

2. The Letters

*Singer to Sigerist, Oxford, 10 March 1920*¹

My dear Sir,

Many thanks for your letter of March 6 which I was very glad to have. You shall certainly have photographs of the work of Heliodoros² and I will arrange for them to be taken at once. I am of course very pleased to help you in any way I can, and much look forward to seeing your edition of this work.³

I am examining the two Hunterian MSS. and hope to publish a full account of them. I am therefore especially pleased that you are throwing light on this particular section. As you are working on somewhat similar lines to myself, perhaps you would be good enough to tell me which of the other MSS. you propose to publish. I ask this so that I may avoid working on the same, because I am going through all the early pre-Constantine MSS. in this country. I do not of course wish to begin on any to which you are applying yourself.

I am delighted to be of service to you and to hear of the advancement of our studies in Switzerland and of the news of my friend Klebs.⁴

Yours sincerely,
Charles Singer

Are there good modern Catalogues of the libraries at St. Gallen & Einsiedeln?⁵ If so can you give me their authors & publishers & dates?

C.S.

I shall be glad to hear from you again. The Catalogue of MSS is now complete but the question of printing is a serious one.⁶ I think we shall bring it out in sections. But it is always open for any one to use. You may care to see my wives [sic] account of it which I send in another envelope.

As regards Galen. My idea is to have a translation of the more important works into English & an abstract of the less important. I am waiting until the Corpus Medicorum Graecorum has progressed a little.

I am interested to hear that you study [studied?] at University College, London. I have recently been appointed lecturer on the History of Medicine there.⁷ I expect you know Prof. Priebisch – the Professor of German there – who recently published an interesting Low German medical text.⁸

¹This may have been the answer to Sigerist's first letter to Singer. The letter-head reads "Westbury Lodge, Norham Road, Oxford". Sigerist's letters of these years are missing, probably because he had not yet made copies of them.

²Heliodoros, a surgeon of the first century AD; see Guy Sabbah, Pierre-Paul Corsetti and Klaus-Dietrich Fischer, *Bibliographie des Textes médicaux latins. Antiquité et haut moyen Age*, Centre Jean-Palmerne, Mémoires 6, (Saint-Étienne: Université de Saint-Étienne, 1987), no. 310, p.93. The photos Sigerist was looking for were those of Glasgow, Hunterian T.4.13 (96), stated note 3, p.145 of Henry E. Sigerist, 'Die "Lecciones Heliodori"', *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin*, 1921, 13: 145–156. Recent research suggests that neither tract is in any way genuine.

³ Henry E. Sigerist, 'Die "Cirurgia Eliodori"', *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin*, 1920, **12**: 1–9 and Sigerist (1921). Sigerist and Singer both worked on medical manuscripts of Antiquity and early Middle Ages.

⁴ Arnold C. Klebs (1870–1943) son of the pathologist Edwin Klebs, physician and medical historian in the U.S. and Switzerland; after WWI he lived in Nyon on Lake Geneva. See Leona Baumgartner, 'Arnold Carl Klebs, 1870–1943', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1943, **14**: 201–216.

⁵ Swiss monasteries with famous libraries.

⁶ This possibly refers to the card catalogue of pre-1600 Western scientific manuscripts created by Singer's wife, Dorothea Waley Singer: *Catalogue of Latin and vernacular alchemical manuscripts in Great Britain and Ireland dating from before the XVI Century*, 3 vols (Brussels: Lamertin, 1928–1931). The card catalogue is now held in the British Library.

⁷ Sigerist had studied Oriental Languages at University College in 1911.

⁸ Robert Priebisch (1866–1935), German scholar; see *The Times*, May 28, 1935; p.21; *ibid*, May 29, 1935, p.16; *ibid*, May 31, 1935; p.21 and H. Menhardt, 'Robert Priebisch', *Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift*, 1936, **24**: 144–8. For a portrait see Negley Harte and John North, *The world of University College, London, 1828–1978* (London: University College, 1978), 153.

2

Singer to Sigerist, Oxford, 22 March 1920

Dear Dr. Sigerist,

Many thanks for your letter of March 17th. Could you give me the name of a reliable bookseller in Switzerland as I should like to order catalogues of the old Swiss libraries?

I am glad to have the list of the MSS. on which you are working. London, Harleian 5792, f. 273–276 I have already transcribed and was about to publish. I will, however, carefully keep off the others. I am glad you are dealing with the Hunterian material and I will not discuss the part that you are investigating in my account of them except in a few lines and will mention that you have the matter in hand.¹

Yours sincerely,
Charles Singer

The Hunterian MS is being photographed for you & you will have them in a few days.
C.S.

¹ The two scholars' work on medieval manuscripts required careful demarcation to avoid any conflict; see the correspondence between Sigerist and Klebs in 1923, in Marcel H. Bickel (ed.), *Henry E. Sigerist: Vier ausgewählte Briefwechsel mit Medizinhistorikern der Schweiz* (Bern, 2008).

