

ARTICLE VII.—*Notices of Ancient Roman Medicine-Stamps, &c., found in Great Britain.* By J. Y. SIMPSON, M.D., Professor of Midwifery in the University of Edinburgh.

MANY years ago Schmidt, in his work on the Antiquities of Nimiguen,¹ published an account of two small, thin, greenish-coloured, square-shaped stones, both of them engraved with intagliate inscriptions on their four sides or edges; but he failed in making out the nature of the inscriptions, or interpreting the object and uses of the stones.

Subsequently, Spon,² Chishull,³ Caylus,⁴ Saxe,⁵ and Walche,⁶ published accounts of other stones exactly similar in their character to the two found at Nimiguen; and it came to be generally admitted, that the nature of the inscriptions upon them, the incuse and retrograde form of these inscriptions, and the localities in which they were found, all proved the stones to be medicine-stamps, employed for the purpose of marking their drugs, by the Roman doctors, who (some fifteen or sixteen centuries ago), practised at the various stations throughout Europe, that were in these olden times occupied by the colonists and soldiers of Rome. Latterly, various additional examples of these Roman medicine-stamps have been discovered, at different old Roman towns and stations in France, Germany, &c., and described by Tochon,⁷ Sichel,⁸ Duchalais,⁹ and others. These medicine-stamps all agree in their general characters. They usually consist of small quadrilateral or oblong pieces of a greenish schist or steatite, engraved on one or more of their edges or borders. The inscriptions are in small capital Roman letters, cut intagliate (like the letters on modern seals and stamps), and consequently reading on the stone itself from right to left, but making an impression (when stamped upon wax or any other similar plastic material), which reads from left to right. The inscriptions themselves generally contain, and that engraved on each side, first, the name of the medical practitioner to whom the stamp pertained; then the name of some special medicine, or medical formula; and lastly, the disease or diseases for which that

¹ *Antiquitates Neomagenses*, p. 98.

² *Miscellanea Eruditæ Antiquitatis*, p. 236.

³ *Hayms Tesoro-Britannico* (1720), vol. ii. Letter in Preface.

⁴ *Recueil d'Antiquites*, tom. i., p. 224, and tom. vii., p. 261.

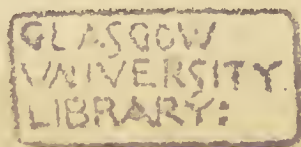
⁵ *Christophori Saxii Epistola de Veteris Medici Ocularii Gemma Sphragide, prope Trajectum ad Mosam eruta*. 1774.

⁶ *Antiquitates Medicæ Selectæ*. Jena, 1772.

⁷ *Dissertation sur l'Inscription Grecque ΙΑΧΟΝΟC ΑΥΚΙΟΝ*. Paris, 1826.

⁸ *Cinq Cachets Inédits de Médecins-Oculistes Romains*. Paris, 1845. To my friend, M. Sichel, one of the most learned of living physicians, I am much indebted for various valuable suggestions in collecting the materials for the present essay.

⁹ *Observations sur les Cachets des Médecins-Oculistes Anciens, à-propos de Cinq Pierres Sigillaires inédits*. Paris, 1846.



medicine was prescribed. But sometimes the first and last of these items are omitted, and the stamps present merely the appellation of the medicine alone; and occasionally the modes and frequency of using the medicine are added. To this brief description one more curious fact remains to be added,—namely, that in almost all, if not in all, the Roman medicine-stamps hitherto discovered, the medicines inscribed upon them are drugs for affections of the eye and its appendages; and the diseases, when specified upon them, are always ophthalmic diseases. Hence it may, with great probability, be concluded, that either these stamps were used by oculists alone, or they were used by the general medical practitioner in marking his eye medicines only. Some authors, on this account, have described them under the designation of Roman oculist-stamps.

