

Foreword

This is a special issue of *Phytologia Balcanica* compiled by one of the members of the Editorial Board, Dr Kit Tan, who is guest editor for the issue. Biologists from 22 institutes in 14 countries have been invited and presented papers dealing with a diversity of plants in the fields of systematics, floristics, phytogeography, plant anatomy, endemism, threatened plants and bibliographic research in the Balkan Peninsula. On behalf of the Editorial Board of *Phytologia Balcanica* we express our warmest thanks to all contributors of this special issue. We acknowledge with gratitude the following persons who have taken time to review the manuscripts submitted: Manfred A. Fischer, Feza Gunergun, Eckehart Jäger, Lise Bolt Jørgensen, Heinz Kalheber, Tristan Lafranchis, Antoaneta Petrova, Vladimir Stevanović, Arne Strid, Kit Tan and Jerzy Zieliński.

We would like to inform the readers of the Journal that Dr Ana Petrova has retired from academic duties. We have been most fortunate to secure her services as Editor-in-Chief of the journal for the past six years.

*“An editor is a gatherer of other men’s flowers,
Nothing but the string that binds them, is his own.”*

Ana Petrova has done more than tie strings. She has devoted herself tirelessly to bring to the journal the scientific standards it has reached today, recognized and accepted as a truly representative regional journal for Balkan flora and vegetation. We do not know all details regarding her work and career as we have not had the pleasure of knowing or working with her in earlier years but what we write may not be unrepresentative.

Ana Petrova graduated from Sofia University in 1966 where she studied biology and specialised in botany. She started her PhD studies at the Institute of Botany of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. In 1970 she



Dr Ana Petrova
Editor-in-Chief of *Phytologia Balcanica* during 2004–2010.

successfully defended her thesis entitled ‘Taxonomic studies on the wild growing representatives of the genus *Linum* in Bulgaria’ and was appointed researcher at the Institute. For 40 years she was involved in all major national research programmes dealing with botany, such as the preparation of the multi-volume Flora of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Red Data Book of Bulgaria, the Atlas of Endemic Plants in Bulgaria, a Field Guide to the Vascular Plants in Bulgaria, etc. Her research interests and studies have been in the fields of taxonomy and biosystematics of many groups of vascular plants in the Bulgarian flora, on endemism, on conservation of rare and threatened plants.

She is author or co-author of more than 140 articles on the Bulgarian members of *Caryophyllaceae*, *Dipsacaceae*, *Gentianaceae*, *Geraniaceae*, *Linaceae*, *Plantaginaceae*, *Poaceae*, *Polygalaceae*, etc.

A number of taxa have been described by her and co-workers such as *Bromus parilicus* Petrova, Kožuharov & Ehrend., *Gentianella bulgarica* subsp. *jundolensis* Kožuharov & Petrova, *Polygala hospita* var. *achtarovii* Kožuharov & Petrova, *P. hospita* var. *moesiaca* Kožuharov & Petrova, etc. *Hieracium petrovae* Vladimirov & Szeląg was named after her in recognition of her contribution to the knowledge of the Bulgarian flora.

Together with Prof. Stefan Kožuharov, Ana Petrova taught Plant Taxonomy and Evolution at Sofia University during 1982–1992, and by herself, Plant Taxonomy at Plovdiv University (1993–1998). There she trained several new decades of botanical students and supervised the diploma or PhD work of a number of graduates.

Ana Petrova has been a member of OPTIMA, including membership of its International Board (2001–2007), IAPT (2000–2010), Chair-person of the Bulgarian Man and Biosphere Committee (since 2001), member of the Bulgarian Botanical Society, Bulgarian Phytocoenological Society, Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, the national Specialized Scientific Council in Botany and Mycology.

In 1993 Ana Petrova was the chief organiser of the VII OPTIMA meeting held in Borovets on Rila Mountains and all who attended this meeting have declared it was the best organized one they had ever known; everything ran like clockwork. This success was in no small part due to her dedicated and conscientious work behind the scenes.

Ana Petrova was Scientific Secretary (1994–1998) and Deputy Director (1998–2003) of the Institute of Botany. During this transitional period for the whole Bulgarian Academy of Sciences she spent all her energy and efforts to improve the organisation and quality of research in the Institute. In the past 10 years she coordinated several large and important projects, thus contributing much to the development of the research infrastructure in the Institute, funding and establishment of new research fields, achievement of important

results for national policy in the field of biodiversity and conservation, e.g., the elaboration of the national IUCN Red Lists for fungi, bryophytes, vascular plants and also the preparation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan (1999–2004, 2005–2010).

In recognition of her work, Ana Petrova has received personally or as part of a team, several prestigious national and international awards. Among them we may relate the Medal “13 centuries Bulgaria” (1985), Silver OPTIMA Medal (1993), Award of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences for popularizing science (2000), award of the International Foundation “Pro Herbario Mediterraneo” (2001), Medal “50 years Bulgaria in UNESCO” (2006).

In 2004 Ana Petrova became Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Phytologia Balcanica* and immediately rejuvenated it with a new outlook, scope and format. Up to this issue, Vol. 16 (2), she has devoted all her enthusiasm, patience and energy to re-shape the journal to achieve the academic standards required for a regional botanical journal.

Vladimir Vladimirov has had the pleasure to work under the supervision of Ana Petrova since 1998 and to share working facilities with her at the Institute for the last several years. Kit Tan is a good friend and has advised Ana and worked closely with her since her appointment as Editor-in-Chief of the journal. Both have been deeply impressed by Ana's enthusiasm, working capacity (she never took holidays!), sense of duty, responsibility, punctuality and devotion to any work or topic she was involved in. She has supported all the junior researchers in the Department of Flora and Florogenesis as well as in the other departments of the Institute with scientific information, literature and advice, sharing knowledge, experience and establishing contacts for them with eminent foreign scientists who are her close friends.

Special and sincere thanks are offered to Ana Petrova for her work which is highly appreciated. With her departure, the journal and the Institute of Botany have lost one of the most active members of staff. We are sure that all contributors, reviewers and readers join us in wishing Ana Petrova good health, good luck and many more happy and enjoyable years in botany for a long time to come.

Vladimir Vladimirov (Secretary of Editorial Board)

Kit Tan (member of Editorial Board and guest editor for special issue)