

DIMITRIE CANTEMIR AND G.W.LEIBNIZ ENCYCLOPEDISTS WITH EUROPEAN VOCATION

Gabriela Pohoățã*

gabriela_pohoata@yahoo.com

***Abstract:** Our analysis has the goal of highlighting the way two biggest thinkers of humanity, one from east, the other from west, pleaded for a united Europe from political, cultural and spiritual point of view, using the scientific and philosophic knowledge in making some political, theological projects confirmed by history, some becoming real.*

***Keywords:** universalism, encyclopedism, theodicy, cognitive paradigm, orthologic paradigm.*

Thinkers with an encyclopedic forming, Cantemir¹ and Leibniz arose into the history of humanity thinking as two personalities with an extraordinary activity that marked both modern and contemporary history of Europe.

The writings of the two thinkers are about various subjects of human knowledge from logics, mathematics, and physics to metaphysics and theodicy, from literature, music, geography, ethnography to judicial sciences, history and politics.

Universal spirits, both Cantemir and Leibniz showed appetite for knowledge for enlargement. It has been almost not even one domain of knowledge that hasn't been explored and represented through their creations, making a genius synthesis between the theoretical and practical dimension of thinking, between tradition and innovation.

A decisive point of view for supporting the universalistic vision of the two thinkers is about shared cultural models.

The one that represented a support for Cantemir was based on Greek and Latin antiquity and oriental culture. The place of Romanian tradition and his membership to universal culture were inside this assembly.

During his activity, Cantemir added information from different models of occidental humanism (especially the Italian & French one). It has to be highlighted the fact that the aspiration towards Occident of this specialist in Orient. He inferred that, the way the past was for the Orient, the future is for Europe.

Scholar, encyclopedist, philosopher, musicologist, ethnologist, diplomat and Romanian politician, Cantemir is considered a marking personality of universal culture. He was the bridge between various cultures: Romanian, Russian and Oriental. His work, mainly written in Romanian or Latin, is a witness of the European vocation of this people, being in the same time a gate towards the rest of Europe.

His contemporary, the German thinker Leibniz, was one of the most productive spirits of the modern world through his universalism about the type of referential personality, not only for his century, but for all times. The idea of Leibniz universalism was highlighted by Diltehey on amid of a genuine history of modern culture: "Leibniz – said Diltehey, is the most universal spirit that the European people created till Goethe. If the highest performance of the philosopher is to bring culture of an époque to self-

* Senior lecturer Ph.D – “Dimitrie Cantemir” Christian University.

¹ Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723) - essay author and treaties in Latin, Greek, Slavonic, Turkish, Russian, Romanian: a truly encyclopedic spirit. He wrote 30 works and only two of them were published before his death.

conscience and to systematic clarity, intensifying the power of these cultures, then no other thinker from Plato & Aristotle made it so broad and creative like this great German philosopher. The powerful forces that coexisted in the culture of the XVII century (the Greek idealism of Plato & Aristotle, the purifying protestant Christianity and the new time science based on nature knowledge) harmonized in this spirit that had a deep power of understanding and prospecting. It seemed that the nature itself was the base of this titanic work².

Leibniz, the author of “Monadology” is more than a savant and a thinker, having the significance of a great originator in various domains of knowledge & actions: the infinitesimal calculus; dynamics; tote (even the idea of “computer”!); the critic method in historiography; logic calculus (and the idea of semantics of logic); the semantics demarche (in its quasi-universal application); the “thinking alphabet”, “the universal grammar”....We shouldn’t neglect Leibniz preoccupy for poetry, music theory, literary theory, for logics and math application in techniques as well as for finding some methods to clarify some unknown languages, projects of medication enlargement and of insurances, medical research plans (especially in his programs for organizing a “Science Academy”).

Mainly, the universalism of his preoccupations his its basis on his activities as a mathematician, jurist, historian, naturalist, technician, geologist, reunited under the construction of a thinking based more on invention than on discovery.

Leibniz work³ contains almost all domains of the possibility of affirmation (theoretical and practical) of the human, going from savant and researcher (in: science and logics, philosophy and theology, mathematics and natural science; linguistic, music and poetry-generally speaking, arts-language sciences, the theory of history; the science of law, of economy and state...) to advisor in economy, foreign policy, theological policy, science organizing and of libraries, information organization,...

