

PLANT KINGDOM AND TRADITIONAL HUMAN LIFE IN THE CALATA AREA (KALOTASZEG)

(Summary)

This book, accomplished by close collaboration between a biologist (Sz. A.), and a philologist (P. J.), comprises the results of the research carried out by the authors between 1972—1982. The main goal of this research was that of registering traditional interactions between plant and man on different levels: genetic, taxonomic, community and ecosystem (including society, language and culture).

The data were collected from a sample territory situated on the north-eastern border of the Apuseni Mountains (Carpathian Mountains, Transylvania), once covered by forests, now inhabited by an agrarian population still preserving its traditional culture transmitted by means of Romanian and Hungarian. In the field work, we have used botanical, ethnographical and linguistic methods. The ethnobotanical thesaurus of the territory have been explored by „itinerary” and „stationary” research, on the 53 settlements, and refers to more than 2 300 phytotaxa and 250 ceuotaxa.

Results and conclusions based on this set of raw data are presented, in the book, in 6 main chapters.

The introductory chapter presents the historical background and the new trends in the research on plant-and-man relations. The goals and methods followed in this work, and the statistical characterisation of the plant and human populations are presented here too. This is followed by a short survey of the geographic environment.

Vegetation is presented in the third chapter according to the principles of the Zürich-Montpellier school of geobotany: zonal and azonal forests, ecotones, grasslands, water-plant communities, antropogenous vegetation — with special attention to human influences on a given plant community, or on the possible influence of a given vegetation on the traditional human life. The vegetational changes in historical times were studied by a method designed here as „ethnogeobotanical”.

In the chapter „*Plant kingdom and folk culture*” some possible approaches were exemplified regarding (food)gathering, cultural ecology of some very ancient crops (*Trilicum monococcum*, *Vicia faba*) or of new cultivated plants of American origin (*Phaseolus*, *Cucurbita*, *Solanum*). The ornamental plants, the plants used in ethnomedicine, in local industry, or mostly as toys by children are also reviewed in separate subchapters. Another chapter reviews the ethnobotanical nomenclature — the origin, morphology and semantics of plant names.

The *Theasurus* of floristic, chorologic, linguistic and ethnographic data, presented in alphabetical order of the scientific plant names is followed by the ethnobotanical dictionary, and a list of abbreviations and references.

Traditional botanical knowledge — as the most ancient, biological heritage in the evolution of our relations with the environment — may still have a contribution to our ecological future