

Forest Areas.

In the cultural landscapes the native plant growth has been preserved by the forests. In the continental climate zone the forest cover represents the unarable lands. In the major part of our territory the original vegetation consisted of closed forests. On the eastern borders of the Italian Peninsula and in the narrow strip of land of the Dinaric coast the forests are replaced by scrubs and drought-resisting shrubs. The natural steppe regions occupied a comparatively small area before man has begun his creative work. Grass lands extend from the east to the west along the Black Sea on the southern borders of the Russian table-land, and they stretch across the Roumanian Plain into Central Europe. In the middle portion of the Great Hungarian Plain the last island of this vegetation zone is to be found. The area of the natural steppe regions had been extended by artificial fields - area of grainfields and other useful graminaceous plants - at the expense of the forests.

The forest areas like homogeneous spots appear only in the map, in reality there are various types of forests to be found. In Central Europe two larger zones may be distinguished: that of the deciduous and the coniferous forest belt. The former one is to be found in the plains and basins, on the gentle slopes and the less elevated mountains, especially in the middle and western portions of this territory. The northern and northeastern sections contain coniferous forests with a great number of species. Conifers predominate everywhere in the higher elevated mountains: thus in the Alps, in the highlands surrounding the Bohemian Basin, and in the Carpathians. The trees of the deciduous forest belt are also affected by relief and climatic conditions. Where the higher elevations resulted in decreased temperature and increased rainfall, beech is the dominant tree. In the lower elevations where the climate is warmer and dryer, oaks predominate.

In the cultural landscapes the modifying work of man is mostly evidenced by clearing the forested land. Man has cleared the forests everywhere in Europe where soil or relief rendered conditions suitable for agriculture. Consequently especially the beech and oak forests have been thinned. Less

thinned are the conifers. The forests, however, are not only cleared by the farmers, they are also cleared by shepherds for grazing purposes, as well as by the miners, shipbuilders and roadmakers for producing fuel and raw material. In consequence of these various kinds of clearing, closed forests are only to be found in the absolute forest areas. In the cultural landscapes the forests remained only in smaller spots. In order to secure fuel and raw material supply, forests are even artificially planted and carefully cultivated. The parks and forests planted around the cities and in the villa quarters for purely recreation purposes, are also significant.

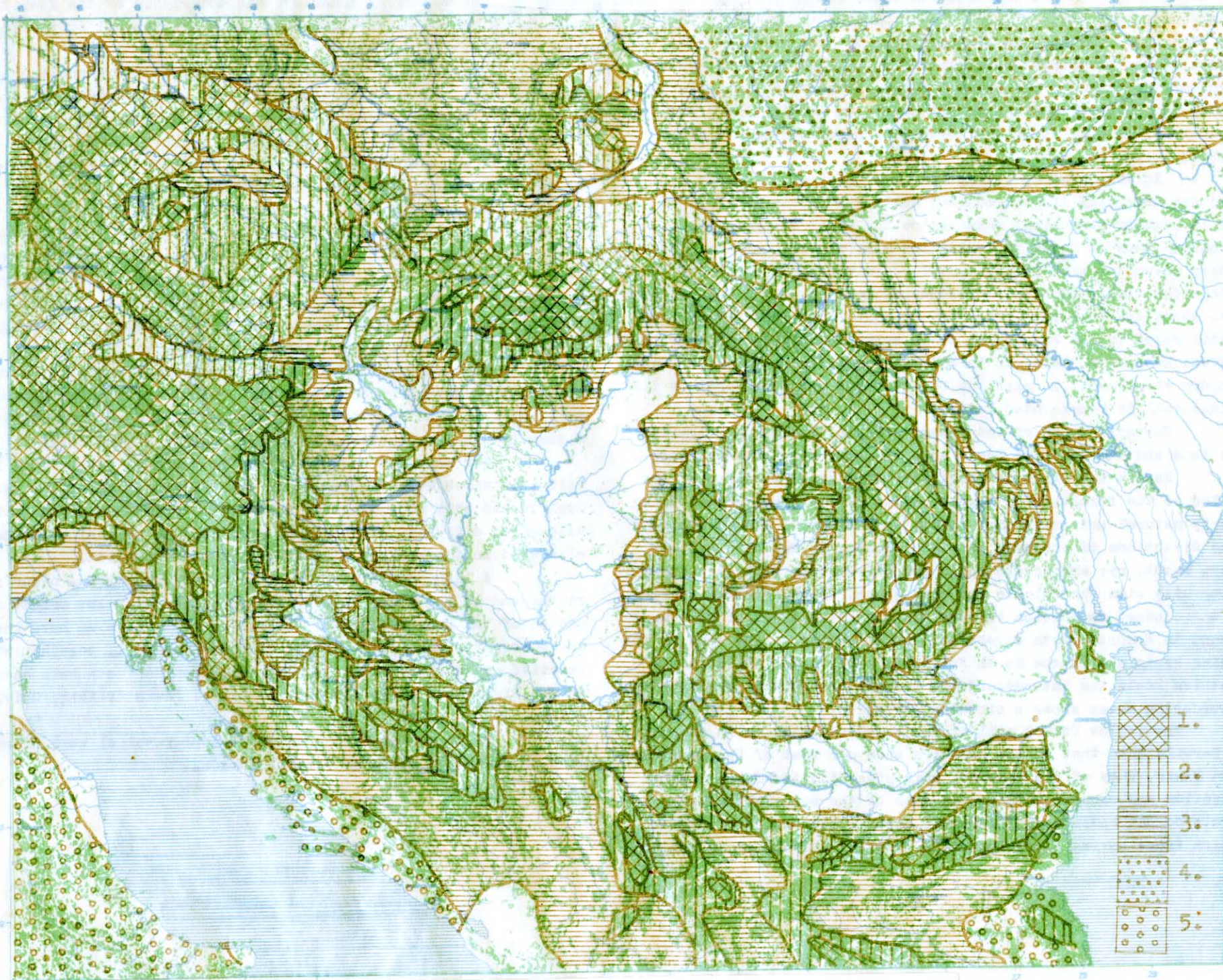
The forest-cover which is to be found in Central Europe today, represents those places where man was unable or did not want to master the forests. These areas remained unpopulated and are avoided by the routes, consequently they became natural barriers and boundaries quite independent of the relief features. In the German lowlands the forests which remained after the period of clearings, have formed boundary lines for a long time among provinces and countries; here and at some other places too, the political and administrative boundaries are often based on the forest areas.

The forests play an important part in regulating the draining-work of precipitation. Careless clearing of the forests leads to the destruction of productive soil. The clearings quicken the levelling and accumulating work of the rainfall and rivers. The courses of rivers, the amount, as well as the regular time of their tidal waves change too. In order to avoid these harmful influences on the precipitous slopes and the areas greatly abundant in rainfall the forests are spared and even replanted. These tasks make the people of the headwater areas of the rivers and those of the plains and basins of their middle and lower sections to be dependent on each other; they form a link between those whose work of clearing or of cultivation of the forests influences the courses of rivers, and those who bear the disasters /floods/ or benefits of this work.

Our map has been made on the basis of military maps, scale 1:200.000.

SPECIMENS OF THE FOREST FLORA

ERDŐTERÜLETEI FOREST AREAS PANNONIAI.



1. Conifers
2. Beech
3. Oaks
4. Boreal-forest (pine and birch)
5. Mediterranean scrubs

terráni bozót.