

In Memoriam

PROFESSOR EUGEN NICORICI
1928-2007



Born in 1928 in Briceni (today the Republic of Moldova), Eugen Nicorici received his university degree in 1954 at the Faculty of Geology and Geography Department at the Babeş University in Cluj, Romania. Soon after, he was employed as a teaching assistant at the university's Department of Geology where he continued his career until retiring in 1993.

During his academic career, professor Nicorici made contributions to the courses on Stratigraphy Geology, Paleontology, and since 1976, he coordinated the course on Geology of Romania. Between 1985 and 1990, he was involved both in teaching and administration, as head of the Department of Geology and Mineralogy.

His scientific interest was applied stratigraphy and paleontology of the Neogene formations in Romania. Specifically, he made important geologic contributions in the study of the intra-Carpathian basins (Transylvanian Basin, and western basins - Şimleu, Vad-Borod, Zarand, Beiuş), and extra-Carpathian area (Moldavian and South-Dobrogea platforms, and Peri-Carpathian unit).

The results of his research were published in Romania and abroad in 114 scientific papers. Some of his contributions received awards from the Romanian Ministry of Education (1962), or were nominated for the Romanian Academy Award (1972, 1973, and 1977).

Two very important contributions were published as monographs in the prominent journals of the Romanian Geological Institute: in 1973, (Study of the Badenian Fauna of Minişu de Sus, Zarand Basin - in Romanian) and in 1977, (The Badenian Pectinids in Romania - in French).

The contributions of his PhD, defended in 1968 at the University of Bucharest under the supervision of Professor Miltiade Filipescu, were published in the book Stratigraphy of the Neogene Deposits in the Şimleu Basin (in Romanian) by the Romanian Academy in 1972.

Professor Nicorici was the co-author of several other books: Geology of Coal Series (2 volumes published in Romanian in 1986 and 1987; the first awarded by the Romanian Academy), and a geological guide of the Cluj area (published in Romanian in 1976). His wide experience and geologic knowledge was used for co-editing the series of volumes on the Geological Formations of Transylvania.

His academic career of almost 40 years supported the progress of the Department of Geology in Cluj and improved knowledge of stratigraphy and paleontology of the Neogene Period. He continued to be a consultant both for young and mature scientists until his unexpected and deeply regretted passing away

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In Memoriam

Acad. Prof. dr. Liviu Ionesi
1925 - 2006



On December 16th, 2006, Acad. Prof. dr. Liviu Ionesi from the “Al. I. Cuza” University in Iaşi has left this world behind, for the eternity. He was one of the great personalities of Romanian geology, who was also involved, in many ways, in the destiny of academic level geology in Cluj. Prof. dr. L. Ionesi has passed away after a long and enduring physical and psychological sufferance that he faced with his typical firmness and dignity. The person that used to cautiously calculate each of his steps or actions till the very last detail was in his last months of life forced to become a helpless witness of the irrecoverable loss of his own physical abilities, to the “*fall of the curtain*” as he used to call this stage. His disappearance represented a big loss for the Iaşi University in general and for the Geology department in particular, but in the same time for Romanian geology as a whole, with deep resonances for the geologists, friends, and colleagues from Cluj, whom many times received his friendly support or benefited of his own generous initiatives. Prof. dr. Ionesi was taking part to most of the scientific meetings organized by the geologists in Cluj, he accepted to be a scientific referee for higher didactic grades contests and a reviewer for PhD theses defended in Cluj. During fieldwork stages in the Eastern Carpathians (after 1955), he met the young university assistant Nicolae Mészáros, and this was the starting point for a life-long friendship. Between 1994-2000 he was a member of the Geonomy Commission of the Ministry for Education and Research, together with Prof. dr. I. Mârza, with whom he built-up a warmhearted friendship, and thus a new bridge between the geology in Iaşi and Cluj was established. In the same time he had a warm sympathy, appreciation and understanding for Prof. R. Givulescu, Prof. I. Petrescu, Prof. E. Nicorici, Prof. V. Ghiurcă, and the

younger colleagues Prof. I. Bucur, Prof. S. Filipescu, Prof. V. Codrea, which he considered of having real professional perspectives.

