In This Issue

Dr. Anand Date has had a long-time interest in Sir William Osler, among other publications having published excerpts of Osler's letters to Grace during his trip to Egypt, (OLN no. 74) work that included transcribing the letters in their entirety. In this lead article, Dr. Date carries out painstaking detective work, bringing to light new information about how and from whom Osler acquired his first Arabic manuscripts. In so doing he reveals Lady Osler's role in our acquisition of the famous herbal by the 12th century Andalusian herbalist and botanist Abu Dja'far Ahmad al Ghafiqi.

Dr. Date is Professor of Pathology and Head of the Department of Pathology at Sultan Al Qaboos University in Oman.

In addition, this issue brings you our annual report and appeal, and a special seasonal greeting from William Osler, recently purchased by the Osler Library.

The Story of Osler's First Four Arabic Manuscript Acquisitions

William Osler became interested in acquiring Arabic medical manuscripts for his library towards the end of 1910, when he was Regius Professor of Medicine in Oxford. Harvey Cushing describes how this interest developed as follows: "His November 25th entry – the cold room at the Examiners' meeting, which put him to bed for a week….But, even when laid up with bronchitis, pleasant things may happen to pass the time, and Bodley's (then) sub-librarian saw fit to inoculate him with a desire for some ancient manuscripts which ultimately found their way into his library and served, furthermore, to introduce him to a Dr. Sa'eed of Teheran, Persia." Cushing's comment implies, though it does not explicitly state, that the manuscripts were purchased from Dr M. Sa'eed, who became Osler's friend and from whom he later acquired many more Arabic manuscripts.

It would therefore, be reasonable to expect, the correspondence between Sa'eed and Osler to begin with letters concerning these manuscripts purchased by McGill University, and even the beautiful Osler Library booklet, follow Cushing, and state quite categorically, that the manuscripts were purchased from Sa'eed.

Subsequent commentators including Ellen Wells, in her excellent study of Osler's book purchases, Charlotte Gray, in her fine description of the Osler Library, Adam Gacek, in his masterful survey of Arabic manuscripts at McGill University, and even the beautiful Osler Library booklet, follow Cushing, and state quite categorically, that the manuscripts were purchased from Sa'eed.

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...it is clear that Osler's purchase of the first Arabic manuscripts for his library preceded his correspondence with Sa'eed.
Osler apparently wrote to Bill offering £25 for the MSS, and in the New Year, Bill wrote to Cowley accepting the offer.

Bodleian Library
Oxford
27-1-1912

My dear Professor, [24]
The enclosed has just come. I am so glad you will now be able to carry out your generous intention of presenting Dioscorides to Bodley [25].
The rather illegible signature is meant to represent ‘J. H. Bill.’
As to Syriac medicine, I see there is a short, but good, account in Duval’s History of Syr. Lit. [26] I will keep the book in my study for a few days, in case you like to look at it.
Yours sincerely
A. Cowley
Will you let me know if you do not wish to buy?

Enclosed was Bill’s letter of acceptance of the price offered. [27]

British Residency
Bushire
7/1/11 [sic ref 29]

Dear Dr Cowley
Do you remember the two Arabic MSS I brought you last year, for which Prof. Osler was willing to go to £25? I have now communicated with the owner, who sadly accepts. Please let me know whether the offer holds good, if so I will send the books. They can be paid for by cheque on the Imperial Bank of Persia. It would probably be simpler to make it out to me.
Yours sincerely

Osler added the following note at the top of this letter: “Sent Feb 1st 1912 received in about 3 mos.” Shortly after sending the payment, Osler would have received another letter about Arabic MSS, which introduces two new dramatic personae to this story, Dr. A.R. Neligan and Dr. Mirza Sa’eed.

B.O. 478 Avicenna. Kitab al-išārat

O. 478 Avicenna. Kitab al-išārat

Do you remember the two Arabic MSS I brought you last year, for which Prof. Osler was willing to go to £25? I have now communicated with the owner, who sadly accepts.

Enclosed was Bill’s letter of acceptance of the price offered.

Osler’s reply does not survive, but two months later Neligan writes again:

Do you remember the two Arabic MSS I brought you last year, for which Prof. Osler was willing to go to £25? I have now communicated with the owner, who sadly accepts.
System of Medicine literally "Rule". It is said by experts in Tehran to be 5-600 years old. It is perfect but for the fact that a few leaves have been rewritten in a bad hand. Lithograph copies were made as recently as 45 years ago – and it was (and is no doubt by some) considered as an excellent book of reference for students and practitioners in Turkey, Arabia and India as well as in Persia. Of course you will submit it to the experts at Oxford. I took it to show to Professor Browne after his lecture on Persian Literature but unfortunately he was besieged by people and I had only a few words with him. There is of course the big "Qanoon" of Avicenna in five volumes. If you do not care for this smaller work – I will ask my native friend to look out for the bigger – but of course it would be difficult and take time to find all five volumes. He is on the look [sic] for the poems. The price is £3-15. A European buyer would of course have to pay more if he had done the bargaining.

