

## Sophus von Rosen

On May 31, 1965 *Sophus von Rosen* will retire as head of the Lund University Department of Orthopaedics at Malmö General Hospital. This issue of *Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica* contains contributions from his past and present staff members, who honor him on this occasion.

Sophus is an eminently contemporary individual; his career therefore provides an unusual record of key developments in our speciality. Indeed, even before the beginning of his professional curriculum his activities should inspire envy in today's objects of the graduation machine. Sophus matriculated as a student at Lund University in 1917, and he graduated from the Medical School in 1928. In those days the University of Lund was a center of turbulent activities in both the cultural and political spheres. Sophus contributed to these activities with his graceful presence and delightful wit. He achieved more than temporary fame as a classic in the art of students' skits. His best known parts were Erik XIV, a Swedish dictator king who was poisoned by his brother, and Nero, the emperor (Fig. 1). In real life he has never re-enacted these roles. Five years after graduation he was appointed head of an Orthopaedic Department in Härnösand, the first in the entire north of Sweden, and in 1940 he was appointed to his present position in Malmö. Throughout his 32 years as a head of clinical departments, Sophus has accumulated an outstanding record as a loyal friend of his younger colleagues.

Sophus wrote his thesis in 1939 on a subject which is relatively unknown to today's orthopaedists: *Die Infektiösen Krankheitsprozesse der Kniescheibe*. These studies focused his interest on the knee region: he became an enthusiast for patellectomy following fracture of the patella or in degenerative osteoarthritis of the knee joint, and advocated wedge osteotomy of the tibia in varus or valgus types of the latter condition; he wrote the chapter on the knee joint in the *Scandinavian Textbook of Orthopaedics* in 1959.

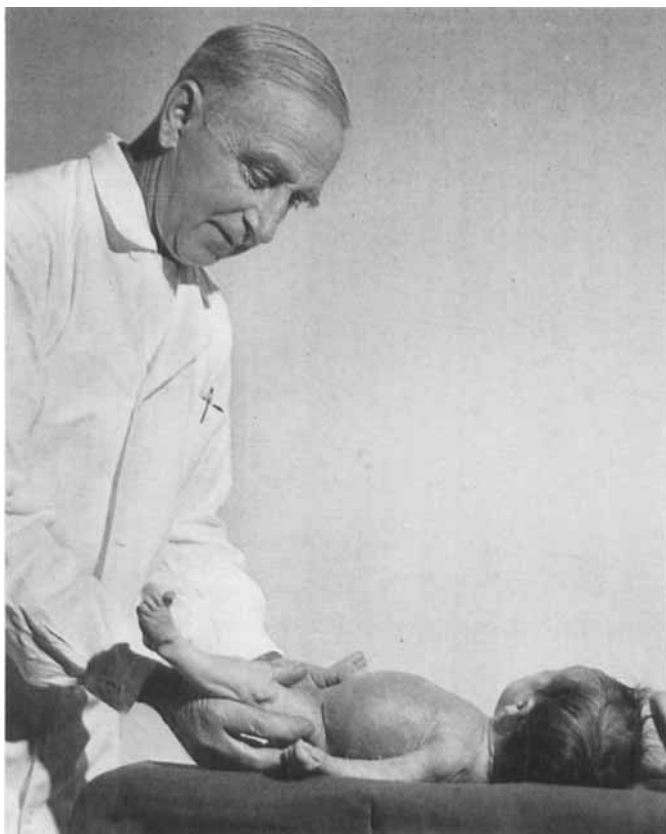


*Fig. 1.*

*Sophus, April 30, 1924.*

In 1956 Sophus published his first article on early diagnosis and treatment of congenital dislocation of the hip joint based on a study begun in 1952. In 1965 he could report on findings in more than 30,000 newborns (Fig. 2). During less than 10 years our concepts of this classic orthopaedic disease had radically changed from preoccupation with treatment to emphasis on the multifactorial etiology, and on prevention. Sophus recognized early that this revolution in thought would occur too slowly unless spurred by an intensive propaganda drive; he has talked on congenital dislocation of the hip in Africa, India, Japan, U.S.A., Canada and in most European countries (Fig. 3).

