

OBITUARY

Peter Arnold Florschütz (1923–1976)

On 27 May 1976 Peter Arnold Florschütz, bryologist, died at the age of only 53 at De Bilt, Netherlands. Only six weeks prior he had been hospitalized as a result of kidney cancer. His untimely death came as totally unexpected and shocking news to his friends and colleagues all over the world, many of whom had seen him in excellent health the year before at the Botanical Congress in Leningrad. He was a lector of botany and curator of the cryptogamic herbarium at the Institute for Systematic Botany and acting director of the Botanical Gardens of the University of Utrecht, the same institution where he had studied biology from 1941 to 1949. In his professional capacity he had held positions at the Institute for Systematic Botany from 1946 until 1949 as student-assistant and from 1949 on as staff member.

Initially under the directorship of his teacher in plant systematics Professor A. A.

Pulle, and from 1948 until 1970 under Professor J. Lanjouw's leadership, the "Flora of Suriname" was being tackled by the staff of the institute. Thus, as a young graduate student, Florschütz was assigned the revision of the mosses of Suriname: a comprehensive and difficult task, because in those post-war years there was a vacuum in European exotic bryology. The heydays, with Herzog in Germany, Brotherus in Scandinavia, Dixon in Great Britain and Thériot and Camus in France were over. At the beginning, Florschütz was entirely dependent on Brotherus' treatment of the world's mosses in Engler and Prantl, "Die natürlichen Pflanzenfamilien." In those years he had run over the leaves of this book for weeks on end in a typical posture, like he used to tell: folded in a chair, book on his lap.

In October 1950 he left for six months on his first expedition to Suriname together with his wife Jeanne, who like himself was a biology graduate from Utrecht. She always participated in his research activities and was co-author of several of his publications. The impressions of morphological variation of the species in the field and their habitats, impressions gained during this Suriname trip, were of major importance for the conception of the moss flora, the first and thus far the only part published. Prior to its publication he had published notes on *Rhaphidorrhynchium* (1), *Papillaria* and *Leucodontopsis* (3) and *Octoblepharum* (4). The *Octoblepharum* study had also been meant as a precursor to a monograph of the genus, which never materialized.

"The mosses of Suriname I" (7), on which he received his Ph.D. with honors, includes the acrocarpous mosses and some pleurocarpous groups (up to Neckeraceae). The descriptions, keys and illustrations are very clear, the critical notes concise and objective; Florschütz was not inclined towards speculations. The introduction includes a very useful bibliography of Latin American moss literature and an essay on the species concept in mosses, which was mainly inspired by the taxonomy of *Fissidens*. In Suriname this genus is represented by a large number of taxa, such as the polymorphic *F. guianensis* s.l. and *F. prionodes* s.l., which he regarded as "species complexes." As to treating these complexes taxonomically Florschütz advocated a wide delimitation, lumping the constituent units as "formae" into one species. The taxonomic problems involved made him realize the necessity to apply experimental methods, e.g. cultivating the units under controlled conditions. This method was finally adopted in his recent, unfinished study of the genus *Campylopus* (15).

In the fifties, herbarium studies on tropical American collections sent him off to Paris and London in 1959, on his first visit to the U.S.A., in conjunction with participation in the International Botanical Congress in Montreal. After the congress he travelled with his friends Bill Steere and Kjeld Holmen to New York, where he worked on his moss flora for two months. As a country, the U.S.A. always fascinated him and, either on his own or accompanied by his wife, he revisited it three additional times: in the spring of 1965 after his second expedition to Suriname (Bakhuisgebergte, with P. J. M. Maas), in 1969 on the occasion of the International Botanical Congress in Seattle and in the summer of 1973 for ICSEB I in Boulder, Colorado. Since his 1965 trip through southeastern U.S. he had developed a close friendship with Lewis Anderson (Durham, North Carolina) and Bill Reese (Lafayette, Louisiana). He had planned another few months' stay in the U.S. in 1976, to include a bryological expedition to the Galapagos islands with Bill Weber and myself.

Parallel to Florschütz' work on the moss flora of Suriname there is his collaboration in the largest bryological project ever completed in the Netherlands: Index Muscorum (5). The history and background of the project, set up by himself and van der Wijk

in 1954 (3), were exposed in the introduction to Vol. 1 (p. vii-x). The daily work on the Index was done mainly by van der Wijk and Margadant in Groningen; stationed at Utrecht, Florschütz assisted in checking obscure literature, solving nomenclatural problems and shaping the form of the Index in which it appeared.

His interest in nomenclature went hand in hand with his involvement in the work of the International Bureau of Botanical Nomenclature and the International Association for Plant Taxonomy (to which he was treasurer for many years), both established at Utrecht since 1951. Since the Stockholm congress in 1950 he had been intimately involved in the organization of the nomenclature sessions at the International Botanical Congresses and since 1969 he was secretary of the Committee for the Nomenclature of Bryophyta (14). This interest in international cooperation (a firmly rooted Dutch tradition!) also resulted in his being elected in 1975 first vice-president of the International Association of Bryologists. In this capacity he played a leading role in the bryological section at the Leningrad congress.

In Utrecht, Florschütz' professional activities were manifold. To mention a few, he served for many years as a student counsellor and organized the special botany courses for extra-mural students. A great deal of time was spent in the management of the Institute and the Botanical Gardens and in various lecturing functions. Soon after obtaining his Ph.D. he became a lector of botany in 1966. From that time on he was particularly devoted to stimulating cryptogamic research in the Institute. The growing interest in ecology and vegetation science helped in creating a favorable climate for it.

