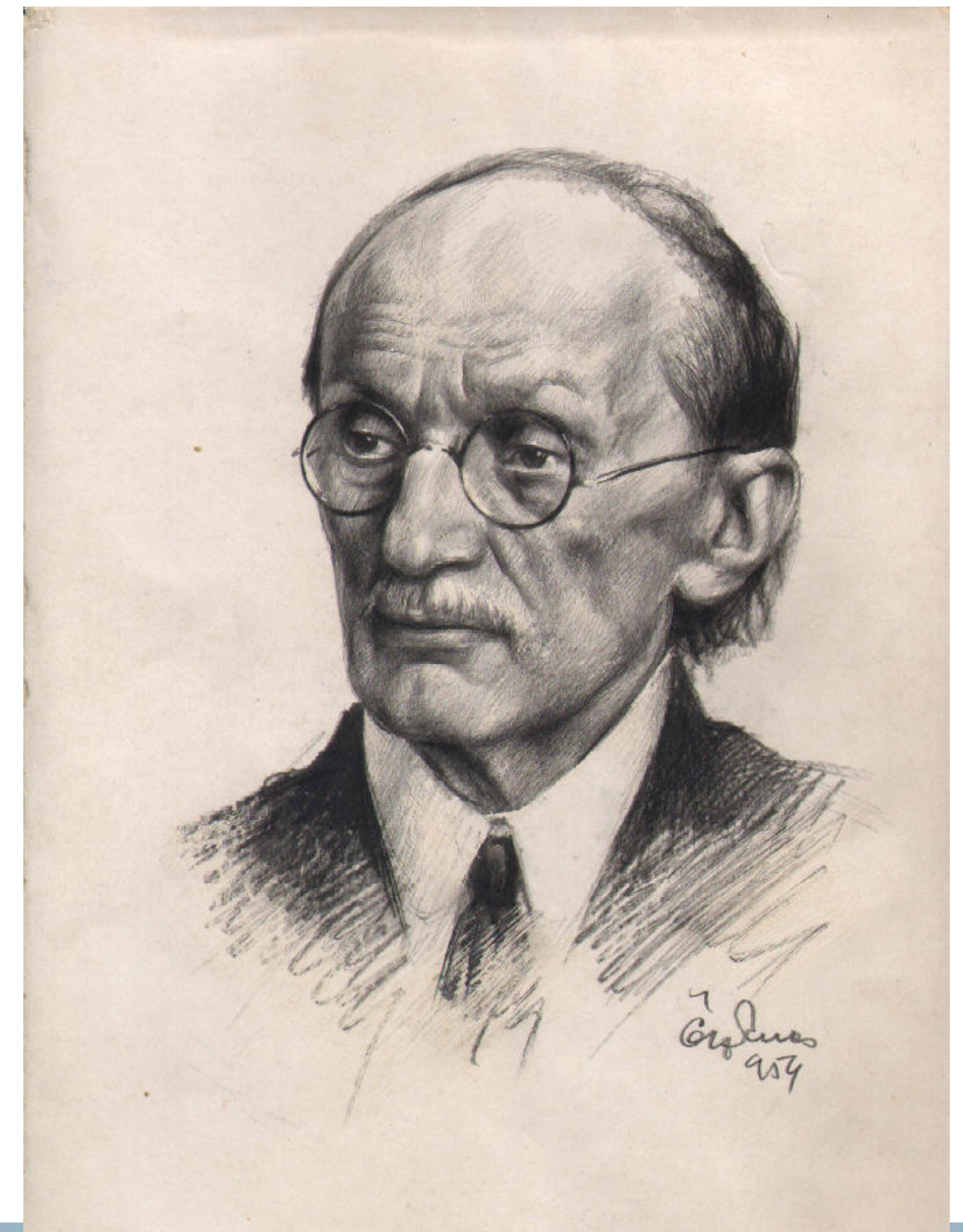


# Elek 'SIGMOND

(1873–1939)

„ 'Sigmond is one of the founders of modern soil science. In Hungarian and international scientific life his invaluable merits are rightly remembered and appreciated...' „He is the Hungarian classic of soil science..."

