One morning, a long time ago, Diogenes the Cynic woke up to an unusual noise outside the barrel in which he lived. When he popped out his head to find out what was going on, he saw people running to and fro, carrying arms, brandishing spears and bringing stones to reinforce the wall. The general buzz of activity told him that the Corinthians were obviously preparing for war. And all of a sudden, Diogenes felt very useless and left out of it all. To remedy this, he hoisted up his tunic and started with all his might to roll his barrel up and down Kraneion hill. When asked by one his friends what on earth he thought he was doing, he explained this remarkable display of psychological self-help avant la lettre as follows: ‘I, too, am rolling my barrel; I do not want to give the impression that I am the only lazybody among so many hard workers!’.

The anecdote can be found in Lucian’s *On How to Write History* (§ 3) and applies directly both to the subject and the occasion of this paper. Obviously, I owe it to my teacher and mentor Dirk Schenkeveld at least to try my hand at rolling my barrel, if at nothing more constructive, in the field of ancient literary criticism. And fortunately, I find myself in good company: for the author who will be in the centre of attention in the following pages, Galen, was not averse to barrel-rolling in this area (or almost any other) either, even though we do not usually associate such interests with a doctor.

As a matter of fact, by Galen’s time, philology had become firmly established as a legitimate activity for the more ambitious exponents of the medical profession. In the third century BCE, the Ptolemies had founded the Museum and the Library as a part of their cultural policy.

* Professor Geoffrey Lloyd kindly read and commented on an earlier draft of this paper.
The great literary heritage from the Greek past was studied there by philologists who enjoyed the support, financially and otherwise, of the monarchs. In this way, the Ptolemies gave off a clear signal that they claimed to be the legitimate heirs to Greek culture and Greek paideia, traditionally embodied in literature. As a result of the active interest shown by the Ptolemies, the social and intellectual status of philology rocketed and became something of an intellectual trend. Contemporary doctors, too, suddenly developed a taste for the lexicographical and exegetical study of the Hippocratic corpus, sometimes slightly to the detriment of their surgical and anatomical interests. The change occurred between the generation of Herophilus and that of Bacchius.\footnote{Cf. Von Staden 1989, 427 ff.; 454 ff.} From this time onward, Hippocratic exegesis was definitely on the medical agenda. In that sense Galen stood in a clearly defined tradition when he devoted more than a little interest to the most authoritative source of the medical profession, Hippocrates.\footnote{Cf. for Galen’s strategy in using Hippocrates’ authority, Lloyd 1991.}

A language-oriented approach to an authoritative text in any field was also stimulated by the nature of ancient education at large. The language disciplines, grammar, rhetoric and logic,\footnote{The ancient terms are not coextensive with the modern ones.} had always been the nucleus of the ancient school system, where they were applied to the study of the poets, Homer in particular. Homer’s authority was approached through philology, so when people encountered an authoritative text in their later walk of life, linguistic analysis would impose itself as a natural approach to the study of such texts. This phenomenon may be labeled the ‘philological paradigm’ of Antiquity.

Moreover, Galen’s interest in linguistic and literary matters also fit in very well with the general tendencies of his age, the second century CE, and especially with the interests of the ‘movement’, if that is the proper word, of the Second Sophistic.\footnote{Cf. Bowersock 1969, 59 ff.; Kollesch 1981.} Although Galen was no sophist
himself, his education, status and taste for travel corresponded to what we know of the acknowledged representatives of the Second Sophistic. Even if his Commentaries on Hippocrates reveal a Galen extremely critical of the exaggerated attention paid by his predecessors and contemporaries to form and style instead of content, it is still significant that he feels obliged to enter into the discussion at all. Galen himself was proud of the fact that he had had a thorough training in grammar and rhetoric. He is very much opposed to a trend he claims to discern in his own day, viz. to skip this educational basis and to proceed directly to philosophy and medicine. As he points out, this procedure produces the kind of ignoramuses who will uncritically believe that they have bought an authentic work by Galen, when anyone without any schooling in medicine, but with basic philological training would be able to undeceive them at the very first glance (De libris propriis 19.8 f. Kühn). His general philological interests stand out quite clearly from the list of his works (De libris propriis, 19 K.), which features, among other items, a commentary on Aristotle’s Περὶ ἐρμηνείας, works on the correctness of names, on homonyms, on the question whether philology is useful for ethics, and a number of lexicographical studies on Attic authors and the comedians.

