

## **Professor Nicolae Oblu - creator of the neurosurgical school in Iasi - 1912-1995**

### **N. Ianovici**

President of Romanian Society of Neurosurgery

He was born on August 7th 1912 in Oltenița (Calarasi county), he graduated from “C. Alimășteanu” high school.

In 1932 he applied to the Faculty of Medicine in Iași. As a student he worked since 1936 as a post-graduate who wanted to become a scientific candidate in the Laboratory of Descriptive Anatomy led by Professor Grigore T. Popa. After graduating from the faculty in 1938 he continued his activity as a lecturer and afterwards he worked as an assistant in anatomy while simultaneously being an intern at the Emergency Surgery Department at „Sfantul Spiridon” Hospital.

On April 18th 1940 he presented his thesis entitled *Correlations entre le caliber des vaisseaux nouricieres ou fonctionels et le masse totale des organes qu'ils desservent* (Brawo typography Iasi, 1940) becoming doctor of medicine and surgery (diploma no. 2024/1940).

Since June 2nd 1940 he obtained the physician's right to profess medicine (published in M.O. 127/1940).

At this time he began working as a resident physician in the Surgery Hospital of Social Security House in Iasi, and since 1944 he worked also as a resident physician in “Charity” Hospital in Iasi, under the guidance of Professor Al. Moruzi. Since early years, the latter kept a close watch on his surgical activity impelling him to choose neurosurgery.

It is worth mentioning that Professor

Moruzi had always been preoccupied to separate the field of neurosurgery from the surgical specialities, being considered the founder of this speciality in Romania together with D. Bagdasar in Bucharest. The medical documents of the time show that the first modern neurosurgical interventions were performed under his guidance at Socola Hospital in Iasi in 1932-1934, and afterwards the department was moved to “Charity” Hospital in Iasi until 1951. In this latter hospital, Al. Moruzi was in charge of this department in 1934-1948 and in 1948-1951 dr. Vsevolov Urbanovici was the head of the department.

On 22nd of March 1946 he takes the exam and becomes a resident physician (Decizia M.S. 138.260/1946) and in 1951 Oblu is offered the title of Master in Surgery and becomes the head of the neurosurgical department; on October 1st 1964 he is transferred to the neurosurgical clinic within the department of medical training and specialization at the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy.

During the period in which the department belonged both to the “Charity” Hospital, and to the “Parhon” Hospital within the Second Department of Surgery (headed by Professor O. Francke) in Iasi, dr. Oblu also continued his educational activity becoming a lecturer on topographic anatomy and operative surgery (M.S. Decision 94249/1944) and lecturer in neurosurgery (M.I. Decision 1964).



**Figure 1** PhD Thesis of Prof N Oblu

After tenure, he was appointed Head of Neurology, Neurosurgery, Endocrinology and Psychiatry Department in the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy (Ordin M.I. 3652/1964). In 1966 he takes the exams and becomes professor of neurosurgery. As a professor, he remained in charge of the Neurosurgical Department in Iasi until his retirement in 1977.

His extremely meticulous activity was rewarded with “The Victory Medal” (1946), “Liberation from the Fascist Yoke” Medal (1954), Order of the Star of the Romanian People’s Republic (1955), The Great Prize for his Activity in the Health Network (1962), The Medal for the 20th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Homeland (1964), Order of the Star of the Romanian People’s Republic (1964), The 25th Anniversary of the Romanian People’s Republic (1969).

He was appointed eminent doctor of the RSR and honorary member of the Romanian Academy.

The entire activity of Professor Nicolae Oblu was a path to success: medical assistance, education, research, administration.

In terms of medical assistance he approached every modern neurosurgical field, although the technical possibilities left a lot to be desired most of the times. Professor Oblu improved his knowledge on descriptive and topographic anatomy and operative surgery thanks to his outstanding theoretical preparation, being an ideal surgeon for his collaborators.

With great operating skill, Professor Oblu impressed by the finesse of his gestures and by the instant solutions that solved the most difficult cases. He approached the skull, the spine, the peripheral nerves, the trauma and the tumours, the ablative or functional neurosurgery masterly.

Due to his rigour, but mostly due to his remarkable presence, he managed year after year to assemble the best students in the faculty for the study of the nervous system (N. Oblu: Memoir of Titles and papers, Thesis: Tetraru C.: Valoarea angiografiei in tumorile cerebrale, 1965, Ianovici N.: Sciatica paralizanta, urgenta neuro chirurgicala). Thanks to his perseverance and results, he also managed to form a team of neurosurgeons in Iasi, the only neurosurgeons in the country who had not been trained in Professor C. Arseni’s clinic in Bucharest, but whose results have always been at the highest level.

