

**75 YEARS OF ANONYMITY. THE TUMULTUOUS HISTORY  
AND THE CATALOGUE OF THE CLERIDAE (COLEOPTERA: CLEROIDEA) FAMILY  
FROM THE "FRIEDRICH DEUBEL" COLEOPTERA COLLECTION  
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**Abstract.** The "Friedrich Deubel" coleoptera collection serves as a reference point for entomological collections from Transylvania and by extension, Romania, being among the first collections of this kind. Unfortunately, due to the vicissitudes of history, the collection does not have a catalogue of the pieces it has contained since its transfer from the Saxon Museum of Bârsa Country to the Faculty of Silviculture and Forest Engineering in 1948, any data related to a pre-existing inventory being uncertain at best. In this regard, the authors began writing up such an inventory, starting with the Cleridae family, identifying, updating, and inventorying 86 specimens belonging to a total of 16 species from 11 genera. More research on other groups is however required in order to highlight the diversity of beetles collected by Deubel and still present in the collection.

**Keywords:** Cleridae, Friedrich Deubel, entomological collection, The Saxon Museum of Bârsa Country.

**Rezumat. 75 de ani de anonimat. Istoria tumultuoasă și catalogul Familiei Cleridae (Coleoptera: Cleroidea) a colecției de coleoptere „Friedrich Deubel” a Facultății de Silvicultură și exploatare forestiere, Universitatea Transilvania din Brașov.** Colecția de coleoptere „Friedrich Deubel” servește ca punct de referință pentru colecțiile entomologice din Transilvania și prin extensie, România, fiind printre primele colecții alcătuite de acest fel. Din nefericire, din cauza vicisitudinilor istoriei, colecția nu a beneficiat de un catalog al pieselor conținute încă de la transferul acesteia de la Muzeul Săsesc al Țării Bârsei la Facultatea de Silvicultură și exploatare forestiere în anul 1948, orice date referitoare la un inventar preexistent fiind cel puțin incerte. În acest sens, autorii au început alcătuirea unui astfel de inventar începând cu familia Cleridae, identificând, revizuiind și inventariind 86 de specimene care aparțin unui număr de 16 specii din 11 genuri. Este necesară dirijarea eforturilor de cercetare și către alte grupuri sistematice pentru a evidenția diversitatea coleopterelor colectate de către Deubel, existente astăzi în colecție.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Cleridae, Friedrich Deubel, colecție entomologică, Muzeul Săsesc al Țării Bârsei.

## INTRODUCTION

Museum collections are an ensemble of cultural and natural assets, constituted systematically and coherently by individuals or legal entities organized under public or private law. (\*\*\*, 2003) The "Friedrich Deubel" Coleoptera collection is one such element, which is currently held by the Transilvania University of Brașov - Faculty of Silviculture and Forest Engineering.

The collection consists of 60 entomological boxes with approximate dimensions of 50x40x6 cm., made of wood, with a lid of grouted glass and a handle in the shape of a button made of porcelain with a moulded floral pattern and an interior padded in glossy white paper (Fig. 1), stored in custom-made cabinets and is culturally significant on a regional and national level since its development between 1876 (NUSSBÄCHER, 2007) and 1933, being among the first historical beetle collections in Transylvania and, by extension, one of the first entomological collections in Romania. (Exact data confirms the existence of the collection since 1886) (NUSSBÄCHER, 2007; CUZEPAN et al., 2015\*). (\*In a previous paper (CUZEPAN et al., 2015), the year 1986 is recorded regarding the attestation of 3000 Coleoptera specimens donated by Fr. Deubel to the Transylvanian Society for Natural Sciences of Sibiu. This date is erroneous and most likely refers to the year 1886).

