

## In memoriam: professor Radu Lăcătușu PhD



The review *Present Environment and Sustainable Development*, whose member of the Editorial Board he was, and the team he was part of, the Environmental Geography and Geomatics, from the Department of Geography, Faculty of Geography and Geology at the University "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" from Iași, present a few lines of pious memory for the regretted emeritus university Professor Radu Lăcătușu, PhD.

At the age of 76, at the dawn of the first Sunday at the beginning of this year, God took from us a special man, our colleague Radu Lăcătușu. Without him, the Editorial board is poorer, like all of us who have known him.

Professor Radu Lăcătușu was a remarkable presence of the university life of Iași, an exceptional researcher and, especially, a man of a special human value. As a geochemist, trained at our university, professor Lăcătușu has approached numerous research directions in geosciences and environmental sciences, but has linked his scientific career and scientific reputation, especially by the field of soil science.

Professor Lăcătușu distinguished himself by his hard work, by his intelligence, by his special capacity for a realistic understanding of scientific phenomena. He was a leader and manager in his scientific field. He took life seriously and stoically got over his troubles. Although he was strict with himself and with others, more correctly said, rigorous, he had a great kindness and understanding towards those around him. He was considered by colleagues in research and higher education, as well as by generations of students, a researcher and manager of exceptional research and a competent teacher, rigorous and of a special correctness and morality. In addition to all this, the most precious tribute is the memory and recognition of his merits by the many former students, the researchers he trained and the colleagues with whom he collaborated. They received from him an exceptional theoretical and practical professional training, as well as advice for their scientific and didactic career. Professor Lăcătușu was a special personality: calm, sober and serious, rigorous, correct, concise and above all he was a professional. He worked out of passion, which kept him active and at the top, in these times of continuous change and increasing demands.

Professor and mentor Radu Lăcătușu forged characters, being himself a human model of a rare professional and human quality and a model in a world that is increasingly lacking in models. He served with competence and devotion at the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University for over two decades, and after that, as a doctoral supervisor, contributing to the training of many generations of young geographers.

In the former Dorohoi county, which gave great personalities of Romanian culture, in the former Herța area, in the village of Târnuca (currently in Ukraine), where Gheorghe Asachi's parents lived, Radu Lăcătușu was born during the Second World War, on 1st of June 1943.

Radu Lăcătușu graduated the High School No. 2 of Dorohoi in 1963. Between 1960-1966, he attended the courses of the Faculty of Biology-Geography, Geochemistry specialization, at the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, and in 1978, he defended his doctoral thesis in geology at the University of Bucharest. He studied two specializations in soil and plant chemistry, in Germany, in the periods 1975-1976 and 1981.

He started his research activity after the graduation of the faculty, in 1967, initially as a chemist, then as a scientific researcher at the Fundulea Research Institute for Cereals and Technical Plants.

From 1973 until his death, for over 46 years, he served the Romanian research within the National Research-Development Institute for Pedology, Agrochemistry and Environmental Protection, ICPA Bucharest. Here, he took the steps of scientific assertion, from scientific researcher to first degree scientific researcher, in 1993. He was head of laboratory from 1973 to 1990 and from 1993 until his death. Here, mainly, his research activity included topics on environmental protection, with special regard to soil, environmental geochemistry, agrochemistry and plant nutrition, prevention and control of soil pollution. He was member in working team and manager of numerous national and international projects (FAO, PHARE, INCO, COPERNICUS, COST).

The didactic activity in higher education of professor Radu Lăcătușu started at the University of Bucharest, where he worked as an associate lecturer at the Faculty of Geography, during 1977-1982. Then, the professor worked as an associate professor at the *Atheneum University* of Bucharest in the academic year 1993-1994; at the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine in Bucharest, during 1997-2011; at the University *Wallachia* in Târgoviște, in the period 1999-2011; at the University *Lower Danube* in Galați, in the period 2000-2011 and at the *Alexandru Ioan Cuza University*, in Iași, in the period 2000-2003.

Radu Lăcătușu became a full professor at the Faculty of Geography and Geology of *Alexandru Ioan Cuza* University in 2003 and worked until his retirement year, 2013, when he received the title of professor emeritus and continued his activity as an associate professor for a while. During his university career, the Professor gave courses and practical works on over 10 subjects in the fields of agrochemistry, pedology and environmental science. Since 2007, he has been a doctoral supervisor,

many young people obtaining the title of doctor in geography under his competent and honorable coordination.

During 2001-2002, he served as director of the Research and Education Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, where he made important contributions to the development of legislation on research and education in agriculture.

Achievements in science, reflected by in-depth analyzes based on documentation and field and laboratory research, were translated into an impressive volume of communications, articles, courses and treatises, maps and specialized atlases, which were presented and published in Romania and abroad. He presented scientific papers at over one hundred scientific events in Romania and abroad and published over 300 papers in specialized journals in Romania and abroad, published 15 specialized books in Romania and abroad and authored three patents of inventions.

He was editor-in-chief of the journal of the Romanian National Society for Soil Science and a member of the editorial boards of the *Carpathian Journal of Earth and Environmental Sciences* (ISI listed), *Present Environment and Sustainable Development* (ISI indexed), *Factors and Pedogenesis Processes in the Temperate Zone*.

The recognition of the results of research and university work submitted with great passion and dedication were officially materialized through diplomas, orders and scientific titles awarded by the Ministry of National Education, the Romanian Academy, universities and various professional societies. Professor Radu Lăcătușu was a full member of the “Gheorghe Ionescu-Șișești” Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences, corresponding member of the German Society for Soil Science, Member and President (1994-2000) of the Romanian National Society for Soil Science and member of 3 Romanian scientific societies and 4 international scientific societies.

He was a laureate of the Romanian Academy Prize for the book “Microelements in Agriculture” (1988) and a laureate of the Prize of the Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences (2004, 2008).

He carried out a sustained activity of popularizing scientific research through mass media - publications, radio and TV shows.

Gratitude and remembrance over time will be present in our souls. Let him remain in our memory, those we had the privilege of having him as a colleague and friend!

May he rest in peace with the righteous!

Liviu Apostol