

Medical achievements of the Pythagorean school
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SUMMARY

At the end of the 6th - first half of the 5th centuries. BC. most of the Pythagorean scientists and philosophers known to us were engaged in medicine, or at least wrote on medical topics. Pythagorean medicine included mainly nutrition, gymnastics, and music therapy. The Pythagoreans discovered a parallelism between the effects of diet and music, aimed at maintaining physical and mental balance.

Key words: Pythagoras, medicine, dietetics, nutrition for athletes.

RESUME

At the end of the VI - first half of the V century BC the most famous to us Pythagorean scientists and philosophers practiced medicine or, at least, wrote on the medical themes. Pythagorean medicine included, mainly, dietetics, exercise and music treatment. The Pythagoreans opened the parallelism between the effects of diet and music aimed at maintaining physical and mental balance.

Keywords: Pythagoras, medicine, dietetics, nutrition of athletes.

Studying the achievements of the Pythagorean school is of great importance for understanding the origins of integrative medicine. Earlier, based on a comparison of ancient sources, we were able to show the similarity of the theoretical provisions of traditional Chinese medicine and some medical schools of Ancient Greece [6]. It is the natives of the Pythagorean school - Alcmeon and Empedocles, who are mainly involved in this. But when it comes to the teachings of the great philosopher Pythagoras, it turns out that, apart from the mathematical heritage, little is known about this, despite the numerous, but vague statements of esoteric literature about the "special initiation" of Pythagoras. This also applies to the practical achievements of his school in the field of general medicine, especially dietetics and what would today be called sports medicine. Not only aspects of his teaching, but the life of Pythagoras himself is little known, and the main reason for this is that it is shrouded in numerous legends, up to the likeness of him to various gods. Moreover, according to E.R. Dodds, "Pythagoras himself played a significant role in the creation of the legend about himself," and the beginning of the legend of Pythagoras undoubtedly dates back to the 5th century. BC. [2, p. 151].

Indeed, how else can one interpret the messages of ancient authors that "about

he told himself (according to Heraclides of Pontus) that he was once Ephalides and was revered as the son of Hermes <...> his appearance was so majestic that it seemed to his disciples that it was Apollo himself, who came from the Hyperboreans "[1, p. 308]? Porfiry even says that "it is well known how Pythagoras showed the Hyperborean Abarid, the priest of the Hyperborean Apollo, his thigh of gold in confirmation that he is the Apollo of Hyperborean" [8, p. 420]. Consideration of the appearance of Pythagoras is further complicated by the fact that Diogenes Laertius points out: "There were four Pythagoras, and they lived simultaneously and nearby: the first was a Croton, a man of a tyrannical nature; the second is a Fliuntian who was engaged in bodily exercises (an oily, as others say); the third is a Zakynthian; the fourth is the one who discovered the mysteries of philosophy and taught them. They say that there was another Pythagoras, a sculptor from Regius <...> and another, nasty rhetorician; and the third, the doctor who wrote about the hernia <...>; and the fourth, the author of the "History of Doryan", who first became engaged in fistfighting in a scholarly way "[1, p. 319]. With all this uncertainty and mythology, one cannot but agree with the opinion of the prominent scientist E.R. Dodds that, of course, we should not unconditionally believe in the reality of those numerous reincarnations of Pythagoras, but it would be unreasonable to neglect in this case the reports of sources saying that he was a person to whom Empedocles attributed the wisdom of ten or twelve previous human lives [2, p. ... 149]. With all this uncertainty and mythology, one cannot but agree with the opinion of the prominent scientist E.R. Dodds that, of course, we should not unconditionally believe in the reality of those numerous reincarnations of Pythagoras, but it would be unreasonable to neglect in this case the reports of sources saying that he was a person to whom Empedocles attributed the wisdom of ten or twelve previous human lives [2, p. ... 149]. With all this uncertainty and mythology, one cannot but agree with the opinion of the prominent scientist E.R. Dodds that, of course, we should not unconditionally believe in the reality of those numerous reincarnations of Pythagoras, but it would be unreasonable to neglect in this case the reports of sources saying that he was a person to whom Empedocles attributed the wisdom of ten or twelve previous human lives [2, p. ... 149].

