

Galen *ad multos annos*

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on demonstrating the weakness of the traditional date for Galen's death. It shows that there are good grounds from both within the Galenic Corpus and outside it for thinking that he lived at least until he was eighty. Information from Byzantine and Arab scholars from the sixth century onwards suggests that he had died in the reign of Caracalla, perhaps in 216.

BIBLID [0211-9536(1995) 15; 25-39]

Fecha de aceptación: 14 de marzo de 1995

When did Galen die? The standard answer has been to repeat the conclusions of the entry in the *Suda* lexicon, written about 1000 (1): Galen, the most distinguished physician, a Pergamene, lived in the reigns of the emperors Marcus, Commodus and Pertinax in Rome. The son of a land-surveyor and architect, Nicon, he wrote much on medicine and philosophy, besides grammar and rhetoric. Because they are universally famous, I thought it inappropriate to draw up a list of them here. He died aged seventy.

On first examination, this biographical account has much in its favour. There are no obvious errors, and, although Nicon is never specifically called a land-surveyor, *geometres*, in our present Galenic Corpus, this could easily have been deduced from the references to his father's skill and education in architecture and geometry, V 42, VI 755 K., or preserved in

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(1) *Suidae Lexicon*, ed. A. ADLER, vol. I, Leipzig, Teubner, 1928, s.v. Galenos. H. FLACH, *Biographigraeci qui ab Hesychio pendent*, Berlin, S. Calvary, 1883, no. 160.

a treatise now lost to us (2). But two features are worth noting. The first, and for the purposes of this essay, the most interesting, is that this short biography must derive from an earlier account, and one that was deliberately abbreviated: the personal «I thought it inappropriate» is a rare, if not unique, comment in this lexicon, and implies that a whole section was lifted bodily from an earlier source (3). Ada Adler, the Suda's most recent editor, suggested in her preface that this was the *Lives* by Hesychius of Miletus, who compiled a series of short biographies of learned and famous men at the end of the sixth century, a suggestion that has been widely accepted. Secondly, apart from the references to Nicon and to Galen's age at death, all the information presented here is taken from Galen's *De libris propriis*, XIX 8-48 K. His books are described in the order in which they are recorded there, and the final comment on his writings on grammar and rhetoric derives from the heading to its final section, XIX 48 K. The absence of Septimius Severus from the list of emperors under whom Galen lived is significant, for in this treatise the only living emperors mentioned are Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, and Pertinax (4). The date of death must come from another source, obviously not from Galen himself directly, and appears here almost as if tacked on to the end of an earlier entry.

This entry in the Suda lexicon is thus not without its merits: it is, at least in part, based on the evidence of Galen himself, and, in all likelihood, it derives from a much earlier biography, perhaps one written at the end of the sixth century. Hesychius may also have been the source for the entry in the *Chronography* of George Syncellus, which was written about 810:

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- (2) References to Galen are by the volume and page in the edition of C. G. Kühn, *Claudii Galeni Opera omnia*, Leipzig, C. G. Knobloch, 1821-1832, repr. Hildesheim, G. Olms, 1964, = K.
 - (3) Rather as large sections from Isidore's *Life of Damascius*, ed. R. ASMUS, *Das Leben des Philosophen Isidoros von Damaskios aus Damaskos*. Leipzig, Teubner, 1911, are incorporated verbatim in the Suda's entries on medicine and philosophy in the later fifth century. The comment about the need to abbreviate was omitted in one of the oldest manuscripts, V.
 - (4) The co-rule and death of Lucius Verus in 169 is mentioned at XIX 18 K., but the compiler of this entry could well have singled out only those emperors whom he thought Galen had served.

Galen, by birth a Pergamene, a most excellent doctor, flourished under Marcus Aurelius, also called Verus (5).

But there were other stories circulating in Byzantium that gave different dates for Galen's life. Michael Glykas in the twelfth century had to warn his readers not to believe in the popular story that Galen had discussed with Mary Magdalene in Rome Christ's healing of the man born blind, John, chapter 9, and had explained to her that Jesus was well acquainted with the healing properties of mineral earths. Learned chronographers, like Tzetzes (d. 1080-1085) and Joel (active after 1204), declared that Galen had lived into the reign of Caracalla, i.e. 211/2-217, a date that is incompatible with that in the Suda. Their source, although not necessarily their only or, indeed, their oldest one, was the *Chronicle* of George Hamartolus (d. ca. 870), whose entry reads as follows: After Antoninus there reigned Antoninus Caracalla for 26 years, and he was killed in warfare. In his time there was also Galen the doctor (7).

