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Cleef, A.M.; Diazgranados, M.; Funk, V.A.

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PLANT SYSTEMATICS WORLD

Edited by Vicki Funk

■ SANTIAGO DÍAZ PIEDRAHITA (1944–2014), COLOMBIAN SYNANTHEROLOGIST AND HISTORIAN

Professor Santiago Díaz Piedrahita, long known as the Colombian expert on Compositae (synantherologist), passed away unexpectedly on 4 March 2014, just before his 70th birthday. A few days before, on 23 February, he had collapsed in his car on his way to the Academia Colombiana de Ciencias Exactas, Físicas y Naturales, in Bogotá.

Prof. Díaz Piedrahita's first love in the Compositae family (Asteraceae) was the Espeletiinae, the impressive stem-rosettes of the páramos, and *Espeletia oswaldiana* S.Díaz (1970) was his first described species. The species name was dedicated to his father Oswaldo Díaz Díaz, a devoted historian and writer. In February 1972 the first author collected an unknown *Espeletia* in the southern Páramo de Guantiva, on a ridge West of Belén, Boyacá, which Díaz Piedrahita later published as *Espeletia brachyaxiantha* S.Díaz (1972). A long list of new species of Espeletiinae would follow until 2010, when he published his last one, *Espeletiopsis laxiflora* S.Díaz & Rodríguez-Cabeza. Recently a new species of frailejón was named after him: *Espeletiopsis diazii* M.Díazgranados & R.L.Sánchez (2013).

Don José Cuatrecasas (1903–1996), the “father” of the Espeletiinae studies, actively worked on a monograph of the group (published posthumously in 2013) for most of his academic life, and Díaz Piedrahita was considered by some to be the successor of Cuatrecasas. Díaz Piedrahita and Cuatrecasas met in 1970 in Bogotá and they combined their interests to produce a treatment for *Pentacalia* and *Dendrophorbium* (published posthumously in 1999). In addition, Díaz Piedrahita published 32 names for *Pentacalia*.

However, the talents of Díaz Piedrahita were not limited to his work in botany. He was president of the Academia Colombiana de Historia and a member of a large number of regional academies of history in Colombia, as well as those of a number of cities such as Bogotá, Mariquita, Cartagena and Mompox. He was a corresponding

member of academies of history of Spain, Portugal, Argentina, Uruguay, Ecuador, San Salvador and Chile, and many other institutions of this kind. He was also active in the Real Academia Española de Lengua and a corresponding member of the Academia Española de Ciencias Exactas, Físicas y Naturales. Díaz Piedrahita served as secretary (1984–1989) of the Academia Colombiana de Ciencias Exactas, Físicas y Naturales in Bogotá (with seat number 22), and later as director of its journal (1988–2006).

Díaz Piedrahita wrote 27 books, 26 book chapters, 51 scientific papers, and 71 papers in social sciences (mainly in history and literature; see Electronic Supplement to the online version of this article for a complete list of publications; <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/iapt/tax>). He produced treatments and detailed studies for legumes and various tribes of Compositae: Barnadesieae, Mutisieae, Astereae, Senecioneae, Lactuceae, Inuleae, Anthemideae, Tageteae, Liabeae, Eupatorieae and Heliantheae. In the context of historical botany, Díaz Piedrahita edited four volumes of the *Flora de la Real Expedición*, and he was author of books on Mutis, Caldas and Triana, just to mention a few. In the course of his studies he described at least 104 species (for a complete list see Electronic Supplement, <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/iapt/tax>), mainly in Compositae, and eight taxa have been named in his honor: *Aragoa × diazii* Fern.Alonso; *Berberis diazii* L.A.Camargo; *Critoniopsis diazii* H.Rob.; *Gunnera diazii* L.E.Mora; *Heliopsis lanceolata* var. *diazii* R.K.Jansen & Stuessy; *Pseudosarcopera diaz-piedrahitae* (Gir.-Cañas) Gir.-Cañas; *Espeletiopsis diazii* Diazgr. & Sánchez; and *Schwartzia diaz-piedrahitae* Gir.-Cañas.

