



# THE OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

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

## Invoking the Phoenix: post-fire, the Osler is teeming with life

By Mary Yearl, Head Librarian, Osler Library  
with Richard Fraser, Director, Maude Abbott Medical Museum

The Osler Library may have been temporarily displaced by last summer's roof fire, but thanks to administrative support and our generous hosts – colleagues in Rare Books and Special Collections and the McGill University Archives – the Osler has maintained a dizzying schedule of activities this year, while operating out of the McLennan Library Building. We started at a fast clip in January and continued the momentum through the middle of May.

In the early weeks of 2019, the Osler Library hosted its first exhibit opening. *Curiosities of Conception* was co-curated by Shana Cooperstein and Frances Cullen, both of whom are Ph.D. students in Art History and Max Stern Fellows of the Visual Arts Collection. The exhibit was originally slated to open in the Osler Library's exhibition space in the McIntyre last summer, but the timeline and location had to change due to the fire. We are indebted to our colleagues based at the McLennan Library, who worked to free up space so this exhibit could be installed in the main lobby. From January through May, visitors were



Details from Pamela Miller's exhibit, showing an assortment of items: a plaque depicting Oliver Wendell Holmes, a paperweight, a loupe, and a gold watch. Credit: Merika Ramundo.

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invited to learn more about medical discourses and their relationship to images of what were historically regarded as monstrous births. The co-curators drew from Osler and other McGill Library materials to demonstrate that medical discourses “actively participated in the cultural construction of female sexuality as aberrant and of the mother figure as monstrous.” (See, for instance, accounts of Mary Toft, who supposedly gave birth to rabbits in the early 18th century, in a series of works bound together and digitized: <https://tinyurl.com/y2dujsaj>)

Two weeks later, in early February, the library celebrated the opening of a second exhibit that had been delayed by the fire: 2018 Larose–Osler Artist-in-Residence Caroline Boileau's *Corps qui hantent d'autres corps* (see her summary, *Osler Library Newsletter* 129, pp. 4–5). This exhibit was inspired by the works that Boileau examined during her residency, which included artifacts and medical texts produced in Europe and

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# McGill



# Invoking the Phoenix: post-fire, the Osler is teeming with life

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Asia ca. 1500-1850. Her focus was on the female body and its (re)presentations in a medical context. Items on display were a blend of Boileau's artistic vision and a number of works from the Osler Library's anatomical collection, including: a Japanese scroll from ca. 1800, depicting the dissection of an executed pregnant female convict; Vesalius's *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543); Remmelin, *Cum Deo... Catoptrum Microcosmicum* (1619); and William Hunter's *Anatomia uteri humani gravidi tabulis illustrata* (1774).

The exhibit had interactive components, too. On one table was a plexiglass box from which one could withdraw Boileau's illustrated book relating to obstetrics titled *Gravidités*; together with the book were two sets of headphones, each attached to an iPod mini. On the iPods one could access four discussions, two in English and two in French, each with a pair of participants reacting to their own perusal of *Gravidités*. In addition, Boileau was at the library every Thursday during the exhibition to continue her own work on *De Fabrica sans Vésale* and to be present to interact with visitors to *Corps qui hantent d'autres corps*. Once again, we thank our colleagues in Rare Books and Special Collections and the McGill University Archives for accommodating an Osler exhibit previously scheduled for display in the McIntyre Medical Building.

*Curiosities of Conception* and *Corps qui hantent d'autres corps* were just a start to the Osler Library's spring activities. On the 500th anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci's death, the library marked the opening of *Sir William Osler's Leonardo da Vinci Collection: Flight, Anatomy, and Art*, curated by Dr. Rolando Del Maestro, William Feindel Professor Emeritus in Neuro-Oncology, Director of the Neurosurgical Simulation and Artificial Intelligence Learning Centre, as well as honorary Osler Librarian and chairman of the Osler Library's Standing Committee. In the year that also marks one centenary since Sir William Osler's death, Dr. Del Maestro examined common aspects in the lives of Da Vinci and Osler. The vernissage and opening talk drew over one hundred attendees; traffic through the exhibit continued to be impressive until its conclusion at the end of June.

Complementing Dr. Del Maestro's production was an exhibit curated by former History of Medicine Librarian Pamela Miller, *William Osler, The Man You Rarely See*. Knowing that there would be a group of Osler experts coming to Montreal, Miller strove – with great success – to create a display of items that reflected the life and afterlife of Sir William Osler, yet which would be as-yet unseen by ardent Oslerians. Among the items in the exhibition were the journal of Featherstone Osler from his time on the *H.M.S. Tribune*, starting in 1828, and Osler family china that was brought to Canada by William Osler's mother in 1837 and which was donated to the library by Osler family descendants.

Other items on display for a limited time included the fur-lined overcoat Osler had during his Baltimore years, as well as the triptych of the three medical humanists – Thomas Linacre, William Harvey, and Thomas Sydenham – that normally hangs above the door in the Osler Room. Joining those items was a marionette representing William Osler, donated to the library by Dr. Salvatore Mangione.

A third May event was the Osler Library's expert panel, "Predictor Unveiled: The first reliable home pregnancy test and its little-known connection to Montreal." The occasion of the panel was the Osler Library's purchase of an original Predictor home pregnancy test kit from its inventor, New York graphic designer Margaret (Meg) Crane. The Predictor was test-marketed in Montreal in 1971, seven years before it was available on the American market. The discussion was focused on broader issues of gender and reproductive rights and highlighted the experiences and expertise of Meg Crane and three academic experts: Jenna Healey, Jason A. Hannah Chair in History of

Medicine, Queen's University; Christabelle Sethna, Professor in the Institute of Feminist and Gender Studies, University of Ottawa; and Alanna Thain, Professor of English and Director of the Institute of Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies, McGill University.

To cap off a lively spring, the Library was part of the local team hosting the 49th annual meeting of the American Osler Society, which met in Montreal from 12-15 May. The meeting had the largest attendance in Society history, as perhaps befits the 100th anniversary of Osler's death. It offered 52 papers by both seasoned Oslerians and students, 32 of which were directly related to Osler. Conference attendees heard from the 2018 finalists for the Pam and Rolando Del Maestro William Osler Medical Students Essay Award, all three of whom had their abstracts accepted by the selection

committee. First prize winner Benjamin Mappin-Kasirer spoke about "Une Médecine sans médecins?: Objectivity in the Paris Clinic"; second prize winner Aditi Kantipuly delivered a paper on "Surgery of the Soul: A Brief History of Lobotomy in Montreal"; and third prize winner Kacper Niburski spoke about "Charting the Chart: Development of the Modern Medical Record." Three current Osler Library Curators and one from the recent past also spoke: Dr. Jonathan Meakins on "Costumes and Comportment: Artists View of Doctors from the 12th to the 17th Century"; Dr. Rolando Del Maestro on "Sir William Osler's Leonardo da Vinci Collection"; Mary Yearl on "Fire and the Resilience of the Osler Library"; and Dr. Jacalyn Duffin on "*Confinia Psychiatrica*: Patient Art and Diagnosis of Mental Illness."

A highlight of the gathering each year is the John P. McGovern Award Lectureship. This year's talk by Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner Marie Wilson, "The



Truth and Reconciliation  
Commissioner Marie Wilson, with  
the John P. McGovern Award.



Dr. Rolando Del Maestro explains the famous mural featuring Wilder Penfield and colleagues as part of his guided tour of the Montreal Neurological Institute.

Medical Philosophy of William Osler and the Health Reality of Indigenous People: A Reflection on Truth, Health and Reconciliation,” was particularly poignant and timely; it was a presentation that few are likely to forget.

The local arrangements committee organized several events to welcome the Oslerians to Montreal, such as a self-directed walking tour of buildings related to Osler on the McGill campus and in nearby areas of Montreal. Rolando Del Maestro offered a tour of the Montreal Neurological Institute and the Neurosurgical Simulation and Artificial Intelligence Learning Centre; Richard Fraser led tours of the Maude Abbott Medical Museum. The Head Librarian worked with a team of students to create a slideshow of Osler quotes and photos; in addition, a separate slideshow featuring prized works from the *Bibliotheca Osleriana* was on display during the opening reception, held at the McCord Museum. Rolando Del Maestro and Pamela Miller installed their respective exhibits in anticipation of the meeting, and curator-led gallery tours were given in advance of the Society’s banquet. The banquet featured arias performed by four alumni of the McGill Music Faculty. This was followed by the Presidential Address and a recitation of poetry by Dr. Clyde Partin, after which Dr. Bruce Hoekstra presented to the library a bas-relief of William Osler by Doris Appel (see the related piece in this newsletter). Finally, Osler’s “loving cup” (containing vintage port) and cigar box (containing smoke-free maple chocolates) were passed around at the end of the evening. All in all, it was an enjoyable and educational experience of the first rank.

In addition to these activities, materials from the Osler Library have figured prominently in the spring conference

circuit. In April, Mary Yearl gave a talk, “Give blood and receive the spirit: monastic applications of an ancient medical practice,” at a conference co-organized by Aslıhan Gürbüz and Faith Wallis, *Angelical conjunctions: Crossroads of religion and medicine, 1200-1800*. At the early June meeting of the Canadian Society for the History of Medicine (CSHM) and Canadian Association for the History of Nursing (CAHN), the Osler was particularly well represented, featuring in the following papers:

- Margaret Carlyle, University of Chicago, 2018 recipient, Dr. Edward H. Bensley Research Travel Award and 2019 recipient, Mary Louise Nickerson Travel Grant, “Gender and the Double-Edged Scalpel in Enlightenment Paris”
- Jenna Healey, Queen’s University, “Joke on Who? Gender, Race, and Professional Identity in William Osler’s ‘Professional Notes’”
- Carly Naismith, York University, 2017 recipient Dr. Dimitrije Pivnicki Award in Neuro and Psychiatric History, “Mad for Cadavers: Medical School and Asylum Ties in Canada”
- Mary Yearl, Osler Library, McGill University, “‘Necessary for the Doctor, Unnecessary for the Artist’: The Anatomical Études of Charles Monnet, Margaret Brooke, and Jean-Galbert Salvage”

With a full schedule of spring events now in the past, we are looking to the summer as an opportunity to work with visiting researchers, to produce collections assessments for digitization, and generally to gear up for the months ahead.

