

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

Early Modern Veterinary Beliefs and Practices in Europe c. 1500 - 1800

Winchester, United Kingdom, 7 – 9 July 2011

Convened by:
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SCIENTIFIC REPORT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1993 Roy Porter commented on the ‘appalling dearth of significant writings on the history of British Veterinary Medicine’ (‘Man, Animals and Medicine at the Time of the Founding of the Royal Veterinary College’ in R. Mitchell (ed) *History of the Healing Professions*, 3 (1993). Since that time, there has been a noticeable increase in interest in the topic, mainly in the modern period. However, relatively little change has occurred in the study of what some historians refer to as the ‘pre-veterinary’ period. Inherent in this term is the idea that ‘real’ veterinary medicine only began with the institutionalization of the practice in the second half of the eighteenth century. As this workshop of early modern scholars working across Europe has shown, the field of veterinary medicine in the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was both widespread and dynamic.

The workshop took place in the ancient city of Winchester, which is approximately one hour southwest of London. Accommodation, meals and the workshop itself was based at the West Downs campus of the University of Winchester. The participants were academics from across Europe working in a range of interdisciplinary areas linked to early modern animal health care. Their papers and subsequent formal discussions were divided into three main sessions:

Session I: The Place of Animals in Early Modern Europe

Anthropocentrism, or the concept that humans were the central figure, if not the reason why the world existed, lay at the heart of early modern beliefs. These views were supported by the cultural dominance of European Christian theology which ordained that the purpose of animals was to satisfy the needs of humans and could therefore be used for any purpose. That said, since sick animals were unable to fulfil their duties and humans were expected to take care of their charges, for both moral and economic reasons. The first group of papers were based on evidence found in literary and philosophical works on the ways in which animals were viewed and cared for in order to provide an overview and context for the following presentations.

Session II: The Veterinary Marketplace

The concept of an early modern ‘medical marketplace’ originated with historians of human medicine in order to describe a plurality of available medical options. Despite the suggestion that ‘marketplace’ suggests a system of purely commercial transactions, it seems likely that the greatest number were obtained by bartering or for free. This also holds true for the parallel marketplace for animals which could be called ‘the Veterinary Marketplace’. Papers on the Veterinary Marketplace provided a socio-cultural view of veterinary options across early modern Europe. They included papers on animal healers, treatments and the popular veterinary literature which disseminated advice and information to both ‘professional’ and lay-healers.

Session III: Veterinary Education and Practice

There is a historical commonplace that ‘real’ veterinary medicine was linked to its’ institutionalization in the mid-eighteenth century. The first veterinary college was founded in France during the early 1760’s. Although other European countries swiftly followed suit, the first English veterinary college only began in 1791. This section included papers which examined the traditional system of formal (or informal) apprenticeships supplemented by information passed through the oral and print culture. It also contained contributions on the state of veterinary education on the Continent during the foundation and early years of their veterinary schools.

Session IV: Continuity or Change in Veterinary Medicine?

The formal presentations concluded with a discussion of the state of veterinary medicine on the Continent and in the British Isles at the close of the eighteenth century.

2. SCIENTIFIC CONTENT OF THE EVENT

Although most participants arrived on the morning of the 7th of July, travel requirements dictated that a few come the night before. This small group, along with the organiser, enjoyed a light supper accompanied by a spirited discussion about early modern veterinary medicine. The dialogue continued the next morning, as additional participants arrived at main West Downs building to register and collect their room keys and conference packs.

Following a buffet lunch, the group adjourned to our meeting room for the formal welcome. This was originally meant to have been delivered by Professor Joyce Goodman, the Head of the Faculty of Education, Health and Social Care (which includes the Department of Interprofessional Studies). Unfortunately, Professor Goodman was unable to come, so a half hour presentation was given by Dr Louise Curth instead. This included an overview of the history of Winchester, once the capital of Wessex and England in the middle ages. The powerpoint presentation also included facts about Winchester’s Cathedral and other historical sights. In the second part of the welcome, the great importance of the study of early modern veterinary medicine and of this workshop was addressed.

