

BEING A PHYSICIAN IN MOESIA INFERIOR*

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Key words: Roman medicine, physicians, Moesia Inferior, medical instruments.

Abstract: This research tries to outline a part of daily life of the Roman province Moesia Inferior, very little surprised by the historical literature: medicine and the practitioners of this profession. It examines the spread of civilian physicians in the communities of the province, especially from inscriptions and discoveries of medical instruments in the tombs. We discuss also about the access arrangements in the branch, doctors' origin, local tradition for this specialization. The physicians identified, as well as the associations that are attested in the Greek cities, are evidences of a normal medical activity in Moesia Inferior, like in any other province of the Roman Empire of first to third century AD.

Cuvinte cheie: Medicina romană, medici, Moesia Inferior, instrumente medicale.

Rezumat: Cercetarea de față încearcă să contureze un aspect de viață cotidiană din provincia Moesia Inferior, puțin surprins de literatura de specialitate: medicina și practicanții acestei meserii. Se analizează răspândirea medicilor civili în comunitățile provinciei, în special pe baza inscripțiilor și a descoperirilor de instrumentar medical în morminte. Se pun în discuție, de asemenea, modalitățile de acces în această branșă, proveniența medicilor, tradiția locală pentru această meserie. Personajele identificate, dar și asociațiile de profil atestate în orașele grecești sunt dovezi ale unei activități medicale normale pentru orice provincie a Imperiului în secolele I-III p. Chr.

Respected, coveted, as well as controversial, the medical profession was recognized in Antiquity as being vital for the smooth development of individual or communal activities in society. The perception of the profession in itself, with the appreciations and the defamations which it has undergone, has been convincingly expressed in many writings from the Roman era, a period which acutely reflects our own preoccupations.¹

As with other cultural and scientific influences, it was the Greeks who introduced rational medicine to Rome.² Physicians attracted to Roman cities, as numerous missions organized for the teaching of medical techniques in prestigious Greek centres, were in a position to replace at least a proportion of the

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¹ Among many reviews, we just mention only some relevant opinions: Seneca appreciated physicians, whom he saw as close to the patients, true intellectual partners with outstanding capabilities (*De Beneficiis*, VI, 15-16). On the other side, Pliny the Elder was against doctors. He believed that „the physicians practice their knowledge at our risk and made experiments on the skin of the sick; the doctor is the only unpunished person in the case of manslaughter. In fact, they may even blame the patient for not respecting the treatment“ (*N.H.*, XXIX, 8). In the same context, Galenus made an observation that „many physicians talk about medicine without being able to show their skills“ (Galen, XIV, 649-650). The interest for this professional category is inferred also from Jus., *Digeste*, XXVII, 1, 6, 2-4; Jus. *Cod.*, X, 58, 9.

² The term „rational medicine“ was spread by Aulus Cornelius Celsus, who did not agree with a divine origin for disease and believed that praying to the gods for healing was not a solution. Celsus, *Med.*, *Proemium*; see also Penso 1984, p. 73.

priestly and magical medicine widely used by the Romans.³ Nevertheless, we are convinced that what was the mystical continued to insert itself artfully and subtly into medical activities and, sometimes, traditions replaced the science. In many cases, rational medicine coincided with popular medicine. However, authentic physicians have succeeded, in general, because a scientific approach convinced patients that “medicaments and drugs are the hands of the gods”.⁴ On the other hand, the central authorities seized on the direct relations between politics and health policy for the population, resulting in the inherent „purchase” or „manufacture” of doctors.

The employment of the first public physician by Rome, the Greek Archagathus, *vulnerarius medicus*, in 219 BC, meant the important recognition of the health care of specialist doctors.⁵ However, the medical profession in the republican era did not enjoy the support due from the state. Slaves, freedmen and foreigners (especially Greeks) were the majority practitioners in this profession.⁶ As late as Caesar, the involvement of the authorities was clear. This moment meant the significant growth in the number of physicians and, implicitly, of interest for medical practice and research.⁷ By obtaining the right of citizenship, they benefited from more immunities which aimed to encourage access to health care. The knowledge of physicians was, in practice, available at all social levels. At the imperial court they become indispensables⁸ and also in military units,⁹ in large cities as well as in smaller communities. If there was hardly a doctor in the town, he would be hired from outside. More than this, from the time of Severus Alexander, the basis of a medical teaching system financed by the State was put in place.¹⁰

Civilian physicians

Civilian physicians were generalists (*clinici*) or specialists,¹¹ that is to say specialists for every part of the body.¹² We are certain that eye specialists (*medicus ocularius*) (ιατρὸς ὀφθαλμικός)¹³ and surgeons

³ Penso 1984, p. 47-69; Önnarfors 1993, p. 157-224, with many examples from ancient literature.

⁴ The phrase belongs to Herophilus from Chalcedon, a founder of the famous Alexandrian medical school (fourth-third centuries BC).

⁵ Nutton 1981, p. 18; Nutton 1986, p. 38-39; Nutton 1993, p. 53.

⁶ André 1987, p. 33-36. For the status of doctors in Rome, see p. 97-179, but also Scarborough 1969 and Cappai 1983, p. 65-87. It was advanced the opinion even that all doctors in Rome were Greeks: Baker 2004, p. 41.

⁷ Suetonius (*Jul.*, 42) stated that the main advantage the doctors obtained was the fact that Caesar granted them citizenship and, hence, they had to pay less in taxes (*Omnes professos, et liberalium artium doctores, quo libentius et ipsi urbem incoherent, et coeteri appeterent, civitate donavit*). Augustus, Vespasian and Hadrian strengthened and increased privileges for doctors (Suet. *Aug.*, 59, Cassius Dio *Hist.*, LIII, 30), but also limited the number of those who could take advantage of these privileges in order to prevent abuses. For the decrees granted by Vespasian in the year 74 AD, see Oliver 1989, n°. 38, with comments at p. 121-123, and for those of Antoninus Pius, see Oliver 1989, p. 588-590.

