

CHAPTER VI

Ophthalmologic Congresses

Many national, regional and international congresses have been commemorated by special stamps.

XV INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

Cairo, 1937

The last International Congress before World War II was held in Cairo, December 8–14, 1937 in the Hotel Semiramis. According to local customs, the president was the Egyptian Minister of Public Health and the professional president was Professor **Eisa Hamdi El Maziny Bey**. The secretary-general was Dr. **Mohamed Tewfik**. The congress was attended by 662 physicians from 51 countries and was opened with pomp and circumstance by the King of Egypt.

The first main theme concerned the retinal changes in arterial hypertension. The report was given by **Wagener** and **Keith** from the U.S.A., **Bailliar** from France and **Koyanagi** from Japan. The second main symposium was concerned with endocrinology and the eye and the reporters were **Snapper** from The Netherlands, **von Szily** from Germany, **Imre** from Hungary, **Jeandelize** and **Drouet** from France and **Lo Cascio** from Italy.

In addition, there were 37 papers connected with the two main symposia and an equal number of free papers. The most important among them was probably a contribution by Uribe Troncoso of New York on the chamber angle of mammalian eyes studied gonioscopically and histologically.

The transactions of the congress were published in seven volumes, one devoted to each of the main symposia, one to the discussions of the main symposia, one to the transactions of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, and of the International League Against Trachoma, one to the administrative affairs (including the opening and closing sessions) and the rest to free papers.

The emblem of the congress, depicted on the stamps, is the “*Oudjat Eye*”, i. e. the healthy eye or the eye of Horus. This symbol was found as a piece of jewelry attached like a pendant to the neck of the pharaoh **Tout-Ankh-Amon**. The piece is of gold and embellished with semi-precious stones (lapis lazuli and others). On one side of the emblem is the vulture goddess “*Nekhbet*” and on the other the serpent goddess “*Oujit*”, the symbols of upper and lower Egypt. The symbol was worn as a charm to ensure good vision, vigor, security, health and protection against the evil eye.

References

1. **Duke-Elder, Sir Stewart**: *A Century of International Ophthalmology* (1857 – 1957); Henry Kimpton, London, 1958.

XV Concilium Ophthalmologicum 1937, Egypte; Imprimerie Nationale Boulac, Cairo 1937.

Egypt 1937; # 220, 221, 222 (Fig. 6.1)

FIRST AFRO – ASIAN CONGRESS

Cairo, 1958

This congress was held at Dar-el-Hekma in Cairo under the patronage of the President of Egypt, **Gamal Abd-El-Nasser**. The Honorary President was the Minister of Health, Dr. **Noor-El-Din Tarraf**.

The idea of this congress was initiated by the Ophthalmological Society of Egypt in 1957. The president of the congress was Dr. **M.A.M. Labib** and the secretary was Dr. **Sabri Kamel**, both of Cairo. The congress was opened by the Minister of Health on March 1, 1958.

The first symposium of the congress dealt with trachoma and acute ophthalmias.

The main social events were held at the Semiramis Hotel and the Heliopolis Palace Hotel in Cairo. There was also a visit to and a tea party at the "El-Manyal" Palace.

After the congress a permanent council of the Afro-Asian Congress of Ophthalmology was established with Professor **M.A.H. Attiah** as president. The council is composed of 20 members from different Afro-Asian countries. The second congress was held in Tunisia in 1960.

Egypte 1958; # B17 (Fig. 6.2)

XIX INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

New Delhi, 1962

The president was **Kiran Sen** of Calcutta and the secretary-general Dr. **Y.K.C. Pandit** of Bombay. The congress was held under the threat of war as Northeast India was thought to be invaded by Red China. This cast a cloud of uncertainty over the entire meeting; nevertheless, 1519 participants from 62 countries attended. More than 150 papers were presented. The congress lasted from December 2 – 7.

There were two main points: The first one dealt with ocular involvement in tropical parasitic diseases. The reporters were **B.N. Bhaduri** of India, **P.A. Larmande** of France and **C. de Rezende** of Brazil.

The second main report was on corneal dystrophies and the reporters were **G. B. Bietti** of Italy, **A. E. Maumenee** of the United States and **A. G. Leigh** of Great Britain. There were also a number of symposia: 1) *Electron microscopy in ophthalmology*, 2) *Complications of cataract operation*, 3) *Eales' disease* and 4) *Problems raised in ophthalmology by the recent progress in aviation*.

The opening ceremony was held in the presence of Dr. **S. Radhakrishnan**, President of India, and of Mr. **Shri Jawaharlal Nehru**, Prime Minister of India. The Indian physicist, Sir **C. V. Raman**, gave a lecture on light, color and vision. Sir **Stewart Duke-Elder**, as the president of the International Council, awarded the Gonin Medal to **Hans Goldmann** of Switzerland.

India at that time reported more than two million blind, 90% of which were probably preventable and another 5% perhaps curable. The major causes of blindness were malnutrition, trachoma, smallpox, leprosy, infectious endophthalmitis and cataract. The International Congress in New Delhi had been organized with the triple mission of 1) *increasing medical knowledge*, 2) *to further the good of humanity*, and 3) *to relieve blindness*.

