

A Tour of the Osler Library of the History of Medicine Through Jewish Eyes

By: EDWARD REICHMAN and ANNA DYSERT

This article is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Shlomo Sprecher, ז"ל, a past editor of Hakirah. Dr. Sprecher was a scholar of the highest order who possessed an unparalleled generosity of spirit. In addition to his medical practice, and his scholarship in the fields of both medicine and Jewish studies, Shlomo also had an interest and serious expertise in the field of Jewish medical history. His article on metzitzah be-peh is a classic, as is his book on the life and work of Mordechai Gumpel Schnaber. Both are referenced in the present article, which we dedicate to Shlomo's memory. We hope that this will be a fitting tribute and believe that not only would Shlomo have enjoyed this contribution, but his insights and erudition would have improved it significantly. May his neshamah have an aliyah, and may his memory be a blessing. He is sorely missed.

Introduction

In July of 2017, the organization Torah in Motion held a conference in Montreal, Canada, addressing the latest advances in medicine from the perspective of Jewish law and ethics.¹ As a supplement to the conference, and to provide some historical perspective, the authors organized a special tour of the Osler Library of the History of Medicine at McGill University, highlighting its relationship to Jews and their practice of medicine

¹ The conference was organized by Rabbi Jay Kelman and Dr. Lazer Friedman under the auspices of the organization Torah in Motion.

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throughout the centuries.² The library, opened in 1929, houses the collection of rare medical and scientific works donated by Sir William Osler, the renowned physician, professor and medical educator. It is one of the finest collections of its kind. The tour was attended by some eighty physicians and health care workers from across the United States and Canada. In this article, we recreate this tour, which explores the relationship of Sir William Osler and his magnificent collection to Jewish medical history. We hope that this exercise will give the reader an appreciation of a dimension of the Osler Library that has not previously been explored.

The Osler Library of the History of Medicine Through Jewish Eyes

Our tour follows the structure of the *Bibliotheca Osleriana*, the catalogue raisonné of Osler's collection. Osler himself began to catalogue his books in 1912 and, in 1914, classify them according to an eight-part scheme.³ We focus primarily on the first part, the *Bibliotheca Prima*, which covers, in a chronological fashion, famous medical personalities represented in the collection. These we relate to Jewish medical history. All numeric references are to the *Bibliotheca Osleriana*.⁴

Hippocrates

Our first stop on the tour is a copy of the first Greek printed edition of the collected works of Hippocrates, published in 1526.⁵ These works were in many cases recovered and then carefully edited by the Venetian scholar-

² For general discussions on Jewish medical history, see Harry Friedenwald, *The Jews and Medicine* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1944); Natalia Berger, *Jews and Medicine: Religion, Culture, Science* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996); Frank Heynick, *The Jews and Medicine: An Epic Saga* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishers, 2002). Authors who have contributed to this field include Zohar Amar, Ron Barkai, Kenneth Collins, John Efron, Gad Freudenthal, Sander Gilman, Solomon Kagan, Nathan Koren, Samuel Kottek (current editor of *Koroth*, a journal devoted to Jewish medical history), Tzvi Langermann, Julius Preuss, Joshua Leibowitz, David Margolit, Suessmann Muntner, Fred Rosner, David Ruderman, and Joseph Shatzmiller.

³ Peter McNally, Glenn Brown and Nicolas Savard, "Osler and Francis: Creating the Bibliotheca Osleriana," in *Sir William Osler: The Man and His Books*, ed. William Feindel, Elizabeth Maloney and Pamela Miller (Montreal: Osler Library of the History of Medicine, McGill University, 2011).

⁴ William Osler, *Bibliotheca Osleriana: A Catalogue of Books Illustrating the History of Medicine and Science* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, University Press, 1969).

⁵ Hippocrates. *Ἀπαντα τὰ τοῦ Ἱπποκράτους. Omnia opera Hippocratis*. (Venetiis: In ædibus Aldi & Andreae Asulani, 1526) B.O. 142.

printer Aldo Manuzio with Franciscus Asulanus. The Jewish physicians of the Middle Ages, as all physicians of the Western world, used the corpus of Hippocratic writings as a staple of medical training.⁶ The widespread use of Hippocratic works by the Jewish community is reflected in holdings of the Cambridge Genizah collection. The Cairo Genizah is a repository of hundreds of thousands of Hebrew manuscript fragments that were disposed of, per Jewish religious dictates, by deposition in the attic of the old synagogue of Fostat.⁷ The documents span roughly 1000 years from 800–1800. While the Genizah was generally for disposal of religious documents, many of a non-religious nature are also found there. A perusal of the medical fragments of the Cambridge Genizah reveals close to one hundred examples of the Hippocratic works in Judeo-Arabic or Hebrew translation.⁸