# La collection des œuvres latines de Symphorien Champier à la bibliothèque Osler

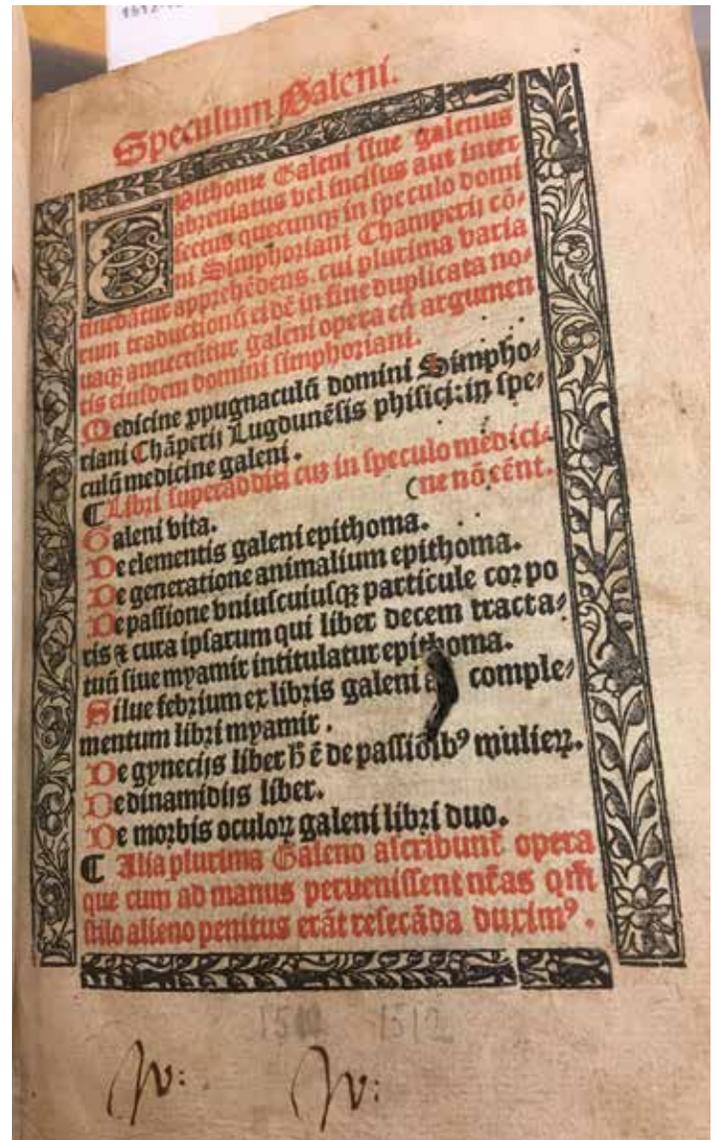
By Caroline Petit

Dr. Caroline Petit (University of Warwick, Department of Classics & Ancient History and Centre for the Study of the Renaissance) is a specialist of early medical texts, particularly Galen and the Galenic corpus.

**English Abstract** The numerous works of Symphorien Champier, a polymath and polygraph of early sixteenth-century France, were an object of fascination for William Osler. He collected many of them (now preserved at the Osler Library at McGill) and visited the site in Lyon where Champier spent his most active years as an author and a physician. Although some of Champier's production has been well-studied and contextualised, notably his contribution to Renaissance philosophy and his attitude to occult sciences, Champier's medical works remain comparatively neglected. My research bears on the relationship between the rise of 'Galenism' in Renaissance Europe and the works of Champier.

Connu de multiples spécialistes, mais pour des raisons différentes, Symphorien Champier est un personnage fascinant qui débuta sa longue carrière d'enseignant, de médecin, d'homme public et d'écrivain au tournant du XVI<sup>e</sup> s. Intéressé par les arts libéraux et particulièrement la philosophie, 'traducteur' de la pensée de Ficin en France, catholique revendiqué, ardent polémiste, Champier est aussi souvent vu comme un penseur proto-féministe du fait de la relative ouverture d'esprit dont il fait preuve dans l'un de ses premiers succès de librairie, la Nef des dames vertueuses (1503). C'est qu'il puise déjà abondamment aux textes antiques de philosophie naturelle et de médecine, dans lesquels il trouve toutes sortes de raisons de valoriser le corps et l'esprit des femmes.

Formé à Montpellier en médecine, il découvre petit à petit l'œuvre des médecins grecs, Hippocrate et Galien. Ces derniers ne deviennent disponibles en grec qu'à la fin du premier quart du XVI<sup>e</sup> s. avec leurs éditions aldines respectives (Venise, 1525 pour Galien; 1526 pour Hippocrate). Les éditions séparées de textes individuels restent rares avant cette date – mais Champier en a connaissance. En ce qui concerne Galien, comme d'autres savants de son époque Champier doit pour l'essentiel se contenter des œuvres « complètes » en latin publiées au tournant du siècle



Symphorien Champier. Speculum Galeni. Epithome Galeni sive Galenus Abreviatus... [Lyon, 1512]. Image credit: Caroline Petit.

(notamment l'édition de 1490, publiée à Venise par Diomedes Bonardus). Ce recueil, dont les sources manuscrites exactes ne sont pas toujours identifiées, rassemblent des traductions tantôt faites sur l'arabe, tantôt sur le grec, tantôt les deux – dans le cas du traité des Simples, lu par Champier, certains

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livres proviennent d'une traduction arabo-latine (I-VI), les autres d'une traduction gréco-latine (VII-XI).

Les traductions arabo-latines présentaient des difficultés parfois insurmontables, et dès la fin du XVe s. en Italie, des critiques se font jour, mettant en cause la clarté et la fiabilité des auteurs et traducteurs arabes. Champier, correspondant assidu de ses confrères de Ferrare et de Padoue notamment, est au fait de ces débats qui agitent la petite communauté médicale, et, dans la lignée de Niccolò Leonicensi, prend parti contre les Arabes et pour les Grecs. Dans cette optique, Galien est un outil puissant : « prince » des médecins, Galien, sous la plume de Champier, se fait même modèle d'éloquence et de modération religieuse, un interlocuteur muet que le médecin de Lyon se plaît à apostropher, imitant par là son propre sujet d'étude. Au-delà de la simple redécouverte des textes antiques par les humanistes, le lien que tisse Champier avec l'œuvre et la pensée de Galien est fondamental dans son propre développement intellectuel et, indirectement, dans celui de ses contemporains, car il n'eut de cesse de transmettre ce savoir, de multiples manières.

La proportion des ouvrages médicaux dans l'œuvre de Champier est considérable : ils se comptent par dizaines, même dans la bibliographie, aujourd'hui en partie périmée, élaborée par Allut au XIXe s. La collection de William Osler comprend la plupart des œuvres de Champier publiées en latin, notamment les œuvres les plus anciennes et les plus rares : un unicum non daté (mais certainement antérieur à 1498), acquisition récente de la Osler Library, fournit un témoignage éclairant sur les débuts de Champier et le carcan intellectuel scolastique qui fut le sien alors qu'il commençait à enseigner : l'opuscule (intitulé *Isagoge Simphoriani Champerii in grammaticam disciplinam & logicam cum denotatione realium vanitatum & elucidatione nominalium veritatum*) se propose de combler une lacune en termes de manuels scolaires, ce qui va demeurer une préoccupation constante de l'auteur tout au long de sa carrière. Mais un monde sépare ce texte, court, sans éclat particulier ni effets rhétoriques, empreint des doctrines de Guillaume d'Ockham, et les œuvres prolifiques et de bonne facture des années 1530 (telles que les *Castigationes seu emendationes pharmacopolarum*, les autres œuvres de pharmacologie, et les *Historiales Campi*).

Ce monde, créé par les humanistes autour des textes classiques, Champier l'accompagne et contribue à lui donner forme, tout en éclairant la transformation de l'univers intellectuel de son temps. La médecine est le fil qui permet de retrouver cette transformation après 1500, lorsque Champier commence à publier des œuvres de vulgarisation

à thème médical (par exemple *Practica nova in medicina aggregatoris lugdunensis domini Simphoriani Champerii de omnibus morborum generibus*, 1517 - Osler 2273), des abrégés et « miroirs » de Galien, parfois assortis de réimpressions de textes traduits (mais non par lui), et souvent accompagnés de préfaces et d'épîtres de correspondants prestigieux, louant et renforçant son autorité ainsi que l'originalité de son œuvre. C'est que Champier a commencé à publier abondamment sur ces textes encore peu lus presque un quart de siècle avant la publication de l'Aldine de Galien. Or, celle-ci marque un tournant dans la réception de Galien, en permettant de nouvelles traductions latines et en relançant la réflexion médicale et philosophique sur ces textes. Cette activité de diffusion et de vulgarisation des grands textes médicaux culmine donc pour Champier avec la publication d'une ample anthologie latine de textes de Galien, publiée en 1532 sous le titre *Historiales Campi*, bientôt suivie d'ouvrages consacrés à la pharmacopée (en latin et en français), non exempts de controverse. En effet, même dans ses vieux jours, l'ancien médecin du Duc de Lorraine ne perdit jamais le contact avec le monde du livre – le privilège royal obtenu sur le tard lui permit de publier sans trêve à partir de 1532. À l'affût des nouveautés et des découvertes, il prit ainsi une part active aux débats des années 1530 sur l'identification des remèdes des Anciens et sur le bon usage des simples du sol national. Mais à sa mort autour de 1539, Champier a en réalité produit une œuvre multiforme, où médecine, philosophie et rhétorique se nourrissent et se complètent l'une l'autre. Prenant Galien pour modèle, il s'est forgé une image de médecin philosophe, en quête de vérité, mais ne dédaignant pas les artifices redoutables de l'éloquence classique pour parvenir à ses fins.

