

A lost manuscript of the geologist Ion Popescu-Voitești: ‘The geological structure of the Romanian Earth’

Codrea A. Vlad^{1,2,3,4,}, Fărcaș Cristina⁵*

- 1- Professor Dr. engineer (r), Senior Researcher Dr., Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, STAR Institute and Research Center for Integrated Geological Studies, Laboratory of Paleotheriology and Quaternary Geology, 1, Kogălniceanu Street, RO-400084 Cluj-Napoca, Romania;
- 2- Mureș County Museum, Department of Natural Sciences, 8A, Mărăști Str., RO-540329 Târgu Mureș, Romania;
- 3- Țării Crișurilor Museum, Department of Natural History, 1/A, Armatei Române Str., RO-410087 Oradea, Romania;
- 4- Institute of Speleology Emil Racoviță, 13, Calea 13 Septembrie, RO-050711, Sector 5, Bucharest, Romania;
- 5- Geologist dr. engineer, Laboratory of Paleotheriology and Quaternary Geology, 1, Kogălniceanu Street, RO-400084 Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

* Corresponding author: codrea_vlad@yahoo.fr

Abstract. In the twilight of his life, retired at his residence in Voitești village (in his own Villa Luna), the geologist Ion Popescu-Voitești finalized a manuscript of a book entitled ‘The geological structure of the Romanian earth’, a synthesis of his theories concerning especially the tectonics of Romania. Shortly after, he died suddenly, consequence of a heart attack. This work presents the efforts of his widow Elena to publish the book, recorded by documents in the archives of the ‘Al. Ștefulescu’ of Tg. Jiu Museum. The rough times, at the end of the WWII, followed by the communist oppression, prevented the widow from successfully completing this project. The manuscript is considered today as lost, after a real succession of various attempts of the widow to publish it, all exposed in this article. The Romanian geological literature was thus deprived of a reference text, which would certainly have been of great utility to Romanian geologists.

Key words: Ion and Elena Popescu-Voitești, Romania, geology, unpublished manuscript.

Introduction

The professional value of the geologist Ion Popescu-Voitești (1876-1944) does not require additional arguments to those already published (Mocioi & Huică, 2017 - with all related references; Săsăran, 2014; Codrea & Popescu, 2017; Codrea & Fărcaș, 2023; Stelea & Ghenciu, 2023; Ghenciu & Culescu, 2023; Chepeneag, 2023; Codrea, 2024; Bordeianu, 2024). Any analysis, even brief, of the published geological contributions issued between the end of the 19th century and the first half of the last century can only highlight the consistency and value of the data reported by this geologist with roots in Gorj County, who was consecrated by his university activity in Cluj.

As it is well known, he stood out in various directions of geology, particularly in invertebrate paleontology (with a plus in the research of large-sized Paleogene foraminifera), regional geology (diverse regions of the country), tectonics, hydrogeology, economic geology (with emphasis on rock salt, oil and gas fields), paleogeography, pedology, etc. In addition, he was a devoted servant of the Romanian high geological school, after the years spent at the University of Cluj, moving then to the University of Bucharest. The current School of Geology of the Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca owes him a great debt for his contributions, which started after WWI when together with Gheorghe Munteanu-Murgoci (1872-1925) they laid the foundations of the geological teaching in Romanian, and his work was continued there by some of his assistants, such as Ioan Alexandru Maxim (1902-1968). He did comparable work in the same field at the University of Bucharest, but for a shorter period, at the end of his career. From that chair he was retired at the age limit, although we have arguments that he would have wished to continue the activity which for him embodied a true passion, to which he dedicated himself with all his being. He was also involved in the activities of Romanian naturalists, being among the organizers of the First Congress of Romanian Naturalists in Cluj, 1928 (Vasilu, 1979; Codrea & Fărcaș, 2023). With such contributions, he represented his native country at various scientific meetings, at home and abroad.

What makes him an unquestionable place in the history of science in Romania are the geological writings, not few at all, that he has left to posterity (Popescu-Voitești, 1928, 1936a; Mocioi & Huică, 2017 with all related references). In this category are included the books he wrote and publish, as well as articles focused on the subjects above mentioned. Some of these books are undoubtedly 'teaching books' dedicated to pupils and students. At the University of Cluj it is well known that until 1919 the entire teaching was taught exclusively in Hungarian and there were no teaching references in Romanian. Therefore, Voitești was practically obliged to fill that gap, and the printed or lithographed courses had just such a target.

After retiring from the University of Bucharest, he continued to write on geological topics. It would have been difficult to imagine things any other way. His

last writing was a synthesis on the geology of the country's territory. On it we wish to stop in this approach. Popescu-Voitești can be considered the father of the discipline that is still today taught in Romanian geologic (and geographic) education, 'Geology of Romania'. This statement is supported by the contents of all the three successive editions of the book 'Elements of Geology', which all include a section devoted to the geology of Romania, as indicated by the wider extension of the title, 'with a focus on the geology of Romania' (Popescu-Voitești, 1921a, b, 1924, 1927). The book was dedicated to high school pupils, students and anyone interested in Earth sciences. A couple of decades ago, geology - with a chapter dedicated to the geology of Romania - was also taught in Romanian in lyceums, but in recent years this discipline has been excluded from the curricula. This aspect deserves to be emphasized, being emblematic for the lack of influence of the geologist decision-makers in Romanian education. We are in a position to state that this aspect will negatively influence the decades to come, in which the Romanian society will face, like all the others, the pressing need for mineral raw materials. On the other hand, this situation tarnishes the professional legacy of the geologist we are talking about.

Ion Simionescu's (1910) earlier writing on the same subject can be considered a mere attempt, with pale extension and content. Moreover, that writing referred to the territory of the so-called 'Small Romania', before the union with Transylvania. Subsequently, a series of writings by geologists such as Ilie (1956), Oncescu (1957, 1959, 1965), Mutihac & Ionesi (1974), Mutihac et al. (2007), Mutihac & Mutihac (2010), etc. were dedicated to this type of synthesis. It is interesting to note how in these writings there is missing exactly one section on the history of this discipline, as would have been natural. Săndulescu (1980) was the one who gave attention to the historical aspects of the geological knowledge of the Romanian territory, but he focused his attention almost exclusively on tectonic aspects, and not on stratigraphic, paleontological, etc. ones.

Retired at his home (Vila Luna) in the village of Voitești, the geologist finalized shortly before his passing, a manuscript entitled 'The Geological Structure of the Romanian Earth' ('Alcătuirea geologică a pământului românesc'), expressing his own satisfaction for the work accomplished (Mocioi & Huică, 2017). His sudden death, which occurred on his return from a hunting party very close to his home prevented him from sending the manuscript to any publisher. Consequently, the manuscript was left to his widow Elena Popescu-Voitești (Fig. 1). As there was a special feeling between the two of them, she tried her best to publish her late husband's writing.