3

Singer to Sigerist, Oxford, 1 June 1920

Dear Dr. Sigerist,

Very many thanks for those reprints which I am exceedingly glad to have, especially the one on Heliodorus.¹ I trust that you found the rotographs satisfactory.²

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Charles Singer

¹ See letter 1 and Sigerist (1920).

² Rotograph, a process of photogravure.

4

Singer to Sigerist, Oxford, 10 September 1920

My dear Dr. Sigerist,

Very many thanks for Overbeck's delightful book.¹ I am really very much obliged to you for it. But you have not or rather the bookseller has not sent me the bill. Do please ask him to do so.

I am for the next two years president of the Historical Section of the Royal Society of Medicine. If you have any thing suitable for them I hope you will send it to me & I will endeavour to get it printed. You know what the difficulties of printing now are but I would do my best, & I should like, if possible, to have something from your pen.

We are preparing a scheme for a meeting, symposium, summer school or whatever you like to call it, next August on the History of Science, probably in Oxford. It would be pleasant if you were able to come.

Klebs paid us a flying visit the other day; I wish it could have been a longer one.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Charles Singer

¹ Probably Franz Overbeck, *Vorgeschichte und Jugend der mittelalterlichen Scholastik* (Basel, 1917).

5

Singer to Sigerist, Oxford, 8 October 1920

My dear Dr. Sigerist,

Many thanks for your letter of 2.10.20.

I am much looking forward to having an article from you & I will do my very best to get it printed. If you can send me anything that bears definitely on the History of Science (in the restricted sense) I can guarantee publication because I have full control of the "Studies".¹ But with [the History of] Medicine there is some times difficult [sic]. Still I have every hope that all difficulties will be overcome & that we shall not have to reduce our publication[.]

I wish I had been able to see Sudhoff again.² I am much looking forward to his & Meyer-Steineg's book.³ Is it out yet?

I enclose cheque for 7 francs for the Overbeck. Are you sure that is enough[?]

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Charles Singer

¹ Charles Singer (ed.), *Studies in the history and method of science*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917–1921).

² Karl Sudhoff (1853–1938) medical historian in Leipzig, Singer and Sigerist's mentor. See Henry E. Sigerist, 'Karl Sudhoff 1853–1938', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1939, 7 (2): 801–804; and Henry E. Sigerist (ed), 'A celebration of the eightieth birthday of Professor Karl Sudhoff', *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine*, 1934, 2: 1–25.

³ Theodor Meyer-Steineg and Karl Sudhoff, *Geschichte der Medizin im Ueberblick mit Abbildungen* (Jena, 1921).

Singer to Sigerist, Oxford, 25 November 1920

My dear Dr. Sigerist,

I am not quite sure if I have replied to your letter of Nov. 4th suggesting that we should make some common plan for editing a "Collectio prae Salernitana".¹ I greatly like the idea and think that we might at any rate as a preliminary, put together a catalogue of the MSS. without a great deal of labour. This I will do for this country during the first weeks of the coming year and I will send you a copy. You will perhaps let me have a similar copy of the Swiss, German and Austrian material. We must of course avoid overlapping and work always from the best MS. in whatever country it may be.

I think that when we come face to face with the material we shall find that the practical way is for each of us to take up special texts rather than special MSS. But this is a matter we can decide when we have indexed what there is.

1920

I have been very busy with lecturing this Term but expect to have a little more leisure next Term.²

With kind regards,
Yours very sincerely
Charles Singer

¹ Both Sigerist and Singer published on pre-Salernitan medicine: Henry E. Sigerist, *Studien und Texte zur frühmittelalterlichen Rezeptliteratur* (Leipzig, 1923); Charles Singer and Dorothea Singer, 'The origin of the Medical School of Salerno', in Charles Singer and Henry E. Sigerist (eds), *Essays in the history of medicine presented to Karl Sudhoff on the occasion of his seventieth birthday November 25th 1923* (London/Zurich, 1924), 121–138.

² Singer had a new appointment at the University College London.

7

Dorothea Singer to Sigerist, London, 20 December 1920

Dear Dr. Sigerist,

We are delighted to hear that you are coming to Paris the week-end of the 6th. We also are arranging to arrive on Friday Jan. 6th. We have been recommended to the Hotel Lutetia, 43 Boulevard Raspail. I have written to engage rooms there, and it will be delightful if you are there too. We shall hope to find you when we arrive at dinner time. Monsieur Lavastine¹ has asked us to dinner on the 7th and tells us that we shall also have the pleasure of seeing you then.

My husband wonders whether we may take this opportunity of carrying you off to London. It will be a great pleasure if you can come with us.

With our best regards,
Yours sincerely,
Dorothea Waley Singer²

¹ Maxime Laignel-Lavastine (1875–1953) French medical historian. See I. Simon, 'Maxime Laignel-Lavastine, historien de la médecine (1875–1953)', *Revue d'histoire des sciences et de leurs applications*, 1954, 7: 81–83, and *British Medical Journal*, 1953, ii: 781.

² Dorothea W. Singer, née Cohen (1882–1964), medievalist, was Singer's wife and co-worker. See Anita McConnell, 'Singer, Dorothea Waley (1882–1964)', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 50, 774–775.