His sympathetic personality attracted many students, and under his inspiring guidance several of them had the opportunity to work on a bryological thesis (M. A. Bruggeman-Nannenga, W. V. Rubers, D. A. J. Vogelpoel and myself). Lichenology was started, as well, but plans to launch systematic algology and mycology failed to materialize through lack of funds. Florschütz managed, however, to build up a working herbarium of all groups of cryptogams.

Besides the classical taxonomic approach Florschütz became involved in experimental taxonomy during recent years. Interest in the bryophytes of the Andes of Colombia—since 1968 in conjunction with ecological work in the area by T. van der Hammen from Amsterdam and collaborators—made him start growth studies in the genus *Campylopus*, to achieve a better definition of the species of this notoriously difficult genus. Living material was collected during a 2-month trip to the paramos of Colombia—a landscape which fascinated him—together with paramos specialist Antoine M. Cleef. Cultivation experiments in Utrecht proved the value of "classical" characters in *Campylopus* systematics, such as costa anatomy and leaf auricles, to be dubious. His presentation of the results (15) at the international bryological symposium in Boulder was met with great interest; it is most regrettable that this preliminary publication received no follow-up.

The identification of the enormous number of Colombian bryophytes resulted in a considerable amount of new data. Part of this material, e.g. the checklist of the mosses of Colombia, is now being prepared for publication by his wife. She is also to continue work on the moss flora of Suriname, his principal work, which they had again energetically taken up during a 4-months stay at Paramaribo in the winter of 1975-76, shortly before his death.

Considering how much Peter Florschütz had done professionally, it is remarkable how little he published after all. The cause of this was undoubtedly his cautious and

utterly critical mind, which made him explore problems to the bottom and commit the results to paper only after long hesitation. He had many interests in biology. His love for animals should be mentioned. He kept different kinds at home, as well as in his office. Instigated by his trips to the tropics, he devoted lectures and several popular articles to zoology. But, in fact, he was a somewhat shy personality, never seeking the spotlight. At congresses he was seldom seen at the dais; even so he was an outstanding teacher. His lectures in Utrecht were highly popular, especially because of his special ability to bring the "dusty" subject of plant systematics to life. Those who have known him will never forget his marvellous sense of humor and his warm, sincere personality.—S. R. GRADSTEIN, *Institute for Systematic Botany, State University of Utrecht, Heidelberglaan 2, Utrecht, Netherlands.*

BRYOLOGICAL PUBLICATIONS OF P. A. FLORSCHÜTZ

1. Het genus *Rhaphidorrhynchium* Besch. *Buxbaumia* 4: 60–62, 1950.
2. Notes on American Musci. *Acta Bot. Neerl.* 3: 94–99, 1954.
3. Index bryologicus. *Taxon* 3: 97, 1954 [with R. van der Wijk].
4. A short survey of the American species of the genus *Octoblepharum*. *Mitt. Thüring. Bot. Ges.* I (2/3): 51–58, 1955.
5. Index Muscorum. *Regnum Veg.* Vol. 17, 26, 33, 48 & 65, 3138 p., 1959–1969 [with R. van der Wijk & W. D. Margadant].
6. Introduction to the facsimile edition of Hedwig, *Species Muscorum*. Weinheim, p. V–XXXII, 1960.
7. Musci. In J. Lanjou (ed.), *Flora of Suriname*, VI(1): 271 p., 107 figs.
8. Mosses from the Netherlands Antilles. *Acta Bot. Neerl.* 15: 524–529, 1967.
9. Review of: E. Vernon Watson, *British mosses and liverworts*, 2nd ed. *Taxon* 18: 572, 1969.
10. Introduction to the facsimile edition of Bruch, Schimper & Gumbel, *Bryologia Europea*. Amsterdam, p. V–VI, 1971 [with W. D. Margadant].
11. The spreading of *Fissidens crassipes* Wils. (Musci) in the Netherlands. *Acta Bot. Neerl.* 174–179, 1972 [with S. R. Gradstein & W. V. Rubers].
12. Bryophytina. In C. Kalkman, *Mossen en Vaatplanten*. Utrecht, p. 12–43, 1972.
13. Review of: Iwatsuki, Z. & M. Mizutani, *Coloured Illustrations of Bryophytes of Japan*. *Taxon* 22: 170, 1973 [with S. R. Gradstein].
14. Committee for Bryophytes [report]. *Taxon* 22: 157–58, 1973; *ibid.* 24: 248–249, 1975.
15. Studies on Colombia Cryptogams I. Variation of characters in South American species of *Campylopus*. *Jour. Hattori Bot. Lab.* 38: 111–114, 1974 [with J. Florschütz—de Waard].
16. Mossen hebben onvoorstelbare variatie. *Groei en Bloei* 2: 36, 1975.
17. *Bizotia* Pierrot, a synonym of *Campylopus*. *Rev. Bryol. Lichénol.* 41: 339–341, 1975 [with J. Florschütz—de Waard].
18. *Herbertus* Gray 1821, *Herbertia* Sweet 1827 und *Herberta* Gray mut. Lindb. 1875. *Jour. Bryol.* 8: 479–481, 1975 [with R. Grolle].