Maimonides (see below), amongst his other medical works, devoted an entire book to a commentary on the works of Hippocrates. This is extant today. Maimonides' medical works were written in Arabic and have been translated into Hebrew⁹ and English.¹⁰

Isaac Israeli¹¹

We present the work of a Jewish physician who wrote in Arabic, but whose texts are found in Latin and Hebrew translation: Isaac Israeli (Isaac ben Solomon, also known as Isaac Judaeus). The medical texts of Isaac,

⁶ Samuel Kottke, "Critical edition of Hippocrates' Aphorisms, translated into Hebrew by J. S. Delmedigo (1591–1655), sections VI–VIII," *Koroth* 7:11–12 (June, 1980), 764–94; Samuel Kottke, Joshua Leibowitz and Benjamin Richler, "A 15th Century Manuscript of A Hebrew Paraphrase of the Hippocratic Oath," *Med. Hist.* 22(1978), 438–445.

⁷ For a history of the Cairo Genizah, see Adina Hoffman, *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza* (Schoken Books, 2011).

⁸ Haskel D. Isaacs, *Medical and Para-Medical Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). The Cambridge Library possesses only a portion of the entire Genizah. There are Genizah fragments found in many libraries across the world. The entire corpus of Genizah fragments is being systematically digitized by the Friedberg Genizah Project. See fjms.genizah.org (accessed July 18, 2017).

⁹ Suessmann Muntner, a Jewish medical historian, authored an academic Hebrew translation of Maimonides' medical works.

¹⁰ Fred Rosner, a Jewish medical ethicist and historian, translated the works of Maimonides into English. Gerrit Bos has produced academic, annotated English translations of many of the works of Maimonides.

¹¹ Kenneth Collins, Samuel Kottke and Helena Paavilainen, eds., *Isaac Israeli: The Philosopher Physician* (Jerusalem: Muriel and Philip Berman Library of Hebrew University, 2015).

who lived from 855 to either 932 or 955 CE and practiced mostly in Kairouan, span a range of subject matter from prognostics to therapeutics. They are widely found in Western Europe by the mid-12th century, forming part of the canon of medical instruction in the medieval university. The Latin versions of Isaac's dietetics work, the Universal Diets and Particular Diets, make up the third portion of Osler manuscript BO 7626. This 13th-century manuscript contains copies of three medical texts. First is the *Viaticum* of ibn al-Jazzar, translated by Constantine the African. This is in fact among the texts that were misattributed to Isaac throughout the Renaissance. The text is a book of medicine for travelers and is organized in the traditional *a capite ad calcem* (head to feet) order. Following this are three leaves containing a medical glossary. There is no title, nor attribution, just an A–Z list of foreign medical terminology in transliterated Arabic or Greek and their Latin translation. Following this, Isaac's *Dietae universales* present the theoretical principles for selecting food for the purpose of conserving health and curing disease, while the *Dietae particulares* are divided up into categories based on more specific food groups or items, including grains, vegetables, water, land, and air animals, and drinks.

Avicenna

The next item on display is B.O. 462, a beautifully illustrated copy of *Al-Qanun fi al-Tibb* (the Canon of Medicine) by Persian physician and polymath Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Sīnā, known to the west as Avicenna (ca. 980–1037). This manuscript of the *Canon* was produced in India in 1567 CE. It was copied from an exemplar dated 1180 or 1199, but according to the manuscript, Book 2 of the text was copied from an exemplar that was copied from Ibn Sīnā's own autograph version.¹²

Avicenna's *Canon* took its place alongside Hippocrates and Galen in the medical curriculum of the later Middle Ages. It remains one of the most embracing texts and medical manuals to have been produced. Avicenna drew on both Aristotle's and Galen's scholarship, synthesizing their work with clarity. The resulting medical compendium is often described as the "summa of all the medical knowledge of Ibn Sīnā's time."¹³ The

¹² Faith Wallis, "The Prince of Medicine," in *75 Books from the Osler Library*, ed. Faith Wallis and Pamela Miller (Montreal: Osler Library, McGill University, 2004), 10.