George's account is a mess. Caracalla did not reign for 26 years, and in his previous entry on Antoninus (whom he seems to see as different from Caracalla), George reports that this emperor reigned with his brother Geta for a few months before killing him, ruled for a further six years, and was then murdered by his own household. This discrepancy between the years could well be illusory, the result of a simple copyist's error (8), but it is also clear that George was himself confused over the names of the emperors and was also trying to reconcile two different sources for the same event, the murder of Caracalla in 216 by his own officers while on campaign against the Persians. George's claim that Galen lived into the

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- (5) George Syncellus, *Ecloga chronographica*, ed. A. A. MOSSHAMMER, Leipzig, Teubner, 1984, p. 431.
- (6) Michael Glykas, *Annales*, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn, 1836, p. 430; Tzetzes, *Chiliades*, ed. P.A.M. LEONE, Naples, Libreria scientifica editrice, 1968, XI 998-XII 28; *Epistulae*, ed. P.A.M. LEONE, Leipzig, Teubner, p. 121; Joel, *Chronographia*, ed. F. IADEVAIN, Messina, Edas, 1979, 707-709.
- (7) George Hamartolus (= George the Monk), *Chronicle*, ed. P. WIRTH, Stuttgart, Teubner, 1978, p. 480.
- (8) ETH Z becomes ETH HZ, which becomes ETH KZ. But if this was a scribal error, it had certainly entered the tradition by the time of Joel, who also gives the number of years as twenty-six.

reign of Caracalla could be the result of a similar misunderstanding, especially because Commodus, Caracalla, and Elagabalus as emperors were all styled M. Aurelius Antoninus. But in the Greek tradition as a whole, and in the Byzantine chronographers in particular, the first two are distinguished as Commodus and Caracalla. Whatever his uncertainty over Antoninus, George Hamartolus was clear in his own mind on the difference between Commodus and Caracalla: whether his sources were so precise is another question. Nonetheless, the possibility must remain that the transfer of Galen to the reign of Caracalla was not simply the result of George's own misunderstandings.

The change of date is all the more intriguing in the light of the almost universal agreement among our oriental sources that Galen died in his eighties, perhaps as old as 87, a date that, in this tradition, goes back to the early tenth century, to the *Lives of the physicians* by Ishaq ibn Hunain (9). Ishaq, no mean scholar himself and a prominent translator of Galen, claimed to have taken his information from a *Chronology of the physicians* by John the Grammarian of Alexandria, an enigmatic authority, who perhaps lived in the sixth century and whom some have sought to identify with the well-known John Philoponus (10). Ishaq's own chronology is far from faultless, and there are signs of evident confusion over names and dates, although some of this may have been the result of a process of transmission that has seen most of his history preserved only as an epitome. Nonetheless, he is ostensibly sure of the dates of Galen's life, with which John had ended his own chronology. If the epitome is to be trusted, and there is no sound reason not to do so, the final section of John's book concluded with a reference to Alexander of Aphrodisias and his relationship with Galen. Just when John's book was composed is more controversial. Fritz Zimmermann drew attention to features which, he thought, indicated that it was a

(9) Variants for this year, e.g. 88, can be explained by mistaking an age for the year; even the incorrect supposition of Sliwa, *De patriarchis nestorianorum*, ed. H. GISMONDI, Rome, 1897, I. p. 3, that he died in year five of the reign of Commodus, if changed to year five of Caracalla, i.e. 216, would then also give 87 for Galen's age at death.

