

Petre Tomescu and His Early Studies in Catatonic Schizophrenia

S. Hostiuc¹, O. Buda²

¹Legal Medicine and Bioethics, University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Carol Davila" Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania ; ²History of Medicine, University of Medicine and Pharmacy "Carol Davila" Bucharest, Bucharest, Romania

Petre Tomescu (born 1890, died 1972) was a professor of Psychiatry, and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine from Bucharest. He was one of the first psychiatrists in Romania to be highly influenced by the hereditary theories of mental pathology and eugenics, proposing a different interpretation and treatment of mental disorders compared to his predecessors.

His scientific work included studies in the areas of epilepsy, physiopathology of adrenergic substances, psychotechnic examinations, excretion and metabolism of alcohols, and so on. One of the main areas of study was however the catatonic syndrome. For example, in an article from 1929, Tomescu continued the researchers conducted by Bourgignon and de Jong regarding catatonia induced by Bulbocapnine on animals, by testing it on cats, dogs, chickens, and rabbits. In another study, conducted together with his mentor Al.Obregia, he described a series of particular cases of periodic catatonia, either as an evolutive stage of periodic psychosis, or alternating with manic syndrome. One of his most interesting, however practically unknown results, was proving a positive response in patients with schizophrenic catatonia to Harmine, a monoamine oxidase inhibitor.

The purpose of this presentation is to present these forgotten studies, and to emphasise the role Tomescu had in the development of Romanian psychiatry in the Interwar period.

Acknowledgment: This work was supported by a grant of the Romanian National Authority for Scientific Research, CNDI– UEFISCDI, PN-II-RU-TE-2012-3-44