

THE NEVER-TIRED APOLLONIAN PETRE T. FRANGOPOL, MY DEAR FRIEND *PETRACHE*

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Writing a short tribute *in memoriam* of such a multi-faceted intellectual and real polymath as Petre T. Frangopol is a fairly intimidating endeavor when one wishes to properly evoke a scholar activity that spanned over six decades, covered a spectrum of scientific domains ranging from chemistry to archeology and tackled multiple science- and education-related aspects of the Romanian societal life. Beyond his initial professional activity in organic physical-chemistry and radiochemistry, Dr. Frangopol extended his activity in the decade of eighties to biophysical chemistry and biophysics. He and his team from the Institute of Atomic Physics in Măgurele have contributed, in those years, to several notable studies published in major international journals.

Dr. Frangopol's most significant activity from that distant past was the initiation and management of an extended program of studies on "Biophysics of the interaction of medicines with cell membranes". That program, sponsored by the Ministry of Chemical Industry, was aimed at promoting through research the Romanian medicines. It was pursued from 1981 till 1991 and involved several research teams from Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca and Iași. In 1990, some studies from that program received the "Constantin Miculescu" prize of the Romanian Academy. The extended and gratifying collaboration with Petre Frangopol within that program, up to the end of 1988 (when I've moved to Belgium) gave me the chance of becoming a close friend of *Petrache* and of his distinguished wife, Dr. Maria Frangopol (*Mioara*) who was his most faithful coworker, beyond of being his lifelong rock-solid support.

The abrupt political changes of December 1989 entailed a troubled transition period for all the Romanian people, including the academic scientists that suddenly found themselves in a quite uncertain social environment. But, though he approached sixty, my friend *Petrache* was not scared and he took the challenge of further expanding his activity. In 1991 he became a Professor of biophysics and biophysical chemistry in the Faculty of Physics of the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University in Iași (the town of his student years), where he was instrumental in launching a section of Medical Physics. Then,

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the never-tired Prof.Dr. P.T.Frangopol successively went to the Biophysics department of the medical school of “Vasile Goldiș” West University in Arad, to the Faculty of Chemistry of the “Babeș-Bolyai” University in Cluj-Napoca, and finally to the Physics department of the “Politehnica” University in Bucharest.

His extended professorial activity did not, however, exhaust the bubbling intellectual energy of that perpetual enthusiastic who was my dear friend *Petrache*. Profoundly attached to the authentic values of Romanian historical heritage in science and deeply preoccupied by country’s progress, Petre Frangopol was sensitive to all the drawbacks in the education of new generations and in the politics of science that he deemed put at risk the future of the nation. Testimony of his keen involvement in the fight for a flourishing future of the Romanian society are the numerous articles written by Professor Frangopol in various newspapers and magazines, most notably his extended series of vigorous papers in the weekly supplement *Aldine* of *România liberă*. In 2002, he assembled and structured those articles into a striking volume titled “Mediocrity and Excellence”, with the very indicative subtitle “A Radiography of Science and Education in Romania”. Then, with an impressive regularity, at about every 3 years Petre Frangopol – an ever vigilant observer of science and education in Romania and never fatigued fighter for the health of these essential domains – issued a new volume in that series, up to the seventh that appeared in 2019. Though that year the author was aged 86, he has kept the same youth of spirit as when we have met, forty years ago.

In the meantime, Professor Frangopol edited a new series of “*Revista de politica științei și scientometrie*”, to which he was Chief Editor from 2012 to 2016 and virtually acted as factotum, in spite of the extremely painful challenge of the incurable illness of his beloved wife. Also, upon his election in October 2012 as Honor Member of the Romanian Academy, Petre Frangopol brought to the venerable assembly his untired vivacity, as shown by his overt expression of thoughtful positions on main matters of Academy’s life, and chiefly by coordinating the ample volume on the “History of Romanian Chemistry”, published in 2018 by the Romanian Academy Publishing House in the jubilee series on Romanian Civilization.

Writing a tribute to the memory of Petre T. Frangopol today (the 29th of June), that happens to be his onomastic day, when I used to call him (as for his anniversary, at May 26), I remember that at the beginning of our temporary collaboration and ever-lasting friendship, *Petrache* told me that from his post-doctoral stay in North America he has kept the credo that “*happiness is having something to do, something to hope, someone to love*”. No doubt, Professor Frangopol was happy, beyond all inevitable sorrows of every human life, and he radiated around him the joy of struggling for worthy causes. May his apollonian personality remain a source of inspiration!