



BIOGRAPHY OF THE HUNGARIAN LICHENOLOGIST KLÁRA VERSEGHY AND HER SCIENTIFIC HERITAGE

Verseghy Klára élete és lichenológiai munkássága

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Dr Klára Verseghy (1930–2020) devoted her life to the Hungarian lichenology. She was the curator of the Lichen Collection in the Hungarian Natural History Museum, Budapest between 1953 and 1985 after she had graduated at the Eötvös Loránd University. She defended her thesis „Az európai *Ochrolechia* fajok monográfiája. [Monographie der europäischen *Ochrolechia*-Arten]” in 1958 supervised by the famous Hungarian lichenologist Ödön Szatala. In 1964 she clarified the typification status of more than a thousand specimens deposited in the Lichen Collection (BP). Altogether 46 taxa (*Caloplaca*, *Ochrolechia*) were described and 69 taxa were recombined by her during her entire publication period. At the beginning of her career she was very active in writing popular papers and having also lectures on lichens for a wider public. Later she concentrated on her scientific work with increasing international relevance, mostly in German language. She participated in several floristical explorations in Hungary (e.g. Bakony Mts, Hortobágy, Kiskunság, Praenoricum, Vendvidék, Villány Mts, Zemplén Mts) and she prepared several taxonomic studies (*Caloplaca*, *Gasparrinia*, *Ochrolechia*, *Squamaria*, *Squamarina* spp.). Within the framework of IBP (International Biological Programme) many questions have been answered about the terricolous lichen communities abundant in semi-arid sandy grasslands in Csevharaszt due to her cooperation with Edit Láng, which led to her dissertation on „Zuzmóprodukción, produktivitás és annak feltételei száraz homoki gyepekben [Lichen-production, -productivity and its conditions in xerophytic grasslands on sandy soil]” for the degree „candidate of biological sciences” in 1980. Then she worked on air pollution bioindication in Budapest (lichen mapping and heavy metal accumulation) together with her students and followers Edit Farkas and László Lőkös. For decades Klára Verseghy represented Hungarian lichenology worldwide travelling to study trips and international scientific conferences (e.g., 1975 – Russia, IBC XII; 1987 – Germany, W-Berlin, IBC XIV). She moved to Keszthely with her husband Dr Árpád Patay (agricultural engineer) after they had retired. Finally, she published „Magyarország zuzmóflórájának kézikönyve. [The handbook of the Hungarian lichen flora]” in 1994. Her publications (106, including 21 in popular subject) and the genus *Verseghya* and two species, *Verseghya klarae* and *Verseghya thysanophora* named after her preserve her memories. Supported by the Hungarian National Research Development and Innovation Fund NKFI K 124341.