

## LAUDATIO

## UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR DOCTOR OVIDIU DRAGASTAN AT 70 YEARS

The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the life of a university professor and researcher represents a threshold of scientific maturity and a solid basement for the assignment of the title of “senior” in the profession – in the case of Professor Dragastan, a career that was built with devotion and passion during 47 years.

Prof. Dragastan was born on February 22 February 1939 in Bucharest, where he has graduated the elementary and high school; between 1957–1962 he was a student of the Faculty of Geology and Geography, Section of Geology, of the University in Bucharest.

Given his remarkable skills as a student, firstly his passion for research and learning, after his university graduation he was invited to join the faculty, as trainer (1962) in the Chair of Paleontology and Stratigraphy of the same faculty. It was in this department that Prof. Dragastan performed afterwards his teaching and scientific activity, including today.

He has gradually occupied all the academic positions, which he has honoured with special teaching and scientific results; all these lead to the assignment, in 1993, of the title of **University professor**. Starting with 2004 he is **Consulting Professor (retired)**.

In 1971 Prof. Dragastan has defended his PhD thesis on “**Upper Jurassic and Lower Cretaceous Microfacies from Bicaz Valley Basin**”, under the co-ordination of Acad. Prof. dr. Miltiade G. Filipescu, his scientific mentor, finalized with the acceptance of the title of “**PhD in geology**”.

The thesis published in 1975, in English, in volume XXI of the series “**Memorii**” (Memoirs) published by the **Geological Institute of Romania**, brought significant stratigraphical contributions concerning the Upper Jurassic–Upper Cretaceous carbonate deposits from the Bicaz Valley Basin, by the study of microfacies types and by the establishment of characteristic biozones based on dasycladalean algae and benthic and planktonic foraminifers, the latter being rare forms. The biozones established in this thesis provided new opportunities for regional correlations with other carbonate platforms, such as those from the Romanian Carpathians, Dinarides, Apennines, and Northern Calcareous Alps.

In parallel with his scientific activity, he performed **academic didactic activity**, starting with the first level, that of trainer, according to the old Romanian academic tradition; he achieved his “teaching training” under the co-ordination of Acad. Prof. dr. Miltiade G. Filipescu, who mentored him both didactically and scientifically. Among the disciplines that were taught by Prof. Dragastan, some following training stages abroad, we can mention: Paleobotanics, Palynology, Paleocology and paleoenvironments, Elements of geology and paleontology, Stratigraphy and Reconstruction of paleoenvironments.

In order to allow a more detailed understanding and for scientific documentation in these topics, Prof. Dragastan has published – as single author or in collaboration, 11 books at different printing houses, among which we can mention: **Paleobotanică și Palinologie** (“Paleobotanics and Palynology”, multiplied, University of Bucharest, ,

1975); **Palinologie - cu aplicații în geologie** – (“Palynology - applied to Geology”), in collaboration with Prof. dr. Iustinian Petrescu from Babeș-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca and Prof. dr. Leonard Olaru from Al. I. Cuza University Iași (Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, Bucharest, 1980); **Alge calcareoase din Mesozoic și Terțiarul României** (“Calcareous algae from the Mesozoic and Tertiary of Romania”, Editura Academiei Române, 1980); **Plante fosile** (“Fossil plants”) - in collaboration with Prof. dr. Iustinian Petrescu (Editura Dacia Cluj – Napoca, 1981); the chapters of **Paleontologie** (“Paleontology”) (1984) and **Biogeochimie** (“Biogeochemistry”) (1985) of Manualul Inginerului de Mine (“Treatise for Mining Engineers”), Editura Tehnică; **Jurasicul și Cretacicul din Dobrogea Centrală și de Sud (Paleontologie și Stratigrafie)** [“Jurassic and Cretaceous of Central and South Dobrogea (Paleontology and Stratigraphy)”] in collaboration with Acad. Prof. dr. Theodor Neagu, Prof. dr. Aurelia Bărbulescu and Prof. dr. Ioana Pană (Editura Supergraph, Cluj – Napoca, 1998), as well as **Miocene to Holocene calcareous algae of the Caribbean area** (Editura Cartea Universitară, București, 2007).

