

# A geological hiking map curiosity from 1939

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**Keywords:** Geotourist map, hiking map, artistic map, foldout maps, tour guides

## Abstract:

The beginnings of the popularization of geological science in Hungary date back to the 19th century, but its wider spread is typical of the early 20th century. Geology-themed guides, landscapes showing geological interpretations of rocks and landforms alongside artistic images, and books were the primary means of promoting geology during this period. Even in this early times, this form of geological education was addressed to an audience beyond the profession, and its aim was not only to spread knowledge but also to stir up the interest of possible future professionals. The works of the major authors are well known to today's representatives of the earth science disciplines, but the works of the "common soldiers" of the profession, school teachers and authors who practised earth science as a co-discipline, have mostly been forgotten.

One such work is the Mecsek tourist guide published by the Pécs Tourist Office in 1939, Hungary, which was edited by the then head of the office, Lajos Sík. The majority of the text is the revision of the earlier "Pécs and the Mecsek" guide by József Kiss, school director and tourism expert, but amongst other changes, a detailed geological description was added to the booklet. The renewed publication is entitled: "Detailed guide to the Mecsek with 2 maps and 2 sketches". The guidebook is a small, ~A5-sized, 200 page-long, richly illustrated booklet printed in two colours: green, and red (Figure 1). After the foreword, there is a geological chapter by Zoltán Pál Szabó, a well-known geographer and speleologist from Pécs, which is quite extended, and contains a list of "literature of interest to tourists" listing several popular science articles about the geology and mining of the Mecsek Mountains. This is followed by chapters on fauna (Antal Gebhardt) and "plant life" (Adolf Horvát), which are shorter and do not contain any literature recommendations. The largest part is about the description of marked tourist trails.

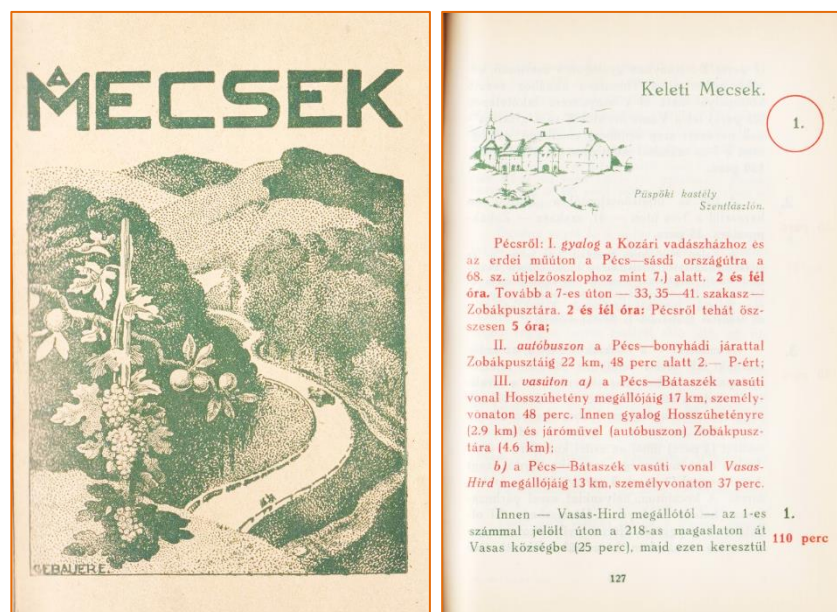


Figure 1. The title page (left) with the illustration drawn by the artist Ernő Gebauer, and one of the illustrated green-red printed pages describing a trail (right).

However, as a novelty, the map appendices of the guide were supplemented with a simplified geological theme, edited by Z. P. Szabó on the basis of the 1:75000 geological map of Elemér Vadász published in 1935. The tourist maps of the Western and Eastern Mecsek Mountains are 33x48 cm and 33x30 cm respectively, and were prepared with three phases: black, red and colour offset. The map maker Attila Kovács was an illustrator rather than a cartographer, and his lack of experience in map making is traceable on the map through errors (e.g. some roads are unconnected, watercourses are black and confused with rail tracks). The geological themes (these are the "sketches" referred to in the title) are shown as

black outlines and texts on fold-out transparent sheets (Figure 2). The fold-outs are glued to the left edges of the tourist maps. The geological overlays have their own titles and explanations and their simplicity stand in contrast to the tourist maps, which are richly decorated with pictorial elements drawn in a light style by Attila Kovács. The tourist map sheets do not contain scale and north arrow, but were copied from a 1:50000 base map from 1926 (compiled by János Vigyázó) and the numbered tourist trails were drawn from a 1:75000 base map published by the National Cartography and Geography Research Institute in 1931.

