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PART TWO

Incantations are not only useless, and wrong, says Galen, they are outside of the activity of the physician.¹¹¹ No one can perform incantations if he wants to be acknowledged as a good doctor: "It is not a learned physician who sings incantations over pains which should be cured by cutting."¹¹² This attitude does not signify a progress reached only in the time of the Hippocratic physicians. Homeric medicine is already opposed to such means, and the polemic of the book on the Sacred Disease only proves that in the fifth century B.C. problems must be discussed which before were not worth discussing.¹¹³

The rejection of incantations was the more difficult since not even those who trusted their validity claimed to have a reason by which their effect could be explained.¹¹⁴ The men who performed incantations were priests, and even Plato admits that for the many it is not easy to come to a definite conclusion concerning the value of incantations.¹¹⁵ But the Olympian religion remains strong enough to resist. Only the superstitious resort to incantations. A believer in magic may dare to state that disbelief in incantations proves disbelief in God; but even in the second century A.D. the answer is that this conclusion is rash, that, on the contrary, men who believe they can force God by their prayers are impious, as

jener Schule die *ἐπαοιδὰ* zur Stillung des Blutes bei Wunden empfohlen . . . Es ist wahrscheinlich, dass die sikelische Schule diese populären Mittel der Volksmedizin aus pythagoreischer Lehre herübergenommen hat." Or it is said (RE, Suppl. IV, s. v. Epode, pp. 340-41): "Der Gebrauch der Epode ist in der antiken Welt nie geschwunden trotz der Gegner, die dagegen bei den Griechen selbst und bei den Christen auftraten. Schon im 5. Jahrhundert finden wir solche bei den Ärzten . . . Von späteren Ärzten welche ihren Gebrauch verwarfen, seien etwa Soranus . . . und Galen . . . genannt . . . aber diese Stimmen drangen nicht durch, da die volkstümliche Verwendung der Epoden von Anfang an auch von Ärzten oder solchen die dafür galten, übernommen wurde." Cf. also F. G. Welcker, *Kl. Schriften*, III, 1850, pp. 68 sq. I think it is sufficient to give the passages in full in order to prove that they have no magical implications whatsoever.

¹¹¹ Galen, Opera, ed. Kühn, XI, 792: *μαγανείαι οὐ περλεργοὶ μόνον, οὐδ' ἔξω τῆς ἱατρικῆς τέχνης, ἀλλὰ καὶ ψευδεῖς ἀπάσαι.*

¹¹² Sophocles, Aias, 581-82: *οὐ πρὸς ἱατροῦ σοφοῦ θρηγεῖν ἐφθδς πρὸς τομῶντι πῆματι.*

¹¹³ Contrary to Wilamowitz, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, I, 1931, p. 29 (*Schon im 5ten Jahrhundert*) and Jones, l. c., I, p. 10.

¹¹⁴ Alexander v. Aphrodisias, *De Fato*, cp. 8, *Supplementum Aristotelicum*, II, 2, 1881, p. 174, 20-25: *ἀδηλα δὲ τὰ αἰτία ἀνθρωπίνῳ λογισμῷ ἐκένων μάλλον ἢ κατὰ τινὰς ἀντιπαθείας γίνεσθαι πεπίστευται ἀγνοουμένης τῆς αἰτίας δι' ἣν γίνεταί, ὅποια περιπατὰ τέ τινα προσεῖληπται οὐδεμίαν εὐλογον καὶ πιθανὴν αἰτίαν τοῦ ταῦτα ποιεῖν ἔχοντα, ἔτι δὲ ἐπαοιδὰ καὶ τινες τοιαῦτα μαγανείαι. τούτων γὰρ ὁμολογεῖται μὲν ὑπὸ πάντων ἀδελφὸς εἶναι ἢ αἰτία, διὸ καὶ ἀναιτιολόγητα λέγουσιν αὐτά.* Not only incantations but all the other magical procedures are then justified by their empirical efficacy.

¹¹⁵ Laws, XI, 933a.

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they were called also in the book on the Sacred Disease.¹¹⁶ It is not until the old religious feeling was weakened that foreign rites and superstition could get the upper hand. And it is important to note that Asclepius, the patron of physicians and patients, was for all pious men of these late centuries the symbol of Olympian religion.¹¹⁷ If in antiquity nobody doubted that magic had its origin in medicine as Pliny relates,¹¹⁸ the medical art of the Greeks and Romans has really freed itself from any magical ingredient. And this in spite of the necessary temptation to use everything which may help to cure the patient and in spite of the supposed empirical confirmation of the power of incantations. For even in the latest centuries it is on the efficacy of incantations in those cases in which the other remedies fail, that their use is based and excused. For the superstitious physicians themselves never forget that in performing incantations they transgress the limits of medicine.¹¹⁹

But what about the relation of physicians to the religious healing of diseases? What do they think about prayers and incubations, which were supposed by many people to help against illness in the same way as surgery and dietetics, remedies and music?

Prayers are not dealt with very often in medical books. In one of the Hippocratic writings it is said: "Prayer indeed is good, but while calling on the gods a man should himself lend a hand."¹²⁰ This is not an

¹¹⁶ Lucian, *Philopseudes*, 29.

¹¹⁷ Harnack, *Medizinisches aus d. ältesten Kirchengeschichte*, I, c., p. 72: "Das eigentümliche des Dämonenglaubens im 2. Jahrhundert besteht erstlich darin, dass er aus den dunklen unteren Schichten in die oberen, selbst in die Literatur, empor- dringt und eine ungleich wichtigere Sache wird wie ehemals, zweitens, dass er keine kräftige naive öffentliche Religion mehr neben sich hat, die ihn niederhält . . . Die ausserordentliche Verbreitung des Dämonenglaubens . . . (ist darauf) zurückzu- führen, dass in der Kaiserzeit das Zutrauen zu den alten Religionen dahinschwand . . ." Concerning the foreign origin of incantations cf. e.g., Diodor, II, 39 (the Chal- deans), III, 58 (Cybele), Lucian, *Demonax*, cp. 23.

¹¹⁸ Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, XXX, 1: *magicam natam primum e medicina nemo dubitat.* But Pliny himself admits that incantations were rejected by the wisest (l. c., XVIII, 3-4).

¹¹⁹ Cf. Alexander v. Tralles, l. c., II, 1879, p. 475 (the explanation of the sup- posed change of Galen's opinion concerning incantations); p. 579; p. 585. In this sense it must be understood that Ammianus Marcellinus (*Res Gestae*, XVI, 8, 2) speaks of an "anile incantamentum . . . quod medicinae quoque auctoritas admittit." Concerning the material preserved cf. again L. Deubner, *Greek charms and amu- lets*, I, c.

¹²⁰ Jones, l. c., IV, p. 423: *καὶ τὸ μὲν εὖχεσθαι ἀγαθόν. δεῖ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν συλλαμβάνοντα τοὺς θεοὺς ἐπικαλεῖσθαι.* Cf. p. 447: "I have discovered regimen, with the gods' help,

