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**Cures of the body and cures of the soul:
from Hippocrates to the early Eastern
Christian Fathers.**

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September 2012

SUMMARY

This study examines the differences between Hippocratic medicine and Eastern Christian medical notions in relation to the human body and mind in health and disease. The aim is to demonstrate that there were two major reasons why the two traditions valued dissimilarly the body and the soul. First, their differing religiosities were reflected in their contrasting ideas about the function of secular and religious cures. By definition, secular medicine is attached to the physical whereas religion dwells mostly in the spirit. Second, the holistic attitude of Hippocratic cures towards the body and the soul in contrast to the dichotomy in favour of the soul that Christianity became known for is largely due to the diverging interpretation of pagan Greek philosophy. Although the Greek philosophical tradition was all-pervasive for intellectuals in both sides, its various theories did accommodate the distinct interests of Hippocratic medicine and of Christian medicine. Hippocratism expressed itself in terms of practical philosophy. Christianity adopted a contemplative outlook of the person. Primary sources such as the treatises of the Hippocratic Corpus, the writings of Galen, the Holy Scriptures and the work of eminent Eastern Christian theologians provide considerable evidence to make the case for these arguments. Secondary sources will be compared against the primary ones and will assist to highlight wider cultural implications surrounding, interacting with and, often, connecting the two movements.

Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation

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1. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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2. This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Philosophy MA

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am glad I did this course. I found the work hard but I completed it and I would like to thank some people who helped me along the way this unique learning and discovering experience.

I am grateful to Dr. James Robinson for his warm support when I started. I want to thank my lecturers Dr. Nick Sutton, Dr. Bettina Schmidt, Dr. Maya Warriar for her academic and personal advice and Dr. David Noy who gave me an insight into exemplary academic practice. I am most obliged to Dr. Augustine Cassiday for supervising my dissertation. Our contact was brief but for me it was very fruitful. His straight-to-the-point approach helped me focus on the task in hand. I would like to extend special thanks to my first port of call, Vicky Smith, whose assistance has been more than just professional during the ups and downs of this journey. I would also like to thank Dr. Catrin Thomas, Miss Sarah Batt and Paul Wright for being understanding and sympathetic towards the changing circumstances in my life.

On a personal level, I would like to thank my friend and academic Stuart Abbott, my wife for her support, patience and love and my baby daughter for motivating me and for eclipsing any doubts in my mind.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Primarily, the aim of this study is to show that the considerable differences between early Hippocratic holism and Eastern Christian healing concepts which dichotomised the body and the soul were largely the result of two distinct factors. First, the two traditions adhered to two different religiosities and their medical theories reflected this. Second, although the theories of both traditions were pervaded by pagan Greek philosophy, diverging paths within this philosophical tradition facilitated different interpretations and contextualisation by Hippocratism and by Christianity to match their essentially separate objectives. These factors also determined how science, medical practice and the physical body co-existed and/or clashed with spiritual, philosophical and psychic elements within Hippocratic medicine as this was indoctrinated and practiced, initially in the pagan Greek world and later in the early Eastern Christian world. With the passing of time Eastern Christianity adopted Hippocratic medicine as part of its civilization, though, in a manner that conformed to Christian principles and, to an extent, bridged the religious and philosophical differences of the two systems. Although the two traditions shared common interests in philosophy, religiosity and human healing their one major difference can be surmised in that Hippocratic medicine was foremost a discipline that concentrated on the physical and practical task of preserving the human body whereas the ultimate function of the Christian religion is the accomplishment of salvation and of immortality of the human soul. The topics of this study spread over the best part of ten centuries and over a large geographic area. Extensive social, anthropological and political changes within this time and place shaped, mirrored and happened along the various medical, religious and philosophical ideas in question and will therefore also be highlighted and related accordingly to offer a more spherical picture of Hippocratic and Christian medical notions of the human body and soul in health and disease.

To analyse and interpret the medical attitudes of Hippocratism and Christianity primary and secondary sources will be examined. For any insight into Hippocratic medicine the most relevant primary sources are of course the treatises of the Hippocratic Corpus. Theoretical and clinical treatises like *The Sacred Disease*, *The Nature of Man*, *Epidemics*, *Regimen* and *Precepts* provide a clear view of Hippocratic medicine in relation to religion, nature and the causes and therapy of bodily and psychic disease. Galen was important in acting as the mouthpiece of the Hippocratic tradition for centuries to come. His works *De Sanitate Tuenda* and “That the Faculties of the Soul Follow the Mixtures of the Body” are indicative of Hippocratic holism and the relationship between physician and philosopher and the body and the soul. On the Christian side, some of the primary sources which will present the Christian viewpoint are books from the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Apocrypha as well as some of the writings of Philo, Origen, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil the Great and other Eastern theologians. On the one hand, The Holy Scriptures express the original ideas of the biblical religions and, on the other hand, they provided the base on which early theologians expanded their own thought. However, it has to be noted that the versions of the Holy Scriptures that will be analysed in this study are probably very different to the ones studied and referred to by early theologians. This limits the comparability of modern and old exegesis of the Scriptures. Among the secondary sources, Nutton’s *Ancient Medicine*, King’s *Greek and Roman Medicine*, Temkin’s *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians* and Lloyd’s *Science, Folklore and Ideology* and *In the Grip of Disease. Studies in the Greek Imagination* will offer invaluable opinions on the medical, philosophical and religious as well as social, political and anthropological content of the primary sources. The primary and secondary sources will be critically evaluated against each other in order to draw conclusions.

The subject of the relationship between the body and the soul, the physical and the spiritual, spreads over most theoretical and scientific discussions about human existence and activity. It is medicine, however, which, by nature and probably more than any other discipline, very often finds itself having to address this subject philosophically and, of course, in practice in its endeavours to preserve the life of the human entity. However, different forms of medicine are influenced by the different values they represent, which in turn are reflected in their medical opinions. Even secular medicine, which is characterised by scientific objectivity, is inevitably bound to the cultural content that surrounds it.¹ Medical systems of different eras and places cannot avoid reflecting the cultural content that surrounds them and this is also evident in their very often conflicting ideas about the human body and soul. This is, largely, because the matter of consciousness has always been an enigma to scientists and theorists alike and interpretations on it and its relationship to the body have greatly depended on value based theories rather than hard scientific evidence. Such a clash of cultures over the subject of the body and the soul in health and in disease occurred between the classical pagan Greek world, as represented by Hippocratism, and the succeeding Christian world, as represented by the Holy Scriptures and by early Christian authors that covered the subject of medicine. Medical ideas which were tightly attached to religious beliefs were even more susceptible to express views outside the strictly medical scope. The power struggle of the two competing cultures over religious and political authority spread over most human affairs including medicine and its metaphysical parameters.

The Hippocratic medical tradition originated in the fifth century BC with Hippocrates as its assumed founder and continued to be eminent among scientists in the Western world until about the middle of the seventeenth

¹ H.T. Engelhardt, 'Ideology and etiology', *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 1, 1976, pp. 256-268. (p. 260).

century.² However, Hippocratic theories developed within, and were directly influenced by, a very different social, political, economic, religious and philosophical environment compared to those cultures that adopted it in later centuries. One of the pivotal changes within Hippocratism developed from its transformation from a creation of the pagan world to its adoption into the Christian world. In the pagan world the art of Hippocratic medicine was an independent discipline so far as it attempted to diagnose and treat disease strictly on scientific grounds, utilising means such as pathology, anatomy, orthopaedics, dietetics, herbal compounds and surgery. Although it synthesised pre-existing philosophical and spiritual components as well as folk and traditional healing ways, its unique theories came to be recognised for their basis on empirical research and its focus on natural explanations of disease. The power of nature played a big part in health and in disease in Hippocratic medicine.

By contrast, it seems that when Hippocratic medicine entered the Christian world it lost part of its independence in the sense that it became simply a part of the One Almighty God's Kingdom. In this new realm, God was the supreme healer with medicine and doctors becoming at best His agents. In distinctly Biblical spirit (the strong influence of Judaism on Christianity must be stressed), disease was thought to be the result of human moral degradation or divine teleological purpose. Physical infirmities were a direct result of infirmities of the soul. Cure of bodily illness could be achieved by banishing sin from one's life and by devoting oneself to the word of God. Within this scope, Jesus, "the Word ... made flesh" (John 1:14), and his followers cured body and soul through faith. Medicine fell into two major categories with early Christian theorists. It was either completely discredited and denied any effectiveness in a world where the state of individual humans' health depended solely on the will of God, or, more commonly, its capacity and value were restricted and recognised only as part of God's

² W.D. Smith, *The Hippocratic Tradition*, Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1979, p. 18.

Creation and as His gift to humanity. Jewish and Christian theologians who adopted the latter view explained their opinions with the help of secular medical concepts, in many cases Hippocratic.

Theologians, clerics and practising mystics allowed medical theories, in instances distinctly Hippocratic, distinguished place in their own right within their writings.³ Of course, their Christian convictions limited the independence they afforded to medicine within God's Kingdom. The frequent references of Christian Fathers to Hippocratic doctrine, on the one hand, and their indirect refutations of it, on the other, due to conflict with their Christian beliefs, are representative of the transformation of Hippocratism from its initial spirit to being contextualised in a Christian light.

Christians allowances to Hippocratic medicine, a pagan cultural creation, is only a small example of the sometimes blurred barrier lines between paganism and Christianity which co-existed chronologically, geographically and culturally during the first few centuries of the latter's development. The greater influence of Greek culture on Christianity became possible through the impact of Hellenism in the Eastern Mediterranean before and during the time Christianity was born and blossomed in that area. For a while, Hellenism and, crucially, Hellenic language and philosophy dominated intellectual life in that part of the world. The four Gospels first emerged written in Greek and early Christian theology is thought to have been inspired by and evolved from, mainly, Platonic and other Greek philosophical ideas. In particular, Platonic thought on the nature and make up of the human body and soul was highly influential in the forming of Christian theories about the nature of the relationship of the human entity to God and his Kingdom and to an extent about the cures of the physical and the spiritual components of humans. However, Hippocratic theories about the body and soul were also embedded in the Greek philosophical tradition. With

³ Basil, *Regulae fusius tractatae*, interrogatio 55, art. 1; col. 1044C.

this in mind, it would be interesting to examine how those philosophical ideas were adapted and utilised by early Hippocratism and Christianity in the field of medicine.

It is commonly thought that pagan philosophy did not assume a well defined distinction between the body and the soul which was also apparent in Hippocratic medicine. It has been asserted by its contemporary⁴ and by modern commentators⁵ that Hippocratism leaned towards a holistic approach when curing the individual. It is accepted that in Hippocratic medicine the body and the soul were not distinguished when curing disease. Diseases of the mind, the soul and the body were treated by similar cures. Christianity, however, interpreted pagan philosophy about the body and the soul differently from Hippocratic medicine. For the most part, Christianity appeared to advocate a dichotomy between the body and the soul. Within this split the soul was said to be superior to the body (I Cor. 15:50-53) and, therefore, curing the soul of its maladies, at least in theory, was more important than curing the body (the coexistence and, therefore, inevitable tight relationship of the body and the soul within the human entity in conjunction with the easier accessibility of the body, due to its tangibility, compared to the inaccessible and ambiguous soul might have meant that practice defied Christian ideals and that the majority of the laity then, as now, settled primarily for caring for the body). This difference between Hippocratic medicine and Christianity seems to be less connected to the general division between paganism and monotheism as such and more related to diverging paths within Greek philosophy which in this instance transcends both paganism and Christianity. The split seems to stem from the fact that Hippocratism primarily represented practical philosophy whose priority lied with the preservation of the physical body whilst Christianity mainly

⁴ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 270c-d.

⁵ D. Tsekourakis, 'Plato's *Phaedrus* and the holistic viewpoint in Hippocrates' *Therapeutics*', *BICS*, 38 1991-3, pp. 162-173.

embodies contemplative philosophy whose task is to immortalise the spiritual soul.

2. HIPPOCRATIC MEDICINE

2. A. A Secular System

It ought to be clarified at the outset that the early Hippocratic system as well as the Hippocratic Corpus was not the making only of the historic Hippocrates. The Corpus treatises are thought, though not conclusively, to have been written between the late fifth century BC and first century AD by several authors⁶ and compiled at a later time. The Hippocratic system, therefore, is considered to have been the work of doctors and authors who synthesized it over a long period of time. For the purpose of Hippocratic studies, however, it is generally referred to as one uniform system and so will its ideas about the body and the soul in this study.

From its beginning, Hippocratism did have certain religious associations. The Hippocratic *Oath* swears by “Apollo Physician and Asclepius, and Hygeia, and Panacea and all the gods and goddesses.”⁷ *Regimen* stresses that “prayer is a good thing, but one should take on part of the burden oneself and call on the gods only to help.”⁸ The author of *The Sacred Disease*, while disputing that the gods are responsible for humans suffering from epilepsy, states “I believe that human bodies cannot be polluted by a god; the basest object by the most pure. But if the human body is polluted by some other agency or is harmed in some way, then the presence of a god would be more likely to purify and sanctify it than pollute it.”⁹ Unlike religious healing systems, however, Hippocratic medicine is famous for removing moral, religious and supernatural elements from its diagnostic and therapeutic processes. In this it is completely different to healing attributed, for example,

⁶ V. Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, Routledge, 2004, p. 61.

⁷ Hippocratic Writings, *The Oath*, ed. by G.E.R. Lloyd, Penguin Classics, 1983, p.67.

⁸ Ibid. *Dreams (Regimen IV)*, p. 252.

⁹ Ibid. *The Sacred Disease*, p. 240.

to the Greek healing God Asclepius, the Jewish God and the Christian saviour, Jesus Christ.

The Sacred Disease is probably the most famous Hippocratic treatise for disassociating disease from religion and moral fall. The author asserts “that the “Sacred Disease” [epilepsy] is no more divine or sacred than any other disease but, on the contrary, has specific characteristics and a definite cause.”¹⁰ He rebukes the popular idea of his time that

The sufferers were ritually unclean, the victims of divine vengeance ... or had done something sacrilegious ... Like other diseases it is hereditary ... [and] the phlegmatic are constitutionally liable to it while the bilious escape ... This so called “sacred disease” is due to the same causes as all other diseases, to the things we see come and go, the cold and the sun too, the changing and inconstant winds. These things are divine so that there is no need to regard this disease as more divine than any other; all are alike divine and all are human. Each has each own nature and character and there is nothing in any disease which is unintelligible or which is insusceptible to treatment ... A man with the knowledge of how to produce by means of a regimen dryness and moisture, cold and heat in the human body, could cure this disease too provided that he could distinguish the right moment for the application of remedies. He would not need to resort to purifications and magic spells.¹¹

Here, the allusion to nature as divine, in line with Greek pagan beliefs, opens up the possibilities of physiological explanations of disease instead of limiting them.

