

GRIGORE ANTIPA

(1867 - 1944)



The illustrious Romanian zoologist, naturalist, marine biologist, hydrobiologist, ichthyologist, and expert in bioeconomy was born on December 7th 1867 in Botoșani. An orphan since childhood and tutored by his mother's side uncle, he attended primary school in Botoșani, and the secondary school and college at the Institute for Education in Iași. He became a student and a PhD student, as well, at the University of Jena (Germany) in 1895. He graduated his PhD (*summa cum laudae*), elaborating a thorough research study on some fixed jellyfish species (Lucernaride) under the supervision of the founding father of Ecology – the famous naturalist Ernst Haeckel. His post-doctoral one-year stage was accomplished at the Zoological Institute of Naples (Italy), that acknowledged him as a marine fauna expert (mainly in fish). He returned to his native country in 1892, and was allowed to visit King Carol I, to whom he displayed a memoir concerning the practice of scientific pisciculture in Romania. He was appointed Inspector-general of the Fisheries of Romania by the succeeding monarchs (1893-1914, and 1929-1944). That position completely highlighted his abilities. His scientific papers on the Black Sea ichthyofauna and on the sustainable fishing, as well, remained cardinal points in his research field. In 1893 he was appointed Manager of the Zoology Museum (founded in 1834), that he will master for the rest of his life. He reorganized the museum on new bases, he continuously expanded and enriched it with new exhibits and new collections, he invented the dioramas – a new efficient way to display the exhibits. His activity at the museum paid off, therefore the authorities granted him funds for a new museum building, following his own blueprints. The building stands tall even nowadays: the 'Grigore Antipa' National Museum of Natural History (on the Kiseleff street in Bucharest). During the first decade of the last century, Grigore Antipa was already a huge personality of the world's Marine Biology, therefore he became a member of the Romanian Academy in 1912. His acceptance speech was entitled 'Hydrobiology Research in Romania and its scientific and economic importance'. He founded the Piscicultural Institute of the Danube Delta (in Tulcea) in 1924 (nowadays the Danube Delta National Institute for Research and Development), and the Institute of Oceanography and Biology in Constanța in 1932 (the actual 'Gr. Antipa' National Institute for Marine Research). He studied and published several monographies on the topics of the Danube, the Black Sea, and the Danube Delta. His scientific, professional and management skills were praised with many Romanian and foreign titles, orders and medals. He passed away due to a heart attack on the 9th of March, 1944.