



GEORGE EMIL PALADE, A LIFE DEVOTED TO SCIENCE

October 8, 2008 – a most gloomy day for all Romanians and for the whole scientific community: the day in which the great man of science, **George Emil Palade**, passed away... A star fell from the canopy of heaven, but did not die, its glittering giving light to other spheres, while joining the constellation of the immortal spirits of our world...

If opening the book of his life and leaving our imagination to fly freely in the past, one should find out that 1953 has proved to be a benefic year for world's science, as it is the issuing year of the studies announcing two of the greatest discoveries in life sciences, namely: elucidation of the spatial molecular structure of the deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) – by J. D. Watson, F. H. Crick and M. H. F. Wilkins – and the discovery of ribosomes – by George Emil Palade.

The memorable importance of these two great discoveries has been unanimously recognized within the international scientific community, by the awarding of the Nobel Prize, in 1962 – for the DNA structure and, respectively, in 1974 – for the discovery of ribosomes and elucidation of cell ultrastructure.

Thus, in the year 2003, the whole scientific world has marked the 55th anniversary of these two events, which laid the basis of a new biological science, already proved as having a most promising future, namely *Cellular and Molecular Biology* which, together with molecular genetics and quantic physics, has enlarged the horizons of life's and matter's deep knowledge.

At the same time, the year 2003 recorded a rare coincidence, namely the celebration of one of the most representative men-of-science in the last half of the XXth century, and also of his exceptional scientific work, materialized in the homage paid to Professor George Emil Palade for his 90 years of life and over 60 years of uninterrupted scientific activity.

Now, in these difficult moments, when the absence of George Emil Palade lies heavy on us all, one should not indulge in sadness, but be proud of his great accomplishments. The most appropriate homage one should pay to such a great scientific personality is to call up the landmarks of the life and realizations of the scientist to whom we had the privilege of being contemporaries and – even more than that – conational, as George Emil Palade was the first Romanian winner of the Nobel Prize for science, to be followed by Ellie Wiesel, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for peace, in 1986.

George Emil Palade passed away at the venerable age of 96 years, but he will always live in the hearts of all those who knew him, met him, or shared his valuable scientific discoveries.

His biography is an illustrative one. Born on November 19, 1912, in the city of Jassy, Romania, in a family of intellectuals; his father, Emil Palade taught philosophy and pedagogy at the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Jassy, his mother, Constantza Cantemir–Palade, was a secondary education teacher. He had two sisters: Adriana Palade (married Israil), who was a geography teacher, and Constantza Palade (married Matim) – who became a pediatricist.