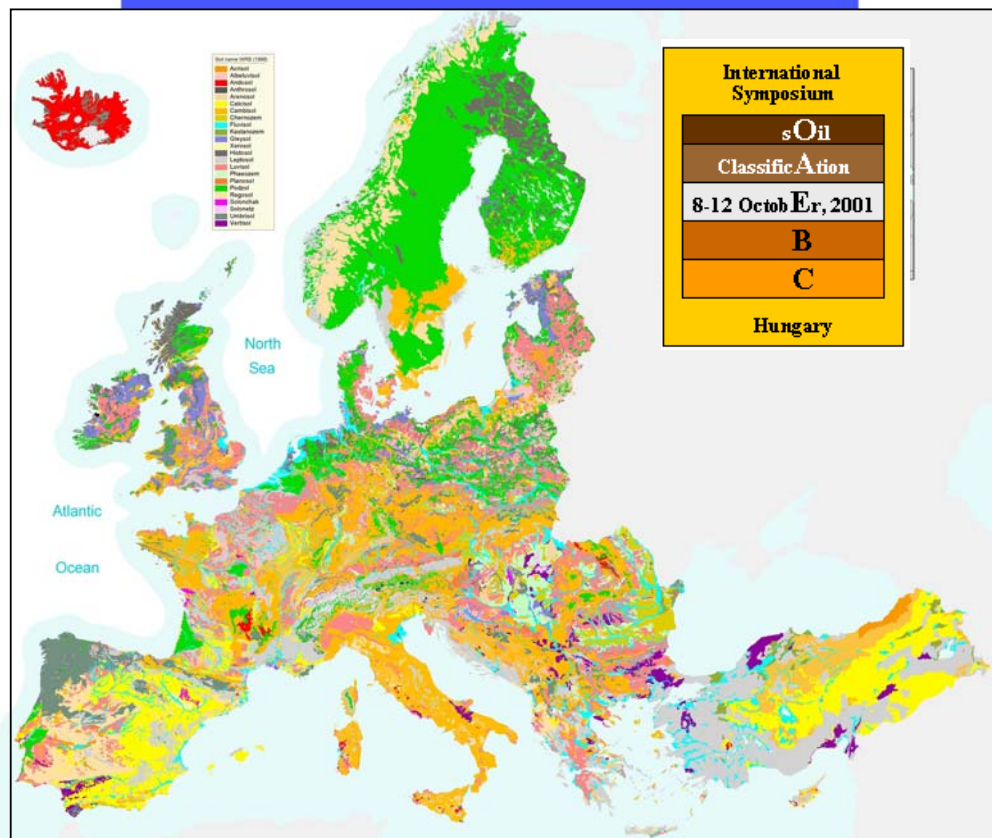


Soil Classification 2001

Erika Micheli,
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Robert J. A. Jones
Luca Montanarella (eds)



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COVER MAP
THE EUROPEAN SOIL DATABASE VERSION 1.0:
DOMINANT SOILS ACCORDING TO WRB (1998)

Preface

Classifications are constructs of humans and reflect the state of knowledge of the science. They also incorporate biases and prejudices of the individual or group that developed the system and necessarily are developed from or based on previous systems. Most modern soil classification systems were initiated in the middle of the last Century and the period for intensive use began in the 1960s. Modifications made in many of the systems were based on validation, on developments in soil science in general, and on soil classification systems of other countries.

Spurred on by the more liberal communications between nations that have taken place during the last decade, new changes have been taking place. In the United States, a second edition of Soil Taxonomy was published in 1999 incorporating all the changes made in the previous two decades. The International Union of Soil Science has developed the World Reference Base for Soil Classification after being challenged to do so by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at a meeting held at Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1978. The French have developed the ‘Référentiel Pédologique’ and the Russians are re-evaluating their system. Other countries, such as Hungary, are embarking on developing or enhancing their national systems.

The dawn of the new millennium presents an opportunity to take stock of the *status quo* of soil classification, exchange ideas and information among the global community, and determine the demands and challenges of the immediate future and re-evaluate the needs and roles of classification systems. Two factors have contributed to the way we generate knowledge and meet the demands of society. First, the shift of emphasis from biomass production to ecological and environmental considerations requires us to pay greater attention to the multi-functionality of land and how well our current soil classification systems serve this broader objective. Second, we are in an info-centric world and the obvious question is how information technology can be used to enhance the systems.

The papers comprising this publication were presented at an International Symposium “Soil Classification 2001”, held 9-12 October 2001 at Velence in Hungary. The Symposium was organized with the following objectives:

- Discuss new philosophies, concepts, and principles to enhance soil classification systems to better serve the users of information
- Report on the status of national, regional, and/or international soil classification systems
- Recommend changes where specific weaknesses exist in current systems
- Evaluate the changing demands for information and the increased use of technology in the systems of the future,
- Improve information exchange and facilitate correlation between national systems

The resulting publication provides a sound basis for improving soil classification in the new millenium.

Erika Micheli
June 2002

EDITORS' NOTE

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Erika Micheli – Freddy Nachtergaele – Robert Jones – Luca Montanarella

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