Litterati pituitae et atrae bili obnoxii sunt.

Cap. III.

Non solum vero membra illa viresque et spiritus homines litterarum cepidii curare diligentissime debent, verum etiam pituitam semper et atrim bilem, non aliter quam navigantem Scyllam atque Charybdim, cautissime devitare iubentur. Quantum enim reliquis corpore otiosi sunt, tantum cerebro ac mente negotiosi. Inde pituitam, quod Graeci phlegma, hoc atrim bilem, quam idem melancholiam vocant, gignere compelluntur. Illa quidem ingenium saepe obundit et suffocat, haec vero, si niumun abundaverit flagramerique, assidua cura crebrisque deliramentis vexat animum iudiciumque perturbat, ut non immerito dici posset, litteratos fore et praecipue sanos, nisi cum pituita molesta est, et lactisimios sapientissimosque omnium, nisi bilis atrae vitio vel maerere saepe vel interdum desipere compellantur.

Quot sint causae quibus litterati melancholici sint vel fiant.

Cap. IV.

Ut autem litterati sint melancholici, tres potissimum causarum species faciunt: prima coelestis, secunda naturalis, tertia est humana. Coelestis quoniam Mercurius, qui ut doctrinas investigemus invitatur, et Saturnus qui efficit ut in doctrinis investigandis perseveremus inventaque servemus, frigidus quodammodo siccique ab astronomis esse dicuntur — vel si fortasse Mercurius non sit frigidus, fit tamen sape Solis propinquitate siccisimus — quales est natura apud medicos melancholica; etandemque naturam Mercurius ipsae Saturnusque litterarum studiosis corum sectatoribus impediti ab initio ac servant augentique quotidie.

Naturalis autem causa esse videtur, quod ad scientias praestemur difficiles consequendae necesse est animum ab externis ad interna tanquam a circumferentia quadam ad centrum esse recipere, atque dum speculatur in ipso (ut ita dixerim) hominis centro stabilissime permanecer. Ad centrum vero a circumferentia se colligeri figique in centro maxime terrae ipsius est proprium, cui quidem atra bilis persimilis est. Igitur atra bilis animum, ut se et collig.

How Many Things Cause Learned People Either To Be Melancholy or To Eventually Become So.

Chap. IV

In the main, three kinds of causes make learned people melancholics. The first is celestial, the second natural, and the third human. The celestial: because both Mercury, who invites us to investigate doctrines, and Saturn, who makes us persevere in investigating doctrines and retain them when discovered, are said by astronomers to be somewhat cold and dry (or if it should happen to be true that Mercury is not cold, he is nonetheless often very dry by virtue of his nearness to the Sun), just like the melancholic nature, according to physicians. And this same nature Mercury and Saturn impart from birth to their followers, learned people, and preserve and augment it day by day.

The natural cause seems to be that for the pursuit of the sciences, especially the difficult ones, the soul must draw in upon itself from external things to internal as from the circumference to the center, and while it speculates, it must stay immovably at the very center (as I might say) of man. Now to collect oneself from the circumference to the center, and to be fixed in the center, is above all the property of the Earth itself, to which black bile is analogous.
gat in unum et si sat in uno contempturque, assidue provocat. Atque ipsa mundi centro similis ad centrum rerum singularum cogit investigandum, 20

vitaeque ad altissima quaeseque comprehendenda, quandoquidem cum Saturno

maxime congruit altissimo planetaram. Contemplatio quoque ipsa vicissim

assidua quadam collectione et quasi compressione naturam atrae bili persi-

millem contrahit.

Humana vero, id est ex nobis, causa est: quoniam frequens agitatio mentis

cerebrum vehementer exsiccat, igitur humore magna ex parte consumptum,

quod caloris naturalis pabulum est, calor quoque plurimum solet extingui,

unde natura cerebri sicca frigidaque evadit, quae quidem terrae et mel-

ancholica qualitas nominatur. Pracreram ob frequentissimum inquisitionis

motum spiritus quoque moti continere resolvuntur. Resolutu autem spiritus

ex subtiliori sanguine instaurari necessarium est. Quapropter subtilioribus

clarioribusque sanguinis partibus saepiis consumptis, reliquis sanguis neces-

sario densus redditur et siccus et ater. Accedit ad haec quod natura, in con-

templatione cerebro prorsus cordique intenta, stomachum heparker destituit.

