The dispute Blaga - Stăniloae as it is mentioned in the press of time

Daniel OPRESCU

L'article propose un regard sur la fameuse dispute entre Blaga et Staniloae, notamment en termes d'articles publiés dans la presse du temps. De ce point de vue peut être évalué une œuvre riche de référence qui mènera à une meilleure compréhension de la controverse qui a marqué un dialogue clair entre l'Eglise et la culture dans le milieu du dernier siècle.

Mots-clés : culture roumaine, Lucian Blaga, Dumitru Stăniloae, polémique

About Lucian Blaga-polemicist several articles have been written in the press immediately after the outbreak of disputes between some Romanian scholars. In this respect, there had been published articles that speak directly about this subject.

Dumitru Isac, in an article published in 1944, adopted from the beginning an authoritarian tone, criticizing "vitiation of fundamental Blaga's thought, the lack of concern for truth"[1]. This gap in the philosophical system of L. Blaga transforms the way to think in a "pseudo philosophy and held a hotbed of anti-scientific, serious error (promoted by the philosophy in question) is that a philosophical conception (consider that) can exist and have value even when is not concerned at all if it corresponds to reality or is it a dream of beautiful fantasy"[2].

D. Isaac does only point to the lack of originality of L. Blaga that would not correspond, in concept, to the period when it appeared. This is because philosophy should not aim to create only as the supreme goal, "of creating just, theoretical views, overview of the world (…) checking, reasoning, justifying the thing you said which being all necessary"[3].

What he undoubtedly recognizes as having real value in L. Blaga's philosophy is the beauty of exposure. However, such a way of philosophizing is an attack against a critical spirit and a plea for obscurantism and mysticism (...); "And has it not been pronounced so many times around Blaga's writings the claim not to apply a critical and rational examination, but to be admitted on the simple intellectual sympathy or intuitive understanding, which would mean bringing chaos and the enthronement of the mental night in philosophy?"[4]. Dumitru Isac wonders in lengthy phrases why L. Blaga has not immediately responded to the raised objections, but took the position of impenetrable Sphinx. And the guessed answer

[1] Dumitru Isa, *Lucian Blaga polemist*, p. 310; p. 311.
[2] *Ibidem*, p. 310.
[3] *Ibidem*, p. 311.
[4] *Ibidem*.

BDD-A191 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:02:26 UTC)

would be that the adoption of such an attitude was not forever, and the reaction did come but it came later, and when it did, he did it "lightening and thundering from his Olympus in Sibiu, he unconsciously hit left and right, with the obvious intention of remaining alone on the stage of the Romanian philosophy"[5].

Isac D. believes that L. Blaga mistook his desire to attack people who have raised objections for his need to justify his philosophical thesis. The direction indicated here would be that Blaga would have agreed to the status of indisputable. He had probably forgotten that the ideas get their immortality only through the fires of disputes.

Blaga's attitude led to the appearance of effects in the Romanian culture:

- first, rebranding a degraded kind of philosophical discussion (...) – in that has been replaced the discussion of ideas with Balkan habit of personal gossiping attacks"[6]. This kind of discussions may be considered only superficially and passionately.

- contesting all men of culture. D. Isac mainly refers in this article to those who founded the Romanian philosophy, and now, must be blamed and kicked in the face"[7].

It does not mean that L. Blaga not attracted against himself by this attitude replies of his position just as without decency, finesse and elegance as those his work , the article cited, signed by D. Isaac being very representative in this respect. He had also given a reply to L. Blaga, and implicitly to Saeculum magazine in 1943, relating to the three notes that appeared in number 5 of the said magazine in 1943 and led by L.Blaga. In this sense, considering that the Romanian philosophy made so far has been preserving "a touch of class, of calm and objectivity as it is to a good discipline in which the sages are talking and clowns not"[8], Isac D. characterizes the polemic activity of Lucian Blaga, as pathetic and dangerous by the ease and the passion with which it is written, damaging our young philosophers (...) and even the author himself (whereas) is covered by ridiculous, and reveals an unsuspected moral superficiality to a man of his size"[9]. This article from Symposion does not make other reference, particularly regarding the question that interests us, namely the debate carried by Stăniloae D. with L. Blaga. However, he emits a hint of polemic between the magazine headed by L. Blaga and magazine Symposion. The reason? Both L. Blaga and an employee of him, which signed with initials NT – there are not offered any other evidence to enlighten us who the person was - characterized as grudges, did not agreed with his remarks of D. Isac about John Petrovich , whom he had considered the best minds of his time, a thinker in classical-style and of European dimension"[10]. D. Isac believed that this

