

PRO-MEMORIA

Prof. Dr. Antonio Amorim (1952-2024)



Prof. Dr. Antonio Amorim (1952-2024). Taken from author's archive

On April 11, 2024, we lost Prof. Dr. António Amorim, Professor emeritus of the University of Porto (Portugal) and Group leader of Population Genetics and Evolution Group at i3S – Instituto de Investigação e Inovação em Saúde.

For T. Grzybowski and W. Branicki who met him several times but know him very well from his papers, he was a prominent researcher with great contribution to population and forensic genetics. For T. Grzybowski his research was simply a benchmark for population genetics' studies. W. Branicki particularly remembers the meeting in Braga in 2018, where, during the International Conference 'Contemporary Challenges to Forensic Genetics in Society', he had the opportunity to talk with Antonio for a longer time and to experience his broad knowledge and friendly attitude. For M. Oliveira and L. Azevedo, he was not only a tutor but also a friend. To many, António was one of the oldest and most esteemed professors at the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Porto.

António was born in Porto in 1952. He graduated in 1974 and obtained his PhD in Biology from the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Porto (FCUP) in 1983. He was a professor at FCUP for more than 40 years, teaching various courses related to genetics. But there is much more to António than the metrics on his CV. Even with over 720 published articles and nearly 19,000 citations, these statistics say little about the man and his work.

As a student of Professor António, I (M. Oliveira) remember the Genetics classes I attended as a biology undergraduate in 1997. We, as students, recorded every word the professor said on cassette tapes without Antonio realizing it, ensuring that nothing would slip out during the exam... And what a lot of work it was to write down these lessons... It was hard work, but it involved hours of complex concepts taken apart and explained thoroughly and simply.

As the leader of the Population Genetics Group and a researcher in Forensic Genetics, António guided hundreds of Master's and PhD students. He was responsible for training the next generation of young researchers, some of whom currently play important roles in research or teaching. In one area or another, he left us all with a sense of legacy, and an added

responsibility for being „his pupils”. This feeling was expressed by many of us through numerous posts on social media after his physical departure – only physical, because teachers like António never really leave. As long as even one of us continues to pass on his teachings, António will remain with us.

All who worked in his group, affectionately called him „the boss”. He worked alongside us in an open-plan laboratory, having given up an office to feel closer to us. There were no hierarchies, only collaboration. He answered emails with requests from us at any time of the day, whether during working hours or even on vacation – there were no schedules, only availability. He always had a pertinent remark to be made to improve the overall quality of each of our publications or project proposals – there were no impositions, only joint growth. Every day, he would wait for his group members to have lunch – it wasn't work, it was friendship. Whenever we asked him to have a chat, we invariably heard, „Is it serious? If it's serious, let's have a cup of coffee and get some air.” No matter what or where, António was always there...

We'll miss António... See you, Professor.

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