

**GLIMPSES OF MEMORIES –
ACADEMICIAN CRISTOFOR SIMIONESCU¹**

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Already 10 years have elapsed since the Founder of this Journal passed away. *The Professor*, as all of us used to call him, has re-founded our Journal after a long period of time, and based it in Iași. This has been indeed a major feat and a coup for that epoch, when the publication of all journals depended, for every new issue, on the “approval” from outside the editorial boards and journal managers.



Professor Cristofor Simionescu in his office, around 1965

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It is unanimously known that, for several decades, academician Cristofor Simionescu has been one of the most representative personalities of the city of Iași and, equally, of the Romanian science. He signed the life of generations of young students and he created long-lasting institutions. He founded research teams and journals, he laid the foundations of a highly valuable School of Chemistry, he formed characters, he was always and swiftly a most correct judge of authentic values, a clever architect of the surrounding university and scientific world; he immediately recognized the fake and the varnish, distinguishing it from what is really valuable in various fields of activity.

To characterize this personality in only one sentence, I should say that, among all great scientists I met and came to know quite well along the years, acad. Simionescu showed the highest regard for teachers, for school, for culture and science – exactly in this order of importance and in capital letters. His immense, exceptional respect for the school and for authentic, devoted scholars explains his severity towards those who only mimicked science.

For some time, I had the chance to have my laboratory on the hall of the old Faculty of Industrial Chemistry; more than that, teaching courses at discipline “Materials for Electronics”, I used to have frequent discussions with my young chemistry colleagues. Fortunately, one of the laboratories of academician Cristofor Simionescu was also there, so that he honoured me with attention even before my age of 30 years. I still remember how, in the beginning of the 80’ies, he urged the young scholars to do genuine research, and not be lost in trifling matters. He loved helping younger scientists and generously used much of his time to kindly steer their interest in science and passion for research. His advice was always candidly given, and for that reason it was accepted, even when it was uncomfortable.

He had the special gift to anticipate and trace the directions to be followed in research and to select the people capable of developing them, while also possessing the capacity and power to show and impose to them, when needed, the right way. I recall that professor Laurențiu Turic, for a long time coordinator of the specialization and head of the Department of Electronics at the Faculty of Electrotechnics of Iași told me that academician Cristofor Simionescu sent him, practically against his will, to attend specialization at the University of Illinois, after which the same Professor Simionescu supported his election as coordinator of the above-mentioned Chair. I know directly from Professor Cristofor Simionescu that even if, personally, he might have not liked some of the great professors of the school of Polytechnics, but had appreciated their professionalism, he helped them – even those with “political stigma” – to remain in the university, a piece of information subsequently confirmed by one of those persons.



At the Iași Branch of the Romanian Academy, with acad. Al. Zub
and prof. Eusebiu Zbranca – about 1990

Professor Simionescu acted as an initiator of institutions and remained a school creator after the year 1990, as well – at the same loftiest, institutional standards: he played an active part in the creation of several institutions and centers of the Iași Branch of the Romanian Academy, which he presided for numerous years. I know this at first hand, from the decisions taken in the Bureau of the Iasi Branch of the Academy, to which I used to participate and where he initiated, elaborated and supported the proposals forwarded for the creation of new scientific units. Few people know that he had a decisive role in the foundation of the Institute of Theoretic Informatics within the Iași Branch of the Academy. I remember the late afternoon in which he came to my laboratory (from time to time, I had the honour of receiving such visits...) and asked me whether the Iași Branch of an institute from Bucharest could be transformed into an institute of the Academy, whether this would have sufficient scientific surface, permitting its development as a representative academic center, and also whether its name should also include an applicative term – as already suggested by the late professor Dan Gâlea –, or to follow only a theoretical direction. He knew of my close relations with all

researchers in informatics (many of them my former students), as I used to organize, as early as the year 1987, a joint seminar devoted to Artificial Intelligence. He began quite abruptly, telling me sincerely that academician M. Drăgănescu had asked him whether he could create an institute of informatics at the Iași Branch of the Academy and that, prior to giving an answer, he wanted to have several opinions on the matter, outlining that my suggestion would be valuable to him (I was simply in the seventh heaven of delight when he told this to me...). Quite cautiously, I recognized that this would be an important step forward for the science of our city, thinking firstly of the valuable team of specialists created and coordinated by professor Dan Gâlea. My suggestion was that the name of the institute should include a theoretical term, the more so that it would be an academic unit. Soon after that, the Institute of Theoretical Informatics was created. I am reasonably sure that, when discussing with academician Mihai Drăgănescu, professor Simionescu recalled my name, as well, as, about two years later, acad. Drăgănescu recalled this to me, making me responsible for the Institute to the foundation of which I had contributed.

The last time I saw academician Cristofor Simionescu he said to me in low voice: the little piece is not working properly, any more. And he put his hand on the left of his chest.

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Academician Cristofor Simionescu loved this Journal and devoted much time to it. I can testify that he spent innumerable hours in the office of the journals he created, together with the highly professional secretaries of the Editorial Boards, Elena Rusu and Cristina Irimia. In fact, he preferred to stay more in the Editorial office of the journals than in his more official bureau of President of the Iasi Branch of the Romanian Academy.

To understand the importance of the revival of this Journal, a few words about its history are needed. "Since 1879, the activity of the Scientific Section of the Romanian Academy prospered. Also since 1879, the Annals of the Academy included a significant number of memoirs and scientific communications from various scientific theoretical and applied domains, like mathematics, geology, anthropology, chemistry, botany, agricultural sciences etc." (slightly paraphrased and translated citation from Dimitrie Sturdza, at the celebration of 25 years since the creation of the Romanian Academy (Sturdza, 1891). Therefore, in 1879 the Annals of the Romanian Academy effectively evolved into three sub-sections; the

third one constituted the origin of our Journal. However, it is only in the 1886–1887 volume that the title “Annals of the Scientific Section” appeared; this re-organization justified the subtitle “Annals – Series II”, even if no independent journal “Annals of the Scientific Section” with series number 1 ever existed. The current title: “Memoirs of the Scientific Section”, with no mention of the “Annals”, was established after a new re-organization of the editorial activity of the Romanian Academy, in 1923. As a sign of continuity, the volume of “Memoirs of the Scientific Section” published in 1923 mentions on its cover “Series III, Tome I”. This series was discontinued before WWII, and not revived after that³. It is the merit of academician Cristofor Simionescu to have taken the initiative of recreating it, as Series IV of the old flag journal of the scientific activity developed in the Romanian Academy. He directed this Journal as Chief Editor until his passing away.

We thankfully devote this special issue to his memory.



First issue of Series IV of MSS Journal, initiated by Prof. Cristofor Simionescu

³ For historical details, see the references.

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