La collection des œuvres latines de Symphorien Champier conservée à la Bibliothèque Osler permet de suivre à la trace ce savant hors du commun, des débuts de l'humanisme français aux diverses controverses médicales qui eurent lieu en Europe jusqu'en 1540. Sa postérité immédiate (lecteurs, citations, diffusion de ses ouvrages, réimpressions) est encore à étudier.

*I would like to express my gratitude to Mary Hague-Yearl, Head Librarian, and the award committee of the Dr. Edward H. Bensley Travel Grant for making this research stay possible. Mary and all the staff in the Special Collections room at McGill made it especially enjoyable. I am also indebted to the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance at Warwick for a Greg Wells Fund award to help fund my trip, for which I am deeply grateful. Finally, I would like to thank Faith Wallis for encouraging me to apply for a travel grant in the first place.*

# Ibn al-Bayṭār's *Al-Mughnī fī al-Ṭibb*: an overview of the copy found at the Osler Library, Bib.Osl.7785/39

By Ayman Yasin Atat

*Dr. Ayman Yasin Atat is a fellow in the department of the history of science and pharmacy at TU Braunschweig, Germany, and specializes in Arabic traditional materia medica and the history of Arabic pharmacy and medicine.*

Ibn Al-Bayṭār was a botanist who was active in the 13th century. He was born in the Andalusian city of Málaga and learned botany from the Málaga botanist Abū al-'Abbās al-Nabātī, with whom he started collecting plants in and around Spain. In 1219 AD, Ibn al-Bayṭār left Málaga to travel surrounding the western and eastern parts of the Mediterranean in order to obtain more knowledge of *materia medica*. After 1224 AD, he entered the service of the Ayyubid sultan Al-Kāmil in Cairo and was appointed chief herbalist. In 1227 AD, Al-Kāmil extended his empire to Damascus, and Ibn al-Bayṭār accompanied him, this provided him with an opportunity to collect plants in Syria. His research on plants



The outline shows the area around which Ibn-Al-Bayṭār traveled in order to study *materia medica*.

extended over a vast geographic area surrounding the Mediterranean, as noted on the map. Al-Bayṭār died in Damascus in 1248 AD. As is evident from the map, the trips made by Ibn al-Bayṭār – starting from Spain through north Africa, Egypt, reaching Turkey, and then ending in Damascus – gave him access to many different substances and sources. He also relied upon the locals' knowledge to collect information and details on simple drugs and their formulations. This enabled him to enhance his own knowledge and skills, and added new sources of information to the Arabic medical culture. Truly, his writings offer a perfect example of the knowledge of simple drugs in the Mediterranean area in the medieval age.

Among his scholarly works, Ibn al-Bayṭār did an explanation of Dioscorides' (d. 90 AD) book on simple drugs. In addition,

he authored two important books: *Kitāb al-Jāmi' li-mufradāt al-adwīya wa al-aghdhīya*, which he ordered alphabetically according to the name of simple drugs; and *Al-Mughnī fī al-Ṭibb*, which he ordered according to the medical benefits of the simple drugs and the ill organs. Both of these books are essential to those wishing to understand and study the culture of simple drugs in Arabic medieval medicine; interestingly, we could observe that *Al-Jāmi'* was edited, published, and also translated into many other languages across history, while *Al-Mughnī* is still without any real edition or study. Notably, my main motivation for studying this book was to shed light on its contents, in an effort to complete the understanding of knowledge about simple drugs in the Mediterranean during the era of Ibn-Al-Bayṭār.

The most completed copy of *Kitāb al-Mughnī fī al-Ṭibb* known is housed at the Osler Library, shelf mark Bib. Osl. 7785/39. This copy consists of 369 folios, each with 23 lines per page. It includes some marginal corrections and glosses, but regrettably is incomplete.

## Description of contents of *Al-Mughnī fī al-Ṭibb*.

As was the habit of medieval authors, they wrote the manuscripts as gifts for the caliphs. In the same vein Ibn Al-Bayṭār mentioned that his book was a gift to the Sixth Ayyubid Caliph (Abu Bakr ibn Nāsir al-Dīn, who became Caliph in 635H/1238 AD, and stayed only for two years).

In addition to the book being a gift, Ibn al-Bayṭār was motivated to write this book to provide a reference work for physicians, wherever their patients might be. In addition, Ibn al-Bayṭār organized it according to the organs to facilitate the searching of medications. Moreover, he put all possible drugs that could be useful for any disease, so patients could easily choose the available and applicable simples to take and use.

Ibn al-Bayṭār divided the book into twenty chapters, their titles being listed in a table of contents after the introduction. The contents of these chapters are as follows:

### Chapter One: *simple drugs beneficial for ailments of the head.*

Ibn al-Bayṭār spoke on simple drugs that could heal headache and migraines, or cause them. In addition to what helps people to sleep or to stay awake, he also spoke on melancholia, epilepsy, and hemiplegia and what might heal or cause those afflictions. In this chapter, Ibn al-Bayṭār quoted a lot of information from many different sources, furthermore, he gave details on the nutrition of their patients, which he quoted completely from Albucasis (d. 1013 AD).

**Chapter Two:** *simple drugs beneficial for ailments of the eye.* Here Ibn al-Bayṭār gave information on many diseases that may happen in eyes like pannus, chalazion, epiphora, cataract, and to what could strength the vision and improve it. Here two points are notable: first, Ibn al-Bayṭār did not mention drugs that might cause diseases, as he had done in the first chapter. The second point is a very interesting one: the quotations by Ibn al-Bayṭār are almost nonexistent, and despite that studies on him did not show him as an ophthalmologist, it seems that he had a great knowledge of ophthalmology.

**Chapter Three:** *simple drugs beneficial for ailments of the ear.* He gave details on some symptoms like pain of ears, ulcers of ears, sonitus, deafness, and drugs that might cause it.

**Chapter Four:** *simple drugs beneficial for ailments of the nose.* Here Ibn al-Bayṭār mainly spoke on epistaxis, and the polyps that appear in the nose, and how to heal them.

**Chapter Five:** *simple drugs beneficial for ailments of the mouth.* Ibn al-Bayṭār discussed in this chapter the oral symptoms like blisters, apthas, and he also mentioned how to heal halitosis. Moreover, he pointed to the simple drugs that are useful in dentology for cases like toothache, and cleaning the teeth, finally he spoke on gum ailments like gingivitis.

**Chapter Six:** *simple drugs beneficial for ailments of the throat, organs of respiration, the chest and its contents.* Ibn al-Bayṭār started this chapter with the tonsils and the epiglottis, then he continued with lung ailments, particularly asthma and tuberculosis. Next, he spoke on the heart, and finished with the breast and discussed how to increase and decrease the milk of women. It is important to mark that regarding heart drugs Ibn al-Bayṭār quoted completely the treatise of Avicenna (d.1037 AD) on cardio drugs (al-adwīyah al-qalbīyah), and he was proud in including it within his book.

**Chapter Seven:** *simple drugs beneficial for ailments of the stomach, liver and spleen.* Ibn al-Bayṭār divided this chapter into three parts dealing with each one separately. Examples of stomach ailments he spoke of included: appetite of food and how to increase or decrease it, acidic belching, flatulence, and the ulcers of stomach. One interesting point here is that when Ibn al-Bayṭār spoke on dropsy as a hepatic symptom and the solidity of spleen, he gave details on the nutrition of their patients while he did not mention this point for patients of stomach ailments, moreover, he quoted (again) the nutritional details from Albucasis.

**Chapter Eight:** *simple drugs beneficial for ailments of the intestines.* Ibn al-Bayṭār discussed drugs that affect the balance of humours in the body. In addition, when he mentioned the nutrition of colitis patients, and those who suffer from intestinal worms, he again quoted from Albucasis. When discussing the humours, Ibn al-Bayṭār quoted the information from the work of 'Omāyah ibn Abī Salt (d. 1134 AD) on the simple drugs.

**Chapter Nine:** *simple drugs beneficial for ailments of rectum.* In addition to the wounds and ulcers that might happen in rectum, the main focus of Ibn al-Bayṭār was on hemorrhoids and how to heal them. Here, he quoted from Avicenna, Ibn Jazzliḥ (d. 1100 AD), and Ibn Radwān (d. 1061 AD); in addition, when he mentioned the foods which could work for or harm patients with hemorrhoids, he quoted the paragraphs from Avicenna and Maimonides (d. 1204 AD).

**Chapter Ten:** *simple drugs beneficial for ailments of kidneys.* Ibn al-Bayṭār spoke in this chapter on nephritis, pains of kidneys, and simple drugs that alleviate it. The main focus was on kidney stones, and how to heal them by using simple drugs that have either a saxifragant effect or a sedative one. Interestingly, Ibn al-

Bayṭār in this chapter mentioned al-Tbzīn (bathtub) as a method for healing the patients of kidney-stones; this method was used more in eastern parts of Arabic civilization, it came from Persian medical tradition, and became later an important way of home caring in Ottoman civilization. After that, Al-Bayṭār finished this chapter with foods that benefit or harm the kidney and again he quoted the paragraphs from both Albucasis and Rhazes (d. 925).

**Chapter Eleven:** *simple drugs beneficial for ailments of bladder.* Ibn al-Bayṭār spoke on pain of the bladder and its ulcers, diuresis, enuresis, ischuria. When he listed the simple drugs that have diuretic effects, he divided them into two categories: first, those which increase urination by being drunk

as a tea, and secondly those which have a diuretic effect brought about by being eaten directly.