Quare alimentis praesertim vel ulceriosibus vel durioribus male concocit,

sanguis inde frigidus crassusque et niger efficitur. Postremo nimio membro-

rum otio neque superflua excernuntur, neque crassi fuscque vapores exhal-

lant. Haec omnia melancholices spiritum maestumque et pavidum animum

effercere solent, siquidem interioribus tenebrae multa magis quam exterior-

ores macore occupant animum atque terrent. Maxime vero litterarum omnium

hi atro bile premuntur, qui sedulo philosophiae studio dedit mentem ac cor-

porrebusque corporis sevocat, incorposisque coniungunt, tum quia diffi-

ciliius admodum opus majori quoque indiget mentis intentione, tum quia

quatenus mentem incorporasse veritatis coniungunt, eaturus a corpore disun-

gere compelluntur. Hinc corpus eorum nonnunquam quasi seminimum red-

ditur atque melancholicum. Quod quidem Plato noster in Timaeo signifcat,

dicens animum divina saepissime et intensiones contemplamentis alimientes
eiusmodi adeo adolescere potentemque evadere, ut corpus suum supra quam

natura corporis patiatur exsuperet, ipsumque vehementioribus agitatiobus

suis aliquando vel effugiat quodammodo, vel nonnunquam quasi dissolvere

videatur.

Therefore black bile continually incites the soul both to collect itself together

into one and to dwell on itself and to contemplate itself. And being analogous

to the world's center, it forces the investigation to the center of individual sub-

jects, and it carries one to the contemplation of whatever is highest, since, in-

deed, it is most congruent with Saturn, the highest of planets. Contemplation

itself, in its turn, by a continual recollection and compression, as it were, brings

on a nature similar to black bile.

The human cause, that which comes from ourselves, is as follows: Because

frequent agitation of the mind greatly dries up the brain, therefore, when the

moisture has been mostly consumed—moisture being the support of the natural

heat—the heat also is usually extinguished; and from this chain of events, the

nature of the brain becomes dry and cold, which is known as the earthy and

melancholic quality. Moreover, on account of the repeated movements of in-

quiry, the spirits continually move and get dispersed. But when the spirits are

dispersed, they have to be restored out of the more subtle blood. And hence,

when the more subtle and clear parts of the blood frequently get used up, the

rest of the blood is necessarily rendered dense, dry and black. On top of this,

nature in contemplation is directed wholly to the brain and heart and deserts

the stomach and liver. For this reason foods, especially the more fatty or harsh

foods, are poorly digested, and as a result the blood is rendered cold, thick,

and black. Finally, with too little physical exercise, superfluities are not car-

ried off and the thick, dense, clinging, dusky vapors do not exhale. All these

things characteristically make the spirit melancholy and the soul sad and

fearful—since, indeed, interior darkness much more than exterior overcomes

the soul with sadness and terrifies it. But of all learned people, those especially

are oppressed by black bile, who, being sedulously devoted to the study of

philosophy, recall their mind from the body and corporeal things and apply it

to incorporeal things. The cause is, first, that the more difficult the work,

the greater concentration of mind it requires; and second, that the more they

apply their mind to incorporeal truth, the more they are compelled to disjoin

it from the body. Hence their body is often rendered as if it were half-alive

and often melancholic. My author Plato signified this in the Timaeus; he said

that the soul contemplating divine things assiduously and intently grows up

so much on food of this kind and becomes so powerful, that it overreaches its

body above what the corporeal nature can endure; and sometimes in its too

veheient agitation, it either in a way flies out of it or sometimes seems as if to

disintegrate it.
Cur melancholici ingeniosi sint et quales melancholici sint eiusmodi, quales contra.

Cap. V.

