

## Paul Hiepko (1932–2019)

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## Paul Hiepko (1932–2019)

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Paul Hiepko (Fig. 1) passed away on 2 July 2019 at the age of 86 in Potsdam. He was a retired Director at the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin (BGBM) and the man who had planned the modern facilities of this institution's herbarium. In addition he had been a long-time co-editor of *Botanische Jahrbücher für Systematik, Pflanzengeschichte und Pflanzengeographie* and of *Bibliotheca Botanica* as well as a world authority on *Opiliaceae* and *Olacaceae*. From 1965 until his retirement in 1997 he was a member of staff of the BGBM who continued to work and publish until his final years leaving behind a considerable scientific oeuvre of consistently high quality and covering a broad spectrum of topics.

### The early years

PH was born on 16 December 1932 as the fifth child to Gustav Hiepko and his wife Lina, née Jennes, in Quedlinburg, a town in the Harz region well-known as a centre of horticulture, in particular for the production of seed material. His father worked there as a commissioner in a seed production company. As a consequence PH grew up in a world where plants played an important role with the weekends of the warm season spent in the gardens of the family. PH attended primary school followed by gymnasium in Quedlinburg and toward the end of the Second World War learned how important gardens could be to live almost self-sustainably. He witnessed the bombing of the nearby town of Halberstadt on 8 April 1945, which was followed by US tanks attacking Quedlinburg ten days later, impressions not to be forgotten. On 19 April this town was occupied by the US Army, which subsequently handed over the administration to the British Army. On 1 July 1945 the Soviet Army took over the affairs of Quedlinburg.

It was the war and its consequences that overshadowed the following years: when in 1948 driving on his bicycle via Stendal to Schwerin during his summer vaca-



Fig. 1. Paul Hiepko at the XIV International Botanical Congress in Berlin in 1987.

tion, PH witnessed in the sky the famous Berlin Airlift. It had been designed to overcome the Soviet Union's blockade of the Western Allies' railway, road and canal access to the western sectors of Berlin under their control. During night time and with the help of a guide, PH managed to cross the so-called green border between the British and Soviet zones of Germany near Marienborn in the following year to meet up with relatives, but returned

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later to Quedlinburg without a guide. The German Democratic Republic was founded in 1949 and two years later, in June 1951, PH passed the final exams at his gymnasium in Quedlinburg. From September 1951 until August 1953 he was trained as an assistant for seed production in Groß-Lüsewitz near Rostock, in a sense thereby following family tradition.

### The meagre years

Meanwhile Stalin had died and the uprising in the Soviet sector of Berlin in June 1953 spreading to the Soviet zone of Germany had been quickly quelled by Soviet troops and the German Democratic Republic's Kasernierte Volkspolizei [Barracked People's Police]. In that year PH sent his application to get enrolled at Rostock University as a student in biology. This wish, however, was declined, and instead the possibility offered to study either agriculture or medicine. Dissatisfied with the rejection and having learned that one of his brothers had just been relegated from university for political reasons with the prospect of more severe sanctions, PH decided to move from the Soviet Zone of Germany to the western sectors of Berlin. In order not to arouse suspicion he travelled without luggage and told the guards at the control points between the Soviet Zone of Germany and the Soviet Sector of Berlin that he merely wished to admire the famous Stalinallee [now Karl-Marx-Allee] in the Soviet Sector, then the flagship building project of the German Democratic Republic. Luckily he got through, but instead of looking at cranes and building pits PH continued straight to the American Sector where he first had to undergo the infamous Notaufnahmeverfahren in Berlin-Marienfelde. Only after having successfully passed this administrative procedure for refugees from the German Democratic Republic was he permitted to get enrolled at the Freie Universität Berlin, founded only four years before, and began to study biology in November 1953.