V. A. Kovda

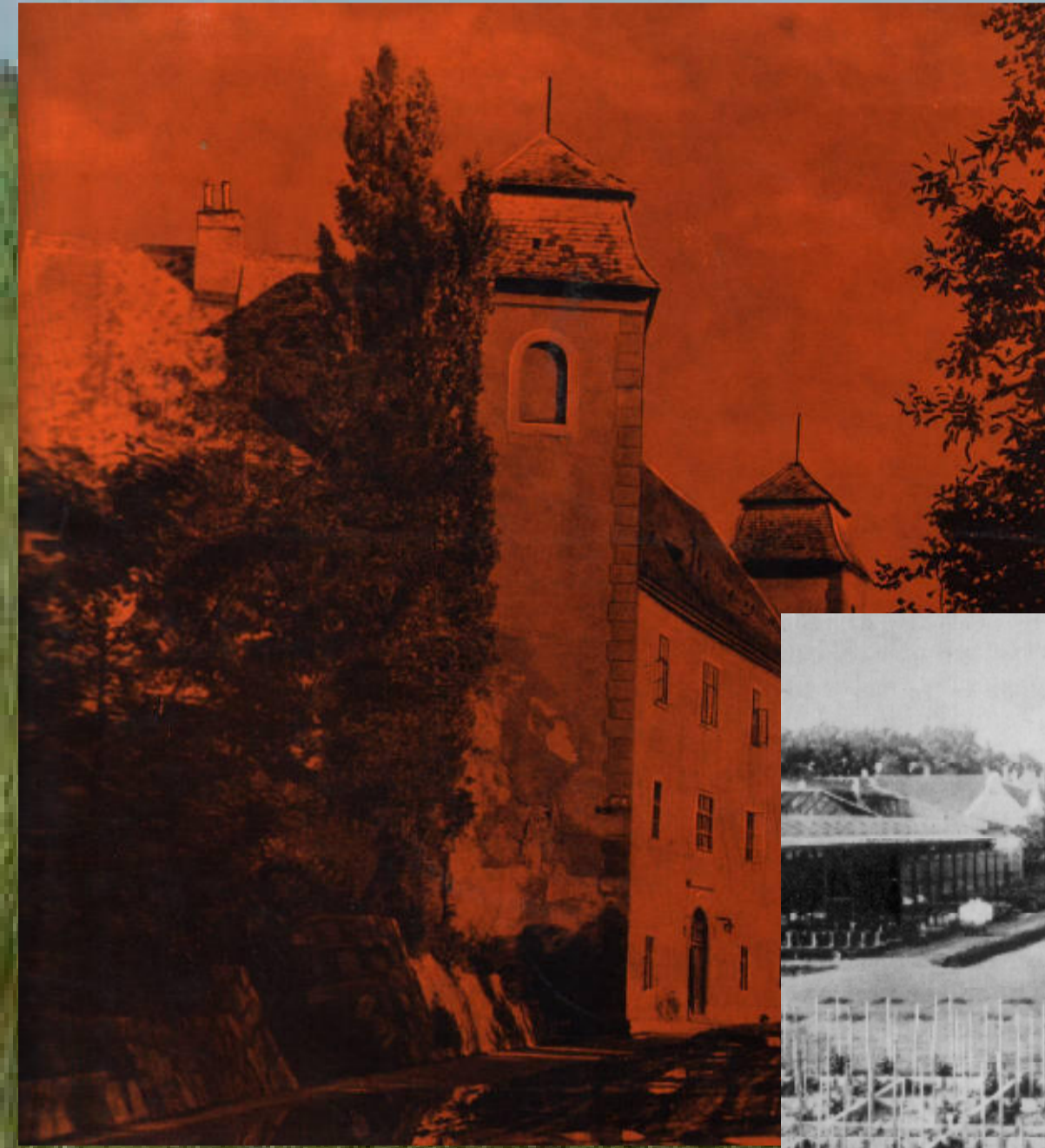


Elek 'Sigmond (Alexius A. J. de 'Sigmond) was born in Kolozsvár (Transylvania) in 1873. He studied chemistry at the Technical University of Budapest, graduating with the degree of chemical engineer in 1895. He is qualified in 1998 by the University of Sciences in Kolozsvár as honorary lecturer in agricultural chemistry.



The chemical building of the Technical University

In 1899 'Sigmond became assistant chemist at the Experimental Plant Cultivation Station at Magyaróvár where his interest in soil problems was stimulated by his chief, S. Cserháti. He engaged in studying Hungarian salt affected soils and the methods of their utilization. In 1904 his book „Agricultural Chemistry” was published.

