

SYMPOSIUM

Subjective words to the jubilee of Gyula Farkas⁺

Ottó Trogmayer

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I have no reason to deny that I am biased as I am trying to organise my thoughts; the thoughts which come to the surface when looking through the work and life of half a century. I am biased and subjective, as the memory of the years of the second half of the century comes into my mind. I remember the atmosphere of the excavations, the hours, when we were sitting together by the telephone, excited about the birth of his daughter, Ildikó. I remember the shared happiness of our successes and the shared bitterness of our failures. I think I have no reason to deny, our work started at the end of the fifties, from which a friendship grew out. I am proud of the work, with which we aimed at reforming the activity of the scholars of archaeology and anthropology on the modern bases of the time. I remember it also how we thought about our teachers who were in their fifties, when we were twenty.

We were both dreaming about an institute where the studies which support each other as auxiliary sciences, are able to answer together the questions of the history of our country, our native land, and the people living here, with the help of consultations and of putting up and immediately answering questions. From these ambitions, the co-operative work grew out. It is true, that you have made long digressions in the fields of anthropology, which deals with the contemporary populations. In addition, here you managed to reach great success, but for me the researches carried out in the field of historical anthropology were the most important. Well, as it turns out from the great many articles translated to different languages, you have made something long lasting. In my opinion your permanent and brave opposing to the fashionable charlatans of the field, who discredit the prestige of our “scientia amabilis” in and out of our country, is a special achievement.

Praising cannot appear without biographical data but I could not find your name in the Hungarian “Who is who”. This is not a shame, but the publisher’s thoughtlessness, in that it had not listed each professor of each university, who is “a somebody” in Hungary after all. The professors, who receive their commissions not from an association or a party, but from the president of the republic himself.

Gyula (László) Farkas was born in Szabadszállás in Bács-Kiskun County, on April 11, 1932. He completed secondary



school in Kecskemét, and the university in Szeged. He graduated at the Attila József University as a teacher of biology and chemistry, in 1954. After having taught half a year in Kecskemét, he came back to the alma mater of the higher education, where he received all the promotions of seniority as teacher and as researcher, too. First an assistant lecturer, than a candidate of biological science in 1976. In 1977, he became a university lecturer, and since 1980, he is the head of the Department of Anthropology in the University of Szeged. In 1988, he became a university professor.

He has had a number of academic offices, and received more rewards for his educational work. The most important pieces of his scientific work has been listed in more detailed biographies and in the almanac of the University of Szeged, so now I will not list the works.

In my opinion, it is true that a scholarly researcher and professor may be qualified after his articles, his life work and his students. This amount is in itself exemplary. We know that most of it has not been written with co-authors, which is not usual in the fields of natural sciences.

The professor has spent most of his life within the walls of the institute. He would not be ashamed of doing physical

⁺Dedicated to Professor Gyula Farkas on the occasion of his 70th birthday.

work if it was necessary. He has done everything for raising the reputation of his Department, and for keeping the level of education on a high level, for securing the conditions of this. He has kept on trying to introduce new research methods. As a teacher, he has held – according to modest calculations – more than five thousand hours of lectures, on a high level.

In my view, his working capacity and diligence are a great example to be imitated, but can never be caught up with.

He taught generations of biology teachers, who are proud of their master. We can only feel sorry about the fact, that out of his students only a few could manage into such a collec-

tion, where they would be able to enter their abilities into the service of research only. This is due to the status of the Hungarian museums.

My dear Gyula! A well-known art historian lady, answering the acknowledgements she received on a similar occasion, asked the people present: “Are you praising me now, or burying me?”

Well, I have ordered my personal thoughts for your seventieth birthday, as a friend, a colleague, to wish you happiness in life, and new results in science. I know that with these wishes, I am not alone. Each member of the Hungarian anthropology and palaeontology wishes the same to you.