

Eleatic School of Medicine and Phylosophy in Elea-Velia: medical Herbs

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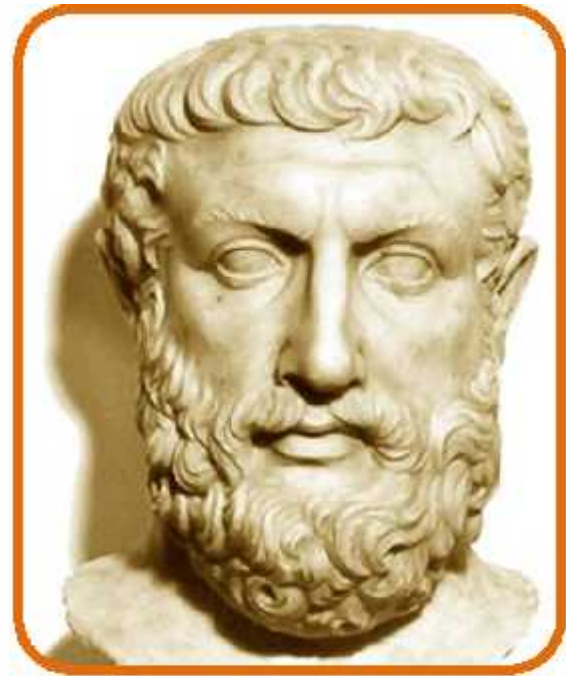
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Parmenides of Elea (Παρμενίδης)

Elea, 515 a.C./510 a.C.^[Plato] 544 a.C./541 a.C. [Apolodorus of Athens] -450 a.C.



"Great scientists like Boltzmann, Minkowski, Weyl, Schrödinger, Gödel and, above all, Einstein conceived things similarly to Parmenides and expressed themselves in singularly similar terms »

(K. Popper, *The World of Parmenides*, trad. it., 1998)



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The philosophy is "the knowledge
of causes and principles"

Aristotle, The Metaphysics



The term philosophos, together with physikòs, in
the Greek world of archaic and classical age
designated the scientist in general, also the doctor.

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Eleatic Medical School

For Elea the highest and purest thought of the Greeks came back to life with Senofane di Colofone thought by some to be the founder of the Eleatic School.

He was followed by Parmenides the Great, who gave laws and regulations to his own city and created the Eleatic tribe (Eleaticòn èthnos).

He also dealt with medicine, especially with embryology in Peri physeos, and the first scientific treatment of procreation (ghènesis anthròpon) is generally attributed to it.

Memorial stele of Parmenides, son of Pirete and Apollo healer

At Elea the chief physician of the school was Parmenides and from these he dated the succession of the chief physicians (phòlarkoi);

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In practice there was the conviction that Parmenides descended from Apollo the healer (the Ouliàdes of the herm) and therefore descended from him the lineage of the ouliàidai to Velia

Statue of Oulis, son of Eyxino, head of
the Medical College of Velia

Statue of Igea ?

Cultural Satue of Asklepios

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The confirmation of all this was provided by the discovery of a headless herm in memoriam Parmenidis which brought to the surface for the first time from the ruins of Velia the memory of Plato's mègas, the great Eleate

Commemorative stele of the doctor Oulis, son
of Jeronimo, head of the School

Finally, in the term physikòs, the last of the epigraph, we can find peculiar elements not only of the naturalist philosopher, but also of the doctor.

Parmenides stele

Stele of Parmenides

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“A further mention of Parmenides as the head of a medical school is found in a bios of Hippocrates and in one of Galen composed at the end of the ancient period by a Greek scholar and then by Arab scholars (one of whom had particular luck in the last centuries of the Middle Ages, when the work known as "Liber philosophorum moralium antiquorum" was translated into Latin and then into several European languages “.