7

Singer to Sigerist, Champex, Switzerland, 25 June 1921

My dear Sigerist,

Very many thanks for “Vom Altertum zur Gegenwart”.¹ It’s a useful compilation & I am extremely glad to have it. It contains many hints for my paper for Livingstone’s book which is at present haunting me.² It really was good of you to have remembered.

We are both looking forward to seeing you in Paris.

We find it delightful here & are making arrangements to come again next year.

With best regards to Mrs. Sigerist³ & yourself in which my wife joins,

Very sincerely yours

Charles Singer

I have just received Frank’s translation of Choulant for *Nature* & the *British Medical Journal*⁴ & Wedels [sic] *Astrology* & Bacon’s *secretum* for *Nature*.⁵

¹ F. Norden, *Vom Altertum zur Gegenwart*, (Leipzig/Berlin, 1921).

² C. Singer, ‘Medicine’, in R. W. Livingstone (ed.), *The legacy of Greece* (Oxford, 1921), 201–248.

³ Mrs. Emmy Sigerist-Escher.

⁴ Ludwig Choulant, *History and bibliography of anatomic illustration: in its relation to anatomic science and the graphic arts*, translated and edited with notes and a biography by Mortimer Frank (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, [1920]), reviewed by Singer in the British science journal *Nature*, 1921, **108**: 141–142 and in the *British Medical Journal*, 1921, **ii**: 12–13. Ludwig Choulant (1791–1861) German medical historian; see Rodolphine J.Ch.V. ter Laage, ‘Reflections on Johann Ludwig Choulant and medico-historical bibliographies’, in P. Smit & R.J. Ch. V. ter Laage (eds), *Essays in biohistory* (Utrecht: International Association for Plant Taxonomy, 1970), 115–133.

⁵ Roger Bacon (1214–1294) English philosopher; his *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi, Fasc. V, Secretum Secretorum cum glossis et notulis*, ed. by R. Steele (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), and Theodore O. Wedel’s, *The Medieval attitude towards astrology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920) were reviewed in Charles Singer, ‘Astrology’, *Nature*, 1921, **107**: 771–772.

Singer to Sigerist, Oxford, 30 July 1921

My dear Sigerist,

Many thanks for your letter of July 24th containing the membership form¹ which I have sent on to Rolleston and Thompson.² Many thanks too for the kind things you say about my “Studies”.³ I will let you have information in the course of the next fortnight about MS. Add. 17063.

I would very much rather publish the *Harleian Antidotarium* with you. Do please give in about it. I think that we could make a nice article for the *Classical Quarterly* between the two of us, and if you will send me your material I will see what I can do about it.

1921

Especially I want your remarks about its sources & the classification of early Antidotaries [.] If I find that I cannot add enough to it on my own account I will publish it in your name without adding mine, but I should very much like to publish something conjointly with you.

I will send you off my spare copy of Smith's Early History of Veterinary Literature⁴ as soon as the Post Offices open. At present they are closed for two days as it is our bank holiday.

I am reviewing E. G. Browne's Arabian Medicine for "Nature".⁵ It is a good book but I must confess to finding myself a little disappointed. I did hope that an author with the very special knowledge that Browne has [,] would give us something that is inaccessible elsewhere. His work is good, thorough and interesting, but it hardly fills a gap.

Congratulations on your appointment in Zürich.⁶ I have just finished my article on Medicine for Livingstone's book The Legacy of Greece and it has gone to Press. I was to have collaborated with D'Arcy Thompson in the article on Biology. Now he has failed and I have to write that alone which is very annoying. It is keeping me here for a week grinding hard.⁷ My wife has gone to Marvin's Summer School at Birmingham where I join her in a day or two.⁸

Have you ever read the Hippocratic treatise *peri physios paidon* De Natura Pueri? I marvel more attention has not been paid to it. Surely Aristotle must have had predecessors for his De Generatione Animalium!

With best regards from us both,

Yours ever,

Charles Singer

P.S. Horrors! I think I must have given my second copy of Smith away, and I rather think I must have sent it to Garrison,⁹ but I will have another hunt. In the meantime I have written to see if there is a copy left.

C.S.

¹ Membership of the Royal Society of Medicine, see letter 10.

² Humphry Rolleston (1862–1944), British physician and medical historian; see Mark W. Weatherall, 'Rolleston, Sir Humphry Davy, first baronet (1862–1944)', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 47, 623–625; D'Arcy W. Thompson (1860–1948), professor of natural history at St. Andrews, Scotland. See W. T. Calman, 'Thompson, Sir D'Arcy Wentworth (1860–1948)', rev. D. S. Falconer, *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 54, 411–412.

³ Singer (ed.), (1917–1921).

⁴ Frederick Smith and Fred Bullock, *Early history of veterinary literature*, (London 1919–1933).

⁵ Edward G. Browne, *Arabian medicine* (Cambridge, 1921), reviewed by Singer 'Greek and Arab medicine', *Nature*, 1922, **109**: 438–440.