(10) ROSENTHAL, E. (1954). Ishaq b. Hunayn's Ta'rikh al-atibba. *Oriens*, 7, 55-80 (reproduced, with identical pagination, as chapter II in his *Science and medicine in Islam*, Aldershot, Variorum, 1990). For the date, see p. 76, and for Ishaq's source, p. 75.

pseudonymous production by a Nestorian scholar writing about 800, but he also admitted that both later Byzantine and Arabic scholars were aware of some of the problems revealed in Ishaq's chronology, notably his synchronism of Galen and Christ, and that this pointed instead to a joint late-Greek source, most likely one composed at Alexandria, or at least dependent on Alexandrian sources (11). There is a more serious objection to Zimmermann's theory. Much of this *History of the physicians* goes back directly to comments, quotations, and ideas found in the Galenic Corpus, and, as Rosenthal himself noted, there are parallels between the account in Ishaq and the abundant antiquarian information contained in a *Commentary on the Hippocratic Oath*, ascribed, I believe correctly, to Galen. This work was not translated into Syriac or Arabic until the mid ninth century, by Hunayn, and into Arabic shortly after that, by Hubaysh, and it is unlikely that it had been earlier available to the largely Syriac speaking Nestorians (12). John must have taken his information direct from the Greek, a strong pointer to an Alexandrian rather than a N. Syrian or Persian source. This contention would be further strengthened if it could be proved that the Byzantine chronological tradition first represented by George Hamartolus, with its reference to Caracalla, also went back to John (13).

So far we have identified two different dates for the death of Galen in Byzantium, one first appearing in the eighth century, the other in the tenth, but both possibly to be traced back to scholars working in the sixth century. On a *priori* grounds there is little or nothing to choose between them. Neither John the Grammarian nor Hesychius of Miletus was incapable of error and confusion, yet each was a man of erudition, energy, and ability. How, then, can the historian decide between these two dates? In

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- (11) ZIMMERMANN, F. (1975). The chronology of Ishaq ibn Hunain's Ta'rih al'atibba. *In: Hunayn ibn Ishaq: Collection d'articles publiées à l'occasion du onzième centenaire de sa mort*, Leiden, Brill, pp. 324-330.
- (12) ROSENTHAL, E. (1954), *op. cit.* (fn. 10), p. 56; *cf.* his 'An ancient commentary on the Hippocratic Oath'. *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 30, 1956, 52-87, at p. 55 (reprinted, with identical pagination, as chapter III in *Science and medicine in Islam*).
- (13) GERO, S. (1990). Galen on the Christians. *Orientalia Christiana periodica*, 56, 395-439, discusses the Arabic evidence, adding further references to Galen's death, and doubts the equivalence of John the Grammarian and John Philoponus. The confusion between the various rulers named Antoninus is found in Arabic sources as well as in George Hamartolus, although this need not point to a joint source.

the rest of this paper I shall employ three separate arguments, each of which, by itself, offers considerable support for the later date, and which, taken together, create an insuperable obstacle to believing that Galen died at the age of seventy.

In 1984, I argued that a passage in an Arabic author, as-Sijistani, who died around 985, incorporated a quotation from Alexander of Aphrodisias to the effect that Galen had wasted eighty years of his life before coming to the conclusion that he knew nothing (14). I suggested there that Alexander was alluding to Galen's philosophical autobiography, *De propriis placitis*, in which, in several places, and especially in chapters 2 and 3, Galen emphasised his agnosticism about many of the standard philosophical topics of the day, which were often phrased in the form of 'either/or' questions, inviting assent or repudiation (15). Galen, for good reasons, rejected this simplistic approach to knowledge, repeating again and again that he saw no way of deciding without solid proof between what he saw merely as assertions. A hostile opponent could easily take this agnosticism for a confession of ignorance, an opportunity unlikely to have been missed by Alexander the Aristotelian, especially as he is known to have opposed Galen on a variety of philosophical issues.

But has as-Sijistani preserved a genuine fragment of Alexander, or is it, as Hilary Wiesner and Silvia Fazzo have suggested, merely a piece of biographical fiction intended to link two contemporaries together in a neat opposition, philosopher versus physician, Platonist versus Aristotelian, and so on? (16) It is true that the Greek Alexander rarely refers to Galen by name, and equally true that in the treatises against Galen's views on motion and on possibility, parts of which are preserved only in Arabic, Alexander's

(14) NUTTON, V. (1984). Galen in the eyes of his contemporaries. *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 58, 315-324 (reprinted, with identical pagination, as ch. III. In: *From Democedes to Harvey*, London, Variorum, 1988).

