

Classics Lecture

Greek Medicine in a Time of Epidemics

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A true tragedy in which many lives have been lost, the current epidemic of COVID-19 has also offered an occasion to reflect on medicine and society, with such questions as preparedness, social reactions, or the medical response. In this context, a look at the history of medicine seems to be more appropriate than ever. This presentation will concentrate on the famous Plague of Justinian of the 6th century CE. and will investigate why it caught the whole world of that time by surprise, how the Byzantine society reacted, and what impact, if any, the epidemic had on medicine. It might be the case that these and other similar questions will unexpectedly seem very modern, illustrating the interest of scrutinizing the past going beyond scholarly antiquarianism.