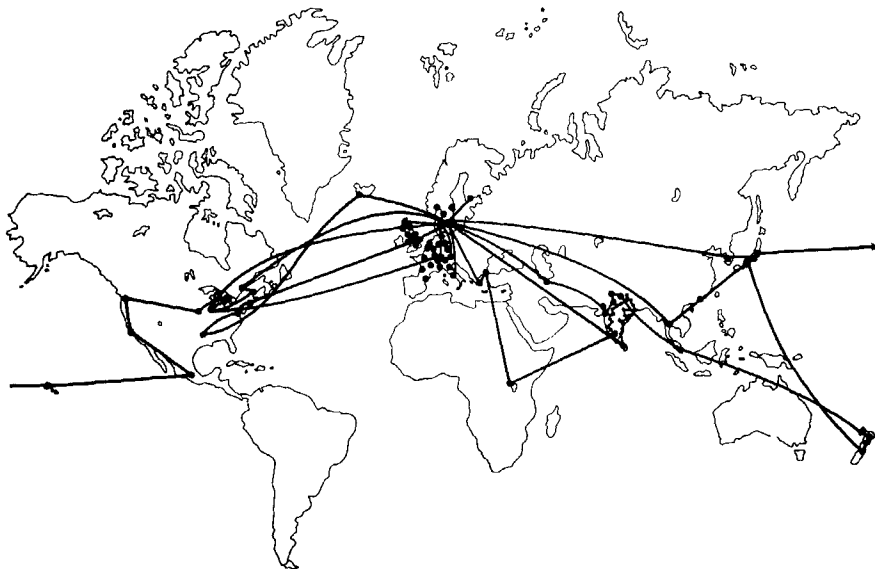
Throughout this decade of intensive concentration on one subject, and recognizing that he was engaged in a massive prospective clinical experiment, Sophus retained a remarkable interest in a diversity of orthopaedic problems. His intuition and generally conservative approach prevented his department from becoming involved in the initial, indiscriminate adoption of the acrylic hip prosthesis. On the other hand, he showed early interest in the valgus osteotomy and the hanging hip



*Fig. 2.*  
*Sophus, 1965.*

procedure for coxarthrosis, and he participated with a succession of senior residents in developing an eclectic attitude toward management of the increasingly heavy load of trauma in his department.

Sophus has had marked success in fostering an attitude of enquiry in his junior staff members. In a very real sense he has himself consistently approached the individual patient as a unique problem; he has therefore always been active in helping younger colleagues to start clinical or more basic investigations. Sophus has always stressed that research is immediately beneficial to the patients studied, sometimes directly, and always indirectly because the practice of medicine requires an intellectual attitude. Few have demonstrated this principle better than he did when congenital dislocation of the hip, this classic ortho-



*Fig. 3.*

Campaigning for early diagnosis and treatment of congenital dislocation of the hip.

paedic condition, was virtually eradicated as a cause of life long disability in the region where he works.

In his training of residents, Sophus has consistently advocated the necessity for team work within his department and co-operation within the hospital and with the outside world. He has placed less emphasis on the dogmatic aspects of training but rather has excelled in the early recognition of talent and has delegated responsibility to a degree unusual in a senior clinician. The reason for this policy can be traced to his own experience as regards management of orthopaedic conditions. Antibiotics, hip fracture nailing, and intervertebral disc surgery were unknown when he trained and were standard one decade later. During the next decade tuberculosis and haematogenous osteomyelitis all but disappeared, and in the 1960's polio was prevented, possibly for good. The growth of his own department (Table) reflects the increase in traumatic cases and co-operation with other medical specialities. In his formal training of residents Sophus has thus emphasized how today's therapy at best represents temporary solutions of fundamental problems.

As an organization man, Sophus has characteristically favored the informal, impromptu approach. He was founder of the Swedish Ortho-

paedic Society, of which he is now an honorary member, and he has edited *Acta Orthopaedica Scandinavica* in his own home since 1950. Sophus' gentle authority and kind wit have contributed an important feature to organizations in which he is an active member; his department is unique in the ease with which staff members can communicate with him and therefore with each other.

*The Orthopaedic Department in Malmö—Then and Now.*

	1941	1964
Number of beds .....	46	156
Patients admitted .....	358	1,779
Operations on patients admitted .....	153	1,323
Wards .....	1	5
Clinic Visits .....	?	37,500
Operations in ambulatory patients .....	201	1,197
Staff Surgeons .....	2	9
Registered Nurses .....	3	22
Physical Therapists .....	0	7
Secretaries .....	0	7
Total number of employees .....	?	150

Sophus still runs up the stairs in the Old Orthopaedic Building in Malmö, and he is as sensitive as ever to a wind of change. We can expect therefore that he will be busy during the next period of his life, and we wish him succes whether he will decide to stay home or perhaps continue his career abroad.

New York City, April 1965.

GÖRAN C. H. BAUER

## SOPHUS VON ROSEN

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