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## **[Greek medecine in its relation to religion and magic - suite]**

**Auteur : Foucault, Michel**

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Coteb028\_f0202

SourceBoite\_028-2-chem | Pile – Ensemble. 1° médecins ; 2° Antiques (notes diverses sur la sexualité dans l'Antiquité). Dite `pile I` [annotation de D. Defert]

LangueFrançais

TypeFicheLecture

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

### **Références éditoriales**

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

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

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reason, are opposed to miracles.<sup>138</sup> Therefore, the Methodists, the physicians of late antiquity who were especially influential in Roman centuries, are the only ones who must reject religious medicine as well as magical medicine. But in general, physicians, as scientists, believe in miracles.

But doctors never expressly advise the use of prayers or of incubations.<sup>139</sup> It is possible only to infer from their theory that they must have acknowledged the validity of prayers and of dreams. This conclusion leads to a very strange problem. If religious medicine cannot be rejected by physicians, is it considered to be valuable in certain cases? And in which cases? Or is it that physicians only believe it possible to be cured by divine help but that they do not resort to it themselves? This would be strange too. But there is no indication to be found in the medical writings as to when patients should use religious medicine and when they should use human medicine. At least, there is no direct indication. Indirectly, I think, it can be deduced from the facts upon what occasions the physicians themselves allow their patients to go to the temple: It is the case of chronic diseases or of every disease which cannot be cured by human knowledge.

The negative attitude of the Greek physicians in many diseases has always been felt to be puzzling. They seemed to be satisfied with the statement that such and such a man can be helped no more. They

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Zeller, I. c., V, p. 697, 6; 704; 720. Dilthey (Das natürliche System der Geisteswissenschaften im 17. Jahrhundert, Gesammelte Schriften, II, 1923, p. 132) stresses the point that miracles could not be entirely discarded until the system of Descartes. The "Begriff von der ausnahmslosen Macht und Geltung der Naturgesetze . . . entstand erst, als durch Descartes alle psychischen Kräfte aus der Natur vertrieben worden waren." Concerning Epicurus cf. Lucretius, De Rerum Natura, I, v. 150-54.

<sup>139</sup> R. Herzog, Die Wunderheilungen v. Epidauros, Philologus, I. c., p. 149; p. 61, believes, along with others, that the passage to be found in the book on Sacred Disease: *θεῖον τε καὶ εὐχεσθαι καὶ ἐς τὰ ἱερὰ φέροντας ἱκετεῖν τοὺς θεοὺς* (Jones, I. c., II, p. 148) "auf die Incubation hinweise." Such an interpretation, however, spoils the argument used by the Hippocratic author. He has claimed that the patients if really possessed by god should not be purified; he adds "one should rather if such patients are to be found pray to the gods and bring them to the temples." For it is his belief that the possession by god, since it is divine, should not be driven away but revered. The Scythians behaved similarly for they revered those men who were possessed by a god (cf. Jones, I. c., I, p. 127). If incubations were advised by the author this would mean a kind of healing which is necessary only if such men are ill, a contention which the author starting from the presuppositions of his enemies tries to refute. The healing of diseases by prayer alone was not recommended before Christian times, cf. Epistle of James, ch. V, 14, 15, 16; The Acts, ch. XL, 20; ch. V, 15.

advised against treating patients who cannot be cured and believed it to be part of their art both to know in what cases the physician cannot accomplish anything and, in those cases, to refrain from doing anything. This, no doubt, is a very peculiar, even inhuman behavior. For it excludes the help of the physician in diseases which are gravest and in which his help is most needed. But such an attitude becomes immediately intelligible if the physician presupposes that the patient, if not treated by him, will go to the temple.

When the art of the physician fails, everybody resorts to incantations and prayers;<sup>140</sup> this phrase was frequently quoted in antiquity. It is especially true in chronic diseases, as it is said: "Those who are ill with chronic diseases and do not succeed by the usual remedies and the customary diet turn to purifications and amulets and dreams."<sup>141</sup> For, of course, one will not go to the god if the case is not serious. Therefore it is a topic of the temple-cures that the god could help when the physicians could not.<sup>142</sup> In a world in which the temples of Asclepius are open to everybody who is ill it need not be mentioned that the patient can and should go to the god if the human physician cannot do anything for him. It is sufficient to state in which cases the physician can do no

<sup>140</sup> Diodorus, Fr., XXX, 43. Dindorf: *ἐκεῖνοί τε γὰρ [οἱ ἐν ταῖς μακροῖς νόσοις δυσποτοῦντες] ὅταν ταῖς παρὰ τῶν ἱατρῶν θεραπείαις ὑπακούσαντες μὴδὲν βέλτιον ἀπαλλάττωσι καταφεύγουσιν ἐπὶ τοῖς θύταις καὶ μάντεσι, ἔτι δὲ προσδέχονται τὰς ἐπιφύλας καὶ παντοδαπὰ γένη περιάπτων.* Cf. Pliny, N. H., XXX, 98.

<sup>141</sup> Plutarch, De Facie in orbe Lunae, 920b: *οἱ ἐν νοσήμασι χρόνιοις πρὸς τὰ κοινὰ βοηθήματα καὶ τὰς συνήθεις διαίτας ἀπειπόντες ἐπὶ καθαρμοῖς καὶ περιάπτῃ καὶ δυνείροις τρέπονται.* Cf. the stories related about Pericles (Plutarch, Pericles, ch. 38), Bion (Diogenes Laertius, IV, 54), Cleomenes (Plutarch, Sayings of Spartans, 223 E), which prove that this attitude is not restricted to the lower classes or to any century. It is the general reaction of men (contrary to Rohde, I. c., p. 89 and Welcker, I. c., p. 69). Since the physicians did not acknowledge magical help to be possible, they were the more interested in that their patients resorted to religious medicine.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. Weinreich, Antike Heilungswunder, I. c., p. 195 sq. "Zur Topik der Wundererzählung, die Kunst der Ärzte versagt." A survey on incantations and the diseases in which they are used also shows that they are especially relied on in chronic diseases. Herzog, in his commentary to the tablets of Epidauros (Die Wunderheilungen v. Epidauros, I. c.) expressly mentions that the diseases cured by the god are those which are not or cannot be cured by human physicians. Later, when the chronic diseases are also treated by physicians, the religious incubations are more restricted to the revelation of remedies, and the type of illnesses dealt with in the temples changes (Weinreich, I. c., pp. 113 sq.). Still, the god performs miracles as in the case described by Rufus, cf. n. 126, above, and in this sense religious medicine of course could never be replaced by human medicine. For, as Rufus says: "If somebody were so good a physician that he could provoke fever (as the god can), there would be no need for any other procedure of healing."

