

# History of Plastic Surgery

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Human dissatisfaction with one's appearance is as old as humanity itself. The desire for a perfect appearance, constant improvement of body proportions and other aesthetic changes can be found everywhere in the world from the oldest civilizations to today's modern world.

## Ancient Egypt

With the ancient Egyptians, we know that their knowledge in the field of healing was at high level for their time. Thanks to the processes of mummification, they learned the secrets of the human body and were able to perform relatively complex surgical procedures. However, the ancient Egyptians were not too concerned with the improvement of the living, but were even more concerned with the dead. They performed procedures on the bodies of their sovereigns that resembled the work of a plastic surgeon. For example, the **mummy** of Ramses II. she had a surgically **modified nose**. Other mummies of Egyptian pharaohs had **faces stuffed with bandages** similar to the way silicone implants are currently used. Egyptologists believe that these interventions were intended to keep the bodies in the most perfect condition even after death. We know from the papyri that the Egyptians were able to practice these tricks on living patients, but they probably didn't.



Mummy of Ramesses II.

## Ancient India

But real plastic surgery was probably born in India, where they were able to do masterful **nose reconstruction** already in the seventh century BC. Skin cut from the forehead or cheeks was used in the operation. The first treatises devoted to plastic surgery were also written in Sanskrit. It dealt with the possibilities of replacing a nose or an ear that the sufferer had lost in battle or had been cut off as punishment. Probably the lesser known plastic surgeon of this period was Sushruta, who was active in India around 600 BC. He published the book Sushruta Samhita, in which he described, among other things, the reconstruction of the nose and ears. He cut the **skin from the forehead or face**, shaped it with a metal plate and sewed it to the face. Wooden tubes were inserted into the nostrils to keep the airways open. This method was then used until the eighteenth century.

## Ancient Rome

The ancient Romans greatly admired the beauty of the naked body and tried to correct its imperfections. Circumcision, which some Roman emperors even banned, was the target of ridicule. In this area, the doctor **Cornelius Celsus**, who performed and subsequently described operations to **recreate the foreskin**, was particularly outstanding. They were done on men who were born without a foreskin, or it was too narrow and had to be removed. Among other things, Celsus also described the reduction of breasts in obese men. Also nose, lip and lobe plastic surgery.

## Middle Ages

In the Middle Ages there is a **decline** of plastic surgery and medicine as such. It rises from the ashes only in the Renaissance.

## 15th century

In the middle of the 15th century, Heinrich von Pflanzpaint described for the first time in Europe a way "how it is possible to create a new nose that a person has lost after a dog attack". He used **the skin from the back of the arm** to do this. However, considering the risks involved in any surgical procedure (and especially in the area of the head or face), plastic surgery was not common for a long time. Until anesthesia began to be used, surgical procedures were associated with great pain and there was a great risk of infection.

## 18th century

Plastic surgery experienced a boom at the end of the 18th century, when British surgeons watched in awe at the work of an Indian mason. He was able to skillfully operate on a Briton whose nose was cut off in a Turkish prison. British doctors copied his method and spread it throughout Europe. Its great promoter, who also described it in the book Rhinoplasty in 1818, was the doctor Karl Ferdinand Graefe. He described for the first time the **cleft surgery** and the **eyelid surgery**. In 1792, surgeon Chopard performed the first lip surgery, using skin from the neck. In 1814, Joseph Carpue successfully operated on a British officer who had lost his nose due to mercury poisoning. In 1891, the American John Roe presented the result of his operation, during which he **straightened** the young patient's **crooked nose**.

## First World War and the Interwar Period

Thanks to the horrors of World War I, surgeons had plenty of "material" to improve upon. Cosmetic procedures most often involved crushed jaws, severed noses, or facial cuts. The New Zealand surgeon Harold Gillies, who developed a number of modern plastic surgery techniques while caring for soldiers with faces disfigured by **war wounds**, made his mark in particular. His work was then developed by his student Archibald McIndoe during the Second World War. In 1946, Gillies then performed the first operation, in which he transformed a woman to a man. Other notable surgeons included the French Moresion and Ombrédanne, the English Kilner, the German Lexer and the Russian Limberg. On the territory of the Czech Republic, we must not forget the important František Burian. In 1930, the French Society of Plastic and Aesthetic Surgery was founded. A year after that, the Americans founded their American Society of Plastic Surgery. And in 1933 is called to Paris the **First International Congress of Plastic Surgery**



Plastic surgeries during the WW1

## Second World War and Post-war History

Since 1946, the journal Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery has been published. In 1955, the International Society of Plastic Surgery was reestablished. The history of modern plastic surgery began to be written in the sixties and seventies. Plastic surgery came into the center of medical attention and procedures became much more common. In the 1960s, **silicone** also entered the scene, and in 1962 Thomas Cronin developed the first **implants** made of silicone. Over the next ten years, silicone was used to enhance just about every part of the body.

## Development of Plastic Surgery in Czechoslovakia

**František Burian** (September 17, 1881, Prague – October 15, 1965, Prague) was a Czech physician who is considered the founder of Czechoslovakia and one of the pioneers of world plastic surgery. Thanks to him, the Czech Republic was the first country in the world to recognize plastic surgery as an independent medical field in 1939. Burian initiated the construction of plastic surgery workplaces in Brno, Bratislava and Košice. He brought plastic surgery to a top level in Czechoslovakia, a generation earlier than in most developed countries.

He studied medicine at the Faculty of Medicine of Charles University in Prague. He graduated on April 6, 1906 and received the title M.D. . He then worked as an assistant in the pathological-anatomical institute, which was headed by Jaroslav Hlava. At the end of October 1912, he went to Belgrade and later to Sofia, where he worked as a surgeon in the Balkan War and managed a large military hospital. After returning from the Balkans, he set up a private practice in Prague in January 1914. He was drafted into the army in August of the same year. He then worked for a year and a half as the chief surgeon of the Prague reserve military hospital, located in the Rudolfinum. He was constantly experimenting and inventing new treatments. After the war, he worked in the Prague garrison hospital. Based on his experience as a war surgeon, he promoted the establishment of a plastic surgery station, which later became the **Institute of Plastic Surgery**. In 1948, the institute changed to a plastic surgery clinic and František Burian became its head. He was the director of the plastic surgery laboratory of the Czech Academy of Sciences from 1955 until the end of his life.

He focused on congenital defects, especially **clefts**, but also injuries and burns. Clefts became his lifelong hobby. He published more than two hundred scientific works, several monographs, for example, Surgery of clefts or Atlas of plastic surgery and university scripts. Burian frequently lectured abroad and was awarded honorary membership of the American Surgical Society in 1937 and membership of the US Academy of Sciences shortly thereafter.

Other important doctors: prof. V. Karfík, prof. H. Pešková, prof. M. Fára, prof. R. Königová and others

## Links

### References

- MĚŠŤÁK, Jan. *Introduction to Plastic Surgery*. 1. edition. Praha : Charles University in Prague - Karolinum Publishing House, 2005. 125 pp. ISBN 80-246-1150-3.

### External Links

- Historie plastické chirurgie ([https://ona.idnes.cz/historie-plasticke-chirurgie-uriznute-nosy-a-obnovovani-predk-ozky-11h-zdravi.aspx?c=A100904\\_220234\\_zdravi\\_bad](https://ona.idnes.cz/historie-plasticke-chirurgie-uriznute-nosy-a-obnovovani-predk-ozky-11h-zdravi.aspx?c=A100904_220234_zdravi_bad))
- František Burian ([https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/František\\_Burian/](https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/František_Burian/))

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