

## **Romanian Medical Historiography (1813–2008)\***

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**Abstract:** The object of the paper is to offer a general analytic and quantitative view on Romanian medical historiography from its beginnings up to the present. With respect to structure, we start with the evolution of bibliographic reference works in the field of the history of medicine, continuing with the presentation of the four stages the research of this scientific domain has gone through. The conclusions point to the idea that though studied mainly by physicians and not historians, the history of medicine in Romania has remained subject to major historiographical changes, and the quantity and quality of the discussions has been directly influenced by the degree of institutionalization present in the domain.

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### **Why a history of medical historiography?**

The idea to analyze the Romanian medical historiography occurred and took shape together with the elaboration of a bibliography on the history of medicine in Romania. Investigating the history of the Romanian medical elite, I had to realize from the beginning of my research that the considerable specialized literature was not accompanied by the absolutely necessary reference works, such as a coherently organized general bibliography on the history of medicine. Participating in a project which undertook to compile such a work, on the one hand I had the occasion to follow the chronological and thematic evolution of the entire Romanian literature on the history of medicine; on the other hand I observed that the latest systematic analysis to this effect had been published a quarter of a century ago,<sup>1</sup> being at the present outdated not with regard to its information (except of course later publications), but rather from the point of view of its structure and interpretation.

Exactly because of this reason the present study does not intend to present Romanian medical historiography in detail following the bio-bibliographical model, but

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<sup>1</sup> Gheorghe Brătescu, “Istoriografia medicală românească” (Romanian Medical Historiography), *Apărarea sănătății ieri și azi. Studii, note documente* (Preserving Health Yesterday and Today. Studies, Notes, Documents), ed. Gheorghe Brătescu, (București: Ed. Medicală, 1984), 531–582.

rather attempts to outline the defining characteristics of the major stages and to analyze them comparatively. Its goal is to make the necessary completions and reconsiderations in the domain of Romanian medical historiography and to offer, for the first time, a series of quantitative and thematic indicators in this scholarly field from the perspective of a historiographer and bibliographer rather than of a medical historian. The following lines present in part the results of a research which intends to make a bibliography of and to analyze as many titles as possible having as a subject the history of medicine in the regions inhabited by Romanians, both from Romanian and Hungarian historiography. The vastness of the material made necessary to set some limits to the investigation; thus, the present study will focus exclusively on the Romanian historiographical space, which is to be completed in the future by a comparative analysis with the Hungarian medical historiography discussing Transylvania and the Banat. The chronological limits are the publication of the first study in the history of medicine elaborated by a Romanian (1813) and the limit year of the most recent volume of the *Historical Bibliography of Romania (HBR)* (2008), the only major bibliographic instrument which quantifies in the present this limited research domain.

### **Romanian bibliographies on the history of medicine**

The fact that Romanian medical bibliography does not have a general bibliography, compels the researcher to resort to the different partial bibliographic works elaborated beginning with the 19<sup>th</sup> century, each of them covering a certain segment of the literature; nevertheless not being juxtaposed they do not offer a complete view.

The first Romanian attempts in this domain belonged to the physician Constantin S. Antonescu-Rîmuș, who in the first volume of a *Treatise on Hygiene* published in 1890 dedicated considerable space to a “selective but justified” bibliography of Romanian medical prints up to that point.<sup>1</sup> The next such works in chronological order were the famous bio-bibliography compiled by Gh. Crăiniceanu, probably the most often used century bibliographic work in the field of the history of medicine,<sup>2</sup> and the too little known and used catalogue of the doctoral theses defended at the Faculty of Medicine in Bucharest between 1873–1974 and 1909–1910.<sup>3</sup>

In the interwar period the works elaborated in the history of medicine benefited from the development of bibliographical research in the Romanian regions, the influence of which being almost immediately perceivable. In Bucharest Dr. Victor Gomoiu elaborated two essential works: a repertory of the medical personnel in the Romanian countries before 1870<sup>4</sup> and a history of Romanian medical press<sup>1</sup> – in fact, a catalogue of

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 542.

<sup>2</sup> Gheorghe Crăiniceanu, *Literatura medicală românească. Biografii și bibliografie* (Romanian Medical Literature. Biographies and Bibliography) (București: Institutul de arte grafice Progresul, 1905).

<sup>3</sup> Victor Gomoiu, *Catalogul tezelor de doctorat susținute la Facultatea de Medicină din București pe anii 1873/74–1909/10* (Catalogue of the Doctoral Theses Defended at the Faculty of Medicine in Bucharest in the years 1873/74–1909/10) (București: Institutul de arte grafice Universală, 1911).

<sup>4</sup> Victor Gomoiu, *Repertoriul medicilor, farmaciștilor, veterinarilor, din ținuturile românești. Vol. I (înainte de 1870)* [The Repertory of Physicians, Pharmacists, Veterinarians in the Romanian Lands. Vol I (before 1870)] (București: Tipografia Cultura, 1941).

these publications accompanied by substantial bibliographic references. The first thematic index of a Romanian medical journal, *Spitalul* constituted another beginning.<sup>2</sup> In Cluj, where under the leadership of Professor Valeriu L. Bologa a group investigating the history of medicine on the basis of a coherent research programme began to develop, the bibliographic influence came from the collaboration with Ioachim Crăciun. The result was that a history of medicine section appeared in historical bibliographies,<sup>3</sup> and also that some reference works were published for university circles: a catalogue of doctoral theses at the Faculty of Medicine in Cluj.<sup>4</sup> Only a few decades later, in 1965, Mihai Popa's *Medico-Historical Bibliography* of Transylvania between 1914 and 1945 was elaborated, a work of which, unfortunately, only one typewritten copy can be found in the Lucian Blaga Central University Library in Cluj.<sup>5</sup>

After World War II, two types of medico-historical reference works were elaborated and promoted in Romania. Firstly, continuing the tradition founded by Ioachim Crăciun, *HBR* accorded attention to research in the history of medicine, including the titles at first in a chapter on the history of science,<sup>6</sup> later on dedicating to them a separate subchapter.<sup>7</sup> Secondly, a series of works (*Indices*) elaborated by bibliographic research groups focusing on medicine included the history of medicine among the investigated subjects, covering however only partially the interval 1948–1989.<sup>8</sup> The comparison of the two types of bibliographic works leads to the conclusion that they can only be used complementarily, for while the *HBR* contains mainly books, studies published in collective volumes, and articles from a limited number of medical journals, medical *Indices* focus on articles from the main current of medical scientific journals and less on books and collective volumes. Another conclusion is that, regarding the intervals not covered by the *Indices*, researchers cannot obtain a complete view on

<sup>1</sup> Victor Gomoiu, *Istoria presei medicale în România* (The History of Medical Press in Romania) (Bucureşti: Tipografia Furnica, 1936).

<sup>2</sup> Victor Gomoiu, G. Davidescu, *Istoricul revistei „Spitalul” şi tabla generală a materiilor (1881–1930)* [The History of the Journal *Spitalul* and Its General Thematic Index (1881–1930)] (Bucureşti: 1931).

<sup>3</sup> Ioachim Crăciun, *Bibliographie de la Transylvanie roumaine* (Bucureşti: M.O. Imprimeria Naţională, 1937), 299–301.

