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A Comparative Study Between Egyptian and Greek Medicine in Antiquity

The aim of this work is to compare the ancient Egyptian Medicine with the ancient Greek Medicine.

The material is various textbooks of History of Medicine, Ancient Greek Literature, and scientific dictionary.

The method is the textual criticism of the relative accessible to us bibliography.

The results are, first of all, there are disputable aspects between ancient Egyptians regarding the goddess of medicine Isis, moon (Diod. I.11.1), mixed, person with horns of cow (Diod. I.11.4), person (Diod. I.13.4 and Diod. I.27.4—6), while ancient Greeks say for its Greek origin (Diod. I.24.8), meanwhile for Asclepius, deity of medicine by Greeks, there is a stable aspect (Diod. IV.71.1). As arises from papyruses the religious character of Medicine is more exaggerated in Egyptian medicine particularly in recent years than in elder, say Ackerknecht — Murken, while the Greek medicine by the time is more and more rational. The embalming was not medical work. The specialization did not included obligingly knowledge of general medicine (Herod. II. 84), due, probably, to the fact that every part of the body was joined with some deity, thus Sigerist speaks for “mythical anatomy” (see, Ackerknecht — Murken), while Greek physicians had knowledge of general medicine. Greek physicians were probably instructed in medicine either by Babylonians and Summerians, whose the Hammurabi’s code is elder of Smith’s papyrus or by Egyptians or by themselves. The first famous Greek physicians as Cheiron, Mahaon, Podalirius, Alcmæon, Democedes, and Hippocrates is being referred had learn the Medicine in Greece. Democedes treated successfully Persian King Darius while Egyptian physicians had previously been unsuccessful in treating him (Herod. III. 129—132). To keep in mind the name “Egypt” is Greek (Apollodorus II. 1. 4—5) and there is Greek mythology about the Egyptian people (Apollodorus, II. 1—5).

In conclusion, Egyptian medicine was developed probably by Greek support but by the time declined, while the Greek medicine progressively became more scientific.

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