

CAROL DAVILA (1828-1884), FRENCH REFORMER OF 19TH CENTURY ROMANIAN MEDICINE AND PHARMACY: A PICTORIAL BIOGRAPHY

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Manuscript received: December 2013

Abstract

130 years since the passing of Charles Antoine François Davila - Carol Davila, there is a need for a pictorial biography of the French doctor, considered providential person for the history of institutionalised medicine and pharmacy in Romania. A prodigious personality, his groundbreaking work was illustrated in biographies signed by his pupils, like C.I. Istrati, D. Grecescu, Z. Petrescu or C.D. Severeanu and by Romanian historians of medicine and pharmacy like G.Z. Petrescu, I. Vintilescu, G. Barbu, G. Brătescu, C. Iugulescu, C. Ionescu etc.

Having obtained his PhD at the Faculty of Medicine in Paris (1853) the young doctor was committed to serve in the military medical service in Romanian Principalities, in Bucharest. Davila studied chemistry and pharmacy in Nantes, Angers and Paris and later supported the founding and organizing of academic education in medical, pharmaceutical and veterinary medical services, both military and civilian, in the 19th century Bucharest. Carol Davila has been immortalized in numerous works of art, signed by painters like T. Aman, N. Grigorescu, A. Elliescu, H. Braunstein; by sculptors like I. Georgescu, C. Brâncuși, C. Storck; photographers: I. Dauthage, D. Williams, Fr. Duschek, Carol Szathmari; engravers and known art designers of the time, like André Lavrillier, Wilhelm and Mayer, Gh. Adoc.

Rezumat

La 130 ani de la trecerea în eternitate se impune deschiderea unei pagini iconografice închinată medicului francez Charles Antoine François Davila, *"omul providențial pentru România"*. Personalitate prodigioasă, activitatea sa de apostolat este ilustrată în biografiile semnate de valoroșii săi elevi, C. I. Istrati, D. Grecescu, Z. Petrescu, C. D. Severeanu și ale istoriografiilor G. Z. Petrescu, I. Vintilescu, G. Barbu, G. Brătescu, C. Iugulescu, C. Ionescu ș.a. După ce obține titlul de doctor la Facultatea de medicină din Paris (1853), tânărul medic primește un angajament în serviciul sanitar militar din Țara Românească. Studiile sale de chimie și farmacie la Colegiile din Nantes și Anger îi vor susține mai târziu activitatea de fondator și organizator al învățământului și serviciilor medico-farmaceutice și veterinare, militare și civile din România.

Davila, un nume transformat în renume, a fost imortalizat în numeroase opere de artă semnate de pictori precum: T. Aman, N. Grigorescu, A. Elliescu, H. Braunstein; sculptori: I. Georgescu, C. Brâncuși, C. Storck; fotografii: I. Dauthage, D. Williams, Fr. Duschek, Carol Popp de Szathmari; gravori și desenatori ai epocii: A. Lavrillier, Wilhelm și Mayer, Gh. Adoc.

Keywords: Carol Davila, Pictorial history, Medicine and Pharmacy in Romanian Principalities, Second half of the 19th century, Eastern Europe

1) A biopic - timeline in pictures

Dr. Carol Davila (8th April 1828, Parma – 26th August 1884, Bucharest), arrives in Romania on 13th April 1853, after obtaining his PhD at the Faculty of Medicine from Paris and after a decade of education and scientific training in France:

Limoges: 1843 – where he completed the lower secondary school;

Nantes: 1st July 1843 - 1st April 1844 – student at Léon le Saut pharmacy;

Angers: 1845-1847 – student trainee at the pharmacy C.S. Olivier; 12th April 1847, he became Baccalaureate in letters; 1st November 1847: he is attending the School of Medicine and Pharmacy,

where from 22nd November 1847 to 1851 he was occupied the post of junior assistant in chemistry, pharmacy and natural history; **Paris:** Internal 1848-1851 at Hôtel-Dieu Hospital and junior assistant of professor Trouessart at "Public course for applied chemistry" held at the local high school in Paris. 1851-1853 he attended, as a student, the Faculty of Medicine from Paris; On 23rd February 1853 - Davila defended his PhD thesis entitled "*De la prophylaxie de la syphilis*", at the Faculty of Medicine, a work dedicated to doctor Guépin Ange (1805-1870), his protector and mentor from Nantes [2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 12].

