

HIPPOCRATES AND THE INTERNATIONAL HIPPOCRATIC FOUNDATION OF COS

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Introduction

HIPPOCRATES was one of the most holy and illustrious personalities of his era. His writings, together with those of HOMER, THUKYDIDES, PLATO, ARISTOTLE and SOCRATES are highlights in Greek literature, and greatly contributed to the distinction of the immortal Greek Civilisation. ARISTOTLE named him "*The Great*". GALEN called him "*divine*", "*most superb*", "*most holy*", "*the first of all philosophers*", "*most true and able judge*", and "*Founder of Medical Science*". For KORAI, HIPPOCRATES' life is one of the few for which it is very difficult to find a parallel. According to LITTRÉ, HIPPOCRATES was a remarkable teacher of medicine and a celebrated writer.

HIPPOCRATES was a descendant of the Asclepiades family, and he glorified medicine by scattering the darkness of his age with his genius in laying the first stable foundations for the structure of medicine. According to the historian PHERECIDES, he was the seventeenth descendant of Asclepios. He did not invent medicine, but by the collection and classification of all former knowledge he became the creator of medicine on a proper basis. He was modest and materially disinterested, a physician of rare capacities, an incomparable teacher, a deep-thinking researcher, and an observer of great perspicacity; these were his mental and physical attributes.

Prehistoric Period: Asclepios and his Temple

We live in the 20th century, age of the triumph of science and the victory of the human mind. Nevertheless, we have to admit that we very rarely look back at the road science has travelled to reach the miracle of today's knowledge. Furthermore, we should not be surprised when we hear denials of the past. This is perhaps due to the tendency of historians to talk about political and economic subjects, rather than the greatness of those men who unveiled before our very eyes the depth of space and gave us the means to advance beyond the dreams of former generations. Those of us wishing to take this retrospective glance back in time will always trace the beginning of almost all man's scientific activities back to the Greeks. Although they were neither the first nor the only nation to seek knowledge, they were the only ones to love knowledge for its own sake; they searched for it sincerely and consequently genuinely – which means “knowledge for the sake of knowledge”.

This explains why the beginning of science in Greece coincides with the beginning of philosophy. Just as philosophy is man's attempt to know, so the Greeks' genius expanded into the field of study and knowledge of the individual sciences. Freed from the bonds of myth and miracle, the Greeks searched with all their mind to explain the surrounding world, thus giving rise in Greece to the basis of the different sciences. This can clearly be seen in the fields of mathematics and astronomy. THALES OF MILETUS was a philosopher and the founder of the school of mathematics, and the name of PYTHAGORAS is connected with astronomy. Something similar took place with medicine. In the beginning, medicine in Greece was limited within religion, as is known from HOMER's poetry. The change was made by pre-Socratic philosophers in the 5th century B.C. These men gave the real meaning of the words *health*, *illness* and *healing*. Their teachings are vivid in the books of the *Hippocratic Collection*.

With the 4th Century B.C., the first hundred year span of Greek science was completed, which can be defined as a period of preparation and foundation of scientific thought. With the end of this period, two immortal monuments were erected: the Works of HIPPOCRATES and the Works of ARISTOTLE.

The beginnings of Greek medicine cannot be determined with accuracy. We have no written evidence, and the archeological findings are insufficient. Thus, we must consider HOMER's poems as the beginnings of Greek medical history. In these poems, medical matters are frequently referred to in connection with the injuries or deaths of the heroes. Nevertheless, it is difficult to distinguish whether this information stems from HOMER's time, or from the period about which he writes. In his poems we meet gods, demi-gods and heroes with therapeutic abilities. The most important among them was APOLLO.

As a healer he was even eclipsed by ASCLEPIOS whose adorers and followers spread far beyond Greece. ASCLEPIOS, who had been taught about drugs by the Centaur CHIRON, was to become the patron of physicians and for this reason doctors became known as *Asclepiads*. The establishment of the *Asclepieion Temple* as a therapeutic centre occurred at the end of the 6th century, and the adoration of this new god, starting at Epidaurus, spread quickly. More than 400 temples and sanctuaries were dedicated to him all over Greece. Today we read with great interest the inscriptions on plaques that were discovered during excavations. They were dedicated by patients who had been cured in the temples of ASCLEPIOS. Attached to these temples were often institutions for the entertainment of the patients and their accompanying relatives, such as theatres, conservatories, etc. Besides the Asclepieia, there were also medical schools in Greece, the most famous of which were *Kyrini, Rhodes, Croton, Knides* and *Cos*.

