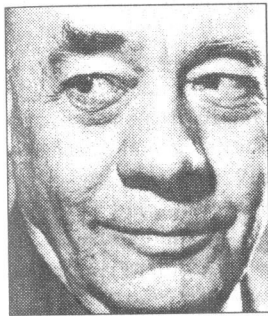


GRIGORE C. MOISIL

1906-1973

BIOGRAPHY



Grigore C. MOISIL was born on 10 January 1906 in Tulcea (where his father was transferred as a teacher). He was the son of Elena (teacher) and Constantin Moisil (archaeologist and numismatist, founder of the Romanian School of Palaeography and head of the Numismatic Cabinet of the Romanian Academy for 40 years), a descendant of an old intellectual family from Năsăud. ● In 1910, he moves with his family to Bucharest, where he attends elementary school between 1912-1916. During the war, the family take refuge at Vaslui, where he attends high school until 1918. He is then educated at the Spiru Haret High School in Bucharest, where he takes his baccalaureate in 1923 (graduating the two final years in one). He contributes to *Ziarul Științelor Populare și al Călătoriilor/The Newspaper of Popular Sciences and of Journeys* beginning with 1920, and in 1923 his first mathematics article is published in *Gazeta matematică/The Mathematical Gazette*. ● It is also in 1923 that he starts attending the courses of the Faculty of Sciences at the University of Bucharest. He also attends the lectures of N. Iorga, A. Tzigara-Samurcaș, T. Vianu and D. Gusti at the Faculty of Letters. Until 1926, Moisil publishes 14 scientific papers and takes his degree in mathematics, as well as his Ph.D., with the thesis *La mécanique analytique des systèmes continus* (in which he uses the new methods of functional analysis). That same year, he presents the results in his theses at the first Congress of the Romanian Mathematicians held at Cluj, arousing the interest of Vito Volterra, one of the founders of functional analysis. He also becomes a honorary lecturer in the department headed by D. Pompeiu. Between 1924-1929, he attends the courses of the Polytechnic School, but drops out due to his lack of calling for engineering (he nevertheless is left with an intellectual receptiveness for technical matters which will come handy later). ● In December 1930, he leaves for Paris with a scholarship for furthering his studies (together with his friend, the mathematician N. Teodorescu), and there he attends the lectures of P. Montel, E. Cartan, H. Villat and J. Hadamard. He presents

several papers in the seminars held by the last of them at College de France. He also contributes with a paper to the Congress of the Scientific Societies at Clermont-Ferrand in April 1931. In the summer of 1931, he returns to Bucharest where he receives the docent degree. On Volterra's recommendation, he gets a Rockefeller scholarship in Rome. From November 1931 until August 1932, he studies there with Volterra, Levi-Civita and Enriquez. ● Back home, he is appointed associate professor at the Faculty of Mathematics in Iași in the fall of 1931. In 1932, he starts teaching the first course on abstract and logical algebra in Romania: *Logic and the Theory of Demonstration*. He attends enthusiastically professor Al. Myller's seminars and makes friends with the mathematician M. Haimovici. After meeting the Polish logician T. Kotarbinski in Iași, he starts working in the field of many-valued logic. ● He marries the chemist Lucia Partenie in 1933 but, as they do not get along very well, they divorce in 1940. In 1938 he meets in Bucharest Viorica Constante (the sister of painter and writer Lena Constante). They marry on 20 July 1940 and she will support him all his life with a deep and intelligent devotion. Their letters (partly published [16]) are perhaps the most beautiful love correspondence in Romanian culture. ● In 1934, he is promoted full professor and, in 1939, is appointed professor at the Department of Differential and Integral Calculus in Iași. In 1942, he is transferred to the University of Bucharest as head of the newly created Department of Higher Analysis and Mathematical Logic (between 1929 and 1942 he published almost 70 scientific papers). ● In September 1946, he participates in the International Congress of Mechanics held in Paris, and, between 1946-1948, he is the Romanian ambassador to Turkey, a position he uses to establish relations between the Romanian mathematicians and those in the Balkan Peninsula. ● He becomes a member of the Romanian Academy in 1948 (together with his father) and is appointed head of the Section of Applied Algebra of the Mathematical Institute of the Romanian Academy. In 1949, he is elected president of the Romanian Mathematical Society, a position he will hold until his death. ● Due to his works in the algebraic theory of switching circuits, he is appointed president of the Automation Commission in 1954. In 1958, he becomes president of the Cybernetics Commission; in 1959, member in the Linguistics Commission of the Romanian Academy; in 1961, member in the Executive Committee of the International Federation of Automatic Control; and, in 1963, president of the IFAC commission for the Algebraic Theory of Relay Systems and Finite Automatic Machines. Between 1959-1967, he publishes 11 volumes in this field, which make him world famous. In 1962, he sets up the University Computing Center and sends numerous students abroad for specialization in computers. In 1968 under the aegis of IFAC he organizes in Bucharest an international congress on *Hazard and Race Phenomena in Switching Circuits*. Between 1965-1969, he is the president of the