⁶ Sigerist's appointment as a Privatdozent (reader) at the University.

⁷ Charles Singer, "Biology", in. R. W. Livingstone (ed.), *The legacy of Greece* (Oxford, 1921), 163–200.

⁸ Francis S. Marvin (born 1863), educationist and League of Nations activist, gave a summer school on Evolution of World Peace.

⁹ Fielding H. Garrison (1870–1935), medical historian, see H. E. Sigerist (ed.) *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine*, 1937, **5** (4); (Fielding H. Garrison memorial number); for a biographical introduction and Sigerist's correspondence with Garrison, see Marcel H. Bickel (ed.), *Henry E. Sigerist: Correspondences With Welch, Cushing, Garrison and Ackerknecht* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 95–155.

Singer to Sigerist, Oxford, 18 August 1921

My dear Sigerist,

A line to say that I have received your splendid piece of work on the Antidotaria.¹ Is this a duplicate copy or am I to return it to you without delay. I ask this because of course a paper such as I am contemplating will take some time to prepare and in the meantime I should much like to have your work by me.

I am glad to see that the Harleian MS is quite a short one, and I hope to be able to get something about it at any rate into the Classical Quarterly. Of course you shall see what I draw up.

I observe a rather irritating note of old Sudhoff about my Lorica² on p. 158 of the new number of the Mitteilungen.³ Of course I acknowledged Wülker⁴ in the most specific and detailed fashion as you will see for yourself on p. 12 of my work if you have it by you. Sudhoff really can be an annoying old man when he tries.

With best regards from us both,

Yours ever,

Charles Singer

P.S. Your election at the Royal Society of Medicine has gone through in due order & you will hear about it[.]

¹ Probably a part of the manuscript to Henry E Sigerist, *Studien und Texte zur frühmittelalterlichen Rezeptliteratur* (Leipzig, 1923).

² Charles Singer, 'The Lorica of Gildas the Briton (? 547). A magico-medical text containing an anatomical vocabulary', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 1918–1919, **12**: 124–144.

³ *Mitteilungen zur Geschichte der Medizin und der Naturwissenschaften und der Technik*, 1921, **20**.

⁴ Richard Paul Wülker (1845–1910), Professor of English Literature and Language at Leipzig University. He had collated and edited the second edition of Thomas Wright, *Anglo-Saxon and Old English vocabularies*, 2 vols (London: Trübner & Co, 1883–1884).

Singer to Sigerist, Oxford, 24 August 1921

My dear Sigerist,

Many thanks for your letter of August 21st.

About the Antidotarium. I should very much indeed like to tackle it but cannot do so by the middle of October because I am pledged until the end of September to give all my time to Hippocrates which I am working at in collaboration with Professor A. J. Platt (Professor of Greek at University College, London), and after then I have another piece of work to which I am pledged which will take me about four weeks. Until these are off I cannot settle down to the Antidotarium.

1921

Would you therefore like me to return it to you and let me have it again later? I very much want to do it and once I am able to settle down to it would give all my time to it. If, however, you feel urgently that it should be published I think I had better stand aside for the moment.

With best regards from both to both,

Yours always,

Charles Singer

12

Singer to Sigerist, Oxford, 28 August 1921

My dear Sigerist,

I see in the *Mitteilungen* an article Wehrli G. A. Die inneren Körperorgane in den Kinderzeichnungen mit einigen ethnographischen Parallelen. *Mitteil. Geogr. Ethnogr. Ges. Zurich* 1918/19 XIX S. 35–51 Zurich 1920.¹

If this is any good would you order a copy for me & have it sent with bill. We are just moving. Our new address will be

5 North Grove

Highgate

N6 London From September 5th

Yours very sincerely

Charles Singer

¹G. A. Wehrli, 'Die inneren Körperorgane in den Kinderzeichnungen mit einigen ethnographischen Parallelen', *Mitteilungen der Geographisch-Ethnographischen Gesellschaft Zürich*, 1920, 35–51. Gustav Adolf Wehrli (1888–1949) Swiss medical historian and collector at the University of Zurich; see Urs Boschung, 'Gustav Adolf Wehrli (1888–1949), Gründer der Medizinhistorischen Sammlung der Universität Zürich', *Gesnerus*, 1980, 37: 91–103.

13

*Singer to Sigerist, London, 15 September 1921*¹

My dear Sigerist,

Many thanks for your letter of September 5th. Your paper on Antidotes shall go off by registered post to-day. I told the Committee of the new Ducange² that you and I would help with early medical terms and they were delighted. We must arrange later on a proper campaign. We are still in great confusion here and you will easily forgive my not writing more.

11

1921

Many thanks for the copies of Wehrli's papers. They arrived safely and I have written to thank him.

With kind regards from us both,

Yours very sincerely,

Charles Singer

¹ New address, see previous letter.

² In 1920, the Union Académique Internationale proposed to its member Académies a project to prepare a new edition of Charles du Fresne, seigneur du Cange (or Ducange), Glossary of medieval and late Latin, *Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis* (Paris, 1678).