**Chapter Twelve:** *simple drugs beneficial for ailments of male reproductive organs and related issues.* The main focus of Ibn al-Bayṭār in this chapter was upon aphrodisiac simples, of which he mentioned several types, including botanical, mineral, and stony. In addition, he mentioned some animal gallbladders that have the same effect. Following that, he gave information on orchitis and its associated pain; hernia; and the appearance of the bellybutton of infants.



The first page of Kitāb al-Mughnī fī al-Ṭibb, Bib.Osl. 7785/39, which is housed at the Osler Library of the History of Medicine. Digitized version available at: <https://tinyurl.com/yxgxbaso>

Continued from page 7

**Chapter Thirteen:** *simple drugs beneficial for ailments of the uterus, and those that relate to pregnancy, birth, and the health of embryos.* Here, Ibn al-Bayṭār started with metritis and its pain, and also touched upon that which is useful for the uterus, then what helps women conceive, and what heals metrorrhagia. Next, he discussed the simples that have an effect on birth either to prevent abortion or to facilitate birth, especially in cases of dystocia. He finalized the chapter by speaking on dysmenorrhea.

**Chapter Fourteen:** *simple drugs beneficial for ailments of joints.* Ibn al-Bayṭār focused on arthrodynia and the pains of gout. Following that, he spoke on sciatica, and when he mentioned the foods that help or harm ailments of the joints he quoted (as usual) the paragraphs from Ibn Jamīʿ (d. 1198 AD), and Qusṭā ibn Lūqā (d. 912 AD).

**Chapter Fifteen:** *simple drugs beneficial for abscess and ulcers.* Ibn al-Bayṭār gave the simple drugs that could heal wounds, ulcers, and their itching. In addition, he spoke about burns and how to treat them by using simples as bandages.

**Chapter Sixteen:** *simple drugs beneficial for swelling and blisters.* Interestingly, Ibn al-Bayṭār divided swelling according to its humoral etiology: phlegmatic, bilious, or atrabilious. In addition, he quoted the nutrition paragraphs from Al-Majūsī (d. 994 AD), Ibn al-Jazzār (d. 980 AD) and Oribasius (d. 403 AD). However, the exciting point in this chapter was his talk on smallpox. Following his discussion of the simples, he spoke about his expertise in this field starting by the smallpox stone. This is a red stone, which gets its name from a severe smallpox outbreak that took place in Persian lands; the people put this stone in the water, and said that whoever drank from this water was safe from smallpox. In addition, Ibn al-Bayṭār described how he healed smallpox by using sesame in one case, and also by using henna in other case; it is worth noting that the use of henna for smallpox was mentioned by Hassan al-ʿaṭṭār in 19th century within his book *Rāḥat al-ʿabdān*.

**Chapter Seventeen:** *simple drugs special for cosmetology.* First, Ibn al-Bayṭār spoke on ailments that happen in skin like acromia, ringworm, chloasma, and impetigo. Then he mentioned kakidrosis and what stimulates perspiration or prevents it from simple drugs. Finally, he spoke about foods that could increase the weight of body or decrease it, and as usual he quoted the nutritional paragraphs from Rufus (d. 110 AD), and Albucasis.

**Chapter Eighteen:** *simple drugs beneficial for fevers and corruption of air.* Ibn al-Bayṭār spoke on many kinds of fever like the quartan fever, phlegmatic fever, and bilious fever. In addition, he mentioned simples that might cause fever, and he quoted the paragraph of nutritional information for feverish patients from Albucasis in this case. Then he spoke on the corruption of air, where he quoted from Shamʿūn al-Rāhib, Rhazes, and Ibn Masawīh (d. 857 AD).

**Chapter Nineteen:** *simple drugs beneficial for poisons.* Ibn al-Bayṭār divided this chapter into two parts: first about vermin bites in general, and the second part is about specific kind of insects. Also in this part, Ibn al-Bayṭār wrote about toxins; his new methodology here was to provide details about the

symptoms of being poisoned by these toxins (as he did not mention any symptoms for ailments before), and he quoted these details of symptoms either from Dioscorides or Avicenna. Unfortunately, the manuscript suffers from lack of information in this chapter, and is missing some of its pages, and some other pages are incomplete.

**Chapter Twenty:** *the acts of drugs and their characteristics without preparing.* Ibn al-Bayṭār divided this chapter into two parts: first on what has benefits for the human body, and the second part on what has the specific character of simple drugs (botanical, animal, and mineral ones) beyond their therapeutic effect. Unfortunately, the manuscript suffers from missing pages, which makes it hard to discern the complete information that would have been included in this chapter. The two interesting points in this chapter were that his texts on using two different kinds of foods at the same time, and his notes on wine, were completely quoted from other sources like Hippocrates (d. 370 BC), Galen (d. 210 AD), and Qusṭā ibn Lūqā.

**Finally,** the numbering of manuscript ends at folio 369, before its intended conclusion.

### **Some observations on the contents Al-Mughnī fī al-Tibb**

Let us start with the sources, Ibn al-Bayṭār used a great system of citation where he mentioned the name of author and sometimes the name of book or treatise. In all, he quoted his information from more than 100 sources. These sources were Arabic and non-Arabic, the non-Arabic sources coming from Greek authors such as Hippocrates, Dioscorides and Galen, and Syriac authors like Shamʿūn al-Rāhib and Ihrin, and Indian ones like Al-khūz and Mankah.

The Arabic sources mainly came from two geographical areas: first, the eastern parts of Mediterranean, including Avicenna, Rhazes, and Ibn Masawīh. The second area is the Andalusia region, from which he quoted a lot of information from authors like Ibn Zuhr (d. 1162 AD), Albucasis, Avempace (d. 1138 AD), Al-Idrīsī (d. 1165 AD), and of course Al-Ghāfiqī (d. 1165), whose work on simple drugs – Bib.Osl. 7508 – was published by McGill University in 2014 as *The Herbal of al-Ghāfiqī*. It is clear that Ibn al-Bayṭār depended more on the Andalusian sources, which might point to the advanced knowledge on simple drugs in Andalusia. Meanwhile, in the chapters about nutritional information, Ibn al-Bayṭār quoted mainly from Albucasis, and others like Avicenna and Rhazes.

Regarding the method of arranging the book, one can see that it is an order that makes it easier for patients to find drugs that help them. In most cases, Ibn al-Bayṭār gave many possibilities that could be used. Moreover, it was interesting that when he was speaking about some ailments he followed them with names of simple drugs that could cause these ailments. Therefore, we could say that this book contains both curative knowledge and preventive medicine.

In the field of simple drugs themselves, Ibn al-Bayṭār mentioned more than 1400 kinds. Some he repeated many times like squill (*Scilla maritima*), radish (*Raphanus sativus*), citron (*Citrus medica*), myrrh (*Commiphora myrrha*), and others.

It is also worth noting that Ibn al-Bayṭār went beyond herbal medicine, though botanical drugs were the most used in the medieval medicine. That is, Ibn al-Bayṭār mentioned other kinds of simple drugs like animal products; the most used ones were milk from different sources and a beaver's testis, but he also mentioned many mineral drugs, where the most used substances were the salt and verdigris.

One of the important aspects of Ibn al-Bayṭār's work in the field of simple drugs was that he gave the meaning of strange names of simples in each instance that he mentioned them within the book. Furthermore, he tried to give the synonyms of the names according to many geographical parts of the Arabic world.

## Conclusion

I want to conclude this report by stating that Al-Mughnī fī al-Tibb could be considered as an encyclopedia for traditional Arabic medicine, and which would complement work on simple drugs culture in medieval Arabic civilization. I hope in the future to hear about efforts to look for other copies over the world, and then to prepare a useful edition of this important manuscript, and to translate it later into other languages.

*Many thanks to Dr. Mary Hague-Yearl for supporting and facilitating my work on this manuscript, also tremendous thanks to Dr. Edward H. Bensley Osler Library Research Travel Grant committee, which gave me the chance for consulting this manuscript and other sources at McGill library.*

# Islamic manuscripts and lithographs at the Osler Library: using enhanced cataloguing and digitization to improve accessibility

*By Eliza Tasbihi, Ph.D., Specialized Editing Cataloguer of Islamic Manuscripts*

*La version française suit*

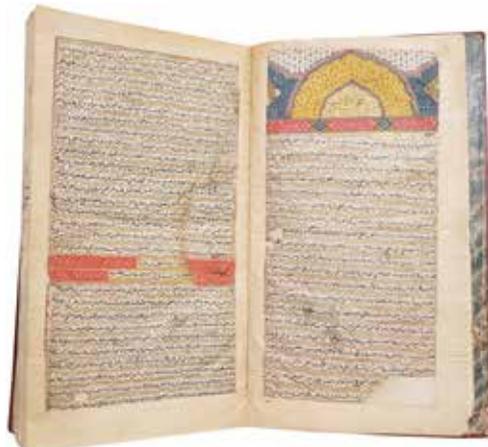
The Osler Library houses a large collection of Islamic manuscripts and lithographs written mainly in Arabic and Persian, with some in Turkish and Urdu languages. The vast majority of these works were donated to the library by ophthalmologist Casey Wood who had obtained many of them from the collections of renowned scholar Wladimir Ivanow and ophthalmologist and medical historian Max Meyerhof. A portion of the manuscripts are listed in the Osler Library's original catalogue, the *Bibliotheca Osleriana* (typically referred to as B.O.), under the title "Oriental Manuscripts."

