Daniel Foote, M.D., of Cambridge:
The Evidence in Print and from the Sloane Collection

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If he is remembered at all, Daniel Foote is usually remembered as the translator of Francis Mercury van Helmont’s ‘Observations’ and his fragment of autobiography contained in British Library, Sloane MS. 530, or as a translator of a treatise ‘Of the stone-colick’ and some late works by Jean Baptiste van Helmont, as well as a biographical account of the elder van Helmont composed by the younger, now Sloane MS. 617. Even though they acknowledged Foote’s hand in the production of those manuscripts, twentieth-century scholars of the van Helmonts largely conferred upon him the status of a lost figure. His biography was fleetingly the subject of scholarly speculation in the early decades of the century, but that curiosity soon gave way to resignation. Among the papers of F. S. Darrow, Francis Mercury van Helmont’s most enthusiastic scholar, is a list of ‘Miscellaneous letters, bibliographies, queries’ which includes a request for any information about Foote’s life and relationship to van Helmont. In 1914, Darrow took to the pages of Notes and Queries to issue a plea for help on a related matter: tracking down various works by the younger van Helmont including an English edition of 1667’s Alphabetum Natuurae, which he understood to have been translated by Foote and printed by Thomas Howkins in London in 1694. No reply was forthcoming, and the London Stationers’ register for that year mentions no such text. In 1930, Marjorie Hope Nicolson judged that Foote’s identity was not the concern of her volume of Anne Conway’s correspondence, and, seven years later, Grace Sherrer observed, ‘Who Dr. Foote was and why he devoted himself to the translation or transcription of the van Helmont record we can only guess’. ‘Dr. Foote lives in history only as van Helmont’s transcriber’, she concluded.

In fact, such pessimism was uncalled-for, and a skeletal biography can be established. The parish register at Cambridge St Clement records the baptism of a Daniel Foote in March 1629/30. Foote was admitted as a sizar to Trinity College Cambridge in 1645, taking a B.A. in 1649/50, an M.A. in 1653 and an M.D. in 1664. This last detail is confirmed in Sloane MS. 625, which contains a copy of Foote’s M.D. certificate made by the doctor in 1675, confirming the date of issue as 1664. A possible explanation for the passage of almost two decades between Foote’s matriculation and receiving his M.D. lies perhaps in his being the vicar ‘of Little Swaffham, Cambs.; ejected, 1662’. Afterwards, Foote was ‘in London’.

1 Cleveland, OH, Kelvin Smith Library, Fritz Sage Darrow Papers, 2-2, 5-5.
4 Ibid., p. 11.
6 Sloane MS. 625, f. 55r.
7 Even by seventeenth-century standards, according to which progress from matriculation to the degree of M.D. was expected to take about fourteen years, Foote’s nineteen-year studentship is long. See, Phyllis Allen, ‘Medical Education in 17th Century England’, Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences, 1 (1946), pp. 115-43 (pp. 122-3).
9 Ibid.
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source for Foote’s ministry at Little Swaffham is the historian of nonconformity, Edmund Calamy, who notes that Foote ‘had this living a few years while he continued at Cambridge, and preached there on the Lord’s-day. When he was ejected he came to London’. Having apparently left Cambridge after losing his position under the 1662 Act of Uniformity, Foote has been identified as a member of Locke’s ‘Dry Club’, the London discussion group founded ‘For the Amicable Improvement of Mix’d Conversation’. This assumption is based on two mentions of a ‘Dr Foot’ in Locke’s correspondence. In November 1690, Benjamin Furly made passing mention of Foote in a letter to Locke. Furly observed that, when his fellow Quaker Robert Lodge spoke, ‘a heavenly magick and melody as Dr. Foot use to phrase it attended him’. Two years later, William Popple, the Dry Club’s secretary, wrote to Locke to inform him of the group’s progress, reporting, ‘We have lately admitted two new Bretheren into our Club: Mr Hedworth and Mr Stevens: both I think very Worthy Good Men, but of very different Characters. We have also chosen two others: Dr Foot and Mr White: but they are not yet come amongst us’. Algernon Sidney’s mention of a ‘Mr. Foot’ in a letter to Furly of 1679 – if it can be taken as a reference to Daniel Foote, M.D., of Cambridge – suggests that Foote was acquainted with the intellectual affairs of this circle: Sidney reports, ‘Yesterday Mr. Foot met me, and desired when I writ next unto you, to minde you of the book, which as was hoped might have been printed before this time. I see he and others are of opinion it might now be done heare, the Act for restraining the presse being expired, and the care he would take to oversee the presse might abate the expence, and thinks the paper that was bought may be put off with littell or noe losse’. Foote is probably the Daniel Foote that is buried in St Sepulchre’s Church at Holborn Viaduct in London, the year of his death given as 1700.

But Foote leaves far more evidence that can be added to these bare details. It is usually overlooked that he was the translator of a work that found its way into print, The Talking Deaf Man by the Swiss physician John Conrad Amman, and his contribution to the Royal Society’s debates about William Simpson’s Hydrologia Chymica has received only slight attention. The first part of this article will therefore examine the inferences that can be made about Foote from these texts. In the second part, I will turn to a more substantial and still more neglected body of evidence, the store of Foote’s papers preserved in the Sloane collection. More than thirty catalogue items can be identified as containing material belonging to him, comprising his collection of assiduously written commonplace books, a number of transcribed and translated works of theology and medicine, including texts of Helmontian and more varied authorship, personal letters, and some essays and treatises from his own pen. These materials offer not only to throw light on Foote’s work, enabling it to be placed within the history of medicine and scholarship, but, with due critical attention, the details they contain promise also to enliven work on histories of reading, education and ideas.

11 This phrase is taken from the rules of the Dry Club held at Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Locke c.25r.
13 Ibid., p. 582.
14 Thomas Foster (ed.), Original letters of Locke, Algernon Sidney and Anthony, Lord Shaftesbury (London, 1830), p. 95. The ‘Act for restraining the presse’ that Sidney refers to as ‘being expired’, was the Licensing of the Press Act 1662, which lapsed in 1679.
I. The evidence in print

Darrow’s impression that Foote translated Francis Mercury van Helmont’s practical method for teaching the deaf to speak was perhaps formed from reading the physician’s rendering of Amman’s *Talking Deaf Man*. That text was printed for Thomas Howkins of George Yard, London, as Darrow supposed the untraceable Helmontian work to have been. A short advertisement to the Reader that prefaces the English *Talking Deaf Man* announces the author’s debt to van Helmont as well as announcing Howkins’s intention to publish a translation of Helmont’s *Alphabetum*: ‘About 26 Years since, the Honourable, Learned, and Pious F. M. Baron of Helmont caused to be published in Latin a small Treatise, wholly and fully to the same purpose, with what is here published: Which said Treatise, entituled, The *Alphabet of Nature* is now in Hand to be Translated, and Published in English; of which it was thought fit here to give thee this Notice’.\(^{17}\) Additionally, the advertisement announced that Howkins planned to publish an English edition of van Helmont’s ‘learned Tract entituled, The Divine Being, and its Attributes’,\(^{18}\) whose translation had recently been completed. Howkins died in 1694,\(^{19}\) and, although no trace of the English *Alphabet of Nature* can be found (a Dutch edition appeared in 1697),\(^{20}\) *The Divine Being* was entered in the Stationers’ register on 30 October 1693.\(^{21}\)

Some tentative inferences can be made about the languages that Foote knew. The edition of Amman included a translator’s dedication, signed by ‘Dan. Foot.’, which reveals that he translated Amman’s treatise from a Latin version. But he also makes mention of the problems of working from a text originally composed in High German, remarking ‘it therefore is necessary, that he who would put his Rules into practice must observe a due Analogy in *mutatis mutandis*’.\(^{22}\) Latin is the most frequently used language of Foote’s manuscripts, and it is unsurprising that he was comfortable with the tongue, having received medical training at Cambridge. But his acquaintance with van Helmont’s manuscripts, as well as his sensitivity to rendering in English the nuances of what was originally a High German text, now filtered through a Latin version, implies that Foote may have known other European languages. It is unclear what was the original language of the van Helmont manuscripts from which Foote worked to produce the texts in Sloane MSS. 530 and 617. Although van Helmont claimed to have learned Latin expressly for the purpose of editing his father’s medical works (published in Latin in 1648 and English in 1664),\(^{23}\) the younger van Helmont’s command of the language, in Henry More’s estimation, was not good. A letter of More’s to Anne Conway, written while van Helmont was in Cambridge in 1670, reveals, ‘van Helmont can speake French and Italian, but Latin very brokenly, so that Mr Foxcroft understanding his Dutch could with most ease conceive his Interpreter, but I need not sett down because Mr Foxcroft will do it more punctually and distinctly’.\(^{24}\) It is likely then that the language from

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\(^{17}\) Amman, *Talking Deaf Man*, sig. a5r-a5v.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., sig. a6r.


\(^{20}\) Een Zeer Korte Afbeelding van het Ware Natuuralyke Hebrewse A.B.C. (Amsterdam, 1697).

\(^{21}\) A Transcript of the Registers of the Worshipful Company of Stationers from 1640-1708 AD, 3 vols (London, 1913), vol. iii, p. 430.

\(^{22}\) Amman, *Talking Deaf Man*, unpaginated preface.

\(^{23}\) ‘the understanding of some Latine Books seemed to be desired; to this end, I read over diverse times the New Testament, in the Latine Idiome, and the Germane, that by that means I might in a few days, not onely understand the Latine stile, but also, that in the aforesaid Testament’. Jean Baptiste van Helmont, *Van Helmont’s Works Containing his most Excellent Philosophy, Physick, Chirurgery, Anatomy*, ed. Francis Mercury van Helmont (London, 1664), ‘Preface to the Reader’, sig. a4r.

which Foote was working when he translated van Helmont’s manuscript notes was either Dutch or German.

In 1700, Amman published an expanded version of *The Talking Deaf Man* in Latin, the Preface to which spoke of van Helmont (who by then was dead) in terms of hallowed respect tinged with rivalry. Amman recounts a story of his meeting ‘with the celebrated philosopher Francis Mercury van Helmont (now among the saints) who informed me of a certain Natural Alphabet, discovered by him some years before, by which he had instructed those who had been deaf and dumb from birth. But when he saw me teaching, he acknowledged with greatest candour, that I had not only borrowed anything from him, but that I had greatly surpassed him in practical results.’ Foote clearly had dealings with both van Helmont and Amman (though possibly conducted through Howkins). That Foote translated Amman’s treatise as well as work by van Helmont, and that (unlike van Helmont’s ‘Observations’) the work was ushered into print, implies that he was not solely an amanuensis or private secretary to van Helmont during the Flemish thinker’s time in London, although that may have been one of his roles.

Elsewhere Foote’s engagement with experimental science and the Royal Society is clear, although there is no evidence to support Allison Coudert’s casual reference to him as ‘a respected member of the Royal Society’. Foote dedicated his portion of the labours involved in producing Amman’s text ‘To his Learned Friends Richard Waller, and Alexander Pittfield, Esquires of the Royal Society’. Waller was a natural philosopher and translator of scientific works, as well as being a close friend and protégé of Robert Hooke and, in 1705, the editor of his *Posthumous Works*. Pittfield was Waller’s brother-in-law and a Fellow of the Society who sat on its council between 1687 and 1688, and again between 1694 and 1699.

Foote may genuinely have been a close friend of Waller and Pittfield, but his dedication might equally have been an attempt to ingratiate himself with the pair, who already enjoyed reputation among the Society, or alternatively to associate himself in the minds of his more influential readers with two establishment figures of scientific translation. Waller translated a set of experimental notes from proceedings of the Florentine Academia del Cimento, as well as composing his own text, *The Measure of the Earth*, which was printed, initially with Pittfield’s translation of the great Parisian architect and natural philosopher Claude Perrault’s *Memoirs for a Natural History of Animals*.

