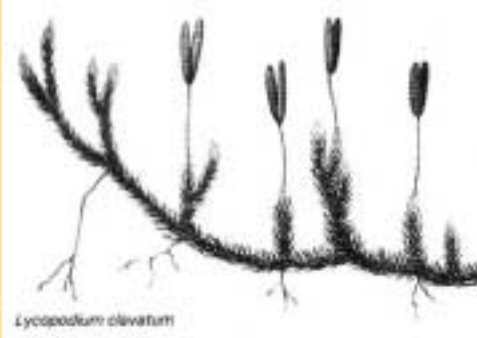


# masterclass

## MAJOR ARCHETYPES OF THE MATERIA MEDICA

by David Lilley MBChB FFHom LLCO



*The clubmoss - The Dictionary of Healing Plants  
by Dr Hans-Peter Dorfler and  
Prof Gerhard Roselt, Blandford Press UK 1989.*

This pullout and keep series includes:

Sulphur

Calc carb

Lycopodium

Pulsatilla

Silicea

Nat mur

Sepia

Lachesis

In our two previous remedy pictures, Sulphur and Calc carb, we witnessed the pre-biotic, volcanic, era of planetary evolution dominated by the influence of fiery, egotistical Sulphur and the subsequent oceanic period of life evolution dominated by the influence of cold, fearful Calc carb. Now we come to the period of early terrestrial evolution dominated by the influence of Lycopodium.

It was plant life that first emerged from the oceans onto the shores of the pristine landmasses. In the carboniferous period, between 350 and 260 million years ago, plants dominated the world, which at that time was one great continent, Pangea, lying across the equatorial and tropical regions and hence exposed to persistent high rainfall. Vast swamps, conducive to the continual and massive production of vegetation, were created. Dense, tangled forests arose and gigantic trees evolved. Even amongst these the mighty Lycopod, Lepidodendron, stood supreme. At the end of the swamp era much of Pangea drifted away from the tropics and began to break apart to form the different continents we know today. The rains slackened and, to survive, Lepidodendron had to adapt. The mighty tree tenaciously resisted extinction by diminishing its size until it dwindled into a creeping plant, the humble club moss, Lycopodium clavatum, which epitomises the emergence of life upon the land.

Returning to the metaphor of the Garden of Eden, we saw that it was Sulphur who ate from the Tree of Knowledge and, being freed from the primitive, instinctive, animal will, is banished from Eden and swaggers forth filled with an inflated ego, eager curiosity and an inventive genius. It was Calc carb who, beset with terrible fears and a sense of being alone, insignificant and weak in a hostile world, sought to protect this tender vulnerability with a shell of security. Finally it was Lycopodium who, despite his misgivings and sense of inadequacy, cast aside the protective shell, and, masking his fears and feelings of inferiority with an over-compensatory arrogance, stepped out into life in pursuit of power and influence. Whereas fear is the limiting force of Calc carb, fear is often the driving force of Lycopodium.

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# Lycopodium

There are a number of signatures to guide the shaman in his search for the therapeutic uses of this remarkable plant.

The remedy is prepared from its yellow spores. These spores supply us with wonderful clues regarding Lycopodium's nature and sphere of action. They are very small and contain a high content of oil droplets. This makes them highly inflammable. They blaze very brightly, with a quick flash, pointing, as in the case of Sulphur, to a highly volatile and explosive temperament, and also to the suddenness with which many of the acute symptoms develop and the speed with which the remedy acts and brings relief in such cases. They are yellow in colour, indicating an affinity for the third or solar plexus chakra and its associated organs, the liver, gallbladder, pancreas, stomach and spleen. In traditional Chinese medicine the liver is regarded as the "general" of the body, and it is often true that Lycopodium rises to positions of eminence and leadership. The liver was also seen as the seat of anger (the choleric nature) where our emotional hurts are stored. Homeopathically Lycopodium is an important remedy for the dire effects of suppressed or stored anger.

Yellow also relates to the nervous system and the intellect. This is a mind that, like yellow, is bright, quick, agile, alert and penetrating; it is also perceptive and curious. Such a brain is cerebrally left dominant – analytical, logical, intellectually rigid, scientific, rational and essentially male. It is given to being critical, judgmental and sceptical. No patients can be more cynical and sceptical of new concepts, including homeopathy, than a Lycopodium. Typically, a Lycopodium homeopath will be dubious about the correspondences I have drawn above. This powerful left cerebral (mental) dominance results in an equally powerful right somatic (physical) dominance, so that the majority of Lycopodium symptoms and signs are to be found on the right side of the body, or commence on the right and then move over to the left.

