

Neguț, Silviu

Article

Victor Tufescu or the perfect elegance of man and spirit

Amfiteatru Economic Journal

Provided in Cooperation with:

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies

Suggested Citation: Neguț, Silviu (2024) : Victor Tufescu or the perfect elegance of man and spirit, Amfiteatru Economic Journal, ISSN 2247-9104, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Vol. 26, Iss. 65, pp. 381-391, <https://doi.org/10.24818/EA/2024/65/381>

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/281827>

Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

Terms of use:

Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.

You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.

If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Victor Tufescu or the Perfect Elegance of Man and Spirit

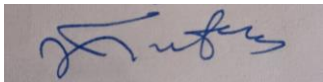
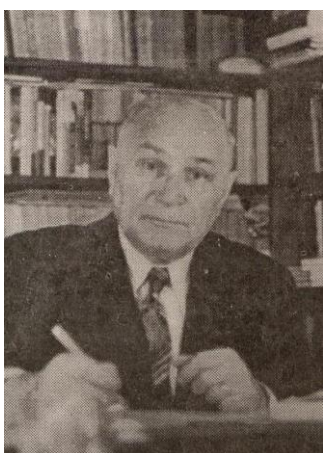
Silviu Neguț

University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania

Please quote this article as follows:

Neguț, S., 2023. Victor Tufescu or the Perfect Elegance of Man and Spirit. *Amfiteatru Economic*, 26(65), pp. 381-391.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24818/EA/2024/65/381>



In the 1950s and 1960s, the Department of Economic Geography at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (BUES, in Romanian known as “ASE”) was part of the Faculty of Commerce (now the Faculty of Business and Tourism). Also, after 2011, the geography collective became part of the newly established Department of Tourism and Geography. Given the esteem in which geography was regarded in ASE, for a long time, until 2013, it was an admission discipline, either compulsory or optional. For example, in 1963, there were even two exams – written and oral – for the Geography of the People’s Republic of Romania. Between 1941 and 1968, the most prominent personality of geography taught at ASE was Professor Victor Tufescu. Between 1951 and 1956 he was abusively removed from university teaching and at one point arrested. Before his university career, he taught geography at the secondary school level. Since 1958, he has been the author of Geography of the RPR / RSR / Romania textbooks for the final grades of general school

and high school, respectively, most often in collaboration with Claudiu Giurcăneanu and Gheorghe Ghica. For at least 40 years, students have learnt the geography of the country from successive editions of these books. The observation is that the attribution of the textbooks would have been done directly, possibly as moral reparation for the three authors, colleagues at the former Commercial Academy, who had also previously suffered obvious professional restrictions. Professor Victor Tufescu has been awarded the Romanian Academy Prizes twice, under different political regimes: for A region of living circulation: Poarta Târgului-Frumos (published in 1940), the “George Vâlsan” Prize, and for Natural relief modelling and accelerated erosion (published in 1966), the “Gheorghe Munteanu-Murgoci” Prize. In 1992, after the new change of political regime, he will be elected as academician. The Institute of Geography and the Faculty of Geography of the University of Bucharest, through V. Urucu and, respectively, by M. Ielenicz, M. Grigore,

D. Bălteanu, F. Grecu and I. Nicolae, will dedicate to Professor Victor Tufescu two tribute volumes, in 2000 and 2008. (Nicolae Lupu)

Victor Tufescu was an outstanding personality of Romanian geography. He established himself with brilliance as a university professor in two prestigious institutions of higher education: the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (formerly the Academy of Higher Commercial and Industrial Studies, then the Institute of Economic Sciences “V.I. Lenin”) and the University of Bucharest, as well as an excellent researcher, mainly at the Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy. He was honoured with the title of Academician.

Professor Victor Tufescu was born on 19 November 1908, in a family of intellectuals, in the city of Botoşani, where he attended secondary and high school. As for his university studies, he attended the Faculty of Sciences of the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iaşi, and after a first attempt to become a physician, as his mother wanted, he became a graduate in Geography and Law, but quickly turned to the first field, to which he was naturally inclined. He ascended to heaven on 11 March 2000.

