THE CONCEPT OF THE SANUS HOMO IN THE DE MEDICINA OF CELSUS

NADINE BRAND

Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
University of Stellenbosch

Supervisor
Dr JC Zietsman (University of Stellenbosch)
Co-supervisor
Prof L Cilliers (University of the Free State)

March 2007
Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree

Signed: ____________________
Date:    ____________________
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss the concept of the *sanus homo* as presented by Celsus in the *de Medicina*.

The first (introductory) chapter outlines the importance of Celsus’ *de Medicina* in the study of Roman medicine. The *de Medicina* is one of five treatises on various subjects written by Aulus Cornelius Celsus in the 1st century AD. When scientific Greek and Latin texts were recovered during the Renaissance, the text of the *de Medicina* was one of the first medical texts to be put into print. Medical practitioners, ancient, medieval and modern, have been universal in their opinion that Celsus’ descriptions are correct, precise and complete, and of practical use.

Furthermore a brief outline of the composition of this important work is also given in this chapter. The preface (*Prooemium*) of the *de Medicina* forms a unique component of the work and gives the reader insight into the thoughts and personality of its author. The rest of the *de Medicina* - eight books, which Celsus introduces by systematically setting out the contents of each particular book - is divided into three parts: health preservation, diseases and healing. Each part, in turn, is introduced by a schematic outline for that part.

Chapter 2 gives the historic background of the author and his works as evaluated by his contemporaries as well as later authors. The *de Medicina* is a compilation of Hellenistic medical theory, adapted for the practical Roman attitude; Celsus often simplifies a complicated theoretical discussion by adding a decidedly practical guideline. He adopts original medical Greek terminology in a Latin that is clear and concise with “elegance and polish”, *non sine cultu ac nitore* (Quintilian *Inst.* 10.1.124).

The third chapter is a translation of Book 1 of the *de Medicina*. For this study, Book 1, which deals with health preservation and the *sanus homo*, is the most important. Translation of a text brings the translator closer to the source language and the original author than merely using a translation at hand. If, in addition, the translation is in outdated idiom it becomes even more difficult to research and interpret the author’s purpose. Therefore a translation of Book 1
of the *de Medicina* was undertaken to be able to better comprehend and interpret Celsus’ perception of the *sanus homo*.

In Chapter 4, the major part of this thesis, the concept of the *sanus homo* is analysed as presented by Celsus. The obvious influence of his predecessors as well as his contemporaries, which he himself acknowledges, is explored.

In the *de Medicina*, a scientific instruction manual, Celsus draws on vocabulary from the medical register that had emerged by his time. He makes use of original Greek medical terminology as well as innovative Latin adaptations for his Roman readers. Although the type of text (technical) and subject matter (medicine) call for appropriate forms of expression, Celsus maintains his reader’s interest by constant variation in tone and intricacy of the language; many interesting literary tools and devices which he uses are pointed out.
OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie tesis is om die begrip die *sanus homo*, soos Celsus dit in die *de Medicina* beskryf, krities te bespreek.

Die eerste (inleidende) hoofstuk gee ‘n uiteensetting van die belangrikheid van die *de Medicina* in die studie van die Romeinse geneeskunde. Die *de Medicina* beslaan een afdeling van vyf verhandelinge (oor verskeie onderwerpe) wat gedurende die 1ste eeu nC deur Aulus Cornelius Celsus opgeteken is. Nadat Griekse en Romeinse wetenskaplike tekste gedurende die Renaissance herwin is, was die *de Medicina* een van die eerste mediese tekste wat in gedrukte vorm verskyn het. Mediese praktising - antiek, middeleeus en modern - het Celsus se beskrywings as akkuraat, volledig en van praktiese waarde beskou.

In die eerste hoofstuk word ook ‘n kort oorsig van die struktuur van hierdie belangrike werk gegee. Die voorwoord (*Prooemium*) van die *de Medicina* is ‘n unieke element van die werk as geheel en gee die leser ‘n blik op die denke en persoonlikheid van die skrywer. Die res van die werk bestaan uit drie afdelings: handhawing van gesondheid, siektes en genesing, wat elk ingelei word deur ‘n opsomming. Die hele werk bestaan uit agt boeke met ‘n planmatige oorsig van die inhoud aan die begin van elke boek.

Hoofstuk 2 gee ‘n historiese oorsig oor die skrywer en sy werke soos dit deur sy tydgenote en later skrywers weergegee is. In die *de Medicina* pas Celsus ‘n versameling Hellenistiese mediese teorieë aan vir sy praktiese Romeinse leser deur dikwels ingewikkelde teoretiese besprekings te vereenvoudig en praktiese riglyne by te voeg. Hy vervang die oorspronklike Griekse terminologie met verstaanbare, akkurate en keurige Latyn, *non sine cultu ac nitore* (*Quintilianus Inst. 10.1.124*).

Hoofstuk 3 is ‘n vertaling van Boek 1 van die *de Medicina*. Boek 1 is die belangrikste boek vir hierdie studie aangesien die kern daarvan die handhawing van gesondheid en die *sanus homo* is. Vertaling van ‘n teks gee die vertaler ‘n beter aanvoeling vir die skrywer en sy brontaal: dit in teenstelling met die gebruik van ‘n bestaande vertaling, veral as die vertaling
in verouderde idioom is. Boek 1 is dus vertaal om Celsus se siening van die *sanus homo* beter te verstaan en te vertolk.

In Hoofstuk 4, wat die grootste gedeelte van hierdie tesis beslaan, word die begrip van die *sanus homo*, soos deur Celsus uiteengesit, verken. Die invloed en menings van sy voorgangers en tydgenote aan wie hy erkenning gee, word ook bespreek.

Ten slotte word daarop gewys dat Celsus in die *de Medicina*, ‘n wetenskaplike handleiding, woordeskat gebruik uit die mediese register wat reeds teen daardie tyd goed ontwikkel was. Hy maak gebruik van Griekse leenwoorde asook innoverende Latynse aanpassings vir sy Romeinse leersers. Alhoewel die tipe teks (tegnies van aard) en die inhoud (geneeskunde) ‘n toepaslike skryfstyl vereis, behou Celsus sy leser se aandag deur variasie in sy taal- en woordgebruik en die gebruik van interessante literêre tegnieke.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks for the assistance, support and guidance of the following people:

My two supervisors, Dr Christoff Zietsman and Prof Louise Cilliers for professional guidance and personal encouragement, as well as for checking and correcting drafts so patiently. They have made the research for this thesis a most rewarding and enjoyable experience. I was particularly privileged to have the input of Prof Cilliers who generously shared her expertise in the specialised field of ancient medicine.

Sue Watermeyer for her careful reading and editing of the draft manuscript. Her linguistic and typographical suggestions were very helpful. Nicky Palmer for contributing to the proofreading.

My children, Jacques, Charl, Michelle and Anneke for their interest, encouragement and patience while I was otherwise occupied. Thank you to Jacques, with his computer skills, who helped me with the technical details of the document.

My husband, Coenie, for his support and advice from beginning to end even under difficult circumstances at times. I found his scientific perspective to my topic refreshing.

Finally, the late Dr Margaret Mezzabotta of the University of Cape Town who introduced me to the de Medicina of Celsus many years ago. Her comment was: “The material in Celsus is so fascinating that you would not have a dull moment!”
ABBREVIATIONS


Abbreviations for titles of journals are those employed by the compiler of L’Année Philologique.
CONTENTS

Abstract
Opsomming
Acknowledgements
Abbreviations

1 INTRODUCTION 1
1.1 Textual transmission 1
1.2 Celsus’ significance in the study of medicine 4
1.3 Preface of the de Medicina 6
1.4 The main theme - health, disease and healing 8

2 THE AUTHOR, HIS CONTEMPORARIES AND THE FIVE ARTES 10
2.1 Biographical background 10
2.2 Quintilian 11
2.2.1 de Rhetorica and de Philosophia 13
2.3 Columella 16
2.3.1 de Agricultura 16
2.4 Pliny the Elder 18
2.5 Celsus 19
2.5.1 de Medicina 19
2.5.2 Celsus as author 22
2.5.3 Greek medical terminology 26
2.5.3.1 Retaining the original Greek 26
2.5.3.2 Latin replacements for Greek terms 28
2.6 Conclusion 32

3 TEXT AND TRANSLATION 34
3.1 Outline of relevant texts 34
3.2 Text and translation: Celsus’ de Medicina Book 1 36

I qualiter se sanus agere debeat 37
1 How a healthy person should conduct himself 38

II qualiter se agere debeant qui stomacho imbecilles sunt 39
2 How those who have a weak stomach should conduct themselves 40

III novae res 43
3 Altered circumstances 44
IV de capite 61
4 The head 62
V de lippitudo quae gravedinem tollit 63
5 Chronic eye inflammation 64
VI de alvo soluto 65
6 Upset stomach 66
VII de dolore intestini interioris 65
7 Pain of the intestine 66
VIII de stomacho 67
8 The stomach 68
IX de dolore nervorum vel podagra 69
9 Pain in the sinews or podagra 70
X observatio adversus pestilentiam 71
10 Precaution during an epidemic 72

4 THE CONCEPT OF THE SANUS HOMO 73
4.1 Introduction 73
4.2 Tiberius 75
4.3 Aesculapius 76
4.4 Hippocrates 77
4.5 Asclepiades 79
4.6 Rationalists and Empirics 81
4.7 Celsus 84
4.7.1 Introduction 84
4.7.2 Folklore 86
4.7.3 Exercise 89
4.7.4 Diet 93
4.7.4.1 Digestion 94
4.7.5 Water 97
4.7.5.1 Bathing 99
4.7.6 Vomiting and purging 101
4.7.7 Insania 104
4.8 Conclusion 106

5 CONCLUSION 110

BIBLIOGRAPHY 112
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Textual transmission

There are indications of an extensive literature on ancient Greek and Roman medicine which is now mostly lost. The material available today is a small part of what once existed. The views of many influential and often controversial scholars\(^1\) have been preserved only in the writings of others, often their opponents. The survival of ancient literature depended on the copying and duplication of the material as well as on individuals or institutions buying and preserving it. Since oral communication was predominant, much of Greek and Roman medicine was not recorded in written form, and furthermore the readership of these works was limited because literacy was often restricted to the male population in the higher ranks of society.

A work was not necessarily preserved for its medical value, but also for its age, its authority or reputation and as a link with a distant past. There are many reasons for the loss of scientific writing: a work may have been deemed too specialized or was supplanted by new, more up to date developments. By AD 500 books had become a rarity because of the hazards of everyday life e.g. fires, wars, conquests, high taxation and economic collapse. Preservation of classical Latin learning was sanctioned and maintained by monasteries and church libraries. Few books on science and medicine were copied and even fewer compiled, since intellectual activity other than theology had apparently ceased.

In the fifteenth century the humanists showed renewed interest in forgotten Greek and Latin classical texts. Many manuscript copies were made for those interested in literature as well as those who were involved in particular professions, such as doctors of medicine. Antonio Beccadelli described his first reading of the *de Medicina* of Celsus in a letter to his teacher, Guarino of Verona, in April 1426 with appreciation and admiration for the work:

\(^1\) e.g. Diocles, Diphilus of Siphnos, Heraclides of Tarentum, Erasistratus, Meges of Sidon, Asclepiades of Bythinia, Satyros of Pergamum, Pelops and Lycus of Macedonia (cf. Galen’s commentary *adversus Lycum*).
... cum animi iocunditate ... mirifica eius oratio ... gravis varia figurata sublimis antiqua ... ne ipsum quidem latinae eloquentiae principem Ciceronem in hoc genere materiae ornatus luculentius atque elegantius disserere potuisse

... with a lively intellect ... his astonishing prose (style) ... dignified adorned with wide-ranging lofty figures of antiquity ... not even the celebrated authority on Latin eloquence, Cicero, could have discussed this type of subject matter more splendidly, more brilliantly and more elegantly

Guarino held a similar view:

... opus elegans summa facundia\textsuperscript{2} copia dulcedine ornatissimum

... excellent elegant work of the greatest eloquence, riches and charm

Barthlomaeus Fontius who edited the first printed edition in 1478 stated that Celsus was

... scriptor gravissimus atque eloquentissimus

... a most dignified and well-spoken writer.\textsuperscript{3}

Marx (1915:l-lviii) lists details of ten different manuscripts of the \textit{de Medicina} produced in the 15th century. He mentions a lacuna in Book 4.27.1 D on diseases of the bladder and uterus, which he found indicated in the heading "\textit{de vessica}" based on an earlier and more extensive text of Celsus. These title headings were put either at the beginning of the books or in margins and did not form part of the original work but were added by ancient copyists. Marx (1915:xxiii) suggests that the title headings in the \textit{de Medicina} were composed by a learned medical doctor (\textit{doctus medicus}) for use as an index to Celsus’ themes.

In 1973 a codex, including a complete text of Book 4 made in the fifteenth century by a Dutchman, Jakob, was described by Dionisio Ollero Granados and Umberto Capitani. This codex is considered a fine example because Jakob specialised in making copies of prose texts as commissions for wealthy

\textsuperscript{2} The word \textit{facundia} is used by Celsus himself to describe Hippocrates. See Chapter 4.4 below for Jocelyn’s (1985) comment on \textit{facundia}.

\textsuperscript{3} These three Latin quotations were taken from Jocelyn (1985:299).
collectors of classical Latin texts. It remains unknown where, when and from what he copied the eight books of the *de Medicina*. This manuscript, named T, is now in the Chapter Library of the Cathedral of Toledo and has been drawn on by translators of the *de Medicina*, such as Mudry (1982) and Serbat (1995). Jocelyn (1985) proposes that the now complete record of what Celsus wrote gives more information than previously available on the nature of this work and its intended reader.

The most recent English translation, without commentary and based on Marx’s (1915) text, was produced by Spencer in 1935 for the Loeb series. It is highly regarded and has proved useful for research of the *de Medicina* as a whole for this thesis. However, considering the importance of Book 1 for “the concept of the *sanus homo*”, a translation of Book 1 has been undertaken using the new revised Latin texts of the *Prooemium* of Mudry (1982) and Books 1 and 2 of Serbat (1995), in addition to the earlier texts of Marx (1915) and Spencer (1935). This translation with philological commentary was used as heuristic tool to comment on and interpret Celsus’ concept of the *sanus homo*, and to analyse his originality and adaptation of Greek sources for his Latin-speaking readers. According to Nord (1997:59)

> Every translation task should be accompanied by a brief that defines the conditions under which the target text should carry out its particular function.

The brief for this translation was to reproduce the content and form of Celsus’ *de Medicina* literally by means of a philological or learned translation. Necessary explanations for background about the culture and some peculiarities of the language have been pointed out in footnotes to render the translation more meaningful for the reader. Since the intended reader (target receiver, Nord 1997:32) of this translation will be a classical scholar or academic, a thorough knowledge of the source text (Latin) has been assumed. The source text has therefore been given beside the English translation for reference purposes.

---

4 Six other codices of Jakob have been identified, i.e. of Caesar, Curtius Rufus, Josephus, Justin, Paulus Orosius and Suetonius (Jocelyn1985:302).
1.2 Celsus’ significance in the study of medicine

The position and significance of Aulus Cornelius Celsus (c. 25 BC – 50 AD) in the study of medicine in antiquity have been controversial. The views range from regarding him as a mere compiler or translator of a Hellenistic medical handbook (Wellman and Marx respectively)\(^5\) to a physician who practised medicine.\(^6\) Neither of these extreme views is accepted today.\(^7\) Celsus reveals a thorough acquaintance with and understanding of Greek medicine, but expresses a definite Roman approach. Even Pliny the Elder (\textit{NH} 29.17) states that medicine was of Greek origin and carried weight among his contemporaries only if it was expressed in Greek.

As to the second view that Celsus was a physician, it is accepted that the eight books of the \textit{de Medicina} were a component of a very large body of work of more than 27 units on various kinds of skills (\textit{artes}). Jocelyn (1985:304) argues that Celsus' books on medicine catered for a purely intellectual interest in the context of a liberal education and enjoyed social prestige and that “this is no longer an interest very easy to comprehend. The evidence of its existence in Antiquity, though scanty, is sufficient”. Later, however, his work on medicine was read and used separately from the other units as a practical medical manual. Langslow (2000:47-48) believes that more credit should be given to Celsus’ expertise in medicine and compares him to “a well-connected modern technical journalist”. His contemporary, Pliny the Elder, refers to him as an \textit{auctor} and not one of the \textit{medici}.\(^8\)

Scarborough (1969:74) puts forward the idea that Celsus obtained his knowledge and expertise directly from his experience as a military physician. He refers to \textit{de Medicina} 7.5.1-5:

\(^5\) M. Wellmann (quoted in Spencer 1935a:ix), \textit{A. Cornelius Celsus, eine Quellenuntersuchung} (Berlin 1913), argues that Celsus merely copied from a certain Cassius; however he later changed his mind. Marx (1915:1xxxiv-xxiv) is of the opinion that Celsus copied from a Greek source that he actually identifies as T. Aufidius Siculus. Celsus himself does not refer to this Greek source and, since he names his main sources in the \textit{Prooemium}, Marx's argument is unconvincing.

\(^6\) Spencer (1935a:xii-xiii) summarises some of the passages from the \textit{de Medicina} as arguments for regarding Celsus as a learned and experienced medical practitioner.


\(^8\) Cf. Pliny the Elder in Chapter 2.4 below.
... tela quoque, quae inlata corporibus intus haeserunt, magno negotio saepe eiciuntur

... missiles too, which have entered the body and become fixed within, are often very troublesome to extract.\(^9\)

Another example is found in 7.33.2 where amputation is described when gangrene has set in. Spencer (1935c:471) adds an interesting footnote: “The amputation described by Celsus was often used in the war of 1914 - 1918 for stumps which had become pointed after emergency amputations. In doing the operation arteries which have already become closed are not re-opened.”

The judgement of medical practitioners, ancient, medieval and modern, has been universally of the opinion that Celsus’ descriptions are correct, precise and complete, and of practical use. Serbat (1995:lxvii-lxviii) concludes the introduction to his translation of Books 1 and 2 of the *de Medicina* with the remark that the merit of this author is not insignificant, even though he has not originated anything. Celsus has succeeded in presenting a diverse collection of information relating to medicine, gleaned from various known sources, in a coherent manner. He has constructed an impressive work and there is merit in this author.\(^10\)

Clearly the name of Celsus is seen as one to be trusted and respected, as shown in references to him by his contemporaries Quintilian, Columella, Pliny the Elder and Juvenal (see Chapter 2). In addition he is quoted by later authors such as Vegetius (4th century AD),\(^11\) Tertullian (c. 160–240 AD), Gargilius Martialis (c. 260 AD)\(^12\) and Marcellus (early 5th century AD) in his preface to *de Medicamentis*.\(^13\) According to Spencer (1935a:390), many passages similar to those of *de Medicina* Book 4 are found in “Causes and

---

\(^9\) Cf. Spencer (1935c:314): “Celsus here gives us the only information which we possess on the treatment of wounds in Roman warfare; the treatment which he describes was in most respects that followed by such well-known surgeons as Paulus Aegineta, Abulkasin and later Paré and Italian surgeons of the Renaissance even after the introduction of gunpowder had largely altered the type of wound inflicted.”


\(^11\) Celsus is quoted as authority on veterinary medicine: *Mulomedicina* 4.15.4 and on military matters: Epitome 1.8.10-12.

\(^12\) In 4.1 he describes Celsus as *Italicae disciplinae peritissimum*.

\(^13\) To Marcellus Celsus is *medicinae artis auctor* (*Med. prooem. 2*).
Symptoms of Acute Diseases” by Aretaeus (c. 120–180 AD). The works of Aretaeus of Cappadocia, a Greek physician, often reflected good sense rather than theory and he taught simple therapeutics, not unlike the principles found in Celsus.

When scientific Greek and Latin texts were recovered during the Renaissance Celsus’ text was one of the first medical texts to be put into print and the de re Medicina, as it was known then, became a popular work. When the de Medicina was printed in Florence in 1478, Celsus was referred to as Cicero medicorum14 because of his elegant style. Scarborough (1969:60) supports this worthy title with the comment that he is a superbly educated Roman aristocrat with a keen mind and elsewhere refers to him as “one of the leading intellects of his time” (Scarborough 1975:25). Daube (1974:42) expresses the view that he is “reminiscent of Leonardo da Vinci” and Spencer (1935a:x) remarks that “the writer [Celsus] did for science what Cicero did for philosophy”. Marx (1915:xciv) comments that the best example of a Latin work on medicine is that of Celsus and that much information can be gleaned about the history of Tiberius’ age while researching the de Medicina.

1.3 Preface of the de Medicina

In the first 11 paragraphs of the lengthy preface (Prooemium) Celsus briefly covers the history of medicine, interrupting the narrative at the end of paragraph 4 with a moral stance:

plerumque tamen eam bonam contigisse ob bonos mores, quos neque desidia neque luxuria vitiarant (Prooem. 4)

none the less health was generally good because of good habits, which neither indolence nor luxury had vitiated.

After the short historical overview, the rest of the preface is given to the debate, current at that time, between the different schools of medicine. Celsus

14 Although there are many subsequent references to this epithet in articles and commentaries on Celsus, its exact origin has not been ascertained.
compares the rationales ("rationalists")\textsuperscript{15} and empirici (Empirics), and being unprejudiced, states that he will adopt a middle way. He then continues to discuss a third school, the Methodists, of which Themison, one of his sources, was one of the founder members (\textit{auctor}), but Celsus believes that they are not consistent and furthermore do not consider patients as individuals. He only mentions the Methodists because of their increasing relevance during the first century of the Roman Empire.

In \textit{Prooem. 45} Celsus states his personal position:

\begin{quote}
cum haec per multa volumina perque magnas contentionis [disputationes] a medicis saepe tractata sint atque tractentur, subiciendum est, quae proxima vero videri possint. ea neque addicta alterutri opinioni sunt, neque ab utraque nimium abhorrentia, sed media quodammodo inter diversas sententias; quod in plurimis contentionibus deprehendere licet sine ambitione verum scrutantibus: ut in hac ipsa re
\end{quote}

Since all these questions have been discussed often by practitioners, in many volumes and in large and contentious disputations, and the discussion continues, it remains to add such views as may seem nearest the truth. These are neither wholly in accord with one opinion or another, nor exceedingly at variance with both, but hold a sort of intermediate place between diverse sentiments, a thing which may be observed in most controversies when men seek impartially for truth, as in the present case. (Translation Spencer 1935a)

The dimension and content of the preface, which forms a unique component of the \textit{de Medicina}, justifies separate research. The way in which the author explicitly expresses his personal opinion in dealing with the subject matter gives the reader insight into his thoughts and personality. It is clear that he is organised, methodical and thorough; moreover, he reveals a compassionate nature in his strong dislike of vivisection and dissection. The translation and

\textsuperscript{15} Nutton (2004:374) states that Celsus does not refer to the Rationalist school since he (Celsus) believes that all doctors should have the ability to reason and form an independent judgment; according to von Staden (1994:78) "there seems to be no clear evidence that any of Celsus’ ‘rationalists’ declared himself a ‘rationalist’, let alone a member of a ‘rationalist’ or ‘dogmatic school’."
commentary by Mudry (1982), *La Préface du de Medicina de Celse*, is highly esteemed\(^{16}\) and quoted by many scholars.

Celsus ends the preface with the following words: *his propositis* (“With these premises …”). He has concluded this debate and will devote the rest of the books to his main theme, healing. He introduces the rest of the *de Medicina* by announcing its division into three parts: health preservation, diseases and healing. Each part, in turn, is introduced by a schematic outline for that part and is sub-divided into books, which Celsus introduces by systematically setting out the contents of each particular book.

### 1.4 The main theme - health, disease and healing

Book 1 is the shortest book and opens with the words *sanus homo*; with these words Celsus states his intention to explore the precepts for health preservation:

\[
\text{sanitatem aegris medicina promittit} \quad (\text{de Med. Prooem. 1})
\]

the art of medicine promises health to the sick.

Cicero defines *medicina* as

\[
<\text{ars est}> \text{valetudinis} \quad (\text{Fin. 5.6})
\]

\[
<\text{it is the art}> \text{of health.}
\]

The subject matter of book 1 is an appropriate starting point for the *de Medicina* because the *sanus homo* defines disease and healing, the focus of the remainder of the work.

The medical information that Celsus conveys in the *de Medicina* is comprehensive, accurate and often very practical and useful. He condenses and arranges his subject matter meticulously and does not digress like Pliny the Elder, a contemporary author on comparable subject matter, nor is he as critical of predecessors. The fact that he explicitly acknowledges his Greek and Roman sources and builds upon their contributions strengthens the authority and integrity of his work. Wide-ranging information about all aspects

\(^{16}\) e.g. Scarborough (1998) and Serbat (1995).
of the practice of medicine, including health preservation, in first century Rome can be obtained from a reading of the *de Medicina*.

There has recently been renewed interest in Celsus’ originality and innovative medical terminology. Notable examples are Umberto Capitani (1975), Manuel Vázques-Buján (1988), Philippe Mudry (1991), Heinrich von Staden (1991) and David R. Langslow (1994). In fact Cecilia C. Mettler (1947:21) had already stated: “Celsus’ book is the first of any magnitude that we encounter in the medical literature after the time of Hippocrates. Anatomists find it important as a source book of the Latinized nomenclature of morphology”. Scarborough (1981), Jocelyn (1985) and Langslow (1994) all express the need for fresh studies, analyses and interpretations of medical texts with the same rigorous attention with which the poets and historians have been studied since the fifteenth century. Scholars have disregarded the vital distinction between their different kinds of writing and the different requirements for scientific texts (Jocelyn 1985:319).
CHAPTER 2

THE AUTHOR, HIS CONTEMPORARIES AND THE FIVE ARTES

2.1 Biographical background

There is no known biographical information about Celsus and the speculation by Marx (1915:v-vi) that he originated from Gallia Narbonensis or Spain is still the only reference available at present.¹ Serbat (1995:vii) agrees with Marx’s conjecture, quoting evidence of inscriptions with the names of the Cornelii found in those regions. Serbat alleges that Celsus belonged to the municipal nobility and possessed large vineyards near the sea, since he uses the Gallic name, marcus (also emarcus), for a certain type of vine. Pliny (NH 14.32) states that it was the plant of preference on the seashore in those regions. According to Serbat (1995:vii), however, the other references to Gaul by Celsus himself in the de Medicina [e.g. 5.27.3 B (his knowledge of a Gallic hunter’s poisons) and 7.7.15 I (cure for infected eyes: there is nothing better than the practice in Transalpine Gaul)] are as indicative of Celsus’ occasional mention of Egypt which would reveal an Egyptian origin. Indeed, Marx (1915:vi) gracefully acknowledges the “shakiness” of his assumptions:

\[ \text{interim contenti oportet simus hac conjectura} \]

in the meantime we must be content with this conjecture.