The negative attributes of yellow are also those of many a Lycopodium – materialistic, egotistical, selfish, prejudiced, sarcastic, disloyal and cowardly. Like the lowly ground-pine (club moss) he can be a creep.

His intellect is his strongest asset, but also his weakest link. It is in this sphere especially that Lycopodium exerts its subversive and curative power. Yellow is not only bright, it is also a very active, busy colour. It is not tranquil and relaxing. To be surrounded by vivid yellow is to become exhausted. Lycopodium is eager to prove himself and to climb the corporate and social ladder, to attain once again the stature of a magnificent tree. To this end he becomes a workaholic, sacrificing his private and family life to his ambition, unwilling to acknowledge mental and physical limitations. They are not good at pacing themselves. They burn out. Mental strain, business and financial worries, or a sickness such as 'flu may precipitate intellectual

problems – mental tiredness, confusion, inability to concentrate, forgetfulness and loss of confidence, often with an aversion to work or undertaking anything new, even within their own profession.

Although the club moss is diminutive in height it grows many metres along the ground and, remarkably, takes fully 10 to 20 years to reach full maturity, the time it takes a tall tree to develop. It keeps pace with that of its mighty ancestor. Here we see paralleled its suitability for ailments that develop in a slow, gradual yet profound manner, for deep-seated, progressive chronic diseases, and for many acute diseases that are slow to resolve and reach convalescence, and where prolonged mental and physical weakness persist afterwards. It is a remedy for chronic fatigue syndrome. Likewise it is a wonderful remedy for those youngsters who are slow to reach physical maturity. Often the mental development is rapid and precocious, whilst the body remains sickly and puny – a strong, mature mind in a weak, immature body. It is an important remedy for delayed puberty in both male and female, for young girls who late in their teens have not yet experienced their first menstrual flow, and whose breasts and hips remain undeveloped.



The Lycopodium tree: Illustrated World of Science Encyclopedia, earth science, Creative World Publications Inc Chicago 1971

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## the lycopodium character...

**The spores** have a hard, impervious, outer capsule, which protects the soft, inner contents. No resemblance could more accurately portray the emotional nature of Lycopodium – an inner vulnerability, sense of inadequacy, great sensitivity and emotionalism hidden behind a veneer of confidence, bravado, hardness and irritable intolerance.

**Three essential keynotes** of the Lycopodium psyche are revealed here, its sense of inadequacy, its tendency to overcompensate, and its duality. They suffer from a deep-seated inferiority complex and lack of self-confidence that is often paradoxically in conflict with a high degree of competence. This is not surprising when we consider the severe loss of stature and substance, which the huge tree *Lepidodendron* had to undergo in the process of regressive evolution so essential for its survival. Lycopodium has never recovered from the resultant feeling of mediocrity. Overcompensation for this motivates so much of the behavioural patterns and personality that Lycopodium projects as a cover-up for its feelings of insecurity and incompetence. When a left cerebrally dominant person is focussed upon a materialistic world as his reality, such overcompensation must emphasise qualities that are egotistical, selfish, aggressive, competitive, domineering and acquisitive. All this may be true of Lycopodium.

**In response to his fears**, uncertainty and self-doubt he calls upon the oldest law of all to solve his dilemma – survival of the fittest. In modern human terms this means the possession of power. Since he is fear-driven and his viewpoint primarily materialistic, power to control the environment and those within the environment would seem to be essential. To compensate for a sense of inner powerlessness Lycopodium pursues the trappings of external power. They fear to face life without defences which we as a species and as individuals have come to view as the symbols of power – money, position, possessions, education, eloquence, beauty, fame and influence.

**Unfortunately the pursuit** of external power may result in ruthlessness, loss of morality, deceit and corruption. The need to dominate and control produces an unhealthy competitiveness that taints many aspects of their lives and detrimentally affects their relationships. They develop a talent for deceit and underhandedness. What you see is not what you get. This is their duality. The fears and self-consciousness of Calc carb demand a shell of security and anonymity, the inadequacy and guile of Lycopodium demand a mask of confidence and irreproachability. So effective is this mask that they often delude themselves

and have difficulty analysing their true motives. They become the victims of their own expert rationalisation.

**True to his duality** he often has a persona for domestic occasions and a conflicting persona that he dons for public and professional occasions. At home he is often a bully, dictatorial, chauvinistic and autocratic. Everything must run according to his desires. Resistance or criticism results in explosions of wrath. Proud, obstinate and self-opinionated, he cannot tolerate being faulted or contradicted. He needs to be constantly respected and admired; it is balm to his inferiority complex. At work he is controlled and compromising and, especially if he has risen to a position of power and influence, presents a dignified and accomplished manner. He may be a tyrant with his family and a gentleman to his staff. Unfortunately on his ascent to prominence a distasteful aspect of his character may be shown, a tendency to be obsequious and fawning towards those in authority and those whom he respects or fears, and domineering and arrogant towards those he regards as inferior or subordinate. With the latter he is, at his best, condescending and patronising, at his worst overbearing, critical and intolerant. He will often resort to sarcasm, to embarrass or humiliate others. Their discomfiture gives him the confidence he seeks.