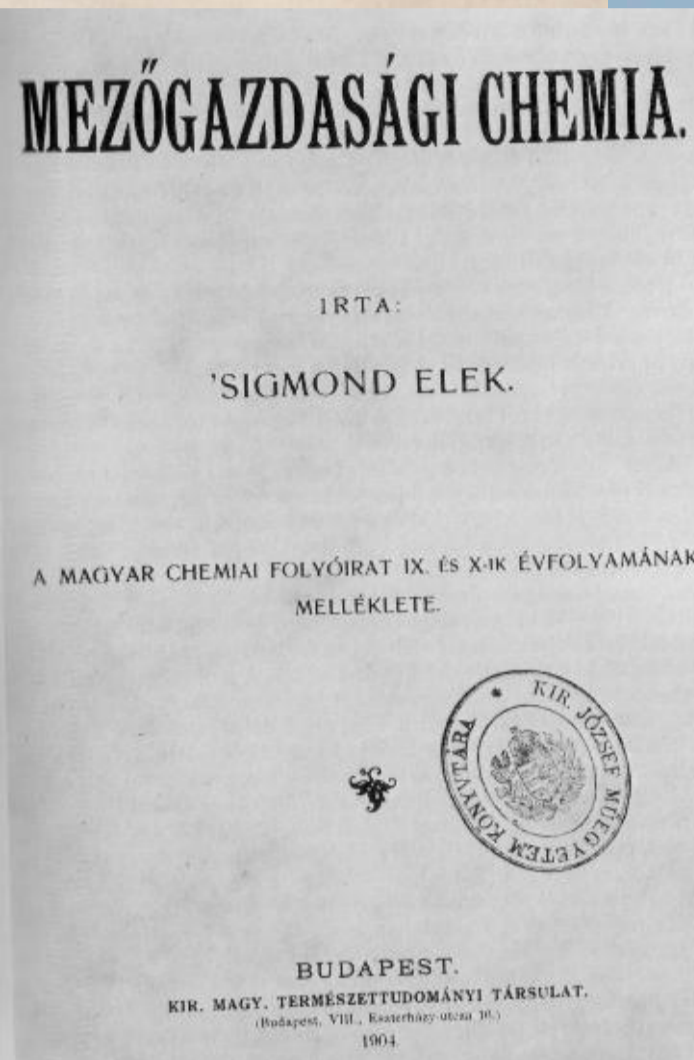


The central building of the Agricultural Academy and the Experimental Plant Cultivation Station at Magyaróvár

To gain experiences in agricultural and food industry he was sent abroad for a two years study tour (1906-1907). He visited agricultural institutes in Western Europe and in United States, and he studied in Egypt irrigation systems. As a first professor of the newly established Department of Agricultural and Food Chemistry within the Technical University (Budapest) he educated over three decades generation of chemical engineers for the agricultural chemical industry and forms around him the famous school of soil science.

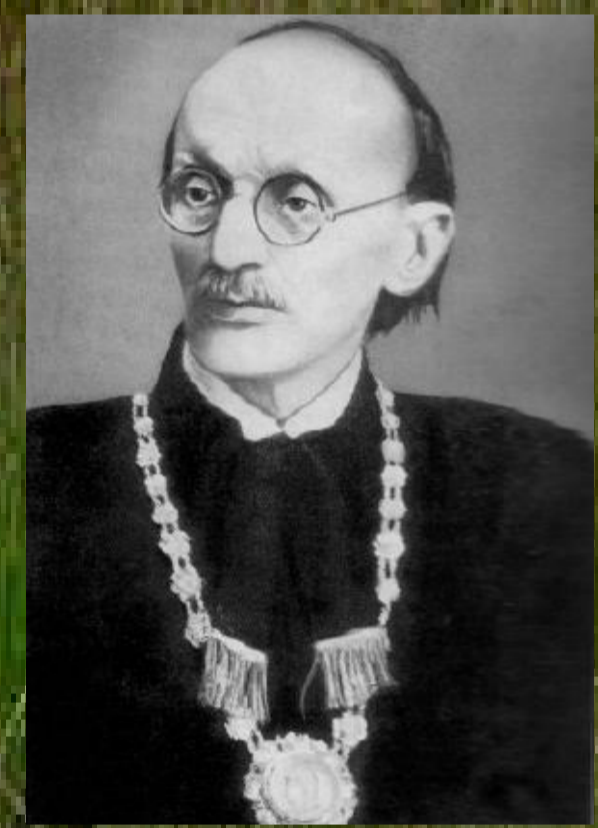


Young scientists at Magyaróvár (Gyárás, 'Sigmond and Krolopp)