It was the island of Cos that had the good fortune to witness the birth of HIPPOCRATES. The methods adopted by the physicians of Cos were based on an accurate and systematic description of the signs and symptoms of different illnesses and of their prognosis and outcome. The reputation of the Cos school is fundamentally owned to HIPPOCRATES, who with his great mind succeeded in leading medicine out of the darkness of a religious fanaticism into the light of science.

The Birth of Hippocrates

From HIPPOCRATES' biographer, SORANOS, who lived in the 2nd Century A.D., we learn that he was born on the 27th of the month Agrianos in the year 460 B.C. Agrianos was the month of spring when the festival of DIONYSOS was celebrated, and corresponds roughly to our April. According to AULIUS JELLIUS, HIPPOCRATES was born in 470 B.C. and as tradition has it died very old, possibly at the age of 109 years. His father was ASCLEPIADES HERACLIDES, and his mother was PHENERETE or PRAXITHEA.

Studies

HIPPOCRATES originally studied under his father and later in the schools of Knides and Cos. After his parents' death and the fire at the school of Knides, HIPPOCRATES left Cos and travelled in many countries. He visited Skithia, Thrace and Egypt and finally terminated his travels in Larissa, where he resided permanently. The climax of his career coincided with the Golden Century and the Peloponesian War.

The Practice of Medicine

Among the many actions of HIPPOCRATES there is reference to his treatment of the Macedonian king, PERDIKAS, and the philosopher DEMOCRITOS. He also

saved Avthira and Attica from an epidemic (but not the Great Epidemic of Attica). He offered valuable medical services to the Thessalians, Argians and Athenians. The latter honoured him with the titles "Second Hercules" in the Eleusinian ceremonies, and "Citizen of Athens", and gave him and his descendants the right to be served in the Prytaneon. Although always willing to give his help and the benefit of his medical assistance, HIPPOCRATES was obliged to refuse the invitations and gifts offered by the Persians to go and treat their king, ARTAXERXES, as he felt his presence was more urgently needed in Greece where perhaps another epidemic threatened.

HIPPOCRATES' practice of medicine was admired by all Greece for his successful therapies, his modesty and financial disinterest.

Teaching and the basic characteristics of Hippocratic Medicine

Together with the practice of medicine, HIPPOCRATES was distinguished as a great teacher. His teaching, which was the system of the Asclepiads, was based on deontology. Also very famous was the oath that his students took and that is still taken by all physicians throughout the world. His reputation as a teacher of medicine can be found in passages of PLATO's "*Protagoras*" and ARISTOPHANES' "*Thesmophoriazusae*".

For the first time, HIPPOCRATES introduced the new medical thought according to which the human body was accepted as an *organism*, i.e. an entity. This principle remains unchanged in today's medicine. The basic characteristics of Hippocratic medicine were:

1. The acceptance of only physical causes for the explanation of the different illnesses.
2. The special importance of observation, which was formed as a diagnostic method, and the establishment of examination methods which are still today used for diagnosis, i.e. observation, palpation, and hearing.
3. The explanation of the importance of the diet.

Among the fundamental teachings were the following:

1. The principal components of the human body are the *chames*: blood, phlegm, dark and light bile. The result of their correct proportion in the body is good health (*eucrasia*), and every deviation from this proportion results in illness (*discrasia*).
2. The causes of sickness are to be found outside the body, and the damage they cause depends on the *idiosyncrasy* of the organism. On this point the importance of heredity is emphasised.
3. The illness passes through three stages: *aepsia* or indigestion (disturbance of the proportion of chymes), *pepsis* or digestion (reaction of the organism with

fever), and *crisis* (the end of the illness). If the patient survives, the end comes suddenly (*crisis*), or slowly (*lysis*).

4. The essential therapeutic factor is *nature*, which the physician must help and support, thus improving the organism's effort to resist.

The Writer

The historians who specialised in HIPPOCRATES and his works are presented with the problem of determining to what extent Hippocratic medicine can be accepted as scientific. R. JOLY supports the view that Hippocratic medicine is certainly rational, but not scientific. Nevertheless, it is unreasonable to seek in HIPPOCRATES' work the spirit of today's medicine, and it is indisputable that Hippocratic medicine laid the first foundations for the theoretical basis and principles of later medical science.