However, due to its tumultuous history, it has remained scarcely known until now, particularly because of what happened to it between the dissolution of the Museum of Bârsa Country in 1944, to 1948, when the collection was transferred to the Forestry Institute, a history that we will present below as follows:

**Historical background.** On February 3, 1908, following several previous unsuccessful attempts (ȘINDILARIU, 2010), (ȘTEFĂNESCU, 2010), five hobbyists from Brașov, including the entomologist Friedrich Deubel (1845-1933), consented to the union of their collections for exhibition purposes, thereby constituting the first opened private museum collection to the public under the name, "Museum of the Society of Brașov Collectors" on July 12, 1908, in an outbuilding consisting of 2 rented rooms in the house on 6, Rosenanger (now 6, George Enescu Square) (TEUTSCH, 1933; ZAMFIR, 2004; NUSSBÄCHER, 2007; ȘTEFĂNESCU, 2010).

Shortly thereafter, due to a lack of exhibition space, the members of the society decided to rent a space in the house located on 2, Rossmarkt (now 2, George Barițiu street), the collections being transferred and exhibited at this address, the opening was set to take place on April 1909 ((TEUTSCH, 1933; ZAMFIR, 2004; ȘTEFĂNESCU, 2010). This year also marks the first reliable attestation of the Deubel entomological collection's registration into the museum's heritage, a portion of it being displayed in the room no. 6, where the zoological collection was stored, the majority remaining however at Deubel's residence (ZAMFIR, 2004). On March 25, 1912, the institution was renamed "The Saxon Museum of Bârsa Country" (TEUTSCH, 1933), a name that has persisted in the cultural memory of people to the present day.

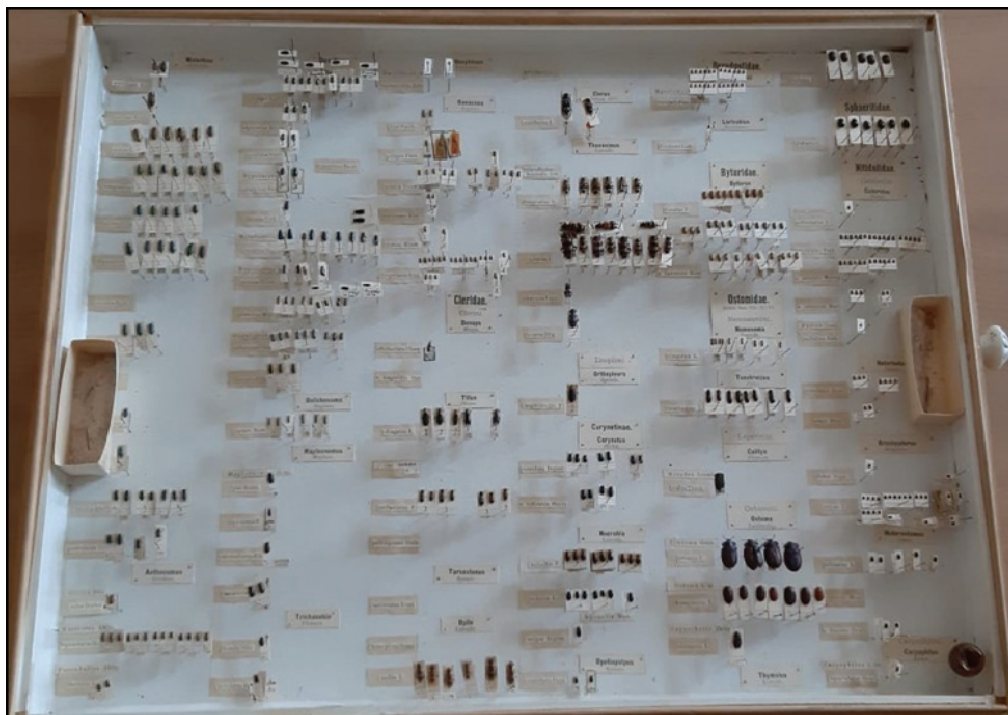


Figure 1. Overview of the features of the entomological box. Credits: Dragomir I. M. (original photo).

