

“A FLÂNEUR NEUROLOGIQUE IN PARIS” –

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ABSTRACT

In the late nineteenth century, Paris was the reference centre of Neurology in the world, particularly the school led by Jean-Martin Charcot at L'Hopital Salpetriere. At that time, Charcot and three of his most illustrious pupils, Pierre Marie, Joseph Babinski and Gilles de la Tourette, lived closed together in the 7^{ème} and 8^{ème} arrondissements (7th and 8th neighbourhoods). Here we present and locate the addresses of the houses of these famous neurological personalities.

Key words: Charcot, Paris, neurologists.

“FLÂNEUR NEUROLOGIQUE EM PARIS” – VISITANDO AS CASAS DE FAMOSOS NEUROLOGISTAS DO SÉCULO XIX: CHARCOT E SEUS FAMOSOS DISCÍPULOS.

RESUMO

No final do século XIX, Paris era considerada o centro de referência de Neurologia de todo o mundo, e particularmente o hospital Salpêtrière, sob a coordenação do Professor Charcot, o mais celebrado neurologista. Naquela época, Charcot e seus famosos discípulos, Pierre Marie, Joseph Babinski e Gilles de la Tourette viveram in diferentes ruas de Paris, predominantemente nos distritos conhecidos como Paris VII e VIII. Nesta revisão histórica nós apresentamos os endereços das casas destes famosos neurologistas de Paris no século XIX, especialmente para entreter aqueles neurologistas contemporâneos que apreciam caminhar sem preocupações pelas ruas da Cidade Luz.

Palavras chave: Charcot, Paris, neurologistas.

The connection between L'Hopital Salpêtrière and nervous diseases grew out of the move by the French public health system to foster medical specialisation in the mid-nineteenth century. Neurology was not formally recognised as a distinct division of internal medicine at this time but when Charcot was appointed director of one of the two medical divisions at the hospital in 1862 transfer of patients to other speciality clinics left his wards

occupied by long-standing degenerative diseases that would later be identified as mainly either neurological or rheumatological. By the end of the nineteenth century Charcot had transformed what was effectively a vast asylum of incurable diseases into a vibrant research centre for the study of nervous diseases. L'Hopital Salpetriere was now the

most important reference centre for *maladies du système nerveux* in the world.^{1,2,3,4} As a consequence it became a 'Mecca' for overseas students including men like Bechterew, Darkschewitch, Kojewnikow from Russia; Marinesco from Romania; Starr, Sachs, and Mitchell from the USA; Russell Reynolds from England and Sigmund Freud from Austria.^{1,2,3,4} Charcot also attended many notable patients in his private office, including Dom Pedro II, Emperor of Brazil, the Gran-Duke Nicholas of Russia, and Cardinal Lavigerie, the archbishop of Algiers.^{1,2,3,4}

In this article we provide a tourist guide to the former homes of Charcot and Pierre Marie, Joseph Babinski and Georges Gilles de la Tourette, three of his most well-known disciples.

Jean-Martin Charcot (Boulevard Saint-Germain)

Professor Charcot's (1825-1893) (Figure 1) contribution to Neurology is outstanding and well-known worldwide, including the description of several neurological diseases, such as lateral amyotrophic sclerosis (ALS) (named after him as Charcot's disease), multiple sclerosis (Charcot and Vulpian described it as *sclerose in plaques*), Charcot-Marie-Tooth's disease (hereditary sensory and motor neuropathy), tabetic arthropathy (Charcot's joints), the clinical description of Parkinson's disease, the pathogenesis of intracerebral hemorrhage (the microaneurysms of Charcot-Bouchard), among so many others. He was also particularly interested in hysteria and studied different aspects of this puzzling condition.^{1,2,3}

Professor Charcot lived in different streets and *arrondissements* of Paris, including the Rue du Faubourg Poissonnière, Paris IX; Cité de Trévis, Paris IX; Avenue du Coq, Paris IX; l'Hôtel de Chimay, Quai Malaquais Paris (1875); and finally his most famous address at the Boulevard Saint-Germain, 217 (previously l'Hôtel de Varangeville), in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, Paris VII. (1884) (Figure 1). Charcot also had a summer house at Neuilly Sur Seine (Ile-de-France), in the outskirts of Paris, and the street of this country home now bears the name of his son - Boulevard du

Commandant Charcot.^{1,4} In his aristocratic mansion at 217, Boulevard Saint-Germain, Madame Charcot and her husband entertained “la crème de la crème”, between the months of October and May at their *Soirées du Mardi*.^{1,2} Following Charcot’s death his mansion was sold to his son in law Alfred Edwards, and is now used as the “*Maison de l’Amérique Latine*.”¹

Pierre Marie (Rue de Lille)

