

The first Plague

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Prologue

The letter from Xenocrates to Aristoxenus which I reproduce here, translated into Spanish [Translator's note: this editorial was originally written in Spanish, but the letter in this translated version will be reproduced in English.] is found in the *Codex Lipsiensis*, a vellum codex with 33 x 27 cm single-column pages, with 40 to 46 lines per page, written by hand in uncial Greek, and transcribed, possibly by a copyist in the fourth century CE (1). Vellums are unquestionably ancient: carbon-14 dating places the date of death of the calves whose skins were used to make them between 342 and 376 CE. Some experts have doubted the authenticity of the ink used, but others, armed with radiocarbon dating and ion beam analysis, have determined that, given the characteristics of their pigments, these could be organic inks dating from around the same era. The writing, without a doubt, is from this time period. However, scholars have noted that no other copies of the letter have been found either before or after *Codex Lipsiensis*, and that no anthologists refer to it, either before or after the fourth century CE. It is, therefore, impossible to determine the copyist's source and, much less, the concatenation of sources and copyists that take the *Codex Lipsiensis* back to the original letter which the unknown Xenocrates (2) wrote in the fourth century BCE (3) to the philosopher, musician, biographer and disciple of Aristototele, Aristoxenus of Tarentum, mentioning various events related to the Plague of Athens which had occurred 100 years before.

The *Codex Lipsiensis* was found among the belongings which the never well-com-mended or well-vilified paleographer, calligrapher, discoverer of very ancient manuscripts and icons, forger of both, trader of all, Constantine Simonides, left in Leipzig in 1856 when he was banished from Prussian Saxony (4). One year before, Simonides had sold a *History of Egypt* (Αἰγυπτιακή ἱστορία), supposedly written by Uranius (Ουράνιο) in the sixth century CE, to the classicist Karl Wilhelm Dindorf, a single edition of which Dindorf was able to print with Clarendon Press in Oxford. However, once published, and when only about 15 copies had been put into circulation, Constantin von Tischendorf, the most important philologist of that time, discovered the deceit, and on February 1, 1856, Simonides was arrested on charges of forgery. After 17 days in jail and appearing in two courts, first in Leipzig and then in Berlin, the judicial authorities gave him a deadline of March 30, 1856, to leave Prussia. His belongings, including the codex with the letter, which was confiscated when he was arrested, ended up in the *Deutsche Bücherei Leipzig* (5) after many twists and turns, where the letter was found a century and a half later during a general inventory performed before the *Gesetzes über die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek* (6) went into effect on June 29, 2006, uniting the Leipzig and Frankfurt am Main libraries, which for almost the entire second half of the twentieth century had been the national libraries of each of the two Germanies prior to reunification in 1989.

The translation of the letter from Attic Greek to English was done by a translator who, against all expectations, wanted to remain anonymous but who, based on the style and some linguistic characteristics, could be a doctoral student at the Faculty of Classics at the University of Oxford (however, you never know, it could also be the work of a member of the Cambridge Philological Society from India, a fellow at the University of Cambridge).

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My job, which was not terribly difficult since the English text uses the neutral and fairly straightforward language so characteristic of Oxford translators (or of Indian Cambridge fellows), was to turn the English text into Spanish. Some terms, which the translator preferred to keep in the original Greek, I have left as is in parentheses (7). Attic Greek can be easily transliterated to Spanish following the guidelines of the Medical, Biological, Historical and Etymological Dictionary of the Universidad de Salamanca, summarized in the document *Alfabeto Griego, Transliteración y Evolución* [Greek Alphabet, Transliteration and Evolution] (8). All footnotes are my own and contain explanations of the events narrated in the letter and their possible concordance with other historical sources.

The letter

Xenocrates wishes Aristoxenus health (9)

I have heard that, now that you have retired from the Lyceum (10) and departing widely from the topic of your known Harmonic Elements (*Ἀρμονικά Στοιχεῖα*) (11), you are writing a text which you will possibly title *The Lives and Views of the Most Eminent Physicians* (*Βίοι καὶ γνώμαι τῶν ἐν ἰατρῶν εὐδοκίμησάντων*) similar to your *Biographies* (*Βιοὶ Ἀνδρῶν*) written a few years ago, of which I recall with special pleasure those of Pythagoras, Archytas, Socrates, Plato and Thelestes (12).

Knowing your work, I venture to predict that the content of your new book will boast the wisdom and other virtues of your previous works, and therefore I would like to give you a brief account of the life of my grandfather, Coriscus of Nisyros, with a few details about his role during the Plague of Athens (*Λοιμὸς τῶν Ἀθηνῶν*) (13), as I hope you will include a chapter on him in your *Lives*.

If I were to summarize the life and legacy of my grandfather in the fewest possible words, I would say that there was no greater hero (*ἥρωες*) during the Plague. By rating him as a hero I do not mean that he was a descendent of humanity's fourth generation, that of the men-heroes or demigods who, as Hesiod affirms in *Works and Days* (*Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι*), live under the rule of Cronus on the Isles of the Blessed (*μακάρων νῆσοι*) at the ends of the earth, where they can reap its sweet fruits three times a year (14). Neither do I claim that he was the offspring of a goddess and a mortal, as the *Catalog of Heroes* asserts to be their origin (15). Rather, I believe, as Aristotle says, that there are ordinary men who, when they must act, instead of resigning themselves, defenseless, to the role of puppets (*νευρόσπαστα*) of fate, stand against it and achieve virtues which we could call superhuman or even divine, to the point where their exploits are compared to those of the gods, and these he calls heroes. This is why, regarding people like my grandfather, those of us who are simple mortals, not heroes, come to think, like Priam before the exploits and virtues of his son, Hector, that they do not seem to be sons of a mortal man, but rather a god (16). That was my grandfather, along with all the physicians

(*ἰατροὶ*) who for five long years fought against the Plague's three assaults. However, I must clarify the nuances: in addition to the moral hero, there is another hero in Aristotle, the tragic hero, the main character of a tragedy, whom I would prefer to simply call the protagonist (*πρωταγωνιστής*) (17), but he prefers to call a hero in this context: a man like us who, due to an error (*ἀμαρτία*) or pride (*ὑβρις*), undergoes an abrupt and catastrophic change of fortune and everything turns into adversity, filling the spectators with fear and compassion (18). Neither my grandfather nor the physicians who accompanied him in the fight against the Plague fit within this type of hero.

Herodotus classified the reports of his *History* (*Ἱστορία*), into those that were autopsies (*αὐτοψία*) and those of which he had only heard (*ἀκοή*) (19). My account of my grandfather's life belongs entirely to this second type of report, as I did not know him and yet, the atmosphere in my father's house was always full of his memory and conversations often revolved around his exploits. At the same time, the family kept documents (*ἔγγραφα*) from his student days and from his medical practice, documents which I have had copied so that you can confirm each of the events I narrate. I have the originals of these documents if you would like to verify the information directly from the corresponding sources.

My grandfather was born on the island of Nisyros, between Cos and Rhodes, and, like so many of its inhabitants, he prided himself on being a direct descendent of Antiphus. Antiphus, together with his brother Phidippus, was featured in Homer's *Catalogue of Ships* (*Νεῶν Κατάλογος*) leading the fleet of 30 ships (*νῆες*) (20) with which Nisyros joined Hellas in his fight against Troy under the command of Agamemnon, the shepherd of men (21).

Ever since he was a child, my grandfather had wanted to practice medicine, because as he repeated fragments of *The Iliad* recited by the grammar teacher (*γραμματιστής*) with his grade school (*δι' δασκαλίειον*) classmates, he had dreamed of achieving Machaon's glory (22), who Homer called a man worth many, since he was a physician (23). Like so many children, he dreamed of being a warrior worthy of poetical praise. The phrase Idomeneus spoke to Nestor Né-lida in *The Iliad*, telling him to save Machaon by removing him from the battlefield in his chariot after Paris wounded him in the back with an arrow, made him think that warrior physicians were even greater than plain warriors.

Since then and during his adolescence, my grandfather followed Machaon's trail in the literature and popular legends. Although some maintained that Machaon had died without descendants during the sacking of the walled city after he entered it in the horse's very belly (24), my grandfather was able to prove that it was possible to visit *Asclepieia* (*Ἀσκληπεία*) (25) in Gerania and Faras administered by *Asclepiads* (*Ἀσκληπιάδης*) (26) who claimed to be direct descendants of Asclepius, the healing god, son of Apollo, through the line of Machaon. He therefore longed to study medicine there, but when he later discovered that

in those Asclepieia, as well as in Epidauras (27), there were no medical schools, but rather healing sanctuaries where he could be trained as a temple priest and participate in all the healing rituals of the Egcoimesis (ἐγκοίμησις) (28), he desisted. My grandfather was not interested in religion or dreams, he wanted to be a physician.

My grandfather was not yet 19 years old when his father, my great-grandfather, died close to the ruins of Sybaris, shortly after the colony of Thurii was founded. This was during the fourth year of the 84th Olympiad (29). My great-grandfather's role in the foundation of Thurii, in which Pericles as strategist (στρατηγός), the architect Hippodamus of Miletus, the sophist Protagoras of Abdera and Herodotus himself (who was to die there 18 years later) participated, was quite modest: he was one of the syntagmatarchis (συνταγματάρχης) (30) of the taxiarchos (ταξίαρχος) Cleandrides, the same one of whom the Spartans say that, together with their King Plistoanax, betrayed them by accepting a bribe from Pericles to withdraw from the plain of Eleusis in Attica after occupying it in an attempt to support the Euboean and Megaran revolt against Athenian dominion using Peloponnesian forces (31). The fact is, that the new Thurian colonists wanted some fertile lands between the Aciris and Siris Rivers to which the inhabitants of Taras, ancient descendants of the Spartans on the other side of the gulf, felt they had more right. After a few years of disputes, including even several armed scuffles, both sides reached an agreement and, instead of fighting over the lands, together they founded the new and prosperous colony of Heraclea on them, and everyone was satisfied. However, by then my great-grandfather had died: without having taken part in any real battle, he was wounded in a ridiculous fashion by an arrow which was randomly shot even before one of the many skirmishes between neighbors in which he participated began. He died a few weeks later from his wound.

When my grandfather learned that, like Machaon, his father had been wounded by an arrow in cold blood and was later told of the circumstances around his death, he became a staunch pacifist. This change occurred long before the annual worship of Irene (Εἰρήνη) was instated and even before the Common Peace treaties (Κοινή Εἰρήνη) at the end of the Corinthian War (32). Gathering some ideas from Solon, for whom war, both civil as well as against outside forces, is always an indisputable sign that the polis (πόλις) is in a state of dysnomia (δυσνομία) (33), my grandfather created his own thesis, which he validated both for the exterior world of the polis as well as the inner world of the psyche (Ψυχή): good polis government and a good walk in private life can only be achieved through just laws, through political debate for the life of the polis and ethical debate for private life.

Subsequently, he engaged with some of Pythagoras's pupils who were completely opposed to war, violence, sacrifices and, in general, any bloodshed (34). If he were alive today, my grandfather would undoubtedly be affiliated with Eubulus' Peace Party and would approve of Isocrates' texts,

whom he knew long before Isocrates spoke about Panhellenism and long before he asserted that it was necessary to make peace not only with the inhabitants of Chios, Rhodes, Byzantium and Cos, but also with all humanity (35). In fact, before Diogenes of Sinope expressed it so beautifully, my grandfather already thought and behaved like a global citizen (κοσμοπολίτης) (36).

Thus, my grandfather stopped dreaming of becoming a heroic warrior like Machaon and thought only of studying medicine. However, with no interest in religious healing, no longer having his father's financial support, and with no close relative to teach him medicine, his chances of reaching his childhood and adolescent dream of being a physician began to fade. He then learned that very close to his birthplace (πατρις), in Cos and Knidos, there were medical schools, both governed by Asclepiads who were descendants of Podalirius, and who were accepting, for a small stipend, students who were willing to learn and work hard, even if they were not sons of physicians.

I am not sure if you are aware of this, but the medical school in the city of Knidos is on the continent, in the Cariu Chersonese, while the one in Cos is located on the island by the same name. Both are almost the same distance from Nisyru so, in light of their similar prestige, my grandfather wanted to leave the choice of school up to fate (τύχη), and determined that if he threw an ostrakinda game shell (ὄστρακίνα) in the air and it landed showing its dark side, he would study in Cos, and if it landed showing its light side he would go to Knidos (37). At first, and by the luck of the draw, he prepared to go to Knidos, but a few months later he changed his plan, as he was unable to leave because all the helmsmen (κυβερνήτης) at that time were afraid of nearing the Carian coast due to the presence of undefeated coastal pirates who found easy refuge on the continent.

To reach the city of Cos by ship from Nisyru, you must get to the entrance of the Ceramic Gulf: Cos is midway between Knidos on the right and Halicarnassus on the left, a city in which Greeks and Barbarians of Carian lineage coexist and blend their ancestors (38). I am convinced that it was not a chance, accidental occurrence, as Aristotle thinks, that led him to Cos; he inevitably ended up there, drawn by Necessity (Ἀνάγκη) (39).

Learning in Cos was based on head-to-head tutorial education: each professor was responsible for a maximum of three pupils, and through direct verbal teaching, would discuss the findings of the history and physical exam as he performed them, establishing theoretical lines of argumentation and postulating treatments which he would later communicate to the patients. The physical exam was based on the use of well-known "instruments": sight, hearing, smell, touch, the tongue and logical connections (40). Students relied on the rather scarce books which these same professors had written and on copious notes (ὑπομνήματα) from the oral classes, taken by older students and which the new students copied and passed from hand to hand over and over

on their waxed tablets (41). They also passed along papyri using the dialogue (διάλογοι) question-answer format like the one used in the theater, which simulated the professor questioning the pupil and the pupil always answering correctly (42). Several of these hypomnemata and dialogues have been kept in my family. I have requested that one of each be copied for you so that you can have an idea of what my grandfather's education was like.