¹³ (EI2 III, p. 942).

Canon, like the works of Hippocrates and Galen before it, was translated into Hebrew. A magnificent illuminated Hebrew manuscript of Avicenna's *Canon* resides in the University Library of Bologna, and the *Canon* is the only extant Hebrew medical incunable (Naples, 1491).¹⁴

Maimonides

Maimonides is one of the greatest figures in all of Jewish history, and in the narrower field of Jewish medical history, more has been written about him than any other Jewish physician. In his essay on Israel and medicine, William Osler called Maimonides “the Prince among Jewish physicians.”

The McGill University Libraries contain a number of rare works of Maimonides, and the Osler Library possesses two of them¹⁵- the incunabulum (this term refers to printed books before 1500), *De regimine sanitatis ad Soldanum Babyloniae* (Florence: Jacobus de Ripoli, ca. 1481), B.O. 196, and the *Praefatio Rabi Moysis Maimonidis ... in aeditionem moralem seniorum Mas-sebeth Avoth* printed in Bologna by H. de Benedictis, in 1526 (B.O. 5111). The 1481 text is the first Latin edition of Maimonides' “On the regimen of health” (Fi tadbir al-ṣiḥḥah), originally written in 1190s as a customized health regimen for the Sultan Al Malik Al Afdal, the oldest son of Saladin the Great.¹⁶ It was translated from its original Arabic into Hebrew in 1244 and from Hebrew into Latin by Jewish convert Johannes de Capua. It was printed in 1481 in a Dominican convent of Florence, perhaps in response to an outbreak of plague that occurred in the city that summer.

The latter is the Latin translation, by Jacob Mantino, of the introduction to the tractate “*Avoth*” of Maimonides' commentary on the Mishnah.¹⁷ Mantino, a Jewish scholar and Italian physician, was well respected in the court of Pope Clement VII and served as the personal physician to Pope Paul III (see below regarding the Popes and Jewish physicians). He translated many Hebrew works into Latin, including the example in the Osler

¹⁴ See Gad Freudenthal and Mauro Zonta, “Avicenna Among Medieval Jews: The Reception of Avicenna's Philosophical, Scientific and Medical Writings in Jewish Cultures, East and West,” *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 22(2010), 217–287. Multiple Hebrew manuscripts of Avicenna are also found in the Cambridge Genizah. See H. D. Isaacs, op. cit.

¹⁵ See Goldie Sigal, “Moses Maimonides: His Works and the McGill Collection,” *Fontanus* 1(1998), 84–94.

¹⁶ Fred Rosner, “Moses Maimonides: Biographic Outlines,” *Rambam Maimonides Medical Journal*, vol. 1, no. 1 (July 2010): 5.

¹⁷ Known in Hebrew as the *Shemonah Perakim* (Eight Chapters), it is a philosophical and ethical treatise in which Maimonides seeks to harmonize Jewish tradition with Aristotelian ethics.

Library. He is perhaps better known for his involvement in the affairs of Henry VIII, who sought advice from many, including the Jewish community, regarding the permissibility of divorcing his wife Catherine. Mantino sided against Henry VIII, which invoked the ire of a number of his colleagues and peers.

In addition to his philosophical, Jewish legal and medical works, most physicians are familiar with what is known as the prayer of Maimonides. Modern research has revealed that this prayer was indeed not written by Maimonides, but by Marcus Herz, a prominent 18th century Jewish physician who was a student of Emanuel Kant and a friend of Moses Mendelssohn.¹⁸ Osler was unsure of the prayer's attribution and inquired of the Chief Rabbi of England as to its origins. Osler B.O. 5114 contains the response of Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz (unrelated to Marcus Herz) to Osler's query confirming that in fact Herz was the author.¹⁹

Andreas Vesalius

Osler B.O. 567 is a first edition of *De humani corporis fabrica*. Vesalius intersects with the Jews in a number of ways, the most obvious being the presence of Hebrew terms in his *Fabrica*.²⁰ A long-bearded figure on the frontispiece, wearing a characteristically Jewish (Fez-like) hat, has been identified as Lazarus di Frigies, the person who assisted Vesalius with the Hebrew terminology in the *Fabrica*.²¹ In addition, a remarkable manuscript now housed in the University of Pennsylvania attests to the challenges faced by the Jewish students matriculating into the University of Padua in the 16th century. It is a Yiddish translation of the anatomical work of Vesalius. Jewish students coming from Poland and Germany, who were not fluent in Latin or Italian, would have used this to study for their anatomy course.²² Finally, we draw your attention to the historiated large letter "I"

¹⁸ See Fred Rosner, "The Physician's Prayer Attributed to Moses Maimonides," *Bull. of the Hist. of Med.* 41:5(1967), 440–457.