Reference

Francois, J.: *Twenty-Five Years of International Ophthalmology* (1957 – 1982), J.P. Wayenborgh, Bonn, 1982.

India 1962; # 362 (Fig. 6.3)

XXI INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS Mexico 1970

This congress was held in Mexico City, where the first Latin American University was founded in 1551 and where the first eye hospital in Latin America opened its doors in 1876. The president of the congress was Dr. **M. Puig Solanes**, the vice-president Dr. **L. Sanchez Bulnes** and the secretary-general Dr. **A. Zertuche**. There were 2663 participants from 76 countries and 290 papers were presented.

The congress was opened on March 8 by the President of Mexico, **Gustavo Diaz Ordaz**. In his speech President **Diaz** alluded to the complete eclipse of the sun which was observable in Mexico City on the day before the opening and which he--jokingly--explained as a special phenomenon prepared by the Mexican ophthalmologists for their distinguished guests. President Diaz also mentioned that only nine days before the opening of the congress he himself had been operated on for a retinal detachment in the left eye. He thanked his physicians and surgeons in the General Hospital of the City of Mexico and in the Mexican Institute of Social Security.

The first main theme of the congress was physiopathology of the occipital lobe. The main speakers were: **A. Dubois-Poulsen**, **Cl. Magis** and **A. Remond** of France and **M. W. Velasco Suarez** of Mexico. The second main theme dealt with ocular embryopathies and the main speakers were: **J. François** of Belgium, **G. Tönduri** of Switzerland, **F. W. Newell** and **A. E. Krill** of the United States and **N. Raimondo** of Italy.

J. Charamis of Greece, as president of the International Council, presented the Gonin Medal to Prof. **Meyer-Schwickerath** of Germany. The preceding sun eclipse was especially appropriate to commemorate this event as **Meyer-Schwickerath** had originally used solar energy to produce retinal burns.

A commemorative lecture "Manuel Uribe Troncoso" was delivered by Professor **Hilton Rocha** of Brazil. There were other symposia on: 1) *Recent concepts on diagnosis and treatment of glaucoma*, 2) *Modern problems in pediatric ophthalmology*, 3) *Cryosurgery in ophthalmology*, 4) *Diseases of the macula*, 5) *Selected subjects in ophthalmological therapeutics* and 6) *Recent advances in ocular electron microscopical histopathology*.

The emblem of the congress represented a hispanic pyramid, a colonial church and a modern skyscraper. The postage stamp issued shows the cross section of a normal eye.

References

1. **François, J.**: *Twenty-Five Years of International Ophthalmology* (1957 – 1982), J.P. Wayenborgh, Bonn, 1982.
2. *Ophthalmology; Proceedings of the XXI International Congress, Mexico*, D. F.; Excerpta Medica, Amsterdam, 1971.

Mexico 1970; # 1026 (Fig. 6.4a-c)

IV CONGRESS OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIETY Budapest, 1972

This congress was held under the presidency of Professor **M. Radnot**, the secretary-general was **B. Nemeth**. The congress was opened on April 17 in the presence of the president of the Hungarian People's Republic, Mr. **P. Losonczi**, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Culture, the president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the mayor of the City of Budapest, as well as the rector of the Semmelweis University Medical School of Budapest. There were more than 1200 participants, 160 of whom were from outside of Europe.

The president of the council of the European Society of Ophthalmology, Professor **E. B. Streiff** of Switzerland, awarded the Helmholtz Medal to Professor **J. François** of Belgium. The Joseph Imre Prize was awarded to Dr. **Jobbagy** of Budapest.



Fig. 6.1



Fig. 6.2



Fig. 6.3



Fig. 6.4a



Fig. 6.4b



Fig. 6.4c

The main theme of the congress was the functional examinations in ophthalmology consisting of 21 main reports selected by the council. There were also 69 free papers.

In addition to various receptions, the Budapest National Opera presented a special performance of “*Bank ban*” by **F. Erkel**.

References

1. *Functional Examinations in Ophthalmology*; editor: **J. François**, S. Karger, Basel 1974.

2. **François, J.**: *History of the European Ophthalmological Society*, *Historia Ophth. Internationalis* 2:45, 1980.

Hungary 1972; # 2142, 2143 (Figs. 6.5, 1.10)

XI PAN – AMERICAN CONGRESS **Santiago, Chile, 1977**

This congress was held in the Diago Portales Building, the official center of the government of Chile. The president of the congress was Dr. **Alberto Gormaz**. The executive-secretary was Dr. **Juan Verdaguero** of Santiago. More than 1000 ophthalmologists from the Americas, Europe and The Philippines attended.

The *Gradle Medal* for teaching was awarded to Dr. **Hilton Rocha** of Brazil and the *Prevention of Blindness Medal* was presented to Dr. **Francisco Contreras** of Peru. The *Gradle Lecture* was delivered by Dr. **Edward Norton** of Miami and the *Pan-American-American Journal of Ophthalmology Lecture* by Dr. **Alvaro Rodriguez** from Colombia.