I did not have the opportunity to be a student of Professor Victor Tufescu, as I graduated in the year (1968) in which he was transferred from the Bucharest University of Economic Studies to the Faculty of Geography of the University of Bucharest. But once I became a professor at ASE, where the great geographer officiated for almost three decades, I had the opportunity to learn many beautiful things about him, thanks to meetings and discussions with many teachers or personalities from the financial-banking, commercial, business, etc., I was therefore able to realise how appreciated and loved Professor Victor Tufescu was – eloquent reports about his special way of giving lectures, for the culture he showed, for his physical and moral integrity, for his extremely deferential way of addressing, for everything that made him a normal but truly special man. Furthermore, of extraordinary politeness, not even the youngest, even students, were addressed as “tu” (“you”), but as “dumneavoastră” (“your”) or, more frequently, as “mata”. If not as a student, I later got to know the professor very well, first as an editor, then thanks to other circumstances, having the chance and, at the same time, the honour of being one of the people very close to His Excellency, in the last part of his life, and thanks, perhaps, to “geographical proximity”, living very close to him, on Nicolae Titulescu Street.

Working with the professor. Once I became a redactor at the Romanian Encyclopaedic Publishing House (*Editura Enciclopedică Română*), I met him in the geography editorial office, where he came to bring the articles that had been commissioned for the Small Encyclopaedic Dictionary, in fact a large work, despite the title, and for what would eventually be called the Encyclopaedic Dictionary (7 volumes).

I was simply stunned when I saw his incredibly beautiful, artistic writing. I liked the professor very much: he was always elegant (suit and tie obligatory, even in the warm season), but not ostentatious, he spoke extraordinarily beautifully, with an even and clear pronunciation, he was – and it didn't just seem to me – extremely deferential to my fellow geographers, about the same age as me, addressing themselves, as I said before, as “dumneavoastră” (“your”) or “mata”.

Then I proposed him as a contributor to the monograph *Romania*, requested by the prestigious West German publishing house Schauble – we were in the “age of openness”,

but unfortunately it did not last long. Professor Victor Tufescu was very pleased with the proposal; he could hardly believe that it was possible to publish a book written in communist Romania for West Germany. He had a... German punctuality: the first to bring the article, impeccable in form and content. During our collaboration, he invited me to his home several times and I still remember the address: Jean Texier no. 19, in Floreasca neighbourhood, opposite the skating rink. It was an old villa, beautiful and elegant, he lived on the ground floor. Later it struck me that he moved “to the block”, buying an apartment on Nicolae Titulescu Street, probably living in that villa by renting it.



Prof. Victor Tufescu with a group of young geographers (1972), from left to right: Silviu Neguș, Ion Nicolae (current university professors), Gabriel Matei and Constantin Romanciuc (editors at Encyclopaedic Publishing House) and Nicolae Pavel (emigrated to the USA)

The book about Romania, for Germany, although it was ready, even translated into German, was never published, since after the Ceaușescu visit to China and North Korea everything took a different turn, especially since Elena Ceaușescu, inspired by the model of Mao's wife, who, among other things, led the “cultural revolution”, came to the forefront of political leadership.

But the collaboration with the professor did not stop there. At his request, I first accepted to be his redactor for a book, even though it was not part of my duties, namely *Agriculture at the Edge of Dryness*, an occasion that allowed me to reinforce my previous convictions about his qualities as a man and as an author. But the moment that simply connected our relationship forever was an extremely important, relevant publishing project: the capital work of the greatest Romanian geographer, Simion Mehedinți, also one of the most representative in the world – *Terra. Introduction to Geography as a Science* – which was republished. A Sisyphean work! More than half a century had passed since the publication of the work (in 1930), a period in which the world had experienced radical political,

scientific, and other events and changes. Professor Tufescu has produced an exceptional critical edition, with a royal respect for the scientific contribution of his great predecessor and with an incredible critical apparatus, designed not to “destroy” the work in question, as we have seen in some cases, but to explain it in the perspective of such alert modern times. In fact, he has succeeded in further accentuating the merits of the great Mehedinți and not in diminishing them, as some of his fellow countrymen have done.