The theory of the four humours, which through Galen became representative of Hippocratism,¹² offers an exclusively physical explanation for illness and provides an example of the distinctly scientific character of Hippocratic medicine. The theory is analytically presented in the treatise *The Nature of Man* of the Hippocratic Corpus. According to this, four fluids, blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile make up the constitution of the human body, each

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 237.

¹¹ Ibid. pp. 240-1, 251.

¹² J. Jouanna, ‘The Birth of Western Medical Art’, in *Western Medical Thought from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. by M. Grmek Cambridge MA: Harvard U.P., 1998, 22-71 (p. 32).

possessing a pair of qualities, warm, cold, dry and wet, which they contribute to the condition of the body. The humours are the cause of health and illness. Health is primarily present when the humours are “in the correct proportion to each other, both in strength and quantity, and are well mixed.” Illness is present when in one of the humours there is “a deficiency or an excess, or [it] is separated in the body and not mixed with the others.”¹³ Its isolation causes ailments both to the parts of the body deprived and in excess of it. The isolation can be caused by a blockage inside the body which obstructs the free flow of fluids. Excess and deficiency can also occur due to weather conditions including change of seasons, geographic position and prevailing winds. Each humour is tightly related to the corresponding basic elements (fire, air, earth and water) and qualities of matter as well as to a season of the year and particular diseases, all of which are also related to each other forming a complicated body of interdependence. Other factors which can upset the proportionate balance of the humours are individuals’ diet, regimen and quality of air. The general advice for treatment is to rebalance the humours using physical cures which have the opposite effect to what has caused the imbalance.¹⁴

Hippocratism recognises dietetics, pharmacology and surgery as three distinct therapeutic disciplines. The preventive character of Hippocratic medicine places the emphasis on dietetics. They are extensively used, mainly to restore the balance,¹⁵ even for conditions like broken bones.¹⁶ Foods are listed by types according to their qualities. For example, “coriander is warm and astringent, it stops heartburn and when eaten last it leads to sleep. Lettuce is quite cooling until it has juice, but sometimes it produces weakness in the body. Dill is hot and astringent and its smell stops

¹³ Hippocratic Writings, *The Nature of Man*, p. 262.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 267.

¹⁵ J. Longrigg, *Greek Medicine from the Heroic to the Hellenistic Age*, A Source Book, Duckworth, 1998, p. 144.

¹⁶ Hippocratic Writings, *Fractures*, p. 308.

sneezing.”¹⁷ Foodstuffs can be consumed or applied externally for medicinal purposes. Other treatments include venesection, emetics, purgatives, herbal drugs, breathing techniques, exercise or simply letting nature take its course to nourish or replenish the body.¹⁸ *Regimen in Acute Diseases* explains how to treat illness with a variety of beverages and appropriate baths.¹⁹ Trepanation of the skull is known to have been used to drain excess fluids from the brain.²⁰ The use of cauterisation is also advised to stop the flow of humours.²¹

2. B. A Holistic System by Medical Theory, Practice, Philosophy and Cultural Influence

The priority of Hippocratic medicine was to treat the body which is why the focus was on investigating the physical causes of diseases and battling them with physical therapies. However, although the significance of the moral element of the patients’ conduct, in the context of religion at least, was diminished within the system, on a different level, understanding the nature of the soul of the individual and taking it into account when treating a patient was also important for Hippocratic medicine. Hippocratic medicine has been described as a holistic system for its simultaneous consideration of the role of the soul and of the body in disease. This has been based, largely, on Plato’s claim in *Phaedrus* that Hippocrates understood the full “nature of man” by knowing the body and the soul and therefore treated the “whole” of the person.²² In modern times, Smith has claimed that *Regimen I* is an authentic work of Hippocrates and that his practice was based on a holistic approach as this is understood in that treatise and in Plato’s account.²³

¹⁷ H. King, *Greek and Roman Medicine*, Bristol Classics Press, 2001, p. 45.

¹⁸ Hippocratic Writings, *The Nature of Man*, pp. 256-7.

¹⁹ Ibid. *Regimen in Acute Diseases*, pp. 199-205.

²⁰ Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, p.96.

²¹ Hippocrates: *Places in Man*, ed. by E.M. Craik, Oxford, 1998, p. 75, 77.

²² Plato, *Phaedrus* 270c-d.

²³ Smith, *The Hippocratic Tradition*, pp. 47-8.

Tsekourakis has also argued the case by relating the content of other Hippocratic theoretical and clinical writings to Plato's contention.²⁴

In *Tradition in Medicine* the author declares that the doctor, who comprehends well the art of medicine through investigation about what man is and how he has been created, is in the best position to understand nature as a whole.²⁵ *Regimen* states that people must know the "whole of the cosmos" to protect properly themselves from disease.²⁶ *Airs, Waters, Places* advises that the medical method should include ethnographic knowledge.²⁷ In this treatise the physical, moral, political and customary differences of Europeans and Asiatics are compared and related to their different responses to diseases.²⁸ Pathological causes of disease are explained in similar spirit. *Breaths* proposes that every disease is caused by air, "which has enormous effects both within the individual and the universe as a whole."²⁹ In spite differences among the treatises, they borrow and synthesise ideas from each other and "acknowledge that their topics can be explained on the same principles as the rest of natural creation, of which mankind is but one part."³⁰

The holistic approach of Hippocratic medicine also means that, to a certain extent, it appreciates how feelings, emotions and the psychological predisposition of a patient can affect his or her physical health. *Decorum* instructs the doctor: "Do everything in a calm and orderly manner, concealing everything from the patient while treating him. Give what encouragement is required cheerfully and calmly, diverting his attention from his own circumstances [and] revealing nothing of his future and present

²⁴ D. Tsekourakis, 'Plato's Phaedrus and the holistic viewpoint in Hippocrates' Therapeutics', pp. 162-173.

²⁵ Hippocratic Writings, *Tradition in Medicine*, p. 83.

²⁶ Longrigg, *Greek Medicine from the Heroic to the Hellenistic Age*, p. 47.

²⁷ Hippocratic Writings, *Airs, Waters, Places*, p. 148.

²⁸ Ibid. pp. 159-169.

²⁹ Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, p.74.

³⁰ Ibid. p. 74.

condition. For many patients through this cause have been pushed the other way.”³¹ This is also highlighted in a really affectionate manner in *Precepts*: “For where there is love of a man, there is love of the art [of medicine]. For some sick people, though aware that their condition is dangerous, simply by being well-pleased with the goodness of their doctor, take a turn for the better. It is well to be in charge of the sick for their health’s sake, and to take thought of the healthy for the sake of their freedom from disease.”³²

A detailed list of factors, internal and external, physical and psychological, that a doctor should inspect when diagnosing and treating illnesses is provided in *Epidemics I*:

The following were the attendant circumstances of the diseases from which I formed my diagnoses, learning from the common nature of all, and the particular form of each individual; from the disease, the patient, from what is prescribed, from the person making the prescription – for from these things diagnosis is rendered easier or more difficult; from the constitution, both as a whole and in respect of the parts, of the weather of each region; from the custom, mode of life, habits and age of each patient; from his words, mannerisms, silence, whims, sleep or sleeplessness, nature and time of dreams, pluckings, scratchings, tears; from paroxysms, excrement, urine, sputa, vomit, and what kind of developments take place in succession from and into what sort of diseases, and the prolongation to a fatal issue or a crisis, sweating, shivering, chill, cough, sneezes, hiccoughs, breathing, belchings, flatulence, haemorrhages and haemorrhoids. From these must we consider what their consequences also will be.³³

Another indication that Hippocratic medicine did not distinguish between body, mind and soul is that “melancholy”, a condition which today would probably be classified by clinical psychiatry as the psychological condition of depression, was considered in terms of the bodily humours, attributing it to excess black bile.³⁴ One of the instances melancholy is mentioned alongside physical symptoms in relation to bile is in a patient case related in the clinical

³¹ Longrigg, *Greek Medicine from the Heroic to the Hellenistic Age*, p. 104.

³² *Ibid.* p. 105.

³³ Hippocratic Writings, *Epidemics I*, p. 100.

³⁴ King, *Greek and Roman Medicine*, p. 12.

treatise *Epidemics* III. In Thasos, a woman had fallen ill shortly before she gave birth to her daughter. The symptoms included prolonged high fever before and after the birth, shivering, delirium, passing “copious stools like watery bile,” no thirst, constipation, strong pain in the right hip and moist coughs. The illness resulted in death on the eightieth day. The doctor made a special note about dark and watery urine, comatose, lack of appetite, despondency, agitation and melancholic disposition.³⁵ From the symptoms described, there can be little doubt that the doctor suspected black bile to be the cause of disease as bile was visible in the stools and the chronic fever described resembled the quartan type, which was associated with black bile and melancholy in line with the description in *The Nature of Man*.³⁶ The entirety of the symptoms also fit, though not exactly, theories in *Airs, Waters, Places*³⁷ and in *Aphorisms*.³⁸ Nowhere in these treatises, where melancholy and bile are associated, is there a distinction made as to the cause of psychological and physical symptoms. Elsewhere, in *On the Diseases of Young Girls* the author asserts that a type of madness which affects females during the onset of menstruation is due to surfeit of blood in their body.³⁹

The interpretation of dreams in *Dreams (Regimen IV)* utilises clues given out during a state of unconsciousness of the patient to diagnose physical ailments.

Accurate knowledge about the signs which occur in dreams will be found very valuable for all purposes. While the body is awake, the soul is not under its own control, but is split into various portions each being devoted to some special function such as hearing, vision, touch, locomotion ... But when the body is at rest, the soul is stirred and roused and becomes its own master, and itself performs all the functions of the body. When the body is sleeping it receives no sensations, but the soul being awake at the time perceives everything; it sees what is visible, it hears what is audible, it

³⁵ Hippocratic Writings, *Epidemics* III, pp. 128-9.

³⁶ Ibid. *The Nature of Man*, p. 271.

³⁷ Ibid. *Airs, Waters, Places*, p. 158.

³⁸ Ibid. *Aphorisms*, pp. 215, 229, 231.

³⁹ G.E.R. Lloyd, *In the grip of disease. Studies in the Greek imagination*, Oxford: OUP, 2004, pp. 71-3.

walks, it touches, it feels pain and thinks. In short, during sleep the soul performs all the actions of both body and soul. A correct appreciation of these things implies considerable wisdom.⁴⁰

The author offers a practical guide to diagnosis through interpreting dreams and to appropriate treatment. For example, “Trees that do not bear fruit indicate destruction of the human semen; if the trees are losing their leaves the cause of the trouble is wet and cold; if they are flourishing but barren, heat and dryness. In the one case, the regimen should aim at warming and drying; in the other, at cooling and moistening.”⁴¹

Hippocratic holism puts diet, or regimen, in the centre of its therapeutics. Diet was used in the original broad sense of the Greek word *diata* (δίαίτα), meaning way of life.⁴² *Regimen* discusses the qualities of the body of men, women and children according to their age and the implications of this in their dietary, exercising and even clothing needs. Seeing, hearing, speaking, thinking and feeling are considered types of exercise. “When sound strikes the soul (implication of the soul being conceived as material), it is exercised, warmed and dried.” Thinking can affect weight loss.⁴³ The use of remedies which mostly aim to improve the patients’ predisposition towards health and illness is apparent and indicate their multiple functions on body, mind, morality and morale. For instance, in *Regimen* egg is prescribed as a remedy for its symbolic qualities of regeneration and nourishment.⁴⁴ Similarly, Hippocratic doctors prescribed remedies which were also associated with divinity, fertility rituals and exorcism.⁴⁵ Hippocratism emphasises the uniqueness of the constitutional make up of each patient and treats in different ways patients who suffer from the same symptoms but live in different environments and have different habits and characters. It

⁴⁰ Hippocratic Writings, *Dreams (Regimen IV)*, p. 252.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 257.

⁴² King, *Greek and Roman Medicine*, p. 44.

⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 45.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 48.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 48-9.

recognises that individuals may react differently to the same remedies according to their nature and constitution.⁴⁶

If we were to place Hippocratic medicine within a holistic sphere, it would follow that Hippocratic practitioners would have aimed to treat, even though not always consciously, the body as well as the soul. This is because, if health were considered a state of balance between different components within and outside of the body, the balance that the doctor tried to achieve would encompass the physical, psychological and mental elements.⁴⁷ This legacy was maintained by Galen with far reaching results. Agreeing with *Regimen*, he thought that if the soul, as a temperament of the brain,⁴⁸ were material, it could be directly affected by dietetics.⁴⁹ Regimen in general and even impressions on the senses could alter the soul's material foundations, which in turn could produce undesirable changes in the rest of the body. In this sense, even human vices associated with one's morals such as uncontrolled passions, desires, crime and sin could result in disease, though through a physical process. Galen attached moral connections to illnesses such as gout, severe arthritis, stone of the bladder and abdominal pain.⁵⁰ "Where [Galen's] theory of the humours had primarily addressed physiological and pathological questions, it came to provide a framework for the organization of thoughts about the diversity of human characters and personality in general."⁵¹

Galen's and *Regimen's* conception of a material soul, the language used to describe the functions of the soul and the body in *Dreams (Regimen IV)* and the holistic approach of *Ancient Medicine, Regimen* and *Breaths* in contextualising the responses of the human entity in health and disease

⁴⁶ G.E.R. Lloyd, *Science, Folklore and Ideology*, London: Bristol C.P., 1983, p. 125.

⁴⁷ Lloyd, *In the grip of disease. Studies in the Greek imagination*, p. 7.

⁴⁸ P.N. Singer, *Galen Selected Works*, Oxford University Press Inc., New York, 1977, p. 151.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 150.

⁵⁰ O. Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, Baltimore: John Hopkins U.P., 1991, p. 14-5.

⁵¹ Lloyd, *In the grip of disease. Studies in the Greek imagination*, p. 235.

within the changes in nature and the universe reveal a philosophical side of the Hippocratic tradition. Hippocratic medicine developed within an intellectual culture dominated by polymaths who made advances in philosophy, mathematics, geometry, physics, astronomy and medicine, as these subjects are understood and classified today. The “pre-Socratic” and the natural philosophers of the sixth and fifth centuries BC led the way to discover and conceptualize the connection between these disciplines, humans and the whole of the universe in an all inclusive manner, first, by breaking down the structure and make up of all matter to its basic constituent elements and then theorizing on how to hold these building blocks together in a harmony, thus, averting the disintegration of the equilibrium of matter.⁵² They believed in an orderly universe regulated by causal laws, which apply to the human entity too, in fact to all matter. Based on this, they rationalized that the causes and effects of natural phenomena and of disease ensue similarly.⁵³

Empedocles was a philosopher, poet, oracle as well as a druggist and doctor who employed skills from all his different expertise to cure disease. He is thought to be the first to assert that all physical bodies are made up by four constituent elements, earth, water, air and fire.⁵⁴ Alcmaeon theorised that health is maintained by the equality of opposite powers, wet and dry, hot and cold and bitter and sweet. Disease occurs if one of the powers gains the upper hand. His preoccupation with clinically investigating the sense organs led others after him to standardise psycho-physiological philosophical inquiries.⁵⁵ Democritus blamed the soul for maladies of the body and “held that the soul is material and all experience, both bodily and psychic, results from the beneficial or disturbing effects of the entry of atomic complexes into

⁵² J. Longrigg, *Greek Rational Medicine: Philosophy and Medicine from Alcmaeon to the Alexandrians*, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 53.

