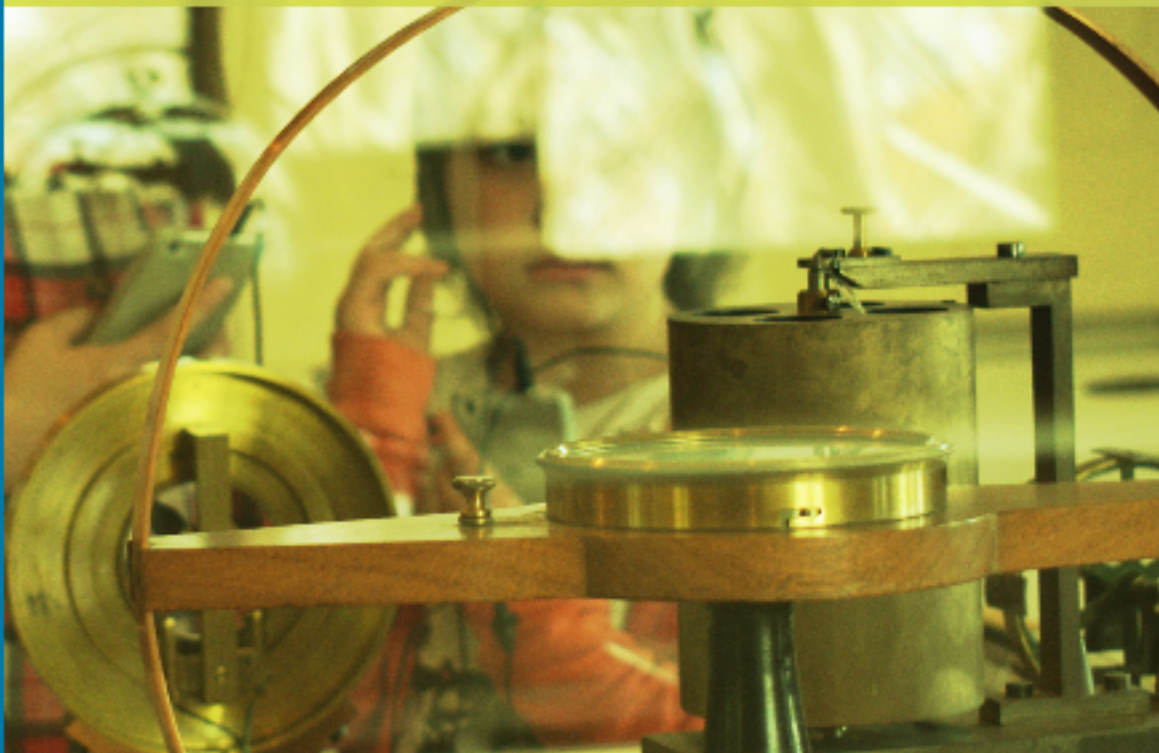


Turning Inside Out

European University Heritage:

Collections, Audiences, Stakeholders



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Museum of Dentistry

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The establishment of a Museum of Dentistry at the Dental School of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) has been a constant request for many years. The first step was made in 2012, thanks to the initiative of the President of the Dental School of Athens Professor Georgios Vougiouklakis who organised a research team. The aim was the creation of an organisation that would manage the reception, storage, maintenance, recording, documentation, research, interpretation and, most important of all, the exhibition and the promotion of dentistry and the dental profession from ancient times until today to the public.

Museum collections and exhibits

The main exhibition area of the Museum is located on the first floor of the new building of the Dental School in Goudi (Figure 1). The two halls house a remarkable collection which includes a significant number of exhibits. The Museum's objects are exhibited both in the main area of the Museum, and in special display cases in order to meet the demands of modern museological exhibition and Museum function spaces.

Figure 1

Collection at the main exhibition area



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On the first-floor exhibition area in the new building, the collection consists of scientific dental instruments dating back to the beginning of the 20th century. Examples are surgical instruments such as dental forceps and levers. There are also operative dentistry devices like amalgam dispensers, dental drills and various types of dental headpieces. The first air driven contra-angle hand piece unit that was used at the Operative Dentistry Department is exhibited there. Moreover, tools and devices of prosthetic dentistry are displayed—porcelain teeth, impression trays, a vulcanising device for the manufacturing of dentures and others (Figure 2). A rare dental unit with an even more rare dental office light is part of the collection of dental units.