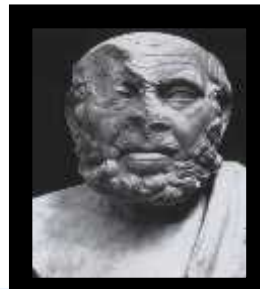
VITA GALENI

Galenus princeps medicorum fuit unus ex octo medicis praecellentibus in arte medicinae qui fuerunt capita sectarum et magistri magistrorum. Et primus ex eis fuit Aesculapius, secundus fuit Horus, tertius Menes, quartus Parmenides, quintus Plato medicus, sextus Aesculapius secundus, septimus Hippocras, octavus Galelienus, magnorum magistrorum postremus, post quem non fuit alter medicus nisi eos minor aut discens ab eo.

Pugliese Carratelli (1986)

eleatate drama

they testify to the existence of a medical college and a School of Medicine in Velia which also included women. This deduction was confirmed by the meeting of a cult statue of Asklepios and a stele dedicated to Parmenides.



"The presence, then, on some of the superb coins of Velia of the fourth and third centuries BC of the symbol of the lower powers, the snake, epiphany of Asklepios, published in Parmenides.

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Eleatic Medical School epigraphic documentation

Funerary epigraphs of Elea Doctors active in the cities of the Black Sea:

- Oulis di Elea, son of Theodotus, second half of the 5th century BC in Olbia
- Zoilo, son of Aristo, 3rd century BC, to Callatis (foundation of Eraclea Pontica) decree in honor of Eleate citizen

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Eleatic Medical School epistolary documentation



Orazio asking his friend Numonio Vala for news on Velia, in particular on the climate and on the waters after his doctor forbade him to go to Baia and its warm waters: "Which is the winter climate in Velia, like in Salerno, or Vala, what kind of people are the locals, which way to go to get there, since Antonio Musa forbids me Baia ... from which of the two peoples abounds the most wheat, if they drink live water or cistern (I don't care about the wine in those places); (Epistles, I, 15, vv. 1-3; 14-15)



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Eleatic Medical School epistolary documentation



Plutarch tells that Lucio Emilio Paolo, the victor of Perseus king of Macedonia in the battle of Pidna of 168 BC "He fell ill with a risky disease in principle, but over time it became dangerous and difficult, from which it was not possible to free oneself. After he was convinced by the doctors, he sailed towards Elea of Italy and there he stayed for a long time in a villa by the sea "

(Life of Emilio Paolo, 39, 1-2)

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Cicero
(Letters to Family Members, VII 20)
in a letter sent on July 20, 44 BC to
his friend Trebazio Testa he makes
explicit mention of a doctor in
Velia, Sesto Fadio from whom he
would have had a treatise by the
doctor Nicone, a native of
Agrigento and a pupil of Asclepiad
of Bithynia

CICERONE, LETTERE AI FAMILIARI (A TREBAZIO), VII 20 (DA VELIA, 20 LUGLIO 44 A.C.)

«Velia è per me più gradita, poichè ho constatato quanto qui tu sia amato. Ma perchè parlo di te, che non vi è chi non ami? Anche il tuo Rufione, in fede mia, era così desiderato come se fosse uno di noi. Ma non ti critico per averlo fatto venire presso le tue costruzioni; perchè, quantunque Velia non sia da meno del Lupercale, preferisco una casa qui a tutto il resto. Se tu vuoi darmi retta - come sei solito (fare) - ti terrai cari codesti beni di famiglia (infatti i Veliensi temono non so che cosa) e non abbandonerai il nobile fiume Alento, nè deserterai la casa dei Papirii.
Per quanto quella abbia ancora un albero di loto, dove i forestieri sono soliti sostare; tuttavia se lo diraderai

potrai vedere molto di più. Ma innanzitutto sembra opportuno, in particolare modo in questi tempi, avere un rifugio, una città dove tu sia amato e poi una casa tua e campi tuoi, in un luogo appartato, salubre ed ameno; credo possa interessare anche a me, mio caro Trebazio.
Ma tu starai bene, curerai i miei interessi e, con l'aiuto degli dei, mi rivedrai prima dell'inverno. Ho sottratto a Sesto Fadio, discepolo di Nicone, il trattato di Nicone Sulla voracità. Oh medico soave, oh me docile a questa disciplina! Ma il nostro Basso aveva tenuto nascosto questa opera a me, non a te, a quanto pare. Il vento si alza. Abbi cura di star bene.
Da Velia, il 20 luglio».

