

History of Dermatology: Fight Against Lepros and its Heroes. Gerhard Hansen - Service for Medicine in Reflecting means Philately and Numismatics

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Abstract

The article presents the results of the research concerning the study of representation in the means of philately and numismatics, stages of combating leprosy and scientists who devoted their lives to fighting this disease. An interesting informative and illustrative material is presented concerning the scientific feat of the Norwegian scientist Gerhard Hansen. As illustrations used philatelic and numismatic material from different countries. The article is of interest for doctors, medical workers of different directions, students and historians of medicine, collectors and a wide range of readers.

Keywords: Gerhard Hansen; leprosy; philately; postage stamps; envelopes; numismatics; commemorative medals

Introduction

The history of medicine knows many scientists from different medical and biological fields who devoted their scientific and practical activities to the fight against diseases that threaten humanity in different time periods. These serious diseases include leprosy (leprosy). Among the heroes of medicine who devoted their lives to the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of this disease, one can safely include the Norwegian leprologist Gerhard Hansen [1,2,3,4]. Before presenting to the reader the collection of philatelic material dedicated to the scientist, I would like to provide his brief biography. Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen was a Norwegian leprologist known for his discovery in 1873 and identification of the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae* (after staining by Albert Neisser) in 1880 as the microorganism that causes leprosy. Dates of the scientist's

life (July 29, 1841-February 12, 1912) [1,2,3,4]. In 1874, he described the causative agent of the disease *Vas. leprae* Hanseni (*Mycobacterium leprae*), and also studied the histomorphology and clinical manifestations of the disease. In many countries of the world, to this day, leprosy is called Hansen's disease [1,2,3,4]. A considerable number of various philatelic materials are dedicated to him. I would like to start presenting the life and scientific work of this scientist with postage stamps from different countries of the world, presented in Fig. 1 [5,6,7,8]. Issue of postage stamps, incl. and on anniversary dates (100 years) associated with the discovery of the causative agent of the disease and/or the dates of the scientist's life - this is gratitude to the Norwegian scientist for his invaluable help in getting rid of leprosy [5,6,7,8].





Figure 1: Gerhard Hansen on world postage stamps

There are also a number of first-day postal envelopes, postage stamps, images and special cancellation seals dedicated to the Norwegian scientist who dedicated his life to the fight against leprosy. Some of these envelopes, issued by the postal departments of Laos, India, the Republic

of Dahomey, France, mainly for the 100th anniversary of the discovery of the causative agent of leprosy (leprosy), are presented in Figure 2 [5,6,7,8].



Figure 2: Envelopes dedicated to Gerhard Hansen

Figure 3 shows maps of France dedicated to the memory of G. Hansen in the fight against leprosy [5,6,7,8].

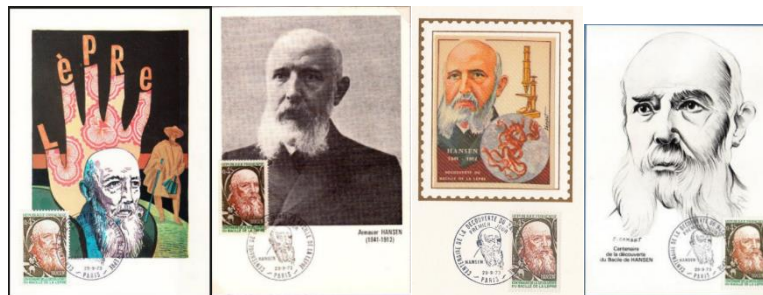


Figure 3: Maps of France dedicated to Gerhard Hansen

I would also like to present tabletop commemorative medals dedicated to Gerhard Hansen. As is known, tabletop commemorative medals belong to numismatics [9]. If you look at the definitions of the concept “table medal”, it is easy to see some duality in it. That is, on the one hand, it can be classified as commemorative and commemorative coins, on the other hand, it can be classified directly as medals [9]. In general, the most acceptable definition characterizes a table medal as a memorial sign that is made in honor of a significant event or an outstanding figure. Actually, the table medal differs from the usual one, first of all, in the absence of fasteners, which gives it a significant resemblance to a coin [9].

Figure 4 shows three tabletop commemorative medals dedicated to Gerhard Hansen [10; eleven; 12; 13]. In Figure. 4a, presents a silver, gold-plated medal (obverse and reverse), which was sponsored for issue, in 1973, by the Tenth International Congress against Leprosy, in honor of

Dr. Gerhard Hansen, on the 100th anniversary of the discovery of the pathogen by the scientist leprosy, in 1873 [10]. In Fig. 4b, a German copper commemorative medal is presented, issued by the German Association for the Fight against Leprosy (leprosy), in honor of the 100th anniversary of the scientist’s discovery of the causative agent of leprosy [11].

Figure 4c shows a Norwegian commemorative bronze medal. The obverse features a portrait of the scientist in profile, facing left, his full name and surname, and the dates of his life “Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen (1841-1912)” [12]. The

The reverse of the medal features the small seal of the Royal Norwegian Scientific Society [12,13].



Figure 4a-c. Commemorative medals issued in honor of Gerhard Hansen

Conclusions

1. Summarizing the presented presentation of collectibles dedicated to the fight against leprosy, I would like to note that the variety of different types of collectibles, as material assets from different time periods, is a creative way to study and present the history of medicine and biology.

2. The variety of collectibles presented clearly illustrates Gerhard Hansen's contribution to the fight against leprosy.

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