

1 (title, summary).

## HUMAN NATURE: MEDICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE WORK OF GALEN OF PERGAMUM.

Galen of Pergamum (129–c.213 CE) may count as the father of western medicine, whose influence dominated European medical history until well into the 19th century. But he saw himself as a philosopher no less than a doctor, and in his voluminous writings we find medical and philosophical perspectives combined. This project aims to explore Galen's theory of human nature from a variety of relevant aspects: physiological, psychological, moral, philosophical and religious. Drawing on various traditions, Galen developed an original and powerful synthesis that secured his unequalled authority in both the Christian and the Muslim world of later centuries. At the same time the theory he formulated was not without its blind spots and unresolved tensions. These are however intriguing in themselves and merit closer inspection with a view to clarifying his position and its intellectual background.

Galen's conception of human nature is fundamental to all of his work. An improved understanding of it will cast welcome light not only on Galen himself but on the subsequent history of medicine on which he made such a profound impact. The project is moreover designed to contribute to present-day debates on health, well-being and illness, concepts of humanity in bio-ethics, the societal role of medicine and the doctor as well as multidisciplinary and discipline-formation.

2. (Applicant).

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3. (Co-applicants): none.

4a. (Discipline codes)

1. Filosofie

33.55.00 Klassieke en middeleeuwse filosofie

2. Wetenschapsgeschiedenis

34.10.00 Geschiedenis van de antieke wetenschap.

4b. (Infrastructural component): no.

4c. (Previous and future submissions:) The project has not been previously submitted, and will not be submitted elsewhere while the proposal is processed by NWO.

(5. Institutional Setting:)

Research Institute for Philosophy and Religious Studies (OFR) & Descartes Centre for the History and Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities, Faculty of Humanities, Utrecht University.

6. Period of Funding:

1 April 2015–1 April 2019.

7. Composition of the Research Team:

a) main applicant: Teun Tieleman

b) no co-applicant(s)

c) researchers: two post-doctoral researchers, one PhD student, main applicant (editor synthetic volume)..

8. (Structure Proposed Research:)

Project 1: “The Unity of Galen’s Physiology”: postdoc, OFR, Humanities, Utrecht. Supervisor: prof. dr. T. Tieleman.

Project 2: “Galen’s Moral Psychology”: postdoc, OFR, Humanities, Utrecht. Supervisor: prof. dr. T. Tieleman.

Project 3: “Galen and the Aristotelians”, PhD student, OFR, Humanities, Utrecht. Supervisor: prof. dr. T. Tieleman.

Project 4: Synthesis: prof. dr. Teun Tieleman (introduction, editor).

9a (Description proposed research).

*I. General description.*

Galen of Pergamum (129–c.213 CE) dominated medical theory and practice until well into the 19th century. The works ascribed to the second giant of classical medicine, the legendary Hippocrates (c.450–380 BCE), have been preserved largely because Galen admired, used and wrote commentaries on them. Today the ancient doctors, far from having been pensioned off, offer a fascinating area for studying new questions about how medicine and its practitioners functioned within their own intellectual and socio-cultural context: the status of medicine as a “rational” art, its interaction with the philosophical tradition, as well as moral and social issues such as the authority of the doctor and the doctor–patient relationship. In the case of Galen the contributions from historians of ancient philosophy since the 1980s are particularly notable. M. Frede, G.E.R. Lloyd, J. Barnes and R.J. Hankinson have done much to elucidate Galen’s concept of medicine and in particular his remarkable ideal of a philosophical medicine, or medical philosophy (although it is only fair to mention a few scholars who kept the flame alive before them, most notably O. Temkin, Ph. De Lacy, and P. Moraux). V. Nutton and H. von Staden have concentrated more on medical aspects and are still contributing significantly to our knowledge of Galen’s work.

Even so, there remain a number of important puzzles and riddles. One of these is the question of the coherence of Galenic anthropology, especially given the variety of perspectives employed by Galen, i.e. his multidisciplinary approach. Understanding Galen's anthropology is crucial for understanding his view of medicine and the later history of medicine, which, as we have noticed, was dominated by his work and thought.