The storyteller Victor Tufescu. During the meetings, at first more sporadic and then regular, I liked to challenge Professor Tufescu to tell stories, as he was charming. This happened especially in his apartment on Titulescu Street, where I used to go with Dan Bălțeanu, but not infrequently, neither alone. When we arrived, either with Dan or alone, Mrs. Liliana would offer us/me a sweet and a glass of cold water and sometimes she would ask us if we/I would like a tea or a coffee. On those occasions, I learnt, earlier than many others, some of the stories he told in his two works: *The Tufescus (Neamul Tufeștilor)* and *Family Portraits (Portrete de familie)*. In fact, when the first one was published in 1999, I played a certain role: together with Professor Florina Bran, I asked her husband, none other than Paul Bran, the rector of the ASE, a wonderful man, to have it photocopied in the institution's printing house. It was an ideal solution, giving the work a special charm, thanks to the professor's exceptional writing. His Excellency was also delighted with the chosen solution. The previous year we had organised a celebration for his 90th birthday at the ASE rector's office. It was a particularly cold day, so when the professor appeared, we were all speechless: he was wearing a light overcoat and his familiar small brimmed hat on his head,



Homage by acad. Victor Tufescu to the founder of Romanian university geography, Simion Mehedinți, also a complement to his fundamental work Terra. Introduction to Geography as a Science (1930)

giving us another sportsmanship lesson, if there was one. I go back to what the professor said. He had, among other things, an extraordinary gift for storytelling, whether it concerned events from his childhood and adolescence, especially, or from later. The modulations of his voice were accompanied by facial expressions, depending on the subject, funny or, on the contrary, sad or sometimes even tragic. He did not victimise himself and he rarely named directly a person who had hurt him. The teacher also had an “elephant's memory”, as they say: even at 90 years of age he would recount details, details, descriptions of the atmosphere, descriptions of people (their physical and intellectual characteristics, qualities and faults, etc.), and in the end, in almost all cases, he would have a comforting word or a meaningful smile.

I remember now, as if I had heard him yesterday, that Dan Bălțeanu, the closest and most appreciated man by the professor in the last part of his life, was also present – the story of Patriarch Theoctist, a poor boy from a large family on the neighbouring estate of Tufescu family who, as a small child, “ran away” to the monastery, from where he was “recovered” and brought home, being subjected to the necessary “corrections”, the teacher intervening with the friendly neighbour with the argument that perhaps this was the child's inclination and destiny, which was perfectly true in time! Not to mention the stories about his family,

whether parents, brothers, sisters, other relatives, or about his two children, Astrid and Mircea, or about his grandchildren...

I can also tell what he did not have. He did not envy those who, in order to prepare their own pedestal for a future statue, dismantled their ancestors or contemporaries. A telling example was the reedition of the fundamental Romanian geographical work: *Terra. Introduction to Geography as a Science* by Simion Mehedinți (1994). More than five decades had passed since its publication, and the publisher proposed to re-edit it, but there were discussions, on the one hand, whether this was appropriate and, on the other hand, who should be the “editor”. The choice of Professor Victor Tufescu was indeed a happy one, the edition he edited being a true model of reedition over time, not diminishing from its value and, moreover, through the footnotes, constantly reinforcing the extraordinary thought and modernity of the great forward. In addition, he has added a significant volume: *Simion Mehedinți. Life and work* as an author.

