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THE LINKS BETWEEN MEDICAL SCHOOL OF BOLOGNA
AND IONIAN ACADEMY

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SUMMARY

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The Ionian Academy, on the British dominion island of Corfu (Kerkyra), was founded in 1824 and his Medical School functioned during two separate periods (1824-1828, 1844-1865). It was the first Greek University. Among the 15 professors of the Academy's Medical School, 12 studied at various Italian Universities. In particular, three of them, G. Therianos, Professor of Comparative Anatomy and Experimental Physics, G. Grassetti, Professor of Physiology and S. Arvanitakis, Professor of Pathology and Hygiene, either studied or graduated at the Medical School of Bologna University. Another Bologna graduate, Rokkos Pylarios, was appointed to the chair of Professor in Surgery and Gynecology - though it is not known if he actually took up the position. It is concluded that the Medical School of Bologna, as a centre of original medical study, contributed significantly to the foundation and development of the Ionian Academy. Moreover, the Greek physicians who had studied either at the University of Bologna or at the Ionian Academy, contributed to the renaissance of neohellenic medicine during the 19th century.

The Ionian Academy (fig. 1) - the first full-scale University on Hellenic soil - was for that time a highly organized and sophisticated educational body comprising Philosophical, Law and Medical Schools.

The Ionian Academy was founded due to efforts of Frederic North the Earl of Guilford (1776-1827) (fig. 2) and operated

during the 19th century. The first period of existence of the Medical School in the Ionian Academy was from 1824 to 1828, when the Medical School was closed because of economic difficulties after the death of Guilford. The second period covers the years from 1844 to 1865; then the Ionian Islands were united with the Kingdom of Greece and the existence of the second University was regarded as excessive.

Many highly educated physicians practised on the Ionian Islands in that time and that was the reason why the Medical School became the most significant branch of the Ionian Academy.

The archives and biographical sources inform us that 15 professors lectured at the Medical School of the Academy during the two periods of its history. Twelve of them graduated from different Italian Universities.

Among them there were Athanasios Politis (1790-1864), Professor of Chemistry and Pharmaceutics who studied at the University of Pavia; George Therianos (1775-1850), Professor of General and Comparative Anatomy and Experimental Physics who studied in Bologna; Christophoros Philitas (1798-1876), Professor of Physiology who studied at the University of Naples; Gaetano Grassetti (1778?-1836), Professor of Physiology who studied in Bologna; Stamatelos Pylarinos (1796-1875) who studied in Pavia and was the Professor of Natural Science; Spiridon Arvanitakis (1802-1880) who studied in Bologna and was the Professor of General and Special Pathology, Hygiene and Therapeutics; Constantinos Zavitsianos (1810-1881) who studied at the University of Naples and was the Professor of Anatomy, Physiology, Obstetrics, Forensic Medicine and Surgery; Angelos Cogevas (1800?-1871) who studied in Pisa and was the Professor of Surgery Pathology and Clinical Surgery; John Baptist Delviniotis (1795?-1869) who was the Professor of Physics, Chemical and Pharmaceutical Analysis; Christoforos Lauranos, Professor of Pharmacology (Materia Medica), Therapeutics,

Natural History (Botanics and Minerology) and Charalambos Typaldos Pretenderis, Professor of Pathology^(1,2,3).

Among the above mentioned scientists G. Therianos, G. Grassetti and S. Arvanitakis graduated from the University of Bologna.

Permit us to inform you of their scientific and educational activities in establishing the high level of the Medical School which influenced the Greek medical science as a whole.

G. Therianos was born on Zante (Zakynthos) Island. After receiving an essential education, probably on his mother-island, at the end of 1791, G. Therianos enlisted in the Flagini School in Venice. We possess the information that G. Therianos studied at the Medical School of the University of Padova and subsequently had his post-graduation course in Pavia, Bologna, Pisa and Paris. There are some evidences that he studied in Malta and practised in Ioannina, as a personal doctor of Mouchtar, Ali-Pasha's son. When Ali-Pasha was overthrown G. Therianos left Greece and went to Italy.

