



# Journal of Intercultural Management and Ethics

## JIME

ISSN 2601 - 5749, ISSN-L 2601 - 5749

published by

Center for Socio-Economic Studies and Multiculturalism

Iasi, Romania

[www.csesm.org](http://www.csesm.org)

## Special Editor

### Professor Beatrice Gabriela Ioan, PhD, MD

Grigore T.Popa University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Iasi, Romania

E-mail: ioanbml@yahoo.com

#### TABLE OF CONTENT

Editorial .....	3
Beatrice Gabriela Ioan	
Ethical Approaches on the Mandatory Vaccination in the Pandemic Context (Romania Case).....	5
Andreea-Iulia Someșan, Ion Copoeru	
Early Approaches in Management of Sars-Cov-2 Infection.....	19
Isabela-Ioana Loghin, Adriana-Florina Bahnă, Oana-Manuela Secrieru, Irina-Margareta Nistor, Irina-Cristina Nicolau, Liviu Jany Prisăcariu, Florin Roșu, Victor Daniel Dorobăț, Cristin-Ioan Loghin, Carmen-Mihaela Dorobăț	
Giving Birth during the Pandemic. How The Decision to Transform Certain Hospitals In Dedicated Covid-19 Medical Units Impacted Women on Psychological Level .....	25
Alexandra Ștefania Nadane	
Evangelicalism in Uganda: Implications for Public Health and Bioethics.....	33
Sana Loue, Francis Bajunirwe	
The Contribution of Ethics to the Development of the Healthcare System .....	51
Cornelia Margareta Gășpărel	
Iatrogenesis Induced by Risk Reduction in Health Care.....	59
Mircea Gelu Buta	
Ethical Contributions in Preserving the Dignity of the Terminal Patient .....	65
Elena Toader, Andreea Decusara, Mirela Pîscuc, Tudor Winsinger	
Ethical Aspects of the Institutionalization Process of Children from Outbreaks of Tuberculosis .....	71
Rodica Gramma, Elena Cernăuțeanu, Adriana Paladi	
Profession, Vocation, Mission or Work. The Ancient Physician and the Contemporary Physician-Parallel Lives .....	77
Orsolya Horber, K.Zilahi	

# PROFESSION, VOCATION, MISSION OR WORK. THE ANCIENT PHYSICIAN AND THE CONTEMPORARY PHYSICIAN-PARALLEL LIVES

Orsolya Horber<sup>1\*</sup>, K.Zilahi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Praxis Dr.Horber-Dr.Zilahi, Satu-Mare, Romania

\*corresponding author, e-mail: praxis@horber-zilahi.ro

## Abstract

In troubled times we return to the origins. Who are we, the physicians? Where did we start and where did we get from? We will approach the method of comparison used by Plutarch in *Parallel Lives*. Doctors (*iatros*) have already been active in ancient Greece and Europe, but there is still a profession today and the differences, at first sight, are significant. However, the image is much more complex and nuanced. Drawing a parallel portrait between the ancient physician (Ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, Judaism and Early Christianity), respectively the professional doctor in our globalized, contemporary world of technology, we can observe that not much has changed and the transformations have not been so accentuated. Almost always only the context has changed.

**Keywords:** ancient physician, contemporary physician, method of comparison, parallel lives

## Introduction

When we decided to present the ancient and contemporary physician, we anticipated that it would be relatively easy work.

The history of Europe is full of events, changes, turbulent periods, which have led from Pandora's box (from that all evils, troubles and diseases have spread everywhere on land and sea) to the post-industrial, globalized world, to the world of advanced technology, to modern diagnostic equipment, to sequencing and immunotherapy. However, doctors (*iatros*) have already been active in ancient Greece and Europe, but medicine is still a profession today, and the differences, at first sight, are significant. However the image is much more complex and nuanced.

To our surprise, studying the historical sources and the Greek, respectively Roman mythology, we observe that the ancient doctors ("old doctors") are not so different from the "new doctors". On a deeper analysis, we can notice that not much has changed (especially in the doctor-patient relationship), and the transformations have not been so accentuated. Except for one condition, what we will reach and return to that in conclusions of our work.

Therefore, starting from the generalities we try to point to the concrete.

In troubled times we return to the origins. Who are we, the physicians? Where did we start and where did we get from?

## I. Approach and method

Starting from the historical context we will present the education, the medical activity, the personality, respectively the change of the doctor's life over time.

We will work with the method used by Plutarch in "*Parallel Lives*". The genre of "comparison" is deeply rooted in the ancient Greek tradition - the competition and rivalry also appears in the classical Greek comedy (for example, the competition of Aischulos and Euripides in Aristophanes' *Frogs*), later in the historical and philosophical writings (such as in

the debate of Persian military rulers at Herodotos).

