



### **In memoriam**

#### **TEODOR T. NALBANT**

(18<sup>th</sup> of December 1933 – 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2011)

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2011 Teodor T. Nalbant left us, one of the most remarkable Romanian ichthyologists, a worldwide famous systematist.

Being born in Constanța, on 18<sup>th</sup> of December 1933, close to the Black Sea, Teodor Nalbant had the chance to spend a part of his childhood among the fishermen from the aquatic paradise of the Danube Delta (where his parents moved for a short period of time, when he was six), a decisive moment for choosing his profession.

After he graduated the high-school, he registered among the students of the Faculty of Biology of Cluj, and then he transferred at the University of Bucharest. When he was in Cluj, he met the well-known ichthyologist Petre Bănărescu, with whom collaborated and published numerous papers. He worked in several institutions, among which there was also “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History, and in the last years he was senior researcher at the Institute of Biological Research. As a specialist, he had the opportunity of participating in several expeditions in north-west of the Atlantic Ocean, on western coasts of Africa or those of Tanzania.

He published, alone or in collaboration with Romanian and foreign specialists over 150 papers of systematic, morphology, ecology, zoogeography, etc., most of

them focused on the study of some species of the families Clupeidae, Cobitidae, Cyprinidae, Gobiidae, Nemacheilidae etc., thus contributing to the knowledge of the marine ichthyofauna from different areas of the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans as well as of the freshwater one from Central Africa, Afghanistan, India, Iran, Turkey, Cuba, etc. A part of the scientific material which was the base of his studies was from the well-known expeditions „Uranie”, „Challenger”, „Albatros”, „Galathea”, „Noona Dan”, etc. Within this context, I have to mention his contribution in editing some chapters of „*Grzimek Tierleben*” or „*Fishes of the Northeastern Atlantic and Mediterranean*”. In absolute figures, his contribution in fish systematic materialized in the discovering and description (alone and in collaboration, as I have mentioned) of over 85 taxa new to science, almost a third representing supraspecific taxa. Fish collection, made together with Petre Bănărescu, which included around 10,000 specimens (preserved now by “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History of Bucharest) is another proof of his quality as scientist.

Calm and patient, good colleague, always willing to help everybody, Teodor Nalbant didn't hesitate to contradict his interlocutor when he considered that it is necessary to do this. Apparently absent, he was a good observer and had a good memory, to which his talent in drawing and meticulousness can be added, necessary qualities for a good systematician.

At the farewell ceremony, in the message sent by his colleague and friend from “Grigore Antipa” National Museum of Natural History, Dan Ottiger Dumitrescu (today in Switzerland and who couldn't be present) mentioned, among others: *I have never observed that Nalbant wanted “to lay relationships” with influent persons or which pretended that they are influent. Characterized by a deep lack of interest*



Teodor Nalbant (the first from the right side) together with the team of the Romanian expedition in Tanzania (from left to right: Dragoș Neculce, Mihai Băcescu, leader of the expedition, and Geza-Iuliu Müller), before getting on the plane (20<sup>th</sup> of November 1973), in “Henri Coandă” International Airport of Bucharest.

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*for everything which represented a material award, even for the PhD thesis or an upper position, Nalbant was meant to the scientific work, at the highest and the most representative level. His life was dedicated to science. Almost exclusively!*

Teodor T. Nalbant's remarkable scientific contributions, also proved by the taxa which bear his name (genus *Nalbantichtys* Schultz, 1967, subgenus *Nalbantius* Mauge & Bauchot, 1984 and species *Schistura nalbanti* Mîrza & Bănărescu, 1979 and *Cyclaspis nalbanti* Petrescu, 1998), give him an important place in the Romanian systematician zoologists' pantheon as well as in that of worldwide ichthyologists. By his departure, the ichthyologists' world lost a good specialist, and his colleagues and those who knew him lost a good friend.

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