About sixty of HIPPOCRATES' works have been saved. They are written in the Ionic dialect and are the result of excellent observation, experience and logic. The presence of linguistic differences in the discourses on various topics – theories, knowledge and diagnosis, have challenged objections to the genuineness of the Hippocratic works. However, it is unquestionable that many of these books were written by HIPPOCRATES himself, and the rest by his son-in-law POLYVIOS and by other students of his. It is obvious that we need time and room to study the works of HIPPOCRATES, and in this small paper it would be difficult to do so. It is even difficult to summarise. But it would be an omission not to mention some of the epigrams that have become classics.

In the book *Epidemie I & II* is the well-known statement:

"Be informed of what has been, what is, and what will be, and in the case of illness, remember two things – benefit and do not damage."

In his *Aphorisms*, one of the most famous books in the Hippocratic Collection, he wrote:

"Life is short, art is long-lasting, appropriate moments pass at once experience is deceptive, judgement difficult."

The last aphorism is also famous:

"All that is incurable by drugs, may be cured by iron; all that is incurable by iron, may be cured by fire; and all that is incurable by fire, must be presumed incurable."

We should also mention the wise principle in his book on *Therapy* which is, once again: "Benefit, and do not damage."

Ophthalmology

In the field of ophthalmology, which is equally important as the other areas of medicine, HIPPOCRATES' contributions are not less great. He gives very inter-

esting descriptions in his books on *Anatomy of the Eyes*, *The Disturbances of Vision*, *The Pathology of the Eyes*, and *The Precise Description of Different Eye Diseases*.

A study of the books referring to Ophthalmology leads to the ascertainment that much of today's ophthalmic knowledge may be considered as an achievement of the ancient Greek studies on this subject. They included:

1. The description of the eyeball's layers.
2. Knowledge of the communication between the eyes and the nasal cavity and the frontal sinus.
3. The description of ophthalmic migraine.
4. The description of Hemianopsia.
5. Visual acuity – amblyopia and amaurosis.
6. Knowledge of myosis and mydriasis of the pupil, anisocoria and iris prolaps.
7. The diagnostic symptoms of the eyelids, caused by different illnesses of the organism.
8. A description of the nerves of the extrinsic muscles and of what is today known as the *Homer syndrome*.
9. The knowledge that fever has a therapeutic effect in diseases of the eyes of the central nervous system, which corresponds to today's *fever treatment of Wagner von Jauregg*.
10. The description of an ophthalmic epidemic, similar to today's *Adamantiades-Behçet Syndrome*.
11. The description of eye symptoms resulting from skull fracture.
12. The treatment of nyctalopia by liver extract, which is now known as an American method.
13. The confinement to bed in a dark room for eye patients.
14. Trephination of the skull in increased intracranial pressure – a method used by neurosurgeons today.
15. The description of surgical treatments for trichiasis and other diseases.
16. Treatment of curetage in trachoma.

With these works and the rest of HIPPOCRATES' activities, Greece soon became the cradle of scientific medicine. Here we should quote the words of ANDRAL:

"I admire and wonder how such men, without possessing instruments of observation, with only their mental force, discovered fundamental truths – truths upon which science is based even today."

Hippocrates' Death

HIPPOCRATES spent his life, working untiringly as a teacher of medicine, as a writer, and as a professional physician. He died in Larissa at the age of 90 (some say at 109) at about the same time as DEMOCRITOS.

He was buried between Larissa and the small Thessalian town of Gyrton, near the banks of the river Pineous. The exact location of his grave is unknown.

SORANOS wrote that HIPPOCRATES' grave existed until his time, and so did SOUIDAS. The historical description given by ANTHIMOS GAZIS in 1807 is most interesting. He states that "Hippocrates' grave may still be seen today" and that he had visited it, outside Larissa, in a place between Turkish graves "on a road with some epigram" which he read but was obliged to leave "with great sorrow and crying" before being able to copy it as he had been surrounded by Turkish boys.

In March 1857, a doctor of Larissa named S. SAMARZIDES wrote about HIPPOCRATES' grave, adding that in 1826 after a flood, a tomb was found by peasants in a place ten minutes outside Larissa and east of the road leading to Tyrnavos, near the villages of Giannouli and Kissaro. The tomb was examined immediately by the scholars T. ANDREADIS and I. OECONOMOS. They found a plaque on the tomb, and engraved on it an epigram and HIPPOCRATES' name. Because they were afraid of the Turks, they restricted themselves to a simple search, and begged a Turkish Bey, friend and protector of the Christians, to save the plaque. This was done, but the rest of the tomb was already pillaged. Doctor SAMARZIDES later found the plaque in the Bey's house and made a copy. He published the text in the journal "*Medical Bee*". The epigram is shown on fig. 1. Only the parts shown in bold lettering were legible on the plaque. The missing parts were supplemented as suggested by Dr. POURNAROPOULOS in his unpublished work "*Hippocrates' Tomb*". The following is a translation of the probable text of the epigram:

To Doctor Hippocrates from Cos, the great speaker,
brave in body and soul.
Give to your town, in the name of virtue,
an eloquent love, and good fortune.
Honest man, may you be joyful and of good health.

