

LUMEN 2014

Profile of an East-European Thinker. Dimitrie Cantemir's Humanism

Tomiță Ciulei^{a,*}^a Valahia University, Târgoviște, Independenței Avenue, 130104, Romania

Abstract

The work of Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723), though of an exceptional amplitude, is (still!) almost unknown today. Unknown to the European culture, unknown even to the Romanian culture in which he originates, at least as a pattern. A prince and a musicologist, an encyclopaedist and a historian, a composer and musicologist and a linguist as well, an ethnographer and philosopher at the same time, Cantemir is one of the most significant intellectual figures of late 17th-early 18th century Europe. The present study aims to reveal a part of his philosophical thinking, which places him, on the one hand, in the thick of humanism, and, on the other, in early Enlightenment. Cantemir's philosophical thinking is a unique form of combining oriental and western thinking, logico-rational thinking and the esoteric one, it is, in fact, one of the first ways of manifestation of what we would later call: *universal spirit*.

© 2014 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>).

Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of LUMEN 2014.

Keywords: humanism; knowledge; truth; authentic man; esotericism.

1. On the destiny of Cantemir's writings

Frequent attempts have been made to place D. Cantemir's thinking if not in full esotericism, at least next to those thinkers influenced by initiatic societies. It is one of the possible extremely important dimensions of this great mind's thinking, although, once immersed into the research of many texts about his work, I found that there are no incontestable proofs that he had belonged to a certain initiatic order (Petrescu, 2013: 54), or to a secret or discreet organisation (Turliuc: 2010). All evidence is indirect (Petrescu, 2013: 54).

* Corresponding author. Tel.: 0040732338075

E-mail address: ciulei@valahia.ro

I have stated above that Noica (1967) thought this nation's cultural history to be resting upon two pillars: Eminescu and Cantemir. And still, issuing a complete series of Dimitrie Cantemir's works emerged as a cultural project ever since the 19th century, when the issue of recovering this great spirit of universality was being raised. The first venture belongs to the Romanian Academic Society (in late 19th century) which aimed to publish Cantemir's work in eight volumes. Essentially, this project resumed that of Mihail Kogălniceanu and Constantin Negruzzi who, 30 years before, had deemed it crucial for our history to publish the prince's full work. They were thinking about a complete work, in nine volumes, announcing their intention in *Albina Românească* magazine, issued on 15 December 1838, when they stated that the title of this revival would be: *Operile întregi ale prințului Dimitrie Cantemir*. It was an endeavour to popularise Cantemir's works. The editors were not interested either in reproducing the original manuscripts, or in keeping the chronological order in which the texts had been written, but were trying to circulate, within our literature and culture, translations of foreign versions of the prince's work. The project actually started in 1871 when Al. Papiu Ilarian was charged with the task of supervising the publication of the Latin text of *Descriptio Moldaviae*. Six years later, Gr. C. Tocilescu left for Russia to find and copy (by hand!) Cantemir's manuscripts. Thus, in 1901, the ninth volume of Cantemir's works, dedicated to *Hronicul vechimei a romano-moldo-vlahilor*, was issued.

Why this recourse in the history of the endeavour of recovering the prince's work? To show that Cantemir's destiny in Romanian culture was not in the least as outstanding as his intellectual, encyclopaedic and universal magnitude of his work would have required. For example, the 1901 edition of *Hronicul vechimei a romano-moldo-vlahilor* was, for 98 years (until 1999), the only edition that circulated in Romania.

Moreover, the first critical edition of *Istoria ieroglifică* appeared in 1965 at *Editura Pentru Literatură*, under the supervision of P.P. Panaitescu. In 1973, the year of Cantemir's 300th anniversary, a new project was initiated, under the patronage of the Romanian Academy. A new project resulting in the publication of *Complete Works*, this time in critical editions, a unitary project under the guidance of academician Virgil Căndea. Unfortunately, this venture was not completed, and in 2003, under the direction of Eugen Simion, the publication of Cantemir's works in *Opere fundamentale* started. It is the most remarkable project, but by 2011, when I stopped my studies on the publication of Cantemir's work, only the first volume had appeared. A particularly important project concerning Dimitrie Cantemir's work is that carried out by Ion Deaconescu and Constantin Barbu, with the financial support of "Tudor" Cultural Foundation. This project debuted in 2010 and aims to print Cantemir's complete manuscripts. At present, *Integrala Manuscriselor Cantemir* has 40 volumes (Tudor, 2013: 43-45).

I understand there is going to be a critical edition both for some of Cantemir's still unpublished texts and for texts that have appeared in magazines for which there is a scientifically outdated version. Such texts are:

- *Manifesti palatini terrarum Moldaviae Demetrius Cantemir dei gratia advitalis palatinus terrarum Moldaviae;*
- *Monarchiarum physica examinatio;*
- *Loca obscura in Cathechisi quae ab anonymo authore slavico idiomate edita et Pervoe ucenie otrokom intitulata est;*
- and..... *Sacrosanctae scientiae indepingibilis imago*

And since we have mentioned *Sacrosanctae* (that further in this paper shall be referred to under this name), we reach the light of prince's philosophical and esoteric thinking. It is also the text that has been left among the last when it came to interpretation and knowledge. And perhaps not by accident, for often truth hides in order to be discovered through a hermeneutic effort. And after all isn't this one of the dimensions of the effort that characterises the Masonic order? Although we shall extensively return to *Sacrosanctae*, I would still like to quote Dan Botta who, on 1 May 1942, wrote in an article titled *O expresie a românismului – filosofia lui Dimitrie Cantemir*, published in *Dacia* magazine, that "From this vision of Necessity, distinct in the history of peoples, Cantemir rose to a vision of metaphysics, structure and functions of the world. A book whose Latin manuscript bears the curious title «*Sacrosanctae Scientiae indepingibilis Imago*» — closes this vision. It is a book that has been forgotten in the Academy archives and that no scholarly society has approached so far, a book which would probably have remained long unknown had not been for the pious hand of Mr. Nicodim Locusteanu — who recently has brought it to light, in a Romanian version. Its nebulous, dramatic, almost infinite style seems to be that of a hierophant" (Botta, 1942).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1113739>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1113739>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)