

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE OF THE RUSSIAN  
FEDERATION

Penza State University  
Medical Institute  
Department of Dentistry


Course work

"History (History of Medicine)"

. " Topic: " Galen (129-c.200) Roman physician and anatomist

**Student's full name: Aldini Gawad Amer**  
**Group №: 19 ls 2a**

**Doctor : Gavrilova Tatiana**



Galen was a Greek who became the Roman Empire's greatest physician, authoring more books still in existence than any other Ancient Greek: about 20,000 pages of his work survive. He was the personal physician to Rome's Emperors for decades.

He consolidated the work of previous Greek medical researchers, adding the results of his own research to create an incredibly long-lasting medical doctrine.

Galen had great expertise in anatomy, surgery, pharmacology, and therapeutic methods. He is famous for bringing philosophy into medicine – although most of his philosophical works have been lost.


We know more about him than other ancient scientist because of the sheer abundance of his medical writing.

Today, some practices promoted by Galen are still recognized as useful, while others are regarded as dangerous.

# Galen's Early Years and Education




**Figure 1** Galen (AD 129–200).



Galen was born in the year 129 A.D. in the wealthy Greek city of Pergamon in the Eastern Roman Empire. Today Pergamon is in Turkey. Sometimes people use the names *Galen of Pergamon* or *Claudius Galen* to identify him.

Pergamon was an ideal place for Galen to grow up; it was one of the most important cultural cities of ancient times, with a highly active intellectual community. Its library was bettered only by the Great Library of Alexandria.

Galen's father, Nicon, was a very prosperous architect and mathematician. He was highly ambitious for his son, desiring that he should become one of Pergamon's greatest minds.



He saw to it that his son was educated to a high standard in the classic Greek fields of geometry, philosophy, logic, and literature. He also taught his son not to mindlessly follow any one school of thought, but to think for himself and judge every issue on its individual merits.

Like other wealthy people in those times, Galen's family were slave owners, using slaves to do all the routine work.

# A Greek God Intervenes



The Greek god of healing, Asclepius. Although Galen believed Asclepius came to his aid, he also came to believe there was only one God. This made the later Christian and Muslim worlds much more receptive to his work.



When Galen reached 16 years old, something remarkable happened.

His father had a dream in which the Greek god of medicine, Asclepius, told him Galen must divert his efforts to medicine and healing.

Nicon was not one to disobey the gods; Galen immediately dropped out of his logic and philosophy classes in favor of medicine.

For the rest of his life, Galen believed that Asclepius came to help him whenever he was badly in need of help.

# Years Becoming a Physician 12

Galen became a trainee doctor at a local upmarket hospital/health resort, learning about medical methods for almost four years, mainly from Satyrus, a well-known physician. His father Nikon died and left Galen a large amount of money. Galen, who was almost 20 years old, decided it was time to spread his wings. He traveled around the Mediterranean learning the latest techniques in medicine and healing. He ended his travels in the great city of Alexandria's medical school, where he studied for about five years. Galen disliked almost every aspect of life in Alexandria, except for what he could learn there.



# Galen Becomes a Professional Physician

Galen returned to Pergamon as an elite physician. He had spent 12 years learning all of the different doctrines of ancient medicine from around the Mediterranean. He had seen ineffective techniques and effective techniques, and now applied his own skills to developing a range of effective methods.

# Galen - Master of Medicine

Galen was a compiler, consolidator, and critic as well as a discoverer. We have to be careful not to credit him with other people's discoveries. Galen was a prolific author, and much of what he described he owed to earlier Greek physicians, such as [Hippocrates](#), Herophilos, Celsus, Alcmaeon, Praxagoras, Herophilos, Erasistratus and Asclepiades. Galen mentioned earlier physicians by name in his books, helping preserve their names in history, because it is through Galen that we learn about the discoveries some of these earlier scientists and physicians made.

He took the earlier work and compared it with his own experimental and practical findings. If he could confirm their work, he would use it; otherwise, he would criticize it, and say why it was wrong.

He had an absolute belief in the power of experiment and observation. He did not believe in merely following what books had told him. He needed to verify the truth for himself.

# Galenism

So influential was Galen that his methods came to be known by the word Galenism. To come close to describing Galenism completely or even partially would require a long book. Rather than that, here are a few bullet-points about Galenic medicine. Please remember, some aspects of Galenism were not actually discovered by Galen himself – he credited other scientists too.

# A Sampling of Galenism's Successes

- Diagnosis of disease by careful attention to the patient's pulse.
- Diagnosis of disease by careful attention to the patient's urine.
- Removal of cataracts from patients' eyes.
- Diagnosis of physical symptoms caused by psychological disturbance.
- Proof that urine forms in kidneys, not the bladder.
- Discovery that arteries carry liquid blood rather than, as previously thought,

# Death

- The 11th-century [Suda](#) lexicon states that Galen died at the age of 70, which would place his death in about the year 199. However, there is a reference in Galen's treatise "*On Theriac to Piso*" (which may, however, be spurious) to events of 204. There are also statements in Arabic sources that he died in Sicily at age 87, after 17 years studying medicine and 70 practicing it, which would mean he died about 217. According to these sources, the tomb of Galenus in [Palermo](#) was still well preserved in the tenth century. Nutton believes that "*On Theriac to Piso*" is genuine, that the Arabic sources are correct, and that the *Suda* has erroneously interpreted the 70 years of Galen's career in the Arabic tradition as referring to his whole lifespan. Boudon-Millot more or less concurs and favours a date of 216.

# Conclusions

Although it has been almost 2,000 years since Galen walked the streets of the Roman Empire, his legacy continues via multiple eponyms that bare his name.