

MEDICAL SYMBOLS: FACTS, ERRORS AND CONFUSION





WHEN DID HERMES DEFEAT
ASCLEPIUS?

Moreover, with the help of which
army?

OBJECTIVES

- To review differences between Hermes and Asclepius
- To review the definition of caduceus
- To review the historical use of the caduceus in Medicine
- To review the use of the caduceus by the US army
- To review current medicine state in regards to caduceus use
- To discuss appropriateness of Rod of Asclepius vs. Caduceus as a symbol of Medicine

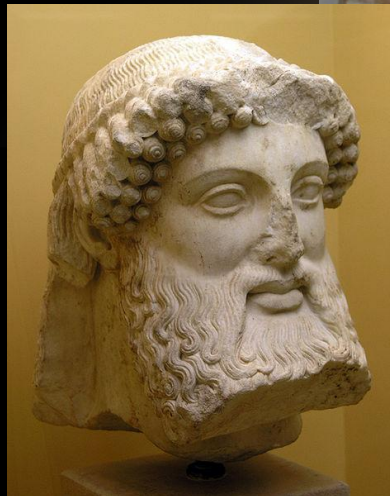
Hermes- Greek Mercury- Roman

- God of Commerce and Merchants
- Messenger of the Gods
- Magic wand between 2 snakes.
- Multiple Hermes



Pre- Homeric Hermes

- God of the Boundary-stone
- God of roads and paths
- God of the “*agora*” or marketplace
- God of oratory
- God of a fertility cult
- Psycho-pomp
- God of luck



Archaic Hermes

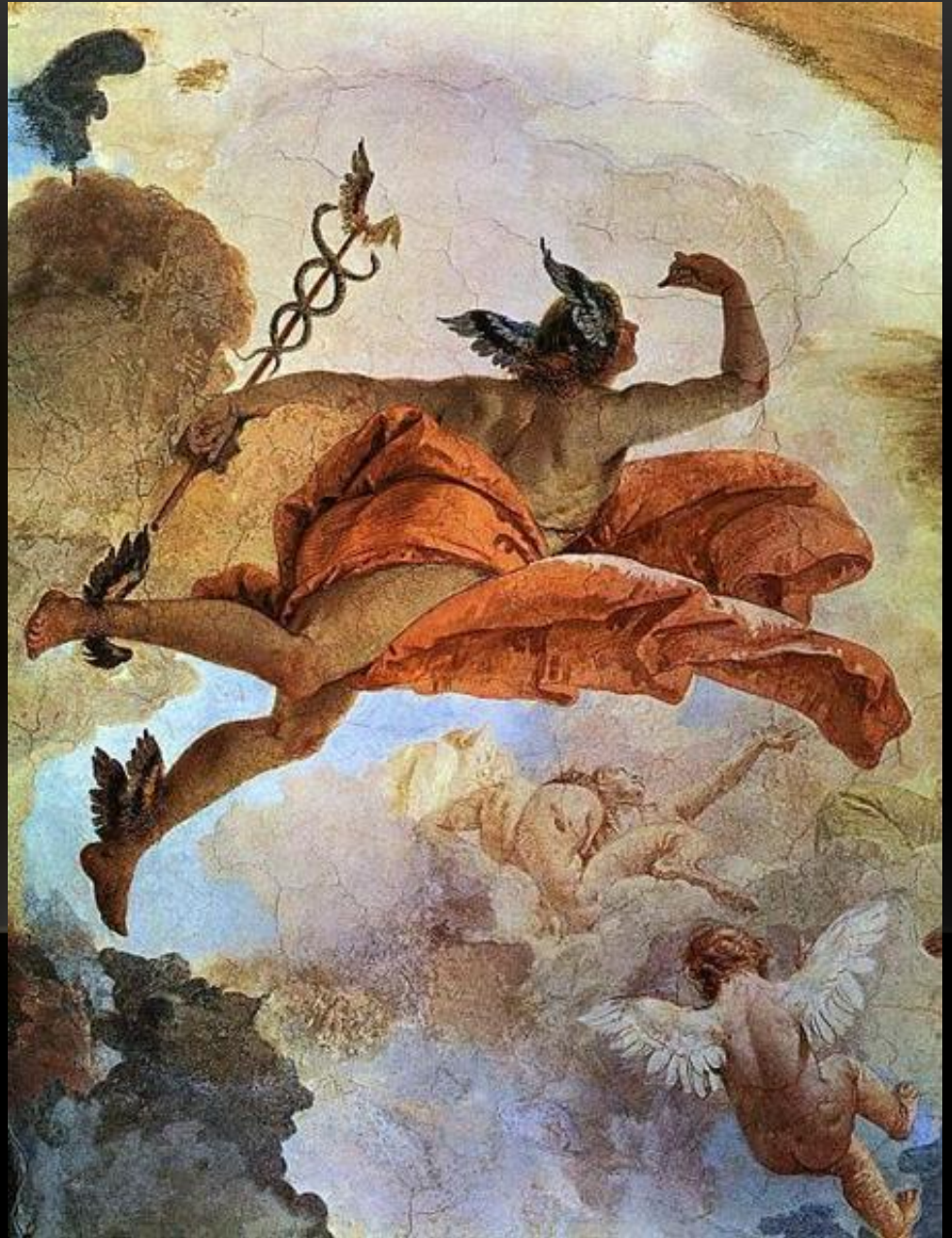
- 700-500 BC. Homeric Hymns
- Could “put people to sleep”
- Messenger of the Gods
- God of athletic contests
- A trickster, a thief and a liar
- Apollo gave him the caduceus