The opening ceremonies took place on May 20 in the Santiago Teatro Municipal. The welcoming addresses were held by Dr. **Humberto Castro Lima** from Brazil for the Portuguese and by Dr. **Frederick C. Blodi** of the U.S.A. for the English-speaking ophthalmologists.

Chile 1977; # 500 (Fig. 6.6a-c)

XXIII INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS **Kyoto, 1978**

The president of the congress was Professor **Akira Nakajima** and the secretaries were Professor **S. Mishima** and Professor **Y. Uemura**.

The opening ceremony was held on May 14 in the presence of their Imperial Highnesses Crown Prince **Akihito** and Crown Princess **Michiko**. In his congratulatory message the Crown Prince stressed the

isolation of Japanese ophthalmology during the 18th and early 19th centuries. He emphasized the influence of Dutch ophthalmologists on Japan during these decades. Japanese physicians at that time not only worked in utter isolation, but also in secrecy without having the resources of any scientific organization or university. He mentioned two early Japanese ophthalmologists who pioneered in their field, **Genseki Habu** and **Genpaku Sugita**. Professor **Nakajima** pointed out that only the Meiji restoration opened Japan to Western influences and modern ophthalmology.

There were two official reports: 1) Ocular immunology and immunopathology, the reporters were **A.M. Silverstein** of the United States, **R. Campinchi**, **E. Bloch-Michel** and **J.P. Faure** of France, **R. Witmer** and **A.C. Martenet** of Switzerland and **W. Böke** and **K.F. Manthey** of West Germany. The second report was concerned with the retinal pigment epithelium and the speaker were **S.E.G. Nilsson**, Sweden, **R.W. Young**, United States and **I. Tsukahara**, Japan.

There were also several round tables such as 1) *Ocular toxicology*, 2) *Choroidal circulation*, 3) *Corneal diseases*, 3) *Optic neuropathy*, 5) *Pathology of the visual cells*, 6) *Vitreous surgery* and 7) *Infections of the eye*.

At the opening ceremony greetings were also extended from Professor **Y. Fushimi**, the president of the Science Council of Japan, by Dr. **T. Takemi**, the president of the Japanese Medical Association, by Mr. **Y. Hayashida**, the governor of the Province of Kyoto, and Mr. **M. Funahashi**, the mayor of Kyoto City.

Professor **Jules François**, as the president of the International Council of Ophthalmology, awarded the Gonin Medal to Professor **Norman Ashton** of Great Britain.

References

1. **François, J.**: *Twenty-Five Years of International Ophthalmology* (1957 – 1982), J.P. Wayenborgh, Bonn, 1982.
2. *XXIII Concilium Ophthalmologicum, Kyoto, 1978*, ACTA: Excerpta Medica, Amsterdam-Oxford, 1979.

Japan 1978; # 1325 (Fig. 6.7a,b)

VII AFRO – ASIAN CONGRESS Tunis, 1980

This congress was opened October 26 in the Congress Palace in Tunis. The president was Professor **R. Mabrouk** of Tunisia.

The first session dealt with the early history of ophthalmology and was mainly concerned with Arabian ophthalmology during the Middle Ages.



Fig. 6.5



Fig. 6.6a



Fig. 6.6b



Fig. 6.6c



Fig. 6.7 a



Fig. 6.7 b



Fig. 6.9a



Fig. 6.8a



Fig. 6.9b



Fig. 6.8b

Other sessions dealt with *ocular trauma, microsurgery of the anterior segment, the fundus and metabolic eye diseases, viral eye diseases, parasitic eye diseases, trachoma, glaucoma, the CT-scanner in ophthalmology, modern teaching of ophthalmology and prevention of blindness*. More than 160 papers were read.

Tunisia 1980; # 768 (Fig. 6.8a,b)

XV ANNUAL CONGRESS OF THE HELLENIC SOCIETY Athens, 1981

This congress celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Hellenic Ophthalmological Society and was opened on May 21. The president was Dr. **J. Tsamparlakis**. The main topic of the congress was: *senile and presenile cataract*.

The congress was attended by 425 Greek and 120 foreign ophthalmologists.

Professor **J. Fronimopoulos** of Athens received the *A. Trantas* and the *Th. Axenfeld* Prizes.

The emblem of the congress was a 6th century B.C. Attica vase. It is an example of a black-figured eyecup of type A. On the outside between the handles are black-figured eyes. The eyeball itself is rendered white with paint.

It is a wine-drinking vessel of a shape which was completed between 560 B.C. and the early 5th century B.C. The presentation of the eye is probably intended to avoid the effect of the evil eye (apotropaiki likythos). The vase is now in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens (inventory no. 18.696, case 75, vessels collection).

Reference

Fronimopoulos, N.J.: Personal communication of July 7, 1981.

Greece 1981; # 1391 (Fig. 6.9a,b)