The comparison also occurs in Roman literature and rhetoric, but the most popular is Plutarch's work. "Parallel Lives" presents simultaneously a Greek and Roman personality and will become often quoted especially in Renaissance and Enlightenment. Petrarch still does not know him, Dante notice only as Traianus' teacher, but later his ideas on education (or theses associated with Plutarch) appeared in works of Erasmus, Melanchthon, Rousseau, Goethe, Schiller (Borzsak, 1965).

Plutarch was born in the 40's AD in Chaeronea, Boeotia, from a wealthy family. He traveled in ancient Greece, studied philosophy and mathematics at Athens and it must be noted his close connection with Delphoi, an important place of ancient medicine. Plutarch lived in Rome too and received Roman citizenship. However, his works will be born not in Rome, the cosmopolitan city, but in Chaeronea, in the province.

Amyot's biographies in North's English translation (1579) were an inspiration for several personalities of Shakespeare's dramas (Coriolanus, Julius Caesar, Antonius and Cleopatra, Timon of Athens). Old and modern philologists have hearty and interesting discussions about the heroes of Shakespeare's dramas: what was true, what was only an addition to Plutarch. After all, Plutarch's comparative genre lives still until today; R.W.Emerson conveyed that "all along there will be books, from time to time Plutarch will be discovered again and again" (Borzsak, 1965).

This method we will use in our essay and learning from ancient masters we will draw a parallel between the life and work of similar personalities. In our case the profession is identical, and as in Plutarch's work, the period when those presented live is very far and different.

## **II. Some mythological data and historical context**

### **Asclepios- the god of healing and medicine**

According to Homeros, Asclepios was a noble "man" from Thesalia, so a "human", who received exquisite education from Kheiron, the bright, gifted centaur. According to Hesiodos or Ovidius, Asclepios was the son of god Apollo and the daughter of King Koronis. He learned the art of hunting and healing, namely resurrecting the dead with the blood of Gorgo Medusa, a gift from the goddess Athene. So he became a well-known healer. But his activity was in contradiction with the aims of Hades (the god of death), who together with Moira (Parca) Clotho made a complaint to Zeus, considering that Asclepios work against death is an implication in the affairs of the gods. Dissatisfied with the fact that "humans" become immortal, like the gods, Zeus punished Asclepios killing him by lightning. Apollo fought for his son's death, sacrificing Zeus' helpers, the cyclops. In the end, Zeus changes his mind and transforms Asclepios into a god, so "immortal". Its symbol, the snake represents both the rebirth (by changing the skin), but in Greek tradition, the snake recognizes also the medicinal plants (Belfiore, 2008). Asclepios had two sons (according to mythology Machaon and Podaleirios participated at trojan war) and a daughter, Hygea.

### **Ancient Greece and medicine**

In the beginning, healers from ancient Greece traveled from town to town and purified the communities. In the 5th century BC, Hippocrates, whose family was considered a descendant of Asclepios, began studying medicine. His father, Heraclides gave his son a select, chosen education. After traveling in Greece and Asia Minor, Hippocrates returns to Kos, where he works, practices the art of healing and teaches the science to the next generation of healers.

The first schools of medicine in Greece appeared around 500 BC in Kroton, from here comes Democedes, the traveling physician. Later, in the 5th-4th centuries BC, rised the

Asclepios- schools in Kos, Knidos or Epidaurus.

When in 332 BC, Alexander the Great conquered Egypt, Greek medicine became inevitable heavily influenced by Egyptian medicine. So arrived the new medical schools: the Alexandrian, empiric, methodic and pneumatic (Szumowski, 1939).

### **Rome**

The birth of Rome (Urbs, the "city") is full of mythological hypothesis and theories. According to legend, Rome was founded in 753 BC. In the beginning, the Romans did not have gods associated with the art of healing. Only after a plague outbreak, they started to study the last three volumes of Sibylla-book and thenceforth they named the god Asclepios from Greeks under the name Aesculapius (Belfiore, 2008). The Roman nobles cure the family according to their old natural methods. The imperial period's encyclopaedist, Plinius the Elder (23 -79 AD) describes natural remedies in *Historia Naturalis*, like Varro in his work on agriculture. According to Plinius the Elder, the first Greek physician came to Rome in 219 BC, when " Lucius Aemilius and Marcus Livius were consuls" and his name was Arcagathus, son of Lysanias (*Historia Naturalis*. XXIX. Book).

Both Julius Cezar and Emperor Augustine offered citizenship to immigrant doctors, most of them of Greek origin (Fengren & Lomperis, 2017). When the Greek doctors would appear in Rome (they were the first professional, but foreign healers), the conservatives would rise up against their influence on the Roman folk healing (Marcus Portius Cato, Plinius the Elder).

