

ANIBAL TEODORESCU ON THE MEANINGS OF THE WORD COUNTRY

Professor Gheorghe CALCAN, PhD.

Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiești
calcangheorghe@yahoo.com

Abstract:

This paper presents the interpretations that Anibal Teodorescu gave to the word country, as exposed within the conference this great Romanian jurist held at the Romanian Academy in 1945. The etymon of the word country is the Latin terra, meaning land. Anibal Teodorescu demonstrated that Romanians, unlike any other Romanic people, had given this word new, more profound meanings which they related to their national existence and development: in his opinion, country means: state, someone's homeland and even the nation, alongside the land inhabited by the Romanian people.

Keywords: *Anibal Teodorescu, country, Romanian Academy discourse*

1. Introduction

In this paper we aim at pinpointing the interpretations that Anibal Teodorescu gave to the word country. By doing this, we also intend to bring in the foreground an aspect of the so called “minor” opera of Anibal Teodorescu, which consists of 37 articles, 6 conferences and 3 studies published in the volumes of several scientific events [1].

Anibal Teodorescu approached the topic of the possible meanings that one can give to the word country within the conference entitled “Valoarea juridică a unui vechi cuvânt românesc” (The Legal Value of an Old Romanian Word) that he held on November 9, 1945, as a correspondent member of the Romanian Academy. After a short biographical survey, we shall analyze the demonstration made by Anibal Teodorescu in front of the Romanian Academy members, and we will expose our conclusions on the issue.

2. Anibal Teodorescu: Biographical References

Anibal Teodorescu was born in 1881 near Focșani. He attended high school studies in this city and in Bucharest and, at the age of 22, he graduated from the Faculty of Law of Bucharest. Three years later, at the age of 25, Teodorescu got his doctorate in

Paris, and, from this stage, he started publishing in the specialized press. He practiced law since 1903 and became the President of the Romanian Lawyers [2].

In 1909, Anibal Teodorescu started his didactic activity, first as the collaborator of Professor Constantin C. Dissescu [3], and later on as a full member of the Department of Administrative Law. In 1939, he became the Dean of the Faculty of Law, position he held until 1940 [4]. As an authority in the field of the Romanian administrative law, the author published numerous studies, some of which, such as the two-volume Treatise on Administrative Law [5], became a landmark in the field. The main fields of interest were: powers' separation in the state, the theory of legality, the Romanian constitutional practice, the problem of decentralization, administrative responsibility, the problem of social solidarity, the history of the Romanian law and so forth. Teodorescu was also a founding member of the Romanian Institute of Administrative Sciences, a member of the Romanian Social Institute, as well as of other Romanian and foreign scientific associations. In 1945, the jurist became a correspondent member of the Romanian Academy.

During the Second Balkan War, in 1913, as well as throughout Romania's participation in the operations of the First World War, Anibal Teodorescu was concentrated in the army and got involved in the political life. He was a member of the National Liberal Party, of the People's Party and later on, of the National Revival Front. After the I WW, he was elected General Mayor of Bucharest (1926-1927) and he was also an MP.

In 1947, when the communist regime settled in Romania, the one who, exactly four decades before, had considered that socialism "had no chance" in Romania [6], was dismissed from education and detained from 1950 to 1957. After being released from prison, he was assigned to "Nicolae Iorga" History Institute in Bucharest and focused on research activity and on publishing several valuable laws of the old Romanian law [7]. Due to his efforts and results, the personality of Anibal Teodorescu revived, but the recognition of his work was, however, "partial and late" [8], as he ceased to exist in 1971.

3. Legal Meaning of the Word Country in Anibal Teodorescu' View.

The analysis of the conference Anibal Teodorescu held in front of the the Romanian Academy has enabled us to identify a three-part structure of the discourse, namely: early contacts between the Roman civilization and the Dacians, the Romance character of the Romanian language and specific meanings given to the word country (Romanian țară < Latin terra).

3.1. Early Contacts of the Dacians with the Roman Civilization

In the conference held on November, 9, 1945, prior to announcing the topic of his discourse, Anibal Teodorescu stressed the importance of the contacts between the Dacians and the Roman civilization, long before the conquest of Dacia. These contacts began “150 years before Christ” [9], were very complex, and, even if not always peaceful, they proved fruitful for the Dacians' spirituality and for their linguistic background. The existence of such early contacts materialized in various accumulations and constituted the premise of the Dacians' Romanization in a relatively short period, from the year of their being conquered, i.e 106 AD, until the Aurelian retreat in 271/274 AD. Therefore, Anibal Teodorescu stated that “the wars between Trajan and Decebal did not represent the beginning but rather the end of the founding of our people” [10]. Only these conditions could explain why the Dacians' Romanization was realized in such a short time.

3.2. The Immutable Romance Character of the Romanian Language

Anibal Teodorescu was, undoubtedly, an admirer of the Roman culture, and, therefore, he considered the Roman influence on the Dacian society as a steady and benefic element which also contributed to an appreciable immutability of the Romanian language. In his opinion, this explains why the Romanian language has not experienced large fluctuations over time. “The entire surrounding nature, with its sky and stars, with its mountains, valleys and waters, with the fields ploughed by the Daco-Romans, with the grass that they stepped on or with the animals they used, bear Latin names. Family members and the house they lived in, as well as their beliefs, have all Latin names” [11].

