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In memoriam

Gyula Erasmus NYÁRÁDY, Outstanding Transylvanian Botanist (1881–1966)

This year we commemorate the 130th anniversary of the birth of Gyula E. Nyárády and the 45th anniversary of his death. One of the most illustrious botanists not only in Romania but also in Central Europe, he lived for 85 years, 63 of which he dedicated to scientific activity: he published 14 books, 166 papers, he described more than 1500 new taxa, plants were named after him. However, his most significant work was the 13-volume *Flora Republicii Populare/Socialiste România* (The Flora of the Romanian People's/Socialist Republic), for which he was co-author, editor and organizer.

Paradoxically, it is both easy and difficult for me to write about Gyula E. Nyárády.

It is very easy, because I knew him personally. Although I was then a child, his knowledge, his amiability exercised a great influence on me, and his scholarly presence, attitude and thinking were a model for me. On the other hand, in 1988, Kriterion Publishing House issued Kálmán Váczy and Sándor Bartha's book: *Nyárády E. Gyula a természettudós* (Gyula E. Nyárády the Natural Scientist). Both authors were close to Nyárády. Kálmán Váczy was his immediate colleague for almost two decades, they worked in the same room, they climbed the mountains together; therefore he knew Nyárády the man well but he was also familiar with his work and working style. In this book Váczy collected and listed all Nyárády's published books and studies, the new taxa described by and the plants named after him, as well as the plants Nyárády named after other botanists. Moreover, a separate chapter contains the appraisals written about this botanist in the period 1955–1981. The second author, Sándor Bartha, Nyárády's disciple and later his son-in-law, was able to appreciate his personal characteristics directly as a family member.

On the other hand, my task is very difficult, for what is there new that can I say about Gyula Erasmus Nyárády, the man and the scientist? What I can add to the previous writings above all is the revaluation of the new taxa he described, because most of these are outdated

according to present taxonomic thought. However, I am not the appropriate specialist for this; therefore I shall only point out the problems that exist.

Gyula E. Nyárády was born on 7 April 1881 in the village of Nyárádtő (Ungheni), in Mureş County. He began his secondary school education in Târgu-Mureş; then, after graduating from the teacher training college of Cluj, he studied natural sciences and geography in the Teachers College of Budapest. There he was noted for his diligence, good exam results, excellent powers of observation, and his vast knowledge of plants. During his undergraduate studies he participated in several field trips to the High Tatra and also researched the then scarcely known flora of the Dalmatian coast. His scientific articles appeared during this period (1903–1911) in *Pedagógiai Lapok* (Pedagogical Journal) and *Magyar Botanikai Lapok* (Hungarian Botanical Journal). Among them were: *A Magastátra flórájáról* (On the Flora of the High Tatra), 1904; *Eine botanische Excursion auf die Eisthaler-Spitze 263O m (Hohe Tatra)*, 1908; *Flora der Bory-Stümpfe*, 1911. In this period he had already published some articles on the flora of Transylvania as well [e.g. *Újdonságok Erdély flórájából* (Novelties from the Transylvanian Flora), 1911], and even books [*Természetrajz. Tankönyv Gáspárdi N. közreműködésével* (Natural History: A Textbook, with the collaboration of N. Gáspárdi), Késmárk, 1909].

He petitioned to be appointed as a teacher to Késmárk (Kežmarok) in order to be able to continue his botanical research in the Tatra. His attachment to his native Transylvania, however, soon determined his scientific activity. Already before World War I, in 1911 he had applied for a transfer to Târgu-Mureş. A few years later he published *Marosvásárhely és környékén élő tavaszi és nyáreleji növények meghatározó könyve* (Plant Identification Book of the Spring and Early Summer Plants Living in Târgu Mureş and Its Environs) (1914). We may call the period between 1903 and 1922 the foundation-laying years; during this time he published 19 scientific papers and two textbooks in the domain of natural science.

The year 1922 brought an important change in Nyárády's life; he was offered the post of Museum Curator (Director of the Herbarium) in the Botanic Garden of Cluj, which he accepted. Under his leadership, the museum of the Botanic Garden of Cluj became the largest and most accurately identified plant collection in Romania. After this date it was his official task to study the flora in Romania's different regions. This 26 year-long period was very fruitful in Nyárády's life: he studied the flora of different mountains and published his findings in various Romanian and Hungarian language specialized articles, e.g. papers about the flora of the Ceahlău Massif (1924), Piatra and Oslea (1928), the Red Lake and Bicaz Canyon (1937), Hargita Mountains (1928, 1930, 1942), Rodna Mountains (1941), and the Retezat Mountains (1928).

