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Lajos Méhely's *Herpetologia Hungarica*, a Review of a Masterpiece of the Hungarian Herpetological Literature

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Introduction

The most legendary Hungarian zoologist of the 20th century and one of the leading European herpetologists of the early part of the period was Lajos Méhely (1862–1953). He published over 250 papers and books (Dely 1967) on many aspects of zoology: evolution, ecology, and taxonomy, including many on amphibians, reptiles, bats, and several groups of invertebrates (Boros & Dely 1967). Several of his papers and the great originality of the ideas therein are known and appreciated worldwide. His name is still familiar as a result of the over 70 new taxa he described (Dely 1967), because of the genus *Mehelya* (Csiki, 1903) and because of the 20-plus species named after him (Dely 1967), like *Xenorhina mehelyi* (Boulenger, 1898), *Agama mehelyi* Tornier, 1902, and *Rana mehelyi* Bolkay, 1911. Comprehensive biographies of Lajos Méhely were published by Boros & Dely (1967), Dely (1967) and Adler (1989: 65). Yet his longest work, *Herpetologia Hungarica*, presenting the reptiles of historical Hungary (then encompassing areas now within the borders of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, Slovakia, Ukraine and Romania) in text and illustrations, was never published. We shall present the history of this remarkable work and discuss in some detail the preserved manuscript and the accompanying plates.

Herpetologia Hungarica

In his zoological career Lajos Méhely held several positions, such as the directorial chair of the Zoological Department of the Hungarian

Natural History Museum (1912–1915), and professor of zoology at the Pázmány Péter University in Budapest (1915–1932). Soon after graduating from the Budapest University in 1885 he spent 12 years as a biology teacher at the Brassó/Braşov/Kronstadt State Realgymnasium. This was a very productive period of his life. In these years Méhely compiled the backbone of many monographs published later and wrote *Herpetologia Hungarica*. His most important herpetological works published during these years were on a new *Triton* for the Hungarian fauna (then *Triton montandoni* Boulenger, 1880; Méhely 1891), on the Hungarian brown frogs (Méhely 1892), a description of a new viper (then *Vipera rakosiensis*; Méhely 1894) and on the vipers *Vipera berus* (Linnaeus, 1758), 1758 and *Vipera ursinii* (Bonaparte, 1835) in Hungary (Méhely 1895).

We know from Méhely's (1932) narrative that he started with the manuscript following a letter of 26 April 1893 by Géza Entz Sr. (1842–1919), who was a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Entz informed Méhely that the Academy planned to advertise a grant of 1,200 forints for a monograph of the Hungarian reptiles based on original research.

The Academy published the advertisement of the Bézsán prize¹ in the May 1893 issue of their journal *Akadémiai Értesítő* (Szily 1893). Applicants were required to submit their contribution before 30 September 1896 as a paginated manuscript copy written by someone else (Szily 1893). The applicants were to remain anonymous, but provide a code phrase in

a form of a motto and a sealed envelope containing the same motto and the name of the author. The seals should not be broken until a decision was taken by the Academy.

In the autumn of 1896 Méhely submitted his 666-page long, bound manuscript titled *Herpetologia Hungarica. Monograph of the Hungarian reptiles (Herpetologia Hungarica. A magyarországi csúszómászók (Reptilia) monográphiája)* and 29 separately bound watercolor paintings entitled *The reptiles of the Hungarian kingdom. 1896 (A Magyar királyság csúszómászói. 1896)* (Szily 1897). He used as his motto a famous phrase from the poem *Huszt* by Ferenc Kölcsey (1790-1838), author of the Hungarian national anthem: *Do, create, enrich, and the country will arise* (Anonymous 1896a).

Méhely's was the only application. It was reviewed by three well known zoologists, namely Géza Entz Sr, Géza Horváth (1847-1937) and Jenő Daday (1855-1920), all members of the Academy (Anonymous, 1896b). It appealed to them and the Academy General meeting in 1897 granted Méhely the prize (Szily 1897). The only deficiency mentioned was the lack of a table of contents, which was expected to be prepared in time for the publication (Szily 1897). The Academy had never given such a positive review before: "None of the present herpetological works could compete with the submitted manuscript" (Szily 1897), "The watercolors, imitating nature, are real masterworks" (Méhely, 1929b).

