Galen and the Sophists

Vivian Nutton
University College London
v.nutton@ucl.ac.uk

Abstract

Galen’s relationship to the sophist movement is a familiar theme. This paper looks at the development of modern ideas on the subject and offers some new ways of linking him with authors such as Plutarch and Lucian. Not only was he a public intellectual, but his position at court placed him as close to the centre of imperial power as did that of an ab epistulis, and to possible obloquy, not least in the years around 192.

Keywords

Galen – Sophists – Plutarch – Lucian – court intellectuals

1 Introduction

Galen’s relationship to sophists and what has generally been termed the Second Sophistic movement has been disputed by scholars for half a century, and there may seem little point in returning to a somewhat hackneyed theme. But, as so often in Galen, a re-reading of even the most familiar of texts provokes some new observations that can be further developed by looking back at the origins of the interest in this aspect of Galen’s work. Our honorand’s publications, particularly on Galen’s activities as a commentator, provide a firm base for understanding some aspects of his literary and critical skills that link with wider intellectual activities in the Roman Empire, and particularly in the Greek Roman Empire, during the period from 50 to 250 CE.

In one sense, this is a non-problem: Galen was not a sophist in the same way as Favorinus or Aelius Aristides – he was a doctor, and, as far as I can tell, with one minor exception, he uses sophist, sophisms and related words always in a negative way, contrasting his own philosophical and medical standpoints...
with those of his many opponents. Others certainly used the word in a more favourable sense and in *On Prognosis* Galen described Hadrian of Tyre as being a rhetor, but not yet a sophist, the technical term for the holder of one of the chairs created at Athens.¹ But he was familiar with several of the individuals who appear in Philostratus’ lives of the sophists, he enjoyed a similar education to theirs, and in his writings he shows many of the same characteristics.

The Oxford historian Peter Brunt argued strongly against the idea of there being any sophistic movement, let alone anything that could be termed a Second Sophistic movement, stressing a continuity in Greek education going back centuries before Philostratus and the existence of public lectures on a range of themes in the Hellenistic period.² But, although he himself disliked the notion of Galen the sophist, Brunt’s wider perspective only strengthens the case for putting Galen alongside Plutarch or his own contemporaries Lucian, Aristides and Herodes Atticus, all of whom Galen apparently had known personally in some way.³ Like them, he was a public intellectual, whose works and influence extended far beyond the confines of medicine. Many of his early dissections were carried out in public, and some of his writings show signs of having been delivered in public or being concerned with some of the same themes and using the same techniques of persuasion as the sophists recorded by Philostratus.

2 Modern Historians and Greek Intellectuals

I begin by sketching something of the historiographical context in which modern historians of the ancient world became interested in the Greek sophists and, almost incidentally, in Galen. The catalyst was Glen Bowersock’s *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire*, published just over fifty years ago, which included a chapter devoted to “The Prestige of Galen”. This was a provocative assertion, as several of his reviewers pointed out, for before then writers on Galen had said little about his wider intellectual world, whereas now it forms a large part of all recent biographies as well as being the subject of more than one volume of conference proceedings.⁴ Conversely, although there had been a few studies of individual sophists, most of them short, neither ancient historians nor

¹ Gal. Praec. 5.11: 14,627 K.
² Brunt 1994, 25–52.
³ Gal. HPV 3,2,18: 5,500 K.; Hipp. Epid. 2,6,9: CMG V.10.1192; Comm. Plat. Tim. 4,33: CMG Suppl. 1,33; Opt. Med. Cogn. 9,18–22: CMG Suppl. Or. 4,112–4.
⁴ Bowersock 1969; Schlange-Schöningen 2003; Boudon-Millot 2012; Mattern 2013; Nutton 2020; Gill, Whitmarsh and Wilkins eds, 2009; López Férez 2015.
students of Greek literature had bothered with Galen, or indeed much with the cultural life of the Greek world of the Roman Empire until the 1960s. There were a few exceptions: my own thesis supervisor, A. H. M. Jones, had produced two complementary studies almost thirty years earlier: Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces, in 1937, and, three years later, The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian, but he was always more interested in institutions than in ideas. Indeed, his section in the latter on culture takes up a mere twenty-six pages and tells you more about the organisation of festivals and the existence of libraries than about what was read or performed. Nor is Jones’ summary of Greek literature likely to entice potential readers: mediocre, banal, tedious, uninspired are but some of the adjective he uses; the biographies of Plutarch have ‘a perennial appeal’, although not his other works, and Plotinus of Lycopolis is ‘not forgotten’. – Galen, like Ptolemy, gets a line. These two books were severely and somewhat unfairly criticised by Louis Robert, by far the best student of the Greek world of the Empire, but, as an epigraphist, his essays were not as well known outside France as they should have been, and his best work bringing together literature and institutions was still in the future or published in some out of the way places. The distinguished French Hellenist Jacques Bompaire had published his major study of Lucian, Lucien écrivain, in 1958, but he had little to say about Galen and his interests were always in literature. It was perhaps not until 1971 with the publication by one of his pupils, Brian Reardon, of his Courants littéraires grecs, that Galen was discussed in French as a papaideumenos alongside other intellectuals of the period. The first book-length study of the later sophists was that of Jonas Palm, Rom, Römertum, und Imperium in der griechischen Literatur der Kaiserzeit, that appeared in 1959. Palm was a student of Albert Wifstrand at Lund, whose series of Eikota contain many useful observations on Galen’s text, and whose other pupils included Cajus Fabricius and, at one remove, Bengt Alexanderson, both names familiar to Galenists.

