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Streszczenie wykładu wygłoszonego w Auli Leopoldyna Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 27 maja 2005 roku na sympozjum naukowo-historycznym zorganizowanym dla uczczenia 150. rocznicy urodzin Alberta Neissera

What's Common about the Two Outstanding Researchers Richard Pfeiffer – Microbiologist and Albert Neisser – Dermatologist

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R. Pfeiffer was born in 1858 and got his early education in Schweidnitz while A. Neisser was born in Schweidnitz 3 years earlier so they were nearly coevals. R. Pfeiffer completed his medical study in the famous Péripière Akademie in Berlin. In 1880 (at the age of 22) he got doctors degree and became an army officer what had taken him 7 years before he became an assistant to Robert Koch. Since 1894 he was professor of microbiology. In 1899 he was appointed the Head of Hygiene Institute first in Königsberg, and 10 years later in Breslau where he worked for 17 years.

A. Neisser completed his medical study in Breslau. In 1877 (at the age of 22) he got doctors degree and became an assistant to Heinrich Köbner and Oskar Simon. Since 1882 he was an associate professor (a title of full-time professor of dermatology he received in 1907). In 1882 he was appointed the Head of Dermato-Venereology Clinic in Breslau where he worked for 34 years.

R. Pfeiffer and A. Neisser were famous as members of German Research Commission. R. Pfeiffer, being interested in plague and malaria, together with Koch took part in a scientific expedition to India and Italy. A. Neisser carried out his research on lepra in Norway and in Spain, and on syphilis on Java island. Among their teachers, friends and co-workers there were two Nobel Prize winners, namely Robert Koch and Paul Ehrlich.

Hygiene Institute (later Microbiology Department) and Dermato-Venereology Clinic in Breslau were situated opposite each other on the same street (Max Strasse, now Chalubiński) so in the



Richard Pfeiffer



Albert Neisser

period of 1909–1916 R. Pfeiffer and A. Neisser as Heads of these institutions were neighbours for 7 years.

In their research work they were interested in infectious diseases – A. Neisser in gonorrhoea, syphilis, tuberculosis and lepra, R. Pfeiffer in influenza, cholera, coccidiosis and malaria. They both have contributed a lot to science. R. Pfeiffer was one of the pioneers of bacteriology. His name is associated with the discovery of *Haemophilus influenzae* (1890) and the specific bacteriolysis (Pfeiffer's phenomenon). He is said to be the father of serology. A. Neisser – an outstanding dermatologist and venereologist was called the father of gonococcus (1879). He was the inventor and a co-investor of modern buildings for Dermatology Clinic in Breslau.

Both Pfeiffer and Neisser were outstanding researchers, had organisational talent and rare intellectual values. They were also musically gifted – Pfeiffer played the piano (he admired Chopin's music), Neisser played the violin; they must have played concert together in Neissers' villa in Breslau.

R. Pfeiffer died in 1945 (at the age of 87) in Bad Landeck, was buried in a coffin at forest cemetery, but that area was later ploughed over by local authority of Łądek Zdrój after the II world war. A. Neisser died in 1916 (at the age 61, due to sepsis) in Breslau. His funeral urn was buried in a

private garden surrounding Neissers' villa; being removed by Nazi it finally disappeared without trace. They died as widowers and do not have even symbolic graves. Luckily in Wrocław Medical University there are lots of remembrances: in Microbiology Department – Pfeiffer's headstand and memorial board, in Dermatology Clinic – Neisser's headstand, wax model collection, library, painting and memorial relief.

From Microbiology Department to Dermatology Clinic – short distance but long-lasting friendship and close links.

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