

EINSTEIN CENTER CHRONOI

Time and Awareness of Time in Antiquity

Workshop “Kairos, Krisis, Rhythmos:
Time and Time Awareness in Ancient Medicine”

Galen’s Theory of Critical Days, as Reflected in his Hippocratic Commentaries

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Galen wrote two major works on this topic, *On Crises* and *On Critical Days*, but his commentaries on works that he considered to be by the famous Hippocrates (especially the *Prognosticon*, the *Epidemics* and *Aphorisms*) also contain a large amount of information about it, often in useful summaries. The idea that there were ‘critical’ points in time throughout the course of an illness – at which sudden changes in the patient’s condition were likely to occur – can first be found in the Hippocratic Corpus. Writing almost 600 years later, Galen is at pains to prove, despite uncertainties about the textual transmission and the debates and disagreements of the intervening centuries, that ‘Hippocrates’ already had a fully-fledged theory of critical days that was exactly like Galen’s own.