Nam actenus quam ob causam Musarum sacerdotes melancholici vel sint ab initio vel studio flant, rationibus primo coelestibus, secundo naturalibus, tertio humanis ostendisse sufficiat. Quod quidem confirmat in libro Problematum Aristoteles, omnes enim inquit viros in quavis facultate praestantes melancholicos extitisse. Qua in re Platonicum illud quod in libro De scientia scivit confirmavit, ingeniosos videlicet plurimum concitatos furiososque esse solere. Democritus quoque nullus inquit viros ingenio magnos, praeter illos qui furore quodam perciti sunt, esse unquam posse. Quod quidem Plato noster in Phaedro probare videtur, dicens poeticas fores frustra absque furore pulsari. Etsi divinum furem hic forte intelligenti vult, tamen neque furor eiusmodi apud physicos aliis unquam ullis praeterquam melancholicos incitatur.


Sola igitur atra bilis illa quam diximus naturalem ad iudicium nobis sapientiamque conduit, neque tamen semper. Sane si sola sit, atque nihil densaque moe obfuscatus spiritus, tertre animem, obrundat ingenium. Si vero putitae simplici misceatur, cum frigidus obsteterit circam praecordia sanguis,
crassa quidam frigiditate severitatem adducit atque torporem; atque ut densitas inops usque materiale naturae est, quando eiusmodi melancholia frigescit, ad summum frigiditatis intenditur. Quo in statu nihil speratur, timentur omnia, taeget coeli convexa tueri. Si bilis atra vel simplex vel mixta putrescit, quartanam gignit febre, illenis tumores et multa generis eiusdem. Ubi nimis exuberat, sive sola sit sive coniuncta pituitae, spiritus crassiores facit atque frigiores, continuo animum afficit taedio, mentis aciem hebetat, neque salit Arcadico circum praecordia sanguis. Oportet autem atram bilem neque tam paucam esse, ut sanguis, bilis, spiritus quasi freno careant, unde instabile ingenium labilemque memoriam esse contingat; neque tam multam, ut nimio pondere praegravati dormitare atque egere calcabritus videamur. Prinonde necessarium est omnino eam esse, quoad eius natura patitur, subtissimam. Si enim tenuata pro sua maxime fuerit, poterit forsitam absque noxa etiam esse multa, atque etiam tanta ut aequare bilem saltem pondere videatur.

Abundet igitur imbre bilis, sed tenuissimam. Non carcat humore subtilioris pituitae circumfuso, ne arescat prorsus durissimaeque evadat. Non tamen miscceatur omnino pituitae, praesertim vel frigidiore vel multae, ne frigescat. Sed bili sanguvium adeo miscceatur, ut corpus unum conficiatur ex tribus, dupla sanguins ad reliqua duo proportionem compositum; ubi octo sanguinis partes, duae bilis, duae iterum atrae bileis portiones existant. Accendatur aliquantulum a dubius illis atra bilis, accensaque fulgeat, non uratur, ne quemadmodum solet materia durior, dum fervet niumum, vehementius urat et concit: dum vero refrigescit, similiter frigescat ad summum. Bilis enim atra ferri instar, quando multum ad frigus intenditur, friget ad summum; quando contra ad calidum valde declinat, calet ad summum. Neque mirum videri debet atram bilem accendi posse facile atque accensum vehementius urere, siquidem idemius calcem illi similium aqua perfusam fervere statim atque exsurgere. Tanquam ad utrumque extremum melancholia vmb habet unitate quodam stabilis fixaque naturae. Quae quidem extremitas ceteris humoribus non contingit. Summe quidem calens summam praestat auditaciam, immo fervoratam; extremo vero frigens timorem ignaviamque extremam. Medisi vero inter frigus caloremque gradibus affecta varia, affectus producit varios, non aliter quam merum praecipue potens bibentibus ad ebrietatem vel etiam paulo liberius affectus inferre varios soleat.