The superman Hippocrates, the ultimate authority in medical matters, who emerges from Galen’s work, is very much Galen’s own construction, intended first and foremost to boost and bolster Galen’s own reputation. A lot of exegetical and lexicographical work had been done already, as I just pointed out, but the sheer volume of Galen’s work on Hippocrates tended to absorb all previous scholarship. The picture that emerges from Galen’s work—and I will, of course, focus on the literary aspects in this paper—is the following: Hippocrates is a model of medical perfection and a remarkable author at the same time. In fact, Galen has to adapt the current grammatical and rhetorical ideals of his day to make Hippocrates fit, but he manages to do so without breaking the boundaries set by the philological paradigm: he never discards the norms imposed by grammar and rhetoric as irrelevant to a medical man. Galen rearranges the rhetorical virtues, stressing brevity and clarity while downgrading the importance of grammatical correctness. He connects this move with the concept of a
separate genre, namely the ἐπιστημονικὴ διδασκαλία, the genre of scientific (scholarly) instruction. In this genre, the effectiveness of the message is always more important than its linguistic form.⁵

Now, Hippocrates was not the kind of author that would be studied by the ‘real’ literary critics in antiquity. There is, however, one remark in Demetrius On Style (§ 4) which quotes the beginning of Hippocrates’ Aphorisms (without the name of the author) as an example of a so-called ἕπαρ σύνθεσις, an ‘arid composition’, the negative counterpart of the plain (ἰσχνός) style. Since Galen, too, has something to say (well actually, a lot) about this aphorism, let us compare their findings. Demetrius explains why exceedingly brief members are equally out of place in discourse as long ones: they produce the so-called ‘arid’ composition. He adds the following comment on his example ὁ βίος βραχύς, ἡ τέχνη μακρά, ὁ καιρός ὀξύς (‘life is short, art long, opportunity fleeting’, Hipp. Aph. 1.1; Eloc. 4):

κατακεκομμένη γὰρ ἐσκεν ἡ σύνθεσις καὶ κεκερματισμένη, καὶ
ἐνκαταφρόνητος διὰ τὸ μικρὰ σώμπαντα ἔχειν.

‘The composition here seems to be minced fine, and may fail to impress because everything about it is so minute’ (tr. W. Rhys Roberts).

Although here the overdose of μικρά is judged negatively, elsewhere in the same treatise Demetrius allows scope for brevity as a virtue, for instance in § 7 where he acknowledges the relationship between brevity and the forceful style (δεινότης).⁶ And he goes on to comment on brevity as follows (Eloc. 9):

⁵ Galen’s views on Hippocrates’ linguistic and rhetorical merits are discussed at length in Sluiter 1994 (forthc.); for a more general overview see Pearcy 1993.

⁶ Eloc. 7: τῶν δὲ μικρῶν κάλκων κἀν δεινότητι χρήσις ἐστι· δεινότερον γάρ τὸ ἐν ὅλῳ πολὺ ἐμφανώμενον καὶ σφοδρότερον, διὸ καὶ οἱ Λάκωνες βραχυλόγοι ύπὸ δεινότητος: ‘Short members may also be employed in vigorous passages. There is greater vigour and intensity when much meaning is conveyed in a few words. Accordingly it is just because of their vehemence that the Lacedaemonians are chary of speech’ (tr. W. Rhys Roberts).
'From the point of view of composition such brevity is termed a "phrase" ... brevity suits apopthegms and maxims; and it is a mark of superior skill to compress much thought in a little space, just as seeds potentially contain entire trees. Draw out the maxim at full length, and it becomes a lecture or a piece of rhetoric rather than a maxim' (tr. W. Rhys Roberts, adapted).

In fact, what Galen does in his commentary on Hippocrates' Aphorisms is just this, viz. to draw out the pithy sayings to full-length pieces of instruction. And he seems to react to those who draw a distinction between aphorisms and teaching in his very commentary on the first aphorism (17b.345-56 K.; esp. 351). In this part of his commentary—which stretches over eleven pages in Kühn's edition—he analyses the first aphorism as the proem of the work (as had become traditional in ancient exegesis of Aphorisms; 17b.346 K.); this proem is then interpreted as a programmatic statement. The text of Aphorisms 1.1, which Galen treats as a single unit, reads:

> ο βίος βραχύς, ή δε τέχνη μακρή, ο δε καιρός ὁξύς, ή δε πείρα σφαλερή, ή δε κρίσις χαλεπή, η δε ου μόνον ἐωντὼν παρέχειν τὰ δέοντα ποιέοντα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς παρέοντας καὶ τὰ ἔξωθεν.

'Life is short, art long, opportunity fleeting, experiment tricky, judgement difficult. One should not only prepare oneself to do what one should, but also the patient and those present and the external circumstances.'

Galen reads this aphorism as a coherent whole: life is short only in comparison with the enormousness of art, which in turn is apparent from the fact that 'opportunity is fleeting': this means that it is fiendishly difficult to know exactly when to act, because bodies are in a state of constant flux. There are two procedures regulating medical action: one is experience, πείρα, which is tricky, because the material on which it
after ἡ δὲ τέχνη μακρά serves only as an explanation (17b.348 K.), while the second part of the aphorism is a piece of advice to the prospective readers. According to Galen, what this first aphorism serves only as an explanation (17b.348 K.), while the second part of the aphorism is a piece of advice to the prospective readers. According to Galen, what this first aphorism\textsuperscript{7} tries to convey is the τρόπος τῆς διδασκαλίας and the χρεία τῶν συγγραμμάτων: the ‘method of teaching’ and the ‘use of Hippocrates’ writings’ (Gal. in Hipp. Aph. 1.1, 17b.351 f. K.):

Τὸ τε γὰρ ἀφοριστικὸν είδος τῆς διδασκαλίας ὑπὲρ ἐστὶ τὸ διὰ βροχυτάτων ἀπαντά τὰ τοῦ πράγματος ἰδία περιορίζειν, χρησιμώτατον τῷ βουλομένῳ μακρὰν τέχνην διδάξειν ἐν χρόνῳ βραχχεί. τὸ τε ὅλως διὰ τούτο συγγράφειν ὅτι ὁ βίος βραχὺς ἑστιν ὡς πρὸς τὸ τῆς τέχνης μέγεθος εὐλαγώτατον.

