

Hungarian-Greek medical relation at the end of 18th century

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The purpose of our article is to present the Hungarian medical influence to the Greek region through medical books translated in the Greek language, during the last decades of 18th century.

One of the Greek Communities in Europe during the period of the Ottoman occupation of the Greek region and especially at the end of 18th century was the Community in Budapest¹, which was the most important center of the Hellenic Diaspora after those of Vienna. Except the fact that Budapest was a Greek merchant center in Europe, it was a place where a lot of Greek books were published and from there they were promoted to other European countries and Greek regions where intellectual centers were flourishing. We note for example that during the period 1801-1818, about twenty books were published in Budapest's printing houses².

During the mentioned period young Greek people who wanted to study medicine took recourse to the European Universities and one of them was those of Pest in Hungary. Except the studies in medicine in Budapest another point that shows Hungarian-Greek medical communication during the last decades of 18th century, was the translation of a medical book from the Hungarian language to Greek and the writing of another book which had as prototype some Hungarian books.

Specifically the writer from Siatista of Macedonia, Greece, Georgios Zaviras, (1744-1804), who resided for about forty years in

¹ About the Greek Community in Hungary see Gr. Gogos, "The Orthodox Greek Community and Church in Pest of Hungary", *Ekklesiastiki Alitheia*, vol. 4, 1884, pp. 339-334. Sp. Lampros, "Pages of History of the Macedonian Hellenism in Hungary and Austria", *Neos Ellinomnimon*, vol. 8, 1911, pp. 257-300. Sp. Lampros, "Greek's tombstone especially for Macedonians in Pest", *Neos Ellinomnimon*, vol. 8, 1911, pp. 462-481. Entre Horvath, "Neo-Hellenic studies in Hungary", *Nea Estia*, vol. 21, 1937, pp. 651-661. Entre Horvath, "Cultural activity of Hellenic Diaspora. I. Greeks in Hungary", *Nea Estia*, vol. 28, 1940, pp. 926-931 and 1005-1009. Ivan Hajnocy, *The History of Hellenism of Kecskemet, Hungary-Hellenic Studies*. No 8, Budapest 1939. Piroska Prosser, *Tombstone inscriptions of Greeks at Hungarian cemeteries*, Hungary-Hellenic Studies. No 19, Budapest 1942. Them. Volidis, "Unpublished correspondence regarding Tokaia's Greek Community", *Epetiris Eterias on Byzantium Studies*, Athens, vol. 22, 1952, pp. 75-81. Ap. E. Vakalopoulos, *The West Macedonians during the Turkish occupation*, Thessaloniki 1958, p. 8. Odon Fuves, "Census of the Greek foreigners of Pest's Prefecture. (Researches in the Archives of Pest's Prefecture)", *Makedonika*, Thessaloniki, vol. 5, 1963, pp. 194-241., Odon Fuves, *The Greeks of Hungary*, Institute for Balkan Studies, no 75, Thessaloniki 1965.

² Ph. Eliou, *Hellenic Bibliography of 19th century. Books and Pamphlets*. Vol. First 1801-1818, Athens 1997.

Hungary, wrote and translated many books in the Greek language, which some remained unpublished and others published later. For example he translated from Latin to Greek the book of Gyorgi Marothi, “Method of Astrognosias”, which was printed later in 1815 in Pest of Hungary in the printing house of Thomas Trattner and the book “Nea Hellas”, which was published by Georgios Kremos in 1872 in Athens.

Zaviras knew, as he writes, that “very few medical books were published in the Greek language”- indeed eight medical books had been published until then³. That’s why he translated and published in Greek the book of Professor of Anatomy at the University of Pest Samuel Ratz, “Medical Exhortations” (Ιατρικαί παραινήσεις), Pest 1787. Characteristically he writes that “seeing the shortage of medical Greek books and prompted by many people, I want to make the effort to translate this wise book, which is an essay of the excellent physician Samuel Ratz, who teaches Anatomy in the University of Pest and is the writer of many books”.



Zaviras’ translation was in the popular Greek language so as to be understood by the general public, a point that shows Zaviras’ enlightening role. He dedicated the book to the writer, Professor Samuel Ratz by writing a text in Latin and Greek. Also an epigram to Samuel Ratz is registered. We notice that the prototype of Ratz’s book was published in Pest in 1778.

Zaviras notes that the writer methodically and briefly described the symptoms and therapy of diseases, so that every one who is not a doctor to be able to refer to it for advice. Nevertheless he mentions that he didn’t translate the names of the herbs of the 183 prescriptions in the popular Greek language, but wrote them in ancient Greek and Latin. At the end of his book he added an explicative catalog of words and terms to be comprehended by ordinary people.