Music lover. I remember even now the professor's stories about his passion for music, and this was before he had written his memoirs. An extraordinary continuous flight into the field, from the piper's box (with the parrot who, at a signal, “would draw out a note with a curved beak, which he offered to anyone who deposited a small coin”) to the military band (“which enchanted me”) and finally to an orchestra (“which seemed to me to be something else altogether”). This is how he relates, in retrospect, that first orchestra audition, at the age of only three and a half, when he accompanied his mother to a celebration at the high school where his father was principal: “The impression made on me by those vocal and instrumental songs was divine; I seemed to rise into a world of angels and floated lightly in the air like dandelion flakes. I was unable to express with the poor vocabulary of my age what I was feeling, but my mother told me that I was pulling her hand and I was ready to cry. I never forgot for a long time that wonderful harmony of sounds, which transfigured me.” But the professor was not only a keen music lover; he took lessons and played the violin himself, and was quite talented, according to the testimony of some contemporaries. He kept that violin with sanctity, which I saw at his house in Jean Texier and at his apartment on Titulescu Street.

An incredible life and destiny. The great portraitist. Professor Victor Tufescu had a more than an interesting life and destiny, which he did not take notice of, only at an old age giving us some elements, and not in public. What a pity! Who would have guessed that this rather small, well connected, polite and deferential gentleman, who was equal to himself, was descended from one of the oldest families of Moldavian boyars (he called them “boiernăși”), that one of his great-grandmothers was the second wife of the ruler Constantin Cantemir, father of the famous scholar Dimitrie Cantemir, that some of his ancestors held important dignities and other positions, especially professors (including university professors), MPs, generals, etc.

His original name, on his father's line, was Dolhici, from his great-grandfather Vlad Dolhici, from whom the name of the village where on May 1, 1406 it was mentioned that he had his residence, namely the village of Dolhești. At the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century, his descendants split into three branches, one, the basic one, remaining in Dolhești, being mentioned in documents from the end of the 17th century under the name of Tufescu, bearing the mention “great-grandchildren of old Vlad Dolhici”, the first, mentioned in documents, being the starost Mihu, whose daughter became the second wife of the mentioned Constantin Cantemir.

On his mother's side, he was also descended from an old family who came from Bucovina after the region came under Austrian rule and founded the village of Dumbrăveni, whose name comes from the fact that the first houses were built in an oak forest grove. That ancestor was called Matei Huzdup, and his grandson, Gheorghe Filip (Filip Huzdup's son), would become the professor's great grandfather, with the nickname of Old Dad ("Tata Bătrân"). The latter's son Nicolai, a priest, was interested in social issues and laid the foundations of cooperation in Romania, together with the great economist Ion Răducanu, future rector of the Commercial Academy (today ASE).

The professor was, among many other things, an extraordinarily delicate portraitist. Here, as a first example, is the image of his great-grandfather:

"During the holidays spent in Dumbrăveni, I met many relatives of my mother's family. Among the most representative was my grandfather's father, whom everyone called Old Dad. His name was Gheorghe Filip and he was a man of small height, very lively even when he was old, with a handsome face, ruddy in the cheeks, with a moustache à la Stephen the Great. He was of cheerful nature, a good storyteller, with a humorous speech". Good storyteller! This is who the professor inherited, who was also, as I said, an excellent storyteller. Returning, let us see a new sample of the professor's gift for observation and storytelling: "What also impressed me as a child was the ceremonial that took place when Old Dad came to see my grandfather («Bunelu»), his son. My grandfather would kiss his hand because he was his father and, in turn, Old Dad would kiss his son's hand because he was a priest. This sign of mutual respect, this worship of ancient customs, was very moving to me". But let us also see the portrait of his mother, whom he particularly appreciated and loved, simply adored. I understood him perfectly because I too had such feelings for my mother: "The first image that emerged, bright in the blackness of memory and lingering in outlines I have never forgotten, was of my mother leaning over my little bed with red string netting on the sides and pictures of angels and beautifully coloured toys on the boards at either end. Some nights, I could hardly be persuaded to leave my toys on the carpet to be placed in the crib, but very quickly my eyelids would close and I would fall asleep dreaming that I was still playing, but with special toys, sometimes fantastic, as far as the fantasy of the limited horizon of images of my early childhood (...) My mother used to move my crib into the middle of the room so she could keep a closer eye on my sleep, with its childlike anxieties. Her gentle figure bent over my blinking and her caresses passed unbidden in my dream. I was convinced at the time that she was the most beautiful mother in the world, the gentlest and sweetest."