Given this *status quaestionis*, the proposed research project starts from what has been established concerning Galen's medical-cum-philosophical outlook in raising further questions on an issue of both historical and universal interest—what is human nature? Clearly, Galen approaches human nature from a variety of perspectives: anatomical and physiological, as when he sets out to establish the main organs (or principles, *archai*) within the human organism; psychological, when dealing with the structure of the human mind, distinguishing between reason and emotion; metaphysical and ontological in dealing with the essence of the soul (*psychê*); moral and social, as in the treatises specifically devoted to human virtue and badness.

Previous studies have left open the question that will be central to this programme: did Galen seek to combine these perspectives into a coherent view of human nature and, if so, how far has he been successful in doing so? Or did he see these perspectives as each restricted to its own field of application, with some of them privileged over others? It often seems typical of Galen as a medical scientist to emphasize the role of physical factors with respect to character and personality as well as emotion, i.e. taking what seems to be a materialist position of the soul as subservient to the body's needs (e.g. in his *The Faculties of the Soul Follow the Mixtures of the Body*). On the other hand, it seems clear that he develops a philosophical and teleological outlook on the human being within a cosmological context, which even involves a religious dimension. Even if the resulting tensions may not be fully soluble, an inquiry along these lines may throw welcome light on his position as a way of dealing with various approaches and options.

The question of the unity (or coherence) of Galen's thought involves the identification of the various influences—both medical and philosophical—to which he was receptive. Working on Galen involves taking account of a plurality of possible influences. This work is often complicated by the fact that Galen himself is our main source for our knowledge of his predecessors: it is precisely his dominant status and influence which has led to the loss of many of their works, which were no longer considered worth preserving. Of particular relevance appears to be his relation to Platonism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism and, on the medical side, the Pneumatist school of medicine, which was itself indebted to Stoicism, especially where psychological issues are concerned. Here Galen's response to Aristotelianism—both Aristotle's own works and those of later and contemporary Peripatetics—as well as the Pneumatist doctors (notably, Athenaeus, Archigenes) are still imperfectly understood and merit further investigation. The proposed project is original in exploring Galen's use of these Peripatetic and Pneumatist sources.

Given Galen's exposure to, and use of, various philosophical *traditions*, his positions and arguments should not only be compared with the original expositions of a few great authors such as Plato and Aristotle, however much Galen himself may make it appear that he is conversing with other great minds directly. The study of his work involves a complicated reception of philosophical thought as it had been shaped by (often

oral) education and expounded and summarized in handbooks, doxographic collections, philosophical commentaries, etc. The options that were in principle open to Galen have often been shaped by this intervening tradition. It is this tradition that also conditions Galen's reading of the original works of great dead philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle as well as the Stoic scholar Chrysippus. The arduous yet rewarding task facing the Galenic scholar is therefore to take full account of what remains of this type of literature also. In reconstructing this philosophical and literary backdrop the submitted programme follows a predominantly *contextualist* method. In doing so it will draw on insights that have been gained, at Utrecht University and elsewhere, into the modes of transmission (e.g. doxographic, didactic, polemical) of philosophical ideas in the Graeco-Roman world (cf. especially the work of J. Mansfeld in the past two decades).

## II. *The Programme.*

The above aims, methods and desiderata determine the format chosen for the programme submitted for funding. In order to answer the central research question it focuses on those issues and Galenic works that are particularly relevant for this purpose, yet have so far remained understudied.

