

The thermophilous forests, especially their herb layer, are important from the conservational as well as from the cultural point of view because they represent unique communities directly and indirectly affected by man on the long term basis. Since the 19th century the way these communities are affected changed significantly, the same way as the whole society changed, and the vegetation responded by shift of species composition, diversity and also changes of the spatial structure. This thesis brings together the most relevant changes of vegetation and their causes. However, there is similar situation in the whole Europe, or more widely in the whole temperate zone, thus there are references also for other countries. Regarding historical ecology, one of the most studied countries is the Great Britain, which is mentioned the most often in this work.