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**SIMONA-ANDREEA OLARIU (căs. ȘOVA)**

**POLEMIC ELEMENTS IN THE LINGUISTIC WORK  
OF ALEXANDRU I. PHILIPPIDE**

**PhD Thesis**

**– summary –**

**Scientific thesis advisor:**

**Prof. Univ. Dr. ALEXANDRU GAFTON**

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The paper consists of an analysis of the polemic elements in A. Philippide's work (1859-1933), since the author's opinions, which have become most often controversial, contradictions and critical attitudes regarding the conceptions of the contemporary linguistics and the work methods of Romanian and foreign scientists, actually contributes to the shaping of A. Philippide's linguistic conception. The aim of this analysis is to demonstrate the idea that in A. Philippide it is not the question of an intrinsic polemical spirit. His linguistic work is the result of a colossal work, thus the accrued scientific knowledge gives him the right to correct the mistakes identified in the works of his contemporary linguists and to speak the truth. His special scientific training, good faith, high consciousness and moral responsibility govern the desire to search for the truth. The achievement of this central goal of the thesis is realized thorough a linguistic-stylistic analysis of the following texts: *Un specialist român la Lipsca*, *Specialistul român. Contribuție la istoria culturii românești din secolul XIX*, *Principii de istoria limbii* and *Originea românilor* (I, II). In this way two manners of making polemic stand out: on one hand, the criticism generated only by the recording of the scientific truth and by the desire to fight, with solid arguments, the erroneous scientific opinions issued by foreign and Romanian linguists (for example, the polemic A. Philippide – Meyer-Lübke), and, on the other hand, the polemic determined by personal grievances regarding the Romanian scientists, whose linguistic truths were the fruit of intuitions and suppositions, nowise of thorough scientific research (for example, the polemic A. Philippide – Hasdeu). Determined by somewhat different causes, the two types of polemics condition, at a morphologic level, the choice of words either from a linguistic perspective, or from a stylistic perspective.

Structured on four chapters, the work is preceded by a **synthetic presentation (Alexandru I. Philippide. Cultural activity)** of the cultural-linguistic activity of the scholar from Iasi, with the purpose of highlighting the pronounced polemical character of his articles, texts and reviews, his philological competence and work method. The work starts with information regarding the publishing of his bachelor thesis, *Încercări asupra stărei sociale a poporului român în trecut*, appreciated by the critics and continues, firstly, with, the involvement in the activity conducted by „Junimea” and „Convorbiri literare”. A. Philippide's affinities with the spirit of Maiorescu are observed on the direction of the development of the critical spirit, of the theory of forms without substance, thus the linguist from Iasi shall publish in the pages of the ”Junimea” magazine the articles *Cronica lui Hur* (1882), marking the scholar's editorial debut, *Idealuri* (1891, 1893), *D-l Hasdeu și istoria limbii române* (1895), *Limba dalmată* (1900) and two reviews, one about *Studien zur rumänischen Philologie* by Heimann Hariton Tiktin (1884) and a second about *Istoria filologiei române*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, by Lazăr Șăineanu (1896). Significant is also the drafting of a study which anticipates

the man passionate for the truth, for science, the lucid and inflexible poem, severe with himself and with his fellows (*Știința noastră. Cum știm. Cum ar trebui să știm. Starea psihologică*). The period of specialization in Germany, 1888-1889, in which he familiarizes himself with the thinking of the School of Neogrammarians, is followed by the publishing of *Principii de istoria limbii* (1894), remake with numerous personal contributions of Hermann Paul's book, *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte* (1882). The work theorizes the causes and rules after which the language changes, especially revealing the influence of the mental factor, and contributes to the reformation of the conception about language, through the rich explanation and illustration of the causes of change of the Romanian language throughout its existence. Important for the contributions brought to the Romanian linguistics are the publishing of *Gramatica elementară a limbii române*, in 1897 and the assiduous work at *Dicționarul limbii române*, which, after nine years of involvement, he is forced to abandon. Notable is also the collaboration with „Viața românească”. A. Philippide shall publish part of his studies, articles and reiews in the pages of the magazine managed by Garabet Ibrăileanu: *Istoria și critica literară* (1906) – report about the Department of History of Romanian Literature from the University in Iasi, *Specialistul român. Contribuție la istoria culturii românești din secolul XIX* (1907), *Cum se apără specialistul român* (1908), *Dicționarul Academiei sau basmul cucoșului roș* (1908), *Un specialist român la Lipsca* (1909, 1910), *Pseudoștiință contemporană* (1911), *Coincidențe* (1915), *Prejudiții* (1916). The articles and studies in „Viața românească” reveal the image of an A. Philippide defender of the truth, who enters in polemic with humour, often being cruel and sarcastic, but well placed, with a firm and harsh attitude. The most valuable linguistic contribution of the scholar from Iasi is represented by the work *Originea românilor* (Iași, 1925, 1928). Published in two volumes, *Ce spun izvoarele istorice* (I), respectively, *Ce spun limbile română și albaneză* (II), the massive and dense work details the formation of the Romanian people from a triple point of view: place, epoch and manner of formation, process pursued on two paths: one purely historical, by consulting the written sources of all sorts, in which one can find data about the issue and one linguistic, by studying the Romanian language itself.

