

**PROFESSOR DR. DOCENT SERGIU I. CĂRĂUȘU,
ILLUSTIOUS ACADEMIC TEACHER, A MAN WITH A LIFE
DEDICATED TO THE SEA AND ITS PEOPLE**

Nicolae C. PAPADOPOL¹, Mircea RĂUȚĂ², Victor SURUGIU³ and
Angelica CURLIȘCĂ¹

¹ Complexul Muzeal de Științe ale Naturii Constanța; angysan2002@yahoo.com

² Universitatea “Dunărea de Jos” Galați, Facultatea de Pescuit – Acvacultura

³ Faculty of Biology, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, B-dul Carol I, no. 20A, 700505 Iași, Romania;
vsurugiu@uaic.ro



In human society in general, but especially in the academic scientific world, there are only but a few people who, after their passage beyond the boundaries of life, can leave dominant traces of a remarkable activity, establishing themselves as a role model for intense, long lasting feeling, but with remarkable results, an example for generations to come.

Professor Emeritus Ph.D. Docent Sergiu I. Cărbăușu has been and still remains, in many ways, a remarkable personality of the University of Iași, emblematic for the Department of Zoology of the Faculty of Biology of this cultural centre, but especially for

the history of the evolution of the Marine Biological Station of Agigea, for the history of the marine higher education, and of the Romanian biological oceanography research school.

Part of the authors of this paper were trained in the presence of the late Professor Sergiu I. Cărăușu, they knew him closely, as he was their mentor in their professional training.

Their intention, and also the intention of the young team that joined them, was to bring into general attention for a long time to come, a less discussed aspect of the teacher's personality, his love for the sea, for its people, the researchers of the marine universe, the sailors or simple fishermen.

Starting from a few well-documented and well-written biographical presentations, carefully documenting the teacher's work of a lifetime, his achievements, the prestige he enjoyed and still enjoys in the field of marine research (Porumb, 1997; Mustață *et al.*, 1999; Mustață & Surugiu, 2007), the authors of this essay attempt a different presentation of the great scientist's personality. Memories have been taken into account, direct, immediate memories of the two main authors related to the contact with the teacher, but also the memories left in the conscience and in the memory of some sea people who knew him.

We thank all of them, many of which no longer exist among us.

Born on 15th February 1907 in the Ișnovăți village, Orhei district, Bessarabia, Sergiu I. Cărăușu went to general school and high schools to the East of the Prut, on the Bessarabia territory, and to the university in Iași, at the faculty where, over the years, he would become a professor. It is still in Iași where, in 1939, he successfully passes his Ph.D. thesis.

Throughout his entire life, without making a statement out of this, he was a great Romanian, but still strongly connected to his Bessarabian origins, that he never denied that he was proud of.

Today, at present time, given the official or unofficial stable fraternal relationship between the two Romanian speaking state entities, we can emphasize that the teacher was and still is recognized and appreciated by the scientific community in Bessarabia.

I felt the power of this feeling when, on 18th October 2007, in the auditorium of the Academy of Sciences of Moldavia, during the opening of the 6th National Congress of Zoology, through the words of one of the authors of these pages, the celebration of 100 years from the birth of the great teacher and scientist was commemorated. We owe the possibility of this initiative, initiative that was received with enthusiasm in Chișinău, to the following gentlemen: Academician Professor Ph.D. Ion Dediu, Academician Professor Ph.D. Ion Toderaș, Academician Professor Ph.D. Vasile Șalaru and Ph.D. Arcadius Capcelea.

Starting with the years 1929-1930, but especially from 1931 until 1960, after graduation, Sergiu I. Cărăușu will work at the Marine Zoological Station of Agigea, this stage being the most prolific of his life, perhaps due to his wife's presence along him – Aurelia Cărăușu – a renowned specialist in the study of molluscs and isopod crustaceans (Porumb, 1997; Mustață *et al.*, 1999; Mustață & Surugiu, 2007).

Formed under the direct guidance of Ioan BORCEA, the titan of Romanian biology, who's assistant he was and whom he accompanied until the professor's passage beyond the boundaries of life, the 30th July 1936, Sergiu I. Cărăușu, besides his attention for the amphipods, field in which he became one of the greatest Romanian specialists, he was an excellent ichthyologist, pioneer and school founder. He made an important

contribution in the fisheries higher education, fundamental, and especially applied, ichthyology research.