The number of the stamps that have already been discovered amply proves that ophthalmic diseases must have been extremely frequent in the sites of the old Roman colonies spread throughout western Europe; and although only one or two such oculist-stamps are as yet described as having been found within the bounds of Italy itself,¹ yet the frequent references to individual oculists at Rome² by Celsus, Galen, and others, and the elaborate descriptions of eye diseases left us by the various Greek and Roman medical authors, who practised in the Eternal City during the time of the empire, sufficiently testify to the fact, that these diseases were also sufficiently common in the Roman capital, and that many of the fellow-citizens of Horace could probably personally apply the well-known description which the poet gives of himself,—

Hic oculis ego nigra meis Collyria lippus
Illinere.

Galen, Celsus, Aetius, &c., all describe the different diseases of the eye with care and minuteness; and the Roman practitioners had evidently studied these affections, and their specific distinctions, with great attention. In modern times medical literature has been enriched with more complete and elaborate monographs upon the diseases of the eye, than upon the diseases of any other single organ of the body. But, perhaps, few of these monographs describe a larger

¹ The two found in Italy have been discovered, the one at Sienna, the other at Verona. See Muratoris' *Thesaurus Inscriptionum*, D. viii. 4; and Maffei's *Museum Veronense*, p. 135.

² Among the ancient Egyptians the medical practice seems, according to Herodotus, to have been subdivided, some three thousand years, into more specialities than we even have at the present day. "The art of medicine is (says he) thus divided amongst them: Each physician applies himself to one disease only, and not more. All places abound in physicians,—some physicians are for the eyes, others for the head, others for the teeth, others for the parts about the belly, and others for internal disorders."—*Cary's Herodotus*, Enterpeii., § 84, p. 125. Most of the old Roman medical authors mention "medici ocularii," "medici ophthalmici," in such terms as to show that the department of eye diseases was cultivated by some medical men as a speciality of practice in their time.

number of ophthalmic diseases than was professed to be known and discriminated in the times of Galen. This author, in the 16th chapter of his book, entitled "Introductio seu Medicus," enumerates not less than one hundred and nineteen diseases to which the eye and its appendages are liable.

In the management of these diseases of the eyes, the Roman practitioners used, as their writings show, bleeding, scarification, and other appropriate constitutional and local treatment. But the practical part of their treatises, referring to ophthalmic affections, is specially loaded with collyria—professedly of use in almost every stage of every disease of the eye. Galen speaks of Asclepiades, describing in his works a perfect forest of collyria (*collyriorum silvam*). In his book "De Compositione Medicamentorum secundum Locos," Galen has himself left us formulæ for upwards of two hundred of the ancient collyria. Aetius gives as great, if not a greater, number. The "Opus de Compositione Medicamentorum" of Myrepsus, contains recipes for eighty-seven ophthalmic collyria; and the works of Scribonius Largus, Celsus, Actuarius, Alexander Trallianus, Marcellus, Paulus Aegineta, &c., present us with abundance of formulæ for the same class of preparations.

These collyria were composed of very various,¹ and in some instances, of very numerous ingredients. But most of them which had attained any great degree of reputation, seem (like the compound formulæ, or prescriptions in our modern pharmacopœias), to have each passed under a short specific name, by which they were, no doubt, readily and generally recognised by the profession, and perhaps also by the public, in these ancient times. The specific appellations of the individual collyria were derived from different sources.

Some of them were known under the names of the oculists who invented or employed them. Thus Galen gives recipes for the collyria of Asclepiades, of Philoxenis, of Capiton, of Zoilus, of Antonius Musa, the collyrium of Sergius, the Babylonian oculist; and many others.² Occasionally the appellation under which the collyria were known was derived from some of their more marked physical properties, as the "collyrium *Chloron* appellatum," from the green

¹ In the following passage Galen tersely enumerates the very varied general ingredients, and general therapeutic effects, of the numerous collyria used by the Roman practitioners of his day:—"Nam et liquores, et succi, et semina, et fructus, et plantarum particulæ, ocularibus compositionibus induntur, veluti etiam non pauca ex iis, quæ metallica appellantur; aliqua quidem extreme austera, et acerba, atque acria; aliqua vero his moderatiora et tamen fortia; quemadmodum item aliqua omnis mordacitatis expertia, ac lenissima per lotionem addita."—*De Compositione Medicam: Secundum Locos*, Cap. I.