(own translation)

From testimonies by his contemporaries there is, however, much more evidence for the age he belonged to and the extent and contents of his encyclopaedic work, the Artes. Celsus reveals much about himself and his personality by the way he has planned and compiled the de Medicina.²

Celsus wrote treatises on diverse subjects of which the eight books of the de Medicina are the only works extant today. According to Celsus himself (Prooem. 1; de Med. 5.28.16 C) and his contemporaries (Columella de R. R. 1.1.14; Pliny NH 14.33), his books on agriculture were written before those on

---

² See section 2.5 in this chapter.
medicine. The other subjects, rhetoric, philosophy and the military, are not as well documented, although from the manuscripts we may deduce that all these treatises were indeed written by him and formed part of a collection. Serbat (1995:xiv) suggests the following possible arrangement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artes</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>de agricultura</td>
<td>1 to 5³</td>
<td>1 to 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de medicina</td>
<td>6 to 13</td>
<td>6 to 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de rhetorica</td>
<td>14 to 20</td>
<td>14 to 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de philosophia</td>
<td>21 to 26⁴</td>
<td>21 to 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de re militari</td>
<td>27 to (unknown)</td>
<td>27 to (unknown)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The five subjects compiled under one title, Artes, represent a unity with a definite connection in the content. If the lost works were of the same high standard as the de Medicina, the work as a whole would have been a useful guide for the homo Romanus. The books on agriculture contain advice on food production and warding off hunger and cold, the books on medicine advice for health preservation and warding off disease. The books on oratory and philosophy deal with human interaction and, should the latter fail, the books on military aspects contain advice on self-defence and subjugating the enemy.

2.2 Quintilian (c. 35 - 95 AD)

There are references to the de Re Militari in Quintilian’s Institutio Oratoria 12.11.24 but its extent is unknown. In the same passage Quintilian refers to the de Agricultura:

Cornelius Celsus … non solum de his omnibus conscripserit artibus, sed amplius rei militaris et rusticae et medicinae praeccepta reliquerit, dignus vel ipso proposito ut eum scisse omnia illa credamus

Cornelius Celsus … not only wrote about all these arts, but also left books of instruction on tactics, agriculture, and medicine: his plan alone

³ Columella 1.1.14: Cornelius totum corpus disciplinae quinque libris complexus est (“Cornelius has embraced the whole substance of the subject in five books”). Translation Ash (1948).
⁴ Cf. Marx (1915:2): Augustine, de haeresibus prol. refers to “quidam Celsus sex non parvis voluminibus absolvit <on philosophy>.”
justifies us in believing that he knew all these things!\(^5\)

Pliny the Elder as well as Columella refer to Celsus’ treatises on agriculture. The former (\textit{NH} 14.33) testifies that these works were read in Rome before 39 AD. Columella confirms this and writes that in his time two names were singled out in agriculture:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Iulius Atticus et Cornelius Celsus aetatis nostrae celeberrimi auctores} (\textit{de R. R.} 3.17.4)
\end{quote}

Julius Atticus and Cornelius Celsus, the most distinguished authorities of our time.

He repeats his impression of the \textit{de Agricultura} in 4.8.1:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Celsus, et Atticus, quos iure maxime nostra aetas probavit}
\end{quote}

Celsus and Atticus too - men whom our age has especially and rightfully approved.

Celsus himself mentions this work in the very first words of the \textit{de Medicina} as transition from the previous book:

\begin{quote}
\textit{ut alimenta sanis corporibus agricultura, sic sanitatem aegris medicina promittit} (\textit{Prooemium} 1)
\end{quote}

Just as agriculture promises nourishment to healthy bodies, so does the Art of Medicine promise health to the sick.

Spencer (1935a:2) points out that \textit{agricultura} in this passage refers to Celsus’ preceding treatise on agriculture of which only fragments remain. All these fragments have been taken up in Marx (1915:5-13) under the title \textit{Agriculturae item artium librorum I-V quae supersunt}.\(^6\) Further mention is made by Celsus in \textit{de Medicina} 5.28.16 C where he suggests that the same remedy for scabies in cattle may be used by humans:

\begin{quote}
\textit{ac si nihil aliud est, amurca ad tertiam partem decocta vel sulfur pici liquidae mixtum, sicut in pecoribus proposui, hominibus quoque scabie laborantibus opitulantur}
\end{quote}

\(^5\) All translations for Quintilian in this chapter are by Russell (2001).
\(^6\) There are 43 extracts.
And when there is nothing else at hand, lees of olive oil boiled down to one-third, or sulphur mixed with liquid pitch, as I have suggested for cattle\(^7\) is also of service for men suffering from scabies.

2.2.1 *de Rhetorica* and *de Philosophia*

Quintilian comments on the *de Rhetorica* and *de Philosophia* in the *Institutio Oratoria*, often after examples from Cicero’s works or those of other famous orators and philosophers. Although he sometimes expresses his disagreement with Celsus’ views, he says in 7.1.10:

\[ non\ plane\ dissentio\ a\ Celso \]

I am in general agreement with Celsus,

and acknowledges in 10.1.124 that Celsus was a very gifted writer:

\[ scripsit\ non\ parum\ multa\ Cornelius\ Celsus,\ Sextios\^8\ secutus,\ non\ sine\ cultu\ ac\ nitore.\]

Cornelius Celsus, a follower of the Sextii, wrote a good deal, and with elegance and polish.

Book 10 contains recommendations for the student to acquire proficiency by reading, by imitating and by writing. There is also a discussion of the benefit to be gained from the perusal of almost all authors. Celsus is mentioned in 10.1.23 where Quintilian discusses improvement by the reading of speeches on both sides of an argument.

In *Inst.* 3.1.21 he lists various Greek writers on oratory followed by the Romans and states that Cicero threw the greatest light. He adds Celsus to this gifted group as being a very precise scholar:

\[ scripsit\ de\ eadem\ materia\ non\ pauca\ Cornificius,\ aliqua\ Stertinius,\ non\ nihil\ pater\ Gallio,\ accuratius\ vero\ priores\ Gallione\ Celsus\ et\ Laenas\ et\ aetatis\ nostrae\ Verginius\ Plinius\ Tutilius\]


\(^8\) This father and son, of the Augustan age, formed a group of philosophers who combined Stoic ethics with some Pythagorean ideas. Quintilian is our authority for their influence on Celsus.
Cornificius wrote extensively, and Stertinius less extensively, on the same subject; the elder Gallio also contributed, but there is more exact scholarship to be found in Gallio’s predecessors Celsus and Laenas, and, in our own lifetime, Verginius, Pliny, and Tutilius.

In Book 9 Quintilian’s themes are figures of speech (tropes) and figures of thought (figures). Celsus, quoted nine times, is used as an important source in this book to illustrate examples of these figures. In 9.1.18 Quintilian informs his reader that Celsus adds “figures of colouring”\(^9\) to the usual two figures, which he, Quintilian, feels is quite unnecessary,

\[\textit{nimia profecto novitatis cupiditate ductus. nam quis ignorasse eruditum alloqui virum credat colores et [sententias] sensus esse?}\]

... led astray no doubt by his craving for originality. Who would believe that an otherwise learned person would not have known that Colours are also thoughts?

Although Quintilian criticises Celsus here, it is clear that he considers him an innovative (\textit{novitatis cupiditate}) and erudite respected scholar (\textit{eruditum}).

Celsus is quoted in many other passages in Quintilian as being a knowledgeable and respected authority on oratory and philosophy.\(^10\) This view is substantiated by Juvenal in \textit{Sat.} 6.245 where he refers to Celsus as a proficient jurist and rhetorician. In 12.11 Quintilian poses the question whether teachers are expert in all their fields or only in transmitting their knowledge, because previous generations had already made all the discoveries:

\[\textit{illis haec invenienda fuerunt, nobis cognoscenda sunt}\]

and these men\(^11\) had to discover these things, while we only have to learn about them!

In his conclusion of the \textit{Institutio Oratoria} (12.11.24), Quintilian refers to

\(^9\) Fr. Rhet. 14 Marx. It is not clear what is meant by “figures of colouring”.

\(^{10}\) Celsus himself holds the following view on philosophers and medicine, cf. \textit{Prooemium} 29-30: \textit{etiam sapientiae studiosos maximos medicos esse, si ratiocinatio hoc faceret: nunc illis verba superesse, deesse medendi scientiam} (“Even philosophers would have become the greatest of medical practitioners, if reasoning from theory could have made them so; as it is, they have words in plenty, and no knowledge of healing at all”).

\(^{11}\) E.g. Homer, Hippias Maior, Gorgias, Plato and Aristotle (Quint. \textit{Inst.} 12.11.21).
Celsius as a “vir mediocris ingenio”. The translation and interpretation of these words have been debated by many scholars. The usual understanding of the phrase “a man of very ordinary ability” is often challenged. Scarborough (1969:196) for instance suggests the interpretation “not ordinary” rather than the meaning “average”. Daube (1974:42) prefers the translation “a man of versatile capacity” or “comprehensive mind”, while Highet (1975:57) does not agree with him and suggests that the word non has been omitted and it should read vir non mediocris ingenio. Serbat (1995:xiii) argues that Quintilian’s words should not be interpreted as being derogatory and should be viewed in perspective.

I am of the opinion that the phrase Cornelius Celsus vir mediocris ingenio should be read in context. This qualifying phrase for Celsius appears where Quintilian pays tribute to teachers, devoted to varied studies in contrast to specialisation, who were role models in his time. He names Homer, Hippias of Elis, Plato and Aristotle of old, and Cato, Varro and Cicero as examples of his own countrymen. He ends the passage:

Quid plura? cum etiam Cornelius Celsus, mediocris vir ingenio, non solum de his omnibus conscripsit artibus, sed amplius rei militaris et rusticae et medicinae praecepta reliquerit, dignus vel ipso proposito, ut eum scisse omnia illa credamus.

Need I say more? Even Cornelius Celsus, a man of very ordinary ability, not only wrote about all these arts [rhetoric and philosophy], but also left books of instruction on tactics, agriculture, and medicine: his plan alone justifies us in believing that he knew all these things!

After naming examples of outstanding intellectuals who have contributed to the many different fields of knowledge, Quintilian adds Celsius, a contemporary of his. Although a man of moderate ability, he was also worthy the credit due to a polymath because of his obvious interest in various subjects with which he was well acquainted.

The value of Celsius’ works lies in the fact that he has compiled information and scholarship on various subjects in many volumes and imparts this
learning to his readers in a clear and concise style and in well-ordered subdivided units.

2.3 Columella (c. 10 - 65/70 AD)

Although Quintilian’s appraisal of Celsus is at times negative, he admits to Celsus’ impressive qualities, being a well-read scholar and creative writer, writing prolifically on a wide range of specialized subjects with polish and elegance. Whereas Quintilian has recorded Celsus’ writing ability and skill, Columella regards him as a learned expert on the whole of natural science:

Cornelium Celsum, non solum agricolationis sed universae naturae prudentem virum
(de R.R. 2.2.15)

Cornelius Celsus, a man of discernment not merely in husbandry but also in nature as a whole, (Translation Boyd 1948)

and uses him as a major source for his manual on agriculture, the *de Re Rustica*.

2.3.1 de Agricultura

Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella wrote a comprehensive manual in twelve books on farming, the *de Re Rustica*, as well as a short treatise on trees, the *de Arboribus*. In his introduction he advises that prospective farmers should consult authorities on agriculture. He lists illustrious Greek authors followed by their Roman successors, the ancients as well as those of his own age, and adds:

non minorem tamen laudem meruerunt nostrorum temporum viri
Cornelius Celsus et Iulius Atticus
(de R.R. 1.1.14)

no less honour, however, is due to men of our own time, Cornelius Celsus and Julius Atticus. (Translation Boyd 1948)

As stated above, he considers Celsus “a man of discernment not merely in husbandry, but also in nature as a whole” - a man with wide ranging interests and an extensive general knowledge in the field of science. His *prudentia* includes advice on appointing a successful overseer for a farm (de R.R. 1.8.4), the selection of seeds (*ibid.* 2.9.11), harvesting beans (*ibid.* 2.11.6), the
best soil for vineyards (*ibid.* 3.1.8), different types of vines and the best places to plant them (*ibid.* 3.2.24, 31), a new way of planting vine shoots successfully (*ibid.* 3.17.4), ablaqueation and pruning (*ibid.* 4.8.1 and 4.10.1) and scientific advice on diggings to stimulate maturing vines (*ibid.* 4.28.2).

Books 6 and 7 deal with care and diseases of domestic animals and Celsus prescribes remedies to treat the different diseases afflicting these farm animals. Columella obviously has a high regard for Celsus’ knowledge and teaching when he refers to him enthusiastically in the following remarks in connection with sheep:

\[
\text{\textit{ut ait prudentissime Celsus}} \quad (\textit{de R.R. 7.2.2})
\]

as Celsus most wisely remarks,

\[
\text{\textit{sicut ait verissime Celsus}} \quad (\textit{ibid. 7.3.11})
\]

as Celsus very truly remarks

and on instructions for keeping a goose:

\[
\text{\textit{ut existimat verissime Celsus}} \quad (\textit{ibid. 8.13.2-3})
\]

an opinion which Celsus expresses with much truth.

Book 9 is a very interesting and comprehensive manual on beekeeping where Celsus is quoted nine times as an expert in this field, from the instructions for management of the beehives to a long discussion on the different types of hives and their positioning. The care and management of the bees themselves, as well as the different kinds of food and localities best suited to them, are also Celsus’ fields of interest and Columella adds:

\[
\text{\textit{consentiens Celso, qui prudentissime ait ...}} \quad (\textit{de R.R. 9.14.6})
\]

I am in agreement with Celsus, who very wisely says ...

The following glowing commendation speaks for itself and confirms Quintilian’s (*Inst.* 10.1.124) remark that Celsus was *non sine cultu ac nitore* (“not without elegance and polish”):

\[
\text{\textit{venio nunc ad alvorum curam, de quibus neque diligentius quidquam praecipi potest, quam ab Hygino iam dictum est, nec ornatus quam Vergilio, nec elegantius quam Celso. Hyginus veterum auctorum placita}}
\]
secretis dispersa monimentis industrie collegit: Vergilius poeticis floribus illuminavit: Celsus utriusque memorati adhibuit modum

(De R.R. 9.2.2)

I come now to the management of bee-hives, about which no instructions can be given with greater care than in the words of Hyginus, more ornately than by Vergil, or more elegantly than by Celsus. Hyginus has industriously collected the opinions of ancient authors dispersed in their different writings; Vergil has embellished the subject with the flowers of poetry; and Celsus has applied the method of both the above-mentioned authors.

(Translation Forster & Heffner 1954)

2.4 Pliny the Elder (23 – 79 AD)

Gaius Plinius Secundus, usually called Pliny the Elder to distinguish him from his nephew, was also a contemporary of Celsus. Throughout his busy career he kept up a constant practice of study and authorship. His interest in science finally cost him his life when the eruption of Vesuvius took place in 79 AD and he initially set sail to obtain a clearer view, but was then trapped in Stabiae in his attempt to rescue some friends. The Naturalis Historia, the largest and most important of his works, is the only one that has survived. It is a systematic account of astronomy, meteorology, geography, mineralogy, zoology and botany - a plain record of the facts of nature, designed for practical use and not for entertainment. In this work Celsus is mentioned essentially in the table of contents (Book 1) in the list of previous writers used by Pliny as authorities (auctores) for his different topics. According to Pliny, Celsus was an authority on Zoology (Books 7 - 11): the sections on human generation (de homine generando), land animals (de sollertia animalium), birds (volucrum naturae) and insects (insectorum animalium genera); Botany (Books 14, 15, 17 - 19): the sections on fruitbearing and cultivated trees, crops and gardens, as well as Materia Medica (Books 20 - 27): the sections on drugs obtained from plants and animals (medicinae ex his).

In Book 29.1.1 Pliny gives an overview of the art of medicine and states:
... plura de ipsa medendi arte cogunt dicere, quamquam non ignorant
sim, nulli ante haec Latino sermone
... compel me to say more about the art of medicine, although I am
aware that no one hitherto has treated the subject in Latin.

(Translation Radice 1963)

He disregards Scribonius Largus’ Compositiones Medicamentorum and
Celsus’ de Medicina. Scarborough (1973:31) interprets this passage by
commenting that Pliny’s concept of what Celsus had done is clear. Celsus
controlled his household as the traditional head of the Roman family and
would have known medicina as part of the practices of the mos maiorum,
updated by aspects of Greek theory and his own experience in medicine.
Scarborough believes that Pliny distinguishes between the learned medical
writers, who were Greek, and the scholarly medicus typified by Celsus.

2.5 Celsus

2.5.1 de Medicina

Celsus himself clarifies his concept of medicine:

haec <medicina> nusquam quidem non est, siquidem etiam
imperitissimae gentes herbas alique promta in auxilium vulnerum
morborumque noverunt. Verum tamen apud Graecos aliquanto magis
quam in ceteris nationibus exculta est (de Med. Prooem. 1-2)

Nowhere is this Art wanting, for the most uncivilized nations have had
knowledge of herbs, and other things to hand for aiding of wounds and
diseases. The Art, however, has been cultivated among the Greeks
much more than in other nations.

Nutton (2004:166) points out that despite Celsus’ book learning and
experience of treating illness, he never calls himself a doctor or identifies
himself with that profession. We are not told how he obtained his learning or in
whose company he saw the cases he reports. Like Cato, Celsus (Prooem. 65
and 3.4.10) implies that one should confine one’s medical attentions to one’s
family and friends and not attempt to treat large numbers of patients.
In Prooem. 11 Celsus refers to medicine as *salutaris ista nobis professio* ("this health giving profession of ours") when he recounts Asclepiades and Themison’s contributions to medicine in Rome. When he refers to the doctrines of the Empirics and the Methodists he uses the term *professio* in a different context. The primary meaning of this word is “a public declaration” and not “profession” as in our modern sense - ancient and modern technical terms seldom correspond precisely. The *medicus* by his declaration, his *professio*, imposes on himself duties within the discipline of medicine, i.e. it is the doctor’s duty to heal, not to harm.

Celsus divides the *de Medicina* into three parts: the first deals with health preservation and how the healthy should conduct themselves, the second the nature of diseases and the third the treatment of diseases. Treatment of diseases is subdivided into three: diet, medication and surgery. The following passage marks a man with a definite well-planned work schedule:

> *ego cum de singulis dicam, cuius quisque generis sit indicabo. Dividam autem omnes in eos, qui in totis corporibus consistere videntur, et eos, qui oriuntur in partibus. Incipiam a prioribus, pauc a de omnibus praefatus* *(de Med. 3.1.3)*

When I come myself to speak of diseases singly, I will point out to which class each belongs. But I shall divide all diseases into those which appear to have their seat in the body as a whole, and into those which originate in particular parts. I shall begin with the former, after a few words of preface concerning all.

In his preface Celsus sets out the different *partes* of medicine, which we could call “schools”, “trends” or “directions” of medicine. He critically discusses the “schools” to which a doctor of the first century would have belonged - the Empirics, the “rationalists” (or Dogmatists) and the Methodists. Celsus finally

---

12 *de Med.* Prooem. 10: *ex ipsa professione se empiricos appellaverunt* ("who in accordance with what they professed called themselves Empirici") and 64: *neque adiectum quicquam empiricorum professioni* ("nor has there been added anything to what Empirics profess").

13 Ibid. Prooem. 66: *intra suam professionem* ("within their professed limitations").

14 Cf. Chapter 1.3 n. 15 above for Nutton’s (2004) and von Staden’s (1994) comments that Celsus’ “rational” group was not a “school”.

---
states his personal position (*Prooem.* 45), namely that he will adopt a middle way, independent of the trends without being too opposed to their teachings.

According to Celsus the practical applications of the theories of medicine differ vastly, but all lead to the same result:

\[ \text{ac nihil istas cogitationes ad medicinam pertiner e o quoque disci,} \\
\text{quod qui diversa de senserint, ad eandem tamen sanitatem homines} \\
\text{perduxerint} \quad (\text{Prooem. 32}) \]

That such speculations are not pertinent to the Art of Medicine may be learned from the fact that men may hold different opinions on these matters, yet conduct their patients to recovery all the same,

and

\[ \text{nec post rationem medicinam esse inventam, sed post inventam} \\
\text{medicinam rationem esse quaesitam} \quad (\text{Prooem. 36}) \]

The Art of Medicine was not a discovery following upon reasoning, but after the discovery of the remedy, the reason for it was sought out.

He further adds in 3.1.4:

\[ \text{in nullo quidem morbo minus fortuna sibi vindicare quam ars potest: ut} \\
\text{pote quom repugnante natura nihil medicina proficiat} \]

Whatever the malady, luck no less than the art can claim influence for itself; seeing that with nature in opposition the art of medicine avails nothing,

and in 7.12.4:

\[ \text{adeo in medicina, etiam ubi perpetuum est, quod fieri debet, non tamen} \\
\text{perpetuum est id, quod sequi convenit.} \]

So it is that in the Art of Medicine even where there is a rule as to what ought to be done, yet there is no rule as to what result ensues.

According to Celsus then, the therapies of the “rationalists” and the Empirics, although their doctrines were not clearly defined, probably did not differ much. Only the Methodists could claim to be a clearly defined sect, with a founder (Themison) and distinct medical theory, but Celsus, although not hostile, complains that its practitioners lacked the subtlety of reasoning to be able to
view each patient as an individual requiring personal care and treatment. Since he himself adheres to this type of treatment of a patient, he does not support the Methodists.

2.5.2 Celsus as author

Celsus is an exceptional teacher who quotes a wide range of Greek practitioners and specialists, and has researched them accurately. He openly acknowledges these sources with due respect for their expertise and accomplishments. He also mentions authorities in Rome for whom he has a high regard:

\[ac\ Rome quoque non mediocres professores \ldots horum eruditissimus\]
\[Meges ut scriptis eius intellegi potest\]  \(\text{(de Med. 7. Prooem. 3)}\)

In Rome also there have been professors of no mean standing … and Meges, the most learned of them all, as can be understood from his writings.

Meges, a surgeon from Sidon, is clearly highly esteemed, as shown in eight admiring references to him, i.a.

\[expeditissimum autem est ex praecepto Megetis\]  \(\text{(5.28.12 K)}\)

But the quickest remedy [for fistulae that become callous] is that prescribed by Meges,

\[Meges auctor est\]  \(\text{(5.28.7 A)}\)\(^{15}\)

Meges is an expert;

and in 8.21.2 he cites that Meges recorded a very unusual procedure to replace a dislocated knee-cap.

Meges, as a surgeon, is more evident in the last two books (7 and 8) of the \textit{de Medicina}, yet there are also other influential physicians who settled in Rome, such as Asclepiades and his pupils, Themison, Aufidius and Nicon. Celsus refers to them in books 1 to 6, also observing their views on the \textit{sanus homo}.\(^{16}\) He introduces other influential physicians of his time with flattering superlatives such as \textit{ingeniosissimus}, \textit{maximus} and \textit{nobilissimi}:

\(^{15}\) There are similar references at 7.7.6 C and 7.26.2 O.
\(^{16}\) Cf. The concept of the \textit{sanus homo} (Chapter 4).
Cassius ingeniosissimus saeculi nostri medicus  
(Prooem. 69)
Cassius, the most ingenious practitioner of our generation,

Euelpides autem, qui aetate nostra maximus ocularius medicus  
(6.6.8 A)
Euelpides, the most famous oculist of our time.

He also refers to a patient who died while

nobilissimi medici neque genus neque remedium invenerint  
(Prooem. 50)
practitioners of the highest standing found out neither the class of malady nor a remedy.

Celsus’ recognition of the importance of his predecessors’ achievements and contributions lends him credibility and so strengthens the authority of his work. He rearranges and develops their views and practices, yet holds strong opinions of his own and often challenges their advice and remedies. When Celsus discusses the views of medi or curantes on medical questions, he often starts with “video” or “neque ignoro”, followed by his personal beliefs, e.g.

quod a Tharria profectum esse servatum a pluribus video  
(3.21.14)
a practice begun by Tharrias, which I see many have followed and elsewhere:

Diocles Carystius tenuioris intestini morbum chordapsos plenioris eileon nominavit: a plerisque video nunc illum priorem eileon, hunc kolikos nominari  
(4.20.1)
Diocles of Carystus named the disease of the small intestines chordapsos, of the large eileos. I note that by many the former is now termed eileos, the latter colicos.17

Although Celsus invokes Erasistratus’ practices in order to lend authority to his own therapeutic recommendations, he politely criticises him here:

17 Spencer (1935a:426) notes that Aretaeus included both eileos and colicos in Chronic Diseases 2.8.
I am quite aware that such a way of treatment was disapproved of by Erasistratus, for he deemed the disease to be one of the liver ... the disease is not primarily one of that organ alone; for it occurs when the spleen is affected, and there is a general diseased condition of the body ...\(^\text{18}\)

and when correcting others:

\[(\ldots)\]

I am not unaware that many favour the insertion of lint formed into a tent and dipped in honey; but this agglutinates more quickly than flesh is formed.

