

CONFERENCE
“NICOLAE DONICI AND ASTRONOMY IN MOLDOVIAN LANDS”
A TRIBUTE SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM

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The Romanian Academy, together with the Academy of Sciences of Moldova and the Astronomical Institute of the Romanian Academy, organised the symposium *Nicolae Donici and Astronomy in Moldovian Lands* on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the birth of the great Romanian astronomer (Figure 1). Internationally recognized scientific personality, primarily through the record number of solar eclipses observed at the time, Nicolae Donici (Donitch) was a pioneer of the International Astronomical Union–IAU (1919) and an honorary member of the Romanian Academy (1922).

The scientific event took place on September 11, 2024, simultaneously in the Aula of the Romanian Academy and the Blue Hall of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, and was opened by Acad. Ioan-Aurel Pop, President of the Romanian Academy, and Acad. Ion Tighineanu, President of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova. The Romanian Academy’s director of the Astronomical Institute, Mirel Bîrlan, skillfully moderated the symposium honoring Nicolae Donici.

His Excellency Mr Nicolas Warnery, the Ambassador of France in Romania, sent a video message in which he addressed a friendly greeting to the presidents of the two Academies, the organizers and the participants of the symposium dedicated to the great astronomer Nicolae N. Donici.

Also, at the symposium’s opening, Valeriu Matei, honorary member of the Romanian Academy and general director of the Publishing House of the Romanian Academy, addressed the audience.

Maria Roemmich-Brunswig, the granddaughter of the astronomer Nicolae Donici, sent a video message from Buenos Aires, Argentina. *Your excellencies, dear participants, years ago, in 1930, my world was Dubossary, Bessarabia, Romania, far from my current life in Buenos Aires. My family, including my grandfather, Nicolai Donici, loved me as a child. He was a respected yet distant figure, remembered for his deep voice and presence apart from the family. He was kind, often rewarding me with a silver coin. Donici, an opera lover, spent his nights observing the stars, a passion I knew was significant but couldn’t fully grasp. Life was vibrant with social gatherings at our house, though Nicolai rarely joined, preferring the solitude of his*

The poster features a dark, starry night sky background. At the top, there are three logos: the Romanian Academy (Academia Română) on the left, the Romanian Academy of Sciences (Academia de Științe a Moldovei) in the center, and the Astronomical Institute of the Romanian Academy (AIRA) on the right. The main title is in large, bold, white capital letters: "NICOLAE DONICI ȘI ASTRONOMIA PE MELEAGURI MOLDOVENE". Below the title, the subtitle "Simpozion științific aniversar" is written in a light blue, cursive font. The location and date information is centered: "DUPLEX în Aula Academiei Române și Sală Azurie a Academiei de Științe a Moldovei" followed by "11.09.2024 ora 10". At the bottom, there is a photograph of a stone tower (Meleaguri) and a portrait of Nicolae Donici. A URL for more details is provided at the very bottom: "Detalii: <https://www.astro.ro:8080/articles/Conferences>".

**NICOLAE DONICI
ȘI ASTRONOMIA
PE MELEAGURI MOLDOVENE**

Simpozion științific aniversar

DUPLEX
în Aula Academiei Române
și Sală Azurie a Academiei de Științe a Moldovei

**11.09.2024
ora 10**

Detalii: <https://www.astro.ro:8080/articles/Conferences>

Fig. 1 – Poster of the symposium *Nicolae Donici and Astronomy in Moldovian Lands*.

observatory. His world was one of science, distant from the everyday. The Soviet invasion in 1940 completely upended our lives. We fled to Bucharest, leaving everything behind. The war brought further change, pushing Nicolai to Paris for his work with the Astronomical Society while we moved to Poland. Eventually, the advancing Soviet forces drove us to move to Munich for safety.

Post-war 1948, my family started a new life in Argentina while my grandparents stayed in Paris. Life was hard there, and though my grandmother visited us, Nicolai Donici never wanted to leave Europe and she passed away during her visit. As I reflect on these events, I'm both proud of my grandfather's enduring scientific legacy and saddened by the upheaval. I am grateful to the Romanian Academy for honoring his work connecting me across the continents to my past. Vă salut de la Buenos Aires declared Maria Roemmich- Brunswig, granddaughter of the astronomer Nicolae Donici.

Ewine Van Dishoeck, past president of the International Astronomical Union (2018–2021), also sent a video message. *Dear participants, dear colleagues, dear Magda (Stavinschi), It's my great pleasure and honor to speak to you as Vice President of the IAU to say a few words to the occasion of the celebration of the one hundred fiftieth birthday of the great Romanian astronomer Nicolae Donici. Donici pioneered the IAU, the professional organization of all astronomers worldwide. Donici's research focuses on solar and lunar eclipses, and he travelled worldwide to measure them. He also built his observatory in the Dubasarii Vechi. I think he would surely appreciate our efforts to preserve the dark skies. The IAU named asteroid 9494 in his name, Donici. In early 2020, as part of the IAU's hundred-year activities, we celebrated Nicolae Donici at the Romanian Embassy in Paris. It is appropriate that his one hundred fifty year's birthday is remembered in Romania through this duplex symposium, and equally important, especially for the younger generation, is to celebrate Donici's spirit, a spirit as a pioneer in bringing people together in building observing facilities and in putting Romania on the IAU and the international map. I wish you a very festive day!* Ewine Van Dishoeck, former president of the International Astronomical Union, ended.

