

Articoli/Articles

LA THÉRAPEUTIQUE BYZANTINE DANS
LE MONDE GREC D'ÉPOQUE OTTOMANE

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SUMMARY

BYZANTINE THERAPEUTICS IN THE OTTOMAN WORLD

The medical literature of the greek speaking ottoman world was deeply influenced by its byzantine heritage: the major authors were copied and commented, while practical manuals containing recipes and therapies - the iatrosophia- kept being enlarged with useful information. Furthermore, during the first centuries hospitals closely followed the models of their glorious past in what concerns architecture, scientific level, means and targets. In fact, only the years after 1770 rely on occidental academic knowledge and adopt modern conceptions.

À héritage du passé, la thérapeutique de l'empire byzantin ajouta le résultat de sa réflexion médicale théorique et de sa pratique quotidienne. Le monde hellénophone d'époque ottomane continua d'enrichir la thérapeutique antique de la sorte, avec une efficacité perceptible au mieux dans l'activité des hôpitaux, dont le but fut exclusivement sanitaire. Alors que les sujets chrétiens de la Sublime Porte perpétuaient ainsi la tradition, les musulmans et juifs sépharades adoptaient, eux, la médecine arabo-syrienne. A partir de 1750 cependant, la thérapeutique grecque vit entrer en masse la science académique italienne et, à un moindre degré, l'allemande ou la française, avec, dès le XVII^e siècle, des pionniers comme Agapios Landos, Nicolas d'Agapha ou Isaac Taxiotes.

Key words: Postbyzantine medical literature - Iatrosophia - Postbyzantine hospital

Tradition et innovation

Nombreux furent les traités grecs d'époque ottomane qui reprirent la médecine d'Hippocrate, de Dioscoride, de Galien ou des grands savants byzantins, sans pour autant négliger les réceptaires à caractère empirique. En effet, d'une approche statistique de quelque sept cents manuscrits et livres médicaux écrits et publiés en langue grecque durant cette époque, il ressort que les *iatrosophia* pratiques constituent environ 45 % de l'ensemble, les traités d'auteurs antiques ou byzantins 35 % et les paraphrases ou traductions 20 %. La presque totalité du dernier type de traités est postérieure à 1770, tandis que les classiques arrivèrent à leur apogée au XVI^e siècle, déclinant par après au bénéfice des aide-mémoire, ne contenant plus guère que de brefs chapitres d'ordre diagnostique, pharmaceutique ou purement théorique attribués aux auteurs anciens¹.

Les auteurs byzantins préférés durant l'époque ottomane furent, selon leur ordre chronologique, Némésios, l'évêque d'Emesse, Aétios d'Amida, Paul d'Egine, le moine Mélétiôs, Syméon Seth, Michel Psellos, Jean, l'évêque de Prisdiana, Nicolas Myrepsos et Jean Zacharias *aktouarios*. On rencontre moins Oribase, Théophile Protospatharios, Stéphane le Philosophe, Jean de Damas et Maxime Planude.

Leurs oeuvres circulèrent entières ou sous forme d'extraits, et furent parfois même revues du point de vue linguistique. Le dernier cas est illustré par Maxime du Péloponèse, par exemple, qui, vers la fin du XV^e siècle, transposa en grec vulgaire le *Syntagma* de Syméon Seth, alors même que cet ouvrage était connu dans sa version originale, que le traité de méthode de diagnostic du moine Mélétiôs apparaissait dans le monde post-byzantin et que l'ouvrage de thérapeutique de Théophane Chrysobalantès s'y retrouvait sous le titre d'*Iatrosophion, avec les extraits des plus importants médecins antiques, dédié à Constantin, empereur porphyrogénète et fidèle*.

Durant le XVI^e s., Marc Mousouros reprit les théories d'Aétios et de Paul d'Egine, en même temps que se diffusèrent celles de Théophane Chrysobalantès, de Mélétiôs et de son héritier Maxime Planude. Deux siècles plus tard, Mélétiôs était encore lu et son traité fut même commenté par l'évêque d'Athènes Mélétiôs

Mitrou, Paul d'Egine et Alexandre de Tralles étaient alors les auteurs plus largement reproduits, non sans qu'Oribase, Jean de Damas et Nicolas Myrepsos apparaissent aussi dans les manuels de thérapeutique. Les mêmes noms se lisaient après 1700, avec en outre ceux de Paul de Nicée, Léon le Philosophe, Théophane Chrysobalantès, Michel Psellos, Syméon Seth, Nicéphore Blemmyde et Jean Zacharias *aktouarios*. Enfin, Paul d'Egine, Alexandre de Tralles et Mélétiôs jouèrent un certain rôle dans la médecine hellénique jusqu'au milieu du XIX^e s.².

Malgré une influence occidentale évidente durant les dernières décennies ottomanes, la médecine antique se maintint toujours dans la production manuscrite non académique post-byzantine ou même chez quelques médecins de formation universitaire. C'est ainsi que, bien avant 1700, Agapios Landos, qui admirait les auteurs italiens contemporains, étudiait attentivement Alexandre de Tralles dans le même temps. De même, Nicolas d'Agrapha était en relation avec l'Europe scientifique et suivait Oribase, Jean de Damas et Nicolas Myrepsos. En plein XVIII^e s., Cosmas de Macédoine brillait comme rénovateur de la médecine, ce qui ne l'empêcha cependant pas de reprendre Paul d'Egine et Mélétiôs. Constantin Economos, quant à lui, étudiait la production contemporaine et reprenait parallèlement la méthode de Paul d'Egine et surtout de Jean Zacharias *aktouarios*; et, s'il traduisit en grec certains opuscules médicaux italiens de l'époque, il sauva de l'oubli le traité de Syméon Seth dans la version revue de Maxime du Péloponèse. Enfin, le gynécologue N. Costis, qui fut recteur de l'Université d'Athènes en 1841, introduisit en Grèce l'éther diéthylique comme anesthésiant, non sans rester cependant profondément influencé par Oribase, Aétios et Paul d'Egine³.

