

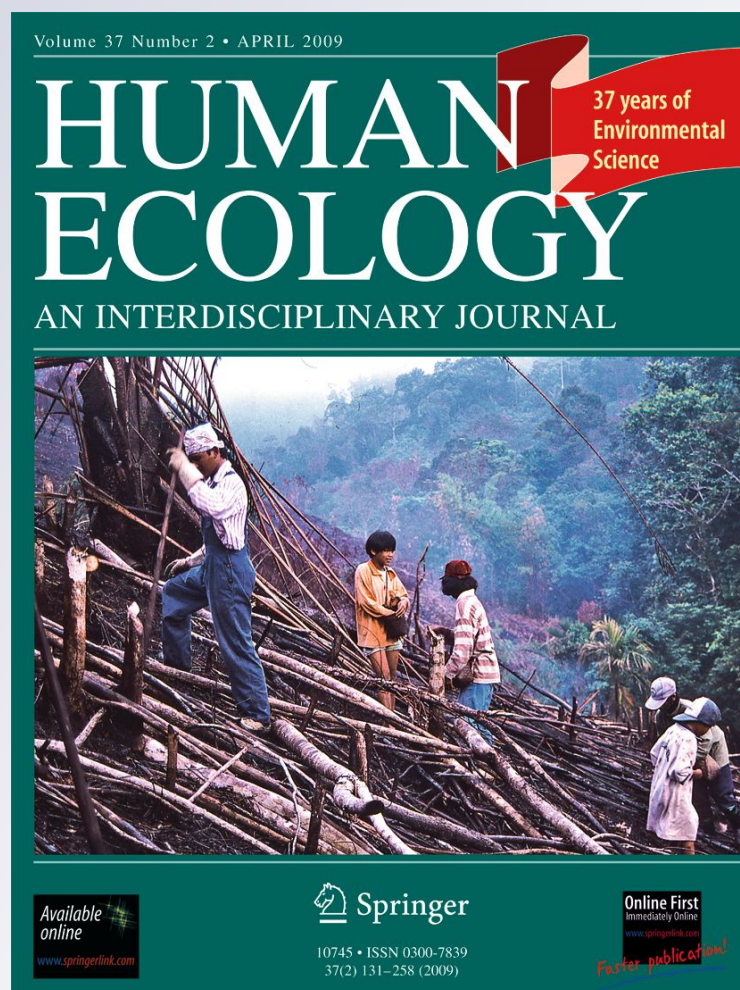
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“We Are Italians!”: The Hybrid Ethnobotany of a Venetian Diaspora in Eastern Romania

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Non gh'è erba che varda in su che non la gabia la sua virtù

(There is no herb, which looks up, that does not have its own virtues - Venetian proverb)

Introduction

The ethnobotanical knowledge of migrant communities has been the focus of a number of studies in recent years aimed at understanding how Traditional Knowledge (TK) about plants changes over time. Changes in TK often occur in response to various sociocultural and/or environmental factors, which affect the continuum between *adaptation* (i.e.,

changing, substituting, or eliminating home plant uses according to the new host environment/culture), and *isolation* (i.e., retaining plant uses according to a presumed “original” plant TK) (Pieroni and Quave 2005; Pieroni *et al.* 2005, 2011; Pieroni and Vandebroek 2007; Maxia *et al.* 2008; Ceuterick *et al.* 2008 and 2011; Zamudio *et al.* 2010; de Medeiros *et al.* 2012).

While a few scholars (especially in Central and Northern Europe) are researching archives where unpublished ethnographic records of plant uses can still be found (Łuczaj 2010a, b; Sõukand and Kalle 2011, 2012), others are using historical sources concerning plant uses (Svanberg *et al.* 2011, and references therein) and meta-analysis of (heterogeneous) ethnobotanical field studies (Leonti *et al.* 2010; Weckerle *et al.* 2011). Nevertheless, original field studies are still urgently needed to document ethnobotanical TK central to preservation of local biocultural heritage, as well as offering important insights into small-scale business activities involving locally neglected plants (e.g., herbal medicines, handicrafts, local food products, and ecotourism). This may be especially important for the TK of ethnic/cultural minorities, which are often not only threatened by global processes such as urbanisation and the disappearance of traditional rural lifestyles, but also by cultural marginalisation.

In this study, we focused on a very small group of descendents of migrants who left Friuli and Northern Veneto in north-eastern Italy at the end of the nineteenth century to work as stonecutters around Măcin Mountain in Dobruja, eastern Romania. Our aim was to record the ethnobotanical knowledge of this diaspora and to compare the data with the previously published ethnobotanical literature available for Romanians and Venetians/Friulans in their home regions in order to learn how practices and beliefs related to plants may have changed.

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Environmental, Ethnographic, and Historical Background

Field research was conducted in July and August 2011 in Greci, a village of approximately 5,500 inhabitants located at the base of Măcin Mountain (467 m a.s.l.) in Dobruja, eastern Romania (Fig. 1). The Dobruja is a windy area of low hills shared by Bulgaria and Romania located between the lower Danube River and the Black Sea at the eastern end of the Pontic-Caspian biogeographical region, which extends from eastern Romania across southern Moldova, Ukraine, Russia and North-Western Kazakhstan to the Ural Mountains. It comprises the European part of the steppes that stretch in a continuous band as far as the Altai Mountains on the borders of Mongolia. The climate is semiarid, with dry and hot summers and cold winters. Conquered by the Turks in 1411, the Dobruja remained part of the Ottoman Empire for five centuries and is still home to a remnant rural population of Crimean Turks. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the area became a battleground during the Russo-Turkish wars. In 1878, the Treaty of Berlin assigned the northern Dobruja to Romania. Today the main economic activity is agriculture and the landscape is dominated by grassland mainly cultivated with sunflowers and maize.

For more than a century, together with the village of Cataloi in the Danube Delta area, whose Italian inhabitants returned to Italy in 1939–1940 (Gaspari 1988), Greci has been considered the main centre of Italian culture in Romania. In 1885, Italians from the hilly/mountainous areas of Central Friuli and around Belluno, Northern Veneto, north-eastern Italy, arrived in the region as seasonal workers. The Italian north-east was at that time extremely poor, and men

sought employment in (at that time) wealthier Eastern European territories. These first immigrants were joined after few years by their families and later by more Italian families from Sicily, Latium, and Lombardy. The men worked as granite stonemasons, while the women made *scarpete*, traditional Friulan home-made slippers. Only a few families were engaged in small-scale agricultural activities.

