

Ernest Juvara (1870-1933) - Founder of the Surgical Anatomy School of Iași

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A figure that cannot be absent from the pantheon of Romanian surgery is that of Professor Ernest Juvara, great anatomist, talented surgeon, accomplished artist and maestro beyond compare, school founder. He was born on the 14th of May 1870 in the city of Bârlad, the son of a landlord, who ensured for him a special education; he was enrolled in the primary school in Bucharest; he graduated from high school at Sf. Sava College in Bucharest, and obtains his baccalaureate degree in letters and science in 1888. He leaves for Paris the same year and applies for Medical School. There he was fascinated by the anatomy lessons of Farabeuf. Practical seminars were held by professor Paul Poirier.

In 1890 he succeeded in passing his exam as extern of Parisian hospitals. For 3 years, between 1890 and 1893, he rotated between the services of professors Duplay, Richard, Rochard și Delbet. Anatomy was his greatest passion. He was director of the anatomy laboratory of Professor Paul Poirier, where he met Thoma Ionescu. In 1892, Ernest Juvara together with H. Friteau published "Quinze leçons d'anatomie pratique", an illustrated work with 84 original drawings and schemes, and together with F. Legueu, urology professor in Paris, the book "Des aponevroses de la paume de la main". In 1894, Poirier elaborated a vast treatise on human anatomy, in which Thoma Ionescu was assigned the chapter on the digestive tube and Juvara the overview and performance of the necessary sketches for this extensive work, drawing almost 100 mural boards. In 1895, Juvara defended his PhD thesis in medicine and surgery entitled *Anatomie de la région pterigo-maxillaire*, which received the qualifier „extrême-

ment bien" from the Faculty of Medicine in Paris (1). In Paris, he becomes close friends with Theodor Pallady, and attends the painting workshops of Gustave Moreau and Jean Aman, where he perfects his skills in drawing, graphical perspective and colour techniques. He also meets Pierre Puvis de Chavannes and becomes acquainted with Ștefan Luchian, who will then on remain a faithful friend (1).

In 1895, upon his return to our country, he becomes an assistant lecturer at the Surgical Clinic of Colțea Hospital in Bucharest, and chief of the Topographical Anatomy and Experimental Surgery Institute. He dedicates his time to the organization of the institute and the founding of its anatomy museum, as well as of the experimental surgery department, which included student teaching. In 1897, he publishes „*Lecțiuni de anatomie practică*” (Practical Anatomy Lessons), in which we encounter 103 original drawings. In 1898 the paper *Anatomia topografică a splinei hipertrofiate* (Topographic Anatomy of the Hypertrophic Spleen) is published, in which, in order for the drawings to be multiplied as exactly as possible, they were first photographed by Juvara and then drawn. Ernest Juvara can thus be considered a predecessor of medical photography in our country. In 1899 „*Leitfaden für die Chirurgische Anatomie*”, with 183 sketches in the text (Berlin, Verlag von August Hirschwald) is released, a paper achieving great success, being appreciated even by professor Waldeyer (1).

In parallel to his anatomy works, he also published during this period papers on therapeutic and clinical surgery, experimental surgery, operative medicine, even describing a procedure now classic in the treatment of rectal prolapse treatment, and develops the necessary equipment for the introduction of asepsia. On the 1st of March 1897, at the initiative of Thoma Ionescu, the *Journal of Surgery* is published, and Ernest Juvara is named editorial secretary. On the 1st of February, also at the initiative of Thoma Ionescu, the Romanian Society of Surgery is born. Among the 30 founding members, the 19th one is Ernest Juvara, who also becomes secretary general of the society. After 5 years of

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collaboration, as an assistant of professor Ionescu, Juvara is named professor of Topographical Anatomy in Iasi, and leaves the journal's editorial staff, leading to the publication's discontinuance.

Next came probably the most prolific period in the great maestro's life. On the 1st of November 1899, at the recommendation of Thoma Ionescu, he becomes through contest Assistant Professor with the Topographical Anatomy Department of Iasi Faculty of Medicine, and on the 26th of November 1904 he obtains his Professor degree.

Being the first Professor of this new discipline, named through contest, when 29 years old, Juvara is the one who, despite all hardships and adversities, actually founded the surgical anatomy school of Iasi, a specialty in which he had serious training, gradually accumulated at the schools of Farabeuf and Poirier for 6 years, and Thoma Ionescu for another 5 years.

He opens in Iasi a museum of anatomy pieces, following the model of the one previously founded in Bucharest. Also during that period of time he gathers a vast collection of medical photographis, due to an extremely intense activity both in the field of anatomy and of surgery. In September 1912, with the occasion of the jubilee of the University of Iasi, King Carol I is accompanied on his official visit among others by the famous German anatomist Waldeyer, who while visiting the anatomical museum of the Faculty of Medicine requests to be left alone in order to leisurely admire the works performed by Ernest Juvara (1).

