

Essays on the history of herbal medicine

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History of phytotherapy

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SUMMARY

The article is the second in a series of essays on the history of herbal medicine and is devoted to the process of the emergence of treatment with medicinal plants in primitive society. Brief information on the history of plants, animals and humans is given. The evolutionary aspects of the emergence and use of medicinal plants, as well as religious and mythological ideas about this process are considered.

Key words: history, plants, animals, man, evolution, religion, myths, herbal medicine.

RESUME

The second article in the series of publications about history of phytotherapy is devoted to the emergence of treatment with medicinal plants in primitive society. History of plants, animals and humans is presented in brief. Evolutional aspects of emergence and use of medicinal plants as well as religious and mythological views about this process are described.

Keywords: history, plants, animals, human, evolution, religion, myth, phytotherapy.

“There is no need to try to impart our knowledge of prehistoric period, an accuracy that they cannot have ... Calculations that do not have a scientific basis, give undoubted scope for imagination ”
J.-J.-M. Morgan [20]

The famous English researchers of primitive society M. and C. Quenell very figuratively characterize our perception of the historical process: “History is like a trip by rail, events sweep past like telegraph poles, as long as they are close, you clearly see what distance separates them, but if you look back, then the events seem to merge into one, and the intervals between them are not visible ”[12].

But we are interested in precisely these intervals, their sequence, length, filling with events, people, objects of study. Of course, I would like the information about this content to be as reliable as possible, documented. Unfortunately, a huge part of human history falls on such ancient times that we can judge them

only presumably. According to scientists, the Paleolithic era, during which man arose, accounts for about 98% of his history. Our knowledge about this period is negligible, especially about the subject of this research - medicinal plants. Does anyone doubt that they arose much earlier than the appearance of man? Is it plausible to assume that prehistoric animals used plants not only as food, but also as a medicine? In my opinion, the likelihood of this is very high. At the same time, attention is drawn to the exceptional mystery of the mechanism of animal recognition of the medicinal properties of plants. I will not pretend to occupy the reader's attention by listing the long-described evidence of the use of herbs for medicinal purposes by animals. I will not object to the well-established views on the decisive role of evolutionary processes in shaping the behavior of fauna representatives. I will cite only facts from recent studies. In the course of the well-known experiment conducted by Soviet scientists to study the behavior of monkeys placed in the unusual conditions of the Pskov forests, along with other interesting observations, it was noted that animals among completely unfamiliar plants unmistakably identified edible, including medicinal, and never tried try poisonous [18]. The French ethnologist Claude Levi-Strauss in his famous book "Primitive Thinking" reports the following. A group of North American plants, including medicinal ones, which never grew in this area, were brought to the Philippines and planted. The plants have taken root well. The amazing thing is that the aborigines (very wild tribes) very quickly began to use these plants for medicinal purposes, and for the same diseases as the American Indians [17]. So maybe the role of evolution as the all-powerful and the only mechanism for the development of life on Earth is somewhat exaggerated? Should we not admit that animals and plants have a way of transmitting information unknown to us? Admitting this, it can be assumed that a person in the early stages of development also possessed this mechanism and subsequently lost it in exchange for some other acquisitions. However, have you lost it? As Paracelsus wrote: "Nature shines with invisible rays to man. Not everyone can see this light, but only a few people" [3]. I had to meet people with pronounced psychic (unfortunately,

So where do we start our journey? Of course, it should be borne in mind that all our knowledge about the so-called "prehistoric period" of the existence of the Earth, nature, man is very approximate, and only in recent decades, the latest radiophysical and radiochemical methods have made it possible to significantly increase the information content and, most importantly, the reliability of archaeological and paleontological research. Prior to this, the time measurement step in the research of even the most meticulous and conscientious scientists was sometimes hundreds of thousands, or even millions of years. And you shouldn't grumble about it. On the contrary, we must feel deep

thanks and admiration for the researchers who, on the basis of the available grains of data, and more often using a deep knowledge of the laws of nature, the ability to look at objects and phenomena differently from millions of other people, could then draw a picture of past events using logical inferences. Nevertheless, in terms of the data at our disposal, let's not forget about their approximation.

