

Alexander Kolisko (1857–1918), A Pathologist in Nineteenth Century Vienna

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The aim of this study is to introduce the life and work of Alexander Kolisko, a noteworthy pathologist of nineteenth century Vienna, into literature. While his contribution to medical science (and particularly obstetrics)¹ is recognised in medical circles, with Kolisko often appearing in works dedicated to the history of the Viennese Faculty of Medicine, particularly its department of Forensic Medicine, he has thus far been mostly overlooked in historical literature, often reduced to a single mention. To date, not a single study has been written about this influential and accomplished pathologist (he was chair of forensic medicine and later chair of pathological anatomy at the University of Vienna, chief prosecutor of Vienna, and also the author of a number of articles and books, of which several were already considered essential reading in his lifetime) or his family, which will be discussed in future articles.

The primary sources for this study were German-language newspapers and medical journals published mostly during Kolisko's lifetime – 1857–1918. Although they often depict Kolisko as a member of several non-medical Viennese societies, this aspect of his life lies out outside the scope of this study and will not be discussed. Kolisko's family life, well-documented in Viennese church books which will serve as the primary source for a future study, will also not be examined. The study will instead focus solely on Kolisko's career as a physician and his work.

Kolisko appears in several biographical dictionaries. A comprehensive entry, which apart from basic biographical data also discusses his contributions to medical science and includes a list of his works, can be found in the fourth volume of the *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950*.² Helmut Winkler's entry for Kolisko in the *Neue Deutsche Biographie* is of

¹ A recent Czech textbook on modern obstetrics mentions Kolisko within the context of his book *Pathologische Beckenformen*, calling it an “unsurpassed work”. Aleš Roztočil et al., *Moderní porodnictví* (Prague: Grada, 2017), 26.

² “Kolisko Alexander, Anatom,” in *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950. Band 4* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1969), 83.

similar scope.³ Kolisko's entry in the *Historisches Lexikon Wien*, while more concise, contains much of the same information.⁴

Alexander Kolisko was born in Vienna on 6 November 1857⁵ as the oldest of four brothers.⁶ His father, Eugen Kolisko, was an obstetrician, while his mother, Luise Bach, was the sister of the Minister of the Interior of the time Alexander von Bach.⁷ The young Alexander followed in his father's footsteps, enrolling at the Viennese Faculty of Medicine after graduating from Schottengymnasium in 1875.⁸ He entered an environment strongly influenced by, among others, the pathologist Karl Rokitansky, the internist Josef Skoda, and the surgeon Johann Dumreicher⁹ – the so-called Second (or New) Viennese School of Medicine which introduced a new paradigm of evidence-based medicine interested in the underlying causes of external symptoms.¹⁰ Rokitansky and Skoda's student Hans Kundrat proved to be the greatest influence on Kolisko. A professor of pathology, he became Kolisko's mentor upon graduation in 1881,¹¹ with Kolisko acting as his assistant.¹²

³ Helmut Wiclisky, "Kolisko Alexander," in *Neue Deutsche Biographie. Band 12* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1980), 461.

⁴ Gabriela Schmidt, "Kolisko Alexander," in *Historisches Lexikon Wien. Band 3: Ha-La* (Vienna: Kreymar & Scherlau, 1994), 554–55.

⁵ *Book of Baptisms 1856–1857*, fol. 403. Alservorstadt pfarre. 01-27. Wien/Niederösterreich (Osten): Rk. Erzdiözese Wien. Available online at: <https://data.maticula-online.eu/cs/oesterreich/wien/08-alservorstadt pfarre/01-27/?pg=407>.

⁶ Alexander's brothers Rudolf, August, and Hans will be discussed in a future article.

⁷ Bach was Kolisko's godfather. Of note is the fact that an article from 1896 mentions Kolisko as "the nephew of former Minister of the Interior Alexander von Bach." See "Kränze und Condolenzen," *Wiener Salonblatt*, 24 May 1896, 5. Since Bach was ennobled with the title of *Freiherr* on 22 April 1854, it can be said that Kolisko was connected to nobility by birth. See, for example, "Amtliches," *Abendblatt der Presse*, 25 April 1854, 2.

⁸ "Von der Universität," *Neues Wiener Journal*, 13 June 1898, 1.

⁹ Interestingly, Dumreicher's niece Amalie von Eschenburg would go on to become Kolisko's wife. See *Book of Marriages 1874–1889*, fol. 70. St. Augustin. 02-14, 15. Wien/Niederösterreich (Osten): Rk. Erzdiözese Wien. Available online at: <https://data.maticula-online.eu/cs/oesterreich/wien/01-st-augustin/02-14%252C15/?pg=291>.

