



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Revealing the production process of Joaquín Albarrán's *Les Tumeurs de la Vessie* 125 years after its writing[☆]



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Abstract

Objective: Investigate how in 1891 Joaquín Albarrán organized and wrote his *Les Tumeurs de la Vessie*, a manuscript printed by Georges Steinheil in 1892.

Material and methods: An analysis was conducted of the manuscript that compiles the casuistry set forth in the work, which helps us understand his production process. The contents of the text are analyzed, revealing the originality and value of the text in the manuscript.

Results: The book describes the author's personal histopathology findings from surgical and autopsied cases in Necker Hospital between 1868 and 1891: 28 numbered autopsy specimens and 67 identified by the patient's name (or, in lieu thereof, the physician's name, bed, ward and date of surgery). The notebook also contains the preliminary design of a number of photomicrographs printed in the book. Histopathology data are provided on the classification of bladder cancer, the pathway of lymphocytic spread, the genesis of cancer, tumoural heterogeneity and a number of original descriptions (squamous cell carcinoma, Von Brunn nests). Other notable clinical concepts include diagnostic symptomatology, prognosis assessment, extirpation by vesical height (with primary closure of the bladder and abdominal wall), the role of nascent endoscopic tumor extirpation and the experimental development of radical cystectomy with urinary diversion.

Conclusions: Joaquín Albarrán analyzed his experience and that of professors Reverdin, Guyon and Horteloup. He reviewed autopsies and surgical specimens from patients and performed the histopathology study in each case. The main original observations from the work are discussed.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

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Desvelando el proceso de producción de *Les Tumeurs de la Vessie* de Joaquín Albarrán 125 años después de su escritura

Resumen

Objetivo: Investigar cómo Joaquín Albarrán organizó y escribió en 1891 *Les Tumeurs de la Vessie*, obra impresa por Georges Steinheil en 1892.

Material y métodos: Análisis del manuscrito que compila la casuística expuesta en la obra y permite entender su proceso de producción. Se analizan los contenidos del texto, y se pone en evidencia la originalidad y el valor del mismo en el tratado.

Resultados: El cuaderno ordena y describe hallazgos histopatológicos realizados personalmente por el autor sobre casos intervenidos o autopsiados en el Hospital Necker entre 1868 y 1891: 28 especímenes numerados de autopsia y 67 identificados por el nombre del paciente (o en su defecto médico, cama y pabellón, y fecha de intervención). El cuaderno contiene también el diseño preliminar de algunas microfotografías impresas en el libro. Se aportan datos histopatológicos sobre la clasificación del cáncer vesical, la vía de extensión linfática, la génesis del cáncer, la heterogeneidad tumoral y algunas descripciones originales (carcinoma epidermoide, nidos de Von Brunn). Otros conceptos clínicos destacados en la obra son la semiología diagnóstica, la evaluación del pronóstico, la extirpación por talla vesical con cierre primario de vejiga y pared abdominal, el papel de la naciente extirpación endoscópica del tumor y el desarrollo experimental de la cistectomía radical con derivación urinaria.

Conclusiones: Joaquín Albarrán analizó su experiencia y la de los profesores Reverdin, Guyon y Horteloup. Revisó autopsias y especímenes quirúrgicos de pacientes intervenidos y realizó el estudio histopatológico en cada caso. Se discuten las principales observaciones originales de la obra.

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Introduction

Joaquín María Albarrán y Domínguez (1860–1912), Spanish Cuban doctor, pioneer of urologic surgery and favorite disciple of Jean-Casimir Félix Guyon (1831–1920), was one of the most important personalities of the international urology of his time and marked a milestone in the development of the specialization of urologic surgery.^{1–3} His linguistic and cultural ties with Spain made him the promoter of the main Spanish schools of urology at the beginning of the 20th century.^{3–5}

Various events and studies were promoted on the occasion of the centenary of his death. Those events and studies have made the most of Joaquín Albarrán's work and his roots.^{3,6} *“Étude sur le Rein des Urinaires”*⁷ was his first book published in 1889 by Georges Steinheil.^{8,9} It was recently reviewed by studying unpublished material composed of watercolors and original manuscripts. Although *“Escherichia coli”* had not yet been named, Albarrán described *“pyogenic bacillus”* and its role in renal infection, bacteremia, kidney failure, sepsis and death of the patient.^{8–10}

In 1890, Joaquín Albarrán was named *Chef de clinique des maladies des voies urinaires* at Paris Faculty of Medicine, in Necker Hospital (Fig. 1). He worked hard to write *“Les Tumeurs de la Vessie”*¹¹ which was distributed in February 1892. It was the same year in which he acquired his status as *Professeur agrégé à la Faculté*.¹² This work marked a turning point in his professional recognition, both in his Parisian environment and in urology worldwide in a time of turmoil development (Fig. 2).

Several works inspired Albarrán. The most influential work was possibly *“Atlas des Maladies des Voies Urinaires”*¹³ published in 1886 by Jean-Casimir Félix Guyon (1831–1920) and Pierre Bazy (1853–1934). This beautifully illustrated book deals with urogenital and prostate tumors, and describes a non-malignant bladder disease from the autopsy collection of Professor Guyon. It was the same source that Albarrán used for his work. Another key text which inspired Albarrán was the second volume of *“Traité des Maladies des Voies Urinaires”*¹⁴ published in 1792 by François Chopart (1743–1795). It was a monograph devoted to diseases of the bladder. *Manual of General Anatomic Pathology and Foundations of Bacteriology*¹⁵ published in 1890 by Santiago Ramón y Cajal (1852–1934) also shares some flavor with the treatise of Albarrán. Beyond the exquisite histopathologic descriptions of both texts there is an underlying friendship between the authors, or a coincidence itself of editorial tastes of the time to justify the coincidence of the designs and accessories of both works.

Material and methods

We have accessed the original notebook of Joaquín Albarrán. He used it to review the casuistry on which he wrote the treatise *“Les Tumeurs de la Vessie”* and which was preserved thanks to the author's family. The notebook is not signed, but the calligraphy writing corresponds to that of Joaquín Albarrán. It consists of 96 pages of 22 × 17 cm and was produced by Boizot Stationery in Paris (see Appendix A supplementary material). The original manuscript and the

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