

*Contribuții Botanice* – 2014, XLIX: 21-23  
Grădina Botanică “Alexandru Borza”  
Cluj-Napoca

**LAUDATIO TO DR. GHEORGHE COLDEA  
ON HIS 75<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY AND IN HONOUR OF HIS 51 YEARS OF  
SCIENTIFIC CAREER**

by Bogdan HURDU



It is a great privilege to present this *Laudatio* in honour of Dr. Gheorghe Coldea, on the occasion of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. We hereby celebrate a great scientific career, spanning over half a century. Thus I will address you also on behalf of my colleagues, former and current researchers at the Institute of Biological Research in Cluj-Napoca, to whom Dr. Gheorghe Coldea served not only as a model during his 49 years of activity in this research institute, but also as a guide and mentor during his 20 years as a director.

Dr. Gheorghe Coldea was born on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1939 in Mănăstireni, Cluj County. He graduated from Babeș-Bolyai University in 1963 with a bachelor's degree in Biology, subsequently beginning his research career as an assistant researcher at the Horticultural

Research Institute in Blaj. After less than two years, in 1965, he began his work as a researcher at the Institute of Biological Research in Cluj-Napoca, where he continues his work at the present day.

While under the scientific supervision of Professor Alexandru Borza, he started his doctoral studies, being awarded in 1972 the PhD degree in the field of botany and phytosociology, with a thesis entitled "*The Flora and Vegetation from Plopiș Mountains*". During his following years, Dr. Gheorghe Coldea was awarded many scholarships for carrying on research visits to geobotanical institutes from the University of Wien, Göttingen University and Hanover University.

His scientific interests in all aspects of vegetation, especially regarding the mountain and alpine areas of the Carpathians, led him to become one of the most reputed scientists in the field of phytosociology, publishing over 10 books and chapters on the subject, of which three are abroad. Among the titles, we can cite the "*Prodrome des associations végétales des Carpates de Sud-Est*" (published in 1991 in Camerino, Italy), "*Vegetation potentielle de la Roumanie*" (published in 1993 in Camerino, Italy), or the chapter on "*The Alpine Flora and Vegetation of South-Eastern Carpathians*" (published in the volume *Alpine Biodiversity in Europe* in 2003 in Berlin). His thorough view and overwhelming experience over the vegetation processes and classification became a fundament for the creation of the most comprehensive work concerning the vegetation classification from Romania, with the first volume focused on the natural grasslands being published in 1997, the second volume regarding the anthropogenic associations published in 2012, and he is currently finalizing this synthetic work by analysing the forest associations.

Nevertheless, Dr. Gheorghe Coldea's passion and abnegation in the research of flora and vegetation is maybe, best reflected in his "*Geobotanical Study of Rodna Mountains*", an area where he conducted his research for over 30 years and for which he was also granted the "Grigore Antipa" Award of the Romanian Academy in 1992.

Dr. Gheorghe Coldea has also published more than 120 papers concerning aspects of botany, ecology, phytodiversity, nature conservation and especially phytosociology. His prodigious work and vast experience in these research fields were crowned with several recent publications in the prestigious scientific journals *Nature Climate Change*, *Science* and *Ecology Letters*, regarding especially the alpine and subalpine plant diversity changes in Europe in relation to climate change.

One of the best recognitions of his knowledge on the flora and vegetation of Romania was capitalized into several international collaborations with highly reputed research centres from other European countries, sufficient to mention the University of Wien, Austria, WSL Birmensdorf, Switzerland, and Laboratoire d'Ecologie Alpine of Grenoble, France. These resulted in one EU Fifth Framework Project (GLORIA Europe) and two EU Sixth Framework Projects (IntraBioDiv and ECOCHANGE), managed by Dr. Gheorghe Coldea for the Romanian contribution of the Institute of Biological Research. The involvement in these European research projects, but also many other developed at a national scale, was fundamental for bridging a strong collaboration with Professor Vasile Cristea and the researchers from "Alexandru Borza" Botanical Garden, as well as with many other research centres in Romania.

Moreover, in 2006, a newly described species from the Eastern Carpathians, *Hieracium coldei* Szlag was named in his honour.

Dr. Gheorghe Coldea's managerial abilities were more than proven during the 20 years he was the Director of the Institute of Biological Research in Cluj-Napoca. His constant support and involvement in the development of a productive and active research centre is proven also by the high number of young scientists currently working at the institute. His guidance was invaluable and always sought by PhD students, and his influence on their build-up as young researchers is reflected also by Dr. Gheorghe Coldea's scientific supervision for the defence of 10 doctoral theses.

His active involvement in nature conservation, where he has offered his expertise at the decision-making level, led him to become the scientific director of the Rodna Mountains National Park and member of the scientific committee of the Apuseni Mountains Natural Park.

We thus show our gratitude to our mentor, to a greatly successful scientist, and we hold an important scientific legacy for which we are honoured. We consider ourselves privileged to have Dr. Gheorghe Coldea as a model, and I am sure that I speak with the assent of all the Romanian scientific community and specialists abroad, friends and collaborators together when we heartily wish him all the good thoughts, great health, happiness and everlasting resources to continue his research work at the Institute of Biological Research in Cluj-Napoca, to which he has dedicated all his fruitful career.

Happy birthday, dear Dr. Gheorghe Coldea, for many years to come!