

Ancient information about the essence of medicine of Asclepius and his followers
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Ancient data about Asclepius medicine and his followers
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RESUME

Nowadays the knowledge about creators of first healing systems in Greece "Gods of medicine" who had significant part of real history and quite established ideology is very superficial among medical society. Appolo and Asclepius represent them. Their medicine was based on primitive animistic beliefs and shamanistic techniques. Their followers in classical and Ancient Greece continued to practice medicine based on personal contact with Asclepius during sleep or religious ecstasy.

Keywords: Asklepios, Apollo, shamanism, traditional medicine, integrative medicine.

SUMMARY

Today, the medical community's ideas about the creators of the first healing systems in Greece - the "gods of medicine", who had, to a large extent, a real history and a well-defined ideology, remain extremely superficial. These include Apollo and Asclepius, whose medicine was based on primitive animistic ideas and shamanistic techniques. Their followers in classical and Hellenistic Ancient Greece continued to practice medicine based on personal contact with Asclepius during sleep or religious ecstasy.

Key words: Asclepius, Apollo, shamanism, traditional medicine, integrative medicine.

Doctors who practice today (in the context of integrative medicine) some psychophysiological, medicinal and physical methods of prevention and treatment that have their origins in the medicine of Ancient Greece, it is far from superfluous to imagine how these methods were formed. Otherwise, false theoretical assumptions can lead to practical errors, from which patients can suffer. In order to understand the meaning of ancient practice, one should certainly have an idea of the worldview on which its methods were based. Meanwhile, today the medical community's ideas about the creators of the first healing systems in Greece - the "gods of medicine", who had for the most part a real history and a well-defined ideology, remain extremely superficial.

Chief among them, at least in the 6th-5th centuries BC, for the ancient Greeks was Apollo. Our recent comparative studies of ancient literary and archaeological sources, combined with data from Indo-European linguistics and DNA genealogy, show that he was most likely the leader of tribes known in ancient literature as Hyperboreans and carriers of the Y-chromosomal haplogroup R1b. They performed during the 4th millennium BC. a rapid aggressive raid from the Southern Trans-Urals and the Caspian steppes to the Northern Black Sea region and further through Asia Minor and North Africa to the Pyrenees [8, p. 671]. Today, carriers of this haplogroup represent the majority of the "indigenous" inhabitants of Western Europe. According to ancient information, it is obvious that Apollo acquired, or rather appropriated, through the efforts of the ministers of his cult, medical functions precisely on the path of ancient migrations, especially in the Northern and North-Western Black Sea regions, long before the penetration into Greece. Even in the Iliad, the wounded gods are treated by the non-Greek deity of healing - Pean. But later we see already Apollo Pean and Apollo the Doctor, although in the Northern Black Sea region, dedicatory inscriptions were found simply to "The Doctor", who could have been an ancient local deity. Less known, but very indicative, is the discovery by archaeologists on the territory of Bulgaria of antique coins with the inscription "Apollo Darron". Darron is the name of the Macedonian demon healer, which is inseparable from the name of the Thracian tribe of Derron or Dersei. All this testifies to the identity of the derron god-healer with Apollo [24, p. 172]. At the same time, Apollo's healing had a distinctly shamanic character, which was first noted by K. Maylie and confirmed by other studies, incl. our [9, p. 109-115].

