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Theon, on the Composition of Purgative Medicines An Unedited Text from Laur. *Plut.* 75.3

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ABSTRACT

An unedited text from Laur. *Plut.* 75.3

Among the treatises in the codex *Plut.* 75.3 of the Laurentian Library (Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana) in Florence, there exists a text entitled: “Theon, On the composition of purgative medicines” (Θέωνος, Περὶ τῶν καθαρῶντων φαρμάκων). There is limited information available about a physician named Theon. Photios (9th century), in his work “Bibliotheca”, mentions a Theon from Alexandria, who authored a medical treatise called “Man” (Ἄνθρωπος).

The text in codex *Plut.* 75.3 comprises two distinct parts: In the first section, eight plants are described in detail: colocynth, flax-leaved daphne, white hellebore, caper spurge, aloe, scammony, dodder, and black hellebore. The second part contains eight recipes, including antidotes for the liver and spleen, as well as unguents for scabies, dropsy, and kidneys. All pharmaceutical recipes presented are unique and cannot be found in any other text. In this article, we are publishing this text for the first time.

Keywords: Theon - Purgative medicines - Byzantine medicine

1. Introduction

The codex *Plut.* 75.3, of the Laurentian Library of Florence contains medical texts by various authors. The manuscript was first described by A. M. Bandini in 1770¹. He titled the codex *Libri medicinales varii* (Βιβλία ἰατρικὰ ποικίλα), and mentioned the following content:

I.	f. 1 ^r	Anonymi brevis tractatus de pulsibus
II.	f. 4 ^r	Ἀλάτιον τοῦ Εὐαγγελιστοῦ Λουκᾶ.
III.	f. 4 ^v	Ex Metrodora de morbis muliebribus uteri. (Ἐκ τῶν Μητροδόρας περὶ γυναικείων παθῶν τῆς μήτρας)
IV.	f. 33 ^v	Anonymi uberrimus de antidotis, emplastris et unguentis
V.	f. 229 ^v	De ponderibus et mensuris
VI.	f. 233 ^r	De urinis secundum naturam optimis et de praenotionibus ex ipsis faciendis. Tractatus anonymi
VII.	f. 238 ^v	Duae occurrunt tabellae, notas ponderum et mensurarum compendiarias
VIII.	f. 239 ^v	Prognosticon (Προγνωστικὰ Ἴπποκράτους)
IX.	f. 255 ^r	Manu diversa
X.	f. 256 ^r	De succedaneis

However, upon closer examination, the codex contains several anonymous texts, and the content changes as follows:

I.	f. 1 ^r	Definitiones pulsuum (Ὅροι σφυγμῶν)
II.	f. 1 ^r	De anima (Περὶ ψυχῆς)
III.	ff. 1 ^r –4 ^r	De pulsibus et theoria medicorum (Περὶ σφυγμῶν καὶ θεωρία τῶν ἱητρῶν)
IV.	f. 4 ^r –4 ^v	Praescriptiones variae <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ἀλάτιον τοῦ Εὐαγγελιστοῦ Λουκᾶ² Μασθούς ὀρθούς φυλάξαι Ἄλλον· Ὅρθούς καὶ μικροὺς διαβῆναι Ἄλλον· Μασθῶν ὄγκους παῦσαι, ἔστιν δὲ καὶ ὀμφαλικόν
V.	ff. 4 ^v –33 ^v	Ex Metrodora, De morbis muliebribus uteri (Ἐκ τῶν Μητροδόρας περὶ γυναικείων παθῶν τῆς μήτρας)
VI.	ff. 33 ^v –180 ^v	Anonymi uberrimus de antidotis, emplastris et unguentis (Ἀωνόμου) ³
VII.	ff. 180 ^v –186 ^r	Theonis, De compositione medicamentorum cathartica (Θέωνος, Περὶ συνθέσεως τῶν καθαιρόντων φαρμάκων)
VIII.	ff. 186 ^r –186 ^v	Selectio ex Alexandro libri, Caput Theta (Ἐκλογὴ Ἀλεξάνδρου, βιβλὸς Κε<φάλαιον> Θ<ῆτα>) ⁴

- IX. f. 187^r-187^v Alexandri, Quae in medicamentis semen generant et excitant (Ἀλεξάνδρου, Ὅσα ἐν φαρμάκοις γεννᾷ σπέρμα καὶ παρορμᾷ)⁵
- X. ff. 187^v-191^v <Alexandri> De paresi, Liber X (<Ἀλεξάνδρου> Περὶ παρέσεως, Βιβλίον Ι')⁶
- XI. ff. 191^v-193^r Procli Patriarchae Constantinopolitani, Antidotum podalicum. (Πρόκλου Πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, Ἀντίδοτος ποδαλγική)
- ff. 193^r-229^v Anonymi uberrimus de antidotis, emplastris et unguentis (continuatio) (Ἀνωνύμου)³
- XII. ff. 229^v-230^v De ponderibus et mensuris (Περὶ σταθμῶν καὶ μέτρων)
- XIII. ff. 230^v-231^v De mensuris et ponderibus <Hippocratis> (Περὶ μέτρων καὶ σταθμῶν <Ἱπποκράτους>)
- XIV. ff. 231^v-233^v De mensuris et ponderibus secundum alphabetum (Περὶ μέτρων καὶ σταθμῶν κατ' ἀλφάβητον)
- XV. ff. 233^r-236^r De urinis secundum naturam optimis (Περὶ τῶν κατὰ φύσιν ἀρίστων οὔρων)
- XVI. ff. 236^r-238^v Quot differentiae sunt unguentorum et quid significant (Πόσαι διαφοραὶ τῶν ἐλαιωδῶν οὔρων καὶ τι σημαίνουσιν)
- XVII. ff. 238^v-239^r Scriptura signorum (Γραφή τῶν σημείων)
- XVIII. ff. 239^v-255^r Prognostica Hippocratis (Προγνωστικά Ἱπποκράτους)
- XIX. f. 255^r-255^v Manu diversa - Praescriptiones variae
- a. Περὶ πόνον καρδίας ἐὰν κρούετε
- b. Ἀντίδοτος Μιθριδάτιος καὶ στομαχικοῖς
- XX. ff. 256^r-263^v Manu diversa - De succedaneis (Ἀντεμβαλλόμενα τῶν εἰδῶν)

As discerned, codex *Plut.* 75.3 comprises a collection of prescriptions encompassing numerous texts of medical content, transcribed from various sources. Among the texts within the manuscript, familiar ones include Hippocrates' Prognosticon (Προγνωστικόν)⁷, the two treatises on urine: *De urinis secundum naturam optimis* (Περὶ τῶν κατὰ φύσιν ἀρίστων οὔρων)⁸, and *Quot differentiae sunt unguentorum et quid significant* (Πόσαι διαφοραὶ τῶν ἐλαιωδῶν οὔρων καὶ τι σημαίνουσιν)⁹, as well as the abridged version of Pseudo-Galenos' treatise *De pulsibus ad Antonium disciplinae studiosum ac philosophum*¹⁰, Metrodora's *De mulierum morbis uteri* (Περὶ τῶν γυναικείων παθῶν τῆς μήτρας)¹¹, and Alexander of Tralles' chapter *De paresi* (Περὶ παρέσεως)¹², have long been recognized.

In contrast, lesser-known or anonymous authors contribute to other texts. Notably, a text extending from folia 186^o to 186^r, titled "Theon's, On the Composition of

Purgative Medicines” (Θέωνος, Περὶ συνθέσεως καθαιρόντων φαρμάκων), stands out. Despite extensive searches, no other copies of this treatise were located in any other codex or library. Until now, texts or scripts from a physician named Theon have been deemed lost or non-existent¹³.

The discovery of this text, even in its fragmentary state, holds significant importance, prompting further investigation into the identity of Theon within this preserved passage. It also raises questions about whether he can be associated with any person previously mentioned in literature and, ultimately, during which period he lived.

2. The Codex Laur. Plut. 75.3

The codex is written on parchment dated to the 10th century, with ff. 263 and a dimension of 110x170mm¹⁴. The manuscript has absorbed moisture at the upper edges, which results in the parchment being damaged and letters or entire rows being erased. In the manuscript, we distinguish three scribes¹⁵. The first, who we could also call the master copyist, copied ff. 1^r-255^r with special care. Each folio contains between 25 and 27 rows. The second copyist copied pharmacological recipes on folia 255^r-255^v. The third copyist copied on ff. 256^r-263^v, *De succedaneis*¹⁶.

Theon’s text is found on ff. 180^v-186^r; it was copied by the first copyist, and he comes from the Saint Nile’s School¹⁷. His writing and the colors he uses in the capital letters, which are painted in green, red and yellow, are characteristic features of South Italy¹⁸. Based on its form and writing, the codex is dated to the end of the 10th century or the beginning of the 11th century, mainly around 980¹⁹, while the area of northern Calabria is placed as the place of writing²⁰.

In the codex, we find notes in the margins. Of great interest are those found on ff. 225^r and 256^r where an owner of the manuscript wrote personal notes.

