

## **Brachet, Jean Louis Auguste**

Born: March 19, 1909 (Etterbeek)

Died: August 10, 1988 (Eigenbrakel)

### **Biography**

His father is the well-known embryologist Albert Brachet. During WWI the family flees to France. After finishing his secondary studies in Etterbeek, Jean studies medicine at the Free University of Brussels (ULB) graduating in 1934 as a doctor. From 1934 till 1938 he is assistant at the ULB and studies at Cambridge and at the Woods Hole Maritime Laboratory of Princeton. On his return he is appointed lecturer of animal morphology followed in 1938 by his nomination by Paul Brien as professor of animal morphology and becoming head of this department in 1942. However during WWI the ULB was closed down by the German occupier; during the war he is kept hostage by the Germans. In 1945 he is dispatched to Great Britain and the USA to view the progress of the scientific research.

He is a visiting professor at the Institut Pasteur in Paris and the University of Philadelphia.

On his return at the ULB he becomes the founder (together with Hubert Chantrenne) of the *Groupe du Rouge Cloître*. Thanks to the Rockefeller Foundation this laboratory becomes the first department of molecular biology with specialized units (embryology, immunology, genetics, ...). In 1963 the "Group of the Red Cloister" is selected by Euratom as one of the four research establishments to study the effect of radiation on man. This leads in 1965 to the establishment of a new campus at Sint-Genesius-Rode known as the "Groupe de Rode".

Jean Brachet is holder of a number of honorary doctorates and of the title of corresponding member of academies for Science (among them of the Royal Society of London and of Edinburgh). Between 1936 and 1972 he collects important scientific prizes and is holder of the Francqui-chair at every Belgian university.

### **Scientific realizations**

Already in the early 30's Brachet studies DNA and RNA and discovers a method for the cytochemical determination of the nucleic acids in the cell (the Unna-Brachet technique).

A thorough survey of Brachet's research by Henri **Alexandre** is published in *Int. J. Dev. Biol.*, **vol.36 (1992), p. 29-39**