It is remarkable the fact that Cantemir and Leibniz were universal spirits not only in a scholar meaning but also through cultural behavior in those times. Their demarche beside great personalities (politic, scientific...) remains significant for the obligation of some savant and, generally speaking, of a man of culture in any period.

So, our analysis has the goal of highlighting the way two biggest thinkers of humanity, one from east, the other from west, pleaded for a united Europe from political, cultural and spiritual point of view, using the scientific and philosophic knowledge in making some political, theological projects confirmed by history, some becoming real. “At the beginning of the XVIIth century, in his *Status Europae incipiente novo seculo* - said Hans Poser in the Congress- Leibniz from 1994 – Leibniz wrote: “*Finis saeculi novom rerum faciam apernit*”. And for us, for the millennium that starts is valid the same thing; because we are also in front of same tasks and that is to really make Europe: to braid the old and the new in a solution of order crisis... Leibniz and Europe- this means more than a congress theme, confronting us with a theme to solve in the next millennium⁴.

What the two savants intended, but also the politicians for **Europe of their time- the idea of a cultural and spiritual union** – remains in the historical horizons of the world as a great project, anyway, to be followed with the chance of being solved (not only a hope).

² W.Diltehey, “Studien zur Geschichte des deutschen Geistes”, in “Gesammelte Schriften”, Bd. III, 4, Aufl., Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht in Gottingen, 1969, p.25

³ A detailed presentation of what he wrote in the sphere of Leibniz main preoccupations: W.Totok, **Handbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie**, Bd.4 (Frankfurt a.M., V.Klostermann 1981, p. 297-374; **Leibniz-Bibliography** (begrundet von K. Muller, hrsg. Von A. Heinekamp, 2.Aufl, 1984, 742p);

⁴ H.Poser,Leibniz und Europa. Einfuhrung in das Kongressthema, in:Leibniz und Europa.VI. Internationaler-Leibniz-Kongress, Hannover, 18, bis 23 iuli 1994: vortrage, II, Teil, 1995, p.16.

The universal-European vocation of our great scholar comes from the fundamental thesis that the Prince of Moldavia always sustained with ability, the one of cultural relations necessity and even political relations between the Orient and Occident.

Moreover, he advances a synthesis Orient-Occident, a coverage of the disruption that is going to be gainful to Europe.

Dimitrie Cantemir identifies Europe with Christianity, the European spirit started to have a shape based on a religious project, attesting the understanding of the entire problematic context that generated this phenomenon later called the spiritual unity of Europe. In perfect harmony with the Romanian thinker, Leibniz dreamed about a harmony of Christian people in Europe⁵. Leibniz saw clearly that one of the biggest sources of the lack of power of German states was the lack of religions unity and absence of spirit of tolerance. Indeed, the role that Leibniz had was more the role of a diplomat than the one of a theologian. Otherwise, a great part of his life Leibniz spend it in the service of some German minor courts where he took advantage of the things offered in order to dedicate his energy to political and religious projects. For example, during his employment in the service of Mainz elector, Leibniz conceived the idea of distracting the ambitions of French expansionists from Germany to Egypt, and was sent in a diplomatic mission to Paris to try to awake the interest of Louis XIVth for this scheme (idea that was never really proposed to the ministry of Louis but was later assumed by Napoleon). After his return from Paris, Leibniz got into the service of Hanover Elector-his last employer, Georg Ludwig, becoming George I after taking Britain's throne. Besides his official duty as a historian and librarian of the court, Leibniz wanted to take care himself of the projects that might lead to the reconciliation between politics and religion. This type of project, to reunite the Catholic and Protestant Churches, was an ambitions plan. Leibniz proved a great intellectual subtlety in his search of finding a formula of doctrine to which both thinkers to agree. On the other hand, recent history of our own time should make us prudent about issuing judge on what is or is not possible on the land of politics because some of Leibniz plans have an almost strange prophetic quality. For example, Leibniz preoccupation to establish a degree of authority for German princes through the Roman Empire prism, anticipated the current preoccupations about nation-states inside a United Europe.

Since 1690, Leibniz addressed to the elector prince of Brandenburg a petition for officially supporting the science. The German elector princes were lying out and imposed "valuable judgments" with the weight of social hierarchy, just the way they had the wright to vote in order to choose the German emperor of the Great Roman Empire. The elector prince of Brandenburg that became king Fredrik of Prussia, decided in 1700 to fund **Societas Regia Scientiarum** (The Royal Society for Sciences), later "Academie der Wissenschaften" of Berlin, whose President is proclaimed Leibniz in 12 July and started to function from 1710.