At the end of the classical period, the authority of such a "god-doctor" as Apollo began to decline, apparently due to an inconspicuous personal contribution to medicine. This required urgently supplementing the mythology with the appearance of his "son" - Asclepius, who actually has an independent Thracian origin [24, p. 172-173]. It is impossible, for example, to neglect the data that Asclepius was killed by Zeus among the Hyperboreans [23, p. 195]. This very weightily emphasizes the origin of the cult of Asclepius in the more northern, in relation to Greece proper, territories. In particular, in the North-Western Black Sea region, i.e. in Thrace. Comparative mythology, as the major researcher of Indo-European migrations L.S. Klein [7, p. 320], gives impressive results. The ancient Greeks and the Aryans had an archer god who sent sickness and silent death with his arrows. For the Aryans, this is Rudra, among the Greeks - Apollo. The sacred animals of Rudra and his son Ganesha are a mouse and a mole. The sacred animals of Apollo and his son Asclepius are the mouse and the mole. This means that the chthonic cult of gods-healers, based on primitive animistic magic, was inherent in the entire Indo-Aryan community, having arisen in Eastern Europe and spreading to India. The absurdity of the origin of Asclepius from Apollo was noticed in antiquity. For example, Cicero reports that Dionysius the Elder, tyrant of Syracuse (431-367 BC), having ordered to remove the golden beard from the statue of Asclepius in Epidauros (in the main temple of this god! - V.L.), remarked: "It is not proper for a son to be bearded when his father is beardless in all churches." Moreover, in the same place - in This means that the chthonic cult of gods-healers, based on primitive animistic magic, was inherent in the entire Indo-Aryan community, having arisen in Eastern Europe and spreading to India. The absurdity of the origin of Asclepius from Apollo was noticed in antiquity. For example, Cicero reports that Dionysius the Elder, tyrant of Syracuse (431-367 BC), having ordered to remove the golden beard from the statue of Asclepius in Epidauros (in the main temple of this god! - V.L.), remarked: "It is not proper for a son to be bearded when his father is beardless in all churches." Moreover, in the same place - in Cicero reports that Dionysius the Elder, tyrant of Syracuse (431-367 BC), having ordered to remove the golden beard from the statue of Asclepius in Epidauros (in the main temple of this god! - V.L.), remarked: a son to be bearded when his father is beardless in all churches. " Moreover, in the same place - in Cicero reports that Dionysius the Elder, tyrant of Syracuse (431-367 BC), having ordered to remove the golden beard from the statue of Asclepius in Epidauros (in the main temple of this god! - V.L.), remarked: a son to be bearded when his father is beardless in all churches. " Moreover, in the same place - in

In his treatise *On the Nature of the Gods*, Cicero states that as many as three Asclepias were known: "Of the Aesculapians, the first is the son of Apollo. He is worshiped in Arcadia. He invented the medical probe and is said to have been the first to bandage wounds. The second Aesculapius was the brother of Mercury. This one, struck by lightning, is said to have been buried in Kinosura. The third, the son of Arsippus and Arsinoe, was the first to discover ways to cleanse the stomach and remove teeth. In Arcadia they show <...> his grave and a grove dedicated to him "[22, p. 186, 175]. This means that already in antiquity, both the personality and the origin of the deified hero-doctor were poorly differentiated.

In considering the essence of the healing of Asclepius, we will be helped by ancient sources and the most authoritative commentaries to them. In early myths, Asclepius appears as a typical hero: a miraculous birth, upbringing by the centaur Chiron (for some reason Apollo himself did not teach his son medicine, but entrusted it to Chiron, whose image goes back to the most ancient animistic ideas). According to the great poet of the 5th century. BC. Pindaru [12, p. 69]: "Chiron, the son of Filyra ... / This is how he once nursed Asclepius, / The quencher of bodies, the scarer of ailments, / The good carpenter of painlessness." This was followed by the numerous exploits of Asclepius in the field of healing, non-standard death - from the lightning of Zeus, and as punishment for self-interest. Pindar unambiguously said about the latter [12, p. 71-72], at the same time giving practical advice to proud healers: "But self-interest is also a burden to skill. / Gold, flashing from the hands of an innumerable reward, / Seduced him / To snatch from death the one seized by death; / And a scorching lightning from the Cronid muscles, / Pav between this and that, / Closed a sigh in his chest, / She surrounded both of them with fate, / Look for a mortal from the gods / Skill in mind, steps in the foot, / Remember in what share we are / Do not try immortality, dear soul, / Lean on yourself only what you can. " Although Homer does not even mention Asclepius, and his sons Machaon and Podaliry are engaged in medicine in the *Iliad*, many achievements were later attributed to Asclepius. How the myth that preceded his deification was formed can be seen from Diodorus of Siculus: "Asclepius, the son of Apollo and Koronis, was distinguished by his natural gifts and intelligence. He was zealous in the science of healing and made many discoveries for the benefit of human health. His fame was unusually great: they said that, to everyone's surprise, he healed many hopelessly sick people, and therefore it was widely believed that he even brings the dead back to life "[4, p. 70]. Pindar points out the variety of therapeutic methods of Asclepius [12, p. 71]: "They went to him, who got used to the ulcers that ate themselves, / Who was wounded by faded copper or a distant stone, / Who is gnawing at the cold and summer heat, / He resolved their passions, removed from torment, / He courted some with soft songs, / Others with a peaceful drink / Or a potion that wraps around the wound / And others were saved by a knife cut.

