

IN MEMORIAM

100 YEARS SINCE THE BIRTH OF THE BOTANIST CONSTANTIN DOBRESCU (1912-1989)



Constantin Dobrescu was born on August 1, 1912 in Gura Sărății village (Merei Commune, Buzău County), in a peasants family (with six children) Vasile and Maria Dobrescu. He followed the primary school in his native village and then the gymnasium in Pătărlagele City. In 1933 he graduated from high school at “Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu” in Buzău City, and in 1937 he graduated the Faculty of Natural Sciences, at University of Iași. Until 1939 he conducted a military service and Reserve Officers School, after that being concentrated on the Eastern Front in the Second World War.

He started the botanist career as assistant at the Botanical Garden of Iași, as it appears in the Seed Catalogs of this institution in 1947 and 1948. Being a teacher at disciplines of Systematic Botany and Phytogeography he often used as teaching material for students, plants from the Botanical Garden. Since 1942 follow the university career, being appointed assistant professor at the Department of Botany, University of Iași (led at that time by Professor Dr. Constantin Papp), is advanced lecturer in 1950, associate professor in 1959 and in 1977 has retired. In 1974, Constantin Dobrescu held at the University of Bucharest, the PhD thesis entitled “Studies on flora and vegetation of Bârlad River upper basin”, thesis prepared under the guidance of Professor Dr. Traian Ștefureac.

In 35 years of didactic activity in higher education from Iași, Constantin Dobrescu lectured on systematic botany and general botany, phytogeography, phytopathology, crop plants, modern research methods etc, both at the University of Iași and the Pedagogic Institute in the same city. He led the students practice in the field and guide over 50 license theses. Distinguished teacher, Constantin Dobrescu was appreciated by students for its clear, accurate and systematic courses, as well as thorough knowledge of the flora in the field.

Simultaneously with the teaching activity, Constantin Dobrescu has carried out an ample and efficient work in direction of nature protection in Moldova, as a member of the Nature Preservation Subcommittee of the Romanian Academy, Iași Branch and President of the Iași Branch of Biological Sciences Society in Romania. Thus, proposed and contributed to the designation of some nature reserves in Moldova, describing the flora and vegetation, such as: *Uricani Forest* (Iași County), *Georza-Dobrovăț Lakes* (Iași County), *Hârboanca-Brăhășoia Forest* (Vaslui County), *Bălteni Forest* (Vaslui County), *Glodeni-Negrești grasslands* (Vaslui County) and *Burcel Hill* (Vaslui County). He contributed to the

enrichment of the herbarium collections of national heritage of *Flora Romaniae Exsiccata* (20 species) and *Flora Moldaviae et Dobrogeae Exsiccata* (34 species), and contributed to seeds exchange collected from native plants by seeds catalog (*Delectus Seminum*) edited by Botanical Garden of Iași.

Constantin Dobrescu published about 100 studies, articles and scientific notes on the flora and vegetation of different regions of the country: the upper basin of Bârlad River, Nișcov-Buzău region and Red Lake - Harghita. As taxonomist Constantin Dobrescu was one of the 28 Romanian botanists who have edited the monumental botanical work *Flora României*, contributing to the drafting of 10 taxa of the *Poaceae* family (*Gramineae*).

Also, Constantin Dobrescu worked to describe some botanical reserves in collective works: *Monumente ale naturii din România* – Natural Monuments in Romania (1965) and *Călăuza monumentelor naturii din Moldova* – Guide to Natural Monuments of Moldova (1969), and the elaboration of monographs *Pajiștile naturale din Moldova* - Natural Grasslands in Moldova (1956) and *Pășunile și fânețele din R. P. Română* – Pastures and grasslands from RP Romania (1963). In collaboration, he published in German language the syntheses work *Conspectul asociațiilor vegetale din Moldova* – Conspectus of plant associations in Moldova, in 1972 (with Attila Kovács, currently Professor at the West University, Faculty of Natural Sciences and researcher at the Institute of Biology - Department of Botany, Zsombathely, Hungary).

