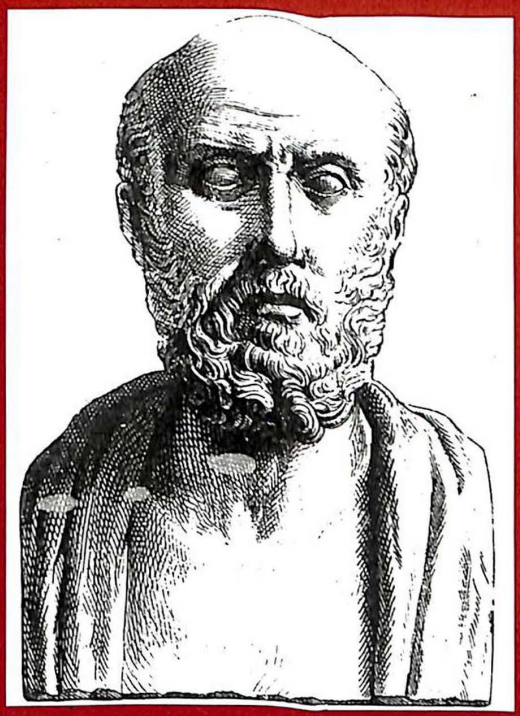
MANOLIS S. KIAPOKAS

# HIPPOCRATES OF COS AND THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH



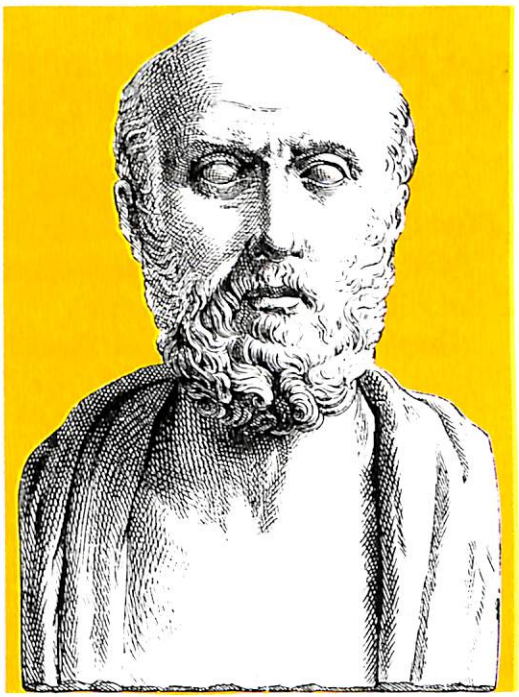
Translated by
ANTONIOS S. HATZINIKOLAOU, BA MSc

Published by
THE CULTURAL CENTRE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF COS
Printed in Athens 1999

ΒΙΒΛΙΟΘΗΚΗ ΔΙΕΘΝΟΥΣ ΙΠΠΟΚΡΑΤΕΙΟΥ ΙΔΡΥΜΑΤΟΣ ΚΩ
ΑΥΞ.ΑΡΙΘ: 628
ΗΜΕΡΟΜ: 4/11/2019
ΘΕΣΙΣ:
ΑΝΤ.: 2

MANOLIS S. KIAPOKAS
PHILOLOGIST

# HIPPOCRATES OF COS
# AND
# THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH



Hippocrates

Translated by
**ANTONIOS S. HATZINIKOLAOU**, BA MSc

Published by
THE CULTURAL CENTRE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF COS
Printed in Athens 1999



HIPPOCRATES OF COS AND THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH
Published by the
CULTURAL CENTRE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF COS
**First published 1999**

Written by **Manolis S. Kiapokas**
Translated by **Antonios S. Hatzinikolaou**
Proof reader: **Sergios A. Hatzinikolaou**
Printed by **Vasilis Thetakis**
Graphic designer: **Theodora Thetaki**

ISBN 960-86505-0-X

COPYRIGHT: MANOLIS S. KIAPOKAS 1999
Aristonos 11, Cos 85300, Greece

# PART ONE

# HIPPOCRATES OF COS

*Ὠφελέειν ἢ μὴ βλάπτειν*

*(Help, or at least do not harm)*

HIPPOCRATES

# CONTENTS

page

THE MAYOR'S ADDRESS....13
FROM THE EDITORS....14
PREFACE....15

**PART ONE**

**HIPPOCRACTES OF COS**

1. SOURCES ON THE LIFE AND WORK OF HIPPOCRATES....19
2. TIME AND PLACE OF BIRTH....23
3. ANCESTRY AND FAMILY....25
4. EDUCATION....32
5. TRAVELS AND TOURS....35
6. PRE-HIPPOCRATIC MEDICINE....38
7. HIPPOCRATES AND THE MEDICAL SCHOOL OF COS....42
8. PERDICCAS' ILLNESS....48
9. HIPPOCRATES AND DEMOCRITUS....49
10. ARTAXERXES' CALL FOR HELP....50
11. HIPPOCRATES AT DELPHI....53
12. THE PLAGUE OF ATHENS....54
13. SLANDER AND WICKEDNESS....60
14. HIPPOCRATES' LAST YEARS IN THESSALY....63
15. EARLY DEDICATIONS AND PORTRAITS....69
16. INFLUENCE AND PRAISE....73
17. THE HIPPOCRATIC COLLECTION AND THE HIPPOCRATIC PROBLEM....81
18. HIPPOCRATIC MEDICINE....91
19. NEO-HIPPOCRATISM, THE I.H.F.C. AND HIPPOCRATIC PRECEPTS....109
20. THE PLANE TREE OF HIPPOCRATES....115
21. HIPPOCRATES AND RELIGION....117
22. HIPPOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY....124

23. HIPPOCRATIC ETHICS ..... 136

## PART TWO
## THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH

I. GENERAL REMARKS ..... 149
II. MANUSCRIPTS AND EARLY EDITIONS ..... 150
III. TIME OF COMPOSITION ..... 152
IV.STRUCTURE, LANGUAGE AND STYLE ..... 154
V. TIME OF OATH-TAKING ..... 155
VI. LAYOUT AND CONTENT ..... 157
VII. THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH: Text, Translation, Glossary ..... 159
VIII. ANALYSIS: Comments, Explanatory Notes. ..... 165
ARTICLE 1: The Invocation. ..... 165
ARTICLE 2: Obligations towards the teacher. The Covenant. ..... 177
ARTICLE 3: Treatment of the Sick. ..... 184
ARTICLE 4: Drugs, Euthanasia, Abortion. ..... 190
ARTICLE 5: Purity of Life and Art ..... 198
ARTICLE 6: Surgery. Respect towards Specialists ..... 201
ARTICLE 7: Help the Sick. Respect their Home ..... 206
ARTICLE 8: Professional Secrecy ..... 211
ARTICLE 9: A Wish and a Curse ..... 214
IX. GENERAL REVIEW OF THE OATH ..... 219
X. IDEAS AND MORAL CONCLUSIONS ..... 211
XI. THE GENUINENESS OF THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH ..... 222
XII. THE INFLUENCE OF THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH. ..... 229
XIII. THE VALUE OF THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH. ..... 243
XIV. RE-ENACTMENT AND MUSICAL PRESENTATION ..... 248

## PART THREE
## HIPPOCRATIC MAXIMS

An Anthology ..... 255
BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 284

# THE MAYOR'S ADDRESS

The publication by the Municipality of Cos Cultural Centre of our respected teacher Manolis Kiapokas' book "Hippocrates of Cos and the Hippocratic Oath" is a landmark in the cultural life of our home island.

The third of a series of publications by the Municipality of Cos, it marks not only the wealth of activities of our local community's collective efforts, but also the intellectual wealth of the citizens of our historic City.

As Mayor of Cos, speaking on behalf of all my fellow-citizens, I respectfully express the gratitude of all of us to the untiring intellectual worker Manolis Kiapokas and congratulate the members of the Administrative Committee of the Cultural Centre of our Municipality and the members of the Publications Committee for their efforts.

The Mayor of Cos,
**Konstantinos Kaiserlis**

# FROM THE EDITORS

Every publication which deals with the life and work of our great ancestor, Hippocrates, has a special significance for our native island; and the fact that this outstanding work, "Hippocrates of Cos and the Hippocratic Oath", has been written by our fellow-Coan, the educator Mr. Manolis Kiapokas, makes us feel especially proud.

Expressing the sentiments of the members of the Cultural Centre's Administrative Committee, I feel certain that our new publishing endeavour will contribute towards the accomplishment of the task which we set ourselves some years ago and which aims at recording our historical and cultural heritage and promoting the intellectual efforts of people who live and create on our Island, so that their precious knowledge might be shared by all of us.

The Chairman
of the Cultural Centre
of the Municipality of Cos,
**Nikos Kantarzis**


**CULTURAL CENTRE**
**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE**

**CHAIRMAN:**
*Nikos Kantarzis*

**VICE-CHAIRMAN:**
*Alekos Markoglou*

**MEMBERS:**
*Theophilos Hatzistergos*
*Irene Svynou*
*Michael Perezous*
*Maria Parisidou*
*Antonis Kardoulias*
*Myron Kyrtidis*
*Sotiris Christakis*
*Evangelia Georgiadou*
*Michael Andreou*




# PREFACE

I have wanted to write a treatise on the great old Master of Cos ever since I was a young teacher. In Cos, everything is reminiscent of Hippocrates – its monuments and its institutions, schools and hospitals, clubs and corporations, its ancient plane tree and its ancestral traditions –, while our tourist activities, cultural events and scientific conferences usually centre around our Hippocratic heritage.

But even beyond the land which bore him and made him prominent, Hippocrates has for centuries been acknowledged as a world personality who continues to guide and inspire every human society with his pioneering thought. Hippocrates is not only the founder of medical science but a profound philosopher, a true humanist and an excellent moral teacher.

Some years ago, I had the opportunity to study the general works of Hippocrates, after which I published a short analysis of the **Hippocratic Oath.** My aim was to contribute to an understanding of the fundamental moral principles of the **Hippocratic Corpus,** particularly in a place where ordinary local people and thousands of visitors often attend a "re-enactment" of the Hippocratic Oath, which includes a recitation of the ancient text.

As soon as I retired, I devoted a large part of my time to becoming better acquainted with the work of the old Sage of Cos; for I believe that the more one studies Hippocrates – be they a philologist, a doctor or a scholar – the more one learns and the more one can pass on to others. At this time came the proposal from the Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Cos to undertake the cost of the publication and even of the translation of my work into three or four foreign languages.

I would like to thank the Mayor of Cos Mr Konstantinos Kaiserlis and the Municipal Council, the Administrative Committee of the Cultural Centre and its Chairman Mr Nikos Kantarzis for their unanimous decision to cover the cost of this publication.

My warm thanks also go to my esteemed friend Mr Tasos Karanastasis, to Professor Spyros Marketos, to Antonios Hatzinikolaou and to everyone else who, through their knowledge of foreign languages, have helped me to obtain information from important foreign publications.

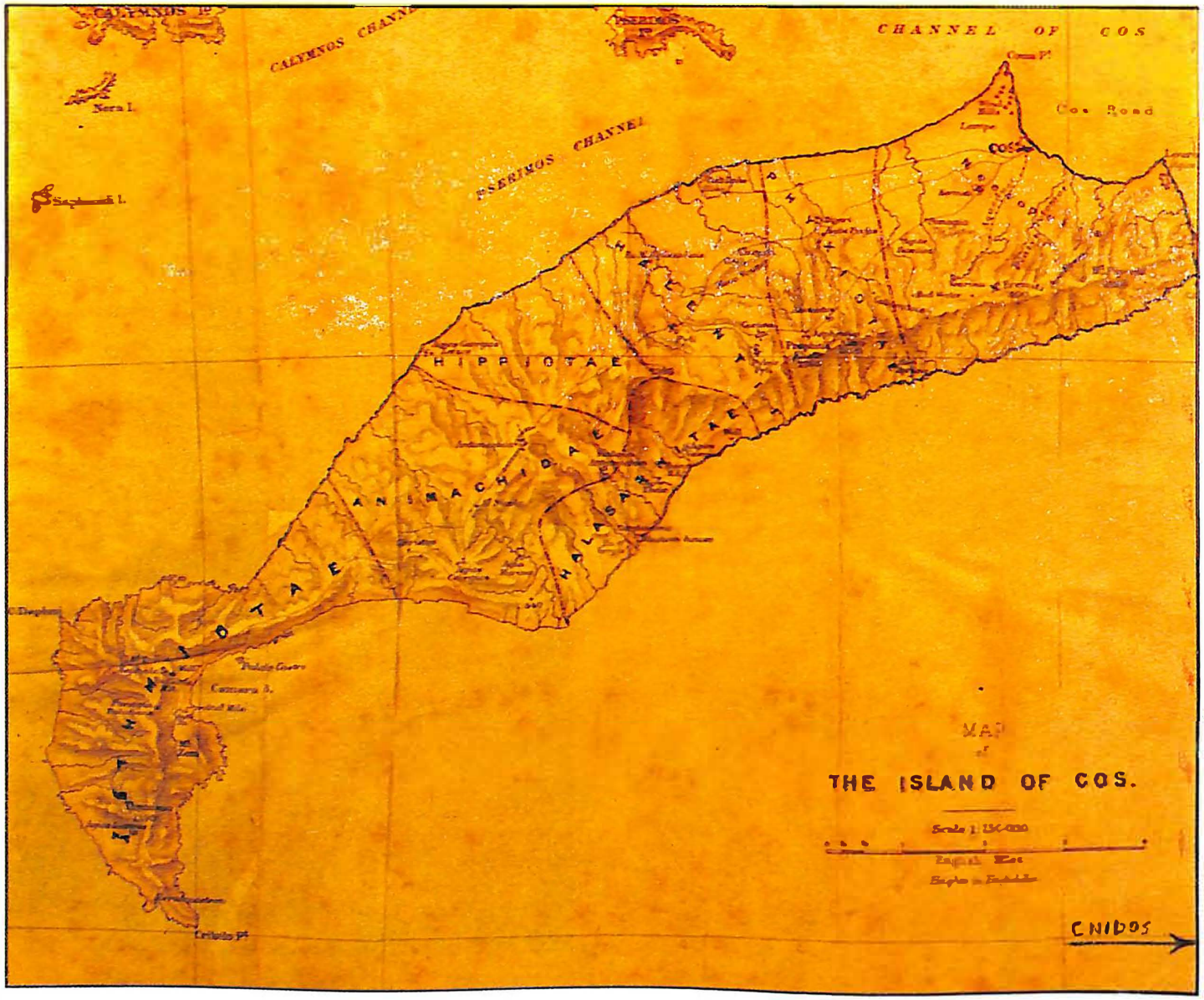
Every year, international conferences are organised, with the participation of distinguished scientists, and dozens of specialist works are published on Hippocrates which are difficult of access, especially when one lives away from the Capital and has no access to a library. That is why perhaps some parts of the book will not come up to the expectations of the specialist reader. I have tried to base my study mainly on the Hippocratic writings and on authoritative, sources, old as well as recent, and to give correct information without too many details.

In the first part of the book I deal with the more basic data concerning the life of Hippocrates and his service to humanity; in the second part I examine the main problems and analyse the deeper concepts of the Hippocratic Oath in more detail this time; while in the third part I present certain adages from the Hippocratic writings, which constitute imperishable precepts for people of all times.

Hippocrates belongs to a category of authors whose writings present great difficulties and problems. I have tried as much as I can to simplify some difficult Hippocratic concepts for the benefit of the wider public, without ignoring the demands of the specialists who might read this book. Whether my efforts have not been entirely wasted will be for the reader to judge.

In our materialistic society, Hippocrates is often severely and unjustly criticised. After all, we live in an age of doubt. It would be a great reward for the writer if this book contributes towards the correct study of the Hippocratic heritage and towards a wider promulgation of the Hippocratic ideas and moral principles in today's crisis of moral values.

**MANOLIS S. KIAPOKAS**




Map of Cos showing the ancient division into districts. From Paton and Hicks, The Inscriptions of Cos ( Oxford 1891 ).



Cos: the modern capital ( Partial air view).

# 1. SOURCES ON THE LIFE AND WORK OF HIPPOCRATES

"Hippocrates' life was one of those to which it is difficult to find a parallel. If his native land of Cos, as Demoxenos said, bore gods, the Coans could rightly call this fellow-citizen of theirs Father of the gods, as they called Zeus". This is what the doctor-philosopher Adamantios Coraës writes in his preface to the Hippocratic treatise ***Airs Waters Places.***[1]

Hippocrates was indeed an outstanding figure, a renowned personality whose genius has shone in the firmament of Greek civilization and has, up to the present day, guided the scholar and the ordinary man alike.

During the glorious period of civilization known as the "Golden Age" of Greece, when Pericles excelled in politics, Pheidias created his marvellous works of art, Thucydides wrote his immortal History, the tragedians presented their remarkable dramas, and Socrates with Plato opened new avenues in philosophy, there appeared on the intellectual horizon the wisest physician of antiquity, Hippocrates of Cos. And just as they excelled in the fields which they represented, Hippocrates also excelled as nobody else had done before in his art and was acknowledged as the outstanding medical celebrity of ancient times.

Without any technical infrastructure or precision instruments, he succeeded, through his intellectual strength alone, in discovering fundamental truths and formulating opinions which are even today considered to be scientific axioms. With his inquiring mind, his profound knowledge and his unfailing concern for the sufferer, he consolidated his position as a dazzling beacon in medical science and came to be regarded as the greatest medical genius.

Such was Hippocrates' reputation and fame that there grew around his name several legends and stories full of exaggerations and inaccuracies which caused a variety of comments and some spiteful attacks against this wise physician. In addition to raising doubts about certain biographical data, some people went as far as denying Hippocrates' very existence, describing him as a mythical character (e.g. Boulet, 1804). However, there is an abyss between reality and myth, and one

---

1. See Α. Κοραῆ, *Ἱπποκράτους τὸ περὶ Ἀέρων Ὑδάτων Τόπων*, ἔκδοσις Β', Παρίσιοι 1816, p.β.)

cannot, without due examination, include into the realm of mythology facts and people for whom there is historical evidence.

Admittedly, we do not possess very much evidence concerning Hippocrates' life from his contemporary writers. Ancient authors addressed their own contemporaries who knew the great physician very well, and therefore did not think it necessary to give details. Nevertheless, there is some reliable information.

First of all, we have two important references by the great philosopher Plato, who was about thirty years younger than Hippocrates, that is, almost his contemporary. In his dialogue ***Protagoras,*** where Socrates refers to Hippocrates, we are told that Hippocrates was a famous physician from Cos, that he belonged to the family of the Asclepiads, that he taught the art of medicine, and that he charged a tuition fee. From the dialogue between Socrates and a young man named Hippocrates (not the Coan) we conclude that, towards the end of the fifth century B.C., "Hippocrates of Cos" was so well-known that you could refer to him as you referred to the sculptors Polycleitus and Pheidias and be sure that everyone knew that you meant the great physician.[2]

The other testimony is found in the ***Phaedrus***. In this text Plato mentions the scientific method of Hippocrates, who based his medical system on a comprehensive knowledge of human nature. In answer to Socrates' question whether we can really understand the nature of the soul without knowledge of the nature of the whole, Phaedrus says, "if we may trust Hippocrates the Asclepiad, it is impossible without this method to have any knowledge of the human body either." Plato honours Hippocrates when he goes on to present Socrates as prompting Phaedrus with the words: "About nature, then, consider what Hippocrates and true doctrine have to say".[3] It seems that Plato already knew some of Hippocrates' works and had been influenced by his teaching on human nature as a psychosomatic whole. This particular extract has caused a lot of discussion among scholars.

Another testimony which is equally important is that of the philosopher Aristotle, who says, with reference to the task performed by city-states, that we should regard as very great the city which is able to accomplish its task best, just as we would call Hippocrates greater, not as a human being but as a

2. See Plato, *The Protagoras*, 311b-c.
3. See Plato, *Phaedrus*, 270 c.

physician, than another man who surpasses him in size.[4] It is obvious that the omniscient Aristotle, who was about seventy years Hippocrates' junior, recognises his scientific skill because he regards him as "great". For Plato and Aristotle, Hippocrates represented without any doubt the personification (incarnation) of medical science, as W. Jaeger says.[5]

The next piece of evidence, dating from the pre-Alexandrian period, comes from Memo, a student of Aristotle, and is contained in a papyrus in the British Museum, the **Anonymus Londinensis,** so called by its first editor, Hermann Diels. In quoting the views of different physicians in order to explain certain diseases in his *Ἰατρικά* (Medical Writings), Memo, who is regarded as the earliest medical historian, refers to Hippocrates in five different passages. He quotes various views from Hippocratic works such as ***Breaths, The Nature of Man*** etc, and wherever he disagrees with the Hippocratic views he adds that Hippocrates has a different opinion. It is remarkable that, while other well-known physicians are referred to by their name of origin, e.g. Euryphon of Cnidos, Dexippos of Cos etc., Hippocrates is mentioned without a specification, which is another indication of the uniqueness and authority of the great Coan Physician.[6]

There is also a disputed piece of information in Aristophanes concerning the Hippocratic Oath which will be discussed in the chapter The Authenticity of the Hippocratic Oath, in Part III.

Some information about the life and work of Hippocrates is also contained in the Πρεσβευτικός ***(Speech of the Envoy),*** a speech which his son Thessalus is said to have addressed to the Athenians. Among other things, Thessalus reminds the Athenians how his father has helped them, particularly in dealing with a devasting plague in Athens, and asks them to cease hostilities against the Coans. Although there have been some doubts about the authenticity of this information, some of the details in the Speech have been verified in the last few years by inscriptions which have been found at Delphi.[7]

One should be particularly wary when using the information contained in the Hippocratic ***Letters.*** With the development of scientific schools and the competition among them during the Hellenistic age, there developed the art of

4. Aristotle, *Politics*, H4, 1326α 13.
5. Paedeia, transl. intro Greek by P. Berroios, Athens 1971, p. 349.
6. See H. Diels, Anonymi Londinensis, Ex Aristotelis ... Iatricis Menoniis et aliis medicis ecologae, Berolini 1893, V 35 ff.).
7. See J. Jouanna, *Hippocrate*, Paris, 1992, pp. 10, 54).

letter-writing. In the same period there was an awakening of interest in the biographies of great men, and many scholars, making use of the various stories and anecdotes which circulated widely, represented the person they were interested in as corresponding with one of his contemporaries, so as to show his activities and personality in a realistic manner. In the same way the ***Letters*** in the Hippocratic collection are mostly of an anecdotal character, and they were probably written by a doctor or scholar who was nurtured in the glamour of the Hippocratic tradition, was a fervent supporter of Coan medical thought and probably lived towards the end of the Hellenistic period. Herzog makes a cautious guess that most of them were written by the Coan physician G. Stertinius Xenophon, personal physician to the Emperor Claudius (41-54 A.D.). Other scholars (e.g. Phillipson) consider the ***Letters*** to be older and date them at about 40-30 B.C.[8]

We have four biographies of Hippocrates, dating from the 2nd to the 12th centuries A.D. One is by Soranus of Ephesos, a physician who lived in the 2nd century A.D. and is entitled Ἱπποκράτους γένος καὶ βίος κατὰ Σωρανόν ***(Descent and Life of Hippocrates according to Soranus).*** A second one is from a Latin manuscript in the Royal Library of Brussels entitled ***Hippocratis genus, vita, dogma,*** which has been preserved for us by Th. Priscianus (6th century A.D.) A third one consists of the biographical notes contained in the well-known Byzantine lexicon of Suidas. Finally, we have the notes on Hippocrates by Joannes Tzetzes, a twelfth-century Byzantine scholar.[9]

The authors of these biographies obtained their information from earlier writers and commentators, such as Eratosthenes, Pherecydes, Apollodorus the chronicler, Soranus of Cos, Histomachus, Arius of Tarsos, Andreas of Carystus, Bacchius of Tanagra and others.

Of the above-mentioned, the most notable was Eratosthenes of Cyrene, who had a broad education and was an excellent chronologer, astronomer and geographer. He flourished around the middle of the 3rd century B.C., was an expert in matters of chronology, and possessed many documents from the Library of Alexandria which he had administered for a great number of years. Therefore, his information is considered to be reliable.

---

8. See Δ. Σακαλή, *Ιπποκράτους Επιστολαί*, Ιωάννινα 1989, pp. 84ff.
9. J. Tzetzes, *Chiliades* VII 944-989.

Hippocrates' fellow-citizen, Soranus of Cos (300 B.C.) is not to be underestimated, perhaps. As Soranus of Ephesos says, "having studied the registers of Cos", he added to the date given by Ischomachus (1st year of the 80th Olympiad) the information that Hippocrates was born during the archonship of Abriadas, on the 27th day of the month of Agrianius, and that the people of Cos later honoured their great compatriot by offering sacrifices on that day.

Bacchius of Tanagra, a physician of the 3rd century B.C. who distinguished himself as a commentator on the Hippocratic writings, is also considered noteworthy. As is believed by some commentators, such as Wellmann, much of the information contained in the Brussels Biography comes from Bacchius. Certain Byzantine writers, such as Eusebius of Pamphilus, bishop of Caesaria (4th century A.D.), Georgius Syncellus, chronicler (end of 11th century A.D.), and Michael Glycas, theologian-historian of the 12th century A.D.,draw their information from the same sources.

Some very important information also comes from Galen, the second greatest physician of antiquity, who wrote some admirable commentaries on a number of Hippocratic writings, though he lived more than five centuries after Hippocrates.

## 2. TIME AND PLACE OF BIRTH

According to Soranus of Ephesos, Hippocrates was born in 460 B.C. As he says, he derives this information from Ischomachus. In the first book of his treatise on the ***Hippocratic Dogma*** Ischomachus, who must be the same person as Histomachus the physician, says that Hippocrates was born "in the first year of the eightieth olympiad", which corresponds to 460 B.C. From Soranus the Coan, the biographer draws the detail that Hippocrates was born during the archonship of Abriadas on the 27th day of the month of Agrianius. The month of Agrianius (Agranius, Agerranius, Agrianus etc., as it appears on various inscriptions) is found in the calendars of certain cities, especially island-cities like Cos, Rhodes, Calymnos, Leros and others and is believed to correspond to Elaphebolion of the Attic calendar, that is, roughly to today's April.

Some scholars date Hippocrates' birth before 470 or 480 B.C., relying mainly on what Aulus Gellius, a 2nd-century-A.D. Roman orator, says in his *Noctes Atticae* (XVII, 21). He considers Hippocrates a contemporary of Sophocles and Euripides and older than Socrates. And since Sophocles was born around the year 495 B.C., Euripides in 480 B.C. and Socrates in 470 B.C., it is concluded that Hippocrates must have been born 15 years before the date mentioned by Histomachus.

Petersen, an Austrian professor (at Hamburg), notes that, since Socrates' year of birth is known, and since Hippocrates was older than him, Hippocrates' year of birth must be calculated at about 475 B.C.[10]

Medical historian K. Metropulos regards Hippocrates as being even older. First, he considers the evidence of A. Gellius, of Eusebius, and of Syncellus who dates the birth of Hippocrates at 501 B.C.. Then he adopts the view that during the Peloponesian War, Hippocrates helped the Athenians to combat the dreadful plague in 430 B.C., as he did other Greeks (Thessalians, Macedonians and so on) by sending his two sons and his son-in-law, Polybus, to offer their medical services.[11]

Since, therefore, he had sons and a son-in-law who were old enough to have been doctors in 430 B.C., it follows that he had been born long before 460 B.C.. Thus he places Hippocrates' birth at 490 B.C..[12]

Difficulties in the dating of events occur in the biographies of other ancient celebrities as well,because chronological calculations based on the Olympiads in pre-Alexandrian times did not always rely on sound evidence.

In any case, most Hippocratic scholars from Littré to our contemporaries agree that Hippocrates' year of birth falls around 460 B.C.

Hippocrates was born on the island of Cos, most probably in its old capital of Astypalaea, in the western part of the island, near present-day Kephalos (Cephalus). "Cos Meropis" (so called by Thucydides and others), the town in the eastern part of the island, which was near the site of the present capital, but not on the coast, did not begin to develop until after the middle of the 5th century, when Hippocrates was already in his prime. Finally, in 366 B.C. there was a

---

10. Philologus IV, 1849, p.258.
11. See Hippocrates, ***Speech of the Envoy.***
12. Κ. Μητροπούλου, *Ἱπποκράτους γένος, βίος, ἔργα*, Ἀθῆναι 1951, p.25.

movement of populations from the nearby villages and the **συνοικισμός** (the founding of the city) of Cos took place near the present harbour, a city which was to become the renowned capital of the island.[13]

That Hippocrates was a native of Cos is confirmed by Plato, by Aristotle's pupil Meno the Physician, and of course by his earliest biographer Soranus of Ephesos. Nor has his Coan descent been disputed by later writers who as a rule refer to him as "Hippocrates the Coan" ('Ιπποκράτης ὁ Κῷος).

Before Hippocrates was born, there was already an Asclepeion in Cos, to which large numbers of sufferers flocked from different parts of Greece, as pilgrims and as patients. There was also a Medical School operating in Cos in Hippocrates' time similar to the famous school of nearby Cnidos. It was on this island, then, with its long medical tradition, and in a wonderful family environment, that Hippocrates, this gifted man who was to open new routes in medicine, and in science as a whole, first saw the light of day.

# 3. ANCESTRY AND FAMILY

Soranus' biography of Hippocrates begins with the statement that he was the son of Heracleides and Phaenarete, twentieth descendant of Heracles (Hercules) and nineteenth descendant of Asclepius. In the biography of the Brussels manuscript Hippocrates' descent (on his father's side) is also traced back to Asclepius.

According to Joannes Tzetzes, Hippocrates' family tree is as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Asclepius | 7. Cleomytades | 13. Nebrus |
| 2. Podalirius | 8. Theodorus I | 14. Gnosidicus |
| 3. Hippolochus | 9. Sostratus II | 15. Hippocrates I |
| 4. Sostratus I | 10. Crisamis II | 16. Heracleides |
| 5. Dardanus | 11. Theodorus II | 17. Hippocrates II, |
| 6. Crisamis I | 12. Sostratus III | the Great. |

Suidas mentions the names of two more ancestors of Hippocrates, Chrysus and

---

13. See Strabo's *Geography*, ΙΔ' 657c; cf. Βασ. Χατζηβασιλείου, 'Ιστορία τῆς Νήσου Κῶ 1990, pp. 69 ff.

his son Elaphus, who were supposed to be the son and grandson of Nebrus respectively.[14]

It would be unthinkable not to relate the greatest physician of antiquity to the peerless healer, Asclepius, who was believed to have been "the inventor of the medical art", as Galen says. We all know that in Homer Asclepius is referred to as a mortal. He was the renowned physician with a high standard of medical skill "the blameless healer" (Iliad Δ', l. 194). In Hesiod, too, he is regarded as a man of divine descent – the son of Apollo and Arsinoe. According to the most prevalent view, Asclepius was the offspring of Apollo and Coronis, daughter of Phlegyas. Phlegyas gave his daughter, pregnant with Apollo's child, to Ischys, son of Elatus; whereupon Artemis, offended by the insult against her brother (Apollo), killed Coronis. Just before Coronis' body began to be consumed by the flames of the pyre, Apollo had Hermes (= Mercury) snatch the unborn child from the flames and entrusted it to Cheiron to be revived.[15]

By the time of Pindar (6th century B.C.) Asclepius had been deified. The following verses are typical:

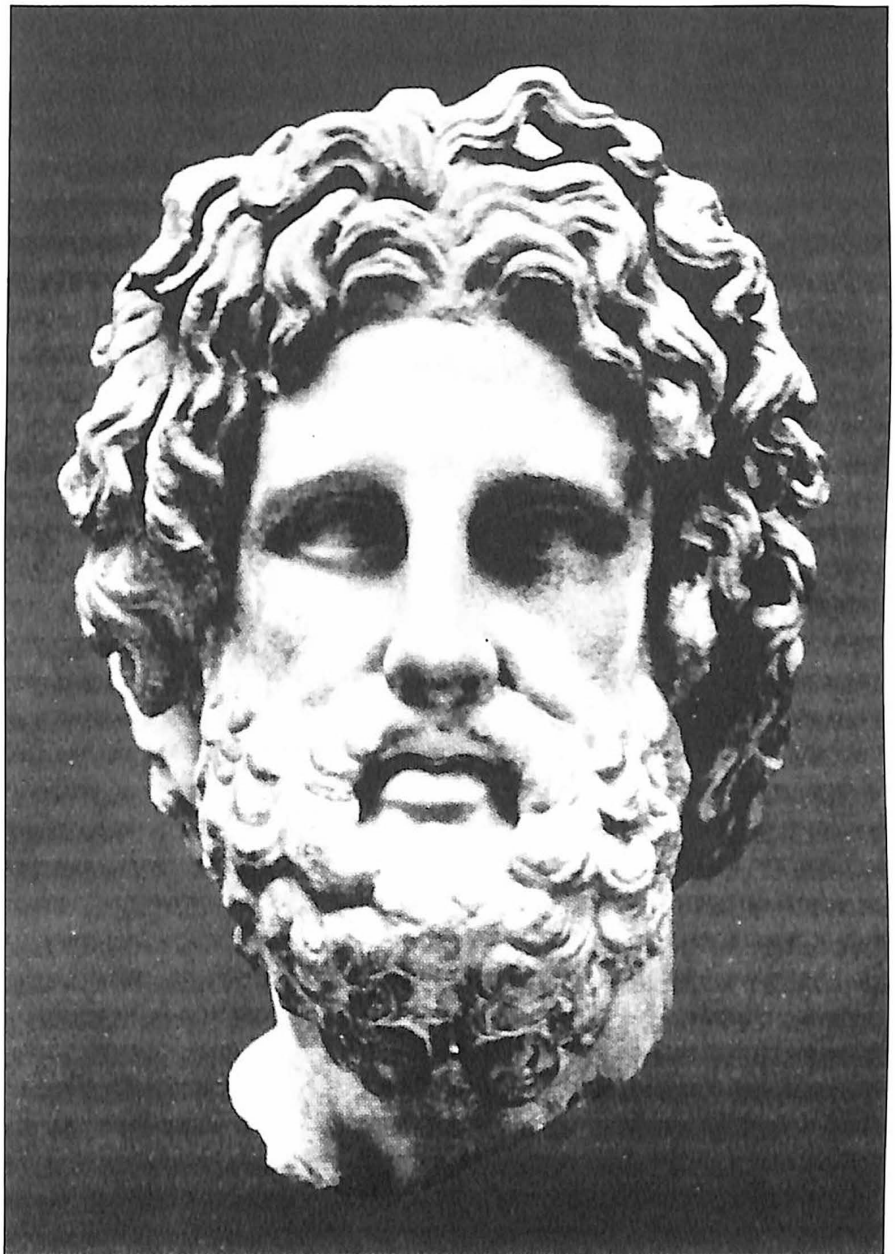
> From holy Tricca a god am I,
> whom my mother, having once
> lain with Phoebus, gave birth to,
> king of wisdom, skilled physician,
> to me, Asclepius.[16]

A century later, Plato believed that Asclepius was the founder of medical science, which was dominated by this god in all its fields: "All medicine, then, as I say, is governed by this god".[17] According to tradition, Asclepius was such a wonderful healer that he could cure any disease, and that he could even resuscitate the dead.[18]

The worship of Asclepius, as Pausanias says, was introduced by the Dorians, first into Epidaurus and later into Cos.[19] At the places of worship of Asclepius, the Asclepeia, the priests, as representatives of the god, practised the art of medicine and taught it, at first, exclusively to their own children. These

---

14. Cf. Hippocrates, ***Speech of the Envoy.***
15. See Hesiod, *Hoeae,* extr. 54, 60 and Pausanias, *Corinthian Travels* II 26, 6.
16. Pindar, *Pythian Ode* III, 14.
17. Plato, *Symphosium* 186 E.
18. See Pausanias, *Corinthian Travels* II 26, 5; cf. Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* III, 10, 3.
19. Pausanias, *Laconian Travels* III, 23, 6.



Asclepius

were the famous Asclepiads, an upper class of people, a privileged caste of physicians who claimed to be the descendants of Asclepius. It was into such a priestly family, such a renowned race of Asclepiads, that Hippocrates was born.

While other physicians tried to trace their origin back to Asclepius or to well-known Asclepiads in order to win fame, Hippocrates did not need to make use of his ancestry, since both his father and grandfather were brilliant Asclepiads, priests at the Asclepeion of Cos, and descended from famous physicians themselves. As Carratelli says, "the Asclepiads of the Isthmus of Cos, one of whom was Hippocrates, were the trustees of the worship of Asclepius and stood out for their high prestige and the moral principles which guided their conduct".[20]

It is interesting to read what Stephanus Byzantius has to say in his Lexicon about Hippocrates' ancestor Nebrus: "Hippocrates was a descendant of the family of the so-called Nebridae. For Nebrus had been the most famous of the Asclepiads, about whom even Pythia gave a favourable testimony".

Thus, tradition had very soon connected Hippocrates and Cos with Asclepius and his sons. In his second Mime, the Coan poet Herodas (3rd century B.C.) puts into the mouth of Battarus an appeal to the judges to show how glorious their ancestors (Thessalus and Heracles) had been "and how Asclepius had come here (to Cos) from Tricca".[21]

One of the legends says that Asclepius' son Podalirius married Syrna, the daughter of Damaethus, king of Caria and Nisyros, and settled in Cos. They had a son, named Hippolochus, to whom Podalirius taught the art of medicine. One of his distant descendants was Hippocrates.[22]

According to another legend, the first two Asclepiads, Machaon and Podalirius, having arrived in Cos Meropis which Heracles had sacked on his return from Troy, brought settlers and established "traditions suited to the nature of the land". Their skill and humanity, having spread to all Greek cities, embellished even barbaric lands and saved, and continues to save, the lives of

---

20. See G. P. Carratelli, *La norma etica degli Asclapiadae di Cos*, LA PAROLA DEL PASSATO XLVI, 1991, p. 85.
21. Herodas, *Mime B'*, l. 97.
22. See Theopompus, *Fragments from Greek Historians* 115 F 103 (14) Jacoby; cf. Stephanus Byzantius, w. "Syrna".

large numbers of people. "From them came a great gift to humanity, Hippocrates".[23]

As we can see, in the above accounts legend is mixed with historical fact. Another legend says that Asclepius married the daughter of Merops King of Cos, Epione, to whom were attributed special medical skills.

Asclepius' position in Coan religious worship was particularly eminent, almost majestic. It is sufficient to note here that on the inscriptions of Cos he is referred to, among other things, as LEADER and SAVIOUR.[24] There are more details in the **Analysis of the Hippocratic Oath** (Chapter I).

Some observations could also be made concerning the tradition which makes a connection of kinship between Hippocrates and Heracles. The legendary hero was very closely connected with Cos. According to Homer, as Heracles was returning from Troy to Argos, he was blown off course by a storm which Hera had caused and was shipwrecked on the island of Cos.[25] Tradition says that he married Chalciope, daughter of Eurypylus king of Cos, and had a son with her named Thessalus.[26] Thessalus' sons were Pheidippus and Antiphus, who led the ships sent against Troy by Cos and the neighbouring islands[27] and from whom Hippocrates' mother traced her ancestry.

These myths are obviously connected with the invasion of the Heracleidae and the settlement of the Dorians on the island of Cos. But, apart from the Doric character of the island, one could discern another symbolism, a special relationship between Hippocrates and the mythical hero, in this legendary kinship: Heracles is the solar god who overcomes the monsters of darkness, a friend of Apollo the god of medicine. Like Apollo, Heracles is a kindly god, who saves humans from the evils that threaten them.[28] Here seems to lie the deeper meaning of the kinship between Hippocrates and Heracles: Heracles saves people from the evil powers; Hippocrates delivers them from ruinous diseases. The former is the mythical benefactor of mankind; the latter, their

23. See Aelius Aristides, *Asclepiadae* 11; cf. Κ. Μητροπούλου, *Ἱπποκράτους γένος, βίος, ἔργα*, 1950, p. 17.
24. See Paton & Hicks, *The Inscriptions of Cos*, p. 294.
25. Iliad, O, 24-30; cf Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, B VII.
26. See Plutarch, *Moralia* ... 58; cf. Ελπιδοφόρου Παπαντωνίου, *ὁ Ἡρακλῆς στὴν Κῶ*, ΤΑ ΚΩΑΚΑ, Τόμος Δ', 1993, p. 161 ff.
27. Iliad B, ll. 676-680.
28. See Decharme, *Greek Mythology*.

living benefactor. Let us not forget that Heracles occupied a distinguished place in the Coans' worship, as we can see from the temples, the statues, the Coan coins and the many inscriptions dedicated to him.[29]

Thus, according to ancient tradition, "divine Hippocrates is the descendant of gods on both sides, being an Asclepiad on his father's side and a Heracleide on his mother's side", to use the words of the 2nd ***Letter*** (Petos), where he is actually referred to as the twentieth descendant of Zeus. Hippocrates' name had become so well-known that various legends were created around his origins and his work from ancient times.[30] Man's admiration of eminent people often made him associate these people with the gods.[31] We could say that this is the way he expressed his amazement.

Nevertheless, even if we dissociate Hippocrates from his divine ancestors, we cannot diminish his fame and greatness. His father Heracleides had been an excellent physician and a distinguished priest at the Asclepeion of Cos. Similarly, his grandfather Hippocrates had been an archpriest at the Asclepeion of Cos and a famous physician, to whom early scholars attributed the works ***Fractures*** and ***Joints.***[32] If we go further back, his great-grandfather Nebrus had been "the best among Greek physicians" as we read in the ***Speech of the Envoy,*** "the most famous of the Asclepiads", according to Stephanus Byzantius, the first archpriest of the Asclepeion of Cos. It was of this distinguished medical family that Hippocrates came, a man who quickly surpassed in knowledge both his father and grandfather and all his ancestors, distinguishing himself as "the most illustrious of all physicians. For he ranked above his grandfather, the father of Heracleides, though they had the same name, by becoming the star and light of medicine the most beneficial art", as Suidas puts it.

According to tradition, Hippocrates' mother was Phaenarete, a descendant of the Heracleidae. Some writers (not many) regard Praxithea, daughter of

---

29. See Paton & Hicks, op. cit., pp. 64-77.
30. Cf. Littré IX 309; also Γ.Κ. Πουρναρόπουλου *"Προσκύνημα εἰς Κῶ, Τὸ Ἀσκληπιεῖον Κῶ... ὁ θρύλος τοῦ Μεγάλου Ἱπποκράτους"*, Ἀκαδημαϊκὴ Ἰατρική, τεῦχος 7ον, Ἰούλιος 1949; Ἀναστ. Καραναστάση, *"Ὁ Ἱπποκράτης σὲ ἀνέκδοτες παραδόσεις τῆς Κῶ"*, Δωδ. Ἀρχεῖον, τόμος 1, 1995 p.p. 111-119; Νικ. Πολίτη, *"Ἑλληνικοὶ Μεσαιωνικοὶ Μῦθοι περὶ Φειδίου, Πραξιτέλους καὶ Ἱπποκράτους*, Δ.Ι.Ε.Ε., τόμος Ι, 1883, p.77.
31. Cf. the Homeric adjectives διογενής, "sprung from Zeus" and διοτρεφής, *"cherished by Zeus"*.
32. See Galen's note on ***Diet in Acute Diseases*** XV, p. 456, Kuhn.

Phaenarete, as his mother *( **Letter II**)*. However, he is referred to as the son of Phaenarete in the earliest biographies, those of Soranus and the Brussels Manuscript. Adamantios Coraës' reference to Hippocrates' mother is typical:

"The fortunate woman who gave birth to Hippocrates was named Phaenarete, just like Socrates' mother was named Phaenarete".

According to the Brussels Manuscript, Hippocrates' wife was Ablabia. Hippocrates and Ablabia had two sons, Thessalus and Dracon, and a daughter who married Polybus the physician. Both sons were taught the art of medicine by their father and distinguished themselves as physicians.

Thessalus is described by Galen as "a wonderful man", to whom some of the works in the Hippocratic Collection, like ***Epidemics II & VI*** and others,were in fact attributed. He worked as the personal physician of Archelaus, king of Macedonia.[33] To Thessalus is also attributed the ***Speech of the Envoy,*** a speech in which he reminds the Athenians of the services that his ancestors had rendered them and appeals to them to cease hostilities against Cos and become allies of the Coans.

Dracon was also regarded as a brilliant doctor, who served Cos and other parts of Greece. To him also are attributed certain sections of or commentaries on some Hippocratic writings.

Hippocrates' family can boast other distinguished physicians as well, grandsons, great-grandsons, great-great-grandsons and other blood-relations of the great Hippocrates. Many of them bore the names of Hippocrates, Thessalus and Dracon. Suidas mentions seven Hippocrateses of Cos, most of whom honoured the profession, following in the footsteps and observing the Oath of their renowned ancestor.

Some years ago, a fragmentary inscription of the 2nd century B.C. was uncovered in Cos, containing a decree by which a city honours with a gold wreath a Coan physician named Hippocrates for the medical services he has rendered to its inhabitants. Thus, in the long line of Hippocrateses, descendants of the Great Physician, an eighth Hippocrates has now been added.[34]

---

33. Galen XV, 12.
34. See J. Jouanna, *Hippocrate*, Paris 1992, p. 81.

# 4. EDUCATION

Hippocrates was fortunate to have been born into an educated family and at a time when the golden age of Greek civilization was just beginning. After his basic schooling, he began to be initiated into the medical world by his father and, according to some scholars, by his grandfather Hippocrates I, an excellent physician. Before long he proved that, in addition to his intelligence, he possessed all the other qualities necessary for a prospective doctor. In his philosophical treatise ***Law*** he says that he who intends to acquire a deep knowledge of the art of medicine requires "a natural inclination, training, a suitable environment, instruction from infancy, industry and time". Hippocrates possessed all these assets and qualifications. First of all, he had a talent, a natural inclination, without which any amount of effort is futile. "When nature acts against you, everything is fruitless", he says in ***Law.*** He had experienced and qualified teachers, a favourable environment, both family and local, previous knowledge from an early age, a willingness to work hard and an unfailing zeal, which ensured that his learning would bear rich fruit.

According to Soranus, Hippocrates "was the pupil of his own father Heracleides, then of Herodicus and, according to some, of the orator Gorgias the Leontine as well, and of the philosopher Democritus of Abdera". Suidas also describes him as the pupil of Prodicus. Thus, according to the information provided by his biographers, Hippocrates' education was not limited just to medical training but extended beyond that to rhetoric and philosophy as well.

Many authors doubt whether Hippocrates was Gorgias' pupil, because Gorgias founded his School of Rhetoric in Athens in 427 B.C., and the information about Hippocrates' going to Athens is not regarded as reliable. The two men must have met in Thessaly at a more advanced age, as Gorgias himself lived there for a long period of time and died in Larissa.

Herodicus' descent is not specified by Soranus. In Suidas and Tzetzes he is referred to as "Herodicus of Selymbria". He was an eminent doctor at that time and had specialised in dietetics and gymnastics. Since the dietetic system and the exhausting exercises of Herodicus of Selymbria are criticised in a treatise of the Hippocratic Collection,[35] some scholars assume that Hippocrates' teacher

35. ***Epidemics VI,*** 3.






The Asclepeion of Cos.

was Herodicus of Cnidos, one of the most eminent representatives of the Cnidian Medical School.[36] Others cite both Herodicuses as teachers of Hippocrates.[37]

As for Democritus, many writers doubt whether he was Hippocrates' teacher; in fact they regard him as younger than Hippocrates. It seems more likely that the two men were close friends, communicated intellectually and complemented each other's knowledge in philosophy and medicine. Their mutual respect is reflected particularly in the letters which the two men are supposed to have exchanged, although these letters are regarded as apocryphal texts. In any case, it appears from ***Epidemics III*** that Hippocrates spent some time in Abdera.

Some authors also regard Metrodorus of Chios as Hippocrates' teacher in philosophy. Coraës writes: "Hippocrates was not only a physician. His parents saw to it that he was given the kind of upbringing that the most distinguished Greeks of that time gave their children. He was taught rhetoric and all that has to do with public speaking by the then famous sophist Gorgias, and philosophy by Democritus or, as others tell us, by Democritus' pupil, Metrodorus of Chios"[38]

Hippocrates was trained at two of the most famous medical schools of antiquity, those of Cos and Cnidos. He also owed a great part of his practical experience to the Asclepeion of his native island, which many patients suffering from all sorts of diseases visited from various parts of the then known world. The various ailments and their remedies were written on tablets, which had already begun to be studied and classified by selected Asclepiads, such as his father and grandfather. Thus, there was abundant clinical material for practice and research. According to the story which Strabo has handed down to us, Hippocrates specialised in dietetics by studying the therapeutic descriptions of treatments kept at the Asclepeion of Cos: "And in the suburb of Cos there is the Asclepeion, a very famous temple, full of votive offerings... They also say that Hippocrates in fact exercised himself in dietetics from the descriptions of cures lying there".[39]

36. See Κ. Μητροπούλου, op. cit., pp. 27-28.
37. See Γ.Κ. Πουρναροπούλου, *Ἱπποκράτης, Ἅπαντα τὰ ἔργα,* ed. ΜΑΡΤΙΝΟΥ, vol. Α', p. 45.
38. See Ἀδ. Κοραῆ, *Προλεγόμενα εἰς Ἱπποκράτους τὸ περὶ Ἀέρων Ὑδάτων Τόπων,* Παρίσιοι 1816 p. ιζ'. Also, Suidas, under "Democritus" & "Hippocrates".
39. Strabo, *Geography*, BK XIV 2, 19.

Thus, Hippocrates, possessing such an excellent background, an exceptional genius and splendid opportunities for learning, acquired a rare education, with which, as a mature man, he embarked on his long scientific quests.

## 5. TRAVELS AND TOURS

When Hippocrates grew up he left his native island and began to tour various parts of the world. Such tours were common among important men in those days. Pythagoras had been to Egypt and Phoenicia; Democritus visited Persia, Scythia, Egypt, Cyrene, Magna Graecia and many other parts of the world. In the same way, Hippocrates travelled to different cities and countries, motivated by his thirst for learning. His aim, according to Soranus, was to study closely what was going on in other countries and so practise his art better. He obviously wanted to become acquainted with the nature and climatic conditions of various places. ("For he needed to write something about the nature of places", says Galen). He wanted to study the endemic diseases, the inhabitants' way of life and the influence of the environment, and to learn from the observations of others. Says Coraës: "Not satisfied with the tablets (of case-histories) in his homeland, he went around the Asclepeia of other cities, with the intention of examining their tablets as well, and learning the priests' observations by word of mouth. As a philosopher, he put all this material in order".[40]

We do not know exactly when Hippocrates began these scientific travels. Soranus simply says: "When he had completed his medical studies and after his parents had died, he left his homeland", without specifying the time. If we take into account the information given by Thessalus,[41] Hippocrates was in Thessaly at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War.

As for the cities and countries which he visited, the information given by his biographers is scanty and partly unreliable. Some scholars, relying on passages from some treatises in the Hippocratic Collection, such as ***Prognostic***

40. Ἀδ. Κοραής, op. cit., p. ιζ'.
41. in the ***Speech of the Envoy.***

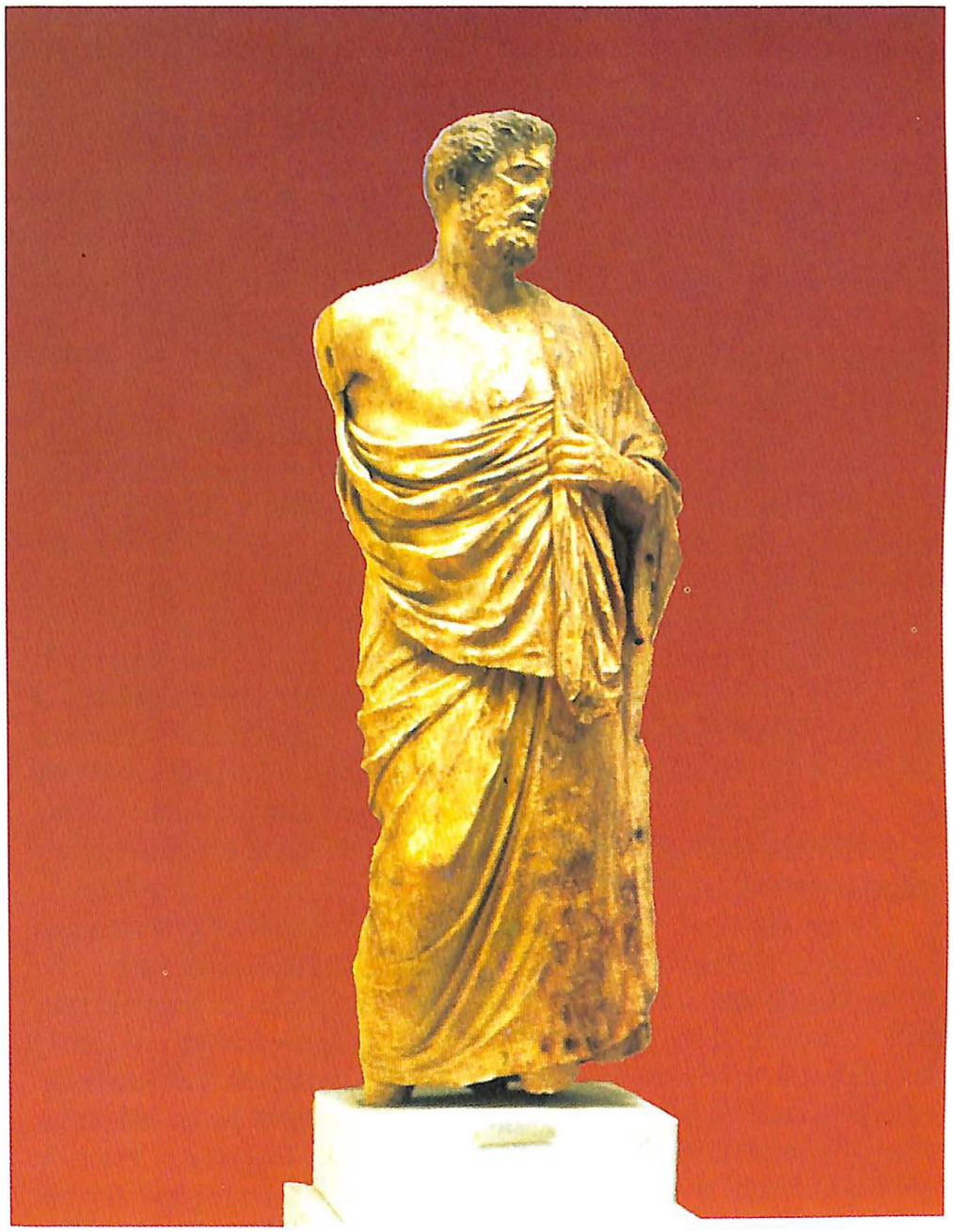
(25), ***Airs Waters Places*** (17, 18). ***Epidemics I & III, Diseases IV, Speech of the Envoy*** and others, estimate that Hippocrates visited countries in all three continents. Petersen says that he visited Scythia, stayed for a long time on Delos, and went to Egypt and Libya, to Thasos and Thrace, to the Propontis and the Hellespont, to Thessaly and to Athens.[42] Others have doubts about Hippocrates' trip to Libya, while they are certain about his visits to cities in nearby Ionia, particularly Smyrna where, according to Galen, he seems to have stayed longer.[43]

There is no reliable information concerning Hippocrates' sojourn in Athens. Nevertheless, the fact that neither Athens nor any Athenian patients are mentioned in any genuine Hippocratic works does not rule out the possibility of Hippocrates' having visited the glorious City of Light. Many scholars express the query, how that Hippocrates who "was admired for curing the whole of Greece", according to Soranus, and who visited so many countries in order to enrich his knowledge, did not visit Athens, which at that time was the home of the most distinguished men of learning, such as Sophocles, Euripides, Anaxagoras, Gorgias, Socrates, Plato and so many others.[44]

Hippocrates' journeys are estimated to have lasted about twelve years, some say fewer. Many scholars adopt the view that Hippocrates undertook fyrther trips as an itinerant[45] physician in middle life, having in mind the cases he describes concerning patients in Thasos, Abdera, Cyzicus and other cities, in ***Epidemics I & III.*** Some attribute his long absence partly to the political disputes among his fellow-Coans, who had been divided into two warring factions, those who sided with the Athenians and those who supported the Spartans.

In any case, Hippocrates' travels to all these places, where he experienced different climatic conditions, studied different characters, customs and conditions, and examined various human constitutions, must have helped him a great deal in his profession.

42. See K. Μητροπούλου, op. cit., p. 30.
43. See Galen XVIII α', p. 347, ed. Kuhn.
44. See K. Λαμέρα, ***Βιβλιοθήκη Αρχαίων Ελλήνων Ιατρών, Ιπποκράτης,*** Αθῆναι 1908, p. κα'.
45. In those days doctors were called **περιοδευταί (travellers),** because they travelled all the time.



The reputed statue of Hippocrates,late Hellenistic age (Cos Museum ).

# 6. PRE-HIPPOCRATIC MEDICINE

To get a better idea of Hippocrates' contribution to the progress of medicine one should examine, however briefly, the state the art of healing was in just before the appearance of this wise Coan physician.

As it appears from written records, in prehistoric times medicine was chiefly religious and occult. As a rule, diseases were attributed to the wrath of the gods or to the influence of evil spirits. For this reason, the most important means of healing were divination, incantations and various other rituals. In Egypt and in most eastern countries the art of healing was usually practised by the priests, who constituted a special caste, but there were also empirical lay doctors who used various medicines or applied practical methods of healing.

Greek medicine, too, was religious at first, as we can discern from Homer's epics. Nevertheless, the Greeks, with their inquisitiveness and their critical mind, did not completely submit to superstition and magic. Side by side with religious medicine they developed an empirical medical science which relied on experience and reason.[46]

The turning point in the history of civilization was the 6th century B.C., when the Greeks separated myth from reasoning and laid the foundations of philosophy and science. Released from traditional superstition, they pondered freely over the phenomena of nature and the purpose of life. In this way, they created a fertile soil for the development of rational thinking, on the basis of experience and observation. As was expected, philosophical meditation greatly influenced medical thought.

Before Hippocrates appeared on the medical scene, biological questions had occupied the minds of many Greek thinkers and philosophers. People who studied cosmic and natural phenomena often dealt with medical problems as well. Thus, the most important of the pre-Socratic philosophers greatly influenced the development of ancient medicine. Through their philosophical reflection, their study of nature and their investigation of human problems, especially those of health, they paved the way for Hippocratic Medicine. Medical historians investigate the philosphical theories of the pre-Socratics, not only because they constitute a link between Homeric and Hippocratic medicine,

46. See A. Castiglioni, ***Storia della Medicina,*** συμπλήρωμα Ν. Σ. Παπασπύρου 'Αθῆναι, 1961, p. 124; cf. Σπ. Μαρκέτου, ***Ιστορία της Ιατρικής,*** Αθήνα 1993, pp.35 ff.

but also because they contain many elements which extremely interest medical science. Of the works of the pre-Socratics only a few fragments have been preserved by later writers, but up till now they have been published several times.[47]

Much has been written at different times about the School of Miletus with Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes, about the School of Croton with Pythagoras and his disciples, about the School of Elea with Xenophanes and Parmenides, and about many philosophers of the 6th and 5th centuries, such as Heraclitus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras and others, who occupied themselves with medical problems. We shall confine ourselves to the most basic factors which influenced the progress of medical science, by pointing out here that the method used by the philosophers of Miletus for the study of natural phenomena was later used in the investigation of health problems. The approach to the interpretation of natural phenomena had a decisive effect on medical thought.

Heraclitus' teaching about perpetual change (**πάντα ῥεῖ, "everything flows"**) and about the origin of all things from fire has aroused a lot of interest. As man also consists of fire, he is likewise in a continuous state of flux. Fire continuously changes into water, and water into earth. The influence of Heraclitus' doctrines is clearly visible in two treatises of the Hippocratic Collection, ***Nutrition*** and ***Diet I.***

Parmenides believed that the universe originated from two constituent elements, "the hot" and "the cold", that is fire and earth.[48] Sensation as well as intelligence or understanding come from the hot and the cold. When the former predominates, man is characterised by more vitality and intelligence. According to Parmenides, we are deceived by our senses and cannot have an accurate perception of reality.

Hippocratic medicine was greatly influenced by Empedocles of Acragas (Agrigentum), a philosopher, poet, engineer, chemist and physician. He wrote a book, ***On Nature***, part of which seems to have been the ***Medical Account.*** He expressed the view that man does not breathe only through the usual respiratory routes, but also through all the pores in the skin.[49] He studied the physiology of

47. See Diels-Kranz, ***Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker.***
48. See Aristotle, ***Metaphysics A,*** 986 b, 34.
49. See Aristotle, ***On Breathing,*** 473 b1.

the senses and is believed to have discovered the cochlea of the ear. He makes a special mention of sight.[50] Of particular importance is his theory of the four elements, **earth, fire, air** and **water,** on which was modelled the theory of the four humours of the human body (**blood, phlegm, yellow bile** and **black bile**) developed by the Hippocratic school of thought.[51] These four indestructible elements, through their fusion, create different things. The forces which unite or separate the elements are Love and Hate (strife). When these elements are mixed in the right proportions, Harmony is achieved.

Another philosopher, Anaxagoras of Clazomenae, expressed the view that there is an infinite number of elements, seeds as he called them. The movement of these elements, (combination and dissolution) is due to the Mind, which is independent, "self-governing", and does not mix with any of these things (**Fragments** 12, 14). Anaxagoras believed that the head was the first part of the embryo to be formed. He is believed to have made dissections of animals and studied the function of the senses. According to what Aetius has to say about the theory of **ὁμοιομέρεια, "similarity of composition",** Anaxagoras was the first to formulate the principle of the imperishability of matter.

Perhaps the deepest influence on medical science was exerted by the Pythagoreans. At their school in Croton, which Pythagoras of Samos had founded around the year 540 B.C., pupils led an ascetic, moral-religious life, endeavouring to maintain a perfect balance, physical and mental. According to the Pythagoreans, the universe rests on opposing forces which are kept at an equilibrium, bound together in an orderly manner. This universal order they called **harmony.** Pythagoras was the first to use the term "cosmos", in order to express universal harmony.[52] Being part of the cosmos, man has a duty to see that the harmony inside him is not upset, so that he can enjoy physical and mental health. To that end the Pythagoreans worked out a strict dietary system. They prescribed a frugal diet and abstinence from any kind of food that might mislead man into violating moderation and losing his inner harmony.

The philosopher-physician Alcmaeon was also from Croton. His views are very similar to those of the Pythagoreans. He declared that man differs from all other animals, for he alone thinks, whereas the rest of the animals only feel. He

50. See Theophrastus, ***Sense Perception*** 7.
51. See Hippocrates, ***The Nature of Man.***
52. Diogenes Laertius VIII, 48.

made great contributions to the study of psychology and physiology. He believed that the soul is in perpetual motion, that it resembles divine things and that it is immortal. Health is maintained by the balance of forces (ἰσονομία), that is by the equal distribution of the qualities of Wet and Dry, Cold and Hot, Bitter and Sweet and so on; but the "domination" of one of them (μοναρχία) causes disease.[53] Alcmaeon combined philosophic speculation with medical thinking, and is regarded as the precursor of Hippocrates. His view that the brain is the seat of sense perception and all mental functions is considered to be original for ancient medicine. In many works of the Hippocratic Collection one can see the influence of Alcmaeon, and of the Pythagoreans in general.

Generally, the pre-Socratic philosophers, by extending their speculation from the macrocosm to the microcosm, came to the conclusion that the laws which govern nature also apply to man: And this constituted an important contribution to the progress of medical science.[54]

In the wider Greek world, especially in cities with an Asclepeion or a medical centre, there were a number of other medical schools before Hippocrates' time. The most famous of these were the School of Cyrene in Libya whose physicians were considered almost equal to those of Croton (e.g. Democedes) according to Herodotus,[55] the School of Rhodes which flourished during the 6th century B.C. but declined later, and the School of Cnidos, an important medical centre represented by such famous physicians as Euryphon, Herodicus and others. A short distance from Cnidos, the School of Cos developed during the 5th century and, with Hippocrates' appearance, soon overshadowed all the rest.

There were also the gymnasts who were quite skilled in dietetics, in the hygienics of gymnastic exercise, in dressing and caring for wounds etc. Among them were such famous men as Iccus of Tarentum and Herodicus of Selymbria.

53. See Aetius V, 30.
54. See Δ. Λυπουρλῆ, *Ἱπποκρατικὴ Ἰατρική*, 1972, p 29 ff.; cf. Εὐαγγ. Σταμάτη, *Προσωκρατικοὶ Φιλόσοφοι*, Ἀθῆναι, 1966.
55. Book III, 131.

# 7. HIPPOCRATES AND THE MEDICAL SCHOOL OF COS

As we have seen, during the 6th century and up to the beginning of the 5th pre-Hippocratic medicine went hand in hand with philosophy. It was Hippocrates who first drew the line between the two disciplines without completely severing relations with philosophy. He took over the Medical School of Cos and extended its teaching beyond the sons of medical teachers to all young men who had the aptitude for studying medicine.

He studied in depth the medicine of the priests at the Asclepeia, examined the medicine of witch-doctors and empirical healers, pondered over the medicine of the gymnasts, investigated the medicine of philosophers and, with his extraordinary genius, laid down new methods of studying the human constitution.

He was the first to apply the eternal laws of nature to scientific research, and to teach that experience, observation and experiment are the most reliable guides for the doctor and, more generally, the natural scientist. In this way, he raised medicine from the status of a multiform empirical art to that of a uniform, systematic science.

Hippocrates dared to separate scientific truth from the superstitions favoured by the priest-physicians of his time and from the erroneous doctrines and witchcraft of the traders in medicine, and to declare that diseases are not a punishment from the gods: "God is not the cause of anything (evil)".

He emancipated the human spirit from the bonds of ignorance, and revealed that diseases are the consequence of human or natural causes which man can probe into: "Each disease has its nature and its cause".

He pointed out the enormous effect of the natural environment on the physical and mental health of the individual: "The changes of nature are extremely important".

He conceived the idea of the existence within the body of a vital force which ensures man's preservation and is called **φύσις**, "nature". It is the principal healing agent which the doctor has to reinforce in order to preserve the body's natural defences: "Nature is the healer of disease".

Making full use of the findings of pre-Socratic philosophers concerning the phenomena of nature and life at a time when there was an air of freedom in scientific inquiry, Hippocrates was able to rid the art of healing of all religious

and magic elements and to lay the foundations of scientific medicine.

He saw man as a psychosomatic whole, as a unique entity. He examined, not only the diseased organ, but the whole organism. The medical axiom "No longer the sickness, but the sick" is a legacy from the great old Sage of Cos.

Hippocrates attached enormous importance to prognosis, to the course and development of the disease in relation to the general condition of the body: "It seems to me", he said, "that the best thing is for a physician to pursue foresight."

Of particular importance to Hippocratic treatment was regimen, which was not just a set of dietary rules, but the adjustment of the way of living according to the patient's age, his habits, the season of the year, the environment and the constitution of each individual. (These points are fully discussed in Chapter 18, HIPPOCRATIC MEDICINE, p. 91).

Generally, through his teaching, Hippocrates endowed his science with a unique greatness and achieved the propagation of the Coan medical tradition far and wide.

Before Hippocrates' time, the art of healing had been hereditary. Its teaching had been handed down from father to son within the limited circle of the Asclepiad family.

However, it seems that some Asclepiads had begun to think about some kind of expansion, on the grounds that the narrow circle of the few pupils would not be able to continue the medical tradition. A Calydonian who is mentioned in the ***Speech of the Envoy*** as an assistant of Nebrus, great-grandfather of Hippocrates, has been thought by certain scholars to have been his pupil, one of those who did not belong to the family of the Asclepiads of Cos. However, we have no testimony as to the medical skill of this citizen of Calydon.

Galen informs us that, as time went by, it became apparent that it would be wise to teach the art to people who were outside the Asclepiad family as well.[56] This "School", or rather medical circle, of Cos was virtually expanded by Hippocrates. Apparently, he saw that medical science could not develop within the narrow family confines, and so extended his teaching beyond the sons of medical teachers. Thus, medical knowledge began to be imparted to other young men as well who had the inclination to learn. Carratelli regards this

56. See Galen, Bk II, p. 280 Kuhn.

opening as an indication of the brave and generous mind of the brilliant Coan who marked a splendid course for the Greek spirit.[57]

It was precisely for these external students that the Covenant (Indenture) contained in the second and longer part of the Hippocratic Oath and specifying the obligations to the Teacher and to the Art was drawn up. "The Oath is directly related to this revolution which aimed at the expansion of the Medical School which at first belonged to one family", says Jouanna.[58] Only through this expansion would it be possible to continue the medical tradition of Cos and promote science.

Thus, besides his sons Thessalus and Dracon, Thymbraeus and a few other Asclepiads, Hippocrates trained a succession of doctors who did not come from the Asclepiad stock. The fame of the physicians who had been taught within the family circle of the Coan Asclepiads, and above all Hippocrates' reputation, attracted to the School of Cos many young men, not only from Cos, but from other parts of Greece, who wished to study the art. The small community of Asclepiad teachers became a proper school, by the standards of that time of course, since in the 5th century there were not yet any systematic schools like those of the Hellenistic age. Some of the best-known physicians, pupils of Hippocrates who did not belong to the family of the Asclepiads, were the following:

**Polybus:** One of the most distinguished pupils of Hippocrates. He stayed on Cos the longest, became intimately attached to the Master, married his daughter and succeeded him as head of the School when Hippocrates left for Thessaly. One of the most important treatises in the Hippocratic Collection, ***The Nature of Man,*** has been attributed to him since ancient times. Littré and other scholars ascribe to him ***Diet for Health*** as well.

**Dexippus:** One of the most celebrated Coan physicians who studied at the School of Cos. He is the author of ***Medical Book*** and ***On Prognoses***. He accepted an offer to cure the two children of Hecatomnas, king of Caria, on condition that the latter would stop the Carians' war against Cos.