A second instance of Foote’s engagement with the Royal Society concerns his contributions to the debate about William Simpson’s *Hydrologia Chymica*, which sought to establish the chemical composition of various spa waters of England and to give an account of their healing qualities. The book was printed in 1669 and dwelled heavily on the waters of Scarborough, disputing the claims of their healing powers made some years earlier by another Yorkshire physician, Robert Wittie. An editorial summary of Simpson’s book appeared

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30 Claude Perrault, *Memoirs for a Natural History of Animals Containing the Anatomical Descriptions of Several Creatures Dissected by the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris Englished by Alexander Pitfeild [...] to which is added an Account of the Measure of a Degree of a Great Circle of the Earth, Published by the same Academy and Englished by Richard Waller* (London, 1688).

in the *Philosophical Transactions* and Wittie published a treatise responding to Simpson, prompting an editorial summary of his *Answer* to appear in the *Philosophical Transactions*, upon which the editors enlarged in another review two months later. Foote composed the first response of an ensuing torrent of correspondence, his letter appearing in the following edition. The letter reveals a good deal about its author. He engaged closely with the articles in the *Philosophical Transactions* and his response is diligently attentive to detail (as well as being deferential to the journal’s editors and adopting a rhetorical tone of empirical detachment). He quotes the editors’ account of Wittie verbatim, and attaches volume and page numbers to his references. He speaks of the editors’ ‘fore-cited words’, their having ‘aptly’ strengthened their case by quoting the authority of ‘famous Doctors’, and their modesty in admitting ‘Here we want instruction’. Although it gives evidence of Foote’s facility with chemical theory (implying his preference for Simpson’s chemical physic rather than Wittie’s traditional) the letter is conspicuously not an assertion of his chemical convictions, but rather a thought experiment that poses a series of relevant questions. When he does advance a chemical theory, he claims to do so, ‘not to have it Justle out the more received one, or any other that may be proposed; but that it may have its Tryall, and accordingly may live or dye’. In his professed devotion to experimental rigour, Foote is surely no iconoclast. As he explains, he is offering ‘Conjectures [...] which I had, if not abandoned, yet kept supprest in silence’. These private ruminations, he says, seemed pertinent to the debate at hand, ‘Wherefore I thought, it might not be very un-acceptable to you, if I desired you, publickely to give notice of these Conjectures, that the Learned may reason and find out the truth of them’. The learning that Foote betrays in the letter indicates a physician acquainted with the nuances of medical thinking about spa waters. In a rare instance of a claim to scientific fact, he corrects Wittie’s remark that ‘these waters loose all their virtue, yea their quant and bulk also, though in Glasses and under the Hermetick seal, if removed from the fountain head’ with the observation that ‘some sort of Medicinal waters loose their virtue, if remov’d to any considerable distance from their fountain head; but others do not, at least, not so soon’. And he is able to enumerate examples of each type: ‘to this last sort belong such, as are our Barnet, Epsham and Dullidge waters; to the other sort belong our Tunbridge, Astrap and Stallbridge-waters’.

But the real question with which Foote is concerned is why it should be that spa waters appear to lose their healing powers when separated from their spring. He proposes nine questions into which further research may enlighten the matter. Those are: Whether anything ‘Vinous’ or ‘Acid’ can be discovered as a product of water; whether or not standing water always produces a sediment; whether the sediment (or ‘Ochre’) sinks more quickly in water that is allowed to stand than in that which is moved; whether the ‘Ochre’ can be found downstream or only in the water’s source; whether bottled water that is ‘stopt’ loses its medicinal qualities more quickly than that which is left open, and whether they ‘have the same precipitated sediment’; whether containers of different materials cause spa water to lose

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34 Daniel Foote, ‘Some Reflexions Made on the Enlarged Accompt of Dr Witties Answer to Hydrologia Chymica in Numb 51. of these Tracts; Chiefly Concerning the Cause of the Sudden Loss of the Vertues of Mineral Waters’, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, iv:52 (1669), pp. 1050-5 (p. 1051).
36 Ibid., p. 1052.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid., pp. 1051-2.
39 Ibid., p. 1052.
their healing properties at different rates; whether the production of a sediment in bottled spa water can be suppressed; whether waters which are weakened still produce an ‘Ochre’; and whether the loss of medicinal qualities might be explained by a hypothesis of ‘Avolation of Spiritous parts’. The hypothesis that Foote hopes to test by these questions is the one proposed by German chemist Otto Tachenius that a spring water’s healing properties stem from a reaction between an acid salt and sulphur, both of which enter the water at its subterranean spring. Foote took the theory from Tachenius’s Hippocrates Chemicus first published in 1666 (another text which he says he saw reviewed in the Philosophical Transactions during 1669). Tachenius’s account of contemporary chemistry was founded on the assumption that Hippocrates had laid the foundations of all subsequent natural philosophy. Thus, the text builds on the Hippocratic theory of two basic elements (fire and water) to develop the chemistry of acids and alkalis on which Foote draws in his letter.

Foote’s having read and absorbed Tachenius is further evidence of his engagement with work by a circle of chemical physicians operating in continental Europe. In 1648, the younger van Helmont edited and published his father’s Opuscula, and Tachenius compiled an index to the second edition, published in Venice in 1651. John Finch, later Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, had faith enough in Tachenius’s acquaintance with the younger van Helmont to consult him on the matter of van Helmont’s reliability as a physician. While still a medical student in Padua, Finch wrote a letter to his sister Anne Conway who was considering enlisting the Flemish physician’s help in the search for a cure for her debilitating headaches. Finch was sceptical, and wrote to his sister that Tachenius had ‘return’d me a civill reply in Latin, and tld me he was the Man sett out that edition of van Helmont’. The news from Tachenius, reported Finch, did not fill him with confidence, though it does establish Tachenius’s relationship to van Helmont: ‘as for cures effected by Helmont at Venice, [Tachenius] knew none though he was intimate with the young man’. The only case in which Tachenius had heard of van Helmont’s effecting a cure, wrote Finch, was ‘a feavour after Nature had made the Crisis by Antimony fixed, which saith [Tachenius], was owed rather to Nature then his Ars.’

Further contributions to the spa water debate followed. Nathaniel Highmore’s article in the Philosophical Transactions was a response to the editorial account of Wittie’s argument, not, as Matthew Eddy has said, a rebuttal of Foote. It was Wittie and not Foote who had, in Highmore’s words, ‘set Allom in the front of his Constituents of his Medicinal Water’ and Simpson who had assumed a distinction between vitriol (sulphur) and iron, whereas Highmore now claimed that vitriol was ‘the Salt of Iron’. John Beale also published two articles in the Philosophical Transactions interrogating the causes of mineral springs, and Wittie responded to Foote and Highmore, offering direct responses to all nine of Foote’s

40 Ibid., pp. 1054-5.
42 Jean Baptiste van Helmont, Ortus Medicinæ (Venice, 1651).
43 Conway Letters, p. 86.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
49 Ibid., p. 1129.
queries, and some reflections on his observations. Wittie defers to Foote, speaking of his ‘ingenious Notes and Letter’, and acknowledging the truth of his observation that the healing power of spa waters lies in ‘Volatile Sulphurs of Metals and Minerals’ (though Wittie said that the medicinal value of the water’s other properties should not be discounted), as well as assenting to his claims about acids and alkalis. Perhaps an intriguing clue about Foote’s relationship with the chemistry of west-central Europe can be found in Wittie’s attempt to respond to his account of Tachenius: ‘as for Tachenius to whom he refers’, writes Wittie, ‘I cannot get him in London, and therefore can say nothing to his Principles’.

Hippocrates Chemicus was printed in Venice in 1666, and an English translation did not appear until 1677. The Venice edition does not seem to have been widely available, and Wittie’s difficulties in obtaining a copy may have been typical. None of the copyright libraries of the UK and Ireland now holds a copy, and nor do the libraries of the Royal Society or Royal Society of Medicine. In fact, I have been able to locate two copies currently in the UK, one in the library of the Royal College of Physicians, the other in the Wellcome Library. Copies in seventeenth-century library catalogues are similarly few, the only case in which I have been able to identify certain ownership being that of the lawyer Sir John Darnell. Though we cannot tell in which version Boyle read Hippocrates Chymicus, he probably had familiarity with the Venice edition: a translation of the text by John Warr, the father of Boyle’s servant of the same name, survives in the Royal Society’s Boyle Papers, bearing the inscription ‘Venice, the Ides of Nov: 1668’. A second edition of Hippocrates Chymicus was published in Brunswick in 1668 (the edition that Locke owned), but, scarce as copies may have been in London, it was the 1666 Venice edition that Foote read, a fact confirmed by his having participated in what appears to have been a communal transcription of that edition, which is held among his papers as part of Sloane MS. 615. The arguments from Hippocrates Chymicus on which he draws in his letter to the Philosophical Transactions cannot have been simply assimilated from the Transactions’ review of Tachenius in the previous issue, because the review makes no mention of the arguments about the chemical origins of healing waters to which Foote refers.

In 1670 Simpson published another book-length text entitled Hydrological Essays, responding to the controversy Hydrologia Chymica had sparked. One of the essays took Foote’s letter to the Philosophical Transactions as its starting point, and, as Wittie had done, paid Foote the respect of addressing each of his detailed questions with detailed responses. Simpson is unsurprisingly keen to praise Foote, referring to him as the ‘ingenious Dr. Dan Foot’ in the book’s full title, the ‘Learned Dr. Daniel Foot’ in the title of the essay, and as the ‘ingenious Doctor’ in its main text. More significantly, Simpson (apparently by accident rather than design) was able to seek Foote’s approval of his new essay’s nuances before publishing, and the pair agreed a caveat to Simpson’s arguments. ‘But here’, he announced, ‘I am to advertise my Reader, That since I committed these

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50 Robert Wittie, ‘A Discourse of Dr R. Wittie, Relating to the Notes of Dr Foot in Numb. 52. and to Those of Dr. Highmore in Numb. 56. of These Tracts’, Philosophical Transactions, v:60 (1670), pp. 1074-82 (p. 1075).
51 Ibid., p. 1080.
52 Ibid., p. 1075.
53 The RCP Library copy is held at shelfmark D2/56-f-22; the Wellcome Library’s copy is shelfmark EPB / A 50594/A.
57 Sloane MS. 615, ff. 1r-65v.
59 Ibid., p. 120.
Papers to the Press, I opportunely had some discourse with the aforesaid Dr. Foot, concerning his Queries afore-mentioned, Whereupon we mutually agreed, That my Return to the Queries, together with the Experiments confirming as well as elucidating the same, do chiefly relate to Mineral Medical Waters, which are of that Class or sort, which do purge by Stool mostly, and also by Urine. In his conclusion Simpson co-opted Foote’s approval of the findings complete with this qualification, reporting, ‘The Doctor did thank me for my Return to his Queries, though he (frankly) acknowledged to me, he supposed my Answer to be inapposite only to that point afore-noted, by reason of my being (at the writing my Return) an perfect stranger to the Tunbridge, or any other Waters of the like properties: but further added, That he hoped my Example would be a motive to others, (whose abilities and opportunities amply capacitate them thereunto) both from Reason and Experiment conjointly, to acquaint the World with the knowledge and usefulness of all sorts of Medical Waters’.

II. The evidence from the Sloane Collection

Prominent among Foote’s manuscripts in the Sloane collection is a group of commonplace books containing notes, in some cases systematically collated and arranged, on a variety of topics. Mordechai Feingold has observed that the titles of the chemical and medical works on which Foote’s commonplace books take notes bear striking similarity to the titles listed in the library catalogue of John Nidd, a fellow of Trinity who had entered the College six years before Foote. Feingold goes as far as to remark that, ‘unless the two had identical libraries, Foote had free access to Nidd’s collection’. A group of three notebooks (Sloane MSS. 81, 588, and 591) present alphabetized concordances to three medical and botanical texts, formally set out in a fair hand. Sloane MS. 81, a folio-sized volume and the largest of the three, contains Latin notes on the manuscripts of Dr John Furtho, a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, who died in 1631, donating money to the College and books to its library. The book contains notes on 120 symptoms and diseases, under a series of headings. Each topic is listed at the top of a new page, with some headings written in without notes being entered underneath. Several pages are left blank, and the final three leaves comprise an index.