Publication dates, are a weak guide to when a particular work was first conceived, but one can confidently point to the first half of the 1960s as the period when young ancient historians, and particularly ancient historians in Britain, one might almost say Oxford, turned their attention to the Greek world and especially to the overlap between literature and society. The catalyst was Sir Ronald Syme, the Camden professor of Ancient History at Oxford, whose two volumes on Tacitus, published in 1958, were a model for how one might bring the two together. He followed this up with books on Ammianus, 1968,

---

5 Jones 1937; Jones 1940, esp. 282–283.
6 Bompaire 1958; Reardon 1971.
7 Palm 1959; Wifstrand 1930–1964; Wifstrand 2005; Fabricius 1972; Alexanderson 1967.
and his Sather lectures on Sallust, 1968, and it is often assumed that his interest was exclusively in Latin historians. But he had contemplated a large book on Strabo, published in part after his death, and had worked extensively on and in Asia Minor in the 1940s. So it was not surprising that, with the opening up of Turkey in the late 1950s, he should have encouraged the best of his research students to investigate the cultural world of that region. Their names and topics are well known: Fergus Millar, *Cassius Dio* 1964; Glen Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek world*, 1965; Barbara Levick, *Pisidia* (1967); Christopher Jones, *Plutarch* 1971. They all were friends of Ewen Bowie, a young Oxford lecturer in Greek who worked on the Greek sophists, and one might add Oxford historians of late antiquity such as Peter Brown, Averil Cameron and Timothy Barnes, all of whom published studies placing famous authors in their social, political and intellectual context. It is into this academic milieu that one can place Bowersock’s work on the sophists, significant both for its date and its Symean methodology.

Others quickly took up Bowersock’s challenge. My 1979 CMG edition and commentary on *Prognosis for Epigenes* owes much to his example, and his wide view of the significance of the sophists was extended by Johannes Hahn’s (1989) *Der Philosoph und die Gesellschaft. Selbstverständnis, öffentliche und populäre Erwartungen in der hohen Kaiserzeit*. More recent work was well surveyed by Susan Mattern in her 2017 chapter on Galen in Richter and Johnson’s *Oxford Handbook of the Second Sophistic*.

Bowersock was interested in the social background and social contacts of his sophists, most of whom, like Galen, came from the haute bourgeoisie. Galen gives us only hints of his social status: he claims merely to be well off, and certainly not as rich as the addressee of *Passions and Errors*. Unlike Dr Acylas of Synnada, whose daughter married into a family of Asiarchs, and possibly even Aretaeus, who, according to the editor of a recent inscription from Cappadocia, came from a consular family, although the connection seems tenuous to me, Galen does not appear to have direct connections with a family of senatorial or near senatorial rank. But as a member of a family of architects at a time when Pergamum and neighbouring places must have resembled a building site in the number of new constructions, many of them impressive even today, he would

---

8 Syme 1958; Syme 1964.  
9 Syme 1995.  
10 Millar 1964; Bowersock 1965; Levick 1967; Jones 1971.  
11 Bowie 1973; Brown 1969; Cameron 1970; Barnes 1971.  
12 Hahn 1989; Mattern 2017.  
13 Gal. Aff. Pecc. Dig. 1.9: 5.49 K.  
14 Samama 2003, 405, no. 300; Adak 2019.
not have lacked for money, even before he entered imperial service. After 169, if Christol and Drew-Bear are right to draw a parallel with Gellius Maximus of Antioch in Pisidia, that alone would have brought in 200,000 HS a year, the equivalent of the pay of a minor provincial governor. Galen was no Herodes, no Polemo of Laodicea, but he was certainly the equal of Hadrian of Tyre or Scopelianos in his wealth.\textsuperscript{15}