DE LA PROPHYLAXIE DE LA SYPHILIS,

PAR

CHARLES DAVILA,

Docteur en Médecine de la Faculté de Paris,
ancien interne en Médecine et en Chirurgie des Hôpitaux d'Angers,
Préparateur de Chimie, Promoteur d'Anatomie,
Lauréat de l'École de Médecine et de l'Administration des Hôpitaux de la même ville,
Médaille de Choléra en 1849 (Médaille d'Argent).

De veniam scriptis quorum non gloria nobis
cavet, sed utilitas officiumque fuit
(Ovis.)

PARIS.

RIGNOUX, IMPRIMEUR DE LA FACULTÉ DE MÉDECINE,
rue Monsieur-le-Prince, 31

1853

Figure 1.

Davila's graduation thesis, Paris, 1853



Figure 2.

Dr. Ange Guépin

In the three decades since his arrival in the Romanian Principalities, until his death in 1884 in Bucharest, Carol Davila played the role of a providential man of modern medical Romania by his personal involvement in establishing military and civilian educational institutions, all precursors of the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy in Bucharest:

* **December 1854** - Modernisation of the Pharmacy of the Army Hospital at Mihai Vodă, closely working with chief pharmacist Francisc (Franz) Xavier Pruszinsky (1802-1874) [2];

* **4th December 1855** - "The Military School of small surgery" at Mihai Vodă: offering three years of medical and pharmacy courses, from those registered at this school, a group of pupils has been selected to be pharmacists - in Romanian: *elevi pentru arta spițeriei* [4, 10];



Figure 3.

¹The Military School of Small Surgery, December 1855,

²Army Hospital at Mihai Vodă (W. Watts, after the drawing of L. Mayer, 1793)

* **6th March 1856** - *The Military School of small surgery* is transformed into *the Military School of Surgery*, with a four-year undergraduate course, Davila being appointed director by the Government Decree 435/1856. A group of twelve future pharmacists constituted a distinct group under the guidance of Francisc Xavier Pruszinsky, Chief Pharmacist of the Army in Bucharest (25.10.1837-24.01.1869; 1.03.1871-1.03.1874) [4, 10];

* **29th July 1857** - *The National School of Medicine and Pharmacy* was born through the profound institutional change of *The Military School of Surgery* into an eight-year undergraduate course, from which three years were devoted to teaching of practical medical skills, thus marking the first step in establishing high ranking courses at the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy in Bucharest [4, 10];

* By the **autumn of 1857**, Carol Davila was undergoing a trip to Paris, from where he obtained from Napoleon III, a jurisprudence document, *the Imperial Edict of 23rd November 1857*, by which the School of Bucharest was assimilated to the Medical Schools in France, providing the legal fact that the Romanian students equated their PhD studies at French medical Faculties [9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18];

* **15th August 1858** - A similar decree was issued by Victor Emmanuel II of Italy in Torino [9, 10];

* **1st October 1858** - The pharmacy class from Davila's School was separately structured from the teaching program of the medical class [10];

* **June-September 1859** - Carol Davila organized the soldiers' camp at Florești, Prahova, with the participation of both armies of the Romanian Principalities, Moldavia and Wallachia. Army chief pharmacist Franz Xavier Pruszinsky organized six

pharmacies, necessary for the regimental military camp [2, 7, 8, 10, 12];

* **17th September 1859** - The introduction of (French) decimal weights and measures in Romanian pharmacies; research was conducted on the enhancement of therapeutic mineral waters in the Romanian Principalities [10];

* **31st March 1860** - Introduction of the pharmacist and assistant exam free practice - as basis for the profession of pharmacist in the School of Bucharest [10];

* **5th November 1860** - The Inauguration of *Bucharest Botanic Garden*. As first director it was appointed U. Hoffmann, professor of botany at the Bucharest National School of Medicine and Pharmacy [10];

* **18th July 1861** - The Romanian newspaper "*Românul*" presented information in which the Pharmacy "*Fortuna*", owned by A. Steege, is marketing a cholera tincture (the so-called *tincture Davila*) [12];

