



Event:

	<p>ENDORSED BY</p> 	<p>HEALTH in BUILDINGS</p> <h1>HYGEIA 2026</h1> <p>where the medical &amp; engineering professions collaborate &amp; innovate</p>	
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May 27-29, 2026 - Island of KOS, Greece

#	<b>Helen Skaltsa, PhD</b> Professor	
Title:	Professor, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, School of Health Sciences, Department of Pharmacy, Section of Pharmacognosy & Chemistry of Natural Products, Athens, Greece	
email:	skaltsa@pharm.uoa.gr	
Presentation title:	<b>The Evolution of Healing: From Asclepieia to the Rational Medicine of Hippocrates</b>	
<p>The beginning of scientific medicine coincides with the birth of Greek philosophy, where for the first time in history we see an attempt to construct a system capable of explaining the phenomena of nature and investigating its laws.</p> <p>Before this period, healing was instinctive, empirical, magical, priestly, and theurgical. The ancient Eastern peoples had accumulated over the centuries an exceptional treasure of knowledge derived from observation and practical instructions, without being concerned with the fundamental causes. Subsequently, in Greece, a transformation occurred in the perception of healing, as theocratic interpretations were gradually replaced by philosophical conceptions. Initially, the science of healing was considered as part of philosophy. Many philosophers were experts in medicine. The decisive turning point came in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE with Hippocrates of Cos, who separated medicine from philosophy and established it as an independent science.</p> <p>Hippocratic medicine relied on observation, rationalism, and experience. The <i>Corpus Hippocraticum</i>, compiled between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BCE, became the most comprehensive written source on medical and pharmacological knowledge of the classical era. This monumental work consolidated the medical and therapeutic knowledge of its time, beginning with the collection of knowledge and observations accumulated in the temples of Asclepius. Across Greece, nearly 300 Asclepieia served as healing centers, one the most renowned being those of Kos. These sanctuaries were built in beautiful places. Progressively, around the primitive sanctuaries, gymnasiums, stadiums, and magnificent theaters were built. They were architectural masterpieces and adorned with works by the greatest artists.</p> <p>Patients visiting the Asclepieia paid a fee and underwent treatments that combined diet, exercise, prayers, incubation or "temple sleep" (enkoimesis), and hydrotherapy. Depending on local beliefs, the approach could be mystical or empirical. When recovery failed, patients often turned to magic, divination, or medicines. Gradually, Asclepieia became true therapeutic centers.</p>		
Short CV:		
<p>Professor at the Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Athens. Her main research interests are Natural Products Chemistry, including the isolation and structure elucidation of specialized metabolites from medicinal and aromatic plants using nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy and mass spectrometry. She also focuses on the History of Pharmacy and Ethnopharmacology, with an emphasis on the Greek Classical, Roman/Hellenistic, and Byzantine periods.</p>		