

BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY
Doctoral School: History, Civilization, Culture
Domain History

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Hospital care in Craiova during the second
half of the 19th century and early 20th century.

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Through this work we intend to capture the evolution of Craiova hospital care for over half a century. Modernization of hospital care was only one of the hypostasis modernizations of Romania as a whole.

From the third decade of the nineteenth century with the introduction the Organic Statutes (1831-1832) in the two Romanian principalities began a process of development of medical structures coordinated by the state population. From the medical point of view there were many problems to solve, three objectives, however, prevailed: the disappearance of major epidemics, lowering level of mobility and extending the life expectancy.

Achievements materialized in the creation of administrative structures medical nature, namely: Health Committee, Superior Medical Council, Council of Hygiene and Sanitation in counties and in large cities, including Craiova.

But reforming action up in 1874 did not bring tangible results in reducing infant mortality or improving quality of life and health, while the interval between the two fundamental laws of modern Romania sanitary, from 1874 to 1910 - a period when a new sanitary law was voted which divided Romania in nineteen sanitary regions and made a clearer distinction between care and social assistance-, was made progress as stopping or reducing epidemics, increased vaccination and revaccination against smallpox, which led to lower infant mortality .As early as 1831 a provision of the Organic Regulations stated the construction of three hospitals in the Romanian Country, of which one in Craiova. But the fulfillment of this goal was possible only in 1856, when it was established the Central Hospital also known as Filantropia, whose medical services benefited both residents of Craiova as well as those from the Dolj county area, , and in some periods only those from Dolj county's rural communities. After a decade of existence, the Filantropia hospital went through critical moments - the financial crisis experienced by the Treasury of Craiova, which reflected on all-city institutions, the hospital was in danger of being closed, but due to physicians' approaches of this hospital and of the authorities in Bucharest, the hospital resumed activities with a greater capacity of receiving patients. However, until 1908, when it was finally taken over by the state, the work was hindered by lack of financial resources, as repeatedly City Hall of Craiova and Dolj Prefecture did not complied with their commitments before the Civil Hospital trusteeship and did not granted subsidies necessary for the operation of the hospital. This was why the hospital was closed in 1867 and reopened after administration was taken over by Civil Hospital trusteeship alternating with administrative

authorities in Craiova. After 1908, enhancements introduced in this hospital were significant. Filantropia Hospital was maintained from funds granted by the Trusteeship of Civil Hospitals, City Hall of Craiova and the Prefecture of Dolj County. All head consultants of this hospital were distinguished by professionalism, but we can say that Dr. Augustine was the representative head consultant of the Filantropia hospital, who made all necessary arrangements to bring out the hospital from the deadlock state. School of rural midwives which functioned beside this hospital under his leadership, the medical staff formed, contributed to decreased maternal and infant mortality in Dolj County and equally founded Dolj medical education. In this hospital were hospitalized patients with all kinds of diseases. It can be said that it constituted a core that which favored the emergence of medical specialties in Craiova. Filantropia was the only hospital that owned its own pharmacy, but the supply of medicines was carried out by pharmacies in the city. Some irregularities were noticed in the holding auctions, storage of medicines, purchase of multiple drug than necessary, rule violations pharmaceutical fee, but over time these irregularities were not signaled and hospital pharmacy became independent pharmacies.

In the period we are dealing with synthetic drugs were less used, naturist medicines were used instead, and this was a feature of all hospitals in Craiova.

Theodore I. Preda Hospital had the name of the donor who left to Municipality by will his estates Cearângul and Stârcovița for the establishment and maintenance. After the arrangements made between the years 1868 and 1870, the hospital was opened on February 9, 1870, under Dr. Joseph Wilhelm Fabricius a famous ophthalmologist. Since foundation the activity was coordinated by detailed regulations stipulating the duties of each party involved in the medical process. Initially functioned in the houses of the donor in the Mihail Kogălniceanu Street, number 20, but it was obvious that they did not meet the purpose, neither in terms of space nor in medical facilities, although in 1902 it was established a modern laboratory for analysis. Thus, on February 14, 1910, was inaugurated the new headquarters building of the hospital, with a capacity of 50 budgetary beds and 10 beds for a fee between 6 and 10 lei per day for hospitalization, and in March 1910 the hospital was installed in a new place.