The 1<sup>st</sup> chapter (**Alexandru I. Philippide in the European linguistic context. Influences**) presents the influences exercised by some of the European linguists of A. Philippide's era, and not only, based on which the scholar from Iasi outlines his own conception about language, about the existence of phonetic laws and linguistic changes, in order to establish the truth in science, attitude which triggered strong polemics at that time. In a first order of ideas, elements of Wilhelm von Humboldt's conception, the founder of the comparative – historical method, alongside Bopp and Grimm, are also identifiable in the works of the scholar from Iasi. A. Philippide does not know Humboldt's ideas directly, but by

reading the works of the linguists G. von der Gabelentz, E. Wechssler and Karl Vossler. Humboldt differentiates two sides in the language analysis: one *external*, material, or the sound complex and one *internal* (*das innere Sprachform*), of content and organizer of lexical and grammatical means, in which the conception of the world of a community is reflected, the unique and unrepeatable principles which captures the spirit of the people and which, in Hjelmslev, appears under the name of the *form of content*. Of the two sides, the linguist highlighted the importance of the internal form of the language, of the mental factor, because the word represents the impression produced by the object on the spirit and not the actual image of the object. Along with Humboldt's theorization, one can notice an important common point with A. Philippide's linguistics: the language, manifested at the level of the *psychological basis*, appears like a mental phenomenon, and some of its changes are due to the continuous development of thinking. Except that, also suffering the influence of Schleicher's linguistics, A. Philippide adds the element *basis of articulation* to the organization of the language and its changes. Another characteristic of Humboldt's linguistics, also encountered in A. Philippide, is that the language is in a continuous dynamic and change in the speech acts, in its daily use, therefore it is not a thing (*ergon – έργον*), an inert, static instrument, given once and for all, but is something subjected to evolution, an activity in which the individual takes part, within a community (*energeia – ενεργεια*). A. Philippide doesn't appropriate Humboldt's point of view regarding the evolutive dynamic of language, but keeps the point of view of the Neogrammarians, who speak about the existence of the causes of linguistic changes. Humboldt's opinions gave birth to a tendency to which also A. Philippide adhered, ethno-linguistics, the language being closely connected to the creation of the national spiritual force. Each language has a unique, distinct structure, which comes to reflect and condition the way of thinking and manner of expression of the people who uses it. In another train of thoughts, according to the German philosopher, there are two phases in the becoming of language: 1) a phase of formation of the language organism – *Organismus* (its production independent of man's will) and 2) a processing and development phase of the language through man's will (*Ausbildung*). Humboldt's conception also appears in A. Philippide, at the scholar from Iasi the two phases representing the popular language and the language of culture, differentiated by „will” or „enactment” in the existence of the second, but both as complementary instances of the national language.

In what regards Steinthal, he rejects the naturalistic vision on language, interpreted as an organism, a phenomenon with its own laws, and thinks that the language is an activity (*energeia*, in Humboldt's terms) of the human psyche and soul. Taken over from Humboldt, this conception on language is assimilated by Steinthal and A. Philippide. In his work *Principii de istoria limbii*, the linguist from Iasi speaks about the importance of the individual

mental activity in the shaping of a language: „If language has a certain physiognomy at a certain time, it is mostly due to the mental activity independent of speech, which [...] receives nature's phenomena in the mirror of intelligence. Before speaking, man thought and after this thought his tongue was modulated” (Alexandru I. Philippide, *Principii de istoria limbii*, p. 169). Moreover, the scholar from Iasi redefines the terms (for him, it is a matter of *psychological basis*) and adds an important element in the composition of the language: *the basis of articulation*. Also under the influence of Humboldt's thinking, who identifies two sides in the analysis of the language, one internal and one external, Steinthal paid special attention to the first, which he named „substance” (represents thought), and the second, „form” (constituted by the audible side), both considered to be in opposition. Also encountered at A. Philippide, regarding the composition of the word within the language, the idea is set forth in the work *Principii de istoria limbii*: „[...] the sound usually wears the name of *form of the word*, we adopted the term of *skeleton*, so that no confusion is made with the *grammatical form*. [...] the connection between the skeleton of the word and meaning is so tight, that it is an unnatural thing for anybody to separate the two sides during a discussion, and anytime we say *word*, the meaning as well as the skeleton of the word should be understood just as well” (Alexandru I. Philippide, *Principii de istoria limbii*, p. 7). Thinking illustrates the substance of the language, of a nonmaterial and subjective nature, therefore resulting in the internal variety of languages: „The language changes according to the speaker's mental character” (Alexandru I. Philippide, *Principii de istoria limbii*, p. 3).