After this “golden team” (M. Rusu, A. Stanciu, Gh. Săndulescu), he created the premises of the 2nd (Th. Obreja, T. Cozma) and 3rd generation (R. Lăcătușu,

C. Robu, N. Ianovici), and consequently the Neurosurgical School in Iasi is renowned and appreciated even today in the national and European context. He edited numerous courses for students in anatomy and nervous system (Course in Central Nervous System, The Anatomy of Vegetative Nervous System, The Anatomy of Sense Organs).

Professor Oblu organized numerous conferences dealing with problems of neurosurgical emergencies (traumatology, tumours, infections, etc) attended by local neurosurgeons and neurologists and he contributed to the entry of these specialization courses for this type of doctors in neurosurgery clinic in Iasi.

His scientific activity was prodigious. In 1988 in the monograph entitled Momente din istoria neurochirurgiei romanesti, there are mentioned over 101 scientific papers

and articles that were published and communicated. Let me list several titles so that you can get an idea about his preoccupations and the fields he approached during the years:

- Normele și variantele părților moi (exceptând creierul și vasele sale) la români - Gr. T. Popa, Lucinescu E., Frasin I., Oblu. N. etc. Congresul internațional de Antropologie București, 1937.

- Tumora cerebrală - Moruzi A., Oblu N. Comunicare Soc. Endocr., Neurolog., Psihiatrie, martie 1944.

- Un caz particular de tumoră medulară - Moruzi A., Oblu N., Urbanovici V. Comunicare Soc. Medici și naturaliști Iași, 12 martie 1944.

- Asupra unui caz de lobectomie frontală - Moruzi A., Oblu N., Comunicare Soc. Endocr., Neurolog., Psihiatrie Iași, 1954.

