Pergamum, Alexandria or Rome.[94] Galen, as far as I can tell, never mentions Dieuches or Pleistonicus on their own, for example, and cites Phylotimus independently only for his writings *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*. For the rest he seems often to reflect the summaries of handbooks. But one should note that Oribasius certainly could later include long extracts from Dieuches, and both he and Athenaeus report more of the dietetic writings of Phylotimus than Galen does.[95] Parallels with Galen's use of non-medical texts also suggest the importance of genre or, at any rate, of context within a particular tract, and, as the example of Posidonius shows, we have also to reckon with Galen's switching of interest from one area of medicine or philosophy to another.[96] A specific book, by Archigenes, for instance, might trigger off a whole series of partly polemical writings, and then be put on one side for years, left in the storehouse by the Sacred Way.

This chapter has tried to show something of Galen's erudition, and of the uses he made of that erudition, and to link together his medical and non-medical learning as revealed by the authors he owned. It is a contribution to a major project that still remains to be carried out fully – the rehabilitation of Galen the writer, the stylist and, dare one say it, the Sophist.[97]

[94] Galen, *Opt.Med.Cogn.* with Nutton 1990.

[95] See the list of citations in Berthier 1972, for Dieuches; and Steckerl 1958, for Pleistonicus and Phylotimus. Galen reports, *Ind.* 13, that there were in the Roman libraries many autograph copies of 'ancient doctors', implying he had had copies made for himself.

[96] Above, p. 29. This is not meant as a criticism of Galen: it is a consequence of his voracious universality.

[97] Bowersock 1969: 58–88, located Galen alongside other practitioners of the 'Second Sophistic'. His interpretation was attacked by Brunt 1994: 43–6, 51–2, who points out that for Galen 'Sophist' is a pejorative term. Yet if we disregard the label, there are still many features that Galen has in common with Favorinus and Lucian, and his opponents may not have been as scrupulous as Brunt.

CHAPTER 2

Conventions of prefatory self-presentation in Galen's On the Order of My Own Books

Jason König

COMPILATORY WRITING IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Galen's relationship with the oratory of the 'Second Sophistic' has received a great deal of attention within recent scholarship.[1] His interaction with the medical writing of his predecessors and contemporaries has been widely, albeit far from exhaustively, mapped. And yet, beyond those two areas very little attention has been given to his relationship with the compilatory habits of works that structure so much of the Greek and Latin writing of the Roman Empire.[2] Accumulation of knowledge is a recurring aim for Imperial writers in a wide range of genres. Common techniques and tropes of knowledge-ordering are shared between many different authors and genres that seem at first sight to have little in common: historical and geographical composition, miscellanistic writing, mythography and paradoxography, lexicography, philosophy, scientific writing of many different types, technical and didactic writing, and in addition an enormous range of texts that are barely categorisable within any of those modern groupings, for example Pliny's vast and encyclopedic *Natural History*, or Athenaeus' ostentatiously eclectic *Deipnosophistae*. This chapter – focused around a reading of the preface to *On the Order of My Own Books* (*Ord.Lib.Prop.*) – offers an initial approach to the problem of how we should situate Galen's work within that vast, if diffuse, Imperial habit of compilation. It aims to draw out Galen's typicality – the way in which he draws on the common language of knowledge-ordering and contributes to it influentially. It also aims to make clear something of his originality, the way in which he manipulates these shared resources for highly distinctive and original ends.

[1] E.g. see Bowersock 1969: 59–75; Reardon 1971: 45–63; Kollesch 1986; Pearcy 1993; Brunt 1994: 43–4; von Staden 1995, 1997b.

[2] The obvious exception is Barton 1994, discussed further below.

To what extent should these compilatory texts of the Roman Empire be viewed as part of a coherent enterprise, to be analysed together?[3] And if we find parallels between them – as I will suggest for Galen and some of his non-medical counterparts – what should we take those parallels to signify? Clearly compilatory styles of writing did not originate in the Imperial period. Their beginnings lie much further back, in the Republican scholarship of Varro or the elder Cato, the work of Posidonius and the scholars of Hellenistic Alexandria, and before that in the systematising project of Aristotle; and on those grounds one might feel that there is little to be gained from viewing the Roman Empire as a distinctive context for knowledge compilation. One answer to that objection would be to argue for a new scale to compilatory activity in the Imperial period. Certainly the volume of miscellanistic, scientific, technical writing that survives from this period far outweighs what we have from the Hellenistic world. Alternatively, and perhaps more profitably, one might search for qualitative differences. The obvious starting-point for that search lies in the fact that the compilations of the Roman Empire are marked out perhaps more than anything by their derivativeness, their dependence on rearranging and reassessing the writings of the past – as we shall see further below for Quintilian, some scientific and technical writers from this period claim to be content with confining themselves to this exercise, and draw attention to the weight of authority embodied by the writings of their predecessors. At first sight that tendency seems to detract from the claim that compilatory styles are distinctively Imperial: it is tempting to feel that the pioneering heyday of knowledge-gathering was in the third to first centuries BC, leaving nothing new for those who came afterwards. However, we should not always necessarily take statements of conservatism at face value. Sometimes such statements arise from the pressures of professional self-presentation (on which more in a moment), which impose the need to avoid an impression of excessive and showy innovation.[4] More importantly, they also ignore the possibility that what we are seeing here is a shift in the very conception of authorship, a move towards the idea that rearranging and reactivating the accumulated knowledge of the past may in itself be a major act of authorial creativity.[5] On that argument the derivativeness of Imperial knowledge-compilation may be its defining feature and, at least in the eyes of its practitioners, its greatest achievement, rather than a sign of inferior value. It may be linked, too, with Graeco-Roman enthusiasm for reactivation of the past in other fields, not least in the archaising field of sophistic composition (whose creativity and innovativeness recent scholarship has increasingly begun to recognise). Many compilatory authors are anyway very self-conscious about the newness of their own enterprise, the way in which their accumulation of facts comes to have fresh meaning in the new context of the Roman Empire, despite its dependence on Hellenistic or Republican forms. The work of Pausanias is a case in point: Pausanias on one level shuts out the Roman present, but at the same time he is also self-conscious about the way in which his totalising vision of the Panhellenic past is made possible precisely by the context of Roman rule.[6]

In some cases we can even map out causal links between social and political conditions specific to the early Empire and the development of particular disciplines. Astrology, for example, seems to have grown in strength, particularly in Rome itself, in the late Republic and early Empire. Tamsyn Barton and others have discussed the ways in which this growth may have been stimulated by the move from Republic to Principate – for example through the patronage of Augustus and his successors, or through the increasing prominence for horoscopy in a political context of autocracy where predictions surrounding the ruler took on particular urgency (although she also rightly acknowledges that not all intellectual disciplines can be mapped on to political change in such a sustained way).[7] Andrew Wallace-Hadrill has made similar arguments in linking the changing valuation of antiquarian knowledge with new pressures of elite self-representation in the late Republic and early Empire.[8] In addition, Claudia Moatti has argued for seeing projects of knowledge-accumulation in the first century BC as attempts to compensate for the disintegration of the Republic.[9]

