

Ophthalmologists and ophthalmic diseases of dignitaries of the Russian Empire (1799-1917).

Igor Zimin, MA, PhD¹ Andrzej Grzybowski MD, PhD^{2,3}

Abstract:

Throughout the imperial period of Russian history from the 18th through the early 20th centuries, members of the Russian Imperial Court had ophthalmic disorders that led to the appearance in the staffing of court physicians. The article presents all of the court ophthalmologists of this period as well as available information on eye problems, including spectacles used by the imperial family.

Key words:

History of Russian Ophthalmology; History of Ophthalmology; History of the 18th century; History of medicine;

Alexander I (reign 1801-1825).

Empress Maria Feodorovna (the wife of Paul I), her son Emperor Alexander I, and his wife Empress Elizabeth Alekseevna suffered from myopia. Their ophthalmic disorders caused the establishment at the Russian imperial court of first a court ophthalmologist, and then an Ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor.

From 1799 to 1820, the post of court was held by Joseph J. Raineri (1759-1835) who graduated from the Medical Academy in Rome and specialized in ophthalmology. In 1795, Raineri arrived in St. Petersburg, and passed the examination for the title of "doctor-ophthalmologist" in the Imperial Medical-Surgical Academy. In 1799, he was appointed as the court eye specialist. Formally, Raineri was responsible for providing eye care to the first persons of the Empire, but for several reasons, the professor-ophthalmologist, J.J. Grude, actually provided this care. This situation caused Raineri to resign in 1820.

The initiator of this decision was J. V. Willie, the first Surgeon in Ordinary to Emperor Alexander I. On January 7, 1820, Willie sent a report to P.M. Volkonsky, the Chief of the General Staff of His Imperial Majesty. Willie reported that Dr. Joseph Ivanovich Grube (1787-1834) a professor-ophthalmologist of the Imperial Medical-Surgical Academy, having "in his conduct of the clinic for eye diseases" been repeatedly summoned to the Winter Palace "for medical treatment of Her Majesty, the Empress Elizabeth Alekseevna, and had often provided medical aid of patients from the Empress Maria Feodorovna and from the Emperor, in particular, military officials, without any excessive remuneration". In the summary part of his report, J.V. Willie asked P.M. Volkonsky "to bring these facts to the attention of His Imperial Majesty, and to request that Mr. Grube be assigned to the Imperial Court as an Ophthalmologist of Their Imperial Majesties".

Willie also pointed out that "the eye doctor Reniery [Raineri], who has never been assigned by me to treat patients suffering from eye diseases and in whom I have not any confidence, has long received excessive rewards which are more than those of Surgeons in Ordinary to the Emperor by 4,000 rubles per year, and was appointed to the court only at the request of the deceased Chief Marshal of the Court Count Tolstoy. This circum-

¹First St. Petersburg Medical University n. a. I. P. Pavlov

²Department of Ophthalmology, University of Warmia and Mazury, Olsztyn, Poland

³Institute for Research in Ophthalmology, Foundation for Ophthalmology Development, Poznan, Poland

stance may serve as a guide for the decision to accept to the highest court a man having much greater dignity in comparison with Dr. Reniery and capable of being useful" . In other words, Willie suggested to the Emperor replace Raineri with Grube.

As a result, on January 9, 1820 Emperor Alexander I signed a decree according to which Grube was appointed "to Our Court as an Ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor, with a salary of 4,000 rubles per year from the State Treasury, leaving him also at the former ophthalmology professor post at the Medical-Surgical Academy"³.

Thus, Grube was the first Ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor of the Russian Empire and this post remained at the imperial court until 1917. It should be clear that the statuses of "an Ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor" and "a court ophthalmologist" had significant differences, since the Ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor was officially engaged in ophthalmologic diseases only of the first persons of the empire, and the "court ophthalmologist" served the entire staff of the imperial court.

Nicholas I (reign 1825-1855).

In December 1825 Nicholas I succeeded Alexander I. In general, Nicholas did not have problems with his eyesight. At least, numerous memoirists who carefully documented minute details of the emperor's life made no mention of such problems.