* **March 1862** - Creation of a bill in which the ranks of health officers were assimilated in the same way like the army ranks of the other officers [2];

* **25th August 1862** - Institutional unification of health services in the United Romanian Principalities, health administration was put under Davila's command [4];

* **January 1863** - First edition of the Romanian Pharmacopoeia was put into practice (printed in late 1862 in Bucharest, and written on his own initiative, by a Commission headed by the pharmacist C.C. Hepites) [10];

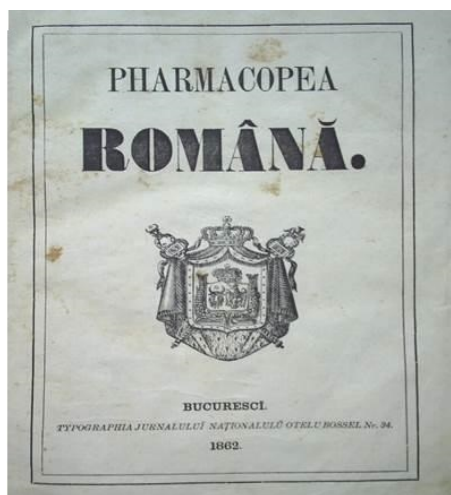


Figure 4.

Romanian Pharmacopoeia, First Edition of 1862

* **1st January 1864** - A drug fee was introduced on the market, accompanied by a strict pharmaceutical regulation [10];

* **July to October 1870** - C. Davila's involvement in the Franco - Prussian War (1870-1871), along with Romanian doctors and medical students who studied in France, they have requested to the French Red Cross the establishing of employment units. The ambulance headed by C. Davila was detained by the Prussians at Saint-Privat, during which he could verify the application of the *Geneva International Convention* from 22nd August 1864 [2];

* **28th November 1870** - The School of Pharmacy became part of the Faculty of Medicine in Bucharest;

* **8th June 1874** - The First Health Law was promulgated in Romania;

* **24th July 1874** - Davila travelled to France and Switzerland to assess and implement in Romania the modern ambulance system [2];

* **1877-1878** - During the War of Independence (the Russian-Romanian-Ottoman War), civilian and military ambulances of both Health Service and the Red Cross, placed south of the Danube were directly coordinated by the Brigadier General Carol Davila [2, 8, 10];

* **26th August 1884** - Carol Davila died in Bucharest, aged 56, in his house in 37th Notagiu Street, in the capital suburb of St. Eleutherius [2].

a) Titles and dignities

14th April 1853 - Oberstab-Doktor (Major) with the role of chief medical army ruler and personal physician of the Landlord;

December 1856 - Professor of dermatology at *The Military School of small surgery*;

5th September 1859 - Civilian General Inspector of the Romanian Sanitary Committee ("*Protomedicus*" of the Romanian Principalities);

30th September 1859 - President of the new Medical Council;

10th October 1859 - Colonel General Staff adjutant to Principality reign;

1859-1884 - Chief Administrative - Efor - of Civilian Hospitals in Bucharest;

3rd December 1860 - Medical inspector and promotion to Brigade General;

25th August 1862 - Inspector General at the General Directorate of Medical Service;

4th August 1864 - General Director of the Public Health Service System;

1864-1884 - Professor of Medical Chemistry;

8th February 1865 - Davila was awarded unanimously by the Elective Assembly the "*great*" naturalization, with all the Romanian citizen rights as national reward for his eminent service to the Country ("*From the moment I became a Romanian citizen, I felt that with all my heart and was proud of this national award*", wrote later Davila);

27th April 1877 - Davila was appointed Head of Sanitary Service, with the grade of Brigadier General during the military campaign in the south of Danube - the War of Independence (the 1877-78 Russian-Romanian-Ottoman War);

1st March 1884 - Promoted to General of Division and High Medical Inspector. Vice president of the Superior Medical Council of Romanian Army [2, 10].



Figure 5.

The Royal Decree no. 499/31 May 1868 awarding the Romanian Citizenship to Carol Davila (Library Collection of the Medical Faculty, Bucharest)

b) Social institutions and Charitable Societies

18th July 1862 - The official inauguration of “Elena Doamna” Asylum for orphans and found children, in the presence of Davila’s wife, Ana Davila and under the patronage of Lady Elena Cuza, wife of Ruler Alexandru Ioan Cuza [4, 5].