Les iatrosophia

Produit de la médecine hospitalière de l'empire byzantin, l'*iatrosophion* fut une compilation de prescriptions et conseils thérapeutiques. Né du besoin d'offrir au personnel des grands *xenones* de brefs conseils à portée pratique, il constitua un réel genre de la littérature médicale byzantine et post-byzantine et présente une indéniable valeur. A l'époque post-byzantine enco-

re, il s'adressait à un public bien informé et s'efforçait de se présenter avec une structure logique et d'offrir une information aussi scientifique que possible.

Sa présence dans le monde médical fut fondamentale durant tout l'époque ottomane et même jusqu'aux dernières décennies du XIXe s., particulièrement au Mont Athos. Du *Ghéoponikon* d'Agapios Landos publié en 1643 jusqu'aux formules de 1935 du moine Gymnase en passant par les textes trop rarement imprimés, il représente trois cents ans d'histoire des soins sanitaires post-byzantins.

Dans la plupart des *iatrosophia*, la tradition s'associe à l'expérience médicale quotidienne des praticiens, la science occidentale n'apparaissant que dans les plus récents d'entre eux. Outre les auteurs anciens déjà mentionnés, on y relève quelques chapitres d'origine byzantine de grand intérêt, tels ceux sur la phlébotomie présentés comme provenant du *xenon* ou des réceptaires dits *pour l'usage hospitalier*.

L'influence byzantine est perceptible aussi à travers de nombreuses prescriptions dépourvues de noms d'auteur, mais reprises à des traités antérieurs et répétées presque sans modifications durant de longues années. Les quelques exemples donnés ci-après ont pour but d'en montrer non seulement le style,

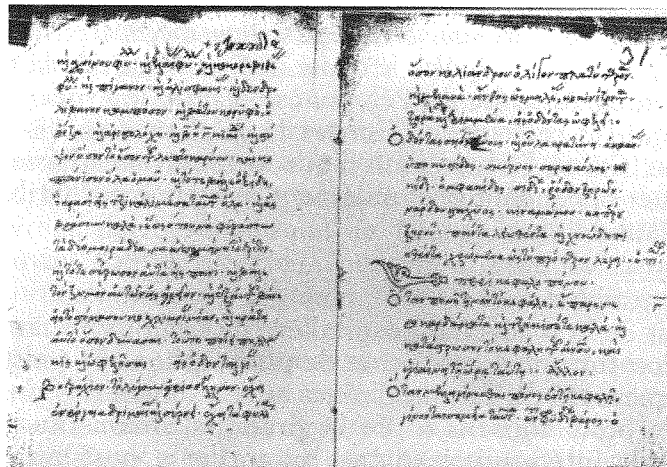


Fig. 1 - MS. Caracallou 277 (30v-31r), Mons Athos, 16^{ème} siècle, "iatrosophion".

mais aussi la variété, et ce même dans un milieu clos comme celui des cloîtres athonites. Ainsi, contre l'irritation des yeux, Théophane Chrysobalantès proposait-il un collyre composé de *blanc d'oeuf et de lait de femme*. La prescription est répétée dans l'*iatrosophion* du manuscrit Athos, Chilandariou, 23 (XVIIe s.): *mettez sur les yeux le blanc de l'œuf et du lait de femme*.

Selon Syméon Seth, *le fenouil est utile contre la cataracte*. Pour une même pathologie, l'*iatrosophion* de Chilandariou déjà cité donne la prescription suivante: *lavez la racine de fenouil, faites-en une décoction, laissez refroidir et appliquez sur les yeux*. Un autre manuscrit de l'Athos (Panteleimonos, 262, de 1771) préfère la macération: *quand le patient voit comme dans la brume, mettez du fenouil frais dans un vase de céramique goudronnée, laissez baigner dans de l'eau de pluie pendant un mois et un jour et appliquez sur les yeux*.

Toujours dans le domaine de l'ophtalmologie, Aétius prescrit le jus de romarin pour traiter l'amblyopie. L'*iatrosophion* du manuscrit Athos, Xénophontos 91 (XVIIIe s.) fait de même: *quand les yeux ne voient pas bien, faites bouillir le romarin dans du vin blanc et lavez-en les yeux deux ou trois fois*.

Théophane Chrysobalantès utilisait contre le cancer de l'œil un *cataplasme de farine de pois chiche avec du mélikrat*. Le manuscrit Athos, Panteleimonos 262 rencontré plus haut prescrit ceci: *faites une farine de pois chiche avec de l'eau de rose*.

Syméon Seth assure que *la cannelle est efficace en cas de refroidissement des reins*. La considération est reprise par l'*iatrosophion* de Chilandariou 23 que nous avons déjà mentionné et qui précise: *buvez de la cannelle dans du vin*.