He often reports his own experience of a particular case or remedy with “invenio”, “credo” or “puto”, e.g.

\[\text{ad strumam multa malagmata invenio. Credo autem, quo peius id malum est minusque facile discutitur, eo plura esse temptata (5.18.13)}\]

For scrofulous tumour I find many emollients. Now I think that the worse this disease and the less easy its dispersal, the more have been the remedies tried.\(^\text{19}\)

In connection with fevers he comments:

\[\text{tum ego puto temptandum, quom parum cibus semel et post febrem datus prodest (3.11.2)}\]

This, I think, should be tried only when there has been little benefit from food given once and at the end of the paroxysm.

It is also the case when he relates the incident of a boy, bitten by a snake, who was saved by drinking vinegar:

\(^{18}\) Celsus goes on to explain that the body as a whole should be treated and not only the liver.

\(^{19}\) He continues to list all the emollients and their inventors.
credo, quoniam id, quamvis refrigerandi vim habet, tamen habet etiam dissupandi  
(5.27.4 A)
I believe this happened because although vinegar is a refrigerant, it has also the faculty of dissipating.

He introduces or explains medical terms, conditions and treatments with “voco”, “significo” or “posuero”, e.g. when he defines types of food:

valentissimum voco, in quo plurimum alimenti est  
(2.18.2)
I call strongest that which has most nourishment,

and when he defines the terms he uses in fever:

frigus voco, ubi extremae partes membrorum inalgescunt, horrorem, 
ubi corpus totum intremit  
(3.3.3)
I call it a chill when the extremities become cold, shivering when the whole body shakes.

He adds detail to an explanation with the following introductory phrase: quam quotiens posuero (“as often as I indicate”). Three examples are given here:

quam quotiens posuero, scire licebit etiam ex infirmissima dari posse  
(3.18.17)
as often as I indicate this class of food, it should be understood that some of the weakest class of food also may be given,

quae quotiens posuero, non quae hic nascentur, sed quae inter aromata adferuntur, significabo  
(3.21.7)
whenever I use these terms I refer, not to native plants, but to such as are imported among spices,

and

quotiens autem bacam aut nucem aut simile aliquid posuero, scire oportebit, antequam expendatur, ei summam pelliculam esse demendam  
(5.19.12)
but whenever I mention a berry or nut or the like, it should be understood that the outer husk is to be removed before weighing.
2.5.3 Greek medical terminology

Celsus employs various innovative ways of dealing with Greek medical terminology. One way of dealing with this challenge was to use the original Greek word, usually after a description of the object, in a formula of the type “quod Graeci vocant” or “quod a Graecis appellatur”. A second, and in Langslow’s (1994:299) view the most important method, was that of acknowledged Greek terms for which Celsus provides a Latin translation. Here too the Greek word is given, usually in a standard formula of the “quod Graeci vocant” type. The difference is that Celsus subsequently uses the Latin expression in preference to the discarded Greek term. Cicero held similar views on translating Greek terminology:

\[
equidem soleo etiam quod uno Graeci, si aliter non possum, idem pluribus verbis exponere. et tamen puto concedi nobis oportere ut Graeco verbo utamur, si quando minus occurret Latinum \quad (Fin. 3.4)
\]

Indeed my own practice is to use several words to give what is expressed in Greek by one, if I cannot convey the sense other (sic). At the same time I hold that we may fairly claim licence to employ a Greek word when no Latin word is readily forthcoming.  

(Translation Rackham 1961)

These two techniques are discussed below, with relevant examples to illustrate how Celsus creatively manages Greek medical terminology. Wide-ranging expressions have been chosen as examples of Celsus’ originality in the use of language and style\(^{20}\) as representative of the medical Latin of the first century.

2.5.3.1 Retaining the original Greek

Celsus usually employs the Greek word where a word occurs only once in the text, e.g.

\[
morbus maioris intestini est, quod Graeci colum nominant \quad (2.12.2 B)
\]

the disease is in the larger intestine, which the Greeks call colon

\(^{20}\) Cf. 2.5.3.2 in this chapter.
and:

\textit{est etiam circa fauces malum, quod apud Graecos aliud aliudque nomen habet, prout se intendit. Omne in difficultate spirandi consistit; sed haec dum modica est neque ex toto strangulat \textit{du}spnoia appellatur; cum vehementior est, ut spirare aeger sine sono et anhelatione non possit, a}spnoia: at cum accessit id quoque, quod aegre nisi recta cervice spiritus trahitur, \textit{o}r\textit{g}spnoia

(4.8.1)

There is also in the region of the throat a malady which amongst the Greeks has different names according to its intensity. It consists altogether in a difficulty of breathing; when moderate and without any choking, it is called dyspnoea; when most severe, so that the patient cannot breathe without making a noise and gasping, asthma; but when in addition the patient can hardly draw in his breath unless with the neck outstretched, orthopnoea.\textsuperscript{21}

Secondly Celsus uses the Greek where he indicates that there is no known Latin word for the Greek:

\textit{cancer occupat. Id genus a Graecis diductum in species est, nostris vocabulis non est}  

(5.26.31 A)

Canker sets in. The Greeks divided this genus into species for which there are no terms in our language.\textsuperscript{22}

A third occurrence is where Celsus finds the word unsuitable or inappropriate:

\textit{enterocelen et epiploce len Graeci vocant: apud nos indecorum sed commune his hirmeae nomen est} 

(7.18.3)

The Greeks call the condition \textit{enterocele} and \textit{epiplocele}, with us the ugly but usual name for it is hernia.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{21} As can be seen from the two examples given here, the text is not consistent in the use of Greek characters - sometimes it is transliterated.

\textsuperscript{22} Spencer (1935c:589-592) explains that the word “cancer” has been used in the translation since the conditions referred to by Celsus do not include the disease now generally known as cancer. His descriptions are not very clear and often apply to more than one disease.

\textsuperscript{23} Spencer (1935:392) notes that \textit{enterocele} is an intestinal hernia and \textit{epiplocele} an omental hernia.
Celsus himself defines his reserve because of decorum or modesty, even slight embarrassment, in discussing certain functions of the body in the following extract:

proxima sunt ea, quae ad partes obscenas pertinent, quarum apud Graecos vocabula et tolerabilius se habent et accepta iam usu sunt, cum in omni fere medicorum volumine atque sermone iactentur: apud nos foediora verba ne consuetudine quidem aliqua verecundius loquentium commendata sunt, ut difficilior haec explanatio sit simul et pudorem et artis praecipue servatibus. Neque tamen ea res a scribendo me deterrere debuit: per, ut omnia quae salutaria accepi, comprehendere; dein, quia in volgus eorum curatio etiam praecipue cognoscenda est, quae invitissimus quisque alteri ostendit (6.18.1)

Next come subjects relating to the privy parts, for which the terms employed by the Greeks are the more tolerable, and are now accepted for use, since they are met with in almost every medical book and discourse. Not even the common use has commended our coarser words for those who would speak with modesty. Hence it is more difficult to set forth these matters and at the same time to observe both propriety and the precepts of the art. Nevertheless, this ought not to deter me from writing, firstly in order that I may include everything which I have heard of as salutary, secondly because their treatment ought above all things to be generally understood, since every one is most unwilling to show such a complaint to another person.

By avoiding detailed descriptions of ailments and treatments Celsus shows his discomfort for words which ordinary users of Latin applied to certain parts of the body. Jocelyn (1958:306) calls this “literary decorum”, which Celsus applied so as “not to disturb the sensibilities of non-medical readers”. In this regard Marx (1915:452) refers to Celsus as: Celsus pudore virginali (“Celsus a man of maidenly decorum”).

2.5.3.2 Latin replacements for Greek terms

When he does not employ the Greek term, Celsus uses innovative Latin phrases to translate and replace acknowledged Greek medical terms.
Langslow (1994:300-301) sets out reasons that could have motivated Celsus to do this; firstly the stylistic standards reportedly set for Latin by influential contemporaries, and secondly the practical advantage that Latin equivalents would have had over unfamiliar Greek terms. As to the first motivation, according to Suetonius (*Tib* 70.1), Tiberius modelled his Latin oratorical style on that of Valerius Messalla Corvinus,24 whom he studied in his youth. As far as being bilingual, Tiberius spoke Greek fluently, yet preferred to use Latin, especially on official occasions such as in the senate. Secondly, Tiberius also insisted that foreign terminology be substituted by Latin and if a Latin word could not be found it be paraphrased in Latin. Marx (1915:xcvi) reasons that, since Celsus wrote during the reign of Tiberius, he would certainly have complied with the example set. Langslow points out that, although Capitani finds a simple or general version of this view unacceptable, Latin phrasal equivalents to Greek medical terms would have been an added advantage to the probable (Roman) readers of the *de Medicina*. The second motivation for Celsus replacing Greek terminology was therefore mainly pragmatic.

Langslow argues that the two motivations mentioned above are modern speculations and proposes that Celsus had a third motivation, namely that Greek medical terminology was inconsistent. It appears that Greek doctors did not have a standardized medical terminology because of the organisational or institutional weakness of ancient medicine.25 Many doctors merely belonged to one of the main medical sects or schools and practitioners were highly individualistic and competitive. Celsus acknowledges these inconsistencies that may cause confusion. Two of the many examples occurring in Celsus are quoted:

\[\text{aliud autem quamvis non multum distans malum gravedo est. Haec nares claudit, vocem obtundit, tussim siccam movet; sub eadem salsa est saliva, sonant aures, venae moventur in capite, turbida urina est.}\]


Haec omnia *ko&ruzav* Hippocrates nominat: nunc video apud Graecos in gravedine hoc nomen servari, destillationem *katastagma&n* appellari

(4.5.2)

Another although not very different affection is gravedo. This closes up the nostrils, renders the voice hoarse, and excites a dry cough; in it the saliva is salt, there is ringing in the ears, the blood-vessels in the head throb, the urine is turbid. Hippocrates named all the above *coryza*; I note that now the Greeks reserve this term for gravedo, the dripping they call *catastagus*;²⁶

*At resolutio nervorum frequens ubique morbus est: interdum tota corpora, interdum partes infestat. Veteres auctores illud a)poplhci&an hoc para&lusin nominarunt: nunc utrumque para&lusin appellari video*

(3.27.1 A)

Relaxing of the sinews, on the other hand, is a frequent disease everywhere. It attacks at times the whole body, at times part of it. Ancient writers named the former *apoplexy*, the latter *paralysis*: I see that now both are called *paralysis*.²⁷

Langslow (1994:301-302) comments on Celsus’ insight with regard to these potential confusions in Greek terminology. Celsus understands that the foundation of science, in this case medicine, should not be based on confusing interchangeable technical terms, but rather investigation and accurate description of the field. He himself clearly illustrates this point in the following account:

*fit ut quicquid abscedit, velamento suo includatur: id antiqui tunicam nominabant. Quod ad curationis rationem nullo loco pertinet, quia quicquid, si tunica est, idem, si callus est, fieri debet. Neque ulla res prohibet, etiamsi callus est, tamen quia cingit, tunicam nominari*

²⁶ Celsus first gives his new Latin expression, *gravedo*, then describes the condition fully, and finally adds the original Greek terminology.

²⁷ With the Latin expression, *resolutio nervorum*, Celsus rephrases the Greek, *para&lusin*, to explain the medical condition instead of merely translating the word.
It happens that the abscess is enclosed in a covering of its own, which the ancients named a coat. This has no bearing upon the mode of treatment, for the same thing ought to be done, whether it be a coat or a callus. There is nothing to prevent a callus being called a coat, since it covers.

Celsus replaces Greek terms with Latin expressions by using a single descriptive word or a defining phrase to enable him to explain his subject matter more accurately. He separates the object from its Greek term and rephrases it in Latin to illustrate the medical subject matter more clearly to his reader, e.g.

phygetron autem est tumor non altus, latus, in quo quiddam pusulae simile est. ... Panum a similitudine figurre nostrui vocant (5.28.10)

Phygetron, again, is a wide swelling, not much raised up, in which there is a certain resemblance to a pustule. ... Our people call it panus, from its spindle-shape.

He describes the diaphragm in the following phrase:

transversum saeptum est, quod membrana quaedam est quae superiores partes ab inferioribus diducit (dia&fragma Graeci vocant) 28

(Prooem. 42)

it is the transverse septum, a sort of membrane which divides the upper from the lower parts (the Greeks call it dia&fragma).

For the Greek hydropa 29 he uses the phrase aqua inter cutem to describe dropsy:

longus vero fieri potest eorum, quos aqua inter cutem male habet, nisi primis diebus discussus est: hydropa Graeci vocant. Atque eius tres species sunt. Nam modo ventre vehementer intento creber intus ex motu spiritus sonus est; modo corpus inaequale est tumorigbus aliter

---

28 In six other passages Celsus defines the diaphragm with this phrase.
29 Hippocrates (Aph. 3.22) uses the term u#drwej.
aliterque per totum id orientibus; modo intus in unum aqua contrahitur et moto corpore ita movetur, ut impetus eius conspici possit. Primum
But a chronic malady may develop in those patients who suffer from a collection of water under the skin, unless this is dispersed within the first days. The Greeks call this hydrops. And of this there are three species: sometimes the belly being very tense, there is within a frequent noise from the movement of wind; sometimes the body is rendered uneven by swellings rising up here and there all over; sometimes the water is drawn all together within, and is moved with the movement of the body, so that its movement can be observed. The Greeks call the first tympanites, the second leukophlegmasia or hyposarka, the third ascites. The characteristic common to all three species is an excessive abundance of humour, owing to which in these patients ulcerations even do not readily heal.

Langslow (1994:301) believes that Celsus himself is the originator of these descriptive medical words and phrases, since they occur only in Celsus in extant Latin. This innovative creativity of Celsus may be a sign of the early stages in the development of a new descriptive medical terminology.

2.6 Conclusion

The word *elegantia* is often quoted to describe Celsus’ style. According to Jocelyn (1985:310) “Elegantia was a term of rhetorical criticism but nothing made it inappropriate to the description of kinds of writing other than oratory. It had to do with the avoidance of vulgarity, artificiality and obscurity, vices feared by the ancient stylist in many contexts.”

---

*Celsius pragmatically points out that the different Greek terms all boil down to *umoris nimia abuntia* (“an excessive abundance of humour”).

31 Quintilian (*Inst. 9.2*) quotes many examples of parts of speech where Celsus supplies Latin terms for the Greek.

32 E.g. Quintilian (*Inst. 10.1.124*): *non sine cultu ac nitore*, Beccadelli and his teacher, Guarino in 1426 (cf. Chapter 1.1), Marx (1915:xix): *elegantia venustas conspicua est* and Spencer (1935:x): “the language is strong, lucid and elegant.”
Examples in the sections above clearly illustrate the rhetorical tools used by Celsus. There are certainly no traces of vulgarity, artificiality or obscurity. In the writing of a medical treatise Celsus has incorporated a literary style greatly admired for its Latinity. By using a wide range of expressions and varying his vocabulary he avoids monotony. His vocabulary appears to come from the common language of his day as well as a special medical register that had emerged in Latin by his time. Jocelyn (1985:314) suggests that Celsus makes a conscious stylistic choice that gives his discourse a flavour of contemporary medical conversation. The *de Medicina*, apart from being a scientific manual with practical value, can also be read with great enjoyment as a literary text.

---

33 Pinkster (1995:556-565) discusses five syntactic features in Celsus' language to show that they fit with the scope of Celsus' work.

34 There can be no doubt that a specifically medical register of vocabulary had emerged in Latin by Celsus' time. Examples of borrowings from Greek medicine are found in Plautus (*elleborum, hepatarius, podagrosus*), Cato Maior (*carcinoma, cataplasma, dyspepsia, polypus, stranguria*), Lucilius (*arthriticus, cataplasma, gangrena, herpesticus, podagrosus*), Varro (*cardiacus, gangrena, phreneticus*), Lucretius (*lethargus*), Cicero (*arteria, cardiacus, chirurgia, diaeta, phreneticus, podagra, stranguria*), Sulpicius Rufus (*lethargus*), Nepos (*tenesmus*), Horace (*cardiacus, cheragra, collyrium, hydrops, hydropicus, lethargus, polypus*) and Vitruvius (*paralysis, pithosis, podagricus*) (Jocelyn 1985:312).
CHAPTER 3

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

3.1 Outline of relevant texts

In 1915 Marx’s A. Cornelli Celsi quae supersunt was published. In this comprehensive work Marx gives a detailed description of the manuscripts in which the de Medicina has been transmitted. To establish his text, he used manuscripts V, F, P and J. Marx’s text was used by scholars as definitive for many decades. Spencer (1935a:xiii) comments that it is “a very valuable work, especially the Prolegomena”. However, 30 years later, Scarborough (1969:61,197) disagreed with Spencer’s translation and interpretation of some passages. In 1982 Phillippe Mudry produced a French translation and commentary of the Prooemium, using an improved text since he added manuscript T. The Codex Toletanus of the fifteenth century was described by two scholars, Dionisio Ollero Granados (1973) and Umberto Capitani (1974). It falls in the same sub-group as manuscript J, except for a few punctuation differences. However, the major advantage of the more recent manuscript is that it sheds light on book 4 of the de Medicina. In his introduction to the French translation and commentary of the complete work Guy Serbat (1995) comments that he has also researched the five manuscripts V, F, P, J and T, and has provided a more exact and workable text than Marx.

Serbat’s research of Marx’s text has led him to conclude that Marx was often mistaken in his reading. He rejects Marx’s numerous corrections and filling of lacunae, since he considers these not as gaps, but rather as examples of the elliptic style of Celsus as a technical author. He also standardized Marx’s inconsistencies; for instance, Marx writes empiricos (Prooem. 10), but empericus (Prooem. 63) and empericorum (Prooem. 64), usually adtollere, yet in Prooem. 19 attollant as well as assumimus, which is usually adsum-. He ignores the assimilation in immortalium (Prooem. 4), but writes ommutui 2.6.7. Serbat chooses to write att- (for adt-), ass- (for ads-), irr- (for inr-), imm- (for inm-), comp- (for comp-), ill- (for incl-), aff- (for adf-) and also changed balineum

---

1 Serbat (1995:lxix) describes the corrections as inutiles, and the lacunae as prétenues.
to *balneum* and *inbecillus* to *imbecillus*. Instead of the inconsistent use of *c/qu* he prefers *concoquunt* to *concocunt* (1.8.3) and *sequ-* to *sec-*, e.g. *sequor* and *sequunt*. All these changes follow the natural phonetic rules of assimilation.

Serbat rejects all words in capitals that do not appear in any manuscripts, but which Marx had used, e.g. *MEDICINA* (*Prooem. 1* and *13*), as well as the Greek terms written in capitals. Marx is also not consistent when quoting Greek terms - he sometimes uses the Greek alphabet and sometimes the Roman. Serbat prefers the Greek alphabet in lower case.

Serbat criticizes Marx’s excessive use of punctuation, i.e. the commas before all subordinate clauses and an overuse of the colon. He removed the comma especially before relative clauses where he considers it to be superfluous, e.g. 1.3.5: ... *aquam calidam cui ...*, ... *eas partes quae ...*, ... *ex oleo cui ...*; 1.3.9: ... *pertinent qui ...*; 1.3.10: ... *ei qui* ... up to 1.10.1: ... *observatio necessaria qua ...*, amounting to twenty suchlike clauses in book 1. He believes that a change of punctuation often allows for a better interpretation of a passage.

In most of the reviews of Serbat’s book, which has generally been favourably received, the main criticism is the occurrence of careless typographical errors. These occur at: 1.3.12 *balneo* instead of *in balneo*, which would be more acceptable, 1.3.39 *autummum* for *autumnum*, 1.9.1 *cheragra* for *cheiragra* and 1.10.4 *vunerunt* for *venerunt*. At first sight *ungui* (1.3.10 and 1.6.1) seems such an error but Serbat (lxx) notes that he prefers *ungui* to the more usual *ungi*, which he maintains is used by the *vetustiores*. The errors have been amended in the text used for this thesis.

Scarborough (1998:718) states: “One must note that the text and commentary by Philippe Mudry is far fuller and often more precise than that offered by Serbat, and students of ancient medicine desiring lucid analysis of the numerous problems in the *Prooemium* should employ Mudry’s painstaking commentary”.

---

2 Serbat (1995: lxx) expresses this in strong terms: “*abus des deux points*”.
4 Cf. 1.3.16 (the Latin text) in this translation at 3.2, on the omission of *cura*. 
3.2 Text and translation: Celsus’ de Medicina Book 1

I qualiter se sanus agere debeat
1 How a healthy person should conduct himself

II qualiter se agere debeant qui stomacho imbecilles sunt
2 How those who have a weak stomach should conduct themselves

III novae res
3 Altered circumstances

IV de capite
4 The head

V de lippitudine quae gravedinem tollit
5 Chronic eye inflammation

VI de alvo soluto
6 Upset stomach

VII de dolore intestini interioris
7 Pain of the intestine

VIII de stomacho
8 The stomach

IX de dolore nervorum vel podagra
9 Pain in the sinews or podagra

X observatio adversus pestilentiam
10 Precaution during an epidemic
... primum (lib. I) dicam, quemadmodum sanos agere conveniat
(prooemium 75)

Liber I

1 qualiter se sanus agere debeat

Sanus homo, qui et bene valet et suae spontis est, nullis obligare se
legibus debet, ac neque medico neque iatroalipta egere. Hunc oportet varium
habere vitae genus: modo ruri esse, modo in urbe, saepiusque in agro;
navigare, venari, quiescere interdum, sed frequentius se exercere; siquidem
ignavia corpus hebetat, labor firmat, illa maturam senectutem, hic longam
adolescentiam reddit.

2 prodest etiam interdum balneo, interdum aquis frigidis uti; modo ungui,
modo id ipsum neglegere; nullum genus cibi fugere quo populus utatur;
interdum in convictu esse, interdum ab eo se retrahere; modo plus iusto,
modo non amplius assumere; bis die potius quam semel cibum capere, et
semper quam plurimum, dummodo hunc conquat.

3 sed ut huius generis exercitationes cibique necessarii sunt, sic athletici
supervacui: nam et intermissus propter civiles aliquas necessitates ordo
exercitationis corpus affligit, et ea corpora, quae more eorum repleta sunt,
celerrime et senescunt et aegrotant.

4 concubitus vero neque nimis concupiscendus, neque nimis pertimescendus
est. rarus corpus excitat, frequens solvit.
... I will first speak of how those in health should act (Book 1).\(^5\)
(Prooemium 75)

**Book I**

1 **How a healthy person should conduct himself**

1 A healthy man who is strong and in control of himself should not be bound by any rules and needs neither a physician nor an anointing doctor.\(^6\) There must be variety in his lifestyle: he should sometimes be in the country, sometimes in the city and more often on a farm. He should sail, hunt, rest occasionally but more often exercise, because inactivity weakens the body, whereas activity strengthens it. The former brings on old age prematurely, the latter prolongs youth.

2 It is certainly advantageous to enjoy a bath at times,\(^7\) and occasionally to make use of cold springs;\(^8\) sometimes to be anointed and sometimes to refrain from that very procedure; to avoid no kind of food in common use; now and then to join in a banquet and then abstain from it; sometimes to consume more than usual but at other times no more; to take food twice daily rather than once and always as much as one wants, provided one digests it.

3 But while this kind of exercise and food is necessary, that of the athlete is excessive: for in the first case a routine of training interrupted because of some social obligations weakens the body, and in the second bodies thus overfed as is their custom,\(^9\) age and become ill very rapidly.

4 Sexual intercourse should neither be desired avidly nor dreaded too much. Rarely performed it revives the body, frequently performed weakens it.

---

\(^5\) Translation Spencer (1935a).

\(^6\) Although Celsus transcribed, translated or created new medical terms for the Greek, he employs the original here. The role of the *iatroalipta*, a massage physician or anointing doctor (*iatro&amp;alpha;&amp;v*: one who heals, *a&amp;leifar*: oil; *iatroalipta* ~*ae* m. physician who cures by anointing), was more important than a mere masseur. He was a practitioner of iatraliptique, founded by Herodicos, teacher of Hippocrates (Serbat 1995:23). According to Lloyd (1978:13) “…the distinction between the doctor and the gymnastic trainer was sometimes a fine one, and experience in the gymnasium was an important part of the training of many of those who practised medicine and surgery in ancient Greece.” In 2.14 Celsus discusses *de frictione* at length as one of the “common aids” described by Asclepiades for curing a number of different ailments. Celsus, however, points out that *frictio* was already practised by Hippocrates: *Asclepiades nihil tamen reppererit, quod non a vetustissimo auctore Hippocrate paucis verbis comprehensus sit* (“although Asclepiades discovered nothing that had not been comprised in a few words by that most ancient writer Hippocrates”). Translation Spencer (1935:175).

\(^7\) According to Celsus it was healthier to limit the ritual of bathing, cf. 4.7.5.1 below.

\(^8\) Cf. discussion on cold water in 4.7.5 below.

\(^9\) Athletes carried both training and diet to excess.
cum autem frequens non numero sit sed natura, ratione aetatis et corporis, scire licet eum non inutilem esse quem corporis neque languor neque dolor sequitur. idem interdii peior est, noctu tutor, ita tamen si neque illum cibus, neque hunc cum vigilia labor statim sequitur. haec firmis servanda sunt, cavendumque ne in secunda valetudine adversae praesidia consumantur.

II qualiter se agere debent qui stomacho imbecilles sunt

1 at imbecillis, quo in numero magna pars urbanorum omnesque paene cupidii litterarum sunt, observatio maior necessaria est, ut, quod vel corporis vel loci vel studii ratio detrahit, cura restituat.

2 ex his igitur qui bene concoxit, mane tuto surget; qui parum, quiescere debet, et si mane surgendi necessitas fuit, redormire; qui non concoxit, ex toto conquisescere ac neque labori se neque exercitationi neque negotiis credere. qui crudum sine praecondiorum dolore rustat, is ex intervallo aquam frigidam bibere, et se nihilo minus continere.

3 habitare vero aedificio lucido, perflatum aestivum, hibernum solem habente; cavere meridianum solem, matutinum et vespertinum frigus, itemque auras fluminum atque stagnorum; minimeque nubilo caelo sole aperiente se, committere ne modo frigus, modo calor moveat, quae res maxime gravidines destillationesque concitat. magis vero gravibus locis ista servanda sunt, in quibus etiam pestilentiam faciunt.