Here we see at least three types of treatment: magic spells ("soft songs"), drug therapy, surgery. But other ancient authors could not believe in the power of drugs or the art of a surgeon, believing that magic and miracles could not be done without. Apollodorus reports on this: "Having become a skilled healer and having accumulated a great deal of experience in this occupation, Asclepius not only saved them from death, but also resurrected the dead. He received from the goddess Athena the blood that flowed from the veins of the Gorgon, and used the blood that flowed out of the left side

bodies, for people to perish, the same blood that flowed out of the right from the right side, for the salvation of people: with the same blood he raised the dead "[2, p. 96]. The wife of Asclepius Epion - "Relieves pain", in ancient Greek mythology, she herself is revered as a deity (Crinagor. Epigrams 12, 51 Page). Legends are associated with it that characterize the nature of the then therapeutic measures. Epion sang sacred songs while preparing medicines - thus, the medicine of Asclepius (like his followers) was clearly magical in nature. This is confirmed by the later Greek and Roman sources, which tell about medicines, the use of which must have been accompanied by the performance of sacred hymns. For example, even Plato's mention of an effective remedy for headache sounds like this: "The remedy is a leaf, the use of which, however, should be combined with an incantation or sacred song; if the use of the leaf is combined with this melody, then this remedy completely cures; without this song the sheet remains invalid "[16].

Nevertheless, Plato in the "Feast" dialogue even says that Asclepius's medical skill was based on pro-scientific principles: "... a great expert in his field. After all, this requires the ability to establish friendship between the most hostile principles in the body and instill in them mutual love. The most hostile beginnings are completely opposite principles: cold and hot, bitter and sweet, wet and dry, and the like. Thanks to his ability to inspire these hostile principles with love and consent, our ancestor Asclepius, as the poets present here assert - and I believe them - laid the foundation for our art "[13, p. 95]. But we believe that this is only a tribute to the officially recognized "founder of medicine", but more than that, an attempt by his "divine" authority to establish natural-philosophical positions in modern Plato's medicine. Moreover, he emphasizes in his major work "The State" the outstanding social significance of the works of the future "god of medicine": Asclepius indicated how to be treated in their condition - with medicines and cuts it is necessary to expel diseases, preserving, however, the usual way of life, so that public affairs do not suffer. In the case of internal illnesses that continue throughout his life, Asclepius did not try to slightly alleviate the patient's situation and, changing his lifestyle and prolonging the illness, lengthen his worthless life, and even give him the opportunity to produce, of course, exactly the same offspring. Those who are incapable of living in the time set for a person, Asclepius believed, does not need to be healed, because such a person is useless both for himself and for society. It is obvious that Asclepius cared about society "[13, p. 175]. Leaving aside the discussion of the thesis, which is strange for a modern doctor, that "there is no need to cure, because such a person is useless both for himself and for society," let us say that in this judgment Plato clearly exaggerated. In any case, Asclepius lived before the Trojan War, and for the II millennium BC. caring for society is sheer nonsense. Moreover, Plato himself, promoting the progressive principles of natural philosophy in medicine for his time, argued the exact opposite of the principles and for society ", let us say that in this judgment Plato clearly exaggerated. In any case, Asclepius lived before the Trojan War, and for the II millennium BC. caring for society is sheer nonsense. Moreover, Plato himself, promoting the progressive principles of natural philosophy in medicine for his time, argued the exact opposite of the principles