In 1914 Méhely agreed with the Royal Hungarian Natural History Society² in Budapest to print 2,500 copies of the 22 plates ready to that date for a popular work. These were ordered from the Frankfurt am Main, Germany based printing company, Werner u. Winter. However, Méhely did not like the background to some of the plates: several print proof versions exist of five plates (24, 27, 35, 36, 39) with the animals in different environments. According to Csiki (1929a), these were redrawn by famous Hungarian artists, like Géza Vastagh (1866-1919) and Jenő Koszkol (1868-1935), but other evidence corroborating this statement has not been found. Probably this was only an allegation by Csiki in a dispute with Méhely. It is, after all, unlikely that Méhely would have agreed to have his plates redrawn by someone else.

The first 500 copies of each plate were paid by Méhely from the 50,000 gold-crowns he had received from the Ministry of Culture to print *Herpetologia Hungarica*. The remaining plates (circa 50,000) were dispatched by Werner u. Winter in 1924 to the Natural History Society, Budapest. However, Méhely by this time considered the text outdated and in need of improvement. Previously its publication as whole was delayed first due to financial difficulties, and thereafter due to World War I. An abbreviated version of the Viperidae part was published (Méhely 1912) containing three of the original plates in black and white depicting *Vipera berus* (p. 23), *Vipera ursinii* (p. 31) and *Vipera ammodytes* (p. 39).

¹ The Bézsán prize of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was founded in 1874, after the Baron József Bézsán (1816-1873) from Dunaszecső, president of the court of justice from Pest donated to the Academy 40,000 forints in his testament dated February 4, 1873 (Anonymous 1891). From the interest the Academy should have granted at least 1,000 forints to projects that significantly contribute to the knowledge in natural sciences and humanities. The Academy decided to advertise the prize every third year and to reward the winning application with 1,200 forints. The prize was allocated for the last time in 1932 (Fekete 2000).

² The Hungarian Natural History Society (Magyar Természettudományi Társulat) was officially founded in Pest on June 13, 1831 (Beck 1998), and was acting after 1843 as the Royal Hungarian Natural History Society (Királyi Magyar Természettudományi Társulat). After the fall of the 1848-1849 revolution it held its first meeting in 1850, and later organized scientific groups and meetings, and published the almanac "A Királyi Magyar Természettudományi Társulat Évkönyvei". From 1860 the Society started publishing the journal "Természettudományi Közlöny". In 1953 the Society resumed its activity under the name Society for Popularization of Scientific Knowledge (Tudományos Ismeretterjesztő Társulat) (Horváth & Korsós 1994). It is still active and publishes its journal as "Természet Világa".

The plates were at an unknown time transferred to the Collection on History of Science of the Hungarian Natural History Museum (HNHM). The original paintings have not yet been traced except for two that are kept in HNHM and the Archive of the Eötvös Loránd University's Library, Budapest (AELTE).

The scientific community rated these watercolor paintings highly as signified by the flattering statements by the herpetologists Franz Werner (1867-1939) "Vor allem nehmen Sie den Ausdruck meiner aufrichtigen Bewunderung für Ihre meisterhafte Abbildung der *Lacerta fumana* und *striata* entgegen. Ich bin entzückt davon." and by George Albert Boulenger (1858-1937) "The specimen plate which you send me for inspection, representing *Coluber longissimus* in lifelike attitude, is simply exquisite." (Méhely 1929b).

The prize and the financial support were envied and debated by many zoologists. As the printing of the manuscript was deferred further, entomologist Ernő Csiki (1875–1954), who succeeded Méhely as director of the Zoological Department of the Hungarian Natural History Museum, even accused Méhely of embezzlement (Csiki 1929b, 1931). The conflict arose following a harsh criticism by Méhely (1929a) of the work *Isopoda terrestria Hungariae* written by Csiki (1926). This incident later resulted in several critical essays published in zoological journals (e.g. Csiki 1929b), but also in antagonistic wars of words in local newspapers (e.g. Méhely 1929b, Csiki 1929a), and in private publications (Csiki 1931, Méhely 1933). They even went to court for a trial, which lasted for more than a year. Judgment ruled in the favor of Méhely. In a letter written on 8 May 1931 Méhely resigned his membership in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Anonymous 1931), due to the negative stance the Academy took towards him when he was struggling against Csiki's accusations. Once the dispute was even close to a duel, which Csiki, however, evaded.

