

## PUBLISHED IN 1796...

## IZŠLO V LETU 1796...

## KINGA SZÉKELY

### Izvleček

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### Kinga Székely: Izšlo v letu 1796...

1796 so izšle tri knjige v madžarskem jeziku, s pomembnimi podatki o jamah. Pred tem je bilo omenjenih le nekaj jam v latinsko ali nemško pisanih dokumentih. 1796 je Valyi izdal prvi del "Opisa Madžarske" in prevod Korabinskijeve "Geografske enciklopedije" (1786). Istega leta je izšel Telekijev popotni dnevnik, s prvo upodobitvijo 2 jam na Madžarskem. Tudi Szallerjeva "Geografija Madžarske" vsebuje opise jam.

**Ključne besede:** zgodovina speleologije, Madžarska, Slovaška, Romunija, Korabinsky, Szaller, Teleki, Valyi.

### Abstract

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Three books containing information on caves, written in Hungarian language, were published in 1796. Before that only the existence of certain caves had been recorded in Latin or German. Valyi published the first volume of "Description of Hungary" and the translation of Korabinszky's (Korabinsky) Enciklopedia. Teleki produced travel book containing the earliest engraved views of two caves. Szaller's "Geography of Hungary" appeared in 1796 too, with descriptions of caves.

**Key words:** history of speleology, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Korabinsky, Szaller, Teleki, Valyi.

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From the earliest times until 1796 there are approximately 90 historical publications relating to the caves of Hungary. The first documents are charters in the Latin language, in which we can find geographical names referring to caves (*Odvaskő 1037, Ravaszlik, rókalyuk 1055. Likaskő, 1355*). The first cave name (*Deményfalva Cave/Demänovská jaskyňa, Slovakia*) can be found in a document of the Archiepiscopal Archives of Esztergom, which was written in Latin in 1299. From the middle of the 1500s, more and more cave descriptions were published in Latin or German in scientific publications. Most of the earliest publications in Hungarian are references only to the existence of caves (*Pozsonyi Magyar Hirmondó 1781; Benkő József, 1784, 1786; Losontzi István 1788; Zay Sámuel, 1791; Gvadányi József, 1792*).

Outstanding events in the early period of Hungarian speleology were the publication of some books in 1796 - exactly 200 years ago - which became the fundamentals in the Hungarian language speleological literature.

The "Description of Hungary" (*Magyarországnak leírása*) by VÁLYI K. András, Volume 1 (Fig. 1), was published in Buda and it was followed in 1799 by

