

Imre Timkó

(1875-1940)

Imre Timkó was born on the 21st of October 1875 in the city of Ungvár. Before enrolling to university in Budapest, he attended primary and secondary school in his home town. Between 1896 and 1897 he was working as an intern at the Hungarian National Museum. Between 1897 and 1897 he was an assistant at the Budapest University. He has been appointed as royal geologist of the Hungarian Royal Institute of Geology, and was sent to Mosonmagyaróvár to study agrochemistry and soil science. He made a longer journey in Russian in 1908. In 1921 he became senior mining consultant, in 1933 economic senior consultant. He filled the director position of the Institute of Geology for a short period, before retiring. His works were published in Hungarian, German and French. Imre Timkó died on the 2nd of February in 1940.

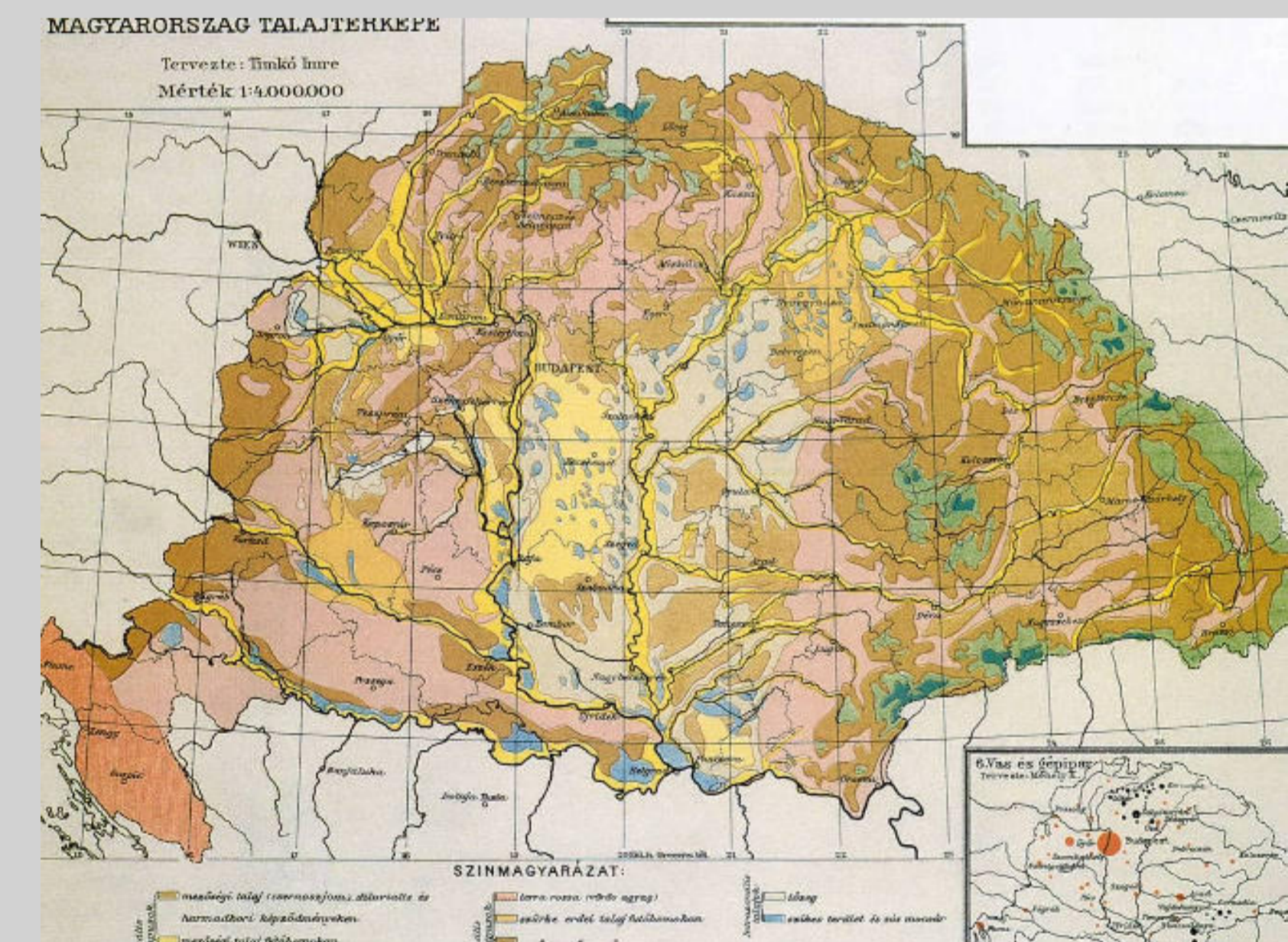
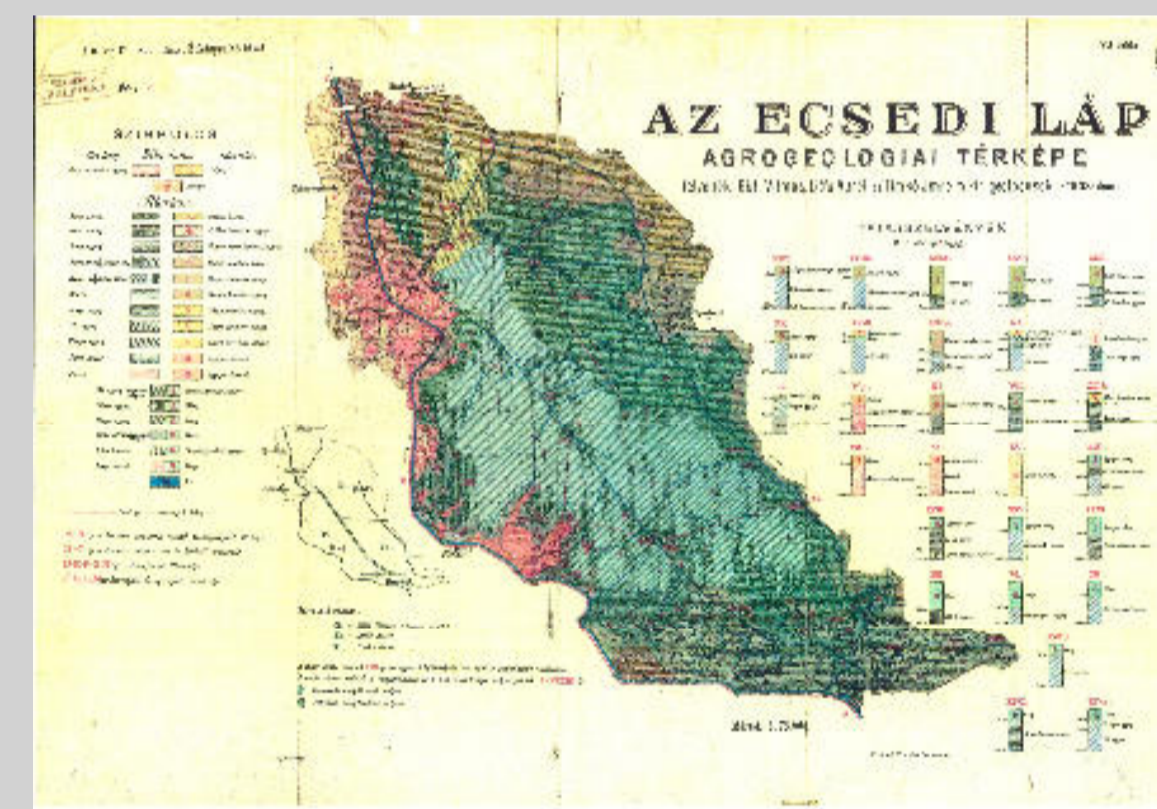