The basic characteristic of the medicine taught in Cos could be summarized, according to my grandfather, in a maxim: "to alleviate suffering based solely on Nature (φύσις)." This involved, above all, leaving rites and spells to the priests and magicians.

One of the Asclepiads in Cos highly valued my grandfather's interest in developing a set of theses on the diseases that survive in a given place, theses which all those in Cos shared, and dedicated extra time to tutoring my grandfather. Based on this collaboration, my grandfather wrote the text *On Local Diseases (νοσηματα επαχωρια)*, which others have called *On Endemic Diseases (νοσήματα ἔνδημα)*, that is, diseases which are more frequent or common in a given community or region. This, stated my grandfather in his treatise, could be due to certain characteristics which are peculiar to each place (τοποί): if the soil is naked and dry or forested and watered, low and hot or high and cold, or if its winds are warm or cold, or its water marshy, soft or hard or arising from rocky or salty and rough heights. But it could also be due to lifestyle peculiarities of those living in these places, such as whether, on the one hand, they are inveterate drinkers, eat more than one complete meal a day and are not inclined to work hard or, on the other hand, they love gymnastic exercises, are hardworking and are given to eating well and drinking little (43).

I have here in front of me a copy of my grandfather's text. The manuscript was extolled and, although it was not completely derived from the author's personal experience, as my grandfather was still very young, it was praised not only for having gathered in one place all his professors' teachings and sayings regarding this type of diseases, but, above all, for the conceptual development of his thesis of grouping diseases which occur more frequently in certain communities as a result not of their location, climate, winds and water but rather their inhabitants' diet and lifestyle preferences (44). This text was a decisive factor in his tutors considering my grandfather worthy of practicing the profession and, after pledging him to adhere to a strict code of conduct which they all had come to adopt (45), he was admitted to the Asclepiad guild, even though he had no family ties to them.

When he was 25 years old, my grandfather left Cos and became a traveling physician (περιοδευτής) in various poleis of Attica and Boeotia. He lived and worked like this, going from one place to another, for three years, until he won first place in a contest run by the polis of Athens to name a public physician (δημοουργός) (46) or, as they call them on the islands, a community physician (ιατροὶ οἱ

δαμοσιεύοντες) (47). This was a physician who was given a basic salary in order for him to stop traveling, establish himself there and practice his profession free of charge for the poorest patients. He was allowed to charge a fee in other cases at the end of treatment, as long as this fee had been agreed upon previously with the patient or his family.

Despite being a metic (μέτοικος) (48), within just a few years my grandfather garnered great prestige among his new countrymen: all who consulted him saw him as an excellent physician and all who interacted with him considered that he had achieved excellence (ἀρετή) (49). He was so prestigious that Pericles himself requested his services on several occasions.

A few years later, in the second year of the 87th Olympiad (50), war was declared against the Spartans. My grandfather was not recruited because, being 30 years old and a physician, he was needed more in the city than on the battlefield. His prestige among the common people as well as the more powerful families undoubtedly had an impact, but it is not improbable that Pericles himself, who by then had my grandfather as his physician and was aware of his pacifist activism, may have intervened to avoid his recruitment in order to avoid the difficulties he would have faced if, as expected, my grandfather would have refused to be deployed.

In the third year of the 87th Olympiad (51), during the second year of the War, a new disease emerged in the polis, with symptoms that were not linked to any known thing. From the beginning, my grandfather actively participated in patient treatment and observation and applied himself to studying the new disease, which was unlike any of the Endemic Diseases on whose knowledge and treatment he had built his prestige. It was so different, that my grandfather felt it necessary to create a separate classification group, which he called *Epidemic Diseases (επιδημικές νόσοι)*. By giving this name to this new class of diseases, he wanted to emphasize the fact that, unlike the usual diseases in a region or city, this one had occurred unexpectedly and nobody in the polis had ever had anything like it. My father told me that my grandfather had once explained to him that he had chosen that name because it was a "visiting" disease, like the visit of an emperor to a town (βασιλικής ἐπιδημίας), during which a solemn sacrifice is always performed in honor of the visitor (ἐπιδήμια θύειν). He also told him that he had chosen that name because the rapidity of the contagion, the lethality of the disease and its catastrophic ability to disrupt community life resembled the effects of a civil war (πόλεμος ἐπιδήμιος).

After its first foray, the epidemic's "visit" ravished the city of Athens with two new waves: the next one was in the fourth year of the 87th Olympiad (52), and the last one was in the third year of the 88th Olympiad (53). You may have heard everything I am telling you, but I detail the dates and facts because the collective memory is fragile and a little more than 100 years have passed. Five years after its arrival, the Plague was extinguished forever, but one of every three inhabitants of Athens and one of every two physicians were

also extinguished during this time by the Plague (54).

The physicians were among the first to contract the disease. They were in direct and constant contact with the patients, and perhaps because of this were the ones most severely affected (55). My grandfather was one of the first to contract the Plague as well as one of the first to survive its onslaught. Once he recovered, he continued relentlessly with his work in favor of those affected by the new disease. He knew very early on that this disease showed no signs of responding to any balm, dressing, diet, exercise regimen, or purge and that, in short, there was no way to cure it. It was also evident to the rest of the physicians that their treatments had not the slightest effect on the progression of the disease; however, with increasing acumen, together they succeeded in finding symptomatic treatments that greatly alleviated the suffering caused by the disease: although they could not reduce its lethality, they could reduce its burden of pain. My grandfather recorded his experience in a new text which, of course, he named *On Epidemic Diseases* (ἐπιδημικὲς νόσοι).

It is a bit paradoxical that someone like my grandfather, considered to be an expert on diseases which survive in a single place (endemic), should end up being the greatest expert in the history of Athens on diseases which occur in “visits” (epidemics), but that was his experience. I do not have the text of *On Epidemic Diseases* with me. I lent my only copy to Hippolytus of Taranto, and he has neither copied nor returned it. When I met him by chance in the market, he told me that the title my grandfather had given that paper was very confusing and not at all descriptive, and he even dared to say that that was why nobody had been interested in copying it.

“To begin with,” he said, “the use of the term ‘epidemic’ (ἐπιδήμια) has always been ambivalent: Homer uses it as a noun to mean something like a ‘stay’ or ‘residency’ in a house or in another city (56). On the other hand, Plato uses it to mean a ‘visit,’ or ‘arrival some place,’ as when he refers to the visits of sophists to Athens (57). In contrast, Ion of Chios gave the title *Ἐπιδημίαι* to his personal story of the foreign trips he made, although he himself was a foreigner in Athens (58). Demosthenes, the orator, has used it in several passages in his speeches, sometimes to mean ‘stay home,’ to refer, for example, to remaining in Athens (59), but other times to mean ‘emigration,’ for example, to indicate that someone leaves to go live in Megara (60).”

“The worst part,” continued Hippolytus, “is that physicians, who are supposed to be the most precise in their definitions, maintain such different meanings of ἐπιδήμια that at times you cannot even understand them: sometimes they apply the adjective ἐπιδημικὲς to give something the literal meaning of ‘passing through,’ in which case an epidemic disease (ἐπιδημικὲς νόσοι) would be the equivalent of a transient disease, and its antonym (he said, posing as a grammarian) would be an incurable disease (61).” “At other times,” he affirmed, “physicians do not use the term as an

adjective but rather a noun to name some of the physicians’ activities, adding a professional bias to its popular meaning of ‘visit’ to refer to a physician’s visit to a patient or a physician’s visit to a city either to look for work or to improve his knowledge.” “The ambivalence of the term among physicians does not end there,” Hippolytus insisted, “they use it even to refer to a patient’s visit to a physician’s office (62).” “But until now, nobody had given ἐπιδήμια a meaning so strange and foreign to the spirit of the language as Coriscus of Nisyros, ‘your grandfather,’” said Hippolytus with a tinge of irony, “as he purports that the visit, the ἐπιδήμια, at least in this maintains a meaning close to the popular use, is not a patient’s visit to a physician, or a physician’s visit to a patient, or even a physician’s visit to a city...but rather a disease’s visit to a city. When had something like this been seen? Since when do diseases travel? Do they adhere to the laws of hospitality on their visits? Do they bring presents?” He was mocking. “Hippocrates himself,” continued Hippolytus with a sarcastic tone, “‘your grandfather’s teacher,’” has at times used the term epidemic to refer to diseases which survive in the same place.” “In fact,” he said, reciting almost word for word from memory, “if one reads Hippocrates’ *Predictions* (Προγινώσκων) carefully, when he says that you must consider the signs and symptoms of a disease and not disregard the disposition of the time of year when making predictions about always epidemic diseases (αἰεὶ ἐπιδημούντων), he is not referring to diseases which ‘come to visit,’ but rather those which survive in the same place (endemic) (63).

“In other parts of his work, Hippocrates does use the term epidemic in a different sense than endemic,” discoursed Hippolytus, “but he calls them epidemic diseases not because they are ‘visiting,’ as Coriscus of Nisyros purported, but rather because they indiscriminately attack the whole demos (64).” I could stand no more, Hippolytus had me riled, but he was holding back the final blow: the only use of ἐπιδήμιος he had not noted among physicians or rhetoricians (he, as I said, poses as a grammarian although he has not written a single text on the subject) was that adjectivized way of describing a disease as something that comes into a city from without, and that there was no “visiting disease” (ἐπιδημικὲς νόσοι) there, he scoffed. “That obscure and ambivalent meaning,” Hippolytus insisted now with an oratorical tone, hammering on my already open wound, “is a previously unheard-of use of ἐπιδημικὲς which nobody understands.”

Before I left without saying good-bye, he added that, in fact, a text had recently circulated with almost the same name, which everyone was interested in copying and which, although many affirmed that it was a direct work by Hippocrates, had certainly not been written by him. Rather, it had been written by medical apprentices in Piraeus practicing writing a clinical history in the best possible way as homework for their professor, a physician from Agrigento who has recently settled there and teaches almost free of charge. These clinical histories describe very precisely the

visits of these physicians to their patients, which is why they have, together, been called Ἐπιδημίεσ (65). His entire discourse filled me with anger; so much so, that I forgot to ask him when he would return my grandfather's text to me and returned home ill humored, recalling that, despite everything, Hippolytus certainly knows what he is saying ...and my grandfather's book will be lost to posterity if I do not manage to recover it from him.

Determined to get to the bottom of the issue, I borrowed the scrolls of the Ἐπιδημίεσ text that some attribute to Hippocrates and others to the pupils of the physician from Agrigento: the text has nothing to do with the term "epidemic" in the sense my grandfather gave of nonendemic diseases which arrive "to visit" in a human community, nor with Plagues, but rather, as Hippolytus says, with the visits of some traveling physicians to their patients. The Ἐπιδημίεσ scrolls only contain clinical history summaries of those patient visits with a few interesting discourses on the weather and the time of year in which they developed the illnesses, the meticulous care the patients received from their physicians and the way they progressed, some to the point of dying from diseases that have nothing to do with true epidemics. I do not think it is necessary to continue to insist that Hippolytus is mistaken; the concept of epidemic is better used in the title of my grandfather's text than in the title of the visiting physicians' text, but only the future use of the term will determine who wins this dispute (66).

At about that time, during the second wave, Thucydides, a friend of my grandfather's, fell prey to the Plague. He survived. I have no explanation of the factors which influenced his having withstood the disease, but in my father's account, which I heard him repeat many times with the same enthusiasm, my grandfather's care always appeared as one of the main causes of his cure. My father would say that my grandfather watched over his friend for a long period and that during the most difficult stages of his suffering, he did not leave his side; that he instructed him in each phase of the disease and that he taught him the medical terms which he would later use in his description of the Plague in History of the Peloponnesian War (Ἱστορία του Πελοποννησιακού Πολέμου).

However, Thucydides, as you well know, was not a physician, and although he tries to give his narration of the Plague the air of a technical report, he does not achieve this (67) because he does not always use the specialized terms of the Asclepiades' jargon properly. He does not know how to use them; he received them on loan from my grandfather. I have Thucydides' text in front of me. The description of the Plague is found precisely in the second scroll. It seems to me, to say the least, very pretentious. According to him, anybody in the future will be able, from his description, to recognize the disease if it occurs again: "I will only describe what the disease was like," he says, "and I will clarify the things with which someone who studies it (σχοποῶν) would be less ignorant (μὴ ἀγνοεῖν) if it should attack

again, knowing something beforehand (προεἰδώς); because I myself was sick and saw others suffer" (68). In reality, he boasts of his storytelling skills. I do not believe that a simple written explanation replaces years of experience of physicians who, like my grandfather, worked next to patients with the disease, were direct witnesses of the multiple symptoms (σύμπτωμα) (69) which accompanied it, learned to recognize them and achieved the ability to diagnose it, which is the term which the Asclepiades use for the rational process of identifying the harmful process. Thucydides claims that his description alone, unsupported by practice, will allow people in the future to know that the Plague has returned, and that everyone will be able to identify it and be sure that it is the same one (70). My father says that my grandfather never boasted of anything like this even though, as you know, if the Hippocratic emphasized anything it was not only the physicians' diagnostic ability but also their ability to make predictions. One of their mottos was, in fact, "declare the past (λέγειν τὰ προγενομένα), recognize the present (γινώσκειν τὰ παρόντα) and predict the future (προλέγειν τὰ ἐσόμενα)," to which they always added what they considered to be their main motto: "with regard to diseases, put two things into practice (ἀσχεῖν): help (ὠφελεῖν) and do no harm (μὴ βλάπτειν)" (71).

To me, Thucydides' medical description is too poor to be able to base a diagnosis of the Plague on it, and its prognostic ability seems even worse. Reading it, I get the impression that his motley description of the Plague ended up inserted in his history of the Peloponnesian War as a digression from the main topic of the conflict (72). It seems to be more of a rhetorical piece aimed at discouraging the readers by heightening the most fearsome aspects of the disease, and I doubt very much that it really serves, from a medical point of view, to identify a reappearance of the disease. I can assure you that not only from a scientific description perspective but also a historical narrative and even a literary perspective, my grandfather's text on Epidemic Diseases greatly surpasses Thucydides' insert on the Plague in his history of the war. Unfortunately, my grandfather's text is still in someone else's possession, but I commit to having it copied once I recover it from Hippolytus.