(15) MANSFELD J. (1990). Doxography and dialectic. In: W. Haase (ed.). *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, Teil II, Principat, 4. Teilband, Philosophie*, Berlin and New York, W. De Gruyter, pp. 3.057-3.229.

(16) FAZZO, S.; WIESNER, H. *Alexandre contre Galien*, an unpublished paper delivered at a Conference *Perspectives médiévales*, held in 1993 at the Institut du Moyen Age, Paris. I am grateful to the authors for letting me see a draft of their paper, which corrects some of my earlier views.

opponent is almost always anonymous. It could indeed be, as Wiesner and Fazzo argue, that the titles of these treatises were added by later scribes already familiar with the story of a quarrel between the two men; bibliography responding to fiction. But not every reference to Galen is an editorial assertion, a translator's attempt at clarification, or a scribal mistake (17), and the closer in time the earliest Arabic descriptions of a debate between the two men are moved to the age in which their works first became available in Arabic, the more likely it is that these descriptions have a basis in texts rather than in sheer invention. Ishaq's source, John the Grammarian, had also spoken of Alexander in connection with Galen, which would take knowledge of this link back probably to the sixth century (18). Besides, the date implied by as-Sijistani, i.e. that Galen lived at least to 209/210, is unusual in that it corresponds to neither of the two dates of death under discussion here. Its singularity is a point in its favour. But, for the moment, let it be conceded that this quotation forms part of a late antique attempt to depict the doctrinal differences between Alexander and Galen in terms of a personal quarrel, and that it may have been one of the sources, if not the source, that suggested to a later biographer that Galen had lived beyond the canonical three score years and ten.

My second argument relates to the chronology of Galen's writings, which, as far as the Severan period is concerned, has not been studied carefully for over half a century. Although Galen was a prolific author, there are physical limits to what a man can write or dictate, and the more treatises that have to be placed in the Severan period, the more likely it is that the traditional death date has to be moved later and later. In his fundamental survey of Galenic chronology, Ilberg listed seventeen titles that he thought were written then, including all of *De locis affectis*, the two tracts *De compositione medicamentorum secundum genera* and *secundum locos*, and the later books of the *Methodus medendi* and *De temperamentis et facultatibus simplicium medicamentorum* (19). Bardong, in his revi-

(17) RESCHER, N.; MARMURA, M. E. (1965). *Alexander against Galen on motion*, Islamabad, Islamic Research Institute: for the mention of Galen's name in the text of the manuscript, see fols. 64a20, 67a1, and the quotation from Galen on possibility, p. 69.

(18) ROSENTHAL, E. (1954), *op. cit.* (fn. 10), p. 79.

(19) ILBERG, J. (1896) *Über die Schriftstellerei des Klaudios Galenos, III*, *Rheinisches Museum*,

sion of Ilberg, added to them the last books of *Administrationes anatomicae* (20). Certainly from this period are also *De propriis placitis* (Galen's last work), *De publice dictis sub Pertinace*, *De moribus*, which mentions the conspiracy of Perennis against Commodus in 185, and *De animi peccatorum dignotione et cura*, which cites the latter work (21). More questionable are the dates of the commentary on *De natura hominis*, that on *De aeris, aquis, locis*, and *Adversus Julianum*, all of which are likely to postdate 189 (22). In my opinion, space has to be found also for *De theriaca, ad Pisonem*, and the commentary on the Hippocratic Oath, which is not mentioned in *De libris propriis* but which was certainly written by a learned man of the time who was very familiar with Pergamum (23). Besides, we cannot a priori exclude from this period at least some of the treatises which are, as yet, undatable or which are now lost to us. Although Galen was a prolific author, this list of works written in a busy (and, in political terms, confused) time of life is one that can be squeezed only with the utmost of difficulty into the years from 193 to 200. Some of these works have an even tighter fit: *De antidotis*, so Simon Swain argues in his forthcoming book, is unlikely to have been written before 197 (24), and the way in which Galen refers to Severus and to the fact that he was forced to use stocks of material going back to Trajan or Hadrian, XIV 65 K, implies that some time has elapsed since then. The later *De antidotis* is placed, the later one must put *De libris propriis* and the later still goes *De propriis placitis*. Galenic chronology is elastic, but not so elastic as to hold all these works in the same package, amounting in total to a minimum of 3300 full pages in

n. F., 51, p. 196 (reprinted, Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974, p. 90).