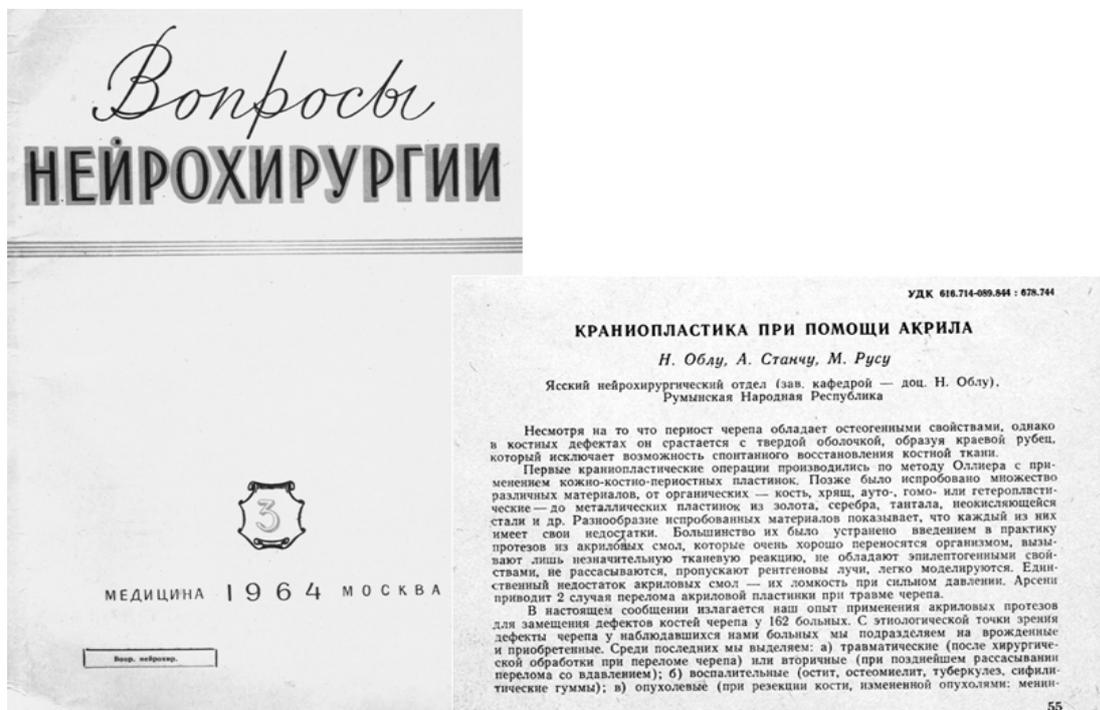
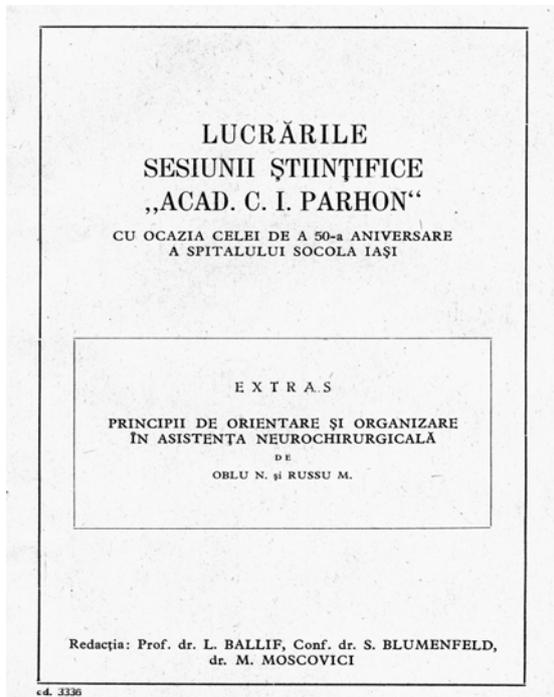
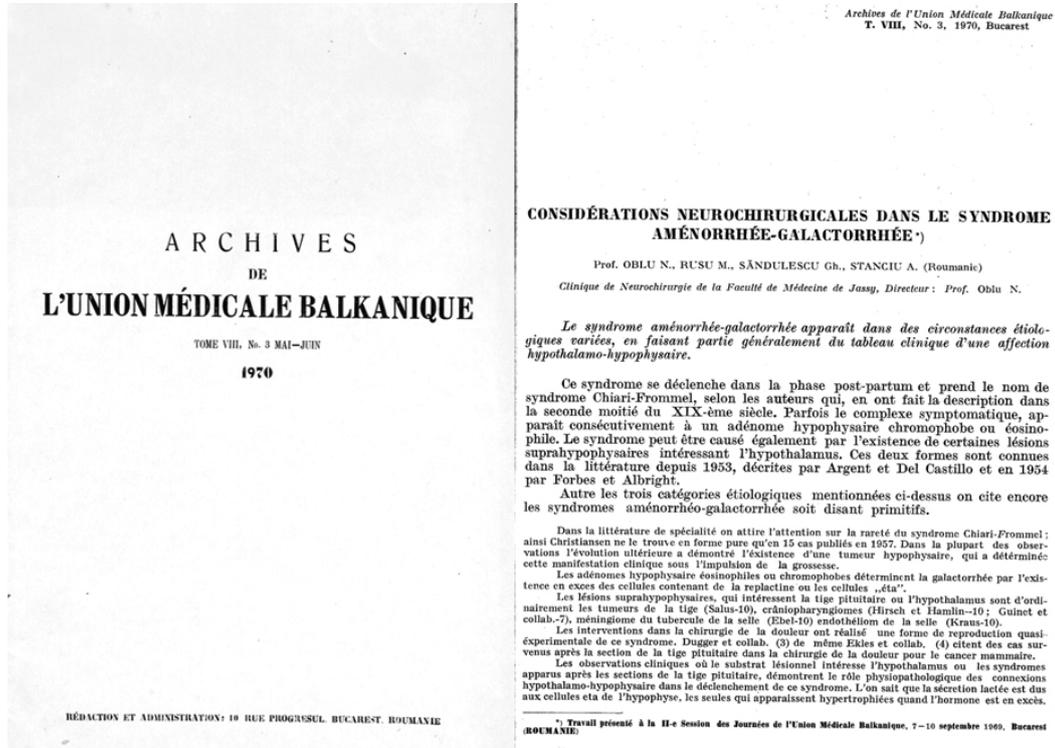


Figure 2 Article of cranioplasty published in Russian Journal, 1964



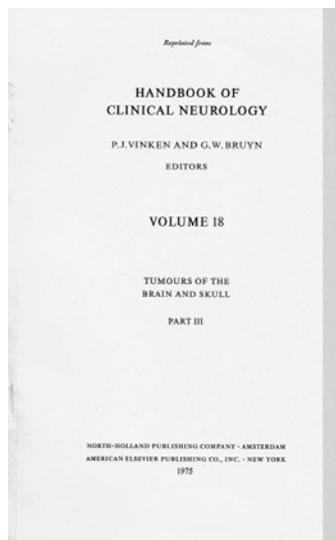
**Figure 3** Article in Archives de l'Union Médicale Balkanique and article presented in scientific meeting

- Tratatamentul sindroamelor dureroase ireductibile prin intervenții chirurgicale pe nervii cranieni și trunchiul cerebral - Oblu N. Raport prezentat Sfatului științific al Ministerului Sănătății în martie, 1951.

- Considerații asupra unor paraplegii prin hernie de disc - Oblu N., Rusu M., Stanciu A. - Revista Medico-Chirurgicală Iași, nr. 1, 1957.

- Un model de foaie de observație clinică neurochirurgicală - Oblu N., Rusu M. - Soc. Neurologie, Psihiatrie, Neurochirurgie Iași, 14 martie, 1958.

