

Empedocles Encyclopedia Article

Empedocles

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Empedocles

492?-432 B.C.

Greek philosopher who gained fame as a physician, statesman, theologian, mystic, and democratic reformer. Only fragments of his long poem, *On Nature*, have survived. Galen called Empedocles the founder of the Italian school of medicine. Empedocles taught that the four ultimate elements—fire, air, water, and earth—were associated with the hot and the cold, the moist and the dry. According to Empedocles, we breathe through all the pores of the body, and respiration is closely connected with the motion of the blood. He is regarded as one of the first to suggest employing experimentation in physiology and medicine.