- (20) BARDONG, K. (1941). Beiträge zur Hippokrates- und Galenforschung. *Nachrichten von der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, phil.-hist. Kl.*, p. 640.
- (21) WALZER, R. (1962). *Greek into Arabic*, Oxford, B. Cassirer, p. 144, n. 7, although his supposition that the tract was written between 185 and 192 is unlikely, since Galen would have been extremely foolish to remark favourably then on the steadfast behaviour of the slaves of the chief conspirator.
- (22) See BARDONG, K. (1941), *op. cit.* (fn. 20), p. 639.
- (23) STROHMAIER, G. (1970). Asklepios und das Ei. In: R. Stiehl; H. E. Stier (eds.). *Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte und deren Nachleben, Festschrift für Franz Altheim, Band II*, Berlin, W. de Gruyter, pp. 143-153.
- (24) *Hellenism and Empire*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996. I am grateful to Dr. Swain for letting me see a copy of the relevant pages while in draft form.

Kühn, all to be written within at most half a dozen years of a busy Roman practice (25).

But the key to resolving the whole problem of date rests on an investigation of the authenticity of the tract *De theriaca ad Pisonem*. Here is a text securely dated to the second half of the reign of Severus, which, if genuinely by Galen, would resolve once and for all the choice between the two traditional dates. As Anton von Premerstein proved almost a century ago, the account of the accident to the son of Piso during a performance of the ceremonial *Lusus Troiae*, XIV 212 K., can refer only to the secular games of 204 (26). If this work was written by Galen, he must have lived for at least five years beyond 199.

At first sight, those who defend the authenticity of this treatise face overwhelming odds. The modern editor of the Arabic version, Lutz Richter-Bernburg, boldly stated in his title that this work was not by Galen, and Konrad Schubring, in his bibliographical introduction to volume XX of the reprint of Kühn, bluntly called it «unecht» (27). The learned Ackermann, in the biographical and bibliographical introduction to Kühn's edition, confessed that he could not easily see how and when Galen had written this book under Severus, pointing to what he considered stylistic anomalies — an absence of references to others and to *De antidotis* (or if that tract was the later one, any mention therein of *Ad Pisonem*), exuberant flattery, lack of organisation, and a style more like that of a young man (28). Those modern writers who defended its authenticity, either, like Coturri, argued that it was a juvenile work by Galen — a theory that went back to the sixteenth century and had long been rightly discarded by serious scholars — or, like Watson and Bowersock, were apparently unaware of the consequen-

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- (25) Calculations are made from the lists in Ilberg and Bardong, with the additions mentioned above: I have added up the pages in K., and allowed 65 pages for each book not included in that edition. I have not included figures for such lost tracts as the genuine *De remediis parabilibus*, which is also to be dated to this period.
- (26) PREMERSTEIN, A. von (1898). *Das Troiaspiel und die Tribuni celerum*. *Festschrift Otto Benndorf*, Vienna, pp. 261-266. See also FUCHS, H. (1990). *Lusus Troiae*. Diss., University of Cologne, pp. 58-64.
- (27) RICHTER-BERNBURG, L. (1969). *Eine arabische version der pseudogalenischen Schrift De theriaca ad Pisonem*. Diss., Göttingen; K. Schubring, XX p. XI.VII K.
- (28) ACKERMANN, J. C. G. In: I, p. XXXVII-XXXVIII K.

ces of their decision (29). The most vigorous of the older champions of authenticity, Justinus Klass, who rightly dismissed the arguments of Ackermann as «trivial» and who cited von Premerstein's article, nevertheless still persisted in attempting to date this tract to before 199 (30). Even Simon Swain, who has given good grounds for believing in authenticity, or at least demonstrated the weakness of the alternative view, has not fully set out all the arguments in support of Galenic authorship.

