

Prof. Dr Jelena Vukojević
Faculty of Biology, University of Belgrade

In memoriam
Prof. dr Maria Muntañola Cvetković
(1923 – 2011)



A year has passed since the death of the doyen of Yugoslav and Serbian mycology, Prof. Dr. Maria Muntañola Cvetković, scientific advisor of the Institute for Biological Research “Siniša Stanković” in Belgrade and Professor of Faculty of Science, University of Belgrade and University of Novi Sad.

Professor Muntañola Cvetković was born in Barcelona in 1923, and later moved with her family to Argentina where she finished high school and graduated at the University of Buenos Aires, gaining the degree of Agronomy engineer. As a graduated agronomy engineer, she engaged in phytopathology at the University Institute of Miguel Lillo in Tucuman, in northern Argentina. It was the beginning of her scientific interest in microfungi that remained the subject of her study and her passion to the end of her career. She gained the degree of PhD in 1958, under the supervision of the famous phytopathologist Georges Viennot-Bourgin. After her marriage in 1960, Dr. Muntañola Cvetković lived in Belgrade and was engaged in scientific work at the Institute for Biological Research „Siniša Stanković” in Belgrade. Therefore, she was one of the first mycologists in Yugoslavia that studied microfungi. Remembering all that she has done for the coming generations of mycologists, for science in this field and society as a whole, this brief overview presents her extensive scientific work, as well as participation in national and international scientific conferences, where she worthily represented Yugoslavian and then Serbian scientific achievements.

She started her scientific work in 1948 in Argentina studying phytopathogenic fungi. On this occasion she toured the whole of Argentina and the neighboring countries Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Panama and Cuba. After coming to Belgrade she expanded her field of interest but still remained in the domain of microfungi. In addition to phytopathology, she studied the physiology and taxonomy of fungi isolated from different substrates and, later on, producers of mycotoxins and their toxicity. Those studies have contributed to understanding the pathogenesis of a number of important pathogenic fungi of agricultural crops as well as the introduction of successful measures of prevention and control of plant diseases. Detection of fungi and mycotoxins in a variety of stored food products

contributed to their suppression, ensuring healthy food and nutrients. A particularly significant contribution of Prof. Dr. Maria Muntañola Cvetković to mycology was her discovery as author or coauthor of eight newly-described species: *Phaeoramularia gomphrenicola* (Speg.) Munt.-Cvetk. 1960; *Aspergillus aureolatus* Munt.-Cvetk. & Bata 1964; *Penicillium yugoslavicum* C. Ramírez & Munt. 1964; *Aspergillus protuberus* Munt.-Cvetk. 1968; *Embellisia didymospora* Munt.-Cvetk. & Ristan. 1976; *Diaporthe / Phomopsis helianthi* Munt.-Cvetk. *et al.* 1981; *Penicillium aureocephalum* Munt.-Cvetk., Hoyo et Gómez-Bole and *Arborillus llimonae* Munt.-Cvetk. Bole & Gómez-Bolea 1998. She was the founder of the mycological laboratory in the Institute for Biological Research “Siniša Stanković”, where numerous mycologists and visiting research students from abroad studied under her supervision. During her study of microfungi from different habitats, she formed a fungal collection with a representative number of species. After retirement, from 1996 to 2002, she collaborated with mycologists from the Faculty of Biology, University of Barcelona within the project “Biodiversity of fungi in Catalonia”, as an expert for identification of micromycetes. The result of this collaboration was monitoring of micromycetes in the tested area and determination of species new to science.

The results of her research have been published by the world’s most prestigious scientific journals such as *Archives für Mikrobiologie* (Germany), *Canadian Journal of Botany* (Canada), *Cryptogamie Mycologie* (France) *European Journal of Applied Microbiology* (Germany), *Mycologia* (USA), *Mycopathologia* (Netherlands), *Phytopathology* (USA), *Sydowia* (Australia), *Transactions of the British Mycological Society* (UK), etc. During the years of her scientific work, from 1948 in Argentina to 2002 in Barcelona, she published 77 scientific papers, which were quoted in prestigious scientific journals, and she participated in 61 scientific meetings. She has participated in numerous national research projects and was coordinator of several international research projects. She was the first president of the Mycological Society of Serbia, a member of the Yugoslav Society for Biosystematics, Plant Protection Society and the British Mycological Society.

Prof. Dr. Maria Muntañola Cvetković had successful collaboration with mycologists all around the world, owing to numerous scholarships: University of California, USA; Memorial John Simon Guggenheim Foundation for Plant Diseases Studies; “Etudiant Patromée” the governments of France; National Council for Scientific Research of Argentina for Phytopathological studies. She visited a number of countries, either as a participant in scientific meetings or as a lecturer by invitation. It would be difficult to list all places she visited, but to mention some of them: Italy, Great Britain, Holland, USA, Iraq (visiting professor at the University of Baghdad) and others.

As a University Professor, Dr. Maria Muntañola Cvetković taught Phytopathology at the Faculty of Science (Department of Biology) University of Belgrade and Mycology at the Faculty of Science (Department of Biology) University of Novi Sad. She was a supervisor to many master’s theses and doctoral dissertations at the University where she gave lectures and also took part in the work of other Universities in the former Yugoslavia. She is author of the book *General Mycology* (1985), which represented a scientific publication of extremely high value, with a comprehensive presentation of the fungi kingdom for the first time in the Serbian language. This book has a significant position as a textbook for students but also as an indispensable guide for all mycologists. The *Guide to the microscopic fungi (Guia de los Hongos microscópicos)* (1997) is a book that was published in Barcelona and is an excerpt from the *General Mycology* publication.

Prof. Dr. Maria Muntañola Cvetković was very demanding and critical in both the selection of colleagues as well as research with them, and hence she taught a large number of mycologists who are now successfully engaged in different aspects of mycological research.