However, as evidenced by account books, with age the emperor came to suffer from some eye problems. In December 1842, the mechanic Schedel received 129 rubles for "two opera glasses", though this fact alone may be of little ophthalmic significance. However, beginning in November 1852, invoices in various amounts paid to an optician Westberg began to appear: on November, 1852 - 15 rubles; on April, 1853 - 6 rubles 50 kopecks; on May, 1853 - 5 rubles; on September, 1853 - 13 rubles; on February, 1854 - 22 rubles; on September, 1854 - 75 rubles . Of course, the nature of these amounts and the frequency of recurring invoices from the optician Westberg show that in the early 1850s Nicholas I used spectacles. Apparently, the problems were connected with presbyopia ,

since at the end of 1852 Emperor turned 56 years old. However, neither in literature nor in museum collections, has any mention of "ophthalmic" artifacts associated with Nicholas I been preserved to the present time.

The wife of Nicholas I, the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna had serious ophthalmologic diseases, as at the end of her life she was almost blind. Nicholas I mentioned her ophthalmologic problems in 1824 when she was just 26 years old. In January 1824, Nikolai Pavlovich wrote: "My wife has a bout in her eyes, and then, Ruehl⁷ gives drops to her; she is better, and then has a headache"⁸. And in September, 1824, the account books of the future emperor received the record that he was in Prussia and bought from the optician Friese "two lorgnettes for 6 Prussian thalers each"⁹. We can assume with great certainty that those lorgnettes were bought for his wife Alexandra Feodorovna. After her death in 1860, her "gold-rimmed spectacles in an enamel case" were passed to her daughter, Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna as a memorial artifact¹⁰.

After the death of Grube in 1834, the post of ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor was filled by Vassiliy Vassilievich (Theodor Heinrich Wilhelm) Lerche (1791-1847). He was born in Braunschweig, Germany. As with many other Germans in the first half of the 19th century, he made his career in Russia. After graduating in 1812 from the Dorpat University (in modern-day Estonia) with a degree of Doctor of Medicine, Lerche joined the Russian army and accompanied the Russian troops in the foreign campaign of 1813-14. At the end of hostilities, the ophthalmologist polished up his professional knowledge in Paris and Vienna.

In 1829, Lerche was first mentioned in the "Address-calendar" as an ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor, along with Grube. Apparently, he began working de facto as an ophthalmologist at the Winter Palace much earlier (probably by 1817). At least in the first half of the 1820s, he was personally acquainted with Alexander I. Only this can explain the supreme order of the Emperor (dd. March 13, 1824): "In order to maintain the Eye hospital for the poor people arranged by an eye doctor, a physician, and a court

counsellor Lerche, make payments from the Cabinet for his disposal in the amount of 3,000 rubles per year, since March 1, 1824 ... and continue delivery of this amount for the aforesaid hospital"¹¹.

The document refers to the famous Eye hospital in St. Petersburg which was then at the following address: Mokhovaya street, 34. Nicholas I, who had ascended to the throne on December 14, 1825, with the Signed Supreme Decree dated January 1, 1826 not only confirmed the order of his older brother, but also has allocated to the Eye hospital an additional amount of 500 rubles a year "of his Own funds, until futher decree" . Later, the Low vision clinic of Lerche was incorporated into the structure of establishments governed by Empress Maria Feodorovna, with appropriate funding. The clinic kept the annual "imperial grants" from the "Most gracious bounties of His Majesty the Emperor". The clinic received the last supreme benefits in July, 1916.

It should be noted that the Ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor, Lerche, provided professional assistance to two emperors: Alexander I and Nicholas I, and to their spouses for over 20 years (from 1817 to 1847) obtaining by his service the rank of general of an actual state councilor. In his declining years, Lerche was a member of the medical elite of St. Petersburg, being not only an ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor and a privy councilor (equivalent to the military rank of lieutenant-general), but also an honorary member of the Imperial Military Medical Academy and a permanent member of the Military Medical Scientific Committee.