Selon Aétios, *les calculs rénaux s'éliminent en buvant de l'écaille de crevettes*. La prescription se retrouve dans l'*iatrosophion* Athos, Karakallou 244 daté de 1583, ainsi que dans celui de l'Athos, Vatopedi E 377 des premières années du XIXe s., où sont employés respectivement *le crabe fluvial avec du miel et la pinne marine dans du vin*.

À un niveau cosmétique, Aétios, Syméon Seth et l'*iatrosophion* Athos, Panteleimonos 262 concordent sur l'affirmation selon laquelle *la décoction de verveine et de ciste renforce le cheveu*.

La langue de la littérature médicale post-byzantine est très variée. Les traités d'époque classique maintinrent la leur, qui fut comme archaïque, tandis que les *iatrosophia* usèrent d'une langue

simple et rapide, en un style conforme à celui de la pratique hospitalière byzantine. Par ailleurs, les auteurs de recettes se heurtèrent au problème de la taxonomie botanique et furent obligés de rédiger des paraphrases ou dictionnaires de noms de plantes.

L'institution hospitalière

La chute de Constantinople marqua la disparition des *xenones* byzantins, à l'exception de quelques uns qui appartenaient aux grands centres monastiques des régions éloignées de l'ex-empire. Alors que des institutions sanitaires ottomanes comme celles de la capitale ou d'Andrinople reprenaient le modèle arabo-syrien, celles du Mont Athos, des Météores ou des alentours de Jérusalem par contre préservèrent celui de Byzance et servirent ainsi d'exemples pour de nouvelles institutions. Des monastères comme la Megisté Lavra, Vatopedi, Iviron, Chilandariou et Esphigmenou possédaient en effet des hôpitaux bien organisés dont le modèle fut repris dès le milieu du XVe s. dans des fondations plus récentes.

Ceci eut une répercussion sur la structure architecturale de ces nouvelles institutions, qui reproduisit le modèle byzantin des hôpitaux encore actifs dans les complexes monumentaux monastiques. C'est ainsi que les infirmeries et hôpitaux disposèrent toujours d'une pharmacie richement dotée et flanquée d'un jardin botanique, d'installations destinées aux bains, de lits individuels et d'une cuisine propre, étant par ailleurs bien chauffées, puisque le foyer de la salle à abside était installé sous une coupole centrale comme, par exemple, dans les monastères de la Métamorphosis et de Barlaam aux Météores ou dans la restructuration de 1585 de la Megisti Lavra de l'Athos; ce n'est que plus tard que l'installation de poêles permit de construire des cellules abritant un nombre plus réduit de patients⁴.

Le personnel qualifié des hôpitaux monastiques se composait de médecins et pharmaciens. Selon la meilleure tradition byzantine, les médecins étaient choisis selon leurs titres académiques, tandis que les pharmaciens et infirmiers n'étaient habituellement que des moines entraînés sur place.

Presque toujours ouvertes aux visiteurs externes, les institutions hospitalières post-byzantines furent plutôt modestes, dépassant rarement le nombre de vingt lits et n'employant qu'un seul médecin.

Seuls disposèrent de deux médecins diplômés les rares monastères dotés d'installations plus vastes comme ceux de Zographou et de Néa Thébais ou ceux fréquentés par de nombreux pèlerins.

Médecine urbaine

Les services thérapeutiques offerts dans les grandes villes devaient tenir compte d'un grand nombre de paramètres supplémentaires, parmi lesquels la multiplicité des nations présentes dans les villes et l'influence étrangère. Les institutions hospitalières orthodoxes relevèrent cependant toujours de la juridiction épiscopale et furent gérées par la communauté, pouvant maintenir de la sorte leurs propres traditions. Aussi gardèrent-elles constamment une idée claire de leur vocation, sans se confondre avec les fondations plus purement philanthropiques, et recoururent de façon exclusive à un personnel laïque salarié et, par conséquent, hautement qualifié.

Les règlements des grands hôpitaux monastiques - contenus dans les articles des *typika* - permettent de déceler la persistance des pratiques byzantines dans le fonctionnement des hôpitaux monastiques d'époque post-byzantine: le confort élémentaire ne devait pas manquer et le médecin-chef était tenu de vivre dans le bâtiment, de même que le pharmacien, qui l'accompagnait d'ailleurs dans les visites quotidiennes aux malades. De formation universitaire, ce dernier était responsable de la préparation des spécialités et de la distribution des médicaments. Les drogues nécessaires à la préparation des médicaments étaient fournies par les jardins botaniques - y compris celui d'Athènes -, de même que par de modestes marchands ou de plus importantes compagnies commerciales⁵.

Des fondations des cloîtres les plus importants aux communautés de métropoles comme Constantinople, Thessalonique, Alexandrie ou Smyrne, les hôpitaux helléniques d'époque ottomane ne limitèrent jamais leurs services aux seuls pauvres; au contraire: offrant gratuitement un service médical de qualité, grâce notamment aux services d'infirmiers formés, et équipés de lits individuels, d'installations sanitaires et de salles bien chauffées, ces *nosokomeia* attirèrent souvent des bourgeois ou des paysans aisés, continuant ainsi une pratique millénaire.

Conclusions

La thérapeutique byzantine, qu'elle fût codifiée sous la forme de traités érudits ou d'*iatrosophia* empiriques, influença donc profondément la médecine hellénophone d'époque ottomane, et ce autant dans sa théorie que dans sa méthode diagnostique ou dans sa pratique pharmaceutique. En outre, le *xenon* byzantin servit toujours de modèle pour l'organisation des hôpitaux, monastiques et puis laïcs. Ainsi, avant que ne se diffusât la médecine académique occidentale, l'héritage antique et byzantin permit-il d'offrir à la population de l'empire ottoman un service médical sans doute assez efficace.