Besides the post-graduate study G. Therianos had some other links with University of Bologna, because he published a critical survey of medical views of Tomazzini one of the University's professors.

Afterwards G. Therianos visited France and England where in 1825 the Earl of Guilford chose him for the position of professor of the Ionian Academy's Medical School. G. Therianos was promoted to the position of Professor of Pathology and Clinic. In the years of 1825-26 he taught Experimental Physics, and in 1826-27 he was the Professor of Pathology and Physiology.

In 1826 he was also appointed the Administrative Director of the University Hospital, founded by Guilford to give the students a chance of genuine practice, and at the same time - the Director of the Pathological Clinic of the same Hospital.

In 1827-28 the program of the Medical School contained Nosography and Clinic for the fourth grade's students, but we

don't know what G. Therianos actually lectured at that time.

After the Medical School had been closed G. Therianos taught Physics at the Philosophical School, but in 1833 he also lectured Forensic Medicine at the Law School of the Academy. When the course of Forensic Medicine was cancelled in 1838 G. Therianos left the Ionian Academy and went to Constantinople where he continued to practice medicine and earned a remarkable reputation. We possess the information that he served as private doctor of the Sultans. G. Therianos died in 1850.

He wrote a lot of papers dealing with different infectious diseases, especially with cholera. Among them there were papers: «The Basics of Medical Philosophy», published in 1825 in Paris and «Cenni Analitici di Nuovi Principi di Patologia Generale», published in 1823 in Bologna.

G. Therianos was a supporter of medical ideas of John Brown which is obviously seen in his paper: «Thoughts of medical ideas of John Brown», published in 1809. In this paper G. Therianos refers to relatively new for the time medical theories of J. Brown concerning the causes of diseases, fever and the effects of stimulating medicines. In another book, published in 1847 in Constantinople, G. Therianos studies various diseases such as Hernia, Tuberculosis, Pneumonia, Lumbago, while other papers dealt with the different pharmaceutical subjects as the effect of ergot on dysuric disturbances (Naples, 1838)^(1,2,3,4,5).

Another significant professor was an Italian, Gaetano Grassetti, who was born in Rome and studied medicine in Bologna. He came to Greece in 1815 after political turmoils in Italy. First he practised in Patra where he had an opportunity to master Greek Language. Afterwards he went to Zante (Zakynthos) where for a short period served as a personal secretary of Prince Alexander Mavrocordatos.

In 1825 G. Grassetti was introduced by his friend Dionisios Solomos — the wellknown outstanding Greek national poet — to Lord Guilford and became the Professor of Latin Language

and Philology at the Philosophical School of the Ionian Academy.

In 1827 the professors of the Medical School suggested to Lord Guilford the promotion of G. Grassetti at the position of Professor of Physiology, Forensic medicine and Civil Sanitary (Polizia Medica). His colleagues believed that the lecturing of the two latter disciplines at least, was of great significance especially in a region which was often hit by epidemics and was next to the plague risk areas. G. Grassetti was the Professor of Physiology in 1827-28, but there is no proved information that he taught any other discipline. After the annulment of the Medical School he continued lecturing on the above mentioned disciplines at the Philosophical School of the Ionian Academy. G. Grassetti died in 1836 on Corfu.

There are evidences that G. Grassetti had a good command of modern Greek Language. During a short period in 1835 he was the official speaker to the Ionian Academy and we possess a record of his speech in 1825 in which he formulates the main goals of public education for the Greek people.

Another prominent figure of the second period of the Medical School of the Ionian Academy was Spiridion Arvanitakis who also received his education in Bologna. He was born in 1802 in Corfu. After elementary education on the Island he studied at the Medical School of Bologna University. In 1831, after political disturbances in Bologna, S. Arvanitakis went to Paris where he continued his studies and finally became the D. Sc. in Pathology and Surgery.

With the reopening of the Medical School S. Arvanitakis was appointed the Professor of General and Special Pathology, Hygiene and Therapeutics. At the Medical School he taught until 1849, agitating through those years of British occupation of the Ionian Islands for the liberty of press. He was the first to start lecturing in Greek, after the Greek Language was validated as optional at the Ionian Academy. He supported all modern

appeals to the British Government for the granting of liberty of press and the holding of free elections on the Ionian Islands.