The second concern of Bowersock and his successors was to examine the relationships between the sophists and their towns or regions. They showed how these public intellectuals helped to consolidate the position of Greeks in the Roman Empire, not only by emphasising a unified culture, a culture that their public performances around the Eastern Mediterranean and elsewhere only strengthened, but also by providing a conduit between their home region and the Imperial power. Many of them were lavish benefactors to the Eastern cities, and imperial doctors, like leading sophists, were similarly generous – witness the benefactions of Statilius Crito and Statilius Attalus to Heraclea Salbace in Caria or those of Gellius Maximus at Antioch in Pisidia.\textsuperscript{16} But sophists also had a role to play in local politics – whether, like Dio Chrysostom, they travelled around offering advice and criticism to fractious cities or themselves played a leading role in their community.\textsuperscript{17} That Galen's family were involved in the local politics of Pergamum is clear: he mentions that his father Nicon was pressed into office somewhat against his will because of his reputation for moral probity, and his own reluctance to return home may have been encouraged by the existence of a \textit{stasis} whose length and origins he does not disclose.\textsuperscript{18} How a stasis in Pergamum might involve a doctor in Rome can be gleaned from the recent publication of an inscription from Cos that throws some light on the meaning of the word \textit{stasis} as well as showing an imperial doctor intervening in local politics a century earlier. A Coan decree thanks the emperor Claudius for his role in bringing a stasis there to an end, and reveals that he had been moved to act by his physician, Stertinius Xenophon, who had intervened with him on behalf of the community of Cos.\textsuperscript{19} Xenophon, we know, was a great benefactor of the island, but he is here described as transmitting a request from them to the emperor, or at least suggesting to him that imperial intervention might be useful. The cynic might also suggest that his mediation might also have involved mitigating any more serious reaction from

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{15} Christol and Drew-Bear 2004, 85–118.
\textsuperscript{16} Nutton 2013, 260–263.
\textsuperscript{17} Bowersock 1969, 17–29.
\textsuperscript{18} Gal. \textit{Aff. Pecc. Dig.} 1.8: 5.41 K.; \textit{Praec.} 9.2: 14.64 K.
\textsuperscript{19} IG 12,4,1,254, cf. 255.
\end{flushright}
Claudius to this unrest. Of course, one might argue that Galen would have been above such political involvement since we have as yet no epigraphic evidence from Pergamum or elsewhere that would confirm this. But, as we shall see in a moment, this is a weak argument, and we can continue to hope for a chance find that would tell us more than Galen himself has chosen to reveal.

The other approach to relating Galen to the sophists comes from the side of philologists. Galen as a literary figure does not seem to have attracted much attention before the 1960s. Karl Deichgräber’s (1956) *Parabasenverse aus Thesmophoriazusen II des Aristophanes bei Galen*, and his *Galen als Erforscher des menschlichen Pulses: ein Beitrag zur Selbstdarstellung des Wissenschaftlers (De dignotione pulsuum I i)* of the following year, attracted very little attention even in Germany, and, outside, the *Sitzungsberichte der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* were not on every classicist’s essential reading.20 Neither Bowersock nor Ewen Bowie, for instance, seems to have known of them, although both essays are relevant to the question of the self-definition of Greekness that interested them. When in the early 1970s I wrote my commentary on *On prognosis*, it was very hard to find studies of Galen’s style, and it was probably Adelmo Barigazzi’s 1991 *CMG* edition of the *Protrepticus* and *De optimo genere docendi*, directed against the sophist Favorinus that can be considered the first literary exploration of Galen. This approach has been continued by Véronique Boudon-Millot in her editions and, particularly, in her biography of Galen, and more recently by Caroline Petit, but there is much more to be done.21 Thanks to them we now know far more about Galen’s early education and what he derived from it as a stylist in the creation of his works.