rational medicine, in the spirit of the dominant temple medicine of Asclepius: "The greatest blessings for us arise from fury, however, when it is given to us as a gift from God <...> Those of the ancients who established the meanings of words did not consider fury ("mania" - μανία) disgrace or shame - otherwise they would not have called "manic" the most beautiful art through which one can judge the future <...> According to the testimony of the ancients, the fury that people have from God is more beautiful than prudence, a human property. Deliverance from disease, from extreme disasters, from the ancient anger of the gods, which had gravitated since ancient times, was found thanks to the fury that appeared from somewhere in some families "[15, p. 153]. And in another dialogue - "Feast", the great philosopher points to medium abilities as the basis of medical art [14, p. 94–96, 111–113].

Frazer, caustically but rightly, remarked: "In this respect there is a striking similarity between the crude Polynesian oracles and the oracles of the illustrious peoples of Greece. As soon as the god possessed the priest, the priest began to shake and drive himself to obvious fury <...> If we could bring an islander of the Pacific Ocean to Delphi and let him see the pythia's convulsive antics and listen to her frantic cries, he would not have to explain any of the rites - they are so similar to the products of his native savage philosophy "[21, p. 95, 328].

Prominent specialist S.Yu. Trokhachev points out: "It is known that in parallel with scientific medicine in Greece there was temple healing with centers in the Asclepeion - the sanctuaries of the god Asclepius. It was understood that in difficult cases, with the impotence of rational knowledge, there was the last hope for the gods "[18, p. 25]. Healing temples began to appear in the 7th-6th centuries. BC. in connection with the ecstatic and mystical wave (the cult of Dionysus, Orphism) that swept across Greece at that time. Then the cult of Asclepius and its temples, which were of a medical and sanatorium nature, appeared - the Asclepeions, of which the earliest were in Tricka (Thessaly) - VI century. BC, Epidaurus (Peloponnese) - V century. BC. and on the island of Kos. Priests from the Asclepiades clan, the descendants of Asclepius, practiced there. The healing procedure in the Asclepeion was as follows. The priests prescribed baths, cleansing, gave dietary instructions, then prayers, sacrifices and other rituals were needed. All this was supposed to "cleanse from filth," that is. evil spirits. Recall that the terms that have found widespread use in medicine - miasma (desecration) and pharmacos (a creature, including a person, to whom the disease was transferred - literally a "scapegoat"), come from the magical practice of purification [25, p. 107]. Then the patient was placed at night in the abaton - the covered gallery of the temple, where no stranger could enter. Here the main thing was accomplished - immersion in "incubation sleep" - a state of ecstasy or hypnosis, which was achieved by using drugs or special psychological influence. It was believed that the oracle of dreams would help to understand the essence of the disease and suggest the necessary treatment. In the morning, the sick talked about their dreams to the priests, who interpreted them and determined further treatment. Those who recovered often described their illnesses and remedies on tables that were hung in churches. Such tables were given to doctors, incl. later also to Hippocrates, useful instructions; incidents were recorded on the slabs

