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**The Influence of Epideictic Discourse on Galen's Argumentative Style**

The purpose of this paper is to explore, in general, the role of epideictic discourse in Galen's work and, in particular, Galen's use of argumentative strategies derived from the rhetorical debates and public demonstrations typical of the Second Sophistic. I maintain that an examination of the interaction between the display of medical knowledge and the show of rhetorical dominance will greatly improve our understanding of Galen's ambivalent position vis à vis the intellectual trends and cultural practices of the Antonine Period.

In the first part of the paper, I examine two illustrative cases of Galen's use of epideictic discourse. These two examples are taken from treatises presented by Galen as scholarly expositions of medical subjects rather than as oratorical pieces or polemical essays. I look first at the inclusion of three fictional speeches in the final chapters of *De Sectis*, each delivered in turn by an unnamed practitioner of the three major medical schools: methodist, empiricist and rationalist. The sudden transition from expository writing to epideictic discourse is obviously intended here as a didactic device to give fair, balanced accounts of the respective positions of the three sects. The result, however, is that an otherwise academic discussion becomes also a public audition combining a polemical and agonistic display of knowledge with its declared pedagogical purpose. Next I look into the frequent inclusion of oratorical pieces and the equally common staging of polemical exchanges in *De Naturalibus Facultatibus*. I show how this rhetorical device is consistently used by Galen to construct his critique of other authors and refute his scientific opponents (Erasistratus and his followers in this case). Although Galen shows in other places his dislike for the fashionable public debates and demonstrations of his time he does not hesitate here to address and challenge his opponents as if they were present and even makes them participate in heated, simulated debates with himself. In fact, Galen's own discourse is loaded with that same verbal exuberance, contrived argumentation, dramatic effects and vicious personal attacks that he claims to loathe in others. This discursive strategy not only defines Galen's argumentative style, but relocates his work and intellectual goals within the realm of public performance and rhetorical debate.

Epideictic discourse also manifests itself in Galen's diction. Galen's choice of vocabulary and phraseology contributes to bringing the discussion closer to the expressive patterns of oral argumentation. Noteworthy are Galen's frequent use of forensic terms and the repeated allusions to an audience. The combined effect of these expressive devices is to transform the reader into a listener and the scientific text into a stage for rhetorical contest.

In the second and final part I conclude that the reenactment of public speeches and the staging of rhetorical matches indicate Galen's dependence upon the expressive and conceptual forms of epideictic discourse and point to the strong connections of his writings with the eristic culture of his time, in spite of his continuous attempts to distance himself from it. Finally, I suggest that the key to understanding the apparent contradiction

between Galen's avowed intellectual position and Galen's argumentative style must be sought in his eagerness to achieve public recognition and cultural supremacy rather than in his efforts to further the progress of medicine.