Meagre years followed. Since the transfer of money from the Soviet Zone of Germany, where his parents continued to live, to the American Zone of Berlin was impossible, PH had to rely on a scant scholarship provided by the Senate of Berlin. More than half of the sum allotted to him went to the landlady who had given him a tiny room as accommodation. This was within walking distance of the Freie Universität, but with the disadvantage that it could not be heated during winter and that taking a bath had to be paid for separately. PH found an ingenious method to warm up—he took the reliably well-heated S-Bahn of the inner circle line orbiting the central districts of Berlin, an almost ideal place for reading, and then headed back to his icy bedchamber. At that time the Deutsche Mark was the currency in the western sectors of Berlin and the East German Mark in the Soviet sector of Berlin. Since PH could exchange his Deutsche Mark on the black market at a favourable rate into East German Mark and since he still could move freely from the

American to the Soviet sector and back, a considerable proportion of his food, like bread or jam, was bought “in the east” and transported “to the west”.

### At the Freie Universität Berlin

PH dedicated the following six years to studies in biology and chemistry, which came to an end in July 1959 when he successfully passed the state exam. This was and is the prerequisite to become Studienrat, i.e. a civil servant teaching in a regular, state-owned grammar school in Germany. However, instead of starting to teach biology and chemistry at school, PH—like his friend Wolfram Schultze-Motel (1934–2011), also born in Quedlinburg and only one year younger (Hiepko 2011)—was appointed first wissenschaftlicher Hilfsassistent, then wissenschaftlicher Assistent at the Institute for Systematic Botany and Plant Geography of the Freie Universität Berlin. These positions he held from April 1959 until July 1965. PH had been chosen by Theo Eckardt (1910–1977), the newly appointed full professor, who in 1964 was to become additionally the Director of the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem [BGBM] (Gerloff 1978). During this period PH was mainly engaged in assisting in the practical courses in systematic botany held by Eckardt and in the beginners' courses in plant determination.

The erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961 was a shock for PH, and he could not avoid watching the construction works in a helpless manner. The western sectors of Berlin had now become an isolated exclave in a hostile land with all crossing points closed for the first two years. In parallel, the Inner German Border, i.e. the border between the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, was gradually made the most heavily fortified frontier in the world effectively cutting Germany into two parts and separating many thousands of families. In the early hours of 13 August 1961 the police and armed forces of the German Democratic Republic began installing barbed wire entanglements and fences along 156 kilometres around the western sectors of Berlin and the 43 kilometres that divided West and East Berlin. For PH all this had an immediate effect: his marriage with Ingrid Simon, scheduled to take place in the American sector on 17 August 1961, took place without his parents, who were unable to attend because of the newly erected barriers.

More important than his share in academic teaching at the Freie Universität was PH's work in flower morphology done under the supervision of Eckardt. He chose the perianth in *Ranunculales* and *Magnoliales* as the subject of his PhD thesis with work started in a room in the cellar of the Institute for Geography of the Freie Universität on the corner of Grunewaldstraße and Schmidt-Ott-Straße. Having passed his exams in botany, zoology and chemistry, PH was promoted Doctor rer. nat. on 31 July 1965. These were glorious days: the next day he could start to work as wissenschaftlicher Angestellter, a tenured position, at the BGBM. At that time this was an institu-



tion independent from the Freie Universität, financed and supervised by the Senate of Berlin with Eckardt as its Leitender Director [Director].

### At the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem

Here PH found his old friend from Quedlinburg Schultze-Motel, who also had written his PhD thesis in comparative flower morphology under the supervision of Eckardt and was now beginning to specialize in bryophyte taxonomy. In later years, when both PH and Schultze-Motel were directors at the BGBM, effectively deputy directors, first under Eckardt and subsequently under Werner Greuter (1938–), they remained on excellent terms, united in friendship and mutual respect.

PH's first ten years at the BGBM may best be characterized as a move from plant morphology toward plant taxonomy. This no doubt was supported by Eckardt, who had a great respect for the latter field and was in need of highly qualified staff to take over responsibility for the extensive, rapidly growing collections. In those days the term “collection” was always meant in the broad sense, including both biological and non-biological collections such as library materials or artefacts, e.g. models, portraits and plant images. Therefore it is no surprise that PH was for a few years also responsible for the library of the BGBM. It was during this period ending in April 1975 that he rearranged several thousand books and gave them new shelf marks, following in every detail the shelf marks, underlying logic and physical arrangement of the books kept in the library of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Although implemented against the will of the head librarian at the time, Christa von Bismarck, this new order proved immensely practical and was neither changed nor modified during the many years the first author of this obituary was head of the library nor by his successor in the job.