In f. 225^r, we read:

φεβρ<ουαρίου> β’ τοῦ ,ζχζ’ ἔτ<ου>ς ἐπὶ βασιλε<ίας> Ἀλεξίου.
February 2nd, of the 6607 [1099] year, in the reign of Alexios.

while in f. 256^r is noted:

μηνὶ Ἰουλίου εἰς τοὺς ιε’ ἡμέρα τετράδι ὄρα α’ ἰνδ<ικτιῶνος> ε’ τοῦ ζχε’ ἔτ<ου>ς ἐπὶ βασιλείας Ἀλεξίου
In the month of July, on the 15th, day Wednesday, at the 1st hour, indiction 5th, in the year 6605 [1097], during the reign of Alexios

Both notes refer to Alexios I., the Emperor of the Byzantine Empire, while the years 1099 and 1097 are noted respectively. This means that an owner of the codex wrote personal notes at the end of the 11th century. The codex, before ending up in the Laurentian library, was part of the collection of the monastery of San Salvatore *de Lingua Phari* in Messina, Italy²¹.

Of particular interest are two Latin words that are partially written in Latin characters and are in the middle of the recipes. These are the words *salpia* (f. 122^r) and *mercuriale* (f. 148^r). Both words were written by the hand of the same copyist and are not an addition, but a continuation and integral part of the text³. Why these words were written in Latin is questionable and as a question remains unanswered²². In these words, the corresponding Latin letters were used for those letters that do not exist in the Greek alphabet. One would expect letters from the Beneventan script used by the Campania-Calabria region at the time to be used here. But the copyist used letters of older writing that refer to those of Capitalis and Unziale²³. This indicates that the ancestor of the text is much older, at a time when the specific letters were in widespread use, and that time is no other than the late 6th or early 7th century²⁴. In addition, the names that are mentioned in the codex confirm this. None of the persons mentioned here, lived after the 6th century²⁵.

3. The physician Theon

The name *Theon* seems to have been widespread. More than three dozen individuals with this name have left their mark in history and are referenced in literature²⁶. Others held positions as bishops and representatives of the church²⁷, sophists, rhetors and philosophers²⁸, artists and painters²⁹, others mathematicians and astronomers³⁰, while only two are mentioned as related to health³¹. *Theon the Gymnast* or *Theon of Alexandria* was a contemporary of Galen (2nd century). These two men, Theon and Galen, disagreed about Hippocrates' views and theories. In Galen's book entitled *Hygiene* (De sanitate tuenda libri VI; Ὑγιεινῶν λόγοι ζ'³²) it is stated that *Theon* wrote four speeches entitled: *On particular exercises* (Περὶ τῶν κατὰ μέρος γυμνασίων):

... ὃ τε κάλλιστα μεταχειρισάμενος ὄλην τὴν πραγματείαν Θεῶν ὁ Ἀλεξανδρεὺς τέτταρα γὰρ οὗτος ἔγραψε βιβλία περὶ τῶν κατὰ μέρος γυμνασίων, ἃ πάντα κάμοι λέγειν ἐξῆν ἄμεινόν γε ἐρμηνεύειν ἐκείνου δυναμένῳ καὶ προσέτι καὶ ἄλλων πολλῶν μνημονεύειν γυμνασίων ἔργους κοινῶν...³³

...and making the most of the entire discourse, Theon of Alexandria, for he, having written four books on particular exercises, all of which he was able to explain better than I, and also, besides, he mentions many other exercises in common practice...

Here *Theon* deals with the training of athletes. Whenever Galen refers to him, he calls him sometimes as *Theon the Gymnast* (Θεῶν ὁ Γυμναστής)³⁴ and sometimes as *Theon from Alexandria* (Θεῶν ὁ Ἀλεξανδρεὺς)³⁵. Galen notes that *Theon* was a “self-taught gymnast” and a supporter of the views of Hippocrates. However, although he calls *Theon* “admirable”, he considers his work incomplete because he does not specify the quality or number of athletic activities:

...ὁ δὲ θαυμάσιος Θεὸν εὐθὺς τοῦτο πρῶτον ἔσφαλται, μήτε τὴν δύναμιν εἰπὼν ποτε τῆς συμμετρῶν κατὰ ποιότητα τρίψεως μήτε τὴν χρείαν, ἀλλ' αἰεὶ παρερχόμενος αὐτὴν ὥσπερ οὐκ οὕσαν...³⁶

...but the remarkable Theon immediately errs in this first point, neither mentioning the power of symmetrical quality of friction nor the necessity, but always passing it by as if it were non-existent...

From these references, it is clear that *Theon* was a *Gymnast*, and the author of a work on exercise, which Galen also mentions under the title *Gymnastica* (Γυμναστικά³⁷). Note also that in Galen's book, *Hygiene*, it is nowhere mentioned that *Theon* had anything to do with medicine or that he was a doctor or that he prepared any medicine or that he wrote medicinal prescriptions. Galen does not refer from *Theon* in connection with the preparation of any pharmaceutical recipe³⁸.

The physician Archigenes (1st – 2nd c. AD) also refers *Theon*³⁹. Here he is referred to a medicinal prescription of a lozenge. The recipe bears the name of the plant *tree heath* (*Erica* spp.) in its title:

Ἄλλος τροχίσκος καὶ αὐτὸς θαυμαστὸς ὁ δι' ἐρείκης καὶ αὐτὸς ὀνομαζόμενος τοῦ Θεώνος. ἔχει δὲ οὕτως· ἐρείκης καρποῦ, ἰτέας φλοιοῦ ἀνὰ Γο α', καππάρεως φλοιοῦ Γο α', ἀμμωνιακοῦ θυμιάματος Γο α', ναρδοστάχου ἐξάγιον α', ἐν ὧν σκυλλητικῶ ποιεῖ τροχίσκον καὶ δίδου ὡς προείρηται ἐπὶ τοῖς ἑτέροις τροχίσκοις. εἰ δὲ βούλει, θές καὶ εὐφορβίου ὅσον ἐξάγιον α'...⁴⁰

Another wonder-working wheel is also attributed to *Theon*, made from heather and also known as *Theon's wheel*. It is composed as follows: heather fruit, willow bark, each oz.⁴¹ one, caper bark oz. one, ammoniac incense oz. one, spikenard hexagon⁴² one, in Scyllian vinegar he signs a troche and give as it said before; on the other troches, if it wants, put also euphorbium as much as hexagon one...

Here we are informed that a person named *Theon* prepared this particular recipe. Although the profession of the manufacturer of this medicine is not specified, he was nevertheless apparently a physician. In this recipe, heather fruit, willow and caper barks, spikenard plant and finally the inorganic material ammonium salt are used as ingredients.

Although the works of Archigenes have been lost⁴³ and only a few fragments of him have survived in books by later writers⁴⁴; the mention here of a recipe derived from a *Theon* is noteworthy and impressive. Also worthy of attention is the phrase:

...καὶ αὐτὸς <ὁ τροχίσκος> ὀνομαζόμενος τοῦ Θεώνος...
...and this <troche> is called from *Theon*...

This reference suggests that Archigenes knew other recipes that *Theon* had prepared. A further reference to a physician *Theon* is found in *Eunapios* (4th century), who mentions a person from Gaul with this name⁴⁵, but he does not give us any other clue concerning to his life:

...καὶ Θεῶν δέ τις ἐν Γαλατία κατὰ τούτους τοὺς καιροὺς πολλῆς δόξης ἐτύγχανεν...⁴⁶
 ...and a certain Theon in Galatia was highly esteemed during those times...

In the literature, it is mentioned that a physician by the name of *Theon*⁴⁷ who was active in Gaul in Asia Minor may be indicated here, since in the previous paragraph there is a reference to the doctor Ionikos of Sardeis. However, this cannot be said with certainty⁴⁸ since there is no other clarifying information in Eunapios' text.

In Aetios from Amida (6th c.)⁴⁹ we find a reference to a physician named *Theon*, who records a prescription apparently belonging to a physician:

Ἐκ τῶν Θεῶνος· οἴνου καθαρτικοῦ χολῆς σκευασία.
 Κασσίας Γο α΄, σκαμμονίας Γο α΄ οἴνου ξε ε΄, ταῦτα λειότατα γενόμενα ἐμβαλλέσθω ὀθονίῳ
 καὶ ἀκριβῶς περισφιγγθὲν τὸ ράκος ἀποκρεμάσθω εἰς τὸν οἶνον καὶ ἐάσθω βρέχεσθαι
 ἡμέρας ε΄, εἶτα ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τούτου δίδου πρὸ τροφῆς κρᾶσιν τελείαν σὺν ὕδατι θερμῷ·
 πεπίστευται χολὴν καθαίρειν...⁵⁰

From Theon; preparation of a wine-based purgative of the bile.

Cassia, oz. one; scammony, oz. one; wine, xestes⁵¹ five; these well-prepared, put in a linen cloth, and the sack being tightly tied, let it hang in the wine and allow it to soak for five days, then from this wine give a complete mixture before meals with warm water; it is believed to cleanse bile....

It should be noted that the above recipe is found in Aetios handbook, in the chapter *Method of composition of cathartic medicines* (Μέθοδος συνθέσεως τῶν καθαιρόντων φαρμάκων). According to the above medicinal recipe, we are informed that a certain *Theon*, who was apparently a physician, prepared it. Here this specific preparation treats the problems of the bile with the wine being a purgative. In this recipe, cassia and scammonia are added to the wine as ingredients. The following are the instructions for the preparation of the medicine and the dosage for administration to the patient. The reference to the recipe ...ἐκ τῶν Θεῶνος..., and much more the plural of the article, refers us to the fact that there were other medicinal recipes from this particular *Theon*.

