A visitor’s guide to l’Hôpital Saint-Louis, the wax moulages museum and the Henri-Feulard library

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Dear friends and colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the heart of the patrimony of French dermatology. For dermatologists of my generation, the 20th World Congress of Dermatology (WCD) represents a unique experience. Greeting colleagues visiting from the five continents is a distinctive privilege and honor. Let us remember that the previous world congress of dermatology to be held in Paris was in 1900.

This guide provides an overview of the history of l’Hôpital Saint-Louis and the French School of Dermatology. It focuses on the historical value of the Henri-Feulard Library and the Wax Moulages Museum, highlighting several essential aspects of our common cultural heritage: recollections of the Masters, books on dermatology, manuscripts, and a wonderful collection of images of skin diseases.

The permanent exhibition of portraits and wax moulages will provide a tour of dermatological history. There is also a temporary exhibition organized for the WCD focusing on books, images, and archives, as the major tools for historical research.

As you begin your tour, you may notice that the focus of the museum is placed upon the images of skin diseases, with the wax moulages being the most striking of them.

Photographs, although usually not exhibited, also have scientific, artistic, and historical value. The Méheux’ Collection is a very appealing aspect of the photographic collection kept at l’Hôpital Saint-Louis. Your attention should be directed to the relationship between art and science, particularly in the field of syphilis.

Archives and manuscripts are also kept in the museum. Among them, the archives Philippe Ricord are of particular interest.

Please read this booklet and you will become more familiar with many facets of the French history of dermatology, treasured in l’Hôpital Saint-Louis. Take your time to visit the museum, look closely at the moulages that remind us of the patients treated by our predecessors, and then stroll through the yards of the hospital, just as Baron Alibert may have.

Should you wish to return another day, please do so. Enjoy your visit in l’Hôpital Saint-Louis and your stay in Paris!
Historical Introduction

L’Hôpital Saint-Louis and the Paris School of Dermatology: an overview

As you may have noticed, l’Hôpital Saint-Louis consists of two parts which are architecturally and functionally distinct: the new hospital built in the 1980’s containing the medical and surgical departments and the older sections erected four centuries ago.

At its beginning, l’Hôpital Saint-Louis had no connexion with dermatology; it was actually created to fight the plague. In fact, in 1606 a new plague epidemic appeared in France. The royal family fled to the Château de Fontainebleau a few miles away from Paris.

Fig. 1
The patients were treated at l'Hôtel-Dieu, the main Paris hospital of the time, where the conditions were poor (four patients either contagious or not in a single bed).

The authorities in charge of the public health policy understood the need for a proper hospital for plague. They prevailed upon King Henry IV, and the construction of the hospital began.

Claude Vellefaux, an architect whose name was given to the avenue that borders the hospital, designed the draughts. Saint-Louis was named after Louis IX, ancestor of Henri IV, who had died of the plague in 1270 and whose statute you will see when entering the museum. Started in 1607, the construction of the hospital was completed in 1610. Erected far from Paris – at this time –, Saint-Louis hospital was shaped as a prison surrounded by high walls that favored the isolation of the patients from the rest of the city.

The patients and the nursing staff were strictly guarded. Dogs were used to prevent germs from spreading to the healthy population. Saint-Louis was permanently opened in 1773 following the burning of l'Hôtel-Dieu. Even into the 19th century, l'Hôpital Saint-Louis was still used as a hospital for contagious patients during epidemics of smallpox, typhus, and cholera.

![Fig. 2](image-url)
The ancient Hôpital Saint-Louis, notably the central square (le quadrilatère), is of remarkable construction, another example of which you will be able to see at Place des Vosges, a charming place within walking distance from the Bastille column. The chapel, built at the same time as the central square, is worth a visit. Today, the ancient Hôpital Saint-Louis is listed as an historical monument.

The specialization of the Hôpital Saint-Louis, a revolutionary reform

The political and intellectual movements of the French Revolution transformed the role of the hospitals. Selected by the Externat and Internat des Hôpitaux de Paris a new generation of physicians was appointed in the hospitals. They endeavored to describe physical signs extensively and to teach a new medicine that attracted a great number of students from France and abroad.

In 1801, the Paris hospitals were divided into general and specialized hospitals to provide the Paris population with a better health organization. In these circumstances, on November 27th and December 4th, 1801, l’Hôpital Saint-Louis —named hospice du Nord (north hospital) for revolutionary conveniences — was officially dedicated to the treatment of contagious disease including tinea and scabies and chronic afflictions such as cutaneous ulcers.

Whatever the importance of this political decision, the dermatological specialization of Saint-Louis came about with the appointment in 1801 of Jean-Louis Alibert (1768-1837). At this time, dermatology was not taught at the Faculty of Medicine. The Saint-Louis hospital became an unique place for teaching and learning dermatology.

Alibert proposed that “Urbi ET Orbi” be noted on the front gate of the hospital emphasizing the role of Saint-Louis in the dermatological community. In fact, thanks to Alibert’s works in dermatology, Saint-Louis and the French School of Dermatology would become within a few years the lighthouse of dermatology throughout the world.
Alibert’s Heirs

Alibert’s successors enriched the knowledge on skin diseases. Laurent Biett (1781-1840), dermatologist born in Switzerland, taught the French dermatologists the elementary lesions, a concept previously developed by Plenck (1738-1807) and improved upon by Willan (1757-1812) in London. After Biett, Alphée Cazenave (1795-1877), Camille Gibert (1797-1866), and Alphonse Devergie (1798-1879) further developed the dermatological science using the same methods. A few decades later, Bazin (1807-1878) tried to integrate the morphological approach with the pathophysiology and aetiology. According to him and his colleague Alfred Hardy (1811-1893), skin diseases did not really exist. Dermatology should be regarded only as a part of internal medicine. These complementary approaches for skin diseases (pure dermatology vs. dermatology connected to internal medicine) continue into 21st contemporary dermatology.

