

Sorin Geacu (2019), *Raul Călinescu, fondatorul biogeografiei românești* (Raul Călinescu, The Founder of Romanian Biogeography), Curtea Veche Publishing House, Bucharest, 333 p.

Sorin Geacu holds both a Ph.D. in Geography and a Ph.D. in Biology, and presents the life and activity of the illustrious Raul Călinescu (1901-1970), a prestigious professor and researcher, the Founder of Romanian Biogeography, in an exceptional publication dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the existence of the Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy.

An impressive volume that documents the interests of this Romanian scientist who, from the very start of the Institute of Geography (1944), was in time to serve as Head of Department, Head of Section and Interim Director, simultaneously performing his teaching work, under the cloak of renowned professor and scientist. This volume, penned by Sorin Geacu, a well-known scholar, is meant to pay homage to Prof. Călinescu.

The volume excels in the sound documentation, that the author has accumulated over a long period of time. R. Călinescu has devoted his entire life to scientific activity, the results of which being amassed, in a sobriety and scholarly style, in his various original papers and volumes, as well as in his lectures. The lectures he held at the University of Bucharest were systematic, clear and concise. S. Geacu makes a thorough presentation of R. Călinescu's personality using data from his private life, his research interests at the Institute of Geography or in the higher education system, is subject not only to exceptionally fascinating details, but also to the originality and uniqueness of many biogeographical aspects.

R. Călinescu, deeply interested in the living side of the geographical cover, began his scientific and publishing activity as early as a second-year student at the University of Cluj, receiving the "Gh. Lazăr" prize of the Romanian Academy in 1928 for his "*The Taxonomic, Biologic and Zoogeographic study of Citellus in Romania*". In 1930, also at Cluj, he earned his Ph.D in Geography with the paper "*Systematic-Zoogeographical Contributions to the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles in Romania*". It was the first scientific work of its kind in Romania which, with the assistance of Emil Racoviță, his former teacher at the University, would later be published in the Annals of the Romanian Academy.

Further on, we shall mention some of R. Călinescu's original work, which contributed to defining Biogeography as a study-object and research path, a field he had created. His particular interest focussed on Vertebrates (identifying them for the first time in Romania's fauna — *Streptopelia turtur* and *Canis aureus*) and also on arthropods. His main research topic were mammals, compiling the first catalogue (1931) of 95 species (compared to the only forty previously-known). He was also the first to create a variety of determinants for amphibians and reptiles (1930), crabs (1933), birds (1938) and for mammals of hunting interest, the last ones being published in three editions (1935, 1939, and 1947). All these accomplishments show his continuous and passionate interest in this area.

With his work "*Introduction to Romania's Biogeography*" (1946), Prof. Călinescu was the first to outline this field. Subsequently, he co-ordinated the Treatise on Romania's Biogeography (1969). After his death, his collaborators Alexandra Bunescu and Maria Nardin-Pătrosescu, published his "Biogeography" Treatise (1972).

Raul Călinescu's researches produced the first maps on amphibians, reptiles and mammal distribution in Romania. In 1958, he wrote (in collaboration) the first zoogeographical units of the country's territory, and in 1967 completed the first national biogeographical regionalisation, which is still valid today.

In phytogeography, he was the first to highlight the presence of Submediterranean elements in the Romanian flora, including the wild lily and Submediterranean bushes (called "shibleac"). He was the first geographer interested in their phenology in his work "The Prosperous Development of the Garden Lilac and the Spring Stages in Romania".

In addition to his research and publishing activity (278 publications in Romania and abroad), Raul Călinescu was a great animator, making his scientific achievements known in public conferences (83), articles in the central press (327) and reviews (60). His popularizing works are captivating and much admired by a large audience.

Professor Călinescu was entirely devoted to Biogeography. He used to grow various species in his own home, watching them for growth, food, reproduction, etc.

His study-room at the Institute of Geography was quite a special place that preserved many plant and animal species alike. He also set up a Biogeography study-room at the University of Bucharest, Faculty of

Geography, where he was the Chair of Special Physical-Geographical Sciences. At the same time, he founded the Geographical research-station at Eșelnița-Orșova (Mehedinți County) that he headed until 1970. As professor, he organized numerous scientific trips with Geography students. He left for posterity quite a few courses: *General Biogeography*, *The Biogeography of Romania*, *Animal Geography* and *Plant Geography*.

It should also be remembered that Raul Călinescu also opened the Bucharest Zoological Garden (1930), serving as Secretary of the Organizing Commission of the Romanian Pavilion at the International Cytogenetic Exhibition in Leipzig (1930).

While with the Institute of Geography, he wrote foundational works, such as “*The Geographical Monograph of Romania*” (1960) and the “*Geography of the Danube Valley*” (1969); he also acted as interim director (July 1949 – February 1952).

It is worth-mentioning that beginning in 1948, when many of his colleagues were removed for political-ideological reasons, R. Călinescu was the only one to have been retained.

As a researcher and teacher, he went through all the stages, until he was the first Ph.D. supervisor of Biogeography in Romania by the end of his career.

Sorin Geacu wrote his work with a great deal of feeling, authenticity, incorporating many original photographs and facsimiles.

Prof. R. Călinescu deserves to be remembered. We offer our most heartfelt greetings to our colleague S. Geacu for his staunch devotion to the research of the life and activity of Raul Călinescu, and the manner in which he presents it in this volume edited under excellent graphic standards.

Octavia Bogdan