Even so, the Greek, Hellenistic and Jewish influence in the medicine of imperial Rome is difficult to be stopped. Empiricism and the practice of theoretical medicine are becoming widespread. However, many doctors see in Asclepios or Aesculapius their protector, so the art of healing is still full of magical elements.

### **Early Christianity**

Early Christianity represented the care and healing around the monasteries. According to the principle of Christianity, the care of the body and the care of the soul (*cura animae et cura corporis*) is unique and becomes the duty of church. From the schools of Reims and Chartres (around the year 1000), where "*septem artes liberales*" is already taught and from the schools of the Benedictine monasteries (where liberal art is also taught, but especially theological issues), we reach the 12th century, when the first European universities (Bologna, Paris) rise. From the 12th century, the Church forbids the involvement of priests in healing ("*Ecclesia abhorret a sanguine*") (Szumowski, 1939).

The principle that declare the medical profession was related to obtaining an official diploma after studying at university, comes from the specific structure of the Middle Ages, which was very strictly constituted by social status, occupation and profession (see the guilds). Each profession had its own activity code and strict rules.

### **III. Discussions-Parallel Lives**

In ancient times the physicians were not well documented and we only know them from indirect sources: representations on painted vessels, medical instruments discovered in archaeological sites, descriptions from the Roman era, later from the monasteries' scripts. About the "new doctor" of the 21st century we have a lot of data from our own experiences, written and digitized data, after all, we live in this period. So we will focus on the description of the doctor of ancient Greece in the full glory of the history of the fifth- fourth century BC, about during and after the period of Pericle, Athens.

We will consider the parallel biographies as a game - a conversation and discussion in which we present the theses and arguments - more from antiquity, some propositions from

our time, is well known by all the contemporary medical world-, answers to the arguments, finally we will draw conclusions, we will reach a compromise or we must start the discussion again in a new, different essay.

## **Parallel lives - The " old doctor" from the 5th-4th century BC.**

### **1. Education**

As a child, the ancient doctor is taught to observe, to listen, to participate in select education in the company of clever, aware teachers. He is educated in the medical schools of Asclepios in Epidaurus or Kos, where he may be the disciple of Hippocrates or his sons: Drakon and Thessalos or his son-in-law Polubos. The future doctor is already breaking the theurgical tradition. The observation is the main element in his work, he is educated that the evolution of the diseases is not influenced by the attitude of the gods, but by the rational-empirical activity of the doctor (Szumowski, 1939). For example, he knows from "De morbo sacro" that the epilepsy is not a divine possession. He learns writings from "Corpus Hippocraticum" - "De aeris, aquis et locis", "De natura hominis" and discovers the mysteries of humoral pathology. The " old- student" studies also philosophy. Philosophy was an applied science in antiquity, an exercise, a way of life (*modus vivendi*) (Hadot, 2010).

### **2. Work and medical activity**

#### ***The doctor-patient relationship***

The physician often travels, he discovers new places and he is becoming an experienced traveler- doctor. Later, the consultation takes place in the physician's own house or in the patient's home. In this time the drawers were inexistent, so the instruments are hanging on the wall or on special supports. The medical office had to be light and airy as it was described in "De medico" in Corpus Hippocraticum. The office must show exactly as the other houses, only its utilization can denote the difference (Schott, 1993). According to the representation of a slate from the 2nd century BC, the doctor, and the patient sit on two chairs of the same height. The physician has a slate and a slate- pencil for notes and an assistant gives them the instruments. The duration of the consultation and the payment for the service were ensured by a contract. The cult of Asclepius also introduced the method of "healing sleep" in temples (*asklepieia*). The sleep (lat. *incubatio*) was preceded by a ritual bath in one of the numerous fountains in the temple. The patients were sleeping on ancient beds called "kline" (this word gave rise to new word clinics). Many votive boards have expressed gratitude for the miraculous cures.

### **3. Behavior during epidemics - public health**

In the work of Thucydides (History of the Peloponnesian War) appears a description of a plague epidemic in Athens - about 430 BC. Further research indicates that Thucydides describes the symptoms of several infectious diseases, because the plague appears in the western space only later (Schott, 1993), but definitely was an outbreak.

Certainly, the doctor is not involved in the treatment and stopping the spread of the outbreak, he has no obligation in this regard. Much later, during the Enlightenment period, physicians will appear as personalities and actors of public health (Outram, 2008).

### **4. The prognosis (Pronoia)**

According to Ferngren & Lomperis, the word *pronoia* means more than prognosis. It represents the patient's trust in the doctor, confidence that must be carefully built over time. This trust's important for the doctor - as in any profession - and it is important for the patient too (so he will know whether he will live or die). Trust in the physician was the only basis of

the doctor-patient relationship in a period when no diploma of license or authorization is required (Ferngren & Lomperis, 2017).