The successor to Lerche for the post of the Ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor was Ivan Ivanovich Kabat (1812-1884). In 1833, after graduating from the course of St. Petersburg Medical-Surgical Academy with a degree in medicine, he enlisted in the military department. Up to 1840, almost every year he went on official assignments to the Russian provinces to combat the eye epidemics in the Army. In 1840, Kabat was appointed as a senior physician at the Petersburg Army Forces Hospital where he led the eye department, and in 1847 he was appointed an ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor Supreme Court¹⁵. Kabat held the position of an ophthalmologist

in Ordinary to the Emperor until his death in 1884. Consequently, he was an ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor for three emperors: Nicholas I, Alexander II, and Alexander III, from 1847 to 1884.

Beginning in 1851, the medical unit of the Ministry of the Imperial Court included the position of Honorary ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor, filled by Karl Andreevich Tillman (1802-1872). Karl Andreevich had a stormy life. Born into a poor family in Germany, he attended a course in medicine at Breslau University, but did not pass the final exams because of a duel. Then, arriving in Russia in 1827, he found a job as a tutor in the family of Lerche, the ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor. Tillman received his medical degree at the University of Dorpat in 1831, and defended his doctoral thesis in 1832. he served as a ship's doctor and worked as an intern in Oranienbaum Naval Hospital. In 1837, Tilman was appointed as a senior doctor in the Petropavlovskiy hospital with the rank of a Privy Councillor.

Problems with eyesight were present in some of the children of Nicholas I. For example, his second son, Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich, was shortsighted since childhood. His younger sister, the Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna, mentioned in her memoirs that "Kostya was short-sighted," so that "uncle Michael called him Aesop"¹⁶. Let us note that Konstantin was the leader of the Liberal Party in the surroundings of Alexander II and the Emperor's ally in the reform to abolish serfdom in Russia in 1861. Perhaps, Konstantin's liberal political views contributed to the destruction of the canons of fashion in the house of the Romanovs. At least, he was the first of the Romanovs who began publicly wearing a pince-nez, monocle, and then eye-glasses. This was documented in several official photos. Memoirists immediately noted that "monocle in his eye gave his face a provocative expression"¹⁷.

Konstantin Nikolayevich began to wear a pince-nez in the 1860s, when the great reforms of Alexander II substantially changed life in Russia. The Grand Duke did not stop at that, and we can see Grand Duke Konstantin with glasses on his nose on one of the water-color paintings of the court artist M. Zichy documenting the baptism of the future czar

Nicholas II in May 1868. Apparently, the Grand Duke allowed himself to wear glasses also for solemn and "clannish" palace ceremonies. A photo of the Grand Duke in glasses was also preserved. It is noteworthy that in this photo the Grand Duke plays the cello. This is a rather "live" instrument, and spectacles in this case are much more "reliable" than a pince-nez.

Alexander II (reign 1855-1881).

The Emperor Alexander II had eye problems related to aging, beginning after the age of 50. At least at the time of his death on March 1, 1881 at the age of 63 years, he used glasses. It is known for sure, because various things that belonged to the czar were picked up on the place of death of Alexander



Caricature of Konstantin Nikolayevich. 1870s.



Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolayevich with pince-nez



Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich bespectacled

II at the gate of the Catherine Canal in St. Petersburg. "A fragment of the lid of a case for the spectacles "has been noted in this extensive list . Apparently, the case with the glasses was either in a pocket of his uniform, or in the pocket of his greatcoat and was broken by the explosion. It is important that the emperor always carried glasses, in the case of need to read any urgent message.

Speaking of glasses, it is important to note that until 1917 the Russian emperors did not have secretaries. The Emperor feared that a secretary would quickly turn into an all-powerful favorite who would provide the monarch with strictly filtered information. Therefore, the whole bureaucratic mechanism of the Empire directly ended with the monarch himself and the daily flow of business documents passed through the hands of the czar. Apparently, a single eyeglass is uncomfortable when working with documents, because it constantly requires the use of one hand.



The ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor, prof. of MMA Nikolay Tikhomirov (1843- 1913).