When did plants appear on Earth? Paleobotanists claim that this happened about 2.5 billion years ago [8]. The tasks of our study do not include a thorough study of the process of transformation of primordial plants (experts agree that these were blue-green algae) into modern flora [31]. Let's just say that this process, according to scientists, took about 2 billion years (how easy the possibility of pronouncing these numbers is, so much the practical representation of them in our minds is not realistic). For us, the starting point in this huge evolutionary process can be the emergence of the so-called. vascular plants, which include all higher plants, with the exception of bryophytes. The Great Soviet Encyclopedia defines vascular plants as "plants in the organs of which there are vessels or tracheids, conductive water and dissolved in it mineral salts, and sieve tubes, conductive organic matter" [5]. More than 90 percent of modern plants are vascular. Paleobotanists date their appearance in the interval 420-415 million years BC, which corresponds to the end of the Silurian - the beginning of the Devonian (periods of the Paleozoic era) [6]. The age of these ancestors of modern plants was established by their imprints found in sediments corresponding to these periods in the UK, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Kazakhstan. In general, the Devonian is a period of rapid development of life on the planet, when there is a great diversification of plants, large trees (equisetophytes) appear. In the next geological period - the Carboniferous - huge treelike ploons, mighty horsetails, ferns already dominate, the first coniferous trees appear. In the same period, animals (amphibians, reptiles) emerge onto land. It is clear that they could leave the sea only if there was plant food on land (according to scientists, plants came out on land in the Ordovician - 40 million years before the appearance of representatives of the fauna on it). In the next, Permian period, the fertile development of nature was interrupted - a monstrous catastrophe occurred (most likely, the collision of the Earth with a huge asteroid (up to 12 km in diameter). Fauna was especially badly affected, up to 90% of fish and 70% of land animals died out, and But, of course, it was impossible to stop development, and already in the onset of the Mesozoic era (the Triassic period) the first flowers appeared in plants, and in animals - flying lizards. One of the most notable events of the next period - Jurassic - was the appearance of dinosaurs (translated from Latin - "terrible lizard"), which nowadays suddenly became very popular, which was largely facilitated by famous American films. The structure of the body of these giants of the animal world was adapted to feeding on the leaves of trees, and in the next, Cretaceous, period, nature created angiosperms for them in the form of a grass cover. And again a catastrophe (already in the Paleogene - the first period of the Cenozoic era), to the Earth nature has created for them angiosperms in the form of grass cover. And again a catastrophe (already in the Paleogene - the first period of the Cenozoic era), to the Earth nature has created for them angiosperms in the form of grass cover. And again a catastrophe (already in the Paleogene - the first period of the Cenozoic era), to the Earth

a meteorite fell (up to 10 km across). A global cooling began, which, as the researchers believe, became the cause of the extinction of the dinosaurs. However, there are also a number of versions explaining this dramatic event - the excessive body weight of these giants, an epidemic of an unknown disease, an explosion of a star near the Earth, an increase in cosmic radiation, etc. [26]. We are interested in the versions of the extinction of these giants, in which, according to scientists, plants played the main role. The first version. Dinosaurs, eating purely plant foods, ate up to 200 kg of grass per day. Their gluttony threatened to completely destroy the grass cover of the planet. And then smart plants (who said that they have no mind?) Found a cruel way out - they began to produce alkaloids, which in large doses are poisons for living organisms. The gluttony of dinosaurs was the reason for their death. Interestingly, most of the fossil skeletons of deceased dinosaurs are found in the embryonic position typical of stomach and intestinal colic [2]. According to the second version, the dinosaurs died from a significant increase in the oxygen content in the atmosphere [26]. And, as you know, plants are the producers of oxygen. Of course, the version about the death of dinosaurs from a sharp cold snap is more scientific and conclusive, but these, specifically "plant" ones, have a right to exist.

