

**SIXTH INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF HUMAN BIOLOGY
VESZPRÉM, 10-13 JUNE, 1997**

*Opening Address
by O. G. Eiben*

We cordially welcome all participants of our Sixth International Symposium.

The series of Symposium of Human Biology in Hungary (organized by O. G. Eiben) has already a nice tradition. The meetings have always had a remarkable international participation. The first Symposium was organized in Balatonfüred in 1976 under the title „Growth and Development; Physique“. The second one was held in Visegrád in 1979 on „Functional Biotypology“. The third Symposium in Bozsok in 1981 „Variations in Human Growth and Physique“ was combined with the Centenarian Congress of Anthropology of the Department of Anthropology, Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. The fourth Symposium was organized in Pécs in 1986 on „Growth Standards“, and the fifth one in Keszthely in 1991 about the „Youth at the End of the 20th Century“.

This time the theme of the Symposium is „Natural Endowments and Possibilities in Human Growth“. The organisers want to discuss the genetic endowments influencing growth and maturation of children, in other words the growth pattern in general as well as all the ecological/economical factors influencing the complex process of growth and development. We have had to experience a decreasing living standards in Hungary in the last years, and its consequences closely affect the children and young people. The issue of the Symposium is very timely.

In order to fulfill the main task, experts in genetics, pediatrics, nutrition, etc. as well as scientists in the field of sport and physical education, sociology, demography, etc. were invited in order to establish a fruitful dialogue, between basic and applied science. A special perspective of the dialogue planned is an analysis of the many-sided variations in human physique, including body composition. Another feature of the Symposium is multidisciplinary: colleagues from various fields will be reunited from various regions of the world around a common theme, growth and physique.

Our Symposium was organized in the year of the Hungarian millecentenary. The first Magyar settlers of Hungary came into the Carpathian Basin at least 1100 years ago. The Hungarian history there in the last eleven-hundred years has not been easy, in fact, it was rather bloody. We can say with our poet:

*„És anyyi balszerencse közt,
oly sok vizzály után,
megfogyva bár, de törve nem
él nemzet e hazán.“*

*„...and amid so much misfortune,
and so much discord,
although diminished but not broken,
the nation lives in this country.“*

(Szózat - Appeal to the Nation = Second Hungarian National Anthem, written by Mihály Vörösmarty in 1836).

This wonderful poem also mirrors our hope in a better future.

Also the town Veszprém which has received the Symposium in a nice place, has also its own history. Veszprém was the residence of the Hungarian Queens. Beside of the house of the Veszprém Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences where the Symposium has its sessions, statues of St. Stephen, the first king of Hungary and his Wife, Beatific Gisella of Bavaria stand and remind us... (The relic of Beatific Gisella, her right humerus, returned from Passau, Germany, just a few weeks earlier and during the Symposium it is in the Cathedral, which is the next-door building.)

The Bisdom of Veszprém (today Archbisdom) was founded exactly 1000 years ago, in 996. It is true enough that the walls in Veszprém Castle respire history.

At the three and a half day Symposium 16 countries (Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Croatia, Estonia, France, Germany, India, Italy, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, U.K., U.S.A., and Hungary) are represented. Twenty-nine foreign speakers (plus five accompanying persons) and 38 Hungarian participants are present. During six sessions, 42 papers will be presented. In the last day, we intend to organize a round-table discussion on body composition, moderated by Professors W.D. Ross and W. A. Stini. The sessions must be very stimulated. Out of the 42 papers, 24 will be given by foreign and 18 by Hungarian colleagues. Five papers will be presented by young colleagues.

The material of the Symposium will be published in the Hungarian journal „Anthropologiai Közlemények“.

During the Symposium nice social events will be organized, too: A concert, followed by a reception given by the County Veszprém; a half-day excursion to Balatonfüred, taking a walk on the shore of the Lake Balaton, visiting the memorial of the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore, then leaving for Tihany by boat. In Tihany in the Abbey church an organ concert is foreseen, after it wearting the tomb of the Hungarian King I. András in the undercraft on the church, afterwards a banquet in a „Csárda“. A closing reception will be given by the Town Veszprém.

After the Symposium, the First Hungarian-Indian Workshop of Auxology will be organized in the same place. The Indian and Hungarian colleagues will have an occasion to know eachother better, to discuss their recent research results, etc. It is planned to create a tradition, followed by the Indian-Hungarian Workshop of Auxology, organized by the Indian colleagues, probably in Patiala, India.

The Organizers have taken steps to ensure that your stay in Veszprém will be as pleasant as possible. We hope that your visit in Hungary will be rewarding both from scientific as well as social points of view, and that it will strenghten and perfect bonds between human biologists and other scientists of bordering fields.

My special thanks are due to Dr. Pál Győri, the Secretary of this Symposium for his valuable and many-sided help in organization of our Symposium.

Our best wishes for a successful Symposium!