

Sempervivum tectorum L. in the Hungarian ethnomedicine

GRYNAEUS Tamás

St. John Hospital, Dept. of Neuropsychiatry, Budapest, Hungary

The ethnomedicine field works of the 19th and 20th centuries proved this name all over the whole hungarian language-area (Fig.2). The similar plant name and use have been known at the separated, very archaic southern and eastern hungarian enclaves (Szerémség, Moldva, Bukovina), proving that this name originated much earlier than the first written documents*.

The name and use of this plant is unknown in the german language-area (Austria, Germany) and —with two exceptions— in the german minorities of Hungary. Similarly among the 6 traditional slovakian names only one (hlucha ruza — 'deaf rose') indicates this traditional-otological use and among the 18 south-slave traditional names (SIMONOVIC) only 2 (uhelnyilk, uhovnik ; uho = ear) refer to an analogous use. In contrast to these in the roumanian ethnomedicine a lot of names reveal this ethnomedicinal use (urehita, iarba de urechi, etc ; ureche = ear) confirmed by the ethnographical descriptions too. The plant Fig. 1 is grown at roofs and on the top of the fences.

The traditional uses of the plant are:

- The expressed sap of a leaf is instilled drop by drop into the aching ear; the sap is sometimes warmed and mixed with some oil; the crude leaf —fixed by a thread— is put directly in the external acoustic meatus.
- The crushed crude leaf in put on wounds.
- Children enjoy the crude leaves as a dessert (it has a sour flavor).

The active compounds have a significant antiphlogistic effect in experimental croton oil otitis (SÁTORY *et coll.* ,1988). The clinical evaluation of the plant is in progress at the otorino-laryngological department of St. John Hospital, Budapest (Hungary) directed by A. Götze MD, CSc, and their preliminary results are encouraging.

The traditional names of some medicinal herbs are in connection with its ethnomedicinal use *e.g.* in the case of *Sempervivum tectorum* L.

Table 1

Traditional Hungarian names of the plant

fülfü	ear-herb
fülvirag	ear-flower
fülfájó fü	ear-ache herb
fülbecsavaro	squeezing in the ear
fülbecseppentő	dropping in the ear
fülbeeresztő	stilling/letting in the ear
körzsa	stone rose

This traditional name was used —according to the written sources— from the 16th century till the first hungarian, scientific botanical work of Dioszegi-Fazekas (1807), and up today.

Figure 1

Sempervivum tectorum L.



Figure 2

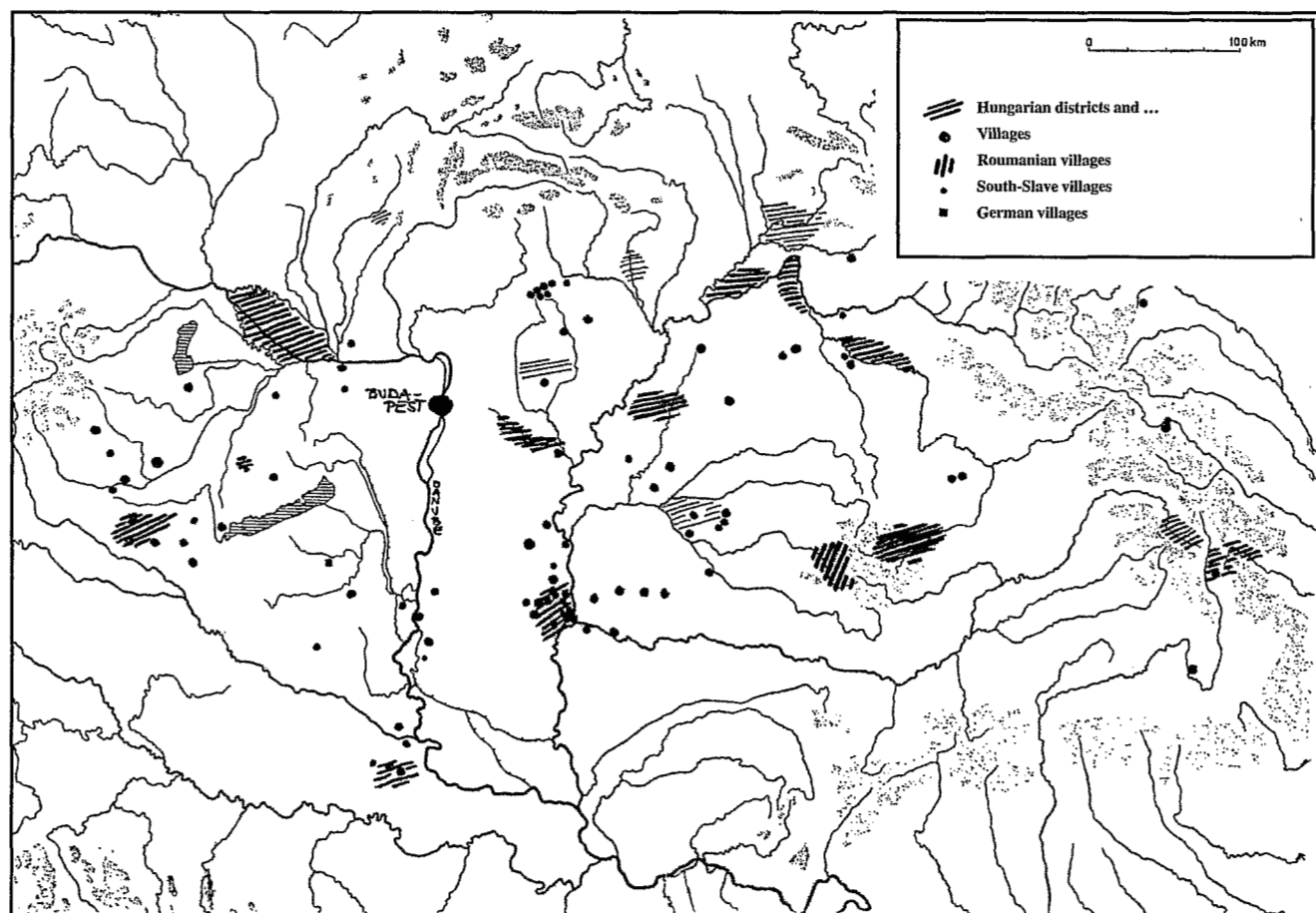
Knowledge and use of *Sempervivum tectorum* as ear herb in the Hungarian language area

Table 2

The plant mentioned in written sources

1555	In a letter of Casparus Fraxinus
1578	Peter Melius: Herbarium
1583	C. Clusius: Stirpium nomenclator pannonicus
1590	Blasius Szikszai-Fabricius: Dictionarium
1690	Franciscus Pariz-Papai: Pax corporis
1718	Anne Zay: Herbarium (manuscript)

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