¹⁹ Marcus Herz and William W. Golden, *Maimonides' Prayer for Physicians* (1900).

²⁰ For a survey of the relationship between Vesalius and the Jews, see Edward Reichman, "The Anatomy of Halacha' in Yitzchak Steinberg, (ed.), *Berakha Le-Avraham: A Collection of Articles in Honor of Rabbi Professor Avraham Steinberg's Sixtieth Birthday* (Jerusalem, 2008), 69–97, esp. 71–77.

²¹ On Frigies, see Michael Nevins and Jay Levine, "A Face in the Crowd: Vesalius' Jewish Friend," *Koroth* 23(2015-2016), 237–256.

²² http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/medren/pageturn.html?id=MEDREN_5809102&rotation=0¤tpage=1, (accessed July 17, 2017).

depicting a scene interpreted by Levine to reflect the grave robbing of a body from the Jewish cemetery.²³

Diploma of a Medical Graduate of the University of Padua (1664)

Vesalius taught at the University of Padua. Padua holds a special place in Jewish medical history, as it is the first university to formally open its doors to Jewish medical students in the Middle Ages.²⁴

B.O. 7543 is the diploma of Joannes Nolto, conferring upon him the degree of doctor of philosophy and medicine from the University of Padua in 1664.²⁵ It represents a typical Renaissance diploma of Northern Italy, with its magnificent illustration. The diplomas of Jewish medical graduates from Padua reveal some textual differences.²⁶ For example, while the standard diploma began with the invocation, *In Christi Nomine Amen*, the diplomas of the Jewish graduates were amended out of religious tolerance to read *In Dei Aeterni Nomine Amen*.²⁷

William Harvey

B.O. 692 is the first edition of Harvey's groundbreaking work on the circulation of the blood, *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis* (1628). Some authors have suggested that allusions to the notion of circulation appear in

²³ Jay Levine, "Jewish History in Vesalius's Fabrica," <http://jmlevinemd.com/jewish-history-vesalius-fabrica/>, (accessed July 17, 2017).

²⁴ For discussion and literature on the University of Padua and the Jews, see Edward Reichman, "The Valmadonna Trust Broadside Collection and a Virtual Reunion of the Jewish Medical Students of Padua," *Verapo Yerapei: Journal of Torah and Medicine of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine Synagogue* 7(2017), 55–76.

²⁵ The library possesses a number of other original Padua diplomas from this time, as well as a facsimile copy of the medical diploma of William Harvey, also a graduate of the University of Padua. Joseph Frank Payne, *Notes to accompany a facsimile reproduction of the diploma of Doctor of Medicine granted by the University of Padua to William Harvey 1602* (London: Privately printed at the Chiswick Press, 1908).

²⁶ The Osler Library has no examples of such diplomas. On the original tour, the author (ER) exhibited examples from his collection.

²⁷ For discussion of the Jewish medical diploma of Padua, see Harry Friedenwald, "The Diploma of a Jewish Graduate of Medicine of the University of Padua in 1695," in his *The Jews and Medicine* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1944), 253–262. For a more expansive discussion of this subject, see Edward Reichman, "Confessions of a Would-Be Forger: The Medical Diploma of Tobias Cohn (Tuvia HaRofeh) and Other Jewish Medical Graduates of the University of Padua," in press.

rabbinic sources that predate Harvey.²⁸ The first explicit mention of Harvey's work in Jewish literature was by Tobias Cohen (AKA Tuvia Katz or Tuvia Ha-Rofeh), a fellow alumnus of Harvey's from the University of Padua Medical School, in his *Ma'aseh Tuvia* (1708).²⁹

Albrecht Haller

Haller, the father of modern physiology, taught at the University of Gottingen in Germany. The first Jew to attend this university was Benjamin Wolf Gintzburger, who completed his dissertation of Biblical and Talmudic medicine in 1743.³⁰ In Haller's work *Bibliotheca Anatomica*, he

²⁸ Joshua Leibowitz, "Harvean allusions in Hebrew medicine," (Hebrew) *Ha-Rofeh ha-Ivri* 2(1957), 74–79; David Margalit, "Sparks of the idea of circulation in ancient sources," (Hebrew) *Ha-Rofeh ha-Ivri* 2(1957), 79–88; Elinor Leibor, "A Medieval Hebrew Presage of the Circulation of the Blood, Based on Biblical and Talmudic Concepts," *Koroth* 9:1–2(1985), 157–163.

