

CALL FOR PAPERS

Galen's Epistemology

A conference organized by the Institute of Philosophy at the Czech Academy of Sciences

Prague, Villa Lanna, October 19-21, 2017

Confirmed participants

P.J. van der Eijk, Humboldt-University Berlin

R.J. Hankinson, University of Texas, Austin

Peter N. Singer, University of Newcastle

Teun Tieleman, University of Utrecht

Background

In Late Antiquity, the Islamic Middle Ages, and the European Renaissance, Galen was recognized not only as a doctor, but also as a logician, epistemologist, and methodologist of science. Modern scholarship has rediscovered this aspect of Galen's work rather recently.

In broad outlines, Galen's position is well-known: Distancing himself, on the one hand, from scepticism and medical empiricism, and, on the other, from crude rationalism, unenlightened by the study of geometry and Aristotle's *Organon*, Galen develops, or claims to have developed, a method of inquiry and proof based on what he regards as indisputable criteria of truth. Many details of this method, however, remain unclear, as well as the extent to which Galen actually follows any clear-cut methodological principles in his works on physiology, therapeutics, or pharmacology. The epistemological foundations of his theory and practice also deserve closer scrutiny.

Here are some questions one might wish to learn more about: How does Galen justify his claims to knowledge? How, if ever, do they differ from claims to a persuasive argument? What is 'experience' and what conditions must it fulfill to count as a criterion? What is observation and what role does it play in the process of acquiring knowledge? How is the knowledge of unobservable phenomena reached? What are the 'common notions'; what is their origin, content, and function? What are the physiological conditions of cognitive activities? What are the varieties of proof? How does Galen actually proceed in providing a proof? What is the role of

dialectic in science? What kinds of definition does Galen distinguish and what is their role in proof? What is the nature and role of division, analysis, and other logical procedures? How traditional or innovative is Galen's account of these issues? How does it relate to similar projects of Galen's time? How is it reflected by Galen's followers and critics?

Aim and format of the conference

The aim of the conference is to provide an occasion for scholarly discussion about these and similar questions, on the basis of close reading and detailed interpretation of precirculated (Galenic or otherwise relevant) material. There will be 10-12 sessions in total (two in the morning and two in the afternoon), each presided by a speaker. Speakers will prepare a collection of material centered around a particular topic and an introduction in which (s)he will present a thesis or a query regarding that topic. This introduction will then be followed by a discussion.

Conditions

Time slot reserved for each session is 90 minutes. At least 60 minutes will be reserved for discussion, so the introduction must not exceed the length of [30 minutes](#).

Every speaker will be asked to provide a manageable selection of texts, on which his or her presentation will be based, by [October 5](#). It is preferable that the texts are provided both in the original language and in a modern translation.

Accommodation is available at the place of the conference. Speakers will have their accommodation costs (including breakfast and lunch) covered by the organizer.

Submissions

Speakers will be selected on the basis of a written proposal. This should include: Name and institution (if applicable); short description of the applicant's research interests (including relevant publications, if applicable); description of the proposed topic and an outline of the thesis/query to be discussed; a preliminary list of passages on which the presentation will be based. Please submit your proposal by [March 4, 2017](#).

Contact

Matyáš Havrda
[havrda\[at\]flu.cas.cz](mailto:havrda[at]flu.cas.cz)