

## DAN MUNTEANU, PHD. CORRESPONDENT MEMBER OF THE ROMANIAN ACADEMY – A LIFE DEDICATED TO ORNITHOLOGY

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**Abstract.** The authors of this material had the chance to be colleagues with one of the prestigious Romanian scholars, Dan Munteanu PhD. – C. M. of the Romanian Academy. The period of time we have been friends covers over half a century (1965-2017), the co-author being a little younger (1987-2017). It is the period that coincided with our professional development. We personally believe that the environment in which we formed professionally, as well as the entourage, had a great importance. In addition to this, we may add keeping in touch during time because, although we had the same formation (biologists), we have followed different paths, namely the field of Ornithology (Dan Munteanu) and Genetics (Mihaela and Gabriel Corneanu). The young Dan had been fond of birds since childhood and he studied them in captivity. He studied their song and the influence of diet on the tone of their trills. This early passion marked his entire life, being also experienced by both his children, Claudia and Victor Munteanu. He attended the Faculty of Natural Sciences (currently the Faculty of Biology) of "*Babeș-Bolyai*" University in Cluj-Napoca (we present the current nomenclature of various academic institutions). He worked as a Scientific Researcher at "*Stejarul*" Biological, Geological and Geographical Research Station from Pângărați (Neamț County) of A. I. Cuza University of Iasi (where he was also a Director). Being a rich and varied floral and faunistic region, the theme of his doctoral thesis reflected the choice of the theme of the study: "*The Avifauna of the Mountainous Basin of the Moldavian Bistrița*", his PhD thesis being defended in Bucharest in 1969. In 1973, he returned to Cluj, occupying the position of Senior Scientific Researcher at the *Biological Research Center in Cluj-Napoca*. He was *President-Founder* of the *Romanian Ornithological Society (R. O. S)*, a scientific organization with multiple achievements at national and international level. He was elected as a *correspondent member of the Romanian Academy (in 1999)* and was awarded the *Order of Academic Merit* in 2003. Since 2000, he has been *Chairman* of the *Committee for Protection of Natural Monuments (C. P. M. N.)* of the Romanian Academy. In this capacity, he has outstanding achievements in the direction of nature protection in Romania. The activity and paths opened by the scientist Dan Munteanu must be preserved and consolidated, this being the only way to honour his memory.

**Keywords:** stages of the professional development (biologist and ornithologist): Pângărați, Cluj-Napoca, the Romanian Academy; professional and scientific activity; president of R. O. S; president of C. P. M. N.

**Rezumat. Dr. Dan Munteanu, membru corespondent al Academiei Române – o viață dedicată ornitologiei.** Autorii acestui material, au avut șansa de a fi colegi de generație cu unul din savanții români de prestigiu, domnul Dr. Dan Munteanu – M. C. al Academiei Române. Analizând perioada de timp în care am fost prieteni, aceasta acoperă peste o jumătate de secol (1965-2017), celălalt co-autor fiind ceva mai tânăr (1987-2017). Este perioada care a coincis cu formarea noastră profesională. Personal considerăm că ambianța în care ne-am format profesional precum și mediul și anturajul, au contat foarte mult. La aceasta se adaugă păstrarea legăturilor în timp, deoarece deși suntem de aceeași formație (biologi), am parcurs drumuri diferite în specializare: ornitologie (Dan Munteanu), respectiv Genetică (soții Mihaela și Gabriel Corneanu). Tânărul Dan, încă din copilărie era pasionat de păsări, pe care le studia în captivitate. Studia cântecul lor și influența alimentației asupra tonalității trilirilor. Aceasta pasiune precoce i-a marcat întreaga viață, fiind prezentă și la cei doi copii, Claudia și Victor Munteanu. A urmat cursurile Facultății de Științe ale Naturii (în prezent Facultatea de Biologie) de la *Universitatea „Babeș-Bolyai” din Cluj-Napoca* (prezentăm nomenclatura actuală a diferitelor instituții academice). A funcționat pe post de Cercetător Științific la *Stațiunea de Cercetări Biologice, Geologice și Geografice „Stejarul”* din Pângărați (județul Neamț), unitate patronată de Universitatea „A. I. Cuza” din Iași (îndeplinind și funcția de Director). Fiind o regiune bogată și variată din punct de vedere floristic și faunistic, tema tezei de doctorat a reflectat alegerea tematicii studiului: „*Avifauna bazinului montan al Bistriței moldovenești*”, teză susținută la București în anul 1969. Din anul 1973, a revenit la Cluj, ocupând postul de Cercetător științific principal la *Centrul de Cercetări Biologice din Cluj-Napoca*. A fost *Președinte-fondator al Societății Ornitologice Române (S. O. R)*, organizație științifică cu realizări multiple pe plan național și internațional. A fost ales *membru corespondent al Academiei Române (în anul 1999)*, primind și distincția *Ordinul Meritul Academic*, în anul 2003. Din anul 2000, a fost *Președinte al Comisiei de Ocrotire a Monumentelor Naturii (C. O. M. N.)* din Academia Române. În această calitate a obținut realizări deosebite pe direcția ocrotirii naturii în România. Activitatea și drumurile deschise de omul de știință Dan Munteanu, trebuie să păstrate și consolidate, singura modalitate pentru a îi cinste memoria.