'For the aphoristic type of instruction, i.e. defining as briefly as possibly everything essential to the matter in hand, is the most useful type for someone wishing to teach a long art in a short time. And, generally, it stands to reason that one’s motivation for writing treatises is the fact that life is short in comparison with art’s magnitude.'

Galen expatiates on this latter point explaining that each individual can only hope to contribute a little bit to the perfection of medicine over a single lifetime. And at the end of his extensive discussion, he summarises his interpretation of the first aphorism as follows (17b.355 K.):

Ἡ μὲν τέχνη μακρὰ γίνεται ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου παραμετρουμένη βίω. χρήσιμον δὲ τὸ καταλπεῖν συγγράμματα καὶ μάλιστα τὰ σύντομα καὶ ἁπλοὶ τὸ νόμον μάθησιν καὶ ἐντὸς τῆς ἐχθηκῆς τὸν ἐκείνην τῷ πολλῷ καὶ ἐντὸς τῆς ἐκείνης ἐπεκείνης τις μετὰ ταύτα ἀνάμειν ὁ τοιοῦτος τρόπος τῆς διδασκαλίας ἐτειχίσθησιν.

'Art is long when measured against the life of an individual human being. And it is useful to leave behind writings and especially brief and aphoristic ones. [NB this phrase has nothing whatsoever in the aphorism of which it could be considered a paraphrase; however, it is essential to Galen’s view of function and purpose of the aphorisms.] For such a style of teaching is suitable for the very first introduction

\textsuperscript{7} It is Galen’s belief that this first aphorism must necessarily fit in with what follows (17b.351 K.).
to a subject, and in order to remember what one has learned, and to bring back to mind afterwards what one has forgotten.’ In this way, the first aphorism becomes a *leçon par exemple*: it is a programmatic statement explaining that, and how, aphorisms fulfill their didactic task, and the explanation itself takes the form of an aphorism. There is no true difference between aphorisms and teaching, as in Demetrius’ observation, nor does Galen share the negative view of the first aphorism advocated by Demetrius. On the contrary, he qualifies the production of treatises necessary to counter the negative effects of the shortness of life as (17b.352 K.):

δοσα τις ἔγνω τοῖς μετέπειτα καταλαπεῖν ἐν συγγράμμασιν, ὀκριβώς τε ἄμα καὶ ταχέως καὶ σαφῶς ἐκπασαν τὴν τῶν διδασκομένων προγράμματων φύσιν ἐρμηνεύοντα.

‘leaving all one’s knowledge behind for the next generations, expressing the nature of what needs to be taught with precision, brevity and clarity’.

There is nothing εὐκαταφρόνητος, nothing of Demetrius’ *quantité négligeable*, about this kind of work.

As far as I know, the passage from Demetrius is the only example of ‘official’ literary criticism being extended to include Hippocrates. So in a sense, Galen was left a free hand to demarcate Hippocrates’ position among the acknowledged literary classics and to establish the genre of the ἐπιστημονική διδασκαλία; the exclusion of scholarly writing from the domain of literature, which had become tradition ever since Aristotle’s verdict on Empedocles’ ‘poetry’, did not bother him.8

The genres that Galen uses as a foil for Hippocrates are poetry, especially Homer,9 and historiography. Both the poets and the historians of the classical period may also be quoted as linguistic parallels to

8 Ar. Po. 1, 1447b17 f. Οὐδὲν δὲ κοινὸν ἐστιν ὁμήρῳ καὶ ἔμπεδοκλεῖ πλῆν τὸ μέτρον.

9 Galen’s views on and use of the poets have been studied before by DeLacy 1966 and Moraux 1987.
Hippocrates, in matters of vocabulary, idiom or syntax. But even in these linguistic matters, Galen sometimes differentiates quite subtly between poetic work and Hippocrates, for example when he insists that the theory of the *epitheta ornantia* should not be extended to Hippocratic texts: in explaining Hippocrates, Galen says, it is not acceptable to deny an adjective its full force and to put it on a par with a phrase like γάλα λευκόν in Homer. Generally speaking, however, the poets’ and historians’ status of παλαιοί guarantees the legitimacy of using them as sources of linguistic comparison. But when it comes to their use as sources of knowledge, it is a different story altogether.