But, although many have claimed that this tract is not by Galen, there has been no detailed argumentation in favour of this position since Ackermann. Richter-Bernburg merely took over the opinion of a friend, Friedrich Holtiegel, who was editing the Greek text for his Göttingen dissertation, a dissertation, as far as I am aware, never completed or published, and Schubring gave no grounds for his opinion. Ilberg, who considered it spurious, found it very hard to see when this book was written, an argument he almost certainly took over directly from Ackermann, whose objection rested more on style and tone than on substance (31). None of these scholars appreciated the significance of the reference to the *Lusus Troiae*, and, if they had, it would have only confirmed them in their view that this tract was spurious.

But if, as I have argued so far, the arguments in favour of Galen dying in 199/200 are far from conclusive, one cannot use that date to disprove the authenticity of a tract that may be by Galen. Conversely, if it can be shown that no one other than Galen is likely to have been its author, the presence of a secure date in it provides a pointer to when Galen may have died.

If we turn to the *Ad Pisonem*, and try to characterise the author without prejudice, we can draw up quite a detailed biography of him. He had

- (29) COTURRI, E. (1959). *Galeno, De theriaca ad Pisonem*, Florence, Biblioteca della Rivista di Storia delle Scienze Mediche e Naturali; WATSON, G. (1966). *Theriac and Mithridatium*, London, The Wellcome Historical Medical Library, p. 69, apparently puts both it and *De antidotis* in the 190s, pp. 3, 69; BOWERSOCK, G. W. (1969). *Greek sophists in the Roman Empire*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, p. 84 (genuine), cf. p. 63 (Galen dies in 199).
- (30) KLASS, J. (1950). In: R. PAULY, R.; G. WISSOWA, G.; KROLL, J.; ZIEGLER, K. (edd.). *Realenzyklopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Band XX.2, Stuttgart, A. Druckermüller, cols. 1802-3.
- (31) ILBERG, J. (1896), *op. cit.* (fn. 19), p. 89.

served both Marcus Aurelius and 'our present emperors', XIV 216, 217 K.; he was familiar with the court, XIV 218 K.; he was working in Rome in 204, XIV 212-4 K.; and, since some time has elapsed since then, he is likely to have remained there for some time. He knows some Roman history, especially the famous stories of Hannibal, Cleopatra, and Mithridates, XIV 231, 235-7, 283-4 K. although his outlook is Greek — it is the Romans who are 'the natives', XIV 244 K. He is a learned man, pedantic as well as garrulous, with a passion for odd details, such as the name of the slave of Mithridates, Bistocus, XIV 284 K. (32), and for not entirely appropriate quotations from Homer and Euripides' *Hecuba*, lines 568-9, XIV 225, 236 K. He is a Platonist, XIV 213 K., who almost worships Hippocrates, XIV 228, 252, 281, 285 K., and who vigorously opposes the Methodists and their puerile precursor Asclepiades, XIV 223-4, 250-5, 277-9 K. He has been for some time at 'great Alexandria', XIV 237 K., cf. for the adjective, VI 612 K., where he has had the opportunity to observe several judicial executions. His medical successes are many and various, although they have been at times frustrated by the failure of a patient and his relative to follow his instructions, XIV 286-7. He often remarks on the amazing works of nature, or on things that, with proper knowledge, are no longer so remarkable, XIV 234, 239, 243, 246, 253-4 K. He tells a good story, but he is also aware from time to time that he is going on too long, XIV 242 K. — although that does not prevent him from giving quotations in full, XIV 239, 233, or for making this tract one of the longest single books in the whole Galenic Corpus. Faced with these biographical details, all of which have parallels in works that are assuredly Galenic, one can hardly fail to recognise Galen in them, or else a doctor whose career was remarkably similar to his, even down to its longevity.

Doctrinal arguments strengthen the case for Galenic authorship. In chapter 3, XIV 223-4 K., the author discusses the effect of drugs, and particularly the way in which some act by a property of their total substance to remove a specific humour from the body; e.g. scammony purges bile. This is not something random; the taking of just any drug will not remove some of the watery fluid from the belly in a case of dropsy. But just as a

(32) Given the poor state of the text as presented in Kühn, it would be dangerous to conclude from the name of the killer of Mithridates, Bistocus, XIV 284 K., that Galen was following a tradition different from that of Appian, *Mithrid.* 111, and Livy, *Per.* 102, who call him Bitoitus/Bituitus.