²⁹ On Cohen and his work, see A. Levinson, "A Medical Cyclopedist of the Seventeenth Century," *Bull. of the Soc. of Med. Hist.* (January 1917): 27–44; D.A. Friedman, *Tuviab Ha-Rofeh* (Palestine Jewish Medical Association, 1940); M.J. Mahler, *A Precursor of the Jewish Enlightenment: Dr. Tobias Cohen and his Ma'aseh Tuvia* (unpublished thesis for ordination, Hebrew Union College, 1978); Nigel Allan, "Illustrations from the Wellcome Institute Library: A Jewish Physician in the Seventeenth Century," *Med. Hist.* 28 (1984): 324–8; David Ruderman, "On the Diffusion of Scientific Knowledge within the Jewish Community: The Medical Textbook of Tobias Cohen," in *Jewish Thought and Scientific Discovery in Early Modern Europe* (New haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 229–55; Shaul G. Massry, et. al., "Jewish Medicine and the University of Padua: Contribution of the Padua Graduate Toviah Cohen to Nephrology," *Amer. J. of Nephrol.* 19:2 (1999): 213–21; Etienne Lepicard, "An Alternative to the Cosmic and Mechanic Metaphors for the Human Body? The House Illustration in *Ma'aseh Tuviyah* (1708)," *Med. Hist.* 52 (2008): 93–105. See also *Koroth* 20 (2009–2010), in which five articles are devoted to Tobias Cohen and his *Ma'aseh Tuviab*. On the relationship between Cohen and the Jerusalem physician R. Dr. David De Silva, as well as for information about Cohen's death, see Zohar Amar, *Pri Megadim by Rabbi David de Silva, Physician of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Tzvi Press, 2003), 41–45.

³⁰ On Gintzburger and his dissertation, see, Francis Schiller, "Benjamin Wolff Gintzburger's Dissertation on Talmudic Medicine," *Koroth* 9:7–8 (Fall 1988), 579–600; N. M. Gelber, "History of Jewish Physicians in Poland in the Eighteenth Century," (Hebrew) in Y. Tirosh, ed., *Shai Le-Yeshayahu: Sefer Yovel Le-Rav Yehoshua Wolfsberg*, (*Ha-Mercaz le-Tarbut shel ha-Po'el ha-Mizrachi*; Tel Aviv, 5716), 347–371, esp. 356; *Koroth* 9 (Special Issue, 1988) [Proceedings of the Third Symposium on Medicine in the Bible and Talmud], 255–261; John Efron, *Medicine and the German Jews: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 190–197.

includes a passage on medicine from the Talmud, drawing heavily from Gintzburger's dissertation, which he references multiple times.³¹

Giovanni Battista Morgagni

Morgagni, the father of modern pathology, was professor and later president of the University of Padua. As such, he likely interacted with many of the Jewish students who attended during his tenure. The diploma of the Jewish student Cervo (AKA Naftali) Conigliano bears Morgagni's signature.³²

The medical consultations of Morgagni, which have been published, include a number of consultations with Rabbi Dr. Isaac Lampronti concerning the latter's challenging medical cases.³³ Lampronti was a prominent rabbi and physician who authored the first Jewish legal encyclopedia, entitled *Pachad Yitzchak*.

Papal Bull

This Papal Bull by Pope Gregory XIII, published in 1584 (B.O. 2827) reaffirmed and expanded the ban on the practice of medicine by Jews and added punishment for Christians who availed themselves of the services of Jewish physicians.³⁴ Such decrees were common and perpetuated for many centuries. Despite these decrees, many popes had Jewish physicians on their medical staff.³⁵ The Jews played a key role in the transmission of

³¹ Albrecht von Haller, *Bibliotheca anatomica, qua scripta ad anatomen et physiologiam facientia a rerum initiis recensentur* (Figuri, 1774–1777), Osler Room ZQS 1 H185 1774.