On the other hand, he thoroughly studied and presented complex genera of particular significance such as *Ranunculus* (1933), *Viola* (1932, 1941), *Hieracium* (1928, 1938, 1940, 1942, 1943), *Centaurea* (1943, 1945), or the species of the genus *Alyssum* (1927, 1928, 1929, 1930). The most important results of this period are his Hungarian and Romanian books on the flora of Cheile Turzii: *A Tordahasadék monografikus ismertetése* (The Monographic Presentation of the Tordahasadék), 1937, pp. 196; *A tordahasadéki edényes növények felsorolásának összefoglalása* (Summary of the List of Vascular Plants in the Tordahasadék), 1938, pp. 321; *A Tordahasadék nevezetesebb látnivalóinak rövid ismertetése* (Brief Presentation of the Most Notable Sights of the Tordahasadék), 1938, pp. 56; *Monografia Cheii Turzii* (Monograph of Cheile Turzii), 1937, pp. 188; *Cheia Turzii. Descrierea cîtorva părţi pitoreşti (*Cheia Turzii: The Description of Some Picturesque Parts), with the collaboration of Sándor Bartha, 1938, pp. 55; as well as *Kolozsvár és környékének flórája* (The Flora of Cluj and its Environs), booklets I–IX, 1940–1944, pp. 688.

Gyula E. Nyárády's most productive years (1948–1966) and his career at the Academy followed only after he was elected in 1948 as a regular member of the Romanian Scientific Academy and commissioned to organize the production of the 12-volume *Flora RPR* (The Flora of the Romanian People's Republic). Nyárády set up a working collective with 26 members to whom he yearly assigned the tasks, but the supervision and the correction of the eventual

deficiencies or errors were carried out by him. The *Flora*-group also had 10 excellent draughtsmen who worked on the illustrations under Nyárády's direction.

Although he was almost 70 when he began work on *Flora RPR*, Nyárády exhibited youthful energy and complete dedication. The *Flora*'s first, 488-page, volume was published as early as 1952. The other volumes followed at intervals of 2–3 years. He lived to see the publication of the 1000-page 10th volume, the so-called Nyárády volume, which contained the description of the genus *Hieracium* and was written by Nyárády alone. The 11th (1966) and 12th (1972), and the 13th supplementary volume (1976), were published after his death on 13 June 1966, and so he did not contribute to their material.

The volumes of *Flora RPR* (since 1966 *Flora RSR*) have enormous scientific value. They contain, on the one hand, the description of Romania's entire flora, and on the other hand, the information from previously published floristic works and relevant herbarium data. This book will remain a standard work for future centuries too, it being only necessary to complete it perhaps with some additional species or to introduce nomenclatural changes.

The collaborators of the *Flora* used for many years the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature issued in 1930 (Cambridge Decisions), which was still based on *taxonomic typification* (it used the taxonomic units *typicus, genuinus, verus, communis*, etc.), although this ceased to be valid from 1 January 1958, being substituted by *nomenclatural typification*. From this date onward the names *typicus, typus*, etc., should have been omitted from both the *Flora* volumes and Nyárády's own papers, but they were left out beginning only with the 7th volume. Also, from 1 January 1958 the description of any newly discovered plant is valid only if it specifies the holotype or the lectotype. If these were lost or destroyed, a neotype collected from the original *locus classicus* can be used. Naturally, the name of the herbarium where this material is lodged and the sheet number in the herbarium must also be recorded.

Therefore, according to international standards, all plant descriptions of the Romanian flora made by Gyula E. Nyárády and the other Romanian botanist of the period are invalid. It is the task of future generations of botanists to meet these taxonomic and nomenclatural demands. The data collected in the *Flora* volumes and in Nyárády's own papers will unquestionably last. Only the manner of description and the nomenclature require some modifications.

According to Váczy's and Bartha's 1988 book, Gyula E. Nyárády described 1627 new botanical taxa during his life. To check their validity is an enormous task well worth carrying out, and indeed it should be done.

Nyárády described two new genera:

The monotypic genus ***Pietrosia***, with the endemic and relict species *P. levitomentosa* Nyár. (1963), was discovered in Bistriţa Mountains, on Piatra Bogolin situated on the territory of Pietrosul Brosteni; its holotype is preserved in the herbarium of the Botanic Garden of Cluj (sheet CL.443.644). Soó (1968) moved *Pietrosia* into *Hieracium*, while Sell (1976) transferred it from *Hieracium* to *Andryala*. Recently, however, on the basis of morphological analyses of achenes and the monopodial structure of the rhizome, Sennikov (1999) has restored the genus *Pietrosia* and the species *P. levitomentosa* Nyár. Negrean (2004) has recognized this rehabilitation of the genus.

