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THE UNION OF THE PRINCIPALITIES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF
A CONTROVERSIAL UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR IN IASI: GIORGE PASCU
(Summary)

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Through the union with Wallachia, in 1859, the city of Iasi gave up its condition of capital city and accepted, in exchange for some compensations of a cultural nature, the resulting sacrifices. The most significant compensation was the foundation of the University, and the city would become a sort of cultural capital of the new state, idea for which the Moldavian leaders, starting with Mihail Kogalniceanu and Titu Maiorescu, fought.

At a local level there is the awareness of the major and, to a great extent, unilateral sacrifice made by the population in Moldavia through their union with Wallachia, and compensations meant to attenuate the symbolic and economic losses are expected from the new center. At that time, what the inter-war intellectuals called “the marginalization of Moldavia and Iasi” and, implicitly, of the cultural and educational institutions, especially of the University of Iasi, generated a complex that marked the entire existence after 1859, the complex of “the province”. It manifests in a city that was accustomed to being a capital city, with all the related rights and privileges, and the intellectuals of this city are painfully aware of the fast passing to a secondary position. The situation worsened in 1918, when the postwar circumstances imposed the focus of the central authorities on the needs of Transylvania and Cluj, leaving the inhabitants of Iasi with the feeling that they were left at the mercy of the bureaucrats in Bucharest and that they were disadvantaged when budget funds were distributed.

Despite some extremely critical and courageous stands, the University of Iasi, which underwent a deep crisis generated by chronic under-financing, the lack of infrastructure, and the absence of professors, did not appear to have the capacity of straightening things out. Most teachers accept their peripheral status without rebellion, even if some brief outbursts gave the impression of an active corps. That is why the powerful voices (A.C. Cuza, Giorge Pascu, Grigore T. Popa) which advocated for the overcoming of the provincial complex, the improvement of the interior activity and the obtaining of recognition, inclusively financial, from the center, seemed excessive in relation to the real issue, which was minimized by most people out of sheer laziness.