And another delicate and moving scene. The professor tells us that when he was about three and a half years old, he accompanied his father to the old house (it was a hundred years old at the time!) and its garden, which he intended to renovate. The child broke away from his father and, after passing through a small gate in the neglected garden, walked "along a path overgrown with knotweed", seeing first, to his great surprise, "a lone red tulip" and then... But let us leave it to the wonderful storyteller: "I stood still for a few moments, as if bewitched, for from under a bush a spiky hedgehog appeared, moving with small steps. I had no idea what this could be: only from a book with colourful drawings did I understand that it could be a hedgehog... I was discovering nature with my own senses. I was overcome with excitement and stunned. After a while, which seemed a long time to me, the hedgehog unfurled again and took off quickly, losing itself in the tall grass." "Small steps", "quick"... how wonderful!

When, after a long search, his father found him and said “I have been looking everywhere for you. What have you been doing in these weeds?”, the child's response was astonishing: “I was in a story!”

The way to geography. Although the professor has been attracted to nature since he was a child, choosing geography was not easy or natural. His mother, whom he loved and respected enormously, wanted him to become a physician. And he took the exam at the Faculty of Medicine (one of the few faculties where there was such a test), succeeded, but very quickly found that he could not accommodate himself to the field (death, smells, etc.) and had to drop out. He applied to “Geography and Natural Sciences”, to which he already felt a certain attraction (I will come back to this), but at the suggestion of an uncle (Jean, his father's elder brother), he also studied law (which was to offer him a sure chance of earning an income, as the aforementioned relative had been pestering him), graduating with an excellent degree in both (in 1930). But he chose the path of geography and he did well, because he became one of the greatest and most representative Romanian geographers. Some of his professors, including Gheorghe Năstase and Ion Simionescu, the latter a great scientific personality (he was also president of the Romanian Academy) and, above all, one of the most talented popularisers of nature, contributed to the consolidation of his decision.

He took his doctorate at the age of only 28, in 1936, with his thesis on *Dealul Mare – Hârlău. Observations on the evolution of relief and human settlements* (published in the following year). But in fact, everything had started at the age of 14, when he took part in a school trip to the Bucovina Mountains.

This is what Victor Tufescu as a pupil wrote in his notebook: “In the morning, in the bright sunlight, when I saw the mountains for the first time, it seemed to me like something wonderful, like a fairy-tale dream. The mountains looked like curtains of darkly coloured fir trees, closing off the horizon in close proximity. The rivers and even the small streams flowed with their clear waters, leaping over the boulders; the towering spruces seemed to me to come from the legend of the Nibelungs, they were different from our deciduous forests pierced by the arrows of the sun's rays... And I began to write and draw in my pupil's notebook, forgetting the pupils who threw stones into the water or played with the ball”.

Professor at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE). Among the many geographers who have taught, over the years, in this prestigious institution of higher education was the university professor Victor Tufescu, who worked at the beginning (1941-1946) at the same time as another great geographer and professor, Nicolae Al. Rădulescu (1905-1989).

Victor Tufescu entered higher education coming from high school – almost a rule at that time in Romania – before being a teacher at a traditional high school in Brasov (“Dr. Meșotă”) between 1935 and 1938 (interrupted in 1936, when he was transferred to the “Vemiamin” Theological Seminary in Iași, in order to prepare and defend his doctoral thesis at the renowned university in the city), then followed a scholarship at Sorbonne (1938-1939), where, newly married, he also took his wife, remaining with a pleasant image for the rest of his life: “The stay in Paris was serene, a beautiful year of my life; I was looking after my studies, Liliana was looking after French language courses”.