Prof. dr. Liviu Ionesi, the proud and wise “Bucovinean”, the erudite professor and the well-known geologist was actively involved in the transformation of the Romanian geological academic system into a united and high-quality one, also by his own valuable scientific works and especially by wonderful academic textbooks for students and young researchers. In the same time, after the changes in 1989 he was the main supporter for the introduction of geology as a discipline in the high schools curricula in Romania. As an argument, below is a fragment of a letter of Prof. Dr. Ionesi (dated February 5th, 1999)¹:

*“...As a man born in **Bucovina**, I was raised in the respect of law and order. I did not accept compromise and thus I was always in trouble. The Communist regime brought many vicissitudes in the life of my family. The family of my wife was practically destroyed. We have come to an end exclusively by our own work. In 1952, my wife (in that year we were not yet married, this event took place in 1953) was suspended from her position as a teacher and she was moved to the Museum of Natural History (in the frame of the university), where she worked for 19 years and was promoted till the position of head of section. The Prague spring (1968) and its effects during the following 2 – 3 years had brought some advantages also to us. I became a professor (1972) and my wife returned to the department in 1971. But the Prague spring had afterwards turned into a heavy winter. We all are familiar to that. We did not accept compromises and thus we were marginalized. We found a*

¹ From the book “Povestea vieţii mele” (“Story of my life”, in Romanian), by I. Mârza (*in press*)

refuge in our work (research and teaching). The heads of department of those days continued to keep their positions until now. After December 22, 1989 I believed in the changes and I managed to achieve some results. I consider the reopening of the Chair of Geology-Paleontology (founded by Gr. Cobălcescu in 1863 and preserved by I. Simionescu, I. Atanasiu, and N. Macarovici) as my most important achievement. Gradually, I realized that after the short interval of confusion, the leadership of the country was taken, explicitly or in a hidden way, by the former secret police ("Securitate") and the former Communist Party (P.C.R.). The geologists from Iași were not represented in the Parliament; however those from Cluj and Bucharest had their exponents present there. Instead of being preoccupied by reintroducing Geology as a subject in the curricula of secondary and high schools, these geologists have built palaces and have travelled all around the world ...” The letter continues with impressions from Prof. Ionesi’s long-term activity as member of the Attesting Commission and of the National Council of the Ministry of Education and Research: “I was very fond of Cluj thus I was against the dictate for the “intelligence concentration centre!” Within the limits of my investment, I supported the principle of having a representative of Cluj within the Academy of Sciences (I refer here to the Geological Sciences). Some results were obtained, i. e., Prof. R. Givulescu was appointed as Honorary Member. Without trying to overemphasize my merits, I have to say that I played an important role in this decision.”

A more recent letter (of June 24, 2005)², written by Prof. Ionesi under the psychological pressure of a deteriorated health condition, stated the following:

“With or without our will, the 8th decade of life started, but under the sign of nothingness. The “fall of the curtain” marks the end of something that is still undefined for us – Life”.

After a year and a half from the moment when those prophetic words were written, we now know that the curtain has fallen and has forever covered the author with the *veil of the Other World*; but never with the veil of the forgotten ones, as in the case of ordinary people. Prof. dr. Liviu Ionesi cannot be forgotten, neither by the curtain, nor by time, due to his meteoric ascension and his legacy, first of all represented by an exemplary firm character and a restless spirit devoted to his life-long work, as well as a valuable oeuvre resulted from his implication in research and general knowledge, in the attempt of finding answers to numerous questions.

Acad. Prof. Dr. L. Ionesi was born on January 27, 1925, in the locality Frătăuții Vechi (Suceava County). Liviu was the second born of the three children in the family of country teachers Călina and Vasile Ionesi, graduates of the Normal (Teacher Preparatory) School in Cernăuți; as a child, he was slender, obedient, and interested, from his early years, in learning.