¹⁰ See, for example, Alfred Vogl, "Six Hundred Years of Medicine in Vienna: A History of the Vienna School of Medicine," *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 43, no. 4 (1967): 282–99.

¹¹ "Kolisko Alexander, Anatom," 83. Kolisko stood by Kundrat's deathbed on 25 April 1893. "Professor Hans Kundrat," *Local-Anzeiger der „Presse“*, 26 April 1893, 10.

¹² Earliest recorded mention in "Oeffentliche Vorlesungen an der k. k. Universität zu Wien im Winter-Semester 1885/6," *Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung*, 18 August 1885, 287.

Establishing himself as a researcher with the 1884 article “Zur Kenntniss des Carcinoma psammosum ovarii,”¹³ Kolisko, along with fellow student Richard Paltauf,¹⁴ acted as a demonstrator in Kundrat’s exercises in pathological histology from 1885 to 1891, leading his own pathologic-histological exercises in 1890.¹⁵ Beginning with 1888, when he was named *Privatdozent* of pathological anatomy,¹⁶ he also established himself as a lecturer, giving lectures on the histology of tumors.¹⁷

Tumors seemed to be of particular interest to Kolisko. His first article, the aforementioned “Zur Kenntniss des Carcinoma psammosum ovarii” published in the *Medizinische Jahrbücher* for 1884, concerned itself with malignant tumors of the ovaries. His paper “Über congenitale Herzmyome” was published in the 1887 edition of the same yearbook.¹⁸ The weekly medical journal *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift* published his paper “Das polypöse Sarkom der Vagina im Kindesalter” – a case study exploring vaginal tumors in 14 deceased girls¹⁹ – between 7 February and 14 March 1889.²⁰ Following up on a demonstration which Kolisko, along with the pediatrician Josef Weinlechner,²¹ had given at a meeting of the Austrian Medical Society on 25 May 1888,²² he examined cases previously described in literature, while also describing two autopsies he had performed himself. In his six-part paper, Kolisko not only provides thorough physical descriptions of the sarcoma cases, but also presents his

¹³ Alexander Kolisko, “Zur Kenntniss des Carcinoma psammosum ovarii,” in *Medizinische Jahrbücher* (Vienna: K. k. Gesellschaft der Ärzte, 1884), 173–206.

¹⁴ He, like Kolisko, would later be named Professor of Pathological Anatomy and have a successful medical career of his own.

¹⁵ “Oeffentliche Vorlesungen an der k. k. Universität zu Wien im Sommer-Semester 1890,” *Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung*, 17 April 1890, 558.

¹⁶ “Kolisko Alexander, Anatom,” 83.

¹⁷ “Kundmachungen,” *Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung*, 26 September 1888, 437.

¹⁸ Alexander Kolisko, “Über congenitale Herzmyome,” in *Medizinische Jahrbücher* (Vienna: K. k. Gesellschaft der Ärzte, 1887), 135–58.

¹⁹ Two were examined by Kolisko himself, one had already been briefly described by the anatomist Theodor Billroth, and the rest were previously described in medical literature. See “Journal-Revue. Gynäkologie und Geburtshilfe. 19. Das polypöse Sarkom der Vagina im Kindesalter,” *Wiener medizinische Wochenschrift*, 22 November 1890, 2035.

²⁰ Alexander Kolisko, “Das polypöse Sarkom der Vagina im Kindesalter,” *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift*, February 7, 1889, 110–11; 14 February 1889, 130–32; 21 February 1889, 159–61; 28 February 1889, 182–85; 7 March 1889, 202–04; 14 March 1889, 222–25.

²¹ A doctor at the St. Anna Children’s Hospital in Vienna where the autopsies of two of the girls took place.

²² Alexander Kolisko, “Das polypöse Sarkom der Vagina im Kindesalter,” *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift*, 7 February 1889, 110.

own microscopic findings. Included are detailed drawings of the vagina and surrounding tissue.

