

MEDICINE, TRAVEL & ANTHROPOLOGY

from the Library of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach

A Catalogue of the Blumenbach/Herbst Collection
With a Supplement from our Stock

Catalogue Six

Jeremy Norman & Co., Inc.

THE BLUMENBACH/HERBST COLLECTION

Traverse City, Michigan, a resort community sometimes called "The Cherry Capital of the World," seemed like an unlikely location for a first edition of Harvey's *De motu cordis* (1628). Nevertheless, early in 1977, I was on the track of a copy there. I received a letter from Robert M. Herbst of Lake Leelanau, an even smaller resort town outside of Traverse City, summarizing his library of more than 500 medical and travel books. Most of Herbst's library had been assembled by that celebrated 18th century polyhistor, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, whose name was already familiar to me as the founder of anthropology.

The list of books which Herbst sent to me was mouth-watering—first editions of Harvey, Berengario da Carpi, Vesalius, etc., etc., and important travel books which Blumenbach used and annotated. I knew that among his diverse publications Blumenbach had compiled one of the first subject bibliographies of medical historical literature—*Introductio in historiam medicinae litterariam* (1786; item 63). From Herbst's list it was clear that he



E. F. G. Herbst, discoverer of "Herbst's cells or corpuscles" and persorption, from a photograph c. 1880 in the possession of Robert M. Herbst.

had some of the very books used by Blumenbach to compile that bibliography. What Herbst described seemed to be a large portion of Blumenbach's working library, many books Blumenbach used for his own wide-ranging researches, books presented to him by his students and colleagues, and even annotated working copies of some of his own publications. Many of the books were outstanding collectors' items in themselves, but what was most extraordinary was that the books were part of a single important library assembled c. 1775–1840. It was hard to believe that this collection had remained intact until the present. When Herbst casually mentioned that he looked forward to hearing of my "possible interest in these books", I hastened to reply in the affirmative.

Now that our catalogue is finally complete, I would like to relate the history of the collection and to point out some of its highlights within the context of the careers of its original owner, Blumenbach, and the three very long-lived members of the Herbst family who have held it over the past 140 years.

The first Herbst to own the Blumenbach books was Robert Herbst's grandfather, Ernst Friedrich Gustav Herbst (1803–93; see portrait). Gustav Herbst, as he preferred to be known, was a pupil and later colleague of Blumenbach at Göttingen. We now know that he purchased the books at the auction of Blumenbach's library in 1840 (see illustration and supplement item S17a). Study of the printed auction catalogue suggests that Herbst purchased about one-fifth of the total Blumenbach library, and that Herbst's selection reflected both his taste for rare medical classics as well as his own particular research interests in anatomy and physiology. After receiving his M.D. at Göttingen, Herbst remained there as "Privat Dozent." He became an assistant under Blumenbach in the "Museum," was appointed assistant librarian for the medical faculty, was awarded a Blumenbach Fellowship for study in London, and was eventually appointed "Ausserordentlich Professor" on the Göttingen medical faculty.

Today E. F. Gustav Herbst is probably most often remembered for his discovery of the so-called "Herbst's bodies or corpuscles"—the sensory terminals in the skin of the beaks of birds. These he first described in *Ueber die Pacinischen Körper und ihre Bedeutung* (1848; Dobson, *Anatomical eponyms* [1962]92). In addition, Herbst published experiments describing the appearance of starch particles in the lymph and subsequently in the blood after ingestion of massive doses of starch in the stomach of dogs. The validity of this observation, long discredited, has only recently been recognized. The phenomenon, now known as persorption, has been named the "Herbst Effect" in the German literature. These observations appeared in Herbst's book on the lymphatic

Verzeichniß

der vom

weil. Obermedicinalrath Blumenbach

nachgelassenen

Bücher,

welche

Montags den 27. Juli 1840

und an den folgenden Tagen

Abends von 6 bis 8 Uhr

in der

Wohnung des Univ.-Gerichts = Procurators

Fr. Just. Schepeler

an der Südenstraße

meistbietend verkauft werden sollen.

Göttingen, 1840.

Dieses Verzeichniß wird durch den Buchbinder Menzel jun. (Nro. 443. Südenstraße) ausgegeben.

Kostet 4 Pf. zum Besten der Armen.

517a. Catalogue of the auction of Blumenbach's library, from which the present collection was formed.

system, *Das Lymphgefäß-system* (1844; Leiber & Olbert, *Die klinischen Eponyme* [1968]198).