In the first decades of the twentieth century Greci was multi-ethnic (as was the whole Dobruja), with a majority of Romanians, and minorities of Italians and Turks. After the Second World War at the beginning of the Communist regime in Romania, Italians were given the choice of returning to Italy or remaining but with the loss of both their Italian citizenship and the possibility of education in the Italian language at the local school. Those who decided to remain were slowly assimilated into the dominant Romanian culture, a process reinforced through intermarriage.

The local economy today relies partially upon small-scale agriculture although a number of villagers have low paid jobs in the nearby centre of Măcin. In the last decade a significant proportion of the working population has migrated for wage labour to Western Europe (especially Italy).

In the 2002 Romanian census (Raluca Torre 2007), a few dozen inhabitants declared themselves to be ethnically Italian. Today, however, only a few consider themselves “Taliani” and attend Sunday mass at the Italian Catholic Church for a weekly social gathering. A few Romanians (mainly women) who married Italians also belong to this network. Only a dozen elderly women remain of the generation of Taliani born in the 1930s who still maintain their Italian-based customs and language, a variety of Venetian. The Furlan/Friulan language was apparently only occasionally spoken until the first half of the twentieth century. Because of the ties these speakers have

Fig. 1 Location of the Dobruja and Greci in Romania



to relatives currently living in Italy, they are also able to understand standard Italian. They are all also bilingual in Romanian.

Methodology

We conducted in-depth open and semi-structured interviews with all of the Italian women who were in Greci during our field study ($n=12$). The participants were selected using the snowball sampling method and only those who spoke the original Italian dialect were chosen. We asked about medicinal plants and wild food plants (in use until a few decades ago or still in use today), the local name(s) of each taxon, the plant part(s) used, and details about preparation and traditional medicinal or food use(s). Interviews were conducted in standard Italian and informants generally responded in Venetian. We also interviewed three Romanian women who were married to Italian men about their perceptions of the continuum/differences between Romanian and Italian ethnobotanical knowledge. However, we did not incorporate their responses in the data analysis.

Prior informed consent was verbally obtained prior to conducting interviews and researchers adhered to the ethical guidelines of American Anthropological Association (American Anthropological Association 1998). Voucher specimens and digital pictures were taken of all the wild plants mentioned, when available. Vouchers were deposited at the Herbarium of the University of Gastronomic Sciences, Pollenzo, Italy. Taxonomic identification was conducted by the first author and plant nomenclature follows the *Flora Europaea* (Tutin *et al.* 1964). Family assignments follow the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group taxonomic recommendations (Stevens 2001).

Data were compared with standard works on Romanian and Venetian folk botanical nomenclature (Pellegrini and Rossi 1964; Borza 1968; Butura 1979; Pellegrini and Zamboni 1982). The data on plant uses were compared with Romanian ethnobotanical reviews (von Czihak and Szabo 1863; Borza and Butura 1938; Butura 1979; Hulubaş 2011, and personal observations in Eastern Romania) and all ethnobotanical studies or reviews conducted in Northern Veneto and Friuli (Cappelletti *et al.* 1978, 1982; Appi *et al.* 1979; Cappelletti 1979, 1985; Selva 1979; Coassini-Lokar *et al.* 1983; Scarpa 1993; Paoletti *et al.* 1995; Coassini Lokar and Poldini 1998; Dreon and Paoletti 2009; Zuin 2010).¹

¹ We did not consider a recent medical-botanical inventory of the Oltenia region of Romania (Tiţa *et al.* 2009) since the field methods used were unclear, nor the medico-botanical literature concerning Hungarians living in Transylvania (Szabo and Péntek 1976; Papp *et al.* 2011).

Results and Discussion

Ninety-one botanical taxa and 135 corresponding food and/or medicinal preparations were recorded (Table 1). Most of the phytonyms cited are Romanian, although Venetian/Friulan phytonyms still occur (Fig. 2). More than two-thirds of plant uses cited were also recorded among Romanians, while fewer uses are similar to those recorded in north-eastern Italy (Fig. 3). The large majority of plants with Romanian phytonyms are used according to Romanian customs, as are some of with north-eastern Italian phytonyms (Figs. 4 and 5). Informants reported that most folk remedies (not derived from plants) have been abandoned.

Wild Hops

Wild hops (*Humulus lupulus* L., Cannabaceae) have been used in Central Europe since at least the fifteenth century to enhance the fermentation process in baking (Maurizio 1927: 383). Both in eastern Romania (personal observation) and Greci, elderly people remember how the female inflorescences of wild hops were mixed with maize flour and wine must to form small balls, which were dried and used for baking. To the best of our knowledge, this practice is unknown in north-eastern Italian culinary traditions. Additionally, informants reported incorporating this plant into the traditional Friulan soup, *pistič*, which consists of many wild plants but did not originally include wild hop shoots (Paoletti *et al.* 1995).

“Our Basil and their Basil”: The Dimorphic Cultural Perception of Basil

In this cultural hybrid context, it is very interesting to analyse the representation of basil (*Ocimum basilicum* L., Lamiaceae) and its presumed “double” identity. Italians in Greci believe, in fact, that there are two kinds of basil: one which grows in the pot and is to be used in the local cuisine (as Italians do); and another – which grows “wild” in the home garden/fields, without having been planted. This “wild” form of basil can only be used in ritual ceremonies, as Romanians do. According to our informants, in the Orthodox Church the holy water is prepared with basil, and basil is brought home from church at Epiphany, or after baptisms and funerals when it is placed around the body. Traditionally, the village Orthodox priest gives girls seeking a husband a bunch of blessed basil to put under their pillows while dreaming of their future husbands. According to informants, Romanians only recently began using basil in their cuisine, initially as a seasoning for cooked beans and sausages. Italians, on the other hand, use basil grown in pots as a seasoning in many of their recipes. They would have bought “wild” basil from Gypsy women.

