

Book Review

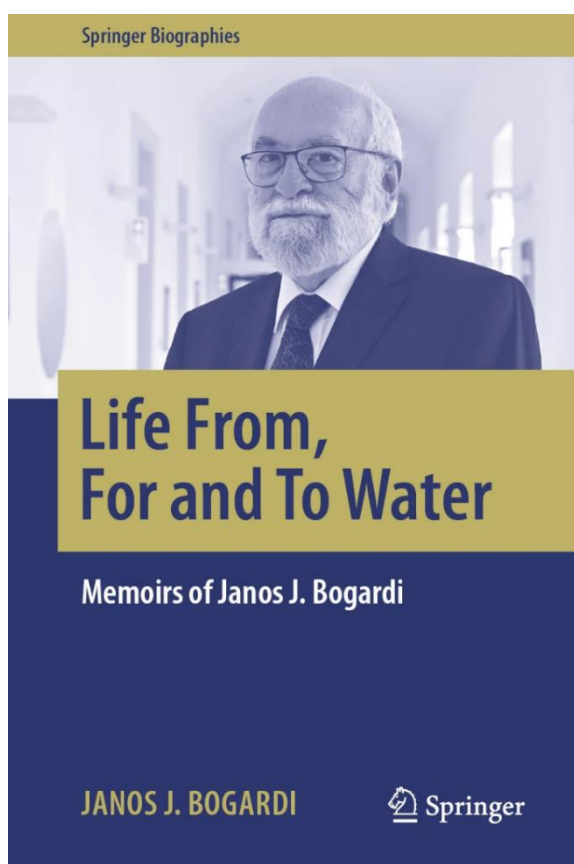


In December 2022, **Professor János Bogárdi published his book titled "*I Am Made of Water, I Will Become Water – Why Does the World Revolve Around the Water Cycle?*"**, a summary of his more than 50-year professional career.

The volume was released under the initiative and coordination of the Scientific Water Council of the General Directorate of Water Management (OVF).

In 2025, **Springer Publishing published the English version of the book under the title "*Life From, For and To Water*"**, describing the book as: Motivation for those who search for a future profession and/or start their own "water career".

In the Introduction, we read about six extreme events that the professor refers to as pivotal moments in his professional life, which also provide the structural framework of the book: the Tisza flood (1970), the Zambezi drought (1981–1984), the Indian Ocean tsunami (2004), Hurricane Katrina (2005), the Cape Town water crisis (2017–2018), and the Ahr River flash flood (2021).



The next three chapters present János Bogárdi's active career in 15–17-year periods, while the fourth chapter summarizes the past decade, which he refers to as his "restless retirement years." The volume concludes with an Epilogue and seven appendices.

In the first chapter, *The Years of Becoming an Engineer and Researcher (1964–1979)*, the author discusses his choice of career, reflects on his university years, and recounts the fight against the 1970 Tisza flood. He attended a six-month postgraduate hydrology course in Padua in 1971, after which he sought and found work in West Ger-

many. He earned his doctorate in Karlsruhe in 1979 with a dissertation on the role of flood retention basins in water management.

He also had the opportunity to gain experience outside the academic world. The second chapter, *The Years of Research, Consulting, and Teaching (1979–1995)*, recounts the drought in the Zambezi Basin and the challenges related to the Kariba Dam. Based on these experiences, he drew fundamental conclusions about water management.

From 1985, he taught at the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok. Reservoirs remained a central topic of his teaching and research. He and his students applied dynamic programming to revisit the earlier Kariba Dam question—how the disaster-level low water levels might have been avoided. His work also involved the operation of Taiwan's Feitsui Reservoir, where his first PhD student conducted research. In this section, Bogárdi's engineering philosophy is also presented.

From 1989, he served as head of department at Wageningen Agricultural University. His inaugural lecture was about the road toward integrated water management. The text is enhanced with commentary added from today's perspective. The chapter also recalls the "golden age" of scientific and educational collaboration in the 1990s, particularly the successes of the Erasmus and TEMPUS PHARE programs.

