

IN MEMORIAM PROFESSOR ȘERBAN DRAGOMIRESCU (1932-2022)



At the end of April of this year, our colleague, professor Șerban Dragomirescu from the Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest, left us. The entire geographical community in Romania learned with sadness about the loss of a special man, a personality in contemporary Romanian Geography.

He was born on April 18, 1932 in Bucharest, where he studied at elementary and high school, after which he completed his professional training in the Faculty of Geology and Geography, the Geography department of the University of Bucharest, receiving his degree in 1955.

After graduating from college, between 1955 and 1957 he was employed by the government as a meteorologist in the General Directorate of Hydrometeorology, from where he left by transfer to the Institute of Geology and Geography of the Academy, recently established. Here he worked in turn as a trainee researcher, scientist and principal scientist until 1990, when he was appointed scientific secretary of the Department of Geonomic Sciences at the Romanian Academy, where he worked until 2000.

Since 1958, was appointed secretary of the Editorial Board of the Geographical journals of the Romanian Academy (*Studies and researches in Geography, Revue Roumaine de Géographie*), a position with which he merged and holds and currently taking care of the appearance in good condition of over 125 issues of journals. He also had substantial contributions to the exchange of publications with foreign countries through the perseverance of the institute, reaching an international exchange with about 300 partners who provide periodicals and specialized papers communicating the top achievements in international research. In 1959 he became a member of the Romanian National Geography Committee attached to the Romanian Academy and between 1990-2001 he held the position of secretary of this committee. He participated as an author and member in the editorial committees of some fundamental works for

Romanian geography such as: Geographical Monograph of the Romanian R.P. (1960), Treatise on the Geography of Romania, Vol. I, III, National Geographic Atlas (1974- 1979), as author and coordinator of the Commission of nomenclature and index of geographical names, or Romania – Historical – Geographical Atlas (1996) et al. In recognition of the high scientific activity submitted as a collaborator in the realization of the work, Geography of Romania vol. I, received, in 1985, the Prize of the Romanian Academy "Gh. Munteanu Murgoci" for 1983.

The field of research he approached at the beginning of his career was that of geomorphology, collaborating on articles with the results of the research undertaken. He also approached in time a series of aspects related to the geography of tourism, both with problems in Romania and abroad, the experience gained allowing him to approach some theoretical aspects of the field. He was one of the initiators and animators of the five colloquia on tourism geography, organized, in collaboration, by the institute, in the eighth decade. lately he has been concerned with the history of geography.

A good connoisseur of foreign languages-French, English and German, he has vectored his energy towards the less approached field of standardization of geographical names. In this direction, he has obtained the status of UN expert in the issues of standardization of geographical names since 1972 and is still a member of the UENGEEN working group for exonyms. With the results of his research, he presented in the specialized commissions at the International Geographical Congresses in Montreal and Moscow in 1972 and 1976, being at the same time a corresponding member of the Union Commission on International Geographical Union for geographical terminology. As an expert from Romania, he participated as a member (1972 and 1992) and leader of the Romanian government delegation (1998 and 2002) in the UN conferences on the standardization of geographical names in London, New York, Berlin.

In 1996 he was appointed secretary of the Commission of the Romanian Academy for the standardization of geographical names, participating in this capacity, in 2001, in the formulation of bilingual versions of the names of localities with over 20% minority population in total.

Șerban Dragomirescu, in parallel with the scientific activity, he also carries out a rich didactic activity, holding in all cases courses of wide interdisciplinarity. Thus, between 1987 and 2000 he was an associate professor at the Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest, between 1990 and 2000 he taught the course of world economic geography at the Faculty of Economics in foreign languages (English and German).

Since 1991, he has been teaching the course of Historical Geography at the Faculty of History of the University of Bucharest, resumed between 1993 and 1997 and at the Faculty of Archiving within the "Al. L. Cuza" Police Academy in

Bucharest. Between 1997-2000 he took the course of Geography of the Balkan Peninsula, within the master's degree, from the University of Arts in Bucharest, and since 1999 he holds the course of Geopolitics held in English at the MediaPro University of Bucharest. In all cases, the lectures were and are being listened to with great interest, they go beyond the traditional patterns through the unique way of approaching and transmitting knowledge of wide interdisciplinarity.

The results obtained in the research activity are concretized by over 60 scientific articles published as author or co-author in specialized journals in the country or abroad, over 30 notes, homage articles, obituaries, general chronicle, etc. Between 1968 and 1990 he contributed as a co-editor to about 10 volumes with the works of some domestic and international scientific events from the Institute of Geography. He wrote and published at Corint the book "States of the Contemporary World" in collaboration with other authors in 2011.

In addition to those mentioned, Șerban Dragomirescu has carried out a rich activity of translator in Romanian and care for editing scientific works or treatises in international literature, contributing substantially to the appearance of reference works by established geographers such as Emm. de Martonne, A. N. Strahler, R. Furon, H. Tazieff, Jean-Louis Dufour ș.a. or of foreign explorers and travelers.

A scientific researcher with a rich geographical culture, endowed with pedagogical talent and great synthesis power, since 1962 he has had a continuous activity of popularizing geographical knowledge, the conferences and lectures at the People's University of Bucharest and in the country, at the interpretive guide courses, etc. He collaborated with the Casa Mureșenilor Museum in Brașov, organizing annual symposia between 2006 and 2019 with topics about Brașov geographers but also with presenters from the country. The articles were published in the annual magazine Țara Bârsei. He has permanently participated with presentations since 1991 at the meetings of the "Simion Mehedinți" Teaching Staff Association in Focșani.

In recognition of his work in the scientific and educational field of geography, he was rewarded with several honorary diplomas from scientific and cultural forum. The whole activity carried out in the over 45 years of work bears the imprint of a high professionalism, penetrated by the consciousness of a job well done, proving to be a very good colleague and advisor, always for the better and of the youngest, helping those around generously and selfless, whenever he was in power.

God rest him in peace!

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