How, then, can those insights help us to get to grips with the detailed texture of compilatory writing, and to understand the overlaps we so often find between different compilatory genres in their techniques and tropes of textual organisation and authorial self-presentation? One answer to those questions is that the political context of the Roman Empire often overflows into the metaphors used by knowledge-ordering writers to structure their work. Pliny's *Natural History* represents its own control over the world of knowledge as equivalent to the territorial conquest of the Roman Empire, using metaphors of mapping and the image of the Roman triumph.[10] A whole range of writers address their works to specific emperors, and in

[3] For more extended discussion of some of these issues, see König and Whitmarsh 2007a.
[4] See Lloyd 1991a; Barton 1994: 149–52.
[5] See Lloyd 1991a: 399; van der Eijk 1999: 2–3; Long 2001: 29–45.
[6] See Elsner 1992: 19, 1994: 248.
[7] E.g. see Barton 1994: 33–62.
[8] Wallace-Hadrill 1997.
[9] Moatti 1991, 1997.
[10] See Carey 2003; Murphy 2004.

the process entwine their own self-representation with images of Imperial authority, with various degrees of assertiveness and subversiveness.[11] In that sense the structures and images of empire are often explicitly and knowingly exploited as models for compilatory composition, within a wide range of genres. Also, the widespread nature of these phenomena is partly a consequence of the fact that so many different areas of knowledge were at least in theory dependent on the Emperor's patronage, in a society where ideals of Imperial omniscience and ubiquity were so prevalent.

Another answer lies in the pressures of professional self-representation that were experienced in common by many different scientific and professional disciplines. The agonistic styles of ancient scientific argument have been by now much documented. Tamsyn Barton has gone furthest towards showing how these styles manifest themselves in similar ways for a range of different disciplines – astrology, physiognomics and medicine – leaving their mark on even the smallest details of textual organisation.[12] She respects the differences between these different areas of knowledge, following a Foucauldian model, which sees particular disciplines as having their own 'regimes of truth', their own particular ways of constructing what is true or authoritative; and acknowledging the importance of rivalry between different disciplines, jostling for position against each other opportunistically. However, she also draws out common threads. She shows, for example, how prevalent is the technique of introducing endless subdivisions in mapping out particular arenas of knowledge, and she links that with the need for scientific practitioners to establish both the complexity of their own field and also their own intricate control over it.[13]

Of course, we should not seek to explain all of these common features as consequences of shared political and social context; some of the similarities between different genres may be due rather to their mutual influence on each other. For example, Galen's use of tropes that we find also in other genres of ancient compilatory writing is partly due to the fact that he, and many of the medical predecessors whose styles of writing he engages with, read – and in Galen's case wrote – very widely outside the field of medicine as we would define it. The boundaries between different areas of knowledge in the ancient world were much more fluid than they are for us; and the claim to be addressing many different genres of work at once is so widespread that it becomes a standard trope in itself. However, the act of signalling engagement with disciplines other than one's own was not always

[11] E.g. see A. König 2007 on Frontinus and McEwen 2003 on Vitruvius.
[12] Barton 1994. [13] See ibid.: esp. 172–4.

simply an unthinking reflection of this atmosphere of intellectual cross-fertilisation. It could also fulfil highly self-serving aims and be parasitic upon highly charged political and cultural images. Most obviously, the pose of polymathy, for Galen and others, was linked with establishment of an authoritative persona as an author, as Tamsyn Barton has shown.[14] Moreover, displays of philosophical and medical eclecticism helped to avoid the accusation of unthinking adherence to a single approach. Claims to be participating in a totalising project of knowledge-gathering were common: for example by addressing a great range of subjects under the banner of overarching ethical aims, as Plutarch does, or, as in Galen's case, by portraying one's own field of expertise as a central part of some overarching philosophical project. Such claims in some cases drew on images of Greek *paideia* as a cosmopolitan, universally empowering, unifying thread for the culture of the Mediterranean world under Roman rule, able to transcend local boundaries and particular specialisms. I should stress that I do not wish to devalue the seriousness of Galen's intellectual aims in drawing attention to the rhetoric by which they are presented (or indeed in my use of the word 'compilatory' to describe his work). Galen's first motives in writing must always have been intellectual and conceptual ones, linked with fierce conviction that his life's work of bringing philosophy and medicine together was essential for any progress in the discipline and that it set him apart from what he views as inferior types of medical practice. My point is rather that the language of totalising or eclectic compilation was language Galen held in common with several other writers, many of whom use it very much more casually and loosely than he does; and moreover that Galen is himself capable of being highly self-conscious and ingenious in rewriting conventional claims of this type for his own ends, as I aim to show in the final section of this chapter for the theme of writing on request.

I am not arguing, then, that the Imperial obsession with compilatory writing was totally new, nor do I want to make claims for any kind of tightly bounded compilatory 'genre'. What I have suggested, however, is that some of the recurring features in the organisational techniques of Imperial knowledge-orderers – as well as being a symptom of the ancient tendency towards intellectual interdisciplinarity – are the result of similar struggles for disciplinary self-promotion that were replayed in many different contexts across the Roman Mediterranean. They also represent responses to ideals of cultural unity and geographical or administrative coherence that are in turn at least obliquely related to the fact of Roman political and territorial

[14] See ibid.: esp. 143–7.

dominance. I should stress once again that I do not mean to minimise the enormous differences that could exist between different genres and different disciplines in their activation of those shared resources; in fact, those differences are precisely the main subject of what follows. In some cases the use of shared compilatory rhetoric might not be strongly marked or self-consciously signalled. But in other situations we see writers being highly self-conscious and ostentatious in signalling both their allegiance to common forms of self-presentation and also their own ingenious adaptation of those forms.

WRITING FOR FRIENDS

Following on from those general reflections, my aim here is not to discuss Galen's engagement with the images and ideals of Empire,[15] but instead to look at the micro-level of his engagement with conventions of prefatory self-representation in knowledge-ordering writing in the Roman period. The technical, scientific and miscellanistic writing of the ancient world, I suggest, has its own distinctive poetics of structuration and authorial self-portrayal. Individual authors manipulate common tropes of compilatory self-presentation repeatedly in a great range of different ways, most conspicuously so in their prefaces. The language of those prefaces is often ostentatiously mundane. But when we begin to see these statements as part of a series it soon becomes clear that they are highly literary, self-conscious creations that often pointedly and ingeniously replay and vary the language of their compilatory relatives, and in some cases also remould motifs familiar from poetic dedications. The tropes of prefatory self-presentation develop their own particular momentum specific to knowledge-ordering writing: we see writers on very different subjects following and manipulating inherited conventions in much the same way as poetic prefaces in Greek and Roman literature play with the idea of inspiration by the Muses (with all the different gradations of self-deprecation and self-promotion which that trope can bring with it) or with the ideas of reluctant composition that we find in the conventions of *recusatio*. There has been in recent scholarship an increasing recognition of that literary, formulaic quality of technical compilation,[16] but surprisingly little of that interest has flowed over into study of Galen, and there are still very few sustained attempts to track Galen's interrelations with non-medical styles of composition.[17]

There are very many recurring tropes one might focus on in order to track those interrelations. For example, one often-repeated programmatic gesture is the pose of equating one's own discipline with philosophy, along with related strategies for ascribing images of universal significance to one's own work. Those gestures are highly familiar from Galen's writing but they are also spread widely through other kinds of compilatory writing, and often manipulated with a high degree of ingenuity and originality.[18] Related to that is the quasi-Socratic exercise of mapping one's current subject into a hierarchy of other arts.[19] We commonly also find in compilatory writing discussion of earlier writing on the same subject: often that kind of doxography is given sustained attention, rather than simply being confined to the opening of a work, but at other times it is compressed to take on the character of a prefatory motif.[20] Other motifs centre more on dramatisation of the author's own attitude to his or her material: that might often involve claims about confidence in one's own abilities, but more often manifests itself in conspicuous modesty (sometimes both together).[21]

[15] For that project, see Flemming 2007 and Flemming in this volume.

