

ON THE WORK OF IOAN MAIORESCU (1811-1864) AT THE CENTENNIAL OF HIS SON TITU MAIORESCU (1840-1917)

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ABSTRACT: *BEYOND A CULTURAL PERSONALITY THE ACTIVITY OF IOAN MAIORESCU HAS LEFT ITS MARK ON EDUCATION, SOCIAL LIFE AND TO A CERTAIN EXTENT DIPLOMACY IN ALL THREE PROVINCES TRANSYLVANIA, WALACHIA AND MOLDAVIA BEFORE THE UNION OF ROMANIA DURING THE 19TH CENTURY. MUCH REVEERED UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY TODAY SEEMS ALMOST FORGOTTEN AND NEGLECTED. ALTHOUGH HIS SON TITU MAIORESCU HAS ENCOMPASSED THE WORK OF HIS FATHER VERY LITTLE REFERENCE IS MADE TO THE MODEL IOAN MAIORESCU'S WORK MIGHT HAVE REPRESENTED TO HIM. REFERENCES AND WRITINGS ON IOAN MAIORESCU HAVE DIMINISHED DURING THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY ALTHOUGH THE WORK OF TITU MAIORESCU HAS BENEFITED OF AN INCREASED ATTENTION AS TIME PASSED THOUGH THE POLICY OF EDITING A COMPLETE SET OF HIS WRITINGS AVAILABLE IN POPULAR EDITIONS TOO STILL AN IDEAL YET TO BE FULLFILLED. THE PUPROSE OF THIS PAPER IS TO BRING INTO THE FOREPLAN IOAN MAIORESCU'S WORK AS A REFERENCE MODEL TO THE MAGNIFICENT FUTURE WORK OF HIS SON TITU MAIORESCU AS A REMARKABLE PERSONALITY OF THE ROMANIAN MODERN CULTURE.*

KEY WORDS: ROMANIAN CULTURE, ROMANIAN LITERATURE, ROMANIAN PHILOSOPHY.

1. Transylvanian cultural background as a starting point

The social and cultural setting of Transylvania at the beginning of the XIX-th centruy was rather different following two major challanges at least for the Romanians at the end of the XIXth centruy. The first was the so called union with the Holy See alias the Roman Catholic Church by a part of the Transylvanian Romanians formerly from the orthodox church(1698 & 1700)[1] and the second was the repressal of the revolt led by Horea, Cloșca and Crișan (1784) [2]. This first event has never been accepted by the large majority from the Romanian Orthodox Church but the results of this union have always been praised and regarded with high esteem. It was due to this so called union that the posibiliy for the Romanian population of Transylvanin at the time part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were open to attend institutions of education within the major places of the empire such as Wien and Rome to name only the most representative of these. This act of

union was one of the moments that opened the way to the birth of the so called Transylvanian school. By the time Ioan Maiorescu(1811-1964) come into this world the Transylvanian school movement was an ongoing reality. Born in the village of Bucerdea Grânoasă [3] in the proximity of the small town of Blaj [4] this was the centre of the uniate church and a centre that would radiate its ideas far and afield directed to raise the cultural and national consciousness of the Romanians within the Empire and beyond in Moldavia and Wallachia the two provinces unde Otoman influence. This was the setting for a personality that would prompt an example for the overall Romanian culture and above all this will be follow by his son Titu Liviu Maiorescu(1840-1917) as the most representative personality and founder of Romanian modern culture.

