

LAUDATIO & BOOK REVIEW

ZSIGMOND GYŐZŐ, *Gombák. A magyar néphagyományban: etnomikológiai Tenulkmányok [Mushrooms in Hungarian folk tradition]*, 2020, Tortoma Publishing House, Baraolt, 366 p, ISBN 978-606-9716-00-7.



Professor Győző ZSIGMOND was born in Turda (Cluj county) on April 20th 1959. After he graduated “Mihai Viteazul” Highschool from Turda, he attended the Hungarian Language and Literature and French Language and Literature sections of the Faculty of Philology, “Babeş-Bolyai” University of Cluj-Napoca. In 1997 he defended his PhD thesis in the field of popular mythology at Babeş-Bolyai” University of Cluj-Napoca.

Since 1992 he is a member of the Hungarology department of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures from the University of Bucharest, first as a lecturer (1992-1999), associated professor (1999-2004) and full professor (2004-present). In 2007 he was granted the position of PhD

supervisor in the field of Philology.

His research domains are related to ethnography and folklore, ethnology, oral history, popular games and toys, popular customs and traditions (especially those regarding the manufacturing of artisanal objects from the tinder fungus (*Fomes fomentarius*), specific to Corund village, Harghita county), popular religion reflected in proverbs and sayings. Also he published studies of ethnoastronomy, referring to traditional knowledge and beliefs of the Hungarian people from Romania, studies included in his PhD research.

The ethnomycology investigations target the Carpathian basin, comprising folklore aspects from all Hungarian ethnographic regions, renewing and reforming the classic ethnomycology with numerous contributions from modern ethnomycology.

In his studies regarding the traditional naming, he focuses on specific toponyms and ethnotexts from three villages from Transylvania: Poiana-Turda and Mihai Viteazul from Cluj county and Dalnic From Covasna county.

He published over 100 studies and articles in national and international journals, in Hungarian, Romanian, French, German and English languages, and 10 books, at renowned publishing houses. Moreover he participated at many conferences, congresses, scientific colloquia, from Romania and abroad: France, Germany, Finland, Israel and Hungary. Between 2003 and 2013 he was chief of the Hungarology Department and between 2013 and 2014 he was director of institute.

In 1996 he wins a scholarship financed by the French Government, to research ethnology at universities and institutes from Aix-en-Provence and Paris. Between 1998 and 2003 he was granted an annual scholarship – *Domus Hungarica Scientiarum et Artium* offered by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and in 2008, 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2017 he benefited from various monthly scholarships in the field of ethnomycology. He also researched ethnomycological aspects from the Carpathian-Danube basin, within a post-doctoral “Bolyai” grant, financed by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

As recognition of his scientific contributions, the *Hungarian Linguistic Society* (*Magyar Nyelvtudományi Társaság*) awarded him, in 1997, with the *Csűry Bálint* award and in 1998 he became corresponding member of the *Hungarian Ethnography Society* from Budapest.

In 2002, as guest professor, he taught at the University of Szeged (Hungary) the *Nature in popular culture / Ethnomycology and ethnoastronomy* course.

He is an active member of several scientific societies and organizations such as: *Researchers Corporation of the Hungarian Academy* (since December 2000), *Association Roumaine des Chercheurs Francophones en Sciences Humaines* (ARCHES), *Magyar Néprajzi Társaság* (*Hungarian Ethnography Society*, headquartered in Budapest, since 1997), *Romanian Association of French-Speaking Researchers in Humanistic Sciences* (headquartered in Bucharest, since 1997), *Kriza JÁNOS Ethnographical Society* (headquartered in Cluj-Napoca, since 1991), *Erdélyi Múzeum-Egyesület* (*Transylvanian Museum Society*), *Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore*, president of *Kálmán LÁSZLÓ Mycological Society*, headquartered in Sfântu Gheorghe, Covasna county, since 1999. He is a founding member (1999), president (1991-1993 and 1995-1997), member of the managing committee (1998-2001) and member of the *Association for the preservation of Hungarian language in Transylvania*. In 2018 he organized at Bálványos Baths (Covasna county) the 36th edition of the *Journées Européennes du Cortinaire* Congress.

He was editor-in-chief of the *Hétpróba* journal (1990) and the *TIK-TAK* paper (1990-1991). Currently, together with Professor Ferenc Pál-Fám, is editor-in-chief of the *Moeszia* journal, which includes valuable researches in the field of mycology and also popularization articles regarding the activity of the *Kálmán LÁSZLÓ Mycological Society*.

His most recent publication, presented as a monography is *Gombák. a magyar néphagyományban: etnomikológiai Tenyelmányok* [*Mushrooms in Hungarian folk tradition*], published in 2020 at Tortoma Publishing House, Baraolt.