Herbst's neat signature can frequently be found in the books near that of Blumenbach. Herbst did not have Blumenbach's habit of annotating the books, but he did apply his librarian's classification system to his own private library. Nearly pencilled on the rear pastedown of many volumes are such abbreviations as "Hist. Nat.", "Anat.", etc. With a librarian's expert knowledge, Herbst selected many of the choicest and most valuable books in Blumenbach's library. The collection also contains significant books such as Wagner's *Physiologie* (4 vols., 1842-53; item 531), and other books presented to Herbst by their authors.

Robert M. Herbst prepared for me a brief history of the Blumenbach/Herbst collection from the death of his

grandfather in 1893 to the present. The books remained in Göttingen until 1900 when they were shipped to Zurich, and from Zurich to New York. Robert M. Herbst's father, Robert Philipp Herbst (1849-1930), left Göttingen about 1866 to pursue a business career in America, leaving home at the early age of 17 to avoid conscription in the Prussian Army. Not being a scientist, Robert Philipp Herbst stored the books as family heirlooms, and willed them to his son, the present owner, who had shown an early interest in the library. A professor of organic chemistry, now retired in Lake Leelanau, Michigan, Dr. Robert M. Herbst taught at Columbia University, New York University, and at Michigan State University in East Lansing. Early in his career he came into contact with the great historian, Howard Adelman, and others who stimulated his researches on the Blumenbach/Herbst collection. He prepared a very comprehensive cross-index of the collection, which was of considerable assistance to us in preparing this catalogue.

The 555 item catalogue of the Blumenbach/Herbst collection, and our own supplement of 124 items, reflect a cross-section of the extremely diverse interests of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840), one of the most influential contributors to the history of anthropology, comparative anatomy, and natural history in general. From the ownership inscriptions in some of the books, Blumenbach developed his scholarly interests at an early age. His earliest dated acquisition in our catalogue is item 409. Peyer, *Parerga anatomica* (1682). Blumenbach acquired this technical medical book when he was only 15 years old, studying at the Gymnasium at Gotha. In 1769 Blumenbach completed his Gymnasium studies and enrolled at the University of Jena. K. F. Marx, Blumenbach's personal physician and biographer, points out¹ that Blumenbach selected Jena mainly because he wanted to attend the medical lectures of Carl Friedrich Kaltschmied (1706-69; G-M 3424.1), but on the very day Kaltschmied's lectures commenced, Kaltschmied dropped dead from apoplexy at a wedding dance for one of his friends. Blumenbach's inscription in his copy of the first edition of Eustachi's *Tabulae anatomicae* (1714; item 178) indicates that he purchased it at the auction of Kaltschmied's books in 1770. The same year Blumenbach also purchased item 322. Lieutaud; and in 1771, item 61. Blankaart. Unfortunately Blumenbach did not always take special care to date his ownership inscriptions, and our chronology of his book acquisition is consequently spotty.

After studying at Jena for three years, Blumenbach transferred to the more famous university at Göttingen in 1772. Not only was he occupied with the medical

¹Bendyshe, *The anthropological treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach* (1865; reprint 1977) 43. See item 518.

course, but also with the care of a natural history collection and with anthropological ideas. His burgeoning interest in these latter subjects is reflected in his acquisition of item 475. Solinus, *De memorabilibus mundi* (1512) in 1772 and item 2. Acosta, *Historie naturael en morael van de Westersche Indien* (1624) in 1773.

Blumenbach's medical acquisitions at this period include some of the fundamental works in anatomy and physiology. Certainly the most extraordinary is his copy of Harvey's *De motu cordis* (1628; item 240), which he acquired in 1774 at the age of only 22! His extensive annotations on the fly-leaves record his study of its rarity and bibliographical history. Also noteworthy is the Latin motto beneath his signature on the title (see frontispiece to this catalogue): "Naturae species, ratioque." While we cannot translate this brief phrase with exactitude, we think "the appearance of nature, and its theory" or "the appearance of nature, and its plan" might be appropriate. Blumenbach seems to be saying that the scientist must interpret nature. This phrase might have been his motto, at least early in his career, as he published it on the verso of the title page of the first edition of his M.D. dissertation, *De generis humani varietate nativa* (1775; *Printing and the mind of man* 219).



S15. Portrait of Blumenbach c. 1800.

In this celebrated thesis published when he was 23, Blumenbach essentially founded scientific anthropology. He was one of the first scientists to view man as an object of natural history and saw in him "the most perfect of all domesticated animals." Yet he was careful to emphasize the differences between man and the lower animals, and his data were later used for evidence against Darwinism. In his dissertation one can find the first reliable survey of the characteristics and distribution of the human races.

