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EDITORIAL

Introduction

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Dear Mycologists,

It is an honor for us to be presenting you with this special issue of *Acta Mycologica*, which is dedicated to two great scientists, prof. dr hab. Maria Dynowska and prof. dr hab. Maria Rudawska. Both of them have made significant contributions to the world of mycological research, and their impacts continue in the daily works of many research centers that base their foundations on Prof. Dynowska's legacy and Prof. Rudawska's constructs.

Looking at Prof. Maria Dynowska's career path, there is no doubt that, as a scientist, she particularly valued interdisciplinary studies, where she focused on the ecology of fungi, with special attention to their variable nature and the consequences thereof. Prof. Dynowska has conducted numerous studies on aquatic ecosystems, tracing the natural reservoirs of anthropopathogens and searching for microorganisms that can potentially be used as bioindicators for assessing both the sanitary quality of water and epidemic threats. Through her studies on crop phytopathogens, such as *Typhula* spp., *Fusarium* spp., and common saprotrophs, her research has enriched our knowledge on phytopathology immensely. Finally, she devoted several explorations to investigating human mycobiota, specifically the roles and potentials of human pathogens present on skin and in the digestive tract, thereby enhancing our understanding of medical mycology. Her legacy reaches beyond the University's walls, leaving a solid mark on medicine, education, and ecological knowledge.

With a focus on ectomycorrhizal fungi associated with forest trees, Prof. Maria Rudawska's many years of research work have contributed to the identification of more than 80 fungal species in this environment. She has carried out numerous studies on the diversity of ectomycorrhizal fungi in bare-root forest nurseries. Her work showing that such forests are well colonized by these fungi has had direct impacts on both the management of these forests and improvement of the health conditions of woodlands.

This illustrates how Prof. Rudawska's scientific interests have evolved. After a long period of intensive research on the physiology of the ectomycorrhiza, she switched her attention to the problem of forest decline and the roles of mycorrhizae and mycorrhizal fungi in this process. Her legacy is still in the making as she continues to inspire her coworkers and young professionals to devote their time to uncovering the secrets of the ectomycorrhizal relationship.

I am aware that the articles in this issue will not fully reflect the enormity of the work, the insights in analyzing the results obtained, and the commitments that characterize both professors. However, I hope that they will become an inspiration for young adepts of mycology and serve as a supplement of knowledge for those who already have experience in scientific work.