[5] *Ibidem*, p. 311.
[6] *Ibidem*.
[7] *Ibidem*, p. 312.
[8] Idem, *Response to ,,Saeculum" magazine*, p. 229.
[9] *Ibidem,* p. 229.
[10] *Ibidem*, p. 230.

BDD-A191 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:02:26 UTC)

statement aroused ambitions, because the two people to whom the article was addressed to were not found in flattering appreciation. Due to bad critics informed that NT launches in the magazine Saeculum, D. Isaac considers him as having "thickened skin by shamelessness and bad faith (...) and takes the pen in his hand as, as if he had not really had anything to do with ideas in his life"[11].

At the end of the article, d. Isac considers the reaction of the staff of the magazine Saeculum an effrontery to that does not appropriate a reply by same invoice.

A new criticism, characterized by distancing of Blaga's conceptions about the world came from Pavel Apostol. Blaga's creations are seen, in a more objective light, and also more conducive to draw a lasting significance"[12].

Recognizing Blaga's cultural significance considered spiritual his formation, P. Apostle calls him spiritual teacher, "even if we rejected the report's contents spiritual philosophy (...), he opened a new horizon on a fundamental attitudes for our orientation and a theoretical term reporting that I had and we have a radical critique position"[13]. This author seeks an explanation to answer the question: Why did Blaga course polemical style, 'philosophical pamphlets (...) engraved in the word, with the acid sarcasm, portraits and reflections on men and mores of world philosophy (...) or to wither the sterility of philosophical current or predicted the lack of conformity, steadfast beliefs, patriotic retorism or retrograde spirit[14]. In this article, although initially confessing that he was not thinking within the limits of Blaga`s vision"[15], P. Apostle accepted that Blaga held debates to wither retrograde spirit, indicating in the brackets the article titled *From the case Grama to the type Grama*, item that contained lightning at D. Stăniloae address.

Otherwise, there is no other clue. It is no doubt that our author accepts the association made by Blaga between D. Stăniloae and the retrograde spirit. P. Apostle also indicates a polemical direction taken by L. Blaga with the magazine's Orthodox of Nichifor Crainic, *Gândirea*, "stemming from the concern that the "thought" thesis can dry the source of the will of creation in the Romanian spirituality"[16].

At the opposite pole, referring to the person of D. Stăniloae, D. Isac, makes a characterization of the work done by our theologian criticizing L. Blaga's philosophy: "(the book is) a very serious attempt to investigate critically the theory of the Transylvanian thinker, from a well-defined point of view; - gains made by the reaction of the theologian from Sibiu are seen as clarifying Blaga's relations with Orthodoxy. But it criticizes the applied theological point of view - by

[11] *Ibidem*, p. 229-230.
[12] Pavel Apostol, *Lucian Blaga polemist and some reflections on philosophical discussion* p. 13.
[13] *Ibidem*, col. I, p. 13.
[14] *Ibidem*, col. II, p. 13.
[15] *Ibidem*, col. I, p. 13.
[16] *Ibidem*, col. II, p. 13.

BDD-A191 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:02:26 UTC)

Stăniloae - to a system of free thinking (...) taking a stand even against the general philosophical spirit"[17].

In a new issue of the magazine cited above, D. Isac continues to father Stăniloae appreciations, calling him "eminent theologian, with a clear and insightful intelligence, with a vast knowledge of how steeped and how problems arose both from the point of view of the philosophical and theological, and with a warm Christian soul that animates and captures"[18].

The criticism made by father Stăniloae to Blaga is considered the most serious orthodox reaction, but uncontrolled and dangerous, both in form and in substance"[19].

Rows of chosen appreciation to the father Stăniloae in the direction investigated by us have emerged from some colleagues. Thus, Peter Rezuş wrote: " Dumitru Stăniloae is a great orthodox theologian and dogmatist, a great Christian philosopher and a great theoretician of culture"[20].

