

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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Dear Viktor:

Under separate cover you will receive shortly a copy of a very long penultimate (I HOPE) draft of the Willier memoir completed only recently. It still contains some typographical errors and other very minor errors, all of which I HOPE by now have been caught and corrected. My goal in writing this long version before the final draft was twofold. First, I wanted to try to enlighten myself about how all this came to pass. Secondly, I felt it was essential to put down on paper in minute detail almost all that I have been able to learn and feel about Willier's life and works to spare others this incredible amount of time and effort should my health situation not permit me to see this project through to publication. My disability leave has finally been extended through the 1982-83 year.

Jim Ebert agreed to evaluate this draft very critically to aid me in preparing the final draft for submission to the Academy. As soon as I received his comments I mailed copies of this long draft to those of you who have been most helpful to me for whatever pleasure you might derive from reading it. I was overwhelmed by Jim's very favorable reaction to the manuscript as a whole. I was especially surprised (but very pleased) that he wrote "It is a little 'on the long side', but with one small exception I cannot recommend that it be cut." That exception is his "purely personal opinion" that he would delete the long listing of traits beginning at the bottom of page 81 and continuing through page 82 on the grounds that he doubted that such a listing adds significantly to the rest of the manuscript. Probably most of you would agree. I set it down on paper as a "trial balloon" as much for myself as for other readers. It was written because this was the only way I could seem to think of to include some negative traits, which all his graduate students know that he had, especially since overall the rest of the manuscript is obviously almost all on the strongly positive side.

You will find that I have inserted in the manuscript a very large number of direct quotes from quite a few unpublished sources which weren't credited to individuals by name. In my cover letter to Jim I wrote "Although I could now attempt to paraphrase many of the direct quotes, I feel strongly that this would greatly reduce their effectiveness because the words of those quoted come through so loud and clear that I, at least, could not hope to improve on them." Jim's response was to retain them all but "I think the manuscript might be strengthened if these individuals would permit their names to be used." I completely agree but felt that in this draft I should protect the anonymity of the sources until it was at least decided that the quotes were essential to the manuscript.

Jim also wrote "I would find it helpful to have at the end of the manuscript a complete list of Willier's doctoral students." Initially I had included such a list but deleted it because of the length of the manuscript. In the final draft I will include this list again with names appearing in the order in which their degrees were awarded.

I took the liberty of making some direct quotes from your autobiography as follows: 1) p. 25, lines 5-8; 2) p. 33, the last six lines; 3) p. 34, the first two lines. I very much hope that you do not object to my doing so. I so much appreciate having the copy of the autobiography you sent to me. It is on file with the National Academy now, is it not?

This week I finally obtained a copy of the book of essays in your honor and find it delightful reading indeed—especially, as you suggested, Rita's superb chapter. Her first sentence was a wonderful opening to a very warm and personal chapter not only about your joint research efforts but upon your marvelous personal relationship as well. The picture of the two of you in Figure 2.3 is great and I have had it copied. I also enjoyed (and copied) the picture in Figure 2.2 of part of the group participating in the Chicago genetic neurology conference. Perhaps you will recall that Paul invited me to "sit in" on these conferences as a silent observer. I also immensely enjoyed the third chapter, particularly because it gave me insight into your essential responsibilities and influence on graduate students as Privatdozent in Spemann's Institute, not only in the field of experimental embryology, but in relating genetics to embryology as well, and on your very strong positive influence on the career of Salome Gluecksohn-Waelsch, which I did not realize. I am very anxious to sit down and reread or read for the first time all the papers in your exciting bibliography essentially without interruption, dating back to 1961 at least. When I think of all the incredibly fine research work you have done and the superb quality of your writing in addition to all your other activities I am simply overwhelmed that you took the time repeatedly to write to me and to be so concerned about me healthwise. You are well aware, I am sure, of the very special place you have in my life and have had ever since you leaned over my microscope and examined my drawings at MBL when I took the course there. In my life you stand tall and straight even without the pedestal I would place you on! And I share your great respect for Frank Lillie and for Ross Harrison. You probably would not know it, but Willier was my second choice ~~as~~ as the man to work with. I had been awarded a full fellowship by Yale but found out that Dr. Harrison would retire at the end of my first year there and I had no desire to work with Nicholas. And one of the major reasons I left Berkeley and went to Chicago was the hope that I might do some work jointly with Dr. Lillie, although the presence of Sewall Wright and Paul Weiss on the faculty was also an attractant. I had always wanted to go to Chicago to work with Lillie on a postdoctoral arrangement, and the opportunity to be on the faculty attracted me even more.

Recently I received from Drew Noden information about his symposium on "The Neural Crest" to be held at the next anatomy meeting. It should be very interesting and I hope I am well enough to attend. He attached a note telling me about how much he enjoyed visiting you recently and how much he wished he could have spent more time with you. Only recently have I become acquainted with Drew.

Things are in a turmoil here at Illinois. Dave Nanney is acting head of our Department of Genetics and Development for one year. Ed Banks, head of our Department of Ecology, Ethology and Evolution, has been in the hospital in intensive care for weeks suffering from a slight heart attack when he entered, then two massive heart attacks with cardiac arrest (he is only 56), then undergoing an angiogram and a 4-way bypass operation similar to mine, so an acting head has replaced him in that department and his prognosis is still very uncertain. The Director of our School of Life Sciences, Joe Larsen, has resigned that position effective at the end of this year and the person all thought would replace him, Ralph DeMoss, has decided to retire at the end of this year, leaving the headship of the Department of Microbiology vacant as well. And our recently established Department of Anatomy is in jeopardy because of continuing uncertainties about the funding of our medical school here. There are obviously very anxious faculty members here in the biological and medical sciences. What all this will do to the promises I have been made that space will be provided for me somewhere and that I can retain, as long as I am active, whatever of my equipment I will want to use, no one knows, but that is such an insignificant matter.

Best regards,

Ray L. Watterson