

13 Commentary

In his biobibliographical treatise, *On My Own Books* (*Lib.Prop.*), Galen categorizes a significant segment of his vast written array according to the past authority (or authorities) with whose works, or wider thought, they are engaged. The names of Hippocrates, Erasistratus, Asclepiades (of Bithynia), Plato, Aristotle and Epicurus, as well as the collectivities of the Empiricists, Methodists and Stoics, all appear in chapter headings as having attracted Galen's dedicated literary attention.¹ Not all appear in the same light, however. Some – Erasistratus, the Empiricists, Methodists and Stoics – are critically identified, with Galen writing to differentiate himself from them; while the rest are referred to more neutrally, as having been written on, or about. The number, and type, of texts that come under each heading also varies considerably, and there are several cross-references to other categories in which the same treatise could (and sometimes does) also feature.

There is still more unevenness in terms of the survival of these texts, so that a distinctly (though revealingly) unrepresentative sample remains available for further study. It is worth, therefore, attempting to replace the extant portion of Galen's exegetical efforts within the wider patterns of his literary engagements with the works of others, before subjecting it to more detailed analysis; trying to get a sense of his interpretative project as a whole before focusing on its most historically successful products. Galen also found it impossible to catalogue his output without providing considerable background information about its composition – about his aims and methods in

My thanks to Jim Hankinson and Mike Trapp for their comments on earlier versions of this essay.

writing any given treatise, about how it related to his own situation at the time and the audience for which it was intended – and this is useful in understanding any aspect of his oeuvre. Though, of course, Galen's own narratives, self-serving and selective as they undoubtedly are, must always be treated with caution.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

In *On My Own Books*, the most extensive section organized by authority belongs, unsurprisingly, to Hippocrates, and the inclusion of the term *hypomnêmata* – 'commentaries' or 'notes' – in the chapter heading is also indicative of the type of text that predominates.² Now, *hypomnêma* is a far from straightforward word, as Galen emphasizes with his detailed autobiographical breakdown of this part of his output. In this case its origin lay in an exercise he undertook for himself, not the wider public, of collecting Hippocratic teachings by subject, clearly expressed and brought to completion in every way. Little or no reference was made in this undertaking to the works of previous Hippocratic exegetes, though Galen claims a familiarity with these 'phrase-by-phrase' (*kath' ekastên autou lexin*) interpretations. Nor was there much engagement with existing scholarship in a series of more specific commentaries subsequently composed at the request of friends, for his full library was inaccessible to him, and he was content with positive statements of his own views; though presumably some of his earlier notes were re-used and re-worked in this context. Only in the final stage of his exegetical activity did Galen, provoked by the popularity of a particularly crass and egregious reading of one of the Hippocratic *Aphorisms*, write for a general audience, not just the 'specific constitution', or perhaps 'situation', (*idian hexin*) of the immediate recipient.³ This entailed a deeper involvement in detailed debates about alternative readings and meanings.

The later, and fuller, style of commentary was applied to the Hippocratic writings *Epidemics 2, 3 and 6, Humours, Nutriment, Prorethetic, On the Nature of Man, In the Surgery and Airs, Waters, Places*, producing a total of thirty-five books. These followed the earlier twenty-seven books covering *Aphorisms, Fractures, Joints, Prognostic, Regimen in Acute Disease, Wounds, Wounds to the Head and Epidemics 1*. It is worth noting that this portion of Galen's literary

output has, including texts preserved in Arabic, a very high survival rate.⁴ Indeed, it has been claimed that Hippocratic commentaries by Galen which are not included in *On My Own Books* are transmitted in Arabic: for this catalogue was not his final act, and some other items are known to have slipped the net. In particular, the *Risâla* of the great ninth-century translator of Galen (and other Greek medical and philosophical writers), Hunain ibn Ishâq, lists a Galenic commentary on the Hippocratic *Oath* which he rendered into Syriac and two of his pupils then converted into Arabic.⁵ Hunain does not question its authenticity, nor even remark that it was not included in *On My Own Books*, both points which he is usually quick to pick up on. Though no manuscript of the actual text of this commentary has been found, substantial extracts from it and other shorter citations are to be found in a range of medieval Arabic works.⁶

The despised Methodists, on the other hand, receive the least attention, and have no *hypomnêmata* dedicated to them; while the more neutrally referred to Asclepiades fares much the same.⁷ Still, the hostile commentary does appear to be part of Galenic literary practice, with three books of (presumably) critical exegesis of the first book of Erasistratus' *On Fevers*, the third also forming the opening part of Galen's larger work *On Erasistratus' Therapeutic Reasoning*.⁸ The oppositional tone of these texts is not explicit in their actual listing, but is certainly suggested by both the orientation of the chapter heading and the polemical character of the surviving treatises from this section, in particular the pair of treatises on venesection, one directed against Erasistratus and one against his followers at Rome.⁹ The *hypomnêmata* dealing with the Empiricists are similarly presented, but raise a new set of questions concerning Galen's use of this word.

In the Hippocratic chapter the reference of *hypomnêma* stretched from informal and personal notes to elaborate and detailed commentaries composed for a wide audience; and, as Heinrich von Staden has demonstrated, in his oeuvre as a whole, Galen broadens its application still further.¹⁰ Galen sometimes distinguishes clearly between *hypomnêmata* and other types of systematic writing (such as *sungrammata*), while at other times he seems to use the terms pretty interchangeably, or as ways of identifying parts and wholes, not different genres.¹¹ Still, the surviving corpus of Galen's Hippocratic commentaries demonstrates that even those he places at the looser,

less developed, end of his output take what might be described as 'canonical' commentary form. They are 'phrase-by-phrase' interpretations, proceeding systematically through the whole work. There is a noticeable increase in the amount of engagement with the views of other exegetes in the later set, but the basic structure does not alter.¹² Moreover, most of these texts are referred to in a formulaic way within the catalogues of *On My Own Books*, the two key elements of the formula being 'commentary' (*hypomnêma*) 'on' (*eis*) whatever work it is. The expression is pretty clear, and it maps well onto the surviving evidence, so its repetition in relation to Erasistratus' *On Fevers* presumably places that exegetical triad of books in the same, or at least a similar, category. But Galen also uses *hypomnêma* more loosely in this chapter, and the clarity of the Hippocratic catalogues seriously breaks down in the section dealing with the Empiricists, as does the extant material, leaving the character of the *hypomnêmata* relating to the *Introduction* of the Empiricist Theodas, and to his colleague Menodotus' work *To Severus*, uncertain.¹³ The text is problematic, and the passage confusingly contains two, non-identical, references to the latter, which may, therefore, have been either a looser work of critical exegesis or a formal commentary.¹⁴

Full commentaries *on* the writings of others reappear, however, in relation to the philosophy of Aristotle. Indeed much of the narrative surrounding the Hippocratic *hypomnêmata* is reprised in the transition to the philosophical portion of *On My Own Books*, though in a somewhat altered form. The story is a still more personal one, intimately bound up with Galen's early, and crucial, quest for sure knowledge, and secure methods of proof, as recounted in the extensive chapter on texts relating to logical demonstration (*apodeixis*) that effects the bibliographical passage from medicine to philosophy, and provides the philosophical underpinnings for his medical system.¹⁵ Galen began this quest as a student of Stoic and Peripatetic logic but, after disillusionment verging on despair, discovered the path to truth lay instead in the mathematics, most especially the geometry, he had learned from his father (as he had learned from his father before him).¹⁶ Thus he attained certainty for himself, a certainty he could explain and support, allowing him to adopt a didactic tone of his own – to become a teacher – as he did in his magnum opus *On demonstration*.

