

OPHTHALMOLOGY
AND
PHILATELY
I. OPHTHALMOLOGISTS ON STAMPS

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A number of ophthalmologists have been honored by special stamps. Before ophthalmology became an independent specialty (during the first decade of the 19th century) a number of physicians or surgeons contributed to the advancement of ophthalmic knowledge or confined their medical practice to diseases of the eye.

I. Rhazes
(Fig. 1)

He was also called Razi. He was born around 860 and died around 925. He was born in Persia near Tehran and worked for a long time in Baghdad. He was *The* clinician of the Islam. He wrote hundreds of contributions and books on medicine and also on ophthalmic surgery.

He was the first to describe the light reaction of the pupil, snow blindness and such operations as: removal of corneal pannus, pterygium excision, and suction operation for cataract (see fig. 1).

2. Pope John XXI

(Fig. 2)

His name was Peter Rebuli-Giuliana. He was Pope from the 8th of September 1276 until the 20th of April 1277. He was the only Portuguese pope.

He was Cardinal of Tusculum at the time of the concilium of Lyon. He was the personal physician of Pope Gregory. It should be pointed out that Gregory X was elected Pope after three years of interregnum. This coincided with the interregnum of the Emperors in Germany after the last Staufer had been executed and before Rudolph of Habsburg was elected in 1273.

Pope John XXI tried to establish peace between France and Castilia. His residency was in Viterbo and he was killed when the ceiling of his room collapsed.

He was a scientist of the first order. He wrote many papers and books on philosophy, psychology, natural sciences, logic and medicine. He tried to organize another crusade.

Pedro Hispano was the name under which he published scientific books and articles before he became Pope. He wrote one book on vision entitled "De Oculo".

3. Jacques Daviel (1692–1762)

(Fig. 3)

He was born in Normandy as the son of a notary. He became a military surgeon and worked then in Marseilles during an epidemic of the plague.

He conceived the idea of removing the cataract from the eye. He first practiced this operation on cadaver eyes. The first patient was a hermit from the Provence. He always used a lower corneal section and removed the lens. The first patient lost his eye but the second case was successful. This happened in 1747.

He then moved to Paris and became quite famous. In 1752 he demonstrated his operation before the French Academy of Sciences. A few years later he published his first statistics and could show that he had 182 successful cases out of 206 operations which is a success rate of 88 %. His most famous patient was King Ferdinand VIII of Spain.

He died in Geneva, Switzerland.

Before him Brisseau (1646–1743) had detected that the cataract was an opacification of the crystalline lens.

4. Joseph Barth (1745–1818)

(Fig. 4)

He was born in Malta and received his M.D. degree from the University of Rome. Before his arrival in Vienna cataract operations were done in Austria only occasionally by itinerant surgeons. The most famous of them were a father and son team: Baron Michael Wenzel and his son, Jean Baptiste Wenzel. They were clever surgeons, but unscrupulous and avaricious. Twice they were begged to come to Vienna to perform a number of cataract operations. On one occasion Empress Maria Theresa put a purse on a table in her room and told Wenzel on leaving “take this”. Whereupon Wenzel not only took the purse with the money but also the most valuable table.

The situation became intolerable and Maria Theresa’s son, Emperor Joseph II, invited Joseph Barth to Vienna in 1789 to perform the cataract operations and teach two students this art.

Joseph Barth was appointed Professor of Ophthalmology and Anatomy in 1773 and he was therefore the first Professor of Ophthalmology at any university ever.

His two pupils were Ehrenritter and Schmidt. The first died early, but the second one continued in the practice of medicine and ophthalmology. He became later Professor of Anatomy and Surgery at the Josefinum and founded the first ophthalmologic journal the “Ophthalmologische Bibliothek” which appeared 1802 til 1807.

The true tradition of the Viennese school, however, started with the first chairman of an independent eye department, Georg Joseph Beer, in 1818.

5. Ferdinand von Arlt (1812–1887)

(Fig. 5)

He was the third Professor and Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Vienna following Beer and Anton von Rosas.

He got his M.D. degree in 1839 from the University of Prague and worked then with Johann Nepomuk Fischer, a pupil of Beer.

He was greatly influenced by the pathologist, Rokitanski who introduced modern pathology at the University of Vienna. He wrote a three volume textbook of ophthalmology and worked especially on myopia.