⁵³ Ibid. pp. 26, 33.

⁵⁴ Lloyd, *In the grip of disease. Studies in the Greek imagination*, pp. 24-5.

⁵⁵ Ibid. pp. 52-3.

the organism.”⁵⁶ Indeed, the identification of the soul or of psychic operations to certain parts or elements of the body was deeply rooted in ancient Greek thought. For example, “wrath” (χόλος) was identified with bile (χολή), the lungs and the heart. Therefore, disturbances had binary effects, physical and emotional.⁵⁷ The ideas of these philosophers influenced and evolved, to a great extent, into the doctrines of Hippocratic medicine, where the cause of disease is identified as universal and applicable to most conditions⁵⁸ and the soul is not significantly distinguished from the body on the basis that they are both material substances. The close relationship between philosophy and Hippocratic authors is witnessed even in *Epidemics*,⁵⁹ writings of the Hippocratic Corpus best known for their empirical clinical outlook of Hippocratic medicine. Lloyd speaks of “theory-laden” descriptions in the clinical cases in *Epidemics*.⁶⁰

The close relationship of medicine and philosophy was acknowledged from Aristotle⁶¹ in classical times to late Antiquity as it was widely accepted that “medicine and philosophy are sisters.”⁶² Galen continued to advocate that the ideal doctor should be a philosopher, physicist and philanthropist, whose role was not just to cure people but to make them better persons too.⁶³ In his treatise *That the Faculties of the Soul Depend on the Mixtures of the Body* he backed his argument with his learning from physicians, Plato and other philosophers.⁶⁴ However, during the time of Hippocrates, Democritus believed that while “medicine heals the body, wisdom frees the soul from

⁵⁶ Longrigg, *Greek Rational Medicine: Philosophy and Medicine from Alcmaeon to the Alexandrians*, p. 67.

⁵⁷ R.B. Onions, *The Origins of European Thought about the Body, The Mind, the Soul, the World, Time, and Fate*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951, p. 84.

⁵⁸ Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, p.72.

⁵⁹ Hippocratic Writings, *Epidemics I*, p. 100.

⁶⁰ Lloyd, *Science, Folklore and Ideology*, p. 154.

⁶¹ Aristotle, *Parva naturalia I*; 436a19-436b1.

⁶² O. Temkin, *The Double Face of Janus and Other Essays in the History of Medicine* Baltimore: John Hopkins U.P., 1977, pp. 187-188.

⁶³ Lloyd, *In the grip of disease. Studies in the Greek imagination*, pp. 204, 234-5, 241.

⁶⁴ Singer, *Galen Selected Works*, p. 150.

passions.”⁶⁵ Furthermore, he thought it was more important to care for the soul than for the body.⁶⁶ This was upheld, in a way, by Galen too, who, influenced, according to Pigeaud, by his Platonic and Stoic learning, “considered the physician’s concern for the soul to be on a lower level than the philosopher’s.”⁶⁷ In *De Sanitate Tuenda* Galen wrote “he who pursues the art of hygiene must ... not think that it is for the philosophers alone to shape the disposition of the soul; it is for [the philosophers] to shape the health of the soul itself because of something greater, whereas it is for the physician to do so on behalf of the body, lest it slips into disease.”⁶⁸ By late Antiquity it was a common concept that “medicine is the philosophy of the body and philosophy is the medicine of the soul.”⁶⁹ It would seem, then, that although Greek philosophy and Hippocratic medicine, generally speaking, exuded a holistic outlook upon the human body and soul, they, nevertheless, identified a special intangible quality in the soul which, in certain situations of illness, called for special treatment, not by the Hippocratic physician of the physical but by the philosophic physician of the invisible.

A story in the *Pseudepigrapha*, as related by Temkin,⁷⁰ about a meeting between Hippocrates the physician and Democritus the philosopher illustrates further how medicine and philosophy perceived the relationship between the body and the soul. The *Pseudepigrapha* are writings originally included in the Hippocratic Corpus. Modern scholarship, however, has doubted they are genuine Hippocratic works.⁷¹ Even though, they still relate the Hippocratic spirit as that is discerned from the rest of the Hippocratic Corpus. The meeting took place when Hippocrates was called to cure

⁶⁵ K. Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*. A Complete Translation of the Fragments in Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard U.P., 1948, p. 149.

⁶⁶ Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, p. 161.

⁶⁷ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 14, n. 20.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 14.

⁶⁹ Temkin, *The Double Face of Janus and Other Essays in the History of Medicine*, p. 187.

⁷⁰ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, pp. 61-71.

⁷¹ King, *Greek and Roman Medicine*, p. 10.

Democritus from insanity, largely exhibited through Democritus' constant laughter at all human condition, happy or sad. Hippocrates found Democritus himself researching madness by dissecting animals in order to find the seat of bile, the increase of which caused insanity. The identification of physical symptoms as the cause of mental illness in Hippocratism is one of its elements that have widely distinguished the system as holistic. Nevertheless, in the story Hippocrates demonstrated awareness of non-physical factors that cause insanity. In one of his letters regarding this case, Hippocrates called all doctors to unite to cure the madness caused by lust for money-Hippocrates was promised a considerable amount of money in exchange for treating Democritus-which in turn could trigger other vices in the human character, by using the intellect and righteousness. The soul which would be ill simultaneously from madness and bodily ailments would also be cured by purging the body. A healthy body contributes to a healthy soul. This is because if the former is unhealthy it can blind the latter and diminish its desire for righteousness.⁷² Temkin sees this as parallel to modern psychiatry dissolving into neurology.⁷³ Democritus' investigation into insanity was also twofold; physiological, already mentioned, and contemplative. When Hippocrates challenged him about his inappropriate laughter at all human condition, Democritus replied that he understood well the ultimate cause of disease of the human condition which is no other than the preoccupation with futile mundane inessentials, whether joyful or gloomy-the distinction itself is a ridiculous illusion of an uncultivated mind. A healthy mind dwells in contemplation and practice of virtue. Moreover, in reality the whole of the human life cycle is but a disease. Temkin thinks that Democritus expressed Cynic ideas to which Hippocrates was eventually converted, truly healing his own mind.⁷⁴ Such a conversion raises the question of what medicine should prioritise to cure, the body or the soul and if the inessential ailing body is worth curing over the essential soul, which

⁷² Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, pp. 66, 71.

⁷³ *Ibid.* p. 66, n. 103.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 68.

may be diseased with immorality. Would this qualify as real cure of the whole human entity? Democritus' thought illustrates the existence of diverging paths within Greek philosophy. On the one hand, Democritus was the atomist, the practical philosopher who searched for madness in bile. On the other hand, he was the contemplative philosopher who visualised a healthy spiritual soul as the ultimate pristine condition of the human entity.

Hippocratism thought of the body and the soul holistically and in certain cases attempted to cure diseases that would appear to have psychological origins such as madness, melancholy and grief with physical therapies. Also, Hippocratism as well as philosophy did think of the soul as a material substance and a part of the body, the health of either depending on the changing condition of the other. However, both physicians and philosophers recognized that, in the final analysis, there was a certain distinction between the body and the soul which meant that in some cases the mundane body could only be cured by the physician whereas the spiritual soul could only be cured by the philosopher. Indeed, the wisdom of great doctors like Hippocrates and Galen might have allowed them to dwell in the lofty territory of the soul but that could not be and, most likely, was not expected by everyday Hippocratic physicians. Therefore, the unavoidable separation of the physician and the philosopher was, partly, because, inevitably, the former spent more time exercising his expertise on the tangible whilst the latter's expertise included the intangible. It might have been that clinical Hippocratism in the field was substantially removed from the philosophical ideas linked with the Hippocratic treatises. This is probably highlighted by the author of *The Nature of Man* who begins with a polemic against those who apply philosophical ideas to medical inquiry.⁷⁵ It is stressed that medicine employs empirical research, which is the appropriate method in discovering the secrets of health and disease and treating the human body, while philosophy's speculative approach has little to offer to this end. The intention

⁷⁵ Hippocratic Writings, *The Nature of Man*, p. 260.

of the author might not have been to differentiate among principles but to establish the professional authority of medicine.

Hippocratic medicine, as represented by practitioners who practised in a manner set in the Corpus, was only one of the traditions that were out to cure the ill. Competition was presented by the Methodists, by religious healing cults, such as that of Asclepius, by “root-cutters,” midwives and folk beliefs, to name a few. They put forward their own theories or practices, often completely different to the Hippocratic ones, which they utilised to treat illness accordingly. In fact, some of them predated Hippocratic medicine and their ways and respective clientele were established prior to its arrival. One can imagine that as Hippocratic medicine evolved into a unique articulated body, it would have to squeeze for space among the other types of healers and to compete with them for clients. These clients would have probably chosen which type of healer to go to according to, among other factors, their personal beliefs, gender, finances, social background and what was locally available to them. This means that none of the different branches monopolised the healing field during that time. Certainly, in the centuries that followed Hippocratic medicine achieved big intellectual exposure and following and was studied extensively. Back in the classical period, however, eloquent medical and philosophical expositions probably did little to convince the sick, most of who were probably uneducated, of the effectiveness of a treatment. In their eyes, tried and tested cures were the best, whichever type of healer they came from. It is possible that Hippocratic doctors accommodated these expectations and prescribed cures that, though not strictly conforming to the school of thought they represented made medical sense simply because they worked.⁷⁶ As Lloyd points out, the knowledge on remedial properties of plants, for instance, whether analyzed in a humoral context or by those who studied them independently, was less than secure

⁷⁶ Lloyd, *Science, Folklore and Ideology*, p. 121.

and so, the main guide must have been experience.⁷⁷ For example, the information about a Thracian styptic plant which prohibits blood flow and is mentioned in ancient literature outside the scope of humours⁷⁸ could have been utilised by Hippocratic doctors by applying the plant as cure for haemophiliacs but also by supporting their own theories of blood imbalance with something that pre-existed the theory. This is not to say that Hippocratic doctors did not believe in different drugs restoring the different humours they naturally match⁷⁹ or that they did not research drugs so as to apply this theory to practice. However, it is questionable to what extent they endeavoured the latter.⁸⁰ In any case, it is probable that, in reality, the divide between different types of healers was not so clear because, whilst in competition, they inevitably rubbed shoulders and learned and used each other's successful procedures regardless of which theoretical angle they came from. There is a well documented overlap, for instance, between physicians and the cult of Asclepius⁸¹ as doctors worked as dream interpreters at sanctuaries and sanctuaries used remedies and even small surgery associated mostly with physicians.⁸²

The holistic approach of Hippocratism might have been cultivated and enhanced by this fusion of different medical traditions and by a general tendency of ancient Greek culture to apply all-inclusive principles through defining the common denominator of analogues. Often, the different healing traditions worked side by side and concepts were synthesised through the merging of religious, scientific and folk insights. For example, the widespread use of purgation in Hippocratism could have evolved from religious purification rituals aimed both at morality and body.⁸³ *Katharsis*, the term for purification, was used in the context of cleansing of the body but also of

⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 126.

⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 124.

⁷⁹ Hippocratic Writings, *The Nature of Man*, p. 264.

⁸⁰ Lloyd, *Science, Folklore and Ideology*, p. 129.

⁸¹ Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, p. 109.

⁸² King, *Greek and Roman Medicine*, pp. 5-6.

⁸³ Lloyd, *In the grip of disease. Studies in the Greek imagination*, p. 6.

getting rid of troubling feelings and ritual cleansing after committing a sin.⁸⁴ Furthermore, issues like purgation of the body and sin were not taken up only by those with expertise on them, for example, doctors in the case of the former and priests in the case of the latter. Complex conceptual subjects were often covered by theorists of philosophy, poetry and historiography. A discussion on ailments of the body might have turned into long debates about analogues in ailments of human behavior, of nature and of political systems.⁸⁵ Conversely, the verdict of such debates might have influenced physicians' theories of treatment. The historian Thucydides, a contemporary of Hippocrates, not only included extensive description of disease in his historiography of the Peloponnesian War, using medical terminology familiar to Hippocrates, he even structured the language of his writings when analyzing human behavior to resemble that of patient case notes. He broke down human deeds to their causations, symptoms and effects in a way a doctor would work with patients.⁸⁶ The tragic poet Sophocles showed particular interest in the states of health and disease which in his poems were portrayed to depend on moral conduct in the face of men and gods.⁸⁷

In the ancient Greek language the principle word for disease was *nosos* which applied, however, not just to the body but also to the mind and extended even to turmoil in the constitution of a country. *Hygieia* (health), too, was not just a condition of physical bodies, mind and soul. It described anything wholesome and sound such as, according to Homer and later philosophers, sensible arguments, statements and commands. *Pathos*, sometimes the word used for illness, was not always used in a negative way. It also meant emotion, fondness or passion. Emotions and ailments were associated and doctors considered both when tackling illness.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 9.

⁸⁵ Ibid. p.240.

⁸⁶ Jouanna, 'The Birth of Western Medical Art', p. 67.

⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 65.

⁸⁸ Lloyd, *In the grip of disease. Studies in the Greek imagination*, pp. 11-13.

Hippocratic ideas and procedures arose from all these different types of stimuli. However, no matter which procedure they used and why, Hippocratic doctors had to attach to it a commanding theory in order to distinguish themselves from others and claim unique authority for the discipline of medicine and for their school of thought.⁸⁹ Whether due to the recognition of the success rate of Hippocratic medicine's clinical processes, of the authority of its holistic philosophy, of its all-inclusive cultural make-up or of the legendary stories of the life, principles and cures of Hippocrates, the Hippocratic tradition's fame spread far beyond the medical world. Reverence for Hippocrates came to be widespread among doctors outside Greece, particularly in the East, during Hellenistic times, since the first century AD. Hippocrates was the assumed forefather of secular medicine for different schools of medicine such as the Dogmatists and the Empiricists and, most famously, for Galen (129-200 AD), all of whom, however, interpreted the Hippocratic theories, in many instances in very different ways from each other.⁹⁰ Galen's interpretation of the diverse Hippocratic Corpus was decisive in making Hippocratism more cohesive and authoritative for future generations. It also defined it for the Christian patristic authors.⁹¹

Hippocrates was also recognised as a paragon of literature, philosophy and exemplary character. As such he was quoted by Plato (fifth century BC) and was esteemed by the historian Plutarch (first to second century AD) and the physician Erotian (first century AD) who edited a Hippocratic glossary.⁹² Erotian not only listed as Hippocratic many of the treatises which now are part of the Hippocratic Corpus, he also placed Hippocrates, for his literary skill, among classical writers such as Homer and Thucydides. As such, he advised the study of the listed works not just to physicians but to all people

⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 240.

