

PROFESSOR OVIDIU DRAGASTAN AT 70 YEARS

The period after the Second World War was extremely prolific for studies related to carbonate rocks, in direct correlation with the discovery of large reserves of hydrocarbons hosted by this type of reservoirs. Jean Cuvillier was the first to publish, at the beginning of the '60es, microfacies studies, while Erik Flügel has perfected this type of investigations by elaborating a new, complex methodology. In the 7th and 8th decades of 20th century numerous papers and some valuable monographs have been published focused on carbonate microfacies; several PhD theses were also dedicated to this topic.

In Romania, following a few sporadic approaches of regretted Dan Patrușiu, the beginning of systematic microfacies research is undoubtedly related to Professor Ovidiu Dragastan. The first step was represented by his doctoral thesis on the carbonate deposits of Upper Jurassic – Lower Cretaceous in Hăghimaș Mountains (the thesis was subsequently published as the first microfacies atlas in Romanian references). This was followed by more detailed studies on carbonate rocks, on larger stratigraphical intervals (from Paleozoic to Cenozoic, however the most important contributions being still related to Mesozoic), as well as on the investigated subjects (from micropaleontological studies on the carbonate shelf microfossils to synthetic works on the evolution of large areas of carbonate platforms and their integration in structural frameworks).

Nevertheless, the most important contributions of Professor Dragastan are still the ones resulting from his studies on calcareous algae. Practically, no fossil algae group was left behind in this enterprise: from dasycladaleans, to bryopsidaleans and charophytes within green algae, to corallinacean red algae and marine and freshwater cyanobacteria. Based on his studies on calcareous algae, Professor Dragastan was acknowledged as one of the experts in this field, worldwide. He is the author of numerous new species and genera of fossil calcareous algae (especially of cyanophytes and green algae) but also of new suprageneric taxa. Through his activity, Professor Dragastan has underpinned the study of calcareous rocks

in Romania; additionally to his personal valuable contributions, he has also provided a favourable environment for the approach of this type of studies by other researchers.

Personally, I consider myself as a disciple of Professor Dragastan. I benefited of his effective support at the beginning of my activity as a researcher; subsequently I was honoured to become his collaborator for several papers on calcareous algae. And I was not the only one: his numerous undergraduate students (when working at their diploma theses), Master students (dissertation theses) and PhD students (doctoral theses) have, on their turn, benefited of his vast knowledge and experience.

If at the beginning of the 7th decade of the last century, in Romania the knowledge on carbonate rocks was at least precarious, today there is a multitude of published data and an extended knowledge on limestone formations; with no doubt, the activity of Professor Dragastan has to be acknowledged as the greatest merit for this achievement.

The 70th anniversary represents, for each person, a time to summarize achievements; at the same time, it also represents a motivation for synthetic and monographic approaches. For Professor Dragastan this approach is not a new one: he has applied it already in the last years, and we are sure that he will not stop from doing this in the future.

Happy birthday, dear Mr. Professor with lots of good health, and with new achievements in scientific research!

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