<sup>4</sup> Valeriu L. Bologa, Lia M. Dima, *Bibliografia tezelor de la Facultatea de Medicină şi Farmacie din Cluj, 1923–1936 (No. 1–1000)* (The Bibliography of Theses at the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmaceutics in Cluj, 1923–1936) (Cluj: Tipografia Cartea Românească, 1936).

<sup>5</sup> Mihai Popa, *Bibliografia medico-istorică 1914–1915. Transilvania* (Cluj: Institutul de Medicină şi Farmacie Cluj. Istoria medicinei, 1965).

<sup>6</sup> *Bibliografia Istorică a României*, vol. I, (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1969), 312–314.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. IV, (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1975), 389–393; *Ibid.*, vol. V, (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1980), 354–356; *Ibid.*, vol. VI, (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei R.S.R., 1985), 381–385; *Ibid.*, vol. VII, (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Române, 1990), 186–187.

<sup>8</sup> *Index bibliografic al lucrărilor ştiinţifice medicale 23 august 1944–31 decembrie 1955* (Bibliographic Index of Medical Scientific Works, August 23, 1944–December 31, 1955) (Bucureşti: Editura medicală, 1956), 13–17, 47–71; *Index bibliografic al lucrărilor ştiinţifice medicale şi farmaceutice: 1970–1977* (Bibliographic Index of Medical and Pharmaceutical Scientific Works: 1970–1977), ed. Elena Aiteanu, Victor Săhleanu (Bucureşti: Editura medicală, 1979), 623–641; *Index bibliografic al lucrărilor ştiinţifice medicale şi farmaceutice: 1978–1982* (Bibliographic Index of Medical and Pharmaceutical Scientific Works: 1978–1982) (Bucureşti: Editura medicală, 1985), 405–414.

Romanian writings on the history of medicine solely by means of the *HBR*. In this period a Romanian bibliography on the history of orthopaedics and the traumatology of the locomotive system was also elaborated by Clement C. Baciuc.<sup>1</sup>

After 1989 the only reference work in this research field has remained the *HBR*.<sup>2</sup> As an individual initiative the *Bibliographic Index of Romanian Folk Medicine* compiled by Cristina Ionescu can be mentioned; however, this is not a work of the highest quality.<sup>3</sup>

For Bessarabia, besides Al. David's older, 1933 *Bibliography*<sup>4</sup> (not too useful for the history of medicine), the recent *Historical Bibliography of Bessarabia and Transnistria* signed by Ion Țurcanu can be mentioned. The latter work, having a complicated and anachronistic structure, lists 57 titles in the thematic index under the entry "Health, the history of medicine". From among these, chronologically and thematically only 6 titles could be included in a bibliography on the history of medicine in Romania.<sup>5</sup>

The general conclusion regarding the bibliographies on the history of medicine is that, though, in the course of time, there have been several investigations to this effect, some of them having valuable results, the varied themes and criteria they used to select the information has led to the appearance of some "blank spots" which can only be completed by compiling a bibliographic synthesis based on the information collected from all former sources, as well as on new research.

#### **The first Romanian writings on the history of medicine (1813–1914)**

The first methodological dilemma one must face in medical historiography is the difference between the writings on the history of medicine and the sources of this field of study, especially before World War I. Gheorghe Brătescu, probably the most important Romanian historian of medicine and author to the most recent Romanian study on medical historiography, proposed as distinguishing criteria the evolutive, diachronic view and the analytic effort made in order to identify causality.<sup>6</sup> Starting from these premises the range of the writings on the history of medicine becomes quite limited as compared to the great amount of medical literature; from the period previous to 1914, for example, only 100 titles fall in this category.

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<sup>1</sup> Clement C. Baciuc, *Pagini din istoria ortopediei și traumatologiei aparatului locomotor în România (bibliografia lucrărilor de specialitate românești publicate între 1864–1986)* [Pages from the History of Orthopaedics and the Traumatology of the Locomotive System in Romania (Bibliography of the Romanian Specialized Works between 1864 and 1986) (București: Editura Litera, 1988).

<sup>2</sup> *Bibliografia Istorică a României*, vol. VIII, (București: Editura Academiei Române, 1996), 293–294; Ibid., vol. IX, (Cluj-Napoca: Imprimeria Ardealul, 2000), 503–505; Ibid., vol. X, (București: Editura Academiei Române, 2005), 832–835; Ibid., vol. XI, (București: Editura Academiei Române, 2007), 290–291.

<sup>3</sup> Cristina Ionescu, *Index bibliografic al medicinei populare românești* (Iași: Editura Bit, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> Al. David, *Bibliografia lucrărilor privitoare la Basarabia apărute de la 1918 încoace* (Bibliography of the Works Regarding Bessarabia from 1918 up to the Present) (Chișinău: Tipografia Eparhială „Cartea Românească”, 1933).

<sup>5</sup> Ion Țurcanu, *Bibliografia istorică a Basarabiei și Transnistriei* (Chișinău: Ed. Litera Internațional, 2005), 586.

<sup>6</sup> Brătescu, "Istoriografia medicală românească", 531–533.



Ana-Maria Călinescu, *Waiting Room for Falling Asleep*, Tempera on paper (420 × 297 mm.)

What characterized the first Romanian writings on this subject and what became later a constant element in the entire Romanian medical historiography is the fact that the interest in this border domain was almost unilateral, being manifested from the direction of medicine towards history. Even if in time the history of medicine became regarded as a branch of the history of science, the great majority of those who discussed the subject came from the field of medicine. None of the great Romanian historians of medicine had had historical studies, only medical ones. Only by the concurrence of circumstances, as the interest in social history increased, certain branches such as the history of welfare work came to the attention of professional historians. This situation originated from the conditions under which Romanian historiography appeared and developed and from its lack of interest in this research domain. Be they romantic or positive, Romanian historical writings cultivated a selective recovery of the past, oriented mainly towards the field of politics, according to criteria which hardly permitted to the followers of Hippocrates to slip into specialized works.

Another characteristic of this initial stage was that the Romanian historians of medicine began to search for subjects in the field of universal history, preferring mainly the Antiquity, since its sources were easier to discuss, and the development of Romanian scientific medicine could justify no special interest in this area. This was the case of the first Romanian writings in the history of medicine signed by A. Arsaki and I. Baraş.<sup>1</sup> The facts that the former was published in Vienna in Greek and the latter was authored by a naturalized Romanian citizen are symptomatic. The investigation of issues belonging to the universal history of medicine continued in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in studies signed by Victor Babeş,<sup>2</sup> George Assaky,<sup>3</sup> Aurel Scurtu,<sup>4</sup> or Ludovic Fialla.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, the Romanian medical educational institutes had courses in the history of medicine in their curricula, which somewhat distanced this domain from the sphere of the historians' preoccupations. Nevertheless, the emphasis was still on the history of universal medicine, and especially on ancient medicine, as it is revealed by the structure of A. Costiescu's lectures held at the Surgery School of Bucharest in 1856–1857. Since no such textbook survived from the period when the Faculty of Medicine in Bucharest was founded, it can only be conjectured that, as all other university textbooks, those from which the history of medicine was taught were also translations, rewritings, or even plagiarisms based on foreign texts.<sup>6</sup> Other textbooks on the history of medicine,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 534–535.