The year 1945 was a rough one for all country. It was not a favorable time to publish scientific papers, as long as the own survival needs took priority. One such aspect emerges from a letter that Prof. Victor Stanciu (one of the financial donors of the erection of the Orthodox cathedral in Cluj) and a close Voitești's collaborator and friend at Cluj University (Stanciu, 1936) addressed to her. The Faculty of Geology in Cluj had been moved to Timișoara as a consequence of the cession of a part of

Transylvania to Hungary, including the city of Cluj. Stanciu wrote to Elena on January 6, 1945 from Timișoara, justifying the impossibility of a visit on that date by the de facto obstacles imposed by the situation in the country: *'But now it is an impossibility to travel from Timișoara. In addition to the overcrowded trains, which only connect twice to Bucharest and which I would face with all the hardships that a trip today requires, we cannot leave the city, because who knows if we would have anywhere to return to, as empty houses are immediately occupied. And with good reason it is done so, there being many people passing through, who must be somewhere to be accommodated in these times of war and winter.'* (letter in the archive of 'Al. Ștefulescu' Museum Tg. Jiu; Fig. 2).

Her first attempt to publish the manuscript in book form (1945-1946) came relatively soon after her husband's death (1944). As this first attempt failed, it was not resumed until a number of years later. This aspect is easy to understand: at the end of WWII Romania was going through a series of troubled years socially and politically. Mainly after the elections in fall of 1946 won by the communists and their allies of long memory, the country had entered the sphere of Soviet influence, and the communist regime that followed for decades in a row was imposed, dictated and directed by Moscow, in the first years by I.V. Stalin (born, Ioseb Besarionis Dze Jugashvili) himself. In those years, Elena did not try to publish the manuscript, which is easy to understand: times were not favorable for such an initiative.

When times changed a bit after Stalin's death (1953), she addressed in this direction to the Council of Ministers, to the Academy of the Popular Republic of Romania and directly to Academician Gheorghe Murgeanu (1901-1984), a geologist of influence in those times. This one had been elected on December 21, 1935 as corresponding member of the Romanian Academy of Scientists, of which Voitești was one of the founding members. This academy was founded by a group of scientists as a reaction to the imperfections and deviations of the Scientific Section of the Romanian Academy, which seems to leave very little room for the representatives of the exact sciences. After the installation of the communist regime, Murgeanu became a member of the new-born Romanian Academy, which incorporated the old academy (but, with the decimation after a politically motivated selection of the old members), and also the Academy of Scientists, which practically vanished. About Murgeanu, Paucă (1998) wrote that *'Murgeanu's geological papers are not only few in number, but none of them has made big wave, which would have been expected from a university professor, academician, and advisor to the Geological Committee! (...) Because he liked to talk, he presented at the meetings of the Institute (n.n., geological) a few communications, but he did not submit them in writing to the editorial office for publication'*. With such a meager scientific productivity, we can assume that he did not value Voitești's scientific writings, or there may even have been a feeling of envy directed towards him.

The requests trended to the specified official addressees were not kept, or if they were kept, we did not have access to those documents. However, one have good

reason to believe that the history of the attempts to publish the manuscript is a real odyssey, but as we shall see, the final fate of the manuscript remains until today confused, unclear.

The odyssey of a manuscript

In the archive of the 'Al. Ștefulescu' Museum of Tg. Jiu (herein after, abbreviated: ASMTJ) are kept some documents related to this case. From what was preserved, it can be understood that the professor's widow tried repetitively after her husband's death, to print the geological synthesis in question.

The first attempt was for sure in 1945, one year after her husband's death, as long a letter signed by the geologist Ștefan N. Cantuniari (1883-1958) (in archive of ASMTJ; Fig. 3) dated February 6, 1946, refers to book chapters already seen by geologist David M. Preda (1886-1963) and summarily analyzed by Ion Atanasiu (1892-1949):

'Highly esteemed Madam Prof. VOITEȘTI,

Following your approval, confirmed in writing, I have entrusted to Mr. PREDA and Mr. ATANASIU the two chapters of "Structure of the Romanian earth" indicated for some revisions and additions.

Prof. PREDA shortly returned me the unmodified text, with the reasoning that his views are different from those of the author.

Prof. I. ATANASIU, being absent from Bucharest for a while, was able to get acquainted with the text a little later, so that only a few days ago he sent me back the part he had reread, with some small corrections, in accordance with his personal studies in the Moldo-Basarabian Plateau.

In the meantime, while skimming through the text of the work myself, generally made up of chapters with a classical background and structure, I could see that some retouching is needed here and there, even some retouching of the wording, of punctuation and especially some underlining, both for the ease of reading and for the uniformity of the whole work.

I have also carefully considered the known "vulnerable" parts, which I consider to be eliminable by appropriate wording, without forgetting the geologist's license and even obligation to treat geological units independently of the country borders!

However, I believe that we can now hand the work over to the Royal Foundations, which keep the drawings of the plans redone and paid for by them since last summer. I hope that although their Committee is composed entirely of men of letters, there will be no difficulty in printing a scientific work of the value and usefulness of that of our late colleague and friend.

And on this occasion I ask you to forgive my slowness in writing, though motivated by abnormal circumstances; which did not stop me from keeping the care of an achievement as dear to us as to you.

Until we receive your reply with new provisions - as I don't know your latest connections with the Foundations - I will continue with the revision of the text (especially the punctuation and underlining for the typeface).

Together with my wife, we wish you health and good thoughts.

Wednesday, February 6, 1946 S. N. Cantuniari'

At the end of the letter it is more than likely recorded in holograph by Elena Voitești that a reply was sent on March, 1 a reply that was probably not kept.