Not surprisingly, the age-old criterion of adherence to truth, or reality versus fiction, was especially important to Galen. In Hellenistic and Roman doctrine, literary forms could be distinguished in accordance

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10 Parallels from Herodotus: *φωκελίξεσθαι*, in Hipp. Aph. 50 (18a.156 K.); *μετεξετέρην*, in Hipp. Art. comm. 3 (18a.599 K.); from Homer: e.g. in Hipp. Aph. 43 (18a.147 K.), see further Moraux 1987, 26 ff.; from Pindar: e.g. in Hipp. Prorrhet. I comm. 3.118 (16.763 K.); from Thucydides: e.g. in Hipp. Epid. VI 12 (17b.167 f. K.); from Demosthenes and the orators: e.g. in Hipp. de art. 1.50 (18a.384 K.), cf. in Hipp. Prognost. 3.2 (18b.237 K.).

11 In *De Comate sec. Hipp.* 3 (7.656 K.), Galen wonders what Hippocrates means by καταφορά νοθρά. He thinks it imperative to find an explanation: οὐ γάρ ἦν τῶν ματαίως τὰ ὀνόματα ἑπιτιθέντων οὕτως ο ἀνήρ οὔτ' ἀνοῆτος πρόσκειται τῇ καταφορῇ τὸ νοθρά, οὕτε φησιν ὅσπερ "Ομηρος, ὕγρον ἐλαιον καὶ γάλα λευκόν μηδενός ἐνεκα διορισμοῦ. καὶ γάρ πάν γάλα λευκὸν καὶ ἐλαιον ὅγρον ἀλλ' ἐκάστη λέξεις καὶ συλλαβή πάσα πρᾶγμα τι σημαίνει περ' αὐτοῦ. Cf. ib. 657 ἐπιμέλειαν περὶ τὰς λέξεις. Galen concludes that the νοθρά καταφορά is a subtype of the ἀγρυπνος καταφορά, the attack of κώμα that comes on without sleep being one of the symptoms.

The second text which discusses this phenomenon is *In Hipp. Epid. VI 6* (17b.339 f.): τὸ δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ σπλήνος εἰρημένον ἀριστερός σπλήν μέγας, οἱ μὲν οὕτως προσκείθηκα νομίζοναι ὡς τῷ γάλα τὸ λευκὸν τὸ ποτήρι προσέθηκε καὶ τῷ σύν τὸ χαμαιευνάδες, οὐκ οὖν οὔτε γάλα-κτος πνεύς ὃ μὴ λευκὸν ἔστιν, οὔτε σωρν αἰ μὴ χαμαιευνάδες εἰσίν. τάχα δὲ κλ. (Galen then proposes an emendation: he submits that ἀριστερός forms part of the previous aphorism, ‘there comes no blood from the left nostril’, thus eliminating the combination ἀριστερός σπλήν.)
with their assumed degree of factual truth. Roughly speaking, there was a threefold division: in declining order of truthfulness they were ἰστορία (fama, verum); πλάσμα (fictum argumentum, verisimile); and μύθος (fabula, falsum). There was some variation in the application of this triad: Asclepiades of Myrlea, for instance, takes the three degrees of truthfulness as subspecies of ἰστορία, with ἀληθὴς ἰστορία coming out ‘on top’. Of course, it was precisely Hippocrates’ superior command of the facts, his insight into reality, that was to make us forgive him his minor flaws in expression. The truth criterion separates Hippocrates’ work from poetry. That is not to say that the poets can never be right in medical matters. But the nature of their work makes truth an entirely accidental feature. This is why Galen is so fiercely opposed to Chrysippus in De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis: Chrysippus used the authority of the poets as an argument, that is to say, he replaced scholarly argument with quotations from the poets, instead of using the poets merely as additional illustrative material. In Galen’s eyes, this was unacceptable. In his ranking of types of argument there is only one scientific type, and three unscientific ones. Among these latter types, the one based on authority takes second position, after the dialectical type; it is styled ‘rhetorical’, and just barely precedes the sophistic type, that degrades itself even to the point of using worthless etymologies. According to Galen, quotations from the poets are in order only when one’s position has already been proven to be correct by other means, or when one is proposing a generally accepted statement.

Let me give two practical illustrations of this attitude to the relevance of poetry, both dealing with fantasy figures: Centaurs and the Cyclops. In the third book of De usu partium, Galen discusses the functionality of hands, a virtually unique feature of human beings that explains why we

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12 See Brink’s commentary on Hor. Ars 338-42; Meijering 1987, 76 ff.; 84 ff.

13 See Sextus Empiricus M. 1.252 f.

14 DeLacy 1966; for Galen’s epistemology, see Frede 1981.
walk on only two legs. We can do without the speed that four legs would have given us, and use our hands to execute clever things that we have thought out (3.169 K.). Then Galen stops and wonders whether a combination of four legs plus two hands, like the Centaurs have, would not have been even better, but rejects the idea as an impossible combination of two types of bodies. Even if human beings and horses could couple, it is unthinkable that a viable embryo could result from it. And then Galen chides Pindar for describing exactly this (Gal. De usu partium 3.1, 3.169 K.):

Πίνδαρος δ' ει μεν ώς ποιητής προσίεται τό τών Κενταύρων μυθολόγημα, συγχωρητέον αύτῷ· ει δ' ώς σοφὸς ἀνήρ καί τι περιτότερον τών πολλών ἐπίστασθαι προσποιούμενος ἐτόλμα γράφειν

... ὃς

Ἰπποίσιν Μαγνητίδεσσι ἐμίυτ' ἐν Πάλιοισει σφυροῖς, ἐκ δ' ἐγένοντο στρατός θαυμαστός, ἀμφοτέροις ὁμοίοι τοκεύσι, τα ματρόθεν μεν κάτω, τα δ' ὑπερθε πατρός ἐπιτιμητέον αύτῷ τῇ προσποιήσει τῆς σοφίας.

