

## *Obituary*

### **Dr. IOAN PORUMB (November 9, 1925 - July 18, 2011)**

I always found it difficult to speak or write about people older than me, who have played an important role in my professional training and in the evolution of my life.

From this point of view and not only, I find it hard to put on paper reminders about the late Dr. Ioan PORUMB, an outstanding scientist, a very special man, with a proverbial verticality, but, above all, a man with a big heart, discreetly hidden by a formalism in behavior willingly used to mask his sensitivity.

In a few words, he was extremely close to me, always besides me for better or worse, whenever my professional development required a competent support. I had him by my side in shaping my scientific papers, from a different field than his scientific concerns, but related, in the preparation of expeditions out in the Ocean, in writing reports following these expeditions, in structuring and performing my PhD thesis, which, accidentally or not, was coordinated by the same illustrious professor as himself. I had by my side this special gentleman, erudite scholar, well-known, with an excellent life experience when I was just a beginner, but also when time brought me leading positions. Besides many others things, I must thank him for being near me in overcoming the difficult moments of life and sharing the small joys of passing through time.

I am honored to try to outline a few reminders about Dr. Ioan PORUMB and I apologize if my lines will be embedded in a sense of appreciation, because it is difficult to write otherwise about a man so special, so distinguished.

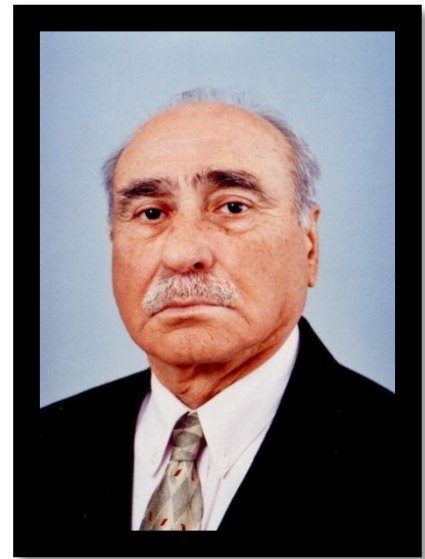
He was born in Iași, on 11/09/1925, and all his life remained connected to the place of childhood, his schools, the Romanian fortress of culture, Iași.

He attended the “Cuza Vodă” elementary school in Iași and completed his high school studies also in Iași, the lower classes at the “Costache Negruzzi” High School and the higher ones at the National High School, sciences section. His high school bachelor exam was passed in 1944, under the harsh conditions of war. The end of the war found him on duty, under arms, which brought him, in time, the war veteran recognition and some additional braids on his officer epaulets.

After the war, he attended the Faculty of Sciences, Department of Natural Sciences, the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, Iași, having as professors the entire array of great university scholars of the interwar period. For a brief period between 1948-1949, he worked as biology teacher at the gymnasium in Ciurea, Iași, and, in February 1949, he moved to the litoral, at the “Prof. Ioan Borcea” Marine Zoological Station, pending the University of Iași, research institute where he completed his ichthyology training.

As a scientist at the Marine Zoological Research Station in Agigea, he worked as assistant professor (1950-1953), with Senior Prof. Dr. Sergiu I. CĂRĂUȘU to promote Ichthyology classes at the Faculty of Fisheries - Fish Farming in Constanța and the organization of the first fishing surveys with the Black Sea offshore fleet. For a brief period between 1953-1955, he was scientific researcher within the Commission for Hydrology of the Romanian Academy and, after 1955, by 01/03/1970, at the “Prof. Ioan Borcea” Marine Zoological Station in Agigea, as senior researcher, head of the Department of Ichthyology.

The moment of unification of the Romanian Marine Research, 01/03/1970, the association of the Romanian Marine Research Institute - Constanța, brought him to the Ichthyology Laboratory of the new



institution. From 1980 until his retirement, in 1988, he led the Laboratory of Black Sea Fishery Resources.

For reasons beyond his choice, caused maybe by the inconvenience of the passage, in 1970, from one form of organization to another, he presented his PhD thesis rather late, in 1970, under the coordination of academician Senior Prof. Dr. Mihai BĂCESCU.

The PhD dissertation “*The Importance of Zooplankton in the Food of Some Pelagic Fish in the Romanian Black Sea Waters*“, a genuine monographic contribution, was and remains, for the issue of marine ichthyologic trophology, an example of serious professional competence and innovative ideas.

Dr. Ioan PORUMB was, above all, a scientist with an outstanding training, a good knowledge of Pontic bio-oceanology and the Mediterranean area, which he encountered several times in his professional career.

