

The history of a female who has four mammae and nipples / by Robert Lee.

Contributors

Lee, Robert, 1793-1877.

Publication/Creation

London : Printed by G. Woodfall ..., 1838.

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/jyg42sx7>

License and attribution

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

4

THE HISTORY
OF
A FEMALE
WHO HAS
FOUR MAMMÆ AND NIPPLES.

BY ROBERT LEE, M.D. F.R.S.,
PHYSICIAN TO THE BRITISH LYING-IN-HOSPITAL, AND LECTURER ON
MIDWIFERY AT ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL.

FROM THE TWENTY-FIRST VOLUME OF THE MEDICO-CHIRURGICAL
TRANSACTIONS, PUBLISHED BY THE ROYAL MEDICAL AND
CHIRURGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

London:
PRINTED BY G. WOODFALL, ANGEL COURT, SKINNER STREET.

1838.

THE HISTORY
OF
A FEMALE
WHO HAS
FOUR MAMMÆ AND NIPPLES.

BY ROBERT LEE, M.D. F.R.S.,

PHYSICIAN TO THE BRITISH LYING-IN-HOSPITAL, AND LECTURER ON
MIDWIFERY AT ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL.

READ JANUARY 9TH, 1838.

MRS. —, æt. 35, was delivered prematurely of a still born child on the 21st July, 1835. Soon afterwards, the mammæ became excessively painful and distended, and she had a severe attack of fever with delirium. Though the symptoms became daily more aggravated, a week elapsed before she would permit the condition of the breasts to be ascertained. On inquiring into the cause of this unwillingness to allow the necessary examination of the mammæ to be made, I was informed by her sister-in-law, that she had two mammæ and two nipples on each side, and that this peculiarity, which she was anxious to conceal, had been observed ten years before, when her first confinement took place.

After long entreaty, I obtained leave to inspect the breasts, and was surprised to find that there were two on each side, as had been represented; the two of the

same side being separated by a deep oblique depression. The inferior or pectoral mammæ, as they were afterwards termed by Sir Astley Cooper, were fully developed and in the natural situation, and their nipples, areolæ and glands presented nothing unusual in their appearance. Near the anterior margin of the axilla, a little higher up on each side, was situated another mamma, about one-sixth the size of the others. The nipples of these were small and flat, but when gently pressed, a milky fluid, which had all the external characters of the milk secreted by the other breasts, flowed copiously and readily from several ducts which opened on their extremities. When milk was drawn from the lower breasts, a small quantity usually escaped from the nipples of the superior breasts, and when the draught came into the former, the latter invariably became hard and distended.

Mrs. — had previously borne several living children, and five years before this period had twins, when she had a severe attack of uterine inflammation, and suffered much from painful distension of the two upper breasts. In consequence of the flatness of their nipples, she has never been able to suckle any of her children with these. The vagina, orifice of the uterus, and all the other organs, besides the mammæ, in this female are well formed.

I mentioned this case to Sir Astley Cooper at the time it first came under my observation, but he did not see it with me until the 28th February, 1836, several months after the secretion of milk had entirely ceased. When Sir Astley saw the mammæ, he said there

could be no doubt that there were two on each side, an axillary and pectoral breast, and that nature had separated them completely from each other. He considered it proper that some record should be given of a case, which he thought to be without a parallel in this country.

Mrs. ——— again became pregnant, and was safely delivered on the 19th July, 1837, of a living child, which she now suckles with the pectoral breasts, and the axillary breasts again present the same appearances as those which have now been described.

The preceding case furnishes one of the best examples of quadruple mammæ in the human subject which has yet occurred. The following are the most striking histories of this variety of malformation, which I have met with in the works of foreign authors.

J. F. Lynceus states that he went from curiosity to see a Roman woman who had four breasts, of a beautiful form, ranged regularly above one another, and giving milk copiously.

An old physician at Basle was once consulted by a young wealthy heiress, who had four mammæ, and who wished to know in the event of her marrying, whether she would have three or four children at a birth, a prejudice with which some matrons had inspired her. Not being satisfied with the opinion of this physician, she addressed herself to the faculty at Tübingen. This lady married, and never had more than one child at a time.