Peter Paul Rubens. “Mercury and Argus”, saving Io from Hera.

Traditional Hermes

- Becomes Hermes-Mercury
- God of gymnasiums and athletes
- Birth of at least 9 infants
- Hermes “transplanted” Zeus muscles
- Many attributes
- Invented speech!



Hermes-Thoth

- Greco-Egyptian. 5th century BC.
- Gods ran to Egypt in fear of Typhon
- Scribe, heart and tongue of Ra.
- Great ethics
- Invented enemas, revived Horus
- Creator of ALL arts and science.
- Wisest of all gods.



Traditional Hermes

- Wise, clever wise
- Inventive: crafts and objects
- Liar, Trickster
- Death: psycho-pomp
- Messenger of the Gods
- Sexually promiscuous
- Caduceus

Thoth

- Wise, knowledgeable wise
- Inventive: arts and science
- Grave judge of right and truth
- Death: officiated souls judgment
- Scribe of the Gods
- Source of laws
- Ibis

Hermes Trismegistus

- Three-times Great
- 2nd-1st century B.C.
- Pseudo-Hermes trismegistus
- Written by roman philosophers,
- Between 3rd – 4th century
- Alchemy created by Hermes³



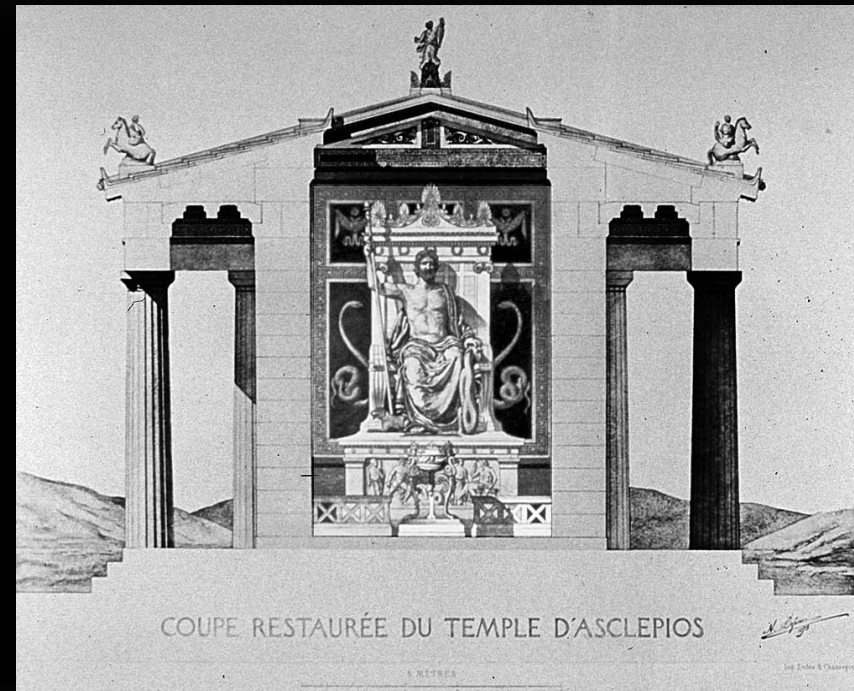
Asclepius- Greek Aesculapius - Roman

- Demi-God of Medicine?
- The “ blameless physician”?
- A Hero? Together with his sons
- God of Medicine?



