Galen in early modern English medicine: case-studies in history, pharmacology and surgery 1618-1794

Submitted by Lisa Charlotte Jarman, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Medical History, September 2013.

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(Signature) .............................................................................................................................
Abstract

This thesis examines the influence of Galen (b. 129 AD) on medicine in England between 1618 and 1794, approaching the study of his authority and the use of his work through three case-studies: histories of medicine, pharmacology, and surgery. The histories of medicine illustrate the variety of ways in which Galen is referred to, both as a historical figure, and as an ongoing contemporary influence. His importance in terms of accessing the knowledge of the ancients, and as a fixed point in time around which to discuss the history of medicine, and to situate other practitioners over a broad time period, underlines the significance of his role within medicine. Similarly, the pharmacological texts examined provide a more tangible sense of the influence of Galen, and their varied, but formulaic structures enable specific remedies to be traced over time and their corresponding associations and details compared between different editions. Identifying the role of Galen within surgical treatises also allows for a more theoretical aspect of surgery to be explored, providing a different perspective on an area more frequently portrayed as a manual art. The use of Galenic texts within each case-study, in particular the histories of medicine, demonstrates a significant and nuanced engagement with the content of his works, reiterating the importance of his contribution, and showing the value ascribed to the simplicity offered by past approaches. It is evident that a shift had occurred from the acceptance of ancient authority based on convention, to evaluating the simplicity and utility of information on an individual basis. The value ascribed to utility in the assessment of medical knowledge is evident throughout these texts, which also demonstrate the importance of the experience and observations of the practitioner in facilitating the ongoing and significant use of the influence of Galen.
# Table of Contents

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................2

TABLE OF CONTENTS .....................................................................................3

ILLUSTRATIONS ...............................................................................................5

APPENDICES ....................................................................................................6

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..................................................................................7

NOTES ON TRANSLATION ..............................................................................7

INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................8

Historiography .............................................................................................................................9

Sources .......................................................................................................................................21

Chapter outline ..........................................................................................................................23

CHAPTER 1: GALEN AND HISTORIES OF MEDICINE .........................25

Galen as preserving older knowledge ......................................................................................47

Galen as marker of time ............................................................................................................50

Galen as source: Galenic texts, citations and references .....................................................59
   References to specific Galenic texts .......................................................................................59
   General references to Galen as source, or to Galenic works .................................................84

Information about Galen ...........................................................................................................95
   Biography ..............................................................................................................................96
   Character .............................................................................................................................101
   Relationship to Hippocrates .................................................................................................105
   Medical system and approach .............................................................................................109
   Assessments and achievements ...........................................................................................111
   Negative perceptions and comments ....................................................................................116

Galen’s knowledge and perspective ......................................................................................121

Perceptions of the effect of Galen over time ..........................................................................135
   Ancient medicine after Galen ...............................................................................................136
   Arabic medicine and the effect of Galen .............................................................................142
   Medieval medicine and the effect of Galen .......................................................................152
   Renaissance and early modern medicine: the effect of Galen ..............................................157

Present use of Galen ..............................................................................................................164

State of medicine .....................................................................................................................166
CHAPTER 2: GALEN AND PHARMACOLOGY

Galen and the 'official' Pharmacopoeia ................................................................. 189
  General references to Galen in translations of the Pharmacopoeia .......................... 191

Galen and popular translations of the Pharmacopoeia ............................................. 198
  General references to Galen in popular translations of the Pharmacopoeia .......... 199

Galenic substances: 1618 and beyond ................................................................. 212
  'Vina Medicata' (Medicated wines) ................................................................. 212
  'Syruipi' (Syrups) ...................................................................................... 219
  'Species sive Pulveres' (Species or Powders) ............................................... 223
  'Electuaria' (Electuaries) and 'Pilulæ' (Pills) ................................................. 227
  'Trochisci' (Troches, or pastilles) ................................................................ 234
  'Unguenta' (Ointments) and 'Emplastra et Cerata' (Plasters and Wax plasters) .. 238

Galenic texts: citations and references .................................................................. 245
  De Antidotis, On Antidotes ......................................................................... 245
  De Compositione Medicamentorum per Genera and De Compositione Medicamentorum secundum Locos ................................................................. 252
  De Sanitate Tuenda, De Simplicium Medicamentorum [Temperamentis Ac] Facultatibus, and De Methodo Medendi .......................................................... 262

