

ACADEMICIAN ION TH. SIMIONESCU

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Ion Simionescu promoted and lauded the Romanian Academy, highlighting its involvement in all fields of education, culture and science, as the essence of its lofty role. More than any of his predecessors, Ion Simionescu achieved a natural, necessary and close relation between the Academy and the people it represents. Today, we refer to Ion Siomionescu as a “scholar and educator of the nation” – a mere act of pious gratitude and reverence towards the great value of a remarkable and gifted professor, who continues to watch upon and guide us.

Keywords: Ion Simionescu, Romanian Academy, academic lectures.

The gallery of outstanding Romanian educators would be incomplete without Professor Ion Simionescu, as history has blessed us with a “scholar and educator of the nation” [1,2] whose example will endure in Romanian culture and science, to be remembered and emulated for centuries.

Much has been written about Professor Ion Simionescu, yet all seems insufficient, since the superlatives, epithets and comparisons used appear as powerless in encompassing all nuances of such a complex activity. Many of those who have written about him – disciples, collaborators, researchers, dedicated or occasional writers [1-5] – could only approximate the sheer size of his encyclopedic work. Dividing it into sections and analyzing it, irrespective of how thorough such analyses may be, they can only provide a series of fragmented images, undoubtedly equally useful and necessary, yet more or less in agreement with what we respectfully and admiringly refer to today as “the life and work of Professor Ion Simionescu” [1,5–7]. This does not mean, however, that the work of Professor Ion Simionescu is difficult to analyze and comprehend, on the contrary. It may be that the extraordinary volume of data presented in an unparalleled panoramic style [8,9], with disarming clarity and harmony, coupled with his emblematic and imposing profile, which transcends his work and commands respect, prevents us from doing so [2,4,7], or it may be that many of those who

attempt at writing about Professor Ion Simionescu are not fully prepared to understand the clear, profound and harmonious thinking of a genius.

It is puzzling, truly regrettable and even outrageous, one might say, that the monumental scientific work of Ion Simionescu has been overlooked for so long time. Even today, the efforts made at bringing his personality and work into the forefront are sporadic and, often, timid. The present study aims at joining the attempts made, in recent years, to contribute to promoting the work of Professor Ion Simionescu, for better knowing and appreciating its true value.

Ueber die Geologie des Quellgebietes der Dimbovicioara (Rumänien).

Von Ion Simionescu.

Mit 4 Zinkotypen im Text.

Vorwort.

Das von mir im Sommer 1896—1897 mit der Unterstützung der rumänischen Akademie der Wissenschaften studierte Gebiet befindet sich zwischen dem östlichen Ende der Fogarascher Alpen und der krystallinischen Insel des Leotagebirges. Die Grenzen dieses Gebietes sind folgende:

Gegen Norden die Landesgrenze, gegen Westen der Rand der Fogarascher Alpen, gegen Süden der Dragoslavebach und gegen Osten eine Linie, die von dem Ghimbavulbache bis an dem westlichen Abhang des Stitliciberges gezogen ist. Ausserdem wurde theilweise des Vergleiches wegen, theilweise als Ergänzung, die längs des rechten Ufers der Dimbovitza von Dragoslavelo bis Stoienești sich erstreckende Kalkmasse von Matiesch näher untersucht und die Umgebung von Bădeni, Nămkesti in Rumänien und von Kronstadt in Siebenbürgen besucht.

Bei der geologischen Aufnahme dieses Gebietes hatte ich manche Schwierigkeiten zu überwinden; die grösste war der Mangel einer guten topographischen Karte. Mir stand nur die österreichische Spezialkarte (Blätter: Törzburgerpass und Kimpulung, Zone 24, Col. XXXII; Lisa und Zernesti, Zone 23, Col. XXXII) zur Verfügung, auf welcher der in rumänisches Gebiet fallende Theil fehlerhaft ist und seit der ersten Aufnahme nicht mehr revidirt wurde. Für eine allgemeine Orientirung ist die Karte hinreichend, für eine geologische Specialaufnahme ist sie jedoch vollkommen ungenügend.

Bei der Bearbeitung des Materiales wurden mir manche belehrende Rathschläge seitens meines hochverehrten Lehrers Herrn Prof. Ed. Suess zu theil, wofür ich demselben meinen verbindlichsten Dank ausspreche.

