Arnold Pick (1851-1924) was born in Moravia to Austrian parents, studied medicine in Vienna and became professor at the University of Prague. The condition of circumscribed focal atrophy with frontal lobe dementia and progressive aphasia was described by Pick in 1892 and is now known to be more common than previously thought. As a medical student Pick was influenced by Theodor Meynert in Vienna before studies with Karl Westphal in Berlin where he was a contemporary of Carl Wernicke. From 1875 he worked at the Prague asylum and joined the faculty of medicine from 1878 becoming full professor in 1886. Pick became an internationally renowned leader in neurology with a research output of 350 publications and a textbook on neuropathology. Pick provided the first description of the neurodegenerative condition associated with his name with the features of aphasia, progressive dementia and loss of initiative. Histological studies were not included in his original descriptions and his contemporaries did not propose a new nosologic entity. His writings display a breadth of knowledge and insight into the nature of the dementia that he considered was the result of focal lesions in the frontal and temporal association areas. In 1911 Alois Alzheimer drew attention to cases of circumscribed atrophy described by Pick associated with argyrophilic inclusions (later called Pick's bodies), whilst in 1922 a Dutch neurologist Gans first suggested the eponym 'Pick's atrophy'. Alzheimer's observations were rediscovered around 1925 and Pick's disease gained acceptance as a separate entity thereafter.