<sup>2</sup> Victor Babeş, "Gambetta halálának oka" (The Cause of Gambetta's Death), *Orvosi Hetilap* (1883, 2): 35–38.

<sup>3</sup> George Assaky, "Descântecele în secolul al XVI-lea înaintea lui Hristos" (Healing Spells in the 16<sup>th</sup> century BC), *Clinica* 2 (1891, 20): 227–228; George Assaky, "Chirurgia în sec. XXX înaintea lui Christos" (Surgery in the 30<sup>th</sup> Century BC), *Institutul de chirurgie* 2 (1892): 241–245.

<sup>4</sup> Aurel Scurtu, "Farmacia la chinezi" (Pharmaceutics at the Chinese), *Buletinul de farmacie și chimie din România* 7 (1905): 123–135.

<sup>5</sup> Ludovic Fialla, "Louis Pasteur", *România medicală* 3 (1895): 460.

<sup>6</sup> I. F. Georgescu, "Primele manuale românești de medicină" (The First Romanian Textbooks on Medicine), *Din istoria medicinei românești și universale* (From the History of Romanian and Universal Medicine), ed. V. L. Bologa (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1962), 301–307.

such as those published by M. Petrini-Galaț in 1875<sup>1</sup> and by G. Moceanu in 1876<sup>2</sup> were in the same line.

The substitution of the universal for the national happened gradually, under a double influence. The reorientation was based on the evolution of the Romanian medico-sanitary system and medical upper education on the one hand, but the important part played by certain “disturbances” which suggested issues such as contagious diseases,<sup>3</sup> the Russo–Romanian–Turkish War in 1877–1878,<sup>4</sup> or social deviance – for example the doctoral thesis signed by P. D. Nedelcu elaborated on the history of suicide in Bucharest between 1848–1895<sup>5</sup> – cannot be neglected. This study, together with some other titles mentioned by the specialized literature draws attention to a yet insufficiently investigated bibliographic segment: the doctoral theses defended at the faculties of medicine. Doctoral dissertations represent an important source for medical historiography, since they mirror both the general interests of the age, and the preoccupations of the theses’ scientific advisors, making possible to identify some coherently structured and oriented research programmes.

Another category of 19<sup>th</sup> century works situated at the borderline of the history of medicine are the collections of medical legislation.<sup>6</sup> Of course, these can much rather be considered collections of sources, however, due to the fact that they do not only contain the legislation in power, but offer a diachronic, evolutive perspective, they too can be considered writings on the history of medicine.

The only general work was attempted by the physician Iacob Felix, who in his *The History of Hygiene in Romania*<sup>7</sup> opened the way for a series of such monographs in Romanian historiography, though his example was not followed until the interwar period. Otherwise, with respect to this work, Gheorghe Brătescu considered that “not the historical preoccupation is predominant in this latest writing by Felix, but the wish to

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<sup>1</sup> Mihail Petrini-Galați, *Istoria igienei. Curs la gimnaziu* (The History of Hygiene. Secondary School Textbook), (Galați: 1875); Mihail Petrini-Galați, *Istoria anatomiei generale. Lecțiuni* (The History of General Anatomy. Lecture) (București: 1881).

<sup>2</sup> G. Moceanu, *Istoria, anatomia și igiena gimnastice* (The History, Anatomy, and Hygiene of Gymnastics) (București: 1876).

<sup>3</sup> C. Nicoreanu, *Studiul istoriei sifilisului în România* (The Study of the History of Syphilis in Romania) (București: thesis, 1889).

<sup>4</sup> I. Șerbănescu, *Campania anilor 1877–1878. O privire medicală asupra asediului Plevnei și de la Plevna la Vidin* (The Campaign of the Years 1877–1878. A Medical View on the Siege of Plevna and from Plevna to Vidin) (București: 1880); G. Petrescu, *Serviciul sanitar rus pe timpul războiului 1877–78* (The Russian Sanitary Service during the War of 1877–78) (București: 1892).

<sup>5</sup> Dimitrie P. Nedelcu, *Studiu statistic și medico-legal asupra suicidului în București 1848–1895* (Statistic and Medico-Legal Study on Suicide in Bucharest 1848–1895) (București: 1895).

<sup>6</sup> G. Pârvulescu, *Legi, regulamente, instrucțiuni, decrete etc. sanitare* (Sanitary Laws, Regulations, Instructions, Decrees, etc.) (București: 1885); \*\*\*, *Legi, regulamente și instrucțiuni sanitare militare* (Military Sanitary Laws, Regulations, and Instructions), 3rd edition (București: 1888); Ștefan Spirescu, Ion Vraca, *Colecțiunea legilor, regulamentelor și instrucțiunilor sanitare* (Collection of Sanitary Laws, Regulations, and Instructions) (București: Tipografia Modernă Gregore Luis, 1899).

<sup>7</sup> Iacob Felix, *Istoria igienei în România în secolul al XIX-lea și starea ei la începutul secolului al XX-lea. Partea I. Memoriul 1, 2, 3. Partea a II-a. Memoriul 1, 2, 3* (The History of Hygiene in Romania in the 19th Century and Its State at the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Part I. Treatise 1, 2, 3. Part II. Treatise 1, 2, 3) (București: Tipografia Carol Göbl, 1901–1902).

clarify, resorting – it is true – to historical argumentation, certain current aspects of public hygiene and health”,<sup>1</sup> which questions the statement that *The History of Hygiene* was the first general work on the history of Romanian medicine.

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, the history of medicine in Romania began to be outlined as a separate research area, defining its most important lines: biography (often in the form of obituaries), institutional history,<sup>2</sup> and the publication of some document and source collections.<sup>3</sup> It is evident from this point of view that the history of Romanian medicine, though elaborated by people with a medical education, follows the general line of Romanian historiography: orientation towards the positivistic paradigm, publishing sources, avoiding speculative models, and preference for description. The explanations are manifold and they are related to the cultural, mental, and political context, as well as to the developmental stage of the scientific branch in question at that moment.

Firstly, positivism was the dominant historical model of the age, promoted by the leaders of Romanian historiography, foremost of whom was Nicolae Iorga. It was not accidental, that he signed the preface to Nicolae I. Angelescu's work, *Records and Documents from the Past of Pharmaceutics in the Romanian Countries*.

Secondly, it must be taken into consideration that those who studied the history of medicine, not being professional historians, often not even experienced writers, preferred to simply conform to the patterns borrowed from the fashionable models of the age.

Moreover, the research subjects did not offer too many possibilities for non-professionals: the biography and the publication of documents were the most convenient genres, not requiring special knowledge and abilities, on the other hand, the temporal interval which could be discussed was limited to the century that had just ended. As an argument to this effect, let us mention only the fact that Doctor Constantin Caracăș's book, written in the 1820s had waited for more than a century to be republished by Pompei Gh. Samarian,<sup>4</sup> since it required a Greek scholar interested at the same time in the history of medicine to do this.

