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In Memoriam Dr. Mykhaylo ZAHULSKYY

By

Bohdan PROTS*), Anton DRESCHER**) and Tatyana KHMIL'***)

With 1 Figure

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Summary

PROTS B., DRESCHER A. & KHMIL' T. 2004. In memoriam Dr. Mykhaylo ZAHULSKYY). – *Phyton* (Horn, Austria) 44(2): 309–318, with 1 figure. – English with German summary.

Dr. Mykhaylo ZAHULSKYY (*10. VII. 1960, †27. I. 2002) was an eminent Ukrainian orchidologist, conservationist, florist and a very committed curator of the Lviv National University Herbarium where he worked as a Senior Research Scientist. He also organised several ecological student camps in the Carpathians and botanical excursions for foreign research institutions in Ukraine. Many checklists and red lists for plants of Ukraine could be prepared only due to his engagement in this field. His work on and for orchids of Ukraine has been widely acclaimed. He was also the editor of the "Lyubka-Platanthera" Journal. The list of his c. 90 publications gives an impression of his scientific career. A tragic car accident put an untimely end to his life.

Zusammenfassung

PROTS B., DRESCHER A. & KHMIL' T. 2004. In Memoriam Dr. Mykhaylo ZAHULSKYY. – *Phyton* (Horn, Austria) 44(2): 309–318, mit 1 Abbildung. – Englisch mit deutscher Zusammenfassung.

Dr. Mykhaylo ZAHULSKYY (*10. VII. 1960, †27. I. 2002) war ein Ukrainischer Orchideenforscher, Naturschützer, Florist und Kurator des Herbariums der Lemberger Universität (LW), wo er zuletzt als Senior Research Scientist arbeitete. Er organisierte mehrere „Ökologische Studentenlager“ in den Karpaten und Botanische Exkursionen für aus-

*) Dr. B. PROTS, State Museum of Natural History, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 18 Teatralna Str., Lviv 79008 Ukraine; e-mail: bprots7@fastmail.fm

**) Dr. A. DRESCHER, Institute of Botany, Karl-Franzens University of Graz, Holteigasse 6, 8010 Graz, Austria; e-mail: anton.drescher@uni-graz.at

***) T. KHMIL' Botany Department, Biology Faculty, I. Franko Lviv National University, Hrushevskyy Str.4, Lviv, 79000 Ukraine.

ländische Forschungsinstitutionen in der Ukraine. Viele „Checklisten“ und „Rote Listen“ für das Gebiet der Ukraine gehen auf seine Initiative zurück und konnten mit Hilfe seiner Geländenotizen fertiggestellt werden. Seine Arbeit an und für Orchideen der Ukraine war weithin anerkannt. Er war Herausgeber der Zeitschrift „Lyubka-Platanthera“. Seine fast 90 Publikationen spiegeln seinen wissenschaftlichen Werdegang wider. Ein tragischer Autounfall beendete sein Leben.

Trying to write about a scientist with such diverse and varied interests is not easy. We present here only the highlights of his short but fruitful life, remaining strictly to his official and private documents. At the same time we know, each of his colleagues and friends has a treasure of fond memories, which will keep him alive in our hearts.

The tragic car accident in the evening of January 27, 2002 brought the life of Dr. Mykhaylo ZAHULSKYY, Ukrainian orchidologist and curator of the Lviv [Lemberg] National University Herbarium (LW) to an untimely end.

Mykhaylo Mykolayovich (in russian Mykhail Nikolayevich) ZAHULSKYY (other transcriptions of the name: ZAGULSKIJ, ZAGULSKY, ZAHULSKI) was born on 10 August 1960, in the village of Pidlyssya, Zolochivskyy Rayon (District), L'viv Oblast (Province) in a family of rural intelligentsia. The picturesque environment of the surrounding hills (Holohory Mts.) left a lasting impression on his soul. As a boy, he was often in the hills enjoying the beauty of the forests and rich dry meadows. His parents (Yaroslava ZAHULSKA and Mykola ZAHULSKYY) wistfully recount Mykhaylo's love for the house garden and his object of pride, his succulent plant collection.

After finishing the Olessk High School (Busk Rayon; Lviv Oblast), he successfully passed the entrance examinations for the Lviv University, Faculty of Biology in 1977. During his student years, Mykhaylo was an active member of the 'Nature Protection Group' (Druzhyna Okhorony Pryrody) and also participated in the 'Biosphere Reserves' (Zapovidnyky) Programme. He also spent some time in the Caucasus Biosphere Reserve, and the Visimsky Biosphere Reserve (Ural Mts.) in 1978 and 1979 respectively, where he collected lots of experience and laid the foundation for his future diverse field of interests.

Mykhaylo ZAHULSKYY (see fig. 1) completed his studies at the Lviv University in 1982. Subsequently, he got a position of an "inzhener" at the Department of Morphology, Systematics and Physiology (since 1992 Department of Botany) of the same University. From 1998 till his untimely death, he worked as a Senior Research Scientist and Herbarium curator.

