

Italian Spetiale/Medical Doctor in the 17th/18th Century: Culture, Food and Environment or a Better Healthness

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Abstract

The way of thinking and working of the ancient pharmacists and medical doctors have been re-pored together with some “curious” prescriptions, comparing and focusing their culture to the actual way of living. However, their mentality regarding the air to breathe, the food to eat, the water to drink and the better condition of the environment where to live were just the same considered and discussed to day from scientists, mass media and normal citizens. And this is really impressive.

Keywords: Culture; Health; Environment; Wellbeing; Pharmacist; Medical doctor; *Spetiale*.

Introduction

In the 18th Century the “*Spetiale*” was a pharmacist who, having a chemical/medical culture, was able to make and distribute herbs, natural potions and drugs to be used in different diseases.

As written into an ancient book (“*Compendio*”) of Fr. Domenico Auda, Head Department of the St Spirito hospital in Rome (“*CapoSpeciale nell Archiospedale di San Spirito in Roma*”), the condition necessary at that time to practice the Art of *Speciaria* were: to will, be able and know (“*volere, potere e sapere*”) (Figure 1) [1,2].

Therefore, Fr. Auda reported the many fatigues and pains he suffered to become an expert *Spetiale* (“*molte fatiche e patimenti*”) during the ten years of his going through different countries, including France, Lombardy and Italy. Finally the monk, arrived at the Pharmacy of St Spirito hospital in Rome where stopped his traveling for achieving his own aim to learn the majority of Chemistry, written and reported in the book (*caminando diverse parti di Francia, Lombardia e Italia riducendomi finalmente nella Spetiaria dell’ Hospedale di San Spirito in Roma. Dove imparai la maggior parte della Chimica chehoscritto in questo Compendio*) (Figure 2) [1,2]. But the ancient pharmacists’ culture was



Figure 1: Ancient book written from the Spetiale Fr Domenico Auda in the year 1716.

also based on the knowledge to comply the many formalities necessary to select and use all the ingredients useful to improve and ameliorate the life conditions by the pharmaceutical "Art", as requested from an expert *speciale* (*Perpoterfar quest'arte comesirichiede*).



Figure 2: Traveling through Francia, Lombardia e Italia to practice the pharmaceutical Art.

Moreover it's interesting to know what was underlined since 1632 by a book written from the medical Medical doctor Durante Di Castor, regarding the prescription of drugs.

It's was showed that their right use might be of great interest to maintain the global body health in good condition from the head to foot. For living longer to a great age (Prattica Medicinale, nellaquale sifamentione di tuttel'infermità delcorpo humano, dalla Cimadella Testa, fin'allepiante de'piedi. ecifavivere lung tempo) (Figure 3) [3]. Therefore and just as the actual way of thinking, it was taken in great consideration the contemporary habitude to drink clean water, eat right food in an environment free of pollution with the aim to range a better way of living. All these conditions, given us by God at our birth, result necessary to maitain the global healthfulness for achieving the aim to spend one' time in a better and longer way the life given from God at our birth (La Sanità, elavitalunga non solo sipromette anoidalCielo nelprincipio delnascernostro, ma la nostra diligenza ancoracela procurache ciascuno sappiaquali Regole nelvitto seruar si debbano) (Figure 4) [3].

Therefore the purity of air breathed was considered more important than other thinks, including the drugs for maintaining an healthy body as well as the water we drink and food we eat (IAerechenecirconda, emutaicorpinostri piùchealcul'altracosa. eperquestomerita etesidicechel'Aerèèpiu nociuodelmangiare, edelbere) (Figure 4) [3]. Soundness of body and mind and a longer to a great age, in fact, depends from our way of working, producing and living (Lasanitàdunque, altrononèche unnatural eaffetto, peril qualesifanno lenostreattioni, oueroe'la cagionedelle operazioninostre).

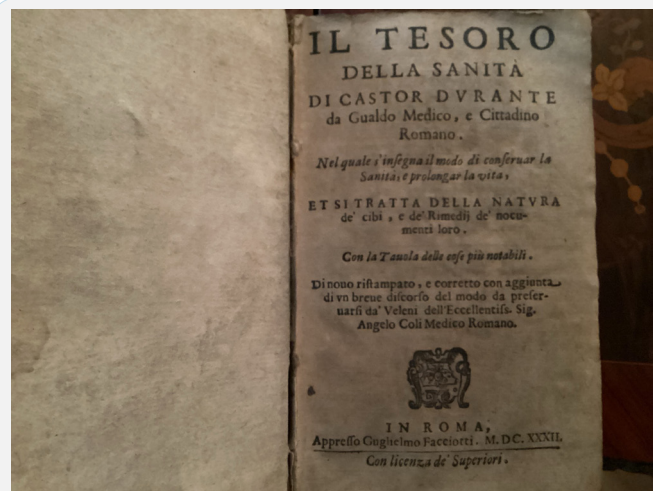


Figure 3: The Book on Wellness by the physician Durante Di Castor.