The first edition of the dissertation included Blumenbach's division of mankind into four races, based on selected combinations of head shape, skin color and hair form. In the second edition of 1781 (item S10) he found it necessary to expand this division into five races, but his famous terms "Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malayan" were not used until the third edition of 1795 (item S13; Bendyshe 99). Some writers have called Blumenbach the founder of scientific racism because his pentagenist arrangement was the first that proved successful, and is the foundation on which all subsequent racial divisions have been based. Nevertheless, Blumenbach attacked all political and social abuses of anthropological ideas, especially the slave trade. He was particularly incensed by the notion that black men were inferior to whites, and Bendyshe (57) notes that he had a collection of books written by black authors (see item 18. Equiano, *Olaudah Equiano's oder Gustav Wasa's, des Afrikaners merkwürdige Lebensgeschichte von ihm selbst geschrieben*). However, Blumenbach did believe the skull of a Georgian woman in his collection to be the most symmetrical and perfect and with this point in mind gave the name Caucasian to the Indo-European race.

Blumenbach's skull collection, the greatest of his day, was the principal foundation for his investigations into the natural history of mankind. He published a catalogue of it in the form of six thin pamphlets called *Decades*, plus a supplement, during 1790–1828. For obvious reasons this set of pamphlets is practically never found complete, especially with the supplement, as in our item S12.

Unlike some anthropologists, Blumenbach did not travel outside of Europe, and thus relied for research data on museum collections, on specimens sent to him by travelers world-wide, and on information to be found in the literature both of medicine and of voyages and travels. One early acquisition to which he must have referred with great frequency was item 378. *Museographia* (1727; purchased in 1774)—a guide to museums throughout the world. Blumenbach left heavy annotations in the sections concerning natural history and anatomical collections. A work which certainly supplied him with both anatomical information on man and data on the primates was item 506. Tulp, *Observationes medicae* (1652). The book includes the first use in Europe of the term "orang-outang," and Blumenbach correctly noted

in his copy that what Tulp was describing was actually a chimpanzee.

For anatomical data on the diverse peoples of the world Blumenbach searched the medical literature, both ancient and modern. In footnotes to editions of his dissertation he cites item 45. Berengario da Carpi, *Commentaria . . . super Mundini* (1521) and item 517. Vesalius, *Fabrica* (1555). Because his inscriptions in these important books are undated we cannot know for sure whether or not the copies in the collection were used for his early researches. Other classic works definitely used in his early researches were item 134. Coiter—a work of virtually legendary rarity—and Albinus' highly useful edition of Fabricius' embryological and anatomical works (item 182; acquired in 1777).

Voyage and travel accounts in the collection include records of visits to most parts of the world, and were probably selected for their anthropological data both physical and cultural. Among the important early travel accounts are 427. Rauwolf, 341. Magnus, and 198. Frobisher, which respectively document the Middle East, Scandinavia, and North America. Another account of particular anthropological interest is the very small book by Örn (item 390). This appears to be the first account of Lapland written by a Lapp.

Concerning peoples of the Pacific Islands Blumenbach assembled a collection of publications relating to Cook's voyages. What remains in the Blumenbach/Herbst collection is a small group of ephemera including items 193. and 194. Forster. Item 388 concerns Oberea, Queen of Tahiti, and the celebrated Omai. Characteristically Blumenbach has made notes cross-referencing passages on Tahitian sexual practices to the account given by Hawkesworth of Cook's first voyage. Several of the books in the collection tend to have risqué qualities which Blumenbach with his anthropologist's taste for variations in sexual behavior never failed to point out in his notes.

Another subject which combined Blumenbach's medical and anthropological studies was Egyptian mummies. On a trip to London Blumenbach examined several mummies, and wrote his *Observations* on them, addressed to Sir Joseph Banks, with whom he visited on the tour. Item 68 is the offprint of Blumenbach's paper, which he wrote in English. The collection also contains what Blumenbach believed to be the first monograph on Egyptian mummies—Strüppe's obviously rare pamphlet of 1574, both in its Latin and German versions (items 169 & 170; see also 167–71).