He published together with B. Pollingher at Esculap Publishing house in Iasi Ateroscleroza cerebrală, with Th. Obreja Hematomul intracerebral primar, with Ianovici N.v Fistulele lichidiene cranio nazale, with Rusu M. Patologia sistemului vertebro-bazilar, he was co-author of the International Treaty on Neurology in Vinken.



**Figure 4** Author of chapter in Vinken's Treaty of Neurology

He published many articles in the journals in the country, especially in Neurology, Psychiatry, Neurosurgery, and abroad:

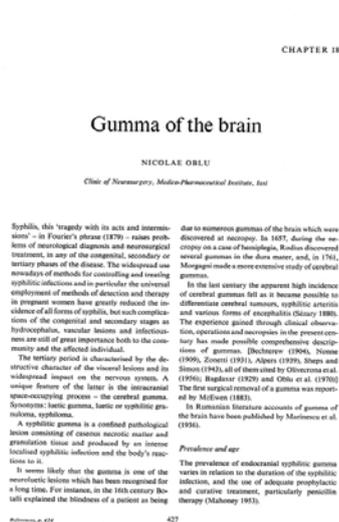
- Rezultatele operatorii în arahnoidita optochiasmatică - Oblu N., Rusu M. - reviewed in Arch. d'Ophtalmologie et Rev. générale d'Ophtalmologie, nr. 20, p. 678, 1960.

- Tulburări de schemă corporală în cadrul comițialității - Oblu N., Rusu M. - Revue Neurologique France, 1964, Recenzată în Ann.Psychologique nr. 122, T. nr. 4, aprilie 1964, p. 466.

- Cranioplastiile cu acrilic - Oblu N., Stanciu A., Rusu M. - Voprosi Neurochirurgii nr. 3, 1964, Moscova.

- Donné cliniques et resultants thérapeutiques sur l'hématome intracranien post traumatiques ; étude sur 308 obs - Oblu N., Săndulescu Gh., Rusu M., Stanciu A., Banu T., Petrovanu I., Ciubotaru P. - Journal de chirurgie, febr. 1965, T. 89, nr. 2, p. 221, 230 - France.

- Considerations clinico-thérapeutiques



**Figure 5** Article in NeuroChirurgie (Paris)

sur les fractures fermées de l'arc posterior de la première vertèbre cervicale – Oblu N., Săndulescu Gh. - Acta Orthopedica Belgica - mai 1965.

- Cercetări experimentale privind patogenia chistului epidermoid - Oblu N., Wasserman L., Săndulescu Gh., Onofrei T.

- L'opportunité de la fermeture opératoire des fistules liquidiennes fronto-ethmoido-nasales post traumatiques - Oblu N., Săndulescu Gh., Cozma N. - Rev. d'Oto-neuro-ophtalmologie. T. XXXVII, nr. 2, 1965 - France.

He was a member of the Society of Doctors and Naturalists in Iași in 1947, member of the Neurology and Neurosurgery Society, member of the ENT Society, member of the Morphological Society, vice president of the National Society of Psychiatry and Endocrinology.

In his administrative activities, Professor Oblu excelled in being a prestigious organizer, an authentic manager in the current sense of the word.



**Figure 6** Surgical team in operating theatre



**Figure 7** Opening ceremony of Neurosurgical Hospital, Iasi

After establishing a neurosurgical service with 30 beds in Socola Hospital, he developed it soon by opening a second pavilion with a second operating room as well as intensive care unit (ICU) cores with 7 beds (dr. Pop), neuroradiology (dr. Aldescu), neuropathology (dr. C. Tetraru, dr. Anghel, dr. Costachescu), functional exploration (Dr. V. Cozma).

However, the masterpiece of his life was the inauguration of the Neurosurgery Hospital in Iasi, the biggest hospital with this profile in the country. Working with Professor Oblu at that time, I could observe his exceptional ability to mobilize himself totally in order to achieve his goals; his day was split between responsibilities, surgeries, lectures, visits on building sites, displacements in Moldova to obtain building materials (concrete, bricks, plates); he was calling upon the competent organs, interceding with different people and only occasionally going fishing or hunting to relax.

He possessed a vast store of knowledge, he spoke French fluently, he was an admirer of paintings, having an impressive collection, and he also was an adoring grandfather for his two grandchildren.

For those who met him, he was a role model, although he was temperamental and sometimes he held grudge against some for too long. This may be the reason why it was impossible to establish collaboration between the schools in Iasi and Bucharest. Or maybe it was Professor Arseni's infinite pride that did not let him admit that another neurosurgeon could be as good as he.

Thanks to his entire career, Professor Nicolae Oblu is a milestone in the modern era of Romanian neurosurgery, the creator of the school in Iasi.