The scholar prince of Romania, who considered himself "the Unicorn", was chosen in this European club of great intellectuals in 1714. Since then, the interest of European personalities of great scholars is focused towards Dimitrie Cantemir works. Chosen member of the Academy of Berlin at Leibniz proposal, the first Romanian that had this honor, Cantemir is impelled by his German colleagues to write about his people. This is how two Latin works appeared: "Descriptio Moldaviae" and "The Romanian –moldo-vlach chronic", both published postum. Cantemir already made a reputation of European. Getting inside the environment of the great European powers embassies, Cantemir had the occasion of promoting Romanian culture and space. In Europe, Dimitrie Cantemir was accredited, quickly and for good, as the best Ottoman history

⁵ Kuno Fischer, **Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Geschichte der Philosophie**, vol. III, ed. aV-a, Heidelberg, 1920, p.6.

knower, occupying a privileged place in the erudite order for more than a century. It is not known for sure if he met Leibniz in Moscow, or other leading German scholars, called there by Petru the Great. What is for sure, says Constantin Noica, is that Leibniz was considered by his contemporary as a worthy person to collaborate with them (and Dimitrie Cantemir took the initiative of making a Russian Academy, just the way that Leibniz wanted).

Intimate advisor of Petru the Great, position that he had because of the Turkish enmity for the Romanian destinies, after the defeat of Petru the Great – Cantemir passes his last years in the Tsar kingdom because he starts a series of scientific researches or writes about the Mohammedan religion and other themes of general interests. Specialist in oriental affairs, for the occident, Cantemir is the first European from the east. This is why he dominates so easily in the world of Petru the Great. But not even the success from West or the exceptional situation that he has in the East managed to make him forget that he is Romanian. Through him, Romanians touched for the first time in their collective historical existence the level of reflexive self-conscience, getting among “those people that knew what they are and what they want”⁶. In other terms, Dimitrie Cantemir entails for the first time, systematically, an identity meaning of the savant culture, seen as the expression of the Romanian community self-understanding and in the same time as a symbolic totality in whose horizon integrate universal significances of artistic, intellectual and spiritual creations from inside or outside the country.

Without minimizing the encyclopedic field in which Dimitrie Cantemir acted creatively (from physics, geography, archeology and music to sociology, logics or theology), it must be said that deep inside, the Romanian scholar creates a model of philosophical anthropology of Christian inspiration, having the goal of metaphysically justifying the opportunity of being in the world of the Romanian people.

From this perspective, the philosophy is called, in the vision of the prince-philosopher, to build from the inside the Romanian community in order to get a new way of being into the world in accordance to Christian and humanist ideals of those times.

Dimitrie Cantemir is the one that helped to make a great jump in our culture from the non-reflexive traditional model of reporting to the world, to the systematic thinking that has its own ration of being. So, the **Divan...** of Dimitrie Cantemir projects the map of a Romanian aim of wisdom if we think that the Weltanschauung of Cantemir is in concordance with the popular representation (traditionally Romanian) about the world. It is also the reason why this paper is considered the **Manual of wisdom** of the ancient Romanian culture even if, in this period, the Romanian savant culture was a refined expression of popular culture. Therewith, the **Divan** abstracted not only the Romanian mentality of those times but also the cultural context from the Eastern Europe in which we must place from the beginning, in the same way that the spirit of the Occident Reform is mirroring in the **Theodicy essay** signed by Cantemir’s contemporary, Leibniz.

Leibniz is the philosopher par excellence of the European Baroque, his beliefs about grace and monads serving as a philosophical and esthetic foundation of this style and also as a core of an imperial vision and political thinking that distributed roles and models of communication between different “actors”. If not directly, at least indirectly, **Teodiceea**⁷ (with an existing or an absent will) is a treaty of a certain world-wide policy, besides the fact that it serves a state policy order that is the lowest possible bad thing that could happen; anyway, a necessary bad in order to accomplish a bigger good, the equilibrium that is meant to express the one between the almighty God and the moral freedom of human.

