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Vascular Medicine at the Old Vilnius University

The objective of this presentation is to describe the origins of angiology in Lithuania by analyzing primary and secondary sources at the Vilnius University Library.

Even in the early 16th–century writings of the surgeon and barbers guild (*Fraternitas chirurgorum et barbitonsororum*) knowledge of blood vessel anatomy is apparent. The early writings of the Vilnius University medical faculty mostly refer to the diagnoses of the diseases of the veins and arteries as well as the lymphatics. The surgeon Jacques Briôtet (1746–1818) lectured on aneurysms (*aneurysma spurium* and *aneurysma verum*) as well as on the amputations of the extremities. The anatomist Joannes Andreas Lobenwein (1758–1820) gave a course of lectures on the arteries, veins and lymphatics. The therapist and clinician Joseph Frank (1771–1842) and the physician Jokūbas Šimkevičius (1775–1818) published an article on the diseases of the aorta and a follow-up method in cases of arterial occlusion. Subsequently, some rather complex surgical procedures were performed on the superficial leg veins as well as the peripheral and carotid arteries. Šimkevičius in his text *Nauka o chirurgii teoretycznej i praktycznej* [The Science of Theoretical and Practical Surgery] (1806) describes diagnostic and treatment principles of venous diseases and aneurysms of peripheral arteries. The surgeon Wacław Pelikan (1790–1873) tried to improve the blood supply in the ischemic leg by ligating the femoral vein.

During a period of ten years until the closing of Vilnius University in 1832, eight graduates completed their dissertations on arterial aneurysms and venous diseases. In 1824, the first dissertation on auscultation, inspired by the French physician and inventor of the stethoscope (1816) René Laennec, was published in Vilnius. This method opened up new possibilities in cardiology and angiology diagnostics.

After the closing of Vilnius University in 1832 and then the closing of the Vilnius Medical-Surgical Academy in 1842, research and practical work in vascular medicine in Lithuania was continued by members of the Vilnius Medical Society. The establishment of this society in 1805 thus played an important role in the development of angiology in Lithuania.