The third part of the welcome speech involved an introduction to our European Science Foundation representative, Professor Andrew Magioris. As a member of the ESF Standing Committee for the European Medical Research Councils, Professor Magioris has a special interest in medical history. This meant that his highly informative powerpoint about the ESF was joined by useful observations about the formation of our interdisciplinary network of academics working in the area of early modern animal health.

Our workshop was divided into four major themes, all of which contained a range of interdisciplinary speakers. After the welcome speeches, the first session began on ‘The Place of Animals in Early Modern Europe’. There were four speakers in this first group with Professor Erica Fudge, a specialist in early modern English human-animal relationships at the University of Strathclyde presenting the first paper in Session I. This was based on the literary view that animals were only viewed as part of a ‘herd’, rather than as individuals. She did this with a wide range of demographic and manuscript sources about cows. This led to a lively discussion about the way cows were seen in different countries in the following break for coffee.

After we re-adjourned, the second paper in this session was given by archaeologist Dr Richard Thomas (University of Leicester, UK). His very interesting paper was on ‘Paleographical Evidence of Veterinary Health in Early Modern England’ based on horse bones found on an archaeological dig at Dudley Castle. It explained the many ways that they could be used to learn about early modern health and illness. This was totally new topic for the majority of the participants and led to a number of questions and a lengthy discussion about the merits of combining archaeological and manuscript sources.

Another new area for many of us was addressed in the following paper on 'Aristotelian Traditions at the Universities', delivered by philosopher Dr Stefano Perfetti (University of Pisa, Italy) focused on This how Aristotle's work on animals were widely used as part of university based medical training in Italy up until around 1650, when they were replaced with more modern work by Francis Bacon. Although most participants were somewhat familiar with Aristotle's work (which were widely translated in the early modern period) none of us had realised what an important it actually played in 'professional' medical training. The many questions that followed this presentation touched on issues of readership and actual implementation of Aristotle's ideas in early modern Europe.

The final paper in this session was a historical study of 'Lord Harley and his Bleeding Horses: the Wellbeck Stud in the 1720's' by Professor Peter Edwards (Roehampton University, London.) It focused on a collection of eighteenth century manuscripts found in the Harley family archives. Edwards' purpose was to show how household accounts illustrated the ways in which professional and lay healers took care of and interacted with sick horses. This led to questions about how representative such records are of broader trends and a discussion of the pros and cons of using such materials without the backup of printed sources.

These first four papers were so well received by the group that the scheduled discussion session of forty minutes ran well over into the drinks reception scheduled at 6.45. This reception was sponsored by the University of Winchester's 'International Department' as a welcome to our European colleagues. Professor Joyce Goodman started proceedings with a warm welcome and had a brief chat with all the participants. This was followed by dinner with more spirited discussions and a chance to get to know our fellow academics.

After breakfast, the second day began at 9 am with the first of six papers in our second theme of 'The Veterinary Marketplace'. Dr Tamay Basagac Gul (Ankara University, Turkey) opened this session by talking about 'Baytars and Early Veterinary Practice in Turkey, c.1500 – 1800. As in many early modern societies, horses were considered to be the most important domesticated animals. This paper focused on the role of 'baytars' or horse healers in the Ottoman Empire. Unlike other European veterinary texts, the 'baitarnames' were translations not only of Greek knowledge, but also of Syrian and Byzantine ones. This led to a discussion about the actual nature of this advice and how it differed from that given in 'mainstream' European works.

Her paper was followed by Dr Joaquin Sanchez de Lollano Prieto (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain) with 'An Introduction to Special Features of Early Veterinary History in Spain'. This paper was an excellent follow-on to the previous one, given that both discussed a similar part of the world. It was illustrated by an impressive interactive timeline to show the developing role of 'albeitaries' or 'horse doctors' and Spanish literature. This included a description of 'Libro de Albeyteria', a text first printed in 1554 which became the definitive reference work on health care for horses. Questions and comments following this paper were based on comparing the contents of this book with those published in other countries

The final two papers before the coffee break continued the theme of Continental Veterinary Medicine. This included Mr Jan Berns (Meertens Instituut of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Amsterdam) talking about 'The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century European Wars and Veterinary Medicine'. One of the most important roles that early modern horses played in Europe was as war horses. This paper argued that that the almost continuous period of warfare in the sixteenth century was the reason for the modernisation of cavalry. The audience was particularly interested in, and asked many questions, about his discussion of 'The Actions of the Low Countries', a seventeenth century book about war in the Netherlands with an emphasis on the role and care of horses.

