

## **Dr. Victor Gomoiu and the IXth Congress of the International Society for the History of Medicine**

From September 11th to 18th, 1932 the International Society for the History of Medicine (ISHM) organised its IXth Congress in Bucharest (Romania) under the patronage of King Carol II. ISHM Honorary President was Prof. Jean-Joseph Tricot-Royer, ISHM founding president in 1920, in Paris. The IXth Congress President was Dr. Victor Gomoiu (1882—1960), founder of the Romanian Society for the History of Medicine and its Museum in 1929, whereas the General Secretary was Dr. Viorica Gomoiu, Dr. Gomoiu's wife and efficient supporter. *Æsculape* journal, ISHM official periodical by then, published Prof. Tricot-Royer's report of this successful scientific event. Two prominent Romanian scientists, members of outstanding national and international scientific Academies, were Congress Vice-presidents: a famous microbiologist, Ioan Cantacuzino, and an illustrious historian, Nicolae Iorga. In his full record Tricot-Royer outlined that Romania gave great attention to this moment: the Post issued special stamps, the King himself took part in the opening ceremony, met the delegates and awarded them the Cultural Merit Medal-Equestrian Order that had as motto „Through Culture to Liberty“. Proving his esteem to scientists, King Carol II of Romania conferred the Sanitary Merit Medal 1st class — to officials from universities and major scientific institutions alone. H.S. the Patriarch of Romania and religious dignitaries warmly welcomed the participants, since both „Doctors and priests aim for the same goal, the moral and physical relief of suffering humanity.“ Countries of the Balkan Peninsula were represented — former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece and Albania —, along with France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Austria, Portugal, Poland, Spain, Sweden and, naturally, Romania. Two main themes were dealt with in 50 communications presented by speakers illustrating 22 nations: the history of medicine in the Balkans and the European defence against the plague. Well-known medical historians and personalities interested in this field delivered interesting lectures: Jules Guiart, Maxime Laignel-Lavastine, Édouard Jeanselme, Jean Vinchon, Jacques Hérissay, Eugène-Humbert Guitart, Gabriel Beytout, Olof Hult, Davide Giordano, Arturo Castiglioni, Pietro Capparoni, Gustavo Tanfani, Georg Sticker, Ricardo Jorge, Ludwik Zembruzki, Tadeusz Blliklewicz, Władysław Szumowski, Aristoteles Kousis, Galip Ata, Ahmed Süheyl, Stoyanoff, Ali Mihali, Glück, Lujo Thaller, Juraj Körbler, Mihai Berza, Valeriu L. Bologa, Alexandru Lenghel, and Pompei Samarian, among many others. Just remembering these celebrated scholars' names and contribution means

traveling through modern medical history. All the more so when reading the Proceedings volume. The Congress was well accomplished and a year later (1933), Dr. Gomoiu became ISHM vice-president and its president, in 1936. He closely collaborated with Prof. Tricot-Royer and they decided together the best solutions for the ISHM further substantial expansion and activity. Their cooperation ceased in 1939, due to the World War II when ISHM remained silent, necessarily keeping a low profile. After the War, Gomoiu was imprisoned (1950—1955) for ideological reasons, then released and socially rehabilitated. He was even invited to join the Romanian Academy and be a full professor for his merits (1957), an offer this erudite humanist, great philanthropist and skilled surgeon rejected with dignity asking only for his retirement pension he eventually got.

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