As the reader may have already noticed, in our study there is a parallel and interconnected consideration of the history of the development of the plant and animal worlds. K.A. Timiryazev, speaking about their relationship, emphasized that "these are only two arms of one common powerful stream of life." In the mediation between the sun and the animal world, he saw the cosmic role of plants [28].

But we are also interested in this relationship from the point of view of herbal medicine. The facts of the use of medicinal plants by animals are widely known and are not disputed, there are noticeably fewer similar facts in the world of birds, and they are completely absent in the fish kingdom, although it can logically be assumed that self-healing is possible in fish as well. Even the ancient Roman erudite writer Pliny the Elder wrote in his Natural History that animals heal themselves by eating various medicinal herbs and roots [24]. The famous Russian phytotherapist O.D. Barnaulov has no doubts that herbal medicine is not the prerogative of mankind. She, in his opinion, is an integral part of the life support program for living individuals [4].

Many can tell about the self-healing of cats and dogs that go into the forest in search of miraculous medicinal herbs and return healthy. The remarkable modern Russian poet, hieromonk Roman, writes about this as follows:

"I saw: even the dogs bow their heads,
Forgetting their dog's duty for a while,
Finding the herbs they need,
To be healed with this herb. " [ten]

Numerous observations are described that indicate the use of medicinal plants by animals. Plants with an anthelmintic effect are in greatest demand - tansy, wormwood, fireweed, pumpkin seeds, yarrow, quinoa. Wild camels, deer and roe deer can travel considerable distances in search of wormwood. Birds peck blueberries for the same purpose.

Animals quite often use the adaptogenic properties of plants. The safflower leuzea, widely known in this regard, which the Siberians call the "root of life" and the Mongols call "buhu" (youth), is called the "maral root" in a number of places. its roots are dug up in spring and eaten by marals [26].

To normalize bowel function, many animals eat herbs that have a laxative effect (lions do this when they overeat). Cats, dogs and wolves from time to time willingly eat the tough, rough leaves of creeping wheatgrass. There are interesting reports of how animals heal wounds. It was noted that before licking the affected area, animals usually chew wormwood or yarrow so that they enter the wound with saliva. People have seen a dog bitten by a snake eat clematis (buttercup family), which induces copious salivation to aid in licking. Sometimes animals eat plants that we think are poisonous. It is known that moose and squirrels sometimes eat red fly agarics, foxes eat lily of the valley berries, and blackbirds eat white mistletoe berries. Knowing the toxicity of these fruits, the researchers conclude that animals use them for medicinal purposes.

Of course, not all information is equally trustworthy. For example, the famous Arab legend about a shepherd who noticed the stimulating effect of the fruit of the coffee tree on goats is quite plausible [18]. But the legend of the South American aborigines that the medicinal properties of the cinchona bark were noticed in the cougar, gnawing this bark in order to get rid of the fever, causes strong distrust. With whom did this sick animal share its suffering? Who dared to touch her hot forehead, even if it was a tamed individual? Quite frankly, many other popular observations are not very well proven.

Nevertheless, the very fact of the existence of self-medication in animals is beyond doubt. In this case, we are interested in the mechanism by which animals obtain information about the usefulness of a particular plant. There is no doubt that such a mechanism had (and is?) A place to be [12]. Some researchers call it intuitive [13]. But is this process one-sided? Unlikely. And again the question naturally arises: why do we deny plants the presence of intelligence, consciousness? However, as already mentioned, not everyone refuses - let us recall Aristotle, Linnaeus, Goethe, Maeterlinck, domestic scientists Famintsyn and Gunar, American Baxter, Austrian France, Japanese Hashimoto, Indian Boche - the list goes on [29]. K.A. Timiryazev wrote about this: "Shouldn't we admit that consciousness is diffused in nature, that it smolders dully in lower beings and only flashes with a bright spark in the human mind?" [28].