We have not at our disposal her document addressed to the Romanian Academy of Scientists, but a report issued after its incorporation into the new Romanian Academy mentioned data issued as result of the General Assembly of the Academy of Scientists on November 16, 1947 (ASMTJ 19223; Fig. 4). From the report its results that the printing of the book was '(...) a duty, both to Romanian science and to the memory of our colleague, to print this particularly important work, which represents the synthesis of all the researches up to the most recent ones, on the geology of Romania, made by one of the most competent specialists. But as it is a massive work - approx. 450 pages - and therefore very expensive, we requested the support of the forums able to help us. After negotiations with the Royal Foundations, which at one point had reached a favorable point, we had to give up this solution. We turned to oil companies and financial institutions, obtaining a grant of 50,000,000 lei from "ROMANIAN-AMERICAN" Soc. and another of 10,000,000 lei from the NATIONAL BANK OF ROMANIA. We had the prudence to commit this fund, purchasing the necessary printing paper and executing the printing of photos. With this face, we can say that we have saved the I.P. VOITEȘTI fund of 60,000,000 lei, which otherwise would have been swallowed by the abyss of the stabilization blockade. (...) Since the work of the late Prof. I.P.-VOITEȘTI, by its content and the ideas expressed, continues to keep its topicality and especially its special practical interest for the specialists called to solve the economic problems related to the geological structure of the country, without speaking about the value of the author's original scientific concepts, which have long since won a place of honor in the world geological literature; and since the printing of the work could today be easily and quickly carried out, having the necessary printing paper (...) I have the honor to propose to consider printing this work as soon as possible, establishing also in agreement with the current owner of the work, Mrs. Elena Voitești, the author's widow, the rights due.'

Unfortunately, the typewritten copy of this report is undated, so we do not know who the author of the proposal is. What we do know for sure is that it was not printed at the time. This text clearly illustrates that the steps directed towards the Royal Foundations had been finalized with failure. On the other hand, those

Foundations were in their turn, like the entire Royalty of Romania, on the verge of dissolution dictated by the communist regime and under the influence of communist Moscow. King Michael had to abdicate, as is well known, and then to leave the country for decades in a row.

After Stalin's death the geologist's widow resumed the approaches to various forums, especially to the Romanian Academy, but also to the Council of Ministers. Therefore, we have on hands a letter received from the Academy of the P.R.R. (Popular Republic of Romania), Section of Geology and Geography, dated January 25, 1957 (original in ASMTJ archive; Fig. 5), which at the end of the letter indicates the name of the geologist Alexandru Codarcea (1900-1974; the one who outlined and defined the Severin thrusting nappe in Southern Carpathians; Săndulescu, 1980), but which is signed in fact by Gheorghe Murgeanu, bears witness to this:

'Dear Madam,

In connection with the work of the late Professor Ion Popescu-Voitești, received at the Section on September 7, 1956, in order to advise on the appropriateness of its publication, we inform you that at the first meeting of the Section - held after the finalization of the thematic plans for 1957, - on October 27, 1956, the above work was discussed.

On this occasion, it was shown that the paper, being written many years ago, is outdated by the current level of geological knowledge of the territory of our country, but that it still represents, for the time at which it was written, a valuable contribution to the study of the geology of the Romanian territory.

The brief analysis that was made of the work in the meeting of the Section, revealed a series of inconsistencies and ideas outdated by current knowledge, which does not justify its printing as a treatise or specialized course, but rather, as "Posthumous works" of Professor Ion Popescu-Voitești. This was the reason why the Section decided to set up a commission to analyze the work in detail and to submit proposals to the Section regarding the possibility of printing it.

However, the work being voluminous, its examination will take a long time until the Section will be in a position to make a final decision.

In the meantime, we remain of the opinion expressed above that the work could appear - and this only after it has been researched by the above-named commission - under the title of "Posthumous Works"

'G. Murgeanu'

The official tone of this letter reeks in every sentence, but it is noteworthy that at least the signatory did not address the widow with the usual formula of those times, 'comrade'. A subsequent letter addressed to Murgeanu (ASMTJ Inv. 22268; Fig. 6) on September 6, 1959, which shows the bitter disappointment derived from

the lack of action of the one in whom he had placed his hopes, also indicates that the approaches in the interval 1956-1958 were more numerous, but they were not kept:

' Dear Mr. Murgeanu,

February 29, 1956

September 7, 1956

September 27, 1956

January 25, 1957

November 5, 1958

Please allow me to begin with this string of dates - which, of course, you know what they refer to; and I believe that between January 25, 1957 and November 5, 1958 you also honored me with two visits, thus answering my letters whose dates I no longer know.

These given dates and the time that has elapsed from the first one until today (three years and six months) show with painful evidence - painful for me - how long I waited and especially how much patience I had, patience that if you qualify it as angelic, is too trite and too understated.

And why have I waited patiently? Because each time you have given me hope, reassurance, even inspired me with confidence. Each time when you came to me, you were extremely kind enough to offer me, besides assurances, the best candies in Bucharest, and their sweetness, please believe me, does not surpass the bitterness that crept and nestled in my soul, still waiting and seeing that nothing is being done for the memory of the distinguished geologist Voitești.

And, as this is the situation at the moment, I ask you, Mr. Murgeanu, very insistently, to be kind enough to return to me the typing and the figures.

Probably, in your long absence from the country, you entrusted the typescript to a person for safekeeping; but I think that the most appropriate place would have been in my drawer, instead of in a drawer other than yours at the Academy; this to avoid indiscretions.

Will you please let me know where and when I can pick it up.

If, within 15 days of your receipt of this letter, you have not realized my wish and my request, I shall be forced to follow another path in order to recover my husband's work, entrusted to you by the Council of Ministers in September 1956.

Allow me to refer also to the letter of the Academy of the P.R.R. of 25 January 1957, signed by you. You stated there that the work would be published. Everything remained a dead letter.

You also told me, among other things, that Voitești's posthumous paper (dated 1944) was 'outdated'. It would be inadmissible not to have made great progress in the geology of Romania, when for 15 years, dozens of teams of young geologists have been working in the field for 6 months a year, being inspected, controlled, and verified by experienced geologists.

However, I have no hesitation in saying that Voitești's work - a work of synthesis - is unique of its kind for the geology of our country; if you have read it, I am sure that you think so too. His theories are still standing today, and only if they would be disseminated to be known, they could be taken as a basis for discussion among specialists, which would certainly bring much new and powerful light in the 'the geological structure of the Romanian Earth'.

Let me end with a remark in your favor. What does 3-4 years matter to a geologist who looks at the past in hundreds and thousands of years? For him, 3-4 years are a small, infinitesimal fraction of time compared with the age of the Earth, whose mysteries he wants to know.

So, the geologist cannot consider as a delay a time interval even shorter than a tenth of a geological second!.....

In expectation, within the above-mentioned time limit, of a reply which will satisfy the request expressed in this letter, please accept the assurance of my best regards.

6 September 1959

Bucharest of. p 37

Calea Moșilor 113'

Faced with a deadline, and in order to avoid unpleasant reverberations at the level of the Council of Ministers, Murgeanu drafted and sent the following holograph reply sent as a letter addressed to Elena Voitești, in September 17, 1959 (ASMTJ Inv. 22266; Fig. 7):

'My esteemed Mrs. Voitești,

Having returned from Karlovy Vary, where I was sent to nurse my health, I found your lines. Please forgive me if I will not be able to submit the manuscript of the work you have entrusted to me by the deadline you have set, and here is why.

