
As disciple of the psychologist C.G. Jung and student of the soil chemist H. Sticher (both in Zürich), Patzel proved the question, whether inner images could give substantial inputs for our understanding of soil and soil science.

At first, Patzel describes the development of the thinking about soils by their protagonists as part of science. This appears to be feasible, because thinking about nature since the ancient world followed the idea that nature is formed from the four elements water, air, fire (warmth), and earth (soil). He describes the history of soil material science (Boden-Stoffkunde) with the mineral theory (Palissy, Saussure, sprengel, Liebig, Stöckhardt), the soil transport and element fluxes (Darcs, Darwin, P. E. Müller, Odum, Ulrich b.o.), the pedology with soil description and genesis (Sprengel, Fallou, Dokuchaev b.o.), and modelling (Jenny), the soil fertility (Bacon, Wallerius, Senft, Steiner, Scheffer b.o.), as well as the soil qualities (Columella, L. Holberg, M. Alexander, War- kentin and Fletcher b.o.), and soil functions (Schlichting, Haase, Sauerbeck). Folk beliefs according to documented interviews by the folklorist W: Mannhardt (in the 1860s) are described together with the so-called Benandanti dreams about night fights for crops of the 16th century in Italy. The materials were analyzed from the viewpoint of depth psychology focusing upon archetypal images therein.

Patzel gives known examples of the influence of dreams upon progress in science (the discovery of the benzene ring by Kekulé b.o.). He describes Jung’s Method of dream-interpretation. He also presented his own dreams that occurred attending his diploma thesis on Soil Fertility, and his dissertation work on Soil Science and the Unconscious at the ETH Zürich. His main finding was that inner images are to be found in the background of soil science and that they can contribute to contemporary understanding of soil and soil sciences.

This book should be of main interest for those with interest in the history of soil sciences, as well as of those with interest in the ways of achieving knowledge in science. [B781]

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