2. Training, formation and work in education and social field

It would be difficult and inappropriate to compare the training and education's ways of those days with the ways of today. However one key word which would describe best the situation for Ioan maiorescu would be a diverse experience. He has attended the gymnasium and a one year course in Philosophy in Blaj also other courses in philosophy in Cluj and Oradea, seminary in Pest and the viennese Augustineum Institute. This period is marked by oscilations between philosophy and theological subjects but it was the philosophical course in oradea that has prompted the bishop Vulcan to describe him as a „*true Mecena of all talents*” [5] and to recommend him to the Theology faculty in Pest. He has chosen not to follow an ecclesiastical career and it is worthy to appreciate his decision not to follow further theological studies in Wien. This aspect has been thouroughly researched and explained by dr. Coriolan Suciu [6]. But beside speculations, intrigues and preferences there is one aspect which has not been emphasyzed so far and that is the relevance of personal religious experience. May be it is the moment to underline the fact that in comparison to his potential he might have recognized the limits of the ecclesiastical system in from of his professional ideals to say so. This is not the first example in the history of culture and civilisation of various people and nations were theology's efficiency has been turned down in favour of other types of activities and professions more efficient to the realities of the day. In this line Ioan Maiorescu might be counted as a perfect example. His path followed various locations in all three Romanian provinces where he has taken various duties preponderent in the field of education and in the service of Romanians. His first destination was Cerneți at the time the county capital town of Mehedinți (1836-1837), than teacher and inspector of Central School in Craiova(1837-1842), teacher at the Socola Seminary in Iași(Iassy), a return to Craiova (1843-1848), teacher of Critical History and Statistics at „St. Sava” College in București (Bucharest) and director of Public Instruction Eforia, teacher of History at Superior School of Letters in București (Bucharest). Other important places his activity has been linked are Brașov, Sibiu and Giurgiu. Apart of his activity related strictly to education, teaching, director, supervisor and inspector he was involved in a wide range of cultural associations and committees of which Frăția (6) and Astra (7) are the most representative, he has supported the foundation of the Central Library in Bucharest, the Museum of Antiquities, the founding to Romanian Academic Society. It will be only a partial view to leave aside his other activities which were concerned with the ideals of the Revolution of 1848, of the union of Walachia and Moldavia in 1859 and his activity in the field of education and culture during the reign of prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza. His activity in the field of diplomacy specially for Austria, Prussia and Hungary has been one of the most prolific kind. He has been entrusted a similar mission in Frankfurt as I. Ghica had in Constantinopol and A.G. Golescu in Paris namely ot raise the interest of gain the support of the “*German world*” in defense of the Romanian revolution against a foreign intervention. Therefore his task in Frankfurt was to promote the idea

of union of “*all Romanians*” [8]. His activity in Frankfurt has not been limited only to the Germanic space together with A.G. Golescu they addressed the National Assembly of France and draw attention to other European powers such as Great Britain to the situation of danubian principalities. Although with no immediate results these missions opened the way to a diplomatic tradition that would bear fruits in the decades to come.

3. Ioan Maiorescu legacy and the work of Titu Maiorescu

Born under the family name of Trifu but under the spell of remarkable personalities from the Transylvanian school such as Petru Maior (1761-1821) Ioan has changed and adopted as surname a derivative from his patron name becoming Maiorescu. This has proved to be a very strong existential referential and it proved very strong in the life and career of his son Titu Liviu Maiorescu (1840-1917). Ioan Maiorescu work can be summarized in several key terms education, culture and diplomacy. When discussing his educational work we have to discriminate between the teaching and managerial tasks and the actual contents issue. Teaching and managerial tasks have been observed in the organization of various institutions and a system approach to instruction meanwhile the content issue has been concerned with History of Romania, of Romanians and linguistic aspects. The linguistic approach has been an important issue in the European thought at the end of XVIII-th century and during the XIX-th century and the works of Rousseau and Herder have been influential in this respect. Ioan Maiorescu has been familiar with the work of Herder and German philosophers of the time. His work edited by his son *Itinerary in Istria* is a proof of the application of such philosophical approaches [9]. This aspect of Herder's thought is also affirmed by Nicholas Boyle in his magnificent and panoramic enterprise on the biography of Goethe: „*The chain of culture that joins together the nations of the human race is a chain whose links are originalities. Herder's theory of language both justifies the propagation of national culture, embodied in a national language, by giving it the status of participation in a natural and universal human cause, and at the same time encourages the individual linguistic and literary spontaneity as the means by which great cause is served*” [10]. To support this important trend we have only to think of his son's studies „*Beția de cuvinte*” („*Drunkenness of words*”), first and second study of linguistic pathology published in *Revista contemporană* (1873) [11] worthy of a more than Herderian application to Romanian language. Titu Maiorescu's contribution to Romanian language and literature has encompassed the popular syntagma of „*theory of forms without a background*” and one has to think only of the long line of poets and writers that came under his spell not to mention the generations of disciples in philosophy such as Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, Ion Petrovici, Petre Paul Negulescu and literary criticism such as Mihail Dragomirescu and Eugen Lovinescu. We can draw another parallel line between the managerial competencies to use an actual syntagma and Titu Maiorescu's involvement in the reform of instruction and education. The education through culture cannot be discussed in the absence of *Junimea* society and movement and the literary review *Convorbiri literare* (*Literary conversations*). The social and political accomplishments of Titu Maiorescu cover a whole range of actions and positions from that of prime minister to strategic thinker and educator of political class activity sustained by his comprehensive volumes of parliamentary discourses that aimed to build a more responsible political class in accordance with the ideals of the nation.