The Dictionary of Souida⁵² (10th c.) includes eight different individuals with the name *Theon*. All of them were sophists, but none was a physician, nor is it mentioned that any of them wrote a medical book⁵³. This most likely indicates that the texts of the physician bearing the name *Theon* were either not survived, or they were considered of lesser importance and did not receive proper attention so that they would be copied and disseminated.

3.1. The reference of Photios

The most detailed report about *Theon* the physician is in the book of *Myriobiblos* (Μυριοβιβλος) or *Bibliotheca* (Βιβλιοθήκη)⁵⁴ of Photios (9th century). Here, we find a reference to a leading physician in Alexandria named *Theon*, who wrote a medical book with the title *Man* (Ἄνθρωπος)⁵⁵. It is interesting that the specific report recorded by Photios, numbered 220, follows that of Oribasios (number 219) and precedes that of Aetios (number 221).

Theon, addressed his book to *Theoctistos* (Θεόκτιστος). In fact, the report is extremely clear and cannot be misinterpreted:

...ἀνεγνώσθη Θέωνος ἀρχιητροῦ Ἀλεξανδρέως ἰατρικὸν βιβλίον, ὃ ἐπιγράφει Ἴανθρωπον. Θεοκτίστῳ μὲν τὸ σύνταγμα προσφωνεῖ...
 ...a medical book by Theon, chief physician of Alexandria, was read, which he entitled 'Man'. He addresses his composition to Theoctistos...

This book is divided into three sections:

The first part starts with the treatment of the ailments of the head and, following an anatomical order, includes all parts of the body and ends up with the ailments of the feet.

...ἀπάρχεται δὲ τῆς θεραπείας ἀπὸ κεφαλῆς καὶ διήκει μέχρι ποδῶν, πάντων τῶν πεπονθότων μορίων τοῦ σώματος θεραπείας τινὰς ἀναγράφων...
 ...it commences the treatment from the head and proceeds to the feet, detailing treatments for all parts of the body that have suffered...

However, the author does not elaborate on nature and the detailed characteristics of each disease.

...οὔτε δὲ τὴν τοῦ νοσήματος φύσιν πλὴν ἐπὶ γε βραχέων ἐκδιδάσκει, οὔτε τοῖς πρέπουσι προσδιορισμοῖς, περὶ ὧν προάγεται λέγειν, τὴν διδασκαλίαν ὑπάγει...
 ...nor does it teach about the nature of the disease, except briefly, nor does it provide appropriate definitions, about which it should speak first, it proceeds with the teaching...

According to Photios, *Theon* describes firstly the recipes for gout and arthritis, and then he proceeds with the simple purgative, explaining to some extent the reasons for using them. Simple, is meaning medicines with one ingredient:

...μετὰ δὲ γε τὸ γράψαι τῶν ποδαγρικῶν καὶ ἀρθριτικῶν παθῶν ἰάματα, διέξεισι μὲν περὶ τῶν ἀπλῶν καθαρτικῶν φαρμάκων, πειρᾶται δὲ καὶ αἰτίας τινὰς ἀποδιδόναι...
 ...after writing about remedies for gout and arthritis, he proceeds to discuss simple purgative medicines, and he also attempts to assign certain causes...

Finally, in the third part, he deals with the composition of various remedies indicated for the diseases mentioned in the first part of the book, and he describes the preparation of plasters, soothing remedies (ἄκοπα), collyria, as well as several recipes together with the names of the physicians who described them for the first time. Photios notes:

...περὶ συνθέσεως παντοδαπῶν διαλαμβάνει φαρμάκων, ὅσα τε αὐτῷ πρὸς τὰ προειρημένα τῶν νοσημάτων ἰκανὴν παρέχεται τὴν χρεῖαν καὶ πρὸς τὰ λοιπὰ πάντα τοῦ σώματος πάθη, ἃ παρῆκε τὴν κατὰ τὰ πεπονθότα μόρια θεραπείαν ἀναγράφων, ἐμπλάστρους τε καὶ ἄκοπα καὶ κουλλούρια καὶ ἀντιδότους διαφόρους ἐκ διαφόρων ἀνδρῶν κατεσκευασμένας ἀναγράφει...
 ... concerning the composition of various medicines, those which provide sufficient for the aforementioned diseases, and for all other afflictions of the body, for which he describes remedies for various conditions, including plasters, unguents, poultices, and various antidotes prepared by different individuals...

It is apparent that Photios does not particularly appreciate the content of the work:

...οὐκ ἔμοιγε δοκοῦν ὀρθῶς οὐδὲ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐξημμένος, δι' ἃς τὴν καθαρτικὴν δύναμιν ἢ τῶν φαρμάκων ἐπιδείκνυσι φύσις...

...it does not seem to me correct, nor is it extracted from the truth, the nature of which demonstrates the purgative power of medicines...

Nevertheless, he considers it similar -in terms of its content- to the book *Synopsis* of Oribasios⁵⁶:

...ἔστι μέντοι τὴν χρείαν τὸ βιβλίον ταῖς τοῦ Ὀρειβασίου συνόψεσι παρεχόμενον παραπλησίαν...

...however, the usefulness of the book is similar to the summaries of Oreibasios...

From the above references of Photios we find that Theon's book entitled *Man* was divided into three parts: 1. *Treatments from head to toe*, 2. *On simple purgatives* and 3. *On the synthesis of all medicines*.

Therefore, the question arises as to whether this book of *Theon*, as Photios tell us, is the source from which the recipes of Archigenes and Aetios originated. Although the bibliography considers the identification of Aetios' reference with that of Photios as given, nevertheless, we are struck by the complete omission of the reference to Archigenes' prescription to the physician *Theon*. The only exception is the note by Mavroudis that Archigenes probably refers to some unknown *Theon*⁵⁷. Although Mavroudis does not explain his opinion, his position could be correct if we accept that Archigenes is referring to a different physician than Photios: One lived before Archigenes or was his contemporary, around the 1st century, and the second one lived after the 4th century.

4. The content of the text

Theon's text, *On the composition of purgative medicines*, (Περὶ συνθέσεως τῶν καθαιρόντων φαρμάκων) can be divided into two parts:

a. In the first part, eight plants are listed: colocynthis, (*Citrullus colocynthis*), flax-leaved daphne (*Daphne gnidium*), white hellebore (*Veratrum album*), caper spurge, (*Euphorbia lathyris*), aloe, (*Aloe vera*), scammony (*Convolvulus scammonia*), dodder (*Cuscuta epithimum*), black hellebore (*Helleborus niger*).

The double mention of the plant *colocynth*, in places 1 and 6, puzzle us, and we wonder if perhaps the copyist here may have accidentally written the word twice instead of colocynth (κολοκυνθίς, *Citrullus colocynthis*) and cucurbita (κολοκύνθη, *Cucurbita pepo*). From the description of the properties of the plants, we understand that the first reference probably refers to the colocynth and the second to the cucurbita. A detailed description of the nature and quality of these plants is done, concerning their "hot" or "cold" properties. Additionally, the author gives an account of their use in the treatment of diseases.

The influence and acceptance of the theories of Hippocrates and Galen in *Theon's* work are evident. The theory of the four humor (*blood, black bile, phlegm, yellow bi-*

le), formulated in the Corpus Hippocraticum, particularly in the treatise: “*On the nature of Man*”, where is noted that properties are in a dynamic equilibrium of opposing pairs: “hot vs. cold” and “wet vs. dry”. According to this theory, it is believed that any deviation from this dynamic equilibrium can deteriorate health. Therefore, the internal qualities of food and medicinal herbs, in terms of “hot”, “cold”, “wet” or “dry”, contribute to the body’s health, according to the principle of the theory of the opposites (θεραπεία διὰ τῶν ἀντιθέτων)⁵⁸. These theories were further developed and supported by Galen, who added that each internal quality could be present in four different grades of strength.

b. In the second part, in Theon’s text, eight recipes are recorded: one for the liver, two for the spleen, one for an ointment for scabies, and four composite drugs; two for dropsy and two for kidney diseases. There is a clear connection between the two parts of the text, as *Theon* mentions that he will refer to them in the last paragraph of the first part:

... Ὅρα δὲ μοι τῶν πονηθέντων καὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ μακρῷ χρόνῳ ἐξευρεθέντων τὴν ὕλην ἐκτίθεσθαι καὶ πρῶτον μὲν προκεχειρίσθω· τίνα καὶ ποῖα τῷ φαρμάκῳ· ποίους καὶ τίνας χυμοὺς καθαίρειν πέφυκεν· δεύτερον δὲ ἐκ ποίων τόπων ἔλκειν τὴν περὶ οὐσίαν τῶν χυμῶν πεπίστευται...

... See how those who have toiled and those who have been discovered over a long period of time present their material; and first let it be determined: what and what kind of medicine; what kinds of juices it is accustomed to cleanse; secondly, from what places the essence of the juices is believed to be drawn...

All the remedies mentioned here are original and have not been recorded in any other known or published text until today.

It is also noteworthy, that in the first eight recipes there are plant names, such as “onoceria” (ὄνοκαιρία), “salica” (σάλικα), “martaca” (μάρτακα) and the verb “psam-mopoio” (ψαμμοποιῶ: turning the kidney stone into sand), which are encountered for the first time in a Greek text and that this is potentially the earliest surviving witness. The word *salica* clearly comes from the Latin word *salix*, which is identified in Greek with the willow plant (ἰτέα).