Celsus, in the same way, enumerates and describes the collyria of Philon, of Dionysius, of Cleon, of Theodotius, of Euclipedes (qui ætate nostra maximus fuit ocularius medicus), of Nileus, of Hermon, &c.

colour of the preparation; the *Cirrhon*, from its yellowish tint; *Euchron*, from its agreeable hue (a colore bono dictum); the collyrium *Cygnus*, from its white or swan-like hue.¹ One was termed *Aromaticum*, from its odour, and so forth. One or other of the principal ingredients entering into its composition seems to have given the name under which other collyria were known, as the *Nardinum*, from its containing spikenard; the collyrium *Diasmyrnes* (*dia* with, and *σμύρνα*, myrrh), from its containing myrrh; the *Diarrhodon*, from its containing roses, &c. Occasionally the collyrium seems to have derived its name and fame from some great person whom it had been fortunate enough to benefit or to cure. Thus, for example, Galen gives a recipe for the collyrium which Phlorus used in Antonia, the mother of Drusus; the "*collyrium harmatium*," which king Ptolemy used, &c. One was termed *Achariston*, from its cheapness: and this collyrium repeatedly occurs on the oculist-seals. Another was termed *Atimeton*, from its supposed great value. But perhaps the most common mode of appellation was the use of some recommendatory name, advertising the supposed high qualities of the drug. Thus the old Greek and Roman authors give various species of the collyrium *Monohemeron*,—so named from its being alleged to effect a cure in a single day; others are designated the *Miraculum*, the *Mysterium*, the nectar collyrium (*Nectarium*); the royal Indian collyrium (*collyrium Indicum regale*); the golden (*Isochryson*); the divine (*Isotheon*) &c., &c. And lastly, a collyrium was often known under some high sounding but unmeaning name, such as the collyrium *Olympus*, *Proteus*, *Phœnix*, *Phynon*, the "*collyrium nominatum Sol*," &c.

Under such designations the principal collyria of the Roman oculists were known and used (like the one invented and boasted of by Galen) "*per omnes gentes quibus imperant Romani*;" and it is under such special appellations that we find these different collyria mentioned in the inscriptions engraved upon the old oculist-stamps, and scattered among the ruins of their ancient colonial stations.

Above sixty Roman oculist-stamps have been now discovered in different parts of western Europe, but particularly in Germany, France, and Holland. Some time ago one was found about ten miles east of Edinburgh; and it is principally with the view of describing this and the other specimens that have been detected in Britain that I have drawn up the present imperfect notes. I have been the more induced to do so because this Scottish stamp is remarkable, both as being found on almost the very frontier of the ancient Roman empire, and-as being one of the most perfect yet discovered. Besides, I entertain a strong hope that a notice such as the present, in a Medical Journal, may perhaps be fortunate enough to lead,

¹ Appellantur talia a medicis collyria *libiana* et *cygni*, ob colorem quidem album.—*Galen. de Compos. Med: Secundum Locos*, Cap. I.

through the zeal of some members of the profession, to the detection in England and Scotland of additional examples of these curious remains of our Roman medical predecessors in these islands.

Description of Individual Roman Medicine-Stamps found in Scotland and England.

No. I.—The Scottish specimen of medicine-stamp to which I have above adverted was discovered some years ago at Tranent in East Lothian, not far distant from the old, and doubtlessly, in former times, extensive Roman town or settlement at Inveresk. The stamp now belongs to the Museum of the Society of Scottish Antiquaries.

It was presented to the Museum by the late Mr Drummond Hay, formerly one of the Secretaries of the Society. From Mr Hay's notes it appears that it was found amid a quantity of broken tiles, brick, and other debris of an old (and probably Roman) house, near the church of Tranent. For many years after being deposited in the Antiquarian Museum its character remained undiscovered, till the present excellent Secretary to the Society, my esteemed friend Mr Daniel Wilson, was led, in reading the descriptions of other similar stamps, to ascertain its true character.