Table 1 Traditional knowledge of medicinal plants and wild food plants among the “Taliane” of Greci

Botanical taxon/taxa (and family)	Status	Local name(s)	Used part(s)	Preparation and administration (I: internal use; E: external use)	Treated pathology(-ies) or other use(s)/perception(s)	Same or similar use(s) recorded among Romanians	Same or similar use(s) recorded in Veneto and Friuli
<i>Achillea millefolium</i> L. (Asteraceae)	W	<i>Coditisa scioricelule</i> ^{RO}	Aerial parts	I: infusion	Kidney and liver complaints; digestive	YES	YES (digestive)
<i>Allium cepa</i> L. (Amaryllidaceae)	C	<i>Ceapa</i> ^{RO}	Bulbs	E: crushed bulb, covered by corn meal polenta, applied overnight on the belly (“ <i>tira il mal</i> ”: “it takes out the illness”) I: eaten raw or cooked	Intestinal pains	YES	NO
<i>Allium sativum</i> L. (Amaryllidaceae)	C	<i>Aio</i> ^{VF}	Bulb (external parts)	I: decoction, sweetened (syrup)	Galactagogue	YES	NO
<i>Amaranthus retroflexus</i> L. (Amaranthaceae) ^a	W	<i>Scitir</i> ^{RO}	Aerial parts	I: eaten See <i>Brassica oleracea</i>	Cough	YES	YES
<i>Anethum graveolens</i> L. (Apiaceae)	C	<i>Mrap</i> ^{RO}	Inflorescences	See <i>Brassica oleracea</i>	Worms Fodder for pigs and cows; considered toxic for rabbits	YES	NO
<i>Armoracia rusticana</i> G. Gaertn., B. Mey. & Scherb. (Brassicaceae)	C	<i>Hrean</i> ^{RO}	Fruits	I: infusion, with sugar and vinegar E: applied on the affected tooth See <i>Brassica oleracea</i>	(Perceived as part of the Romanian heritage – “Taliane” are said to not use it for seasoning) Cough	YES	NO
<i>Artemisia abrotanum</i> L. (Asteraceae) ^a	C	<i>Matorica</i> ^{RO} (but attributed to <i>A. annua</i>)	Root	E: burned	Toothache	YES	NO
<i>Artemisia absinthium</i> L. (Asteraceae)	W	<i>Pelin</i> ^{RO}	Dried aerial parts	E: infusion or macerate in wine E: decoction, in external washes E: decoction, in external washes; or absorbed on cotton wool, which is then dried to form little ovules (or in the same manner, but suing soap); ovules inserted in the vagina when needed	Mosquito repellent	YES (referred to other <i>A. species</i>)	NO
<i>Atriplex hortensis</i> L. (Amaranthaceae)	SC	<i>Laboda</i> ^{RO} <i>Loboda</i> ^{RO}	Fresh leaves	See <i>Brassica oleracea</i>	Appetizing; intestinal troubles; digestive Wounds, sores Vaginal complaints; abortive	YES	YES (emmenagogue)

Table 1 (continued)

Botanical taxon/faxa (and family)	Status	Local name(s)	Used part(s)	Preparation and administration (I: internal use; E: external use)	Treated pathology(-ies) or other use(s)/perception(s)	Same or similar use(s) recorded among Romanians	Same or similar use(s) recorded in Veneto and Friuli
<i>Beta vulgaris</i> L. (Amaranthaceae)			Root→Sugar, powdered Root→Sugar	E: externally applied	Eye inflammations		
<i>Brassica oleracea</i> L. (Brassicaceae)	C	Verza	Fresh leaves	I: ingested I: lacto-fermented for a few months in water, salt, adding garlic, a piece of a horseradish root, dill inflorescences, and a few branches of cherry leaves; the vegetable is then consumed and the resulting water drunk E: crushed and externally applied or simply wrapped on the affected part	Heart complaints Drunkenness	YES	NO
<i>Calendula officinalis</i> L. (Asteraceae)	C	Galbanele ^{RO} Gelbinele ^{RO} Gialinele	Flowers	I: infusion	Liver diseases; stomach-ache	YES	NO
<i>Centaurea cyanus</i> L. ^b (Asteraceae)	W	Bensemia	Aerial parts	E: decoction, then in external washes	Sores, skin inflammations	NO	NO
<i>Chelidonium majus</i> L. (Papaveraceae)	W	Rostopasca ^{RO}	Flowers	I: infusion	Not specified	NO	NO
<i>Chenopodium album</i> L. (Amaranthaceae)	W	Farinei ^{VF} Farinele ^{VF}	Fresh whorls	E: topically applied I: boiled in a traditional soup (<i>pistiç</i>), generally seasoned with garlic, and accompanied with eggs or corn meal polenta	Warts "Healthy" food	YES	YES
<i>Cichorium intybus</i> L. (Asteraceae)	W	Radicio de campo ^{VF}	Fresh whorls	I: salads or <i>pistiç</i>	"Healthy" food	NO	YES
<i>Citrullus lanatus</i> (Thumb.) Matsum. & Nakai (Cucurbitaceae)	C	Pepene verde ^{RO}	Seeds Half-ripe fruits (collected in September)	I: infusion See <i>Brassica oleracea</i>	Kidney stones	YES	NO
<i>Citrus x limon</i> (L.) Osbeck (Rutaceae)	Bought	Limon ^{VF}	Fruit juice	I: mixed with honey and ingested	Sore throat; preventing various diseases	NO	NO
<i>Cornus mas</i> L. (Cornaceae)	W	Cuorne (fruits, plural) ^{RO}	Fresh fruits	I: eaten fresh or dried I: macerated in <i>snitapa</i> (especially that from wine dregs) adding sugar	Anti-diarrhoeal and as food Digestive	YES	YES

Table 1 (continued)

