

Wolfram Schultze-Motel (1934–2011)

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PAUL HIEPKO¹

Wolfram Schultze-Motel (1934–2011)

Wolfram Schultze-Motel passed away after a long illness on 7 March 2011, just two months after his 77th birthday. He had worked for more than thirty years in different functions and positions at the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem and was an authority on two very different plant groups: European *Cyperaceae* and, first and foremost, tropical bryophytes.

Born on 7 January 1934 in Quedlinburg near the Harz Mountains in Central Germany, Wolfram lived in this famous old town until his school-leaving exam (Abitur) in 1952. Very early he started here to study the local flora and to build up a herbarium, often together with his elder brother Jürgen, who later also became a botanist. Wolfram was not only interested in higher plants, but developed also an interest in bryophytes very early. Since I lived in the same town and went to the same school, I remember that Wolfram used all intermissions during the rehearsal of the school choir to read in a Flora of the bryophytes occurring in the Harz Mountains.

Wolfram started to study biology at the University of Halle in 1952. One year later he moved to (West-)Berlin in order to continue his studies at the Free University, which had been founded three years before in the American Sector of Berlin. In 1955 he interrupted his studies for one term in order to undertake ecological studies in the forests of southern Germany (Forstliche Standortskartierung). In 1958 Wolfram received his diploma (Diplom-Biologe) and in addition he also took his final examination for becoming a high school teacher (Staatsexamen). Only one year later he finished his doctoral thesis on the comparative morphology of the inflorescences and flowers of *Cyperaceae* supervised by Theo Eckardt and received his Ph.D. (Dr. rer. nat.) from the Free University.

For one term (1958/59) Wolfram was engaged as scientific assistant at the Institute for Systematic Botany and Plant Geography of the Free University. In April 1959, aged only 25, Wolfram Schultze-Motel then joined the scientific staff of the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem, where he worked for his entire

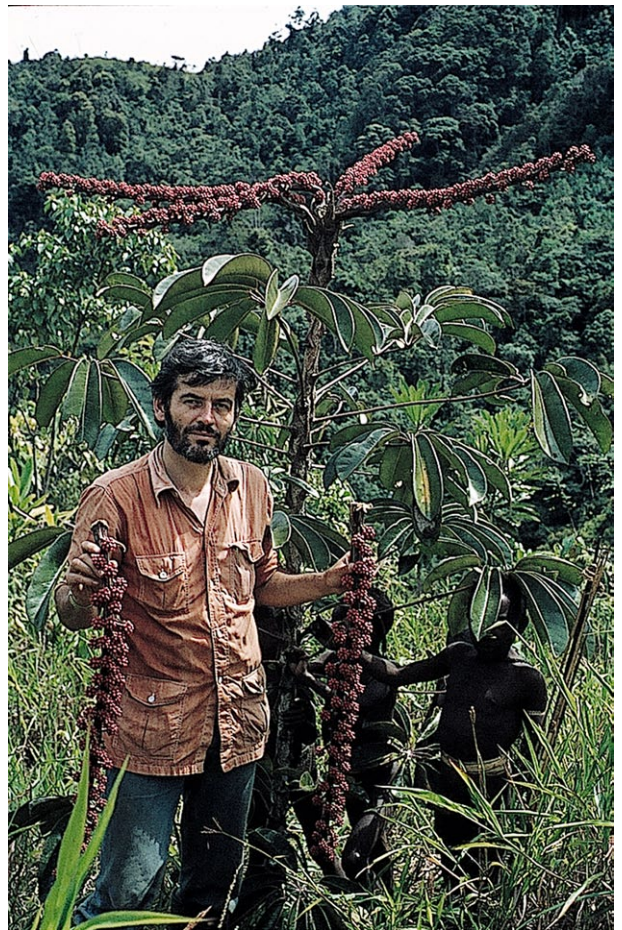


Fig. 1. Wolfram Schultze-Motel with inflorescences of *Schefflera brassaiella* Ridley, Hiepko & Schultze-Motel 1449 in the Eipomek valley, West New Guinea, March 1976. – Photo P. Hiepko.

professional life. During the first years, he was in charge of a part of the phanerogamic herbarium especially the *Cyperaceae*, but at the same time he was actively curating the bryological collections of the Botanical Museum. In connection with this responsibility, he started to identify the material of old bryological collections, which had

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survived World War II only because they had not yet been named and inserted into the herbarium. In this way he was able to publish the bryological results of the journey undertaken by Alexander von Humboldt, Christian Gottfried Ehrenberg and Gustav Rose in Russia in 1829. Later he did the same for the important and extensive bryological collections of Max Fleischer from Australia and New Zealand made in 1903.