In 1995, he successfully completed his Ph.D. thesis with the title "Chorology, Population Structure and Conservation of the Orchids (*Orchidaceae*) in the Western Provinces of Ukraine". In 1998, the scientific government title of "Senior Research Scientist" was conferred upon him.

In 1998 he was granted a research fellowship at the Geobotany Department of the Lublin University, Poland, which was succeeded on its heels by the Szafer Fellowship at the Polish Botanical Society of the Institute of Botany, Polish Academy of Sciences, Kraków, in 1999.

As a Herbarium curator with a special fondness for orchids, he collected a couple of thousand specimens of different *Orchidaceae* species, most of them are housed in the Lviv University Herbarium (LW). Although the limited re-

sources of the period of transition and stagnation in Ukrainian economy were discouraging, ZAHULSKYY's hard work raised the standard of the Herbarium substantially. The fact, that the oldest collections in Ukraine are accessible here, is also one of his achievements. He also collected and published a lot of material on the history of the Herbarium and famous collectors of the XIXth century.

Dr. Mykhaylo ZAHULSKYY is the author of around 90 publications in the field of distribution, population structure and conservation of orchids in the western provinces of Ukraine. The preservation of other Red-List species, history of botany, herbarium collections in Ukraine and abroad were his other interests, which were dealt in his papers. About half of them were prepared in collaboration with nearly 50 (!) other scientists, which underlines his independence as well as his readiness to cooperate. He was communicative, liked to travel and participated in more than 30 conferences.

Applied nature conservation was one of Mikhaylo's field of interest. From 1990 to 1994 he organised several ecological student camps in the International Biosphere Reserve "White Carpathians" (Czech Republic). He also worked in Bieszczadzsky, Tatransky, Roztoczański and Pieninsky National Parks (Poland). For many years ZAHULSKYY cooperated actively with different institutions like the administrations of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve 'Medobory' and the 'Rostochya' Nature Reserves as well as with Carpathian National Nature Parks Yavorivsky and 'Skolivski Beskydy' and Lviv Province Department of Ecology and Natural Resources. His biodiversity studies in these parks are of great interest. For some of these studies he even placed his private resources at disposal. His grandfather's house in the village of Pidlyssya is exemplary in this context, which he used as a botanical field station for the Northern Podilya exploration. This house has been since then a favourite haunt for many Ukrainian and foreign scientists, Ph.D. students and naturalists.

In 1993 Mykhaylo organised an excursion with the botanists of the L'viv National University and the Institute of Botany of the University of Graz to the Ukrainian Carpathian Mts. As a result of this excursion *Nigritella carpatica* – a relict species of the Eastern Carpathian Mts. – was described together with H. TEPNER and E. KLEIN.

In order to improve the available data on biodiversity, he managed many research projects and was (co-)author of project reports like "Inventory and database on rare plant species in the western provinces of Ukraine", or in 1999–2000, "Yavorivsky National Nature Park establishment". During the same period he was also the leader of a botanical group of International Polish-Ukrainian-Byelorussian project "Ecological valley corridor of Western Bug river: state, threats and preservation", supported by IUCN. Till his death he prepared in co-operation with A. ZELENCHUK the "Check-list of vascular plants of Lviv Province listed in the Ukrainian Red Book", which is not published yet. He was



Fig. 1: M. M. ZAHULSKYY in 1993

the member of the National Commission for the Ukrainian Red Book and of Advisory Council for the Yavorivsky National Nature Park management.

He was the organiser and editor of the "Lyubka-Platanthera" Journal (The Bulletin of the Ukrainian Society for the Protection of Orchids). Together with his colleagues he prepared the first two issues (1997 and 1998). His disappointment about the inability to publish further issues due to lack of resources was great, which didn't hinder him from following other goals.

Mykhaylo ZAHULSKYY was a member of several scientific organisations: Ukrainian Botanical Society, Shevchenko Scientific Society, European Commission for Orchids, Ukrainian Nature Protection Society, Ukrainian Society for Protection of Orchids and Carpathian Society.

He always had a sympathetic ear for everybody problems, botanical or otherwise, and one hardly finds anybody who sought help from him and got turned away. He will always remain in our memory as a good friend, wise advisor and a beloved teacher to his students. More than his colleagues and friends he will be missed by his two children (Nataliya, 9 years and Taras, 6 years old), his wife Nataliya, his parents and all other family members.

Mykhaylo set many goals in his life and achieved most of them at a young age. His life ends like a suddenly interrupted song, a song tuned to botany.

Acknowledgements

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Chronological list of Mykhaylo ZAHULSKYY's publications

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 - 1985c. Orchids within the three local nature reserves of Lviv Province. – Dep. in UkrNIINTI 13. 5. 1985, N 10084 Uk-85 Dep., 10. (in Russian).
 - 1985d. Spread and conservation of orchids in the western part of the Podilya Region. – Young scientists and main directions of modern biology development: Proceedings of 16th scientific conference of young scientists of the MGU Biological Department (Moscow, 20–24, April, 1985), 33–35. (in Russian).
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