Pythagoras lived and worked in real historical time - around 540–500. BC. Few information concerning this suggests the following. Pythagoras is the son of Mnesarch the stone-cutter, a native of the Samian or Tyrrhenian. From childhood he turned out to be capable of all sciences (according to Porfiry, as a child, Pythagoras studied with a cypharist, painter and athlete, and in his youth he came to Miletus in Anaximander to study geometry and astronomy), and his father "brought him to Tire and brought him to the Chaldeans, where Pythagoras mastered all their knowledge. " Returning from there to Ionia, on the island of Lesbos, he met Pherekides there and was his listener. After the death of Pherekides, Pythagoras went to the island of Samos to listen to Geromodamant. Then he "appeared in Egypt <...>, learned the Egyptian language <...>, appeared to the Chaldeans and magicians. Then on Crete, he, together with Epimenides, went down to the cave of Ida, as in Egypt in the sanctuaries there, and learned the most secret about the gods "[1, p. 307]. Porfiry clarifies that "he learned the so-called mathematical sciences from the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Phoenicians. Returning to Ionia, he set up a school in his homeland, it is still called the Pythagorean fence, and the Samians gather there for councils "[8, p. 417-418]. Iamblichus points out that to sail to Egypt and get in touch with the priests, especially the priests of Memphis and Diaspolis, Pythagoras inclined Thales, "since, they say, he himself was recruiting from them what creates for him a reputation as a sage among the majority" [11, p. ... 108]. Thus, even if we discard the difficult-to-verify information about the Chaldean magicians and Egyptian priests, it is obvious that Pythagoras received serious training, including mathematics, from the most famous scientists of his time.

This is how the famous Pythagorean school developed. Already in her early philosophy, a great interest in natural science is clearly visible. Not at all less than the Ionians (from Thales to Democritus), but rather even more, the Pythagoreans were engaged in physiology, anatomy, embryology, botany. At the end of the 6th - first half of the 5th centuries. BC. most of the Pythagorean scientists and philosophers known to us were engaged in medicine or wrote on medical topics. In turn, many southern Italic doctors were close to the Pythagorean school. In the mainstream of medical practice, an interest arose in what could contribute to the healing of patients - the structure and functioning of the human body, medicinal plants, diet, etc. At the turn of the VI-V centuries. BC, according to Herodotus (III 130), the Cyrene and especially Croton doctors were the most famous in Greece. About Cyrene's medics, a remote colony in Africa, we know virtually nothing. The Croton school, which arose almost simultaneously with the Pythagorean school, was closely connected with it. Moreover, we know much less Pythagorean mathematicians of that time than Pythagorean doctors [3, p. 270-272]. Herodotus speaks (III, 125 ff) of Democede of Croton as the most famous physician of his time.

An important remark should be made: ancient Greek medicine, even in the period of its highest flowering (III century BC), cannot be called strictly scientific medicine from today's perspective. And the Greeks themselves then did not consider it a science, medicine was considered a practical art - τέχνη. Anatomy and physiology that originated in Greece at the turn of the 6th-5th centuries. BC, could only partially explain in a rational way the causes of the disease. The reason for this lay not only in their underdevelopment, but in the fact that the way to such an explanation, Greek medicine considered the knowledge of the entire nature of man, and this task was then completely unbearable. Here is the time to ask the question, where did Pythagoras get his views from? "From the Orphic doctrine," is the usual answer. But even if this is so, then only new questions arise, since what is known about the Orphic doctrine, very far even from pro-scientific principles. According to the authoritative opinion of E.R. Dodds, it is quite possible that Pythagoras was not at all dependent on any "Orphic" source and that he, and before him Epimenides, shared the northern belief they heard from someone that the "soul" or "guardian spirit" of a deceased old shaman can move into a living shaman, thereby increasing his abilities and knowledge [2, p. 149-150]. The same can be said about the indication of Diogenes Laertius that Pythagoras said that he had lived earlier in the guise of the ancient shaman Germotim [1, p. 310]. that the "soul" or "guardian spirit" of a deceased old shaman can infuse a living shaman, thereby increasing his abilities and knowledge [2, p. 149-150]. The same can be said about the indication of Diogenes Laertius that Pythagoras said that he had lived earlier in the guise of the ancient shaman Germotim [1, p. 310]. that the "soul" or "guardian spirit" of a deceased old shaman can infuse a living shaman, thereby increasing his abilities and knowledge [2, p. 149-150]. The same can be said about the indication of Diogenes Laertius that Pythagoras said that he had lived earlier in the guise of the ancient shaman Germotim [1, p. 310].