- Project 1, entitled “The Unity of Galen’s Physiology,” is carried out by a postdoctoral researcher with the aim of answering the question how Galen determines the core parts of the human being; it is slanted towards but not confined to medical sources and traditions. It starts from the fact that Galen actually seems to operate with three different hierarchically arranged schemes in explaining human nature: (1) his version of the Platonic tripartition of the soul involving the brain, heart and liver (i.e. its trilocation); (2) the nervous system with the brain as its structural and functional starting point—a post-Platonic scheme inherited from the great Alexandrian medical scientists Herophilus and Erasistratus (first half 3rd century BCE); (3) Galen’s pneumatology involving a distinction between psychic, vital and, it seems, natural *pneuma* (“breath,” “spirit”), which is of mixed provenance involving as it does at least Aristotelian, Stoic and medical influences. The first and second schemes have been studied before but primarily on the basis of *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato (PHP)* books I-VI but it is necessary to study a much broader selection of works and passages for drawing a complete picture of Galen’s theory and its possible development in the course of time (*PHP* I-VI are from the early part of Galen’s career). A prime target for this undertaking will be the corpus of the Hippocratic commentaries. Hippocrates’ conception of the soul and its functions according to Galen is all the more worth studying since in the *PHP*, despite its title, he gives far more attention to Plato. The question of (3) the *pneuma* in Galen stands in need of a more systematic treatment than has so far been undertaken; but it should be part of a study that also involves (1) and (2) with a view to answering the question how far Galen has integrated the three different schemes into a coherent view of the human organism. Aspect (3) moreover involves the question of the influence of the Pneumatist school of medicine (see above).

In combining these aspects, this subproject is directly relevant to the overarching research question of the proposed programme, viz. how Galen defined human nature and how far he achieved unity, or coherence, in doing so.

- Project 2, “Galen’s Moral Psychology,” will also be carried out by a post-doctoral researcher. It addresses the question how far Galen achieved a coherent view of our moral functioning in psychological terms in the light of the relevant philosophical traditions, most notably Platonism, Aristotelianism, Stoa, and Epicureanism. This aspect of Galen’s work has hardly been studied, although editions of the relevant treatises have appeared, notably *On the Diagnosis and Cure of the Soul’s Affections* and *Character Traits* as well as *PHP* books IV-V. Another relevant treatise, entitled *Avoiding Distress* has only recently been discovered in a Byzantine manuscript (first published in 2007). The aim here is to make this part of Galen’s project of philosophy-cum-medicine the subject of a comprehensive monograph (so far only a few articles based on smaller selections of material have appeared). Included in this project is the question of the input from medicine: how much weight does Galen give to medical ideas involving bodily factors? Does he draw a clear borderline between emotions and what we call psychiatric afflictions? Furthermore, Galen’s conception of emotion and its cause(s) leads to a consideration of the therapeutic techniques he employs or recommends.

A full-scale study of Galen’s moral psychology involves the question which faculties we share with animals and which are rooted in the divine realm (given Galen’s appeals to a “god within” and to Asclepius and the dreams the god sends to communicate with him and others so privileged). Humans seem to stand somewhere halfway between the animal and divine realms but a more precise determination of his position on these matters still is a desideratum. An answer to the question where and how Galen positioned humankind within the cosmos may be expected to deepen our understanding of his moral and psychological thought also. Thus (sub)project 2 contributes a few related viewpoints that are indispensable for addressing the programme’s central questions.

- Project 3 “Galen and the Aristotelians” (to be carried out by a PhD student) aims to characterize Galen’s position in relation to the Aristotelian tradition with particular reference to the ideas on the nature and status of the human *psychê*. In doing so it considers Galen’s use of the conceptual apparatus of Peripatetic metaphysics, most notably the concepts of form, essence and matter, in this particular context. This project takes its starting point from Galen’s own many references to Aristotle behind which there seems to lurk a deep engagement with the later Aristotelian tradition up to and including the Peripatetics of his own day (of whom he names quite a few). An overall characterization of Galen’s relation to the Peripatetic tradition (which will in part build upon and refine Moraux’s 1984 survey) will complement other studies that have concentrated on his relation to *other* philosophical schools, notably Platonism and Stoicism. As such the project will be aimed at certain works in particular (*PHP*, *UP*, *QAM*) but also involves relevant passages from the rest of the corpus (to be tracked down in part through the *TLG* data base) Galen’s relation to the Aristotelian legacy still is imperfectly understood. In particular, it is a moot point whether Galen’s attitude towards Aristotle and his later followers can be described as a typically Middle Platonist one, in which it is perfectly acceptable to use their work to interpret what Plato had said or implied. Alternatively, Galen may have been far more sympathetic to Aristotle’s thought, sharing with him and his followers, the Peripatetics, a deeply felt interest in the study of Nature’s workings.