³² This diploma is housed in the New York Academy of Medicine, and I thank Arlene Shaner, Historical Collections Librarian of the Academy, for kindly providing me with a copy of the diploma. For discussion of this diploma and its graduate, see, Bruno Kisch, "Cervo Conigliano: A Jewish Graduate of Padua in 1743," *J. of the Hist. of Med.* 4(1949), 450–459.

³³ Saul Jarcho, ed. and trans., *The Clinical Consultations of Giambattista Morgagni: The Edition of Enrico Benassi (1935)* (Charlottesville: Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine; Distributed by the University Press of Virginia, 1984).

³⁴ *Litterae S.D.N. D. Gregorii Papae XIII innouationis constitutionum Pauli Quarti, & Pij Quinti, contra medicos Haebreos: et illarum extensionis ad eos qui medicos Haebreos, vel infideles ad Christianorum curam vocant, admittunt, vel eisdem medendi licentiam concedunt* (Roma: Per gli heredi d'Antonio Blado, 1584).

³⁵ See Harry Friedenwald, "Jewish Physicians in Italy: Their Relationship to the Papal and Italian States," in his *The Jews and Medicine* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1944), 551–612; J. Pines, "Des Medecins Juifs au Service de la Papaute du XII au XVII Siecle," *Le Scalpel* 114 (May 1961), 462–470; Edwin Mendelsohn, *The Popes' Jewish Physicians* (self-publication, 1991).

medical knowledge throughout history due to their translations of Greco-Roman and other medical texts, often from Arabic into Latin. As a result, Jews were to some extent considered the bearers of the medical tradition, despite being the victims of unabashed anti-Semitism. This experience of being simultaneously revered and reviled was the reality of the pre-modern Jewish physician.

One Jewish physician, David De Pomis (1525–1593), personally experienced this paradox. After the Papal Bull of Pope Paul IV in 1555, which severely restricted Jewish religious practice and relations with Christians, De Pomis was forced to leave his home and medical practice. While this decree was later relaxed, allowing him to treat Duke Nicholas Orsini and the ruling Sforza family, De Pomis spent the rest of his life alternating between periods of being oppressed and tolerated. Indeed, the very Papal Bull of Gregory XIII on display led De Pomis to compose a defense of Jewish physicians, *De Medico Hebraeo Apologica* (Venice, 1588).³⁶

Our tour was privileged to learn firsthand how this landscape has changed in the 21st century. Present for our tour and a lecturer at the conference was Rabbi Dr. Avraham Steinberg, Director of the Medical Ethics Unit in Shaare Zedek Medical Center (Jerusalem), a world-renowned author and expert on Jewish medical ethics, who just weeks earlier was “openly” appointed by Pope Francis to the Pontifical Academy of Life, which exists for the promotion and defense of life. This is the first time a Jew has ever been appointed to the Academy.

William Hunter

Hunter was one of the most outstanding obstetricians and anatomists of his day. Joseph Hart Myers, whose father was the sexton of the Great Synagogue of London, was a student of Hunter in London.³⁷ Joseph’s father was instrumental in the capture of a famous Jewish criminal, Levi Weil (purportedly a physician, graduate of Leiden, though no record exists). Weil was sentenced to death and his body was given by the courts to William Hunter to dissect for his anatomy lectures, a common practice

³⁶ On De Pomis and his work, see Harry Friedenwald, *The Jews and Medicine* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1944), 31-53.

³⁷ Stephen Massil, “Naphtali Hart Myers (1711–1788): New Yorker and Londoner,” *Jewish Hist. Stud.* 43(2011), 97–124, esp. 118–123; *idem*, “Dr. Joseph Hart Myers (1758–1823) and his Family: Public Prominence and Private Losses,” *ibid.* 44(2012), 179–199.

of the day.³⁸ It has been suggested that the young Myers met, or was exposed to, Hunter for the first time through this episode.

John Hunter

John, William's younger brother, was one of the most distinguished scientists and surgeons of his day. Mordechai Gumpel Schnaber was a Jewish medical student of his.³⁹ In fact, Schnaber dedicated one of medical works to his former professor (*Das Blut*, 1782). He also acknowledges Hunter in his Hebrew commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes.⁴⁰ In addition to his medical accomplishments, Schnaber wrote the first exposition of Newtonian physics in Hebrew.⁴¹

Edward Jenner

Rabbi Israel Lipschutz (1782–1860), in his commentary on the Mishnah (*Avot*, Chapter 3), refers to Edward Jenner as being one of the great sages of the world for his contributions to the treatment of smallpox. Some members of the anti-vaccination movement incorporated anti-Semitic ideas into their literature, claiming that Jenner was colluding with the Jews to impose this destructive drug onto the populace. It is also noteworthy that a painting of the biblical scene of the golden calf appears in the background of James Gilray's famous anti-vaccination satire, "The Wonderful Effects of the new Inoculation."⁴²

³⁸ Simon David John Chaplin, "John Hunter and the 'Museum Oeconomy', 1750–1800," (Ph.D. diss., King's College, London, 2009).

