

MARIANNE WINDER

1918–2001

An Appreciation

The unexpected death of Marianne Winder occurred peacefully in London on 6 April 2001 following a short illness. For over thirty years Marianne Winder had been associated with the library of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, first as Assistant Librarian then as Curator of Oriental MSS and Printed Books and, finally, as Consultant in Tibetan Medicine.

Marianne Winder was born in Tepliz, north west of Prague, on 10 September 1918, when Czechoslovakia had yet to come into existence being then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The elder of the two daughters of Ludwig Winder, the distinguished writer and literary critic, she belonged to the central European world of Jewish intelligentsia, later to be so tragically destroyed. The increasing political difficulties of the late 1930s forced Ludwig Winder, his wife and elder daughter to abandon their home in Prague and seek refuge in England.

The literary circle of Ludwig Winder, which included such luminaries as Kafka, doubtless influenced his daughter to pursue a career in German literature. After the war, Marianne Winder took an honours degree in German as an external student of London University and, in 1948, was appointed Tutorial Assistant in the Department of German at Nottingham University. Her research interests lay in the etymology of Middle High German words, the subject of her master's thesis at Nottingham. An extract from this thesis was published in 1952 as a supplement to Maurice Walshe's *A concise German etymological dictionary*. Since no etymological dictionary of Middle High German as found in medieval German texts existed at that time, Winder's contribution was significant in the field.

In 1953, Winder was appointed Assistant Librarian at the Institute of Germanic Studies, London University, where she continued to pursue her research interests in German language and literature. In addition to her expertise in German, Winder was also an able classical scholar. This gave her access to medieval and early Renaissance writings, particularly texts relevant to astrology and related topics where her research interests lay at this time. Having completed the Diploma in Library and Information Studies at University College London in 1963 with her dissertation on German astrological works, 1452–1600, published in 1966 in the *Annals of Science*, Winder accepted the post of Assistant Librarian at the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine where she was to remain for the rest of her career.

At the Wellcome Institute, Winder's linguistic skills were appreciated in the cataloguing and organization of the library. Her interest in medieval and Renaissance literature led to a productive collaboration with Dr Walter Pagel, the well known medical historian and pathologist. With Pagel, Winder published in 1968 'Gnostisches bei Paracelsus und Konrad von Megenberg' in *Fachliteratur des Mittelalters*, a festschrift for Gerhard Eis and, in the same year, they published 'Hervey and the "modern" concept of disease' in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*. The following year, the same collaboration produced 'The eightness of Adam and related "gnostic" ideas in the Paracelsian corpus' published in *Ambix*. In 1972, Winder compiled a bibliography of the writings of Pagel in *Science, medicine and society in*



Figure 1: Marianne Winder looking at a Tibetan thanka displayed at the exhibition 'Body and mind in Tibetan medicine' in 1986. (Wellcome Library, London.)

the Renaissance, which was published in his honour. Following Pagel's death in 1983, Winder edited his writings in two volumes, the first published in 1985 under the title *Religion and Neoplatonism in Renaissance medicine*, the second in 1986 entitled *From Paracelsus to Van Helmont*.

Winder's long-standing interest in Buddhism developed into an interest in Tibet, its language and culture. Having become proficient in Tibetan from attendance at language courses at the School of Oriental and African Studies, Winder was the obvious choice to fill the new post of Curator of Oriental MSS and Printed Books created in the Wellcome Institute in 1970. With this appointment Winder embarked on a second career.

The Wellcome Institute's extensive collections of oriental manuscripts and printed books were largely unknown at the time of Winder's appointment. A brief, unpublished hand list of some 3,000 Sanskrit manuscripts had been made in 1954 and a catalogue of less than a third of the Arabic manuscripts was published in 1967. The task to organize, catalogue and bring the Wellcome oriental collections to the attention of oriental scholarship was immense. Winder tackled this task and laid down the foundations of this work which continues today. As a result of her ground work, the oriental collections preserved in the Wellcome Library not only occupy an unrivalled position as a primary resource for the study of medicine in Asian cultures, but they are acknowledged as one of the major oriental collections in the west. In addition to her curatorial duties, Winder pursued her research in Tibetan medicine and collaborated with Rechung Rinpoche Jampal Kunzang in his work *Tibetan medicine: illustrated in original texts* published in 1973. This work was reprinted by the University of California Press in 1976 and has become a standard work on the subject. A Chinese translation was published in Lhasa in 1986 and selections from the book were published in French

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translation in 1989. Shortly before her death, Winder, in collaboration with the Rinpoche, had completed a revision of the book recently published in Delhi.

On her retirement in 1978, Winder was appointed Consultant in Tibetan Medicine which enabled her to continue her work on the *Catalogue of Tibetan manuscripts and xylographs, and the catalogue of thankas, banners and other paintings and drawings in the Library of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine*, published in 1989, the crowning achievement of her second career. Her retirement was both active and fruitful. In 1985, she participated in an international workshop on the study of Indian medicine. Her paper 'Vaidūrya' was published in the proceedings, entitled *Studies in Indian medicine* edited by Dominik Wujastyk and G J Meulenbeld. The following year, Winder herself organized the conference 'Aspects of classical Tibetan medicine as reflected in Central Asia' and with it staged a major exhibition 'Body and mind in Tibetan medicine' for which she produced a catalogue. The proceedings of this conference were edited by Winder and published in 1993 in the monograph *Aspects of classical Tibetan medicine*.

Ever open to new ideas, Winder continued to be active and to utilize the latest developments in information technology. She sat on the council for *Ambix*, the journal of the Society for the History of Alchemy and Chemistry, and acted as a consultant for the book *Eastern healing: the practical guide to the healing traditions of China, India, Tibet and India* compiled by Jacqueline Young and published just before her death. Winder was preparing to contribute a chapter describing some of the Thankas in the Wellcome Library for a book on the Wellcome oriental collections due to be published as part of the celebrations to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Sir Henry Wellcome in 2003, and had selected the material with which to illustrate her contribution.

Marianne Winder will be remembered, not only for her scholarship and for the contribution she has made in her fields of expertise, but also for her warmth, loyalty and sense of humour. Her circle of friends was drawn from the several areas her life touched upon—from her early days in Prague, from the difficult years as a refugee during the war, from the world of academia, from those who shared her enthusiasm for Tibet its people and culture, and from the Buddhist faith she embraced. She was, in the words of the Hebrew prophet Amos, "a firebrand plucked out of the burning" of her homeland to burn brightly from her adopted land in the hearts and minds of her many friends and admirers.

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