Ebenso bin ich den Herren Dr. G. v. Arthaber, Privatdocent und Assistent an dem palaeontologischen Institute, und meinem guten Freunde Othenio Abel, Assistent an der Lehrkanzel für Geologie, zu Dank verpflichtet; Herrn Dr. v. Arthaber für seine Bereit-

Jahrb. d. k. k. geol. Reichsanstalt, 1898, 48. Band, 1. Heft. (Ion Simionescu.) 2

First page of the doctoral dissertation of I. Simionescu [1]

A key moment in the career of Professor Ion Simionescu was undoubtedly when the Romanian Academy, through the providential involvement of its illustrious representatives, contributed to the shaping of one of the greatest figures of Romanian science and culture. It happened in 1895, when Ion Simionescu (supported by Professor Petru Poni) won a “Vasile Adamachi” scholarship (granted only to eminent students for specialization abroad) in order to attend doctoral studies in Vienna [1]. In his support letter, Professor Petru Poni highlighted the

remarkable skills of Ion Simionescu as a researcher in the field of Natural Sciences: “The Academy is providing the means for you to fulfill your desire and move forward exclusively through your own effort and qualities, and the only obligation it demands is that which any honest man asks of himself, namely doing your duty.” [1]. Ion Simionescu did, indeed, fulfill his obligations to the Romanian Academy, and not only, he did this shortly and remarkably, through his “own effort and qualities.” At the end of his doctoral studies in Geology and Paleontology (1895-1898), he defended, at the University of Vienna, the doctoral dissertation titled *Über die Geologie des Quellengebietes der Dâmbovicioara – Rumänien (Geological and Paleontological Research on the Dâmbovicioarei Basin)*, which he had developed under the guidance of the illustrious Professor E. Suess, thus receiving the title of Doctor of Philosophy in Geology [2,7]. The value of Ion Simionescu’s dissertation was soon thereafter duly recognized by both the Romanian and foreign academia, which paved the road for future research [3,6].

Various monographies and articles state that Professor Ion Simionescu began his collaboration with the Romanian Academy in 1907, when he became a corresponding member [4,5,10]. In fact, he cooperated with distinguished members of the Romanian Academy from the very beginning of his career, in various scientific fields (Geology, Paleontology, Geography, Biology, etc.), as well as in organizing, developing and promoting the Romanian educational system [1,3,7]. The results of these collaborations are visible and undeniable. Moreover, the Geology and Geography programs at the Universities of Iași and București, as well as the doctoral schools created within these academic centers, were founded with the unmediated support of the Romanian Academy, even if its contribution was not directly and univocally stipulated in various monographies, articles or documents [2,5,6].

The election of Professor Ion Simionescu as corresponding member and, in 1911, full member of the Romanian Academy, represents the “official” recognition of his merits as skilled researcher and eminent cultural figure [11,12]. In his speech titled *The evolution of scientific culture in Romania*, delivered on May 24th, 1913, upon his admission to the Romanian Academy, Professor Ion Simionescu stated that: “the duty they have toward science and country demands that those who serve science sacrifice a portion of their activity toward educating the masses.” [9]. This was, indeed, one of the fundamental coordinates of the life and work of this remarkable personality who, above all other duties, placed himself in the devoted service of the highest academic forum – the education, culture and science of his nation.

The uninterrupted and prodigious activity, the national and international prestige and encyclopedic nature of his work have led to the election of Ion Simionescu as President of the Scientific Section of the Romanian Academy (1928–1931) and then President of the Romanian Academy (1932–1935). In 1941, upon the completion of the mandate of Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, Ion Simionescu was elected President of the Romanian Academy, a position he held until January 7th, 1944 [1,4,10].

As a full member of the Romanian Academy, Ion Simionescu delivered reverent speeches in honor of his predecessors, such as the eulogy for I. Caragiani

(1921) or the commemoration speech of 1936, at the Romanian Atheneum, for Gh. Asachi. The speech he delivered in 1942, at the 50-year commemoration of the death of Grigore Cobălcescu, his professor and mentor, who opened his horizon of knowledge on the geology of the Romanian territory, was particularly ravishing and memorable. The discourses he held at various cultural and scientific events, such as the Jubilee of Romanian Youth (1939), or the opening of the Institute of Universal History (1941), have remained imprinted onto the collective consciousness of the nation, not only due to the profound significance he attributed to the history, culture and science of the Romanian people, but also to the empathy he cultivated for the values he cherished [4,7,10,13].

Ion Simionescu promoted and lauded the Romanian Academy by the presentation of *the richness of its collections* (1931), highlighting the *works accomplished by the Romanian Academy* (1940), as well as by his active involvement in all fields of education, culture and science in the work titled *75 years of activity of the Romanian Academy* (1941), evidencing the essential *Meaning of the Academy* (1941) [4,5,13]. More than any of his predecessors, Ion Simionescu achieved a natural and necessary relation between the Romanian Academy and the people it represents. Today, we refer to Ion Simionescu as a “scholar and educator of the nation” [1,2,7] as a mere act of pious gratitude and reverence toward the great value of a remarkable individual and gifted professor who continues to watch upon and guide us.



The assembly of the Romanian Academy (1912) [1]

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