The stamp itself is, as usual with these seals, cut upon a greenish coloured steatite. The stone is of the figure of a parallelogram, with inscriptions cut upon two of its sides. There is a roundish projection at either extremity of the stone, as seen in the accompanying lithograph (Plate I., No. I., Figs. 1, 2, 3), where the stone and letters of the two inscriptions are, in every respect, faithfully copied from the original as to form and size. The letters are, as in all other similar medicine-stamps, cut incuse and reversed, so as to read from left to right, when the inscription was stamped upon any impressible material. Fig. 2 shows one of the inscriptions as it appears cut intagliate upon the stone. Fig. 3 presents an accurate copy of this inscription as it is seen when stamped upon wax. Fig. 1 is an equally faithful copy of the second inscription placed on the opposite side of the stone. It will be observed that, as in the original, the size of the lettering varies on the two sides.

The inscriptions on the sides (1 and 2) read as follows, when we separate the individual words composing them from each other.

1. L. VALLATINI EVODES AD CI-
CATRICES ET ASPRITUDIN
2. L. VALLATINI APALOCRO-
CODES AD DIATHESIS

Let us endeavour to interpret each of these inscriptions in detail, supplying the elisions and contractions which exist in almost all Roman inscriptions, but which are less in this seal than in most others.

1. *Lucii VALLATINI EVODES AD CICATRICES ET ASPERITUDINES.*
 — *The Evodes of Lucius Vallatinus for cicatrices and granulations.*

Several of the collyria derived, as I have already observed, their designation from some special physical character. The present instance is an example in point, the appellation *Evodes* (εὐωδες) being derived from the pleasant odour (εὐ, well, and ὠδῆς, smell) of the composition. Marcellus, in his work “*De Medicamentis*,” specially praises the collyrium known under the name of *Evodes*; and that too in the class of eye diseases mentioned on the Tranent seal. For, in his collection of remedies for removing ulcers, cicatrices, &c., of the eyes and eyelids, he recommends (to use his own words) “*præcipue hoc quod quidam Diasmyrnon, nonnulli Evodes, quia boni odoris est, nominant.*” And he directs the *Evodes* to be dissolved and diluted in water, and introduced into the eyes with a probe, or after inverting the eyelid, when it was used with the view of extenuating recent cicatrices of the eyes, and removing granulations of the eyelids,—“*ex aqua autem ad cicatrices recentes extenuendas, et palpebrarum asperitudinem tolledam teri debet, et subjecto specillo aut inversa palpebra, oculis inseri.*”¹

Scribonius Largus had previously described, in nearly the same words, the collyrium,—“*quod quidam εὐωδες vocant,*” and its uses in recent cicatrices and granulations, &c. Both these authors give the same recipe for the composition of the *Evodes*,—viz., pompholyx, burnt copper, saffron, myrrh, opium, and other ingredients, rubbed down in Chian wine. Its agreeable odour was probably owing to a considerable quantity of spikehard being used in its composition.² Galen gives two other collyria, of a different composition, and for other affections, as known at his time under the same name of *Evodes*,—the one termed the “*Evodes of Zosimus*,” the other the “*diasmyrnon Evodes of Syneros.*”³

2. *L. VALLATINI APALOCROCOCODES AD DIATHESIS.* — *The mild Crocodes of L. Vallatinus, for affections of the eyes.*

The term diathesis in this inscription is used in a different sense from that in which we now employ the same word in modern medicine. At the present day, we apply the term diathesis to designate the tendency or predisposition to some special disease, or class of diseases. In the times of the Roman physicians, it was often used as synonymous with disease itself; and in the Latin translations of the Greek texts of Galen, Aetius, &c., it is hence rendered usually by the general word “*affectus*,” “*affectio*,” &c. The first sentence in Paulus Æginetus’s chapter on Ophthalmic Diseases, affords an instance in point: “*Quum dolores vehementiores in oculis fiunt, con-*

¹ *Medicæ Artis Principes*, p. 273.

² *Medicæ Artis Principes: Scribonii Largi de Compositione Medicamentorum Liber. Comp.* xxvi., p. 198.

³ *Galen Opera Omnia.* (Kuehn’s Edit.) Vol. xii., pp. 753 and 774.

sidera ex quarum affectione (διαθεσε) oculum dolere contingit.”¹—Thus, also, the *Evodes* of Zosimus (to which I have before alluded) is entered by Galen as a remedy simply against “dolores et recentes affectus,” according to the Latin translation of Kuehn,—“προς περιωδυνιος και προσφατους διαθεσεις,” according to the original Greek text. He uses diathesis in fact as a general term for eye diseases.² The word is misspelled in its last syllable in the inscription on the seal,—diathesis standing instead of the Roman accusative diatheses, or the Greek accusative diatheseis.