⁸ Literary sources have kept the name of the personal physicians of emperors: Tiberius's (Caricles) - Tac., *Annales*, VI, 50, Nero's (Andromachus from Crete) - Galen, XIV, 232-233, Claudius's (Quintus Stertinus Senofontes from Cos, followed by Gaius Stertinus Senofontes and Scribonius Largus) - Tac., *Annales*, XII, 61 and 67, Trajan's (Criton) - Ioannes Lydus, *De magistratibus*, II, 28, Marcus Aurelius and then Commodus's (Galenus). For details see Cappai 1983, p. 78-79.

⁹ About physicians from army and treatment of war wounds it is already published a substantial literature: see Scarborough 1968, p. 254-261 and note 1 with bibliography; Nutton 1969, p. 260-270; Krug 1993, p. 204-208; Salazar 2000, especially p. 68-124 but, also, Baker 2004.

¹⁰ SHA, *Alexander Severus*, 44, 4. Against this source see Nutton 1977, p. 216-217.

¹¹ A passage from Cicero refers to this variety of specializations: *An tu existimas, cum esset Hippocrates, ille Cos, fuisse tum alios medicos qui morbis, alios qui vulneribus, alios qui oculis mederentur?*, Cic. *Ora.* III, 33. Specialization began to appear mainly in Imperial Roman times. Greek sources recorded little evidence of this.

¹² Penso 1984, p. 118. For surgery see also Michler 1969; *La chirurgia* 1975; for a more strict specialization in surgery see Künzl 1983a, p. 487-491; for ophthalmology Nielsen 1974 and Korać, 1986, p. 53-71; Rocca 2003, for brain diseases.

¹³ André 1987, p. 63-65; Nielsen 1974; Künzl 1983b, with references; Korać 1986, p. 53-71; Jackson 1996, 2228-2251. In terms of inscriptions, many are certified as specialists: Rome - CIL VI, 3987, 6192, 8909, 8910, 9605, 9606, 9607, 9608, 9609, 33157, 33880, AE 1924, 196; Italy - CIL V, 3156, 3940, 8320; CIL X, 6124; CIL XI, 742, 5400, 5441, 6232; North Africa - CIL VIII, 21105; Baetica - CIL II, 1737, 5055. See a doctor in the Mauritanian Cesarea: Samama 2003, n°. 459, note 17, p. 509.

(*chirurgus*) (χειρουργός)¹⁴ were the most widespread, but there is also evidence of other categories.¹⁵ Doctors were employed by communities as *medici publici*, or they serviced families with economical potential, like *domestici et familiares medici*.¹⁶ *Medici ambulatorum* had an interesting situation, also.¹⁷

Physicians discharged their duties in special spaces, in dispensing offices or surgeries for consultation (*taberna medicinae*, ἰατρεῖον) where they treated the sick, kept instruments and medicaments or consulted books.¹⁸

We cannot speak of the existence of hospitals or civil hospices during the period of the Principate. The first such institutions were set up quite late, in the Christian era, under the influence of religion.¹⁹

Medical practitioners could be attached to certain public institutions, such as circuses and theatres,²⁰ watching fights between gladiators,²¹ are present at sporting competitions,²² as well as in private institutions, such as the various professional associations (*collegia*).²³

As for the physicians of the government, there is a hierarchy of these, since in the inscriptions a *supra medicos* is recorded,²⁴ but also a *scriba medicorum*.²⁵ The organizational chart of the doctors of the imperial house provides information about a *decurio medicorum*,²⁶ indicating that these medical practitioners were organized in *decuriae*, but there were also more ἀρχιτροί, official court physicians.²⁷

In the following pages we will evaluate the importance of this profession in the province of Moesia Inferior. This will allow us to draw some conclusions about individual and collective health care in this part of the Roman world. The goal is to identify the civilian physicians who served the communities in the province, based on the sources we have at our disposal.²⁸

¹⁴ Samama 2003, n°. 381 mentions two surgeons who worked in the year 227 AD in a town near Tyre, in Arabia. Then, see for Rome CIL VI, 3986; 4350, 33882 and for Italy CIL IX, 3895. Surgeons are certified by different names in the sources: *chirurgus*, *medicus chirurgus*, *vulnerarius*, *vulnerum medicus*, *chirurgus venarius*: Jackson 1993, p. 91.

¹⁵ *Medicus auricularius*: CIL VI, 8908; AE 1910, 71; one *medicus o(ssa)?*, in Gummerus 1932, p. 62, n°. 226. The instruments found in graves show a significant spread of specialists in lichenotomy, and a smaller expansion of dentists: Künzl 1983a, p. 487-491 and Jackson 1993, p. 86.

¹⁶ Cappai 1983, p. 78.

¹⁷ Doctors, like any other category of free professional employees, were always traveling, either to acquire new knowledge, or to practice in various cities. See Samama 2003, p. 25-26, with details and references for the Greek period. They also played an important role in celebrations and temporary fairs, especially in the border regions.

¹⁸ Hyg., *Fab.*, CXLVII. In a relief from Ostia, a doctor is found sitting in his office: Penso 1984, p. 133, fig. 83. See also Samama 2003, p. 37-38.

¹⁹ For details see Miller 1984, p. 54-56; Miller 1985; Samama 2003, n°. 328 and p. 37: an epitaph of fifth century AD, from Euchaita, in Pontus, mentions a doctor who worked in a hospital.

²⁰ Vit., *De Arch.*, V.9.