4 scire autem licet integrum corpus esse: quo die mane urina alba, dein rufa est, illud concoquere, hoc concoxisse significat. ubi experrectus est aliquis, paulum intermittere; deinde, nisi hiemps est, fovere os multa aqua frigida debet;

10 Serbat (1995:24) does not agree with Marx (1915) who suggests that aestimandus, habita has dropped out here. It is Serbat’s contention that lacunae are intentional as these are examples of Celsus’ elliptical style and should not be corrected unnecessarily.

11 Cf. Serbat (1995:134-135) for his rendition of the text. He proposes retaining aperiente of MS F¹ and correcting soli to sole for the ablative absolute sole aperiente se. se committere tends to be taken together ignoring the fact that committere ut/ne (on its own without se) may be translated “to bring about that/that not”.

39
Since however frequency should not be in the number of times but in the quality, taking into account the age and constitution of the body, it is clear that it is not harmful unless it is followed by languor or pain. Furthermore it is more harmful in the daytime and safer at night, but care should be taken that in the first instance it is not followed immediately by food and in the second by wakefulness and exertion. The healthy must heed these precautions and take care not to use up in good health their defences against ill-health.

2 How those who have a weak stomach should conduct themselves

1 But the weak, among whom a great many are town dwellers and almost all who are fond of literature, must be more cautious so that care may restore what the nature of their constitution, or of their locality or study takes away.

2 Of these therefore, he who has digested well will rise early with safety, he who has not digested well should rest, and if he has had to rise early must go to sleep again. He who has not digested at all must rest completely and neither work nor exercise nor attend to business. He who regurgitates undigested food without heartburn, ought to drink cold water at intervals and none the less exercise self control.

3 <Those who have a weak stomach should> live in a dwelling full of light exposed to a breeze in summer and to the sun in winter. Avoid the midday sun, and the early morning and evening chill as well as the exhalations of rivers and marshes. They should not venture under an overcast sky with the sun breaking through, which causes now a chill then warmth, as this in particular provokes colds and runny noses. Indeed one must observe these conditions much more in unhealthy localities where they also cause pestilence.

4 Now, one can ascertain that the body is healthy on the day that the urine is clear in the morning and then tawny - the former indicates digestion is taking place, the latter that it has already taken place. When the person has woken up, let some time pass, then he should bathe his face with plenty of cold water unless it is wintertime.
5 longis diebus meridiari potius ante cibum; si minus, post eum. per hiemem potissimum totis noctibus conquiescere; sin lucubrandum est, non post cibum id facere sed post concoctionem. quem interdiu vel domestica vel civilia officia tenuerunt, huic tempus aliquod servandum curationi corporis sui est. prima autem eius curatio exercitatio est, quae semper antecedere cibum debet, in eo qui minus laboravit et bene concoxit, amplior; in eo qui fatigatus est et minus concoxit, remissior.

6 commode vero exercent clara lectio, arma, pila, cursus, ambulatio, atque haec non utique plana commodior est, siquidem melius ascensus quoque et descensus cum quadam varietate corpus moveat, nisi tamen id perquam imbecillum est. melior autem est sub divo quam in porticu; melior, si caput patitur, in sole quam in umbra, melior in umbra quam paries aut viridia efficiunt, quam quae tecto subest; melior recte quam flexuosa.

7 exercitationis autem plerumque finis esse debet sudor aut certe lassitudo, quae citra fatigationem sit; idque ipsum modo minus, modo magis faciendum est. ac ne his quidem athletarum exemplo vel certa esse lex vel immodicus labor debet. exercitationem recte sequitur modo unctio, vel in sole vel ad ignem; modo balneum, sed conclavi quam maxime et alto et lucido et spatio. ex his vero neutrum semper fieri oportet, sed saepius alterutrum pro corporis natura. post haec paulum conquiescere opus est.

8 ubi ad cibum ventum est, numquam utilis est nimia satietas, saepe inutilis nimia abstinentia; si qua intertemperantia subest, tutior est in potione quam in esca. cibus a salsamentis, holeribus similibusque rebus melius incipit; tum caro assumenda est, quae assa optima aut elixa est.

12 “The reference is to the custom of walking the fixed course of an (indoors) palaestra; writing today, Celsus would tell us to jog outdoors rather than on a jogging track at a health club”. Thayer (2004).
5 If the days are long a siesta must be taken preferably before a meal, if shorter, after the meal. During winter it is best to rest for the entire night, but if obliged to work at night, it must not be done after the meal but after digestion. Whether domestic or civil duties occupy one during the day, some time must be set aside to attend to one’s body. Now, its most important care is exercise which must always precede a meal, more strenuous for him who has laboured less and digested well, but milder for him who is tired and has digested less well.

6 Appropriate exercises, to be sure, are reading aloud, drilling in armour, ball games, running and walking, the latter by no means as effective on level ground because walking uphill and downhill causes the body to move more effectively in a variety of ways, unless, however, the body is extremely weak. In any case walking is healthier in the open air than under a roof, healthier in the sun if the head tolerates it than in the shade, better in shade made by a wall or shrubs than shade under a roof, better if walking straight than on a winding path.

7 Now generally at the end of exercise one must perspire or feel tired, but this must definitely be before exhaustion; at times less, and at times more must be done. But even in this there should be no fixed rule or excessive exertion as in the case of athletes. The proper sequel to exercise is sometimes oiling, either in the sun or in front of a fire; sometimes bathing, but then in a room as high, light and spacious as possible. However, neither of these must be performed at all times but one of the two more often in accordance with the body’s constitution. After exercise it is necessary to rest for a while.

8 When we come to eating, overeating is never beneficial and excessive fasting often harmful. If there is overindulgence, it is safer in drinking than in eating. It is better to commence the meal with salted fish, vegetables and similar fare, then meat must be eaten, which is best boiled or roasted.

---

13 Jocelyn (1985:314) points out that this shift between the concrete and verbal sense, e.g. the use of *arma* for “drilling in armour” and *pila* for “playing at ball”, peculiar to Celsus, may have had medical associations; see also *cibus* for “the act of eating”, Cels. 1.2.8. The indication of maladies by merely referring to the body parts affected is also found, e.g. *tonsillae* for “tonsilitis” 1.5.1, *dentes* for “toothache” 5.25.3 A. In the latter case, however, Marx (1915:212) supplies *male habent*, which Spencer (1935:60) translates.

14 Cf. 1.1.3.
condita omnia duabus causis inutilia sunt, quoniam et plus propter
dulcedinem assumitur, et quod modo par est, tamen aegrius concoquitur.
secunda mensa bono stomacho nihil nocet, in imbecillo coacescit. si quis
itaque hoc parum valet, palmulas pomaque et similia melius primo cibo
assumit. post multas potiones quae aliquantum sitim exsserunt, nihil
edendum est, post satietatem nihil agendum.

ubi expletus est aliquis, facilius concoquit si quicquid assumpsit potione
aquae frigidae includit; tum paulisper invigilat, deinde bene dormit. si quis
interdiu se implevit, post cibum neque frigori neque aestui neque labori se
debet committere: neque enim tam facile haec inani corpore quam repleto
nocent. si quibus de causis futura inedia est, labor omnis vitandus est.

III novae res

1 atque haec quidem paene perpetua sunt; quasdam autem observationes
desiderant et novae res et corporum genera et sexus et aetates et tempora
anni. nam neque ex salubri loco in gravem, neque ex gravi in salubrem
transitus satis tutus est. ex salubri in gravem prima hieme, ex gravi in eum qui
salubris est, prima aestate transire melius est.

2 neque ex multa vero fame nimia satietas neque ex nimia satietate fames
idonea est. periclitaturque et qui semel et qui bis die cibum incontinent
contra consuetudinem assumit. item neque ex nimio labore subitum otium
neque ex nimio otio subitus labor sine gravi noxa est; ergo cum quis mutare
aliquid volet, paulatim debeat adsuescere. omnem etiam laborem facilius vel
puer vel senex quam insuetus homo sustinet.
9 All preserves\textsuperscript{15} are harmful for two reasons, because more is consumed on account of its sweet taste, and even in an appropriate quantity it is digested with more difficulty. Dessert does not harm a strong stomach, in a weak one it turns sour. If someone is not particularly strong in this respect, it is better that he eats dates,\textsuperscript{16} fruit and such like in the first course. After many drinks which have somewhat surpassed normal thirst, nothing must be eaten and after overindulgence nothing done.

10 When someone has eaten enough, he digests more easily if whatever he has eaten is concluded with a draught of cold water, then stays awake awhile and afterwards sleeps soundly. If someone has taken a full meal at midday he must thereafter not expose himself to cold, heat or activity, for these conditions do not harm an empty belly as much as a full one. Any kind of exertion must be avoided if for whatever reasons there is the prospect of fasting.

3 Altered circumstances

1 Now these instructions are indeed almost always valid, but altered situations, different constitutions, gender, age and seasons call for particular observations. For changing from a healthy to an unhealthy locality\textsuperscript{17} or from unhealthy to healthy is not altogether safe. It is better to change from healthy to unhealthy at the beginning of winter and from unhealthy to that which is healthy at the beginning of summer.

2 Excessive eating is not healthy immediately after fasting, nor fasting after overeating. He who eats immoderately once or twice a day contrary to his lifestyle, puts himself at risk. Likewise after excessive exertion sudden inactivity is harmful and after too much idleness sudden activity is not without serious harm. Therefore when someone wants to change something, he will have to accustom himself gradually. Indeed any effort is easier for a child or old man than for a person unaccustomed to it.

\textsuperscript{15} Spencer (1935a:48) comments: “condita: the context suggests sweets preceding dessert. The word is not found elsewhere in Celsus, but is referred to by Col. de Re Rustica 2.22: \textit{uvas itemque olivas conditui legere licet}, ‘raisins and olives can be gathered for candying (in honey)’”.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Palmula}, diminutive of \textit{palma} – fruit of the palm, date.

\textsuperscript{17} Unhealthy localities refer to swamps and marshes.
3 atque ideo quoque nimis otiosa vita utilis non est, quia potest incidere laboris necessitas. si quando tamen insuetus aliquis laboravit, aut si multo plus quam solet etiam si qui adsuevit, huic ieiuno dormiendum est, multo magis etiam si os amarum est vel oculi caligant, aut venter perturbatur: tum enim non dormiendum tantummodo ieiuno est, sed etiam\textsuperscript{18} in posterum diem\textsuperscript{19} permanendum, nisi cito id quies sustulit. quod si factum est, surgere oportet et lente paulum ambulare. at si somni necessitas non fuit quia modice magis aliquis laboravit, tamen ingredi alicui eodem modo debet.

4 communia deinde omnibus sunt post fatigationem cibum sumpturis: ubi paulum ambulaverunt, si balneum non est, calido loco vel in sole vel ad ignem ungui atque sudare; si est, ante omnia in tepidario sedere, deinde ubi paululum conquierunt, intrare et descendere in solium; tum multo oleo ungui leniterque perfricari, iterum in solium descendere, post haec os aqua calida, deinde frigida fovere.

5 balneum his fervens idoneum non est; ergo si nimium aliqui fatigato paene febris est, huic abunde est loco tepido demittere se inguinibus\textsuperscript{20} tenus in aquam calidam cui paulum olei sit adiectum, deinde totum quidem corpus, maxime tamen eas partes quae in aqua fuerunt, leviter perfricare ex oleo\textsuperscript{21} cui vinum et paulum contriti salis sit adiectum.

\textsuperscript{18} Marx (1915) supplies quieto after etiam and Spencer (1935) translates this reading. Serbat (1995) does not edit here, see 1.1.4 above.
\textsuperscript{19} Marx (1915) notes that v.d. Linden supplies ita after diem.
\textsuperscript{20} The use of inguen in the sense of groin (\textsc{boubw}n) was a medical calque; however, as employed by Homer it had nothing peculiarly medical about it. On the other hand Hippocrates (Aph. 4.55) uses it in the sense of “inguinal swelling”. Lucilius uses it in the sense of “groin” (1195) and “swelling” (541).
\textsuperscript{21} Technical authors have been scrutinised for Vulgar Latin elements such as prepositional phrases with \textit{ex} and \textit{per} instead of the ablative of instrument. Pinkster (1995:556) does not regard them as “vulgarisms” in a negative sense: “Prepositional phrases have a life of their own” and do not merely replace the ablative but may be more appropriate in that specific context. The type of text (instruction) and the subject matter (medicine) should also be taken into account.
3 And so also on that account a lifestyle too idle is not beneficial, because a need for action can unexpectedly arise. If at any time someone who has been unaccustomed has nevertheless worked, or even if someone who has been accustomed to it has done much more than usual, he must go to sleep without eating, the more so if his mouth has a bitter taste or his sight is impaired or his stomach upset. For then he must not only sleep without having eaten, but remain so for the next day unless the rest has alleviated the problem speedily. If this has happened, he must get up and walk about slowly for a while. But if sleep was not necessary because he has only worked rather moderately, he must still walk a little in the same way.

4 General instructions then for all after suffering fatigue before taking food: when they have walked about a little, (then) if there is no bath, anointing and sweating in a hot place, either in the sun or before a fire. If there is a bath, before all else to sit in the warm room, then when they have taken a short rest, to enter and get into the tub. Next after being generously oiled and gently rubbed down, again to descend into the tub and after this to bathe the face with warm and then cold water.

5 For the following cases a very hot bath is not suitable: if someone is almost feverish because of excessive fatigue it is enough for him to immerse himself up to the groins in warm water to which a little oil may be added, in a tepid room, then the whole body, especially those parts that were under the water, must be rubbed gently with oil to which wine and a little ground salt have been added.
6 post haec omnibus fatigatis aptum est cibum sumere, eoque umido uti, 
aqua vel certe diluta potione esse contentos, maximeque ea quae moveat 
urinam. illud quoque nosse oportet quod ex labore sudanti frigida potio 
perniciosissima est atque etiam cum sudor se remisit, itinere fatigatis inutilis.

7 a balneo quoque venientibus Asclepiades inutilem eam iudicavit; quod in iis 
verum est quibus alvis facile nec tuto resolvitur quique facile inhorrescunt; 
perpetuum in omnibus non est, cum potius naturale sit potione aestuante 
stomachum refrigeratori, frigentem caelefieri. quod ita praecipio ut tamen fatear 
ne ex hac quidem causa sudanti adhuc frigidum bibendum esse.

8 solet etiam prodesse post varium cibum frequentesque dilutas potiones 
vomitus, et postero die longa quies, deinde modica exercitatio. si assidua 
fatigatio urguet, in vicem modo aquam modo vinum bibendum est, raro balneo 
utilendum. levatque lassitudinem etiam laboris mutatio; eumque quem novum 
genus eiusdem laboris pressit, id quod in consuetudine est, reficit.

9 fatigato cotidianum cubile tutissimum est; lassat enim quod contra 
consuetudinem, seu molle seu durum est. proprie quaedam ad eum pertinent 
qui ambulando fatigatur; hunc reficit in ipso quoque itinere frequens frictio, 
post iter primum sedile, deinde unctio; tum calida aqua in balneo magis 
superiores partes quam inferiores foveat.

10 si quis vero exustus in sole est, huic in balneum protinus eundum 
perfundendumque oleo corpus et caput; deinde in solium bene calidum 
descendendum est; tum multa aqua per caput infundenda, prius calida, 
deinde frigida. at ei qui perfrixit opus est in balneo primum involuto sedere, 
donec insudet; tum ungui, deinde lavari; cibum modicum, deinde potiones 
meracas assumere.

---

22 Spencer (1935:55) translates balneum with calidarium and Serbat (1995:30) with au bain 
adding the explanation dans les salles chauffées, naturellement. The term balneum and its 
variants (balineae, balineae, balineum) refer to the bathing facility or bathing vessel or the 
chamber that contained the bath, or even the act of bathing itself, e.g. de Med. 4.31.3 where a 
person suffering from podagra is advised to be gently rubbed, sweated and douched with 
lukewarm water sine balneo loco calido (“in a warm place without a bath”).
6 After this it is in order that all those who are weary take food and especially that of a fluid consistency; they should be content with either water or at least a drink diluted with water, preferably something that induces urination.\textsuperscript{23} It must also be noted that a cold drink is extremely harmful to someone perspiring as a result of activity and even if perspiration has ceased, harmful to those wearied by a journey.

7 Asclepiades\textsuperscript{24} was of the opinion that it was also harmful when coming out of the bath. This holds true for those whose stomach is, without warning, easily upset and who are prone to shivering. This is not always valid in all cases, since it is more natural to cool a hot stomach and warm a cold stomach with a drink. Although I advise this, yet I must concede that for this very reason someone still perspiring, must not drink something cold.

8 It also happens that a vomit is beneficial after a variety of food and numerous diluted drinks, and the next day a long rest and then moderate exercise. If constant fatigue follows, water alternated with wine must be drunk, but a bath must rarely be used. Change of activity also relieves fatigue, and routine revives one who is depressed by a new form of a familiar task.

9 The daily resting place is most comforting for the weary, since what is contrary to routine, whether pleasant or unpleasant, wearies. Some things in particular are applicable to a person who is wearied by travelling on foot; frequent rubbing along the way itself refreshes him and after the journey first of all sitting down and then anointing; next fomenting with warm water in a bath the upper parts of the body more so than the lower parts.

10 But if someone has been burnt in the sun, he must go to the bath immediately and pour oil over his body and head, next he must climb into a well heated bath tub, then pour lots of water over his head - first hot and then cold. On the other hand, he who has become very cold needs to sit in the bath room at first well covered until he is sweating, then be oiled, next wash himself and consume a little food and then undiluted drinks.

\textsuperscript{23} Hippocrates recommends white wine, cf. \textit{Regimen in Acute Diseases} 51.

\textsuperscript{24} Asclepiades of Bithynia is one of Celsus’ main sources. He often quotes him in the following formulae: "\textit{antiqui} (the ancients) say … Asclepiades says … but \textit{I} am of the opinion". Marx (1915:lxviii-lxix) quotes twelve such passages.
11 is vero qui navigavit et nausea pressus est, si multam bilem evomuit, vel abstineret a cibo debet vel paulum aliquid assumere. si pituitam acidam effudit, utique sumere cibum sed assuetum leviorem; si sine vomitu nausea fuerit, vel abstineret vel post cibum vomere.

12 qui vero toto die vel in vehiculo vel in spectaculis sedit, huic nihil currendum sed lente ambulandum est. lenta quoque in balneo mora, dein cena exigua prodesse consuerunt. si quis in balneo aestuat, reficit hunc ore exceptum et in eo retentum acetum; si id non est, eodem modo frigida aqua sumpta.

13 ante omnia autem norit quisque naturam sui corporis, quoniam alii graciles, alii obesi sunt, alii calidi, alii frigidiores, alii umidi, alii sicci; alios adstricta, alios resoluta alvus exercet. raro quisquam non aliquam partem corporis imbecillam habet.

14 tenuis vero homo impleere se debet, plenus extenuare, calidus refrigerare, frigidus calefacere, madens siccare, siccus madefacere; itemque alvum firmare is cui fusa, solvere is cui adstricta est; succurrentumque semper parti maxime laboranti est.

15 implet autem corpus modica exercitatio, frequentior quies, unctio et, si post prandium est, balneum; contracta alvus, modicum frigus hieme, somnus et plenus et non nimis longus, molle cubile, animi securitas, assumpta per cibos et potiones maxime dulcia et pinguia; cibus et frequentior et quantus plenissimus potest concoqui.\(^\text{25}\)

11 But he who has sailed, indeed, and been overcome by nausea, if he has vomited a lot of bile, must either abstain from food or eat very little. If he has spewed sour phlegm, he may certainly take food but less substantial than usual. If he were nauseous without vomiting, he must either abstain from food or vomit after eating.

12 But, he who has been sitting in a carriage or at the games for a whole day, must not run at all but walk slowly. A leisurely stay at the bathhouse followed by a modest meal is usually beneficial too. If a person becomes too hot in the bath, vinegar taken and held in the mouth refreshes him. If there is no vinegar, then cold water may be taken in the same way.

13 But above all, each person must be acquainted with the nature of his own body, since some are slender, others obese, some warm, others colder, some moist, others dry; some have a constricted stomach, others a loose stomach. Rarely does someone not have some part of the body that is weak.

14 And so the slim individual must fatten himself up, and the stout one become thin, the warm one cool himself and the cold one warm himself, the moist one dry himself up and the dry one moisten himself. Likewise one must make the stomach that is loose, firm, and relax the stomach that is constricted; and the part of the body that is mostly affected must always be assisted.

15 Now the following fatten the body: moderate exercise, more frequent resting, anointing, and if it is after lunch, a bath; a contracted stomach, moderate cold in winter, sound sleep yet not too long, a soft bed and peace of mind, taking food and drinks which are especially sweet and rich; meals both more frequent and also as plentiful as can be digested.

\[26\] Celsus avoids monotony by using a variety of expressions to describe body size, alii graciles alii obesi (13) followed by tenuis homo and homo plenus (14).

\[27\] Cf. Hippocrates Regimen for Health 2 - 4, where he advises that balance be restored. Celsus adds two pairs of opposites (slender/obese and the tendency for constipation/diarrhoea) to the four general elements (fire, water, air, earth) with their association hot/cold and dry/moist.
16 extenuat corpus aqua calida, si quis in ea descendit, magisque si salsa est; ieiuno balneum, inurens sol ut omnis calor, cura, vigilia; somnus nimium vel brevis vel longus, per aestivalm durum cubile; cursus, multa ambulatio, omnisque vehemens exercitatio; vomitus, deiectio, acidae res et austerae; et semel die assumptae epulae; et vini non praefrigidi ieiuno potio in consuetudinem adducta.

17 cum vero inter extenuantia posuerim vomitum et deiectionem, de his quoque proprie quaedam dicenda sunt. reiectum esse ab Asclepiade vomitum in eo volumine, quod de tuenda sanitate composuit, video; neque reprehendo, si offensus eorum est consuetudine qui cotidie eiciendo vorandi facultatem moliuntur. paulo etiam longius processit: idem purgationes quoque eodem volumine expulit; et sunt eae perniciosae, si nimis valentibus medicamentis fiunt.

18 sed haec tamen summovenda esse non est perpetuum, quia corporum temporumque ratio potest ea facere necessaria, dum et modo et non nisi cum opus est adhibeantur. ergo ille quoque ipse, si quid iam corruptum esset, expelli debere confessus est. ita non ex toto res condemnanda est, sed esse eius etiam plures causae possunt, estque in ea quaedam paulo subtilior observatio adhibenda.

19 vomitus utilior est hieme quam aestate: nam tunc et pituitae plus et capitis gravitas maior subest. inutilis est gracilibus et imbecillum stomachum habentibus utilis plenis, biliosis omnibus, si vel nimium se replerunt, vel parum concoxerunt. nam sive plus est quam quod concoqui possit, periclitari ne corrumpatur non oportet; sive corruptum est, nihil commodius est quam id, qua via primum expelli potest, eicere.

28 Although cura is omitted in the Serbat (1995) text, he translates it with “de souci”. Unfortunately there are a few similar inaccuracies in this text. In his review of Serbat’s book Langslow (1999:313) observes: “It has to be said, however, that one’s first impression on actually using this edition is that it is unfinished and, worse, not properly checked. The number of typographical errors and inconsistencies, in the text itself and elsewhere, is large”.

51
16 The following slim the body: hot water, and if one bathes in it, the more so if it is salty; bathing on an empty stomach, a scorching sun as well as any kind of heat, worry and insomnia; either too short or too long slumber and a hard bed throughout the summer; running, much walking and any vigorous exercise; vomiting, purging and acid and pungent foodstuffs; a single meal a day, and also the habit of drinking wine that is not too cold on an empty stomach.

17 Since I have mentioned vomiting and purging among the slimming measures, I must also mention some things in particular about them. I see that vomiting has been rejected by Asclepiades in that book which he wrote, with the title de tuenda sanitate (“On protecting your health”). I do not blame him if he was shocked by the custom of those who, by vomiting daily, acquire the capacity for overindulging. He has even gone a little further, he also rejected purgings from the same volume altogether; and purgings are dangerous if achieved by too strong medicaments.

18 These procedures must however not be given up altogether, because regard for constitutions and seasons can render them necessary, provided they are adhered to in moderation and only when there is a need. Therefore he himself conceded that if something had already been corrupted, it should be expelled. Thus the procedure must not be condemned totally, for there can be more reasons for it, and in that regard the matter needs a somewhat more nuanced consideration.

19 Vomiting is more beneficial in winter than in summer, for then there is more phlegm and more severe dullness in the head. It is harmful for thin people and those with a weak stomach, it is beneficial to the stout and all who become bilious, whether they have overeaten or have not digested well. For if a meal is larger than one can digest, one must not risk it lest it becomes corrupted; and if it has become corrupted, nothing is more appropriate than to get rid of it by whatever way its expulsion is first possible.

29 Asclepiades.
30 Cf. Hippocrates Aph. I.2: “In disturbances of the stomach and when there is spontaneous vomiting, it is beneficial to the patient if the noxious matter be voided.” Translation Chadwick and Mann (1950). Asclepiades also supports this treatment, cf. 1.3.18 above.
20 itaque ubi amari ructus cum dolore et gravitate praecordiorum sunt, ad
dunc protinus confugiendum est. item prodest ei cui pectus aestuat et
frequens saliva vel nausea est, aut sonant aures, aut madent oculi, aut os
amarum est; similiterque ei qui vel caelum vel locum mutat; hisque quibus, si
per plures dies non vomuerunt, dolor praecordia infestat.

21 neque ignoro inter haec praecipi quietem, quae non semper contingere
potest agendi necessitatem habentibus, nec in omnibus idem facit. itaque
istud luxuriae causa fieri non oportere confiteor; interdum valetudinis causa
recte fieri experimentis credo cum eo tamen, ne quis qui valere et senescere
volet, hoc cottidianum habeat.

22 qui vomere post cibum volt, si ex facili facit, aquam tantum tepidam ante
debet assumere; si difficilius, aquae vel salis vel mellis paulum adicere. at qui
mane vomiturus est, ante bibere mulsum vel hysopum, aut esse radiculam31
debet, deinde aquam tepidam, ut supra scriptum est, bibere. cetera quae
antiqui medici praecipuam, stomachum omnia infestant.