Kolisko's studies and articles published from 1889 on seem to indicate a shift in interest. "Ein Beitrag zur pathologischen Anatomie der Ureteren," published in *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift* on 28 November 1889,²³ examines previously reported cases to describe duplication of the ureter in newborns. Along with "Zur Kenntniss des Carcinoma psammosum ovarii" and "Das polypöse Sarkom der Vagina im Kindesalter," the article forms a triptych of works focused on the genitourinary system.²⁴ "Zum Wesen des Croups und der Diphtherie" from 21 February of the same year²⁵ is a summary of the state of research on croup, a respiratory infection common in children, and diphtheria, a viral illness that commonly causes it.²⁶

After his habilitation, Kolisko's standing rose rapidly. In 1890, he was named assistant prosector – or performer of autopsies –, at the Allgemeine Krankenhaus in Vienna.²⁷ Throughout his career, he performed countless autopsies, with several being particularly high profile. Among Kolisko's autopsied were opera singer Maria Wilt,²⁸ politician Franz Schuhmeier²⁹ and three cholera victims.³⁰ Kolisko was also an apt conservationist, overseeing the conservation of Archduke Charles Louis in 1896³¹ and of Emperor Francis Joseph I in 1916.³²

²³ Alexander Kolisko, "Ein Beitrag zur pathologischen Anatomie der Ureteren," *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift*, 28 November 1889, 917–19.

²⁴ A blanket term for the genital and urinary organs.

²⁵ Alexander Kolisko, "Zum Wesen des Croups und der Diphtherie," *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift*, 21 February 1889, 147–49.

²⁶ This seems to be Kolisko's only foray into the realm of microbiology, which – or rather its subfield of bacteriology – had gained a foothold among his colleagues (e.g., fellow students of Hans Kundrat's, Richard Paltauf and Richard Kretz) in the years leading up to the article's publication. Although influenced by bacteriology, their research was firmly anchored in Rokitsky's pathologico-anatomical tradition. See Erna Lesky, *The Vienna Medical School of the 19th Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 516–17.

²⁷ "Alexander Kolisko," *Wiener medizinische Wochenschrift*, 2 March 1918, 397.

²⁸ "Maria Wilt †," *Deutsches Volksblatt*, 27 September 1891, 4.

²⁹ "Das Ergebnis der Obduktion," *Die Zeit. Abendblatt*, 13 February 1913, 3.

³⁰ "Ein eingeschleppter Cholerafall," *Erlafthal-Bote*, 13 November 1892, 3; "Ein Cholerafall in Wien," *Neues Wiener Abendblatt*, 29 August 1893, 3; "Die Cholera," *Neue Freie Presse*, 3 September 1893, 8.

³¹ "Kränze und Condolenzten," *Wiener Salonblatt*, 24 May 1896, 5.

³² As reported by newspapers published on 25 November. See, for example, "Die Aufbahrung in Schönbunn," *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, 25 November 1916, 6.

On 15 June 1892, Kolisko, along with his colleague Richard Paltauf, was named extraordinary professor of pathological anatomy.³³ He taught a course of pathologic-anatomical demonstrations³⁴ while also continuing to publish scientific works and give lectures at meetings of the Austrian Medical Society,³⁵ of which he had been a member since 1887.³⁶ It was at this time that his research first began to be published in book form. The 1891 *Über die Beziehung der Arteria choroidea anterior zum hinteren Schenkel der inneren Kapsel des Gehirnes* aimed to examine Otto Heubner's claim that the anterior choroidal artery supplies the posterior limb (or rather, its inferior half) of the internal capsule of the brain.³⁷ As Kolisko explains in the foreword, the idea was suggested to him two years earlier by neuropathologist Theodor Meynert. In his own words, his research "essentially confirmed Heubner's statement," although he was able to supplement and "partially correct" Heubner's findings.³⁸

Shortly after being named extraordinary professor, Kolisko saw another career advancement. The chair of pathology at the University of Vienna was left vacant upon Hans Kundrat's death on 25 April 1893. The position was eventually filled by Kolisko.³⁹ Though only temporarily, with Anton Weichselbaum taking over in July of the same year,⁴⁰ he found himself presiding over a university body for the first time in his career – a clear sign of the respect he held within the Viennese medical community.⁴¹

After his brief tenure as chair of the pathology department, Kolisko returned to lecturing and publishing. The following years saw the publication

³³ "Hof- und Personal-Nachrichten," *Die Presse. Abendblatt*, 15 June 1892, 3.

³⁴ "Oeffentliche Vorlesungen an der k. k. Universität zu Wien im Winter-Semester 1892/3," *Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung*, 15 September 1892, 1.

³⁵ "Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Blutversorgung der Grosshirnganglien," published in the 16 March 1893, issue of the *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift*, was "based on a lecture given in the k. k. Medical Society on 15 January 1892." See Alexander Kolisko, "Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Blutversorgung der Grosshirnganglien," *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift*, 16 March 1893, 192–95.