**Praxagoras the Elder:** One of the best anatomists of antiquity. He was the first to distinguish arteries from veins and thus acquired great fame. The titles

57. See G.P. Carratelli, ***La norma etica degli Asclapiadai di Cos***, LA PAROLA DEL PASSATO, XLVI, 1991, p. 83.
58. ***Hippocrate,*** 1992, p. 74.



**HIPPOCRATES TEACHING**
By British sculptor A. Alwyn, 1994.

of his books ***Anatomy***, ***On Diseases*** and others have been preserved. Some of his views on anatomy are referred to by Galen, Caelius Aurelianus and others.

**Syennesis of Cyprus:** He was attracted by Hippocrates' fame, became his pupil and taught at the Medical School of Cyprus. He was one of the first scientists who described the vascular system. An extract from one of his works is quoted by Aristotle and has been preserved in the Hippocratic treatise ***The Nature of Bones.***

Other physicians who had been apprenticed with Hippocrates included **Apollonius, Philion, Polyarchus, Timolycus,** and many others about whom there is no reliable information.[59]

Side by side with the school of Cos there was the famous School of nearby Cnidos which was older. Between the two schools there was some rivalry which, despite the bitter criticism it involved, was kept at scientific level. Galen described it as a "noble rivalry". Hippocrates criticised the empirical school of Cnidos because, with its detailed analysis of the clinical picture of diseases, it limited treatment to the ailing part of the body; he taught that the doctor should examine the general condition of the patient, in order to apply an effective treatment. As opposed to the Cnidians who attached great importance to particular symptoms of the disease and recorded in detail the complaints of the different organs, Hippocrates and the Coan physicians sought the general symptoms of diseases and classified these diseases into larger categories. In spite of the progress it made, Cnidian medical thinking was unable to overcome certain prejudices; whereas Hippocratic medicine, being more rationalistic, advanced towards true knowledge and created the initial impetus for the progress of medical science.

The differences between the two Schools have occupied scholars, especially during the last few years, since the publication (1977) of the **Delphi Inscription** which refers to the "Community" of the Asclepiads of Cos and Cnidos. The inscription informs us that the **Asclepiad Guild** of Cos and Cnidos instituted an oath whose object was to preserve the common religious privileges of the members of the great family which descended from Asclepius. We can conclude, therefore, that at the religious and family levels the ties between the genuine Asclepiads of Cos and Cnidos were very close. At the medical level,

59. See ***Biography of the Brussels Manuscript;*** cf. J. Jouanna, op. cit.p., 75.

however, the Asclepiads, and in a broader sense the servants of the art of Asclepius, were rivals, vigorously supporting the tenets of their respective Schools.[60]

Before he left Cos, Hippocrates ensured the continuation of the operation of the School by entrusting its administration to Polybus. His pupils continued the propagation of his teaching, which bore rich fruit in the years that followed. The fame of Hippocrates and the skill of the physicians of Cos continued to lend a unique illustriousness to the Medical School of Cos. Many cities continued to invite physicians from Cos right down to Alexandrian times. Inscriptions from the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. containing honorary resolutions from the neighbouring islands and from Caria, Delos, Samos, Delphi, from cities in Crete and from other parts of the Greek world, extol the virtues of Coan physicians.[61]

Hippocrates' departure from Cos favoured the spread of medical knowledge to the mainland of Greece as well. In Thessaly he must have carried on teaching. His clinical observations were enriched and his new experiences had a positive effect on the future of Hippocratic medicine.




60. See J. Jouanna, op. cit., p. 76; Rougemont, ***Coprus des inscriptions Delphes,*** Paris 1977, p. 122.
61. See S. Sherwin-White, ***Ancient Cos,*** Göttingen 1978, pp. 267 ff.

# 8. PERDICCAS' ILLNESS

Hippocrates' fame as a distinguished doctor did not take long to spread beyond his native island and to reach the ends of the then known world.

In Soranus' biography of Hippocrates we are told that the great physician was sent for by Perdiccas, King of Macedonia, who was thought to be suffering from tuberculosis, to visit him at his court with Euryphon and cure him of his illness. Hippocrates recognized that Perdiccas' illness had been caused by his secret desire for his father Alexander's mistress Phila, freed him from this passion and won his favour.

Some scholars regard this piece of information as unreliable because it is combined with the presence of his senior in years Euryphon the Cnidian and because they date Perdiccas II's illness at 437 B.C., when Hippocrates had not yet acquired much experience or fame. However, there is no chronological difficulty, as other scholars point out, since Hippocrates is considered almost a contemporary of Euryphon, and Perdiccas may have been affected by this illness later. We also know that he lived until 413 B.C. and that he tried to attract famous Greeks to his court.[62]

Galen refers to Perdiccas' illness as "an illness which required Hippocrates' skill".[63] According to Eusebius Pamphilus' testimony, "When Perdiccas was King of the Macedonians, Hippocrates the Coan was known as an Asclepiad by descent".[64] While, according to Suidas, Hippocrates "lived in Macedonia, being a very close friend of King Perdiccas".

Although these accounts come from later sources, the possibility of Hippocrates' having visited Periccas' court cannot be excluded.

62. See *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους,* ΕΚΔΟΤΙΚΗ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ, Vol. Γ1, p. 169.
63. Galen I, 58 Kuhn.
64. ***Chronicle,*** BK I, 53, 28.

# 9. HIPPOCRATES AND DEMOCRITUS

A testimony of Hippocrates' fame is the information given by his early biographers (e.g. Soranus) that the Abderites invited him to their city to cure Democritus of a certain mania of which he was supposed to be possessed. The invitation, the journey to Abdera, the conversation between the two men, the diagnosis and their mutual admiration are described in great detail (not always reliable) in the letters which the two men are supposed to have exchanged, between them or with others, and which are classed by most Hippocratic scholars as apocryphal works.

According to the 10th ***Letter***, the Senate and the Popular Assembly of the Abderites, concerned about the behaviour of Democritus who was indifferent to human affairs and laughed at happy and unhappy events alike, and believing that he had lost his reason, appealed to Hippocrates to rush to the aid of a wise man who was the pride of their city. In the letter it is also pointed out that, besides their city, "the whole of Greece beseeches Hippocrates to save a man of wisdom".

In the 11th ***Letter,*** it appears that the Abderites had offered Hippocrates the huge sum of 10 talents, which however he did not accept, saying among other things: "it is no wealth making money from everywhere" and "I do not profit from illnesses".

According to the 17th ***Letter*** (supposedly sent to Damagetus), when Hippocrates went to Abdera, he was led to the secluded place where Democritus was staying, and the two men talked at length about people's madness and their unrestrained desire to acquire wealth, glory, pleasures etc; and having discovered that Democritus was in excellent mental health and that he was justified in laughing at other people's insanity, he went away, thanking the Abderites for giving him the opportunity to meet the distinguished philosopher.

We do not know how much truth there is in these and other stories in the rest of these pseudo-Hippocratic ***Letters***. One thing is clear, however: That whoever wrote these letters wanted to stress the theoretical and philosophical foundation of Hippocratic medicine.[65]

65. See Δ. Σακαλῆ, op. cit., p. 78.

Nevertheless, it seems certain that Hippocrates stayed in Abdera for some time and cured many sick people, for in his treatise ***Epidemics III*** he mentions by name quite a number of cases with detailed descriptions of their symptoms and the course of their illness. During his stay, the two men must have come to admire each other and established a close friendship, since they shared the same ideas and interests – medical, philosophical and so on.

Diogenes Laertius also records this first meeting between Hippocrates and Democritus, embellished with two incidents: "In the eighth part of his treatise called ***Walks,*** Athenodorus says that when Hippocrates visited Democritus, he ordered some milk to be brought; and that when he saw it, he said that it came from a black goat which had just borne her first kid, whereupon Hippocrates was impressed by his precision. But also with the maiden who accompanied Hippocrates during his visit to him, on the first day he greeted her saying 'Hail, maiden', whereas on the following day he said 'Hail, woman'; for the maiden had been seduced during the night".[66]

In spite of their anecdotal character, these stories prove the close relationship between the two men.

## 10. ARTAXERXES' CALL FOR HELP

Another incident which reflects Hippocrates' fame as well as his spirit is that connected with Artaxerxes. From the first ***Letters*** of the Hippocratic Collection we learn that the Persian King Artaxerxes, worried about the spread of the plague which infested his army, and having been informed by Petus that "Hippocrates the physician can cure this condition" and that he was endowed with divine powers and had raised the art of healing from an empirical craft to the status of a science, wrote to Hystanes, governor of the Hellespont, telling him to send Hippocrates to relieve them from the plague, offering him huge amounts of gold and the highest of honours: "Give him as much gold as he wishes and an abundance of things that are rare, and send him to us. For he will be of equal status with the best of the Persians". (Letter III).

66. Diogenes Laertius, Book IX, p. 42; cf. Suidas, article on **Democritus.**

But Hippocrates boldly refused this generous offer and in his reply he pointed out that he had provisions, clothes, lodgings and all that was sufficient for living; "and it is not right for me to benefit from the wealth of the Persians, nor to relieve from disease barbarians who are the enemies of the Greeks" (Letter V). In anger, Artaxerxes demanded from the Coans to hand over Hippocrates who had dared behave so insolently towards him and his people, threatening their island with utter destruction; whereupon the Coans replied in a manner which was worthy of their great compatriot, to the effect that they would not hand over Hippocrates even if they were to suffer the worst calamity and that the gods would not neglect them. Here are the two letters:

8. "The King of Kings, Great Artaxerxes, tells the Coans the following. Hand over to my messengers Hippocrates the physician who has bad manners and behaves insolently towards me and towards the Persians. Otherwise, know that you will be punished for your first mistake as well. For, having destroyed your city and pulled your island down into the sea, I will see to it that in the future no one will know if ever there was in this place either the island or the city of Cos".

9. The Coans' Reply: "The people's assembly has decided to reply to the messengers of Artaxerxes that the Coans will do nothing unworthy of either Merops, Heracles or Asclepius, in whose names the citizens, in a body, will not hand Hippocrates over, even if they were to suffer the worst destruction. For when in fact Darius and Xerxes with letters demanded from our forefathers earth and water, the assembly did not give them any, considering them to be ordinary mortals like everyone else. And now it gives the same reply. Leave the land of Cos; for they will not hand over Hippocrates. And you, the messengers, tell him that the gods will not neglect us".

Many scholars regard this information as unreliable. It is most unlikely, they say, that Hippocrates would have had the courage to reply so contemptuously to the mighty king of the Persians. Other scholars, however, regard Hippocrates' bold reply as quite natural and in fact absolutely in line with the attitude of the Greeks towards the Persians who constituted a permanent threat to their country. K. Lameras writes: "Those who describe this letter as insulting surely forget that Hippocrates lived at a time when the paeans of the Marathon and Salamis triumphs echoed very loudly throughout Greece inspiring everyone with noble sentiments and self-confidence".[67]

Some interpreters maintain that the humane Hippocrates could not possibly have turned down so callously Artaxerxes' call for help. Simple charity

---

67. See Κ. Λαμέρας, op. cit., p. κσ'.

would have obliged him to go to Persia to help the sick. Others, however, fully justify Hippocrates' attitude because , as things stood then, most Greeks would have regarded his visit to Artaxerxes' court as treason and would have thought that his motives had been connected with the riches and honours that the enemies of his country had offered him.[68]

In his biography of Hippocrates, Soranus mentions the incident about Artaxerxes' invitation and attributes Hippocrates' refusal to his self-respect, disinterestedness and patriotism.

Verifying the incident, Galen wonders if anyone among his own contemporaries is so disinterested as to be able to teach by example (as Hippocrates did) that the limits of wealth reach as far as the satisfaction of people's basic needs: that is, freedom from hunger, thirst and cold. And even if there were such a man, Galen goes on, he would not be able to defy Artaxerxes and refuse to appear in front of him.[69]

We also have the testimony of Plutarch who, referring to Hippocrates' reply to Artaxerxes, that he could never render his services to the enemies of the Greeks, says that this commitment was part of a common vow of all Greek doctors: "When the Great King invited him (to his court) promising him a lot of money, he replied that he would never render his services to barbarians, the enemies of the Greeks, because this was an oath common to all Greek physicians".[70]

The story of Artaxerxes as it is presented in the ***Letters*** shows the superiority of the Medical School of Cos. The ***Letters*** project the general principles of Hippocratic medicine and underline the difference between the School of Cos and that of Cnidos.

Some scholars point out that the invitation from the king of Persia constitutes not only a proof of Hippocrates' prestige, but also an indication of disregard toward the Cnidian doctor Ctesias who was Artaxerxes' personal physician.

If we now accept the view that Petus, the man who recommended Hippocrates to Artaxerxes, was an Egyptian, we must conclude that the fame of the great Coan physician (according to the writer of ***Letter II***) had reached as far as Egypt.[71]

Despite the reservations expressed by certain scholars, all the above information undoubtedly reflects the great fame of Hippocrates as a skilful doctor, which had soon reached even hostile countries, as well as the respect he enjoyed among his contemporaries.

68. cf. Γρ. Κάτσα, ***Στοιχεῖα Ἰατρικῆς Δεοντολογίας,*** Ἀθῆναι 1940, p. 211.
69. Galen, I 58, Kuhn.
70. Plutarch, ***Cato,*** 23, 3-4.
71. See Δ. Σακαλῆ, op. cit., p. 69.

# 11. HIPPOCRATES AT DELPHI

The information which connects Hippocrates and the Asclepiads of Cos with Delphi is considered noteworthly, especially since it has been verified by archaeological discoveries this century.

According to the ***Speech of the Envoy,*** the Coan Asclepiads were granted the privilege of being the first to consult the Oracle, a privilege enjoyed only by magistrates, out of gratitude to Nebrus, Hippocrates' great-grandfather, who had helped Delphi during the war against the Crisaeans. As evidence of this, Thessalus says that when he and his father arrived at Delphi, the Amphictiones (deputies) rendered them the honours due to their privileged status, renewed their privileges and wrote them up on a special column at Delphi.[72]

This column (or slab) has not been found yet, but some inscriptions which have been discovered show that Hippocrates had visited Delphi and that the Asclepiads of his native island preserved certain privileges at the temple of Apollo. On one of the inscriptions he is referred to as ΙΠΠΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ [ΘΕΣΣ]ΑΛΟΣ (Hippocrates the Thessalian), as he is in the epigram of the ***Palatine Anthology*** which we cite in a later chapter. The inscription has been published by H. Pomtow.[73]

This visit of Hippocrates and his son Thessalus to Delphi is dated at 420 B.C.[74]

In the ***Speech of the Envoy,*** we are also informed that when the great plague broke out in the north, Hippocrates sent Thessalus to Macedonia, his other son Dracon to the Hellespont, and Polybus and other followers to different cities to help, while he himself, setting off from Thessaly on his way to Athens, helped the Dorians of Thermopylae and all the inhabitants of Phocis, while at Delphi he prayed to the god for the deliverance of all the Greeks and made a sacrifice.

The close ties of the god-fearing Hippocrates with Delphi are also testified by Pausanias who says that among the votive offerings at the temple of Delphi there was a copper model of a human skeleton which the locals attributed to Hippocrates.[75]

72. See ***Speech of the Envoy.***
73. ***Hippokrates und die Asklepiaden in Delphi,*** KL10 XV, 1918, p. 308.
74. See J. Jouanna, op. cit., p. 54.
75. See Pausanias, X 2, 6.

The special privileges enjoyed by the Asclepiads of Cos at the Oracle of Delphi were verified by inscriptions found at Delphi a few years ago. Of particular importance is the resolution of the Community of the Asclepiads of Cos and Cnidos which is dated at about the end of Hippocrates' life. According to it, the said Asclepiads, when visiting Delphi, had to take an oath that they were descendants of Asclepius in male lineage in order to be entitled to the privileges enjoyed by their ancestors.[76]

From what has just been said, we can conclude that the information in the ***Speech of the Envoy*** about the relationship of Hippocrates and the Coan Asclepiads with Delphi comes from reliable sources.[77]

It seems that Hippocrates had always maintained very close ties with the great temple of Apollo, the benevolent god of light and health.

Hippocrates also spent some time in Delos which, according to tradition, was the birthplace of Apollo.

Delos is mentioned in some of the books of the Hippocratic Collection, such as ***Prognostic*** (25) and ***Epidemics*** (V, 61 and VII, 33).

## 12. THE PLAGUE OF ATHENS

The traditional information about Hippocrates' combating the Great Plague of Athens during the 2nd year of the Peloponnesian War has raised certain doubts.

In Thessalus' ***Speech*** it is stated that the pestilence had come from the northern countries of Illyria and Paeonia, which had called in Hippocrates to help them.

Hippocrates had sent his sons and his son-in-law to various parts of Greece to render their services, while he himself had gone from Thessaly down to Athens where he prescribed all the necessary measures for the deliverance of the Athenians.

76. See G. Rougemont, ***Corpus des Inscriptions de Delphes,*** Paris 1977, p. 122; cf. JBousquet, ***Inscriptions de Delphes,*** B.C.H. LXXX, 1956, p. 579.
77. Cf. J. Jouanna, op. cit., p. 56.

According to Soranus, Hippocrates concluded from the Illyrian and Paeonian ambassadors' answers that the plague would strike Attica, predicted the time of the outbreak and sent his followers to various Greek cities to help.

This information is not consistent with what we learn from the History of Thucydides, who says that the plague came from Ethiopia and affected Piraeus first. Yet, the question remains: How could Hippocrates at the approximate age of 30 have had sons and a son-in-law who were doctors and whom he sent to Greek cities to help combat the plague?

Referring to "a great plague" which Hippocrates combated, the Roman writer Varro (1st century B.C.) says that he (i.e. Hippocrates) had saved many cities with his scientific skill: "Multa oppida scientia servavit".[78]

Galen praises "the most admirable Hippocrates", who cured "the plague which had come to Greece from Ethiopia", without mentioning the city of Athens.[79]

In the 6th century A.D., Aëtius of Amida describes the way in which Hippocrates and Acron combated the plague, but does not specify the time of the epidemic: "... Change the air to hot and dry ... as Hippocrates and Acron of Acragas are said to have done in Athens".[80]

As we can see, the information is incomplete. Yet, one cannot overlook the following argument: If Hippocrates had in fact delivered the city of Athens from the Plague in 430 B.C., this would have been mentioned by Thucydides, who described the devastating disease in great detail and actually noted that the physicians had failed to combat it.[81]

Some scholars (e.g. Petersen) believe that Hippocrates treated a plague which had broken out in Athens and the Peloponese in 420 B.C.. Others calculate the appearance of this pestilence at between 419 and 416 B.C.[82]

A Latin manuscript in the Royal Library of Paris (No. 7028) confirms that Hippocrates went to Athens, noticed that the blacksmiths had not been affected by the plague, disinfected the air in the City with fire, and when he had contained the epidemic, the Athenians put up an iron statue in his honour with

---

78. M.T. Varronis, ***De re rustica*** I, par. 4.
79. See Galen XIV, 281, Kuhn.
80. Aëtius V, c. 95.
81. See Thucydides, Bk B', ch. 47-53.
82. See J. Jouanna, op. cit., p. 51.

the inscription: ΙΠΠΟΚΡΑΤΕΙ ΣΩΤΗΡΙ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΕΡΓΕΤΗι ΗΜΩΝ (TO HIPPOCRATES, OUR SAVIOUR AND BENEFACTOR).

Referring to the splendid honours which the citizens of various cities had bestowed upon Hippocrates, his biographer Soranus says that the Athenians "initiated him into the Eleusinian Mysteries, registered him as a citizen and granted his descendants the right of public maintenance at the Prytaneum (Town Hall)".

These honours from the Athenians and the expression of their deep gratitude towards Hippocrates are written up in the ATHENIAN DECREE which Littré counts among the "Apocryphal Works". The aythentieity of this decree has been questioned by other Hippocratic scholars as well, some of whom in fact date it at the late Hellenistic age.[83]

In spite of whatever reservations one might have, we set it out here, because it is a typical example of the traditions about the invaluable services which Hippocrates had rendered to the whole of Greece through his knowledge and his actions:




83 See Γ.Κ. Πουρναροπούλου, *Ἱπποκράτους Ἅπαντα*, ed. ΜΑΡΤΙΝΟΥ, vol. ΣΤ', p.158.

INTERNATIONAL HIPPOKRATOUS FOUNDATION
1960

# THE ATHENIAN DECREE
## Text

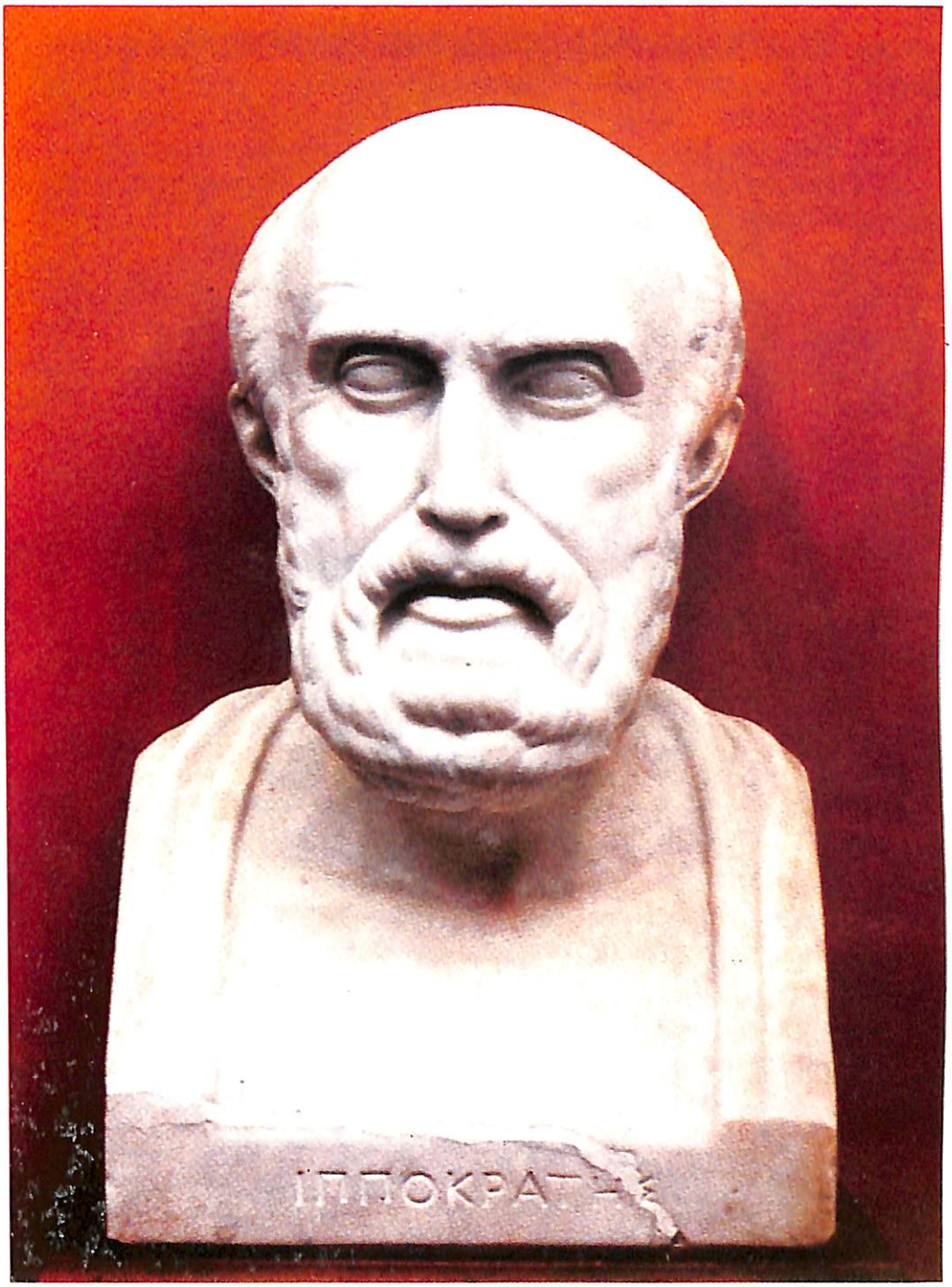
*Ἔδοξε τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ Ἀθηναίων. Ἐπειδὴ Ἱπποκράτης Κῷος, ἰατρὸς ὑπάρχων καὶ γεγονὼς ἀπὸ Ἀσκληπιοῦ, μεγάλην εὔνοιαν μετὰ σωτηρίας ἐνδέδεικται τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, ὅτε καὶ λοιμοῦ ἰόντος ἀπὸ τῆς βαρβάρων ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα, κατὰ τόπους ἀποστείλας τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ μαθητάς, παρήγγειλε τίσι χρὴ θεραπείαις χρωμένους ἀσφαλῶς διαφεύξασθαι τὸν ἐπιόντα λοιμόν, ὅπως τε ἰητρικὴ τέχνη Ἀπόλλωνος διαδοθεῖσα τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἀσφαλῶς σώζει τοὺς κάμνοντας αὐτῶν· ἐξέδωκε δὲ καὶ ξυγγράψας ἀφθόνως τὰ περὶ τῆς ἰητρικῆς τέχνης, πολλοὺς βουλόμενος τοὺς σώζοντας ὑπάρχειν ἰητρούς· τοῦ τε Περσῶν βασιλέως μεταπεμπομένου αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τιμαῖς ταῖς κατ' αὐτὸν ἴσαις καὶ δώροις ἐφ' οἷς ἂν αὐτὸς Ἱπποκράτης αἱρῆται, ὑπερεῖδε τὰς ὑποσχέσεις τοῦ βαρβάρου, ὅτι πολέμιος καὶ κοινὸς ἐχθρὸς ὑπῆρχε τοῖς Ἕλλησιν. Ὅπως οὖν ὁ δῆμος Ἀθηναίων φαίνηται προαιρούμενος τὰ χρήσιμα διὰ παντὸς ὑπὲρ τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ ἵνα χάριν ἀποδῷ πρέπουσαν Ἱπποκράτει ὑπὲρ τῶν εὐεργετημάτων, δεδόκηται τῷ δήμῳ μυῆσαι αὐτὸν τὰ μυστήρια τὰ μεγάλα δημοσίᾳ καθάπερ Ἡρακλέα τὸν Διός, καὶ στεφανῶσαι αὐτὸν στεφάνῳ χρυσῷ ἀπὸ χρυσῶν χιλίων· ἀναγορεῦσαί τε τὸν στέφανον Παναθηναίοις τοῖς μεγάλοις ἐν τῷ ἀγῶνι τῷ γυμνικῷ καὶ ἐξεῖναι πᾶσι Κῴων παισὶν ἐφηβεύειν ἐν Ἀθήναις καθάπερ παισὶν Ἀθηναίων, ἐπειδήπερ ἡ πατρὶς αὐτῶν ἄνδρα τοιοῦτον ἐγέννησεν· εἶναι δὲ Ἱπποκράτει καὶ πολιτείαν καὶ σίτησιν ἐν Πρυτανείῳ διὰ βίου.*

# THE ATHENIAN DECREE
## Translation

It has been decreed by the Council and the People of Athens: Whereas Hippocrates of Cos, a physician and descendant of Asclepius, has shown great goodwill and helpfulness toward the Greeks by sending his disciples to various places when the plague coming from the lands of the barbarians invaded Greece; has prescribed what treatments must be applied to escape safely from the incoming plague, thus demonstrating how the healing art of Apollo transmitted to the Greeks saves those among them who are sick _

whereas he has unselfishly published medical books in his desire to see

many physicians prepared to save the people –
whereas, when the king of Persia called him and offered him honours equal to his own and all the gifts he Hippocrates might ask for, he turned down the offers of the barbarians, hated common enemy of the Greeks –
therefore the people of Athens, desirous of showing their regard for the common welfare of Greece and of giving adequate reward to Hippocrates for his services, decrees: to initiate him at government expense into the great mysteries, like Heracles, son of Zeus –
to crown him with a wreath of gold of the value of one thousand gold coins –
to announce the crowning publicly at the time of the great Panathenaea, during the gymnastic contest –
to allow all children of Coans to have the ephebes' training in Athens with the same rights as Athenian children, since their homeland has produced such a man –
finally, to give Hippocrates Athenian citizenship and grant him sustenance in the Town Hall for life.




Bust of Hippocrates at the Medical School, University of Athens (Sculpured by D. Kossos, 1862).

# 13. SLANDER AND WICKEDNESS

There is no doubt that, from the first moment, Hippocrates' pioneering work disturbed the peace of quacks and medical profiteers. His revealing the secrets of the art to young people who did not come from medical or Asclepiad families caused great concern to self-seeking physicians and to the priests of the Asclepeia.

Moreover, the disagreements and rivalry between the Coan and Cnidian schools, which continued even after Hippocrates' death, often caused their followers to level accusations and unpleasant comments at each other.

We must add here that at first the Romans also looked with suspicion at the progress of ancient Greek medicine.[84]

It is a well-known fact that fame and glory often cause the envy of others, and that envy can invent the most unbelievable lies. As with many renowned personalities, so it happened with Hippocrates: Malevolent people tried to belittle the integrity of his character and his scientific status. Thus, among the reasons for his leaving Cos they included a slanderous accusation that he had burned the temple of Asclepius. This false accusation probably came (originally) from unworthy fellow-artisans who saw themselves overshadowed by Hippocrates' stature and their interests immediately threatened. According to Adamantios Coraës, "it was probably due to this hatred of the priests of Asclepius that the shocking and shameless slander which refers to Hippocrates' life came about, namely that he was forced to leave his native Cos because he had set fire to the temple of Asclepius".

Of course, there is no such information in the writings of the most serious authors, Plato and Aristotle, who have only good things to say about Hippocrates; nor in the works of such worthy writers as Strabo who refers to the Asclepeia of Cos and Cnidos and to Hippocrates, Galen who gives details of the life and work of Hippocrates, Plutarch and so many others.

The first person to give this information was someone by the name of Andreas, five or six generations after the death of Hippocrates. Thus, Soranus tells us that Hippocrates "left his homeland, as Andreas malignantly says in his book on medical genealogy, for having burnt the archives of Cnidos". It seems

84. See J. Jouanna, op. cit., p. 35.

that this malignant Andreas, in writing that Hippocrates had burnt the archives of Cnidos, hoped that many people would believe that Hippocrates had committed arson in order to plagiarize the observations of his predecessors or so that the Coan School would benefit, since the disputes and rivalry between the two schools were well known.

According to Daremberg, Andreas belonged to the School of Herophilus, which contended against that of Hippocrates.[85] It is possible that this insignificant doctor, Andreas (of Carystos), was one of those healers who believed in magic and superstition, in which case he had every reason to hate Hippocrates. Galen describes Andreas as "a cheat and a charlatan", who according to Littré is identical with the slanderer.

In the 1st century A.D. the Roman historian Pliny the Elder, drawing on the testimony of Varro, writes: "... that Hippocrates wrote down the observations [of the Asclepeion] and, as our Varro believes, after the temple had been burnt, he established what is called Clinical Medicine".[86]

The information here refers to the burning of the temple of Asclepius, but this does not necessarily mean that this sacrilegious act was committed by Hippocrates. As Adamantios Coraës also points out, the misunderstanding is mainly due to the phrase "templo cremato" (the temple having been burnt)) which, owing to the use of the Ablative Absolute in Latin, can be translated either "the temple having been burnt" or "having burnt the temple", since Latin has no Active Past Participle. Of course, all great Hippocratists translate Pliny's phrase correctly, "the temple having been burnt", arguing in fact that if Hippocrates had burnt the temple of Asclepius, it would have been utterly impossible for him to establish Clinical Medicine on his home-island and continue his work undisturbed.

Unfortunately, eleven centuries after Pliny, another scholastic writer came to increase the confusion. In his biographical notes on Hippocrates, Joannes Tzetzes, without checking his facts, revives and even alters Andreas' slanderous story with the following lines:

"In Cos having been appointed the keeper of the archives,
Hippocrates burnt all the books of physicians of old,

85. See K. Λαμέρα, op. cit., pp. λη' & μα'
86. See Pliny, ***Historia Naturalis,*** XXIX, Ch. I.

As well as the old library; wherefore he ran away,
And went to live in Hedonaeum of Thessaly, in Greece".

What Hippocrates burnt, according to Tzetzes, was neither the archives as the first slanderer (Andreas) says nor a temple as Pliny tells us, but a medical library. Slanderers do not always agree, because they continuously invent lies. How unfounded these allegations are can be seen from the fact that before Hippocrates' time there were no libraries, that medical books were almost non-existent and that only a few medical notes were interspersed in philosophical works, as we can conclude from Galen's ***Medical Terms.*** The first man to attempt a collection of books for the establishment of a library was Aristotle, about 80 years after Hippocrates' time. Tzetzes' reasoning , that because he had burnt the library Hippocrates left Cos and went to live in Thessaly, is also ridiculous: Thessaly was a place with a deeply religious tradition, with the first Asclepeion, that of Tricca, birthplace of Asclepius. Actually, Hippocrates did spend a big part of his life in Thessaly, until his death, not persecuted as an arsonist, but honoured and respected for his integrity and wisdom.

We do not think it necessary to discuss any longer such unfounded accusations, to which scholars do not attach any special significance, in any case. Arguments against the slander and a detailed and thorough refutation of the accusations against Hippocrates, including an explanation of the real purpose of his trips, are presented by Coraës in his introduction to the Hippocratic treatise ***Airs Waters Places.***[87]

The slanderers have not succeeded in convincing the world and minimizing the reputation and the importance of this great man. There is no doubt that Hippocrates' trips were purely educational and that they bore rich fruit, as one can see in the wise observations which are set out in many of his works.

One final point: If Hippocrates had burned the temple of Asclepius, his fellow-Coans and all his contemporaries would have punished him most severely, instead of honouring him while living and even after his death. Undoubtedly, a sacrilegious arsonist would have been followed forever by Herostratus' infamy and not by the continuous fame which has accompanied Hippocrates to this day.

---

87. See 'Α. Κοραῆ, *Προλεγόμενα στοὺς Ἀρχαίους Ἕλληνες Συγγραφεῖς*, 1988, vol. Β', p. 344.

# 14. HIPPOCRATES' LAST YEARS IN THESSALY

The part of Greece which Hippocrates visited repeatedly, and in which he stayed the longest, was Thessaly. From ***Epidemics III,*** which is regarded as a genuine Hippocratic work, we can gather that he lived and practised medicine in the cities of Meliboea and Larissa. In other books of the Corpus there are case-histories of patients from cities in Thessaly which Hippocrates may have visited, such as Crannon ***(Epidemics II, IV and VI),*** Pharsalus ***(Epidemics II)*** and Pherae ***(Epidemics V).*** His long stay in Thessaly must account for the fact that he was called a Thessalian, as he is referred to in the familiar epigram.[88]

In his old age Hippocrates left his home-island and returned to Thessaly where he stayed until his death. We do not know why he left Cos. According to one view, he went to retire in Larissa, then a peaceful and prosperous city.

In the ***Epibomius,*** a speech which Hippocrates addressed to the Thessalians, he was said to have undertaken a certain mission, namely to ask for their help on behalf of his fellow-Coans whose island had been invaded by the Athenians. It is not clear whether he was referring to the destruction of the island by Alcybiades in 408 B.C.[89] or to an earlier one in 412 B.C., as Petersen suggests. Irrespective of the information contained in the ***Epibomius*** (which is not regarded as an authentic speech), during the last years of the Peloponnesian War, Cos did suffer a lot of plundering through the rivalry between Athens and Sparta, and a great disaster from the earthquake of 412 B.C.[90] Perhaps these successive upheavals made Hippocrates leave his home-island.

Hippocrates' departure from Cos may have been partly due to the doctors at the Asclepeion of Cos. Attached as they were to religious medicine, they continuously antagonised Hippocrates and tried to belittle his authority (hence, perhaps, the well-known slander about the burning of the temple).

Another possibility is that Hippocrates decided to settle and work in Thessaly where he had stayed as a young man and where, according to Petrequin, his two sons probably lived. It is common knowledge that some of

---

88. See below.
89. See Diodorus Siculus XIII 69
90. See Thucydides, H' 41; cf. B. Χατζηβασιλείου, *Ἱστορία τῆς Νήσου Κῶ,* 1990, pp. 71 & 86.

his contemporaries also spent the last years of their lives away from their native land: Gorgias in Thessaly, Euripides in Macedonia, Herodotus in Italy, and so on.

Hippocrates' decision to choose Thessaly as a home for quite a number of years is also reasonably attributed to the close religious, ethnic and family ties which existed between the Coans and the Thessalians. The Asclepiads of Cos maintained strong spiritual bonds with the Asclepeion of Tricca, since Tricca was believed to be the birthplace of their ancestor Asclepius.

These ties with the Thessalians and Hippocrates' stay in Thessaly are also mentioned in the ***Speech of the Envoy*** where, among other things, Thessalus says: "For there it is that my father had his residence then and now".[91] In Soranus' biography we are told that, according to the account given by Soranus the Coan, Hippocrates' emigration to Thessaly was dictated by a divine order in a dream.

Thus, having spent his last years in Larissa, Hippocrates died at a very old age. Soranus writes: "... And he died in Larissa, at the same time as Democritus is said to have died; and some say at the age of ninety, others at eighty-five, others at one hundred and four, and still others at one hundred and nine. And he is buried between Gyrton and Larissa, and his grave can still be seen today." According to the biography of the Brussels Manuscript, he died at the age of 104. Suidas and Tzetzes also agree on this age, and so do several other scholars who calculate his life between the eightieth and the hundred-and-sixth Olympiads, according to Adamantios Coraës.[92]

In other words, Hippocrates' year of death cannot be precisely calculated, but it can be placed between the years 370 and 358 B.C. This ambiguity is probably due to the unstable situation prevailing in northern Greece at the time.[93] Putting up Hippocrates' age beyond the century may also be due to a tradition by which a long life was attributed to so renowned a physician.[94] It seems most likely that he lived to between ninety and ninety-five, about the same age as his friend and contemporary Democritus.

---

91. Cf. Κ. Μητροπούλου, op. cit., p. 42.
92. e.g. Saxius Onomastus, p. 44, (Ad. Coraës, op. cit., p. 360).
93. The riots during the reign of Amyntas King of Macedonia (389-369 B.C.), the conflicts between the Aleuadae of Larissa and the Pheraean tyrants in Thessaly (380-358 B.C.) are well known.
94. See Ἰωάννου Ἀναγνώστου, *Ἱπποκράτους κατ' ἐκλογήν*, Ἀθῆναι 1926, p. 10.

According to Soranus, Hippocrates was buried between Gyrton (south of where Tyrnabus is today) and his grave could still be seen in his (Soranus') time, that is in the 2nd century A.D. He even adds the legend that for many years there was on the grave a beehive whose honey could cure children's thrushes.

Concerning Hippocrates' grave, we have more recent testimonies, dating from the time of Turkish rule. At the beginning of the nineteenth century (1807), Anthimos Gazes wrote the following: "Hippocrates' grave lies outside Larissa, among Turkish graves at the side of the road; I saw it myself and read the inscription on it, but being unable to copy it for fear of the Turkish youths who had surrounded me, I left in grief and with sighs".[95]

Half a century later (1857), Dr. S. Samartsides adds: "Of the more recent investigators, the late Regas Pheraeus and Gazes claim that Hippocrates' grave was among the Turkish graves outside Larissa, near a place called *Arnaut Mahalle*. The late Coraës says practically the same things".[96]

In 1826, after a flood, at a distance of ten minutes from Larissa, near the village of Giannouli, some villagers discovered an urn which the scholars Thomas Andreades and Joannes Economides tried to examine. They unearthed a plaque with an inscription on it, in which they discerned the name of Hippocrates in a few letters, but they could not continue the examination for fear of the Turks. However, they reported the incident to a Turkish official named Necib Bei, whom they regarded as a protector of the Christians, and he sent his servants to bring the slab to his home. Under the slab, inside the sarcophagus, they found some ancient coins and a gold chain in the shape of a snake, which "were immediately pillaged", as Th. Andreades who had been present told S. Samartsides.

In 1857 S. Samartsides, drawing on the information given by the above scholars Andreades and Economides, found the tombstone in the bathroom of Bei's luxurious villa in Larissa, read what he could from the inscription and copied the legible letters, marking with dots those which had been effaced or words which were illegible. He confesses that "their reading presents great difficulties for me, being a doctor and never having dealt with such things before". Having copied the inscription, he visited the sarcophagus which he found "fortunately intact and covered with just a little soil", as he writes in his interesting paper.[97] The inscription reads as follows:

---

95. See. Ἀ. Γαζῆ Μηλιώτου, *Ἑλληνική Βιβλιοθήκη*, 1807, vol. Α', p. 200.
96. Περιοδικὸν ΠΑΝΔΩΡΑ 1857, p. 282.
97. Περιοδικὸν ΙΑΤΡΙΚΗ ΜΕΛΙΣΣΑ, Vol. Δ', p. 534, March 1857; also, Τάφος τοῦ *Ἱπποκράτους, Ἀθῆναι 1858*

....ΙΠΠΟΚΡΑΤ .... ΚΩ ..... ΑΓΛΑΟΦ .....
..... ΣΩΜΑ .....
ΠΟΛΕΙ ..... ΜΕ ..... ΤΕΛΕΣΦ .....
ΑΓΑΘΗ ..... ΑΡΕ ..... ΕΝΕΚΑ
..... ΧΡΗΣΤ ..... ΧΑΙΡΕ

The news of the grave and the inscription caused great excitement and a lot of comment in scientific circles. Some scholars expressed their disappointment at the incompleteness of the transcription, others their doubts about the identity of the tomb, among them the eminent Hellenist R. Briau.[98]

Basing their arguments on the language of the inscription as a whole and the last line in particular, some scholars believe that it is of a later date, since the ending with the words ΧΡΗΣΤΕ ... ΧΑΙΡΕ was common, according to archaelogists, during Alexandrian and Roman times (R. Briau). It is possible that in the Hellenistic period a cenotaph with the above inscription written on it was erected where according to tradition Hippocrates' tomb had stood.

Others, like the archaeologist Dowald, are more cautious, arguing that no definite conclusion based on the inscription with its numerous omissions can be arrived at, and consider its completion very difficult. Still others conjecture that it is a "reconstruction" of the original inscription on Hippocrates' tomb at a later time.[99] It is a pity that neither the sarcophagus nor the tombstone was preserved.

Hippocrates' memory has remained and will always remain indelible through the centuries; for this great thinker had set as his main purpose in life the relief of sufferers and, more generally, the benefit of his fellow-humans, "becoming the etemal leader in good deeds". Galen's prediction about Hippocrates' etemal remembrance, "Whom all the Greeks will remember for ever", has been proved up to this day, in fact, with greater and greater recognition of Hippocrates as the founder of medical science by the intellectuals of all civilised countries in the world.

Even though the inscription on the tombstone was copied incompletely, there have been preserved in the Greek Anthology epigrams which reflect Hippocrates' virtues and the profound appreciation of his service to humanity by posterity. We present here three epigrams, the first of which is attributed to the poet Nicomedes of Smyrna. Some ascribe it to Bassus, also an epigrammatist from Smyrna who lived in the 1st century A.D.

98. ***Gazette Hebdomadaire*** No 39, 25 Sept. 1857.
99. Cf. Β. Χατζηβασιλείου, *Η τελευτή του Ιπποκράτη στη Θεσσαλία,* ΤΑ ΚΩΑΚΑ, Vol. Ε' 1995, pp. 107 ff.

**1. CONVERSE[100] EPIGRAM**

Hippocrates became the light of men and saved whole nations
And because of him deaths became very rare.

**2. AN EPIGRAM TO HIPPOCRATES (Anonymous)**

He opened new paths to the art of healing,
The saviour of men, Hippocrates the Coan.

**3. A SEPULCHRAL EPIGRAM (Anonymous)**

Here lies Hippocrates the Thessalian, of Coan stock,
Whose divine roots spring from Apollo,
Who set up lots of monuments from his conquests of disease,
And who won great fame not through luck, but through skill.[101]

In other epigrams, too, Hippocrates is placed beside Apollo and Asclepius.[102]

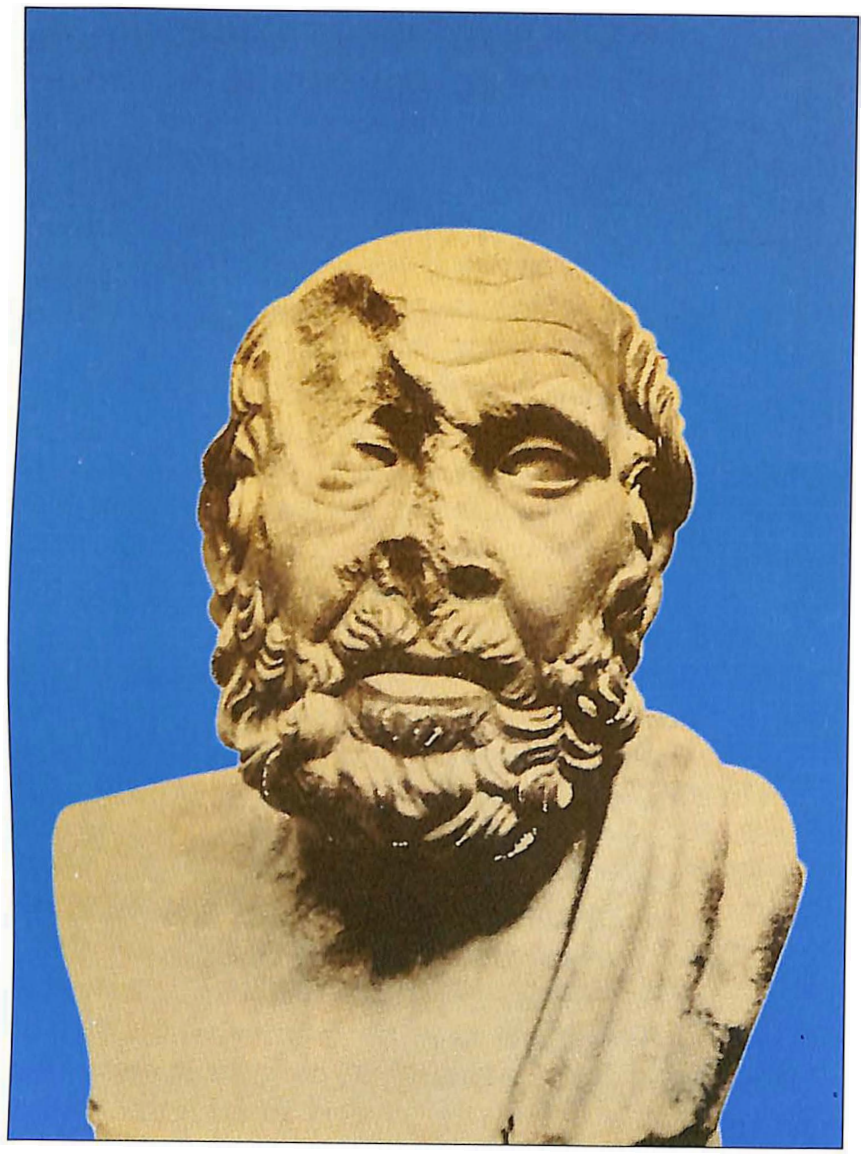
In Soranus' biography there is an account by Soranus the Coan, according to which Hippocrates' date of birth, the 27th of Agrianius, had been set apart by the Coans as a holiday, on which they performed sacrifices in honour of their great compatriot: "for which the Coans are said on this day to have sacrificed in honour of Hippocrates up to the present day".

But apart from his birthplace, the whole of Greece has always honoured Hippocrates for his service to humanity. Pliny's testimony is typical: "Greece has rendered him honours, similar to those rendered to Heracles".

In 1975 a cenotaph was erected in Larissa and on top of the cenotaph a statue of Hippocrates, 4.20 metres high.[103]

In Cos the Municipal Gardens are being remodelled and will be re-named the "Hippocratic Gardens". In them a statue made by the British sculptor Alexander Alwyn will be put up representing Hippocrates with two of his students and a woman bringing her child for treatment.

100. It is called "converse" because it can be read backwards.
101. ***Palatine Anthology,*** VII 135.
102. See ***Epigrammorum Graecorum,*** Froben, Basle, 1549, I, p. 81.
103. Sculpured by G. Kalakalas.



Hippocrates in old age.
The oldest discovered bust of Hippocrates, dated 3rd century B.C. (M. Ostia).

# 15. EARLY DEDICATIONS AND PORTRAITS

The recognition of Hippocrates' services created a tradition, as early as Alexandrian times, of honouring him in various ways.

In order to honour the memory of their great ancestor, the Coans circulated coins which depicted Hippocrates with various symbols or letters. During excavations which took place in Cos at various times in the past, copper coins were found with Hippocrates' figure and the inscription ΚΩΙΩΝ ΙΠΠΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ (HIPPOCRATES OF COS) written on them, and others showing the form of a bald man, most probably Hippocrates.[104]

In the museums of Berlin, London, Paris and other cities, Coan coins of the Roman period are exhibited, having on one side the head of Hippocrates and the first two letters of his name (ΙΠ) and on the reverse side the sacred snake and the inscription ΚΩΙΩΝ (OF COS).[105]

Another type of copper coin of the Roman period shows Hippocrates sitting and facing right, with the word ΙΠΠΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ on the same side, while the other side depicts Heracles with his cudgel and the word ΚΩΙΩΝ.[106]

Other copper coins show Hippocrates sitting, facing left, and the words ΙΠΠΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ ΚΩΙΩΝ written on them, while on the reverse side they have a representation of Faustina II, wife of Marcus Aurelius, and the words ΦΑΥΣΤΙΝΑ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΗ (FAUSTINA AUGUSTA) [107]. Hippocrates' figure seems to be represented also on two ringstones found in tombs near the Asclepeion of Cos dating back to the 4th Century B.C.[108]

In one of the most beautiful mosaics of Cos, dating from about the 2nd century A.D. and showing Asclepius' arrival on one of the shores of the island and his reception by one of the inhabitants, Hippocrates is seen a short distance away, in the posture of a teacher (Cos Museum).

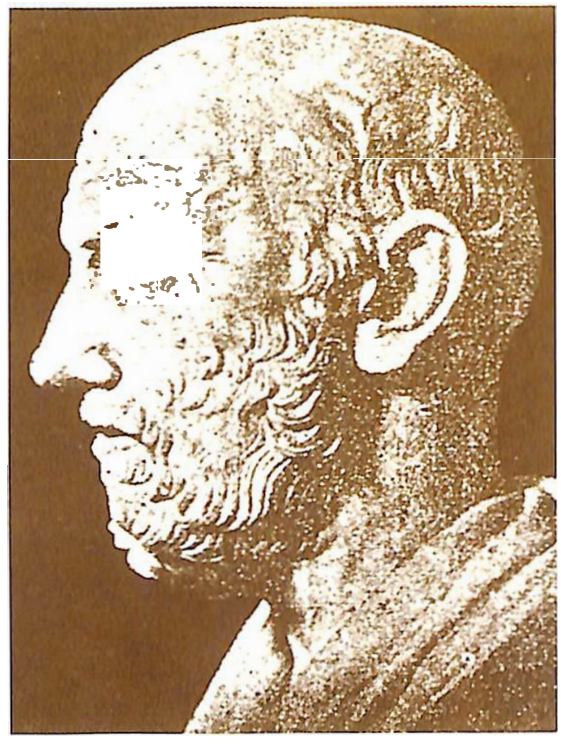
According to tradition and the testimony of his earlier biographers, Hippocrates was of medium height, with a bald head which he usually covered

---

104. For details about Coan coins see Paton & Hicks, ***The Inscriptions of Cos,*** London, O.U.P. 1891, pp. 303 ff.; Βασ. Χατζηβασιλείου, ***Ἱστορία τῆς Νήσου Κῶ,*** 1990, p. 129.
105. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Medailles, Nos 1273, 1274.
106. Paris, Cabinet des Medailles, No. 1246.
107. See J. Jouanna, ***Hippocrate,*** Paris 1992, pp. 61, 587.
108. See Σ. Ζερβοῦ, ***Ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ Ἱπποκράτους,*** Ἀθῆναι 1940, p. 27.



Picture of Hippocrates on a ringstone found in a 4th-century B.C. grave near the Asclepeion of Cos (Skevos Zervos collection)



Head of Hippocrates found in the Villa Albani, Rome. (From G. K. Pournaropoulos, ΙΠΠΟΚΡΑΤΗΣ ΑΠΑΝΤΑ (Ed. ΜΑΡΤΙΝΟΣ).



Ancient coins of Cos depicting Hippocrates (1st and 2nd centuries A.D.)



Asclepius' arrival in Cos, showing Hippocrates on the left. (2nd-century-A.D. mosaic, in the Museum peristyle).

with a felt cap or with his cloak. Some attributed this covering of his head to the importance which Hippocrates attached to the protection of that part of the body. Others believed that he had to draw part of his cloak over his head in order to have both hands free when performing an operation. Still others attributed it to his noble birth – or to his baldness![109]

The subject of the genuine representation of Hippocrates has troubled scholars for a long time.

A small marble sculpture of the Hellenistic age shows Hippocrates' face with a beard, a bald head and an imposing expression.[110]

In 1929, at the Roman Odeon of Cos, a statue was found which probably belongs to the late Hellenistic age and has been thought to represent Hippocrates. The legs and the right arm were never found. The head leans a little to the left and is not bald as it is on ancient coins and the old busts. Some think that it represents Hippocrates at a younger age, before he became bald, while others have some reservations about this (Cos Museum).

A 3rd-century-B.C. bust with a damaged right side of the face, found during excavations at Ostia, near Rome, in the 1940s is supposed to represent Hippocrates at an advanced age and bald-headed, while the opening words of the first ***Aphorism,*** ΒΡΑΧΥΣ Ο ΒΙΟΣ (LIFE IS SHORT), and a short funeral commentary are written on the tombstone. It is thought to be a copy of a Greek prototype and, according to the experts, is the most accurate representation of Hippocrates that has been discovered so far (Ostia Museum). Becatti has written about the identity of the bust in ***Un Ritratto di Ippocrate.***[111] A copy of this bust can be seen at the Museum of the International Hippocratic Foundation of Cos. A similar bust, in better condition, is kept in the art gallery of Florence.[112]

A bust of Hippocrates which is believed to date from the 3rd century A.D. was found in the Villa Albani in Rome; an old marble bust with a bald head and strong features is kept in the Louvre (No 326); and, finally, a bust with roughly the same features can be seen in the British Museum.

Of the Byzantine representations of Hippocrates, a symbolic miniature in a 14th-century manuscript kept in the Paris Library[113] is quite remarkable.

---

109. See ***Hippocrates' ancestry and life according to Soranus.***
110. Athens National Museum, No 1184.
111. Rend.... Pont.... Acc.... XXI, 1944-45, p. 123
112. Uffici Gallery.
113. Parisinus gr.... 2144.

Hippocrates is pictured sitting on a throne like a despot, holding an open book in which the first three phrases of the first Aphorism are written, while his head is covered with a pleated part of his cloak.

Pictures of Hippocrates were found earlier on murals in Byzantine churches on Mount Athos, in Naples and eslewhere. A miniature in a 17th-century Turkish manuscript shows Hippocrates on a mythical bird which symbolises the medical spirit (Topkapu Palace Library, Istanbul).

Scenes from the life of Hippocrates, such as Perdiccas' treatment, Artaxerxes' invitation etc., have from time to time inspired many artists whose works adorn various museums around the world: the Louvre, Gsell Museum in Algeria, Dumbarton Oaks Museum in the U.S.A. and so on.

In more recent years, numerous busts and statues have been erected in honour of the Father of Medicine at academies, universities, institutions and museums in various cities like the Vatican, Naples, Madrid, Florence, Paris and so on.[114]

## 16. INFLUENCE AND PRAISE

Hippocrates was held in high esteem both as a doctor and as a medical teacher by his own contemporaries, as one can see from Plato's accounts in the ***Protagoras*** (311 b) and the ***Phaedrus*** (270 c). His fame rested not only on his wisdom but also on his integrity which is reflected in his writings, as Adamantios Coraës observes.

People's respect for Hippocrates grew still deeper from the Hellenistic period onwards, when some of his writings became known. With the establishment of the famous Library of Alexandria and the efforts of the early Ptolemies to obtain books, many treatises of the Hippocratic Collection began to be copied, studied and annotated. Already in the 3rd century B.C., Baccheius of Tanagra undertook the publication of certain Hippocratic works which was

114. See M.V. Barrow, ***Portraits of Hippocrates***, Medical History XVI, 1972, pp. 85-88; G.M.A. Richter, ***The Portraits of the Greeks***, London 1965, vol. I, p. 152.

later completed by Epicles of Crete. Almost all distinguished scholars of ancient times studied Hippocrates. "There is no scholar worthy of note who has not taken notice of the man", said Erotian, the man who compiled the most important Hippocratic dictionary of his time ***(A Collection of Hippocratic Terms)*** in the 1st century A.D. So great was the interest of learned men in Hippocrates' writings that, as Daremberg says, no ancient writer has ever been discussed so much.

By studying the works of Hippocrates, scholars, doctors, philosophers, philologists and many other men of learning have always gained valuable knowledge, benefited in many ways and expressed their admiration for his scientific skill and noble ideals.

In comparing Hippocrates with Asclepius, Cicero, the most distinguished Roman orator (b. 106 B.C.), expresses the belief that the deliverance of many sufferers from their illnesses had been granted by Hippocrates rather than Asclepius.[115]

The Roman philosopher Seneca, who lived around the time of Christ, calls Hippocrates "medicorum maximum" (the greatest of physicians), regards him "as medicinae scientiae conditorem" (the founder of medical science) and "naturae peritissimum" (an excellent judge of nature).[116]

Cornelius Celsus (1st century A.D.), a profound student of ancient Greek medicine and author of the most significant Roman medical treatise ***De Medicina,*** describes Hippocrates as "virum arte et facundia insignem" (a man distinguished in skill and erudition) and calls him "omnis medicinae parentem" (the father of all medicine).

Referring to the "founder of medicine" and the moral precepts of the oath, Scribonius Largus, a physician of the 1st century A.D., notes that Hippocrates "prepared the souls of his pupils in humanity".

Pliny the Elder, a most erudite Roman writer of the 1st century A.D., acknowledges that "every kind of medical subject has been investigated by Hippocrates, the prince of medicine", and that "he was the first to teach the precepts of treatment".

---

115. ***De Natura Deorum*** III, 38.
116. See Van der Linden, ***Magni Hippocratis Coi, opera omnia,*** Leyde 1665, vol. B, pp. 978 ff.; cf. ***Βιβλιογραφία, Αρχαίοι και Βυζαντινοί συγγραφείς.***

Referring to the distinguished Coan physician, Plutarch (47– c. 147 A.D.), a most prolific writer and one of the most versatile minds of post-classical Greece, describes him as Ἱπποκράτης ὁ πολὺς ἐν τῇ ἀρχαιότητι καὶ θαυμαστὸς τὴν ἐπιστήμην (Hippocrates the great man of antiquity and remarkable man of science).

Athenaeus (2nd century A.D.), a most learned scholar, author of ***The Dinner-table Philosophers,*** regards Hippocrates as "holy in his art and in his manners" and calls him "most holy".

Soranus of Ephesus (2nd century A.D.), the founder of gynaecology, a profound student of the Hippocratic writings, calls Hippocrates the "originator and inventor of all good works".

Galen (born at Pergamum in 131 A.D.), the most famous ancient physician after Hippocrates, an excellent annotator of the Hippocratic writings and the undisputed successor of Hippocratic medicine, considers Hippocrates infallible. He writes: "All of Hippocrates' doctrines are absolutely correct"; "Hippocrates' words are the voice of god"; "I find that nothing written by Hippocrates was written in vain". He calls Hippocrates "the best among all doctors, the truest among philosophers and the most competent judge", "prince of all our best knowledge". According to Galen's learned judgement, "Hippocrates surpassed everyone and was the first to bring out into the light the perfect Greek medicine", "he became everyone's benefactor"; "he was the first to name what is useful among the works of the art"; he was "the great Hippocrates ... the best physician and writer among the Greeks", the "noble and good ..., a lover of truth, not glory", the "first man to understand the workings of nature", "admitttedly the best among physicians" etc.

In many of Galen's writings Hippocrates is described as "divine", "marvellous", "a true man", "excellent", "most true", "most divine" and so on.

The distinguished religious writer and bishop Eusebius of Pamphilus (born 265 A.D.) calls Hippocrates "the best of physicians".

Theodorus Priscianus (4th century A.D.), court physician to the emperor Gratianus, describes Hippocrates as "the leader of physicians".

From Oribasius, a famous Greek physician of the 4th century A.D., we get the descriptions "the most remarkable Hippocrates" and "truthful in everything".

According to Ambrosius bishop of Milan (4th century A.D.), a most distinguished Catholic Father, Hippocrates was the "Master of medicine".

St. Augustine (4th century A.D.), one of the most renowned Fathers of the Catholic Church, points out the superiority of Hippocrates' teachings as compared with the rest of the medical literature, and describes him as "medicum nobilissimum" (a most distinguished physician).

The 5th-century-A.D. Roman scholar Macrobius, praising Hippocrates' powers of healing, calls him "Aesculapii successorem", that is, the successor of Asclepius.

Alexander of Tralles, a famous doctor of the 6th century A.D., describes Hippocrates as "most divine".

Theophilus Protospatharius, court physician to the Byzantine emperor Heracleius (603-641 A.D.), calls Hippocrates "most wise" and "the Prometheus of medicine", that is, the giant (Titan) of medical science.

Paul of Aegina (7th century A.D.), one of the most eminent Byzantine physicians, speaks with reverence "of the authority of the most learned Hippocrates".

The Byzantine author Stephanus Byzantius, who mentions in his work all the famous men of learning, says that "Hippocrates [was] most renowned and left us some remarkable writings".

The Greek lexicon of Suidas says about Hippocrates' works, "His books are revered as if they were the voice of God not of a human mouth", while it describes him as "a star and light of the most useful medical science".

Demetrius Pepagomenus, personal physician to the emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus (1261-1281), in support of medical truths, writes: "This is also corfirmed by the greatest of all, the prince, Hippocrates".

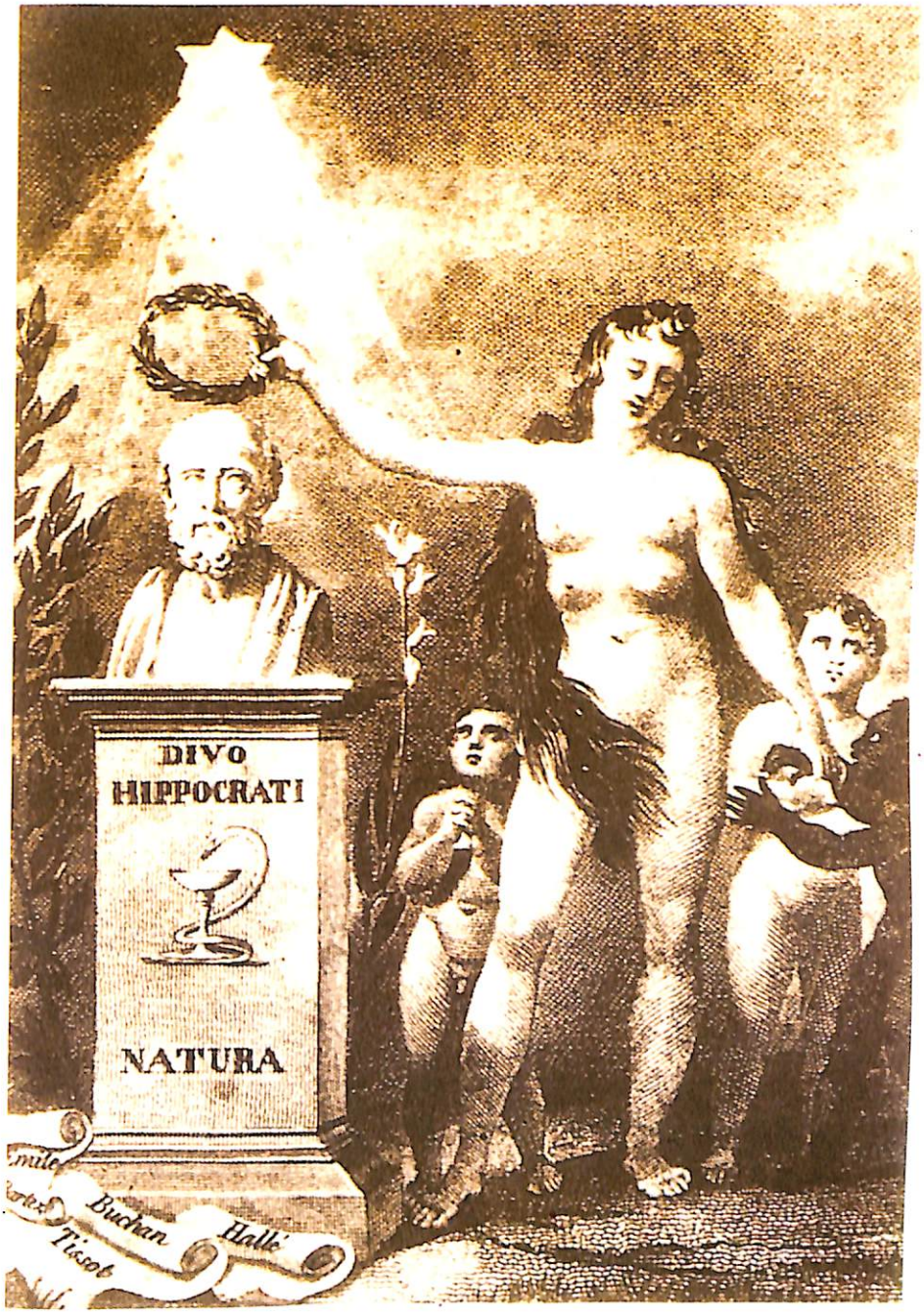
Similar expressions were used by Roman physicians in order to lend credit to their views.[117]

According to Castiglioni, Razes (the most famous Persian physician of the Middle Ages) is regarded as one of the most genuine Hippocratics.

Avicenna (980-1037), the most important Arab physician and Aristotelian philosopher of the Middle Ages, admired Hippocrates and tried to combine the humoral theory of Hippocrates with the anatomical knowledge of Galen.

The first medical School in the West, that of Salerno in Southern Italy, which flourished chiefly during the 11th and 12th centuries, was mainly

117. Cf. "As the most blessed Hippocrates confirms" of Octavius Horatianus.




THE DEIFICATION OF HIPPOCRATES

"To divine Hippocrates. Nature". From Sp. Marketos' book *History of Medicine*, 1993.

influenced by the Hippocratic writings. Its headquarters was called "Civitas Hippocratica", Hippocratic State, and the Board of Professors "'Collegium Hippocraticum", Hippocratic College.

Guy de Chauliac, the most distinguished French surgeon of the Middle Ages (14th century), who wrote the first ***Comprehensive Surgery,*** respected Hippocrates, and declared that "he gave medical science its first lights", while he likened Galen to "a farmer, who conscientiously cultivated what Hippocrates had planted".[118]

The Swiss Physician Paracelsus, a philosopher and alchemist, Professor at the Medical School of Basle (early 16th c.), disparaging earlier physicians, exempted and honoured only Hippocrates, while he publicly, and in the presence of his students, burned the works of Galen, Avicenna, Razes and others.

But after the Renaissance as well, and even in our days, especially during the last two centuries of rapid progress in medical science, many eminent doctors, university professors and pioneers of scientific research have studied the Hippocratic works, adopted the basic Hippocratic principles, and spoken with reverence of Hippocrates' great genius. A few examples are the Italian Ramazzini, the Englishman Jenner, the German Virchow, the Frenchman Claude Bernard, and so on.

The following are just a few testimonies of the imperishable influence of Hippocrates through the ages:

Sydenham, the best clinical physician of the 17th century, one of the most renowned scholars and disciples of Hippocrates, led a crusade for a return to the Hippocratic ideals, which is known in the history of medicine as the ***Neo-Hippocratic Movement*** or the movement of the ***English Hippocrates.*** He regarded Hippocrates as an unrivalled investigator of disease and used to tell his students that he helped Nature as he had been taught by Hippocrates.[119]

Boerhaave, the ***"Dutch Hippocrates",*** was the most popular healer-physician of the 18th century and one of the wisest European doctors of all time, according to Professor S. Marketos. An admirer of Hippocrates, he strove (following Sydenham) for the revival of ***Neo-Hippocratism*** and for the return of the physician to the bedside of his patient, successfully combining the

---

118. See Σπύρου Μαρκέτου, ***Ιστορία της Ιατρικής, Αθήνα*** 1993, p. 167.
119. See Σ. Μαρκέτου, op. cit., p. 219; cf. J. Jouanna, ***Hippocrate,*** 1992, p. 512.

achievements of medical mechanics and medical chemistry with the eternal Hippocratic teachings.

Rasori, a notable Italian epidemiologist and faithful upholder of the Hippocratic principles, wrote (1799) a eulogistic treatise on Hippocrates entitled "Sul proteso genio di Hippocrate" (On the genius of Hippocrates) supporting the revival of the Hippocratic spirit.

Laenec (1781-1826), the excellent French physician, peerless teacher and pioneer researcher who invented the stethoscope, confirms that he drew inspiration from Hippocrates for his invention. A profound scholar of the Hippocratic writings, he based his scientific work on firm Hippocratic foundations and is regarded as an innovator in medical science. His doctoral dissertation on the application of Hippocratic teaching to medical practice has been described as a masterpiece. In it he maintains that Hippocrates' views on fever are more advanced than those of the eminent French anatomicophysiologist X. Bichat expressed 23 centuries later![120]

The eminent Canadian clinician and learned researcher William Osler, one of the greatest humanists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and an admirer of Hippocrates, followed the Hippocratic principles faithfully, and in particular the humanitarian dogma "Where there is love of humanity there is love of art". He used to examine thousands of patients free of charge every year, declaring in a true Hippocratic manner, "Medicine is not a trade but a mission".

Referring to the rich legacy of the ancient Greeks, and in particular to that of Hippocrates, the researcher Charles Singer believes that, as the work of the ancient Greek mind, medicine is probably the greatest legacy from ancient Greece to posterity.