From a medical point of view, Thucydides' text on the Plague is a vain attempt to provide a medical description based on the observations and experiences of someone who is not a physician, but rather a historian. In contrast, the other two times Thucydides names the Plague he speaks to aspects which were directly related to the war, and in this case he does it well, like a good chronicler. I think they are pertinent and well finished; I copy them here for you, although you may have access to the full text.

In the first scroll, referring to the calamities that struck Hellas during the war, Thucydides names the war itself and the human disasters it causes, adding earthquakes, eclipses, droughts, famine and, as a daunting epilogue, the Plague: "The Peloponnesian war lasted a very long time and, in

its course, Hellas experienced such disasters as had never before occurred in a similar lapse of time. Never had so many cities been taken and devastated, some by the Barbarians and some by the Hellenes themselves, in wars against each other. There were several which, after their capture, changed inhabitants. Never had so many human beings been displaced, nor had so much human blood been shed either in the course of the war itself or as a result of civil wars. And stories which legend had related but had very rarely been confirmed by facts ceased to be incredible: earthquakes, for example, which prevailed over a large part of the earth and were extremely violent; solar eclipses which occurred more frequently than what has been recorded; great droughts, as well, in some areas with their consequent famines and, finally, the disaster that caused the most damage to Hellas: the pestilential disease” (73).

The second mention of the Plague comes in the second scroll, which relates that, towards the end of that first summer of the war, the Athenian army led by Pericles invaded Megaride with all its troops, citizens and metics included. At the same time, the troops from the 100 ships of the naval expedition against the Peloponnese, having fulfilled their mission, were returning toward Athens, but learning of the nearness of the ground forces, decided to join them at Aegina: “This was the largest Athenian army ever to be gathered in a single body, because the city was still at the height of its strength and had not yet been struck by the plague” (74). Thucydides says no more about the Plague in these two references. It is the narration of a chronicler, a historian, not of someone who seeks, with his language, to provide a medical report without having the experience to do so.

The third mention of the Plague in Thucydides’ text, the one which I say is not even close to my grandfather’s text, is found in the second scroll. Since, unfortunately, as I have told you, I do not have my grandfather’s text on hand, as it is still in Hippolytus’ possession, I will reproduce a few excerpts from Thucydides’ description to at least serve as an illustration, so you can have an idea of the disease against which my grandfather and other physicians fought:

“Suddenly, and being in good health, people first experienced intense heat in the head (κεφαλής θερμαί) along with reddening and inflammation of the eyes (ὀφθαλμόν ερυθρήματα) and the inner part of the mouth; both the throat and the tongue immediately turned blood red (φλογωσις) and the patients’ breath (πνεῦμα) was unnatural (ἄτοπον) and foul (δυσώδεις). In the next stage, they developed sneezing (παραμός) and hoarseness (βράγχος) and the disease would quickly go down to the chest accompanied by a severe cough (βηχός). Next it would settle in the abdomen, which would churn, and bilious vomiting (ἀποκαθάρσεις χολής) would ensue, accompanied by great suffering (ταλαιπωρίας) and, in most cases, ineffectual retching (λύγξι) followed by violent spasms (σπασμός). Externally, to the touch, the body was not very hot (θερμόν) and did not appear pale (χλωρόν) but rather reddish (ὑπέρουθρον),

livid (πελιτνόν), accompanied by a rash (ἐξηνηθμός) characterized by small blisters (φλυκταιναισ) and ulcers (ἔλκε). However, internally, the patients felt consumed by such a heat (ἐκαίετο) that they could not stand to have the lightest cover or linen sheet on their skin, they wanted to be completely uncovered and would have liked to throw themselves into cold water. In fact, many of those who did not receive proper care threw themselves into cisterns, tormented (ξυνεχόμενοι) by an unquenchable (ἀπαύστω) thirst (δίψη), no matter how much they drank. They were constantly plagued by restlessness and insomnia (ἀγρυπνία) which never decreased. However, when the disease was at its peak (ἀκμάζω), the body surprisingly seemed to resist the ravages of its attack. In fact, when, almost always on the seventh or ninth day, the patients died from the internal heat, they still had a little strength. For those who survived this first crisis of the disease, it then moved down to the intestines, producing acute ulceration along with violent diarrhea (διαρροίας), such that in this final stage most died from the weakening (ασθενειαν) it caused. The disease, starting from the head where it first lodged, descended until it spread through the whole body, and if they survived the worst, at the very least took over the extremities, leaving its marks there. It even attacked the private parts and fingers and toes, and many escaped with their life but lost these, and some also lost their eyes. In some cases, immediately after the apparently full recovery, the patients were affected by an overwhelming memory loss (λήθη), which treated all memories brutally, so that they did not recognize themselves or their friends” (75).

Thucydides’ dissertation on the disease, as you can see, is a bit obscure and repetitive. It lacks a physician’s descriptive conciseness and the proper use of the Asclepiads’ jargon. Thus, I repeat, it ends up being more of a rhetorical piece. However, the part which could lend itself to a greater rhetorical display, the one devoted not to the medical aspects of the disease but to its social consequences ended up being, paradoxically, much clearer and more succinct. My grandfather, on the other hand, does not say anything about this in his text, as his viewpoint was a bit biased, aimed only at the patients and the disease, while Thucydides, a good chronicler after all, shows a genuine interest in describing the disease’s effects on society. My grandfather, for example, as part of his special sense of duty and staying faithful to his oath as an Asclepiad, never asks himself if a patient is a citizen of Athens or a metic or a slave; he is only interested in the person’s provenance when it is relevant from an endemic disease (one that survives in a certain place) perspective. Thucydides, with another viewpoint, is globally interested in the problem of the effects of the disease on the life of the polis, which is at the same time political and, as Aristotle would now call it, economical (76).

In fact, of them all, only Thucydides was able to glimpse the relationship between the war and the disease, describing

the nexus between the invasion of the *khora* (χώρα) by the Peloponnesian League, the subsequent displacement of the farmers and cattle herdsman to the city (where they arrived seeking refuge within its walls, against which they built improvised cabins), and the progression of the Plague. The *asty* (ἄστυ) (77) was not prepared to receive and shelter, much less feed, this many new inhabitants. Overcrowding and famine were complete, and this was coupled with the Plague which spread rapidly among the refugees (78) and then reached the rest of the city. It is very possible that the Plague started there, among the people displaced by the war, overcrowded in the battered huts erected next to the long walls (Μακρά Τείχη) which at that time protected the road to Piraeus (79) and not, as some said, on the route to Piraeus due to the Spartans placing poison (φάρμακα) in this area's cisterns, which still did not have public springs (80).

Just as the disease did not respond to doctors' treatment, neither did it respond to the prayers (εὐχαί) or sacrifices to the gods (θῦσ'αι). In a short time, the city's inhabitants, finally overcome by the calamity, stopped seeking relief from their suffering in religious practices (81).

In the city, overwhelmed by the Plague, the rules of coexistence cracked rapidly. Ownership of livestock, tools, plows, weapons and dwellings changed hands from one day to the next with no need for a holdup; you just had to occupy a house in which all the inhabitants had died, and the easiest way to vacate the house was by disposing of the bodies on the street pyres that other relatives had already prepared for the funereal rituals for their dead (82). Many chose to think that, since death was near and there was no way to escape it, the best thing to do was to enjoy the few days of good health and life that might be left to the fullest and, "judging that godliness and ungodliness were the same," says Thucydides, they had no qualms about committing countless misdeeds because "nobody expected to live long enough to be held accountable and pay the penalty for their crimes" (83).

It is at this point that my grandfather's remarks turn not just toward the patients and their symptoms, but toward the city sick with *δυσνομία*: just as he helped, as much as possible, those who were suffering, also aware that medical science did not have sufficient knowledge and resources to combat the disease and that its effects went beyond the patient's body to his psyche and even further to the very body and organization of the community, he dedicated his efforts also to battling against the disorganization the Plague had brought on the polis. After realizing that the disease rarely attacked twice, and that, if it did, it never had a fatal outcome (84), he organized community health brigades to care for the sick, helped by those who, like himself, had survived the disease. He organized the cleaning of public wells to keep the distribution of water as constant as possible; he organized food distribution campaigns for the refugee families; set up group shifts to guarantee, without neglecting the funeral rites, the appropriate disposal of the bodies; and, in each of the 139 demos of the 10 original tribes (φυλαί) of the polis

(85), he created community work groups which bolstered many to look forward to the end of the Plague and, above all, to avoid falling into the excesses of those who had lost all hope and all moral restraint. In a city where everything was chaotic, my grandfather was a hero, maintaining order and hope through collective work for others.

The Athenians of that time attributed the Plague in Athens to Apollo Smintheus (86). Before undertaking the war, the Spartans were known to have sent a delegation to Delphi to ask Apollo if it would be advisable for them to go to war, and the god's answer had been very clear: "If you fight with all your strength, victory will be yours." And he went even further: through the Pythia, he offered to help the Spartans in the fight, even if they did not call upon him (87). Thus, when the Plague came, the common citizens, who knew everything about the Delphi prophecies regarding the war backwards and forwards, thought that the god's omen was being fulfilled, and that this was his way of helping the Spartans and the Peloponnesian League to defeat Athens and the League of Delphi. In addition, they all knew the supposedly prophetic ancient verse: "A Dorian war will come, and the Plague with it." Nobody remembered anymore who had said it and, although some tried to refute the prophecy arguing that the verse did not say "A Dorian war will come and the Plague (λοιμός) with it," but rather "A Dorian war will come and famine (λιμός) with it," the prevailing opinion was that the prophecies were, in fact, being fulfilled (88).

Thucydides affirms that the Plague began in Ethiopia and, from there, through Egypt, it was progressively disseminated until it reached Athens. He describes its progression as though it were a process of nature, like a tornado (*ανεμοστρόβιλος*); however, most of his countrymen did not believe his Ethiopian thesis and much less his natural thesis (*φυσικός*): for them, the origin of the Plague was, as I said, Apollo Smintheus, a thesis which was much more believable than the Ethiopian one since from early childhood we all learned in our first readings that, although The Iliad supposedly began with Achilles' anger ("Sing, oh goddess, of the rage of Achilles, son of Peleus"), the true beginning was a plague, the oldest plague we remember, a plague derived from the wrath (*μῆνιν*) of Smintheus against the Achaeans, the anger of the gods against men (89).

While my grandfather and a few others, like Socrates, performed the rituals to avoid judgements and sentences at the Areopagus, they did not really believe that the gods could affect men's fate or tip the balance of a war, attacking the enemy with the arrows of the Plague, as in the first song of The Iliad. My grandfather told my father that Socrates lived such an orderly life that he was one of the few in the city who did not get sick with the Plague, with no need for the gods (90). This perhaps sealed his fate: a quarter century after the Plague ended, he was condemned to drink hemlock due to his ungodliness.

The tail end of the Plague epidemic also pummeled Pericles and he called my grandfather to help him in his

illness. No patient is the same as another, my grandfather would say (91), but among those affected by the Plague, Pericles' case, he said, was one of those furthest from the usual pattern: without having all the symptoms of severity of the typical clinical pictures, he developed a slow consumptive process that my grandfather was unable to stop, and which led to the strategist's death. After the failure of the expedition to Epidaurus, Pericles had been overthrown. Gossip had it that they had most probably tried to conquer Epidaurus to take Asclepius from there to Athens with the strange idea of the son undoing what his father had done (92). This is not true. Others say that it was Sophocles, the tragedian, who was finally able to bring Asclepius to Athens, but this was after the Plague had passed, and perhaps with the idea of having a god to invoke if it should return (93). Except for Smintheus, there was no god to blame for the damage and whom to implore that the damage would not be greater. In this regard, Asclepius is a strange god: he does not cause harm, he does not need to be implored to not cause harm, he just needs to be invoked to remedy the harm decreed by other gods (94).

At any rate, it was still strange that Pericles should have embarked on such an adventure with such a trivial argument. To his benefit, after having been overthrown following the failure at Epidaurus, the new government did not govern in the midst of the chaos caused by the Plague, and the crisis reached such proportions that when new elections were called, some rich friends paid the heavy fine levied on Pericles so that he could run in the election, and he won once again. I am convinced that Pericles attacked Epidaurus because he expected to ingratiate himself with the Athenian citizens through a victory, which he expected to be quick, against the Peloponnesian League. I do not believe the hoax that he hoped to protect us with Asclepius, as Pericles was not a fervent believer, although we should not forget that, in their worst moments, men turn their eyes toward the gods in search of help or comfort. In fact, on his deathbed and close to the end, Pericles showed my grandfather an amulet that one of the women who cared for him had attached to his neck, as though to say: "You with your science and I, in addition, with this" (95).

According to my grandfather's story, the few close friends who had survived the Plague surrounded Pericles on his deathbed and, thinking he was in a coma, began to praise the dying man's feats and political legacy out loud. Suddenly, Pericles opened his eyes wide and with a broken voice said to them: "Everything you have said about me you can attribute to luck, not to me: any other general, with the help of luck, would have obtained similar achievements; but with all your talk, you left out the only thing I really care about: no Athenian has had to mourn because of me" (96). This phrase was, actually, a half-truth, said my grandfather, because while it was true that Pericles always acted justly and nobody ever had to mourn for a loved one directly because of him, however, he did take many men to war, and through war to death, and many Athenian widows

and orphans owed their widowhood and orphanhood to him. But we must not forget that my grandfather's pacifism never condoned anyone who promoted or approved of war, not even his own father, I do not believe.