23 post vomitum, si stomachus infirmus est, paulum cibi, sed huius idonei,
gustandum, et aquae frigidae cyathi tres bibendi sunt, nisi tamen fauces
vomitus exasperarint. qui vomuit, si mane id fecit, ambulare debet, tum ungui,
dein cenare; si post cenam, postero die lavari et in balneo sudare.

31 Diminutives are often used by technical writers. In 2.18.5 Celsus lists and names different
pulses, bulbs and roots such as *lenticula* and *radicula*. Marx (1915:xcvii) comments on
Celsus’ *deminutiva* regarding food (*lenticula, pulticula* and *caliculus*), as well as *cubiculo* (“for
those sleeping”) and diseases *febricula* (“slight fever”) and *tussicula* (“a little cough”) in the
manner of the conversation of a physician or anxious mother or wife.
20 And so when there are bitter eructations with pain and pressure of the diaphragm, he must immediately vomit. Likewise it is helpful for him whose chest is on fire, who has copious saliva or nausea, or whose ears ring, eyes water or mouth has a bitter taste. Similarly he who undergoes a change of climate or place, and those who suffer heartburn if they have not vomited for several days.

21 I am not unaware that in such cases rest is prescribed, which is not always possible for those who have to work, and it [sc. rest] does not have the same effect on all. And so I admit that it [sc. vomiting] must not be practised because of opulent living, yet I believe from experience that it can sometimes rightly be practised for the sake of health with this reservation however, that no one who wants to keep well and live to old age should practise this daily.  

22 He who wants to vomit after eating, if he does so easily, should drink tepid water by itself beforehand, if with some difficulty, he should add a little salt or honey to the water. He, however, who wants to vomit in the morning, must first drink wine with honey or hyssop or eat a radish, then drink tepid water as written above. The other emetics prescribed by ancient physicians all disturb the stomach.

23 If the stomach is weak after the vomit, a little suitable food must be eaten and three ladles of cold water must be drunk, unless the retching has irritated the throat. If someone has vomited in the morning, he must take a walk, then be oiled and then dine, if he has vomited after dinner, he must bathe and sweat at the bathhouse the next day.

---

32 The double negative is often used by Celsus as a kind of litotes to strengthen a remark.
33 i.e. the conditions described in 1.3.19.
34 Cf. 1.1.1 above: qui et bene valet … nullis obligare se legibus debet, … hic longam adulescentiam reddid.
35 The use of this aromatic plant is often quoted by Celsus. According to Spencer (1935a:491) its identification is doubtful. Although Pliny NH 25.136 writes, “it is bad for the stomach” (stomacho contrarium), he recommends it when mixed with figs to promote loose stools or with honey to promote a vomit. Celsus does not specify the mixture that contains hyssop, it could be an infusion or the preparation quoted by Hippocrates (Reg. salut. 5) for use by obese individuals, which is ground hyssop mixed with water with vinegar and salt to improve the taste (the instructions for purging of slim people are much more complex).
37 Celsus refers to physicians such as Hippocrates Aph. 4.1 3–16 who advises that their bodies should be moistened with increased food and rest and that they should be encouraged to move about and sleep less. All these precautions are prescribed because hellebore may be dangerous.
24 inde proximus cibus mediocris utilior est isque esse debet cum pane hesterno, vino austero meraco et carne assa cibisque omnibus quam siccissimis. qui vomere bis in mense vult, melius consulet, si biduo continuaret quam si post quintum decimum diem vomuerit, nisi haec mora gravitatatem pectori faciet.

25 deiectio autem medicamento quoque petenda est ubi venter suppressus parum reddit, ex eoque inflationes, caligines, capitis dolores, aliaque superioris partis mala increscunt. quid enim inter haec adiuvare possunt quies et inedia\textsuperscript{38} per quas illa maxime eveniunt? qui deicere volet, primum cibis vinisque utetur his quae hoc praestant; dein, si parum illa proficient, aloen sumat.

26 sed purgationes quoque, ut interdum necessariae sunt, sic, ubi frequentes sunt, periculum afferunt: assuescit enim non ali corpus, cum omnibus morbis obnoxia maxime infirmitas sit.

27 calefacit\textsuperscript{39} autem unctio, aqua salsa, magisque si calida est, omnia salsa, amara, carnosa; si post cibum est, balneum, vinum austerum\textsuperscript{40}. refrigerant in ieiunio et balneum et somnus, nisi nimis longus est, omnia acida, aqua quam frigidissima, oleum, si aqua miscetur.

\textsuperscript{38} Spencer (1935a:62) states: “Marx suggests that some words have been omitted such as "quae nonnulli commendant horum malorem remedia 'which some commend as remedies in such ills.' Van d. (sic) Linden, followed by Daremberg, reads per quae illa, 'through which (rest and fasting) these conditions (i.e. constipation) arise.'”

\textsuperscript{39} calefacit: cf. 2.33.5-6 where Celsus describes hot poultices, composed of local products, applied to disperse inflammation.

\textsuperscript{40} Celsus took this from the medical register; cf. Cato Agr. 126 vini nigri austeri congios III: “three congii of strong black wine” mixed with other ingredients is recommended for stomach troubles. Translation Hooper (1934:109).
24 After that the next meal is preferably light and must consist of day old bread, sour undiluted wine and roasted meat - all the food as dry as possible. He who wants to vomit twice a month would be better advised if he does it in the course of two consecutive days rather than every fortnight, unless this delay causes heaviness in the chest.

25 Bowel movement must also be brought on with medication when the stomach is constipated and too little is passed, and because of this there develop flatulence, impaired vision, headache and other maladies of the upper part of the body. For what can rest and fasting help in the very circumstances through which this condition [i.e. constipation] usually comes about? He, who wants to empty his bowels, should first take those foods and wines which will promote it; then, if they are ineffective, he should take aloe.

26 But purgatives also, although they are a necessity from time to time, entail a risk when used frequently, for the body becomes accustomed to malnutrition, since a weakened state leaves it exposed to all kinds of diseases.

27 The body is heated by: anointing, salt water, the more so if it is hot, all food which is salted, pickled and meaty, also a bath and strong wine if it is after dinner. The following cool [the body]: on an empty stomach a bath and sleep if it is not too long, all acid foods, water as cold as possible and oil if mixed with water.

---

41 Hippocrates (Reg. salut. 5) first presented these precepts, cf. chapter 4.7.6 below.
42 Pliny NH 27.14-20 describes in detail the aloe plant as well as all its attributes: “There are many uses for it, but the chief is to relax the bowels, for it is almost the only laxative that is also a stomach tonic, no ill effects whatever resulting from its use”. Translation Jones (1956:399).
43 Cf. Celsus de deiectione 2.12.1 deiectiones autem antiqui variis medicamentis ... in omnibus paene morbis moliebantur (“Now purging was promoted by the ancients in almost all diseases by various medicaments ...”). Celsus names different purgatives and the rules to be observed when administering them, as well as the advantages and dangers. Here he again (as in 1.3.7 above) refers to Asclepiades in this regard: “the practice was limited by Asclepiades though still kept, but I see that in our time it is usually neglected” (2.12.2). Translations Spencer (1935a).
28 umidum autem corpus efficit labor maior quam ex consuetudine, frequentes balneum, cibus plenior, multa potio, post hanc ambulatio et vigilia; per se quoque ambulatio multa et matutina et vehemens, exercitationi non protinus cibus adiectus; ea genera escae quae veniunt ex locis frigidis et pluviis et irriguis.

29 contra siccat modica exercitatio, fames, unctio sine aqua, calor, sol modicus, frigida aqua, cibus exercitationi statim subiectus, et is ipse ex siccis et aestuosis locis veniens.

30 alvum adstringit labor, sedile, creta figularis corpori illita, cibus imminutus, et is ipse semel die assumptus ab eo qui bis solet; exigua potio neque adhibita, nisi cum cibi quis quantum assumpturus est cepit, post cibum quies.

31 contra solvit aucta ambulacio atque esca potusque, motus, qui post cibum est, subinde potionem cibo immixtae. illud quoque scire oportet quod ventrem vomitus solutum comprimit, compressum solvit; itemque comprimit is vomitus qui statim post cibum est, solvit is qui tarde supervenit.

32 quod ad aetates vero pertinet, inediam facile sustinent mediae aetates, minus iuvenes, minime pueri et senectute confeci. quo minus fert facile quisque, eo saepius debet cibum assumere, maximeque eo eget qui increscit. calida lavatio et pueris et senibus apta est; vinum dilutius pueris, senibus meracius; neutri aetati, quae inflationes movent.
28 The following cause the body to become moist: exertion more than is customary, frequent bathing, overeating, copious drinking followed by walking and late nights, much walking, early in the morning and strenuous has by itself [the same effect], and food taken not immediately after the exercise, those kinds of food that come from cold, rainy and irrigated areas.

29 On the contrary, <the following> dry the body: moderate exercise, fasting, anointing without water, heat, moderate sunshine, cold water, food immediately after exercise, coming from dry and hot regions.

30 The following cause constipation:44 exertion, sitting still, potter’s clay smeared on the body, a scanty diet, and that taken once a day by one used to it twice a day, drink in small quantities and that only taken after consumption of the quantity of food to be taken, also a rest after the meal.

31 Conversely the bowels become loose by increasing the length of the walk and more food and drink, movement after the meal and frequently drinking during the meal. It should also be common knowledge that vomiting checks diarrhoea and also relieves constipation; likewise that a vomit immediately after a meal checks diarrhoea and a vomit later relaxes the stomach.

32 Indeed as far as the stages of life45 are concerned, those in midlife endure hunger the easiest, young people less and children and those worn out by age the least. The less easily a person bears it, the more frequently food must be taken, and in the growth stage the need is most.46 Warm bathing is recommended for children and the elderly; wine must be diluted for children, but be unmixed for the elderly, at neither age of a kind to cause flatulence.

---

44 Cf. 2.30.1 - 3 on foods that cause this problem.
45 Cf. Censorinus de Die Natali 14.2 who states that according to Varro the five stages are: birth – 15 years = pueritia; 15 – 30 years = adolescencia; 30 – 45 years = iuventus; 45 – 60 years = seniores; 60 – death = senectus, but that Hippocrates divides life into seven stages, with each stage covering 7 years. Celsus also refers to age when he discusses diseases in 2.1.5: “The middle period of life is the safest, for it is not disturbed by the heat of youth, nor the chill of age”. Translation Spencer (1935a:89).
46 Cf. Hippocrates (Aph. 1.14): “Things which are growing have the greatest natural warmth and, accordingly, need most nourishment”. Translation Chadwick and Mann (1950:208).
iuvenum minus quae assumant et quomodo currentur, interest. quibus iuvenibus fluxit alvus, plerumque in senectute contrahitur, quibus in adulescentia fuit adstricta, saepe in senectute solvitur. melior est autem in iuvene fusior, in sene adstrictior.

tempus quoque anni considerare oportet. hieme plus esse convenit, minus sed meracius bibere; multo pane uti, carne potius elixa, modice holeribus; semel die cibum capere, nisi si nimis venter adstrictus est. si prandet aliquis, utilius est exiguum aliquid, et ipsum siccum sine carne, sine potione sumere. eo tempore anni calidis omnibus potius utendum est vel calorem moventibus. venus tum non aequo perniciosa est.

at vere paulum cibo demendum, adiciendum potionis, sed dilutius tamen bibendum est; magis carne utendum, magis holeribus; transeundum paulatim ad assa ab elixis. venus eo tempore anni tutissima est.
aestate vero et potionis et cibo saepius corpus eget; ideo prandere quoque commodum est. ei temporis aptissima sunt et caro et holus, potio quam dilutissima ut et sitim tollat nec corpus incendet; frigida lavatio, caro assa, frigidi cibi vel qui refrigerent.

ut saepius autem cibo utendum, sic exiguo est. per autumnum propter caeli varietatem periculum maximum est; itaque neque sine veste neque sine calceamentis prodire oportet, praecipue diebus frigidioribus, neque sub divo nocte dormire, aut certe bene operiri. cibo vero iam paulo pleniore ut licet, minus sed meracius bibere.

Note oportet and gerundives expressing obligation (1.3.35) demendum, adiciendum, bibendum, utendum and transeundum as examples of Celsus' different ways of giving his own instructions and precepts. He does not use direct commands, imperatives or jussive subjunctives.

Celsus' variety in vocabulary shows the literariness of his style (Jocelyn 1985); cibo uti is one example of the different ways he expresses "to eat"; others are cibum consumere, assumere (1.3.38), capere and esse (1.3.22; 34).
calceamenta refer to shoes and boots as distinguished from sandals and house slippers (solea, crepida, sandalium, soccus); it included all those more complete coverings for the feet which were used in walking out of doors or travelling.
33 For the young, what they eat and how they are cared for matter less. People who have relaxed stomachs in youth are generally constipated in old age, those who were constipated when young often have loose bowels in old age. It is, however, better to be rather loose in youth and more constipated in old age.\textsuperscript{50}

34 One ought also to consider the season of the year.\textsuperscript{51} In winter it is fitting to eat more and drink less but then stronger wine. Eat a lot of bread, meat preferably boiled and vegetables in moderation, take food once a day unless the stomach is too constipated. If one eats early in the day it is better if it is sparse and dry without meat and without drinking anything. During that time of the year preferably everything that is hot or promoting warmth must be consumed. Sexual intercourse is then also not so harmful.

35 On the other hand in spring food must be reduced a little, drink increased but nevertheless must be drunk diluted; more meat and vegetables eaten and gradually changed from boiled to roasted. At that time of the year sexual intercourse is at its safest.

36 In summer the body needs both drink and food more often - for this reason it is healthy to eat lunch as well. Both meat and vegetables are very suitable for that season and wine as diluted as possible to quench thirst without heating the body; bathing in cold water, roasted meat and cold food or what is cooling.

37 But just as food must be consumed more often, so the portions must be small. During autumn on account of the changeability in the weather the danger is very great. Therefore one should not go out without a cloak or thick shoes, especially on colder days, and not sleep in the open air at night or certainly be well covered. As far as food is concerned, one may eat a little more, drink less but stronger wine.

\textsuperscript{50} Cf. Hippocrates (\textit{Aph.} 2.53): “Those who have relaxed bowels, if they are young, tend to do better than those with constipated ones, but worse if they are getting old; for it is a general rule that the bowels become constipated with advancing years”. Translation Chadwick and Mann (1950:212).

\textsuperscript{51} Just as age, 1.3.32 above, seasons of the year is also an ongoing theme in medical literature of antiquity, e.g. Hippocrates \textit{Aph.} 1.15 and 18; \textit{Reg. salut.} 1. See further \textit{de Med.} 2.1.1-4 “So then spring is the most salubrious, next after it comes winter; summer is rather more dangerous than salubrious, autumn is by far the most dangerous”. Translation Spencer (1935a:87).
poma nocere quidam putant quae immodice toto die plerumque sic assumuntur ne quid ex densiore cibo remittatur. ita non haec sed consummatio omnium nocet; ex quibus in nullo tamen minus quam in his noxae est.

sed his uti non saepius quam alio cibo convenit. denique aliquid densiori cibo, cum hic accedit, necessarium est demi. neque aestate vero neque autumno utilis venus est, tolerabilior tamen per autumnum; aestate in totum, si fieri potest, abstinendum est.

IV de capite

1 proximum est ut de iis dicam qui partes aliquas corporis imbecillas habent. cui caput infirmum est, is si bene conc oxit, leniter perfricare id mane manibus suis debet; numquam id, si fieri potest, veste velare; ad cutem tonderi. utileque lunam vitare maximeque ante ipsum lunae solisque concursum; sed nusquam post cibum [progredi].

2 [si cui capilli sunt, cotidie pectere] multum ambulare, sed, si licet, neque sub tecto neque in sole; ubique autem vitare solis ardorem, maximeque post cibum et vinum. potius ungui quam lavari, numquam ad flammam ungui, interdum ad prunam. si in balneum venit, sub veste primum paulum in tepidario insudare, ibi ungui; tum transire in caldarium; ubi sudavit, in solium non descendere sed multa calida aqua per caput se totum perfundere, tum tepida, deinde frigida, diutiusque ea caput quam ceteras partes perfundere; deinde id aliquamdiu perfricare, novissime detergere et unguere.

Marx notes that some MSS insert proregedi and Spencer (1935) translates it. Targa noted the lacuna and proposed to omit the sentence utile ... concursum. Serbat (1995) omits the lacuna as well as the first clause of 1.4.2 si cui capilli sunt, cotidie pectere, suggesting that it is out of place. I prefer the inclusion of proregedi here and translated it. insudare, poetical and post-Augustan, found in Horace (S 1.4.72). Celsus alternates this word with the more common sudare, another example of the literariness of his style; see 1.3.37 footnote above.
38 Some think fruit is harmful which [is generally the case] when consumed excessively all day without reducing more substantial food. Thus it is not the fruit that is harmful but the combination of everything, however, in none of them is there less harm than in the fruit.

39 But it is not advisable to eat fruit more often than other food. Indeed when fruit is added it is necessary to cut out some of the more substantial food. Neither in summer nor in autumn is sexual intercourse harmless, however, it is more tolerable in autumn; in summer it must be abstained from altogether if that can possibly be done.

4 The head

1 My next theme is to speak about those people who have some parts of the body weak. He who has a weak head should rub it gently with his own hands in the morning if he has digested well. If it is possible he must never cover it with a wrap and must shave it to the skin. It is beneficial to avoid moonlight especially before the conjunction of the moon and sun. In any case go nowhere after a meal.

2 [If he has (retained his) hair, he should comb it daily], walk much, but if possible neither under cover nor in the sun, moreover he must avoid the heat of the sun especially after a meal and wine. He must rather be anointed than bathe, never be anointed near an open flame, but from time to time near a brazier. If he goes to the bath, he should first sweat for a little while in the tepid room with a wrap on, then be anointed there; next go through to the hot room. When he has sweated he should not go down into the tub, but wash completely from his head down with lots of hot water, then tepid water followed by cold water poured over the head much longer than the other parts of the body. Then he must rub it for some time and finally wipe it dry and anoint it.
3 capiti nihil aeque prodest atque aqua frigida: itaque is cui hoc infirmum est, per aestatem id bene largo canali cotidie debet aliquamdiu subicere. semper autem, etiamsi sine balneo unctus est neque totum corpus refrigerare sustinet, caput tamen aqua frigida perfundere; sed cum ceteras partes adtingi nolit, demittere id, ne ad cervices aqua descendat; eamque, ne quid oculis aliisve partibus noceat, ad os de fluentem subinde manibus regerere.

4 huic modicus cibus necessarius est, quem facile concoquat; isque, si ieiuno caput laeditur, assumendus etiam medio die est; si non laeditur, semel potius. bibere huic assidue vinum dilutum leve quam aquam magis expedit, ut, cum caput gravius esse coeperit, sit quo confugiat.

5 eique ex toto neque vinum neque aqua semper utilia sunt: medicamentum utrumque est, cum in vicem assumitur. scribere, legere, voce contendere huic opus non est, utique post cenam; post quam ne cogitatio quidem ei satis tuta est; maxime tamen vomitus alienus est.

V de lippitudine quae gravedinem tollit

1 neque vero iis solis, quos capitis imbecillitas torquet, usus aquae frigidae prodest, sed iis etiam quos assiduae lippitundines, gravedines, destillationes tonsillaeque male habent. his autem non caput tantum cotidie perfundendum est, sed os quoque multa frigida aqua fovendum est; praecipueque omnibus quibus hoc utile auxilium est, eo utendum est ubi gravius caelum austri reddiderunt.

2 cumque omnibus inutilis sit post cibum aut contentio aut agitatio animi, tum iis praecipue qui vel capitis vel arteriae dolores habere consuerunt, vel quoslibet alios oris affectus. vitari etiam gravedines destillationesque possunt, si quam minime qui his opportunus est loca aquasque mutet; si caput in sole protegit ne incendatur, neu subito ex repentino nubilo frigus id moveat; si post concoctionem ieiunus caput radit; si post cibum neque legit neque scribit.

Serbat (1995) places ad os before defluentem. Spencer (1935) has the word order defluentem subinde manibus [ad os] regerere ("and with his hands directs the flow to his face").
3 Equally, nothing is as beneficial for the head as cold water. Consequently he who has a weak head must hold it under a strong flowing water pipe for a while daily during summer. He must also always douche his head with cold water, even if he is anointed without going into a bath and cannot bear cooling of the entire body. However, since he does not want the rest of the body to get wet, he must bend his head forward so that the water does not run down his neck. He should direct the flow of the water to his face with his hands, so it does not irritate his eyes and other parts of the body.

4 This man needs a moderate amount of food so that it may be digested easily and if his head is affected by fasting, he should also eat at midday; if not affected, he should rather eat once (a day). It is healthier for him to frequently drink light diluted wine rather than water, so that, when his head becomes heavier there may be something in reserve for him.

5 On the whole, neither wine nor water is always of benefit to him, each is a remedy when taken in turn. He should not write, read and debate, especially after dinner; in fact after dinner not even meditation is safe enough for him; most of all, however, a vomit is not recommended.

5 Chronic eye inflammation

1 Application of cold water is not only beneficial to those who suffer weakness of the head, but also to those who have chronic eye inflammations, colds, runny noses and tonsillitis. Indeed, they must not only douche the head daily, but the face must also be treated with lots of cold water. Especially all those who find this a useful remedy must apply it when the south winds bring on more oppressive weather.

2 Since strife or mental worry after dinner is harmful to all, then especially to those who often have headaches or pains in the wind-pipe or whatever other oral infections. Colds and runny noses can also be avoided if one who is liable to them makes as little change as possible regarding locality and waters; if he protects his head in the sun so as not to suffer sunstroke, and a chill does not affect it suddenly because of an unexpected cloudy sky; if he shaves his head after digestion or on an empty stomach and if he neither reads nor writes after a meal.
VI de alvo soluto

1 quem vero frequenter cita alvus exercet, huic opus est pila similibusque superiores partes exercere; dum ieiunus est, ambulare; vitare solem, continua balnea; ungui citra sudorem; non uti cibis variis, minimeque iurulentis, aut leguminibus holeribusque,\textsuperscript{55} iisque quae celeriter descendunt; omnia denique fugere quae tarde concoquuntur.

2 venatio durique pisces et ex domesticis animalibus assa caro maxime iuvant. numquam vinum salsum bibere expedit, ne tenue quidem aut dulce, sed austerum et plenius, neque id ipsum pervetus. si mulso uti volet, id ex decocto melle faciendum est. si frigidae potiones ventrem eius non turbant, his utendum potissimum est. si quid offensae in cena sensit, vomere debet, idque postero quoque die facere; tertio modici ponderis panem ex vino esse, adiecta uva ex olla vel ex defruto\textsuperscript{56} similibusque aliis; deinde ad consuetudinem redire. semper autem post cibum conquiescere ac neque intendere animum, neque ambulatione quamvis levi dimoveri.

VII de dolore intestini interioris

at si laxius intestinum dolore consuevit quod colum nominant, cum id nihil nisi genus inflationis sit, id agendum est ut concoquat aliquid: ut lectione aliisque generibus exerceatur; utatur balneo calido, cibis quoque et potionibus calidis, denique omni modo frigus vitet, item dulcia omnia leguminaque\textsuperscript{57} et quicquid inflare consuevit.

\textsuperscript{55} This refers especially to cabbage.
\textsuperscript{56} defruto [sc. mustum], new wine boiled down to a small portion of its original quantity, cf. Cato Agr. 105; Col. de R. R. 12.20.21; Verg. Geor. 1.295.
\textsuperscript{57} legumina: any leguminous plant; especially the bean, cf. Verg. Geor. 1.74,75.
6 Upset stomach

1 But he who is frequently troubled by a runny stomach, should exercise the upper part of his body with a ball or similar exercises, should walk on an empty stomach, avoid the sun and prolonged bathing, be anointed before sweating and not consume a variety of dishes, least of all stews either with pulses or greens and those that pass through quickly; in short he should avoid everything that takes a long time to digest.  

2 Venison, firm fish and roasted meat from domestic animals are especially beneficial. He should never drink salted wine, nor indeed light or sweet wine, but dry and more full-bodied and it must not be too old. If he should want to drink wine sweetened with honey, it must be made with boiled honey. If cold drinks do not upset his stomach, it is these that must be consumed above all. If he feels any discomfort during dinner, he must vomit and repeat it the next day. The day after that he must eat a small portion of bread dipped in wine with the addition of grapes preserved in a jar or in must and other similar foods, then he must return to his usual routine. But he must always rest after a meal and never exert his mind nor [his body] while on a walk, however short.

7 Pain of the intestine

If the more lax intestine, called the colon, is habitually painful when it is nothing but some kind of flatulence, an effort must be made to promote digestion. Occupy oneself by reading aloud and other kinds of exercise, enjoy a warm bath and also warm food and drinks, and finally avoid any kind of cold and also all sweet foods and legumes and whatever usually causes a bloated feeling.

---

58 Marx (1915:72 note 1) states: “the advice is to avoid food which passing through quickly, is ill digested.” At 1.8.1 v.d. (sic) Linden (followed by Daremberg) reads cibum assumere: “to take all such things as are digested slowly”.

59 Wine mixed with seawater. Pliny NH 14.77 describes this wine: “The people of Cos mix in a rather large quantity of sea-water—a custom arising from the peculation of a slave who used this method to fill up the due measure, and this mixture is poured into white must. In other countries a blend made in a similar way is called ‘sea-flavoured wine’, and ‘sea-treated’ when the vessels containing the must have been thrown into the sea”. Translation Rackham (1960).
VIII de stomacho

1 si quis vero stomacho laborat, legere clare debet et post lectionem ambulare; tum pila et armis aliove quo genere quo superior pars movetur, exerceri; non aquam sed vinum calidum bibere ieiunus; cibum bis die assumere, sic tamen ut facile concoquat; uti vino tenui et austero, et si post cibum, frigidis potius potionibus.