During the last third of the 19th century, a new generation of physicians endeavored to restore the international influence of the French dermatology which had weakened since the 1840’s: Charles Lailler (1822-1893), founder of a very innovative school for children afflicted with tinea capitis (see below), Alfred Fournier (1832-1914), the renown syphilographer, who championed the fight against syphilis as a modern crusade, Emile Vidal (1825-1893) co-author with Leloir (from Lille, north France) of the first French treatise that underlined the importance of the histopathology and Ernest Besnier (1831-1909), leader of the French School of Dermatology and director of *La Pratique Dermatologique* textbook authored by the main French dermatologists of the early 20th century.
These physicians started the *Annales de Dermatologie* (Adrien Doyon and Besnier in 1868), founded the French Society of Dermatology (1889), and organized the first and the fourth world congresses of dermatology (1889, 1900), both at l’Hôpital Saint-Louis.

Later, Hallopeau (1842-1919), Brocq (1856-1928), Darier (1856-1936), Thibierge (1856-1926), Sabouraud (1864-1938), Milian (1871-1945), and Achille Civatte (1877-1956) enriched the dermatological knowledge with their clinical, histopathological, and microbiological works.

The first academic chair of dermatology and venereology in Paris was created at Saint-Louis in 1879, with Alfred Fournier as the first professor. Ernest Gaucher (1854-1919), Edouard Jeanselme (1858-1935), Henri Gougerot (1881-1955) and Robert Degos (1904-1987) succeeded him.

During this long period (1801-1980’s) many facilities were erected to house patients and to provide them with more facilities. Most of these buildings have been destroyed and replaced by
the new Hôpital Saint-Louis, beginning in the early 1980’s. Two buildings with dermatological use still exist: the “Ecole Lailler” (Lailler School) and the “service des bains” (balneology department).

The importance of the bath in dermatological therapy justified the creation of a special department in 1814 not only for the patients of the hospital but also for the indigents of the vicinity. The department was first set in the central square. Several thousand people used it. By the 1860’s, more than 100,000 baths were given annually. Due to this activity, the first bath department was replaced with new construction erected in 1860 and inaugurated in 1862, quite near from the outpatient building (ground floor of the museum). Since the 1980’s, it has housed the department of physical rehabilitation. It is located a few meters from the wax museum.

Teaching and Treating the Children: the Ecole Lailler

In the 19th century, patients afflicted with tinea capitis represented an important portion of the patients in the dermatological departments. Until the end of the “Ancien Régime”, tinea capitis was treated outside Saint-Louis in a hospital called l’Hôpital des Petites-Maisons, no longer extant. Then, as reported by Crissey and Parish “in the early years of the 19th century the care of favus and other chronic diseases of the scalp at l’Hôpital Saint-Louis had fallen into the hands of a mysterious pair of brothers, les frères Mahon, commercial empirics who had developed secret medications for the treatment of favus”.

From 1853, a special department and a dispensary were created and headed by Bazin at Saint-Louis. Despite this medical improvement, the children had to interrupt their schooling until the favus was gone. With compulsory school attendance, the solution was a treatment facility and a school in a single place.
Lailler succeeded: a school (Ecole des teigneux) where the young patients were given treatment and instruction every day, opened in 1886. The Assistance Publique that named the new school “Ecole Lailler” in January 1894 acknowledged the role of Lailler. It existed until the 1960’s when griseofulvin drastically changed the treatment of ringworm. This very original school is still visible at the corner of the rue Bichat and the rue de la Grange-aux-Belles. The name of Lailler remains on the frontage of the building today devoted to the Center for the Treatment of the Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

Being now more familiar with the history of the l’Hôpital Saint-Louis, you will now learn something about the Masters of the Paris School of Dermatology. In fact, your visit to the wax museum and library starts with this tribute.
A Guide to the Museum

The Masters of Saint-Louis, a Tribute to Their Memories

When entering the building that harbors the museum, you will face saint Louis, King of France. Sitting under an oak, he seems to greet the visitors. Above his head, in an upper position is Emile Vidal “dark enough to be mistaken for a Spaniard (…) by all accounts a handsome figure” (J. Crissey and L. Parish). Head into Saint-Louis, Vidal was known as the inventor of a device –scarificator- he used it with great skill for the treatment of lupus vulgaris and rosacea. Nearby is Lailler who played a very important role in the creation of the wax moulages collection and in the development of the library. Although no disease is named after him, he is remembered as the leader of several dermatological facilities that marked the history of the specialty in Saint-Louis.

The wax moulages collection is a significant example. The innovative “Ecole des teigneux” also reveals his dynamism. Finally, should you have a special interest in the history of photography in dermatology, you will be interested to learn that the first truly colored photographs in dermatology were published by Lailler in 1878 (*Les teignes*).

Do not forget to look at the busts of Jeanselme, Achille Civatte, Bazin, Weissenbach (1885-1963), and Darier (1856-1936), all personalities who deserve to be known. Darier was undoubtedly the most famous French dermatologist in the 1920-1930’s. He was the main editor of the *Nouvelle Pratique Dermatologique* (1936), a magnificent treatise of eight volumes updating and enlarging Besnier’s *Pratique Dermatologique*. He also described several skin diseases, notably follicular dyskeratosis named after him (Darier’s disease or Darier-White’s disease). In the conference room, you will see another portrait of Darier, in fact a copy of a pastel by Levy-Dührmer.

Walk up now to the first floor.
The staircase that leads to the museum is really a portraits gallery, illustrating the Masters of Saint-Louis. We will make few stops in front of the pictures of several dermatologists in order to remember some aspects of their works. Basically, only deceased dermatologists have their portraits in this memorial gallery. Fortunately, Professor Jean Civatte and Professor Antoine Puissant whose portraits you will see while going up to the museum are significant exceptions.
First, Alibert. He deserves to be looked at as the pioneer. Alibert was born in Villefranche-de-Rouergue, southwest France. Educated in Paris under the greatest masters of the revolutionary medicine, Alibert was appointed at Saint-Louis in 1801. Alibert gave his lessons in the “Pavillon Gabrielle” (still visible and today used as the salle de garde of Saint-Louis’ residents), named after Gabrielle d’Estrée, Henri IV’s favorite mistress. Due to the number of students, he was forced to lecture outside the buildings, under the lime trees (today plane trees) facing the entrance of the pavilion Gabrielle.

Using sensualism and the art of the description he learned from Cabanis and Pinel, Alibert invented the clinical case in dermatology. He used the five senses and comparisons extensively to perfect the clinical descriptions and to print them in the minds of the students (the smell of the favus, the noise produced by the scales of the ichthyosis, the consistence of the mycosis fungoides tumors...). He authored two books on skin diseases: the Description des maladies de la peau observées à l’hôpital Saint-Louis (1806-1814) the Clinique de l’hôpital Saint-Louis (1833), very large –and heavy- in-folio superbly illustrated that you will admire in the library. In some ways an opponent to the Willanists, Alibert favored a natural approach to skin diseases - and of diseases in general. Thus, he summarized in a premature and somewhat clumsy way: the Tree of Dermatoses (Arbre des Dermatoses) presented at Saint-Louis, April 26th 1829.

Alibert is credited for making the first description of mycosis fungoides (Lucas, the patient afflicted with the condition still remains as one of the symbol of French clinical dermatology), amiantaceous tinea, cutaneous leishmaniasis, keloid, and dermatolysis. The theatrical atmosphere of his lectures has been related many times. Calling the patients by the name of their diseases and behaving like an actor, he delivered very didactic, strongly impressive
lessons that attracted students, physicians, and even lay people. Because of his reputation and of his fidelity to the monarchy, Alibert was made the physician to King Louis XVIII and his brother Charles X. On November 27th 2001, the French Society for the History of Dermatology and the administration of the Hospital celebrated the bicentenary of Alibert’s appointment in Saint-Louis. A booklet authored by the members of the SFHD testifies to the occasion. The texts can also be read on the SFHD’s website.

Besnier was acknowledged as the master of the French dermatology at the dawn of the 20th century. He co-edited with Brocq and Jacquet La Pratique Dermatologique, a prestigious textbook in four volumes published from 1900 to 1904. The diseases are arranged alphabetically, an innovative attempt at simplifying the nosology. Besnier coined the word biopsy (1878) and described the lupus pernio clinical form of sarcoidosis later enriched by Schaumann and Boeck. Besnier was President of the 4th World Congress of Dermatology, Paris, 1900.

Ricord was born in Baltimore (USA) in 1800 to a French family who had emigrated during the Revolution. As a young man, he sailed back to France and became assistant-pharmacist at the military hospital du Val-de-Grâce. He then became a resident at Dupuytren’s and Lisfranc’s departments.

As the surgeon at l’Hôpital des Vénériens (hospital for venereal diseases), Ricord modelled himself after Alibert, lecturing on syphilis and venereal diseases. Brilliant and having a great sense of humor, Ricord became a renowned teacher and in fact founded the French School of Syphililography. Several of his pupils became leaders in syphilis; Fournier, Bassereau, and Diday (Lyon) are significant examples. Despite his ability as a syphilologist, Ricord made many mistakes. He regarded soft chancre and hard chancre as both forms of the same infection by the so-called syphilitic virus. Moreover, he considered the signs of secondary syphilis as non-contagious, eventually admitting his error and declaring: “the stupid man is this who never changes his mind”. For those interested in the places of medico-historical value in Paris, the luxurious building where Ricord had his surgery (6 rue de Tournon, Paris, VIème), the main entrance of l’Hôpital du Midi inside the l’Hôpital Cochin, (Boulevard de Port-Royal) and the tomb of Ricord in the Père-Lachaise Cemetery are easily accessible. An exhibition of Ricord’s archives can be seen in the Conference Room.
Pierre Louis Alphée Cazenave created in 1843 the first French journal of dermatology, the *Annales des maladies de la peau et de la syphilis*, founded 25 years before the *Annales de dermatologie*. Using his proper name or pseudonyms, Cazenave wrote most of the articles, notably the first descriptions of lupus erythematosus and pemphigus foliaceus. In 1852, the journal ceased publication.

Henri Feulard (1858-1897) is a name that we remember with respect. Secretary of the 1st International Congress of Dermatology (1889), Feulard was the first librarian of the medical library (1886) and the first curator of the wax museum (1894). In both activities, he acted with a great skill organizing the collection of books, journals, and moulages. Feulard was elected secretary of the 4th International Congress of Dermatology (Paris, 1900). Unfortunately, he and his young daughter died under awful circumstances in the burning of the Bazar de la Charité, May 4th, 1897. The medical library was then named in his memory, marked by a marble tablet.

His contemporaries properly regarded Achille Civatte as the French Master of the Difficult Diagnoses in Cutaneous Histopathology. In 1906, he published a treatise on parapsoriasis and in 1947 updated the *Précis de Dermatologie*, previously edited by his teacher, Jean Darier. Civatte founded in 1922 the Museum of Histopathology. He was elected President of the Société Française de Dermatologie in 1954. One of his sons, Jean Civatte, now Emeritus Professor of Dermatology and Chairman in Saint-Louis, was the successor of Professor Degos, and is a member of the National Academy of Medicine. He is also Honorary President of the French Society for the History of Dermatology.

Sabouraud (1864-1938) is a personality who deserves to be remembered as a true pioneer. “He was a born professor; he genuinely enjoyed teaching and his approach to that art was quiet, effective and charming (...) He was a good musician, a connoisseur of painting and a particularly fine sculptor”, wrote Crissey and Parish. In fact, several busts you will see on the ground floor and in the Conference Room are Sabouraud’s personal works. Within few years, he had become the master of the trichophytons for the study of which he had invented a specific medium called “milieu d’épreuve” still used (milieu de Sabouraud). Any historian of dermatology interested in the history of the ringworm fungi must read *Les Teignes, chef d’œuvre* of 1910.
Robert Degos (1904-1987) ruled the French School of Dermatology during a quarter of a century. Editor of the *Annales de Dermatologie*, Secretary of the Société Française de Dermatologie, Professor of Dermatology and Chairman in Saint-Louis he personified dermatology in France. His treatise *Dermatologie* (issued in 1953 with annual updates) was regarded as the Bible for French speaking dermatologists. The quality of the clinical descriptions in “the Degos” still remains unrivalled.

When going up to the Museum, you will notice a small painting of naïve style, representing a white-haired man sitting in the middle of strange objects. This painting on cardboard made in 1911 by E. Dufour depicts one of the major heroes of the Museum, Jules Baretta (1833-1923), the first wax moulageur of Saint-Louis whose portrait and bust you will see many times in the Museum. Appointed as a curator of the wax museum in 1884, he was honoured by the Legion of Honour in 1889. Baretta ceased his activities in 1913.

Coming up to the first floor you will see a massive wooden board to the glory of Alfred Fournier. When arriving in Saint-Louis, you may have observed the entrance of the old hospital is actually located “place du docteur Alfred-Fournier”. Fournier began his studies on syphilis under Ricord, surgeon at l’Hôpital du Midi. In 1876, Fournier was appointed as a head at l’Hôpital Saint-Louis where he remained until his retirement in 1902. Despite his professorship in cutaneous and syphilitic diseases, Fournier made syphilis his only subject of interest. According to Louis Nekam, a Hungarian dermatologist, Fournier classified skin diseases as syphilitic, parasyphilitic, syphiloid and asyphilitic. In fact syphilis, regarded as a serial killer, was at this time a great matter of health and social concern. The fight against syphilis was considered as a priority that had to concentrate all the intellectual energies. Fournier wrote many thousands pages on syphilis, the cutaneous and extra cutaneous manifestations notably the connexions between tabes, general palsy and syphilis, the transmission described as hereditary and the prophylaxis (Fournier founded the French Society for Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis in 1901).

The anti chamber on the first floor leads to three rooms: the library, the wax museum and the conference room were the congress people registered in 1889. Go inside the conference room and look around. Many hundreds thesis of medicine and books of dermatology covered the walls. Treatises on syphilis are kept in two glass cases. Few busts (Hallopeau, Brocq, Besnier, Thibierge) and portraits of dermatologists are exposed in the room.
The Wax Museum, Treasure of French Dermatology

The Museum you are approaching keeps more than any other place in France the remembrance of the French School of Dermatology. Remember that the meetings of the French Society of Dermatology were held in this place from its foundation in 1889 until the beginning of the 1980’s. French and foreign masters of dermatology gave life to this place. Their lively debates echoed in the room. Moreover, remember that the Museum is also devoted to the memory of the patients who agreed to the exhibition of their disfigured appearances for the enrichment of dermatological knowledge.

Architecturally speaking, the Museum is a typical example of the 19th century museum, mixing glass, wood, and steel. The window cases surrounding the central part which were used as meeting and teaching rooms. A glass roof previously lit the Museum.

After several decades of international leadership (1800-1830), the French School of Dermatology partly lost its influence to the German-speaking schools, mainly Vienna headed by Ferdinand von Hebra and his son-in-law, Moriz Kaposi. In fact, the wax museum and the library were regarded as one of the visible elements helping to restore the French influence.

Alphonse Devergie and Charles Lailler, heads at Saint-Louis, Armand Husson, Director of the Assistance publique, and Jules Baretta, were the main workers of the creation of the Museum.

When retiring in 1866, Devergie gave the hospital administration the watercolors he had ordered at his own expenses. Look up in the Museum and you will see Devergie’s collection hung with other watercolors procured by Bazin and Cazenave. Husson, congratulating Devergie provided the collection with the facilities indispensable for a proper exhibition.

The first museum was actually located in a very small room that no longer exists. It opened on April 25th 1867. Besides the watercolors, the Museum exhibited several wax moulages made by Baretta. A craftsman specializing in the production of artificial fruits, Baretta was “discovered” in 1863 by Lailler who was looking for an artist talented enough to depict skin diseases. Baretta accepted Lailler’s offer and set up a workshop in Saint-Louis where he improved the moulage technique. By following Lailler as he made rounds in Saint-Louis, Baretta obtained an introduction to dermatology. He produced his first moulage in 1867, still in relatively good condition.
Proceed to window case 34. This is the face of a woman afflicted with cutaneous lupus erythematosus. The moulage, relatively clean by comparison with its dusty neighbours, was recently restored. This patient treated by Lailler remained in Saint-Louis from April 1867 until April 1868!

