



PROF. DR. KATARINA ČUFAR – PREJEMNICA ZOISOVEGA PRIZNANJA ZA  
POMEMBNE DOSEŽKE IN ZLATE PLAKETE UNIVERZE V LJUBLJANI

PROF. DR. KATARINA ČUFAR RECEIVED THE ZOIS PRIZE FOR IMPORTANT  
ACHIEVEMENTS AND THE GOLDEN PLAQUE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

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Izvleček / Abstract

**Izvleček:** Prof. dr. Katarina Čufar je konec leta 2020 prejela dve prestižni priznanji: Zoisovo priznanje za pomembne znanstvenoraziskovalne dosežke za razvoj dendrokronologije in znanosti o lesu in Zlato plaketo Univerze v Ljubljani za izjemne znanstvenoraziskovalne dosežke, za zgledno pedagoško delo ter za zasluge pri krepitvi ugleda univerze. Kratko predstavljamo nagrajenko in njeno raziskovalno delo.

**Ključne besede:** dendrokronologija, znanost o lesu, anatomija lesa, državno priznanje, zlata plaketa univerze

**Abstract:** At the end of 2020, Prof. Dr. Katarina Čufar received two prestigious awards: the Zois Prize for important scientific research achievements in the development of dendrochronology and wood science, which is a state award of the Republic of Slovenia, and Golden Plaque from the University of Ljubljana for outstanding scientific research, exemplary teaching and achievements in enhancing the university's reputation. We briefly introduce the prize-winner and her work.

**Keywords:** dendrochronology, wood science, wood anatomy, award

Vrhunska znanstvenica in pedagoginja, prof. dr. Katarina Čufar je konec leta 2020, v prvem tednu decembra, prejela dve zares prestižni priznanji: Zoisovo priznanje za pomembne znanstvenoraziskovalne dosežke za razvoj dendrokronologije in znanosti o lesu in Zlato plaketo Univerze v Ljubljani za izjemne znanstvenoraziskovalne dosežke, za zgledno pedagoško delo ter za zasluge pri krepitvi ugleda univerze.

Prof. dr. Katarina Čufar je Zoisovo priznanje za pomembne dosežke prejela za razvoj znanosti o lesu, posebej za dosežke in razvoj na področju anatomije lesa in dendrokronologije ter za prenos znanja na področja kulturne dediščine in arheologije, s čimer je trajno prispevala k razvoju znanstvenoraziskovalne in razvojne dejavnosti na področju biotehnike in humanistike v Republiki Sloveniji. Prof. dr. Katarina Čufar ter sodelavke in sodelavci doma in po svetu so v večletnih raziskavah pojasnili najpomembnejše fiziološke procese, predvsem tiste, povezane z delovanjem kambija ter nastajanjem lesa in skorje v drevesih (Čufar et al., 2008c; Prislan et al., 2011, 2013; Gričar et al., 2014). Te procese vodi-

jo notranji in okoljski dejavniki, predvsem klima, njihov vpliv pa je zabeležen v anatomiji lesa (Balzano et al., 2018). Les s svojimi celicami in tkivi zato predstavlja arhivski zapis preteklih dogodkov, ki jih proučuje dendrokronologija. Dendrokronologija temelji na proučevanju lesa branik, razmejenih z letnicami, kjer v prvi fazi ugotovijo, v katerem letu je les nastal in s tem les datirajo. V mnogih primerih je datiranje in ugotavljanje starosti tudi končni cilj raziskav. Datiranje je hkrati velik izziv, saj naša kulturna dediščina hrani tudi več tisoč let stare predmete (Čufar et al., 2014b). Nagrajenka je opravila pionirsko delo na področju dendrokronologije v Sloveniji, kjer je bilo najprej treba sestaviti referenčne kronologije (Čufar et al., 2008b). Delo na tem področju ne bo nikoli zares končano, saj bi v idealnem primeru potrebovali kronologije glavnih drevesnih vrst za vsa interesna obdobja in območja v Sloveniji, za kar pa je seveda nujno delo širokega kroga sodelavk in sodelavcev ter interdisciplinarno in mednarodno sodelovanje.