Along this path of discovery, and as Galen continued to explore and elaborate epistemological themes, his engagement with the ideas of others again took literary form, or forms, for the three-fold division into exegetical works composed as a personal exercise, exclusively for friends, and for friends but also with an eye to a wider audience, recurs in the chapter on apodeictic texts. The first, most personal, category is the largest in this case, and in it Galen places his youthful notes on Chrysippus' syllogistic and almost all his Peripatetic commentaries, the only exceptions being the books on Eudemus' *On Discourse*, written at the request of friends, and those on Aristotle's *Categories*, written with a wider pedagogic purpose. Not too wide, though: the friend who prompted Galen in this case is instructed to restrict its distribution to students of Aristotle who have either already read the *Categories* under the supervision of a teacher, or, if self-taught, have advanced as far as other commentaries, such as those of Adrastus and Aspasius.¹⁷ Still, whatever their origins, all of these works did eventually emerge into the public domain in some way (Galen's Chrysippean notes were sold to an eager caller at his family home in Pergamum by a household slave, and then circulated further by those into whose possession they had thus passed); and they are, therefore, included in his bibliographic catalogue under the appropriate headings (which is, of course, to publicize them further).¹⁸

The chapters actually organized by philosophical authority, then, follow a section on ethical writings.¹⁹ The first authority is Plato, this position of precedence reflecting his pre-eminent status within Galen's overall web of reference and deference, though Galen had paid scant attention to him as he strove to overcome his epistemological anxieties.²⁰ Still, his Platonic writings encompass books on Plato's logical theories, as well as a quartet of *hypomnēmata* dealing with medical statements in the *Timaeus*, eight summaries of Platonic dialogues and a range of other treatises, including the major work *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato (PHP)*. Fragments of the commentary on the medical content of the *Timaeus* survive, and though not advertised as *hypomnēmata eis* (perhaps because they were not on the text as a whole), the most complete Greek fragments are in proper commentary form, with lemmata.²¹

Aristotle is next in Galen's philosophical ranking, and though the level of actual engagement with Peripatetic writing and thinking is,

in some senses, higher than with Plato's, that is in part because it is more critical. The comprehensive list of substantial 'commentaries on' a range of Aristotelian texts included in this chapter serves to underline the point.²² Most were mentioned in the section on works concerned with demonstration, in much the same terms, and with a rather disapproving edge: the three books on Aristotle's *On Interpretation*, along with the eight (in total) on the two books of *Prior Analytics* and eleven on the two of *Posterior Analytics*, four on the *Categories*, six on Theophrastus' *On Affirmation and Denial* and, finally, the three on Eudemus' *On Discourse*. Just before Eudemus in the catalogue come the only additional items, listed as 'on *In how many ways (eis to peri tou posachôs)* commentary in three books; on *The first mover is itself unmoved (eis to protôn kinoun akinêton [auto])*'. These are both works that take Aristotle's *Metaphysics* as their starting point, which may explain their previous omission from the apodeictic section of Galen's bibliography. According to Philippe Moraux, *Peri Posachôs* is just another way of referring to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Δ, and the previous book ends with the statement that the 'first mover must itself be unmoved'.²³

Despite the books of Peripatetic commentary adding up to an impressive total – thirty-eight compared to the sixty-two on Hippocratic texts – that they were important to Galen mainly in a developmental sense, as aids to clarifying his own ideas, as preparation for their articulation in *On demonstration*, is emphasized by their subsequent fate. Not only are all now lost, their disappearance seems to have been rapid and unremarked. While *On demonstration* is a relatively frequently cited text, Galen's Aristotelian commentaries are not, though they too can be located in a long and lively exegetical tradition.²⁴ This tradition stretched back beyond the two names Galen mentions in this respect – those of Adrastus and Aspasius (perhaps his older contemporaries) – to the first century BC, and was reinvigorated by Galen's younger contemporary Alexander of Aphrodisias, continuing right through antiquity and beyond.²⁵ None of Galen's exegetical efforts are mentioned, as such, by the Greek commentators, however; Galen appears in their works as a more broadly authoritative figure who had involved himself in a number of philosophical debates and disputes.²⁶ Still, at least one Galenic commentary made it into Arabic. Hunain's *Risâla* lists *On the First Mover* as having been rendered into Syriac and Arabic both by himself and

several of his collaborators, and the work then goes on to have a complex Arabic afterlife.²⁷ The only other such commentary to appear in the *Risâla* is that *On Interpretation*, but Hunain records only finding an incomplete manuscript, not that he translated it.²⁸ None the less, this does go some way towards validating Galen's suspiciously flattering claims for the circulation of his more personal acts of exegesis.

The final philosophical pair around which Galen organizes his text are the Stoics and Epicurus.²⁹ The works relating to the teachings of the latter, and some of his followers, include no *hypomnêmata*, and, though the three books on Chrysippus' *First Syllogistic* and one on his *Second* are so described, it is without the crucial '*eis*' ('on'), moreover, Galen's previous allusions place them firmly in the category of notes rather than formal commentary. Galen's engagement with Stoic logic, serious and systematic as it was, proceeded rather differently from his involvement with Peripatetic ventures in the same field. In this also it seems that Galen was once again following precedent, or at least responding to an absence in that regard. For, in contrast to long-standing traditions not only of Hippocratic and Aristotelian, but also Platonic, commentary, the exegetical practices of both Stoics and Epicureans were rather slight.³⁰ Or, at least, neither Stoics nor Epicureans seem, by this time, to have produced full commentaries on their authoritative texts in the way that the other philosophical currents had; though both were interested in issues of general interpretation and specific doctrinal exposition.³¹

The first point to draw out from this overview is, therefore, the sense in which Galen can be located within existing and vibrant commentary traditions, both medical and philosophical; and to emphasize the centrality of these traditions within his intellectual and literary milieu. Established practices of extensive textual interpretation and exposition can, indeed, be found far beyond medicine and philosophy, in fields as diverse as astronomy and grammar (broadly construed), for instance; and this was an especially vital, and burgeoning, area of activity in the second century AD and beyond.³² In many ways Galen and Alexander of Aphrodisias stand simply as the most successful representatives of much larger, and growing, hermeneutic communities, with one important area of contemporary growth being in the development of Christian commentary. Biblical exegesis takes, as it were, full classical form with Origen and Hippolytus as the second century draws to a close.³³

In all these cases, textual exegesis enabled a direct relationship to be forged between exegete and ancient authorities and/or texts of particular pre-eminence. Whatever the precise nature, or content, of that relationship, it always staked some claim to a share in the prestige of the past authority and writing. For Galen, moreover, going straight back to the founding fathers themselves, unmediated by their current adherents, was especially crucial. It allowed him to rise above his contemporaries by asserting both his greater independence of judgement – he is no mindless follower of anyone or anything, but subjects all to stern scrutiny, to a rigorous assessment of their ideas and commitments – and his greater understanding of the works of the masters, sadly misconstrued as they often are, even by those who profess themselves most loyal.³⁴ Furthermore, these aims are achieved through both his formative and summative acts of exegesis. The mastery attained through his more personal interpretive writings is no less than that proclaimed in his more polished pieces, hence his enthusiastic reluctance in respect to their diffusion.

The second point to stress, though, is the way in which Galen appears to depart from, or at least re-figure and extend, established exegetical patterns. Given how much is known about Galen's activities in this area, in comparison to anyone else's, caution is clearly required in asserting his status as an innovator. Still, as things stand, several significant gaps emerge between Galen and his predecessors. His combination of medical and philosophical commentary (a very distinctive combination with its emphasis on the logical and demonstrative parts of philosophy) has no extant precedent. The relationship between medicine and philosophy was a close one in the ancient world, and a number of physicians are known to have had philosophical allegiances and involvements that might have encompassed commentary (certainly of the more informal varieties); but there is no actual evidence for prior activity of these kinds.³⁵ Galen also seems to be extending the exegetical remit within medicine, taking it beyond the confines of the Hippocratic Corpus to the work of another physician – Erasistratus.³⁶ Again, non-Hippocratic commentary could have arrived on the scene earlier. The sectarian divides that engendered 'agonal' commentary on Hippocratic texts, alongside sustained literary attacks on opponents' teachings and robust self-defence, might have led to a mixing of genres and purposes, but if so the results have disappeared without a trace.³⁷

Linking his commentary on Erasistratus' *On Fevers* with his philosophical *hypomnêmata* is, of course, the sense in which both are external exegetical endeavours. Galen's position as a physician on the one hand, and as an anti-Erasistratean on the other, means that none of these interpretations are undertaken from the inside (the medical commentary on the 'divine' Plato's *Timaeus* perhaps comes closest in these respects). Galen's commentaries on the Peripatetics are avowedly critical, moreover, though certainly not matching his downright hostility to *On Fevers* or Chrysippus. This slant also seems distinctive, even if his greatest animosity is contained in his more privately composed and orientated texts. For, in general, commentary was an internal, and largely loyal, activity up to this point, undertaken within philosophical currents on their own authoritative texts, and within wider disciplines on works that played a similarly foundational role in their formation, such as the Hippocratic writings did for medicine.³⁸ Polemical tracts, composed from outside, might be detailed and specific in their attacks on particular treatises or authorities, as were, for example, Athenodorus the Stoic's work *Against Aristotle's Categories*, and Asclepiades of Bithynia's *Against Erasistratus* (or perhaps '*Refutations*'); but they did not take full commentary form.³⁹ Herophilus' more targeted book, 'against Hippocrates' *Prognostic*', demonstrates that criticism from inside, in the broader disciplinary sense, also occurred, though from a more general position of recognizing, and respecting, the founding father.⁴⁰ Asclepiades' Hippocratic commentaries (on *Aphorisms* and *In the Surgery*) can probably be placed in the same category, since, though the Bithynian certainly disagreed strongly with some Hippocratic doctrines (rejecting, for example, the important Hippocratic notion of 'critical days'), there is nothing in the few surviving references to his exegetical endeavours to suggest they were polemical in tone.⁴¹

In conclusion, then, it is probably safe to assert that here, as elsewhere, Galen does go further than his predecessors in various ways, though that is not to diminish their importance to him, nor indeed more generally. He builds on, but extends and exceeds, previous patterns. Still, it is in the more traditional areas that he had the most success: it is his internal, loyal, Hippocratic commentaries that have survived, and were to prove so immensely influential in shaping future understandings of Hippocratic thought. This is no accident, nor is the partial transmission of his commentary on the medical

statements in Plato's *Timaeus*, which can also be placed in roughly the same category. It is important to remember, however, that the extant texts constitute less than half of Galen's exegetical efforts as catalogued in *On My Own Books*, and that they have a broader cultural, as well as Galenic, context.