### *Synthesis.*

Projects 1, 2 and 3 hang together without overlapping: all three of them deal with Galen's view of human nature from various perspectives. Their results—to be recorded in two monographs and one doctoral dissertation respectively—may be compared so as to determine the interrelation between the different perspectives they have each taken to approach Galen's conception of what it is to be human. As such, these projects are amenable to an ensuing synthetic project, which takes the form of a conference, in which their results are presented and discussed and contextualized through other contributions by non-team-members. The proceedings of the conference, which is to take place in the fourth and final year of the project period, will include a substantial introduction on Galen's anthropology in the light of the newly gained insights. The synthesis will increase and improve our knowledge of Galen's view of human nature, its coherence and the sources and motives behind it.

### *Organisation and institutional environment.*

The research team will be embedded within the Utrecht ancient philosophy group (in fact the only *group* working in this area in the Netherlands). In the last national research assessment exercise (2013) the team was awarded a “5” (“excellent”) for Quality and was credited with (in the words of the review committee) “an unusually high international reputation.” Of them, the project leader, Teun Tieleman, has already done a lot of internationally recognized work on Galen and Stoicism and their interrelations. Professors K. A. Algra and J. M. Van Ophuijsen have published extensively on neighbouring areas, notably ancient physics and science and the Aristotelian tradition, and will be able to contribute usefully to the subprojects of the proposed programme through research seminars, reading draft chapters, etc. This environment will guarantee opportunities for further exchange at the international level.

The researchers will be part of the Utrecht Institute for Philosophy and Religious Studies while being simultaneously attached to the multidisciplinary Descartes Centre for the History of the Sciences and the Humanities. These institutions bring together a relatively large number of historians of science and the humanities including the Utrecht historians of philosophy, both ancient and early modern, whose research is marked by a distinct focus upon the interactions between philosophy and science and on the phenomenon of discipline-formation.

The Utrecht Department of Philosophy is also home to the Ethics Institute (director: prof. dr. Marcus Düwell), which organizes courses in (medical and bio-)ethics for students in the Faculty of Medicine, among others. Düwell also directs a research programme concerned with the question what the humanities can contribute to our practical self-understanding. Thus the submitted programme ties in with some of the research interests of the Utrecht moral philosophers as well.

On the national level, the Utrecht historians of ancient philosophy participate in OIKOS, the Dutch national research school for classical studies. PhD students belonging to the participating research groups take part in the OIKOS training programme specially designed for them and enabling them to develop their skills, competence and self-awareness as researchers. The PhD student working on Project 3 will participate in this OIKOS programme.

In sum, the programme “Human Nature” will be embedded within an appropriate and stimulating research environment, with plenty of opportunities for exchanging ideas and results, not only within the research team but also with a wider circle of relevant staff. In addition, the host institute facilitates national and international exchange by receiving guest-lecturers and stimulating team members to participate in conferences and other research activities outside Utrecht and the Netherlands. Since the number of researchers working on Galen is limited, an international orientation seems highly desirable. At the same time, a strong home base, which stands in an established and relevant research tradition, is essential to the outcome of the programme proposed here.

### *III. Relevance for Society and Culture (Including Research Utilization)*

Given its focus upon various disciplinary perspectives and upon the question of their interrelationship, the programme throws (historical) light on current issues concerning discipline-formation, changing boundaries between disciplines, and multidisciplinary. The project thus contributes to the debate on these issues, in which scientists and scholars from various backgrounds take part. In addition, it adds a valuable historical dimension to current debates on human nature, or identity, e.g. in reaction to developments in genetic engineering, to the role and status of medical knowledge and doctors, and to ideas on human fulfilment and happiness. In so doing it shares in the value of the study of the cultural past in general: it anchors the present in the tradition from which we have emerged and in which we are still standing, thus affording the opportunity to reflect upon our situation and deepen our moral and existential self-understanding.