I shall not fail to avail myself of your invitation when I am next at Oxford.

Believe me,
Yours v. truly,
A. R. NELIGAN.

That these manuscripts had been received within a short time of each other, had come from the same country, Persia; and through intermediaries, both of whom were British officials on furlough in England, confused Cushing into believing that they came from the same source.

It was more than a year later that Osler received his first letter from Saeed:

Hamadan, Persia.
July 17, 1913.

To Sir William Osler,

Dr. Neligan wrote me that you liked the Kanoun of the Avicenna which I procured for you while I was in Teheran. Since my return to my old haunts I have been searching to find something worthy of you. I obtained at the house of an old physician & philosopher whose family had had great reputations as men of learning, an old MS which is remarkably well preserved and the notes in it proves that it has been well studied by many. I hope you will graciously accept it from me, as a token of my indebtedness to your teachings in your Principle [sic] and Practice of Medicine, which has been my companion & help since 1895. [37]

Dr. Neligan also mentioned your desire to have the Avicenna’s poetical works. What remains of him in this line are scattered here & there, and I am trying to collect as much as possible. I came across a MS of his Arabic lines on Hygein [sic] (hygiene) and treatment, which I believe, judging by the learned professor Browne’s works, has not found its way yet into Europe, it is being copied for you.

The gentleman who owned the present vol of Ishârât pointed out to me a building not far from the Avicenna’s grave, “a house was standing here which belonged to the Avicenna where he dwelt, it was standing in the lifetime of my grandfather.”

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Ever your grateful servant,

M. SAEED

From the Regius Professor of Medicine, Oxford
1st August 1913

Dear Dr. Sa’eed: [38]

It is exceedingly kind in you to send me that beautiful Avicenna manuscript. I have just shown it to Mr. Cowley at the Bodleian, who is delighted with it, and says it is in an unusually good state of preservation. Let me know, please, at any time, of others that may be offered for sale, and I would particularly like a manuscript of Avicenna’s poems. Mr. Cowley tells me that he thinks modern volumes of his poems have been issued. I would like very much if you could have some one take a good photograph of the tomb of Avicenna, and send me a memorandum of the cost. I am interested also in Rhazes.

How long shall you by staying in Hamadan? I should like to send

Avicenna’s tomb in Persia Past and Present, by A.V.W. Jackson, New York 1906, taken by the author
you a copy of the new edition of my text-book (1912).

Sincerely yours,

Wm Osler

The letters quoted above are clearly the beginning of the correspondence between Sa’eed and Osler and occur two years after the “Dioscorides MSS” were brought to Oxford for sale. Dioscorides is not mentioned but instead the *Kanun* that Sa’eed sent to Neligan, for Osler, is mentioned. Nor is Dioscorides mentioned anywhere in their correspondence which continued till Osler’s death, or the subsequent letters that Sa’eed wrote to the widowed Lady Osler, while many other Arabic manuscripts are mentioned. Most importantly, if the “Dioscorides manuscripts” had passed through Sa’eed’s hands these would have been correctly identified since Sa’eed was well versed in Arabic and had a profound knowledge of Arabic medical manuscripts.

Later that year while on a visit to England, Sa’eed accepted Osler’s invitation to visit 13 Norham Gardens, although no record of the visit has been found. Cushing speculates that during the visit: “it is certain that all the Arabic MSS. in the Bodleian were got out for inspection and there was much talk about Avicenna.” If this did happen and Osler had shown Sa’eed the “Dioscorides MS” the time available may not have been sufficient for Sa’eed to make a detailed examination that would have revealed its true nature. Cowley’s failure to identify the manuscripts correctly was also probably due to lack of time. But after Osler’s death, when he was helping to catalogue Osler’s manuscripts in 1920 he realised what he had missed earlier, namely that only one of the manuscripts in question was of Dioscorides, and the other was a rare and precious al-Ghafiki. [40]

Cowley’s scholarship allowed Francis to retain the latter for the Osler Library, while transferring only the former to the Bodleian, as directed by Osler’s bequest. WW Francis’s side of the story concerning the al-Ghafiki MS is related in letters that he wrote many years later, to Max Meyerhof an historian of Arabic Medicine. [41]