[16] On prefatory conventions, see Janson 1964; Santini and Scivoletto 1990–2; Alexander 1993: esp. 42–101 on scientific prefaces; Formisano 2001: esp. 28–31; Fögen 2003; on the formulaic, literary qualities of technical literature more generally, and on the interrelations between different genres of technical or compilatory writing, see Nicolet 1995; Meissner 1999, esp. 226–45; Long 2001; Santini 2002. On medical writing specifically, see Pigeaud and Pigeaud 2002; van der Eijk 2005a: 29–41, esp. 40–1: '. . . different styles of discourse, with different stylistic registers, types of argument, appeals to the audience, commonplaces, and suchlike; what they were like in the ancient world deserves to be described, and the attempt should be made to detect patterns, and perhaps systematicity, in them . . . The works of Galen provide a particularly promising area of study, for one can hardly imagine a more self-conscious, rhetorical, argumentative, polemicising and manipulating ancient scientific writer than the doctor from Pergamum'.

[17] For exceptions, see Barton 1994 on Galen's self-presentation (and cf. Nutton 1991 on Galen's competitive self-presentation, but without sustained reference to parallels outside Galen's own work); Nutton 1979 discusses the overlaps between Galen's *On Prognosis* and other apologetic writing; Boudon-Millot 2000a: 3–16 discusses the relations between Galen's *Protrepticus* and other protreptic writing; Wilkins 2007 discusses overlaps (and divergences) between Athenaeus and Galen in their techniques of composition, arguing that Athenaeus in particular delights in twisting and departing from familiar patterns of organisation; my aim in what follows is to make a similar argument for Galen, revealing something of the intricacy and ingenuity with which he too reshapes standard patterns of textual organisation and authorial self-promotion for his own purposes.

[18] E.g. see Galen, *The Best Doctor is also a Philosopher*; J. König 2007 on Plutarch's *Quaestiones convivales* and other examples; French 1994: 123–30 on Strabo's equation of history and geography with Stoic philosophy.

[19] E.g. see Galen's *Protrepticus*, with Boudon-Millot 2000a: 16–35; König 2005: 315–25 on Philostratus' response to that categorisation in his *Gymnasticus*; Pearcy 1993: 450–2 on Galen's ranking of rhetoric against the other arts.

[20] E.g., see van der Eijk 1999a: esp. 2: 'Many ancient philosophers and scientists (as well as historians) regarded themselves as part of a long tradition. They explicitly discussed the value of this tradition, and their own contribution to it, in a prominent part of their own written work, often in the preface'; and see further below on Quintilian and Galen.

[21] See van der Eijk 2005a: 40 on the alternation between 'rhetoric of modesty' and 'rhetoric of confidence'; cf. Formisano 2001: 28–31 on *dissimulatio* as one of four key poses in the prefaces of late-antique technical writing (the others are *sollertia, diligentia* and *utilitas*).

Closely connected again is the (often disingenuous) claim to be composing spontaneously, or to be putting ideas down as they come to mind rather than in any particular order, with the implication that the current work is less polished and less complete than it might be.[22]

I want to focus here, however, on just one single motif (although it is a motif which often becomes intertwined with the other motifs just listed), that is, the way in which knowledge-ordering writers so often claim to be writing for friends, and more specifically at the request of friends. I want to track that motif through the prefatory sections of three different texts, the *Encheiridion* (Introduction to Music) of Nicomachus Gerasenus, the *Orator's Education* of Quintilian, and finally Galen's *On the Order of My Own Books* (*Ord.Lib.Prop.*). In following that structure I do not mean to suggest that Galen knows and responds to the work of these predecessors (who were, after all, writing in genres in which Galen never worked extensively himself). I am interested rather in their very different, innovative uses of the same shared argumentative resources; and so in the richness and flexibility of this motif as a vehicle for authorial and disciplinary self-portrayal.

Of course the idea of writing for friends has a long heritage lying behind it.[23] It takes a number of different forms – sometimes epistolary, sometimes organised around more formal rhetorical dedication and sometimes using an unelaborated vocative without specifying exactly what kind of communication we should envisage. The stated reasons for writing also vary. In many cases the texts are said to be gifts for intimate friends; in some cases they involve recording conversations in which the addressee participated, in order to give him or her the pleasure of recalling them at leisure. At other times we see a more pointed sense of status dissonance between author and addressee, for example in dedications to superiors, where expression of the author's motives of friendship has a note of self-deprecation. Elsewhere again we find didactic situations, where it is clear that the author has written to instruct the addressee[24] (who may in turn stand in for the general reader via the author's use of the second person, which allows us to feel that we are being personally addressed). In many cases it is not specified clearly which of these three categories a preface fits into; and often a preface may fit more than one, for example in Plutarch's *Sympotic Questions*, which satisfies

[22] See J. König 2007 on Plutarch, *QC*, preface to Book 2 (629d); and for parallels see Pollux, *Onomasticon*, preface; Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* preface, 3; n. 26 below, on Pliny, *Ep.* 1.1, with Henderson 2002: 21 and Gowers 1993: 271, n. 229; and the section on Nicomachus below.

[23] See Alexander 1993: 27–9, 50–63, 73–5 on the development of conventions of addressing named addressees in historical and scientific prefaces, with many examples (including several from Galen).

[24] Works in this category are sometimes addressed to family members, e.g. Varro, *De re rustica* (to his wife), or Macrobius, *Saturnalia* (to his son).

all three criteria: Plutarch states explicitly that the recorded conversations are designed to give the pleasures of remembering to the addressee, Sosius Senecio, but he is also envisaged as a potential pupil in the Greek styles of erudition Plutarch presents, and he was also a politically influential figure, worthy of the honour of the dedication.

We also find subsets of each of the above three categories where the writing of the work is explicitly said to be at the request of the recipient, rather than on the initiative of the author. It is that motif – of writing on request – that I want to concentrate on in what follows. It is common in a wide range of contexts within both Greek and Latin literature.[25] However, it recurs especially frequently within writing that has a technical or didactic character, or which is particularly concerned with drawing together a range of previous writings.[26] In that sense it is a good example of why we should be more ready to view the relationship between literary and technical

[25] For a detailed account of this motif in Latin prose prefaces, with many examples additional to the ones listed below, and with particular emphasis on the further increased popularity of this work in late antique prose writing, see Janson (1964) 116–24 (and cf. 124–49 for examples of a range of other prefatory techniques for expressing the author's modesty). See Griffin 1984 for an exploration of the varieties of commission and compulsion that we can see in Augustus' and Maecenas' relations with the Augustan poets; also Virgil, *Georgics* 3.41, with Mynors 1990 ad loc. for parallels. The motif of writing on request is particularly common in epistolary contexts; e.g. Cicero and his correspondents continually defend themselves against accusations of not writing often enough, and make similar accusations in turn to their correspondents, often with requests for specific pieces of information.

