

# HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF MEDICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN ROMANIA AND THE USA BETWEEN THE PERIOD OF 1870–1950

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*Abstract:* The paper presents historical aspects concerning Romanian–American medical relations between the period of 1870–1950.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The history of medical relations between Romania and the USA has evolved with the medical and scientific progress. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century various data were reported in medical literature by isolated American doctors who had arrived in the Romanian provinces, as well as Romanian doctors who had traveled for higher medical education or had practiced medicine in the USA.

## 2. MEDICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN ROMANIA AND THE USA BETWEEN THE PERIOD OF 1870–1950

In 1870, American dentists, Layton and J. B. Young, had settled in Bucharest where they brought the trephining device of Barunn and gold fillings for teeth. J. B. Young from New York, became a dentist at the Royal Palace in 1871. J. B. Young's medical treatments were registered in his "Daily Notes" by the Romanian literary critic and politician Titu Maiorescu (1840–1917). J. B. Young also had treated Romanian poet and politician Vasile Alecsandri (1821–1890).

In the years 1877–1878, during the War of Independence, American doctors L. D. Casey from New York and Lawson came to Romania and worked in the Hospital located in Batistei St., Bucharest.

In October 1893, the Deans of the Faculty of Medicine of Bucharest approved that Ioseph Krainic, Ph.D. in dental surgery with a Diploma from the Academy of Dental Surgery in Baltimore, USA, to obtain the practice exam in Romania with a Committee consisting of Prof. Victor Babeș and the dentist Simon Lempart.

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In the same period, Jacques Popper, with the degree of Ph.D. in surgical dentistry from the College of Dentistry in Philadelphia, asked for the same privilege, but the Committee made up Prof. G. Stoicescu and the dentist Simon Lempart postponed their decision for a year.

In 1894, the dental surgeon Ionas Eichenbaum, with a Bachelor of Dentistry degree from schools in Paris and Chicago, asked for practice of medical activity in this country.

Prof. George Assaky (1855–1899), one of the forerunners of modern neurosurgery, and Prof. Nicolae Manolescu (1850–1910), the founder of the Romanian School of Ophthalmology, had been appointed honorary members of the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, for their didactic and scientific activities carried out in the medical field.

The Romanian dentist Leon Velescu earned a Ph.D. degree in final examination held at the Surgical Dentistry College in Philadelphia, the “Gold Cross” no. 10.

Pavel Macarovici (1845–1921) was the founder of the first “Society of dentists in Romania” (1890) and he opened the high schools for the first dental courses on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1909. The scientific papers sent by P. Macarovici “Pulpitis chronica idiopathica” and “The situation of dentistics and of dentists in Romania”, at the Colombian Congress in Dentistry in Chicago (17<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> of August 1893) and published in 1894 in the Annals of Congress, were the first Romanian dental scientific and history papers which became world famous.

Victor Babeş (1854–1926) the founder of the Romanian School of Microbiology, had published the scientific paper “About tetanus” in New York in two editions (1897 and 1902).

The surgeon Prof. Thoma Ionescu (1860–1926), scientist with an extensive anatomical knowledge, had popularized in the USA the upper rahianesthesia, after the practical demonstrations carried out in England, demonstrating the advantages of his method. On 7<sup>th</sup> December 1909, in New York, the Romanian surgeon had practiced rahianesthesia at the Cripples Hospital “Reptured and Cripples”, where Gibnay and William Colley brothers had worked with famous surgeons and on the second day he had practiced rahianesthesia at the service of Dr. Robert Morris, at Post Graduate Hospital. Also in New York he had another operations at Mount Sinai Hospital. In Philadelphia, on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1909, he had operated in University of Pennsylvania, and on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1909 at Medical College. Then he had operated successively in Washington, Chicago (at Cook Country Hospital), Rochester (in Minnesota) in the Clinic of the Mayo brothers and at the State Hospital. As a recognition of its practical and scientific value in surgical field, Clinic of the Mayo brothers Thoma Ionescu’s bust was made. In addition to monographs, the scientist Thoma Ionescu had written over 650 articles, scientific papers and communications presented at different national and international scientific meetings or published in various periodicals. Thoma Ionescu was a member of the Academy of Medicine in Paris, the International Society of Surgery

and an honorary member of the Romanian Academy in 1925. It should be noted that Thoma Ionescu was also a great patriot and he had his contributions, in the First World War, at the Great Union of 1918 militating for it as the first of our delegate to the “Society of Nations”, in 1920, where he published two volumes entitled “La quéstione roumaine”.

