The Osler Library of the History of Medicine, McGill University, Montréal (Québec) Canada

In This Issue

This issue highlights the Osler Library’s purchase of what appears to be a unique publication, an unknown 16th century edition of Galen’s Therapeutics to Glaucon — unique in that it is a translation from Latin into French, the earliest known vernacular translation of a work from antiquity of a medical text. William Kemp, research associate with the French Department at McGill is the author of the featured article and the specialist who brought this work to the attention of the Osler Library. Our ability to purchase the text results from the James Darragh Rare Book Endowment, recently established by The Harold Crabtree Foundation. It fits in perfectly with Osler’s wish to build the French language holdings of his collection.

Dr. Richard Golden offers us a graceful article on Osler, this time concerning another incunable in our collection, presented to Osler by fellow members of the Colophon Club.

We mourn the passing of two distinguished members of McGill’s Faculty of Medicine and supporters of the Osler Library, Dr. Charles Leblond and Dr. Patrick Cronin, former Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. We note the recent meeting of the American Osler Society in Montreal and draw to your attention, the Library’s unexpected presence in outer space.

As this issue goes to press, we are saddened to hear that Dr. John McGovern, Oslerian benefactor extraordinaire, has passed away. A full appreciation will appear in our next issue.

The Earliest Known French Translation of Galen (ca. 1530) at the Osler Library

The Osler Library has recently acquired from the rare book dealer Bruce McKittrick a previously unknown 16th century edition of a French translation of Galen’s Therapeutics to Glaucon (Ad Glauconem de methodo medendi). The title of the book is Le deuxiesme liure de Claude Galene intitule lart curatoire a Glaucon. (Fig. 1) This quarto volume contains 32 leaves, but it is incomplete at the end, lacking roughly one gathering. It stands apart from the other, slightly later editions of French translations of Galen, in that it was printed in a Bastard Gothic type, as can be seen in the accompanying illustrations of the title page and of the first page. (Fig. 2) The colophon may have contained the date of impression, but the title page does not — though it provides the name of the Parisian printer, Jérôme Denys or Denis.

Fig. 1 Galen’s Le deuxiesme liure de Claude Galene intitule lart curatoire a Glaucon.

Fig. 2 Start of Galen’s Le deuxiesme liure lart curatoire a Glaucon.
In all likelihood, the translation is based on Simon de Colines’s 1528 reprint of the new Latin translation of De arte curativa ad Glaucenem libri duo by the humanist Niccolò Leonicenico (†1524). With 1528 as a terminus a quo, and the fact that Denys is not known to have printed any titles after 1530 or 1531, we can confidently assign our Galen a date of ca. 1530. This makes the Osler Galen the earliest printed vernacular translation in any language of a substantial medical text from Antiquity, and the first such translation in French. No copy of this edition is recorded in any other major library, such as the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the British Library, the Bodleian Library, or major medical historical libraries (Wellcome, Yale, Johns Hopkins). Nor does it appear in any of the key databases like WorldCat, the Catalogue collectif de France, or COPAC in the UK.

Less spectacular but still crucial was the work of Renaissance humanists who edited the texts of the medical writers of Antiquity, especially Hippocrates and Galen. In 1510, Wilhelm Cop from Basel, physician to King Louis XII of France and translator of Paulus Aegineta and Galen, wrote: "In view of the multitude of ancient texts that [the Venetian printer] Aldus’s diligence has recovered for us, I thought it worth trying to restore the ancient medical authors also to something of their former glory." Among these humanists must be...
numbered François Rabelais, who published an edition of the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates in Greek and in Latin at the press of Sebastian Gryphius in Lyons in 1534 (1545 Paris edition: Osler 153, 164 (Fig. 5) and 394). The recuperation of ancient medical treatises, techniques and wisdom involved locating manuscripts, printing editions, translating and commenting on this large corpus. In the case of Hippocrates and Galen, that meant editing the original Greek texts, translating them into Latin and then into the vernacular languages of Italian, French, Spanish, German and English.

