

Romanian and Universal Medicine in Old Collections. A View Of The Digital World in the Central Library of the "Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy– Bucharest

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Abstract

The "Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy was founded in 1857. The first library book collections date from that time and include foreign old books from the incunabulum period to 1800, Romanian old books from 1508 to 1830, foreign and Romanian modern books from the mid-19th century to the present time. These collections include well-known authors in the history of the universal medicine (Albinus, Altomare, Bartholin, Bartholomaeus Anglicus, Celsus, Erasmus, Hippocrates, Malpighi, Vesalius etc.) and these volumes provide an important documentary basis for studying the history of medicine. The library organized and develops three programmes of scientific recovery of these collections, namely: *Bibliophile Values of Foreign Book. 15th to 18th Centuries*; *Representative Pages in the History of Romanian and Universal Medicine* and *Old and New Theses*.

The first programme is based on a collection of 600 volumes of foreign rare books since 1481 to 1800, and the second by establishing a collection entitled *Carol Davila. The History of Romanian and Universal Medicine. The History of Romanian Medical Education*. It is the work of Carol Davila, the founder of the Romanian school of medicine, the main Romanian and foreign authors of medical literature who are used in the education process and documents certifying the continuity of the Romanian education in medicine. The collection has 5,000 titles. The third programme is based on the printed PhD catalogue for the periods 1873-1945 and 1952-2008.

The librarians in charge of these collections of old books have selected these books from the general collection of the library, catalogued them in a comprehensive bibliographical description of the specific characteristics of each copy, a preparatory stage of the process of digitization for a virtual library - *Bibliotheca Historia Medica*.

The digitization programme is phased so that interested users can access on the Internet these valuable works by the end of 2010.

Introduction

The beginnings of *the Central Library of the "Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy - Bucharest* interweave with the first evolutions of the Romanian school of medicine. It was formed by the gathering of collections of smaller libraries and medical institutions founded in the early decades of the second half of the 19th century, as *the School of Small Surgery* in 1855 and *the National School of Medicine and Pharmacy*, founded in 1857. Established as the Library of the Faculty of Medicine since 1862, the book and periodical collection has grown along the years.

After the building in 1903 of the current premises of the Faculty of Medicine of Bucharest, in 1907, the dean from that time of the faculty, Professor Thoma Ionescu, inaugurated the reading room (which now bears his name).

After World War II, in 1948, the institution was named the Central Library of the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy, which today is the "Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy.

Programmes of Scientific Recovery and Digitization of the Library

Since 1998 the library has been modernized, but the process has not finished. The library aims to organize and develop programmes of scientific recovery and digitization of three collections namely:

- Bibliophile Values of Foreign Book – 15th -18th centuries;
- Representative Pages in the History of Romanian and Universal Medicine;
- Old and New PhD Theses.

The processing and reorganization of old foreign book collections gave the opportunity to discover bibliophile values, including documentation of the history of Romania, considered lost or even ignored before. For example, the three volumes from 1778 of *Analecta Scepusii sacri et profani*, which include documents gathered by the Jesuit Carolus Wagner, professor at the University of Tyrnavos, many of them with references to historical personalities and events of the Romanians (Nicolaus Olahus, Petru Rareș, Despot Vodă).

In *Codex medicamentarius or pharmacopaea Parisiensis* (Paris, 1748) it is mentioned Joseph Exupere Bertin (1712-1781), professor and member of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Paris, who between 1741 and 1744 was the physician of "the High Prince of Moldavia and Vlachs"- Constantin Mavrocordat.

In the paper *Responsorum et Consultationum medicinalium* (Venice, 1589), the famous Italian physician Girolamo Mercuriale responds to a letter received from the ruler of Wallachia, Mihnea Turcitul, who suffered from gout, offering him a broad consultation with many pieces of advice and prescriptions.

The history of the universal medicine is rich enough illustrated through remarkable editions, some of them very rare (the word "rarissima" appearing in the catalogues for some of these works).

The work of the "father of medicine", Hippocrates from Kas, which has seen countless editions accompanied by scholarly comments, is represented by the Greek-Latin bilingual edition (Basel, 1579) due to the outstanding physicians and Hellenist Janus Cornarius (translator) and Theodor Zwinger (Scientific Editor) and by the reprinting (Geneve, 1657) of the most famous of the Hippocrates works' editions, namely the 1595 edition achieved by the physician from Metz, Anuce Foës, monument of an incomparable erudition (and fruit of over 40 years of hard work).

The only collection incunabulum - the most valuable piece by age and its rarity - is the Cologne edition from 1481 of the Middle Ages encyclopedia *Liber de proprietatibus rerum*. Work of the Minorite English monk Bartholomaeus (13th century), professor of theology at Paris and Magdeburg, who until the late 19th century was mistaken, in encyclopedias and catalogues, with another English monk, Bartholomew Glavilla (died ca. in 1360).

Old editions of works of medical personalities who entered history shows too the patrimonial value of our library collections.