Last but not least, due to the lack of a coherent programme for studying the history of medicine within an organized institutional framework, and the lack of some obligatory main objectives, those interested in this field had no thematic models, being compelled to direct their attention toward the patterns produced by the national historiography. One of the few initiatives to implement some new research subjects belonged to the physician and professor C. D. Severeanu, who in 1897 offered a prize of 150 Lei to the author “of the best and most complete work which contains the

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<sup>1</sup> Brătescu, “Istoriografia medicală românească”, 545.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 542.

<sup>3</sup> Nicolae I. Angelescu, *Acte și documente din trecutul farmaciei în Țările Românești* (Records and Documents from the Past of Pharmaceutics in the Romanian Countries) (București: 1904); V. D. Michail, *O pagină din retrospectiva serviciului sanitar în Principatele Române până la 1866* (A Page from the Past of the Sanitary Service in the Romanian Principalities until 1866) (București: 1907).

<sup>4</sup> Pompei Gh. Samarian, *O veche monografie sanitară a Munteniei, „Topografia Țării Românești” de dr. Constantin Caracăș* (An Old Sanitary Monograph of Muntenia, *The Topography of Walachia* by Dr Constantin Caracăș) (București: Institutul de arte grafice Bucovina, 1937).



biographies and portraits of all those Professors at the Faculty of Medicine who have deceased until the submission of the work". The winning book remained unfortunately unpublished, depriving us of a series of important biographical contributions.<sup>1</sup>

In what regards the quantification of the Romanian scientific historico-medical publications from before 1914, they can be estimated to less than 100 titles (excluding popularizing articles and obituaries). 25% of these had as a subject the history of universal medicine, 10% were handbooks (bibliographies, catalogues, legislative collections), and 10% tackled issues related to epidemics and contagious diseases (cholera, leprosy), the remaining discussing the history of some medico-sanitary institutions, the history of pharmaceuticals, the history of military sanitary service, etc. We excluded biographies from this quantification deliberately, since very few of them were elaborated with the observation of at least the minimal scientific norms, and most of them were obituaries or portraits for anniversaries, having a commemorative-festive role, rather than a scientific goal. Only in the case of Doctor Crăiniceanu's *Romanian Medical Literature*, among the portraits of which most of the Romanian medical personages from before 1900 can be found, one can speak about scientific biographies relevant for the history of medicine.

### **Between the two World Wars (1915–1944)**

After a century of pioneering and diletantism, the Romanian medical historiography changed its aspect completely in the interwar period. Although it still remained the prerogative of medical doctors, it was no longer a collection of writings generated by spontaneous individual initiatives, but passed to the stage of coherently devised research programmes and projects under the patronage of some important university personalities, such as Valeriu L. Bologa and Victor Gomoiu.

The first impulse came however from historians, through Nicolae Iorga, who in a lecture entitled *Medical Doctors and Medicine in the Romanian Past* outlined, for the first time, a coherent framework for the research of the history of medicine. Starting from the numerous data gathered in the course of his investigations, the leader of Romanian historiography at that time emphasized the necessity of acknowledging the importance of popular medicine and of ethnological studies as an auxiliary science for the history of medicine. He also underlined the role of physicians in the relationships between the three Romanian countries during the Middle Ages and clarified the ethnicity of several medical men who activated in the Romanian Principalities during the Early Modern Age, considered beforehand Greeks, identifying them as Macedonian Romanians.<sup>2</sup>

Nine decades later, the relationship between Iorga's discourse and the nationalistic exuberance generated by the events of 1918 seems to be obvious: the orientation towards popular medicine, the search for medieval relationship between the provinces, and re-claiming, on the basis of ethnical criteria, the physicians from the Principalities all belonged to the vast historical justificatory programme of the new political context – Greater Romania. In this particular case however, nationalism, the generator of so much misfortune, had a positive effect, for under its impulse not only Iorga's planned directions took shape, but the entire institutional structure necessary to

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<sup>1</sup> Brătescu, "Istoriografia medicală românească", 544.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 548–549.

transform the history of medicine from an activity dependent on more or less specialized personal initiatives into the professionals' research domain. The emergence of a new major research centre – Cluj – also constituted an important factor, all the more so, as here a Hungarian historiographic tradition had already existed in this domain based on the previous experience of the Franz Joseph University's Faculty of Medicine. The two centres, Bucharest and Cluj developed in different ways, but each of them offered to medical historiography a remarkable personality, two professors who can be labelled without exaggeration "school founders".

In Bucharest, Professor Victor Gomoiu managed to make a start in several historiographic genres, as well as to connect the history of medicine in Romania to international scientific life. As an author, he elaborated the first general work on the history of medicine in Romania (the Old Kingdom),<sup>1</sup> the first and so far the only bibliography of the Romanian medical press,<sup>2</sup> and the first catalogue of the medical personnel in the Old Kingdom.<sup>3</sup> He also authored, in the spirit of Nicolae Iorga's propositions, a book on the history of medical folklore,<sup>4</sup> surpassed later by Aurel I. Candrea's much more elaborated work.<sup>5</sup> The general work did not exclude the interest in institutional history, *The Society of Medical Students* and the journal *Spitalul* being two of his favourite subjects.

At an administrative level, he initiated the formation of the Romanian Society for the History of Medicine in 1929; he organized in 1932 the 9<sup>th</sup> International Congress in the History of Medicine held in Bucharest, and from 1936 on he presided for two decades over the *International Society for the History of Medicine*.<sup>6</sup> In this way, by the end of the interwar period, Romanian research in the history of medicine institutionally had been integrated in the international organizations, due almost exclusively to Dr Victor Gomoiu's efforts.

Another form of institutionalizing research in the history of medicine was the organization, in 1925, in the Department of Experimental Therapeutics, of a "conference" on the history of medicine under the direction of Gh. Z. Petrescu, son of General Zaharia Petrescu (who had held a similar course at the C. Davila's Medical School a century earlier). Gh. Z. Petrescu was interested especially in the history of universal medicine, but he also published a series of writings referring to particular aspects of the medical past in the Romanian countries: epidemics, dentistry, balneology, the status of the medical personnel.<sup>7</sup>

Despite this institutional consolidation, a significant segment of the Romanian medical historiographic literature in the interwar period was still the result of individual

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<sup>1</sup> Gomoiu, *Din istoria medicinei și a învățământului medical în România (înainte de 1870)* [From the History of Medicine and Medical Education in Romania (before 1870)] (București: Tipografia Cultura, 1923).

<sup>2</sup> Gomoiu, *Istoria presei medicale în România*.

<sup>3</sup> Gomoiu, *Repertoriul medicilor, farmaciștilor, veterinarilor, din ținuturile românești. Vol. I (înainte de 1870)*.

<sup>4</sup> Gomoiu, A. Raicovicianu, *Histoire du folklor médical en Roumanie* (Brăila : Presa, 1938).

<sup>5</sup> Aurel I. Candrea, *Folklorul medical român comparat. Privire generală. Medicina magică* (Romanian Comparative Medical Folklore. General View. Magical Medicine) (București: Casa Școalelor, 1944).

