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Memoriam

In memoriam of Elio Corona (1930–2015)



Professor Elio Corona passed away in Rome, Italy on August 2nd, 2015.

Born in Mezzano di Primiero on September 28th, 1930, Elio Corona was educated at the Università di Firenze as a forest scientist and wood technologist. He worked first (1953–1962) as a forest engineer for the forest service in his beloved home forests in the Dolomites, then for the national railways as a wood technologist and engineer from 1962 until 1986. Later, he worked as a full professor in wood technology at the Università della Tuscia in Viterbo, close to Rome, where he was active as a consultant for the Vatican Museums and where he spent his last years.

Elio Corona introduced dendrochronology to Italy. With his passion for trees and forests, as well as for classical culture and fine arts, nobody could bridge natural sciences and humanities, forest science, botany, mathematical modelling and fine arts, art history in Rome and human culture in Italy, better than he did. Elio Corona was a true dendrochronologist.

I remember the first time I met Professor Corona. I was a young PhD student sampling cookies from a subalpine spruce forest in Paneveggio in the Dolomites, where he was managing the forest as a forest engineer during the 1950s. We met over lunch in the dining hall of the forest workers' lodge. In less than an hour, among hot *spaghetti alla bolognese* and chainsaws, Professor Corona was telling me all about the forest, its past management and its natural disturbances, including snow avalanches and wind storms.

He told me about the traces left by World War I, about poachers and rangers, and about how Stradivari selected the right wood for his violins. I was strongly impressed by his reflective soul, calm conversation, inspiring observations and deep thoughts. He had an incredible talent for teaching with simple words, a profound love for his forests and mountains and for the local people, a genius for inspiring my own enthusiasm to understand the forest. He taught me many lessons that I shall never forget.

Elio Corona was the founder and first Editor of *Dendrochronologia*. The first issue of *Dendrochronologia* appeared in 1983, edited by himself and published by the Istituto Italiano di Dendrochronologia, of which he was President. The journal was printed by Archeonatura Ed. in Verona and thus a typical Italian product indeed, but already very international. The first issue included two papers in German (one by Eckstein and Wrobel, "Dendrochronologie in Europa", and one by Egger, "Die Absolute-Datierung der Saone-Rhone-Kultur und der Bronzezeit in der Westschweiz"), two in Italian (one by Corona himself, "Dendrochronologia in Italia", and one by Bebber, Brugnoli, Fasani and Martinelli, "Una curva dendrochronologica della Quercia per l'antica età del Bronzo dell'Italia settentrionale"), and one in English (by Aniol, "Tree-Ring Analysis using Catras"). Corona set the structure, creating the backbone of an international scholarly journal. We owe the existence of our journal to him, and will deeply miss his passion and wisdom.

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