NATURAL CRITERIA AND THE TRANSPARENCY OF JUDGEMENT
ANTIOCHUS, PHILo AND GALen ON EPISODEOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION

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I. Galen's thesis: the existence of natural criteria

Galen thought that, in spite of their protracted and wordy disagreements, there was really no issue of substance dividing Academic sceptics\(^1\) and Stoics on matters of epistemology. Indeed, for all their technicalities, the views of both schools really amount to no more and no less than what ordinary people ordinarily believe, that there are some things which are simply evident to perception, and others evident to the intellect, from which all knowledge derives:

the discrimination of these things [sc. true from plausibly false argument] is reduced to impression (phantasia), which as the more recent Academics\(^2\) say is not only plausible but also thoroughly examined (periodeumene) and unrevoked (aperispastos),\(^3\) or as Chrysippus says to the apprehensive (kataluptikê), or as everybody generally believes, to evident perception and reasoning. But although the expressions just mentioned are supposed to differ from one another, if one considers the matter with greater care they have the same import (dunamis), as too when someone says that they begin from common conceptions (koinai ennoiai) and posit these as the primary criterion for everything which is credible on

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\(^1\) For clarity and convenience in what follows, I shall talk of 'sceptics' (lower-case 's') in general to cover both Academics and Pyrrhonists—where I intend to make a specific reference to one or other school I shall use the latter designations.

\(^2\) The 'more recent Academics' are Carneades and his school: cf. Galen On the Best Method of Teaching (Opt. Doct.) I.40 Kühn (see further the discussion in Ioppolo (1993)). Here and elsewhere I refer to Galen where possible by way of the monumental edition of Kühn (1821-33) because in this case (and most others) where later and superior editions exist, they are none the less keyed to it. Opt. Doct. is edited and printed in its entirety as Fr. 28 in Barigazzi (1966) 179-86 (although in fact the actual fragment occupies only a couple of lines: I.47-8 K. = Barigazzi (1966) 183.10-12 = Barigazzi (1991) 100.17-19); Barigazzi has recently re-edited the work as CMG V,1,1 (1991).

\(^3\) For these technical terms of Carneadean philosophy see S.E., M. VII.166-89; P. I.226-9.
its own account (ex heautou piston). (1: Galen, On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato [hereafter P.H.P.] V.778 Kühn)4

That claim that Academics and Stoics are really in agreement is striking, not to say bizarre: and it is usually dismissed.5 Here, however, I am more concerned with a different strand in Galen’s syncretism,6 the claim that differing Dogmatic epistemologies are united by the fact that they all ultimately agree on the structure and sources of human knowledge, differences of terminology notwithstanding:

that the primary criterion must be indemonstrably credible is agreed by everyone, although not everybody thinks it must be natural and common to all men. (2: ibid. 778)

Some perversely deny what is evident to all for reasons of sectarian affiliation, while others will assert what they know to be false to discredit other positions (778-9): but this does not compromise the basic epistemological agreement.

After sketching the distinction between useful and useless inquiries relative to particular disciplines (779-81),7 and noting that the human body is far more complex and well-adapted than any lay individual tends to think, Galen goes on to argue, in an antiatomist vein, that it is obvious that the animal kingdom is the result of creative skill and planning (782-91):

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4 P.H.P. has been most recently edited, with English translation and commentary, by De Lacy (1978-83), to which I am greatly indebted.

5 For instance by Long (1988) 200: ‘the difference between the Academic’s “convincing” impressions and the cognitive impression of the Stoics could only be treated as a fine one by someone who was either philosophically inept or unconcerned, for his own purposes, with the distinction between the “apparently true” and the “certainly true”. Galen knew the difference, but chooses here to ignore it.’ I defend Galen’s position in Hankinson (1991).

6 For a general discussion of which see Hankinson (1992).

7 The doctor needs to know where the rational faculty is located, but such information is of no moment to the moral philosopher (779; cf. P.H.P. V.794 K.: while both doctors and moral philosophers need to know that the powers of the soul are distinct and what those powers are, neither need worry about which parts of the soul are mortal and which immortal). Equally, from the point of view of ethics and politics, it is unimportant to establish whether the world had a beginning, or what the gods are like substantially, although it does matter crucially whether the world was created with divine forethought and providence or not (779-81 K.). On Galen’s divine, creationist teleology, see Hankinson (1989). Galen’s teleological biology is given its fullest expression in his On the Function of the Parts [U.P.] (III 1-IV 366 K.; U.P. is also edited by Helmreich (1907-9).