In the fourth year of the 88th Olympiad (97), just after overcoming the last wave of the Plague, which was not to return, Sophocles presented his work, *Oedipus the King* (Οἰδίπους τύραννος) (99) for the first time in the theater, as part of the Great Dionysia celebration (Διονύσια τὰ Μεγάλα) (98). My grandfather attended the performance at the Theater of Dionysus with Thucydides. My father was still very young, he would have been about thirteen years old and, of course, could not attend the performance nor the religious events, but he enthusiastically recalled the conversation that ensued when my grandfather and Thucydides returned home and spent the afternoon there discussing the shows they had seen that morning. They talked most of all about *Oedipus the King*, which at that time was just called *Oedipus*; years later, the *τύραννος* was added to differentiate it from another one of Sophocles' *Oedipuses*, *Oedipus at Colonus* (Οἰδίπους ἐπὶ Κολωνῶ). That afternoon they did not focus on the myth, which everyone knew, but rather on the form Sophocles gave it, as the plot begins, strangely, at the end, when *Oedipus* is already King, and as the play unfolds, he himself takes charge of the investigation and begins to uncover the past until he arrives at the full knowledge of who the King was who assassinated the King, bringing the plague to Thebes: himself. With this anagnorisis (ἀναγνώρισις) (100), the tragedy for *Oedipus* and his own is unleashed. They praised Sophocles' good move in beginning *Oedipus the King* in the same way that Homer begins *The Iliad*: with a plague, a plague which is, on the one hand, the most ancient plague we remember and, on the other hand, the most painful and recent public event, more painful even than the war. By including the plague at the beginning of his play, Sophocles forced the audience (101) to reconsider everything that had happened before the play began, forcing them to bring to mind what they knew about the myth, especially what they had learned with the *γρομματιστής*, and, besides, being a current event, it made the audience connect immediately with the plot. Neither in *Oedipoda* (Οἰδιπόδεια) (102) nor in the *Odyssey*, when the hero visits Hades and encounters *Epicasta*, *Oedipus*'s mother and wife, and tells her his story, is any Plague related to *Oedipus* mentioned (103); it was Sophocles' creative genius which made the two events contemporaries. The strength of this association between *Oedipus*' story and the Plague is so strong (this digression is now my own), that, after Sophocles' *Oedipus*, we have grown accustomed to viewing the story of the Plague intertwined with the myth, as though it had always been like that. Undoubtedly, Sophocles wanted to give his story modernity and at the same time warn his countrymen about the effects a fortuitous event like this one brings on not only an individual's health, but also on the community and city government's health. My

father tells that the two friends bade each other good-bye late in the day, after mentioning that the other two tragedies presented by Sophocles that morning had not interested them, and neither had his satirical play, but they did sharply criticize the fact that Philocles, Aeschylus's nephew, had won first prize, instead of Sophocles, whose tetralogy held second place.

I have strayed a bit from the topic of my grandfather's life, as I could not overlook a memory that had such an impact on my father: that conversation between the two old friends, who would not be friends again, throughout that afternoon in the family home, strangely moved him, so much so that he often returned to the topic, repeating the same story to those of us who already knew it, and did not hesitate to tell it to anyone willing to stop a bit to hear it. Please forgive the digression since, as you can see, I have done the same with you that my father used to do with whoever was willing to hear him.

You may ask why, despite the friendship that united them, Thucydides does not name my grandfather even once in all his extensive recapitulation of the Plague of Athens in his History of the Peloponnesian War. I suppose it was a sort of retaliation (τιμωρία) related to a testimony which, as an expert physician, my grandfather gave before the Areopagus Council (βουλή). There may not be anything more powerful, able to destroy even the strongest friendship, than coming before the Areopagus Council, having been called as a witness for the opposing party (104). The fact was that a relative of Thucydides, a distant relative, even, was accused of murder after leaving a day laborer abandoned in a well as a punishment for having quarreled with one of his slaves. The day laborer could not get out of the well because he was tied up, and when they went to rescue him a few days later it was too late: he had died of cold and hunger (105). How long can a human being survive without any food at all? How long can he survive if, in addition, he does not have access to any liquid other than the scant raindrops he is able to trap in his open mouth? How long can he survive outdoors in the middle of winter?, were some of the archon's questions. My grandfather answered these and other similar questions honestly. He did not have all the answers and, on occasion, asserted that he had not had the opportunity of observing a similar case to the one presented in the question but, in these cases, he asked for permission to answer based on the authority of one of the Asclepiads, if they had recorded their own experience in writing. Overall, he was able to answer most of the archon's questions based on his own experience, and thus my grandfather's answers meant the conviction of the accused and the end of the long and fertile friendship which had united him with Thucydides in the past. Four years after these events, during which time there was no reconciliation, despite my grandfather's unsuccessful attempts, Thucydides died.

Six years after Thucydides's death, my grandfather died unexpectedly. He was murdered by some thieves in front

of his house, next to a cistern where he had gone to drink water. They wanted to steal his himation (ἱμάτιον) (106). Some said the thieves were poor metics who lived outside the city walls, but my father knew that it was exactly the opposite: while some slaves (δοῦλος) from a neighboring house tried to contain the blood that gushed out of my grandfather's chest, the metics chased off the thieves. He was 70 years old and had survived the Plague, the return of the Plague and the second return of the Plague, and had also survived the slander of the thirty tyrants who did not love him. His death was unexpected, he was very healthy and just as active professionally and intellectually as during the time of the Plague. I believe it was his fate.

Aristotle, however, used his unusual death to show that fate does not exist, or at least that not everything is completely determined. Although Aristotle was born 20 years after the war ended, he heard tell of the physician who had survived the three attacks of the Plague of Athens but died at the hands of some thieves as he walked towards a fountain to drink water. Was his death, under these exact circumstances, a result of chance or fate? Or, in other words, was the event that ended in his death necessary or was it accidental? In one of his conferences, Aristotle asks himself if the death of Coriscus (107), my grandfather, was necessary or contingent, and divides the problem posed by the question into two facets: if the question is a general question about death, certainly the same syllogism would have to be applied which he at times illustrated with Socrates: "All men are mortal, Coriscus is a man, therefore, Coriscus is mortal." From this perspective, Coriscus will necessarily die. But this logical deduction says nothing about the circumstances: Will he die from disease? Will he die accidentally? Will he die violently? This perspective is not so general anymore, it is very particular, it refers to the exact moment in which my grandfather encounters some thieves who had also gone to drink at the fountain, and the opportunity for theft presents itself, ending in murder. "Will Coriscus die?" asks Aristotle, placing himself a few steps prior to the process that led to his death. The answer is obvious: "If he leaves the house." But this answer raises another question: "Will he leave?", with its respective answer: "If he goes to the fountain to drink water"...and so forth: "Will he go to the fountain to drink water?"..."If he is thirsty"..."Will he be thirsty?"..."If the food is spicy." For Aristotle, it is obvious that, at some point, this linking of necessities which he terms cause and/or fate will end, as a principle will be reached that does not fall back on something else; it will end at a principle that occurs solely by chance, accidentally, by coincidence (ἔτυχεν), and there will be no other cause in the generation of this principle. Let us suppose that, in this case, the next question is: "Does he like spice?" and the answer is "yes," but the answer to the next question: "Is there spice in the house?" depends on such a list of incidentals that chance begins to play an essential role ("Did the slave who does the marketing buy spice the last time he went to market?"

“Did the guests at the symposium yesterday eat all the spice or did they not?”...and so on ad infinitum).

It happened that the timeline which ended with my grandfather at the fountain at the same time as the thieves' timeline led to certain events. Could it have happened another way? The answer is a resounding “Yes”: my grandfather could have been delayed a few minutes in the doorway to greet a neighbor from afar or to see how the lilies were growing in the garden. But he did not do this, and he coincided with the thieves at the fountain and what happened, happened. Aristotle insists that, despite appearing, in retrospect, to have been absolutely necessary, in reality it was something accidental. According to Aristotle, the appearance of necessity arises from the fact that each retrospective question has only one answer and each answer leads to a new question with only one answer. In fact, it is impossible to answer any question, such as “Is there spice in the house?” both affirmatively and negatively at the same time. When all the questions are taken and ordered from past to present, necessity appears to be established. However, according to Aristotle, if we look at events towards the future, we can see how accidental and unnecessary an occurrence is: Could somebody assert today, based on a “yes” answer to the question of whether there is spice in the house, that as a result of this tomorrow afternoon a man will die next to a fountain at the hand of some thieves? Aristotle affirms that we cannot know what has not yet occurred, but I insist that it was fate, and although I accept, along with Aristotle and Agathon, that not even the gods can change the past (108), I go even further: not even the gods can change the future. Zeus himself must obey the Moirai (109). There is an asymmetry in knowledge: we can know going backward if we know the present events, but even if we know them well, we cannot know going forward. For the gods, however, both the past and the future, and between these two the present which flows, are amply known: all three are already determined by fate.

I heard from my father of the fear that many times accompanied my grandfather and other physicians during the three assaults of the Plague of Athens. In some of his stories he even described to me moments of real terror, such as the day a crowd mutinied in front of his office, ready to lynch two metics and a slave who were sick with the Plague, and had arrived in the high city from the walls of Piraeus seeking help. My grandfather went out to face them with just his words and managed to calm them when they were ready to burn the house, with the sick people and two physicians caring for them inside. Listening to my father's stories about certain episodes in my grandfather's life, I always asked myself if it was possible to be brave when gripped by fear, if it was possible to continue being a hero in spite of the terror, if only the fearless could be heroes. It was only when I met Aristotle that I was able to understand it. Although I do not agree with his thesis on fate, his handling of the virtues has helped me understand the true extent of the actions of physicians like my grandfather. We can call them heroes, but

the description falls short. The heroes in *The Iliad* and the tragic poets seem to always advance imperturbably toward their destiny. They are heroes, they are already made like that, that is their structure, their lives are built on a set of skills with which they arrived in the world, or on gifts from the gods, and all of this makes them superior to common mortals from the outset and capable of the boldest actions. But my grandfather and the physicians who accompanied him were not heroes, they were not born, like Ulysses, endowed with unequalled sagacity, nor like Achilles, endowed with foolproof courage or like Ajax with a colossal size. They were mere mortals, like us. They were not born heroes, they became heroes. They did not perform exploits because they were born heroes, the feats they carried out made them heroes. Despite the fear and terror, or precisely because of these things. Being descendants of the race of ephemerals rather than the race of the heroes or immortal gods is what makes their deeds even more heroic. To have experienced the fear and dread which always assault mortals in situations of complete uncertainty or threat with no possible defense and still have acted as they did in favor of other human beings despite the risk to which they were exposed, and which in many cases ended their lives, is what makes them heroes. *A pesar del miedo y del terror, o precisamente por eso.*

Every virtue, says Aristotle, is an intermediate point between two extremes. Generosity, for example, is opposed on the one hand to stinginess and on the other to squandering. Courage, continuing with Aristotle, is completely contrary to cowardice, but also to audacity. The coward, gripped by fear, does not carry out the task assigned by his duty and hides or flees. At the other extreme, a person with audacity performs his task without fear but thoughtlessly, and the results may be disastrous, putting his life and that of those with him at risk. The truly brave person is afraid, and that fear forces him to be moderate and prudent and, above all, to reason: despite the fear, he fulfills his duty and does it in a reasoned and precise fashion, taking care of those who accompany him and of himself (110). A courageous man may end up giving his life in the fulfillment of his duty, but not as a result of thoughtlessness or lack of expertise, only inasmuch as there was no other possible action. The clear example of all I am saying is found in the deeds of the physicians who, like my grandfather, combated the Plague of Athens throughout the five long years its yoke lay on the city.

Now that all of this is history, now that people do not lock themselves in their homes for fear of the Plague, and even invite friends over for dinner and carry out symposia (*συμπόσιον*) (111), now that the suffering of that time seems so far away and only indirectly affects a few, as there is no one alive at this time who experienced the Plague, I believe this is the time to remember those heroes who, like my grandfather, fought for years to contain the havoc caused by the Smintheus (I insist that I do not believe in the Physis theory). The true tragic heroes walk toward their destiny and fulfill it knowing that they are going to offer their lives, and they

even oppose the gods, with fear but aware that their gamble is for the mortal race. This is why I believe my grandfather deserves a place in your book, Lives and Views of the Most Eminent Physicians.

Epilogue

The letter from Xenocrates to Aristoxenus, as the indulgent reader will have already guessed, never existed. It is a work of fiction intended to support a weak plot aimed at illustrating various aspects of classical Greek medicine, the education at that time, and the fight against the first epidemic with a record of documents contemporary with the events. Neither did Coriscus of Nisyros, his father, son, or grandson, Xenocrates, exist. They all, however, were possible beings given the era and circumstances. The other characters and events, each and every one of them, without exception, existed and are documented as shown in the footnotes. The purpose of this fiction has only been to gather some criteria of the classics surrounding the first documented epidemic in history, in order for the reader to see the parallelisms which make the circumstances of that time and their repercussions similar to and at the same time different from our own, all as a tribute to the physicians and healthcare workers who became heroes struggling against this new pandemic, putting their safety, peace and comfort at risk and, in many cases, offering their lives.