2 stomachum autem infirmum indicant pallor, macies, praecordiorum dolor, nausea, et nolentium vomitus, ieiuno dolor capitis, quae in quo non sunt, is firmi stomachi est. neque credendum utique nostris est qui, cum in adversa valetudine vinum aut frigidam aquam concupiverunt, deliciarum patrocinium in accusationem non merentis stomachi habent.

3 at qui tarde concoquunt et quorum ideo praecordia inflantur, quive propter ardorem aliquem noctu sitire consuerunt, ante quam conquiescant duos tresve cyathos per tenuem fistulam bibant. prodest etiam adversus tardam concoctionem clare legere, deinde ambulare, tum vel ungui vel lavari; assidue vinum frigidum bibere, et post cibum magnam potionem, sed, ut supra dixi, per siphonem; deinde omnes potiones aqua frigida includere.

4 cui vero cibus acescit, is ante eum bibere aquam egelidam debet et vomere; at si cui ex hoc frequens deiectio incidit, quotiens alvus ei constiterit, frigida potione potissimum utatur.

60 According to Pinkster (1995:563) this is an example of a declarative main clause where the word order is object, finite verb, subject - the message is organized from the perspective of the stomach.
8 The stomach

1 If someone suffers stomach ache, he must read aloud and after reading walk, then exercise with a ball and with armour or any other kind of exercise by which the upper part of the body is moved. He must not drink water but warm wine on an empty stomach and must eat food twice a day but in such a manner that it is easily digested, drink light dry wine, and if drinks are taken after a meal then they should preferably be cold.

2 Now the following are indications of a weak stomach: pallor, weight loss, heartburn, nausea and involuntary vomiting, as well as headache when the stomach is empty. Where these symptoms are absent, the stomach is sound. But we certainly must not believe our patients who, when in ill health crave wine or cold water, lay the blame on their innocent stomach to back up their desire for pleasure.

3 But those who digest slowly and become bloated because of this or who on account of heat of some kind frequently become thirsty in the night, should drink two or three ladles through a thin reed before they retire. As for slow digestion the following is helpful: reading aloud, then walking, then either being oiled or bathing, regularly drinking cold wine and after a meal a large draught but, as I have stated above, through a reed. Finally cold water should conclude all drinking.

4 He whose food turns sour must beforehand drink tepid water and vomit; but if, because of this, he suffers repeated diarrhoea, as often as his stomach has recovered he should whenever possible take a cold drink.

61 Lit. “whose part below the heart or diaphragm becomes inflated”.
IX de dolore nervorum vel podagra

1 si cui vero dolere nervi solent, quod in podagra cheiragrace^63 esse consuevit, huic, quantum fieri potest, exercendum id est quod affectum est, obiciendumque labori et frigori, nisi cum dolor increvit. sub divo quies optima est.

2 venus semper inimica est; concoctio, sicut in omnibus corporis affectibus, necessaria: cruditas enim id maxime laedit, et quotiens offensus corpus est, vitiosa pars maxime sentit.

3 ut concoctio autem omnibus vitiis occursit, sic rursus aliis frigus, aliis calor; quae sequi quisque pro habitu corporis sui debet. frigus inimicum est seni, tenui, vulneri, praecordiiis, intestinis, vesicae, auribus, coxis, scapulis, naturalibus, ossibus, dentibus, nervis^64 vulvae, cerebro.

4 idem summam cutem facit palliam, aridam, duram, nigram; ex hoc horrores tremoresque nascentur. At prodest iuvenibus et omnibus plenis; erectiorque mens est, et melius concoquitur, ubi frigus quidem est sed cavetur.

5 aqua vero frigida infusa, praeterquam capiti, etiam stomacho prodest, etiam articulis doloribusque qui sunt sine ulceribus, item rubicundis nimirum hominibus, si dolore vacant. calor autem adiuvat omnia quae frigus infestat, item lippientis, si nec dolor nec lacrimae sunt, nervos quoque qui contrahuntur, praecipueque ea ulcera quae ex frigore sunt. Idem corporis colorem bonum facit, urinam movet.

^63 The words podagra and cheiragra, as used by Celsus, were used of any pain in the feet and hands, though such pain was often a joint pain and sometimes occurred in the case of true gout, but sometimes perhaps the result of lead poisoning. Pliny NH 26.64 mentions podagre morbus rarius ... verum etiam nostra: "gout ... a rarer disease ... but also of our own generation" and adds "it is also itself a foreign complaint; had it existed in Italy in early times it would have received a Latin name". Translation Jones (1966).
^64 "The Latin nervus includes tendons, ligaments and nerves. It is used of all fibrous tissues or membranes" (Jones 1963:381).
9 Pain in the sinews or podagra

1 If the sinews habitually cause someone pain which is common in the foot or hand, the affected part must be exercised as far as is possible, and must be exposed to work and cold unless when the pain has increased. It is best to rest in the open air.

2 Intercourse is always harmful. Good digestion is a necessity, as in all affections of the body, for indigestion is very harmful and whenever the body suffers an attack, it is always the affected part that feels it most.

3 As digestion has to do with all kinds of problems, so cold has to do with some and heat with others. Each person must take into account the condition of his own body. Cold is harmful to the elderly, the slim, a wound, the part below the ribs, the intestines, the bladder, the ears, the hips, the shoulderblades, the genitals, the bones, the teeth, the sinews, the womb and the brain.

4 It also makes the skin pale, dry, callous and black and causes shivering and trembling. On the other hand it is of benefit to the young and all stout people. The mind is more alert and digestion better, but one must take precautions when it is cold.

5 A cold water infusion is beneficial not only for the head but also the stomach and joints and pains that are without lesions, likewise for people who are too ruddy if they do not suffer pain. Heat on the other hand is beneficial to everything that cold harms, also impaired eyesight if there is neither pain nor tears, muscles that contract and especially those lesions caused by the cold. It gives the body a good colour and promotes diuresis.

65 Cf. Spencer (1935a:463-465). Celsus describes this ailment as well as its treatment at 4.31;32.
si nimius est, corpus effeminat, nervos emollit, stomachum solvit. minime vero frigus et calor tuta sunt ubi subita insuetis sunt: nam frigus lateris dolores aliaque vitia, frigida aqua strumas excitat. calor concoctionem prohibet, somnum aufert, sudorem digerit, obnoxium morbis pestilentibus corpus efficit.

X observatio adversus pestilentiam

1 est etiam observatio necessaria qua quis in pestilentia utatur adhuc integer, cum tamen securus esse non possit. tum igitur oportet peregrinari, navigare, ubi id non licet, gestari, ambulare sub diu ante aestum leniter eodemque modo ungui; et, ut supra (9.1-3,6) comprehensum est, vitare fatigationem, cruditatem, frigus, calorem, libidinem, multoque magis se continere si qua gravitas in corpore est.

2 tum neque mane surgendum neque pedibus nudis ambulandum est, minime post cibum aut balneum; neque ieiuno neque cenato vomendum est, neque movenda alvus; atque etiam, si per se mota est, conprimenda est.

3 abstinendum potius, si plenius corpus est, itemque vitandum balneum, sudor, somnus meridianus, utique si cibus quoque antecessit; qui tamen semel die tum commodius assumitur, insuper etiam modicus ne cruditatem moveat. alternis diebus in vicem modo aqua modo vinum bibendum est. quibus servatis ex reliqua victus consuetudine quam minimum mutari debet.

4 cum vero haec in omni pestilentia facienda sint, tum in ea maxime quam austri excitarint. atque etiam peregrinantibus eadem necessaria sunt, ubi gravi tempore anni discesserunt ex suis sedibus, vel ubi in graves regiones venerunt. ac si cetera res aliqua prohibebit, utique retineri debebit a vino ad aquam, ab hac ad vinum qui supra positus est transitus.

Spencer (1935b:2) comments that victus, like the διαιτα (“regimen” or way of life) of Hippocrates includes not only regulation of diet, but rubbing, rocking and rules for exercise.
6 If excessive, it drains the body of energy, softens the tendons and relaxes the stomach. But cold and heat are the least safe when it is unexpectedly applied to people unaccustomed to it, for cold causes pains in the sides and other maladies and cold water provokes tumours in the neck (goiter). Heat suppresses digestion, prevents sleep, causes sweating and makes the body susceptible to epidemic diseases.

10 Precaution during an epidemic

1 There is an indispensable precaution which an as yet healthy person must observe during an epidemic, although he can nevertheless not be secure. At such a time therefore, he must travel abroad, set sail, but when that is not possible, be carried in a litter. He must walk gently in the open before the heat of day and likewise be anointed, and as has been stated above (9.1-3,6), avoid fatigue, indigestion, cold, heat, excitement and restrain himself all the more so if there is any heaviness in the body.

2 At such a time he must neither get up early nor walk barefoot, least of all after a meal or a bath. He should not vomit on an empty stomach or after having eaten, nor set his bowels in motion and, indeed if the bowels move spontaneously, it must be suppressed.

3 He should preferably abstain if he is rather stout and also avoid the bath, sweating and a midday siesta, at any rate if a meal has preceded. Nevertheless it is better then to eat once a day and in addition moderately, so as not to cause indigestion. He must drink water one day and wine the next. If he observes these precepts, he must change the rest of his customary regime as little as possible.

4 Since these precautions should indeed be heeded during all kinds of epidemic, then even more so in one brought on by the south winds. The same precautions are necessary for travellers when they have left their homes at the unhealthy season of the year or have arrived at unhealthy regions. Even if some circumstance prevents the observance of the other rules, at any rate he must keep up the alternation of wine to water and water to wine as mentioned above.
CHAPTER 4
THE CONCEPT OF THE SANUS HOMO

4.1 Introduction

Celsus’ concept of the sanus homo in the de Medicina is comprehensive. He treats the notion of sanus homo systematically, discussing any possible condition that might have an effect on a healthy body. There should be a balance in lifestyle and habits in order to keep the body healthy and if it becomes weak or diseased it should be restored to health. He draws a clear distinction between the sanus homo, whom he defines as qui et bene valet et suae spontis est ("one who is strong and in control of himself") (1.1.1) and the homo imbecillus, one who has a delicate constitution.

This condition is self-inflicted because the homo imbecillus usually lives in a large town, and is attracted to and involved in literary pursuits. In fact in Prooemium 6 Celsus already states this view:

nulli clari viri medicinam exercuerunt, donec maiore studio litterarum disciplina agitari coepit; quae ut animo praecipue omnium necessaria, sic corpori inimica est. Primoque medendi scientia sapientiae pars habebatur, ut et morborum curatio et rerum naturae contemplatio sub iisdem auctoribus nata sit: scilicet iis hanc maxime requiennentibus, qui corporum suorum robora iniqueta cogitatione nocturnaque vigilia minuerant

No distinguished men practiced the Art of Medicine until literary studies began to be pursued with more attention, which more than anything else are a necessity for the spirit, but at the same time are bad for the body. At first the science of healing was held to be part of philosophy, so that treatment of disease and contemplation of the nature of things began through the same authorities; clearly because healing was needed

---

1 The text and translations of Book 1 used in this chapter were taken from Chapter 3.2 above; the text and translations of passages for the Prooemium and other books of the de Medicina are those of Spencer (1935).
2 quo in numero magna pars urbanorum ("among whom a great many are town dwellers").
3 omnesque paene cupidi litterarum sunt (1.2.1).
especially by those whose bodily strength had been weakened by restless thinking and night watching.4

A person with a weak constitution should take every precaution possible to restore his body to a state of health and Celsus offers the precepts and advice for achieving this in Book 1 of the *de Medicina*.

In a number of letters that Cicero wrote to Tiro, his secretary, from November 50 to July 46 BC, he expresses his concern for Tiro’s health, e.g. *valetudo tua me valde sollicitat* (“Your health makes me very anxious”) (*Fam.* 16.17). From previous letters it seems that Tiro must have had health problems. While he is recuperating at Cicero’s house at Tusculum, Cicero advises him to look after his health:

*indulge valetudini tuae; cui quidem tu adhuc, dum mihi deservis, servisti non satis*

humour your health. In your devotion to me you have not hitherto devoted yourself enough to that,

and then tells him how to regain his strength:

*ea quid postulet non ignoras: pe&yin, a)kop&an, peri&paton su&mnetron, tri&yn, eu)lus&an koili&av. fac bellus revertare*5

(Translation Shackleton Bailey 2001)

You know what it requires - digestion, no fatigue, a short walk, massage, proper evacuation. Mind you come back in good shape.

These are many of the principles that Celsus suggests for a health regime in Book 1 of the *de Medicina*.

Since Celsus wrote during the reign of Tiberius,6 the latter’s perception of the *sanus homo* will be considered briefly to provide some insight into the lifestyle

---

4 Philosophy is used in the wider sense, to include natural science, cf. Spencer (1935a:5).
5 Cicero frequently reverts to Greek when he talks about health. Cf. 2.5.3 on Greek medical terminology, which was still the language of preference in scientific writing in the 1st century.
and perceptions of that age. This will be followed by an overview of the first
source on the origin of medicine, Aesculapius. Finally the *sanus homo* as put
forward by Celsus’ main sources, namely Hippocrates, Asclepiades, the “rationalists”\(^7\) and the Empirics, will be discussed. Celsus himself introduces them in the *Prooemium* and draws on their expertise, not only with regard to the *sanus homo* but throughout the *de Medicina*.

### 4.2 Tiberius (42 BC – 37 AD)

According to Suetonius (*Tib. 68.4*) the Emperor Tiberius enjoyed very good health during his entire reign, and from his thirtieth year managed his health in accordance with his own wishes without the assistance of doctors. In fact, according to Tacitus he even mocked this profession towards the end of his life:

> He was making a show of vigour to conceal his illness; and he kept up his habitual jokes against the medical profession, declaring that no man over thirty ought to need advice about what was good or bad for him. \((\text{Ann. 6.}50)\)

Tiberius’ outspoken disdain for the medical profession may well be the reason for his name not being mentioned in the *de Medicina*. In his excellent prolegomena Marx (1915:94) remarks:

> *Quam qui perlegerit, is de historia aetatis Tiberianae pauc a admodum poterit ediscere in quibus memorabile triste hoc praec onium quod in prohoemio positum est* (5): “ideoque multiplex ista medicina, neque olim neque apud alias gentes necessaria, vix aliquos ex nobis ad senectutis principia perducit”

He who researches it [sc. the *de Med.*] would certainly be able to learn a few things about the history of Tiberius’ time with this memorable, sad public outcry that is observed in *Prooem*. 5: “and hence this complex Art of Medicine, not needed in former times, nor among other nations even now, scarcely protracts the lives of a few of us to the verge of old age.”

\(^7\) Cf. Chapter 1.3 n.15.
Tiberius died at the advanced age of 78. The manner of his death is obscured by legend. He fell ill while on a journey but managed to reach Misenum where he stayed in a villa. As always, he refused to consult a doctor and tried his best to keep up appearances and conceal his condition. A doctor, Charicles, was able to take his pulse by clasping his hand as he left a banquet and proclaimed that he had at most two days to live. Tacitus (Ann. 6.50) claims that he fell into a coma and was presumed to be dead, but regained consciousness and asked for food; however, he was smothered with his bedclothes (opprimi iniectu multae vestis). Suetonius (Tib. 73.1) gives a number of accounts of the events that followed his fainting spell: that he was given a slow poison, or that he was refused food and starved to death or that he was smothered with a pillow. He also ascribes to Seneca another account of Tiberius’ death: that he called for his attendants and when no one came, he rose from his bed, collapsed beside it and died. Tiberius’ sense of responsibility for his own health, substantiated by the testimony of these authors, is reflected in Celsus’ endeavour to instil a sense of responsibility in the sanus homo.

4.3 Aesculapius

Celsus traces the progression of medicine (ars medicinae) in his introduction to the de Medicina. He introduces Aesculapius (the Latinized version of the Greek Asclepios) as the first authority (Prooem. 2: vetustissimus auctor) in this field, succeeded by his two sons Podalirius and Machaon, who were wound-healers during the Trojan War. Homer states that they gave no aid during the pestilence (Iliad 1.43) nor for other diseases. Celsus observes that the complex skill of Medicine (multiplex ista medicina) was not necessary then, since health was generally good because of salutary habits. Furthermore, disease was at that time ascribed to the anger of the gods, whose help was sought to alleviate it. It is idleness and over-indulgence that afflicted the health of humans, but ista medicina vix aliquos ex nobis ad senectutis principia perducit (Prooem. 5) (“this medicine scarcely protracts the lives of a few of us to the verge of old age”). The sanus homo is responsible for his own physical and mental well-being and should preserve his health by
a balanced lifestyle and health-promoting habits. This is achieved through care and common sense and not medicine (*ista medicina*).

Although Homer represents Aesculapius as a physician, he in time came to be worshipped as the god of healing. The most famous seat of his cult was at Epidaurus; he was later introduced to Athens (420 BC), and in 293 BC to Rome because of a severe epidemic. The serpent, as symbol of rejuvenation, was sacred to Aesculapius and was supposed to have the power of discovering medicinal herbs. Sacred serpents were kept at the temples of Aesculapius where patients came to be cured. The cure was brought about during the night while the patients slept, and the procedure for the cure was communicated by dreams. The sanctuaries of Aesculapius provided facilities for exercise (porticos), relaxation (theatres), water therapy (natural springs) and rest (sleep). These are also the basic principles according to which the *sanus homo* should live.

4.4 Hippocrates (c. 460 BC)

Celebrated philosophers of the 5th century BC such as Pythagoras, Empedocles and Democritus became expert in medicine because the science of healing was considered part of philosophy. According to Celsus it was Hippocrates who first distinguished between medicine and philosophy and he adds that Hippocrates was *et arte et facundia insignis* (“notable both for professional skill and for eloquence”) (*Prooem. 8*). Here medicine is referred to as a professional skill (*ars*) for the first time, and Celsus’ high regard for Hippocrates is evident. Jocelyn (1985:311) points out that *facundia* was attributed to speakers and writers whose eloquence was natural rather than acquired. Throughout the *de Medicina* the strong influence of Hippocrates is apparent and many of Celsus’ precepts are taken from the Hippocratic Corpus.

Factors contributing to diseases can be divided into internal and external causes. The external causes often correlate with particular seasons or weather conditions. *Aphorisms* 3.2 states this common doctrine:
The changes of the seasons are especially liable to beget diseases, as are great changes from heat to cold, or cold to heat in any season. Other changes in the weather have similarly severe effects.\(^8\)

In 1.3.34-38 Celsus elaborates on this theme in setting out his own principles for the *sanus homo*. A healthy person should take into account the season of the year in his choice of food, exercise and other activities. In *A Regimen for Health* 1-2 the Hippocratic author concludes the discussion on seasons and diet with the advice:

> Diets then must be conditioned by age, the time of year, habit, country and constitution. Such is the best road to health.

The internal factors most frequently mentioned in the Hippocratic Corpus are diet and exercise (both of which are an essential part of what the Hippocratics understood as “regimen”). Several writers developed theories about the need to balance these two. Thus the author of *Regimen* 1.2 states that food and exercise have opposite powers (“for it is the nature of exercise to use up material, but of food and drink to make good deficiencies”), but that they both work together to produce health; it was often held that diseases were caused by excess either in overeating or in fasting (Lloyd 1950:23-24). In the first paragraph of Book 1 Celsus warns:

> oportet … sed frequentius se exercere; siquidem ignavia corpus hebetat, labor firmat

... but he should exercise more frequently; because inactivity makes the body lazy, whereas activity invigorates.

In 1.2.6 he elaborates on ways to exercise under different circumstances. He deals with the principle of diet in the same way by an initial short statement: *prodest etiam … nullum genus cibi fugere, quo populus utatur* (1.1.2) (“it is certainly advantageous to avoid no kind of food in common use”) followed by more detail in 1.2.8-10 on suitable and unsuitable food, as well as the harm of exercise after a meal.

\(^8\) Translations quoted from the Hippocratic Corpus are by Chadwick & Mann (1950), unless otherwise indicated.
Hippocrates concludes the *Regimen for Health* 9 with the following remark:

> A wise man ought to realize that health is his most valuable possession and learn to treat his illnesses by his own judgement.

### 4.5 Asclepiades (c. 129 – 40 BC)

Celsus had a high regard for Asclepiades’ procedures, which he frequently quotes in his work. *Asclepiades multarum rerum, quas ipsi quoque secuti sumus, auctor bonus* (4.9.2) (“Asclepiades, who wisely advises many things, which we also ourselves practise”).

Asclepiades of Bithynia, with his preference for diet and a healthy regimen as opposed to medication and surgery, introduced an entirely new method of healing. He was famous for five *communia auxilia* (“common aids” or types of therapy), which were walking, exercise in the open air, fasting, water/wine-drinking and massage. However, Vallance (1993:705) questions the view that Asclepiades was the originator, since the ideas that movement and active exercise were beneficial, as well as the use of water and wine in therapy, were widespread throughout antiquity. Pliny (*NH* 26.12-14) sarcastically criticises these methods (*communia auxilia*) employed by Asclepiades by insinuating that he advocated these ideas only to enhance his reputation. However, there are other passages where Pliny explicitly acknowledges a debt to Asclepiades.\(^9\) In 2.14.2 Celsus mentions:

> Asclepiades nihil tamen repperit, quod non a vetustissimo auctore Hippocrate paucis verbis comprehensum sit

> Asclepiades discovered nothing which had not been comprised in a few words by that most ancient writer Hippocrates.

All these *auxilia* are recommended by Celsus, who is less critical in his discussion of Asclepiades although he does sometimes disagree with him but then justifies his own view.\(^10\) In 2.19-33 Celsus considers his own general aids (*communes*) systematically, stating that *ex quibus tamen quaedam non

---

\(^9\) i.e. *NH* 20.42; 22.53; 23.16.

\(^10\) *de Med.* 1.3.7; 1.3.17-18 (cf. 4.7.6 below); 2.14.1-2; 2.15.1-4; 3.6.11-12.
aegros solum sed sanos quoque sustinent (2.9.1) (“some of these, however, sustain not alone the sick but also those in health”).

Celsus was a follower of Asclepiades in his aversion to drugs and the use of medication:

\[ \text{illud scire oportet, omne eiusmodi medicamentum, quod potui datur, non semper aegris prodesse, semper sanis nocere} \] (2.13.3)

This should be recognised, that all such medicaments given as a drink do not always benefit the sick, and are always harmful to those in health.

Celsus repeats this view in Book 7 Prooem. 1 where he discusses surgery as cure, “luck helps much, and the same things are often salutary, often of no use at all, [therefore] it may be doubted whether recovery has been due to medicine or a sound body or good luck”. In Celsus’ view improvement as a result of treatment by surgery is much more obvious than treatment with medication.

Asclepiades did not support the custom of purging, as he believed that this remedy was put to use after overindulgence (vorandus) and thus strengthened the indolent and luxurious (desidia et luxuria) lifestyle vehemently criticised by Celsus (Prooem. 5). It is clear that Asclepiades did not approve of people who yielded to excess or were indifferent to and unconcerned about their health. Although he wrote several works on medicine\(^\text{12}\) and was a practicing physician, there is consensus that he favoured prevention rather than cure. Pliny writes:

\[ \text{sed maxime sponsione facta cum fortuna, ne medicus crederetur, si umquam invalidus ullo modo fuisset ipse. et vicit suprema in senecta lapsu scalarum exanimatus} \] (NH 7.124)

But, most of all, he (Asclepiades) is renowned because he made a bet with Fortune that he should not be considered a doctor if ever he

\(^{11}\) These general aids are discussed under 4.7.4 (Diet), below.

\(^{12}\) Nothing has survived but some forty different ancient authors refer to them (Vallance 1991:709).
himself should be ill in any way, and he won his bet because he lost his life as a very old man by falling down stairs.

(Translation Healy 1991)

Asclepiades’ view that prevention is better than cure is also the view which Celsus promotes in Book 1 when he considers the sanus homo. In 3.1.4 he states:

\[
\text{in nullo quidem morbo minus fortuna sibi vindicare quam ars potest: ut pote quom repugnante natura nihil medicina proficiat}
\]

Whatever the malady, luck no less than the art can claim influence for itself, seeing that with nature in opposition the art of medicine avails nothing.

### 4.6 Rationalists and Empirics

In his discussion of the different schools of medicine, Celsus reviews the most important theories of influential medical writers before expressing his own opinion. One group holds the view that a sound knowledge of the natural functions of the body is necessary in order to treat diseases that afflict the body. These natural functions are breathing, digestion of food and drink, the working of the blood vessels, sleep and wakefulness. Among these factors affecting the natural state of the body digestion seems to be of most importance, with the result that there are diverse theories about digestion, which Celsus then recounts.\(^{13}\) The “rationalists” (rationales)\(^{14}\) believed that those who understood the natural actions were able to deal with problems. Hence they made use of dissection and even vivisection to scrutinize the viscera and intestines and in this way acquaint themselves with the nature of the internal organs. They justified their conduct by asserting that they sought

\(^{13}\) Cf. Prooem. 20-21: in digestion the food is ground or mashed (teri cibum in ventre)(Erasistratus), decays (putrescere)(Plistonicus), is cooked by heat (per calorem concoqui)(Hippocrates) or transmitted through the body undigested as swallowed (sed crudam materiam, sicut adsumpta est)(Asclepiades).

\(^{14}\) Rationalists (Celsus does not use the term Dogmatists), unlike Empirics, did not give themselves this label. There was no “rationalist” school in the sense that there was an Empiric or Methodist school. Such a “school” was not an organised centre for medical studies, but a group of likeminded people who broadly agreed about certain basic medical tenets. Certain cities like Alexandria, Ephesus and Pergamum became famous for their medical philosophies, yet there were no organized medical schools in Greek or Roman cities.
remedies for people of all future ages (*remedia populis saeculorum omnium*) (*Prooem*. 26).