**Cuvinte cheie:** etape în formarea profesională (biolog și ornitolog), Pângărați, Cluj-Napoca, Academia Română; activitatea profesională și științifică; președinte S. O. R; președinte C. O. M. N.

### Family, family atmosphere and intellectual development

The eminent scientist Dan Munteanu is a sacred name in Ornithology. His passion and formation as an ornithologist dates back to his childhood, having a genetic determinism conferred by the heredity inherited from parents, personalities with deep Transylvanian roots, characterized by an avid desire to know the surrounding world. Both his parents were descendants of families of intellectuals with old roots in Transylvania. His father, Dr. Didi Munteanu, a paediatrician, was an associate professor at the University of Medicine in Cluj and director at the institution Child's Home in Cluj.



Photo. Dan Munteanu - PhD. C. M. of the Romanian Academy.

On the paternal line, he was the nephew of the martyr orthodox archpriest from Huedin, Aurel Muntean. His mother, Maria Cupcea, a reputed intellectual, composer, theatre and film artist, played in movies and onto stage of the National Theatre in Cluj, between 1949 and 1955, being also the director of the aforementioned institution. His mother was the descendant of an ancient family of Greek-Catholic priests and teachers from Maramures. On the maternal line, the young Dan was the nephew of the Greek-Catholic vicar Petru Cupcea, from Șimleul Silvaniei. As in his family there were different religious confessions, the environment in which his first perceptions and moral and psychological principles of life formed were characterized by tolerance and respect for others, humans or animals. The passion for ornithology of young Dan Munteanu developed in his childhood, when he studied the birds raised in captivity. He studied bird song and the influence of diet on it. Moreover, his first ornithological work is from this period, about the **southern woodpecker**, a new variety in Romania. The familiar environment allowed him to address these intellectual, but relatively eccentric preoccupations for the age and time of his childhood (the end of the Second World War). His mother, **Maria Munteanu, born Cupce**, was the daughter of a renowned teacher from Carei, George Pteancu. Thus, the attendance of the Faculty of Natural Sciences (later referred to as the Faculty of Biology) was inherent. Graduate of the **Faculty of Natural Sciences, "Babeș-Bolyai" University, Cluj**, he became a scientific researcher in the field of Biology and Zoology at "**Stejarul**" **Biological, Geological and Geographical Research Station from Pângărați of "A.I. Cuza" University of Iași**. In just two years, as a graduate of the Faculty of Biology of the University of Bucharest, one of the two authors of the present commemorative material (Corneanu C. Gabriel) was assigned in the same wonderful collective. I use to say that the most beautiful period in my life is represented by the two years spent at "**Stejarul**" **Station** from Pângărați (October 1965 - April 1967). As in the presentations available on line, there are no mentions about the period spent at "**Stejarul**" **Station**, where we both worked as scientific researchers for almost two years (October 1965 - April 1967 in my case), I consider it is necessary to present some events from this period.