24 September, 1937
Dr. Max Meyerhof
Sharia Fuad El-Auwal,
Cairo, Egypt

Dear Dr. Meyerhof, [42]

… [The Al-Ghafiki manuscript] was bought from a Persian who sent it to Oxford 1912 as one of two volumes of an illustrated Arabic Dioscorides, and it was not identified as Al-G.’s work until 1920, after Osler’s death, when Cowley of the Bodleian catalogued it for us… owing to the rarity of illustrated copies of Dioscorides in Arabic, Osler left it to the Bodleian. Since the companion volume was not D.’s, but
al-Ghafiki. And precious was a rare manuscript in question of Dioscorides, but after Osler’s death, when we discovered that this volume was not Dioscorides, I had a friendly debate with Bodley’s librarian as to whether I could conscientiously keep this one for the Osler Library, and Lady Osler decided in my favour.

With kind regards,
Sincerely yours,
W.W.F.

We wonder how “friendly” the debate was. When the Dioscorides MS was delivered to Cowley, he made an unsuccessful attempt to get the al-Ghafiki as well. Did Cowley ever regret his scholarship?

Bodleian Library
Oxford
25.8.1926

Dear Lady Osler,

Please accept my best thanks for sending to this Library the volume of the Arabic Dioscorides – It is interesting in itself & a valuable addition to our collections, but I am specially glad to have it here as a memorial of Sir William – I remember so well the circumstances of our getting this & the other volume, & how delighted he was with them.

I hope you will not think me ungracious if I say that I feel quite sure Sir William meant both volumes to come to the Bodleian – We negotiated the purchase as one work, not knowing that the second volume was not Dioscorides. & we always referred to the two volumes under that name – The other volume wd be in very suitable company if you decide to send it to us.

With many thanks again, believe me Yours very sincerely
A.Cowley

The Bibliotheca Osleriana notes that predated Arabic. He was an authority on the Samaritans and Harran. He had a special interest in the Samaritans and Harran. Even before his contacts with Osler began, he stayed on two occasions in England updating his medical knowledge and training in ophthalmology. He resided most frequently in Hamadan and Tehran, where he was renowned for his skills as a physician.

Dioscorides (AD 40 – c90) also known as Pedianos Dioscorides of Anazarbus. A Greek surgeon about whom little is known although he was thought to have served as a medical officer in the Roman Army. He compiled the first herbal in which he described 600 plants and 35 animal products. Although written in Greek it is usually known as De materia Medica (its Latin title). The Bibliotheca Osleriana entry is as follows: ‘BO 346 Dioscorides. MS. in Arabic, on oriental paper: illustrated: written in 637 A.H. [=1239 A.D.]: 9 3/4 x 6 3/4 in., v + 211 leaves. 3rd Makala (i.e. ‘Discourse’, book) of Dioscorides in Arabic translation made (? in Spain) by Stephanus ibn Masali; copied at Bagdad by Al-Hasan ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Nasawi. The writing is very good; there are numerous coloured drawings of plants (a number rather rubbed), and a portrait of Dioscorides (parly erased and then restored, with the halo turned into a turban) on fol. 2v.” (Bibliotheca Osleriana: A Catalogue of Books Illustrating the History of Medicine and Science Collected, Arranged and Annotated by Sir William Osler, Bt. And Bequeathed to McGill University. Editors: W. W. Francis (Librarian, Osler Library), R. H. Hill (Bodleian Library), Archibald Malloch (Librarian, New York Academy of Medicine) Oxford at the Clarendon Press 1929.)
This was Mr. John Hugo Hepburn Cowley to Osler 1-12-1910.

This is not as it first seems — en-

"Physician art thou? — one, all

"Get thee behind me, Satan"

Osler to Cowley 1-12-1910

Gacek A. Arabic calligraphy and

Gray C: The Osler Library: A col-

30th 1906 as Assistant to the Po-

States. He was posted from July

1900; from 1906 was posted to the

ford; entered Indian Civil Service

1891-5; B.A. New College, Ox-

Bodleian Library Letters with MS

foxglove grew.

time in southern Britain where the

man legions were stationed at that

for his.
gions while making observations

whimsy: Dioscorides did travel

tirely an example of Oslerian

William Wordsworth.

ii

McGill University.

The Osler Library

1989; ii: 37-53 (p 3, note 8)

8. The Osler Library. McGill University, Montreal, 1979, p 35.

9. "Cushing's Curious Persian Puzzle or the Adventure of the Missing

Persian" Presentation at the 35th

Annual Meeting of the American

Osler Society, Pasadena, CA. April

11, 2005.

10. Osler to Cowley 1-12-1910

Bodleian Library Records, d. 351,

folios 272-273.