[26] Plutarch offers a particularly good point of comparison for Galen in this respect: a great many of his works are dedicated or addressed to a wide range of friends, as part of his strategy of conjuring up a virtual, cosmopolitan philosophical community through his writing; and a significant number of those are represented as responses to requests: e.g. see *Bravery of Women* 242f (where the present treatise is said to be designed as a follow-up to an earlier conversation, supplementing the examples Plutarch presented orally at the time); *On Tranquillity of Mind* 464e; *On Fate* 568b–c, where Plutarch modestly reminds his addressee, Piso, that he has granted the request despite his own scruples about writing; *Precepts of Statescraft* 798b, where Plutarch writes with didactic intent on the request of his young friend Menemachus; and *On the Generation of the Soul in the Timaeus* 1012b, addressed to Plutarch's two sons. Similarly, this is a recurring theme for Seneca: e.g., see *Dial.* 1.1.1 and 3.1.1 and (slightly different) the opening of *Dial.* 9, where Seneca reports his addressee's request and his own answer in dialogue form. See also Varro, *Res Rusticae* 1.1.2, where Varro refers to his wife's request for instruction; and Columella 10 pr. 1 and 11.1.1 (and similar passages at the beginning of Books 2, 4 and 5) where he responds to specific requests from his addressee Silvinus. See also Pliny, *Ep.* 1.1, where Pliny claims to be publishing the current collection of letters on the request of a friend, but insists that they are arranged in no particular order (that theme recurs later in the collection, e.g., *Ep.* 2.10, 5.10 and 9.1, in all of which Pliny in turn urges friends to publish; Pliny also tells the story at 6.15.2 of a public reading where the dedicatee of the work being read out interrupts to object that he never asked for the work to be written, an incident which suggests some self-consciousness about the way in which the motif of writing on request could be used opportunistically). For another typical Greek example, see Apollonius of Perga, *Conics* 1, preface. For examples of requests from members of the Imperial family (which stand in contrast with the preference for more intimate models of literary friendship in Plutarch and Galen), see Oribasius, *Collectiones Medicae* 1.1–2, compiled, so the author tells us, on the request of the Emperor Julian; and Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 1.3, where Philostratus explains that he is writing on the request of the Empress Julia Domna; while not blatantly didactic this work does represent itself as having compilatory aims, being, so Philostratus tells us, a condensation of documents written by Apollonius' companion Damis.

writing in the ancient world more as a relationship of continuum and cross-fertilisation than of contrast; here we see a common motif of poetic writing being customised and appropriated so that it becomes *particularly* at home in compilatory styles of composition. One reason for the attraction of this motif for authors concerned with the ordering of knowledge may be that it is particularly well adapted to conveying a sense of modesty and self-deprecation, through the implication that the writer in question is not writing out of self-interest; in that sense it satisfies the requirement for avoidance of blatant self-advertisement within the context of competitive intellectual rivalries. In addition, it helps to justify projects that might otherwise seem useless because of their derivativeness. It may be right to claim, as I suggested above, that rearranging the writings of the past was often viewed as a prestigious project, but many ancient writers (as we shall see for Quintilian below) were nevertheless self-conscious about the fact that it could also be viewed in more negative terms. The obvious question to address to a writer whose energy is dedicated to refashioning the work of his or her predecessors[27] is 'Why does this work need to be written at all, when all of the material is already on paper?'; writing on request gives a very specific answer to that question.

Galen, as we shall see, is no exception: his use of the motif of writing on request is particularly frequent. *Ord.Lib.Prop.* is an exceptional work. It is striking above all (along with *On My Own Books* (*Lib.Prop.)* and also some of Galen's other shorter passages of autobibliography, for example the final chapter of *The Art of Medicine* (*Ars.Med.* 37, K1.407–12), for skewing familiar tropes of doxography and compilation of knowledge to self-reflexive ends.[28] Galen wrestles with his own *oeuvre*, struggling to impose order on it in much the same way as others wrestle to impose order on whole disciplines. One implication, of course, is the extraordinary bulk and complexity of Galen's own work. This is a kind of self-summarisation on a far greater scale than the tables of contents of Pliny or Aulus Gellius or Scribonius Largus, applied to a whole life's work rather than one single text. In this chapter, however, I want to make a rather different claim, which is that *Ord.Lib.Prop.* is an exceptional work also for what it does with the motif of writing for friends and (closely connected with that) the motif of reluctant composition. Even for Galen, who uses those claims so often and so carefully, this is a remarkable and complex version of one of the most frequently used tropes of compilatory writing.

[27] Or even his or her own previous work, as in the case of Pliny, *Ep.* 1.1.
[28] See Mansfeld 1994: 117–26.

First, Nicomachus of Gerasa. Nicomachus was a mathematician and musical theorist, whose works date probably to the late first or early second century AD. We have two of his works surviving in full, his *Introduction to Arithmetic* and his *Encheiridion*, an introductory work on music. He seems also to have written a life of Pythagoras and perhaps also a work on astronomy.[29] His writing tends to be very much neglected in modern scholarship on both ancient music and mathematics, and yet in his own day, and in the centuries following, he was one of the most popular of all mathematical writers, and was widely translated and commented on.[30] The modern consensus is that his work is derivative, and that the reason for its popularity was simply its usefulness as a school text.[31] But we should at least consider the possibility that Nicomachus' introductory works would have been seen by his contemporaries as more prestigious than that assumption allows, and that the derivative nature of his writing would not have debarred him from being viewed as a creative compiler of major stature.

The preface to the *Encheiridion* explains that Nicomachus has written the work in response to the request of his female addressee.[32] He explains that the work is rushed – dictated spontaneously during a period of travel – and is only a much shorter version of the more comprehensive work he hopes to write in the future.

> Even if it is the case that a study of intervals and their relations in the harmonic elements is multi-faceted (πολύχους) and hard to compress (δυσπερίληπτος) completely into a single treatise; and even though I am not able, because of the confusion (ἀκαταστασίας) and hurry (συνεπείξεως) of travelling, to throw myself into the task of giving instruction on these matters with an untroubled (ἀκύμαντῳ) understanding of the issue and sense of purpose, and with the appropriate clarity, which needs leisurely (σχολαίου) and unharassed (ἀπερισπάστου) opportunity

[29] See D'Ooge 1926: 79–87.
[30] E.g. see Berthier 1978: 9–10; Cuomo 2001: 181.
[31] E.g. see D'Ooge 1926: 16–45; Netz 1999: 284.
[32] Levin 1967: 55 makes the point that the *Encheiridion* is unique amongst surviving musical works in having an epistolary form; and that only one other musical treatise uses the second person, that is the *De Musica* of Aristides Quintilianus, whose work is addressed in much less specific terms to 'most honoured friends'. Nicomachus' choice of a female addressee is also relatively unusual: the precise significance is hard to pin down, but one effect might be to add weight to the self-deprecating strand of Nicomachus' representation of his work by emphasising its amateur status, in other words its positioning outside the quasi-institutionalised processes of succession between (male) master and (male) pupil that we hear of for philosophers (e.g., in the work of Diogenes Laertius) or orators (e.g., in Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*) or indeed doctors (e.g., in Galen's repeated mentions of his own relationship with (male) students).

and argumentation, nevertheless it is right for me to spur on my own enthusiasm – since it is you who ask me to do so, excellent and distinguished lady – to set out (ἐκθέσθαι) a bare and spontaneous outline, without preparation or varied demonstrations of my argument.[33]

This brief outline, he explains, can then serve as an aide-mémoire for his addressee when she seeks to remember in detail what she has learnt. If the gods are willing, he continues, he will compose a fuller introduction at a time when he has more leisure, and will send it on to her at the first opportunity. Finally he announces his intention of linking the current work with his earlier oral instruction:

I shall begin from the point where I started my instruction when I explained these things to you in person, in order that you can follow more clearly.