Igitur opportune temperata sit atra bilis oportet. Quae cum ita moderata est, ut diximus, et bili sanguinique permixta, quia et natura sicca est et con-

its heavy frigidity; and as is the nature of any very dense material, when melancholy of this kind gets cold, it gets cold in the extreme. When we are in this state, we hope for nothing, we fear everything, and "it is weariness to look at the dome of the sky" [Aem. 4.451]. If black bile—either simple or mixed—putrefies, it produces quartan fever, swellings of the spleen, and many infirmities of the same kind. When it is too abundant, whether alone or joined with phlegm, it makes the spirits heavier and colder, affects the mind continually with weariness, dulls the sharpness of the intellect, and keeps the blood from leaping "around the Arcadian's heart" [Aem. 10.452]. But the black bile should not be so small in quantity, that blood, bile, and spirit, as it were, lack a rein, from which will arise an unstable wit and a short memory; it should not be so great as to sicken with too much weight, we seem to sleep and to need spurs. Therefore it must be every bit as subtle as its nature allows; for if it were rarefied very greatly, to the extent of its nature, perhaps there could even be much of it without harm, and even so much that it should seem to equal the [yellow] bile, at least in weight.

Therefore let black bile abound, but very rarely; make sure it has the moisture of the more subtle phlegm surrounding it, so that it doesn't become hard and completely dried up. But let it not be mixed only with phlegm, especially the more frigid sort, or much of it, lest it get cold. But let it be so mixed with bile and with blood, that one body is made of the three humors, compounded in a double proportion of blood to the [sum of the] two others; where there are eight parts blood let there be two portions bile and two again of black bile. Let the black bile be kindled a bit from these two others, and having been kindled let it shine, but not burn, lest, as harder material characteristically does, when it boils too strongly, it should burn too intensely and become agitated, but when it cools off, it similarly should become cold in the extreme. For black bile is like iron; when it starts to get cold, it gets cold in the extreme; and on the contrary, once it tends towards hot, it gets hot in the extreme. Nor should it seem surprising that black bile can be kindled easily and when kindled burn with great intensity, for we see something similar in line, in that when sprinkled with water it begins at once to boil and burn. Melancholy has a similarly great tendency towards either extreme, in the unity of its fixed and stable nature. This extremism does not occur in the other humors. Extremely hot, it produces the extremest boldness, even to ferocity; extremely cold, however, fear and extreme cowardice. Various imbued with the intermediate grades between cold and heat, however, it produces various dispositions, just as wine, especially strong wine, characteristically induces various dispositions in those who have imbibed to the point of drunkenness, or even just a little too freely. Therefore it behooves you to temper black bile in an appropriate manner. When it is moderated as we specified and mixed with bile and blood, because
it is dry by nature and in a condition rarefied in so far as its nature admits, it is easily kindled by them; because it is solid and tenacious, once kindled, it burns longer; because it is very powerful in the concentration of its very tenacious dryness, it burns vehemently. Like wood in straw when both are kindled, it burns and shines more and longer. But certainly by means of long-lasting and vehement heat, there arises huge radiance and vehement and long-lasting motion. This is what Heraclitus meant when he said, “A dry light, a soul most wise.”

How Black Bile Makes People Intelligent.

Chap. VI

One might perhaps ask what it is like—that humoral body composed out of those three humors in the aforementioned proportion. In color, it has much the appearance of gold, but somewhat inclining towards purple. And when it is heated, as much by natural heat as by motion of the body or of the mind, it burns and shines much like red-hot gold tinged with purple; and it takes on in the burning heart various colors like a rainbow [Aen. 4.700–701].

One might, again, how a humor of this kind conduces to intelligence. Well, in the first place, the spirits born of this humor have the subtlety of that water which is called *aqua vitae* or *vitis* and *aqua ardens*, when this liquor is extracted by the usual process from thicker wine by distillation at the fire. For the spirits of this kind of black bile are in the highest degree rarefied under pressure in the narrower passages by the heat that is intense because of its concentration; and having been squeezed through these narrower passages, when they emerge they are more subtle. Second, they are correspondingly hotter and by the same token brighter; third, being quick in motion they are most vigorous in action; fourth, pouring forth continually from a solid and stable humor they can support an action for a very long time. Supported by such compliance, our mind explores eagerly and perseveres in the investigation longer. Whatever it is tracking, it easily finds it, perceives it clearly, soundly judges it, and retains the judgment long.

