



THE FIRST INTERDISCIPLINARY SYMPOSIUM BIOGEOGRAPHY OF THE CARPATHIANS: EVOLUTION OF BIODIVERSITY IN A SPATIOTEMPORAL CONTEXT 2013 SEPTEMBER 26–28, CRACOW (POLAND)

CONFERENCE REPORT

When we heard about the Biogeography of the Carpathians, my best friend and I, we got excited. The excitement was justified: we had been working in various parts of the Carpathians on and off for more than ten years and we were curious what other people, dealing with other taxa, had to say. Before, we had only read about whatever non-snaily things we needed to know: some geology and some plant communities, but never participated in a purely Carpathian symposium. So we went and even had a presentation.

The Symposium was organised and financially supported by the following institutions/organisations: W. Szafer Institute of Botany, Polish Academy of Sciences, Cracow; Institute of Botany, Jagiellonian University, Cracow; Committee of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences; Foundation for Polish Botany and the Polish-Swiss Research Programme. Although it was mainly botanical (the topical structure reflected the organising institutions; see below), it was worth going to.

The number of participants was about 100, from 13 countries, most coming from Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The Abstract Book (Fig. 1) contained abstracts of 29 oral presentations and 73 posters (the posters were actually fewer). The structure of authorship (in %) was: Poland 34.4, the Czech Republic 16.5, Slovakia 12.8, Hungary 11.1, Romania 9.7, Ukraine 5.1, Switzerland 3.1, Germany 2.6, Austria 1.7, UK and USA 0.9 each, Russia 0.6, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Serbia 0.3 each. As you can see, it was not exactly in accordance with the area of the Carpathians within each country or with the distance from the Carpathians; obviously other non-Carpathian people were interested too, and especially the “owners” of the Alps (Austria, Germany, Switzerland). Anyway, it was very good to see so much international co-operation – many papers were international (which must have mainly biogeographical reasons).

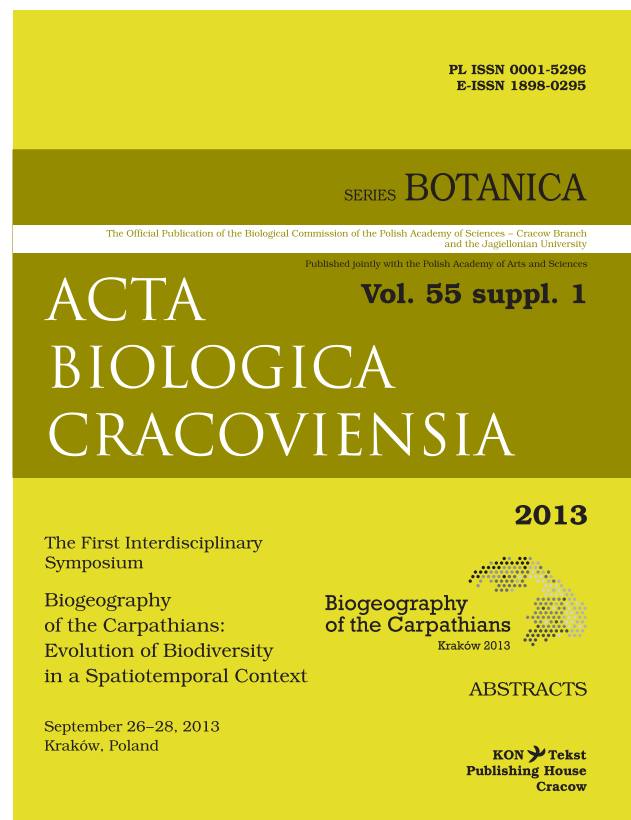


Fig. 1. Book of Abstracts

The four keynote lectures were about the genetic variation in Carpathian forest trees, Carpathian vegetation history and phylogeography within the last glacial cycle, Faunal history of Southeastern Central Europe and Climate change and range shifts of Carpathian plants. All of them were good but we, obviously, liked the faunal one best. It was by ZOLTÁN VARGA and provided some interesting insights into

the past of the Carpathian faunas. The presentations and posters dealt mainly with trees, shrubs and herbs; many were based on pollen analysis. Fairly many were about lichens and fungi. The main topics in terms of the number of papers were biogeography, ecology (including conservation), genetics and fossil record. Zoological presentations were few: two about birds, two about flies, two about beetles, one (ours) about snails, and one about newts. Besides, snails featured in three papers about plant succession. The Symposium, though short, included a banquet and a trip to the Tatra Mts.

On the whole the Symposium was good, but there are a few things to criticise. The Symposium was not well advertised. We know quite a number of people

who learned about it by accident and too late to participate. Also, why publish the abstracts in a journal (*Acta Biologica Cracoviensia*) which must be costly, while we don't score any points for abstracts and they don't count as publications? The same criticism pertains to the Symposium venue – a posh conference centre, while it could have been organised at the University, for example.

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