Association of the Latin Mathematicians. ● In 1955 and 1959, he participates in the Congress of Mechanics held in Eastern Germany and in the international mathematical congresses in Prague and Edinburgh, and in 1960, in the International Congress on Automation in Moscow. He lectures in Moscow (1956), Bologna, Parma, Rome, Bari (1957), Varenna – Italy (1959), Paris, Poitiers, Grenoble, M.I.T. – Boston, Institute for Advanced Studies – Princeton, New York (1960), Paris, Tbilisi, Moscow, East Berlin, Szeged – Hungary (1962), Moscow, Novosibirsk, Tokyo (1964), Yablonna – Poland, London, Paris (1966), Saint-Avold, Lille, Paris, Clermont-Ferrand, Lyon, Marseille, Toulouse (1968), Herzeg-Novi, Belgrade, Novi-Sad (1969), Moscow, Riga (1971), Rome and Bologna (1972). ● In an attempt to create bridges not only between mathematics and technology, but also between mathematics and humanities, between 1968-1970 he signs the weekly column *Reflections* in the magazine *Viața economică/The Economic Life* [19] and, beginning with 1970, the column *Science and Humanism* in *Contemporanul/The Contemporary* [23]. His radio and television conferences, full of wit and humour, open new and unprecedented horizons both for specialists and the lay public of all ages. In 1970, he delivers a course in mathematics for humanities at the Faculty of Philology in Bucharest, as well as one on the logic of nuance reasoning at the University of Urbino [15]. He also organizes a symposium on the mathematical applications in history and archaeology. ● In 1971, he is elected vice-president of the International Union for the History and Philosophy of Science. However, due to the envy and the cavils of the management of the Faculty of Mathematics, he transfers (with the help of A. Joja, member of the Romanian Academy) to the Faculty of Philosophy and Law of the University of Bucharest. His lectures become very popular not only among students, but also among many outstanding men of culture who come to listen to him, just as long ago people used to come to listen to Iorga or Călinescu. ● In 1973, he is invited for a series of lectures in the US and Canada. He delivers several lectures in Montreal and New York, but dies at Ottawa on 21 May 1973. Between 1976-1992, professor S. Marcus edits three massive volumes including some of his mathematical papers (about 300 all in all). His papers on mathematical logic were republished during his life [14, 20]. ● He was a member of the editorial staffs of the following reviews: *Journal de mécanique* (Paris), *Revue A* (Bruxelles), *Elektronische Informationsverarbeitung und Kybernetik* (East Berlin), *Revue Roumaine de mathématiques pures et appliquées*, *Bulletin de la Société des Sciences Mathématiques de la R.S.R.*, *Acta logica*, *Cahiers de linguistique*, *Noesis*, *Studii și cercetări/Studies and Researches* (Romania). ● He was a member of the Science Academy in Bologna (1964), the International Institute of Philosophy in Paris (1965), the Polish Academy of Science (1967), the Academy of Science in Messina, Italy (1968) and the Royal Science Society in Liège (1972), as well as Doctor

Honoris Causa of the Academy of Science in Bratislava (1969).

● In 1997, the IEEE Computer Society granted him the Computer Pioneer Award postmortem, in recognition of his merits as founder of computer science, along with other 32 scientists among whom H.H. Aitken, E.W. Dijkstra, J.F. Forrester, D.A. Huffman and K. Zuse.

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(L. B.)