SAMARZIDES' article was translated and published by the well-known Hellenist RENÉ BRIAU in the journal "*Gazette Hebdomadaire*". The latter added his personal opinion that it was difficult to accept the view that this was indeed the tomb of HIPPOCRATES, and that the plaque was probably not older than the Alexandrian period. The fates of the tomb and the plaque are unknown today.

Many of the biographical details that we have about HIPPOCRATES are of a legendary character. Thus, it is said that bees built swarms on HIPPOCRATES' grave, and that this is the reason why honey cures stomatitis in infants.

Various epigrams that were found illustrate the great honours shown to HIPPOCRATES:

"Here lies the Thessalian Hippocrates of Kos, descendant of the immortal generation of Apollo. Many are the victorious monuments he erected in the fight against illness with health as his only weapon, earning great glory – not by fate, but by his own skills."

The statues that have been found, and which are said to represent HIPPOCRATES, and also the coins found in Cos, show his face as being melancholy and lined, with a long beard and a few hairs on an otherwise bald head. The statue found in Cos during the Italian occupation, which was believed to represent HIPPOCRATES, seems now unlikely to be his, after all.

The International Hippocratic Foundation of Cos (Fondation Internationale Hippocratique de Cos 1960)

Thousands of years have passed since the death of HIPPOCRATES, and although many hospitals, societies and journals bear his name, and throughout the world physicians take his oath, proper honour has not yet been done to this man.

The Athens Academy celebrated the 2400th anniversary of his birth on 16th May 1940, with an inspired speech by the Academician, Professor A. COUSIS.

It is logical that in our age we should return to the study and analysis of HIPPOCRATES' works, which encourage us to further our education and culture. At various times, different physicians have thought about establishing an organisation or medical school at Cos, HIPPOCRATES' birthplace, where we can still see today the plane tree, under which HIPPOCRATES used to teach. The aim of this movement was to revive the tradition, to create an international medical centre, to re-establish the ancient Medical Faculty of Cos on an international level and to create a Neo-Hippocratic evolution. This idea was realised in 1960 with the establishment of the *International Hippocratic Foundation of Cos (I.H.F.C.)*.

The first president, also originator of this magnificent idea was Professor SPIROS OECONOMOS. Following in his father's footsteps, Professor NICOS OECONOMOS is continuing with great effort in the medical and humanistic tradition of his family, and their involvement with the Hippocratic ideal.

At this point, it may be of interest to mention further details concerning the aims of the Foundation.

1. To build the *International Hippocratic Centre* or Building of Medicine.
2. To donate a plot of land to every nation in order to build their own *National Hippocratic Centre*, thus at some time in the future creating an international medical town.

ΙΗΤΡΩ, **ΙΠΠΟΚΡΑΤΕΙ** ΚΩΩ, ΑΓΛΑΦΩΝΙ
 ΨΥΧΗΤΕ ΚΑΙ **ΣΩΜΑΤΙ** ΑΝΔΡΕΙΩ,
ΠΟΛΕΙ ΔΟΣ ΥΜΕΤΕΡΗ, **ΤΕΛΕΣΦΟΡΗ**,
ΑΓΑΘΗ. ΤΥΧΗ, **ΑΡΕΤΗΣ** ΕΝΕΚΑ
 ΑΝΕΡ **ΧΡΗΣΤΕ** ΙΗΤΡΕ **ΧΑΙΡΕ**-ΥΓΙΑΙΝΕ

Fig. 1: Inscription on plaque of Hippocrates' tomb, as copied from the original by SAMARZIDES (bold lettering) and supplemented by POURNAROPOULOS (normal script).



Fig. 2: Postage stamp depicting the head of Hippocrates. It was issued on the occasion of the official inauguration of the International Hippocratic Foundation of Kos in 1979.