Figure 6.

The “Elena Doamna” Asylum for orphans and found children

c) Memberships and publications

29th November 1857 - Scientific Medical Society of Bucharest (Nicolae Kretzulescu - President, Secretary - Carol Davila);

15th November 1859 - “*Medicul Român*” [The Romanian Doctor], the first medical periodical;

1st January 1862 - “*Monitorul Medical*” [Medical Gazette];

5th October 1867 - Chairman of the Medical-Surgical Society of Bucharest;

1st October 1869 - Honorary President of the Romanian Society of Pharmacists, president - A. Trausch;

February 1871 - “*Foaia Societății Farmaciștilor Români*” [Newsletter of the Romanian Pharmacists Society], the first Romanian pharmaceutical periodical;

4th June 1876 - Vice-President of Red Cross Society of Romania, founded on his initiative [10, 18].

2) Photographs



Figure 7.

Carol Davila portrait, 1860 (Military Museum Bucharest)



Figure 8.

Carol Davila portrait, 1870 (photograph by Fr. Duschek)

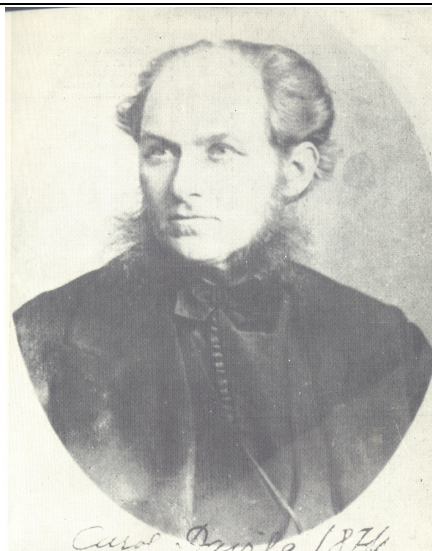


Figure 9.

Carol Davila portrait, 1874 (National Library)



Figure 10.

Carol Davila in front of Red Cross tents, during the Independence War, Grivița, 1877, photograph by Carol Popp de Szathmári (1812-1887)



Figure 11.

Carol Davila portrait, 1884, (National Library)



Figure 12.

Carol Davila with his son, Alexandru in 1884



Figure 13.

Carol Davila portrait, (Library Collection 1884, by R. Liebich, Rusciuk of the Medical Faculty, Bucharest)



Figure 14.

Carol Davila portrait, (History of Medicine Library, at the Public Health Institute, Bucharest)

3) Paintings



Figure 15.
Carol Davila oil painting by **Alex. Eliescu** (1850-1889), (Council Room of the Medical Faculty, Bucharest) [3]



Figure 18.
Carol Davila drawing by **Th. Aman**, after a photograph by **Fr. Duschek** (National Library) [11]



Figure 16.
Carol Davila oil painting by **N. Grigorescu** (1838-1907), (The National Museum of Art of Romania) [1, 6]

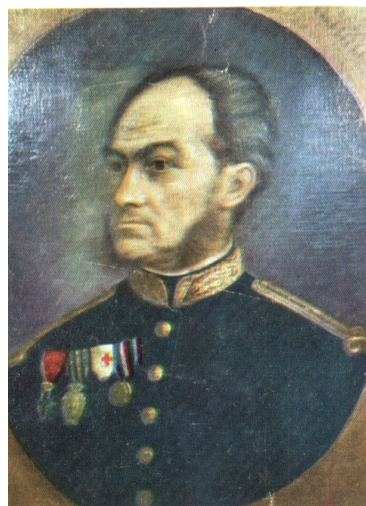


Figure 19.
Gen. dr. Carol Davila, 1877-1878, (Military Museum Bucharest) [19]



Figure 17.
Carol Davila painting by **Th. Aman** (1831-1891) (Brasov Museum of Art) [6]

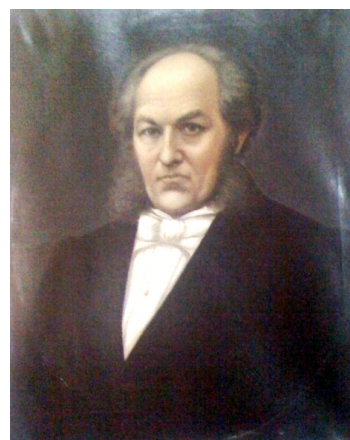


Figure 20.
Carol Davila, by **H. Braunstein** (Iulia Hasdeu Museum, Câmpina)

4) Sculptures and bas-reliefs



Figure 21.