Dr Dominik Huenniger (George-August University, Goettingen, GR) speaking about 'The medical discourse on epizootics before the invention of academic veterinary medicine'. This paper introduced a new theme based on the massive episodes of rinderpest, or 'cattle plague' in the eighteenth century. Once again, he used a range of contemporary printed books to illustrate the medical discourses, ideas

about prevention and treatment of the times. This led to questions about these texts and a discussion of how they were similar or different to those in other countries. This continued into the break for refreshments, which provided participants with opportunities to ask the speakers more questions.

After reconvening, we continued with the theme of 'The Veterinary Marketplace' in the 18th century. The next two papers focused on early modern printed veterinary literature and practitioners. Professor Peter Koolmees (University of Utrecht, NL) spoke about 'From praying to experiment: veterinary medicine in 18th century Dutch Literature'. As in other countries, there were a range of vernacular veterinary texts for 'hoefsmids', which was the Dutch word for horse healers. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, when the Netherlands were occupied by France, these included many in French. A sample of these works showed that many of the same ingredients were used in horse remedies through the mid-nineteenth century. This led to questions and a discussion about similarities and differences between veterinary treatments and recipes from different countries.

The second paper after the break was delivered by Professor Andrej Pengov (University of Ljubljana, SL) who spoke about 'Achievements of Slovene Veterinary Medicine'. This visually stunning presentation introduced us to a number of prominent medical practitioners who were involved with animal health care in the region that now makes up Slovenia. These were highly educated men who studied mainly in the famous medical schools of Vienna and Padua. While the texts that they wrote were mainly in German, the first veterinary book actually published in the Slovenian language only appeared in 1784. Questions and the following discussion revolved about the content of the books discussed in this paper.

The final part of this segment was provided by Dr Stephanie Spencer, who is the Head of Research in the Faculty of Education, Health and Social Care at the University. The purpose of this session was to introduce funding options and facilitate discussions about collaborative bids. This consisted of an overview of British funding bodies followed by a group workshop/discussion about possibilities for collaborative funding proposals. During the group discussion, the participants made the decision to apply for an ESF Conference grant (through the University of Winchester) in order to broaden our network. We also talked about possibilities for smaller, collaborative projects between different institutions.

Our discussion continued during lunch, after which we reconvened for our third theme of 'Veterinary Education and Practice'. This session began with Professor Ilkka Alitalo (University of Helsinki, FI) talking about 'Animal diseases before the beginning of Nordic veterinary education'. The first references to diseases in Sweden and Finland (part of the same kingdom) date from the 14th century. These were discussed, along with the growing numbers of official acts about sick animals in the following two centuries. Questions from the participants, however, focused on the Swedish Act of 1734 about cattle infected with rinderpest, followed by a comparison with legislation in their own countries.

His paper was followed by a presentation by Dr Marion Thomas (University of Strasbourg, FR) on the prominent 'Vicq d'Azyr's Campaign against Rinderpest in 1774-6'. France is a very important country in veterinary history, as it was home to the first veterinary school in Alfort. Although Vicq d'Azyr was one of the most prominent figures in eighteenth century French veterinary medicine, the questions and discussion revealed that most of us were unfamiliar with his work. This paper examined his main writings, such as on the unity of human and animal medicine. It also discussed some of the main legislation regarding rinderpest in France.

The last paper of the day was on 'Veterinary Schools in the Eighteenth Century', delivered by Hnd. Berit Aschenbach (University of Leipzig, DE). This paper focused on 'the German speaking territories' and their veterinary colleges in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Vienna, which was the first in German speaking areas, was founded in 1767. By 1790 these had been followed by schools in Hanover, Miester, Dresden, Karlsruhe, Berlin and Munich. The following questions and discussion showed that they had shared many similarities with other European schools both in terms of teaching and problems staying open.