The houses in Kogălniceanu street were sold to G.G. Vorvoreanu and the money was used for maintenance of the hospital. In addition to revenues from leasing estates left by Theodor I. Preda to Craiova City Hall administration, the hospital benefited from donations, which amounted to 70,000 lei in 1906. In 1909, it was decreed that the hospital was removed under the administration of the General Directorate of Health Services and taken over by Craiova Municipality, as testamentary dispositions left by Theodor I. Preda.

As in the case *Filantropia*, all hospital doctors contributed to its development. Doctor Vernescu insisted and was heavily involved for a new headquarters building of the hospital, and Dr. Fabricius has brought the fame of the hospital beyond the borders of the country due to the thousands of successful eye surgery. Being a mixed hospital patients were hospitalized with all types of illnesses, but those with eye diseases predominated.

Theodore I. Preda Hospital did not have its own pharmacy, but paid for the drugs of the patients who were consulted free of charge.

Necessary medicines for hospital were procured from pharmacists in the city, who annually - starting from April 1 to March 30 the following year-, operated through the City Hall of Craiova, based on the rotating system, inaugurated in 1899. Chief physician of the hospital, Dr. Vernescu, managed in 1904 to obtain the right to release free recipes without the visa of Interim Commission of the City Hall which led to simplification of formalities, due to which prescriptions were issued very late, and some cases it was impossible to purchase drugs in the absence of Commission President Interim city.

Even though in 1886, Dr. Râmnicănu noticed some irregularities in the administration of funds by the City Hall of Craiova left by Theodor I. Preda for hospital maintenance, however this hospital managed much better financially than *Filantropia* hospital.

In 1860, in the yard of the church Madona-Dudu in Craiova, a hospital was built for patients with various diseases, but there were treated mostly the alienated who were believed to be dominated by evil spirits that only priests could remove by harmless prayer or even exorcism. The church Madona Dudu in Craiova, was founded in 1782 and from its rich incomes, founder Ralian opened a small hospital in 1860 known as Madonna-Dudu. The church assumed responsibility of establishing the hospital with the intention to prevent the commission of antisocial acts by the mentally ill. Beginning with 1861, patients began receiving medical prescription drugs and food provided by the hospital, but the other things needed were purchased from own sources.

The provisions of *Regulation Memorandum* prepared by Dr. Nicolae Hanselman in November 1861, which provided for the reorganization of the hospital, created a favorable environment for the construction of new premises of the hospital, objective achieved over three decades, in 1891.

By Dr. George Mileticiu, no hospital doctor had specialized studies in the field, but they were self-taught, have given patients appropriate treatments-mostly naturist treatments-and all were followers of human and rational treatments, without being in accordance with the methods of physical mistreatment.

In this hospital were not admitted only patients with mental disorders-caused by heredity, pellagra and alcoholism, but also those with neurological disorders, being recorded many cases of progressive general paralysis, but many patients did not seek medical advice and were not hospitalized both because of too complicated formalities as well as collective mentality, as it was considered a demeaning thing to be hospitalized in such a place.

Also the hospital *Madona Dudu* adopted since 1888 - when at the hospital management was Dr. Fabricius-rotation system in the supply of drugs. This system consisted in the fact that every year, another pharmacist provided necessary medicines for the hospital, in exchange for a discount of 25%, and that to avoid excessive competition between pharmacists and improve the quality of medicines supplied by pharmacies.

During 1891-1922, this hospital, which developed its activity in a modern building located on the outskirts of the city, in the Amărăzii barrier- was one of the best organized institutions for insane assistance from the Old Kingdom, which was both due to *Madona-Dudu* church trustees that supported it financially as well as to primary physician of the hospital, Dr. George Mileticiu.

The *hospital for Infectious Diseases* was established by the City Hall quite late, only in the late nineteenth century.

It was maintained from Craiova Municipality funds, and at the opening had a total of 10 beds.

Although there was absolute need of such hospital, until 1896, contagious patients were isolated and treated in improvised barracks beside the hospital *Filantropia*.

It initially operated in rented houses within three to five years, and in 1900, the City built a pavilion for contagious patients on land owned by the City Hall, located in a place called Bucharest barrier. Pavilion for children suffering from contagious diseases was inaugurated in 1907. Its construction was carried out at the initiative of the ladies from Craiova, Maria Coloni and Elena Cornetti as representatives of the companies' "Hospital Independenta and Furnica".