During the teacher's activity at Agigea, before the war and after the cessation of hostilities, until his departure for Iași, in 1960, his most valuable works have been designed, written and entrusted to publishing (Porumb, 1997; Mustață *et al.*, 1999; Mustață & Surugiu, 2007).

We would like to emphasize once again though these lines, the very special value of the “*Treatise of Ichthyology*” (Cărăușu, 1952), that remains a landmark contribution even today. It ought to be republished in order for it to become a useful tool for teaching activities, and ichthyology research carried out today and in the future.

After the Second World War, between 1948-1960, the teacher was involved, along with his young collaborators, in the rebuilding and modernization of the Marine Biological Station of Agigea, reuniting the local and international relationships of this settlement, which facilitated the establishment and the development of the MBS's exceptional library, a process that was continued, with dedication, by all those who have followed the professor at the management of the institution.

In 1953 he became director of the resort, coordinating in parallel, not for a long time, the multidisciplinary research team from Mamaia, hosted by former Bio-Oceanological Institute of Grigore Antipa and Zaharia Popovici, a station of the Fishery Research Institute of Romania.

Since 1948-1949 Sergiu I. Cărăușu joins a number of great specialists in aquatic biological resources management and research, such as: Prof. Ph.D. Theodor Bușnită and Prof. Ph.D. Constantin S. Antonescu, creating the basis for fisheries higher education by founding in Constanța the Faculty of Fishery and Fisheries. At this university will become course master, professor and then dean.

In teaching Ichthyology, he will have around him the late Ph.D. Ioan Porumb, soon become a renowned marine ichthyologist, a representative researcher at MBS of Agigea.

In these years, in the post-war period, Romanian fisheries nationalization occurs, the transition to an alert industrialization of the marine fisheries through the creating and putting into practice the “offshore fleet”, contained in a unique structure, with headquarters in Constanța.

This fleet of cutters and seiner-drifters, some of them imported, others built in Romanian sites on the Danube, from wood or metal, will practice an intensive fishing based on the reserves of blue mackerel (*Scomber scombrus* Linnaeus, 1758) and bonito (*Sarda sarda* Bloch, 1793). Catches of this fleet were directed to the “Red October” ship, an old Greek cargo that had been modernized and transformed into a floating canning factory, or to the plants in Constanța and the Danube ports (Papadopol, 1996a, 1996b; Papadopol & Maxim, 1999).

The increased demand for fish products, determined by time trials between 1947-1948, amplified by a fragile economy's deficiency, affected by the pressure of war debts, required efforts to organize the fishing fleet, operating in the first place with the support of Romanian specialists.

Professor Sergiu I. Cărăușu, with his reputation of excellent connoisseur of sea resources, will work in the operational commands of the time, running numerous

campaigns at sea, along with the fishermen-sailors of the fleet, with young professionals, his former students.

In the fisherman fleet of those years, the professor enjoyed a huge reputation built on his high level of knowledge of the marine environment, of biology and behaviour of the target species, but mostly because of his good sailing knowledge, of his particular way of talking to the people, of the ease in the use of Russian in the relationship with Khokhol and Lipovan fishermen, many of those people, captains of ships at the time, having the cult of the teacher's personality. We like to remember some of them, nowadays no longer among us: Theodor Țepeneanu, Nico Perideri, Georgica Zvanovici, Costică Ciochină, Fedea Gavrilov, Giony Ionescu, Gheorghe Popa, Costică Mănăilă and last but not least Mircea Ciufu.

Mircea Ciufu, one of the teacher's first students, no longer passed away, had a special history, being in the first place an exploitation engineer, a patented seiner captain, captain of a research ship, scientist and technologist engineer on the expeditionary fishing vessels. Before the unification of Romanian marine research on the 30th March 1970, he was for a while deputy director of the Marine Biological Station "Prof. Dr. Ioan Borcea" of Agigea, but previously also the captain of the research R/V "Emil Racoviță", whose contribution and reinforcement the teacher handled himself.

Throughout his entire life, the Professor felt a special bond with the dear memory of the "offshore fleet" years, fallen into dissolution after 1964-1965, the years of collapse of the net-bag fishing.

He preserved and kept within himself the memory of those ships and its people, the memory of his experiences on the SEA.