3 The Stylist and His Library

This is not always easy to describe. He typically tells us more about his experiences with his philosophy teachers than about what literary and historical authors he studied, and even less about his reactions to them. His isolated comment that Herodotus is read for pleasure, *terpsis*, contrasts with his respect for Thucydides and the rarity of his mention of other historians; but even here, his emphasis is on the medical information they all impart rather than their work as historians in general. His reading can be identified, for the most part, only from passing references and allusions in his writings, which impart their own biases. So, for example, Galen alludes far less to the ancient orators than

---

20 Deichgräber 1956; Deichgräber 1957.
21 Boudon 2000; Petit 2018.
to poetry largely because their speeches are far less relevant to the matter in hand. His literary judgments appear at first sight banal: his many quotations from Homer, the poet par excellence, his reverence for Sappho, the poetess, and his preference for Euripides among the tragedians can all be paralleled among his contemporaries. More unusual though is a quotation from the first version of the *Thesmophoriazusae* and another of the mysterious Heliodorus of Athens, a writer of very uncertain date, as well as his commendation of Plutarch’s *Homerica*.

But although there are quotations from earlier literature for which Galen is our only extant source, it would be prudent not to claim overmuch for him as an omnivorous reader. Any surprise at finding in his little tract on seven-month children a quotation from Euphorion used in a discussion of the normal period of gestation is somewhat modified by the knowledge that this fragment, fr. 100 Lightfoot, is cited by Stobaeus to exemplify the pains of childbirth, as well as by later lexicographers to illustrate the very rare word, *anthereon*. A similar caution may be necessary when one looks at Galen’s use of stories and exempla. He is, for example, the only author to tell the story of Parthenius’ intervention in a debate between two *grammatikoi* over the authenticity of his writings, but his account in *On Character Traits* of a merchant visited in a dream by Hermes when he was debating with himself whether to sell a statue of the god to adorn a temple or a tomb has a very close parallel in Babrius, the writer of fables.

But it is not only the range of his non-medical quotations and allusions that aligns him with other sophistic authors, the product at least in part of a shared system of educational values, but the way in which he deploys his learning, and not just in his polemics. Adelmo Barigazzi and Véronique Boudon-Millot have analysed his use of such learning in the *Protrepticus*, and their insights could be extended to many other treatises. Caroline Petit in her splendid study of Galen’s rhetoric has also shown how he carefully crafted some of his descriptions, such as that of Stabiae, discussed also by Tommaso Raiola, and many years ago I drew attention to the function (and the elegant exposition) of his longer case studies in the second half of the *Method of Healing*. One could easily extend this detailed examination to *Affected Parts* or *On Prognosis* where Galen’s choice of words adds to the effect of the incident he is describing, but I will end this section with a reference to a long passage from *Character Traits*, preserved in a tenth-century Arabic writer on zoology, al-Marwazi,

---

22 Nutton 2009.
23 Euphorion, fr. 100 Lightfoot; Gal. *Sept. Part.* p. 348 tr. Walzer.
24 Gal. *Prop. Plac.* 1.1: p. 172 RJ; *Mor.* 2.2: p. 158 tr. Davies; Walzer 1962, 167–169.
25 Petit 2018, 149–53; Raiola e Mascolo 2014.
which Galen uses the example of the enmity between a snake and a mongoose to argue that some traits are innate.\textsuperscript{26} Having been offered some poisonous snakes by a friend in Egypt who had been given them as an unwanted present, Galen conducted an experiment, introducing a young mongoose into the presence of one of the snakes to see if the two would fight, even if they had never been trained to do so or even seen the other species before. He describes the fight in graphic detail, noting their moves as each tried to get into position to deliver the killing bite until they ended by each grabbing half of the open jaw of the other. His servant, forewarned of this possible outcome, then cut off the snake’s head, and saved the mongoose by pouring a draught of the theriac antidote down its throat. Even in Arabic and the subsequent English translation the vigour, precision and relevance of Galen’s observations stand out clearly. Richard Walzer was not wrong when he chose to describe this treatise as a diatribe, in the technical sense of the word.\textsuperscript{27}