Besides taxonomy, chorology and phytocoenology research, Constantin Dobrescu has studied the halophilic plant ecology, phytoteratology and mycology. In the mycology field he has discovered some fungal species and has described as new to the science, the species *Haplographium hispidulum* Dobrescu et Volcinschi (1961).

In the field of taxonomy and chorology of cormophytes in Moldavia, Constantin Dobrescu brought an important contribution by describing several species and hybrids new for the science: *Agrostis moldavica* Dobrescu et Beldie (1965), *Asperula moldavica* Dobrescu (1954), *Quercus* × *speciosa* Dobrescu et Beldie (1960), *Quercus* × *barnova* Georgescu et Dobrescu (1966), *Cirsium* × *moldavicum* Dobrescu et E. I. Nyárády (1964), all this taxa being maintained in *Romanian Flora* and *Flora Europaea* works. He identified some species as new for our country: *Schkuria abrotanoides* Roth, *Verbascum glanduligerum* Velen., *Agropyron orientale* Roem. et Schult., as well as 25 new taxa in the flora of Moldavia.

In phytocoenology field Constantin Dobrescu has described 18 coenotaxa new to the science, such as *Irido-Sietum latifoliae* Dobrescu et Vițalariu 1970 and *Galegetum officinalis* Dobrescu et Vițalariu 1981. He mentioned new choronyms and descriptions for more than a hundred plant associations, some of which are mentioned for the first time in Moldavia vegetation.

Should also be mentioned his concerns for the inventory and phenology of ornamental plants in parks and gardens, the mistletoe attacks, the reporting of some harmful plants for fisheries, mapping of the weeds in crops, forests and pastures mapping etc.

Being familiar with the botanical literature, Constantin Dobrescu has elaborated articles about “Society of Physicians and Naturalists of Jassy”, about Flora of Moldavian principality – *Flora principatului Moldovei* (by J. Szabo), about Herbarium of the botanist Constantin Petrescu from Iași, about the scientific work of Professor Constantin Papp and about conferences of geobotany and some reviews of *Flora Europaea*, Hungary Flora (by R. Soó), etc.

He held the position of editorial secretary of the Scientific Annals of University of Iași - Biology series, since 1963.

A particular aspect of the life of Constantin Dobrescu is his involvement in the destiny of Iași Botanical Garden. Thus, based on the Order of the Ministry of Education no. 74.809/1960 on 1 August 1960 was convened a Commission consisting of Vice-rector Elena Jeanrenaud, Vice-dean Pierre Jeanrenaud, Associate Professor Constantin Papp, Associate Professor Constantin Burduja, Associate Professor Constantin Dobrescu and Engineer T. Vasilescu, which reached the following conclusions: because the botanical garden located near the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University could no longer meet the requirements of teaching and research, the For a have provided a new location for future Botanical Garden. This terrain, located in the northwest of Iași city, behind the Exhibition Park had displays a diversified relief with slopes crossed by a transversal valley (Bădărău Valley). The surface was evaluated, first at about 60 ha. In the basement there is a groundwater that can be collected. It is also stipulated to be built greenhouses in the area of 5,000 square meters, all the actual outside sections, and a gradual work until 1970.

On the background of this activity, Constantin Dobrescu was appointed on 1 June 1962, Director of the the Botanical Garden of Iași. When he held this position, made available by Professor Constantin Burduja withdrawal, he already knew many of the problems to be solved and “for almost 1 year with diligent work he led the destiny of this institution and caring attention that plants material can reach in good condition the Garden from Copou hill”. Even if he briefly led the activity of the Botanical Garden of Iași (until 1 March 1963), he has shown real leadership qualities and an openness to new challenges, such that the botanical garden to be moved in actual location.

Constantin Dobrescu died in Iași, December 22, 1989, and was buried in the Eternity Cemetery of Iași (parcel 31 / I, row 15, place 22).

Through the multitude of issues raised with scientific evidence, Constantin Dobrescu is an example of popular teacher, multilateral researcher, with a competent critical spirit, admired both by the students and his collaborators.

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