A significant event in the teacher's last years emphasizes a very emotional attachment to the sea, to the ships and the people that Sergiu I. Cărăușu kept in his heart. On 15th February 1997, the Senate Hall of the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, the teacher was celebrated at the celebration of 90 years of life, an event in which he was given the title of "Professor Emeritus". He was celebrated with much respect, human affection, he received emotional homage messages, met many people who had been his students and disciples in the world of science.

He received from the Romanian Marine Research Institute in Constanța the title of honorary member of the Scientific Council, notified through an excellence degree, accompanied by a medal commemorating the 25th anniversary of the institution. The moment he was receiving these awards, at which point Prof. Gheorghe Mustață and Ph.D. Nicolae C. Papadopol were around, the distinguished professor asked, while watching the reverse of the medal which had the contour of a ship imprinted:

"Nicu, what ship is that?"

"The "Marea Neagră", Professor, Costică Ciochina's ship!"

Hearing the prediction, the professor suddenly bowed and kissed the medal. It was a symbolic gesture dedicated to a ship and to a man from his youth, both in the history of '50s-'60s, at the Black Sea. Then, few have understood this gesture that we reveal today.

The transfer of the professor Sergiu I. Cărăușu from the Marine Biological Station of Agigea and from the Faculty of Fishery and Fisheries in Constanța, to the Faculty of Biology of the University of Iași was seen by many as a meritorious promotion, to reward his work at seaside and to bring him where he had his formative roots, where his teacher had served, the great professor Ioan BORCEA.

In reality, for years afterwards, with absolute discretion, worn over the years with the great nobility of great people, the professor kept in his heart the pain of separating from the sea, from the storm wave sound, from the uninterrupted cry of the gull chased over the water crests, from the breath of salty sea breeze, but not least from the ships and from the people of his time.

In Constanța he was an illustrious and beloved university professor, a symbol of the beginnings of fisheries higher education, in Iași he was one of the great University Professors of the city, he was one of the great values of a group of brilliant teachers who formed the teaching staff of the '60s and of the '70s.

In Iași, at the Faculty of Biology, he will teach the course of Hydrobiology, Ecology, Zoogeography and for a while the course of Hunting Economy and Fishing techniques, he will take over the duties of Head of Department of Zoology, until his retirement in the '70s, when he remains with his collaborators, as a teacher consultant, becoming 77 days before his death Professor Emeritus, a distinction awarded for his prolific entire academic career.

He was a famous doctoral student's supervisor in Iași, and Galati, at the faculty where he began his career, the faculty being transferred to the banks of the Danube in the late '50s.

From 1964, in Galati, he coordinates the Ph.D. theses of a number of outstanding people in applied marine research or in ichthyology, a series of personalities from whom we mention: Ph.D. Engineer Gheorghe Șerpoianu, Ph.D. Engineer Carmen Ionescu-Mărgineanu, Ph.D. Engineer Ileana Cautiș, Ph.D. Engineer Stefan Pârcălăboiu, Ph.D. Engineer Gabriel Munteanu, Ph.D. Engineer Soare Stăncioiu, etc. He will give a higher importance to the Ph.D. committees of two of his former students, both involved in marine research, Ph.D. Engineer Nicolae Jelescu, and Ph.D. Engineer Virgil Iordănescu.

In Iași, in providing its professional services, Sergiu I. Căraușu will be assisted by several assistants, Marieta Zugrăvel-Popescu, Ph.D. Raoul Constantineanu, Ph.D. Taisia Boișteanu, the last one being his close collaborator as she continued his interests in hydrobiology.

In Iași, Professor Sergiu I. Căraușu was a special splash of colour in the academic community. Tall, slightly bent backwards, walking firmly, used to the rocking deck of the ship, with lion-like hair, marked by the years and the wickedness of man, with harsh skin from the winds of the sea, always elegant, he was an unforgettable presence on the Copou Boulevard, on the corridors and in the classrooms of the faculty, or in his office, opened for colleagues and friends.

Regardless of the course he taught, his lectures were unforgettable, sustained with oratorical vocation and academism, an echo of his encyclopaedic training.

In his working office at the faculty there was always an organized mini-disorder, a strong smell of tobacco and men's fragrances floated in the air; the Professor received his guests at a desk loaded with papers, covered by angular letters, written down, always in black ink.