Galen, as more than one author has pointed out, is adept at using his knowledge of poetry and drama for his own polemical purposes, whether to demolish the theories of others or to support his own. That of course is typical of second-century literature, but what is striking about his quotations is Galen’s methodology or rather the way in which he lets use into his workshop. There is no need to go into the details of his work as a creator of lexika (a task that in large part he could leave to his assistants), but I will choose to exemplify this by the quotation from Euphorion that I mentioned earlier, fr. 100 Lightfoot; he uses the poet’s claim, put into the mouth of a mother, possibly Clytemnestra, that she had carried the child in her womb for some 300 suns before he broke painfully out of his prison. This, for Galen, was confirmation that in classical Greece authors could use\textit{ helios}, sun, as a synonym for day, and thus shows what Hippocrates meant by the word in this context, his discussion of seven-month children.\textsuperscript{28} His reasoning is explained in\textit{ Medical Terminology}, a treatise greatly in need of a re-edition and a new translation, preferably into a more accessible modern language than German, something shamefully neglected by today’s Anglophone classicists. Galen argues that when seeking to understand the ordinary meaning of words in Hippocrates’ time, one must be careful to select the right level of language for comparison: that of philosophers was too technical, that of tragedians too elevated. One must have recourse to comedy in particular, for comic writers had to use everyday language in its everyday meaning in order to succeed. An author who, except for parody, used words

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Stern 1956.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Walzer 1962, 164–174.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Above, note 23.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
that were unfamiliar and incomprehensible to his audience grasp, was bound
to fail, incapable of raising a laugh.\(^{29}\) Such an attitude towards language can be
paralleled in his claims for ‘clarity’, his dislike of neologisms, and his refusal to
take part in the controversies between Atticists and their opponents.\(^{30}\) In \textit{On
Examining a Physician}, he condemns lexicographical and etymological games,
although, as we know from a recently published section from \textit{On Simples}, he
was very much interested in words, in Latin and even in a local language from
the borders of Armenia.\(^{31}\) If he was portrayed by Lucian in the \textit{Lexiphanes},
as Barry Baldwin once suggested, this would imply that others were aware
of his enthusiasms, even if Lucian exaggerated and misrepresented Galen’s
position – one might argue a fair punishment for Galen’s misrepresentation
of others.\(^{32}\) Galen knew of Lucian, and may even have been acquainted per-
sonally with him, if Lucian’s invention of a spoof passage from Hippocrates
occurred when both men were living in Alexandria. It is but one example of
Galen’s relationship with the world of the public performer – his dislike of
Favorinus is another.\(^{33}\)

4 Moral Philosophy in \textit{On my Own Books}

Further confirmation can be found by looking in detail at a very familiar pas-
sage, yet one whose significance commentators and translators have not fully
elucidated. I refer to the list of writings included by Galen in \textit{On my Own Books}
under the heading of moral or ethical philosophy.\(^{34}\) The title of this section,
“What I have written on questions of ‘moral philosophy’”, \textit{ethike philosophia},
immediately suggests a parallel with Plutarch, as well as a problem about
how to translate the word \textit{ethike}. Galen carefully distinguishes works on this
topic from his other philosophical writings, and the miscellaneous nature of
both his and Plutarch’s tracts in his \textit{Moral Essays} indicate a much wider range
than psychology, the heading under which several texts in this section are
discussed in Hankinson’s companion to Galen, and even more than what is
understood by ‘morality’ or ‘ethics’ in English.\(^{35}\) Rather, what Galen includes
under the heading of moral philosophy are treatises on human behaviour in a

\(^{29}\) Gal. \textit{Nom. Med.} pp. 31–32, cf. \textit{Hipp. Epid.} 3.32: 17a.678 K; Deichgräber 1956.
\(^{30}\) Nutton 2014, 12–13.
\(^{31}\) Gal. \textit{Opt. Med.Cog.} 13.2: CMG Suppl. Or. 4.127; Martelli 2012.
\(^{32}\) Baldwin 1973, 38–40.
\(^{33}\) \textit{Hipp. Epid.} 2.6.9: CMG V.i.10.1.192.
\(^{34}\) Gal. \textit{Lib. Prop.} 15.19.46 K. Boudon 2007, 134–173, provides a much-improved text.
\(^{35}\) Hankinson 2008, 184–209. A similar restriction in Singer 2013, 11–15.
wide range of situations, offering advice on how one might best react in certain circumstances. In more than one of them Galen draws on examples from his own life to encourage others to follow him – Avoiding Distress is a prime example, written in response to a friend asking how he could retain his equanimity in the face of disasters.36 Some may have been delivered before an audience, others, like the now lost On Wealthy Money-lovers, were dashed off on the spur of the moment, but, presumably, then allowed to circulate among friends, as is implied by his comment on its composition at the end of Avoiding Distress, ‘as I was wont to do, as you know well’.37 But others seem to be much more carefully composed.

