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“SINCE ARRIVING IN THIS WORLD,
THE PEASANT IS LEFT ON THEIR OWN.”
THE PROFESSIONAL CORPS OF THE RURAL MIDWIVES (1874-1914)
(Summary)

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The rural midwives, also known as the 2nd class midwives or the qualified midwives, were the main qualified personnel in Romania's healthcare system charged with taking care of births in the rural area. The Romanian government made constant efforts to support them, creating schools and passing laws that defined the midwife's status within the healthcare system. This institution made progress throughout this period and garnered increasing prestige. It has struggled, however, with an education system that was unable to produce the required number of graduates to fill all the posts in the healthcare administration. No less of a challenge was the “competition” by the uneducated and unauthorised midwives and the opposition of the inhabitants of the rural area. The 2nd class midwives were poorly paid, constantly surveyed – both by the people they took care of, as well as by their superiors in the healthcare system – and often received additional responsibilities. As they were too few to cover the needs of the rural area, the healthcare system was forced to incorporate some uneducated midwives. Our analysis seeks to portray these complex processes using the legislation of the period, articles published in the medical press and the reports of the primary county physicians.

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