Botanical taxon/faxa (and family)	Status	Local name(s)	Used part(s)	Preparation and administration (I: internal use; E: external use)	Treated pathology(-ies) or other use(s)/perception(s)	Same or similar use(s) recorded among Romanians	Same or similar use(s) recorded in Veneto and Friuli
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L. (Betulaceae)	W	<i>Alun</i> ^{RO}	Kernel	I: eaten roasted	Food	YES	YES
<i>Cotinus coggygia</i> Scop. (Anacardiaceae) ^a	W	<i>Scumpie</i> ^{RO}	Branches	I: infusion	Not specified	YES	YES
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i> Jacq. (Rosaceae)	W	<i>Paducer</i> ^{RO}	Flowering tops Fruits (<i>ghirghine</i>)	I: infusion I: dried and consumed	Heart weakness "Healthy" food (good for the hearth) Worms	YES NO YES	YES NO YES
<i>Cucurbita pepo</i> L. (Cucurbitaceae)	C	<i>Zuca</i> ^{VF}	Seeds Seeds	I: eaten in the morning before breakfast E: fresh seeds with pulp wrapped around the neck	Relieving the pain of measles	NO	YES (relieving the pain of toothache, used in the same manner)
<i>Cucumis sativus</i> L. (Cucurbitaceae)	C	<i>Castravete</i> ^{RO}	Fruits	See <i>Brassica oleracea</i>		YES	NO
<i>Datura stramonium</i> L. (Solanaceae) ^a	W	<i>Turbaciune</i> ^{RO}	Fruits	E: decoction, in external compresses	Rheumatism	YES	NO
<i>Dianthus</i> sp. ^b (Caryophyllaceae) ^a	W	<i>Cuietoare</i> ^{RO}	Leaves	I: infusion	Diarrhoea	NO	NO
<i>Equisetum arvense</i> L. (Equisetaceae)	W	<i>Cuada caluti</i> ^{RO}	Aerial parts	I: infusion	Stomach-ache	YES	NO
<i>Helianthus annuus</i> L. (Asteraceae)	C	<i>Girasole</i> ^{VF}	Seeds→Oil (bought)	E/ritual: patient has to watch the sun through an empty oil bottle (with drops of oil still inside the bottle) E: warm oil is instilled in the ear	Sty	NO	NO
<i>Hosta plantaginea</i> (Lam.) Asch. (Asparagaceae) ^a	C	<i>Gilio</i> ^{VF}	Fresh flowers	E: mixed with salt and then in foot massages	Earache Foot massage	YES NO	NO NO
<i>Humulus lupulus</i> L. (Cannabaceae)	W	<i>Home</i> ^{RO} , <i>Iomet</i> ^{RO}	Shoots Female inflorescences	I: <i>pisitç</i> I: mixed with white wine must and corn meal in small balls (<i>turtiscioare de tomet</i>), which were dried and stored. These were then regularly used as bread yeast in home baking	Food Food	YES YES	YES NO

Table 1 (continued)

Botanical taxon/taxa (and family)	Status	Local name(s)	Used part(s)	Preparation and administration (I: internal use; E: external use)	Treated pathology(-ies) or other use(s)/perception(s)	Same or similar use(s) recorded among Romanians	Same or similar use(s) recorded in Veneto and Friuli
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i> L. (Hypericaceae)	W	<i>Sunetoare</i> ^{RO}	Aerial parts	I: infusion	Liver diseases; stomach-ache	YES	NO
<i>Iris germanica</i> L. (Iridaceae) ^a	C	–	Rhizomes	E: decoction, in external washes	Haemorrhoids	NO	NO
<i>Juglans regia</i> L. (Juglandaceae)	W	<i>Noseler</i> ^{VF}	Fruit kernel	I: eaten fresh, dried, or roasted (covered with sugar, as a candy [<i>bomboana</i>])	Strengthening food		
			Leaves	E: decoction, in external washes or directly applied	Hair strengthening dye; rheumatism. Used also for dyeing the wool in brown	YES	YES
<i>Laurus nobilis</i> L. (Lauraceae)	C	<i>Dafin</i> ^{RO}	Fresh and dried leaves	I: leaves as fodder I: seasoning sauces and meat	Lice in hens Food (perceived as part of the original "Talian" heritage – Romanians are said to not use it often for seasoning)	YES	YES
<i>Levisticum officinale</i> W.D.J. Koch (Apiaceae)	C	<i>Leusitan</i> ^{RO}	Fruits	I: infusion	Intestinal pains; appendicitis	YES	NO
<i>Lycopersicon esculentum</i> Mill. (Solanaceae)	C	<i>Pomodoro</i>	Unripe fruits	See <i>Brassica oleracea</i>			
<i>Malva sylvestris</i> L. (Malvaceae)	W	<i>Malva</i> ^{VF}	Leaves	E: external washes with the infusion E: necklaces	Feet pains; wounds	YES	YES
<i>Matricaria recutita</i> L. (Asteraceae)	W	<i>Camomila</i> ^{VF} <i>Musacel</i> ^{RO} <i>Muscezel</i> ^{RO}	Aerial parts with flowers Aerial parts with flowers	I: infusion, external washes I: infusion, in external washes	Ornament for kids Intestinal troubles; digestive; sore throat Eye inflammations	YES	YES
<i>Mentha spicata</i> L. and <i>M. x piperita</i> L. (Lamiaceae)	C	<i>Menta</i> ^{VF}	Dried aerial parts	I: infusion	Stomach-ache; digestive; intestinal pains; diarrhoea (also for young chicken)	YES	YES
<i>Nerium oleander</i> L. (Apocynaceae)	C	<i>Leandro</i> ^{VF}	Fresh leaves	I: inserted in the vagina	Abortive	NO, but the ethnobotanical information in Butura (1979) cannot be maybe considered reliable on this topic, given	NO

Table 1 (continued)

Botanical taxon/taxa (and family)	Status	Local name(s)	Used part(s)	Preparation and administration (I: internal use; E: external use)	Treated pathology(-ies) or other use(s)/perception(s)	Same or similar use(s) recorded among Romanians	Same or similar use(s) recorded in Veneto and Friuli
<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i> L. (Solanaceae)	Bought		Leaves→Tobacco	E: inserted in the tooth E: smoke sent inside the ear I: infusion	Toothache Earache	YES NO	YES NO
<i>Ocimum basilicum</i> L. (Lamiaceae)	C (but perceived as “wild”, since “higher” and growing in the home-gardens)	<i>Bustioc</i> ^{RO}	Leaves	I: infusion	Helminthiasis in children. This “kind” of basil is also brought to the Church during special religious ceremonies (All Saints, Christmas, Epiphany, Easter Day); it is used in crowns as an ornamental when somebody dies; it is also brought at home and kept under the pillow by women to help divine the name of their future spouse Food (only this “ethno-variety” of basil is considered edible)	YES	NO
<i>Oryza sativa</i> L. (Poaceae)	C (growing in flower pots) Bought	<i>Riso</i> ^{VF}	Leaves Seeds	I: seasoning sauces I: water remaining after rice has been boiled in it is drunk I: boiled with milk, as a food I: infusion	Diarrhoea	NO	NO
<i>Papaver somniferum</i> L. (Papaveraceae) ^a	C	<i>Mac</i> ^{RO}	Fruits	I: infusion	Galactagogue	NO	NO
<i>Pastinaca sativa</i> L. (Apiaceae) ^a	W	<i>Pestenacia</i>	Fresh whorls	I: <i>pistiç</i>	Tranquillizing (for kids) Food	YES	YES (<i>P. rhoeas</i>)
<i>Pelargonium graveolens</i> L. (Geraniaceae) ^a	C	<i>Andrescid</i> ^{RO}	Leaves	I: aromatizing jams (leaves are added to the boiling fruits and then eliminated at the end) E: applied in the vagina	Food	YES	NO
	C	<i>Geranio</i> ^{VF}	Fresh leaves	E: applied in the vagina	Abortive		NO