The title page bears the name ‘Dan Foote M.D.’ as well as being inscribed with the words ‘Dr. Butler of Cambridge his handwriting’. Both inscriptions appear to have been written by Hans Sloane, who made many similar inscriptions on Foote’s texts as they came into his collection, often identifying items inherited from Foote by a letter ‘F’ on the title page. The identity of Dr Butler represents a mystery. He was not Charles Butler the philologist and apiarist, on whose Rhetoricae Foote took notes in Sloane MS. 612, as that Butler was neither a doctor nor ever had any connection to Cambridge.

Sloane MS. 591 presents a similar prospect, though recorded in a smaller notebook. Another fair copy in a formal hand, with annotations in Foote’s casual hand, it consists of an alphabetical encyclopedia of the plants of England copied from a work by John Pratt, a physician and fellow of Trinity who was made the College’s bursar in 1646. Another
notebook containing notes in Foote’s hand, listed in the Catalogue as Pratt’s medical casebook, is Sloane MS. 587.66 Feingold suggests that the presence of the botanical volume suggests that Foote inherited Pratt’s manuscripts at the physician’s death in 1663.67

The third of the collection of these homemade concordances, Sloane MS. 588, is a set of medical notes taken from Georges Bertin’s *Campani Medicina* of 1587, confirming the exposure to scholastic medicine that might have been expected of Foote’s Cambridge medical training.68 Bertin was a French Protestant and his *Campani Medicina* takes up cudgels against the encroaching tide of Paracelsian chemistry in late-sixteenth-century Europe. The text, another small notebook, is more casually laid out than the other two. Each page carries a letter heading, and contains several entries under that heading, rather than allowing a new page for each note. A margin for additional annotations is ruled into the right-hand edge of each page.

In addition to these reference works, Foote assembled another two summarizing his own medical learning. Sloane MS. 590, a text whose spine is stamped with the words ‘Dr Foote’s Tables of Diseases’, is a small notebook with a number of larger folded pages bound into it containing a series of schematic diagrams with notes listing the causes, symptoms and cures of various diseases and their differential treatment by various authorities. For example, f. 47r is headed ‘Cataracta ex Barrough’ and presents a series of notes on the reputation of cataract, as well as the facts that can be positively adduced about it, taken from the Galenist physician Philip Barrough. Folio 90v offers the varying Hippocratic and Galenic cures for apathy. A list on the first page provides more evidence about Foote’s principal sources: Caspar Bartholin’s *Anatomiae Institutiones* (1633), Bertin’s *Campani Medicina*, André Du Laurens’s *Historia Anatomica Humani Corporis* (1600), and Alexander Read’s *Manuall of the Anatomy of the Body of Man* (1634).

Sloane MS. 603 contains Latin lists of diseases, herbal recipes for their treatment and an index. It is another small volume, written in a cramped hand that is mostly consistent but grows larger and less careful in the later pages. The notebook begins with a detailed contents list, and its notes are divided into two sections, each with its own index: its size and layout perhaps imply that was designed for portability and easy reference.

A series of diligently annotated commonplace books of a more conventional kind caps Foote’s collection of such works. His surviving manuscripts include two medical commonplace books, along with one each containing notes on anatomy, chemistry, theology, ethics and logic, and a further two miscellaneous volumes. Sloane MSS. 589 and 592 contain Foote’s medical notes, MS. 592 listing Johannes Fabri’s *Alchymista Christianus* (1632) and Joseph Du Chesne’s *Diaeteticon Polyhistoricum* (1626) as sources. Sloane MS. 589 is a closely copied notebook containing Latin and some Greek notes from a range of mostly medical texts listed on its first two folios. Prominent among Foote’s acknowledged sources for this book are orthodox physicians from England and Europe. He consulted a 1595 edition of Hippocrates and, from his own age, read James Primrose, Caspar Bartholin and Leonhart Fuchs as well as the much-printed physician to Louis XIV, Lazarus Riverius. But even in this work, which seems to stem from the period of Foote’s medical education, a range of interests beyond these figures is evident. Foote read alchemy in the work of the apothecary Francis Anthony, and medical theology in Thomas Erastus and Bernardinus Paterno. A taste for non-conformity was satisfied by Gilbert Jack and Roger Drake, and an interest in the medieval by John of Gaddesden.

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66 Sloane MS. 587 is additionally interesting because it appears to have survived in its original full leather binding rather than having been rebound with a quarter-binding as have the rest of Foote’s commonplace books. The notebook appears to have been sealed with a pair of metal clasps which are now broken.
67 Feingold, ‘Isaac Barrow’, p. 36.
68 Although by the mid-seventeenth century the beliefs and practices of medicine-derived experimental science were beginning to insinuate themselves into medical education, the universities’ curricula were still dominated by Galenic medicine. See Allen, ‘Medical Education in 17th Century England’.

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Sloane MS. 602 comprises a third set of medical commonplaces. The first part of this small notebook offers Latin notes on physiology, pathology, symptoms and diagnostic standards, while the second gives a list of various plants, herbs, fruits and roots and their medicinal uses. Sloane MS. 593 contains notes on anatomy, mainly collected from André Du Laurens, though Foote’s other sources for the volume include Harvey and Vesalius. Foote’s chemical commonplace book is Sloane MS. 506, containing alphabetized lists of chemical ingredients and references to works in which they are used. As is his habit, Foote includes a list of his principal sources on the notebook’s opening page: two texts printed at Geneva in 1635 head the list: the alchemist Oswald Croll’s *Basilica Chymica* and pharmacist Johann Hartmann’s *Praxis Chymiatrica*. These are followed by the Paracelsian Joseph du Chesne’s *Pharmacopea Dogmaticorum* (1631). Another influential alchemist, Daniel Sennert, is represented by his *Institutiones Medicinae* (1637) and Fabri’s *Alchymista Christianus* (1632) figures again.

The British Library also holds four printed medical texts heavily adapted and annotated by Foote. The first comprises the pages of Pierre de Gorris’s ‘Fabrica Receptorum Ex Compositis Medicamentis’ excerpted from a duodecimo edition of Alfonsus Morescottus’s medical compendium *Compendium Totius Medicinae*. The text consists of a 12cm by 7cm notebook containing manuscript sheets of Latin medical notes interleaved with pp. 207-19 of Morescottus’s text. A note on the flyleaf, in Sloane’s hand, entitles the work, ‘Fabrica Receptorum with MSS. notes by Dr Foot’, while a note in Foote’s hand on that page also makes reference to the Geneva edition of Harmann’s *Praxis Chymiatrica* (1635). The second text is Johannes Jacobus Brunn’s *Systema Materiæ Medicæ* (1650), another text interleaved with pages of Latin notes, bearing an alphabetical index at the back and a further ten pages of medical commonplaces. Sloane has inscribed the flyleaf with the work’s title and the phrase ‘MSS notes of Dr Foot’. In another two printed volumes, Foote confines his annotations to a series of pages added to each end of a printed text rather than interleaving them as he did in his ‘Fabrica Receptorum’. The first is an edition of the Italian botanist Jean Provost’s *Medicina Pauperum* containing a number of additional sheets bound into the volume before the printed text, one of which bears Foote’s name and another the name Jo Pratt (adding credence to Feingold’s hypothesis that Foote inherited Pratt’s papers). The volume is lightly annotated and five sheets of handwritten medical recipes in Foote’s hand follow the printed text. Among the acknowledged sources of these notes is Thomas Brugis’s surgical handbook, *Vade Mecum*. Additionally, Foote’s notes can be found in an edition of Bartholomew Castelli’s medical dictionary, *Lexicon Medicum Graeco-Latinum*. Again, Foote’s name appears on the flysheet and a set of manuscript pages containing alphabetized medical terms and definitions which do not feature in Castelli’s work comprise an addendum to the text. Finally, the British Library holds a sextodecimo copy of Guillaume Postel’s *Cosmographica Disciplina* (1636), which, though it has not been significantly annotated, appears to have belonged to Foote, whose name is written in Sloane’s hand on the flyleaf; beneath Sloane’s inscription appears a brief note in the hand of Foote.

Among the non-medical commonplace books, Sloane MS. 597 stands out, being a series of notes on logic which, in fact, are taken almost exclusively from Caspar Bartholin. Sloane MS. 594—Foote’s repository for notes on theology—similarly fails quite to shake off its compiler’s

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69 BL., 1036.a.36, under the title, *Fabrica Receptorum ex compositis medicamentis.* Copsious MS. notes [by Dr Foot]. Morescottus’s text was first printed in 1563 and appeared in various duodecimo volumes. I have not been able to identify from which one Foote’s text was excerpted.

70 Johannes Jacobus Brunn, *Systema Materiæ Medicæ* (London, 1650), shelfmark 547.b.34.

71 Jean Provost, *Medicina Pauperum* (Lyon, 1654), shelfmark 1039.a.43.


73 Bartholomew Castelli, *Lexicon Medicum Graeco-Latinum: a Bartholomaeo Castello Messianense Inchoatum* (Rotterdam, 1651), shelfmark 773.b.3.

74 Guillaume Postel, *De Cosmographica Disciplina et Signorum Celestium Vera Configuratione* (Leiden, 1636), shelfmark 569.a.34.
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interest in medical matters, containing more notes from Johannes Fabri, although its references to scriptural verses and to Augustine comprise by far the majority of the entries. Erasmus also features prominently, as does George Herbert, who appears to have been a favourite of Foote’s and, like Augustine, is also referred to in Sloane MS. 595, Foote’s notebook on ethics. Sloane MS. 612 is commonplace book containing notes from Charles Butler’s Rhetoricæ (first printed in 1597 with seven editions to 1629), a set of notes on grammar probably taken from Orthotonia published in 1630 by an author calling him or herself R.F., and further notes on Joannes Posselius’s Johannis Posselii Syntaxis Graecæ (1640).

Sloane MS. 598 contains notes on a series of sermons that Foote heard (or perhaps read) either in his Cambridgeshire youth or during his university days. He lists a number of sermons by fifteen preachers, often university men identified by college, with various strong tendencies towards non-conformity. Some can be tentatively identified. Notes on three sermons by ‘Mr Arrowsmith’ figure in the notebook, the preacher in question presumably being John Arrowsmith the presbyterian divine who became master of St John’s College the year before Foote’s arrival at the university. 75 ‘Mr Gibbs: Trinity’ gave two sermons on which Foote took notes, and is probably the Samuel Gibbs who was made chaplain of Trinity College in 163676 rather than a ‘Thomas Gibbs, of Trinity Coll’ as the British Library’s online catalogue identifies him.77 ‘Mr Hill’, who figures twice in Foote’s notebook, must be the Thomas Hill who took over the mastership of Emmanuel in 1645 but was almost immediately transferred to Trinity,78 and ‘Mr Tuckney’ (who appears in the notebook once) must be his friend and successor to Emmanuel’s mastership, the presbyterian Anthony Tuckney.79

Others are more problematic. ‘Mr Harris St Johns at Trinity’ is perhaps George Harris, who was a fellow of St John’s but became vicar of Holy Trinity church in Cambridge in 1628. Harris died in 1638, which dates his sermons to Foote’s youth rather than his student years. The ‘Mr Mayden’ who gave two sermons on which Foote made notes is probably Richard Maden a fellow of Magdalene College and the author of a volume of sermons printed in 1637.80 ‘Mr Hildersham’ gave two sermons on which Foote made notes, both on Luke 13:3, and is perhaps Samuel Hildersham, the ejected minister who became a fellow of Emmanuel College in 1618, although he had officially left Cambridge before Foote was born.81 Similarly ‘Mr Ward: Eman’ is most likely to refer to Nathaniel Ward the Essex preacher, although the chronology of that ascription is convoluted. Ward was a student of Emmanuel in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, leaving Cambridge in 1603; between 1628 and 1633, he was the rector of the Essex parish of Stondon Massey before being suspended by William Laud for his puritan views, leaving the country for Massachusetts (the state for which he compiled a legal code) and not returning until 1646, whereupon he became the rector of Shenfield in Essex.82

Most problematic is the volume’s central figure. The title page reads ‘Dr Prestons Sermons’ and the notebook contains five sermons by ‘Dr Preston’, who is almost certainly John Preston, the famous clergyman and master of Emmanuel College.83 Preston helps

77 http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?fn=display&vid=IAMS_VU2&afterPDS=true&doc=IAMS040-002112949
identify two further preachers from Foote's notes: 'Mr Ball: Em' is probably Thomas Ball the fellow of Emmanuel who took over Preston's pupils on the older man's death and was the author of a life of his mentor. 84 ‘Mr Goodwin’ who preached three sermons mentioned in Foote’s notes, is probably the Thomas Goodwin who collaborated with Ball on a posthumous edition of Preston’s sermons.85 The first two of these, however, are problematic in that Foote cannot have heard Preston preach, as the clergyman died in 1628, two years before he was born, while Ball left Cambridge during Foote’s infancy.