Last year, in the autumn, when the papers to be published in 1959 were being planned, I again presented Professor Voitești's paper to the plenary of Section V, to which I belong, with the request to be included in the editorial plan. The Section approved my request, the paper was planned for 1959, and it was decided that the revision should be entrusted to the geologist Grigore Popescu, a researcher at the Institute of Geology-Geography of Section V. Grigore Popescu is a very experienced

geologist, over 40 years old, and the Section was of the opinion that he was able to do the revision requested by the Academy Publishing House.

Unfortunately, a few sessions later, the editorial plan was redrafted, in accordance with the suggestions of the Academy's management, and deeply modified. The same plenum of Section V informed me, 'with regret', that Professor Voitești's work was no longer included in the 1959 plan and that its publication would be delayed. My insistence could not be taken into consideration and the decision of Section V to postpone the publication remained valid.

I did not want to tell you this so as not to cause you disappointment. Now I realize that I was wrong, not knowing the decision of the Fifth Section plenary, you are blaming me for not publishing the paper.

Reading your lines, I realized that your trust in me is completely shattered and that there is nothing left for me to do but return your manuscript.

I immediately looked for Grigore Popescu but I learnt that he is on the field in Jiția, in the former county of Râmnicu Sărat. I wrote him a letter asking him as soon as he comes to Bucharest to return the manuscript to me in the state of revision (...).

Please believe that when Gr. Popescu's arrival in Bucharest, I will be in possession of the manuscript for submission. I regret very much that, at the moment, I cannot tell you the date on which I will return the work to you as I do not know it myself. But I will keep you informed of Gr. Popescu's answers in which the date of its return will be mentioned.

Your letter caused me great bitterness. I understand very well that it was written in indignation that the publication of the work is so long delayed. I am not responsible for this long delay. I am only a cog in the great mechanism of the Academy.

I was particularly impressed by the fact that you interpret my deference to you as hypocrisy, as an attempt to cover up, by kindness, my despicable character.

I cannot forget, however, that I have been your and Prof Voitești's guest and have enjoyed a warm, affectionate welcome in the past.

Please accept, dear Mrs. Voitești, the assurance of my respect

G. Murgeanu '

The manuscript was probably returned to her in autumn, at the time when the geologists in the field were returning to Bucharest. What is certain is that Elena resumed her endeavor for publication the following year, this time not to the Academy Publishing House but to the State Technical Publishing House in Bucharest through its director, dated March 20, 1960, registered under no. 4660 of 22 March 1960 at the State Technical Publishing House (Archive ASMTJ; Fig. 8 a,b):

‘ To

THE STATE TECHNICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE.

B U C H A R E S T .

I, Elena Popescu-Voitești, widow of Ion Popescu-Voitești, university professor of Geology, residing in Bucharest, Calea Moșilor 113 C, Tudor Vladimirescu district, have in my handwriting his last work: The geological structure of the Romanian Earth, a work that has not yet seen the light of the printing.

I allow myself to make it available to the State Technical Publishing House to be printed as a "posthumous work" and I warmly request that the attention it deserves be given to this work and its author.

Professor Voitești was active in all fields of geological sciences, making important contributions in both the scientific and the practical-economic fields; as a crowning achievement of his meticulous and long research, in the last year of his life - retired - he elaborated a synthesis work that remained in typescript: "The geological structure of the Romanian Earth" a work not only of large dimensions (450 pages with 98 figures and maps), but also - as the specialists who have skimmed it state - of an undeniable and permanent scientific value through the documentary material it contains on the geology of the Romanian Earth.

This work represents the synthesis of his entire scientific activity in the field of geology and its dissemination would be of great use to specialists, students and all those who are interested in the evolution of geological science in our country.

Up to the last moment of his life, he polished and prepared it, leaving it ready for printing, but by the brutal separation from life (4 Oct. 1944) he could not realize it.

It is the only work of its kind for the geology of our country and it would put at the disposal of the researchers of our country's terrains a series of data: geological, tectonic, paleontological, stratigraphic, systematized and correlated according to the major geological units of our country.

And Prof. Voitești's theories, which are well known, could be taken as a basis for discussion among specialists, which would bring a new and strongly guiding light in the geological formation of the Romanian Earth.

The paper is composed of two parts:

Part I – INTRODUCTORY.

A. - Paleogeographic evolution.

B. - Structural units.

C. - Intimate geological composition of the Carpathian structural units.

Part II – DESCRIPTIVE.

A. - The Banat Mountains and the neighboring Plain.

- B. - The Southern Carpathians of Oltenia.*
- C. - The Southern Carpathians between Olt and Prahova.*
- D. - The Getic Depression.*
- E. - The Southern Bend Carpathians with the Sub Carpathians and the plain in front.*
- F. - Eastern Carpathians and Sub Carpathians.*
- G. - Moldavian Plateau and Moldavian Plain with the mouths of the Danube.*
- H. - Dobrogea.*
- I. - Apuseni Mountains.*
- J. - Transylvanian Basin.*
- K. - Maramureş Basin.*

The literature used is listed at the end of each chapter.

The work consists of 448 typed pages (41 r. at 62 beats) and 98 figures and maps.

It goes without saying that the work needs to be revised as far as some geographical data are concerned; and after this operation will be carried out, I warmly ask you to kindly accept that this work - "posthumous work" - be printed in the State Technical Publishing House, thus making a large gesture of homage to the memory of a man who devoted his life to science and to the initiation of youth into this science.

Fight for peace!

Bucharest

Calea Moşilor 113 C.

20, March, 1960

Elena Voiteşti ‘

It is important to mention that in the upper segment of the first of the pages was written in holograph: '*Manuscript has been retained in the editorial office (including drawings)*', signed indecipherably, 22. III. 1960.

The content of this book is important, because it gives insight into the geologist's conception of the geological structure of the Romanian territory. In this chapter, there is a mix between geographically outlined units (*e.g.*, Banat Mountains and neighboring Plain, Getic Depression, Moldavian Plateau and Moldavian Plain with the mouths of the Danube, Dobrogea, Apuseni Mountains) *vs.* units with geological structural significance (*e.g.*, Transylvanian Basin, Maramureş Basin) is to be noted. At the time of the writing of this book, the structural boundaries in the present geology of Romania were far from being defined as such, as they appear for example in Săndulescu's book (1984). The first part of the book is also the most challenging, the one that amplifies our frustration at not having it available for direct

study. However, it is clear that the beginning of the approach (A) seen through the prism of the paleogeographic evolution of the territory of Romania is in the logic of the synthesis on this subject, which had been the subject of the article published in Cluj only eight years ago (Popescu-Voitești, 1936b). In the second chapter (B) of the first part there is certainly the structural rationalization of the area in question, which would have provided us with the latest conception of the geologist author. Finally, the third chapter (C) of the first part probably dealt with aspects focused on the Carpathian tectonic structures, so it centered on the problems related to the Carpathian orogen. It would have been particularly useful to know what were the divisions of this orogen and how they were defined at the end of a professional career in which the tectonic studies had been always a priority.