The collyrium mentioned in the prescription (the *Crocodes*) derives its designation from its containing the crocus, or saffron, as one of its principal ingredients.

In describing the therapeutic effects of the crocus, Dioscorides mentions as its first special use—its efficacy in “fluxions of the eyes.”³

Pliny, in enumerating the qualities of the crocus, begins by observing, that it has a discutient effect upon all inflammations, but chiefly on those of the eyes (discutit inflammationes omnes quidem, sed oculorum maxime); and in speaking of its combinations he tells us that it has given a name to one collyrium (collyrio uno etiam nomen dedit).⁴ But it entered into the composition of very many of the ancient eye medicines, and more than one of these passed under the name of *Crocodes*, as in the inscription on the seal. Galen, in his list of eye remedies, gives the recipe for the composition of a *Crocodes* collyrium for epiphoræ, pains, and affections (διαθεσεις) from wounds of the eye.⁵ He discusses the composition also of the aromatic *Crocodes* of Heraclides, and the oxydercic *Crocodes* of Asclepius, &c.⁶ When describing, in another part, the remedies for ulcers of the eyes, he mentions a collyrium containing crocus, and adds, “habet autem plurimum in se crocum, unde etiam croceum (κροκωδες) appellatur.”⁷

Celsus, Alexander Trallianus, and Paulus Eginetus give recipes for eye collyria, under the name of diacrocus (δια κροκος).⁸

I have not yet alluded to the expression *APALO*, standing before *Crocodes*. This expression presents the only difficulty in reading the inscription; and various suggestions might be offered in regard to its explanation. But it seems most probable that it was used as a

¹ Cornarius' Latin Translation in *Principes Artis*, p. 432.

² Sripsi omnia quæ necesse est Medicum de oculorum affectibus (διαθεσεων) nosse. Kuehn's Edit. of Galen, xii. p. 699.

³ P. Dioscoridis Opera quæ extant Omnia. (Edit. Saraceni, 1698.) P. 21, lib. i., cap. xxv.

⁴ *Naturalis Historia*. Leyden edit. of 1635. Vol. ii., p. 473.

⁵ Opera a Kuehn. Tom. xii., p. 770.

⁶ Ibid. Pp. 785 and 773.

⁷ Ibid. P. 713.

⁸ See Milligen's *Celsus*, p. 295; *Principes Artis Medicæ*, p. 170 of Part II., and p. 432 of Part III. Our own Pharmacopœias long retained similar terms. The London Pharmacopœia, for example, for 1662, contains an electuary termed *Diacrocuma*, an emplastrum *oxycrocum*, &c.

qualifying term to the *Crocodes*. Several of the collyria have the Latin adjective “lene,” and “leve,” placed before them, in order to certify their mild nature. Scribonius Largus gives a whole division of collyria, headed “Collyria composita levia.” Aetius has a chapter, “De Lenibus Collyriis.” The expression *apalo*, as a part and prefix to *Crocodes*, would seem to indicate the same quality in the crocodes sold by Vallatinus, the term being in all likelihood derived from the Greek adjective *απαλος*, or the corresponding Latin adjective *apalus* (mild, soft). Homer frequently uses the word as signifying soft, delicate, and especially as applied to different parts of the body (See *Iliad*, book iii. 371 ; xvii. 123, &c.) ; and, indeed, Aetius employs the Greek adjective therapeutically in the sense of mild, and as applied to collyria. In the treatment of acute inflammatory ulcers of the eye, after inculcating the usual antiphlogistic treatment, he adds, “collyria vero tenera (*απαλα*) ulcerato oculo infundantur.”¹

I am indebted to the kindness of Mr Birch for the impressions of two unpublished oculist-stamps, found in England, and contained in the British Museum. Their forms and inscriptions are represented in Plate I., Nos. II. and III.; and I shall describe under these numbers.