The education he received in the family was strongly related to the healthy principles of the rural Bucovina, with deep roots in the tradition of his peasant ancestors. The grandparents on the father side, Ecaterina and Neculai Ionesi have had four children, of which only the elder one, Vasile, got a scholarly education. Among the seven children of the maternal grandparents, Maria and Dumitru Paliuc, Gheorghe

had graduated the Natural Sciences Section of the Science Faculty in Bucharest and became an university assistant at the Chair of Mineralogy headed by L. Mrazec, later on Assistant professor with a PhD title (1943), and author of interesting mineralogical and petrographical studies mainly focusing on the Parâng Massive (Southern Carpathians). The geologist Gh. Paliuc represented for L. Ionesi - his nephew – a special reason of being proud with his family, and a model to be followed.

Liviu Ionesi graduated the primary school (after 5 years of study, between 1931-1936) in the natal locality, having Silvestru Țigănuș as a teacher, and the high school at the “Eudoxiu Hurmuzachi” Lyceum in Rădăuți (graduated in 1944). Due to the war, the archive of the high school in Rădăuți was transferred to Turda, where Liviu Ionesi and his classmates obtained their Baccalaureate. During the troubled years after the Second World War, Liviu Ionesi, in those times a refugee, decided to apply (in 1945) to the Faculty of Medicine from Timișoara, following an older dream from his childhood. But he could not resist the call of his family and birth places, and that of natural sciences that he became fond of during his high school studies, so that soon he returned in Frătăuții Vechi, and in November 1945 he registered for the Faculty of Sciences, Natural Sciences Section of the “Al. I. Cuza” University in Iași, looking forward to become a geologist such as Gh. Paliuc, his uncle.

During his university studies, the student Liviu Ionesi had focused his efforts towards geological research, being a beneficiary of the valuable tradition of the Iași school of geology founded by Gr. Cobălcescu, and continued by I. Simionescu and others. In the same time, he benefited of a prestigious group of professors in geology (M. Savul, N. Macarovici, O. Nechita, P. Jeanrenaud, Gh. Mastacan etc.). Soon, L. Ionesi was remarked among the other students by his professors, who involved him in several field campaigns (Moldavian Platform, Bucovinian Crests, i.e. “Obcine”, Eastern Carpathians, Agigea area near the Black Sea shore) that represented a real geological apprenticeship. In this way, he could broaden his background by dealing with a high diversity of geological formations and issues, but his final decision, still during his student years, concerned *Stratigraphy*.

Liviu Ionesi graduated the faculty in 1949 and accomplished his State Exam in 1950, which represented the newly-reglemented substitute for the Licence exam. Being an eminent student, after graduation he was offered, at the proposal of Prof. N. Macarovici, a position within the faculty, thus his academic career begun. He successively obtained all the academic titles: assistant (November 15, 1950); lecturer (October 1, 1959); assistant professor (November 1, 1971) and university professor (October 1, 1972). In January 1990, he contributed in an essential manner to the re-establishment of the Chair of Geology-Paleontology, which, during the communist regime was merged into a “super chair” (together with Mineralogy-Geochemistry and Geography). L. Ionesi was unanimously elected as Head of the Chair, and he maintained this position until May 1, 1991, when he retired upon request. Starting with the academic year 1991/1992 he was a consulting professor.

Professor Ionesi became well-known for his “Geology of Romania” course taught to his students in Iași. Together with V. Mutihac (professor at the Bucharest University), he was the author of the treatise on the “*Geology of Romania*”

² Idem with footnote 1.

(“*Geologia României*”, in original) published by the Technical Publishing House and awarded with the bronze medal at the publications exhibition in Moscow. The same publishing house has issued in 1994 Prof. Ionesi’s book “*Geology of the platform units and of the North Dobrogea Orogen*” (“*Geologia unităților de platformă și a Orogenului Nord Dobrogean*”, in original), containing a first outline of the geology of the Romanian Black Sea shelf. After his retirement, he continued to deliver, as consulting professor, the course on “*Special issues for the geology of Romania*” and the course on “*Biostratigraphy of the sedimentary terrains of Romania*” (the latter included in the curriculum of the Master studies).