As regards the cultural atmosphere of the time, P. Rezuş said that it was missing the convergence with religion. This was in the name of desire for freedom of creation, inspiration, thinking that inevitably leaded to disbelief and atheism.

This anti-Christian Romanian cultural trend that comes mainly from the philosophy that is revolting against Christian truths (and creating) the existence and philosophical, scientific and artistic originality strikes against it"[21]. The Romanian philosophy is characterized by a fear of revelation, criticizing the book *Religion and Spirit*, as one that has sad repercussions for our ancestral faith"[22]. Through the exclusion of divine revelation, L. Blaga excludes the transcendent and the supernatural.

As an alternative to the revelation that excludes, L. Blaga offers spiritual creations and stylistic categories, being likened to the heretic Arius, because "although as one of the most legitimate expectations of Orthodoxy, he has escaped from healthy and good frameworks, (and) with sorrow we have to recognize that Mr. L. Blaga (...) uses his reason only to destroy our ancient Church grounds"[23].

Lucian Blaga will respond to P. Rezuş, professor of theology, with a reply - note published in the journal Saeculum[24]. The short phrases that form the note in question are undoubtedly crossed by a sarcastic tone. Here, the philosopher demands his official refute rumors picked up by P. Rezuş, as that L. Blaga has confessed his regret of publishing his book *Religion and Spirit*, a miserable philosophical book.

---

[17] Dumitru Isac, *Father Stăniloae and Lucian Blaga.Notes*, p. 118.

[18] Idem, *Notes. Jesus Christ or the human restoration by Father. D. Stăniloae– review*, p. 218, 219.

[19] Idem, *Lucian Blaga and The Great Anonymous*, p.47.

[20] Petru Rezuş, *Prot. Stav. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae*, p. 67 .

[21] Idem, *Prolegomena to a history of Romanian religious philosophy*, p. 48.

[22] *Ibidem*, p. 49.

[23] *Ibidem*, p. 53, 54, 55.

[24] Referring to *Prolegomena to a history of Romanian religious philosophy*, p. 66-69.

BDD-A191 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:02:26 UTC)

And L. Blaga asks himself: "who's the goitrous who could devise in his misery this unspeakable lie ? Where, when and how have we ever officially or unofficially expressed our regret for printing the fucking writing?"[25]. At the end of the article, Blaga hopes that his work, so criticized, but very readable exactly in theological circles"[26], to reappear in new editions.

The hostility of the Romanian philosophy to theology and theologians is also noted by another person: it is Constantin Micu, this hostility helping to the rift between them, to the emergence of an argument, from which philosophy especially has lost"[27].He identifies the reason for the closeness between these two disciplines of the human spirit: the common seeking of the cause of causes, emphasizing also the dividing line between them and that is: (philosophy) can prove that God exists, but it has no means to teach us the love of God"[28].

However, the author sees everyday atmosphere between philosophy and theology as one of conciliation, otherwise indicated of Prof. I. Petrovich, during the utterance of his speech when Theological Academy in Sibiu was raised to the rank of faculty. Returning to the philosopher Blaga, D. Isac will bring to light certain contradictions of his philosophical system, contradictions that arise also prejudicial. This action was done but without depreciation, as a whole, Blaga's work. In a new article signed D. Isac, he will start the exposure about the conception of Great Anonymous, making a flattering introduction to his work. However, the author shows "a full reserve on some of the essentials of philosophical thinking embodied in it"[29].

George Dănescu considers that it is wrong to believe that only theologians are entitled to speak of God; so he says: „as theological based, however Stăniloae's indictment is void for philosophy because we all have the right to raise our eyes to heaven, not just astronomers. God, if he exists, he is of everyone, whatever theologians say. That is why, at a time, Blaga saw fit to call him simply the Great Anonymous, because none of the theologies of the world, succeeded in giving us any clear idea about him"[30]. G. Dănescu justifies saying that theology cannot convince anyone to receive God, if the world itself will not have faith in him. The justification of Lucian Blaga`s position is done in the light of medicines, benefits, rights and cons that are different to theologians and different to philosophers. Therefore, the late Dumitru Stăniloae was kind of offended and had nothing against Blaga more than fifty years ago. It's like Blaga would have crossed his mind to write a book about some Pope's position in Rome, about his stylistic philosophy"[31]. The work of Lucian Blaga put God under human observation, as once Thomas