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THE "LETTER... TO A CYPRIOT PHYSICIAN"
ATTRIBUTED TO JOHANNES ARGYROPOULOS
(CA. 1448-1453)*

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SUMMARY

In four Byzantine medical manuscripts, appears a letter entitled Solution of some problems and questions studied by one among the philosophers and physicians of the [school] of Cyprus and attributed to the well known philosopher and teacher Iôannês Argyropoulos (1393/4 [?] or ca. 1415 - 1487). In this paper, we examine this text, its authenticity and its contents, arriving at the conclusion that it is a sort of compendium of a medical teaching held by Argyropoulos during his stay in Constantinople, ca. 1448 - 1453. As such, it documents the medical activity of the last Byzantine period, little known from other sources.

In four Byzantine manuscripts appears a letter entitled *Solution of some problems and questions studied by one among the philosophers and physicians of the [school] of Cyprus*, that is attributed to the Byzantine scholar Iôannês Argyropoulos (1393/4 [?] or ca. 1415 - 1487). According to recent works, this document would have been written by Argyropoulos in Constantinople, during the period ca. 1458 - 1453.

Well known for having contributed to the diffusion in Italy of the philosophical work of Aristotle (384 - 322 BC), Argyropoulos

*This paper has been written during a stay at the Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, Washington. I have benefitted the invaluable resources of the library, as well as the help of its staff, whom I thank warmly.

Key words: Ioannes Argyropoulos - Byzantine medicine

is sometimes referred to in current bibliography as a physician and, in any case, as a teacher of the so-called *Xenôn of the Kral* in Constantinople. According to the authors, he would have taught philosophy, natural philosophy, medicine or physiology, and could very well, thus, have been the author of the letter transmitted under his name.

Although it could evidence a medical activity of Argyropoulos not documented otherwise - and it would deserve attention, thus -, the letter has been few studied so far, and not even its authenticity has been verified.

In this paper, we propose an analysis of this document, which will lead us to clarify the question of its authorship and shed some new light on the last period of Byzantine medicine and medical teaching, almost unknown in current bibliography.

Argyropoulos' biography and activity

While the career of Iôannês Argyropoulos after his transfer to Italy further to the fall of Constantinople in May 1453 is well known¹, his anterior biography is still a subject of interrogation: his year of birth, generally situated around 1415, has been hypothetically brought back to 1393/4². Born in Constantinople, he has been considered to have moved early to Thessalonika (when he was around 10 years old, i.e. in 1403/4), since he became orphan; there, he would have been hosted by an uncle and received the so-called *encyclopedic education* (i.e. the secondary education), leaving further the city to return to Constantinople around 1407; in the capital, he found a teacher who treated him like a son, and he is thought to have begun to be himself a teacher before 1425³. He continued this activity during his whole life, with 4 main periods: before 1425 [?] to 1438/9, in Constantinople; from 1441 to 1444, in Italy; from ca. 1448 to 1453, anew in Constantinople, and from 1456 to 1479, in Italy again, alternatively in Florence (1456 - 1471), Rome (1471 - 1477), Florence (1477 - 1479) and, finally, Rome (1479 - 1487), where he died in 1487.

The period to which the letter has been attributed is the second Constantinopolitan one, the years ca. 1448 - 1453⁴. The activity of Argyropoulos is documented by a piece of rhetoric ad-

dressed to him by one among his students, Michaël Apostolês (ca. 1420 - 1474 or 1486), written on the occasion of the beginning of Argyropoulos' teaching activity⁵. The document is not dated; but it has to be situated between 1444, the most recent year for which we have a trace of Argyropoulos' presence in Italy, and 1448, the earlier year during which his activity is evidenced in Constantinople⁶. According to the title, Argyropoulos taught in the *Katholikon Mouseion of the Xenôn*, i.e. in the school located in the hospital (the so-called *Xenôn*) built by the King of Serbia Stephan Uroch Milutin II (1282 - 1321) in the complex of the Prodromos monastery dedicated to Saint John the Precursor, situated in the so-called area of the *Petra* in Constantinople⁷. On the other hand, according to a picture of an Oxford manuscript, Argyropoulos read Aristotle's *Organon* during his lessons. The manuscript is the *Baroccianus* 87 of the Bodleian Library⁸, and the picture appears on f. 33^{v9}: it represents a teacher seat on his chair, reading the text of Aristotle, in an architectural context. On the upper and right sides of the image, captions are written, which identify the teacher and mention the names of his students; in the center of the picture, appears the name of Aristotle, that has been cancelled, however. The identity of the personage has been questioned: according to the upper caption, he is Argyropoulos; but he has been considered to be Aristotle, since his name is written in the center of the page¹⁰. There is no doubt, however, that the teacher is Argyropoulos, since his face as it is represented in the drawing shows a certain similarity with three among the portraits known to be those of the 14th c. teacher¹¹. The picture, once described as if it were an original¹², is now considered to be an Italian copy of a Constantinopolitan manuscript¹³. Although its paper does not bear any watermark, it presents the same characteristics than the other sheets of the volume and can thus be attributed to the epoch ca. 1455/60 like them, thanks to their watermarks¹⁴. On the basis of this picture, Argyropoulos has been considered as a teacher of medicine or as teaching matters related with the medical art, since some among the students whose name appears in the captions of this illustration are credited with the quality of physicians¹⁵.

