

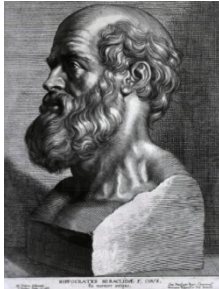
4. The digestive system

4.3 Historical representations of digestion

4.3.1

In the 2nd century

HIPPOCRATES AND GALEN

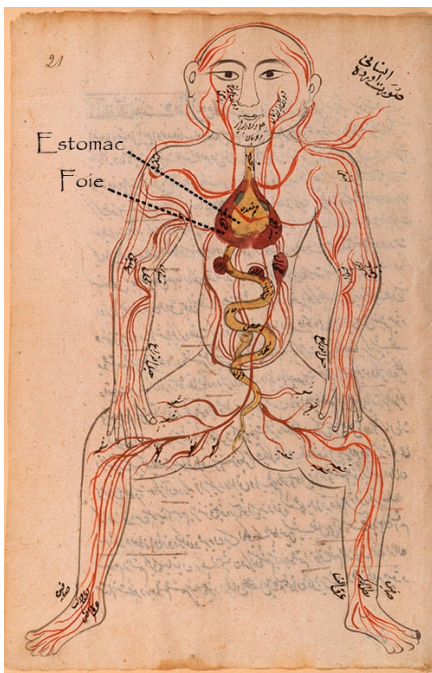


Hippocrates is often held up as being the Father of Medicine. This is because he is the oldest Greek doctor whose writings we still have.

After him, we think of Galen as being the most famous Greek doctor of Antiquity, This is probably because his treatises on digestion have dominated medicine for fourteen centuries.



GALEN



COOKING FOOD

Galen described digestion as cooking food.

First of all, chewing physically prepares food, then the stomach cooks it.

To help this process along, the lobes of the liver surround the stomach and heat it up.

GOING INTO THE BLOODSTREAM

Having undergone a first round of cooking, food then passes from the intestine into the liver where it is turned into blood – which will go on to feed different parts of the body, passing through the veins.

Credits: National Library of France

“Estomac”: Stomach, “Foie”: liver

Those of you who know about the different stages of digestion are aware that the reality is more complex than this, but it was a good start for those times!