

CONTINENTAL AND PANNONIAN LOESS FLORA AND VEGETATION ON THE SOUTHERN BORDER OF ITS DISTRIBUTION

Dragica Purger¹ and János Csiky²

1 - Department of Animal Ecology, Institute of Biology, Faculty of Sciences, University of Pecs.

E-mail: dragica@ttk.pte.hu

2 - Department of Phytotaxonomy and Geobotany, Institute of Biology, Faculty of Sciences, University of Pecs.

E-mail: moon@ttk.pte.hu

Areas covered by loess are parts of the forest steppe zone distributed in the Great Hungarian Plain. A botanical survey was carried out on the southern (southwestern), marginal part of loess ridges, on Baranya Hills (S Hungary) and on BANSKO HILL in Baranya (NE Croatia).

The last natural climax community of the forest steppe zone on loess substratum was *Aceri tatarici - Quercetum roboris* Zólyomi 1957. Some places were covered by species-rich loess steppe grasslands such as *Salvia nemorosae - Festucetum rupicolae* Zólyomi ex Soó 1964.

The majority of these lands had been converted to agricultural fields, and only small fragments of original loess vegetation have remained unploughed.

On the basis of recent survey loess vegetation of BANSKO HILL can be “reconstructed”. This now consists of very few fragments of differently degraded semi-natural stands of forest-steppe and steppe grasslands.

Extremely steep loess cliff surfaces are covered by natural vegetation patches of open, pioneer grasslands (*Agropyron cristati - Kochietum prostratae* Zólyomi 1958).

A comparison was made between loess flora of the Hungarian and Croatian part of Baranya. We will also present new data collected during 2007, about populations of some plants which are rare or poorly documented in the continental part of Croatia, e.g.: *Acer tataricum*, *Agropyron pectinatum*, *Astragalus cicer*, *Astragalus onobrychis*, *Campanula bononiensis*, *Chamaecytisus supinus*, *Euonymus verrucosus*, *Festuca valesiaca*, *Nonea pulla*, *Salvia nemorosa*, *Thymus glabrescens*.

(This work is supported by INTERREG III A, SLO-HU-CRO 2006/01/167/HU).