The "Letter ... to a Cypriot Physician" and its attribution

The letter we are interested in¹⁶ is transmitted by four manuscripts¹⁷. Apart from the introduction, it contains questions and the solution given to each one of these questions by the author of our letter, according to the literary genre *erotapokri-sis* (i.e. question/answer). It is supposed to be, thus, an answer to another letter, now lost, addressed to the author of our document by his Cypriot interlocutor, provided that the request of the Cypriot physician really existed and that the exchange of correspondance alluded to in our document is not a fiction, created by the author of the letter. In any case, our text reproduces the questions asked by the supposed Cypriot physician (12 questions, exactly) and gives the answer furnished by the author of the letter. The questions are the following:

1. Since God has the knowledge of all and sees all, why did He say Adam that the fact of not eating from the tree of knowledge was in the same time good and bad, and why did he die the same day when he ate?
2. Since Adam, as a human creation, had to know the good and the bad, why did God say him that the fact of not eating from the tree of knowledge was good and bad?
3. Why Adam did not die the day when he ate the fruit, disobeying Gods' order, but lived 130 years, dying further?
4. Why the Saver of all Mankind was born from an Hebrew woman instead of being formed like Adam or of being born from a woman of same nature?
5. Why Christ, the Saver of the World, died as a human creature, saved some and not others, and did not save all the souls?
6. If the four elements of the World came from the first matter, why one is warm, another cold, another moisten and another one dry, why is there fire, water, air and earth ?
7. What is the first matter, where is it to be found, in which place is it and how did the elements come out of it ?
8. Which type of mixed things and of mixing are to be found in the natural things and which are the mixed things themselves?

9. How many are the natural things, which and how many are the non-natural, how many and which are the things conform to nature?
10. How many natures (of human body) are there, and which are they?
11. How is made warmth and which is its proper constitution?
12. How many are the things that reinforce and strengthen (the body), and restore human health, and which are they?

Concerning the authenticity of this letter, we have neither an explicit reference to the author in the text, nor an internal element to verify the attribution. But, if we compare the text of some of its passages with the data we have on Argyropoulos' activity, we can establish significant parallels.

In the answer to question 9, dealing with the natural and non-natural things, their number and identity, the letter alludes to a division of the parts of human body according to their nature (fundamental or not) and to the type of the matter from which they are made (homeomer or not, according to Aristotle's concept)¹⁸:

... are fundamental ... the testicles ... the simple [parts of the body] ... the homeomer [ones] are simple, like bones, cartilage ... the an-homeomer [parts of the body] are the organic ones ...

Now, this passage corresponds quite closely to a note found in the Vatican manuscript *graecus* 285, f. 151^r referring explicitly to Argyropoulos¹⁹. The mention of Argyropoulos is the following²⁰:

Three essential causes may be seen in the [study of] pulse ... as for the being [of pulse], the very wise and excellent orator Iôannês Argyropoulos

The note dealing with the parts of the body is the following:

... the parts [of the body] which are the fundamental ones and are the first are ... the testicles ... all the organic parts are qualified as an-homeomer, as hairs, teeth and similar; the simple ones are homeomer, like bones, cartilages and similar ...

The close correspondence between the text of our letter and the note allows us to admit the attribution of the letter to Argyropoulos.

Two other elements confirm the fact: first, the letter appears in the Vatican manuscript²¹, where we have found the note quoted above, precisely. Second, it proposes a definition of the parts of medicine according to the bodily states that is very similar to that of the *Ars medica* of Galen (219 - post 216 [?])²², as the following example demonstrates:

Argyropoulos' letter²³

The extension [of the concept] of health can be divided in the simple health and the present one. And the simple health is the constant one and the one mostly present ...

Galen, *Ars medica*²⁴

The bodies being healthy, some simply and some presently (both states are said to be healthy), we say that there is a division into two parts of the bodies simply healthy, by the fact that some are so for all the time and some mostly ...

Now, according to a note of a Venice manuscript (*app. gr. V.9 [coll. 1017]*)²⁵, Argyropoulos taught the *Ars medica* of Galen²⁶:

*Diagram of Iôannês Argyropoulos, the philosopher and teacher, when we were following his course on Galen's *Ars medica*, in the Xenôn of the Kral...*

It seems thus, on the basis of these elements, that we can admit the attribution of the letter to Argyropoulos.

As we already mentioned, it has been attributed to his second Constantinopolitan period, generally situated ca. 1448 - 1453²⁷. Although the reason why this chronology is proposed has not been given, it seems evident that it is because Argyropoulos is credited with a medical teaching during this phase of his activity, a point which will be confirmed hereunder.

The contents of the letter

If we analyse closely the text of the letter, we can summarise its contents as follows:

questions ²⁸	topic treated	discipline ²⁹
1-2	Adam and the tree of knowledge	theology and theological
3	death of Adam	anthropology
4	birth of Christ	
5	death of Christ	
6-7-8	matter of the World primary matter concept and processes of transformation of matter	natural philosophy
9	constitutive elements of human body	physiology
10	bodily states	general pathology
11	concept of warmth	principles of therapeutic
12	medicines	therapeutics

To sum up, the letter deals with 6 main topics: theological anthropology; analysis of matter and of its transformation; general principles of medicine, pathology, and therapy; and, finally, therapeutics.