The extract shares many conventional details with the second-person prefaces of Galen and others. One of its most striking features is its mixture of modesty and confidence. On the surface this is a self-deprecating start to the text. As so often, the (conventional, but not necessarily for that reason fabricated) motif of writing in response to a request seems to be attractive partly because it helps to downplay any sense of ostentatious self-promotion; but also at the same time because it can serve to emphasise that an author is in demand, and capable of even better writing in future. In that sense modern scholars who have been reluctant to recognise the value of Nicomachus' achievement may have taken his rhetoric of self-deprecation too much at face value. For example, the claim to be writing reluctantly, and not as part of some careful and premeditated plan, draws our attention to the work's unambitious, unelaborated nature. Nicomachus also makes it clear, however, that the brevity of the work has a calculated value for the beginner, not only because it makes the subject clearer, but also more specifically – and almost in Epicurean style – because it will aid memorisation. It is as if Nicomachus is performing in advance the process of mapping out for beginners that Galen undertakes (albeit on a much larger scale) in *Ord. Lib. Prop.* Nicomachus also stresses the powerful didactic potential of his work – in much the same way as Galen – not only by addressing his work in person to a specific beginner, but also more pointedly by representing this written work as an extension of earlier oral instruction. He stresses the way in which this work arises out of one particular didactic situation, a sign of his devoted care for the abstract details

[33] For full translation and commentary on the work, see Levin 1967; for discussion of this passage, see Haase 1982: esp. 120–43.

of knowledge and for his pupils' understanding of them, and he reminds us sporadically of that didactic relationship in the rest of the work by dropping in similar, additional references to his addressee.[34] He is also keen to remind us that he is in demand: not only has this work been commissioned, it has also had to be squeezed in between other commitments. Yet his studied vagueness about both the identity of his addressee and the purposes of his travel (presumably we are meant to suspect that he is travelling for professional purposes) at the same time suggests a lack of concern about worldly prestige. Finally, he foregrounds the difficulty of his task, reminding us of the inevitability of incompleteness in any attempt to summarise such an enormous subject, and of the fact that he has had to struggle with his material in order to put it into shape. Those claims function as a much less sustained version of the fascination which Galen and many of his predecessors show with the difficulty of organising and subdividing the medical *technē*.[35] The tortuous syntax of the opening sentence – together with the long string of words for confusion or disturbance or lack of calm[36] – articulates that impression of struggle with difficult material and difficult circumstances, as well as enhancing the impression of Nicomachus' reluctance to promote himself through writing, reluctance which is finally overcome only four words from the end of the sentence, in the thirteenth line of Teubner's text, when we finally reach the word he chooses to describe the act of writing: ἐκθέσθαι (to 'set out' or 'expound'). In this work Nicomachus makes little mention of his relation to earlier writers (in contrast with his *Introduction to Arithmetic*, where he repeatedly flags his debt to his predecessors),[37] but even here, and despite his self-deprecating tone, it is clear that the work of synthesis that this work performs is open to a very high valuation.

WRITING FOR FRIENDS IN QUINTILIAN'S *ORATOR'S EDUCATION*

Quintilian's use of the theme of writing on request follows many of the same paths as Nicomachus', but carries them to a much greater degree of complexity, not least through much more explicit and sustained exploration of the theme of reluctant or hesitant publication. That complexity

[34] Other references at 3.9, 11.10, 12.3 and 12.12. [35] E.g. see von Staden 2002b.

[36] πολύχους, δυσπερίληπτος, ἀκαταστασίας, συνεπείξεως, ἀκύμαντῳ, σχολαίου, ἀπεριστάστου (the last two refer not to confusion but the opposite – the untroubled leisure that Nicomachus is unable to lay hold of).

[37] For a full list of Nicomachus' references to earlier writers in the *Introduction to Arithmetic*, see Berthier 1978: 12–15; cf. *Encheiridion* 9 for a good example from Nicomachus' musical work.

is enhanced by the fact that the work effectively has two prefaces referring to two different requests to publish. The first is addressed to his bookseller, Trypho:

> You have been asking me every day and very insistently (*efflagitasti cotidiano convicio*), to embark on publication of the books I had written for my friend Marcellus on oratorical education. I myself felt that they have not yet matured enough. As you know, I spent slightly more than two years in writing them, at a time when I was also much distracted by business matters. That time was spent not so much on composition as on the research required for an almost infinite work and on reading countless numbers of other authors.

The preface ends with Quintilian's final agreement to defer to Trypho's request, 'if they are as much in demand as you claim' (*si tantopere efflagitantur quam tu adfirmas*), and with a final request to Trypho to make sure 'that they come into people's hands in the most carefully corrected state possible'. This preface shares many of the same themes as Nicomachus' opening sentences, and also some of the same reticence about providing details; it adopts a brisk, allusive tone, appropriate to the context of business correspondence. For example, his claim to be distracted from writing by 'business' is vague about the exact nature of those commitments – in much the same way as Nicomachus' reference to his own travelling. Quintilian seems to be reminding us quietly of his professional reputation and of the way in which the text in front of us arises directly from the hands-on experience of teaching, while also doing his best to avoid the impression of ostentation. He also stresses the difficulty of his task in referring to the large amounts of reading it has required. In making that claim he shares some of Nicomachus' modesty, identifying this work as a work of synthesis, but is more explicit about the way in which that synthesis arises from engagement with the writing of the past. Most importantly, perhaps, he conjures up an impression of immense care and immense reluctance, taking those poses much further than Nicomachus does. Where Nicomachus is reluctant to publish a work that he claims was written spontaneously, Quintilian is still unhappy even after many years of revision.[38] Quintilian phrases his doubts in terms appropriate to his oratorical topic, worrying that the work has not yet 'matured' enough for publication. That phrase anticipates his meticulous interest in everything that follows in the maturation of the young potential orator from earliest childhood,[39] and is in line with his tendency to represent his own text as a body to be moulded in the

[38] The conventional nature of Quintilian's claims here need not be incompatible with their accuracy: Kennedy 1969: 37 suggests that there are indeed signs of haste in Book 12.

[39] See Kennedy 1969: 39–54.

same way as the body of his imaginary subject.[40] It is only the vehemence of the requests he receives (vehemence that is enacted through the repetition of *efflagitasti* and *efflagitantur*) which drives him to relent. Here, then, the theme of writing on request is used to stress, much more sustainedly than for Nicomachus, both Quintilian's hesitancy about putting his work forward and at the same time the degree to which his work is publicly valued.