One hundred numbered volumes with 22 color plates each were eventually assembled from the stock of plates in 1991 for the 6th Ordinary General Meeting of the Societas Europaea Herpetologica (Dely & Korsós 1991). The elegant atlas folder in oblong quarto is accompanied with three pages of explanatory comments and index of plates.

Form and content of the text

The manuscript is preserved in AELTE. After the review by the Academy the manuscript was returned to Méhely to prepare it for printing, thus he was able to complete and correct several parts and add new species that he subsequently found, such as *Lacerta taurica*. The text is written on large (35 x 21 cm) sheets in two volumes, a large sized, now unbound volume of 596 pages (six paginated pages are blank) and another bound volume of 77 pages. There are 44-45 rows per page, each row containing 75-80 characters. A table of contents is provided in Table 1. We have cited scientific names as they appear in the manuscript. For corresponding modern names refer to Table 2.

The first volume is the anonymously written copy submitted to the Academy. The first six pages are missing, and the whole introductory chapter contains several cross-outs and additions. It contains 24 tables, four phylogenetic trees and a drawing. The detailed description for each native species is split into the following headings: synonymy (a "complete" list of synonyms was prepared), body proportions (subsequent to a discussion, Méhely provided in tabular format body proportion for specimens collected in different parts of the country), scale numbers, color pattern, distribution (first the overall distribution is discussed, afterwards all records from the territory of Hungary were listed and commented upon in detail) and ecology.

Two species, *Lacerta taurica* and *Lacerta sicula*, are presented on 14 separately inserted pages. These were written during the early

Table 1. Content and page length of different chapters of *Herpetologia Hungarica*.

Volume/Heading	Number of Pages
Volume 1	
Introduction: role of reptiles in nature and their place in human culture, morphology, functional anatomy, ecology, distribution and phylogeny.....	50
Description of the Squamata.....	1
Description of the lizards.....	16
Keys for the Hungarian lizards.....	1
<i>Hemidactylus turcicus</i> (detailed description).....	11
<i>Ophisaurus apus</i> (detailed description).....	14
<i>Anguis fragilis</i> (detailed description).....	30
<i>Lacerta</i>	1
Keys for the Hungarian <i>Lacerta</i>	1
<i>Lacerta viridis</i> (detailed description).....	38
<i>Lacerta agilis</i> (detailed description).....	67
<i>Lacerta vivipara</i> (detailed description).....	34
<i>Lacerta praticola</i> (detailed description).....	20
<i>Lacerta muralis</i> : subsp. <i>Tiliguerta</i> , var. <i>Campestris</i> , forma <i>olivacea</i> (detailed description).....	80
<i>Ablepharus pannonicus</i> (detailed description).....	20
Ophidians.....	7
Hungarian Colubridae.....	1/2
<i>Tropidonotus natrix</i> (detailed description).....	16
<i>Tropidonotus tessellatus</i> (detailed description).....	12
<i>Zamenis gemonensis</i> forma <i>typica</i> and <i>Zamenis gemonensis</i> var. <i>Caspicus</i> (detailed description).....	17
<i>Coluber leopardinus</i> (detailed description).....	9
<i>Coluber quatuorlineatus</i> (detailed description).....	11
<i>Coluber longissimus</i> (detailed description).....	20
<i>Coronella austriaca</i> (detailed description).....	16
<i>Tarbophis fallax</i> (detailed description).....	10
<i>Vipera</i>	2
<i>Vipera ursinii</i> (detailed description).....	14
<i>Vipera berus</i> (detailed description).....	60
<i>Vipera ammodytes</i> (detailed description).....	18
Separate pages	
<i>Lacerta taurica</i> (detailed description).....	11
<i>Lacerta sicula</i> (detailed description).....	3
Volume 2	
The morphology, origin and systematics of the turtles.....	22
Athecae.....	1
<i>Thecophora</i>	1
Hungarian species (general notes).....	1/2
<i>Testudo</i>	1/2
<i>Emys</i>	1/2
<i>Emys orbicularis</i> (detailed description).....	26
<i>Testudo graeca</i> (detailed description).....	25
Rhynchocephalia.....	1

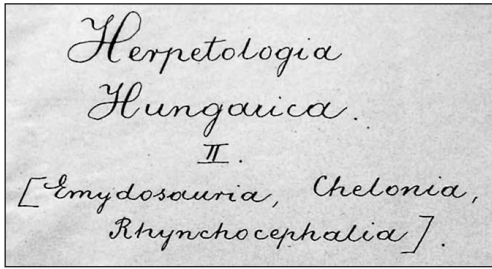


Fig 1. Text on the cover page of the second volume of *Herpetologia Hungarica*.