As for the sources of the letter, we have already seen that, for a point at least (the divisions of medicine according to the states of body), they are constituted by Galen's *Ars medica*. A further analysis confirms that Galen's work has been used for the other strictly medical and therapeutical parts of the letter, while, for physiology, it relies on a group of treatises of medico-religious anthropology including the different *De natura hominis* by Nemesius (4th c.³⁰), Meletius (9th [?] c.³¹) and Leo the Physician (9th or 12th - 13th c. [?]³²), as well as the Pseudo-Hippocratic *Lectiones ... de homine*³³.

Now, the Pseudo-Hippocratic text appears in the *Vaticanus graecus* 285 (f. 287), as well as in the *codex Parisinus graecus* 985, f. 302^r - 314^r, which contains also our letter on f. 12^r - 25^v.

This Parisian manuscript is a mid-15th c. one³⁴ of Constantinopolitan origin³⁵, that has been demonstrated to be the model of the *Vaticanus graecus* 285 for a part of their common texts³⁶. Although it is the most ancient *codex* of the letter currently known, it cannot be considered as the copy of the Pseudo-Hippocratic *Lectiones ... de homine* used by Argyropoulos to write the

letter, since it is almost contemporary of Argyropoulos³⁷. The source consulted by our teacher is thus an older manuscript, which could be the oldest extant one of the treatise, the *codex* of Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, *medicus graecus* 13, f. 4^v- 6^v, of Constantinopolitan origin³⁸, provided that it belonged to a library to which Argyropoulos had access.

The context of the "Letter"

From anthropology to therapeutics, the "Letter" covers all the field of medicine and seems to be a sort of compendium of medical knowledge. Given that in two of the three manuscripts quoted here - the *Vaticanus* and the *Venetus* -, there are references to a teaching of Argyropoulos, it is tempting to consider that the letter is like a summary of Argyropoulos' courses or, at least, that it reflects their contents, as it is already suggested by the parallelism we have stressed between the letter and Galen's *Ars medica* which Argyropoulos taught.

If we compare the contents of the manuscripts *Vaticanus graecus* 285, and the *Venetus app. gr.* V. 9 (coll. 1017), we discover that they present the text of the same Galenic or Pseudo-Galenic works. Before listing them, we have to note that their sequence is not identical in the two manuscripts, probably because the Venice one was damaged³⁹. We reproduce under the order of the texts of the Vatican manuscript, as it reflects manifestly a logical sequence, as we shall show further. These texts are thus the following⁴⁰:

texts	Vat. gr. 285 (1 st vol.) ⁴¹	Ven. app. gr. V.9
<i>Ars medica</i> ⁴²	f. 12 ⁴³	f. 179
[<i>Introductio</i>] ⁴⁴	f. 49	f. 206
<i>De morborum temporibus</i> ⁴⁵	f. 81	f. 131
<i>De totius morbi temporibus</i> ⁴⁶	f. 92	f. 139 ^v
[<i>On pathologies of eyes</i>] ⁴⁷	f. 99	-
<i>De tremore, palpitatione, convulsione et rigore</i> ⁴⁸	f. 110	f. 164 ^v
<i>De uteri dissectione</i> ⁴⁹	f. 127	f. 145 ^v
<i>Pro puero epileptico consilium</i> ⁵⁰	f. 133	f. 150 ^v
<i>De atra bile</i> ⁵¹	f. 139	f. 155

The relationship between the two manuscripts suggested by this general parallelism is confirmed by their proximity in the tradition of each of the treatises they bear, as far as it is known: both the *codices* come from the same source, the *codex Vaticanus graecus* 1845⁵², even though they are not directly related⁵³.

A final element confirms the proximity of both the *Vaticanus graecus* 285 and the *Venetus*, as well as their link with Argyropoulos' teaching: the *Venetus* contains on f. 178^v a *definition [of the concept] of health*⁵⁴, with a note specifying the authorship of the table, as well as the circumstances of its creation. The note is the following⁵⁵: *diagram of Iōannēs Argyropoulos, the philosopher and teacher, when we were following his course on Galen's Ars medica, in the Xenōn of the Kral ...* Precisely, this *definition [of the concept] of health* appears in the Vatican manuscript on f. 80^r.

Our hypothesis that the manuscripts *Vaticanus graecus* 285 and *Venetus app. gr.* V.9 (coll. 1017) reproduce the contents of a course of Argyropoulos is reinforced by the topics of Galen's and Pseudo-Galen's treatises they contain, the groups they constitute and their sequence. We identify, indeed, three groups of treatises, with, for each one, a specific object: general introduction to medicine (*Ars medica* and [*Introductio*]), general theory of pathology (*De morborum temporibus* and *De totius morbi temporibus*), and special pathology, with ophtalmology ([*On pathologies of the eyes*]), neurology (*De tremore, palpitatione, convulsione et rigore*), gynecology and obstetrics (*De uteri dissectione*), pediatric neurology (*Pro puero epileptico consilium*) and psychology (*De atra bile*). Although this programme could seem specialized, it was probably an introductory one, since it is such the nature of some treatises (*Ars medica* and [*Introductio*]), while the others are not the main ones of Galen on the topics they are dealing with and do not treat exhaustively the matters they cover⁵⁶.