Table 1 (continued)

Botanical taxon/faxa (and family)	Status	Local name(s)	Used part(s)	Preparation and administration (I: internal use; E: external use)	Treated pathology(-ies) or other use(s)/perception(s)	Same or similar use(s) recorded among Romanians	Same or similar use(s) recorded in Veneto and Friuli
<i>Pelargonium zonale</i> (L.) L'Hér. (Geraniaceae) ^a	C	<i>Patrunge</i> ^{RO}	Leaves	I: infusion	Abortive	NO (see <i>Nerium oleander</i> L.)	YES
<i>Petroselinum crispum</i> (Mill.) Fuss (Apiaceae)	C	<i>Fasol</i>	Seeds	I: soup	Galactagogue	NO	NO
<i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i> L. (Fabaceae)	C		Dried fruits (without seeds)	I: infusion	Diabetes	NO	NO
<i>Piper nigrum</i> L. (Piperaceae)	Bought	<i>Pevere</i> ^{VF}	(Fermented) dried fruits	I: infused in hot distillate (<i>snitapa</i>) and the distillate drunk hot	Cold and flu	YES (macerate in wine)	YES (ingestion of three seeds within a day)
<i>Plantago major</i> L. (Plantaginaceae)	W	<i>Patlagina</i> ^{RO}	Fresh leaves	E: externally applied	Varicose veins; wounds	YES	YES
<i>Polygonum aviculare</i> L. (Polygonaceae)	W	<i>Troscol</i> ^{RO}	Aerial parts	I: infusion	Respiratory infections	YES	NO
<i>Primula</i> sp. ^b (Primulaceae) ^a	W	<i>Pateracia</i> ^{VF}	Aerial parts	I: infusion	Obesity	NO	NO
<i>Prunus armeniaca</i> L. (Rosaceae)	C	<i>Caisse</i> ^{RO}	Young leaves	I: <i>pistiç</i>	Food	NO	YES
<i>Prunus cerasifera</i> Ehrh. (Rosaceae)	C	<i>Zazere</i> ^{RO} (fruits)	Fruits (<i>caisse</i>) (alone or together with plums, cherry-plums, and grapes)→Distillate (<i>snitapa</i>)	E: externally applied	Headache; fever; toothache	YES	YES
<i>Prunus cerasus</i> L. (Rosaceae)	C	<i>Ceraser</i> ^{VF} (fruits: <i>cerese</i>)	Fruits (mixed together with other <i>Prunus</i> fruits)→Distillate (<i>snitapa</i>)	See <i>P. armeniaca</i>	See <i>P. armeniaca</i>	YES	NO
<i>Prunus cerasus</i> L. (Rosaceae)	C		Leaves	E: decoction, in external washes	Rheumatism	NO	NO
<i>Prunus cerasus</i> L. var. <i>marasca</i> (Host) (Rosaceae)	C/SC	<i>Visnier</i> ^{RO}	Branches	See <i>Brassica oleracea</i> L.		YES	NO
			Fruit peduncles	I: infusion	Diuretic	YES	YES
			Fruits (<i>viscnie</i>)	I: macerated in <i>snitapa</i> (especially that from wine dregs) adding sugar, to obtain <i>viscniata</i>	Digestive; social and "recreational" beverage (served to guests/visitors)	YES	NO
<i>Prunus domestica</i> L. (Rosaceae)	C		Ripe fruits	I: consumed	Laxative	YES	YES

Table 1 (continued)

Botanical taxon/taxa (and family)	Status	Local name(s)	Used part(s)	Preparation and administration (I: internal use; E: external use)	Treated pathology(-ies) or other use(s)/perception(s)	Same or similar use(s) recorded among Romanians	Same or similar use(s) recorded in Veneto and Friuli
<i>Prunus domestica</i> L.	C	<i>Brugner</i> ^{VF} (fruits: <i>brugne</i>) <i>Susin</i> ^{VF}	Fruits (mixed together with other <i>Prunus</i> fruits)→Distillate (<i>smitapa</i>) Leaves	See <i>P. armeniaca</i>	See <i>P. armeniaca</i>	YES	NO
var. <i>institiata</i> (L.) Bonnier Layens (Rosaceae)	C	<i>Pesica</i> ^{RO} (fruit)	Root juice	I: infusion I: mixed with sugar, drunk	Toothache Cough	NO YES	NO YES
<i>Prunus persica</i> (L.) Batsch. (Rosaceae) <i>Raphanus sativus</i> L. ssp. <i>niger</i> (Mill.) DC. (Brassicaceae) ^a <i>Ranunculus arvensis</i> L. ^b (Ranunculaceae) <i>Ricinus communis</i> L. L. (Euphorbiaceae) <i>Robinia</i> <i>pseudoacacia</i> L. (Fabaceae) ^a	W Bought W	<i>Cornucei</i> ^{RO} <i>Salken</i> ^{RO}	Seeds Seeds→Oil Flowers Flowers Leaves	E: crashed and externally applied E: applied on the wart I: fried E: infusion, then vaginal washes I: infusion	Bone pains Warts Food Dysmenorrhoea Diarrhoea	YES NO NO YES NO	NO NO YES NO YES (stomach-ache) YES
<i>Rosa canina</i> L. (Rosaceae) <i>Rosa x centifolia</i> L. and <i>R. gallica</i> L. (Rosaceae) <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> L. (Rosaceae) <i>Rubus idaeus</i> L. (Rosaceae) <i>Rumex acetosa</i> L. (Polygonaceae) <i>Salix</i> sp. (Salicaceae)	W C W W W W	<i>Stropacut</i> ^{VF} <i>Rosa</i> ^{VF} <i>Murele</i> ^{RO} (fruits) <i>Smeura</i> ^{RO} <i>Scetgia</i> ^{RO} , <i>Scetvia</i> ^{RO} <i>Salce</i> ^{RO}	Fresh fruits Fresh petals Fruits Fruits Fresh leaves Aerial parts Aerial parts Fresh and dried leaves	I: eaten E: macerated in vinegar, then the resulting macerate applied on the forehead I: eaten raw or preserved in jams I: eaten raw, or preserved in jams, or in liqueurs I: salads or <i>pisitic</i> E: decoction, in external washes E: burned and the smoke instilled in the ear I: infusion I: seasoning sauces, especially with beans and meat (hare)	Headache; fever Food Food Food Rheumatisms Earache Cough; blood circulation "Healthy" (perceived as part of the	NO YES YES YES YES NO YES NO	NO YES YES YES YES NO YES YES
<i>Salvia officinalis</i> L. (Lamiaceae)	C	<i>Salvia</i> ^{VF}				YES	YES