An important turning point in the history of the museum is due to one of the members of the "Society of Braşov Collectors", Erich Jekelius, who would later become the director of the museum. He was actively involved in the issue concerning the association of the collections of "Johannes Honterus" gymnasium with the ones of the Saxon museum, successfully unifying them in 1913 with the consent of the Honterus Evangelical-Lutheran Presbytery, leading to the relocation of the collections located in the building on 2, Rossmarkt, to the second floor of the B and C buildings of the abovementioned gymnasium, thus solving the problem of storage space and obtaining a better expositional state (ŞINDILARIU, 2010; ŞTEFĂNESCU, 2010). According to Teutsch (TEUTSCH, 1933), room 6 housed Deubel's insect collection, which had previously been deposited on Rossmarkt 2 and had been completed by the transfer of the remaining material to the "Honterus" gymnasium.

The period of the First World War brought a climate of uncertainty over the museum's activity, with the institution being forced to give up a portion of the allocated space as well as to send a number of the items to Budapest, from where they were later recovered (ŞINDILARIU, 2010; ŞTEFĂNESCU, 2010). Braşov being at that time an area of military operations, there was a fear that the museum's heritage would be destroyed or stolen, so, throughout the conflicts, the museum was provided with military protection (ŞTEFĂNESCU, 2010). It wasn't until 1920 that the museum's activities were fully resumed. In 1924, Deubel donated all his Coleoptera collection to the museum under the condition that he remains its custodian until his death, which took place in 1933 (NUSSBÄCHER, 2007; HELTMAN, 2008).

Considering the socio-political climate that prevailed among the Saxon population prior to the Second World War, as a temporary solution to the possible seizure and instrumentalization of the museum heritage by various pro-Nazi Saxon groups, as well as the fear of forced romanization measures, the owners of the collections together with the director of the museum at that time, Erich Jekelius, decided to transfer the entire museum heritage to the property of the Honterus Evangelical community (ŞINDILARIU, 2010; ŞTEFĂNESCU, 2010). This event took place on June 7, 1937, in the same year when the name of the museum changed from "The Saxon Museum of Bârsa Country" to "The Museum of Bârsa Country" (ŞINDILARIU, 2010; ŞTEFĂNESCU, 2010).

However, the worries became real in 1939, when, with the outbreak of the Second World War, the museum's activity was almost completely suspended (ŞTEFĂNESCU, 2010). Another event that will have dire consequences is the handover of the museum heritage pieces (including the Deubel collection and the related buildings) by the same Honterus Evangelical community in 1943 to the German Ethnic Group (PROX, 1997; ŞTEFĂNESCU, 2010). In 1944, as a result of the Anglo-American bombing of Braşov in April, it was decided to issue an order to transfer the most valuable pieces to the town of Hălchiu, from where most of them will never be recovered (PROX, 1997). The previous action of transferring the entire museum heritage into the possession of the German Ethnic Group will prove to be unfortunate; after the events of 1944, as a result of political changes, the group was outlawed and all the goods were requisitioned (ŞTEFĂNESCU, 2010).

The story of the non-transferred heritage assets in the Honterus gymnasium after August 1944, including the entire collection of exhibits in the natural sciences department (including the "Friedrich Deubel" Coleoptera collection), is largely unknown, with the few recorded data referring to the period 1944-1947/1948 coming from Alfred Prox, the museum's last director, as well as several accounts that the authors benefited from during the time were concerned with this issue. Thus,

towards the end of 1944, after the arrival of Soviet troops in Braşov, the B and C buildings of the Honterus gymnasium were requisitioned and used mainly as a field hospital; Prox noting after the statements of some witnesses that "in order to vacate the space, a good part of the pieces left in the buildings were thrown out the window" (PROX, 1997). The authors don't know whether the Deubel collection had the same fate, and it's possible that a smaller or larger number of the 60 entomological boxes that exist today were lost at the time.