**The period "Stejarul" Pângărați.** About the existence of "Stejarul" Station from Pângărați, located at the same distance from Piatra-Neamț Municipality and the town of Bicaz, situated at the end of the Lake Izvorul Muntelui near Bicaz (13 km), I found out on the day of my arrival at "A. I. Cuza" University of Iași, when the graduates of the 1965 promotion of the Biology faculties in the country (Bucharest, Iași and Cluj-Napoca) came for distribution. In the absence of a more tempting position in research or education, at the suggestion of Dr. Filimon Cardai, professor of Zoology at A. I. C. U. - Iași, I applied for the position of researcher at "A. I. Cuza" University, Iași. I started from the premise that I liked the city of Iași (seen during the morning of that day), about the culture of which I knew many beautiful things, even though I had never been there and I did not know if I had relatives or not in Iași or Moldova (in fact, I later found out that I had!) and I wanted to know people, history, nature and art monuments (a hobby of mine); thus, the position of scientific researcher in the field of hydrobiology was kind of attractive to me, involving permanent news. In addition, unlike my future friend, Dan Munteanu, who knew the field in which he would work (Ornithology), in my case (except for the general presentation "genetics, the science of heredity"), apart from the theoretical information approached in the bachelor graduation paper ("Nucleic Acids and Their Role in Heredity", elaborated and presented in 1965), I did not have a clear vision of the field in which I would have to work. Prof. Filimon Cârdei told me that in the Genetics field at A. I. C. U., there worked specialists trained abroad (Dr. Corneliu C. Zolyneak, trained in Germany, a radiobiologist, about whom I found out only after his premature death, that we were relatives), Dr. Iordachi I. Tudose (a cytogenetics expert with the Ph.D. obtained in Leningrad under the coordination of the famous Prof. Lobașev) or Prof. Ioan Cărăușu (trained in the country), etc.

On a beautiful October day, in the autumn of 1965 (when I arrived for a few weeks at my first job), I was with Dr. Ionescu Vasile, in the shadow of some towering coniferous trees in the courtyard of the ancient monastery of Pângărați (founded by Prince Alexandru Lăpușneanu in 1560). Being new in the team, my colleague Vasile Ionescu (former professor at the Pedagogical Institute of Bacău) offered me different information about our colleagues. He affirmed that the colleague Dan Munteanu impressed him most because, although he was at the beginning of his scientific activity, he knew what he wanted to study. He specified that he was struck by the fact that he arrived from Cluj with two boxes full of scientific works and ornithological scientific material. It must be mentioned that Dr. Vasile Ionescu, who had just retired from the Faculty of

Natural Sciences of the University of Bacău, had been teaching Zoology, being the author of the only vertebrate identification guide in the Romanian specialized literature. One month after I had started working, I knew both my colleagues (researchers, technical and administrative staff, the animals from the station), as well as aspects about the history of those places. In this way, at the meeting for choosing the leadership of the trade union, I actively participated in the nomination and election of my colleague Dan Munteanu as chairman of the union organization at "Stejarul" Station.

**The organization of free time**, after the departure of the colleagues who lived in other localities (mainly in Piatra Neamț, Bacău, etc.), was made by mutual agreement. Thus, out of the seven afternoons of the week, five were spent together at the house of a colleague who was the organizer of the action. At first, there was presented scientific information from different areas of Biology, including aspects of individual research, followed by discussions about various aspects of our life and work. There followed: watching TV, funny games, information and cultural debates (mainly supported by the Ionescu family), proposals for activities in the coming days, etc.

During the hunting season, Sunday was reserved for this sport activity, coordinated by our colleague and friend, Dan Munteanu. I was part of the team after I had been properly trained during the lessons I received, being both hunter and beater. My first hunt was a bird, its hunting being done thanks to Dan, who showed me its position on the tree (at the bifurcation of some branches at the base of the crown). There are many jokes about hunt and hunters. However, I have to mention that many of these stories are real. So, on a snowy and sunny Sunday, with pleasant atmosphere, dressed properly, we returned home (to "Castel") with empty bags, after lunch. Arriving on the territory of the station, Dan warned us that "there is something"; there were three foxes in a lair. Their capture created an atmosphere of great joy (it was the case to find something after a few hours of searching!). One of the picturesque and unusual actions was the reception and escort of the "Emil Racoviță" ship, transferred from the Marine Station **Prof. Ioan Borcea** from Agigea to "Stejarul" Station (both belonging to "A. I. Cuza" University of Iași). Entering the territory of Neamț County, we were given the privilege of accompanying the ship, on the road, to the Lake Izvorul Muntelui from Bicaz. Having an enviable "sound", the group of researchers from "Stejarul" Station, due to the hullabaloo they made, represented a redoubtable group. After 2-3 days, the "sound" of my voice succumbed. Gathered in the house of the Munteanu family, in the evening, there came out a real quarrel between me and Mrs. Monica Munteanu, I do not remember why (probably due to the jokes about the people from Oltenia and Transylvania that abounded during that period). Both of us were standing and talking to one another (Monica had a voice while mine was 'out') and our colleagues were taking photos of us. Dan was sitting on a chair between us, with the hand propping up the chin, waiting for us to finish, so that he could have dinner ... The photos are still in everyone's "golden photo collection". There were many group trips: around the Lake Izvorul Muntelui-Bicaz, along the Bistrița Moldovenească valley, at the Bicaz Gorges, Ceahlău Mountains, together with the colleagues from Agigea retracing the route of Ștefan a Petrei's Nica, visiting the painted monasteries of Northern Moldavia, the city of Neamț, the memorial houses in the area, etc.