Within this volume, the author, with an experience of over 25 years, gathered precious information regarding ethnomycology, especially Hungarian ethnomycology, focusing on aspects such as: the popular names of mushrooms, the use of mushrooms in popular medicine, mushrooms and mythology, mushrooms as food resource.

Using thorough and complex questionnaires, talking to local people and consulting various literature sources, he managed to create a very real profile of the *Mushrooms*, exactly as they appear in folklore and everyday life.

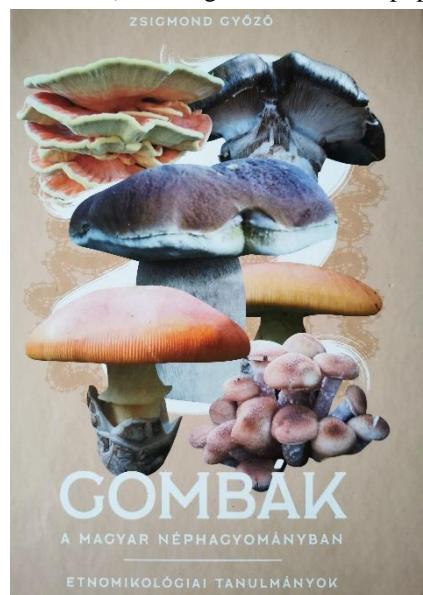
This volume is organized as a collection of 30 studies that present valuable data on many mushroom species, used over the years by the local Hungarian populations.

These studies are preceded by a brief *History of Hungarian Ethnomycology*, which sums up the most important figures that researched this field, with their valued contributions and published works.

The first study focuses on one species of Polypore, not yet identified (probably an *Albatrellus* species), only known by the Székely population, as an excellent edible mushroom.

The second study refers to the various uses of two widely known Polypores: the tinder fungus (*Fomes fomentarius*) and the birch polypore (*Piptoporus betulinus*). The tinder obtained from these fungi, processed in a very specific way, has multiple uses, starting from fire material, raw material for decorations, hats and slippers, bags and wallets, keychains and toys, these arts and crafts being an exclusive and unique local brand.

The following studies, present the importance of several fungal species in the regional folklore (including their various popular names, depending on the region), their ethnopharmaceutical values, the history of mushroom gathering, the extensive use in the local cuisine, tales and myths, their connection with religious and profane beliefs, aspects regarding their ecology, their role as income source for the local populations: the chanterelle (*Cantharellus cibarius*), the peppery milkcap fungi (*Lactarius piperatus* and *Lactarius pergamenus*), the saffron milkcap (*Lactarius deliciosus*), the orange milkcap (*Lactarius deterrimus*), the wooly milkcap (*Lactarius torminosus*), the morels (*Morchella* sp.), the wrinkled caps (*Verpa* sp.), the penny bun (*Boletus edulis*), the summer cep (*Boletus reticulatus*), the slippery Jacks (*Suillus* sp.), the oyster mushroom (*Polyporus ostreatus*), the parasols (*Macrolepiota* sp.), the truffles (*Tuber* sp., *Elaphomyces* sp., *Choiromyces* sp.), the bird's nest fungus (*Cyathus olla*), the coral fungi (*Ramaria* sp.), the wood-ear (*Auricularia auricula-judae*), the funnel mushrooms (*Clitocybe* sp. and *Lepista* sp.), the chicken of the woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus*), the lacquered bracket fungus (*Ganoderma lucidum*), the velvet shank mushroom (*Flammulina velutipes*), the grey knight (*Tricholoma terreum*), the white domecap (*Lyophyllum connatum*), the St. John's mushroom (*Calocybe gambosa*), the dryad's saddle (*Polyporus squamosus*), the shield pinkgill mushroom (*Entoloma clypeatum*), the honey fungus (*Armillaria mellea*), the fairy ring mushroom (*Marasmius oreades*), puffballs (*Lycoperdon* sp.), several species belonging to Agaricaeae, Amanitaceae, and Russulaceae families, and many other fungal species.



Many of the presented species and the related by products, are illustrated in good quality pictures, which gives the reader a significant insight of mushrooms ecology and uses, local habits and activities.

The very well documented studies are followed by the questionnaire given to locals, the list of mushrooms that appear in the book, the index of Hungarian popular names for the mushrooms from the Carpathian basin (with 1165 names), the list of references, with over 600 titles, the list of people who provided valuable information and abstracts (in English language) for every study published within this volume.

The book represents an important tool in discovering and understanding Hungarian ethnomycology and not only, an impressive collection of valuable information that helps everybody who is interested, to explore the wide and exciting world of fungi, in very close contact to local history and language, occupations and practices, customs and traditions, beliefs and ways.

Cătălin TĂNASE
“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi, Faculty of Biology
Cristiana Virginia PETRE
“Anastasie Fătu” Botanical Garden, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași