Letter to the Editor

Art in Science: Orthopaedics Through Philatelic Material

Ahmadreza Afshar MD, Armin Pedram MD

Received: 2 November 2013 / Accepted: 27 December 2013 / Published online: 9 January 2014
© The Association of Bone and Joint Surgeons® 2014

To the Editor,

We read the article by Gursu et al. [6] with great interest.

The authors mentioned that Avicenna was a Turkish physician. However, Avicenna was born in 980 AD in Afshaneh, near Bukhara (Uzbekistan). He died in 1037 AD, at the age of 58, and was buried in Hamadan, Iran [2, 3]. Avicenna never stepped out of the Persian borders, but his ideas, thoughts, teachings, manuscripts, and books circulated around the world through to the present day [1]. His works are written in Farsi and Arabic; Arabic was the

official language of the Islamic territories during that time [2, 3]. Twenty-five countries located in the Middle East, Africa, and Europe used the vignette of Avicenna on their postage stamps to honor him [1].

We would also like to add other philatelic materials to this brief history of orthopaedics.

In 1895, Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen (1845–1923), a German physicist, discovered the radiograph [5]. In 1951, the Deutsche Bundespost (Federal Republic of Germany's Federal Post Office), issued a stamp featuring a vignette of Röntgen to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his Nobel Prize award.

In 1963, the Brazilian postal service issued a stamp to commemorate a century of birth of Dr. Alvaro Alvim (1863–1928). His experiences with radiation beams led to radiation burns of his hands. The stamp shows Dr. Alvim with partial amputations of both of his hands [11]. In 1981, Bangladesh issued a stamp depicting a child undergoing a Krukenberg operation [4].

Surgical specialties like orthopaedics are in debt to the scientific advances of anatomy. In the 16th century, Andreas Vesalius published six anatomical illustrations, known as *Tabulae Anatomicae Sex* (*Six Anatomical Charts*). These six illustrations are considered the birth of modern anatomy as a science [12]. In 1964, the Belgian post office issued a stamp featuring a vignette of Vesalius (1514–1564) to commemorate his 400th birthday [7]. In 1976, the Correo Uruguayo (Uruguay postal service) issued a stamp that depicts the extensor surface of the forearm and hand [8].

As a tribute, the name of Professor Dr. Luis Morquio (1867–1935) was given to mucopolysaccharidosis Type 4 (Morquio disease). In 1969 [15] and 2001, the Correo Uruguayo (Uruguayan post office) issued two stamps to honor him.

(RE: Gursu S. Yildirim T, Sahin V, Tok E. Art in Science: Orthopaedics Through Philatelic Material. *Clin Orthop Relat Res*. 2013;471:3755–3759.)

The authors certify that they, or any members of their immediate families, have no funding or commercial associations (eg, consultancies, stock ownership, equity interest, patent/licensing arrangements, etc) that might pose a conflict of interest in connection with the submitted article.

All ICMJE Conflict of Interest Forms for authors and *Clinical Orthopaedics and Related Research*® editors and board members are on file with the publication and can be viewed on request.

The opinions expressed are those of the writers, and do not reflect the opinion or policy of CORR® or the Association of Bone and Joint Surgeons®.

A. Afshar (✉)

Department of Orthopedics, Imam Khomeini Hospital, Urmia University of Medical Sciences, Modaress St. and Ershad Blvd., 5715781351 Urmia, Iran
e-mail: afshar_ah@yahoo.com

A. Pedram

Center for Orthopedics and Trauma Surgery, St. Anna Hospital, Herne, Germany

In 1972, the United States Postal Service commemorated the 75th anniversary of the American Osteopathic Association [16]. In 1978, the Japanese post office issued a stamp for the 50th anniversary and the 14th World Congress of the International Society of Orthopaedic Surgeons, held in Kyoto, Japan [14].

The development of microsurgery was a major breakthrough in surgical orthopaedics. In 1975, the Chinese government issued a stamp to commemorate advances made by Chinese surgeons in replantation [10].