11. "Get thee behind me, Satan"

12. Not: 'The Lord thy God,' but

Lloyd George the Chancellor of

the Exchequer who had just begun

to impose a series of new taxes.

13. "Physician art thou? — one, all

eyes, / Philosophet — a fingering

slave, / One that would peep and

botanize / Upon his mother's grave" from: A Poet's Epitaph

by William Wordsworth.

14. This is not as it first seems -

entirely an example of Oslerian

whimsy: Dioscorides did travel

extensively with the Roman legi-

ions while making observations

for his Materia Medica and four Ro-

man legions were stationed at that

time in southern Britain where the

foxglove grew.

15. Cowley to Osler 1-12-1910,

Bodleian Library Letters with MS

Arab d. 138.

16. This was Mr John Hugo Hepburn

Bill I.C.S., Wellington College

1891-5, B.A. New College, Ox-

ford; entered Indian Civil Service

1900; from 1906 was posted to the

Political Department that dealt

with the semi-autonomous Indian

States. He was posted from July

30th 1906 as Assistant to the Po-

tical Resident, Persian Gulf at

Bushire, where the native rulers

were also in the orbit of the Indian

Political Department. Next, he was

deputed to act as British Consul at

Shiraz from 30th April 1908 to 4th

April 1910. And from: 21st July

1910 to 17th Nov 1911 he was on

furlough in the U.K.

17. Bodleian Library Records, d. 351,

folio 271.

18. Bodleian Library Records, d. 351,

folio 270.

19. Osler described this manuscript

as follows: "From Byzantium we

have the earliest known complete

medical manuscript, dating from

the sixth century — a work of

Dioscorides — one of the most

beautiful in existence. It was pre-

pared in the fifth century for Anicia

Juliana, daughter of the Emperor

of the East, and is now one of the

great treasures of the Imperial

Library at Vienna." (Osler W., The

Evolution of Modern Medicine, New

Haven, Yale University Press, 1921, p 91.)


Bodleian Library Records, d. 352,

folio 19.

21. Bernard Alfred Quaritch, London,

son of antiquarian bookseller

Bernard Quaritch, who founded

the firm in 1847.

22. Bill's description of the conditions

in the yearly Administration Report of

the Persian Gulf Political Residency

states: "In fact, the old theatrical

direction "Confused noise without"

is the most adequate expression to

the effect produced on a student

of Shiraz politics during this trou-

bled year." (April 1st 1907 — May

31st 1908, p20) "The history of the

period (April 1st to December 31st

1908) falls naturally into three

parts which may be entitled respec-

tively, Government, Mis-government

and No-government. (p19)"

An attack on Mr. Bill as he was

leaving on furlough, and probably

carrying the manuscripts, is de-

scribed in the report for the year

1910 (p4): "Mr. J. H. Bill, I.C.S., of

the Political Department of India,

made over charge of the Consulate

[at Shiraz] to Mr. Smart of the Le-

vant Consular Service [part of the

Consular Service of the British For-

eign Office dealing with Middle

Eastern countries], on 4th of April.

Mr. Smart had arrived from the

north, via Ispahan, travelling with

a strong Sowar [Indian cavalry]

escort, which again escorted Mr.

Bill back to Tehran. The latter was

attacked between Abadeh and

Shulgistan by a party of Kuhgelu

[tribesmen], on the 15th of April.

Mr. Bill, realising that his caravan

was about to be attacked, deter-

mined to try conclusions with the

party while they were yet in an

open country; he and his sowars

came into contact with the robbers

and succeeded in putting them to

flight. Three of the gang however,

having been rounded up, showed

fight, and two Indian sowars were

killed in the skirmish which en-

sued. Mr. Bill himself fortunately

escaped unhurt."

23. Osler to Cowley 2-11-1911.

Bodleian Library Records, d. 352,

folio 281.


Osler Library Archives P100 Sir

William Osler Collection Box 103

— file "Osler William — Letter —

Cowley A.

25. Osler had apparently already told

Cowley of his intention to be-

queath the Dioscorides MSS. to

the Bodleian Library. This inten-

tion is recorded in Appendix II of

the Bibliotheca Osleriana (op. cit. ref

c. p xxx) that deals with: "Distri-

bution of special books to other li-

braries... To Bodley – The illus-

trated Arab Dioscorides A.D. 1239

– which will comfort the heart of

Dr. Cowley – one of, I believe, the

three illustrated MSS of this author

in Arabic."


Chrétiennes II La Littérature Syriaque.


27. Bill to Cowley 7-1-1911(sic12).

Bodleian Library. Letters with MS

Arab d. 138.