According to the Italian medical historian Castiglioni, Hippocrates was not only the best-known physician of his time, but the profoundest investigator and shrewdest observer as well.[121]

G.E.R. Lloyd, a contemporaryAmerican scholar who is particularly interested in ancient Greek philosophy and science, says that what one admires in Hippocrates is: "Firstly the detailed and meticulous clinical observations, and secondly the example he set of the doctor's devotion and concern for his

---

120. See Σ. Μαρκέτου, op. cit., p. 413.
121. Ἱστορία τῆς Ἰατρικῆς, vol. A', p. 154.

patients, and of his uprightness and discretion in his dealings with them. For this example, especially, Hippocrates continued and continues to inspire".[122]

The contemporary French Hippocratist J. Jouanna, professor of medicine at the University of Sorbonne, concludes his recent book on Hippocrates as follows: "Although Hippocrates' work has to a great extent become scientifically outdated, its human dimension remains a model for doctors. It definitely remains and will remain one of the richest and most wonderful monuments of exaltation of the scientific spirit in Greece and the Western World".[123]

The greatest Hippocratist of the 19th century, French physician and scholar Emile Littré, who devoted one third of his life to the study, translation and publication of the Hippocratic Corpus, expresses his gratitude to Hippocrates and declares that Hippocrates "has taught a code of conduct towards patients and colleagues that is always the basis of medical ethos" and pointed out a method whose basic principles are meticulous clinical observation, prudence and critical thought, principles which have never lost their value.

This declaration, made by a wise scholar, continues to hold good in our own days, regardless of the changes in science and technology.




122. See G.E.R. Lloyd, ***Hippocratic Writings***, Penguin Classics, 1983, Introduction, p. 59.
123. J.Jouanna, op. cit., p. 513.

# 17. THE HIPPOCRATIC COLLECTION AND THE HIPPOCRATIC PROBLEM

The Hippocratic Collection (or CORPUS HIPPOCRATICUM) consists of the works which have come down to us under the name of Hippocrates. Their number varies according to the criteria used from time to time. The biography of the Brussels Manuscript mentions 74. In Suidas the number is 64. According to Tzetzes, they amounted to 53, and according to later scholars, their number was between 57 and 60.

These treatises were written in the Ionic dialect, the language of scholars for a while during the fifth century, although Hippocrates himself, as a Coan, was of Dorian extraction.

In earlier times, most of these works were attributed to Hippocrates, some were supposed to have been written by his pupils under the supervision of the Master, a few were said to have come from the medical school of Cnidos, and very few were ascribed to later authors.

How were these writings transmitted through the ages? At first the Hippocratic texts circulated in the form of pamphlets among the scholars and physicians of the time. These were probably the kind of texts which both Plato and Aristotle had in mind when they referred to Hippocrates, the former in the ***Protagoras*** and the ***Phaedrus***, the latter in his ***Politics.***

These hand-written treatises, like all ancient texts except for the theatrical ones, had no titles at first. Names were given later, when they began to be collected and sorted out in libraries. Sometimes, in fact, these names could be changed, as was the case with ***Airs Waters Places*** which is also referred to as ***Hours and Places.***[124]

The collection of these books and their presentation as a body or Corpus dates from the 3rd century B.C., and an important role in this must have been played by the Library of Alexandria to which, thanks to the efforts of the first Ptolemies, a great number of texts had been brought, most of them anonymous

---

124. See X. Κιάρη, ***Ιστορία των Βιβλίων της Ιπποκρατικής Συλλογής, εκδόσεις μέχρι το 1839,*** ΚΩΑΚΑ, vol. 5, 1995 p. 38; cf. I.J.A. Laboulbéne, ***Histoire des livres Hippocratiques,*** Paris, 1881.

and untitled. It was probably there that these treatises were first connected with the name of Hippocrates. Recently, in fact, it has been argued that these works were part of a library which was used as a workshop at the School of Cos.[125]

Of course, these books contain a great variety of subjects and show many linguistic and other variations, so that most scholars think it very unlikely that all of them were the work of one man. Even the first commentators, such as Erotian (1st century A.D.) who compiled a dictionary of unusual Hippocratic terms and Galen (2nd century A.D.) who wrote excellent commentaries on Hippocratic texts, had opposed the idea of connecting all these works with the name of Hippocrates. Galen actually tried, by carefully selecting the authentic works, to separate them from the spurious ones. In examining what might have happened to the Hippocratic writings during the reign of the kings of Egypt and Pergamum, when spurious books appeared on the market as well, he observes that with the competition for the acquisition of books, some kind of fraud had begun around titles and adaptations of books.[126]

As for the time of composition of these works, the latest investigation has led to the conclusion that the Hippocratic Collection took its final form before the Library of Alexandria was founded and probably before the year 300 B.C.. With the exception of a few books which are regarded as later additions, "the bulk of the works in the Hippocratic Collection belongs to the period from the second half of the 5th century to the second third of the 4th century B.C., as shown by their linguistic and other features; which is one more reason for us to be convinced once more that the works in the Corpus cannot all be regarded as the legitimate children of Hippocrates".[127]

A publication of the Hippocratic works was attempted by Baccheius of Tanagra (3rd century B.C.). Another publication, as Galen tells us, was undertaken by Artemidorus of Capiti in the time of the Emperor Hadrian, and by Dioscurides. Very early on we have analyses, annotations, interpretations and commentaries of the Hippocratic texts. The most important scholars of this kind during the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman times were: Diocles of Carystus who, according to Wellmann, was the first to assemble the Hippocratic Collection into a corpus, Herophilus the anatomist, Baccheius of Tanagra, Xenocritus of

---

125. See Δ. Λυπουρλῆ, *Ἱπποκρατικὴ Συλλογή*, Ἡράκλειον 1991, p. 16.
126. See Galen, ***Commentary on Hippocrates' "Humours"***, vol. A', p. 16 Kuhn.
127. See Δ. Λυπουρλῆ, *Ἱπποκρατικὴ Συλλογή*, p.16.

Cos, Mnemon of Sida, Glaucias Empiricus, Zeuxis the Younger, Heracleides of Tarentum, Erasistratus of Ceos, Aristarchus Grammaticus,Philinus Empiricus, Euphorion of Chalcis, Callimachus Medicus, Apollonius Citiensis who compiled the first commentary on the Hippocratic treatise ***Fractures*** (1st century B.C.), Philotimus Medicus, Lycus of Neapolis, Epicles the Cretan, Nicander of Colophon, Lysimachus of Cos, Antigonus and Didymus of Alexandria, Aristocles of Rhodes, and Erotian whose work is not only a glossary of Hippocratic terms but also a critical analysis.

But the most important scholar of the Hippocratic works was Galen of Pergamum, who, with his accurate observations on the works of Hippocrates, safeguarded many genuine texts and preserved a large part of Hippocrates' teaching for future generations.

A lot of interest in the works of Hippocrates was shown by the Romans, among them the most prolific writer Pliny the Elder (1st century A.D.) and his contemporary Cornelius Celsus who studied many Hippocratic writings before he wrote his medical encyclopaedia ***De Medicina.*** The Romans' interest in Hippocrates was kept alive by other eminent Greek physicians, besides Galen, who worked in Rome in the early Christian era, such as Rufus of Ephesus, Aretaeus of Cappadocia and Soranus of Ephesus.

During the Byzantine era also, there were scholars of the Hippocratic works, which by now had spread to East and West. The distinguished physicians Oribasius of Pergamum (4th century) and Aëtius of Amida (6th century) touched upon various works of the Hippocratic Corpus and preserved many Hippocratic views in their encyclopaedias.

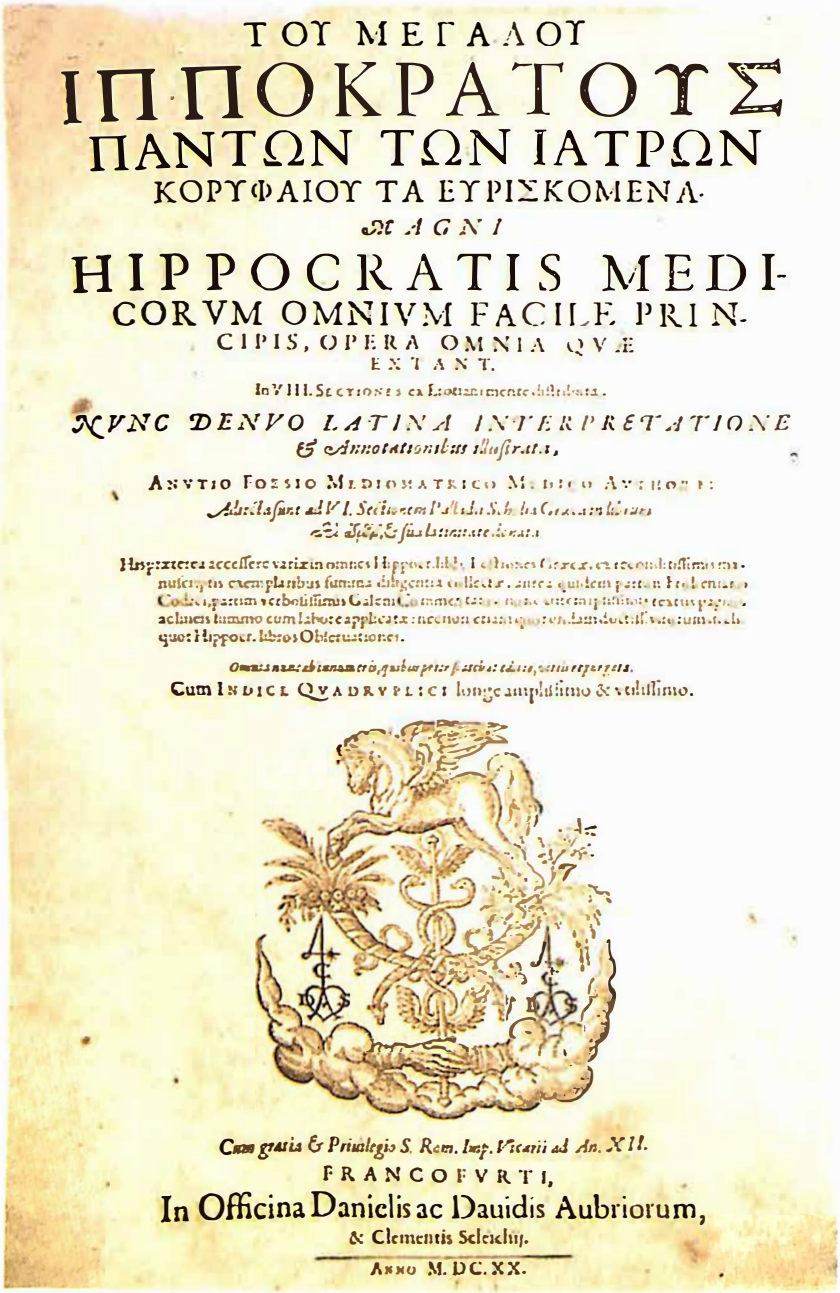
The medico-sophist Palladius of Alexandria who flourished around 600 A.D. wrote a treatise entitled ***Comments on Hippocrates,*** in which he discusses ***Epidemics VI*** and ***Fractures.***

Stephanus of Athens (or Alexandria), a scholar of the 7th century A.D., wrote excellent commentaries on some of the Hippocratic works, such as the ***Aphorisms, Prognostic*** and ***Fractures.***

Theophilus Protospatharius, court physician to the emperor Heracleius, also wrote a treatise entitled ***Comments on Hippocrates' Aphorisms.***

The famous 7th–century physician Paul of Aegina (Paulus Aegineta) makes frequent references to the Hippocratic treatise ***Joints*** and to many passages in other Hippocratic books.

In the West, the study and diffusion of Hippocratic literature was particularly enhanced by the translation of some of the books into Latin. Latin


ΤΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ
ΙΠΠΟΚΡΑΤΟΥΣ
ΠΑΝΤΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΙΑΤΡΩΝ
ΚΟΡΥΦΑΙΟΥ ΤΑ ΕΥΡΙΣΚΟΜΕΝΑ.

MAGNI
HIPPOCRATIS MEDICORVM OMNIVM FACILE PRINCIPIS, OPERA OMNIA QVÆ EXTANT.

In VIII. Sectiones ea Lectionum serie distributa.

NVNC DENVO LATINA INTERPRETATIONE & Annotationibus illustrata,

ANVTIO FOESIO MEDIOMATRICO MEDICO AVTHORE:

Adiecta sunt ad VI. Sectionem Pallada S. huius Græcarum lectionum

Hispraeterea accessere variarum omnes Hippocr. libb. Lectiones Graecae, ex recondit. mss. nuscriptis exemplaribus summa diligentia collectae, antea quidem partim Frobenianae Codici, partim vetustissimis Galeni Commentariis, nunc autem ipsissimis textus paginis adiunctis summo cum labore applicatae: accessit etiam quorundam doctiss. virorum in eosdem quos Hippocr. libros Observationes.

Omnia nunc demum recognita, quibus prius fuerunt addita, sunt reperta.

Cum INDICE QVADRVPLICI longe amplissimo & vtilissimo.

Cum gratia & Priuilegio S. Rom. Imp. Vicarii ad An. XII.

FRANCOFVRTI,

In Officina Danielis ac Dauidis Aubriorum,

& Clementis Schleichij.

ANNO M. DC. XX.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF HIPPOCRATES

(Published in Frankfurt, 1620. Hippocratic Museum, I.H.F.C.)

translations of works like ***Airs Waters Places,*** the ***Aphorisms, The Nature of Man, Prognostic, Diet*** etc. had already begun to circulate since the beginning of the 6th century, some even earlier.

The famous dignitary and lover of classical learning Cassiodorus founded the Vivarium monastery in Calabria in 540 for the purpose of copying and preserving ancient manuscripts. He collected the works of Hippocrates, Galen and others in Latin translation and directed the monks to study and copy them. His example was followed by the Benedictine monks, particularly at Monte Cassino in Italy, which became well-known as a centre of medical learning.

Later (10th century), the medical school of Salerno (Civitas Hippocratica) based its teaching on the Graeco-Roman tradition, and in particular on the Hippocratic writings.

From the outstanding Greek centres where the medical tradition continued, especially Constantinople and Alexandria, there began a diffusion of the Hippocratic writings to the Arab world, and more generally to the East. The Syrian Hunayn Ibn Ishak and his students made a great contribution to this by translating the works of Hippocrates, Galen and others into Syrian and Arabic in the 9th century.

The Persian Abu Bakr al Raji (10th century) who is regarded as the greatest doctor in the Islamic world, also translated a number of Hippocratic texts into Arabic.

The 12th century Arab-Hebrew philosopher-physician Maimonides was another scholar of the Hippocratic works who, among other things, wrote commentaries on the ***Aphorisms.***[128]

The contribution of Byzantine monasteries was most valuable in that they collected great numbers of manuscripts, many of which were later transferred to monasteries and libraries in the West. With the transcription of the Hippocratic and the other ancient texts, the industrious monks contributed to the preservation of most of them until the 15th century, when the printing press was invented. The oldest surviving manuscripts date back to the 10th-12th centuries;

---

128. Cf. Παπαβασιλείου - Ρόζου, op. cit., pp. 249, 250.

they do not contain the whole of the Hippocratic collection. They are to be found in the libraries of Vienna, Paris, Florence (the Laurentian Library), St Mark in Venice and the Vatican.

The first edition of the complete works of Hippocrates (**omnia opera**) was carried out in Rome by F.M. Calvus in 1525. The first Greek edition of the complete works of Hippocrates came out in 1526, in Venice, the work of Aldus Manutius and Asulanus. There followed at least 18 editions of the complete works in various European cities (Basle, Lyon, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Leyden, Paris etc.) until 1839, when the first volume of Emile Littré's edition of the Hippocratic writings appeared in Paris. Littré's ten-volume edition with its wealth of medical and philosophical comments which was completed in 1861 gave a fresh impetus to the study of the Hippocratic works and laid the correct foundations for Hippocratic research.

Littré divided the works of the Hippocratic Corpus into eleven groups or categories.

**1st Category** - Works written by Hippocrates: *Ancient Medicine, Prognostic, Aphorisms, Epidemics I & III, Diet in Acute Diseases, Airs Waters Places, Head Wounds, Joints, Fractures, Oath, Law.*

**2nd Category** - Works by Polybus: *The Nature of Man, Diet for Health.*

**3rd Category** - Works earlier than Hippocrates: *Coan Prognoses, Prorrhetic,* Book I.

**4th Category** - Works from the School of Cos written by contemporaries or pupils of Hippocrates: *Ulcers, Fistulae, The Sacred Disease, Breaths, Places in Man, The Art, Diet* (in 4 books), *Haemorrhoids, Affections, Internal Affections, Diseases* (Books I, II & III), *The Seven Months' Child, The Eight Months' Child.*

**5th Category** - Works consisting of fragments or notes: *Epidemics II, IV, V, VI, & VII, In the Surgery, Humours, The Use of Liquids.*

**6th Category** - Works attributed to one writer, before Aristotle: *Generation, The Nature of the Child, Diseases* Book IV, *Diseases of Women, Diseases of Maidens, Sterile Women.*

**7th Category** - A work probably written by Leophanes: *Superfoetation.*

**8th Category** - Works later than Hippocrates, written in the time of Praxagoras and Aristotle (the latest in the Collection): *The Heart, Nutrition, Fleshes, Periods of Seven Days, Prorrhetic* Book II, *Glands,* extracts from *The Nature of Bones.*

**9th Category** - Treatises, extracts or selections (anthologies) which are not mentioned by ancient critics: *The Physician, Decorum, Precepts, Anatomy, Teething, The Nature of Woman, Excision of the Embryo, Vision, Aphorisms* Part VIII, *The Nature of Bones, Crises, Critical Days.*

**10th Category** - *Fatal Wounds, Missiles and Wounds, Diseases* (Little Book I).

**11th Category** - Apocryphal works: *Letters, Decree, Speech at the Altar, Speech of the Envoy.*

Thus, according to Littré, the Corpus Hippocraticum contains 58 works or 73 books.

After Littré's classic edition, **Oeuvres complétes d' Hippocrate,** the problem of the authenticity of the various works in the Hippocratic Collection began to be investigated more thoroughly. Starting from different points of departure and basing their views on different criteria, investigators have at various times formulated a variety of theories, often contradicting one another, about Hippocrates' involvement in the works of the Corpus.

A few years after Littré, Daremberg classified the works of the Hippocratic Collection into five categories:

**1st:** Works which were undoubtedly written by Hippocrates (2).

**2nd:** Works which were almost certainly written by Hippocrates (10).

**3rd:** Works which were written in Hippocrates' time, most of them probably "under the eye" of the Master (about 13).

**4th:** Works belonging to the Cnidian School (4).

**5th:** Works which were written by one and the same writer (10).

The origin of the rest he regards as obscure.

In 1899 another investigator, C. Friedrich, appeared more hesitant to specify any works in the Collection as genuinely Hippocratic. The only view that he expresses with certainty is that "many of the works in the Collection were written by pupils and followers of Hippocrates, inspired by him".

In 1905 M. Wellmann, thinking along the same lines as Wilamowitz, wondered whether Hippocrates had left his teaching in writing or whether he had taught only orally, like his contemporary Socrates. However, twenty-four years later, he changed his mind and declared that Hippocrates must have written ***Prognostic*** and ***Epidemics I & III.***

Deichgräber (1933) was also cautious concerning the authenticity of most of the works in the Hippocratic Collection. On the basis of language, content and method, he simply distinguished groups of related works which definitely

belonged to the time of Hippocrates and were influenced by him. As such he regards ***Epidemics I & III, Airs Waters Places, The Sacred Disease, Prognostic, Epidemics II, IV & VI, Humours, In the Surgery, Instruments of Reduction, Fractures*** and ***Joints.***[129]

Nestle (1942) regarded almost all the above works as genuinely Hippocratic, and even added some others, such as ***Diet for Health*** and part of the ***Aphorisms.***

Castiglioni (1959-69) distinguished 13 works as worthly of the name of Hippocrates and 12 others as genuinely Hippocratic. Among these he included ***The Physician***, ***Decorum***, ***Precepts***, ***Diet*** and ***Prorrhetic***, the authenticity of which has been questioned by other researchers.

The contemporary Hippocratist Lichtenthaeler regards as genuine ***Diet in Acute Diseases*** (1965), and ***Oath*** (1984), besides ***Epidemics I & III***, ***Fractures*** and ***Prognostic***.

We have presented just a few general views of contemporary scholars and some of the typical disagreements among them. A lot of differences of opinion are to be found concerning the classification of the Hippocratic books and the question of the authorship of particular sections of works. Some treatises were probably excerpts or notes which were intended for private use.

Furthermore, the admission that the Corpus includes works which contain doctrines of physicians from the School of Cnidos has caused new problems and has led to endless discussions. How did works belonging to the Cnidian School come to be incorporated into the Hippocratic Collection? Which could these works be? These and other such questions have troubled scholars for the last century and a half.

Already by 1851, in the 7th volume of his edition, Littré had revised his original view and attributed to the School of Cnidos the treatises ***Diseases II***, ***Diseases III*** and ***Internal Affections***; and two years later, in presenting the 8th volume, the Works ***Generation***, ***The Nature of the Child***, ***Diseases IV*** and ***Diseases of Women.***

In the 3rd volume of his 1864 edition, Ermerins ascribed to Cnidian physicians of various periods twenty-six works of the Hippocratic Collection.

Some scholars consider the works which are based on chronologically

---

129. See Δ. Λυπουρλῆ, *Ἱπποκρατικὴ Ἰατρική*. Θεσσαλονίκη 1972, pp. 62-65.

older views to be of Cnidian origin, in contrast to those which reflect the new, "Hippocratic" spirit (Comperz 1895).

Wachtler (1896) related almost all the works of gynaecological and embryological content to the doctrines of the Cnidians.

In his important monograph on the Cnidian School,[130] Ilberg, expanding on his earlier investigations, claimed that the number of works in the Hippocratic Collection belonging to the Cnidian School is 12.

Edelstein, who in 1931 claimed that none of the works in the Hippocratic Collection could be attributed to Hippocrates, or even to the Coan School , with any degree of certainty, regards as Cnidian only ***Diet in Acute Diseases***, ***Diseases II*** and ***Internal Affections***.

After many years of research, Jouanna (1971-72) came to the conclusion that the works which belong to the Cnidian School are ***Diseases II*** (Chapters 1-31), ***Diseases I***, ***Diseases III***, ***Affections***, ***Internal Affections*** and the books of gynaecological content.

A. Thivel, another contemporary scholar, has observed (1981) that we can detect "Cnidian" characteristics in Coan physicians and "Coan" characteristics in Cnidian physicians. Returning to the old view, he proposes that the Hippocratic Collection be treated as a whole, in an effort to comprehend the relationships which link the various works together.

In a well-documented treatise, Professor Demetrios Lypourles proposes a systematic study of the terminology found in the texts of the Hippocratic Collection and expresses his confidence that, through such a study, there will be positive results for the examination of the issues concerning the Hippocratic Collection and, of course, the issue concerning the Coan and Cnidian Schools.[131]

From the few opinions we have just presented, one can see how right H. Diller was when he said some years ago that "The Hippocratic problem resembles the Homeric one". It is evident that there are still unbridgeable differences among investigators. In any case, regardless of the objections and reservations of eminent scholars about the origin of many of the writings, there are several others (like Castiglioni) who agree that most of the sources of the works in the Collection reflect the direct influence of Hippocrates' personality. The fact that Hippocrates became recognised in times which were very close to

---

130. ***Die Ärzteschule von Knidos***, 1924.

131. See Δ. Λυπουρλή, ***Κνιδιακή Ιατρική Γραμματεία στην Ιπποκρατική Συλλογή***, περιοδικό ΤΑ ΚΩΑΚΑ, vol. Γ' 1989 p.p. 7-43, where the views of many scholars are given.

his own, as is evidenced by the honours bestowed on him by the ancients, and that he was regarded as the author or the inspirer of the most important medical writings, obviously carries a certain weight. Counter to the arguments of the sceptics (Edelstein etc), later researchers have tried to prove beyond doubt, or at least with a high degree of probability, the genuineness of certain works in the Hippocratic Collection. After all, doubting everything usually leads to unjustified scepticism.

The following observations are, perhaps, justified:

(a) Most of the works in the Hippocratic Collection are chronologically placed in the 2nd half of the fifth and the 1st half of the fourth century B.C., that is, at the time when Hippocrates lived and flourished.

(b) All the works in the Hippocratic Collection are written in the Ionic dialect. The linguistic discrepancies found in some of the works are not important.

(c) Between the works which are regarded as genuinely Hippocratic and those attributed to the Cnidian School or to other authors there is to be found a common spirit. Their common features are more than their differences; that is, in fact, why the term "Hippocratic" is used.

It is very difficult for an unbiased investigator to prove that some typical treatises, such as ***Fractures***, ***Joints***, ***Instruments of Reduction***, ***Wounds in the Head***, ***Aphorisms***, ***Epidemics I & III***, ***Prognostic***, ***Airs Waters Places***, ***The Sacred Disease*** etc. were not written by Hippocrates.[132]

Thus, it is not unlikely that the view that many of the works in the Hippocratic Collection were written by Hippocrates is correct. The question of authenticity is an important one, but the reservations concerning the authorship of many works in the Corpus do not lessen the value of their content. The important thing is that these works have been, and still are, a real treasure, that they have remarkable originality and that they contain the classic doctrines of medical science.

In assessing this treasure of the Hippocratic texts, the French medical historian Daremberg acknowledges that "The whole of Western medicine springs from Greece as from an inexhaustible source".

---

132. Cf. Δαμιανοῦ Τσεκουράκη, *Ἱπποκράτους Περὶ Ἀρχαίης Ἰητρικῆς*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1994, p. 31.

# 18. HIPPOCRATIC MEDICINE

From what has been said so far about the Hippocratic Collection, it is clear that the term "Hippocratic medicine" denotes not only the medicine of Hippocrates himself but also that of his disciples who were inspired by him. So many were the branches of medicine with which Hippocrates and his followers dealt, and so much is the knowledge contained in the works of the Hippocratic Collection, that it would be impossible, especially when one is not a medical scientist, to present even briefly their most basic elements within the limits of a chapter. We shall, therefore, attempt to touch on the most essential ones.

It is true that much of the Hippocratic teaching has become outdated through the amazing progress of science; nevertheless, the wise observations of the great Physician and the basic principles of his School are regarded as fundamental for many modern branches of medical science. Many researchers, even today, discover original ideas in the Hippocratic writings and feel the need to return to Hippocrates and adopt his doctrines. In spite of the inadequacy of knowledge in anatomy, physiology, pathology and so on, in spite of the lack of laboratories and the insuperable difficulties of experimentation, Hippocratic medicine, based as it was chiefly on direct experience from contact with the patient combined with philosophical thinking, succeeded in discovering remarkable truths and achieved a progress which was unprecedented for its time.

From a medical point of view, the Hippocratic works constitute the most valuable evidence of a tremendous development in the art of medicine at a time when science was just taking its first steps.

The main aspects of Hippocratic medicine are the following:

(a) It was the first to separate scientific truth from superstition and from the witchcraft of profiteers in medicine.

(b) It was the first to reveal that diseases can only be explained through natural causes; that each disease has its nature (φύσις) and its cause (πρόφασις).

(c) It was the first to establish observation as the physician's basic guide and to raise it to the status of the best diagnostic method. Hippocratic medicine established the diagnostic methods of examination which are still used today, i.e. inspection, palpation and auscultation.

Referring to these fundamental Hippocratic principles and to Hippocrates' colossal medical creation in a recent speech (1994), the academician Georgios Merikas said: "Only a first-class philosophical genius makes such conceptions possible; and Hippocrates possessed just that".

On the basis of the contents of the Hippocratic Collection and the branches of medicine that the Hippocratic physicians dealt with, many scholars usually divide the writings of the Corpus into the following categories:

**GENERAL:** *The Oath, Law, Ancient Medicine, The Physician, The Art, Decorum, Precepts, Aphorisms.*

**ANATOMY-PHYSIOLOGY**: *Anatomy, The Heart, Fleshes, Glands, The Nature of Bones, The Nature of Man, Generation, The Nature of the Child.*

**DIETETICS:** *Nutrition, Diet* (four books), *Diet for Health.*

**PATHOLOGY:** *Airs Waters Places, Humours, Crises, Critical Days, Periods of Seven Days, Breaths.*

**PROGNOSIS:** *Prognostic, Prorrhetic I & II, Coan Prognoses.*

**SPECIAL NOSOLOGY:** *Epidemics* (seven books), *Affections, Diseases I, Internal Affections, The Sacred Disease, Places in Man, Diseases II, III, IV.*

**THERAPEUTICS:** *Diet in Acute Diseases, The Use of Liquids.*

**SURGERY:** *In the Surgery, Ulcers, Haemorrhoids, Fistulae, Head Wounds, Fractures, Joints, Instruments of Reduction*

**OPHTHALMOLOGY:** *Vision.*

**OBSTETRICS - GYNAECOLOGY:** *Diseases of Maidens, The Nature of Woman, Superfoetation, The Seven Months' Child, The Eight Months' Child, Excision of the Embryo.*

**PAEDIATRICS:** *Teething.*

**MISCELLANEOUS:** *Letters* (twenty-four), *Athenian Decree, Speech at the Altar, Speech of the Envoy.*[133]

Let us now briefly present some of the Hippocratic physicians' medical knowledge and their fundamental doctrines under different headings, citing the views of scholars and referring the reader to special treatises.

The ***anatomical knowledge*** of the Hippocratic physicians is thought to have been remarkable for their time. Although religious considerations forbade the

133. Cf. Βασ. Μανδηλαρᾶ, *Ἱπποκράτης Ἅπαντα*, ed. ΚΑΚΤΟΣ, Ἀθήνα 1992, vol. Α', p. 22.

dissection of human bodies, a fair amount of knowledge concerning the structure of the human organism is to be found in Hippocratic medicine. From the observation of people injured on the battlefield or in accidents and of sacrificial and other animals, Hippocratic physicians had gathered a lot of anatomical knowledge which they considered indispensable for the exercise of their skill.

In the treatise ***Places in Man***, Ar. Kouzis can see the Hippocratic principle "according to which the foundation of medicine should be the knowledge of the structure of the body, that is, anatomy".[134]

In the Hippocratic writings there are detailed descriptions of the heart and the large blood-vessels, and references to the meninges of the brain, the ear-drum and so on.[135]

That Hippocrates had made a perfect study of the human skeleton is also evident from the bronze model of a human skeleton which the great physician dedicated to the Oracle of Delphi, as Pausanias tells us.[136]

In **Physiology,** the concept of the existence inside the body of a vital force called "nature" (φύσις) by Hippocrates was remarkable. According to Kouzis, this idea of "nature" as an internal force driving the vital functions and maintaining health constitutes "the most brilliant product of Hippocrates' genius". Nature is the most important therapeutic factor ("The body's nature is the physician in disease"). According to Hippocratic doctrine, the body's natural resistance can, under suitable conditions, eliminate disease. It is, therefore, necessary for the body's powers to be suitably enhanced to enable it to cope with disease in an effective manner. This Hippocratic view is perfectly in line with modern theory about the body's immunity system. The Hippocratic utterance "The nature of the body is the first principle of medical science" constitutes an eternal truth.

Hippocratic physiology is governed by the theory of humours. Hippocrates systematized the views of the Pythagoreans about humours and combined them with those of other pre-Socratic philosophers, especially Empedocles, about the elements (earth, fire, air and water). According to Hippocrates, the human

---

134. Α. Κούζη, *Ἱστορία τῆς Ἰατρικῆς,* Ἀθῆναι 1929, p. 114.
135. See Π. Δημακοπούλου, *Αἱ Ἀνατομικαὶ Γνώσεις τῆς Ἱπποκρατικῆς Συλλογῆς,* Διδακτορικὴ Διατριβή, Ἀθῆναι 1968.
136. ***Phocis*** X, 2,6.

organism contains four **humours** (blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile) and their function, combined with the four **elements** (hot, cold, dry and moist), determine the condition of each individual person. When these humours are present in the body in proper proportion to each other (that is, when we have **"eucrasia"** or proper mixture) and the elements function normally, the individual enjoys perfect health.

When, on the other hand, one or other of the humours happens to be in excess (that is, when we have **"dyscrasia"** or an abnormal mixture), the body is diseased. The mixture of the humours and the function of the elements determine people's nature, that is their idiosyncracy and temperament. Humours increase or decrease in quantity, depending on the season and on a person's nature; and that is how the Hippocratics explained seasonal diseases. This Hippocratic doctrine of alternating predominance of the humours and the creation of particular diseases is regarded by Castiglioni as "one of the most fundamental principles of chemopathology". According to other scholars, "Hippocratic chemopathology has been the starting point and the basis of all forms of treatment for the last twenty-five centuries".[137]

Hippocratic **Pathology** is considered to have been quite advanced. Hippocrates regarded the patient, and not the disease, as the centre of interest for the physician. This notion was the basis of the humanitarian principles of Neo-Hippocratism which is today supported by eminent physicians from all over the world.

Hippocratic physicians regarded dyscrasia of the humours as the basic cause of disease. This could be due to climatic conditions, seasonal changes, nutrition, digestion or other factors.

In his introduction to the Hippocratic treatise ***Humours,*** G.K. Pournaropoulos draws attention to the "gems" of the book and says that "of paramount importance to Pathology is the statement in paragraph 14 with the proverbial saying: it should be examined in what condition the body is when the season is changing". Analysing the text further, he discerns the foundations of Preventive Medicine. When he goes on to comment on paragraph 15 which contains the Hippocratic doctrine "It is changes that are chiefly responsible for diseases" he says that it "constitutes the foundation of Medical Climatology".[138]

---

137. See Ι. Θ. Παπαβασιλείου καί Β.Π. Ρόζου, *Ἐγχειρίδιον Ἱστορίας τῆς Ἰατρικῆς,* Ἀθῆναι 1979, p. 148.
138. See Γ. Πουρναρόπουλου, *Ἱπποκράτης, Ἅπαντα τὰ Ἔργα,* ed. ΜΑΡΤΙΝΟΣ, vol. 3. p. 9; cf. his *Ἡ Παθολογία τοῦ Ἱπποκράτους,* Ἀθῆναι 1966.

Hippocrates' contribution to the establishment of **Clinical Medicine** has been vital. The academician G. Merikas says: "There has been no branch of clinical medicine to the understanding of which [Hippocrates] has not contributed" and "The human mind cannot conceive of a more accomplished personality of a clinical physician, chiefly pathologist, than that of Hippocrates".[139] Diagnosis, prognosis and treatment were all set on the right basis by the Great Physician.

Hippocratic **Diagnostics** reveals an amazing power of observation. Hippocrates' advice for a careful and detailed study of the patient's medical history and a meticulous and objective examination from head to toe is typical. Apart from visual examination and palpation, the Coan physician used auscultation widely. In his treatise on *Auscultation and the Invention of the Stethoscope,* the famous scholar Laënnec categorically confirms that his method was inspired by Hippocrates.

The Hippocratics also conducted **Laboratory** examinations. Despite the lack of laboratory methods, Hippocrates derived diagnostic data from the texture, the colour and the odour of the various products (secretions) of the body, such as urine, evacuations, sputum, perspiration, vomit etc.[140]

The colour of the face, the expression of the eyes, the condition of the gums, the tongue, the complexion of the hands, breathing, the temperature , the pulse, the patient's posture in bed and his overall physical build were evaluated with great care by Hippocrates and his pupils.

Hippocratic **Semeiology** arouses the admiration of doctors even today. The description of the face of a seriously ill patient, suffering from an extremely acute disease, which Hippocrates presents in his ***Prognostic*** (§ 2), has impressed people through the centuries. This classic description is still widely known in medicine today and it is termed "Hippocratic facies". Other clinical signs also bear witness to Hippocrates' keen-wittedness and still bear his name today: E.g. "Hippocratic fingers" (Plectrodactylia), "Hippocratic sound" (succussion sound) and so on.

The Hippocratics attached special importance to **Prognosis.** According to Hippocrates, the physician "who foresees and foretells what is going to happen" has excellent results. For, through foresight based on correct diagnosis, the doctor wins the patient's confidence and applies the correct treatment. Prediction about the course of the illness was always combined with diagnostic

---

139. See Γ. Μερίκα, Τα μεγάλα Ιπποκρατικά αξιώματα και η σημερινή ιατρική, ΝΕΑ ΕΣΤΙΑ, vol. 116, July 1984, p.p. 935f.f.
140. See Β.Π. Ρόζου, *Ἡ ἐξέτασις τῶν οὔρων εἰς τὴν Ἱπποκρατικὴν διαγνωστικήν*, March 1976.

evidence. Peaceful sleep, a clear mind, agility, a good appetite and profuse perspiration on the critical days were some of the indications of a favourable prediction; whereas lying in bed with the mouth open or with the legs splayed, unexpected changes, insomnia, excessive sleep, violent gesticulation, cold perspiration and symptoms like those described in the "Hippocratic facies" led to an unfavourable prediction. Hippocrates also made some very important observations on the critical days (4th, 7th and 11th), which determined whether the disease would prove fatal or subside instead.[141]

Referring to Hippocrates' prognostic powers,[142] modern investigators admit that "he was the first to foresee the importance and excellent prospects of preventive medicine", which is being developed in our days. But he can also be regarded as the precursor of predictive medicine, which is just beginning to be developed.[143]

Hippocratic **Therapeutics** is based mainly on the following: (a) The patient's nature, that is, the natural resistance of his constitution; (b) diet; (c) medication; (d) surgery. To increase the body's resistance to disease, Hippocrates prescribed therapeutic measures whose effect was the opposite of the symptoms of the disease. His basic therapeutic principle "opposites are a cure for opposites" became an axiom, and was imparted to the Arab world and to the West, where in its Latin form *(Contraria contraribus curantur)* it became "the basis of enantiopathology of modern times".[144]

For the reinforcement of the patient's natural powers, besides a proper diet and proper medication, Hippocratic physicians prescribed a healthy living, clean air, spa treatment, climatotherapy, physiotherapy and massage. Born of the belief that man's nature eliminates disease was also the famous Hippocratic precept "Help or at least do not harm". This axiom has always applied to every remedial intervention by the doctor, and therefore medication as well.

The **pharmacological** knowledge of the Hippocratics was remarkable. They used mainly herbs, some animal medicines and various mineral ones. Herb-gatherers, especially the so-called "root-slicers", supplied doctors with leaves, flowers, juices, roots of various trees, and plants which they regarded as having curative properties. Hundreds of medicinal plants which still grow on

---

141. ***Prognostic*** 20.
142. See ***Prognostic, Prorrhetic.***
143. Cf. Σπύρου Μαρκέτου, *Ιστορία της Ιατρικής*, Αθήνα 1993, p.73.
144. Cf. Γ.Κ. Πουρναρόπουλου, *Εἰσαγωγὴ εἰς τὸν Ἱπποκράτην*, 1967, p.97).

Cos and the wider Greek world today are mentioned in the works of the Hippocratic Collection and are recommended for the treatment of various ailments. Here are a few examples:

**Chase-tree:** Its seed was used to cure ailments of the spleen or to clean wounds.[145]

**Asparagus:** It was recommended as a conceptive or against diarrhoea.[146]

**Worm-wood:** Soaked in white wine, it was recommended by the Hippocratics against tetanus.[147]

**Elder-wood:** It was administered in order to stop haemoptysis,[148] or in gynaecological cases.[149]

**Sage:**It was taken as an astringent,[150] as a lactifer by women in childbed,[151] against pulmonary ailments etc.

**Thyme:** It was recommended for bowel action and urination as well as for discharging phlegmatic substances.[152]

**Nettle:** It was used in cataplasms against epilation,[153] and its seed as a purgative of the uterus.[154]

**Fleabane:** It was given as a tonic, as a diuretic, to facilitate childbirth, as a purgative for women's genitals in childbed etc.[155]

**Fennel:** It was used to relieve pain in the uterus,[156] on injuries of the skull, etc.[157]

**Tamarisk:** It was recommended for the treatment of haemorrhoids.[158]

**Marjoram:** According to the Hippocratics, it warmed and rejected bilious substances[159] and was a contraindicant for the eyes and teeth.[160]

---

145. See ***Ulcers,*** 11.
146. See ***Diet II,* 54.**
147. See ***Internal Affections,*** 52.
148. See ***Internal Affections,*** 1.
149. See ***Sterile Women,*** 230.
150. See ***Diet II,*** 54.
151. See ***Diseases of Women,*** I 44.
152. See ***Diet II,*** 54.
153. See ***Diseases of Women,*** II 159.
154. See ***The Nature of Woman,*** 109.
155. See ***The Nature of Woman,*** 3,18,32,88 etc.
156. See ***Diseases of Women,*** II 172.
157. See ***Wounds in the Head,*** 14 etc.
158. See ***Haemorrhoids,*** 9.
159. See ***Diet II,*** 54.
160. See ***Epidemics*** **V,** 54.

**Cinque-foil:** It was prescribed for the treatment of broken nerves,[161] while a concoction made from its roots was used against tertian fever.[162]

**Buckthorn**: It was considered suitable for fumigations. Poultices of its leaves were used on wounds, etc.[163]

**Celery:** It was prescribed against constipation[164] and to control menstruation,[165] for healing wounds etc.[166]

**Squill:** It was recommended as a diuretic, a cordial and an expectorant. It was used on empyemas,[167] for healing wounds[168] and so on.

The basil, the blite, the bay-tree, the mint, the hellebore, the ivy, the wild gourd-plant, the squirting cucumber-plant, the barley, the cummin, the dock, the linseed, the lettuce, the mallow, the myrtle, the leek, the pomegranate-tree, the sesame, the lentisk, the clover, the peppermint and various other products of "the most sacred institution of Earth", according to the phrasing of the 16th ***Letter,*** were used by the Hippocratics for healing purposes with remarkable results.[169].

According to Hippocrates, medicines affect the pathological condition of the patient, but one must not give strong drugs for light ailments. The Hippocratics gave drastic medicines only in order to cure serious illnesses and depending on the constitution of each patient. They always selected the most suitable and well-tried medicines, on the basis of the axiom "Opposites are a cure for opposites". Hippocrates often thought it best not to administer any medication. "For it is a good remedy sometimes to use nothing", he says.[170] In the Hippocratic Collection there are about three hundred kinds of drugs mentioned which pharmacologists classify into twenty categories. Many of these are the basis of contemporary compound medicines or even used unaltered.[171]

**Diet** was extremely important in Hippocrates' view. In the works of the Hippocratic Collection diet is placed on its proper basis.[172] Hippocrates and his

---

161. See ***Ulcers,*** 20.
162. See ***Diseases II,*** 42.
163. See ***Affections,*** 38.
164. See ***Diet II,*** 54.
165. See ***Diseases of Women, II*** 113.
166. See ***Affections,*** 38 etc.
167. See ***Diet in Acute Diseases,*** **II** 30.
168. See ***Ulcers,*** 21.
169. See Κ. Μητροπούλου, *Γλωσσάριον Ἱπποκρατείου Συλλογῆς*, Ἀθῆναι 1982, pp. 301 ff.
170. See ***Joints,*** 40.
171. See Γ. Κ. Πουρναροπούλου, *Εἰσαγωγὴ εἰς τὸν Ἱπποκράτην*, p. 96.
172. See ***Diet I, II, III; Nutrition, Diet for Health.***

followers systematically studied the foods and drinks which were used then, distinguished the useful ones from those that were harmful, the digestible from the indigestible ones and the nutritious from the non-nutritious ones, and pointed out with remarkable clarity the ill effects of the use of many foods on common illnesses. In Hippocrates' view, regimen should be regulated according to the ailment, the patient's age, the season, the climatic conditions (i.e. the land), as well as the habits and physique of the person.[173] The wise Physician discerned the significance of the individual factor in the regulation of the patient's diet, for which the doctor has to know the measure of endurance of each patient towards each kind of food. In recommending an individualised diet, the Hippocratics tried first of all to increase the body's natural defence mechanisms in order to restore its shaken health. Thus, to a great extent, Hippocratic therapeutics is based on dietetics.

Referring to Hippocrates' dietetics, Professor Per. Kalogirou writes: "Relying on his unerring clinical judgement and using as experimental material common nutritional ingredients of popular diet, Hippocrates raised dietetic therapy to the status of a real science, many fundamental conclusions of which are proving extremely useful even in our own time".[174]

As for **Hygiene,** Hippocrates' basic principle was the maintenance of due measure: "Food, drink, sleep, sexual pleasures – all [should be] in due measure", he advised. "Excess of any kind is an enemy of nature", he warned. His advice "Exercise a little and walk" is, as we know, applied by doctors today when they recommend light exercise and walking. The Hippocratics attached great importance to the balance between incoming food and expended energy. The Hippocratic rule addressed to healthy people "moderation in eating promotes health", which advises against gluttonizing, is an enduring dietetic truth which has maintained its value up to the present day.

Hippocrates' view on the effect of the **Environment** on people's health is considered to be a superb conception of a most fertile mind. In the brilliant treatise **Airs Waters Places** he expresses with penetrating insight some original views on the significance of climate, the seasons, winds, water, the soil, diet, exercise, laws, ethics and customs and their influence on physical, mental and

---

173. See ***Diet for Health,*** II.

174. See Περ. Καλογήρου, *Ἡ διαιτητικὴ ἐν τῇ ἰατρικῇ ἐπιστήμη, ἐναρκτήριον μάθημα.* Ἀθῆναι 21-12-1948.

spiritual health. This wonderful book has a bearing not only on clinical medicine, but on hygiene, ecology, anthropology, ethnology and other sciences as well. The Academician G. Merikas says: "Hippocrates' insight into the role played by the environmental factor, as far as it went, is more than enough to justify his being named the Father of Medicine".[175]

Hippocrates' original ideas on the effect of the various climatic and local conditions and the seasonal changes on man's health have been appreciated particularly in the last few years, when environmental factors have begun to be studied systematically in a special branch of science called Environmental Medicine and through other related specialised branches.

With his amazing and original observations, Hippocrates is today regarded by experts as the precursor of many contemporary scientific branches. "By stating the influence of climate and land on the physical and moral character of man", says A. Kouzis, "Hippocrates laid the foundations of Medical Geography and of Hygiene".[176] Professor Eug. Fokas regards Hippocrates as "the real founder of Hydrotherapy and Climatology... and the precursor of Meteorology".[177] Castiglioni regards the treatise on ***Airs Waters Places*** as the first attempt at investigating the relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm and sees in it "the foundations of Idiosyncratic Pathology".[178]

Hippocrates' contribution to **Rheumatology** was also significant. He was the first to use the appropriate term "arthritis".[179] He describes arthritis as a disease which causes great pain and fever, and attributes it to the accumulation of black bile and phlegm in the joints.

Hippocrates distinguished between **gout** and other forms of arthritis. He discerned that gout was "long-lasting and painful, but not mortal".[180]

Some specialists and medical historians regard Hippocrates as the founder of Rheumatology as well.[181]

---

175. *Τά μεγάλα Ιπποκρατικά αξιώματα και η σημερινή Ιατρική*, ΝΕΑ ΕΣΤΙΑ, Vol. 116, July 1984, p. 941.
176. *Ιστορία της Ιατρικής*, p. 192.
177. Ε. Φωκᾶ, *Γενικαί ἀρχαί Ὑδατοθεραπείας καί Ἰατρικῆς Κλιματολογίας*, Ἀθῆναι 1957, p. 32.
178. Castiglioni, *History of Medicine*, 1961, p. 167.
179. See ***Aphorisms* III**, XVI; ***Affections***, 30.
180. ***Affections***, 31.
181. See Γερ. Ρηγάτου - Ι. Κάππου - Β. Θούα, *Ἱστορία τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Ρευματολογίας*, Ἀθήνα 1987, p. 28.

The Hippocratic physicians' contribution to **Nosology** is also recognised today. Hippocrates knew a great number of diseases and their symptoms, and he in fact gave names to many of them which have been accepted and are used by scientists to the present day: e.g. exanthema, icterus, catagma, lithiasis, pleuritis (pleurisy), melancholia (melancholy), cynanche, nephritis etc. The nosological term "epidemic", too, was first used by Hippocrates with approximately its present meaning. Experts find valuable nosographical and nosological observations in Books I and III of ***Epidemics*** which are regarded as genuine works of Hippocrates. Jones considers them to be the most notable observations in Greek science.[182] Castiglioni finds in them "an attempt to bring together certain diseases according to their symptoms and their characteristic features".[183] Hippocrates pointed out the complexity and multiformity of diseases.[184]

Many diseases, such as epilepsy (the **"sacred disease"**), endemic malaria, epidemic parotitis, tuberculosis etc., are described in a remarkable way in the Hippocratic writings. In the treatise ***Places in Man*** (par. 24) there is a description of a "monster" ulcer which experts regard as an accurate description of cancer. As for tuberculous spondylitis (Spondylitis Tuberculosa), which is commonly called "Pott's disease", many experts argue that it ought to be called "Hippocrates' disease", since he was the first to describe it scientifically.[185]

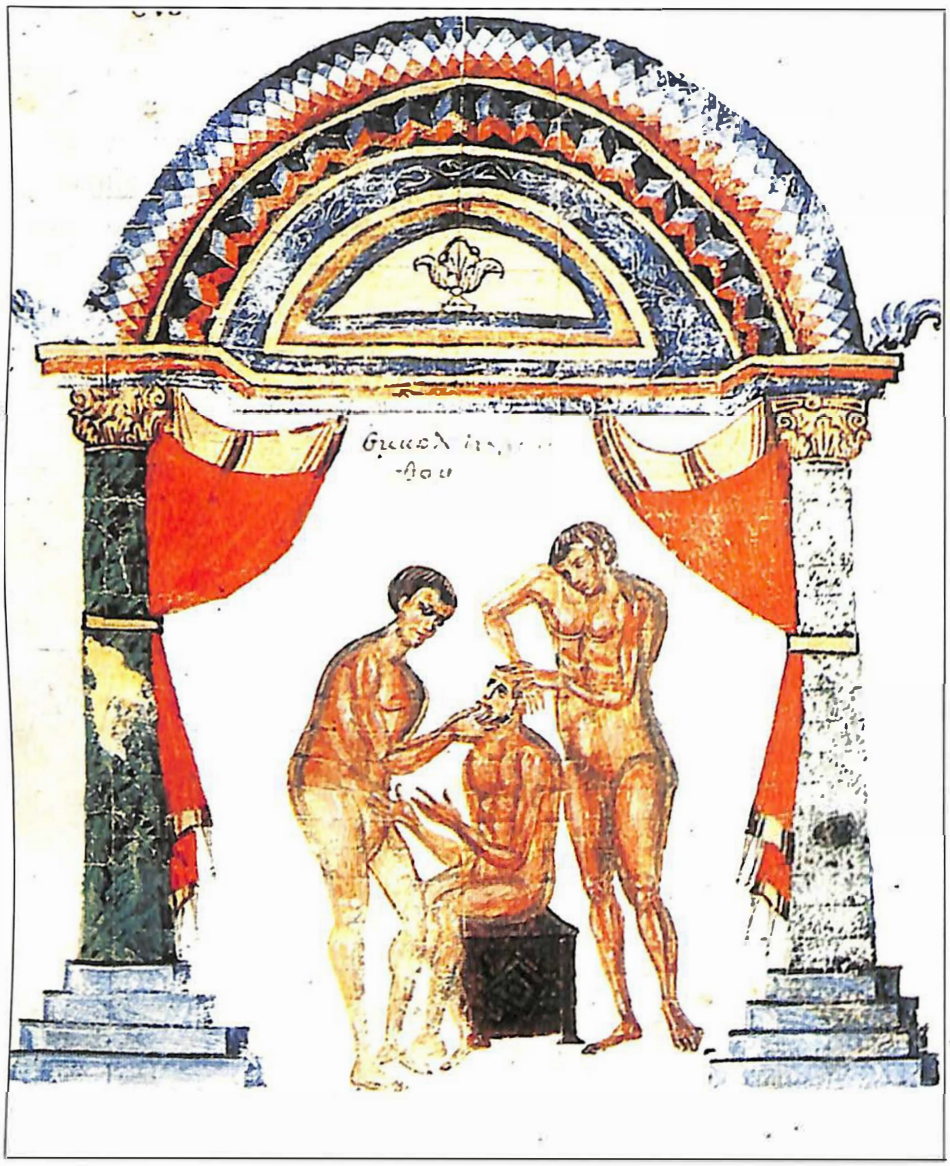
The Hippocratics attached great importance to **Heredity** in explaining diseases. ("All diseases have their origin in the family"). Their observations on the effect of heredity are verified by the latest research which has proved the transmission of pathological conditions from ancestors to descendants.

Hippocrates was also the first to perceive that microbiotic factors (**miasmata**) are the cause of diseases and epidemics.

One of the most important Hippocratic works, probably the most outstanding, is ***Aphorisms.*** Up until the last century it was regarded as the epitome of all medical knowledge, an indispensable tool to every doctor. It has impressed doctors of all times by its sound views on dietetics, prognostics, therapeutics and general medicine. It has been copied and published more times

---

182. W.H.S. Jones, *Hippocrates*, London 1939, vol. I, p. 141.
183. Op. cit., p. 170.
184. G. Merikas.
185. See Γ.Κ. Πουρναροπούλου, *Εἰσαγωγὴ εἰς τὸν Ἱπποκράτην*, p. 98.



**HIPPOCRATIC ORTHOPEDICS**

Rectification of a dislocated jaw by the Hippocratic method, as depicted in a Byzantine copy of the Cypriot physician Appollonius' memorandum, kept at the Biblioteca Medicae Laurenziana in Florence. (From Sp. Marketos' *Illustrated History of Medicine*, 1993)

than any other work in ancient Greek medical literature. Castiglioni regards the ***Aphorisms*** as the work of a great genius, and the observations contained in it as the outcome of great experience and profound knowledge.[186]

Hippocrates and his school made important progress in **Surgery** and **Orthopedics.** They applied painstaking aseptic and antiseptic methods for the prevention of infections. As it is evident from the statement "Water needs to be boiled and purified from foulness", [187] Hippocrates had discovered that water is sterilised through boiling (Αναγνωστάκης). For haemostasis the Hippocratics used desiccants, astringents, haemostatic bandages and local cauterization of the veins. Hippocrates' recommendations for the use of wine and sea water as antiseptics are regarded as significant.

One is also impressed by the instruments used by the Hippocratics. In his doctoral treatise "Ancient Medical Instruments" (1975), K. G. Pournaropoulos points out many instruments which were devised by Hippocrates and his followers.[188] The "Hippocratic Bench", which was used for the rectification of a dislocated thigh, is regarded as a proper orthopedic bench. In the surgical treatises of the Hippocratic Collection, especially in ***Joints*** and ***Fractures,*** there are descriptions of a variety of orthopedic instruments which were used for the rectification of dislocated limbs and of fractures. Many surgical instruments which have been discovered from time to time date from the Hippocratic period; some of them, such as the probe, the spatula, the knife, the ostagra or bone forcepts, the staphylagra etc., are mentioned in the Hippocratic Collection and are in fact attributed to Hippocrates himself. Some (e.g. Skevos Zervos) attribute to the Hippocratics certain bronze instruments which were found on the site of the Asclepeion of Cos by Herzog and in the tombs of court physicians on the island.

As ascertained by the experts, the surgical knowledge of Hippocratic physicians included fractures, dislocations, damage of the bones and joints, the rectification of dislocated limbs, the treatment of fractures, the treatment of scoliosis and cyphosis, the perforation of the skull, the treatment of haemorrhoids through cauterization, the healing of various wounds, the treatment of fistulae and much more.

---

186. Castiglioni, op. cit., p. 172.
187. ***Airs Waters Places,*** 8.
188. Cf. T. Meyer-Steineg, *Chirurghische Instrumente des Altertums*, Jena 1912.



Surgical instruments of the Hippocratic period (Meyer-Steineg).

Hippocrates' method of trepanation of the skull is regarded as classic.[189] With his wealth of experience, Hippocrates knew that in the case of injuries of any kind, except for those in the abdomen, it is advantageous to let the blood flow out freely so as to prevent infection.[190] It is worth noting the purgative power of fire which, according to the Hippocratics, could cure anything that could not be cured through surgery. As the last Aphorism puts it: "Those diseases that the knife does not cure are cured by fire".

Hippocratic surgery is still admired today by the most eminent surgeons of the world. Referring to Hippocratic surgery, Forgue, who wrote a "History of Surgery" in 1983, notes that of all the civilized peoples in the world the Greeks were able to lay the foundations of a true surgical science which is based on immediate observation, guided by reason and experience, and distinguished for its skill. According to Littré, the works on ***Joints*** and ***Fractures*** constitute great surgical monuments of antiquity and a model for all time. The advice to surgeons and the suggestions concerning operations, which are found in the treatise ***In the Surgery,*** are also regarded as authoritative.[191]

**Obstetrics and Gynaecology** in Hippocratic times "deserves every attention, being the first scientific investigation of these branches", says G. K. Pournaropoulos. In spite of the ignorance and the views which prevailed in those days, the Hippocratics studied gynaecological matters very closely and put forward some remarkable views. They were the first to observe that the most favourable time for conception was a few days before or after menstruation.[192] Besides the important subject of fertilization, they studied in great detail sterility, pregnancy, childbirth, child-bed, the formation and nutrition of the embryo, the various diseases of the female genitalia and so on. They calculated the duration of gestation at 280 days. The Hippocratics knew perfectly well that embryos which are seven months (182 days) old are capable of surviving birth, whereas those born during the eighth month usually die. These pioneering ideas and others of a similar kind are found in the works ***The Seven Months' Child*** *and* ***The Eight Months' Child*** etc.

There are many other significant observations in the rest of the books of the Hippocratic Collection which deal with obstetrics and gynaecology, though

---

189. See Hippocrates, ***Head Wounds.***
190. Hippocrates, ***Ulcers.***
191. See E.K. Σταματιάδη, *Συμβολή εἰς τὴν μελέτην τῆς Χειρουργικῆς τῶν Ἱπποκρατείων ἰατρῶν,* Ἀθῆναι 1964; A. Roselli, *La chirurgia Ippocratica,* Firenze 1975.
192. See ***Diseases of Women*** **I,** 17.

some of them are attributed to the Cnidian School. Professor Skevos Zervos, who specialised in Hippocratic obstetrics and gynaecology, regarded the investigations and observations of the "ingenious Hippocrates" as original and amazing.[193]

In **Ophthalmology,** the experts ascribe many discoveries to Hippocratic Medicine. The Hippocratics attributed eye diseases chiefly to atmospheric conditions, visible external causes and invisible internal ones. The knowledge and description of some diseases, like ophthalmic migraine, hemianopsia and epidemic ophthalmia, the surgical treatment of trichiasis, the treatment of granular conjunctivitis, the treatment of trachoma by abrasion and cauterization and so on, are regarded as very significant. By observing the eyelids, they ascertained unhealthy conditions in the body. G.K. Pournaropoulos says: "The supreme truth that the physician acquires diagnostic data about diseases in the rest of the body by examining the eyes was expressed by Hippocrates in the famous "Whatever affects the eyes affects the [rest of the] body".[194]

The Hippocratics also dealt systematically with **Dentistry**. Besides the extraction of teeth, they applied therapies to decaying teeth and various oral ailments. Their observations on childrem's teething are worth noting.[195] Professor Lyc. Kokoris regards Hippocrates as the founder of dental science and notes that he was the first to deal with teething and dental diseases, and the first to diagnose that dental affections are often interrelated with various other general complaints of the body.[196] Professor S. Sperantsas notes that Hippocrates made some pioneering observations about orthodontics, an extremely important area which is being systematically investigated by stomatologists, particularly orthodontists, twenty-four centuries later.[197]

From the opinions interspersed in the works of the Hippocratic Collection, it is clear that the Hippocratics engaged upon **Otorhinolaryngology** as well. Some of Hippocrates' views on polypi are found in E. Giannoulis' work *On polypi of the Nose according to Ancient Greek Physicians* (Athens, 1911). Of the

---

193. See Σκεύου Ζερβοῦ, *Ἱστορία τῆς Ἰατρικῆς*, Ἀθῆναι 1914, vol. A', pp. 79-226 cf; Ν.Κολιοπούλου, *Ἡ Μαιευτική τοῦ Ἱπποκράτους*, Διδακτορική Διατριβή, Ἀθῆναι 1968.
194. *Εἰσαγωγὴ εἰς τὸν Ἱπποκράτην*, 1967, p.105; cf. Α.Δ. Καστραντᾶ, *Αἱ ὀφθαλμικαὶ γνώσεις τῶν Ἑλλήνων κατὰ τὴν Ἱπποκράτειον ἐποχήν*, Διδακτορική διατριβή, Ἀθῆναι 1960.
195. The Hippocratic treatise on ***Teething*** also includes many notable observations of a *paediatric* nature.
196. Λ. Κόκορη, *Ἱστορία τῆς Ὀδοντιατρικῆς καὶ Στοματολογίας*, Ἀθῆναι 1918, p.13.
197. See Στ. Σπεράντσα, *Ὀρθοδοντική*, Ἀθῆναι 1949, p. κά.

rest of the specialist studies we can quote two: (1) On Hippocratic Rhinology, P. Pantazopoulos' *Plastic Surgery of the Nose in Ancient Greek Medicine* (Athens 1958) and (2) on Hippocratic Otology, Sp. Bonatis' *The Ancient Greek Physicians' Views on the Pathology of the Ears.* (Athens, 1966).

The works of the Hippocratic Collection also contain views on **Sexology** and **Dermatology** which are commented on by the experts. In his book *History of Sexology and Dermatology in Greece from the earliest times until today* (Athens 1939) G. K. Pournaropoulos cites passages from such Hippocratic works as ***Epidemics III, IV & V, Aphorisms, Internal Affections*** and so on, which refer to sexual and skin diseases.

Hippocrates and his followers dealt in depth with **Psychiatry** and **Neurology**. The Hippocratics' psychological knowledge was considerable for their time. Besides physical examination, they conducted psychological examinations of their patients. Detailed examinations of the patients' case histories are regarded by scholars as a kind of psychoanalysis.[198] The fact that Hippocrates and his students regarded the patient as an undivided psychosomatic whole is particularly important. They believed that in order to cure the body, we must know the whole human being. The Hippocratic principle that man functions normally when all his constituents, physical and mental, are in harmony is now being adopted by Psychosomatic Medicine.

The Hippocratics stressed that the brain is the centre of intelligence, sense and movement, as opposed to the view held by many of their predecessors that all mental activity originated in the diaphragm.

By the term "melancholy", which they were the first to use, they meant the disorder of the black bile which causes neurological and psychological symptoms.[199]

The Hippocratics were well aware of the role played by heredity, age, sex, occupation, physical build and the environment in the formation of the personality and the predisposition to mental disease.[200]

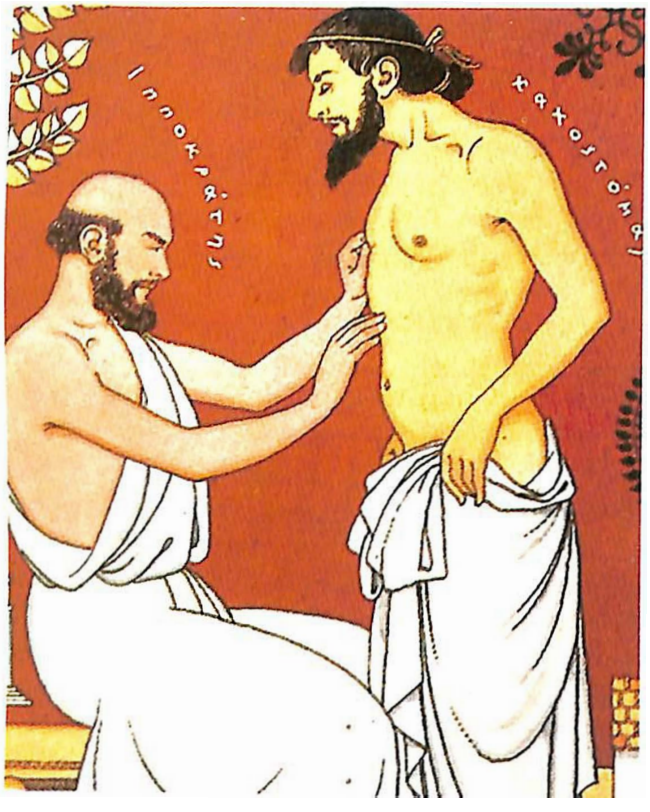
From what has just been said one can see that, through his genius, Hippocrates applied himself to almost every major medical problem, conceived new ideas, discerned truths and set out principles which are accepted by scientists today. This is why the Hippocratic teachings and writings are

198. Γ.Νότης.

199. Cf. Γ.Κ. Πουρναροπούλου, *Εἰσαγωγὴ εἰς τὸν Ἱπποκράτην*, p. 101.

200. See Χαρ. Χ. Βαρουχάκη, *Ἱπποκρατικὴ Ψυχιατρική*, Διδακτορικὴ διατριβή, Ἀθῆναι 1966.

universally accepted as the foundation of scientific medicine and an invaluable legacy to world civilization. Professor Spyros Marketos writes: "Hippocrates founded scientific medicine and bequeathed an immortal work which is today judged to be not only original but in many ways prophetic as well. The content of this work is both medical and philosophical, humanistic and biological, and is characterised by permanence".[201] Hippocrates inherited a medical art which was oracular, theocratic and dogmatic; but with his powers of observation, his imagination and his judgement he transformed it into an exalted Art, qualified to deal objectively with the problems of health.




201. Σπύρου Μαρκέτου, *Ιστορία της Ιατρικής*, 1993, p.73.

# 19. NEO-HIPPOCRATISM, THE I.H.F.C. AND HIPPOCRATIC PRECEPTS

Hippocrates' influence on modern medicine is also seen in the Neo-Hippocratic Movement.

At the beginning of this century there had been, first in America and later in some European countries, a drift towards the experimental and laboratory approach, by which a lot of laboratory and technical information was gathered as the basis of diagnosis, without any consideration for the patient's particular constitution, his personality, his family environment, his background and so on. This method drove medical science away from Hippocrates' humanistic views and began to lead it to an impasse, since it looked upon the patient as a complex of organs, a colony of cells, without a soul or personality.

In order to overcome this crisis many clinicians, after the First World War, suggested combining the experimental and laboratory approach with the basic principles of Hippocrates. Such people were Osler (mentioned in the last chapter) and Brown in England, Robin in France, Pende in Italy, Maranon in Spain, Aschmer in Austria and so on. In Greece a pioneer champion in the struggle for the acceptance of the Hippocratic principles and idiosystatic medicine was the renowned clinician Alexandros Kavvadias, who in fact suggested the term **Neo-Hippocratism** to describe the movement: "Neo-Hippocratism, Anthropocentric Medicine and American Psychosomatic Medicine represent today's views on medical science, for which we can use the expressive term of the Marshal and philosopher Ian Smuts **Holistic Medicine** or the German term **Ganzhuts Medizin.** Neo-Hippocratism has the widest meaning", Kavvadias writes in his announcement at the Academy of Athens.[202]

His observation is typical: "We do not wish to go *back to* Hippocrates, but *forward with* Hippocrates".

The most important principles of Neo-Hippocratism rest on Hippocratic foundations:

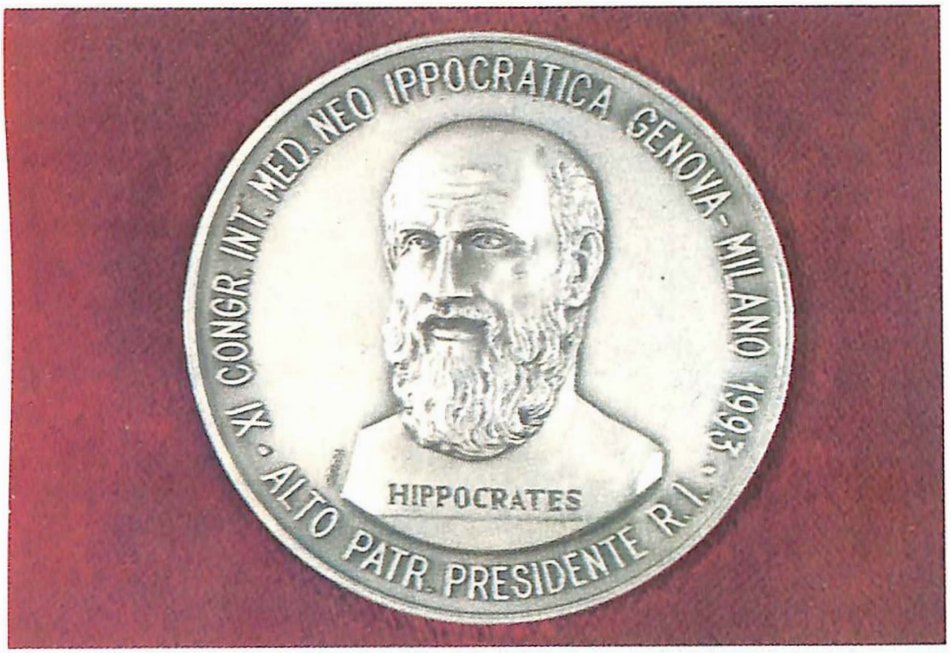
(1) Neo-Hippocratism reinstates the concept of man as a unified organism in a special environment, and the concept of disease as a general reaction of the body. It sees man as a single psychosomatic entity.

---

202. *Ἡ Ἰατρικὴ καὶ αἱ Ἀνθρωπολογικαὶ Ἐπιστῆμαι*, Conference of 14th December 1963: cf. his *Neo-Hippocratism*, London 1937.




Some of the commemorative bronze and silver medals in the Hippocratic Museum of the I.H.F.C.




One of the latest Hippocrates medals (1993).
11th International Congress of Neo-Hippocratic Medicine, Genova, Milan.
(From the periodical edition of the I.H.F.C., February 1994)

(2) It focuses diagnosis and treatment on the patient as a person. (Hippocrates regarded the patient, not the disease, as the centre of interest). The patient is not á file of laboratory analyses, but a free personality with a particular physical and mental temperament, a specific background and a specific environment.