miraculous healing; the sick, healed with the help of deities, donated images to their temples, most often from noble metals, those parts of the body that were affected by the disease [1, p. 380]. A great connoisseur of antiquity A.I. Zaitsev sarcastically noted, analyzing the treatment procedure in the Asklepeion: "The attraction of comparative material from different cultures, accessible to direct observation, ranging from the practice of an African healer-sorcerer and ending with the activities of the shrine of the Mother of God in Lourdes, is in this case invaluable" [5, p. 29]. For our part, we emphasize that not to see here the legacy of the shamanism of Apollo and Asclepius means not to notice the obvious. As for the use of medicinal herbs in asclepeion, they were also used in a magical, shamanic aspect. Here is what Flavius Philostratus says about this: "Iarch returned to the conversation about sorcery, listing many benefits that it brings to people, and he called healing the greatest of these gifts, for the wise Asclepiades would never have comprehended this science if Asclepius had not been the son of Apollo and had not prepared the potion needed for every ailment according to the word and broadcast of his father - and not only did Asclepius impart this art to his children, but also taught his admirers what herbs to heal wet wounds and what kind of dried or scabbed wounds, and what measure to release a medicinal drug in order to expel water from dropsy or hold back blood in those who are bleeding, or to stop consumption and the resulting exhaustion. Who will deny that from magic comes the science of both antidotes and the treatment of many ailments with the same poisons? For, in my understanding, without the mediation of prophetic wisdom, people would never have dared to combine destructive potions with saving ones "[20, p. 70]. Asclepius, who appeared in a dream, often prescribed to patients and physical methods of treatment, quite paradoxical. Marcus Aurelius urges to agree with them: "Asclepius assigns such and such a ride, cold washing or walking barefoot <...> such and such is sent down to such and such, such and such is assigned to such and such. Let us treat this in the same way as what Asclepius appoints. Indeed, in the latter case, much is not to our taste, however, the hope for health prompts us to gladly go for it "[10, p. 84]. Galen left a testimony even more revealing: "One Asclepius ordered to write many odes and compose many comic mimes and songs (for the movements of their passions, having become more energetic, raised their body temperature more, what you need); and to others, just as numerous, he punished hunting and horseback riding and exercises with weapons, because he wanted to increase the too weak passion of those people "[19, p. 151]. The judgments of the great thinker, concurrently also the successful Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, as well as the great physician Galen, are dictated by the fact that by their time the cult of Asclepius had reached its peak, long ago and completely supplanting the worship of Apollo as a healer, as well as many local cults of hero-healers [11, p. 28]. that by their time the cult of Asclepius had reached its peak, long ago and completely supplanting the worship of Apollo as a healer, as well as many local cults of hero-healers [11, p. 28]. that by their time the cult of Asclepius had reached its peak, long ago and completely supplanting the worship of Apollo as a healer, as well as many local cults of hero-healers [11, p. 28].

Let us turn directly to the recollections of one of the patients of the Asclepiades. Aelius Aristides, who suffered from many diseases, but mainly from asthma attacks and fever, was unsuccessfully treated by a number of doctors, incl. at the famous Satyr. Since Aristides was not helped by laxatives, cups, poultices, bloodletting, or "antidotes and other such medicines," he went to the sanctuary of Asclepius at Pergamum in 146 AD. after appearing

In his dream, Asclepius "commanded him to walk barefoot" (it was the middle of winter). Communication with God impressed the patient so much that, following divine instructions, he even took a bath in the icy river, having a suffocating cough and fever. Aristides compiled the book *Sacred Speeches* about his impressions of his own "treatment" and the experience of other patients of Asclepeion. In it, although he mentions, albeit haphazardly, the balms used, poultices, diet (sometimes the strictest fasting, sometimes a diet on this or that food or drink), warm baths, laxatives, bloodletting, the main emphasis is still on visions and ecstatic chants. It was then that Aristides always realized how "great Asclepius was!", Receiving further instructions from him [19, p. 150-169]. André-Jean Festugiere, famous French classic scientist, After analyzing the cases of illness and healing described by Aristides, he emphasized that in the Asklepeion: "A sick person blindly obeys all orders; and, since the imagination plays a decisive role in the cure of certain chronic diseases, especially if the patient has an unstable psyche, these orders bring him back to normal not only physically, but also mentally. They help him, but he is not healed. Better to say: they help him, and therefore he is not healed, for he, in essence, does not want to be healed. To be healed would be to no longer be in the presence and fellowship of God; but this is exactly what the patient desires most of all "(it is highlighted by us - VL) [19, p. 143]. It is subtly noticed and how modern it sounds, if we recall the frequent cases in our country, when unfortunate people literally travel after the next "great healer"! As a result, A.-J. Festujier clearly defined the necessary components of the successful activity of the Asklepeions: 1) unconditional belief in the god Asclepius; 2) the ancient and popular practice of dream interpretation; 3) a specific community of impressionable patients living in constant anticipation of medical prescriptions, even more unusual than they were before; 4) the staff of the temple, accustomed to clients-neuropaths, well-versed in the interpretation of dreams and, like no one else, believes in the power of Asclepius [19, p. 169-170]. Let us agree that such methods of "healing" cannot be referred, under critical consideration, to the system (sic!) Of traditional medicine, especially as used today, although there are a lot of people prone to ecstasy, like adherents of dousing with ice water. Characteristically of course, asclepias as equal carriers of one and the same art, i.e. there was a direct succession. In the medicine of Asclepius and his followers, in fact, almost nothing has changed in comparison with the shamanic healing methods of Apollo. of course, asclepias as equal carriers of one and the same art, i.e. there was a direct succession. In the medicine of Asclepius and his followers, in fact, almost nothing has changed in comparison with the shamanic healing methods of Apollo.