14

Singer to Sigerist, London, 10 October 1921

My dear Sigerist,

Many thanks for your letter of October 6th with the news that you had come back from the meeting of the German Association.¹ Could you give me any public announcement concerning the introduction of the History of Medicine as a compulsory subject in the medical course of the German Universities? If anything of that sort appears I should very much like to publish it here as it may do our subject quite a lot of good.

I know the Cassel Apuleius. It really is a fine document and extremely interesting. That is splendid news that you are to do the Pseudo Apuleius for the Corpus Medicorum Latinorum.² It is a thing which badly wants doing and should prove an exceedingly interesting piece of work. It is sufficiently short not to be tedious and contains innumerable problems. I look forward immensely to being of some little assistance to you in it. I have already begun on the new Ducange.³ I have a pupil here who is working on the anatomical text in the Hunter MS (Xth century) and there are quite a lot of latinised Greek words in it, and I propose to open my Ducange [sic] box with them. I will send you the transcript of it as I expect you will be able to throw light upon it.

As luck will have it I have just come across my second copy of General Smith's book⁴ and I was arranging to send it to you. Now you write that you have got one after all!

Our very best regards to Neuburger.⁵ We are just back from a meeting at Paris⁶ and I want to say some things to you about it which please regard as confidential, though not secret. I hate all these petty personalities but I think it best to put you au fait with what happened.

In order to make some sort of provisional body, names were asked for from each country. When we came to Switzerland Cumston⁷ (who was the only Swiss present) suggested your name in addition to his own. Thereon I proposed Klebs and was seconded by Wickersheimer.⁸ Cumston objected saying that two were surely enough from Switzerland! I thought under the circumstances it would be best to bide my time so that I could introduce Klebs under the American list but when it came to that again there was difficulty as it was said that Klebs was not an American, and I really was not sufficiently in possession

of the facts to press it on this point. But I had another and better reason for dropping the whole matter. On reflection – and the whole thing, you know, only occupied a few minutes – I came to the conclusion that Cumston, if my diagnostic powers are correct, is obviously going downhill in the physical sense, and I thought to myself that it is quite probable that he will not attend further meetings, that you will then come as the representative of Switzerland and that between the two of us, with Wickersheimer to help, the thing will go through automatically and we shall ask Klebs to become an official delegate. That seemed to me better than an unseemly dispute with Cumston. That is the matter as I see it, and I think it only fair to put you in communication with my views. The French, I think, are coming round in the point of view of meeting enemy countries at the next Congress after this.⁹ To my surprise the question was not raised at all and there is nothing in the rules of the Association to prevent Germans and Austrians becoming members. It simply requires that a man should be proposed and seconded. I think it wiser not to propose or second any of them for this Congress but we will raise the question in London and I believe it will settle itself by the following year. The important thing is to do nothing! Could not you manage to come to the Paris meeting in December and then come on here and we could do some Ducangeing?

With best regards from us both,

Yours ever,

Charles Singer

P.S. Perhaps you would like the enclosed list.¹⁰

¹ German Association of the History of Medicine.

² Ernst Howald and Henry E Sigerist, *Pseudo-Apulei herbarius* (Leipzig/Berlin, 1927)

³ See letter 13.

⁴ Possibly referring to Frederick Smith and Fred Bullock, *Early History of Veterinary Literature*, see letter 9.

⁵ Max Neuburger (1868–1955), Professor of Medical History in Vienna. See Solomon R. Kagan, 'Professor Max Neuburger: a biography and bibliography . . . in honor of his seventy-fifth birthday', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1943, **14**: 423–448; Robert Rosenthal, 'Max Neuburger', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1955, **29**: 295–298.

⁶ Probably for the organization of the International Society of the History of Medicine, founded in Paris in mid-1921.

⁷ Charles G. Cumston (1868–1928) lecturer of the history of medicine at Geneva. See Ernest Wickersheimer, "Charles Greene Cumston", *Janus*, 1928, **32**: 117–118.

⁸ Ernest Wickersheimer (1880–1965) French medical historian. See "Ernest Wickersheimer, 1880–1965", *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 1966, **21**: 62–63

⁹ For years after World War I the French excluded German and Austrian scientists from scientific conventions.

¹⁰ Probably from Paris meeting.

15

Singer to Sigerist, London, 2 November 1921

My dear Sigerist,

Many thanks for your letter of October 30th. I quite understand, sympathise with and agree with your point of view about the Congress. The question is, what is it best to do?

1921

It is natural that there should be a difficulty in starting these international organisations. Someone must begin, no one knows exactly the conditions in other countries, and it is natural that the most pushing get in first. It seems to me that the right thing for the Swiss to do is to hurry forward the organisation of their own Society, and once that is formed you can express your own opinions clearly. Jeanselme is an understanding and tactful man, and I believe has seen through the whole affair.¹ I am in a very difficult position in the matter as being neither Swiss, American nor French. It happens, however, that Cumston is a Vice-President of our English Society.

My own feeling is, however, that if you will have two or three months' patience concerning the International Congress, and will get on with the formation of your Swiss Society,² the whole matter will solve itself.

