

PROFESSOR LEONARD OLARU, PH.D.

AT THE AGE OF 65



In one scientist and academic professor's life, there comes a moment of survey of the past, by a memorial or by another person. Such a moment comes at the age of 65, when the academic professor, if he accomplished his academic and scientific mission, passes to the "Senior" position annually granted until the age of 70.

Ph. D. Prof. Leonard Olaru was born on the 4th of October, 1936, in the family of Vasile and Olga Olaru, both teachers, in the village of Noul Caragaci, in Cetatea Albă, Basarabia District. He never accepted the special mention from his identity card, emphasizing "born in U.S.S.R.". In 1940, by the ultimatum incorporation of Basarabia to U.S.S.R., together with his parents he had refuged in the village of Rubla, Buzău District, which he left, in 1945, for

the village of Vișani, Brăila District, after the death of his mother.

He attended the Primary School, firstly in Rubla, than to Vișani, the Pedagogic Secondary School in Buzău (1947-1954) and the Faculty of Biology-Geography, Department of Physical Geography at "Al. I. Cuza" University in Iași (1956-1961), passing his Geography Diploma teacher. At that time, the geographers were acquiring great geological knowledge. As a result to the proposal made by Professor Neculai Macarovici and Lecturer Pierre Jeanrenaud (Dean), he was appointed staff assistant at the Department of Geology, that he has never left it. As Assistant Professor, being closed to the students, I was asked about the graduate Leonard Olaru.

Between 1965-1969 he attended the classes of the Department of Geology at "Babeș-Bolyai" University, passing his Geology Diploma examination. From young assistant teacher, he passed the successive positions of Laboratory Director, main Geologist, Assistant Professor, Assistant Lecturer (1972-1990), Lecturer (1991) and Academic Professor (1993). He had the "bad luck" (as some other colleagues) to work for many years as Assistant Professor, the promotions for lectures and professor positions being directly sanctioned by the "Second Office" (Elena Ceaușescu) from the Central Committee of the Communist Party. In 1994, he received Ph.D. leadership, with Palaeontological - Stratigraphical field - Palynology specialisation, and between 1999-2002 he was the Head of Department.

All along these years, he taught: Palaeobotany and Palynology, Paleontology and Stratigraphy, Hydrogeology, Geotechniques, General Geology, and since 1990, Physical Geology. He published lectures and practical laboratory guides for taught subjects, and he founded and guided the Student's Scientific Debating Groups of Palynology and Hydrogeology.

In collaboration with Ovidiu Dragastan and Iustinian Petrescu, he published "Palinologie cu aplicații practice in geologie" (1980, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică), the single book of this kind in Romania. With an energetic nature and as a good organizer, he guided itinerary practical applications with the students, field productive chain applications (Prospection and Geological Exploration Companies, Exploitation Corporations etc.).

As a suggestion coming from Professor Neculai Macarovici he specialized in Palynology, quite a new research field.

In order to improve his work quality, he specialized (1963) at the Research and Oil and Gas Prospection Institute of Bucharest, with experts, and at the "M. V. Lomonosov" University in Moscow (1971) and at the Geological Institute of the Academy Sciences of Moscow, and Geological Oil - Gas Institute of Leningrad (Sankt Petersburg).

In 1976, he passed the Ph.D. Degree, with a thesis on the Paleogene Flysch in Tarcău and Vrancea Nappes, leaded by Professor Neculai Macarovici. The paper had been published in the "Memories" (volume 27, 1978) of the Geological Institute of Bucharest.

Before displaying his research activity, we mention that, in 1960, he married with his academic colleague, Elena Savin, setting up a durable family. Mrs. Olaru worked for a short time as teacher, and than she continued to work at the Central University Library and at "Gh. Asachi" Polytechnical University Library. They have a daughter Diana, who is physician in France, and who enlarged the Olaru family with 3 nephews.