As in the morning, talk during the afternoon refreshment break was mainly on the papers that had just been given. This continued into the ‘comments and discussion’ session that followed from 4.30 – 5.30. The content of the discussion revealed that there were several participants interested in applying for funding for a comparative study on early modern veterinary literature in German and English. Participants were then given a short break, before reconvening for dinner at half past 7.

The final day of the workshop addressed the theme of ‘Continuity or Change?’ This began with the thought-provoking paper by Professor Johann Schaeffer (Tieraerztliche Hochschule, Hannover, DE) entitled ‘Veterinary Medicine in the Renaissance: Renaissance of Veterinary Medicine?’ As one of the most eminent veterinary historians in Europe, Schaeffer’s presentation illustrated his vast knowledge of the subject. This included doing an excellent job at drawing conclusions about the actual state of veterinary medicine in Continental Europe at the close of the eighteenth century. Our final paper focused on a similar theme in Great Britain. Based on Dr Louise Curth’s extensive work in early modern English veterinary care, this discussed the state of the art both before and after the foundation of the first London Veterinary College. This led to a spirited discussion comparing veterinary medicine in individual countries to the conclusions drawn by Schaeffer and Curth.

After a final coffee break, the group spent the scheduled two hours and the final lunch discussing future activities/networking and collaboration. This included a great deal of discussion about the best ways to further develop our network and activities. The major focus of this was on generating ideas for the ESF conference bid to be submitted through the University of Winchester. Although the workshop group represented a range of different disciplines, the decision was made to encompass many more (such as economic history, paleopathology and ethics). We also put together a preliminary list of possible speakers representing a broader spread over Europe and the rest of the world. The spirited nature of our discussion ran past the time allocated, illustrating once again a resounding interest in early modern veterinary research.

3. ASSESSMENT OF THE RESULTS, CONTRIBUTION TO THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE FIELD, OUTCOME

This workshop has been highly successful in meeting the state daims of beginning to :

- evaluate the state of early modern veterinary research in Europe
- share research on a multi-national level
- establish a network of academics interested in early modern veterinary medicine
- explore new directions for European-wide collaborative research projects

This workshop was marked by high levels of energy and desire to build a new network of early modern veterinary academics. In addition to informal communication, our next step is to apply for the ESF conference funding. If successful, this will allow us to move on to our ultimate aim of acquiring network funding. There are also plans to forge ahead with smaller, collaborative bids for funding on early modern veterinary literature and veterinary practitioners.

4. FINAL PROGRAMME

Thursday, 7 July 2011

Morning/Afternoon *Arrival*

12.30 – 2.00 *Registration*

1.00 – 1.45 *Lunch buffet*

2.00 – 2.30 **Welcome and introduction**
Convenor **Dr Louise Hill Curth**, University of Winchester, UK

2.30 – 2.50 **Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF)**
Professor Andrew Margioris, ESF Standing Committee for the European Medical Research Councils (EMRC)

Session I: The place of animals in early modern Europe

2.50 – 3.20 **‘Humans and Animals’**
Professor Erica Fudge, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, , UK

3.20 – 3.50 *Coffee / tea break*

3.50 – 4.20 **‘Paleographical Evidence of Veterinary Health in Early Modern England’**
Dr Richard Thomas, University of Leicester, UK

4.20 – 4.50 **‘Aristotelian Traditions at the Universities’**
Dr Stefano Perfetti, University of Pisa, IT

4.50 – 5.20 **‘Lord Harley and his Bleeding Horses: the Welbeck Stud in the 1720s’**
Professor Peter Edwards, Roehampton University, London, UK

5.20 - 6.00 **Comments and general discussion**

6.45 - 7.15 *Welcome Drinks Reception*
Professor Joyce Goodman, Head of Faculty of Education, Health and Social Care, University of Winchester, Winchester, UK

7.30 *Dinner*

Friday, 8 July 2011

Morning *Breakfast*

Session II: The Veterinary Marketplace

9.00- 9.30 **Baytars and Early Veterinary Practices in Turkey, c. 1500 – 1800’**
Dr Tamay Başağaç Gül, Ankara University, TR