Most of the treatises in this section are now lost except for their titles, but even these are sufficiently indicative of their contents and of parallels in other writers: On Idleness, On Pleasure and Pain, The Consequences of Each Chosen Aim in Life, and perhaps even the mysterious On the Making of Wills (or just possibly contracts). Others refer to public performances, whether as performer or audience: Against Orators in the Forum; The Relationship of Speakers to their Audience; Taking Part in Discussions; The Value of Public Opinion.38 Some of these titles display Galen’s literary ambitions, whether in adopting the form of a Platonic dialogue as in The Discussion with Bacchides and Cyrus in the Villa of Menarchus; or in choosing a somewhat fanciful or playful title, for I would agree with Ivan Garofalo in translating Kroniskoi as ‘old fogies’: taking the -iskos ending as hypocoristic, although we still have no idea of the book’s contents.39 Was it a humorous catalogue like Lucian’s The Long-lived, or had it a more serious purpose like Lucian’s Runaways, an attack on the Cynics? It would appear to have been divided into eight sections, perhaps each focusing on one Kroniskos.

One title in particular has not been given the attention it deserves and leads us back to the social and political situation described by Bowersock as typical of his sophists. I refer to Public Statements in the Reign of Pertinax, an extremely unusual, if not unique, title. It is unlikely that by public statements Galen was referring to official proclamations, a sort of documentary record, but would have been his account of what people said about Commodus and the new Emperor. To judge from Avoiding Distress, it would not have been favourable to Commodus, but would have praised his successor and, in all likelihood,

36  Gal. Ind. 1. Probably not the same as the man mentioned at Gal. Aff. Pecc. Dig. 1.25: 5.37 K.
37  Gal. Ind. 84.
38  For the last, cf. Dio Chrys. Or. 67–70.
39  Gal. Libr. Prop. 15: 19.46 K. Vegetti 2013, 162, emends the first title and translates as ‘presso la corte imperiale’, for the second title, Garofalo and Vegetti 1978, 88.
Septimius Severus, for the title implies that it was written after the death of Pertinax either during the civil war that followed or once Severus had firmly established his rule.\textsuperscript{40} Another title would also fit this period, \textit{On Concord, Peri homonoias}, the theme of more than one oration by the earlier Dio Chrysostom, but this could equally have applied to some political unrest back in Pergamum, a plea for an end to stasis, or simply to one individual’s agreement with another or even with himself.\textsuperscript{41} But why should Galen have written about the events of 193, and indeed in some way circulated the tract on public statements? The question, once formulated in this way, has a simple answer: because he wished to dissociate himself from any part in the misdeeds of Commodus and to proclaim his loyalty to the new regime. One might notice how in \textit{Avoiding Distress} he mentions that he had in some way left the court and was planning a permanent move to Campania; he had not wanted to be an imperial doctor, but nonetheless continued to serve for much, if not all, of that murderous reign. “I was there, but I wasn’t really involved; and if I was, I did not want to be”, a plea familiar to anyone who has attended a magistrate’s court.\textsuperscript{42}

The position of an imperial doctor was like that of the \textit{ab epistulis} held by several sophists; it was a position of power as well as of honour.\textsuperscript{43} One was close to the supreme ruler, even in some intimate moments, and whatever the exact nature of that relationship, people believed, if not expected, that that individual was in a position to secure favours and to influence the emperor. Galen may not have been quite as involved in court politics as an Antonius Musa or Stertinius Xenophon, we cannot tell.\textsuperscript{44} Galen liked to portray himself as a man of stalwart independence, but others may have viewed him differently. This closeness to a monarch like Marcus Aurelius might not have mattered in good times, but in “the worst reign in all history”, proximity brought danger, both in the emperor’s lifetime and in the aftermath of his demise. Galen had to defend himself from the attacks of others, and it precisely here that I would place another lost treatise, \textit{On Slander, in which I Talk of my Own Life}; with which might be compared the title of the fragments of a similar tract by Plutarch, or Lucian’s warning against putting one’s trust in slanders. Admittedly it is hard to date Galen’s treatise.\textsuperscript{45} It could have been written earlier: one might remember...

\textsuperscript{40} Gal. \textit{Ind.} 54, with Nutton 2020, 49, note 62. Vegetti 2013, 162, suggests that the discussion with \textit{Bacchides and Cyrus} may also have touched on life at court, but this is unlikely.

\textsuperscript{41} Dio Chrys. \textit{Or.} 38–40.

\textsuperscript{42} Gal. \textit{Ind.} 10 and 16.