CHRONOLOGY

Philosophical exegesis was largely an activity of Galen's youth, but his Hippocratic *hypomnēmata* were products of his full maturity. While his most direct and detailed engagement with a range of Peripatetic and Stoic texts occurred in a distinctly formative period of his career, in preparation for the full elaboration and presentation of his own theories in *On demonstration* (published around AD 150), almost the reverse process operated in relation to the Hippocratic Corpus. It was only after he had developed, and repeatedly proclaimed, his own medical system that various Hippocratic texts received a thorough interpretative treatment. Most scholars agree that the exegetical enterprise commenced around AD 175, well into Galen's second, permanent, stay at Rome, after his position there was well established, if never completely guaranteed.⁴² This, too, is the most probable date for the commentary on the *Timaeus* which is promised in *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato (PHP)*, itself completed by AD 176.⁴³

As Galen tells it, moreover, this move was made only reluctantly. In an ideal world what he had already written should have sufficed. Thus, in his commentary on *Epidemics 3* he states:

Since I knew that I had always explicated Hippocrates' view in all the works I had written, and quoted his timeliest remarks, I thought it superfluous to write exegesis in commentaries, phrase by phrase, from beginning to end of all his works.⁴⁴

But he eventually gave in to the begging of some of his companions (*hetairoi*) to be provided with these, too. Similarly in his commentary on *Prognostic*, though Galen claims that: 'all of the things useful for the medical art that one should learn from him [Hippocrates] have been recorded by me in many treatises', he then accedes again to demands from a group of his *hetairoi* who had found his oral expositions of Hippocratic teachings, particularly those less clearly

articulated in the Corpus itself, to be much more satisfactory than any existing written commentary, and so committed his spoken words to papyrus.⁴⁵

In the *Epidemics 3* passage Galen proceeds to describe his exegetical career up to that point in some detail, providing a rough relative chronology for many of his commentaries, and still more specificity about their intended audience.⁴⁶ Having agreed to his companions' demands, he began with the 'most genuine and useful of Hippocrates' books', that is *Fractures, Joints, Ulcers, On Wounds in the Head, Aphorisms* and *Prognostic*. The commentary on *Regimen in Acute Diseases* was then produced, to meet a more specific friendly request, and that on *Humours* quickly followed, the speed being necessary 'on account of the impending journey of the man who asked me to write it'. All of these were, of course, very well received, and they reached well beyond Galen's immediate circle of *hetairoi* to many others, including physicians, who added their voices to the clamour that he should complete the set. So he launched on *In the Surgery*, and *Epidemics 1* and *2*, diverting at the urging of some friends to engage with *Prorrhetic*, before returning to *Epidemics 3*, the present work. A little over a decade had probably elapsed since he began his exegetical journey, and it was not over yet: commentaries on *Epidemics 6, Nutriment, Nature of Man* and *Airs, Waters, Places* were still to come. It is also worth noting that, though this account tallies, for the most part, with the listing in *On My Own Books*, there is some discrepancy. That listing makes no claims to be a sequence, rather a grouping of earlier, sparer, commentaries on the one hand, and their more elaborate successors on the other; but, while it would initially appear that the transition occurs with *Humours*, as those that follow come into the fuller category, *Epidemics 1* is an exception, being classed, instead, with the earlier group in *On My Own Books*.⁴⁷

The line that emerges clearly from all Galen's reflections on his more systematically interpretative compositions is, then, that the demands of an admiring public combined with the poor quality of existing Hippocratic commentary drove him down the exegetical path, with some additional impetus being provided by the admitted unclarity of some of the Hippocratic writings themselves. Galen himself had no particular desire to undertake this task, considering that his own works, consistent as they were with Hippocratic doctrine, incorporating, and sometimes explicating, Hippocratic

statements, as they did, were sufficient. Wesley Smith has challenged this self-assessment, however, arguing that it is an internal rather than an external inadequacy which prompts Galen to take up the commentator's cudgels.⁴⁸ The problem is not with other people – with their bad commentaries or their need for Galen to spell things out for them, to provide, in writing, the understanding they lack – but with Galen himself; that is, with the mismatch between the claims he constantly makes to Hippocratic filiation, to be the true heir of the founding father of Greek medicine, and the rather slight nature of the actual support he offers for these claims. Eventually Galen comes to realize, or perhaps has it pointed out to him by his (numerous) opponents, that he must walk the walk as well as talk the talk. A more systematic engagement with the Hippocratic treatises themselves as well as with the exegetical tradition, with all its alternative readings and interpretations, is necessary if his Hippocratic heredity is to be convincingly established and maintained. Unfortunately (at least for a Hippocratic scholar such as Smith), it was too late by that time. Galen's system – a synthetic construction that drew most heavily on Hellenistic (and indeed more recent) medical developments – was already formed, and publicly formulated, its Hippocratism merely a legitimating cover; and Galen's exegetical turn would alter nothing.

All of Galen's statements about his aims and accomplishments, his projects and prestige, have, of course, to be approached somewhat gingerly. Self-promotion is always part of his agenda, and due allowance must be made for that fact. Still, it is not the only goal Galen pursues, his intellectual ambitions were as real as his desire to talk up the extent to which he had achieved them. So the truth is likely to lie somewhere between Galen's claims and Smith's countercharge. The turn to 'phrase-by-phrase' commentary cannot have been simply down to the demands of friends, there must have been something in it for Galen, too; but that is not to say that he himself did not believe in his own Hippocratism, that it was mere rhetorical gloss, or 'ideological patina', as Smith puts it.⁴⁹ He could have followed a different path to medical authority, one that acknowledged Hippocrates as the founding father of the medical art, but fell short of asserting actual paternity for his own vision of that art. Asclepiades of Bithynia, as already mentioned, adopted this more relaxed, and innovative, approach, as did the Methodists, more emphatically in some instances. There is nothing to suggest that Galen's choice was

not born out of conviction, even if that was an easy conviction to come by in his world, rather than one needing to be fought for.

Indeed, the sense in which Galen is following established patterns, is participating in common practices, is worth stressing again here, too. Given what can be pieced together about the place of Hippocratic commentary in the medical culture of the second century AD, an activity apparently re-launched by the publication of the new 'editions' of the Hippocratic Corpus by Dioscurides and Artemidorus Capiton around the turn of that century, it would have been distinctly odd if Galen had not become an exegete at some time in his career.⁵⁰ Admittedly, the bulk of the evidence for this culture comes from Galen himself, but it is none the less notable that so many of the medical figures for whom he had any respect (and several for whom he had only scorn) have Hippocratic commentaries to their names. Many of these, moreover, are figures with whom Galen had personal, educational, links, and he was willing (at least prior to some of his own exegetical writing) to recommend their works to a wider audience.⁵¹

The two most authoritative exegetes are Sabinus and Rufus of Ephesus, representatives of an earlier generation; alongside whom can be placed Galen's teacher Pelops (and his teacher, Numisianus, though few of his writings survived).⁵² The line from Sabinus to Galen is drawn by his fellow Pergamene, Stratonicus, student of the former and teacher of the latter. Galen also claims familiarity with the Hippocratic interpretations of the influential Quintus through the mediation of his most authentic exponent, Satyrus, who preceded Pelops on Galen's pedagogic register. It is knowledge he is asserting here, rather than admiration or affiliation – the knowledge requisite to master the field in general and to criticize the other students of Quintus, such as the Stoically inclined Aephicianus and the abhorrent Lycus (the 'Hippocratic bastard' as Galen calls him), for distortion of their master's message in particular.⁵³ The set is completed by the Empiricist pairing of Epicurus of Pergamum and Philip (the public interlocutor of Pelops), and assorted unnamed but respectable authors of Hippocratic commentaries in his father's and grandfather's generation. These latter (and, presumably, those of Rufus) Galen has just read, and made extracts from, while he announces (or implies) his direct interaction with the rest, which is crucial not only to establishing his pedagogic pedigree but also

because their publications were limited. Hippocratic exegesis was very much a teaching tool, practised orally, circulated in written form among a select few, rarely reaching a wider audience and then incompletely. Galen's reach is wide, however, and he has harvested a full crop of previous interpretations.