In 1856 he became professor in Vienna. He had previously become chairman at the University of Prague. He was connected in friendship to Albrecht von Graefe and Donders.

Arlt was one of the leading figures of the Viennese school. He introduced Albrecht von Graefe into ophthalmology and Graefe himself wrote "without Arlt I would probably never have returned as ophthalmologist to Berlin".

Arlt wrote the first surgical textbook for ophthalmology (1874) and for 21 years conducted courses and instructions in ophthalmic surgery. His students became professors not only in Austria but also in Germany (Heidelberg, Leipzig), Rome, Budapest, Cracow and other places.

After his death a second university eye clinic was established in Vienna. His immediate successor was Stellwag von Carion, while the second eye clinic had as its first chairman, Eduard von Jaeger.

6. Frans Cornelis Donders (1818–1889)

(Fig. 6)

He was educated at the University of Leyden and worked there as an ophthalmologist. In 1848, he joined the University of Utrecht and became there Professor of Ophthalmology. In 1858, he founded a new eye hospital.

In 1862, he switched to the chair of physiology, while his pupil, Snellen, was appointed Professor of Ophthalmology (the latter was later followed by his son).

Donders was a good friend of Bowman and Albrecht von Graefe. His main contributions were in the field of refraction especially astigmatism. His principal book appeared in London in 1864 "On the Anomalies of Accommodation and Refraction".

7. Albrecht von Graefe (1828–1870)

(Fig. 7)

Graefe is universally regarded as the founder of modern ophthalmology. He was born in Berlin and graduated from the University of Berlin in 1848. He then went to Prague and worked under Arlt, who introduced him into ophthalmology. He then went to Paris and visited the clinics of Sichel and Desmarres. He finally went to Vienna to work with Friedrich von Jaeger and his son, Eduard. At that time he obtained one of the first ophthalmoscopes from Helmholtz. Later he went to London to work with William Bowman.

In 1851, he returned to Berlin and founded his own clinic. In 1854, he initiated the Archives of Ophthalmology and in 1857, he became Professor of Ophthalmology and in 1866 head of the department. At that time already severely affected by pulmonary tuberculosis, he became the Director of the Eye Clinic of the Charité. In 1857, he initiated with a few friends (among them Arlt, Donders, Zehender and others) the Ophthalmological Society of Heidelberg, the oldest ophthalmological association in the world.

Graefe was not only the first one to advise the iridectomy for the treatment of glaucoma, but he described and initiated numerous ophthalmic diseases and surgical procedures.

8. Hilario Soares de Gouvea (1843–1923)

(Fig. 8)

He was an ophthalmologist from Rio de Janeiro who worked with Albrecht von Graefe in Berlin in 1867. He returned to Brazil to be one of the pioneer ophthalmologists in that country.

He became Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Rio and later also Professor of Otolaryngology.

9. J. R. de Gama Pinto (1853–1945)

(Fig. 9)

He was born in Goa, Portuguese India. He studied medicine and ophthalmology in Berlin and later in Heidelberg where he acquired the title of Professor.

In 1891, he founded the Instituto Ophthalmologico in Lisbon, Portugal. At that time there was no professor of ophthalmology at the medical school in Lisbon nor was there any professor of ophthalmology at the University in Coimbra.

He lived most of life in Lisbon, Portugal and in Goa where he died.

10. Ricardo Vertiz

(Fig. 10)

He was the third director of the oldest eye institute and hospital in Latin America. He built a new hospital in 1898 in Mexico, the "Hospital Oftalmologico de Nuestra Señora de la Luz". This hospital was the immediate successor of the old "Institucion Valdivielso" which was founded in 1876 by Don Ignacio Valdivielso y Vidal de Lorca, fifth count de San Pedro del Alamo. This count left money in his will for the foundation of this institute for the treatment of eye patients.

After his death his younger brother, Joaquin Vertiz, became director of the hospital.

11. Alvar Gullstrand (1862–1930)

(Fig. 11 and 13)

He was born in Sweden as the son of a physician. He received his M.D. in 1888 from the University of Stockholm. He worked then in ophthalmology and was appointed in 1894 as Professor of Ophthalmology at Uppsala. He always worked

on problems of optics and was the first to design aspheric lenses (punctal). In 1911, he received the Nobel Prize and his Nobel oration dealt with the intralenticular accommodation mechanism. (He shared the Nobel Prize with a German physicist, Wilhelm Wien, who also worked in optics and described the black body radiation.)