The Vatican manuscript cannot be considered a personal copy of one among Argyropoulos' students, since it was copied around the years 1490/1500, as it can be shown by means of its watermarks⁵⁷. Instead, it is a Western copy of a *codex* which, on its turn, was directly annotated by a student of Argyropoulos as

it is witnessed by the phrase ... *when we were following his course on Galen's Ars medica, in the Xenôn of the Kral...*⁵⁸

The Venice manuscript, instead, could very well be the personal copy of one among Argyropoulos' students. On the one hand, the author of the note on f. 178^v included himself among the participants of Argyropoulos' lecture, since he refers to his teaching with the expression... *when we were following his course ... myself*⁵⁹. On the other hand, the watermarks of the manuscripts as they are identified by E. Mioni⁶⁰ are attested to the period of the mid 15th c. Now, according to him⁶¹, the author of the note was also the one who restored the manuscript, since it was damaged, as we said. His work was almost contemporary of the copy of the manuscript, given that the papers used for the restoration are the same as those of the body of the manuscript⁶². This student of Argyropoulos cannot be identified, however, because, if he mentioned the name of some among the students of his teacher, he did not give his own.

If we come back to the programme covered by the texts of both the Venice and the Vatican manuscripts, we have to stress that it does not necessarily represent the totality of the course taught by Argyropoulos. A proof in this sense is given by another note of the *Vaticanus graecus* 285, in which appears the name of Argyropoulos⁶³:

Three essential causes may be seen in the [study of] pulse. I mean the systole and the diastole, as the teacher of the teachers [taught] us. As for the being [of pulse], the very wise and excellent orator Iôannês Argyropoulos taught clearly

So we learn that Argyropoulos taught also sphygmology, i.e. the method for the diagnosis of diseases⁶⁴.

Besides confirming that the list of Galen's treatises of both the Vatican and the Venice manuscripts represents only a part of Argyropoulos teaching, this note allows us to consider it as an introductory course, since sphygmology was used as a sign for the diagnosis⁶⁵. As such, it constituted probably a specialized course and is not alluded to in the *Letter to a Cypriot physician*, a fact which contributes to define this letter as a sort of introductory compendium to medicine.

Conclusions

This first approach of the letter attributed to Argyropoulos, besides confirming the attribution of the document to our teacher, opens interesting perspective, as it evidences a medical teaching on which we have no explicit traces otherwise, but which can be reconstituted with the help of the manuscripts linked to the letter, that all bear some allusion to Argyropoulos.

In the same time, this study has confirmed the elements proposed so far in the analysis of the letter, but without true proof, i.e. the relation of the letter with a medical teaching by Argyropoulos during the period ca. 1448-1453. It does not seem, however, that the personage taught medicine, *stricto sensu*, but natural philosophy and philosophical principles of medical practice.

A new approach of Argyropoulos' career seems to be possible, as well as of the Late-Byzantine medical curriculum, all the more because Argyropoulos is credited of having obtained a medical degree in the West, at Padua. But this is another story, on which we shall return and which deserves further study.

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33. The Greek text of this Pseudo-Hippocratic is still unedited. On this work, see: DIELS H., see note 17, p. 43, num. 79a, for its manuscripts, where the Vatican one is omitted; MERCATI G., FRANCHI DE' CAVALIERI P., see note 19, p. 398 (where the reference to Diels is not correct: 46 instead of 43); HUNGER H., KRESTEN O., *Katalog der griechischen Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek, Teil 2: Codices juridici, codices medici (Museion, Veröffentlichungen der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek. N. F., Vierter Reihe, Erster Band, Teil 2).* Wien, 1969, p. 54, num. 13.
34. On this manuscript, see OMONT H., *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale et des autres bibliothèques de France et des Départements.* Paris, vol. 1, pp. 195-196.
35. MAZZUCCHI C.M., see note 11, p. 220.
36. IDEM, pp. 219-223.
37. IDEM, p. 219, for the watermark of the *Parisinus*, and p. 220-221, for its attribution to the second Constantinopolitan period of Argyropoulos' activity, i.e. ca. 1448-1453.
38. On this manuscript, see HUNGER H., KRESTEN O., see note 33, p. 54.
39. On this point, see MIONI E., see note 25, p. 265.
40. Pseudo-Galenic treatises have their title between square brackets.
41. The manuscript is now divided into 2 volumes (ff. 12-152 and 153-304).
42. For the Greek text, see: KÜHN C.G. (ed.), *Claudii Galeni, Opera omnia.* 20 vol., Leipzig, 1821-33 (reprints: Hildesheim, 1964-65 and 1998), vol. I, pp. 305-412; and, for the bibliography: FICHTNER G., *Corpus Galenicum. Verzeichnis der galenischen und pseudogalenischen Schriften.* Tübingen, 1988, pp. 12-13, num. 7.
43. We mention the folio where the texts begin.
44. Edition: KÜHN C.G. (ed), *Claudii Galeni, Opera omnia.* 20 vol., Leipzig, 1821-33 (reprints: Hildesheim, 1964-65 and 1998), vol. XIV, pp. 674-797; bibliography: FICHTNER G., see note 42, p. 51, num. 87. For the authenticity of the treatise, see KOLLESCH J., *Untersuchungen zu den Pseudogalenischen Definitiones medicae (Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur der Antike, 7).* Berlin, 1973, pp. 30-35.
45. Edition KÜHN C.G., see note 42, vol. VII, p. 406-439; bibliography: FICHTNER G., see note 44, p. 34, num. 47.
46. Edition KÜHN C.G., see note 42, vol. VII, pp. 460-462; bibliography: FICHTNER G., see note 44, p. 35, num. 48.
47. This is not a specific treatise by Galen, but an extract of the [*Introductio*] (chapters 16-20). Edition KÜHN C.G., see note 42, vol. XIV, pp. 767-797. It should not be confused with the Pseudo-Galenic treatise *On eye's anatomy (de quo: FICHTNER G., see note 44, pp. 88-89, num. 232).*