(3) It restores the complete diagnosis. First comes the diagnosis on the patient as a whole and then the careful examination of local changes, but always with an eye on "the whole".

(4) Following the basic Hippocratic approach, it regards the final clinical examination as of the utmost importance. This does not mean that it ignores laboratory examinations. It applies a scientific order for a more reliable diagnosis: "First, clinical examination; secondly, laboratory; thirdly, an objective clinical process for the final synthesis".[203]

(5) Therapeutics is based on the pre-eminence given to the resistance put up by each patient's particular physical and mental constitution. It avoids the administration of too many drugs, and of strong medication without an accurate diagnosis.[204]

We must not confuse Neo-Hippocratism with Hippocratism. Hippocratism is a medical dogma which, by following the example of Hippocrates, imposes conformity to and respect for nature, and the study of its spontanteous self-healing processes as well as the crises that it can cause.

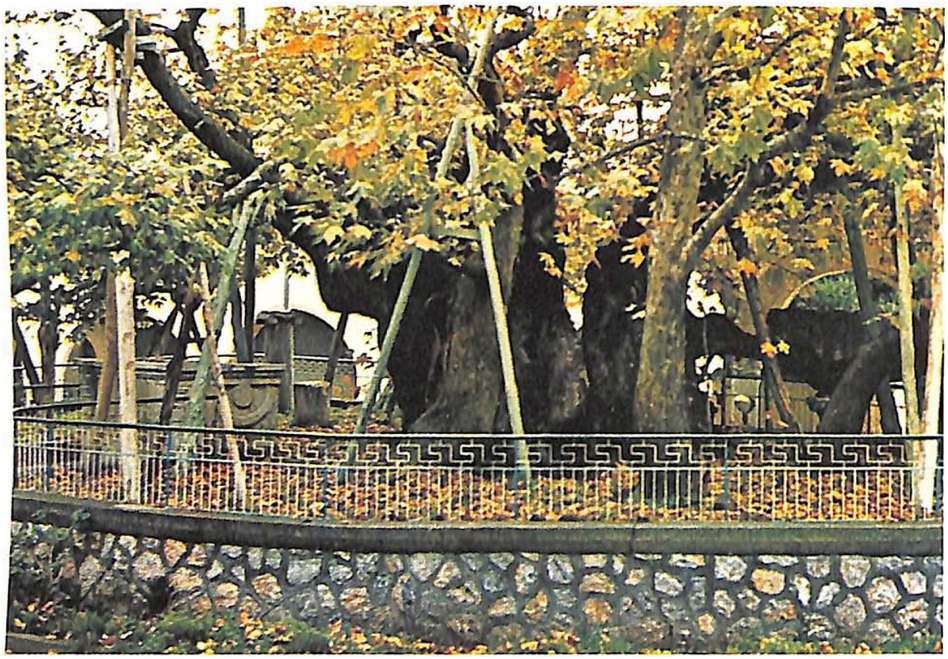
A great contribution to Neo-Hippocratism was made by the distinguished surgeon and devout Christian Marinos Geroulanos, a Member of the Academy of Athens since 1933, who is regarded as the "Father" of psychosomatic Medicine and Personality Medicine in Greece. [205]

The preservation of the Hippocratic ideal owes much to the tireless efforts of the brilliant Calymnian scholar and lecturer in Medicine, Skevos Zervos, who was also the first to conceive the idea of founding an "International Research Institute" in Cos before 1945.

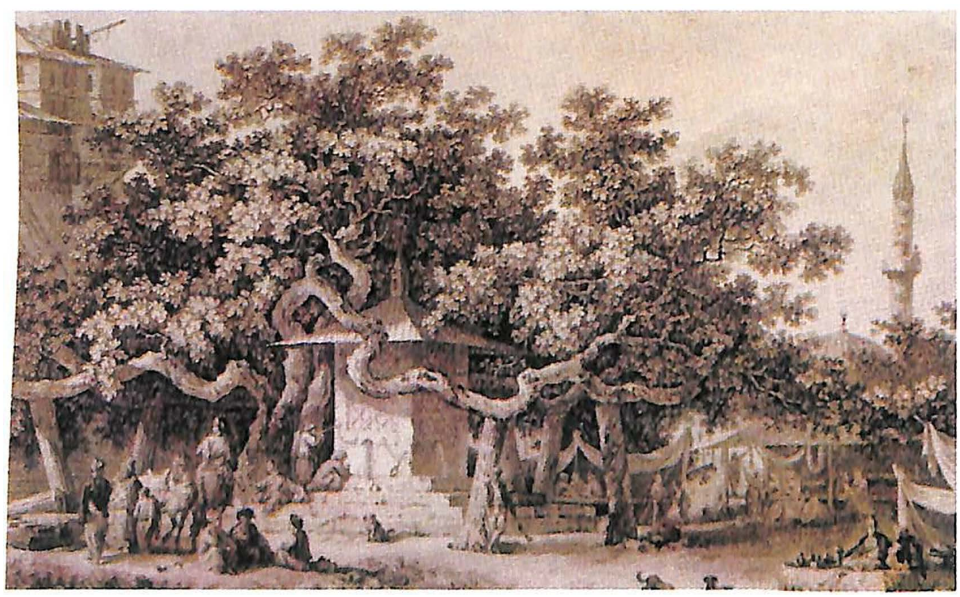
In Cos, the birthplace of Hippocrates, the Neo-Hippocratic movement is today expressed by the International Hippocratic Foundation of Cos (I.H.F.C.), which was established in 1960 by Professor Spyros Oiconomou of Athens University. This foundation, which now possesses conference rooms, a museum and other amenities close to the Asclepeion of Cos, greatly contributes

---

203. Alexandros Kavvadias, op. cit.
204. Cf. Γ.Κ. Πουρναροπούλου, *Εἰσαγωγὴ εἰς τὸν Ἱπποκράτην*, Ἀθῆναι 1967 p.p. 108 ff.
205. See ΑΚΤΙΝΕΣ Periodical, June 1991, pp. 200 ff.



The Plane Tree, under which, according to tradition, Hippocrates taught his pupils. The International Ecological Foundation COLAS considers the Plane Tree one of the oldest in the world.



The first depiction of the Plane Tree and Lozia Square.Copperlate print from "A Trip to Greece" by the French traveller C. Coufier (1783).

to the development of humanistic medicine based on the Hippocratic principles. Professor Nikolaos Oiconomou says characteristically: "Hippocrates' grandeur necessitates the dedication to him of an institution which, besides other things, would have as its main purpose the spread of Hippocratic Philosophy and Ethics". Some of the important goals of the Foundation are: The participation of doctors from all over the world in the exchange of views on matters concerning the Hippocratic ideology, the projection of Hippocratic ethics in the practice of the medical profession, the promotion of the Hippocratic idea and the revival of the Neo-Hippocratic spirit, the encouragement of historical and philological research on the Hippocratic Corpus, etc.

Following the international scientific conferences of recent years, the I.H.F.C. is now being recognised as a "Centre of Humanistic Neo-Hippocratic Medicine" with wonderful prospects. The Foundation has recently (1995) become a member of the Council of International Organizations of Medical Sciences which is under the auspices of U N E S C O and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The present Chairman of the Foundation and Honorary President of the Society of Humanistic Neo-Hippocratic Medicine, Professor Spyros Marketos, has succeeded in having the first Medical Olympiad held in Cos, in combination with the 35th International Conference on the History of Medicine (September 1996), and this supranational event hosted by the International Hippocratic Foundation of Cos every four years.

Every year, leading scientists from all over the world visit the birthplace of Hippocrates to pay homage to the founder of medicine ("the most renowned of all arts"), or to make their own contribution to the international conventions which promote the Hippocratic Idea.

Hippocrates has survived the test of time, since modern science, with all its spectacular progress, continues to draw lessons from his teaching. Hippocrates' views – medical, philosophical and humanitarian – are characterised by trans-temporality. Here are some typical examples:

Today Hippocrates' appeal "to know what man is" is still a matter of primary importance.

The Hippocratic idea that man is a single entity and that a doctor's duty is to regard the patient as a psychosomatic totality is in our days a fundamental principle of Psychosomatic Medicine.

The Hippocratic message that the body's natural resistance is the most important factor in the process of healing ("the body's nature is the physician in disease") is a perpetual precept for doctors to follow. Hippocrates will always remind us that "Untrained, ...nature does what is needed".

Hippocratic teaching on the influence of the environment is being triumphantly justified today by Ecology, Climatology and all the other related sciences. The senseless abuse of the natural environment continually brings to the foreground Hippocrates' warning: "The factors that create differences in men's constitutions are most important".

Hippocrates' doctrine that every phenomenon has a natural cause and that nothing takes place without nature's participation remains eternal: "Nothing arises without its natural causes".

Hippocrates' categorical command "Help or at least do not harm" is today the highest ideal of all great scientists and the foundation of humanistic medicine. Hippocrates will always teach us that ".... where there is love of man, there is also love of the art".

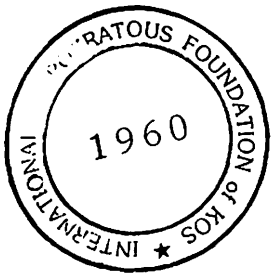
Hippocrates sends a prophetic message to our society of plenty and leisure, which is still seeking its orientation: "In all abundance there is lack".

Hippocrates' concern for the prevention of disease is put forward by the most eminent representatives of Preventive Medicine, which is being developed in our days: "Prevention is better than cure".

Hippocrates' moral precepts have always been the basic principles of medical ethics, while the Hippocratic Oath continues to be a model for the world's humanitarian declarations.[206]

Finally, for those who insist on attributing diseases and misfortunes to God, Hippocrates declared, four centuries before the birth of Christ: "It is not the god who is to blame".

In an age when technology triumphs and challenges, it is particularly comforting to see that medical science deems it necessary to combine contemporary achievements with the eternal principles of Hippocrates.[207]




206. See chapters on "HIPPOCRATIC ETHICS" and "THE VALUE OF THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH".
207. See chapter on "HIPPOCRATIC MAXIMS".

# 20. THE PLANE TREE OF HIPPOCRATES

An ancient monument in Cos which is directly connected with the Father of Medicine and symbolizes the immortal Hippocratic spirit is the Plane Tree of Hippocrates.

Much has been written and many legends have been passed down to us since ancient times about the old Plane Tree, the most popular being the story which says that Hippocrates taught his pupils under its shade. This is the reason why, for many centuries, all sorts of efforts have been made to preserve the tree and prolong its life.

An epigram by Hermesianax (3rd century B.C.), which was preserved by Athenaeus, informs us that the people of Cos had erected a bronze statue under a plane tree in honour of the distinguished Coan poet Philetas. We do not know, however, if that is the Plane Tree which is connected with Hippocrates' name.

Our information concerning this historic tree dates chiefly from the period of the Turkish occupation, during which many foreign travellers visited Cos and noticed the Plane Tree. The French traveller Jean Thevenot's reference (1655) is typical: He describes the impression made on him near the Castle of Cos by a huge tree which could shade 2,000 people. Its branches were supported by several stone pillars and wooden poles, and it was surrounded by many stores, barber's shops, coffee houses, stalls and so on. This is obviously a reference to the Plane Tree of Hippocrates.

On the northern side of the fence surrounding the Tree there is a fountain, and above it an old Turkish inscription which the Coan historian Zarraftes has translated as follows: «This fountain was erected by Gazi Hasan Pasa in 1200 and the water flowed from the spring of Hippocrates». This is the year according to hegira (the Muslim calendar) and it corresponds to our Christian year 1786.

As this type of tree can hardly live for more than ten centuries (the Damascus Plane Tree is believed to be about 1300 years old, according to P.C. Gennadios, Φυτολογικὸν Λεξικόν, Ἀθῆναι 1959), the present Plane Tree of Cos is thought to be a shoot from the old Plane Tree of Hippocrates. After all, two younger trees have been growing next to the old Plane Tree for a number of years.

The Plane Tree of Hippocrates is probably the oldest tree in Europe. In its recently published trilogy, the international ecological institute COLAS includes the Plane Tree of Hippocrates among the 70 oldest trees in the world.

Hundreds of tourists visit and admire the ancient tree every day, and organized groups of scientists from all over the world come to the old Plane Tree with veneration as they pay their respects to the Father of Medicine.

As an illustration of the events that are organized and the references made in honour of Hippocrates, here is just a short inscription which was fixed to the pedestal of the Plane Tree by members of the International Convention on the History of Medicine during their visit-pilgrimage to Cos in 1960:

DEEPLY MOVED, THE 17TH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE HAVE GATHERED UNDER THE SACRED PLANE TREE, WHERE THE FATHER OF MEDICINE HIPPOCRATES THE COAN TAUGHT, FOR THE REGENERATION OF THE ANCIENT MEDICAL SCHOOL OF COS, SPIRITUAL MOTHER OF ALL PHYSICIANS IN THE WORLD.

Cos, the 8th of September 1960
Day of the week Thursday, time 7 a.m.

On the occasion of the 1st International Medical Olympiad organised by the I.H.F.C., another commemorative inscription was set in the pedestal of the Plane Tree, which reads:

SCIENTISTS FROM THE 5 CONTINENTS HUMBLY APPROACH THE SACRED PLANE TREE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO HIPPOCRATES OF COS.

Cos, 2nd September 1996.

# 21. HIPPOCRATES AND RELIGION

Like all great intellects, Hippocrates tried to go deeply into the mysteries of godhead. After all, man's tendency towards the divine is an innate characteristic, and religion is simply the expression of man's desire to transcend the limitations imposed on him by life and nature.

"Hippocrates based medicine on completely natural foundations, but without overstepping the boundaries of religion", says K. Georgoulis. "He prudently tried to differentiate between medicine, a science which seeks a natural explanation of diseases, and the pre-existing methods which were based on primitive ideas about the relationship between gods and mortals."

Hippocrates is regarded as a rationalist, but his rationalism is mild, versatile and moderate; he does not adopt the denial of faith, nor does he show the tendencies of the 19th and 20th- century rationalists who violate the contrast between reason and religion.[208]

Attempting through his genius to approach the divine, he formulates the view that knowledge of the gods is woven into the stuff of the mind by medicine.[209]

Examining Nature, he points out the perfection of its creations and perceives that they all function as one harmonious entity.

As he compares the works of humans with the creations of Nature, Hippocrates points out the differences: "... custom was settled by men for themselves without their knowing those things about which they settled the custom; but the nature of all things was arranged by the gods. Now, that which men arranged never remains constant, whether right or wrong; but whatsoever things were arranged by the gods always remain right. So great is the difference between the right and the wrong".[210]

Referring to different ailments and symptoms, he expresses the opinion that medicine is found mostly to be held in honour by the gods.[211]

Contrasting religion with science, Hippocrates declares that the power of science is limited in comparison with that of the deity. Physicians submit in the presence of divine power, he characteristically writes in the treatise ***Decorum***.

---

208. See J. Jouanna, op. cit., p. 278.
209. See ***Decorum***, VI.
210. See ***Diet I***, XI.
211. ***Decorum***, VI.




Picture of Hippocrates in a 14th-century manuscript (Bibliotheque National, Paris). From Spyros Marketos' book *Hellenic Medicine, 1991.*

Some scholars express doubts as to whether these views belong to Hippocrates, since they do not consider ***Decorum*** a genuine Hippocratic work. Yet, similar views are expressed about the "divine" in other Hippocratic works which are regarded as genuine. Referring to the ability to foretell the course of a disease in ***Prognostic,*** Hippocrates writes that physicians should find out if there is some divine cause in disease and learn how to forecast it.

This statement has interested various interpreters. According to Nestle, the term "divine" refers to all the meteorological influences, towards which man is absolutely helpless. D. Lypourles writes: "It is not unlikely that the term *divine* here means something *inexplicable, beyond human understanding".* In this sense the word seems to be appropriate when uttered by a docfor, whose duty is to always specify the limits beyond which his science cannot reach. [212]

According to the view of earlier as well as contemporary scholars, strict piety was also prevalent in the environment of the Medical School of Cos. Carratelli, a profound scholar of Coan inscriptions, observes a close convergence of views between Hippocratic teaching and religion, and believes that the moral obligations of the Asclepiads in the School of Cos were reinforced by deep religiousness. [213]

Hippocrates' position towards the gods, sometimes even towards God, is quite clear in many parts of the treatise ***The Sacred Disease.***

Many people spoke then of divine diseases. Epilepsy was regarded as a disease sent by the gods and was called the "sacred disease". Those who named the disease sacred, says Hippocrates, must have been people like "the magicians, purifiers, charlatans and quacks of our own day, men who claim great piety and superior knowledge". [214]

The so-called "sacred disease" is no more sacred than any other. It has the same nature as other diseases, and the cause that gives rise to individual diseases. As far as their remote origin is concerned, diseases are of "divine descent", but they are brought on by natural causes which men can foresee and combat effectively.

Hippocrates' conscience rebelled against those who exploited religion by talking about divine diseases which they were supposed to drive away through magic. "Godhead is not to blame for anything", he declares in the treatise on the "sacred disease". Almost the same declaration is used by St Basil as a heading

---

212. See Δ. Λυπουρλή, *Ιπποκρατική Συλλογή,* 1991, p. 211.
213. See G.P. Caratelli, *La norma etica degli Asklapiadai di Cos,* 1991, p. 89.
214. The ***Sacred Disease,*** II.

for his 9th homily: "God is not to blame for any misfortunes". This Hippocratic treatise, which is described as "a milestone in the history of European medicine", expresses the endless struggle of the scientifically-minded man against superstition and charlatanism.

As a true philosopher and scholar, he was the first to write about everything that experience had taught him and everything he had learnt from his daily observations, stigmatizing the prejudices and the charlatanism which prevailed in his day. His piety would not allow him to tolerate god-peddling. He expressed his indignation against those who spoke about gods and spirits without believing or respecting anything.

Apart from the priests of the Asclepeia, many other physicians who worked privately mixed superstition with their healing methods and often collaborated with the priests, obviously sharing the profits.

Those who promise cures by miraculous means, Hippocrates tells us, deceive people and offend the gods, for they shamelessly attribute their cunning tricks to godhead. Thus, if the patient recovers, they advertise the outcome in order to win fame; and if he dies, they have a safe excuse, that they are not to blame but the gods. And he concludes: "... What they call piety and the divine is impious and unholy".[215]

These declarations of Hippocrates and his scientific revelations had provoked the hatred of many witch-doctors and certain "wonder-working" Asclepiad priests, and it is quite likely that this was the source of the shameless slander, namely that he was forced to leave Cos because he had burnt the temple of Asclepius, according to Pliny's peculiar story.

Of course, great Hippocratists have never seriously believed either this testimony or that of Andreas about the burning of the Archives of Cnidos.[216]

Hippocrates condemns all those healers and purifiers who try to influence godhead by magic and incantations, because he regards all these as antiscientific actions which eventually lead to the degradation of religion. With these purifications and exorcisms they commit the gravest impiety and blasphemy.[217]

Instead of purifications and incantations they should in fact use sacrifices and prayers; they should take their patients "to the sanctuaries, with sacrifices

---

215. ***The Sacred Disease,*** III.

216. See Ἀδ. Κοραῆ, Προλεγόμενα εἰς τοὺς Ἀρχαίους Ἕλληνες Συγγραφεῖς, vol. Β', pp. 342 ff.

217. ***The Sacred Disease,*** IV.

and prayers, in supplication to the gods", he says in Section IV of ***The Sacred Disease.*** And he goes on to explain: " I cannot accept that a man's body is defiled by a god", for the utterly corrupt cannot be defiled by the perfectly holy. "It is not a god but the disease which injures the body," he declares at another point. [218]

If there is indeed an unholy miasma, it must be cleansed by the god, because our worst and most profane errors can only be cleansed and purified by the power of the god: "For it is godhead that purifies and sanctifies us from the greatest and most impious of our sins".[219] This is in fact a declaration which reminds one of the writings of Christian Fathers.

As Lesky says, the treatise ***The Sacred Disease*** offers some special and wonderful examples of Greek piety, since in it the scientific problem of the natural causes of disease is identified with the problem of their divine origin. After all, everything has its origin in godhead.[220]

Hippocrates is categorically against superstition in his treatise ***Airs Waters Places*** as well. In those days many Scythians suffered from sexual impotence which the locals attributed to some deity. Hippocrates revealed the real cause[221] which brought on the malady and pointed out that this disease was no more divine than any other. "No disease", he says, "is more divine or more human than any other; all are alike, and all divine. Each of them has a nature of its own, and none arises without its natural cause".[222]

Observing, in fact, that this complaint affected the rich rather than the poor, he took the opportunity to comment on another superstition concerning the unreasonable demands and favours of the gods. If this disease had been more divine than the rest, Hippocrates observed, it should have affected rich people less, since it is they who often perform sacrifices and make offerings to the gods, and more those who have not the means to make offerings to the gods, "if indeed the gods are pleased to receive from men respect and worship, and [that they] repay these with favours". Furthermore, the poor often criticise the gods and complain to them for not giving them wealth. One would, therefore, expect the penalties for such sins to be paid by the poor rather than by the rich.

However, such views seemed unreasonable to Hippocrates and to any religious (not superstitious) person. Hippocrates always respected traditional

---

218. **The *Sacred Disease,*** XIV.
219. **The *Sacred Disease,*** IV.
220. Lesky, *A History of Ancient Greek Literature.*
221. i.e. horse-riding
222. ***Airs Waters Places,*** XXII.

religion despite its shortcomings which he discerned with his clear mind. An indication of his piety is his dedication of a bronze representation of a human skeleton to the Oracle of Delphi which is mentioned by Pausanias.[223]

Hippocrates' piety is clearly seen also in the ***Oath,*** where he invokes first the four deities that protect health as companions and assistants of the doctor in his work, but also all the gods and goddesses as witnesses and guarantors of the sincerity of his promises. Thus, everyone who takes the Oath is morally bound in the presence of the divine powers as guardians of moral order in the world, and feels that he is undertaking a sacred duty. The religious principles of the Oath are best seen in the central statement: "I will keep pure and holy both my life and my art". With the adverb ὁσίως (in holiness) he particularly stresses piety, the dedication of a true missionary to godhead. Here we are taught by this spiritual man that he who thinks and acts according to divine law is always pure and of service to humanity. It is an axiom right in the middle of the Hippocratic Oath which applies not only to doctors but to every person of every era.

Hippocrates' religious principles, especially those expressed in the ***Oath,*** were particularly appreciated by the Church Fathers and scholars, and projected from time to time as outstanding moral teachings and Christian precepts.

In his funeral speech on the death of his brother Caesarius, who was an excellent court physician, St Gregory of Nazianzus, in order to show how virtuous and how loyal to his duties as a doctor the deceased had been, emphasised that "he had had no need to be sworn by anyone on the Hippocratic Oath".[224]

Referring to professional secrecy, eagerness and decency which Hippocrates imposes on his pupils through the ***Oath,*** St Jerome asks himself: "How much more should we clergymen, who have been entrusted with the care of people's souls, respect the homes of Christians?".[225]

Cassiodorus, the 6th-century Roman senator and later monk in Calabria and a prolific writer, refers with reverence to the precepts of the Hippocratic Oath, admonishing monks towards a pure, Christian life. He wrote a guide to the education of monks in both religious and secular matters, in which he urges them to study the writings of Hippocrates, Galen and others.[226]

The Venerable Basil the Younger, Bishop of Caesaria during the first half of the 10th century, mentions with great respect the Oath which Hippocrates had bequeathed to posterity so that no one could corrupt or alter any part of the

---

223. *Phocis,* X2.
224. *Ἐπιτάφιος εἰς Καισάριον,* XXXV, 763a Migne.
225. *Letter 52,* 15 XXII 539, Migne.
226. See Cassiodori, *De Institutione Divinarum Litterarum* I, c.31

humanitarianism of the medical art, and so that no doctor could ever exploit his fellow-men.[227]

In general, Hippocrates' views are so close to Christian teaching that scholars, both early and contemporary, have used the terms "Hippocratic Christianity" and "Christian Hippocratism".[228]

Throughout the Middle Ages the Christian Church honoured Hippocrates as they did very few ancient Greek sages. An additional example of this honour is seen in a Byzantine religious painting. This colour picture is found in an illustrated 14th-century manuscript which is kept in the Paris Library.[229]

From what has been said so far, it is clear that Hippocrates was indeed a pious man. Contrary to the religious beliefs and mythological traditions of his time, he had a very noble view of godhead. Going deeply into the important subject of religion, this enlightened investigator preserved the independence of his art from the conjurer's healing tricks without ever going against the gods. He separated the supernatural from the scientific, granting to each its due. He respected and honoured the divine, while at the same time serving and promoting the Art in the service of humanity.[230]

---

227. See *Σχόλια εἰς Λόγους Γρηγορίου*, 59, 28, 14.
228. See O. Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, Baltimore 1991, p.251.
229. No 2144.
230. Cf. J. Jouanna, *Hippocrates de Cos et le sacré*, Journal des savants, Janvier-Juin 1989, pp. 3-22.

# 22. HIPPOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy is a purely intellectual human need, which is particularly felt by the intellectual giants. The greatest celebrities in the fields of Letters, Arts and Sciences have always shown a special inclination towards philosophy.

With their inquisitive minds, the ancient Greeks were the first to separate reason from myth and to lay the foundations of philosophical thinking. They raised the human mind to the highest levels of thought and reflection.

Philosophy is a perpetual search for truth, a rejuvenating dialogue with Creation and with ourselves. It gives man freedom, because it releases him from the irrational forces of the world, from superstition and fear, which life brings.

Philosophy is not an isolated intellectual function but connected with other functions in life, such as religion, art, science etc.

It was in this light, so closely related to his art, that Hippocrates saw philosophy. Hippocrates achieved the unification of science and philosophy, which was the ancient Greek philosophers' ideal.

He had the good fortune to have succeeded a long line of excellent philosophers, such as Anaximander, Pythagoras, Alcmaeon, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras and others who, apart from the investigation of natural phenomena, had begun to look into human phenomena, especially matters of health, on a rational basis.[231]

Thus, medical science gradually began to be disengaged from quackery and to be based on observation.

Within his family Hippocrates had had some brilliant examples of philosophically-minded men, like his father Heraclides and his grandfather Hippocrates, excellent Asclepiads who used the art with philosophical judgement. His inquisitive mind and his philosophical disposition were certainly favoured by the fact that he lived in the golden age of philosophy, with Socrates as its leading representative, that he was a close friend of Democritus and that he had been taught by Gorgias.

All these advantages, his outstanding genius and his excellent virtues contributed to Hippocrates' being distinguished not only as the founder of medical science but also as a true philosopher, a reverent humanist and an outstanding moral teacher.

---

231. Cf. Ε. Σταμάτη, *Προσωκρατικοί Φιλόσοφοι*, Ἀθῆναι 1960.

Galen describes Hippocrates as the "first among all physicians, the truest of all philosophers and the most capable of judges".

Hippocrates did indeed discern, from the first moment, the close relationship between philosophy and medicine, and based his research on philosophical thinking. As he studied man and his environment, he realised that the important questions (man's origin, the nature of the human body, the substance of the soul, the laws of nature, the moral rules of life, factors of health, life and death, the potential of science) are matters which, apart from the medical approach, also need a philosophical approach. For Hippocrates, a philosophical infrastructure is an indispensable outfit for a true physician.

First of all, let us consider how Hippocrates saw the philosophy of reason: The phrase "to pursue properly" in the opening line of his treatise ***Airs Waters Places*** is typical of Hippocrates. This proper pursuit is enquiry according to the rules of logic, that is philosophical enquiry. During this period of the sophist movement the word ὀρθός (= proper, correct ) was beginning to be used in order to denote the correctness of expression purely from the point of view of logic. Science is correct when it can stand the test of logic. By extension, therapy is effective when it is given in a manner whose rightness is guaranteed by reason.Thus, by way of Hippocrates' "proper enquiring", the physician can achieve "accurate forecasts" [232] and "scientific healing".[233]

So, Hippocrates recommends that one should check the correctness of the line of thought according to the general rules which the mind must follow during a scientific enquiry.

The word λόγος carries a special philosophical weight in many works of the Hippocratic Corpus. It denotes that every theory should be founded on arguments based on logic. Some of the views that follow have been taken from texts in the Hippocratic Collection which have not yet been proved through philological enquiry to have been genuinely Hippocratic.

A good theory, says Hippocrates, is that which comes from the work that has been the object of instruction,[234] and explains: what has been done by art has derived from theory; whereas what has been said according to art but has not become practice is an example of an artless method. What is needed, according to Hippocrates, is a harmonious combination, the interdependence of theory and practice.

---

232. See ***Prognostic,*** XXV.
233. See ***Ancient Medicine,*** XIII; cf. Δ. Λυπουρλή, Ιπποκρατική Ιατρική, p. 248.
234. ***Decorum*** IV.

The formulation of theories is useful when it relies on fact; whereas the conclusions which are drawn from logic without observation are questionable.

In other parts of the Corpus, Hippocrates advises doctors not to rely on hypothetical deduction but on experience and logic: "... one must attend in medical practice not primarily to plausible theories, but to experience combined with reason".[235] He again recommends a combination of reason and experience with the remark: "One must clearly know about sure signs and about symptoms generally".[236]

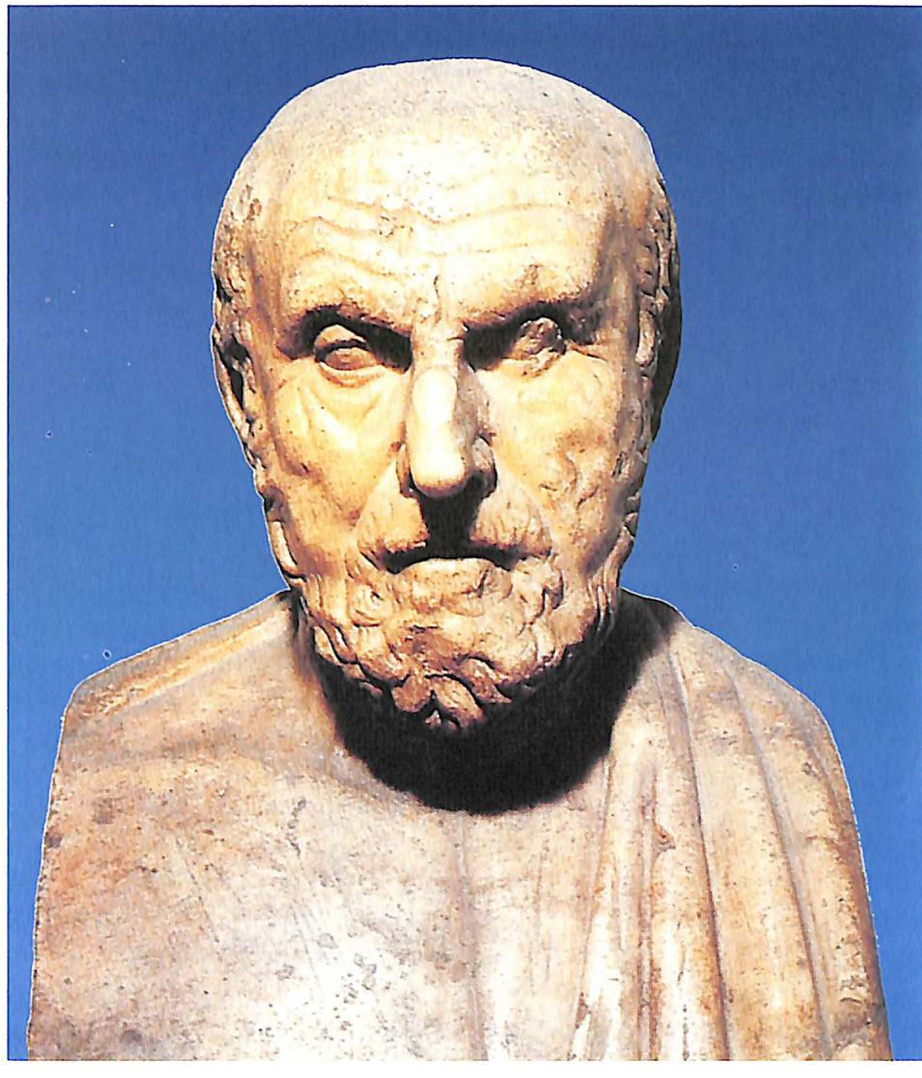
Plato honours Hippocrates as a philosopher when, through Socrates, he says: "Consider what Hippocrates and the true account have to say".[237] Many interpreters discern in Hippocrates' "true account" the harmonious combination of theory and practice.[238]

With his observations and his critical mind, Hippocrates opposed the guesswork and the generalizations expressed by some of the natural philosophers of his time about science in general and medicine in particular. One can use assumption, the logic of one principle, Hippocrates says, when dealing with abstract and impenetrable mysteries like what goes on in the sky, or under the earth, but not when dealing with an art like medicine.

***In Ancient Medicine*** [239] he says: "Medicine has for long possessed the qualities necessary to make a science. These are a starting point and a known method according to which many valuable discoveries have been made over a long period of time. By such a method, too, the rest of the science will be discovered if anyone who is clever enough is versed in the observations of the past and makes these the starting point of his researches". Here again we can see the importance of research when it is based on accurate knowledge. It is a praise of research and discovery, says A. J. Festugiere.[240] If, however, one rejects what has been proved and follows another method of investigation, claiming that he has discovered something else, he becomes the victim and the cause of error.

As a conclusion, we can say that hypotheses contain the element of doubt and, being ungrounded generalizations, have no place in the field of science, where there is accurate knowledge based on concrete evidence. Suppositions

235. ***Precepts,*** I.
236. ***Prognostic,*** XXV.
237. Plato, *Phaedrus,* 270c.
238. See I.N. Δάμπαση, *Η Ιπποκρατική Φιλοσοφία,* ΠΑΡΝΑΣΣ., Vol. 13, 1971.
239. Paragraph II.
240. *Hippocrate, L'ancienne medecine,* Etudes et Commentaires IV, Paris, 1948, p.35.



Bust of Hippocrates (Museo Capitolino, Rome). From the periodical publication of the I.H.F.C., August 1993.

are permitted only in cases where there is no direct observation, and they are usually proved wrong by new evidence.[241]

A scientist cannot rely on opinion or probability. Those who follow this path are lost in a blind alley and experience great disapointment, says Hippocrates.[242]

Science is correct and objective knowledge, while opinion is an imperfect form of knowledge and cannot exclude mistakes. In ***Law*** Hippocrates contrasts the two terms: "Science and opinion are two different things; science is the father of knowledge but opinion breeds ignorance".

Hippocrates' views on fate are worth noting: In his life, man often comes across accidental events, unpredictable situations, whose cause he cannot specify. Many people attribute these events to chance. But if we accept chance, we must deny the existence of causal necessity and of laws which determine the whole of nature. With this in mind, Hippocrates denies the existence of chance or "spontaneity" (τὸ αὐτόματον) as unscientific. To those who attribute to chance the cure of patients who have not called in a physician he replies that the patient has employed the same means as would have been employed if the physician had actually been called in.[243] Everything that occurs has a cause, and "spontaneity is a mere name, and has no reality".[244] In another treatise he points out: The science of medicine has been established on excellent principles and has no need of good luck. He who has sound knowledge does the correct thing and succeeds. The scientist does not rely on good luck. "For anyone who has an understanding of medicine depends very little upon good luck".[245]

Hippocrates' teaching on Nature as Creation, as Environment and as the physical structure of the organism is extremely important. With a clear mind he pointed out the need for the study of nature. With the meagre means of his time he tried to read the great Book of Creation in which the unchanging laws governing all creatures are written. According to Hippocrates, everything is divine and everything is human; and "all things take place through a divine necessity".[246] Everything in nature tends towards perfect harmony. The forces of nature try to keep an order, a balance. The reader is reminded of the Hippocratic

241. See H.D.F. Kitto, *The Greeks*, p. 188.
242. ***Precepts,*** I.
243. ***The Art,*** V.
244. ***The Art,*** VI.
245. ***Places in Man,*** 46.
246. ***Diet,*** Book I, V.

saying: "But the nature of all things was arranged by the gods... and whatsoever was arranged by the gods always remains right".[247]

Nature is man's great Teacher, the investigator's infallible guide. "The dominant factor ... is nature", he says in ***Decorum,*** IV. Nature is not taught anything by anyone. "The natures of all things are untaught".[248] Whatever nature does, it does by itself, without a teacher. The amazing thing is that nature, without any training or instruction, does the right thing: "The body's nature is the physician in disease;... untrained and without instruction, nature does what is needed".[249]

Hippocrates sees a general sufficiency in nature: "Nature is sufficient in all for all", we read in ***Nutrition,*** XV. His opinion on the earth seems to be similar, i.e. that it has countless nutritional powers. This is a statement whose truth is verified today by everything man does towards the destruction of his own natural environment.

In nature and in all living things there are two natural forces, **fire** and **water.** They are different in power but similar in use. When they act together, they are sufficient for one another and for everything else, whereas each of them by itself is not sufficient, either for itself or for anything else. Fire is the motive force, while water is the nourishing force: "Fire can move all things always, while water can nourish all things always".[250] Neither of them can become the master completely. If either of them were ever to be completely mastered by the other, then none of the things that exist today would be as they are now; in other words, there would be no harmony in nature. Therefore, Hippocrates concludes, the forces of fire and water will never cease to exist. Thus, according to Hippocrates, the macrocosm and the microcosm depend on the harmonious interaction of the natural forces: of fire, which has the attributes of the hot and the dry, and of water, which has the attributes of the cold and the moist.

Expanding upon the qualities of fire and water (the hot and the dry, the cold and the moist), and having in mind also the theories of Heraclitus and Anaxagoras, Hippocrates says that "nothing perishes and nothing comes into being that did not exist before. Things change merely by mingling and being separated".[251] Here we have another formulation of the principle of the

---

247. ***Diet,*** Book I, XI.
248. ***Nutrition,*** XXXIV.
249. ***Epidemics*** 6.5, 1.
250. ***Diet I,*** III.
251. ***Diet I,*** IV.

indestructibility of matter, or "the law of the conservation of mass", which was to be verified in the 18th century through Lavoisier's scientific experiments. According to Hippocrates, the natural forces are eternal and imperishable, and are subject to endless mingling and separation, sometimes in the same and sometimes in a different way; in other words, they are in constant motion, which causes the universe to function.

The influence of nature as environment is dealt with in ***Airs Waters Places,*** one of the best works of Hippocrates. Not only does the natural environment regulate the individual's health, but it affects his mental condition as well. Climate and local conditions formulate the physical and mental qualities of different races. Ultimately, it is nature which determines the customs regulating people's lives in each place. "Custom is reinforced by nature", Hippocrates tells us in Paragraph XIV of ***Airs Waters Places.*** And further on there is another important pronouncement: "Nothing arises without its natural cause".[252]

One of Hippocrates' most ingenious conceptions was the view that in the body there is a vital force which governs everything and is called ***physis,*** nature. With this term Hippocrates means the innate force which directs the vital functions and guarantees the maintenance and development of the body. This is indeed an admirable intellectual effort at interpreting the mystery of life which has always occupied the minds of great scholars and philosophers.[253]

According to Hippocrates, the study of the natural constitution of the body is the first step in medical thinking: "The nature of the body is the beginning point of medical reasoning".[254] Philosophy and medicine go hand in hand and help each other, for they have a common objective: nature. The nature of the human body shows an exact likeness to the nature of the world as a whole. Baissette says that Hippocrates was the first to see the connection of the human body with the infinite universe, a connection which starts from the invisible cells and reaches as far as the inaccessible planetary systems.[255] One cannot be taught about the object of philosophy and of medicine before one learns that medicine starts with the knowledge of human nature, and philosophy with the knowledge of Nature and its creations. That is exactly why Hippocrates advises doctors to apply philosophy to medicine and vice versa. "For a physician who is a lover of wisdom[256] is the equal of a god".[257] This Hippocratic precept

252. Par. XXII.
253. e.g. the Vitalists.
254. ***Places in Man,*** 2.
255. See Baissette, *Hippocrate, le Pére de la Medecine,* 1967.
256. i.e. a philosopher
257. ***Decorum,*** V.

concerning the philosophical education of physicians is also put forward by Galen in his treatise *"A physician is excellent when he is a philosopher [as well]"*.

One of Hippocrates' basic teaching is that doctors should find out as much as they can about the nature of man, why he exists and everything connected with his existence: "To know what man is, by what causes he is made, and similar points accurately".[258] He goes on to explain that they should study human nature, man's relationship with food and drink, his habits and the influences he receives. A similar admonition is found in another Hippocratic treatise: Referring to diet, Hippocrates says that whoever wishes to write a good treatise on human diet "must first acquire knowledge and discernment of the nature of man in general – knowledge of its primary constituents and discernment of the components, by which it is controlled".[259] But what are the basic constituents of the human body? This question had troubled the pre-Socratic philosophers, especially Alcmaeon, Empedocles and Philolaus. Hippocrates must have known their views on "elements" and "humours", but he formulated a more complete opinion about their various beliefs and systematized the theory of humours.

Apart from the views of the pre-Socratic philosophers about the fundamental elements of all physical bodies (earth, fire, air, water) Hippocrates was, according to Galen, the first to define the qualities in which these elements act and are acted upon by each other.[260]

So, according to Hippocrates, the four elements, which Empedocles conceived as unchangeable, experience all sorts of changes through heat or cold, dryness or moisture. The role of the natural qualites – the hot, the cold, the dry, the moist – is a decisive one for the nature of man and for the essence af all physical beings in general.[261]

Medical science, then, must be based mainly on thorough knowledge of the whole nature of man; and a doctor's duty is to help nature in its work for the restoration of health.

With his investigation into the nature of man as a whole and the influences of the environment on the formation of his psychosomatic constitution, Hippocrates lent a more positive character to medicine and to philosophy. With his study of the human constitution, Hippocrtates contributed to a better

---

258. ***Ancient Medicine,*** XX.
259. ***Diet I,*** II.
260. Galen, *On the Elements according to Hippocrates,* Βκ. Α', ch. 8.
261. Cf. Α. Φυλακτοῦ, *Ἡ Φιλοσοφία τῶν Ἑλλήνων προσωκρατικῶν φιλοσόφων κυρία πηγή ἀντλήσεως τοῦ Ἱπποκράτους καὶ τῆς Σχολῆς αὐτοῦ,* Ἀθῆναι 1973, pp. 171 ff.

understanding, by doctors and philosophers alike, of man's relationship with Nature and of the relationship between the various parts of the body and the psychosomatic whole. Body and soul constitute a harmonious whole; and in order to understand what is going on in one of them, we have to know what is happening to the other. "The doctor has to get to know the patient as an individual, as Hippocrates points out, as a collective whole, body and soul, mind and heart", says the humanist Norman Cousins of the University of California.[262] The physician must face his patient as a psychosomatic whole. He has to know not only his patient's anatomy but his psychological condition as well: "Nobody can know medicine who is ignorant of what a man is".[263] Man functions normally if all his constituents, physical and mental, are in a harmonious combination. This is a fundamental Hippocratic principle, which was followed by the most outstanding philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, and to which Psychosomatic Medicine is returning today.

Now, what does the Hippocratic school of thought teach about the soul and, generally, about man's mental state? It says that ***psyche*** penetrates the human body as a mixture of fire and water and becomes part of the organism:

"Into man there enters a soul, having a blend of fire and water, a portion of a man's body".[264] According to Hippocrates, the soul is an immortal biological force which is diffused through all parts of the body. Thus, it participates in all functions of the body and bears the consequences of its disorders: Each soul "receives the attacks that are made". It fights against what is strange and unsuitable, and accepts what is useful and beneficial. Thus, the human soul develops in a homogeneous environment: "A man's soul grows in a man, and in no other creature".[265]

Comparing the soul with the body, Hippocrates says: "The minds and the bodies of people differ very greatly".[266] The human soul remains unchanged: "... for it changes neither through nature nor through force".[267] The body, on the other hand, changes both by nature and by force, "for it both dissolves into all things and also combines with all things".[268]

---

262. *Head First, The Biology of Hope*, 1989.
263. ***Ancient Medicine,*** XX.
264. ***Diet I,*** VII.
265. ***Diet I,*** VI.
266. ***Prorrhetic II,*** 12.
267. ***Diet I,*** XXVIII.
268. Ibid.

A man's mental condition is influenced by his diet and, in general, by the way he lives. People who apply moderation in their lives rise to higher planes of existence and improve their souls; whereas those who are always preoccupied with material pleasures make their intellectual condition worse. Thus, with proper living and the proper blending of the elements, the soul can improve: "Regimen can make this blending either better or worse".[269]

In another treatise of the Hippocratic Collection, the soul is understood as an intellectual factor. During sleep, it is explained, the soul "administers her own household, and of herself performs all the acts of the body. For the body, when asleep, has no perception; but the soul, when awake, has cognizance of all things – sees what is visible, hears what is audible, walks, touches, feels pain, ponders..."[270]

The driving force of life, according to Hippocratic doctrine, is innate heat. Man, as an animate being with intelligence and wisdom, was created in imitation of the world as a whole by the indestructible source of all beings, "the hottest and strongest fire". This fire controls all things, regulates everything wisely and according to the dictates of nature, and is imperceptible to sight or touch. The soul, the mind, movement and change, all function in agreement with it. "This[271] governs all things always, both here and there, and is never at rest".[272] We must explain here that Hippocrates' fire is not the same as that of Heraclitus, which had been deified.[273]

The Hippocratic views on the arts are also worth mentioning. The arts constitute an imitation of nature or a reflection of the functions of the body. Men do not often discern the invisible through the visible. Although they employ arts which are like the nature of man, they do not know it. The mind of the gods has taught them to imitate their own functions; but although they know what they are doing, they do not know what they are copying.

"Custom and nature... do not agree though they do agree".[274] He goes on to say that custom, which was settled by men for themselves, is imperfect, while the functions of nature, which were arranged by the gods, are always right. In ***Diet I*** there are thirteen examples of arts and crafts, such as divination, iron-working, cobbling, building, weaving, music, sculpture etc., with which the writer tries to show that the work of artists and craftsmen is similar to what

---

269. ***Diet I,*** XXXVI.
270. ***Dreams,*** I.
271. i.e. fire.
272. ***Diet I,*** X.
273. See H. Diels, fragm. 50.
274. ***Diet I,*** XI.

takes place in the human body, visible or invisible. "They are copying the nature of man".[275] With this comparison between art and nature he comes to the conclusion that "all the arts have something in common with the nature of man".[276] But since human nature constitutes part of universal nature, it follows that the arts are imitations of nature. As we can gather also from other works in the Hippocratic Collection, the art which is taught through nature is the best guide to scientific research.

As for the prospects of the art, the first of the ***Aphorisms,*** which is considered to be the most famous of the genuine Hippocratic texts, has become proverbial: "Life is short and the art is long; the opportunity fleeting, experiment dangerous, and judgement difficult". This superb definition, though referring particularly to medicine, applies to every science and almost every art. In this aphorism, Hippocrates expresses his respect for the art (i.e. science), notes the vastness of scientific knowledge and emphasises man's duty to devote all his powers to his profession as an apprentice throughout his whole life.

The word **καιρός** carries a particular weight in the Hippocratic writings. It is the critical moment in time for the physician's opportune intervention.[277] More generally, it is the opportunity which is offered for immediate action and which, when lost, carries away with it the possibility of success. It is used in the same sense by the post-Hippocratic philosophers, particularly by Plato.[278]

Professor K. Despotopoulos writes: "Ever since then, the philosophical concept which was expressed by the term **καιρός** has involved something like a warning about the crucial importance of the various moments of time for the success or failure of people's actions, whatever their field: farming or sailing, medicine, politics or whatever else".[279]

The admission that **κρίσις,** that is, intelligent examination, diagnosis and decision for action, is difficult, shows how much prudence, according to Hippocrates, is needed in order to find the most suitable therapy or, more generally, the best solution. This scepticism about the adequacy of human judgement constitutes another indication of the modesty which springs from the sage's self-knowledge. Seldom have such wonderful truths been expressed in such a concise manner.

---

275. ***Diet I,*** XVI.
276. ***Diet I,*** XXIV.
277. Cf. ***Precepts,*** I.
278. See *The Republic* 370b, *Laws* 709b etc.
279. See K. Δεσποτοπούλου, *Ὁ Ἱπποκράτης καὶ ἡ Φιλοσοφία,* ἐπετηρὶς τοῦ Κέντρου Ἐρεύνης Ἑλληνικῆς Φιλοσοφίας, ΑΚΑΔΗΜΙΑ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ, 1985-86, p. 145..

Hippocrates, however, like a true philosopher, saw his art as a sacred mission. Comparing medicine with philosophy, he points out that all the elements of philosophy are to be found in medicine as well: disinterestedness, humility, modesty , reserve, sound opinion, judgement, quiet, tolerance, purity, authority, knowledge of what is good and necessary for life, dispensation of that which cleanses, freedom from superstition, divine excellence. Whatever the philosopher avoids should be avoided by the good physician as well: intemperance, vulgarity, greed, concupiscence, rapacity, shamelessness. [280]

This enumeration of virtues and the necessity for the coexistence of philosophy and medicine indicate the guidelines given by the Hippocratic School, as well as the experience of the ideal teacher and philosopher. For Hippocrates had all the characteristics of the intellectual who *lived* his science and his philosophy. That he is still recognised as the founder of medical science is not only due to the fact that he freed medicine from superstition and applied scientific methods in diagnosis and treatment, but also because he introduced philosophy into medical care and research, as Professor Spyros Marketos of the University of Athens rightly observes.[281]

There is no doubt that, along with medicine, Hippocrates also promoted philosophy. With the introduction of correct thinking into the problems of health, with the persistent investigation into the laws of the future, with the exploration of the living body through observation and experiment, with the treatment of man as a phychosomatic entity, with his struggle against superstition and dogmatism, in short, with his wise observations, Hippocrates provided the answers, through medicine, to many questions which philosophy had been trying to answer.

The Hippocratic method is based chiefly on physio-philosophical thought. The philosophical reasoning which governs scientific observation today was suggested by the great Coan sage. The medical philosopher Adamantios Coraës also regards Hippocrates as a philosopher, for he sees in all his writings a profound knowledge of man and of the world.

As a conclusion, here is the opinion of the great 19th century Hippocratic scholar, Emile Littré: "Hippocrates", he says ,"reflects towards the highest idea, the double capacity, for he is simultaneously a great philosopher and a most skilful physician. From everywhere in his writings there radiates a light; and one does not know what to admire more, the depth of his thought or the accuracy of his observations".

---

280. Cf. ***Decorum,*** V.

281. *Hellenic Medicine,* Athens 1991, p. 243.

# 23. HIPPOCRATIC ETHICS

Hippocrates' greatness lies not only in his remarkable medical discoveries and his wise observations but also in the harmonious combination of scientific knowledge and a rare medical ethos which he achieved. This wonderful combination of theory and life which is reflected in Hippocrates' writings marks him out as an unparalleled model of a scientist and a man. Aware of the important obligations which arise from the medical profession, he tried to inspire in his pupils strong moral principles which remain unchanged to the present day.

According to Hippocrates, scientific knowledge without moral foundations is not only useless; it can cause great harm. Art and ethics, joined harmoniously together, lead to perfection. Hippocratic medicine and Hippocratic ethics are two mutually-connected and inseparable elements. While studying Hippocrates' writings, one realises that he misses no opportunity to admonish, instruct and advise.

A doctor's first duty, according to Hippocrates, is to be observant of his obligations. The sense of responsibility is one of the most important characteristics of the personality of a true physician. Where the sense of duty is missing, there prevails self-interest, and a man becomes dangerous to his fellow-men. When this lack of conscientiousness accompanies a doctor, then the danger is much greater.

This is the reason why in the epilogue of the Oath Hippocrates includes a blessing and a curse concerning the fulfilment or not of the doctor's obligations. The swearer wishes to himself that he may enjoy the respect of his fellow-men and a good reputation for all time if he carries out his duties to the full and keeps his promises; and he invokes his own punishment if he breaks his promises and forswears himself. With the phrase μὴ ξυγχέοντι ("break it not") Hippocrates aims at preventing his pupils – and doctors, in general – from any violation or distortion of the moral and ethical code. Whoever violates the rules of the oath will be discredited among his fellow-men and will be regarded as a failure both in his life and in his art. It is worth noting that punishment for the violation of the oath is not left to the laws; loss of reputation is punishment enough. But an oath is sacred and inviolable, and he who breaks it brings down upon himself the punishment of the gods as well. Therefore, there is no other way for the physician except that of the faithful observance of the Oath, that is the fulfilment of duty.

One of Hippocrates' basic principles is benevolence or "philanthropy" (φιλανθρωπίη = love of man). In a society where the institution of slavery was recognized, the humane Hippocrates preached undivided attention to one's fellows. Dedicated as he was to helping the sick, "curing and saving man", as it

is aptly remarked, he was confident that only through love and sympathy towards his fellow-men could he fulfil his mission. Only a benevolent man can be an excellent doctor; for, according to Hippocrates, he whose soul is full of love tries to apply himself to his art in order to learn as much as possible, so that by perfecting himself he can offer a more positive service to the sufferer. "For where there is love of man, there is also love of the art", he says characteristically in his ***Precepts.***[282] " Benevolence is the chief motive of the Hippocratic physician's actions", says Deichgräber, one of the greatest Hippocratic scholars of our century.

Hippocrates' concern for man is so great that he often advises physicians to look after the healthy as well, so that they do not fall ill: "... to care for the healthy to keep them well".[283] It is from this idea that the famous Hippocratic maxim "prevention is better than cure" came, a maxim which even today constitutes the most fundamental principle of hygienists for the prevention of disease.

In giving advice on how to practise the profession, at the beginning of his treatise ***The Physician,*** Hippocrates says that a doctor should be " a gentleman in character, and being this he must be grave and kind to all".

In his Introduction to the Hippocratic treatise ***Airs Waters Places,*** the medical philosopher Adamantios Coraës says: "Hippocrates' writings prove that this benevolent man had no other purpose in life than that which all true lovers of virtue ought to have, namely to help their fellows".

Wishing to inspire his pupils with the fundamental principle of helping others, this great teacher repeatedly stresses in the ***Oath*** the phrase "to help the sick". In other works of the Hippocratic Collection, too, helping one's fellows is extolled as a primary obligation. One cannot help admiring the respect towards the human personality and the zeal for service as they are presented in the Hippocratic writings.

The wise precept "Help or at least do not harm" in ***Epidemics I*** springs from the profound humanism of the Father of Medicine and has been the great ideal of the Hippocratics and of all true scientists through the ages.

Recognizing Hippocrates' outstanding humanism, the Romans pointed out that he particularly prepared his pupils' souls in humanism.[284]

Closely connected with benevolence is disinterestedness. For Hippocrates, it would be unthinkable to consider the patient's wealth in offering his services.

---

282. (Ch. VI).
283. ***Precepts,*** VI.
284. Cf. Scribonius Largus, *Compositiones* s2, 29.

The physician who begins by discussing payment gives the impression that he will abandon the patient if no agreement is reached, or that he will not prescribe the appropriate treatment. This is why in ***Precepts***[285] he advises: "So one must not be anxious about fixing a fee". All talk about settling the doctor's fee is inopportune, especially in the case of an acute disease: "For the quickness of the disease, offering no opportunity for turning back, spurs on the good physician not to seek his profit but rather to lay hold on reputation".[286] The disinterestedness which characterizes all true philosophers should be the fundamental quality of every doctor as well, he writes in ***Decorum.***[287]

In Chapter VI of ***Precepts,*** Hippocrates urges physicians not to be unkind, but to fix their fees in proportion to their patient's financial means. To people of no means they are urged to give their services for nothing, "calling to mind a previous benefaction rather than present satisfaction". Hippocrates taught by example that the limit of wealth reaches "as far as not being hungry, thirsty or cold", as his greatest commentator, Galen, says.

Another example of his disinterestedness are the conditions he lays down in the Oath about teaching the art to the sons of his teacher "without fee or indenture".

**Justice** is a fundamental social virtue, which Hippocrates passionately taught and observed. He always had a strong sense of justice which expresses respect towards a man's dignity and gives to everyone what is due to them.

In a society of so much injustice and inequality, Hippocrates dared to declare that the physician, and any man for that matter, has a duty to offer his services to everyone without exception, be they rich or poor, friends or strangers.

In the most central article of the Oath, the young doctor promises that he will always be just and honest towards his fellow-men. In two other parts of the Oath, he emphasises that he will protect his patients from injustice and that he himself "will abstain from all intentional wrongdoing and harm".

Rightly, then, has it been said that "the concept of the just doctor in the Oath is the image of the Apollonian physician".[288] His reference to men and women, slaves and freemen alike, shows Hippocrates' belief in the idea of justice, his absolute respect towards man.

---

285. Chapter IV.
286. Ibid.
287. ***Decorum*** (ch. V).
288. Deichgräber, op. cit.

"Justice" is a term which Hippocrates is particularly fond of. He uses it many times in the sense of equality, normality, exactness, symmetry. "This is most comfortable with nature", he says in ***Fractures,*** I.

In ***The Physician,*** he says that the doctor must be fair in all his relations, for justice helps effectively in many cases: "In every social relation he will be fair, for fairness must be of great service". In general, Hippocrates' sense of justice is remarkable.

In an age when slaves were regarded as the property of their masters, Hippocrates' declarations of respect towards every human being without discrimination surpass the limits of his own times and approach the teachings of Christianity.

Aware of human passions and man's weakness in dealing with them, Hippocrates recommends self-control and continence. He who becomes a prey to his own passions ruins not only his health but his dignity as well.

"Food, drink, sleep, sexual activity, in moderation", Hippocrates advises.[289] He is much stricter towards his pupils, and to doctors in general, because he is fully aware of the temptations which they face every day in the exercise of their profession.

In the Hippocratic Oath the doctor promises that he will not take advantage of his freedom of entering other people's homes, and that he "will abstain from all intentional wrongdoing and harm, especially from abusing the bodies of man or woman, bond or free". This is one more principle which makes the Oath a milestone in the history of medical ethics.

In ***The Physician,*** Hippocrates stresses the importance of self-restraint and admonishes doctors to respect the dedication and trust which the patient and his family show towards him: "Patients in fact put themselves into the hands of their physician, and at every moment he meets women, maidens and possessions very precious indeed. So towards all these self-control must be practised." In spite of the fact that inter-sexual relations were not governed by very strict rules in those days, Hippocrates imposed a wise rule here as well, apparently in order to safeguard the sacredness of the art and the purity of the physician's life.

Hippocrates was deeply conscious of the imperfections of science, although he was "the first to bring out into the light the best of Greek medicine", as Galen rightly points out. This is why in his writings he always shows humility. "Since the art cannot admit of such nice exactness, it is difficult always to obtain perfect accuracy", he says in ***Ancient Medicine*** (XII). This is a

---

289. ***Epidemics VI***, b,2.

sensible view which is held even today by all great investigators and learned scientists, despite the remarkable progress of science.

A scientist should never forget that there is instability in knowledge, that much escapes one's notice, that "the opportunity is fleeting, experiment treacherous and judgement difficult", as Hippocrates quite shrewdly observes in the first Aphorism.

Knowing all these difficulties and the restricted nature of human intelligence, he recommends self-knowledge and modesty. He also knows the imperfections of his art, acknowledges that he is liable to error and does not boast about whatever successes he may have, but always behaves modestly towards his fellow-men. "For there is no test the application of which would give certainty".[290]

The same awareness of human weakness and of the limits of science is clearly shown in the Hippocratic Oath, where the physician repeatedly declares that his service will be proportionate to his ability.[291]

One is impressed by the way Hippocrates, an always moderate man, reacts when he manages to get *near* to the truth (for getting to the truth is impossible): The expression "This, or something very like this, is the truth", which is repeated in other works of the Hippocratic Collection, is a remarkable indication of self-knowledge, especially considering that it was said when science was in its infancy.[292]

The respect which Hippocrates shows for his predecessors is remarkable. He is as laudatory of the wonderful inventions of his predecessors as he is critical of the ostentatious (and generally ineffective) ways of treatment used by some of his contemporaries. Characteristic of this attitude is the way he praises those who have invented various instruments of reduction: "For the contrivance is an ancient one, and for my part I have great admiration for the man who first invented it, or thought out any other mechanism in accordance with nature.[293]

This attitude of Hippocrates is one more argument against those who accused him of having burned the books of previous physicians so that he could present as his own, as they said, what others had invented.

Hippocrates criticised those physicians who bragged about their knowledge while they lacked practical experience. "For mere opining brings, in medicine most particularly, blame upon those who hold opinions and ruin upon those who make use of them".

290. ***Ancient Medicine,*** I.
291. "according to my ability and judgement".
292. cf. ***The Sacred Disease,*** XI.
293. ***Joints,*** XL II.

"It is disgraceful in any art, especially in medicine, to make parade of much trouble, display, and talk, and then do no good", Hippocrates says in ***Joints,*** XLIV.

Arrogance usually breeds obstinacy and this in turn causes terrible mistakes. For this reason, Hippocrates advises physicians not to rely only on conclusions based on theory, but on those which are proved in practice. "For affirmation and talk are deceptive and treacherous".[294] The modest and sensible man, on the other hand, distinguishes between opinion and knowledge and follows the right path to truth.

The medical profession requires mutual respect and co-operation among colleagues. Particularly at medical councils, which were held then as they are now in order to deal with serious cases, respecting a colleague's point of view was absolutely necessary. Slander and malice should never enter a physician's mind; this would be disgraceful. Hippocrates puts it very accurately, "For I shall assert upon oath, a physician's reasoning should never be jealous of another. To be so will be a sign of weakness",[295] and adds that such behaviour is typical rather of those who have vulgar occupations.

Another quality which is indispensable to a physician is prudence. A good scientist is always moderate, modest, sensible and above all prudent when dealing with serious problems. Before he makes any predictions, the physician must weigh all the symptoms carefully and consider with prudence what he is about to say. Here Hippocrates is categorical: "I recommend that in making predictions ... you be cautious" and "I advise you to be as cautious as possible... in making predictions".[296] Prudence and sobriety are needed both in diagnosis and in treatment. The physician must look into each case thoroughly, considering how to give treatment, "not by daring but by judgement, not by violence but by gentleness".[297]

The prudent man must also be careful of certain moral considerations – "not only to be silent, but also of a great regularity of life, since thereby his reputation will be greatly enhanced".[298]

In his book entitled "The Moral Principles of Hippocrates" (Greek), Professor I. K. Lameras says: "Perhaps the most important quality of a doctor is tolerance, patience".[299] The doctor must listen patiently to what the patient has to

---

294. ***Precepts,*** II.
295. ***Precepts,*** VIII.
296. ***Prorrhetic,*** II, 2.
297. ***The Art,*** XI.
298. ***The Physician,*** I.
299. Ἰ.Κ. Λαμέρας, *Αἱ Ἠθικαὶ Ἀρχαὶ τοῦ Ἱπποκράτους*, Ἀθῆναι 1947, p.19.

say, often about incidents that are irrelevant to his illness, encourage him to give details, show sympathy and understanding, suggest what has to be done cheerfully and calmly, while at the same time boosting his morale: "Give necessary orders with cheerfulness and serenity, turning his attention away from what is being done to him; sometimes reprove sharply and emphatically, and sometimes comfort with solicitude and attention..."[300] A doctor is in absolute need of patience, for his work presents great difficulties, he undertakes great responsibilities and often faces criticism which hurts him most deeply. "... the medical man sees terrible sights, touches unpleasant things, and the misfortunes of others bring a harvest of sorrows that are peculiarly his".[301]

A doctor must always be affable, kind, gentle and pleasant. He may even tell a joke at the right moment so as to create a pleasant atmosphere. When visiting his patients he must be calm and gentle, not rough and hard, for this will make him repulsive. ".... the physician must have at his command a certain ready wit, as dourness is repulsive both to the healthy and to the sick".[302]

Similar suggestions are found in another work of the Hippocratic Collection, ***The Physician.*** A doctor can be thoughtful and serious without being harsh; for harshness is taken to mean arrogance and unkindness. On the other hand, "a man of uncontrolled laughter and excessive gaiety is considered vulgar".[303]

It is worth noting Hippocrates' advice concerning the physician's appearance. He must be clean in person and properly dressed: "... well dressed, and annointed with sweet-smelling unguents...", Hippocrates suggests in ***The Physician***; while in ***Precepts*** he advises doctors to avoid "luxurious headgear and elaborate perfume".

Ostentation and pretence have no place in the medical profession. "For excess of strangeness will win you ill-repute, but a little will be considered in good taste".[304] In another book, Hippocrates points out that the physician must take care of his appearance when visiting a patient, his manner of sitting next to the patient, the way he talks to him, the composure and self-control that he should display.

Promptness and diligence, according to Hippocrates, are fundamental characteristics of a good physician. A doctor's job is nearly always urgent, and no delay whatsoever is permitted, for it may prove fatal to his fellow-man. If

---

300. ***Decorum,*** XVI.
301. ***Breaths,*** I.
302. ***Decorum,*** VII.
303. ***The Physician,*** I.
304. ***Precepts,*** X.

other arts admit of no delay, this is more so with medicine, "where postponement puts a man's life in danger". It is, therefore, a doctor's duty to deal with urgent cases willingly and promptly, for even the slightest delay may cause a patient's condition to deteriorate.

Hippocrates advises physicians to visit their patients frequently, and take as much care of them as possible: "Make frequent visits; be especially careful in your examinations...".[305] Such careful attention was regarded as necessary for three reasons: (1) So that the doctor would be fully informed of the course of the disease; (2) so that the patient would be satisfied; and (3) so that the patient's trust in the doctor would be enhanced. A doctor's attention to his patients must be continuous, because they often ignore his instructions concerning diet or drugs, avoid disagreeable medicines and risk their lives. So it is necessary for him "to keep a watch also on the faults of the patients".[306]

A physician's primary obligation is discretion. In the treatise ***The Physician,*** τό σιγᾶν (being silent) is considered to be the most important quality of a prudent man. Due to the nature of his calling, the physician knows a lot about the patient and his family – political, social and other matters – which should not be divulged. He must, therefore, be reticent about them and not spread any information which may harm his fellow-men. What the physician has to guard most carefully, however, are the patient's secrets: "... I will never divulge, holding such things to be holy secrets", the Hippocratic Oath expressly says. Knowing how important secrecy is in matters of health and how difficult it is for anyone to keep a secret, Hippocrates used the Oath to establish professional secrecy, which applies even today and is observed by the majority of physicians all over the world. The patient tells his doctor whatever has a bearing on his illness, confides his secrets to him and often depends on his discretion. The doctor sees, hears and learns about the patient and his family things which are not supposed to be publicised outside the home. He is, therefore, expected to keep them secret, no matter how hard he may be pressed to divulge them. In the medical profession secrecy is of particular importance and must on no account be violated.[307]

It is a physician's duty to improve himself all the time through study, observation and meditation, because: (a) the study of medicine requires a long time ("It is not possible to learn medicine quickly"), (b) everything changes and

---

305. ***Decorum*** XIII.
306. ***Decorum,*** XIV.
307. See below, *Analysis of the Oath,* Article 8.

develops ("medicine brooks no delay"), (c) it is difficult to achieve perfection at all times, (d) only if he keeps educating himself can he be useful.

A prerequisite for the exercise of any trade is knowledge. This is the reason why Hippocrates emphasises that "he who knows has right understanding always, he who knows not, sometimes right, sometimes wrong".[308]

Ignorant physicians are harmful and blameworthy, for they lower the prestige of the profession and inspire doubts in people's minds about the usefulness of medicine. This is emphasised by Hippocrates, particularly in ***Law***: "Medicine is the most distinguished of all the arts, but through the ignorance of those who practise it, and of those who casually judge such practitioners, it is now of all the arts by far the least esteemed". A sensible physician will advance steadily towards improving his art and achieve perfection if he has knowledge and ability and continues his research, beginning with what has already been discovered:"... if the inquirer be competent, conduct his researches with knowledge of the discoveries already made, and make them his starting-point".[309]

He who improves himself all the time can entertain hopes for the future. According to Hippocrates, a physician must believe in his calling and be confident about the service he offers through his art. He should not become disappointed through some failure, since "perfectly exact truth is but rarely to be seen".[310] On the contrary, he should look forward with confidence to the improvement of curing methods and the continuous development of science. According to Hippocrates, "understanding can be commanded, and of itself represents good luck, whenever the person who has knowledge employs it".[311] This is another prediction made by Hippocrates which has been proved to be correct through the amazing progress of science and technology. If the old Coan sage were alive today, he would not add to this message but his favourite word "correctly" at the end of it. For what man really needs today is the correct use of scientific achievements, the exploitation of technological discoveries for the good of all humanity.

These are the most important moral principles of Hippocrates – principles which raised many generations of physicians and made them models of honesty and humanity. Hippocrates' precepts are still considered today the corner-stone of medical ethics.

---

308. ***Diet I***, XII.
309. ***Ancient Medicine***, II.
310. ***Ancient Medicine***, IX.
311. ***Places in Man***, 46.

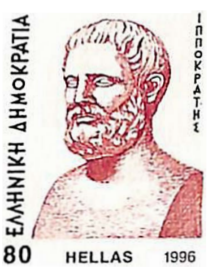
His admonitions, precepts and counsels show that Hippocrates was an excellent moral teacher, a brilliant instructor, a "teacher of the good things", as he is described by the distinguished physician of antiquity, Galen.

Although his moral precepts are addressed to physicians, to a great extent they apply to most occupations. Hippocrates' admonitions have a universal appeal and permanent value; they are eternal and imperishable.

In our days, when moral values are being devalued and man's existence is in greater danger than ever before, prominent scientists are beginning to realise that technological knowledge can become fatal for humanity if it is not accompanied by moral principles like those of Hippocrates.

The Hippocratic Oath's "I will keep pure and holy both my life and my art" must become everybody's motto and be applied, without any deviation, by both rulers and ruled.

