



## In Celebration of Professor Stephan Robbert Gradstein

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This Festschrift has been compiled to honor Prof. Stephan Robbert Gradstein (aka Rob Gradstein Orcid:0000-0002-3849-6457) on the occasion of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and pay tribute to his distinguished, abundantly productive career and impactful contributions to bryology for more than 50 years. Rob was borne on 31 October 1943 in Krimpen aan den IJssel, a town in the province of South Holland, the Netherlands. He pursued his graduate education at the University of Utrecht, earning his M.Sc. in biology in 1969 and his Ph.D. in botany in 1975, the latter under the tutelage of Dr. Peter A. Florschütz. Rob's earliest publications (1968–1973) were primarily floristic studies of select bryophyte species in either the Netherlands or Crete, some with J. H. Smittenberg, from the Provinciale Planologische Dienst, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands.

At the beginning of his doctoral studies, Rob spent a year at the University of Cincinnati as a Research Assistant with Dr. Margaret Fulford, well known for her research on Latin American hepatics. Dr. Fulford encouraged Rob to study the many neotropical hepatic collections in her keeping, to become familiar with the neotropical flora, and Rob's colleague, Antoine Cleef, who was working on a vegetation analysis of the Colombian páramo, began sending him fresh specimens from Colombia. This early collaboration ultimately led to several publications on the diversity of oil body morphology in neotropical liverworts, including the first reports for some taxa (Gradstein et al. 1977, Gradstein 1978, Gradstein et al. 1981, Zhu & Gradstein 2003) and marked the beginning of Rob's lifelong studies of Andean hepatics. While at Cincinnati, Rob also began work on his doctoral dissertation, “A Taxonomic Monograph of the Genus *Acrolejeunea* (Hepaticae), with an Arrangement of the Genera of Ptychanthoideae,” which he successfully defended on 20 October 1975, and for which he received the Jessie Greenman Award, given for the best PhD dissertation in systematics published in 1975.

Rob was affiliated with the University of Utrecht as curator of the herbarium and lecturer from 1971 to 1995, but he assumed other positions as well during this time. For example, in 1976 he was a Fulbright Fellow at the University of Colorado, where he worked with Dr. William Weber, collecting bryophytes throughout the Galápagos Island archipelago, and in 1986–1987, he served as Visiting Professor at the University of Michigan, teaching courses in tropical botany. In 1995 he moved his very active research program to the University of Göttingen in Germany as Professor of Botany and Director of the Herbarium and Botanical Garden, remaining there until his retirement in 2009. In 2010 he moved to Paris, France where he was affiliated with the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle as a Research Associate in the Department of Systematics and Evolution, where he substantially enriched the herbarium with specimens from South America and Asia in particular. As a young retiree, the time he devoted to bryology enabled him to revise or identify *de novo* many samples, thereby making an exceptional contribution to the Paris herbarium of cryptogams (PC). In 2021 he moved his research to Meise Botanic Garden in Belgium, as a Research Associate of that institution.

Throughout his storied career Rob has shared his passion for tropical studies and systematic investigations, especially of the large, complex and taxonomically difficult liverwort family Lejeuneaceae, with more than 32 doctoral students under his direction and innumerable colleagues from around the world. He has provided numerous workshops and training courses in tropical bryology in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Indonesia, Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico and Venezuela. Among his almost 500 publications are 20 books, the most impactful of which include Gradstein (1994), Gradstein et al. (2001), Gradstein et al. (2003) and Gradstein (2021). These publications, which provide easy to use identification tools and relevant ecological notes, have enhanced the collection, preservation and documentation of distributions of neotropical bryophytes by students and professionals alike. After moving to the Meise Botanic Garden, Rob began his study of bryophytes from Central Africa, as part of the “Flore D’Afrique Centrale” (The Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi) series, to provide tools for the identification and conservation of the rich bryophyte flora of the region.

In 1995 Rob was awarded the A.P. de Candolle Prize from the Société de Physique et d'Histoire Naturelle of Geneva for his monographic treatment of the *Lejeuneaceae: Ptychantheae. Brachiolejeuneae* (Gradstein 1994), and in 2013, he was awarded the high honor of the Hedwig Medal from the International Association of Bryologists in recognition of his outstanding life-time contributions to bryology.

In addition to being an insightful, highly productive author, Rob is also an enthusiastic field botanist, who has personally explored the many habitats of which he writes, from the lowlands and mountains of Europe to the cloud forests, steep river gorges and páramos of Latin America. He has discovered new species (e.g., *Fossombronia jostii* Crand.-Stotl. & Gradst., Crandall-Stotler & Gradstein 2017) and re-discovered extremely rare, critically endangered species (e.g., *Colura irrorata* (Spruce) Heinrichs, Y. Yu, Schäf.-Verw. & Pócs, see Gradstein & Benitez 2014). His explorations, usually undertaken in collaboration with local botanists, have taken him into little studied regions, including the Chocó area of Colombia and the deep gorges of the Rio Topo and Pastaza River and their tributaries in Ecuador. His thousands of curated collections from throughout Latin America provide a wealth of information for both present and future generations of bryological researchers.

Rob is being honored not only for his incredible research record, but also for his service to the bryological community, which began when, as a graduate student, in 1969 he assumed the position of secretary-treasurer of the newly formed International Association of Bryology (IAB), which was established under the umbrella of the Utrecht-based, International Association of Plant Taxonomy (IAPT). Rob was elected twice more to this office, ultimately serving in this capacity for 18 years (1969–1987). As secretary-treasurer, he maintained the membership logs and financial records of the society and handled all correspondence between the Board of Directors and the growing membership. He edited the *Bulletin of Bryology*, which was published as a part of *Taxon* (1971–1981), the two editions of *Directory of Bryologists and Bryological Research* (Gradstein 1973, 1979), and helped compile two editions of guides to the bryological herbaria of the world, with D. Vitt and Z. Iwatsuki, published in 1976 (Iwatsuki et al. 1976) and 1985 (Vitt et al. 1985). He served as the President of IAB from 1999–2005, continuing as the Past President on the Board of Directors of the society until 2009. In addition to his long years of service to IAB, Rob also served for many years as a member of the International Committee for Nomenclature of Bryophyta (1981–1994), Editor-in-Chief of *Taxon* (2005–2011) and *Regnum Vegetabile* (2011–2018), and Editor of 16 volumes of *Flora Neotropica*, 27 volumes of *Bryophytorum Bibliotheca*, and 10 volumes of *Tropical Bryology*.

For his many years of service and impressive research accomplishments, this Festschrift volume of Bryophyte Diversity and Evolution is presented as a tribute to the on-going career of Professor Stephan Robbert Gradstein. For additional information on Prof. Gradstein's career and a list of his publications, see <https://www.plantentuinmeise.be/en/pQxoGsK/sc-robbert-gradstein>.

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