With all unconditional respect for the practical heritage of Hippocrates, it can be considered established that he is not the "father of medicine" as a whole, and for a number of serious reasons [10, p. 341-360]. And his theoretical foundations (the doctrine of four liquids) did not find further development, except for medieval scholasticism. But, in principle, all this is not so important - genuine

the greatness of Hippocrates is seen in another. According to the just admission of the French historian of medicine J.M. Guardia: "Hippocrates had the honor to snatch medicine from the sanctuary and bring it to a clear path" [1]. However, his practical innovations found support only in the Hellenistic era, in the Alexandrian school. In classical times, when the cult of Asclepius gradually supplanted the worship of Apollo the healer, official medicine dominated, concentrated in the Asclepeion. Summarizing the available data, it should be stated that it was in its essence magical, without the systemic use of rational means, which were used in temples only with a "cleansing" purpose in the context of magical, fundamentally shamanic, manipulations. This largely retarded the progress of ancient medicine, since the cults of the "healing gods" Apollo and Asclepius were state ones. In this regard, it would be tempting to interpret the episode of the burning by Hippocrates, a descendant of Asclepius in the seventeenth generation, the library of Asclepeion - the temple of his deified ancestor on the island of Kos after graduation from this temple [6, p. 12; 17, p. 615], as an act of combating stagnation in medicine. However, most likely, everything was simpler if we take into account the centuries-old domination of the principles of harsh agonistics in Ancient Greece, including in medicine. Hippocrates committed a life-threatening sacrilege to reduce the number of competitors. But, regardless of this, he did manage to largely rationalize medicine, significantly purging it of ancient magic. a descendant of Asclepius in the seventeenth generation, the library of Asclepeion - the temple of his deified ancestor on the island of Kos after graduation from this temple [6, p. 12; 17, p. 615], as an act of combating stagnation in medicine. However, most likely, everything was simpler if we take into account the centuries-old domination of the principles of harsh agonistics in Ancient Greece, including in medicine. Hippocrates committed a life-threatening sacrilege to reduce the number of competitors. But, regardless of this, he did manage to largely rationalize medicine, significantly purging it of ancient magic. if we take into account the centuries-old domination of the principles of rigid agonistics in Ancient Greece, including in medicine. Hippocrates committed a life-threatening sacrilege to reduce the number of competitors. But, regardless of this, he did manage to largely rationalize medicine, significantly purging it of ancient magic. if we take into account the centuries-old domination of the principles of rigid agonistics in Ancient Greece, including in medicine. Hippocrates committed a life-threatening sacrilege to reduce the number of competitors. But, regardless of this, he did manage to largely rationalize medicine, significantly purging it of ancient magic.

So, the medicine of Asclepius and his followers - the Asclepias was in its essence magical without the systemic use of rational means. A modern physician in the field of integrative medicine should not recklessly rely, both historically and practically, on the authority of any "gods" or "fathers" of medicine, especially if their activities are based on ecstatic states and fanatical faith. The charm of ancient myths is undeniable, but integrative medicine should not be like some "schools of health", in fact, the heirs of the methodology of the Asklepiads. Although the snake - the symbol of Asclepius - adorns the signs of medical education, in order to successfully and safely help patients, the doctor should be careful enough and strictly follow the principle of the intelligibly theoretically justified use of ancient methods - physical, medicinal and, especially, psychophysiological. An example of this is traditional Chinese medicine, where the doctor from ancient times was obliged to get the patient to understand the mechanisms of the development of the disease and the action of drugs, and only then start treatment.

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