The catalogue records for the collection are currently being enhanced by the Specialized Editing Cataloguer of Islamic Manuscripts, Dr. Eliza Tasbihi. Each manuscript that is listed in the *Bibliotheca Osleriana* is catalogued under the textual call number "Bib.Osl.", or sometimes "Bibl. Osl.", followed by its unique B.O. catalogue number. The remaining manuscripts, which are not listed in the B.O., are catalogued under the textual call numbers: MS. Islamic Osler, followed by a corresponding number. Among other materials catalogued for the Osler Library, mention should be made of an object known as the Assyrian Medical Tablet. This tablet has double-sided engraving and was written in the Akkadian language. It is the first known medical treatise on eye diseases, dated 705-681 BC, and belonged to the medical school of Assur.

The enhancement of existing catalogue records, and creation of new ones where needed, is the first step of a two-part process. When cataloguing work is completed for each book, it is sent to the Digital

Initiatives Department. The aim is gradually to make all of these works available electronically via the McGill Library Catalogue and to add them to the Osler Library's collection within the Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/details/mcgilluniversityosler> – hint: search within the collection for "Arabic").

The digitization work is taking place as time and resources permit, but already the results have aided international scholarship. See, for instance, the article in this newsletter by Dr. Ayman Atat of Technische Universität Braunschweig; the focus of his work, Ibn al-Bayṭār, *Al-Mughnī fī al-Tibb* (B.O.7785/39), was among those digitized (see: <https://tinyurl.com/yxgxbaso>) Others that have been uploaded so far include Abū Ja'far Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ghāfiqī, *Kitāb fī al-adwiyā al-mufrada* (B.O. 7508 - <https://tinyurl.com/yy9w9nkr>), of which a facsimile with accompanying critical editions were published as *The Herbal of al- Ghāfiqī: a facsimile edition of MS 7508 in the Osler Library of the History of Medicine*, ed. Adam Gacek, Pamela Miller, F J Ragep, and Faith Wallis (Montreal, 2014). Other notable works include a 17th-century illuminated manuscript copy of Avicenna's Canon (B.O.



A 17th-century illuminated manuscript of Avicenna's Canon, B.O. 462. This manuscript has been digitized and can be seen at: <https://tinyurl.com/yymbmcmv>

462 - <https://tinyurl.com/yymbmcmv>) and a commentary on Avicenna's *Ishārāt wa-al-tanbīhāt* (B.O. 478 - <https://tinyurl.com/y4d44s4w>), which incorporates comments by Fakhr al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Rāzī. This work was a gift of Dr. M' Sa'eed and bears the inscription, "Presented to Sir W. Osler, To whose sound teaching the Profession all the world over owes so much."

**Note:** The Osler Library is particularly grateful to Eliza Tasbihi, Specialized Editing Cataloguer of Islamic Manuscripts, and Greg Houston, New Media & Digitization Administrator, for their respective work in bringing this project to fruition.

# Manuscrits et lithographies islamiques à la bibliothèque d'Osler : le catalogage et la numérisation améliorés au service de l'accessibilité

Par Eliza Tasbihi, Ph.D., catalogueuse spécialisée en édition de manuscrits islamiques

La bibliothèque d'Osler possède une importante collection de manuscrits et de lithographies islamiques écrits principalement en arabe et en persan, dont certains en turc et en ourdou. La grande majorité de ces œuvres ont été données à la bibliothèque par l'ophtalmologiste Casey Wood, qui en avait obtenu plusieurs des collections du célèbre spécialiste Wladimir Ivanow et de l'ophtalmologiste et historien médical Max Meyerhof. Une partie des manuscrits est répertoriée dans le catalogue original de la Bibliothèque Osler, la *Bibliotheca Osleriana* (généralement appelée B.O.), sous le titre « Manuscrits orientaux ».

Les notices du catalogue de la collection sont en cours d'amélioration par la catalogueuse spécialisée en édition de manuscrits islamiques, Eliza Tashibi. Chaque manuscrit répertorié dans la *Bibliotheca Osleriana* est catalogué en utilisant le numéro d'appel textuel « Bib.Osl. », ou parfois « Bibl. Osl. », suivi de son numéro de catalogue B.O. unique. Les autres manuscrits, qui ne figurent pas dans le B.O., sont catalogués sous les numéros d'appel textuels : MS. Islamic Osler, suivi d'un chiffre correspondant. Parmi les autres documents catalogués pour la bibliothèque Osler un objet connu sous le nom de tablette médicale assyrienne vaut la peine d'être mentionnée. Cette tablette est gravée sur les deux cotés et a été écrite en langue akkadienne. Ce fut le premier traité médical connu sur les maladies oculaires et appartenait à l'école de médecine d'Assur en 705-681 avant notre ère.

L'amélioration des notices catalographiques existantes et la création de nouvelles notices au besoin constituent la première étape d'un processus en deux parties. Lorsque le travail de catalogage de chaque livre est terminé, il est envoyé au Service des initiatives numériques. L'objectif est de rendre progressivement toutes ces œuvres disponibles électroniquement via le Catalogue de la Bibliothèque McGill et de les ajouter à la collection de la Bibliothèque Osler dans l'Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/details/mcgilluniversityosler> - recherchez « Arabic » dans la collection).

Les travaux de numérisation se déroulent dans la mesure où le temps et les ressources le permettent, mais les résultats ont déjà aidé l'érudition internationale. Voir, par exemple, l'article de Ayman Atat, Ph.D., de la Technische Universität Braunschweig, dans ce bulletin ; l'objet de ses travaux, Ibn al-Bayṭār, *Al-Mughnī fī al-Ṭibb* (B.O. 7785/39), était parmi ceux numérisés (voir <https://tinyurl.com/yxgxbaso>). Parmi les autres documents qui ont été téléchargés jusqu'à présent, on peut citer Abū Ja'far Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ghāfiqī, *Kitāb fī al-adwiya al-mufrada* (B.O.

7508 - <https://tinyurl.com/yy9w9nkr>), dont un fac-similé accompagné d'éditions critiques a été publié sous le titre *The Herbal of al-Ghāfiqī: a facsimile edition of MS 7508 in the Osler Library of the History of Medicine*, ed. Adam Gacek, Pamela Miller, F J Ragep et Faith Wallis (Montréal, 2014). Parmi les autres œuvres remarquables, on peut citer un manuscrit enluminé du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, le *Canon* d'Avicenne (B.O. 462 - <https://tinyurl.com/yymbmcmv>) et un commentaire sur *Ishārāt wa-al-tanbīhāt* d'Avicenne (B.O. 478 - <https://tinyurl.com/y4d44s4w>), qui intègre des commentaires de Fakhr al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn 'Umar al-Rāzī. Le médecin M' Sa'eed et contient l'inscription « Presented to Sir W. Osler, To whose sound teaching the Profession all the world over owes so much. »



B.O. 7508, Abū Ja'far Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ghāfiqī, *Kitāb fī al-adwiya al-mufrada*.

# Presentation of a Doris Appel bas-relief of Sir William Osler, to the Osler Library

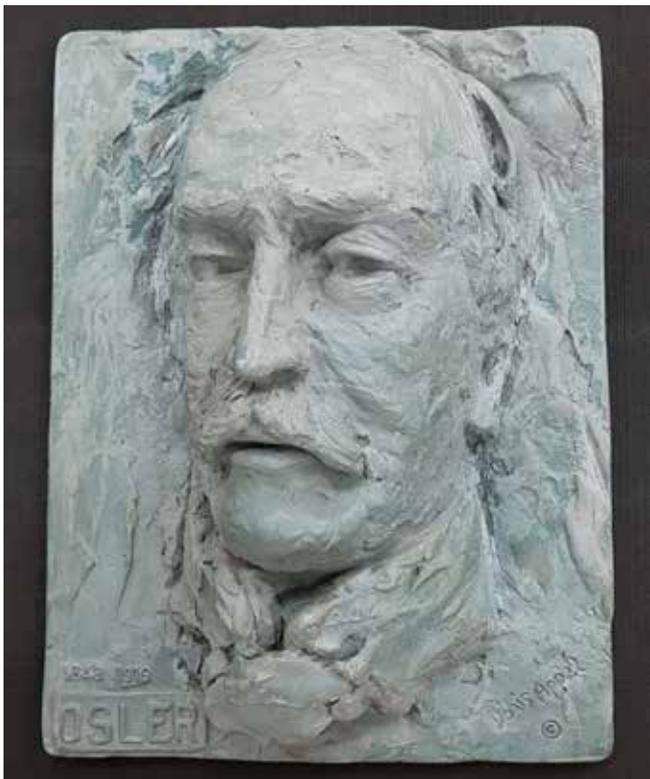
One of the memorable and poignant moments of this year's annual meeting of the American Osler Society came during the banquet, which was held at McGill's Faculty Club. It was there that Dr. Bruce Hoekstra presented the Osler Library with a plaster bas-relief of William Osler, by Doris Appel. The bas-relief had belonged to Dr. Reuben Frank Reider, a McGill graduate (BSc '28, MD '32, DipPubHealth '33), who bought the work directly from the artist. Dr. Hoekstra, meanwhile, received the sculpture from Dr. Reider's daughter, Karen Reider Sullivan, and thought that the year marking the centenary of Sir William Osler's death would be a fitting occasion on which to give Appel's work to the Osler Library at McGill in honour of its original owner: alumnus and Oslerian, Dr. Reider.

After completing his medical studies at McGill, Dr. Reider trained at Bellevue Hospital in New York City. During WWII, he served in the U.S. Public Health Service, where he later rose to the rank of Chief, Training Branch, Division of Health Mobilization.



Dr. Frank Reuben Reider.  
Image ref. 0000-0481.04.636

Courtesy of McGill University Archives.



Detail: bas relief of William Osler by Doris Appel

The bas-relief itself is striking for its realistic detail. Doris Appel (1904-1995) was known as an artist and medical historian; she combined these two interests in several works depicting key figures in the history of medicine, placing William Osler in a collection that included Galen, Vesalius, Maimonides, Pasteur, and Lister.