Blumenbach's trip to London was exceptional for him as he never otherwise travelled beyond Germany, Switzerland, and France. Through extensive correspondence and exceptionally wide social contacts (he was a member of no less than 78 scientific societies) and through his

hundreds of important students, many of whom undertook expeditions to far-away lands, he was apparently able to assemble more than sufficient data. Among his students were some of the greatest scientific travelers of the 19th century: Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859), Georg Heinrich von Langsdorff (1774–1852), Prince Maximilian von Wied (1782–1867). Together these men authored some of the most spectacular travel books of all time. It is a pity that the collection does not contain the presentation copies which they undoubtedly sent Blumenbach. However, our supplement does contain Humboldt's great *Kosmos* (1845–62; S72) and the *Travels in Arabia* (1829; S20) of Johann Ludwig Burckhardt (1784–1817), yet another Blumenbach student.

Throughout the notes to each catalogue entry we have tried to make connections between the books for sale and Blumenbach's scholarly contributions. His scholarly output was enormous, and our catalogue contains only a representative sampling of his writings. Among those not already mentioned is item 62. *Prolusio anatomica de sinibus frontilibus* (1779). This records the lecture he delivered on appointment as ordinary professor of medicine at Göttingen. Bendyshe (19) notes that Blumenbach was the first to distinguish the nature and destination of the frontal sinuses, as well as their condition in disease.

Item 64. *Specimen physiologiae comparatae inter animantia calidi et frigidi sanguinis* (1787), interleaved and with more than 1000 words of autograph notes, has particular interest for illustrating the different styles of handwriting Blumenbach used at different stages of his life. Adept in many languages, Blumenbach characteristically annotated books in the languages in which they were published. The page illustrated here has notes in German, French, Latin, and English. The scraggly hand at the bottom of the page was the result of his switch from writing with his right hand to his left after a stroke. Although he lived to the age of 88, he apparently never wore spectacles, and was able to return to writing with his right hand at the age of 87! "If you ever got him to talk on the chapter of writing, he took care never to forget to recommend the art of writing handily in your pocket, which had been of great service to him on diplomatic missions, through the agency of a short thick lead-pencil and strong parchment paper" (Bendyshe 38).

Apart from anthropology Blumenbach's most influential writings were on comparative anatomy and natural history. His textbook on comparative anatomy (item S16) was epoch-making. Blumenbach believed that he was the first, at least in Germany, to lecture on comparative anatomy, and that his text book was the first to deal with the entire subject.

A major lacuna in the Blumenbach/Herbst collection is Blumenbach's *Handbuch der Naturgeschichte* (1806–11) which is present only in translation (e.g. first French

Monro fat gaffer af rim meoffeldwote 3/4 Othung
unter wasser blie: der dytel 5 der 6 thundt brufft rim
frog ze verpuffen. on fishes p. 62.

Ranas in vapor aqua jelle aspiugni, non in V&B Duhis
vapore. Lohow-Festi. Haller 6. p. 14. p. 162.

mitte in rim alba Ubra (bij Munden) arthropes d'annost. L. n. Helmolz
in rim alba fide die in rim Muffenwelle ajmunt d'epholz tafamwot. fof =
Med. Schmid in litteris 1817
of Experiences fungulices faites sur la vitalite des crapauds. par M. Henffant
in Journal encyclopedique Juill. 1772. T. V. pag. 263. 84.
Ms La note rapportee a ce sujet dans les obs. s. la phys. par l'abbé Rozier 1772 ibid
T. V. n'est point exacte ni conforme a la verite.
Darnit zu troyl. Voigt's wirtsch. Beytrag. VIII. p. 507.

2 not **
Le Cat. faubourg Mayon. XVIII 8^e p. 264 54
Munster in 993 96. p. 426 84.
H. Götting. Zeyher Cat. 97:1. 190.
plumais of J. C. W. Voigt d'Arna mine-
ralogie B. Götting 128. Weim. 1799. 8.
2 J. H. Voigt (Ailoud) Strassburg XI 6.
183. p. 133 ~ 51.

Sam'l Hitchcock's account of Frogs found in
the Earth. in his memoirs of the American Geol-
ogy of Arts & Sciences vol. II. P. I. p. 63 84. Götting
geol. mine. Examen, find over in mine 7. p. 8
20-25 feet d. t. inf. into Klina fress, which ap-
peared to adhere closely to the earth, & perfectly pre-
pared & dead. - when they were exposed to the
heat of the sun, in a short time, they appeared to
revivify: & soon became full of life & activity. - My
informant told me that he was himself a witness to as
many as 20 or 30 of them.

