

### **Professor Mircea D. Matei on his 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

This year, we, the colleagues and collaborators of the **University Professor Mircea D. Matei, PhD**, have a mission that honors us and is a joy for us at the same time, namely that of celebrating him on the occasion of his 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, for his quality of remarkable personality in the domain of the Romanian medieval town and, generally, of the Romanian Middle Ages.

Becoming early in his life part of the research team of the Institute of Archeology from Bucharest, Mister Professor has been one of the few and enthusiastic road openers who, in the 1950s, initiated *de facto* the archaeological research of the Romanian medieval town. His professional carrier developed at a fast rate, as in 1957 he had already obtained his PhD title, after a three years term spent at the prestigious archaeological school of Sankt Petersburg. Soon after he had finished his doctoral studies, Mister Professor Matei became one of the most active researchers in the department of medieval archaeology, where he was rapidly promoted as senior scientific researcher, then head of section and later on head of department.

His efforts in order to decipher the beginnings of the Romanian extra-Carpathian Medieval civilization required long terms of archaeological research, in different sites that he managed (Suceava, Baia, Roman, Bârlad, Siret etc.), an activity which has resulted in admirable scientific studies, articles and monographs.

The eloquent proof of the recognition of all these contributions is the participation of Professor Matei to a series of important scientific events in Romania and abroad (Paris, Göttingen, Praga, Budapesta etc.), his interventions being unanimously appreciated.

As far as Professor Matei's didactic activity is concerned, beside the special courses that he held early on in different higher education institutions, like the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the University of Bucharest, or the "Nicolae Grigorescu" Fine Arts Institute, we should mention the numerous BSc theses he coordinated at the Faculty of History of the University from Bucharest.

Beginning with the year 1997, his activity acquired a new dimension, as he became titular professor at the "Valahia" University of Târgoviște, teaching the course of Medieval Romanian History at the Faculty of Humanities. His merits as reputable specialist in the domain of the Romanian medieval town have been happily matched, in the person of the Professor Mircea D. Matei, with the virtues of a veritable school founder. Erudite, communicative, rigorous, even severe, Mister Professor has always been able to arouse the respect, the admiration, and, even more importantly, the scientific ambition of his collaborators, licence and masteral students that he has always been near to and whom he has guided without sparing any of his time or energy.

On the other hand, the exceptional merits of the Professor Mircea D. Matei

concerning the knowledge about the Romanian medieval towns as well as about their role in the general civilizational and cultural development of the Romanians have crystallized not just in his work but also in the significant position he secures within the Towns' History Commission (Comisia de Istorie a Oraşelor).

A respected teacher and possessor of a vast culture, Mircea D. Matei is, today, naturally rewarded through the recognition of his historical contributions on the issues related to the Romanian medieval town that, thanks to him, have become clearer and more convincingly presented. These important contributions reaching up to 200 references give a clear emphasis to the position Mircea D. Matei took up in the Romanian academic world. Among these important titles, I would restrain myself to mentioning only a few: *Contribuții arheologice la istoria oraşului Suceava*, Bucharest, 1963; *Studii de istorie orăşenească medievală (Moldova, secolele XIV-XVI)*, Suceava, 1970; *Habitatul rural medieval din Valea Moldovei și din bazinul Şomuzului Mare (secolele XI-XVII)*, Bucureşti, 1982, (co-authored, granted with the „Nicolae Bălcescu” Prize of the Romanian Academy); *Civilizație urbană medievală românească*.

*Contribuții (Suceava până la mijlocul secolului al XVI-lea)*, Bucharest, 1989; *Geneză și evoluție urbană în Moldova și Țara Românească*, Iași, 1997.

Serving the chair and the research department, but combining these preoccupations with his actual efforts of archaeological research, deployed at numerous medieval sites, the Professor Mircea D. Matei has certainly contributed to laying the bases of a new philosophy in historical research. Moreover, through the value of his finds, he has significantly enriched the Romanian national cultural patrimony, providing inestimable services to the Romanian monuments and museums. For all of these reasons, both the University of Suceava, and the "Valahia" University of Târgoviște have awarded him the title of Doctor Honoris Causa, the two former capitals of Moldova and Wallachia being grateful to the Professor Mircea D. Matei for his scientific endeavors.

Not just as a historian and an archaeologist, as part of the academic staff and foremost citizen of the city, but also as a distinguished collaborator of our team, Mister Professor Mircea D. Matei deserves our entire gratitude.

Denis Căprăroiu