

## MIHAI C. BĂCESCU (1907 - 1999)

A great European naturalist, who succeeded in being also a remarkable curator, in the same time, left us on 6<sup>th</sup> of August 1999, when the inhabitants of the Old Continent were preparing to watch the last eclipse of the millennium.

Mihai Băcescu led the destinies of the largest museum of natural history from Romania, museum which bears the name of Grigore Antipa, father of the Romanian museology, for more than two decades (1965 - 1988), but, practically, he carried on his entire activity within this institution.

Leaving a promising academic career, began at Iași, he came in Bucharest as a result of Grigore Antipa's request, who, in 1939, offered him a job as chief of department.

He contributed to the rehabilitation and rebirth of the museum when it was almost destroyed by the air raids of 1944.

Passionately fond of zoology, knowing deeply a lot of animal groups, from crustaceans to birds, in a period of a strict specialization, founder of the ecological studies in the Black Sea, learned and prolific ethno-zoologist, Mihai Băcescu was a wonderful collector. He enriched the collections as anybody else, excepting Grigore Antipa, and he began the material exchanges with museums all over the world. From his expeditions on the oceans or from his trips in far regions (Cuba, Peru, Iran, etc.) he always came back with numerous specimens of a very great value.

Mihai Băcescu created the first collection of types of the Museum from Bucharest and fully contributed to the international fame of this institution by his ideas and museological achievements and by his huge activity.



He was the president of the Committee of Museums from Romania (1964 - 1967) and the president of the Romanian' National Committee ICOM (1965 - 1974) and he had a decisive part in the reorganization and modernization of the Romanian museums. He was one of the founders of the *Revista muzeelor* (1964) ("The Romanian Journal of Museums"), the first and, unfortunately, the only museological journal in Romania.

Not a few museums of natural history gained from his huge experience, acknowledged also by ICOM which appointed Mihai Băcescu president of the International Committee of the museums of natural

history, for two subsequent legislations (1965-1968, 1968-1974) and member of the Executive.

During the international conferences of museology and of the ICOM general assemblies, his speeches and proposals were always interesting and constructive. This activity was rewarded by his appointing as a ICOM honorary member on 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1977, on the occasion of the General Assembly from Moscow, *pour les services exceptionnels rendus a l'ICO et, à la cause des musées sur le plan international.*

From his numerous papers on museology we mention here only *Les Musées de Sciences Naturelles*, published in 1970 in Training of Museum Personnel and *L'évolution des musées de sciences naturelles* (1972, Cahiers de l'Histoire Mondiale, UNESCO, 14, 1, 74-102).

On Mihai Băcescu's own initiative and co-ordination, also it was published *Liste préliminaire de*

*catalogues des spécimens types en zoologie et paléontologie?* (1968) and the very useful *Directory of the Natural Sciences Museums of the World* (Bucharest, 1971).

Mihai Băcescu was an active worker, the activities he carried on along six decades, up to his last months of life, are an eloquent example, showing that a good curator have to be, in the same time, a very good specialist in his own field, a very ample field in his case.

The Romanian Academy, which chose him as a member in 1990 and honoured him with two of its most important rewards (1947, 1963), also publishing his last volume of zoological folklore (1997), loses by Mihai Băcescu's disappearance a conspicuous collaborator, the community of the museologist from Romania, a remarkable mentor, and the International Committee of Museums, an illustrious member.

Alexandru MARINESCU

## IN MEMORIAM MIHAI C. BĂCESCU (1908-1999)

În vara anului 2004 se împlinesc cinci ani de când Academicianul Mihai C. Băcescu a intrat în nemurirea marilor oameni ai acestui neam, la venerabila vârstă de 91 de ani.

Numele său este legat de peste o jumătate de secol de muzeologia românească, ca om de știință unanim recunoscut pe plan internațional, fiind, după Antipa și Racoviță personalitatea zoologiei românești cea mai bine apreciată, fondatorul școlii românești de carcinologie și a celei moderne de oceanologie (cea din urmă, fondată de Grigore Antipa) care se bucură, în continuare, de cea mai bună cotație pe plan mondial; dar și ca

muzeograf, ca organizator de instituții (director al Muzeului Național de Istorie Naturală „Grigore Antipa“ între anii 1964-1988, ctitor al Muzeului Apelor din Fălticeni, membru de onoare al ICOM). Cea mai mare strălucire a Muzeului din București a fost cunoscută în perioada cât a fost condus de Domnia Sa, instituție căreia i-a dedicat întreaga pricepere, energie, întreaga sa carieră și viață.

S-a născut 28 martie 1908 la Broșteni, Suceava, din părinți învățători. Rămâne orfan de ambii părinți la 4 ani. A fost luat și crescut de un frate al mamei, Nicolae Baciu.