However, Wolfram was always well aware of the fact that the study of living plants in their natural habitat is a necessary complement to the research in the herbarium. Therefore he often travelled, in particular to the islands of the Pacific. His first extensive bryological expedition was to Samoa and Fiji in 1972. In connection with an institutional project to study the flora of Togo in 1973, he collected bryophytes and, together with the author, higher plants in this West African country. Three years after this expedition, in 1976, we again travelled together, then to western New Guinea studying the flora and vegetation as part of a multidisciplinary project investigating the people and nature of the Eipomek valley, an untouched area in the Papuan mountains. Later Wolfram also visited the Seychelles, Mauritius, New Zealand and the Cook Islands. In 1982, he took part in an expedition to Peru in the framework of the joint project BRYOTROP undertaken by German bryologists. The results of these expeditions can be found in his publications.

Let us return to the work of Wolfram at the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem (BGBM). He was not only very active in bryological studies. At the same time, he continued to study the European taxa of *Cyperaceae*, which led to his treatment of this family for the third edition of Hegi's famous "Illustrierte Flora von Mitteleuropa", published in four parts (1967 to 1977).

Wolfram was also always aware of the importance of the living collections cultivated in the Botanic Garden for comparative studies and for teaching. Starting from 1963, he continuously gave lectures on systematic botany (especially referring to bryophytes) and plant geography at the Free University, often combined with demonstrations in the Botanic Garden. In 1970 he qualified as a university lecturer for botany at the Free University (Habilitation) and six years later, he became appointed Professor (apl. Professor) by the same university.

After the retirement of G. K. Schulze-Menz in 1973, Wolfram was promoted to Director and Professor at the BGBM and became scientific head of the Botanic Garden. When responsible for the living collections, he emphasised, among other activities, the importance of Botanic Gardens for the conservation of endangered indigenous species. In order to improve the impact of the Botanic Garden, he wrote a nicely illustrated guide book through the different parts of the garden, which reached three editions. But his research on the beloved bryophytes did not stop even during these nearly six years when in charge of the Botanic Garden. After the retirement of J. Gerloff

in February 1979, Wolfram became head of the cryptogamic herbarium of the Botanical Museum.

Besides some more or less local floristic papers on bryophytes, Wolfram monographed a part of the genus *Andreaea* (the costate species comprising 14 taxa). He published several lists of mosses known for special geographic regions. This work was necessary in preparation for his expeditions to different tropical areas, facilitating a quick determination of the new collections and publication of the results. At the same time, he was asked to contribute to the famous series "Progress in Botany" (Fortschritte der Botanik) the chapter on the systematics of bryophytes, which was published in four volumes between 1970 and 1976.

In addition to his own publications, Wolfram was always well aware of the importance of editorial work. Starting in 1968, he was for three years editor of the journal *Willdenowia*. In connection with his treatment of *Cyperaceae* for Hegi's "Illustrierte Flora von Mitteleuropa", he became co-editor of the third edition of this famous Flora for many years. In addition, he edited the series *Advances in Bryology* from 1978 until 1984.

Furthermore Wolfram was very active in national and international organisations. Some examples should be given: Together with G. Follmann, F. Koppe and J. Poelt, he was one of the founders of the "Bryologisch-Lichenologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Mitteleuropa" and co-editor for some time of the journal of this association, "Herzogia". He actively participated in the bryological congresses of the International Association of Bryologists and was Council Member of the I.A.B. During the XIII. International Botanical Congress in Sydney, he organised a Symposium on "Bryogeography of Australasia and the Pacific".

For his efforts to promote bryological research, Wolfram Schultze-Motel received the medal of merit of the University of Helsinki in 1985. In 1996, the award of the "Fritz-Koppe-Stiftung zur Förderung der Mooskunde" was given to him in Stuttgart.

Two new species of liverworts collected by him for the first time have been named after him: *Bazzania schultze-motelii* N. Kitag. from New Guinea and *Plagiochila wolframii* Inoue from Peru.

Wolfram was very well-read, one of his favourite authors was Theodor Fontane who often mentions plants in his novels (see the paper on "Theodor Fontane und die Botanik", 1981). But he was even more interested in music. Wolfram sung very well and was an enthusiastic member of several choirs, which performed the great oratorios of Bach and Haydn. In 1951 and 1952 during school holidays, he even sang in the opera choir of the "Harzer Bergtheater" (see his article "Theaterspielen ist Gottesdienst" in A. Brüggemann & G. Wurlitzer (ed.), *Durch meine Brille. Quedlinburger Erinnerungen 2: 257–260*, Quedlinburg 2007). Later, in Berlin, he was for instance for some years member of the famous "Sing-Akademie zu Berlin", an old choir rich in tradition. His

most beloved composer was Mozart. He attended as many performances of his operas as possible and at home he accompanied himself on the piano when singing arias from Mozart's operas.

Unfortunately, at the end of 1990, he was forced into an early retirement for health reasons. After this date, he was able to publish only three more bryological papers, two of them together with his student Mario Menzel. Finally he turned his interest, together with his brother Jürgen Schultze-Motel, back to a famous old individual of *Taxus baccata* in the Harz Mountains, which he had already studied in his early youth.

I would like to thank Wolfram's son Dr Paul Schultze-Motel and Prof. H. Walter Lack for improving the English of a preliminary version of this paper.

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