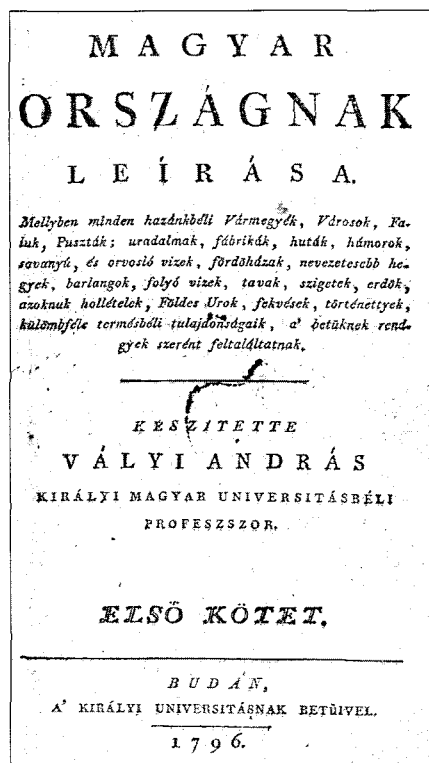


Fig. 1

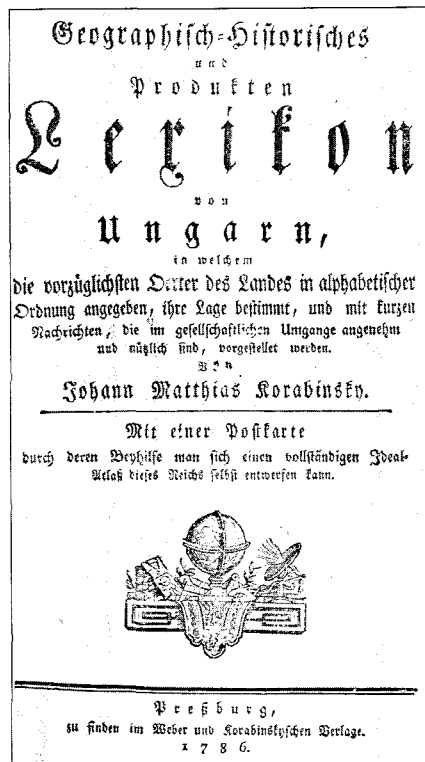


Fig. 2

Volumes 2 and 3. As mentioned in its subtitle, one can find in alphabetical order the descriptions of all the counties, cities, villages, hamlets, mines, factories, smelting works, hot springs, bath houses, important mountains, rivers, lakes, islands and forests, as well as of some caves.

Vályi András was born on the 30th of November, 1764 in Miskolc. He was the inspector of schools in the Kassa (*Košice, Slovakia*) educational district. Later, in 1792, he became the first professor of the Department of Hungarian Language and Literature at the University of Pest. His death was recorded in Pest on December 2nd, 1801.

Due to the public interest, Vályi translated from German to Hungarian the Encyclopaedia of Geography published by **Korabinszky János (Johan Matthias Korabinsky)** in 1786 (*Fig. 2*), which he supplemented with data collected by himself. With his work, he laid the foundation for the detailed Hungarian dictionary of geography, where the well-known Hungarian caves are described under individual entries.

Under the entry of Agtelek, Korabinszky described both the village and the cave (*Baradla*), but Vályi discusses them in two separate entries. The two cave descriptions are almost identical, except for the last sentence. Vályi does not include the information on utilisation of finely ground dripstones as a paint substitute; instead of that he provides an important fact in the history of the cave, namely, that it was discovered by János Farkas in 1794. If the historians had paid attention to this new information, we might know the original of the first map of the cave, as well as the first Hungarian language description of the cave by Farkas, which were lost without a trace.

Vályi's one-column description of the Cave of Benikova (*Jaskyňa Beníková, Slovakia*) gives the general location and size of the cave as well as mentioning the dripstones therein. He also goes into details regarding "the dragon bones", the healing power of the cave springs, and the fact that the cave had been surveyed by Buchholtz and its map published by Bél Mátyás (1723). In a much shorter description of Deményfalva Cave (*Demänovská jaskyňa, Slovakia*), the most important information revealed is that the cave was explored and surveyed by Buchholtz at the request of Bél's. This map also was published in Prodrómus.

Under the entry for Fonátza or Funátzai Cave (*Peștera de la Finașe, Romania*), the only information was that it was surveyed for 4 hours by Nedeczky Elek in 1772. His observations were published in the same year in Vienna and a summary was published in Hungarian Geography by Windisch (1780). The detailed description of the cave can be found under the entry of Bihar County, together with the description of Esküllő Cave (*Romania*).

On numerous occasions when Vályi described counties, mountains, rivers, hamlets or forts; he also mentioned caves. In Borsod County, one can find three caves. First, he writes about Felete-lyuk (cave), which is one hundred steps long and sixteen steps wide - an ideal hiding place for the local popula-

tion during the Rákóczi revolution. This cave's name is unknown now, and most likely is a misspelling, but due to the to the given sizes it can be assumed to be Szeleta Cave. The other two caves, Kecske-lyuk Cave and Diósgyőr Cave, are still called by the same names today. At the Gerets Mountains, he describes a cave without a name. According to the location, size and historical data, this cave can be identified as Szelim Cave.

From among the settlement entries, at Borzova (*Silická Brezová, Slovakia*) the ice cave and at Csobánka the Kis-Kevély Cave are mentioned. At the Boi stream (*Romania*) the entrance to the Cave of Boli is described. At the Castle of Csesznek three caves are mentioned: the first is under the fort, the second one is on the opposite side, and the third one is further away and has water which smells like snake and tastes bad but is healthy for bathers.