In 1914, Dr. Olga Turbure-Secară (1856–1927) the first student in medicine of the Faculty of Medicine from Bucharest, left for Paris, London, and had settled in New York and subsequently practiced medicine in Los Angeles, California.

Prof. ophthalmologist Gheorghe Stănculeanu (1874–1917) had lectured at different medical societies in the USA during the First World War. He invented of some new ophthalmic instruments, including an ocular forceps that was presented in the English catalog, “Catalogue of Ophtalmic Instruments and Appliances” with the title “Forceps for intra-capsular-extraction Stănculeanu’s (no. 273)”.

In 1917, Dr. W. D. Kirkpatrick – The Chief of American Red Cross Mission and the Dr. Bayne Brekeridge had conducted medical activities in Moldova. On this occasion in the newspaper “USA–Romania” (1917) it was stated that three American Red Cross ambulances were sent to Romania and a donation was made for \$ 250,000 for medicine, food and clothing, and other health professionals also were sent.

During the interwar period, between the years 1919 and 1939, the medical relations between Romania and the USA had a great extension and had resulted in multiple different aspects. They were represented by: Rockefeller Foundation fellows; scholarships awarded by some international organizations and associations; equivalence of studies and diplomas obtained in the USA for the practice of medicine in our country; teachers that had left for study in the two countries on their own expenses; the visiting of our country by the USA medical scientific personalities; participation of Romanian delegates to congresses and conferences in the USA medical centers; lectures, conferences and demonstrations held in both countries; translations of medical scientific papers and books from American English into Romanian language; different changes in scientific publications and articles and research collaborations with major periodicals of the American and Romanian; the collaboration in some journals and collective works etc. In following paragraphs are presented some examples.

Prof. George Schmitzer (1904–1970) from I.M.F. Bucharest, during July-November 1936 had done a study of specialization in USA at Detroit, Chicago and Baltimore.

After the First World War, Romanian-American Institute and the Rockefeller Foundation, had sent and supported the medical studies, for about one hundred graduates, recruited on the basis of recommendation and examination, which had expertise and trained in various medical fields, at the most renowned universities and medical research centers in the USA in New York, Boston, New Haven, Case Western-Reserve, Chicago etc. These ones at the returning in Romania, applied the

know-how acquired medical knowledges at the highest level of medical development at the time, and they became medical and academic personalities.

Among the formers Rockefeller Foundation fellows, we can mention some Romanian personalities who had worked in hospitals, clinics and laboratories, research institutes and university colleges under the guidance of great personalities of world medicine.

Prof. Constantin Ionescu-Mihăești (1883–1962) as Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation, had worked in the period 1923–1925, at Columbia University, John Hopkins University and Harvard University.

Prof. Dimitrie Combiescu (1887–1961) had studied in the laboratory of the Faculty of Medicine John Hopkins-Baltimore (USA) with Prof. Mac Callum (January-June 1924); in the laboratory of Bacteriology of the Faculty of Medicine from New York (June-October 1924) with Prof. F. Gay; in the laboratory of Bacteriology of the Faculty of Medicine from Boston, Harvard University (October-January 1925).

Prof. Vintilă Ciocâlțeu (1890–1947) had studied at the Department of Biochemistry of Faculty of Medicine at Harvard University in Boston, USA, as scholar of the Rockefeller Foundation since 1925 with Prof. Otto Folin from Boston, one of the founders of modern organic chemistry. Prof. Otto Folin elected him as an associate in a series of scientific researches which were published together and recommended him to be admitted as “Research Fellow in Biological Chemistry”.