magnet attracts only iron, so some drugs must have a property that affects one humour only. This is a far simpler and more convincing explanation than that offered by Asclepiades, who believed that while fluid in general was removed during purgation, it was only during the actual process of excretion that the fluid was changed into the specific form of bile or water. As Galen asks rhetorically, «Who could believe that the substance of the humour to be excreted was created only with the taking of the drug?». Asclepiades is then characterised as «childish», «vain-glorious», and «a slave to dogma». In his final work, *De propriis placitis*, chapter 12, Galen singles out this argument as one that runs throughout his writings and is one of the indications of authenticity (33). It is found elsewhere in the Galenic Corpus: in the fragment *De medicamentis purgativis*; in his attack on Julianus; in *De facultatibus naturalibus*; and in *De atra bile*; and the allusion in *De propriis placitis* needs not be just to this tract (34). It is, of course, a view that could have been held by other opponents of Asclepiades, but, as John Vallance has pointed out, the further attack on Asclepiades' ideas on drugs in section 11: XIV 250-5 K. corresponds so closely in tone, argument, and somewhat unscrupulous rhetoric to everything else in Galen's writings about Asclepiades that one would be hard-pressed to deny Galenic authorship (35).

A second argument focusses on the poem of Andromachus that is quoted at length in both this treatise and in *De antidotis*, but which has not been printed in full in both places since Chartier. As Ernst Heitsch pointed out in the prolegomena to his edition of the poem, the manuscripts of the two tracts differ among themselves as to where they contain the poem (36). Sometimes it is presented in *De antidotis* alone, sometimes only in *Ad*

(33) Galen, *De propriis placitis*, 12, in my forthcoming edition: «Et quidam uident quod natura medicine non solum attrahit unum humorum coporis sed attrahit omnes humores a uenis equaliter et postea conuertit eos in naturam aut in ipsam. et ego locutus sum super hiis non bis sed pluries... et monstraui quod unaqueque istarum medicinarum purgatiuarum habet uirtutem per quam attrahit aliquem humorem.»

(34) Respectively, XI 324-35 K.; XVIII A 287-96 K.; II 40-2 K.; V 128-30 K.

(35) VALLANCE, J. T. (1990). *The lost theory of Asclepiades of Bithynia*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, pp. 38-39.

(36) HEITSCH, E. (1963). Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu Andromachos, Markellos von Side und zum Carmen de viribus herbarum, *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, phil.-hist. Kl. 2*, pp. 26-39.

Pisonem, which raises the question as to whether there has not been a substantial interpolation in one or other tract. But in neither instance is it at all easy to remove the poem from its context, and replace it by a casual reference. In *De antidotis* one would have not only to tidy up the passages immediately preceding and following, XIV 32-42 K., but also the various later references back to the words of the poem, XIV 51, 54 K. In *Ad Pisonem* the poem is embedded even more firmly in its surroundings, XIV 232-3 K., and there is at least one reference back to the wording of the poem, XIV 259 K. The Arabic version of this tract takes the poem as an Appendix, and it is possible that its Syriac or Greek exemplar had the same arrangement (37). But the unique manuscript of the Arabic translation still preserves the traces of its original order, and the careful reader can easily see where the transposition was made (38). Unless there has been reorganisation on an unusually large scale, I conclude that the poem stood originally in both treatises. If that is so, we have a further strong case for Galen's authorship, for not only is the poem cited at length in both places, but, so Heitsch reports, the textual variants between the two versions in the various manuscripts are negligible. Not only would both Galen and his putative *alter ego* have had the same passion for quotation, but their memories, or their written copies, would have been equally good. The author of *De theriaca ad Pamphilianum*, by contrast, although of Severan date and repeating much of the same information, does not quote Andromachus verbatim, and his version of the theriac differs slightly in its details.

There are, I suggest, no good grounds for supposing that *Ad Pisonem* is spurious, and an overwhelming case in favour of authenticity. There can be little doubt that this text was written sometime after 204, but probably before 211, by which time Aelius Antipater, who is lavishly praised at XIV 218 K., had fallen out of favour (39). If so, the date of death reported in

(37) RICHTER-BERNBURG, L. (1969), *op. cit.* (fn. 27), pp. 103-113, a good example of how a technique valid for translating scientific prose was unable to cope with verse.