ASCLEPIUS DEIFICATION

- Mycenaean inscriptions 1500 BC
- Homer circa 900 BC, NO GOD but a HERO
- Hesiod 700 BC DEMI-GOD
- Pindar 520-442 BC DEMI GOD
- Progressive deification 500 BC-100 AD
- Hellenistic Greece 420 BC. GOD
- Pausanias 140 AD Roman.



ASCLEPIUS BIRTH AND DEATH

As told by HESIOD. 700 BC

- Son of a GOD, and a mortal
- Apollo's jealousy killed Coronis.
- Asclepius born by C-section
- Zeus killed Asclepius.
- *Asclepius was destroyed because of his benevolence to mankind*

As told by PINDAR. 520-440BC

- Apollo and Coronis were lovers.
- Rightful Apollo killed Coronis
- Asclepius accepted gold
- Post –Homeric Greece
- Asclepius was destroyed because he was greedy

WHAT'S IN THE NAME?

- Askles: a tyrant of Epidaurus
- Epios: Greek for gentleness, kindness, calmness
- “kindness to all those suffering”.
- “To cut open” “The mole-Hero”.
- Etymology :pre-Greek



Sebastiano Riccica, 1720. "Dream with Asclepius". Academy Gallery, Venice, Italy

ASCLEPIUS' FAMILY

- Father: Apollo
- Mother: Coronis
- Wife: Epione, “*epios*”
- Machaon: “Surgery”
- Podalirius: “Internal Medicine”
- Hygeia: goddess of health.
- Panacea: “soothing simples” or remedies



Asclepius and his family meet the sick. Unknown author.
National Museum of Art. Athens.

HERMES AND ASCLEPIUS' FAMILY

- Daughters: Hygieia, Panacea, Meditrina, Aceso, Iaso, Aglaea
- Sons: Machaon, Podalirius, Telesphoros,
- Killed by Zeus with a Thunderbolt
- Post-mortem God
- Constellation Ophiuchus





SANCTUARY OF ASCLEPIUS,
ALBANIA. BUILT III BC

JOHN WILLIAM WATERHOUSE. "A SICK
CHILD BROUGHT INTO THE TEMPLE OF
ASCLEPIUS. 1877



ASCLEPIADS

Asclepius

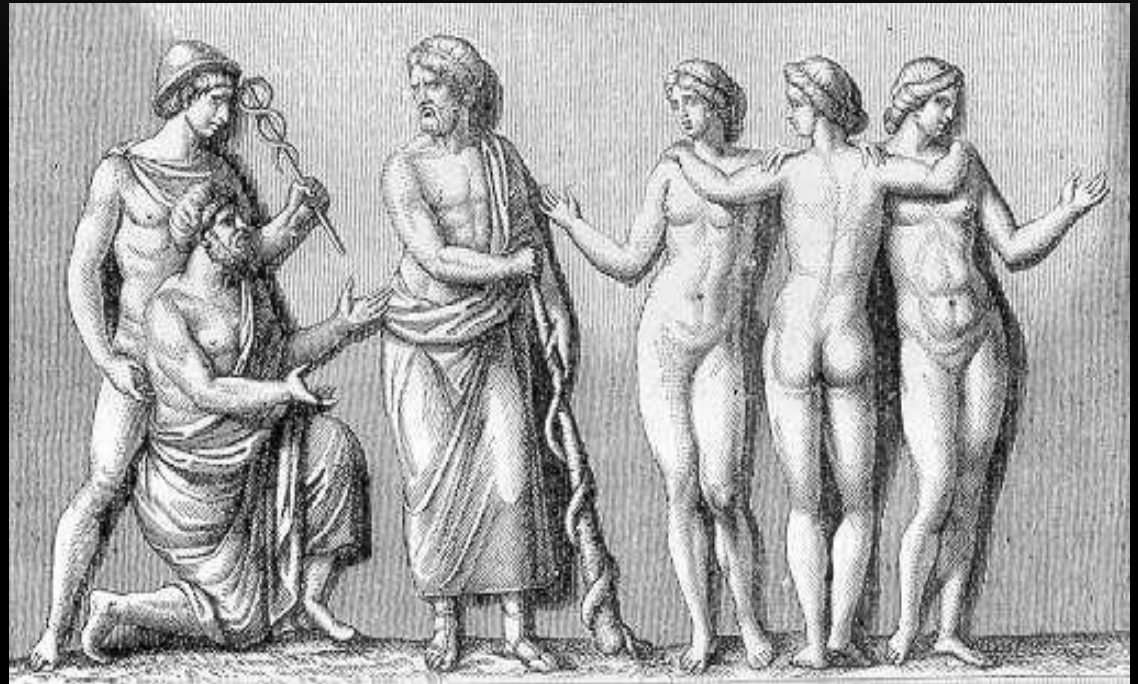
- Lover of all people
- Accessible to supplicants
- Man-God
- Killed for his compassion to the condemned
- Dared to care for the outcast, regardless of the consequences