References

1. Era Común
2. No tiene ninguna relación con Jenócrates de Calcedonia (396-314 AEC), mencionado por Diógenes Laercio en su *Vidas y opiniones de Filósofos Ilustres* (Diogenes Laertius. Lives of Eminent Philosophers. Tiziano Dorandi: Editor, Traductor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2013: pp 301-307).
3. Antes de la era común
4. La historia completa de Constantino Simonides se puede leer como un aventura de crímenes académicos en: Rüdiger Schaper. *L'Odisea del Falsario: Storia Avventurosa di Constatino Simonides*. Bologna: Bonomia University Press; 2013: 294 pp.
5. Biblioteca Alemana de Leipzig
6. Ley de la Biblioteca Nacional de Alemania
7. Toda referencia al griego ático ha sido consultada en: Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, Henry Stuart Jones, Roderick McKenzie. *Greek-English Lexicon*. Ninth Edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press; 1996: 2446 pp. Existe una versión en línea basada en ediciones más antiguas que se puede consultar en: The Online Liddell-Scott-Jones Greek-English Lexicon, disponible en <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/ljs/#eid=23547&context=lsj>.
8. Disponible en https://dicciomed.usal.es/documentos/____3ba9a58d816abba90ba63134802676e7____alfabetogriego.pdf. Se trata de un documento sencillo que respeta y resume la norma ISO 843:1997, disponible a su vez en <https://www.iso.org/standard/5215.html>.
9. Ξενοκράτης Αριστόξενος ὑγιαίνειν: esta fórmula, habitual para comenzar una carta en la Grecia clásica, equivale a nuestro “Estimado Señor o Señora...”
10. En efecto, en el año 322 AEC, Aristóximo se retiró del Liceo fundado por Aristóteles. Las circunstancias de su retiro han sido por lo demás controversiales: en la entrada 3927 de la Suda se menciona, junto a otros datos biográficos de interés, que Aristóximo fue discípulo de Mnesias, su padre, de Lampro de Eritrea, de Xenófilo el Pitagórico y del propio Aristóteles. Afirma la Suda que Aristóximo trató con arrogancia (ὑβρισε: con hibris) a su antiguo maestro debido a que, cuando aquel se vio obligado a abandonar Atenas después de la muerte de Alejandro, en lugar de nombrar sucesor en el Liceo a Aristóximo, méritos le sobran, designó a Teofrasto (Suidae Lexicon. Ada Adler: Editor. Pars I, A-G. Leipzig: KG Saur Verlag; 2001: p 357).
11. Existe una excelente versión bilingüe griego-castellano de los *Elementos de Armonía*, fundamental para comprender la música de la Grecia clásica (Aristóximo de Tarento. *Harmónica*. Francisco Javier Pérez Cartagena: Editor, Traductor. Murcia: Universidad de Murcia; 2001: 459 pp).
12. Ninguna de estas biografías ha llegado hasta nosotros, sólo fragmentos. (Stefan Schorn. *Aristoxenus' Biographical Method*. En: *Aristoxenus of Tarentum: Discussion*. Karl A. Huffman: Editor. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers; 2014: 177-221)
13. El nombre griego para Plaga o peste o epidemia era, entonces, Λοιμὸς. Como se verá, Epidemia tenía en esa época otro significado.
14. En *Los trabajos y los Días* afirma Hesíodo que son cinco las edades de la humanidad: la edad actual, que es la quinta o edad de hierro, formada por hombres como nosotros, la edad de los héroes, formada por semidioses, la edad de bronce, la edad de plata y la edad de oro (Hesiod. *Works and Days*. 156-169b. Hugh G. Evelyn-White: Editor, Traductor. London: William Heinemann; 1914: pp 12-15).
15. En *La Teogonía* (Θεογονία), al comenzar el *Catálogo de los Héroes*, saluda Hesíodo a “la tribu (φῦλον) de diosas que, siendo inmortales, yacieron con varones mortales y dieron a luz hijos semejantes a dioses” (Hesiod. *Theogonia*. 963-1020. Hugh G. Evelyn-White: Editor, Traductor. London: William Heinemann; 1914: pp 150-155).
16. Sin duda Jenócrates conocía bien el texto de Aristóteles que posteriormente se llamaría la *Ética a Nicómaco*, la cita es casi textual (Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. 1145a 19-22. David Ross: Traductor. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2009: p 118), lo mismo que su cita de la cita que hace Aristóteles de *La Ilíada* (Homero. *Ilíada*. XXIV 258. Rubén Bonifaz Nuño: Editor, Traductor. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; 2012: p 448).
17. El protagonista es simplemente el carácter principal en la tragedia, su denominación se deriva de protos: el primero y agonistas: luchador o atleta. Agonista (ἀγωνιστής) y antagonista (ἀντᾱγωνιστής) tienen el mismo origen.
18. Jenócrates conoce, sin duda, también la parte de la *Poética* dedicada a la tragedia. (Aristotle. *Poetics*. 1453a, 7-22. Cambridge Massachussets: Harvard University Press; 1995: pp 68-73).
19. Autopsia (autopsia) tiene entre los griegos el significado de observado por uno mismo; de: αὐτός (autos: uno mismo) y ὄψις (opsis: observar). Por otra parte, ἀκοή (akoē): de oídas, hace referencia a aquello citado en un diálogo a partir de informes verbales de terceros. La referencia más precisa a esta manera de dar informes por autopsia o de oídas la trae Heródoto en el libro II, capítulo 29, de su *Historia* cuando refiere que, buscando las fuentes del Nilo: “[...] de nadie más logré saber directamente algo, pero me hice con otro material muy valioso, que abarca el mayor espacio posible, cuando llegué como testigo ocular (αὐτόπτης) a la ciudad de Elefantina; ahora bien, a partir de aquí sólo puedo informar por lo que oí (ακοή)” (Herodotus. Volume I. Book II 29. Godley AD: Editor. London: William Heinemann; 1920: p 306).
20. Nominativo plural de ναῦς (barco, nave). Las naves de *La Ilíada* eran galeras con una sola línea de remeros, todavía no se acercaban a los trirremes que harían famosa a la flota ateniense en Salamina y a la espartana en Egospótamos (Lionel Casson. *The Homer Galley*. En: *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press; 1971: pp 43-48).
21. Antifo (Ἀντίφος: Antifos) y Fidipo (Φειδίππος: Feidippos) figuran en *La Ilíada* en las líneas 676 α 680 del libro II, comandando una flotilla de 30 galeras procedentes de Nisiros, Crápatos, Casos y Cos (Homero. *Ilíada*. Rubén Bonifaz Nuño: Editor, Traductor. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; 2012: p 38).
22. Macaón (Μαχάων), hijo de Asclepio, participó en la guerra de Troya junto a Podalirio (Ποδάλειρος), su hermano, ambos médicos, ambos del lado de los Aqueos. En el Catálogo de las Naves figuran en las líneas 729 a 733 del libro II, comandando 30 galeras procedentes de Tricca, Itome y Ecalio (Homero. *Ilíada*. Op. cit. p 38). Arcino de Mileto en *El Saqueo de Troya* (Ἰλίου πέρσις) uno de los libros que dan continuidad al ciclo troyano y del que sólo se conservan escasos fragmentos, dice con respecto a Macaón y Podalirio: “A uno [Podalirio] le dio manos más diestras, para sacar proyectiles de la carne y cortar y curar todas las heridas, pero en el corazón del otro [Macaón] puso conocimiento exacto, para diagnosticar lo que se oculta y para curar lo que no mejora. Él fue quien primero reconoció los ojos centelleantes y el espíritu agobiado del furioso Ajax” (Patrick J. Finglass. *Iliou persis*. En: *The Greek Epic Cycle and its Ancient Reception A Companion*. Marco Fantuzzi, Christos Tsagalis: Editores. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2015: 349-350). En la *Pequeña Ilíada*, otro de los libros que dan continuidad al ciclo troyano y del que no se conservan más que escasos fragmentos, su desconocido autor cuenta que Macaón fue quien logró curar a Filoctetes para que, trayendo al lado de los Aqueos el arco y las flechas de Hércules, alcanzasen la victoria (M. L. West. *The Epic Cycle: A Commentary on the Lost Troy Epics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2013: p 184-187).
23. La frase completa en griego homérico se encuentra en la línea 514 del libro XI de *La Ilíada*: “ιητρος γαρ άνηρ πολλών άντάνξις άλλων”. El significado de cada palabra es:
 - ιητρος: el que cura, médico o cirujano
 - γαρ: partícula para introducir la razón o causa de lo que antecede, “pues”
 - άνηρ: hombre, por oposición a dios, a mujer, a joven, a monstruo, pero también al lado de una jerarquía o, como en este caso, de una profesión

- πολλών: muchos
 - ἀντάξιος: vale tanto como
 - ἄλλων: todos los otros
- En resumen: “pues un hombre que es médico vale por muchos otros” (Homero. *Iliada*. Op. cit. p 201).
24. La búsqueda en que se había empeñado Corisco no era fácil, pues no existía ni existe una tradición fija sobre la suerte de Macaón: algunos relatos lo hacen morir durante la guerra a manos de Eurípilo, guerrero de los Misios aliados inicialmente con Troya; otra lo hace morir, después de haber curado a Filoctetes, a manos de la Amazona Penthesilea que viene a auxiliar a Troya casi al final de la guerra; y otra más (que perdurará hasta *La Eneida*) lo ve activo en el vientre del caballo, pero muere durante el saqueo y sus cenizas serán retornadas a Grecia por Néstor (M. L. West. Op Cit: p 192).
 25. Ἀσκληπιεῖον, plural Ἀσκληπιεῖα, en castellano Asclepeion, es el nombre de los templos dedicados a Asclepio (Ἀσκληπιός), dios de la medicina, llamado entre los romanos Aesculapius, de donde deriva nuestro castellano Esculapio.
 26. Ἀσκληπιάδης, en castellano Asclepiáda: de la estirpe de Asclepio. Nombre dado a hijos o descendientes de Asclepio. Más tarde se daría este nombre, por extensión, a los sacerdotes-médicos formados en los Asclepeiones y, más tarde aún, se utilizaría para designar a los médicos, profesión que se transmitía de padres a hijos conservando el saber-hacer en familias que se decían descendientes directas de Asclepio. En la isla de Cos pervivía la tradición de que la familia de Hipócrates pertenecía a Asclepiádas descendientes de Podalirio (Jacques Jouanna. Hippocrates. MB DeBevoise: Traductor. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press; 1999: pp 3-24).
 27. En Epidauró se encontraba el más famoso Asclepeion de la época.
 28. Egcoimesis: ritual curativo que consistía en dormir en el templo de Asclepio después de un periodo de preparación y purificación. Durante la egcoimesis el propio Asclepio visitaba al enfermo en un sueño, luego el médico-sacerdote interpretaba el sueño y daba las recomendaciones que Asclepio había transmitido mediante la imaginaria onírica para la recuperación de la salud física y emocional del enfermo (Cécile Nissen. Évolution de l'action guérisseuse d'Asclépios lors de l'incubation. En: Entre Asclépios et Hippocrate. Liège: Presses universitaires de Liège; 2009: pp 201-228). Con el nombre latino de *Incubatio* la práctica de la egcoimesis sobrevivió a la desaparición del paganismo. Hubo iglesias famosas durante la Edad Media en Constantinopla, Roma, Alejandría, Tours, Cambridge, en las que se practicaba la *Incubatio*. Obviamente, en este caso no era Asclepio quien aparecía en sueños, sino un santo que lo había sustituido: Santos Cosme y Damián, San Terapón, Santa Tecla, Santa Fe, San Maximino (Mary Hamilton. *Incubatio or the Cure of Disease in Pagan Temples and Christian Churches*. London: WC Henderson and sons; 1906: 228 pp).
 29. 441 AEC
 30. Estratego es un rango militar aproximadamente equivalente al de general en tiempos modernos, sintagmatarca equivale aproximadamente al de coronel y taxiarca al de brigadier.
 31. Kalomira Mataranka ha revisado *in extenso* la historia de Cleándridas y coincide con el relato de Jenócrates (Kalomira Mataranka. Cleándridas le Spartiate: un cas énigmatique. *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* 2017; 17 supplément: 551-572).
 32. Irene, la paz, fue deificada y tuvo culto y sacrificios anuales en Atenas a partir del 375 AEC (María Dolores Miron Pérez. Eirene: Divinidad, género y paz en Grecia antigua. *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* 2004; 30 (2): 9-31). La Paz Común, se refiere a una serie de tratados de paz entre varias ciudades-estado griegas teniendo como garante al imperio Persa. El primer tratado de la Paz Común, la Paz del Rey de 387 AEC, concluyó la llamada Guerra de Corinto que había estallado en 395 entre los espartanos y sus aliados por un lado y los atenienses, tebanos, corintios y argivos, apoyados al principio por el Rey de Persia, por el otro (Timothy Thomas Bennett Ryder. *Koine eirene: general peace and local independence in ancient Greece*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 1961: pp 1-24).
 33. Disnomia se refiere a un proceso social en el que prima el desorden, la dificultad para garantizar las normas y las leyes. En sus *Elegías* (fragmento 3 G.-P.2 = 4 W.2), Solón explica de manera cabal el significado de disnomia (sin ley, en desorden) por oposición a eunomia (εὐνομία) (Solon, the Athenian, the Poetic Fragments. Maria Nougassia-Fantuzzi: Editor, Traductor. Leiden: Brill; 2010: pp 217-264). En la *Teogonía*, Hesiódo hace a Eunomia hija de Temis y Zeus. Junto a Δίκη (Dike: la Justicia) e Irene (la Paz), Eunomia conforma el grupo de las tres Horas “que protegen los trabajos de los hombres” (Hesiódo. *Teogonía*. 901-906. Aurelio Pérez Jiménez: Editor, Traductor. Madrid: Editorial Gredos; 1995: p 109). Por su parte, Disnomia tiene otro origen: “la maldita Eris (Ἔρις, la Discordia) parió a la dolorosa Fatiga, al Olvido, al Hambre y los Dolores que causan llanto, a los Combates, Guerras, Matanzas, Masacres, Odios, Mentiras, Discursos, Ambigüedades, al Desorden (ἄσυνονμία) y la Destrucción, compañeros inseparables, y al Juramento, el que más dolores proporciona a los hombres de la tierra siempre que alguno perjura voluntariamente” (Hesiódo. *Teogonía*. 226-233. Op. Cit. p 80).
 34. Kurt A. Raaflaub ha documentado muy bien la oposición de los pitagóricos a todo derramamiento de sangre mencionada en la carta de Jenócrates (Kurt A. Raaflaub. Conceptualizing and Theorizing Peace in Ancient Greece. *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 2009; 139 (2): 225-250).
 35. La afirmación de Jenócrates es, en este sentido, absolutamente cierta (Isocrates. *On the Peace*. En *Isocrates Volume II*. George Norlin: Traductor, Editor. London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1929: pp16-17).
 36. Cosmopolita: de κόσμος, el universo y πολίτης: ciudadano, hombre libre. La frase completa la trae Diógenes Laercio: Al preguntarle alguien a Diógenes de Sínope sobre su lugar de origen respondió: “soy ciudadano del mundo (κοσμοπολίτης)” (Diogenes Laertius. *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. VI-63. Tiziano Doranti: Editor, Traductor. Cambridge: Cambridge University, p 443).
 37. Ostrakinda: juego del tiesto. Juego infantil de la Grecia clásica en el que se enfrentaban dos equipos, el de la noche (νύξ) y el del día (ἡμέρα), cada uno con igual número de miembros separados por una línea trazada en el piso. Para iniciar el juego uno de los jugadores lanzaba al aire una concha (δοσράζον) o un fragmento de tiesto de cerámica (δοσράζον) que previamente habían sido coloreados de negro por un sólo lado con brea. Quien lanzaba el δοσράζον gritaba “noche o día” (νύξ ἢ ἡμέρα) y, dependiendo de la cara que mostraba hacia arriba el ostrakón, los miembros del equipo con su nombre corrían a perseguir y atrapar a los del equipo contrario. En la época clásica la expresión “el giro del tiesto” (δοσράζον περιστροφή) se aplicaba a cualquier situación compleja en la que se presentaba, por puro azar, un revés de fortuna. (Costanza Salvatore. *δοσρακίνδα*, gioco del coccio. En: Giulio Polluce, *Onomasticon: excerpta de ludis, Materiali per la storia del gioco nel mondo greco-romano*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso; 2029: pp 138-143).
 38. Es tal cual como lo describe Jenócrates. El inventario de ciudades arcaicas y clásicas elaborado por *The Copenhagen Polis Centre* para la *Danish National Research Foundation* enumera y discute todas las investigaciones que permiten sustentarlo (Mogens Herman Hansen, Thomas Heine Nielsen. *An Inventory of Archaic and Classical Poleis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2004: pp 1115-1116).
 39. Necesidad (Ἀνάγκη): lo que ocurre indefectiblemente. Lo opuesto es lo accidental, lo fortuito, lo que podría haber ocurrido o no (συμβεβηχός) (Aristóteles. *Metafísica*. 1025b-1052a. Valentin García Yebra: Editor, Traductor. Madrid: Editorial Gredos; 1982: pp 302-479).
 40. Esta afirmación puede ser corroborada en el Sexto libro de *Epidemias* del *Corpus Hippocraticum* (Hippócrates. *Epidemias*. VI, 8, 17. Alicia Esteban, Elsa García Novo, Beatriz Ceballos: Editoras, Traductoras. Madrid: Editorial Gredos; 1989: p 247).
 41. Las hiponemata son cualquier nota o memorandum, escrito sobre tablillas enceradas o a veces en papiro, destinadas a preservar información tomada al vuelo, como los apuntes de clase (Fridolf Kudlien. *Medical Education in Classical Antiquity*. En: CDO Malley: Editor. *The History of Medical Education*. Berkeley: University of California Press; 1970: pp 3-37).
 42. Aún se conservan algunos de estos *Dialogoi*. Quien quiera consultarlos, Nicola Reggiani los ha estudiado a fondo y están disponibles algunas muestras de ellos en sus publicaciones (Nicola Reggiani. *Digitizing Medical Papyri in Question-and-Answer Format*. En: *Ancient Greek Medicine in Questions and answers*. Meeusen, Michiel: Editor. Leiden: Brill; 2021: pp 181-212).
 43. Esta parte del texto es en todo semejante a un pasaje de *Sobre Aires, Aguas y Lugares* de Hipócrates (Hippocrates. *Airs, waters, places*. En: WHS Jones: Editor, Traductor. *Hippocrates Volume I*. Cambridge Massachusetts: Loeb Classical Library Harvard University Press; 1957: pp 70-73).
 44. En *Sobre la Naturaleza del Hombre* Hipócrates trae una idea exactamente igual (Hippocrates. *Nature of Man*. En: WHS Jones: Editor, Traductor. *Hippocrates Volume IV*. Cambridge Massachusetts: Loeb Classical Library Harvard University Press; 1959: pp 26-29).
 45. Es posible que se refiera a un rito de iniciación que incluía un Juramento (ὄρκος) indispensable para ingresar a un cuerpo de médicos; sin embargo, no es posible asegurar que se refiera específicamente al que conocemos como *Juramento Hipocrático* cuyas raíces, se sabe, más que hipocráticas parecen ser pitagóricas. Con independencia de su origen, el Juramento Hipocrático resume lo que para la medicina de la Grecia clásica debía ser el comportamiento de un médico (María Dolores Lara Nava. *Introducción. Juramento*. En *Tratados Hipocráticos I*. Madrid: Editorial Gredos; 1983: pp 63-76).
 46. Demiurgo: de demos (δήμος) comunidad y ergon (εργόν) trabajo, alguien que trabaja para la comunidad, bien sea un médico o un artesano con habilidades especiales. Más tarde fue el nombre dado al creador.
 47. ἰατροὶ οἱ δαμοσεύοντες: médico perteneciente al pueblo. Louis Cohn-Haft discute si en la Grecia clásica existía o no una medicina socializada (Louis Cohn-Haft. *The Public Physicians of Ancient Greece*. Northampton, Massachusetts: Department of History of Smith College; 1956: p 12).
 48. Meteco: En la Grecia clásica un meteco (de μετά, para indicar cambio, y οἶκος, lugar de habitación o, también, casa) era un extranjero residente en la ciudad, un habitante procedente del exterior. Los metecos, a diferencia de los esclavos, eran libres pero carecían de los derechos de los ciudadanos nativos de la ciudad (αὐτόχθονες): no podían poseer tierras, ni casarse con la hija de un ciudadano, ni votar en la Asamblea, ni servir como jurados (δικαστής) o como magistrados,

