Albrecht Scholz (1940-2013): German dermatologist and historian of dermatology

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Abstract

Albrecht Scholz (Figure 1) was born in Görlitz (now Zgorzelec, a city located at the Polish-German border, covering both sides of the River Nysa) on September 6, 1940, the youngest of three children. His father was a laryngologist, specializing in voice and hearing impairment. Scholz attended school in his hometown and in 1958 passed his Matura examination, after which he studied medicine at both Humboldt University in Berlin and the “Carl Gustav Carus” Medical Academy in Dresden. Following successful completion of the state examination in 1964 and an internship at the Reichenbach Hospital the following year, he was granted the right to practice medicine. His 1964 doctoral dissertation was titled, “Evaluation of Astrand’s Steps in Elderly Patients.”

Career in dermatology

Dermatology then took Scholz’s attention, influenced greatly by his father, who recognized that dermatology is the “child” of internal medicine and surgery, offering many possibilities in both conservative and interventional treatment. From 1965 to 1969, Scholz took his training in the Dermatology Clinic of the Medical Academy of Dresden under Heinz Egon Kleine-Natrop. In 1969, he became a specialist in dermatology and venereal diseases.

Beginning in 1971, Scholz joined the Department of Dermatology at the Medical Academy in Dresden. Five years later, he was appointed Chief Physician, and by 1980, he had become Head of the Department of Dermatology of the Medical Academy in Dresden. During this time, Scholz conducted intensive studies on the influence of low temperatures on malignant tumors. This resulted in his habilitation dissertation titled, “Methods of Cryosurgery in Basal Cell Carcinoma (Basoliom).”

As the head of dermatology in Dresden, he organized a step-by-step method to expand the role of ambulatory dermatology so that it would include cryotherapy, laser therapy, phlebology, and psychosomatic dermatology.

His extensive publishing, growing development of the department, and frequent appointments to various boards and medical societies were increasingly recognized. In 1995, while being a nonpolitical person, he advanced to the post of Associate Professor of Dermatology.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Scholz was no longer hampered by a repressive regime. The following year, Scholz was able to organize a branch of the German...
Dermatological Society (DDG) for Saxony, of which he was in charge for 4 years. In the same year, he became the cofounder of the journal *Arzteblatt Sachsen* and served on the journal’s editorial board for 3 years.

**History of dermatology**

Scholz had always held a keen interest in the history of medicine. Beginning in the winter semester of 1991/92, he organized lectures in the history of medicine, and in latter half of 1992, he became Head of the Institute for the History of Medicine of the Medical Academy in Dresden. Four years later, he was appointed Professor of the History of Medicine and Director of the Institute for the History of Medicine of the Technical Academy in Dresden (Figure 2). In addition, between 1997 and 2001, he served as President of the German-Polish Society of History of Medicine. Another area of interest was the history of moulages (wax models), once so popular in many parts of the world to teach students and staff members and now more of historic, rather than didactic, interest.

In his work as a medical historian, Scholz paid particular attention to the contributions of Jewish physicians to the development of European medicine, especially those in the German-speaking countries. To illustrate his desire to maintain good relations with Polish scientists, he visited the Dermatology Clinic of the University of Wrocław almost 20 times.

In 1983, Scholz received the Samuel J. Zakon Award from the History of Dermatology Society for his work on Albert Neisser (1855 to 1916). Later awards included “Karl-Linser-Medaille,” presented by the DDG. Until 1994, Scholz remained as the publisher of the “Medizin und Judentum,” of which he was also the founder, and from 1997 he was the editor of “Schriften der Medizinischen Akademie.”

Although Scholz’s research in dermatology could be more general, as illustrated by his work on the methods and effectiveness of skin cancer treatment, the history of dermatology was his penchant. He paid particular attention to the fate of dermatologists in the Third Reich, especially those of Jewish origin. His book on the history of German dermatology extensively describes their scientific achievements, as well as a biographical sketch of Albert Neisser and the history of dermatology in Wrocław. He was also engaged in the description and analysis of scientific achievements of many lesser known dermatologists.

His last contributions, published shortly before his death, were six chapters in *Pantheon of Dermatology, Outstanding Historical Figures*, edited by Christoph Löser, Gerd Plewig, and Walter Burgdorf in 2013. They included biographical essays on Edvard Ehlers (1863 to 1937), Eugen Emanuel Galewsky (1864 to 1935), Max Jessner (1887 to 1978), Karl Kreibich (1869 to 1932), Oscar Lassar (1849 to 1907), and Albert Neisser, all richly illustrated.

**Remembering Albrecht Scholz**

Scholz’s scientific achievements reached 303 publications, including papers, books, and book chapters, as well as approximately 250 lectures, delivered both in Germany and internationally; but there was more to the man. He was a warm, understanding gentleman with a keen intellect who may also be remembered for being unassuming and even humble.

Albrecht Scholz was devoted to his family. When he died on March 24, 2013, after a short illness, he left his wife, Dr. Ingrid Scholz, a family physician, and his three children: Dr.
Fig. 3  Albrecht Scholz as the head of exhibition “Carl Gustav Carus—Nature and Ideas” Natur und Idee,” National Art Collections Dresden, Germany, 2009; painting behind: C.G. Carus “Woman on a Balcony” 1824 (Photo: Konrad Kästner).

Stefan, a dermatologist in Zurich, Switzerland; Adrian, a musician; and Christine, a midwife Figure 3.

Acknowledgments

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