

Evolving from a storehouse of books to a scientific information center: the 80th anniversary of the Scientific Library of the Filatov Institute

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Від книжкового сховища до науково-інформаційного центру: 80 років Науковій бібліотеці Інституту імені В. П. Філатова

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Our organization, State Institution “The Filatov Institute of Eye Diseases and Tissue Therapy of the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine”, is celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2026. Although anniversary events are being held throughout this year, I propose to pay attention to a more modest jubilee of one of the most important departments of the institute. In March 2026, we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Scientific Library of the institute, which was established on the instructions of Acad. V.P. Filatov in 1946.

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For many years, the library was under the care of Mykola P. Koroliov, and then he was relieved by Ielyzaveta G. Ershkovych, a long-serving library professional, and Galyna O. Chyviriova. However, these names are remembered merely by the eldest employees of the Institute; and younger generation keeps a grateful remembrance of Tamila A. Marysheva. Over the years, she performed bibliographic work, and then headed the team of the library, being its irreplaceable chief and contributing greatly to the library collection. She was succeeded as the head of the library by Svitlana M. Bielousova and Nataliia E. Usenko [1]. Today, the staff of the library consists of three persons: the head (Dmytro V. Horshkov, Master of History and Researcher), the chief librarian who keeps library up and running (Svitlana V. Fedotova, an experienced and valuable team member), and the librarian (Artem Lykhmanov, a young employee and specialist in computer science).

The library collection has developed over the years and includes not only ophthalmological literature items in Ukrainian, English, Russian and other languages, but also numerous items of general science, general medicine, biological and reference literature. The most valuable items include all fifteen volumes of the “System of Ophthalmology” edited by Sir Stewart Duke-Elder, the Fellow of the Royal Society. Naturally, the library has also three great medical encyclopedias published in the years of the USSR.

Edition	Publication years	Number of volumes in a set	Chief editor
1st edition	1928–1936	35	M.A. Semashko
2nd edition	1956–1964	36	A.M. Bakulev
3rd edition	1974–1989	30	B.V. Petrovskyi

Another interesting encyclopedic item is the “Medical Encyclopedia” published by the National Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine, under the editorship of P.I. Chervyak in 2012. Our staff has published articles in the “Encyclopedia of Contemporary Ukraine”, and the library has this encyclopedia.

Of note that the library collection includes valuable and unique dissertations and books by the pioneers of ophthalmology M.I. Averbakh, S.S. Golovin, V.P. Filatov, and V.P. Odintsov, as well as rare manuals on ophthalmology. A lot of books were gifted by Academician V.P. Filatov from his private collection. Our contemporaries, scientists of the institute, followed his example. Over the most recent decade, institute staff members donated several sets of book to the library. Corresponding Member of the National Academy of Medical Sciences, Professor and Dr Sc (Med), Natalia V. Pasyechnikova, donated more than 100 books. Other donors of books and distinguished library users are Professor Vira I. Serdiuchenko, Head of Laboratory of Binocular Vision Disorders, Professor Eduard V. Maltsev, and Researcher Valeriia V. Myrnenko, Head of Organizational and Methodological Department. Special words of gratitude are extended to the widow of Professor Vit, Nadiia P. Vit, who donated 218 books from the professor’s private collection.

It is also noteworthy that the library collection includes a complete set of candidate of science theses and doctoral dissertations that have been defended at the Filatov Institute, and a complete set of “Ophthalmological Journal” issues.

Our scientific library has evolved from a storehouse of books and journals to a multifunctional scientific information and analytical center integrated into all stages of the research process performed at the institute.

Over the most recent five years, special attention has been paid to Internet services and computer-associated activities. The inclusion of an IT specialist in the library staff has enabled us to begin the development of an electronic library catalog based on Koha library software.

Another important activity is scanning the most valuable, old and rare books and journals from the li-

brary collection. In 2022, given the risks associated with the war, Corresponding Member of the National Academy of Medical Sciences and Professor Natalia V. Pasyechnikova initiated scanning of valuable items from the library collection and V.P. Filatov’s scientific heritage. At the end of 2022, within the framework of the “Military books” project, we scanned several books on the treatment of eye injuries and burns, and uploaded them to our repository, making them available to any eye trauma surgeon in Ukraine.