(38) *Ibidem*, p. 69. I suspect that the transposition was made after the translation, thus removing from main body of the text what is a difficult, and in part irrelevant, section. Its presence as an Appendix would also explain why some thought that Galen was the author of the poem, and why some Arabic authors refer to this tract as *On theriac, to Caesar*, see RICHTER-BERNBURG, L. (1969), *op. cit.* (fn. 27), pp. 6-8.

(39) RÉMY, B. (1989). *Les carrières sénatoriales dans les provinces romaines d'Anatolie au Haut*

the Suda cannot be right. Secondly, and independent of the authenticity or otherwise of *Ad Pisonem*, a consideration of the number of works that Galen wrote in the Severan period indicates that this productivity can hardly be reconciled with a date of death for Galen in 199/200. Thirdly, there are, admittedly fallible, traces of a tradition within the Greek world, perhaps deriving from Alexandria, that placed the death of Galen in the reign of Caracalla. Together with the passage already noted in al-Sijistani, they all independently suggest that we should abandon the Suda's dating, in favour of one several years later. With the abandonment of that dating goes also the main opposition to the date suggested in the Arabic tradition, the year 216 A.D., although how and why John the Grammarian and Ishaq ibn Hunain came to that conclusion must, as yet, remain unsolved.

One final hypothesis can be ventured in order to explain the discrepancy between the Suda's date and that of the Arab tradition. In the chronology of John the Grammarian as reported by Ishaq, the last entry, on Galen, reports that he had lived for seventeen years as a child and student, and for seventy as a scholar and teacher (40). This division between the days of apprenticeship and those of maturity, is a commonplace in this type of biography, in both Greek and Arabic, and is applied by Ishaq and his source to the eight physicians who make up the list of great names. In large part it is purely imaginary fiction, but there is a grain of truth in its accounts of Parmenides, Plato and Galen that can be traced back to writings associated with them. For Galen, the crucial turning point came with the decision taken by his father when Galen was in his seventeenth year to follow the injunction given him in a clear dream by Asclepius and set his son to study medicine as well as philosophy, XIX 59 K. A biographer could easily have misinterpreted this change and assumed that Galen began his life as a doctor and teacher then, especially as his earliest writings were composed when he was still a student with Satyrus in Pergamum, XIX 16 K. Since, as has already been noted, there is the strong possibility that

Empire, 31 av. J.C. — 234 ap. J.-C., Istanbul and Paris, Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes, pp. 111-112; LEUNISSEN, P. M. M. (1989). *Konsuln und Konsulare in der Zeit von Commodus bis Severus Alexander (180-235 n. Chr.)*, Amsterdam, J. C. Gieben, p. 281. A date of composition around 207 would fit the information Galen gives on Antipater.

(40) ROSENTHAL, E. (1954), *op. cit.* (fn. 10), p. 76.

the same chronological tradition was as accessible in tenth-century Byzantium as in the Arab world, it would have been easy for a hurried compiler of a lexicon to have mistaken the seventy years of Galen's active life as a scholar and doctor for his whole life-span (41). If this suggestion is correct, then not only do we have an explanation for the anomalous date but further confirmation that the chronology familiar in the East was also known in Byzantium, and, what is even more important, that there was no alternative date of death proposed in any independent source.

This paper has set out to demonstrate the weakness of the traditional date for Galen's death, and it has shown that Galen must have lived at least into the middle of the first decade of the third century. There are good grounds, too, for thinking that he lived at least until he was eighty, and there was agreement among later scholars, from at least the sixth century onwards, that he had died in the reign of Caracalla, perhaps in 216. Whether they were right to make that decision cannot be settled for certain: dead men rarely announce their decease beforehand, and we do not know what information was available to a biographer in the sixth century on which to base a judgment, although the possibility cannot be excluded that it was founded on some contemporary or near-contemporary text. The answer to the question posed at the beginning of this essay can now be answered. The bold may adopt the date in the Oriental tradition, *ca.* 216; the scrupulous may prefer to put 'after 209' or, even, 'after 204'; only the faint-hearted, or the foolish, will still believe solely in the fateful year 199/200.

(41) This explanation was suggested to me in conversation by Prof. M. D. Grmek.