Following established house tradition, the major taxonomic groups of the plant and fungal kingdoms were assigned to curators, who were responsible for the respective sector in the herbarium and the living collection as well as for providing in-depth information on their field in-house as well as for the general public. Taking into account the topic of his PhD thesis, it was quite natural for Eckardt to assign to PH, among others, the *Polycarpicae* and *Magnoliales*. When the IDC Company applied for permission to produce a microfiche edition of the Willdenow herbarium, a well-known historical herbarium conserved at the BGBM, PH was asked to produce a catalogue of the c. 22 000 specimens to accompany this work and write an introduction on the interpretation of the material. This led to his life-long interest in this collection, in particular the specimens collected by Johann Reinhold Forster (1729–1798) and his son Georg (1754–1794) during Cook's second circumnavigation of the globe. It went also without saying that PH contributed to the galleries in the Botanical Museum, giving

advice on flower and fruit models to be produced by the in-house workshop and writing texts for the showcases and the guidebook. During the years 1971–1981 PH also accepted several teaching assignments at the Freie Universität Berlin, giving introductory courses for the determination of vascular plants native in Central Europe and organizing a students' excursion to northern Italy.

While routine work was done peacefully in the BGBM, the diplomats of the Four Allies worked out what later would be called the Four Power Agreement on Berlin, although the word “Berlin” does not occur in the original texts and is circumscribed only as “relevant area”. This document drawn up in English, French and Russian, all texts being equally authentic, was signed on 3 September 1971. The precise wording was deliberately not identical in the three versions, so that a compromise could be reached, and the two German states used translations that differed slightly. Although huge quantities of printers' ink were used to discuss these subtleties and the reasons behind them, the agreement contributed greatly both to a reduction of tensions between East and West over Berlin and to expand contacts between the two German states. For PH all this had positive consequences: the agreement facilitated travel between the western sectors of Berlin and the Federal Republic of Germany as well as communication between the two parts of the city and between the two German states. It also brought numerous improvements for the residents in the western sectors of Berlin, and PH was one of them.

Ten months later PH became civil servant of the Land Berlin, effectively Berlin (West), and got the title of Oberkustos [senior scientific officer]. In those days a civil servant was expected to serve the institution to which he was affiliated and, at least indirectly, the public. Eckardt had a close eye on this and made sure that work done for the institute's collections and the general public in the garden and museum had priority over research work. Basically PH followed this line for all his life.

These were not yet the days of the narrowly focused specialist in plant taxonomy for which the *Ullstein Lexikon der Pflanzenwelt* [Ullstein Lexicon of the plant world] edited by H. Bastian and published in Frankfurt, Berlin and Vienna in 1973 is a good example. With the exception of the entries on ferns, gymnosperms, and a fraction of the angiosperms, all texts were written in a joint effort by staff members of the BGBM: PH, Schultze-Motel (Hiepko 2011), Eva Potztl (1924–2000; Hiepko 2000) and Hilde-Mar Scholz (1928–2012; Lack & Raus 2012). However, the individual entries are not attributed to the individual authors and therefore not listed in the bibliography.

When G. M. Schulze (1909–1985; Gerloff 1986) retired as head of the phanerogam herbarium, PH followed him and on 18 June 1975 was made Director at the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem, which in the terminology of the time meant one of the deputy directors reporting to Eckardt. While the denomination and circumscription of his Abteilung [division] changed