The second preface repeats many of the same points in more extended form, opening up to view some of the complexities which lie beneath the surface of Quintilian's terse statement of them in preface one, while also making it clear (as for Galen in *Ord.Lib.Prop.*) that he has a range of different obligations and audiences to cater for, rather than just a single reader: not just the bookseller Trypho, but also the dedicatee of the work, and addressee of the second preface, Marcellus Vitorius,[41] as well as the many unnamed friends whose requests Quintilian refers to. That preface opens as follows, with a more explicit reminder than the first preface of his personal involvement in teaching:

> After finally gaining some free time to devote to my studies – time which I had spent for the last twenty years on educating the young – some friends asked me to compose something on the theory of oratory. For a long time I resisted, because I knew perfectly well that some very distinguished authors in both Greek and Latin had left to posterity many writings on this subject composed with the utmost care. But the reason why I thought it would be easier to gain forgiveness for my refusal was precisely the thing which inflamed them more (*hac accendebantur illi magis*), because they said that it was hard to choose between the divergent and in some instances contradictory beliefs of earlier writers; and for that reason they seemed to be not unjust in imposing upon me the burden (*iniungere laborem*) not necessarily of making new discoveries, but certainly of judging between old ones. (*Inst.* 1.pr.1–2)

Quintilian goes on to explain that he finally consented, and that he then discovered that the task was bigger than expected, partly because he wanted to make sure he was not simply following in the footsteps of others, and partly because he saw at once how important it was to make the innovative step of combining rhetorical instruction with all other branches of learning.[42] Here

[40] See Gunderson 2003: 71, citing Winterbottom 1984: 367.

[41] On Marcellus Vitorius, and Quintilian's repeated references to him in later parts of the work, which remind us sporadically of this context of friendship, see Kennedy 1969: 26 and 143, n. 33.

[42] See Kennedy 1969 on Quintilian's interest in sorting through and judging earlier writings, both here and in later parts of the work, and also on the closely connected pose of avoiding allegiance to any one school of thought (cf. the similar claims made by Galen in *Ord.Lib.Prop.* 1 (K19.52), discussed further below); cf. Fantham 1982 on the balance between derivativeness and innovation in Quintilian's instruction.

the pose of creative synthesiser, which Quintilian hints at in the preface, is stated more clearly. Interestingly Quintilian seems to speak to modern doubts about the originality of Imperial-period knowledge-ordering, acknowledging that the idea of making innovative contributions in such a heavily studied field is counter-intuitive. However, once he has broken through that initial reluctance he soon sees the potential for creating work that has a kind of universal reach, touching on all other disciplines in much the same way as Galen's medical philosophy. The sense of compulsion here – prompted not just by a much more vehement version of the personal request for instruction, which motivates Nicomachus (vehemence which is articulated through the phrase *iniungere laborem*, with its implication of forced labour), but also by the state of the discipline itself, which makes his contribution urgent and leaves him almost no choice but to go further once he has embarked on the project – is again a feature that we will see playing a prominent, and in some ways even more distinctive, role for Galen.

The other factor, finally, which spurs Quintilian to accept the challenge is his concern about two books wrongly circulating under his name, taken down by shorthand from one of his lectures and circulated without his knowledge 'by some excellent young men who were too fond of me, and therefore rashly honoured it with publication'. This worry forms a striking parallel with Galen's concerns about inauthentic publication (on which more in a moment). For Quintilian it acts almost as an extension of his points about his friends' requests, as if the young men – who are represented (in contrast with the forgers Galen derides) in friendly terms – are so impatient in waiting for Quintilian to satisfy demands for publication that they take matters into their own hands. Friends, as Quintilian describes them, are hard to refuse. They help him to see, contrary to his original inclination, how urgently needed is his own contribution given the state of the discipline. Initial refusal only increases their eagerness, rather than dampening it (*accendebantur magis*), and in the end they force his hand by taking, on their own initiative, what Quintilian is unwilling to give, so driving him to undertake the task of correction.

RELUCTANT COMPOSITION AND SOCIAL COMMENT IN GALEN'S *ON THE ORDER OF MY OWN BOOKS*

A great many of Galen's works are addressed to friends. Many of them are stated to have been written at the request of friends.[43] There is no particular reason to feel that the context of friendship is ever fabricated or

[43] E.g. see Boudon-Millot 1993: 120; Flemming 2002: 101.

exaggerated;[44] equally, however, the likelihood that real-life relationships lie behind these references should not be taken as a reason to downplay the self-consciousness with which Galen exploits this motif. As is the case for Nicomachus and Quintilian, it is tied up with a pose of avoiding the appearance of competitiveness and self-advertisement, for example in cases where he has to be encouraged by his friends and students to write up arguments against his rivals.[45] It also functions to remind the reader that the written work is tied to the real-life experience of learning and teaching. Galen's preference for didactic motives is at the expense of other possibilities: he prefers on the whole not to use his prefaces for advertising relations with wealthy and influential patrons.[46] In many cases he uses an unelaborated vocative without specifying exactly why he has chosen a particular addressee, and thus with only a hint of didactic purpose.[47] Often, however, he refers back to a specific request from students or medical colleagues to write up the answer he gave in an earlier conversation or lecture.[48]

Often these references to the context of friendship and request are brief. In some works, however, he treats them in more extended fashion. As a preliminary example of the energy Galen devotes to varying and rewriting these motifs, I turn briefly now to his work *On the Therapeutic Method* (*MM*), which anticipates some of the effects I discuss for *Ord.Lib.Prop.* below. The work opens as follows:

> While you, my dear Hiero, have frequently asked me to write about the therapeutic method, I for my part was most eager to gratify your wishes (particularly since other colleagues have joined with you subsequently), and desired no less to be of assistance to the best of my ability to those who come after us. None the less, I hesitated, putting the matter off every time for a variety of reasons . . . Chief of all of them was the risk of wasting my time writing, as pretty much no one nowadays cares about the truth; rather they pant after money, political power, and the insatiable enjoyment of pleasures to such an extent that if anyone happened to occupy themselves with some serious branch of knowledge, they would think him quite mad. (*MM* 1.1.1–2, K10.1–2)[49]

[44] E.g. see Nutton 1991: 5–6; for a more sceptical view, see Smith 1979: 98.
[45] E.g. see *On My Own Books* K19.21–2; cf. Vegetti 1999b: 336–7 on *PHP* 7.1.1 (K5.586).
[46] See Nutton 1991: 5–6 for the point that very few of Galen's addressees come from the Roman governing elite; and that many of them seem to have been doctors themselves.
[47] E.g. see *Exercise with the Small Ball* 1 (K5.899).
[48] E.g. see *Thrasyboulos* 1–2 (K5.806–9); *Affections and Errors of the Soul* 1 (K5.1); cf. *On the Pulse for Beginners* 1 (K8.453) where Galen states that he is writing for Teuthras as a beginner; see also van der Eijk 2005a: 36–7 on the high priority given to oral teaching by Galen and many of his medical counterparts.
[49] Translation from *MM* is taken from Hankinson 1991b.