No. II. This large stamp consists (Plate I., No. II.²) of a flat quadrilateral stone, about an inch and a-half broad, and engraved upon three of its sides. A portion of one corner of the stone is broken off ; but it is easy to supply the deficiency which is thus produced in one of the inscriptions. The three inscriptions read as follows :—

1. SEX : JUL : SEDATI
CROCOD PACCIAN.
2. SEX : JUL : SEDATI CRO-
CODES DIALEPIDOS.
3. (*Sex*) : JUL : SEDATI CRO-
(*cod*)ES AD DIATHES.

The name of the oculist—Sextus Julius Sedatus—is imperfect on the 3d or broken side, the prænomen “Sex” being wanting on that side in the first line, and the middle syllable “cod” of the word Crocodes being also wanting, from the same cause, in the second line.

The restored reading of this 3d side—viz., SEXTI JULII SEDATI CROCODES AD DIATHESes—need not be dwelt upon, as it is so very similar to that on one side of the Tranent stone. The other two sides contain the names of two new varieties of crocodes.

¹ Cornarius' Latin edition of Aetius, 1549, p. 371 ; and Venice Greek edit., p. 126.

² The central figure shows the size of the stone, and the intagliate inscription on one side. The other figures show its three inscriptions as they read from left to right when stamped on wax.

One of these varieties—the *CROCODES PACCIANUM*—received its name from Paccius the oculist, who either invented this special collyrium, or brought it into repute. In the list of his ophthalmic medicines, Galen gives formulæ for various collyria, invented by Paccius, such as the *Sphragis Paccii*,¹ *Asclepiadeum Paccii*,² *Collyrium ex terra Samia Paccii Ophthalmici ad affectus intensos* (επιτεταμενας διαθεσεις).³ Galen does not give any receipt for the *Crocodes* of Paccius; but it was evidently a collyrium duly esteemed at the time at which he wrote; for, in his chapter on ulcers of the eyes, he specially names the “*Crocodes Paccianum*,”⁴ and recommends its use in cases in which the accompanying inflammation has already ceased, and at the stage when a stimulating application becomes necessary.

The other variety of crocodes used by Sedatus is the *CROCODES DIALEPIDOS*. A formula for *Dialepidos* is given by Marcellus,⁵ with the crocus as the first ingredient mentioned in its composition. The *Dialepidos* derived its name from its containing the scales (λεπιδος) of burnt copper, or the black peroxide of that metal,—a preparation which Dioscorides (lib. v., cap. 89) describes as useful in eye diseases; and Galen declares it a “*medicamentum multo utilissimum*,” xii. p. 223.

No. III. The second undescribed Roman medicine-stamp, contained in the British Museum (see Plate I., No. III.) is small and broken. It is only engraved on one side, and the inscription does not contain, as usual, the name of the oculist who possessed and employed it. The inscription reads as follows:—

COLLYR. P. CLOC.

If extended, the inscription would probably run thus,—*COLLYRIUM Post Caliginem Oculorum*. Several of the prescriptions found in these medicine-stamps are collyria, professing to be useful against and after (*ad* and *post*) *caliginem*.

No. IV. The first Roman medicine-stamp discovered in Great Britain was described about 130 years ago by Mr Chishull in the learned “*Dissertatio De Nummo cκωπι*,” which he addressed to Haym, and which this last-mentioned author has published in the preface to his second volume of the “*Tesoro Britannico*.”

The stamp had been found some years previously at Colchester, a well known and extensive Roman colonial station. Mr Chishull

¹ Kuehn's Galen. Tom. xii., p. 751.

² Ibid. P. 772.

³ Ibid. P. 760.

⁴ Ibid. Tom. xi., p. 715.

⁵ *Medicæ Artis Principes: De Medicamentis Liber*. P. 280.

believed it to have belonged to some old Roman Iatraliptos or dealer in ointments. The following is a copy of the inscription on this Colchester stamp as given by Chishull:—

1. QIULMURRANIMELI
NUMADCLARITATEM.
2. QIULMURRANISTAGIU
MOPOBALSAMATADCAP.

And Mr Chishull interpreted these inscriptions thus:—"Quinti Julii Murrani Melinum, sive ex malis cotoneis oleum, ad claritatem oculorem faciens. Iterumque, Quinti Julii Murrani stagium opobalsamatum, sive myrrhæ oleum opobalsamo permixtum, ad cap. i. e., ad caput medicandum utile." In this interpretation Mr Chishull seems to have fallen into more than one important error, as we shall endeavour to show by considering the two inscriptions in detail.