Izsledki raziskovalnega dela prof. Katarine Čufar s sodelavkami in sodelavci so pomagali, da lahko tudi v Sloveniji uporabljamo dendrokronologijo za ugotavljanje starosti lesa v objektih kot so na primer koliščarske naselbine na Ljubljanskem barju in najstarejše leseno kolo na svetu (Čufar et al., 2010; Čufar & Velušček, 2012). Uvedba dendrokronologi-

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je je omogočila, da danes vemo, kdaj natančno so bile med leti 3770–2450 pr. n. št. naseljene posamezne koliščarske naselbine na Ljubljanskem barju (Čufar et al., 2015). Datiranje je omogočilo boljše razumevanje življenja ljudi na našem ozemlju v prazgodovini ter njihove povezanosti s kulturami v širšem geografskem območju. Rezultati in skrbno hranjen arheološki les iz raziskav so ključni za nadaljnje temeljne raziskave, kot je na primer proučevanje genetike in migracij hrasta v obdobju 10.000 let po zadnji poledenitvi (Wagner et al., 2018). Material so porabili tudi za raziskave gospodarjenja z gozdnimi viri v daljni preteklosti (Out et al., 2020).

Pri mnogih lesnih konstrukcijah in predmetih, pomembnih za našo kulturno dediščino, dendrokronologija pomaga poleg starosti ugotavljati tudi izvor lesa ter originalnost in vrednost predmetov, kar najbolje prikazujejo raziskave umetniških in uporabnih predmetov, glasbenih inštrumentov ter konstrukcij različnih stavb od gradov, cerkva, palač ter mestnih in kmečkih stavb, od bivališč do kozolcev (Čufar et al., 2014a, 2017, 2020). Material in rezultati iz omenjenih raziskav so pripomogli k rekonstrukciji klime

v Sloveniji za zadnjih 500 let in v Evropi za zadnjih 2000 let (Čufar et al., 2008a; Cook et al., 2015).

Razvoj dendrokronologije nagrajenka s svojimi sodelavkami in sodelavci gradi na trdni osnovi poznavanja anatomije lesa in fiziologije dreves. Prav zato so izredno pomembne raziskave živih dreves, kjer dendrokronologija, navezana na klimatologijo, med drugim pojasnjuje, kaj omejuje in kaj podpira rast določenih dreves in drevesnih vrst na določenem območju, kar je posebej pomembno takrat, ko se glavni dejavniki (npr. klima) spreminjajo in je preživetje dreves ogroženo (Čufar et al., 2014a; Cailleret et al., 2017; Novak et al., 2017). Temeljne raziskave širše skupine na področju delovanja kambija ter nastajanja lesa (ksilema) in skorje (še posebej floema), ki vključujejo drevesa iz pretežno zmerno celinskih (Cuny et al., 2015; Martinez del Castillo et al., 2018), hladnih alpskih (Rossi et al., 2016; Li et al., 2017) in vroče suhih sredozemskih okolij (De Luis et al., 2013; Novak et al., 2013; Prislán et al., 2016), so prinesle številna bazična spoznanja. Ta spoznanja pa so nadgradili z uporabo satelitskih podatkov (Decuyper et al., 2020) in opazovanjem listne fenologije dreves (Škrk et al., 2020).



Slika 1. Zoisovo priznanje prof. dr. Katarina Čufar za pomembne dosežke za razvoj dendrokronologije in znanosti o lesu.

Figure 1. Zois Prize for Prof. Dr. Katarina Čufar for important achievements in the development of dendrochronology and wood science.



Izsledki raziskav so bili predstavljeni v prestižnih objavah, ki jih je svetovna znanstvena skupnost prepoznala in dobro sprejela, kar se odraža tudi v visoki citiranosti objav (Bibliography..., 2020a, b).

Iz bibliografije nagrajenke je razvidno, kako pomembno je sodelovanje ter delo raziskovalk in raziskovalcev v Sloveniji ter kako je domače dosežke potrebno in mogoče vpeti v delo mednarodnih konzorcijev. Pri tem nagrajenka deluje tudi kot glavna urednica revije *Les/Wood*, kjer z uredniškim delom in objavljanim skrbi za slovenski jezik in slovensko znanstveno izrazoslovje.

Na kratko opisane temeljne in aplikativne raziskave se tesno prepletajo in medsebojno dopolnjujejo, zato smo veseli, da je bilo delo Katarine Čufar prepoznano in nagrajeno z državnim priznanjem.