⁶ Hegel, “**Lecture of philosophy of history**”, Bucharest, Humanitas, 1997, p.6

⁷ G.W.Leibniz, “**Teodiceea**”, Iasi, Polirom

What Cantemir was for the Romanian people, Leibniz was for Germany. Inside his work, he realized a union between *ars, scientia, philosophia*⁸, unity that the well-known Denis Diderot (*Encyclopedie*, 1765) connected with “this man, that himself brought to Germany so much glory, just the way Plato, Aristotle and Archimedes together did for Greece.”

We can consider them genuine models, a typical accomplishment of values of two personalities that fascinate even nowadays the world.

Leibniz was preoccupied by the problem of Germany's rise, economically and socially speaking, and saw with a particular discernment that the cultural development was detained by the political disruption of the country. A big part of his projects in economy, politics and religious tolerance were conceived by Leibniz in order to unify and modernize Germany. Furthermore, his universalism can be observed as a reconciliation of unification: in philosophy, where he tried reconciliation of modernity and antique; in religion, where he tried reconciliation of Catholics and Protestants; in culture, where he pleaded for reconciliation between philosophy and religion; in politics, where he militated for a united Europe.

Such a complex character, with all those failings and concerns that he stand for in the princely or royal courts where he was a clerk, guest or diplomat, he understood that he had to sustain the feudal-aristocratic order of those times, based on the ideology of the divine-right monarchy (being in opposition to the natural right doctrine that had already appeared) because this is, *de facto*, the best possible, the image of continuity between the metaphysic-theological order of the cosmos and the social and political order from the society, transposition in the social and political life of a pre-established harmony.

The one that Leibniz proposed in 1714 as a member of the Academy of Berlin, Dimitrie Cantemir would be sent to the tsar Petru I (through his son, Serban) in the same year, the text called **Monarchiarum**.... That represented through the erudite way of argumentation “an application in political history of the cyclic evolution theory”. More than that, beyond the attempt of discovering a particular order in the social and political evolution of history that has a cyclic periodicity, *Monarchiarum*... is the attempt of conciliating two attitudes that seem to be opposite, religious and scientific, an interpretation by means offered by the natural science and socio-human science, both of the Holy Scripture and of the ongoing of global policy since the beginning of history and until the moment when this document was written.

Through this study⁹, Dimitrie Cantemir would have been intersected with Leibniz (himself at the court of Petru I in order to advise him about some civil reformations and to propose the project of a Christian federation to conciliate the rivalry between the Occident and the Orient), not only as a advisor of the tsar but also in the methods of natural theology (inspired by the author of “*Teodiceea*”)¹⁰, that he use in this speech.

A natural theology¹¹ that is, however, inside the limits of Christian -orthodox faith because otherwise Dimitrie Cantemir, in a polemic work (***Loca obscura ni Catechisi, quae ab anonymo autore slaveno idiomate edita***) disputes the

⁸ W.Totk, *Die Begriffe ars, scientia und philosophia bei Leibniz- „Leibniz, tradition und Aktualiti”*. V. Internationaler Leibniz-Kongress, 14-19, November 1998.

⁹ Dimitrie Cantemir, “Study about the nature of monarchies”, in “*Studies. The journal of history and philosophy*” (Year IV, January- March 1915).

¹⁰ *Teodiceea* means the doctrine of justifying God; *Essays of Teodicee about the Kindness of God, Human Liberties and the Origins of Evil*, book written under the influence of the queen of Prussia, Sofia Carlota.

¹¹ **Natural theology** – the assembly of rational researches about the existence of God, of his nature and connections with the world, term that is synonym with <<**teodiceea**>>;

Lutheran tendencies affirmed by some Russian theologian, defending the traditions of orthodox civilization.

It is very important to highlight the fact that, even if Dimitrie Cantemir confesses his orthodox faith, being a great savant just like Leibniz, he joins the line of accordance between faith and intellect, theology and philosophy just like the German thinker. More than that, both thinkers share a philosophical vision about divinity, Leibniz being an exponent of modern rationalism, and Dimitrie Cantemir that emphasize the human being rationality is preparing the enlightenment. We bring the following texts in order to support the highlighted similarity:

“But we don't need the revealed Faith to know that there is a unique principle of all things, perfectly good and wise. The intellect offers it to us through infallible demonstrations and, consequently...we will see that what we tend to blame is according to the most dignifying plan”; in one word: nous **verrions** et ne **croirions** pas seulement que ce que Dieu a fait est le meilleur”¹²