It is interesting that some of the caves known at the time are not mentioned in the Encyclopaedia, namely the Abaliget Cave, Detrekő Cave (*Plaveská jaskyňa, Slovakia*), and Veterani Cave (*Peștera de la Pinza Curii, Romania*).

The second important literary work is **TELEKI Domokos**, travel book published in Vienna and describing four visits to Hungary between 1793 and 1795 (Fig. 3). Teleki Domokos, the son of Teleki Sámuel the Transylvanian Chancellor, was born in Transylvania on September 5, 1773. He was brought up in Marosvásárhely (*Tirgu Mures, Romania*) and Nagyszeben (*Sibiu, Romania*) and he later studied at the universities of Pest and Vienna. Due to his poor health, he sought relief through travels. He became acquainted with Hungary from north to south, and with Transylvania and Saxony. During his stay in Jena he was elected a member of the Scientific Society, and in 1798 he became the first chairman of the Mineralogical Society. He died at the age of 25 on September 16, 1798 in the town of Marosvásárhely.

During his Hungarian and Transylvanian travels he visited many caves such as Baradla Cave, Szilice Ice Cave (*Silická ladnica, Slovakia*) Szkleno Cave (*Jaskyňa Parenica, Slovakia*) and the Torja cavities (*Peștera Pucioasade la Turia, Romania*). Besides the detailed descrip-

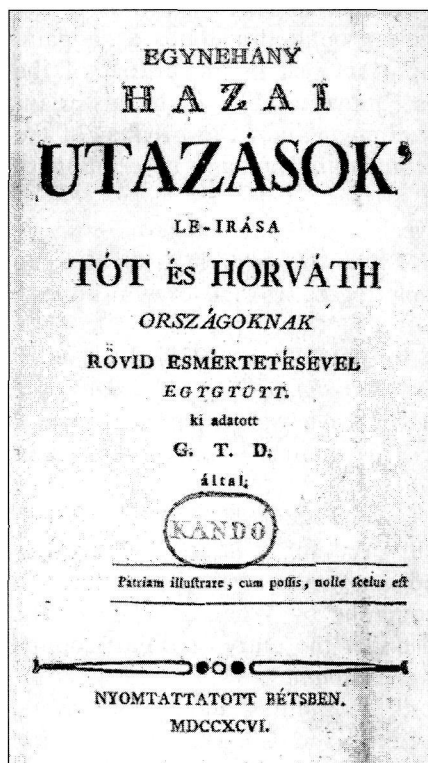


Fig. 3

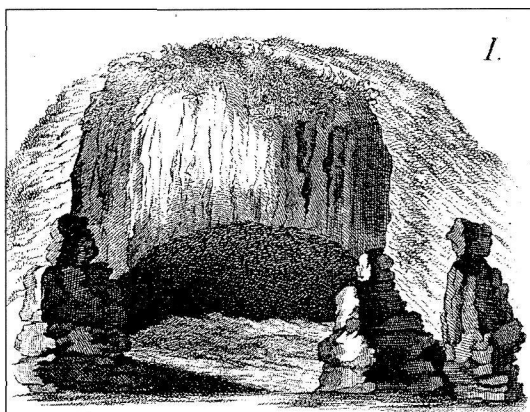


Fig. 4

In addition, in 1796 **SZALLER György** published the *Geography of Hungary*. The date and place of his birth is unknown; he died on October 30, 1807. The only other information about his life is found on the title page of his book. He was a surveyor in Pest and the Hungarian Language Instructor at the Pozsony College (*Bratislava, Slovakia*). Hungarian geographers honour him as the one of first persons to describe Hungary's geography in Hungarian, in which work he provided a map of the country, too. His work is a dry database listing of the counties and urban areas; it also reflects the country's people and economy. The first part of the 250-page book describes the natural environment of the country, where the ninth section discusses waterways and caves. The caves are mentioned by names such as the Okno Cave (*Demänovská jaskyňa Okno, Slovakia*), Szentivány Cave (*Stanišovská jaskyňa, Slovakia*), and the caves of Deményfalva (*Demänova, Slovakia*), the perennial icy cave of Szilice (*Silická ladnica,*