²¹ A certain Trophimos, a doctor who cared for the wounds of fighters in the arena, is mentioned in a text from Cos, first-second centuries AD: Samama 2003, n°. 30, p. 135. A *medicus ludus Matutinus* see in CIG 6658 (Samama 2003, n°. 473) and, other one, in CIL VI, 10172; for details about this category of doctors see Robert 1940. Also, consult Scribonius Largus, a Roman doctor and pharmacologist from the first century AD. He indicates the measures taken by surgeons to heal the wounds of gladiators: Scrib.Larg., *Comp.*, LXXI and LXXVII.

²² They are mainly reported in gymnastics competitions. The doctor Heleis from Thyatire was in charge of an association of gymnasts. The inscription dates from second-third centuries AD.: Samama 2003, n°. 229. For more information about what treatments were applied to athletes see Pliny, *NH*, 28, 237. See also Samama 2003, n°. 37, 38.

²³ After *decuriones* of *collegium fabrum tignariorum* appears L. Tettius Clycon (Glycon?), *medicus*: CIL XI, 1355. See for comments Gummerus 1932, p. 64, n°. 235.

²⁴ CIL VI, 3982 (M. Livius Liviae l(ibertus) Orestes, *supra medicos*).

²⁵ T. Aurelius Telesphorus is recorded as the secretary of the association of doctors in CIL VI, 9566 and in a Greek inscription from the third century AD, perhaps a translation from Latin or vice versa: Samama 2003, n°. 485.

²⁶ CIL VI, 3984; Penso 1984, p. 114.

²⁷ About *arhiatroi* as personal physicians of political leaders in Antiquity see Nutton 1977, p. 193-198. The first evidence of an *arhiatros* was made in the first part of the second century BC, with a note about Crateros from Antiochia, a doctor of the Seleucids: Samama 2003, p. 42. In Rome, Andromachus, Nero's physician, is the first *arhiatros* whose sources record: Penso 1984, p. 114.

²⁸ We will not refer here to the military physicians of Lower Moesia, who will receive special attention in another article. See for this subject CIL III, 7449; ISM V, 103, 170, 299; AE 1995, 1350.

Civilian physicians from Moesia Inferior

Inscriptions discovered provide us with most information about the activities performed by the civilian physicians from Moesia Inferior. Archaeological excavations and several literary sources also have much to tell us. Moreover, the same hierarchy of sources revealing medical activity is found throughout the Empire.

A votive inscription from Novae (Svištov, Bulgaria), from the second half of the second century AD, reveals information about Ae(lius) Macedo, *med(icus)* (appendix, n° 1).²⁹ Since there is no information stating that he was part of a military unit, we can conclude that he was a civilian physician. A military hospital, a *valetudinarium*, has been identified in the Novae legionary. It functioned in the second and third centuries AD.³⁰ The inscription revealing information about the doctor Macedo was found just in this unique construction from Moesia province. Military physicians usually belonged to a particular military structure such as a legion, an auxiliary fortress or a naval unit.³¹ It is therefore most likely that we are speaking about a civilian physician who carried out his duties in a military hospital. This was not a unique case throughout the Empire.³²

Like most votive inscriptions raised by doctors, this one is dedicated to the gods of the medical arts. Unfortunately, apart from the two divinities, Asclepius and Hygia, who are honored by this monument, we know no other details about this physician.³³

A man named Διό[δω]ρος, perhaps a civilian physician as well, seems to have been mentioned in another inscription from the Novae region, also discovered in the military hospital of the I Italica legion (appendix, n° 2).³⁴ The fragment, in Greek, is dated after 212 AD.

T. Rascanius Fortunatus, of the Pollia tribe, originally from Faventia, Emilia Romagna, region of Italy, was also very likely to have been a community physician (appendix, n° 3).³⁵ In local communities, well-known doctors were in especially great demand. Usually, the local administration welcomed qualified people who wished to settle in a town of another province. On his arrival in the Moesian town, the local authorities probably employed this physician on the basis of his professional qualifications.

However, to avoid the intrusion of impostors, the city council found ways of testing those who were applying for medical positions. A series of tests of skills and knowledge, several public presentations and speeches, were used in the selection process. Since the Hellenistic period, the physicians had to earn their place in the community, as the community was responsible for their salaries.³⁶

The authorities in Troesmis hired the physician we are discussing in the second century. *Municipium Troesmis* was the result of the twofold development between the *canabae* settlement raised near the legionary fortress of the V Macedonica legion and the *civitas* (local community).³⁷ Unfortunately, we cannot date exactly our epigraphic document with *medicus* Rascanius to know if he was active in the *municipium*,³⁸ *canabae* or *civitas*. The way in which medical assistance was provided between these last two communities, leading to the formation of the city of Troesmis, is a question that cannot be clarified in this moment. We can only assume that since they had different administrative institutions,³⁹ they had different medical structures as well. This situation raise new questions such as: who served the *canabae*? Military or civilian physicians? Or, what kind of relationships existed between

²⁹ Kolendo 1998, p. 62-64; AÉ 1998, 1134.

³⁰ Press 1985, p. 367-371; Press 1987, p. 171-184; Press 1990, p. 327-334.

³¹ The epigraphic sources indicate different appellatives for the military *medici*: *medicus legionis*, *medicus cohortis*, *medicus alae*, *medicus duplicarius*, *medicus castrensis*, *medicus castrorum*, *medicus miles*, *medicus ordinarius*, *medicus ordinarius legionis* are the most frequent. See Scarborough 1968, p. 258-259 and note 27.

³² AÉ 1929, 215; AÉ 1969-1970, 502.

³³ The Macedo cognomen was quite widespread throughout the Empire. Hadrian or Antoninus Pius bestowed citizenship on them: Onomasticon III, p. 42.

³⁴ IGLNovae, 176; Kolendo 1998, p. 64 and note 43.

³⁵ ISM V, 193.

³⁶ About the salaries see Samama 2003, n°. 47-53. In addition to the remuneration from public funds, the doctor could benefit from fees from the patients: Cohn-Haft 1956, *passim*.

³⁷ Vulpe 1953, p. 557-582; Suceveanu, Barnea 1991, p. 50.