We underscore that "the highest iconography" has not preserved a single image of the Russian monarchs wearing glasses, including Alexander II. One of the authors (IZ) of this study, has not met in memoir sources a single mention of the fact that Alexander II used glasses and the "fragment of the lid" is the only mention that the

Emperor used glasses only in the narrowest circle when working with documents. Most likely, those glasses were the only pair and they have been "killed" along with the Emperor at the hands of terrorists. Most likely, Alexander II suffered from presbyopia. At the same time, the State Museum-Reserve "Peterhof" preserved a magnifying glass in a frame from the cabinet of Alexander II in the Farm palace; the glass was apparently used by him when working with maps.

Alexander III (reign 1881-1894).

Alexander III (1881-1894) and his wife, the Empress Maria Feodorovna, both had good eyesight.

From 1884 to 1897, the Earl Ivan Khristoforovich Magavli (Johann Philipp Christoph) (1831-1904?) was Ophthalmologist of the Supreme Court in Ordinary to the Emperor. Magavli was atypical among medical professors of the time: Catholic, a British citizen and noble in bearing. He was gradu-



The ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor, prof. of MMA Leonid Georgievich Bellyarminov (1859-1930)

ated from the medical faculty of the University of Dorpat (1850-1856) passed later an assistant practice in a therapeutic clinic at the Medical Faculty of the University of Dorpat (1856), and continued advanced medical education at the universities of Würzburg, Vienna, Prague, Paris and Berlin. In November 1859 he joined the St. Petersburg eye hospital

as the supernumerary intern. From 1861 until 1878 he was a full-time physician on its staff. In April 1873, Migavli received, according to Supreme Decree, the appointment of an honorary ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor. In 1878, he took up the post of director of the St. Petersburg low vision clinic, and in 1884 the post of the ophthalmologist of the Supreme Court in Ordinary to the Emperor¹⁹.

Nicholas II (reign 1894-1917).

From the beginning of the reign of Nicholas II in 1894, the gradual process of replacement of 'old' staff began, and in 1897 Nikolai Ivanovich Tikhomirov replaced Migavli and occupied the post of Ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor. Tikhomirov served in this position until 1912.



Nikolai Ivanovich Tikhomirov, the ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor (1843-1913)

Tikhomirov graduated from the course of the Imperial Medical-Surgical Academy in 1865, and remained at the Academy.

He was awarded the degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1867 for his dissertation "On the phenomena of diffusion through the live cornea". From 1869 he was an assistant in the ophthalmology department in the Clinical Military Hospital. In addition, he served the Troitskaya community of Sisters of Mercy being in 1874. In 1883, Tikhomirov took the position of district ophthalmologist of the Petersburg Military District.



Leonid Georgievich Bellyarminov, Honorary ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor (1859-1930)



Grand Duke Georgiy Mikhailovich, and his wife Greek queen, Grand Duchess Olga Konstantinovna. 1914

Nicholas II (1894-1917) had good eyesight, but his wife, Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, had ophthalmic diseases. When in 1897, the eyesight of 25-year-old Alexandra Feodorovna started to deteriorate after the birth of her second child, the Ophthalmol-

ogist in Ordinary to the Emperor, professor and head of the Ophthalmology Department of the Imperial Military Medical Academy Tikhomirov ordered glasses for her after 12 visits. At the same time, Tikhomirov provided necessary professional assistance to the elder sister of the Empress, Princess Irene of Prussia²².

Among the huge number of photos of the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna, there is none in which she is wearing glasses. She used them, according to tradition, only in the narrowest circle. We note that there are several photographs of Nicholas II, but photographing of the Empress in glasses, even at



Lorgnette of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna

the beginning of the 20th century, was an absolute taboo.

If we talk about the Grand Duchess, stereotypes of behavior began to change at the beginning of the XX century, even in a such conservative environment as the Imperial Court. Therefore, we have occasional shots of the grand duchesses with lorgnettes, and monacles. At the same time, we can say with a high degree of confidence that among her intimates, these ladies enjoyed more comfortable glasses, but they used only "allowed" lorgnettes in the presence of others.