28. Bill is no longer British Consul in

Shiraz from whence he came with

the manuscripts to England. As

recorded on page 9 of the Administra-

tion Report of the Persian Gulf Po-

litical Residency for the year 1911:

"Mr. J.H.H. Bill, I.C.S., on return from

leave in November, was appointed

First Assistant Resident" at Bushire,

the port from where British gun-

boats ruled the Gulf.

29. Obviously a lapse of memory

on Bill's part - forgetting that the New

Year had started. In January 1911

he was still on furlough in England.

30. Bill always made it a point to

mention his status as an Indian

Civil Service officer. Page 13 of the

Administration Report of the Persian Gulf
36. Enclosed in the copy of Avicenna’s ‘ISHARAT’ (Hints or Allusions) with commentaries by Razi. Bib Os. 478: AVICENNA MS. in Arabic, Kitab al-Ishârât
The end flyleaves bear notes and an inscription by the donor, Dr. M. Sa’eed, and notes by Sir W. Osler. Cushing (ii, op cit., p 368) mentions the arrival of this book at 13 Norham Gardens as a “pleasant happening” in his record of the events of July–August 1913.
37. Most probably one of the British first editions of the book. 1892 or 1894.
38. Typed letter from W.O. to Dr. Sa’eed, Tehran, Persia. August 1, 1913. Cushing Papers P417, Folder 39. Also given in full, in Cushing ii, p368 where “[Ishârât]” is inserted after the word: manuscript.
39. Cushing has incorrectly placed this in the pages devoted to events in September 1913, a month earlier than Osler’s letter to Neligan. (Cushing H, op cit. ref 1, p376-377)
40. Abu Dja’far Ahmad al-Ghafiki, Spanish-Arabic pharmacologist, native of the fortress Ghafik near Cordova. His dates are not known, but he may have died around the middle of the 12th century. He was considered to be the best expert on drugs of his time; he elaborated thoroughly the materia medica transmitted from Dioscorides and Galen and presented it in a concise, but apparently complete form in his Kitab al-Adwiyah al-mufrada. (The Encyclopaedia of Islam (New Edition) vi, s313b)
41. Max Meyerhof was a German Jewish physician who practised in Egypt for thirty years. He first visited Egypt in 1900-1901, and subsequently decided to practise ophthalmology there. He did so first during the years: 1903 – 1914

Acknowledgements
It is my pleasure to acknowledge the kind help of Doris Nicholson of the Bodleian Library with the Dioscorides manuscript and other related bibliographic material, and of her colleague Steven Tomlinson for copies of the Osler – Cowley, and Bill – Cowley correspondence; the assistance of Dorian Leveque of the British Library, London, and Paul Rich, Professor of International Relations & History at the University of the Americas, Puebla, Mexico, in locating material about Mr. J.H.H. Bill; the help of John Gurney of the Oriental Institute, Oxford with the unpublished E.G. Browne correspondence; the answers Richard Golden provided to questions about Osler’s Textbook, the unstinting help of Pamela Miller and Lily Szczygiel of the Osler Library, Montreal, and the enthusiastic encouragement of Charles Ambrose.
Hooper portfolios, before and after treatment

A good Library is an ongoing seminar, in the Osler Library’s case, one that lasts for years on end. Researchers, Osler family members, clinicians, students, professors, staff and international conference attendees all bring their particular perspective to our collections. When they leave, we hope that they have found new knowledge and even inspiration from our collections and projects. They in turn invariably bring fresh ideas to the Library through their enthusiasm for their work. Close contact with the visitor/researcher often generates additions to our collections and ideas for exhibitions. Exhibitions bring more discoveries. This year two outstanding exhibitions prove the point.

