

OBITUARY

Attila BARCZI **(1964–2020)**

Dr. Attila Barczi, habilitated associate professor of the Department of Nature Conservation and Landscape Management at the Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences of Szent István University; editor of *Columella - Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences*, died unexpectedly on March 14 2020, at the tragically young age of 56.

Dr. Barczi was born in 1964 in Budapest. He completed his primary and secondary schools in Siófok. He began his university studies in 1983 at the József Attila University, Department of Biology, and went on to Gödöllő University of Agricultural Sciences in 1985. He started his work as a graduate agricultural engineer in 1989 at the Gödöllő University of Agricultural Sciences (later: Szent István University).

To further develop his professional knowledge, he obtained a degree in soil science and soil fertility on post-graduate engineering (1991) and one in agricultural-environmental engineering (1995). He defended his doctoral thesis (PhD) in 1997 with highest honors, and habilitated in 2004.

He began to work for the university at the Department of Soil science and Agro-chemistry as a staff member, then continued as a junior assistant professor and later as an assistant professor. He then became an associate professor at the Department of Landscape Ecology (later the Department of Nature Conservation and Landscape Ecology), where he oversaw the work of the department for several terms as head of department. During his rich professional career, he was, among others, the president of the Scientific Students' Associations at the university, the developer and supervisor of several study programs, the acting head of the Doctoral School of Environmental Sciences, and vice-dean for science and research of the Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences.

Dr. Barczi's subjects, taught in Hungarian and English, played a significant role in all levels of education, including undivided, BSc and MSc programs, post-graduate engineering and doctoral programs. His courses were primarily related to soil science and soil conservation, Hungarian landscapes and landscape management, as well as knowledge on landscape ecology. In his educational activities, he always considered field education tasks, field practical training and complex field landscape analyses to be of paramount importance. As a guest lecturer, he participated in the training of several Hungarian colleges and universities. He also engaged in significant science propagation activities, was frequently invited to speak at farmer forums, events and exhibitions, undertook editorial work in TV programs such as *Telecke* and *Heuréka*, regularly talked on professional programs, and undertook professional set of several educational films. The hallmarks of his teaching work lay in the high number and excellent performance of students who wrote their undergraduate, graduate or doctoral thesis under his supervision, while his outstanding talent management activity with Scientific Students' Associations is characterized by national first places, ministerial diplomas, and special awards. In recognition of his teaching and university work, he was eight-time winner of the Gold Medal for Best Performer awarded by students, while his work with Scientific Students' Associations was honored with a commemorative medal, the Páter Károly

Memorial Medal, the SZIE Laurel Wreath Gold Degree and the SZIE Silver Medal.

His research activities were extremely versatile. In addition to the examination and qualification of organic manures, compost and humus materials, he also dealt with agricultural land suitability studies, natural and agricultural landscape analyses, as well as landscape and agricultural assessments. Dr. Barczy's complex approach in education was most prominently evident in landscape analyses – which, based on information in geology, geography, biology, soil science, landscape history, land use and landscape processes – helped to perform sustainable land use and landscape conservation tasks and to plan farming activities that are aligned with landscape conditions. Investigations of the interaction of soil types and soil-forming factors, soil-plant correlation analyses and the study of the time of soil formation were also part of his work, as were soil compaction research, the effects of agricultural and industrial use on soils, and monitoring the effectiveness of recultivation procedures. His research on soil protection initiatives, his erosion databases and his studies on soil degradation were not only currently relevant, but also forward-looking by international standards. His research of the buried soil layers of kurgans and their paleo-ecological and paleosol properties extended over the Carpathian Basin to other Eastern European mounts, which contributed to his international recognition and the expansion of his scientific relations.

The results of his scientific work were published in more than 75 Hungarian and international scientific journal articles, 5 books and 22 book excerpts, 27 professional studies, 55 domestic and international conference volumes and 95 conference abstracts, 22 textbooks, textbook chapters and notes, 25 science propagation publications and 16 works. The recognition of his publications is also indicated by more than 500 independent citations.

Written and edited with scientific rigor but also with a view to popularize, Attila Barczy's colorful educational booklets on the landscapes of Hungary will help theoretical and practical training for many years to come.

During his professional career, he participated in 21 research proposals as a leader or participant. He was a member and official of several Hungarian and international scientific societies, as well as the founder and editor-in-chief of the scientific journal *Tájökológiai Lapok*, and also helped the work of the editorial boards of several domestic and international journals. The recognition of his research activities was marked by conference awards and excellent research scholarships (Széchenyi and Bolyai Scholarships).

In him, we have lost an erudite, open-minded, professionally recognized, very popular educator, a kind and helpful man and a good friend.