'If Pindar accepts the story of the Centaurs in bis capacity of a poet, he should be forgiven for it. But if he dared to write the following as a knowledgeable person, claiming to know more than the masses, he should be taken to task for his pretension to knowledge: "... and he coupled with the Magnesian mares on the spurs of Pelion; and a weird breed was engendered, in the favor of either parent: the mare's likeness in the parts below, and the manlike father above [Pi. P. 2.46 ff., tr. Lattimore]"'.

And after some further discussion of the problem, Galen continues (De usu partium 3.1, 3.170 f. K.):

ἀλλ', ὡς Πίνδαρε, σοι μεν ἄθεου τε καὶ μυθολογεῖν ἐπιτρέπομεν εἰδότες τὴν ποιητικὴν μοῦσαν οὐχ ἔκλεψιν τῶν ἀλλῶν τῶν οἰκείων κόσμων καὶ τοῦ θεώματος διομένην· ἐκπλήξευ γὰρ οἷῳ καὶ κηλίδας τοὺς ἄκρατας, οὐ διδᾶκα βούλεσθαι, ἠμεῖς δ', οἰς ἀλληθείας, οὐ μυθολογῶς μέλει, σαφῶς ἢμεν οὐσίαν ἄνθρω-πον τε καὶ ἵππον παντάποσιν ἄμικτον ὑπάρχουσαν.
‘But, Pindar, we will leave the singing and story-telling to you. For we know that the Muse of poetry needs her own apparel and wonder as much as any of the Muses. I think she wants to astonish and entrance her audience, not to instruct them. We, however, who are concerned with truth, not story-telling, know very well that the natures of human beings and horses do not allow crossing in any way.’

In the first passage quoted, the poet is opposed to the σοφὸς ἀνήρ, but his poetic license, alluded to by σνΎχωρητέον, is respected; in the second, the functions of ἐκπλήξεων and κηλήσων are opposed to διδάξων, as μυθολογία is to ἀλήθεια. It goes without saying that this terminology has a long-standing pedigree in literary criticism.\(^{15}\)

So, as we saw, Centaurs were relegated to the world of poetical fiction, but the story of the Cyclops is used very differently in the next book of *De usu partium* (4.14, 3.313 K.). There, Galen has just described the position of the liver and the importance of the vena cava. A wound in these parts is always lethal. And to corroborate this point Galen adduces the story of Odysseus’ vengeance on the Cyclops: if it had not been for the fact that Odysseus and his companions could never have escaped from the cave by themselves, Odysseus would surely have executed his original plan: to stab the Cyclops in the area of the liver and the vena cava, thus ensuring his instantaneous death. It was only because the entrance to the cave was blocked by an enormous boulder that Odysseus had to resort to burning out Polyphemus’ eye: the Cyclops had to remain alive to remove the blockade.\(^{16}\)

The mythological character of the narrative is completely discounted here, and the story is, for once, taken at face value. On the other hand, Galen does stick to his own principles. Homer is not put forth as proof of how vital this part of the human body is, but rather to the contrary: the vulnerability of the liver area explains the relevance of Odysseus’ deliberations. Galen’s views on the relevance of poetry to scientific work are

\(^{15}\) Cf. Meijering 1987, 62 ff. (on poetic license); 6 ff. (ψυχαγωγία), cf. the table of opposites 10 f. (from Polybius).

\(^{16}\) Galen quotes *Od*. 9.361 (ὅθε φρένες ἡπαρ ἐξοντιν).
fairly traditional; the passages just quoted may be compared with the discussion between Strabo and Eratosthenes as reflected in the first book of Strabo’s *Geographica*.

Obviously, claiming a position for the genre of the scholarly treatise distinct and autonomous from poetry was not the main challenge Galen had to face. The real problem was to differentiate the genre from the only serious competitor as a literary prose genre, historiography. The need for differentiation may have been reinforced by the name ἱστορία itself: for ‘history’, the results of previous research, had always been one of the epistemological pillars of medicine. And as a literary genre, it was historiography that ever since Aristotle derived its uniqueness as a genre precisely from its particular claim to truthfulness and correspondence to reality. In the period between Thucydides and the second century CE, the notion of the usefulness of history had changed: Thucydides considered history useful because of the rational insight it provided into the mechanisms of past events, but he did not claim that history had a predictive value. He realised that the absence of fiction may make the genre less entertaining, but accepted this consequence. On the other hand, Polybius did stress the prognostic possibilities provided by history (and, incidentally, the connection of prognosis with history brought the genre into even closer proximity to medicine). Thus, usefulness for theoretical purposes gave way to usefulness in given situations. And

