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## **[Bowersock. Greeck sophists and roman empire - suite]**

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### **Présentation de la fiche**

Coteb028\_f0637

SourceBoite\_028-6-chem | Galien.

LangueFrançais

TypeFicheLecture

RelationNumérisation d'un manuscrit original consultable à la BnF, département des Manuscrits, cote NAF 28730

### **Références éditoriales**

Éditeuréquipe FFL (projet ANR *Fiches de lecture de Michel Foucault*) ; projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle).

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Notice créée par [équipe FFL](#) Notice créée le 22/03/2021 Dernière modification le 23/04/2021

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god in his mysterious way prescribed, as he did, treatments for the ailing who dreamt of him, there was no reason why his treatments should not be medically acceptable. Sometimes they were, but many times they were not: as a result of the valuable compilation (now to hand) of testimonia on the divine healings of Asclepius,<sup>1</sup> it is possible to survey conveniently a generous selection of examples. The student of Aelius Aristides' autobiographical discourses will recall the amazement of Pergamene doctors at some of the treatments the god prescribed for him. For instance: 'When the harbour waves were swollen by the south wind and ships were in distress, I had to sail across to the opposite side, eating honey and acorns from an oak tree, and vomit; then complete purification is achieved. All these things were done when the inflammation was at its peak and had even spread right to the navel.'<sup>2</sup> Contrast the sensible words of Galen: 'It has great influence on the patient's doing all that is prescribed if he has been firmly persuaded that a remarkable benefit to himself will ensue.'<sup>3</sup> However reluctant modern man is to admit it, there is no escaping the conclusion that the work of the doctors and of Asclepius was quite separate and that there was no collusion.<sup>4</sup> Rational healing and spiritual (or psychological) healing existed side by side; the doctors did not castigate the prescriptions of the god or try to attract his patients. What we find easy to forget is that he was *their* god. Thus, the second century saw a simultaneous resurgence of both rational and irrational healing.

The revival of Asclepius is best expressed in palpable form by the construction of the great Asclepieum at Pergamum by the consular Rufinus, the *Ῥουφίνιον ἄλσος*.<sup>5</sup> The reports of Aristides furnish vivid pictures of the litterati and ex-consuls at Pergamum for their health: cultivated conversations by day, incubations by night. As the quotation from Aristides has shown, however, life was not all comfort in the care of Asclepius.

<sup>1</sup> Edelstein, op. cit., vol. i, Testimonia.

<sup>2</sup> Aristid. 47. 65 Keil.

<sup>3</sup> Galen 17 (2). 137 Kühn.

<sup>4</sup> This was the conclusion of Edelstein, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 173.

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 61 with n. 1.