This resemblance is also significant because it is the same as the likeness that Dr. John P. McGovern donated to Green College (now Green Templeton College) in June 1984 to remain on permanent display in the entrance hall of "Open Arms," the Osler family home at 13 Norham Gardens in Oxford.

The Osler Library is honoured to receive the bas-relief, and thankful to Dr. Hoekstra and to the family of Dr. Reider for making it possible for Doris Appel's sculpted depiction of Sir William Osler to have its final home in Montreal.

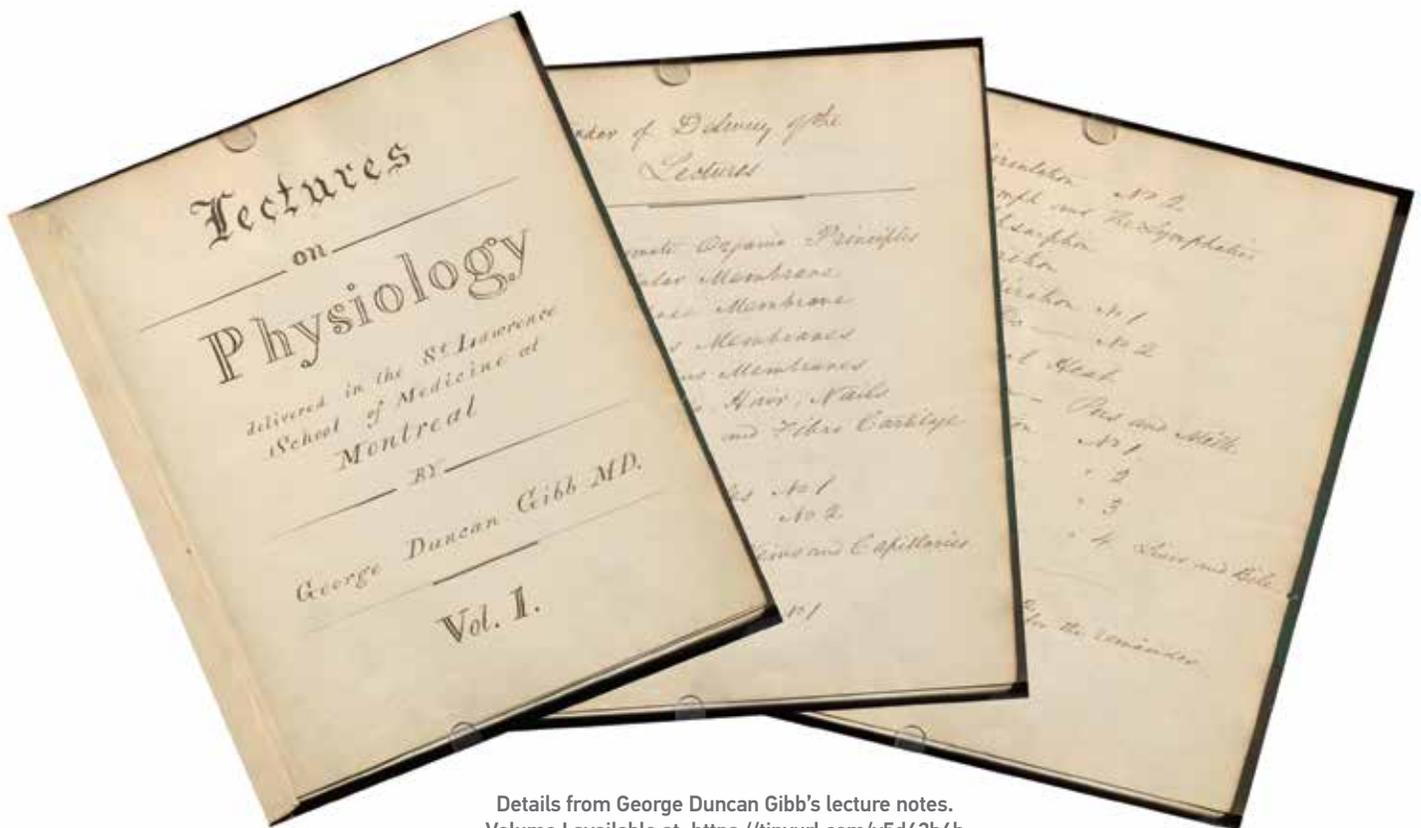
# Medical education and practice in the 19th century: the lectures and case notes of George Duncan Gibb

**H**oused within the Osler Library of the History of Medicine are several manuscript volumes representing two parts of the long and varied career of George Duncan Gibb (1821-1876): two volumes of lecture notes from his work at the St. Lawrence School of Medicine in Montreal, and six non-consecutive volumes of case notes from his work as a physician in London. Each set of Gibb's manuscript volumes available at the Osler Library is important and unique. All can be accessed by searching for "Gibb" within the Osler Library collection in Archive.org: <https://archive.org/details/mcgilluniversityosler>.

George Duncan Gibb was born in Montreal and graduated with an MD from McGill in 1846. As was typical for ambitious north American graduates at the time, Gibb spent time in Europe to further his education. He returned to Montreal in 1849 and in 1851 he co-founded the short-lived St. Lawrence School of Medicine of Montreal. By June 1853, he had settled in London, where he established a medical practice and developed

mid-19th century and will make an interesting comparison with another recent Osler acquisition: student notes taken by Alfred Guertin de St-Césaire, who graduated from the *École de médecine et de la chirurgie de Montréal* in 1866.

Gibb's method and attention to detail are clear from the opening pages of the lecture notes. Following the general table of contents is one page of memoranda, including that he missed part of November due to his marriage. When one looks at the list of lectures by date, there is a gap between the lectures of 5 and 17 November 1851, presumably the time when he was married. While the medical substance is what researchers will likely be most interested in, it is of note to see which days (beyond the obvious, e.g. Easter) were given as holidays from lectures: 3 and 4 December 1851 were noted as election days, but it is also notable that he did not lecture on Saint Patrick's Day, and he listed it as a holiday. On Tuesday 27 April he notes in his lecture list, "I had an operation." On 4 and 26 March, he turned the lecture over to



Details from George Duncan Gibb's lecture notes.  
Volume I available at: <https://tinyurl.com/y5d43b4h>  
Volume II available at: <https://tinyurl.com/yyroy5n8>

a specialty in laryngology. For further biographical details, see the accompanying article on Gibb by David Crawford.

The recently-acquired lecture notes from Gibb's time at the St. Lawrence School of Medicine provide considerable detail and insight into medical teaching in Montreal in the

his former professor, Robert Lea MacDonnell.

The books are interesting not only for their content, but also for Gibb's own notes to self. For instance, he writes that the first lecture "was too short – Hereafter write down the analyses before the class on the board, and extend some of the lecture – 2 or 3 pages."

Cell Theory - All the tissues of the body, according to Schwann either originate from, or consist of cells. Before Schwann had commenced his investigations, Schleiden had shown that the entire class of Cellular plants in the vegetable Kingdom consisted only of cells; many of them formed solely of homogeneous cells strung together, some of even a single cell. Now Schwann in the course of his investigations pointed out the similarity between some individual

Detail of George Duncan Gibb's lecture notes, referring to Theodor Schwann's remarks upon cell theory.

He follows that note with, "Take more time with the experiments."

Within his notes lies evidence of the transmission and acceptance of new medical knowledge. Starting on p. 12 of his lectures on "Proximate Organic Principles," Gibb includes a section on cell theory, in which makes several references to Theodor Schwann, who had published his observations on cells in 1838 and expanded on these ideas in the now-classic *Mikroskopische Untersuchungen über die Uebereinstimmung in der Struktur und dem Wachsthum der Thiere und Pflanzen* in 1839; he also gives some credit to Schwann's compatriot and colleague Matthias Schleiden for his work on plant cells, published in 1838. Elsewhere, his lectures are peppered with important names in the (then-recent) history of scientific medicine: William Prout, François Magendie, Friedrich Tiedemann (which he seems to write as Liedeman), Leopold Gmelin, Claude Bernard, Samuel Wright.

The case books of Gibb have existed at McGill for several decades, having been transferred from the Medical Library to the Osler Library in 1972. The series is incomplete, consisting of volumes 3,7,8,9,11,12 and covering the years 1863-1870. The earliest volume we have, volume 3, covers Gibb's work in 1863. The casebooks contained detailed notes on patients he treated, and many include drawings to illustrate the medical challenge he faced. In one case, he notes that a widow had asked him whether her husband might not have died, had they gone to him earlier; he records an answer that was not definitive. On the same page, he pasted in a clipping from a newspaper, dated around three months later, announcing the re-marriage of the widow (which could conceivably have been out of financial necessity). His descriptions are extensive and include where his patients lived, their family situation, whether another doctor had made the referral, and considerable detail about symptoms and his approach to treatment. His overall approach is to follow the initial report with brief notes for each subsequent day of treatment. In several of the cases, he later added a quick note in red pencil to denote inclusion in a published account.

From Gibb's lecture notes and from his case books, one can gain a glimpse at a dynamic personality, and from the case notes in particular one can get a sense of his development as a specialist. All of these newly-digitized works will be of interest to those interested in nineteenth-century medicine and its developments.

of the attack. Last fluid and through belly. Off to whole in  
 swallowing fluids. Night breast low & inflamed. Spoke  
 in a low whisper.

Suggesting should a smaller of the false cords  
 for Fig. & no view of false cords at all. Head  
 partly raised, & sound clear - pharynx inflamed in some parts  
 - quite clear -

By the throat of  
 1/2 lb. of milk 1/2 lb. of sugar  
 1/2 lb. of honey 1/2 lb. of oil  
 1/2 lb. of egg white 1/2 lb. of  
 1/2 lb. of almond oil 1/2 lb. of

Applied Sol. iodine & large of flowers & rose -  
 24th Better, but has much prostration - 1 p. b.  
 The vocal cord been seen to day for Fig.