³⁸ It is most likely that the city of Troesmis obtained municipality status between the years 179-180 AD: Aparaschivei 2010, p. 111.

³⁹ ISM V, 158.

physicians in military units and those in nearby civilian communities?⁴⁰ The general belief is that there was a mutual interest in establishing a connection between the two backgrounds, civil (consisting of the *canabae*, *civitates* and *municipia*) and military. Evidence is being found at Novae, where, as we saw above, a civilian physician was working in the military hospital. On the other hand, civilians needed the expertise of a military doctor, a specialist in surgery, who had the knowledge to treat wounded soldiers. For the army physicians this collaboration was a way of improving and using their knowledge of women's or children's diseases, as they looked forward to retiring from the military and continuing their work in a civilian environment.⁴¹

Anyway, Fortunatus Rascanius worked in the community of Troesmis until he was 50 years old. His followers, freedmen Rascania Phoebe and T. Rascanius Euthycus, wanted to highlight that fact in the monument they built.

M. Octavius Aper, originally from Nicomedia, is identified as a *medicus* in a funerary inscription from Pliska, Bulgaria, from the second-third centuries AD (appendix, n° 4).⁴² The cognomen also reflects his Greek origins.⁴³ It is possible that he worked in a Greek city from the Black Sea coast, but, more probably, he served in Nicopolis ad Istrum. It is well known that, in the city founded by Trajan, both the elite and many members of the middle and lower classes came from Asia Minor and especially from the two cities of Bithynia, Nicaea and Nicomedia.⁴⁴ Moreover, Nicomedia was recognized for its rich cultural and scientific traditions, including in the medical field.⁴⁵

The citizens living on the West coast of Pontus Euxinus all had good reasons to have their entire medical system thoroughly reorganized, considering the tradition recorded in the Hellenistic period.⁴⁶ However, Ovid suggests that when he fell sick during his exile in Tomis, no one was assigned to his medical care when he needed it.⁴⁷ But, the text has a slight note of exaggeration and a desire to impress the reader. It cannot therefore be considered fully truthful.

At Tomis, as in other Greek cities on the western Black Sea coast, organized medical activity is well documented in the Hellenistic and, then, the Roman period. In an inscription found at Enisala (Tulcea county, Romania), a certain Κλαδᾱϊος leaves a personal description to his descendants in the form of a metric epitaph (appendix, n° 5).⁴⁸ Proudly declaring himself a citizen of Tomis, he admits that he has mastered the arts of Hippocrates. It is possible that this physician from the second century AD studied medicine in a southern (Mediterranean) city, where he could have learnt the Dorian dialect used in his text.

Medical instruments found in a tomb at Tomis confirm the fact that we are dealing with another medical practitioner, who operated in the late second and early in the following century.⁴⁹ The four pieces identified show great artistry.⁵⁰

⁴⁰ A particular case in this respect is the one of doctor of the legion VII Claudia from Drobeta. Marcus Valerius Longinus was honoured by the Senate of the city of Drobeta, probably for services brought to the civilian community: IDR II, 42.

⁴¹ Baker 2004, p. 52.

⁴² AÉ 1935, 70; Conrad 2004, p. 211-212, n° 316.

⁴³ Corsten, Marschall Fraser, Matthews 2010, p. 277, and about the spread of this *cognomen* in the Roman provinces see also Onomasticon I, p. 138.

⁴⁴ Tačeva 1969, p. 116-117.

⁴⁵ The school of Menodotus from Nicomedia, developed in the middle of the second century AD, is famous: Perilli 2004. Also, St. Panteleimon lived in Nicomedia and became *patronus* of the doctors. For details see St. Pantaleon 2010; about the physicians from Nicomedia see in Samama 2003, n° 307, 308, 309. Schools with a tradition of medical education in Asia Minor were located at Smyrna (Samama 2003, n° 193-198), Pergamum (Samama, 2003, n° 185-190), Ephesus (Samama 2003, n° 203-223) and Cnidus. However, to call these medical schools is in fact not quite appropriate, since, in the Greek world, there were, in fact, different groups of practitioners and teachers at schools with different theories: Nutton 1995, 19.

⁴⁶ We know about a few doctors from Istria in the third to the second centuries BC: ISM I, 4, 16 and Avram 2000-20001, p. 339-344; then ISM I, 26 and 32.

⁴⁷ Ov., *Tristia*, III, 3, 10: *Non domus apta satis, non hic cibus utilis aegro, nullus, Apollinea qui levet arte malum.*

⁴⁸ Samama 2003, n° 97, p. 196; SEG 30, 1980, 844. See also Avram, *Prosopographia*, n° 3145. In Kirova 2010, p. 83 it is used the form Σκλάδατος, apud Danoff 1931-1934, p. 89, n°1.

⁴⁹ Bucovală 1977, p. 91-96.

⁵⁰ It is about a scalpel, two handles, probably from some long needles and a needle or a cauterizing instrument; they are decorated with a silver inlay: Bucovală 1977, fig. 1-6; Künzl 1983b, fig. 87.

In Histria, the evidence of medical activity is obvious from Hellenistic period. An inscription from the second century BC attracts our particular attention because it provides proof of the working of the recruitment process for physicians.⁵¹ A doctor arrived from Cyzicus and held several public lectures in the city's γυμνάσιον,⁵² in which he tried to prove his abilities, but also aimed to attract customers. This practice was common. Poets or artists, practicing their rhetorical skills, used the same technique.

In the Roman period, in contrast to third and the second centuries BC, we know no names of doctors from Histria. However, we have valuable proof that there was an association of physicians in the second half of the second century AD (appendix, n° 6).⁵³ An inscription referring to the organization of physicians serving the community was made in honour of the benefactress of the city, the Aba priestess. She offered several gifts to professional people in the city, who included physicians. The number of medical practitioners in Histria must have been quite significant.⁵⁴ The medical profession is mentioned with other professional categories, including teachers.