The imposing Galenic corpus was printed in Greek at the Aldine Press in Venice in 1525 (5 vol.: Osler 350). Latin translations of individual works of Galen were produced in quantity in Italy during the last decades of 15th century but, beginning in the 1510s, France entered the field with five editions from Lyon and nine from Paris. From the 1520s on, and for several decades, Paris dominates: during the 1520s alone, Lyon produced 6 editions of Galen, while Parisian printers put out a remarkable 42 editions. Among the early Latin editions of Galen printed in Paris between 1513 and 1520, Thomas Linacre’s translation of *De sanitate tuenda*, Paris 1517 (Osler 372), as well as Willem Cop’s translation of *De afectorum locorum*, Paris 1513 and 1520 (Osler 379, etc.), are worthy of note. Major Paris printers got involved in this effort: Henri I Estienne (fl 1500-1520), Simon de Colines (1520-1546), Simon du

It now appears, however, that the earliest French translation of a medical text from Antiquity was published in Paris in about 1530, …
It was one of Osler's most progressive wishes for his Library that it would actively collect historic works of medicine in the French language...
3. Among the few medical writings between the linguistic communities of Montreal. This is a fine addition to Dr. Osler’s remarkable collection of early medical imprints, which remain a fundamental strength of the Osler Library.

*I want to thank Faith Wallis for corrections to and suggests for this text, as well as for her enthusiastic support of this project.

References

1. The text is to be found in the Opera omnia of Galen, ed. C.G. Kühn, Vol. XI (Leipzig: Cnabloch, 1826), pp. 71-146.
5. For basic, up-to-date information on Galen and Hippocrates during the Middle Ages, see Medieval Science, Technology, and Medicine. An Encyclopedia, ed. Thomas Glick, Steven J. Livesey and Faith Wallis (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 179-182 and 224-226.
8. See 75 Books from the Osler Library, p. 9.
10. Good descriptions of these editions, printed by Guillaume Guelques, are provided in Baudrier’s Bibliographie lyonnaise. Recherches sur les imprimeurs, libraires, relieurs et fondeurs de lettres de Lyon au XVIIe siècle, ed. Dolet, 1539 (p. 32), Le Deuxième Liure, non date (p. 289), Le Quatorzième Liure, 1558 (p. 292), Le Troisième [and 4th, 5th, 6th and 13th] Liure, ed. Dolet, 1539 (p. 293). Other composite volumes of these editions are held in the Bibliothèque municipale in Amiens and in Épernay, as well as the Académie de médecine, the Bibliothèque nationale de France and the Bibliothèque Sainte-Genevieve in Paris, plus the Royal College of Physicians in London.
15. On this work, see Paule Dumaintre, Ambroise Paré, chirurgien de quatre rois de France (Paris: Perrin, 1986), chap. 6 (pp. 81-87); also Gurunluoglu et al., “Review of the ‘Chirurgia’ of Giovanni de Vigo”, p. 620, as well as Mireille Huchon, “Définition et description : Ambroise Paré chirurgien méthodique et huguenot”, in Ambroise Paré, 1510-1590 : pratique et écriture de la science à la Renaissance. Actes du colloque de Pau, 6-7 mai 1999, ed. Évelyne Berriot-Salvadore and Paul Mironneau, (Paris: Champion, 2004), pp. 201-227 at 207. Other candidates for the title of first original medical text printed in French: Symphorien Champier’s Le guidon en francoys with his additions (Lyons, 1503; and Lyons, 1520), as well as his Myrouel des Appotheiuarie et pharmaçeules (Lyon, 1531). Dr. Osler’s collection includes most of Champier’s major Latin works.

This is a fine addition to Dr. Osler’s remarkable collection of early medical imprints, which remain a fundamental strength of the Osler Library.
William Osler
AND THE
COLOPHON CLUB:
A LAST TRIBUTE

by Richard L. Golden

At the peak of his career, William Osler came to England in 1905 to assume the chair of Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford. Alarmed by occasional anginal pain and the death of his 60-year-old brother, Britton Bath Osler, from coronary artery disease, Osler was strongly motivated by the need for surcease from the burdens of an increasingly stressful career. To his colleague William Thayer, he wrote: "I am on the down grade, the pace of the last three winters have been such that I knew I was riding for a fall. Better to get out decently in time, & leave while there is still a little elasticity in the rubber."