⁹⁰ Smith, *The Hippocratic Tradition*, pp. 74-77.

⁹¹ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 12.

⁹² J. Jouanna, *Hippocrates*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP; tr. M.B. DeBevoise, 1999, p. 63.

with intellectual aspirations.⁹³ On the Latin side Hippocrates was admired by personalities such as the imperial physician Scribonius Largus (first century AD), the rhetorician Quintilian (first century AD), Emperor Julian (fourth century AD) and Saint Augustine (fourth to fifth centuries AD).⁹⁴

One of the most famous Hippocratic phrases, “Life is short, science is long” comes from the treatise *Aphorisms* of the Collection.⁹⁵ This phrase was thought to extend far beyond the sphere of medicine and contributed largely to establish Hippocrates as a great philosophical mind in the ancient world. Seneca (first century BC to first century AD), the Stoic philosopher, thought that with this aphorism Hippocrates, “the greatest of physicians,” was expressing humanity’s complain about the short lifespan nature gives us.⁹⁶ Zeno of Citium (fourth century BC), the founder of Stoicism, based on the apophthegm his own convictions: “There is nothing of which we are in greater need than time. For indeed, life is short, but the art is long, especially that capable of healing the diseases of the soul”.⁹⁷ In Zeno’s thought, too, there is belief in the close relationship of medicine and practical philosophy and the tight connection between healing the body and healing the soul.

In one of Hippocrates’ biographies written by Soranus (first to second century AD), it is mentioned that after Hippocrates had died, nurses applied honey made by bees near his grave to children for curing mouth ulcers.⁹⁸ In the *Pseudepigrapha* Hippocrates is described as the saviour of the whole of humanity and a divine man descending from gods. The nature of his soul and excellence in his art reflect his divinity.⁹⁹ This image of Hippocrates is reinforced in the poem “On the Ethical Duties of the Physician” by the Greek Stoic philosopher Sarapion (first to second century AD). In this poem

⁹³ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 40.

⁹⁴ Ibid. pp.40-2.

⁹⁵ Hippocratic Writings, *Aphorisms*, p. 206.

⁹⁶ Seneca, *De Brevitate Vita*, 1.1; 2:287.

⁹⁷ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 44.

⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 53.

⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 71.

Sarapion reiterates part of the *Oath* and adds “Like a saviour god, let [the physician] make himself the equal of slaves and of paupers, of the rich and of rulers of men, and to all let him minister like a brother; for we are all children of the same blood”.¹⁰⁰ The ethical and divine portrayal of Hippocrates in this poem was in harmony with the ethical treatises of the Hippocratic Corpus.

The Canon of the Hippocratic Corpus certainly suggests an association between a skillful and wise doctor and a holy man: “Holy things are revealed only to holy men. Such things must not be made known to the profane until they are initiated into the mysteries of science.”¹⁰¹ The compassion, devotion and selflessness towards the patients in the form of an almost holy mission are exemplified in the Hippocratic *Oath*:

I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment, but never with a view to injury and wrong-doing. Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course. Similarly I will not give to a woman a pessary to cause abortion. But I will keep pure and holy both my life and my art. I will not use the knife. Into whatsoever houses I enter, I will enter to help the sick, and I will abstain from all intentional wrong-doing and harm, especially from abusing the bodies of man or woman, bond or free. 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. Now if I carry out this oath, and break it not, may I gain for ever reputation among all men for my life and for my art; but if I transgress it and forswear myself, may the opposite befall me.¹⁰²

In Hippocratism, “the ultimate goal of medicine, the welfare of the patient, is never lost sight of.”¹⁰³ As the dictum in *Epidemics* instructs, “concerning

¹⁰⁰ J. H. Oliver, “Two Athenian Poets.” *Hesperia* supplements, Vol. 8, The American School of Classical Studies in Athens, 1949, pp. 243-258 (p. 246). <<http://www.jstor.org>>

¹⁰¹ Hippocratic Writings, *The Canon*, p. 69.

¹⁰² Hippocrates, *The Oath*, in *Hippocrates Collected Works* I, Hippocrates, W. H. S. Jones, Cambridge. Harvard University Press. 1868.
<<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/collection?collection=Perseus:collection:Greco-Roman>>

¹⁰³ Jouanna, ‘The Birth of Western Medical Art’, p. 62.

disease practice two things, help or at least do not harm. The *techne* has three parts, the disease, the patient and the healer. The healer is the servant of the *techne*. In contending against disease the patient co-operates with the healer.”¹⁰⁴ Hippocratic medicine puts the patient in the centre of its practice and is more interested in caring for them than in making large amounts of money, giving treatment to slaves and poor people as well as to the rich.¹⁰⁵ *Precepts* advised doctors to waive fees, in cases of extreme poverty, in such a way that it would not embarrass the patient.¹⁰⁶ *Therapeia* (therapy), a word which also means “serving”¹⁰⁷ probably indicates a philanthropic attitude of the doctor towards the patient which is exemplified in *Breaths*: “For the medical man sees terrible sights, touches unpleasant things, and the misfortunes of others bring a harvest of sorrows that are peculiarly his.”¹⁰⁸ The “holy” conduct of the physician in conjunction with his gentle relationship with the patient could be psychosomatically beneficial for the patient in the same manner *Precepts* proposed that “love for a good doctor” could be beneficial.

¹⁰⁴ Hippocratic Writings, *Epidemics I*, p. 94.

¹⁰⁵ King, *Greek and Roman Medicine*, p. 17.

¹⁰⁶ Longrigg, *Greek Medicine from the Heroic to the Hellenistic Age*, pp. 104-5.

¹⁰⁷ Lloyd, *In the grip of disease. Studies in the Greek imagination*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁸ Jouanna, *Hippocrates*, p. 81.

3. CHRISTIAN MEDICINE

3. A. Jewish Influence through the Holy Scriptures and Theologians

This hugely diverse image of Hippocratic medicine, all inclusive and enjoying wide-ranging clinical, intellectual and spiritual acceptances, at least in the pagan world, was probably what Christianity encountered. However, Christian values, drawing from the Jewish heritage, were significantly different from Hippocratism and, therefore, Christianity was not prepared to readily accept it. In the Greek society Hippocratic medicine coexisted harmoniously with religious healing. There was no open rivalry between physicians and the cult of Asclepius and the pagan Hippocratic attributes to the divinity of nature, if anything, opened up the possibilities of physiological explanations in health and disease. The famous apophthegm in *Regimen* about the usefulness of prayer but also of one's practical means to reinstate health suggests that there was a mutual respect between secular and religious healing schools of thought. Nevertheless, the bottom line in Hippocratic medicine was that physical means were used to cure the physical body. On the other side, in the Jewish tradition there seemed to have been little space for diversity in the field of medicine. This is because, unlike Greek culture, where the god Asclepius' sole duty was to heal and secular doctors provided a natural alternative and where the divine nature co-operated with doctors, The universal, monotheistic God, according to the Jews, exclusively and supernaturally controlled the state of health and disease of humans. He inflicted disease and healed it according to His will.

In Deuteronomy God declared "I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal: neither is any that can deliver out of my hand" (Deut. 32:39). Jeremiah pleaded "heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed" (17:14). In the Jewish belief system God sent disease to people who had sinned and healed disease he had previously inflicted in those who had repented. "If my people ... shall

humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron. 7:14). Therefore, illness was thought of as the result of the commitment of moral transgression and the healing of illness was considered as a consequence of God’s forgiveness of such transgression. Miriam was punished with leprosy and cured in response to Moses’ prayer (Num. 12:10-15). Some of God’s chosen people were also given the power by Him to act in a similar manner. In this way, Elisha “the man of God” (2 Kings 5:8) cured Namaan from leprosy (2 Kings 5:1-19), which he then transferred to his badly behaved servant (2 Kings 5:20-27). Sin was not the only cause of illness. Sometimes God tested the faith of His dearest virtuous people (Job 2:5-7) by putting them through tribulations in fulfillment of His divine plan. Eliphaz reassured Job (Job 5:17-18) by saying “Behold, blessed is the man whom God correcteth: herefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.” Based on religion, the dominating Jewish culture made God the exclusive healer. However, the words of Jeremiah (8:22) “Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no healer there?” may suggest that there were some secular healers, though, probably, only for treating wounds and fractured bones.¹⁰⁹ For the more inexplicable conditions, the devout might have been required to do as Job did when his whole body was covered in boils. After scraping his body with potsherd he sat down among the ashes (Job 2:7-8) submitting himself to the will of God. Kee, after relating a number of passages from the Old Testament where doctors and medicine are shown to be ineffective in the face of God, concludes that according to the scriptures God “is indeed the restorer and orderer of human life ... and no human agency, least of all doctors, can solve problems, alleviate suffering, or cure ill.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 87.

¹¹⁰ H.C. Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1986, p. 17.

These perceptions had created a split between religious and secular healing in the consciousness of the Jews. Moreover, the lack of physiological explanation or cure of disease in the aforementioned stories separated the moral and the physical into a relationship where the body became subordinate to the soul as the body's condition depended exclusively on the ethics of the individual. However, elsewhere in the Old Testament the importance of taking physical precautions to prevent the spreading of disease is underlined. Leviticus, chapter 13, extensively instructs on sanitary and quarantine measures to prevent the spread of leprosy. In the Apocrypha, Ecclesiasticus, written by Ben Sira, expands on the subjects of hygiene and gives dietetic advice. It points out that many die from excessive eating and that one could prolong one's life by taking precautions (37:31). In doing so, it significantly acknowledges the mundane aspects of preserving health. It maintains that doctors and medicines are created by God and should not be rejected (38:1-8), therefore, legitimizing medicine religiously. "Honour a physician with the honour due unto him for the uses which ye may have of him: for the Lord hath created him." Ecclesiasticus also defends the doctors' worldly capacity by pointing out that they were respected by royalty and "great men" (38:2-3). Ecclesiasticus speaks about medicines in the same way. "The Lord hath created medicines out of the earth; and he that is wise will not abhor them" (Ecclus. 38:4). God giving humans, in particular doctors, the skills of understanding and assessing what medicines to use to ease the patients' pains, is a testimony to His glory (Ecclus. 38:8). It could be argued that here Ecclesiasticus attributes to doctors a kind of rationalism, a distinct feature of Hippocratic empirical method. Ecclesiasticus advises on the benefits of seeking the help of both God and doctor and on what to do in case of disease:

My son, in thy sickness be not negligent: but pray unto the Lord, and he will make thee whole. Leave off from sin, and order thine hands aright, and cleanse thy heart from all wickedness ... Then give place to the physician: let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him. There is a time when in his hands there is good success. For they shall also pray unto the Lord,

that he would prosper that, which they give for ease and remedy to prolong life. He that sinneth before his Maker, let him fall in the hand of the physician (Ecclus. 38:9-15).

Temkin thinks that although Ben Sira speaks of God-fearing doctors his words indicate the existence of secular Jewish physicians and of those who consulted them.¹¹¹ In spite of all the textual uncertainties, it is clear that Ben Sira took medical successes, however limited, for facts, and regarded medical interference as something indispensable.¹¹² Temkin also believes that Ben Sira was not the first Jewish thinker who put forward the concept of reconciliation between secular medicine and God's rule but his influence on this subject was exceptionally strong on Christians.¹¹³

It is not known whether the dominating biblical tradition represented correctly the degree to which secular medicine was developed and the influence it had within Jewish society. However, the story of pious Tobias in the apocryphal books of the Bible might suggest that even in cases where natural means, associated mostly with secular medicine were used to cure the body, they were presented under the veil of the supernatural gift of God to the pious. Tobias was blinded by a whiteness that set in his eyes which the doctors could not cure (Tob. 2:10). God commanded the angel Raphael to help Tobias (3:17), so the angel instructed Tobias' son to smear the gall from a fish on his father's eyes (6:1-3) and to rub it off when it became irritant. Tobias' son did as he was told and his father was cured (11:8, 13). At first glance, this story suggests a miraculous cure engineered by the hand of God in return for his subject's pure soul. However, assuming the blindness described corresponds to the medical conditions of leukoma or cataract, then the natural treatment prescribed, the fish gall, might not have been too dissimilar to those used at the time for such diseases. Dioscorides (first century AD), the Greek physician and pharmacologist, maintained that "all

¹¹¹ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 90, n. 24.

¹¹² *Ibid.* p. 90, see also n. 25.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* p. 90.

kinds of bile are pungent and heating and differ from one another by the more or less of strength ... Foremost seems to be that of the sea scorpion and of the fish ... That of the wild goat is especially fitting for beginning cataracts and mist over the eyes.”¹¹⁴ If this is the case, it would seem that although Tobias’ healing from blindness was a gift from God, the natural means used were within the choice of secular medicine as well.

Despite the differences between Hippocratic medicine and monotheism about the cause and treatment of disease there appears to be some common ground between them regarding the relationship of the soul and the body in states of health and disease. The close relationship between Greek medicine and philosophy allowed theorists and practitioners to borrow from each others’ concepts and to draw parallels from the tangible and the empirical to the abstract and the imperceptible and vice versa. However, this was not exclusive to the Greek culture. The ancient Jews had their own self-supported equivalent ideas over the body and the soul. Isaiah (1:5-6) refers to the soul even though he describes physical symptoms when he says: “the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores.” In accounting for eating together with publicans and sinners, Jesus (Matt. 9:12); explains that “they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” The comparison of himself to a doctor and those with sick souls to diseased people is reminiscent of the Greek concept of the relationship between the physician and the philosopher. One could argue that, if anything, scriptural monotheistic healing expressed a form of holism more explicitly in that a healthy body always went hand in hand with a pious soul. In contrast to the Hippocratic worldview, however, the Jews tagged wounds and illnesses entirely with a moral blemish.¹¹⁵ In order for the people of Judah to be cured, Isaiah (6:10) maintains, they must “understand

¹¹⁴ Ibid. p. 92, n. 35.

¹¹⁵ Kee, *Medicine, Miracle and Magic in New Testament Times*, p. 14-16.

with their hearts and convert.” The use of Hippocratic reason and physical explanation is absent. Most importantly, in biblical representations the condition of the soul always determined that of the body, never the other way around as in Hippocratic concepts of a two way relationship and interdependence. This probably highlights that as pagan philosophy so Jewish religion concentrated on the spirit and the soul, not matter and, thus, even in medicine, the immaterial soul was more important than the physical body. The main object of the secular doctor’s practice, on the other hand, was the physical body. Therefore, secular medicine may not feature much in the Old Testament not because it was in competition with God but because it was of no consequence to monotheistic world view and, therefore, of no concern to it either. Philo the Jew (20 BC-50 AD) was one of the theologians whose theories most typically represent the strong belief in God as the ultimate healer, dismiss the usefulness of secular medicine and embody the overlapping of Jewish and later Christian theology with pagan philosophy in prioritizing the soul over the body.