Pierre Marie (1853-1940) (Figure 2) was a prominent member of the French neurological world of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and is generally now considered one of the most outstanding of Charcot’s pupils, as well as his favourite, and most energetic apologist.^{1,2,5,6} Marie’s contributions to Neurology and Internal Medicine include the description of the hereditary motor and sensory neuropathy known as Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease; hereditary cerebellar ataxia, known as Marie’s ataxia; a sporadic idiopathic cerebellar ataxia with late onset known as Marie-Foix-Alajouanine’s disease; acromegaly or “*maladie de Marie*”; and ankylosing spondylitis.^{5,6} Pierre Marie lived in Paris, in the Paris VII (“7^{ème} Arrondissement”), at 76 Rue de Lille.⁵ (Figure 2)

Joseph Babinski (Boulevard Haussmann)

Joseph Babinski (1857-1932) (Figure 3) was Charcot’s ‘chef de clinique’ from 1885-1887.^{1,2,7,8} and had a filial affection for ‘Le’.^{1,2,7,8} Among his best known contributions to neurology are his description of the plantar response associated with pyramidal lesions which earned him eponymous fame; the semiology of deep tendon reflexes; his detailed description of many of the symptoms of neurosyphilis; his work on cerebellar and vestibular dysfunction and his studies on Pithiatism.^{7,8} Joseph Babinski lived together with his family in the Boulevard Montparnasse, after that in the Rue Bonaparte and finally in 170-bis Boulevard Haussmann, Paris VIII, together with his brother, Henri Babinski (Figure 3).^{7,8} Henri Babinski was a civil engineer and wrote a very famous book entitled “*Gastronomie Pratique*”, under the pen name of Ali-Bab.^{7,8} During a special Sunday lunch at the Babinskis, On one occasion when Pierre Marie was invited, for lunch Henri Babinski was appalled when his brother’s colleague added water to the glass of a very famous vintage wine. Henri later rebuked his brother saying “*Marie will not be invited again*”.⁷

Georges Gilles de la Tourette (Rue de l'Université)

Gilles de la Tourette (1857-1904) is now remembered for his article "*Etude sur une affection nerveuse caractérisée par de l'incoordination motrice accompagnée d'écholalie et de coprolalie*".^{1,2,9,10} (Figure 4) Professor Charcot - who Tourette not only admired as his mentor, but even worshipped as a medical God - proposed naming this neurological condition as "*Maladie de Gilles de la Tourette*".^{1,9} Gilles de la Tourette was Charcot's "*Chef de Clinique*" and became his most devoted even sycophantic disciple recording all his master's lectures in long hand for subsequent publication went to published several papers on neurological diseases, .Gilles de la Tourette published extensively on hysteria .^{1,2,9,10} Gilles de la Tourette moved quite a bit from one address to another, including 36 Rue Bonaparte, Paris VI (1878); 43 Rue Monge, Paris V (1879); 14 Rue de Beaune, Paris VI (1886); and 39 Rue de l'Université, Paris VII (1893).⁹ (Figure 4)

Conclusion

In the late nineteenth century, Paris was the reference centre of Neurology in the world, and Professor Charcot was the most celebrate neurologist and professor of Neurology, with an outstanding output pouring out of his headquarters at the Salpêtrière Hospital (Figure 5).^{1,2,3,4} At that time, Charcot and his most triumvirate of favourite pupils - Pierre Marie, Joseph Babinski and Gilles de la Tourette - lived in different streets of Paris, predominantly in the districts ("*Arrondissements*") known as Paris VII and VIII (Figure 6).^{1,2,3,4,5,8,9} In this historical review we are remembering and visiting, as a "*Flaneur Neurologique in Paris*", the addresses of the houses of these famous and outstanding Parisian neurologists from the late XIX century.

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Figures:



Figure 1 – Professor Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893) and his house at the Boulevard Saint-Germain (Hôtel de Varangeville), Paris.

(Extracted from Google Images: health.howstuffworks.com, accessed on 12th October, 2016; and extracted from Google Images: Wikiward, 12th October, 2016)



Figure 2 – Pierre Marie (1853-1940) and his house at Rue de Lille, Paris. (Extracted from Google Images: <http://www.historiadelamedicina.org/marie.html>, accessed on 10th April 2017).



Figure 3 - Joseph Babinski (1857-1932) and house, at Boulevard Haussmann, Paris. (Extracted from Google Images: Wikipedia, October 12th, 2016 and Himetop.wikidot, October 12th, 2016)



Figure 4 – Gilles de la Tourette (1857-1904) and his house at Rue de l'Université, Paris. (Extracted from Google Images: Wikimedia Commons, October 12th, 2016)



Figure 5 – Salpêtrière Hospital – Paris: (Extracted from Google Images: geotracteur.fr/blog, October 12th, 2016)

