

Camille Lian 1882–1969



Professor Camille Lian died suddenly at his home in Paris on 8 April, 1969, at the age of 87. The Cardiac Society is sad to lose one of its most distinguished honorary members, and some of us, like myself, are grieved by the passing of an old friend.

Born at Treigny (Yonne) in 1882, he studied medicine in Paris and became attracted to cardiology as an interne under Ernest Barié and P. Teissier. He graduated in

1909 and his inaugural thesis dealing with functional mitral incompetence was based on experimental work carried out in François-Franck's physiological laboratory at the Collège de France and on clinical observations at the Hôpital Laennec during his internat. He was an early worker with the polygraph and one of the first to record cardiac pulsation by the oesophageal route.

Though ineligible for military service on account of

myopia, he nevertheless volunteered in the 1914 war and served as a battalion medical officer at the front. He was nominated Médecin des Hôpitaux in 1919, Agrégé in 1923, Professor of the History of Medicine in 1942, and eventually Professor of Clinical Medicine.

When I first met Lian at the Hôpital Tenon, Vaquez was still in full activity at the Pitié and most of the leading Paris cardiologists had gained their reputations as assistants in his clinic. Lian, not being a protégé of the école Vaquez, had built up his reputation almost single-handed, and this may have inclined him to assert his independence at times perhaps a little provocatively, but if so, it was taken in good part, and in due course he was elected president of the Société Française de Cardiologie.

Appointed physician to the Hôpital Tenon in 1926, he embarked on phonocardiography in which he became a pioneer in Europe. With his friend Minot, the Lian-Minot phonocardiograph was designed, and over the next 15 years he investigated every kind of murmur and abnormal heart sound. A series of papers dealing with triple rhythm, the opening snap, the signs of mitral stenosis, late systolic murmurs, etc., did much to clarify clinical auscultation of the heart, and he was the first to record the pulmonary systolic ejection click and the early diastolic sound of constrictive pericarditis. In 1941, with Minot and Welti, he published a treatise on phonocardiography.

Other important contributions concerned left heart failure and myocardial infarction. Though pulmonary congestion behind a failing left ventricle had been described by Hope and others in the previous century, this clinical syndrome had fallen into some disfavour at the hands of Mackenzie and Lewis, but Lian's precise account (1910) clarifying the signs of left and right heart failure is listed by Paul White among historical milestones in the evolution of our knowledge.

Lian was one of the first in France after the 1914 war to recognize the clinical features of acute myocardial infarction as we know them today, and he discussed the diagnosis in 1921, the abdominal symptoms in 1924, and later under the title of 'l'angor aigu coronarien fébrile' he published 34 personal cases.

Lian dedicated himself to cardiology, and his zest and enthusiasm for clinical research and teaching never diminished throughout his long career; indeed, he refused to grow up or to abandon a youthful enjoyment of his

many activities. He was a prodigious worker, a prolific writer, and an active participant in scientific meetings and congresses. As a teacher he spoke simply, clearly, and emphatically, and a lecture of his at the Pitié on triple rhythm still ranks in my memory as a masterly exposition. In 1965, the International Cardiology Foundation awarded him the golden stethoscope which Paul White presented to him at a memorable dinner in Geneva. Lian's passing marks the end of an era as he was the last of the old guard who dominated cardiology in France after the 1914 war, Vaquez, Laubry, Clerc, and Gallavardin having all departed before him.

Madame Lian gave him constant support in all his activities, was his inseparable companion at congresses and meetings, and all those who recall her kind hospitality at the Rue de Bourgogne, will wish to join me in expressing to her the deep sympathy of all his British colleagues.

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