On another hand, the linguistic ideas of Neogrammarians capitalize, strengthen and develop the previous psychologist views, of Humboldt, Steinthal and Potebnea, also claiming that the language is in a close connection with the spiritual life of the speakers, reason for which they consider that the language exists only in the form of speech. As a consequence of this fact, the changes and innovations within a language are due to the individual, and the main object of their research is the evolution of the language. Developing in the spirit of the Neogrammarians, A. Philippide publishes in 1894 his *Principii de istoria limbii*, paper which capitalizes the work of Hermann Paul, *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte*, 1882, called by Suchier „Biblia lingvistului” (*The linguist's Bible*). A. Philippide considers that the language lives through those who speak it, fact which determines its evolution, and follows the mental factor of human speech, explaining the changes of the language through the necessity of the speakers to express themselves clearly and to understand one another. In this context, A. Philippide formulates three important principles of linguistic changes: convenience, clarification and enactment and considers causes of the language ignored by Hermann Paul, such as rhythm, will, the evolution of thought and differentiation, encountered in Humboldt and Steinthal. Beside the influence exercised by the Neogrammarians, A. Philippide has

dissociated the study of the language states from the study of the language changes, idea encountered by him in J. Baudouin de Courtenay. Saussure makes the same difference between synchronic linguistics, descriptive, static and the diachronic, evolutive, dynamic, but he had not yet been published at the date of appearance of *Principii, Curs de lingvistică generală*, in order to be known by A. Philippide. He reads the *Curs de lingvistică generală* only in 1921, the details regarding it being found in volume I of *Originea românilor*, published in 1925. Furthermore, the idea of the link between articulatory organs and phonetic changes was appropriated from C. Nigra and H. Osthoff, they themselves starting from Schleicher, Ascoli and Schuchardt. The expression „articulatory organs” encountered in Nigra and Osthoff becomes in A. Philippide, „basis of articulation”.

**Chapter II (Alexandru I. Philippide’s era. The Romanian historic and social-cultural context)** presents the historic, cultural and linguistic context, in order to partially motivate A. Philippide’s polemical attitude, dissatisfied with the superficiality of the „specialists” of his time. Endowed with an exceptional analytical spirit, with a tireless thirst to get closer to reality, in order to understand and present it, with a huge capacity to subject his own ideas and researches to all issues imposed by science, renouncing them if they would prove to be wrong – defining traits of many industrious geniuses, among which also Charles Darwin, whose *Origin of the species* appears in the year A. Philippide was born –, but also with an acuity of the critical spirit which almost always reached an almost self-destructive intransigence, A. Philippide, the great representative, alongside Garabet Ibrăileanu, of the critical spirit from Iasi and the creator of the Linguistic School in Iasi, is the one who is going to shed light in the Romanian linguistics, opening the path for true neogrammatic research, based on the neo-positivist philosophy and the scientist spirit of the era. Volcanic and excessive temper, of an exceptional erudition, A. Philippide detested superficiality, empty oratory, form without substance, hence his contemporary society seemed to him faulty, and the political class inefficient, incompetent and indolent. Structured based on a polemical dialogue, his scientific works prove an unusual freedom of expression in tearing the others to pieces – but also in appreciating their contribution to the development of the Romanian culture –, the criticism of the scholar from Iasi being mainly focused on the Romanian and foreign intellectual (Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu, Sextil Pușcariu, Ovid Densusianu, Lazăr Șăineanu, Heimann Hariton Tiktin, Gustav Weigand etc.), revealing the „realistic linguist and the man of exemplary firmness in the respect towards the deontology of culture” (Carmen-Gabriela Pamfil, *Alexandru Philippide*, p. 90). Carefully following the path, A. Philippide understands that the discoveries of the European scholars, although especially valuable, are not sufficient to solve the problems of Romanian linguistics – whose solving was urgently needed – and that this process had to be produced by the effort of Romanian scholars. In this

way, having not only linguistic knowledge and a philosophical perspective, but also a good knowledge of the field and its needs, the great linguist understood the necessity to firstly solve some of the concrete problems which kept Romanian linguistics in sufferance, laying, therewith, solid conceptual foundations and of principle.