Against this background, Galen was always going to compose 'phrase-by-phrase' commentaries on Hippocratic texts. Within the medical community that produced him, and of which he felt himself most a part, it was basically *de rigueur*. It was also a particularly integral facet of an aspect of Galen's persona and practice that has been rather obscured, both by a degree of Galenic coyness and by the absence of any surviving witnesses, but was clearly important none the less: his role as teacher. That this area of his activities should come more to the fore once his position and reputation had been safely established, that he should see the wider dissemination and fuller development of medical commentaries as helpful in the period of consolidation which followed the initial urgency of system building, is unsurprising. So too is his competitiveness in this as in all things: Galen's project to encompass and surpass past traditions, and so dominate the present and future, is clearly enacted here once more.

Still, the question remains whether (or to what extent) this order of things, the fact that his Hippocratic exegeses followed the construction of a medical system which grounded its claims to authority, in part, in a claim to conformity with Hippocratic doctrine, led to the kind of distortions that Smith alleges: to Galen creating a Hippocrates in his own image. It will be examined in more detail shortly. Before embarking on such an investigation it should be stressed, however, that this is what Hippocratic commentators had been doing since Hellenistic times, and that Aephicianus' Stoic Hippocrates, for example, demonstrates that the practice was alive and well among Galen's contemporaries. Galen does criticize Aephicianus in these very terms, though, and his claims to be the *true* heir of Hippocrates are not forgotten either. He also sets a number of more specific exegetical standards for himself against which his productions can be measured.

METHODOLOGY

Galen opens his first proper Hippocratic commentary, on *Fractures*, with a delineation of his exegetical principles.⁵⁴ The driving force

behind his commentary is simple: 'that which is unclear (*asaphes*) in the text is to be made clear (*saphes*).'⁵⁵ Something can be unclear in and of itself (*asaphes auto di'heauto*), or it can be rendered unclear by the inadequacies of the reader.⁵⁵ Poor preparation or education either in relation to specific topics and arguments or in general, as well as innate stupidity, can all produce unclarity. Demonstrating the truth or falsehood of what has been written, and defending it against sophistical misconstruals, is distinct from exegesis but has become pretty universal in commentary writing, and is allowed in moderation. A similar, if slightly differently weighted, formulation can be found in the prefatory remarks to the commentary on book 3 of *Aphorisms*.⁵⁶ In practice, moreover, Galen certainly gives as much space to demonstration as to clarification in his *hypomnēmata*, indeed the two are often inseparable.

Two other rough rules of interpretative writing emerge from Galen's commentaries, though not so straightforwardly. The first is the principle of utility, already cited (together with authenticity) as determining Galen's initial choice of Hippocratic works for systematic exegesis, which is then repeatedly evoked as a criterion for deciding both which passages within the selected texts deserve full elucidation, and the content of that elucidation. *Hypomnēmata* should be useful: they should attach themselves to worthy primary material, and treat that material in a functional rather than excessive or sophistical manner. The names of the patients in the *Epidemics* are not worth worrying about, for example, even where there are disputed readings, and a number of other matters of linguistic and historical detail are equally trifling.⁵⁷ Similarly (and connectedly), though Galen has the whole exegetical tradition at his command, he will be disciplined and focused in deploying it, otherwise his *hypomnēmata* will become overblown and unwieldy. In relation to existing interpretations, he will limit himself to refuting only the most dangerous of errors, and engaging more positively with the comments of the most famous, and those who have something really helpful to offer.⁵⁸ In relation to textual readings he will basically stick to the consensus he claims was forged by the first Hippocratic scholars, and avoid being drawn into discussions about recent (and reckless) deviations.⁵⁹

Such formulations, however, serve to highlight Galen's dilemma. His commitment to the useful brings him into conflict with the competitive, display culture of which he is a part. His discipline might be mistaken for ignorance and inability, his omissions adjudged to

be not from choice but necessity, and that would not do. Hence the parade of proclaimed learning and appeals to ancient consensus (both suspect) that accompany his insistent statements of method. Hence also the occasional breach of the rules he has laid down, so that his erudition can be exhibited. The most famous of these lapses is his digression on the obscure symbols that follow the case-histories in *Epidemics 3*, and excited much scholarly attention.⁶⁰ Galen condemns enquiries into their origins and meanings as useless, pursued by those physicians who consider historical knowledge and arcane information to be more valuable to their careers than a sound understanding of medicine; but none the less provides lengthy discussions of both. He is permitted such indulgence, he claims, on account of the great and useful services he has already rendered to the medical art, including in his Hippocratic commentaries: otherwise, 'I would be ashamed to be diverted to such nonsense'.⁶¹ Elsewhere Galen makes a more serious attempt to square theory and practice by extending the remit of the useful. So, for example, Galen concludes a lengthy, and often poetical, discourse on the meaning of the word *pronoia* (literally 'forethought'), which appears in the opening line of the Hippocratic treatise *Prognostic*, with a claim to have provided a useful and apposite exegetical, if not medical, service.⁶² This is quite different, he says, from the activities of those interpreters who spend time explicating the same line's qualifying 'I hold' or 'it seems to me' (*dokei moi*) phrase, an activity that is entirely superfluous and useless in all respects.⁶³

Utility is a responsibility that relates to the audience of any interpretative writing, so Galen pairs it with a duty to the work being interpreted. In the extensive proem to the commentary on *Epidemics 1*, Quintus is criticized for lacking the two cardinal virtues of the exegete.⁶⁴ He neither expounds things that are 'useful' to the readers of his *hypomnêmata*, nor 'preserves' (*phulassein*) the 'meaning' or 'sense' (*gnômê*) of the text (*sungramma*). What Galen means by the second part of this formula is rather less clear than might initially appear, as is illustrated by the example of Quintus' wickedness in this respect that he offers, in which the element of transgression against the text itself is rather under-developed.⁶⁵ Galen objects to his rival's apparently empiricist interpretation of a Hippocratic aphorism, not because it is incompatible with that aphorism itself, but because it is contradicted by a statement in *Airs, Waters, Places*. It

would seem, therefore, that what is being preserved is not the meaning of the actual treatise but the consistency and integrity of Hippocratic doctrine more generally (indeed, of a particular understanding of that doctrine). This approach is more openly articulated in Galen's commentary on the introductory section of *Prognostic*, where there is an explicit switch of focus from text to author, to Hippocrates as author of a range of other works that are brought into play in exegesis.

In addition to *pronoia*, the other word that receives lengthy treatment here is *theion*, 'the divine element' that may be present in any disease and, the author of *Prognostic* asserts, needs to be considered alongside all the other possible factors in prognosticating.⁶⁶ This, too, was a matter of long-standing controversy, and Galen begins by outlining the view of various (anonymous) commentators that the reference is to the divine anger that can cause human illness, as shown in myth. He immediately objects, however, that:

They do not show whether Hippocrates shared this opinion (*doxa*), which is the task of good exegetes. For we are enjoined not simply to state in our exegeses that which seems true to us, but also that which accords with the meaning (*gnômê*) of the author (*sungraphêus*), even if it is false.⁶⁷

Moreover, Hippocrates definitely did not share this opinion, as *On Sacred Disease* demonstrates. Instead, with the assistance of selections from *Aphorisms* and *Epidemics*, the *theion* can be construed as nothing but the surrounding air (*aeros periechôn*).

This reading shows little respect for the integrity of *Prognostic* itself, rather, it is simply forced into line with an externally derived understanding of Hippocratic doctrine. The *gnômê* of the text has certainly been subordinated to that of its assumed author. Nor, indeed, has Galen actually confronted the possibility of non-alignment between his own opinion, that of Hippocrates and the truth. He has worked very hard to avoid that situation, and so flouted his own injunction. Still, as Galen describes the activities of others in the same field, as he refers to existing commentaries and commentators, it appears that all are playing the same games. Reading divine *anger* into the word '*theion*' is a more obvious move to make than taking it as synonymous with the surrounding air, but it still goes beyond the actual phrasing, which is more vague and open. Quintus' statement that an aphorism concerning the seasonality of

diseases is 'known by experience alone' has no more support from what is written in *Aphorisms* than Galen's intertextual rejoinder already mentioned; and there are plenty of other examples where all parties to an argument seem to be adopting equally dubious exegetical strategies.⁶⁸

There are, then, plenty of criticisms that can justly be levelled at Galen the exegete. Failures both in his own terms, and by more modern standards, are easy to point to. Indeed, even his desire for clarity itself can get him into trouble. Further on again in the commentary on *Prognostic*, Galen is unhappy at a second listing of dangerous (even deathly) symptoms, which he (very reasonably) finds hard to reconcile with an earlier version (ostensibly) of the same.⁶⁹ To elucidate the matter, and also protect the consistency (if not the *gnômê*) of the text, he suggests 'completely altering' (*metalabôn holên*) the wording of the lemma. By inserting an opening phrase making it clear that the second set of signs are later developments (to be looked for on the third day of an illness or after), then reworking its closing clauses to define more clearly their relationship with the previously enumerated indications of danger, the two lists can be made to collaborate, not conflict, removing any confusion in the process. It is not, however, that he is actually proposing a textual amendment here, though he does on other occasions, as did many of his predecessors, sometimes with quite dramatic effects on meaning.⁷⁰ It is just that he wants to clarify Hippocrates' thought (*dianoia*) in this respect, tidy things up.