The collection grew rapidly. Fournier, previously the head at l’Hôpital Lourcine (Hospital for Syphilitic Women), was appointed to the Saint-Louis in 1876 and brought his wax moulages collection. In 1878, Lailler proposed that a room of his department be transformed for a better exhibition of the collection. The second museum was located in the Pavillon Bazin (today the Skin Research Institute). The vividness of the wax pieces incited the dermatologists to make more and more moulages. The creation of a proper museum was then regarded as a necessity. At this stage, the intervention of Désiré Bourneville was decisive.

Dermatologists know Bourneville as the describer of tuberous sclerosis (Epiloia). He was also a physician of the insane and much involved in politics. Bourneville was the promoter of a new educational system in medicine. As a Paris city counsellor he considered that the Assistance publique – placed under the authority of the city of Paris- could teach medicine without the Faculty of Medicine that he regarded as almost useless. He proposed the creation of a city school of medicine that could use all the medical and surgical departments, libraries, and museums of the Paris hospitals. In this context, the creation of the building that contained a museum, a library, and an outpatient clinic was considered as a true institute for the teaching of the skin diseases that could provide the students with all the facilities needed to study dermatology.

The Museum was officially inaugurated on August 5th 1889, the opening day of the world congress. More than 2300 moulages made by Baretta were exhibited producing enthusiastic comments from the congress attendees. When returning to their homes, several foreign dermatologists created wax museums and ordered Baretta moulages of skin diseases. Baretta, therefore, contributed to the enrichment of several collections abroad (USA and Germany notably) and improved his own circumstances.
Imagine this humble craftsman who spent his life modelling skin diseases! Roger-Milès, French writer at the close of the 19th century gave some account of Baretta’s workshop atmosphere: “here we are in the artist’s workshop. We now come upon a life, hidden from the miserable city, that is the most picturesque and artistic that one can dream of. From generous windows, light pours through glass panes; from the top of the walls hang sketches painted in oil, caricatures and bright studies of scenes from the quays of Paris and suburban places, studies off with a nimble brush on a sunny afternoon. There are busts and statuettes in terra cotta on brackets and a piano loaded with knick-knacks. Were it not for photographs of fatal
monstrosities and the two benches in front of the windows, one would believe him miles from a hospital workshop. (...) Attired in an apron with a bib, (...) with a piece of red ribbon in a button hole (the award of the Legion of Honour), he (Baretta) spends a good part of his days in his workshop. When he is alone, he works on pieces already started; never is there any lack of work in his studio and it is no simple task to find colors exact to everything that he has to reproduce. (...) When a patient is brought to him, a different modus operandi is assumed and again with warmth and good nature. M. Baretta is an invaluable collaborator in scientific work. Without brusqueness, but with the tenderness of a mother and unfailing patience, he applies his preparations and while the material is setting, he converses with the patient, interests himself in the condition… and effortlessly wins confidence by the sympathy he instils…The patient tends to be still because it takes a certain period of times for the material to harden, M. Baretta shows him his paintings; all of the hanging are his. Then he seats himself at the piano and lulls his patient with some old melody“(trad. G.Solente).

How did Baretta make the wax pieces? The answer to that question remains a mystery. Baretta, like his successors in Saint-Louis and colleagues abroad, was silent about the procedures he employed. In fact, the material for Baretta’s moulages consisted of a mixture of bees wax and a resin, probably gutta percha. He heated the casting material to a temperature of approximately 200°C before pouring it into the plaster cast. Some of the colors may have been incorporated into the mixture. The finest colored details were probably painted on the surface of the moulages. The technical processes used by Baretta seemed to differ from his successors. You will notice many differences in comparing the moulages made by Baretta, and those made by the moulageurs who succeeded him in Saint-Louis.

The art of moulaging and modelling wax in medicine is fascinating. Should you wish to know more about this art, read “Diseases in wax”, a scholarly book by Thomas Schnalke, essential to everyone interested in the history of the medical moulages. For the French speaking readers, “Artistes et Mortels” by Michel Lemire is also an indispensable source.

Since 1992, the moulage collection has been listed as an historical monument. Today, more than 4800 moulages are exhibited and catalogued. The last one was made at the request of Prof. Degos in 1958 (window case 22). Some of them are in bad condition, broken or cracked; most of
them are dirty. The ceiling is damaged, rainwater may fall into the museum, and the absence of
air conditioning is deleterious for the conservation of the wax pieces.

Quite recently, the French Society for the History of Dermatology has set up a special
program sponsored by the French Society of Dermatology and the Ministry of Culture to clean
and restore the moulages.

Mr Besnainou, professional restorer has been appointed to manage the technical
operations.
The Henri-Feulard Library (bibliothèque Henri-Feulard)

On Thursday December 23rd 1886, Vidal, Lailler, Besnier, Fournier, Hallopeau, Quinquaud, dermatologists, Péan and Ledentu, surgeons, Porak, obstetrician, Lutz, pharmacist, Feulard, senior registrar (chef de clinique) in Fournier's department, founded a library which they named “bibliothèque médicale de l'hôpital Saint-Louis”. The dermatologists had claimed the library as a natural complement of the wax museum. Thanks to the moulages, the students could complete the practical apprenticeship they acquired during the consultation. In the library they could find books and journals indispensable for the enrichment of the theoretical knowledge. The consultation, the wax museum, and the library could be considered as an ideal center for the teaching and learning of dermatology.