Additionally we can mention the scientific invited talks of Professor Ovidiu Dragastan at Ruhr University in Bochum (2000–2003) and Köln University (2004–2005), Germany.

**His scientific activity** - an essential component in the profile of a genuine university professor - was remarkably interrelated to his teaching interests. From the beginning, Professor Ovidiu Dragastan was interested in studying important and up-to-date fields of geology, which he continues to approach still today. Among these, one can include: **Microfacies, Carbonate platforms, Biostratigraphy** (Upper Paleozoic–Mesozoic–Cenozoic), **Reconstruction of paleoenvironments, Paleobotanics** and **Environmental geology**.

Related to these topics, Prof. Dragastan took part to several training stages at various institutions among which: Germany, as a grantee of Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, 1980–1990; at Ruhr University in Bochum, 2003–2003 and 2006, 2007, and recently in 2009; Köln University, 2004 – 2005, in USA through Fulbright Senior Awards, 1993–1994 at Boston University, and then at Berkeley University, 2001; at the Smithsonian Institution- Washington 2002 -2003, at Fort Pierce (Florida), 2003 and Smithsonian- Balboa, Panama, 2002.

The results of his research in these major areas of interest were published in 145 articles and studies, in Romania and abroad, among which 43 ISI-cited, and 11 books and treatises, among which some were already mentioned. Directly or via international collaborations, the 45 years of scientific activity of Professor Dragastan have contributed to the development of several new research trends in Romania, with theoretical or practical impact.

**These trends concern the following: - Mesozoic**

and Cenozoic microfacies and carbonate platforms, - **Lithostratigraphical analysis and definition of new formations in the carbonate units of Romanian Carpathians, Moesian Platform and the Romanian shelf of Black Sea**, with an emphasis on reservoir rocks and the mother rocks for hydrocarbons, as well as the types of traps, **Biostratigraphy**, with an emphasis on **evidencing the main biozones in Mesozoic deposits and their use for correlating the carbonate platforms in the Romanian Carpathians, Moesian Platform, Northern Calcareous Alps, Apennines and Dinarides**.

Another area that Prof. Dragastan has developed is **Paleoalgology**, resulting in the description of 3 new families, 36 genera and 260 species new for science of Mesozoic and Cenozoic calcareous algae.

His contributions to **Paleobotanics**, summarized by the description of taxa of various flora represented by fossil leaves and wood, with insight on the phytostратigraphy of Upper Paleozoic, Jurassic or Upper Cretaceous deposits, from Reșița–Moldova Nouă area, Codlea (Southern Carpathians), in collaboration with Conf. dr. Mihai Popa, then from Central Dobrogea (Middle Jurassic flora), in collaboration with Prof. dr. Aurelia Bărbulescu, as well as from Northern Dobrogea (the flora from Babadag Basin), in collaboration with Prof. dr. doc Răzvan Givulescu and Acad. Th. Neagu.

**Paleoenvironment reconstructions** for Mesozoic carbonate platforms in the Alpine-Carpathian area, as well as studies and research work on **Environmental protection** concerning the impact of mining works for bauxite ores in the Apuseni Mountains and designing new methods for rehabilitation of the mining areas were other of his significant research trends.

It is worthy to mention that several scientific papers were published as a result of international collaborations in the frame of Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, DAAD at Ruhr Universität Bochum, University of Köln, Freie Universität in Berlin (Germany), as well as of Fulbright Foundation and Smithsonian Institution, Washington, Fort Pierce, Florida and Balboa, Panama, to which we can add Berkeley University, Boston University and Miami University (USA).