<sup>6</sup> Brătescu, "Istoriografia medicală românească", 550.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 552–553.

initiatives. However, contrary to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, authors started from a pre-existent historiographic basis, thus the mark of dilettantism which had characterized many former works began to grow blurred. The physician-historians' investigations (for most of these "Sunday" researchers were the disciples of Hippocrates) were often retrospective views on the medical profession they followed, or on the institution in which they activated. Biographical studies also received a more accurate, professional aspect.<sup>1</sup>

The range of interests and the impact of the writings elaborated by this category of authors never passed beyond the limited context of medical historical research, with a single notable exception represented by Dr Pompei Gh. Samarian. Physician in Călărași and author also of a monograph on plague in the Romanian countries published in 1932,<sup>2</sup> Samarian wrote and issued at his own expense between 1935 and 1938 a three volume work, exhaustive for that time, covering the period 1382–1834.<sup>3</sup> It ought to be mentioned that during his evolution as a writer he did not directly turn to the domain of his own profession, his writings on the history of medicine having been preceded by the publication of a town history on Călărași. This work, considered by Gheorghe Brătescu a "preparatory exercise",<sup>4</sup> could have influenced the quality of Samarian's later writings. It also represents the particular result of a more general affiliation, which demonstrates that the interest in this domain was not only generated by the professional environment, but also by a personal propensity towards historical research.

The second important research centre for the history of medicine was founded in the interwar period by the new Romanian University of Cluj. Already in 1919 a History of Medicine Department had been founded here under the leadership of the French parasitologist, Jules Guiart, whose assistant lecturer, Valeriu L. Bologa became one of the most prominent Romanian representatives of this field. Bologa was preoccupied both with the pedagogical aspects of this profession, trying to attract the students' attention to it, and with the institutionalization of the research domain. He created a small medical historical "department" museum (which bears his name presently), transformed the Institute for the History of Medicine into a reference centre open to anyone interested in studying the past of medicine,<sup>5</sup> and initiated collaboration with the Institute of National History and the University Library to elaborate the medical bibliography and to edit books for the collection of *Medical-Historical Library*.

This effort, carried out with the help of PhD students, resulted in a series of medico-historical bibliographies of limited dimensions but very useful, having for their subject the doctoral theses in medicine at the University of Cluj,<sup>6</sup> the history of

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 556–557.

<sup>2</sup> Pompei Gh. Samarian, *Din epidemiologia trecutului românesc – Ciuma* (From the Epidemiology of the Romanian Past – The Plague) (București: Editura Marvan, 1932).

<sup>3</sup> Pompei Gh. Samarian, *Medicina și farmacia în trecutul românesc. vol. I. (1382–1775)* (Medicine and Pharmaceutics in the Romanian Past) (Călărași: Tipografia Modernă, 1936); Ibid., *vol. II–III (1775–1834)* (București: Tipografia Cultura, 1938).

<sup>4</sup> Brătescu, "Istoriografia medicală românească", 553.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 558–559.

<sup>6</sup> Nina Dodul, *Bibliografia tezelor de la Facultatea de Medicină și Farmacie din Cluj din anii 1923–1927* (The Bibliography of Doctoral Theses at the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmaceutics in Cluj in the Years 1923–1927) (Thesis) (Cluj: Tipografia Cartea Românească, 1936); Andrei Dăneș, *Bibliografia tezelor de la Facultatea de Medicină și Farmacie din Cluj din anii 1927–*

balneology<sup>1</sup> and of ophthalmology.<sup>2</sup> An additional argument for Valeriu L. Bologa to promote some coherent medico-historical research programmes was the analysis of the subject matters chosen for doctoral dissertation in the period subjected to bibliographic research (1923–1936).<sup>3</sup> Out of the 1000 theses in medicine defended during this interval 80 were on issues related to the history of medicine: epidemics according to contemporary reports, press as a source of the history of medicine, biographical portraits of some Romanian medical personalities, and, of course, medical bibliographies. Professor Bologa tried to include all his students' abilities, thus the dissertations in question covered both sources from Romania (Hungarian, Saxon, Romanian), as well as Russian ones – these latter compiled by Bessarabian PhD students.

The biographical study of some important figures of the Romanian history of medicine in Transylvania, such as the medical doctors Ioan Piuariu-Molnar, Vasile Popp, and Pavel Vasici also began in the interwar period. The order we enumerated these scientists was also the quantitative order of the references. Ioan Piuariu-Molnar received the greatest interest by far, due to several studies by I. Lupaș.<sup>4</sup> It is yet to be decided whether in the case of the three physicians the interest in the history of medicine, or the interest in political-national history was predominant. I personally tend to believe that they would have been in any case included in the research projects developed by Bologa; nevertheless, it is evident that the initial impulse came from the part of I. Lupaș and this was much rather related to the history of the national movement than that of medicine.

Gheorghe Brătescu stated that “because of several reasons, but first of all due to the difficulties in obtaining the necessary information, our researchers before 1944 did not risk to discuss subjects of universal history”,<sup>5</sup> however, one of the “several reasons” which could not be enumerated in 1984 was probably the nationalistic enthusiasm which characterized the entire period. Although both Valeriu L. Bologa and Victor Gomoiu had planned to elaborate some major works of universal history, these were not carried out, the Romanian region monopolizing their and the other medical historians' attention. It was otherwise normal in this age of nationalism for the national history of medicine which was that far unstudied and for its representative figures to represent priorities to the detriment of universal issues.

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1933 (The Bibliography of Doctoral Theses at the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmaceutics in Cluj in the Years 1927–1933) (Thesis) (Cluj: Tipografia Cartea Românească, 1936); Iacob Bucur, *Bibliografia tezelor de la Facultatea de Medicină și Farmacie din Cluj din anii 1933–1936* (The Bibliography of Doctoral Theses at the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmaceutics in Cluj in the Years 1933–1936) (Thesis) (Cluj: Tipografia Cartea Românească, 1936).

<sup>1</sup> Aurelian Borșianu, *Bibliografia balneologiei în Ardeal* (The Bibliography of Balneology in Transylvania) (Thesis) (Cluj: Tipografia Grafic-Record, 1932).

<sup>2</sup> Ioan Graur, *Bibliografia oftalmologică românească* (Romanian Ophthalmologic Bibliography) (Thesis) (Cluj: Tipografia Anca, 1932); Pavel Iva, *Bibliografia oftalmologică românească 1920–1931* (Romanian Ophthalmologic Bibliography 1920–1931) (Thesis) (Cluj: Tipografia Victoria, 1932).

<sup>3</sup> Dima Bologa, *Bibliografia tezelor de la Facultatea de Medicină și Farmacie din Cluj, 1923–1936 (No. 1–1000)* (The Bibliography of Doctoral Theses at the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmaceutics, 1923–1936).

<sup>4</sup> Crăciun, *Bibliographie de la Transylvanie roumaine*, 302–303.

<sup>5</sup> Brătescu, “Istoriografia medicală românească”, 559.

Unfortunately, the medical historiography of interwar Romanian (with the exception of Transylvania) is the area least represented in the bibliographies of the subject, thus a quantitative account on these historiographic works can only be based on approximations for the time being. Taking into consideration the fact that for Transylvania approximately 1100 titles (including the works elaborated in the Old Kingdom but which refer to the intra-Carpathian region)<sup>1</sup> were identified in the period 1914–1945, approximately 2000 titles can be estimated for the whole interwar Romania. The difference compared to the previous period is overwhelming, but we must take into consideration that at least 10% of this literature consists of doctoral dissertations in medicine, the publication of which was compulsory at that time, and another important segment comprises biographies, which, as we have mentioned before, began to be elaborated scientifically. The entire bibliographic area referring to the Old Kingdom of Romania not being covered, any further remarks on the thematic distribution of this literature would be based on simple guesses unsupported by sources.