Dr. Rolando Del Maestro, as reported in the last Newsletter, no. 105, produced a magnificent display entitled *The History of Neuro-oncology*, using books selected from our collection as well as many from his own collection. In addition he produced a superbly illustrated catalogue, writing the text and choosing the illustrations, given to delegates to the Canadian Congress of Neurology last June. The stunning volume, bearing the same title as the exhibition, is on display and for sale, in the Osler Library ($20, please visit http://www.mcgill.ca/osler-library/about/introduction/sales/). There was an unexpected bonus for the Osler to Dr. Del Maestro’s research. One of the works he selected was Robert Hooper’s *The Morbid Anatomy of the Human Brain* published in London in 1828, plate XIII entitled “Encysted Tumour of the Brain” appearing on the cover of the book. We recalled that six volumes of plates, only when they were placed (still grubby and somewhat frayed) in stronger boxes. Dr. Del Maestro chose one plate for display but by the sheerest of coincidences, at that very moment, McGill University expressed a wish to acknowledge the enormous respect and appreciation of the University community for the contributions of Dr. Fuks as Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. Conserving the Hooper plates seemed a fitting recognition of Abe’s dedication to medicine at McGill and of his support for the Osler Library.
Thanks to your support, the conservator Terry Rutherford already happened to be on the spot restoring books that your generosity allows us to treat. Her presence here meant that she could evaluate the condition of the plates and begin work immediately. As a result of the University’s imaginative and generous initiative, we now have the works beautifully restored, housed and easily accessible for study. The works consist of Hooper’s manuscript notes, and the lithographs in every state from watercolour to final production. In describing the illustrations found in The Morbid Anatomy of the Human Brain, Hooper attests to the accuracy of the drawing and the faithfulness of the colouring so that those who do not have the opportunity of seeing diseased parts, may learn about them. According to the author, no expense was spared. Hooper is known to have had a lucrative practice in London and for his collection of specimens acquired for his students to study. Osler noted that Hooper published a number of text-books and that The Morbid Anatomy of the Human Uterus published in 1832 was the only other volume of our collection of plates that was ever published. The Alimentary System, the Respiratory System, Circulatory and Urinary Systems remain unpublished, but are now impeccably conserved, on our shelves.

Following Dr. Del Maestro’s exhibition, Dr. Richard Fraser produced a display entitled, William Osler and the Pathologic Specimen: McGill University – Montreal General Hospital 1870-1884. This too, was mounted in conjunction with a congress being held in Montreal, the International Academy of Pathology at which 2,600 delegates were registered for the celebration of their 100th anniversary, Maude Abbott being one of the founders. In addition to the above exhibition held at the Osler, Dr. Fraser produced a larger exhibition at the conference centre in the Palais des Congrès using 150 specimens from McGill’s pathology collection. Four of Maude Abbott’s posters on congenital cardiac disease, which she displayed on four separate occasions including the 1932 meeting of the British Medical Association in London, were chosen for the display. This involved conserving the posters, the cost being shared between the Osler and the exhibition. The posters were conserved in such a way as to be easily stored once the conference ended some-thing that will be of lasting benefit to the Library.

While researching his exhibitions and re-editing Maude Abbott’s 1936 Atlas of Congenital Cardiac Disease, McGill-Queen’s University Press 2006 (and serving as local arrangements chairman of the centennial anniversary congress of the IAP) Dr. Fraser discovered a draft of Maude Abbott’s letter of application to McGill’s Faculty of Medicine, dated the 11th of February, 1889. Thanks to Dr. Fred Silva, President of United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology, the letter is now in our collection. As we all know, Maude Abbott’s unsuccessful application did not keep her from obtaining her medical degree. Less well known, is that Maude’s friend the renowned Canadian artist Mary Bell Eastlake was the first to plant the idea of medicine as a career in Maude’s mind. The artist also painted the well-known portrait of Maude in her bright red doctoral robes that hangs in the Strathcona Anatomy and Dentistry Building. What we did not know is that she also produced another portrait of Abbott. Dr. Fraser, on learning that this portrait was up for sale, arranged for its purchase and donation to the Osler Library. This
very fine study will be placed in our post-1840 research room. We are more than grateful to Dr. Fraser and to Dr. Fuks for this magnificent acquisition.

Another example of close work with our public has resulted in a donation to the Osler Library of funds to be used to reproduce an unpublished manuscript (and its transcription) of the address that Osler delivered to students at the University of Pennsylvania in 1885. Dr. Gail Beck Medicine '75 and her husband Andrew Fenus have recently funded this publication entitled *From William Osler to Osler Fellows*, which will be presented to Osler Fellows at the annual white coat ceremony every October. This is our contribution to the Faculty of Medicine's new Physicianship Programme, led by Dr. Don Boudreau, dedicated to inspiring medical students to understand the role of the doctor as healer and professional. In his speech, Osler outlined systematically the steps in acquiring a medical education, explaining in very clear terms what the student would expect to learn during the course of his studies and how to do so. He finishes by saying:

*The knowledge which a man can use is the only real knowledge, the only knowledge that has life and growth in it and converts itself into practical power. The rest hangs like dust about the brain or dries like rain drops off the stones.*

We have made good use of your help in other areas as well. While attending a conference at Cambridge University, Professor Robin Yates of the Department of East Asian Studies was shown images from a Chinese herbal from the late 16th century which had been rediscovered in the Rare Book Room of the Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Beijing, China. The herbal, dated 1591 has been reproduced in exact facsimile in the old-style thread-bound format in 14 volumes or rolls contained in four boxes. There are 1,128 images, outstanding sources for the study of traditional Chinese medicine. Thanks to your generosity, we purchased the herbal giving Professor Yates' students a rare opportunity to consult this glorious work.