The same accent on intellect is observable also to our scholar, to whom the human is a rational being, a “capable idiot” in a Cantemir way of expressing and the intellect is “the universal given into the human”, his own, his datum. This is how we can explain the exclusive interest of the philosopher, the central “character” from **Divanul**, “for what is given universal into the human being and why the same wise man is a shape-giver to the soul (the intellect)”. In almost the same way, Leibniz in **Monadology**, thesis 29, he highlights: “...the thing that distinguish us from simple animals is the conscience of necessary and endless truths: because of this, we have the intellect and sciences and we can get to God and self-conscience. And this is what is called, inside us, rational soul or spirit”¹³.

But at the beginning of the modern era, the paradigm of speculative thinking of the Occident is mainly cognitive, while the paradigm of the Orient is ortological. This is because the wise (the model that Cantemir builds in **Divanul**) is searching an ideal of humanity that concurs with “building in spirit” of the righteous man and he is not interested at all in cognitive ideals of the western philosopher. We might say in this interpretative horizon that the entire eastern orthodox culture has its basis and is nourished at the level of speculative thinking from this ortological paradigm.

From the middle of south-east, that has an orthodox and Byzantine tradition, Cantemir started the edification of a bridge towards southern and western Europe, filling and, more than that, finishing the idea of Romanity issued by his predecessors.

Sometimes, Cantemir added to our very strange history some fragments that were missing from different documents and he managed to put them in the right place with a deep intuition of integrated truths. It is another test for the ways in which he understood the twined development of history and spirit, as an initiate that has learned to use the integrative faculty of the spirit, to embrace phenomena in their original unity, to retrace from the sum of understandable fragments. Another approach to Leibniz is in the preoccupation for national history that represents every single one: if Leibniz writes a history of the German Empire from Carol the Great, Cantemir through his Hronic and other history books and Romanian ethnology edits “the masterpiece of a Hasdeu of the XVIII century” (N.Manolescu). Being in the median area of the Balkans, in the space of all possible meetings but also of all disruptions, Cantemir, that had just a little bit the opportunity of living the great history (and the one of his own people), in a plenary way of speaking of his deployment, had his revenge writing.

He covered many areas of knowledge, some of them considered to be on top, just like nowadays. He touched the glory more postuma – and it is interesting to see today

¹² Leibniz, Teodiceea, op.cit. p.75.

¹³ G.W. Leibniz, **Monadologia**, Bucharest, Humanitas, 1994, p.62.

what and how much from his intuition with short or long – range became true or, equally important, served to his followers in affirming their rights, of culture and spirit of Romanian people. What Cantemir managed to do and what has a greater interest nowadays than his talent, erudition and amazing versatility is the fact that he proved that the south-eastern European space (and mainly in his country by birth), as part and parcel of Europe is impregnated by the European spirit and represents one of the sources of this spirit itself.

Even if the Moldavian and Vlach princedoms lied under the Phanariot obscurantism, Cantemir's ideas are followed, underlined and developed in the cultural Europe. The ideas of Cantemir were followed by scholars of another nation and represent the development of Romanian spirit in the Phanariot century, the entrance of the Romanian spirit in the universality of culture. The majority of commentators of Dimitrie Cantemir work agree that "The history of the Ottoman Empire" is addressed to the Occident, trying to convince them that the southern empire is not that strong and infallible as they thought it was. The Turkish Empire had a growth, developing phase but during Cantemir, it was in a decadent phase, a start for the decline.

Both Cantemir and Leibniz will remain attached to some targets: the fulfillment of a united Europe, finding some strategies in order to defeat the Ottoman Empire, putting together Europe's resources for scientific research to which Leibniz adds the union of Churches and the universal peace. In their imperialist vision, the two thinkers differentiate: while Leibniz sees in Ludovic XIV the savior of Europe of the Ottoman Empire (suggesting him a military campaign in Egypt), Dimitrie Cantemir, forced or not by circumstances, considers the tsar Petru I as being the called one for defending Christianity.

But together with the great philosopher Leibniz, Dimitrie Cantemir will bring a remarkable contribution to modernizing Russia of Petru I.

So, Dimitrie Cantemir and G.W.Leibniz wrote down a memorable page in the great history book of science and human thought, situating themselves through a work that contributed conclusive to modernizing the European culture, into the value space of universality.