³⁹ Dr. George Levison, *Selected Works of Mordechai Gumpel Schnaber Halevi 1741–1797* (with an introductory essay by Shlomo and Mati Sprecher on the life and times of the author) (self-publication, 1995), available on Hebrewbooks.org. See also, Heinz M. Graupe, "Mordechai Shnaber-Levison: The Life, Works and Thoughts of a Haskalah Outsider," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 41:1(1996), 3–20; Moshe Pelli, "Mordechai Gumpel Schnaber: The First Religious Reform Theoretician of the Hebrew Haskalah in Germany," *Jewish Quarterly Review, New Series* 64:4(April 1974), 289–313.

⁴⁰ *Tokbat Megullab* (Hamburg, 1783), 3b.

⁴¹ *Ma'amar ba-Torah ve-ba-Hokbmab* (London, 1771).

⁴² See Lisa Epstein, "Modern Medicine Indicted: Anti-Jewish Iconography and Jenner's Smallpox Vaccine," unpublished manuscript.

Louis Pasteur

A Jewish scientist who worked with Pasteur at his institute in Paris once asked him about the medical ramifications of one aspect of the circumcision ceremony. It was customary to perform oral suction (*metzitzah be-peh*) on the wound after the incision for circumcision was made. He asked Pasteur if the *mohel* (ritual circumciser) could be harmed thereby, possibly contracting disease. Pasteur performed research on the disease of rabies, for which wound suction was a commonly recommended therapy.⁴³ In the modern era, there are discussions as to whether the child may contract disease (e.g., herpes) from the *mohel* as a result of *metzitzah*.⁴⁴

Rudolf Virchow

Virchow is considered the father of modern pathology. One of Virchow's students was Julius Preuss. Preuss had the distinction of receiving the highest marks on Virchow's exams and the latter commented on the quality of his medical thinking.⁴⁵ Preuss was also a Talmudic scholar and went on to write *Biblische Talmudische Medizin*, discussing all the medical passages in the Talmud and related rabbinic literature. This work, which has been translated into English by Dr. Fred Rosner, is found in the Osler collection (B.O. 84).

There are a number of Jewish personalities in the modern era that are represented in the collection as well.

Paul Ehrlich

The Nobel Laureate was Jewish, but other lesser-known Jewish physicians, whose works appear in the Osler Library deserve mention.

David Macht (B.O. 5442 and 6160)

Macht graduated Johns Hopkins Medical School in 1905. He wrote his senior thesis on Maimonides, in commemoration of the 700th anniversary of his death, and presented it at the meeting of the Johns Hopkins Historical Club, of which William Osler was president, on December 11,

⁴³ See *ha-Meilitz* 17:29 (October 1899).

⁴⁴ For a medical historical analysis of the *metzitzah* controversy over the centuries, Shlomo Sprecher, "Mezizah be-Peh—Therapeutic Touch or Hippocratic Vestige?" *Hakirah* 3(2006), 15–53.

⁴⁵ See David Macht, "Dr. Julius Preuss," *Bull. of the Johns Hopkins Hosp.* 25:277 (March, 1914).

1905.⁴⁶ Other presenters that day included Dr. William Welch, the founder of John Hopkins Medical School, and Dr. Harvey Cushing, the father of modern neurosurgery. The essay was subsequently published in the Johns Hopkins Hospital Bulletin.⁴⁷ Remarkably, in his published essay, Macht provides the Hebrew date for the completion of the thesis, *Kislev* 8, 5666, and adds a Hebrew phrase as a postscript (which I suspect was no small feat to convince the editor to include)⁴⁸:

תם ונשלם שבח לקל בורא עולם

The work is completed, praise to the creator of the world.

