Multiple floating thrombi of the ascending aorta revealed by embolisms

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A 62-year-old man was hospitalized for a transient ischemic attack with aphasia. An ischemia of the left upper limb appeared the next day, with thrombosis of the humeral artery in Doppler. Transesophageal echocardiography revealed a thrombus, floating in the ascending aorta. Urgent surgery was decided (Figs. 1 and 2).

Fig. 1. Intraoperative views. After median sternotomy, aortic cross clamping was performed, guided by transesophageal echocardiography, with administration of retrograde cardioplegia. After the aortotomy was made, the pedicle thrombus was visible, hung to the left anterior part of the mid ascending aorta (a). Exploration revealed many other thrombi, requiring an en-bloc cuneiform resection of the aorta (b). A complementary resection extended to the non coronary sinus was performed because of severe atheroma of the ascending aorta. Replacement by a Dacron graft was performed.

Fig. 2. View of the emboli. In a second step, during the same operation, the embolectomy of the humeral artery was performed by the vascular surgeon. Post-operative course was normal.

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