Another thing is in what form this consciousness exists. After all, we are ready to recognize any form of consciousness among aliens, we are ready to make every effort to achieve mutual understanding (or is it just irresponsible reasoning, which is based on complete confidence in the impossibility of cosmic contact?). We read with delight "Solaris", in which S. Lem endows the ocean with intelligence, we talk about the collective consciousness of bees, ants, rats, birds as an undoubtedly existing phenomenon, but we stubbornly refuse to recognize something similar for plants. This reasoning is by no means

scholastic. They are designed to help in uncovering the main secret of the interaction between humans and plants, to clarify the mechanism for a person to obtain information about the medicinal properties of plants. This, I repeat, in no way denies the role of omnipotent evolution, practical experience, centuries of observation, trial and error.

But there are other, if I may say so, versions. For example, here are the ways in which the founder of Chinese herbal medicine, the legendary Shen Nong, went in recognizing the medicinal properties of plants. At first, he simply tested the effect of plants on himself, but it was unsafe (about 70 times the researcher received severe poisoning), then he began to receive information from plants, subjecting them to physical effects (whipped with a whip), but in the end he stopped at the help of an assistant - the mythical beast Yao Shou ("medicinal beast"), which the patient stroked with his hand and he ran into the fields, looking for the right grass. Here we are dealing with all three forms of obtaining information about medicinal plants. However, this is a legend, the real existence of Shen Nong is in question, because even the most famous historian of Ancient China, Sima Qian, speaking of the three great emperors, begins the countdown of Chinese history with the Yellow Emperor (Huang Di), who ruled third [27]. Doubts about the real existence of the two predecessors Fu Xi and Shen Nong are caused by the fact that they are described as creatures with a human head and a snake body. Moreover, Shen Nong's body was supposedly green. At the same time, unlike other mythical characters, the exact dates of their birth and death are known.

We often come across the opinion that primitive man knew more about plants than we know. This is both true and not true. Not so, because primitive man, of course, did not know anything about the processes taking place inside the plant, about chlorophyll, about the most complex biologically active substances, in short, he knew nothing about plants, except what he needed. And he needed only momentary: edibility, combustibility, the ability to use as a primitive weapon, and subsequently a tool of labor, and provide self-and mutual assistance in case of injury and illness. And here for primitive man it was not enough just an external acquaintance with the plant world. Some kind of internal connections were needed. And they certainly were. It is likely that not all members of primitive communities possessed the ability to establish these connections, and these qualities were valued, at least not less than physical strength. There is no doubt that the secret knowledge of the plant and animal worlds, including the ability to communicate with them, was an absolutely necessary attribute of the power and authority of leaders, priests, shamans, sorcerers. At what stage of development these abilities were lost, it is difficult to say. And have they been completely lost? And how did wise nature compensate for this loss (I have no doubt that this compensation took place)? And again the question arises - how do animals recognize the usefulness of this particular plant and at a given moment? In appearance (cold), in smell (warm), capturing in an unknown way the wave information necessary for them (hot!)? It is difficult to say if we will ever get an answer to these questions. that intimate knowledge about the plant and animal worlds, including the ability to communicate with them, was an absolutely necessary attribute of the power and authority of leaders, priests, shamans, sorcerers. At what stage of development these abilities were lost, it is difficult to say. And have they been completely lost? And how did wise nature compensate for this loss (I have no doubt that this compensation took place)? And again the question arises - how do animals recognize the usefulness of this particular plant and at a given moment? In appearance (cold), in smell (warm), capturing in an unknown way the wave information necessary for them (hot!)? It is difficult to say if we will ever get an answer to these questions. that intimate knowledge about the plant and animal worlds, including the ability to communicate with them, was an absolutely necessary attribute of the power and authority of leaders, priests, shamans, sorcerers. At what stage of development these abilities were lost, it is difficult to say. And have they been completely lost? And how did wise nature compensate for this loss (I have no doubt that this compensation took place)? And again the question arises - how do animals recognize the usefulness of this particular plant and at a given moment? In appearance (cold), in smell (warm), capturing in an unknown way the wave information necessary for them (hot!)? It is difficult to say if we will ever get an answer to these questions. sorcerers. At what stage of development these abilities were lost, it is difficult to say. And have they been completely lost? And how did wise nature compensate for this loss (I have no doubt that this compensation took place)? And again the question arises - how do animals recognize the usefulness of this particular plant and at a given moment? In appearance (cold), in smell (warm), capturing in an unknown way the wave information necessary for them (hot!)? It is difficult to say if we will ever get an answer to these questions. that this compensation took place)? And again the question arises - how do animals recognize the usefulness of this particular plant and