Fragment d'Arna 26. p. 50

Buckland on the vitality of Frogs enclosed in Stone &
wood (1825) in Zoological Journal no XI. 1830 p. 314 ~ 20

64. Annotations by Blumenbach in his paper on hot and cold-blooded animals, showing the different handwriting styles which he used at different periods in his life. The scraggly hand at the bottom

apparently dates from the time he switched from writing with his right hand to his left after a stroke. He later recovered writing ability with his right hand.

translation, item 70). However, present in the supplement (S14) is the rare complete run of his 10-part series of illustrations of natural history curiosities, the *Abbildungen naturhistorischer Gegenstände* (1796–1810). The collection also contains many other unusual publications on natural history, of which the most important is Turner's *Avium praecipuarium* (1544; item 507)—the first scientific treatise on ornithology.

Although much of the collection relates to travel, anthropology, and natural history, the bulk of the books, of course, concerns medicine. At the relatively early age of 34 Blumenbach published one of the first subject bibliographies of medical historical literature, his *Introductio in historiam medicinae litterariam* (1786). This work, which predated much of his later researches in other fields, illustrates Blumenbach's early intense interest in medical history and may explain the presence of so many classic works in the collection. It is important for us to remember, I think, that Blumenbach was not an historian of medicine, but a practical researcher in the forefront of the scientific knowledge of his day. He collected his historical books primarily for their practical research value since even some of the Renaissance treatises had not been made fully obsolete by the science of his time. Among the major medical classics not previously mentioned here is an impressive run of publications by the Bartholins (items 26–33 & Supplement S4–6). Items 231–36 represent a significant group of books by Haller.

Besides the first edition of *De motu cordis* (1628), the collection contains some important related works including Harvey's rare response to Riolan (item 242) and other early writings pro and con (items 241, 243). Our supplement contains no less than 18 additional Harvey items, including the second edition of *De motu cordis*, the first and second English translations, and Sir Thomas Millington's copy of Harvey's *De generatione animalium* (1651), bound in contemporary red morocco (item S50). We have attempted to make our supplement a relevant addition to the Blumenbach/Herbst collection and have included in it works by authors already represented in the collection or works whose subject matter parallels the collection as a whole. We hope you enjoy the catalogue.

Jeremy M. Norman

Some additional Blumenbach & Herbst references (not for sale).

BARON, Walter. Evolutionary ideas in the writings of J. F. Blumenbach (1752–1840). *Proc. 10th Int. Congr. Hist. Sci.* (Ithaca, 1962) 2: 945–7. Paris: Hermann, 1964.

BARON, Walter; STICKER, Bernhard. Ansätze zur historischen Denkweise in der Naturforschung an der Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert. 1. Die Anschauungen Johann Friedrich Blumenbachs über die Geschichtlichkeit der Natur. 2. Die Konzeption der Entwicklung von Sternen und Sternsystemen durch Wilhelm Herschel. *Sudhoffs Arch.*, 1963, 47: 19–35.

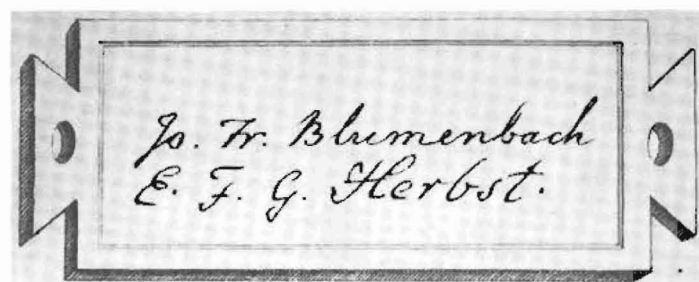
BLUMENBACH's library. *J. Hist. Med.*, 1955, 10: 123–4.

EBSTEIN, Erich. Aus Blumenbachs Studierstube. *Arch. Gesch. Naturwiss. Tech.*, 1912, 4: 234–8.

PLISCHKE, Hans. Johann Friedrich Blumenbachs Einfluss auf die Entdeckungsreisenden seiner Zeit. *Abhandl. Ges. Wiss. Göttingen, Philol. Hist. Kl., neu ser.*, 20: viii, 107. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1937.

HERBST, Gustav. Das Lymphgefäßsystem und seine Verrichtung. *Persorption-eine historische Dokumentation*. Munich: von Heyden, c. 1968.

VOLKHEIMER, G. Über parazelluläre, chylöse Resorptionsmechanismen (Herbst-Effect). *Ernährungsfor-*
schung, 10, nos 2–3: 280–83.



Blumenbach's booklabel with his autograph signature, to which Herbst later added his own name.