### **The communist period (1945–1989)**

Medicine was one of the domains which suffered less from the political changes which took place after 1945. Unfortunately, research to this effect has hardly begun and the institutionalized condemnation of communism imposed a series of clichés on the subject which are still to be confirmed or refuted by further investigations. It is certain that the history of medicine in Romania in the period 1948–1989 had two stages. The first corresponds to the 1950s and reflects faithfully the ideological brutality and Sovietization which dominated the age. The second stage began in the 1960s and continued to the end of the 1980s; it can be considered, using the terminology of the period's wooden language, the “Golden Age” of the Romanian medical historiography.

Looking to section IV.1. of the *HBR*'s 1<sup>st</sup> volume, entitled *The History of Science. Natural Sciences*,<sup>2</sup> one may be surprised to discover that the history of medicine titles published in the period 1944–1969 can be literally numbered on one's fingers. Thus this work is of little use for the researcher of the domain. A part of the interval (1944–1955) is covered by a well compiled medical *Index* containing a section of medical historiography,<sup>3</sup> but it is obvious that for the years 1956–1969 extensive bibliographic research is necessary.

Of course, the important works can be identified easily, being referred to in most subsequent investigations. They offer a view on what the history of medicine meant in the Romania of the 1950s, and even if some titles seem to be relatively neutral, a closer look reveals that they conformed to the ideological current imposed by Communist party policy.<sup>4</sup> The characteristic subjects of this period were the history of Russian–Romanian medical relationships,<sup>5</sup> the history of occupational medicine applied

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<sup>1</sup> Popa, *Bibliografia medico-istorică 1914–1915. Transilvania*.

<sup>2</sup> *Bibliografia Istorică a României*, vol. I, 312–314.

<sup>3</sup> *Index bibliografic al lucrărilor științifice medicale 23 august 1944–31 decembrie 1955* (Bibliographic Index of the Scientific Works in Medicine, August 23, 1944–December, 1955), 13–17, 47–71.

<sup>4</sup> Brătescu, “Istoriografia medicală românească”, 560–561.

<sup>5</sup> *Contribuții la studiul legăturilor medicale româno-ruse* (Contributions to the Study of Russian–Romanian Medical Relationships), ed. Vasile L. Bologa (București: Editura de stat pentru literatură științifică, 1952); Vasile L. Bologa, Aurel Simplăceanu, Samuil Izsák, “Contribuții noi

on the worker “class”,<sup>1</sup> and, of course, biographies. These latter were dedicated to some militant socialist physicians, such as Ștefan Stîncă,<sup>2</sup> to representative figures whose activity was reinterpreted according to the requirements of communist ideology (Carol Davila, Victor Babeș, Iacob Felix), or to the new models imported from the Russian regions, first of all I. P. Pavlov.<sup>3</sup> The Russian scientist was, otherwise, one of the most often referred to personages of the medico-biographical literature of the age, dozens of studies being written about him beside the other dozens dedicated to his compatriots,<sup>4</sup> while among the Romanians special attention was given to Victor Babeș, on whose works a bibliography was compiled.<sup>5</sup> A great part of these biographical reorientations in the history of medicine was done under the aegis of the Romanian Academy, which through its periodical publications and the Publishing House of the Romanian People’s Republic’s Academy contributed to their dissemination.

One of the positive results of the “obsessive decade” in the Romanian medical bibliography was represented by the extensive institutionalization of research, history of medicine departments being founded in the years 1948–1950 beside every medical institute in the country. In order to understand the importance of this measure we ought to specify that at the end of the interwar period the research centre of Cluj was the only such institution to function in a Romanian university in this field, as the department in Bucharest ceased to exist following G. Z. Petrescu’s death. In 1953 a history of medicine section also began to function within the *Centre for Organizing Health Protection and History of Medicine*. Its members organized beginning with 1956 a series of medico-historical circles, of which several scientific personalities marginalized in that period, such as Mayer A. Halevy, Nicolae Vătămanu, Lucian Predescu, etc. profited.<sup>6</sup>

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la studiul legăturilor medicale româno-ruse. I–III” (New Contributions to the Study of Russian–Romanian Medical Relationships I–III), *Contribuții la istoria medicinei în R. P. R.* (Contributions to the History of Medicine in the Romanian People’s Republic) (București: Editura Medicală, 1955), 213–258.

<sup>1</sup> Gheorghe Brătescu, *Istoria ocrotirii sănătății muncitorilor din România (până la 23 august 1944)* [The History of Preserving Workers’ Health in Romania (until August 23, 1944)] (București: Editura Medicală, 1957).

<sup>2</sup> \*\*\*, “90 de ani de la nașterea lui Ștefan Stîncă” (Ștefan Stîncă’s 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary), *Ocrotirea sănătății* 5, No. 4 (1955): 3–4; Iuliu Ghelester, *Locul lui Ștefan Stîncă în gândirea medicală românească* (Ștefan Stîncă’s Place in Romanian Medical Thinking) (București: Editura Academiei R. S. R., 1965); Vasile Rășcanu, *Viața lui Ștefan Stîncă* (The Life of Ștefan Stîncă) (București: Editura Academiei R. S. R., 1965).

<sup>3</sup> Some of the most important titles: \*\*\*, *Comemorarea savantului I. P. Pavlov* (Commemorating the Scientist I. P. Pavlov) (București: Editura Academiei R. P. R., 1949); \*\*\*, *Învățătura lui I. P. Pavlov, baza înfloririi științelor medicale. Conferințe ale membrilor delegației medicale din RPR care au vizitat URSS* (I. P. Pavlov’s Teachings, the Basis on Which Medical Sciences Flourished. Lectures by the Members of the Medical Delegation from the Romanian People’s Republic Who Visited the USSR) (București: Editura Academiei R. P. R., 1952); I. Cotaescu, *Importanța filosofică a învățăturii lui I. P. Pavlov* (The Philosophical Importance of I. P. Pavlov’s Teachings) (Timișoara: Editura Institutului de medicină, 1955).

<sup>4</sup> *Index bibliografic al lucrărilor științifice medicale 23 august 1944–31 decembrie 1955*, 47–71.

<sup>5</sup> \*\*\*, *Bibliografia lucrărilor lui Victor Babeș* (The Bibliography of Victor Babeș’s Works) (București: Editura Academiei R. P. R., 1954).

<sup>6</sup> Brătescu, “Istoriografia medicală românească”, 560–562.

From a quantitative point of view, bibliographies comprise for the period 1945–1964 a number of approximately 400 titles in the history of medicine, which represent only 20–25% of the estimated total number of works written in the domain in the period 1945–1989, and approximately the same percentage from the estimated total of the interwar period. Even supposing that in lack of complete bibliographies we undervalued this number, the difference remains considerable, reflecting the researchers' personal insecurity, the difficulties to adapt to the new ideological requirements, and the general decline of scientific life.