For example, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna, the elder sister of Empress Aleksandra Feodorovna, used a lorgnette. That lorgnette, decorated with blackened bone and with planted monograms

under crowns "IE", and which is stored in the Armory of the Moscow Kremlin, was manufactured in 1911-1916 by Genrikh Vigstrem, one of the best masters of the jewelry firm of Carl Faberge. But there are no photos of the Grand Duchess with a lorgnette.

In subsequent years, the ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor Tikhomirov visited the Emperor's residences from time to time. For example, in the spring of 1902 he treated the 6-year-old Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna. He visited the Winter Palace 17 times in April and March, and the Alexander Palace in Tsarskoye Selo 8 times in April and May. In the summer of 1902, the physician continued to monitor the status of the royal patient from time to time (another 9 visits)²⁴.

In addition to treatment of royal patients, the ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor was engaged in eye treatment for the immediate circle of the Empress. In the spring of 1905, he went 4 times to the Alexander Palace of Tsarskoye Selo, where he treated the eyes of an English babysitter, Miss Orchard. In May, 1905, the ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor Tikhomirov went to the Alexander Palace three more times "for inspection and treatment of eyes of the Englishwoman Miss Orchard". Unfortunately, it is unknown what kind of ophthalmological care was provided to the sick woman.

In April, 1906, for the first time, the new eye doctor was invited to the Alexander Palace of Tsarskoye Selo: professor of the Imperial Military Medical Academy Leonid Georgievich Bellyarminov (1859-1930) was paid 150 rubles for 3 visits. But only in 1912 was academician Bellyarminov appointed the Honorary ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor, a position he maintained until 1917.

Bellyarminov was graduated from the Imperial Military Medical Academy (1883) and was retained by the Academy for the preparation of his dissertation. In 1886 he defended his thesis for the degree of Doctor of Medicine: "The experience of the graphical method to the study of pupil movements and intraocular pressure". In 1887 he was sent abroad to improve his skills for two years, where Bellyarminov worked under the guidance of Helmholtz, Waldeyer, Virchow,

Schweigger, and others. In 1889 Bellyarminov became a privat-docent of the Imperial Military Medical Academy (MMA) in ophthalmology and in with low vision clinic; since 1893 - Professor of Military Medical Academy in the department of ophthalmology with the low vision clinic. In 1893 he became a consultant on eye diseases at the Main Military Medical Department, then a deliberative member of the Military Medical Scientific Committee. In 1898-1905, he was a Chairman of the St. Petersburg Ophthalmological Society. In 1893 he became a member of the Council on the Blind under the patronage of Empress Maria Alexandrovna where he organized the "Special patronage department for the prevention of blindness". In Soviet times, Bellyarminov created his school of ophthalmologists.

In July 1906, a chambermaid of the Empress in her note to the secretary of Alexandra Feodorovna pointed out that "in April, the ophthalmologist Bellyarminov was three times in Tsarskoye Selo at Her Majesty for her treatment" . From 1906 up to 1917, Bellyarminov treated the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna.

At the beginning of 1912, Bellyarminov conducted a routine inspection of all the children of the Emperor Nicholas II. It was a significant event for the doctor. Moreover, after his visit to Tsarskoye Selo, he received the title of honorary Ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor. His business card preserved, in addition to the official text: "Academician Leonid Georgievich Bellyarminov. Honorary Ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor of His Majesty Court. Professor of the Imperial Military Medical Academy" the following inscription: "I had the good fortune to be invited to Tsarskoye Selo to examine eyes of His Imperial Highness, the Heir and Tsarevich, and Grand Duchesses Olga Nikolaevna, Tatiana Nikolaevna, Maria Nikolaevna, and Anastasia Nikolaevna in the beginning of 1912". In November, 1912 the ophthalmologist again examined the eyes of the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna.

