

A salute on behalf of the University in Iași

Dear colleagues,

We gathered here again, at Bucharest University for the 5th edition of the National Symposium of Paleontology, after a long way started right here, in Bucharest, and continued in Cluj and Iași, coming back at the starting point. Besides the sessions of this Symposium, we also celebrate the centenary of the first Paleontology Department from Romania. We have the great opportunity to wish the centenary department and to its honorable people “Happy Birthday” and good luck for more valuable and useful scientific results.

Geology and Paleontology started to exist in our country from 1863, when Grigore Cobălcescu, who came back from studies from Paris, founded the first Geology Department from our country, at “Al.I. Cuza” University, in Iași. Also, he is the author of the first geological and paleontological scientific work in Romanian, „Calcaritul de la Răpidea”, published in 1883 Grigore Cobălcescu, the father of Geology and Paleontology in Romania, was followed by valuable scientific men, some of them with lots of years of work also at the Bucharest University. Among them we remind Ion Simionescu, Sava Athanasiu, Romulus Sevastos, Gheorghe Macovei, Mihai David, Theodor Văscăuțanu, Emilia Saulea, Ion Atanasiu, Nicolae Macarovici, Pierre Jeanrenaud, Natalia Paghida-Trelea and many more. The homologue from Bucharest of Grigore Cobălcescu was Gregoriu Ștefănescu, who started the paleontological research at the University and funded a Paleontology school here in Bucharest. These two titans, modest, yet intelligent, had the gift to offer a sense to the paleontological research in Biostratigraphy, and to apply them in the extended geological researches. Their successors, among them some of the already above-mentioned ones, developed the studies started by their precursors. Subsequently, the paleontological researches largely extended and diversified, from nannoplankton to microfauna, from the first life arguments, acritarchs and chitinozoans, to spores, pollen and macroflora, from invertebrate rests to small and large vertebrates, to human rests. All these results were biostratigraphically and paleontologically analyzed, and subsequently used in other geological branches with practical applicability for hydrocarbon fields and useful minerals exploration.

Thus, we all must and to emphasize once again the “queen” title for Paleontology among all geological sciences as domain of the fundamental research and practical utilization in all geological fields, classical or modern. Those who deny the role of Paleontology in the geological researches do not have enough geological knowledge, are unilateral and do not understand the complexity of the evolution of natural phenomena in geological time.

Paleontology is a tough and hard science; it requires lot of passion and much knowledge, both from Biology and Geology. Nowadays, the computers divert the interest for paleontological researches, considered classical and declined. However, the computer is a very useful working tool also in Paleontology. The real substance, the primary material which the computer could process, is the field and laboratory paleontological research, which offers the computer the necessary data to analyze. Thus, the scientist will reach faster the best final result and will be able to compare it with others, will be able to put forward hypothesis and, moreover, to choose the most real final result. The science also will progress faster on the shortest way.

Dear colleagues, in spite of all the difficulties and the material lacks from the tough competition between classical and modern researches, Paleontology did not lose, did not disappear as research branch or as subject of study from universities. The recent reformatory changes from the upper educational system did not eliminate Paleontology from the student program.

However, we, the school masters, must choose the most adequate methods, the best procedures to make Paleontology become more attractive, to implement in the mind of the students and young researchers the interest for the study of previous nature through its present, to make the bridge between classic, modern and useful. Only this way we will have a permanent reserve of researchers in the future, young men passionate by Paleontology studies. Moreover, the numerous Ph.D. theses are prepared in this Paleontology field at Bucharest, Cluj and Iași, important scientific works are published, as well as monographs and synthesis with special scientific value. Among these I would like to remind a special monographic work titled „Sarmațianul mediu și superior de pe Platforma Moldovenească”, published at the Romanian Academy Publishing House (2005), which contains 553 pages, 24 plates, written by a 5 author staff, including Acad. Em. Ph.D. Prof. Liviu Ionesi (Iași University) (coordinator), Em. Ph.D. Prof. Bica Ionesi (Iași University), Ph.D. Prof. Vladimir Roșca (Chișinău University), Ph.D. Prof. Alexandru Lungu (Chișinău University), Ph.D. Lecturer Viorel Ionesi (Iași University). It is a model of a paleontology and geological monograph on a unique

territory, even if it is divided by two states, Romania and Republic of Moldova. This example also represents an entering prelude for the European Union, when the actual boundaries will disappear and there will be no more limits for the scientific research, no matter which, and especially, for the geological and paleontological one.

Dear colleagues, the role of the Romanian Society of Paleontologists is to support and maintain above the flag of paleontological researches. I noticed that the scientific activity within the societies is prolific. The four previous symposia had an important affluence of researchers, the presented works were interesting and diversified. We hope that in the future the same desire for scientific expression will remain unchanged. It is good to gain many young people for the research work, especially in universities, starting with the student years. I noticed in some of these student scientific activities some very talented young men, eager to know and to explore the unknown. We do not have to let go from the research these "buds", but to help them to blossom, to develop and finally to bear fruits. Only this way we will have the assurance that Paleontology will survive this tough battle. Finally, I want to congratulate the Organization Committee of the 6th National Symposium of Paleontology, and I hope that all communicated works will bring an original and interesting novelty to continue to sustain the Paleontology research.

Good luck!

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