Philo criticised those who put their faith in medicine rather than on God. Such a criticism might suggest that in everyday life doctors had in fact a bigger impact than orthodox scripture afforded them. It might also suggest a struggle between Jewish culture and other cultures that surrounded it.¹¹⁶ Philo himself was a Hellenised Jew who lived in Alexandria, a stronghold of Greek intellect, and wrote exegetical commentaries on the Old Testament in Greek. Regardless of what Philo’s general views of secular medicine were, the name of Hippocrates was known to him and that particular doctor had gained his respect. Philo quoted Hippocrates to validate his own opinions. In line with Stoic Zeno, when warning people against wasting time on inessentials instead of exercising the art of philosophy, Philo observes “it is well to be sparing of time, seeing that according to the physician Hippocrates

¹¹⁶ S. Noorda, “Illness and Sin, Forgiving and Healing: The Connection of Medical Treatment and Religious Beliefs in Ben Sira 38, 1-15,” in *Studies in Hellenistic Religions*, ed. by M.S. Vermaseren, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979, pp. 215-24 (p. 215).

life is short but the art is long.”¹¹⁷ Philo’s thought strongly reflected Stoicism and Platonism as those were infiltrated by, and evolved into, first, Jewish and later Christian theological doctrine. In this, Philo preceded Christian theologians.

The influence of the Platonist tradition was only one, though very important, of the elements of Christianity’s wider pagan background (from Philo’s saying above it might be deduced that the Hippocratic tradition, too, was indispensable for Christianity). Platonism provided one of the models from which, and alongside with, Christian theology developed. Original pagan Platonic concepts, which evolved through the movements of intellectual Middle and Neo-Platonists, were interpreted by Christian theology in a religious and, in particular, theocentric light when its canon was taking shape. Ascetic spiritual ascent, the nature of the transcendental and the union of human soul with it were some of the topics that were covered by both systems. However, the old pagan order that Platonism represented often clashed with the new Christian order. Plato’s theories about the relationship between the body and the soul in the latter’s journey towards spiritual completion feature strongly in equivalent Christian discussions which, in turn, influenced the value placed on the body and the soul in relation to medicine by Eastern theologians. For this reason, it seems appropriate to open brackets here to introduce some of these relevant Platonic notions.

For Plato, “knowledge of the gods was identical with the vision of supreme and utterly pure being.”¹¹⁸ The vision brought a participation in that being and even gave immortality.¹¹⁹ The aim of the Christian religion, too, was to

¹¹⁷ Philo, *De Vita Contemplativa*, 2.16; 9:122.

¹¹⁸ L. Jones, *Encyclopedia of Religion* 2nd ed., L. Jones, Editor in Chief, Thompson Gale, 2005, p. 6332

¹¹⁹ Plato, *Timaeus* 90a-d, Plato, in *Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 9 translated by W.R.M. Lamb, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1925.

spiritually equip its members on their journey through worldly life to afterlife, albeit, as this is set within God's Kingdom. This experience was no other than the ascent of the soul to God. Plato assigned humans the goal of assimilating themselves with the transcendental. This task involved two most crucial understandings. First, humans possessed certain qualities that were akin to those of gods. Second, humans needed to utilise these qualities in the correct manner in order to partake in the unchangeable reality of absolute being.

According to Plato's cosmology, the Demiurge has created everything there is including material, or sensible, kinds and immaterial, or intelligible, kinds.¹²⁰ However, the sensible world of matter is volatile and ever changing and does not provide humans with a concrete image of reality. If humans' material surroundings do not represent the one unchanging reality, humans must look for it elsewhere because knowledge of true reality is necessary in order to know their own true condition, act upon it and live meaningful lives. Plato argued that if ultimate reality does not lie with the material world, this must mean that it is to be found in the intelligible, immaterial world-the adoption of the concept of division of two realms by Christian Platonists was important for later Christian doctrines.¹²¹ Nevertheless, the intelligible creation, of which gods are part, is not so easy to comprehend. It follows that for humans to understand it they must become akin to gods. The grace of the Demiurge has made gods immortal and human beings mortal. This difference is because, although both gods and human beings are made of body and soul, the body of gods is indestructible whereas the body of humans is not. The condition of the soul, on the other hand, is what gods

<[¹²⁰ Plato, *Phaedo* 79b, Plato, in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 9 translated by W.R.M. Lamb, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1925.<\[¹²¹ A. Andreopoulos, *Metamorphosis: The Transfiguration in Byzantine Theology and Iconography*, Crestwood, NY: SVS Press, 2005, p. 52.\]\(http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text;jsessionid=16FF1DD1E87A72D0FFC136433FB2F2B4?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a1999.01.0170%3atext%3dPhaedo></p></div><div data-bbox=\)](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text;jsessionid=16FF1DD1E87A72D0FFC136433FB2F2B4?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a1999.01.0180%3atext%3dTim.></p></div><div data-bbox=)

and humans have in common. The soul of both gods and humans is immortal¹²² and it possesses the power of the *nous*, the intellect. This similar quality of the soul can bring mortals and immortals close to each other. The power of the *nous*, the intellect, is what ultimately enables humans to realise the knowledge of the intelligible creation, which is the absolute reality of being. Real knowledge comes through the intellect's contemplation of the intelligible creation. Humans have to contemplate hard if their *nous* is to see through the obstacles of the unreal material world and, instead, grasp the real world of the intelligible creation, which, in turn, will help them to assimilate with the gods. These differences, however, can never be fully bridged and this is why gods and mortals are, in the final analysis, different. It follows that complete assimilation between humans and the gods can be achieved only after the person's death,¹²³ when the soul has freed itself from the obstructing weight of the material body. Only those who die having reached a pure state of wisdom will join the company of the gods.¹²⁴ Such knowledge cannot be achieved only through studying and collecting information. To experience such knowledge, it is imperative that one takes the path of contemplative philosophy.¹²⁵

After Plato's death, his successors at the Academy reworked the original Platonic theories and continued to spread them. Over the centuries, Platonist philosophers, that is intellectuals who were inspired by Plato's system and developed their own thought from it, made their mark working within and outside Greece. The Hellenisation of the Eastern Mediterranean brought Platonism to intellectual centres such as Alexandria and Antioch. There, it flourished further in the form of different movements, as these have been classified and named in modern times. These movements concurred and

¹²² Plato, *Phaedrus* 245a-d.

¹²³ Plato, *Phaedo* 64a.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* 82b.

¹²⁵ Plato, *Republic* 518b-e. Lee, D., Plato, *The Republic*, Penguin, 1955.

were in direct dialogue with other philosophical and religious groups. Inevitably, they exchanged ideas and contributed to the shaping of the each others' doctrines. Such an instance took place between the movement known today as Middle Platonism, Judaism and the initial outburst of Christianity.

Middle Platonism came to exist between the first century BC and third century CE. Middle Platonism is more theistic compared to original pagan Platonism and more dualistic emphasising the separation of the spiritual and the material worlds. One of its most prominent representatives was Philo. His work is permeated with some of the first examples of fusion between Platonic thought and the Biblical tradition. This kind of pioneering earned him eminence and his concepts stayed with, and were built on by, Christian theology for many centuries. Philo draws from Platonic doctrines and applies to them his own theistic convictions.

Philo attacked those who first turned for help to doctors and relegated God to the last resort in the case of illness. He distinguished between general health and health as the result of recovering from illness. He thought that in the case of the latter people forgot who the ultimate healer was because it was physicians who treated the patient. To him, however, it was clear that it was always God that healed regardless of doctors' contributions.¹²⁶ Philo seems to be at least uninterested in medicine or even negatively predisposed towards it because it obscured peoples' vision from the real healer. Others were out rightly hostile to all forms of secular healers as the rabbinical citation "even the best doctor belongs to hell"¹²⁷ indicated. In *On the Birth of Abel and the Sacrifices Offered by Him and His Brother Cain*, Philo openly turns against those people (and maybe indirectly against medicine and doctors) who

¹²⁶ Philo, *Allegorical Interpretation of Laws following the Creation* 3.178; 1.420.

¹²⁷ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 93, n. 36.

When anything befalls them which they would not, since they have never had any firm faith in God their Saviour, they first flee to the help which things created give, to physicians, herbs, drug-mixtures, strict rules of diet, and all the other aids that mortals use. And if one say to them, "Flee, ye fools, to the one and only physician of soul-sickness, and cast away the help, miscalled as such, of the created and the mutable," they laugh and mock, and all their answer is "tomorrow for that," as though, whatever may befall, they would never supplicate God to save them from the ills that beset them. But when no human help avails, and all things, even healing remedies, prove to be but mischievous, then out of the depth of their helplessness, despairing of all other aid, still even in their misery reluctant, at this late hour they betake themselves to the only saviour, God.¹²⁸

As there are people who "prefer the body to the soul, the slave to the mistress, so there are those who have honoured the created rather than God."¹²⁹ Philo attributes such false perceptions to "all human intelligence which considers everything its property and honours itself before God."¹³⁰ Hippocratic rationalism would, thus, probably be condemned by Jewish doctrine as this was expressed by Philo. In Philo's thought the dichotomy, in Judaism and later in Christianity, not only between religious and secular healing but also between the nature of the body and the soul, the spirit and the matter is spelled out loud and clear.

In *On the Birth of Abel* when Philo contrasts the "one and only physician of soul-sickness" to "the created and the mutable," "the body" as "the slave" to "the soul" as "the mistress" and "the creation" to "God," he reiterates the Platonic differentiation between the illusionary material world and the ultimate reality of the Demiurge, the gods and the soul. He applies this to secular medicine which obstructs people's vision from the essential nature of human disease, that of the soul. People need a physician who will open their eyes to what is behind created things and will cure the disease of the soul. This line of thought is not far removed from that of Democritus, particularly as that was expressed in his meeting with Hippocrates in the

¹²⁸ Philo, *On the Birth of Abel and the Sacrifices Offered by Him and His Brother Cain* 19.70-71; 2:147.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* 20.72; 2:149.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* 19.71; 2:148.

Pseudepigrapha. If this is the case, however, an oxymoron seems to develop as, while, on the one hand, Greek philosophy contributed to the formation of the Hippocratic holism highlighted in Plato's *Phaedrus*, on the other hand, it became a model on which Middle Platonist Jewish and Christian theologians rationalized the proposed strict dichotomy of their religions between the body and the soul and, also, between religious and secular healing. Indeed, one might wonder why Philo's attitude, being Hellenised, was not more generous to secular medicine, a distinctive intellectual part of Hellenic culture. The answer seems to lie more with the different objectives of secular medicine, on the one side, and philosophy and religion, on the other, rather than with the clash between paganism and monotheism. Yes, generally, pagan philosophers regarded the soul as a material substance and pagan philosophy did not propose the outright dichotomy monotheism did. However, the main concern of pagan philosophy was human behaviour, soul and spirit. This fact alone, to a degree, constituted the soul more important than the body for philosophy. In a way, it also brought pagan philosophy and monotheistic religion closer as the soul was the main focus for both. On the contrary, in this sense alone, it distanced pagan philosophy (and Middle Platonist monotheistic religion whose proposed dichotomy seems to have been the result of an extreme interpretation of Platonic philosophy) from Hippocratic medicine whose practical priority in disease was the physical body. This could also explain why Ben Sira, who was also a Jew but not a philosopher like Philo, promoted ideas of reconciliation between medicine and religion, thus, unlike Plato's or Plato's contemplative philosophy, valuing the practical needs of the human body in a similar way Hippocratism did. Therefore, the clash between paganism and monotheism with regards to the projected holism of the former and the latter's dichotomy of the body and the soul might not be the only factor in this matter. The assumption that the task of healing the soul was higher than of healing the body and for this reason the physician of the soul ought to possess supreme qualities was accepted even by Galen. Suspicion

against Jesus' claim to divinity rose on account of maintaining he was authorized by God to forgive sins rather than on account of his divine ability to cure the body. The Pharisees accused "only God can forgive sins" (Luke 5:21) not "only God can cure the sick".

3. B. The New Testament and Christian Theology

"Heal the sick ... and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:9). This was the instruction Jesus gave to his disciples and the new popular hope on which the spreading of the new apostolic religion was built during its infantile beginnings. It also demonstrates the strong link between healing of the body and spreading the Christian God's Word which is no other than the saving of souls. In a time when the scientific knowledge and ability of medicine to efficiently explain, diagnose and cure disease was lacking compared to today and the states of health and disease of the human condition were precarious, those with the skill to save lives were perceived as special in the eyes of their contemporaries. Healers who were believed to possess extraordinary powers of healing were, as in the case of Hippocrates and Asclepius idolized and even divinized in the consciousness of people. Christ certainly established his divine authority largely through performing astonishing cures of disease and at the same time by acting as the mouthpiece of God. He dedicated his time "teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matt. 4:23). This is particularly the case in one of the stories in the Gospels. Jesus was at a house speaking to a large crowd. A paralytic man was brought to him to be cured but the only way to get through was to lower the man in his bed from the house roof (Luke 5:19). Jesus, sensing strong belief in Him, told the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matt. 9:2). To the Pharisees objecting that this was blasphemy as only God can forgive

sins (Luke 5:21), Jesus replied “that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins.” To the paralytic he said “Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine home.” When the man stood up and walked, the people “marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men” (Matt. 9:5-8).

Although the paralytic man was brought to Jesus to be physically cured, this was done in conjunction with the forgiveness of his sins by Jesus. In this occasion, the curing of both the body and the soul was preconditioned on the existence of faith. Jesus alluded to the twofold nature of the miraculous healing of a woman whose bloody flux was cured simply by touching his clothes. He said to her “be of good comfort: thy faith hath made you whole; go in peace” (Luke 8:47-48). The word “whole” seems to refer not only to the restoration of her physical health; similarly to the case of the paralytic, it most probably refers to the healing of her soul as well. Jesus was the perfect physician of body and soul.

Faith on the part of the supplicants in Jesus was an instrumental factor in most of Jesus healing acts and another parameter of the twofold healing. On several occasions Jesus stressed that faith in him and in God was necessary if he or his disciples were to cure (Acts 3:11-16), (Mark 3:15), (Luke 9:1). He told a boy’s father that everything is possible (including resurrection of the dead in the case of Lazarus (John 11)) to those who believed. The boy’s father exclaimed that he believed and Jesus cured his son (Matt. 17:20). Temkin points out that “In view of the fact that Jesus took trust in himself to be sufficient to effect a cure, it is not impossible that he was thinking of faith as an autonomous power.”¹³¹ Faith in the physician as a psychological factor contributing to the healing seems to be the only common element in Hippocratism and in Jesus’ healing philosophy that provides a concept that can be broadly compared between the two. And I say broadly because the

¹³¹ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 97, n. 9.

modest Hippocratic concept that love for one's physician could assist in curing disease, as suggested in *Precepts*, is the nearest Hippocratism comes to the extraordinary Christian belief that faith in Jesus can miraculously bring back the dead. Modern interpretations of psychosomatic interrelationship in healing might perhaps suggest that in effect the idea in both is very similar: belief in the healer and the healing and positive thinking can produce a cure.

