



Professor John Charamis

PROFESSOR JOHN CHARAMIS (1904 – 1978)

Professor John Charamis, who was born in Athens on 16th November 1904, died in Paris on 14th January 1978. Laureate of the Athens Faculty of Medicine in 1925, he became in 1926 Assistant, first under Professor Terrien at the Hôtel-Dieu Hospital in Paris, then successively under Dr. Bailliart at the Quinze-Vingts in Paris, under Dr. Magitot at the Tenon Hospital, under Professor Krückmann in Berlin, under Professor Van der Hoeve in Utrecht and under Professor Clausen in Halle. He received his degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1928 from the University of Athens.

From that time on, Professor Charamis' academic career was very brilliant. He was nominated Associate Professor at the Faculty of Medicine in Athens in 1932 and became, in 1933, Director of the Ophthalmological Clinic of the Red Cross Hospital and, in 1940, of the Ophthalmological Centre of the 7th Military Hospital. After the War, in 1947, he was elected Professor in charge of the Faculty of Medicine and Director of the Ophthalmological Clinic of the University of Athens.

Professor Charamis' scientific activity was both very extensive and very fruitful. He published 370 original and highly appreciated papers and a noteworthy book on

ophthalmic surgery which rapidly became a classic among Greek ophthalmologists. In addition, he lectured in a wide variety of countries and made numerous films which were shown at many conferences and other meetings.

After having set up the Eye Bank, Professor Charamis designed and established the Athens Ophthalmological Centre, which must be included among the most handsome and most extensive and which provides every conceivable facility for experimental and clinical research.

He was the founder in 1931 of the Hellenic Ophthalmological Society and became its President in 1950, later becoming its Honorary President. In 1976, the Society established the Charamis Medal, awarded every four years by the European Ophthalmological Society, to the European ophthalmologist who contributed most to the development of ophthalmic surgery.

Professor Charamis occupied several very important posts. From 1948 on he was Physician to the Greek Royal Family. He became an expert of the World Health Organisation in 1951 and a member of the International Council of Ophthalmology in 1952, becoming its Vice-President in 1962 and its President in 1966. In 1956, he was Vice-President of the Greek Section of the International College of Surgeons, in 1958 Dean of the Faculty of Medicine in Athens, in 1960 President of the First Congress of the European Ophthalmological Society, in 1961 Minister of Health and Social Welfare, in 1963 member of the Executive Council of the French Ophthalmological Society and, in 1973, President of the International Congress of Eye Surgeons.

Professor Charamis was a member of the Editorial Committees of many international journals, including *Ophthalmologica*, *La Revue Internationale du Trachome*, *Actualités Latines en Ophtalmologie*, *Aggiornamenti di Terapia Oftalmologica*, *Annales d'Oculistique*, *Annales de l'Institut Barraquer*, *Journal of Pediatric Ophthalmology*, *Documenta Ophthalmologica* and the *Indian Journal of Ocular Pathology*.

Thus it was not surprising that his extensive scientific activity and the efforts made by Professor Charamis to encourage, in the ophthalmological world, both science and human relations, brought him many honours. He received the Gold Medal of the International Organisation against Trachoma, the Gold Medal for Literature, Art and Science of the City of Paris, the Gold Medal of the Mexican Government, the Medal of Honour of the City of Albi, the Trantas Medal, the Helmholtz Medal, the Medal of the Balkan Union and the Favaloro Medal.

He was a Member of the Academy of Puglia (Italy), of the Academy of Athens, of the Academy of Medicine of France, of the Academy of Rome, as well as an Honorary Member of the Ophthalmological Societies of Turkey, Italy, United

Kingdom and Spain, of the Royal Society of Medicine of London, of the Gonin Club, of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, of the Balkan Medical Union and of the Research Study Club.

Professor Charamis, who had been awarded the Croix de Guerre and the Gold Cross of the Greek Red Cross, was also a Commander of the Order of George I, of the Order of the Phoenix, of the Légion d'Honneur, of the Order of Civil Merit of Spain, of the Order of the Crown of Belgium, of the Order of Merit of Italy, of the Orthodox Knights of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Order of scientific Merit of Romania.

Professor Charamis was not only an ophthalmologist and a scientist of the highest order, but he was also a very engaging person, who inspired a friendly response in everyone who came in contact with him. His aristocratic behaviour, his natural friendliness and his exquisite kindness, as well as the loyalty that he dedicated to his students and his colleagues, compelled the affection of all his friends. Ophthalmology has lost one of its great men, whose memory we shall always cherish.

Prof. Jules FRANÇOIS