In 1979, the La Poste (mail service from France) issued a stamp to honor Felix Guyon (1831–1920) who is credited for the first description of the Loge de Guyon [9] (Guyon's Canal Syndrome), or ulnar nerve entrapment at the wrist..

Martin Kirschner (1879–1942) introduced K-wires to orthopaedic surgery in 1909. In 1979, during the 96th Congress of the German Society for Surgery in Munich, he was honored with a portrait on a cancelled First Day Cover [13].

The orthopaedic surgeon Sir Fredrick Grant Banting (1891–1941) received a Nobel Prize in 1923 for physiology and medicine due to his discovery of insulin. Switzerland (1971), Kuwait (1971), Canada (1991 and 2000), and Guinea Bissau (2008), honored him on their stamps.

In 1997, the ELTA (the Greek postal service) issued a set of stamps to commemorate the International Year of Rheumatic Patients. On one of those stamps, a physician is on the verge of incising the antecubital vein, demonstrating bloodletting. On another commemorate stamp, a physician is examining a large and swollen leg [15].

We would also like to add a valuable reference written by Wallossek to this interesting topic [17].

References

1. Afshar A. Honoring Avicenna, the great Persian physician on the world's postage stamps. *Arch Iran Med*. 2010;13:447–453.
2. Afshar A. Concepts of orthopedic disorders in Avicenna's Canon of Medicine. *Arch Iran Med*. 2011;14:157–159.
3. Afshar A. A brief report about the concepts of hand disorders in the Canon of Medicine of Avicenna. *J Hand Surg Am*. 2011;36:1509–1514.
4. Afshar A. Hands on Stamps: Krukenberg Hand. [Published online ahead of print Jan 31, 2013]. *J Hand Surg Am*. DOI: [10.1016/j.jhsa.2012.12.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhsa.2012.12.008).
5. Afshar A. Hands on Stamps: Germany, 1995—Discovery of X-Ray Beams. [Published online ahead of print Mar 1, 2013]. *J Hand Surg Am*. DOI: [10.1016/j.jhsa.2013.01.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhsa.2013.01.006).
6. Gursu S, Yildirim T, Sahin V, Koc E. Art in science: orthopedics through philatelic material. [Published online ahead of print Sep 27, 2013]. *Clin Orthop Relat Res*. DOI: [10.1007/s11999-013-3280-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11999-013-3280-4).
7. Light TR. Hands on stamps. *J Hand Surg Am*. 1981;6:441.
8. Light TR. Hands on stamps. *J Hand Surg Am*. 1981;6:549.
9. Light TR. Hands on stamps. *J Hand Surg Am*. 1982;7:124.
10. Light TR. Hands on stamps. *J Hand Surg Am*. 1982;7:571.
11. Light TR. Hands on stamps. *J Hand Surg Am*. 1985;10:912.
12. Moes RJ. Andreas Vesalius and the anatomy of the upper extremity. *J Hand Surg Am*. 1976;1:23–8.
13. Rehder K, Shampo MA, Kyle RA. Martin Kirschner. *JAMA*. 1982;247:1302.
14. Shanberge JN. The medical philately collection. CID. 1999; 29:296–297. Available at: <http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CC0QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fcid.oxfordjournals.org%2Fcontent%2F29%2F2%2F296.full.pdf&ei=c55yUq2LH4e0tAaAtIDQAw&usg=AFQjCNG5Oot53WOIBFQJ3X0WWjD5PewIvA&bvm=bv.55819444,d.Yms>. Accessed November 10, 2013.
15. Shanberge JN. Transfusion medicine in philately. *Transfusion*. 1999;39:534–536.
16. U.S. #1469. 8 cent Osteopathic Medicine. Mystic Stamp Company. Available at: <http://www.mysticstamp.com/viewProducts.asp?sku=1469>. Accessed December 26, 2013.
17. Wallossek R. Orthopedics in philately. *Med Monatsschr*. 1975;29:123–128, 209–213.