

BOOK REVIEW: ANTHROPOGENIC GEOMORPHOLOGY

L. DÁVID – J. SZABÓ (EDS.)

University of Debrecen, 2006.

Kossuth University Press, Debrecen, 322 p. (ISBN 963 472 979 7)

In the past few decades interest in the environment has reached a peak as popular opinion has become aware of the extent of the human impact on natural systems. A proliferation of degrees has followed this wave of 'environmentalism', their focus has been on natural areas and the damage caused by human impacts. **Environmental geomorphology** is a special interaction of humans with the geographical environment which includes not only the physical constituents of the Earth, but also the surface of the Earth, its landforms and in particular the processes which operate to change it through time. Since the 1970s in the research of the physical environment two, frequently intertwining trends are prominent. One of them investigates the changes in the natural environment induced by human economic intervention (which are often undesirable) along with their counter-effects. The other aims at the quantitative and qualitative survey of the resources and potentials of the physical environment and the evaluation of also regionally varying geographical potentials. Researchers reviewing the geomorphological literature of the last 40 years will gain the impression that the perception of Man as a geomorphological agent is a fairly recent development. **Anthropogenic geomorphology** is a new approach and practice to investigate our physical environment, because in the eighties the more and more urgent demands from society against geography - ever more manifest due to the scientific-technical revolution - underlined the tasks to promote efficiently the rational utilization of natural resources and potentials, to achieve an environmental management satisfying social requirements and opportunities. At the same time, anthropogenic geomorphology is a new challenge for geomorphologists, since environmental problems have an effect on several branches of science. Anthropogenic geomorphology studies the huge – and more and more increasing – number of landform associations of extreme variety depending on the given way and aim of their creation, which have been made by the human activity. The discipline also studies the surface changes induced by these forms; moreover, predicts the consequences of disturbance of the natural equilibrium, and makes recommendations for preventing damages. Therefore, anthropogenic geomorphology can be also regarded as an applied discipline, which helps to solve both social-economic as well as environmental and natural protection problems.

The editors and authors of the new Hungarian text-book on anthropogenic geomorphology think that mankind must be regarded directly as a geomorphological agent, for it has increasingly altered the conditions of denudation and aggradation of the Earth's surface, and it has been becoming the main landscape sculpturing factor. We regard and teach anthropogenic geomorphology as an activity system, therefore, we believe in the equality ranks among the various fields of science in environmental protection and we assign an important part to anthropogenic geomorphology in the structure of our education. The organisation of the book follows this concept. After a general introduction of aims and scope of this discipline, the individual chapters focus on the different sectors of the human activity. The final chapter intends to give a qualitative and quantitative summary of the human impact on the Earth's surface.