1. Q. JULII MURRANI MELINUM AD CLARITATEM.—*The Melinum of Q (Quintus?) Julius Murranus, for clearness of vision.*

Two or three varieties of the collyrium *Melinum* are given by Galen.¹ Thus in his list of collyria he gives formulæ for the *Melinum* of Lucius; for the *Melinum atarachum* (i. e. against the taraxis); and for a *Melinum delicatum*, fitted for those who could not bear the irritation of any powerful medicament.

Different opinions have been expressed in relation to the origin and signification of the term *Melinum*. Walch,² like Chishull, derives the term from "malum," (μῆλον) an apple, supposing it to be the principal ingredient in the collyrium. And certainly Pliny and Paulus Aegineta speak of an oil termed *melinum*,³ being made described by Pliny as useful in inflammation of the eyes. But no from the quince (*Malum Cydoneum*); and the flower of the plant is "malum" enters into the composition of any of the three *Melina* collyria, which I have referred to in Galen.

The best variety of alum seems, in ancient times, to have come from the island of Melos; and, according to Pliny, it was consequently termed *Melinum*, and was useful in discussing granulations of the eyes (*oculorum scabritias extenuat*).⁴ Hence Saxe (p. 29) and Tochon (p. 18), have conjectured that the alum or *Melinum* of Pliny was the *Melinum* which has been found on several oculist

¹ Kuehn's Galen, vol. xii. p. 787, 786, and 769. Actuarius gives a formula for a collyrium *melinum*, but it is a copy of the last of Galen. See *Principes Artis Medicæ*, Part ii. p. 309.

² *Antiquitates Medicæ Selectæ*, p. 55.

³ *Historia Naturalis*, Lib. xiii., tom ii., p. 37. Dr Adam's edition of Paulus Aegineta, vol. iii. p. 592.

⁴ *Historia Naturalis*, Vol. III., Lib. xxxv., page 423. See the same oleum *Melinum* described by Dioscorides, i. 55, p. 31.

stamps. But again, the same objection holds,—namely, that in none of the collyria *Melina* of Galen was alum a component ingredient.

In his observations, however, upon the different forms of emplastra (and many of which were named *Melina*), Galen gives a sufficient explanation of the origin of this term as it was applied to plasters; and the same holds, no doubt, also in reference to its application to collyria. According to his own explanation, it was a term significant merely of the colour of the resulting medicament, like the green, &c., plasters and collyria, named *chloron*, *cirrhon*, &c. &c. Gesner, Cooper, and other philologists, lay down *Melinum* as an adjective, meaning yellow; and perhaps the term was originally derived from *mel* (μελι), honey, honey-coloured. The yellowish tint of the emplastra *melina* was, as Galen tells us, generally, but not always, derived from their containing verdigris, altered by a moderate boiling with the other component ingredients.¹ The collyria *Melina* of Galen contain ceruse and calamine in their composition.

The *Melinum* is professed, in Murranus' stamp, to be efficacious for the clearing of the eyesight (ad claritatem). The *Melina* collyria of Galen are all alleged by him to have effects conducive to this object, viz., the removing of cicatrices and calli, and every weakness of vision (omnem hebetudinem visus).

2. Q. JULII MURRANI STAGIUM (STACTUM) OPOBALSAMATUM AD CAP (CALIGINES).—*The Opobalsamic Stactum, or Opobalsamic Eye-drops, of Q. Julius Murranus, for dimness or blindness.*

Mr Chishull read Stagium instead of Stactum, the CT of the latter word having been mistaken by him for GI. Mr Forster showed to the London Antiquarian Society,² in 1767, a plaster-cast of what was doubtlessly this same Colchester stamp, and gave the reading correctly in the second inscription as Stactum.

