



IULIU MOLDOVAN (1864 – 1935) – A PROMINENT ROMANIAN FORESTER AND PATRIOT

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Abstract

IULIU MOLDOVAN shall forever be remembered by foresters as the founder of Romanian experimental forestry and the initiator of the culture of exotic forest species.

Born in Arad, on 13 April 1864, he was involved, along with Vasile Goldiș and the other freedom fighters of Arad, in the Great Union of 1 December 1918. For this reason, apart from being a forester, he was also a patriot, as he was a leading figure in forestry in Ardeal starting with the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Keywords: Tree garden, culture of exotic species, experimental forestry

INTRODUCTION

Born in Arad, on 13 April 1864, IULIU MOLDOVAN studied forestry and natural sciences at the University of Budapest and initially worked with the Austro-Hungarian Forest Corps. Due to his profound patriotism, in 1892 he left the Austro-Hungarian Empire illegally and, from Bucharest, he announced his resignation to the forest authorities of Vienna. He began his work in European-type forestry at the Forest District of Mihăești, Argeș County, and taught at the School of Forestry in Brănești, Ilfov.

In 1918, with the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he is called upon to manage the Forest Department of the Steering Committee of Ardeal, located in his home city of Arad. He stood against Hungarian claims on the forest of Ardeal until the completion of Greater Romania. From a political point of view, he was elected senator of Arad in 1922 from the Liberal Party.

For his work in forestry, the General Assembly of "Progresul silvic" Society of May 1934 proclaimed

him an honorary member (S.P.S., 1934). In 1935, one year after his death, the Forest District of Ceala – Arad received the name of "Iuliu Moldovan" Forest District.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Having gained experience in forestry in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Iuliu Moldovan organized the Forest District of Mihăești at the level of a European district, after his arrival in Romania. The District was declared a model Carol I Forest District.

The second achievement of the outstanding forester Iuliu Moldovan were the two parks in Mihăești and Dofteana (C. Georgescu, I. Moldovan, 1935-1936; A. Mihalache, 1988), which, together with the Botanic Garden of Cotroceni, raised to the level of tree gardens in the most advanced countries of Europe at that time. Iuliu Moldovan thus became part of the history of Romanian forestry as the initiator of the culture of exotic plants in Romania. (C. Georgescu, 1934). The experiment started and led by Iuliu Moldovan showed Romanian foresters which exotic species can be subject to massive culture for the sub-zone of holm oak forests



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in mixture with other deciduous species: *Juglans nigra*, *Quercus rubra*, *Carya alba*, *Fraxinus Americana*, etc. He also demonstrated the low chance of success for the culture of Scots pine in that zone.

Equally valuable has been the experimental culture of Doftana, which, additionally, was created according to principles and rules of landscaping (C. Georgescu, I. Moldovan, 1935-1936; A. Mihalache, 1988).

It can be stated, without the risk of erring, that Iuliu Moldovan is the founder of exotic culture in our forestry and, at the same time, the promoter of experimental works, applying and developing his forerunners' initiatives and modest achievements in this field: Ion Ionescu de la Brad (1818-1891), P.S. Aurelian (1833-1909) and Vlad Cârnu-Munteanu (1858-1903).

The third grandiose, bold and memorable work of the illustrious forester Iuliu Moldovan were the forestations made in Dobrogea, an achievement made even more surprising by the fact that, up until that point, he had not dealt with forest issues in steppe area. The solutions he provided (I. Moldovan, 1934), based on sound knowledge of ecology, continue to be used today.

The fourth remarkable contribution of our illustrious trailblazer Iuliu Moldovan is the creation of green areas in city areas, demonstrating that foresters were capable of completing such tasks, as well. Endowed with fine artistic capabilities, he succeeded in landscaping numerous parks, including in Bucharest. As an active counselor of the Capital's House of Public Gardens, he successfully applied the principles of landscape architecture.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A forerunner of experimental forestry in Romania, founder of the culture of exotic species and the first forester to demonstrate that long-lasting forests could be created in the steppe of Dobrogea, Iuliu Moldovan also had a major input in higher education in forestry. Thus:

- As a professor at the School of Forestry in Brănești (1902-1905), he devised an ample course of forestry, modern for its time, being in contact with great scientists, such as the academician, geologist and pedagogue Gh. Munteanu-Murgoci, from whom he had adopted new concepts in his course, such as that of soil type;
- As a senator (1922-1926), together with his friend and supporter N.G. Popovici, he

successfully fought to integrate forestry in the Polytechnic School of Bucharest.

It is also worth mentioning that the parks of Doftana and Mihăești, as well as the forests of the Forest District of Mihăești, a model of good management, have been the most important "in situ laboratories" for many generations of students from higher schools of forestry.

Sensitive to the country's natural heritage, Iuliu Moldovan constantly militated for the protection of exceptional, scientifically and culturally significant trees and arboreta in Romanian forests.

It should be noted that, following the 1989 Revolution, after several decades the Forest District of Ceala reprised its old name of "Iuliu Moldovan" Forest District.

Buried in Arad, next to his parents, it would be desirable that the work of the illustrious forester of Arad be paid homage by a bust like the one in Mihăești.

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