Add to this that, as we said above [1.5], the soul with an instrument or incitement of this kind—which is congruent in a way with the center of the cosmos, and, as I might say, collects the soul into its own center—always seeks the center of all subjects and penetrates to their innermost core. It is congruent, moreover, with Mercury and Saturn, of whom the second, the highest of the planets, carries the investigator to the highest subjects. From this come origi-
Liber Primus

Cap. VII

Quinque sunt praecipui studiosorum hostes: pituita, atra bilis, coitus, satietas, matutinus somnus.

Cap. VII

Ut autem redeamus illuc inde iam longius digressi sumus, longissima via est quae ad veritatem sapientiamque percutit, gravibus terrae quaerendo marisque plena laboribus. Quicunque igitur hoc iter aggregiuntur, ut poetae quipsiam dicentur, saepe terrae marique pericidantur. Sive enim mare navigant, constime inter fluctus, id est humores duos, pituitam scilicet et noxias illam melancholiam, quasi inter Scyllam Charybdimque iactantur. Sive terra (ut ita dixerim) iter agant, tria monstra profunda se se illis oblivient. Primum terra Venus Priapusque nutrit, secundum Bacchus et Ceres, tertium nocturna Hecate frequenter opponunt. Ergo et Apollo ab aetherie et Neptunus ab aequore et a terra Hercules saepe vocandus, ut monstra eiusmodi Palladis inimica iaculis Apollo transfigat, Neptunus tridentem dedit, clava Hercules contundat et lacet.

Primum quidem monstrum est Venereus coitus, praeritimum si vel paulum vires exessit; subito namque exsatur spiritus praesertim subtiliores, cerebrumque debilitat, labefactat stomachum atque praecordia. Quo malo nihil ingenio adversius esse potest. Cur nam Hippocrates coitum comitiali morbo similium iudicavit, nisi quia mentem, quae sacra est, percipit; tantumque obest, ut Avicenna in libro De animalibus dixerit: "Si quid spermatis, supra quam na-

nal philosophers, especially when their soul, hereby called away from external movements and from its own body, is made in the highest degree both a neighbor to the divine and an instrument of the divine. As a result, it is filled from above with divine influences and oracles, and it always invests new and unaccustomed things and predicts the future. Not only Democritus¹ and Plato² affirm this but also Aristotle confesses it in his book of Problems,³ and Avicenna in his Liber divinorum⁴ and in his De anima.⁵

What is the purpose of so much information about the humor black bile? That we may remember that just as much as black bile—or rather, I should call bile of this kind white—is to be sought and nourished as the best, just so that which is contrary to it, as we said, is to be avoided as the worst. For it is so pernicious a thing that Serapion says its onset is instigated by a bad daemon,⁶ and the wise Avicenna does not deny it.⁷

The Special Enemies of Scholars Are Five: Phlegm, Black Bile, Sexual Intercourse, Gluttony, and Sleeping in the Morning.

Chap. VII

But to return from where we have been digressing now for quite a while, the road is very long which leads to truth and wisdom, full of heavy labors on land and sea. Hence people who undertake this journey are often at danger, as some poet might say, on land and sea. For if they sail on the sea, they are constantly tossed among the waves, that is, the two humors, namely phlegm and that noxious form of melancholy, as if between Scylla and Charybdis. Or if they journey on land, so to speak, three monsters immediately oppose them. The first monster is nourished by the earthly Venus and Priapus; the second, by Bacchus and Ceres; and the third, nocturnal Hecate often positions against us. Therefore Apollo must often be summoned from the heavens, Neptune from the sea, and Hercules from the land in order that Apollo may pierce such monsters, enemies of Pallas, with his shafts, Neptune may subdue them with his trident, and Hercules may crush and mangle them with his club.

The first monster is sexual intercourse, especially if it proceeds even a little beyond one's strength; for indeed it suddenly drains the spirits, especially the more subtle ones, it weakens the brain, and it ruins the stomach and the heart—no evil can be worse for one's intelligence. For why did Hippocrates judge sexual intercourse to be like epilepsy, if not because it strikes the mind, which is sacred;¹ and it is so harmful that Avicenna has said in his book De animalibus: "If any sperm should flow away through intercourse beyond that which