5. The dating of the text

The dating of the text attributed to *Theon* can be deduced by using his references to Galen:

There are two references to Galen in folia 181^v and 182^r:

f. 181^v ... ἐν γοῦν τοῖς ἀπλοῖς τοῦ θαυμασιωτάτου Γαληνοῦ φανεροῦς καὶ διαρρήδην μαθεῖν ἐστὶ τὸ λεγόμενον...

... indeed, in the simple writings of the most marvelous Galen, it is clearly and explicitly learned what is said...

and

f. 182^r ... δι’ ὃ καὶ ἐκκοπωτικὴν αὐτὴν Γαληνὸς οἶδεν....

... which even Galen also knows as eccoprotic...

These references to Galen suggest that the text of *Theon* preserved in codex *Plut.* 75.3 was written after the 2nd century. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the comparison of Theon's work with Oribasios' *Synopsis*⁵⁹, made by Photios, indicates a composition date of compilation for the handbook *Man* that cannot be earlier than the 4th century. From the above, a valid argument can be made supporting the view that *Theon* mentioned by Aetios, and perhaps that of Eunapios, is identical as that of Photios, and that he lived and wrote his book after the 4th century, a fragment of which we have in codex *Plut.* 75.3. This text is the only surviving fragment of Theon's medical book. Based on the content, structure and the arrangement of the manuscript text, we judge that this excerpt can be identified with what mentioned by Photios.

The writing style of the surviving fragment suggests an author who dealt with the humor theory. Although many other medical writers dealt with and written about this specific topic. But here the composition of the text and the approach to the theory of the humors seem problematic. These issues seem to confirm the remarks of Photios, who did not particularly appreciate Theon's work:

...οὔτε δὲ τὴν τοῦ νοσήματος φύσιν πλὴν ἐπὶ γε βραχέων ἐκδιδάσκει, οὔτε τοῖς πρέπουσι προσδιορισμοῖς, περὶ ὧν προάγεται λέγειν, τὴν διδασκαλίαν ὑπάγει...
 ...nor does he teach the nature of the disease except briefly, nor does he provide suitable definitions, about which he ought to speak, he leads the teaching...

In the manuscript text, after the mention of the examination of plants, follows a paragraph that leads us to the next section, the mention and recording of prescription. This paragraph seems to be the link of the transition from one chapter to the next, specifically from simple to complex drugs. The prescriptions of complex drugs found here are original and recorded for the first time. After the end of Theon's text on f. 186^r of manuscript *Plut.* 75.3, there is a reference from the book of Alexander, apparently of Tralles, where nine prescriptions are recorded.

f. 186^r Ἐκλογὴ Ἀλεξάνδρου βιβλὸς κε<φάλαιον> θ´
 Collection of Alexander's book chapter 9

This title is an indication that here ends Theon's book, and a passage from Alexander's book begins.

6. The publication

6.1. Characteristics of the copyist

Examining the writing characteristics of the copyist, we observe that the orthography is corrupted due to the confusion of homophonous vowels and diphthongs, especially itacisms: ι for η in words like ῥίγματα, ἐπιμίκη and δίγματα; υ for οι in κυλίαν and κυλιακοῖς; ι for υ in κολοκίνθης; η for ει in words like ἠλεώδεσιν and τριφθήσιν;

ο for ω in μετόπω and ρόννυσιν, or ω for ο in ἀντιδώτου; ε for αι in πεωνίας, or αι for ε in μακαιδονικοῦ. Double consonants are sometimes avoided, as in κόμεως or ἀμωνιακοῦ, and sometimes added, as in κόκκων, even when single consonants are expected, like κίσσηρος or πιννομένη or πυρρέσσουσιν. Assimilation is not expressed, as in συνλειωθέντα; ἐνβάψας; συνχριόμενον; γίνομαι is more common than γίγνομαι. Furthermore, μάραθρον is found alongside μάραθρον and μάλαθρον; κασία and κασσία; ἀμμωνιακόν and ἀμωνιακόν; μολόχη is more common than μαλάχη, and ἀφουνίτρον more common than νίτρον ἀφροῦ or ἀφρουνίτρον; ὀρυγγίου or ἐρυγγίου instead of ἠρυγγίου. The copyist himself corrects errors he noticed in his source. For example, he changed ἐργασίαν in the superscript to ὕγρασίαν, similar to the changes from νωσώδης to νοσώδης; δυσκατάλωτα to δυσκατούλωτα; ποδαλγήση to ποδαλγάση; λιθιοῦντας to λιθιῶντας; κηρῶ to κηροῦ; μονοκλάδου to πολυκλάδου, etc. The grave accent is placed even before the punctuation mark, such as ἐστὶν· or χυμὸν·. The circumflex is sometimes used correctly and sometimes incorrectly in the same word, as in οὔτως and οὔτωσ. The acute accent is often incorrectly noted in infinitives like κρατεῖσθαι; κινεῖσθαι or θερμανθῆναι. The final sigma in prepositions is not marked, and instead, the sigma is placed to connect words even if they are not complex as in ὡσὰν; ὡσεῖρηται or ἰσαπόλυτον instead ὡς ἂν; ὡς εἴρηται or εἰς ἀπόλυτον. The iota subscript is not indicated.

6.2. The edition

The text of *Theon* has been edited following the rules of a critical edition. Errors related to iotacism's, accent or pronunciation errors are tacitly corrected. Beyond spelling, no other errors were corrected.

The punctuation marks, except the high dot, are rarely indicated, while the dot appears infrequently. The placements of punctuation marks are random. At the end of each prescription or title, often arrangements of four dots “:.” appear instead of a period. The punctuation marks appearing in the manuscript have been retained in the edition. The original words in the manuscript are given in the footnotes.

Abbreviation

[.....]	missing letters in the gap
<>	Supplement or change
<	Drachme
∫	half

f. 180^v

ΘΕΩΝΟΣ'

ΠΕΡΙ ΣΥΝΘΕΣΕΩΣ ΚΑΘΑΙΡΟΝΤΩΝ ΦΑΡΜΑΚΩΝ

1 α' Περί κολοκυνθίδος

Ἡ κολοκυνθίς πικρά τὴν φύσιν ἐστίν· ἐδείχθη δὴ ποιότης αὐτῆς ἐκ θερμοῦ καὶ ξηροῦ τὴν γένεσιν ἔχουσα ταύτη τῇ δυνάμει ἀντίκειται καὶ τὰ μὲν τὰς δραστικὰς ποιότητας ἢ ψυχρὰ καὶ ὑγρὰ τουτέστιν τὸ φλέγμα κατὰ δὲ τὴν γευστὴν ἦν ἄποιος· τὸ γὰρ ἄποιον τῷ πεποιωμένῳ ἐστὶν ἐναντίον ὥστε καὶ κατὰ τὰς δραστικὰς ποιότητας καὶ τὰς γευστὰς εἶη ἂν ἐναντίον τῇ κολοκυνθίδι.

2 β' Περί κνιδίου κόκκου

10 Πάλιν δὲ ὁ κνιδίος κόκκος δριμύς καὶ καυστικός τὴν φύσιν ἐστίν· ἐδείχθη δὲ ὅτι πάντα τὰ δριμύα θερμὰ καὶ ξηρὰ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ οὕτως πεπίστευται τὸν φλεγματικὸν χυμὸν ἐκκαθαίρειν· ἐκκαυθέντα γοῦν τὰ σώματα ὑπὸ τοῦ προκειμένου φαρμάκου εἰς ἀνάψυξιν τῶν ἐναντίων· ἐστὶν δὲ οὕτως κατὰ τὰς ἀπτάς καὶ γευστὰς ἐναντίως τῷ φλέγματι.

f. 181^r

3 γ' Περί λευκοῦ ἐλλέβορου

15 Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ λευκὸς ἐλλέβορος· ἐκκαθαίρειν πέφυκε τὸν φλεγματικὸν χυμὸν· καὶ γὰρ καὶ οὗτος δριμύς καὶ πικρὸς τὴν δύναμιν ἐστίν· πάντα γὰρ τὰ δριμύα καὶ πικρὰ θερμὰ καὶ ξηρὰ τὴν φύσιν ἐστίν· ἵνα τὴν μὲν δριμύτητα ποδηγεῖ εἰς τὸ βάθος· καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐσχάτην ἐπιφάνειαν μετενεγκεῖν δυνήσεται τὴν πικρὰν ποιότητα· τῇ δὲ πικρότητι ἐκκαθαίρει τὸν φλεγματικὸν χυμὸν· χρώμεθα γοῦν αὐτῷ πρὸς ἐπειδὰν ἐφ' ὧν συναληθιμμένον καὶ συμπεφυσιωμένον καταλάβωμεν τὸν φλεγματικὸν χυμὸν ὑπάρχοντα ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ σώματι· λέγω δὴ τὸν παχὺν καὶ γλίσχρον καὶ ἰξώδη καὶ εἰς ἀπόλυτον· ἦτις γοῦν ὠμίλησεν τοῖς ἔργοις τῆς τέχνης· καὶ διὰ τῶν ἔργων ἐβασάνισε τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ θείου φαρμάκου.