CHAPTER 3: GALEN, THE ANCIENTS AND EARLY MODERN SURGERY

Galen and early modern surgery ......................................................................... 297

Galen and the early modern medical framework ................................................... 304

The role of ancient knowledge in early modern surgical theory ......................... 314

The continuing relevance of ancient knowledge in early modern surgery .......... 319

Approaches to the reconciliation of ancient and modern knowledge .................... 327

Understanding changes to surgical theory and 'errors' in past practice ............... 338

The role of modern advances in surgery ............................................................... 354

CONCLUSION ...................................................................................................... 371

APPENDICES ...................................................................................................... 381
  Appendix A .................................................................................................. 381
  Appendix B .................................................................................................. 383
  Appendix C ................................................................................................. 419
  Appendix D .................................................................................................. 440
  Appendix E .................................................................................................. 449

BIBLIOGRAPHY ................................................................................................. 451

Primary sources ................................................................................................. 451

Secondary sources ............................................................................................ 462
Illustrations

Figure 1 ......................................................................................................................... 96
*Detail of contents page from Francis Clifton*

Figure 2 ......................................................................................................................... 101
*Section of footnote from Francis Clifton, showing use of Greek and allusion to Hippocrates*

Figure 3 ......................................................................................................................... 148
*Detail from William Black’s ‘Chronological chart’ showing 900-1000 AD*

Figure 4 ......................................................................................................................... 254
*Section of footnote from Henry Pemberton, showing use of Greek and Galenic text*

Figure 5 ......................................................................................................................... 257
*Section of footnote from Henry Pemberton, showing use of Greek and Galenic text*

Figure 6 ......................................................................................................................... 258
*Section from William Salmon, showing part of the pharmacological entry for ‘Ceratum Galeni, Galen’s Cerecloth.’*

Figure 7 ......................................................................................................................... 261
*Section from William Salmon, showing the pharmacological entry for ‘Philonium Tarsense Galeni’*

Figure 8 ......................................................................................................................... 268
*Section from Thomas Gale, showing the title page of Book 5*

Figure 9 ......................................................................................................................... 347
*Two sections from Percivall Pott, showing the various instruments mentioned with regard to the treatment of fractures of the cranium*

Figure 10 ......................................................................................................................... 386
*Section of footnote from John Barker, showing use of Greek and Galenic text*

Figure 11 ......................................................................................................................... 420
*Section of footnote from John Barker, showing use of Greek and Galenic text*

Figure 12 ......................................................................................................................... 422
*Section of footnote from John Barker, showing use of Greek and Galenic text*

Figure 13 ......................................................................................................................... 423
*Section of footnote from John Barker, showing use of Greek and Hippocratic Aphorism*

Figure 14 ......................................................................................................................... 433
*Section of footnote from Clifton Wintringham, showing use of Greek and Galenic text*
Appendices

Appendix A  Galen as source – summary of Galenic works referenced

This table shows the titles (in Latin and English) of all the different Galenic works that are mentioned within the early modern texts studied, and also shows in which of the other Appendix documents they are discussed.

Appendix B  Galen as source – table of references and citations

Galenic texts with English translation

These tables of citations and references show where Galen is utilised as a source, and link each individual reference to the specific Galenic text. They are arranged in order of the number of times each text is mentioned in the early modern works, and then by the order in which they appear in Kühn.

Appendix C  Galen as source – table of references and citations

Galenic texts without English translation

These tables of citations and references show where Galen is utilised as a source, relating to texts not currently available in English, which limits the possibility of verifying the reference. They are arranged in order of the number of times each text is mentioned in the early modern works, and then by the order in which they appear in Kühn.

Appendix D  Galen as source – summary table of references and citations shown in Appendices B and C

These tables summarise the content of Appendices B and C, showing the Galenic texts referenced, alongside the authors mentioning them and brief additional information, including the specific books and chapters where this is provided.

Appendix E  The table entitled ‘A CHRONOLOGICAL CHART OF MEDICAL AND SURGICAL AUTHORS’ within William Black’s An historical sketch of medicine and surgery (1782).

This provides a great deal of information regarding the broad narrative of the history of medicine, and shows the relative dates of activity and general area of medicine of notable practitioners from 400 BC to 1800 AD.
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