The qualities of good manager and organizer determined the team of "Stejarul" Station and the leadership of the Faculty of Biology and Geography of "A. I. Cuza" University of Iasi to entrust to Dan Munteanu the position of scientific director of "Stejarul" Station.

As in any human community, there were sometimes insignificant disputes, but the human criterion of mutual respect and friendship always prevailed. I left "Stejarul" Station in May 1967, but Dan remained there in order to finish and defend his PhD thesis, finalized in 1969 (defended in Bucharest).

**PhD thesis and BRC Cluj-Napoca period.** The doctoral thesis elaborated by our colleague, Dan Munteanu, was in the field of Ornithology (Zoology), having as topic *The Avifauna of the Mountainous Basin of the Moldavian Bistrița*. It is a dense material that includes studies on avifauna, ornithological geography, systematics, ecology, migration and bird biology in Romania. In 1973, he transferred to the Biological Research Institute in Cluj-Napoca, where he held the position of senior scientific researcher. Here, we met more frequently, as I went from Craiova to Cluj about 6 times per year and each trip lasted about 7 days.

Our friendship succeeded to overcome time and, then, the physical distance imposed by our jobs. After each separation of only 2-3 months, we naturally returned to Iași, Agigea, Pângărați, Cluj, Bucharest, Craiova and other places in the country, where we attended biology symposiums or conferences held at scientific sessions. As a representative of different human communities (collectives of researchers, groups of hunters, etc.) engaged in various social activities, research themes, works presented at scientific sessions, our colleague Dan Munteanu proved to be an excellent binder of interhuman relations, having outstanding achievements in this sense.

**The Romanian Academy, President of R. O. S. and President C. P. N. M.** He was elected a correspondent member of the Romanian Academy (January 29, 1999), being rewarded with the Order of Academic Merit for the activities carried out (2013). He was part of the Academic Staff of "Babeș-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca. In this capacity, he was invited to various university centers to talk to the students and to organize field trips. Such a trip took place in Craiova, when courses and information presented to students and researchers (about 15-20 persons) were followed by field trips (the Jiu alluvial plain, Bucovăț Hill, Bibescu-Romanescu Park, etc.). He was an editor at various specialized journals, member of the editorial boards of certain periodicals published by the Romanian Academy, organizer of Scientific Symposia, coordinator of international contracts, rapporteur for Romania in two international reports on the state of the environment, etc. He was also part of the Editorial Board of various publications, including the journal published by the Oltenia Museum. Studies and Research, Natural Sciences, participating in the scientific sessions and field trips in all areas of Oltenia.

He was the **founder president of the Romanian Ornithological Society**, being a member of the Executive Board of the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau (headquartered at Slimbridge, United Kingdom) and representative of the International Council for Bird Preservation (headquartered at Cambridge, United Kingdom). In these circumstances, he participated in the implementation of certain European programs. The solid knowledge of General Biology and the experience gained in ornithological research facilitated the realization of valuable studies, among which there can be mentioned: (a) *The provisional atlas of the brooding birds of Romania* (a work that will be included in the European Atlas); (b) Chapter *Birds*, in the Red Book of Vertebrates of Romania, Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2005; (c) *Important bird areas of Romania - Documentation*, ALMA MATER Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2004; (d) *Rare, vulnerable and endangered birds in Romania*, Alma Mater Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2009; (e) *Fauna of Romania. Aves*, Vol. XV, Fasc. 2. The Romanian Academy Publishing House, 2015.