Less certain still is identity of the ‘Mr Prime’ that delivered two of the sermons in Sloane MS. 598: the brothers William and Henry Prime, both clergymen in Suffolk, perhaps merit tentative consideration as candidates.86 Five further preachers appear only once each in Foote’s sermon notes. Mr Robinson is likely to be the John Robinson of King’s College who was the author of a sermon preached at Paul’s Cross in 1631 and printed under the title Vox Ducis.87 ‘Mr Rudstone Trinity College’ is perhaps a reference to Christopher Rudstone, although that preacher presents the problem that he died in 1635 when Foote was five years old.88 A plausible candidate for ‘Mr Edwards’ is Thomas Edwards, the Church of England clergyman and religious controversialist and author of the presbyterian tracts Antapologia (which responded to a text printed by Thomas Goodwin) and Gangraena.89 ‘Mr Taylor’ is perhaps the William Taylor who was admitted to Emmanuel College in 1616 before his ordination in 1623, whereupon he took up a parish in Lincolnshire,90 and ‘Mr Dale’ perhaps the William Dale also of Emmanuel (1627) and a Lincolnshire parish that he took up in 1631.91

The notebook is not so systematic as others of Foote’s commonplace books. The sermons are not ordered by preacher, nor by text, implying that the notes were taken from sermons as Foote heard them, rather than being notes on his reading, which he tended to organize more systematically. Further, some of them are by preachers that leave no printed records of their sermons, and of those that did, Foote still notes some sermons which did not figure in print. However, the problem of Foote’s being too young to have heard Preston and certain others remains, indicating perhaps that the volume contains notes taken from an amalgam of oral, printed and manuscript sources.

Sloane MS. 598 appears to belong to the period of Foote’s youth and early life in Cambridge, as does the miscellaneous commonplace book, Sloane MS. 586. The sermon book contains what appears to be practised handwriting on its first page, while the commonplace book bears various scribblings and repetitions of Foote’s signature. The volume contains what appear to be educational exercises, including notes on ethics taken from the Cistercian Eustachius à Sancto Paulo, and on medicine from the German physician and natural philosopher Johannes Magirus, as well as notes from the scholastic astronomer Libert Fromond’s treatise.

84 Ibid., vol. i, p. 77. Ball’s life of Preston is Thomas Ball, The Life of the Renowned Doctor Preston Writ by his pupil, Master Thomas Ball ... in the year 1628, ed. E.W. Harcourt (Oxford, 1885).
85 Alum. Cant. I., vol. ii, p. 239. The edition of Preston’s sermons is John Preston, An Abridgment of Dr. Preston’s Works: Formerly Published by Dr. Sibbs, Mr. Davenport, for Sermons Preached at Lincolns Inn. Mr. Goodwin, Mr. Ball, for those at Cambridg (London, 1648).
87 John Robinson, Vox Ducis: or, An Alarme from the Trumpet of God to Ebury Sauldier in Jesus Christ. Calling them to Fight the Good Fight of Faith. In a Sermon at Paul’s Crosse, Sept. 11. 1631. by John Robinson Preacher of the word of God and Mr of Arts of Kings Coll. in Camb. (London, 1631). This is perhaps the same John Robinson of King’s College as was ordained ‘deacon (Peterborough)’ in 1626. Alum. Cant. I., vol. iii, p. 470.
88 Ibid., p. 497.
89 Ibid., vol. ii, p. 89. See also Thomas Edwards, Antapologia, or, A full Answer to the Apolgeticall narration of Mr Goodwin, Mr Nye, Mr Sympson, Mr Burroughs, Mr Bridge (London, 1644), and Gangraena, or, A Catalogue and Discovery of Many of the Errours, heresies, Blasphemies and Pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this Time (London, 1646).
90 Alum. Cant. I., vol. iv, p. 211.
91 Ibid., vol. ii, p. 4.
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on meteors, *Meteorologorum* (1627). Additionally the work contains notes on the Anglo-Saxon language among other miscellaneous jottings, including what appears to be a scrap of a letter to the Pope. Sloane MS. 613 is a similar commonplace book containing brief, rough jottings on various subjects including chemistry, handwriting and shorthand alphabets, as well as dedicated notes on a few specific texts: the Neoplatonist philosopher Iamblichus’s *De Mysteriis*, the Paracelsian Robert Fludd’s *Tractatus Theolo-Philosophicus*, the medieval French alchemist Nicholas Flammel’s *Exposition of the Hieroglyphical Figures* (1624), Conrad Gesner’s *Bibiotheca Gesneri* (1574), and *Fasciculus Chemicus* (1650) which is by John Dee, although Foote attributes it to the translator James Hasolle. Sloane MS. 599 is more systematic than MSS. 586 and 613, and includes an index. It appears to collect commonplace notes on a literary or dramatic theme, and reveals titles of some of the plays with which Foote was acquainted including *The Tragedy of Nero* (1624) and *The Virgin Martyr* (1622).

Foote is largely remembered for his translations of Jean Baptiste van Helmont but, while Helmontian texts are the most numerous among his manuscripts, the Sloane collection contains a large number of translations and transcriptions in his hand of works by a range of authors. Sloane MS. 630 contains a set of Latin ‘Aphorisms’ that Foote apparently compiled from his reading of the Amsterdam edition of the elder van Helmont’s works printed in 1652. What appears to be a rough copy of the same text is in Sloane MS. 615, although the first 80 of the 295 aphorisms are different in that version. Sloane MS. 617 presents unpublished translations of Jean Baptiste van Helmont’s “Treatise Concerning the Stone-Colicke” and a number of late works, while Sloane MS. 630 contains Foote’s rendering of ‘An Unheard of Doctrine Concerning Feavers’. Another unpublished treatise entitled “The Rule of Diet Dietetical Physick” figures in Sloane MS. 633, and Sloane MS. 631 contains Foote’s Latin notes on Helmont’s ‘De Liquor Alkahest’, a subject that appears to have held particular interest for Foote. Sloane MS. 632 contains a poem, copied in a hand other than Foote’s, entitled ‘Aurora: The Day Break’ and described as ‘a poem by I.B. van Helmont; written in Low Dutch by the author, and thence translated into English’. Ever the diligent and systematic scholar, Foote also compiled a series of indexes to various Helmontian works, six of which are in Sloane MS. 615 and another in Sloane MS. 633.

Foote’s most referred-to works, the translation of the younger van Helmont’s ‘Observations’ and the fragment of his autobiography, are in Sloane MS. 530. Neither the ‘Observations’ nor the biographical fragment is solely in Foote’s customary hand, although a portion of the fragment is, while the ‘Observations’ at least bears some of his notations and an index transcribed by him. The same volume contains a set of English aphorisms and reflections on various topics: the generation of man, the revolution of human souls, man’s biblical lineage, and the definition of truth. These texts present various lines of thought that can be detected, in one version or

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92 Sloane MS. 630, ff. 241r-249r.
93 Jean Baptiste van Helmont, *Ortus Medicinæ. Id est, Initia Physicæ Inaudita* (Amsterdam, 1652).
94 Sloane MS. 615, ff. 89v–97v.
95 Sloane MS. 617, ff. 1-84.
96 Sloane MS. 633, ff. 133r-141v, 142r-145v, 146r-151r and 151v-162v.
97 Sloane MS. 630, ff. 31r-75r.
98 Sloane MS. 631, ff. 236r-237r.
99 Sloane MS. 632, f. 26r.
100 Sloane MS. 615, ff. 66r-89v, 98r-132v, 133r-141v, 142r-145v, 146r-151r and 151v-162v.
101 Sloane MS. 633, ff. 237r-277v.
102 Sloane MS. 530, ff. 5r-45v.
103 Ibid., ff. 46r-57v.
104 Sloane MS. 530, ff. 75r-94v.
105 Ibid., ff. 75r-80r.
106 Ibid., ff. 81r-4v.
107 Ibid. ff. 85r-91v.
108 Ibid., ff. 92r-94v.
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another, in the younger van Helmont’s work (in particular the Paradoxal Discourses\(^{109}\) and Two Hundred Queries\(^{110}\)) but they do not seem to have a direct source in his printed work. The spine of Sloane MS. 530 is stamped with the motto ‘Dr Foote’s Translation of van Helmont’s works’, although its contents are certainly not confined to works of Helmontian authorship (among them is a manuscript copy of Foote’s letter to the Philosophical Transactions about spa waters).\(^{111}\) Some of the other titles in the manuscript are of uncertain authorship. Among them are a herbal recipe to treat spleen,\(^ {112}\) which is not in Foote’s hand, but bears his annotations, a rough copy of a text entitled ‘Ascitions about Meteors’,\(^ {113}\) a fragment entitled ‘The Author’s Preface’, which is written in a similar anecdotal style to Helmont’s autobiographical text, and may be a misbound page from the ‘Aphorisms’, as well as a series of five chemical ‘Queries’ about the nature of tinctures.\(^ {114}\) This last item might be a fragment of an unpublished Helmontian work but it is equally plausible that it is part of another set of Foote’s reflections and paraphrases of van Helmont.

Foote’s interest in alkahest, the supposed universal solvent\(^ {115}\) was indulged further in 1664 when he made a translation of the Italian adept Luigi de Conti’s treatise on the subject, Clara Fidelisque Admonitoria (1661).\(^ {116}\) In the translator’s preface to this work, now in Sloane MS. 618, he admits to ‘Havinge mett with this author & perused him’.\(^ {117}\) However, Foote’s engagement with Conti cannot automatically be taken for tacit approval. His motive in translating the work, Foote says, was rather to subject it to the test of popular opinion than to celebrate it: ‘I thought it would be no bad service to it, or rather to ye truth, if I exposed it to all both learned & unlearned, yt either it might appeare to glisten only on ye outside, or els be Gold as well as to seeme guidled’.\(^ {118}\)

As well as a set of notes under the title ‘De Liquor Alkahest’, not in Foote’s hand, but which claims to be taken from Helmont’s manuscripts,\(^ {119}\) Sloane MS. 631 also contains Foote’s Latin notes on alchemy and alkahest from a text by the arch-Helmontian George Starkey,\(^ {120}\) probably his essay, ‘Secret of the Liquor Alkahest’ published in English 1683 and reprinted in the anthology Collectanea Chymica in 1684. Sloane MS. 633 also contains a Latin transcription of Vade-mecum Philosophicum,\(^ {121}\) which Starkey appears to have published in 1659 under the pseudonym Agricola Rhomæus, as well as materials from a translation of a work presumably by Starkey given the English title, ‘A treatise of Chymistry by G.S’.\(^ {122}\) The fifteen-page document consists of a dedication ‘To all the sons of Hermes philosopher’, followed by a transcription of Starkey’s exposition\(^ {123}\) of the fourteenth-century alchemist

\(^{110}\) Francis Mercury van Helmont, Two Hundred Queries Moderately Propounded Concerning the Doctrine of the Revolution of Humane Souls and its Conformity to the Truths of Christianity (London, 1684).
\(^{111}\) Ibid., ff. 3r-4v.
\(^{112}\) Ibid., ff. 1r-2v.
\(^{113}\) Ibid., ff. 73r-74v.
\(^{114}\) Ibid., f. 60v.
\(^{115}\) Ibid., ff. 61r-71v.
\(^{117}\) Sloane MS. 618, ff. 1r-52v.
\(^{118}\) Ibid., f. 2v.
\(^{119}\) Ibid.
\(^{120}\) Sloane MS. 631, ff. 236r-237r.
\(^{121}\) Ibid., ff. 198r-199r.
\(^{122}\) Sloane MS. 633, ff. 95r-114r.
\(^{123}\) Ibid., ff. 1r-15v.
\(^{124}\) George Starkey, An Exposition Upon Sir George Ripley’s Epistle to King Edward IV (London, 1677).
George Ripley’s epistle to Edward IV, and another dedicatory essay, ‘To all those who have resolutely given up their names to Chymistry but are yett in their Tyranny’, a sentiment that Foote echoed in his own ‘Apologie for Physitians’, to which I will return. Intriguingly, Foote’s copy of Starkey’s exposition, though it is the same in substance, consistently differs in vocabulary and phraseology from the version printed in 1677. Neither of the prefatory essays that Foote transcribed figure in the printed Vade-mecum, and I have not been able to trace their source. Hortolanus Junior, however, in his alchemical work The Golden Age mentions reading a ‘Treatise of Sulphur’ by ‘Aeyrenaeus’ (Eirenaeus Philalethes, being Starkey’s pseudonym) that begins ‘To all Searchers of the Art of Chymistry; namely the true Sons of Hermes, the Author wisheth all Health, and prays to God for a Blessing.’

