

By the time Galen was composing his vast corpus of medical literature, there had already been a wide variety of philosophers and physicians who had written on *sperma* and its relationship to conception, growth, and development. While there was no universally accepted theory, there was a belief among philosophers, physicians, and the learned elite that the seed provided a logical explanation to a whole set of questions concerning the generation of mankind. Questions concerning the sex and character of a child, or the differences between male and female bodies, or the formation of body parts could be ultimately explained by a correct understanding of the human seed. In many respects, there was a science of the seed which was based on observation and philosophical speculation.

The science of the seed was a recurring topic in the Galenic corpus, and it was clearly important to Galen's program to promote a more philosophical brand of medicine. For example, in *De constitutione artis medicinae* (CAM) Galen uses the concept of the seed to explain how one can determine what to treat and what not to treat. He argues that body parts which are generated by the seed can not be treated because once they are formed they are impossible to change. On the other hand, body parts that are generated by nature can be regenerated and therefore repaired. Thus, he advises that a physician first recognize whether nature or the seed has generated the part before he attempts to treat it. While this seems like sage advice, it is difficult to imagine how it could be practically applied. These comments should be viewed in light of his overall argument in this work, namely, that the art of medicine should be constructed via philosophical methods. With this in mind, Galen's distinction between parts generated by the seed and parts generated by nature underscores to his audience that the art of medicine is thoroughly philosophical since it is based on the science of the seed.

This paper will examine how Galen uses the science of the seed in his presentation of the art of medicine. It will take into consideration how these concepts fit into Galen's overall rhetorical strategy in a variety of genres. In doing so, the following questions will be addressed: What theories of the seed does Galen emphasize as being fundamental to the art of medicine? When and why does he bring these theories up in his explanations and arguments? What is he trying to convey to his audience? Ultimately, this study aims at demonstrating how Galen often uses the science of the seed in a rhetorical manner to make his explanations of the art of medicine more cogent.