In accordance with prior investigations of great Romanian historians, the orator stated that the process of the Romanian ethno-genesis was not an isolated phenomenon, as it “occurred identically or almost identically in other regions of Europe, where the Romans had settled, such as Italy or Iberia”, or Gaul, we would add. The main factors of the Romanization process in Dacia were the Roman and the Dacian veterans, the townspeople settled in the villages for safety reasons, the Roman colonists and, last but not least, the “genius of Rome”, as called by Gh. I. Brătianu, which was present in Dacia three centuries before Christ and three centuries afterwards. [12]

3.3. Meanings of the Romanian Word “țară”

The word country (Romanian țară) that Anibal Teodorescu chose to analyze represented the “slight and transparent transformation of the Latin terra”, which meant land. [13] In the Romanian language, the word terra developed two dominant meanings: a) the land being inhabited and cultivated, and b) (a geographic sense) a region, a historical province or even someone’s homeland. The latter meaning acquired special, sacred valences for the Romanians, aspect on which Anibal Teodorescu insisted.

In his opinion, the metamorphosis of the word terra began from the very Daco-Roman ethno-genesis. Our ancestors did not use this word to designate the land itself and preferred for this referent the term *pavimentum*. Daco-Romans gave the word terra other meanings, though all connected to the idea of land. Terra became in Romanian țară, term that did not designate the land as its own anymore and that acquired a political sense. Some derivatives of the Latin terra have, however, retained the link with the land-related concept, such as țăran (n. peasant), țărănesc (adj.peasant), țarină (n. piece of land), țărână (n. dust).

The political meaning of the word can be traced in the names of several human communities organized in political and administrative forms, such as Bârsa Country (Țara Bârsei), Oaș Country (Țara Oașului), Șipeneț Country (Țara Șipenețului) and so forth. Later on, they united and formed state entities, such as the Country of Moldavia, Wallachia, also called the Romanian Country etc. Therefore, in the early Middle Ages, the

word country was already perceived as equivalent with the state [14], fact which is specific for the Romanian language.

The other Romance languages have strictly kept the primary, ancestral meaning of the word. Thus, in the Italian country is terra, in French - terre, in Spanish – tierra and in Portuguese - terra. Our Daco-Roman ancestors acknowledged terra as that sacred place designated by the Greeks through Gaea, as the place where the members of their collectivity, principality or Country/ 'Țară' dwelt. "The land, terra, is equivalent with the people itself; the word now contains the juridical relationship between the Romanians' community [...], and their land, the right of the nation over its land" [15]. The person who, for one reason or another, was driven away or left the country, became what was called *deșărat*.

For the Romanians, the word country means not only the land that they live, but also the nation, the "race of free and proud people [...], a race that belongs to this land and not to any other, just as the land belongs to this race and not to any other" [16]. The Romanian nation remained on their territory throughout history and connected to their land despite all vicissitudes of time.

When approaching the relation between the people and their homeland, Anibal Teodorescu's expression was particularly plastic: "This nation remained steadfast on the land to which they are linked by the deepest and strongest roots, however harsh the vipers have passed or how much blood was shed for the defense of this land"[17]. In order to support his ideas and to give more credibility to his point of view, the speaker appealed to Nicolae Iorga's appraisal, in whose opinion the nation could not be destroyed by anybody, as it was the one that strengthened the state in favourable regimes, or "hid[es] it in her sacred mystery, until another dawn", just like the tree "hides its sap in the autumn for the spring to come".

Anibal Teodorescu demonstrated further meanings of the word country, by providing a series of examples from the writings of Romanian scholars, such as Grigore Ureche, Ion Neculce, Nicolae Costin and Dionisie Fotino. In his conference, the author highlighted other meanings of the word such as: reign, people, (the Romanian) nationality, crowd, lower class, all generating relations that are specific to the public law.

3.4. Final Appreciations of Anibal Teodorescu

In the conclusion of his discourse, Anibal Teodorescu pointed out that “country was the very cohesive state involving both the nation and the land itself”, state that had been naturally born in its historical evolution and did not represent “a mere legal, momentary creation of international interests and agreements”. For the Romanians, country is “above all, a notion that goes beyond the boundaries of the public law, as it represents the homeland itself”. To conclude, țară is not a simple notion, an illusion or an artifice, but the reputation, “the highest and most beautiful human reality”, that homeland loved and praised by the poets. “For us, country is a word as old as our nation itself, a word that our language preserves and worships as a holy and precious treasure”. This word encompasses “all sorrows and struggles, all defeats and victories, all our rights”. In this word, there merge “the land and the people”. Country is, therefore, considered by Anibal Teodorescu as a magical land, which epitomizes the national ideal itself, the perpetual existence of the Romanian people for the last two thousand years. [18]

4. Conclusions

Anibal Teodorescu was a great representative of the Romanian law, who is commendable for the fact that, alongside a vast legal culture, he manifested profound patriotic feelings, as proved by his keen and constant interest in the national history [19].

In the conference held in front of the highest national scientific forum, i.e. the Romanian Academy, on November, 9th, 1945, Teodorescu chose to convey the meanings of the word “țară”, a word with deep and rich significance in the history of the Romanian nation. The author succeeded to highlight the specificity and the sense the Romanians gave to this word, which is non-existent in other Romance languages.

Anibal Teodorescu based the argumentation on both his logic and culture, supporting the ideas with the writings of Romanian chroniclers and great historians, such as: Gheorghe I. Brătianu, Constantin C. Giurescu, Nicolae Iorga, Ion Nistor, Vasile Pârvan. His argumentation was logically structured, with explanatory and gradual steps

and the style was cursive, narrative and logical. The sensitive topic was approached using a well-constructed argumentation.

For the Romanians' psyche and collective mentality, țară/ country is a very powerful word that enriched the initial physical, direct meaning and acquired multiple valences, namely that of state, patriotic and existential constituent, thus encompassing a certain national sacredness. The meanings identified by Anibal Teodorescu in 1945 are preserved still unaltered in the Romanian language, as assigned by the great jurist.

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