Redna profesorica dr. Katarina Čufar je na področju znanosti o lesu tudi izvrstna in med študenti izjemno priljubljena pedagoginja. Naključje je hotelo, da ji je prav v istem tednu, kot ji je bilo podeljeno

Zoisovo priznanje, kot ugledni mednarodni raziskovalki in odlični predavateljici tudi Univerza v Ljubljani podelila enega svojih najvišjih priznanj, Zlato plaketo. Prof. Čufarjeva je Katedro za tehnologijo lesa, ki jo vodi, postavila na svetovni zemljevid odlično opremljenih laboratorijev, v katerega radi prihajajo tuji znanstveniki in študenti. Zavzeto skrbi tudi za prenos znanja v prakso. Svoje vrhunske izsledke objavlja v najuglednejših svetovnih publikacijah, ob tem pa ji vedno uspe poiskati čas za najrazličnejše zahtevne vodstvene funkcije in ne nazadnje, za prijazno besedo svojim sodelavcem, ko se slučajno srečamo na hodniku ali ob kavici.

Sodelavci Oddelka za lesarstvo na Biotehniški fakulteti smo se obeh uglednih priznanj naše pedagoginje in raziskovalke, prof. dr. Katarine Čufar, izjemno razveselili in ji iskreno čestitamo! Verjamemo, da se našim čestitkam pridružujete tudi vsi ostali, ki z njo tako ali drugače sodelujete, ali pa jo poznate kot svojo sedanjo ali bivšo profesorico.



Slika 2. Predavanje v mikroskopirnici na Oddelku za lesarstvo. Foto: Angela Balzano.

Figure 2. Lecture in a microscopy classroom at the Department of Wood Science and Technology. Photo: Angela Balzano.

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*Slika 3. Najstarejše kolo na svetu z osjo staro 5150 let hrani Mestni muzej Ljubljana MGML. Večino temeljnih raziskav lesa kolesa in drugih najdb iz koliščarskih naselbin na Ljubljanskem barju so v sodelovanju z Inštitutom za arheologijo ZRC SAZU opravili na Oddelku za lesarstvo Biotehniške fakultete. Foto: Rado Likon, (Vrhunci..., 2020).*

*Figure 3. The oldest wheel in the world with an axle is 5,150 years old and is kept by the City Museum of Ljubljana MGML. Most of the basic research on the wood of the wheel and other finds from pile-dwelling settlements of Ljubljansko barje was conducted at the Department of Wood Science and Technology of the Biotechnical Faculty, in cooperation with the Institute of Archeology RC SASA. Photo: Rado Likon (Vrhunci..., 2020).*



*Slika 4. Dendrokronološka analiza violine za določitev starosti in originalnosti inštrumenta. Foto: Rado Likon, (Vrhunci..., 2020).*

*Figure 4. Dendrochronological analysis of a violin to determine the age and origin of the instrument. Photo: Rado Likon (Vrhunci..., 2020).*





*Slika 5. Fenološko opazovanje rumenjenja listja na bukvah iz krajinskega parka Tivoli – Rožnik v Ljubljani. Foto: Rado Likon, (Vrhunci..., 2020).*

*Figure 5. Phenological observation of leaf yellowing in beech in the Tivoli - Rožnik Landscape Park in Ljubljana. Photo: Rado Likon (Vrhunci..., 2020).*

In the first week of December 2020, our top scientist and teacher, Prof. Dr. Katarina Čufar, received two truly prestigious awards: the Zois Prize for important scientific research achievements in the development of dendrochronology and wood science, and Golden Plaque from the University of Ljubljana for outstanding scientific research, exemplary pedagogical work and achievements to enhance the reputation of the University.

Katarina Čufar received the Zois Award for important achievements for the development of wood science, especially in the field of wood anatomy and dendrochronology and for the transfer of knowledge on cultural heritage and archaeology. In this way, she contributed to scientific research and development in the fields of both the life sciences and humanities in the Republic of Slovenia.

Katarina Čufar, in cooperation with colleagues from Slovenia and around the world, has spent many years studying the most important physiological processes in trees, including those related to cambium activity and the formation of wood and bark (Čufar et al., 2008c; Prisljan et al., 2011, 2013; Gričar et al., 2014). Such processes are driven by

internal and environmental factors, especially climate, and their influence is recorded in wood anatomy (Balzano et al., 2018).