Well, well, we traveled well across our planet in the prehuman

period, it's time to move on to the dialogue of herbs and humans. As you know, all living nature on Earth is divided by scientists into five Kingdoms. Plants have their own Kingdom, man does not deserve this and belongs to the Kingdom of animals. Further classification determines the place of man in this way: class - Mammals, order - Primates, family - Hominids, genus - Man, species - Homo sapiens. Therefore, let us, without stopping our historical train at all stages of sapientation (the process of the emergence of modern man), mentally slow down at the turn of 70-80 million years ago to witness the emergence of mammals, then at about 38 million years we will be able to see the first ape-like creatures - primates, of which evolution has created a hominid (it took more than 30 million years) - upright apes (the most famous of them are Australopithecines) [12]. At around 2-2.6 million years ago, we will be able to observe how one of the branches of the Australopithecus develops into a "skillful man" (human!), Which after a million years (you feel how the process is accelerating) evolves into a "Homo erectus" ... A little more (the "Heidelberg man" flashed by, better known to us as Sinanthropus, Pithecanthropus) and we have to stop, since at the turn of 150-200 thousand years ago a very interesting subject arose, the remains of which were first discovered in the Neandertal valley (Germany), which gave him the name - "Neanderthal". We are interested in this type not as our ancestor (most scientists agree that it was a dead-end branch of evolution,

First, the Neanderthals were noted for a phenomenon unique for that time. - rock carvings. Scientists interpret the purpose of these drawings in different ways (for a magical ritual that gave animals to the power of a shaman, to familiarize hunters with the objects of the upcoming hunt, to depict a tribal totem) [6]. The ritual purpose of the drawings is supported by their location in hard-to-reach corners of caves in order to hide them from the eyes of the uninitiated - women, children, prisoners [20]. Unfortunately, among the reasons for the appearance of these images, the aesthetic component of this phenomenon is not very prominent. And I would like to see in these rudiments of fine art the subject of self-expression of the author, his attitude.

As my talented classmate Yuri Stefanov wrote in the late 50s (who did not become a doctor, but left a noticeable mark in poetry and translated literature):

"Everything will disappear: culture and literacy,
But as time is immortal talent, And the caves with
mammoth drawings will once again adorn the
coming Rembrandt!"

However, let's leave these disputes to the scientists. The second reason for our attention to the Neanderthals, which lies in the results of excavations in the Shanidar cave (Iraqi Kurdistan), is of much greater interest to us. Columbia University scientist Ralph Solecki from 1951 to 1965 found 9 skeletons of Neanderthals there. Radiocarbon studies determine

that the age of the finds is 44-48 thousand years. The finds were numbered and named Index I, Index II, etc. For us it represents

special interest Index IV, so-called "Flower Man". This is the skeleton of a 35-50 year old man. In his grave, traces of 8 types of flowers were found, tied in bouquets. These were plants of the type of viper onion, buttercup, marshmallow pink, and yellow groundwort. Traces of rose pollen, carnation, hyacinth were also found there. Traces of medicinal plants were also found - yarrow, centaury, ephedra. Since there are no traces of vegetation in the cave itself, there is no doubt that these plants were brought in from the outside [16, 21]. At the moment, this is the most ancient fact that testifies to the use of medicinal plants by humans in the prehistoric period. I don't know as a reader, but given the above, I'm a little sorry that the creative-minded, caring for the dead, The Neanderthal who appreciates flowers and medicinal plants has been excluded by scientists from our immediate ancestors. However, recent studies (2010) show that genes inherited from Neanderthals are still found in the genome of modern humans (with the exception of most Africans).

