



Memories about the Academy of Medical Sciences since its reestablishment – July 1969

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The Academy of Medical Sciences (AMS) was established in 1935, by the law No. 91, endorsed by the Royal Decree 176/1935. Its launching is due to Daniel Danielopolu, who, as permanent secretary of the Romanian Academy, initiated another academy specifically for medical sciences. The Academy was dismantled by the communist authority in 1948. However, in 1965, trying to attract the medical elite, the ruling communist regime reestablished in 1969 the Academy of Medical Sciences of the Romanian Socialist Republic. Obviously, after the political changes of 1989, there was a need to reorganize the Academy of Medical Sciences, which was done under Stefan Milcu. This institution is acting now according to the Law 264/2004 and to the bylaws approved by the Government Decision 1665/2004.

For me, as a witness of those days, I am able to present and emphasize the importance of the General Assembly in carrying out the AMS activity, as well as the role of the personalities at the helm of the AMS. I had the chance to get to know and carry out my activity in two periods of the existence of the AMS. One in the first four years after its establishment (1969-1973) and the second stage after December 1989. The functioning of AMS in those days was ruled by the General Assembly of the members who participated in the vote of the regulations proposed by the presidium. The bylaws stipulate that: *the members of the ASM are elected for life; the meetings are chaired by the president, in his absence by one of the vice-presidents; the president is elected*

by the General Assembly for a term of 4 years.

I shall evoke here a few snippets from the activity of the AMS of those days. It was an honor for me to be able to carry out my activity for several years in this scientific and human environment. Before being elected member of AMS, I started my activity as a physician in 1957, having graduated from the Faculty of General Medicine of the Medical Pharmaceutical Institute of Cluj Napoca in the same year. After graduation, I followed 3 years of mandatory internship, then I was enrolled as PhD student at the the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy of Cluj. At that time (the 60s), in order to obtain the title of PhD, called *candidate in medical sciences*, 5 exams were necessary, followed by the public defense of a doctoral thesis; mine was defended on November 6, 1963 at the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj. The 5 exams were: *Dialectical and historical materialism* which I took on April 29, 1961, examiner prof. Gáll Ernő. *Russian language* – exam taken on May 3, 1961. Both were compulsory and eliminatory exams. After passing these I continued to take the 3rd exam *in a foreign language* (to choose from French, English, German); I chose *French*, an exam taken on May 22, 1962. All 3 exams were held at the Babeş Bolyai University – Cluj. The other two *pathophysiology* and *medicine exams* were held at IMF Cluj. The doctoral thesis was presented on November 6 at the Medical-Pharmaceutical Institute of Cluj, examination board presided by Academic Rector Aurel Moga, who appreciated the value of the thesis. The PhD degree was granted by the decision of the Higher Commission

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for Diplomas number 618.30.07.1964. A first academic stage was completed, after which I was appointed at the Institute of Normal and Pathological Physiology “Daniel Danielopolu” through a competition – Order 382/1965 – Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania – President of the RSR Academy academician prof. Ilie Murgulescu. In the Institute of Normal and Pathological Physiology “Daniel Danielopolu”, for almost half a century, I carried out health care, teaching and medical scientific research work. As a scientific researcher, I went through the stages of senior scientific researcher grade II and grade I, exercising the leading functions in scientific research as head of section, namely *the Research and Exploration of Humoral Mechanisms of Adaptation and Compensation Research Laboratory*, then as Head of Section at the *Medical Clinical Section* of the Institute of Normal and Pathological Physiology.

The Institute of Normal and Pathological Physiology was established in 1949 by Presidential Decree no. 76 published in the Official Gazette no. 32 bis of June 9, 1948. The name of Institute of Normal and Pathological Physiology was given by the scientist Daniel Danielopolu, whose main research field was “*mechanisms of regulation of the normal and pathological vital processes of the human body*”. Through the same Decree, there were four other medical institutes. *Institute of Endocrinology*, led by **academicians C.I. Parhon, Ștefan Milcu**; *The Institute of Internal Medicine* led by **Acad. N. Gh. Lupu**, then by **Ion Bruckner**; *Institute of Virology*, director **Acad. Ștefan S. Nicolau** followed by **Acad. Nicolae Cajal** and then by **Acad. Costin Cernescu**; *The Institute of Neurology*, first director **Acad. Arthur Kreindler**, followed by **Acad. Vlad Voiculescu**. These four institutes have remained – they are still in existence and are still operating today. *The Institute of Normal and Pathological Physiology “Daniel Danielopolu”*, which was founded in 1948 by presidential decree no. 198, was abolished in 2002 by Government Decision no. 1014 of 14 September, as published in the Official Gazette no. 700 of 25 September 2002. In its 54 years, the “Daniel Danielopolu” Institute of Normal and Pathological Physiology had 4 directors: Acad. Daniel Danielopolu, Acad. Grigore Benetato, then Prof. Dr. Petru Groza and dr. doc. Marcel Uluitu. The “Daniel Danielopolu” Institute of Normal and Pathological Physiology was the only physiology institute in the world that also had an organically integrated medical clinic in its functional structure, a clinic that I also ran in recent years until my retirement.