Samuel Ratz, (1744-1807), was Professor of Anatomy at the University of Pest and writer of many books. In Zaviras’ library⁴ were found two more books of Ratz: “*A physiologianak rovid summaja*”, Pest 1789, and “*Orvosi Praxis*”, Buda 1801, but not the prototype of the book of “Medical Exhortations” (Ιατρικαί παραινήσεις), which was published in the Hungarian language in Pest in 1778.

³ Dem. Karaberopoulos, *The medical European knowledge in the Greek region, 1745-1821*, Athens, 2003, p. 68.

⁴ Entre Horvart, *Life and works of Georgios Zaviras*, Boudapest 1937, p. 40. Andras Graf, *Catalogue of Georgios Zaviras library in Budapest*, Budapest 1935.

Also in 1787 Zaviras published the book “*Ονοματολογία Βοτανική*”, “*Botanical nomenclature*” in four languages, ancient and modern Greek, Latin and Hungarian, and in which are included the names of 771 pharmaceutical herbs. In the preface he writes about the cause of that book’s publishing. He notes that “my illnesses for long and many times, which have consumed about half of my life, became my teachers” and they have greatly contributed to writing this book. In practice Doctors wrote the names of herbs in their prescriptions in ancient Greek or Latin, as for example “μαλάχη, αλθαία, ανθεμίδα, malvan, salviuim, chamaemilum” and therefore the patients believed that all these herbs were very rare and originated from as far as Arabia or America, but in reality these herbs, as Zaviras emphasizes, are in our fields and we walk on them. He further supplements that “my extensive experience became my teacher and without paying I have found the herbs under my feet, which I previously bought by paying a lot of money to the pharmacies”.

All these were the cause for him to write his book with the names of the herbs in four languages: Ancient and Popular Greek, Latin and Hungarian. He published this book in order for everyone to know the ordinary name of the herb when he read it in Doctor’s prescriptions, when the names of the herbs are in Latin or Ancient Greek and therefore have the ability to make his own medicines with his known herbs. Specifically, Zaviras in his preface emphasizes that his printed book is the first attempt which has been made on Botany in the Greek language in recent years.

Researchers have shown that the names of the 771 herbs, which are included in “*Botanical nomenclature*”, Zaviras collected them from many foreign scientific books and especially from the book of J. Csapo, *Uj fuves es virages Magyar kert, Pozsonyban 1775*, which was Zaviras’ basic source and model⁵.

Additionally we mark that except the two previously mentioned Zaviras’ books, about three decades later in Budapest other Greek medical books were published. Precisely Demetrios Panayotou from the town Siatista of Macedonia, Greece, during his studies in his fourth year at the University of Hungary published in Pest in 1822 in the Greek language his studies “Brief physiology, and also referring to magnetism”⁶, “Treatise on soul’s actions”⁷.

The following year, in 1823, another medical book was published in Budapest in the Greek language, titled “*Treatise on Physiology. Volume 1. Containing Shortened History of Physiology translated from*

⁵ Entre Horvath, i. e. pp. 55-59. Fuves, Odom, “Hungarian-Greek medical relation in the 18-19th centuries”, *Balkan Studies*, vol. 6, 1965, pp.79-82.

⁶ Entre Horvath, *Hungary-Hellenic Bibliography*, Budapest 1940, no. 48, p. 46.

⁷ National Greek Library, no FLS 1689*.

*Latin, in Pest, Publishing House of Th. Trattner 1823*⁸. Translator of that book was Giorgios Poullios from Tirnavos of Thessaly, Greece, a student in the fourth year of Medicine at the University of Hungary. The translation was made from the book of the “famous” Michael Lenhossek, (1773-1840), who was Professor of Physiology and Anatomy at the University of Pest during the period 1809-1818 and after that he took the position of Professor G. Prochaska (1749-1820) at the University of Vienna. Poulios mentions that his translation at some parts is brief, because, as he explains, he was engaged in the publishing of Lenhossek’s “Physiology”.

We mark that the Greek famous journal “*Hermes Logios*”, in 1819, p. 924, mentions the five volume Lenhossek’s “*Physiologia medicinalis*”, Pesta 1816-1818, with the information that is taught at the University of Pest. Also in following year 1820, p. 660, notes that Lenhossek remains a Professor at the University of Vienna. It is pointed out that Poulios’ ambitious plan to translate and publish in the Greek language the five volume book “Physiology” of Lenhossek was never published and has not yet found a relevant manuscript.

Conclusion: During the last decades of the 18th century is ascertained, a case of Hungarian-Greek medical relation by the translation from Hungarian to Greek and the publishing in Budapest medical books, and this case is repeated later in 1823.

⁸ Entre Horvath, *Hungary-Hellenic Bibliography*, Budapest 1940, no. 49, p. 46.