The city of Dionysopolis provides relevant evidence about medical colleges from the second and third centuries AD. Two honorary decrees, one from the end of the second century and the beginning of the third one (appendix, n° 7),⁵⁵ and the other one from the first part of the third century (appendix, n° 8),⁵⁶ dedicated to the same benefactor, set the medical association and the teachers' association alongside each other.

A physician who worked in Asia Minor, but was originally from Dionysopolis, is a special case. An elegiac distich from the second - third centuries AD, found at Vasada, between Pisidia and Lycania, recalls him (appendix, n° 9).⁵⁷ This physician, Dionysus by name, died more than 1000 km away from his country of origin. Dionysus provides us with a classic example of the itinerant physician.

Archaeological sources confirm sustained medical activity in Dionysopolis. Several medical and surgical instruments made of bronze and bone, as well as other specialized vessels with pharmaceutical substances were discovered in a family tomb of the second - third centuries AD.⁵⁸ It is most probable that one of the deceased was a physician who had worked in the city. On the basis of the inventory discovered, another tomb in the same city area seems to have been that of a doctor.⁵⁹ Moreover, especially in the first three centuries AD, the burial of physicians with the tools they used during their lifetime was a widespread practice throughout the Empire.⁶⁰

Odessos (modern Varna) records the name of Asclepiades, the town's physician during the second century AD (appendix, n° 10).⁶¹ From a prominent family of medical practitioners, he had several political and religious functions.⁶² The ἀρχιατρός appellation provides further evidence of the existence

⁵¹ ISM I, 26.

⁵² About γυμνάσιον as conference place in Samama 2003, p. 441, note 44 with references, but also Debru 1995, p. 69-82.

⁵³ ISM I, 57. The opportunity for doctors to associate was recognized by decrees promulgated by Augustus and later by Vespasian.

⁵⁴ See the recommended number of doctors who were benefiting from tax exemptions and other rights, as Antoninus Pius issued this edict in order to limit fraud: Oliver 1989, p. 588, appendix 8 (Modestinus, *Digest* 27.1.6.2 and 7).

⁵⁵ IGB I², 15 bis.

⁵⁶ IGB I², 15 ter. Several institutions are mentioned, such as the city Council, the seven tribes, with the ἀγορανόμοι, doctors, teachers, merchants and artists' association.

⁵⁷ SEG 19, 1963, 866 and IGB I², 50, but also Samama 2003, n°. 345, p. 444 and Dana 2008, p.12, note 14.

⁵⁸ Škorpil 1912, p. 101-134; Tafrahi 1927, p. 31-42; Hansel, Künzl 1980, p. 419. See details about the inventory in Künzl 1983b, p. 110-112 and Dana 2008, p. 113. It is about tweezers, lancets, spoons, two probes with handle, three surgical instruments with handles of bone, bronze knives, bronze box that contained various drugs.

⁵⁹ It is a kind of a suction cup: Tončeva 1954, p. 74 (*non vidi*); Hassel, Künzl 1980, p. 419 and Künzl 1983b, p. 110. About this kind of instruments see Künzl 1982, p. 517, note 15

⁶⁰ For more information about medical instruments from the first centuries of the Christian era see Jackson 1997, p. 223-248, and for the instruments found in the graves, see Künzl 1983; Hassel, Künzl 1980, p. 403-421; Künzl 1983b; Künzl 1984a, p. 59-65; Künzl 1984b, p. 204, fig.1 which contains a map of doctors' graves throughout the Empire in the first to the third centuries AD.; see also Künzl 1996, p. 2440-2442.

⁶¹ IGB I², 150; Samama 2004, n°. 94.

⁶² He was a priest of Θεὸς Μέγας and γυμνασίαρχος but was also acclaimed by the people as a ἀριστεύς.

and functioning of medical associations in Roman times.⁶³ One cannot be sure that he was in charge of the medical association, but it is certain that he had an important role in the structure which provided medical care in the city. In this case, it seems that this is the official title given to the city doctor.⁶⁴ Ἀρχιατροί, known as civilian physicians in the Greek cities in the Eastern part of the Empire, became common from the second century AD onwards,⁶⁵ when Antoninus Pius set some limits on the number of those who benefited from exemptions.⁶⁶ The term is found in documents until the fifth and sixth centuries AD.⁶⁷ To our knowledge no other ἀρχιατροί are recorded in Moesia Inferior.

In the city area of Odessos at least four Roman tombs with grave goods belonging to possible physicians were discovered. It is about medical and pharmaceutical instruments, but also other glassware necessary for storage and preparation of drugs. In the first grave, a probe and a fragment of a *speculum* from the second - third centuries AD were found.⁶⁸ In another grave from the same period, it was possible to identify a suction cup,⁶⁹ the fragment of a scalpel and wafers for the preparation of ointments.⁷⁰ Another tomb contained a booklet for preparing medicines, as well as a medical instrument, probably an ear probe.⁷¹ The fourth tomb, also the richest, dated from the third century and contained medical instruments, specialized glass bottles and traces of drugs.⁷²

In Callatis, no inscriptions confirming the presence of physicians have been discovered. However, the sarcophagus of a wealthy woman, from the second century AD, revealed a spoon-probe that could be used in medical or pharmaceutical activities, alongside several glass vases and a few spoons made of bone.⁷³ It is obvious that these objects could have been also used for cosmetic purposes. However, it is known that medical practitioners may have been trained in the preparation of cosmetic products and acquired the relevant skills.