The Latin designation Stactum, analogous to the Greek terms Stacton, Enstacton, and derived from the verb σταζω (I drop), denoted any liquid collyrium, applied by drops into the eye—"collyria stactica, hoc est, instillatitia, appellata."³

A collyrium, with the appellation *Stactum* or *Staticon*, is described by Marcellus,⁴ Myrepsus,⁵ Paulus Aegineta⁶ &c.; and Aetius⁷ gives a chapter of collyria under this designation. In this chapter Aetius

¹ Quemadmodum viridium emplastrorum plurima propter æruginem præpollentem talia fiunt, presertione quæ sunt ex ipsis colorationa; ita quoque *Melina*. Sed viridia æruginem incoctam habent, *Melina* vero coctam quidem, sed mediocriter; nam si amplius coquas, bicolora emplastra quibusdam appellata, quibusdam gilva, efficies. Solent Medici simpliciter viridia, *Melina*, et rufa, nominare, &c.—*Galen de Compositione Medicamentorum per Genera*, Cap. VI.—Kuehn's Edit., Vol. XIII., p. 503.

² See Archæologia, Vol IX., p. 228.

³ Ætius' Tetrabiblias, Cornarius' Edit., p. 435.

⁴ De Medicam. Liberi; Principes Artis. Part III., p. 284.

⁵ De Compos. Med. in Ib. Part III. p. 660.

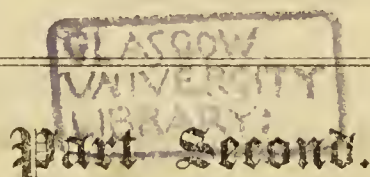
⁶ Paulus Aegineta's Work. Dr Adams's Translation, Vol. III. p. 551.

⁷ Cornarius' Translation, p. 435.

describes five collyria *Stactica*; and of these four contain the Opobalsam¹ as an ingredient, showing the origin and propriety of the term *Opobalsamatum* in the inscription on the seal.

Chishull read the last three letters of the inscription CAP, and thought that the oil was serviceable for head diseases. But if the inscription is not really CAL, the P has been substituted by an error of the engraver for L(CAL), an abbreviation for *Caligines*. The same inscription occurs at greater length on an oculist stamp found at Daspich in France; and in it the *Stactum Opobalsamatum* is professed to remove *Caligines*.² And, no doubt, Murranus, of Colchester, vended, of old, his Opobalsamic Eye-drops for the same alleged purpose. This quality of “visum acuens” is attributed to two out of the four forms of Opobalsamic Eye-drops mentioned by Aetius. The *Stactum* is (avers Myrepsus) “ad acumen visus mirabile admodum.”—P. 660.

In a second and concluding Part, I shall describe other Roman medicine-stamps found in these islands; speak of the uses, &c., to which they were applied; and point out some other relics referring to the former existence of Roman medicine and Roman medical practitioners in Great Britain.



REVIEWS.

The Pharmacopœia of the King and Queen's College of Physicians in Ireland. 1850. Dublin: Hodges and Smith.

“The New Pharmacopœia of the London College is prepared, but is not yet published.”—*Pharmaceutical Journal and Transactions*, for December 1850.

A QUARTER of a century is a long time for science to be allowed to advance in these onward days, without its progress being acknowledged in a National Pharmacopœia. The second edition of the Dublin Pharmacopœia appeared in 1826; and twenty-four years have elapsed before its re-appearance in a fresher form,—an interval so long, that it must have ceased in a great measure to be the guide alike of the physician and of the druggist. But the College can scarcely be blamed for this. In Dublin, as everywhere else, an amiable attachment to classical prejudices and ancestral custom, clothed the pharmacopœia in the dress of a dead language, which

¹ Opobalsam, the “succus a plaga” of the Syrian balsam tree. See *Pliny*. Lib. xii., c. 25.—Dioscorides, in describing its origin, effects, &c., specially recommends it as a detergent application in dimness of sight (quæ pupillis tenebras offundunt, exterget.) Lib. i., cap. xviii., p. 18.

² The inscription on the Daspich stone is “Q. Valleri Sexti Stactum ad Caligines Opobalsamatum.”

