

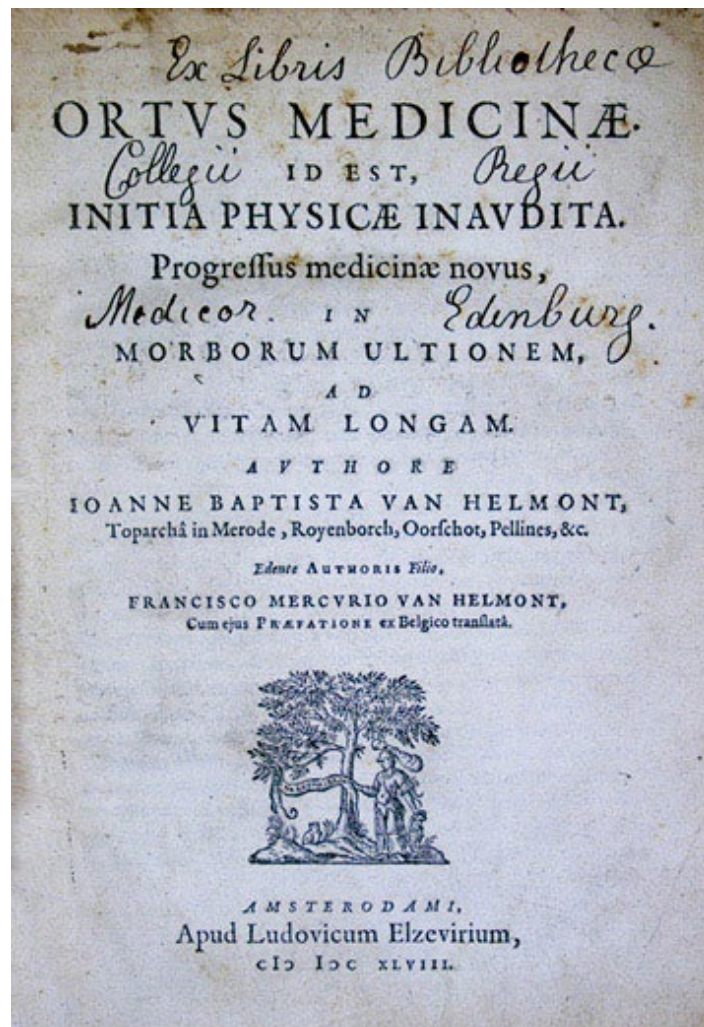
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Title Page(s) Key Passage(s) Portrait(s) Context

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Van Helmont JB (1648). *Ortus medicinæ: Id est Initia physicæ inaudita. Progressus medicinae novus, in morborum ultionem, ad vitam longam.* [The dawn of medicine: That is, the beginning of a new Physic. A new advance in medicine, a victory over disease, to [promote] a long life.] Amsterodami: Apud Ludovicum Elzevirium, pp 526-527.

Title pages



Key passages

Medicina enim non est nudum verbum, inanis jactantia, aut sermo vanus: post se namque opus relinquit. Quocirca sperno contumelias, jactantias ambitionis, & vanitates miseras. Eja mecum ad rhombum. Si verum dicitur. Sola

ad hominum. si verum dicitis, scio, quod possitis sanare quaslibet febres citra evacuationem: sed nolle, præ metu deterioris recidivæ. Ad luctam descendite, Humoristæ. Sumamus è Xenodochiis, è castris, vel aliunde 200 aut 300 pauperes febrientes, pleuriticos, &c. partiamur illos per medium: mittamus sortes, ut mihi illorum una medietas cedat, & altera vobis. Ego illos curabo citra phlebotomiam, & evacuationem sensibilem; vos verò facite ut scitis (nec enim vos adstringo ad jactantiam phlebotomi, vel solutivi abstinentiam) videbimus quot funera uterque nostrum habiturus: præmium autem certaminis sint 300 floreni, utrimque depositi. Hic vestrum agitur negotium. O Magistratus, quibus cordi est salus populi! Pro bono publico certabitur, pro veritatis cognitione, pro vita & anima vestra, filiorum, viduarum, pupillorum totiusque sanitate populi. Ac tandem pro methodo curativa, in actuali contradictorio disputata. Superaddite præmium, honorarii loco, ex officio. Compellite nolentes intrare in certamen, vel palæstra obmutescentes cedere. Ostendant tum, quod modo oblatrando stentantur. Sic namque diplomata ostendenda sunt. Cedant verba, & jurgia, agamus amicè, & per experientias mutuas: sciatur posthac, utra methodus sit vera. Siquidem in contradictoriis, non ambæ quidem propositiones: 2. at tantum altera, vera est. Sed jam Hu-

Translation

For Medicine is no empty word, no fool's boast, no vain speech: after the word is said the work remains to be done. In this matter I scorn abuse, the boasts of the ambitious and pitiful vanities. Come on, then, I'll lead you into the magic circle. If you speak the truth, you Schoolmen, that you are able to cure any kind of fever without purging but that you are not willing to do so for fear of a worse relapse, come down to a contest, you believers in the Humours. Let us take from the itinerants' hospitals, from the camps or from elsewhere 200 or 500 poor people with fevers, pleurisy etc. and divide them in two: let us cast lots so that one half of them fall to me and the other half to you. I shall cure them without blood-letting or perceptible purging, you will do so according to your knowledge (nor do I even hold you to your boast of abstaining from phlebotomy or purging) and we shall see how many funerals each of us will have: the outcome of the contest shall be the reward of 300 florins deposited by each of us. Thus shall your business be concluded. O you magistrates to whose hearts the health of your people is dear; let the trial be made for the public good, in order to know the truth, for the sake of your life and soul and for the health of all the people, sons, widows and orphans. Let there be a real debate to find the means of cure. Rather than giving honours use your office to add a reward for its finding. Compel those who refuse either to enter the contest or to concede the field in silence. Let them demonstrate what they now bawl about. Thus are credentials to be established. Let words and quarrelling cease; let us act in friendship and from our shared experiences; let it be known hereafter which is the true method. For when there is contradiction, of the two proposals only one is true.

Translation by IML Donaldson
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