Marble Statue of Ana Davila, at “Elena Doamna” Asylum, Bucharest 1882, **Karl Storck** (1826-1887), **Carol Storck**, and **Carl Teutsch**



Figure 22.

Bronze Statue of Carol Davila, 1903, **Carol Storck** (1854-1926), located in front of the Medical Faculty, Bucharest



Figure 23.

Carol Davila Marble bust, 1885, **I. Georgescu** (1856-1898), (Medical Faculty, Bucharest)



Figure 24.

The Centenary Anniversary of Carol Davila, 1928



Figure 25.

Carol Davila, bronze bust, 1903, **Constantin Brâncuși**, inaugurated 1912, at the Military Central Hospital, Bucharest



Figure 26.

Carol Davila bas-relief by **I. Iordănescu**, inaugurated 17th October 1930 by the Sanitary Military Institute at the occasion of Centenary Birth Anniversary of Davila (Council Room of the Medical Faculty, Bucharest)

5) Medals and Orders

a) received during his lifetime

Davila was awarded orders and medals for his outstanding achievements and humanity towards the sick, wounded, and prisoners of war: 1849 - Medal "*Cholera*", France; 1854 - Campaign Medal "*Danube*"; 1855 - Order "*Medgidia*" third class, given by the Ottoman government in nursing cholera in the Turkish army of occupation; 1873 - "*Legion of Honour*" of France, in the rank of Knight and that the rank of Officer; 1877 - "*Red Cross*" by International Society of Geneva; 1877/1878 - Cross Russian orders "*St. Ana*", in the rank of Commander and "*St. Stanislas*" cl. II; 1878 - Order "*Osman*" in the rank of Commander; 1878 - Campaign Medals of the War in Bulgaria from the Russian Army and the Romanian Army for independence; "*Defenders of Independence*"; 1877-1878 "*Military Virtue*" and "*Cross the Danube crossing*" campaign in Bulgaria; 1879 - Honorary Sign Golden "*25 years of military service*"; 1882 - Grand Officer of the Order of the Cross "*Romanian Crown*".

b) anniversary medals:



Figure 27.

Plaque Dr. Carol Davila, 1903, by the Committee for the elevation of the monument in front of the Faculty of Medicine, Bucharest, engraving **Wilhelm and Mayer** [13; 20]



Figure 28.

Centenary medal Carol Davila (1828-1928), by **André Lavrillier** [13, 20]



Figure 29.

Carol Davila Medal, engraver **Gh. Adoc**, 1992

Davila's expressiveness and daring face features are easily recognizable on the medals and platelets, whose bust is depicted in his military uniform as a general, bearing his meritorious awards.

6) Stamps and Maximaphily

Romanian Philately issued several stamp editions illustrating Davila's prestigious career.



Figure 30.

The Centenary of Medical and Pharmaceutical education in Bucharest (1857-1957)



Figure 31.

Carol Davila's Centenary (1884-1984)



Figure 32.

The Centenary of Bucharest Botanical Garden



Figure 33.

The Centenary of the Red Cross Society (1876-1976)



Figure 34.

Carol Davila' Grave (Photograph, V. Roman, 1994)

The positive atmosphere of the 19th century, fuelled by the French Revolution, created a more classical art approach linked - by the mid of the century - to a more realistic aesthetic in painting and sculpture. Carol Davila depictions belong to these iconographic series.

Representations were made by artists, most formed in the Franco-German cultural space, which were also attracted to expat personalities like Davila, and issued as a sign of gratitude by students, collaborators and his followers.

All these pictorial traces are a testimony of his rich medical legacy: Davila was an accomplished scientist and medical reformer of French origin, who left a landmark for future generations of Romanians: the institutional and social modernization of Medicine and Pharmacy in Romania during the second half of 19th century.

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