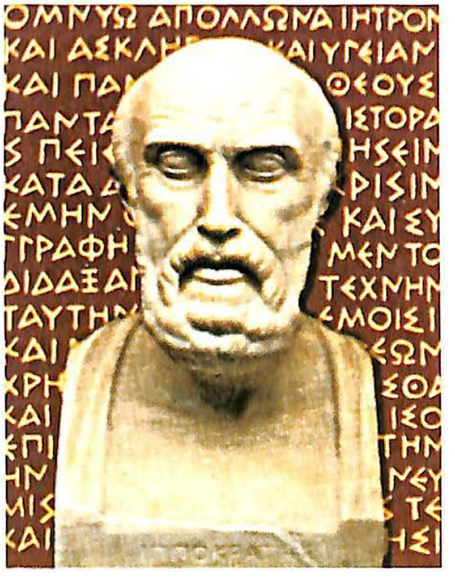
Projecting Hippocrates' multi-dimensional figure, Adamantios Coraës recognised in his person "a model for the moral regeneration of Greek society". Hippocrates is still today a model for the moral reform of society as a whole.






## PART TWO

# THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH



## Ο ΟΡΚΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΙΠΠΟΚΡΑΤΟΥΣ



ΜΝΥΜΙ ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΑ ΙΗΤΡΟΝ, ΚΑΙ ΑΣΚΛΗΠΙΟΝ, ΚΑΙ ΥΓΕΙΑΝ, ΚΑΙ ΠΑΝΑΚΕΙΑΝ, ΚΑΙ ΘΕΟΥΣ ΠΑΝΤΑΣ ΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΠΑΣΑΣ, ΙΣΤΟΡΑΣ ΠΟΙΕΥΜΕΝΟΣ, ΕΠΙΤΕΛΕΑ ΠΟΙΗΣΕΙΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΔΥΝΑΜΙΝ ΚΑΙ ΚΡΙΣΙΝ ΕΜΗΝ ΟΡΚΟΝ ΤΟΝΔΕ ΚΑΙ ΞΥΓΓΡΑΦΗΝ ΤΗΝΔΕ· ΗΓΗΣΑΣΘΑΙ ΜΕΝ ΤΟΝ ΔΙΔΑΞΑΝΤΑ ΜΕ ΤΗΝ ΤΕΧΝΗΝ ΤΑΥΤΗΝ ΙΣΑ ΓΕΝΕΤΗΣΙΝ ΕΜΟΙΣΙ, ΚΑΙ ΒΙΟΥ ΚΟΙΝΩΣΑΣΘΑΙ, ΚΑΙ ΧΡΕΩΝ ΧΡΗΪΖΟΝΤΙ ΜΕΤΑΔΟΣΙΝ ΠΟΙΗΣΑΣΘΑΙ, ΚΑΙ ΓΕΝΟΣ ΤΟ ΕΞ ΩΥΤΕΟΥ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΙΣ ΙΣΟΝ ΕΠΙΚΡΙΝΕΙΝ ΑΡΡΕΣΙ, ΚΑΙ ΔΙΔΑΞΕΙΝ ΤΗΝ ΤΕΧΝΗΝ ΤΑΥΤΗΝ, ΗΝ ΧΡΗΪΖΩΣΙ ΜΑΝΘΑΝΕΙΝ, ΑΝΕΥ ΜΙΣΘΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΞΥΓΓΡΑΦΗΣ, ΠΑΡΑΓΓΕΛΙΗΣ ΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΑΚΡΟΗΣΙΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΣ ΛΟΙΠΗΣ ΑΠΑΣΗΣ ΜΑΘΗΣΙΟΣ ΜΕΤΑΔΟΣΙΝ ΠΟΙΗΣΑΣΘΑΙ ΥΙΟΙΣΙ ΤΕ ΕΜΟΙΣΙ, ΚΑΙ ΤΟΙΣΙ ΤΟΥ ΕΜΕ ΔΙΔΑΞΑΝΤΟΣ, ΚΑΙ ΜΑΘΗΤΑΙΣΙ ΣΥΓΓΕΓΡΑΜΜΕΝΟΙΣΙ ΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΩΡΚΙΣΜΕΝΟΙΣ ΝΟΜΩΙ ΙΗΤΡΙΚΩΙ, ΑΛΛΩΙ ΔΕ ΟΥΔΕΝΙ. ΔΙΑΙΤΗΜΑΣΙ ΤΕ ΧΡΗΣΟΜΑΙ ΕΠ' ΩΦΕΛΕΙΗ, ΚΑΜΝΟΝΤΩΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΔΥΝΑΜΙΝ ΚΑΙ ΚΡΙΣΙΝ ΕΜΗΝ, ΕΠΙ ΔΗΛΗΣΕΙ ΔΕ ΚΑΙ ΑΔΙΚΙΗ, ΕΙΡΞΕΙΝ. ΟΥ ΔΩΣΩ ΔΕ ΟΥΔΕ ΦΑΡΜΑΚΟΝ ΟΥΔΕΝΙ ΑΙΤΗΘΕΙΣ ΘΑΝΑΣΙΜΟΝ, ΟΥΔΕΥ ΦΗΓΗΣΟΜΑΙ ΞΥΜΒΟΥΛΙΗΝ ΤΟΙΗΝΔΕ· ΟΜΟΙΩΣ ΔΕ ΟΥΔΕ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΙ ΠΕΣΣΟΝ ΦΘΟΡΙΟΝ ΔΩΣΩ. ΔΙΝΩΣ ΔΕ ΚΑΙ ΟΣΙΩΣ ΔΙΑΤΗΡΗΣΩ ΒΙΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΕΜΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΤΕΧΝΗΝ ΤΗΝ ΕΜΗΝ. ΟΥ ΤΕΜΕΩ ΔΕ ΟΥΔΕ ΜΗΝ ΛΙΘΙΩΝΤΑΣ, ΕΚΧΩΡΗΣΩ ΔΕ ΕΡΓΑΤΗΣΙΝ ΑΝΔΡΑΣΙ ΠΡΗΞΙΟΣ ΤΗΣΔΕ. ΕΣ ΟΙΚΙΑΣ ΔΕ ΟΚΟΣΑΣ·ΑΝ ΕΣΙΩ, ΕΣΕΛΕΥΣΟΜΑΙ ΕΠ' ΩΦΕΛΕΙΗ, ΚΑΜΝΟΝΤΩΝ, ΕΚΤΟΣ ΕΩΝ ΠΑΣΗΣ ΑΔΙΚΙΗΣ ΕΚΟΥΣΙΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΦΘΟΡΙΗΣ, ΤΗΣ ΤΕ ΑΛΛΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΦΡΟΔΙΣΙΩΝ ΕΡΓΩΝ ΕΠΙ ΤΕ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΕΙΩΝ ΣΩΜΑΤΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΔΡΩΙΩΝ, ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΩΝ ΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΔΟΥΛΩΝ. Α Δ' ΑΝ ΕΝ ΘΕΡΑΠΕΙΗ, Η ΙΔΩ, Η ΑΚΟΥΣΩ, Η ΚΑΙ ΑΝΕΥ ΘΕΡΑΠΗΙΗΣ ΚΑΤΑ ΒΙΟΝ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΩΝ, Α ΜΗ ΧΡΗ ΠΟΤΕ ΕΚΛΑΛΕΕΣΘΑΙ ΕΞΩ, ΣΙΓΗΣΟΜΑΙ, ΑΡΡΗΤΑ ΗΓΕΥΜΕΝΟΣ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΤΑ ΤΟΙΑΥΤΑ. ΟΡΚΟΝ ΜΕΝ ΟΥΝ ΜΟΙ ΤΟΝΔΕ ΕΠΙΤΕΛΕΑ ΠΟΙΕΟΝΤΙ, ΚΑΙ ΜΗ ΞΥΓΧΕΟΝΤΙ, ΕΙΗ ΕΠΑΥΡΑΣΘΑΙ ΚΑΙ ΒΙΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΤΕΧΝΗΣ ΔΟΞΑΖΟΜΕΝΩΙ, ΠΑΡΑ ΠΑΣΙΝ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΙΣ ΕΣ ΤΟΝ ΑΙΕΙ ΧΡΟΝΟΝ· ΠΑΡΑΒΑΙΝΟΝΤΙ ΔΕ ΚΑΙ ΕΠΙΟΡΚΟΥΝΤΙ, ΤΑΝΑΝΤΙΑ ΤΟΥΤΕΩΝ.




# I. GENERAL REMARKS

Since very ancient times, people have felt it necessary to verify the truth of their words or the fulfilment of a promise by an oath. When they began to form a clearer concept of God as the guardian of moral order in the world, they placed the oath under His protection and invoked His witness every time they had to take an oath. St Paul observes, quite appropriately, that "men swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument".[312]

An oath is chiefly the invocation of God's witness or the witness of a saint about the truth of our words or the sincerity of our promises. Thus, we have two kinds of oath: The confirmatory oath, where the swearer invokes God as a witness of the truth of what he says; and the promissory oath, by which the swearer invokes God as a guarantor of the sincerity of what he promises. He who breaks a confirmatory oath is called a perjurer (ψεύδορκος), while he who breaks a promissory oath is called a false swearer (ἐπίορκος).

The oath has always been considered sacred and inviolable, and its connection with religion has contributed to its occupying a prominent position in social life.

In the Old Testament the oath is considered absolutely necessary[313] and is quite common in everyday life, while false swearing is severely punished.[314] Christian teaching regards the oath as incompatible with Christian life and commands the faithful not to swear at all.[315]

There has been a lot of debate since early times concerning the necessity or otherwise of oaths and people's lack of faith. However, human societies as a rule regard the oath as indispensable, either for the confirmation of truth at court hearings or for the observation of professional duty, or again for the safeguarding of precious possessions. Thus, state legislations, despite possible breaches by the unscrupulous, continue to impose formal oaths, like that of the soldier, the public servant, the judge, the professional etc.

The ancient Greeks believed that Oath was the son of Eris (Strife, Discord), a claimant to justice, and put him under the supervision of the powerful deities, particularly Zeus who was often called Ὅρκιος (of the oath) and Πίστιος (of faith; Lat. Fidius).[316] He was the personification of the power of bonds, the

312. Hebrews 6:16
313. See Exodus 22:11; Numbers 5:21 etc.
314. See Ezekiel 17:16; Zechariah 5:4.
315. See Matthew 5:34.
316. See Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 274.

barrier against violence; for the word ὅρκος (oath) is etymologically related to the word ἕρκος (barrier). Its violation incurred punishment from the gods.

The development of philosophy and science in ancient Greece contributed to the oath becoming one of the foundations on which moral principles and scientific inquiry were based. As early as the 6th century B.C., a sacred oath was taken by the Pythagoreans who led a most austere moral life and maintained in strict secrecy everything they heard and learnt at their School. An oath was also taken later by the Asclepiads of Cos and Cnidos at the temple of Delphi, where certain religious privileges were shared by those who were genuine descendants of Asclepius through the male line.

However, the oath which more than any other has influenced scientific ethics was the Oath of Hippocrates, as it radiates absolute respect for man and disinterested love a science.

The Hippocratic Oath concerns not only doctors but all scientists and professional people who believe in humanism and regard their profession as a sacred mission in society. Within the space of just one page, one can find eternal truths, enduring principles, imperishable precepts, and admonitions which are eternally valid.

## II. MANUSCRIPTS AND EARLY EDITIONS

According to the current view, the Hippocratic writings were collected together in the 3rd century B.C. and were for the first time connected with the name of Hippocrates at the Library of Alexandria in Egypt. The books of the Hippocratic Collection, or ***Corpus Hippocraticum,*** like all ancient literature, were distributed through copying which was not always accurate. As often happens, a number of scribes or copyists made certain corrections or added comments above difficult words which were later incorporated into the text. This is precisely why the effort of grammarians and critics to restore ancient texts is extremely important.

As far as the ***Hippocratic Oath*** is concerned, from Erotian's time (1st century A.D.) until the first edition came out, many scholars, among them Scribonius Largus, St Gregory of Nazianzus, St. Jerome, Cassiodorus, the Venerable Basil the Younger, Libanius, Hunain Ibn Ishaq, Avenzoar and others, wrote commentaries on or made references to it.

The text of the Oath, like other Hippocratic texts, was preserved in several codices. These are not, of course, the original manuscripts, but later ones. Among these handwritten codices which contain the ***Oath*** are: The *Marcianus* 269 (11th century) which is kept in Venice, the *Vaticanus* 276 (12th century) and 277 (14th century), the *Parisinus* 2141 (13th century) and 2143 (14th century), the *Ambrosianus* B 113 (14th century) which is kept in Milan, the *Laurentianus*, Plut. 74 (15th century) and Plut. 74,3 (12th century) which are kept in Florence. Manuscripts of the ***Hippocratic Oath*** dating from the 15th century are also found in Rome (Palat. 192), Vienna (Vid. von phil. 219), London (Arundel 538, British Museum), El Escorial (Scorial Σ II, 5), Bologna (Bonon. 3632), Modena (Mutinens. 61), Oxford (Baroccian. 204) and elsewhere. The ***Oath*** is also found in a 16th-century codex kept at the library of the Monastery of Ibera on Mount Athos (No 4302).

With the invention of the printing press and the interest shown in classical learning during the Renaissance, the ***Oath*** was edited several times, especially in Latin. After the publication of the ***Oath*** together with other works by A. Brentius (Rome 1483), Fabius Calvus was the first to publish the complete Works of Hippocrates in Latin (Rome 1525).

The ***Hippocratic Oath*** was also published individually several times during the 16th and 17th centuries. Among these editions are those of Nic. Peroto (Paris 1514), Al. Benedetti (Strasbourg 1528), Alb. Torinus (Bale 1536), Linacre-Sinkeler (Bale 1538), J. Canape (Lyon 1552), P. Blondel (Paris 1575), Pierre Memmius (Rostock 1577), I. Fabricius (Rostock 1614), Fr. Ranchinus (Montpellier 1618), Fr. de Franciscus (Geneve 1618), Mich. Lelong (Paris 1637, in verse), I. H. Meibonius (Lugduni 1643) and others.[317]

From the 19th century onwards the Oath began to be translated into different modern languages, such as French by Littré (1839-61), German by Von Ruder (1864), English by P. Smith (1892) etc., which contributed to its being more widely spread and appreciated.

317. See Χαραλ. Κιάρη, *Η Ιστορία των Βιβλίων της Ιπποκρατικής Συλλογής, οι Εκδόσεις μέχρι το 1839*, ΚΩΑΚΑ, τόμος 5ος 1995.

# III. TIME OF COMPOSITION

There have been various theories concerning the time at which the Oath was composed and the circumstances which contributed to its composition.

Classifying the Oath among the genuine Hippocratic works, Littré has argued that its composition dates from the end of the 5th century B.C., when Plato was a young man. Daremberg expressed almost the same view in 1855.

Th. Meyer-Steineg and G. Schonak (1913) believed that the Oath was written at a period before Hippocrates' time. Some say that it was composed during the Alexandrian period. Sing even attributes it to the time of Julius Caesar. Others, like Creutz (1948) and Kolditz (1978), regard it as a work of archaic times.

However, people who have studied the Oath systematically and in depth place it between the 5th and 4th centuries B.C. The first thing they detected was the influence of democratic ideals and Apollonian ethics in the Oath. Its adherence to the ideals of justice and moderation, a characteristic feature of the Greeks at the time of Hippocrates'prominence, has led Deichgräber to the conclusion that the text of the Oath belongs to the end of the 5th century B.C.

Edelstein (1943) laid more emphasis on the influences of Pythagorean teaching and argued that the Oath was given its final form during the second half of the 4th century B.C. by a Pythagorean physician. Diller (1978) dated the Oath at the beginning of the 4th century B.C. and attributed it to the School of Cos.

The *linguistic* approach is usually more positive. Deichgräber has pointed out that the word *διαίτημα* (= treatment) in the 3rd Article of the Oath is usually found in the Hippocratic works which were written after 410 B.C. The word ξυγγραφή with the meaning of indenture or contract is found in the Oath for the first time, as are the words μετάδοσις (= imparting), παραγγελίη (= written instruction) and ἀκρόησις (= oral instruction). The word κρίσις, in the sense of judgement, in which sense it is also found in Sophocles and Herodotus, is regarded by certain scholars as a significant piece of evidence for dating the Oath to the 5th century B.C.

F. Heinemannn's observations on the term *διαιτήματα* (= treatment) are very important. Having studied the subject of diet in ancient times quite systematically, he showed that the correct regimen was an achievement of the last years of the 5th century B.C.; he even showed the order – diet, medication, surgery –, which is the same as that of the Oath. (1945, 1965).

Some scholars discern in the Oath both old and new elements, organized in a unique text. Some of these elements must have been taken from the patriarchal traditions of the Asclepiads. Other elements were probably derived from the scientific and professional relationships as they were developed under the influence of the sophists at the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 4th century B.C.

Lichtenthaeler discerns the influence of the sophist Gorgias on the language and style of the Oath. As for its content, he correlates the idea of equality between freemen and slaves reflected in the 7th Article of the Oath with the maxim "God granted everyone freedom, and Nature has not made anyone a slave" of Alcidamas, who was Gorgias' pupil and Hippocrates' fellow-pupil. This is why he expresses the view that the Oath must have been written in the years in which Gorgias' first pupils were in their prime, that is between 420 and 400 B.C. If Aristophanes in his *Thesmophoriazusae* l. 273 has in mind Hippocrates of Cos, then we have a fixed date, 411 B.C., **a terminus ante quem,** for the correct dating of the composition of the Oath.[318]

Carratelli, too, believes that the Oath was written before the City of Cos was founded (366 B.C.), taking into account the fact that in the Oath the first god to be invoked is Apollo, who after the founding of Cos gave his place of honour to his son Asclepius.[319]

Furthermore, the extension of the teaching of medicine beyond the closed circle of the Asclepiads shows that medicine was already beginning to become popular towards the end of the 5th century, and in this Hippocrates' contribution was very significant. According to Jouanna, the Oath is directly related to the revolution which consisted in the expansion of the Medical School beyond its original limits as a family concern.[320]

Thus, we can assume that this text was composed by a strictly moral and democratic person in an age of liberal ideas, when a lot of young men outside the elite circle of the medical class had begun to seek medical training. Naturally, the need was then more keenly felt for these external students to be bound by oath, which would safeguard the medical tradition and the proper exercise of the art.

From the foregoing assumptions, it follows that the Oath must have been written in the last quarter of the 5th century B.C., within the framework of the Medical School of Cos, when it had been expanded and organized by Hippocrates.

---

318. See Ch. Lichtenthaeler, *Der Eid des Hippokrates*, 1984 p. 273.
319. See G. P. Carratelli, op. cit., p.90.
320. J. Jouanna, *Hippocrate*, 1992, p. 73.

# IV. TIME OF OATH-TAKING

The question of when the young physicians took the Oath in ancient times has exercised scholars for a long time. In the past, some people believed that the Oath was taken by young men at the end of their studies, just as it was done later, in the Middle Ages, by the students of all medical faculties in Europe. Others compared the Hippocratic Oath with the oaths of medical guilds, which was also taken at the end of a course of training.

Some commentators however, do not accept this comparison because, as they say, the Hippocratic Oath did not concern a certain guild, but a family. Others have pointed out that the agreement referred to in the second paragraph of the Oath was signed by an apprentice at the beginning of his studies; and that the participle *διδάξαντα* ( teacher) referred to his future teacher, the man who would teach the student the art of medicine.[321]

Deichgräber has argued that the medical student who did not belong to the family of the Asclepiads took at least part of the oath at the beginning of the course. He has pointed out that the first part of the Hippocratic Oath, which contains the Contract, is very different from the second part, which enumerates the physician's duties.[322]

Of course, we have no information from ancient sources about the exact time of oath-taking. There is only a later reference, that of St Jerome in the 4th century A.D., according to which Hippocrates swore in his students before he began to teach them: "Hippocrates adjurat discipulos, antequam doceat".[323]

Lichtenthaeler believes that the promises made by the swearer, that he will take care of his teacher and that he will teach his teacher's children, make sense only at the beginning of a course of training. He says, in fact, that if the students took the oath at the end of their studies, they could easily disappear just before the end, so as not to undertake this responsibility.[324]

From the word ὁρκισμένους (= sworn-in) and the rest of the context, it seems to follow that the young man who takes the Oath undertakes to teach students who will have taken the Oath at the beginning of their training. However, the articles that follow have more to do with graduates of the School who are ready

---

321. Daremberg; Jones.
322. See K. Deichgräber, *Die ärztliche Standesethic des Hippokratischen Eides* (1993), ANTIKE MEDIZIN, 1971, pp. 100 ff.
323. See Letter 52, XXII, 539 Migne.
324. See Ch. Lichtenthaeler, op. cit, pp. 265 ff.

to practise medicine. This is why some scholars believe that the various parts of the Oath were put together into one single text at a later time. There is a third view, which seems more correct, that the students took an oath twice: The first part of the Oath, consisting of the first two clauses or articles was taken at the beginning, when the student enrolled (Contract-Adoption); the second part of the Oath (the physician's duties), or perhaps the whole of the Oath, was taken at the completion of the course of study, that is, when the young physician was about to begin his medical practice.

We can imagine the swearer standing before the altar dedicated to the gods mentioned by name in the oath, or in front of an altar dedicated to all the gods, raising his arms towards the heavens, in a serious attitude, and reciting his oath during a solemn ceremony.

## V. STRUCTURE, LANGUAGE AND STYLE

In language and form, the oath is a perfect piece of writing and is regarded as a masterpiece of ancient literature.

Its structure is circular. It begins and ends with the same air of sacred awe. We have an invocation of the gods at the beginning and a prayer to the gods at the end, while the centre of the circle is occupied by the most condensed part, the promise in the 5th clause: "... I will keep pure and holy both my life and my art", with the most central and most expressive verb διατηρήσω (= I will keep).

The style of the Oath is rich and majestic, befitting its noble content. It is impossible to separate form from content. "Virtue and beauty become one," says Lichtenthaeler.

The dialect of the Oath, like that of the rest of the Hippocratic Collection, is the Ionic. This is the late Ionic dialect, in which Hippocrates' near-contemporary, Herodotus of Halicarnassus, wrote his *History*. Despite being a Dorian, Hippocrates chose to write in the Ionic dialect, which was, after all, more refined than Doric. According to Aelianus, Hippocrates wrote in Ionic "for Democritus' sake".[325]

The text of the Oath, like the rest of the Hippocratic writings, contains a few Attic forms as well. For there was a tendency from the end of the 5th

325. Aelianus, *Varia Historia*, β' δ. 20.

century B.C. onwards to replace certain dialectal forms with their Attic equivalents. Thus in the dative plural of second declension nouns and adjectives the ending -οις is preferred to -οισι (ἀνθρώποις instead of ἀνθρώποισι), while in the manuscripts we sometimes come across εἰς and sometimes ἐς, sometimes contracted types and sometimes uncontracted ones.

In brevity and compactness of meaning, the language of Hippocrates resembles that of Thucydides. Like a true Dorian, Hippocrates expresses his ideas concisely and clearly. In the Oath one can discern a directness of thought, positiveness of commitment and nobleness of sentiment.

The ways in which the writer of the Oath emphasises certain things are characteristic:

In about half of the clauses (1,2,7,8) there is a repetition of structures: With the series of infinitives (***to hold, to make, to share, to consider, to teach***) in the 2nd clause, attention is drawn to the duties of the pupil to his teacher and to the art. The pairs ***wrongdoing and harm, man and woman, bond or free*** in the 7th clause emphasise the absolute justice and self-restraint of the Hippocratic physician.

It is worth noting the pairs of synonyms, such as ***pure and holy, injury and wrongdoing, transgress and forswear*** and other similar expressions with which ideas of particular importance are stressed.

With parallel figures, such as ***carry out and break ....***not and ***I will not use ... I will give place,*** certain thoughts are expressed both positively and negatively.

The so-called equal-membered figures or *ἰσόκωλα* stand out in Clauses 3 and 6. We can see six words in the first part of each clause and six in the second. This equal number of words seems to correspond to the equality in number of the duties and services which the swearer undertakes.

The repetition of certain phrases, such as ***according to my ability and judgement*** and ***to help the sick,*** with which it emphasises the human limitations and the idea of service to the sufferer respectively, is another characteristic feature of the Oath. Words of particular significance, like βίος (= life) and τέχνη (= art), appear four times in the Oath. The author uses the verb ποιέω (= do/make) five times in various forms, probably in order to emphasise that the swearer commits himself to an endless effort.

Chiasmus or inversion is used in the 3rd and 7th clauses, while Clause 4 begins and ends with the words οὐ δώσω (= I will not give), thus forming a circle.

It is worth noting the poetical words in the text, such as ἵστωρ (= witness), γενέτης (= parent), ἁγνῶς (in purity), ὁσίως (= in holiness), ἄρρητα

(= holy secrets), as well as the rare words φθορίη (= harm) and δήλησις (= injury).

The word ἄρρητα[326] is used metaphorically, being connected with the Greek mysteries, while the verb ἐκλαλέεσθαι (= be published) is onomatopoeic, a sound word.

The style of the Hippocratic Oath is clear, serious and epigrammatic, without verbosity. It is characterised by sincerity, naturalness and courtesy. The poetical words and expressions add to the style an air of venerableness and magnificence. Rhetorical figures are incorporated into the text with great skill and without pretence. Lichtenthaeler discerns in the style of the Oath the influence of the rhetoric of the sophists which was then in its prime – suggesting, in fact, that some of the figures in the Oath were used in imitation of Gorgias. Yet, the rhetorical figures used by the author of the Oath are not used as an artificial decoration, nor do they aim at causing admiration, like the pompous style of the sophists.

The tone of the Oath is sublime and solemn. Some scholars discern in the text of the Oath an expressional harmony, a musicality. Words stressed on the same syllable, like μετάδοσιν ποιήσεσθαι, βίος-τέχνη, ἀδικίη-φθορίη, create a parallel rhythm, a musical harmony.[327]

On the whole, the Hippocratic Oath is an excellent literary text, which skilfully combines a masterly form with a noble content.

# VI. LAYOUT AND CONTENT

The ***Oath*** is the shortest but also the best-known treatise in the Hippocratic Collection, and thousands of pages have been written on it up to the present moment.

This concise treatise reflects the missionary spirit of a school which nurtured science; it stresses the important duties of the physician and promotes the fundamental principles of professional ethos.

It is a promissory oath and can be divided into four parts: (a) The Invocation; (b) Duties towards the profession; (c) Duties towards the patient; (d) The Vow.

---

326. See above.

327. See Lichtenthaeler, op. cit., pp. 241 ff.

INTERNATIONAL HIPPOKRATOUS FOUNDATION of KOS
1960

(a) In the first part, the swearer invokes the gods to witness that he will keep his oath.

(b) In the second part, he states the obligations which he undertakes towards the profession within the medical family: He promises to honour his teacher like his own parents, and to regard his teacher's sons as his own brothers. He swears that he will teach the art of medicine to his sons and to his teacher's sons without fee, as well as to those students who have the inclination to learn and are willing to be bound by the physician's oath.

(c) In the third part, he enumerates the physician's duties towards his patients. The newly-initiated promises that he will aim only at helping his patients, that he will never administer a deadly drug to anyone, that he will not help a woman to have an abortion, but that he will keep pure both his life and his art. He goes on to declare that he will respect the patient's home, that he will abstain from all injustice and all abuse of the patient's body, and that he will keep any secrets that he may come across in the course of a treatment or in his daily associations.

(d) In the last part of the Oath, he wishes that, as long as he keeps his oath, he may enjoy the respect of his fellow-men; but that if he violates it, he may suffer the contrary.

In the analysis, each paragraph of the Oath is commented upon separately. After all, each paragraph contains its own message.



Medical graduates taking the Hippocratic Oath at the Asclepeion of Cos, led by Minas Hatziantoniou (1st International Medical Olympiad, 31st August 1996).

# VII. THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH

# THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH

## TEXT

1. Ὄμνυμι Ἀπόλλωνα ἰητρὸν καὶ Ἀσκληπιὸν καὶ Ὑγείαν καὶ Πανάκειαν καὶ θεοὺς πάντας τε καὶ πάσας, ἵστορας ποιεύμενος, ἐπιτελέα ποιήσειν κατὰ δύναμιν καὶ κρίσιν ἐμὴν ὅρκον τόνδε καὶ ξυγγραφὴν τήνδε.

2. Ἡγήσεσθαι μὲν τὸν διδάξαντά με τὴν τέχνην ταύτην ἴσα γενέτῃσιν ἐμοῖσι, καὶ βίου κοινώσεσθαι, καὶ χρεῶν χρηίζοντι μετάδοσιν ποιήσεσθαι, καὶ γένος τὸ ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἀδελφεοῖς ἴσον ἐπικρινέειν ἄρρεσι, καὶ διδάξειν τὴν τέχνην ταύτην, ἢν χρηίζωσι μανθάνειν, ἄνευ μισθοῦ καὶ ξυγγραφῆς, παραγγελίης τε καὶ ἀκροήσιος καὶ τῆς λοιπῆς ἁπάσης μαθήσιος μετάδοσιν ποιήσεσθαι υἱοῖσί τε ἐμοῖσι καὶ τοῖσι τοῦ ἐμὲ διδάξαντος καὶ μαθηταῖσι συγγεγραμμένοις τε καὶ ὡρκισμένοις νόμῳ ἰητρικῷ, ἄλλῳ δὲ οὐδενί..

3. Διαιτήμασί τε χρήσομαι ἐπ᾽ ὠφελείῃ καμνόντων κατὰ δύναμιν καὶ κρίσιν ἐμήν, ἐπὶ δηλήσει δὲ καὶ ἀδικίῃ εἴρξειν.

4. Οὐ δώσω δὲ οὐδὲ φάρμακον οὐδενὶ αἰτηθεὶς θανάσιμον, οὐδὲ ὑφηγήσομαι ξυμβουλίην τοιήνδε· ὁμοίως δὲ οὐδὲ γυναικὶ πεσσὸν φθόριον δώσω.

5. Ἁγνῶς δὲ καὶ ὁσίως διατηρήσω βίον τὸν ἐμὸν καὶ τέχνην τὴν ἐμήν.

6. Οὐ τεμέω δὲ οὐδὲ μὴν λιθιῶντας, ἐκχωρήσω δὲ ἐργάτῃσιν ἀνδράσι πρήξιος τῆσδε.

7. Ἐς οἰκίας δὲ ὁκόσας ἂν ἐσίω, ἐσελεύσομαι ἐπ᾽ ὠφελείῃ καμνόντων, ἐκτὸς ἐὼν πάσης ἀδικίης ἑκουσίης καὶ φθορίης τῆς τε ἄλλης καὶ ἀφροδισίων ἔργων ἐπί τε γυναικείων σωμάτων καὶ ἀνδρείων, ἐλευθέρων τε καὶ δούλων.

8. Ἃ δ᾽ ἂν ἐν θεραπείῃ ἢ ἴδω ἢ ἀκούσω, ἢ καὶ ἄνευ θεραπείης κατὰ βίον ἀνθρώπων, ἃ μὴ χρή ποτε ἐκλαλέεσθαι ἔξω, σιγήσομαι, ἄρρητα ἡγεύμενος εἶναι τὰ τοιαῦτα.

9. Ὅρκον μὲν οὖν μοι τόνδε ἐπιτελέα ποιέοντι καὶ μὴ ξυγχέοντι εἴη ἐπαύρασθαι καὶ βίου καὶ τέχνης, δοξαζομένῳ παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἐς τὸν αἰεὶ χρόνον· παραβαίνοντι δὲ καὶ ἐπιορκέοντι, τἀναντία τουτέων.

# *THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH*
## *TRANSLATION*

1. I swear by Apollo Physician, by Asclepius, by Hygeia and Panacea and by all the gods and goddesses, making them my witnesses, that I will carry out, according to my ability and judgement, this oath and this indenture.

2. To hold my teacher in this art equal to my own parents; to make him partner in my livelihood; when he is in need of money to share mine with him; to consider his family as my own brothers, and to teach them this art, if they want to learn it, without fee or indenture. To impart instruction written, oral and practical, to my own sons, the sons of my teacher, and to indentured pupils who have taken the physician's oath, but to nobody else.

3. I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgement, but never with a view to injury and wrongdoing.

4. Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course. Similary, I will not give to a woman a pessary to cause abortion.

5. But I will keep pure and holy both my life and my art.

6. I will not use the knife, not even, verily, on sufferers from stone, but I will give place to such as are craftsmen therein.

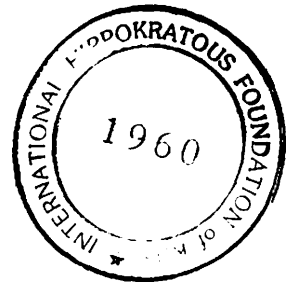
7. Into whatsoever house I enter, I will enter to help the sick, and I will abstain from all intentional wrongdoing and harm, especially from abusing the bodies of man or woman, bond or free.

8. And whatsoever I shall see or hear in the course of my profession, as well as outside my profession in my intercourse with men, if it be what should not be published abroad, I will never divulge, holding such things to be holy secrets.

9. Now, if I carry out this oath, and break it not, may I gain forever reputation among all men for my life and for my art; but if I transgress it and forswear myself, may the opposite befall me.

# GLOSSARY

ὄμνυμι (also ὀμνύω in Attic prose-writers): swear.
ἴστωρ (-ορος): sage; one who knows law and right; judge; witness.
ἐπιτελής: accomplished. ἐπιτελὲς ποιῶ: accomplish, fulfil.
ξυγγραφή (Attic συγγραφή): book; written contract; covenant; bond; indenture.
ἡγέομαι (-οῦμαι): go before; lead the way; think; believe.
ἡγοῦμαι+Accusative: consider; hold.
γενέτης: begetter; father. Plural: (the) parents.
κοινόω (-ῶ): communicate; make common. Middle, κοινοῦμαι: share.
χρέος: debt; purpose; business; anything useful.
χρήζω: need; desire; long for.
ἐπικρίνω: decide; determine; consider.
παραγγελίη (also παραγγελία): order; command; set of rules; written instruction.
ἀκρόησις (also ἀκρόασις): recitation; lecture; oral instruction.
μάθησις: acquisition of knowledge; education; training; practical instruction.
νόμος: usage; custom; law; statute.
διαίτημα: food; diet; rules of life; regimen; treatment.
κάμνω: build; toil; labour; grow tired; be sick.
δήλησις: harm; mischief; injury to health.
εἴργω (also ἔργω): shut out; bar one's way; keep away from.
ὑφηγέομαι (-οῦμαι): guide; indicate; instruct in.
πεσσός: stone; die (dice); medicated plug of wool; pessary.
φθόριος (-ον): destructive; producing abortion. φθορία: harm; corruption.
ὁσίως: according to divine law; piously; in holiness.
ἀφροδίσια: sexual pleasures. ἀφροδίσιος: belonging to Aphrodite (goddess of love).
ἐκλαλέω (-ῶ): blurt out; divulge.
ἄρρητα: unspoken; mysterious; not to be divulged; secret(s).
ξυγχέω: (Attic συγχέω): pour together; mix; confound; violate; break.
ἐπαυρίσκω (also ἐπαυρέω): partake of; enjoy; achieve; gain.



**GUIDE**

First Terrace (level)

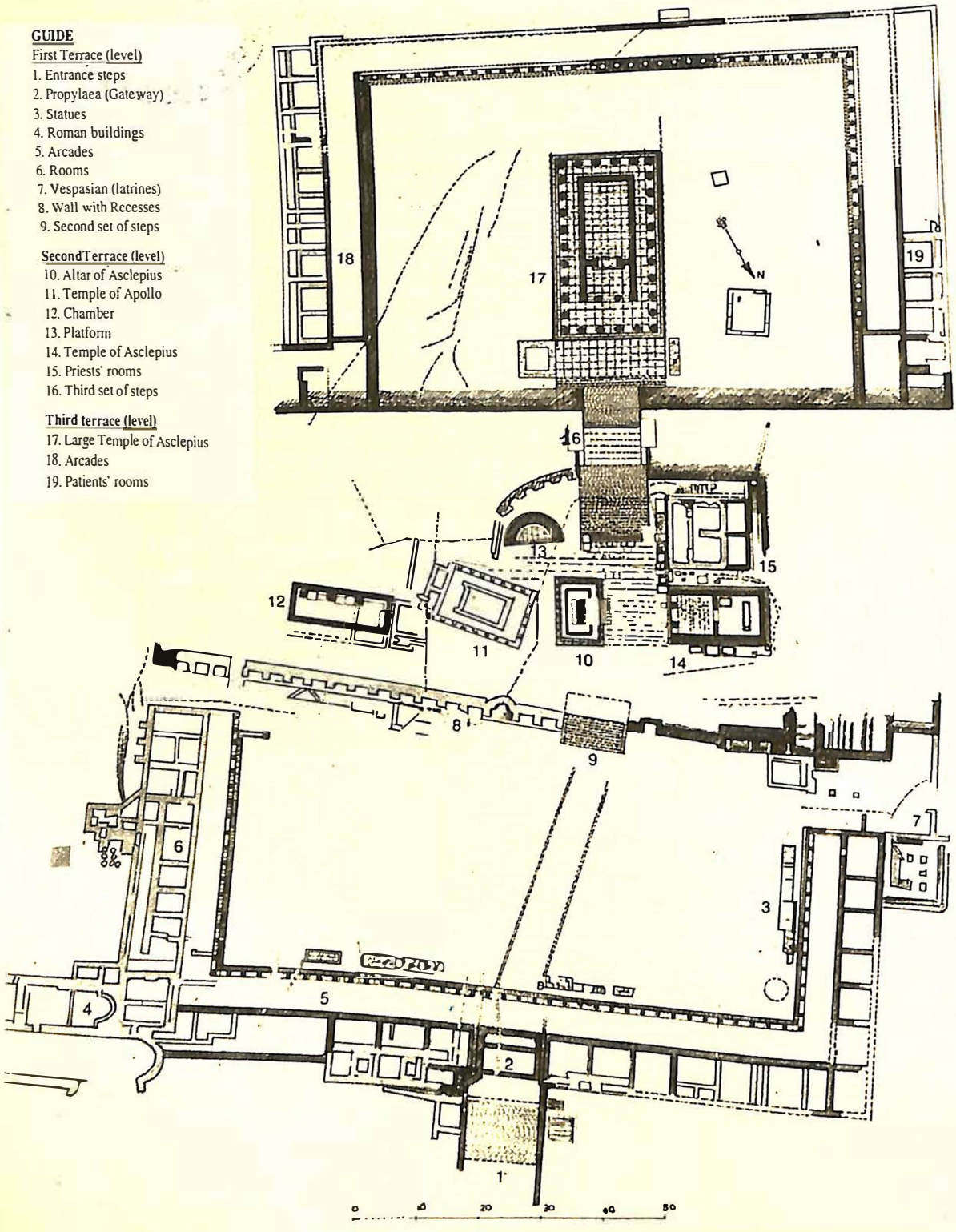
1. Entrance steps
2. Propylaea (Gateway)
3. Statues
4. Roman buildings
5. Arcades
6. Rooms
7. Vespasian (latrines)
8. Wall with Recesses
9. Second set of steps

Second Terrace (level)

10. Altar of Asclepius
11. Temple of Apollo
12. Chamber
13. Platform
14. Temple of Asclepius
15. Priests' rooms
16. Third set of steps

Third terrace (level)

17. Large Temple of Asclepius
18. Arcades
19. Patients' rooms




Sectional Plan of the Asclepeion of Cos




# VIII. ANALYSIS
# (Comments, Explanatory Notes)

## ARTICLE 1
## The Invocation

In the Prologue, the young doctor invokes the gods of health and all the other gods as his witnesses that he will fulfil his oath and all relevant obligations.

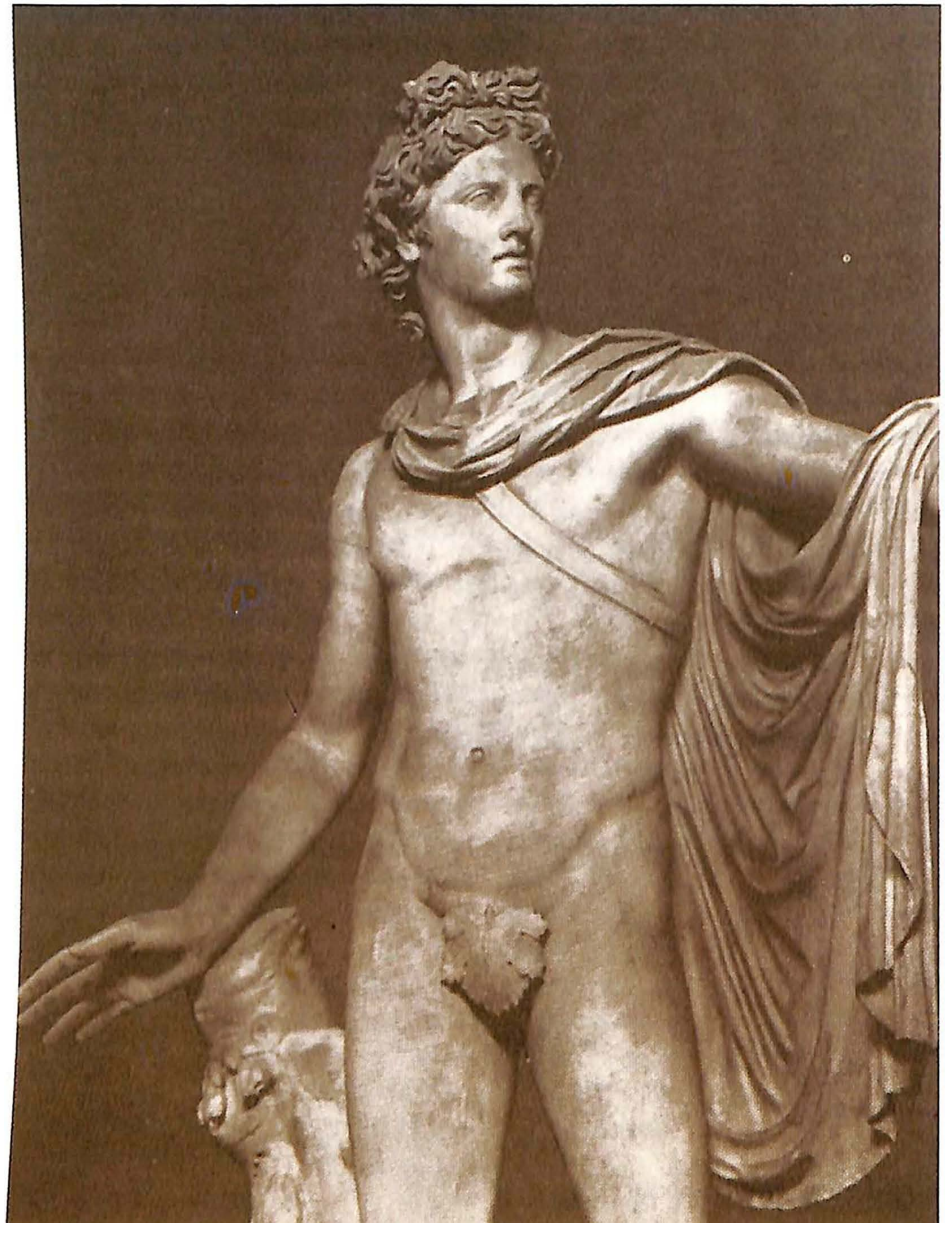
**Ὄμνυμι:** Some manuscripts have ὀμνύω. The form ὀμνύω is usually found in Attic prose-writers and in Herodotus. The verb was first used by Homer. Already in Homeric times, the decline of faith in the ordinary promise led the Greeks to the institution of the oath. In both the Iliad and the Odyssey, gods and heroes often confirm by oath that they will fulfil a promise using this commitment. Early scholars suggested the derivation of the verb ὀμνύω from ὄμμα (= look; glance; sight; vision) and νεύω (= nod; beckon; assure; grant; promise).

The corresponding verb ὁρκίζομαι is used in modern Greek to begin all kinds of oaths – political, professional, judicial, military etc. In some cases the old form ὀμνύω is still used in Greek courts.

**Ἀπόλλωνα ἰητρόν:** (= Apollo Physician): Apollo (*Ἀπέλλων* in Doric) was especially a Greek god. His worship began as a result of the influence of the sun's light on nature. He was the personification of the sun which burns but also warms and gives life. The effect of the sun on the purification of the atmosphere and the beneficial action of the sun's rays on the human body soon linked Apollo's name with health. The name was thought to derive from the verb ἀπόλλυμι (=destroy) or, according to others, from the verb ἀπολύω (= deliver; set free), "from the fact that people are freed from evil". *(Μέγα Ἐτυμολογικόν Dictionary).* The derivation of the name from the verb ἀπέλλω (= prevent; keep away) also seems possible. The word is found in Hesychius' Lexicon.

Thus, Apollo is invoked both as a god of health and as the father of Asclepius. For the ancient Greeks, Apollo was the god who kept off epidemics. (One of his epithets is ἀλεξίκακος= *keeping off ill* or *mischief*). He was the god who warded off death: ἀλεξίμορος (= *warding off death*) is another epithet of Apollo.[328] He was the divine physician who helped the sick (ἐπικούριος=

328. see Sophocles, Oedipus Rex, l. 164



succouring) and healed all diseases. That is why he was also called ἰήιος (= *healing*), ἀκέσιος (= *healing*), ἀποτρόπαιος (= *averting evil*), νουσολύτης (*freeing from disease*) and σωτήρ (= *saviour*). He was also called οὔλιος (= *healing*) in Cos, Delos, Miletus and elsewhere.[329]

The god's beneficial influence was gradually extended to include moral disease as well: Apollo also cured the souls of those who repented their sins. He was the cleansing god who delivered people from moral illness.

Appollo was also the god of music, of harmony (Μουσαγέτης= *leader of the Muses*). Harmony is closely associated with the quality of medicine which aims at ensuring the harmonious functioning of the different systems in the body, so that there is uninterrupted well-being. According to the ancients, particularly the Pythagoreans, music contributed very much to boosting up health.[330]

Apollo was even worshipped as a god of divination. He granted to his elect a wonderful sense of perception that enabled them to foresee the future. Hippocrates regards medicine and divination as related arts. "..... medicine and divination are very closely related; for the two arts have one father, Apollo ...".[331] This view proves the great importance of clear perception in medical diagnosis. In another treatise of the Hippocratic Collection it is also mentioned that medicine resembles divination.[332]

In Cos, where the Oath is most likely to have been composed, the worship of Apollo was widespread. Herzog maintains that at Halasarna, in Cos, the worship of Apollo went back to very early times;it was even earlier than the worship of Asclepius.[333] Recently (1982), another temple and altar of Apollo were discovered at Kardamena, which is situated where ancient Halasarna was.

As it appears from the inscriptions and other monuments, Apollo was worshipped in almost all the towns of ancient Cos: In the district of Phyxiotae, people worshipped Apollo **Phyxius** and **Horomedon**. There was a temple dedicated to Apollo the healer (οὔλιος: See above) in the district of the Isthmiotae. In the Asclepeion area, in the large grove, people worshipped Apollo **Cyparissius** (*Κυπαρίσιος*, of the cypress tree). In the town of Halasarna there was a large temple of Apollo which was the oldest on the Island. Apollo was also worshipped under the epithets of Didymeus, Delian, Pythian, Carnean,

329. See Strabo, *Geography* XIV, 1,6.
330. See Iamblichus, *Pythagorean Life*, p. 164.
331. See Hippocrates, ***Letter XV***.
332. See ***Diet in Acute Diseases,*** VIII
333. See R. Herzog, *Archäologische Anzeige*, 1905, p. 18.

and Sminthian. Details about the religion of the ancient Coans can be found in Sherwin-White's book "Ancient Cos".[334]

**Ἀσκληπιόν** (*Asclepius*): The name appears in several other forms (Ἀσκλαπιός, Αἰσκλαπιός, Αἰσχλαβιός, Ἀσχλαβιός, Ἀσκαλαπιός, Ἀσκαλπιός, Ἀσκαπιός, Αἰγλαπιός etc.) and many attempts have been made to find the etymology of the word. Suidas derives it from the verb ἀσκῶ (= *handle, deal with, train*) and ἤπιος (= *mild, gentle*), "from the softening of diseases".[335] Earlier on, it was believed that the name came from ἀσκελής (= *severe)* and ἤπιος (= *mild*), because he made severe[336] diseases mild and gentle.

According to H. Grégoire, the god's name is connected with the words σκάλοψ, ἀσπάλαξ, σπάλαξ (= *blind-rat*), which indicates that Asclepius was an earth god. This view he based, among other things, on the fact that the blind-rat held a prominent position in popular medicine. In addition, the structure of the dome of the Asclepeion at Delphi resembled a blind-rat's nest.[337]

Asclepius was the first great healer to be deified for his achievements, and he was worshipped all over Greece, where more than 360 Asclepeia were established, the most famous of all being that of Cos.

The son of Apollo, he inherited his father's medical skill. He learned many things from his famous teacher, the Centaur Cheiron, in the luxuriant environment of Pelion. He possessed the secret power of healing the most difficult and chronic diseases.[338] According to tradition, he had reached a point where he could even raise people from the dead.[339] Pluto, the god of the underworld, concerned about Asclepius' exploits, and afraid lest his realm be depopulated, complained to Zeus, who, according to one version of the legend, realised that people might eventually become immortal and struck Asclepius dead with a thunderbolt.[340]

In the above legend Asclepius had not yet been deified. Man's need to personify, in the form of a divine being, the healing quality which nature had granted among so many destructive powers must have at first contributed to the deification of Asclepius.

334. Göttingen 1978, pp. 290 ff.; cf. Paton & Hicks, *The Inscriptions of Cos*, Oxford 1891, pp. 396-402.
335. See Suidas, Ἀσκληπιάδαι.
336. i.e. serious.
337. See Δ. Λυπουρλῆ, *Ἱπποκρατικὴ Ἰατρική*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1972, p. 50.
338. See Pindar, *Pythian Odes*, I, 44.
339. See Pausanias, *Corinthian Travels*, II, 26.5.
340. See Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, Γ' ιβ', 11 and ιγ' 2-3; Cf. Pindar, *Pythian Odes*, Γ' 20-55.



Asclepius

In people's minds the hero Asclepius, the protector of physicians who for many centuries had practised their profession travelling from one place to another, became more and more identified with medicine, until he became the Physician *par excellence*. Thus the perfect physician, the "blameless healer" of Homer (Iliad, Δ' 194), the "enemy of disease" and "healer of all", according to the 68th **Orphic Ode**, the healing hero, gradually developed into a healing god. The deification of Asclepius must have taken place at Epidaurus towards the end of the 6th century B.C.[341]

From Epidaurus, the worship of the new god spread very quickly and soon temples and shrines were built everywhere in his honour. The sick started flocking to the Asclepeia in order to ask for the god's help. They were suitably prepared by the priests, who were usually skilful physicians (Asclepiads) and to whom Asclepius appeared, as they said, in their dreams and prescribed the treatment that they were supposed to apply.

The Asclepeion of Cos, which is directly connected with the Hippocratic Oath, stood out as a healing centre, and its priests, among them the famous physician Nebrus and Hippocrates, the grandfather of the great Hippocrates, were regarded as the best medical teachers. The other Asclepeia considered the Asclepeion of Cos the most sacred temple, and the Epidaurians sent gifts there every year.[342]

The medical school of Cos contributed to the Asclepeion's becoming more famous. The Coan poet Herodas (or: Herondas), who lived in the 3rd century B.C., informs us about the works of art which were collected in the Asclepeion of Cos, and praises the god with the following couplet:

"Hail King Paean, who rulest over Tricca,
And livest in sweet Cos and Epidaurus".

In his second Mime, too, Herodas makes Battarus address the judges and appeal to them to show how worthy Cos, Merops, Heracles and Asclepius were.

The Coans held an annual festival on the 7th day of the month of Artamitius. In a letter to the Abderites, Hippocrates describes this festival: "There is the assumption of the staff ... a festal assembly and a lavish procession to the Cypress Grove".[343]

---

341. See Emma and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius. A Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies*, Baltimore, 1945.
342. See Pausanias, III, 23; cf. Ἀριστ. Ἀραβαντινοῦ, *Ἀσκληπιὸς καὶ Ἀσκληπιεῖα*, Leipsig 1907, p. 59.
343. Hippocrates, ***Letter 11.***

From the above testimonies and from the various inscriptions, it appears that Asclepius held a prominent position in the Coans' religion from classical times onwards. The official celebrations in honour of Asclepius were the **Asclepieia.**[344] A typical inscription is that of the town of the Isthmiotae in Cos, which describes THE LEADER AND SAVIOUR GOD ASCLEPIUS.[345] Coins with the inscription of ASCLEPIUS SAVIOUR have also been found in Cos.

In the Hippocratic Oath, Asclepius is not only the founder of therapeutics and protector of physicians, but also Hippocrates' great ancestor. While Apollo signifies the divine origin of medicine, Asclepius symbolizes its human ancestry.

Ὑγείαν (= *Hygeia*): Many scholars prefer the older form Ὑγίεια. She is an independent goddess, personifying physical, mental and spiritual health. The ancient Greeks imagined her as a smiling goddess with shining eyes.

In her oldest temple in Titane, near Sicyon, she was worshipped with Asclepius, who, from classical times onwards, was believed to be her father.[346] In local inscriptions, they are mentioned together, e.g.

TO MASTER ASCLEPIUS AND HYGEIA,
SUCCOURING GODS ... [347]

Ariphron of Sicyon composed the best paean ever written in her honour, where she is praised as "a pleasure to men from the gods","a relief from suffering", "the honoured lady among the gods" etc[348]

Others called her ἐρατή (= *lovable*), ὀλβιόδωρος (= *giver of happiness*), φερόλβιος (= *bringer of happiness*), εὐκταιοτάτη (= *most-invoked*), πολυθάλμιος (= *much-nourishing*) etc.[349] Thus, she was given the most striking epithets for the supreme blessing she symbolized.

In Cos, with its rich medical tradition, the worship of the goddess Hygeia was very popular, as is seen from various inscriptions and other monuments. In many of these inscriptions she is mentioned together with her father Asclepius, e.g.:

---

344. See A. Modona, *L'isola di Coo nell' antichità classica*, 1993, p.111; cf. Αν. Καραναστάση, *Ἡ ἀσυλία τοῦ Ἀσκληπιείου τῆς Κῶ καὶ ἡ πενταετηρὶς τῶν Ἀσκληπιείων*, Ἀθῆναι 1960.
345. See Paton and Hicks, op. cit. p. 294, No. 408.
346. See Pausanias, *Corinthian Travels*, B' 11, 5.
347. Collection of Inscriptions 139, 1.
348. See Scaliger, Lib. I Poet.
349. Cf. *Orphic Ode* 67.

AND THE TWO TAX-COLLECTORS ARE TO BE GIVEN THE PRIESTLY SERVICE OF ASCLEPIUS AND HYGEIA.[350]

As soon as excavations began at the Asclepeion of Cos in October 1902, the first important marble fragment was unearthed, on which were written the first four letters (ΥΓΙΕ ...) of the goddess's name.

From the opening lines of Herodas' fourth Mime it is deduced that in the front hall of the Asclepeion there was a sculpture of Asclepius and Hygeia, in which Asclepius touched his daughter with his right hand (lines 4-5).

Hygeia very soon became a goddess and was specially honoured, since health has always been man's basic concern.

Πανάκειαν (= *Panacea*): A deity which, according to one tradition, symbolizes treatment with herbs. According to Greek mythology, she was the daughter of Asclepius and Epione or Lampetia. The word itself, consisting of πᾶν (= *everything*) and ἄκος (= *cure*), means "she who cures everything". She was, in other words, the personification of the power of healing. The ancient Greeks deified every concept from which they expected some benefit.

Panacea was worshipped mainly in Athens, Oropus, Cos, Calymnos and Orchomenus. At the shrine of Oropus she was worshipped with Asclepius and her sisters Hygeia and Iaso, according to Pausanias' testimony.[351] It appears that she was deified sometime in the 5th century B.C. and gradually began to be honoured in the same sacred manner and with the same traditional rites as her sister Hygeia.[352]

Conceming the worship of Panacea in Cos, there is also the testimony of the poet Herodas, according to which there were altars dedicated to Panacea, Epione and Iaso in the Asclepeion of Cos.[353] Quite rightly, therefore, the writer of the Oath mentions both goddesses; for Hygeia was more closely connected with hygiene, whereas Panacea had more to do with health.

Thus, he invokes four deities, two male and two female, all of whom are very closely connected with the great gift of health. They ward off evil, deliver people from suffering, grant desired well-being, and protect all those who work for man's health. So, from the first moment, the swearer feels that he is about to undertake a divine duty, and that he is being initiated into a caste of people who practise a sacred mission.

---

350. See Paton and Hicks, op. cit., No. 30, p. 53; also No. 401, p. 285, No. 406, p. 293; cf. R. Herzog, *Heilige Gesetze von Kos*, 1928, No. 15, p. 39.
351. See Pausanias, *Attic Travels*, A' 1, 34.
352. See Aristophanes, *Plutus*, Lines 702 and 730.
353. See Herodas, *4th Mime*, lines 5-6.



Statue of Hygeia, 2nd century A.D. (Cos Museum).

θεοὺς πάντας τε καὶ πάσας (= *all the gods and goddesses*): "With this general invocation, the Oath takes on a particularly festive character", says Dem. Lypourles of the University of Thessaloniki.[354] With these words, the young physician invokes all the gods and goddesses as guarantors of the sincerity of his promises. He agrees to be morally bound to the divine powers, as guardians of moral order in the world. In this way, the Oath acquires greater authority and sanctity, and is no longer easy to violate.

The invocation of all the gods was a frequent occurrence in various circumstances, as is seen in passages from other writers of the classical period. E.g.: "I swear by Gaea (= *the Earth*), by the bright light of the sun, and by all the gods".[355] "I therefore swear by all the gods without exception".[356] "I swear by all the gods and goddesses together".[357]

In spite of being a rationalist, Hippocrates always honoured ancestral religion. He did not attempt to approach the gods through mysticism and exaltation, as did some of his contemporaries, but faced the divine with prudence and piety, within the bounds of religious legitimacy. His respect is shown not only in the Oath but in other works as well, as we have said in the chapter "Hippocrates and Religion".

Hippocrates' exhortation to take the sick "to the sanctuaries, with sacrifices and prayers, in supplication to the gods,"[358] springs from a genuine religiousness and from the indignation which he felt at seeing the profiteers of the art invoke the gods in order to deceive their fellow-men through superstition and exorcism. With his rational mind, he always differentiated between the supernatural and the scientific. While preserving the independence of the art from withcraft, he acknowledged that physicians submitted to the will of the gods.[359]

Modern Hippocratic scholars point out that, with treatises such as ***The Sacred Disease***, ***Airs Waters Places*** and others, Hippocrates marked out the potential of science and put medicine in its proper place in relation to religion. Thus, separating quackery and superstition from scientific knowledge and truth, he defended the ancestral faith against impiety and atheism.[360]

---

354. *Ἱπποκρατικὴ Ἰατρική*, p. 94.
355. Euripides, *Medea*, lines 752-753.
356. Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazusae* l. 269.
357. Demosthenes, *Against Conon*, 41.
358. ***The Sacred Disease***, IV.
359. See ***Decorum***, VI.
360. Cf. Jacque Jouanna, *Hippocrate*, Paris 1992, p. 274.

ἱστορας ποιεύμενος (= *making them my witnesses*): The surest witnesses are the gods, for they know law and justice and oversee the implementation of moral rules. Since the gods are the expert judges, the invocation of their testimony is the best guarantee for the strict and undeviating observance of the oath. Ever since Homeric times, all agreements or contracts became binding and acquired validity only when the people involved took an oath which they placed under the supervision of the great deities, especially Zeus, who was often called ὅρκιος (= *of the oath*) and πίστιος (= *of faith, Lat. Fidius*). Here is just one line from Agamemnon's oath after his reconciliation with Achilles: "Now let Zeus know first, who is the highest and best among the gods".[361]

The oath of the warriors and that of the "adolescents" (i.e. 18-year-olds) usually ended with the words: " Let these gods be my witnesses".[362] At the shrine of Ares (= *Mars*) in Acharnae, a 4th-century-B.C. column was found with the inscription of the oath taken by the Athenians before the battle of Plataea and the oath taken by Athenian boys when they reached adolescence.[363] In the epilogue of the Adolescents' Oath, with its typical invocation, the names of particular gods are mentioned: "Let the gods Aglauros, Hestia, Enyo, Enyalius, Ares and Martial Athena, Zeus, Thallo, Auxo, Hegemone, Heracles ...".

Galen's way of phrasing this invocation is also typical: "The gods know, so let them be called as witnesses".[364]

ἐπιτελέα ποιήσειν (= *that I will carry out*): In this phrase there is the sense of perfection, because ἐπιτελής means **perfect, complete, certain.** In other words, the newly-initiated swears that he will carry out his oath to the last iota, that he will fulfil his promises to the end.

As for ποιήσειν, the use of the Future Infinitive is quite correct, for it depends on ὄμνυμι (= *I swear*). Further down, however,[365] the text is not equally consistent in syntax: The infinitives are replaced by main clauses, [366] χρήσομαι etc.

κατὰ δύναμιν καὶ κρίσιν ἐμήν (=*according to my ability and judgement*): Knowing very well how difficult it is to achieve perfection, since man's abilities are limited, the wise Physician adds this statement. The phrase is repeated in the

---

361. Iliad T, 258.
362. See Stobaeus, *Speech on the Oath.*
363. French Archaeological School, Athens.
364. Galen, *Περὶ Κρίσεων*, Γ' 10.
365. From Article 3 onwards.
366. i.e. indicatives

3rd Article, and it shows the profound sense of responsibility of the Hippocratic physicians.

It is worth noting that, while earlier writers used the phrase κατὰ δύναμιν (= *according to my ability*) in similar situations [367], the Hippocratic Oath in both instances adds καὶ κρίσιν (= *and judgement*); obviously, in order to emphasize that the swearer's efforts will be in proportion to his mental as well asphysical capabilities.

Judgement depends chiefly "on trying and considering", which are not always infallible. This is why in the first Aphorism, too, we find the statement "judgement is difficult". Some kind of caution is, therefore, expressed here, since, apart from physical, there are mental difficulties as well.

ξυγγραφήν or συγγραφήν (= *indenture*): This word has generated a lot of discussion. Some scholars translate it as a written contract securing the medical teacher's fee; others interpret it as a special covenant which specified the young physician's obligations; still others identify it with the text of the Oath. Perhaps it would not be too risky also to say that συγγραφή was the contract binding the pupil to his teacher's family and to the medical family as a whole; that is, it included the obligations referred to in Article 2 of the text [368]. In this way, it is distinguished from the main part of the Oath [369] which contains the physician's obligations towards his patients.[370] The contract apparently applied to physicians who did not belong to the family of the Asclepiads, and contained commitments towards the teacher and the profession.

Judging the Prologue of the Oath as a whole, we can say that, in the invocation of the gods, we can discern the Oath's religious orientation, which stems from the sancity of the Art.

367. e.g. Hesiod. *Works and Days*. 334. and Herodotus. *History* Γ' 142.
368. The 1st section of the main body.
369. The Oath proper.
370. Articles 3-8.

## ARTICLE 2
## Obligations towards the teacher. The Covenant.

In the second paragraph or article, the swearer promises that he will honour his teacher like his parents and regard his teacher's children as equal to his own brothers, and that he will teach the art of medicine to his own sons, to the sons of his teacher, without fee, and to any pupils who will accept the obligations of the medical oath.

ἡγήσεσθαι (= *to hold/consider*): Some editors use an Aorist Infinitive here.[371] Jones was right in restoring the Future Infinitives ἡγήσεσθαι, κοινώνεσθαι and ποιήσεσθαι, since the swearer's promise [372] refers to the future, and the construction of ὄμνυμι governing the Future is the most regular and most common one. Besides, the Future Infinitives that follow immediately,[373] actually demand this restoration, as Dem. Lypourles observes.[374]

τὸν διδάξαντά με (= *my teacher*): It is worth noting that the newly-initiated honours his teacher first and foremost. He feels an urgent need to express his deep gratitude to the man who has taught (or who is teaching) him the art, for it is to him that he owes the most precious thing he possesses.

The teacher is the hierophant of the art, the imparter of wisdom; and he rightly inspires the pupil's respect and esteem.

Some decades later, we hear Alexander the Great confessing that he owes "the good [375] living" to his teacher Aristotle.[376]

τὴν τέχνην ταύτην *(= this art)*: The word τέχνη, which comes from the verb τίκτω (= *bear*), had various meanings in ancient times. It meant *craftsmanship at a certain occupation, a trade, a system of rules* and so on. Here it is used in the sense of a set of special skills connected with the art of medicine. It is found in many passages of the Hippocratic Collection carrying the same meaning, as for example in ***Aphorisms I, Joints X, Law I, Ancient Medicine III*** & ***XII*** etc.

---

371. i.e. ἡγήσασθαι.
372. i.e. commitment.
373. ἐπιχρινέειν, διδάξειν etc.
374. *Hippocratic Medicine* p. 95.
375. i.e. proper, correct.
376. See Plutarch, *Alexander*, ch. 8.

He who practises this art also knows what man is, what elements he consists of, what a disease is and what causes it, what diagnosis and therapy are, as well as the most suitable medicines for each disease, so that he can always apply the correct methods of treatment. At the same time, he must investigate on the basis of knowledge and not luck, discover the real causes of unhealthy symptoms, suggest the proper regimen, really help his patients and promote his art.[377]

This brief description leads us to the concept of science as we understand it today. For Hippocrates, however, science means chiefly a distinct knowledge, while art covers a wider concept. In the Hippocratic Collection, art is regarded as somewhat superior to science and is often referred to with a sense of pride. It denotes a combination of science and technique, as we can see in ***The Art.***[378]

**ἴσα γενέτῃσιν ἐμοῖσι** (= *equal to my own parents*): Here the pupil is bound to his teacher like a son to his father. A relationship of adoption binds him to his teacher's family, and he more or less becomes one of its members. Edelstein says: "(Here) the covenant establishes between teacher and pupil the closest and most sacred relationship that can be imagined between men, and it does so for no other apparent reason than that the pupil is being instructed in the art".[379] This custom of honouring their teachers like adopted fathers was also common among the Pythagoreans in the 4th century B.C., as Edelstein believes, which is why he regards the contract in the Oath as having been influenced by Pythagorean philosophical thinking.[380]

Close ties between teacher and pupil had been developed among other ancient schools of philosophy, such as those of Plato, Aristotle and others. These ties were further strengthened through Christian teaching. Referring to the relationship between pupil and teacher, Isidorus the Pelusiote (370-450 A.D.) characteristically writes: "Apprentices must love their true teachers like fathers and respect them like rulers".[381]

**βίου κοινώσεσθαι:** This phrase has presented a certain difficulty to scholars. Some attribute to the word **βίος** the meaning of *livelihood, income, property;* others interpret it literally as *life;* still others translate it word for

---

377. Cf. Δ. Τσεκουράκη, *Ἱπποκράτους περὶ Ἀρχαίης Ἰητρικῆς*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1994, p. 87.
378. See Δ. Λυπουρλή, *Ιπποκρατική Συλλογή* 1991, p.223; cf. J. Jouanna, Hippocrate 1992, p. 347.
379. *Hippocrates, The Oath*, Baltimore 1943, p. 39.
380. See Δ. Λυπουρλῆ, *Ἱπποκρατικὴ Ἰατρικὴ* 1972, p. 96.
381. See ***Letter*** 26, P. G. Migne 78, p. 473.

word, attributing an active sense to the infinitive κοινώσεσθαι. Littré translates "share my life with him", Jones gives "make him partner in my livelihood", while Edelstein has "live my life in partnership with him". In the translation chosen here,[382] the word "partner" is used in a broader sense: companion, fellow-participant. This seems to express rather the moral support, since the next phrase in the text expresses the material support.

This phrase and the next one ("to share my money with him") clearly show how much the pupil is indebted to his teacher, both morally and materially. After all, the relationship between children and foster parents incorporates moral as well as material commitments, especially when the parent is *in need.*[383]

This promise is reminiscent of the willingness of Socrates' pupils to be subjected to moral as well as material sacrifices in order to save their teacher.[384]

ἀδελφεοῖς ἴσον (= *as my own brothers*):ἀδελφοί was the name given to those born of the same parents, but chiefly to children born of the same mother because the word comes from the cumulative prefix α and δελφύς (= *womb*) and originally denoted those who came from the same womb, that is from the same mother, the "genuine" siblings. Thus, it denotes the next of kin after the parents. This statement, then, that he will regard his teacher's children as his own brothers, shows how inseparably the pupil was bound to the family of his spiritual father.