Foote’s participation in the collaborative transcription of Tachenius’s Hippocrates Chymicus gives evidence of his willingness to pay detailed attention to non-Helmontian texts. Foote had great admiration for Tachenius, as a copy of a reverential Latin letter to the chemist in Sloane MS. 529 testifies. As well as confirming the regard in which Foote held Tachenius, the letter, written in May 1670, helps to date the transcription, speaking of Foote having first encountered Tachenius’s work two years earlier. At the end of 1670, he received a polite letter from the German chemist in return, which is also part of Sloane MS. 529. That volume also contains a page of Latin notes on Tachenius under the title ‘Observatia ex Tachenio’.

Sloane MS. 630 represents an interesting part of Foote’s collection of chemical works. Its principal item of interest in this area is Foote’s translation of the beginning of a work on ‘philosophical wine’ from a text of 1684 by the hermetic philosopher Joannes Segerus Weidenfeld, and Foote also transcribed an English treatise, from an unknown source, under the title ‘Most ancient Rencouter of three Cavaliers A Dialogue Alchemisticall betwixt ye philosopher’s stone & Gold & mercury concerninge the true matter of ye stone’. Sloane MS. 630 also contains notes on three texts by another hermetic philosopher, Thomas Vaughan – his Fame and Confession of the Fraternity of R:C: (1652), Lumen de Lumine (1651) and Waters of the East (1655) – as well as observations on the alchemist Johann Otto von Hellwig’s treatise on the nature of salt, and notes from the ‘New Idea of medicinal Practise’ (1675) by the Dutch physician Franciscus Sylvius.

Sloane MS. 631 is similarly bountiful, and includes a large contents list and index to Nicaise Le Febvre’s chemistry, as well as copies of several letters between physicians and apothecaries on matters of herbal healing. An unattributed English work entitled ‘A treatise of the Virgin Earth’ appears to be a version of a recipe from the fifteenth-century French alchemist Jean Saunier that was also reported by Kenelm Digby, who claimed to have found it among a bundle of papers containing Saunier’s works: ‘upon the out-side of it were written the following words, Perfumes, Curiosities, My great Arcane of this Note.’

126 Sloane MS. 615, ff. 1r-65v.
127 Sloane MS. 529, ff. 22r-v.
128 Ibid., ff. 20r-21v.
129 Ibid., ff. 24r-25r.
130 Sloane MS. 630, ff. 178r-199r.
131 Ibid., ff. 116r-120v.
132 Sloane MS. 630, ff. 170r-177v.
133 Sloane MS. 630, ff. 200r-211v, and f. 226r.
134 Ibid., ff. 212r-225r.
135 Ibid., ff. 226v-227r.
136 Ibid., ff. 228r-239v.
137 Sloane MS. 631, ff. 185r-186r.
139 Ibid., p. 41.
MS. 631 also contains a copy of what is described as a ‘Spell found in the pocket of an Irishman killed near Clonmel: 1690/1’,\(^{140}\) and Sloane MS. 632 includes a transcription of a medicine-preparing treatise by the Belgian Paracelsian physician and alchemist, Gerhard Dorn.\(^{141}\) Another Dutch alchemist, Alexander von Suchten, appears in a Latin transcript in Sloane MS. 618,\(^{142}\) which also contains a set of works under the heading ‘General collections and anonymous treatises’. Sloane MS. 633 contains a set of notes on the seventeenth-century alchemical writer Baro Urbigerus,\(^{144}\) and a transcription of ‘Hydropyrographum Hermeticum’,\(^{145}\) an anonymous German treatise on ‘Fiery Water of the Philosophers’, which appeared in an English translation in John Frederick Houpreght’s alchemical anthology, *Aurifontina Chymica* (1680).\(^{146}\)

Turning to the medieval, Foote owned (though it is not in his hand) a transcription of some parts of the *Practica Medicine* (1494) of Arnaldus de Villa Nova,\(^{147}\) the thirteenth-century alchemist whose texts enjoyed a resurgence of popularity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and made another of the Majorcan writer and philosopher Ramon Llull’s works on alchemy.\(^{148}\) Both are in Sloane MS. 630. Sloane MS. 633, meanwhile, holds a set of alchemical notes, in a different hand to Foote’s (though Sloane’s mark identifying the text as his appears on the title page), from the thirteenth-century Franciscan philosopher Roger Bacon.\(^{149}\)

Foote’s reading in alchemy was both broad and deep, and he supplemented his independent scholarship by collaboration with colleagues and contemporaries, as the collective transcription of Tachenius demonstrates. Two colleagues figure prominently in his medical and chemical collection: Samuel Bellingham and Percival Willoughby. Of the two, Bellingham is the more difficult to place. Although he seems to have been a physician, the records of Cambridge and Oxford offer no evidence of his training, and neither does he figure in *Munk’s Roll* of the members of the Royal College of Physicians. His presence is felt, however, among Foote’s manuscripts and a number of his own papers are also held in the Sloane Collection. Sloane MS. 633 contains Foote’s notes on what Sloane describes as Bellingham’s ‘Collectanea medica & Chymica’\(^{150}\) and Bellingham’s name appears in the right-hand margin of another set of notes from an alchemical text in that volume.\(^{151}\) Sloane MS. 629 contains a copy of a letter dated 1666 from Bellingham’s father (also called Samuel) to his son, which is not in Foote’s hand.\(^{152}\) The question of whether some of the manuscripts among Foote’s papers that are not in his hand can be identified as having been written by Bellingham is one upon which future research may wish to reflect.

Willoughby’s identity is less obscure. *Munk’s Roll* reports that he was educated at Oxford, practised in Derby, and was admitted to the College in 1640, dying at Derby in 1685.\(^{153}\) Additionally Munk notes, ‘An exquisitely written MS entitled, ‘The Country Midwife’s Opusculum or Vade Mecum’, by our physician, is now in the possession of J H Aveling, M.D.’\(^{154}\) Although Willoughby

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140 Sloane MS. 631, ff. 224r–224v.
141 Sloane MS. 632, ff. 1r–24v.
142 Sloane MS. 618, ff. 214r–229v.
143 Ibid., ff. 230r–236r.
144 Sloane MS. 633, ff. 115r–122v.
145 Ibid., ff. 87r–94v.
147 Sloane MS. 630, ff. 98r–115v. The text is marked on its (otherwise blank) first page with Sloane’s characteristic ‘F . ’ denoting Foote’s ownership.
148 Ibid., ff. 1r–30r.
149 Sloane MS. 633, ff. 123r–141r.
150 Ibid., ff. 197r–218v.
151 Ibid., ff. 149r–196v.
152 Sloane MS. 629, ff. 273v–278r
153 *Munk’s Roll*, vol. i, p. 231.
154 Ibid.

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does not appear to have published any of his writings, Foote seems to have had access to them, and Sloane MS. 529 contains a transcription of a Latin text on childbirth entitled (in Sloane's hand) ‘Dre Willougbe Derbiensis De Puerperio Tractatus’, \(^{155}\) which may be a version of, or a companion to, the text referred to by Munk.

Foote did not neglect his age’s most popular medical works. Sloane MS. 633 contains a set of closely written notes from the *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis*, methodically set out in two columns, and an index to them.\(^{156}\) Further pharmaceutical notes are taken in Sloane MS. 623 from the *Pharmaceutica Schroederiana* of Johann Schröder,\(^ {157}\) the German physician, pharmacologist and discoverer of the fact that arsenic is an element. Sloane MS. 630 includes notes on the much-reprinted Elizabeth Gray, Countess of Kent.\(^ {158}\) An English translation of Thomas Willis’s ‘Treatise of the Gout’,\(^ {159}\) from his popular *De Anima Brutorum* (1672), is bound into the same volume.

Other texts are less easy to place. Sloane MS. 4018 has notes from a series of anatomical lectures by a Dr ‘Nichols’,\(^ {160}\) two sets of notes on Henry Power,\(^ {161}\) and on a surgical treatise on gangrene.\(^ {162}\) Sloane MS. 631 includes notes on an unidentified Latin treatise on sterility,\(^ {163}\) and Sloane MSS. 529 and 3991 (a commonplace notebook which seems to date from Foote’s later years) both contain single-sheet recipes. The dissertation in Sloane MS. 631, written in Foote’s hand, is entitled, ‘Hypothesis juniorum de generatione calculi est mechanice explicabiliior antiqua’.\(^ {164}\) A scrap of paper bound with the work bears the subtitle ‘Quastremus Dr Ballet Coll: Christi Cantabrigi et hocu consuetis disputatae juo Junii 1665’\(^ {165}\) implying that it may be a copy of the academic disputation of Charles Ballet, who was admitted to Christ’s College in 1661, receiving his Bachelor of Medicine degree in 1666, and his M.D. in 1674.\(^ {166}\)

Foote also made transcriptions of, and took notes on, a number of texts relating to matters natural philosophical and political. Sloane MS. 629 contains a single sheet of rough notes for ‘A Catalogue of the extant Manuscripts of Bacon’\(^ {167}\) and Sloane MS. 623 includes an index to Boyle’s *Exercitationes de Utilitate Philosophiae Naturalis Experimentalis* (1692).\(^ {168}\) Sloane MS. 631 has a set of notes on the biblical scholar and orientalist John Gregory’s ‘Description and use of the Terrestrial Globe’,\(^ {169}\) and his ‘Description and Use of Maps and Charts’,\(^ {170}\) which were printed in his *Gregorii Posthuma of 1649*. A transcript of the second part of the Dutch

\(^{155}\) Sloane MS. 529, ff. 1r-35v.
\(^{156}\) Sloane MS. 633, ff. 50r-85v.
\(^{157}\) Sloane MS. 623, ff. 1r-69v.
\(^{158}\) Sloane MS. 630, ff. 251r-253v.
\(^{159}\) Ibid., ff. 121r-156v.
\(^{160}\) Sloane MS. 4018, ff. 88r-98r. The Dr Nichols is perhaps John Nichols (1594-1646) of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, who received his M.D. in 1630, and left books to the college at his death. Robert Masters, *The History of the College of Corpus Christi and the b. Virgin Mary (commonly called Bene’)* in the University of Cambridge, from its Foundation to the Present Time (Cambridge, 1753), p. 350. He is not, as the British Library’s online catalogue says, Frank Nicholls, the renowned anatomist, who was born in 1699, a year before Foote’s death. http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?fn=display&vid=IAMS_VU2&afterP DS=true&doc=IAMS040-002116411
\(^{161}\) Sloane MS. 4018, ff. 31r-77r.
\(^{162}\) Ibid., ff. 78r-87v.
\(^{163}\) Sloane MS. 631, ff. 134r-144v.
\(^{164}\) Ibid., ff. 39v-54v.
\(^{165}\) Ibid., f. 40r.
\(^{166}\) *Alum. Cant. I.*, vol. i, p. 77.
\(^{167}\) Sloane MS. 629, f. 243r.
\(^{168}\) Sloane MS. 623, ff. 70r-71v.
\(^{169}\) Sloane MS. 631, ff. 9r-16v.
\(^{170}\) Ibid., ff. 17r-25v.
logician Franco Petr Burgersdijk’s *Institutionum Logicarum* (1637) can be found in Sloane MS. 600.  