In forming your Swiss association I should be happy if you would put me down as a member if you are able to include foreigners.

I am much upset that Klebs should not be an official representative from Switzerland, & that my proposal of his name did not go through automatically

Yours always
Charles Singer

I am glad to have news of Neuburger who writes to me frequently. Poor fellow. As I daresay he told you I am having a good deal of printing work done through him at Vienna.

With best regards from us both,
Yours very sincerely,
Charles Singer

¹ Antoine E. Jeanselme (1858–1935) French physician and medical historian. See M. Laignel-Lavastine 'Edouard Jeanselme Historien', *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Histoire de la Médecine*, 1939, **33**: 145–192; and *British Medical Journal*, 1935, **i**: 1004–1005.

² The Swiss Society of the History of Medicine was founded at the end of 1921.

16

Singer to Sigerist, London?, 6 December 1921 (postcard)

Would you be so good as to tell a Swiss bookseller to send me (with bill)
E. Lichtenhahn [sic] *Sprachliche Bemerkungen zu Marcellus Empiricus*
Thèse de Bâle Bâle (Werner Riehm.) 1917¹
Charles Singer

¹ Eduard Liechtenhan, *Sprachliche Bemerkungen zu Marcellus Empiricus* (Basel, 1917); Marcellus Empiricus (c. 410 A.D.) medical author in Bordeaux.

Singer to Sigerist, London, 13 December 1921

My dear Sigerist,

You may care to have the enclosed articles by me on “Medicine” and “Biology” contributed to Livingstone’s “Legacy of Greece”, Oxford, 1921.¹ There is a separate article on Aristotle by D’Arcy Thompson.²

With kind regards,
Yours very sincerely
Charles Singer

¹ ‘Medicine’ (Singer 1921c); ‘Biology’ (Singer 1921b).

² D’Arcy Thompson ‘Natural Science’, in Livingstone (1921), 137–162.

Singer to Sigerist, London, 15 December 1921

My dear Sigerist,

There has just turned up at the Cambridge University Library two fragments of a Beneventum Manuscript¹ which are being investigated by Dr. Minns who is Reader in palaeography at Cambridge University.² There are, as you know, only thirteen Beneventan medical manuscripts and this makes the fourteenth. If I remember rightly this one and the Glasgow manuscript are the earliest.

I have been asked to identify the fragment which is obviously an Antidotarium and I have explained that you are the authority on the earliest Antidotaria. I am venturing, therefore, to send a typed copy of it to you. It preserves the original alination and you will see that the ends of the lines are incomplete. With Dr. Minns’ permission I am enclosing this to you and I feel sure he would be glad to have your opinion on it.³

We are going to Paris on the 6th and my wife has written to you about hotels. It would be delightful if you could come back to us and we could then do some work together.

I quite agree with your views about the Congress and will do my best to support you.⁴

With very best regards from us both,
Yours always,
Charles Singer

¹ Beneventum, a town in southern Italy.

² Ellis H. Minns (1874–1953), archaeologist and palaeographer; see Grahame Clark, ‘Minns, Sir Ellis Hovell (1874–1953)’, rev. *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 38, 359.

³ The enclosure is titled “Cambridge University Library. MS. Add. 6324 (Transcript by Dr. E. H. Minns, 10. XII.1921)”.

⁴ Probably for the organization of the International Society of the History of Medicine.

19

Singer to Sigerist, London, 6 January 1922

My dear Sigerist,

The Channel is so rough – & has been all the week – that we shall not cross.¹ It hardly seems worth while to arrive ill & then to leave – as we should have to do in any case – the next day. It is a great disappointment not to have seen you; we were much looking forward to it.

I have had a line from Sudhoff who, rightly feels very hardly about the exclusion of the Germans.² I have written to him repeatedly & I say to you also, that it is not by my will & I am altogether against it. I do not in the least mind saying this publicly & I have repeatedly done so. Still time will heal the matter & the thing for the Germans to do is to take as little notice as possible. I shall do my best.

With very best regards from us both,

Yours ever,

Charles Singer

¹ For the Paris Congress, see previous letter.

² See letter 14.

20

Singer to Sigerist, London, 10 January 1922

My dear Sigerist,

I have just been reading with much pleasure your article “Lecciones Heliodori” in the *Archiv*.¹ I congratulate you upon it. There ought to be a really complete description of Hunterian T.IV.13 published.² What extraordinary Latin it is. Can you translate the first paragraph of Heliodorus? If so I wish you would let me have your rendering.

I have just been working at Donnolo and Alchandrius which are of the same date.³ I think the material might interest you.

It was a great bore not getting over to Paris. What is the best Latin edition of the Herbarium of Apuleius up to date? And can you give me any references to writings on the Synonym lists in the Pamphilus and Dioscorides texts?⁴

1922

I have at last found the extra copy of Smith's Veterinary Medicine⁵ which I will send if you still want it.

With best regards from us both,

Yours very sincerely

Charles Singer

¹ Henry E. Sigerist, 'Die "Lecciones Heliodori"', *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin*, 1921, **13**: 145–156.