- aunque sí como testigos; además, tenían que pagar un impuesto per capita cada mes (μετοίκιον), tenían que unirse al ejército si se les requería y luchar en las guerras de la polis aunque siempre en regimientos diferentes a los de los ciudadanos (en este caso casi siempre los preferían en la marina) y, finalmente, debían tener un ciudadano como patrocinador o representante (προστατέω) (James Watson. The origin of metic status at Athens. *The Cambridge Classical Journal* 2010; 56: 259-278). Jenócrates de Calcedonia (nada que ver con quien escribió esta carta), no pudo en cierta época pagar el impuesto de meteco y la polis de Atenas lo vendió como esclavo para recuperar el dinero. Por fortuna, Demetrio de Falero lo compró, le devolvió la libertad y pagó el impuesto (Diogenes Laertius. *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. Tiziano Dorandi: Editor, Traductor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2013: pp 301-307).
49. ἀρετή: excelencia, pero también virtud moral sumada a los premios que concede la excelencia (prosperidad, fama y reputación), todo al tiempo.
50. Año 431 AEC
51. Año 430 AEC
52. Año 429 AEC
53. Año 426 AEC
54. Este dato ha sido controvertido por algunos historiadores, aunque otros lo apoyan (Jennifer T. Roberts. *The Plague of War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2017: p 84).
55. Tucídides reconoce que los médicos no sólo desconocían la enfermedad sino que al principio no acertaban remedio alguno para la misma y muchos de ellos morían los primeros al visitar a los enfermos; es posible que más tarde -la conjetura es mía-, hayan dado con algún tipo de alivio sintomático a algunas de las quejas de los pacientes, porque, excepto en los casos en los que progresaba de manera espontánea a la mejoría, la enfermedad resultaba refractaria a toda intención curativa (Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. II, 47-54. Volume I. Charles Forster Smith: Editor, Traductor. Cambridge Massachussets: Harvard University Press; 1956: pp 341-357).
56. Así utiliza Homero el término en cuestión (Homero. *Odisea*. I, 194. Pedro C Tapia Zúñiga: Editor, Traductor. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; 2017: P 7).
57. Así lo emplea Platón en el diálogo llamado *Parménides* (Plato. *Parmenides*. 127a. Arnold Hermann: Traductor, Editor. Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing; 2010: pp 76-77).
58. Elizabeth Craik confirma este aserto en su libro sobre el *Corpus Hippocraticum* (Elizabeth M. Craik. The 'Hippocratic' Corpus: Content and Context. London: Routledge; 2014: pp 63-91).
59. Teódoto, Carino, hijo de Epicares, Leuconeo, Formión, hijo de Ctesifonte, de Pireo, Cefisédoto de Beocia y Heliodoro de Pito estuvieron presentes cuando Androcles le prestó a Artemo tres mil dracmas en plata a solicitud del hermano de éste último, Lacritus, con el fin de realizar unos negocios marítimos y con el compromiso de que, una vez recibido el dinero, Artemo se haría a la mar con él mientras Lacritus permanecería (ἐπιδημῆσεν) en Atenas como garante, pero apenas recibieren el dinero los dos hermanos lo repartieron entre ellos... una historia de intrigas y timos que devela el mundo de los negocios en la Grecia clásica (Demosthenes. *Private Orations*. Volume I. Contra Lacritum. 35, 16. AT Murray: Editor, Traductor. London: William Heneimann Ltd; 1936: pp 286-287).
60. Después de la batalla de Leuctra, refiere Demóstenes, un tal Estéfano vino a residir (ἐπιδημῶντα) a Mégara y se quedó en casa de Neera, una hetaira, acusada de haber despojado a Frinión en Atenas de los objetos con que la adornaba mientras fueron amantes... Una historia llena de intrigas y reveses que permite adentrarse en la vida cotidiana de Atenas, las relaciones familiares, la legislación sobre ciudadanos, metecos y esclavos y sobre el papel de las mujeres (Demosthenes. *Private Orations*. Volume III. In Neaeram 59, 37. AT Murray: Editor, Traductor. London: William Heneimann Ltd; 1939: pp 378-379).
61. Esta diferenciación de Jenócrates (o de Corisco) entre enfermedades epidémicas y enfermedades incurables tal vez nos sorprenda, pero no se debe olvidar que la diferenciación actual entre enfermedades agudas y enfermedades crónicas no era conocida por los hipocráticos y sólo aparecería dos siglos más tarde con Asclepiades de Bitinia (Christos Yapijakis. *Hippocrates of Kos, the Father of Clinical Medicine, and Asclepiades of Bithynia, the Father of Molecular Medicine*. In *Vivo* 2009; 23 (4): 507-14).
62. Los médicos itinerantes visitaban al enfermo directamente en su casa, pero era posible visitar a un médico ya instalado en un lugar y con oficina propia. En el *corpus hippocraticum* se encuentra la mejor descripción de una tal oficina de la época con consejos sobre cómo mejorarla (Hippocrate. De l'officine du médecin. *Oeuvres Complètes d'Hippocrate*. Tomo III. Émile Littré: Editor, Traductor. Paris: JB Bailliére; 1841: pp 262-337. Consultado el 20 de abril de 2022. Disponible en <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=12gFAAAAQAAJ&pg=GBS.PA10&hl=es>)
63. De hecho, los traductores al castellano y al inglés así lo entienden y trasladan αἰεὶ ἐπιδημῶντων por enfermedades endémicas y *endemic diseases*, respectivamente (Hippocrates. El Pronóstico. 25. *Tratados Hipocráticos I*. Carlos García Gual, María Dolores Lara Nava, et al: Editores, Traductores. Madrid: Editorial Gredos; 1983: pp 431-460) (Hippocrates. Volume II. Prognostic. 25. En WHS Jones: Editor, Traductor. London. William Heinemann Ltd; 1959: p 55).
64. La afirmación de Hipólito de Tarento es correcta. Si se revisan los usos de ἐπιδήμιος y derivados en el *Corpus Hippocraticum* es posible encontrar diversos sentidos, incluso antagónicos desde la perspectiva actual. En algunos casos en el texto se utiliza ἐπιδήμιος o su derivado con el sentido actual de endémico; por ejemplo en *Sobre los Aires, Aguas y Lugares* ἐπιδημῆ σημαίνει sin lugar a dudas endémico (Hippocrates. Volume I. *Airs Waters Places*. 4. En WHS Jones: Editor, Traductor. London. William Heinemann Ltd; 1957: pp 76-77); lo mismo que en *El Pronóstico*, donde τῶν νοσημάτων αἰεὶ ἐπιδημῶντων significa sin duda enfermedad endémica (Hippocrates. Volume II. Prognostics. 25. WHS Jones: Editor, Traductor. London. William Heinemann Ltd; 1957: pp 54-55) y también en *Epidemias*, donde, aunque πυρετῶν ἐπιδημῶσεν εἶδεα fue traducido por el editor como fiebres con presentación epidémica, es indudable que la mención a continuación de fiebres tercianas, cuartanas, quintanas (Hippocrates. Volume I. *Epidemics I*, III. 3.3.12. WHS Jones: Editor, Traductor. London. William Heinemann Ltd; 1957: pp 250-251) que, como sabemos, hacían parte de las fiebres endémicas de las polis vecinas a los pantanos, obliga a considerar errónea la traducción, el propio Hipócrates afirma en otro apartado de *Sobre los Aires, Aguas y Lugares* (que constituye quizá, la primera mención de la malaria en la medicina griega) que las "fiebres epidémicas" se presentan todos los veranos y se acompañan de esplenomegalia (Hippocrates. Volume I. *Airs Waters Places*. 4. En WHS Jones: Editor, Traductor. London. William Heinemann Ltd; 1957: pp 84-85), desde nuestra óptica una enfermedad que se presenta cada año en la misma estación es una epidemia estacional no una epidemia. De otra parte, también son varios los apartados en los que ἐπιδήμιος no significa epidemia sino exactamente epidemia, una enfermedad que ataca a todo el demos: en *Epidemias* tiene νόσημα ἐπιδημῶν el significado de enfermedad epidémica en el sentido más o menos actual de epidémico (Hippocrates. Volume I. *Epidemics I*, III. 1.3.14. WHS Jones: Editor, Traductor. London. William Heinemann Ltd; 1957: pp 166-167); en otro apartado de *Epidemias* ἐπιδημῶσεν δὲ καὶ δυσεντερία significa disentería epidémica (Hippocrates. Volume I. *Epidemics I* and III. 1.3.15. WHS Jones: Editor, Traductor. London. William Heinemann Ltd; 1957: pp 168-169); en otra parte también de *Epidemias* ἐπιδημῶσαντα νοσήματα significa enfermedades epidémicas en el sentido actual (Hippocrates. Volume I. *Epidemics I*, III. 3.3.3. WHS Jones: Editor, Traductor. London. William Heinemann Ltd; 1957: pp 240-241); y, finalmente, en *Sobre la Dieta en las Enfermedades Agudas* refiriéndose a que en aquellos lugares en los que no hay un tipo de enfermedad prevalente (refiriéndose seguramente a las enfermedades endémicas) y, por el contrario, las enfermedades son esporádicas, aquellas, entre estas, que causan fiebres continuas (no cíclicas) y se extienden de manera epidémica, producen muchas más muertes que todas las otras juntas (Hippocrates. Volume II. *Regimen in Acute Diseases*. 2. WHS Jones: Editor, Traductor. London. William Heinemann Ltd; 1959: 66-67).
65. El texto de Ἐπιδημῆσις, publicado más tarde como Περί Ἐπιδημιῶν, ha perdurado hasta nosotros y forma parte del *Corpus Hippocraticum*. Los avatares sufridos por el texto desde ese entonces hasta ahora son desconocidos. No sabemos cuántos comentaristas se le han añadido que, después, por error de los copistas, pasaron a formar parte del texto original, ni sabemos cuántos fragmentos se han perdido. Tal como está ahora es un texto de calidad bastante diversa compuesto por siete libros cuyos verdaderos autores se desconocen. Se desconoce también quién organizó los textos de esa manera pero al menos sabemos que para el siglo II EC y tenía una distribución parecida a la que hoy tiene. En los comentarios que hizo Galeno a *Epidemias* es evidente que lee un texto muy parecido al actual en su organización pero con algunos fragmentos que no han llegado hasta nosotros, en especial en lo que tiene que ver con el significado de epidemias para los hipocráticos. La mayoría de comentaristas está de acuerdo, desde los comentarios de Galeno, en que los libros I y III forman parte de un texto continuo debido a un autor único (¿Hipócrates?) y que II, IV y VI por un lado y V y VII por el otro forman dos grupos de libros parecidos. Cada grupo tendría diferentes autores, pero es posible que cada libro lo tenga. En todo caso, afirma WHS Jones, uno de los más notables comentaristas de la obra hipocrática, "la narración [de los libros I y III] siempre va al grano, y siempre transmite la impresión de que el único objeto del escritor es expresar los hechos observados de la manera más adecuada y por el camino más corto". Lo más probable, continúa Jones, "es que el escritor probablemente escribió estos comentarios como una serie de notas en un cierto orden que quería sugerirle a sí mismo" para depurarlos después y seguramente publicarlos, "pero nunca llegó a corregirlos [...] y combinando esto con la gramática rota, parecen indicar que el trabajo nunca se preparó para publicación" (Hippocrates. Volume I. *Epidemics I*, III. En WHS Jones: Editor, Traductor. Cambridge Massachussets: Loeb Classical Library Harvard University Press; 1957: pp 141-145). Si esto ocurre con los libros I y III que son, por decirlo de alguna manera, "los de mostrar", qué decir de los otros libros.
- Otros comentaristas consideran que "los restantes [libros] consisten en una simple colección de notas sueltas (hypomnēmata) tomadas precipitadamente" (Elsa García Novo. Introducción. En: *Hipócrates. Tratados Hipocráticos V*. Alicia Esteban, Elsa García Novo, Beatriz Cabellos: Editoras, Traductoras. Madrid: Editorial Gredos; 1989: pp 23-44). Otros comentaristas como Hankinson, van incluso más lejos en