He was then a professor at the Higher Normal School in Bucharest (now the “I.L. Caragiale” National College), with postgraduate rank. At the Academy of High

Commercial and Industrial Studies (A.I.S.C.I.) he was appointed substitute associated professor in 1941, and when N.Al. Rădulescu left for the University of Bucharest, where he became a full professor by competitive examination and, at the same time, head of the Geography Department at A.I.S.C.I. (1946).

However, the professor began his academic career in a bad period, during the Second World War, and in the one that followed, not less bad, which meant the sovietisation of Romania, with major interference in higher education in general and in the economic one in particular. His academic career, to which he had devoted himself with all his passion and skill, being “the right man in the right place”, was, however, brutally cut short for five years (1951-1956), when he was forced to work as a designer at the Institute of Forestry Research and Management in Bucharest/Institutul de Cercetări și Amenajări Silvice București (1952-1955) and, unfortunately, for nine months (November 1955-July 1956), he was arrested and sent to prison. He was released and returned to his department in the ASE (then called the “Institute of Economic Sciences and Planning V.I. Lenin”), where he remained until 1968, when he moved to the Faculty of Geology and Geography (Geography section) of the University of Bucharest, at the initiative (and insistence, as the professor told me in a discussion) of the great mathematician Gheorghe Mihoc, then rector of the famous university (who insisted on the idea of restoring the greatness of geography in this higher education institution). Unfortunately, he would only teach for five years, and in the autumn of 1973, he was simply removed from his professorship, quite unnaturally, after the start of the academic year. In fact, it was political interference: a younger gentleman (I.P.), a relative of Ceaușescu's political figurehead Manea Mănescu, needed a vacant teaching post to advance, and another professor had his eye on one of the most significant offices in the faculty.

I have unwittingly been a direct witness to this machination. On that early October day, I had an appointment with the professor in his office. When I got there, at the faculty, on the third floor, on the right, in the last office on the left, I found that the office was closed, which surprised me: I knew that not only me, but also the professor, was extremely punctual. It jumped out at me that in the corridor in front of the desk was a large, massive desk (an old-style desk), which I recognised as the professor's. As I sat there in total bewilderment, I was approached by a young, burly assistant whom I knew, although he had not been my “seminarian”, M.I., who said to me, in his frustrated style that I would become accustomed to later, when we became good friends, that “you're sitting there for nothing, Tufescu has been dismissed, you wait for him for nothing. From now on, you worship someone else and chances are that he is one of yours!” (I understood that, by the way, he was from my native region, but his reaction was totally different).

By tradition, since its foundation in 1913, the Academy of Economic Studies has taught subjects grouped under the name of Economic Geography. Thus, Professor Victor Tufescu gave several courses in the period immediately following the Great World War, all of which were published textbooks (and, in fact, lithographed at first).

- a) Geography of Romania and neighbouring countries, taught in the academic year 1942-1943;
- b) Geography of Europe and Asia, taught in the academic year 1943-1944;

c) Regional Economic Geography, a two-year course:

- Large extra-European geo-economic areas, taught to first-year students (academic year 1946-1947);

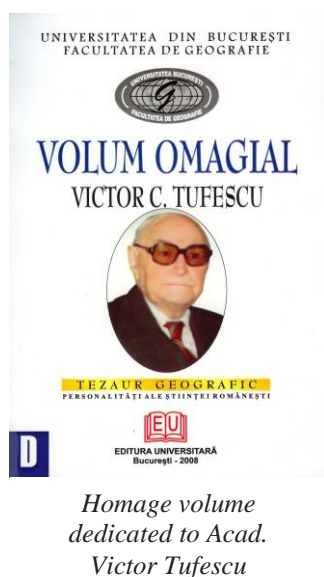
- Large European geoeconomic areas, taught to second-year students (the same academic year 1946-1947);

d) General economic geography, taught to first-year students (the same academic year 1946-1947);

e) Economic Geography of Romania, taught in the academic year 1948-1949;

f) Economic Romania and its geo-economic relations with neighbouring countries, course introduced in the academic year 1948-1949 (it is not clear from the title page which year students were taught).