**As a result of individual studies or of international collaborations**, by promoting new research directions and specialisations in Romania, we can underline the following main achievements of Professor Ovidiu Dragastan:

- Study of Upper Jurassic and Lower Cretaceous calcareous microfacies in Bicaz Valley Basin and reconsidering the ammonite, corals, sponges, gastropods and bivalves faunal associations, as well as microfloral – especially calcareous algae, and benthonic and planktonic foraminifers associations;
- Synthetic studies on Mesozoic algae from Romania, Germany, Turkey, Greece, Slovakia, Caribbean area (USA), Pakistan, Egypt and Morocco;
- Research on stratigraphy of bauxite deposits from the Northern Apuseni mountains, as well as environmental protection and mining areas rehabilitation;
- Lithostratigraphy and biostratigraphy of Jurassic and Lower Cretaceous deposits from the carbonate platforms of Romanian Carpathians, as well as of the deposits on the Romanian Black Sea shelf area;
- Of taxonomic and systematic importance is the description of three new for science calcareous algae

families: **Pseudoudoteaceae**, **Avrainvilleaceae** and **Rhipiliaceae**;

A series of significant international contributions is related to the study of non-marine carbonate facies at the Jurassic–Cretaceous limit in Weserbergland area, NW Germany and from the Western Carpathians, Slovakia, as well as the study of calcareous algae associations from Palau Archipelagos (Western Pacific), or those from Key Largo and Miami (Florida) limestones, in collaboration with experts from Smithsonian Institution and University of Miami, Florida (USA).

As part of his scientific research, Professor Dragastan was involved in an impressive number of scientific internal and international contracts and grants (in some of them as project director) under the umbrella of the Romanian Academy, of CNCSIS-Romania, Ruhr Uni-Bochum, Smithsonian Institution and University of Miami.

Professor Dragastan was one of the **organisers of the 1<sup>st</sup> National Symposium of Paleontology in Romania, in 1997**, which took place at the Faculty of Geology and Geophysics of the University of Bucharest, organised by the Society of Paleontologists from Romania. He was also **the editor of the first Romanian paleontology issue - of the journal Acta Palaeontologica Romaniae**, today a publication of international recognition, currently publishing its 7<sup>th</sup> issue.

At the same time, Professor Dragastan has took part at numerous national and international scientific reunions, symposia and congresses (**Capri, 1991 Chairman**; Vienna, 1992, New Orleans, 1993; Denver, 1994; Rio de Janeiro, 2001; Athens, 2007), being elected at some of these meetings as **Chairman** or **Scientific Judge**. He is member of some international research groups (Mesozoic biostratigraphy from Alpine carbonate areas), and member of some national and international scientific associations, such as: Society of Paleontologists of Romania, International Organization of Paleobotany, London, Geological Society of France, American Association of Petroleum Geologists, Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA, American Association for Advancement of Sciences, USA, as well as Alumni Humboldt Foundation, Germany. In recognition for his scientific results, Prof. Dragastan has been awarded several important **diplomas and distinctions**, among which: **“Grigore Cobălcescu” Prize of the Romanian Academy** (1983); **Honorary Diploma of the AAPG (USA)**; **“Emil Pop” Prize of the Society of Paleontologists of Romania** (2007); **Honorary Diplome of the Rectorate of the University of Bucharest** (2008) **for international cooperation and research, published in Micropaleontology, New York – ISI acknowledged, in collaboration with Prof. dr. Hans Georg-Herbig from Köln University**.

Currently, Professor Dragastan co-ordinates four PhD thesis. He plays an important role in creating the Collection of fossil calcareous algae, microfacies and microflora, consisting of 3,000 thin sections; the collections also preserves the holotypes of the 36 genera and 260 species new for science described from Babadag Basin, Central Dobrogea and Southern Dobrogea, as well as from other areas in the Romanian Carpathians, or other areas from Europe, Asia or

Caribbean (USA).

Besides these remarkable didactic and scientific results, Professor Dragastan has also been involved in **managerial tasks**, being Head of Department between 1996–2004 and Director of research in the topic Microfacies and geological environment protection.

At the celebration of seven decades of life and activity of our colleague, **Professor dr. Ovidiu Dragastan**, at the time when his whole activity is summed up, we can firmly state that he is an outstanding scientific researcher, with impressive didactic and scientific achievements, a symbol of professional devotion and one of the most notable

experts of the Romanian School of Paleontology.

On this occasion we wish him good health and strength to continue his deed, in order to finalise his work as researcher and investigator of life tracks still unrevealed by the Romanian underground, through the same hard, detailed but full of beauty scientific labor.

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