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encyclopedias, the new and prevailing spirit of medicine was that of religion and magic. But those centuries are called the decadence of ancient medicine. There is hardly another term used to describe this period, so strong is the conviction that scientific medicine cannot have anything in common with religious and magical forces.⁴ Some scholars recognize the fact that religion and magic became apparent only in the Byzantine epoch but began to influence medicine long before Galen.⁵ They date the decline earlier. According to them the rational treatment of Coan and Cnidian physicians was already contaminated in the fourth century B.C. For Hippocratic medicine did not outlive Platonic methods; from the Hellenistic era on it became speculative and even superstitious. Thus medicine, like all the other sciences, collapsed long before the close of antiquity.⁶

Now it is easy to argue that from a purely historical aspect these limitations and valuations cannot be accepted. Medicine, imbued with religion and magic or freed from both of them, medicine after Galen or

⁴ H. O. Taylor, *Greek Biology and Medicine (Our Debt to Greece and Rome)*, 1922, especially p. 122. Identical in its principle is the representation of the history of Greek medicine in Gercke-Norden, *Einleitung in die Altertumswissenschaft*, II, 5⁴, *Exakte Wissenschaften v. A. Rehm und K. Vogel*, Leipzig, 1933. Cf. also U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Die Griechische Literatur des Altertums (Die Kultur der Gegenwart, I, 8³, 1912, p. 250)*. Ivan Bloch, *Byzantinische Medizin (Handbuch der Geschichte der Medizin, herausgegeben v. M. Neuburger und J. Pagel, Jena, 1902, I, p. 508)*. A certain superiority of Greek medicine over the Roman is thereby acknowledged even for the latest centuries, cf. Gercke-Norden, I. c., p. 77 and M. Neuburger, *Geschichte der Medizin*, II, 1, 1911, p. 3. Cf. also S. Runciman, *Byzantine Civilization*, London, 1933, pp. 132; 237.

⁵ M. Neuburger, I. c., pp. 3-4.

⁶ W. H. S. Jones, *Hippocrates, with an English translation (Loeb Classical Library)*, I, 1923, p. 8: "[In Greek medicine] the two methods, that of Greek philosophy and that of modern science, stand face to face. The struggle between them was, for the time being, short. Medicine, almost the only branch of Greek science scientifically studied, was worsted in the fight, and medical science gradually degenerated from rational treatment to wild speculation and even quackery and superstition. The transcendent genius of Plato, strong in that very power of persuasion the use of which he so much deprecated, won the day. The philosophic fervor which longed with passionate desire for unchangeable reality, that felt a lofty contempt for the material world with its ever-shifting phenomena, that aspired to rise to a heavenly region where changeless Ideas might be apprehended by pure intelligence purged from every bodily taint, was more than a match for the humble researches of men who wished to relieve human suffering by a patient study of those very phenomena that Plato held of no account. So for centuries philosophy flourished and science languished, in spite of Aristotle, Euclid and Archimedes." Withington in his contribution to W. H. S. Jones, *Malaria and Greek History*, Manchester, 1909, pp. 154 sq., expresses the same opinion, although he gives a different explanation.

in the Hellenistic period is, after all, Greek medicine; Greek medical literature is, indeed, an accumulation of the most different writings.⁷ One must depict the facts as they are without any prejudice and properly determine the share which each of the different forms of treatment had in reality.

But this is not enough. There are not only "three lines of possible approach which may be described as the secular, the magical and the religious,"⁸ each one of them of equal historical value, and each strictly separated from the others. That religious medicine at least changed a good deal by taking over results of scientific medicine, by becoming more rational, is a fact generally believed.⁹ Yet an influence of religious and magical ideas on science is also conceivable. It can be denied only if it is true that the conception of medical art necessarily devoid of any religious and magical content was adopted by the ancient physicians. Whether this was generally the case is not to be decided without further proof; the reticence concerning religion and magic, even their rejection in many cases, does not suffice as an argument. For these are ambiguous instances which have to be interpreted first. Such an inquiry is also important, since religious healing and magical rites used by patients throughout antiquity and relied on in ever-increasing measure presented if not a theoretical, at least a practical problem to the physicians. Did the physicians recognize the practice of priests and magicians as a means outside their own activity or did they renounce it as being worthless and even false? Their reaction must have depended largely on their theoretical attitude toward religious and magical ideas.

These are the problems involved in the relation of Greek medicine to religion and magic. It is with their discussion and with the description of the historical situation that I shall try to deal, testing the char-

⁷ Charles Singer, *Greek Biology and Greek Medicine*, Oxford, 1922, p. 80-81, is quite right in stating: "That mass [of Greek medical learning] contained much dross, material that survived from early as from late Greek times which was hardly, if at all, superior to the debased compositions that circulated in the name of medicine in the middle centuries. The recovered Greek medical writings also contained some material of the purest and most scientific type."

⁸ W. R. Halliday, *The Treatment of Disease in Antiquity* (in "Greek Poetry and Life," Essays presented to G. Murray, Oxford, 1936, p. 277). But he, too, calls Galen "the last Greek medical scientist of antiquity. Man's mind had moved from a scientific toward a religious and magical view of the universe." (p. 293).

⁹ Cf. R. Herzog, *Die Wunderheilungen von Epidauros*, Philologus, Supplement XXII, III, 1931, pp. 145-147; cf. also O. Weinreich, *Antike Heilungswunder, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche u. Vorarbeiten*, VIII, 1, 1909, p. 110.