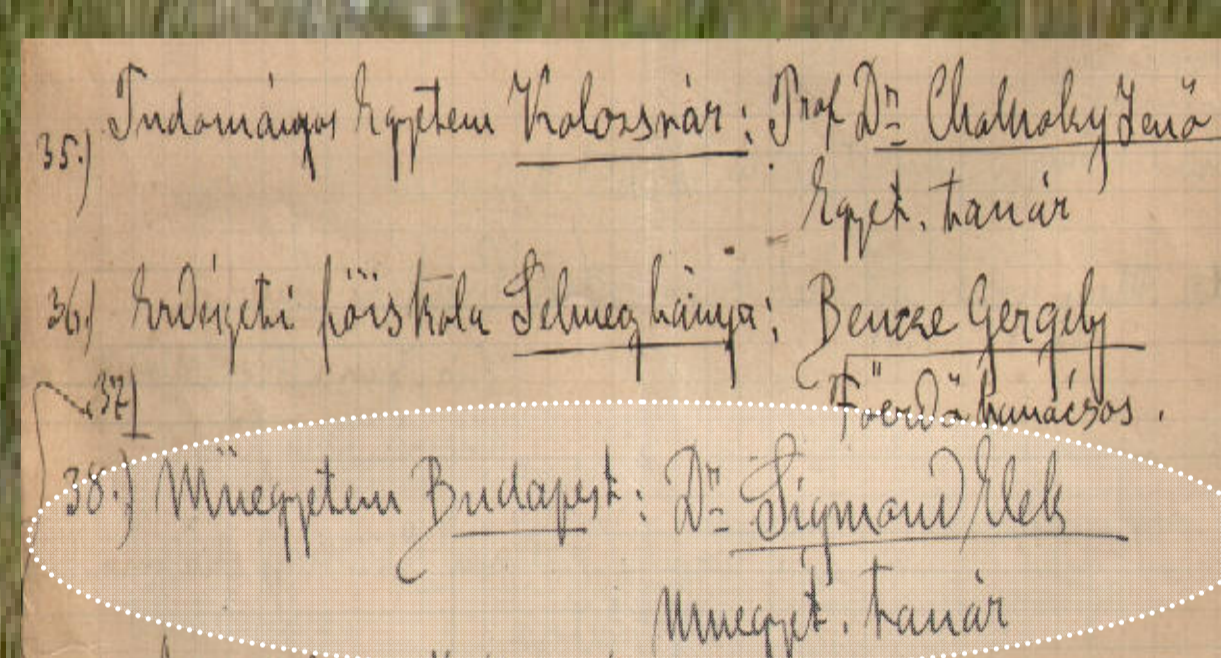
„Agricultural Chemistry” (1904)

100 years ago, the 1st International Congress on Agrogeology began its sessions in Budapest. This Conference was the start of a new epoch in the evolution of soil science. Soil scientist of Western Europe and USA have met here for the first time the results attained by the Russian school of soil science. Among the invited and contributing 90 scientists, representing a dozen countries we find the name of Prof. 'Sigmond, who, conjointly with Prof. Stoklasa presented a paper entitled „Über die Bedeutung der chemischen Bodenanalysen im Gebiete der agrogeologischen Forschungen und der Bodenkartierung”.



Numerous Hungarian soil scientists, agrochemists, food-chemists studied and worked under the supervision and guidance of 'Sigmond.

Elek 'Sigmond suggested international cooperation for the investigation of soils. The international Commission on Chemical Soil Analysis was established in Stockholm in 1910, and 'Sigmond was elected president of this commission during the Fourth International Conference on Agrogeology in Rome. In the meantime he received a new office; president of the 5th, Alkali Soils Subcommission, another important department of the International Soil Investigation Commission. As an acknowledgement of his successful international work he was elected, in Oxford in 1935, Honorary Member of International Soil Science Society, and Honorary President for life of Commission II. (Chemical) Commission of ISSS.



List of invited scientists (February, 1909)



The presidency of the Soil Chemistry Commission of ISSS (1929)

His most important scientific and practical work was in the research of alkali soils. His monography „Hungarian Alkali Soils and Their reclamation” was published by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1923. A few years later it was translated into English and published by University of California (Berkeley) in 1927. He used the results of his scientific research in his practical work when, as the President of the State Central Soil Amelioration Committee, he organized and directed the first national soil amelioration action (1928-1933). In the course of this work about 16 000 acres of alkali land become arable soil. During this time he also performed the duties of the Director of the National Chemical Institute, and established laboratories in Budapest as well as in the country for investigation of soils.