Given these issues of continuing and universal interest, the programme lends itself to concrete activities aimed at disseminating its results among (a) researchers and students working in other fields of science and scholarship; (b) the general public:

- Two or three workshops in which Galen will be brought to bear on current debates on the role and use of medicine in present-day society, e.g. on concepts of humanity in bioethics, enhancement, moral psychology. Contributions will come from the programme’s researchers and Utrecht ethicists as well as relevant guests from other universities. This initiative is likely to spawn interesting publications also.
- Developing initiatives exploring the ways in which Galenic medicine can regain a place in medical education, especially in the context of courses on the history of medicine and medical ethics. This will involve collaboration with the Utrecht Faculty of Medicine (in particular with Prof. Frank Huisman).
- Lectures and publications designed for a more general audience with an interest in Galen’s relevance to present-day issues in medical ethics, ideas on illness and well-being, lifestyles, the doctor-patient relationship, holistic and evidence-based medicine, etc. The lecture series organized in the context of Studium Generale and HOVO<sup>\*\*</sup>) are but two obvious platforms for reaching such a wider audience.
- Galen in the classroom: work on a broad variety of texts from Galen may also lead to the selection - and appropriate presentation - of passages suitable for use in secondary education, viz. a series of lessons to be used by teachers of classics in grammar schools.

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<sup>\*\*</sup>) HOVO = Hoger Onderwijs voor Ouderen - a programme in which university lecturers speak on specific themes before an audience of people older than 50.

These results may be made available e.g. through journals for classicists such as *Lampas* and the VCN Bulletin.

9b. Proposed Investment Component: none.

10. Five key words:

Humanity - nature - medicine - philosophy - antiquity.

11. Work Programme.

Year 1:

Project 1: first chapter on philosophical aspects of Galen's model of mind finished.

Project 2: chapter on first selection of moral and psychological treatises finished.

Project 3: period of orientation in relevant primary and secondary literature (halfway through the year the OFR requires an assessment of the performance of the PhD student); start with OIKOS training programme (see above 9a). The first year is concluded with a writing sample.

Project leader: management of research team and guidance of individual members; activities in the area of research utilization (academic and interdisciplinary workshops, lectures for broader audiences, initiatives in higher and secondary education, all specified under 9a, III).

Year 2:

Researcher Project 1: (a) study of nervous system including brain in Galen, leading to chapter; (2) study of Galen's pneumatology (chapter).

Researcher Project 2: study of second set of texts, or text, leading to chapter.

Researcher Project 3: chapter on Galen's relations with Aristotelians, and Aristotelian texts; chapter on form and essence in relation to the soul (*QAM*, *PHP*, other Galenic works).

Project leader: see under Year 1.

Year 3:

Researcher Project 1: Conclusion; revisions of manuscript. Preparing contribution to Conference.

Researcher Project 2: study of Man's place in the cosmos (*scala naturae*, God): chapter. Conclusion. Revisions. Preparing contribution to Conference.

Researcher Project 3: work on further selections from the Galenic corpus; conclusion OIKOS training.

Project leader: utilization, continued (see prev. years); start with synthetic study (seconded by assistant); articles on Galen; preparations for conference (Year 4).

Year 4:

First half of this year: Utrecht Galen conference: Galen and Human Nature.

Researcher Project 1: Contribution to Conference.

Researcher Project 2: Contribution to Conference.



Researcher Project 3: Conclusion and final reworkings; completion of dissertation.  
 Project leader: organisation of conference (with assistant), completion of synthetic exposition, edition of conference proceedings.

