

Galen in the Library: Texts, Canons, and Literary Criticism at *Peri Alupias* 13-17

Galen's recently rediscovered treatise *Peri Alupias*, written shortly after the loss of a significant portion of his personal library in the conflagration in 192 CE that also destroyed the Palatine libraries, represents an important new source of evidence for the practical function, as well as the cognitive role, of libraries in the High Roman Empire. While previous work on this text has focused on identifying the remains of the buildings which Galen describes or the specific practical realia of working within these structures (Tucci 2008, Jones 2009; Nicholls 2011, Rothschild and Thompson 2012, Nicholls 2013), in this paper I examine its self-portrait of Galen as a critic. In particular, I concentrate on two central passages describing Galen's work practices within these libraries and their implications for the authority of Galen's intellectual persona within the broader context of imperial literary trends.

While explaining to his addressee the great tragedy represented by the loss of both his personal books and the holdings of the Palatine libraries (*PA* 12-13), Galen singles out several eponymous collections for comment (Ἀττικιανὰ, Καλλίνια, Πεδουκίγια). That these collections remained intact and bore the names of their bibliophilic compilers vouchsafes their perceived high quality and the critical effort that went into assembling the books. Moreover, though, by assimilating the physical books with the men responsible for assembling them, Galen hints at the intermediate ground between the idea of the library as a physical collection and as the archive embodied by the cultural performance of an individual. This conflation of the individual and his books echoes the displays of massive amounts of knowledge inherent in, for example, Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* (Jacob 2000, Jacob 2013).

Galen's self-portrait in the *Peri Alupias* draws upon these intellectual currents in his attempt to represent himself as a singular scholarly authority. After decrying the loss of the

authoritative eponymous collections, Galen remarks upon errors that he has observed in the so-called πίνακες (*PA* 16-17) that can no longer be corrected on the authority of the texts in those collections (*PA* 14). While Galen's self-representation in his other works as a textual critic *par excellence* has been noted (e.g. *Hipp. Epid. III*; Totelin 2009, von Staden 2009), here the Galenic portrayal of his own edits to the catalogue reflects his role in refining and redefining the records of the Greco-Roman tradition in a fashion consonant with the bibliophilic collectors mentioned previously. On the one hand, Galen positions himself as the superior critic in relation to the Hellenistic scholars that initially codified and established the canon in the third and second centuries BCE. At the same time, his activity runs parallel to an impulse in imperial intellectual circles to demonstrate mastery of the classical tradition through performative display of knowledge, while also mediating notions of "the canon" through choice and omission. Galen's account thus sheds light not only upon his activities within the imperial libraries themselves, but also upon his own intellectual self-portrait, which reveals echoes of other imperial scholarly activities present in texts such as Athenaeus.

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