

¹By means of the present scientific paper, that concentrates on what it meant and who has really been Giovanni Papini, I intend to inform everyone interested about the true value of the Italian philosopher and writer.

The main reason that led to choosing this theme for the Ph.D. thesis is the fact that there have not been deeply analyzed the aspects regarding Giovanni Papini's passion for philosophy, but neither those relating his conversion, only by a small number of foreign researchers, in Romania being too little researched. As a matter of fact, the present thesis is the only one from our country that concentrates on this subject, following the entire activity of the Italian, as a philosopher and religious writer. This is one of the

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reasons for which the thesis has a monographic character.

His evolution has to impress, especially because of the courage of this restless spirit to impose, even when everything was against him. Practically, the research will have a double aspect, both philosophical, as well as religious; also, the chronological line of the events and of his writings will be followed.

The suggested title thus represents an announcement for what will be presented during the paper. The present paper, entitled *The Case of Giovanni Papini: Philosophy as praeparatio evangelica (the model of a conversion)*, aims to present the way in which philosophy and religion may co-exist as ideas in thinking, in general, and the attention will be towards Giovanni Papini. This particular case is a special one because of the path taken by the Italian philosopher and writer, who started from the simple lecture of some philosophical currents, of the history and universal literature and managed to transpose in his works different ideas that came from here.

For the development of this scientific thesis, we will follow the chronological line in Giovanni Papini's life, because only in this manner one can present his evolution, as well as the essential changes. The pluridisciplinary character will be presented in each of the five chapters from the Ph.D. thesis.

There are many aspects that are not very well known about the life, or the works of G. Papini. Due to the bibliography that contains the studies of some foreign researchers, most of them Italians, Papini's works that are not published in Romania, as well as the correspondence he had with different friends or with other writers, I will manage to reveal a few of the philosophical ideas studied by him. The most complex studies that aimed at him and followed his life and his works were signed by Francesco Di Felice, Antonino Di Giovanni, Renato Fondi, Vintilă Horia or Enzo Palmieri.

In the first chapter, entitled *The Italy of Giovanni Papini*, we intend to make an introduction of Giovanni Papini in the historical space, but also in the

cultural one that characterized the age when he lived. We will highlight the most important aspects and historical and cultural events from the end of the nineteenth century, going all the way till the half of the twentieth century. From a historical point of view, the main events that marked this period of time were: the war of independence of Italy, the two World Wars and one must not forget about the fascist domination that ruled this country for more than 20 years. Culturally, we will see how the positivist current is in full climb now. After that, pragmatism, newly introduced among the Italian intellectuals, will be more and more appreciated. A few magazines have dominated in this period the cultural space from Italy; we mention: *Leonardo*, *Voce*, *Anima* or *Lacerba*.

The second chapter – *Philosophy as praeparatio evangelica* – will deal with the evolution of Giovanni Papini, following first of all the philosophical characteristics from his thinking and, then, the issues of religion and faith of which he was interested from his teenage years. Giovanni Papini, Italian philosopher and

writer, was concerned about the field of philosophy since his teenage years, philosophy thus proved to be his first love. We will see how, together with the launch of his first magazine, *Leonardo*, the young Gian Falco (because he used this pseudonym for signing the articles from the mentioned period) proves to be interested especially in the philosophical current of pragmatism. The Italian got his inspiration from the founders of this current, William James and Charles Sanders Peirce. With them he tied also a friendship relation and professional collaborations for a long time. For Giovanni Papini, the divine revelation allowed itself to be discovered in time and not in a sudden manner. He thus applied pragmatism to the religious field, managing to combine the central ideas from them. The philosophical elements of prevision, will and action will be found, individually or together, in his writings from this period. Pragmatism got his attention for only a few years.