**Chapter III (Contributions regarding the scientific polemic in Alexandru I. Philippide. Textual-discursive practices)** presents and analyses from a stylistic point of view the polemical fragments identified in the linguistic texts of the scholar from Iasi. A. Philippide, outstanding personality of the Linguistic School in Iasi, impressed by the correctness with which he caught the scientific truth and by the courage to demonstrate the imposture and falsity encountered in men of culture. Among the polemicists found in an interlocutive dialogism there is an ethic of the intellectual endeavour, a style, certain rules of conduct which allow the development of a constructive polemic, beneficial for cultural progress. Hence a true polemic is the one which constitutes a reason for respect and closeness between opponents, related on the plan of superior intellectuality. This is the case of the scientists A. Philippide, on one hand, and Sextil Pușcariu, Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu, Heimann Hariton Tiktin and Gustav Weigand, on the other hand, each representing a strong personality not only at the level of the university centres which they were part of, but also at a national level. Thus, the polemicist A. Philippide chooses a complete adversary, like him, so that the polemic implies full equality of the partners. On the other hand, the attention of the scholar from Iasi is focused on linguists who, although should have been rigorous in the scientific work done, often violate the truth and spread incorrect information because of ignorance or confusion. The polemical exchanges can appear as an attempt to symbolically eliminate the other, but they necessarily occur between speakers who consider themselves complete in a certain field of activity. Choosing one's adversary means recognizing in him the qualities necessary to share a common word space. The scholar from Iasi polemizes with those close to him in one way or another (for example, linguists with a high erudition such as Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu) and whose ideas threaten, from his point of view, the alteration of the linguistic information sent to the contemporaries, but also to future generations. At a unitary level, A. Philippide reproaches all linguists the inexcusable mistakes at the lexical-semantic, morphologic and syntactic level, identified in their works. The common building elements for polemical speeches are represented by: punctilious addressing formulas, rhetorical interrogations, exclamatory enunciations, anti-phrases, the continuous referral to the original texts, elements of irony and humour, the presence of certain anecdotes, direct addressing, using the plural author („we”), 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person, singular and plural pronouns and verbs, insistence on persuasive explanations and arguments, generated by an assiduous research work, but also referrals to the read bibliography.

In this chapter I kept sight of the delimitation of the polemic specific concepts and traits: *subject*, *anti-subject*, *object*, *referral +*, *referral -*, *the third*, „interlocutive dialogism”, „anticipatory interlocutive dialogism” (the terminology belongs to Daciana Vlad), *discourse-agent*, *discourse-patient*, the stakes of the polemic (scientific priority, the level of the meta-language and the conceptual level), the procedures of polemic (the *ad rem* and *ad hominem* modes, direct and indirect invalidation), the dissociation between polemic and polemicist (interactional dimension – discursive dimension), the subjective dimension of polemic, the role of anecdotes and short stories in the polemical speech, forms of address, the modalities of the polemic (those which enter dialogism in the enunciation, those which serve at building the negative ethos of the *anti-subject* and those which serve at naming and judging the *anti-subject*), as well as types of polemicity (constitutive / of substance and explicit/ of tonality, identified at the surface of the text due to certain formal pointers).

In **chapter IV (*Originea românilor. Linguistic and reflexive-polemic perspectives*)** we continue the analysis of the polemical fragments in the monumental work *Originea românilor*. Although they make the reading difficult and transform the text into an arid one, whose message is revealed with difficulty to the reader, *Originea românilor*, like the majority of scientific texts of the scholar from Iasi, is composed of polemical dialogues on various linguistic themes, their purpose being to clarify the topic of discussion. In this chapter one can notice that A. Philippide’s polemic with foreign historians is realized through direct invalidation and is of an *ad rem* type, unlike the polemics developed in the other studies (*Un specialist român la Lipsca*, *Specialistul român. Contribuție la istoria culturii românești din secolul XIX*, *Cum se apără specialistul român* etc.), packed with rhetorical exclamations and interrogations, marks of the revolt and dissatisfaction in front of superficiality and ignorance.

The difficulty of the topic approach in *Originea românilor* also imposed the presentation of the linguistic perspective, not only of the reflexive-polemical one, hence he also approached issues such as: the Romanization of the Balkan Peninsula, peoples subjected to Romanization, the occupation of the current territories by the Romanians, common Latin, polemic on the sounds *ă* and *î*, „primitive Romanian” and linguistic changes which generated polemics with Saussure and Karl Vossler.

Thought as a spiritual inheritance for future generations, like all valuable texts, the scholar from Iasi designs his extensive work as a scientific treaty packed with historical and geographical information, and the vast consulted bibliography and the multitude of theories presented in detail throughout the work entitle him to have the last word in what regards the discussed issues. Consequently, A. Philippide represented a model for his contemporaries, but especially for the linguists who followed him and considered him a mentor.



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