Embracing his new appointment at Oxford with distinctive intensity and passion, Osler transformed a potential sinecure into a multifaceted endeavor that brought new achievements and honors. A.W. Pollard, the Secretary described this first attendance: "The Society needed new inspiration, and Osler brought it. ... A meeting had begun, when the entrance of a stranger with an attractive mobile face, alert figure, and notably light tread, caused a whispered secretarial inquiry as to who he was. The answer came back that it was Professor Osler, and the Secretary had an instinctive conviction that his coming meant much for the Society. Indeed it did, for Osler served on the Society's Council beginning in 1910, was elected Vice-President in 1911, and President from 1913 until his death in 1919. Osler, the longest serving president (undoubtedly a function of the Great War), described this as "an embarrassing honour, as I feel so horribly amateurish with all these professional fellows like Pollard — but it is a very nice group of men & I have been on the Council for three years as Vice-President." Osler gave his first paper at the Society's monthly meeting in November 1909 speaking on "The Library of Robert Burton." For his presidential address on January 19, 1914 he spoke on "Printed Medical Books to 1480." The address was later edited, a preface provided by A.W. Pollard, a bibliographical description by V. Scholderer, and the monograph published posthumously (1923) by the Bibliographical Society as Sir William Osler's Incunabula Medica: A Study of the Earliest Printed Medical Books 1467-1480.

In his address Osler explained:

Not an expert bibliographer, but a representative of an ever-increasing group of ordinary book-lovers, I have tried in the casual studies of a life devoted to hospital and consulting practice to glean two things, the book biographies of the great men of science, and the influence of their books in promoting the progress of knowledge. The anatomy of the mind of a man as shown in his book, and the physiology of the book itself, so far as it has had a definite function, though not perhaps bibliography proper, serve to illustrate its story. And this plan of study has its place. Revolutions are more rapidly effected in the arts than in the mind. Harvey's demonstration of the circulation of the blood was scarcely accepted by his own generation, but within a few years after Jenner's discovery the civilized world was vaccinated. It is not surprising to find the invention of printing spread so rapidly that, before the close of 1480, ... some 350 printers had been at work. It is estimated that the total output of the early presses in the fifteenth century amounted to twenty million copies. ...

As my profession has never before been honoured by the presidency of the Bibliographical Society, it seemed appropriate to try to indicate the influence which the introduction of printing had on medicine, to get, if possible, a mental picture of professors and practice at the time from the characters of books that they thought it worth while to have printed ...

In describing Osler's work as president, the Secretary, A.W. Pollard, wrote: "work" is not quite the right word, for he brought us
life and high spirits and would give us no less even to the end."³⁸

The Colophon Club was the inner circle of the Bibliographical Society, founded in January 1905, when the Council approved the proposal to form a Dining Club "with a view to showing hospitality to the readers of papers and the Foreign and American Members, and to the promotion of good fellowship." Its members (initially thirty-five) were elected from the officers, Council, and other invited members of the Society.¹⁴ Osler became a member of the Club in December 1907 but did not attend a dinner until 1909.¹⁵ In June 1911 he hosted an unusual extra-London meeting at Oxford and wrote to a friend: "I wish you could have been here Saturday night. I had the Colophon Club—a sort of inner circle of the Bibliographical Society—at dinner at Christ Church—a very interesting group of men."¹⁶ As president of the Society he was ex officio president of the Club from January 1913 until his death in 1919,¹⁵ bringing to it his characteristic energy and contagious enthusiasm. The London dinners from 1905 until 1914 were held at the elegant Oddenino's Imperial Restaurant in Regent Street (near Piccadilly Circus) and provided intellectual, fraternal, and gastronomic pleasures for these ardent Edwardians, who in the early years consumed a hearty repast of "hors-d'œuvre, two kinds of soup (one thick, one thin), fish, a meat course with vegetables, followed by game with salad, ham, an iced pudding and dessert" served with "a bottle each of hock, claret, and port."¹⁴ (Figure 1)

James Atkinson (1759-1839) once described bibliography as "dry, dusty, tedious accursed, hateful," a view perhaps shared by some, but not by Osler's fellow Colophonists.¹⁷,¹⁸ Pollard gives further insight into the Club and Osler's influence:

Many of us will remember Sir William most vividly as the president of the Colophon Club, composed of London members of the Bibliographical Society who dine together two or three times in a session and entertain readers of papers, especially any who come from a distance. The Club takes its name from the Colophon or final paragraph in early books, giving details as to their authorship, printer, place and date. The Greek word taken over to denote this means a crowning stroke, and under Osler's chairmanship the Colophon dinners formed an extra-ordinarily pleasant climax to the Society's meetings. He was always in high spirits, always ready with some graceful compliments to the readers of papers, and full of friendliness and good stories. No dinners were held during the war but he called for one in January 1919 and outdid himself in his efforts to make it a success, incidentally insisting on providing champagne on the patently false pretext that it was the Secretary's birthday! Many of those at the dinner never saw him again, but they would hardly have a brighter memory of him.¹⁹