Prof. Robin Yates and Margaret Wee-siang Ng, Ph.D. student in the History Department examining the Chinese herbal
At the opposite end of the scale is our purchase of a number of e-books, including *The Cambridge Historical Dictionary of Disease*. It is available to McGill users either through the McGill on-line catalogue or from the Osler Library web page under "on-line resources", "encyclopaedias and dictionaries". This is an excellent source for concise information on the history of 161 diseases and is a condensed version of *The Cambridge World History of Human Disease*, edited by Kenneth F. Kiple, which we have on our shelf.

In between these two extremes we have added some quite unusual rare works including the third edition, 1681 of François Mauriceau’s *Traité des maladies des femmes grosses...pour bien aider les femmes en leurs accouchemens naturels...* with several plates. Regarded as the foremost textbook of its time, this work is seen as establishing obstetrics as a science, (Garrison & Morton, 5th ed., 6147). We have also purchased Sébastien Guillié’s *Essai sur l'instruction des aveugles...* published in Paris in 1817, George Simpson’s *The Anatomy of the Bones and Muscles...* designed for the use of artists and members of the artists’ anatomical society, with lithographed illustrations, published in London in 1825 and to add to our collection of material on nursing and the Crimean War, *Eastern Hospitals and English Nurses: the narrative of twelve months experience in the hospitals of Koulali and Scutari*, by a Lady Volunteer, London, 1856, a two volume work describing the wretchedness of hospital care for the injured and ill during that miserable war. The author, Mary Magdalen Taylor, calls on her readers to learn from grim experience and to begin the systematic training of qualified nursing staff.

We continue to purchase an astonishing array of contemporary books. Among the many hundreds is Michael Bliss’ splendid biography of Harvey Cushing, published in 2005. The author has delighted a wide range of readers, from those interested in Cushing as Osler’s biographer to those interested in knowing more about the life and work of this highly visible neurosurgeon. Ancient medicine is explored in Jo Ann Scurlock’s *Magico-Medical Means of Treating Ghost-Induced Illnesses in Ancient Mesopotamia*, Boston, 2006. And to prove that many topics in medical history continue to be relevant today, James Dickerson’s *Yellow Fever: a Deadly Disease Poised to Kill Again*, New York 2006 reminds us that the struggle against disease is far from over.

This brief report launches our annual appeal. At the time of writing, our most recent Travel Grant recipient is finishing pouring over the Penfield Archive as she begins her doctoral work at the University of Toronto’s Department of History. Next year’s candidates are already inquiring about the 2007 award. Another researcher is at work on our historical anatomical atlases, including the above-mentioned work by Simpson, recently acquired thanks to you. Thank you. It is because of your help that these researchers are here. Our numbers are growing. Your help ensures that our on-going seminar will continue to meet the needs of those interested in Osler and the history of medicine.

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**DELLA GAVRUS, OSLER LIBRARY RESEARCH TRAVEL GRANT RECIPIENT 2006**

I visited the Osler Library in September 2006 to conduct research on the history of neurology and neurosurgery in the first half of the 20th century. For this purpose, I consulted the Wilder Penfield collection and the William Cone papers.

My research focus was twofold: first, I looked at material related to the founding of the Montreal Neurological Institute. I was interested in the strategies that Wilder Penfield (1891-1976) employed to sell the idea of a Neurological Institute to potential funders, and I wanted to identify the critical factors that contributed to the success of the project at this particular time (1934). After all, a much more influential neurosurgeon, Harvey Cushing (1869-1939), had attempted to establish a similar institution – a National Institute of Neurology – immediately after World War I, and he failed to get sufficient support from the United States Government and from private foundations. This past summer I visited the Rockefeller Archives in New York State to understand the reasons why the Rockefeller Foundation was interested in contributing such a large sum of money (1,232,000) to the Montreal project. After looking at the Penfield papers, I began to understand how the specific local conditions in Montreal contributed to the Foundation’s decision. However, a much more interesting
critical factor appears to have been Penfield’s attempt to draw attention to a supposed crisis in neurology. Penfield argued that neurology was close to the brink of extinction as a medical specialty due to a variety of reasons, and that the only course of action was a different (i.e. surgical) approach to the diseases of the nervous system and a drastic change in the education of neurologists and neurosurgeons, an argument that the Rockefeller Foundation was particularly interested in given a recent change in policy. In essence, Penfield endeavored to redraw the boundaries between the closely related fields of neurology, neurosurgery, and psychiatry at a time when these disciplines were in flux and had not established more or less strict boundaries. At the same time, Penfield pointed out the danger of overspecialization and of losing touch with general medicine. This rhetoric of holism was common in the interwar period, as historical scholarship has shown, and proved to be a successful technique in lobbying for the establishment of an institute that promised, to put it anachronistically, a multidisciplinary approach to diseases of the nervous system.

