

Lichen diversity of Armenia

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The lichen mycota of Armenia has been poorly studied to date, especially when compared to the mycota of the other Caucasian countries Georgia and Azerbaijan. Only very few studies have been undertaken by Armenians like V. Nikogosyan in the Sixties and A. Abrahamyan in the Eighties but Sh. Barchalow from Azerbaijan has mentioned 195 species from Armenia in a series of papers dedicated to the Caucasus region in the Sixties of last century. The Czech lichenologist A. Vězda has visited the country and distributed some species in his famous exsiccate. The Czech naturalist V. Vašák and the Viennese botanist E. Vitek have collected specimens and deposited in the lichen herbaria GZU (Graz) and W (Vienna). In order to obtain more representative data about the lichen biodiversity a large range of habitats from low to high elevations and from dry to humid sites have been sampled. More than 900 specimens have been collected in 2005 and 2006 containing 246 taxa, of which 114 have been new for Armenia (Harutyunyan & Mayrhofer 2009). In addition a phylogenetic study of black fungi inhabiting lichens from seasonally arid habitats in Armenia has been carried out (Harutyunyan et al. 2009). Based on a comprehensive evaluation of the literature (more than 50 publications), herbarium and field studies, Armenia has an actually known diversity of c. 400 species. Crustose saxicolous taxa dominate, which is in accordance with the dry climate and mountainous nature of the country.

A catalogue is in preparation which includes information regarding references, localities placed under provinces, ecology and herbarium specimens as a solid basis for further inventories or taxonomic projects in this country.

Harutyunyan, S. & Mayrhofer, H. 2009. A contribution to the lichen mycota of Armenia. – *Bibliotheca Lichenologica* 100: 137–156.

Harutyunyan, S., Muggia, L. & Grube, M. 2009. Black fungi in lichens from seasonally arid habitats. – *Studies in Mycology* 61: 83–90.