9.30 – 10.00 **An Introduction to Special Features of Early Veterinary History in Spain**
Dr Joaquin Sanchez de Lollano Prieto, Universidad Complutense de

Madrid, ES

- 10.00 – 10.30 **‘The Sixteenth and Seventeenth European Wars and Veterinary Medicine’**
Mr Jan Berns, Meertens Instituut of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Amsterdam, NL
- 10.30 – 11.00 **The medical discourse on epizootics before the invention academic veterinary medicine (Germany, ca. 1713-1784)**
Dr Dominick Huenniger, Georg-August University, Goettingen, GR
- 11.00 – 11.30 *Coffee / tea Break*
- 11.30 – 12.00 **‘From praying to experiment: veterinary medicine in 18th century Dutch literature’**
Professor Peter Koolmees, Utrecht, NL
- 12.00 – 12.30 **‘Achievements of Slovene Veterinary science in the 18th Century’**
Professor Andrej Pengov, University of Ljubljana, SI
- 12.30 – 1.30 **‘Funding Options and Discussion on Collaborative Research in Early Modern Veterinary Medicine’**
Dr Stephanie Spencer, University of Winchester, UK
- 1.30 – 2.30 *Lunch*

Session III: Veterinary Education and Practice

- 2.30 – 3.00 **‘Animal diseases before the beginning of Nordic veterinary education’**
Professor Ilkka Alitalo, University of Helsinki, FI
- 3.00 – 3.30 **‘Vicq d’Azyr’s Campaign against Rinderpest in 1774-6’**
Dr Marion Thomas, University of Strasbourg, FR
- 3.30 – 4.00 **‘Veterinary Schools in the Eighteenth Century’**
Hnd. Berit Aschenbach, University of Leipzig, DE
- 4.00 – 4.30 *Coffee / tea break*
- 4.30 – 5.30 **Comments and General Discussion**
- 19.30 *Dinner*

Saturday, 9 July 2011

Morning *Breakfast*

Session IV: Continuity or Change?

- 09.30-10.00 **‘Veterinary Medicine in the Renaissance: Renaissance of Veterinary Medicine?’**
Professor Johann Schaeffer, Tierärztliche Hochschule Hannover, DE
- 10.00-10.30 **Continuity or Change in Veterinary Medicine?**
Dr Louise Hill Curth, University of Winchester, UK

10.30-11.00	<i>Coffee / tea Break</i>
11.00- 13.00	Discussion on follow-up activities/networking/collaboration <i>End of Workshop</i>
13.00 - 14.00	<i>Lunch and departure</i>

5. FINAL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Convenor: Dr Louise Hill Curth, Faculty of Education, Health & Social Care, University of Winchester, Great Britain

ESF Representative: Professor Andrew Margioris, Faculty of Medicine, University of Crete

Professor Ilkka Alitalo, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Helsinki

Hd. Berit Aschenbach, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Leipzig

Associate Professor R. Tamay Basagac Gull, Veterinary Faculty, Ankara University

Mr Jan Berns, Meertens Instituut of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Professor Peter Edwards, Department of Humanities, Roehampton University, London, Great Britain

Professor Erica Fudge, Humanities and Social Sciences, Strathclyde University, Scotland

Dr Dominik Huenniger, Lichtenberg-Kolleg, Georg August University, Göttingen, Germany

Professor Peter Koolmees, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Utrecht, Netherlands

Professor Andrej Pengov, Institute for Microbiology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Dr Stefano Perfetti, Department of Philosophy, University of Pisa, Italy

Professor Joaquin Sanchez de Lollano Prieto, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain

Professor Dr Johann Schaeffer, Tierärztliche Hochschule, Hannover, Germany

Dr Marion Thomas, Faculty of Medicine, University of Strasbourg

Dr Richard Thomas, Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Leicester, England

6. STATISTICAL INFORMATION: PARTICIPANTS

Gender: 5 female, 11 male

Age ranges:

Under 40: 6

Over 41: 10

Countries:

England: 3 (including convenor)

France: 1

Greece: 1

Netherlands 2

Slovenia: 1

Turkey: 1

Finland: 1

Germany: 3

Italy: 1

Scotland: 1

Spain: 1