It is known that Pythagoras founded a kind of religious order - a community that included both men and women, and where they led a lifestyle completely determined by the expectation of a posthumous existence. Similar societies existed before Pythagoras - for example, established by Zalmoxis in Thrace, where he gathered "the best citizens" and taught them, not that the human soul is generally immortal, but that they and their descendants will live forever (Herodotus IV 93 , 95; Plato. Charmides 156). These were specially selected people, a kind of "spiritual elite". The real Zalmoxis may have been a heroized shaman that was already distant for the Pythagoreans of the past. The later tradition also speaks of the connection between Pythagoras and

another native of the north - the shaman Abaris, and endows Pythagoras with such shamanic abilities as the gift of prophecy, biolocation and the ability to heal people with the help of magic; according to the same tradition, Pythagoras traveled to the world of spirits [2, p. 150]. Porfiry writes: "It is also said that he accurately predicted earthquakes, quickly stopped general diseases, averted hurricanes and hail, tamed rivers and sea waves; and Empedocles, Epimenides and Abarides took it over from him, who also did this more than once - it was not for nothing that Empedocles was nicknamed the Windbreaker, Epimenides the Purifier, Abarid the Air Runner, as if he had received an arrow from Apollo on which he flew rivers, and the sea, and off-road, as if running through the air. Some people think that Pythagoras did the same, when, on the same day, I talked with students both in Metapont and in Tavromenia "[8, p. 420]. It is impossible to neglect the data that directly indicate the shamanic nature of the activities of Pythagoras and his followers. This is evidenced by the identification of Pythagoras himself with Apollo Hyperborean, the shamanic foundations of the cult of which, like the cult of Apollo the Doctor in the Northern Black Sea region, can be considered proven, including in the medical sense [4]. No wonder the famous "Hippocratic Oath" was born, as is now established, in the Pythagorean environment and began with the words: "I swear by Apollo the Physician ...". Pythagoras and his school most clearly demonstrate the continuity of the foundations of ancient medicine, which originated in the shamanistic environment of the Northern Black Sea region [5]. Very little is known about the medical skills of Pythagoras himself. According to Diogenes Laertius: "It was he who brought the geometry to perfection <...>. He paid most attention to the numerical side of this science. <...> He did not neglect the science of healing either. They say that he was the first to keep the fighters on meat food, and the first of them - Eurymenes, while they used to strengthen the body with dry figs, soft cheese and wheat bread. <...> Most of all, he commanded not to eat rubella, not to eat black-tails (these are fish - erythia and melanur, dedicated, like the sea swallow - trigla, according to Iamblichus, to the underground gods - V.L.), to refrain from the heart and from beans, and sometimes (according to Aristotle) also from the uterus and the sea swallow. He himself, as some say, was content only with honey or honeycombs or bread, did not touch wine in the daytime, for a snack he ate boiled and raw vegetables, and occasionally fish "[1, p. 310, 312]. As you can see, Pythagoras paid sufficient attention to the diet of athletes, for example, the aforementioned Samos athlete Eurymenos, who, thanks to the advice of Pythagoras, despite his small stature, managed to overcome and defeat many tall opponents at the Olympic Games. The fact is that the rest of the athletes, according to the old custom, ate cheese and figs, and Eurymenus was the first to eat the amount of meat assigned by Pythagoras every day and from this to gain strength [8, p. 418].