- su consideración crítica: “[Epidemias] es una serie de notas dispersas, de manos diferentes y con diferentes motivaciones, y de ellas no se puede extraer ningún relato único y desarrollado de etiología médica” (Jim Hankinson. *Aetiology*. En: Peter E. Pormann: Editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Hippocrates*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2018: p 104).
66. Como se aclaró en la nota 64 los siete libros de *Epidemias*, atribuidos a Hipócrates son, en realidad, una mezcla sin concierto de Historiales Clínicos recopilados por médicos itinerantes en los diversos lugares que visitaban, acompañados de comentarios sobre temas naturales (ambiente, clima, lugar, estación del año) y su posible relación con el proceso patológico descrito. Quienquiera que haya sido el editor encargado de recopilar y unir de manera tan artificiosa estos textos de tan diversa calidad le dio por título en griego Περί Επιδημιών, que ha sido traducido como *Sobre las Epidemias*, aunque habría sido mejor, teniendo en cuenta que el hilo conductor de los siete libros está constituido precisamente por los Historiales Clínicos recopilados durante las visitas de médicos itinerantes a diversos lugares, haberlo traducido como *Sobre las Visitas* o, siguiendo la sugerencia de José Alcina, como *Notas de Viaje* (José Alcina. *Los orígenes helénicos de la medicina occidental*. Barcelona: Guadarrama; 1982, pp 21-22). El texto después dio en llamarse Επιδημιών βιβλία Επτά (*Los Siete Libros de las Epidemias*, aunque quedaría mejor *Los Siete Libros de las Visitas*). Quien en la actualidad se enfrenta a este texto por vez primera y lea el título es posible que de manera errónea crea que lo que viene a continuación es una descripción de diversas enfermedades epidémicas que el autor conoció o en las que tuvo alguna intervención, pero pronto se percata de que allí sólo se mencionan casos clínicos aislados, ninguna epidemia. El error de apreciación nace de abordar el texto de *Epidemias* basados en el actual significado de epidemia, en lugar de hacerlo con el significado habitual entre los griegos para quienes Επιδημιεσι significaba “visita”. El título de *Epidemias* se refiere en este caso a las visitas de los médicos a ciertos lugares, no a ciertas enfermedades con la tendencia a diseminarse a toda la población. Si el texto describiera enfermedades de este tipo y no visitas de médicos, se habría llamado Περί Λοιμών, *Sobre las Plagas*, en lugar de Περί Επιδημιών. ¿Cómo y por qué epidemia pasó a ser sinónimo de peste o plaga? La conexión debe verse en que la idea de “Enfermedades Visitantes” ya existía en el lenguaje técnico de los Asclepiadas y seguramente en el habla popular (en esta carta Jenócrates atribuye la idea a Corisco de Nísiros). Siete siglos después, en el comentario de Galeno a *Sobre la naturaleza del hombre* de Hipócrates, aparece la primera mención escrita de esta idea: Galeno considera que existen “enfermedades visitantes” y que estas, además, son colectivas o pestilentes. En el renacimiento, los traductores al latín de los textos griegos de los hipocráticos y de Galeno, al haber perdido a lo largo de los siglos el concepto de Επιδημιεσι como la irrupción o visita de algo que viene de fuera lo tradujeron por enfermedad colectiva o epidémica. El mejor análisis sobre la deriva del término epidemia hasta llegar a significar peste (y el salto de aquí a términos como epidemiología) se encuentra en el trabajo de Pino y Hernández (Luis Miguel Pino Campos, Justo Pedro Hernández González. En torno al significado original del vocablo griego epidemia y su identificación con el latino pestis. *Dynamis* 2008; 28: 199-215).
67. Al respecto, veintitrés siglos más tarde, Hornblower tiene una opinión similar con respecto a la supuesta precisión médica de los términos utilizados por Tucídides: “Podemos llamarla escritura semitécnica o, en el peor de los casos, pseudotécnica. [Sin embargo] la opinión de Woodman de que Tucídides simplemente asaltó a los escritores médicos para sus propios propósitos retóricos no servirá del todo” (Simon Hornblower. *A commentary on Thucydides*. Volume I. Oxford: Clarendon Press; 1991: pp 316-327).
68. El texto, levemente deformado, se encuentra en Tucídides (Thucydides. *The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians*. II, 48, 3. Jeremy Mynott: Editor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2013: p 119).
69. σύμπτωμα: cualquier cosa que sucede, una oportunidad, una ocurrencia, un síntoma de una enfermedad, pero también percance, desgracia e incluso, característica, propiedad (de una curva en geometría). Derivado del verbo συμπίπτω: caer juntos, reunirse violentamente (vientos, ríos).
70. Dos mil quinientos años después, la controversia no termina. A partir de la descripción de Tucídides nadie ha logrado ponerse de acuerdo sobre cuál fue la enfermedad que causó la Plaga de Atenas y mucho menos sobre si ha reaparecido a lo largo de la historia o si fue única. Algunos han intentado otros enfoques, como estudios de genomas bacterianos obtenidos de los dientes de esqueletos apiñados (enterrados a la bartola) en Atenas, hallados con motivo de las excavaciones de las olimpiadas.
71. Así, tal cual, se encuentra en el primer libro de las *Epidemias* de Hipócrates (Hippocrates. *Epidemics*. I, 11. Op. Cit. pp 164-165). Es muy probable que de esta frase se haya derivado en latín la famosa “primum non nocere” (Cedric M. Smith. *Origin and Uses of Primum Non Nocere - Above All, Do No Harm!*. *Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*, 2005; 45: 371-377).
72. El inciso en la Guerra del Peloponeso dedicado a la Plaga de Atenas abarca los capítulos 47 a 54 del segundo libro. (Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. II, 47-54. Volume I. Op. cit. pp 340-357).
73. En la cualidad este texto puede leerse en el primer libro de la Guerra del Peloponeso (Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. I, 23, 1-3. Volume I. Op. Cit. pp 40-43).
74. En el segundo libro de la Guerra del Peloponeso, en el capítulo 31, se encuentra el texto que menciona Jenócrates (Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. II, 31, 2. Volume I. Op. cit. pp 314-315).
75. La descripción de los síntomas y signos de la Plaga se encuentra en el capítulo 49 del segundo libro de la Guerra del Peloponeso. (Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. II, 49, 1-5. Volume I. Op. cit. pp 344-347).
76. En el momento en que escribe la carta, Jenócrates conoce *La Política* (Πολιτικά) y *Económicos* (Οικονομικά) de Aristóteles. El primer texto corresponde en realidad a notas de Aristóteles para dictar sus clases o apuntes de las mismas tomados por sus discípulos; el segundo texto, o al menos lo que ha llegado de él hasta nosotros, es más bien una mezcla de las notas de un discípulo de Aristóteles con un resumen de *El Económico* (Οικονομικός) de Jenofonte (Aristotle. *Oeconomica*. ES Forster: Editor Traductor. Oxford: Clarendon Press; 1920: Preface), razón por la cual muchos editores se niegan a adjuciar este texto directamente a Aristóteles y en su lugar lo atribuyen a un Pseudo-Aristóteles (Pseudo-Aristoteles. *Económicos*. En: Manuela García-Valdés: Editora, Traductora. *Constitución de los Atenienses - Económicos*. Madrid: Editorial Gredos; 1984; pp 231-312). Aristóteles denominó exotéricos (ἐχωτερικοί; externo, público) todos sus textos destinados a la publicación para diferenciarlos de los que, siendo notas de clase, no tenían la corrección de estilo necesaria para ser publicados y debían permanecer “ocultos” en el Liceo. A estos los llamó esotéricos (ἐσωτερικός; interno, secreto). Ninguno de los textos exotéricos ha llegado hasta nosotros, sólo contamos con algunos de los esotéricos, preservados gracias al celo de sus discípulos (Robert W Sharples. *Aristotle's Exoteric and Esoteric Works: Summaries and Commentaries*. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 2007; 50 (94, 2 supp): 505-512). Resulta bastante extraño, por tanto, que Jenócrates cite estos textos, sólo un discípulo del Liceo podría haberlo hecho.
77. La khora es la parte de la polis que está más allá de las murallas, es el campo cultivable y los prados para la ganadería, incluye casas de habitación para los campesinos y casas de recreo para los aristócratas y por supuesto, santuarios. Asty es la ciudad propiamente dicha, con sus casas de habitación y sus edificios gubernamentales, sus centros recreativos y los templos del culto (Sylvian Fachard. *Asty and Chora: City and Countryside*. In Jennifer Neils, Dylan Rogers: Editores. *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Athens*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2021: pp 21-34).
78. Al respecto la visión de Tucídides es clara (Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. II, 52, 1-2. Volume I. Op. cit. pp 350-351).
79. Los muros que protegían a lo largo de casi 8 km el acceso de Atenas a su puerto fueron construidos por todo el pueblo ateniense, hombres, mujeres y niños, bajo la dirección de Temístocles antes de la guerra (Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. I, 90-91. Volume I. Op. cit. pp 150-157).
80. El relato de Tucídides confirma lo dicho por Jenócrates (Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. II, 48, 1-3. Volume I. Op. cit. pp 342-345).
81. En el mismo sentido se expresa Tucídides con respecto a la desesperanza religiosa que se abatía sobre los atenienses (Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. II, 47, 4. Volume I. Op. Cit. pp 342-343) y, con respecto a la percepción que tuvo del asunto, refiere W. Nestle que Tucídides “no pierde ni una sílaba en discutir esa explicación religiosa de la epidemia. Antes al contrario: lo que subraya cuidadosamente es que todos los procedimientos religiosos imaginables que se pusieron en juego para conseguir de los dioses el fin de la epidemia, procesiones impetratorias y preguntas a los oráculos, no sirvieron para nada” (Wilhelm Nestle. *Historia del espíritu griego*. Manuel Sacristán: Traductor. Barcelona: Editorial Ariel; 1975: pp 170-171).
82. De acuerdo con Tucídides, mientras por las calles rodaban los cuerpos de aquellos que, medio muertos, trataban de arrastrarse a las fuentes para calmar la sed, los supervivientes no sólo encendían las piras ajenas preparadas para recibir otro cadáver sino que arrojaban un cadáver sobre otro que yacía ya en su pira encendida y, cuando escasearon los materiales funerarios necesarios, apilaban los cadáveres uno sobre otro como fardos, al tiempo que los templos se llenaban con los cadáveres de quienes habían buscado refugio en ellos y habían muerto allí (Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. II, 52, 4. Volume I. Op. cit. pp 352-353).
83. Este es uno de los momentos más descriptivos en Tucídides de lo que Solón había llamado δυσνομία (Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. II, 53, 1-4. Volume I. Op. cit. pp 350-351).
84. Tucídides también tuvo conciencia de este hecho que hoy llamaríamos inmunidad pero que entonces carecía de nombre (Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. II, 51, 6. Volume I. Op. cit. pp 350-351).
85. Esa era, en efecto, la división administrativa de Atenas en tiempos de la Plaga, mantenida desde la organización realizada por Clístenes (John S Traill. *The Political Organization of Attica: A Study of the Demes, Trittyes, and Phylai, and Their Representation in the Athenian Council*. *Hesperia Supplements* 1975: 14: i-169. Disponible en: JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1353928>. Consultado el 9 de junio de 2022).