Our next stop is at the symbolic mark 40 thousand years ago. This is the time of the appearance of the "Cro-Magnon" - our immediate ancestor, whose remains were first discovered in the Cro-Magnon grotto in France in 1868. The Cro-Magnons already had the appearance of a modern man (although they were somewhat more massive than us). Coming from the African tropical regions, Cro-Magnons first occupied territories free of Neanderthals, but subsequently began to actively displace them from their habitats. This process continued for several millennia, while it was accompanied by a mixture of species (skeletons of mestizos with intermediate characters were found, and this explains the presence of Neanderthal genes in our genome) and ended not only with the displacement, but with the complete disappearance of Neanderthals.

So, strictly following evolutionary theory, we got to the origins of the treatment of humans with medicinal plants. But we will not be entirely right if we do not mention other views on the origin of herbal medicine.

In monotheistic religions, everything on Earth was created by the Creator. The Bible even indicates the exact date of the creation of herbs - the third day. The Qur'an avoids such detailing. It should be noted that these holy books do not contain information about medicinal plants. Therefore, great opportunities are opening up for folk art. A prominent researcher of herbalism N.A. Ivanitsky cites the following etiological legend: "When God wished to create man, he drew his figure in the sand, and the devil came up and made 77 wounds and holes on this drawing. Then God said: "If you have made 77 wounds, then I will create 77 plants to heal these wounds" [11]. It is no coincidence, as we have already noted, that the names of many plants by the people are associated with God, the Mother of God, and saints.

Myths are a valuable source for understanding the history of the Ancient World. Modern researchers have different attitudes towards the huge amount of information contained in myths. Some believe that this information cannot be the object of serious scientific research, while others pay attention to its essential aspects, believing that it is they who determine the enduring value of myths for

knowledge of the world. The domestic researcher of myths A.F. Losev gave the following definition: "The myth is in words this wonderful personal story" [19].

When assessing the significance of mythology, one must not forget that the great ancient Greek drama (Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Sophocles, Euripides, Menander) is entirely based on myths, from which great painters and composers drew plots for their brilliant works. Without exaggeration, the myth can be called the soul of classical art. Admiring the immortal Homeric creations, we remember that both the Iliad and the Odyssey are an almanac of myths filled, like other ancient Greek masterpieces, with symbolic (?) Imaginary (?) Heroes who perform feats and are overwhelmed by such close and understandable passions and feelings.

What can we learn from the myths about the creators of herbal medicine? We have already mentioned one of them - the great Shen Nong. It must be said that if it were not for the snake body and green skin color attributed to him, his existence could well be considered real. However, it is quite possible to admit the idea that the ancient Chinese deliberately endowed the real emperor with superhuman features and qualities in order to emphasize his divine origin.

According to Sumerian mythology, the great mother goddess Ninhursag, in the most difficult conditions of a lifeless swampy area, grew the first 8 plants, which were used as medicinal plants [14].

And, of course, the most informative in this regard is the ancient Greek mythology. The modern researcher of the ancient history of medicine V.G. Lazarenko recently discovered in the tragedy of Aeschylus "Prometheus chained" evidence that this outstanding mythological personality is the forefather of modern medicine [16]. This is how this character himself speaks of his deeds:

"... Before there was no salvation from disease.
No such herb, no ointment was known to
mortals And died without medicine until
I have all sorts of painkiller mixes
I didn't tell them to stop any ailment. " [16, 30]

Supporting V.G. Lazarenko in his discovery, we note in passing that these lines allow us to consider Prometheus, if not the creator of medicinal plants, then the first who understood their medicinal purpose.

But who was the first to use herbs as a remedy? The myths contain the answer to this question as well. But this answer is not unambiguous.