Still, though the flaws in Galen's exegetical approach, and workings, are again apparent, this also emphasizes that (as yet at least), they fall short of substantiating the charge that he constructed Hippocrates in his own image, for there is nothing exclusive in his attitude or practice (rather the reverse). So far, Galen has merely helped to shore up the well-established, if contested, image of Hippocrates the Rationalist, with a naturalistic approach to the causes of disease, a Hippocrates particularly associated with a core set of treatises and ideas, with a coherent and extensive 'system' to his name. Certainly this, along with his various demonstrations of his competitive edge – in terms of method or learning, discipline or display – serves also to shore up his own position and status; but if specifically Galenic contributions are to be discovered then the medical content of his *hypomnêmata* needs to be examined in more detail.

LEMMATOLOGY

The prefaces, and other introductory passages, to Galen's commentaries have already been mentioned as places where he may reflect on the aims, audiences and methods of his interpretations. They may also deal with matters more specific to the treatise under scrutiny, such as its authenticity, title, style, subject matter and relation to other Hippocratic works: that is, all the preliminary points that need to be covered before the phrase-by-phrase exegesis begins; all the things that need to be said about the text as a whole, before its dissection, to provide some basic orientation and guidance to the readership.⁷¹

That the surgical works are genuine is not in any doubt, for example; but Galen notes that there is a question about whether *Fractures* and *Joints* were originally books one and two of a larger treatise, which obviously has a bearing on their reading.⁷² Authentic texts may also be subject to interpolations, and more substantial accretions: a fate which Galen considers to have befallen, for instance, *On Wounds in the Head* as well as *Aphorisms*, *On Regimen in Acute Diseases*, and *Epidemics 2*, especially at the end of each, while the later interference with *On the Nature of Man* is a more complex matter.⁷³ Here two works now transmitted separately (*On Healthful Regimen* being the other) have been combined, with various unfortunate additions, mainly in between them but also spreading a bit further.⁷⁴ Galen is absolutely committed to the authenticity of the main section of *On the Nature of Man*, for it provides, 'the foundations for the whole art (*technê*) of Hippocrates', and, of course, acts similarly (if entirely implicitly at this juncture) for his own medical system.⁷⁵ He is reluctant even to consent to the common suggestion that the work was by Polybus (by now viewed as Hippocrates' pupil and successor, entirely faithful, so Galen claims, to his master's doctrines) rather than the great Hippocrates himself.⁷⁶ He is, on the other hand, content with the ascription of the good, majority, parts of *On Healthful Regimen* (those portions that are 'well-expressed and in accordance with Hippocratic *technê*') to Polybus.⁷⁷ The interpolated section, however, should be attributed to neither, but belongs to Hellenistic Alexandria: for not only is it inconsistent with both the phenomena themselves and *Epidemics 2*, but it also uses more recent language.⁷⁸

Three categories of authenticity thus emerge, and are widely employed by Galen. Texts can be divided into those most genuinely by Hippocrates, the genuinely Hippocratic (such as those by such a close and loyal associate as Polybus) and the spurious, the *notha*, that contrast with both. The seven books of *Epidemics* can be used to illustrate the point.⁷⁹ Books One and Three come under the first heading. They are, by common consent, the only ones to have been written by Hippocrates 'for publication' (*pros ekdosin*). Books Two and Six had yet to reach that stage by the time of Hippocrates' death, but were revised and put into circulation by his son Thessalus; while book Four was either a particularly heavily revised example of this genre or the work of a grandson (also called Hippocrates). Books Five and Seven are still more distant productions, obviously *notha*, but it should also be stressed that spurious material has infiltrated all the other books too (to a greater or lesser extent). This serves to emphasize that the real contrast lies between this third, spurious, category and the other two. Indeed, Galen actually remarks that it makes no odds whether *Epidemics 2* is by Hippocrates or Thessalus, and he is equally unconcerned about the authorship of *In the Surgery*.⁸⁰

What does matter is that his audience is alerted to the difference in shape and style between books Two and Six of *Epidemics* and those Hippocrates wrote *pros ekdosin* before they embark on his *hypomnêmata* on the former.⁸¹ The shared title should not mislead readers into expecting a well-crafted explanation and discussion of 'epidemic' diseases, as in Books One and Three, when what they will get is much more miscellaneous and aphoristic. Similarly, neither the title nor opening sequence of *In the Surgery* adequately prepare the readership for what is actually a more narrowly focused work than either would suggest (though still very useful for beginners).⁸²

On the other hand, what is required as a preparatory preamble to *Epidemics 1* itself is rather different, and serves both to bring questions of Galenic specificity back to the fore and to move matters on the lemmata themselves. For the extensive proem to this treatise does its introductory work, essentially, by taking the title – *Epidêmiai* – as a lemma to be elucidated in full.⁸³ Galen asserts that Hippocrates used this word, which literally means 'visits', to refer to the visitations of disease in certain locations at certain times. He goes on to explain how whole communities (more or less) can simultaneously fall ill in this way. Living together in the same place means

that the same factors will have shaped the bodily constitutions, the humoural mixtures (*krâseis*), of the inhabitants, having a homogenizing effect; and they will all be exposed to the same seasonal changes, and to any more erratic alterations in the surrounding air and environment. Galen refers to *Airs, Waters, Places, On the Nature of Man*, and *Aphorisms* to help support and clarify the points he makes, taking his swipe at Quintus as he does so. Indeed, Galen suggests that these three texts, and *Prognostic*, should be mastered before coming to *Epidemics*, a view he goes on to elaborate at considerable length, providing a mini-curriculum for Hippocratic study, beginning with *On the Nature of Man*. There is then some discussion of the orthography of the title, in which, incidentally, Galen enunciates for the first time (at least in extant medical writings) the distinction between epidemic and endemic diseases (*epidêma/epidêmia* and *endêma*, respectively) in roughly the modern manner. Finally he finds space to fit in some more explicit warnings against Empiricist readings of the *Epidemics* (in case his attack on Quintus was too subtle!), before eventually moving from such preliminary matters to the 'part-by-part' (*kata meros*) exegesis itself.

The individual interpretations that follow, in this commentary and all the others, replicate this basic pattern, with variations of emphasis and fullness. Elucidation of meaning may require paraphrase, or other linguistic clarification; but, more importantly, it entails explanation. How does this work? How does it fit into the wider Hippocratic system? Such an explication, moreover, functions simultaneously as demonstration, for if it does work, does fit well within the system, that implies its truth. The clarification of the Hippocratic lemma has served to show its consistency with the phenomena, and its contribution to the art of medicine. This is the main business of commentary, though Galen may also involve himself in further matters of language and history, engage in various exegetical debates, as his principles or inclinations dictate. Nor is his competition simply with other exegetes. Galen also has a tendency to fill in any gaps he feels have been left in any Hippocratic statement: to complete lists, add extra refinements to arguments, expand specific examples into general rules, and so show that his mastery really is total.

These points can easily be illustrated by Galen's commentary on one of the most famous Hippocratic pronouncements: the description in *Prognostic* of the most alarming appearance of a patient:

Nose sharp, eyes hollow, temples sunken, ears cold and contracted, and the lobes of the ears curled up, the skin of the forehead hard and taut and dry, and the colour of the whole face yellow (*chlôros*), or even black (*melan*).⁸⁴

Galen's exegesis here also demonstrates the way in which his explanatory drive takes him, not just beyond any given lemma, but also beyond the boundaries of the Hippocratic Corpus, into the territory of Hellenistic, and indeed post-Hellenistic, medical developments. These, combined with the systematic humoralism of *On the Nature of Man*, are the main weapons in his explicatory armoury. Nor is any attempt made to conceal this fact. The point is rather to show, as von Staden puts it, 'the permanence of Hippocrates' truths'.⁸⁵ Or, perhaps more precisely, it is the permanence of medical truth itself that is on display. First expressed, albeit in somewhat compressed and embryonic manner, in Hippocratic texts; then elaborated and expanded by some (usually unnamed) Hellenistic physicians; and now brought to completion, fully realized, by Galen himself.