But these prohibitions were of a magical, and not physiologically justified nature, as is evident from Porfiry's message: "Do not eat the inappropriate, namely, neither born, nor increment, nor beginning, nor completion, nor what is the fundamental principle of everything" - by this he forbade eating from sacrificial animals the loins, testicles, uterus, bone marrow, legs and head: he called the loins the primary principle, for animals

hold on to them, as on a support; by birth - the testicles and uterus, by the power of which all living things arise; increment - bone marrow, because it is the cause of growth for every animal; the beginning is the legs, and the end is the head, in which there is supreme power over the whole body. He forbade touching beans, just like human flesh. The reason for this, they say, he explained as follows: when the universal beginning and origin was violated, then much in the earth merged together, condensed and rotted, and then from this originated and separated again - animals were born, plants germinated and then from one and that the same humus arose people and sprouted beans. And undoubted evidence of this he gave the following: if you chew a bean and put the gum out for a while in the heat of the sun, and then come closer, you can smell the smell of human blood; If, in the very bloom of the beans, you take a flower that has already turned dark, put it in an earthen vessel, close the lid and bury it in the ground for ninety days, and then dig it up and open it, then instead of a bean, it will contain a child's head or a female womb. In addition to beans, he forbade eating various other things - nettles, trigla fish, and almost everything that is caught in the sea "[8, p. 423]. So the meat diet of athletes, first introduced by Pythagoras, is perhaps the first example in history when ideology retreated to pragmatics, in this case, athletic competitions. Porfiry also has an interesting message about how Pythagoras himself ate: "At breakfast he ate honeycomb, at dinner - millet or barley bread, boiled or raw vegetables, occasionally sacrificial meat, and even then not from any part of the animal. Intending to go to the sanctuaries of the gods and stay there for a long time, he took remedies for hunger and thirst; he made a remedy for hunger from poppy seed, sesame, the shell of sea onions, washed before he himself cleansed everything around, from asphodel flowers, mallow leaves, barley and peas, chopped in equal shares and diluted in Himmeth honey; a remedy for thirst - from cucumber seed, juicy grapes with elongated seeds, from coriander color, mallow and purslane seeds, grated cheese, flour sifting and milk cream mixed with honey from the islands. This composition, he said, was taught by Demeter Hercules when he was sent to waterless Libya "[8, p. 421-422]. Note that Pythagoras himself ate meat, but this rarely happened and, obviously, was only part of the sacrificial offering to the gods. how he himself cleansed everything around, from asphodel flowers, mallow leaves, barley and peas, chopped in equal shares and diluted in Himmeth honey; a remedy for thirst - from cucumber seed, juicy grapes with elongated seeds, from coriander color, mallow and purslane seeds, grated cheese, flour sifting and milk cream mixed with honey from the islands. This composition, he said, was taught by Demeter Hercules when he was sent to waterless Libya "[8, p. 421-422]. Note that Pythagoras himself ate meat, but this rarely happened and, obviously, was only part of the sacrificial offering to the gods. mallow and purslane seeds, grated cheese, flour sifting and milk cream mixed with honey from the islands. This composition, he said, was taught by Demeter Hercules when he was sent to waterless Libya "[8, p. 421-422]. Note that Pythagoras himself ate meat, but this rarely happened and, obviously, was only part of the sacrificial offering to the gods. mallow and purslane seeds, grated cheese, flour sifting and milk cream mixed with honey from the islands. This composition, he said, was taught by Demeter Hercules when he was sent to waterless Libya "[8, p. 421-422]. Note that Pythagoras himself ate meat, but this rarely happened and, obviously, was only part of the sacrificial offering to the gods.

Pythagoras attached great importance to "cleansing": this is how he called the treatment music, Iamblichus points out [11, p. 493]. But, like most dietary instructions, and its use for the treatment of music, had a magical character: "And with songs, melodies and lyre playing, he soothed both mental and bodily ailments; he taught this to his friends. <...> When they were in good health, he talked to them; when they were sick in body, he treated them; when with his soul, he consoled them, as said, some with conspiracies and spells, and others with music. From bodily ailments he had tunes with which he knew how to relieve the suffering, and there were those that helped to forget pain, soften anger and calm lust "[8, p. 420]. Unfortunately, the surviving information about the medical skills and discoveries of Pythagoras is limited to this. About his treatment of specific diseases, in addition to the message of Porfiry:

to follow him there and heal him "[8, p. 425], nothing is known. The Pythagoreans believed in the transmigration of souls, refused meat food, wore white clothes, performed mysterious rituals that excluded the presence of the uninitiated. Those who wished to join their teachings underwent long tests, calling themselves first acusmatics (listeners), then, at the second stage, mathematicians. Diogenes Laertius points out: "They spent five years in silence, only listening to the speeches of Pythagoras, but not seeing him, until they passed the tests" [1, p. 309]. Iamblichus clarifies: first there were three years of testing, then five years of apprenticeship in silence and behind the curtain, then access to esoteric knowledge. He, in the most detail of the ancient authors, tells about the classes throughout the day, which Pythagoras assigned to his students. To avoid defects in interpretation, especially in health and medical terms, it is advisable to cite this information almost entirely: "The Pythagoreans took their morning walks alone, and in places where there was suitable peace and quiet, where temples and sacred groves or some other fence. For they believed that one should not meet with anyone before ordering and harmonizing consciousness, and it is precisely such silence that contributes to the ordering of consciousness; on the contrary, communication with the crowd immediately after the ascent, in their opinion, causes confusion of the spirit. And only after the morning walk they met each other mainly in churches <...> This time they used to teach and study, as well as to correct morals. After such a pastime, they turned to taking care of the body. The majority oiled themselves and practiced running, the minority also wrestling - in the gardens and groves, others with dumbbells or in boxing with a shadow (χειρονομία), choosing exercises in such a way that they contribute to strengthening the body. For breakfast, they ate bread with honey or honeycomb, and did not drink wine during the day. The time after breakfast was devoted to the affairs of state <...> in the hours after breakfast they tried to finish all their affairs. And with the onset of evening, they again went for walks, but now not alone, but in twos or threes, recalling lessons, practicing good deeds. After the walk, they took a bath and went to joint meals, and no more than ten people gathered at one meal. <...> We proceeded to dinner in order to dine before sunset. They ate wine, barley cakes, [wheat] bread, meat and vegetables, both boiled and raw. Meat was served only for sacrificial animals to be slaughtered, and they rarely eaten fish, since some of its species are harmful to health due to known reasons. After dinner, libations were made, and then they began to read. According to custom, the youngest read, and the oldest watched what should and should not be read. Before leaving, the cupbearer poured them wine for libation, and after the libation, the eldest recited the following commandments: do not harm or destroy domestic and fruit plants, as well as animals that do not harm the human race, do not harm or destroy them. After that, everyone went home. The clothes were white and clean. Linen served as bedding, sheepskin was not used. <...> They made sure that the bodies [always] were in the same state and would not be either skinny or fat: in this they saw a sign of a wrong life.

They drove away anger, despondency and anxiety, and they had a commandment: for those with intelligence, none of human passions should be unexpected, but one should expect (i.e. foresee) everything over which they have no control. If anger, sadness, or something like that was found on them, then they went away and, left alone with themselves, tried to digest passion and heal from it. <...> The Pythagoreans refrained from crying, tears and everything like that, and neither greed, nor lust, nor anger, nor ambition, nor anything like that ever caused strife among them, but all the Pythagoreans treated each other like a good father applies to children. <...> Of the sciences, the Pythagoreans most of all appreciated music, medicine and mantics (the art of fortune telling - V.L.). <...> From medicine, the dietary type was most favored, and in it they were extremely scrupulous. First of all, they aimed to study the signs of proper proportion of drinking, eating and resting. Then they were almost the first to study and define [dietary norms] for cooking. More than their predecessors, the Pythagoreans used cataplasms (ointments - V.L.), and less approved pharmaceuticals and from medicines they used mainly anti-suppurative agents, and incisions and cauterization (i.e., surgical intervention - V.L.) approved least of all. Spells were also used against some diseases. They also believed that music had a great healing effect on health, as long as it was used in the right mode. Selected quotations from Homer and Hesiod were also used to correct the soul "[11, p. 491-493, 495]. Aristoxenus, information about which dates back to the Pythagoreans of the first half of the 4th century. BC, indicates (fr. 27) that "the food of the Pythagoreans was bread and honey - the one who takes this food constantly protects himself from diseases best of all." One of the features of Pythagorean medicine is the parallelism she discovered between the effects of diet and music, aimed at maintaining physical and mental balance. Among those who shared the Pythagorean idea of the healing effect of music were not only philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus), but also professional doctors. From the story of Philip of Opuntsky about the last days of Plato, it follows that, being sick with a fever and hoping to be cured of it with music, he invited a Chaldean musician accompanied by a flute player. Later, music therapy will be effectively practiced by the doctors of the Alexandria Museum. In general, according to Aristoxenus, Pythagorean medicine combined gymnastics, nutrition, and music. The natural methods used by the Pythagorean doctors could not seriously harm the patients, which was extremely important in conditions of the low effectiveness of the available medical devices. They, at least, did not hang their patients upside down, advise them not to cross the river on a stormy night, or to treat a spleen tumor by sawing wood for a month, as some hippocratic doctors did. The list of Pythagoreans who wrote on medical topics, as well as doctors who are in one way or another close to this school, covers almost all Italian and Sicilian doctors known to us at the end of the 6th-first half of the 5th centuries. BC. Thus, Italian medicine of this time turns out to be, if not identical to Pythagorean medicine, then at least closely related to it. Moreover, Alcmaeon of Croton, the most famous of the Pythagorean physicians - the author of the first medical essay, the content