4. Reminiscences for today

Despite the fact that there are no available fashionable set of complete editions of works for any of the two personalities or comprehensive biographies it has to be mentioned that there are a lot of

accomplishments regarding both of these aspects. The approaches to the works of both Ioan and Titu Maiorescu have to be regarded in the cultural and historical context of Romania otherwise a superficial appreciation has to be dismissed from the start. Although the period regarding both thinkers covers over two centuries in time there has been a constant concern with the work and works of both of them and the level of interpretation was determined by the moment and the specialist who performed it. May be it is only after such a long period and an accumulation of editions and interpretative works and biographies that one can reflect upon an hermenutic of the works of Ioan and Titu Maiorescu. The other aspect is that the work of them has been mainly treated separatly and Titu Maiorescu is much more approached overshadowing his parent. If from a hermeneutical perspective neither one work on the Romanian history of the period is whitout reference to both of them. What it is still missing is a more holisitc approach of the work of both of them not being seen from a separate perspective but rather as a continuation at a higher level. From a biographical perspective Ioan Maiorescu has been celebrated at his centennial by the massive biographical study by N. Bănescu and V. Mihăilescu [12], another biography in a lower key was that of Marin Stoica [13] and in after the year 2000 the biography Nicolae A. Andrei and Barbu Paul – Emanoil [14]. The efforts to preserve the memory of Ioan Maiorescu work in the village of Bucerdea Grânoasă are due to the Greek Catholic priest Mr. Szilagy Mihai whoe has written and editied several versions of a well documented biography and has also written a monographic study of Bucerdea Grânoasă [15]. His zeal for preserving the personality of Ioan Maiorescu is worthy of appreciation also by collaborating with the local secondary school which bears the name of Ioan Maiorescu and where in the school library the documentary center displays various works of the two thinkers [16]. Of particular interest is the small book of Mr. Szilagy Mihai that presents the visit of the poet Mihai Eminescu to Bucerdea Grânoasă which was determined by the particular acquaintance of Ioan Maiorescu and the poet [17]. In fact the relation of Mihai Eminescu and both Ioan and Titu Maiorescu is one of the most stupendous events in the history of Romanian language and literature.



Documentary display “*Remarkable personalities of Romanian culture originallz from Bucerdea Grânoasă, Ioan Mairoescu - Titu Mairoescu*” in the School Library from Secondary School “Ioan Mairoescu” in Bucerdea Grânoasă, Conty of Alba - works on and about Ioan Mairoescu and several volumes from The Journal of Titu Mairoescu – photo by the author during documentary visit early 2017. By far Octav Ionescu [18], Gh. Pârnuță[19] and Nicolae Andrei are the most prolific in research on Ioan Mairoescu either in the history of Romanian pedagogy or various monographic studies such as those of Nicolae A. Andrei[20]. His monograph contains also the best bibliography and resources books for a more comprehensive and in depth biography and further study of Ioan Mairoescu.



The statue of Ioan Maiorescu in Craiova oriented towards the National College “Carol I” – photo by the author June 2017

The memory of Ioan Maiorescu has been preserved also through the name of various schools such as the high school of Craiova at present National College Carol I which for a while it was named after Ioan Maiorescu, the statue erected by public subscription nor stands in front of two national colleges in Craiova “Carol I” and “Elena Cuza”, initially being placed in the Romanescu public park[21]. Educational institutions from Giurgiu and Aiud have also been named after Ioan Maiorescu. Various school magazines edited by students and teachers have been issued specially the ones of the colleges in Giurgiu and Craiova and various other memorabilia has been issued periodically.



Memorial plaques on the side wall of National College “Carol I” from Craiova marking the place where Ioan Maiorescu lived for a period of time in Craiova(left) and marking the place where Titu Maiorescu was born(right), erected by the Foundation-Fundația “Serisul Românesc” - photo by the author , June 2017.

Above all the centennial of his son Titu Maiorescu is an occasion not only to bring forward a work with educational, philosophical and social implications but also to reconsider various other facets of it and to approach it as a transitional personality of the pre-modern Romanian culture but to consider it and him as a truly model of contemporary thinkers who has been able to perform

more duties and tasks than we are capable to think no matter how much empathic character we would demonstrate and to be aware of how much of the present we owe to him.

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