

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316501680>

# The history of an unknown dermatological wax collection from Cluj-Napoca University “Iuliu Hatieganu”, Romania

Article in *Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift* · April 2017

DOI: 10.1007/s10354-017-0564-4

CITATIONS

0

READS

20

6 authors, including:



**Alexandru Tataru**

Iuliu Hațieganu University of Medicine and P...

21 PUBLICATIONS 20 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



**Maria Grazia Roccia**

University B.I.S Group of Institutions, Gagra, ...

107 PUBLICATIONS 49 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



**Katlein França**

University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

165 PUBLICATIONS 295 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



**Massimo Fioranelli**

Università Telematica Guglielmo Marconi

201 PUBLICATIONS 266 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Handbook of Lasers in Dermatology [View project](#)



Trichotillomania: Clinical Characteristics, Psychological Interventions and Emotional Effects [View project](#)



## The history of an unknown dermatological wax collection from Cluj-Napoca University “Iuliu Hatieganu”, Romania

Alexandru-Dumitru Tataru · Dan Tataru · Maria Grazia Roccia · Katlein França · Massimo Fioranelli · Torello Lotti

Received: 3 December 2016 / Accepted: 30 March 2017  
© Springer-Verlag Wien 2017

**Summary** Among the dermatological wax collections across Europe, one of the latest created is the collection from Cluj-Napoca University, Romania. The initiator was Professor Coriolan Tataru and the moulage artist employed was Dr. Richard Hoffmann. Between the years 1923 and 1928, around 200 wax moulages were made, all realised after patients hospitalised in the clinic. The majority of cases represent the dermatological infectious pathology of that time: syphilis, cutaneous tuberculosis and mycetomas. Other interesting moulages represent genodermatoses, pelagra, different cutaneous cancers, and atypical aspects of common diseases like psoriasis and eczemas. The models depicting different stages of syphilis won the gold medal at the Ninth International Congress of Dermato-Venereology held in Budapest in 1935. We believe that the collection has a great value from a historical, artistic, didactic and scientific point of view, and it is organised as a museum within the Dermatology Clinic.

**Keywords** Dermatology · Wax · Moulages · Collection · Cluj-Napoca

**Die Geschichte einer unbekanntem dermatologischen Wachsgussammlung der Universität „Iuliu Hatieganu“, Klausenburg, Rumänien**

**Zusammenfassung** Unter den dermatologischen Wachssammlungen in Europa ist die Sammlung der Universität Klausenburg, Rumänien, als eine der Letzten entstanden. Initiator war Prof. Coriolan Tataru, und die Moulagen wurden von Dr. Richard Hoffmann erstellt. Zwischen den Jahren 1923 und 1928 wurden etwa 200 Wachsmoulagen individuell nach Patienten angefertigt, die stationär in der Klinik waren. Die Mehrheit der Fälle repräsentiert die dermatologischen infektiösen Erkrankungen jener Zeit: Syphilis, Hauttuberkulose und Myzetome. Andere interessante Moulagen stellen Genodermatosen, Pellagra, verschiedene Hautkarzinome und atypische Aspekte verbreiteter Erkrankungen wie Psoriasis und Ekzeme dar. Die Modelle, welche die verschiedenen Stadien der Syphilis abbilden, gewannen die Goldmedaille auf dem 9. Internationalen Kongress für Dermatovenerologie in Budapest 1935. Die Autoren sind der Ansicht, dass die Sammlung aus historischer, künstlerischer, didaktischer und wissenschaftlicher Sicht von großem Wert ist. Sie ist in Form eines Museums innerhalb der Dermatologischen Klinik organisiert.

