

## **Obituary**



### **Vassil T. Vuchev (1935–2001)**

Vassil T. Vuchev, one of the leading Eastern European geomathematicians, died unexpectedly after a brief battle with cancer on 2 November 2001 in Sofia, Bulgaria. He was one of the staunch supporters of the International Association

of Mathematical Geology (IAMG) and was an avid promoter of mathematical geology in Eastern Europe. Vassil served as Eastern Treasurer of IAMG from 1980 to 1984, an Assistant Editor for Computers & Geosciences for 5 years, and an Editorial Correspondent for Mathematical Geology for 10 years.

He was born in the Village of Glojene, Lovech District, in northern Bulgaria on 23 August 1935 and worked most of his professional career with the Geological Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia.

Vassil received a masters degree in petroleum geology from Leningrad (St. Petersburg) Mining Institute (USSR) in 1958 under the tutelage of Nikolai Vassoevich, one of the early advocates of quantitative methods in geology; a PhD from the Geological Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Science in 1971; a bachelors degree in mathematics from Sofia University (Bulgaria) in 1975; and a DSc from the Geological Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Science in 1986.

He had a broad range of geological interests including petroleum geology, sedimentology, and structural geology and used a quantitative approach wherever possible. His special interests in mathematical geology included statistics, pattern recognition, numerical classification, stochastic simulation, and rock mechanics analysis. He published about 150 papers in various local and international journals.

From July 1958 to December of 1959 he was a research geologist for the All Union Petroleum Institute in Leningrad. He was a prospecting geologist for the Bulgarian Geological Survey from January 1960 to January 1961 when he joined the Academy as a research associate. In recognition of his contributions, he was promoted to the highest rank of Senior Research Scientist in 1974. In 1975, he was made an Associate Professor of Mathematical Geology at Sofia University where he taught mathematical geology and supervised student projects.

He was a Visiting Exchange Scientist in 1971 with the U.S. Academy of Sciences to the Space Sciences Laboratory at the University of California, Berkeley, and at the Department of Geology at Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York. He was the Visiting Research Scientist at the Kansas Geological Survey in 1980–82. While at Kansas he arranged for a generous bequest from the Bulgarian government of a large library of Bulgarian-language books to the Department of Slavic Languages. In 1981 he took part in Leg 79 on the Glomar Challenger from the Canary Islands to Brest, France.

In addition to being a member of the IAMG, Vassil was a member of the Bulgarian Geological Society, American Association of Petroleum Geologists, SEPM (Society for Sedimentary Geology), and the American Statistical Association. He was instrumental in forming a regional group of the IAMG in Bulgaria in 1983 that was affiliated with the Bulgarian National Committee on Geology and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. He also served on the Editorial Boards of Petroleum and Coal Geology, Sedimentology, and *Geologica Balcanica*. Vassil was involved with the International Geological Correlation Program (IGCP) of the

International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) with Project 98 (Standards for Computer Applications in Resource Studies) and served as the chairman of the Bulgarian National Committee.

Vassil was a cosmopolitan and enjoyed traveling. In addition to his studies in the USSR and his tours of the United States, including Hawaii, he was able to visit most of Europe, Canada, Mexico, and the Canary Islands. His desire to tour and see more of the world's geology was hampered by lack of money and difficulties in obtaining permission to travel. His creed was "The geologist's profession requires being constantly in touch with nature, going on expeditions and trips and seeing different countries and peoples" and he lived that creed. He was fluent in several languages including English, Russian, and French. Vassil was an accomplished accordion player and liked to entertain whenever asked.

On a personal note, we remember Vassil not only as a serious researcher, but also as a sociable and humorous person. He always enjoyed a good relaxing time of music, food and drink, and comradeship.

He is survived by his geologist wife, Anna N. Vucheva, and two grown sons, Andrei and Vladimir.

### Selected List of Research Publications

- 1962 Study of jointing of Senonian limestones of Lujtenska anticline in connection with their reservoir properties: *Rev. Geol. Inst. Bulgaria Acad. Sci.*, v. 10, p. 181–193.
- 1963 (and G. Dimov) On petroleum prospecting of Beshovica anticline: *Proc. Geol. Bulgaria, Stratigraphy and Tectonics Ser. 5*, p. 197–210.
- 1965 (and G. Radev) Jointing and reservoir properties of Mesozoic carbonates of Pastrina Hill: *Proc. Geol. Bulgaria, Stratigraphy and Tectonics Ser. 6*, p. 195–215.
- 1966 (and O. Mateeva, A. N. Naidenova) Estimation of precision of some indices and physical properties of sediments (in connection with organic geochemistry and petroleum geology studies): *Rev. Geol. Inst. Bulgaria Acad. Sci.*, v. 15, p. 169–190.
- 1969 Some problems in application of mathematics into earth sciences in Bulgaria: *Rev. Bulgaria Geol. Soc.*, v. 30, no. 3, p. 241–250.
- 1972 (and H. G. Howells, A. L. Burlingame) The presence and geochemical significance of organic matter extractable from Jurassic and Triassic sediments of northern Bulgaria, *in Advances in organic geochemistry*: Pergamon Press, Oxford, p. 365–386.
- 1974 Studies of organic matter in the Triassic carbonates of northern Bulgaria, *in Advances in organic geochemistry*: Edition Technip, Paris, p. 489–505.
- 1976 (and others) Geochemistry of recent and young sediments of Black Sea. I. Organic matter in bottom sediments of Burgas Shelf: *Petroleum Coal Geol.*, v. 4, p. 23–33.
- 1977 (with K. Hsu, I. K. Nachev) Geologic evolution of Bulgaria in light of plate tectonics: *Tectonophysics*, v. 40, no. 3/4, p. 245–256.
- 1979 Cluster analysis application in organic geochemistry modeling: *Hornicka Příbram ve vede a technice, Sbornik Prednasek, Sekce matem. metody v geologii*, p. 815–822.
- 1980 Jointing of sedimentary rocks of the Luda Kamchija River basin (Eastern Balkan Mountains): *Geologica Balcanica*, v. 10, no. 2, p. 79–96.

- 1983 Numerical classification procedures in pattern recognition in organic geochemistry: *Sciences de la Terre, Informatique Geologique* 16, p. 19–58.
- 1988 (and D. F. Merriam) Fracture morphology and tectonics of Mikhailovgrad anticline, northwest Bulgaria: *Geologica Balcanica*, v. 18, no. 3, p. 31–42.
- 1994 (and others) Geological structure, petroleum exploration development and hydrocarbon potential of Bulgaria, in Popescu-Bogdan, M., ed., *Hydrocarbons of eastern central Europe: Habitat, exploration and production history*: Springer, Berlin, p. 29–69.

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