

Artom, Camillo ^[1]

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by Peter W. Hairston, 1979

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From *The Gray Matter*, 1963, dedication to Artom. Image courtesy of the

Internet Archive. ^[2]Camillo Artom, internationally recognized scientist and head of the department of biochemistry at Bowman Gray School of Medicine of *Wake Forest University* ^[3], was born in Asti, Italy, of a Jewish family prominent in business and politics. His father, Victor Artom, was a banker. His brother, Eugenio Artom, who served in the Italian Senate, was a lawyer and professor of history in Florence, Italy. Beginning the study of medicine at the University of Rome, Camillo Artom received an M.D. degree at the University of Padua in 1917. Following *World War I* ^[4] service with the Italian Alpine troops, in which he earned a lieutenant's rank and two decorations, he returned to the laboratory and classroom and was awarded a Ph.D. in physiology by the University of Messina in 1923 and a Ph.D. in biochemistry by the University of Palermo in 1926. After further studies at the universities of Amsterdam and Frankfurt, he received appointments as chairman of the department of biochemistry, first at the University Cagliari and in 1935 at the University of Palermo.



Dr. Camillo Artom and dean of the medical school, Dr. Coy C. Carpenter, at construction of Bowman Gray Medical School. Courtesy of Digital Forsyth.

^[5]The Mussolini government imposed increasing restrictions on Italian Jews, and in 1939 Artom migrated to Wake Forest as professor of biochemistry and chairman of the department in the School of Medical Sciences at *Wake Forest College* ^[3], bringing with him a reputation as "the outstanding biochemist that Italy has produced in the present generation." In 1941, Artom became head of the department of biochemistry at the *Bowman Gray School of Medicine* ^[6] at *Winston-Salem* ^[7]. In this position he continued until 1961; in 1963 he became professor emeritus, and he continued his research there until his death in 1970.

Artom's more than two hundred papers, mostly dealing with body fats, were published in the most prestigious of scientific journals, including *Nature* ^[8] and the *Annual Review of Biochemistry* ^[9]. One paper, published in 1939, was the first publication on the use of a radioisotope in the study of intermediary metabolism. His special field was lipid metabolism, dealing with the absorption of fat in food through its metabolism in the liver to its appearance in arterial



Image courtesy of Digital Forsyth.

^[10]Walls. Especially important was his investigation of the synthesis of phospho-lipids in the liver and his interest in the formation of lecithin in the liver. Artom's studies have had an important bearing on modern understanding of arteriosclerosis; he also did significant work on the incorporation of amino acids into fat-soluble compounds.

Artom was regarded as a fine teacher, and in 1963 the senior class of Bowman Gray dedicated to him their yearbook, *The Gray Matter* ^[2]. In 1968 he was awarded the first Medallion of Merit of Wake Forest University. He died in Winston-Salem and was buried in Asti, Italy.

In 1929 he married Bianca Ara of Venice, Italy. They had one son, George Victor. Artom was naturalized as a U.S. citizen in 1946.

References:

American Men of Science, 11th ed., vol. 1 (1965).

Irving E. Carlyle to Mrs. Albert D. Lasker, letter (23 Mar. 1966, copy in the possession of Mrs. Artom).

Dr. L. Emmett Holt to Dr. Coy C. Carpenter, letter (19 Oct. 1938, original in the possession of Dr. Carpenter but quoted in Carlyle to Lasker, above).

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Winston-Salem Journal-Sentinel, 9 May 1948, 24 Sept. 1967.

Winston-Salem Twin-City Sentinel, 1 Feb. 1968.

Additional Resources:

Camillo Artom Doing Research, WFU Libraries: <http://wakespace.lib.wfu.edu/jspui/handle/10339/15740> ^[11]

Camillo Artom Records at WFU Libraries:

<http://wakespace.lib.wfu.edu/xmlui/handle/10339/15717?show=full> ^[12]

<http://hdl.handle.net/10339/15740> ^[13]

Camillo Artom image WFU Libraries: <http://wakespace.lib.wfu.edu/jspui/handle/10339/15717> ^[14]

Camillo Artom Papers at WFU School of Medicines: <http://www.wakehealth.edu/Library/Collections/Camillo-Artom-Personal-Collection.htm> ^[15]

Camillo Artom in [WorldCat](#). ^[16]

Image Credits:

Bowman Gray School of Medicine. *Gray and White Matter*. Winston-Salem (N.C.): Wake Forest School of Medicine. 1963. <https://archive.org/details/graywhitematter1963bowm> ^[17] (accessed January 29, 2013).

Dr. Camillo Artom and dean of the medical school, Dr. Coy C. Carpenter, at construction of Bowman Gray Medical School. Courtesy of Digital Forsyth. Available from <http://www.digitalforsyth.org/photos/3478> ^[5] (accessed January 29, 2013).

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Authors:

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Origin - location:

Wake Forest University^[22]

From:

Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.^[23]

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