

## Obituaries

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### JOSHUA O. LEIBOWITZ (1895–1993)

The passing of Joshua Leibowitz on 10 July 1993 closed a long and distinguished chapter in the history of medicine. His particular blend of medical, linguistic and historical scholarship was representative of that Baltic-Jewish tradition of learning which contributed so much to European culture before its dispersal and decimation by the Nazi horror. He will be widely mourned by the history of medicine community.

His particular association with the Wellcome Institute was close and affectionate. He and his wife Hannah spent a number of extended study periods in London during the 1960s and 70s and became keenly interested in the development of the Institute and its Library. At the opening of the then new Oriental Reading Room he characteristically insisted on intoning some appropriate verses from the Hebrew scriptures—“to get it off to a good start”. Never the austere “Herr Professor Doktor” but always instinctively a teacher, he endeared himself to staff by his willingness to discuss and debate all manner of historical and cultural topics. His learning inspired awe, and his complete lack of academic condescension, affection.

He was born in 1895 in Vilna (now Vilnius, but at that period part of Russia), but spent his school years in Riga. In 1913 he began his medical studies at the University of Heidelberg, but these were soon interrupted by the world war. Internment followed, but his wider studies continued, particularly in the Hebrew language. In 1918 he was able to resume medical studies, receiving his MD degree in 1922. Medical training at Heidelberg was made to accommodate courses on philosophy and the history of art as well as rabbinical learning.

Joshua Leibowitz’s medical interests ranged through internal medicine, psychiatry and, particularly, neurology. His years as Director of the Jewish Sanatorium in Bad-Homburg brought him into fruitful contact with the intellectual riches of the then flourishing Jewish community of Frankfurt-am-Main, where he taught Hebrew literature and Jewish thought at the *Judisches Lehrhaus*. He was already accumulating interests and book collections in the history of medicine: building a choice rare book library which was to travel with him to Palestine in 1935. He was co-founder of the Israel Society for the History of Medicine and Science in 1947 and of the journal *Koroth* in 1952. In 1957 he began the first formal course of instruction in the history of medicine at the Hebrew University, Hadassah Medical School. As a pillar of the International Society for the History of Medicine he attended all its international congresses between 1950 and 1982, delighting in opportunities to meet colleagues and extend his own work.

Professor Leibowitz was intellectually active until well after his ninety-fifth year, publishing his last paper in *Koroth* (with J. Urbach) in 1991. His bibliography in medical history was long and distinguished, but he is likely to be remembered chiefly for his monograph on *The history of coronary heart disease* in 1970. (A bibliography of his work between 1933 and 1984 was published by David Wilk in *Koroth*, 1985, 8, No. 11–12).

Professor Leibowitz leaves behind his wife and devoted companion Hannah. Their inseparability, and her gracious personality, ensure that our condolences are heartfelt.

Eric J. Freeman

(Note: I am grateful to Professor Samuel S. Kottek, Faculty of Medicine, Hebrew University, for his kind permission to make free use of his tribute to Professor Leibowitz, published in *Koroth* in 1985, together with additional private communications.)

### SIDNEY HERBERT WATKINS (1912–1993)

Sidney Watkins, who died aged 81 on 24 August 1993, worked as an assistant in the Wellcome Library from 1946 to 1977. He was the protégé of William Bishop, Wellcome Librarian (and later

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editor of *Medical History*), who poached him from the Royal Society of Medicine, and for a generation of medical historians from the 1940s to the 1960s he was the Library's public face as Supervisor of the Reading Room. Latterly he was in charge of the photographic service and there too he built up a satisfied clientele.

Sidney caught only the tail-end of the Library's antediluvian period at Willesden but he was a key figure in the next phase, lasting until the early 1960s, when the Library struggled on a shoe-string to develop a role. For several years he was actually third in the hierarchy after Bishop and Noël Poynter, his deputy and successor; later he would comment sardonically on the number of professionals needed to do what he had once done single-handed.

Besides his service to readers, Sidney was the valued factotum of Bishop and Poynter and was much in demand, in his spare time, for reference-checking and bibliographical searches. He contributed to successive editions of *Garrison-Morton*. After Bishop's untimely death he was proud that his bibliography of his writings was accepted for *Medical History* and regarded the appearance of his name in *Current work* as the ultimate accolade.

John Symons

### GWENETH WHITTERIDGE (1910–1993)

Few scholars can have identified themselves so firmly with an author as did Gweneth Whitteridge with William Harvey. Although she was trained in medieval French studies and in palaeography, it was her appointment in 1935 as archivist (to Sir D'Arcy Power) at St Bartholomew's hospital, London, and her marriage to a future professor of physiology at Edinburgh and Oxford, that set her on her career as a Harveian. Apart from a brief history of Bart's (1961), her energies were devoted to editing and translating Harvey's works: *On local animal motion* (1959); the *Anatomical lectures* (1964); *On the circulation of the blood* (1976); and *On generation* (1981). A new translation of his *Letters on the circulation and the lacteal veins* is in press. She provided a valuable *Bibliography* of Harvey's writings (1989, with Christine English), and summed up her interpretation of Harvey in *William Harvey and the circulation of the blood* (1971). She defended her views in vigorous controversy with Walter Pagel and Jerome Bylebyl, whose preference for intellectual contextualisation she felt diminished Harvey's importance as a physiologist. Even if her later translations did not meet with total acclaim, her earlier versions of *On motion* and the *Anatomical lectures* performed a singular service by making available texts existing only in manuscript or in rare copies.

She was an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, and served from 1983 to 1985 as President of the Historical Section of the Royal Society of Medicine, of which she was also an Honorary Fellow.

Vivian Nutton

### SIR WILLIAM PATON (1917–1993)

We regret to announce the death of Sir William Paton on 17 October 1993. An obituary will appear in the April 1994 issue of *Medical History*.

### CHARLES HOLWELL TALBOT (1906–1993)

We regret to announce the death of Dr Charles Talbot on 11 September 1993. An obituary will appear in the April 1994 issue of *Medical History*.