The Academy of Medical Sciences was founded on June 20-21, 1969 – when *the Constitutional Meeting* took place, chaired by the Minister of Health, Aurel Moga. The meeting was attended by delegates from all medical scientific research units of medical and pharmaceutical education institutes throughout the country and representatives of the older generation and

young researchers.

On this occasion, the Minister of Health, Aurel Moga, emphasized the importance of establishing the AMS as a *scientific forum* meant to concentrate all the forces of scientific creation and to coordinate the activity of scientific, medical and pharmaceutical research. Noting that the vast majority of delegates were in the room, he declared open *the Constitutional Assembly of the Academy of Medical Sciences* and the works of that meeting were further chaired by Ștefan Milcu, who proposed the following agenda:

1. Presentation, discussion and adoption of the draft statute of the Academy of Medical Sciences.
2. Election of honorary members, full members, corresponding members and members of the presidium of the Academy of Medical Sciences.

Submitted to the vote, the agenda was unanimously approved.

At the first point of the agenda, the Minister of Health, Aurel Moga, presented *the draft of the Statute of the Academy of Medical Sciences*, with provisions that defined the activity, the organization and functioning, as well as the governing bodies. Numerous participants (in the order of dozens) took the floor, including:

- Nicolae Nestorescu, President of the Union of the Societies of Medical Sciences
- Octavian Fodor, Rector of the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj-Napoca
- Ioan Pop de Popa, Vice-Rector of the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy Târgu Mureș
- Radu Păun, the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest
- Ioan Moraru, Deputy Minister of Health

After the end of the agenda, *Ion Păcuraru*, chairman of the proposals commission, read the list of proposals for the Presidium of the Academy of Medical Sciences. Submitted to the vote, the proposals were approved unanimously.

The Presidium of the Academy of Medical Sciences, the governing body, was made up of: President, 4 Vice-Presidents and 12 members. The presidium included:

- Aurel Moga – president
- Ștefan Milcu – vice-president
- Csöngör Ludovic - vice-president
- Radu Paun - vice-president
- Ion Moraru - vice-president

Obviously overwhelmed by emotions, *the President of the Academy of Medical Sciences*, elected unanimously, thanked and expressed his conviction that the establishment of the high scientific forum would have a particularly significant role in the further development of Romanian medical science. The establishment of the AMS is an event that the history of medicine must record.

Through the profession of medical researcher and the positions exercised, I had the chance to know quite

well dozens of personalities (I think the number exceeds a hundred) from the Romanian academic world. With some of the personalities to whom I will refer, I was in a doctor-patient relationship, of closeness, naturally keeping the balance between my person as a doctor who took care of their health. With some of them we had relationships of emotional closeness and friendship. It is understood that now I will not present in detail aspects in the field of the connections I had with the great Romanian personalities. I shall briefly relate some aspects of the ethical, moral, affective, sentimental relations with them.

Aurel Moga, President of the Medical Sciences Section of the RSR Academy between 1960 and 1977 was a great personality. We met in the 1960s, since then I have many pleasant memories, lived events that marked me and to a large extent influenced my medical, scientific, organizational professional activity. I start the recollection with the event when Aurel Moga, rector of the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj, participated at the defense of my dissertation for the title of candidate in medical sciences 1963 at the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy of Cluj. This was a particularly important event for my professional career, which took place on November 6, 1963, when I defended my dissertation for obtaining *the title of candidate in Medical Sciences* with the thesis *Value changes in endogenous creatinine clearance in some medical and surgical nephropathies by crenotherapy* (Căciulata I and Izvorul 24 Olănești springs). Scientific supervisor was Professor Eugen Moraru.

Aurel Moga, president of the commission, praised the results of the investigations carried and emphasized in particular the clear, orderly way of presenting the dissertation thesis. There were other opportunities when I was invited him to lunch at the Continental restaurant in Cluj or accompany him at opera performance in Cluj. Knowing what the rector Aurel Moga represented in Cluj (a kind of Dalai Lama of Cluj), those invitations represented a great honor for me. There were also cases when I was invited to his home, or my participation in the birthday celebration of academician Aurel Moga, a festivity organized on his 60th birthday (November 1, 1962). These are events that have made me happy and embellished my life. I could also add the postcards (views) that he sent me from Vatra Dornei where he spent his vacation with his wife Manuela (in fact, he never travelled without Manuela). I would also mention the postcard sent from the West Germany with a special content for me. Academician Aurel Moga, in the position of rector of the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj, proposed the position of assistant professor for me, but meanwhile I was appointed researcher at Daniel Danielopolu Institute of Normal and Pathological Institute in Bucharest.

Aurel Moga passed his summer vacations in Bucovina in Iacobeni, a locality located in a very beautiful region 9 km from Vatra Dornei.