In this context, Elena made one last intervention, this time directed to the brilliant geologist Ion Băncilă, from which we learn (Archive ASMTJ; Fig. 9): *'For over 15 years, this work has been sitting in various drawers, sometimes hidden, sometimes not, from prying eyes.*

I won't tell you all its odyssey, because it is long and causes me much bitterness.

Now, recently, a small group of young geologists have approached me to present it to the State Technical Publishing House, asking for it to be printed and distributed.

I presented myself with it on Tuesday, March 22 this year, at the Publishing House and I had the impression that it was skimmed with much interest in its contents and with a desire to make Voitești's theories known. I was made very welcome; the work remained there.

But, of course, this work needs a lot of rework, so entrust it to a competent person.

I was asked whom I would recommend for the job.

I have taken the liberty of saying your name - and yours alone - without any "and", without any "or".....

I was thinking about the very good relations that existed between you and my husband, collaborating within the Faculty of Geology of the University of Bucharest.

I remembered that he cherished you both as a man and as a scientist and always spoke to me with joy of this close and good understanding.

On Thursday, March 24, there was a meeting at the Publishing House, at which this matter was put on the agenda. I was sorry that you were not able to attend this meeting, which also discussed the work.

From what has reached my ears, I have the impression that your presence and your answer were expected in order to take a decision.

I ask you very warmly not to refuse me this support. For 15 years I have been living with the desire and hope to revive my husband's name and fame; I made an attempt with the geology book for high school but it did not succeed.

For this work, - a synthesis of his entire thinking in Geology - based on data known up to 1944 - I struggled a lot.

I know that revision and reworking will require a lot of hard work, a lot of sacrifice, but I believe that you will not regret it when you see that you have contributed to the revival of the spirit of Voitești. (...)'.

This is the last document on the subject to which we have had access. It is, however, clear that the manuscript in question by Ion Popescu-Voitești has never been printed either by this publishing house or by any other, and its fate after this date becomes deeply unclear.

Concluding remarks

After 1960, Popescu-Voitești's typed manuscript plain and simple vanished. It is unlikely that this time the widow Elena Voitești was able to recover it from the publisher. Deprived of a decent income - as was the case for not a few elderly people of Popular, and then Socialist Romania - she had to make a living by typing various texts for diverse benefactors. Hence the unpleasantness that ended in court, with allegations that through her work she had supported legionary intellectuals such as Dinu Pillat (Steinhardt, 2008).

Despite searches of many of geologists and ourselves, it could not be found in the archives of the Bucharest Geological Institute. The publishing house where it was deposited, which subsequently became Technical Publishing House (Editura Tehnică), ceased its activity in 2014, for reasons of profitability. There might be a possibility that the manuscript is deposited at the National Archives, but looking for it there would be like looking for a needle in a haystack. If it ever turns up from that direction, it would be more the result of a happy happening. Brief, there are relatively few chances that this manuscript will be found and even less, that it will be valorized. At present, its value would be historical indeed, if we are to judge by the many decades that have elapsed since it was written. However, it would have an importance for understanding the evolution of geological knowledge of the Romanian territory and as a benchmark for outlining the progress in Romanian geology and the development of the discipline named 'Geology of Romania'.

What we know for sure is that a book (1956) written by geologist Mircea Ilie (1904-1974) bears a title identical to the one Popescu-Voitești thought up for his own book. Is it a coincidence, or did he had the opportunity to consult the manuscript? Anyway, the references of the book does not show this.

We conclude with a few lines addressed by Voitești's disciple Ștefan Mateescu, to the widow of the geologist from Gorj (letter from October 3, 1944, ASMTJ Inv. 20181; Fig. 10): *‘Together with Professors Mrazec and Murgoci, Professor Voitești has worked all his life to the growth and development of the tectonic school in Romanian Geology. That he was not understood by so many geologists - is not surprising: ordinary people - even in science - look with disbelief at the one who builds with toil and clairvoyance a new path in the science of his country. Even when they pretend to understand these new principles applied in other parts of the world, they refuse them for our country (...). That is why Professor Voitești could be appreciated by the scientific world outside our frontiers; but he was surrounded by an icy atmosphere in the country. However, Prof. Voitești will remain a head of a new school! His memory will live with his work.’* It is possible in this short message to summarize the values of Popescu-Voitești's life as a geological scientist and to trace the evil plots that hastened his end. Lo and behold, those close to him knew them.

Acknowledgements. Authors address their entire gratitude to the manager of the ‘Al. Ștefulescu’ Museum in Tg. Jiu, Dr. Dumitru Hortopan for having facilitated the access of one of us (VAC) to documents from the museum's archive and for having helped us with data and images that appear in this paper. Thanks also to our colleagues’ geologists Dr. Monica Ghenciu and Dr. Ion Stelea (Institute of Geology Bucharest) for a series of data that they kindly made available to us.

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Anexe



Fig. 1. Elena Popescu-Voitești (photo in ASMTJ archive).

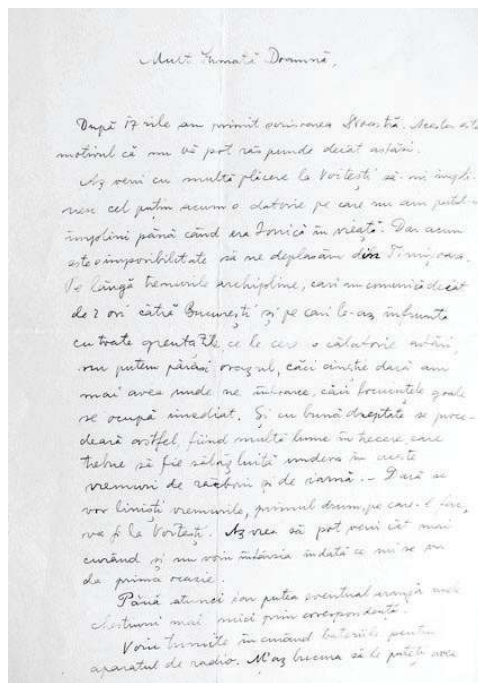


Fig. 2. Facsimile of the first page of the letter addressed by Prof. Victor Stanciu to Elena Popescu-Voitești.