over the years, he remained the head of the phanerogam herbarium and was responsible for the management of this very substantial, albeit rather unbalanced collection. In order to make the taxonomic community aware of all those materials that had survived the Dahlem catastrophe of 1943 and those that had subsequently been acquired, PH published several extremely helpful papers on the Berlin herbarium. He stressed in particular that while large gaps exist in the phanerogam herbarium proper, many special collections, e.g. specimens preserved in liquid, fruits, seeds, gymnosperm cones and wood samples, had survived the disaster almost intact and were available for consultation. As a consequence PH became a connoisseur of the collections under his care and also an excellent source for the institution's oral tradition, among them anecdotes from the days of Adolf Engler (1844–1930). One of PH's favourites was Hermann Harms (1870–1942) stating "I am ready to cut for you three species from each and every tree". Needless to say very numerous annotations in PH's easily recognizable handwriting are to be found in all parts of the herbarium. At irregular intervals he also informally gathered the curators of the phanerogam section in order to attribute totally unnamed herbarium specimens, particularly from tropical regions, to individual families. In this field he showed his extensive expertise. PH also took care to keep and maintain a proper balance between the workload the different curators had to shoulder.

As a student PH had undertaken botanical excursions to conventional destinations like Switzerland and northern Italy. Later he became fond of travelling and plant collecting in tropical countries, with Togo particularly important, although he worked there only once, in 1973. In the early seventies it was the conviction of several members of staff at the BGBM, with PH being one of them, that the institution should resume publishing Floras. Togo, a former German colony, had the advantage of being relatively poorly collected, but at the same time covered by the somewhat outdated second edition of the *Flora of West Tropical Africa* (FWTA). Several expeditions to Togo were undertaken and considerable material was brought home, collected in several sets of duplicates to balance exchange debts with other herbaria. However, the continuation of the Togo project was not supported by Greuter, who had followed Eckardt as director of the BGBM in April 1978, since he rightly presumed that travel costs would be excessive and such long-term projects difficult to fund. As a consequence, what had been intended as a proper Flora ended as a checklist with keys in French and studied specimens cited. PH wrote the accounts of thirty-one families for the *Flore analytique du Togo*, among them *Amaranthaceae*, *Annonaceae*, *Chrysobalanaceae* and *Hippocrateaceae*, but a somewhat bitter aftertaste seems to have remained, in particular since he and others had hoped that the Togo project would act as a starter for new Floras of parts of tropical Africa to be written in Berlin. Irrespective of this, PH retained a lifelong interest in the flora of the tropics

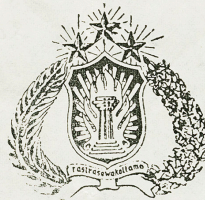


Fig. 2. Paul Hiepko during field work in the Guianas in 1988.

and was one of the few specialists for this part of the world in the BGBM. It is unclear why he developed a special love for the *Opiliaceae*, a small pantropical family of root-parasite trees and lianes, and for the *Olacaceae*, a family of tropical woody autotrophic and hemiparasitic plants with somewhat uncertain circumscription. In any case PH became the great specialist for these rather inconspicuously flowering plants and wrote the respective accounts for several Flora projects and checklists, e.g. *Flora of Thailand*, *Flora of Ethiopia* and *Flora of the Guianas*. In the context of these taxonomic studies PH travelled widely, firstly for herbarium work to many of the major herbaria in Europe, the US and Australia, secondly for fieldwork to Costa Rica, Ecuador, the Guianas (Fig. 2), Kenya and Thailand. However, for him the most impressive expedition seems to have been that undertaken together with Schultze-Motel to Western New Guinea in 1976 as part of a multidisciplinary project investigating the inhabitants and the nature of the Eipomek Valley. Collecting in virgin territory always



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SURAT KETERANGAN JALAN

NOPOL. : **77** /SKJ POA/DPKN/ I /1976.

DIBERIKAN KEPADA

1. N a m a : DR. HIEPKO, PAUL HUBERTUS JOSEF.
2. Tempat dan tanggal lahir : Quedlinburg, 16-12-1932.
3. Warganegara : J E R M A N.
4. Pekerjaan : Professor.
5. Paspor Nomor Tgl dan : 67631 K T-1.3-12-1975  
berlaku sampai dengan 31-12-1976.
6. Keterangan lain-lain : VD NO. KAG/76/153.  
Tgl. 14-1-1976 s/d 30-6-1976. DEPLU RI.