Some years later, the philosopher Aristotle, out of gratitude towards Proxenus of Atarnae who had undertaken his upbringing and education, brought up Proxenus'son Nicanor, educated him and, in his will, instructed that Nicanor should marry his daughter Pythias, as Ammonius tells us: "Not only did he bring up and educate his (= Proxenus') son Nicanor, but he made him his own son as well".[385]

ἄρρεσι (= *brothers; male siblings*): This discrimination in favour of men is not unusual for that period of time, since women were strictly confined to the limits of the home, to housekeeping. Sappho's circle of educated young women in Lesbos was an exception. As we know, the boys participated in the common

382. i.e. *"make him partner in my livelihood".*
383. *χρεῶν χρηίζοντι.*
384. See Plato, *Crito,* ch. 4.
385. See Ammonius' *Life of Aristotle,* Westermann, p. 398.

meals or public messes, in wars, in honours for bravery etc. In the patriarchal societies of classical times, men were regarded as the pillars of the home, those who ensured the continuity of the family. Euripides' testimony is typical: "For the pillars of homes are the male children".[386]

The term is also directly connected with the tradition of the Asclepeia, by which the sons of the Asclepiads succeeded – exclusively at first – to the teaching and the priesthood, like Hippocrates' own ancestors Heracleides, Hippocrates, Nebrus etc. Thessalus' phrase in the ***Speech of the Envoy*** is informative: "We the Asclepiads in the male line". It is worth noting that the phrase "in the male line" is found in Coan inscriptions and constitutes a piece of evidence for the origin of the Hippocratic Oath.[387]

ἄνευ μισθοῦ καὶ ξυγγραφῆς (= *without fee or indenture*): This is a remarkable promise, given by the young physician, namely, that he will teach the art of medicine to his teacher's sons without fee or indenture. It is one more example of the profound gratitude felt by the pupil towards his spiritual father, and the close bond of kinship which united them. In this part of the Oath one discerns a clearly idealistic attitude. Deichgräber sees rather the medical family's interest in the generations to follow and the provision for the continuation of the art.[388]

The question of whether Hippocrates was paid for giving medical instruction has aroused much discussion. Plato's testimony in the *Protagoras* (311 b) refers to Hippocrates of Cos, a medical teacher, who gave lessons on medicine to young men who were not the sons of physicians. Some interpreters take this testimony to be just a simple example in connection with the fee charged by Gorgias for teaching rhetoric, and bearing in mind the esteem that Plato felt towards Hippocrates and the great Physician's disinterestedness, they maintain that Hippocrates did not in fact charge any fees. Commenting on the above testimony, Littré and many other eminent scholars argue that Hippocrates practised his profession for payment; after all, every kind of work is paid for. It was natural for students who were outside the medical family, and who had the means, to pay some kind of fee to cover the teacher's material needs and the maintenance of the School. "The contract specified the duties of the new student and offered moral and financial guarantees to the medical teacher".[389]

---

386. See Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, l. 57.
387. See Paton & Hicks, op. cit., p. 70.
388. See K. Deichgräber, *Die ärtztliche Standesethik des Hippokratischen Eides*, 1933, ANTIKE MEDIZIN, 1971, p. 102.
389. See J. Jouanna, *Hippocrate*, 1992, p. 73.

The members of the Asclepiad family, the teacher's children, were exempt from the obligation to sign a contract or pay a fee.

Hippocrates' disinterestedness is also stressed by his biographer Soranus and by his greatest commentator Galen, who says that Hippocrates taught by practical example "the natural limits of wealth, which went as far as not being hungry, thirsty or cold".[390] Even concerning medical fees, Hippocrates advised physicians not to concern themselves about payment: "So one must not be anxious about fixing a fee".[391]

Hippocrates' disregard for money can be appreciated even more when one remembers that other eminent physicians of antiquity demanded princely payments, as can be ascertained from the plaques at Epidaurus. Even Asclepius was said to have cured Phalysius of Naupactus for 2,000 gold staters, enough money to rebuild the temple at Epidaurus.[392]

What concerned Hippocrates and his followers above all was to pass on the art of medicine. The Hippocratic treatise ***Decorum*** ends with this piece of advice to physicians: "Watch it and keep it, perform it and pass it on".

Perhaps it is no accident that in Hippocrates' own birthplace no evidence has been found concerning fees or salaries paid to the public physicians of Cos.[393]

παραγγελίης ...ἀκροήσιος ...μαθήσιος (= *written, oral and practical instruction*): The meanings of these terms have interested many scholars. Littré translates the word παραγγελίη as *precepts concerning medical ethics.* Jones finds this division "curious and unusual". Edelstein argues that the origin of these terms must be sought in Pythagorean teaching, where there were the terms παραγγέλματα (= *precepts*), ἀκροάσεις (= *lectures*) and μαθήσεις (= *all other studies, theoretical and practical*), according to Aristoxenus, believing that they are used in the same sense in the Hippocratic Oath.[394]

Judging by the Hippocratic treatise ***Precepts***, the first would denote the general rules governing the exercise of the profession and the physician's conduct. In the same treatise, in Chapter XII, the word ἀκρόασις seems to denote a *lecture* or *lesson.* Aristotle uses the term παραγγελία in the sense of *professional rules formulated through experience.*[395]

---

390. Galen, I 58.
391. ***Precepts,*** IV.
392. See Pausanias, I. 38, 13. On fees charged by Democedes of Croton, see Herodotus, *History* Γ' 131.
393. See Sherwin-White, *Ancient Cos*, 1978, p. 274.
394. See Edelstein, *Hippocrates, The Oath*, Baltimore 1943, reprinted in Chicago, 1957, p. 46.
395. *Nichomachean Ethics* B', 1104 a7.

If we take these concepts in graduating order, the word παραγγελίη would denote practical advice for apprentices;[396] ἀκρόασις would be the oral instruction, that is, the lectures or lessons. The word is synonymous with Aristotle's "oral" or "esoteric" lectures. Plutarch regards as ἀκροαματικά "the secret and deeper instruction".[397] According to Choulant, this is the main scientific instruction. Others interpret the term as an advanced written lecture for advanced students. The word μάθησις seems to have referred to the practical exercises. Choulant believes that the term applied to the entire clinical teaching. According to Meibonius, μάθησις was the teaching of particular cases, specialised practice.[398]

To sum up the basic meanings of these terms, we can see a complete course of instruction: written, oral and practical. We see a remarkable curriculum with a very high educational aim. For, with παραγγελία (= *the general advice and guidelines*), ἀκρόασις (= *the systematic lectures*), and μάθησις (= *the practical exercises*), a complete teaching of the art is sought, a perfect training – what Isocrates later described as "imparting the whole art".

The three terms indicate how organized the Medical School of Cos was, and how conscientiously its physicians worked.

μαθηταῖσι ξυγγεγραμμένοις καὶ ὡρκισμένοις (= *indentured and sworn-in students*): Some scholars prefer the older Ionic form μαθητῆσι, and others put the second participle into the Present (ὁρκιζομένοις). It is well known that in every ancient civilization the arts were limited to closed family circles. The priests at the Asclepeia, the so-called Asclepiads, at first maintained strict secrecy about their knowledge, which the son inherited from his father, promising under oath at his father's deathbed not to disclose what was regarded as a holy secret. Lucian's testimony is typical: "My oath to keep silent and my dying father's last wish do not allow me to speak".[399]

Thus, medicine was also a secret and hereditary art, which was passed on from father to son within a closed professional guild. However, here we see, for the first time, an expansion of the circle of students, an extension of medical teaching beyond the children of the Asclepiads, something that lends the Oath an important social dimension.

---

396. i.e. written instructions for beginners.
397. *Life of Alexander.*
398. See Meibonius, *Hippocratis Magni Jus Jurandum*, 1643, p. 98.
399. Lucian, *Tragopodagra*, l. 271.

According to Galen, the Asclepiads decided that it would be a good idea to admit students from outside the medical family, since mature men who had been honoured for their merit were already participating in the art.[400]

Hippocrates lived in the heyday of Democracy and, being an open-minded man, foresaw that medicine could not be perfected within the family framework, nor could it benefit humanity if it remained within the limits of material interest. This was the very reason why he broke this closed family circle and extended his teaching beyond the sons of medical teachers to all those who had the inclination and the ability to learn the art, "innovating against the few whose interests it suited that the common people should not become too wise", as Adamantios Coraës says.[401]

νόμῳ ἰητρικῷ (= *the physician's oath*): Some scholars translate the phrase literally "according to the physicians' law". Others attribute to the word νόμῳ the meaning of **oath**. Still others have argued that the phrase describes the attributes of the physician, the medical qualifications as they are explained in the treatise of the Hippocratic Collection ***Law***. Earlier interpreters discerned in this phrase rules, agreements and promises included in the **indenture** (Meibonius). Some translate the phrase "according to the medical commands". Others prefer the interpretation "according to the custom prevailing in medical circles".[402]

From this phrase and from the participle ὡρκισμένοις one can draw certain conclusions. Deichgräber had pointed out earlier (in 1933) that the student took the Oath at the beginning of his training according to medical law. Following this view, other interpreters of the Oath regarded διδάξαντα as the **future** teacher and proposed the spelling διδάξοντα instead, which would change the meaning from "the man who **has taught** me" to "the man who **will teach** me". Lichtenthaeler, a contemporary interpreter of the Hippocratic Oath, argues that the pupil had to be sworn in at the beginning, that is on his admission to the School, concerning both his obligations towards the teacher and the observance of educational secrets.

Following the above views, we must accept that there were two oaths: one on the student's enrolment for the observance of the rules of attendance, and another on graduation to ensure the proper exercise of the profession.[403]

---

400. Galen, Book II, p. 280 Kuhn.
401. See his Prologue to ***Airs Waters Places;*** cf. J. Jouanna, Hippocrate, 1992, p. 74.
402. Jones, Lypourles.
403. See Ch. Lichtenthaeler, *Der Eid des Hippokrates,* Köln 1984, p. 265; cf. I. N. Δάμπαση, *Περὶ τοῦ Ἱπποκρατικοῦ Ὅρκου,* ΙΑΤΡΙΚΑ ΧΡΟΝΙΑ, Vol. 9, issue 82, 1969, p. 877.

ἄλλῳ δὲ οὐδενί (= *but to nobody else*): This assurance is probably related to the observance of the secrets and rules of the art. With this phrase, all those who have not been enrolled or sworn in, all the untrained, the incapable, the unsuitable, are excluded. It was natural that such advanced knowledge should be imparted only to responsible and sensible young men, to **"suitable"** people. The wise author of the Oath does not exclude people out of envy or malice, but because he is fully aware that the Art should rely on the capable and the stable, not the unpredictable and temperamental: "Non discipulis vagis sed firmis" (= Not to uncertain but to firm pupils), says Meibonius.[404] After all, it was the common belief of all wise people in those days that one "should not impart knowledge to the untrained and uninitiated".[405]

After enumerating the qualities of prospective physicians and the methods of teaching the Art in his short treatise ***Law,*** Hippocrates ends with the following words, which have become an axiom: "Things, however, that are holy are revealed only to men who are holy. Such things must not be revealed to the profane until they have been initiated into the mysteries of science". Profane and uninitiated people were in abundance in those days, as we learn from other Hippocratic works and from the testimonies of other writers. A passage from Heraclitus the philosopher who flourished around 500-490 B.C. is typical. He says: "Physicians, then, after cutting, burning and in every way torturing the sick, demand even more".

The Hippocratic suggestion concerning the profane is reminiscent of the admonition in the Gospel addressed to Christians, not to leave the sacred things of the Faith in the hands of the profane: "Do not give dogs what is sacred".[406]

In brief, the second article contains the contract for the external student who is admitted to the School to study the art of medicine. This contract verifies the obligations of the student-physician towards his Teacher and the Art, the future solidarity among the initiated, and the exclusion of the uninitiated.

## ARTICLE 3
## Treatment of the Sick

In this article the physician promises that his first and foremost concern will be treatment for the benefit of the sick and great care so that no harm will come to them.

---

404. *Hippocratis Jus Jurandum*, p. 105.
405. *Greek Anthology*, VII.
406. Matthew, 7:6.

διαιτήμασι (= *treatment*): διαιτήματα (Nom. Plural) were the "rules of life", especially concerning food, the **diet**. However, the word δίαιτα in ancient Greek did not denote only the regulation of eating habits but also the organization of a person's way of living, his pursuits, his place of living, physical exercise, bathing, sexual life, sleep and so on.

By attaching such great importance to diet, Hippocrates "raised dietetics to the status of an outstanding therapeutic system, which he based on the knowledge of human nature and on the influence of food", says K. Metropoulos.[407]

Hippocrates regards his dietetic system as a useful discovery for everyone: "This discovery reflects glory on myself its discoverer, and is useful to those who have learnt it".[408]

Hippocrates' dietetics was followed by most of the later physicians, and many scholars have acknowledged that the dietetic branch of medicine was invented by Hippocrates.[409]

Many works in the Hippocratic Collection deal with various aspects of diet, e.g. ***Diet I-III, Diet for Health, Diet in Acute Diseases, The Nature of Man, Ancient Medicine, Nutrition*** and so on.

From these works, it can be seen that Hippocratic treatment was heavily dependent on dietetics. Its greatest merit was the accurate observation of the patient, the diagnosis of his condition, and finally the adjustment of his diet: "The most important thing in dietetics is observation and protection".[410]

According to Hippocrates, the adjustment of diet depends on many factors, such as age, the time of year, eating habits, climate, weather conditions and the idiosyncrasy of the individual patient: "So in fixing regimen pay attention to age, season, habit, land, and physique ..."[411]

In applying a systematic diet, the Hippocratic physicians took great care to reinforce the natural defence mechanisms of the body for the restoration of the patient's health. The task of dietetics was to find the most appropriate combination of food and drink for people's nutrition, and in particular for the benefit of the sick. It was the physician's duty to look into the nutritional value of each food, to see which foods were nourishing and which harmful for each patient in each case.

---

407. See Κ. Μητρόπουλος, *Ἱπποκράτους Περὶ Διαίτης*, p. 3.
408. ***Diet III,*** LXIX.
409. See Εὐσταθίου, Παρεκβολαὶ εἰς Ὅμηρον, Ἰλιάδος Λ' 829, 40.
410. ***Diet in Acute Diseases,*** XXII
411. ***Diet in Health,*** II.

The way people eat and live has an important influence on their psychosomatic constitution. A person's mental condition "can become better or worse" depending on good or bad diet. Distinguishing man from the animal world, Hippocrates maintains that correct diet helps the soul rise to levels higher than the material world and become wiser; where as gluttony and intemperance render the soul morbid and senseless.[412]

Hippocrates' dietetics shows certain similarities to Pythagorean teaching concerning nutrition and the treatment of illness. According to the Pythagoreans, most illnesses are due to overeating and luxurious living. What is admitted into the body, they argue, creates a certain disposition in the soul, too. This is why the physician must take good care of the patient's diet and make sure that the patient's soul does not fall prey to unhealthy desires through the wrong diet. Edelstein maintains that the rules about dietetics as it is understood in the Oath were influenced by Pythagoreanism, "in fact they acquire meaning only if seen in the light of Pythagorean teaching".[413]

However, even if the order of importance in the Hippocratic system of treatment (diet ⇨ drugs ⇨ incisions) coincides with the classification supported by the Pythagoreans (dietetics ⇨ pharmacology ⇨ surgery), the dietetic sector of medical science is based mainly on the knowledge of the psychosomatic structure of the human being as a whole, and concurs with Hippocratic teaching as it is presented in ***Diet I*** and predominates in many works which bear the seal of the Hippocratic School of thought.

At many points Hippocrates' dietetics clashes with the harsh regimen of the Pythagoreans [414] and with the diet recommended by his own contemporaries, such as Herodicus of Selymbria, the Cnidian physicians and others. Hippocrates avoided standardized diets and applied moderation according to each person's idiosyncracy, as can be deduced from the opening paragraphs of ***Aphorisms.***

**χρήσομαι ἐπ' ὠφελίῃ καμνόντων** *(= I will use ... to help the sick):* The most important part of the Oath begins with this sentence. The syntax is rather inconsistent with what precedes it in the text. No infinitives depending on **ὄμνυμι** are used any more, but future indicatives in independent main clauses. Thus, the declaration acquires greater definiteness. The choice of the verb **χρῶμαι** (= *to use*) is appropriate, too; for it means, besides other things, "to act with the power of one's mind".

---

412. ***Diet I,*** II ff.
413. See Edelstein, *Hippocrates, The Oath,* p. 24.
414. e.g. their vegetarianism.

The statement that the dietetic prescriptions which the physician intends to give will aim at helping the sick, at first seems obvious. After all, everyone who practises a profession has an obligation to pursue what is best, noblest and most beneficial for the object of his or her profession or trade. But in the medical profession, this statement carries much weight; for in this case, the object of attention is man himself and the objective aim here is the sufferer's relief, the restoration of impaired health, which is the most precious of all "possessions". On the Hippocratic physician's lips, it carries still greater weight; because, for Hippocrates, "help" has the sense of disinterested service, of full support and of wholehearted assistance to the patient.

This promise is repeated in Article 7. In other works of the Hippocratic Collection, too, help towards his fellow-man is emphasised as a fundamental duty of every physician. Hippocrates' command "Help, or at least do not harm,"[415] which springs from his profound humanism, constitutes the Hippocratic physician's highest ideal and remains an eternal precept against selfishness.

The participle **καμνόντων** also has its use and significance here. For the verb **κάμνω** means chiefly *labour, suffer, feel badly.* Thus, the writer stresses fatigue and distress in general, and avoids stronger terms, such as **νοσέω,** which expresses diseased conditions, and **πάσχω,** which refers rather to tragedy or misfortune. "By avoiding the use of stronger terms,[416] he also avoids dependence on the technology of medicine," says Mottura.[417]

**κατὰ δύναμιν καὶ κρίσιν ἐμήν** *(= according to my ability and judgement):* The young physician's awareness of human weakness and of the shortcomings of science obliges him to declare both at the beginning of the Oath and at this point that his service will be proportionate to his ability. This declaration shows the deep sense of responsibility among Hippocratic physicians, as we have mentioned with reference to the first article. Aware of the difficulties encountered by the scientist in achieving perfection, Hippocrates writes: "Since the art cannot admit of such nice exactness, it is difficult always to attain perfect accuracy".[418]

**ἐπὶ δηλήσει... καὶ ἀδικίῃ** *(= with a view to injury and wrongdoing):* The writer uses two synonymous expressions in order to stress the physician's

---

415. ***Epidemics I,*** xi.
416. e.g. *πάσχω.*
417. *Il Giuramento di Ippocrate,* Roma 1986, p.14.
418. ***Ancient Medicine,*** XII.

endeavour to keep the patient free from all harm and injustice. As Deichgräber has suggested, two equivalent phrases or expressions are often used in the Oath, so that something of particular significance may be emphasised. For example, **pure and holy, wrongdoing and harm, transgress and forswear** and so on.

But what sort of injury does the author of the Oath have in mind? Injury and wrongdoing concerning diet can be caused by members of the patient's family, his friends, himself or the physician.

This phrase, followed by the infinitive εἴρξειν, has caused a lot of discussion among scholars. According to Littré, the physician swears that he himself will not intentionally harm the patient. Daremberg, disagrees with this interpretation, pointing out that εἴρξειν is a transitive verb and cannot have as its object the physician himself. The same view has been expressed by Deichgräber and Edelstein. Having in mind the Pythagorean doctrine that people have a tendency to cause harm and injustice to themselves through their eating habits, Edelstein maintains that the physician here promises to protect his patients from harm which they themselves might inflict on themselves by choosing the wrong diet. In fact, he mentions certain Pythagorean views on bodily appetites and says that "human desires [are] to be watched closely and to be scrutinized severely".[419] Diller does not accept Edelstein's interpretation and asks: How is it that in the first part of this paragraph (Διαιτήμασι ... etc) the patients are presented as the object on which the physician will apply his dietetic treatment, while in the second (ἐπί δηλήσει ...etc.) the patients themselves become the subject which will apply on itself this same treatment? His second argument concerns the difficulty presented by the active form of εἴρξειν, and he suggests replacing the infinitive (which interrupts the finite verb forms in the main part of the Oath) with the form εἴρξομαι. Presenting the above interpretations and commenting on them, Professor D. Lypourles agrees with Diller, especially about the second argument.[420]

Ch. Lichtenthaeler, another interpreter of the Oath, has expressed the view that the patient can inflict injury on himself, especially when he has lost hope after a prolonged illness. His close relatives can do him harm as well (especially if they do not want him to survive), in which case the physician becomes a kind of judge between the patient and his relatives.[421]

419. Hippocrates, *The Oath*, p. 22.
420. See Δ. Λυπουρλῆ, *Ἱπποκρατικὴ Ἰατρική*, 1972, pp. 98-99.
421. Der Eid des Hippokrates, Köln 1985, p. 126.

Judging from the general content of the text, it seems more correct to assume that the physician promises to protect his patients from any injury which may be caused through their own carelessness. Besides, in Article 7, a similar expression (ἀδικίης καὶ φθορίης) refers to wrongdoing and harm which the physician himself might cause. The physician's intention not to harm makes sense also as a prerequisite for his professional improvement.

It is true that Hippocrates often draws the physician's attention to the mistakes which the patients make regarding their diet. E.g.: "Keep a watch also on the faults of the patients".[422] Nevertheless, a physician cannot be held responsible for the wrong diet which the patient or his family choose, since it is impossible to watch them at all times. What the physician has a duty to do is to watch the course of the illness, visit the patient frequently and take as much care of him as possible: "Make frequent visits; be especially careful in your examinations".[423]

**Εἴρξειν** *(prevent* or *abstain)*: This form presents a linguistic problem, as it interrupts the series of independent clauses (**χρήσομαι, δώσω**). Besides, there has been a lot of debate since Littré's time concerning the object (and the subject) of the infinitive (**εἴρξειν**). To smooth out the text, Diller has suggested replacing the infinitve **εἴρξειν** with the Future Indicative **εἴρξομαι**.

Other interpreters insist on retaining the conventional form **εἴρξειν**, rather than replacing it. Lichtenthaeler does not accept the form **εἴρξομαι** because, as he says, a physician is supposed to *prevent others*, not *himself*, from making mistakes.

According to some other interpreters, a more general term like **πᾶν** (= *everything*) could be added as the object of **εἴρξειν**, which would somehow bridge the gap between the different views. In that case, the physician would promise to prevent **everything** that might cause harm or injury to the patient.

It is interesting to note that this article shows a linguistic symmetry. It consists of two equal parts between which there is the prepositional phrase **κατὰ δύναμιν καὶ κρίσιν ἐμήν** (= *according to my ability and judgement*). The first part contains six words (**Διαιτήμασί τε χρήσομαι ἐπ' ὠφελίῃ καμνόντων**), and the second part the same number of words (**ἐπὶ δηλήσει δὲ καὶ ἀδικίῃ εἴρξειν**). This figure is called **ἰσόκωλον**, and it produces a sense of symmetry, of proportion. In this case, it is obviously pointed out that the amount of effort for the benefit of the sick will be equal to that for the prevention of harm to the patient.

422. ***Decorum***, XIV.
423. ***Decorum***, XIII.

To sum up, the third article stresses the importance of diet in the process of treatment and the avoidance of any course of action which might harm the patient.

## ARTICLE 4
## Drugs, Euthanasia, Abortion

In the 4th article the physician swears that he will never administer a deadly drug to anyone for the sake of euthanasia, nor will he give to a woman an abortive to help her miscarry.

Οὐ δώσω ... φάρμακον θανάσιμον (= *I will not give a poison*): The word φάρμακον (= drug) had a broader meaning in ancient times: It signified any means by which one could either cure or harm. Many philologists derived the word from φέρω+ἄκος (= *bring+cure*), or in other cases from φέρω + ἄχος (= *bring+harm*). Commenting on Homeric drugs in his work *Critical Remarks*, Eustathius of Thessalonica writes: "Φάρμακον is a middle[424] word, taken to have the bad connotation of *causing harm* and the good one of *bringing about a cure*".[425]

Drugs were usually distinguished, by the addition of an adjective, into: ἤπια *(mild)*, κακά *(bad)*, ἐσθλά *(good)*, λυγρά *(baneful)*, χρήσιμα *(useful)*, φθόρια (destructive), ὀδυνήφατα *(pain-killing)* ὀλέθρια *(ruinous)*, θανάσιμα *(deadly)* etc. From Hippocrates' time, the word began to be used as a technical term denoting a means of treatment. Hippocates himself was not particularly keen on giving drugs. He maintained, in fact, that in some cases the best treatment is to give no drugs at all: ".... it is a good remedy sometimes to use nothing".

In the Hippocratic Collection, depending on the way they were administered, drugs fall into the following categories:

ἀλείμματα *(unguents)*, ἐπιπλάσματα *(plasters)*, καταπλάσματα *(poultices)*, μαλθακτήρια or μαλθακτικά *(emollients)*, κατάποτα *(pills)*, ποτήματα *(potions)*, βάλανοι *(suppositories)*, πεσσοί *(pessaries)*, προσθετά *(additives)*, χρίσματα *(oils)*, χριστά *(salves)*, κατάχριστα *(ointments)* etc. Hippocrates used drugs mainly made from herbs, but also some which were of

424. i.e. neutral
425. Iliad Δ', 191 & 218.

animal or mineral extraction. In those days, the herb-gatherers and the so-called ῥιζοτόμοι (*root-cutters* or *herbalists*) supplied physicians with various herbs or juices from the vegetable world for use in the making of drugs. In classical times, there were the pharmacists or apothecaries, but also the φαρμακοί or φαρμακεῖς (*poisoners, sorcerers*) who made poisons. These poison-makers were regarded as unhappy creatures who were connected with witchcraft or sorcery. According to Suidas, φαρμακός was "one destroyed[426] for the purification of a city, a so-called κάθαρμα (*scapegoat, outcast*)".

Thus, it was easy for those who wanted to commit suicide, or put others to death, to obtain deadly drugs. Nevertheless, sick people usually turned to their physician. So in the ***Oath,*** the physician promises not to supply a deadly drug to any patient who wants to commit suicide. Here, then, according to most interpreters, we are talking about the prevention of **suicide,** not **homicide.**[427] Although there were laws forbidding the administration or supply of poison,[428] it was not easy to ascertain whether a deadly drug had been given, because in those days post-mortem examinations and modern chemistry were unknown.

As Edelstein has demonstrated,[429] sick people who suffered intolerable pain often asked physicians to give them a poison to put an end to their unbearable lives, if they realised that no help was to be expected. The sufferer frequently pressed his relatives or close friends to ask the physician to give him some mild, painless poison to end his life peacefully. Some physicians, when they saw that the patient's condition was absolutely hopeless, went as far as to suggest, indirectly or even directly, that a poison be administered.

Here, then, we have the problem of **euthanasia,** which has troubled society and the experts ever since. The Hippocratic Oath categorically forbids it. In fact, if we examine the phrasing carefully, we can see that this article begins with an emphatic double negative (**Οὐ δώσω οὐδέ φάρμακον ...**), followed by repeated negatives (***Οὐδενί ... οὐδέ .... οὐδέ ....***), with which it is made absolutely clear that there will be no compromise whatsoever. He will not give any poison, no matter how hard he may be pressed (αἰτηθείς).

The question now arises: "Why this absolute and unconditional refusal"? Since it was mainly the Pythagoreans who forbade suicide, Edelstein sees in this

---

426. i.e. sacrificed
427. i.e. murder.
428. cf. Plato, *Laws* XI, 932d.
429. Op. cit., pp. 7-10.

prohibition of the Oath the influence of Pythagorean teaching. Lichtenthaeler expresses a different view: First of all, he points out the similarity of the negatives to those we come across at the end of CaseVI in the first part of ***Epidemics III,*** which is regarded as a genuine Hippocratic treatise: "Nor did she desire anything ... and she drank nothing worth mentioning".

The ethics of the Oath is not middle-of-the-road, compromise ethics. It concerns a minority and constitutes a moot point. Hippocrates is strict in other parts of the Oath, as in the case of lithotomy, for example.

Regardless of what philosophers and others believed, the physician had to take a stand concerning this serious matter. "One cannot imagine", says Lichtenthaeler, "the man who has sworn before Apollo and all the other gods, reaching the point of killing people (intentionally). It would be a blasphemy, an outrage, which would sooner or later bring the god's vengeance down upon him".[430]

In our humble opinion, Hippocrates imposed this obligation on the physicians of his School because: (a) He was a deeply religious man and believed that only the gods determined the right to life and death; (b) he regarded the preservation of human life as the primary aim of medical science; (c) he believed that physicians should not interfere with incurable diseases;[431] and (d) he was well aware of the consequences of an unworthy physician's unscrupulousness. G. Pournaropoulos says: "The oath which was imposed on physicians forbidding them to administer poison was essential, when one considers that even today unscrupulous physicians are employed to administer toxic substances in order to kill".[432]

This Hippocratic declaration was really remarkable, appearing as it did four centuries before the advent of Christianity. This attitude is reinforced these days by the medical circles and the legislatures of most countries in the world. When, for instance, the majority of members in the Dutch Parliament recently voted in favour of euthanasia, the decision appeared on the front pages of all major European newspapers, and caused a storm of reaction in Europe, America and elsewhere.

It is well known that when a proposal for the legalisation of euthanasia was submitted to the European Parliament in 1991, most European Members voted No.

Jack Kevorkian, known as "Dr Death", who with the aid of a special device assists incurable patients to commit suicide, has repeatedly been convicted in the courts of the U.S.A.. Recently his acquittal by a Michigan court caused a

430. Op. cit., pp. 135-141.

431. Cf. ***The Art,*** III.

432. See Ἱπποκράτους Ἅπαντα. Ἐκδοσις ΜΑΡΤΙΝΟΣ, Volume Β', p. 296.

sensation among the American public. It has been observed that, wherever euthanasia has been legalized, there have been many cases of precipitated death which have not been discussed with the patients themselves, are illegal and falsely reported as cases of natural death. In June 1994, the Supreme Court of Holland convicted Dr Chabot for helping a depressed person to commit suicide.

Emmanuel Panagopoulos, professor of surgery, writes: "The facts contradict the claims made by the supporters of euthanasia and confirm the view that the acceptance of active voluntary euthanasia inevitably leads to the acceptance and practice of involuntary euthanasia".[433]

Despite the laxity of morals and the materialistic views of our time, society as a whole still considers euthanasia an outrageous deed and does not accept a physician's act of killing for mercy. No matter how hard people might try to justify euthanasia, it remains an act of taking a human life.

**οὐδὲ ἡφηγήσομαι ξυμβουλίην τοιήνδε:** (= *nor will I suggest such a course)*: It is remarkable that the Oath does not only forbid the physician to give a poison to a patient who wants to put an end to his unbearable life; it also forbids any suggestion which has to do with such an action. Direct or indirect advice concerning suicide, even if it is given under pressure, is considered to be consent and complicity to the act of suicide on the doctor's part.

Having this prohibition in mind, the famous physician Aretaeus (1st century A.D.) described the suggestion of suicide as an equally unholy act on the physician's part: "causing death or suggesting death".

Earlier commentators stressed this commitment most emphatically. Even if the physician were ordered by the ruler of the country to administer poison, or to suggest such a course, they said, he was not justified in doing so.[434]

**Οὐδὲ γυναικὶ πεσσὸν φθόριον δώσω** *(= nor will I give to a woman a pessary to cause abortion)*: This article begins and ends with the same negative expression (**οὐ δώσω**), which creates a wonderful "chiasmus". With this figure, the swearer completes his commitment not to administer a deadly drug, since abortion also involves death.

By **πεσσὸς φθόριος** the author means an oval-shaped medicated plug of wool or lint which was introduced into the vagina of the pregnant woman in

433. See Ἐμμ. Παναγωπούλου, *Τὸ ἀληθινὸ πρόσωπο τῆς εὐθανασίας*, Η ΔΡΑΣΙΣ ΜΑΣ magazine, January 1995, p.28.
434. Cf. Meibonius, op. cit., pp. 127-130.

order to destroy the embryo.[435] The ancients used many kinds of gynaecological pessaries, such as φθόριος (= *destuctive*), ἀτόκιος (= *causing barrenness*), ἀνώδυνος (= *allaying pain*), ὑπνοποιός (= *causing sleep*), συμπεπτικός and παρηγορητικός (*digestive and soothing*), μαλακτικός (*emollient*) ἐννεαφάρμακος, (*consisting of nine ingredients*) and so on. For an abortion in particular they used various methods: philtres, abortives, suppositories, vaginal douches (clysters), pessaries, appendages, expellants and other "abortive medicines".

Judging from various cases we come across in the Hippocatic Collection[436] and from the testimony of the two leading Greek philosophers, abortion was not always a reprehensible act in ancient Greece.[437] Aristotle accepted abortion, but only "before the embryo acquires life and feeling" or in cases of demographic problems, that is where family planning becomes necessary.[438] The parents had absolute power over their children and could rid themselves of unwanted births with their physician's assistance. Many doctors had no hesitation in giving abortive drugs, since law and religion allowed them complete freedom to act according to their own judgement. After all, there were city-states which did not want an excessive increase in population for economic, political and other reasons. Others allowed abortion in order to prevent children being born to old parents, or to maintain a social balance.[439]

Nevertheless, the Pythagoreans regarded abortion as definitely reprehensible. They believed that the embryo had a soul from the moment of conception. And they considered it a man's duty to beget children, so as to leave behind him worshippers of the gods. This concept about the "worship of the gods" is also found in Plato.[440]

Edelstein argues that in no other stratum of ancient Greek society were such views held concerning the unconditional prohibition of abortion. And this is where he establishes one of his arguments that the Oath originated among the Pythagoreans.[441]

It was natural that Hippocates, too, should take a stand on such a serious issue. And, what other position regarding abortion, but its complete rejection, could have been adopted by the servant of "the most renowned art" whose chief

---

435. See Δ. Λυπουρλῆ, *Ἱπποκρατικὴ Ἰατρική*, p.101.
436. e.g. ***Women's Diseases***, I: LXVIII, LXXII and LXXVIII.
437. Cf. Plato, *Theaetetus*, 149d.
438. Aristotle, *Politics* VII, 1335.
439. Cf. Plato, *The Republic*, E 641; Laws, E 740d.
440. See *Laws* VI, 773ε and 776β.
441. Edelstein, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

duty was "to save man"? So he forbade the artificial interruption of pregnancy with abortive remedies, and demanded the implementation of such a prohibition in a most categorical manner. According to Professor I. Lameras, "Hippocrates appears to have been the first to criticise and condemn this act[442] and to bind by oath his pupils, and physicians in general, to abstain from this kind of act".[443]

Some scholars have questioned the validity of the above arguments, since, as they say, in several works of the Hippocratic Collection, such as ***Women's Diseases, The Nature of Woman, Epidemics II, V and VI, The Nature of the Child, Generation*** etc., there are terms like ἐκβόλια (= *abortives*) ἀποφθορά, (= *abortion*), ἀπόφθαρμα (= *miscarriage*) ἀμβλυασμός (= *abortion*) etc., and a number of miscarriages and abortions are mentioned.

First of all, we must point out that modern investigators doubt the authenticity of the above works. Secondly, most of these cases refer to circumstances where the mother's life was in danger. After studying such cases as haemorrhages, disorders of the gastrointestinal canal, acute diseases, tenesmus etc., the eminent Hippocratic scholar Skevos Zervos concludes: "Contemporary obstetrics unquestionably accepts these reasons and methods of Hippocrates, and counts them among the main reasons and methods which may bring about the interruption or pregnancy".[444] It should be noted that the means used by ancient physicians, when there was a very serious reason, were harmless. The ancient ἐκβόλια, for instance, were not actual drugs but sudden movements, shaking and jumping, which caused the expulsion of a paralysed or dead embryo in order to save the mother. Some investigators have pointed out that Hippocrates distinguished between an **abortion** and an **effusion**.[445]

There is no doubt that Hippocrates regarded abortion as an act which degraded the Art, as a kind of murder. The very term ἀποφθορά which he uses to describe abortion shows how much he detested this act. His respect for life is also seen in the advice he gives to physicians in the fifth section of the ***Aphorisms***,[446] to take care of the unborn children as they grow: "Care is needed when the unborn child is of less than four months or of more than seven". This is how the word νήπια is translated by G. Pournaropoulos and E. Kaisaras in A. Martinos' edition of **The Complete Works of Hippocrates** (vol. B', p. 258).

---

442. i.e. abortion.
443. See Ἰ. Λαμέρα, *Αἱ Ἠθικαὶ Ἀρχαὶ τοῦ Ἱπποκράτους*, Ἀθῆναι 1947, p. 23.
444. See *Ἱστορία τῆς Ἰατρικῆς*, Ἀθῆναι 1914, vol. A. p. 134.
445. Cf. Meibonius, op. cit., p. 131, where *abortio* is regarded as criminal while *effuxio* is deemed legitimate.
446. Paragraph XXIX.

In another aphorism, Hippocrates draws the physician's attention to phlebotomy on pregnant women; for it usually causes a miscarriage in the last months of pregnancy: "A woman with child, if bled, miscarries; the larger the embryo the greater the risk".[447] For a pious man like Hippocrates, the artificial interruption of pregnancy would have been a terrible act of impiety against the gods, since the physician would be usurping their prerogatives.

Lichtenthaeler stresses the religious aspect of abortion, especially the fact that such a deed would be an act of impiety against Apollo's sister, Artemis, who was regarded as the protectress of children (*Παιδοτρόφος*). So, even on religious grounds alone, Hippocrates would not have allowed abortion.[448] It should be added here that Artemis was also worshipped as Λοχεία, that is, the protectress of women in childbirth, and as Ὠκυλόχεια, because the ancients believed that she granted a quick and easy delivery.

There is no doubt that this prohibition in the Hippocratic Oath had a great influence on future generations. Scribonius Largus, court physician to the emperor Claudius (41 A.D.), writes the following, which is typical of this stipulation: "Hippocrates, the lawgiver of our profession, taught the principles of science with an oath, under which it has been sanctioned (= sanctified) that no abortive medicine be given or suggested to a pregnant woman by a physician, thus fully preparing his pupils' souls in philanthropy".[449]

Many physicians absolutely refused to administer any abortive medicines, following the Hippocratic Oath faithfully. Slightly disagreeing, Soranus of Ephesus, the greatest gynaecologist of the Graeco-Roman period, gave abortive remedies only when the mother's life was in danger; and not, of course, if she wanted to conceal the fruit of an adulterous relationship, or to preserve her beauty.[450]

From the first moment of its appearance, Christianity considered abortion an unforgivable interference in God's creative work and a crime equivalent to murder, for it has always regarded the embryo "as the perfect human being in the making". According to St. Basil, "those who administer abortive remedies commit murder".

Since the early centuries of its existence, the Church has imposed heavy penalties on physicians and midwives who have collaborated with pregnant women for the interruption of pregnancy. The sixth Ecumenical Council,

447. ***Aphorisms* V**, xxxi.
448. Lichtenthaeler, op. cit., pp. 145-147.
449. See Scribonius Largus, *Compositiones*, pp. 2, 29.
450. Soranus, *Women's Diseases*, I, xviii.

convened at Constantinople in 680, condemned with a special canon (93) all women who either accepted or administered abortive medicines: "Those women who give and those who accept abortive drugs are to be submitted to the punishment which applies to murderers".

Today, with our advanced medical technology, we are given many opportunities to interfere with nature, and quite often we probably do not think of the consequences of our actions. In our permissive society, in which almost anything is accepted, we have begun to lose sight of what is right and what is unacceptable. That is why this prohibition in the Oath is of particular importance for our time, the more so for the nations which legalize abortion and, as a result, endanger their very existence through a sharp decrease in the birth rate.

It is interesting to note the views of brilliant scholars, e.g. "Abortion is equivalent to murder", "Life begins at conception", "The Child is an autonomous being inside or outside the womb" etc., which were heard a few months ago at the United Nations convention on the demographic problem.[451]

A short while ago, the obstetrician B. Nathanson, regretful of the abortions (about 5,000) which he had carried out in the U.S.A., confessed that where the Oath of Hippocrates is ignored "there prevails the collaboration of crooks in the industry of abortion". No matter how badly this Hippocratic stipulation is violated today, it remains a bright example of piety and respect for human life.

In the 4th article, containing the physician's commitment never to have any part in suicide or abortion, the protection, at all costs, of life as the most precious thing is declared most categorically.

This declaration is a landmark in the ethics of the medical profession. "For the first time", says anthropologist Margaret Mead, "there emerges an absolute distinction between killing and curing".

---

451. The Cairo Convention, 1994.

# ARTICLE 5
## Purity of Life and Art

In the 5th article, the swearer promises that he will keep pure his life and his art.

Ἁγνῶς ... καὶ ὁσίως διατηρήσω (= *In purity and holiness will I keep ...*): This article is exactly in the middle of the Oath; and it is the shortest, the most compact and the most significant. According to the structural division followed by some interpreters, there are four articles preceding it and four following it. Lichtenthaeler discerns some influence of the worship of Hestia (= Vesta), whose altar was always in the centre of the temple and had to do with oaths. He even points out the verb διατηρήσω, which is in the middle of the sentence and constitutes the centre of the whole Oath.[452]

Other scholars, however, regard this sentence as a supplement to Article 4 which forbids abortion and the administration of poison for euthanasia.

Edelstein maintains that the physician's promise that he will keep his life and his art pure and holy is directly connected with his previous two promises: "I will not administer a poison ..." and "I will not give ... a pessary".

Sigerist remarks that this statement is the only positively expressed promise in the Oath and that it lies in the middle of a symmetrical structure which consists of the physician's duties towards his patients.[453] Of course, this epigrammatic utterance can stand as an independent sentence, as a separate Article, of particular weight, in fact. Furthermore, the conjuction δέ (= *but*), which is used here as a transitional one, indicates that we have a new complete paragraph, an affirmative sentence between two negative ones.

ἁγνῶς καὶ ὁσίως: Purely and piously, in justice and in holiness. This expression has a universal appeal. With the two almost synonymous and equally powerful adverbs the author projects the basic rules of conduct for every physician, and for every man. "To live in justice and in holiness", Plato was to declare a few years later.[454] And much later, St. Paul was to preach: "To live self-controlled, upright and godly lives".[455] Hippocrates wants the physician pure in deed and clear in thought; for he believes that clear and straight thinking

452. Lichtenthaeler, op. cit., p. 154.
453. Henry E. Sigerist, *A History of Medicine*, vol. II, p. 302.
454. *The Republic*, I 331.
455. *Titus*, 2:12.

makes for clear and straight action. He who thinks purely according to divine law (ὁσίως) also acts honestly, morally, according to human law (ἁγνῶς).The two concepts form a noble combination of virtues, reinforce each other and complement each other. The first *(ἁγνῶς)* stresses honesty towards man, the second *(ὁσίως)* emphasises respect towards godhead. When these two concepts co-exist in the same person, that person becomes useful to others and reaches human perfection.

This declaration in the Hippocratic Oath is reminiscent of the inscription at the temple of Asclepius in Epidaurus:

ΑΓΝΟΝ ΧΡΗ ΝΗΟΙΟ ΘΥΩΔΕΟΣ ΕΝΤΟΣ ΙΟΝΤΑ
ΕΜΜΕΝΑΙ· ΑΓΝΕΙΗ Δ' ΕΣΤΙ ΦΡΟΝΕΙΝ ΟΣΙΑ

that is, "Whoever enters this fragrant temple must be pure; and purity is to think piously".

As we can see, the Asclepiads in Epidaurus demanded piety from those who entered the temple of Asclepius. In the same way, Hippocrates wanted the true servants of the Art to lead a pure and holy life.

This is an utterance with a universal appeal, approaching Christian doctrine. Discussing this phrase and the etymological affinity between ἁγνῶς and ἅγιος (= *holy*), Mottura discerns a dedication to godhead and compares this text with St. Paul's sermon on the imitation of Christ.[456]

βίον τὸν ἐμὸν καὶ τέχνην τὴν ἐμήν *(= my life and my art)*: In many manuscripts and editions the text is given without the definite articles τόν and τήν. We prefer the (RU) version which includes the definite articles, because they give greater emphasis and signify a closer connection between life and art. We are dealing here with two interrelated concepts: Life cannot be imagined without work. Man lives and works. The important point is, however, what sort of life he leads and how he does his work. On this universal issue the Hippocratic Oath adopts a decisive attitude: Purity. With the adverbs (*ἁγνῶς* and *ὁσίως*) it stresses purity and holiness in life and in the exercise of the art; with the verb διατηρήσω it underlines the length and stability which must characterise the virtues of a true missionary. The swearer promises that, for as long as he lives, he will keep pure and holy both his life and his art.

If we try to attribute ἁγνῶς to βίον and ὁσίως to τέχνην, we realise how difficult it is to separate the two adverbs as well as the two nouns. We discover that the two concepts are condensed into one. We have here a rhetorical figure

456. See. G. Mottura, op. cit., p. 16.

called ἓν διὰ δυοῖν *(= two in one)*, which expresses very vividly the purity of holiness in the exercise of the art through life.

Lichtenthaeler examines this Article together with the rest of the Oath and points out the holiness which is shown in the invocation of the gods and the adoption of the physician by his teacher's family (Articles 1, and 2), and the purity which is seen in the physician's duties towards his patients.[457] Commenting on Article 2 in particular, he points out that it is not only the art which becomes a sacred bequest, but life as well.[458]

The importance attached to the words βίος and τέχνη by the writer of the Oath is evident both from the fact that he uses them four times in the text and from the epilogue where the Blessing and the Curse refer to the swearer's life as well as his art. It seems no accident, then, that these two words are found side-by-side in the first Aphorism, too: "Life is short and the art is long ..."

This matching of purity in life and in art was the basis of the Hippocratic physician's professional ethics and reared generations of genuine successors of the great sage of Cos. It is remarkable that the expression *βίον καὶ τέχνην* (= *life and art*) is found in the decrees of various cities, with which these cities bestowed honorary distinctions on Coan physicians for their conduct and their services to the citizens: A 2nd-century-B.C. resolution passed by the City of the Apteraeans in Crete, which was found during the excavations at the Asclepeion of Cos in 1902, says among other things: "Whereas Callipus, the son of Aristocritus, a Coan physician,... has conducted himself with dignity ... both in his life and in his art, showing great diligence, and whereas he has saved many of the citizens, ...it has been decided... to honour... and to crown him ..."

Remarking on the above resolution, and in particular on the phrase "both in his life and in his art", Man. Detorakis writes: "This phrasing has been taken from the Hippocratic Oath *(I will keep pure ... my life and my art)*, which will always remain the foundation of medical ethics".[459]

This phrase, in combination with the rest of the sentence, indicates not only the ideal manner of practising the particular art,[460] but also man's true purpose in life. The combination of a pure life and a pure art is exactly what constitutes an accomplished personality. A life and an art which are in harmony with purity

457. Articles 3, 4, 6 and 7.

458. Lichtenthaeler, op. cit., p. 157.

459. See *Μετάκληση Κώων γιατρών στην Κρήτη τον 2ον αιώνα π.Χ.*, ΚΡΗΤΙΚΑ ΧΡΟΝΙΑ, vol. Λ' 1990, p. 55.

460. i.e. Medicine.

are bound to be of service to society and follow a sure path towards man's perfection. Such an ideal could only have been recommended by a pure hierophant of the art. Hippocrates had already in ancient times been described as "holy in his art and in his character". (Athenaeus).

The 5th article clearly constitutes the nucleus of the Oath and sums up in one line the moral code of the art together with the ideal aim in life. The art is identified with life, in an atmosphere of absolute purity, and becomes a divine mission.

## ARTICLE 6
## Surgery. Respect towards Specialists.

In the 6th article the physician promises that he will not undertake operations for lithotomy but leave them to the specialists.

**Οὐ τεμέω δὲ οὐδὲ μὴν λιθιῶντας** (= *I will not use the knife, not even, verily, on sufferers from gall stone*): There has been a lot of discussion concerning this passage. At first it was thought that Hippocrates here forbids operations in general. However, in other parts of the Hippocratic Collection there are references to "incisions" (**τομαί**), such as trepanation, pleurotomy, amputations etc. Others have argued that he only forbids operations for gall stone, because ancient physicians believed that after such an operation a man was deprived of the ability to procreate. René Moreau has suggested that this is a prohibition against castration (**τομίας**= *a eunuch*). This view was particularly supported by Littré who substituted ΑΙΤΟΥΝΤΑΣ for ΛΙΘΙΩΝΤΑΣ , in which case the sentence reads: "I will not use the knife[461] even on those who wish it.[462] The correction seems very accurate, when one bears in mind that in those days eunuchs were very much sought after, especially in Eastern courts, as Herodotus tells us.[463] Nevertheless, in the end Littré did not dare to adopt this version, either.

---

461. i.e. castrate.
462. i.e. who ask me to.
463. Book H, p. 105.

Reinhold has suggested that the original text must have read: **Οὐ τεμέω δὲ οὐδὲ μὴν ἐν ἡλικίῃ ἐόντας** = *I will not castrate even adolescents.*[464]

Edelstein maintains that with this phrase the Oath aims at excluding surgery altogether from the field of the physician. In his view, the text can be translated: "I will not use the knife, not even on sufferers from stone". In the separation of surgery from medicine proper he discerns some kind of belittling of surgery which was not very common among ancient physicians. Nevertheless, there was at least one medical sect, namely the Pythagoreans, who valued surgery less highly than dietetics and pharmacology. He quotes Aristoxenus, who said that the Pythagoreans "believed least of all in using the knife and in cauterizing". Finally, to the question why the Pythagoreans avoided surgery, Edelstein replies: "The answer can only be a conjecture: he who believed that bloody sacrifices should not be offered to the gods and saw in them a defilement of divine purity could well believe that he himself would be defiled in his purity and holiness by using the knife in bloody operations".[465] As we can see, Edelstein discerns in this prohibition, too, the influence of the Pythagoreans.

Mottura believes that the prohibition of lithotomy was probably initiated by the priests, who feared that it might cause men to lose their procreative power or even die of pain. However, he also expresses the suspicion that this phrase is probably a later addition.[466]

Lichtenthaeler considers this paragraph genuinely Hippocratic and disagrees with those who imply that it was a later addition.[467] Lithotomies were very difficult operations in those days, and a doctor who dared to perform such an operation was in danger of failing, being held responsible and ruining his reputation as a result. It was only after the Hellenistic period and the invention of more advanced equipment that lithotomies were performed by trained physicians like Ammonius, the so-called "Lithotomist".[468]

Petrequin (1809-1876), Professor of surgery, who wrote **Chirurgie d' Hippocrate** in 1873, mentions a great number of difficulties which surgeons faced in lithotomies even in his own time, since there was no proper anaesthesia and patients often fainted; and he assumes that in antiquity lithotomy was "a

---

464. C.H.T. Reinhold, *Ἱπποκράτης κωμῳδῇ*, Ἀθήνησι 1865, p. 37.
465. See Edelstein, op. cit., p. 31.
466. J. Mottura, op. cit., pp. 17-18.
467. like Deichgräber at first.
468. 1st century A.D.

barbaric operation" and that "Hippocrates was right in forbidding it". It is worth noting his testimony that even in his own time there were empirical surgeons who performed lithotomies.

Lichtenthaeler has pointed out that in many parts of the Hippocratic Collection there are references to lithiases (λιθίδες); in fact, they were diagnosed with a catheter called αὐλίσκος (lit. "little reed"),[469] but there is no mention of operations for gall-stone. Hippocratic physicians knew very well how far they could go, and they refused to undertake a risky treatment, because they did not possess the necessary means or specialist knowledge. Besides, Hippocrates was dedicated to the preservation of life by every possible means, so he would never have permitted such operations, which could cause irreparable damage to the patient, including sterility.[470]

We could say, then, that Lichtenthaeler's views, combined with Petrequin's testimony, provide satisfactory answers to most of the questions concerning this phrase. The Hippocratic physician was above all a servant of the Art, and he promised under oath not only to pursue the benefit of his patients but also to avoid any injustice against them. It was natural, therefore, that he should not undertake such a difficult operation, which exceeded his capabilities and might cause irreparable damage. The avoidance of risky operations for wounds in the brain, the liver, the bladder etc. is suggested in other Hippocratic works as well.[471]

ἐκχωρήσω δὲ ἐργάτῃσιν ἀνδράσι πρήξεως τῆσδε *(= but I will give place to such as are craftsmen therein)*: Here again we notice that the second part of the article has six words, exactly the same number as the first. Thus, we have another symmetrical figure, another ἰσόκωλον.

As for the content, we notice that a concession is made here, which indicates that lithotomies were not condemned but left to practical surgeons specialising in such operations. According to early scholars, these men were trained only in this job, acquired a certain amount of experience and performed these dangerous and often fatal operations.

---

469. See ***Diseases*** I, 6.
470. Lichtenthaeler, op. cit., pp. 172 ff.
471. See ***Prorrhetic*** II, 12.

Meibonius informs us that the **"craftsmen"** *(operarii)* of the Oath were empirical, trained in their craft, and undertook lithotomies at great risk. Hippocrates distinguishes them from the real physicians and calls them ἐργάται *(craftsmen).* In his **Onomasticon**, Pollux calls them χειροτέχναι,( artisans, lit. "handicraftsmen")[473] and Hesychius in his *Lexicon* or Collection of Words gives them the title of ἐργαστικοί (workmen).[474]

Boerner maintained that they were specialist physicians. Quoting Herodotus' testimony concerning the specialist physicians of ancient Egypt,[475] he claimed (around the middle of the 18th century) that "in Hippocrates' times there was a distinctly separate class of lithotomist physicians whom the Father of Medicine called craftsmen".[476]

Although Hippocratic surgery had made remarkable progress, there is no evidence that operations for stone were performed by specialists. Nevertheless, the concession ("I will give place") is interpreted by certain scholars as a recognition of some special skill. The physician confines himself strictly within the limits of his own knowledge and capabilities, and leaves to the expert the difficult operation which requires special skill and experience. Thus, we have another example of the Hippocratic physicians' conscientiousness. Deichgräber recognizes here, too, an attitude which is above and beyond the ordinary, a higher principle which, in fact, deprives the physician of a source of income.[477]

Other commentators believe that the removal of stone from the bladder was an operation which was beneath the dignity of a physician (πρήξιος τῆσδε= *such work*), and was, therefore, left to practical healers who were called, with some contempt, ἐργάται *(= craftsmen).*

Lichtenthaeler agrees that these two words (ἐργάται and πρῆξις) imply some kind of contempt, and he even points out that the word πρῆξις is used on purpose, instead of the word τέχνη *(= art).*

Commenting on this concession, Edelstein attributes it ultimately to philanthropy (on the part of the Pythagoreans, of course). He says: "To give place to another craftsman, especially in such instances where the patient might fall prey to a sinful temptation, was a duty demanded by philanthropy, by commiseration with those who suffered".[476]

---

472. See Meibonius, op. cit., p. 161.
473. *History,* B, 84.
474. Cf. Πουρναροπούλου, *Ὅρκος, Προεισαγόμενα,* Ἱπποκράτους Ἅπαντα, ed. ΜΑΡΤΙΝΟΣ, vol. Β', p. 292.
475. Deichgräber, op. cit., p. 108.
476. *Hippocrates, The Oath,* p. 31.

Edelstein's interpretation seems convincing, though one could point out that Hippocrates was at least as great a philanthropist as the Pythagoreans.

To those who regard this paragraph as a later addition one could reply that the Hippocratic Oath could not have omitted the field of surgery. Having covered the subject of dietetics in the third article and that of pharmacology in the fourth, it was natural that in this article it should deal with the third branch, surgery.

In the 6th article, the physician promises not to undertake operations for lithotomy, as they may cause irreparable damage to the patient's health, but leave them to the experts, even though they may be empirical and unscientific.

## ARTICLE 7
## Help the sick. Respect their home.

In the 7th article, the swearer promises to respect the homes of his patients, abstaining from all intenational wrongdoing and harm.

Ἐς οἰκίας .... ὁκόσας ἂν ἐσίω *(= Into whatsoever house I enter)*: In classical (and pre-classical) times, the entry of a stranger into a house took the form of a sacred ceremony. It was natural that the visit of a physician, who came to cure a member of the household, should be even more ceremonial in character.

The Greek house was a sacred place: It had an altar in the centre of it where the sacrifices to the household gods took place, and it was under the protection of the gods. When, in pre-classical times, the hearth (= ἑστία) was deified (Hestia, Lat. Vesta), the sacred centre around which the family gathered became the place where Hestia resided: According to the ancient Greeks, she was the first of the household deities to teach men how to build houses, and grant them all the blessings of family life. It is worth noting that Hestia, the symbol of the home, was a modest, courteous, shy goddess who remained a maiden, despite the tempting proposals of Poseidon and Apollo who wanted her for a wife.

According to popular tradition, people often saw a smile or a frown through the crackling fire of the family hearth.[477]

477. Aristotle, *Meteorologica.*

The household fire was sacred and of divine origin, like the fire of the public altars.

The sanctity of the home naturally accompanied the presence of the physician, who was always received into the patient's home with feelings of respect and who on his part had to show diligence in helping the patient and absolute respect towards the patient and his family.

In several works of the Hippocratic Collection, Hippocrates enjoins physicians to prepare themselves before each visit and to know exactly what they have to do before entering the patient's home: "Know what you must do before going in".[478]

When he enters the patient's room, the physician must watch the way he sits, the way he is dressed, the words he says; he must keep calm, take good care of the patient, know how to deal with the patient's objections, be restrained in the face of trouble which is common in such situations, and in general, mind his conduct, which should always be aimed at helping the patient: "Readiness to do what has to be done".[479]

A physician's visits to the patient's home only concerned the usual ailments, such as fevers and so on. The more serious cases, operations etc., were always dealt with in surgeries.[480]

ἐπ' ὠφελίῃ καμνόντων *(= to help the sick)*: So concerned is Hippocrates with helping and generally serving the sick, that he repeats the phrase which he has used in the 3rd article. Apart from the exhortation "Help or at least do not harm", there are similar expressions in many parts of the Hippocratic Collection: E.g. ***Humours,*** IV, V & X; ***Affections,*** 44; ***Nutrition,*** XI; ***The Physician,*** III & IV; ***Decorum,*** XIII; ***Precepts,*** II and so on. The verb ὠφελῶ *(= help, benefit)*, λυσιτελῶ *(= benefit)* and συμφέρω *(= be useful to)* are used repeatedly in the Hippocratic works to remind the doctor of his basic duty and the primary purpose of treatment.

The medical scholar Adamantios Coraës writes about Hippocrates: "History as well as his writings bear witness to the fact that, in his dealings with medicine, he had no other aim than that which all true lovers of virtue should have, that is to help humanity".[481]

---

478. ***Decorum,*** XI.
479. ***Decorum,*** XII: cf. ***The Physician,*** I.
480. Cf. Hippocrates, ***In the Surgery,*** I & II.
481. Ἀ. Κοραῆ, *Προλεγόμενα εἰς τοὺς Ἀρχαίους Ἕλληνας Συγγραφεῖς*, vol. Β', p. 325.

ἐκτὸς ἐὼν πάσης ἀδικίης ... καὶ φθορίης *(= and I will abstain from all ...wrongdoing and harm)*: Hippocrates wants the physician to keep away from all injustice and corruption.

Justice and honesty are referred to as the most important qualities of a doctor in the Hippocratic treatise ***The Physician***: "He must be a gentleman in character, and being this he must be brave and kind to all ... In every social relation he must be fair, for fairness must be of great service".

Abstaining from injustice is dictated here, not by fear of the law, but basically through the professional consciousness that every physician should have. Any injustice done to the patient is regarded as a "miasma". The awareness that he is always in danger of making a mistake (since, according to Hippocrates, infallibility "is but rarely to be seen" ) is ever-present in the Hippocratic physician's mind. After all, there are always misleading forces (e.g. Ἄτη= Goddess of Mischief) which can lure people and lead them astray. There are dangerous tendencies, such as greed which causes harm and injustice, arrogance, and pathological egomania which despises everything and often leads to excess and to **insolence** (Ὕβρις=Hubris).He must, therefore, be extremely careful so as not to commit any intentional injustice and harm (φθορίη).

It might be mentioned here that the word φθορίη, which does not occur in any other Hippocratic text, has been taken by some contemporary interpreters to be the feminine of the adjective φθόριος (= *destructive*), in which case the physician is supposed to be enjoined to abstain from every "intentional and destructive wrongdoing". Basically, the sense does not change much, since this commitment also aims at abstaining from injustice and doing what is right.

For the ancient Greeks, especially from classical times onwards, justice was the leading principle of life, a universal virtue which incorporated all the others. As Plato put it: "Do not place anything above justice". Aristotle expressed the same sentiment when he said: "In justice there are all the virtues together". And, finally, the Pythagoreans instructed: "Practise justice both in word and in deed".

Despite the fact that all these philosophers, Hippocrates and many others regarded justice as the fundamental social virtue, Edelstein discerns in this promise of the Oath another Pythagorean influence. "Interpreted in the light of Pythagorean teaching ... the recommendation of justice epitomizes all the duties of the physician towards his patient in the contacts of daily life, all he should do or say in the course of his practice".[482] At another point, however, he admits that

---

482. Edelstein, op. cit., p. 36.

unaffectedness and civility which characterise the style of the Oath are to a great extent characteristic of ***Prognostic, Epidemics I & III*** and other Hippocratic writings. A certain rhetorical quality which one notices in the Oath is usually attributed to its content as well as to the influence of the sophists. Rhetoric is also apparent in the parts of the Hippocratic works which deal with the value of the medical art, the correct conduct of physicians and other similar issues.

(8) Finally, the following question remains unanswered: If Hippocrates did not write the Oath, who did? Those who discern in the Oath only Pythagorean influences overlook its original purpose, its true spirit, and remove it from its real environment. Those who reject the authenticity of the Hippocratic Oath do not specify the author of this remarkable text; and it is indeed very difficult to suggest any other medical figure of antiquity, on a par with the scientific and moral stature of Hippocrates, as the author of the Oath. Finally, those who argue that the Oath originated in a guild, with the successive contributions of several physicians, do not take into account the fact that guilds, by themselves, cannot co-ordinate differing elements and so create a perfect organic whole. A masterpiece always presupposes a mastermind, a unique creative personality.[544] This is why even today, in spite of doubts expressed by certain investigators, many Hippocratic scholars regard the Oath as one of the genuine works of Hippocrates.

It is not necessary to tire the reader further by citing more evidence and presenting more arguments in order to prove the authenticity of the Hippocratic Oath. In any case, in analysing the oath, we have presented a number of arguments which have established a direct connection between the Oath and Hippocrates.

According to our evidence, then, the Oath must have originated in the most renowned medical school of antiquity, the School of Cos, and is directly linked with a revolution for those days, that is the extension of the teaching of medicine to young men who did not belong to the family of the Asclepiads. This innovation was obviously introduced by Hippocrates, the great reformer of medical science, who also wrote the Oath, in order to ensure the continuation of the medical tradition and the proper exercise of the "humanitarian art".[545]

---

544. See Lichtenthaeler, op. cit., p. 257.
545. Cf. J. Jouanna, *Hippocrate*, 1992, p. 74.

The fact that the physician is bound by oath to abstain from all sexual relationships with men or women, freemen or slaves, gives the Oath another dimension, which was unusual for the social conditions of those times. It is a statement of purity and equality which very few writers dared to declare before the arrival of Christ.

The right to equality was known among many ancient peoples, but it was not recognized by all. Even in Athens, in the unanimous opinion of lawyers and philosophers, equality existed only among freemen,[488] while for slaves there was a different set of laws which treated them like possessions.

Among the few people who stigmatized this inequality was Alcidamas, an orator and philosopher, who had the courage to declare: "God created everybody free, and nature has made no slaves".

The declaration in the Hippocratic Oath is similar. Its reference to men and women, freemen and slaves, clearly shows the adherence of the Hippocratics to the ideal of equality and justice. At a time when slaves were regarded as the property of their masters, such declarations of respect towards every human being without exception surpass the ethics of the classical world and approach the teachings of Christianity: "There is neither slave nor free, male nor female".[489]

A profound investigator of nature and of man, Hippocrates found equality in the symmetry of nature and the regular proportions of the body. This is why in the Hippocratic works the term δίκαιος *(= just)* often means *equal, symmetrical* or *normal.* E.g. Δίκαιον ἔχουσι τὸ σῶμα οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ τὰς χεῖρας καὶ τὰ σκέλεα *(= Men's bodies are symmetrical as to arms and legs).* We are guided towards symmetry and equality by fairest Nature. Quoting Hippocrates, the Romans later said: **Jure naturae omnes aequales sunt**, that is, **According to the law of nature all men are equal.**

In his endeavour to prove that this prohibition, too, has its roots in Pythagorean teaching, Edelstein argues that the Pythagoreans had the severest views on sexual matters. They "upheld the equality of men and women. They alone condemned sodomy. Besides, in the performance of moral duties, they did not discriminate between social ranks. In that respect free-born people and slaves, for the Pythagoreans, were on equal footing". And he concludes: "Everything, then , that the Oath stipulates in regard to sexual continence agrees

---

488. See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1134o 27.
489. *Galatians*, 3:28.

with the tenets of Pythagorean ethics, in fact with the ideals of these philosophers alone".[490]

Edelstein's views have been opposed by Lichtenthaeler. Briefly, he says: Edelstein quotes the testimony of later authors, and there is no absolute certainty as to whether the above views come from the original ideas of Pythagoreanism or from those of the Neo-Pythagoreans. Furthermore, if equality was upheld by the Pythagoreans, how does he explain the inequality in Article 2, where the term ἄρρεσι (= *male*) is used? If equality was a self-evident principle for every Pythagorean, why is it emphasised here? And, finally, one need not have been a Pythagorean to have shown concern for the slaves, since they, too, were indispensable to the family, many of them in fact as teachers (παιδαγωγοί).

Lichtenthaeler sees rather the influence of the sophists in the attitude to equality in the Oath. Having in mind the cosmopolitan spirit and teaching of the sophists, who said that all people, men and women, Greeks and barbarians, were equal by nature, he quotes Alcidamas' saying that "God has created everybody free, and nature has made no slaves"[491] and points out that Alcidamas, like Hippocrates, was a pupil of Gorgias the sophist. In other words, he perceives a spiritual relationship between the declarations of the two men, who lived at about the same time and were taught by the same teacher.[492]

We believe that, even without any influences whatsoever, the purity of Hippocratic life and art, the sacredness of the family and Hippocratic philanthropy and fair-mindedness were sufficient to justify such a noble declaration.

The 7th article stresses the physician's obligation for a flawless conduct towards the patient and his family, his absolute respect towards the family sanctuary. The swearer commits himself to abstaining from all unjust and immoral deeds and to not losing sight of his sole aim, which is the benefit of the sick.

490. Edelstein, op. cit., pp. 34-35.
491. See above.
492. See Lichtenthaeler, op. cit., pp. 199-204.

# ARTICLE 8
## Professional Secrecy

In Article 8, the young physician swears to keep his patient's secrets and conceal any other information which should not be published abroad.

This article shows an affinity with No. 2, as we can see from the words ἡγήσεσθαι-ἡγεύμενος and βίου-βίον and the connection between the contract (in No. 2.) and professional secrecy (in No. 8.).

ἐν θεραπείῃ *(= in the course of treatment)*: Hippocratic treatment borders on ritual. The physician is not supposed to be satisfied with the initial diagnosis and the prescription of a course of treatment. He is expected to visit his patient and give his undivided attention to the course of his illness: "Make frequent visits and be especially careful in your examinations", Hippocrates commands. The Hippocratic physician's care is not limited to the improvement of the patient's physical condition, but extends to his psychological state as well.

As for giving treatment, Hippocrates recommends prudence and calmness at all times, not rashness and daring. "And if he can be made well in many ways", Hippocrates says, "one should choose the least troublesome".[493] Every time a physician treats a patient, the Hippocratic maxim "Help or at least do not harm" should be his guide. Here, in particular, it is combined with discretion.

ἢ ἴδω ἢ ἀκούσω *(= I shall see or hear)*: This multiconjunctional figure ( ἤ ...ἤ .... ἤ ...) is very appropriately used here to emphasise that, whatever the swearer sees or hears, he will keep quiet about and never disclose "what should not be published abroad". The verb ἐκλαλέεσθαι (= *blurt out*) is also well-chosen, for it renders accurately the idea of publicizing secrets.

κατὰ βίον ἀνθρώπων *(= in my intercourse with men)*: With this phrase, Hippocrates extends secrecy beyond the bounds of the medical profession. In his contacts with other people, a man learns many different things, such as family disputes, religious beliefs, political convictions, social attitudes etc., which are not supposed to be divulged. He, therefore, has a duty to keep quiet

493. See ***Joints***, LXXVIII.

when others are being talked about and, in any case, control his tongue, because he might harm his fellow-men morally and socially. An educated man, in particular, must always respect other people and, remembering the importance of his position and of his mission, exercise self-restraint in what he says or does.

σιγήσομαι, ἄρρητα ἡγεύμενος *(= I will not divulge, holding [them] to be holy secrets)*: For the first time in the history of medicine, the obligation to keep silent about a secret under oath is introduced. Hippocrates is here establishing professional secrecy: The patient tells his secrets to his physician, confesses whatever has a bearing on his illness, and often relies on his discretion. The physician sees, hears and learns many things about the patient and his family which should not be publicized outside the home. He is, therefore, obliged to keep them secret, no matter how hard he may be pressed to divulge them. Being an excellent psychologist, Hippocrates knows how difficult it is to keep a secret,[494] and for this reason he imposes secrecy as a sacred duty. Pasteur Radot says: "From the moment he enters the patient's quarters he no longer has the right to disclose what is happening there. Let us remember the Oath of Hippocrates."

Professional secrecy is extremely important in the medical profession. A doctor who honours his oath and keeps secrets inspires respect, is completely trusted by his patient, raises the patient's morale and always exercises his mission beneficially.

Hippocrates' injunction concerning professional secrecy is in absolute conformity with the commands of ancient Greek religion, according to which people's privacy must be universally respected. It is in this religious realm that, according to Lichtenthaeler, the verb σιγήσομαι, the key word in this article, belongs.[495]

Divulging a secret may not have been condemned by human courts of law, but, according to the religious views of the ancient Greeks, it was punished by the gods. Babbling is serious enough an offence, but when perpetrated by a physician, it is much more serious and often borders on impiety. According to Hippocrates, a physician's reticence should be absolute, admitting no violations. Publicizing a patient's secrets constitutes "intentional injustice" and, therefore, incurs the condemnation of godhead.

Reticence is also extolled at the beginning of the Hippocratic treatise ***The Physician,*** where τὸ σιγᾶν *(silence)* and εὔτακτον *(regularity)* are regarded as

494. Cf. Chilon's "It is difficult to keep silent about secrets".

495. See Lichtenthaeler, op. cit., p. 210.

the characteristics of a prudent physician and particularly enhance his reputation. By contrast, prattling is considered to be a dangerous "disease" in a physician. As Menander put it: "A prattling physician is a disease on the disease".[496]

Edelstein connects the holy secrets ( ἄρρητα) of the Hippocratic Oath with the silence imposed by Pythagorean teaching:

"... silence about things which are not to be communicated to others was considered a moral obligation by the Pythagoreans. They did not tell everything to everybody. They did not indiscriminately impart their knowledge to others. They expected the scientists to be reticent and ready to listen".[497] According to Aristoxenus, "One should not tell everybody everything".[498]

Lichtenthaeler, on the other hand, does not see this as necessarily a Pythagorean influence, since ἄρρητα *(= secrets)* were also part of the Greek Mysteries and of ancient comedy. Besides, the Asclepiads with whom Hippocrates was directly connected are known to have been reticent about their knowledge, too. Apart from ***Law*** which enjoins the physician to reveal **holy things** only to **holy men**,[499] ***Decorum*** describes the wise physician as "silent [in the face of disturbance]" and "in the face of silence ready to reason and endure".[500]

But quite apart from Hippocrates' connection with the Asclepiads, there is, above all, his righteousness and his respect for man, especially for the suffering man. This respect dictates, even imposes, reticence.