4 δ' Περί λαθυρίδος

f. 181^v

25 Ἡ μέντοι λαθυρίς· οὐ διὰ τῶν ἐναντίων / τὴν κάθαρσιν ποιεῖται τοῦ φλεγματικοῦ χυμοῦ· ἀλλὰ διὰ τῶν ὁμοίων πίστις τοῦ λεγομένου· τοῦτο τὸ σπέρμα γλυκὺ μετρίως τοῖς γενομένοις φαίνεται· ἐδείχθη δὲ τὰ μετρίως γλυκέα· ψυχρὰ καὶ χλιαρὰ· ἐν γοῦν τοῖς ἀπλοῖς τοῦ θαυμασιωτάτου Γαληνοῦ φανερώς καὶ διαρρήδην μαθεῖν ἐστὶ τὸ λεγόμενον· ἀκούσωμεν τοῖνον τῆς λέξεως αὐτοῦ· τὰ δὲ γλυκέα μόνον ἅπαντα· κατὰ πόσον τῆς γλυκύτητος εὐθύς· καὶ τῆς θερμότητος μετέχει· ὥστε οὐδὲν μὲν τῶν γλυκῶν ψυχρὸν εἶη
30 δ' ἀντὶ μετρίως· γλυκὺ ψυχρὸν· ἐπειδὰν τὸ πλεῖστον ταύτης τοῦ σώματος οὐσίας ὕδατῶδες· ἢ ὡς τὸ στρυφνὸν ἰκανῶς ἢ ὀξύ· ἀλλ' ὡς καὶ πρόσθεν ποῦ λέλεκται περὶ τῶν χλιαρᾶς θερμασίας μετεχόντων· οὕτω μὲν οὖν ἡ λαθυρίς καὶ κατὰ τὰς δραστικὰς καὶ τὰς γευστὰς καὶ κατὰ τὸν βαθμὸν τῷ φλέγματι ἐξομοῖται· τὸ γοῦν ὀρῶδες τοῦ φλέγματος τὸ χλιαρὸν ὡς ἂν τίς εἴπῃ· καὶ μετρίως γλυκὺ καθαίρει.

f. 182^r

35 5 /<ε'> Περί ἀλόης

Ἡ μέντοι ἀλόη· ἔχει μέντοι καθαρτικόν· ἀλλὰ κόπρου· δι' ὃ καὶ ἐκκοπρωτικὴν αὐτὴν Γαληνὸς οἶδεν· εἰ δὲ τις ἐνιστάμενος πρὸς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς φασκεῖ· μὴ εἶναι αὐτὴν ἐκκοπρωτικὴν· ἀλλὰ χολῆς καθαρτικὴν· ἴσως ἀπορίαν τινὰ κινήσει ἐν τῷ λόγῳ· οἱ γοῦν προστάται τοῦ δόγματος· τοιαῦτα φασίν· κατὰ τινὰ λόγον τῆς κολοκυνθίδος· πικρὰς οὐσης· καὶ τῆς ἀλόης οὐχ ὁμοίως· <ύ>π' ἀμφοτέρων· ὁ φλεγματικὸς χυμὸς ἐκκαθαίρεται· ἀλλ' ὑπὸ μὲν τῆς κολοκυνθίδος τὸ φλέγμα· ὑπὸ δὲ τῆς ἀλόης ἢ χολῆ· ἐδείχθη δὲ ἐν τοῖς

2 καθαίρων τῶν | 4 κολοκύνθις | τὴν | ἐστίν· | 5 τῇ | ἀντίκειται | 6 τουτέστιν | γευστὴν | 8 κολοκυνθίδη | 10 ἐστίν· | 11 ξηρὰ· | οὕτως | φλεγματικὸν | 12 ἀνάψυξιν | 13 οὕτως | 15 φλεγματικὸν | χυμὸν· | 16 ἐστίν· | 17 ἐστίν· | ποδηγεῖ | 18 μετενεγκεῖν | δυνήσεται | πύοτητα | 19 φλεγματικὸν | χυμὸν· | ἐφῶν | ἐπειδὰν | συναληθιμμένον | 20 καταλάβωμεν | φλεγματικὸν | ὑπάρχοντα | ὅλω | 21 τῷ | τὸ | παχὺ | ἰξώδη | ἰσαπόλυτον | ὀμίλησεν | 22 διάτων | 24 λάθυρις | φλεγματικοῦ | 25 λεγομένου | 26 χλιαρὰ· | γοῦν | 27 Γαληνοῦ | διαρρήδην | λεγόμενον | 29 τὸν superscr. τῶν | 30 ψυχρὸν· | ἐπειδὰν | πλεῖστον | ταύτης | 31 ὀξύ· | τὸν superscr. τῶν | 32 χλιαρὰς | λαθυρίς | 33 γοῦν | τὸ | τοῦ | 34 ὡσάν | 35 ἀλώης | 36 ἀλώη | καθαρτικὸν· | ἐκκοπρωτικὴν | 37 γαλινὸς | φακεῖ | φασίν· | 38 ἐκκοπρωτικὴν· | χολῆς | καθαρτικὴν· | ἀπωρείαν | ἐν | ἀλώης | γοῦν | 39 προστάται | τοιαῦτα | ἀμφοτέρων | πικρὰς | οὐσης | 40 ταμφοτέρων | φλεγματικὸς | ἐκκαθῆρεται | 41 γολῆ·

- περὶ ὕλης· ἡ ἀλόγη· ἐκ πικρᾶς καὶ στυφούσης συγκειμένη δυνάμει· ἵνα ἐκ μὲν τῆς στυφούσης τὸ ῥωστικὸν καὶ εὐστόμαχον ἔχη· ἐκ δὲ τῆς πικρᾶς τὸ ῥυπτικόν· ὡς εἶναι τὴν τάξιν αὐτῆς καὶ τὴν ἀναλογίαν· καὶ τὸν βαθμὸν πρὸς τὴν ἡμετέραν χολήν· τῇ οὖν ὁμοιότητι οὐ τῇ ἐναντιότητι· ὡς ἡ κολοκύνθης τὴν ὀλκὴν τῆς χολῆς ἡ ἀλόγη ποιεῖται· εὐστόμαχος γοῦν ὑπόκειται τὴν φύσιν· καὶ / εἰ κα[...+6...] χολῆ τῇ ἐπ<ε>ιτα· ἔντερα κατιούση· αὕτη γὰρ εἰς ἐρεθισμὸν καὶ ἔκκρισιν τῶν περιττῶν ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως δεδημιούργηται· καλῶς τοιγαροῦν οἱ ἀρχαῖοι διὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα τὴν πρὸς τὴν χολήν ἐκκοπρωτικὴν αὐτὴν ἔφασαν· τίνα γὰρ ἡ ὁμοιότητι ἡ ἐναντιότητι κενοί.
- 506 <ς'> Περὶ κολοκυνθίδος
Ἡ μέντοι κολοκυνθίς· ὡς θερμότητι καὶ ξηροτάτη· τρίτης τάξεως ἐστὶν κατὰ τὸ θερμαίνειν καὶ ξηραίνειν· πρὸς ἔστι δ' αὕτη καὶ πυρώδης οὐσία· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο εἰς κρᾶσιν τὰ σώματα καταστήσασα· ὡς καὶ τὰ δηλητήρια ἀναγκάζειν τῶν ἐναντίων ἐφίεσθαι.
- 7 <ς'> Περὶ σκαμμωνίας
Ἐξεταζέσθω δὲ ὁ λόγος καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς σκαμμωνίας· καὶ ἐκ παραλλήλου γυμναζέσθωσαν οἱ λόγοι οἱ τε τῆς κολοκυνθίδος καὶ οἱ τῆς σκαμμωνίας· ἐδείχθη γὰρ διὰ τῆς πείρας χολῆς καθαρτικὴν δυνάμιν ἔχουσα· ἡ σκαμμωνία· αὐτῆς γευσασμένην τὴν φύσιν· ἐστὶν ἄποιος· ἐξ ἐναντίων μέντοι δυνάμεων σύγκειται· ὡς καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ καθαρτικά· ἡ μὲν γὰρ τῷ τῆς ὀλκῆς λόγῳ προσέχοιμεν· εὐρήσομεν αὐτὴν / θερμὴν καὶ ξηρὰν τῆς πρώτης τάξεως εἶναι τὴν ἐλκτικὴν δυνάμιν· ἐξ ἀερώδους δὲ οὐσίας τὴν λεπτομερίαν αὐτῆς· διὰ τοῦτο γοῦν καὶ ἐλκτικὴ τυγχάνει· καὶ μάλα γε εἰκότως· τῆς πρώτης τάξεως εἶναι τὴν ἐλκτικὴν δυνάμιν· ἐπὶ τῆς σκαμμωνίας ἡ τὰ πάντα ἀρίστη φύσις· ἥπιστατο γὰρ· οὐ βιαίας ὀλκῆς· δεῖσθαι δεῖ τὴν χολὴν ἐπιπόλαιον οὖσαν· καὶ κοῦφον· καὶ πυρὶ ἀναλογοῦσαν· ἐπὶ μέντοι τῆς κολοκυνθίδος· βιαιοτέρας ἐδείχθη ἡ φύσις τῆς ὀλκῆς· γλίσχρον γὰρ χυμὸν καὶ ἐνιζηκότα ἐκμοχλεῦειν ἠπειγέτο· διὰ τοῦτο τοιγαροῦν τῆς τρίτης τάξεως τῶν θερμαινόντων καὶ ξηραίνοντων τὴν κολοκυνθίδα πεποίηκεν· τὴν μέντοι σκαμμωνίαν τῆς πρώτης ὡς εἴρηται· ψυχρὰ μέντοι καὶ ὑγρὰ τῆς πρώτης τάξεως ἐστὶν· κατὰ τὰς δραστικὰς ποιότητας· καὶ οὐδὲν θαυμαστόν· καὶ γὰρ ἡ ἀλόγη ἐκ ψυχρᾶς καὶ θερμῆς κράσεως ἐστὶν· καὶ ἐκ πυκνωτικῆς καὶ ἀραιωτικῆς εἰ γοῦν ἐν μνήμῃ λάβοις τὴν πικρὰν καὶ στυφουσαν δυνάμιν· πάντως ὑπομνησθήσει ἐξ ἐναντίων αὐτὴν κερά<ννυ>σθαι δυνάμει· οὐδὲν οὖν ἄτοπον καὶ τὴν σκαμμωνίαν / οὕτως ἔχειν φύσεως· ὥστε διὰ μὲν τὴν ὀλκὴν· θερμὴν αὐτὴν καὶ ξηρὰν· τῆς πρώτης τάξεως εἶναι· ἐνυπάρχει δὲ αὐτὴν καὶ ἀερώδη τὴν οὐσίαν· ἥτις αὐτὴν τὴν λεπτομέρειαν ὡς ἐργάζεται· ἡ μέντοι ἄποιος· δηλοῖ τὸ ψυχρὸν καὶ ὑγρὸν τῆς κράσεως· τοιαύτης τοίνυν οὖσα φύσεως· εἴτα ἐμπροσθεῖσα τῷ ἡμετέρῳ σώματι· θερμῶ τὴν φύσιν ὄντι· ἐπιψύχει μέντοι τὸ πάθος· πέφυκε δὲ τὰ καθαρτήρια κρατεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ κρατεῖσθαι· εἴτα τῶν σωμάτων κατὰ τὸ συνεχές· ψυγόντων ἔφεσις τῶν ἐναντίων γίνεται· οἱ δὲ ψυγόντες θερμανθῆναι ποθοῦσι· οὕτω μὲν καὶ ἡ σκαμμωνία τὴν χολὴν καθαίρει· ἐστὶν γὰρ καὶ κατὰ τὸ δραστικόν καὶ κατὰ τὰς γευστικὰς δυνάμεις τῇ χολῇ ἐναντία, τὸ γὰρ ἄποιον· κἀναυθὰ τῷ πεποιομένῳ ἐστὶν ἐναντίον.
- 808 <η'> Περὶ ἐπιθύμου καὶ μελανοῦ ἐλλεβόρου
Ἔλθωμεν δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ ἐπιθύμον καὶ τὸν μέλαινα ἐλλέβορον· ταῦτα γὰρ καθαρτικά εἶναι τοῦ μελαγχολικοῦ χυμοῦ πεπίστευται· θερμὰ δὲ καὶ ξηρὰ τῇ κράσει ἐστὶν· νόει δέ μοι τὸ