This appears to be an educational volume, as its title page is dated 1646 and emblazoned with a hand-drawn stamp of Cambridge University. But Foote’s habit of collating his reading in this way stayed with him into later life. He showed a marked concern with the medical history of Charles II, Sloane MS. 529 holding a medical account of the King’s last days in Latin, which appears to be a transcribed version of Charles Scarburgh’s eyewitness account of Charles’ death. Religious and political interests are reflected in Sloane MS. 629’s transcriptions of papers by Charles II and the Duchess of York on their adoption of the Catholic faith, and by the same manuscript’s inclusion of the military-political tract *Militia Old and New* (1642), which argued for the election of military officials by the people they seek to represent. Further evidence of Foote’s interest in the religious aspect of political power can be found in the same volume, which also contains a set of writings on the Reign of Louis XIV under the unflattering title, ‘Divers Pieces concerning ye Politick maxims of ye French King, to make himselfe the absolute monarch of all Christendome’.

Religious works represent a substantial portion of the texts that Foote translated, transcribed and took notes on. His theological reading, like his medical, was broad, demonstrating engagement with a spectrum of Catholic and Protestant belief. Sloane MS. 601 is a small notebook containing a full length transcription of the popular (and later prohibited) *Rule of Perfection* by William Fitch, the Protestant-born Catholic convert, who became a Benedictine monk, taking the name Benedictus de Canfeld in 1587. *The Rule of Perfection* was printed in 1609, though Foote appears to have made his transcription from a later edition. He speaks of his source text being ‘Printed at Rouen in France’ dating his transcription to ‘Octob 1652’, so very probably his source was the Rouen edition of 1635.

Mysticism seems to have been a religious interest of Foote’s and he made a full-length transcription of the *Sayings* of the German mystical writer Matthias Weyer (1521-1560). Curiously, Foote dates his transcription, now part of Sloane MS. 631, to 1677, although its source text appears to be John Spec’s translation printed in London in 1683. Sloane MS. 631 also includes a copy of the epistle on Rosicrucianism, entitled (by Sloane) ‘Fratrum Roseæ Crucis epistola ad Germanum quendam’ from Robert Fludd’s *Sophiæ cum Moria Certamen* (1629).

A third work of which Foote made a detailed translation was *Le Chrétien Intérieur* by another mystical writer, Jean de Bernières Louvigny (1602-1659), founder of the hermitage of Caen. Foote’s title page does not name the ascetic Bernières Louvigny, referring to the text instead as having been written ‘By a person in solitude’. Although not published during Bernières Louvigny’s lifetime (as none of his works were), the text was popular and appeared in French editions published in Rouen in 1660 and 1681, Liege in 1663, and Paris in 1668 and 1670, while an Italian edition appeared in Venice in 1678. Although an English edition was printed at Antwerp in 1684, two years earlier than the date of Foote’s edition, he does

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171 Sloane MS. 600, ff. 1r-62v.
172 Sloane MS. 529, ff. 26r-34r.
174 Sloane MS. 629, ff. 354r-355v and ff. 353r-354r.
175 Ibid., f. 269r-272r.
176 Ibid., f. 180r-197r.
178 Sloane MS. 601, ff. 1r-51r.
179 Ibid., f. 2r.
180 Ibid.
181 Sloane MS. 631, ff. 55r-112v.
182 Ibid., ff. 178r-182v.
183 Sloane MS. 629, ff. 8r-179v.
184 Ibid., f. 8r.
not appear to have known this, claiming on his title page that the *Le Chrétien Intérieur* was ‘Published first in French, But now done into English’. Foote renders the work’s title as ‘The Inward Christian’ whereas the Antwerp translator gave the title as *The Interior Christian*. More meaningfully, Foote’s version and Antwerp appear to have been translated from separate sources. Antwerp begins with translator’s preface, signed by the initials ‘A.L.’, followed by a biographical essay on Bernières Louvigny which it says was ‘Extracted out of the French Preface’. Foote’s text contains no biographical information about the author, and opens with a dedication ‘To Jesus Christ’ which does not appear in Antwerp.

Prominent among the shorter religious works that Foote translated is the ‘Life of Ignatius Loyola’, also in Sloane MS. 629, which he excerpted and translated from Etienne Binet’s *Abregé des Vies des Principaux Fondateurs des Religions de l’Eglise*, published in Antwerp in 1634. Binet (1569-1639) was a Jesuit author and Loyola (1491-1556) the founder of the Society of Jesus. The same volume contains a translation of another Catholic author, Nicolaus Khrypffs de Cusa (1401-1464), Bishop of Brixen, offering his essay on the Sonship of God, which Foote dated ‘Apr. 23. 1696’.

Sloane MS. 629 does not confine itself to Catholic texts. Along with the documents describing the King and Duchess of York’s Catholic conversions, it includes an abridged transcription of a text printed in 1679 that describes the imprisonment and maltreatment of Protestant ministers in Hungary for refusing to convert, and a transcription of a sermon by an unidentified preacher on Matthew 3:13. Additionally, the volume contains various sets of notes not in Foote’s hand, including another sermon transcript, this one dated 1 June 1672 and given on a Fast Day.

Foote kept notes on the gospels, with Sloane MS. 3991 holding notes on Luke and Sloane MS. 617 containing annotations on John. That volume also contains a longer discussion posing ‘explanatory questions on every chapter of the book of Revelation’.

Finally, Sloane MS. 631 includes a run of interesting evidence of Foote’s interest in Quakerism. The volume includes an item under Sloane’s heading, ‘Sevll papers of Quakers & madmen gatherd by Dr Foot’. In spite of Sloane’s evident disapproval, Quakerism was a fascination for several members of Foote’s circle of acquaintance, notably Francis Mercury van Helmont.

The first text that Foote transcribes is a trenchant attack on wealth and privilege as blasphemous derelictions of piety. Its author demands, ‘all you high & lofty-Dives-like, be yee silent, & lett yor mouths be stopped all you who are in unrighteousness, away with all yor professions, & now repent & tremble before ye Lord yee Children of ye Divell, cme down all yee high & lofty Ones Dives-like, be yee silent, & lett yor mouths be stopped all you who are in unrighteousness, away with all yor professions, & now repent & tremble before ye Lord yee Children of ye Divell, cme down all yee high & lofty Ones, howle & mourne in sackcloath & ashes, for ye Lord is comminge to burne you up as stubble before him’. A second tract, entitled ‘A

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185 Ibid.
187 Ibid., ‘The Author’s Life Extracted out of the French Preface’, sig. a1r-a4r.
188 Sloane MS. 629, ff. 9r-15r.
189 Ibid., ff. 218r-221r.
190 Ibid., ff. 222r-229r.
191 Ibid., ff. 356r-357. Foote’s transcription is dated 29 March 1695.
192 Ibid., ff. 232r-242r.
193 Ibid., ff. 1v-7v.
194 Sloane MS. 3991, ff. 1r-40r.
195 Sloane MS. 617, ff. 85r-s.
196 Ibid., ff. 88r-124v.
197 Sloane MS. 631, ff. 119r-122r.
199 Sloane MS. 631, f. 120v.
Warning to All offers a less fanatical enjoinder to behave in a demure and pious manner, but Foote’s collection of Quaker texts was not confined to such polemic. He made a copy of a letter from the Quaker martyr James Parnell to his executioner pleading for clemency, and copied another written by the Quaker Richard Hubberthorne to his sister during his incarceration at Newgate prison. Finally, he kept a short set of notes under the title ‘Papers given forth from and by James Jolly’.

Jollie (as it is commonly spelled) was the brother of Thomas Jollie, the ejected minister, and both were Foote’s exact contemporaries at Trinity, with James becoming a fellow in the College in 1649 and a major in the Parliamentary army. The notes include a description of Jollie’s treatment by Trinity College at his adoption of apparently Quaker practices. ‘My practise of Late hath bene to weare no garment, nor any thing els about me wch is unnecessary, to give unto ye poore what ever is over & above my Necessities’, he wrote. Consequently, he was ‘by them of Trinity Coll in Cambridge forceably kept in Certaine bonds by a Man appointed for yt purpose, & […] not permitted to goe into ye Town’.

Before I come to the texts composed by Foote, it is worth dwelling on the fact that there are some unattributed works among his manuscripts, which may have been from his pen, though some might be the work of one of the van Helmonts or that of another author entirely. Sloane MS. 629 contains a three-part work of epistemology arguing against reason as a defining human quality and an indication of animate beings. The text, which bears Sloane’s mark identifying it as Foote’s, comprises three essays under the headings, ‘The Indagation of Knowledge’, ‘Logick is useless’ and ‘The Image or Likeness of a ferment stampt upon a corporeall mass, impregnates it with a seede’.

Whether or not the author of these essays is Foote, the premise of the first – that ‘Reason is reputed to be ye life of ye Soule, or ye life of our life. But I rather believe yt ye Omnipotent, is alone ye way, Truth, life, & light of all things livinge & unlivinge; & yt this cannot be accounted Reason.’ – gives concerted treatment to a casually expressed belief of the younger van Helmont. Van Helmont’s *Cabbalistical Dialogue*, which was published in Latin in 1677 and English in 1682, presents a rational theologian posing logical questions about Kabbalist accounts of creation. ‘I perceive thou examinest all things so strictly in the Ballance of Reason, which for the most part is stark blind in these more sublime matters’, is Cabbala’s answer. The second of the essays gives similar treatment to logic, taking up a position that sits uncomfortably with Foote’s empirical contributions to the Royal Society’s debates on spa waters: ‘every true or intellectuall science whatsoever is indemonstrable: yt is, yt true sciences cannot proceede from demonstration inasmuch as all demonstration consisteth in discourse & reason: for it is a single & perfect ratiocination. But (according to Aristotle) ye knowledge of principles is not in reason but altogether above it.’ The final essay proceeds from the Helmontian maxim

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20 ibid., ff. 125r–128v.
21 ibid., ff. 130v.
22 ibid., ff. 131rv.
23 ibid., ff. 132r–133v.
26 ibid.
27 Sloane MS. 629, ff. 199v–208v.
28 ibid., ff. 209r–211v.
29 ibid., ff. 212r–217v.
30 ibid., f. 199v.
32 Sloane MS. 629, f. 211v.
that ‘Ferments are allwaies praevious & necessary to all transmutations in things’. This time, it is the elder van Helmont who is the source of this idea, as he claimed that ‘Therefore there are two chief or first beginnings of Bodies, and corporeal Causes, and no more, to wit, the Element of Water, or the beginning, [of which,] and the Ferment or Leaven, or seminal beginning, [by which] that is to be disposed of’. The purpose of the essay is to argue that ferment – essentially the reactive property of matter that transforms it from and returns it to its initial state of water – is its most powerful property (more powerful than fire: ‘Glass itselfe was unconquerable by fire, & in ye aire remaines incorrupt, yet in a few yeares beinge within ye earth becomes fracide, putrifies, & att last is made subject to ye jurisdiction of water’).

The work wears its Helmontian influence prominently, and a case might be made for its being an unpublished Helmontian text. The beginning of the third essay makes a claim for the word ‘Ferment [or Leaven] being unknown except in ye makinge of breade’. Given that the word appears more than a hundred times, in various senses, in Jean Baptiste van Helmont’s Works of 1664, this is not a claim that could have been sustained by Foote, who elsewhere displays detailed familiarity with Helmont’s oeuvre.