The fruits of centralized institutionalization in the history of Romanian medicine began to ripen beginning with the second half of the 1960s. An ideological relaxation, the reintegration of some marginalized researchers, and last but not least a change of generations in the intellectual sense was necessary for this. With the demise of Valeriu L. Bologa in 1971, Gheorghe Brătescu remained the leader of this discipline, alongside a series of specialists: Samuil Izsák, Iosif Spielmann, Iuliu Ghelerter, Gabriel Barbu, Paul Pruteanu, Nicolae Vătămanu, Arnold Huttman, C. I. Beruş, Ion F. Georgescu-Vâşte, Eva Crişan, who succeeded, despite the restrictions of the age, in realizing a goal beforehand attained only in the interwar period: connecting Romanian medical historiography into the international scientific circuit. The extensive bio-bibliographic analysis carried out by Gheorghe Brătescu represents the best written historiographical evaluation of the period; however, it is not the intention of this study to return to it, for the development of this field of study was so great that even the acknowledged leader of the domain hesitated to make, at that moment, analytical evaluations.<sup>1</sup>

A simple quantification shows that the medical historiographic production of the age was only by little above that on the interwar period; nevertheless, the qualitative difference is evident. First of all, the research in the history of medicine between 1965 and 1989 was no longer indebted to dry positivism to the same degree as interwar investigations, leaving more space to analytical interaction with such domains as philosophy and intellectual history.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, the high level of institutionalization was reflected in the character of the publications: if between the two World Wars journal articles and shorter writings (shorter than 100 pages) were predominant, in this period a significant increase in the number of studies published in collective volumes was noticed, these having a subject fixed beforehand, many of them containing papers presented in scientific meetings. There was also a significant number of valuable general works on the history of Romanian and universal medicine.<sup>3</sup> Last but not least, the history of medicine had become a field studied mainly by specialists, understanding by this people with constant and methodologically well grounded preoccupations in the domain. An additional thematic characteristic was the boom of biography as a genre, both in its shorter form (published in periodicals and collective volumes) as well as in the shape of more voluminous works dedicated to representative figures of the Romanian medicine,<sup>4</sup> biographies occupying approximately 25–35% of the entire scientific production in this domain.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., 562–579.

<sup>2</sup> *Filozofie şi medicină* (Philosophy and Medicine), ed. Gh. Florescu (Bucureşti: Ed. medicală, 1978).

<sup>3</sup> *Istoria medicinei universale* (History of Universal Medicine), ed. Valeriu. L. Bologa, (Bucureşti: Ed. medicală, 1970).

<sup>4</sup> Brătescu, "Istoriografia medicală românească", 576.

**Romanian medical historiography in the post-communist era (1990–2008) – a quantitative-thematic perspective**

The *Historical Bibliography of Romania*, the only publication which offers data on the Romanian medical historical investigations after 1990, records from this year until 2008 approximately 500 titles, 40% of these being book, 25% articles in periodicals, and 35% studies in collective volumes. The small number of studies published in journals is due both to the irregular publication of the periodicals and to the limitations imposed on by the editorial methods of the *HBR*, which does not cover a series of medical periodicals liable to contain medical historiographic writings. The chronological distribution indicates that only 36% of the titles appeared in the period 1990–1999, which means that in this last decade an evident revival of medical historiography has taken place. From the point of view of the investigations' geographical distribution, Bucharest continues to have the pre-eminence, followed in order by Cluj-Napoca, Timișoara, and Brașov.

25% of the titles are still biographical contributions, and commemorative medical literature is increasing, containing both “classical” figures (Victor Gomoiu,<sup>1</sup> C. D. Severeanu<sup>2</sup>), and contemporaries wishing to communicate their experience. 15% of the works is represented by institutional monographs, especially of some university centres – which mirrors the interest in the history of the university environment, and also marks a reorientation in this field. If Gheorghe Brătescu could proudly announce the existence in the 1980s of a “group of readers” interested in writings on the history of medicine, the following decade, influenced by the changes of the publishing market, brought the withdrawal of this discipline to the academic circles, a process reflected also by the substantial decrease in the number of specialized writings. The increase which can be detected in the last 8–9 years is due mainly to the general reinvigoration of research in Romania; however, there remain a series of major problems unfavourable to this field of study. The most important of these is probably the lack of institutionalized scientific communication between historians and the historians of medicine, all the more as the percentage of the medical historical writings resulting from social historical, mentality-historical, thanato-historical, historical anthropological, etc. approaches is increasing.

This brief look on the last two decades of Romanian medical historiography must be completed with a last remark, namely that one of the causes which triggered the regress compared to the 1970–1980s is undoubtedly institutional decentralization, which has led to the localism of research, another, even more important, being the lack of scientific personalities willing and able to undertake major projects which would exceed the limits of their own university centre, would go beyond the stage of biographies, and would not to cling to generalities and university textbooks. A sign to this effect is represented by the situation of the history of medicine projects financed through national research programmes: in the last three years the (few) projects in the history and sociology of medicine which received grants were elaborated by historians, sociologists,

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Gomoiu, *Viața mea* (My Life), vol. 1–6 (Craiova: Sitech, 2006); Victor Gomoiu, *Chirurgia mea (așa cum am trăit-o și cum o văd)* [My Surgery (as I Have Experienced and as I See It)], ed. Mihai Viorel Popescu, Mihail Șcheau (Craiova: Editura MJM, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> C. D. Severeanu, *Din amintirile mele (1853–1929)* [From My Memories (1853–1929)], ed. Constantin Rezachievici (București: Editura Fundației Culturale Gheorghe Marin Speteanu, 2008).



political scientists<sup>1</sup> and not by historians of medicine educated as medical doctors (who have dominated this historiographic field since its beginnings). This signals that the traditional structures of the discipline are wearing away or are no longer adequate.

The historiographic increase which characterizes the present decade may be considered a positive sign for this domain; nevertheless unless some leaders emerged who brought about institutional collaborations and projects with a large scope, Romanian medical historiography would remain trapped in unconstructive localism.

### **Conclusions**

The Romanian medical historiography has had a sinuous road since its beginnings in 1813, being influenced both quantitatively, as well as from the point of view of its genres by the evolution of the national historiography and the involvement of the political factor to different degrees, from establishing research institutes to imposing on researchers its ideological line. An important moment in the evolution of this field of study was the interwar period, when against the background of nationalism and institutionalization research boomed, some important research subjects were defined, and a series of leaders in the domain emerged, of whom only Valeriu L. Bologa could continue his activity in the next stage at the cost of conforming to the requirements of the new regime. The 1950s and 1960s brought a qualitative and quantitative regression, followed by a powerful revival in the eighties, when the scientific production in this domain reached its zenith in every aspect.

Although the relationship between the periods 1915–1945 and 1965–1989 seems to be balanced, the variety of subjects, the authors' learning, and the quality of analysis naturally turn the scales in favour of Gheorghe Brătescu's age and not that of Victor Gomoiu and Valeriu L. Bologa. Of course, in a comparative analysis it may be asked whether there is an explicit connection between these flourishing historiographic periods and the modernization programmes of health policies (the founding of the Ministry of Health in 1923 with its entire system and the medical-social projects of the communist era). Another scarcely studied subject would be the interpretative modulation according to the ideological models of the moment.<sup>2</sup>

After 1990 Romanian medical historiography is characterized on the one hand by localism and the disappearance of large scale projects, on the other hand by increasing interest from the part of professional historians in the field, due to the new approaches which connect the history of medicine to the history of political ideas,

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<sup>1</sup> The list of the projects financed by the National Council for Scientific Research in Higher Education in the competition Idei PCE-2008, social sciences committee:

<http://cncsis.ro/UserFiles/File/proiecte%20propuse%20spre%20finantare/stiinte%20sociale.pdf>.