\textsuperscript{43} Bowersock 1969, 50–58.

\textsuperscript{44} Nutton 2013, 260–263. Note the friendship of the author of \textit{Ther. ad Pis.} 2: 14.218 K. with Aelius Antipater, an \textit{ab epistulis}.

\textsuperscript{45} Plut. \textit{Mor. frag.} 153–156; Lucian \textit{Cap.}
the anger of his competitors during his first Roman stay, and his own com-
bative nature could have invited reprisals at any time. But the implication
of the subtitle and his decision to use incidents from his own life to illustrate
the wider theme of slander suggests that it was more likely to have been writ-
ten in his middle or later years rather than before his second visit to Rome. At
the very least, in it he would have been defending some of his actions against
public attacks. Placing it after 193 would seem to me to be probable, but when-
ever it was written, it reminds us that not everyone saw Galen as he wished to
appear and that he was far from being the model of Christian virtue asserted
by some of his renaissance admirers. The title of a tract known to the Arabs
under the heading of How to Profit from One’s Enemies another Plutarchean
title, may be another way of referring to On Slander, since it does not figure in
On my Own Books, or is mentioned elsewhere by Galen a separate work. At
the very least, if it is by Galen, it also shows that he was not universally liked.

As I have tried to suggest in this short paper, Bowersock’s instinct was
right to place Galen in the context of other public intellectuals, the sophists,
whether one looks at his use of rhetoric, his education or his position in court
circles. We are, of course, as historians, largely at the mercy of what Galen
chose to reveal about his life in Rome, but one should always remember that
he was a public figure, never far from confrontation and, for some fifty years,
with access to the emperor of the Roman world and to members of the court.
What he learned in the palace, and what he might have told to a historian
like Cassius Dio, we sober scholars can never know, but that has not stopped
at least one novelist from telling the truth as she has imagined it. Amanda
Prantera describes Galen on his deathbed dictating his reminiscences to Dio
for him to use in his (lost) final books of his Histories. But who can reveal the
inside story of Hippocrates?

Bibliography

Adak, M. (2019). Der Pneumatiker Aretaios und ein Verehrer Platons aus Kappadokien.
   In: K. Harter-Uibopuu ed., Epigraphische Notizen. Zur Erinnerung an Peter Hermann,
   Stuttgart.

Alexanderson, B. (1967). Galenos ΠΕΡΙ ΚΡΙΣΕΩΝ. Überlieferung und Text. Gothenburg.

46 Vegetti 2013, 162, seems to prefer the earlier date.
47 Nutton 2009a.
48 Bergsträsser 1925, 40–1, no. 121. Cf. Plut. Mor.86B–92A.
49 Prantera, (1991), The Side of the Moon, London.
Baldwin, B. (1973). *Studies in Lucian*. Toronto.

Barigazzi, A. (1991). *Galeno, Protrettico*. Berlino 1991 (CMG V 1, 1).

Barnes, T. D. (1971). *Tertullian: a Historical and Literary Study*. Oxford.

Bergsträsser, G. (1925). *Hunain ibn Ishaq, über die syrischen und arabischen Galen-Übersetzungen*, Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 17, 2.

Bompaire, J. (1958). *Lucien écrivain*. Paris.

Boudon, V. (2000). *Galien, Tome II, Exhortation à l'étude de la médecine*. Paris.

Boudon-Millot, V. (2012). *Galien de Pergame, un médecin grec à Rome*. Paris.

Bowersock, G. W. (1965). *Augustus and the Greek World*. Oxford.

Bowersock, G. W. (1969). *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire*. Oxford.

Bowie, E. (1970). *Greeks and their Past in the Second Sophistic. Past and Present* 46, pp. 3–41.

Brown, P. R. L. (1969). *Augustine of Hippo: a Biography*. Oxford.

Brunt, P. (1994). *The Bubble of the Second Sophistic*. BICS 39, pp. 25–52.

Cameron, A. (1970). *Agathias*. Oxford.

Christol, M. and Drew-Bear, T. (2004). *Caracalla et son médecin L. Gellius Maximus à Antioche de Pisidie*. In: S. Colvin, ed., *The Greco-Roman East: Politics, Culture, Society*. New Haven, pp. 85–118.

Deichgräber, K. (1956). *Parabasenverse aus Thesmophoriazusen II des Aristophanes bei Galen*. Sitzungsberichte der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, phil.-hist. Kl.