Yang atas perintah/persetujuan : LEMBAGA ILMU PENGETAHUAN INDONESIA.  
tersebut dalam suratnya tgl : 14 Januari 1976 No. 234/SK/B.5/1976.  
akan melakukan : Riset bidang botani dan zoologi.  
ke / di : Irian Jaya.  
dalam rangka : Menambah pengetahuannya dengan judul " The interdisciplinary  
research project in Irian Jaya " Metoda Taxonomy, checking  
the flora, sesuai suratnya tsb diatas.  
mulai tgl : 15 Januari 1976 s/d 30 Juni 1976.

7. PERHATIAN

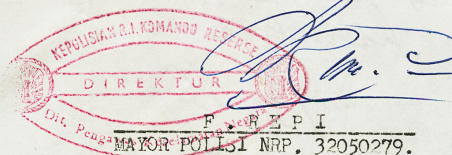
- a. Dalam waktu 2X24 jam setelah pemegang surat Keterangan Jalan ini tiba ditempat yang dituju, HARUS memberitahukan/melaporkan tentang kedatangannya kepada Kantor Kepolisian setempat.
- b. Setelah selesai diharap supaya Surat Keterangan Jalan ini dikembalikan kepada Direktorat Pengawas Keselamatan Negara M A B A K di Jakarta.

Dikeluarkan di : Jakarta.  
Pada tanggal : 15 Januari 1976.

A.n. DIREKTUR PENGAWAS KESELAMATAN NEGARA  
KEPALA DINAS PENGAWASAN COLOKONGAN ASING



Alat-alat yang dibawa :  
1 Foto Camera with additional  
equipment.



MAYOR POLISI NRP. 32050279.

Fig. 3. Document issued by the chief of the Indonesian police for Paul Hiepkko for his stay in Western New Guinea in 1975.



goes together with special sentiments, and the repeated contacts with the Eipos, an ethnic group then comprising merely c. 800 people, added to PH's joy as reflected in a paper published thirty-one years later. He was most impressed by the extensive knowledge of plant diversity of the Eipos, in particular their children, who for weeks continued bringing plant specimens to PH and Schultze-Motel. During the expedition the two taxonomists were faced with considerable bureaucratic obstacles (Fig. 3) and the realities of collecting in an extremely wet climate that necessitated the specimens to be airfreighted to Berlin for further procedure.

Editing taxonomic papers for a scientific journal became an important and extremely time-consuming part of PH's work. When Greuter and Hermann Merxmüller (1920–1988, München), the co-editors of *Botanische Jahrbücher*, resigned in 1982 on disagreeing with the publisher Schweizerbart in Stuttgart over the cost of reprints for authors, Jürke Grau (1937–, Munich), Peter Leins (1937–, Heidelberg) and PH stepped in. There was no formalized division of work, but taxonomic papers were often dealt with by PH. Since this was not yet the time when every manuscript submitted for publication had to undergo a review process done by two independent referees, it was PH alone to decide on the quality. Although no rejection rates are known, he took this obligation, as always, very seriously and spent endless hours in reading and editing manuscripts, corresponding with authors over improvements and seeing the final versions through the press. Until his retirement PH served the scientific community in doing this job, i.e. he co-edited volumes 104 (1983) to 119 (1997) of *Botanische Jahrbücher*, a total of 9297 pages. *Bibliotheca botanica*, a series of monographs forming a companion to *Botanische Jahrbücher* and also published by Schweizerbart, was also co-edited by Grau, Leins and PH with a similar informal division of labour. In this way the latter contributed to volumes 137 (1985) to 148 (1996).

Succeeding Schulze as head of the phanerogam herbarium went hand in hand with taking over the former's role as a member of the Editorial Committee of the *International Code of Botanical Nomenclature* (ICBN). This made PH one of the co-editors of the ICBN adopted by the Twelfth International Botanical Congress (XII IBC) in Leningrad, and subsequently co-editor of the ICBN adopted by the XIII IBC in Sydney, meetings in which he participated. Together with Greuter he also translated into German the ICBN adopted by the XIV IBC in Berlin and that adopted by the XV IBC in Yokohama, meetings that he also attended. The high esteem in which PH was held in the taxonomic community is reflected by the fact that he acted as a member of the General Committee on Botanical Nomenclature for two periods, i.e. from 1987 until 1999.