In the history of ancient Greek mythology, there are two authors, without whom it is unthinkable - the Greek Apollodorus and the Roman Hyginus. Moreover, the attitude of scientists towards them is not the same. If Apollodorus is revered for his systematic nature, depth and pseudoscience, then Gigin for many researchers is, so to speak, a frivolous gossip, fixing only the factual side of events. But we will listen to both.

Hyginus unequivocally considers the centaur Chiron to be the founder of herbal medicine. It is appropriate here to devote a few lines to this one of the most popular and that

especially important, the cute characters of ancient Greek mythology. Unlike other centaurs - rude, evil and ignorant creatures - Chiron possessed many knowledge and positive qualities, being skilled in music, medicine, hunting and even martial arts. (He was born a centaur (man-horse), since his father, the all-powerful and cruel Kronos (Hyginus naturally calls him Saturn, as it should be in ancient Roman mythology), who swallowed all his children, except for the miraculously escaped Zeus, but was very afraid of the wrath of his wife Rhea, entered into a love affair with Filira, just in case, taking the form of a horse. By the way, judging by the myths, it is the ancient Greek gods that have priority in using in relations with the chosen ones what modern sexologists and sexopathologists call "role-playing games." Zeus was especially ingenious in this regard, who appeared to his chosen ones in the form of a bull, then an eagle, a swan, or even a golden rain). Chiron was an excellent teacher, educator, mentor. Among his pupils are Achilles, Theseus, Jason. Even Hercules, being his close friend, considered Chiron to be his teacher. Chiron taught medicine to one of the first famous doctors - Asclepius. Gigin writes that "the centaur Chiron, the son of Saturn, was the first to heal with herbs and discovered the surgical healing art" [7].

This point of view is supported by the ancient Greek poet Pindar, who dedicated many enthusiastic lines to Chiron and called him "the divine centaur." He writes like this:

"Deep thoughts Chiron
Raised Jason under his stone
roof,
Raised Asclepius,
By teaching him the meek laws of potions. " [23]

This is also evidenced by such an authoritative source as Homer, who in the Iliad describes the treatment of King Menelaus by the son of Asclepius Machaon:

"The doctor examined the ulcer, inflicted with a bitter arrow; He
squeezed out the blood and, skillful, showered it with medicine,
The power of which Chiron opened to his father by the friendly "(translation by N. Gnedich)
(16)

Here "doctors" are undoubtedly medicines, and at that time they were represented mainly by medicinal plants.

Another version is voiced by Apollodorus. He calls Melampod, the son of Amiton and Idomenes, the discoverer of herbal medicine. Melampus was a descendant of Prometheus (sixth tribe), a soothsayer and understood the language of birds. It is quite possible to assume that the language of animals was also known to Melampoda, which means that he could receive information from them about the medicinal effect of medicinal plants [1].

At the end of our short and far from exhaustive mythological study, let us again turn to the already mentioned "Pigeon Book", which, according to its researchers, is nothing more than an ancient Slavic (and maybe even Indo-European) myth.

In one of its later Orthodox versions, the origin

medicinal Plakun-herb is associated with the tears of the Virgin, who

"I dropped my purest tears To
mother on the damp earth; From
those tears from the pure, Plakun-
grass was born ... "[9]

Concluding this part of the study, I would like to once again emphasize the enormous and close relationship of all life on Earth. The man is his youngest representative. In childhood, he acutely felt his dependence on Nature and worshiped her, in his youth, having begun to study it, he tried to reduce its essence to physical formulas and chemical reactions and, having learned them, arrogantly believed in his superiority, separated himself from Nature, forgot about the indissolubility of connections all living things, for which he was repeatedly and cruelly punished. And now, when a person has acquired maturity, sobering gradually comes, an understanding of the original all-independence and the need to live in harmony with nature. And then she, noble, sublime, understanding everything and everyone, will return us her paternal attitude, share with us her inexhaustible potential, including for the treatment of sick people.

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Karpeev, A.A. Essays on the history of herbal medicine / A.A. Karpeev // Traditional medicine. - 2012. - No. 3 (30). - S.40-47.

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