Another personality deserving to be mentioned is Academician Ștefan Milcu. He was President of the Medical Sciences Department of the Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania until 1960. In 1969 he was elected Vice-President of the Academy of Medical Sciences, being one of the four Vice-Presidents. He was also the president of the medical biology department. I met him for the first time in the 1970s. In April 1990 he was elected president of the Academy of Medical Sciences. In the first days of January 1990, the Minister of Health appointed a team with the mission to lead the Academy of Medical Sciences, consisting of the interim President, Acad. Nicolae Cajal, and two members, Nicolae Balta and Mihai Zamfirescu. Among our objectives, the great urgency was the election of the president of the Academy of Medical Sciences. The urgent resolution of this situation was also necessary because the academician Constantin Arseni, who was President of the Academy of Medical Sciences, discreetly withdrew and the Secretary General of the Academy of Medical Sciences, Emil Magureanu, was killed in the days of the revolution.

Ștefan Milcu knew and appreciated my professional activity, recorded in a document that has a flattering content that I was pleasantly surprised by when I read it. Another event that I mention is the fact that after the publication of my book in the publishing house of the Romanian Academy, "Actualities in Myocardial and Coronary Pathology", Ștefan Milcu was looking for me to congratulate me and to say that there was a chapter in the book (Chapter 4 – The Heart, Endocrine Organ) that he particularly appreciated, adding that he also dealt with polypeptides. I replied that I did not know about his work and that if he had told me I would have quoted him in the chapter's bibliography. Ștefan Milcu was considered a "sacred monster". He led with dedication the destinies of the Romanian Academy as Secretary General (1955 – 1963) and then as Vice-President in 1963 – 1974.

The election of academician Ștefan Milcu as President of the AMS took place in the General Assembly on April 30, 1990. The proposal was made by the interim President of the AMS Nicolae Cajal, who also chaired the meeting. A small number of members participated, including Ștefan Milcu, Nicolae Cajal, Vlad Voiculescu, Radu Păun, Ioan Pop de Popa, Ovidiu Popovici, Dan Alexandrescu. After the election of the new President, the commission for the revitalization of the AMS appointed by the Minister of Health, where I activated, ceased its activity.

Ștefan Milcu held the position of president of AMS from the re-establishment in 1990 until 1997, when he died at the age of 96. After the death of Ștefan Milcu, the position of President of AMS was kept by Nicolae Cajal, who, with wisdom and erudition, doubled by humanity and kindness, led this scientific forum as President until the end of his life. He was the most loved president of

AMS. Considered a good and generous man, kind to people, science and the country, he managed to combine the research activity, the didactic one with the public one, for the good and benefit of man and the community. Nicolae Cajal declared that he learned to love man and medicine and also admitted that “I was and remained a passionate follower of innovation “. He is the author of the first Romanian book of virology.

On June 9, 2006, the General Assembly elected Laurențiu Mircea Popescu as President of AMS. He was a worthy follower of his predecessors. If we go back in time to the history of AMS, we find the existence of similarities between the 5 former presidents of AMS and Laurentiu M. Popescu. I mention a few, related to the titles, dignities or positions held by the 5 presidents: they were all members of the Romanian Academy, some of them were also elected as president of the medical section of the Romanian Academy, they are scientists who opened new fields in which they have consecrated themselves: normal and pathological physiology, cardiology, endocrinology, virology, neurosurgery. Laurențiu Popescu held the position of president of the medical department of the Romanian Academy, and through his fundamental research in cellular morpho-physiology, he opened new horizons of cellular and molecular medicine. He was also rector for over 10 years at University of Medicine and Pharmacy Bucharest.

Since I personally believe that the General Assembly is the supreme governing body of the Academy of Medical Sciences, I would like to make other proposals:

- The Academy of Medical Sciences to bear the name of one of the former presidents of this scientific forum. In the event of acceptance, I bring to your attention the following proposals: Daniel Danielopolu, the one who founded the Romanian Academy of Medicine in 1935. Referring to D. Danielopolu, Aurel Moga wrote: “I believe that we have not only the right but also the pride

to place a Romanian among the great personalities who created modern cardiology”.

George Emil Palade, our medical Nobel Prize winner, visited AMS at its headquarters in Biserica Amzei Street no. 29, in the 70s; a happy opportunity for me to meet him. He was a charming man, a creative and seductive personality (as described by Maya Simionescu), a good patriot, very eager and determined to support Romanian medical research. He contributed decisively to the establishment of the Institute of Cell Biology and Pathology (1973).

I would like to make some brief remarks regarding the honorary membership of the ASM. The Academy of Medical Sciences, when it was refounded in 1969, included 41 full members, 13 honorary members, 27 corresponding members, a total of 81. After the reorganization in December 1989, President Ștefan Milcu had a voluntarist conduct; he overcame that Numerus Clausus, increased the number of members of the AMS and introduced the new titles of emeritus members, full members, honorary members and corresponding members from Romania and from abroad, post-mortem members. All members, regardless of the category, were elected by the general assembly. Regarding the first category (emeritus members), President Ștefan Milcu said “we included the candidates who were over 75 years old and had a meritorious activity that would have justified their election as full or corresponding members of the AMS”. After a while, the category of emeritus members was waived, they were included in the group of honorary members without the approval of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, I would like to cite from the bylaws: “*The supreme governing body of the AMS is the General Assembly, made up of honorary members, full members and corresponding members. The General Assembly elects the President, the Vice-Presidents and the other members of the ASM Presidium*”.