

**PROFESSOR VASILE LĂZĂRESCU,  
A REMARKABLE PERSONALITY OF THE  
ROMANIAN GEOLOGY – TWENTY YEARS  
AFTER HIS DEATH  
(1926–1989)**



Vasile Lăzărescu was a brilliant successor of a great gallery of scientific personalities of the Romanian geology. We must mention some of them, scientists and teachers, true founders of this relative young science with important contributions to the evolution of the Romanian society in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, like Grigore Ștefănescu, Petru Poni, Grigore Cobălcescu, Sava Athanasiu, Sabba Ștefănescu, Ion Simionescu, Gh. Munteanu-Murgoci, Ion Popescu-Voițești and Gheorghe Macovei.

Professor Vasile Lăzărescu continued the tradition of these masters who deciphered the main elements of the geological and tectonical structure of the alpine areas of the Carpathians and its neighbouring regions. We wish to render a modest and necessary homage to the memory of this scientific personality, whose single aim in life was the progress of the geological sciences.

Vasile Lăzărescu was born in Bucharest, at January 22, 1926, his father, Vasile, being native of the Vrancea county (Urechești) and his mother, Eugenia, born in Săcele, Brașov county. He went to the *Costache Negruzzi* (in Jassy) and *Gheorghe Lazăr* (in Bucharest) high schools. Afterwards he went to the Faculty of Mine and Metallurgy courses (of the Polytechnic School of Bucharest) and graduated in 1949, with “*Magna cum laude*” distinction. His university career started in that year (1949) and continued until his death, in 1989 (April 19). He was a remarkable successor of his mentors, academician Gheorghe Murgeanu and professor Ion Dumitrescu.

The teaching activity began and was continued within the framework of the Faculty of Geology, of the Institute of Oil and Gas (1948–1949), Mine Institute (1951–1957), Institute of Oil, Gas and Geology (1957–1974) and University of Bucharest (1974–1989).

Vasile Lăzărescu had ascended all university degrees, from teaching assistant in 1949 to lecturer in 1967, fonction held until his death. Unfortunately the communist authorities did not recognize his professional statute and did not grant him the title of professor which he fully deserved. During twenty-two years (1967–1989) he taught with an inimitable attractiveness the course of General Geology (or Physical Geology) continuing the tradition of famous academician Gheorghe Murgeanu. Besides this principal course he taught the courses: Geology of Romania (1967–1969), Asian and African Geology (1967–1974), Earth Physics (1985–1989) and, in the last life year, the course of Marine Geology (1988–1989). Also, in the 1965–1967 period, he lectured the UNESCO post-university courses. He elaborated (1972–1973) the course of the Physical Geology, in three parts, containing 536 pages. Later, in 1980, Vasile Lăzărescu published at the Technical Publishing House the book *Physical Geology* (in Romanian), a reference work in the Romanian geological literature. This volume (512 pages) is based on a vast modern documentation about the complex geological processes affecting the planet Earth, necessary to students and researchers in geological and geophysical fields.

From the beginning, the teaching activity was permanently accompanied by scientific preoccupations in different domains of the geological research, especially the dynamics of the

lithosphere and the correlation between tectonic structure and seismicity of some active regions of Romania. The first preliminary seismotectonic synthesis of the Romanian Eastern Carpathians was published in 1973, in cooperation with Prof. Liviu Constantinescu and dr. Ion Cornea.

Formerly he collaborated with geologists M. Săndulescu, O. Mirăuță, S. Pauliuc and C. Georgescu (under co-ordination of Prof. Ion Dumitrescu), for the elaboration of the *Tectonic map of Romania, scale 1:500.000* (published in 1958) and *Tectonic map of Romania, scale 1:1.000.000* (printed in 1962). Last image was included in *Tectonic map of Europe* (printed in 1964). In this domain, between 1969 and 1974, Vasile Lăzărescu worked with Prof. Liviu Constantinescu and dr. Ion Cornea in the framework of UNDP/UNESCO international project *Survey of the seismicity in the Balkan region*. The purpose of this scientific project was a regional and detailed synthesis of the geological, tectonical and seismological information for this European area with high crustal and subcrustal seismicity. In this framework the mentioned Romanian specialists elaborated *Seismotectonic map of Romania* and *Neotectonic map and Pliocene tectonics*.

In 1966, Vasile Lăzărescu presented his Ph.D. Thesis: *Geological researches between Someș and Lăpuș, NW Dej*, under coordination of acad. Gheorghe Murgeanu. This paper was well appreciated and it conferred him in 1968 the jubilee medal "Semi-centenary Union of Transylvania with Romania".

The scientific original contributions of dr.eng. Vasile Lăzărescu are recognized by three prizes of the Romanian Academy: *Grigore Cobălcescu Prize* (1962) for the synthesis (elaborated in cooperation) "Mémoire à la Carte tectonique de la Roumanie"; *Gh. Munteanu-Murgoci Prize* (1971) for the paper (in cooperation) "Contribution géophysique et l'étude des massifs du sel en Roumanie"; *Aurel Vlaicu Prize* (1983) for the chapter elaborated with dr. Ion Cornea in the book "The Earthquake from Romania on March 4, 1977" (in Romanian), printed by the Publishing House of the Romanian Academy, coordinated by acad. Ștefan Bălan, dr. V. Cristescu and dr. I. Cornea.

Vasile Lăzărescu was a founding member and general secretary of the Geological Science Society of Romania, during the time when the president was acad. Gh. Murgeanu (dead in 1983). Within this status he carried out an intense activity of scientific cooperation with similar societies from many countries of the world.

In the last period of his life, Vasile Lăzărescu was especially preoccupied by geodynamics problems, the tectonic signification of recent crustal movement (vertical and horizontal) and different seismotectonic characteristics of active seismic areas from Romania. In the last months, he began a book of seismotectonics, in which he wanted to combine his vast knowledge in the field of tectonics and seismological information. Unfortunately, his premature death (April 19, 1989) interrupted this scientific preoccupation in the last days of hospital.

Twenty years after Vasile Lăzărescu's death, we remember the remarkable qualities of the professor and researcher of the Earth sciences. His scholarship, talent and charm of his simple explanations, but with deep signification, his human attitude in relations with students and fellow-workers should be mentioned. He loved his profession and he transmitted to the young generations the love for our planet and for the knowledge of past and recent complex dynamic processes deforming the Earth crust's surface or different levels in depth. Our modest homage was insufficient to draw his human and professional personality.

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