Accessed January 25, 2010.

The list of the projects financed by the National Council for Scientific Research in Higher Education in the competition Idei PCE-2008, humanities committee:

<http://cncsis.ro/UserFiles/File/proiecte%20propuse%20spre%20finantare/stiinte%20umaniste.pdf>

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Accessed January 25, 2010.

See also: <http://socialzoom.com/echiserv/>. Accessed February 8, 2010.

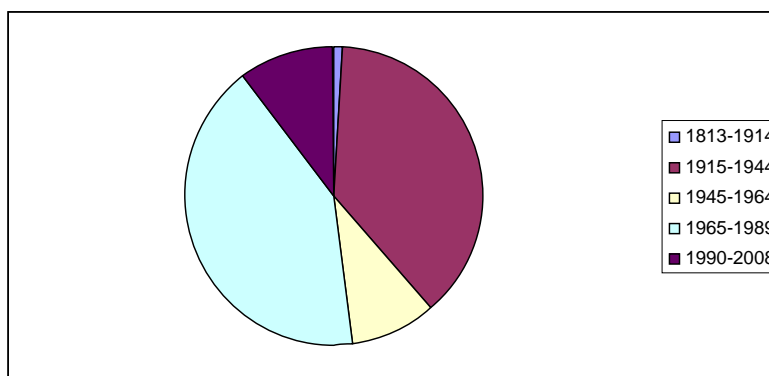
<sup>2</sup> These suggestions were made by Silviu Hariton, which, with his permission, I considered suitable to be included in the text.

nationalism,<sup>1</sup> mentalities,<sup>2</sup> and to historical anthropology.<sup>3</sup> The fact that by means of such investigations, or even of classic discussions the domain remains connected to the international scientific circuit makes us believe that there is a real chance for medical historiography to shake off its status as a (self)marginalized branch of Romanian historiography.

A quantitative analysis indicates a number of approximately 5,000 titles from the period 1813–2008, distributed over the period as Chart 1 shows it. Out of these only 55–60% is included in bibliographies (Chart 2). The biggest “blank spots” are represented by: articles published in 19<sup>th</sup> century Romanian periodicals (only partially recorded by Victor Gomoiu), the Old Kingdom in the interwar period, the years 1955–1970 and 1983–1989. The latter two intervals are in part covered by the *HBR*; nevertheless, as Chart 3 demonstrates, additional research is necessary, mainly for the period 1955–1970, especially with regard to medical journals and collections of studies.

I shall end by observing that, beyond the historiographic conclusions of the above lines, this study wishes to point out the need for a bibliography on the history of medicine in the Romanian territories, a reference work which cannot be replaced by historical bibliographies. On account of this lack of any research in this field, including the present one, assumes from the beginning a great amount of bibliographic relativism.

**Chart 1. The distribution of Romanian medico-historical literature in the period 1813–2008 (estimated total number of titles)**

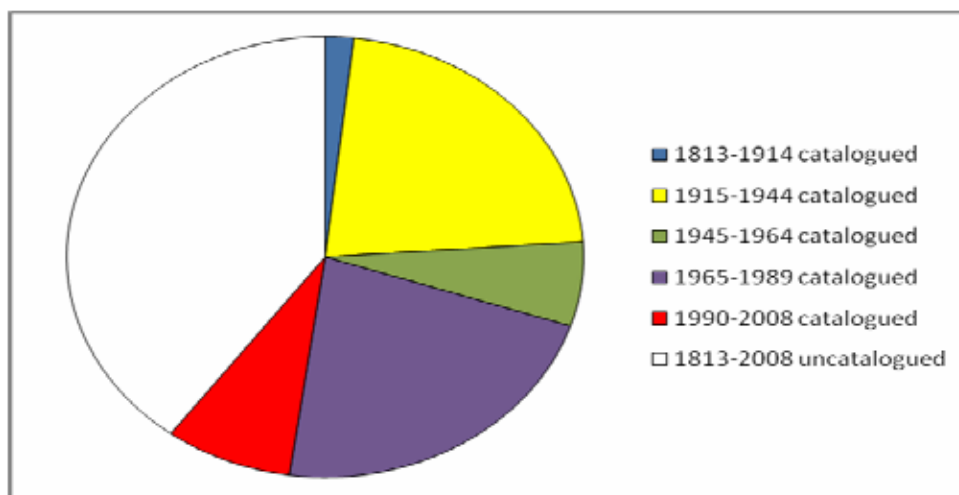


<sup>1</sup> Marius Turda, *The Idea of National Superiority in Central Europe* (Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2004); *Blood and Homeland. Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe*, ed. Marius Turda, Paul J. Weidling (CEU University Press, 2007).

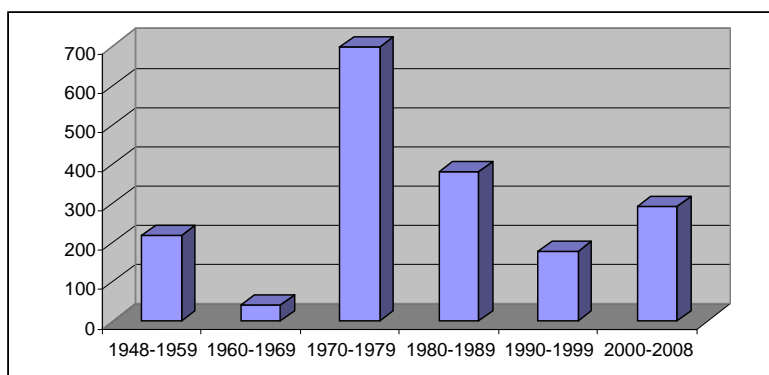
<sup>2</sup> Marius Rotar, *Moartea în Transilvania în secolul al XIX-lea, vol. 1-2: 11 ipostaze ale morții* (Death in Transylvania in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, vol. 1–2: 11 Aspects of Death) (Cluj-Napoca: Accent, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Constantin Bărbulescu, *Imaginarul corpului uman: între cultura țărănească și cultura savantă (secolele XIX–XX)* (The Imaginary of the Human Body: Between Peasant Culture and Scholarly Culture), (București: Paideia, 2005).

**Chart 2. The distribution of Romanian medico-historical literature in the period 1813–2008 (total number of titles figuring in a bibliography – coloured – compared to the total number of estimated titles – coloured + white)**



**Chart 3. Distribution of Romanian medico-historical literature according to decades in 1948–2008 as shown by specialized bibliographies<sup>1</sup>**



Translated by Ágnes Korondi

<sup>1</sup> As I have mentioned in the text as well, the bibliographic data do not always reflect reality: for example the lack of a medical *Index* for the period 1955–1972 is observable in the very low numbers in the period 1960–1969. Nevertheless, despite the need for revaluations based on future research, I have prepared the chart because I presumed the value line in general will not be modified by later completions.