1900s, as *Podarcis tauricus* was discovered in Hungary only in 1902 (Méhely 1902) and *Podarcis siculus* was listed as a subspecies of *P. muralis* in the fair copy. Méhely started rewriting the *P. siculus* chapter, but managed to finish only three pages.

The second volume “*Herpetologia Hungarica* [Emydosauria, Chelonia, Rhynchocephalia]” (Fig. 1) is preserved with Méhely’s handwriting on 77 pages. This must be an original manuscript that was never submitted to the Academy, and possibly the master for the fair copy. Most of the pages are successively numbered starting with page 599 and ending with page 666. For an unknown reason Méhely penned multiple copies of four pages, which were marked by page number and letters (e.g. a, b, c). The volume contains two tables and a phylogenetic tree. For the two Hungarian species discussed in detail (i.e. *Emys orbicularis* and *Testudo graeca*) Méhely compiled their complete synonymy, presented their morphology, ecology, origin and distribution, and discussed the records from the literature and specimens preserved in museum collections originating from Hungary. Curiously, Méhely also included half a page with the order for the tuatara, Rhynchocephalia, the old name for Sphenodontia.

Méhely used a pleasing Hungarian language with many original, yet traditional expressions. His wording is logical, easy to understand, and delightful to read. His handwriting is clean, uniform and with relatively few corrections (Fig. 2).

Plates

Méhely planned 39 colored plates (Table 2) for the book but he never succeeded in finishing all of them. While he was writing the text and/or drawing the plates he often changed his opinion on the number of plates and drawings that should be included. We successfully traced these changes, as AELTE stores four different plate list drafts compiled by Méhely. The plates reached different stages; some were never drawn, whereas others were printed in several versions (print proofs) stored variously at AELTE and HNHM. We have arranged them into five groups, as follows:

- 1) Illustrations that were never prepared (or for which no evidence survives). Four species.
- 2) Photographs that could have served as models for the plates. Two are known, one (*Tarentola mauritanica*) is reproduced in Korsós & Horváth (1992: 41).
- 3) Original watercolor with no plates printed. Two are known. The aquarelle depicting *Lacerta horvathi* Méhely, 1904 (Pl. 8 in Table 2) is preserved in HNHM (Korsós & Horváth 1992), and was reproduced in Korsós (2002). Another aquarelle (Pl. 37 in Table 2) is in AELTE. It depicts *Mauremys rivulata* (Valenciennes, 1833) and was reproduced in Korsós & Horváth (1992: 42).
- 4) Print proofs. Nine are preserved (Fig. 3).
- 5) Printed, 22 plates with 2,500 copies of each. Six are available in proof stages as well.

Originally Méhely planned to paint two separate plates for *Lacerta oxycephala* and *Lacerta mosorensis*, but later decided to place them on a single plate (Pl. 7). Plate 11, now depicting four *Lacerta muralis* and four *Lacerta fiumana* was planned to show a male and a female *Lacerta serpa*, now *Podarcis siculus* (Rafinesque-Schmaltz, 1810) only. This species was never depicted, or the drawing did not survive. Black and white drawings were planned for *Lacerta major*, but these were never finished or did not survive. Black and white photographs should have been included in the text, depicting

Lacerta taurica Pall.

(I - IV. tábla)

Synonymák.

Lacerta taurica Pallas, Zoogr Rosso-Aasiat. III. Petropoli, 1831. p. 30; Rathke, Mem. Sav. Etr. Ac. St. Pétersb. III. 1837, p. 302, tab. II. fig. 1-4; Nordmann in: Demidoff, Voy. Russ. Méc. III. 1840, p. 337, tab. I. fig. 1, 2; Schinz, Europ. Fauna, 1840, p. 15; F. Boulenger, Proc. Zool. Soc. London 1881, p. 740; Bedriaga, Zool. Anz. VI. 1883, p. 216; Abb. Jenckent. Ges. XIV. 1886, p. 320, tab. -, fig. 25, 28; Boulenger, Catal. Lix. Brit. Mus. III. 1887, p. 26; Werner, Wiss. Mitth. Bosn. Herzegov. VI. 1899, p. 833.