After the hospital was closed, two years later, in 1946, the buildings were reorganized, becoming a local administrative headquarters of the Romanian Railways Company (PROX, 1997), (ȘTEFĂNESCU, 2010). The date of December 30, 1947 brings with it the shattered hope of restoring the institution to its status prior to the year 1939, along with the proclamation of the Romanian People's Republic, when the entire patrimony of the institution was nationalized. However, the period coincides with the establishment of the Forestry Institute in 1948 (now the Faculty of Silviculture and Forest Engineering), which, according to Prox's testimony, "took over the Collection of Natural Sciences in the fall of 1948, without knowing their number [of pieces] in the absence of inventories and of any delivery-receipt documents" (PROX, 1997) also supported by Ștefănescu who claims that the possibility of an existing inventory was high, but that it was most likely lost or destroyed as a result of the events that happened in 1944 (ȘTEFĂNESCU, 2010). This fact is also confirmed by the late professor Aurel Rusu, who was assigned to the Topography discipline at the time and recalls that "the collections were handed over without an official inventory" (Dieter Simon, pers. comm.).

**Present-day status.** What is certain, at least in the case of the "Friedrich Deubel" Coleoptera collection, is the existence and preservation of 60 entomological boxes in the zoological collection of the Faculty of Silviculture and Forest Engineering, which can still be viewed and enjoyed by those who are interested, whether researchers, students, or pupils. Given that the collection has previously lacked a catalogue of entomological pieces as well as a general overview of its historical evolution, this work aims to shed light on both of these issues and would be the first to deal with the writing of such an inventory, beginning with the Cleridae family, paving the way for similar subsequent efforts.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

**Identifying and cataloguing the specimens in the collection.** The primary activities undertaken to bring up the data from the "Friedrich Deubel" Coleoptera collection were the identification and cataloguing of the pieces pertaining to the Cleridae family. For identification, a Kern binocular microscope type OZL-46 with a maximum magnification of 450x was used, along with the most recent Western Palaearctic Cleridae key (GERSTMEIER, 1998). The World Catalog of Cleridae (CORPORAAL, 1950) and the last edition of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (\*\*\*, 2012) were used in parallel with the Catalogue of Palearctic Coleoptera (KOLIBÁČ & GERSTMEIER, 2007) in order to solve nomenclatural problems involving synonymy, emendations and a case of *lapsus calami*. A Transylvanian localities dictionary (SZABÓ, 1992) was used to identify several toponyms. The obtained data was stored in the authors' databases.

## RESULTS

The Cleridae material in the Deubel entomological collection consists of 86 specimens belonging to 16 species from 11 genera (Fig. 2) from a total 30 species belonging to 13 genera recorded until now in Romania out of which 3 are cosmopolitan (*Necrobia rufipes* (De Geer, 1775); *Necrobia ruficollis* (Fabricius, 1775); *Necrobia violacea* (Linnaeus, 1758)) and two are trans-Palaearctic (*Trichodes apiarius* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Trichodes ircutensis* (Laxmann, 1759)), the remaining ones having a Western Palaearctic distribution. The species with the most collected individuals is *Necrobia ruficollis* (Fabricius, 1775), with a total of 23, while the species with the fewest collected individuals are *Denops albofasciatus* (Charpentier, 1825), *Trichodes ircutensis* (Laxmann, 1759), *Trichodes favarius* (Illiger, 1802), *Dermestoides sanguinicollis* (Fabricius, 1787), and *Necrobia rufipes* (De Geer, 1775), with one individual each. The taxa are systematically arranged according to Catalogue of the Palaearctic Coleoptera (KOLIBÁČ & GERSTMEIER, 2007), as shown in the table (Table 1) below.

Table 1. The Cleridae material from the "Friedrich Deubel" entomological collection.