The Empirics (*empirici*), on the contrary, argued that enquiry into natural actions was unnecessary (*naturalium actionum quaestionem ideo supervacuam esse*) (*Prooem*. 27), in fact they were “even opposed to it” (*etiam contrariam*) (*Prooem*. 36), because nature cannot be comprehended. It is important to know what brings relief and not what causes a disease; the choice of food to be digested, for instance, is more important than knowledge of how digestion takes place. We have no need to inquire in what way we breathe, but it is necessary to know what relieves laboured breathing (*Prooem*. 38). All this was to be learnt through experience because the Art of Medicine was not a discovery which was the result of reasoning. After the discovery of a cure, the reason for its success was sought. Empirics strongly condemned the custom of vivisection because of its cruelty; moreover, they stated, the appearance of organs would change because of the victim’s fear, pain, fatigue, hunger and other conditions. The victim may even die as result of the vivisection, in which case the “medical murderer” (*latrocinans medicus*)\(^{15}\) would not learn anything about the organs in a living body. Empirics believed that observant practitioners would learn in the course of their work while treating the injured (e.g. wounded gladiators, soldiers or similar cases) because internal parts might be exposed by the wounds. Some Empirics even found the practice of dissection of the dead unnecessary\(^{16}\) since they argued that the condition of bodily organs change after death. Cicero (*Acad*. 2.122) notes that dissection was usual for physicians to get to know the structure of the body, but that the Empirics did not regard it a successful method to gain this knowledge:

\[
\textit{nec eo tamen aiant empirici notiora esse illa, quia possit fieri ut patefacta et detecta mutentur} \quad (*Acad*. 2.122)
\]

Yet nevertheless the empiric school assert that this has not increased our knowledge of them, because it is possibly the case that when

---

\(^{15}\) *Prooem*. 42: a term used by Empirics.

\(^{16}\) Ibid. 44: “although not cruel it is nasty (*foeda*)”. 
exposed and uncovered they (the internal organs) change their character. (Translation Rackham: 1956)

Celsus himself endorses the strong terms of condemnation of vivisection. On the other hand, he believes that dissection of bodies is a necessity for prospective physicians who should study everything that is to be known about “the positions and relations” of the internal organs (Prooem. 74). Celsus concludes that the rest can be learnt from experience in the process of treating patients (in ipsis curationibus), “somewhat slower yet much milder” (Prooem. 75).

In the “rationalist”-Empiric controversy, Celsus positions himself between the two divergent views without favouring either. In fact, his accounts are impartial and objective, as seen in his use of the neutral third person plural (e.g. proponunt, putant, credunt) and impersonal constructions (e.g. visum est, placuit, videtur). Three rationalists who frequently appear as sources (Hippocrates, Erasistratus and Asclepiades) confirmed the importance of experience and of evident causes as advocated by the Empirics. In Prooem. 45-75 Celsus gives an extensive account of his own view, not only of rationalism and Empiricism, but even of Methodism, possibly to emphasize his independence. He concludes this introduction by saying:

rationalem quidem puto medicinam esse debere, instrui vero ab evidentibus causis, obscuris omnibus non ab cogitatione artificis sed ab ipsa arte reiectis (Prooem. 74)

I am of the opinion that the Art of Medicine ought to be rational, but to draw instruction from evident causes, all obscure ones being rejected from the practice of the Art, although not from the practitioner’s study.

---

17 Scarborough (1976a:32) argues that vivisection at Ptolemaic Alexandria was merely a rumour perpetuated by later Roman polymaths when they wrote about the wonders of Alexandria of old. He is of the opinion that stories that ridiculed useless learning or reflected public dismay at varied experimental studies were common in the literature of late Hellenistic times.

18 The fragmentary nature of the extant evidence concerning Erasistratus makes it difficult to determine how much use Celsus made of his doctrine or to what extent he knew his predecessor (von Staden 1994:83).
4.7  Celsus

4.7.1  Introduction

In Prooemium 70 Celsus passes on to the reader what the sanus homo should heed - advice given by experienced contemporaries and experts (auctores) such as Cassius Felix. To preserve his health the sanus homo should avoid cold, heat, overindulgence, exertion and excessive passion (libido), especially when in unhealthy localities and during high risk seasons. In these places and during these seasons he should rest often and neither upset the stomach with emetics nor the bowels with purging. These general precautions could also be heeded in other circumstances, e.g. 1.2.10 where Celsus warns against exposure to cold, heat and exertion after a substantial midday meal.

Emetics and purging are discussed at length by Celsus to present a balanced view. He does not totally condemn the practice, but carefully explains all the circumstances where it may be necessary to resort to such procedures to maintain health, and gives precise instructions on how to manage vomiting and purging (1.3.19-24). He gives a strict warning that vomiting should not be practised because of the bad habits of an opulent lifestyle, and that a person who wants to remain healthy and live to old age should not resort to it daily. However, vomiting is often necessary for the sanus homo, for instance when he is bilious (biliosus est) (2.13.1). The emetics, suitable for those in health, can also be taken to induce vomiting in the treatment of acute diseases. Emetics for the treatment of chronic life-threatening diseases, however, are too strong and should never be taken by those in health:

\[ illud scire oportet, omne eiusmodi medicamentum, quod potui datur, non semper aegris prodesse, semper sanis nocere \] (2.13.3)

This should be recognized, that all such medicaments given as a drink do not always benefit the sick, and are always harmful to those in health.
In 2.12.A-F. Celsus mentions the different purgatives and the rules to be observed when administering them as clysters, as well as their advantages and dangers. He stresses the fact that this method (frequently used by the ancients in the treatment of almost all diseases) is not often used since people are aware of the dangers to their health. In 1.3.26 he warns that purgatives entail risks and may weaken the body, leaving it exposed to all kinds of diseases. It is better to alleviate problems by taking appropriate food and drink, or a natural remedy such as aloe as laxative. The best therapy is to know one’s body and the conditions that cause constipation and diarrhoea, and to live according to the precepts ensuring good health.

The principle that each individual has his own strengths and weaknesses runs through the entire work up to Book 7. In 2.10.2-5, for instance, where he discusses bloodletting, Celsus states:

*Interest enim, non quae aetas sit... sed quae vires sint. ... non quicquid autem intentionem animi et prudentiam exigat protinus faciendum est, cum praecipua in hoc ars sit, quae non annos numeret, sed vires aestimet. ... Interest etiam inter valens corpus et obesum, inter tenue et infirmum*

For it matters not what is the age, but what may be the patient’s strength. Not that we should be in a hurry to do anything that demands anxious attention and care; for in that very point lies the art of medicine, which does not count years, but calculates the strength of the patient. ... There is a difference between a strong and an obese body, between a thin and an infirm one.

In 3.4.8 he advises:

*unum illud est, quod semper, quod ubique servandum est, ut aegri vires subinde adsidens medicus inspiciat; et quamdiu supererunt, abstinentia pugnet; si inbecillitatem vereri coeperit, cibo subveniat*

There is one thing that should be observed, always, and everywhere, that the patient’s strength should be continually under the eye of the attending practitioner; and so long as there is a superfluity, he should

---

19 Celsus explains these conditions in 1.3.30-31.
counter it by abstinence; if he begins to fear weakness, he should assist with food.

Celsus emphasizes the importance of preventing illness, but in the case of illness states that treatment lies in restoring the disturbed balance by exercise, diet, baths and medication. Medication (*medicamentum*) pertains to disease, which is not the focus of this thesis, yet folklore remedies, since they can prevent serious illness,\(^\text{20}\) are appropriate in the context of the *sanus homo*, and are thus discussed.

### 4.7.2 Folklore

Celsus separates the remedies and cures used by country folk from those prescribed by medical practitioners. There are many examples in the *de Medicina* of these natural remedies which are practical, inexpensive and easily obtainable. For instance, after describing diseases that start with a pain in the side such as pleurisy, fever and coughs, he lists various remedies which can be applied to relieve or cure these diseases but adds:

> *quaε ita a medicis praecripiuntur, ut tamen sine rusticos nostros epota ex aqua herba trixago\(^\text{21}\) satis adiuvet* \(^\text{(4.13.3)}\)

Though such are what medical practitioners prescribe, yet our country people, lacking these remedies, find help enough in a draught of germander.

A second example is found in 5.28.7 B where Celsus discusses *struma*\(^\text{22}\) and its complicated treatment by physicians. Here he gives the very “practical” advice:

> *quaε cum medici doceant, quorundam rusticorum experimento cognitum, quem struma male habet, si [eum] anguem edit, liberari*

---

\(^{20}\) Cf. *de Med.* 3.2.6: *per haec enim saepe instans gravis morbus discutitur* (“For often in this way a severe disease is dispersed while it is pending”).

\(^{21}\) Pliny (*NH* 24.80) also describes *Trixago* (germander, chamaedrys, “ground oak” or “the Trojan plant”), records its uses as cure for chronic coughs and stomach disorders and adds its application to many other ailments.

\(^{22}\) “… swelling of the lymphatic glands of the neck, axilla and groins”. It is now generally applied by English writers to goiter (*Spencer* 1935b:14).
Although these are the doctrines of the physicians, it has been found out by the experience of some country folk that anyone with a bad struma may be freed from it by eating a snake.

A similar comment is found in 5.28.18 B after the discussion of elaborate treatments for papules and pustules. Celsus simply states:

*sed levis papula etiam, si ieiuna saliva cotidie defricatur, sanescit*

But in fact a slight papule heals if it is rubbed daily with spittle before eating.

A very bizarre remedy for freeing a person from epilepsy is the drinking of hot blood from the cut throat of a gladiator, a cure that Celsus rationalizes: *apud quos miserum auxilium tolerabile miseries malum fecit* (3.23.7) (“a miserable aid made tolerable by a malady still more miserable”). He does, nonetheless, suggest more pleasant alternatives, but implies that the disease is difficult to cure and will probably be lifelong. His advice for mitigating the condition to some extent is similar to the general guidelines for the sanus homo, i.e. exercise, rubbing (in the case of the epileptic *non minus ducenties perfricetur* (“not less than two hundred hand-strokings”) and a suitable simple diet.

In 4.7.5 Celsus refers to a remedy for acute infection of the throat, namely eating a nestling swallow, which had considerable popular authority. Pliny (*NH* 30.33) also describes this treatment in detail. Because Celsus does not consider it detrimental he inserts it in his work, although he states that he has found no reference to it in authoritative medical writings. According to Celsus the dried, mashed liver of a fox is not an absurd idea in the treatment of the distressful disease asthma (4.8.4), but once again adds the very practical advice for the sanus homo: *nihil magis quam ambulatio lenta paene usque ad lassitudinem* (“there is nothing better than a walk until almost fatigued”).

---

23 Compound prescriptions by renowned authorities (*clari auctores*) such as Protarchus, Serapion and Myron are mentioned.

24 Pliny also mentions this cure (*NH* 28.2.4): “The blood too of gladiators is drunk by epileptics as though it were a draught of life, though we shudder with horror when in the same arena we look at even the beasts doing the same thing”. Translation Jones (1963).
Celsus considers toothache the greatest of torments and gives various remedies, such as that of Heras (for pain) and Menemachus (for molar teeth). He also mentions other preparations, giving the exact quantities, proportions and instructions for the mixtures. This section is concluded with a natural remedy used by country folk, namely the inhalation of steam from an infusion of catmint and boiling water, *idque saepe longiorem, semper annuam valetudinem bonam praestat*. (6.9.7) (“and this ensures good health always for a year, and often for longer”); a simple, harmless remedy with no side effects. In fact, these side effects often lead to complications and prolong the disease. Hence Celsus’ view that this treatment does not only cure but ensures continued good health (*valetudinem bonam praestat*).

In 6.7.9 Celsus discusses the removal of a foreign object from the ear. This may be done by a probe with sticky resin, an ear scoop, a blunt hook or an ear syringe; these complicated devices are all described and explained in great detail. Then follow two simple practical solutions, namely inducing a bout of sneezing to force out the object, and the following entertaining instruction:

> *tabula quoque conlocatur, media inhaerens, capitibus utrimque pendentibus; superque eam homo deligatur in id latus versus, cuius auris eo modo laborat, sic ut extra tabulam emineat. Tum malleo caput tabulae, quod a pedibus est, feritur; atque ita concussa aure id quod inest excidit*

Again, a plank may be arranged, having its middle supported and the ends unsupported. Upon this the patient is tied down, with the affected ear downwards, so that the ear projects beyond the end of the plank. Then the end of the plank at the patient’s feet is struck with a mallet, and the ear being so jarred, what is within drops out.

These examples of Celsus’ down-to-earth view of folklore remedies confirm that the *de Medicina* was also intended for the *paterfamilias* of a household who would have appreciated appropriate practical advice, therapies and cures that were easily obtainable in the country. It substantiates the observation that the concept of the *sanus homo*, the theme in Book 1, is of such importance to
Celsus that the remedies of physicians are trivialized by the unsophisticated and harmless folklore remedies which he suggests as alternative. Unnecessary intervention and medication can cause more harm than benefit, especially to a healthy and robust body.

4.7.3 Exercise

According to Celsus the most important consideration in the lifestyle of the sanus homo is exercise, prima autem eius curatio exercitatio est (1.2.5) (“its most important care is exercise”), which strengthens the body and keeps it youthful. Inactivity weakens the body and causes it to age prematurely. This view is in accordance with the view Hippocrates states in Regimen 2.60: “Inaction moistens and weakens the body ... but labour dries and strengthens the body”. Cicero had also come to this conclusion:

sequitur illud: ipse melior fio, primum valetudine, quam intermissis exercitationibus amiseram; deinde ipsa illa, si qua fuit in me, facultas orationis, nisi me ad has exercitationes rettulissem, exaruisset

(Fam. 9.18)²⁵

Next, I benefit directly, first in health, which I lost when I gave up my exercises; and then my oratorical faculty, if I had any, would have dried up had I not gone back to these exercises.

Seneca, on the other hand, does not find exercise pleasant although he includes it in his daily routine. After a run with his trainer he states that it has been “more a spell of exhaustion than of exercise” (Ep. 83).²⁶

The Younger Pliny, a generation after Celsus, often mentions the advantages of exercise in his letters to his friends, for instance he is appreciative of Spurinna’s enviable life in his late seventies:

mane lectulo continetur, hora secunda calceos poscit, ambulat milia passuum tria nec minus animum quam corpus exercet

²⁵ Cicero writes to Paetus while he is relaxing at Tusculum in 46 BC.
²⁶ He also mentions that “a very small part of it (his day) has been given over to physical exercise”. Translation Campbell (1969).
Every morning he stays in bed for an hour after dawn, then calls for his shoes and takes a three-mile walk to exercise mind and body and later that morning,

*peractis septem milibus passuum iterum ambulat mille*

after a drive of seven miles he will walk another mile.

*inde illi post septimum et septuagensimum annum aurium oculorum vigor integer, inde agile et vividum corpus solaque ex senectute prudentia.* (Ep. 3.1)

The result is that Spurinna has passed his seventy-seventh year, but his sight and hearing are unimpaired and he is physically agile and energetic; old age has brought him nothing but wisdom.

(Translation Radice 1969)

Celsus stresses self-control and warns that the athlete’s excessive training, when interrupted, causes weakness in the body. Exercise should take place before meals and each person should acquaint himself with his strengths and weaknesses to decide how much exercise his body needs. He suggests suitable types of exercise, namely reading aloud, drilling in armour, ball games and walking, and explains the latter in more detail: the terrain should not be level to enable the body to move in a variety of ways, and it is healthier in the open air and in sunshine or natural shade caused by plants rather than under the roof of an arcade (*palaestra*). Walking is especially beneficial if someone has been inactive, since his body must become accustomed to activity gradually; he should thus start by walking about slowly. Hippocrates also refers to walking as a natural exercise and explains the reaction of the body to exercise in complicated detail. Finally he summarizes the benefits:

*Early-morning walks too reduce <the body>, and render the parts about the head light, bright and of good hearing, while they relax the bowels.* (Reg. 2.62, translation Jones 1931)

Hippocrates pays more attention to the reaction of the body to exercise, whereas Celsus concentrates on the methods and benefits of exercise.

Exercise should preferably be followed either by anointing (*unctio*) or a bath,
depending on the body’s constitution, and a short rest. After exercise the person must perspire and feel tired (lassitudo), yet not suffer exhaustion (citra fatigationem) (1.2.7). True to the well-structured, comprehensive design of his work, Celsus specifies the different degrees of fatigue. He gives instructions on what action to take when someone is totally exhausted (nimium alicui fatigato): bathing and gentle rubbing with oil to which salt and wine have been added, resting and taking diluted liquids, but definitely not cold drinks which are very harmful. When someone suffers chronic fatigue (assidua fatigatio), he advises drinking water alternated with wine and preferably not bathing (raro balneo). Change of activity relieves a general feeling of weariness or lethargy (lassitudinem); on the other hand, that which is contrary to routine may also cause tiredness (lassat). In this case routine tasks refresh and the daily resting place (cotidianum cubile) provides the best comfort for the resulting fatigue (fatigato). Celsus gives special advice for relieving tiredness on a journey (ambulando fatigatur ... in itinere). Frequent rubbing during the journey is important and when the destination has been reached, a short rest followed by anointing and bathing the upper part of the body with warm water.

Celsus recommends reading aloud for those suffering from pains in the colon, stomach aches and slow digestion (1.8.3). In a letter to Fuscus Salinator, Pliny the Younger writes that he reads a Greek or Latin speech aloud early in the morning to strengthen both digestion and his voice. He also mentions that a book is read aloud to him, his wife and friends while they are dining (Ep. 9.36). The calming effect of reading rhythmically would promote relaxation and digestion, as well as relieve abdominal pains. Celsus advises that someone who is frequently troubled by an upset stomach (1.6.1) should vary the types of exercise, especially exercise the upper part of his body with ball games and walk on an empty stomach.

Any form of exercise was clearly an important consideration for the Younger Pliny, since he makes provision for its practice in his many houses. When he describes his Laurentian retreat to a friend, Gallus, he mentions a gymnasiuim for the household (hoc etiam gymnasion meorum est), as well as a ball-court (sphaeristerium) adjoining the bathing quarters of the house. A third amenity
is a lavish, versatile cryptoporticus ("covered arcade"), which can be used in all weather conditions (Ep. 2.17). His property in Tuscany, at the foot of the Apennines, is also equipped with these facilities:

\[ \text{apodyterio superpositum est sphaeristerium, quod plura genera exercitationis pluresque circulos capit. Non procul a balineo scalae, quae in cryptoporticum ferunt prius ad diaetas tres} \] (Ep. 5.6)

Over the dressing-room is built the ball court, and this is large enough for several sets of players to take different kinds of exercise. Not far from the bath is a staircase leading to three rooms and then to a covered arcade.

Celsus’ recommendation that pain in the joints, podagra, can also be alleviated by exercise, sounds harsh when he advises that the part affected be exercised and exposed to work and cold. However, the treatment recommended here refers to the sanus homo who suffers a bout of this disease and requires swift relief. On the other hand, in Book 4.31 where Celsus discusses the treatment of podagra, the disease, the treatment is milder; the patient should be rocked and then carried to a promenade where he should move about. Walking should be alternated with sitting down frequently for a rest. In Fam. 9.23 Cicero writes to Paetus to arrange a visit to him. He mentions that a communal friend had told him that Paetus was in bed with gout (in lecto esse quod ex pedibus laborares) but that he (Cicero) would visit him all the same and even dine with him: non enim arbitror cocum etiam te arthriticum habere (“for I don’t suppose your cook is a fellow sufferer”). He adds that he is a small eater, in fact, he avoids sumptuous banquets. According to Cicero’s letter, the treatment for gout is bed rest and a moderate diet - different from the exercise that Celsus recommends above. Pliny the Elder, on the other hand, suggests more invasive treatment, namely that gouty pains and diseases of the joints be rubbed (fricari) with a mixture of oil or grease and the remains of some or other water creature (i.e. frog or toad). The affected body part may also be covered with beaver or seal skin (NH 32.110).
During an epidemic (*in pestilentia*) (1.10.1) exercise should also be moderate; other precautions that the *sanus homo* should take to protect his health are a gentle stroll before the heat of day and the avoidance of fatigue and excitement. The last chapter of Book 1 (1.10) ends abruptly, in contrast to Celsus’ usual sound investigative and detailed discussion of a topic.

### 4.7.4 Diet

When scholars began to distinguish between the Art of Medicine and the study of philosophy they divided cures into three categories, the first being diet (*victus*, Graeci nominarunt *Diaithtikh*), the second medication (*medicamenta*, Graeci nominarunt *Farmakeutikh*) and the third surgery (*manus*, Graeci nominarunt *Xeirourgi*). Supporters of the diet cure also endeavoured to study nature because they considered that the Art of Medicine would be weak and incomplete without this knowledge. In *Prooem.* 19 Celsus records the natural functions of the body, which are breathing, digestion of food and drink, the functioning of the blood-vesse lls and sleep; of these digestion is the most important. If something should go wrong with any of these natural functions, disease is sure to follow and therefore, according to some authorities, knowledge of their functioning would be helpful in finding a cure. However, Celsus’ own view is more pragmatic and sensible. He emphasizes the importance of avoiding disease by managing one’s health and continues (*Prooem.* 38):

> non intersit, quid morbum faciat, sed quid tollat; neque ad rem pertineat, quomodo, sed quid optime digeratur ... Neque quaerendum esse quomodo spiremus, sed quid gravem et tardum spiritum expedit ... Haec autem cognoscit experimentis. ... itaque ingenium et facundiam vincere, morbos autem non eloquentia sed remediis curari

It does not matter what produces the disease but what relieves it; nor does it matter how digestion takes place, but what is best digested ...

We had no need to inquire in what way we breathe, but what relieves

---

27 Hippocrates of Cos was said to be the first to have made this distinction, followed by Diocles of Carystus, Praxagoras, Chrysippus, Herophilus and Erasistratus (*Prooem.* 8).

28 Spencer (1935b:2) comments that *victus*, like the *diāita* ("regimen") of Hippocrates includes not only regulation of diet, but rubbing, rocking and rules for exercise.
laboured breathing. ... All this was to be learnt through experiences; and so cleverness and fluency may get the best of it; it is not, however, by eloquence but by remedies that diseases are treated.

4.7.4.1 Digestion

In 1.1.2 Celsus explains what is meant by the balanced lifestyle which he believes the sanus homo should follow, with special reference to diet. He is not prescriptive, yet emphasizes variety in the kind, the quantity and frequency of food taken. His only stipulation is “provided one digests it”. In 1.2.2 he emphasizes the importance of digestion by the warning that a person who has not digested his food should not work, nor exercise nor attend to business but rest completely. Even if he has digested partially he is still to rest and sleep; this is in accordance with Hippocrates who states:

those who suffer from distention of the hypochondrium showing that the food remains undigested, should take more sleep. (Reg. salut. 7)

In 2.19.1 Celsus lists the foods that have good juices (boni suci), digestible foods, and bad juices (mali suci), indigestible foods; for instance, everything that is over-sweetened is bad for digestion (1.2.9 and 2.25), with the additional disadvantage that more is usually consumed because of its pleasant taste. This leads to overindulgence (intemperantia), even overeating (nimia satietas), which in itself is very harmful and should be avoided at all costs. Like Hippocrates, who states in Aph. 2.4: “Neither a surfeit of food nor of fasting is good, nor anything else which exceeds the measure of nature”, Celsus advises that excessive eating after fasting is not healthy. He states that overindulgence is safer in drinking than in eating (1.2.8), a recommendation also given by Hippocrates: “it is better to be full of drink than full of food” (Aph. 2.11).

Other foods that are hard to digest are stews, pulses and greens; anything that takes a long time to digest should be avoided and is unhealthy (1.6.1). The sanus homo is frequently warned against unhealthy indulgence and advised that, after overeating, he should not overexert himself nor expose himself to cold or heat and should rest. His digestion will be better if he
finishes any substantial meal with a draught of cold water (1.2.10). Hippocrates had already advised:

They should drink more wine and take it less diluted and also, at these times, reduce the amount of food. For it is clear that the weakness and coldness of the belly prevent the greater part of the food from being digested. (Reg. salut. 7)

An indication that the body is healthy because of optimal digestion is the colour of the urine early in the morning. A tawny colour is proof that food has been digested well, yet, if it is clear it indicates that digestion is still taking place. A person should not exercise strenuously while digestion is taking place but wait until he has digested well; exercise should preferably always precede a meal (1.2.4-5). According to Celsus in 1.7, digestion is promoted by reading aloud, exercise such as walking, a warm bath and warm food and drinks. Those who digest slowly become bloated and should make a special effort to follow Celsus’ advice.

In 1.3.34-39 Celsus discusses the different foods, solids and liquids, appropriate for the different seasons, as well as the portion sizes and combinations. Spring is the most salubrious time of year when the rich, boiled meat, suggested for winter, should gradually be reduced and preferably be roasted rather than boiled. Celsus recommends that vegetables be taken in moderation during winter but increased in spring. Liquids, which in winter are taken undiluted, should progressively be diluted to quench thirst during the summer months. Since the body needs food and drink more often in summer, it is healthy to eat more meals a day, consisting of cold or cooling foods. In autumn when the weather is changeable and the body more susceptible to disease, Celsus advocates that more food and less, yet stronger wine should gradually be taken until the onset of winter.

Seneca (Ep. 108) relates how he became a vegetarian influenced by the

---

29 Cf. Pliny (NH 28.68): Auguria valetudinis ex ea traduntur, si mane candida, dein rufa sit, illo modo concoquvere, hoc concoxisse significatur (“Urine gives us symptoms of general health: if in the morning it is clear, becoming tawny later, the former means that coction is still going on, the latter that it is complete”). Translation Jones (1963).
teaching of the philosopher Sotion. Within a year he was finding it an enjoyable and easy way of life, and sensed that his mind had become more alert. He gave up the practice at the request of his father, who disliked philosophy, yet Seneca continued observing moderation in his diet for the sake of his health. In Ep. 9 he mentions that he is a small eater and dislikes extravagant banquets (see 4.7.3 above).

In 2.19-33 Celsus considers general benefits that not only sustain the sick but also preserve health. These *communes* are the effects of different foods on the bodily functions,

\[ \textit{pertinetque ad rem omnium proprietates nosse, primum ut sani sciant} \]

(2.18.1)

and an acquaintance with the properties of all is of importance, in the first place that those in health may know how to make use of them.