"'work' is not quite the right word, for he brought us life and high spirits and would give us no less even to the end."
A meeting of the Colophon Club on July 12, 1919 paid tribute to Osler’s seventieth birthday presenting him with a choice incunabulum, Johannes Jacobi’s *Regimen contra pestilentiam Epidemiam*, c. 1498 (figure 2), the most popular plague tractate of the fifteenth century.5,14,20,21 The book was accompanied by a presentation letter from Pollard, on the stationery of the Bibliographical Society, that palpably expresses the devotion of the Club:

Dear Sir William,

The best of good wishes for your Seventieth Birthday from all of your book-loving friends. The little book which comes with this is a present from those of them who have really eaten a Colophon Dinner under your Chairmanship. I hope you have not got the book already, but in any case you must look on it only as a handy form in which your Brother Colophons could put on record their affection for you. Needless to say, as we are Colophons, you must look at the end.

Ever yours,
Alfred W. Pollard 22

On a leaf of delicate laid paper bound in at the end is printed the names of the twenty-six members of the Club,23 the cream of British bibliography, and their accolade:

Presented to Sir William Osler on his 70th Birthday by practicing members of the Colophon Club as a little token of their affection for an unsurpassable President

12 July 1919

Another example of this presentation sheet is known24 (Figure 3) and it seems likely that a very limited number of copies were printed for distribution to the members of the Colophon Club either at the meeting or when it was announced.

Osler, in bed with bronchial pneumonia, wrote a poignant and prescient letter of thanks later that month to his friend Alfred W. Pollard:25

Dear Brother Colophonist,

You will be interested to know how your President survived his admission into the ranks of the 'last lappers'. From our standpoint the birthday was a great success. The anniversary volumes with articles from 150 contributors26 are themselves a direct encouragement to bibliography. As for the *Regimen contra pestilentiam*, which you & others so kindly sent, please accept my hearty thanks for such a gem—both author & printer have already stimulated my interest, which is the test of the value of any incunabula. An untouched 1859 Omar27 inscribed to Prof. Max Müller28 with the compliments of the translator was a pleasant surprise on the breakfast table. A present of the snuff-box of our lamented friend Bannister,29 whose Vatican mixture had stimulated the pineal gland of all the chief continental bibliographers, has induced your President to take up a habit of such undoubted antiprogeric value.

That a well-ordered 70th birthday may have all the advantages of the final exitus may be shown by the July number of the Johns Hopkins Hospital Bulletin,30 which leaves nothing to be said. The end of the number brought the thrill of the day, when I saw revealed the utter shamelessness of my life—and the true reason of our Secretary's attachment to me! A bibliography of my writings extending to 730 articles!31 An illuminated

Figure 2. Johannes Jacobi’s *Regimen contra pestilentiam Epidemiam*, c. 1498
address from the staff at Bodley (not to have worshiped at whose shrine I count the day lost), the promise of a medico-literary anthology in my honour,32 with greetings from scores of dear friends helped to complete a very happy day.…

In the letter Osler refers to a silver snuffbox that he inherited from provided Osler with an entrée to the wonders of the Library during his visit to Italy in February 1909,29,33,34 Osler died on December 29, 1919 and this last birthday gift from the Colophon Club that so pleased him, now rests in the Osler Library, McGill University, where, as he aspired, “my astral self, like the Bishop of St. Praxed35 could peek at the books I have disorders. Am. J. Cardiol. 1978; 60: 175-178.


References


2. Golden, R.L. Sir William Osler’s angina pectoris and other...
...it is clear that Osler’s purchase of the first Arabic manuscripts for his library preceded his correspondence with Sa’eed.

15. Personal communication, Robin Myers, Honorary Archivist, Bibliographical Society; Honorary Secretary, the Colophon Club, September 6, 2006.
24. From the collection of the author.
26. Contributions to Medical and Biological Research dedicated to Sir William Osler Bart., M.D., F.R.S. In Honour of His Seventieth Birthday July 12, 1919 by His Pupils and Co-Workers, 2 Volumes, New York: Paul B. Hoeber, MCMXIX.
28. Friedrich Max-Müller (1823-1900). German philologist and orientalist, Taylorian Professor of Modern Languages, Oxford, 1854; Corpus Professor of Comparative Philology, Oxford, 1856; and Curator of the Bodleian Library. (Who Was Who. 5th Ed. London: Adam & Charles Black; 1966: I, 483.)

