

IN HONOREM ACADEMICIAN RĂZVAN THEODORESCU

In May 2019, Răzvan Theodorescu – the Vice President of the Romanian Academy – celebrated his 80th birthday, a landmark for a prolific life spent within the family of famous and untiring professors inspired by the Muse Clio. Author of impressive historical work and exceptional researcher in the field of the Christian history, Răzvan Theodorescu has become famous especially through the investigation and promotion of the Byzantine culture and its influence on the Romanian Medieval art and civilization.

According to a traditional conception of the duty supported by professors such as A. Oțetea or I. Nestor, M. Berza, Emil Condurache, and Emil Lăzărescu, Răzvan Theodorescu has dedicated his efforts, time and resources to instruct and train many generations of students, history teachers, scholars, specialists in heritage preservation and restoration of historic buildings, researchers who carry on the message of the historical truth. The passion for thinking of evidence as a way of reconstructing the past, the respect for the historical facts, the elegant discourse, and the constant interest for openness and cooperation reflect the rich multi-faceted nature of Professor Theodorescu's activity and indicate that he exercises his profession in a special and unique manner.

His remarkable scientific work begins with *Byzantium, the Balkans, the Western World in the Beginnings of the Romanian Medieval Culture (the 10th-14th centuries, An Art Millennium on Lower Danube (400-1400), Medieval Itineraries, The Cliff of Three Holy Hierarchs*, and continues with *The Romanian Civilization from Medieval to Modern Times, The Image's Horizon (1550-1800), La peinture murale moldave de 15-eme – 16-eme siècle, Roumains et Balkaniques dans la civilisation sud-est européenne, Bukovina*. These are just a few of the titles to be mentioned in an anniversary retrospective, especially since they are, on the one hand, an invitation to a better knowledge of the Byzantine Christian spirituality and on the other hand an encouragement for a more in-depth study of existence and development of the Romanian identity and dignity in the history of mankind.

As a member of the “Romanian historiography family”, along with Alexandru Elian, Virgil Cândea, Emilian Popescu, etc., Professor Răzvan Theodorescu stands for the Romanian Orthodox erudite and devout. Equally, his academic lectures – *History of the European Civilisation, History of the Ancient Romanian Arts, Course on the Typology of the Arts During the Christian Orient*, etc. – his books, studies, and

articles that have been published in Romania and abroad illustrate the history of Romanian spirituality. He has applied his knowledge in a magisterial and exemplary way in all his scientific work, which is now obligatory reading for everyone in the specialty.

Răzvan Theodorescu's research is and will remain enormously important. It was awarded the "Bernier" Prize by the French Institute, the "Nicolae Bălcescu" Prize by the Romanian Academy, the "Nicolae Iorga" Prize by the International Ecumenical Centre for Spiritual Dialogue, and "Doctor Honoris Causa" by several prestigious universities from Romania and from abroad. In 2004, as a gesture of gratitude, love, and respect, professors, researchers, historians, theologians, unknown people, and close friends have become students again – just for a few hours – attending the festive course, in Aula Magna where Professor Theodorescu received the *Doctor Honoris Causa* honorary title. In his lecture's topic, focusing on *Romania's Position Worldwide*, he stated: "we have an Eastern mentality: the mentality of an Eastern World that fully embraces the *Autocracy*, in comparison with the other world, the western world, a world of *Austrocracy*, a world with different traditions that we have nothing in common with, the Protestant world and the Catholic world, very respectable, setting the standards for Western Europe and for its creative outskirts: Central Europe". Confronting his audience with a world that has become alien to many, in which spirituality is not only a predicate of actions but an existential condition, academician Theodorescu concluded: "Our future cannot be envisioned otherwise than belonging to this very place where we all live on, as part of South-East Europe, in Eastern Europe in excellent communion with the other Europe with which, coincidentally and institutionally, we are actually bordering with".

Yet, Professor Theodorescu stands out as an individual not only through his work but also through his conduct. He gives to his contemporaries a broader sense of possibility so that they can distance themselves from unconscious intellectual prejudgements or commitments and wonder what they think about them. A work that succeeds in generating this critical sense deserves the highest appreciation. In a time of quick changes, the Romanian academician urges through his example and accomplishments constructed on the perennial and solid values such as Country, Church, and Family. These three milestones are viewed by Răzvan Theodorescu through the lens of his self-esteem, honesty, kindness, and love.

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