In the spring of 1916, Alexandra Feodorovna was repeatedly mentioned in the letters to Nicholas II on her problems with eyesight, "Bellyarminov says that I need to have more powerful reading glasses; my eyes are over-

worked, and pains are caused from gout, as well as nerve pain in the face, but he was pleased with my eyes, and he says that they are in good condition, but I had retired them. I'm glad to see him, because the pain is sometimes very strong, and make me nervous, and I see worse when I'm reading (I think they fade from the fact that I cry a lot, and many unshed tears that fill my eyes and which should disappear by themselves, but I did not tell him about all that). Then he gave me an ointment to apply on my eyes, if they hurt a lot".

Apparently, the problems were serious enough (March 10, 1916): "My eye hurts badly when I'm writing; yesterday there was nothing I could do the whole day, and it was awful during a medication, like a pencil stuck in the middle of my eye, and all eyes badly hurt, so it's better to quit now and continue later"; (13 March 1916) "I lay down later due to pain; although it is not strong, it is still going on, especially in my right eye".

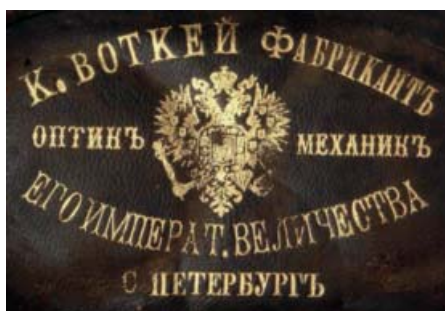
The Empress even tried to explain in letters to her husband the reasons for those pains. It should be noted that in the autumn of 1914 she attended a course of lectures on anatomy in a wartime volume for Sisters of Mercy, and was familiar with a certain amount of medical terminology (March 14, 1916): "My eyes (and brain) have severe pain all day: it is on the trigeminal nerve in the face. One branch goes to the eye, the other to the upper jaw, the third to the bottom one, and the main node is near my ear. I heard that many people suffer from such pains... My cheek and teeth feel much better: tonight the left jaw drops out all the time, and my eyes hurt very much, so now I will not write any more".

Opticians and Jewellers.

Along with ophthalmologists, an important role was played by mechanics, opticians and jewelers, who manufactured lorgnettes, monocles and glasses for the first persons of the empire. For the most part, they had the status of suppliers of the Imperial Court . In 1833, the right to use the national emblem for promotional purposes was awarded to the optician Kandler. Apparently, he was still working for Alexander I making the dioptric glasses for his lorgnettes. In the 1850s the list of "suppliers" also included opticians Strauss (1853) and Vassily Westberg



Binoculars made by K.O. Votkey's company



K.O. Votkey, the supplier of the Imperial Court

(since 1855). They worked for the family of Nicholas I whose spouse and children suffered from myopia.

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Four opticians worked for Alexander II and his family: Alexander Edelberg from Kharkov after 1863; the Titsner brothers from Riga after 1870; and the optician Schwabe from Moscow after 1871. It is difficult to say why the list of opticians - suppliers of the Supreme Court comprised experts from Kharkov, Riga and Moscow, and not specialists from St. Petersburg. Perhaps, it was on the recommendations of relatives of the royal family. Because the title of a "Supplier of the Supreme Court" was assigned to individuals, not companies, after the death of such an "individual", his successors had to start all over again.

The successor of the optician Schwabe (supplier since 1871) represented by F. Schwabe who was the head of the company, and manufactured "surgical and optical accessories", attained the title of "supplier" in 1913.

Under Alexander III, the list of opticians-suppliers included the optician and mechanic Karl Osipovich Votkey (since 1882). Alexander III and Maria Feodorovna did not suffer from myopia, so the list of suppliers included only one name. K.O. Votkey got this title for binoculars and long glasses made for Alexander III.

Under Nicholas II, two more opticians began to work for the czar's family: Fedor Mielke who traded "under the guise of" "IE Mielke" (1901) and Nicholas Zimmer owned the "K. Votkey" firm in St. Petersburg (since 1912)³².