The first sentence seems to offer a straightforward instance of response to a request: Galen fulfils personal obligation as well as public service; and in much the same way as Quintilian he draws attention to the fact that he has received a range of requests beyond those of the named addressee, thus enhancing the impression that his work is in demand. Immediately in the second sentence, however, we begin to see that the picture is more complicated, and that Galen's reasons for hesitation are very different from those of Nicomachus or Quintilian, based not on self-deprecation but on worries about the state of society. He proceeds to detail these at great length, criticising the ignorance and frivolity of his contemporaries in vivid terms, in ways which recall similar tirades elsewhere in his work.[50] He then turns in 1.5 to an attack on Thessalus, who founded Methodism, so Galen claims, in order to exploit the laziness of society. There is a sense here that Galen can hardly hold himself back from these criticisms. In 1.6, for example, he seems to have finished the diatribe:

> It was for these reasons, then, that I hesitated to write about the therapeutic method which was inaugurated by the ancients . . . (*MM* 1.1.6, K10.5)

but even before he finishes the sentence he finds himself swept away into further denunciation, repeating many of his earlier criticisms over the course of several paragraphs. Not only that, but it eventually becomes clear that his reasons for not writing are rapidly turning into the main subject of the work, as we watch his complaints against contemporary society metamorphosing into a criticism of contemporary views on healing. That paradox comes into focus in *MM* 1.2.2, where he reverses his earlier expressions of reluctance in closely similar language:

> It is for these reasons, then, that I have resolved to say something against his (Thessalus') defamation of his predecessors . . . (*MM* 1.2.2, K10.8)

We have seen a similar paradox for Quintilian, who claims that his explanation of his reluctance to write only prompted the requesters to request more urgently. But for Galen the reversal is much more striking: he moves from a flat refusal to write, based on the belief that it will be a waste of time, to a passionate determination to correct the conditions that he feels make it not worth writing; and he does so, moreover, without mentioning any specific moment of resolution, almost as though he is swept into the change of heart without intending it, and in the course of writing.

[50] On parallels in other works by Galen, see Hankinson 1991b: 81–4.

Many of these effects are echoed in *Lib.Prop.* and *Ord.Lib.Prop.*, both of which repeat in some form the point about the degenerate state of society as a disincentive for writing. It is the second of those two works I want to focus on in most detail in what follows, although I will also make passing mention to some of the most striking features of *Lib.Prop.* *Ord.Lib.Prop.*, I argue, gives a version of the motifs of writing on request that is highly unusual by the standards we have seen already for other compilatory and didactic writers and even by the standard of Galen's own work, surpassing even *MM* and *Lib.Prop.* in both its ingenuity and its pessimism.

Even the opening sentence of *Ord.Lib.Prop.* stands out immediately for the fact that Galen in some ways downplays the intimacy of the request he records from Eugenianus – even more so than he does for the requests from Hiero in *MM* – making the decision to publish as much a matter of public interest as of personal obligation. Up to a point, the preface of *Lib.Prop.* follows the same path: there, Bassus is said to have 'advised' publication rather than requested it, and Galen speaks as if Bassus has done him a favour rather than the other way round. The opening words of *Ord.Lib.Prop.* are even further removed from the normal language of obligation:

> You seem to me, Eugenianus, to have done the right thing in asking (καλῶς μοι δοκεῖς . . . ἠξιωκέναι) for a book to be produced (γενέσθαι) explaining the order of the things written by me (τῶν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ γεγραμμένων). (K19.49)

The verb of 'asking' hints that Eugenianus may have some personal interest in the production of the book; and the opening words in which Galen expresses approval (καλῶς μοι δοκεῖς) conjure up an impression that Galen is speaking here as Eugenianus' intellectual superior, as a senior doctor approving his colleague's reasoning from a position of authority, and so gives the opening a familiar didactic flavour. At the same time, however, the impersonality of the sentence is striking: the verb γενέσθαι (translated above as 'to be produced', but more accurately as 'to come into being') pointedly downplays Galen's authorship, as does the phrase τῶν ὑπ' ἐμοῦ γεγραμμένων ('the things written by me'), as if Galen is trying to depersonalise these developments, avoiding the sense of intimate personal obligation in favour of a more dispassionate tone. Immediately afterwards, in the sentence following, he proclaims the importance of friendship, making the point that many of his works in the past have been written for the benefit of friends, and others for beginning students; but it is hard to avoid the impression that the opening sentence is pointing to a rather different set of motives.

That impersonal opening, I suggest, prepares us for themes that surface more and more explicitly as the preface goes on. At first sight, the opening has a great deal in common with the more conventional approaches of Nicomachus and Quintilian, but it soon becomes clear that there are factors which make it highly unusual. For one thing Galen's resistance to the idea of publication is much more vehement even than Quintilian's. Moreover, his final reasons for overcoming that reluctance are much more surprising and paradoxical, and in some cases actually reverse the tropes we find in Quintilian: the things which drive Quintilian to publish in Galen's case only reinforce and deepen his intransigence, as we shall see in a moment. In the end, for Galen, it is not the demands of friendship which drive him to write – if anything they make him even more wary; instead it takes something much more powerful, that is, an almost despairing sense of obligation to correct the bad reading habits of his society (an even more intense, paradoxical and tortuously articulated version of the sense of obligation and outrage which we have seen already in *MM*). That sense of obligation, I suggest, is prefigured by the dispassionate tone of the opening sentence, with its hints that the text in front of us may be a matter of public service as much as personal exchange.

How exactly, then, does Galen represent his reluctance to write in this work, and how exactly is that reluctance overcome? The reason he gives initially for writing this work is that it is necessary to offer an overview of his earlier writings, given that different texts were written for different purposes; and indeed throughout the treatise he reminds us that different readers should be reading his work in different ways, according to their levels and priorities. That aim of guidance is close to Quintilian's stated aim of guiding his readers through the writing of the past, except that in Galen's case the body of material to be navigated through is his own writing, as if his *oeuvre* has the complexity of a complete intellectual discipline in its own right. The things that hold him back in his writing of *Ord.Lib.Prop.* itself are relatively conventional worries, not stated explicitly. He seems to be concerned, for one thing, about the difficulty of the task and keen to avoid oversimplification – at any rate he tries out several different ways of ordering his material, and stresses the need for each reader to respond according to his or her particular needs.[51] He also seems keen to avoid self-promotion – his inclination to write for friends, instead of for public

[51] See Mansfeld 1994: 120–2 on the way in which the work envisages two different types of reader; and cf. von Staden 2002b for just one example of Galen's habit of endlessly testing out different ways of dividing his material (in that case following but also extending traditional fascination with the question of how the medical *technē* should be divided).

circulation and the anonymity of his opening sentence, discussed above, both reinforce that impression.

However, that theme of reluctance very quickly takes a more surprising turn in the passage immediately following, when Galen starts to talk about the reluctance to write that he used to feel at an earlier stage in his career:

> In neither case was it my aim that these should be publicly distributed nor that they should be kept for posterity, since I could see that very few people understood even books which had been written in previous ages. Doctors and philosophers admire other doctors and philosophers without learning what they say and without training in the study of logic, through which they would be capable of distinguishing false arguments from true . . . Having persuaded myself that even if a book were written by the Muses it would not be respected more than the compositions of the most ignorant people, I did not have any desire for any of my writings ever to gain any public reputation. (*Ord.Lib.Prop.* 1, K19.50–51)

Here Galen ingeniously reverses standard claims about being in the debt of the writing of the past. As for Quintilian, it is the great number of previously written works which holds him back; but in contrast with Quintilian, this is not because of his respect for the formidable wisdom these works embody, but instead because of his contempt for the way in which others judge that wisdom. For Quintilian, the high calibre of the accumulated knowledge of the past and the realisation that people have difficulty sorting through it is, in the end, a good reason to write. For Galen, by contrast, that is a reason for pessimism about the whole principle of embodying knowledge in textual form. In that sense this is a much more scathing version of the claim that the writing of the past is a barrier to taking up one's pen. Galen signals his scepticism about the whole industry of knowledge-compilation, acknowledging its prestige but casting doubt on the basis for that prestige. Paradoxically, it is this scepticism, at least on his own account, that allows him to keep his distance from attention-grabbing forms of composition, and that allows him to make such a powerful contribution.