tions of his visits to these caves, he also mentions the cave origin of the Golumbács fly (*Romania*) in his book. In Teleki's 333-page book, we can find, beside maps, two engravings of Szilice Ice Cave (*Silická ladnica, Slovakia*) and one of the entrance to Baradla Cave (Fig. 4-5). These engravings are the first pictures of the entrances of these caves. The book was also published in 1805 in Pest in German and it was used as a basis for the books of Sartori (*Vienna, 1807-1810*) and Engelhart (*Vienna, 1816*).

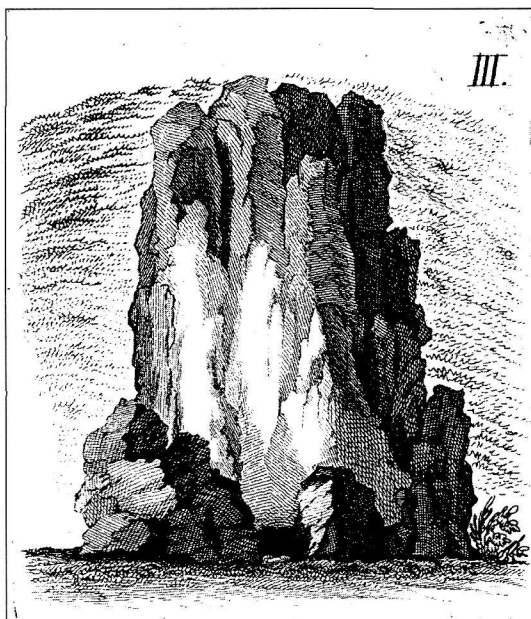


Fig. 5

*Slovakia*) and Fonácsa Cave (*Peștera de la Finașe, Romania*) are discussed, and the presence of caves in Túróc and Gömör Counties is mentioned. Under the counties one can read about the dragon bones of Deményfalva Cave in Liptóv county; the Mazarna and Dupna caves in Túróc county (*Mažarná a Dúpna jaskyňa v Turci, Slovakia*); the cave on the hill at Dobsina and the bottomless Csörgölyuk (*Zvonivá diera, Slovakia*) at Pelsőc in Gömör county; the Szádelő (*Zádielská jaskyňa, Slovakia*), and Szilice and Borzova caves (*Silická ladnica a Brezovská jaskyňa, Slovakia*) in Torna county. It is interesting that Szaller does not mention Baradla, even though it was known to exist then. It is also interesting that the description of Dobsina rather fits that of Baradla. Here we can read the same as in the later Baradla descriptions: the water dripping down the walls and changing into stones, which were used for their clean white colour as paint and also as medicine for bovine.

In 1796 Hungarian language geographic studies and publications began to replace the previously prevailing Latin and German publications. This development provided new, previously unknown facts and information regarding caves in Hungary. These Hungarian publications were based not only on translations but also on new data and personal experiences.

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## **IZŠLO V LETU 1796...**

### **Povzetek**

1796 so izšle tri knjige v madžarskem jeziku, z zelo pomembnimi podatki o jamah na Madžarskem, Slovaškem in v Romuniji. Pred tem je bilo vsega skupaj omenjenih le nekaj jam v 90 rokopisih in knjigah, pisanih v latinskem ali nemškem jeziku, s prvo jamo, omenjeno leta 1037. 1796 je K. A. Valyi izdal prvega od treh delov svoje knjige "Opis Madžarske" ter prevod Korabinskyjeve "Geografske enciklopedije" (1786), dopolnjen z novimi podatki, kjer so tudi jamam namenjena posebna gesla. Istega leta je izdal D. Teleki svoj popotni dnevnik, kjer sta poleg opisov tudi gravuri dveh jam, to sta prvi upodobitvi znanih jam Baradle in Silicke ledenice. Tudi "Geografija Madžarske" G. Szallerja, na 250 straneh, ki je izšla 1796, vsebuje opise številnih jam, ki so danes na Slovaškem in v Romuniji.