Applied above some time -

By Sol. iodine 1/2 lb. of  
 1/2 lb. of milk 1/2 lb. of  
 1/2 lb. of honey 1/2 lb. of  
 1/2 lb. of egg white 1/2 lb. of  
 1/2 lb. of almond oil 1/2 lb. of

28th Head soreness on right side of forehead & base of  
 helmet, with an ulcer in front of latter. Applied Sol. of Iodine  
 behind, & also to ulcer with good effect. - 1/2 lb. of Sol  
 of the ulcer - Gave to Bourneau with fresh solution -  
 In evening 1/2 lb. of Sol. iodine 1/2 lb. of  
 1/2 lb. of egg white 1/2 lb. of  
 1/2 lb. of almond oil 1/2 lb. of

See 17. Can increased outside of the Quoted in Ed 2  
 nose, heart better, swelling of face gone - cuts well  
 & swallows well.

A page from the case books of George Duncan Gibb. See the note in red, in the bottom right quadrant, indicating that Gibb included this case in a published account.

# George Duncan Gibb (MD 1846)

By David S. Crawford, Emeritus Librarian,  
McGill University.

Reprinted, with minor revisions, from: <https://internatlib.mcgill.ca/Gibb.htm>

**G**eorge Duncan Gibb was born in Montréal on Christmas Day 1821, the eldest son of a Scottish-born merchant, Thomas Gibb.

After his father died in August 1832, he and his two siblings were brought up by their mother, Magdalena Campbell. After leaving Rev. Dr. Edward Black's school (connected to St. Paul's Presbyterian Church), George Gibb entered the study of law, and then spent some time in business, as is evident from his appearance in the *Montreal Directory* of 1842/43 and 1843/44 as a "Clerk" and a "Bookkeeper" (1). In 1843, he entered the Faculty of Medicine at McGill College, and graduated with an MD in May 1846, having written a thesis on "Morbid states of the urine" (2). Gibb was also interested in geology and was an eager student of chemistry: his entry in *Bibliotheca Canadensis* — possibly self-written — says, "he was the best

chemical student of his day in McGill Coll., and before taking his degree was offered the appointment of Chemist to the newly founded Geological Survey of Can., which he declined, not wishing to devote himself exclusively to that branch of science" (3, p. 143). On October 3, 1846 he was elected as an "Ordinary Member" of the Montreal-Medico-Chirurgical

Society. From 1845 to 1847 he was resident apothecary and an assistant house surgeon at the Montreal General Hospital, and he was also appointed Surgeon to the 3rd Battalion of the Montreal Militia. ("This was in some measure a reward for his services as a Volunteer during the Rebellion of 1837" (3, p. 141)).

Between 1847 and 1849 he travelled in Europe and studied in both London and Dublin, where, on April 27th 1848, he obtained a Licentiate of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland. He then went to Paris, arriving in the middle of the June 1848 revolution. While he was in Paris, he presented a paper to the Société de Médecine de Paris (of which he was later elected to membership) on the gunshot wounds he had observed during the revolution; he later published this paper, in three parts, in *The British American Journal of Medical and Physical Science*, a Montréal journal edited by his former professors Archibald Hall and Robert Lea MacDonnell (4–6).

In 1849 Gibb returned to Montréal, via New York, as surgeon on the packet ship "St George"; an avid reporter, Gibb wrote up his shipboard medical experiences (7). As was stated in one of his obituaries, he was "always industrious and

with a keen desire to record all

that appeared to him of interest" (8, p. 527). Gibb was clearly a very active young man, and the list of his publications covering medicine, natural history, numismatics, geology, anthropology and chemistry is extensive (3, 9).

On his return to Montréal, Gibb took up medicine again, living and practicing on Craig Street, though he soon became



George Duncan Gibb

involved in other professional activities as well. In 1849, he and George Edgeworth Fenwick (McGill MD 1847) advertised a series of lectures on the “different branches of Medical Science, for the instruction of Students about to present themselves before the Medical Boards of the Province” (10, 11), and in 1851 he and Fenwick were among the founders of the St. Lawrence School of Medicine of Montreal (École de médecine de St. Laurent, à Montréal). The other founders included Francis Arnoldi, who had, in 1845, been involved in the foundation of the Montréal School of Medicine and Surgery (École de médecine et de chirurgie de Montréal); Robert Lea MacDonnell, an Irishman who had formerly been a member of the McGill medical faculty before going, for a short time, to Toronto; and Robert Palmer Howard, McGill MD 1848) (12, 13).

Gibb was appointed as the professor of the institutes of medicine (See Note A) and comparative anatomy at the St. Lawrence School to which, in the words of W.H. Drummond, “he attracted by his marvellous powers as a lecturer and demonstrator, students from all parts of the country” (14, p. 649). (See note B.) In summer 1852 it was advertised that he would give a three-month series of lectures on pathology (15). As if all this were not enough, he also assisted in the re-founding the Montréal Dispensary at the time of the 1849 cholera epidemic, and was physician there; delivered lectures at the Natural History Society, the Mercantile Library Association, and the Addisonian Literary Society; and was the “Cabinet Keeper” and Librarian of the Natural History Society. He was also Secretary of the Medico-Chirurgical Society from 1849 to 1851 and served on its Committee of Management in 1851. He was a founder and first President of the Montréal Pathological Society, and the Secretary of the Montréal General Hospital (he later became a Life Governor). During these years he also indulged in his hobby, numismatics, and gathered the information for an unpublished work on the geology of the Montréal area (16). In 1851 Gibb married Mary Elizabeth Rumley; before she died in 1861, they had three daughters: Ricarda Cecilia, Helena Theresa, and Julia Sophia (17).

Though the St. Lawrence School of Medicine attracted 24 students (18), it closed after only one year of operation. As noted by Campbell:

it could not compete on equal terms with McGill University. The graduates from McGill received their licences from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Lower Canada without further examination ... those whose Medical course would have been completed at the St. Lawrence School, had it lived and requiring the Provincial licence, would have had to present themselves to the College for examination on all the branches of Medical Science. The examiners of this Board, were, many of them, Professors in McGill. I have been told by several who were Lecturers in the St. Lawrence School, that it was not considered either wise or fair to submit the chance of their students getting fair play from a Board largely composed of rival Professors. With the termination of its first session — the St. Lawrence School of Medicine therefore closed its doors. (19, p. 3).

Following the demise of the School, and after unsuccessfully applying for an appointment to the attending staff of the Montréal General Hospital, Gibb decided to leave Montréal again: in June 1853 he settled in London, England. As one might expect from such an industrious man, he soon established a practice there, and in 1855 he was also appointed as a Reporter to the *Lancet*, a position he held for over 10 years. (His entry in *Bibliotheca Canadensis* notes that this involved writing 3120 columns over ten years, at least six per week) (3, p. 150). He was also attached to two dispensaries, and held an appointment at the West London Hospital. In 1867 he obtained an appointment as Assistant Physician at the prestigious Westminster Hospital, an appointment he considered “one of the most important events in the history of his medical career” (3, p. 142). In 1874 he was appointed Physician there, and was also appointed lecturer in forensic medicine in its medical school. His professional life was busy: he was soon invited to become a Fellow of the Medical Society of London, was elected to its Council in 1855, and was its Orator in 1869. He joined many scientific societies, such as the Geological Society (he was elected a Fellow on June 13th 1855), the Kent Archaeological Society, and the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

Shortly after his arrival in London he published a book on whooping cough, dedicated to Lord Elgin, the former Governor General of British North America (20). In 1859 he became a member of the Royal College of Physicians, in 1860 was on the Council of the Obstetrical Society of London, and in 1864 was elected a Fellow of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society. He became more interested in diseases of the throat, and in 1860 published a well-received book on this subject (21). Gibb was subsequently asked by Johann Nepomuk Czermak to translate into English the French edition of his book on the laryngoscope (22); it appeared, in 1861, as *Czermak on the laryngoscope and its employment in physiology and medicine* in the New Sydenham Society’s prestigious monograph series (23). This translation was very well received, and established Gibb as the laryngologist in London. In 1863 he published his own book on the laryngoscope (24) which was very favourably reviewed in the *Lancet*:

Dr. Gibb was an authority on affections of the throat long before the introduction of the laryngoscope, and translated for the New Sydenham Society the monograph of Czermak on the employment of this instrument. His skill in examination of the laryngeal apparatus, and in the treatment of its disorders and diseases, was, therefore, obtained under exceptionally favourable circumstances. He has fully availed himself of the opportunities presented to him, and in this pamphlet gives to the profession some of the results of his large experience. It is written clearly and succinctly; giving just that amount of information about the history and employment of the laryngoscope which the practitioner requires for his guidance in its use. (25)

*Continued on page 16*

Gibb followed this with a second edition of his *Diseases of the Throat* in 1864 and two further editions of his book on the laryngoscope in 1867 and 1868. As Laurensen noted, “Gibb was indeed London’s foremost laryngologist” (26, p. 208).

Though he was clearly busy in London, Gibb was not forgotten in and did not forget Québec. He remained a Member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Lower Canada [Québec] until he died, and apparently welcomed many Québec students to London (27). He was a corresponding member of the Montréal Natural History Society and a donor to the Québec Literary and Historical Society. In 1856 he was awarded an honorary M.A. by McGill, and in 1864 a Doctorate en Droit *honoris causa* by Université Laval. In 1865 he became an Honorary Member of the Montréal Medico-Chirurgical Society, and was elected one of the first Honorary Members of the Canadian Medical Association at its second annual meeting in 1869. He was the anonymous “London Correspondent” of the Montréal medical publication *Medical Chronicle* from 1854 to 1859 and the *British American Journal* from 1860 to 1862. He dedicated several of his books to his old colleague from the St. Lawrence School, George Fenwick. In October 1857 he presented a substantial collection of maps and artefacts of the Crimea to the Montréal Natural History Society and, in 1870, he presented two prizes in clinical surgery to the Faculty of Medicine at McGill (copies of the 3rd edition of his book on the laryngoscope) which were won by Alexander Henderson and Octavius Clarke – Henderson’s copy is now in the Osler Library. In addition to many contributions to British publications, he continued to publish in Canadian journals and clearly kept in touch with his former colleagues.