In Quintilian's case, of course, it is not only optimism about his own ability to make a positive difference to the field that spurs him in the end to write, but also a desire to improve on the unrevised lecture notes circulating without his consent. Galen faces similar problems: famously, he complains in *Lib.Prop.* about forgeries and unauthorised texts being sold under his name, and cites that as one of the spurs which drove him to write the work, in order to establish an authentic list of his publications. In *Ord.Lib.Prop.*, however, we hear that this situation has led him to a very different reaction.

Far from spurring him on to publish, the mistreatment of his works has the opposite effect, making him unhappy even about the idea of writing up arguments for friends for fear that they will be published and so exposed to the bad reading habits of society despite his wishes to the contrary:

> But because they were distributed widely without my consent, as you know, I was exceedingly reluctant to give my friends any written version of what remained. And I was forced (ἠναγκάσθην) because of this actually to write a work on *The Best Sect*, not the kind which many doctors and philosophers have written in the past where they praise their own sect by name, but give only a hint about the method by which one might constitute the best sect either in medicine or any other field. In that work is stated and demonstrated the claim I made a moment ago, that it is necessary for anyone who wants to be a true judge of sects first to gain an understanding of logic.[52] (1, K19.51)

Later he repeats the same point:

> But when the works I had given to friends began to be circulated amongst many people, I also wrote on compulsion (ἐξ ἀνάγκης) the work on *The Best Sect*... (1, K19.52)

Initially, by Galen's own account, the misuse of his work makes him more reluctant to publish, rather than less, increasing his suspicion of the whole publishing industry.[53] Where Quintilian writes in order to clarify and improve on the notes circulated without his approval, Galen represents his task of correction as much greater, to correct the logical shortcomings and bad reading habits of his society, which does not have the logical training necessary for independent judgement. It is only then, having broken the barriers of his own reluctance through an awareness of the depth of his obligation, that he is free to launch into a long list of his own writings. Ostensibly his reluctance to write does not apply to *Ord.Lib.Prop.* itself; instead, he is reliving the reluctance from a much earlier stage in his career. But it is nevertheless vividly enacted here through his tortured language, torn between despair and compulsion, and through the repetitive structure of the opening paragraphs. For example, he describes in K19.51 his

[52] As Galen himself explains, *Opt.Sect.* is itself an unusual version of the 'best sect' genre precisely because it avoids simplistic recommendation of a single approach: see van der Eijk 1999a: 14–15; Runia 1999: 41–2.

[53] Admittedly the picture he offers in *Lib.Prop.* is much closer to what we find in Quintilian: concern for his own reputation, and for the accuracy and correct attribution of his own works, are what prompt him to write there. In *Ord.Lib.Prop.* itself, the second mention of how his work has been distributed against his wishes (K19.52) is much closer to that picture than the first: nevertheless even in that second passage of *Ord.Lib.Prop.* Galen avoids mentioning the motive of self-protection explicitly.

reluctance to write and his final breaking of that reluctance – through the phrase 'I was compelled' (ἠνάγκάσθην) – before almost immediately getting sucked back into another tirade against the bad reading habits of contemporary society. That in turn leads him to express again his unwillingness to publish, and once again to re-enact his final change of heart with repetition of the same concept – 'I was compelled' (ἐξ ἀνάγκης) – more than thirty lines later in K19.52.

Galen feels the need to write, in other words, in order to reverse the situation where he feels appalled by the idea of writing.[54] In that sense, Galen's rejection of conventional versions of the knowledge-ordering project, which rely, according to his account, on unthinking adherence to inherited ideas, is precisely the thing which allows his own knowledge-ordering activities to be so effective and so revolutionary. Ultimately, *Ord.Lib.Prop.* – or at least the section of it where Galen recounts the struggles that filled his early career before the writing of *Opt.Sect.* – is not about writing for friends at all. It throws doubt on the very images of friendly composition that fill its opening lines, through Galen's worries in K19.51–2 about the way in which work can leak into public circulation even from the hands of his close associates, making it clear that friendship on its own may not be enough to justify composition in a society whose illogical reading habits are so deeply and damagingly ingrained. It is only something stronger than the demands of friends – that is, a despairing urge towards social and philosophical reform – that can give a powerful enough compulsion. The ignorance of society both prompts his work and at the same time holds it back, and the work gives a vivid sense of the way in which Galen gets caught between these opposing compulsions. Both of the points he shares most strikingly with Quintilian – on the authority of the writing of the past and on the problems of unauthorised publication – are used not (as for Quintilian) as reasons to publish against initial inclination, but instead as further reasons to hold back, and as a springboard for reflecting, in a much more barbed, pessimistic and paradoxical way, on the degenerate state of society. Aspirations to social reform and tirades against the state of society are not unparalleled in Galen's other work – the opening of *On Prognosis* is a case in point – but they are striking here for being so ingeniously and paradoxically combined with standard prefatory tropes of authorial self-justification. Also, in this case they help Galen towards one of the most studied and ingenious avoidances of self-advertisement one

[54] To my mind Mansfeld 1994: 118–19 greatly underemphasises the degree to which Galen stresses his own reluctance.

could imagine. Not only does he avoid the temptation of seeking public approval; he is not even tempted (as so many of his knowledge-ordering counterparts are) by the demands of personal obligation; it is only a higher cause, born from desperation, that can break through his reticence. For Plutarch, in his theorisation of self-praise, one of the factors that can make self-praise acceptable is if the self-praiser has higher moral ends in view;[55] Galen satisfies that criterion masterfully.

[55] See Gibson 2003: 239.

CHAPTER 3

Demiurge and Emperor in Galen's world of knowledge

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> The Emperor – this world-soul – I saw riding through the city to review his troops. It is indeed a wonderful feeling to see such an individual who, here concentrated into a single point, reaches out over the world and dominates it.
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> Hegel, 1806

The presence of a wise, powerful, skilful and provident creator figure – alternately labelled 'nature' (*phusis*) and 'demiurge' (*dēmiourgos*) – is absolutely key to Galen's thinking, to the medical and philosophical system he constructs and articulates. This figure has, however, not yet been subject to the intensity of scholarly scrutiny that its structural significance demands.[1] This chapter is an attempt to fill in some of these gaps by investigating, in a more focused manner than hitherto, questions about where Galen's notion of nature and the demiurge comes from and about the work it does in his world of knowledge. I examine the intellectual resources that Galen drew on in fashioning his creator, what is traditional and what original in his formulation, and the identity of both its past precedents and the contemporary features it shares, as well as the motivations that he may have had in producing the particular package that he did.

Two specific, and connected, arguments will be put forward, following on from some more general points about Galen's demiurge, his notion of nature, as it appears and functions within his medical system and fits into his wider cultural context. First, that the Roman Emperor, in both an abstract and more concrete sense, should be placed alongside the usual suspects when considering the conceptual treasury Galen drew on in formulating his creator. So, as well as the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions which Galen explicitly acknowledges as influential, and his more hidden (but just as well-known) debts to Stoicism, the configuration of power in the Roman Empire

[1] Various aspects of the subject have been covered by e.g. Hankinson 1989, Flemming 2000, Kovačić 2001, Frede 2003 and Jouanna 2003. This still leaves many gaps, however.