



Final farewell to Victor V. Pop (1936–2022)

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Victor V. Pop crossing a river during fieldwork in the Eastern Carpathian (Romania) in 2008

While finalizing this volume dedicated to the memory of our prematurely deceased colleague İbrahim Mete Mısırlıoğlu we received the sad news that an icon of earthworm taxonomy and phylogeny, Victor V. Pop, had also passed away peacefully on the 04th December, 2022. Here, the oligochaetologist community takes the opportunity to say a final farewell to our friend and respected colleague.

Victor was the first son of senior Victor Pop (1903–1976) a professor of zoology at the Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj (Romania) and world renowned lumbricid systematist. After a little detour in the study of soil science, Victor followed in his father's taxonomic footsteps and described his first earthworm species *Allolobophora zarandensis* V.V. Pop, in 1978 from the Zarand Mts. (Western Carpathians). He has since spent decades exploring the earthworm fauna of the Western Carpathians. This work has resulted in the description of numerous earthworm species, the most iconic being the giant (reaching almost 1 m length) species such as *Octodrilus permagnus* V.V. Pop, 1989. He was among the first earthworm scientists who recognized the importance of molecular methods and from the early 2000's his interest turned to molecular taxonomy/systematics. Together with his daughter Antonia, they have published several essential papers on this topic.

Victor was a frequent participant at the earthworm ecology (ISEE) and taxonomy (IOTM) conferences, where his mild and cheerful personality always greatly impressed his colleagues.

His enormous knowledge on lumbricid taxonomy and ecology, his jovial attitude and characteristic smile will be missed by us all.