Table 1 (continued)

Botanical taxon/taxa (and family)	Status	Local name(s)	Used part(s)	Preparation and administration (I: internal use; E: external use)	Treated pathology(-ies) or other use(s)/perception(s)	Same or similar use(s) recorded among Romanians	Same or similar use(s) recorded in Veneto and Friuli
<i>Sambucus nigra</i> L. (Adoxaceae)	W	Soc ^{RO}	Flowers	I: syrup (flowers boiled with water and sugar)	“Talian” heritage – Romanians said to not use it for food	YES	YES
<i>Satureja hortensis</i> L. and <i>Thymus vulgaris</i> L. (Lamiaceae)	C	Cimbru ^{RO}	Aerial parts	I: infusion	Cough; tranquilizing	YES	YES
<i>Silene alba</i> (Mill.) E.H.L. Krause (Caryophyllaceae) ^a	W	Orele de grever ^{VF}	Fresh whorls	I: boiled in soup (<i>pistic</i>)	Food	NO	YES
<i>Solanum tuberosum</i> L. (Solanaceae)	C	Patata ^{VF}	Tuber	I: soup E: cut in small pieces, applied on the forehead or on the neck, eventually with spirit or vinegar	Galactagogue Headache; sore throat; measles	NO YES	NO YES
<i>Symphytum officinale</i> L. (Boraginaceae)	W	Tetenizza ^{RO}	Roots	I: infusion	Liver diseases; tumours	YES	YES (stomach disorders)
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> Weber (Asteraceae)	W	Popedia ^{RO} Popodia ^{RO}	Fresh leaves	I: <i>pistic</i>	Food	NO (generally not in soups)	YES
<i>Thymus serpyllum</i> L. s.l. and <i>Satureja montana</i> L. (Lamiaceae)	W	Cimbru de padure ^{RO}	Aerial parts	I: infusion	Stomach-ache	YES	YES
<i>Tilia cordata</i> Mill. (Malvaceae)	SC	Tei ^{RO}	Flowers	I: infusion	Food	YES	NO
<i>Triticum aestivum</i> L. (Poaceae)	C	Forment ^{VF}	Seeds→Flour	E: decoction, in external washes I: flour mixed with water or milk, and scrambled eggs, in external applications	“Healthy” beverage; tranquilizing; respiratory ailments Wool dyeing (light yellow) Suppurative	YES	YES
<i>Urtica dioica</i> L. (Urticaceae)	W	Ortiga ^{VF}	Seeds→Flour Fresh whorls Fresh aerial parts	I: soup prepared roasting the flour and then adding pork fat (or oil) and water (<i>supa brusada</i>) I: boiled in soup (<i>pistic</i>)	Strengthening food; reconstituent Food Rheumatism	NO NO YES	YES YES YES

Table 1 (continued)

Botanical taxon/taxa (and family)	Status	Local name(s)	Used part(s)	Preparation and administration (I: internal use; E: external use)	Treated pathology(-ies) or other use(s)/perception(s)	Same or similar use(s) recorded among Romanians	Same or similar use(s) recorded in Veneto and Friuli
<i>Valerianella</i> sp. ^b (Caprifoliaceae)	W	<i>Ardale</i> ^{VF}	Aerial parts	E: beaten directly on the feet or decocted, then in external washes	Dandruff; baldness	NO	YES
<i>Veronica beccabunga</i> L. (Plantaginaceae)	W	<i>Grasson</i> ^{VF} (referred to the species <i>Rorippa nasturtium-aquaticum</i> (L.) Hayek, which is often named and used interchangeably in Italy)	Aerial parts Fresh whorls Fresh leaves	E: decoction with walnut leaves, in external washes I: leaves, as fodder I: <i>pistitç</i> I: salads	Lice in hens Food Food	NO YES	NO YES
<i>Viscum album</i> L. (Santalaceae)	W	<i>Vês(c)</i> ^{RO}	Aerial parts	I: infusion	Hypertension	YES	NO
<i>Vitis vinifera</i> L. (Vitaceae)	C	<i>Vigna</i> ^{VF}	Sap Fresh fruits→Wine (<i>vîno</i>) Fresh red fruits→Red wine (<i>vîno</i>) Fruits→Wine→Vinegar (<i>ozet</i>) Fruits→Wine→Vinegar (<i>ozet</i>)	I: instilled in the eye E: mixed with bread and externally applied I: boiled, drunk	Eye inflammations Bruises; blows; swollen feet Rubella (children)	YES YES NO NO	YES YES NO
<i>Xanthium spinosum</i> L. (Asteraceae) ^a	W	<i>Holera</i> ^{RO}	Fresh fruits→Wine→Wine dregs (<i>drodgîta</i>)→distillate (<i>sniapa</i>) Fresh leaves	E: mixed with sugar, in gargles E: mixed with water, in external compresses on the forehead or on the feet E: topically applied	Cough Headache; fever Headache, fever	NO YES	YES (sore throats) YES
<i>Zea mays</i> L. (Poaceae)	C	<i>Sorgo</i> ^{VF}	Seeds	I: ingested I: eaten I: fermented in water with yeast from previous <i>borsc</i> ; at the end of the fermentation, the liquid is diluted to prepare the	Digestive Diarrhoea "Healthy" food; appetizing	YES YES	YES (pomace's distillate) YES (pomace's distillate) NO NO

Table 1 (continued)

Botanical taxon/taxa (and family)	Status	Local name(s)	Used part(s)	Preparation and administration (I: internal use; E: external use)	Treated pathology(-ies) or other use(s)/perception(s)	Same or similar use(s) recorded among Romanians	Same or similar use(s) recorded in Veneto and Friuli
Diverse tree species			Stigma Seeds → Flour Wood → Coal	proper <i>borsc</i> soup, or also added in small amount to diverse other soups (<i>ciorbe</i>) I: infusion E: hot polenta, externally applied on the chest E: well water ("virgin", i.e. touched or drunk by nobody) thrown on burning coal (while chanting three times the Lord's prayer), then drunk; the remaining water used to wash the affected person's face with the back side of the hand, finally the remaining water has to be thrown on a dog; the dog shakes ("il can sgorla") - this is considered as the sign for a successful treatment I: ingested I: consumed	Diuretic Bronchitis Evil eye (<i>dituchio</i>), esp. in children	YES YES	YES YES (with flax seeds)
			Wood → Ashes		Constipation Used as an ingredient in home-made Carnival (Mardi Gras) fritters (<i>crostoi</i>), which were deep fried in pork lard		

