

The future of the 'Garrison-Morton' bibliography*

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This July will mark the 80th birthday of the distinguished English medical librarian Leslie T. Morton, formerly librarian of the National Institute for Medical Research in London. Nineteen eight seven is also the 44th anniversary of the first edition of the 'Garrison-Morton' bibliography, used by librarians, collectors, and booksellers around the world. On this occasion it seems appropriate to discuss the history of 'Garrison-Morton' and to share some plans for its future.

Anyone who collects or deals in rare medical or biological books knows how indispensable 'Garrison-Morton' is. Leslie T. Morton compiled the first edition of this world-famous work and saw it published in 1943 under the modest title of *A Medical Bibliography*. Over the years he has put the book through four editions, with the fourth and current edition appearing in 1983. Through an agreement between Leslie Morton, Gower Publishing Company Ltd, and myself, I will edit the fifth and future editions. The project is already underway even though the fifth edition will not appear until 1990.

Following the growth of scientific information, 'Garrison-Morton' has doubled in length in forty years, and now contains 7830 main entries. It is especially useful as a tool for book-collecting, bookselling, and historical research because it immediately enables you to identify the first or most important editions of the landmark books and journal articles in the history of medicine and related sciences. These are listed in chronological order by each subject or medical specialty. Since most entries are also annotated, the bibliography helps you rapidly to assess the significance of a work within the history of its subject, or to make a quick survey of the important works in the history of a particular field. In addition to citations for the classic primary sources, the bibliography also maintains citations for the most important secondary works on the history of each particular subject.

Morton appropriately credited the great medical historian Fielding H. Garrison (1870-1935) on the title page of the 1943 first edition even though the two men never met. Garrison provided the model through his check-list of classic medical texts first published in the *Index-Catalogue of the Library of the Surgeon-General's Office*, 2nd series, 1912, Vol. 17, pp. 89-178, and later reworked as 'A Revised Student's Checklist of Texts Illustrating the History of Medicine' (published in the *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine*, Vol. 1, 1933, pp. 333-434).

From the beginning, however, the public identified the work as a collaboration between Garrison and Morton and the book has always been cited in the bibliographic literature as 'Garrison-Morton'. No one expects this to change. But to give Leslie

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Morton appropriate credit, future editions will be called *Morton's Medical Bibliography (Garrison and Morton)*, edited by myself.

I was attracted to continuing the bibliography because we use it literally every day in our business of dealing in rare medical books. Having become intimately familiar with the book's idiosyncracies over the past twenty years I would hope to build upon its strengths and to try to strengthen its weaknesses.

Correcting errors in this vast text has always been an ongoing project for Leslie Morton. He still maintains a very active interest in the book. Throughout the past 40 years users of the book have been an invaluable source of help in correcting errors and in suggesting new entries for inclusion in the bibliography. If you spot errors in the current edition please report them to me. I will, of course, also entertain suggestions concerning new entries for the future edition.

With the ever-increasing pace of scientific and technological advance it is inevitable that the fifth edition of 1990 will be substantially larger than the present fourth. New areas such as genetic engineering and organ transplants will have to be included. All other subject areas will have to be updated and expanded. Important areas such as medicine in art, dentistry, Japanese and Chinese medicine, and pediatric surgery, as well as the crucial but unglamorous field of colo-rectal surgery, which previously have received only brief mention, will be treated in depth. Only publications up to 1980 will be included, as we need the distance of at least ten years to develop any reasonable historical perspective on scientific advances.

How will it be possible for an antiquarian bookseller and intended publisher like myself to undertake this task, especially at a time when knowledge is advancing so rapidly? The answer is that I will have plenty of expert assistance. Sections of the bibliography will be read over by acknowledged experts in each field, who will be asked to make suggestions for the new entries in each subject. This panel of experts will be amply credited in the introduction.

To produce the book itself we will exploit the latest in microcomputer technology. My contract with Gower calls for submission of the manuscript on paper. However, if my company is successful in converting the whole book to a database, more than likely it will be published eventually in some electronic form, in addition to the printed version. By the 1990s electronic publication should become economically viable as an alternative form for large bibliographies. CD-ROM now appears to be the likely vehicle for electronic publications of this sort. An electronic version of 'Garrison–Morton' will definitely not replace the book. It will only offer an alternative source for the information.