Lacerta taurica part. Duméril & Bibron, Zool. Acclimat. V. 1839, p. 225; Schreiber, Herpetol. Europ. 1875, p. 419.

Podarcis taurica Symon, Scott. Fauna III. 1836-1841, p. - tab. 6, fig. -

F. Kesler, Tr. St. Pétersb. Nat. Soc. VIII. 1878, p. 163;

Termet, magság.

Egész megjelenésében a L. muralis-hoz + még inkább a L. ^{siatica} ~~gambrovi~~-^{hoz hasonlít} -^{hoz hasonlít}, de általában kisebb, feje rövidebb, és domborúbb + farka is rövidebb. A magyarországi példányok 140 - 172 mm. hosszúak, a kisebb alakok azonban jóval nagyobbak, így egyik Amerikába való him példányom 197 mm. hosszú.

A L. taurica feje rövid, felül meglehetősen domború, kevésbé lapított mint a L. muralis-é. Arcsora a végén komoly kerékívet, rövidebb is vastagabb mint a L. muralis-é. A fej szélessége úgy aránylik a hosszához mint 1 : 1.5 - 1.7. A him feje sokkal nagyobb + vastagabb mint a nőstényé, hosszabb, hátul szélesebb 2.5 - 2.7 - nek foglaltatik a törzs hosszában, míg a nőstényé 3.3 - 3.5 - nek. A nyak + a törzs a L. muralis-éhoz hasonló, csak hogy valamivel rövidebb. A nőstény törzse hosszabb mint a himé, 41 - 42 mm hosszú, míg a himé csak 33 - 41 mm. A farka rövidebb is valamivel vastagabb mint a L. muralis-é. (A L. muralis a nőstény nem úti még a L. muralis-é, a L. muralis a nőstény nem úti még a L. muralis-é, a L. muralis a nőstény nem úti még a L. muralis-é.) A himé 1.54, a nőstényé 1.6 - 1.7 - nek foglaltatik arányban egész hosszában, a him farka tehát valamivel hosszabb mint a nőstényé. L. muralis a nőstény nem úti még a L. muralis-é, a L. muralis a nőstény nem úti még a L. muralis-é, a L. muralis a nőstény nem úti még a L. muralis-é.

* A nősténynek csak a hátsó része egy kicsit hosszabb, mint a fej + a törzs együtté, a L. muralis a nőstény nem úti még a L. muralis-é, a L. muralis a nőstény nem úti még a L. muralis-é, a L. muralis a nőstény nem úti még a L. muralis-é.

Fig 2. First page from the Lacerta taurica chapter of Herpetologia Hungarica in Méhely's handwriting.

Table 2. Account of plates planned for *Herpetologia Hungarica*.

