In Memoriam

Academician Prof. Dr. doc. RADU DIMITRESCU
(1926–2013)

He was 86 when he left our world for the one of the shadows, on July 1st, 2013. A geologist, university professor, and member of the Romanian Academy, the late Radu Dimitrescu amazed through his intelligence, universal and encyclopedic knowledge, professionalism, incredible memory, and refined approach. He became a living legend for his peers, and then through verbal communication for the younger generation of geologists. As offspring of a distinguished Romanian intellectual family, during the two World Wars he received a genuine solid education, including learning several foreign languages, which represented a privilege in those times. Among others, I remember the geological pre- and post-conference field works organized during the communist times, which often provided the frame for lively professional discussions. As a rule, and for most of the participants trained in the “red” schools, the “communication tools” were unfortunately missing. In such occasions, the interventions of Radu Dimitrescu were essential for clarifying everything. He was always polite, generous, jovial, integer, and constant in his correctness, rigor and perseverance.

Radu Alexandru Dimitrescu was born on November 27th, 1926. Although originary from Macedonia, by the second part of the 19th century the family established in Ploiești in south Romania. Afterwards, the family moved to Bucharest, where Radu enrolled at the primary school “Silvestru”. In 1944, he entered the prestigious “Spiru Haret” High school where each year he obtained the overall top results. After graduation, Radu Dimitrescu enrolled as student of the Faculty of Mines and Metallurgy of the Polytechnic University in Bucharest, which he graduated in 1949 as a geologist engineer. His remarkable results recommended him for an academic career: he was appointed as university assistant at the Oil and Gas Institute (1950–1954), and then at the Mining Institute (1954–1956). For a long time (between 1948 and 1966) he worked solely for the Geological Survey of Romania, where he defined his main scientific interests: magmatic and metamorphic petrography-

petrographical study of the region between Gârda and Lupşa (the upper Arieș Basin) - that he then published in 1958. Prof. Valeriu Luca and Radu Dimitrescu knew each other from their common stage at the Mining Institute in Bucharest - as I learned later from R. Dimitrescu himself. The story, as told by I. Al. Maxim goes as follows: “In Arieș Valley, upstream from Lupşa, we met a very smart young geologist from Bucharest who presented to our students the geology of the upper Arieș Basin in such a clear and documented manner that we were all impressed”. By sharing this “geohistorical” moment, I want to address a vibrant call to the new generations of geologists to follow this memorable example.

In 1977, the personal life of Radu Dimitrescu has changed dramatically in one instant when his mother, father, wife and single child (Anton) died during the devastating earthquake in Bucharest. In time, his strong character helped him recover from this tragedy: he restarted with a new life, after getting married with Mihaela, a geologist herself, who brought sunshine back into his life. Together they have a daughter, Diana, who is currently a Master student at one of the most prestigious universities in England. Acad. R. Dimitrescu had a rich and consistent professional activity focusing on deciphering the geophenomena occurring in Romania. His fieldwork concerned many areas in the country, but mainly the Apuseni Mountains (Ciucua, Gilău, Muntele Mare, Valea Arieșului, Biharia, Highiş etc.), Southern Carpathians (Iezer, Păpușa, Făgăraș, Poiiana Rusca etc.), and the Eastern Carpathians (Baia Mare, Vâșeul, Iacobeni areas among others).

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His diverse and prodigious scientific activity is reflected in numerous studies that he has authored and co-authored as papers and treaties on petrography-petrogenesis-metallogeny and structural geology, e.g., his PhD thesis mentioned above, published in 1958; “Muntele Mare. Geological and petrographic study” (in Romanian), 1966; “Geology of the Apuseni Mountains” (in Romanian), 1976, monographic work coordinated by Prof. Virgil Ianovici. Other widely used books published (in Romanian) by R. Dimitrescu in collaboration with Prof. Dan Rădulescu are “The topographic mineralogy of Romania”, 1966 and “Endogenous petrology of the S.R. of Romania”, 1982. Among his more didactic contributions one can include the university textbooks on mineralogy and ore deposits-metallogeny published by the university in Iaşi (e.g., “Metalliferous and non-metalliferous ore deposits”, 1972, or “Textbook on metallogeny”, 1984. On top of all these, he has published more than 170 original scientific papers in prestigious journals in Romania and abroad. Even this brief summary manages to outline the impressive scientific legacy that R. Dimitrescu left behind, in both applied, field geology, and in the more theoretic-scientific one. To this, we can add that he was an active field geologist himself for more than six decades (1950-2013). In the moment of final departure from our dear common friend, both Dan Rădulescu and myself we agreed: “In Romania, any new geological contribution will have to make a reference to the previous work of Radu Dimitrescu”. This remark summarizes the wide spectrum and the sustainable value of the scientific contribution of Radu Dimitrescu, a dedicated geologist and an eloquent interlocutor on every occasion and topic.

The merciless disease that currently haunts humanity finally defeated him; this, in spite of the fact that until 2012 he could smoothly control it. After this point, R. Dimitrescu engaged with hope and trust into a tough battle that episodically seemed to have been won. Always on his side, supportive and encouraging, were his wife Mihaela and his daughter Diana.

The final departure of the geologist academician and professor Radu Dimitrescu along the road with no return, represents a heavy spiritual loss for the Romanian geologists and geology and for all who knew him. As messenger of my colleagues from the Department of Geology in Cluj, I tried to illustrate in few words the great deeds of the erudite vanished one. My soul is stoned by immeasurable regret; at the same time, I am extremely grateful for the contributions of the Man, the geologist, the professor, the academician and the friend who Radu Alexandru Dimitrescu always was.

Prof. Ioan Mărza