St Jerome presented the *promise of silence* in the Hippocratic Oath as an example for the clergy to follow.

In Article 8, Hippocrates promotes the virtue of reticence and establishes professional secrecy. With the Oath, this professional duty becomes sacred and inviolable, and assumes a prominent place in medical ethics.

Professional secrecy in medicine has been faithfully observed up to the present day by most physicians in the world, and has been regarded as a sign of prudence and self-restraint.

---

496. *One - Line Gnomes*, 379.
497. Edelstein, op. cit., p. 37.
498. *Diogenes Laertius*, VIII, 15.
499. See Article 2 above.
500. ***Decorum***, III.

# ARTICLE 9
## A Wish and a Curse

In the epilogue, the swearer wishes that he may prosper in his life and in his profession if he carries out his oath; but that he may suffer the opposite if he transgresses it and forswears himself.

The last article has much in common with the first one, so that the text forms an excellent circle. The prologue begins with **Ὄμνυμι** *(= I swear)*; the epilogue begins with **Ὅρκον** *(= oath)*. At the beginning of the Oath we have an invocation of the gods; at the end of it, a prayer and a curse in the presence of the gods. Both the invocation and the prayer-curse refer to the fulfilment of the Oath. The similarity of expression is also striking: **ἐπιτελέα ποιήσειν** (first article), **ἐπιτελέα ποιέοντι** (last article). The Oath begins and ends in a tone of sacred awe. The piety which characterizes the opening lines of the Oath also marks its closing lines. Here, again, we see what many scholars have pointed out: that "the ancient Greeks conversed with the divine powers".

**Ὅρκον ....τόνδε** *(= this oath)*: This is the way in which almost all ancient Greek oaths ended, although not all of them contained a curse. Here the prayer for a prosperous life is combined with a curse for the opposite fate (i.e. misery, failure etc.) in the event of the swearer's breaking his oath.

Besides the noun **ὅρκος**, the verbs used here (*συγχέω, ἐπαυρίσκομαι* and *ἐπιορκέω*) are also Homeric. Keeping in mind that old things, as a rule, inspire reverence, we can say that with these expressions the Oath becomes more sacred.[501]

**μὴ ξυγχέοντι** *(= break it not)*: Apart from the sense of *mixing*, the Homeric verb **συγχέω** also implies **breach, violation,** as we understand it in **ὅρκίων σύγχυσις** in the 4th rhapsody of the Iliad. Similar expressions are: **ὅρκους συγχέαι** in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, **συγχέαι σπονδάς** in Thucydides (Book E), and elsewhere. Here we have an apt metaphor from the idea of mixing liquids for the purpose of deceiving. Thus, **συγχέοντες** were the *unreliable*, the *ungrateful* and the *dangerous*, while **μὴ συγχέοντες** were the *reliable*, the *honest* and those who kept their *promises*.

---

501. Cf. Lichtenthaeler, op. cit., p. 214.

This phrase could have been omitted, since it is preceded by the synonymous phrase ἐπιτελέα ποιέοντι which actually implies the absolute fulfilment of the Oath. Nevertheless, it is included in order to convey greater gravity. The ultimate aim is to prevent the swearer from any violation or distortion of the Oath. The Oath is sacred and inviolable, and it has to be unswervingly observed by everyone, without misinterpretation or distortion.

εἴη *(= may)*: We have singled out this word because it carries the whole weight of the last unity. The oaths and promises of the ancient Greeks usually ended with a sentence in the Optative Mood: E.g., "If I keep my oath, may I enjoy many blessings".[502] Most academic oaths in Greece today also end with an Optative, e.g. "May God help me in life". Man knows that, even if he remains faithful to his obligations, his success and prosperity ultimately depend on God's will. The ancient Greeks were deeply conscious of man's transience and the uncertainty of fate. They believed that even above the gods there was Μοῖρα *(= Fate)*, inconceivable and irresponsible!

Within the above framework, the swearer felt the need to make a wish for his future. He who undertakes very big responsibilities, like a physician, feels this need even more urgently.

ἐπαύρασθαι καὶ βίου καὶ τέχνης *(= gain [reputation] for my life and for my art)*: The archaic verb ἐπαυρίσκομαι has been appropriately chosen here in order to emphasize the passion for success, while the words βίος *(= life)* and τέχνη *(= art)* are again shown inseparably, as in the central part of the Oath.[503] These two concepts cannot be understood separately; for when success in life is combined with success in the art, a man feels that his happiness is complete.

So, at the end of the Oath, the young physician wishes for himself happiness in life and success in his art as he is about to put himself at the service of his fellow-men. As a "servant of the art",[504] the physician feels extremely happy when he does his work properly. This wish is not motivated by selfishness but mainly by conscientiousness and altruism, which should be the characteristic qualities of every physician. The more he studies and improves himself, the more positive his service to society is going to be; for the aim of medicine is " to heal and save man".

---

502. Demosthenes, *Against Conon*, 41.
503. Article 5.
504. ***Epidemics A***, *XI*.

δοξαζομένῳ παρὰ πᾶσιν *(= reputation among all men)*: Esteem was a great ideal for the ancient Greeks. The acquisition of a good name was often the basic motive for their actions. The view that it is worth sacrificing oneself for the common good because in this way one acquires immortal fame can be found in many ancient writings, from Homer to Plutarch, and it constitutes the foundation of the Greek sense of honour.

This love of fame is also discernible in Greek nomenclature: More than three hundred ancient Greek names have κλέος (= *glory, fame*) as their prefix or suffix. For instance: **Cleomenes, Cleobulus, Pericles, Sophocles,** and so on.[505]

Solon asks for "happiness from the blessed gods" and "eternal glory from all men".[506] Plato speaks of "eternal and undying fame".[507]

In the Hippocratic Oath, the young physician also wishes for himself eternal fame: Praise bestowed on him, not only by the patients he cures, but by all men; and not just fame for this (temporary) life, but glory that will follow him after death. Of course, a precondition for this immortal fame will be his virtue and his service to his fellow-men. With his righteous life and the successful exercise of his art (ἁγνῶς and ὁσίως), he will continue to earn the trust and esteem of his fellow-citizens, and society at large, which will remember him **forever** (**ἐς τὸν αἰεὶ χρόνον**). In other works of the Hippocratic Collection, too, we come across references to respect[508] and good reputation.[509]

Since the ancient Greeks had a confused concept of life after death and did not believe in eternity as it was preached by Christianity much later, the pursuit of eternal fame must have been for them a hope for immortality.[510]

Fame, therefore, is not sought here for the gratification of a selfish ambition – after all, Hippocrates always advised modesty and was described by Galen as "a lover of truth, not glory" – but rather as a reward for the services of the successful physician and a recognition of his accomplishment.We should add here that the Pythagoreans had a different conception of fame or glory. Pythagoras' injunction was: "Avoid ambition and the love of glory".[511] The Pythagoreans were not concerned about the opinion of the multitude; they were

505. See Ε. Κιαπόκα, Ἀνάλυση τοῦ Ἱπποκρατικοῦ Ὅρκου, p. 25.
506. I, 34.
507. *Symposium*, 208 c.
508. e.g. ***Prognostic***, I.
509. e.g. ***Decorum***, XVIII.
510. ch. Lichtenthaeler, op. cit., p. 220.
511. Diogenes Laertius.

only interested in the approval of the few, the chosen, the connoisseurs. This is a strong indication that the Oath could not have been written by a Pythagorean philosopher as Edelstein has claimed. "He who wishes to be famous among all men cannot be a Pythagorean", says Lichtenthaeler.[512]

παραβαίνοντι ... καὶ ἐπιορκέοντι *(= transgess it ...and forswear myself)*: The violation of the Oath, or forswearing, is given greater emphasis by the use of two synonymous participles. For the ancient Greeks, the violation of an oath was an impious act, which brought down punishment from the gods. Menander writes: "If you forswear yourself, do not think that you will escape the god's notice";[513] and Phocylides enjoins: "Do not violate your oath, either intentionally or unintentionally, for the immortal god loathes forswearers".[514]

Thus, by uttering these words, the physician here feels that any violation of the oath will be an offence and an outrage against the gods. He must, therefore, observe his oath faithfully and carry out his duties to the full and throughout his whole life.

τἀναντία τουτέων *(= the opposite of these)*: The Oath ends with a self-curse. The swearer lays himself under a curse, namely, to suffer the opposite of what he has just wished, if he violates his oath. He surely has in mind great misfortunes which he does not mention by name. Deichgräber has suggested that the swearer deliberately avoids mentioning by name the evils that may befall him, for fear of bringing them down upon himself.

Similar expressions occur in very solemn oaths in which the swearers guarantee the preservation of democratic institutions or of treaties, or the proper management of public and sacred money.

In Mario Segre's collection of Coan inscriptions, which was published two years ago, there is one dating from the 3rd century B.C. with an oath to Apollo, where the promise for the upright management of the temple money is confirmed with the statement: "If I keep my oath, may I enjoy blessings; but if I violate it, may the opposite be my lot".[515]

From various ancient judicial speeches, we learn that in the oaths taken at lawsuits, the litigants and their witnesses uttered awful curses in order to

---

512. Op. cit., p. 342.
513. Menander, *One-Line Gnomes*, 347.
514. Phocylides, *Gnomes* 16-17.
515. See Mario Segre, *Iscrizioni di Cos*, Roma 1993, p. 131 ed. 196.

convince the judges that they were telling the truth. Here is a typical passage from Demosthenes: "If I am forswearing, may I be utterly ruined, myself, as well as whatever I possess or expect to possess".[516]

By the phrase "The opposite" we can imagine, among other misfortunes, a miserable life, professional failure, and social discredit. In Hippocrates' ***Law*** we are told that the only punishment meted out to the unworthy physician is dishonour: "Medicine is the only art which our states have made subject to no penalty save that of dishonour".[517] Bearing in mind the importance which the ancient Greeks attached to reputation, we can understand how heavy the penalty of ill repute was, that is, of defamation and discredit.

In the last article, the swearer makes a wish that he may succeed in his life and in his art; but at the same time, as he is determined to fulfil his promises to the end, there is a curse that he may be a complete failure if he violates his oath.

Like the prologue, the closing article (i.e. the epilogue) has a religious base. The Oath is taken before the gods, and any violation will incur divine punishment.

---

516. Demosthenes, *Against Conon*, 41.
517. ***Law***, I.

# IX. GENERAL REVIEW OF THE OATH

In examining the Oath as a whole, we discern a scholarly composition and an exemplary moral code. All its concepts serve the basic purpose of life, and all the moral principles expounded in it are organically connected together and submit to one central idea:

At the beginning, with the invocation of the gods, the Oath is given authority, formality and sanctity. The promises which follow are now sacred and inviolable.

The young physician's first promise, that he will honour his teacher like his parents, establishes an unbreakable bond between pupil and teacher. Expressing his profound gratitude towards his teacher, the newly-initiated young man promises to teach the art to his teacher's sons without a fee. The recognition of the teacher's toil is praiseworthy, and the young physician's disinterestedness – so rare in our times – is really remarkable.

The teaching will not be mere delivery, but "written, oral and practical" instruction, that is, professional training, scientific instruction and practical exercises, all of which require a system, organization and hard work.

At this point, Hippocrates imposes the extension of teaching beyond the physicians' families, because he believes that (a) everyone has a right to education, and (b) medicine can be exercised properly and improved continually only by those who have the inclination, the ability, and the dedication to duty.

Beginning with his duties towards his patients, the young physician promises, first of all, that he will always be of service in the exercise of his profession and that he will carefully avoid all harm and injustice against his fellow-men. But immediately he adds, "according to my ability...", because he is aware of the difficulties and of the big responsibility he is undertaking.

With the first prohibition, that he will never administer a deadly drug, the Oath emphasises piety as a fundamental quality in a physician, as well as the moral responsibility of the scientist; while the condemnation of abortion underlines his respect for human life from the moment of conception. Hippocrates' purpose is to restrain the physician from all misconduct, which can drag him down to the depths of corruption and unscrupulousness.

In the very centre of the Physician's obligations, the wise author of the Oath places the most solemn promise: "I will keep pure and holy both my life and my art". This is a masterly way of expressing a most profound concept. Such a

covenant constitutes a rule of life. It sums up all the duties of the physician and of every other professional man. For, when a man leads a pure life (that is, according to human law) and a pious life (that is, according to divine law), he improves himself and achieves perfection; and only an accomplished personality has the ability to exercise a profession as a mission in the service of humanity.

Now, if he is to be of service to humanity and abstain from injustice and corruption, a physician must, above all, exercise self-restraint and prudence. He must respect himself, the patient and the patient's family. A man who cannot restrain his passions and impulses should never enter other people's homes: He certainly cannot exercise a mission.

Within this framework of respect towards man, the Hippocratic Oath establishes professional secrecy.As a clever psychologist, Hippocrates is well aware that, owing to his position, a doctor sees, hears and learns many things about his patients which should not be published outside the home, so he imposes absolute secrecy. In fact, he considers this duty so imperative, that he extends it to people's everyday social contacts. Here again, a great truth is made clear: That a man must be particularly careful about what he says and always restrain his tongue when other people are being talked about; otherwise, he may harm his fellow-men.

Finally, the young physician's wish to prosper in life if he carries out his oath, or to suffer the opposite if he breaks it, shows the faith that the Hippocratics had in their important mission, and their irrevocable decision to remain steadfast in the exercise of their duties for the rest of their lives.

Now, if we want to present all these duties under one general heading, we can conclude with the following fundamental principle: **A man becomes useful and accomplishes his mission if he leads a pure life and places his profession in the service of his fellow-men.**

This rule has remained, and will remain, eternal and unchangeable, no matter how times may change; for it will always constitute a rule of life for all true men, and an immortal principle in human relationships.

This is why the Oath has justly been described as a masterpiece of moral and religious greatness.

INTERNATIONAL HIPPOKRATOUS FOUNDATION of KOS
1990
220




# X. IDEAS AND MORAL CONCLUSIONS

1. As guardian of moral order, God is the indisputable guarantor of the sincerity of a man's promises.
2. Self-knowledge and a sense of responsibility are the foundations of a successful professional career.
3. A pupil owes exceptional honour and eternal gratitude to his true teacher.
4. Disinterestedness in imparting knowledge is a teacher's first duty.
5. The aspiration to learn is a fundamental ideal in life.
6. A physician must have high principles and a proper scientific education, in order to be useful at all times.
7. Any intervention for abortion is absolutely contrary to the primary aim of medicine, which is the preservation of human life.
8. He who believes in God and loves his fellow-men thinks purely and acts honestly at all times.
9. Conscientiousness is a decisive factor in the exercise of any profession.
10. Self-restraint is the foundation of moral behaviour, which should especially mark a doctor.
11. Justice and kindness are among the fundamental qualities of a successful professional.
12. It is the sacred duty of every physician, and every man, not to disclose other people's secrets.
13. Reliability secures a good reputation and respect among men.
14. A man proves his worth by his principles and his service to society.

# XI. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH

The question of the authenticity of the Oath has troubled many scholars, and even today various problems concerning the date of its composition and its author are being discussed by experts.

In his 1839-1861 edition of the Hippocratic Corpus, the famous French Hippocratist Émile Littré lists the Oath among the genuine works of the Father of Medicine.

Some scholars, like Daremberg, regard the Oath as one of the oldest works in the Hippocratic Collection. In a thoroughly-documented article on Hippocrates which he wrote for the Realencyclopädie in 1913, Gossen considers the text to have been the written crystallization of the oath which the Hippocratics took, and he believes that it is based on genuine sources.

Some scholars claim that the text of the Oath originated in the vocational oath of the priests of Apollo and Asclepius. Others, like Meyer-Steineg and Schunack, have suggested that it belongs to an earlier age than that of Hippocrates.

Deichgräber has discerned in the Oath an adherence to the idea of justice and Apollonian ethics, and has argued that the Oath belongs to the age and school of Hippocrates.

On the basis of similarity between certain moral precepts in the Oath and the Pythagorean rules of conduct, Edelstein (as we have shown in the analysis of the relevant articles) has looked towards Pythagorean ethics, and expressed the view that the Oath was given its final form by a Pythagorean physician during the second half of the 4th century B.C.. Edelstein's work, **The Hippocratic Oath** (1943), has influenced many investigators of the Oath during the last fifty years.

Some scholars agree (with Edelstein) that certain basic principles in the Oath come from Pythagorean circles, whereas others point out that in ancient times there were other closed circles which showed similar modes of conduct. Some linguistic investigators, while agreeing with Edelstein about the Pythagorean influences on the Oath, disagree about dating the Oath in the second half of the 4th century B.C..[518] On the basis of its language and its relation to other works in the Hippocratic Collection, which was compiled in the 4th century B.C., they attribute the composition of the Oath to the end of the 5th or the beginning of the 4th century B.C..

---

518. e.g. Jones, Diller.

In a second study in 1995, Deichgräber attributes to the basic ideas in the Oath a much more general character than that attributed to them by Edelstein, and he does not agree that many parts of the Oath are of Pythagorean origin. Since 1983, he seems to have been inclined towards accepting the authenticity of the Hippocratic Oath.

Lichtenthaeler, a contemporary investigator of the Oath (1984), does not see any important Pythagorean influences in it. Commenting on Edelstein's views, he says that Edelstein "was influenced by the rationalistic spirit of his time and saw the issues in the Oath subjectively, through his Pythagorean spectacles".[519] After years of investigation he has reached the conclusion that this extraordinary text was the work of a creative mind, the mind of Hippocrates.

Those who reject the Pythagorean origin of the Oath put forward, among other arguments, the following:

(a) The Pythagoreans swore chiefly by **tetractys**[520] and avoided other oaths since Pythagoras' command was "not to swear by the gods".[521] (b) Fees had no place in the closed circle of the Pythagoreans, whereas in the Oath there is mention of a fee, and the impression that there was a tendency to widen the medical circle. (c) The Pythagoreans were among the few Greeks who showed no interest at all in fame, whereas the physician of the Hippocratic Oath wished that he might "gain forever reputation among all men"; therefore, he could not have been a Pythagorean.

Naturally, it is not easy to prove beyond doubt the authenticity of the Hippocratic Oath, but there is a fair amount of evidence which points towards the great old Coan:

(1) In the first place, the four gods, (Apollo, Asclepius, Hygeia and Panacea) with whose names the Oath begins, occupied, as we have elucidated in the analysis of the first Article, a prominent position in the ancient Coans' religion and in the Asclepeion of Cos, where the pious Asclepiad, Hippocrates, was nurtured and educated.

(2) There is a passage in Aristophanes which seems to hint at the Oath of Hippocrates: In the **Thesmophoriazusae**,[522] where Mnesilochus asks Euripides to swear that he will help him, he mentions "The Hippocratic community",

519. See Lichtenthaeler, *Der Eid des Hippokrates*, 1984, p. 286.
520. i.e. the sum of the first four numbers, 1+2+3+4.
521. See Diogenes Laertius VIII, 22.
522. ll. 269-274.

while Euripides assures him that he swears by all the gods: "I swear, then, by all the gods together". Thus he uses a similar expression to the one used in the prologue of the Hippocratic Oath ("I swear ...by all the gods and goddesses"). This is the reason why certain scholars, like Anagnostakis, Lichtenthaeler and others, take "the Hippocratic community" to mean the **association**, the **brotherhood** of the gods who are referred to in the Oath of Hippocrates – and not to the children of Hippocrates the General, whom Aristophanes satirises in the **Clouds**, nor to the collection of statues belonging to another Hippocrates, as some other interpreters have suggested. The above view is reinforced by the next lines in the comedy which refer to oaths and wishes in the name of the gods and goddesses, such as lines 272, 295, 310, 331 and 356. From this interpretation, it is evident that the Oath of Hippocrates was known in Athens before 411 B.C., the year in which Aristophanes' **Thesmophoriazusae** was put on stage.

(3) The expression ἀδελφεοῖς .... ἄρρεσι (*male siblings*) in the 2nd Article points to the Hippocratic family environment. As we know, the birth of boys was a great advantage for the propagation of the art. For the genuine Asclepiads in particular, descent on the man's side, the so-called **ἀνδρογένεια**, was of the greatest importance, because the title of "Asclepiad" had often been claimed since classical times by other physicians who did not belong to the Asclepiad family. This is why Hippocrates' son Thessalus in his ***Speech of the Envoy*** very proudly says to the Athenians, "we the Asclepiads by male descent" (**κατ' ἀνδρογένειαν**). That this phrase is directly connected with the Asclepiads of Cos was confirmed some years ago by the publication of the **Delphi Inscriptions**. From these inscriptions we learn that the Asclepiads of Cos and Cnidos by male descent took a special oath at the temple of Delphi and had special religious privileges which they were careful to maintain by this Oath. Concerning the above expression in the Hippocratic Oath, we should bear in mind that the word **ἀνδρογένεια** (= *male descent*) exists only in Coan and Cnidian inscriptions.[523] This is another indication that the Oath is directly connected with an Asclepiad from the Cos - Cnidos area.

(4) The influence of the Oath is often evident in the inscriptions of Cos, especially those of the Alexandrian period. In our analysis of the 5th Article of the Oath, we mentioned a decree of the 2nd century B.C., with which the

---

523. See J. Bousquet, *Inscriptions des Delphes*, B.C.H., LXXX 1956, P. 579; cf. Paton-Hicks, op. cit., p. 70, No. 36.

Apteraeans had honoured the Coan physician Callippus, son of Aristocritus, for his success "both in his life and in his art", an expression which comes from the Hippocratic Oath. In another resolution, of the people of Ales and Pela in Cos, the physician Isidorus, son of Nicarchus, is honoured with a golden wreath for his excellence "in his art and the other aspects of his life". In this phrase, too, we can see quite clearly the influence of Articles 5 and 9 of the Oath.[524]

The key-phrase in the Hippocratic Oath, "in purity and holiness", is used almost unchanged or slightly altered in Hellenistic and later inscriptions of Cos, e.g.: "having been an **upright** clerk of the market and a **pious** judge of contests" found in a 1st-century - A.D. inscription.[525]

The blessing and curse expressed in the epilogue of the Oath are phrased in a similar way in oaths which refer to the management of sacred money or the preservation of democratic institutions and are found in inscriptions of the Alexandrian period, e.g.:

"If I keep my oath, may I enjoy blessings;
but if I break it, may I suffer the opposite".[526]

A similar expression is seen in an oath of the people of Telos addressed to their Coan allies in a 3rd-century-B.C. inscription:

"If I keep my oath, may I have many blessings;
but if I break it, may I suffer the opposite".[527]

(5) Certain important issues which are touched upon in the Oath are dealt with in the same spirit in other works of the Hippocratic Collection which are regarded as genuine. Here are some examples: (a)The basic idea of service to the sufferer, "to help the sick", which predominates in the Oath is also emphasised in ***Epidemics I*** with the maxim "Help, or at least do no harm", and in other Hippocratic works. (b) The combination of **life** and **art**, which is repeatedly stressed in the Oath constitutes the basis of the first and most famous of the Hippocratic ***Aphorisms :*** "Life is short and the art is long ..." (c) The Hippocratic triptych, physician - patient - disease, found in the Oath, is also emphasised in ***Epidemics I:*** "The art has three factors, the disease, the patient, the physician. The physician is the servant of the art".[528] (d) The ability to judge,

---

524. See Paton-Hicks, op. cit., p. 221, No. 334.
525. See M. Segre, op. cit., p. 175, unit 15.
526. See M. Segre, op. cit., p. 131.
527. See Sherwin-White, *Ancient Cos*, 1978, p. 89.
528. ***Epidemics I***, XI.

which is mentioned twice in the Oath ("according to my ability and judgement"), is also pointed out in the first ***Aphorism*** with the words "judgement [is] difficult". (e) The special care for diet is presented in the same way in the ***Diet*** books and other Hippocratic works as it is shown in the Oath. For instance, in ***Joints*** **LXIX**, Hippocrates enjoins: "One must be careful as to diet"; and in ***Epidemics*** **III**[529] we read: "One who has knowledge of these matters can know whom he ought to treat, as well as the time and method of treatment". (f) The acquisition of a good reputation ("reputation among all men"), which the swearer wishes for himself if he keeps his oath, is almost identical with the justified admiration which a successful physician may evoke, as it is seen in the first chapter of ***Prognostic:*** "He will justly win respect and be an able physician".

(6) The linguistic similarities between the Oath and the genuine Hippocratic works are remarkable. Apart from the characteristics of the old Hippocratic language common to all, the means of expression in the Oath are very similar to those in the works which are attributed to Hippocrates:(a) The **multiconjunctional figures** or sentences, so common in the Oath, are often found in ***Prognostic, Epidemics I & III, Fractures, Joints*** **etc.** For example: "... καὶ ἀγρυπνέωσί τε καὶ ἐκπλαγέωσι καὶ κλαυθμιρίζωσι καὶ τὸ χρῶμα μεταβάλλωσι ..." (... and they cannot sleep and are terrified and moan and they change colour ...")[530] "...περιάγειν καὶ περικάμπτειν καὶ μὴ... βιάζεσθαι ... καὶ παρωθέειν ..." (... keep it up and use movements of circumduction and flexion, and do not force it ... and press ...")[531] "... ἄγρυπνός τε καὶ ἀπόσιτος καὶ διψώδης ἦν καὶ ἀσώδης". (" ... she lost sleep and appetite, and suffered thirst and nausea").[532] (b) The **pairs of synonyms** which appear in the Oath, such as ἁγνῶς καὶ ὁσίως (in purity and holiness/pure and holy), ἐπὶ δηλήσει καὶ ἀδικίῃ (with a view to injury and wrongdoing), are also very common in the above-mentioned Hippocratic works: E.g. περιεστικὸν καὶ κάρτα ὠφελέει (it is a very favourable sign of recovery and very beneficial),[533] καλῶς ἰητρευμένου καὶ ὀρθῶς ἐπιδεομένου (good treatment and correct bandaging), [534] περὶ τῶν τεκμηρίων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων σημείων (about sure signs and about symptoms generally)[535] θανατώδεες ἦσαν καὶ πλείους ἀπώλλυντο (the cases were dangerous and more died).[536]

529. Chapter XVI.
530. ***Prognostic,*** XXIV.
531. ***Joints,*** XVIII.
532. ***Epidemics III,*** Case XI.
533. ***Prognostic,*** XIV.
534. ***Fractures,*** V.

(c) **Parallel figures** of speech, like ἐπιτελέα ποιέοντι καὶ μὴ ξυγχέοντι ( if I carry out ... and break ... not) of the Oath, are often found in other Hippocractic writings: ἐνθυμεῖσθαι καὶ μὴ λανθάνειν (to recognize, and not to pass over),[537] πυρετοὶ ξυνεχέες καὶ οὐδὲν ἐκλείποντες (Fever, continuous and not intermittent,) [538] πάντα κακὰ ποιέουσιν, ἀγαθὸν δὲ οὐδέν (They do all sorts of harm and no good).[539] (d) **Isocolons**, i.e. pairs of clauses consisting of equal "members", or an equal number of words, which we pointed out in the 3rd and 6th Articles of the Oath, are also present in the genuine Hippocratic treatises: ἀγάλλεται μὲν ὁ ἰητρός, χαίρει δὲ ὁ ἐπιδεδεμένος (the practitioner rejoices, and the patient is pleased),[540] οἱ μὲν ἡμέρην μίαν ζήσαντες, οἱ δὲ ὀλίγῳ πλείονα χρόνον (living one day or a little longer),[541] ἤν τε ἐξ ἀρχῆς προγνῶς ἤν τε καὶ ἔπειτα μεταγνῶς, (whether you prognosticate it from the first, or recognize it later).[542] (e) The **quadruple negative** in Article 4 of the Oath, **οὐ** δώσε δὲ **οὐδὲ** φάρμακον **οὐδενὶ** αἰτηθεὶς θανάσιμον, **οὐδὲ** ὑφηγήσομαι ξυμβουλίην τοιήνδε (Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course) has been compared by contemporary interpreters with the negative in ***Epidemics III,*** Case VI: **οὐδ'** ἐπιθύμησεν **οὐδενός**. ἄδιψος, **οὐδ'** ἔπινεν **οὐδὲν** ἄξιον λόγου (nor did she desire anything. No thirst, and she drank nothing worth mentioning).[543] (f) The **repetition** of words or phrases which are used in the Oath, also occur in the Hippocratic works which are considered genuine: E.g., the various forms of **ποιέω** in the Oath (ποιεύμενος, ποιήσειν, ποιήσεσθαι, ποιέοντι) are reminiscent of the forms of **προγιγνώσκω** which one repeatedly comes across in Chapter I of ***Prognostic,*** or of **κρίνειν** in the last chapter of the same treatise, or of **ἐνθυμέεσθαι** which is used three times in the first chapter of ***Airs Waters Places.***

(7) The style of the Oath is simple, clear and serious without being verbose, like the style of all genuine Hippocratic writings. The precision, directness,

---

535. ***Prognostic*** XXV.
536. ***Epidemics I,*** XIV.
537. ***Prognostic,*** XXV.
538. ***Epidemics I,*** II
539. ***Fractures,*** XXX.
540. ***Joints,*** XXXV.
541. ***Prognostic,*** I.
542. ***Fractures,*** XXIX.
543. See Lichtenthaeler, op. cit., p. 136.

unaffectedness and civility which characterise the style of the Oath are to a great extent characteristic of ***Prognostic, Epidemics I & III*** and other Hippocratic writings. A certain rhetorical quality which one notices in the Oath is usually attributed to its content as well as to the influence of the sophists. Rhetoric is also apparent in the parts of the Hippocratic works which deal with the value of the medical art, the correct conduct of physicians and other similar issues.

(8) Finally, the following question remains unanswered: If Hippocrates did not write the Oath, who did? Those who discern in the Oath only Pythagorean influences overlook its original purpose, its true spirit, and remove it from its real environment. Those who reject the authenticity of the Hippocratic Oath do not specify the author of this remarkable text; and it is indeed very difficult to suggest any other medical figure of antiquity, on a par with the scientific and moral stature of Hippocrates, as the author of the Oath. Finally, those who argue that the Oath originated in a guild, with the successive contributions of several physicians, do not take into account the fact that guilds, by themselves, cannot co-ordinate differing elements and so create a perfect organic whole. A masterpiece always presupposes a mastermind, a unique creative personality.[544] This is why even today, in spite of doubts expressed by certain investigators, many Hippocratic scholars regard the Oath as one of the genuine works of Hippocrates.

It is not necessary to tire the reader further by citing more evidence and presenting more arguments in order to prove the authenticity of the Hippocratic Oath. In any case, in analysing the oath, we have presented a number of arguments which have established a direct connection between the Oath and Hippocrates.

According to our evidence, then, the Oath must have originated in the most renowned medical school of antiquity, the School of Cos, and is directly linked with a revolution for those days, that is the extension of the teaching of medicine to young men who did not belong to the family of the Asclepiads. This innovation was obviously introduced by Hippocrates, the great reformer of medical science, who also wrote the Oath, in order to ensure the continuation of the medical tradition and the proper exercise of the "humanitarian art".[545]

---

544. See Lichtenthaeler, op. cit., p. 257.
545. Cf. J. Jouanna, *Hippocrate*, 1992, p. 74.

# XII. THE INFLUENCE OF THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH

(The Hippocratic Oath through the ages)

The universality of the moral precepts of the Hippocratic Oath and its profound humanitarianism have contributed to the survival of this remarkable text through the centuries and its decisive influence on medical ethics, on the moral codes of related professions, and even on world decrees in modern times.

In discussing the Hippocratic Oath, the great 19th-century Hippocratic scholar Émile Littré said, among other things, that the Greeks, having exerted a powerful influence on the scientific future of medical science, were also the first, at least in the West, to influence its moral future, by formulating at such an early time the first and foremost duties of the physician.[546]

Already in Alexandrian times, the basic principles of the Hippocratic Oath were regarded as absolutely necessary for the proper exercise of the medical profession, and were propounded as rules of conduct for physicians towards their patients.

In a poetical version of a medical oath written by Heliodorus (1st century B.C.?) the swearer, after invoking Asclepius ("the gentle god of Tricca"), Apollo and Zeus, affirms that he never allowed himself to be bribed, nor did he consent, either through need or through friendship, to causing harm to anyone, but lifted his pure hands towards the sky and kept his thoughts away from evil . Here are the last two lines, which remind us of the 5th and 6th Articles of the Hippocratic Oath:

"But my pure hands do I raise to the bright sky,
and keep my mind absolutely undefiled by vice".[547]

Although the Romans initially regarded Greek medicine with suspicion, they attached great importance to the Hippocratic Oath and adopted its religious principles and the principles of disinterestedness, humanitarianism, respect for the art and the endeavour to cure as far as the physician's ability would allow.

Scribonius Largus, court physician around the middle of the first century A.D., acknowledged that, through the Oath, Hippocrates had laid the moral foundations of medical science, and that physicians had a duty to observe the

546. See É. Littré, op. cit., IV, 25.
547. Heliodorus, *Apolytica Nichomachea.*

injunctions of the Oath and abstain from giving abortive medicines to pregnant women. He went on to point out that with his principles, Hippocrates prepared his pupils' souls in humanism: "Longe praeformans animos discentium ad humanitatem".[548]

Galen, the most famous ancient physician after Hippocrates and the best interpreter of his works, was a faithful upholder of the principles of the Hippocratic Oath and an ardent supporter of the Hippocratic legacy. In his connotations, he always takes the opportunity to promote the moral principles of Hippocrates.

On an Oxyrrhynchus papyrus dating from the 3rd century A.D., a few lines have been preserved which refer to the prohibition of lithotomies and the administration of deadly poison as well as to respect for the art. They really echo the well-known views and injunctions found in the Hippocratic Oath: "Not to use the knife on sufferers from stone, nor administer a poison to anybody, nor do anything else that goes beyond the art".[549]

On some fragments of an inscription found in the temple of Asclepius just below the Acropolis of Athens which date from about 200 A.D., certain lines from a poem have been deciphered which refer to the physician's duties: "That he will cultivate his soul and keep away from everything that is against divine law and the Oath ... That he will try to help equally the slaves, the poor, the rich, the rulers; like a brother, he will help everyone ... he will not hate anyone ...nor raise his demands". These are precepts which clearly echo the principles of Hippocrates.[550]

A metrical version of the Oath, dating from about the 4th century A.D., has been preserved in some handwritten codices in Florence,[551] the Vatican, Paris, Copenhagen and elsewhere. In this oath, the physician invokes the "always great among the immaculate gods", and briefly vows as follows: "I will not harm anyone, either local or stranger, nor will I let anyone bribe me to commit any grievous violation or administer any poisons which cause homicide ...but, raising my pure hands towards the heavens and keeping my mind away from evil, I will endeavour to do the things which ensure man's integrity, giving to everyone precious and life-giving health".

It is worth noting that the swearer invokes **one** eternal God in the light, now, of the new religion. The oath strongly emphasises the physician's

---

548. Scribonius Largus, *Compositiones*, S. 2, 29.
549. POxy. 437 - III 77.
550. See G. Mottura, op. cit., p. 29.
551. *Laurent. plut.* 74,3.

commitment not to harm anybody and not to administer a deadly drug, his care about preserving his purity, and his endeavour to give everyone most precious health.

During the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, the influence of the Hippocratic principles on helping sufferers was profound, and it was greatly strengthened by the spirit of Chistianity with its redemptive message of love towards one's neighbour. In the first centuries of the Christian era, the Hippocratic Oath was partly adapted to Christian teaching. As a matter of course, the prologue with the invocation of the ancient gods was replaced by the benediction: "Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ...". The epilogue with the wish for glory and reputation was altered to an invocation for God's help. The main part of the Oath remained almost intact, except for Article 7 (about lithotomies) which was omitted. In other versions of the Oath, benevolence and disinterestedness are particularly emphasised, while the pupil's obligation to teach his teacher's sons is expressed as an obligation to teach anyone who asks him to.

It is worth noting the Byzantine versions of the Hippocratic Oath, in the form of a cross, which are found in the handwritten codices **Vaticanus**[552] of the the 12th century and **Ambrosianus B 113** of the 14th century entitled: **The Hippocratic Oath as it might be taken by a Christian doctor.** After the prologue "Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, that I do not lie", the swearer promises: "I will not defile the teaching of the medical art". Then all the articles (except No. 7 which forbids lithotomy) are set out in a different order and with some linguistic alterations. First, the prohibition against administering a deadly drug is set forth with a slight variation in the second part: "... nor will I give to a woman an abortive medicine, either from above or from below". Next, there is the promise of imparting instruction in the art, which is expressed as follows: "I will teach this art, as is proper and necessary and fitting for Christians to learn, without grudge and without an indenture". The physician's obligations concerning helpful treatment, a pure life, the avoidance of injustice, "intentional or unintentional", and professional secrecy are phrased in approximately the same terms as in the Hippocratic Oath. In the epilogue, the poetic ἐπαύρασθαι is replaced by the benediction "So help me God", while the rest remains almost unchanged.

With the invasion of Europe by the barbarians, medical science began to be limited to the clergy. Many Church Fathers and Scholars greatly appreciated the

552. Vat. Urbinas gr. 64.

moral principles of the Hippocratic Oath and presented them as exemplary teachings. St. Jerome pointed out to the clergy the zeal, the respect for man and the observance of professional secrecy imposed by the Oath of Hippocrates. The Venerable Basil the Yoynger emphasized the principles of philanthropy and disinterestedness which Hippocrates established through the Oath. The same kind of appreciation is expressed by the scholarly monk Cassiodorus and by others.[553]

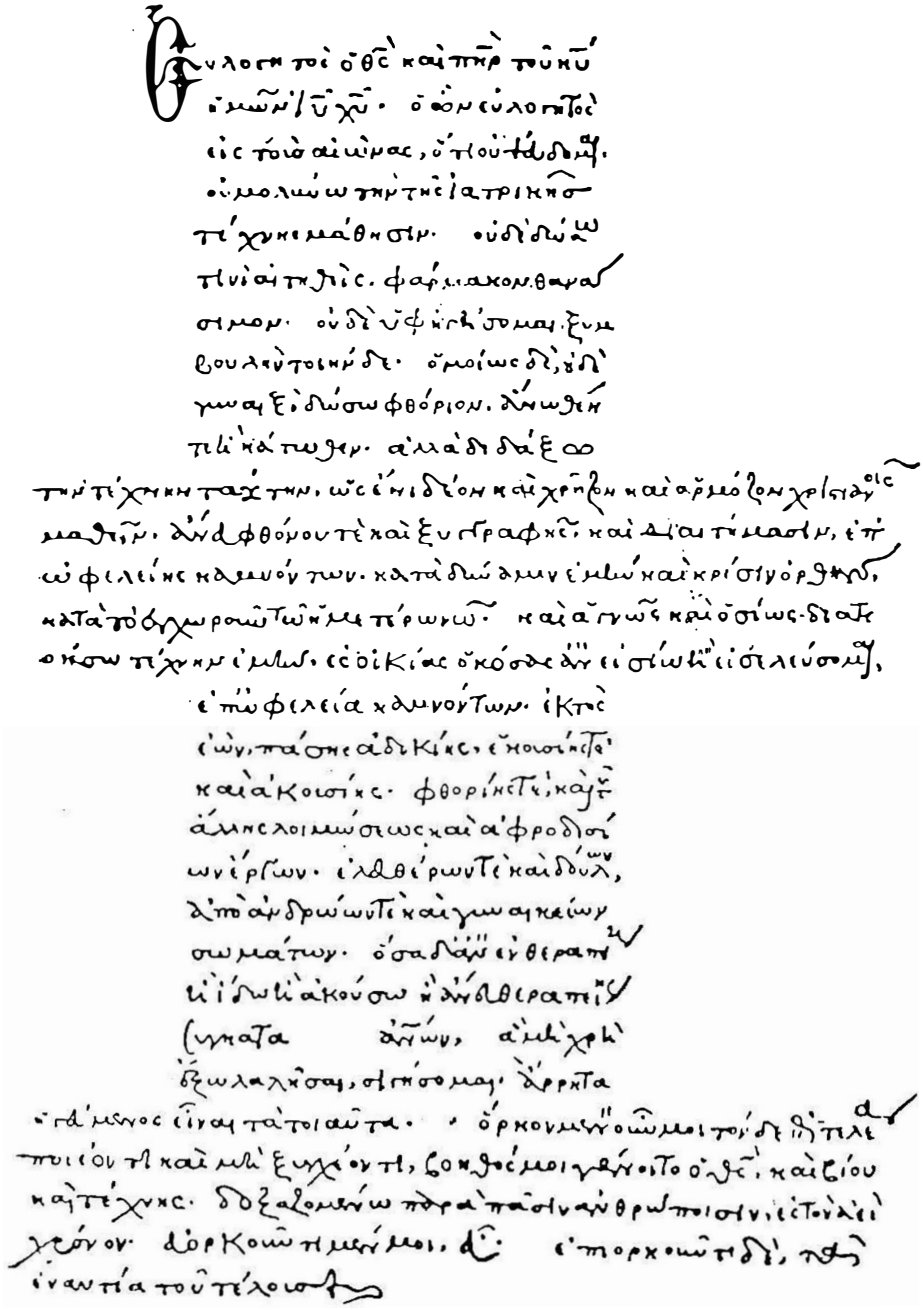
With the spread of Hippocratic medicine to the Arabs during the eighth century, the Oath of Hippocrates became known to the Arab world. A literary translation of the Oath into Arabic in 816, which is attributed to Hunain Ibn Ishaq, shows a blending of Hippocratic and Arabic religious elements and is particularly interesting. In place of Apollo we now have Allah, the Lord of life and death, the giver of healing, while in place of the other gods and goddesses we have the saints (male and female) of Allah. The invocation of Asclepius remains, however, as does the rest of the text with very few changes. Although the Arabs, and more generally the Moslems, officially avoid, for religious reasons, any reference to Hippocratic ethics, it is most likely that the above translation was the actual oath which Arab physicians took in those days.[554]

A modification of the Hippocratic Oath was attempted in Spain in the 12th century by the ophthalmologist Muhamed al Gafiqi. The text *(Testamentum Hippocratis)* includes the main rules of the Hippocratic Oath with some additions or alterations. The obligation to teach the art to the teacher's sons is now changed to an exhortation to fulfil a human duty: "Take care of your teacher's children as you would of your brothers". Concerning the fee that the physician might demand, we have an addition: "Let him not seek riches, but divine reward, in return for treatment." Favour towards paupers is also stressed: "If possible, let him not charge the poor even for the medicines".

With the establishment of the first European universities, the Hippocratic Oath was introduced into their Medical Schools. The Medical School of Salerno acquired great fame with its dedication to ancient Greek medicine. It followed the Hippocratic principles so faithfully that its seat, Salerno, was named **Civitas Hippocratica** (the Hippocratic State). Already in the 11th century, its medical students began to take the Hippocratic Oath. An important addition was the physician's obligation to treat the poor free of charge. It is remarkable that the

553. See chapter on *Hippocrates and Religion.*

554. See Deichgräber, op. cit., p. 112.



A Byzantine version of the Hippocratic Oath, found in the 14th-century handwritten codex Ambrosianus B 113 (Milan).

prospective physician is obliged to obey the regulations of the School and *not to contradict his teachers' opinions*, which obviously springs from medieval authoritarianism.

Towards the end of the 12th century, the medical oath of the University of Montpellier followed the basic principles of the Hippocratic Oath. Its central points were, roughly, as follows: "In the presence of the Professors of this School and my fellow-students, and before the image of Hippocrates ... I swear in the name of the Supreme Being that I will observe the rules of honour and righteousness in the exercise of Medicine. I will offer my services to the poor free of charge, and I will never demand an exorbitant fee for my work ... I will be discreet when entering the patient's home ... I will not divulge any secrets that I may be trusted with, and I will not contribute to the corruption of morals or to crime. Full of respect and gratitude towards my teachers, I will impart to their sons the knowledge which I have received from them. May I have the esteem of men if I keep my promises; may I be discredited and despised by my colleagues if I do not keep my oath". As we can see, even the obligation to teach the teacher's sons is maintained, although the historical conditions have now changed. On the whole, during the Middle Ages medical science followed the Hippocratic tradition, and the physician's oaths conformed with the Oath of Hippocrates.[563]

With the invention of the printing press, the Hippocratic Oath was first published in Rome in 1483 by Brentius, and later by other publishers, and became more widely known. Due to the revival of classical learning and the great interest in the Oath during the Renaissance, it was edited singly thirteen times in Greek and Latin and ten more times together with other Hippocratic writings within a century.

In reviewing his own life and wishing to show that he had always observed the principles of Hippocrates and Galen, the Jewish physician Amatus Lusitanus, who lived in Ferrara and Ancona in Italy and died in Thessaloniki in 1568, published an oath (1539) which must have been sworn by Jewish physicians. Here are its main points:

"I swear by immortal God and by his most sacred ten commandments which were given to Moses ... that I will not deviate from tradition ... I will not use deceit. I will always endeavour to enhance people's welfare ... If I lie, may I be punished by the indignation of God and his angel Raphael, and may no one trust me from then onwards. I will not be greedy for payment, and I will offer

555. See G. Mottura, op. cit., p. 70.

my services free of charge when necessary. I will pursue the restoration of the patient's health through careful treatment ... People of all faiths – Jews, Christians or Moslems – will be equal in my eyes ... I will show the same concern for poor and rich alike. I will not betray the secrets which they may entrust to me ... I will not administer a poison, and I will not cause an abortion ... I will always keep in mind the teachings of Hippocrates and Galen, the fathers of Medicine, and I will never forget the work of many excellent men of my science ...."As we can see, the influence of the Hippocratic Oath is evident.[556]

During the 16th and 17th centuries, the Hippocratic Oath, together with other works of Hippocrates, like ***Prognostic, Airs Waters Places*** and ***Aphorisms,*** was used as a textbook in the universities of Bologne, Rome, Padua, Montpellier, Paris and so on.

Variations of the Hippocratic Oath or versions of oaths like that of Montpellier, [557] with very few alterations, were composed or preserved during the 18th century as well. The influence of the Hippocratic Oath is also apparent in the oath taken by doctors at the University of Berlin, dating from 1810 and including briefly the following:

"I solemnly promise and swear that I undertake to practise the art, not for my own benefit, but in order to serve the glory of God, safeguard the health of my fellow-humans and, as far as I can, contribute to my art. I will carry out my obligations faithfully and devoutly ... and I will help all sufferers, rich or poor, without discrimination ... I will not endanger anybody's life through fruitless experiment or by dubious means ... and I will not degrade myself by practising my art with immoral intentions ... I will treat my colleagues in a manner befitting the dignity of my art ... I will co-operate with them for the treatment of the sick and, to the best of my ability, I will make the work to which I have been dedicated a holy mission. So help me God and His Holy Gospel".

The English physician Thomas Percival (1748-1804), of the University of Edinburgh, published in 1803 an important treatise on **Medical Ethics** in the form of a series of exhortations, which is clearly related to the Oath of Hippocrates. He divided his treatise into articles like those of the Hippocratic Oath, and based the ethics of the medical profession, to a great extent, on the principles of Hippocrates, especially those of the Oath.

---

556. See G. Mottura, op. cit., p. 72.
557. See above.

Percival's medical ethics was quite effective, and deeply influenced the ethical codes of the English-speaking world. Its influence on the ethical code (1847) of the American Medical Association is quite obvious. This ethical code, too, promotes professional secrecy, the benefit of sufferers, good manners and philanthropy on the part of the physician, and so on.

The influence of the Hippocratic Oath can also be seen in the work of the great humanist and founder of the International Red Cross, Henry Dunant, **Un souvenir de Solferino** (1865). The ethical code of the Red Cross is based on the principles of humanitarianism, voluntary service, disinterestedness, justice, honesty etc.

In the 19th century, the Hippocratic Oath began to be translated into various modern languages. There were several translations into French, the most important being that of Émile Littré (1844). A notable German edition of the ***Oath*** and the ***Aphorisms*** was that of Regensbourg in 1864. English translations of the Oath were published in America by P. Smith (Baltimore, 1892), in England by W.H.S. Jones (1924) and elsewere.

The influence of the Hippocratic Oath is also apparent in the oath which was taken by English nurses towards the end of the 19th century. The text is roughly as follows:

"I am solemnly bound before God and before this Convention to lead a pure life and to practise my profession lawfully. I will abstain from all harm and malice and I will not take nor supply any poisonous substance ... I will do my best to raise the standard of my art and I will safeguard any personal information I may be entrusted with and any family matter that I may come to know in the course of my profession. I will help the physician in his work, and I will attend to the welfare of those who entrust themselves to my care".

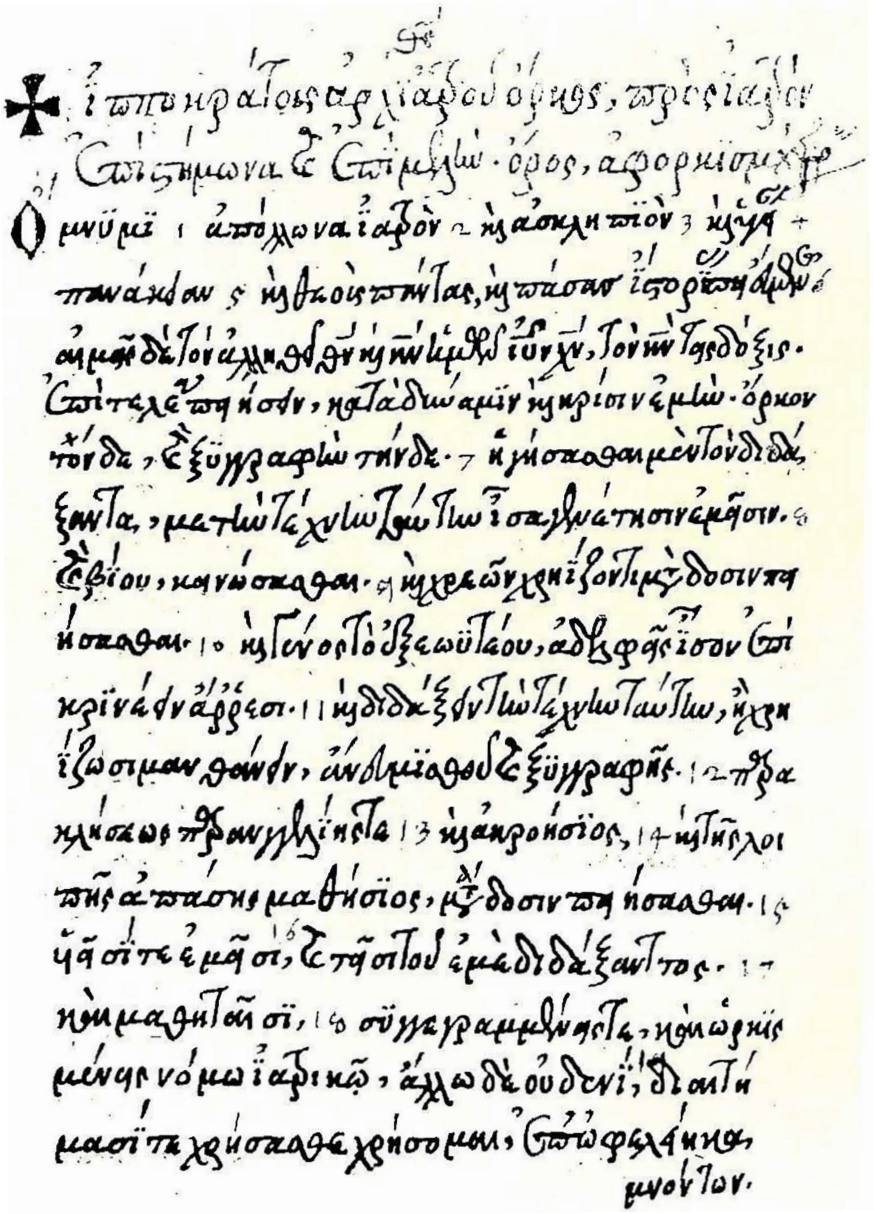
Many medical oaths of our own times either contain the basic rules of the Hippocratic Oath or have adapted its principles to contemporary conditions.

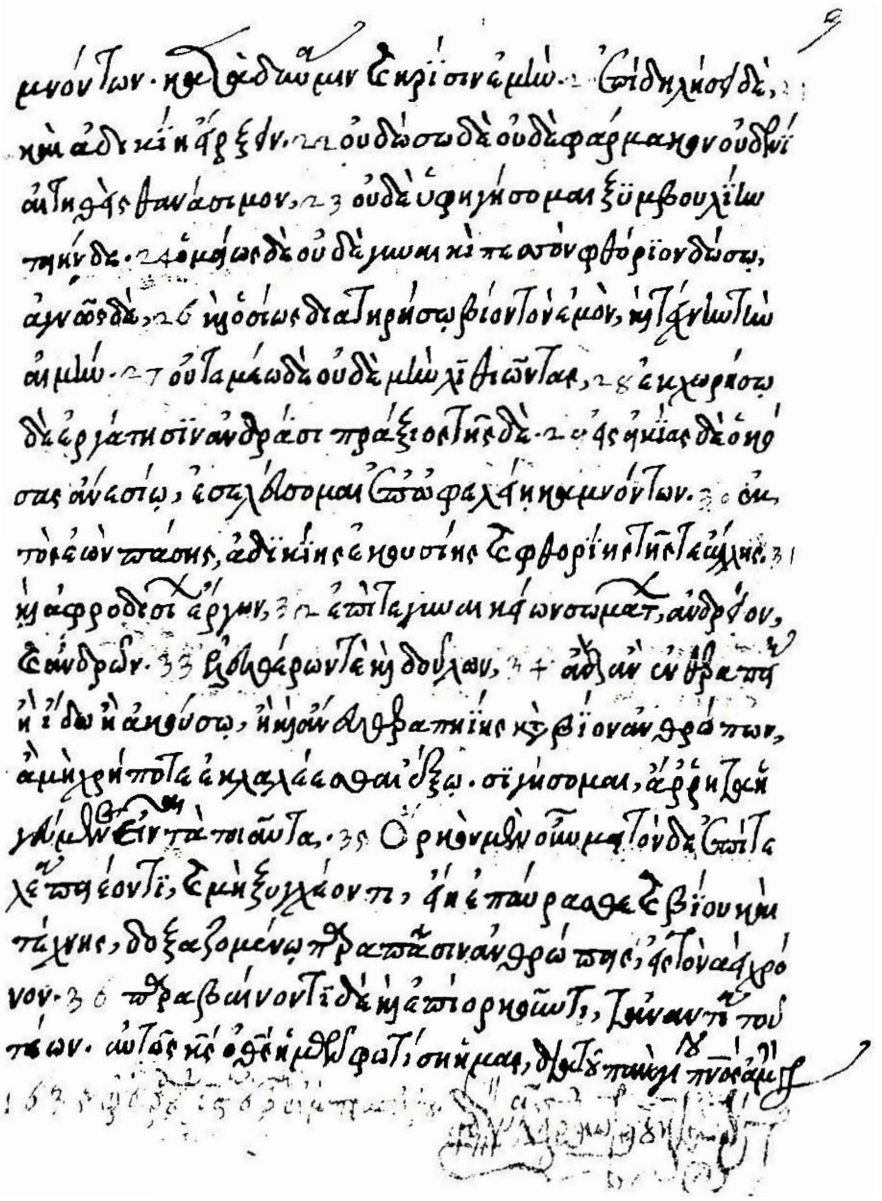
The German physician's oath of 1926 is worth noting. It contains the main Hippocratic injunctions concerning the protection of the unborn child, professional secrecy, the blameless conduct of the physician and his humanitarian attitude, and stresses his commitment to abstain from all injustice. A significant change which appears for the first time is the rule which says that the most important duty of a German doctor is to care for the health of the German nation. Thus, for the first time, the nationalist element is introduced into the medical oath.[558]

---

558. See K. Deichgräber, op. cit., p. 116.

# OATH OF HIPPOCRATES, CHIEF PHYSICIAN





16th-century manuscript (Ibera Monastery library, Mount Athos, No. 4302).

In 1947, the World Medical Union was founded which, in its general assembly, issued an important statement, the **Geneva Declaration**. This declaration, concerning the doctor's duties, basically follows the Hippocratic tradition. Referring to its basic principles, Mottura says that the Geneva Declaration of 1948-49, together with the International Code of Medical Ethics, appears even today like a contemporary extension of the Hippocratic Oath.[559] Here are some articles of the Geneva Declaration:

"I swear to dedicate my life to the service of humanity. I will treat my teachers with... respect and gratitude. I will practise my profession with conscientiousness and dignity. My patients' health shall be my primary concern. I will respect the secrets which they will entrust me.... I will not permit religious, racial, political ... obstacles to intervene in the exercise of my duty. I will maintain the highest possible respect for human life from the moment of its conception ... I promise the above freely, honesty and sincerely". The influence of the Hippocratic Oath is again obvious.

The Soviet doctors' oath (1971) is also in conformity with the basic principles of the Hippocratic Oath, in spite of the different views of Marxism concerning the exercise of the medical profession.

With its declaration of the patient's rights (Lisbon, 1981), the World Medical Association followed faithfully the moral principles of Hippocrates. Many scholars consider that declaration an abridged version of the Hippocratic Oath.

During the last few decades, under the influence of mechanistic ideas, some people have begun to question the validity of Hippocratic principles and to propose the substitution of an updated text for the Oath of Hippocrates. The ethical problems which have emerged from the new medical technology and the changes in social structure have provided an excuse for some scholars to describe as outdated or extremely strict some of the prohibitions of the Hippocratic Oath, such as the prohibitions against euthanasia, abortion, the disclosure of professional secrets etc.

There are certain answers to the above arguments: First of all, the Hippocratic Oath refers to professional ethics, not to the ethics of medical research or to biotechnology. It is a symbol of the ethical principles in the professional life of doctors. The Oath of Hippocrates is of historical importance, because its prohibitions represent the first indications of professional

559. See G. Mottura, op. cit., p. 128.

organization. Even where it does not provide guidelines according to contemporary rules, says Spiros Marketos, it offers a useful prospect.[560]

During the last few years, some Jewish-American guilds have been trying to have the Hippocratic Oath replaced by a prayer written by the 12th-century Arab-Jewish pharmacologist and physician Moses Maimonides. In this prayer, which was first published by M. Herz in 1783, the Jewish physician asks God to guard him against greed and megalomania which are the enemies of humanism and truth ... to strengthen his heart so that he can serve equally the rich and the poor, the honest and the dishonest, friend and foe, since they are all God's creatures, ... to grant him health ... to enlighten him etc.

This is a prayer which every physician, depending on his faith and ideology, can address to the Almighty, often or seldom, usually adapting it to his needs. However, there is a great difference between a prayer and an oath. Those who object to the replacement of the Hippocratic Oath by Maimonides' prayer use, among others, the following arguments: (1) In Maimonides' prayer, the physician is possessed by a constant awe and asks everything from God, whereas in the Hippocratic Oath, in swearing before godhead, the physician is confident that he will fulfil his obligations through his own ability and moral integrity. (2) In the Jew's theocratic prayer we can see a transference of responsibility to the Almighty for the proper exercise of the profession, whereas the Hippocratic Oath projects the individual's effort and the sense of responsibility of each physician.[561]

We must point out that, in spite of these efforts and the vast social changes, the Oath of Hippocrates continues to survive triumphantly and to be projected as the charter of medical ethics and a model for international declarations. Today, many Medical Schools in advanced countries give their young graduates a copy of the Hippocratic Oath or expect the recitation of the Hippocratic Oath, with very slight alterations, at graduation ceremonies for the awarding of Doctor's degrees.[562]

The promotion of the ethical principles of Hippocrates by the International Hippocratic Foundation of Cos, and Professor Spyros Marketos' recommendation that Doctors of Medicine take the Hippocratic Oath on the home island of Hippocrates, are being received very favourably by the international medical community.

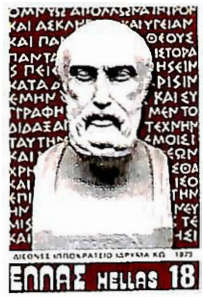
---

560. See S. G. Marketos, *Le serment Hippocratique est-il anachronique?* Pictorial Bulletin of the I.H.F.C., August 1993, pp. 35-40.

561. Cf. 'Ι. Παπαβασιλείου - Β. Ρόζου, *Ἐγχειρίδιον Ἱστορίας τῆς Ἰατρικῆς*, vol. Α', 1979, p. 162.

562. See text below.

Indicative of the Oath's world-wide appeal is the fact that graduate doctors from all over the world (America, Japan etc.) visit the birthplace of Hippocrates privately in order to take, symbolically, the Oath of Hippocrates as well.



# THE OATH OF A DOCTOR OF MEDICINE (MD)

Medical School, University of Athens

"Whereas the eminent School of Medicine, with the dean's consent, has deemed me worthy of admission into the body of its doctors, I publicly make this pledge to it and to the Presidency: To hold my teachers in this art equal to my own parents, and never to use my art for my own interest in life, but for the glory of God and the preservation of men and for the honour and glory of this pledge, carrying out, faithfully and correctly, according to my ability and judgement, everything that is the duty of a physician, bringing expert relief to the sick with equal zeal, whether they happen to be rich men or paupers, without attempting in a reckless manner to endanger anybody's life or practising medicine for making money or acquiring fame. Into whatsoever house I enter, I will enter to help the sick, and I will abstain from all injustice; and whatsoever I shall see or hear in the course of my profession, as well as outside my profession in my intercourse with men, if it be what should not be published abroad, I will never divulge, holding such things to be holy secrets; and I will cultivate my art according to my ability, making every effort to understand its laws thoroughly; and I will always be friendly and kind towards my colleagues and consider them as my own brothers, willingly contributing anything from which the sick might benefit. If I carry out this promise, may I gain reputation for my life and for my art, and have God's help; but if I transgress it, may the opposite befall me".

# XIII. THE VALUE OF THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH

From what has been said so far, the value of the Hippocratic Oath should have become obvious. The mere fact that it has survived for more than twenty-four centuries and influenced the ethical codes of so many nations and world organizations shows its enormous significance.

The Oath of Hippocrates is still regarded today as the most fundamental document of medical etiquette and medical morals of all time. Although it was written in an age which was very different from our own, it contains eternal principles and precepts which continue to apply even today. In a text of merely one page, the most significant commitments and qualities which distinguish a noble profession have been postulated: piety, gratitude towards the teacher, disinterestedness, service to the sufferer, purity, respect for the human person, unwavering care for the fellow-human irrespective of social or financial status, reliability in the fulfilment of duty, a sense of responsibility and so on. The prohibition of abortion and euthanasia shows absolute respect for life and the superiority of the Hippocratic Oath over the various legislations of antiquity. For the first time in the history of humanity, the Oath of Hippocrates separated τὸ ἰατρεύειν (medicine) from τὸ γοητεύειν (witchcraft), the physician from the magician. For the first time, helping the sick became the foremost (in fact, the sole) aim of the physician. For the first time in medical history, professional secrecy became instituted, and the patient's faith in his physician permanently established.

In comparing the Oath of Hippocrates with other ancient ethical codes, scholars have pointed out its great superiority. The famous Hammurabi Code[563] which is the most important monument of Babylonian legislation, contains among other things the oldest medical ethical code. The inequality and harshness of some of its rules are remarkable: For example, the physician's fee for treating a slave was specified at the lowest possible amount, which was of course paid by the "owner", his master. Any doctor who caused irreparable damage was condemned to death or mutilation.

Egyptian medical ethics was based on magic and exorcism and lacked the qualities of the Hippocratic ethics as established in the Oath.[564] Egyptian priests

563. c. 1.800 B.C.

564. See G. Mottura, op. cit., p. 22.

transmitted medical knowledge only to their own children, and obliged them not to disclose the secrets of the art to anyone except their descendants.

The Indian code Charaka Samhita obliged physicians to refuse their services to the enemies of the ruler, to evildoers, to women of loose morals and to dying patients.

The Oath of Hippocrates constitutes a monument of the highest order in the history of civilization and is of special interest to the study of the internal organization of ancient medical guilds. It reflects a new educational possibility for the circumstances of its time and a historic landmark in medical ethics. The universality of its rules and its profound humanism render it a declaration of eternal value and unequalled authority. The Oath of Hippocrates is often called "the Golden Rule" of Medicine and compared to the Ten Commandments and Christ's Sermon on the Mountain.[565]

Despite the variety of its contents – invocation, indenture, teaching, moral rules, self-curse – the Hippocratic Oath shows a remarkable uniformity. It is a wonderful combination of the religious and the secular, of the traditional and the modern, the conservative and the progressive. Not only its content, but its structure and style and language are noble. The Oath of Hippocrates shows thematic, structural and linguistic perfection. It presents an ideal combination of morality and beauty, of sound judgement and elegance of style. It is a succinct, unique, exemplary and original piece of writing. Seldom has such a short text succeeded in incorporating so many noble concepts and such superb ideas. In this single Hippocratic page an extraordinary intellectual and spiritual treasure is contained.

Our age, which is called the most criminal of all historical periods, in its whirling rejection of values, calls into question even the principles of the Hippocratic Oath. When science and technology are separated from their humanitarian elements, how can we expect the moral principles of Hippocrates not to be rejected? The fundamental principle of the Oath, which is the physician's commitment to his patient, is under the most severe criticism today. Many people seek their personal freedom in their release from moral precepts. However, there is a great difference between internal and external freedom. Right-minded people have always declared that there is no genuine personal freedom without moral commitments. Medical conscience must of necessity always turn to the eternal, constant and unchangeable moral principles. This is why the Hippocratic Oath remains a guiding beacon in the progress of doctors

---

565. See Lichtenthaeler, op. cit., p. 239.

and all true professionals. Today when people openly put their self-interest before their duty, principles like those in the Hippocratic Oath show the true way to humanitarianism. Today when we are overwhelmed by so many loose rules and conflicting regulations, the honest physician sees in the Oath of Hippocrates a permanent standard. In the modern trend of malevolent distortion and moral depravity, the Hippocratic Oath proposes the imperishable principle: **Live a pure and holy life**. A life outside purity and holiness leads to dangerous compromises and chaotic situations. The only antidote to the brutal exploitation of our age is honesty in the exercise of the profession as recommended in the Oath.

From the above it can be concluded that the Hippocratic Oath is not only not outdated but, in today's ideological crisis, it acquires greater authority and value.

Those who have studied the principles of the Hippocratic Oath in depth express their wonder at this revolutionary text, and underline its permanent significance. Here are some views expressed by early and contemporary Hippocratic scholars who have studied this Hippocratic treatise:

Littré says: "In the Oath one recognizes all those elements which rendered the professional ethos of Hippocratic physicians a model for all time" (1844).

According to Daremberg, the Hippocratic Oath is a most magnificent, imperishable monument of ancient Greek literature (1855).

Bouillet describes the Oath as "the perfect wreath of austere morality which crowns the head of the divine old Coan like an imperishable diadem of grandeur" (1883).

According to Jones, the Oath of Hippocrates "is a landmark in the ethics of medicine" (1924).

I. Anagnostakis writes: "This Oath has exercised a redeeming and perpetual influence on the medical profession".(1926)

Deichgräber points out that "the Oath is a token of the exemplary character of the most important representative of medical science" (1933).

According to Nikolaos Louvaris, "The Oath of Hippocrates is a memorial of a most noble spiritual culture, a most exalted humanism and a most genuine benevolence" (1942).

G.K. Pournaropoulos considers the Hippocratic Oath a masterpiece of moral and religious greatness. "From beginning to end", he says, "the Oath is full of unrivalled moral concepts and Christian principles". (1968)

According to Vasilios Rozos, "the Hippocratic Oath is still a universal model of morality and ethics for the medical profession" (1979).

G. Merikas declares: "The more I enrich my medical experience, the more I see the need for the physician to heed the principles of the Hippocratic Oath" (1984).

Lichtenthaeler writes, among other laudatory things, that for doctors the Oath of Hippocrates is "a perpetual possession ", an eternal moral and professional achievement (1984).