Wood with its cells and tissues therefore represents an archive of past events, which is investigated by dendrochronology. Dendrochronology is the study of tree-rings and is based on cross-dating, which can be used to determine in which calendar year the wood was formed. Dendrochronology thus makes it possible to date the wood, which is sometimes the ultimate goal of research. However, such dating can be a great challenge, as Slovenian cultural heritage also contains objects that are thousands of years old (Čufar et al., 2014 b). Katarina Čufar pioneered the field of dendrochronology in Slovenia, where reference chronologies first had to be established (Čufar et al., 2008b). The creation of such chronologies sometimes seems to be a never-ending project. Ideally we need chronologies of the main tree species for all periods of interest, and all regions in geographically heterogeneous Slovenia. This requires well-organised teamwork with broad interdisciplinary and international cooperation.

The research work of Katarina Čufar and her colleagues helped us to determine the age of wood in pile-dwelling settlements in the Ljubljansko barje and the oldest wooden wheel in the world (Čufar et al., 2010; Čufar & Velušček, 2012). Dendrochronology has made it possible to determine exactly when the pile-dwelling settlements at Ljubljansko barje were inhabited in the period between 3770 and 2450 BC (Čufar et al., 2015). Dating this made it possible to better understand the life and cultural connections of people in the distant past. The research results and carefully preserved archaeological wood enabled further basic research, such as the DNA study, which explained how populations of oak trees changed in space and time over a period of 10,000 years after the last glaciation (Wagner et al., 2018). The material was also used to study woodland management in the distant past (Out et al., 2020).

For constructions and objects of cultural heritage, dendrochronology helps to determine the origin of wood and the originality and value of objects, which is best shown by studies of musical instruments and constructions of castles, churches, palaces and various buildings, including rural architecture (Čufar et al., 2014a, 2017, 2020). The material and results of numerous studies have enabled reconstruction of the climate in Slovenia over the last 500 years, and in Europe over the last 2,000 years (Čufar et al., 2008a; Cook et al., 2015).

Katarina Čufar together with colleagues developed dendrochronology on a solid foundation of wood science, including wood anatomy and tree physiology. She showed that the study of living trees is necessary to relate dendrochronology to climatology and explain the factors that limit tree growth. This is particularly important when the climate changes and the survival of trees is threatened (Čufar et al., 2014a; Cailleret et al., 2017; Novak et al., 2017). Basic research by a wider group on cambium activity and the formation of wood (xylem) and bark (especially phloem) in trees from temperate continental (Cuny et al., 2015; Martinez del Castillo et al., 2018), cold alpine (Rossi et al. 2016; Li et al. 2017) and hot dry Mediterranean environments (De Luis et al., 2013; Novak et al., 2013; Prisljan et al., 2016) have produced a number of fundamental findings. These were scaled up to studies using remote sensing data (Decuyper et

al., 2020) and terrestrial observations of leaf phenology in trees (Škrk et al., 2020). Most of the papers were published in prestigious publications and acknowledged by the global scientific community, which is reflected in a high citation frequency (Bibliography 2020 a, b).

The bibliography of Katarina Čufar shows that the arduous work of researchers in Slovenia can and must be integrated into the work of international consortia. Katarina Čufar also serves as editor-in-chief of the journal *Les / Wood* and is also involved in the development of Slovenian scientific terminology.

The basic and applied research briefly described here are closely intertwined and complement each other, so we are pleased that the work of Katarina Čufar has been recognized and awarded the high state award of the Republic of Slovenia.

Katarina Čufar is a full professor who is known as an excellent teacher in the field of wood science. She is extremely popular among students. Coincidentally, in the same week that the Zois Prize was awarded to her, the University of Ljubljana presented her with one of its highest awards, the Golden Plaque. As an internationally recognized researcher and outstanding teacher, Prof. Čufar has put the Department of Wood Science and Technology and the team she heads in Wood Science on the world map of well-equipped laboratories with highly qualified and friendly staff. Therefore, the Wood Science team is a very popular partner, and the laboratories are constantly visited by scientists and students of all grades from all over the world. Katarina Čufar is also actively involved in the transfer of knowledge into practice. Together with co-authors she publishes in the most prestigious publications. At the same time, she always manages to find time for numerous challenging management functions and, last but not least, for a friendly conversation with her colleagues when we happen to meet in the hallway or over a coffee.

The staff of the Department of Wood Science of Biotechnical Faculty are very happy and proud that our teacher, scientist and colleague Prof. Dr. Katarina Čufar has received both prestigious awards. We sincerely congratulate her! We believe that all those who have worked with her in one way or another, or got to know her as a teacher, join us in congratulating her.



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