Sloane MS. 630 contains a Latin dissertation, written in Foote’s hand, on the course of chyle through the lymphatic system that appears to respond to the French anatomist Jean Pecquet’s work on that subject, printed in 1651. The work has a comparable form to the academic disputation of Charles Ballet in Sloane MS. 631, being written in a similar hand and containing the same crossed-out sentences and paragraphs. Both titles have been obliterated and, unlike the Ballet text, the dissertation in Sloane MS. 630 does not survive with a separate sheet of authorial information. It is possible that the dissertation is Foote’s own, but the similarity it bears to Ballet’s implies that he may stand in an equivalent relationship to the text, as the reader and transcriber rather than its author.

More readily ascribable to Foote are the two short Latin texts on fevers in Sloane MS. 631, whose title page is inscribed by Sloane, ‘Dan. Foot M.D. Theses de febribus.’ These two works’ frequent quotation of Galen and scarce use of Helmont imply that they are early medical works of Foote’s, as does the hand in which they are written, which is more reminiscent of that used in the commonplace books and educational notes than of the later translations, transcriptions and treatises.

Another work that appears to have been composed by Foote is the ‘Chronological Conjecture of ye Age of ye Worlde’ which appears in two versions in Sloane MS. 617. The work attempts to extrapolate the age of the world from biblical evidence, concluding that the year 1700 should represent a millenarian occasion. The first version seems to be a fragment of an early draft, while the second presents a completed edition. Sloane MS. 617 also contains a translation of Nicolaus Khrypffs de Cusa’s Conjectura de Ultimis Diebus in three versions. Like Foote, Cusa estimates that the resurrection will occur between 1700 and 1734. The ascription of the ‘Chronological Conjecture’ to Foote is credible if not certain. The first version of the work gives the title as ‘A Chronological Conjecture of ye Age of ye

213 Ibid., f. 212v.
215 Sloane MS. 629, f. 217.
216 Ibid., f. 212r.
217 Sloane MS. 630, ff. 78r-97v.
219 Sloane MS. 631, ff. 156r-160v and ff. 161r-167r.
220 Ibid., f. 155r.
221 Foote’s was written in 1698. See Sloane MS. 617, f. 137.
222 Ibid., ff. 86r-87v.
223 Ibid., ff. 135r-140v.
224 Ibid., ff. 125r-128; ff. 129r-131v and 132r-134v.
World & ye Consumation thereof. by Dr. Foot’, although Foote’s name has been added by Sloane. The idea that the world’s age could be calculated figures in the first paragraph of Francis Mercury van Helmont’s autobiographical fragment, though Helmont’s approach was different from Foote’s. Helmont appears to have adhered to Joachim of Fiore’s doctrine of the three ages of the world (the age of the Father, that of the Son, and that, yet to come, of the Holy Spirit). His belief was that the sun, moon and stars represented various ‘signes & times & days & yeares’ and that ‘Therefore we may Consider that ye signes of ye times may be found out by ye days & years; & when anyone will take ye age of ye persons of ye first world he will find out ye end of ye whole world’. Foote’s own text does not take up this astrological reasoning, beginning instead with an account of the calculations of the German historian Johann Sleidan (1506–1556). Foote corrects Sleidan’s biblical calculations by reference to the Pauline epistles, and a number of other New Testament texts. Perhaps most revealing about Foote’s doctrinal beliefs is his account of the reasons for various miscalculations and corruptions of the biblical information. Foote fixes the point of corruption at the adoption of Christianity by the Roman emperor Constantine in the fourth century. ‘Becoming Christian’, Foote writes, Constantine ‘favoured all he could, ye Church & Church-men with great emoluments, donations & preferments, by ye means of wch (thro humane weakness) the former Gospell-syncerity, purity, & simplicity, became corrupted’. Consequently, ‘ye deceitfulness of riches choked ye world; so yt from thenceforth ye Professors of Christianity degenerated more & more & worser & worser, till this present deformed face of things appeared amongst those who terme themselves ye Church of Christ’. Then, in Foote’s history, ‘About ye yeare of Christ (viz. from his death) 666⅔/ο ye degenerated part of yt Church att Rome began to take upon her ye stile of ye One, only, & Catholick or Universall Christian Church (to nonsencically) ye Mother of all Churches; & her Bishope, ye universall Bishope over all Bishopes, & he to be (blasphemously) called The Vicar to God & Christ over all ye earth’. Foote reserves his last anger for two further cornerstones of Catholicism. First, he attacks ‘that great characteristicall doctrine (thou [sic] also ye absurd & nonsensicall doctrine) of Transubstantiation’, as well as denouncing the sixteenth-century Council of Trent (where much Catholic doctrine was defined along with a number of Protestant heresies). In Foote’s account the Council was ‘that most antichristika [sic] & infamous Councill, wch also established ye Ignatian Society of Jesus, most falsly so called. Then in ye 4th period in or about 1333½ from Christ’s death, but 1506 from his birth, first appeared ye first Society of Jesuits, long before ye Ignation Society, wch was founded about 1540 from Christs nativity, but 1506 from his death, under Pope Paul 3d, the horrible monster’. It seems, Foote’s reading of Jesuit texts may have been conducted to the end of arming himself against an inherent enemy rather than in the pursuit of spiritual truths.

Finally, Foote appears to have composed two substantial works of medical scholarship. The first is a set of medical aphorisms in Latin which appears in two textually identical versions in Sloane MSS. 618 and 4018. Both texts include a fever-curing treatise as an appendix.
Both are prefaced with a set of five quotations from Hippocrates and one from Pliny, as well as four biblical quotations. Foote shared his respect for Hippocrates with Tachenius as well as with the sometimes-iconoclastic van Helmont, who quoted him frequently and said he had nearly learned the Hippocratic aphorisms by heart.

Robert Rich, the work’s dedicatee, is probably Sir Robert Rich, second Baronet (1648-1699) who was the MP for the famous rotten borough of Dunwich between 1689 and 1699 and a Lord of the Admiralty. The work is not dated, but the dedication to Rich ‘equiti aurato, et Baronetto’ places it after February 1675/6, when Rich received his knighthood, and indeed after 1677, when he succeeded to the estate and Baronetcy of his father in law Sir Charles Rich.

Beyond the dedication to Rich, the work consists of an Introduction to the Reader, a main text of 314 aphorisms divided into seventeen sections, a Conclusion and the appendix on fevers. The aphorisms begin from a set of universal principles, the first claiming that all created matter has two natures: one material or passive, the other formal or active, while one in the second section expresses the view that the physician who fails to follow the edicts of nature is clearly impoverished.

As his text goes on, Foote offers remarks on the inherent natural properties of synthetic medical preparations. The characteristic view underpinning the text appears to be that many of the essential philosophical assumptions of Classical medicine still obtain in the case of seventeenth-century pharmaceutical healing, an argument which is given full expression in the Conclusion. The case it makes is for cumulative knowledge that encompasses and builds on ancient and modern medical learning.

The clearest statement of Foote’s medical views can be found in his English treatise in Sloane MS. 633, entitled ‘An Apologie for Physitians & their Practise against all false Pretenders Especially ye Pseudo-Chymists Who intermedle with that Learned & noble Art’. The 21,000-word dissertation makes an argument for true learning (in which category Foote includes the work of Galen, Hippocrates and Helmont) against opportunist quackery. By writing in English, Foote announced his text as a different type of work to his Latin ‘Aphorisms’. Similarly the dedication, to Foote’s cousins, the London merchants Robert and Samuel Foote, rather than to an influential member of the peerage, indicates a difference in the intended purpose of the two texts. Foote acknowledges exactly this in his dedicatory epistle. His purpose in writing the ‘Apologie’, he says, is to expose ‘pseudo chymists’ by demonstrating that ‘ye names they assumed to themselves, & ye vainglorious boastings they putt on their medicines neither they nor those ever had any ye least truth or honesty in them, but down right couseners & cousnages'. But he acknowledges that ‘it is easier much to pull down then it is to build up againe’, and, referring, presumably, to the ‘Aphorisms’ he remarks that ‘to attempt somewhat towards a positive amendment in this usefull profession, I have lately given a publication to some notions in Latine wch doe not as it seems to me very like conduct thereunto’. The layout and careful hand of both the ‘Aphorisms’ and ‘Apologie’ in manuscript suggest that both works were prepared with submission to the press in mind, although neither appear to have made it into print.

237 Van Helmont’s Works, p. 13.
238 Sloane MS. 4018, f. 2r.
240 Sloane MS. 4018, f. 4v.
241 Ibid., f. 5v.
242 Ibid., f. 23v.
243 Sloane MS. 633, ff. 16r-58v.
244 Ibid., f. 17v.
245 Ibid.
246 Ibid.
Although the reasons for Foote’s failure to make public these works, for which he clearly envisaged a public and professional purpose, remain mysterious, the ‘Apologie’ does shed some light on one of the outstanding biographical mysteries about Foote. In spite of the respect in which his contribution to the Philosophical Transactions was held, Foote was not invited to join the Royal Society’s fellowship, nor, in spite of being a practising London physician, was he a member of the Royal College of Physicians. Perhaps he was simply not well enough known in influential circles to be made FRS, but the ‘Apologie’ implies a more sinister reason for his failure to join the College. Foote is full of respect for the College, speaking of it as ‘our learned & generally honoured Society of Physicians of London, incorporated & constituted by Law, & ye royal patents of many of or [sic] Kings: & made illustrious by many of its members & there writings & learned attainments: particularly by ye great & excellent Harvey in his invention of ye bloods circulation an invention equall to yt of Columbus (as is said) of a new world’. Acknowledging that ‘I am not honoured by being of yt justly famed college’ he explains, ‘ye fault is & hath benne my owne, who uppon severall attempts thereunto was baulked therein by some persons & things not fitt now to trouble ye reader with part wanted ye encouragement upon & invitations too of some of ye most considerable members thereof, as for reasons, above concealed, I declined & doe still decline ye injury being only to myselfe’.

Foote says no more on the matter of the ‘persons & things’ that caused him to baulk at acceding to College membership, but a slight clue may lie in Sloane MS. 625, into which he copied not only ‘All Ye Statutes Concerning Physitians, espetially of London’ and the statutes of the Royal College, but also two accounts of the case of Thomas Bonham, the physician who, having supported the Barber-Surgeons’ company in their dispute with the College, in 1606 was denied membership of the College and imprisoned for unlicensed practising. Following protracted legal action and another period of imprisonment, Bonham was released and the College fined by the Lord Chief Justice Edward Coke, the author of one of the reports that Foote transcribes.

The body text of the ‘Apologie’ offers a number of insights into Foote’s medical philosophy. ‘The direct object’, he says of his treatise, ‘is yt bipartition of ye Art of medicine into Gallenicall & Hellmontian, ye most recent & freely received distinction out of ye mould of interest & invention’. In Foote’s thinking, this ‘bipartition’ does not necessarily correspond to a distinction between healing based on humoral physiology and that grounded in post-Paracelsian chemistry. Rather, his distinction is between ‘Art wch Hellmont professed’ and ‘ye old brite manner of ye shops’ (apothecaries). Significantly, pure Helmontian chemistry for Foote bears little relation to ‘ye present Chemicall præparation of medicaments’, which he considers to have been debased by profiteering and quackery. The distinction between the physic practised by trained physicians and that of ‘ye shops’ also bears further scrutiny. Foote begins from the observation that, in common parlance, ‘ye Art of ye shops’ is referred to by pseudo-chemists as ‘Gallenical & their own Chimicall’. Although he is deeply sceptical
of the idea that so-called chemists practise a different brand of physic from that of the apothecaries, he never questions the assumption that the art of the apothecaries’ shops is grounded in Galenism. Instead, he goes to some lengths to demonstrate that Helmont was not so dismissive of Galen as later, debased adherents to iatrochemical teaching claim. Foote’s knowledge of Helmont is unsurprisingly deep and detailed. His source text is the Elzevir edition of *Ortus Medicinæ* published in Amsterdam in 1652, and he supports his arguments with dozens of references to that work, giving chapter, page and paragraph numbers. Although he is also highly selective about which parts of the texts he quotes, omitting Helmont’s frequent and sometimes acerbic attacks on Galen, he admits as much, reasoning, ‘though this Author oft & bitterly inveigheth against ye Gallenists yett his invectives against ye pseudo–chimists exceeded much ye other in my opinion’.258