Mulțumesc stimatei Doamnă Prof. VOITEȘTI,

Următor încuviințării DV. confirmată și în scris, am încredințat D-ilor BREDA și ATANASIU cele două capitole din "Alcătuirea pășunului românesc" îndată, pentru unele revizuirii și completări.

Prof. BREDA mi-a înapoiat în scurt timp textul nemodificat, cu motivarea că părerile sale sunt diferite de ale autorului.

Prof. I. ATANASIU, lipsind un timp din București, a putut lua cunoștință de text ceva mai târziu, așa că numai de câteva zile mi-a înapoiat partea pe care a revăzut-o, introducând câteva mici rectificări, în conformitate cu studiile lui personale din Podișul Moldo-Basarabean.

Între timp răsfoind însuși textul lucrării, alcătuită în genere din capitole cu fond și structură clasică, am putut constata că mai sunt necesare tot-colo unele corecturi și redacții, de punctuație și mai ales de sublinieri, atât pentru ușurarea cititului, cât și pentru uniformizarea întregii lucrări.

Am ocupat cu deosebită grijă și la părțile "vulnerabile" știute, pe care însă le scotese înălturabile prin redacție adecvată, fără a uita că licența și chiar obligația geologului de a trata unitățile geologice independent de granițele țării!

Oricum eu cred că acum putem înainta lucrarea Fundațiilor Regale, care păstrează din timpul verii trecute deosebita plăcerilor refăcute și achitate de acestea. Sper că deși Conținutul acestora este alcătuit numai din literatură, nu se va ridica greutatea la imprimarea unei opere științifice de valoarea și utilitatea aceleia a regretatului nostru coleg și prieten.

Și cu prilejul acesta vă rog să-mi iertați adăncă

Fig. 3. Facsimile of the first page of the letter addressed by Acad. Ștefan Cantuniari to Elena Popescu-Voitești

REF E R A T .

Prin votul unanim al ultimei Adunări Generale a ACADEMIEI DE ȘTIINȚE DIN ROMÂNIA (la 16 Noembrie 1947), s'a aprobat - între altele - și "amânarea pentru mai târziu a tipăririi proiectate a marii lucrări postume: "Alcătuirea geologică a pământului românesc" a regretatului nostru coleg I.P.-VOITEȘTI. Am considerat ca o datorie, atât față de știința românească, cât și față de memoria colegului nostru, a tipări aceasată deosebit de importantă lucrare, ce reprezintă sinteza tuturor cercetărilor până la cele mai recente, asupra geologiei României, făcută de unul din cei mai competenți specialiști. Fiind însă vorba de o lucrare masivă - aprox. 450 pagini - și deci foarte costisitoare, solicitasem sprijinul forurilor capabile a ne ajuta. După tratative cu Fundațiile Regale, care într'un moment ajunseseră la un punct favorabil, a trebuit să renunțăm la această soluție. Ne-am adresat societăților petoliere și instituțiilor financiare, obținând o subvenție de 50.000.000 lei dela Soc. "ROMÂNIA-AMERICANA" și alta de 10.000.000 lei dela BANCA NAȚIONALĂ A ROMÂNIEI. Am avut prudența să angajem acest fond, achiziționând hârtia necesară tiparului și executând clișeele. Cu chipul acesta, putem spune că am salvat fondul I.P. VOITEȘTI de 60.000.000 lei, care altfel ar fi fost și el înghițit de abisul blocării stabilizării? (rap. Secretarului General).

Ca urmare, la data integrării A.S.R. (efectiv la 12 Aug. 1948) în Noua ACADEMIE a Republicii Populare Române (Decret-lege din M.Of. 113 bis din 13 Iunie 1948), între lucrările de publicat ale fostei Academii de Științe s'a găsit și dactilograma (448 pag. cu 98+2 planșe și fotografii) citatei lucrări, operă epocală a marelui geolog și profesor universitar Dr. Ion.P.-VOITEȘTI, membru fondator al A.S.R.; și care ca Președinte al Sec.VI de Geologie, Mineralogie și Geografie, a condus neîntrerupt lucrările acestei secțiuni, cu autoritate și suflet, dela fundare și până la decesul lui accidental, la 4 Octombrie 1944.

Imprimarea lucrării a fost mereu întârziată, din cauza imposibilității de a angaja o lucrare atât de mare, cu durată lungă de executare, cu tipografiile, care luptau fără isbândă cu salturile considerabile dela o zi la alta ale costului mâinii de lucru, determinate de devalorizarea rapidă a leului. Astfel au rămas în păstrarea A.S.R. hârtia necesară tiparului (s'a contat și pe un rezumat francez anexat lucrării), și o parte din clișee în zinc (29 buc.), atâtea câte s'au mai putut executa cu fondurile disponibile devalorizate, până la data stabilizării.

Fig. 4. Facsimile of the first page of the report of the Romanian Academy about Ion Popescu-Voitești's book.