About sixteen years ago, in the village of Pfullendorf in Germany, an aged woman who lived upon

alms, was exhibited as a great curiosity, who had four mammæ, perfectly equal, and placed symmetrically upon two parallel rows. Old age, misery, and want, gave to this female a very disagreeable appearance. If it had been possible, as she bent forward, to forget for an instant that she was a woman, it would not have been difficult to believe, that these four mammæ belonged to an individual of an entirely different species*.

The following case of quadruple mammæ was communicated by M. Champion of Bar le Duc to Messrs. Percy and Laurent, the writers of the articles *Mammelle* and *Multimamme* in the 30th and 34th vols. of the *Dictionnaire des Sciences Medicales*.

“Madame —— was delivered of her fourth child on the 15th February, 1818, which she did not suckle. The fourth day after, she began to complain of an uneasy sense of distension in the axilla, and of pains analogous to those experienced in the mammæ during puerperal turgescence. The fifth day, the uneasiness was so much increased as to attract my attention. On the right side, under the axilla, behind the edge of the great pectoral muscle, where it leaves the trunk, to form the anterior border of the axilla, was a tumour larger than a turkey's egg, flattened and irregularly circumscribed, painful without redness of the skin, which was covered with a fluid thicker than the ordinary perspiration of the axilla. A portion of the shift which corresponded with this tumour was moistened. This circumstance led me to compress the

* *Diction. des Scienc. Medicales*, Tom. XXXIV. p. 527.

tumour, which I at first considered to be a lymphatic gland, and there issued from six small openings, irregularly distributed over the centre of the gland, a milky fluid, similar to that which the other breasts afforded. I could have collected, by slight pressure, a quantity sufficient to fill a coffee-spoon. The openings were very small, and it was obvious, from the clothes covering them being always moistened, that milk kept constantly oozing from them. The flow of milk gradually diminished, with the size of the breasts. A similar gland was observed in the left arm pit, but it was neither so large nor so painful; and I counted only five instead of six apertures in it. On the 25th March, 1818, the gland of the right axilla was not larger than a flattened nut. Three divisions or glandules were observed in it, of which two were larger than the others. That of the left was much the smallest, and had only two lobes."

In the *Journal de Médecine*, l'an. II., Dr. Gardeur published the following case of quadruple mammæ which occurred in St. Domingo, and which has also been cited by Percy, but which is not considered as a perfectly authentic history by J. Geoffroy St. Hilaire*.

"Aglæe, fille mulâtre, âgée de 19 ans, native du Cap, d'un blanc et d'une negresse d'une constitution robuste et sanguine et d'une humeur joviale, taille au dessous de la moyenne, et assez replete, porte quatre mamelles, dont deux placées dans le lieu ordinaire et bien conformées, et les deux autres près de l'aisselle à un pouce au des-

* Histoire des Anomalies de l'Organization, Tom. I. p. 712.

sous et en avant, ayant de sept à huit lignes d'élévation de la surface de la peau et de trois pouces et demi à quatre pouces de circonférence, laissant apercevoir, au tact, sous les tegumens, de petits corps glanduleux et chacune terminée par un petit mamelon proportionné à leur volume. Elles ressemblent parfaitement à celles d'une jeune fille qui entre dans l'âge de puberté. Cette femme a eu un enfant à quatorze ans, et les mammelles extra naturelles ont donné du lait en raison de leur capacité. Je n'ai pu savoir à quel âge elle avait commencé à être réglée; suivant les apparences, elle a dû l'être fort jeune, et je crois, vers l'âge de onze à douze ans, et depuis ce temps elle l'a toujours été exactement."

In some women only one breast has been developed, others have had two nipples placed on one mamma, and a few individuals have had three breasts, two in the natural situation, and a third situated in the middle of the two others. Only one case has been recorded of five mammæ in the human subject*.

* Dict. des Scien. Med. Tom. XXXIV. p. 529.