Plate No.	Name of the Plate	Specimens Portrayed	Production Stage	Present Name of the Taxon
1	* <i>Tarentola mauritanica</i> L.	One	Ph (AELTE)	<i>Tarentola mauritanica</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)
2	* <i>Hemidactylus turcicus</i> L.	One	PP (AELTE)	<i>Hemidactylus turcicus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)
3	<i>Ablepharus pannonicus</i> Fitz.	Three	P	<i>Ablepharus kitaibelii fitzingeri</i> Mertens, 1952
4	<i>Anguis fragilis</i> L.	♀, ♂ & juv.	P	<i>Anguis fragilis</i> Linnaeus, 1758
5	<i>Ophisaurus apus</i> Pall.	One	P	<i>Pseudopus apodus</i> (Pallas, 1775)
6	<i>Algiroides nigropunctatus</i> DB.	[♀, ♂]	P	<i>Algyroides nigropunctatus</i> (Duméril & Bibron, 1839)
7	<i>Lacerta oxycephala</i> DB., <i>Lacerta mosorensis</i> Kolomb.	One each	PP (HNHM)	<i>Dalmatolacerta oxycephala</i> (Duméril & Bibron, 1839), <i>Dinarolacerta mosorensis</i> (Kolombatovic, 1886)
8	<i>Lacerta Horváthi</i> Méh.	Two	Wc (HNHM)	<i>Iberolacerta horvathi</i> (Méhely, 1904)
9	<i>Lacerta praticola</i> Evers.	♀	P	<i>Darevskia praticola</i> (Eversmann, 1834)
10	<i>Lacerta vivipara</i> Jacq.	[♀, ♂]	P	<i>Zootoca vivipara</i> (Jacquin, 1787)
11	* <i>Lacerta muralis</i> Laur., * <i>Lacerta fiumana</i> Wrn.	Color variants, four each	PP (HNHM)	<i>Podarcis muralis</i> (Laurenti, 1768), <i>Podarcis melisellensis fumanus</i> (Werner, 1891)
12	* <i>Lacerta fiumana</i> Wrn.	[♀, ♂]	PP (AELTE)	<i>Podarcis melisellensis fumanus</i> (Werner, 1891)
13	<i>Lacerta taurica</i> Pall.	Color variants, 5 ♀, 2 ♂	PP (HNHM), P	<i>Podarcis tauricus</i> (Pallas, 1814)
14	<i>Lacerta muralis</i> Laur.	♀, ♂	P	<i>Podarcis muralis</i> (Laurenti, 1768)
15	* <i>Lacerta viridis</i> Laur.	♂	PP (AELTE)	<i>Lacerta viridis</i> (Laurenti, 1768)
16	* <i>Lacerta viridis</i> Laur.	♀	PP (AELTE, HNHM)	<i>Lacerta viridis</i> (Laurenti, 1768)
17	<i>Lacerta agilis</i> L.	♂	P	<i>Lacerta agilis</i> Linnaeus, 1758
18	<i>Lacerta agilis</i> L.	♀	P	<i>Lacerta agilis</i> Linnaeus, 1758
19	<i>Lacerta agilis</i> L.	Color variants, 4 ♀, 4 ♂	P	<i>Lacerta agilis</i> Linnaeus, 1758
20	<i>Lacerta agilis</i> L. (forma <i>rubra</i> Laur.)	♂	P	<i>Lacerta agilis</i> Linnaeus, 1758
21	<i>Lacerta agilis</i> L. (forma <i>rubra</i> Laur.)	♀	P	<i>Lacerta agilis</i> Linnaeus, 1758
22	* <i>Tropidonotus natrix</i>	—	NE	<i>Natrix natrix</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)
23	<i>Tropidonotus tessellatus</i>	One	PP (HNHM), P	<i>Natrix tessellata</i> (Laurenti, 1768)
24	<i>Zamenis gemonensis</i> Laur.	One	PP (HNHM), P	<i>Hierophis gemonensis</i> (Laurenti, 1768)

Plate No.	Name of the Plate	Specimens Portrayed	Production Stage	Present Name of the Taxon
25	<i>Zamenis caspius</i> Iwan.	One	P	<i>Dolichophis caspius</i> (Gmelin, 1789)
26	* <i>Zamenis Dahlii</i> Fitz.	–	NE	<i>Platyiceps najadum</i> (Eichwald, 1831)
27	* <i>Coluber longissimus</i> Laur.	One	PP (AELTE)	<i>Elaphe longissima</i> (Laurenti, 1768)
28	<i>Coluber leopardinus</i> Bonap.	One	P	<i>Zamenis situla</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)
29	* <i>Coluber quatorlineatus</i> Lacèp.	One	PP (HNHM)	<i>Elaphe quatuorlineata</i> (Lacépède, 1789)
30	* <i>Coronella austriaca</i> Laur.	One	Ph (AELTE)	<i>Coronella austriaca</i> (Laurenti, 1768)
31	<i>Tarbophis fallax</i> Fleischm.	One	P	<i>Telescopus fallax</i> (Fleischmann, 1831)
32	* <i>Coelopeltis lacertina</i> Wagl.	–	NE	<i>Malpolon monspessulanus</i> (Hermann, 1804)
33	<i>Vipera Ursinii</i> Bonap.	[♀]	P	<i>Vipera ursinii rakosiensis</i> Méhely, 1893
34	* <i>Vipera macrops</i> Méh.	–	NE	<i>Vipera ursinii macrops</i> Méhely, 1911
35	<i>Vipera berus</i> L.	♂	PP (HNHM), P	<i>Vipera berus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)
36	* <i>Vipera ammodytes</i> L.	[♀]	PP (AELTE, HNHM)	<i>Vipera ammodytes</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)
37	<i>Clemys caspica rivulata</i> Val.	[♂]	Wc (AELTE)	<i>Mauremys rivulata</i> (Valenciennes, 1833)
38	<i>Emys orbicularis</i> L.	[♀]	PP (AELTE), P	<i>Emys orbicularis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)
39	<i>Testudo graeca</i> L.	♀, ♂	PP (AELTE), P	<i>Testudo graeca</i> Linnaeus, 1758

NOTES

* – Plate names preceded by an asterisk do not appear on the plate but were obtained from Méhely's lists.
 [♀, ♂], [♀], [♂] – Gender symbols placed in square brackets do not appear on the plate.