3. To offer facilities in the International Centre enabling physicians from all over the world, together with philosophers, philologists, archeologists and other intellectuals to study and thus obtain a more profound medical education.
4. To arrange medical congresses, seminars and discussions and to award an *Hippocratic Prize* for the most remarkable discovery or contribution in medicine or biology.
5. To reinforce the medical and pharmaceutical aid to the inhabitants of Cos and visitors.
6. To strengthen and conserve the ancient medical tradition of the *Hippocratic Oath*, which is in danger of being replaced in contemporary society.

Today, the I.H.F.C., after the official acknowledgement by Act of Parliament No. 731 of 29th October 1960, is directed by a board of Greek doctors, under the chairmanship of Professor N. OECONOMOS. On a privately owned ground of 200 acres, the *Hippocratic Centre of Cos* has been built, dedicated to medical science and especially to Hippocratic Medicine, to continue spreading of Neo-Hippocratism, and as a reminder of the principles, ethics and deontology transmitted to us through the teachings of HIPPOCRATES, the greatest physician mankind has ever known.

Since April 1979, a series of intellectual and scientific events have taken place there, and with these activities, the Foundation fills the existing vacuum in the security of a very old medical tradition, namely the Hippocratic Oath. Last year the Foundation was officially inaugurated by the President of the Nation, Mr. K. TSATSOS, who after a prologue by Professor OECONOMOS, made an inspired and significant speech about the international humanistic importance of the Foundation.

Furthermore, the nation honoured the Foundation by commemorating its official inauguration with the issue of a postage stamp depicting the head of HIPPOCRATES (fig. 2).

The classical teachings of HIPPOCRATES, based on ethics and morals, which in our times are in danger of being dismissed, inspired JULES FRANÇOIS, President of the International Council of Ophthalmology, to found in 1975 the *Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis*, with the aim of studying the history, and maintaining the tradition, honour, and ethics in the field of ophthalmology. This effort, which was well received throughout the world, materialised these aims by compiling and publishing in many languages and journals a *Code of Ophthalmological Ethics*, and by founding the journal "*Historia Ophthalmologica Internationalis*".

Under these circumstances, and in view of the existing international mood of understanding, the assumption seems justified that the I.H.F.C. and the A.O.I. will in a short time become focal points of an international scientific fraternity. This will cultivate and assure love and peace to mankind, without distinction of nation, race or creed.

Summary

The introduction gives us an insight into the background and high reputation of Hippocrates. A descendant of Asclepius, he was called "The Great" by Aristotle, a title awarded to few people in the history of civilisation. The prehistoric period of medicine is described, as well as the close ties between the various sciences, including medicine which developed from a worship of Asclepius, with his temples as centres of healing, into a pure science.

Hippocrates' life is then outlined: his birth around 460 B.C., his studies, his highly ethical and much admired practice of medicine. The basic characteristics and teachings of Hippocratic medicine are set out, and reference is made to his work as a writer. His contributions in the field of ophthalmology were most significant and are enumerated, many being basically identical to contemporary techniques and modern "discoveries". Little is known of his later years spent in Larissa and his death at an old age. Doubt surrounds the actual locality of his tomb. The only sources of information are the writings of over a century ago by some scholars who were apparently the last to see his tomb.

Now, almost 2500 years later, the International Hippocratic Foundation of Cos has been established. It was originally inspired by Prof. Spiros Oeconomos, and whose place has most deservedly been filled by his son, Prof. Nicos Oeconomos, who is the President of the Foundation. The aims of the Foundation and of the Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis are briefly described. We believe that their realisation will cultivate a mood of international understanding, harmony and scientific fraternity.

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FRONIMOPOULOS, J. et LAMBROU, N. — Hippocrate et la Fondation Hippocratique Internationale de Cos

Resumé

L'introduction nous rappelle la grande réputation d'Hippocrate, descendant d'Aesculape. Il était appelé «le Grand» par Aristote, un titre qui n'a été donné qu'à peu de personnes dans l'histoire de la civilisation. La période préhistorique

de la médecine est décrite, ainsi que les liens étroits existant dès l'origine entre les différentes sciences, y compris la médecine qui, d'abord religieuse avec Aesculape et ses temples, s'est développée ensuite pour devenir une véritable science.

La vie d'Hippocrate est décrite depuis sa naissance autour de 460 avant J. Chr. jusqu'à ses études, ses conceptions hautement éthiques et sa pratique médicale tant admirée. Les caractéristiques de base et l'enseignement d'Hippocrate sont expliqués, tout en rappelant ses dons d'écrivain. Ses contributions au domaine de l'Ophthalmologie ont été importantes et sont énumérées. Nombreuses d'entre elles sont fondamentalement les mêmes que les techniques contemporaines ou les découvertes modernes. On sait peu de la fin de sa vie à Larissa et de sa mort à un âge avancé. Il y a des doutes sur la localisation de sa tombe, les seules sources d'information étant les écrits d'élèves qui ont été apparemment les derniers à voir sa tombe.