General economic geography course. I found in the ASE Central Library and was able to study, among other things, the lithographed course for students of the 1946-1947 academic year, a real treatise in the field, having no less than 758 pages. This textbook, too, follows the general rule of the professor's books: extremely logical structure, accuracy of treatment (clear sentences, in a natural sequence), punctuation of essential elements, without abdicating one's own scientific convictions. Although he was an extremely polite man, as many of us knew him, he was not afraid to be very direct, often cutting interventions when he did not agree with something and was convinced that things were different. In this respect, I would give an example from the above-mentioned *General Economic Geography* course. When he talks about economic geography (in the preamble to the course, entitled *Introduction*), he declares himself dissatisfied with the definitions given to it by two of his contemporaries, not just any two, but Simion Mehedinți, who was already recognised as the "Patriarch of Romanian Geography", and Nicolae Al. Rădulescu, his former colleague and head of department at the Academy of Higher Commercial and Industrial Studies.



After the generous Introduction, in fact a more than welcome theoretical approach, the work is structured in two parts:

- Part One: *Economic Factors*, with two chapters (*Nature and Man* respectively);
- Part Two: *The Geography of Production*, with six chapters (*Food Plants, Fruit and Beverages, Spices, Narcotics and Medicinal Plants, Textile and Rubber Plants, Animal Products, Mineral Products*), plus the *Agricultural Regions of the Globe* and the *Major Domestic Animal Regions*.

Returning to the professorship will be beneficial both for him and for the mass of students. Because, as Veselina Urucu points out in the volume dedicated to the professor in 2000, "Victor Tufescu was, first and foremost, a professor. Being a professor, like for other young people in the first half of the twentieth century, was an ideal, a noble

profession, a full achievement on the scale of social values. Becoming a university professor was the culmination of a brilliant career for any Romanian intellectual”.¹ This appreciation in no way diminishes the exceptional scientific contribution of Professor Victor Tufescu to the heritage of geography, which will reward him, on merit, although a little late, with the title of academician, in 1992 (two years earlier he had been elected corresponding member).

Professor's work. Professor Victor Tufescu has written not only a lot (more than 300 scientific studies, of which about 20 are books), but also well, and his personal imprint can be felt. He was – without exaggeration of completeness – a perfect collaborator: he delivered materials (book manuscripts or articles) on time, elaborated with an enviable accuracy, with an outstanding logic and topicality of phrase. His handwriting was of perfect elegance that reminded you of the old professional calligraphers. As for the content of his writing, you had to be very well prepared, informed, armed with really strong arguments to get him to change anything.

I also express the appreciation of Professor Mihai Ielenicz, former Dean of the Faculty of Geography and President of the Romanian Geographical Society: “The scientific achievements, the perfect pedagogical style based on perfect information, captivating



Geography of the RSR – a textbook for the 12th grade, a textbook that so many generations of students, some of whom have become great geographers, have learned from, written together with Prof. Claudiu Giurcăneanu, a fellow professor at ASE

presentations and simple but complete and easy-to-follow schemes, the oratorical art hard to put into words: chosen phrases and intonation that made the rooms where he exhibited always full; the proverbial calmness in any dialogue or dispute, the depth of discussions and analyses of any kind, the correct relations of understanding and support for all those who wanted them, the masked passivity, although his soul cried, in the face of the injustices created by the regime or the open immobility of some colleagues...”.