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Eleatic Medical School

The presence of doctors of Roman origin is documented in Velia, such as Valerio Cepione, who in a Latin honorary inscription found there is referred to as pholarchos, a title reserved for doctors in the inscriptions.

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Eleatic Medical School archaeological evidence

Marble head, found in the architectural complex of Insula II, referring to a statue of Apollo Oulios ("sanatore")

Statue of Asclepius, also in Insula II, datable to the first half of the 1st century BC



Eleatic Medical School archaeological evidence

Sanctuary of Asclepius referring to the complex of the so-called "Agorà", characterized by terraces with arcades, fountains, basins and channels that are well suited to an Asclepion where hydrotherapy was widely used. Elea-Velia was one of the few cities of the Greek West visited in 243 BC from an embassy sent by Cos, one of the most important centers of cult of Asclepius, to ask for the recognition of the festivals instituted in honor of the god and the right of asyilia of his sanctuary.

Practice of incubation at the temple of Asclepius:

the person suffering from epilepsy was made to sleep on a stone slab waiting for the night healing by the God of the medical art.



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Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli, Mario Attilio Levi, Pietro Ebner, Venturino Panebianco, Velia 1966

"It is clear, in short, that, as in the serious tissue of portraits of doctors in the Liber, a precise and authoritative tradition is reflected, which had entered the history of Greek medical schools: the promoter of the celebration of the doctors of Velia and later the Greek author of the two biois in the Alexandria occupied Alexandria.

An independent medical school of Velia can therefore rightly declare its existence

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In the vineyards of Velia grew one of the most famous spices (precisely the third in order of importance) of white hellebore, a plant used for medicinal purposes



(Theophrastus: History of plants, IX 10, 3)
(Pliny the Elder: Natural History, XXV 5, 49)

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Hellebore (Helleborus: "let die")

Family: ranunculacee

History: Ancient Greeks "needing the Elleboro" indicated the fools. The myth tells that Heracles was cured of madness thanks to this plant. At the time, many mentally ill people went to Antycira, in the Gulf of Corinth, which was a place renowned for the rich vegetation of Hellebore. It seems that the ancient philosophers used Elleboro to reach a hypnotic state, very similar to deep meditation. Paracelo used the leaves of the Elleboro for an "elixir of long life", probably taking advantage of the presence of the cardioactive glucoside Elleboreina. Paracelsus also used the root of Elleboro, together with other plants, as a constituent of the "satanic ointment", which, if sprinkled on the body, gave the witches the opportunity to participate in the Sabbath

**Epilepsy
mania**

Cultivation:
widespread throughout Europe, Western Asia

Active principles:
Elleborina (narcotic action) and Elleboreina
(digitalis action) Aconitic acid



Herbal Medicine:
Vertigo, jaundice,
vermicide, thinner,
cicatrizant

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False hellebore (False hellebore)

Family: Liliaceae



History: widespread throughout Europe,
from Lapland to Italy

Active principles: Veratralbina and veratrine Oleina,
stearin Verona supergallate



In antiquity: Epilepsy mania



Current uses: instead of colchicine in gout, like ointment in
scabies

Herbal Medicine: Powerful and irritating poison For the sake of vomiting and diarrhea
Inhalation is a powerful irritant via nasal passages

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Stramonio

(*Datura stramonium*)

Family:
Solanaceae



Active principles:
Alkaloids of Belladonna
> *josciamina*

History:
widespread in hot areas,
South America, Caspian Sea
(arrives in Europe with the gypsies)

In antiquity:
Effective sedative in epileptic seizures, mania and agitation



Current uses:
Smooth muscle antispasmodic



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Hyssop

(*Hyssopus officinalis*)

Active principles:

Veratralbina and veratrine Oleina, stearin Verona
supergallate Inflorescences are used (macerated in
water)

In antiquity:

Epilepsy (Alexandros of Talles) Vomiting,
lethargy, drowsiness Jaundice, stranguria
(Salmon: Herbal, 1710)

Current uses:

Carminative and diaphoretic Infusion expectorant
Pain-relieving cream

History:

Southern Europe, Sacred plant
(Greeks and Jews): used for
purifying temples
Cited in the Old Testament