Macht, who later taught at Yeshiva University, wrote extensively on the relationship of pharmacology and rabbinic literature, including an entire treatise of the botanical and pharmacological aspects of the holy incense of the Temple.⁴⁹

Charles David Spivak

Spivak, whose encyclopedia entry on Medicine in the Bible and Talmud is found in the library (86), graduated Jefferson Medical College in 1890.⁵⁰ His thesis on the topic of menstruation in medical and rabbinic literature won first prize and was published in a medical journal.⁵¹ The command of the English language and literary talent that is reflected in this essay is striking given that English was not Spivak's first language. He founded

⁴⁶ Trans. of the Johns Hopkins Hosp. Hist. Club (December 11, 1905).

⁴⁷ 187 (October 1906), 332-337.

⁴⁸ In 1978, Isaac Bashevis Singer received the Nobel Prize for Literature. This led The New York Times to place Yiddish text on Page 1, for the first time ever. See John Vinocur, "Singer, in His Nobel Lecture, Hails Yiddish," *New York Times* (December 9, 1978), A1. For a behind-the-scenes look at how Yiddish made its way onto the front page of The New York Times, see Janet Hadda, *Isaac Bashevis Singer: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 176. I thank Menachem Butler for these references.

⁴⁹ David Wilk composed a brief bio-bibliography of Macht's medical historical contributions that was published in *Koroth* 8:7-8 (August 1983), 305-317.

⁵⁰ On Spivak, see Jeanne Abrams, *Dr. Charles Spivak: A Jewish Immigrant and the American Tuberculosis Movement* (Denver: University Press of Colorado, 2009).

⁵¹ *Times and Register: Weekly J. of Med. and Surg. Sci.* (January to July, 1891).

the National Jewish Hospital for the Treatment of Consumptives in Denver, which provided kosher food for its Jewish patients, and wrote numerous articles on the relationship of Judaism and medicine.⁵²

Harry Friedenwald

Friedenwald was an ophthalmologist on faculty at Johns Hopkins and was contemporary with Osler. Friedenwald was in essence the Osler of Jewish medical history,⁵³ spending his life amassing an extraordinary collection of rare books relating to the Jews and medicine. Indeed, they served together on the Johns Hopkins Historical Club, with Osler as president and Friedenwald as secretary. Perhaps they shared the same antiquarian booksellers, or even bid against each other on the same items at auction. Friedenwald's collected essays on Jewish medical history are a classic to this day. His *Jewish Luminaries in Medical History*, a catalogue of the works in his library, is the Jewish analogue to *Bibliotheca Osleriana*. Friedenwald bequeathed his library to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

We conclude with the words of Osler himself regarding the Jews and medicine:

I have always had a warm affection for my Jewish students, and it has been one of the special pleasures of my life the friendships I have made with them. Their success has always been the just reward of earnestness and tenacity of purpose and devotion to high ideals of science; and, I may add, a dedication of themselves as practitioners to everything that could promote the welfare of their patients. In the medical profession the Jews had a long and honorable record, and among no people is all that is best in our science and art more warmly appreciated; none in the community take more to heart the admonition of the son of Sirach- "Give place to the physician, let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him."⁵⁴

There is much more in the Osler Library collection beyond the *Bibliotheca Prima* which relates to Jewish medical history, but as the library is closing and our tour must come to an end, we shall leave the remaining sections of the *Bibliotheca Osleriana* for another time.

⁵² For a discussion of Spivak's article in JAMA on Talmudic anatomy, see Edward Reichman, "The Anatomy of Prayer," in *Mitoch HaObel: Tefillab*, ed. Daniel Z. Feldman and Stuart W. Halperin (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 2014), 37–52.

⁵³ On Friedenwald, see Alexandra L. Levin, *Vision: A Biography of Harry Friedenwald* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1964).

⁵⁴ William Osler, "Israel and Medicine," *Can. Med. Assoc. J.* 4(1913), 729–733.

Postscript:

As a token of appreciation to Anna Dysert and the library for the tour, the Torah in Motion organization donated a volume to the library entitled, “In The Pathways of Maimonides: Studies in Maimonides, Medical Ethics, and Jewish Law: A Tribute to Dr. Fred Rosner.” The book, co-edited by Rabbi Dr. Steinberg and Rabbi Dr. Reichman (both in attendance at the tour), as well as Dr. Kenneth Collins, is dedicated to Dr. Fred Rosner, a world-renowned Jewish medical ethicist, Jewish medical historian, and Maimonides scholar, who has also amassed one of the greatest collections of the works of Maimonides. His collection now resides in the Maimonides Institute in Haifa. 