By the time he reaches this specific passage in his commentary on *Prognostic*, Galen has already established the basic principle that it is deviation from the normal, natural, healthy appearance which is really at issue here. So these are all observable (and, for each individual, roughly measurable) examples of dangerous divergence from that benchmark. Galen initially takes the 'sharp nose' as a separate lemma to refine that point, and also open discussion on the logical link between such signs (*sêmeia*) and the gloomy prognosis.⁸⁶ There is one, these matters are subject to rational enquiry, but Galen is keen to proceed *epilogistikôs*, by means of loose, practical, reflective reasoning in each case, rather than by means of anything more formal and deductive (*analogismos*). For the former course will command the greater and wider respect. He then puts the nose back into the rest of the face in offering a set of explanations for why these signs are so ominous.⁸⁷

There are conditions which specifically involve the dissolution of the fleshy parts, but the more general explanation rests on the diminution of innate heat (*emphytos thermasia*) that is associated with much illness, particularly when serious. Heat is conserved in the innermost organs, but no longer reaches the extremities, and so also the supply of blood and *pneuma* to those outer zones dwindles

dramatically. These processes of withdrawal are particularly apparent in the face, an external location that contains both bony and fleshy parts in close proximity. The stable, 'earthy' (*geôdês*), bones remain unchanged, while the moist flesh contracts around the bone of the nose (especially at the tip), and the eyes, normally hot and full of *pneuma*, 'grow hollow' even quicker; while the temples sink as the muscles they contain (called 'temporal/*krotaphites*') shrink away; and the ears contract with coldness. This contraction has a particular effect on the lobes, which are softer, less cartilaginous, than the rest of the ear. It causes them to curl back towards the source of the nerves that run to them. The skin becomes hard and taut as it dries out and stretches, and it is this drying also that produces the 'black' colour, that is the colour of dried blood. The yellow discoloration may be a stage on the way to black. *Chlôros* (also called *ôchros* by the ancients) is, for Galen, a very dark colour, darker than red (*erythros*) and caused by cold (as is black).

The combination of these features is so serious that the face may be described as 'deathly' (*nekrôdês*), though it is slightly less worrying in the context of a long drawn-out disease than if it appears suddenly at the beginning of an illness. Hippocrates will go on to discuss such a situation in the following passage, but Galen first wants to draw attention to something he overlooked. That is, as is mentioned in *Aphorisms*, that in cold lands and in winter, and in the case of those with cold constitutions and the elderly (who are both cold and dry in the Galenic schema), these signs are not so disastrous.⁸⁸

Though possessing Hippocratic precursors, both the innate heat and *pneuma* are post-Aristotelian in their elaboration and integration into an overall somatic system. Similarly, precise references to nerves and cartilage, not to mention the naming of the muscles of the temples, derive from Hellenistic anatomy. Matters become more particularly Galenic in relation to two subsequent passages in *Prognostic*, both of which take Galen into discussions of the eyes. So, for example, he refers to things 'we have learnt from dissections' about the anatomy of the eye and its relationship to other structures and networks of and in the skull, in explaining how the whites of the eyes becoming red is another dangerous symptom.⁸⁹ Yet more bad signs are various movements of the hands – such as hunting for things in the air, or plucking at walls or bed-clothes – by those suffering from certain fevers, pneumonia and phrenitis.⁹⁰ The reason for both these

motions, and the alarm they cause, resides, as Galen explains it, in the eyes and their workings.⁹¹ In particular, when serious (phrenitis always being serious), these diseases affect the fluid between the crystalline body (the lens) and the pupil, as humours are vaporized in the head, making it cloudy. This fluid has a crucial role to play in Galen's theory of vision, as set out and as referred to in the commentary, in book thirteen of *On demonstration*, book seven of *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, and book ten of *On the Utility of the Parts*. It conveys the optical *pneuma* through the pupil to the external air, which is then aligned with the *pneuma* so as to act like a nerve, transmitting perceptions back to the brain. When clouded, however, the *pneuma* does not pass through cleanly, but is blocked in patches, creating dark images – sometimes resembling threads, or little gnats, or perhaps lentils – that float or fly across the sight, as if they were external objects. So people grab or pluck at them.

Plenty of other examples can be offered of references to other Hippocratic works, reliance on (often anonymous) Hellenistic endeavours and citation of Galen's own contributions to medical knowledge, all woven together in his explanatory and exegetical web.⁹² It is, moreover, a seamless web, eliding differences between those who partake in the medical truth, while emphasizing (even creating) distinctions between them and the rest, those who have erred, have strayed from Hippocratic *gnômê* as Galen understands and promulgates it.

It also seems likely that, if the commentaries of, for example, Sabinus and Rufus of Ephesus, or even Lycus and Quintus, had survived, much the same pattern would be repeated. The figure of the main Hippocratic interlocutor and heir would obviously be altered, but little else. They would have conducted their exegetical business in roughly the same manner, including their construal of Hippocratic *gnômê*. This is easiest to judge in the case of Rufus, whose Hippocratic *hypomnêmata* Galen recommended as reading (at least before he completed his own), and who has a handful of extant treatises (though no commentaries) to his name, and certainly operated with a medical system also constructed from a synthesis of Hippocratic and Hellenistic teaching; but even Lycus and Quintus seem to have been working with many of the same concepts and assumptions.⁹³ In his surviving writings Rufus cuts a somewhat more modest figure than Galen (and, by all accounts, Lycus and Quintus, too), though

he is not scared of an argument where necessary, and he seems less of a total system builder. He appears not to have become involved, for instance, in debates about elements, or theories of proof, and his references to philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle are more specifically medical and less general.

Still, these are all differences of degree, not dramatic rifts: divergences that would be expressed in the content, rather than form, or approach, of their commentaries. The point, once again, is that Galen was part of a medical community that held much in common. He built his system from the same constituents as others around, and before, him, but arranged them somewhat differently, and elaborated, and connected, them better, more fully and completely, than anyone else. Which is to say that the main difference between Galen and the rest lies in his success.

CONCLUSION

It is, then, not just that Galen's surviving commentaries form part of a larger exegetical project, one that encompassed significant sections of Peripatetic philosophy as well as Hippocratic medicine (and, indeed, other authorities, too); but that this project itself emerged out of, and participated in, a broader exegetical culture, both in general and particular. Textual commentary, in Galen's world, played a key role in the development of ideas and understanding, in their articulation and elaboration, and in their transmission and dispersal. It allowed the exegete to define himself and his doctrines in relation to what had gone before, to locate himself on an existing conceptual and ideological map, in an authoritative manner. The commentator was, after all, the student who had become the teacher. His commentary combined learning and teaching, announced his mastery of the subject, the sense in which he had absorbed, and could now contribute to, the tradition. Perhaps it was Galen's failure to actually pass that transitional point, to turn from student to teacher, in his philosophical commentaries (rather than in *On demonstration*), that consigned them to relative oblivion, as much as their external situation.

It is, moreover, the didactic role of Hippocratic commentary in Galen's most immediate medical community that comes across so clearly in his contributions to the genre. Whether that was the case

in the distant past, in the world of the *palaioi*, the earliest commentators, is less clear. Galen's references are too partial (in all senses) to tell. However, his discussion of both his own role as (reluctant) public exegete and his relationship with his closest rivals is inextricably bound up with descriptions of, and allusions to, pedagogic lineages and practices. Elucidation of certain Hippocratic texts in a certain style was an intrinsic part of Galen's education, as of his colleagues', and competitors'. It was something each of his teachers engaged in, and which he readily received. Indeed, he went further in his quest for Hippocratic learning, so that his own teaching could lay claim to completeness in addition to all its other virtues.

Despite his rhetoric, there are undoubtedly omissions, elisions and distortions, in his works, but the richness of his commentaries is also obvious: presenting both opportunities and pitfalls for the scholar. One problem is that this portion of Galen's literary production is as resistant to summary as any other. Galen's efforts at systematization are continually undermined by his drive to encompass everything, to display his erudition as well as enact his methodological rigour. He himself recognizes this, as the assorted excuses and justifications he offers for his numerous breaches of his own exegetical principles show. Still, it is the dual ambition, the promised combination of both completeness and coherence, that there is a pattern into which everything will fit, that is also the mark of his success.

NOTES

1. The antiquity, if not originality, of these chapter headings is assured by their appearance in Hunain's Arabic translation of the text: see Boudon (2002a, 9–18).
2. *On My Own Books* (*Lib.Prop.*) (XIX 33–37, = B.-M. 159.9–162–111; I give rough equivalences between Véronique Boudon-Millot's *Bude'* edition and Kühn, as also for the CMG volumes (where possible), though it should be noted that the actual text is often not the same, and, where available, I have always used the post-Kühn editions.
3. The practice of writing private commentaries, for personal and pedagogic use, seems to have been a common one, see e.g. *On Hippocrates' 'Epidemics'* (*Hipp.Epid.*) VI 7 (CMG V 10,2,2, 412.15–413.30).
4. Indeed, Arabic translations of the handful now lost – the commentaries on *Humours*, *Nutriments*, *Wounds* and *Wounds in the Head* – may yet

be found, following the discoveries of the Arabic versions of those on *Airs, Waters, Places* (lost in Greek) and sections of *Epidemics* (some of the Greek text printed in Kühn, along with all that claiming to be commentary on *Humours* and *Nutriments*, is a Renaissance forgery: see instead *CMG* vols. V 10,1–10,2,4).

