

PLANTS WITH DIURETIC ACTION ACCORDING TO DIOSCURIDES MATERIA MEDICA IN THE GLAGOLITIC OLD CHURCH SLAVONIC MEDICAL FOLIA FROM SINAI

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Objectives:

To study a fragment of three small bifolia with medical prescriptions entitled "Cosmas' healing", loosely inserted between folia 141-142 of the *Psalterium Demetrii Sinaïtici* (Sin. slav. 3/N) and presently counted as ff. 141a-f. On ff. 141ar-cv. They contain 22 prescriptions for various diseases. According to paleographic and linguistic characteristics, the manuscript can be dated to the third quarter of the 11th century. These are housed in Saint Catherine's monastery in the Sinai peninsula since the famous find of 1975 (1).

Methods:

The codices have been translated only into German. We used the facsimile edition *Psalterium Demetrii Sinaïtici* by Miklas (2) and also we translated them into English and Greek. The structure of the treatise in only 6 instances resembles the botanical writings of famous ancient medical authors who classified their works according to the *materia medica* used. In the majority of (16) cases the Sinai prescriptions start with the symptom, illness or affected organ, following the medieval *iatrosophia*. Consequently, we compared its content with Dioscurides' and Pliny's writings on the therapeutic properties of plants, as well as with Greek *iatrosophia* on the same topic. A further comparison was made with the Rosenschon's (3) and Subaric - Gorgieva's (4) relevant works.

Results:

We could trace eight plants with an action on the kidneys as described by Dioscurides, namely: 1. Aron or Drakontia or Akoron against gout; 2. Arktion or Agrimony against dysuria. the Sinai fragment mentions it for antitumor treatment; 3. Raphanus as cathartic. Rosenschon (3) comments its use in folk medicine as choleric; 4. Prason cephaloton as diuretic but also nephrotoxic. The Sinai treatise describes it as an anti-fever; 5. Suppositorium with salt and honey. A concoction of honey and quinces has a diuretic action according to Dioscurides; 6. Lapathon for renal stones according to Dioscurides. In the treatise as treatment of equine wounds; 7. Thymos herpyllon as diuretic; and Rosenschon reports it as purgative; 8. Helenium as diuretic, too, while the treatise mentions it as anti-pertussis, but Rosenschon reports it as diuretic in folk medicine.

Conclusions:

Our findings support the claim that the Sinaïtic Glagolitic medical prescriptions (which end abruptly in an unfinished word) are the remnant of a somewhat larger collection, in which these properties were described in passages with nephrological conditions. More over, they represent the oldest surviving reference on diuretic plants in a Slavic language, antedating by far the well-known Chilandar Medical Codex which contains many renal references.

References:

1. Cf. i.a. the description of the new Slavic finds by I. Tarnanidis: *The Slavonic Manuscripts Discovered in 1975 at St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai*. Thessaloniki: HASS, 1988.
2. See the facsimile-edition (with description and full literature) in: H. Miklas (ed.), *Psalterium Demetrii Sinaïtici (monasterii sanctae Catharinae codex slav. 3/N), adiectis foliis medicinalibus* (Glagolitica Sinaïtica 1). Wien: Holzhausen, 2012.
3. See U. Rosenschon, Sechs Seiten medizinischer Rezepte im glagolitischen Psalter 3/N des Sinaiklosters. 1994; *Byzantinoslavica* 55, 304-335.
4. See G. Subaric Gorgieva, Kidney disease in medieval Serbian manuscripts from the Chilandar monastery (Mount Athos, Greece). 2006; *J. of Nephrology* 19 (Suppl. 10), S30-S37.