In Marcianopolis, too, the discovery of further grave goods which contained simple or highly complex medical devices, guaranteed the presence of medical practitioners, even if there are no physicians' names attested. These three tombs, dating from the end of the second century and the beginning of the third century AD, contained various probes, instruments for dissection, scalpels, and forceps, as well as other accessories used in the processing of powders or ointments.⁷⁴ The most spectacular medical kit from Marcianopolis and perhaps one of the richest and most varied from the whole territory of the Empire was found in the ruins of a house which was set on fire in the fifth century AD. According to the author who brought them into circulation, the approximately 32 instruments and accessories, most of them made from bronze, some of them with silver or gold inlays, belonged to a physician who would have inherited them from his ancestors.⁷⁵ Like most fragments found in the region, the instrumentation is typical of the third century AD.

From their diversity, complexity, technical and artistic craftsmanship, and the sheer number of objects found, we believe what we are dealing with a medical practitioner's office (ιατρεῖον) that had functioned at least since the third century. This place probably facilitated the professional activity of numerous physicians, under the tutelage of the city. This would explain the transmission of objects over

⁶³ RE II, 1896, p. 463-464.

⁶⁴ Samama 2003, p.194.

⁶⁵ About ἀρχιατροί as public doctors in the Greek East see Nutton 1977, p. 198-206. For details concerning our doctor see p. 224, n° 79.

⁶⁶ Dig., XXVII, 1, 6, 2-3, and for comments in Oliver 1989, p. 588.

⁶⁷ Samama 2003, p. 44-45.

⁶⁸ Tončeva 1961, p. 34, fig. 31 and 34; Hassel, Künzl 1980, p. 419; Künzl 1983b, p. 112.

⁶⁹ About typology of these instruments see Künzl 1982, 513 and, especially, p. 517, note 15.

⁷⁰ Tončeva 1961, p. 36, fig. 42, 45 and 46; Hassel, Künzl 1980, p. 419; Künzl 1983b, p. 112.

⁷¹ Tončeva 1961, p. 39-40, fig. 58, 60; Hassel, Künzl 1980, p. 419; Künzl 1983b, p. 112.

⁷² Tončeva 1964, p. 51-52, fig. 1-6; Hassel, Künzl 1980, p. 419; Künzl 1983b, p. 112.

⁷³ Rădulescu, Coman, Stavru 1973, p. 258-263, fig. III/1, V/3, IV/1,2,3.

⁷⁴ Minchev 1983, p. 143-148.

⁷⁵ Minchev 1983, p. 147-148. It is a matter of the spatula, various types of probes, dissection instruments, scalpels, scissors, hooks, needles, forceps and instruments for gynaecological intervention, hones for sharpening scalpels and blades, a pestle, and bronze containers for storing the ointments, powders, or liquid medicines.

several generations, the variety of operations that could be made (from ophthalmologic to gynaecological operations, from simple to very complex surgery) and, last but not least, their high material value for the period in question.

In addition to medical instruments found in the tombs, we have identified numerous specialized pieces discovered in excavations or outside the archaeological context.⁷⁶ All this confirms a state of normalcy in terms of spreading medical practice in Moesia Inferior.

Some conclusions

Every item of information about the individuals known from inscriptions, or whose work appears in the burial inventory discovered in the archaeological excavations, helps in constructing the image of the normal activities of this guild in Moesia Inferior.

There is no doubt that the most considerable amount of evidence of medical activity we have comes from the Greek cities, where medical traditions, transmitted mainly from the Hellenistic period, were very rich (see the map). The schools were always promoting specialists. Exchange of experience with the renowned medical centres in Asia Minor gave a remarkable boost to the professionals in this part of the province. The local authorities made an important contribution, always very supportive of the liberal professions. Some individuals rewarded the members of this profession as well, as the physicians were seen as an important part of the community.

Of the seven possible civilian physicians known from the inscriptions, only three of them came from typically Roman cities: Aelius Macedo, the hypothetical Ἀὐτο(ρήλιος) Διό[δω]ρος from Novae and Rascanius Fortunatus of Troesmis. The rest hailed either from the Greek cities on the coast, Dionysopolis (one), Tomis (one), Odessos (one) or from Pliska (Nicopolis ad Istrum?) (one). Three of them were Greeks, Aelius Macedo was a Roman citizen, but with a Greek history, as is M. Octavius Aper. Only Rascanius Fortunatus has Italian origins, as revealed from the funerary inscription made in his honor. He came from a town in Italy, where he probably gained his knowledge and the practice of medicine. Otherwise, in the first centuries AD, most doctors who are known in Roman Empire, from epigraphic evidence, at least, are of Eastern origin.⁷⁷

The abundant archaeological evidence from the Greek cities is consistent with the information from the inscriptions. Tombs of physicians draw a picture of this profession in an era of glory for the arts of Hippocrates in the Lower Danube area. They show, to a great extent, the complexity reached in the treatment of certain diseases, which also spread to the vocational training centres. The instruments identified in these tombs present evidence that eleven possible other individuals practiced the medical profession: in Tomis (one), in Callatis (one), in Dionysopolis (two), in Odessos (four), in Marcianopolis (at least three).

As for the medical specialists in Moesia Inferior, the inscriptions and the medical instruments found in graves can not indicate with certitude a strict specialization by any medical practitioner. In fact, the vast majority of the sets of instruments found throughout the Empire suggest that in those times physicians were, largely, general practitioners. The majority of the artefacts can be comprises in three categories of items: pots or remnants of pharmaceuticals, a number of basic tools for surgery and, finally, other objects for investigation or treatment of several diseases.⁷⁸ The same rule is maintained for the region covered by this research.

The fact that the physicians were regarded with respect inside the communities did not serve them with an opportunity to accede to a public function, at least not for many. Besides Asclepiades from Odessos, who was a member of a prominent family in the city, none of the individuals mentioned above played any role in the administration. This situation could be the result of exemptions from the performance of public officials who assumed significant costs from owners. Antoninus Pius offered the philosophers, rhetoricians, teachers and physicians the opportunity of refusing public notabilities such as gymnasiarch, priest or positions with other obligations they might have on local or provincial level.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ For medical, pharmaceutical and cosmetical instruments discovered in Bulgaria see Kirova 2010, map. 1. For other instruments from Moesia Inferior see also Aparaschivei, Matei 2010.