The genus ***Tripetalum*** with the single species *T. pinifolium* was described by Nyárády in 1926 based on examples from Ulu Dagh, Anatolia, Turkey. It was transferred by Dudley (1966) to *Alyssum*; thus *Tripetalum pinifolium* is a synonym today of *Alyssum pinifolium* (Nyár.) Dudley and the genus *Tripetalum* has not been conserved.

In what follows, we shall present the fate of a few new taxa out of the 110 new species and 127 hybrids described by Nyárády, relying on *Flora Europaea* and *Index Nominorum Genericorum*. The species have been selected randomly.

Within the genus ***Alyssum*** (following *Flora Europaea* 1, ed.2, 1993) the following are still accepted at specific rank: *A. borzaeanum* Nyár., *A. caliacrae* Nyár. (incl. *A. obtusifolium*

Steven ex DC. subsp. *cordatocarpum* Nyár.) and *A. smolikanum* Nyár. Although several of Nyárády's *Alyssum* species, including *A. simonkaianum Nyár., A. sulcati-frons* Nyár. and *A. transiens* Nyár., are not recognized, *Flora Europaea* lists a number of his species that deserve further research.

The following have been included within other species: *A. cuneipetalum* Nyár. = *A. longistylum* (Somm. & Levier) Grossh., *A. degenianum Nyár.* and *A. punctatum Nyár.* = *A. murale* Waldst., *A. grintescui* Nyár. = *A. tortuosum* Willd.; *A. obtusifolium* Steven ex DC. subsp. *helioscopioides* Nyár. and *A. bertolonii* Desv. subsp. *scutarinum* Nyár. (incl. *A. balkanicum* Nyár., *A. kosaninum* Nyár.) are still accepted at subspecific rank.

In ***Centaurea***: *C. piroskana* Nyár., *C. beltekiana* Nyár., *C. brasoviana* Nyár., *C. iclodii* Nyár. and *C. soói* Nyár. are no longer recognized. *C. coziensis* Nyár. = *C. rhenana* Bor. ex Nyman

In ***Rosa***: *R. coziae* Nyár. = *R. villosa* L., therefore no longer a Romanian endemic species.

In ***Rubus***: *R. fagetanus* Nyár. is an accepted species, *R. banaticus* Nyár. = *R. bifrons* L.

In ***Hieracium***: *H. abietogenum* Nyár., *H. sublicicaule* Nyár., *H. lubricicante* Nyár., *H. ostii bucurae* Nyár., *H. pseudokotschyanum* Nyár., *H. tomasiasae* Nyár. have all been included within the single species *H. silesiacum* Krause.

Finally, most of the several hundred infraspecific taxa described by Nyárády were not included in *Flora Europaea.*

In the decade previous to his death, Nyárády published another important book: *Flora şi vegetaţia Munţilor Retezat* (The Flora and Vegetation of the Retezat Mountains), 1958. Another work, *Szováta fürdő flórája és vegetációja* (The Flora and Vegetation of Sovata) unfortunately remained in manuscript, although he prepared it for publication both in Hungarian and in Romanian, drawing the maps himself.

Nyárády's own herbarium, consisting of 50,000 sheets, the instruments belonging to this, and the botanist's books are preserved in the Museum of Natural Sciences in Sibiu. During the years he was a museum curator, he added 20,000 specimens to the University Herbarium of Cluj; his son, Antal Nyárády donated 5,000 more herbarium sheets to the Agricultural University of Cluj.

Already during his life, Gyula E. Nyárády's work received national and international recognition. The fact that at the age of 67 he was appointed head of the editorial group preparing the greatest and most fundamental botanical work in Romania, *Flora RPR (RSR)*, was a great tribute. His 80th anniversary was celebrated with a festivity at the Academy; he was awarded the Star of the Romanian Socialist Republic (1st degree), the Order of Labour (1st class), and the title of Excellent Scientist, as well as the State Award of the Romanian Socialist Republic. He was appointed by the Academy to several foreign missions. He was a member of the *Flora Europaea* Editorial Board and of the International Association for Plant Taxonomy and Nomenclature, Utrecht, since he was one of the most outstanding botanists not just in Romania but in Central Europe as well.

Forty-five years, almost half a century, has passed since Gyula E. Nyárády's death. His life's work and his scientific merits and achievements are undying.

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