Prof. Gr. T. Popa did studies of embryology, neuroanatomy and comparative anatomy in Chicago, in 1925, with the Professors Frank R. Lillie, Charels J. Henrick, Carl R. Moore and B. Willier. In 1926 also did studies of experimental embryology and comparative anatomy at the Marine Biological Resort from Woods-Hole.

Prof. Dimitrie Bagdasar (1893–1946), Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation and the founder of Romanian School of Neurosurgery, did specialized studies at Boston, in USA, in Harvey Cushing’s Clinic, then considered the greatest neurosurgeon of the world, between 1927–1929. During this period he published two important scientific papers: “The treatment of cerebral gommias” *Rev. Neurologique*, 1929 and “Intracranial cordoblastoma”, *Amer. J. Path.*, 1929, in collaboration with P. Bailey.

During the interwar period, the Professors who had studied in the USA, we can mention: Prof. Emil Crăciun (1896–1976), at the Institute of Pathology of John Hopkins University in Baltimore with Prof. W. G. Callum and Harvard University in Boston with W. Koch, Hali and Otto Folin, in oncology, biochemistry, histochemistry and tissue cultures, and had published several articles and studies, including one in collaboration with Dr. E. H. Oppenheimer: “The cultivation of the granules of vaccinia virus”; Prof. Mihail Zolog (1894–1943) at Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, being graduate of the Harvard School of Hygiene; Prof. M. Mezincescu at Harvard School of Public Health in Boston.

Prof. Vioran L. Raul obtained a Doctor Diploma in Chicago, and he had won the recognition of his studies and his Diploma was recognized by the Faculty Board of Medicine in Bucharest on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1921.

Prof. Dumitru Mezincescu (1880–1961), the former Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, opened the Hygiene Institute in Bucharest, in 1927, built from the Rockefeller Foundation funds.

Between 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> October 1932, Prof. Dr. Eastman Seehan, specialist in facial plastic surgery in New York, had lectured and held practical operating demonstrations accompanied by projections at the Amphitheater of Faculty of Medicine in Bucharest.

During the period of 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December 1933, Prof. Dr. José Arcé, an American surgeon, had lectured three conferences in the same Amphitheater, the first of which was dedicated as a homage to Romanian surgeon, Prof. Thoma Ionescu.

In 1945, George Emil Palade (1912–2008) graduated from the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Bucharest in 1940 with a doctorate in medicine, he then emigrated with his family to USA, where he was employed as a researcher at the University Rockefeller of New York, in the Department of Cellular Pathology. Among the researches he conducted and added many contributions in cell biology field and he became a prominent personality in the world of medical sciences. In 1961 he was elected member of the Academy of Sciences of the USA. He became the winner of the 1974 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine with Albert Claude from the Free University of Brussels, and Christian de Duve, from the Rockefeller University in New York. The award was motivated by the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm as follows: the award had been offered for the three scientists for “their discoveries concerning the structural and functional organization of the cell” because they “have revolutionized by their works, the cell biology field, especially of cytoplasm components, which completely changed knowledge under the spur that they gave in the last thirty years”. George Palade was also honorary member of the Romanian Academy in 1975.

Dr. Emanuel Revici (1896–1998) took a degree in medicine at the University of Bucharest in 1920. The following year he received the right to practice and was appointed assistant in the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Bucharest. From 1936 he moved to France, then in Mexico and in 1946 he settled in New York. In 1947 he became Medical Director of the Institute of Applied Biology in New York.

In 1946, the sociologist and psychiatrist Levi Jacob Moreno (1889–1974), born in Romania, published in New York the scientific work “Psychodrama” in three volumes.

The present examples demonstrated the fruitful relationships of cooperation between Romania and the USA in the medical field, resulting in bilateral exchanges of views and visits to medical institutions, the organization of medical common actions for training and specialization, exchanges of experience on the line of research and methodology, the use of more efficient techniques and procedures for investigation and treatment, especially for medical care and scientific research.

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