[25] Lucian Blaga, *Sancta Simplicitas*, p. 87.
[26] *Ibidem*, p. 87.
[27] Constantin Micu, *Theology and philosophy*, p. 220.
[28] *Ibidem*, p. 221.
[29] Dumitru Isac, *Lucian Blaga and The Great Anonymous*, p. 26.
[30] L. Blaga, *Philosophy Of Religion course*, p. 234.
[31] *Ibidem*, p. 243.

BDD-A191 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:02:26 UTC)

Geamanul, dared to explain, to experience, from the thought that if that happened, he was not diminishing with something or lose something, but we would be earning or gaining wisdom, or faith. There is in this approach a legitimate aspiration that was condemned by Stăniloae, and in the vision of G. Dănescu is not deserved. He recognizes that within neither philosophy, nor philosophical criticism, Lucian Blaga was not well received because he did not take account of clichés and schemes. His originality lies in rethinking the philosophical issues not in number, in a way that makes this approach.

Father Stăniloae considered that L. Blaga had come to a breakthrough in the way of negation in his philosophy characterized by the removal of God from it.

He aimed at awarding a totalitarian cult, in which his philosophical ego must be in the center, revered by all.

Furthermore, removal of God was not isolated, but through the assertion of the Lucifer spirit`s apology, raising a monster with all his attributes on the divine throne (...) with the name of Great Anonymous (...); (this), however large would be considered, all remain anonymous, as a zero, no matter how great still remains zero"[32].

References

Bible or Holy Scripture, The Holy Synod anniversary edition, printed with the blessing and the preface of His Beatitude Patriarch Teoctist of Romanian Orthodox Church, IBMBOR Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001

Anghelescu G., Untea, C., *Father Dumitru Stăniloae - A Worthy Disciple of the Classical Patristics (Bio-Bibliography)*, Metropolitan of Oltenia Publishing, Craiova, 2008

Vatamaniuc, D., *Lucian Blaga 1895-1961. Bibliography***,** Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing, Bucureşti, 1977

Blaga, L., *Philosophy Of Religion course***,** text established by Dorli Blaga, Christu Nastu şi G. Piscoci Dănescu, Fronde, Alba Iulia – Paris, 1994

Apostol, P., *Lucian Blaga polemist and some reflections on philosophical discussion*, **(**published in *Literary Romania*, year II, No. 19, Thursday 8, May, 1969)

Idem, *Sancta Simplicitas*, in *Saeculum* magazine, year II, No. 1, January-February, 1944

Isac, D., *Lucian Blaga polemist*, in *Symposion* magazine, year II, No. 3-4, July, 1944

Idem, *Response to „Saeculum" magazine*, in *Symposion* magazine, year III, No. 2, October, 1943

Idem, *Father Stăniloae and Lucian Blaga.Notes* , in *Symposion* magazine, year III, No. 1, June, 1943

Idem, *Notes. Jesus Christ or the human restoration by Father. D. Stăniloae– review***,** in *Symposion* magazine, year III, No. 2, October, 1943

Idem - *Lucian Blaga and The Great Anonymous*, in *Symposion* magazine, year III, No. 1, June, 1943

Micu, C., *Theology and philosophy*, in *Symposion* magazine, year III, No. 2, October, 1943

[32] Dumitru Stăniloae, *Attitudes. A victim of megalomania*, p. 317.

BDD-A191 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:02:26 UTC)

Rezuş, P., *Prot. Stav. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae*, in *The Altar of Banat (Altarul Banatului)* magazine – Caransebeş 1944, year I, No. 1-2, January - February, 1943
Idem, *Prolegomena to a history of Romanian religious philosophy*, in *The Altar of Banat (Altarul Banatului)* magazine – Caransebeş 1944, year II, No. 1-2, January - February, 1944
Stăniloae, D., *Attitudes. A victim of megalomania*, in. *Theological Review* XXXIII, No. 5-6, May-June 1943

BDD-A191 © 2012 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.34 (2026-11-14 00:02:26 UTC)