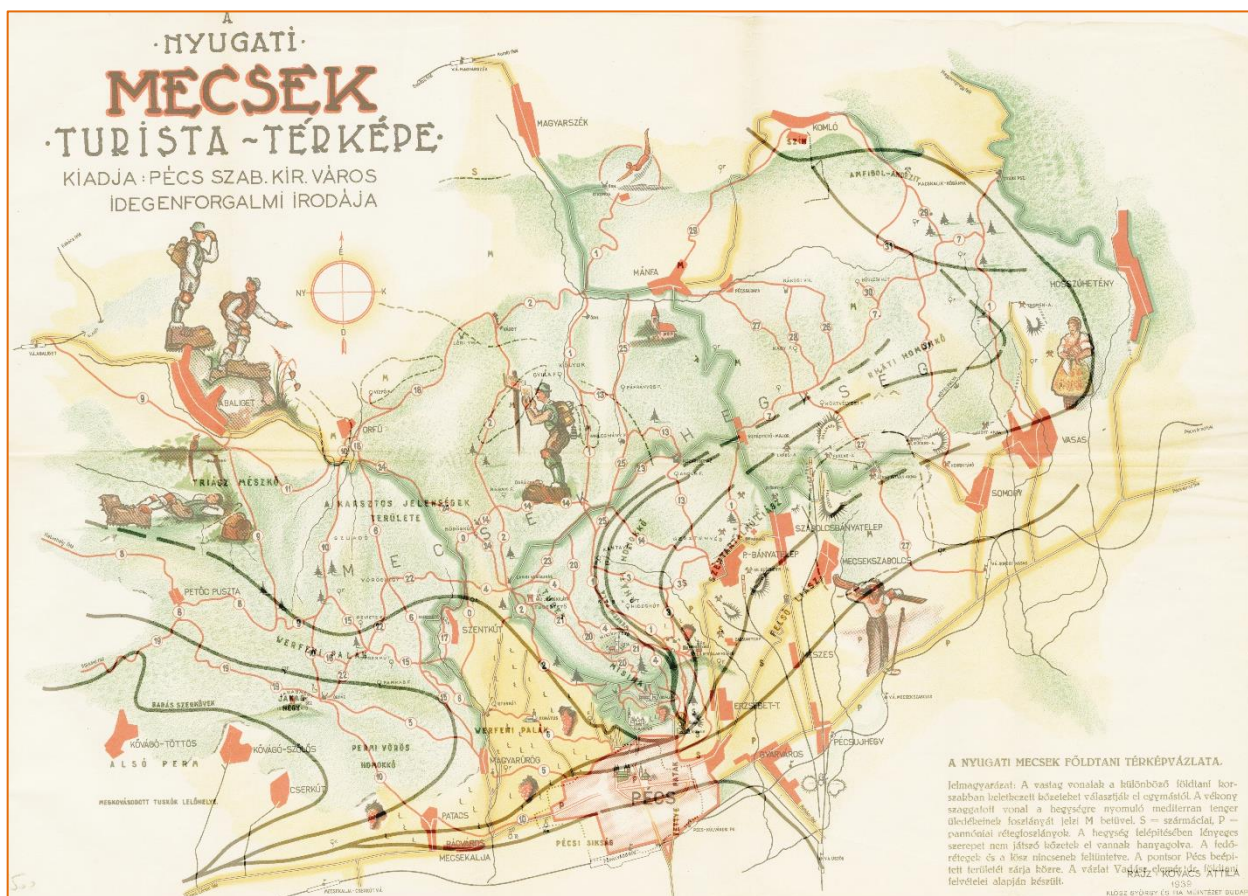


Figure 1. The tourist map of the Western Mecsek overlaid with the geological sketch on a transparent sheet. The funny figures with oversized tourist boots often appear in the booklet as well.

The Mecsek is a low- to mid-range mountain in south Hungary built up of Late Palaeozoic and Mesozoic sedimentary rocks. Its largest city is Pécs, whose millennia-long history is closely linked to the raw materials found in the mountains and the karst water resources in the Mesozoic rocks. In the booklet's geological summary, the author links stories and legends to geomorphological landmarks, highlights the significance of the rocks for local history (e.g. karst springs), and emphasises the economic importance of the raw materials. All these characteristics are key elements in the communication when geological phenomena are presented as tourist destinations.

From the late 20<sup>th</sup> century the branch of geotourism created a new genre of maps, which serves as media to communicate with non-specialists (tourists). Geotourism introduces the public to the geological heritage of a region through marked sites, tours and popular science publications including guides and maps. Geological hiking maps are geotourist maps bearing the mixed characteristics of geological and hiking maps and are aimed to assist field navigation. Although geotourism as a distinctive label could not even have occurred to the authors, from today's point of view they have created an early representative of the geotourism map genre. Such map of the genre was not previously known in Hungary from this era, and it is probably one of the earliest of its kind in the world.