The work programme can be tabulated as follows:

Year	1st/2nd half	Subproject 1: Galen's Physiology. (PostDoc).	Subproject 2: Galen's moral psychology. (PostDoc)	Subproject 3: Galen and Aristotelianism (PhD student)	Direction: Synthesis, utilization (Leader)
1	1			Start 01-04-15. Orientation on subject-matter	Supervision; start utilization of project theme.
	2	(Start 01-10-15) assembling the evidence; orientation on subject-matter	(Start 01-10-15) assembling the evidence; orientation on subject-matter	Aristotle and Aristotelianism in Galen's earlier works (e.g. PHP I-VI). Writing sample.	Utilization: general, secondary education; academic workshop.
2	1	chapter on philosophical models of mind in Galen	chapter on psychological treatises	Further evidence: UP, QAM, selection from entire corpus. Chapter.	See above.
	2	work on physiological aspects (e.g. nervous system)	Galen's moral philosophy, chapter.	Continued. Chapter.	See above; second academic workshop.
3	1	chapter on medical background: Hippocrates	Galen's psychiatry; chapter.	Revisions and additions to produce complete text.	Supervision. Additional publications.
	2	role of the pneuma, chapter	soul, cosmos: religious dimension; chapter.	Idem. Preparing for conference.	See above.  Preparations for conference.
4	1	manuscript revision; contribution to conference End 31-09-18	manuscript revision; contribution to conference. End 31-09-18	Conclusion & reworkings. Towards a final text.	Apr.-Oct. 18: Conference; synthetic study; editorial activities (proceedings conference).
	2			End 31-03-19	Supervision PhD.

12 (Number of words:)

9a general description (including section on utilization) 2332 (max. 2500).  
subprojects: 1005 (max. 2400).  
synthesis: 157 (max. 400).  
9b: 0.  
Total: 9a + 9b: 3494.

13 (Planned deliverables:)

2 monographs (projects 1 and 2; Brill ancient medicine series or comparable), 1 dissertation (project 3); one volume of conference proceedings (Brill, idem, or comparable) edited and prefaced by the main applicant; activities and publications aimed at the dissemination of the results among a wider academic audience and the general public (main applicant and other team members): 9a. III (Relevance for Society and Culture).

14. Short *curriculum vitae* of main applicant (project leader).

**Teun Tieleman** studied classics and philosophy at Utrecht University, where he earned his PhD with highest distinction (1992). He was a teacher of classics in secondary education as well as a researcher and lecturer at Cambridge University and Radboud University Nijmegen. He returned to the Utrecht Department of Philosophy in 2001. He has held visiting positions at UCLA and Novosibirsk State University, Siberia.

His research focuses on the interactions between philosophy and science, in particular medicine, in antiquity, Galen of Pergamum and his influence, Stoicism, theories of emotion as well as the ways in which philosophy was taught and transmitted in the Graeco-Roman world.

With New Testament scholar Prof. Dr. Annette Merz he directed the interdisciplinary research programme “Habent sua fata libelli; ‘Text Processing’ in the Philosophical and Religious Movements within the Roman Empire (1-300 CE)” (2005-2010).

Teun Tieleman is Chair of the Board of Examiners of the School of Philosophy and Religious Studies as well as of the Graduate School in Humanities (section Research Master Programmes). He is also a member of the board of the Vereniging Classici Nederland (VCN), the Dutch classical association, as well as coordinator of the ancient philosophy section of OIKOS, the Dutch national research school in classical studies.

Some relevant publications: \*)

*Galen and Chrysippus on the Soul. Argument and Refutation in the De Placitis II-III* (Leiden Brill 1996) xxxvii + 307 pp.

*Chrysippus on Affections. Reconstruction and Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill 2003) 346 pp.

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\*) For a full list of publications see <http://www.phil.uu.nl/hsfl/members/Tieleman/index.html>

‘Galen’s Psychology’ in J. Barnes - J. Jouanna (eds.), *Entretiens sur l’antiquité classique XLIX: Galien (Fondation Hardt, Vandoeuvres, Suisse 2003) 131-169.*

‘Methodology’, in R.J. Hankinson (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Galen* (Cambridge: CUP 2008) 49-65.