Professor Leonard Olaru, as we mentioned before, displayed his research activity in Palynology field, as an urge coming from Professor Neculai Macarovici. His first researches refer to the study of

peat-bogs from Moldavian Platform, accomplishing the knowledge concerning the Quaternary vegetation. He continued with palynological research of Cretaceous and Paleogene flysch formations in the Tarcău Nappe of the Bistrița Half-Window, and in the Vrancea Nappe, cumulated in his Ph.D. thesis. He recognized a great number of palynomorphs (140 taxa) and allowed their grouping into 4 bionomic steps, which correspond to the following limits: Maastrichtian / Paleocene; Paleocene / Eocene; Eocene / Oligocene; and Oligocene / Miocene. Among the 140 taxa, he created one new genus and nine new species, which entered the "Palynodata Bank" in Tucson, U.S.A. These final results proved that Professor Leonard Olaru is a valuable specialist.

In 1974, Professor Leonard Olaru changed his palynological research objective, studying pre-Paleozoic and Paleozoic formations in Carpathian Orogene, especially, the crystalline schists from the East Carpathians and North and Central Dobrogea. The studies concerning Paleozoic stratigraphic interval in North Dobrogea followed two aspects: correlations with the already known fauna (Bujoare Formation - Lower Devonian, and partially, Beștepe Formation - Devonian), and proofs for non faunistic ones (Carapelit Formation - Lower Carboniferous).

Concerning crystalline schists, with some exception, the palynomorphs gave the single biostratigraphical witness, especially when we talk about acritarchs and chitinozoans.

Professor Leonard Olaru dealt with the palynological study of crystalline schists in Bistrița Mountains (Bretila, Rebra and Tulgheș Groups), with biostratigraphical proofs, based on acritarchs assemblages in order to remove or decrease the mistakes.

Also, palynological research of crystalline schists in Bistrița Mountains was necessary from practical reasons in order to identify some biostratigraphical marks in prospecting and exploring of polymetallic sulphides, done by the Geological Prospecting and Exploration Company - Suceava (the present S.C. Geomold S.A.). Also, Professor Leonard Olaru studied some crystalline formations in Leaota Mountains (in collaboration with Professor Radu Dimitrescu) and Apuseni Mountains (Leurda - Vulturese Formation, in collaboration with Professor Ioan Mârza). Also, he studied Green Schists Group in Central Dobrogea, recording rich assemblages, which prove Lower Cambrian age, as well as Orlița Group, in Măcin Nappe (Riphean and Vendian age).

Undoubtedly, the palynostratigraphical research of crystalline schists reflects the advanced stage and the acme of palynological research, worked out by Professor Leonard Olaru. This fact was recognized by granting to him the "Gr. Cobălcescu" Award of the Romanian Academy, in 1996, due to a thesis on crystalline schists in Highiș Mountains (in collaboration with Professor Radu Dimitrescu) and to the publishing of a synthetic thesis on crystalline schists of the 9th International Congress on Palynology, Texas, U.S.A., 1996 (published in 2001).

Professor Leonard Olaru had done many official scientific stages in order to gather evidence (in France, to Strasbourg and Orléans; in Poland to Wrocław) and especially, to take part in scientific meetings (U.S.A., Canada, England, Italy, France, India, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Russia), where he presented several scientific works.

Beside Palynology, Professor Leonard Olaru worked for some Hydrogeological researches, and some concerning some claystones in Moldavian Platform.

To conclude with, the research activity is synthesized into a monography (Palynology in the Paleogene Flysch) and 110 scientific papers (published in Romania and abroad), completed with 26 geological reports (on agreement reasons), the "Palynology" book, 1980 (in collaboration) and the locally published lectures (11):

Through his researches, Professor Leonard Olaru compeled recognition as, a valuable specialist, recognized in his working field in the country and abroad. For our department he stands as the founder of palynological organizer, he fundamentally contributed to organizing and well displaying of the 3rd National Symposium of Palaeontologists, Iași, 28-30 September, 2001. He is an official member of the Scientists' Academy of Romania, the Romanian Society of Palaeontologists, the Romanian Geological Society, the Geological Society of Moldavian Republic, Association des Palynologues de Langue Francaise (APLF) and the International Commission for Paleozoic Microflora (England). For the last two, he is a Romanian scientific speaker.

Professor Leonard Olaru had been my student, than my Assistant professor and department colleague. I am glad to honour him at the age of 65 and I wish him to continue to be active in all fields (academic, scientific, organizational), to respect the Department (as he has done before) and to be a great grandfather.

Professor Liviu IONESI, Ph.D.