

ABSTRACT:

A Working Day of Guillaume Dupuytren

At the time of Dupuytren's birth in 1777, France was still governed by an absolute monarch Louis XVI. When Dupuytren died in 1835, he had lived through two revolutions (1789 and 1830), a republic, a 'Directoire', a consulate, an empire under Napoleon and another two royal restorations under Louis XVIII and Charles X.

Dupuytren was always closely involved in these historic events as he was in direct contact with the leading figures from the different periods, both privately and professionally. He played an important role in the organisation and reorganisation of medical surgical education. As the "head surgeon" of the Hôtel-Dieu hospital, the largest hospital in France, he treated not only a large and highly varied number of surgical patients but also the victims of riots, insurrection, revolutions and wars, as well as victims of the cholera epidemic of 1832.

His role in the development of modern surgery and surgical pathology was so overwhelming that the period during which he was "head surgeon" is called **the Dupuytren age** in the history of surgery in France.

The centre of his life was the operating room at the Hôtel-Dieu hospital in Paris which also served as a lecture room, consultation room and dissection room during his life.

Surgery was not only a profession but a life to be experienced.

The name Dupuytren became immortal. Not only in the contracture of the palm, which he described extremely precisely, but also in a specific fracture of the fibula. His name also survives in road names, in the "Musée Dupuytren", the museum of pathological anatomy in the medical faculty in Paris, in the new university centre in Limoges, which is named after him and in an amphitheatre in the Parisian Hôtel-Dieu hospital. The anniversary of his birth and death are also still remembered in Pierre-Buffière where he was born and in Paris where he studied, worked, lived and died. A statue of him has been erected in the inner courtyard of the Hôtel-Dieu hospital in Paris and a memorial has been built in his place of birth.

Let us walk through a working day of this famous surgeon.

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