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100th anniversary of the Academician Vytautas Gudelis



In 2023, the Lithuanian academic community celebrated the 100th anniversary of Vytautas Gudelis, the famous geologist, geographer and oceanologist, full member of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, professor, habilitated doctor of science, founder and the first editor of the scientific yearbook „Baltica“.

Vytautas Gudelis was born on 13 July 1923 in Kaunas, Lithuania, in the family of Kazimieras Gudelis, a doctor of the Lithuanian Army, and Monika Šiškaite-Gudelienė. In 1930–1941 he attended the Panevėžys Boys' Gymnasium, and in 1941 he began his studies in geology at Vilnius University. After the closure of the University by nazis, he worked for the Lithuanian Geological Survey from 1943. In 1944–1947 V. Gudelis studied geography at Vilnius University. In 1947–1950 he was a senior lecturer at the Departments of Geology and Physical Geography of Vilnius University. In 1951, V. Gudelis was appointed as Scientific Secretary of the Institute of Geology and Geography of the Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian SSR; later he became the Head of the Sector, still later the Head of the Department of Geography, and finally the Director of the Institute of Geography. In 1954, he defended his candidate of geological and mineralogical sciences thesis entitled “The Geological Development of the Baltic Sea within the borders of the Lithuanian SSR and the Kaliningrad Region in the Late Glacial and Post-Glacial periods”. In 1968 he defended his PhD thesis in geography entitled

“The Relief and Quaternary Formations of the Baltic Area”. In 1969 V. Gudelis was conferred the title of Professor. In 1980 he was elected a Corresponding Member of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, and in 1994 – a Full Member (Academician). Vytautas Gudelis passed away on 17 July 2017.

Over sixty years of his fruitful scientific research activity V. Gudelis achieved outstanding scientific results. The list of fields of science to which he made valuable contributions includes Pleistocene and Holocene stratigraphy and palaeogeography, neotectonics, litho- and morphodynamics of sea shores (coastal geology), geology of the Baltic Sea, geochemistry of landscapes, dynamic geomorphology. However, in 1975 this list was supplemented with one more field of science, i.e., modern marine sedimentation and biogeochemistry, in which he initiated research. It was on the initiative of V. Gudelis that the “International Yearbook *Baltica*”, a predecessor of the currently well-known international scientific journal of the same name, was founded in 1961, and from 1963 to 1982 was published under his editorship. He was a scholar of broad interests, an excellent speaker and lecturer, a participant of numerous conferences, a prolific writer of scientific and journalistic articles on geography, Quaternary geology, oceanology, ecology, and an author of numerous monographs. The bibliographical index to V. Gudelis lists over 800 entries. Among them, there are more than 600 publications in

various fields of science, published in five languages, in Lithuanian and foreign scientific journals, monographs, and periodicals. The academician's scientific research activities also include organising, editing and publishing of 26 highly important volumes of scientific papers and monographs. Possibly the most important publications prepared by V. Gudelis personally are the monograph "The Lithuanian Offshore and Coast of the Baltic Sea" (1998) and the explanatory dictionary of four languages "Glossary of Coastal Research Terms" (1993), which summarize the results of complex fifty-year-long research on the Lithuanian coast and offshore. V. Gudelis edited the scientific publication "The Geographical Yearbook" (27 volumes), worked on the editorial boards of numerous other publications: wrote forewords to books and albums, translated scientific books and articles into Lithuanian, reviewed publications. V. Gudelis's pedagogical work is also noteworthy: he taught 12 courses in different subjects at the departments of geography and geology of Vilnius University, supervised 42 scientific theses, acted as a supervisor or an opponent of 28 doctoral dissertations. All scientific works by the academician V. Gudelis are listed in the bibliographical index "Vytautas Gudelis" (compiled by B. Kisieliene), published in 1994 by the Vrublevskiai Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. The manuscript archive of the academician is kept in the Manuscripts' Division of the Vrublevskiai Library.

In 1992, V. Gudelis was awarded an Honorary Doctorate degree of the Uppsala University for his productive research work on the Baltic Sea and its coasts and his sustained efforts to develop international scientific cooperation. In 1995, he was elected an Honorary Member of the Coastal and Marine Union (EUCC).

The monograph "Academician Vytautas Gudelis" compiled and edited by A. Grigelis appeared in 2011. It acquaints the academic and general public with the life and scientific activities of V. Gudelis. In 2023, several meaningful events were held to mark the honourable centenary of Vytautas Gudelis' birth. On the initiative of his family, the Academician Vy-

tautas Gudelis Foundation was established on 19 May 2023 and a commemorative medal was created (author G. Raudonius, 2023) to perpetuate his memory. To honour the life and work of the outstanding Lithuanian scholar, on June 27, 2023, the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences hosted the conference entitled "Academician Vytautas Gudelis – 100". A group of the academician's research associates and his research successors were awarded the above-mentioned commemorative medals. On the day of Vytautas Gudelis' birth, which is July 13, a group of scientists honoured his memory by visiting the grave of the academician and his wife Romana on the Artists' Hill in the Antakalnis Cemetery, Vilnius. On 7 September, the Nature Research Centre opened a rich exhibition entitled "This is the Baltic Sea. This is Lithuania" (prepared by S. Dagienė and A. Trumpienė, the Vrublevskiai Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences). The exhibits on display featured the most significant areas of V. Gudelis' research, e.g., Quaternary geology issues, the phenomenon of the Curonian Spit, enigmas of the Baltic Sea, etc. Exhibition visitors were given a glimpse of another, not so well-known area of V. Gudelis' activity, i.e., his poetic creation. During the event, another group of his research associates were honoured with his commemorative medals.

The erudition and versatility of the academician Vytautas Gudelis, his scientific research accomplishments, his administrative and social activities still inspire admiration of scientists and those who knew him. His scientific, pedagogical, and administrative legacy is widely used today by scientists and specialists in various fields and will undoubtedly be used in the future.

The information about Vytautas Gudelis is based on articles published in "Mokslo Lietuva" ("Scientific Lithuania"), No. 13 (700), 06.07.2022 (authored by B. Kisieliene) and "Geologijos Akiračiai" ("Horizons of Geology"), 2023, No. 3–4 (authored by O. Pustelnikovas, A. Grigelis, V. Pukelytė). Photo: averse and reverse of the medal commemorating Academician Vytautas Gudelis (author Gvidas Raudonius, 2023).