Species		No. of specimens	Collecting site		Collector	Collecting date
Current name	Written as		Current name	Written as		
<i>Denops albofasciatus</i> (Charpentier, 1825)	<i>Denops albofasciata</i> Charp.	1	Transylvania	Érdely	Frivaldszky	missing
<i>Tillus elongatus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	<i>Tillus elongatus</i> L.	2	Tâmpa Mt.	Kapellenberg	Deubel	missing
		1	Bucegi Mts. alpine zone	Bucsecs alpin	Deubel	missing
		1	Hațeg Mts. subalpine zone	Hatseger Gbg., subalpin	Deubel	missing
		1	Rodna Mts. alpine zone	Rodnaer Gbg., alpin	Deubel	missing
<i>Tilloidea unifasciata</i> (Fabricius, 1787)	<i>Tillus unifasciatus</i> F.	6	Deva city	Déva	Deubel	2 <sup>nd</sup> of June
		1	Hărman village	Honigberg	Deubel	June 4 <sup>th</sup> 1907
<i>Opilo mollis</i>	<i>Opilo mollis</i> L.	1	Braşov Mts.	Kronstadter Gbg.	Deubel	missing

(Linnaeus, 1758)		3	Tâmpa Mt.	Kapellenberg	Deubel	missing
		1	Deva city	Déva	Deubel	2 <sup>nd</sup> of June
		1	Braşov Mts.	Kronstadter Gbg.	Deubel	missing
<i>Clerus mutillarius</i> Fabricius, 1775	<i>Clerus mutillarius</i> F.	1	Saschiz village	Keiszd	Deubel	missing
		1	3 Scaune Comittee (near today's Sfântu Gheorghe)	Haromszek	Deubel	missing
<i>Thanasimus formicarius</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	<i>Thanasimus formicarius</i> L.	1	Rarău Mt.	Rareul	Deubel	missing
		2	Hășmașul mare Mts.	Nagy Hagymas Gbg.	Deubel	missing
		1	Măgura Codlei Mt.	Zeidener Berg	Deubel	missing
		2	Tâmpa Mt.	Kapellenberg	Deubel	missing
<i>Trichodes apiarius</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	<i>Trichodes apiarius</i> L.	2	Tâmpa Mt.	Kapellenberg	Deubel	missing
		1	Câmpina village	Campina	Deubel	missing
		1	missing	missing	Deubel	missing
		5	Merești village	Almas H.	Deubel	July 1 <sup>st</sup> 1907
		1	near Honterus highschool	Honterus	Deubel	missing
		1	Merești village	Almas H.	Deubel	missing
		1	Braşov Mts.	Kronstadter Gbg.	Deubel	missing
		<i>Trichodes ircutensis</i> (Laxmann, 1759)	<i>Trichodes irkutensis</i> Laxm.	1	Rodna Mts. alpine zone	Rodnaer Gbg., alpin
<i>Trichodes favarius</i> (Illiger, 1802)	<i>Trichodes favarius</i> Illig.	1	Merești village	Almas H.	Deubel	July 1 <sup>st</sup> 1907
<i>Dermestoides sanguinicollis</i> (Fabricius, 1787)	<i>Orthopleura sanguinicollis</i> F.	1	Hărman village	Honigberg	Deubel	missing
<i>Korynetes caeruleus</i> (De Geer, 1775)	<i>Corynetes caeruleus</i> Degeer	7	Braşov Mts.	Kronstadter Gbg.	Deubel	missing
<i>Korynetes ruficornis</i> Sturm, 1837	<i>Corynetes caeruleus</i> var. <i>ruficollis</i> (sic!) Sturm	4	Braşov Mts.	Kronstadter Gbg.	Deubel	missing
<i>Necrobia ruficollis</i> (Fabricius, 1775)	<i>Necrobia ruficollis</i> F.	23	Braşov Mts.	Kronstadter Gbg.	Deubel	missing
<i>Necrobia violacea</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	<i>Necrobia violaceus</i> L.	6	Râşnov Mts.	Rosenauer Gbg.	Deubel	missing
		1	Braşov Mts.	Kronstadter Gbg.	Deubel	missing
<i>Necrobia rufipes</i> (De Geer, 1775)	<i>Agonolia rufipes</i> Degeer	1	Prague	Praga	Dr. Lokay	missing
<i>Opetiopalpus scutellaris</i> (Panzer, 1798)	<i>Opetiopalpus scutellaris</i> Panz.	1	missing	missing	Deubel	missing
		1	Northern Hungary	Hungaria bor[ealis]	Reitter	missing

