

## ***Some Biogeographers, Evolutionists and Ecologists: Chrono-Biographical Sketches***

### **Troll, Carl (Germany 1899-1975)** phytogeography



Photo courtesy of [Stadtarchiv Schaffhausen](http://www.stadtarchiv-schaffhausen.ch/).

Carl Troll was one of the twentieth century's most influential physical geographers, both as an innovative thinker and researcher, and as perhaps the single most important person helping to get German geography--once by far the world's leading school of thought on the subject--back on track after the years of Nazi domination of that country. Troll was already a well-established scientist when he published his landmark 1939 paper introducing the concept and term *Landschaftsoekologie*, which became even better known in its English translation as "landscape ecology." Originally trained as a von Humboldt-influenced botanist, his interests, like Humboldt's, extended to most of the now recognized areas of physical geography, with a decided leaning toward phytogeographical and ecological subjects. He was especially known for his work in periglacial geomorphology, glaciology, high altitude studies, air-photo interpretation, microclimatology, soil structure, ecozonation, plant physiognomy, and, in general, for his systems-level approach to his subjects. Troll managed to survive the war years and in 1947 established at his own expense the journal *Erdkunde*, a leading geography title (he would later found several more titles). He left behind several monographic studies, and several hundred shorter works.

### **Life Chronology**

- born near Wasserburg, Bavaria, on 24 December 1899.
- 1921: Ph.D., University of Munich
- 1925: made lecturer in geography, University of Munich
- 1926: begins three-year period of field work in the Andes
- 1928: awarded the silver medal of the Berlin Geographical Society
- 1933-1934: undertakes field studies of high altitude environments in eastern Africa
- 1936: hired as professor of economic geography by University of Berlin
- 1936: made editor of *Koloniale Rundschau*
- 1937: directs an expedition to the Himalayas; named to the German Academy of Natural Scientists Leopoldina
- 1937: named to chair in geography at the University of Bonn; acts as director of the geographical institute there for over twenty-five years
- 1938: phytogeographical investigations in Ethiopia
- 1939: publishes "Luftbildplan und Ökologische Bodenforschung" in *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, inventing the term "landscape ecology"
- 1946: made dean of the faculty of science at University of Bonn

- 1947: initiates and becomes founding editor of *Erdkunde*
- 1948: visiting professorship at Zurich University
- 1951: receives the Vega Medal of the Royal Swedish Society of Anthropology and Geography
- 1954: visiting professorship at the University of Wisconsin
- 1956: vice-president of the IGU congress in Rio de Janeiro
- 1958: visiting professorship at the University of London
- 1958: publishes his *Grosser Herder Atlas*
- 1959: receives Ritter gold medal of the Berlin Geographical Society
- 1959: publishes his *Die Tropischen Gebirge; Ihre Dreidimensionale Klimatische und Pflanzengeographische Zonierung*
- 1960-1964: president of the IGU
- 1962: awarded Victoria Medal of the Royal Geographical Society, London
- 1965: made professor emeritus at University of Bonn
- 1968: made chairman of the IGU commission on high-altitude geocology
- dies at Bonn, Germany, on 21 July 1975.

### For Additional Information, See:

- Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies*, Vol. 8 (1984): 111-124.
- The Makers of Modern Geography* (1969): 164-166.
- Taxonomic Literature*, Vol. 6 (1986).
- A Question of Place; The Development of Geographic Thought* (1967): 115-120.
- [Geographical Review, Vol. 66\(2\) \(1976\): 234-236.](#)
- [The Geographical Journal, Vol. 142\(1\) \(1976\): 193.](#)

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<http://www.wku.edu/~smithch/chronob/TROL1899.htm>

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