³⁶ "Gesellschaft der Aerzte," *Die Presse*, 20 March 1887, 15.

³⁷ Interestingly, the artery that supplies the inferior half of the anterior limb now carries Heubner's name.

³⁸ Alexander Kolisko, *Über die Beziehung der Arteria choroidea anterior zum hinteren Schenkel der inneren Kapsel des Gehirnes* (Wien: Alfred Hölder, 1891), 3.

³⁹ "Hochschulnachrichten," *Deutsches Volksblatt*, 17 May 1893, 6.

⁴⁰ "Der Nachfolger des Hofrathes Kundrat," *Deutsches Volksblatt. Abend-Ausgabe*, 22 July 1893, 2.

⁴¹ Another sign can be found in the results of the 1894 Medical Chamber of Vienna elections. Kolisko was elected a member with 900 votes out of 976. "Das Ergebnis der Aerztekammerwahlen," *Deutsches Volksblatt*, 27 May 1894, 6.

of two collaborative efforts. The first publication, the 1895 *Schemata zum Einzeichnen von Gehirnbefunden*, written with Emil Redlich, was another in a series of works concerned with the pathological anatomy of the brain.⁴² The second, the 1896 *Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Osteomyelitis*, written with Eduard Albert,⁴³ signaled Kolisko's new interest in the pathology of bones. Both works were met with an immediate positive reception. A review in the *Wiener medizinische Wochenschrift* calls the former "an altogether practical book worthy of the reputable names of its authors" and praises its selection of images,⁴⁴ while the latter was "a rich source for surgeon and pathological anatomist alike."⁴⁵

Kolisko's career would soon take another turn. On 27 August 1897, Eduard von Hofmann, the chair of forensic medicine at the University of Vienna, died. Once again, a vacant spot needed to be filled. The collegium of professors at the Faculty of Medicine brought forth three candidates⁴⁶ – Hans Dittrich, then professor of forensic medicine at the University of Prague,⁴⁷ Albin Haberda, who had only recently become *Privatdozent* for forensic medicine,⁴⁸ and Alexander Kolisko. Haberda ended up being named the temporary chair, serving until June 1898, when Kolisko replaced him as the definitive chair, being named ordinary professor of forensic medicine in the process.⁴⁹

Kolisko's inaugural lecture took place on 7 November 1898. Reflecting his background in pathological anatomy, he chose to discuss the relationship between pathological anatomy and forensic medicine.⁵⁰ The lecture was

⁴² Kolisko had already followed up on the aforementioned *Über die Beziehung der Arteria choroidea anterior* with an article on the blood circulation of the basal ganglia. See Kolisko, "Grosshirnganglien," 192–95.

⁴³ According to Helena Kokešová, Kolisko was among Albert's closest associates at the University of Vienna. See Helena Kokešová, *Eduard Albert* (Prague: Vyšehrad, 2014), 126. Albert mentions Kolisko and their combined effort in his memorial book.

⁴⁴ "Schemata zum Einzeichnen von Gehirnbefunden," *Wiener medizinische Wochenschrift*, 7 December 1895, 2116.

⁴⁵ Julius Schnitzler, "Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Osteomyelitis," *Wiener klinische Rundschau*, 31 May 1896, 390. Schnitzler notes the book's dedication to the late Hans Kundrat which "will help to further increase the fame of three Viennese researchers."

⁴⁶ "Hochschulnachrichten," *Deutsches Volksblatt*, 5 March 1898, 8.

⁴⁷ He would continue to teach at said university until retirement.

⁴⁸ "Haberda, Albin (1868–1933), Gerichtsmediziner," in *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950. Band 2* (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1958), 122.

⁴⁹ "Die Professur für gerichtliche Medicin," *Neues Wiener Abendblatt*, 13 June 1898, 3. Upon his joining, the college of professors consisted of twenty men. See the header of *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift*, 30 June 1898, for a full list.