Actuellement, presque 2500 années plus tard, la Fondation Hippocratique Internationale de Cos a été établie. Elle s'est faite sous l'action du Prof. Spiros Oeconomos et de son fils, le Prof. Nicos Oeconomos, Président de la Fondation. Les buts de la fondation et de l'A.O.I. (Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis) sont décrits. Leur réalisation favorisera et stimulera l'entente internationale, ainsi que la fraternité scientifique.

FRONIMOPOULOS, J. und LAMBROU, N. – Hippokrates und die Internationale Hippokrates-Stiftung von Kos

Zusammenfassung

Die Einleitung gibt einen Überblick über die Herkunft und das hohe Ansehen des Hippokrates. Er war Nachkomme des Asklepios und wurde von Aristoteles als „der Große“ bezeichnet, ein Titel, der nur wenigen Gestalten in der Geschichte der Zivilisation verliehen wurde. Nach einer Darstellung der prähistorischen Ära der Medizin wird auf die Bedeutung des Asklepios und seiner Tempel und Heilstätten für die Entwicklung der Medizin hingewiesen.

Es folgt eine Darstellung von Hippokrates' Leben, beginnend mit seiner Geburt um 460 v. Chr. Seine ethischen Vorstellungen und seine Bedeutung als Praktiker, Lehrer und Schriftsteller werden betont. Seine Beiträge im Bereich der Ophthalmologie sind besonders wichtig, und manche moderne „Entdeckungen“ waren ihm schon bekannt. Über seine letzten Lebensjahre in Larissa und über seinen Tod in hohem Alter ist weniger überliefert. Zweifel bestehen auch über die genaue Lage seines Grabes. Hier sind einige Mitteilungen von Gelehrten des vorigen Jahrhunderts, die sein Grab wohl noch gesehen haben, unsere einzigen Quellen.

Erst jetzt, 2500 Jahre nach Hippokrates, ist die Internationale Hippokrates-Stiftung von Kos gegründet worden. Sie wurde ursprünglich von Prof. Spiros Oeco-

nomos angeregt und wird jetzt von seinem Sohn, Prof. Nicos Oeconomos, als Präsident geleitet. Die Ziele der Stiftung und der A.O.I. (Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis) werden kurz dargestellt. Die Autoren bringen zum Ausdruck, daß beide Institutionen ein Gefühl des internationalen Verstehens, der Harmonie und der wissenschaftlichen Brüderlichkeit fördern werden.

FRONIMOPOULOS, J. y LAMBROU, N. – Hipócrates y la Fundación Hipocrática Internacional de Cos

Resumen

La introducción nos recuerda la gran reputación de Hipócrates, descendiente de Esculapio. Que era llamado "el grande" por Aristóteles, un título que solo fue dado a pocas personas en la historia de la civilización. El periodo prehistórico de la medicina está descrito, así como los lienes estrechos existentes desde el origen entre las diferentes ciencias, incluida la medicina que, siendo al comienzo religiosa con Esculapio y sus templos, se desarrolló luego para transformarse en una verdadera ciencia.

La vida de Hipócrates está descrita desde su nacimiento, alrededor de 460 años antes de Jesucristo, hasta sus estudios, sus conceptos altamente éticos y su práctica médica tan admirada. Las características de base y la enseñanza de Hipócrates están explicadas recordando al mismo tiempo sus dones de escritor. Sus contribuciones en el dominio de la Oftalmología han sido importantes y están ennumeradas. Varias de entre ellas son esencialmente las mismas que las técnicas contemporáneas o los descubrimientos modernos. Sabemos poco del final de su vida en Larisa y de su muerte a una edad avanzada. Hay dudas sobre la localización de su tumba, las únicas fuentes de información son los escritos de alumnos que aparentemente son los últimos que la vieron.

Actualmente, casi 2500 años más tarde, la Fundación Hipocrática Internacional de Cos ha sido establecida. Esta se logró bajo la acción del Prof. Spiros Oeconomos y de su hijo, el Prof. Nicos Oeconomos Presidente de la Fundación. Las metas de la Fundación y de la A.O.I. (Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis) están descritas. Su realización favorecerá y estimulará la comprensión internacional, así como la fraternidad científica.

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