



DR. DUMITRU MURARIU AT HIS 70TH ANNIVERSARY

If it is said that the appearances are deceptive, about the first impression it is said that it counts. The first impression on the main curator Dumitru Murariu was positive when I met him, in 1980. Then, I saw a thin and active man, wearing a perfect suit, with a large forehead and a jovial smile of a man who appreciates humour and has a playful perspective on existence. Although our ways, probably the outlook too, did not intersect but later, I found out soon that he came from that north-eastern region of Romania which was the cradle of the most important Romanian intellectuals and naturalists – Bucovina.

He was born in the telluric sign of the zodiac Virgo, on the 21st of September 1940, in Ungureni locality of the Botoşani County. He graduated “A. T. Laurian”

High School of the Botoșani town and attended the course of the Faculty of Biology-Geography of the “Al. I. Cuza” University, Biology – Zoology Department, in Iași, Moldavian capital, between 1961–1966.

Within the period 1966 – 1969 he worked as biologist - bacteriologist, at the laboratory of “Pantelimon” TBC Unified Hospital of Bucharest, also presenting scientific papers at the Society of Medical Sciences of Bucharest.

Because it is said that man influences his destiny by his will and actions, Dr. Murariu choose to be zoologist and curator at “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History, in 1969, where he was hired through competition. Here, he went through all hierarchical levels, from simple a guide to chief of department, and since 1991, general director.

In 1975, he presented his PhD thesis, “Tegumentary glands of insectivores (Mammalia) from Romania”, guided by the Emerit Professor G. T. Dornescu.

With a special energy, Dr. Murariu faced easily but professionally the curator position, which I, myself, know so well: field activity, management of the scientific collections, public relations, guiding, conferences and temporary exhibitions. Yet, research attracted him more, and just it was to bring him accomplishments. One of them was a Fulbright Scholarship, in USA, between 1975 and 1976, when he worked in museums from Washington D. C., New York, Pittsburgh, Chicago, in mammal morphology, systematics and ecology, approaching deeply the investigations by histology and histo-chemistry techniques on integumentary glands of eight species of North American shrews.

When he came back to his “Museum”, with a modern experience of researcher and curator, Dr. Murariu dedicated to the field, laboratory and museum activity for 36 years. Many time alone but sometime within researching teams he crossed the country, from the Danube and the Danube Floodplain, from Dobrogea and the Southern and Western Plains, till the numerous summits of the Romanian Carpathians (from Banat and Prahova Valley to Piatra Craiului and Maramureș), “planting” traps for micromammals (difficult!). Gladly, I confirm that when I reached the chalets in different locations I found out that our charismatic colleague D. Murariu, who was able to be pleasant for ordinary people, had already been there. He was collaborator at the Institute of Biology of Bucharest, he participated to 34 researching projects with practical applications (impact studies and of ecological notifications), many of them led by him. His work was not sterile, materializing in 174 de papers and articles (88 fundamental scientific papers and 86 on museology). It has to be mentioning the seven reports with foreign finances (LIFE, PHARE, BioCASE).

As a result of his studies on the scientific collections from Romania and from “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History of Bucharest, which he substantially enriched, he participated at 23 international congresses.

Being one of the hardest working Romanian zoologists who I ever met, Dr. Dumitru Murariu worked for decades all day with only one lunch break. Probably this is the reason why he succeeded in publishing numerous scientific and popularization books, as the 4 volumes for the Academy collections “Fauna României” (“Romanian Fauna”), on the Insectivora, Rodentia, Lagomorpha, Carnivora (between 2000 – 2005), or the 3 volumes of the collection “Din viața mamiferelor” (“Life of the mammals”), between 1988 and 1998.

We cannot finish the presentation of his activity without mentioning his actions of environmental protection, being co-author of the Red Book of the

European mammals, the Red Book of Romanian vertebrates and the book "Chiroptere din România" ("Chiropterans of Romania") (2003).

From Dr. Dumitru Murariu's complex activity, the educational activity couldn't be ignored. He held courses of biodiversity and ecology at the Technical University of Constructions (1992 – 1994), he was occasional lecturer for the museologists' training (1986 – 2004), he has not less than 85 conferences in the Museum amphitheatre and in different schools and had over 130 interviews for written media, radio and TV. He is director of the publication of *Travaux du Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle „Grigore Antipa”*, the most valuable Romanian journal of zoology.

Nature served itself when gifted Dr. Murariu with a special energy for studying it. Full of energy he participated at the international expeditions of "Grigore Antipa" National Museum of Natural History in Indonesia (1991), Brazil (1994) and in the Mediterranean basin (Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, between 2006 and 2009), expeditions which enriched the collections of the museum and offered the opportunity of the description of over 40 new taxa.

Valuable successor of Dr. Grigore Antipa, Acad. Mihai Băcescu, general director of "Grigore Antipa" National Museum of Natural History, Dr. Dumitru Murariu, implied in the rehabilitation of the museum building (since 1996) as well as in the management, marketing and organization of numerous and successful temporary exhibitions.

Beginning with 2009, "Grigore Antipa" Museum is in a rearranging process of the permanent exhibition. Once again, when some colleagues were afraid of such kind of implementation, Dr. Murariu proved to be a modern spirit and made a calculated risk for this change for the general public, according to Antipa's visionary intuition.

Life member of American Society of Mammalogists, member of the European Mammalogists Society, member of consulting Committee of "Eurobats", of IUCN, of Species Conservation Committee - Rodentia, of the Scientists Association of Romania, of the Naturalist Museologist Association of Romania, president of the Romanian Federation of Chiropterology, laureate of the Cultural Merit Order, in Rank of Officer of E category – "National Cultural Patrimony", Dr. Dumitru Murariu is appointed Correspondent Member of Romanian Academy, since 2006. This meritorious appointment was received by him at the phone, while he was in his tent, in Tunisian desert together with me.

The "young" Academician Dumitru Murariu never forget his old colleagues with whom he went in trips, with whom he supported continuously the publishing of the well-known scientific journal, with whom he acted for the science popularization. He joined the young generation, where he feels wonderfully, because he has the same young ambitions from spiritual and biological point of view. Personally I wish him health, energy and lucidity, to be the same modest, good-natured, discerning Moldavian person who Mother Nature endowed, not only for personal success but also for the team of naturalists from Kiseleff Avenue and from Romania.

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