⁵⁰ "Notizen," *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift*, 10 November 1898, 1034.

published in *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift* later that month in the form of a feuilleton.⁵¹ Apart from being a concise history of the Viennese department of forensic medicine,⁵² the article also offers a unique look into Kolisko's plans for the future and reveals that, though he had conducted his research in a different area for the past 17 years, he held the field of forensic medicine in high regard, and entered his new position with a great sense of duty.⁵³

Throughout 1898 and 1899, the newspapers almost exclusively record Kolisko as a prosecutor, particularly of murder victims. The very first such article demonstrates the gravity of Kolisko's new role.⁵⁴ As reported by *Neues Wiener Abendblatt*, he performed the autopsy of 10-year-old Anna Kutschera, the daughter of a post office worker. It was originally believed that Anna died by suffocation when her brother covered her mouth with his hands. Kolisko's autopsy determined, however, that suffocation was in fact not the cause of death. Instead, the prosecutor found countless fresh injuries all over the girl's body, including a wrist fracture. This suggested that Anna's death was of a more violent nature, perhaps the result of mistreatment by Anna's stepmother.⁵⁵

Even in his new role as head of the department of forensic medicine, Kolisko did not hesitate to honor his roots in pathological anatomy. The year 1900 saw the publication of the first part of the first volume of *Die pathologischen Beckenformen*, a textbook on deformities of the pelvis written together with obstetrician Carl Breus. This first part alone spans 366 pages and contains 116 illustrations. A contemporary review notes "the creation of an epochal literary product which far surpasses anything that has been published so far

⁵¹ Alexander Kolisko, "Das Verhältniss der pathologischen Anatomie zur gerichtlichen Medicin," *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift*, 17 November 1898, 1050–55.

⁵² Kolisko begins with the department's founding in 1805 and ends with von Hofmann's death, mentioning among others Rokitsansky, Skoda, and Kundrat along the way. It is evident that he held not just the department, but also its heads and von Hoffmann in particular, in high regard.

⁵³ Another indicator is, perhaps, the fact that he oversaw the publication of the two-volume *Beiträge zur gerichtlichen Medizin* in 1911 and 1912, a work composed of studies by the various members of the department of forensic medicine.

⁵⁴ It can be assumed that Kolisko's naming as the chief Viennese prosecutor in 1900 made the burden of his work all that heavier. Of note is the fact that Albin Haberda was named his first deputy. See *Wiener Kommunal-Kalender und städtisches Jahrbuch* (Vienna: Paul Gerin, 1900), 500.

⁵⁵ "Das Marthyrium eines Kindes," *Neues Wiener Abendblatt*, 14 December 1898, 3. Anna's stepmother was initially sentenced to death, but her sentence was altered to eight years heavy jail upon the Emperor's intervention. Anna's father was also tried but was eventually freed of the charges. See, for example, "Die Kindesmörderin Kutschera begnadigt," *Ischler Wochenblatt*, 28 January 1900, 4.

in terms of the abundance of what is offered.”⁵⁶ The work continued to be published in separate parts (eventually compiled into full volumes) until 1912, when the second part of the third volume was published. It would go on to acquire the reputation of Kolisko’s most significant and accomplished work, useful not just for pathological anatomists, but also for obstetricians.⁵⁷

Only a year after the last part of *Die pathologischen Beckenformen* was published, Kolisko authored another textbook of similar proportions. The work, entitled “Plötzlicher Tod aus natürlicher Ursache,” was published as part of Hans Dittrich’s *Handbuch der ärztlichen Sachverständigentätigkeit* and spanned almost 800 pages. In a review published in the 9 May 1914 issue of *Wiener medizinische Wochenschrift*, Albin Haberda praises the work, calling it “a textbook in which the physician will find almost everything he needs for his work at the dissection table” and pointing out that such an amount of detail is “available nowhere else.”⁵⁸

While chair of forensic medicine, Kolisko found himself in even higher positions on several occasions. The first such occasion was in 1901, when he was elected a member of the academic senate of the University of Vienna.⁵⁹ He was reelected the following year.⁶⁰ Of particular significance is his election as the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, also in 1901.⁶¹ Though elected for only one term – the 1901–1902 school year –, he was later elected Dean for a second time.⁶² This can be seen as a sign of respect from his fellow professors, and also as recognition for his continuing contributions to medical science.

In 1916, Kolisko’s long tenure as head of the department of forensic medicine came to an end. Just like almost 20 years earlier, a vacant seat facilitated his move to another department. Anton Weichselbaum, the head of the department of pathological anatomy, had reached the age limit for his position, and was to retire. It was decided that his successor would be Alexander

⁵⁶ “Die pathologischen Beckenformen,” *Wiener klinische Wochenschrift*, 4 October 1900, 912. The reviewer also calls the work “an honorable monument set to the memory of [Hans] Kundrat.”