**As we have noted** the spores are filled with oil. In his desire to ingratiate himself Lycopodium can be smooth and slippery, oiling his way to popularity, favour and success by flattery. No one can laugh more loudly, affectedly or longer than a Lycopodium when the boss tells a joke. He blows his own trumpet and is forever boasting about his knowledge and abilities. To make an impression and earn respect he will exaggerate or even lie about his achievements. For Lycopodium a lie frequently repeated becomes a truth. They also love to “name drop” and bask in reflected glory.



*What you see is not what you get*

Picture courtesy of Mask Workshops at the Theatre Museum, Covent Garden, London

**Lacking self-esteem** and oversensitive to the approval of others, they wish to be seen as confident and composed at all times, but you will often see through their pose when, being ill at ease, they whistle tunelessly and inappropriately to appear nonchalant. Lycopodiums always fear that they will make fools of themselves and that others will witness their inadequacy. Because of this and their lack of faith in themselves performance anxiety is always under the surface and flares up into anticipatory fears if anything new or unusual looms before them. Their sense of apprehension is felt in the pit of the stomach. They incline to negative self-talk, projecting all kinds of problems and risk of failure into anything they have to face or undertake. This leads to stage fright, fear of speaking in public and examination fears. They hate being watched as they work, especially when tackling something unfamiliar. It quite unnerves them and causes them to make mistakes, or their hands to shake.

**Lycopodiums are often** only confident when they are in their own territory, or dealing with subjects and situations within their own experience, and with people who are familiar to them. Indeed, in such cases, they are often unpleasantly overbearing, assertive and argumentative. The strong Lycopodium recognises this frailty and sets about extending his familiar territory - his comfort zone. He will assiduously set about doing everything necessary to enhance his ability and confidence. He will even master public speaking, though characteristically even the veteran Lycopodium orator will experience an attack of nervousness before getting to his feet, taking a few minutes to get into his stride.

**Lycopodiums are vain.** Beauty means a great deal to them. They are forever observing themselves in the mirror. Much time and effort may be devoted to developing or maintaining a good body and grooming themselves. Some will enlist the talents of a cosmetic surgeon to augment their appearance. Much to their chagrin they are often afflicted with premature baldness and grey hair and a skin that is sallow, acquires blemishes and ages too soon. They will often choose a partner for their looks rather than their inner qualities. It does much for their confidence and prestige to be accompanied by a beautiful woman or a handsome man. They are often attracted to persons much younger or intellectually inferior or less experienced than they, someone they can dominate, manipulate and mould.

**They often marry late** or remain confirmed bachelors or

spinsters. This may be due to inadequacy in the face of worldly responsibilities. In relationships Lycopodiums are often selfish, predatory and promiscuous, especially the males. They seek sexual intimacy rather than emotional

intimacy. Either sex is vulnerable to infidelity and may forsake their families in pursuit of an infatuation or new love. Sexual performance is an important part of the Lycopodium image. Being a great lover is often too important for the male and becomes his Achilles' heel. They may develop sexual difficulties due to lack of faith in themselves and an anxious need to perform. The problem of being a spectator to the act rather than a participant may arise and a fear of failure may result in premature ejaculation or inability to achieve or sustain an erection. This is more likely to occur in the context of an ongoing relationship or marriage. A Lycopodium may often be impotent with his wife, whilst being well able to perform with a casual contact that provides him with the stimulus of the forbidden, without responsibility. Many become jaded by familiarity, bored with their partners, and constantly need new excitement to sustain their sexual interest and ability. Despite this Lycopodiums are notoriously jealous and possessive. Their partner is their property. They are even jealous of their partner's past lovers, always fearing comparison. Unwarranted jealousy and suspicion can bring much unhappiness to the Lycopodium home - the addition of alcohol may precipitate a tragedy.

**Lycopodium given** in appropriate potency to a person displaying the above picture can help free them from the addiction to external power and, by restoring their faith in themselves and life, start them on the quest for their true heritage, the development of internal power in keeping with the symbolic image of the proud and mighty Lycopods, the monarchs of the ancient coal swamps.



Picture courtesy of Mask Workshops at the Theatre Museum, Covent Garden, London

Next issue: David Lilley looks at Pulsatilla

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