Production Stage:

Ph - photographs that could have served as models for the plates

PP - print proofs, printed in several versions

P - printed with 2,500 copies of each

Wc - original watercolor with no plates printed

NE - non-existent: illustrations that were never prepared (or nothing survived)

Location:

AELTE – located in the Archive of the Eötvös Loránd University's Library

HNHM - located in the Historical Collection of the Hungarian Natural History Museum

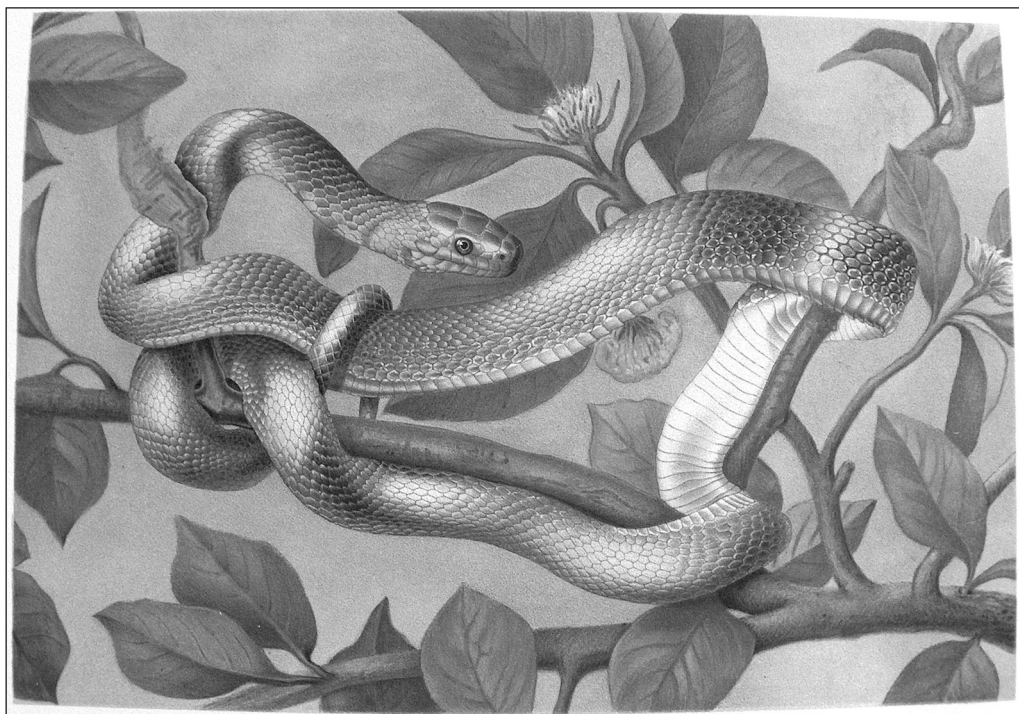


Fig 3. Print proofs of plate 27 depicting *Elaphe longissima* (Laurenti, 1768).

Chelonia mydas (Linnaeus, 1758), *Caretta caretta* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Dermochelys coriacea* (Vandelli, 1761). These photographs, if ever prepared, have not survived. Similarly, Méhely first wanted to add a black and white photograph of *Chelonia imbricata* (Linnaeus, 1766) (now *Eretmochelys imbricata*) as well but dropped the idea later.

After the World War II, Méhely was charged and convicted for a crime against humanity and was imprisoned. He died in the prison in 1953 in Budapest at the age of 91. The manuscript has still not been published due to a lack of financial support. In Hungary the market would be rather small and with a translation to any other language it would be difficult to reproduce its literary qualities. Nonetheless, it is still our heartfelt hope that this Hungarian herpetological opus magnum one day can be published.

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