It was during these years that an event took place that changed the course of European history—the end of the division of Europe into two blocks. Changes first took place along the border separating Austria from Hungary in June

1989, reached their zenith with the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 and were followed by further dramatic events in Prague and Bucharest. Neither Berlin nor Germany was divided any more, and this profound change filled PH with relief, satisfaction and joy. In a sense for him a nightmare had come to an end. After all, special Stasi forces of the now defunct German Democratic Republic had been instructed as late as 1973 “Do not hesitate to use your firearms, not even when the border is breached in company of women and children, which is a tactic the traitors have often used”. PH may well have suspected such orders and the complex situation around Berlin seems to have had a traumatic effect on him. However, the first step toward détente and the fall of the wall had been the much debated Four Power Agreement referred to above.

In Appendix 4 A of this document the Soviet Union had explicitly sanctioned international congresses to take place in the western sectors of Berlin. When the Senate of Berlin started preparations for the seven-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of Berlin, it encouraged in general terms various bodies to organize their international meetings in Berlin (West). On the basis of this the participants of the XIII IBC in Sydney received an invitation from the Deutsche Botanische Gesellschaft and the Botanischer Verein Berlin for the next IBC to take place in Berlin, effectively Berlin (West), in 1987. This was accepted without protest from participants from the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic. Several years earlier Eckardt had succeeded in reaching a decision by the Senate of Berlin that the herbarium wing destroyed during the Second World War was to be rebuilt, but no date for the start of the planning nor the actual reconstruction work had yet been fixed. Knowing that the XIV IBC would take place in Berlin, Greuter was clever enough to argue that the time had come to implement the decision. The crowded herbarium and library facilities would not be the proper places to receive the international community of taxonomists. These considerations fell on fertile ground and the green light was given to begin the planning. While this process was coordinated by Greuter, the bulk of the actual planning work was done by Potztal, PH and the first author of this obituary. Since it was made perfectly clear by Greuter's superiors that no further extension of the Botanical Museum was to be erected for the next fifty years, the calculation of the requested space for the herbarium became a sensitive matter. Several questions had to be addressed by PH: firstly, the space requested for the pre-existing collections, plus that necessary for the collections to be acquisitioned over the next fifty years had to be calculated; secondly, the space requested for air conditioning the underground storage rooms had to be estimated; thirdly, the methods of fire suppression and of disinsectizing the herbarium as well as the pertinent technical equipment had to be decided upon; fourthly, a conclusion had to be found as to which collections were to be moved and which were to remain in the pre-existing museum wing.

While the actual building process lay clearly outside PH's responsibility, the selection of the moving herbarium shelves, herbarium boxes and drawers for fruits, seeds and cones etc. was definitely his job. The transfer of c. 2.5 million herbarium specimens from different buildings, among them Adolf Engler's former villa and other storage sites, with contractors was another major challenge. Leaving large gaps for material flowing in over the subsequent fifty years was one aspect of this operation, because it was felt necessary to minimize later shifting of specimens *en masse*. Because of considerable delays in getting the disinsectizing facilities functional, time pressure was considerable, but in the end at least one out of the 24 underground storage rooms with the herbarium material in place could be demonstrated to the participants of the XIV IBC in August 1987. Two years later the transfer was completed.

For the next 12 years PH was able to put the new herbarium facilities to test. He must have been extremely satisfied. Thirty-two years after the inauguration, the herbarium rooms, both for storage and for mounting of specimens, are in full function, while the fire suppression equipment had to be replaced by next-generation technology. For the BGBM and scientific community the herbarium facilities are by far the best visible and the most highly appreciated part of PH's work.

When the legal status of the BGBM changed and it became a Zentraleinrichtung [central unit] of the Freie Universität Berlin, PH like several other staff members remained sceptical. For good reason he feared that the changes would lead—at least in the long run—to a focus on research and at the same time to less interest in and money for the collections in the broad sense, i.e. garden, herbarium and library, to which he was so closely attached.