More on par with Jesus' cures is the vaguely miraculous healing with honey made by Hippocrates' grave as described by his biographer Soranus from Ephesus (first to second century AD). Stories of miraculous healing in both traditions may suggest that the belief, or the need to believe, in miraculous healing represents an across the board anthropological expression of that time and place rather than a distinctive feature of either tradition which, however, might have been projected as such. Miraculous faith healing found advocates equally in paganism with Asclepius, Apollonius of Tyana (first century AD) and, to a lesser extent, Hippocrates and in Christianity with Jesus, the prophets and the saints. This could also imply an overlapping of ideas of the two traditions about the role of invisible factors in curing disease.

Belief in the physician, Hippocrates or Jesus, was warranted because of his extraordinary qualities. Love for Hippocrates would have derived from his adherence to the requirements of the *Oath* and the other ethical content of the *Corpus*, putting himself through trouble for others' benefit (*Breaths*), curing people from all social strata with little thought for money and instilling hope (*Precepts*) and belief by some (*Pseudepigrapha*, Sarapion, Soranus) in his divine nature. Faith in Jesus was similarly attained because he cured all people out of mercy (Matt. 9:13), he was philanthropic (Lazarus, John 11:33-35), he took humanity's sins upon himself and he was of divine nature. The excellence of both figures was, therefore, judged by almost identical criteria. Although they represented different worldviews, the prevailing ethical

principles of the time might have influenced both. For example, the distinctly Stoic concepts of love for one another and philanthropy¹³² could have had an impact on Hippocratic medicine and on Christianity. Chronologic coincidence in the writing of ethical treatises such as the *Oath*, *Decorum* and *Precepts* and the conception of Christian morals cannot be ruled out as modern scholarship believes that those Hippocratic treatises are some of the latest of the Corpus.¹³³ The restorer of Sarapion's poem referring to Hippocrates as the divine saviour spreading brotherly love to humankind noted a remarkable similarity between the poem and Luke 4:23. They both exhort "Physician, heal thyself."¹³⁴ In any case, whether the image of the Hippocratic physician had an impact on Christians with regards to the expectations they had of the saviour of their religion or whether all physicians, including Hippocrates, the paragon of them all, were to earn more admiration due to their association with Jesus, the godly healer, it is important to remember that such comparisons have distinct limitations as the essence of Hippocratism remained secular and cures were achieved with very natural means whereas Jesus' cures had a specific religious meaning.

After Jesus' departure, his disciples continued to miraculously cure "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 3:6) and to preach that faith in Him heals (Acts 3:16). However, curing the body was secondary to curing the soul by spreading the Word of the Kingdom of God. Jesus' command to the apostles to "go ... into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Matt. 28:19) was followed by spreading Christianity to Jews and gentiles outside Palestine. Paul's missionary work was decisive in spreading the new religion to the gentile nations but also in accommodating their customs to synthesize the code of practice of the Christian community from different cultures. For example, Paul's insistence that gentiles converts did not have to circumcise

¹³² Seneca, *On Mercy* 2.5.3; 1:439.

¹³³ Jouanna, *Hippocrates*, p. 70; E.D. Phillips, *Greek Medicine*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1973, p. 37.

¹³⁴ Oliver, 'Two Athenian Poets', p.246.

and to observe the Levitic laws (Acts 15:29) eventually led all Christian converts, including those from Palestine, to adopt these practices, thus taking away some of the Jewish components of Christianity and adding others from different cultures. The separate notions of “Christianity” and “Judaism” already existed by early second century.¹³⁵ Fox points out that the abstraction “paganism” was also a result of the Christian approach of classification of doctrines of the different philosophies.¹³⁶

Christian concepts of healing remained on the same path mostly. The Epistle of James directs: “Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray ... Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him” (James 5:13-15). James’s convictions seem to be in line with the old Judaic ones. He does not appear to be against secular medicine of the body. Instead, he seems, similarly to Philo, to be indifferent to it. However, since the existence of faith was so important in the Christian concept of healing, Angus thinks that for Christians “it would have been a breach of faith to call in a professional physician.”¹³⁷ No matter what the position of James was towards secular medicine, his preference of religious healing over secular is apparent. In the same vein, Clement of Alexandria (150 - 215 AD) in the face of a number of adversities asked God “to heal the sick” as of his responsibilities.¹³⁸ However, in his first Epistle to Timothy, Paul suggests drinking wine instead of water “for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities” (I Tim. 5:23) and commends elderly widows who “lodged strangers” and “relieved the afflicted” (I Tim.

¹³⁵ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 110.

¹³⁶ R.L. Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, Penguin, 1973, p. 31.

¹³⁷ S. Angus, *The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World*, New York: Biblio and Tannen Publishers, Inc., 1967, p. 418.

http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=LqCxxiulr0oC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

¹³⁸ Clement, *First Epistle to the Corinthians* 59.4; 1:113, in *Apostolic Fathers* 1:3-121.

<http://archive.org/stream/apostolicfather00lakegoog#page/n124/mode/2up>

5:10). The Apostolic Father and bishop of Smyrna Polycarp (first to second century AD) regarded the care of the sick as one of the presbyter's responsibilities.¹³⁹ Faith in God and Jesus aside, Christian philanthropy valued the care of the sick human body by secular means and by those who could assist the process of the healing of the body in itself. It would seem that, at least indirectly, Christian philanthropy endorsed the usefulness of physicians, who, by profession, were in the front line of relieving the human body of pain. These Christian altruistic doctors who cared for the sick were conceptually analogous to Galen's philanthropic physicians, whom Galen called to be philosophical physicians of the soul as well. In their latter capacity, the Christian doctors would probably realise a more complete Christian objective than Paul's elderly widows and Polycarp's presbyters. Nevertheless, the insistence of Christianity to apply religious faith to medicine became a thorny issue for pagan philosophy and Hippocratic medicine.

For pagans the subject of theology was taken up by philosophers. Medicine was the vocation of doctors which they practiced applying reason. Galen, as an empirical doctor, despite recognizing Christianity as a moral philosophical system, condemned it for being based on faith rather than reason.¹⁴⁰ The Apologist Theophilus of Antioch (120 – 190 AD) commented that in everything faith came first. A patient had to fully trust his physician if he wanted to be healed.¹⁴¹ Theophilus contention could explain why Christians initially addressed the issues of health and disease of the body and the soul from the perspective of faith and secular medicine might have been disregarded rather than despised. Also, in the beginning, Christian expositions such as those of the Apologists often aimed at defending and

¹³⁹ Polycarp, *Epistle to the Ephesians* 6.1; 1:290, in *Apostolic Fathers* 1:280-301.

<<http://archive.org/stream/apostolicfather00lakegoog#page/n302/mode/2up>>

¹⁴⁰ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 113.

¹⁴¹ Theophilus, *Autolycus* 1.8; p. 59, Ante-Nicene Christian Library: *Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, ed. by A. Roberts, D.D. and J. Donaldson, L.L.D., Vol. III Tatian, Theophilus, and the Clementine Recognitions. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark
<<http://archive.org/stream/writingsoftatian00tatiiala#page/n7/mode/2up>>

establishing the religion against pagan polemic and, at times, persecutions. A detailed investigation into the subject of medicine was, therefore, probably not a priority. It is probably not a coincidence that eminent Eastern Christian authors of the fourth and fifth centuries such as the Cappadocian Fathers, whose accounts included lengthy medical writings, flourished after the Christian religion had become officially free by the Edict of Milan in 313 AD, it had become dominant within the Roman Empire and the capital of the Empire had been moved to the East. They followed Clement and Origen who had laid the ground much earlier (late second to early third centuries) for a rationally supported Christian doctrine on the footsteps of Greek, particularly Platonic, philosophy.

4. THE INFILTRATION AND CONTEXTUALISATION OF HIPPOCRATIC MEDICINE BY CHRISTIANITY

Clement and Origen contextualized Hippocratic medicine within the scope of Christian theology just as pagan intellectuals had done in terms of philosophy. Clement adapted the Hippocratic phrase “the practice of health [consists in] moderation in food [and in] not shrinking in toil”¹⁴² to the Christian cause of preserving the human body and soul through ascetic practice.¹⁴³ Commenting on Ben Sira’s work, Origen added: “And surely there can be no doubt about medical knowledge. For if there is any knowledge [that comes] from God-which will be more so than the knowledge of health, in which the virtues of herbs as well as the qualities and differences of [the] humors are discerned?”¹⁴⁴ Here, the emphasis is on discerned reason, material remedies and physiology rather than on faith or the soul. In maintaining that the cause of madness in a boy was demoniac possession, Origen wrote that doctors favoured a physiological explanation for the disease instead of a spiritual one because “as natural philosophers they have to maintain that the contents of the head are set in motion according to sympathy with the lunar light, which is of a moist nature. We, however, also believe the Gospel.”¹⁴⁵ These authors contributed to a synthesis of multicultural, philosophical and religious components that shaped Christianity. This was not acknowledged at the time by Christians who, just as Hippocratic doctors had done, after amalgamating elements from other belief systems, presented them as Christian authorities. At times, Christians turned against other traditions.

¹⁴² Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 131.

¹⁴³ Clement of Alexandria, *The Miscellanies* 2.20; p. 71, Ante-Nicene Christian Library: *Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325*, Ed. By the Rev. A. Roberts, D.D. and J. Donaldson, L.L.D., Vol. XII, Clement of Alexandria, Vol. II. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. <<http://archive.org/stream/writingsofclemen02clem#page/n5/mode/2up>>

¹⁴⁴ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 130, n. 19.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 200.

From as early as the second century Apologists antagonised the pagan culture. Theophilus of Antioch used chronology to show that the biblical fathers, the prophets and, therefore, the roots of Christian doctrine were older than pagans believed.¹⁴⁶ Tatian insisted that Christian “philosophy is older than the systems of the Greeks.”¹⁴⁷ However, the use of the word “philosophy,” itself, suggests a turn from expressing Christian truths only through faith to utilising reason as well. Paul publicly attacked pagan gods during his missions to the gentiles (Acts 19:26-27). Asclepius was censured as one of the false gods and his function was scorned. Indirectly this could be a criticism of pagan secular medicine as well.

In *Address against the Greeks*, published at around 155 AD, Tatian describes pagan gods as demons who inflict maladies on humans by obscuring the spiritual world with the material. Demons had previously been angels expelled from God’s Kingdom taking humans with them too. Consequently they both had lost their divine spirit.¹⁴⁸ The human body and soul are pervaded by material spirit and are, therefore, mortal, although the soul preserves its aptitude to know God and to reunite with the divine spirit.¹⁴⁹ Tatian thought that disease occurs as demons push humans further into the world of matter and that cure can be achieved by rejecting matter, including the impeding body, thus, prevailing over demons as well.¹⁵⁰ For Tatian evil matter is not only objects used in magic but also antipathetic medicinal remedies such as herbs, drugs and plant roots.¹⁵¹ Medicinal remedies too, as material objects, are the property of demons and therefore responsible for people putting their trust in them instead of the only real healer, God and the divine spirit. Temkin thinks that “Tatian is concerned with theology, not medicine. The words “medicine” and “physician” do not

¹⁴⁶ Theophilus, *Autolycus* 3.20; p. 123.

¹⁴⁷ Tatian, *Address to the Greeks* 31; p. 35.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 7; p.p 12-3.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 13; p. 18-9.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 16; p. 21-2.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.* 17; p. 22-3.

occur in the *Address against the Greeks* at all.”¹⁵² Moreover, Temkin continues, Tatian comments only on pharmacology, not the other two parts of medicine, diet and surgery as they do not represent matter as such. Therefore, he should not be labeled as an early Christian enemy of secular medicine. Much earlier, Philo had been a harsher critic of the art by advising “to cast away the help, miscalled as such, of the created,”¹⁵³ including doctors, drugs and dietetics. Still, condemning the physical, as Tatian does, indirectly stigmatises medicine which uses physical means and is mainly concerned with the physical body. Tatian’s fight seems to have been about establishing Christianity as a superior belief system compared to paganism. However, as Hippocratic medicine, the way he described it, was seen as part of the latter, on some level it also represented the inferior “other.” Tatian’s struggle against matter was a precursor of the forceful convictions of Christian ascetics who set out to elevate the soul over the flesh in practice and, in doing so, to show God and Jesus as the true physicians. On principle and in practice, they stood firm against the symbiosis of secular medicine and Christianity. Nonetheless, they and Tatian expressed their ideas through concepts of pagan philosophy.

Temkin thinks that, generally speaking, the divide between pagans and Christians in the field of medicine could not have been so straight forward as it appears in theory. After all, certain professional doctors became passionate advocates of Christianity and Luke, Paul’s “beloved physician” (Col. 4:14) became acquainted with the “medicine for souls” through his relationship with Paul and the apostles.¹⁵⁴ In the absence of evidence indicating otherwise, Temkin assumes that the majority of people who had used Hippocratic doctors before becoming Christians, would have probably

¹⁵² Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 122.

¹⁵³ Philo, *On the Birth of Abel and the Sacrifices Offered by Him and His Brother Cain*, 19.70-71; 2:147.

¹⁵⁴ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.4.6; 1:197. Eusebius. *The Ecclesiastical History*, With an English translation, 2 vols. Vol. 1 translated by Kirsopp Lake, Vol. 2 translated by J.E.L. Oulton and H.J. Lawrol. Loeb. Vol. 1, 1965; vol. 2, 1964.

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still done so thereafter. At times, even ascetics resorted to consulting doctors as in the case of the Egyptian monk Palladius.¹⁵⁵ Some Christian authors believed that although medicine was learned by pagans, in reality it was God's gift to humankind, that Hippocrates could not help being pagan as he had lived before Jesus and even that Galen was a secret Christian.¹⁵⁶ Temkin proposes that Hippocratism was not rejected for being a pagan creation. Instead, at some point Hippocratic medicine was adopted into the Christian abode and its "science, expertise and wisdom" were used, with a modified Christian outlook, by Christian theologians.¹⁵⁷ This happened in conjunction with the legitimization of philosophical argument in Christian theology.