During his career he received many honors and awards (e.g., from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia; from the Asociación

Colombiana para el Avance de la Ciencia in 2003; and from the Academia Colombiana de Ciencias Ex., Fís. y Nat., the Premio a la Obra integral de un Científico in 2008). His most important award was the Premio Iberoamericano de Botánica José Celestino Mutis, received in March 2012 in Cádiz, Spain. The citation for this award referenced Díaz Piedrahita's exceptional botanical, cultural, linguistic and historical contributions. Indeed, he has been commemorated by Colombian journals as a successor of Mutis.

Santiago Díaz Piedrahita with *Espeletiopsis corymbosa* (Humb. & Bonpl.) Cuatrec., in 1979. (Photograph by V. Funk).

Colombia has lost an impressive botanist and historian, one who made substantial contributions to science and culture and we have lost a valued colleague and friend.

Personal impressions

Antoine: *Santiago Díaz Piedrahita was a good friend who was always ready to serve the scientific community. After his retirement from the Instituto de Ciencias Naturales, where he was a Professor, as well as spending some years as acting Director and Dean of the Faculty, he dedicated himself to new goals and continued his work. I met him in Bogotá in November 1971, at the Instituto and I went with him several times to the páramo, and shared many adventures. I remember one expedition when he and his team were arrested after one month of fieldwork in Sumapaz without a shower, and with dirty clothes and boots and unshaved faces. From the very beginning Díaz Piedrahita was very friendly, “muy cordial”, and a gifted Compositae botanist. He was dedicated and persistent in his taxonomic work and historical research. At the time of his death Díaz Piedrahita and his wife, Clemencia Manrique, were planning a trip to Europe (Cologne, Berlin, Italy and Spain) for his 70th birthday on 18 July and I was planning on meeting them at that time. Over the years our friendship never ended and I was looking forward to seeing him again.*

Mauricio: *It was 2005 and I was getting ready to start my Ph.D. thesis working on the Espeletiinae. I tried to contact Prof. Díaz Piedrahita but his secretary at the Academia Nacional de Historia told me that he had a pretty busy agenda with committees and meetings. I said “please tell him that I need to talk to him about my future dissertation on Espeletiinae”. Seconds later he was on the phone, and the same evening we met at his office. In a matter*

Santiago Díaz Piedrahita (left) and Antoine Cleef (23 November 2007). (Photograph by C. Manrique)

of minutes he was giving me all sort of tricks about the morphology of the group, something that he acquired after long years of work on the Compositae. At that point we began a fruitful relationship that was the beginning of a very long collaboration. In 2013 Roberto Sánchez and I dedicated a species of Espeletiinae to him and when we described Espeletiopsis diazii, a beautiful and very unusual species. The news about his death came so unexpectedly that it was hard to believe. For all of us that had the honour to work with and learn from him, it is going to be difficult to continue working on the Compositae without him.

Vicki: *When I was a graduate student I met Santiago at the herbarium (COL). He introduced me to fieldwork in Colombia and to many colleagues and friends. He was extremely helpful even accompanying us into the field on the first day of collecting. Since then our paths crossed many times under different circumstances (field work, teaching, herbarium visits) and he was always the same: gracious, helpful, and generous. I can't imagine Colombian botany without him and I know the Compositae have lost their Colombian champion.*

Antoine M. Cleef,¹ Mauricio Diazgranados^{2,3} & Vicki A. Funk²

¹ Institute for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Dynamics, University of Amsterdam, Science Park 904, 1098 XH Amsterdam

² Department of Botany, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20013-7012, U.S.A

³ Jardín Botánico José Celestino Mutis, Bogotá, DC 111071, Colombia

Santiago Díaz Piedrahita (2nd from the right) and colleagues, during the First Workshop on Colombian Compositae (10 August 2011). Vicki Funk and Mauricio Diazgranados (both with red jackets) organized the workshop. (Photograph by M. Diazgranados)