My second research focus was on Penfield’s correspondence with other neurosurgeons and neurologists in order to understand the ways in which the purview of these disciplines was negotiated and shaped. For instance, Penfield insisted in his letters to other physicians on using the term ‘neurosurgeon’ to the more commonly used ‘neurological surgeon,’ and he made an effort to induce others to use this term. This constitutes one of the less dramatic, but nonetheless effective strategies that he used to carve out a broader and more secure place for his medical specialty. Unlike Cushing, who saw neurological surgery as primarily concerned with tumor removal, Penfield was very much interested in extending the authority of this medical branch to other illnesses, such as epilepsy. Penfield’s correspondence with his colleagues also reveals points of contention that shaped twentieth-century neuroscience discourse, for example Penfield’s argument with the British neurologist Francis Walshe (1885-1973) over the "homunculus" and with the Harvard neurologist Stanley Cobb (1887-1968) over the mind-brain problem.

The Penfield and Cone papers at the Osler Library are an invaluable resource for historians interested in twentieth-century neurology and neurosurgery. I am very grateful for the wonderful opportunity to visit the Osler Library that the Research Travel Grant has afforded me, and I am indebted to Pamela Miller and her wonderful staff for all their help.

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NOTES FROM THE OSLER LIBRARY

History of Medicine Meetings

Last Spring in Halifax, amid bagpipes, musical medical students, a lobster feed and some of the best presentations ever, Dr. Jock Murray was named President of the American Osler Society. A neurologist, well-known for his roll in promoting the medical humanities and former Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Dalhousie University, Dr. Murray will preside over the next meeting of the AOS, from the 30th of April to the 3rd of May, here in Montreal. The meetings are timed to overlap with the American Association of the History of Medicine and the Archivists and Librarians in the History of the Health Sciences. Eager researchers are already planning their visits to the Osler Library.

Revere Osler’s Christening Cup

The late Professor Archie Malloch’s sister, Mrs. Joan Lord, has presented the Osler Library with Revere Osler’s christening cup. Revere was born in Baltimore on December 28th, 1895. Michael Bliss, in his recent biography of Osler, reports that Grace Osler insisted that the baptismal water from the River Jordan be sterilized for health reasons, leaving very little for the ceremony. Later, his Afro-American nurse, unimpressed with the ceremony, carried out her own rite in the nursery with a full cup of water. (Bliss p. 240) The cup was given to Georgina Osler Abbott following Revere’s tragic death. She added a spout. It then passed to Katherine Abbott Malloch, the wife of Dr. T.A. Malloch and then to Joan Lord, Grace Revere Osler’s goddaughter. The cup is a delight-
ful but poignant addition to our Oslerian silver, which ranges from family items to elaborate presentation pieces.

**Worthington Watch**

Dr. Ronald Bayne, Med. ’47 presented us with an unusual gold watch. The inscribed watch was presented to Dr. E.D. Worthington (1820-1895) by his friends in recognition of his service in Sherbrooke, Quebec, for helping to control an outbreak of smallpox. Dr. Worthington was loved and respected for his work among the citizens of that town, rich and poor alike, serving the community for 50 years. The watch is a welcome supplement to our Worthington archival fonds that documents the activities of Dr. Worthington and his family. Of particular interest is the apprenticeship of young Worthington to the famous surgeon Dr. James Douglas of Quebec City in 1833 at the age of 13.
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The Library gratefully acknowledges the support it has received from Friends, both old and new, who have responded to the appeal for funds for the 2005-2006 academic year. Over the year, 205 Friends have given a total of approximately $26,600 and they are listed below. Most of the contributions have come from Friends in Canada and the United States of America. However, very welcome contributions have also come from several other continents.

The appeal to the Friends for the 2005-2006 academic year concluded on May 31, 2006. Contributions received after May 31, 2006 will be recorded in the 2007 fall issue of the Osler Library Newsletter.

The appeal for the 2006-2007 academic year is made in this issue, No. 106-2006.

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Your help ensures that our on-going seminar will continue to meet the needs of those interested in Osler and the history of medicine.

A New Neighbour. This photograph, taken earlier this year by Alan Forster, shows the groundwork for our new next door neighbour to the east of us, the Francesco Bellini Life Sciences Building and the new Cancer Research Pavilion.

Christmas wishes sent by Osler to an unknown correspondent, adapted from Henry VIII, Act. iii, Sc. 2 (P100 Sir William Osler Collection Addenda)