Of his many books, two stand out in terms of size, which of course add to their value. *Natural Modelling and Accelerated Erosion* (Academia Publishing House, 1966, 618 pages) and *Romania. Nature, Man, Economy* (Scientific Publishing House, 1974, 530 pages). The former is the first treatise on dynamic geomorphology to appear in our country, and is the culmination of his research, thought, and elaboration in studies in the physical field of geography. The second is a unique, unparalleled geographical synthesis that offers an all-encompassing view of our country.

Professor Victor Tufescu was, I believe, the most complex Romanian geographer, the only one who has dealt equally with the two main branches of geography, physical and human, and their subbranches, combining them in the most blissful way in the treatise *Romania. Nature, Man,*

¹ Victor Tufescu, Romanian Geographers Collection, Institute of Geography, Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 2000 (volume coordinator Veselina Uruclu); the coordinator's study is entitled *Victor Tufescu. The Man. The Professor. The Geographer.*

Economy. There is, however, an inclination towards geomorphology, in the case of physical geography, and towards the geography of human population and settlement and the geography of agriculture, in the case of human geography. As regards geomorphology, in addition to the treatise already mentioned and the numerous articles and studies, books such as *Subcarpathians* (1962, 70 pages), *Natural relief modelling and accelerated erosion* (1966, 618 pages), *Subcarpathians and marginal hills of Transylvania* (1966, 254 pages), *Torrents* (1967, 68 pages) are worth mentioning.

I cannot also fail to note the love with which he has bent down and revealed the merits of great geographical personalities (Dimitrie Cantemir, Emmanuel de Martonne, and Simion Mehedinți, including the critical edition: *Terra. Introduction to Geography as a Science* and the volume *Simion Mehedinți. Life and Works*, 1994, 139 pages – or George Vâlsan, Vintilă Mihăilescu, Tiberiu Morariu). He was also co-author and coordinator of several preuniversity geography textbooks (*The Geography of R.S. Romania, Geography of the environment, Earth's fundamental geographical issues*), and one of the most knowledgeable and talented authors of geographical descriptions: *In the Valley of Moldova. Views and evocations* (1970, 216 pages), *Stopovers in the countryside* (1976, 195 pages), *People of the Carpathians* (1982, 207 pages).

These are just a few glimpses of memories and appreciations of Professor Victor Tufescu. When I became a close collaborator of the professor and afterwards, for more than two decades, I never suspected that one day I would become a university professor in the department that he served, so beautifully and well, for almost three decades. For me it was truly a great honour.

Professor Silviu Neaguț was editor-in-chief of Encyclopaedic Publishing House (1990-1993), and also vice-dean (1993-2008) and dean (2008-2012) of the Faculty of International Business and Economics (REI) at ASE. His contributions are plenary. Following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Professor Victor Tufescu, he is the author of geography textbooks for preuniversity education (grades 5-12). His 2005 work *Introduction to Geopolitics*, published by Meteor Press, will mark a decade since the introduction in the undergraduate curriculum of the discipline of Geopolitics (1994), for the first time in post-communist Romanian university education. At the same time, in 2004, it will found a dedicated Master's programme. Also, under his signature, *Geopolitics. The Universe of Power, 2008* and *Geopolitics, 2015* will follow. Thus, the "school of geopolitics at ASE" – whose founder can be considered Professor Silviu Neaguț – was taking shape. Through more than 1300 radio broadcasts, he contributed to spreading knowledge of geography and geopolitics, as no one else has. He was awarded the "Simion Mehedinți" Prize of the Romanian Academy in 1997 for *Mathematical Modelling in Human Geography*, published by Scientific Publishing House. In 2004, he also published *The geography of tourism*, in 2011, *Human Geography, the first Romanian treatise in the field*, and in 2022, *Geostrategy (with Marius-Cristian Neacșu)*. The library of his native commune, Vadu Pașii, Buzău County, bears his name. A volume of 'Writings in Honour of Professor Silviu Neaguț' was published in 2010 by CD Press. Another work, 'Tireless Explorer of the Planetary and Human Universe', was dedicated to him in 2014, when the title of Doctor Honoris Causa was awarded.