As can be seen from the attached table (Table 1), most of the collection sites are from the geographic area of Transylvania, the few exceptions including 1 specimen of *Trichodes apiarius* (Linnaeus, 1758) from Câmpina locality in Prahova County, or some a few species obtained through exchanges or acquisitions from other European entomologists, such as *Denops albofasciatus* (Charpentier, 1825) collected by Imre Frivaldszky, *Opetiopalpus scutellaris* (Panzer, 1798) by Edmund Reitter or *Necrobia rufipes* (De Geer, 1775) from Emanuel Lokay. Aside from these details, most of the specimens were collected by Deubel himself, the scientific material exchanges demonstrating his cordial relations with the coleopterists of the time.

The names of the collecting sites on the specimen labels are written in German or Hungarian, with three of them (Bucsecs, Campina and Rareul) being fairly accurate Romanian transliterations. The accuracy with which they can be located is relatively precise for the time frame in which the specimens were collected, which compensates for the lack of a collecting date for the majority. The names of the listed taxa are the ones in use at the time when the specimens were collected and remain valid until today, except for some nomenclatural changes, out of which: I) justified emendations (*Denops albofasciata* → *D. albofasciatus*, *Trichodes irkutensis* → *Trichodes ircutensis*, *Corynetes* → *Korynetes*, *Korynetes caeruleus* → *K. caeruleus*, *Necrobia violaceus* → *N. violacea*); II) the transfer of a species to another genus (*Tillus unifasciatus* → *Tilloidea unifasciata*); III) synonymisation of two generic names due to precedence (*Agonolia* Mulsant et Rey, 1863 → *Necrobia* Olivier, 1795); IV) synonymisation due to a species description using non-binary nomenclature (*Orthopleura* sp III Schaeffer, 1777 → *Dermestoides* Spinola, 1844) and V), a case of *lapsus calami*, where four specimens of *Korynetes ruficornis* were correctly identified and grouped, but erroneously labeled as *K. caeruleus* var. *ruficollis* (sic!), the species' name being treated as a species variation and also misspelled.

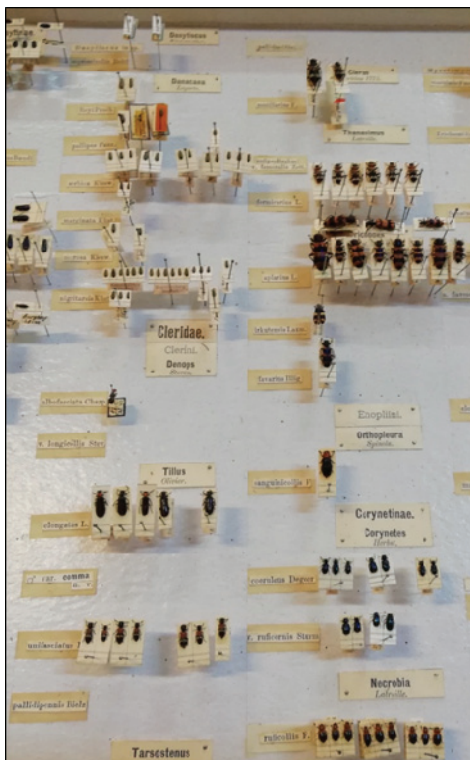


Figure 2. Family Cleride in the "Friedrich Deubel" Coleoptera collection. Credits: Dragomir I.M. (original photo).