**Schlüsselwörter** Dermatologie · Wachs · Moulagen · Sammlung · Klausenburg

A.-D. Tataru · D. Tataru (✉)  
Cluj County Hospital – Medicala 1, University of Medicine and Pharmacy “Iuliu Hatieganu”, 3–5 Clinicilor Street, postal code: 400006 Cluj-Napoca, Romania  
tataru.cardio@gmail.com

M. G. Roccia · M. Fioranelli · T. Lotti  
University G. Marconi, Rome, Italy

K. França  
School of Medicine, University of Miami, Florida, USA

The history of wax models dates back to the Renaissance period, when renewed scientific interest in anatomy motivated artists and physicians to study cadavers.

The premier known anatomical wax model was a small statue of an “écorché” created in Florence by

**Table 1** Preserved dermatological wax collections in Europe. Adapted from [7–19]

Country, City (alphabetical)	Founder	Mouleur
Austria, Vienna	M. Kaposi	C. Henning, R. Poller
Belgium, Brussels	B. Lengelé	Bought from Paris, Breslau
Bulgaria, Sofia	B. Beron	Stevanov, Borodaevsk
Czech Republic, Prague	(no data)	Bought from Vienna, Dresden
Denmark, Copenhagen	N.R. Finsen	(no data)
France, Paris	C. Lailier	J. Baretta
Germany, Berlin	E. Lesser	F. Kolbow
Germany, Bonn	E. Hoffmann	A. Kaltschmidt, H. Hessling
Germany, Dresden	J. Werther	F. Kolbow, P. Geisler
Germany, Erlangen-Nuremberg	L. Hauck	(no data)
Germany, Frankfurt-on-Main	(no data)	(no data)
Germany, Freiburg	(no data)	(no data)
Germany, Göttingen	(no data)	(no data)
Germany, Hamburg	(no data)	A. Kroner
Germany, Hannover	(no data)	(no data)
Germany, Kiel	V. F. Klingmuller	A. Kroner
Germany, Leipzig	J. Rille	(no data)
Germany, Munich	K. Posselt	Hammer
Germany, Münster	C. Moncorps	A. Kroner, O. Vogelbacher
Germany, Rostock	M. Wolters	K. Krug, F. Kaltschmidt
Germany, Tübingen	(no data)	(no data)
Greece, Athens	G. Photinos	G. Photinos
Hungary, Debrecen	(no data)	Bought from Vienna by J. Vincze
Netherlands, Utrecht	(no data)	(no data)
Poland, Breslau (Wrocław)	A. Neisser	P. Berliner, A. Kroner
Portugal, Porto	(no data)	(no data)
Romania, Cluj-Napoca	C. Tataru	R. Hoffman, R. Kinle
Russia, Moscow	A. Pospelow	(no data)
Serbia, Belgrade	S. P. Alisov	V. Sikoparija
Spain, Madrid	J. Olavide	Zofio
Switzerland, Zurich	B. Bloch	L. Volger
United Kingdom, London	J. Hilton	J. Towne

Lodovico Cardi [1]. In the late 1600s, Gaetano Giulio Zumbo produced the first realistic anatomical models made from coloured wax, representing a valid alternative to dissected human specimens [1]. His work can be seen in the “La Specola” Museum in Florence, Italy. Wax moulages showing anatomical topography became very popular in Italian Medical Universities [2].

On the other hand, dermatological wax moulages have been used for 150 years. In the mid part of the 19th century, several dermatological centres independently began to develop moulages: Joseph Towne at

Guy’s Hospital, London [3, 4]; Anton Elfinger at Dermatology Department, Vienna [5]; and Jules Baretta at Saint-Louis Hospital, Paris [6].

The First International Congress of Dermatology and Syphilology was organised in August 1889 at the Saint-Louis Hospital in Paris. There, the wax moulages of Baretta were presented for the first time to the dermatological community, creating great enthusiasm among participants. At that time, the moulages became a fashion, but also the peak of technology in representing a three-dimensional, coloured and very accurate portrayal of a dermatological disease. The moulage fashion spread all across Europe and several dermatological wax collections were created, mainly between 1890 and 1928 [7].

To the best of our knowledge, there are only around thirty dermatological wax collections in Europe (Table 1) which have survived to present day [7–19]. They are of great importance from many perspectives: historical, scientific, didactic and artistic.