42 πικρᾶς | 43 ἔχει | πικρᾶς | ῥυπτικόν· | ὡσεῖναι | 44 χολήν· | 45 ἐναντιούτητι | κολοκυνθῆς superscr. κολοκίνθης | ποιεῖται | 46 γοῦν | κατιούση | 47 αὕτη | περιττὸν superscr. περιττῶν | δεδημιούργηται | 48 τοῖ γὰρ οὖν | 51 κολοκυνθῆς· | 52 αὕτη | πυρώδης | κράσιν | 53 κατὰστήσασα | δηλητήρια | 55 ἐπὶ | 58 ἐξἐναντίων | καθαρτικά· | 56 πρὸς ἔχοιμεν | εὐροῖσωμεν | 58 εἰ | 59 πρὸςἔχοιμεν | εὐροῖσωμεν | 62 ἥπιστατω | γὰρ· | βιαίας | 64 βιαιοτέρας | γλίσχρον | ἐνηζηκότα | 65 ὑπήγετο | τοῖ γὰρ οὖν | 67 ὡσεῖρηται | ἐστὶν· | πύοτητας | 68 ψυχρᾶς | ἐστὶν· | 69 πυκνωτικῆς | ἀραιωτικῆς | ἤγουν | 70 ὑπομνησθήσει | ἐξἐναντίων | καὶ ῥᾶσθαι | 71 ὀλκῆν· | 72 ξηρὰν· | ἐν ὑπάρχει | 73 λεπτομερίαν | 74 τοιαύτης | ἐμπροσθεῖσα superscr. ἐμπροσθεῖσα | 75 μᾶλλον | 76 κρατεῖσθαι | συνεχές· | 77 θερμανθῆναι | 79 τὸ | πεποιομένῳ | 81 μέλαινα | 82 μελαγχολικοῦ | κράση | ἐστὶν· |

- f. 184^r / ξηρὸν διχῶς· τὸ μὲν πυρῶδες· τὸ δὲ γεῶδες τοῦτο τὸ πυρῶδες· ἐνυπάρχει ἐν τοῖς
 85 προειρημένοις φαρμάκοις λεπτομερῶς δὲ τῇ φύσει ἐστίν· τὰ δὲ λεπτομερῆ δέδεκται· καὶ
 τὰ θραυστικὰ καὶ διαιρητικὰ καὶ παχύτητος τμητικὰ ἀντίκειται· τοιγαροῦν ὁ μέλας
 ἐλλέβορος καὶ τὸ ἐπίθυμον ἄτε δὴ θερμὰ καὶ λεπτομερεῖ τῇ φύσει ὄντα τῇ ψυχρᾷ καὶ
 γεῶδει οὐσία· τοῦτ' ἔστιν τοῦ μελαγχολικοῦ χυμοῦ γενήσεται· τοιγαροῦν ἡ κάθαρσις ἐκ
 τῶν ἐναντίων φαρμάκων· οὕτως ἄρα πανταχοῦ τὰ κατηριθμημένα φάρμακα· ἢ διὰ τῶν
 90 ἐναντίων ἢ διὰ τῶν ὁμοίων τὴν κάθαρσιν ποιεῖτε· ἴστε μέντοι τὴν ἑλκτικὴν δύναμιν
 συμπεπαῖχθαι ταῖς δραστικαῖς ποιότησιν· λαβομένη γὰρ ἡ δραστικὴ ποιότης τοῦ ὁμοίου
 χυμοῦ· κεκραθεῖσα διόλου τῇ ἑλκτικῇ δυνάμει· ἐξοχετεύει ἐκείνη τὸν χυμὸν ἐπίγεται·
 ἐπὶ μέντοι τοῦ ἐναντίου διττὴ ὀλκὴ γίνεται· πῆ μὲν ἐκ τῶν ἐναντιοτήτων ἀθρόως εἰς
 ἄμετρον δυσκрасίαν ἐκτραπέντων τοῦ δεξαμένου τοῦ φάρμακον σωμάτων· πῆ δὲ ἐκ
 f. 184^v τῆς ἐνυπαρχούσης αὐτῷ ἑλκτικῆς δυνάμεως· / διὰ τοῦτο τοιγαροῦν καὶ βιαιότερα ἐκ τοῦ
 95 ἐναντίου φαρμάκου γίνεται κάθαρσις· ὑπόλοιπον δὲ ζητεῖν κατὰ τινὰ τὴν αἰτίαν· τὰ μὲν
 τὴν ἄνω κοιλίαν καθαίρει· τὰ δὲ τὴν κάτω· ὅσα θερμὰ καὶ ξηρὰ τοῦ φαρμάκου μετὰ
 πυρῶδους καὶ πνευματικῆς οὐσίας σύγκειται· ταῦτα αἱματικά τυγχάνει· διὰ τοῦτο τὴν
 ἄνω φορὰν κινεῖσθαι· ὡς ὁ λευκὸς ἐλλέβορος·
 Ὅσα γεῶδους οὐσίας μετέχει· καὶ πέφυκε τὴν κάτω φορὰν κινεῖσθαι· ταῦτα διὰ
 100 τῆς κάτω κοιλίας τὴν κάθαρσιν ποιεῖται· ὡς ἡ λεπίς τοῦ χαλκοῦ δέδεκται δὲ πάντα τὰ
 βαρῆα τὴν κάτω φορὰν κινούμενα· ὅσα δὲ μικτῆς ἐστὶν ἐκ πνευματικῆς καὶ ἀερώδους καὶ
 βαρέας καὶ κατωφεροῦς ταῦτα καὶ ἄνωθεν καὶ κάτωθεν τὰς καθάρσεις ποιεῖται· ὅτι δὲ ἡ
 κολοκυνθὶς τὴν κεφαλὴν καθαίρει· ἢ πείρα μαρτυρεῖ· κοῦφον γὰρ καὶ ἀερώδη τὸ
 γναφαλῶδες τῆς κολοκυνθίδος· ὅτι δὲ πάντα τὰ κοῦφα τὴν ἀνωφορὰν κινεῖται· παντὶ ποῦ
 105 δῆλον· δραγμὴ γὰρ ἐπιπαστήσα μελικράτῳ· ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς φλέγμα ἐκκαθαίρειν πεπι-
 στευται· / τοσαῦτα μὲν οὖν ἡμῖν κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν ἦτι ὀλογεῖσθω περὶ τῶν καθαιρουμένων
 φαρμάκων·
 Ὅρα δέ μοι τῶν πονηθέντων καὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ μακρῷ χρόνῳ ἐξευρεθέντων τὴν ὕλην
 ἐκτίθεσθαι· καὶ πρῶτον μὲν προκεχειρίσθω· τίνα καὶ ποῖα τῷ φαρμάκῳ· ποίους καὶ τίνας
 110 χυμοὺς καθαίρειν πέφυκεν· δευτέρον δὲ ἐκ ποίων τόπων ἔλκειν τὴν περὶ οὐσίαν τῶν
 χυμῶν πεπίστευται.
 1 Ἀντίδοτος ἡπατικὴ πεπειραμένη
 Κόστων ἀνατολικόν· ξηροζινζίβεριν· πύρεθρον· τρεῖς ἐννέα κόκκους πεπέ<ρεως>
 κύμινον καὶ πλατοκύμινον, ἀνά < α'· κενταυρείου, χεῖραν μίαν· δαφνόκοκκα· < α'·
 115 κοκκία θερμῶν πικρῶν· < α'· ἄλῳς, < α'· σμύρναν· μακεδονησίου σποράν· ὄνοκαιρίαν·
 γεντιανὴν, ἀνά < α'· ταῦτα κόψας καὶ σήσας καὶ ἀποτριτώσας μετὰ οἴνου· δίδου πιεῖν·
 ἀπυρέτοις μετὰ οἴνου ἐν λουτρῷ· πυρέσσουσιν δὲ μετὰ ὕδατος.
 2 Πρὸς σπλήναν
 Μυρικής καρπὸν καὶ τὴν ρίζαν ἐκξεσον οἴνῳ παλαιῷ· ἐπὶ πολὺ δίδου δὲ πιεῖν νήσται· εἰ
 120 δὲ μαθεῖν θέλῃς τὴν ἀκρίβειαν· δὸς πιεῖν χοίρῳ ἢ προβάτῳ καὶ θύσας οὐ θεωρεῖ σπλήναν.
 f. 185^v 3 Ἄλλο<v>
 Τὸν φλοῦν τῆς ἰτέας ἢ ἐστὶν σάλικα καὶ γ'· ποτήρια ὄξους δριμῆως· ἐψησας ἀποτριτώσων
 καὶ δὸς τῷ νοσοῦντι νήσται καὶ σὺν Θ<ε>ῷ ἰᾶται.
 4 Ἄλειμμα πρὸς ψώρα<v>
 125 Ὑδράργυρον, < α'· καὶ μάρτακαν καὶ βάλε ἔλαιον καὶ φύρασον τὸν ὑδράργυρον καὶ τὴν