Many of the patients of this hospital were children, but there were cases when parents opposed hospitalization and often declared that they had no sick children. However, in 1925 we can speak of progress in terms of collective mentality, as people began to get used to isolate the sick, moreover, almost all patients started to require personally admission to hospital.

Primary care physicians of this hospital were Dr. Bazilescu and the doctor Aureliu Metzulescu, who for 45 years held their work devotedly in this hospital.

Particularly scientific merit of Dr. Aureliu Metzulescu, which made him well known in the country and abroad, was the invention of methods of treatment that healed scarlet fever. Romanian Academy appreciated his original contribution in the fight against scarlet fever, for which he was paid, on 13 May 1928, *Professor Dr. Victor Babeş* prize in the amount of 10,000 lei for his work on the treatment of severe scarlet fever. But Dr. Metzulescu donated 10,000 lei to create a fund Metzulescu, from which the Romanian Academy could award works to support fight against diseases.

This award was not singular. After inspection and the findings made to *Contagious Diseases Hospital* of Craiova in 1929, the Ministry of Health granted to senior personnel and auxiliary staff of the hospital the *Medical Merit* medal, but doctor Metzulescu renounced that time also to any reward.

Military Hospital from Craiova can be considered the first "military" Romanian hospital since it was put into operation at least one month prior to that in Bucharest. It was also the oldest hospital in Craiova.

In 1881, the Ministry of War bought from Maria M. Poenaru and the City of Craiova, the land located in the Caracal barrier that was built the *Military Hospital*, made up of several pavilions, based on the English model.

By the new reorganization of the army, in 1883, the territorial divisions were transformed into army corps, and the military hospitals of residence received the title of *Hospitals Army Corps*, under the authority of the chief doctor of the Army Corps.

The doctor of Division, Ion Vercescu, was the first commander of the hospital, from 1883-1897 and 1899-1902.

In 1898, the hospital had a capacity of 200 beds divided into two services: medical and surgical.

In 1897 was established a chemistry lab, led by chemist captain George Constantinescu, also was added, in 1911, a service of Bacteriology. In 1906, was established the radiology service, that originally functioned within the laboratory.

During 1880-1916, the *Military Hospital* in Craiova was permanently employed and equipped in a way that made it possible to conduct remarkable surgical activities. Here worked some of the most outstanding surgeons of the army, such as: Ion Vercescu, Athanasie Demosthen, Iacob Potarca, Ion Elian etc.

Craiova military surgical service was an example, both through the professionalism of doctors as well as through modern equipment: operating room with sterilized water plant, material for dressings and instruments.

War of Independence of 1877-1878 was a great demand for the Army Health Service, which had the main mission of organizing medical care.

In the years 1877-1878, along with existing hospitals in order to provide care and treatment of wounded soldiers on the battlefield, a number of temporary military hospitals were established: *Independenta, Maica Domnului Dudu, Central*, and a series of specially designed medical establishments or privately owned buildings houses: *Golfineanu, Brăiloiu Vladica, C. Vrabiescu, Dumba, Olteanu, Pata, Haralamb, Nae Chiciu, Dini Mihail, Teodoru Statie etc..*

All Craiova temporary military hospitals were, during the war, under a *Standing Committee Administration and Supervision*, consisting of Ion N. Titulescu- Dolj county prefect, G.I. Pessicu- mayor of Craiova, I. Theodorian- member, Wilhelm Iosif Fabricius and Iacob Banciu-doctors.

The doctors from Craiova Fabricius, Drăgoescu, Nicolaidis, Christescu, Roscovski and others carried out valuable work, and worked relentlessly to care for wounded soldiers and officers, which prompted Dolj County prefect to speak words of appreciation and praise.

From the above mentioned we observe in this paper that despite material shortages, hospitals in Craiova benefited from exemplary physicians in terms of professional and not only, who showed devotion to the sick led sometimes to the extreme, of self-sacrifice, of humanitarianism and unconditional love towards other people.

Keywords

Hospital, doctors, Craiova, pharmacy, Filantropia Hospital, Preda Hospital, Hospital Madona-Dudu, Infectious Diseases Hospital, medication, independence, Military Hospital, Elie Antonini, Metzulescu, Roscovschi, Mileticiu, Laugier, Carol Davila