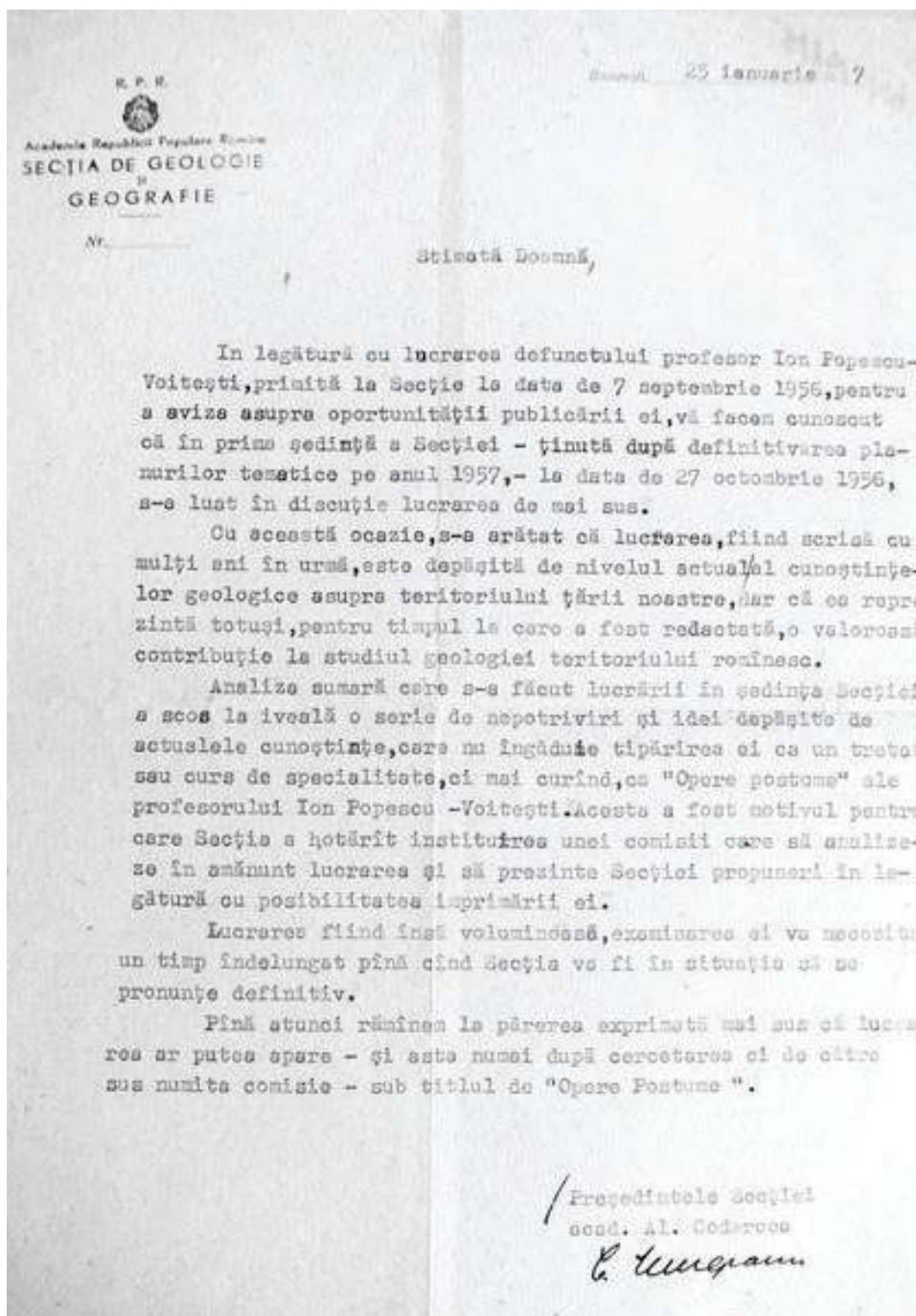


Fig. 5. Facsimile of the letter of the Romanian Academy addressed to Elena Popescu-Voitești signed by Gh. Murgeanu.

Stimate Doamule Murgeanu,

29 februarie 1956
 7 septembrie 1956
 27 septembrie 1956
 25 ianuarie 1957

 5 noiembrie 1958

Ieraltorii vă rog să încep prin această înșiruire de date -care, desigur, știți la ce se referă; și cred că între 25 ianuarie 1957 și 5 noiembrie 1958 m-ați mai onorat cu două vizite, răspunzând astfel scrisorilor mele ale căror date nu le mai știu.

Acestate date și timpul ce s-a scurs dela prima până astăzi (trei ani și zece luni) arată cu o dureroasă evidență -dureroasă pentru mine - cât am așteptat și mai ales câtă răbdare am avut -răbdare pe care dacă o calificați ca îngreună, e prea banal și prea puțin spus.

Și, dece am așteptat cu răbdare? Pentrucă de fiecare dată m-ați dat nădejdi, asigurări chiar și m-ați inspirat încredere. De fiecare dată când ați venit la mine, ați avut extraordinară simplitate de a-mi oferi, pe lângă asigurări, cele mai bune bombone din București, iar dulceața lor, vă rog să mă credeți, nu înțrece amărăciunea care s-a strecurat și s-a călărit în sufletul meu, tot așteptând și văzând că nu se face nimic pentru memoria distinsului geolog Voitești.

Și, fiindcă aceasta este situația în prezentul de față, vă rog Doamule Murgeanu cu ultimă insistență să fiți bun a-mi restitui dactilogramă și figurile.

Ironică, în lipsa Dv. îndelungată din țară, ați încredințat dactilogramă unei alte persoane pentru păstrare; cred însă că locul cel mai potrivit ar fi fost în sertarul meu, în loc să stea în alt sertar decit al Dv. dela Academie; aceasta pentru a se evita indiscrețiile.

Veți și lun, vă rog, a-mi comunica unde și când m- pot prezenta spre a o ridica.

Dacă

Fig. 6. Facsimile of the first page of the letter addressed by Elena Popescu-Voitești to Gh. Murgeanu.

17 Septembrie 1959

Dragă stimată Anamă Voitești,

Înapoiat dela Karlory Vary, unde
am fost timpu șpe a-mi îngriji să-
nătatea, am găsit vînduții șpe. Mă
rog să mă iertate că nu voi putea
depeni manuscrisul lucrării pe care
mi-ati încredințat-o la termenul
fixat de șpe și iată le ce.

Anul trecut, în tranșă, cînd se
planificau lucrările ce trebuiau să
apară în 1959, am prezentat șpe nou
lucrarea Profesorului Voitești plenului
Secției V, șpe care fac parte, cu rugă-
mintea de a fi inserate în planul
editorial. Secția a aprobat cererea
mea, lucrarea a fost planificată pentru
1959 și s'a hotărît ca să șpe să șpe
încredințată geografului Gheorghe Popescu,
cercetător la Institutul de Geografie -
Geografie al Secției V. Gheorghe Popescu
este un geolog cu mare experiență, în
vîrstă de șpe 40 ani, și Secția a fost

meu șpe
In șpe pot să șpe că am fost șpe
și al șpe șpe. Mă iertate și că m'am prezentat, în
trecut, cu o primă șpe, șpe șpe.
Primiti în șpe, stimată Anamă Voitești, am-
gurașe vopșetă șpe mea

G. Murgeanu

Fig. 7. Facsimile of the first/last pages addressed to Elena Popescu-Voitești by Gh. Murgeanu.

*Manuscrisul a fost
returnat în redacție (incluzând desenele)*
22.10.1960

Către
EDITURA TEHNICĂ DE STAT.
BUCUREȘTI.

Subsemnata Elena Popescu-Voitestî, văduva profesorului
universitar de Geologie Ion Popescu-Voitestî, domiciliată în
București Calea Moșilor 113 C, raionul Tudor Vladimirescu, peșed
în dactilogramă ultima lucrare a sa „Alcăstuirea geologică a
pământului românesc”, lucrare care a-a văzut încă lumina tipă-
rului.

Îmi permit a o pune la dispoziția Editurii Tehnice de Stat
pentru a fi tipărită ca „lucrare postumă” și rog călduros a se
da atenția ce merită, acestei lucrări și autorului ei.