He edited the third edition of Helmholtz' book "Treatise on Physiologic Optics". In 1911, he described the slit lamp and in 1914, he was appointed Professor of Physical and Physiologic Optics at the University of Uppsala.

12. Emil de Grosz (1865–1941)

(Fig. 12)

He was born in Budapest the son of an ophthalmologist. He was appointed Professor of Ophthalmology at the First University Eye Clinic in Budapest in 1905 where he served until his death. He was trained at the clinic of Schulek as all Hungarian ophthalmologists of that time.

He was extremely active in national and international ophthalmology as well as in affairs of public health, hygiene and national matters.

13. Laszlo Blaskovicz (1869–1938)

(Fig. 12)

He was head of the Second Eye Clinic at the University of Budapest from 1927–1938. He was especially well known for his plastic operations and above all for his lid operations.

14. Josef Imre, Jr. (1884–1945)

(Fig. 12)

He was born and educated in Budapest. In 1918, just before the end of World War I, he was appointed Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Pozsony (Bratislava, Pressburg). With the peace treaty, Slovakia became part of Czechoslovakia and Imre was appointed Professor at Pecs (Fünfkirchen) in 1919. In 1929, he became Professor of Ophthalmology at the Second Eye Clinic in Budapest.

His father was also a well-known ophthalmologist (1851–1933). He was appointed in 1909 Professor of Ophthalmology at Kolozsvar (Cluj, Klausenburg) in Transylvania (Ardeal, Siebenbürgen). This area became part of Rumania after the end of World War I and he was appointed Professor of Ophthalmology at Szeged where he worked from 1919 to 1924.

15. Jules Gonin (1870–1935)

(Fig. 13 and 14)

He was born in Switzerland and became Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Lausanne in 1920. He remained chairman until his death.

He was the first one to advise a successful operation for retinal detachment in applying cautery to the area of the retinal hole.

16. Vladimir Petrovich Filatov (1875–1956)

(Fig. 13 and 15)

He graduated from the University of Moscow in 1904 and then became an ophthalmologist. He became chairman at the Department of Odessa in 1911 and founded the first eye bank in 1931.

He was the first to use autopsy eyes for corneal transplants. He became a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Summary

Before ophthalmology became an independent specialty, during the first decade of the 19th century, a number of physicians or surgeons contributed to the advancement of ophthalmic knowledge or confined their medical practice to diseases of the eye. Afterwards, a number of ophthalmologists have been honored by special stamps.

**BLODI, F.C. – Ophtalmologie et philatelie
I. Les ophtalmologistes comme sujet de timbres****Resumé**

Avant que l'ophtalmologie ne devienne une spécialité indépendante, au cours de la première décennie du XIXe siècle, un certain nombre de médecins ou de chirurgiens ont contribué à l'avancement de la science ophtalmologique ou confiné leur pratique médicale aux maladies des yeux. Par la suite de nombreux ophtalmologistes ont été honorés par des timbres spéciaux.

**BLODI, F.C. – Ophthalmologie und Philatelie
I. Ophthalmologen auf Briefmarken**

Zusammenfassung

Bevor die Augenheilkunde während der ersten Jahrzehnte des 19. Jahrhunderts ein selbständiges Fachgebiet wurde, trugen eine Anzahl von Ärzten und Chirurgen zum Fortschritt ophthalmologischer Kenntnisse bei und widmeten ihre medizinische Tätigkeit den Augenkrankheiten. Eine Reihe von diesen Ärzten, Chirurgen und Ophthalmologen wurde durch Sonderbriefmarken geehrt.

**BLODI, F.C. – Oftalmología y filatelia
I. Oftalmólogos en sellos especiales**

Resumen

Antes de que la oftalmología se convierta en una especialidad independiente, en el curso de la primera década del siglo XIX, un cierto número de médicos y cirujanos han contribuido al adelanto de la ciencia oftalmológica o bien confinado su práctica médica al cuidado de las enfermedades de los ojos. Mas tarde, numerosos oftalmólogos han sido honrados por sellos especiales.

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Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14



Fig. 15