In his later years, as well as publishing several papers on longevity and (under the pseudonym Carribber) a geology book for “young persons” dedicated to his daughter, Ricarda Cecilia (28), Gibb became obsessed with tracing his decent from the Scottish family of Gib and establishing his claim to the defunct baronetcy of Falkland and Carribber – a pursuit that resulted in some scorn. As noted in one of his obituaries, “unfortunately he left the beaten track he had so far trod so well and devoted the remaining years of his life in seeking after a bauble which, when found, was worthless” (8, p. 529). Gibb published two pamphlets on this genealogical research (29, 30) and a book in 1874 (31); sadly, these publications sullied his considerable reputation. The eminent Edinburgh historian Aeneas J. G. Mackay reviewed the book at some length for the literary journal *Academy*, noting,

It is, under the disguise of a family history, an attempt to construct a family, and establish a title to a baronetcy which would at once be rejected if presented to any competent Court. (32, p. 417)

There are a good many baronets, especially in Scotland, with dubious titles; but none of them, so far as we know, has fallen

upon Dr. Gibb’s device of supporting them by the publication of biographies of imaginary ancestors. (*ibid.*, p. 418)

In narrating his title to what he calls the Barouny of Carribber, Dr. Gibb, unfortunately for the credit of the Transatlantic University which made him M.A. [i.e. McGill], quotes a Latin Charter and Precept... the errors of which can scarcely be laid to the charge of the printer. (*ibid.*, p. 417)

Gibb died, of tuberculosis, on February 16th 1876, leaving an estate of “Under £600”. (See Note C). As indicated in several quite-extensive obituaries (8, 27, 33–35), he was a major figure in medical circles in the mid-nineteenth century in both Montréal and London, and a pioneer in the use of the laryngoscope. He should not be forgotten.

### Notes:

A. “Institutes of Medicine” is equivalent to “physiology” in today’s nomenclature. Gibb’s contemporary Robley Dunglison defined the province of a professor of the Institutes of Medicine as:

to expound the phenomena and laws of the phenomena of the human organism more especially in all their bearings; or to teach what has been, by many, termed, in the aggregate, the ‘philosophy of medicine’—a department which, although not in the curriculum of certain of our schools, ought not to be omitted in any that profess to give full instruction in the science, as well as the art of medicine. (36, p. 7)

Samuel Jackson stated:

The Institutes of Medicine are, comprehensively, the science of medicine as distinguished from medicine as an art, or an empiricism. They may be said, in this view, ... to be applied physiology, as mechanic arts are now named applied mechanics. (37, p. 8)

William Osler was appointed to the position of Professor of the Institutes of Medicine at McGill in 1875.

B. In late 2016, during research on Gibb, the serendipitous discovery was made on the online bookselling site *Abebooks*, of two bound volumes containing manuscript copies of 114 of Gibb’s lectures at the St. Lawrence School of Medicine (38), which were then purchased by the Osler Library. It is hoped that, in due course, these will be fully studied as it is comparatively rare to find a (presumably) complete set of a professor’s lecture notes from this period. The Osler Library already held several volumes of Gibb’s (London) case books in Archive Fonds PO36.

C. Probated wills, including that of George Duncan Gibb, are available, for a fee, from <https://probatesearch.service.gov>.

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Thanks: Many thanks are owed to my friend and colleague Deanna Cowan who untangled my syntax and tidied up my prose and the references. Any errors that may remain are, of course, mine.

# The McIntyre fire: Osler Library update

**O**n 3 May, the McGill Library issued its 4th update on progress being made at the Osler Library following the fire last summer on the rooftop terrace of the McIntyre Medical Building. Notably, it was confirmed that the Osler Library would be restored to pre-fire conditions. The update

contained brief background information about the fire of July 13, 2018 and reference to the impressive recovery effort that allowed nearly all Osler Library materials to be available for consultation at a temporary location within the McLennan Library, within only a few months of the fire.

## The key part of the update was on the space itself and is worth duplicating in full:

**Space Update:** The Library is pleased to report that the Osler Library of the History of Medicine will be rebuilt as per pre-fire conditions. Reconstruction work will be coordinated by Facilities Management and Ancillary Services in collaboration with the Library and the Faculty of Medicine.

## The scope of reconstruction work includes:

Reinstallation of finishes and components including dismantled woodwork, bookcases and cabinetry as per pre-fire conditions.

- Repairing all damage caused by the dismantling and fire (i.e. water & soot)
- No changes to room layouts

## The timeline and schedule of work is to be determined and subject to change. It includes:

- Completion of remediation work
- Ingestion of books and other materials into the library

## Other important components of the update confirmed the continued availability of materials and assistance of staff. It also provided an overview of our attempts to accommodate the needs of those who make direct use of Osler Library collections:

- **Osler's Circulating and Rare Collections:** Osler materials continue to be accessible. The Osler Library's circulating collection continues to be accessible by request. In January 2019, card key access to circulating collection materials was provided to members of the McGill community who need to access the

collection directly (e.g., SSOM faculty members, graduate students, and other students in history of medicine classes). Osler books can also be requested directly through the catalogue. It was determined that 600 volumes from the circulating collection have been damaged beyond repair; a further 800 need repair. In the meantime, circulating collection material that is unavailable on site can be requested by McGill students, faculty, and staff through Interlibrary Loans. ...Rare Osler items prior to 1840 and Robertson materials are currently available for review upon request on the 4th floor of the McLennan Library Building.

- **Osler staff members** continue to be based from the 4th floor of the McLennan Library Building (3459 McTavish Street) and are available to handle reference requests when possible. ...



Wellcome Camera, looking towards the Osler Room on 27 May. Compare with the image to the right, from 12 July.



The Wellcome Camera on 12 July 2019: Sir William Osler's 170th birthday and one day shy of the one-year anniversary of the fire.



The Osler Room on 8 July 2019, nearly one year after the fire. The lights have been replaced, the shelves and carpets cleaned. All work is now complete in the Osler Room, but it will remain sealed while restoration takes place immediately outside its doors, in the Wellcome Camera.

While the May 3 update was intended to provide general information and reassurance, our readership may be interested in additional key points that have been confirmed jointly by the Dean of Libraries and the Dean of Medicine:

### Key reiterations

- The Osler Room and its contents will be restored as they were before the fire
- All of the items that were part of Sir William Osler's bequest will be housed, as before, at the Osler Library within the McIntyre Medical Building

### Key additions

- Since the library shelving areas are being restored in a way that adheres to current Quebec building codes regarding accessibility, the library will lose a small amount of shelving space from the area that houses the circulating collection. Consequently, there are some decisions to make re: on-site collections. Here are some examples of the solutions under consideration, though it is important to note that all decisions will be made following a consultation period:

- The circulating collection is returning to the McIntyre; library staff will work with key users – particularly faculty and associates of the Social Studies of Medicine Department – to develop a plan whereby a certain number of materials will be housed off-site, but available by request. Examples: books that are readily accessible electronically, and journals for which digital editions exist, may be candidates for off-site shelving
- The library may create additional space for future growth by digitizing and putting into accessible storage certain large-run, recently acquired, collections of 19th century material

Evidence of the progress being made can be seen in photos of the Wellcome Camera. The shelving is being reinstalled, as is the panelling on the walls. Colleagues in Facilities have orchestrated meetings to discuss lighting as well as security cameras that meet much higher standards than did those damaged in the fire. Meanwhile, the Osler Room itself has been thoroughly cleaned and has had new lights installed. The carpet has recently been shampooed and for now the room rests, ready for the day that the books begin to return.

# Reflecting upon the centenary: looking forward and looking back

As is well known by followers of Sir William Osler, 29 December 2019 marks the centenary of Osler's death. The Osler Library is marking this year with appreciation and reflection. We intend for the autumn issue of the *Osler Library Newsletter* to be a bit different. Rather than focus on the current happenings at the library, we will be publishing a number of reflections upon Sir William Osler and the library he left to McGill.

At the library itself, we encourage visitors to write in the journal that we first introduced at the recent meeting of the American Osler Society. The idea is



for those who find meaning in the library itself, or in Sir William Osler's approach, to write their thoughts in the book. For those who cannot visit the library in person, we would encourage you to send us entries that we can keep with the book and enter into the Osler Library Archives when the journal is transferred there upon the conclusion of our commemorative activities.

If you wish to contribute thoughts to the next edition of the Newsletter or to the commemorative book (or, indeed, to both), please write to us by post or email: see contact information at the bottom of this page.

Two of the works that were on display for a pop-up exhibit assembled in conjunction with the conference, "Angelical Conjunctions: Crossroads of Religion and Medicine, 1200-1800," co-organized by Aslihan Gürbüz and Faith Wallis.

The Osler Library was originally slated to host the conference, but there was a change of venue due to uncertainty immediately following the fire. The library was the site of the keynote address and opening reception. The keynote speaker was Professor Lauren Kassell of the University of Cambridge, who spoke about her work on The Casebooks Project (<https://casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk/>) in a talk titled, "Universal Medicine: Lessons from Seventeenth Century England."



Abū Ma'shar.  
*Albumasar*  
*De magnis conjunctionibus: annorum revolutionibus: ac eorum prosectionibus: octo continens tractatus.* [Venice, 1515].  
A166a 1515  
Osler Room



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folio WZ 230  
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Osler Room



## THE OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

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