Profesorul Voitestî a activat în toate domeniile științelor
geologice, aducând contribuțiuni importante atât în domeniul
științific, cât și cel practic-economic; ca încununare a cercetă-
rilor sale științifice și îndelungate, în ultimul an al vieții
- pensionar fiind - a elaborat o lucrare de sinteză scrisă
în dactilogramă: „Alcăstuirea geologică a pământului românesc
lucrare cu numă de mari dimensiuni (450 pagini cu 96 figuri și
hărți), dar și - după cum afirmă specialiștii care au răscălit-o
de o valoare științifică incontestabilă și permanentă prin ma-
terialul documentar ce cuprinde privind geologia pământului
românesc.

Această lucrare reprezintă sinteza întregii sale activi-
tăți științifice în domeniul geologiei și difuzarea ei ar fi
de mare folos specialiștilor, studenților și tuturor celor ce
se interesează de evoluția științei geologice în țara noastră.

Înă în ultima clipă a vieții, a glesuit-o și a pregă-
tit-o, începînd-o gata pentru tipărire, înă prin desprinderea
brutală de viață (4 oct. 1964) nu a putut-o realiza.

Este undea lucrare de acest gen pentru geologia țării
noastre și ea ar pune la îndemîna cercetătorilor pământurilor
țării noastre o serie de date: geologice, tectonice, paleontolo-
gice, stratigrafice, sistematizate și corelate după marile uni-
tăți geologice ale țării noastre.

Iar teoriile Prof. Voitestî, cunoscute, ar putea fi luc-
rate ca bază de discuție între specialiști, ceea ce ar aduce o lum-

- 2 -

nouă și puternic îndrumătoare în alcăstuirea geologică a pământului românesc.

Lucrarea se compune din două părți:

Partea I-a - INTRODUCȚIVA.

A. - Evoluția paleogeografică.
B. - Unitățile structurale.
C. - Alcăstuirea geologică intimă a unităților structurale carpatice.

Partea II-a - DESCRIȚIVA.

A. - Munții Banatului și Cîmpia vestică.
B. - Carpații meridionali și Oltenici.
C. - Carpații meridionali dintre Olă și Prahova.
D. - Depresiunea getică.
E. - Carpații curburii meridionale cu subcarpații și cîmpia din fașă.
F. - Carpații și Subcarpații orientali.
G. - Podiul moldovenesc și Cîmpia moldovenească cu Gurile Dunării.
H. - Dobrogea.
I. - Munții Apuseni.
J. - Basinal Transilvaniei.
K. - Basinal Maramureșului.

Literatura folosită este indicată la finele fiecăruia din aceste capitole.

Lucrarea cuprinde 448 pagini dactilografiate (41 r. a 62 băti) și 96 figuri și hărți.

Și de la sine înțeles că lucrarea treisig șevăntă în ceea ce privește unele date geografice; iar după această operație se va efectua, vă rog călduros să binevoiți a accepta ca această lucrare - „lucrare postumă” - să fie tipărită în Editura Tehnică de Stat, făcînd prin acest și un gest larg de omagiu memoriei unui om care și-a consacrat viața științei și inițierii tinereții în această știință.

În luptă pentru pace!

București.
Calea Moșilor 113 C.
20 martie 1960.

208 Mart-60

Figs. 8 a,b. Facsimile of the letter addressed by Elena Popescu-Voitestî to the State Technical Publishing House in Bucharest, in March, 1960; in 8 b. there are the chapters of Ion Popescu-Voitestî's manuscript.

Stimate Doamnă BĂNCILĂ,

Ca să nu vă răpesc prea mult timp, intru de-a dreptul în subiect - țelul acestei scrisori.

Probabil știți, că soțul meu a lăsat în dactilogramă o lucrare de sine stătătoare, lucrare de dimensiuni mari (450 pagini, cu 98 de figuri și hărți) intitulată : „Alcătuirea geologică a pământului românesc”.

De peste 15 ani, această lucrare stă mustrătoare în diverse sertare, uneori ferită, alteori nu, de ochi indiscreți.

Nu vă spun toată odiseea ei, căci e lungă și-mi produce multă amărăciune.

Acum, recent, un grup mic de tineri geologi au intervenit la mine să o prezint la Editura Tehnică de Stat, rugând să fie tipărită și difuzată.

M-am prezentat cu ea marți în 22 martie a.c. la Editură și am avut impresia că a fost răsfoită cu mult interes pentru cuprinsul ei și cu dorința de a s-a face cunoscute teoriile lui Voitești. Mi-s-a făcut o primire foarte binevoitoare; lucrarea a rămas acolo.

Dar, negreșit această lucrare are nevoie de multe rețușeri, deci încredințată unei persoane competente.

Am fost întrebată pe cine ași recomanda pentru această însărcinare.

Mi-am permis a spune numele Dv. - și numai al Dv.- fără nici un „și”, fără nici un „sau”.....

Dând acest răspuns m-am gândit la relațiile foarte bune care au existat între Dv. și soțul meu, colaborând în cadrul facultății de geologie al Universității din București.

Mi-am adus aminte că el vă prețuia atât ca om, cât și ca om de știință și-mă vorbea totdeauna cu bucurie de această strînsă și bună înțelegere.

Joi în 24 martie a fost o ședință la Editură, ședință în care s-a introdus și această chestiune pe ordinea de zi. Mi-a părut rău că nu ași putut lua parte la această consfătuire, la care s-a vorbit și de lucrare.

Fig. 9. Facsimile of the first page of the letter addressed by Elena Popescu-Voitești to Ion Băncilă, the ultimate hope...

menținerea la el ce construieste cu
tindă și clar viziune o cale nouă în
știința țării sale. Chiar atunci când
ei simulează că ar înțelege aceste
principii noi aplicate în alte părți
ale pământului, le refuză pentru
țara noastră; veșnică secretă fiindu-
le mai bună călăuză.

De aceea Profesorul Voitești a putut
fi apreciat de lumea științifică din
afară granitelor noastre; dar a fost
încorjorat de o atmosferă glacială
în țară.

Totuși Profesorul Voitești va ră-
mâne în sef de seamă nouă!

Amintirea lui va trăi imprimă
cu așera lui.

Domniei Voastre vă exprim cele mai
sincere sentimente de condoleanțe și
de profund regret.

Ștefan Mateescu

Fig. 10. Facsimile of the last page of the letter addressed by Prof. Ștefan Mateescu to Elena Popescu-Voitești, a synthetic point of view of a competent follower on the geological scientist Ion Popescu-Voitești.