### After retirement

PH retired from his duties at the BGBM on 31 December 1997 and wisely made use of the following years. Together with Grau and Leins, the former later superseded by Stefan Poremski (1960–, Rostock), he continued as co-editor of *Botanische Jahrbücher* and of *Bibliotheca Botanica*, work that made him come regularly to the BGBM and occupied him for many hours, mainly in the library. This is how volumes 120 (1998) to 125 (2004) of *Botanische Jahrbücher* totalling 3275 pages, and volumes 149 (1999) to 156 (2003) of *Bibliotheca Botanica* were published following established procedure. Treatments of *Opiliaceae* and *Olacaceae* for several flora projects appeared, with the account of *Opiliaceae* written for *Flora Neotropica* the most extensive, followed by an account of the same family for the (meanwhile aborted) *Species Plantarum – Flora of the World* programme. Always interested in the history of plant taxonomy, in particular those figures that were influential for the course of events in Berlin, PH now found time to write about Adelbert von Chamisso (1781–1838), one of his predecessors in charge of the Berlin herbarium

and clearly his favourite, and the great Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859), who had donated an extensive set of his gatherings in tropical America to Carl Ludwig Willdenow (1765–1812), Humboldt's mentor. PH's interest in Chamisso lead him to become an active member of the Chamisso-Gesellschaft and made him an adviser for the newly founded Chamisso Museum in Kunersdorf near Berlin. Just like he had shown groups of visitors round the Botanic Garden or the Botanical Museum in Berlin, he now organized tours in the Chamisso Museum.

On family property in Groß Glienicke near Potsdam, which came under the control of the Hiepkos only after the fall of the wall, PH had a house built and in 2003, aged 71, he and his wife moved in. Here and in the garden belonging to it he enjoyed the more pleasant aspects of retirement. Fond of singing since his youth in Quedlinburg, PH had previously joined the Singakademie zu Berlin, a famous choir rich in traditions. Now he also joined the Singakademie Potsdam, which kept him in contact with musical events in both cities. Additionally he became a member of the Groß Glienicker Kreis e. V., a society focused on local history and nature conservation. For this association he gave introductory courses on the local flora, offered lectures, organized excursions to the Berlin and Potsdam botanic gardens, and studied miscellaneous neophytes with interested members. Additionally PH acted for a few years as an aid to a nature conservation authority in Potsdam, e.g. regularly taking measurements of the ground water level. On one of his excursions to the Groß Glienicker See he discovered a fragment of the horrific “Stalin-Rasen” [Stalin's meadow], a metal frame two square metres in size covered with 14 cm long steel spikes. Placed on the ground by the border guards of the long defunct German Democratic Republic, these structures were intended to cause severe wounds to refugees trying to cross from east to west. Typically for PH he donated this find to the German Historical Museum, where it received the inventory number Pol 2010/3 and arranged for this trophy to be placed on show at a temporary exhibition focused on the post-war division of Germany.

Aged 82, PH was diagnosed with prostate carcinoma in an advanced state. Over the following three years neither androgen deprivation therapy nor radiotherapy was able to stop the progress of the disease that made PH weaker and weaker. Under palliative care, but basically without suffering from pain, a life dedicated to botany peacefully came to its end in July 2019. PH is survived by his wife Ingrid, his son Andreas and his daughter Camilla with their families.

As a person PH was a man of mild manners, kind, always helpful, albeit at first often somewhat restrained. He hardly spoke about the conflicts he must have felt during his many years in office and was dissatisfied about a few developments at the BGBM that took place after his retirement. At the same time Paul was a pure-bred taxonomist, a hard-working editor and a highly competent administrator of Germany's largest herbarium. Until late in life PH



maintained an interest in this collection, to which he had devoted so much of his energy and time. He listened, e.g., to the authors' report on the integration of the Dörfler and Reuss herbaria only a year before he died.

### Epilogue

PH did not possess the big ego that today apparently is the prerequisite for a career in science. He was not focused on the next cutting-edge, high-impact research paper to be published in a prestigious journal but instead dedicated his whole life to the institution to which he had belonged for so many years, in particular to its herbarium. In short, he was a model to follow—both in his care for a scientific collection and as a plant taxonomist.

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