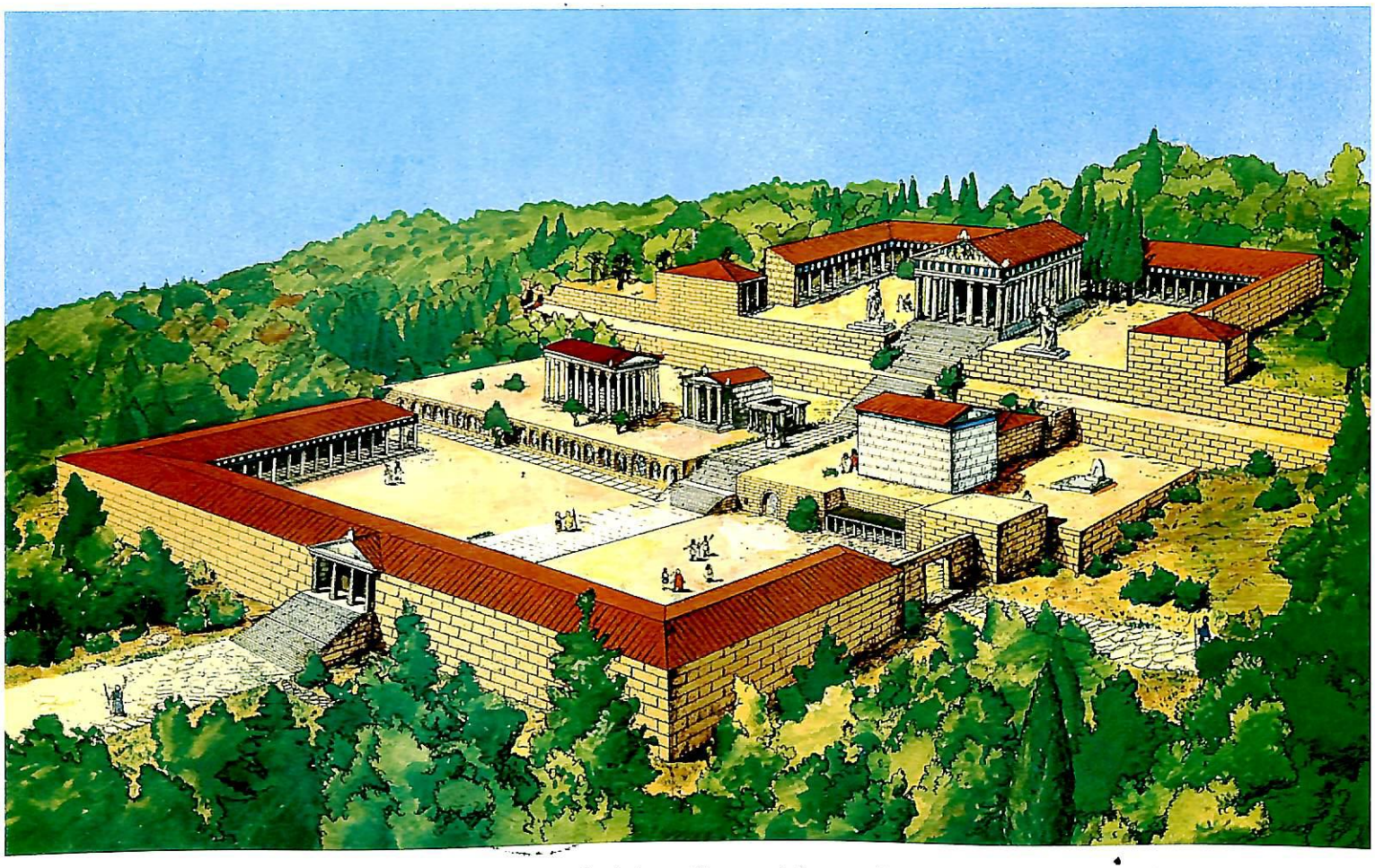
According to Mottura, the Oath of Hippocrates is a noble, precious heirloom, like a revered flag. It has the qualities of being admirable, beneficial and inspiring (1986)

D. Lypourles sees the Hippocratic Oath as "the unique model of professional medical ethics through the centuries, as everyone agrees". (1991).

Spyros Marketos regards the Hippocratic Oath as "the charter of medical ethics, a code of professional etiquette ... on which all relevant world declarations have been based" (1993).

To sum up, the Oath of Hippocrates has remained a model among medical oaths, up to the present day , because it contains suprahistorical and universal precepts. This masterpiece of professional ethics is presented, even today, in the lecture rooms of many universities, and the Doctors of medical schools in the advanced countries of the world are called upon to swear by it.





The Asclepeion of Cos during the Hellenistic age (Representation according to R. Herzog)

# XIV. RE-ENACTMENT AND MUSICAL PRESENTATION

Since about the middle of this century, a special event has been taking place from time to time which is called the **Re-enactment of the Hippocratic Oath**. It is a solemn twenty-minute ceremony which was first performed in April 1952 by students of the Hippocrateion High School of Cos at the Asclepeion of Cos in honour of some European doctors who were then visiting the birthplace of Hippocrates. The School Principal in those days was the late Gabriel Papatheophanous and the P.E. teachers were Mrs Amalia Exarchaki and Mr Panagiotis Photias, who taught the students (boys and girls) the appropriate movements. One of the originators of this event was the eminent philologist and writer Photis Varelis, who made the basic recommendations for the ceremony.

At the first re-enactment, the basket-bearers (girl students) wore traditional Coan costumes, but later on white attire was instituted.[566] Ever since then the ceremony has been performed, with very few additions, several times each year, especially during the **Hippocrateia** celebrations which are organized by the Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Cos, and during international conferences or visits by eminent personalities to the birthplace of Hippocrates.

As we can deduce from the records of the Hippocrateion High School of Cos, the first part of the ceremony has its origins in the re-enactment of the procession during the Great Panathenaea. In a letter to the Rhodes newspaper RODIAKI, dated 28th July 1958, the then Principal Gabriel Papatheophanous wrote among other things: "It is a procession of basket-bearing maidens, which represents part of the procession of the Great Panathenaea, during which maidens carrying baskets accompanied the robe of Athena to the Acropolis". The recitation of the Hippocratic Oath was added to the end of this re-enactment.

This ceremony is held, almost always, at the Asclepeion. Twelve maidens in white, carrying baskets, descend slowly and rhythmically the third set of steps of the Asclepeion in two lines, while in their midst three flute-players dressed in tunics play a rhythmical piece of music. Last follows a young man wearing a wreath, holding a parchment with the text of the Oath on it and accompanied by two maidens dressed in white. When the basket-bearers reach

566. See pictures on p. 250..

the second terrace of the Asclepeion, they scatter flowers on the altar of Apollo (and Asclepius), and take their position around the altar, where the crowned young man, in an evocative atmosphere, recites the Oath of Hippocrates.

Within the scope of its cultural activities, the Cultural Centre of the Municipality of Cos is about to enrich and improve the whole event.

During the last few years, there have been some efforts to set the Hippocratic Oath to music. The veteran Dodecanesian statesman Ioannis Zigdis, in co-operation with the Dodecanesian Cultural Institute "Cleobulus the Lindian" which he himself has founded, has been showing an active interest in the Hippocratic Oath being set to music, "so that it may be used at National and International Medical Conferences as an expression of gratitude to the Father of Medicine", as he says.

The gynaecologist and Assistant Professor Sakelarios Karpathios, one of the pioneers of this idea, who is co-operating with the composer Thomas Bakalakos towards setting the Oath of Hippocrates to music, believes that "setting the Oath to music could prove to be a special event for the World Medical Community. All medical conferences could open with their own anthem, the musical Oath of Hippocrates the Coan".[575]

Within the scope of the efforts being made by the above Institute for the musical adaptation of the Oath, and after receiving a letter from Ioannis Zigdis (15th July 1994), I myself submitted the following metrical translation:

THE OATH OF HIPPOCRATES
(in metrical translation)

Apollo and Asclepius, Hygeia, Panacea,
And all the gods and goddesses by oath assure I grave;
That I will constantly fulfil this sacred testament
To hold my teacher in this art as equal to my sire
And to regard his family as equal to my kin.
To teach them th' art of medicine, without a teacher's fee,
And other worthy pupils more, if they desire to learn.
I will always use regimen to help all sufferers,
And I will not, within my power, let evil come their way.
A deadly drug or poisonous never will I prescribe,
Nor will I give a pessary to women to abort,
But both my life and my noble art pure and holy will keep.

---

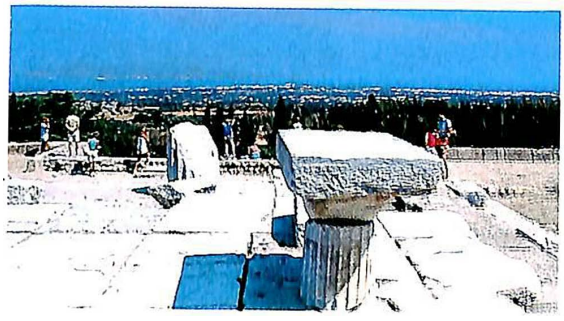
567. See *ΑΙΓΑΙΟΠΕΛΑΓΙΤΙΚΑ ΘΕΜΑΤΑ* (mag) Jan-Febr. 1994, pp. 7-9.

INTERNATIONAL HIPPOKRATOUS FOUNDATION of KOS
1960

Serious operations I let expect men perform.
My patient's homes when entering, respect will I them show,
With decency and honesty men and women I' ll treat,
And never intent to abuse them, be they bond or free.
Whatever I will see or hear I will not publicize,
But keep the secrets of the sick as closely as I can.
As long as I my oath observe, may all good come to me,
May glory, fame, success in life and happiness be mine.
But if I break it, evil fate let be my lot for e'er.

This version can be adapted to Christian and more generally to monotheistic rules if we substitute,

**Almighty and omniscient God by oath assure I grave**
For the first two lines and
**May I be blessed all my life with every heav'nly gift**
For the last line but one.





**The first re-enactment of the Oath, April 1952**
The basket-bearers in local costumes descend the steps from the third terrace of the Asclepeion towards the Altar. On the top step is the crowned young man, followed by his retinue.



**Re-enactment of the Hippocratic Oath (1992).**

PART III

# APPENDIX:
# HIPPOCRATIC MAXIMS

# HIPPOCRATIC MAXIMS

Hippocrates' wisdom is also obvious in the infinite number of maxims and sayings which are found in the Hippocratic texts as conclusions of his observations or as precepts addressed to physicians as well as to everyone else.

Apart from his medical observations, the great Master occasionally posits valuable truths, crystallized into maxims, which help man to judge his thoughts, words and actions better.

Hippocrates' opinions about the important issues in life, such as God, Man, the Soul, Nature, Science, Art, Health, Humanism and so on, are gems of wisdom which have been shaped, and to a great extent justified, with the passage of time.

Most of the Hippocratic sayings continue to be valid today and constitute precepts which guide man along the way to his final destination.

We have attempted to collect the most important maxims of the old sage of Cos, to classify them into approximately fifty thematic units, and to provide a somewhat free translation on facing pages. We have omitted the lengthier maxims as well as many admonitions which are included in the chapter on Hippocratic Ethics and in other chapters of this book.

Under each saying we mark the title and the paragraph or chapter in the Hippocratic book from which it has been taken, so that the reader who wants to make a more profound study of the subject can find more details by turning to the relevant extract. In the case of the very few (4 or 5) maxims for which it was impossible to find and quote the exact reference, the indication ANTHOL. is given, which means that they are to be found in anthologies of earlier writers as Hippocratic apophthegms without any references.

In the cases where there are two or more Hippocratic maxims of roughly the same content, we have chosen the shortest or the one which is more obviously of an apophthegmatic character.

In conclusion, we would like to point out that many of the Hippocratic sayings which come from genuine Hippocratic writings are in full agreement with the precepts of the Hippocratic Oath, which is another piece of evidence that the Oath is a genuine Hippocratic work.

# HIPPOCRATIC MAXIMS
## An anthology from the works of Hippocrates

INTERNATIONAL HIPPOKRATOUS FOUNDATION of KOS
1960

# HIPPOCRATIC MAXIMS
## An anthology from the works of Hippocrates

### GOD

Οὐκέτι ὁ θεὸς αἴτιός ἐστιν.

(The Sacred Disease, II)

Πρῶτον μὲν ἐκ τῶν θείων ἄρχεσθαι δεῖ.

(The Nature of Women, I)

Οὐχ ὁ θεὸς τὸ σῶμα λυμαίνεται ἀλλ᾽ ἡ νοῦσος.

(The Sacred Disease, XIV)

Ἡ περὶ τῶν θεῶν εἴδησις ἐν νόῳ ἐμπλέκεται.

(Decorum, VI)

Ὁκόσα δὲ θεοὶ διέθεσαν, αἰεὶ ὀρθῶς ἔχει.

(Diet I, XI)

... Πάντα γίνεται δι᾽ ἀνάγκην θείην.

(Diet I, V)

Θύειν τε καὶ εὔχεσθαι καὶ ἐς τὰ ἱερὰ φέροντας ἱκετεύειν τοὺς θεούς.

(The Sacred Disease, IV)

Τὰ γοῦν μέγιστα τῶν ἁμαρτημάτων καὶ ἀνοσιώτατα
τὸ θεῖόν ἐστι τὸ καθαῖρον καὶ ἁγνίζον.

(The Sacred Disease, IV)

### HUMANISM

Ὠφελέειν ἢ μὴ βλάπτειν.

(Epidemics I, XI)

Ἦν γὰρ παρῇ φιλανθρωπίη πάρεστι καὶ φιλοτεχνίη.

(Precepts, VI)

Ὑγιαινόντων δὲ φροντίζειν, ἕνεκεν ἀνοσίης.

(Precepts, VI)

Ἐξυγιαίνειν καὶ σώζειν τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

(ANTHOL.)

### PHILOSOPHY

Φύσιν δὲ πάντων θεοὶ διεκόσμησαν.

(Diet I, XI)

# Translation

## GOD

Neither is godhead to blame.

First of all, one must begin from divine things.

It is not a god but the disease which injures the body.

Knowledge of the gods is woven into the stuff of the brain.

Whatsoever things were arranged by the gods always remain right.

All things take place ... through a divine necessity.

They should have brought them to the sanctuaries, with sacrifices and prayers, in supplication to the gods.
At least it is godhead that purifies and cleanses us from the greatest and most impious of our sins.

## HUMANISM

Help, or at least do no harm.

For where there is love of man, there is also love of the art.

To care for the healthy to keep them well.

To cure man completely and save him.

## PHILOSOPHY

But the nature of all things was arranged by the gods.

*Εἰδέναι ὅ,τι ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος καὶ δι' οἵας αἰτίας γίνεται.*

(Ancient Medicine, XX)

*Μετάγειν τὴν ἰητρικὴν εἰς τὴν σοφίην.*

(Decorum, V)

*Ἰητρὸς γὰρ φιλόσοφος ἰσόθεος.*

(Decorum, V)

*Ἀδίδακτον γὰρ τὸ χρέος ἔν τε τῇ σοφίῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ τέχνῃ.*

(Decorum, IV)

## SCIENCE

*Ὁ βίος βραχύς, ἡ δὲ τέχνη μακρή, ὁ δὲ καιρὸς ὀξύς, ἡ δὲ πεῖρα σφαλερή, ἡ δὲ κρίσις χαλεπή.*

(Aphorisms I, I)

*Δύο γάρ, ἐπιστήμη τε καὶ δόξα, ὧν τὸ μὲν ἐπίστασθαι ποιέει, τὸ δὲ ἀγνοεῖν.*

(Law, IV)

*Ἡ δ' ἐπιστήμη ἄρχεται καὶ εὐτυχής ἐστιν, ὁπόταν βούληται ὁ ἐπιστάμενος χρῆσθαι.*

(Places in Man, 46)

## MEDICINE

*Ἰητρικὴ τεχνέων μὲν πασέων ἐστὶν ἐπιφανεστάτη ...*

(Law, I)

*Ἡ δὲ ἰητρικὴ ὀλιγόκαιρός ἐστιν.*

(Places in Man, 44)

*Ἰητρικὴν οὐ δυνατόν ἐστι ταχὺ μαθεῖν.*

(Places in Man, 41)

*Οὐκ ἔνι δυνατὸν ἰητρικὴν εἰδέναι ὅστις μὴ οἶδεν ὅ τί ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος.*

(Ancient Medicine, XX)

*Ὅς γὰρ ...ἰητρικὴν ἐπίσταται, ἐλάχιστα τὴν τύχην ἐπιμένει.*

(Places in Man, 46)

## THE PHYSICIAN

*Ὁ ἰητρὸς ὑπηρέτης τῆς τέχνης.*

(Epidemics I, XI)

To know what man is and by what causes he is made.

Transplant medicine into wisdom.

For a physician who is a lover of wisdom is the equal of a god.

For in the art, as in wisdom, use is not a thing that can be taught.

## SCIENCE

Life is short, the Art is long, opportunity fleeting, experiment treacherous, judgement difficult.

There are in fact two things, science and opinion; the former begets knowledge, the latter ignorance.

But understanding can be commanded, and of itself represents good luck, whenever the person who has knowledge employs it.

## MEDICINE

Medicine is the most distinguished of all the arts.

In medicine the correct measure is narrow.

Medicine cannot be learned quickly.

Nobody can know medicine who is ignorant of what a man is.

For anyone who has an understanding of medicine ....depends very little upon good luck.

## THE PHYSICIAN

The physician is the servant of the art.

Τὸν ἰητρὸν δοκέει μοι ἄριστον εἶναι πρόνοιαν ἐπιτηδεύειν.

(Prognostic, I)

Ὁ καιρός ἐστιν ὃν δεῖ τὸν ἰητρὸν εἰδέναι.

(Places in Man, 44)

Ὁ ἰητρὸς ὁρῇ τε δεινά, θιγγάνει ἀηδέων, ἐπ᾽ ἀλλοτρίῃσι ξυμφορῇσιν ἰδίας καρποῦται λύπας.

(Breaths, I)

Ὁ γὰρ ἄριστα διαγνοὺς καὶ ἄριστα θεραπεύει.

(ANTHOL.)

## NATURE, ENVIRONMENT, INNATE POWER, NATURAL CAUSE

Ἡγεμονικώτατον ... ἁπάντων ... ἡ φύσις.

(Decorum, IV)

Φύσις ἐξαρκέει πάντα πᾶσιν.

(Nutrition, XV)

Φύσιες πάντων ἀδίστακτοι.

(Nutrition, XXXIX)

Ἡ φύσις αὐτομάτη ἐπίσταται.

(Diet I, xv)

Νούσων φύσιες ἰητροί. Ἀνευρίσκει ἡ φύσις αὐτὴ ἑαυτῇ τὰς ἐφόδους.

(Epidemics VI, 5.1)

Ἀπαίδευτος ἡ φύσις ἐοῦσα καὶ οὐ μαθοῦσα τὰ δέοντα ποιέει.

(Epidemics VI, 5.1)

Μέγισταί εἰσιν τῆς φύσιος αἱ διαλλαγαί.

(Airs Waters Places, XXIV)

Ἡ φύσις συμβάλλεται τῷ νόμῳ.

(Airs Waters Places, XIV)

Οὐδὲν ἄνευ φύσιος γίνεται.

(Airs Waters Places, XXII)

## MAN

Εἰδέναι ὅτι ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος.

(See MEDICINE)

I hold that it is an excellent thing for a physician to practise forecasting.

It is the correct measure that the physician must recognize.

The medical man sees terrible sights, touches unpleasant things, and the misfortunes of others bring a harvest of sorrows that are peculiarly his.

For he who has made a perfect diagnosis also treats perfectly.

## NATURE, ENVIRONMENT, INNATE POWER, NATURAL CAUSE

The dominant factor ... is nature.

Nature is sufficient in all for all.

The natures of all are untaught.

Nature of herself knows how to do these things.

The body's nature is the physician in disease. Nature finds the way for herself.

Untrained and without instruction, nature does what is needed.

The chief controlling factor is the variability of the weather.

Custom is reinforced by nature.

Nothing arises without its natural cause.

## MAN

To know what man is.

*Εἰ ἓν ἦν ἄνθρωπος, οὐδέποτ' ἂν ἤλγεεν.*

(The Nature of Man, II)

*Ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῇ πρώτῃ τῶν ἡμερέων θερμότατός ἐστιν αὐτὸς ἑωυτοῦ, τῇ δὲ ὑστάτῃ ψυχρότατος.*

(The Nature of Man, XII)

*Ἀνθρώπου ψυχὴ ἀεὶ φύεται μέχρι θανάτου.*

(Epidemics VI, 5.2)

*Δίκαιον ἔχουσι τὸ σῶμα οἱ ἄνθρωποι.*

(Joints, X)

*Αἱ ψυχαί τε καὶ τὰ σώματα πλεῖστον διαφέρουσι αἱ τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ δύναμιν ἔχουσι μεγίστην.*

(Prorrhetic II, 12)

*Δυνάσται δὲ ἄνθρωποι.*

(Diet I, XXV)

## THE SOUL

*Ἀνθρώπου ψυχὴ ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ, ἐν ἄλλῳ δὲ οὐδενί.*

(Diet I, VI)

*Ἑκάστη ψυχὴ ...δέχεται τὰ προσπίπτοντα.*

(Diet I, VI)

*Ἐσέρπει δὲ ἐς ἄνθρωπον ψυχὴ πυρὸς καὶ ὕδατος σύγκρησιν ἔχουσα.*

(Diet I, VII)

*[Ἡ ψυχὴ] δύναται ἐκ τῆς διαίτης καὶ βελτίων καὶ χείρων γίνεσθαι.*

(Diet I, XXXVI)

*Ψυχῆς περίπατος φροντὶς ἀνθρώποισιν.*

(Epidemics VI, 5.5.)

## THE BODY

*Τὸ σῶμα ὁκοῖον ἡ ψυχὴ διακοσμέεται.*

(Diet I, VI)

*Φύσις δὲ τοῦ σώματος ἀρχὴ τοῦ ἐν ἰητρικῇ λόγου.*

(Places in Man, 2)

*Δύναμις πάντα αὔξει καὶ τρέφει καὶ βλαστάνει.*

(Nutrition, LIV)

If man were a unity, he would never feel pain.

A man is warmest on the first day of his existence and coldest on the last.

The soul of a man grows until death.

Men's bodies are symmetrical.

The minds and the bodies of people differ very greatly, and these differences have great consequences.

Men are very strong.

## THE SOUL

A man's soul grows in a man, and in no other creature.

Each individual soul ... receives the attacks that are made.

Into man there enters a soul, having a blend of fire and water.

Regimen can make [the soul] either better or worse.

Intellection is a stroll for the soul in men.

## THE BODY

The body [of man], like the soul, is set in due order.

The nature of the body is the beginning point of medical reasoning.

Power gives to all things increase, nourishment and birth.

Ἄριστον δὲ καὶ ὅλον τὸ σῶμα θερμόν τε ἐὸν καὶ μαλθακὸν ὁμαλῶς.

(Prognostic, IX)

## HEALTH

Οὐδὲν ὄφελός ἐστιν οὔτε χρημάτων οὔτε τῶν ἄλλων οὐδενὸς ἄτερ τῆς ὑγιείης.

(Diet III, LXIX)

Τοῖσιν ἀνθρώποισι πλείστου ἄξιόν ἐστιν ἡ ὑγιείη.

(Diet in Health, IX)

Ἄσκησις ὑγιείης, ἀκορίη τροφῆς, ἀοκνίη πόνων.

(Epidemics VI, 4.18)

Ἐς ὑγιείην ἄριστα, ὅσα ὀλίγιστα ἐσιόντα αὐτάρκη ἐστίν.

(Affections, 47)

## CONSTITUTION

Πρῶτον μὲν χρὴ τὰ εἴδεα τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐξεπίστασθαι.

(Prorrhetic II, 11)

Πρῶτον μὲν παντὸς φύσιν ἀνθρώπου γνῶναι καὶ διαγνῶναι.

(Diet I, II)

## DISEASE

Πάντα θεῖα καὶ πάντα ἀνθρώπινα [τὰ νοσήματα].

(The Sacred Disease, XXI)

Ἕκαστον [νόσημα] φύσιν ἔχει καὶ δύναμιν ἀφ᾽ ἑωυτοῦ.

(The Sacred Disease, XXI)

Ἕκαστον [πάθος] ἔχει φύσιν τὴν ἑωυτοῦ καὶ οὐδὲν ἄνευ φύσιος γίνεται.

(Airs Waters Places, XXII)

[Τὰ νουσήματα] εἴωθεν ἀπὸ σμικρῶν προφασίων μεγάλα καὶ πολυχρόνια γίνεσθαι.

(Affections, 33)

Αἱ νοῦσοι οὐκ εὐθέως ἐπιγίνονται, ἀλλὰ κατὰ σμικρὸν συλλεγόμεναι ἀθρόως ἐκφαίνονται.

(Diet I, II)

But it is a very good sign when the whole body is evenly warm and soft.

## HEALTH

Neither wealth nor anything else is of any value without health.

Health is the greatest of human blessings.

Healthy discipline, not gluttonizing, not avoiding work.

The best foods for health are ones that, entering in a small quantity, are sufficient in themselves.

## CONSTITUTION

[One] must first recognize clearly the different types of human beings.

[He] must first acquire knowledge and discernment of the nature of man in general.

## DISEASE

They (i.e. diseases) are all divine and human.

Each [disease] has a nature and power of its own.

Each [disease] has a nature of its own, and none arises without its natural cause.

[Diseases] tend, from minor provocations, to become serious and chronic.

Diseases do not arise all at once; they gather themselves together gradually before appearing with a sudden spring.

Αἱ νοῦσοι γίνονται, αἱ μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν διαιτημάτων, αἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος ὃ ἐσαγόμενοι ζῶμεν.

(The Nature of Man, IX)

Τὰ νοσήματα χρὴ ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς ἰᾶσθαι.

(Places in Man, 31)

Τὰ παλαιὰ νοσήματα χαλεπώτερον ἰᾶσθαι τῶν νέων.

(Places in Man, 38)

## THE PATIENT

Ὑπεναντιοῦσθαι τῷ νουσήματι τὸν νοσοῦντα μετὰ τοῦ ἰητροῦ χρή.

(Epidemics I, XI)

Ἐπιτηρεῖν δεῖ καὶ τὰς ἁμαρτίας τῶν καμνόντων.

(Decorum, XIV)

## TREATMENT

Τὰ ἐναντία τῶν ἐναντίων ἐστὶν ἰήματα.

(Breaths, I)

Ἴησις ἀντίνοον, μὴ ὁμονοεῖν τῷ πάθει.

(Epidemics VI, 5.4)

Ἐς τὰ ἔσχατα νουσήματα αἱ ἔσχαται θεραπεῖαι ἐς ακριβίην κράτισται.

(Aphorisms I, VI)

Εἰ δὲ πολλοῖσι τρόποισιν οἷόν τε εἴη ὑγείας ποιέειν, τὸν ἀοχλότατον χρὴ αἱρέσθαι.

(Joints, LXXVIII)

Ὁκόσα φάρμακα οὐκ ἰῆται, σίδηρος ἰῆται· ὅσα σίδηρος οὐκ ἰῆται, πῦρ ἰῆται· ὅσα δὲ πῦρ οὐκ ἰῆται, ταῦτα χρὴ νομίζειν ἀνίατα.

(Aphorisms VII, LXXXVII)

Μὴ τόλμῃ μᾶλλον ἢ γνώμῃ καὶ ῥᾳστώνῃ μᾶλλον ἢ βίῃ θεραπεύῃ.

(The Art, XI)

## MEDICATIONS

Πάντα φάρμακά εἰσι τὰ μετακινέοντα τὸ παρεόν.

(Places in Man, 45)

Diseases arise, in some cases from regimen, in other cases from the air by the inspiration of which we live.

Diseases must be treated from their origin.

Old diseases are more difficult to treat than new ones.

## THE PATIENT

The patient must co-operate with the physician in combating the disease.

Keep a watch also on the faults of the patients.

## TREATMENT

Opposites are cures for opposites.

Healing is dispute with a disease, not agreement.

For extreme diseases extreme strictness of treatment is most efficacious.

And if he can be made well in many ways, one should choose the least troublesome.

Those diseases that medicines do not cure are cured by the knife. Those that the knife does not cure are cured by fire. Those that fire does not cure must be considered incurable.

To give treatment, not by daring but by judgement, not by violence but by gentleness.

## MEDICATIONS

All substances that change the state of the patient are medications.

*Τὰ φάρμακα, ὅσα ποτὰ καὶ ὅσα πρὸς τὰ τραύματα προσφέρεται, μανθάνειν ἄξιον παρὰ παντός.*

(Affections, 45)

*Τὸ δὲ φάρμακον χρὴ διδόναι πρὸς τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁρῶν, ὡς ἂν ἔχῃ ἰσχύος.*

(Head Wounds, XX)

*Σμικρὴ αἰτίη ἄκεσις γίνεται, ἢν μή τι περὶ τόπον καίριον πάθῃ.*

(Precepts, XIV)

*Ἀγαθὸν γὰρ φάρμακόν ἐστιν ἐνίοτε καὶ τὸ μηδὲν προσφέρειν.*

(Joints, XL)

## DIET

*Τῆς δὲ διαίτης ἐπιμελεῖσθαι χρή.*

(Joints, LXIX)

*Τό γε εὕρημα μέγα τε καὶ πολλῆς σκέψιός τε καὶ τέχνης.*

(Ancient Medicine, IV)

*Τῆς διαιτητικῆς ἐστι μέγιστον παρατηρέειν καὶ φυλάσσειν.*

(Diet in Acute Diseases (Spurious), 22)

*Εἰδέναι οὓς καὶ ὅτε καὶ ὡς δεῖ διαιτᾶν.*

(Epidemics III, XVI)

*Μέγα τὸ ποσὸν εὐστόχως ἐς δύναμιν συναρμοσθέν.*

(Nutrition, XXXV)

*Δεῖ οὖν πρὸς τὴν ἡλικίην καὶ τὴν ὥρην καὶ τὸ ἔθος καὶ τὴν χώρην καὶ τὰ εἴδεα τὰ διαιτήματα ποιεῖσθαι.*

(Diet for Health, II)

*Ὁκόταν ἀκμάζῃ τὸ νόσημα, τότε λεπτοτάτῃ διαίτῃ ἀναγκαῖον χρῆσθαι.*

(Aphorisms, I. VIII)

*Αἱ ἐς τὸ ἔσχατον λεπτότητος ἀφιγμέναι δίαιται χαλεπαί.*

(Aphorisms, I. IV)

## FOOD AND DRINK

*Ῥᾷον πληροῦσθαι ποτοῦ ἢ σιτίου.*

(Aphorisms, II. XI)

About medications that are drunk or applied on wounds it is worth learning from everyone.

In giving the drug you should have an eye to the patient's vigour, what strength he has.

A slight cause turns into a cure unless the affection be in a vital part.

For it is a good remedy sometimes to use nothing.

## DIET

One must be careful as to diet.

Nevertheless the discovery was a great one, implying much investigation and art.

The most important part of the dietetic art is to observe and watch closely.

To know whom he ought to treat, as well as the time and method of treatment.

It is a great thing successfully to adapt quantity to power.

So in fixing regimen pay attention to age, season, habit, land and physique.

It is when the disease is at its height that it is necessary to use the most restricted regimen.

A regimen carried to the extreme of restriction is perilous.

## FOOD AND DRINK

It is easier to replenish with drink than with food.

Τὰ βρώματα καὶ τὰ πόματα πείρης δεῖ εἰ ἐπὶ τὸ ἴσον μένει.

(Epidemics II, 2.11)

Ὅκου ἂν τροφὴ πλείων παρὰ φύσιν ἐσέλθῃ, τοῦτο νοῦσον ποιεῖ.

(Aphorisms, II. XVII)

Τροφὴ οὐ τροφή, ἢν μὴ δύνηται.

(Nutrition, XXI)

Σιτίον νέοισιν ἀκροσαπές, γέρουσιν ἐς τέλος μεταβεβλημένον, ἀκμάζουσιν ἀμετάβλητον.

(Nutrition, XLI)

Ὑγρασίη τροφῆς ὄχημα.

(Nutrition, LV)

Τὰ ἀσθενέστατα σιτία ὀλιγοχρόνιον βιοτὴν ἔχει.

(Epidemics VI, 5. 14)

Τὰ σιτία καὶ τὰ ποτὰ ἐλάσσω τελέειν ἢ ὥστε πλήρη εἶναι.

(Affections, 43)

## EXERCISE

Οὐ δύναται ἐσθίων ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὑγιαίνειν, ἢν μὴ καὶ πονῇ.

(Diet, I, II)

Τοῖσιν ὑγιαίνουσιν ἐς ἀσφαλείην καὶ τοῖσιν ἀσκέουσιν ἐς εὐεξίην.

(Diet in Acute Diseases)

Οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν γυμνασίων περίπατοι καθαρὰ τὰ σώματα παρασκευάζουσι καὶ ἰσχναίουσιν.

(Diet II, LXII)

Καὶ περιπατέειν καὶ γυμνάζεσθαι ὀλίγα.

(Diseases II, 66)

Πόνοι σιτίων ἡγείσθωσαν.

(Epidemics VI, 4.23)

## MODERATION

Πᾶν τὸ πολὺ τῇ φύσει πολέμιον.

(Aphorisms, II. LI)

Οὐ πλησμονή, οὐ λιμόν, οὐδ' ἄλλο οὐδὲν ἀγαθόν, ὅ,τι ἂν μᾶλλον τῆς φύσιος ᾖ.

(Aphorisms, II. IV)

We need experience as to whether food and drink have equal staying power.

When more nourishment is taken than the constitution can stand, disease is caused.
Nutrition [is] not nutrition if it has not its power.

Food for the young partly digested, for the old completely changed, for adults unchanged.

Moisture [is] the vehicle of nutrition.

Very weak foods contain short-lived sustenance.

To consume less food and drink than would fill.

## EXERCISE

Eating alone will not keep a man well; he must also take exercise.

Preservation of health to those who are well, good condition to athletes in training.

Walks after gymnastics render the body pure and thin.

Have him take walks, and do a few exercises.

Exercise before food.

## MODERATION

All excess is hostile to nature.

Neither repletion, nor fasting, nor anything else is good when it is more than natural.

Ὀργάνων ἄσκησις, πόνοι, σιτία, ποτά, ὕπνος, ἀφροδίσια, μέτρια.

(Epidemics VI, 6.2)

Ὕπνος, ἀγρυπνίη, ἀμφότερα μᾶλλον τοῦ μετρίου γενόμενα, κακόν.

(Aphorisms, II. III)

Ἐπὴν δὲ ὑπερβάλλῃ τὸν καιρόν, τὰ ὑπεναντία γίνεται.

(Places in Man, 44)

Δεῖ γὰρ μέτρου τινὸς στοχάσασθαι.

(Ancient Medicine, IX)

Ὡς μέγας φόβος φυλακτέος, καὶ χαρᾶς δεινότης.

(Precepts, XIV)

## EXERTION

Κόποι αὐτόματοι φράζουσι νούσους.

(Aphorisms, II. V)

Ὅκου λιμὸς οὐ δεῖ πονέειν.

(Aphorisms, II. XVI)

Πόνοι μὲν γὰρ πεφύκασιν ἀναλῶσαι τὰ ὑπάρχοντα· σιτία δὲ καὶ ποτὰ ἐκπληρῶσαι τὰ κενωθέντα.

(Diet I, II)

Ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς ταλαιπωρίης καὶ τῶν πόνων αἱ ἀνδρεῖαι.

(Airs Waters Places, XXIII)

## CHANGE

Αἱ γὰρ μεταβολαί εἰσι τῶν πάντων αἱ ἐπεγείρουσαι τὴν γνώμην τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ οὐκ ἐῶσαι ἀτρεμίζειν.

(Airs Waters Places, XVI)

Ἥρος αἰφνιδίη ταραχὴ φυλακτέη.

(Precepts, XIV)

Γῆν μεταμείβειν ξυντροφὸν ἐπὶ τοῖσι μακροῖσι νοσήμασιν.

(Epidemics VI, 5.18)

Exercise of the faculties, exertion, food, drink, sleep, sexual activity, in moderation.
Sleep or sleeplessness, in undue measure, these are both bad symptoms.

But when he goes beyond the correct measure, the opposite happens.

For it is necessary to aim at some measure.

As great fear is to be guarded against, so is excessive joy.

## EXERTION

Spontaneous weariness indicates disease.

When on a starvation diet a patient should not be fatigued.

For it is the nature of exercise to use up material, but of food and drink to make good deficiencies.

Endurance and exertion [are food for] bravery.

## CHANGE

For it is changes of all things that rouse the temper of man and prevent its stagnation.

A sudden disturbance of the air is to be guarded against.

It is supportive to go to another land in long illnesses.

## THE SEASONS

*Αἱ μεταβολαὶ τῶν ὡρέων μάλιστα τίκτουσι νουσήματα.*

(Aphorisms, III.1)

*Φυλάσσεσθαι δὲ χρὴ μάλιστα τὰς μεταβολὰς τῶν ὡρέων τὰς μεγίστας.*

(Airs Waters Places, XI)

*Προλογιστέον οὖν, ὁκοίως ἂν ἔχοντα τὰ σώματα αἱ ὧραι παραλαμβάνωσιν.*

(Humours, XIII)

## CUSTOMS

*Νόμος μὲν πάντα κρατύνει.*

(Generation, 1)

*Οἱ νόμοι οὐχ ἥκιστα τὴν εὐψυχίην ἐργάζονται.*

(Airs Waters Places, XXIII)

*Νόμον γὰρ ἄνθρωποι ἔθεσαν αὐτοὶ ἑωυτοῖσιν, οὐ γινώσκοντες περὶ ὧν ἔθεσαν.*

(Diet I, XI)

*Ὁ γὰρ νόμος οὐκέτι ἰσχύει διὰ τὴν ὁμιλίην τῶν ἀνθρώπων.*

(Airs Waters Places, XIV)

## FORM OF GOVERNMENT

*Ὅκου γὰρ βασιλεύονται, ἐκεῖ ἀνάγκη δειλοτάτους εἶναι.*

(Airs Waters Places, XXIII)

## MENTALITY

*Ἐνθυμέεσθαι δὲ χρὴ καὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τῆς τε γνώμης τοὺς τρόπους, τοῦ τε σώματος τὴν δύναμιν.*

(Prorrhetic II, 4)

## FORETHOUGHT

*Τὸ προλαμβάνειν μεῖζόν ἐστι τοῦ θεραπεύειν.*

(ANTHOL)

*Λέγειν τὰ προγενόμενα, γινώσκειν τὰ παρεόντα, προλέγειν τὰ ἐσόμενα.*

(Epidemics I, XI)

## THE SEASONS

It is chiefly the changes of the seasons which produce diseases.

One should be especially on one's guard against the most violent changes of the seasons.

Accordingly, account must be taken of the condition of a body when the seasons come upon it.

## CUSTOMS

Custom reinforces everything.

Institutions contribute a great deal to the formation of courageousness.

For custom was settled by men for themselves without their knowing those things about which they settled the custom.

For owing to intercourse with other men the custom is less prevalent.

## FORM OF GOVERNMENT

For where there are kings, there must be the greatest cowards.

## MENTALITY

One must also take into consideration the inclinations of the person's mind and the strength of his body.

## FORETHOUGHT

Prevention is better than cure.

Declare the past, diagnose the present, foretell the future.

Ὑγιαινόντων δὲ φροντίζειν, ἕνεκεν ἀνοσίης.

(Precepts, VI)

Χρὴ προμηθέεσθαι πρὶν ἂν ἐς τὰς νούσους ἀφικνέωνται.

(Diet III, LXXII)

## INTELLECT

Ἡ δὲ διάνοια παρ᾽ αὐτῆς λαβοῦσα ...ὕστερον ἐς ἀληθείην ἤγαγεν.

(Precepts, I)

Τὴν δὲ φρόνησιν ὁ ἀὴρ παρέχεται.

(The Sacred Disease, XIX)

Ὁ γὰρ λογισμὸς μνήμη τίς ἐστι ξυνθετικὴ τῶν μετ᾽ αἰσθήσιος ληφθέντων.

(Precepts, I)

## BRAIN, CONSCIOUSNESS

Νομίζω τὸν ἐγκέφαλον δύναμιν ἔχειν πλείστην ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ.

(The Sacred Disease, XIX)

Φημὶ τὸν ἐγκέφαλον εἶναι τὸν ἑρμηνεύοντα τὴν σύνεσιν.

(The Sacred Disease, XX)

Ἐς δὲ τὴν σύνεσιν ὁ ἐγκέφαλός ἐστιν ὁ διαγγέλλων.

(The Sacred Disease, XIX)

Ἡ σύνεσις ὁμογενής ἐστιν, εὐθὺ τὸ πέρας ἐδήλωσε γνῶσις.

(Decorum, IV)

## REASON

Πᾶν γὰρ τὸ ποιηθὲν τεχνικῶς ἐκ λόγου ἀνηνέχθη.

(Decorum, IV)

Πάντα κατὰ λόγον ποιέοντι, ... μὴ μεταβαίνειν ἐφ᾽ ἕτερον.

(Aphorisms, II. LII)

## ART

Τὸ μὲν σύμπαν τέχνη εἶναι οὐδεμία οὐκ ἐοῦσα.

(The Art, II)

Αἱ τέχναι πᾶσαι τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ φύσει ἐπικοινωνέουσιν.

(Diet I, XXIV)

To care for the healthy to keep them well.

What is necessary is to exercise forethought before the diseases attack.

## INTELLECT

And the intellect, ...taking over from nature [the impressions], leads us afterwards into truth.
It is the air that gives it [i.e. the brain] intelligence.

For a theory is a composite memory of things apprehended with sense-perception.

## BRAIN, CONSCIOUSNESS

I hold that the brain is the most powerful organ of the human body.

I assert that the brain is the interpreter of consciousness.

To consciousness the brain is the messenger.

Where understanding is on a par with action, knowledge at once makes plain the end.

## REASON

For everything that has been done artistically has been performed as a result of reasoning.
When acting in all things according to rule, ...do not change to another course.

## ART

Generally speaking, there is no art which does not exist.

All the arts have something in common with the nature of man.

*Μέγα δὲ μέρος ἡγεῦμαι τῆς τέχνης εἶναι τὸ δύνασθαι σκοπεῖν καὶ περὶ τῶν γεγραμμένων ὀρθῶς.*

(Epidemics III, XVI)

## KNOWLEDGE-IGNORANCE

*Ὁ μὲν εἰδῶς αἰεὶ ὀρθῶς, ὁ δὲ μὴ εἰδὼς ἄλλοτε ἄλλως.*

(Diet I, XII)

*Ὅσα γὰρ τὴν τῶν ὀμμάτων ὄψιν ἐκφεύγει, ταῦτα τῇ τῆς γνώμης ὄψει κεκράτηται.*

(The Art, XI)

*Γνώσεως ἀμοιρῶν μὴ ἐπαγγέλλου.*

(ANTHOL.)

## EXPERIENCE-INEXPERIENCE

*Προδιαστέλλεσθαι οὖν χρὴ τὸ ἐκβησόμενον ἐκ τῆς ἐμπειρίης.*

(Decorum, XI)

*Ἡ δὲ ἀπειρίη κακὸς θησαυρὸς καὶ κακὸν κειμήλιον τοῖσιν ἔχουσιν αὐτήν.*

(Law, IV)

*Τὸ γὰρ οἴεσθαι μέν, μὴ πρήσσειν δέ, ἀμαθίης καὶ ἀτεχνίης σημεῖόν ἐστιν.*

(Decorum, IV)

*Τὸ γὰρ ἔθος τῇσι χερσὶ κάλλιστον διδασκάλιον γίνεται.*

(Breaths, I)

## SHORTCOMINGS

*Τὸ δὲ ἀτρεκὲς ὀλιγάκις ἐστὶ κατιδεῖν.*

(Ancient Medicine, IX)

*Σφαλερὴ γὰρ καὶ εὔπταιστος ἡ μετ᾽ ἀδολεσχίης ἰσχύρισις.*

(Precepts, II)

*Πάσῃ γὰρ εὐπορίῃ ἀπορίη ἔνεστι.*

(Precepts, VIII)

*Ἐπὶ τοῦ χρέους ἀπορίη ἀηδής.*

(Decorum, VII)

The power, too, to study correctly what has been written I consider to be an important part of the art [of medicine].

## KNOWLEDGE, IGNORANCE

He who knows has right understanding always, while he who knows not, sometimes right understanding sometimes wrong.

For what escapes the eyesight is mastered by the eye of the mind.

Do not plead ignorance.

## EXPERIENCE, INEXPERIENCE

So you must from your experience forecast what the issue will be.

Inexperience on the other hand is a cursed treasure and store for those that have it.

For to hold opinions, without putting them into action, is a sign of want of education and of want of art.

For habit proves the best teacher of the hands.

## SHORTCOMINGS

Perfectly exact truth is but rarely to be seen.

For affirmation and talk are deceptive and treacherous.

For in all abundance there is lack.

Lack [of knowledge] when need arises is an unpleasant thing.

## WORK, IDLENESS

Ὅπη οὐκ ἀργίη, οὐδὲ μὴν κακίη.

(Decorum, I)

Χρῆσις κρατύνει, ἀργίη δὲ τήκει.

(In the Surgery, XX)

## COWARDICE, INDISCRETION

Δειλίη μὲν ...ἀδυναμίην σημαίνει· θρασύτης δὲ ἀτεχνίην.

(Laws, IV)

Ἀπὸ ... ἡσυχίης καὶ ῥαθυμίης ἡ δειλίη αὔξεται.

(Airs Waters Places, XXIII)

Τὸ γὰρ προπετὲς καὶ τὸ πρόχειρον καταφρονεῖται, κἢν πάνυ χρήσιμον ᾖ.(The Physician, I)

## TIME, OPPORTUNITY

Χρόνος ἐστὶν ἐν ᾧ καιρός, καὶ καιρὸς ἐν ᾧ χρόνος οὐ πολύς.

(Precepts, I)

## AGE

Ἀκμὴ ἡλικίης πάντα ἔχει χαρίεντα, ἀπόληξις δὲ τοὐναντίον.

(Precepts, XIV)

Γέροντες εὐφορώτατα νηστείην φέρουσι, δεύτεροι οἱ καθεστηκότες, ἥκιστα μειράκια, πάντων δὲ μάλιστα παιδία.

(Aphorisms, I. XIII)

Μάλα γὰρ καὶ φύσις φύσιος καὶ ἡλικίη ἡλικίης διαφέρει.

(Fractures, VII)

## SLEEP

Περὶ δὲ ὕπνου, ὥσπερ καὶ κατὰ φύσιν ἡμῖν σύνηθές ἐστιν, τὴν μὲν ἡμέρην ἐγρηγορέναι χρή, τὴν δὲ νύκτα καθεύδειν.

(Prognostic, X)

## WORK, IDLENESS

Where there is no idleness, there is no evil either.

Use strengthens, disuse debilitates.

## COWARDICE, INDISCRETION

Cowardice indicates powerlessness; rashness indicates want of art.

Rest and slackness are food for cowardice.

For an over-forward obtrusiveness is despised, even though it may be very useful.

## TIME, OPPORTUNITY

Time is that wherein there is opportunity, and opportunity is that wherein there is no great time.

## AGE

The prime of life has everything lovely, the decline has the opposite.

Old men endure fasting most easily, then men of middle age, youths very badly, and worst of all children.

For both constitutions and ages differ greatly.

## SLEEP

As for sleep, the patient ought to follow the natural custom of being awake during the day and asleep during the night.

## DREAMING

*Ὁκόσα δὲ δοκέει ὁ ἄνθρωπος θεωρέειν τῶν συνήθων, ψυχῆς ἐπιθυμίην σημαίνει.*

(Diet IV, 93)

*Ὁκοῖα γὰρ πάσχει τὸ σῶμα, τοιαῦτα ὁρᾷ καὶ ἡ ψυχή, κρυπτομένης τῆς ὄψιος.*

(Diet III, 71)

## WATER, FIRE

*Τὸ μὲν γὰρ πῦρ δύναται πάντα διὰ παντὸς κινῆσαι, τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ πάντα διὰ παντὸς θρέψαι.*

(Diet I, III)

## EARTH

*Ἔχει γὰρ ἡ γῆ ἐν ἑωυτῇ δυνάμιας παντοίας καὶ ἀναρίθμους.*

(Diseases IV, 34)

## LIFE

*Τὰ μὲν ἄλλα πάντα διαλείπουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι πρήσσοντες. Ὁ γὰρ βίος μεταβολέων πλέως.*

(Breaths, IV)

## DREAMING

Whatever of the usual things people think they see [in their sleep] indicate their soul's desire.

For as the experiences of the body are, so are the visions of the soul when sight is cut off.

## FIRE, WATER

Fire can move all things always, while water can nourish all things always.

## EARTH

For the earth has inside herself innumerable forces of all kinds.

## LIFE

All other activities of a man are intermittent, for life is full of changes.



# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## I. ANCIENT AND BYZANTINE AUTHORS


**Aelianus,** *Varia Historia.*
**Aëtius** (of Amida), *Libri Medici.*
**Alexander of Tralles** (or Trallianus), *Θεραπευτικά.*
**Ambrosius** (Mediolani), *Epistulae.*
**Anthologia Palatina-Planudea,** *Anthologia Graeca.*
**Apollodorus** (Mythographus), *Bibliotheca.*
**Aristides Aelius,** *Asclepiadai.*
**Aristophanes,** *Thesmophoriazusae.*
» *Plutus.*
**Aristotle,** *Meteorologica.*
» *Nicomachean Ethics.*
» *Politics.*
**Aristoxenus** (of Tarentum), *Fragments* (Diels-Kranz).
**Athenaeus** (Grammaticus), *Deipnosophistai* (The Learned Banquet).
**Augustinus,** *Contra Manichaeum.*

**Basil** (the Young), *Σχόλια εἰς λόγους Γρηγορίου* (P.G. Migne).
**Bible**
**Brussels Manuscript,** *Hippocratis genus, vita, dogma* (Th. Priscianus).

**Cassiodorus,** *Institutiones divinarum et saecularium lectionum.*
**Celsus,** *De Medicina.*
**Cicero M.T.,** *De Natura Deorum.*
**Clement of Alexandria,** Στρωματεῖς *(Miscellanies).*

**Demetrius** (Pepagomenus), *Podagra.*
**Democritus,** *Fragments* (H. Diels).
**Demosthenes,** *Against Conon*
**Diodorus Siculus,** *Βιβλιοθήκη Ἱστορική (World History).*
**Diogenes Laërtius,** *Lives of Philosophers.*
**Dioscorides** (Dioscurides), *Materia Medica.*

**Erotian,** *Glossary to Hippocrates.*
**Euripides,** *Medea.*
» *Hippolytus.*
**Eusebius** (Pamphilus), *Chronicle.*

**Eustathius of Thessalonica,** *Critical Remarks on Homer's Iliad and Odyssey.*
**Galen,** *Works* (ed. Kuhn, 1827).
» » (ed. ΠΑΠΥΡΟΣ, 1975).

**Gellius Aulus,** *Noctes Atticae.*
**Glycas Michael,** *Βίβλος Χρονική.*
**Gregory of Nazianzus,** *Ἐπιτάφιος εἰς Καισάριον.*

**Heliodorus** (Epicus), *Ἀπολυτικά.*
**Heliodorus** (Medicus), *Χειρουργούμενα.*
**Heraclitus** (Philosophus), *Fragments* (H. Diels).
**Herodas,** *Mimes.*
**Herodotus,** *History.*
**Hesiod,** *Works and Days.*
**Hesychius,** *Lexicon (Συναγωγὴ πασῶν λέξεων κατὰ στοιχεῖον).*
**Hieronymus S.E.,** *Epistolae.*
**Hippocrates,** *The Complete Works* (ed. Littré, 1839-1861).
» » » (ed. ΠΑΠΥΡΟΣ, 1937-1941).
» » » (ed. Α. ΜΑΡΤΙΝΟΣ, 1967-1971).
» » » (ed. KAKTOS, 1992).

**Homer,** *Iliad, Odyssey.*
» *Hymns.*

**Iamblichus,** *Περὶ τοῦ Πυθαγορικοῦ βίου (De vita Pythagorica).*
**Isidorus** (Pelusiotes), *Ἐπιστολαί (Letters).*

**Κεδρηνὸς Γεώργιος,** *Σύνοψις Ἱστοριῶν.*

**Lucian,** *Tragodopodagra.*

**Maimonides,** *Σχόλια εἰς τοὺς Ἀφορισμοὺς τοῦ Ἱπποκράτους.*
**Menander,** *Γνῶμαι μονόστιχοι (one-line gnomes).*
**Meno,** *Ἰατρικὴ Συναγωγή* (ed. Kenyon-Diels, 1893).

**Oribasius,** *Ἰατρικαὶ Συναγωγαί (Collectiones Medicae).*

**Palladius,** *Σχόλια εἰς Ἱπποκράτην (Comments on Hippocrates).*
**Paul of Aegina** (Paulus Aegineta), *Ἐπιτομὴ Ἰατρικῆς (Compendium of Medicine).*
**Pausanias,** *Περιήγησις τῆς Ἑλλάδος (Description of Greece).*

**Phocylides,** *Γνῶμαι (Gnomes).*
**Pindar,** *Pythian Odes.*
**Plato,** *Laws.*
» *Phaedrus.*
» *Protagoras.*
» *Theaetetus.*
**Pliny G.S.,** *Historia Naturalis.*
**Plutarch,** *Alexander.*
» *Cato Major.*
» *Moralia, Quaestiones Graecae.*
**Polydeuces,** *Ὀνομαστικόν.*

**Seneca L.A.,** *Dialogi, Epistolae morales.*
**Scribonius Largus,** *De compositione medicamentorum.*
**Solon,** *Ὑποθῆκαι εἰς ἑαυτόν (Counsel to himself).*
**Sophocles,** *Oedipus Tyrannus.*
**Soranus** (of Ephesus), *Βίοι ἰατρῶν (Lives of Physicians).*
**Stephanus Byzantius,** *Ἐθνικά.*
**Stobaeus J.,** *Ἀνθολόγιον (Anthology).*
**Strabo,** *Geography.*
**Suda** (Suidas) Lexicon.
**Syncellus G.,** *Ἐκλογὴ Χρονογραφίας* (Selected Chronicles).

**Theophilus** (Protospatharius), *Comment on the Aphorisms of Hippocrates.*
**Theopompus** (of Chios), *Ἑλληνικαὶ ἱστορίαι (Hellenica).*
**Thucydides,** *History.*
**Tzetzes J.,** *Chiliades (or Historiarum variarum chiliades).*

**Varro M.T.,** *Rerum rusticarum.*

## II. LATER AND CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS

**Anagnostou** (Ἀναγνώστου Ι.Χ.), *Ἱπποκράτης κατ' ἐκλογήν,* Ἀθῆναι 1926.
**Aravantinos** (Ἀραβαντινὸς Ἀρ.), *Ἀσκληπιὸς καὶ Ἀσκληπιεῖα,* Λειψία 1907.
**Baisette G.,** *Hippocrate, la père de la Medecine,* 1967.
**Baldini M. – Malato M.,** *Ippocrate Aforismi e Giuramento,* Roma 1994.
**Barrow M.V.,** *Portraits of Hippocrates,* Medical History, XVI, 1972.
**Bonotis Sp.** (Μπονώτης Σπ.), *Αἱ περὶ τῆς Παθολογίας τῶν ὦτων ἀντιλήψεις τῶν ἀρχαίων Ἑλλήνων ἰατρῶν,* Διδακτ. διατριβή, Ἀθῆναι 1996.
**Bousquet J.,** *Inscriptions de Delphes,* B.C.H. LXXX, 1956.

**Briau R.,** *Hippocrate et la lithotomie,* Paris 1879.

**Carratelli G.P.,** *La norma etica degli Asclapiadai di Cos,* LA PAROLA DEL PASSATO XLVI, 1991.
**Castiglioni Art.,** *Storia della Medicina,* suppl. by N. Σ. Παπασπύρου,Ἀθῆναι 1961.
**Cavvadias A.P.,** *Neo-Hippocratism,* London 1937.
**Celli B. Bruni,** *Bibliografia Hippocratica,* Caracas 1984
**Coraës Adam.** (Κοραῆς Ἀδαμ.), *Ἱπποκράτους τὸ περὶ Ἀέρων Ὑδάτων Τόπων* (Προλεγόμενα), Παρίσιοι 1816.
» » *Ὁ καθ' Ἱπποκράτην ἰατρός* (Θερειανοῦ, Ἀδαμ. Κοραῆς, τ. 3ος. Μετάφραση ἐκ τοῦ Λατινικοῦ, Τεργέστη 1890.

**Dampasis I.N.** (Δάμπασης I.N.), *Περὶ τοῦ Ἱπποκρατικοῦ Ὅρκου,* ΙΑΤΡΙΚΑ ΧΡΟΝΙΑ, τ. 9ος 1969.
» » *Ἡ Ἱπποκρατικὴ Φιλοσοφία,* ΠΑΡΝΑΣΣΟΣ, τ. 13ος 1971.
**Daremberg Ch.,** Oeuvres choisies d' Hippocrate, Paris 1855.
**Debru A.,** Hippocrate. La consultation, Paris 1986.
**Deichgräber K.,** *Der hippokratische Eid,* Stuttgart, 1955.
» Die ärztliche standesethik des hippokratischen Eides (1933). ANTIKE MEDIZIN, Wege der Forschung CCXXI, Darmstadt, 1971.
**Demakopoulos P.** (Δημακόπουλος Π.), *Αἱ ἀνατομικαὶ γνώσεις τῆς Ἱπποκρατικῆς Συλλογῆς,* Διδ. διατριβή, Ἀθῆναι 1968.
**Detorakis M.** (Δετοράκης Μ.), *Μετάκληση Κώων γιατρῶν στὴν Κρήτη τὸν 2ον αἰώνα π.Χ.* ΚΡΗΤΙΚΑ ΧΡΟΝΙΑ, τ. Λ', 1990.
**Diels H.,** *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,* Berlin 1951.
**Diller H.** *Besprechung von: L. Edelstein, "The Hippocratic Oath",* GNOMON, Bd. 22, 1950.
**Dugant J.E.,** *Essai sur la vie d' Hippocrate,* These, Nice 1987.

**Edelstein L.,** *The Hippocratic Oath,* Baltimore 1943.
» *The Hippocratic Oath,* with an Appendix on *The Hippocratic Patient and Physician* by H.N. Couch, Chicago 1979.
**Entralgo P.L.,** *La Medicina hippocratica,* Madrid 1970.
**Festugière A.J.,** *Hippocrate, "L' ancienne medecine"* (Études et commentaires IV), Paris 1948.
**Gazes A.** (Γαζῆς Ἄνθιμος), *Ἑλληνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη,* 1907.
**Gossen H.,** *Hippokrates.* Article in Real-Encyclopädie, VIII 1913, ll. 1801 ff.

**Hatzivasiliou B.Σ.** (Χατζηβασιλείου Β.Σ.), Ἱστορία τῆς Νήσου Κῶ, 1990.
**Heinimann F.,** *Nomos und Physis,* Basel 1945.
**Herzog R.** in *Archäologisches Anzeigen,* 1905.
» *Heilige Gezetze von Kos,* in Abb. d. Akademie Berlin 1928.

**Ilberg J.,** (A biography of Hippocrates) in *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum,* IV 1927.
**Ioannidis A.I.** (Ἰωαννίδης Ἀντ. Ἰ.), *Οἱ ἠθικὲς παραγγελίες καὶ ἡ ἰατρικὴ δεοντολογία τοῦ Ἱπποκρατικοῦ Ὅρκου,* ΙΑΤΡΙΚΗ ΗΘΙΚΗ,ΓΑΛΗΝΟΣ, τ. 30ός, 1988.
**Irigoin J.,** *Hippocrate et la Collection hippocratique,* Annaire du collège de France, 1987-1988.

**Jaeger W.,** *Paedeia.* Translated into Greek by Π. Βέρροιος, Ἀθήνα 1971.
**Joly R.,** *Hippocrates of Cos,* in Dictionary of Scientific Biography, VI, New York, 1972.
**Jones W.H.S.,** *Hippocrates,* London 1939.
» *The Doctor's Oath. The Early Forms of the Hippocratic Oath,* Cambridge1924.
**Jouanna J.,** *Hippocrate de Cos et le sacré,* Journal des savants, Janier-Juin 1989.
» Hippocrate, Paris 1992.

**Karanastasis A.M.** (Καραναστάσης Α.Μ.) *Ὁ Ἱπποκράτης σὲ ἀνέκδοτες παραδόσεις τῆς Κῶ,* ΔΩΔΕΚΑΝΗΣΙΑΚΟΝ ΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ, τόμος Γ', 1955.
» » *Ἡ ἀσυλία τοῦ Ἀσκληπιείου τῆς Κῶ καὶ ἡ πενταετηρὶς τῶν Ἀσκληπιείων,* ΔΩΔΕΚΑΝΗΣΙΑΚΟΝ ΑΡΧΕΙΟΝ, τόμος Δ',1960.
**Kastrantas A.D.** (Καστραντᾶς Ἀ.Δ.), *Αἱ ὀφθαλμικαὶ γνώσεις τῶν Ἑλλήνων κατὰ τὴν Ἱπποκράτειον ἐποχήν,* Διδακτ. διατριβή, Ἀθῆναι 1960.
**Katsas Gr.** (Κάτσας Γρ.), *Στοιχεῖα Ἰατρικῆς Δεοντολογίας,* Ἀθῆναι 1940.
**Kavvadias A.P.** (Καββαδίας Ἀλ. Π.), *Ἡ ἰατρικὴ καὶ αἱ ἀνθρωπολογικαὶ ἐπιστῆμαι,* Ἀθῆναι 1964.
**Ketseas Th. V.** (Κετσέας Θ.Β.), *Ἱπποκράτης, τὸ ἄρωμα τῆς ἀρετῆς,* ΑΚΤΙΝΕΣ, 1994.
**Kiapokas E.S.** (Κιαπόκας Ἐ. Σ.), *Ἀνάλυση τοῦ Ἱπποκρατικοῦ Ὅρκου,* Ἀθήνα 1981.
**Kiaris H.** (Κιάρης Χαρ.), *Ἱστορία τῶν Βιβλίων τῆς Ἱπποκρατικῆς Συλλογῆς, ἐκδόσεις μέχρι τὸ 1839,* ΚΩΑΚΑ, τόμος 5ος, 1995.

**Kitto H.D.F.**, *The Greeks*, Edinburgh 1959.
**Koliopoulos N.** (Κολιόπουλος Ν.), *Ἡ Μαιευτικὴ τοῦ Ἱπποκράτους*. Διδακτ. διατριβή, Ἀθῆναι 1966.
**Kouzis A.P.** (Κούζης Ἀρ. Π.), *Ἱστορία τῆς Ἰατρικῆς*, Ἀθῆναι 1929.

**Laboulbène J.J.A.**, *Histoire des livres hippocratiques*, Paris 1881.
**Lameras K. I.** (Λαμέρας Κ. Ἰ.), *Βιβλιοθήκη Ἀρχαίων Ἑλλήνων Ἰατρῶν*, Ἱπποκράτης, Ἀθῆναι 1908.
» *Αἱ ἠθικαὶ ἀρχαὶ τοῦ Ἱπποκράτους*, Ἀθῆναι 1947.
**Lesky Alb.**, *History of Ancient Greek Literature*, transl. by Ἀ. Τσοπανάκης, Θεσσαλονίκη 1972.
**Lichtenthaeler Ch.**, *Der Eid des Hippocrates. Ursprung und Bedeutung*, Köln 1984.
**Littré É.**, *Oeuvres complètes d' Hippocrates*, Paris 1839-1861.
**Lloyd G.E.R.**, *Hippocratic Writings*, Penguin Classics, 1983.
**Louvaris N.I.**, (Λούβαρης Ν. Ἰ.), *Ὁ ὅρκος τῶν ἀρχαίων ἰατρῶν*, Ἀθῆναι 1942.
**Lypourles D. D.**, (Λυπουρλῆς Δημ. Δ.), *Ἱπποκρατικὴ Ἰατρική*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1972.
» » *Ἱπποκρατικὴ Συλλογή*, Βικελαία Βιβλιοθήκη, Ἡράκλειον 1991.

**Mandilaras V.** (Μανδηλαρᾶς Βασ.), *Ἱπποκράτης, Ἅπαντα*, τ. Α' ἔκδοση ΚΑΚΤΟΣ, Ἀθῆναι 1992.
**Marketos Sp.** *Hellenic Medicine, Medico-Historical Issues*, Athens 1991.
» *Ἱστορία τῆς Ἰατρικῆς* εἰκονογραφημένη, Ἀθῆναι 1993.
**Marketos Sp.** *Le serment Hippocratique est-il anachronique?* (Pictorial Bulletin of the IHFC, August 1993)
**Meibonius I.H.**, *Hippocratis Magni ὅρκος sive Jusjurandum*, Luguni 1643.
**Merikas G.** (Μερίκας Γ.), *Τα μεγάλα Ἱπποκρατικὰ ἀξιώματα καὶ ἡ σημερινὴ Ἰατρική*, ΝΕΑ ΕΣΤΙΑ, τόμος 1160ς, 1984.
**Meyer-Steineg Th.**, *Chirurgische Instrumente des Altertums*, Jena 1992.
**Meyer-Steineg Th., und Schonack W.**, *Hippokrates. Über Aufgaben und Pflichten des Arztes*, Bonn 1913.
**Mitropoulos K.** (Μητρόπουλος Κ.), *Ἱπποκράτους Γένος-Βίος-Ἔργα*, Ἀθῆναι 1950.
» *Γλωσσάριον Ἱπποκρατείου Συλλογῆς*, Ἔκδ. Β', Ἀθῆναι 1982.
**Modona A.**, *L' isola di Coo nell' antichita classica*, 1993.
**Mottura G.**, *Il Giuramento di Ippocrate*, Roma 1986.
**Nestle W.**, *Hippocratica*, HERMES, LXXIII, 1938.
**Notis G.P.** (Νώτης Γ.Π.), *Ὁ Ἱπποκράτης ὡς φιλόσοφος*, Ἀθῆναι 1950.

**Panagopoulos E.** (Παναγώπουλος Ἐ.), *Τὸ ἀληθινὸ πρόσωπο τῆς εὐθανασίας,* Η ΔΡΑΣΙΣ ΜΑΣ, 1955.
**Papantoniou E** (Παπαντωνίου Ἐλπ.), *Ὁ Ἡρακλῆς στὴν Κῶ,* ΤΑ ΚΩΑΚΑ, τόμος Δ', 1993.
**Papavasiliou - Rozou.** (Παπαβασιλείου Ι.Θ. - Ρόζου Β.Π.), *Ἐγχειρίδιον Ἱστορίας τῆς Ἰατρικῆς,* τόμος Α', Ἀθῆναι 1979.
**Paton W - Hicks E.,** *The Inscriptions of Cos,* Oxford 1891.
**Petersen Ch.** *Zeit und Lebensverhältnisse des Hippokrates,* PHILOLOGUS, VI, 1849.
**Petrequin J.E.** *Chirurgie d' Hippocrate,* Paris 1877-1878.
**Phokas E.A.** (Φωκᾶς Εὐγ. Α.), *Γενικαὶ Ἀρχαὶ Ὑδροθεραπείας καὶ Ἰατρικῆς Κλιματολογίας,* ἐν Ἀθήναις 1957.
**Phylaktos A.** (Φυλακτὸς Ἀνδρ.), *Ἡ Φιλοσοφία τῶν Ἑλλήνων Προσωκρατικῶν Φιλοσόφων κυρία πηγὴ ἀντλήσεως τοῦ Ἱπποκράτους καὶ τῆς Σχολῆς αὐτοῦ,* Ἀθῆναι 1973.
**Pomtow H.,** Hippokrates und die Asklepiaden in Delphi, KLIO, XX, 1918.
**Pournaropoulos G.K.** (Πουρναρόπουλος Γ.Κ.), *Προσκύνημα εἰς Κῶ, τὸ Ἀσκληπιεῖον Κῶ. Ὁ θρύλος τοῦ Μεγάλου Ἱπποκράτους,* ΑΚΑΔΗΜ. ΙΑΤΡΙΚΗ, 7, 1949.
» » *Εἰσαγωγὴ εἰς τὸν Ἱπποκράτην,* Ἀθῆναι 1967.
» » Ἱπποκράτης, Ἅπαντα τὰ ἔργα, Προεισαγόμενα, 6 τόμοι, Ἐκδόσεις ΜΑΡΤΙΝΟΣ, 1967-1971.
**Pournaropoulos K.G.** (Πουρναρόπουλος Κ.Γ.), *Τὰ ἰατρικὰ ἐργαλεῖα τῶν Ἀρχαίων,* Διδακτορικὴ διατριβή, 1975.

**Reinhold C.H.T.,** *Ἱπποκράτης, Κομιδῇ,* Ἀθήνησι 1865.
**Rigatos G. - Kappos I. - Thuas B.** (Ρηγάτος Γ.-Κάππος Ι.-Θούας Β.), *Ἱστορία τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς Ρευματολογίας,* Ἀθῆναι 1858.
**Roselli A.,** *La chirurgia Ippocratica,* Firenze 1975.
**Rougemont G.,** *Corpus des inscriptions des Delphes,* Paris 1977.

**Sakalis D. Th.** (Σακαλὴς Δ.Θ.), *Ἱπποκράτους Ἐπιστολαί,* Ἰωάννινα 1989.
**Samartsidis S.** (Σαμαρτσίδης Σ.), *Τάφος τοῦ Ἱπποκράτους,* Ἀθῆναι 1858.
**Segre Mario,** *Iscrizioni di Cos,* Roma 1993.
**Sherwin-White S.M.,** *Ancient Cos,* Göttingen 1978.
**Sigerist H.E.,** *A History of Medicine,* O.U.P. 1955-1961.
**Smith W.D.** *The Hippocratic Tradition,* Cornell University Press, 1979.
**Sperantsa S.** (Σπεράντσα Στ.), *Ὀρθοδοντική,* Ἀθῆναι 1949.

**Stamatiadis E.K.** (Σταματιάδης Ἐ.Κ.), *Συμβολὴ εἰς τὴν μελέτην τῆς Χειρουργικῆς τῶν Ἱπποκρατείων ἰατρῶν*, Ἀθῆναι 1964.

**Temkin O.,** *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians,* Baltimore 1991.
**Thivel A.,** *Cnide et Cos? Essai sur les doctrines medicales dans la collection hippocratique,* Paris 1981.
**Touliatos Dion.** (Τουλιάτος Διον.), *Ἡ ἑλληνικὴ ἰατρικὴ διὰ μέσου τῶν αἰώνων*, Ἀθῆναι 1957.
**Tsekourakis D.** (Τσεκουράκης Δαμ.), Ἱπποκράτης *"Περὶ Ἀρχαίης Ἰητρικῆς"*, Ἑρμηνευτικὴ ἔκδοση, Θεσσαλονίκη 1994.
**Varouhakis H.H.** (Βαρουχάκης Χ.Χ.), *Ἡ Ἱπποκρατικὴ Ψυχιατρική*, Διδακτορικὴ διατριβή, 1966.
**Vitrac B.,** *Medecine et Philosophie au temps d' Hippocrate,* Paris 1989.
**Wellmann M.,** *Hippokrates, des Herakleides Sohn*, HERMES 64, 1929.
**Zarraftes, Jacob** (Ζαρράφτης, Ἰάκωβος), *Ὁ Πλάτανος τῆς Κῶ*, Κῶς 1916.
**Zervos, S.** (Σκεύος Ζερβός), Ἱστορία τῆς Ἰατρικῆς, τ. Α', Ἀθῆναι 1914.
» » Ἡ εἰκὼν τοῦ Ἱπποκράτους, Ἀθῆναι, 1940.



Hippocrateios Library
KOS-Greece

