

## A LIFE DEVOTED TO MUSEOGRAPHY: ZOE APOSTOLACHE STOICESCU

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**Abstract.** With a significant number of books and over 100 publications, as well as numerous academic achievements, including the "Emil Racoviță Award" of the Romanian Academy certifying the quality of her work, Dr. Zoe Apostolache Stoicescu can easily be regarded as a prominent figure in Romanian science and culture. Between 1978 and 1983 she develops a unique project for Romanian museography, a museum of man, inaugurated in Ploiești in 1984 as the Museum of Human Biology. Spiritual and patrimonial heir of the painter Rudolf Schweitzer–Cumpăna, as his niece, she ventures for two decades in a complex of activities such as seminars, exhibits and monographs, in order to underline the role and place of Schweitzer–Cumpăna in the Romanian fine arts.

**Keywords:** Zoe Apostolache Stoicescu, ecology, interdisciplinarity, human biology, art collector.

**Rezumat. O viață închinată muzeografiei: Zoe Apostolache Stoicescu.** Cu un număr semnificativ de cărți scrise și peste 100 de publicații, precum și numeroase distincții academice, incluzând „Premiul Emil Racoviță” al Academiei Române drept certificare a calității muncii sale, dr. Zoe Apostolache Stoicescu se remarcă drept o figură proeminentă în știința și cultura românească. În perioada 1978 și 1983, elaborează un proiect unic în muzeografia românească, un muzeu al omului, inaugurat la Ploiești în 1984 sub titulatura de Muzeu de Biologie Umană. Moștenitoare spirituală și patrimonială, în calitate de nepoată a pictorului Rudolf Schweitzer – Cumpăna, realizează timp de două decenii un complex de activități (seminarii, expoziții, monografii) care au ca scop reliefaarea rolului și locului pictorului în arta plastică românească.

**Cuvinte cheie:** Zoe Apostolache Stoicescu, ecologie, interdisciplinaritate, biologie umană, colecționar de artă.

On the warmest day of 2017, on Friday the 27<sup>th</sup> of July, the flame that had burnt so close to us, bearing a destined name, Zoe Apostolache Stoicescu, was fading with its last flickers.

Born in Ploiești on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 1936 and guided since middle school by the two brilliant minds of Prahova's museography, Nicolae Simache and Margareta Moșneaga, Zoe Apostolache Stoicescu moved forward in this profession, with notable achievements, worthy of recognition and remembrance.

After attending middle school and high school in Ploiești, she graduates in 1959 from the University of Bucharest, Faculty of Natural Sciences, with a major in biology and she returns to her hometown. Here, she goes through her postgraduate preparation as a biochemist researcher for the Epidemiological Center. In 1962, she enters the Museum of Natural Sciences from Ploiești as a museographer, only six years after the museum had been founded. In this institution, Zoe Apostolache Stoicescu begins an intense research activity, immerses herself in the museum's activities and gets involved in various cultural and educational projects. All of her endeavors are comprised in numerous scientific papers published in academic journals.

In 1965 she begins her activity within the Romanian Academy's Commission for Natural Monuments as an honorary custodian, thus commencing a quarter of century contribution to the protection of the existing natural reservations and their expansion in the sub Carpathian area.

In 1970, she takes over Margareta Moșneaga's legacy by becoming the director of the Museum of Natural Sciences in Ploiești. In this position, she contributes to the development of the museum by adding new exhibition spaces in the cities of Cheia, Slănic and Sinaia.

In 1976, Zoe Apostolache Stoicescu receives the title of doctor in biology after presenting the paper "Taxonomic, zoogeographic and ecologic study on populations of terrestrial gastropods from the basin of Teleajen", coordinated by the scholar Nicolae Botnariuc.

In 1982, she collaborates with Dr Petre Neacșu for the first "Dictionary of Ecology" published by the Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House in Bucharest (Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică București). The dictionary is a referential monographic work in Romanian science, being awarded the "Emil Racoviță Award" of the Romanian Academy on the same year.