C cultivated; SC semi-cultivated; W wild
 RO same or similar name(s) in Romanian;
 VF same or similar name(s) in Venetian or Friulans
^a taxa quoted by one or two informants only
^b exact identification was not possible, since specimens were not available; presumed identification has been conducted via folk linguistic analysis and plant description
 Note on the pronunciation of the Venetian phytonyms: c: to be pronounced like the English *c* in the word *code*; ċ: to be pronounced like the English *ch* in the word *chocolate*; sc: to be pronounced like the English *sh* in the word *share*; s (c): to be pronounced like the English *sc* in the word *score*

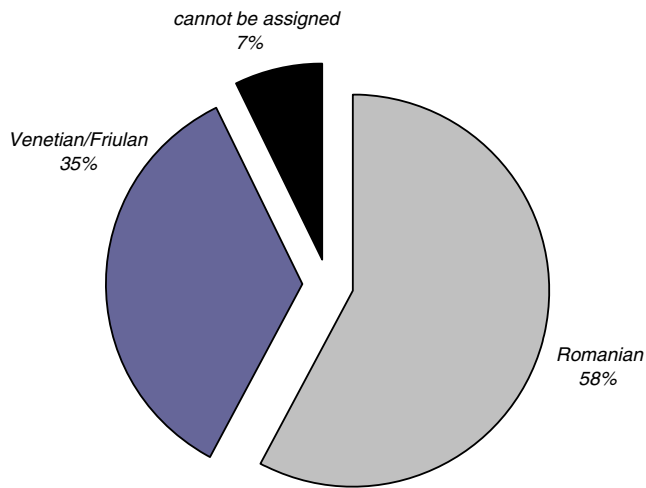


Fig. 2 Origin of the phytonyms used by the “Taliani” of Greci

Fig. 3 Folk medicinal/food plant uses recorded among the “Taliani” of Greci and their relation to ethnobotanical studies previously conducted among Romanians and North-Eastern Italians

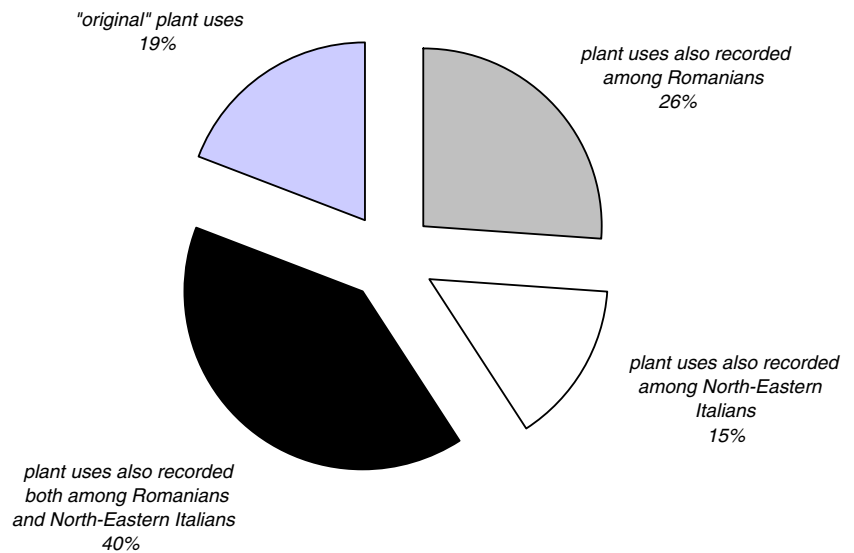
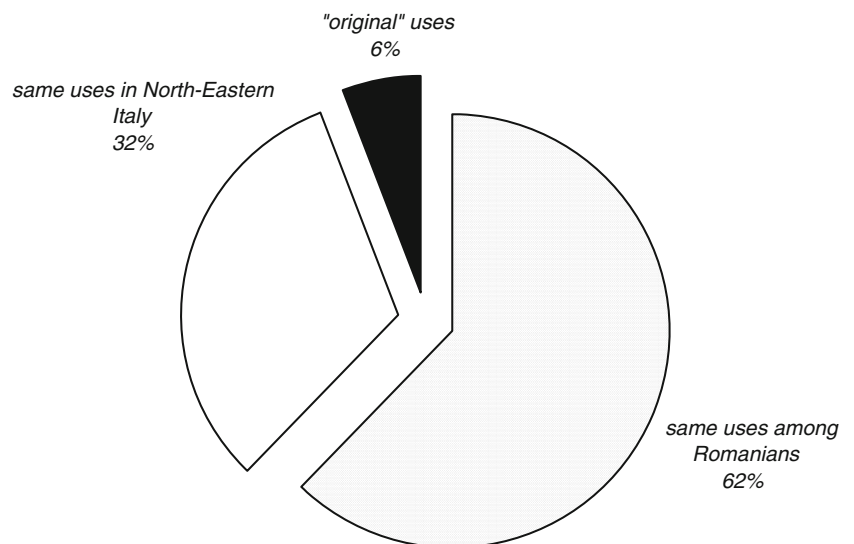


Fig. 4 Similarity between the recorded plant uses and the Romanian and North-Eastern Italian ethnobotanies for those folk taxa, which have been named by the “Taliane” of Greci with Romanian phytonyms



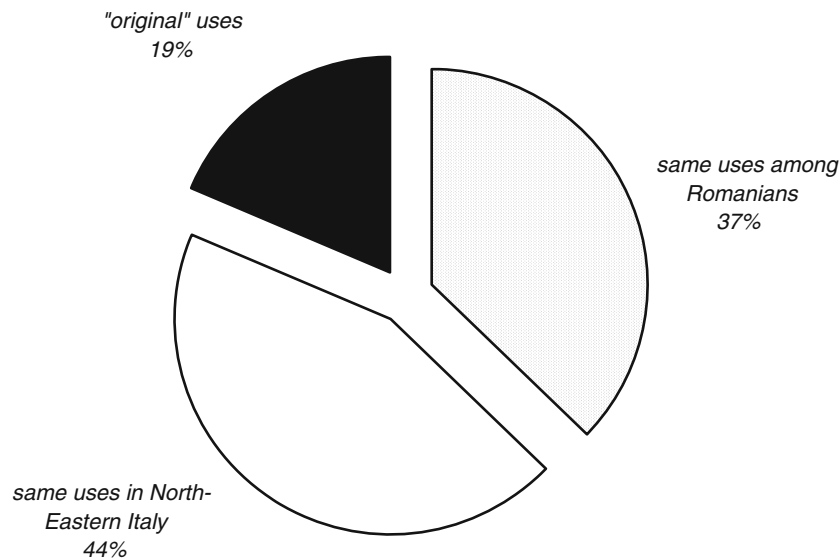


Fig. 5 Similarity between the recorded plant uses and the Romanian and North-Eastern Italian ethnobotanies for those folk taxa, which have been named by the “Taliane” of Greci with Venetian phytonyms