So, throughout the imperial period of Russian history of 18th through early 20th centuries, members of the Russian Imperial Court had to a greater or lesser extent, problems of an ophthalmologic nature that, in fact, led to the appearance in the staffing of court physicians taking the position of an ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor, and they were all qualified experts. All of them had not only an impressive track record, but also were prominent scientists defining the level of "their own" science in that time. Specialists - opticians engaged in the manufacture of lenses, worked closely with ophthalmologists in Ordinary to the Emperor. Generally, they received the title of court suppliers. There were 11 such masters from 1833 to 1917. Lorgnettes and pince-nez were often decorated by jewelers of a level of Faberge who from 1885 to 1917 was also the supplier of the Imperial court.

Notes

¹ In 1826, Volkonsky was appointed to the Minister of the Imperial Court

² Russian State Historical Archive. *Archival Fund 519*. Series 3. Archiving 4. Sheet 1. On appointment of the doctor Grubi to the Imperial court as an ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor. 1820.

³ On appointment of the doctor Grubi to the Imperial court as an ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor. 1820.

⁴ Department of Manuscripts of the Russian National Library. *Archival Fund 650*. Archiving 1071. Sheet 75, rev. // Book of an amount for dressing purposes, 1838-1841

⁵ Department of Manuscripts of the Russian National Library. *Archival Fund 650*. Archiving 1074. Sheet 29. // Book of His Imperial Majesty's amount for dressing purposes since January 1, 1852 to March 15, 1855.

⁶ Presbyopia („senile vision“): anomaly of ocular refraction upon which a person cannot see a fine print and small objects at close range.

⁷ Ivan Feodorovich Ruhl (Johann Georg von Ruhl, 1768-1846) - a graduate of the St. Petersburg Medical-Surgical Institute (1787), Doctor of Medicine and Surgery (1792, the Medical Faculty of the Erfurt University), a court physician (1798), a surgeon in Ordinary to the Empress Maria Feodorovna (since 1804).

⁸ *Notebooks of the Grand Duke Nicholas Pavlovich. 1822-1825*. M. ROSSPEN. 2013. P.349.

⁹ Department of Manuscripts of the Russian National Library. *Archival Fond 650*. Archiving 1067. // The account book of pocket money. 1824-1825.

¹⁰ RSHA. *Archival Fund 524*. Series 1. Archiving 372. Sheet 88. The instruments of the separation of residual property remained after the death of Alexandra Feodorovna. 1860-61.

¹¹ RSHA. *Archival Fund 468*. Series 17. Archiving 2. Page 1 On granting of an amount for maintenance of an eye infirmary in St. Petersburg. 1824-26.

¹² In 1837-1840, a stone three-story building was built upon the of project architect I.I. Charlemagne for the eye infirmary at Mokhovaya street, 38.

¹³ RSHA. *Archival Fund 468*. Series 17. Archiving 2. Sheet 3. granting of an amount for the maintenance of the eye infirmary in St. Petersburg. 1824-26.

¹⁴ On September 26, 1836 V.V. Lerche has been granted the hereditary nobility with the permission of His Imperial Majesty: „The coat of arms on the emblem is crossed. A lark stands at the right top of a black field on a green hill. Down, a baculus of Aesculapius entwined by snake and green laurel branch are crosswise in a silver field. An eye with a natural color eyebrow are above them. The shield is crowned with nobility helmet having a crown. A crest has two trunks and a lark standing between them to the right bird. A mantling is green and grounded with silver“. Since 1842, V.V. Lerche began to receive a „pension ... in excess of salary“. See RSHA. *Archival Fund 479*. Series 1. Archiving 106., on the assignment to the ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor, actual state councilor Lerche 1.143 rubles. 68 kopecks a year in excess of salary as a pension according to the prescription of the Minister of Imperial Court. 1842.

¹⁵ RSHA. *Archival Fund 479*. Series 1. Archiving 304. On assignment of the chief medical officer of the Eye Department at 2nd St. Petersburg Army Hospital, state councilor Kabat as an ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor Supreme Court, the position opened on occasion of death of the actual state councillor Lerche. 1847.

¹⁶ *The dream of youth. Memories of the Grand Duchess Olga Nikolaevna*. 1825-1846 // Nicholas I: Husband. Father. Emperor. M. Slovo. 2000. P.233.