Feulard was officially appointed as the officer of the library in 1890 whose opening took place November 1887. After his death in 1897, the medical library was named after him and is now known as the “Bibliothèque Henri-Feulard”. Wickham succeeded Feulard until 1913, when Brodier became the librarian, serving until 1939. Pignot and Solente succeeded him.
In 1986 on Daniel Wallach’s initiative, the Assistance publique and the French Society of Dermatology founded an association according to the 1901 French law. D.Wallach was the first General Secretary of this new association in charge of the library. Mrs M.-D. Vignon-Pennamen succeeded him in 1995.

In 1999, Gérard Tilles was elected as General Secretary of the Bibliothèque Henri-Feulard. For the last few years, the French Society of Dermatology has withdrawing its sponsorship, endangering the future of the library.

Today the library contains more than 15000 books and 600 different journals of dermatology and medicine. A database on therapeutics in dermatology, enriched by the administrators of the library and sponsored by the Pierre-Fabre Group, is accessible on the Internet. (www.clubdermaweb.com).

A Temporary Exhibition of Dermatological Knowledge

The Books, Conservatories of Knowledge

From the very beginning, the librarians of the Henri-Feulard library endeavoured to get the more representative books of the French and International dermatological and medical literature. Exhibiting the complete fund of the library is obviously beyond the scope of our purpose. We made a selection of few vintage textbooks either because of their significant content or because of the personality of their authors. Take your time to look at them.
Joseph Jacob PLENCK, Doctrina de morbis cutaneis, Vienne apud Rodolphum Graeffe, 1776, 124 p.
Presents a new classification of the skin diseases based upon the elementary lesions. Mentioned 115 different skin diseases divided into 14 classes.

Anne Charles LORRY, Tractatus de morbis cutaneis, Parisiis apud P. Guillelmum Cavelier via San-Jacobaewa sub singo Lilii aurei, MDCCLXXVII, xvi-704p.
“Lorry is regarded as the founder of French dermatology. A pupil of Jean Astruc, his most important work is his Tractatus in which he attempted the classification of diseases on the basis of essential relations, their physiological, pathological and etiological similarities. It is the first modern text on the subject and the last major work on dermatology to be published in Latin (Garrison et Morton, Morton’s medical bibliography 5th ed., edited by Jeremy Norman, Cambridge, 1991, p. 619).

According to Garrison and Morton “modern dermatology may be said to start with Willan.(…) He established a standard nomenclature which is still more or less in use today” (Garrison and Morton, Morton’s medical bibliography 5th ed., edited by Jeremy Norman, Cambridge, 1991, p. 620).

Magnificent in-folio published at Alibert’s own expenses (probably with his wife’s dowry). Don’t forget to have a look at Lucas the patient with mycosis fongoide first described by Alibert.

Thomas BATEMAN, Delineations of cutaneous diseases exhibiting characteristics appearances of the principle genera and species comprised in the classification of the late Dr Willan, London, printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Browne, Paternoster-Row, 1817, xiv-556p., 72 pl.
“The above work is notable for its 72 colored plates. Strictly speaking it is the first atlas of dermatology as Willan’s work falls more into the category of illustrated treatise.” (Garrison and
Head of a medical department in Paris hospitals outside Saint-Louis, Rayer authored a major textbook on kidney diseases. He also published a treatise on skin diseases that influenced the German schools of dermatology. As dean of the Paris Faculty on Medicine, Rayer favored the development of the medical specialities, notably dermatology and venereology. Rayer had a great influence on the thought of the German speaking dermatologists notably on Hebra's who used Rayer's physiopathological approach of dermatology.


“This large folio atlas is the most visually impressive of all his books” (Garrison and Morton, Morton’s medical bibliography 5th ed., edited by Jeremy Norman, Cambridge, 1991, p. 621).

Ferdinand von Hebra (1816-1880), Atlas der Hautkrankheiten, Text von Prof Dr Ferdinand Hebra Bilder von Dr Anton Elfinger und Dr Carl Heitzmann, Wien, 1869

“In preparation for this atlas Anton Elfinger, Carl Heitzmann, Julius Heitzmann, all physicians, painted several hundred water colors. More than a hundred were actually published. Some five hundred of these paintings, predominantly by the above masters, are preserved in the Institute for the History Medicine in Vienna” (Holubar K., Schmidt C., Wolff K., Challenge dermatology, Vienna 1841-1992, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna, 1993, p. 37)
George Henri FOX (1846-1937), Iconographie photographique des maladies de la peau, trad. Holman, 48 pl. d'après nature coloriées à la main, Paris, JB Baillière, 1882


This is the first French textbook that used photography as a teaching aide in dermatology. Hardy (1811-1893) had been head of the department at Saint-Louis since 1851, successor to Lugol and professor of internal medicine since 1867. Together with Bazin, he was the main organizer of dermatological debates and, in 1889, was President of the First International Dermatology Congress in Paris. Montméja was a former provisional intern at Saint-Louis. Then, from 1869 to 1873, Montméja, in collaboration with Rengade, published the Revue photographique des hôpitaux de Paris and convinced the Director of the Assistance Publique (Public hospital administration) to set up the first photographic workshop in Paris hospitals.

The Clinique photographique de l'hôpital Saint-Louis contains 50 photographs classified according to an order derived from Hardy's classification designed to make dermatology part of the “field of medicine and to destroy these ideas of specialty which are based on nothing real or useful”. Hardy chose frequent diseases, emphasising a new approach to teaching. Syphilis naturally occupied an important place (16 photographs); the other cases included several cases of cutaneous mycoses, acne, scabies, impetigo, eczema, alopecia areata.

Fig.20
The images were printed on albumin paper performed from collodion plates which do not allow good color restitution, particularly red and yellow. Montméja colored the images by hand from nature and therefore essentially added red and yellow.