In the following years comes his collaboration with other magazines that caught the attention of the

Italian intellectuals, magazines that focused on the most various issues, such as those regarding religion, politics (futurism or fascism) and literature. Most of his papers from the period 1908-1919 will concentrate, in a more or less direct manner, on elements that belong to religion and faith. His attempts to get closer to the divine truth he was looking have sometimes been extreme: once we see how he defends religion in front of philosophy, in other case he creates a new version of Genesis. His restless spirit will push him towards the most unusual situations; but one must highlight the fact that Giovanni Papini has always proved to be sincere, regardless the ideas he was presenting.

The conversion of Giovanni Papini is the title of the third chapter of this thesis. It will include all the details regarding the preparation that Giovanni Papini needed in order to receive the divine revelation. His atheism was not easy to overcome. He needed help to accept what others close to him seen long before him. The study of philosophy, family, friends, the historic event that marked him profoundly – the First World

War – but also different signs given by the Divinity, they all contributed to his going towards the Catholic faith. Maybe even harder than the conversion itself was for G. Papini the adjustment to the new life as a Christian, but also the conclusive proves he wanted to offer, unconsciously, to those that questioned his honesty.

The chapter number four, entitled *The moment of conversion – point of reference in studies*, will highlight the differences in thinking, before and after the moment of conversion, that will be reflected in the writings of Giovanni Papini, but also the fact that some of the works made before year 1921 could not exist if his returning to faith had not happen. The novel *Viața lui Isus* is in fact the public acknowledgement of his renouncement to atheism; here the author surprises his readers again through the language that may seem too violent for this category of writings. Giovanni Papini has always admired Saint Augustine for his faith, but he also considered him a role model. The volume *Sant'Agostino* reflects not only the life of the numidian,

but also the author's aspirations to manage to resemble him. Papini's *Seconda nascita* can be compared, to a certain extent, with the volume of Saint Augustine – *Confessions*. Maybe the most surprising novel of G. Papini is *Diavolul: note pentru o viitoare diabolologie*. Although many stated that it was an error from the Italian's behalf, I see in this volume rather an express desire of presenting each element from Christianity.

The last chapter, which is called *Romanian Italianists on Giovanni Papini*, follows and analyzes the most important professional and of friendship relations that Giovanni Papini had with a few of the best-known Romanian writers. All the volumes dedicated by the Romanians to Papini have followed a chronological line of his life or writings. G. Papini's opinions regarding them, but also the opinions of the Romanians regarding the Italian, have been essential in shaping the main aspects of the relations and connection between them. Also, the fact that these relations have resisted for many years proves the mutual respect that existed between them.

First of all, the best-known admirer of Papini from Romania was Mircea Eliade. For the Romanian writer, the Italian has always been considered a model. The correspondence between them proves this admiration, and the enthusiasm that characterized the two encounters they had, although at a difference of 30 years one from the other, shows the deep friendship between them.

On the other hand, the friendship that lasted the most of G. Papini was the one with Alexandru Marcu. The Italian appreciated a lot the fact that Al. Marcu took care in a particular manner of introducing in the literature of our country the volumes translated from the Italian language. Papini had a great consideration for the Romanian writer, to whom he remained grateful, a fact that can be noticed from their correspondence.

We will see how, when it was speculated about a visit of the Italian writer and philosopher in Romania, C. H. Niculescu dedicated an essay that concentrates on the cultural activity of Papini till then. And, last but not least, in the volume signed by Vintilă Horia, it will be

highlighted a lot the moment of return to faith of G. Papini. V. Horia also had the privilege of an encounter with Gian Falco. All these Romanian writers admired in the Italian his courage, honesty, but also his works; regarding his conversion, each of them gave the importance needed for such a moment.

The main intention of this Ph.D. thesis was that of concentrating especially on the issues that belong to the philosophical field, as well as on the formation of Giovanni Papini as philosopher. His texts however did not allow much liberty in research, the line followed by him being rather limited. As a matter of fact, neither those that made different studies that had the Italian as a central figure, did not intend to focus too much on this aspect. This fact lead to the final result, that of developing a narrative – monographic character of the present thesis.