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18 Arist. *Po.* 9, 1451a36 ff.; see Brink 1960, 17 for the incidental role of history in this section of Arist. *Po.*
19 See Th. 1.22; the absence of τὸ μυθώδες is considered ἀτερπέστερον there. Thucydides aims at τὸ σαφές and τέρψις.—While Thucydides at least acknowledges that a lack of τὸ μυθώδες may diminish the entertainment aspects of historiography, he still thinks this effect entirely secondary. Cf. for the interpretation of the use of history, de Romilly 1954.
20 See Verdin 1973, 548 n. 28 for references. E.g. 6.57.4 ἀποικεῖν ὑπὲρ τοῦ μέλλοντος; 3.31.13. Note that Polybius is not the first to express this thought. It had been voiced before by orators, see Walbank 1967, 392.
where the entertainment aspect of historiography is concerned, Polybius states that its absence is what distinguishes historiography from tragedy.²¹ In the second century CE, however, historiography underwent a decisive change, at least if we may believe Lucian.

Lucian—a slightly younger contemporary of Galen’s—is the author of the only ancient monograph dedicated exclusively to the theory of historiography, On How to Write History—as one will see, it was no coincidence that my opening anecdote was derived from this treatise. In it he complains about the incompetent historians that were mushrooming in Rome at the time. Instead of devoting themselves to writing useful histories—to Lucian, τὸ χρήσιμον is the only legitimate purpose of writing history at all, while τέρψις is secondary at best²²—they utterly confuse the genre of historiography with encomiastic literature and poetry. Lucian tries to redress this uncalled-for striving after amusement by stressing the traditional relationship between historiography and usefulness and truthfulness.⁰³ As far as I know, Galen nowhere refers to contemporary developments in historiography, nor does he need to. For him, the only relevant material for comparison with Hippocrates lies in the classical historians, Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon. But his approach to historiography is necessarily the very opposite of Lucian’s: in order to make the criterion of ἀλήθεια more exclusively relevant for the genre of the scholarly treatise, Galen had to downgrade its relevance for the genre of historiography.

²¹ Plb. 2.56.11-2: τὸ γὰρ τέλος ἱστορίας καὶ τραγῳδίας οὐ ταύτων, ἀλλὰ τοῦκατ' αὐτοῦ, ἐκεῖ μὲν γὰρ δεῖ διὰ τῶν πιθανωτάτων λόγων ἐκπλήξει καὶ ψυχαγωγήσει κατὰ τὸ παρόν τοὺς ἀκούοντας, ἐνθάδε δὲ διὰ τῶν ἀληθινῶν ἔργων καὶ λόγων εἰς τὸν πάντα χρόνον διδάσκει καὶ πείσει τοὺς φιλομαθοῦντας· ἐπειδήπερ ἐν ἑκείνους μὲν ἴδεται τὸ πιθανόν, κἂν ἡ ψεῦδος, διὰ τὴν ἀπάτην τῶν θεωμένων, ἐν δὲ τούτως τάληθες διὰ τὴν ὀφέλεια τῶν φιλομαθοῦντων. Meijering 1987, 10; 46.


This explains why he stresses on various occasions that historians (especially Herodotus) are read for pleasure only, but that the students of medicine should display a different attitude towards their reading (*In Hipp. Epid. VI Comm. 3, 17b.33 K.):

... εάν τέ τις μῆ καθάπερ Ἡροδότου καὶ Κτησίου μόνον ὡς ἰσταρίαν ἀναγινώσκεται βιβλία τῶν παλαιῶν ἰατρῶν, ἀλλ' ἐνεκά τοῦ πλείον πεì εἰς τὰ τῆς τέχνης ἐργα.

'... at least if one does not read the books by the ancient doctors just like those by Herodotus and Ktesias, merely as history, but in order to become more proficient in the exercise of one's art.'

Herodotus’ companion in this text is significant: Ctesias, a contemporary of Thucydides, was ‘popular precisely for the story-telling element’ in his work (τὸ μυθωδὸς). His work ‘is full of fanciful details, pathetic episodes elaborately narrated, elements of biography and romance side by side with political and military narrative’ (Connor 1985, 459).

In the case of Thucydides there is an extra complication, for this historian actually ventured into the field of medicine in his description of the plague. Here, Galen has to resort to another tactic to show Hippocrates’ superiority. He adduces the criterion of the audience, something he also did to defend the need for writing his own commentaries: Hippocrates wrote for specialists, Galen explained his work for students. In the case of the plague, the argument runs that Thucydides wrote as a layman for laymen, while Hippocrates wrote as a specialist for his colleagues. This explains why Thucydides’ account is flawed in its selection of details: since Thucydides did not have a clue as to which details were relevant and which were not, he just presented everything

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24 Cf. *De anatom. adm.* 3.9 (2.393 K.), where Galen claims that the histories of Herodotus are read ἐνεκα τέρψεως only.