Deichgräber, K. (1957). *Galen als Erforscher des menschlichen Pulses: ein Beitrag zur Selbstdarstellung des Wissenschaftlers (De dignitiole pulsum I)*. Sitzungsberichte der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, phil.-hist. Kl.

Fabricius, C. (1972). *Galens Exzerpte aus älteren Pharmakologen*. Berlin.

Garofalo, I. e Vegetti, M. (1978). *Galeno, Opere scelte*. Torino.

Gill, C., Whitmarsh, T. and Wilkins, J. eds (2009). *Galen and the World of Knowledge*. Cambridge.

Hahn, J. (1989). *Der Philosoph und die Gesellschaft. Selbstverständnis, öffentliche und populäre Erwartungen in der hohen Kaiserzeit*. Stuttgart.

Hankinson, R. J. (2008). *The Cambridge Companion to Galen*. Cambridge.

Jones, A. H. M. (1937). *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*. Oxford.

Jones, A. H. M (1940). *The Greek City from Alexander to Justinian*. Oxford.

Jones, C. P. (1971). *Plutarch and Rome*. Oxford.

Levick, B. M. (1967). *Roman Colonies in Southern Asia Minor*. Oxford.

López Férrez, J. A. ed. (2015). *Galeno, lengua, composición literaria, léxico, estilo*. Madrid.

Martelli, M. (2012). Galeno grammatico sui nomi stranieri e il digamma. Un passo inedito dal IX libro del trattato *Sui medicamenti semplici*. AION. Annali dell’Università degli Studi di Napoli ‘L’Orientale’ (Sezione Filologico-Letteraria) 34, pp. 124–136.

Mattern, S. P. (2013). *Prince of Medicine: Galen in the Roman World*. Oxford.
Mattern, S. P. (2017). Galen. In: D. S. Richter and W. A. Johnson eds, The Oxford Handbook of the Second Sophistic, Oxford, pp. 371–388.

Millar, F. G. B. (1964). A Study of Cassius Dio. Oxford 1964.

Nutton, V. (1979). Galen, On Prognosis. Berlin. (CMG v 8, 1).

Nutton, V. (2009). Galen’s Library. In: Gill, Whitmarsh and Wilkins 2009, pp. 19–34.

Nutton, V. (2009a). Biographical Accounts of Galen, 1340–1660. In: T. Rütten ed., Geschichte der Medizingeschichtsschreibung. Historiographie unter dem Diktat literarischer Gattungen von der Antike bis zur Aufklärung. Remscheid, pp. 213–224.

Nutton, V. (2013). Ancient Medicine. ed. 2. London and New York.

Nutton, V. (2020). Galen a Thinking Doctor in Imperial Rome. London and New York.

Palm, J. (1959). Rom, Römertum, und Imperium in der griechischen Literatur der Kaiserzeit. Lund.

Petit, C. (2018). Galien de Pergame ou la rhétorique de la Providence. Leiden.

Prantera, A. (1991). The Side of the Moon. London.

Raiola, T. e Mascolo, A. (2014). Galeno e la Campania (De meth, med. V.12). AION. Annali dell’Università degli Studi di Napoli ‘L’Orientale’ (Sezione Filologico-Letteraria) 35, pp. 124–136.

Reardon, B. P. (1971), Courants littéraires grecs des 2e et 3e s. ap. J.-C. Paris.

Samama, E. (2003). Les médecins dans le monde grec. Sources épigraphiques sur la naissance d’un corps medical. Geneva.

Schlange-Schöningen, H. (2003). Die römische Gesellschaft bei Galen. Biographie und Sozialgeschichte. Berlin.

Singer, P. N. (2013). Galen, Psychological Writings. Cambridge.

Stern, S. M. (1956). Some Fragments of Galen’s on Dispositions (Περὶ ἠθω̑ν) in Arabic. CQ 6, pp. 94–95.

Syme, R. (1995). Anatolica. Studies in Strabo. Oxford.

Syme, R. (1958). Tacitus. Oxford.

Syme, R. (1964). Sallust. Berkeley and London.

Vegetti, M. (2013). Galeno, Nuovi scritti autobiografici. Rome.

Walzer, R. (1962). From Greek into Arabic. London.

Wifstrand, A. (1930–1964). Eikota: Emendationen und Interpretationen zu griechischen Prosaikern der Kaiserzeit, I–VIII. Lund.

Wifstrand, A. (2005). Epochs and styles. Selected Writings on the New Testament, Greek Language and Greek Culture in the Post-Classical era. Tübingen.