Notes from the Osler Library

Dr. Charles Philippe Leblond died earlier this spring at the age of 97. A distinguished researcher with over 430 scientific articles to his name, Dr. Leblond was active until the end, a frequent attendee at lectures and events at the University. A great supporter of the Osler Library, he is seen here attending a Medical Library Christmas party in the Strathcona Building in 1960.

Dr. Patrick Cronin, Dean of Medicine from 1972 to 1977 died in Switzerland last January. Dr. Cronin visited the Osler Library and kept us up to date with wonderful letters about his research activities and family news, including the complications surrounding the completion of his degree in science from Princeton University...in the year 2000! In
2002 he donated his father A.J. Cronin’s report on first aid in Welsh coal mines, published in 1927. This report, found among some forgotten family papers, formed the basis of A.J. Cronin’s novel The Stars Look Down, later made into a highly successful film.

Johnson Sketchbooks Found

In issue number 104, we lamented the disappearance of Rev. Arthur J. Johnson’s sketchbooks, following the closing of the Canadian Museum of Health and Medicine. It is a great pleasure to report that they have been found and are now located in the Canadian Museum of Science and Technology.

Sir Donald Irvine

Those of you who were unable to attend Sir Donald Irvine’s inspiring talk at last year’s Osler Lecture, are now able to read it either in hard copy in the 5th of March edition of the Medical Journal of Australia and in the online version at: http://www.mja.com. The title of the article is, “Everyone is Entitled to a Good Doctor”. The article discusses professionalism, the Bristol effect and education among other topics, and the abstract’s final sentence states, “The advantages for patients are self-evident, but the trustworthiness, influence and good name of individual doctors and the medical profession collectively would be enhanced if together they were able to show that the house of medicine is being maintained in good order.”

History of Medicine Conferences in Montreal

During the first week of May, four conferences took place in Montreal. Although not hosted at McGill, many of us served on the local arrangements committee and the Osler Library welcomed visitors throughout the week. The associations included the American Osler Society whose president this year was Dalhousie University’s former Dean of Medicine, and keen medical historian, Dr. Jock Murray, the American Association of the History of Medicine, the Archivists and Librarians in the History of the Health Sciences and the Medical Museum Association. Along with organized tours, many researchers chose this occasion to consult our collections and we were delighted by their enthusiasm for our work and resources.

Patrick Cronin (middle) at convocation with Gertrude Kalz and Francis McNaughton, May 1974 (Photo by Ralf Emery reproduced here though efforts to reach Mr. Emery were unsuccessful).

American Osler Society members visiting the Osler Room.

Jock Murray, President of the AOS 2006-2007.
...many researchers chose this occasion to consult our collections and we were delighted by their enthusiasm for our work and resources...

Osler Library Studies in the History of Medicine

Dr. Richard Golden has published *The Transatlantic Voice*, Number 10 in our Osler Library Studies in the History of Medicine, a painstaking reconstruction of a manuscript that Osler worked on for many years, but never published. The organized appearance of the publication hides the fiendish disorder by means of which this manuscript has defied the most dedicated of Oslerians, save Dr. Golden. The 67 page book sells for $20 for our Friends ($25 regular price) and may be ordered from our web site at http://www.mcgill.ca/osler-library/about/introduction/sales/.

The Osler Library in Outer Space

The Osler Library sometimes receives bizarre requests. This one, however, from McGill's University Relations Office, surpassed them all. Dr. Dafydd Williams, Med. ’83, will be acting as Mission Specialist for STS-118 on the 22nd assembly mission of the International Space Station. Dr. Williams, who has already performed 3 spacewalks, wanted something small from the Osler Library to take with him on his mission, scheduled for June 28th. Fortunately for all of us, the Osler Niche postcard based on a photograph taken by Karen Coshof in 1976, fit the request perfectly. Dr. Williams' affection for the Osler Library stems from his time spent here as a student, studying in the Osler Room.

Osler Day

November 7, 2007 is our next Osler Day. Our speaker is Dr. Rita Charon, an expert in narrative medicine.