84 ἐστίν· | 85 τοῖ γὰρ οὖν | 86 λεπτομερῆ | ψυχρᾷ | 87 γεῶδη | μελαγχολικοῦ | τοῖ γὰρ οὖν | 88 οὕτως | ἄρα
 | κατὰριθμημένα | 89 ποιεῖτε | 90 συνεπεπαῖχθαι | πιότησιν | πιότησι | 91 καὶ κραθῆσα | 92 πι | 94 τοῖ γὰρ οὖν
 | 95 ὑπόλοιπον | 96 κοιλίαν | ὅσα superscr. ὅσα | 98 φορὰν | κινεῖσθαι | 99 κινεῖσθαι | 100 κοιλίας | ποιεῖται |
 ὡσεῖ | 101 βαρῆα | 102 ποιεῖται | 103 κολοκυνθῆς | τῷ | 104 κολοκυνθίδος | 106 τοσαῦτα | 108 ἐξ
 εὑρεθέντων | 112 ἡπατικῆ | 113 ξηροζινζίβεριν | 115 ἄλῳς | μακαιδωνησίου | 116 σίσας | ἀποτριτώσας | 117
 οἴνου scr. οἶδωρ | 119 πιεῖν | ἢ | 120 μαθῆν | πιεῖν | χεῖρω | οὐθε ὀρεῖ | 122 δριμῆως | ἀπὸ τρίτωσον | 124
 Ἄλειμμα

- μάρτακαν καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο βάλε ὄξους δριμὺ καὶ ζύγε ἔλαιον.
- 5 Ὑδρωπικὸν θαυμαστόν
Χαμαιλέοντος· πετροσελίνου, ἀνὰ < η´· δίδου, κοχλιάριον ἔν· μεθ' ὕδατος θερμοῦ.
- 6 Ὑδρωπικὸν ἐπίθεμα· ἐξιποτικὸν ὕδερων·
- 130 Ἀσβέστου ζώσης· κηροῦ, ἀνὰ < μη´· φρικτῆς· πιτυίνης, ἀνὰ < ης´· χαλβάνης, < μ´·
ἀρσενικοῦ· στυπτηρίας σχιστῆς, ἀνὰ < ις´· ἐλαίου παλαιοῦ, < μη´· τὰ ξηρὰ ὄξει λειώσας
καὶ λύσας τὰ τικτά· ἔψε ἕως ἀναλήψεως καὶ χρᾶ.
- 7 Νεφριτικὸν θαυμαστόν· ἐμποιοῦν ἐπὶ τῶν πυορροούντων καὶ αἷμα καὶ πόνον κύστεως·
Συκίου ἡμέρου σπέρμα, < ιβ´· ὑοσκυάμου σπέρμα, < ζ´· λαπάθου σπέρμα, < γ´· κωνίου
- 135 σπέρμα· στροβίλου πεφρυγμένου· ἀμυγδάλων πικρῶν· καρῶν Ποντικῶν, ἀνὰ < γ´·
f. 186^r / φυσαλλίδος, κόκκους κε´· δίδου ἀπυρέτοις δι' οἴνου γλυκέως, τοῖς λοιποῖς δι' ὕδατος.
- 8 Νεφριτικὸν ἐπαινούμενον· θρύπτει γὰρ τοὺς λίθους καὶ ψαμμοποιεῖ διδομένη· ὠφελεῖ
δὲ καὶ κωλικοῖς· σπληνικοῖς· στομαχικοῖς·
Πεπέ<ρεως>· Γο β´· ἀρκευθίδων σαρκῶν· παιωνίας ρίζης· σχίνου ἄνθους· πετροσελίνου·
- 140 ἄμεως σπέρματος· λιβανωτίδος· ἀνίσου· ἀσάρου· μέου· νάρδου στάχους, ἀνὰ Γο α´·
μέλιτος ἀττικοῦ τὸ ἀρκοῦν· δίδου κυάμου Ποντικοῦ τὸ μέγεθος.

128 Χαμαιλέοντος | πετροσελίνου | μεθύδατος | 129 ἐξιποτικὸν | 130 φρικτῆς | 131 σχιστῆς] * | λιώσας |
133 ἐμποιοῦν | ποιοροῦν των | 134 κωνίου | 135 καρῶν | 136 φυσαλλίδος | λυποῖς | 137 ψαμμοποιεῖ |
διδωμένη | 138 κωλικοῖς | 139 πεωνίας | 140 λιβανωτίδος

Translation

THEON,

ON THE COMPOSITION OF PURGATIVE MEDICINES

1. About colocynth

The colocynth has a bitter nature; its quality has been shown to originate from heat and dryness by this power, it opposes both active qualities, such as cold and moist, i.e., phlegm. However, concerning its taste, it is insipid. For insipidity is contrary to what is produced, so it would be contrary to both the active qualities and the tastes of the cucumber.

2. About flax-leaved daphne

Once again, flax-leaved daphne is a harsh and caustic substance by nature; it has been shown that all harsh, warm and dry substances are believed to purge the phlegmatic humor; once the bodies have been heated by the administered medicine, they are refreshed by its opposites; this operates contrary to both the senses of touch and taste, opposing the nature of phlegm.

3. About white hellebore

Moreover, white hellebore also purges the phlegmatic humor; this substance is also harsh and bitter in its potency. All harsh and bitter (substances) are indeed hot, dry, and penetrating in nature. Thus, its harshness penetrates deeply, while its bitterness is capable of reaching the outermost surface. Through its bitterness, it purges the phlegmatic humor. Therefore, we employ it when we need to remove the phlegmatic humor pervading the entire body, particularly the dense, viscous, and sticky, even to the point of saturation. This is indeed the substance that conversed with the arts of the craft and through its works tested the potency of the divine drug.

4. About caper spurge

The caper spurge, however, does not cause purging of the phlegmatic humor through opposites, but rather through similarities, as is commonly believed. This seed appears moderately sweet to those who taste it. It has been shown that moderately sweet substances are cold and tepid. Indeed, it is clearly and openly learned from the simple teachings of the most marvelous Galen. Let us listen, therefore, to his words: All sweet substances are entirely sweet, instantly sweet in their sweetness, and participate in warmth. So, none of the sweet substances are cold, but rather moderately so. Sweetness is cold when the essence of the body is mostly watery. Or it may be somewhat sharp or pungent, as discussed previously concerning tepid temperatures. Therefore, lettuce seed resembles phlegm both in its properties and its taste, and in its degree of similarity to phlegm. Thus, the tepid quality of phlegm is visible, as one might say, and lettuce seed moderately sweet purges it.