which we know [3, p. 276-279, 272-273].

It is known that research activities in Ancient Greece were concentrated in Musei. One of them was founded by the Pythagoreans in Tarentum, Italy, and was visited by Plato, meeting with Archytus of Tarentum. It is known that the largest Pythagorean community lived in Tarentum - Iamblichus gives a list of 45 people. Among them we see such celebrities as the astronomer Philolaus, who created the Pythagorean model of the Universe, the doctors Lycon and Ikkos. The latter, like Pythagoras, developed therapeutic diets and practiced health-improving gymnastics, and also, possibly, was the author of the first book on dietetics as the basis for training athletes. Plato in "Laws" (839s) spoke with respect about Ikkos, a famous athlete in his youth, and then a gymnastics teacher and doctor. The Greeks spoke of modest dinners as "Ikkos's dinner"; during the competition, he observed a strict diet and abstinence. Dietetics did not exist in Greece before the classical period. Plato speaks of it as a "newfangled" invention ("Republic" 405c) and calls it the founder Herodicus of Selimbria (born about 490 BC); meanwhile, Herodicus was younger than not only Democeda and Alcmeon, but also Ikkos. The origin of Greek dietetics has long been traditionally associated with the practice of training athletes, for which Croton was famous just in the second half of the 6th - first half of the 5th centuries. BC. Of course, the ancient Greek "sports medicine" practiced by the pedotribes involved more than just nutrition. It was supposed to include the treatment of injuries often received in wrestling and fistfights. To this environment belonged as the Pythagorean winners of the Olympic Games Milo and Ikkos, and Croton doctors Democeda and Alcmeon [9, p. 168-169; 3, p. 272, 278-281]. The main merit of the Pythagorean school in the creation of, probably, the world's first system of dietetics. True, Herodotus says (II, 77) that the Egyptians see the cause of some diseases in the food they eat, but the existence of dietetics is not confirmed by Egyptian materials. During the Zhou dynasty in China, dietetics was also considered the main branch of medicine, and even a corresponding specialization of doctors appeared [10, p. 147, 179, 180, 493]. However, the chronicles do not say in which particular century (from a very long period of 1027–249 BC), so it is permissible to assume that this happened, on a historical scale, almost simultaneously with the insights of the Pythagoreans. The reason for this was, obviously, the similarity of the theoretical provisions of dietetics in ancient China and Greece. In the latter, they were developed by immigrants from the Pythagorean school Alcmeon and Empedocles at the turn of the 6th-5th centuries. BC. The unity of the approaches of ancient scientists in regions that are very distant from each other should serve as a guarantee of the success of modern integrative medicine. In this regard, the use of traditional dietetics as a basic method of recovery is seen as very promising. Its practical aspects, with the use of products common for Russians, including in the preparation of athletes, were described in detail by us earlier [7]. In this regard, the use of traditional dietetics as a basic method of recovery is seen as very promising. Its practical aspects, with the use of products common for Russians, including in the preparation of athletes, were described in detail by us earlier [7]. In this regard, the use of traditional dietetics as a basic method of recovery is seen as very promising. Its practical aspects, with the use of products common for Russians, including in the preparation of athletes, were described in detail by us earlier [7].

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Lazarenko, V.G. Medical achievements of the Pythagorean school / V.G. Lazarenko // Traditional medicine. - 2013. - No. 2 (33). - S.50-55.

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