Figure 2
Dental tools and devices



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One of the most striking exhibits is the portable wooden cabinet with materials and tools for exercising the dental art. It contains a significant number of glass vials with pharmaceutical preparations for dental use, a great collection of hand tools for placing materials, endodontics tools, needles, syringes, intact local anesthetic vials, etc.

We are deeply convinced that a very important part of the history of dentistry is the story of the people who tried to explore, understand and apply the principles of dentistry. A dialectic relationship between yesterday and today can be achieved by museum islets where the exhibits are in plain sight for both students and patients on a daily basis. For this purpose, old dental units, dental appliances and tools were selected and are displayed in properly designed areas of the dental school building complex (Figure 3).

Figure 3
Old dental unit



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The Dental School's Historical Archive

The Dental Department Museum incorporates the historical archive of the Athens Dental School (Figure 3) and supports the research of the archive. The rare archival footage tracks the evolution of the 'Οδοντοϊατρικόν Σχολεῖον' (Dental School) from the very early steps of establishment in 1916 until the early 1980s.

The documents illustrate the way in which the first University Dental educational institution was formed, as well as the changes over the years. In that way, the critical historical period, during which the earlier dentistry has been constituted in Greece, is revealed. At the same time, unknown aspects of NKUA academic activity are illuminated.

The Digital Museum

The Dental Department Museum utilised the advantages of modern Internet and multimedia technology and developed a Digital Museum (www.museum.dent.uoa.gr). The purpose was not only to present the exhibits, but also to feature the history of dental education and practice in Greece over time.

In the digital crossroads of contemporary technology and dental history, personal exploration is allowed based on digital storytelling. Thus, the website visitor can wander around and study the entire dental legislation since the establishment of the modern Greek state until the present.

One of the most ambitious programmes running at the moment is the creation of an open, freely accessible online library for the specialist, the student, the scholar, in fact, everyone. Rich material about the Museum and dentistry will be offered in electronic form. The Museum has undertaken the digitisation of all English dental books which are copyright free.

The website also presents the teaching staff, wishing to thank all those who contributed to the upgrading of dental education in our area. The presentation is not a cold, sterile and long list of names, but shows the evolution of the overall staff per academic year as it is recorded in the university yearbooks. Thus, the reader can follow the course of subjects and faculty over time. In addition, a special section is devoted to all doctorates of the Dental School of Athens. Currently, an effort is in progress to record all the graduates from the first one who graduated in 1916 to the present day.

Research, Education and Awards

The Museum of Dentistry, like any university museum, supports a remarkable number of research projects. A monograph on 'Dentistry in the Ancient Greek World' is the result of one of these programmes. Another study, which concerns the role of the 'Iatro-synedrion' (medical council) in supporting the dental profession and promoting dental education in Greece, is already at the final stages of writing.

At the same time, the Museum contributes to the teaching of the undergraduate course on the history of dentistry through its rich collection. Innovative educational programmes have been designed for school children, both for primary and secondary education. The programmes designed and realised by the Museum of Dentistry have begun to bear fruit and are well-appreciated. The staff of the Museum won the first prize for the best poster presentation at the 40th National Medical Conference held in Athens (14–17 May 2014) by showcasing an educational programme designed and implemented for elementary students.

BIOS

Margarita Sakelliou (M.Sc. in health informatics) is technical collections staff member, responsible for day-to-day management of the collections, registration of exhibits, as well as managing the museum database and digital assets. Her main research interest is museum informatics, especially in the fields of digital museum and digital curation.

Georgios Vougiouklakis is the Scientific Director of the Museum. Besides his research interest in the field of operative dentistry, he also focuses on the historical development of operative dentistry, history of dentistry in modern Greece and history of western dental education in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Dimitrios Koutroumpas (PhD in History of Medicine) is post-doctoral researcher in the history of dentistry, with a focus on ancient Greco-Roman dentistry. He is also interested in historical research in university historical archives of the 19th and 20th centuries (documentation, analysis, digitisation and presentation) as, for example, the archives of Athens Dental and Medical School.