² Hunterian T.IV.13: A manuscript.

³ Authors of herbals in Antiquity and early Middle Ages.

⁴ Apuleius, Pamphilus and Dioscorides are authors of herbals in Antiquity and early Middle Ages.

⁵ Smith and Bullock (1919).

21

Singer to Sigerist, London, 21 February 1922

My dear Sigerist,

(1) Many thanks for your letter of Feb. 6th and for your reprints. All which you write I of course always read, and I am extremely glad to have them in separate form as it enables me to classify them among my pamphlets.

(2) About Paris. I have only the English translation of the notes at the Congress as taken down by C.J.S. Thompson's clerk.¹ Had they been in French I might have understood them but being in English they are quite incomprehensible to me! There is one point, however, on which I must get definite enlightenment, and as I do not want to raise the somewhat acrimonious discussion uselessly I write to you to let me know the facts in confidence.

The original arrangement concerning the Germans was this. We agreed with the French that we should not invite the Germans on this occasion, but it was evident that on the next occasion the meeting would probably be in a neutral country and that they therefore might be invited. It was agreed that a new nation might be admitted to the Society on the vote of two thirds of the members. This was in itself a harsh regulation as the committee meetings are to take place in Paris and naturally the French are liable to outnumber other nations; but it was so agreed and might pass.

I now understand, (though I am not quite sure that I understand rightly,) that in Paris at the last meeting, at which I was not present, they made a new rule that to admit any new country they would require the unanimous vote of all the delegates present!! Is this the case? Do I understand the matter rightly? If it is the case, and if I do understand the matter rightly I intend to protest.

You ought to know, and you will be glad to know, that some of our most eminent historians protest most strongly against a Society calling itself "International" when it is not International. Among their names I am entitled to mention Dr. W.H.R. Rivers, who is the President of the Anthropological Institute,² and the eminent Orientalist E. G. Browne.³ My own feelings are no less strong though my eminence is less.

(3) I shall be delighted to join your Swiss Society if you will elect me. You must think me a very careless fellow for I have unfortunately mislaid the card of application. Please, however, consider this as an application and let me know how much I am to pay.

(4) Have you communicated with the Cambridge people about the manuscript? If you have not, I will forward your letter to them.

(5) Yes, the Hunterian MS. T.IV.13 is indeed written in a terrible language. Much of it is absolutely unintelligible. I have myself been trying to translate the section on Anatomy which has most interesting relations with some of the anatomies that Sudhoff has recently been publishing. The linguistic changes in these Dark Age documents are, however, particularly interesting. They ought to go into the new Ducange.⁴ Work does crowd on one so but there is no doubt you and I ought some day to put together these medical terms and they would make the document of first-rate importance. They should appeal, I think, to Niedermann who is at Zürich, is he not?⁵

Did I tell you that I have a new Greek papyrus containing figures of plants of the fifth century? It is the property of the Egypt Exploration Fund and I am hoping to publish it in conjunction with Johnson.⁶ It is arranged just like Apuleius but in Greek instead of Latin. I suppose Apuleius must be a translation from the Greek?

It will be delightful to see you here in July. We do so much look forward to it.

With very best regards from us both,

Yours always,

Charles Singer

I have just come on the circular & enclose cheque for 10 francs Swiss.

¹ Charles J. S. Thompson (1862–1943), historian, author, and Henry Wellcome's assistant; see John Symons, 'Thompson, Charles John Samuel (1862–1943)', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 54, 408–409.

² William H. R. Rivers (1864–1922), anthropologist and psychiatrist. See Michael Bevan and Jeremy MacClancy, 'Rivers, William Halse (1864–1922)', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 47, 48–49.

³ Edward G. Browne (1862–1926), Persian scholar. See E. D. Ross, 'Browne, Edward Granville (1862–1926)', rev. John Gurney, *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 8, 155–157.

⁴ See letter 13.

⁵ Max Niedermann (1874–1954), classical philologist, University of Basel; see Albert Grenier, 'Éloge funèbre de M. Max Niedermann, correspondant étranger de l'Académie', *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, 1954, **98** (1): 22–24.

⁶ The Johnson Papyrus (Wellcome Library, London, MS.5753); a fragment from an illustrated herbal found in 1914 by the classical scholar John de Monins Johnson (1882–1956), at Antinoe, Egypt, whilst he was working for the Egypt Exploration Fund. See Arthur S. Hunt and John Johnson (eds), 'Two Theocritus papyri' *Gnomon*, 1930, **6**: 561–564.

Singer to Sigerist, London, 20 March 1922

My dear Sigerist,

There is really no secret about Klebs though the matter is a little awkward. The situation is as follows. I proposed him in the usual way and got Rolleston to second him.¹ Somewhat incautiously perhaps I then asked a third member of our Section, whom I happened to meet, to support the proposal. I think I had better not give you his name, [.] Immediately he raised the question of Klebs' sympathies during the war. I did not quite know what to do in the matter and so consulted privately D'Arcy Power who is our Senior Vice-President and one of the kindest and most broad-minded of men.² Power thought the objection absurd, but he also thought it would be advisable to wait awhile, as clearly we do not want to offend any of our old members. That is how the matter stands. The matter rests with me and has never been placed before any others but those I have mentioned. If Klebs will be so generous as to wait awhile in silence I have no doubt it will be perfectly all right. His name has never been put forward, and in my opinion it is preposterous that such questions should be raised at all. My views on these matters are too well known to need repetition again.