Among Foote’s reasons for wishing to uphold Galenic teaching appears to be his great admiration for the university system of which he was a product. His plea to all physicians is ‘that you well distinguish betwixt your friends & yor foes, and twist up yor interests with those of ye 2 Universities because it is divine advice’.259 And, if he was a committed believer in the centres of excellence, his views on the professional elite extended to a belief in an inherent hierarchy of the healing professions. In a section of the treatise addressed to apothecaries, he apologizes for having the presumption to offer advice, but warns, ‘these invasions upon you may be thought to procede from yor intrusions upon orselvs, however they were manifestly more injurious to you rather then to us’.260 The details of his advice are revealing. For Foote, it was essential that apothecaries familiarize themselves with the knowledge of simples and herbal recipes, because, ‘it may be no absurdity for a physitian not to trouble himselfe with these particulars haveing enough else to doe but to committte them to yoo. & consequently it cannot reflect upon such a physitian if he neglect to know them or to depende upon your care & skill in them: & then for ye praparation of them into medicines, it is yor duty to be observant, skillfull & faithfull’.261 Van Helmont would not have agreed. He observed that learning the names and properties of simples, ‘repented me again, and again, of the insufficiency, uncertainty, and conjectures of healing’.262 To Foote, however, the physician’s art was hampered by no such limitations. Such specialist knowledge was not only beyond the remit of the physician in Foote’s understanding, it also represented, for apothecaries, the ‘boundaries of yor profession’.263 He warns them, ‘if by chance you gaine some discrepency of ye intentions of Physitians in usinge medications in cases wch you also in part understande, yett never perswade yorselves yt yt is sufficient to enable you to use ye same medicines, in a case wch you guess afterwards to be ye same with ye former, for this were empyricisme, & he yt venturys to practise on such a thin account doth plainly quack as play ye cheate’.264 Although, early in the treatise, he took the side of apothecaries from whose preparations the pseudo-chemists plagiarized their supposed innovations,265 a final word of warning incites apothecaries to know their place: ‘if such an ability as is mostly found amongst you be enough to encourage yor attempts to practise as physitian, then have all & every one of ye most illiterate mountebacks as good as equall a plea as yourselves for theire intrusions, because by what medium soever you forme yor arguments for practise ye same will you fully serve those ignorant also for theire’.266

258 Ibid., f. 31r.
259 Ibid., f. 43v.
260 Ibid., f. 44r.
261 Ibid., ff. 44rv.
263 Sloane MS. 633, f. 44v.
264 Ibid.
265 ‘I deny yt they have attainted to another art for ye præparation of medicines, then yt of ye shops & my reason is, because ye art of ye shops & theire art is one and ye same as to ye subject-matter wrought on’. Ibid., f. 21r.
266 Ibid.
None of this sits comfortably with van Helmont’s beliefs, but, alongside his reluctance to admit the knowledge of simples as a physician’s business and his belief in the profession’s meritocratic hierarchy, Foote also entertained a belief in Helmont as an adept in the alchemical tradition, and in familiarity with alchemical secrets as an integral part of the healing arts. One of his criticisms of the pseudo-chemists is that they assume “That there is one & ye same with ye Art exercised by Raimand Lully, Basil Valentine, Paracelsus, but especially Helmont”, a formulation which conveniently expresses Foote’s belief in a chain of alchemical knowledge transmission from the thirteenth-century Llull, through fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Valentine and Paracelsus, to van Helmont. And, at a local level, Helmontian medical practice, according to Foote, requires initiation not only in the doctrine described in the written works of van Helmont but in the practical specialist knowledge transmitted as arcana in the alchemical tradition: ‘Because there is such a dependence, connection, or rather such an inseparable union betweene Helmont’s doctrine & his greate arcanous medicines, yt no man can practise, defende, or profess ye one without ye possession of ye other’.

III. Conclusions

The evidence in print and the Sloane manuscripts throws considerably more light on Foote’s life, practice and beliefs than has hereto been credited. Although he remains a figure whose place in the medical history of late seventeenth-century London is vague, and probably marginal, there is enough evidence to refine and challenge some of the casual references made to Foote as a ‘member of the Royal Society’ (which he was not), a Cambridge physician (which he was by training, but not in practice), or ‘one of van Helmont’s many amanuenses’, which he may have been, although there is no evidence for the claim that Foote was ‘the person to whom van Helmont dictated his manuscript autobiography’, although Foote’s inscription of Sloane MS. 530 refers to the text as a ‘transcription’. Henry More’s report implied that van Helmont did not speak English, making it unlikely, even if he had learned the language by 1682 when the text was produced, that he would dictate his work in English to Foote, a supposed amanuensis who was comfortable in at least one of the languages van Helmont spoke naturally. There is some evidence, however, for Foote’s having been a physician of some small reputation, able to command respect. He was spoken of with equanimity by Locke’s epistolary community, and his contribution to the Philosophical Transactions was met with deference in both of the responses it received. Sloane’s inscription of Foote’s books and manuscripts to him, in spite of having been thirty years his junior, perhaps implies that Sloane at least knew who Foote was.

Also sustainable is the claim that Foote (along with David Thomas, another physician and a member of Locke’s circle) were ‘chemical physicians, not Galenists, and consequently shared Locke’s interest in the work both of Paracelsus and both the elder and younger van Helmont’. Foote was certainly a chemical physician in as much as he believed in the principles of iatrochemistry, deferring to van Helmont on practically every matter. But, his ‘Apologie for Physitians’ makes clear that he felt the term ‘Chymistry’, if not the medical principles it connoted, had been debased. ‘I canot but desire my Reader not to expect in ye following pages, an aiminge att an utter extirpation of what vulgarly passeth under ye name of

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267 Ibid., f. 21r.
268 Ibid., f. 41r.
269 Coudert, The Impact of the Kabbala, p. 60.
271 Coudert, The Impact of the Kabbala, p. 171.
273 Sloane MS. 530, f. 57v.
274 Coudert, The Impact of the Kabbala, p. 274.
Chymists, never having nor intending such an injury to a laudable act'. His intention was to set the healing practitioners in their correct stations: ‘to call the artists new Apothecaries, as next to give them their due essence & place, not beyond or above ye old ones much less above & beyond all physitians, & craft of all to be equall & ye same with those of auld adept chymists who gave prooves sufficient that they were quite another sort of persons.’  

The number of alchemical works among Foote’s papers demonstrates a fascination with the discipline, and the ‘Apologie’ testifies to his belief that Helmont was the inheritor and preeminent exponent of a tradition of alchemical learning that Foote traced through work ‘exercised by Raimund Lully Basil Valentine, Paracelsus, but especially Helmont’.  

Illuminating though Foote’s papers may be on the matter of his medical education and professional interests, they are less so about his religious life. I have found no primary evidence supporting Calamy’s claim that Foote was the vicar of Little Swaffham in Essex or anything that confirms his ejection in 1662. The chronology of what can be inferred about his biography, however, does not discount a period of clerical life in the 1650s and 1660s, and Foote’s medical manuscripts all appear to date from after the Great Ejection. The sermons he attended or read as a student imply a leaning towards Calvinist theology consistent with his Cambridgeshire background and university education. Foote’s close engagement with, and complete transcription of, obviously Catholic texts – William Fitch’s Rule of Perfection, Jean de Bernieres Louvigny’s Inwarde Christian, and Nicolaus de Cusa’s De Filiatione Dei – is indicative of an interest in esoteric religious and philosophical traditions that might be expected of a member of the younger van Helmont’s circle rather than of a particular tendency towards Catholic theology. His ‘Chronological Conjecture of ye age of ye World’ in Sloane MS. 617 issued a spirited dismissal of what Foote considered the errors and injustices perpetrated under the name of Popery.

More worthy of a pause for reflection is Foote’s relationship to Quakerism. His manuscripts attest to a certain fascination with the beliefs and behaviour of Quakers. In spite of Sloane’s designation of the ascetic tract on the inherent sinfulness of wealth one of ‘sevll papers of Quakers & madmen’, Foote’s copying of that work, along with an account of James Jollie’s treatment by Trinity College and letters from prison by James Parnell and Richard Hubberthorne, suggests his sympathy with the movement. Although Jollie was Foote’s contemporary at Trinity and Parnell and Hubberthorne were both dead by 1662, the second half of Foote’s life does seem to have entailed moving in circles of Quaker sympathizers. He was known personally to Benjamin Furly and, as the merchant’s letter to Locke reveals, Foote had apparently been moved by the Quaker speeches of Robert Lodge. Like Foote, Furly was an acquaintance of Francis Mercury van Helmont whose own, perhaps fleeting, Quaker experiences have been well documented. Additionally, Thomas Howkins, the publisher of Foote’s translation of John Conrad Amman’s Talking Deaf Man, though probably not a Friend himself, was noted for printing works by Quakers. Similarly, there is no

275 Sloane MS. 633, f. 19r.
276 Ibid.
277 See R. S. Mortimer, ‘Biographical Notices of Printers and Publishers of Friends’ Books up to 1750: A Supplement to Plomer’s Dictionary’, Journal of Documentation, iii (1947), pp. 107-25 (p. 115). ‘There is no evidence to show that Hawkins was a Friend, but he printed seven books for Friends, including the second edition of Penn’s No Cross, No Crown, on some copies of which his label is found pasted over that of Benjamin Clark.’ Russell Mortimer’s assessment is that ‘As a publisher for Friends, Thomas Howkins, bookseller in George Yard, did little’: Russell Mortimer, ‘The First Century of Quaker Printers’, Friends Historical Society Journal, xxxxi (1949), pp. 75-84 (p. 77). Perhaps notably, Hawkins printed George Fox’s Word of Admonition to Such as Wander from the Anointings and Teachings, and from the Father and the Son (London, 1684) and a single-sheet pamphlet, Concerning such as have Forbidden Preaching or Teaching in the Name of Jesus (London, 1684). Sarah Howkins, probably Thomas’ widow, printed Francis Mercury van Helmont’s Seder Olam (London, 1694), and Spirit of Diseases (London, 1694).
conclusive evidence for Foote’s having been a Quaker. It is however notable that, although his manuscripts reveal that he made original translations of numerous healing texts, much of the work of his later decades appears to have been conducted as part of a circle of acquaintances that shared a sympathetic disposition towards Quakerism and had the younger van Helmont at its centre.

Appendix I

List of Sloane manuscripts containing Foote’s material

BL Sloane MS. 81
BL Sloane MS. 529
BL Sloane MS. 530
BL Sloane MS. 586
BL Sloane MS. 587
BL Sloane MS. 588
BL Sloane MS. 589
BL Sloane MS. 590
BL Sloane MS. 591
BL Sloane MS. 592
BL Sloane MS. 593
BL Sloane MS. 594
BL Sloane MS. 595
BL Sloane MS. 596
BL Sloane MS. 597
BL Sloane MS. 598
BL Sloane MS. 599
BL Sloane MS. 600
BL Sloane MS. 601
BL Sloane MS. 602
BL Sloane MS. 603
BL Sloane MS. 612
BL Sloane MS. 613
BL Sloane MS. 615
BL Sloane MS. 617
BL Sloane MS. 618
BL Sloane MS. 623
BL Sloane MS. 625
BL Sloane MS. 629
BL Sloane MS. 630
BL Sloane MS. 631
BL Sloane MS. 632
BL Sloane MS. 633
BL Sloane MS. 659
BL Sloane MS. 3991
BL Sloane MS. 4018
Appendix II

Works Composed by Foote


‘Aphorismi Physici ac Medici’, Sloane MS. 4018 A.


Works Translated or Edited by Foote

Bernières Louvigny, Jean de, ‘The Inwarde Christian Or The Interiour Conformity which Christians ought to have with Jesus Christ Divided into eight Bookes’, Sloane MS. 629.


———, Autobiographical fragment, Sloane MS. 530.

———, ‘Observations’ (1682), Sloane MS. 530.


———, ‘Late Works’, Sloane MS. 617.


Daniel Foote, M.D., of Cambridge: The Evidence in Print and from the Sloane Collection


**Works of Uncertain Authorship**


‘The Indagation of Knowledge’, Sloane MS. 629.