5. For an English summary of the *Risâla* see, e.g., Meyerhoff (1926): this commentary is no. 87; and for the Arabic text see Bergsträsser (1925).
6. Collected, in English translation, in Rosenthal (1956). Rosenthal remains uncommitted about the ascription to Galen.
7. *Lib.Prop.* 13 and 11 (XIX 38, = B.-M. 163.18–20 and 4–7).
8. *Lib.Prop.* 10.2 (XIX 37, = B.-M. 162.13–18).
9. *On Bloodletting against Erasistratus* (*Ven.Sect.Er.*) XI 147–186; and *On Bloodletting against the Erasistrateans at Rome* (*Ven.Sect.Er.Rom.*) XI 187–249; and see Brain (1986) for translation and discussion.
10. Von Staden (1998, esp. 72–3).
11. Distinctions are drawn at e.g. *On Hippocrates' 'Prorrhethics'* (*Hipp.Prorrh.*) 1.8 and 13, 3.53 (XVI 532, 543, and 811, = *CMG* V 9,2, 24,9–10; 29,20–23; 161,7–9); but the instances where that rule is breached are legion, see e.g. the examples in von Staden (1998, 72).
12. The level of Galen's engagement with the tradition is analysed in detail by Smith (1979, esp. 123–76); and see also the substantial study of Manetti and Roselli (1994). The other discussions I have found particularly useful are those relating to Galen and commentary in chapters 4 and 5 of Mansfeld (1994, 115–76).
13. *Lib.Prop.* 12 (XIX 38, = B.-M. 163.8–17).
14. See discussion at B.-M. 214–18, esp. notes 7 and 13.
15. *Lib.Prop.* 11 (XIX 39–45, = B.-M. 164.1–169.12).
16. See *introduction*, pp. 3–4; and chs. 3 and 5 (Tieleman, Morison) both in this volume.
17. *Lib.Prop.* 14.15 (XIX 42–3, = B.-M. 166.22–167.6).
18. The story about his Chrysiptean notes is recorded at *Lib.Prop.* 14.16 (XIX 43, = B.-M. 167.6–14).
19. The ethical chapter is *Lib.Prop.* 15 (XIX 45–6, = B.-M. 169.13–170.13).
20. *Lib.Prop.* 16 (XIX 46–7, = B.-M. 170.14–171.8); and see De Lacy (1972, 27–39). See further ch. 6 (Hankinson) in this volume.
21. See H. O. Schröder (ed.), *Galenus In Platonis Timaeum Commentarii Fragmenta* (*CMG Suppl.* 1, 1934). The material collected by Larrain (1992) does not add to our Galenic material, as argued by Nickel (2002, 73–8).
22. *Lib.Prop.* 17 (XIX 47, = B.-M. 171.6–172.2); for more on this, see ch. 4 (Morison) in this volume.
23. Moraux (1953, 73); Arist. *Metaph.* 1012b.

24. Citations of *On demonstration* are collected in von Mueller (1897); and see also Strohmeier (1998).
25. For an overview of the tradition see e.g. Sorabji (1990b); for Alexander more particularly see, e.g., Sharples (1987).
26. One quotation in Simplicius *In Phys.* (CAG X 1039,13–15) is generally assumed to be from Galen's commentary *On the First Mover*, though it is not explicitly labelled as such, and I would argue that it actually comes from *On demonstration* (also cited earlier in the same text, CAG IX 708,27–8). The argument is too complicated to go into here, however, and the basic point about Galen's invisibility *as a fellow commentator* remains either way. On his (rather dim) visibility as a medical authority see Todd (1977).
27. Bergsträsser (1925, 51.5–9) (Arabic). Most complexly, this work seems to have been refuted, in Arabic, probably by a member of the Aristotelian movement of Arab Baghdad with which al-Farabi was associated, who borrowed Alexander of Aphrodisias' name for the purpose: see Fazzo (2002, 109–45). This Arab text itself is published in Rescher and Marmura (1965), assuming the authenticity of the claimed authorship. Other references to Galen *On the Prime Mover* in Arabic are also collected in this book (1–4).
28. Bergsträsser (1925, 51.77–23) (Arabic).
29. *Lib.Prop.* 18 and 19 (XIX 47–8, = B.-M. 172.3–173.4).
30. On the development of Platonic commentary in relation to the practices of other philosophical schools see, e.g., Sedley (1997).
31. So, though Epicureans discussed specific textual/interpretative problems in Epicurus, they did not write commentaries (see, e.g., Puglia, 1988); and, while the Stoics had historical interests in literary criticism, and (in the Roman Empire, certainly) taught through oral exposition of key school texts (especially those of Chrysippus – see e.g. Arr. *Epict.* I.4.6–9 and 17.13–18), discounting Galen, the first known commentary on a Stoic text is from the sixth century AD – Simplicius' on Epictetus' *Enchiridion* (and Donini, 1994, 89–90, argues that the earlier silence is not accidental).
32. For discussion of Galen in relation to wider ancient 'scientific' commentary traditions such as astronomy see, e.g., von Staden (2002); and for Galen's relationships with exegetical practices within the discipline of grammar/rhetoric see, e.g., Sluiter (1995).
33. That is to say, Origen and Hippolytus composed systematic 'phrase-by-phrase' commentaries in the classical style (see e.g. Heine, 2004a, 2004b); though they clearly draw on existing Christian exegetical practices and Jewish interpretative traditions, as well as Hellenistic techniques: see e.g. Young (1997) for further discussion.

34. For his repeated claims not to follow any sect, and always decide for himself, see e.g. *On the Order of My Own Books* (*Ord.Lib.Prop.*) 1–2 (XIX 50–4, = B.-M. 88.13–92.7); and *The Passions of the Soul* (*Aff.Dig.*) 8 (V 42–3, = *CMG V* 4,1,1, 28,25–29,12).
35. Athenaeus of Attaleia, the founder of the pneumatist school of medicine, is, for example, described by Galen as a ‘pupil’ of Posidonius (*On Containing Causes* (*CC*) 2.1: *CMG Suppl. Or.* II 54,3–6 and 134,3–6); and, even if this statement (transmitted only in Arabic and Latin translations) is to be interpreted loosely, his Stoic commitments are plain (see e.g. Nutton, 2004, 202–5, for discussion). There is no indication that he (or any of his followers) wrote anything other than medical works, however.
36. And he composed epitomes of the anatomical writings of Marinus and Lycus (*Lib.Prop.* 4.9: XIX 25, = B.-M. 147.16–19).
37. On this ‘agonal’ exegetical tradition see, e.g., von Staden (1982).
38. This was, of course, changing, as philosophical authorities, texts and ideas became more common property in the Roman Empire (leading to the ‘neo-Platonic’ commentaries on Aristotle, for instance); and Homer obviously had a foundational role for classical culture more broadly, making Homeric exegesis a very open field.
39. Athenodorus: *Simp. In Cat.* 4 (*CAG* 8 62,25); this work engaged in sufficient detail with Aristotle’s text for Athenodorus to be labelled ‘exegete’ at *CAG* 8 159,32, but there is no indication it was a commentary in the strict sense. Asclepiades: Caelius Aurelianus *On Acute Diseases* (*TP*) 5.51 and *On Chronic Diseases* (*CP*) 2.173.
40. Mentioned at Cael. Aur. *TP* 4.113, and see von Staden (1989) for discussion both of this passage in particular (74–5) and Herophilus’ relationship with Hippocratic ideas and texts more generally (his humoral pathology could certainly be described as broadly ‘Hippocratic’, for example: 116, 242–7 and 301–5). There is, it should be stressed, no indication that Herophilus’ book was a commentary.
41. For Asclepiades’ denial of the existence of critical days see Cael. Aur. *CP* 1.108–9. His commentaries are referred to at *CP* 3.5 and Galen, *On Hippocrates’ ‘Surgery’* (*Hipp.Off.Med.*) XVIII B 666, 715, 805 and 810; and see also Smith (1979, 222–6) for further discussion of his relations with Hippocrates.
42. The two fundamental works on Galenic chronology, as it relates to the commentaries, are Ilberg (1889, 229–38), and Bardong (1942). For more general biographical discussion see e.g. Nutton (2004, 216–29).
43. *PHP* VIII 5 (*CMG V* 4,1,2, 508,6–9 and 522,34–36, = V 682–3 and 702); for its dating see *CMG V* 4,1,1 46–8.
44. *Hipp.Epid.* 3 2 (*CMG V* 10,2,1, 60,11–15, = XVIII A 577).