48. Edition: KÜHN C.G., see note 42, vol. VII, pp. 584-642; bibliography: FICHTNER G., see note 44, p. 36, num. 52. Brief summary in: MORAUX P., see note 22, p. 170, num. XIII.
49. Edition: NICKEL D. (Herausgegeben, übersetzt und erläutert), Galen, *Über die Anatomie der Gebärmutter. Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, V 2,1, Berlin, 1971; bibliography: FICHTNER G., see note 44, pp. 18-19, num. 16.
50. Edition: KEIL W., *Galenii puero epileptico consilium. Ausgabe und Kommentar*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Göttingen, 1959; bibliography: FICHTNER G., see note 44, p. 46, num. 75.
51. Edition: DE BOER W. (Herausgegeben), Galeni, *De propriorum animi cuiuslibet affectuum dignotione et curatione. De animi cuiuslibet peccatorum dignotione et curatione. De atra bile*. *Corpus Medicorum Graecorum*, V.4.1.1, Berlin, 1937; bibliography: FICHTNER G., see note 44, p. 26, num. 31.
52. On this manuscript, see CANART P., *Codices Vaticani Graeci. Codices 1745-1962*. Recensuit -, t. 1: *Codicum enarrationes*. City of Vatican, 1970, pp. 314-315, for a general description, and, for the bibliography CANART P., PERI V., *Sussidi bibliografici per i manoscritti greci della Biblioteca Vaticana*. (*Studi e Testi*, 261). City of Vatican, 1970, p. 650, and CERESA M., see note 19, p. 452.
53. See, for example: NICKEL D., see note 49, pp. 13-19 and 21-22 (*De uteri dissectione*); and KONSTANTINIDES K., *The Greek Manuscripts of Galeni: De tremore, palpitatione, convulsione, et rigore liber, with a Critical Edition of Chapters 1-5*. Unpublished PhD thesis, New York University, 1977, pp. 28-36 (*De tremore ...*).
54. See MIONI E., see note 25, p. 267, num. 8.
55. On this note, see: IDEM, *Ibidem*, and FORMENTIN M., *I codici greci di medicina nelle tre Venezie*. (Università di Padova, *Studi bizantini e neogreci*, 10), Padua, 1978, p. 76.
56. For the main treatises by Galen on these topics, see MORAUX P., see note 22, *passim* (particularly pp. 157-178, the presentation of Galen's main treatises). For pathology, for instance, see the *De locis affectis* (edition of the Greek text: KÜHN C.G., see note 42, vol. VIII, pp. 1-452; English translation and commentary: SIEGEL R. (Translation from the Greek text with Explanatory Notes by), Galen, *On the Affected Parts*, 1976); bibliography: FICHTNER G., see note 44, pp. 38-39, num. 58, and, generally, the theoretical anatomical and therapeutical treatises, like the *De anatomicis administrationibus* (edition of the Greek text: KÜHN C.G., see note 42, vol. II, pp. 215-731; English translation and commentary: SINGER C. (Translation of the surviving books with introduction and notes by), Galen, *On anatomical procedures. Peri Anatomikon Egcheireseon [sic]. De Anatomicis Administrationibus* (Publications of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, N. S., 7), London, 1956); bibliography: FICHTNER G., see note 44, pp. 15-16, num. 11, the *De usu partium* (edition of the Greek text: KÜHN C.G., see note 42, vol. III, pp. 1-939; English translation and commentary: MAY M.T. (Translated from the Greek with an Introduction and Commentary by), Galen, *On the usefulness of the parts of the body. Peri chreias morion- De usu partium*, 2 vol., Ithaca, 1968); bibliography: FICHTNER G., see note 44, p. 19, num. 17), or the *De methodo medendi* (edition of the Greek text: KÜHN C.G., see note 42, vol. XI, pp. 1-146; English translation and commentary: HANKINSON R.J. (Translated with an Introduction and Commentary by), Galen, *On the therapeutic method*. Clarendon Later Ancient Philosophers, Oxford, 1991). Bibliography: FICHTNER G., see note 44, pp. 43-44, num. 68.
57. On this point, see MERCATI G., FRANCHI DE' CAVALIERI P., see note 19, p. 400.
58. See f. 151^r (cf. MERCATI G., FRANCHI DE' CAVALIERI P., see note 19, p. 396).
59. For this note, see MIONI E., see note 25, p. 267, num. 8.

60. See IDEM, p. 265.
61. IDEM, *Ibidem*.
62. IDEM, *Ibidem*.
63. See f. 151^r. For the full text of the note, see MERCATI G., see note 20, p. 580, and MERCATI G., FRANCHI DE' CAVALIERI P., see note 19, p. 396.
64. MILLER T., see note 4, p. 174 and 254, n. 43, considers that Argyropoulos wrote a treatise on sphygmology, referring to FUCHS F., see note 6, p. 72, who, in fact, states, on the basis of the note in *Vaticanus graecus* 285, that a student mentions a course on this topic.
65. On this point, see: MORAUX P., see note 22, pp. 167-169. For a commentary of a Galenic treatise on pulse (*De pulsibus ad Tirones*), see: TRIFOGLI R., *Galenii de pulsibus ad Tirones*. Rome, 1958.

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