Early works

In 1902 he was engaged in the agrogeological mapping of Nemesócsa, Aranyos, Marcelház and Martos. In the summer of the same year, the Ministry of Agriculture assigned him to undertake pioneer mapping works of the Ecsed marshland and its surrounding territory. In three years time, Timkó mapped an area of 97 km². Based on Timkó's work and the increased interest of marshlands, the Institute of Geology decided to survey the country's marshes and their peat amount. In 1903 he was working in the Csallóköz, in 1904 in the Szigetköz and partly in the marshlands of the Hanság. In the same year he moved the focus of his work to Pest County, where he was conducting mapping work around Budapest and in the ranges of the Dunazug territory between 1904 and 1908. The first agrogeological map was published at that time (Horusitzky, Inkey and Timkó), however the methodology was not unified in every detail, so a committee of Timkó, Güll and László was set up to aim to finalize the methodology and editorial issues of the mapping works. Based on their recommendations, Timkó compiled his map of Érsekújvár and Komárom, which was accepted as the standard that has to be followed in the future. In 1905, he undertook geological survey in the Pilis-Szentendre-Visegrád range, later on in the surroundings of Budapest, Gödöllő, Isaszeg and the Galga-Tápió watershed.

Study tours, Hungarian soil researchers and the international soil science society

During his visit in 1907 and 1908 he got familiar with the theses of the Dokuchaev school. With the supervision of Glinka, he did a longer study tour along the coastal area of the Black Sea and Poland. After returning, he was totally convinced that the Dokuchaev theory would be of great benefit to the deeper knowledge of Hungary's special soil cover. The row of the big international conferences has been started with the first agrogeological conference held in Budapest in 1909. The conference was convoked by Lajos Lóczy – the director of the Institute of Geology – by the occasion of the 40th anniversary. This has been recommended by Peter Treitz and Imre Timkó. One of the conference's decrees was that soil mapping in favourable areas should be accomplished all around Europe, based on their climate zonality. Based on this statement, soil mapping in the country began in 1911, with the contribution of Treitz, Timkó and Ballenegger. In 1912 he mapped the Eastern territories of the Transdanubian region, Veszprém, Tolna and Fejér County, and Pest-Pilis-Solt-Kiskun Counties. In the Northern part of Hungary he undertook work in the Low Tatras, the Eastern part of the Big Fatra range, the Hungarian Ore Mountains, the Nógrád-Gömör hills, the Turóc-Garam watershed and the Liptó-Szepes upland. The draft version of his map appears in the Kogutowitz World Atlas in 1913. Mapping of Transylvania began in 1914 and ended in 1918. Hungary's climate zonal soil map – edited by Treitz and Timkó – was published later on the same year.



Agrogeological mapping between 1919 and 1944

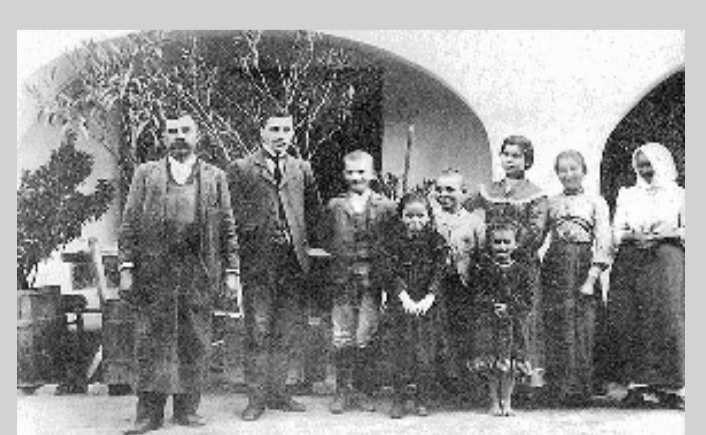
In the beginning of 1919, the Department of Agrogeology was relocated and reorganised as the National Institute of Soil Science of the Agricultural and Botanical Station. Timkó worked for the institute until it was closed two years after its opening. In 1926 the Ministry of Agriculture assigned him with the task of mapping and examining alkaline territories. The Great Hungarian Plain was subdivided into 8 regions, each mapping working group with the leadership of an agrogeologist, agrochemist or botanist was responsible for one of the territories. Within the frames of this programme, Timkó was mapping the Kiskunság and the Jászság.



The heritage of Imre Timkó

With the agrogeological mapping, he did pioneering and highly important work for the development of the country's climate zonal soil map. He contributed to the knowledge of the evolution and dynamics of alkaline and marshland soils. He assessed the possibility of amelioration and agricultural usage of alkaline soils. He reconstructed the development of the Nagy-Sárrét, and assessed the effects of marshland drainage on future soil development. He has been engaged in studying the role of loess deposits and red clays in soil evolution. He contributed to the researches aiming to establish the irrigation stations of the Great Hungarian Plain.

Besides his interest in natural sciences, Imre Timkó was an excellent photographer. Some of his pictures can still be found in the collection of the Hungarian Museum of Ethnography.



Bridging the Centuries

1909–2009

Hungary – Budapest
16–17 September, 2009