25 Cf. Sluiter 1994 (forthc.).
pell-mell. Hippocrates, on the other hand, eliminates everything that is not strictly relevant to the medical side of the story.²⁶

Seriousness and usefulness, reliability of the facts and an intelligent account of the underlying causes: it would seem that Hippocrates’ literary virtues were all on the side of docere and τὸ χρήσιμον, with nothing to balance them on the side of delectare and τέρψις.²⁷ However, Galen manages to make Hippocrates score even on this latter count. In fact, the story from Hippocrates’ Epidemics that I am referring to so appealed to his fancy that he quotes from it on four different occasions.²⁸ Here, I will discuss the most extensive version (De semine 1.4, 4.524 K.). The issue is the membrane that is said to encompass the embryo right from the moment of conception. Its presence could be demonstrated by dissecting animals. However, says Galen,

"Αμεινον δὲ Ἰπποκράτους ἀκούσαι περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν λέγοντος ἐν
tῷ περὶ φύσεως ποιῶν γράμματι, ποιῶν τὰ γάρ ἡμᾶς τῷ
τῆς θεωρίας ἀκριβεῖ, καὶ τέρψει, κεράσας οἷς δὴ λέξει τὴν
dιήγησιν, ἀντ᾽ ἐπανένατι τῷ σφοδρῷ τὸ περί φύσεως
tῆς θεωρίας, μὲν ὡστ᾽ ἐπανένατι τῷ σφοδρῷ τού λόγου, καὶ
dιανοαπεισάνθησαν σὺν ὄφελοισ τὴν διηγήσιν, ἵν' ἐξής
νεανικώτεροι γενόμεναι συντείνωμεν ἡμᾶς αὐτῶν ἄκμαστερον ἐπὶ τὸ κατά-
λοιπον τοῦ λόγου, καὶ τοῖς ἔδη ἀκούσωμεν τοῦ Ἰπποκράτους.

νοσώσιν ως ιδιώτης ιδιώταις ἐγραψεν, Ἰπποκράτης δὲ τεχνίτης τεχνί-
tους. Thucydides himself also envisages a select audience, cf. Th. 1.22.4 and
Montanari 1984, 116 (comparing Lucian, Polybius and Strabo).

²⁷ Combining instruction and entertainment becomes a characteristic feature
of great literature at least from the second century BCE onwards (Neoptolemus of
Parium apud Phld. Po. V, col. xiii 8-15 Jensen); Hor. Ars 343; Strabo 1.2.9, cf.
Meijering 1987, 6.

K.); Nat. fac. 2.3 (2.86 K.); Adv. Lycum 7.3 (18a.236 K.). The original story is
'It is better to listen to Hippocrates when he discusses these same issues in his ‘On the Nature of the Child’.\textsuperscript{29} For he will instruct us by the precision of his theory, and amuse us by mixing his narrative with a certain quality of speech.\textsuperscript{30} This entails a brief relaxation of the power of his style, and resting awhile, and entertainment accompanied by profit, in order that we may subsequently be rejuvenated and exert ourselves even more energetically in absorbing the rest of his argument. Well now then, let us listen to Hippocrates'. 

The relevant opposition is the one between παιδεύειν and τέρπειν, to educate and to entertain. The value of the instruction is guaranteed by Hippocrates' precision (τὸ ἀκριβές), and his ability to entertain by his style (λέξις). The relaxation of his usual forcefulness does not, however, lead to mere amusement, but to a combination of entertainment and instruction: σὺν ὡφελεῖα τερπόμενον, which influences the attitude of his audience in a positive and stimulating way. Horace would approve!

Although strictly speaking the story itself is irrelevant here, it would be unfair to deprive you of it, if only because that would also mean denying you the opportunity to judge Hippocrates’ λέξις for yourselves. So here it is, in Galen’s version (\textit{De semine} 1.4, 4.525 f. K.):

Hippocrates reports how he came to see a six-day old embryo, a γονή ‘seed’!\textsuperscript{31}

Ως δὲ εἶδον τὴν γονὴν ἐκταίνην ἐούσαν, ἐγὼ διτ/γήσομαι. γυναικὸς οίκετις μονουσιργὸς πολύτιμος ἦν, πορὰ άνδρας φοιτε-ουσα, ἢν οὐκ ἔδει λαβεῖν ἐν γαστρὶ, ὅκως μὴ ἄτιμοτέρχ ἐγ.

\textsuperscript{29} For the construction ἄκοψτο τίνος λέγοντος, cf. Schenkeveld 1992.

\textsuperscript{30} Or: 'by the kind of speech with which he mixes his narrative'. Cf. Strohmaier 1981, 192 f., who mentions Benedict Einarson’s emendation ἡδείς for ὡς δῆ, which seems to be confirmed by the Arabic version: 'because he mixed it with a talk which contains a lovely story'. However, as Strohmaier rightly stresses, this translation is by Hunayn, who had a solid knowledge of Greek, knew his Homer, and had enjoyed thorough philological training at Constantinople. Therefore, the possibility cannot be excluded that Einarson and Hunayn arrived at the same conjectural emendation independently.