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Peony (*Paeonia officinalis*)

History:
widespread in Europe



Active principles:
paenol, paenoniflorina, tannins, anthocyanins and
flavonoids (we use roots, flowers and seeds)

In antiquity:
Convulsions Epileptics were made biting a
peony root when a crisis occurs: if they could
chew it crisis were blocked The roots were
wrapped around the neck to protect epileptics
mania



Current uses:
Antispasmodic, tonic, emmenagogue emetic
External use ad fissures and hemorrhoids

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Rue (*Ruta graveolensis*)

Family: Rutaceae

History:
southern Europe Greek name:
"free" case



Active principles:
Rutin, quercetin, glucosides, anthocyanins,
curarine, furocumarine, bergaptene,
xantotossina
Whole grass both fresh and dried



In antiquity:
Antidote of Mithridates (Hippocrates) Antimagic
properties (Greek) Middle Ages (witch protection)
Epilepsy
(Piperno, Neapolitan doctor, 1625)

Current uses:
Cough, croup, abdominal colic, flatulence On the skin oral
psoralenico

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Artemisia (artemisia vulgaris)

Family:
compositae



History:
Europe Said medieval: the eve of S. Giovanni, between the roots of the artemisia coals are found whose powder heals immediately epilepsy

Active principles:
Volatile oil, acridic resin and tannin Infusion or juice, obtained from flowering tops

In antiquity:
Epilepsy

Current uses:
stimulating and tonic, diuretic and diaphoretic properties powerful emmenagogue

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Major plantain (*Plantago major*)

Family:
plantaginacee



History:
perennial, very common, grows at the edges of the paths and streams

Active principles:
Quinine, cincokinino, conconine, quinidine, Hydroxycinconidine, quinamine, homoconconidine, Hydroxykinin, quinic acid, concolannic acids The active ingredients are obtained from the bark (*china officinalis*)

In antiquity:
Epilepsy (in the '700) Powdered seeds block Vomiting, lethargy, drowsiness jaundice, stranguria, epilepsy (Salmon: Herbal, 1710) Cited by Shakespeare for the treatment of skin wounds



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Henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*)

Family:
Solanaceae



History:
Southern and central Europe

Active principles:
Alkaloids (yosciamina, l-giusquiamina e Small amounts of atropine and yoscina
(fresh leaves, seeds, inflorescences and branches)

Current uses: Antispasmodic, hypnotic, mild diuretic, tranquilizer

In antiquity:
Dioscorides (1st century AD) sleep and pain)
Celsus (1st century AD) Pliny (1st century AD) defined the its infusion similar to wine e therefore danger to the Intelletto
Epilepsy ('800 extracts)



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Cincona (China Rossa) (Cinchona succirubra)

Family:
Rubiaceae



History:

origin Central and South America, also cultivated India and Sri Lanka

Active principles:

Quinine, cinchonino, conconine, quinidine, Hydroxycinconidine, quinamine, homoconconidine, Hydroxykinin, quinic acid, concolannic acids The active ingredients are obtained from the bark

In antiquity:

Epilepsy In European pharmacopoeias from the 1600s

Current uses:

Febrifuge, tonic and astringent
chinc -> antimalarial



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Blue anagallis (Centonchio of the fields)



Family:
Primulacee

History:
Europe, temperate regions also cultivated
India and Sri Lanka

Active principles:
Little known saponin
Whole plant

In antiquity:
Panacea Pliny (liver disease) Epilepsy
(700) Dried flowers: 20 grains x 4 / day

Current uses:
Liver, rheumatic and renal affections, antispasmodic
On the skin -> oral



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Wild herbs (alimurgiche) are those wild plants that generously support domesticated plants



The term alimurgia was coined by the Florentine physician and naturalist Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti (1712-1783) in the treatise *De Alimenti Urgentia* (1767), a work that dealt with the possibility of dealing with famines, resorting to the use of spontaneous products of the earth and mainly of vegetables

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Foraging

the practice of collecting, without damaging nature, the food that grows wild in mountain, forests, meadows and fields, in the waters of lakes, along river banks and in lagoons



borage



chicory



plantain



lampascione



pellitory

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Thank you

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