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IN MEMORIAM: Dr. Ana-Puica FABIAN (1928-2019)

In early July this year, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ana-Puica Fabian, one of the last academics trained by the interwar generation of our university professors, passed away at the age of 91.

Born (Grozavu) in Orăștie (Hunedoara county), A-P Fabian attended the middle school and high school in Deva, and between 1947-1951, the Faculty of Sciences of Cluj University, being appointed during her last year of studies as a teaching assistant at the Plant Physiology Department.

She completed all the steps of the university career up to associate professor (1951 – instructor, 1962 – assistant professor, 1977 – associate professor), while having the misfortune of working in a period when all decisions depended on the unique party leadership. Thus, she retired in 1988, but not before she managed (in a discrete and friendly manner), for one legislative period, the Biology Department of the Faculty of Biology, Geography and Geology.

In 1971, she defended her doctoral thesis entitled “*Implications of sulfhydryl compounds in plant movements*”, under the supervision of Acad. Emil Pop.

Her complex and fruitful activity, born from the permanent thrill of the consciousness of her mission as an educator and a lover of her country, cannot be completely described within an “In Memoriam”.

Among her interests, we first mention the teaching activity that A-P Fabian carried out in the disciplines *Plant physiology*, *Plant ecophysiology*, *Photosynthesis*, *Cell biology*, an activity strongly marked by the spirit of her mentor, Acad. Emil Pop, and by the wide culture of our colleague. Like in the case of E. Pop, her lectures were not school lesson sequences, but a universe of ideas intended to deepen some issues, considered as a whole, particularly when

interpreting life. Even practical work was sometimes conducted in nature or within the space of the botanical garden, using the laboratory equipment.

Her scientific interests can be found in a number of Romanian specialized journals (*Contrib. bot., Studia UBB s. Biologia, Rev. Roum. Biol., Physiol. Plant. Roum.*, etc.), as well as in many books. The topics approached are related to: **1.** plant movements (e.g. geotropism under the influence of SH groups) and protoplasmic movements under the influence of antibiotics (e.g. chloramphenicol), growth inhibitors (e.g. maleic hydrazide, etc.); **2.** the alteration of biochemical, physiological or ultrastructural parameters under the action of treatment with rays (gamma, UV), radioactive elements (e.g. Sr⁹⁰), herbicides (e.g. Lindane, Aldrin, Gesatop), detergents, or under the influence of the attack of parasitic fungi; **3.** the phenomenon of allelopathy in some vascular plants (conifers, fodder species, weeds) or in some algae cultivated in the laboratory.

Particularly interesting and useful for us (in a period when in Romania there was a great information crisis) were her syntheses and essays regarding: - the theory of systems in contemporary biology; - the chemical structure-biological function relationship; - quantum processes involved in the genesis and functionality of living systems; - the global approach to environmental and ecosystem protection; - premises for human protection; and also, those in the field of the history of sciences (for which reason she was elected in the Romanian Committee for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technique of the Romanian Academy).

As a former student and subsequently as a colleague and even a collaborator (in the field of the history of biology) or as a colleague and friend, we had the privilege to enjoy and benefit from her advice and guidance, from her inventive spirit, her humanistic culture, which all together facilitated our collaboration and orientation along the paths followed in our studies and in our work in general.

Ana Fabian had a long and full life and an impressive work, particularly through the diversity of its topics and through its qualities. She was a model of persistence in work, tension in scientific research, and passion for the knowledge of the living world. We use the words of her mentor, E. Pop, about one of the university professors to emphasize what Ana Fabian means for us. She *“is a source of suggestions for us, and her dynamic personality is an example of continuously renewing powers whenever we face the hardships and shadows inherent to any surge that attempts to break the darkness of the unknown”*.

This is why A-P Fabian will remain in our memory as an excellent teacher (a teacher of vocation and not of circumstance!), a leader full of humanity, a colleague of very wide general culture, and a biologist extremely interested in the entire complexity of the living world.

God rest her soul in peace!

Vasile CRISTEA and Felician MICLE