In 1995, he joined UNESCO's Water Sciences Division. The third chapter, *Science Management on and Beyond Water (1995–2012)*, describes this period. At UNESCO, Professor Bogárdi participated in many high-impact projects as a scientific diplomat, including water transfer from Lesotho to South Africa, and strategic planning for the Aral Sea and Volga Basin. Even 20 years later, his co-edited volume with Z. Kundzewicz, *Risk, Reliability, Uncertainty and Robustness of Water Resource Systems*, is still widely cited. He initiated the long-running project "From Potential Conflict to Cooperation Potential."

As the coordinator for education in UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme, Professor Bogárdi was involved in dozens of training courses worldwide, including the former VITUKI's International Post-graduate course. He also fought for four years to grant international institutional status to IHE Delft, a prestigious institute for water education, under UNESCO.

Between 2003 and 2009, he was founding director of the Institute for Environment and Human Security of the United Nations University. Following the Indian Ocean tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, the issue of environmental migration came to the forefront. Under his leadership, the institute quickly became a key player in scientific discourse on this topic.

Between 2009 and 2012, he led the revival of the international project office of the Global Water System Project, which focused on examining global water management interrelations and disseminating the findings.

The fourth chapter deals with his ongoing *restless retirement years* (2012–). During this time, he chaired a UNEP committee tasked with drafting a guideline for a future international directive on the sustainability of aquatic ecosystems. He also organized a conference in support of incorporating a dedicated water goal into the Sustainable Development Goals adopted at the 2015 UN General Assembly.

In 2021, he served as editor-in-chief of the *Handbook of Water Resources Management: Discourses, Concepts and Examples*, a volume with over 100 contributors,

providing a comprehensive overview of ongoing professional debates, facts, theories, and methods to support decision-making processes.

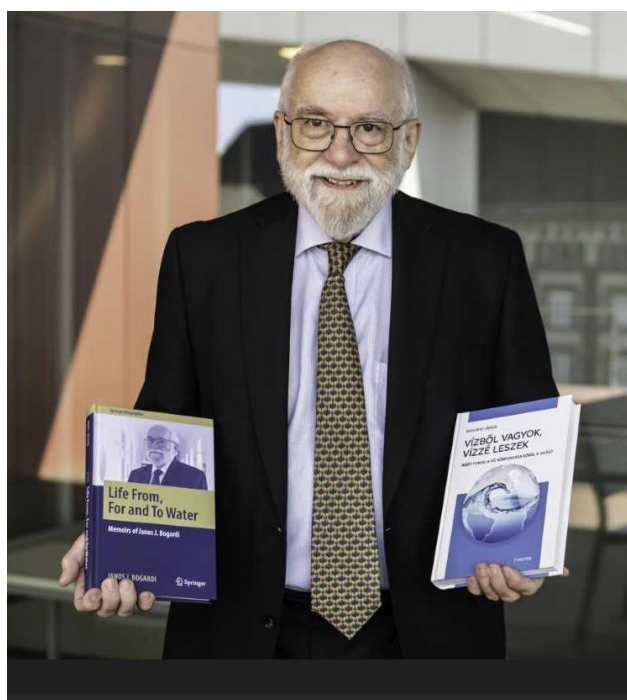
Based on personal experience, he reflects on the failure of flood protection in the Ahr River valley in the summer of 2021, which resulted in over 100 deaths in one of the world's most developed regions.

In the Epilogue, titled *Four People, Four Dimensions*, he reflects on the four individuals who most shaped his career. Among all his achievements, Professor Bogárdi is most proud of his students, in whom he places his hope for the continuation of scientific progress.

Today, Professor János Bogárdi contributes his knowledge and experience to the Institute of Advanced Studies in Kőszeg (Hungary). Since 2023, Professor János Bogárdi has been a research professor at the Faculty of Water Sciences at the Ludovika University of Public Service. His autobiographical volume is not only insightful but also highly engaging.

Dr. József Gayer

Member of the Editorial Board of *Hungarian Journal of Hydrology*



At the presentation of Professor Bogárdi's oeuvre volume on June 24, 2025, at the Ludovika University of Public Service