In fact, Hardy gave the instructions for the final quality of the photos.

This new technique was not yet trustworthy and retouching the photos seemed necessary. The reproduction of the actual morphology may be somewhat altered and, for some images, the result is sometimes a curious mixture between lithography and photography. The images uniformly presented, with no particular effect of light, diseases and patients belonging to the most underprivileged social classes, experiencing photography for the first time, with a fixed appearance in a dramatic, sometimes almost theatrical attitude, accentuated by the colour printing process. However, the important place occupied by scientific comments clearly situated the photographs in a dermatological rather than a sociological context.


« Repeating Hunter’s experiment, Ricord proved that syphilis and gonorrhoea were separate diseases. After Hunter, he was the greatest authority on venereal disease”. (Garrison and Morton, Morton’s medical bibliography 5th ed., edited by Jeremy Norman, Cambridge, 1991, p. 801).


The Méheux Collection : Art and Science of Syphilis

From the first ages of the specialty in the late 17th century, dermatologists have been using images to improve and transmit their knowledge. They took advantage of the technical improvements to reproduce the skin diseases in the most vivid manner. In the years following the publication of Willan's book — that contained the first colored images of skin diseases —, the presence of images gradually became a constant feature of dermatology books, either integrated into the text (Alibert, Cazenave) or presented in an atlas which favoured the artistic quality (Hebra) or the economic accessibility and therefore the educational use (Rayer). Very few authors, such as Gibert, were hostile to images, which they considered too fashionable and too far from reality.

However, regardless of the choice and quality of these images, the physician remained dependent on a painter or engraver. The instantaneous aspects of the image was lost due to the constraints of the technique and the disease represented was often that of an "ideal" patient, based on a combination of several cases.

When photography made its appearance in dermatology at the end of the 1860s, dermatologists, who had been using images for several decades, were therefore intellectually prepared to use this new process which, due to rapid technical progress, appeared to be able to reconcile realism and a relative ease of use.

Apart from their scientific value, images may be artistically valuable. The connexions between art and sciences in medical reproductions have been studied by many scholars. Contemplating images of skin diseases is a great opportunity to consider these connexions.

Looking at the wax moulages collection is obviously a good opportunity for this kind of consideration that you will have when walking in the Museum. Today an additional approach is proposed to you. In fact, the Museum is not only a wax museum; it is a true conservatoire of images of skin diseases gathering moulages and several thousand photographs. Among these, the
Félix-Méheux collection is often regarded as having an artistic value of a particular interest. Part of the collection has been exhibited on several occasions in and outside Saint-Louis.

For the special event of the 20th World Congress of Dermatology and the History of Dermatology Tri-Societies Seminar, a different section of the Méheux collection is presented that combines scientific, artistic and historical interest: the photos on syphilis.

The Photography in Dermatology, A New Tool for Investigations.

Nicéphore Nièpce (1765-1833), May 5th, 1816, successfully made the first negative on paper of the history of the humanity. Louis Daguerre (1787-1853) continued the work of Nièpce and convinced François Arago (1786-1853), Secretary of the French Academy of Science and Director of the Paris Observatory, of the value of his invention. Arago presented the process to the Academy of Science, January 8th, 1839. Photography was launched.

Its use in medicine rapidly developed from the 1840s onwards. The first medical daguerreotypes were microphotographic images performed in Paris from 1840 by Alfred Donné, head of a complementary microscopy course at the Faculty of Medicine of Paris, and Léon Foucault, physicist to the Paris Observatory.

The publication in 1862 by Duchenne (from Boulogne) of the first illustrated book of clinical photography marked the entry of photography into medical practice and clinical research.

The first photographs in the field of dermatology were published in the 1860’s. In 1865, in London, Alexander John Balmanno Squire (1836-1908), an English surgeon, published the first atlas of dermatology-venereology, containing 12 hand-colored photographs on albumin paper, *Photographs (colored from life) of the diseases of the skin*.

In Paris, several photographs of skin diseases were performed at the Faculty of Medicine, but the first dermatological photographs were actually published by Hardy and Montméja. (see above).
Saint-Louis Hospital Photographic Museum

In 1868 Armand Husson, manager of the Assistance publique decided to sponsor a photographic museum for the Paris hospitals. Montméja carried on his work as a benevolent photographer. Few years later, from 1884 until 1904, Félix Méheux, a private photographer, enriched the collection with black and white and hand painted photographs.

In the early 20th century Louis Brocq, head at Saint-Louis boosted the photographic collection by donating the collection he had previously set at the hôpital Broca. The collection was launched as the Musée Photographique de l'Hôpital Saint-Louis. The photographs were taken by Sottas, assistant physician and Schaller, clock-maker in the hospital. In 1934 Maire, jeweller, succeeded him.

In the beginning of the 1980’s the collection was transferred to the Image Centre of the Assistance publique where they remained until the 1990’s. On the initiative of the SFHD, the collection came back to l’Hôpital Saint-Louis first in a tiny room in the central square then in a more convenient place close to the museum.

Since few years the SFHD has been setting a special program and purchased with the support of the City of Paris and the Ministry of Culture, specific material for a better conservation of the photos.

Fig. 21
The collection, called “le musée photographique de l’hôpital Saint-Louis” now comprises twenty thousand photographs. Some of them are digitalized and can be viewed on the SFHD website.

Syphilis and the First Steps of Photography in Dermatology

A large number of photographs depicts syphilis in all its clinical varieties. In fact in the finishing 19th century, syphilis was regarded as a health priority to such an extent that every physician had to be familiar with its clinical forms.