Professor L. Ionesi became a PhD co-ordinator in 1977, quality that allowed him to share his vast expertise and teaching experience with young researchers and university teaching staff. Under his supervision, 20 PhD theses in Stratigraphy and Paleontology were finalized. Significant personalities for the Romanian geology: I. Papaianopol, Gh. Mantea, P. Enciu, Fl. Florea, S. Baciuc were some of his PhD students, as well as geologists from abroad: Dolores Bouaou (Algeria) and Viorica Muntean (Republic of Moldavia).

The scientific activity of professor Ionesi was basically devoted to the study of the flysch deposits in the Eastern Carpathians. After 1968, he was also involved in the research of the Sarmatian deposits from the Moldavian Platform. His investigations on the flysch units in the Eastern Carpathians resulted in numerous new finds concerning cartography, litho- and biostratigraphy, paleontology or tectonics. He has separated and characterized several new lithostratigraphical units within the Audia, Tarcău and Vrancea Nappes. He contributed in a significant manner to the biostratigraphy of the Paleocene and Lower Miocene flysch deposits within the three above mentioned tectonic units, and he brought new paleontological contributions to the study of the large foraminifers, of microforaminifers and of some other microfossils hosted by the flysch formations.

His research on the Sarmatian deposits in the Moldavian Platform has also resulted in several new finds that have been corroborated in the collective synthesis on the Middle and Upper Sarmatian published in 2005.

Valuable books and a large number of articles published in specialized journals reflect the scientific activity of Prof. Ionesi, remaining as proof over time of a life-long sustained professional passion.

The high prestige as university professor and prominent researcher of the geological terrains of Romania led to the acceptance, on December 18, 1991, of Prof. Ionesi as *Correspondent member* of the Romanian Academy. This was followed by the acceptance as *Full (titulary) member* on July 21, 2003. From this new position, he contributed to the organization of 11 scientific sessions dedicated to some prestigious personalities of Romanian geology such as Grigore Cobălcescu, Ion Simionescu, Mircea Savul or Ion Băncilă in the frame of the Geonomy Sciences Section of the Romanian Academy.

As an invited guest to the reunion of the Iași Chapter of the Romanian Academy dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the academician Liviu Ionesi, one of the authors (I. B.) has given a short speech, a part of which is included below for expressing a specific state of spirit:

“The Romanian geological teaching, as well as the corresponding research, is related to the three classical academic centres: Bucharest, Iași and Cluj. Each of these centres have hosted, in time, personalities that have marked their existence and evolution, and have established regional, national and international landmarks. The best way to define the personality of the academician professor Liviu Ionesi would be, thus, to establish his qualities as a landmark.

Iași University can be proud of having been the cradle for several remarkable personalities for the evolution of Romanian geology. Professor Ionesi is undoubtedly one of them. Personally, I have always associated his figure to a Senior, that has conducted with serenity, skilled grace and generosity the “geological concert” in Iași area.

There are two main messages of recognition which the geologists from Cluj would like to submit to your attention on this occasion: (1) a special acknowledgment for the exceptional geological activity carried out by Professor Academician Liviu Ionesi during several decades, and for the passion wave he spread as a professor of the Iași University; and (2) a recognition from the heart for the Person that has always been a great friend of the geologists in Cluj, not only of his generation but also much younger than him. Personally I am extremely honoured that I was a beneficiary of his appreciation and friendship. [...] Let it be that the friendship for your colleagues in Cluj, built-up and supported by you during decades, to stand up in the future, through your younger colleagues as well”.

We will preserve alive the memory of Acad. Prof. dr. Liviu Ionesi in our minds and souls, as an eminent representative of geology in Iași and in Romania, as a distinguished friend of the Cluj academic geology and in particular of several geologists of the currently active generation from Cluj but also of the previous ones, as a well-known professional who did not hesitate to dedicate all his skills and energy to geological research for more than half a century. His legacy for his successors is represented by his firm character, his actions and achievements, most of them reflected in his vast list of publications, books and articles, which will be a continuous source of inspiration. The former students will always find an example in his devotion for the geological academic school in Iași and in Romania, in general. The scientific legacy is not only the result of his native intelligence, but also of his perseverance, of his professional passion and of the many deprivations he suffered along his whole life.

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