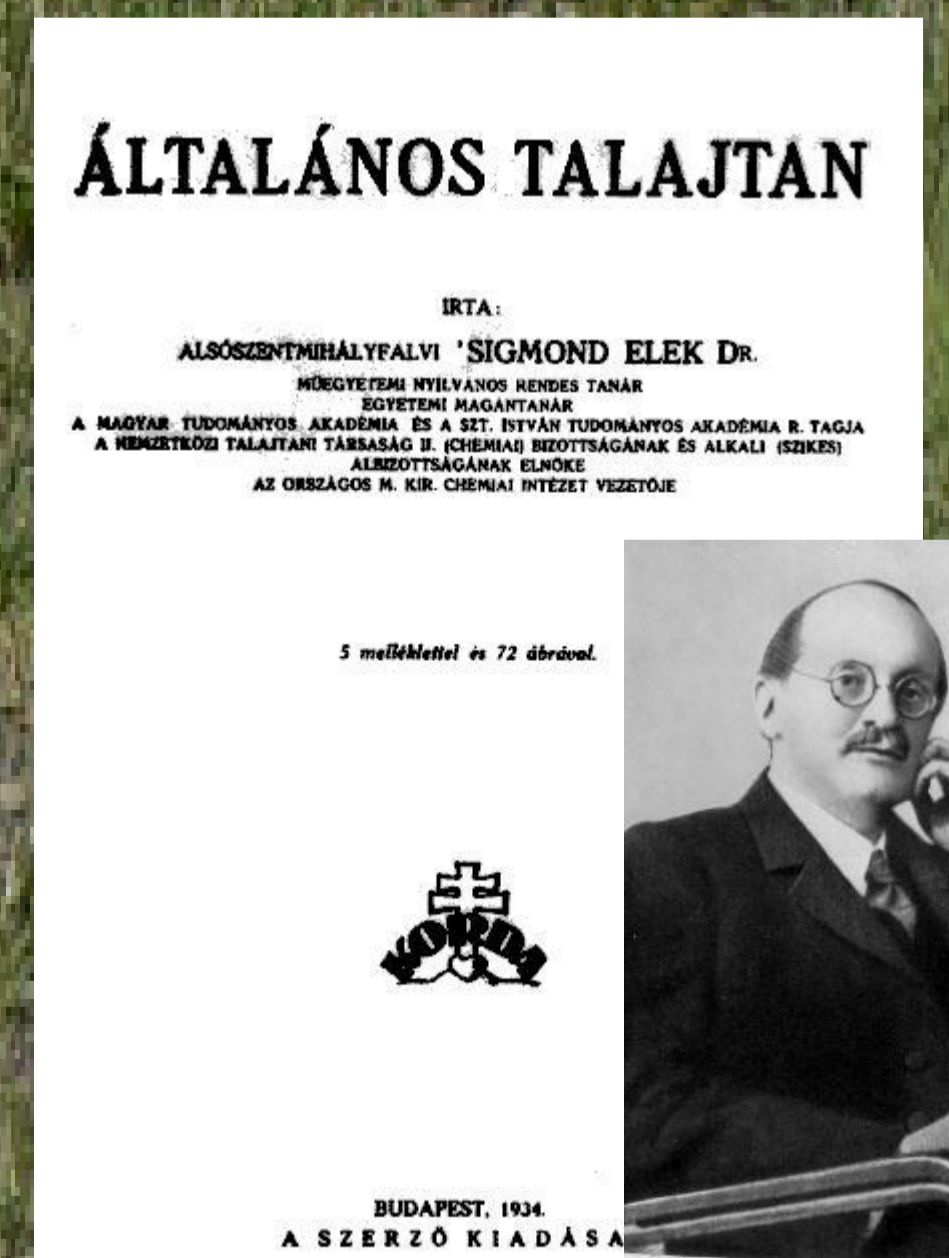
The laboratory and building of the National Chemical Institute



Publications

In 1934 'Sigmond published his book „General Soil Science” in Hungarian in which he summarized the results of his investigations and his systematic classification of soils. This classification system of soils was set up according to their origin and other soil-forming factors (genetical and dynamical principles). This work was published in English under the title „The Principles of Soil Sciences”, London, 1938.)

'Sigmond's scientific activity was not confined to one particular field in soil science. His constructive research work was concerned with so many different topics (e.g. soil fertility, soil mineralogy, soil classification and mapping, soil physico-chemistry, soil physics etc.) that it is simply impossible to summarize.



„General Soil Science” (1934)

Bridging the Centuries  
1909–2009

Hungary – Budapest  
16–17 September, 2009