¹⁷ St. Petersburg Society of the 60s (1863-1868) // Memoirs of a Count S. *Archiving of Sheremetev*. M. Indrik. 2001. P.136.

¹⁸ RSHA. *Archive Foundation 1614*. Series 1. Archiving 116. Sheet 1.

¹⁹ Successful shooting of Emperor Nicholas II at a shooting range indirectly evidenced on his good eyesight: „I have visited a new shooting range. Took part in various shootings. I managed to take the first prize, shooting from the distance of 100 steps to moving targets with the standard rifle „(March 7, 1912).

²⁰ RSHA. *Archival Fund 479*. Series 1. Archiving 1767. Sheet 28. On the appointment of the doctor of medicine, Earl Migvali as a Honorary ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor, and the doctor of medicine Vreden as a Honorary otologist in Ordinary to the Emperor, and the conference to the Sweden citizen Andrew Berlingd the rank of a court gymnast. 1873.

²¹ RSHA. *Archival Fund 468*. Series 14. Archiving 968. Sheet 6.

²² RSHA. *Archival Fund 525*. Series 1. Archiving 26. Sheet 42. On giving a reward to the doctor Ostrogorsky for the treatment of August children of Their Imperial Majesties. 1908.

²³ In March 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29, 1902, and in April 1, 4, 7, 10, 13 and 16 in the Winter Palace; in April 20, 23, 27 and 29; and in May 2, 6, 11 and 13, in the Alexander Palace. For these visits, the ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor should receive a fee of 876 rubles, but 1.000 rubles were paid "due to rounding this amount". See: RSHA. *Archival Fund 525*. Series 1. Archiving 89. Sheet 3. On Remuneration to Tikhomirov, the ophthalmologist in Ordinary to the Emperor. 1902.

²⁴ In June 4, 17 and 19; in July - 4, 11 and 22; in August - 7 and 23; in September 4, 1902. There are no mentions in the thoughts' journal of Nicholas II on visits of N.I. Tikhomirov and L.G. Bellyarminov, ophthalmologists in Ordinary to the Emperor.

²⁵ RSHA. *Archival Fund 525*. Series 1. Archiving 55. Sheet 47. On remuneration to professors Simanovskiy and Popov. 1899.

²⁶ RSHA. *Archival Fund 525*. Series 1.(209\2707). Archiving 164. Sheet 3.

²⁷ RSHA. *Archival Fund 525*. Series 1.(209\2707). Archiving 164. Sheet 12.

²⁸ In 1850-ies. strict rules have been developed for all persons who carry out deliveries to the Imperial court. Business partners received the title of a „Supreme Court supplier“ with the right to use the national emblem on signs subject to 8 - 10 years of perfect cooperation with the Ministry of the Imperial Court, the highest quality of supplied goods and services.

²⁹ The optician and mechanic Vassiliy Karlovich Westberg was the son and successor of Karl Westberg.

³⁰ A French citizen, merchant of 2nd guild Karl Ossipovich Votkey opened his opto-mechanical factory in St. Petersburg in 1842 (Ofiterskaya street, 32 / 2). He manufactured binoculars, spotting scopes, and other optics. In 1849 K.O. Votkey took part in the St. Petersburg exhibition of Russian manufactory instruments. By 1870, 50 people employed at Votkey's factory manufactured up to 500 optical instruments a year. The company has ceased to exist in 1917.

³¹ Johannes Mielke founded his business in St. Petersburg in 1848 as a workshop for polishing optical glasses and an optical goods shop. His business was continued by his son Feodor Ivanovich Mielke. His shop in Moscow was located on Bolshaya Dmitrovka street, 13, on the corner with Stoleshnikov lane. It was in his shop, A.P. Chekhov ordered a pince-nez. It is on Mielke's factory there were produced glasses and lorgnettes for Empress Maria Alexandrovna and for Alexander II.

³² V.V. Skurlov. Suppliers of the Supreme Court. SPb., 2002.