In the field of ichthyology, he was a genuine encyclopedia, a good and fine connoisseur of specialized literature, aiming even remote geographical areas. This latter quality of his was often helpful for me, as he served as my advisor in searching for good sources of information for the Atlantic species, not exactly common, which, one way or another, I was interested in.

In his concerns, of knowing the trophic relationships in the tertiary sector of the ecosystem, of ichthyology training, Ioan PORUMB developed a methodology for the reconstruction of species belonging to the organisms in the digestive tube of fish, by parts of the body, a careful, but also excellent professional skill methodology.

He published a total of 50 papers, all with real value and good acknowledgement in the scientific world. His works are cited by authors of reputation, contained in prestigious bibliographic synthesis, being included in the classical literature of the field.

In the world of specialists in the Black Sea region, Dr. Ioan PORUMB was always recognized as one of the leading representatives of the Romanian ichthyology, very familiar with the dynamics of group pelagic fish resources, targets of industrial and semi-industrial fishing. He represented Romanian at numerous meetings devoted to the Black Sea fishery resources and made an important contribution to the industrialization of Romanian fisheries, the creation and operation of the Romanian trawling fleet in the ‘80s. From this point of view, he was one of the supporters of the introduction of trawl fishing in Romanian waters, along with Dr. Eng. Simion NICOLAEV and Eng. Adrian COCIAȘU, specialists in fishing technology.

Expert in working with maritime charts, he was a skillful specialist in guiding operative fisheries with profitable experiments in the years 1950-1960, fishing for blue mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*), bonito (*Sarda sarda*) and, subsequently, in the ‘80s, fishing for sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*) and horse mackerel (*Trachurus mediterraneus ponticus*).

His excellent knowledge of the national competence area in the Black Sea, this special ability to use the charts, determined, among other things, the active presence of Dr. Ioan PORUMB in the Romanian team that prepared, in the years after 1986, the documents for the reorganization of the Northern maritime border of Romania and the foundation of the right to manage the exclusive economic zone.

During 1970-1988, period of activity within the Romanian Institute for Marine Research, he coordinated with skill, dedication and high professionalism the “Black Sea Research Program for the Enhancement of Fish Stocks“. He formed around him, at that time, a team of specialists who met all the requirements of that period.

Dr. Ioan PORUMB had a genuine passion for the Mediterranean Sea. He first encountered its ichthyological fauna in 1960, during a M.A.M.B.O. training, in Tunisia, and as Dohrn Foundation scholarship beneficiary, at the Zoological Station in Naples. In 1975-1976, he was aboard B22 “Delta Dunării“ vessel, under Romanian flag, in Libyan waters, in a complex expedition for the enhancement of local fisheries resources.

He had a good knowledge of French, maybe not as good as his life and research companion’s, the distinguished lady Dr. Florica PORUMB, he knew Italian well and, for documentation needs, Russian and Spanish.

During his activity within R.M.R.I.-N.I.M.R.D., he was a member of the Scientific Council of the institution for a long time and, after retirement, external, honorary member. At the same time, he was a member of the Academy of Scientists in Romania, the Romanian National Committee of Ecology/CNR-UNESCO and the International Committee for the Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean.

Above all, the famous researcher Dr. Ioan PORUMB remains in the memory of those who knew him as a specialist with great respect for the history of Romanian marine research, in turn appreciated, who consistently campaigned for the recognition of the great values of national oceanology. He was and will remain in our memories, those who knew him, a good citizen, having much respect for Romania, its traditions, values and aspirations, to the maritime vocation of the Romanian people.

In recent years, after 1992, he was noted by his active participation in the activities of the Romanian Navy League: he led the Environmental Department at the R.N.L. Constanța subsidiary and was a member of the editorial board of the magazine "Our Sea".

Few know that Dr. Ioan PORUMB was a top officer of the Romanian Army, lieutenant colonel of artillery, retired, and war veteran. His well-known, vertical posture, even in his later years, arises from military training, but especially from practicing, in his youth, a noble sport, horse riding.

He left us quietly, after a suffering known only by the family, on 18/07/2011, leaving behind the memory of a MAN, a RESEARCHER of the SEA, of great and recognized prestige.

For many, many things, for the author of these lines, as well as for many others who knew him, worked with him or around him, he remains the symbol of *honesty, fairness and dedication* to his craft. We thank for the information made available to Mrs. Dr. Florica PORUMB, wife of the one whom these few lines are dedicated to.

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