Transmitted by prostitutes and killing the children of the upper classes, syphilis became the symbol of the destruction of the bourgeoisie by the working classes.

The struggle against syphilis was described by physicians as a top priority not only because of the contagiousness that was inflicted on the family but also because of the hereditary consequences notably the frightening mortality threatening future generations and consequently because of the degeneration that syphilis could bring upon the human race.

The role of syphilitic heredity was felt as stronger and stronger to such a point that it was considered capable to encompass all the manifestations of morbid heredity in general. The obsessive fear of syphilitic heredity was such that some physicians created anthropometrical list that allowed identifying syphilitic patients -or supposed so- at a glance. Several features, considered as characteristics of the syphilitic shape of ears or the toothline, stammering, somnambulism, nervous tics, and even ginger hair.

Despite the contagiousness of the genital lesions of syphilis, only a few physicians considered condoms an efficacious method in the fight against syphilis. In fact, for most of the physicians, the condom by its birth control function represented a social and political controversy. The preoccupation with the effect on birth rate at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century came from an actual depopulation in France and from the rivalry with the bordering nations, especially Germany.

The medico-social climate that surrounded syphilis with anxiety encouraged physicians to develop teaching aids on syphilis as a prophylactic method. In this respect, photographs became the ideal tools for the prevention policy.
Félix Méheux was a member of the French Society of Photography. He used to practice privately and acted as a photographer at l’Hôpital Saint-Louis and other Paris hospitals, (Broca, La Pitié). His photographs on albumen-paper show fine details of the disease and give artistic views of the patients.

Catalogue of the Méheux Collection on Syphilis

1. Chancre du pouce, cliché n° 97, hôpital Saint-Louis, serv. de M. le Pr A. Fournier,
2. Chancre de l’index, cliché n° 293, hôpital Saint-Louis, serv. de M. le Pr A. Fournier.
3. Chancre de la sclérotique, cliché n° 1327, polyclinique H. de Rothschild.
10. Syphilis alopecie, cliché n° 204, hôpital Saint-Louis, serv. de M. le Prof A. Fournier.
13. Syphilides tuberculeuses en plaques, cliché n° 690, observation de M. le Dr. Jullien.
15. Syphilis, ulcération, oblitération de la gorge, cliché n° 1339, hôpital Saint-Louis, serv. de M. le Prof A. Fournier.
16. Plaques syphilitiques érosives et hypertrophiques, cliché n° 1170, hôpital Broca, serv. de M. le Dr Brocq.
17. Syphilides hypertrophiques crustacées, cliché n° 1082, hôpital Saint-Louis, serv. de M. le Prof A. Fournier.
21. Syphilides papuleuses, cliché n° 1524, hôpital de la Pitié, service de M. le Dr Darier.
22. Syphilis ulcération de la lèvre chancriforme, cliché n° 1494, hôpital Saint-Louis, serv. de M. le Prof A. Fournier.
27. Hérédosyphilis ulcération phagénédéniques, cliché n° 177, hôpital Saint-Louis, serv. de M. le Prof A. Fournier

Archives, Major Sources for the Historians: the Ricord’s Archives

1. Decree for Ricord’s appointment as an extraordinary pharmacist at the Hôpital du Val-de-Grâce, September 16th 1820.
2. Diploma for M.D., June 20th 1826.
4. Ricord’s American passport, July 24th 1828.
7. Death notice of Ricord.
8. Portraits and caricatures.
9. Speech pronounced by Jules Péan, surgeon at Saint-Louis, on the occasion of Ricord’s funerals.

*The Ricord’s Archives are catalogued in the Arkeion file (ARK 102).*

**Further suggested readings**


Legends of the figures
Fig. 1: The Hôpital Saint-Louis in the 17th century, in R. Sabouraud, L’hôpital Saint-Louis, coll. Les vieux hôpitaux français, Ciba, Lyon, 1937.
Fig 2 : The hôpital Saint-Louis in the 17th century, from the hôpital Saint-Louis website.
Entrance of the old Hôpital Saint-Louis, coll. GT
Fig. 3-4-5 : The central square (le quadrilatère), Hôpital Saint-Louis, coll. GT.
Fig. 6-8: From left to right : Ernest Bazin, Pierre Louis Alphée Cazenave, Alphonse Devergie, coll. Musée de l'hôpital Saint-Louis.
Fig.10 : The Lailler School in L’Assistance publique en 1900, Assistance publique, Paris.
Fig. 11 : Charles Lailler, coll. Musée de l’Hôpital Saint-Louis.
Fig. 12 : The “memorial gallery” in the Musée des moulages de l’Hôpital Saint-Louis, coll. GT
Fig. 14 : The Musée des moulages de l’hôpital Saint-Louis (wax museum) in the 1960’s, coll. Musée de l'hôpital Saint-Louis.
Fig 15 : Jules Baretta by E. Dufour, coll. Musée de l’hôpital Saint-Louis.
Fig 16-17 : D. Besnainou restoring wax moulages in 2001, coll. GT
Fig. 18 : The Henri-Feulard library, coll. Musée de l’hôpital Saint-Louis

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Fig. 19: Henri Feulard, coll. Musée de l’hôpital Saint-Louis.
Fig. 20: Pemphigus foliaceus in A. Hardy et A. de Montméja, Clinique Photographique de l’hôpital Saint-Louis, Paris, Chamerot et Lauwereyns, 1868, vii-50 pl.
Fig. 21: Alopecia areata in A. Hardy et A. de Montméja, Clinique Photographique de l’hôpital Saint-Louis, Paris, Chamerot et Lauwereyns, 1868, vii-50 pl.

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