Figure 4: Soundness depends from our way of living.

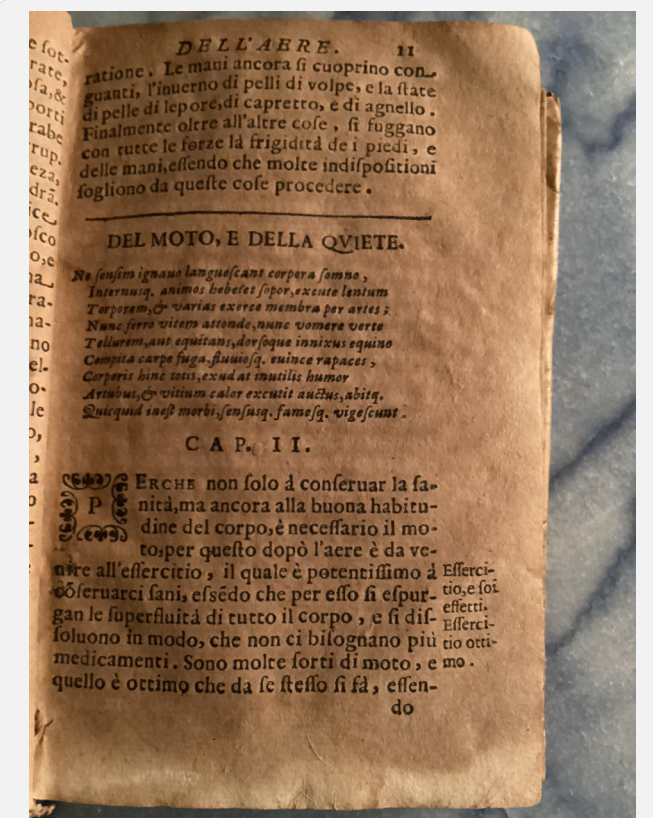


Figure 5: Exercises and walking to take drug away.

Moreover for the body healthness, it's considered a good habitude to walk every day and take different exercises both useful to avoid the use of drugs. However, the exercises have to be taken by calibrated nimble movements, just as fishing, to maintain a young appearance, fortify both body and mind for keeping old age away (*a conferuarlasanit , ma ancora alla buonahabitudine delcorpo, e'necessario ilmoto. inmodoche noncibisognano pi medicamenti. l'esercitio temperato. as fishing. e'quelloche conferisce allasanit , perch  corroborata calor natural. vinifica lagiouentu, alleggerisce lavecchiezza. fortifica isensi e nerui*) (Figure 5) [3].

In addition and just as it may happen by excessive physical exercises, the idleness might be another cause of disease, capable to slow down the global body efficiency, weight down and weaken its structures, modifying the blood flow also (*l'otioconsuma, e rompeaccresce la flemmanellevene, ingrassailcorpo. e l'indebolisce*). Therefore, the excessive stillness considered idleness may result of great damage not only for the body but also for the soul, making women and men negligent, lazy, forgetful and ignorant (*lasouerchia quiete, chiamataotio, e' di grandissimo nocumento nonsoloa'corpi, maall'animo ancora, percioche fa' gl'huomini neglimenti, pigri, ignoranti, scordeuelli*). (Figure 6) [6]. It's interesting to underline that nothing is changed from the 17th century up to day during which the majority of scientists and massmedia have finally understood the importance to eat the right food, drink clean water, breathe pure air in a natural safe environment, for maintaining healthness, live longer and take away old age and climate disasters [4,5]. Moreover, the same recommendations were reported by ancient Chinese books that, focused on the Traditional Chinese Medicine, have evidenced the importance to maintain a beauty and healthy body, applying cosmetics on the skin and eating the right food, necessary to avoid the use of drugs. At this purpose it might result of historical interest some ancient and curious medical and cosmetic formulations used, for example, in Rome in the year 1612 (Figure 7) [1-3] as well as the beauty products that, recovered in Chinese jars, were made and packed in the periods between 770-476 BC (Figure 8) [8].