⁷⁷ Nutton 1969, p. 265.

⁷⁸ Jackson 1993, p. 92

⁷⁹ Oliver 1989, p. 590, appendix 9 (*Digest* 27.1.6.8).

However, in the Greek communities on the territory of the Empire, there are numerous examples of doctors who were involved in administrative activities, who contributed financially to the accomplishment of different tasks and who were praised for their merits by the cities.⁸⁰

But medical activity in the province of Moesia Inferior is not only confirmed by individual names kept in epigraphic documents. Professional associations or colleges found in Histria, Dionysopolis or Odessos and which certainly also existed in other cities, draw an image of the magnitude and complexity of the medical phenomena in the region.

Almost all the sources reveal an interesting association. Physicians were linked with teachers. Even in the imperial edicts which provided immunity, the two professional groups were inseparable, a sign that they were seen in the same way, and that their importance to society was recognized as such. In the cities of Moesia Inferior we find the same situation.

Sources from the Hellenistic period and those from the Roman period, the subject of this material, prove continuous medical activity in the Lower Danube region. This continuity can be found later, also. The best example is the medical certification of the physician Εὐγενίος, son of Κονσταντῖνος, mentioned in a funerary inscription from Odessos, from the late sixth century,⁸¹ as well as the medical kit discovered in the Marcianopolis area, we believe a physician's office, from the fifth century AD.

So, having drawn a picture of the activities of doctors in various communities of the province of Moesia Inferior, we find that there was already a strong medical tradition in this province, where the Greek civilization preceded the imposition of Roman authority. The organization of the physicians, their training and the existence of medical schools are obvious realities which gave a serious boost to Greek civilization in a province which had been regarded as Latin, as was the case of Moesia Inferior.

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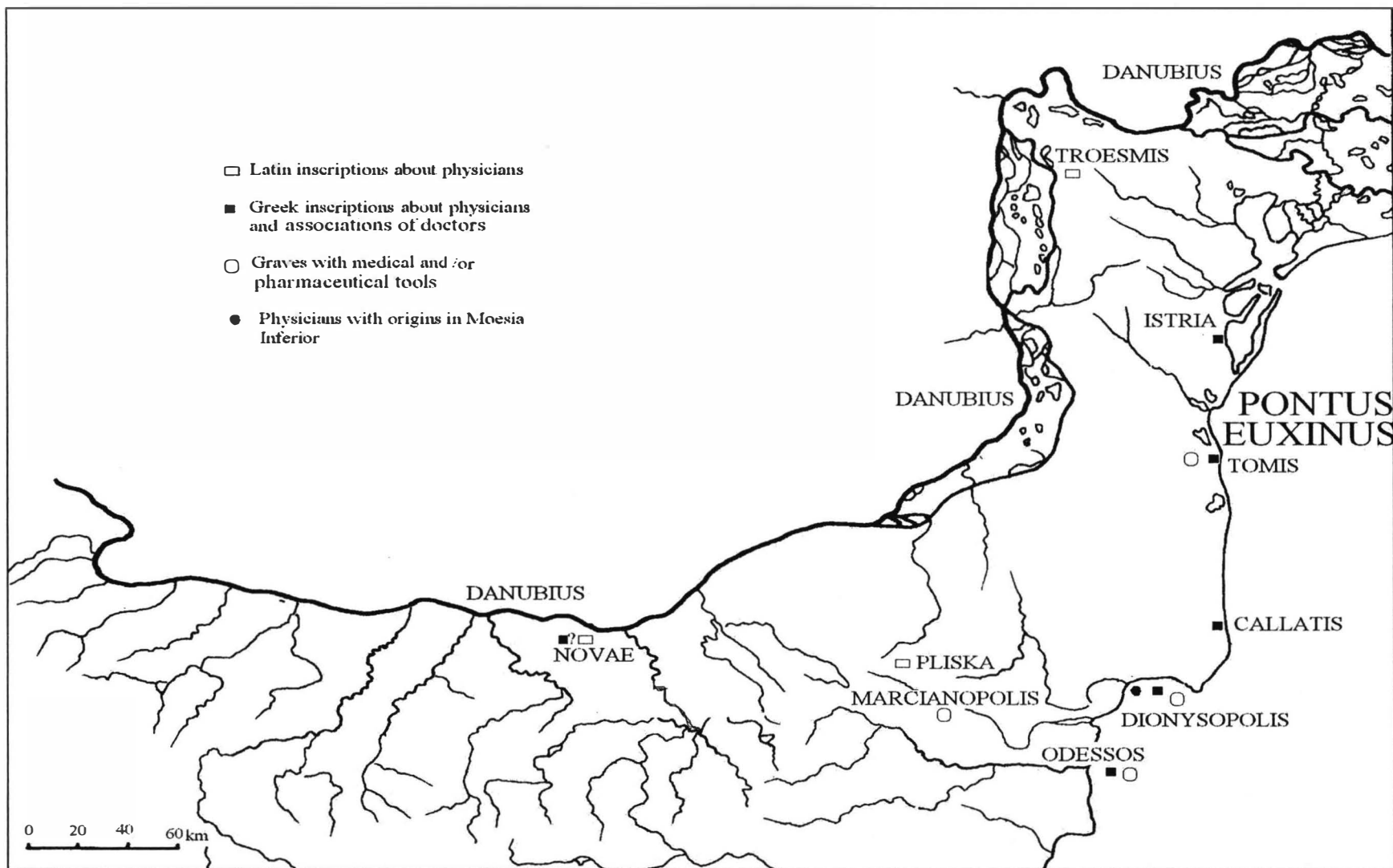
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⁸⁰ There are recorded also doctors like ἄρχοντες (Samama 2003, n°. 268), βουλευταί (Samama 2003, n°. 119, 209, 216, 250, 298), ἀγονοθέτες (Samama 2003, n°. 231), ἀγορανόμοι (Samama 2003, n°. 33, 119).