45. *On Hippocrates' 'Prognostic' (Hipp.Prog.)* III 6 (CMG V 9,2, 328,11–22, = XVIII B 230).
46. *Hipp.Epid.* 3 2 (CMG V 10,2,1, 60,15–62,2, = XVII A 577–8).
47. Indeed it is, together with the commentary on *Epidemics* 3, a more minimal production than those on *Epidemics* 2 and 6, reflecting differences between the texts being interpreted. The developmental classification in the *Lib.Prop.* may, therefore, be a later spin on a rather more contingent process.
48. Smith (1979, esp. 122–4).
49. Smith (1979, 175).
50. On these 'editions' see Ilberg (1890).
51. The debt Galen as Hippocratic commentator owes to the medical community that produced him is emphasized and explored in Manetti and Roselli (1994, esp. 1580–1614). See also Smith (1979, esp. 62–77).
52. Galen's most concentrated coverage of his relationship with previous commentators comes in *Ord.Lib.Prop.* 3 (XIX 56–8, = B.-M. 98.3–99.9), and *Hipp.Epid.* 6 7 (CMG V 10,2,2, 412,15–413,30).
53. See e.g. Gal. *Hipp.Epid.* 3 1.4 (CMG V 10,2,1, 17,7–8, = XVII A 507).
54. Gal. *On Hippocrates' 'On Fractures' (Hipp.Fract.)* pr. (XVIII B 318–322).
55. Galen outlines this distinction briefly here, referring to a work *On Exe-
gesis* for fuller treatment; but unless this is the same as his *On clarity
and unclarity (Peri saphêneias kai asapheias)* listed at *Lib.Prop.* 20.2 (XIX 48, = B.-M. 173.13–14), this is otherwise unknown. He also generally tends towards blaming the reader for any Hippocratic 'unclarity', see Sluiter (1995).
56. *On Hippocrates' 'Aphorisms' (Hipp.Aph.)* 3 pr. (XVIII B 561–562).
57. See e.g. *Hipp.Epid.* 1 2.85 (CMG V 10,1, 99,22–100,2, = XVII A 197–8); and on other invocations of utility see von Staden (2002, esp. 134–6).
58. See, e.g., *Lib.Prop.* 19.5 (XIX 34–5, = B.-M. 160.8–13); *Hipp.Epid.* 6 (CMG V 10,2,2, 412,15–413,9).
59. See e.g. *Hipp.Off.Med.* 1 pr. (XVIII B 630–632).
60. *Hipp.Epid.* 3 2.4 and 5 (CMG V 10,2,1, 75,23–83,13, = XVII A 600–613).
61. *Hipp.Epid.* 3 2.4 (CMG V 10,2,1 78,17, = XVII A 604).
62. *Hipp.Prog.* 1.4 (CMG V 9,2 203,11–13, = XVIII B 12), commenting on the line (2 110.1 L): 'I hold it to be an excellent thing for a physician to practise *pronoia*.' Galen had begun by assuming *pronoia* and *prognosis* to be synonyms, and indeed he sticks to that view.
63. *Hipp.Prog.* 1.4 (CMG V 9,2, 203,13–18, = XVIII B 12).
64. *Hipp.Epid.* 1 pr. (CMG V 10,1, 6,16–19, = XVII A 6).
65. *Hipp.Epid.* 1 pr. (CMG V 10,1, 6,6–16, = XVII A).
66. *Hipp.Prog.* 1.4 (CMG V 9,2, 205,28–209,6, = XVIII B 17–22), comment-
ing on a phrase (2 112.4–6 L) omitted from the Teubner edition (and,

following that, the Loeb) despite its presence in all the manuscripts (not to mention the commentary tradition!).

67. *Hipp.Prog.* 1.4 (CMG V 9,2, 206,5–9, = XVIII B 17–18).
68. For Quintus see, again, *Hipp.Epid.* 1 pr. (CMG V 10,1, 6,6–16, = XVIII A 6).
69. *Hipp.Prog.* 1.10 (CMG V 9,2, 223,17–225,6, = XVIII B 49–51).
70. See, e.g., the lengthy discussion of a particularly vexed passage in *Epidemics* 2 which *everyone* emended (CMG V 10,2,1, 230,4–234,7); and cf. *Hipp.Epid.* 6 pr. (CMG V 10,2,2, 4,4–17, = XVIII A 794).
71. That this is his prefatory project is explicitly stated at e.g. *Hipp.Epid.* 1 pr. (CMG V 10,1, 10,21–22, = XVIII A 13); and see also *Hipp.Epid.* 6 pr. (CMG V 10,2,2, 5,2–3, = XVIII A 796), where more introductory material is required as the audience widens; and *Hipp.Off.Med.* pr. (XVIII B 632). This issue is discussed by Mansfeld (1994, 117–47).
72. *On Hippocrates' 'On Joints' (Hipp.Art.)* pr. (XVIII A 300–303).
73. All these are listed as such in *On Hippocrates' 'Regimen in Acute Diseases' (HVA)* 4 pr. (CMG V 9,1, 271,3–272,3, = XV 732–4), but there are references to interpolations in almost all his commentaries.
74. *On Hippocrates' 'Nature of Man' (HNH)* 1 pr. and 2 pr. (CMG V 9,1, 7,21–8,18 and 57,4–21, = XV 9–11 and 108–109).
75. *HNH* 1 pr. (CMG V 9,1, 8,19–20, = XV 11); the point is elaborated further in his work *On the Elements according to Hippocrates* ([*Hipp. Elem.*] CMG V 1,2); see also ch. 9 (Rocca) in this volume.
76. *HNH* 1 pr. (CMG V 9,1, 8,22–29, = XV 11–12). The ascription to Polybus goes back to Aristotle (*HA* 3.3), and the Peripatetic medical doxography used by Anonymus Londinensis (19.1–18), without any reference to his relationship with Hippocrates, his emergence as star pupil, successor and even son-in-law, may well be part of a later attempt to keep the Hippocratic Corpus within the family.
77. *HNH* 1 pr.; 2 pr. and 22; 3 pr. (CMG V 9,1, 8,14–19; 57,6–8 and 88,12–13; 89,14, = XV 11, 108, 173 and 175).
78. *HNH* 2.22 (CMG V 9,1, 87,15–88,11, = XV 171–3).
79. As set out at, e.g., *Hipp.Epid.* 6 1. pr. and 2 4.1 (CMG V 10,2,2, 5,3–11, = XVIII A 796, and CMG V 10,1, 310,23–30).
80. *Hipp.Epid.* 2 1 (CMG V 10,1, 155,31–33); *Hipp.Off.Med.* (XVIII B 666).
81. *Hipp.Epid.* 6 1 pr. and 2 4.1 (CMG V 10,2,2, 5,12–6,5, = XVIII A 796–7, and CMG V 10,1, 310,31–311,11).
82. *Hipp.Off.Med.* 1.pr. (XVIII B 632 K).
83. *Hipp.Epid.* 1 pr. (CMG V 10,1, 3,8–11,10, = Arabic-XVIII A 14).
84. Hippocrates, *Prog.* 2 (2 114.2–6 L): the so-called '*facies Hippocratica*'.
85. Von Staden (2002, 115). A similar attitude is taken (*mutatis mutandis*) in various philosophical commentaries, and is found, in a more extreme form, in the genre of the *De Evangelica Praeparatione*.

86. *Hipp.Prog.* 1.6 (CMG V 9,2, 211,1-17, = XVIII B 25-6).
87. *Hipp.Prog.* 1.7 (CMG V 9,2, 211,18-214,14, = XVIII B 26-32).
88. Galen closes his exegesis by quoting the relevant aphorism (2.34; 4 480.7-9 L).
89. *Hipp.Prog.* 1.10 (CMG V 9,2, 222,15-22, = XVIII B 47); the implicit cross-references are to *On the Utility of the Parts (UP)* 10.2 and 8.9.
90. *Hipp.Prog.* 4 (2 122.5-10 L); cf. Galen, *On the Therapeutic Method (MM)* XIII 21 and *Loc.Aff.* IV 2 and V 4 (X 928-32, VIII 226-7 and 330-1).
91. Gal. *Hipp.Prog.* 1.23 (CMG V 9,2 235,18-238,8, = XVIII B 71-5).
92. See, for instance, *Hipp.Aph.* V for intertwined references to Galen's works (e.g. *On Semen [Sem.]* at XVIII A 840-841), Hellenistic reproductive anatomy (e.g. Praxagoras at XVIII A 838) and other Hippocratic texts (e.g. *Nat.Puer.* at XVIII A 828).
93. On Rufus see, e.g., Sideras (1994); for Quintus and Lycus in the general mix see e.g. Gal. *Hipp.Epid.* 6 5.14-15 (CMG V 10,2,2, 284,7-296,8, = VII A 269-277 + Arabic).