5. About aloe

Aloe indeed possesses purgative properties, but it is manure. Therefore, Galen himself knows it as a purgative. However, someone who opposes the reputation of this man might claim that it is not purgative but bile purgative. This might perhaps raise some confusion in the argument. Supporters of the doctrine say such things concerning the nature of both substances: that there is a certain analogy to the bitterness of the colocynth, but not equally so for aloe. The phlegmatic humor is purged by both substances, but by colocynth, it is the phlegm, while by aloe, it is the bile. This was demonstrated in discussions about their properties: Aloe contains a mixture of bitter and harsh powers, so that it possesses the digestive and stomachic power from the harshness and the purgative power from the bitterness. This is to maintain its order and proportion, and its degree compared to our bile. Therefore, its similarity is not in opposition, but in likeness, just as aloe creates the attraction of bile, so it is suitable for the stomach's nature. And if it reaches the bile, it stimulates the intestines. For it has been created by nature for irritation and the expulsion of excess. Thus, the ancients rightly considered it purgative due to its similarity to bile, for what emptiness is there in similarity or opposition?

6. About colocynth

Colocynth, indeed, is extremely hot and dry; it belongs to the third order in terms of heating and drying. It possesses a fiery substance and, for this reason, it brings about heating in the bodies, even forcing the contrary humors to flow towards it, just as poisons compel the opposites to adhere to them.

7. About scammony

Let us examine the matter also regarding scammony, and let us exercise comparison with colocynth, as both have been demonstrated through experience to possess a purgative power. Scammony, to one who tastes it, appears tasteless; however, it is composed of opposite forces, just like other purgatives. For when we focus on its drawing power, we find it to be hot and dry of the first order, its drawing power coming from an airy substance. Therefore, it is also drawing, and quite rightly so, being of the first order in drawing power. Concerning scammony, it has the best nature of all; it is moderate, not violent in its drawing. Bile should be superficial when drawing it out; it should be light and analogous to fire. However, concerning colocynth, nature required a more violent drawing, for it urgently seeks to remove the slimy and congealed juice. Therefore, nature has made colocynth of the third order of heating and drying. Scammony, however, as previously stated, is cold and moist of the first order, according to its active qualities, and there is nothing surprising about it. For aloe, too, is made from a cold and hot mixture and, from a thickening and thinning substance, if one takes into consideration its bitter and congealing power, one will surely remember its opposite forces. Therefore, it is not at all inappropriate for scammony to have such a nature. Thus, due to its drawing

nature, it is hot and dry, being of the first order. It also possesses an airy substance, which works its fine details. However, it appears tasteless, indicating the cold and moist nature of its mixture. Such is its nature, and then, when it encounters our body, being naturally warm, it stimulates the passion. It tends more to hold the purgatives than to be held by them. Then, according to the continuity of bodies, when the opposites are cooled, a release of the opposites occurs. Those who are cooled desire to be warmed. Thus, scammony also purges bile, for it is contrary to bile both in its active and in its gustatory powers. For the tasteless is opposite to bile, and here too, what is tasteless is contrary to what is made.

8. About dodder and black hellebore

Let us now discuss dodder and black hellebore, for these are believed to be purgatives of black bile. They are hot and dry in temperament. However, understand that dryness can be twofold: one is fiery, and the other is earthy. This aspect exists in the aforementioned remedies, but it is intricate in nature; it has been finely divided. In addition, it is opposed to what is fragile, divisive, and conducive to density. Black hellebore and dodder, being hot and finely detailed in nature, consist of cold and earthy substance. This is how the generation of black bile will occur. Therefore, purgation comes from opposite medicines. Thus, everywhere, medicines listed either effect purgation through opposites or through similars. However, know that the drawing power is contrary to the active qualities. For when the active quality of similar humor is taken, it completely overwhelms the drawing power. Hence, it primarily draws out that humor. Nevertheless, when contrary action is taken, there is a twofold drawing. In one case, by the accumulation of opposites, bodies are diverted into immoderate dyscrasia. In the other case, it occurs through the inherent drawing power. Hence, a more violent purgation occurs from the contrary medicine. The remaining cause should be sought in some respect: some purify the upper belly and some the lower. Whatever medicines consist of hot and dry substances, along with a fiery and pneumatic substance, cause sanguineous purges. Therefore, the upper passage is stimulated, like white hellebore. Those composed of an earthy substance naturally stimulate the lower passage. These effect purgation through the lower belly, as shown by the purification of brass filings. Whatever consists of a mixture of pneumatic, airy, heavy, and descending substances, effects purgation both from above and below. As for the fact that colocynth purges the head, experience attests to this. For the light and airy nature of colocynth is well known. Also, it is evident that all light things stimulate upward passage. For example, when a mustard plaster is applied, phlegm is believed to be cleared from the head. Therefore, as much as possible, let us reason out the materials of purging medicines.

Look at what has been tested and discovered over a long time and present the essence of the humors that the medicine purges. Secondly, let us consider from which parts of the body it draws the essence of the humors.

1. Hepatic antidote, experienced

Eastern costus, dry ginger, pellitory, three nine grains of pepper, cumin and long cumin, each one drachma; one hand of centaury; bayberries, one drachma; grains of bitter lupine, one drachma, and a half; aloe, one drachma; myrrh; macedonian seed; onoceria; gentian; each, one drachma. Give these after cutting, pounding, and sifting with wine. Administer to drink. For patients without fever, give wine in the bath; for those with fever, give water.

2. For the spleen

Extract the fruit and root of tamarisk with old wine. Give plenty to drink fasting. But if you want to know exactly: give to a pig or a sheep to drink, and if it doesn't observe spleen, it is not effective.

3. Another

The bark of the willow, which is salica, and three cups of strong vinegar. Boil, strain, and give to the patient to drink while fasting, and with God's help, he will be healed.

4. Ointment for scabies

Mercury, one drachma; and martaca mix with oil and rub mercury and martaca and after that put in strong vinegar and mix with oil.

5. Remarkable hydropic

Chamaeleon; parsley; each one drachma; give one spoonful with warm water.

6. Hydropic suppository, diuretic water

Lime poultice; wax; each one drachma; resin; pine; each ninety-six drachmas; galbanum, forty drachmas; arsenic; astringent; each sixteen drachmas; old oil, forty-eight drachmas; grind the dry ingredients with vinegar, dissolve and use as needed.

7. Remarkable remedy for kidneys; Induces flow in those with urinary discharge, blood, and bladder pain.

Seeds of figs, a dozen of drachmas; seed of henbane, six drachmas; seeds of monk's rhubarb, three drachmas; conium seed; pine roasted; bitter almonds; Pontic walnuts; each, three drachmas; bladder, seeds twenty-five; for patients without fever give sweetly wine; for the others, give water.

8. Praised nephritic remedy; for crushes stones and sands given; it also benefits those with colic, spleen, and stomach issues

Pepper; juniper-berry flesh; peony root; safflower flower; parsley; ajowan seed; frankincense; anise; asarum; spignel; spike nard spike; each, one oz.; sufficient Attic honey; give in the size of a Pontic bean.

Conclusions

A long-forgotten text within the codex *Plut. 75.3* of the Laurentian Library (*Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana*) in Florence gave us the opportunity to make an inquiry on *Theon*, an Alexandrian physician. The text itself contains medical prescriptions,

which most probably belong to the lost book *Man* (Ἀνθρωπος) of *Theon*. The text and the recipes do not match with any other literary source, according to our investigation. Photios (9th century), refer to a leading physician in Alexandria named *Theon*, who wrote a medical book. According to Photios, *Theon* describes recipes of purgative medicines with a single ingredient, explaining to some extent the reasons for using them. Finally, he deals with the composition of various remedies and he describes the preparation of patches, soothing remedies, collyria. All pharmaceutical recipes reported here seem to be original. It is worth noticing that some plant names, such as “onoceria” (ὄνοκαιρία), “salica” (σάλικα), “martaca” (μάρτακα), and the verb “psam-mopoiō” (ψαμμοποιῶ) are encountered for the first time in a Greek text.

The text in the *Plut.* 75.3 is not found anywhere else, or in any other published treatise, work or text, and therefore, it is original and unique. The nature of the extant passage refers to the writer *Theon*, who grappled with the nature of the theory of humors. Although many other medical authors have dealt with and written about the specific topic, it seems that both the composition of the text and the way of dealing with it and theorizing it are problematic. After the examination of the eight plants follows a paragraph that refers us to a section that precedes the list of recipes. It seems that this paragraph is the connecting link of the transition from one chapter to the next. Both the content, the quality of the text and its entire form seem to confirm the writings of Photios, who did not particularly appreciate *Theon*'s work.

The finding and publishing medical texts like this of *Theon* gives us information about the evolutionary course of medicine in the Middle Byzantine era.

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41. Ounce.
42. Unit of weight one sixth of the ounce, esp. in pharmaceutical doses.
43. Mavroudis A, Ref. 39. p. 52.
44. Ibid, p. XXX. Here Mavroudis notes that Brescia publishes four chapters that some manuscripts attribute to Paulos from Aegina [=Heiberg IL (ed.), Paulus Aegineta, vol. I-II, Leipzig/Berlin 1921-1924], but only the codex Vat Pal. gr. 199 attributes them to Archigenes. Of these chapters, only the section On the spleen, (Paulos, VII, 3.49), is the same. The rest of the text, published by Brescia, and attributed to Archigenes, is original prototype. In addition, Paulos does not mention Theon anywhere in his book.
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