The **Romanian Ornithological Society** (R. O. S.) is the first non-profit organization in Romania and the longest-lasting one, with regional offices in Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca and Tulcea, and branches where groups of people are involved in various aspects of bird life, biology and protection. By going through the materials we have at our disposal, we can trace Dan Munteanu's trips within the entire country. I came over friends and nature protectors' names (biologists, forest engineers or simply bird friends) that I had known for decades. If there is a passion for action, it is not necessary to be a large city with academic or economic potential. I remember that, in a locality from the Romanian Plain, a teacher passionate about Ornithology and Pestalozzi's pedagogical studies, made a study on the brooding of the black stork, study presented at a communication session SOMN-Oltena, held at the *Oltena* Museum in Craiova. He was helped by the family, as well. For several weeks he lived in a shelter on a tree, his boy bringing him the necessary food. The family of this passionate teacher acted according to the principle "*Where there's a will there's a way*". For this reason, ROS branches develop where there are people who are passionate about knowledge. They are located in Anieș, Caracal, Țândăreni, Vălenii de Munte, Ozun, Covasna County, etc. On the other hand, it is regrettable to notice the absence of branches in prestigious university and cultural centers, although there are specialists in some of them, but, for various reasons, they did not organize branches, which have both obligations and opportunities to make their presence felt actively. The main localities without branches, although having a rich history in avifauna study, different economic and social importance, museums and researchers, etc., can be considered: Craiova, Timișoara, Sibiu, Oradea, etc.

**Committee for Protection of Natural Monuments.** According to the documents displayed by the Romanian Academy, the activity carried out within the CPNM consisted in: elaboration of some regulations and legislative acts; the setting up of *Natura 2000* ecological network in the member states of the European Union; approval of the documentation regarding special avifaunistic protection areas, sites of community importance, elaboration of the documentation regarding the setting up of new protected areas (national parks, natural parks, nature reserves, capitalization of natural resources, ecological restoration works and reforestation, the types of works that can be carried out within protected areas, etc.). C. P. N. M. worked in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and ROMSILVA (National Forestry Administration).

When I arrived in Cluj, we gathered around the dining table, usually at the Munteanu family, in Jiu Street in Cluj. It was a similar situation to the one at Pângărați, when, as I was not married, dinner preparation (when it was my turn) was usually done by my friends' wives, Mrs. Monica Munteanu or Mrs. Sabina Ciaglic. It was the time of stories, memories of the shared background of living realities. We did not think that, over time, everyday happenings would become memories and we ourselves would also become memories.

**Synthesis of the carried out activities.** I together with his family grouped the numerous activities my colleague Dan Munteanu, PhD, C. M. of the Romanian Academy was involved in as it follows:

**Positions:** **Junior scientific researcher** at "Stejarul" Station from Pângărați of the "A. I. Cuza" University of Iași; **\*Scientific Director** at "Stejarul" Station from Pângărați; **\*Senior scientific researcher I** at the Institute of Biological Research Cluj-Napoca; **\*Senior scientific researcher** at the **Romanian Academy**, Bucharest (2004-2017).

**Prizes, scientific recognition:** **\*"Emil Racoviță"** Prize of the Romanian Academy, collectively awarded; **\*20** diplomas and medals; **\*The title "Senior of the Citadel"** awarded by Cluj-Napoca City Hall (August 2009); **\* Member** of two International Scientific Societies (Oradea and USA); **\*Coordinator** of PhD theses, Biology, at "Babeș-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca.

**Published scientific papers:** **\*Participations** in national and international scientific events; **\*Over 100** scientific papers published in the country and abroad; chapters published in 13 books (8 printed abroad); main author of 10 books; 140 papers of scientific information and popularization;

**Administrative jobs:** **\*Scientific Director** of "Stejarul" Biological, Geological and Geographical Research Station, Pângărați (Piatra-Neamt); **\* Founder President** and Executive Director of R. O. S.; **\* President** of C. P. N. M., the Romanian Academy since 2000.

**Other activities:** **\*Editor** of specialized journals; **\*Member** of the editorial boards of some periodicals of the Romanian Academy (Revue Roumaine, Biologie, etc.); **Member** of the Editorial Board of scientific publications (The Oltena Museum, Studies and Research; **\*Organizer** of Scientific Symposia, **Coordinator** of national and natural parks and biosphere reserves in Romania; **\*Coordinator** of international projects; **\*Rapporteur** for Romania in two international reports on the state of the environment, etc.

**Pedagogical and spiritual activities:** **\*Didactic:** Students training during summer field trips; **Didactic:** Training of young specialists in ornithology; **\*Didactic:** guidance of biology PhD students; **\*Spiritual:** After 1990, he supported the rights

and recognition of the Roman Catholic Church; he actively participated in the activities of religious confessions, being physically exposed in certain cases. Thus, after 1990, when the weather was nice, we met at the service held at the Roman-Catholic church, which was under construction in the area of the Romanian National Theatre in Cluj.

**Family life:** He was a devoted father and husband, who, together with his wife (Monica Munteanu), was involved in raising and educating his children (Claudia and Victor) and grandchildren (Paul-Cristian and Mihai).

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Received: March 31, 2017

Accepted: July 18, 2017