Would you perhaps explain all this to Klebs? I have not the least objection to your sending him a copy of this letter or even the letter itself.

I am threshing out this matter of the French and am very unsettled about it. I am writing to Jeanselme this week to say that if necessary I will come over to discuss the whole matter with him, but in my opinion there is nothing for the French to do but alter their decision about a unanimous vote.

Will you in the meantime bring pressure to bear on your side?

Yours ever,

Charles Singer

¹ This probably refers to his being proposed as a member of the History of Medicine Section of the Royal Society of Medicine.

² D'Arcy Power (1855–1941), British surgeon and medical historian; see Harold Ellis, 'Power, Sir D'Arcy (1855–1941)', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 45, 131–132.

Singer to Sigerist, London, 22 March 1922

My dear Sigerist,

I forget if I wrote to you that I rather think I can get photographs taken at the Hunterian Library at Glasgow rather cheaper than most people. If you want any others taken you had therefore better have the work done through me. I am most interested to hear that you are

getting on with further texts from T 4.13. I am much looking forward to seeing your work. Keep off the anatomical text as I am at work on that and have a good deal to say about it.

I enclose photos of the new Greek papyrus.¹ Please return them but if you want copies I can let you have others. I read on one side

CΥΜΦΥΤΟΝ

ΑΥΤΗ ΒΟΤΑΝΗ ΤΡΙΒΟΜΕΝΗ

ΘΕΡΑΠΕΥΕΙ ΠΙΑΣΑΝ

ΚΑΙ ΤΡΑΥΜΑΤΑ

ΚΟΠΙΑΚΟΛΛ

ΤΑΙ ΘΕΡΑΠΕΥΕΙ

& on the other a few letters such as

ΛΑΘΙ ΚΟΚ

ΗΣ ΒΟΤΑΝ ΗΣ ΤΟ

ΥΧΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΥ(Ε)ΛΟΚΑ

ΑΝΘΟΥΣ

ΠΟΙΕΙΤΑΙ

ΘΕΡΑΠΕΥΕΙ

It shows

(a) Rigid conventionalisation in [...] MSS of the 5th century closely parallel to the Leyden Apuleius

(b) The existence of a Greek text on similar lines to Apuleius containing uses of herbs but without their description save by figures.

If you think you can make further suggestions as to readings I will send you a more “diplomatic” transcript of the letters.

As always

Charles Singer

¹ Charles Singer, ‘The herbal in antiquity and its transmission to later ages’, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1927, 47: 1–52, pp31–33. His published text contains very different readings, after consulting Dr H. I. Bell of the British Museum. See Marie-Hélène Marganne, *Inventaire analytique des papyrus grecs de médecine* (Geneva: Droz, 1981), p.51 no. 30 (Wellcome MS 5753), and David Leith, ‘The Antinoopolis Illustrated Herbal (P. Johnson + P. Antin. 3.214 = MP 3.2095)’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 2006, 156: 141–156.

24

Singer to Sigerist, London, 30 March 1922 (postcard)

I entirely agree with your letter to the Paris Committee. You could not have acted otherwise. I have not yet had a reply to my protest.

Charles Singer

25

Singer to Sigerist, London, 4 April 1922

My dear Sigerist,

As regards the resolution of the French. I have been considering the matter carefully and if the French law of procedure is anything like the English law of procedure it is impossible to pass such a resolution as that which was passed in Paris demanding a unanimous vote to admit a new national society, except by giving special notice. The English law of procedure is that no motion which affects the constitution of a society can be put on the agenda unless full notice is given of it. This usually means two meetings and should have meant two meetings in this case. If I am right in this we can very easily reverse the decision at the London meeting.¹ If I find it cannot be done I shall certainly resign my membership of the International Society.² But I rather gather from a letter recently received from Lavastine that it can be done.

The object of this letter is to urge you to attend the meeting of the Society in London. The more people like yourself will come the more my views may be strengthened by your support.

It was decided at a recent meeting of our Council in London to send an invitation to Zürich University asking them to send a representative, who will of course be yourself.

Yours always,
Charles Singer

¹The London meeting was to take place on 17–22 July 1922.

²International Society of the History of Medicine.

26

Singer to Sigerist, London, 24 May[?] 1922

My dear Sigerist,

I find that there is a letter from you on my table dated March 4th some elements of which are I think still unanswered.

I notice that you are interested in the MSS. of Solomon Negri¹ in the Hunterian Library at Glasgow. It is impossible to photograph them there. But it is possible to get them to London. If you care for this I could, I think, arrange for them to be here for a few weeks during your visit. One has to insure the MSS for a rather large sum (£ 1,000 I think) which costs about £ 3. But I think it could be done.