His political sympathies were for the Radicals who were demanding immediate unification of the Ionian Islands with the Kingdom of Greece. After the 1850 as a member of the Ionian Parliament he was promoting the ideas of the unification.

After the dismissal of the Parliament of 1850, which was done obviously to disorder the unification plans of the Radicals, S. Arvanitakis — which was quite natural — was also dismissed from the position of Professor of the Medical School. He never returned back.

Later this position was taken by Charalambos Typaldos Pre-tenderis, one of the most significant scientists of that time, the future Professor of the University of Athens.

S. Arvanitakis chose the path of political struggle. In 1852 he was elected member of the new Parliament, sat in Committees for Public Education, Hygiene, Charity Foundations in the city of Corfu.

He was a founding member of the Literary Society of Corfu (Anagnostiki Eteria), an eminent cultural institution, which continues its activity until nowadays, and was elected its President.

His parliamentary career lasted until 1864, afterwards he turned to the practical medicine. S. Arvanitakis wrote a lot of papers, dealing with infectious diseases, especially with cholera and therapeutics observations, such as the effect of cinchona on the intermittent fever.

He was the Correspondent Member of the International Cultural Society, the Psychological Society of Paris, the Medical Society of Athens and a founder member of the Medicopharmaceutical Society of Corfu. S. Arvanitakis died in 1880^(1,3,5).

Another outstanding physician of that period was Rokkos Pylarinos. Born in Cephalonia, he was appointed at the Ionian Academy as Professor of Surgery and Gynecology, but we do not know for sure whether he was really employed.

R. Pylarinos studied in Padua and Bologna and was known as one of the Tomazzini's most favourite students. In 1823 he was proclaimed D. Sc. of the Medical School of the University of Pisa. Afterwards he came to Corfu and served as a personal doctor of Guilford. Guilford appreciated his broad knowledge and sent him to England and France for a post-graduation course, where he was said to make an excellent impression on the leading scientists of that time.

In 1827 Guilford suggested him as the Professor of Surgery and Gynecology, and Pylarinos had to begin lecturing the next year. There is no proved information whether he began his work. On the contrary, we know that he practiced in Corfu with great success and in 1844 was mentioned as the Chief Physician of Corfu Island³.

From the information we have collected, mainly from the Greek and especially the Ionian bibliography is clearly seen the significant role of the Italian Universities in the formation of the Ionian Academy's medical conception. Most of the Medical School's professors, almost all of them in fact, studied and had their post-graduation courses at different Italian Universities.

In the process of foundation and further development of the Ionian Academy the most significant role was played by the Medical School of the Bologna University, which at that time was a center of the original medical and educational ideas and where the most prominent of the Academy's professors had had their studies or post-graduation courses.

The Academy's Medical School had been supplying the whole Greek soil with dynamic up-to-date medical potentiality, and the Greek physicians, who studied at the Academy itself or at Bologna University Medical School, played a decisive role in the renaissance of the Neohellenic medical conception through the 19th century.

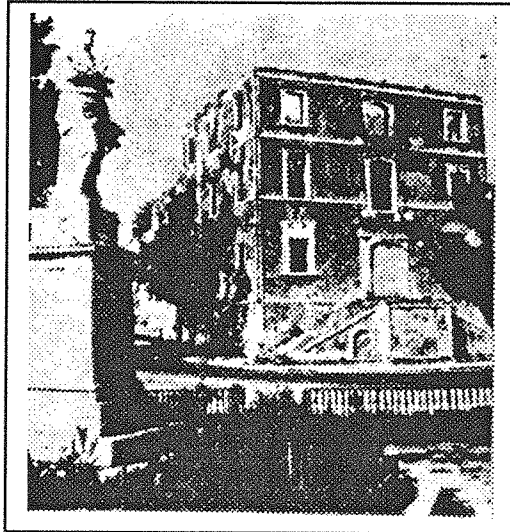


Fig. 1 - The building of the Ionian Academy



Fig. 2 - The portrait of Frederic North the Earl of Guilford.

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