One of these collections is located in Cluj-Napoca (Klausenburg), Romania, a city which was for centuries the cultural and teaching heart of Transylvania, as it is nowadays.

Between 1866 and 1918, Transylvania was annexed to the Hungarian side of the Habsburg Empire and the official language became Hungarian. The first Faculty of Medicine from Cluj-Napoca was established in 1872 by the “Franz Joseph” Hungarian University. After World War I, the Habsburg Empire collapsed. In 1918, after a people’s referendum, Transylvania was integrated in The Romanian Kingdom and the Romanian language was used for the first time in academic settings. In 1919, the “King Ferdinand” Romanian University was created upon the remaining structures and buildings of the Hungarian University.

The collection of dermatological wax moulages from Cluj-Napoca is one of the last made in Europe, between 1923 and 1928. The initiator was Dr. Coriolan Tataru (Romanian citizen, Romanian origin), the first Romanian Professor of Dermatology, in 1923, at the newly established Romanian University of Cluj, Faculty of Medicine [20]. Dr. Richard Hoffman (Romanian citizen, Jewish origin) was a good dermatologist and an excellent artist at the same time, so he was employed by Professor Tataru to create a wax collection at the Dermatology Clinic. Old documents suggest that Dr. Hoffman was helped by a manual worker named R. Kinle (Romanian citizen, German origin) [20].

Between 1923 and 1928, the group lead by Professor Tataru created over 200 dermatological wax moulages and numerous illustrations on glass and paper. All of them were made according to real cases hospitalised in the Dermatology Clinic at that time. After 1928, Dr. Hoffmann left the University of Cluj for better paid employment in a pharmaceutical company. No other moulages have been made since then. We didn’t find any documents about Dr. Hoffmann af-



**Fig. 1** Late congenital syphilis, gumma type. (Museal collection Coriolan Tataru, © Regional Emergency Hospital Cluj – Napoca. With friendly permission)



**Fig. 3** Cutaneous anthrax, typical aspect of a malignant pustule. (Museal collection Coriolan Tataru, © Regional Emergency Hospital Cluj – Napoca. With friendly permission)



**Fig. 2** Tuberculosis cutis verrucosa, professional disease caused by *Mycobacterium bovis*. (Museal collection Coriolan Tataru, © Regional Emergency Hospital Cluj – Napoca. With friendly permission)



**Fig. 4** Porokeratosis of Mibelli. (Museal collection Coriolan Tataru, © Regional Emergency Hospital Cluj – Napoca. With friendly permission)

ter 1940. Perhaps, the anti-Jewish policies imposed by Nazi Germany explain the situation. After World War II, a part of the collection was spread to several universities across Romania.

Today, the wax collection is located on the ground floor of the Dermatology Clinic, University of Medicine and Pharmacy “Iuliu Hatieganu”, Cluj County Emergency Hospital, and consist of 183 models. Just like in other wax museums, the moulages are stored in specially constructed glass and wood showcases, in a room with controlled temperature and protection against sunlight.

The collection consists in models of:

1. Infectious diseases, especially all stages of syphilis, including malignant syphilis and many types of congenital syphilis (Fig. 1); skin tuberculosis (Fig. 2); cutaneous anthrax (Fig. 3); Ducray's disease; Madura foot and favus of the scalp;
2. Genodermatoses: porokeratosis of Mibelli (Fig. 4), Darier's disease, cutis verticis gyrata and others;
3. Common diseases like psoriasis and eczemas with unusual clinical aspects;

4. Skin cancers: basal and squamous cell carcinomas, malignant melanomas, mycosis fungoides and angio-fibrosarcomas;
5. Others: a skin wound caused by electric discharge (something new at that time), allergic eczemas due to cosmetic use.

The very good quality of the moulages and the work done by Professor Tataru and collaborators were recognised at the Ninth International Congress of Dermatology, held in Budapest, 1935, where the moulages representing different stages of syphilis won the gold medal [20].