Retaining Traditions: The Resilience of Pistici

Our informants still recall gathering wild plants for pistici in the spring. In Friuli, this soup was prepared with a wide variety of wild herbs (Paoletti *et al.* 1995; Dreon

and Paoletti 2009). In Greci women used to gather the most tender aerial parts of nettle (*Urtica dioica* L., Urticaceae), fat hen (*Chenopodium album* L., Amaranthaceae), white campion (*Silene alba* (Mill.) E.H.L. Krause, Caryophyllaceae), dandelion (*Taraxacum*

Plant ingredients of pistici in Friuli (Paoletti et al, 1995)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 <i>Aposeris foetida</i> * | 22 <i>Filipendula vulgaris</i> * | 43 <i>Rubus ulmifolius</i> * |
| 2 <i>Aristolochia pallida</i> * | 23 <i>Fragaria vesca</i> * | 44 <i>Rumex acetosa</i> |
| 3 <i>Aruncus dioicus</i> * | 24 <i>Galium aristatum</i> * | 45 <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> |
| 4 <i>Bellis perennis</i> | 25 <i>Galium mollugo</i> | 46 <i>Ruscus aculeatus</i> |
| 5 <i>Campanula trachelium</i> | 26 <i>Hypochoeris maculata</i> | 47 <i>Salvia pratensis</i> * |
| 6 <i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i> | 27 <i>Hypochoeris radicata</i> | 48 <i>Silene alba</i> * |
| 7 <i>Cardamine flexuosa</i> * | 28 <i>Lamium purpureum</i> | 49 <i>Silene dioica</i> * |
| 8 <i>Cardamine hirsuta</i> | 29 <i>Leontodon hispidus</i> | 50 <i>Silene vulgaris</i> |
| 9 <i>Cardaminopsis halleri</i> | 30 <i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> | 51 <i>Sonchus asper</i> |
| 10 <i>Carlina acaulis</i> * | 31 <i>Myosotis arvensis</i> | 52 <i>Sonchus oleraceus</i> |
| 11 <i>Carum carvi</i> | 32 <i>Ornithogalum pyrenaicum</i> * | 53 <i>Stellaria media</i> |
| 12 <i>Centaurea nigrescens</i> | 33 <i>Oxalis acetosella</i> | 54 <i>Tamus communis</i> * |
| 13 <i>Chenopodium album</i> | 34 <i>Papaver somniferum</i> * | 55 <i>Taraxacum officinale</i> |
| 14 <i>Chenopodium bonus-henricus</i> | 35 <i>Phyteuma spicatum</i> * | 56 <i>Tragopogon pratensis</i> |
| 15 <i>Chenopodium polyspermum</i> | 36 <i>Plantago lanceolata</i> | 57 <i>Urtica dioica</i> |
| 16 <i>Cirsium oleraceum</i> * | 37 <i>Plantago major</i> | 58 <i>Veronica beccabunga</i> |
| 17 <i>Clematis vitalba</i> | 38 <i>Plantago media</i> | 59 <i>Viola mirabilis</i> * |
| 18 <i>Crepis capillaris</i> * | 39 <i>Polygonum persicaria</i> | |
| 19 <i>Crepis setosa</i> * | 40 <i>Primula acaulis</i> * | |
| 20 <i>Erigeron annuus</i> * | 41 <i>Ranunculus ficaria</i> | |
| 21 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> | 42 <i>Ranunculus repens</i> | |

Plant ingredients of pistici in Greci a few decades ago

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 13 <i>Chenopodium album</i> | 55 <i>Taraxacum officinale</i> | -- <i>Humulus lupulus</i> |
| 40 <i>Primula sp.</i> | 57 <i>Urtica dioica</i> | -- <i>Pastinaca sativa</i> |
| 44 <i>Rumex acetosa</i> | -- <i>Cichorium intybus</i> | -- <i>Valerianella sp.</i> |
| 50 <i>Silene sp.</i> | | |

Plant ingredient of pistici in Greci nowadays

- 44 ***Rumex acetosa***

Fig. 6 The transformation of *pistic* in Romania (the asterisks indicate taxa only occurring in Italy, but not in Dobruja [data according to Oprea 2005, and Ciocărlan 2009])

officinale F.H. Wigg., Asteraceae), and sorrel (*Rumex acetosa* L., Polygonaceae). In addition, they used some plants not used in Friuli, such as the shoots of wild hops (*Humulus lupulus* L.), an important ingredient Romanian cuisine. However, today only two informants still prepare *pistić*, and they typically collect only sorrel, also important in Romanian cuisine (Butura 1979) (Fig. 6).

Conclusion

The case studies of *pistić* clearly demonstrate that the Italian community in Greci have reduced the use of wild plants originally used north-eastern Italy. This can be explained partially by their new natural environment and partially by their contact with the local population, resulting in an increasingly restricted pool of known plants. Moreover, they began to substitute a few plants with others, which were and continue to be culturally salient among the Romanians.

According to Wolff and Medin (2001), language terms (e.g., *pistić* defined as a soup made from dozens of wild plants) may survive while knowledge of specific details of the underlying concepts (e.g., the ingredients of *pistić*) disappears. Thus, the term *pistić* remains even although it is now prepared from only one species – sorrel.

Traditional plant knowledge among the Italians of Greci is significantly eroded, as is the case of many rural areas in Europe and elsewhere. This loss of TK of wild edible and medicinal plants is closely linked with their gradual assimilation into the local Romanian community and resultant language loss (Maffi 2001). Nevertheless, this part of their cultural heritage may represent an important tool for fostering local projects based on sustainable use of local natural resources. Moreover, studies of the TK among migrant communities provide crucial insights for understanding how ethnobotanical beliefs and practices change over time, and how different environmental and social factors affect maintenance or loss of ethnobotanical knowledge.

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