⁵⁷ As evidenced by, for example, “Die pathologischen Beckenformen,” *Wiener klinische Rundschau*, 9 June 1912, 359. One of Carl Breus’ obituaries calls it a “foundational work.” See “Karl Breus †,” *Medizinische Klinik*, 21 June 1914, 1084.

⁵⁸ Albin Haberda, “Plötzlicher Tod aus natürlicher Ursache,” *Wiener medizinische Wochenschrift*, 9 May 1914, 1037–38.

⁵⁹ “Der neue akademische Senat,” *Das Vaterland*, 18 July 1901, 6.

⁶⁰ “Der neue akademische Senat der Wiener Universität,” *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, 2 July 1902, 6.

⁶¹ “Von der Universität,” *Neue Freie Presse*, 16 June 1901, 7.

⁶² “Von der Universität,” *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 17 June 1909, 12.

Kolisko.⁶³ His naming as chair of pathological anatomy was followed with his naming as ordinary professor of pathological anatomy.⁶⁴ The chair of forensic medicine, now too left vacant, would be filled by Albin Haberda.⁶⁵

Kolisko was only able to enjoy his new position for a little over a year. On February 23, 1918, he passed away in a Viennese sanatorium due to a long-lasting illness.⁶⁶ His funeral took place at the Schottenkirche and was attended by members of the government, several of his medicinal colleagues, high-ranking military representatives, and “a large circle of his friends.”⁶⁷ An obituary published in the 2 March issue of the *Wiener medizinische Wochenschrift* describes him as “a superb anatomist, a brilliant teacher, and an amiable colleague.”⁶⁸ Ten years later, a street in the Viennese district Favoriten was given his name – *Koliskogasse*.⁶⁹

As evidenced, Alexander Kolisko was very much a product of the Second Viennese School of Medicine. He not only learned from and worked with some of its most accomplished members, but also carried on their legacy through his words and work. Though largely overlooked now, he was well-respected in his own time. His contributions to the Viennese medical school, and medicine as a whole, were such that he most definitely deserves to be remembered. Hopefully, this study has ensured that he will receive proper attention in the future. His family, whether his siblings, ancestors, blood relatives, or in-laws, also deserves to be recognised, and will be examined in future articles.

Abstract

Alexander Kolisko was born in Vienna in 1857, the son of obstetrician Eugen Kolisko and Luise Bach, and sister of former Minister of the Interior Alexander von Bach. After graduating from the Viennese Faculty of Medicine in 1881, he was an assistant to his mentor, Hans Kundrat, while also conducting research in pathological anatomy. He published his research in 1884 with the article *Zur Kenntniss der Carcinoma psammosum ovarii*. He published

⁶³ “Abschied zweier medizinischen Gelehrten von der Wiener Universität,” *Neues Wiener Abendblatt*, 21 September 1916, 3.

⁶⁴ “Von den Hochschulen,” *Fremden-Blatt*, 2 October 1916, 4.

⁶⁵ “Hofrat Kolisko als Nachfolger des Hofrates Weichselbaum,” *Neue Freie Presse*, 2 October 1916, 7.

⁶⁶ “Hofrat Professor Dr. Alexander Kolisko gestorben,” *Der Morgen*, 25 February 1918, 3.

⁶⁷ “Hofrat Professor Dr. Alexander Kolisko,” *Neue Freie Presse*, 27 February 1918, 8.

⁶⁸ “Alexander Kolisko,” *Wiener medizinische Wochenschrift*, 2 March 1918, 397.

⁶⁹ “Neue Wiener Straßennamen,” *Neues Wiener Journal*, 24 March 1929, 25.

articles concerned with several distinct areas of his field, but his most important works focused on deformations of the pelvis (*Die pathologischen Beckenformen*) and sudden death from natural causes (*Plötzlicher Tod aus natürlicher Ursachen*). He was named extraordinary professor of pathological anatomy in 1892, leading his department for a short time after Hans Kundrat's death in 1893. He remained a lecturer and researcher. In 1897, after the death of the chair of forensic medicine Eduard von Hofmann, Kolisko replaced him in his position, also being named ordinary professor of forensic medicine. While being an apt prosecutor (he was even named chief prosecutor of Vienna in 1890), he also tried to honor the legacy of his predecessors. He led the department until 1916, when he was named chair (and ordinary professor) of pathological anatomy. He was also voted Dean of the Faculty of Medicine on two separate occasions. He died in 1918 as a respected pathologist.

Keywords: Alexander Kolisko; Kolisko family; Pathology; History of medicine; Forensic medicine; Nineteenth century Vienna; Second Viennese School of Medicine

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