The wax moulages represent important scientific data and a reminder of “lost”, but not “extinct” skin diseases that were usual in the last century (e. g. cutaneous anthrax, Ducray's disease, favus).

The didactic value is obvious for students, training dermatologists and specialists, but also for specialists from all medical fields.

**Conflict of interest** A. D. Tataru, D. Tataru, M. G. Rocca, K. França, M. Fioranelli, and T. Lotti declare that they have no competing interests.

## References

- Ballestriero R. Anatomical models and wax Venuses: art masterpieces or scientific craft works? *J Anat.* 2010;216:223–34.
- Riva A, Conti G, Solinas P, et al. The evolution of anatomical illustration and wax modelling in Italy from the 16th to early 19th centuries. *J Anat.* 2010;216:209–22.
- Atherton DJ. Joseph Towne: wax modeller extraordinary. *J Am Acad Dermatol.* 1980;3:311–6.
- Bryant T. Joseph Towne, modeller to Guy's Hospital for 53 years. *Guys Hosp Rep.* 1883;26:1–12.
- Joshi R. Moulages in dermatology-venereology. *Indian J Dermatol Venereol Leprol.* 2010;76:434–8.
- Solente G. Le Musée de l' Hôpital Saint Louis. *Am J Dermatopathol.* 1983;5:483–9.
- Kazandjieva J, Popov J, Tsankov N. History of dermatological moulages. *CEEVDA Bull.* 2000;2:55–6.
- Schnalke T. A brief history of the dermatologic moulages in Europe: part II: breakthrough and rise. *Int J Derm.* 1992;31:134–41.
- Schnalke T. A brief history of the dermatologic moulages in Europe: part III: prosperity and decline. *Int J Derm.* 1993;32:453–63.
- Medenica L, Lalevic-Vasic B, Skiljevic DS. The belgrade dermato-venereologic moulage collection: past and present. *J Eur Acad Dermatol Venereol.* 2008;22:937–42.
- Sticherling M, Uta E. The collection of dermatologic wax moulages at the University of Kiel, Germany. *Int J Dermatol.* 2001;40:586–92.
- Geiges ML. Traces of Marion B. Sulzberger in the museum of wax moulages in Zurich and their importance for the history of dermatology. *J Am Acad Dermatol.* 2009;60:980–4.
- Conde-Salazar G. Olavide and his work. The beginning of dermatology in Spain. *An R Acad Nac Med (Madr).* 2010;127(1):47–57, discussion 58–64.
- Bieber B, Bieber T. The 100-year old collection of wax moulages at the Department of Dermatology of the University of Bonn. *Eur J Dermatol.* 2013;23(4):443–8.
- Stander S, Crout J, Sunderkötter C, et al. Wax model collection of the Department of Dermatology, University of Münster. *Hautarzt.* 2001;52(7):662–6.
- Heise H, Schlecht K, Zimmermann R, et al. Die Rostocker Moulagensammlung. *Hautarzt.* 2002;53(5):347–51.
- Seidl E. Collections. Museum der Universität Tübingen 2014. [https://www.unimuseum.uni-tuebingen.de/fileadmin/content/05\\_MUT/Publikationen/sammlungen\\_en.pdf](https://www.unimuseum.uni-tuebingen.de/fileadmin/content/05_MUT/Publikationen/sammlungen_en.pdf). Accessed 26 Mar 2017.
- Friedrich-Alexander Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg. Moulagensammlung der FAU 2016. <https://www.fau.eu/university/about-fau/collections-and-museums/medical-moulage-collection/>. Accessed 26 March 2017.
- Weber C. Dermatology. UMAC Worldwide Database of University Museums & Collections 2017. <http://publicus.culture.hu-berlin.de/collections/list.php?id=i&s=Dermatology>. Accessed 26 March 2017.
- Florea M. The Medical School from Cluj. Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cartii de Stiinta; 2003, pp 89–102.