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**LAUDATIO TO PROFESSOR EMERITUS
FRANCO PEDROTTI AT THE AGE OF 80**

by Dan GAFTA



It is an honour but also a most difficult task to evoke the complex personality of Professor Pedrotti. His *opera omnia*, achieved over 55 years of professional activity, is impressive both in extent and diversity: over 500 geobotanical, nature conservation, historical, academic, historical and biographical contributions published as editor or author! As I previously recalled the professional activity of Prof. Pedrotti ten years ago in Cluj-Napoca [1], here I shall focus exclusively on the achievements that he has fulfilled since then up to the present.

In late 2004 Prof. Pedrotti set up and then directed a new degree, Master in Landscape Planning and Management of Protected Areas at the University of Camerino. This Mastership is the successor to the former School of Specialisation in Management of Natural Environment and Protected Areas, which had been also founded by him in 1998.

In the last ten years Prof. Pedrotti has organised several congresses, conferences and workshops aimed at either scientific or nature conservation targets:

- Stelvio Seventy Conference (8–11th September 2005);

- Workshop "For the institution of a regional, natural park in the area of Monte Pennino, Valle Scurosa and Montelago" (14th October 2006);
- 108th Congress of the Italian Botanic Society (18–20th September 2013);
- The future of Stelvio National Park (21st March 2014).

After the two titles of *Doctor Honoris Causa* in Biology conferred on him by Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca and A.I. Cuza University of Iaşi back in 1994 and 1998 respectively, Prof. Pedrotti was granted several other distinctions:

- *Doctor Honoris Causa* in Ecology and Biogeography at the University of Palermo in 2006;
- The prize "Natural Parks of Sicily" conferred by the National Academy of Lincei in Rome, in October 2009;
- *Doctor Honoris Causa* at the University of Brest (France) in September 2014.

In addition, he was elected President of the Accademia degli Accessi in Trento (Italy), in March 2014.

Since 2004 Prof. Pedrotti has served as editor-in-chief of several journals and volume series:

- Braun-Blanquetia (which has been renamed, and published as Geobotany Studies since 2012 by Springer Verlag);
- Documents Phytosociologiques (from 1982 to 2007);
- La Riserva Naturale di Torricchio;
- L'Uomo e l'Ambiente;
- Natura ed Aree Protette.

Moreover he has been a member of the editorial board of 24 scientific and scholarly journals from Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Canada, Slovakia and Romania (Table 1).

Table 1: List of journals in which Prof. Pedrotti has been acting as a member of the editorial board

Journal name	Publishing city
Archivio Botanico Italiano	Forlì
Biogeographica. Lavori Società Italiana Biogeografia	Siena
Colloques Phytosociologiques	Bailleul
Contributii Botanice	Cluj-Napoca
Documents de cartographie écologique	Grenoble
Ecologia Mediterranea	Marseille
Etudes écologiques	Québec
Fitosociologia. Notiziario della Società Italiana di Fitosociologia	Pavia
Geobotanische Kolloquien	Frankfurt am Main
Itinera Geobotanica	Leon
La Riserva Naturale Abbadia di Fiastra	Macerata
Natura e Montagna	Bologna
Oecologia Montana	Bratislava
Opuscula Botanica Pharmaciae Complutensis	Madrid
Proposte e Ricerche	Ancona
Report Centro Ecologia Alpina	Trento
Revue d'Ecologie alpine	Grenoble
Rivasgodaya	Madrid
Rivista di Idrobiologia	Perugia
Studi e Ricerche del sistema aree protette WWF Italia	Rome
Studia Botanica	Salamanca
Studia Geobotanica	Trieste
Terra	Bologna
Travaux scientifiques du Parc National de la Vanoise	Chambéry

As an acknowledgement of his scientific contributions but also of his generous, honest and cosmopolitan character, some newly described species, both botanical and zoological (phylum Tardigrada), have been named after him:

- *Protopodocarpoxylon pedrotti* Biondi (a fossil gymnosperm);
- *Taraxacum pedrotti* van Soest (Pedrotti's dandelion);
- *Ranunculus pedrotti* Spinosi ex Dunkel (Pedrotti's buttercup);
- *Hypsibius pedrotti* Bertolani (Pedrotti's water bear).

Although Prof. Pedrotti had to retire at the age of 75, he was immediately proposed and shortly after appointed as Professor *Emeritus* at the University of Camerino. In this way he could continue to teach his favourite classes (Nature Conservation and Geobotany Mapping) and to supervise Masters and PhD students.

His restless work over the last ten years has been most fruitful in terms of the number and diversity of publications to which he has contributed as editor and/or author: 40 in Botany and Vegetation Science, 13 in Nature Conservation, 7 in Natural Area Planning and 10 biographical notes.

Let me present briefly just three of his most important scientific and editorial contributions:

- *Plant and Vegetation Mapping* [3], which is currently the most comprehensive and outstanding treatise of its kind, as well as a milestone in Prof. Pedrotti's scientific career;
- *Centenary of Phytosociology* [2], which is a tribute to both Phytosociology as a science and one of its great promoters and developers, Prof. Jean-Marie Gehu (who unfortunately died a few months ago);
- *Stelvio '70: biodiversity, landscape dynamics and mountain area management* [4], which is like an impressive "monument" of 800 pages offered to his most beloved national park (Stelvio).

This wealth of papers written, books edited, meetings organised and academic duties accomplished deserves our appreciation and admiration all the more so as during this time Prof. Pedrotti has not been spared tragic events and dramatic misfortunes.

First, I want to recall the death of his wife – Prof. Carmela Cortini Pedrotti – in 2007, after two years of hard suffering. How else could he cherish and honour the memory of his wife, if not by creating a nature reserve! So, in 2008 he purchased 30 ha of mixed oak coppice within Gran Sasso - Monti della Laga National Park (in the central Apennines) and established a natural reserve for research and conservation activities called Carmela Cortini Forest.

Second, the Department of Botany and Ecology of Camerino University, developed and directed by Prof. Pedrotti for 30 years, was abolished in 2006 and subsumed within the School of Environmental Sciences, which in turn was further deactivated in October 2013! This seems to be the inexorable, dark fate of so many departments of plant systematics and ecology throughout Europe... In homage to all the people (employees, students, alumni, visiting scholars and professors) who had studied or worked in the former department (Institute), Prof. Pedrotti wrote and published a review that gathered relevant information from all the yearbooks until 2006 [5].

In spite of all these sad episodes, Prof. Pedrotti pushes on and doesn't stop, to astonish us with his endless ambition, passion, inventive spirit, strength of mind, and love for botany, vegetation science and nature conservation. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that he is

currently preparing, among other publications, two important monographs devoted to the karstic tablelands of the central Apennines and the wetlands of the southern central Alps.

We all wish him to stay in good health, and hope to celebrate him again in 2024!

Many, many happy returns of the day, Prof. Pedrotti!

and last but not least,

May you achieve good and prolific work in all your ongoing and future projects!

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