The controversial subject of the nature of the resurrection of the human body and soul was debated in a philosophical way. Paul's claim about the resurrection of the dead on the Day of Judgment was received with skepticism and disbelief both in Athens (Acts 17:32-33) and in Corinth (I Cor. 15:12). In the centre of the problem for Christians and pagans alike was the comprehension of the concept of the literal resurrection of the previously dead human body. The idea of the survival of the soul, which had been asserted centuries before by Plato and had infiltrated Jewish and Christian doctrine, might have sat more easily in the consciousness of both Christians and pagans. The resurrection of the body, however, though accepted by some, certainly not all, Christians through faith, needed to be explained rationally to pagans, particularly those who were used to comprehend through deduction of "physical reasons."¹⁵⁸ Indeed, writers like Justin Martyr

¹⁵⁵ Palladius, *Lausiatic History* II 35; p. 105. *The Lausiatic History of Palladius* II. Texts and Sources, Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature, ed. By J. A. Robinson, D.D., vol. 6, Cambridge: at the University Press, 1904.

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¹⁵⁶ King, *Greek and Roman Medicine*, p. 55.

¹⁵⁷ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 126.

¹⁵⁸ Justin, *On the Resurrection* 5; p. 346. Ante-Nicene Christian Library: *Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*, ed. by A. Roberts, D.D. and J. Donaldson, L.L.D., Vol. II, Justin Martyr and Athenagoras. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

(100-165 AD) and Athenagoras (late second century AD) resorted to natural philosophy (in particular theories about the indestructibility of the elements that make up all matter, including humans) and human physiology to qualify the Christian argument. Athenagoras, in *Resurrection of the Dead* built his contention around the process of human digestion to show how it, in a hypothetical case of cannibalism, would work to assimilate the flesh of a person to another thereby realizing its survival.¹⁵⁹ Within this contention, he also explained how improper undigested food inside the body causes diseases. “Even though it be expelled at length, overcome by certain medicines, or by better food, or by the natural forces, it is not got rid of without doing much harm, since it bears no peaceful aspect towards what is natural, because it cannot coalesce with nature.”¹⁶⁰ He also explained the role “of moist or dry, or warm or cold, matters of the body” and of “blood, or phlegm, or bile, or breath” in relation to nourishment within the process of such resurrection.¹⁶¹ Not only the wording used and the processes described are of Hippocratic character,¹⁶² there is a distinct absence of the notions of “faith”, “sin”, and “soul.” The use of Hippocratic natural theories instead of religious ones were needed to face the opposition on the issue of resurrection.

The best known Christian anthropology is *On the Nature of Man* by the bishop Nemesius of Emesa (late fourth century AD) who based his work largely on Galen (though he did not identify the soul as a temperament of the brain as Galen had maintained).¹⁶³ These instances of Hippocratic medicine breaking into Christian thought demonstrate that, at times, Christianity had to employ scientific and natural arguments to support and legitimize its

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=_sIFAAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbg_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false>

¹⁵⁹ Athenagoras, *On the Resurrection of the Dead* 4; pp. 427-8.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. 6; p. 431.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. 7; p.431.

¹⁶² Longrigg, *Greek Medicine from the Heroic to the Hellenistic Age*, p. 47, Hippocratic Writings, *The Nature of Man*, pp. 261-6.

¹⁶³ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 134.

abstract, faith based spiritual doctrines. They also lay bare that pagan science and philosophy were indispensable to the forming of Christian doctrine about the whole nature of humans, whom God made, after all, in His own image.

This was acknowledged by some Christian theologians who attempted to reconcile with pagan intellectualism without sacrificing Christian beliefs: “Thousands of things have been learned by them [pagans] in which none of us are experienced because no teaching is given in this part of investigation and because not everyone wish to know who they are. We are at peace with knowing heaven more than ourselves. Do not loathe the miracle within you.”¹⁶⁴ Christian theology attempted to explain the nature of everything, physical and spiritual, including medicine. To do this, Christianity drew from and synthesized a variety of cultures and disciplines into one system. However, this contributed to the formation of inconsistent doctrines which were left open to never ending debates and controversies. The above statement could be interpreted as referring to the inability of Christian theology to master knowledge in all subjects which had been separately researched and comprehended by experts in them whether they were Christians or pagans. It might also set the limitations of Christian theology and define its major domain as being “knowing heaven”, and the soul rather than the physical world of matter. In this latter domain, the curing of human bodies in particular, it conceded supremacy to other disciplines, one of which is Hippocratic medicine.

Christian theologians revered Hippocrates’ wisdom. They quoted him as an authority to qualify their arguments, very often paraphrasing Hippocratic dictums to cross over to the domain of the medicine of the soul. In this, the

¹⁶⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, *In Scripturae verba: Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*, oratio 1; col. 257B-C. Gregory of Nyssa, *In Scripturae verba: Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*, oratio 1. Minge, PG, 44:257-78.
<http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/20vs/103_migne_pg_g/1815-1875,_Migne,_PG_044_%2801-00%29_Gregorius_Nyssenus._Opera_Omnia,_GM.pdf>

phrase about the physician's toilsome vocation which benefits others but can be harmful to him,¹⁶⁵ served them particularly well. In its original context it alluded to the hardships physicians had to endure in order to heal the sick bodies of their patients. Gregory of Nazianzus (325-389 AD) used it in *Oratio II-Apologetica* as a stepping stone to cast doubt on the ultimate usefulness of medicine and on the meaning of the human condition. After praising physicians in agreement with the Hippocratic saying and for their meticulous scientific method, he then pointed out that prolonging human life, which was destined to end one day anyway, was in vain. If the person whose life was temporarily saved was bad, the physician had only delayed his release from evil. If, on the other hand, the person was pious and intelligent, the physician delayed his healthy soul from joining the truly good.¹⁶⁶ Gregory's positive view of doctors contrasted by his negative view of worldly life might have found in agreement a Platonist or a Cynic philosopher or even Aristotle who had said it was better not to live than to live.¹⁶⁷ Therefore, the question of the distinction between clinical Hippocratism and some of its philosophical inspirations, which coincide with Christian philosophy, is raised again. The major difference between Christian theology and pagan philosophy, on the one side, and Hippocratic medicine on the other, is underlined this time by Gregory. Hippocratic medicine held the human body and life in high regard and doctors did not take into account the moral standards of patients when treating them. Philosophy's preoccupation with the soul was not shared by medicine. Gregory's thought exemplified the conflict between mundane life, supported in practice by Hippocratic medicine, and life's Christian spiritual interpretation. As Origen stressed, "a man ought to use medical means to

¹⁶⁵ See n. 107.

¹⁶⁶ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio II-Apologetica* 27; cols. 436B-437A. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio II-Apologetica*, Migne, PG, 35:407-514.

<http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/20vs/103_migne_pg_g/1815-1875,_Migne,_PG_035_%2801-00%29_Gregorii_Nazianzeni_Theologi_Opera_Omnia,_GM.pdf>

¹⁶⁷ Plutarch, *Moralia* 22:27; cols. 281C-282D. G.N. Bernardakis, *Plutarchi Chaeronensis, Moralia*, vol. 1, Lipsen: Aedibus B.G. Teubreni.

<<http://archive.org/stream/moralia01plut#page/n3/mode/2up>>

heal his body if he aims to live in the simple and ordinary way. If he wishes to live in way superior to that of the multitude, he should do this by devotion to the supreme God and by praying to Him.”¹⁶⁸ However, the Christian Fathers did recognize and respect the value of physical life. Gregory’s brother, Caesarius of Nazianzus (313-368) was an imperial doctor. Gregory alluded to the distinction between the idealism of philosophising and the pragmatic unpleasant necessities of the physical world when in his oration about his brother’s death he said: “Will he not enjoy the works of Hippocrates and Galen and their opponents? No, but neither will any harm come to him from others’ misfortunes.”¹⁶⁹

Eusebius (263-339 AD) compared the burdensome task of doctors with that of Jesus, whose great healing power could bring the dead back to life and who cured human souls by ultimately taking our sins upon himself.¹⁷⁰ However, unlike physicians of the body, Jesus “who treated the injuries of our soul by the word of God in him was immune to all evil.”¹⁷¹ Only the perfect philosophic physician was able to deliver a complete cure of body and mind. Although it was recognized that not all physicians could realize this ideal, the concept of self-sacrifice in the fulfillment of the physician’s professional duty and in the fulfillment of the divine mission established a bond between the secular healer of the body and the divine healer of the soul. This bond legitimized secular medicine within Christianity and in some cases it probably encouraged clerics becoming physicians at the same time. Theodoretus described a priest as “adorned by the priesthood and also

¹⁶⁸ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 156, n. 43.

¹⁶⁹ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio VII-Funebra in laudem Caesarii fratris* 20; cols. 780C-D. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio VII- Funebra in laudem Caesarii fratris*, Migne, PG, 35:755-88. <http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/20vs/103_migne_pg_g/1815-1875,_Migne,_PG_035_%2801-00%29_Gregorii_Nazianzeni_Theologi_Opera_Omnia,_GM.pdf>

¹⁷⁰ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 10.4.11; 2:403. Eusebius. *The Ecclesiastical History*. With an English translation. 2 vols. Vol. 1 translated by Kirsopp Lake. Vol. 2 translated by J.E.L. Oulton and H.J. Lawrol. Loeb. Vol. 1, 1965; vol. 2, 1964.

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¹⁷¹ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 144, n. 91.

adorned by the rational [art of] therapy.”¹⁷² Another cleric, Aetius of Antioch (fourth century AD), studied medicine “that he might be able to heal not only the disease of souls but of bodies as well.”¹⁷³ Caesarius of Nazianzus (331-368 AD) studied Hippocratic medicine in Alexandria and Basil the Great learned about it during his education in Athens.

Basil and Gregory Nazianzus were Neo-Platonists. They believed, like Philo had in the context of Judaism,¹⁷⁴ that part of Christianity’s purpose was the accomplishment of Classical Greek education, probably in the belief that Plato’s view, that appropriate education can lead the mind to differentiate between false and true reality, is correct.¹⁷⁵ Neo-Platonism developed from the third century through to the sixth. The philosopher Plotinus, a contemporary of Origen, is reputed to have been its founder. Neo-Platonism offered religious inspiration as it was thought to provide individuals with spiritual independence. Neo-Platonism made it easier for intellectual Christians to be philosophically educated, without being accused of heresy or paganism, by keeping pagan philosophy apart from pagan worship. Indeed, Ammonius, the common teacher of pagan Plotinus and Christian Origen, was reputed to have been himself a Christian. Christians recognized in Neo-Platonism a notion of God closer to their hearts compared with that available in the traditional pagan Greek religion.¹⁷⁶ There is no duality in Neo-Platonism. Similarly with Neo-Platonists, but also with Galen and Aristotle,¹⁷⁷ the Eastern Church embraced the material world as a theophany, a proof of the existence and the splendour of God. Studying Hippocratic medicine enhanced the knowledge of the material world whilst philosophising elevated the soul.

¹⁷² Ibid. p. 145, n. 100.

¹⁷³ Ibid. p. 145, n. 101.

¹⁷⁴ E. R. Goodenough, *An Introduction to Philo Judaeus*, Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 159-60.

¹⁷⁵ A. Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983, p. 6.

¹⁷⁶ L. Jones, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, (2nd ed.), Thompson Gale, 2005, p. 6474-5.

¹⁷⁷ King, *Greek and Roman Medicine*, p. 55.

Once the Christian Fathers had conceded the wisdom of Hippocratic medicine, studied it and practiced it within the abode of Christian principles, the transformation of Hippocratism from a pagan to a Christian science became a reality. The Christian Fathers wrote medical treatises reiterating Hippocratic medical theories while at the same time glorifying God for his gift of medicine to humankind. In such treatises disease was explained in its own right in relation to physiology rather than divine act.

Saint Basil's relationship with medicine was more on a philosophical level rather than clinical. In *Quod Deus non est auctor malorum*, "that God is not the cause of evil," he reasons that

Neither is disease ungenerated, nor is it the handiwork of God. But living beings were created with the faculties suited to them according to nature, and brought into life complete in their limbs and organs, but they became ill through a perversion. For a disruption of health occurs either because of a bad lifestyle or because of some other cause of illness. Therefore, God created the body, not the illness; and likewise God created the soul, not the sin. Rather, the soul is made evil through a perversion of what is according to nature.¹⁷⁸

This extract is important for two reasons. It echoes the opinions of the Hippocratic treatise *The Sacred Disease* and it lays the foundation for bringing secular medicine, the soul and Christian theology into the same conversation. The latter is again brought to the table in Basil's *Regulae Fusius Tractatae* where the question whether medicine is used in accordance with piety is answered.¹⁷⁹ Basil asserts that God equipped humans with skills such as agriculture, weaving, and medicine because of

¹⁷⁸ Basil, *That God Is Not the Cause of Evil* 6, p. 73. Saint Basil the Great, *On the Human Condition*, translated by N.V. Harrison, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005.

<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=I-ltvHT3wqkC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false>

¹⁷⁹ Basil, *Regulae Fusius Tractate*, interrogatio 55; cols. 1043-52. Basil. *Regulae Fusius Tractate*. Migne, PG, 31:889-1052.

<http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/20vs/103_migne_pg_g/1815-1875,_Migne,_PG_031_%2803-00%29_Basilii_Opera_Omnia,_GM.pdf>

their frail nature. However, whereas the other skills only served material needs, medicine had a superior function:

Because our body is vulnerable to maladies from outside causes and from within from food and because it is harmed from surfeits and deficiencies, medicine's function, similarly to the function of the therapy of the soul, is to forgive the excesses and shortcomings of our divinely regulated lives.¹⁸⁰

Here, the description of disease and its treatment is as in the Hippocratic *Breaths* I.¹⁸¹ The portrayal of secular Hippocratic medicine as being God's gift to humans to help them realise the ultimate Christian ideal, the cure of the human soul, is probably the highest honour attached to Hippocratic medicine by anyone, Christian or pagan. Basil, like the Hippocratic treatises and Galen, included inappropriate diet as one of the major causes of disease and thought of its correct regulation as benefiting the condition of the soul. "Christians must abstain from what is contrived and elaborate, what diverts strongly from other things, and turns our whole life, as it were, over to the care of the flesh."¹⁸²

Of course, as a Christian theologian, Basil's main concern was God and the way He regulates His Creation. Accordingly, he adds that regarding medicine, "we must take heed to use the art, if ever needed, so as not to invest it with the entire cause of being healthy or sick. Rather, we must receive the use of what belongs to medicine with a view to the glory of God and as an example of the care of the soul."¹⁸³ In practical terms, if medical help were not available, the ultimate healer, God, is there to cure His subjects like he did so many times before. He is the real saviour. Even when medicine cures, Basil thought, we should give thanks to God for having created medicine and what comes with it. These latter convictions seem to take away some of the independence he had vested medicine with earlier.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. art. 1; col. 1044C.

¹⁸¹ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 172, n. 6.

¹⁸² Ibid. p. 173, n. 7.

¹⁸³ Ibid. p. 173, n. 10.