After founding the Museum of Man in Ploiești, in 1984, Dr. Zoe Apostolache Stoicescu impregnates, for almost a decade, her multicultural and multidisciplinary approach on the entire museum patrimony of the Prahova County, while also running the Departmental Office for the National Cultural Patrimony. As a general manager of the Departmental Museum Complex (that includes the Art Museum, the History and Archaeology Museum, the Museum



of Natural Sciences, memorial homes etc.) between 1982 and 1990, she shines a light on this local thesaurus, both nationally and internationally, through hundreds of permanent and temporary exhibitions, symposiums and conferences, articles and scientific papers, books and monographs.

More than 100 titles that can be found in prestigious volumes and academic publications account for Dr. Apostolache - Stoicescu's lifetime work. Her most important external endeavors were accomplished in partnership with the National Museum of Prague – Czechoslovakia (1972, 1976, 1979, 1985), the National Museum of Berlin and the German Hygiene Museum – Germany (1980), the Lomonosov University of Moscow – Russia (1978), the Museum of Man in Paris – France (1973, 1981) and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC – USA (1982). Having been granted a scholarship by this prestigious institution in the programme for the Office of Museum Programs, she gives an impressive lecture on the wildlife in the natural park of the Natural Sciences Museum in Ploiești on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, in what can be regarded as one of the highlights of her career.

Her official retirement in 1990 was far from bringing her well-deserved peace. On the contrary, Zoe Apostolache Stoicescu began a second youth, becoming for 25 years one of the trademark figures in non-governmental activities by participating in dozens of interdisciplinary cultural programs with an extraordinary energy. As the niece of the painter Rudolf Schweitzer-Cumpăna, she became his spiritual and patrimonial heir. In this sense, for two decades she organized seminars and exhibitions and worked on monographs with prestigious art critics with the sole purpose of revealing the role and place that the painter who mentored generations of students had in the Romanian and universal fine arts.

A simple review of the more than 100 published articles paints the picture of a complex scientist, of a woman of culture with extensive preoccupations in various domains and with an interdisciplinary overall vision on the material and spiritual world. The same portrait of Dr. Zoe Apostolache Stoicescu's complex personality emerges from the titles of her most important books, written during five decades of scientific, museistic and cultural activity:

1981 – *Monografia județului Prahova (Monograph of the Prahova County - collective work)*;

1982 – *Dicționar de Ecologie (Dictionary of Ecology - co-written with Petre Neacșu)*;

2003 – *Zooterapie – leacuri cu animale (Zootherapy – Cures with Animals - sole author)*;

2003 – *Album – Pictorul Rudolf Schweitzer-Cumpăna (Album – Painter Rudolf Schweitzer-Cumpăna - co-written with Radu Ionescu)*;

2005 – *Dicționarul Enciclopedic al Mediului (The Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Environment - co-written with Costanștin Pârșu)*;

2005 – *Terminologie populară românească în medicină (Popular Romanian Terminology in Medicine – co-written with Ion Georgescu Vâște)*;

2005 – *Stihuri peste generații (Verses across generations – co-written with Liana Dupont, Sabina Popa and Eliza Tomescu)*;

2007 – *Margareta Moșneaga, sensul unei vieți (Margareta Moșneaga, the meaning of a life – sole author)*;

2014 – *Frânturi de viață. Monografie Rudolf Schweitzer-Cumpăna (Shards of life. The monograph of Rudolf Schweitzer-Cumpăna)*;

1998-2006 – *Caietele Fundației Rudolph Schweitzer-Cumpăna (Five volumes of the Notebooks of Rudolf Schweitzer-Cumpăna Foundation)*.

The ruthless destiny steals her from this world on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 2017. Her family, disciples, collaborators, colleagues and scientists from our country and abroad who knew and appreciated her, now bring Dr. Zoe Apostolache Stoicescu a pious homage, forever keeping her in their memory as she was for her entire lifetime: a living flame on the altar of knowledge.

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