

Todd Curtis
University of Newcastle upon Tyne

Galen's approach to what is Hippocratic in *De natura hominis*: A rhetorical analysis of *In Hippocratis de natura hominis commentaria*

For Galen, it was important that *De natura hominis* (*Nat.Hom.*) was perceived as having a Hippocratic pedigree, which is quite obvious from the title of one of his lost works, *In 'The Nature of Man', Hippocrates is observed holding the same opinion in respect to his other works* (*De libris propriis* K. 19.36). The reason Galen was so committed to *Nat.Hom.* was that it presented a model of human physiology which could be mated to his own. Hence, in his work *On the Elements According to Hippocrates* (*Hipp.Elem.*), *Nat.Hom.* was held forth as evidence that Galen's medical theories of the four elements and humors were indeed in harmony with the legendary Father of Medicine. Unfortunately for Galen, the status of *Nat.Hom.* had been called into question long ago by the followers of Aristotle, who believed that Hippocrates' student, Polybus, was its author. Moreover, there was still speculation concerning the author(s), contents, and Hippocratic authenticity of *Nat.Hom.*, which provided his critics with plenty of ammunition to attack his claims as to its Hippocratic heritage. To complicate the matter further, not all of the concepts expressed in *Nat.Hom.* were consistent with Galen's theories and observations. Thus, Galen was faced with the difficult task of extricating parts of *Nat.Hom.* that he viewed as Hippocratic in order to solidify *Nat.Hom.*'s Hippocratic pedigree. One of the literary tools Galen called upon to accomplish this task was a 'word-for-word' commentary, *In Hippocratis de natura hominis commentaria* (*HNH*).

The question that this paper examines is not so much what is Hippocratic but how one argues for a text's Hippocratic pedigree. It should not be forgotten that in *Hipp.Elem.* Galen had previously expounded upon parts of *Nat.Hom.*, but instead of returning to this dogmatic form of exegesis, he chose to write a word-for-word commentary to prove *Nat.Hom.* is authentically Hippocratic. In selecting this genre, Galen is using a literary tool that ostensibly allows the audience and the author to both become readers of *Nat.Hom.*. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how this genre figures into the rhetorical strategy Galen uses to authenticate and relegate parts of *Nat.Hom.* that he deems to be or not to be Hippocratic. While it is clear from his prefatory remarks that the question of Hippocratic authorship is of primary importance to this commentary, it remains unclear to what extent his argument for *Nat.Hom.*'s Hippocratic authenticity governs the way he selects his *lemmata* and expounds upon them. In other words, does Galen lemmatize *Nat.Hom.* according to its sense units or according to an overall argument in his exegesis? By examining the ways in which he divides up the source text and the kinds of questions he asks of it, this paper will shed some light on how rhetorical the process of demonstrating what is Hippocratic can be in word-for-word commentary.