The symposium, organized in two sections, highlighted the personality of Nicolae Donici based on new historical research and the contributions of other astronomers from Moldova lands. The participants, researchers and professors gave 16 scientific communications in the presence of the public gathered simultaneously in the Aula of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest, in the Blue Hall of the Moldova Academy of Sciences in Chisinau and on the electronic platform through which the live transmission of the symposium was carried out.

During the break between the two symposium sessions, Magda Stavinschi launched her latest book, **Sky Seen from Moldova Lands**, published by the Romanian Academy Publishing House. The volume presents the contributions of some

sky researchers born in Moldovian lands who, as Magda Stavinschi states in the book's Preface, highlight *the national and international panoply of scientists*. It is about Neculai Culianu (1832-1915), Spiru Haret (1851-1912), Nicolae Donici (1874-1960), Constantin C. Popovici (1878-1956), Constantin Drămbă (1907-1997), Călin Popovici (1910-1977), Vintilă Şiadbei (1898-1944), Alexandru Nicolaevici Deutsch (1901-1986), Victor Nadolschi (1911-1996), Cornelia Cristescu (1928-2005), Victor Stavinschi (1930-1997), Eugeniu A. Grebenicov (1932-2013) and Ieronim Mihăilă (1936-2019). Also, the book contains presentations of foreign travellers through Moldova—for example, Johann Ritter von Oppolzer and Edmund Weiss, who observed the transit of Venus in Iasi in 1874—as well as medallions about four amateur astronomers, Dimitrie Ghica-Comăneşti (1839-1923), Victor Anestin (1875-1908), Vladimir Boico (1909- 2001), and Matei Alexescu (1929-1993).

Romfilatelia presents also the new envelope dedicated to this event (Figure 2).



Fig. 2 – Romfilatelia released the tribute envelope *Nicolae Donici—150 years since his birth* on the day of the symposium.

The organizing committee of the symposium *Nicolae Donici and Astronomy in Moldovian Lands* was made up of Magda Stavinschi, Mirel Bîrlan and Sorin Marin (Astronomical Institute of the Romanian Academy), Veaceslav Ursachi and Tudor Braniște (Academy of Sciences of Moldova) and Cătălin Mosoia (Romanian Academy).

Papers presented at the Nicolae Donici Symposium (in Romanian language):

- Magda Stavinschi: Nicolae Donici și alți observatori ai cerului de pe meleaguri moldovene;
- Cătălin Mosoia: Doniceștii;
- Elena-Aurelia Țene, Ancuța Manea, Florinela Georgescu: Nicolae Donici – contribuții în meteorologie;
- Alexandru Corduneanu: Situl Complexul Observatorului Astrofizic al lui

Nicolae Donici de la Dubăsarii Vechi;

- Ion Holban, Mugur Ioan Grigoriță: Activitatea astrofizicianului Nicolae Donici – o pagină strălucită a științei românești care necesită a fi valorificată la maxim;
- Veaceslav Ursachi: Valoarea creației astronomului Nicolae Donici reflectată în evenimentele organizate de Academia Română și Academia de Științe a Moldovei;
- Mirel Bîrlan, Dan Alin Nedelcu, Diana Beșliu-Ionescu, Vlad Turcu, Octavian Blagoi: Prezentul și perspectivele astronomiei românești;
- Liliana Dumitru: Topologia câmpului magnetic într-o regiune solară activă;
- Cătălin-Bogdan Galeș: Modelarea dinamicii particulelor infinitezimale care orbitează corpurile nesferice aflate în rotație;
- Viorel Bostan, Nicolae Secrieru: Dezvoltarea nanosateliților, provocări și experiență în cadrul Universității Tehnice din Moldova;
- Viorel Bostan, Ion Bostan, Maxim Vaculenco, Ion Bodnariuc: Pendulul Foucault modernizat – un dispozitiv unic în cercetarea atracției universale Pământ-Lună-Soare în timpul eclipselor;
- Mihail Calalb, Viorel Dabija, Irina Zelenschi: Predarea găurilor negre și a undelor gravitaționale în fizica școlară;
- Afrodita Liliana Boldea: Astronomia, continuarea unui vis realizat de astronomul Nicolae Donici;
- Iulia Malcoci: Rolul Astronomiei ca disciplină de studiu în învățământul pre-universitar;
- Igor Postolachi, Valentina Postolachi: Activități practice la astronomie;
- Vitalie Chistol, Jan-Ovidiu Tercu: Predarea astronomiei pe meleagurile românești în relație cu istoricul ei.

Abstracts of the works and details about the authors are available on the Astronomical Institute of the Romanian Academy website at <https://www.astro.ro:8080/articles/Conferences/>.