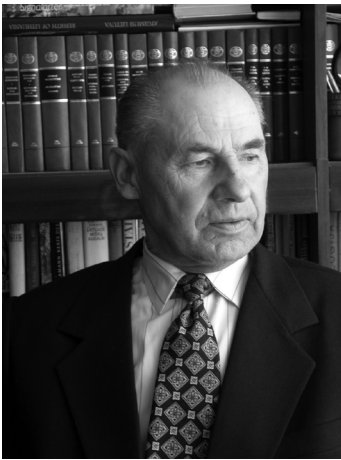


IN MEMORIAM

Doctor Habilitus Vincentas Kazys Urbonas (1934 – 2008)



On February 3, 2008, the distinguished Lithuanian mycologist, Vincentas Kazys Urbonas passed away at his home in Vilnius. He was well known researcher on macroscopic fungi, and a committed person in nature conservation, science popularization and administration. Vincentas Urbonas was born in Gudeliai village (Marijampolė district, southern Lithuania) on June 27, 1934. After graduation from the Secondary School in Simnas he entered the Faculty of Nature and Geography of Vilnius Pedagogical Institute (now – Vilnius Pedagogical University), and completed the studies of biology in 1959. After graduation V. Urbonas started the scientific work at the Institute of Botany of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences in Vilnius. His

main field of research was the diversity, taxonomy, biology and ecology of agaricoid fungi. In 1967 V. Urbonas received a degree of *Candidate of Biological Sciences*, based on a dissertation “Naujas indėlis Lietuvos TSR kepurėtiesiems (*Agaricales* eilės) grybams pažinti” [New contribution to the knowledge of the *Agaricales* s.l. of Lithuanian SSR] under the supervision of Dr. Jonas Mazelaitis. In 1990 he defended his *Doctor of Science* thesis in biology “Agarikal’nye griby (*Agaricales* s.l.) Litovskoj SSR (vidovoj sostav, sistematika, ekologija)” [The *Agaricales* s.l. of Lithuanian SSR (species composition, systematics, ecology)] at M.G. Kholodny Institute of Botany of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in Kiev. After nostrification in 1994 he was bestowed a scientific title of *Doctor Habilitus*.

During his scientific career V. Urbonas published more than 110 scientific papers and 7 monographs. He had wide-ranging interests in mycology. Most of his works were devoted to the diversity and distribution of Lithuanian agaricoid fungi. More than ten thousand fungus specimens collected and determined by V. Urbonas make basis for the agaricoid collection of the Herbarium of the Institute of Botany (BILAS). About 1260 species of agaricoid fungi recorded in Lithuania were described and illustrated in five volumes of edition “Lietuvos grybai – Mycota Lithuaniae“. In co-operation with Prof. K. Kalamees and Dr. V. Lukin two editions of “Conspectus florum agaricalium fungorum (*Agaricales* s.l.) Lithuaniae, Latviae et Estoniae” were published. V. Urbonas proposed several taxonomic novelties (new suprageneric

taxa, nomenclatural combinations). V. Urbonas investigated mycobiota in protected areas, studied rare and endangered species of fungi. He dealt with problems of fungi conservation, and was actively involved in making lists of fungi for the Lithuanian Red Data Book. Together with colleagues he investigated biochemical properties, heavy metals and radionuclides in the fruit bodies of the agaricoid fungi. He was also interested in resources of edible mushrooms and cultivation of some mushroom species, especially *Agaricus bisporus*.

Under his supervision several active Lithuanian mycologists, namely Antanas Matelis, Danutė Stankevičienė and Ernestas Kutorga received *Cand. Biol.* degree, and Jonas Kasparavičius received *Ph. D.* degree. As a consultant, a member of defence committees or as an official opponent he took part in Ph.D. student research and thesis defence process of many mycologists and botanists.

V. Urbonas attended numerous local and international scientific conferences. He took part in almost every symposium of Baltic Mycologists and Lichenologists and, when it was Lithuanian turn to organize the event, was often a heart and soul of the organizing committees. In 1990ties when the independence of Lithuania was restored, V. Urbonas took initiative to renew and activate the scientific contacts between Lithuanian and Polish mycologists and lichenologists. This initiative resulted in bilateral visits of researches and exchange of mycological literature published in both countries.

V. Urbonas was active and successful administrator. From 1984 to 2001 he was a Head of the Laboratory of Cryptogamous Plants (since 1992 – Laboratory of Mycology), for some period served as a Deputy Director and a Member of the Council of Institute of Botany. He was one of initiators, at first a Deputy Editor-in-Chief and later Editor-in-Chief of the many-volume edition “Lietuvos grybai – Mycota Lithuaniae“. Also he was a member of Editorial Board of scientific journal “Botanica Lithuanica“ and a member of Botanical Dictionary Commission.

Vincentas Urbonas worked very effectively for popularisation of mycology. He organised or actively participated in fungal exhibitions, delivered public lectures, gave interviews on TV and Radio, wrote numerous popular papers. He was the author or co-author of popular books: “Lietuvos grybai” [Mushrooms of Lithuania] (1980, together with J. Mazelaitis), “Grybai” [Mushrooms] (1986, 1998), “Mažieji miško turtai” [Lesser Riches of Forest] (1987, together with co-authors), “Susipažinkime: grybai” [Get acquainted: Mushrooms] (1998), and “Lietuvos grybų atlasas” [Atlas of Lithuanian mushrooms] (2007). He was active member of the Lithuanian Mycological Society since its foundation in 1998.

Dr. Habil. V. Urbonas scientific work was acknowledged by the Lithuanian State Award for Science in 1981 (together with J. Mazelaitis and A. Minkevičius) for the cycle of works “Lietuvos TSR makromicetai” [Macromycetes of Lithuanian SSR] and the Lithuanian State Award for Science in 2002 (together with M. Ignatavičiūtė, S. Stanevičienė, B. Grigaliūnaitė and E. Kutorga) for the cycle of works “Lietuvos makromicetų ir augalų parazitinių mikromicetų įvairovės įvertinimas (1991–2000)” [Evaluation of diversity of macromycetes and plant pathogenic micromycetes of Lithuania (1991–2000)].

He was a devoted family man. With his wife Jūratė they raised son Raimundas and daughter Živilė, also took care of beloved grandchildren. We remember him as a skilled scientist, talented writer, and patient teacher, warm and considerate colleague always ready to assist. We will miss his kind words and encouragement in which he was always so generous.

I. MONOGRAPHS

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II. MAIN RESEARCH PAPERS

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III. MAIN HANDBOOKS

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