They include digestible, indigestible, bland and acrid foods, those that cause phlegm to become thicker (e.g. raw eggs, milk and glutinous substances) or thinner (e.g. salted and acrid products) or produce flatulence (e.g. leguminous, fatty and sweet food, garlic, onion and cabbage); on the other hand, fennel and anise in particular relieve flatulence. There are foods that are suited or unsuited to the stomach, yet these do not necessarily fall in the groups that are digestible or indigestible. Some foods heat (e.g. pepper, salt and stewed meat) and some cool (e.g. uncooked pot-herbs, cucumber, beet, cherries and sour apples), some go bad readily (e.g. leavened bread and pastry) and others not (e.g. unleavened bread, birds, pickled fish and shellfish). Eating the correct foods should regulate constipation and diarrhoea as well as the passing of urine. Finally Celsus lists some herbs that aid sleep (e.g. poppy, lettuce, mulberry and leek) or conversely excite the senses (e.g. catmint, thyme, hyssop, pennyroyal and rue).

Apart from the effects different foods have on bodily functions, their nutritional value should also be considered. Celsus informs his reader that the nutritional value of food depends on soil type, climate and habitat, for instance grain
grown in hilly districts is more nutritious than the grain of the plains; fish found among rocks less nutritious than those in sand, which in turn are less nourishing than those in mud (2.18.9).

4.7.5 Water

The sanus homo should follow a routine of appropriate exercise, a simple diet, fresh air and sunlight (saepius in agro) (1.1.1), and rest:

\[ haec firmis servanda sunt, cavendumque ne in secunda valetudine adversae praesidia consumantur \] (1.1.4)

The healthy must heed these precautions and take care not to use up in good health their defences against ill-health.

To these Celsus adds the use of water, usually in conjunction with dietary regulation. Book 1 contains sixteen recommendations for preventive medicinal bathing which was gaining popularity. Celsus testifies to Asclepiades’ promotion of bathing: antiqui timidius eo <balineo> utebantur, Asclepiades audaci (“The ancients used it <the bath> more timidly, Asclepiades more boldly”). Celsus recognizes the advantages of water and recommends the use of hot water as well as cold springs (1.1.2).³¹

The use of cold springs for bathing became fashionable at this time. According to Suetonius (Aug. 81), Augustus suffered from several acute diseases during his lifetime. In 23 BC when he had a severe bout of abscesses of the liver, his physician, Antonius Musa, advised him to bathe in cold springs when hot fomentations, the usual remedy, brought him no relief. He was cured and was so appreciative that he had a statue of Musa erected beside that of Aesculapius (Aug. 59). He even exempted all physicians from taxes (Aug 42).

In a letter to Vala (Ep. 1.15), Horace mentions that he was given the same advice by Antonius Musa. He complains that he can no longer make his usual

³⁰ Spencer (1935a:196) states that the spring wheat grown in south Italy is rich in gluten and used for making pasta.
³¹ Cf. Chapter 3.2 the translation in this thesis for my interpretation of aquis frigidis uti (“make use of cold springs”).
³² This incident is also recorded by Pliny NH 25.38.
journeys to Cumae and Baiae and that those towns, with their famed sulphur springs, are falling into disrepute. Now that he bathes in cold water, even in winter time, he has to change his well-known resting places to the springs of Clusium and chilly Gabii. He also asks Vala which districts produce healthy, beneficial food and water (“Do they drink from tanks that collect the rain or from wells of water that never fail?”),\(^{33}\) so that he may return home “as fat as a true Phaeacian”.\(^{34}\) He enquires about the climate at Velia and Salernum where there are cold springs, later also referred to by Pliny the Elder in \textit{NH} 31.5.

Pliny discusses the healing powers of water, especially that of Cutilia of the Sabines - very cold and very healthful to the stomach, the sinews and the body as a whole. Celsus himself mentions Cutilia in 4.12.7 when he refers to \textit{frigidis medicatisque fontibus, quales Cutiliarum Sumbruinarumque} (“cold medicinal springs such as Cutilia and Simbruvium”) as an excellent cure for an ailment of the stomach if food is not digested and the body wastes away because of malnutrition.

When discussing his daily routine and exercise, Seneca reveals that he used to be a devotee of cold baths when he was younger,\(^{35}\) but now in old age a cold plunge means “just short of warm”, and he uses his own pool which has had the chill taken off by the sun.

Celsus mentions many advantages of cold water, e.g. bathing one’s face in cold water upon waking in the morning (1.2.4), ending the bath ritual with cold water (1.4.2), cold water being healthy and cooling in the summer season (1.3.36), for someone with a weak head to douche his head daily with cold water from a strong flowing pipe (1.4.3), and for those who suffer chronic eye inflammations to treat the face and eyes with lots of cold water (1.5.1). Likewise a cold water infusion is beneficial to treat the stomach and joints and to combat indigestion (1.9.6). Conversely Celsus points out the dangers of

\(^{33}\) Translation Rudd (2005). 
\(^{35}\) Sen. \textit{Ep}. 83: “... regularly paying my respects to the Canal on the first of January and jumping into the Maiden Pool in just the same way as I read, wrote and spoke some sentence or other every New year”. Translation Campbell (1969).
cold water, especially if used unexpectedly by people unaccustomed to it, for it causes pains in the sides and provokes tumours in the neck (1.9.6).

4.7.5.1 Bathing

Hot water could, according to Celsus, also be beneficial for the sanus homo and useful in the treatment of certain weaknesses of the body. He recommends that a warm bath be taken after exercise and before the main meal; however, bathing after a meal was sometimes thought to promote digestion (1.8.3).

In 1.4.2 Celsus describes the order in which the different stages of a bath should be taken: first, sweat for a little while in the tepid room (tepidarium) without undressing, then be anointed (ungui), next proceed to the thermal chamber (caldarium) and after a course of sweating (sudavit) not to go down into the hot tub (solium) but pour some hot water over the head, then tepid and lastly cold water. Finally the person should be rubbed and dried and then anointed again. It is clear that he does not believe this ritual should be followed daily since he states at the beginning of Book 1: prodest etiam interdum balneo … uti (1.1.2.) (“It is certainly advantageous to enjoy a bath at times”), and, concerning a bath after exercise he adds in 1.2.7: exercitationem recte sequitur modo unctio, vel in sole vel ad ignem; modo balneum (“The proper sequel to exercise is sometimes oiling, either in the sun or in front of a fire; sometimes bathing”).

This view is upheld by other authors, e.g. Columella where he recommends providing bathing facilities for the household:

\[
\text{nam eas quoque refert esse, in quibus familia, sed tamen feriis, lavetur; neque enim corporis robori convenit frequens usus eorum} \\
\text{(de R.R. 1.6.20)}
\]

for it is important also that there be such places in which the household may bathe - but only on holidays; for the frequent use of baths is not conducive to physical vigour, (Translation Ash:1948)

and Suetonius (Aug. 82) who says that Augustus “made good his weakness by great care, especially by moderation in bathing” (translation Rolfe 1998).
Seneca (Ep. 108) tells Lucilius that he has avoided hot baths his entire life, believing that “it is effeminate and pointless to stew one’s body and exhaust it with continual sweating”. In Ep. 86 he criticizes people for spending money on extravagant bathing facilities and indulging in excessive bathing rituals for recreation. He commends previous generations for using the bath only to clean themselves after hard work and states that it was not their custom to have a bath every day, only hands, feet and legs were washed. Bathing was undertaken weekly for health and cleanliness.

On the contrary, the Younger Pliny’s extravagant bathing facilities at his houses (referred to in 4.7.3 above) are not an indication of moderation. He enthusiastically describes them in his letters, e.g. Ep. 2.17.11-12:

*inde balinei cella frigidaria spatiosa et effusa, cuius in contrariis parietibus duo baptisteria velut eicta sinuantur, abunde capacia si mare in proximo cogites. Adiacet unctorium, hypocauston, adiacet propnigeon balinei, mox duas cellae magis elegantes quam sumptuosae; cohaeret calida piscina mirifica, ex qua natantes mare aspiciunt*

Then comes the cooling-room of the bath, which is large and spacious and has two curved baths built out of opposite walls; these are quite large enough if you consider that the sea is so near. Next come the oiling-room, the furnace-room, and the antechamber to the bath, and then two rest-rooms, beautifully decorated in a simple style, leading to the heated swimming-bath which is much admired and from which swimmers can see the sea.

In spite of these ample facilities, Pliny sometimes finds it necessary to use the public baths of the nearby village:

*frugi quidem homini sufficit etiam vicus, quem una villa discernit. In hoc balinea meritoria tria, magna commoditas, si forte balineum domi vel subitus adventus vel brevior mora calfacere dissuadeat*

*(Ep. 2.17.26)*

There is also a village, just beyond the next house, which can satisfy anyone’s modest needs, and here there are three baths for hire, a
great convenience if a sudden arrival or too short a stay makes us reluctant to heat up the bath at home.

According to Celsus the sanus homo should limit the ritual of bathing to specific circumstances, especially after suffering fatigue. His instructions are precise: if there is a bath he should sit in the warm room for a while and then go into the tub. After this be oiled and gently rubbed and then to go into the tub again; the face should be bathed with warm water first and then with cold (1.3.4). If he is feverish because of excessive fatigue he should use only the tepid room and lower the body up to the abdomen into warm water to which oil has been added (1.3.5). Yet if the fatigue is chronic, a bath must rarely be used (1.3.8). On the other hand, a leisurely visit to the bathhouse is very beneficial for those who have been inactive and if they become too hot there, a gargle of vinegar or cold water refreshes them (1.3.12).

When the sanus homo suffers from sunburn he needs the bath immediately to enable him to pour oil over his head and body. The tub should be well heated (bene calidum) and lots of hot water poured over the head followed by a cold douche (1.3.10).

In 1.3.16 there is a further use for hot water where Celsus advises those who are stout to control their weight in order to remain healthy. Bathing in hot salty water as well as bathing on an empty stomach are ways to slim the body.

4.7.6 Vomiting and purging

A hot bath, quite a pleasant way of slimming, may well control overweight, but Celsus also suggests other, less healthy means of obtaining a slimmer body, vomiting and purging (1.3.17): extenuat corpus ... vomitus, deiectio ("vomiting

---

36 The custom of unacceptable purging is often satirised e.g. Juvenal Sat. 6.432: the hostess … bibit et vomit while her guests wait for their dinner, and Cicero Phil. 2.104 where he criticises the conduct of Antony at Varro’s house: at quam multis dies in ea villa turpissime es perbacchatus ab hora tertia bibebatur, ludebatur, vomebatur (“Day after day, at Varro’s mansion, you continued your disgusting orgies. From seven in the morning onwards, there was incessant drinking, gambling and vomiting”). Translation Grant (1960:147).
and purging slim the body"). He warns that this may be dangerous if it becomes a daily habit which could lead to a tendency of overindulgence. He also cautions that vomiting must not be practised because of opulent living and that no one who wants to keep well (the sanus homo) and live to old age should indulge in this daily. Asclepiades,37 one of Celsus’ mentors whom he often quotes, rejected this custom, and especially warned against purging with dangerous substances. Asclepiades did however admit that if something had been corrupted or was noxious it should certainly be expelled. Hippocrates had already stated that vomiting, if spontaneous, was beneficial to a patient since the body got rid of noxious matter that disturbed the stomach (Aph. 1.2). In Reg. salut. 5 he gives definite rules to be observed in the administering of emetics (during winter) and clysters (during summer). He advises that clysters suitable for fat and moist people should be salty (brine and sea water) and those for slim and dry people should be greasy and thick (milk or boiled chickpeas).

Since Celsus usually gives a balanced view about a subject, stating the advantages and disadvantages, he feels that this practice should not be condemned totally but be examined more thoroughly. He sets out his own precepts and thoughts about vomiting and purging in eight paragraphs (1.3.19-26), commencing with the benefits, followed by instructions to perform these procedures as harmlessly as possible.

Vomiting is more beneficial in winter and for those who are stout; overeating causes indigestion because the food is not digested well. In this case vomiting should always be induced. Suetonius (Aug. 77) relates that Augustus was a light eater and drank very sparingly (parcissimus erat), and that if he drank more than his habit “he used to throw it up” (translation Rolfe:1998). Vomiting is also beneficial if the sanus homo practises it for the sake of health - this Celsus knows from own experience. Those who become bilious easily, suffer bitter eructation, salivate, suffer heartburn, and whose ears ring, eyes water and mouth has a bitter taste, are advised that vomiting will bring relief.

37 Celsus refers to his book de tuenda sanitate in 1.3.17.
In 49 BC Cicero tells his wife Terentia, in a letter sent from a ship, how he got rid of cares that had plagued him:

\[ \text{xolh\&n a!kraton noctu eieci. statim ita sum levatus ut mihi deus aliquid medicinam fecisse videatur} \] (Fam. 14.7)

I threw up pure bile during the night, and felt an instantaneous relief as though a god had cured me.

Celsus gives clear instructions on how to induce a vomit causing the least harm to the body, because emetics could be dangerous and disturb the stomach. He suggests natural preparations, such as starting with tepid water followed by a stronger mixture of tepid water with salt or honey. If these preparations are not effective, other stronger mixtures are wine with honey or hyssop and eating radish before taking the tepid water. This is similar to Hippocrates’ mixture:

The emetic should consist of a gill of ground hyssop in six pints of water; this should be drunk after adding vinegar and salt to improve the taste. \( \text{(Reg. salut. 5)} \)

Cicero (in a letter to Atticus December 45 BC) refers to vomiting as if it were an everyday practice when he describes hosting Caesar at his house:

\[ \text{inde ambulavit in litore. post H. viii in balneum. unctus est, accubuit. e)metikh\n agebat; itaque et edit et bibit a)devw et iucunde, opipare sane et apperate} \] (Att. 13.52)

Then he (Caesar) took a walk on the shore. Towards two he went to his bath. After anointing he took his place at dinner. He was following a course of emetics, and so both ate and drank with uninhibited enjoyment. It was really a fine, well-appointed meal.

Vomiting may cause weakness of the stomach or irritation of the throat, therefore the sanus homo should take care to eat small portions of suitable foods for the next few meals. Celsus (1.3.24) insists that all food should be as

---

38 Cicero used Greek whenever health was being discussed, cf. n.5.
39 Cicero uses Greek as noted in n.38.
dry as possible, such as old bread and roasted meat, and that the drink consist of three ladles of cold water or sour undiluted wine. Following Hippocrates’ precept, Celsus advises that vomiting twice a month should be done on two consecutive days rather than every fortnight.

He is more emphatic about the dangers of purgatives. Laxatives and clysters should always be gentle since they entail a risk especially when used frequently. When bowel movement must be brought on because of constipation (which leads to maladies such as flatulence, impaired vision and headache), those foods and wines that promote bowel movement should first be tried. If they are ineffective, a natural laxative such as aloe should be taken and vomiting is also said to relieve constipation. Although he admits that clysters are sometimes beneficial, Celsus states that they were not used often in his day, which he observes as a positive trend (2.11.2). In 1.3.30 Celsus records conditions that cause constipation: exertion, sitting still, potter’s clay smeared on the body, not enough food, drinking too little and a rest after a meal. If the sanus homo were to avoid these conditions he would not need harmful purgatives, since the problem of constipation would be less likely.

Celsus observes that vomiting is not always self-induced, e.g. sailing may cause nausea followed by vomiting, which can be relieved by abstaining from food. Secondly if one should regurgitate undigested food, a drink of cold water and self-control (se continere) bring relief (1.2.2). The advice he suggests in these examples is simple, practical and safe.

In the sections discussed above the physical well-being of the sanus homo was explored. The next section has to do with those who have healthy bodies but troubled minds.

4.7.7 Insania

Insania may follow on fever when patients become delirious and talk

40 Cf. Reg. salut. 5. “Those who are accustomed to induce vomiting twice a month will find it better to do so on two consecutive days rather than every fortnight; as it is, most people do the opposite”.

105
nonsense. Treating the fever cures this form of the malady (3.18.1). There are, however, many other forms of insanity or dementia where the person's body is healthy but his mind affected. In fact, such a person is often physically strong and robust (robusti corporis esse consuevit) (3.18.19). Troubled minds manifest in various ways: some people may be sad (tristes), others jovial (hilares), some delirious (intra verba desipiunt) and others become violent (violenter). Of these some act on impulse (impetu) but others are artful and feign sanity and although they appear completely sane, could harm themselves or others.

Celsus gives practical and straightforward advice starting with the premise that it is necessary to treat each individual according to the nature of his affliction, e.g. groundless fears must be relieved, laughter (hilares) stopped with reproof or threats and melancholy dispelled with music, cymbals or other noise. Violence should be restrained, at first gently, but may call for a flogging or even fettering, which should only be used to protect an individual from harming himself or others.

Celsus weighs up the different views on whether to keep an anxious, unsettled person in a dark room or in the light. The ancients (antiqui) advocated the dark (in tenebris) since they believed it calmed the spirit; Asclepiades preferred the light (in lumine) since he held that the dark would disturb them. As stated above, Celsus believes that each individual should be treated according to his nature and that there should not be a fixed rule; some are disturbed by darkness and others by light. If a person is strong he could be kept in a light place (loco lucido) and if not too strong in a dim place (loco obscuro). It is clear that here, as elsewhere (i.e. precepts for the sanus homo), Celsus encourages non-invasive and moderate treatment.41 The person should be supported and gently assisted to health.

Although sleep may be difficult, it is necessary mainly because while sleeping many are cured. Drugs to induce sleep should be used in moderation or preferably not at all. Sleep may be assisted by the sound of falling water and

41 Cf. Celsus' use of loco obscuro (dim, muted place) instead of in tenebris (darkness, night, blindness) and loco lucido (light, bright place) instead of in lumine (light, lamp, daylight).
rocking after a meal and at night, particularly with the motion of a hammock (3.18.15). These suggestions are practical and pleasant to put into practice. Celsus tries to avoid intervention that would upset or threaten the troubled mind.

Depression (tristitia) should be treated by prolonged rubbing, cold water poured over the head, the emersion of the body in water and oil, eating moderately and brisk exercise even until fatigued. Optimism and hope (bona spes) should be suggested as well as entertainment provided, such as storytelling and games. A depressed person should also be gently reproved and told that his melancholy could be without cause; in fact, the very things that trouble him may often be a source of joy (3.18.18).

The general treatment for dementia, prescribed by Celsus, is the same as the general precepts that he repeatedly presents to the sanus homo. Fundamentally, he supports a balanced lifestyle with healthy habits, most importantly plenty of exercise, prolonged rubbing - even twice a day, a healthy diet (i.e. neither fatty meat nor wine but light food) and, finally, a change of scenery by traveling at least once a year. Even delirium (3.18.24) because of fright, a rare type of insanity, should be treated like all other mental afflictions by dietetic regimen (similique victus genere curandum est).

4.8 Conclusion

There are certain diseases that are unpleasant and cause discomfort, but do not require treatment because they are not fatal. Celsus describes the distressing symptoms of gravedo (the common cold) but adds (4.5.5):

neque ... expedit tamquam aegros agere, sed cetera omnia quasi sanis facienda sunt

it is not expedient to treat the patients as sick men, but they are to do everything as in health.

He mentions walking briskly, in particular, and rubbing the chest, face and head - actions that need no special devices, drugs or remedies.
The sanus homo is accountable for his own health by following Celsus’ doctrine, but should he need a physician, he ought to choose carefully. In Prooem. 73 Celsus advises that it is more useful to have in the practitioner a friend rather than a stranger, assuming that his state of knowledge (scientia) is proficient. In 3.4.9 he warns that practitioners, who care for many patients because they are slaves to gain, are not suitable. They are not dedicated in their attendance to their individual patients since they are often unavailable to attend to them because “more is to be got out of a crowd”.

In Prooem. 39 he states: “A man of few words, who learns by practice to discern well, would make an altogether better practitioner than he who, unpractised, overcultivates his tongue”, and in 3.6.6 the practitioner is portrayed as a very gentle, composed person:

\[
cum \textit{primum medicus venit, sollicitudo aegri dubitantis, quomodo illi se habere videatur, eas moveat. Ob quam causam periti medici est non protinus ut venit adprehendere manu brachium, sed primum desidere hilari vultu percontarique, quemadmodum se habeat, et si quis eius metus est, eum probabili sermone lenire, tum deinde eius corpori manum admovere.}
\]

When the practitioner makes his first visit, the solicitude of the patient who is in doubt as to what the practitioner may think of his state, may disturb his pulse. On this account a practitioner of experience does not seize the patient’s forearm with his hand, as soon as he comes, but first sits down and with a cheerful countenance asks how the patient finds himself; and if the patient has any fear, he calms him with entertaining talk, and only after that moves his hand to touch the patient.

Asclepiades held that a practitioner had a duty to treat safely (tuto), swiftly (celeriter) and pleasantly (iucunde). Although Celsus admits that he himself aspires to this, he warns in his typically cautious manner, that there is danger in too much haste (nimia festinatio) and too much pleasure (nimia voluptas). As usual he advises moderation because a patient’s well-being (salus) should always be the first consideration (3.4.1).
Celsus reasons that a physician who cures by “the hand” (surgery) should have the following attributes:

\[
\textit{esse autem chirurgus debet adulescens aut certe adulescentiae propior; manu strenua, stabili, nec umquam intremescente, eaque non minus sinistra quam dextra promptus; acie oculorum acri clarique; animo intrepidus} \quad (\textit{lib. 7 Proem. 4})
\]

Now a surgeon should be youthful (\textit{adulescens}) or at any rate nearer youth than age; with a strong and steady hand which never trembles, and ready to use the left hand as well as the right; with vision sharp and clear, and spirit undaunted.

To these qualities Celsus adds that the surgeon should have empathy with his patient yet not be emotionally involved since he has to cut (\textit{vulnus facit medicus}) to cure his patient.

In the description of his model physician Celsus draws attention to the personal nature of his involvement with his patient and, although he mentions that he should be skilled, he does not discuss his medical knowledge, skills or training. As in the case of the \textit{sanus homo}, Celsus is clearly conscious of the personal well-being of the patient. His precepts and advice for the \textit{sanus homo} reveal this same interest in human nature and human behaviour, in the maintenance of a health-giving lifestyle.

Celsus concludes Book 2, the book on general therapeutics, with the remark:

\[
\textit{his autem omnibus, et simplicibus et permixtis, varie medici utuntur, ut magis quid quisque persuaserit sibi appareat, quam quid evidenter compererit} \quad (2.33.6)
\]

But as regard all these medicaments, whether used as simples or in mixtures, their uses by medical men (\textit{medici}) vary, so that it is clear that each man follows his own ideas rather than what he has found to be true by actual fact.

Once again he implies that the Art of Medicine might not be as scientific, effective and successful as people wish to believe, an important reason for the \textit{sanus homo} to keep his body healthy and avoid medical intervention.
Although Book 1 is the focus of the sanus homo and health preservation, this theme is carried on throughout the other books of the de Medicina, which deal with the diagnosis and prognosis of diseases, general therapeutics, pharmacology and surgery.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

On the whole, ancient medicine depended on the recuperative powers of the body and the fact that many acute diseases were self-limiting. Since disease was often triggered or caused by external factors, such as the weather conditions, the quality of the local environment, the water, deprivation, overexertion and an unhealthy lifestyle, the idea of personal responsibility for managing health was prevalent. Even in present-day scientific medicine with its advanced technological aids, the older ideas about each individual’s responsibility for maintaining his health still exist (the gymnasium culture, “health shops” incorporated in pharmacies, health magazines and the proliferation of organised popular sporting events).

The individual’s accountability to self is Celsus’ main concern in his precepts for the sanus homo, as researched in the thesis. Although regimen (programmes of exercise, massage, bathing, regulation of diet and other measures) occupies a minor part of the de Medicina, it is the most important intervention recommended for preventing disease or healing a sick body. According to Flemming (2000:112): “Regimen was interactive not so much between physician and individual, but between self and body”. The two other “techniques of intervention”, pharmacology and surgery, were directed specifically at the disease or at a specific bodily aspect. Although these methods of healing are Celsus’ main focus in the de Medicina, the concept of the sanus homo and health preservation is fundamental and is carried on throughout the work.

Considering the scarcity of works on ancient medicine extant today, the de Medicina is a very important document that tells us how medicine was practised in Rome at the beginning of the first century AD. The most important contribution of Celsus’ work is the way in which he gives his reader a comprehensive explanation of all aspects of the Art of Medicine (ars medicinae) - from the preface (prooemium) dealing with the history and theory of medicine, to chapters on the healthy body, health care, diseases, treatments (folklore as well as specialised techniques and medications) right
up to the far-reaching intervention of surgery. In the latter Celsus describes many surgical instruments such as blades, hooks, forceps, needles, probes, cupping vessels, tubes and syringes. He also includes the specialised field of bone surgery in the last book (lib. 8). Of particular value is Celsus’ chapter (7.5) on the treatment of wounds sustained in battle, for it is an area of medicine neglected by most other medical writers (Jackson 1994:187). These descriptions have in all probability prompted the assumption that Celsus obtained his medical knowledge while performing military duty as an army medicus.

In each section of the work Celsus resourcefully deals with the task he has set himself. He clearly announces his topic with an introduction, followed by the discussion or explanation and ending with a conclusion before moving on to the next topic. He unambiguously states his intention with each topic and follows it through to the end. Although his work would not be called “scientific” by today’s standards, his modus operandi is certainly not haphazard or disorganised. Throughout the work he refers to the sources he has consulted and acknowledges their contributions. He often makes use of cross-references to substantiate his statements and arguments.

Celsus wrote in an age when writing had already been defined into genres, each with its own appropriate form of expression. He is writing a technical instruction manual, yet maintains his readers’ interest by constant variation in the tone and intricacy of the language, for instance a word substituted by a synonym purely as a literary device (many examples have been quoted in the thesis). The de Medicina, apart from its practical value as a scientific manual, can also be read with great enjoyment as a literary text.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Texts and Translations of Primary Works

Celsus


Censorinus


Cato


Cicero


Cicero

Columella  


Hippocrates  

Horace  

Juvenal  

Pliny, the Elder  


Pliny, the Younger  

Quintilian  


Seneca  

Suetonius  


**Dictionaries**


**Secondary Sources**