86. Esminteo “cazador de ratones”, otro de los epítetos de Apolo (Jennifer T. Roberts. *The Plague of War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2017: pp 84-86).
87. Esta profecía casi contemporánea sobre la guerra la trae Tucídides (Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. I, 118, 3. Volume I. Op. cit. pp 196-197).
88. Esta profecía antigua sobre la guerra y la Plaga también la trae Tucídides (Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. II, 54, 1-3. Volume I. Op. cit. pp 354-355)
89. La peste se abate sobre el ejército Aqueo desde el primer canto de *La Iliada* como obra de Apolo, irritado contra Agamenón Átrida porque, a pesar de la súplica de Crises, sacerdote del templo de Apolo en Crisa, no quiso devolverle a Criseida, su hija, raptada durante una de las incursiones de los Aqueos a las ciudades vecinas. Ante la negativa de Agamenón, Crises suplica de nuevo, pero esta vez su ruego no iba dirigida al Átrida inclemente sino al Esminteo misericordioso para “que paguen los Dánaos mis lágrimas con tus dardos”. Apolo, entonces, apuntó sus flechas contra las acémilas, los perros y luego los hombres del campamento Aqueo. Al décimo día, cuando ya ardían múltiples piras funerarias por los muertos de peste, Aquiles convocó la asamblea de generales en la que el adivino Calcante develó, después de pedir a Aquiles que lo protegiese del culpable, que éste no era otro que Agamenón, pues Apolo vengaba con la peste la humillación de Crises que seguía esperando la devolución de su hija. El resto es conocido: Agamenón de mala gana aceptó devolver a Criseida y Crises solicitó a Apolo que terminase la peste: “Aparta ya de los Dánaos el ignominioso estrago”, pero Agamenón se empeñó en que le compensasen la pérdida de Criseida y, vengándose de Aquiles por haberlo puesto en evidencia ante la asamblea de generales, le arrebató a Briseida. Aquí comienza la cólera de Aquiles, pero esta es posterior a la cólera del dios.
90. Este dato lo confirmará siglos más tarde Diógenes Laercio, seguramente a partir de fuentes diferentes (Diógenes Laercio. *Vidas y Opiniones de los Filósofos Ilustres*. II, 25. Carlos García Gual: Editor, traductor. Madrid: Alianza Editorial; 2007: p 102).
91. Tucídides afirma otro tanto: después de describir lo que llama “la naturaleza general de la enfermedad” afirma que él “pasa por alto muchos de los síntomas inusuales”, ya que con base en estos era posible afirmar que “afectaba a un hombre de manera diferente en comparación con otro” (Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. II, 51, 1. Volume I. Op. cit. pp 348-349).
92. Ni Tucídides ni Plutarco mencionan esta hipótesis sobre la razón para intentar tomar Epidaurio (Jennifer T. Roberts. *The Plague of War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2017: pp 86-91).
93. La leyenda sobre Sófocles como introductor del culto de Asclepio en Atenas no es más que leyenda; hizo sí, un peán dedicado a Asclepio y quizá por ello lo dicen (Andrew Connolly. Was Sophocles Heroised as Dexion?. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 1998; 118: 1-21).
94. Asclepio, a diferencia de los demás dioses, a quienes es necesario mantener contentos so pena de recibir un castigo, es un dios sanador a quien se invoca no para que cese de hacer daño sino para que inicie un proceso curativo.
95. Plutarco hará años más tarde, a partir de una fuente de información desconocida, un relato similar (Plutarch. *Lives*. Volume III. Pericles and Fabius Maximus, Nicias and Crassus. Bernardotte Perrin: Traductor, Editor. London: William Heinemann; 1932: pp 110-111).
96. Plutarco trae el mismo relato (Plutarch. *Lives*. Volume III. Op cit: pp 110-111).
97. 425 AEC
98. La Gran Dionisia o Dionisia Urbana, era una festividad anual en honor de Dionisio, el dios que turba los sentidos, dios de la enajenación y el frenesí, dios del vino (Walter F. Otto. *Dioniso. Mito y culto*. Cristina García: Traductora. Madrid: Ediciones Siruela; 2006: pp 99-106). Además de procesiones, oraciones y sacrificios propios del culto, las celebraciones incluían cantos y bailes y un festival de teatro que, en su forma plenamente elaborada, incluía la competencia entre tres autores dramáticos preseleccionados por un comité a partir de las propuestas realizadas durante el año previo. Durante la Gran Dionisia cada autor hacia representar durante toda una mañana, entre los días tres y cinco de las festividades, tres tragedias de temas más o menos entrelazados y un drama satírico breve relacionado con las anteriores. Al finalizar la competencia, diez jueces escribían cada uno el nombre de su candidato al premio en una tablilla de arcilla y el oficial superior elegía al azar cinco de ellas para determinar el vencedor. Este recibía una corona de laurel y la fama, además de la casi seguridad de que estaría de nuevo en competencia el año siguiente en caso de que presentara una propuesta (Kenneth McLeish, Trevor R Griffiths. *A Guide to Greek Theatre and Drama*. London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama; 2003: pp 1-30).
99. Aunque esta fecha inaugural ha sido muy discutida, Bernard Knox coincide con el dato de Jenócrates (Bernard MW Knox. *The Date of the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles*. *The American Journal of Philology* 1956; 77 (2): 133-147).
100. Para el momento en que escribe la carta, Jenócrates ya ha leído *La Poética* de Aristóteles: la anagnórisis en una obra literaria es el reconocimiento de personas, sucesos u objetos, inicialmente desconocidos, que revelan al protagonista su verdadera identidad precipitando el desenlace (Aristóteles. *Poética*. 1452a22-1452b13. Edición Trilingüe. Valentín García Yebra: Editor, Traductor. Madrid: editorial Gredos; 1974: pp 163-166).
101. Cuando Jenócrates se refiere al “público” de las obras de teatro haciéndolo extensivo a los poemas épicos no está incurriendo en error. Las grandes epopeyas fueron creadas para que Aedos y rapsodas itinerantes las cantaran o declamaran frente a todo aquel que quisiera escucharlos. La diferencia entre aedo y rapsoda no es muy clara. Para algunos, los aedos cantaban los ciclos épicos acompañados de una cítara (o más propiamente un forminge -φόρμιγγε- o lira homérica), mientras los rapsodas los declamaban marcando el ritmo con un bastón (σζήπτρον) (Hermann Fränkel. *Poesía y Filosofía de la Grecia Arcaica*. Ricardo Sánchez Ortiz de Urbina: Traductor. Madrid: Visor; 1993: pp 25-40). Para otros, la diferencia entre aedo y rapsoda es de otro matiz: aedo sería un término técnico para designar a los poetas especializados en crear épicas orales y cantarlas, mientras que, más tardíamente, con la apropiación del invento fenicio de la escritura por parte de los griegos y la fijación del texto del poema épico en formas seguramente muy cercanas a las que conocemos en la actualidad, aparecieron los rapsodas, que aprendían textos escritos que luego declamaban (Andrew Dalby. *Rediscovering Homer*. New York: WW Norton and Company; 2005: pp 224-225).
102. Oedipodea: poema épico del Ciclo Tebano que relata las vicisitudes de Edipo.
103. En la *Odisea* Homero llama Epicasta a la madre y esposa de Edipo. En Sófocles figura como Yocasta (Homero. *Odisea*. XI, 271-280. Pedro C Tapia Zúñiga: Traductor. México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México; 2017: p 186).
104. Los 500 miembros del Boule eran elegidos al azar, 50 por cada una de las 10 tribus (PJ Rhodes. *The Athenian Boule*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; 1972: pp 1-48).
105. En el *Eutifrón* de Platón hay un relato de un evento muy similar, aunque sin relación alguna con Tucídides (Platón. *Diálogos*. Volumen I. Julio Calonge-Ruiz, Emilio Lledó-Íñigo, Carlos García-Gual: Editores, Traductores. Madrid: Editorial Gredos; 1985: pp 218-242).
106. El himation era una pieza textil rectangular casi siempre de lana que tanto hombres como mujeres utilizaban sobre la túnica (χιτων); se pasaba por debajo del brazo izquierdo y se aseguraba sobre el hombro derecho con agujas o con broches de metal, madera o cerámica; su tamaño era variable, desde un rectángulo pequeño que a manera de manto cubría la parte superior del tronco en temporadas cálidas hasta una gruesa y pesada capa que cubría todo el cuerpo en épocas frías (Maureen Alden. *Ancient Greek Dress. Costume* 2003; 37 (1): 1-16).
107. En la versión que ha llegado hasta nosotros del texto de Aristóteles, que siglos más tarde Andrónico de Rodas renombrará como la *Metafísica*, las referencias a Corisco aparecen en capítulos diferentes al capítulo cuyo tema es los eventos necesarios versus los eventos accidentales. En este capítulo, el tercero del sexto libro, no hay mención directa a Corisco sino una genérica referencia a “este”, pero seguramente se trata de Corisco a quien ya venía mencionando como ejemplo desde el sexto capítulo del libro quinto (Aristóteles. *Metafísica*. VI, 3: 1027a-1027b. Tomás Calvo Martínez: Editor, Traductor. Madrid: Editorial Gredos; 1994: pp 274-275). Algunos dicen que Aristóteles podría haberse referido a Corisco de Escepsis (Aristotle. *Metaphysics*. V, VI, 1-5. Volume I. Hugh Tredennick: Editor, Traductor. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; 1933: p 227), pero que en realidad se trata de un nombre cualquiera utilizado en sentido genérico, como cuando en otros ejemplos nombra a un Sócrates; Jenócrates da por sentado que la referencia no es genérica y que Aristóteles está hablando específicamente de Corisco de Nisirois, el médico que se salvó de los embates de la Plaga pero no de un hecho fortuito.
108. La frase completa de Agatón, un trágico de quien no nos ha llegado ninguna obra completa (sólo breves fragmentos de citas textuales en obras de otros) la trae Aristóteles en su *Ética a Nicómaco*: “Sólo de una cosa está privado incluso Dios, de hacer que no haya ocurrido lo que ya está hecho” (Aristoteles. *Ética Nicomáquea* 1139b 6-10. Barcelona: Editorial Gredos; 1993: p 152).
109. Jenócrates adhiere a una idea bastante antigua: ni siquiera los dioses pueden cambiar el destino. En efecto, en la *Iliada* el propio Zeus en dos ocasiones debe pesar en la balanza dorada del destino (χρυσεία τάλαντα) cuál es el designio de las Moiras; en la primera ocasión con respecto a la lucha entre aqueos y troyanos (Homer. *Iliad*. VIII, 68-74. William F. Wyatt, A. T. Murray: Editores, Traductores. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press; 1924: pp 354-355) y, más tarde, con respecto a la lucha entre Héctor y Aquiles (Homer. *Iliad*. XXII, 208-213. Op. Cit. pp 466-469). El padre de los dioses se limita en ambos casos a realizar una *kerostasis*: pesar en la balanza dorada el dictado del destino para cada uno de los contendientes, dictado al que no se puede oponer, aunque quizás podría revertirlo pero, en tal caso, ninguno de los demás dioses aprobaría su gesto (JV Morrison. *Kerostasia, the dictates of fate, and the will of Zeus in the Iliad*. *Arethusa* 1997; 30 (2): 273-296). También es bien conocido el pasaje de *Prometeo Encadenado*, obra atribuida con dudas a Esquilo, en el cual el dios Prometeo afirma que la Necesidad está por encima de todo y que incluso Zeus no puede escapar al Destino: “¿Es Zeus más débil que las Moiras triformes?” Pregunta a Prometeo el Corifeo, “Así es, desde luego. Él no podría esquivar su destino”, es la concisa respuesta (Aeschylus. *Prometheus Bound*. Alan H Sommerstein: Editor, Traductor. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press; 2009: pp 498-499). En el Edipo de Séneca, aunque muy posterior a la época que nos atañe, el Coro entona un estásimo que sintetiza el concepto de destino que muchos compartían en la época clásica griega y romana y es muy claro con respecto a la antigua idea

de que el futuro tampoco los dioses lo pueden cambiar, excepto las Moiras (las Parcas en Roma, una de las cuales es Láquesis): Los hados nos arrastran; ceded ante los hados; // no sirve el inquietarse con preocupaciones // para cambiar los hilos del inmutable huso. // Todo lo que sufrimos la raza mortal, // y todo lo que hacemos proviene de lo alto; // y Láquesis mantiene las leyes de su rueda, // haciéndola girar de modo inexorable. // Todo va por la senda que se le ha trazado // y el día primero ya señala el último: // no puede un dios cambiar el curso de unas cosas // que van encadenadas a sus causas. // Hay para cada cosa un orden fijo // que no puede cambiar plegaria alguna [...] (Séneca. Edipo. 980-992. En: Tragedias II: Medea, Fedra, Edipo, Agamenón, Tiestes. Jesús Luque Moreno:

Editor, Traductor. Madrid: Editorial Gredos SA; 1987: p 179).

110. La consideración de Aristóteles al respecto es exactamente igual, Jenócrates conocía bien su filosofía (Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics. III, 7. 1115b-1116a. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; 1934: pp 156-163).
111. Συμπόσιον es el nombre que los griegos clásicos daban a las reuniones destinadas a la libación y a la conversación. También se llamaba simposio el grupo de personas que asistían a la reunión y el sitio destinado a la reunión. Con el tiempo pasó a ser el nombre de una reunión dedicada a examinar y discutir un tema específico, pero en su origen el simposio era más báquico que académico.