‘Galen on Perception’, *Antiquorum Philosophia* 5 (2011) 83-97.

‘Miracle and Natural Cause in Galen,’ in S. Alkier & A. Weissenrieder (ed.), *Miracles Revisited. New Testament Miracle Stories and their Concepts of Reality*, Studies on the Bible and its Reception, vol. 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter 2013) 101–115.

15. Summary for non-specialists and for the public.

15. Summaries.

(A) Summary for non-specialists (in Dutch)/Samenvatting voor niet-specialisten:

*De menselijke natuur: medische en filosofische gezichtspunten in het werk van Galenus van Pergamum.*

*Dit onderzoek richt zich op een van de grote figuren van de klassieke beschaving, de arts en filosoof Galenus van Pergamum (129–ca. 213 n. Chr.), wiens invloed de westerse en Arabische geneeskunde tot ver in de 19de eeuw beheerste. Galenus keek naar de menselijke natuur met de bril van de arts én die van de filosoof. Volgens hem moest de behandelend arts de gehele mens in beschouwing nemen, maar ook inzien dat elke mens een individu is, verschillend van andere. Maar in zijn visie op het verschijnsel mens kwam ook tot uitdrukking dat hij filosoof was en beïnvloed door verschillende filosofieën uit zijn tijd. In dit onderzoek wordt nagegaan wat hiervan de uitkomst was: hoe zag Galenus het verschijnsel mens? Deze algemene vraag valt uiteen in enkele andere, meer specifieke vragen: wat verstond hij onder de ziel of psychê van de mens? Hoe dacht hij over de verhouding tussen lichaam en ziel? Tussen verstand en emotie? Hoe origineel was hij en wat leende hij van andere filosofen en artsen? Wist hij al die ideeën en invloeden te verenigen in een samenhangend mensbeeld? Hoe zag hij zelf de verhouding tussen de verschillende invalshoeken die men kan kiezen bij de beschouwing van het verschijnsel mens: fysiologisch en anatomisch, psychologisch, ethisch en filosofisch, religieus?*

*Dit mensbeeld vormt de basis van zijn denken en werken als medicus en filosoof. Een beter begrip hiervan leert ons niet alleen veel over Galenus zelf, maar ook over de latere geschiedenis van de geneeskunde, waarop hij zozeer zijn stempel heeft gedrukt. Ook is het de moeite waarde ons af te vragen wat zijn betekenis en relevantie vandaag de dag nog kunnen zijn. De geneeskunde heeft in de afgelopen anderhalve eeuw spectaculaire vooruitgang geboekt: vele ziekten die voorheen dodelijk waren, zijn nu goed behandelbaar. De levensverwachting is voor de meeste mensen sterk gestegen.*

*Tegelijkertijd komen de rol en autoriteit van de geneeskunde steeds meer onder discussie te staan. Nieuwe ziekten doen zich voor, waarvan sommige kenmerkend voor ons deel van de wereld: kanker, obesitas, depressie, allergieën... Wat kunnen we leren door terug te grijpen op de klassieke Oudheid? Wat leren grote artsen zoals Galenus ons nog over gezondheid en ziekte? Wat heeft hij ons nog te zeggen over gezondheid en gezondheidszorg? Over ziekte en levensstijl? Over de rol en positie van de arts en de patiënt? Zo leren we deze belangrijke schrijver en denker beter kennen vanuit de vragen van zijn eigen tijd, maar kunnen wij zijn ideeën ook gebruiken om licht te werpen op ervaringen en vragen die ons nog steeds bezighouden.*

*(B) Publiekssamenvatting.*

*Galenus en het verschijnsel mens.*

*Galenus (129-ca. 213 n. Chr.) was arts én filosoof, beroemd in zijn eigen tijd en nog vele eeuwen later. Hij meende dat je naar de hele mens moest kijken, niet naar één (ziek) orgaan, maar ook dat elke mens verschillend is. Met Galenus kijken we van verschillende kanten naar het verschijnsel mens, gezond of ziek.*