Special attention was given to the scientific heritage of V.P. Filatov, the founding father of our institute. His doctoral dissertation on corneal transplantation and a complete four-volume set of his publications were scanned, converted to PDF files, and uploaded to the repository. More than 11 thousand printed pages (about 60 books and dissertations) have been scanned for the above purpose.

During the most recent four years, the library reading hall has been equipped with Wi-Fi and a computer with Internet access. Today, a library user may come to the library to do his/her computer work at the library computer using free software.

Previously, in order to respond to library users’ requests, our librarians had to look only through the printed items from the library collection, whereas today we can use fast Internet and knowledge of our computer science specialist to provide our users with the response not limited to the above items. Today journals can be accessed through the Internet. The Research4Life publisher partners have taken steps to expand access to information resources for Ukraine institutions, including the Filatov institute, and we have access to Research4Life.

A “point of indestructibility” was deployed at the scientific library in 2022-2023 [2]. At that period of the full-scale invasion, prolonged power outages became part of everyday life over the city including the district where our institute is located. People living in the adjacent houses of our district saw that there was electric power at the institute, and were coming to our library to charge their devices and have Internet access. To make this process easier for these people, we even bought some extension cords and charging devices.

Additionally, recently, scientific historical research work has begun in the library. The head of the scientific library, Dmytro V. Horshkov, explores the history of the institute, writes articles and speaks on this topic at library conferences and conferences on local history and heritage. He coined the term “the fourth generation of Filatovites” [3] and spoke at the two conferences held

at the Odesa National Scientific Library (ONSB) [2,4] in 2024, and at the conferences held at the ONSB and the Information Technology Department, Odesa Polytechnic University [5], in 2025. Every year in May, our library staff members participate in a Filatov memorial lectures conference, where they present our booth with monographs, books and brochures written and published by doctors and scientists of our institute.

In May, 2026, D.V. Horshkov, and S.V. Fedotova, the Head and the Librarian, respectively, of the Scientific Library, were awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from Professor Boris Burkynskyi, the Head of the Southern Scientific Centre of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine [6], for our meticulous research and computer-assisted work [6]. This confirmed that we are on the right track.

In our activities, we do our best to make our library reading hall a meeting and communication space for the staff of the institute. Thus, we conducted the Nobel Week Research and Practice Seminar in 2025. Intern physicians, post-graduate students, and young scientists of our institute were invited to participate in the seminar. At the seminar we reported on the Nobel Week 2025 (the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, Physics and Chemistry 2025), and young scientists debated on the Nobel Prize and where global medical science is going next. Therefore, we try to inspire our youth to pursue frontier science, make breakthrough discoveries and shape tomorrow.

Moreover, we are going to conduct intergenerational dialogue meetings with the leading scientists of our institute, asking them to tell the invited intern physicians, post-graduate students, and young scientists of our institute about their science careers. In collaboration with Oleg S. Zadorozhnyy, Deputy Director for Scientific Work, we are going to create a separate science archive on the basis of our library. We, as the staff of the library, will do our best to make this archive function effectively. The digital video archive on the history of the institute has been already created and is stored at our library.

To conclude, eighty years since the establishment of our library is not just an anniversary date. It is eight decades of preserving knowledge, scientific memory and generational continuity. Political eras, technologies, scientific fields and the very concepts of the library have changed over this period of time. But the essence — the commitment to the preservation of knowledge and making it accessible to everyone — has remained unchanged.

The Scientific Library at Filatov Eye Diseases and Tissue Therapy Institute continues to thrive and grow.

Today it has not only rare books and unique dissertations, but also the electronic library catalog, digital collections, the repository and access to Internet. A small portion of the scientific heritage has been already digitized and given a new lease of life, becoming accessible not only to contemporary researchers, but also to future generations.

But the library is not just a collection of books and computers. It lives through its people, those who have been maintaining and carefully preserving library collections for years and those who continue this work today, and those young scientists who come to the library for knowledge, ideas and inspiration. That is why the library remains a true place for meetings between a person and a book, between a scientist and science information, between past and future, and, most important, a place for intergenerational meetings.

Let the Scientific Library of the Filatov Institute remain a place where people meet with knowledge, experience meets with youth, and history meets with future, a place where new science ideas are born, discoveries originate, and great achievements begin. Therefore, as we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the library, we want to look forward rather than back. After all, a true library is never stuck in the past, but it preserves the past to help build the future.

Література

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