Asclepiads- Physicians

- Hippocrates > the Asclepiad (Plato's)
> the leader of the
Asclepiads (Aristotle's)
- Medicine: responsibility to care for the sick, even if placed the physician at danger. Despite social status, financial gain or personal risk
- Altruistic art

HERMES AND AESCULAPIUS RELATIONSHIP

- Hermes was Aesculapius Uncle
- Saved him from his death (some say)
- Hermes thought to have married Hygeia (among many others)



Hermes, a merchant, Aesculapius, Meditrine, Hygeia, Panacea. Engraved from an original in the then Museum Pio Clemens in Rome *Galerie Mythologique, Recueil de Monuments* by Aubin Louis Millin, Paris 1811

ONE MORE COMPARISON HAD BEEN MADE....

Christianity



Paganism



DEFINITION OF CADUCEUS

- Caduceus: Latin word
- From Greek word *kerykeion*
- *Herald's wand*
- Non- Medical dictionaries: still *Herald's wand*
- .." figure whose basic structure consists of two serpents encircling a wand or rod"



THE CADUCEUS IN MEDICINE



Caius' emblem



Butt's caduceus

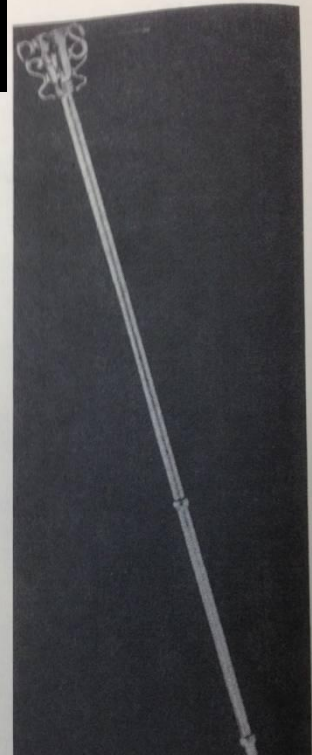


Harvey's caduceus

Caduceus of Royal
College of Physicians
of Edinburgh



Caduceus of the Royal
College of Physicians,
London. Caius



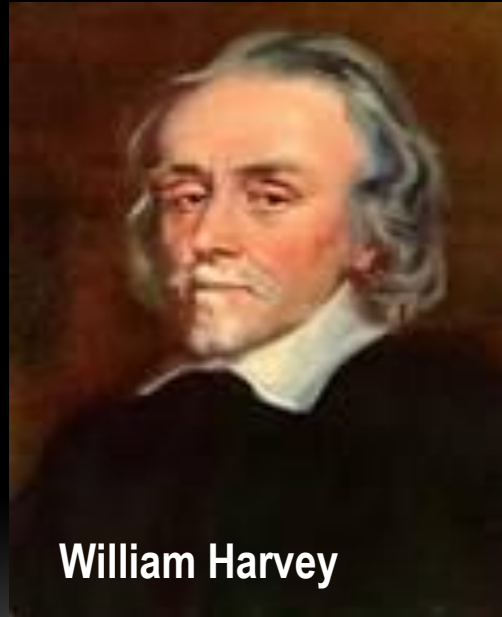
SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURY



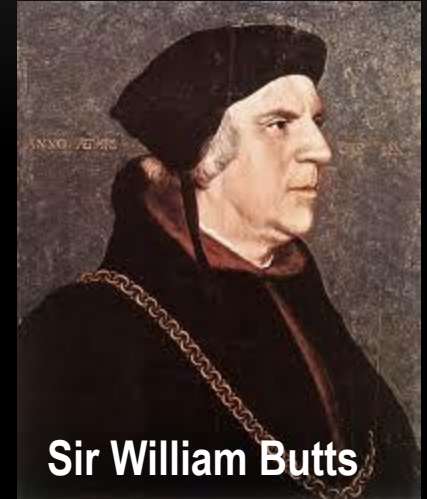
John Caius

President of the Royal College of Medicine 1555-1571. "Authority should be exercised with gentleness and mercy". Snakes > prudence. Replica given to ACP in 1954.

