

On the eightieth anniversary of the birth of Professor Dobrina Temniskova, a prominent algologist and botanist

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The life of Prof. DSc. Dobrina N. Temniskova-Topalova in science has already been described in depth by her colleague and friend Professor Dimitar Vodenicharov and her students Kalina Manoylov & Nadja Ognjanova (2006). I would just like to focus on some of her scientific and public works. She has certainly had a profound impact on my own career, as well as on the careers of many other algologists, botanists and palaeobotanists.

I met Professor Temniskova for the first time in 1981, when she taught me Systematic Botany (algae and fungi) at Sofia University. The students were attracted by her charm, temperament, enthusiasm, and energy. I was taking then my first steps in botany, but already on the following year I found myself studying fossil diatoms from the Neogene sediments in Bulgaria under Prof. Temniskova. I was impressed by her personality, knowledge and the teaching methods employed by her, which gave me the freedom to develop my own abilities. She never seemed disappointed and always showed interest in my point of view. It was also quite evident to all her students that she had total command of the subject she taught. Her professionalism and noble conduct impressed me so strongly that I felt simply destined to engage in palaeobotany, palaeoecology and biostratigraphy when I sat for my Master's Thesis.



Prof. D. Temniskova in her study.

Dobrina Nikolova Temniskova was born on 12th November 1934 in Veliko Tarnovo, a former capital city of Bulgaria during the Second Bulgarian Kingdom in the Middle Ages. She completed there her elementary and secondary education, Biology and Bulgarian Language and Literature were her favourite subjects. In 1952, D. Temniskova enrolled at the Faculty of Biology, Geology and Geography of St. Kliment Ohridski Sofia University, in one of the University's oldest departments - the Department of Botany. At the University she studied under some of the most famous scholars in Bulgarian botany, namely, Acad. Daki Yordanov, Prof. Kiril Popov, Prof.

Alexander Vulkanov, Prof. Boris Kitanov, all great researchers, formidable professionals and excellent friends. In 1962, Prof. Temniskova got her first job as Assistant Professor at the Botany Department, Faculty of Biology, Sofia University. Ever since her student years, she had evinced great interest in algae, and in 1972 she defended her PhD Thesis in algology. Subsequently, in 1994, she completed another dissertation on *Taxonomy, Evolution and Biostratigraphy of the Bulgarian Neogene Diatoms* and received the scientific degree Doctor of Biological Sciences.

In the professional advancement of Prof. Temniskova, mention deserve her specializations and studies abroad at the Diatom Lab of Saint Petersburg University, at Harkov University, Ukraine, and Athens



In Arbanassi, near the town of Veliko Tarnovo (2008).



At the opening ceremony of the 7th National Conference of Botany (2011).

University, Greece. There she commenced her professional contacts with V. S. Sheshukova-Poretzkaja, N. I. Strelnikova, T. F. Kozyrenko, I. V. Makarova, A. I. Moiseeva, A. M. Matvyenko, K. Anagnostidis, and A. Economou-Amilli.

The entire teaching and research career of Prof. Temniskova unfolded at Sofia University, Faculty of Biology, Department of Botany. She worked as Assistant Professor until 1995, when she became Full Professor at Sofia University. She founded and headed the Laboratory of Diatom Analyses (1982–2002), served as Head of the Botany Department, member of the Academic Board of Sofia University (1999–2003), and the first Ombudsman in the history of Sofia University (since 2004).

The major scientific contributions of Prof. Temniskova are in paleofloristics and taxonomy, biostratigraphy, paleoecology, paleobiogeography, and evolution of diatoms and algae, and she introduced in Bulgaria the systematics and modern studies of diatoms with recent and ancient aquatic habitats. She is author of more than 120 scientific papers published in Bulgarian, German, French, Swedish, Finnish, Russian, and American journals, as well as of a number of books and textbooks. Prof. Temniskova has also participated in international

symposia and congresses in more than 50 countries: the United States, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, Netherlands, Russia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, the former Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, etc.

Prof. Temniskova has been on many scientific boards and expert working groups in Bulgaria as a head of scientific projects and member of many editorial boards. In her capacity of President of the Bulgarian Botanical Society (since 1999), Prof. Temniskova organized two National Botanical Conferences. She was active in the protection and development of the Botanical Garden of Sofia University in the town of Balchik. Thanks to her help and expert advice, the Garden has become a place for understanding plant diversity and conservation and a lovely venue for teaching and education.

For her life-work contribution, Prof. Temniskova was awarded the Honorary Badge of Sofia University, 1st degree (1999) and the Honorary Badge of Sofia University with a Blue Stripe (2003).

Finally, on behalf of the Editorial Board of *Phytologia Balcanica* I have the pleasure to congratulate warmly Prof. DSc. Dobrina Nikolova Temniskova-Topalova and to convey to her our best wishes for her 80th birthday. We wish her many happy returns!