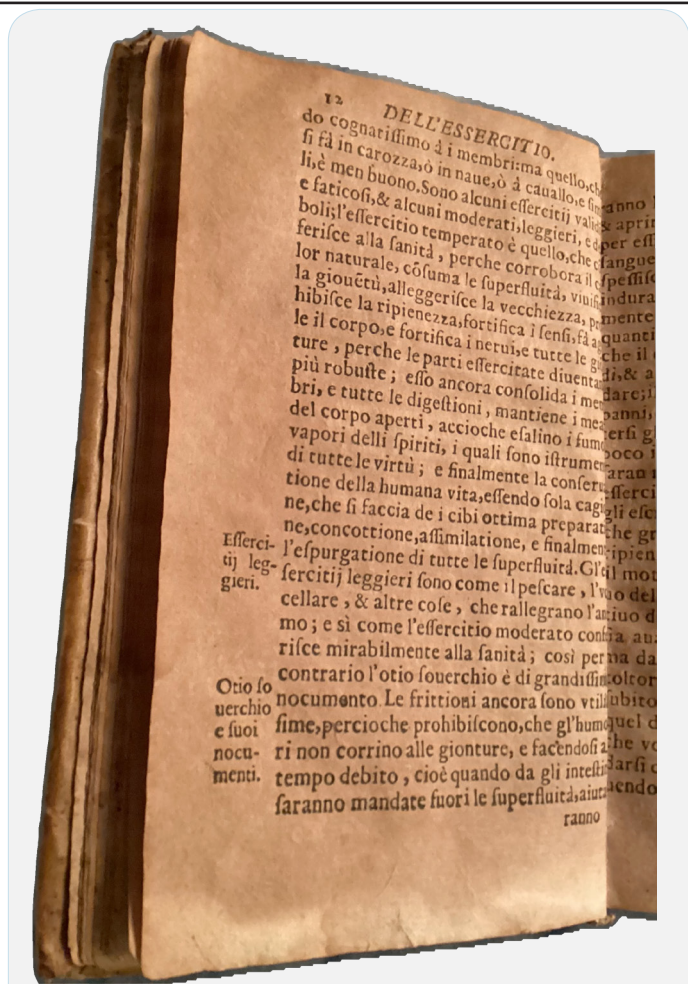


Figure 6: The excessive exercises and idleness is another cause that slow down the body efficiency.

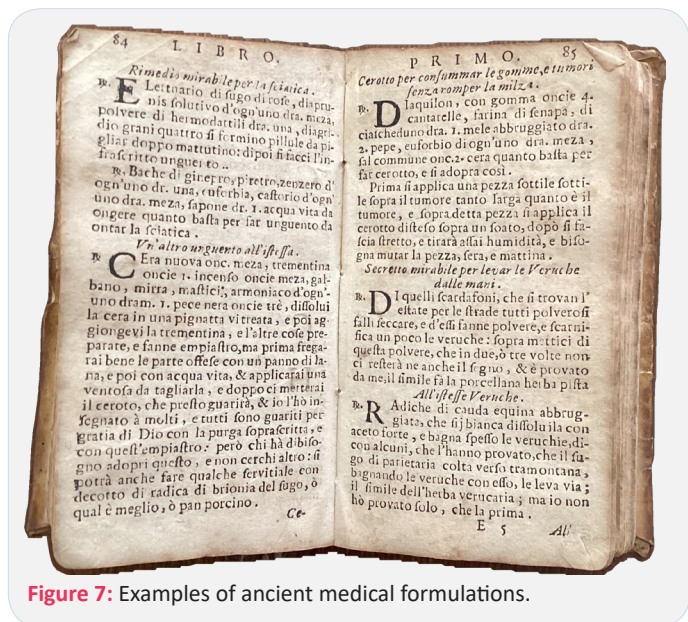


Figure 7: Examples of ancient medical formulations.

Surprising secret to eliminate the warts from the hands

Regarding the black-beetles that it's possible to find dusty on the road during the summer, put them to dry and reduce in powder two or three times, so that no mark or scar will remain, & it's has been shown by myself. *Secretto mirabile perle varle Veruche dalle mani* (Di quelli scardafoni che si trovano l'estate per le strade tutti, falli seccare, e d'essi fannepolvere, e scarnifica un poco le veruche: Sopra mettici di quella polvere, che in due, o



Figure 8: Ancient jars that, recovered in a landscape of the Liujawa site in China, seem to contain specialized cosmetics (Courtesy of Han et al. [7]).

tre volte non ci resterà ne anche il segno, & e' provato da me).

Conclusion

In conclusion we hope this short paper has been able to show that the formalities, accepted by the ancient pharmacists and medical dictators and considered necessary for maintaining an heathy body/mind, were just the same of the majority of the West and East professionals and people of the actual society.

On other hand, drugs and cosmetics were really "unusually" and certainly not in line with the actual scientific knowledge and technologies. However, the ancient *Spetiale* had the same actual mentality regarding the wellness and wellbeing, underlying the importance to eat selected food in the right quantity, to drink clean water and to live in a natural environment free from any kind of pollution. And this, in our opinion, is really impressive.

Declarations

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