Similar coat of arms as 2 other Padua's law students (1602)



William Harvey



Sir William Butts

Prudent in judgment

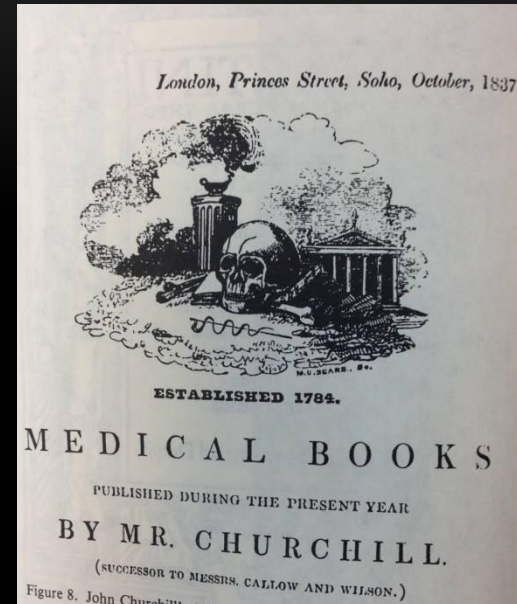
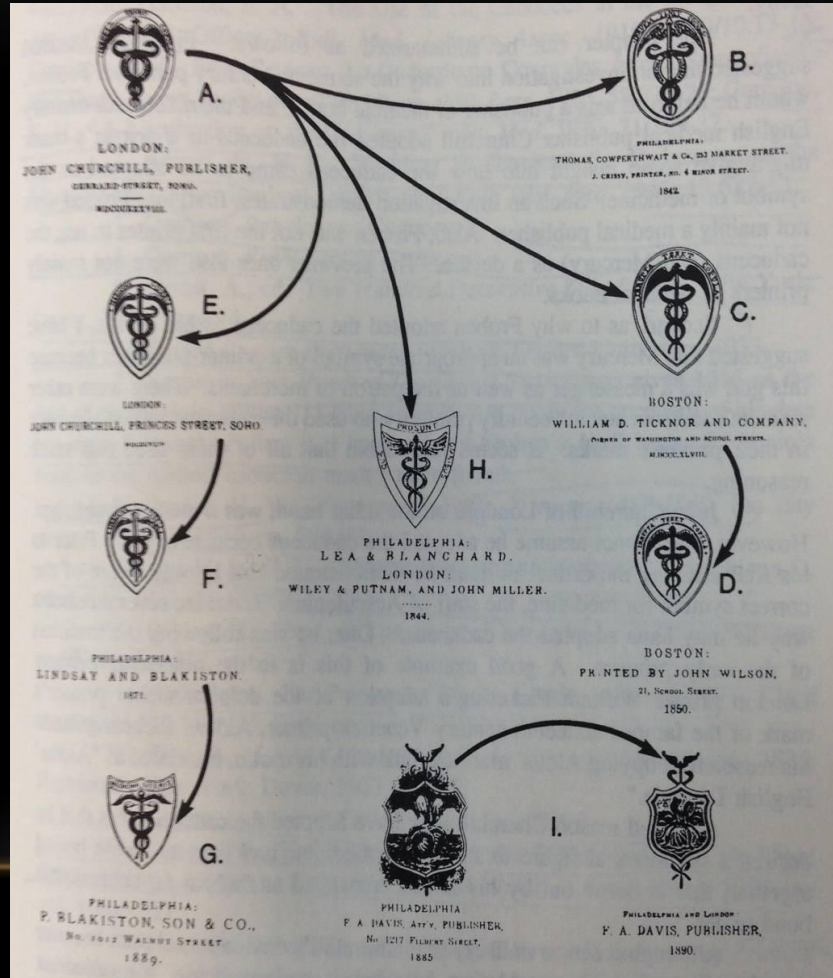
CADUCEUS AS A PRINTER'S MARK

Multiple American printer's marks derived from Churchill's.

Medicine, Literis. Unbreakable bond unites



Johann Froben's printer's mark. 1516. medical and non-medical books



John Churchill's printer's mark. 1837. Medical books

ROD OF ASCLEPIUS- MILITARY MEDICAL CORPS



France



German WWI medical
uniform



Australia



UK



South Africa



Army Reserve



Indian

CADUCEUS IN MEDICAL ORGANIZATIONS?

AAMC



- Founded in 1876
- Caduceus insignia in 1987-88
- Changed logo recently



AMA



- Founded in 1847
- JAMA 1883



QUESTIONS??



Claude Lorrain. Asclepius reviving Hippolytus

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4. Asclepius. The perfect discourse of Hermes trismegistus. Clement Salaman. 2010
5. The way of Hermes



Sandro Botticelli: Aphrodite in La Primavera. 1492