\textsuperscript{31} Cf. Weisser 1983, 167 f.: in the Arabic tradition, too, the embryo could be called 'a seed' during the first couple of days after the conception.
"How I came to see a six-day-old seed, I will recount. A lady acquaintance had a valuable slave, a singing girl, who served the gentlemen. On no account should she become pregnant, lest it diminish her value. The singing girl had listened to the kind of talk women have among each other, namely that when a woman is about to conceive, the seed does not leave again, but remains inside. She had understood this well and was always checking whether this happened. When she somehow noticed that the seed did not leave again, she informed her mistress. And word was given to me. When I had heard what was the matter, I ordered her to jump to the ground. And when she had jumped seven times, the seed flowed down to the earth, and there was a sound. She saw it and looked at it intently and with wonder. I will say what it was like: it was as if someone had peeled off the outer shell of a raw egg and the moisture inside was shining through the inner membrane. This is Hippocrates’ testimony on the fact that the seed remains inside and that it has a membrane."

32 The story is reported only this far because it is the point about the membrane that Galen is interested in here. Note how an egg-like object is being observed, simply because that is what the ‘seed’ was expected to look like. Note the number seven. The story has been trivialised in that in Hippocrates’ version the girl is made to jump πρὸς πυγήν. She hits her buttocks with her heels while jumping. This is related to some kind of Laconic dance, which fits in with the girl’s profession, but it also accounts for the abortive effect in a better way than does the reading γῆν. Is γῆν an intrusion from p. 526?; cf. Weisser 1983, 194 f.
I suppose a male doctor in the second century may well have been charmed by this story.

Now, where stylistic theory was concerned, Galen had demonstrated that Hippocrates’ style coincided with the ideal style, and—not by coincidence—with that of Galen himself. Galen is not in the habit of calling attention to the entertaining aspects of Hippocrates, and neither does he stress his own frivolous side. Nevertheless, he can parallel Hippocrates on this point too: In his *Ad Pisonem de theriaca* 8 he recounts the story of the death of Cleopatra, who killed herself by means of a poisonous snake, after having tried out the effectiveness of the poison on her two faithful lady-servants. It worked. Whatever one may think of this, I will restrict myself to noting Galen’s comment on his own performance (*Ad Pisonem de theriaca* 8, 14.237 K.):

&lsquo;Αλλὰ τούτο μὲν οὐκ ἀπερπώς ἱστορεῖσθω διὰ τὴν σήν ἐν πάσιν τοῖς λόγοις φιλοσυμίων, καὶ οἷς διὰ τούτων τὴν ὀξύτητα πρὸς τὸ ἀποκτεῖναι τούτων τῶν θηρίων ἄμεν εἰδότες.

‘But let this not unamusing account be reported because of your eager interest in all manner of stories, and in order that it may make us knowledgeable about how quickly these creatures can kill.’

Here, too, the serious part of the work is not forgotten. The story is told at least as much to serve a didactic purpose as to please Galen’s addressee. Sheer amusement plays no part in an *ἐπιστημονικὴ διδασκαλία*.  

It is time to sum up. In this paper I have drawn attention to one aspect of what may be called ‘the philological paradigm’ in Galen, namely his use of poetical theory in delineating Hippocrates’ position as an author and in

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33 Cf. Sluiter 1994 (forthc.).

34 On the other hand, Galen does at times get carried away by his own sense of humour, although a modern (and possibly an ancient) audience may fail to be equally impressed by it. The long digression about the problems Centaurs may encounter in living the life of an ordinary human being (*De usu partium* 3.1, 3.171 ff. K.) is a case in point. I can find no didactic or instructive point in the digression whatsoever.
and in conquering a place for the ἐπιστημονικὴ διδασκαλία as a literary genre. The literary critics of the first centuries BCE and CE had paid little, if any, attention to Hippocrates. This left Galen a more or less free hand to create his own self-constructed super author and super authority, conveniently labeled 'Hippocrates'.

We have seen how Galen applied the criterion of truth or fiction to distinguish scholarly work from poetry. For Galen to think it at all necessary to define the relationship between medicine and poetry is, in itself, revealing. Historiography, medicine's main competitor as a serious prose genre, was traditionally opposed to poetry by this very truth criterion. In order to create a clear distinction between historiography and scholarly writing, the relevance of the truth criterion to the former had to be watered down, while its entertainment value and the lack of erudition in its intended audience were stressed. This went against the grain of contemporary theory about historiography, that tended to keep it strictly separated from encomiastic and poetical works by applying this very truth criterion. However, Galen may have felt justified in taking this attitude by contemporary historical practice.

On the other hand, Galen did not go so far as to deny outright that Hippocrates, too, could be entertaining. On the contrary, there is at least one occasion on which he explicitly ascribes this characteristic to Hippocrates. And it is particularly relevant to our concept of the philological paradigm that in the story concerned he is especially charmed by Hippocrates' style.

As a result, Galen has earned himself a place in a symposium on Ancient Literary Criticism: this is what comes from rolling your barrel.

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