## DISCUSSIONS

One of the main objectives of this work was to compile a catalogue of the Cleridae specimens from the Deubel collection. Given the collection's unfavourable historical context, it can be asserted that its actual state of preservation is relatively good, with no major damages encountered. The pieces in the collection, including the ones analyzed and presented in the table (Table 1), are organized in systematic order, the species being alphabetically grouped within each genus. The beetles are pinned or glued to rectangular mounting boards, each piece or group of pieces having one or more data-containing labels. Generic and specific name-bearing labels are cut from a copy of Karl Petri's 1912 catalogue (PETRI, 1912) and glued to the bottom of the entomological box next to each series of pieces. The pinned labels are either ink-handwritten or partially printed. The specimens have been preserved in great condition owing to the lack of activity involving the handling of the entomological boxes, with their original arrangement in rows and columns being kept. Deubel's conservation method involved the use of small fumigation funnels containing creosote placed in the box's right-bottom corner, also enhanced by rectangular cardboard naphthalene containers placed on the sides of the box.

A noteworthy aspect is the use of collection data to complete the faunistic inventory published by Petri in 1912 (PETRI, 1912), the first of its kind as a volume of data, with nothing equivalent for the area of Transylvania until the present day. Data from the collection were also used in the compilation of the 1925 addenda and corrigenda (PETRI et al., 1925), and the first paper about the zoogeography of the Carpathians (HOLDHAUS & DEUBEL, 1910) which Deubel co-authored. These records demonstrate once again, as previously emphasized, the crucial historical and scientific importance of the collection and why this approach was a necessary one.

From a historical point of view, the collection is comparable in terms of development with the collections of the Museum of Natural History in Sibiu, especially with the collection of the Transylvanian Society for Natural Sciences and the "Karl Petri" collection of Palearctic Coleoptera. (CUZEPAN et al., 2015; KURZELUK & TĂUȘAN, 2015). If we limit ourselves strictly to the Cleridae family, as resulting from the data extracted from Kurzeluk and Tăușan (KURZELUK & TĂUȘAN, 2015), the specimens have been present in the Transylvanian Society and Petri collections since 1851 and 1891 respectively, with the most recent ones being collected in 1931 and 1919. Given the lack of precise collecting data for the clerids in Deubel's collection, we can estimate that they were gathered between 1886 and 1933, as specified by Nussbächer and Cuzepan and al. (NUSSBÄCHER, 2007; CUZEPAN et al., 2015), if we consider the year of Deubel's death as the year of completion of the collection.

Comparing the number of individuals of the same species present in the Deubel collection to the Petri and Transylvanian Society collections, we find that it is relatively similar, with 86 specimens in the Deubel collection compared to Petri's (57 specimens) and 104 specimens in the Transylvanian Society collection. (KURZELUK & TĂUȘAN, 2015).

This paper has several limitations, which the authors are aware of. The relatively small number of catalogued specimens (86 specimens) does not constitute a significant representation of the number of taxa and pieces present in the entire collection, the Cleridae family consisting of only a relatively small portion of an entomological box out of 60. As such, this publication should be considered a starting point that needs to be completed by many more such reports, larger in terms of data volume, which will probably also provide a broader perspective on the collecting sites as historical-ecological landmarks in future faunistic studies regarding the distribution of Coleoptera and particularly the Cleridae family in Romania.

## CONCLUSIONS

This work arose from the natural need to undertake a reparative gesture in memory of Friedrich Deubel, a leading pioneer of Romanian museology, founding member of the first museum in Brașov, a genuine and acknowledged coleopterist of that time and among the first ones in Romania, and, last but not least, to highlight the significant role that the ethnic Saxons from Transylvania had in the country's cultural and scientific evolution. This contribution, though small, is the first of its kind since the collection was transferred from the Saxon Museum of Bârsa Country to the Faculty of Silviculture and Forest Engineering 75 years ago. In this regard, we identified, updated, and catalogued 86 specimens from 16 species belonging to 11 genera in the Cleridae family. More research focusing on other groups present in the "Friedrich Deubel" entomological collection is required to better emphasize the diversity of beetles collected during that time period in order to relate them to current faunistic studies in the same area and also to shed light on the data contained in the collection as a cultural and historical heritage element.

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