The Professor's office hosted an excellent library filled with reference works, from various fields of biology, but also with strictly sailing hints. The professor was a true polyglot for whom writings in European languages had no secret, the only inaccessible ones being, after his own predictions, only the papers written in languages from the Finno-Ugric group. He knew in detail the Agigea library; he was able to make precise referrals of any

prints that had touched his hands, which he had studied. He was an astute connoisseur of the UDC code facilities, of bibliographic guidance, which had always allowed him access to the writings of the time, regardless of the language.

He was always a good host, regardless of his state of mind, for his close associates or for the guests coming from far away. In professional discussions, through his erudition he would force you to always be prepared for meeting him, always well-informed about the proposed subject: when necessary, he would always know how to guide you to the sources that would clear your questions, and correct the age's mistakes.

During the activity of Iași, he was highly involved in the issues of the university stations from Pângărași and Agigea. To honour those who managed the faculty in those years, the teacher was always consulted on the destinies of the Agigea Marine Station, with whose researchers he was always in close connection. The annual scientific sessions were emotional moments of joy for the teacher, because they brought to Iași the special world of the SEA researchers, many of them very close to the Professor.

He felt the pain 30th March 1970, the moment of the unification of the Romanian marine research in the new Romanian Marine Research Institute of Constanța, not because he was against this idea, but for the effect of loss of autonomy and entity of the Marine Biological Station "Prof. Dr. Ioan Borcea" of Agigea. Perhaps this was too much for the Professor, despite these feelings, he always remained close to those in Constanța, two of his former students who had become researchers of the SEA.

During his activity as Head of the Zoology Department in Iași, strongly supported by several collaborators, the late Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Vasile Ghenciu, Prof. Ph.D. Nicolae Valenciuc, the current Prof. Ph.D. Ion Iordache and especially his assistant, Ph.D. Taisia Boișteanu, no longer among us, he initiated and supported a campaign to restore the collections of the Museum of Vertebrates and Invertebrates with biological material taken on board of the fleet's fishing expedition ships.

In this process he encouraged all initiatives, and the relationships established with the fleet, on behalf and under his prestige, by the one who was then his student, the later researcher, Nicolae C. Papadopol.

In comparison with other academic institutions and museums, the demands of the Faculty of Biology in Iași, had priority for the expeditionary fleet, firstly because they came from Professor Sergiu I. Cărăușu and because they were addressed to his former students, technology-engineers on board of the ships, or navy officers to whom the teacher's name was more than familiar. Those years, of the 1965-1968 period, of maximum emulation in this area, have brought many exhibits to the faculty, many of them rare, coming from the Central Eastern Atlantic, from the continental platform between El Spartel Cape and Senegal, or from the North-western Atlantic waters, from Labrador to Nova Scotia (Papadopol & Nicolae, 2001). A series of the Professor's former students have contributed to this effort, either by the approvals granted or by the hard work of collecting and conserving: Engineer Paul Nicolau, engineer Nicolae Vasilescu, engineer Mihai Lefterescu, engineer Virgil Țipă, engineer Ștefan Mazăre, engineer Constantin Bădică, and engineer Dumitru Aioanei.

Other younger people have been solidary in the efforts, among which we mention eng. Gheorghe Bălan, eng. Traian Dobre, George Creangă, etc.

Many years later, with growing older and with the withdrawal from coordinating Ph.D. theses, the Professor increasingly withdraw in his office or at home, on the Tudor

Vladimirescu Boulevard. He will keep in touch with the SEA and its men through correspondence with the loved ones, accompanying some of them far away, on the dustless roads of the ocean. The Professor, highly discreet, appreciated very much the letters that were looking for him, coming from those who had always been close to him. A few lines on a sheet of paper, dated 11/09/1994, becoming yellowed over time, keep as a memory the great Professor's feelings, when he was far away from the places of his youth.

“Your lines have brought to me a real breeze of the sea, at the shores on which I have lived many unforgettable springs.”

He was a giant of the profession, a man with a big heart, loving his fellow men, demanding but sensitive, with an unique interior soul, full of feelings and warmth, with an endless love for the SEA, for its people, but also for the cultural citadel of Iași, that loved and honoured him. In times of celebration, at Agigea, we wanted to pay homage to the man who has been and will remain for all of us, Professor Ph.D. Docent Sergiu I. Cărăușu.

We hope, through our lines, to bring back his strong memory, here, at the seaside, between the walls of the old settlement for science, marine research and university education.

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