

Traces of Botanical Knowledge in Ancient and Medieval Armenian – A Linguistic and Pharmacognostic Perspective

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Armenian knowledge on herbs and drugs is known to have a great tradition. Although, we do not know a lot about the origins of Armenian plant names. The etymology of Armenian plant names shows a new perspective on cultural and botanical knowledge of the Armenian speaking population. As we know from Indo-European studies, the evaluation of semantic fields allows us to reconstruct an Indo-European flora. Similarly, it is possible to evaluate the Armenian lexicon. The Armenian botanical vocabulary shows interesting details on plant use, plant origin, cultural and mythological context, medical use and precultural heritage. In contrast to Greek, Persian and Arabic influences Hittite, Urartian, Sumerian and Assyrian traces are waiting to be identified in the Armenian lexicon. Also, geo- and archaeobotanical data need to be included in this research. This interdisciplinary analysis of the botanical lexicon and its etymology should help further research of Armenian botanical and medical manuscripts.