### 5. Malpractice

In ancient times the medicine was not regulated, controlled, supervised. Doctors did not have a very good reputation. In the Hippocratic writings (*Corpus Hippocraticum* born between 400 BC. and about 100 AD.) appear new rules through the doctors who have studied in medical schools trying to delineate themselves from the ignorant, uneducated healers. The consequence of a malpractice was at most a bad reputation. Already in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* exist rules for doctors against negative fame. They must study in medical schools, have a pleasant appearance and proper behavior, simple and practical clothing, being used both for healing activity and for walks in nature. In discussions, conversations and debates the doctor must have a serious, simple attitude, not to lose the temper and he must be balanced and equitable. The rules can be considered early medical ethics, as in the Hippocratic Oath. According to the original Oath, the physician who takes the oath is identified with a "clean and holy" life (this fact having no connection with the ancient philosophy, the significance of the oath increases, precisely by this requirement, in Christianity).

### Curriculum vitae of 21st-century physicians. "The new doctor". A few propositions.

After high school and baccalaureate, the young student (more or less knowledgeable about what he wants), follows the courses of the medical school, studies more the natural sciences, less the humanities, graduating the University by an examination of license. It follows the required curriculum: residency and specialized exam. No one can practice medicine without a diploma of license and authorization, becoming a member of the College of Physicians. The medical office needs health authorization, the work is regulated by laws. The medical activity is supervised in almost the smallest details - the obligations of the physician as a healthcare provider, contracts and payments, malpraxis, but here must be mentioned also the patient's rights law.

### IV. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that much has changed in the last 2000-2500 years. Civilizations and relationships, the meaning of place and use of time, research, science and diseases. One thing remained almost unchanged, the man.

Based on the comparison (parallel biography) of the doctor-patient relationship from the ancient and contemporary times, we emphasize three aspects:

1. The doctor with education either in medical schools or faculties is constant, his medical activity and his personality changed to a small extent.
2. The patient - to be sick it's the same always and everywhere
3. The doctor-patient relationship: the medical office, consultation, communication, diagnosis or prognosis are established with small differences almost identical. The success or the positive reputation, which brings more patients, respectively the malpractice, which brings negative fame is the result both in the ancient period and today either of the merits (arete), or of the accidental, of the blind luck, of the variable fate and fatality (*tukhe*). But one component has changed substantially: the system. The system in which doctors work. The system in which the doctor-patient relationship is realized. The system, which regulates or not, the system that supervises, verifies or not, the system that creates huge or smaller bureaucracy. And at this point, we arrive at the trial of the system against Josef K. in Kafka's novel "Jemand musste Josef K. verleundet haben, denn ohne dass er etwas Boses getan hatte, wurde er eines Morgens verhaftet" (Kafka, *Der Prozess*). "Somebody must have laid false

information against Josef K., for he was arrested one morning without having done anything wrong"- this is the first sentence of "The Trial" (Kafka, 2000). According to Kafka, the isolated, alienated individual or person (in our case physician) conflicts and fights with bureaucracy uselessly and hopelessly. In the end, all the works of Franz Kafka are against all the irrationalities of all periods and worlds.

Considering Greek mythology a starting point and source for European culture and medicine, we, all doctors, we can consider ourselves descendants of Asclepius, because we have acquired and inherited the secret medical knowledge and we will be the ones who teach these secrets to the next generations.

How can we define the activity of the doctor - profession, vocation, mission or work? It differs from person to person. It differs from one historical period to another. It differs even throughout the life of the physician: if it was a vocation, a profession at first, it can become work, even work for the benefit of the community at the end.

After all, as in the case of Asclepius, the gods will not leave unpunished those who try to save the humans from the death, those who try to know the mystery of immortality, in this way intervening in the affairs of the gods.

But we try and try again.

## References

- Belfiore, J. C. (2008). *A gorog es romai mitologia*. Larousse. p 104-106, Debrecen, Alföldi Nyomda
- Borzsak, I. (1965). Utoszo. in Plutarchosz. Parhuzamos eletrajzok. Fordította Mathe Elek, Magyar Helikon, 1636.
- Ferngren, G. B. & Lomperis, E. N. (2017). *Essential Readings in Medicine and Religion*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 53-54.
- Hadot, P. (2010). *A lelek iskolaja. Lelkigyakorlatok es okori filozofia*. Kairosz Kiado.
- Kafka, F. (2000). *The Trial*. Translation Idris Parry. Penguin Modern Classics.
- Outram, D. (2008). *Panorama iluminismului*. Bucuresti: ALL, 275.
- Schott, H. (1993). *A medicina kronikaja*. Budapest: Officina Nova, 34-41.
- Szumowszki, U. (1939). *Az orvostudomány története*. Budapest, 139, 168.