

**THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BESSARABIAN MYCOLOGIST
ȘTEFAN MANIC**



Ștefan Manic was born on March, 22, 1947, in Stolniceni, district Hîncești, a village located at the edge of the forest. He inherited, from his parents, the love for nature, which later made him become a student at the Faculty of Biology and Chemistry of Tiraspol State Pedagogical University (1965).

Since the early years as a student, he had a particular interest in research and was invited to participate in expeditions to collect paleobotanical material, organized by the assistants of the Department of Botany, the now late academician Andrei Negru and dr. hab. Ana Ștefăreț. Together, they gathered a rich collection of fossil plants, which served as a basis for further research on Sarmatian flora from around the village Bursuc (district Camenca). The results were presented in two monographs of great value. After graduating from university, he worked for a year as a biology and chemistry teacher at school, in his native village, then, for another year, he served in the army.

In 1972, he started working in the Flora and Geobotany Laboratory of the Botanical Garden of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova (ASM). Between 1972 and 1976, together with his colleagues Andrei Negru and Ana Ștefăreț, Mr. Manic undertook numerous expeditions to collect palaeobotanical material, at that time he specialized in researching fossil wood. In 1976, Ștefan Manic published his first scientific paper entitled: “The Remains of *Glyptostrobus* Endl. (Taxodiaceae) in the Pontic Sediments from the South of Ukraine”. In the same year, the Flora and Geobotany Laboratory was reorganized, and Mr. Manic was transferred in the study group that researched lower plants and the theme of his doctoral thesis was approved – “Pileated Fungi in Moldova” – a new direction in the study of fungi.

At the Botanical Institute of St. Petersburg, one of the best equipped and most prestigious scientific centres, in the first two years of research, from 1977 to 1978, he inventoried about 150 species of macromycetes, included in the paper “Mushroom Composition of Agarics in the Central Part of Moldova”. With this paper, he participated in the contest for young scientists and won the 2nd prize, awarded by the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova.

Under the supervision of the famous mycologist, Boris Vasilcov, Ștefan Manic completed the doctoral theses and defended it in 1982, becoming PhD in biology. In the doctoral thesis, he presented about 300 new species of macromycetes, found on the territory of Moldova. As a result of the field research, he has gathered an impressive herbarium of macromycetes, which lists more than 2500 specimens, which today is kept in the Botanical Garden.

Along with the scientific work in the Flora and Geobotany Laboratory, Ștefan Manic actively participated in the construction of the Botanical Garden and, together with his

colleagues from the laboratory, took part in the creation of the exhibition sector “Flora of Moldova”, based on the principles of typological classification of forests from Moldova.

In 1990, by contest, he became director of “Codrii” Scientific Reserve, where he worked until 2014. From the very beginning of his activity as a manager, Stefan Manic faced acute organizational and scientific problems, as well as problems with the staff. However, having a rich experience, gained at the Botanical Garden, Mr. Manic solved these problems – supported the scientific training of four PhD students and a *dr. habilitat* in biological sciences, who successfully defended their theses.

As director of “Codrii” Scientific Reserve, Mr. Manic, in 1991-1995, with the help of the collaborators of the Botanical Garden of ASM, initiated and conducted a floristic research on (secondary) inventory, determining the precise floristic composition of plant communities in the reserve. Besides, an inventory of flora and fauna in the strictly protected area was carried out for the first time. In order to study the dynamics of development of the vegetation of the main types of forest of the reserve, a network of stationary terrains was organized.

It is noteworthy that every 5 years since 1996, were organized in the Codrii reserve four symposiums entitled “*Codrii*” *Scientific Reserve: Achievements, Problems and Prospects*. They were followed by the publication of collected articles, totalling over 400 scientific papers.

The director of the reserve always paid a lot of attention to the Museum of Nature, which was modernized and completed with new exhibits from the reserve, and in 2005 launched a new concept of its organization and obtained the status of National Museum. He founded a collection of botanized plants found in the reserve, permanently completed with new exsiccate.

As an outstanding manager, Mr. Manic, at a time when computerization was progressing at a rapid pace, realized how important the knowledge of the staff in the field of information technology was. Thus, he equipped the offices of the institution with 10 computers. The botany and zoology workshops were re-equipped with everything necessary to run meetings, scientific conferences and practical work with pupils and students. He also made possible to open, in the reserve, a canteen and a hotel for visitors. As a result of these organizational activities, “Codrii” Scientific Reserve collaborates with other institutions from the Republic of Moldova and, annually, tens of students do their practical work and prepare their theses.

By the will of fate, at the end of 2013, Mr. Ștefan Manic returned to the Botanical Garden (I) of the ASM, to the Laboratory of Spontaneous Flora and Herbarium, where his scientific career had started.

The theme, addressed by the author in the past 5 years, focuses on the taxonomic diversity of macromycetes, and has been researched for more than three decades (1976-2016), in all its aspects, in order to develop a sustainable and flexible strategy for its effective and rational use and a more effective conservation of the gene pool of the biosphere.

He managed to carry out a generalization of the research on macromycetes and, in the summer of 2015, defended his habilitation thesis in biology, on the topic “Macromycetes in the Ecosystems of the Republic of Moldova”. As a result, the taxonomic composition of macromycetes in the Republic of Moldova has been determined; it includes 836 taxa belonging to 227 genera, 81 families, 26 orders, 8 classes, 3 phyla and 2 kingdoms: Fungi and Protozoa. The biological and ecological characteristics of the identified species have been established.

The conducted study reflects the current state of the mycobiota of the Republic of Moldova and makes it possible to develop recommendations for the optimization of biodiversity conservation in this territory. For the 3rd edition of the Red Book, 15 species of macromycetes, of different categories of rarity, have been proposed and accepted by the National Committee for the Red Book. It is still necessary that the competent authorities (“Moldsilva” Agency and the Ministry of Environment) adopt measures to protect the 15, more or less endangered, species of macromycetes, as well as the edible species, by limiting the quantities allowed to be collected.

The results, obtained by the author, greatly enrich the knowledge about the biological diversity of the territory of the Republic of Moldova and represent a significant contribution to the assessment and the identification of fungal taxa, besides they are a starting point for future research.

In the future, the results of the research from the above-mentioned publications will supplement *Flora of Bessarabia* with a separate volume about the world of fungi.

Mr. Manic is the author of more than 60 scientific papers, including 9 monographs. He is the President of the Society of Mycologists and Botanists from the Republic of Moldova. For his prodigious work on the research and the conservation of biodiversity, Mr. Manic was awarded: 2nd Prize, for young scientists, of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova; Jubilee Medal “The 60th Anniversary of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova”; Honorary Diploma of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova; the Medal “Civic Merit”; Honorary Title “Emeritus Man of Science”; “Dimitrie Cantemir” Medal of the ASM; Prizes of the ASM “Ilie Untilă” and “Boris Melnic”.

On the occasion of the anniversary, we wish you, Mr. Manic, good health and new scientific achievements!

Valentina CANTEMIR, Cătălin TĂNASE