



## Ibrahim Mete Misirlioğlu (1972–2021), the father of Oligochaetology in Turkey

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The following papers in this issue of *Zootaxa* are dedicated to the memory of Ibrahim Mete Misirlioğlu, "Mete" to his friends and colleagues, who passed away at the age of 48 (5 September 1972–2 May 2021). Mete was a full professor at the Department of Biology, Faculty of Science and Arts of Eskişehir Osmangazi University in Turkey. As we received the message from one of his students, Ibrahim Tavuç, announcing Mete's death, we all were shocked because we knew Mete as an active researcher in his best years and his sudden death due to cardiac arrest was utterly unexpected for all of us.



FIGURE 1. Ibrahim Mete Mısırlıoğlu (1972–2021).

We met Mete for the first time during the 3rd International Oligochaeta Taxonomy Meeting (Platres, Cyprus) where Mete and we presented together a talk entitled "Biodiversity of the Earthworm Fauna in Turkey" (Misirlioğlu *et al.* 2008). We saw him again at the 4th International Oligochaeta Taxonomy Meeting that took place in Diyarbakır (Turkey) where Mete presented a poster entitled "Distribution of endemic earthworm species in Turkey (Oligochaeta, Lumbricidae)" (Misirlioğlu 2010). Again he joined us to prepare a contribution for the 6th International Oligochaeta Taxonomy Meeting in Palmeira de Faro (Portugal) (Pavliček *et al.* 2014).

Mete began his scientific career by writing articles on different topics including invertebrates such as scorpions (Misirlioğlu 2003) and, of course, earthworms (Csuzdi *et al.* 2006), and vertebrates such as dolphins (Misirlioğlu 2002a) and deers (Misirlioğlu 2002b). During the last 15 years, Mete was working mainly on different earthworm related topics such as:

(i) Taxonomy and biodiversity of earthworms in Turkey and the surrounding regions (e.g. Misirlioğlu 2010, Misirlioğlu 2017, Misirlioğlu *et al.* 2018, Misirlioğlu 2019a.)

(ii) Medical properties of earthworms (Misirlioğlu 2018) and

(iii) Vermicomposting (several conference abstracts see Tavuç 2021).

In the distribution and diversity of earthworm species and their taxonomy in Turkey, Mete was stressing the importance of geography and climate on earthworm endemism and distribution (Misirlioğlu 2004). He joined us as well in the study of the causal relationship between earthworm species richness and plate tectonics (Pavliček *et al.* 2010).

Mete was a talented faunist and had a synthesizing mind. He, together with his regular co-authors from Bulgaria (Hristo Valchovski) and Serbia (Mirjana Stojanović), summarized the up-to-date knowledge on the distribution of several important earthworm species and genera in the East Mediterranean (Misirlioğlu & Valchovski 2016, Misirlioğlu & Stojanović 2017, Reynolds & Misirlioğlu 2018). His last paper was devoted to the distribution of the East Mediterranean earthworm *Dendrobaena pentheri* in Turkey and adjacent areas (Misirlioğlu & Reynolds 2021).

All these studies, together with other activities (Szederjesi *et al.* 2014, Szederjesi *et al.* 2018) brought the earthworm taxon richness in Turkey from 69 (Csuzdi *et al.* 2006) to 87 different species and subspecies belonging to the autochthonous families Lumbricidae and Criodrilidae, and to the introduced families Megascolecidae and Acanthodrilidae (Misirlioğlu 2019b).

Apart from the different earthworm species recorded newly for Turkey (Misirlioğlu 2018, Misirlioğlu & Stojanović 2018), Mete also co-authored three new earthworm species endemic to Turkey: *Dendrobaena mahunkai* Csuzdi, Pavliček & Misirlioğlu, 2007; *D. omodeoi* Csuzdi, Pavliček & Misirlioğlu, 2007 and *Perelia hatayica* Csuzdi, Pavliček & Misirlioğlu, 2007 (Csuzdi *et al.* 2007).

Mete treasured his native Turkish culture so much that he pressed the editors of the international journals, where he published, to accept his articles (or abstracts) in Turkish, although he was aware that only relatively few readers in the scientific community understand Turkish. He regularly published his scientific results in local journals in his mother tongue and also published several books on earthworms in Turkish (see Tavuç 2021 for complete bibliography)

Mete's scientific contribution goes beyond the articles he wrote. He was an example of a hard-working scientist captivated by the biodiversity of Turkey. With his death, we lost a precious collaborator in the research on Turkish earthworms, and also a good friend.

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