Furthermore, for all his appreciation of medicine's physiological, philosophical and theological capacities and representations, Basil, in a slightly self-contradicting manner asserted that some diseases were not the result of natural deviation but God's way of chastising mankind for its moral fall.¹⁸⁴ For these types of diseases humans should disregard secular medicine and should place their trust for cure to God. This is because the analogue between cures of the body and the soul of secular medicine can only be beneficial in diseases that have natural causes, whereas in the case of God sent diseases the analogue can distract from caring for the soul in favour of the body. Therefore, Basil substantially stays true to the Jewish and Christian Scriptural heritage. However, Basil's distinction reflects once again the essentially mundane purpose Hippocratic medicine fulfils. This was embraced by Christian notions of ministry to the fellow man and thus Hippocratic medicine was welcomed in practice by Christianity for providing Christians with the means to cure bodily maladies of those in need.

Basil is reputed to have been the founder of the first hospital of the Western world, a consequence, partly, of monastic philanthropic dedication to serve humanity in the footsteps of Jesus. Gregory of Nazianzus pointed out that Basil's particular provisions for lepers at the hospital stemmed from the example Jesus had set by curing leprosy "not by theories but by actions."¹⁸⁵ For this reason, the hospital was a place of prayer but, importantly, from the perspective of secular medicine, also a place where medical care was administered. In one of his letters, Basil describes it as a house for the servants of God and a lodge where the sick receive medical care and nursing.¹⁸⁶ Through his medical knowledge, Basil was able to assess the benefits of Hippocratic medicine even for devoted Christians. In the same

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 174, n. 16.

¹⁸⁵ Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* XLIII; art. 63; col. 580C, Migne, PG, 36:493-606. <http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/20vs/103_migne_pg_g/1815-1875,_Migne,_PG_036_%2802-00%29_Gregorii_Nazianzeni_Theologi_Opera_Omnia,_GM.pdf>

¹⁸⁶ Basil, *Letters* 94; 2: 151, translated by Roy Deferrari. 4 vols. Loeb. 1926-34. <<http://archive.org/stream/letterswithengli02basuoft#page/150/mode/2up>>

spirit, when John Chrysostom (347-407 AD) was patriarch of Constantinople, he founded numerous hospitals.

Harmonious coexistence of secular medicine and religious faith is witnessed in one of the stories from the life of the ascetic Daniel the Stylite (409-493). When a man was wounded and paralysed, the local bishop sent him to a hospital. At the hospital, his wounds were healed but the paralysis remained. The bishop then sent him to Daniel who cured his paralysis through prayer. Daniel thanked the bishop for his kindness to the man,¹⁸⁷ showing that there was no clash between the function of secular medicine and the function of Christian faith. In this instance, their relationship is analogous with that of Hippocratic medicine and the cult of Asclepius. However, this also demonstrates the Christian view that in diseases of the body the final decision was God's and that only the Christian faithful had complete power over it. Moreover, in curing the spiritual soul, Christian theology, not Hippocratic medicine was the authority.

The recognition by these Christian theologians that secular medicine, in this instance Hippocratic, was an appropriate discipline to explain disease and to take charge of the diseased human body as well as to offer helpful analogues in curing the soul was by no means conclusive or exclusive. Groups or individuals within Christianity continued to express indifferent or negative views about medicine. Generally speaking, however, the inclusion of medicine in the Christian civilization closed a kind of circle for Hippocratic medicine. In pagan Greece, Hippocratic medicine had started out as a secular discipline curing the body. Due to its deeper investigations into a human nature of tight and complicated ties between the body and the soul, Hippocratic medicine was also recognized for its capacity to regulate the condition of the soul as well. With the passing of time, in the Eastern Christian world too, Hippocratic medicine achieved recognition for the same

¹⁸⁷ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 165.

reasons, though with the emphasis being placed on the implications of its newly attached religious significance. However, the religious aspect of Christianity also dictated its differences with Hippocratic medicine regarding the soul just as the spiritual quality of the soul had revealed disparity between pagan philosophy and Hippocratic medicine.

5. EPILOGUE

Hippocratic medicine attempted, and largely achieved, to shed from its theories religious beliefs that had previously dictated the explanations and therapies of disease. In doing so, it stood out as a distinct and self-determined discipline, whose central purpose was to preserve life by using scientific and natural means. Although Hippocratic medicine developed along side pagan religious systems which also dealt with medicine, though not exclusively but only as one part of their greater rationalisation of the divine, the universe and humankind, it remained independent. The biblical tradition, on the other hand, stood at the opposite end of what Hippocratic medicine represented. The monotheistic God inflicted and cured disease at will through supernatural processes incompatible with Hippocratic medicine. There was limited space for secular medicine among faithful Jews and Christians who sought cure through prayer to God, the One and only healer. Even when Ecclesiasticus and Leviticus made provisions for hygienic precautions and Christian theologians like Saint Basil validated the Hippocratic physiological explanations of disease, the belief that only certain diseases had physiological causes was still prevalent. There were some other diseases, it was thought, which cannot be explained naturally as they are inflicted by God who chastises people in this way. Moreover, successful cure for any kind of disease is ultimately the result of God's grace even if it is seemingly delivered by doctors. Doctors and the art of medicine itself are the gifts of God to humankind who should thank Him for the benefits reaped from these gifts.

The different natures of Hippocratic medicine and monotheistic medicine determined the different mediums by which they cured disease and also what part of the human entity they focused on curing. For the most part, Hippocratic medicine dwelt in physical matter. The worldly nature of

Hippocratic medicine went hand in hand with the worldly purpose it served, the treatment of the human body. The purpose of religion, in this instance Christianity, on the other hand, is mainly the shaping of the human character, morality and soul. The infliction or the cure of disease of the human body by God was ultimately aimed at punishing, testing or rewarding the human soul's conduct within God's universal plan. However, since God indicated where humans are on their spiritual journey through chastising or rewarding their body, inevitably, the nature of the physical body and its part in the greater religious scheme of things became an object of theological analysis within Christian Scripture and theology. Moreover, the twofold healing reveals a vaguely holistic, as it would be termed today, dimension of Christian religious healing, also illustrated in the curing acts of Jesus, his disciples, saints and prophets, as the state of health of the body depended on that of the soul. By contrast, the well recognised holistic spirit of the Hippocratic medicine's processes emanates from its theories about the constitutional make up of the soul, not religious manifestations.

In *Regimen*¹⁸⁸ and according to Galenic theories¹⁸⁹ the constitutional make up of the human soul is, similarly to the body, material. Therefore, the conditions of the body and the soul are equally shaped by physical regimes such as diet, by external factors such as air and weather conditions and by feelings and emotions. Moreover, the condition of either can be equally affected by the other. For these reasons, when treating a patient, Hippocratic physicians considered the role of the body and the soul in individual diseases and patients and because of their physical interdependence, they cured both. As material substances, the body and the soul were equally important to Hippocratic doctors. Conversely, the twofold healing of the Christian God was not based on the equality of the body and the soul. A healthy body hugely depended on and presumed a healthy soul, never the

¹⁸⁸ See p. 15, n. 43.

¹⁸⁹ See p. 16, n. 48.

other way around. Still, God approached the soul through the body, which alone revealed the special relationship of the two.

The attitudes of both Hippocratism and Christianity on the relationship of the human body and soul were largely influenced by pagan Greek philosophy. Natural philosophers such as Democritus conceived the soul as material. Plato conceded that Hippocrates' treatment of the "whole" nature of humans was based on the equal knowledge of the body and the soul. Also, some philosophers were doctors too and, so, by vocation they were sympathetically predisposed towards the body and the soul as they investigated both and attempted to cure both. They realised the tight connection of the two as parts of one entity. However, they also understood the different functions and purpose of the body and of the soul in humankind's material and spiritual quests respectively. The philosopher's main concern was to make human spiritual aspirations achievable. In this, the attainment of a healthy soul was indispensable as it was the soul that possessed spiritual qualities. To preserve a healthy soul for spiritual purposes philosophy was needed, not medicine. Medicine served mostly material needs. Not only was this recognised, also recognised by philosophers and doctors alike was that maintaining a healthy soul for spiritual objectives was more important than the material benefits obtained by a healthy body.

This conception did not distract Hippocratic medicine from its main purpose, the curing of the physical body and neither did it diminish its importance within the pagan culture. If anything, it elevated the image of the medical discipline, which, through physical means aiming at the body's wellbeing, could contribute to the healthy condition of the spiritual soul. In this way, the close relationship of holistic Hippocratic medicine to philosophy, the medicine of the soul, and the, generally speaking, high regard for the body in the pagan world, were confirmed. The same cannot be said, however, about

the relationship between secular medicine and Christianity in conjunction with the latter's ambiguous views on the body.

Christian ideas about the nature of the human body and soul, the relationship between them and their respective functions in humankind's spiritual journey within God's Kingdom, the latter being Christianity's main concern, were also based on pagan philosophy, particularly Platonic. However, whereas the Platonic assertion in *Phaedrus* coincided with Hippocratic holism, his description in *Phaedo*¹⁹⁰ of a spiritual ideal whereupon the insensible soul can only assimilate with the gods when it raises above the material world and separates itself from the physical human body led to a proposed dichotomy between the body and the soul in Christian thought. Does Plato in *Phaedo* contradict the established Greek philosophical concept of a material soul? Galen seems to think so and was in disagreement with Plato.¹⁹¹ Although Galen, even as a physician of the body, was a proponent of the higher principle of spirituality over materialism, he remained true to Hippocratic holism believing in altering the condition of the material soul, just like that of the body, by employing physical means. The seeming separation of the body and the soul by Plato was favoured by Christianity when transforming Platonic philosophy into its religious doctrine. Nowhere did the dichotomy between the sanctified eternal soul and the lowly mortal body become more apparent than in the theology of the Christian resurrection where the body became the object of much controversy.

Origen who conceived the Christian resurrection as a spiritual event said that the only reason the body received a ceremonious burial upon death was out of "respect for the soul that dwelt within" it. Had it not been for the soul the body would have had probably been thrown away.¹⁹² The value of the religious dimension of the mortal human body (as opposed to its

¹⁹⁰ See p. 37, n. 122, 123.

¹⁹¹ Temkin, *Hippocrates in a World of Pagans and Christians*, p. 204.

¹⁹² *Ibid.* p. 135, n. 48.

physiological potential) within the significance of the Christian resurrection became one of the most important debates in the shaping of Christian doctrine. Paul answered the doubts of the Corinthians with absolute conviction of the resurrection of Jesus and the dead, underlining that without it the Christian religion was of no consequence (I Cor. 15:14-15). The physical body, he declared, is weak and ignoble but is resurrected in strength and in nobility as a spiritual body. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God," but at the last trumpet "we shall all be changed, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye ... For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:50-53). Although this could be interpreted as Paul denying the resurrection of the physical body itself, the resurrection of the body became Christian doctrine. Irenaeus argued that what was impossible for the body on its own was possible for the whole human entity whose soul "that accepts the spirit of the Father" is merged with the flesh.¹⁹³ Clement went further in his support of the body to say:

Let none of you say that this flesh is not judged and does not rise again. Understand: in what state you receive salvation, in what state did you receive your sight, except in this flesh? We must therefore guard the flesh as a temple of God, for as we were called in the flesh, you shall also come in the flesh. If Christ, the Lord who saved us, though he was originally spirit, became flesh and so called us, so also we shall receive our reward in this flesh.¹⁹⁴

Jesus spoke of his body as a temple (John 2:19-21). For others the body was not a contemptible thing and in the case of sin it was as much to blame as it was the inciting soul.¹⁹⁵ Body and soul should be equally punished or rewarded as equal partners, in the same way Jesus had cured both in his miracles. However, Jesus' remark "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is

¹⁹³ Irenaeus, *Contra Haereses* 5.6.1; col. 1137A, Migne. PG, 7:433-1224.
<http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/20vs/103_migne_pg_g/1815-1875,_Migne,_PG_007_%2802-00%29_Irenaeus_Lugdunensis_Episcopus,_GM.pdf>

¹⁹⁴ Clement, Second Epistle to the Corinthians 9.1-5; 1:141-43.

¹⁹⁵ Justin, On the Resurrection 3-4; pp. 343-45, 8; p. 349.

weak” (Matt. 26:41) and Paul’s warning “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:13) still added to the two sided debate. From a medical perspective, the questions posed by those religious ideas would be how far one would go in caring for the body in health and disease and how much one would mortify the body before damaging its health for the sake of the soul. In any case, these ideas are philosophical and apply to a minority of ascetic contemplative minds. For the majority of common people, in pagan and in Christian cultures alike, medicine was, as it is today, indispensable for curing the immediate physical body which, when diseased and in pain, calls for immediate physical actions.

The contemplative philosophy which favoured the therapy of the soul and the disregard of the illusionary body in Christianity found corresponding proponents in pagan culture. This indicates that the differences between Hippocratism and Christianity were not exhausted by the “pagan” and “Christian” division. In this instance the division was also between the practical philosophy of Hippocratic medicine and contemplative philosophy, whether pagan or Christian. The perception of the body in relation to the soul was not always favorable with pagan philosophy either. According to Plato, before Socrates died he consoled his companions with the notion the when dead the philosopher’s soul escapes the bondage of the body.¹⁹⁶ Plotinus had spoken with shame about his body.¹⁹⁷ Galen, though himself a physician, had considered the philosopher’s mission to cure the soul more valuable than the doctor’s investigation of the relationship between the body and the soul. Cynics might overlook the body and matter in general in favour of the soul. Stoics prioritized virtue over health.

¹⁹⁶ Plato, *Phaedo* 28-32.

¹⁹⁷ Plotinus, *Life of Porphyry* 1:2. Plotinus, translated by A.H. Armstrong, 6 vols. Vols. 1-3. Loeb. 1966-67. <<http://archive.org/stream/plotinus032858mbp#page/n45/mode/2up>>

Comparable philosophical ideas of Christians and pagans about the relationship between the body and the soul reveal that Christian theology has, in a way, more in common with pagan philosophy than Hippocratic medicine does and, thus, the division between “pagan” and “Christian” is not the only cause of the clash between Christianity and Hippocratic medicine. Theistically it is but philosophically it is not. The theoretical and practical holism of Hippocratism might have been highlighted by Plato but it was not quite matched by certain of his own contemplative theories about the body and the soul which, in turn, largely influenced the formation of the Christian concepts of dichotomy between the two. Contemplative philosophy, whether pagan or Christian, perceives the cure of the soul as its foremost vocation. Hippocratic medicine on the other hand, although it borrows from philosophical ideas to rationalize and legitimize its own theories, it is quit clearly mainly intent on preserving the health of the human body, driven in this by the common folk’s matter-of-fact attachment to, and cry for, bodily health. The paths of the medicine of the soul and the medicine of the body inevitably cross because of the, by nature, complicated coexistence and relationship of the body and the soul as parts of the human entity. This does not change the fact, however, that the two medicines prioritize over the two different components of the entity. Regarding the subject of the body and the soul, the qualities that Hippocratic medicine represents are those of naturalistic practical philosophy, not of contemplative thinking, pagan or Christian.

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