In a short enumeration we mention some great names connected to the history of medicine and book (Hemann Boerhaave, Marcelo Malpighi, Albrecht von Haller, Antonio Scarpa, Jean Baptiste de Senac, Andreas Vesalius). Some books were and are very expensive due to the rarity and elegance of the editions, many illustrated with engravings themselves valuable.

In what concerns the second collection, "Carol Davila. The History of Romanian and Universal Medicine. The History of Romanian Medical Education", this includes the work of Carol Davila (1828-1884), founder of the Romanian school of medicine, the main foreign and Romanian authors of medical literature used in the educational approach and original documents showing the development of Romanian medical education.

The library preserves an important collection of PhD theses. This third collection includes theses from the period 1873-1945 and theses from 1952 to date.

The patrimonial dimension is important in the case of these three collections and to the extent that confers prestige to a tradition, showing the efforts of some personalities of the Romanian school of medicine to constitute representative collections for the history of medical book both Romanian and foreign.

Digitization activities in libraries from Romania

Our country elaborated *The Proposal of Public Policy* on the digitization of national cultural resources and the creation of the Digital Library of Romania. Member of the European Union, Romania can enhance the collective cultural memory by providing access to its cultural and scientific heritage.

At national level the first steps in the process of digitization have been taken however long before Romania's EU entry by scanning some public collections, for reasons of preservation of fragile and patrimony documents.

In 2005 *the National Library of Romania* (<http://www.bibnat.ro>) together with CIMEC (<http://www.cimec.ro/>) developed the project APOGRAF (the National Digital Library of Manuscripts and Old Books) - initiated by the Ministry of Culture and financed by the World Bank within the framework of the "Cultural Heritage" programme. The result of this project was the scanning of several valuable manuscripts from the collection of the branch library Batthyaneum from Alba Iulia, ie over 50,000 pages. Currently the National Library has in a scanned form all Romanian books from 16th and 17th centuries and part of those from the 18th century (years 1701-1716) from its own collection of old Romanian books.

In 1999 *the Library of the Romanian Academy* (<http://www.biblacad.ro>) started to scan the manuscripts of the national poet Mihai Eminescu (1850-1889) together with the Ministry of Culture and CIMEC (the Institute for Cultural Memory).

The Central University Library "Carol I" Bucharest (<http://www.bcub.ro>) developed the project RESTITUTIO (<http://www.bcub.ro/continut/restitutio.html>) that provides access for readers to 10,000 pages of rare and bibliophile books, through a local application.

The County Library "Octavian Goga" Cluj (<http://www.bje.ro>) participated in 2007-2009 to ENTITLE (Europe's New libraries Together In Transversal Learning Environments - <http://www.entitlelll.eu>) and is involved now in another European project - EDLocal (Making local and regional content accessible through the European Digital Library (<http://www.europeanlocal.eu> - 2008-2011)).

The Central Library of the "Iuliu Hațieganu" University of Medicine and Pharmacy - Cluj-Napoca (<http://www.umfcluj.ro/lista.aspx?t=Biblioteca-Prezentare>) develops <<the Project Papilian>> which is based on the digitization of valuable documents from the collection of the branch library of the History of Medicine Department. The programme will include also the digitization of all PhD theses defended at this university.

The Library of the "Gr T. Popa" University of Medicine and Pharmacy - Iași (<http://biblio.umfiasi.ro/teze-de-iasi.aspx>) digitized a collection of PhD theses in medicine and surgery defended at the Faculty of Medicine between 1887-1940. Many of these theses are important contributions to the development of the Romanian school of medicine, some being pioneer's works.

The Central Library of the "Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy - Bucharest (<http://www.univermed-cdgm.ro/?pid=530>) organized and develops the programmes:

– <<Bibliophile Values>> - which is based on the collection of foreign books, described in the book "Foreign books. 15th - 18th centuries. Catalogue", by Elena-Maria Schatz and Gheorghe Buluță, catalogue available in electronic form in the local network of the library. There are digitized the title sheets, the pictures and other bibliophile elements with value, which will accompany each bibliographic description.

– <<Bibliotheca Historia-Medica>> - which includes the publication collection "Carol Davila. The History of Romanian and Universal Medicine. The History of Romanian Medical Education", whose catalogue is available in electronic form in the local network of the library. There are digitized the title sheets, the elements with documentary and historical value for each bibliographic description in part.

– <<Theses>> - which is based on the printed catalogue for the contemporary period ("The Catalogue of PhD theses defended at the "Carol Davila" University of Medicine and Pharmacy - Bucharest, 1952-2008, 4 volumes achieved within the framework of the department "Cataloguing - Classification" of the library). The catalogue is available in electronic form too (<http://www.univermed-cdgm.ro/?pid=531>). There are digitized the title sheets, some of the theses are digitized in full text (the theses of the personalities of Romanian medicine), then documentary and historical elements for the period 1873-1945, with a view to making it available to users on the Internet.

We organize and develop these programmes of scientific recovery and digitization of the collections of publications with documentary and historical value in order to offer access to electronic information for all categories of users of the library, which provides its visibility and competitiveness.