In 1900, he accepts to lead the surgical service of the Israeli Hospital in Iasi, and in 1906 prof. E. Juvara founds, at Spiridonie, the first university surgical clinic, called Surgery Clinic II, which will afterwards be known as Surgery Clinic I. Erudite professor, extraordinarily skilled surgeon, inventive spirit, brilliantly self-taught, Ernest Juvara created from the very beginning a highly functioning, European level service. Through his example, Ernest Juvara created a tradition by which the professors with this clinic had to have solid anatomy training, which guaranteed a less aggressive surgical intervention, free of complications and with minimum mortality rates. This tradition was perpetuated for almost 100 years (2).

He introduces spinal anaesthesia in Iasi, without excluding the other types of analgesics. He enforces the asepsis method in surgery and manages to convey it to his students. He has a precise, rapid and apparently simple surgical technique. The operative stages succeeded each other without hesitation, and the surgical wound looked like an anatomy atlas. At the same time, Ernest Juvara was a great school founder. Among his students we include: N. Hortolomei, I. Tănăsescu, I. Făgărășanu, A. Cosăcescu, I. Anghel, V. Râșcanu, V. Dimitriu, E. Cristide, I. Climescu, M. Georgescu and many others.

The activity carried out by Juvara at Iași was intense. He worked on both intertwined fields, anatomy and surgery, alike, which allowed him to publish articles, memoirs or addresses with different scientific societies, beginning with the Society of Doctors and Naturalists in Iasi, which, in response to his special interest shown towards it ever since his arrival in Moldavia's capital, elected him president in 1910. We enumerate here some of the titles published in this period: „Operation de la hernie inguinale par le procede de Bassini”, based on a personal experience of 800 cases, „De la creation d'un vagin dans le cas de l'absence congenitale, par dedoublement de l'espace intervesse-rectum, suivi soit d'autoplastie par manchon cutane”,

„Emasculatıon totale”, „Pleurotomia cu rezecție de coastă sub lambou” (Pleurotomy with Costal Resection below the Flap), „Evidement du plancher buccal”, „De la suture intradermique, sur la technique du raccourcissement des ligamentes de l'uterus”, „Topographie de la région lombaire en vue de la ponction du canal rachidien”, „Technique de la résection du ganglion de Gasser par la voie du plan osseux spheno-temporal”, „Contribuție la studiul ghemurilor de păr ce se pot găsi în stomac (tumorile păroase sau trichobezoarele)” (Contribution to the Study of Hair Balls that Can Be Found in the Stomach – Hairy Tumours or Trichobezoars), „Anestezia rahidiană cu stovaină” (Spinal Anaesthesia with Stovaine), „Operation de la hernie crurale, technique chirurgicale”. The book „Lucrări de terapieutică și clinică chirurgicală” (Works of Clinical Surgery and Therapeutics) is the last of his publicist activity in Iași. As an acknowledgement of the contribution brought by Juvara to the progress of surgery, the National Surgery Society of Paris, quite strict in admitting new members and the Paris Society of Surgeons included him among their members ever since 1911.

In 1912 Ernest Juvara was once again transferred to Bucharest, to Filantropia Hospital, and then deployed in 1913, as a military doctor during the Balkan War, where he performs mass vaccination against the cholera epidemic. At the end of the war, he resumes his activity at Filantropia Hospital where he takes interest in perfecting spinal anaesthesia and improving treatment measures for fractures, described in his outstanding paper „Tratamentul operator al fracturilor diafizelor prin metoda fixatorului extern” (Surgical Treatment of Diaphyseal Fractures by External Fixator Method), a work that includes him among the founders of modern orthopaedics.

In 1916, during World War I, he is deployed, promoted to colonel and transferred to Hospital IX, at Mărășești, where he carried out an extenuating surgical activity, operating on the wounded day and night. In 1923, he is transferred to the Brâncovenesc Hospital, where he organizes the largest and most modern surgical clinic in the country, being visited by famous professors A. Hartmann from Paris and Fred H. Albee from New York, who also perform operations in the clinic. He edits a Surgical Anatomy Manual („Manual de anatomie chirurgicală”), containing over 250 colour sketches, all created with a watchmaker's precision and of incontestable artistic value.

Professor Juvara was decorated with the Order of the Star of Romania, as a Knight, and was elected President of the Romanian Society of Surgery between 1929 – 1930. In full health and creative power, Professor Ernest Juvara passed away suddenly, on the night of May 5th 1933, as a result of a domestic accident (1,2).

Great anatomist, exceptional surgeon, excellent professor, school founder, patriot devoted to his country and his fellows, Ernest Juvara remains one of the brightest figures of Romanian surgery, who brought enormous prestige to Romanian medicine and surgery.

References

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