⁸¹ Samama 2003, n°. 95.

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Map: Civilian physicians from Moesia Inferior through archaeological and epigraphic sources.

Appendix

Epigraphic sources concerning the civilian physicians and the associations of doctors
from Moesia Inferior

1. *Aescla-*
po et Hy-
giae Ae<l>(ius)
Macedo
med(icus) PS.S.P

(Novae, Svištov, Bulgaria); late second c. AD; AÉ 1998, 1134; Kolendo 1998, n° 7).

2. Ἀσκλη[πι]-
ῶ θεῶ σω[τῆ]-
ρη +++ Διό[δω]
ρος

(Novae, Svištov, Bulgaria; after 212 AD; IGLNovae, 176; Kolendo 1998, n° 8).

3. *[Dis M]anibus*
[T(itus) Ras]canius
[For]tunatus
[Poll]ia Faventia
[medic]us an(norum) L h(ic) s(itus) e(st)
[cui mo]n(u)mentum
[Rasca]nia Phoebe et
[T(itus) Rasca]nius Euthychu(s)
[hered]es f(aciendum) c(uraverunt) h(oc)
m(onumentum) h(eredem) n(on) s(equetur)

(Troesmis, Iglîța, Tulcea County, Romania; second c. AD; ISM V, 193).

4. *D(is) M(anibus) [s(acrum)]*
M(arcus) Octavius
Firmi f(ilius) Pal(atina)
Aper Nicom(edia)
medicus vixit
annis p(lus) m(inu)s XLIX
et Lisame Polla
vixit [a]nn(is) p(lus) m(inus) LXV
quae O[ctav]io [v]i[vo]
natis viv[is] le[gem]
natura[e] absoluit.
Marcus Octavius [Pal(atina)] D[o]-
mitius Nicom(edia) vet(eranus) [l]eg(ionis)
V Mac(edonicae) matri suae et
[f]ratri pientis(simo) posuit

(Pliska, Šumen County, Bulgaria; second-third c. AD; AÉ 1935, 70)

5. [A]ῖ τις ἐμὴν μετὰ μοῖραν ἐμὸν βίον | ἐξερεεῖνη, |
 [χ]ῶττις ἦν τί τ' ἔρεξα καὶ οὐνομα πατρίδο [ς] | ἀμῆς |
 [μ]ανύσει λίθος ἄδε καὶ ἐσσομένοισιν | ἀκουήν' |
 πάτρα μοι πέλεται ματρόπολις | Εὐξείνιοι |
 ἄστρ' περικλήιστον ἐυμελῖαο Τομή[του] |
 οὐνομα δ' ἦς Κλαδαῖος, τέχνην δ' ἑδάημ [εν] | ἄνακτ [ο]ς |
 Ἴπποκράτους θείοιο καὶ ἐσσομένοισιν | ἀκούη.

(Enisala, Tulcea County, Romania; second c. AD; SEG 30, 1980, 844; Samama 2003, n°. 97).

6. Ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ.

Ἔδοξε τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ· Οὐλπίος Δημή-
 τριος εἶπεν, ἐπιψηφίζομένου Διογένους Θεο-
 δώρου· ἐπειδὴ Ἄβα Ἑκαταίου τοῦ Εὐξενίδου
 θυγάτηρ γυνὴ δὲ Ἡράκοντος Ἀριστομάχου, γο-
 νέων τε ἐπιστήμων καὶ προγόνων ἐπιφανεστάτων
 οὔσα καὶ οὐδεμίαν φιλοτιμίαν ἢ λειτουργίαν
 εὐσχήμονα παρητημένων, ἀλλὰ καὶ στεφανη-
 φορίας καὶ ἱερωσύνας καὶ ἀρχὰς καὶ ἐπιμελεί-
 ας καὶ πάσας δημοτελεῖς χορηγίας ἢ καὶ ἐνδό-
 ξους ὑπηρεσίας ἀνυπερβλήτως ἐκτετελεκό-
 [τω]ν καὶ πάσης ἐξαιρέτου τειμῆς τετυχηκό-
 [των, μ]ικρὸν ἡγησαμένη τὴν ἀπὸ μόνου τοῦ
 [γένους με]γαλαυχίαν εἰ μὴ καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς ἰδίας
 [πρὸς τὸ]ν δῆμον εὐποιῖας προσκτήσαιο δόξαν,
 [καὶ δ]ιὰ τοῦτο ἱερ[ωσύ]νην Μητρὸς Θεῶν αὐτεπάγγελ-
 [τος ἀν]αλαβοῦσα, οὐ μό[ν]ον ὅσα σεμνῶν γυναικῶν καὶ
 [ἱερεῶ]ν καὶ τοῦ παλαιο[ῦ αἰῶν]ος ἦν ἴδια {ν} μεγαλο-
 φρόνως καὶ εὐγενῶς καὶ ε[ὐ]σ[εβῶ]ς ἐτέλεσεν,
 ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅσαι μεγάλαι τῶν ἀνδρῶν φιλοτ[είμων ἀρ]-
 χιερωσύναι ἢ καὶ τινες ἄλλαι χορηγαὶ καὶ τα[ύ]τας [μι]-
 μήσασθαι σπουδάσασα· πρῶτον μὲν εὐθύς τὰς πρῶτας
 προσόδους καὶ θυσίας καὶ εὐχὰς τοῖς θεοῖς ποιου-
 μένη τὴν τοῦ ἔτους ἀρχὴν μετ' εὐφροσύνης καὶ εὐ-
 ωχίας μεγαλοπρεποῦς ἐποίησατο τοῖς μέ]ν γὰρ
 βουλευταῖς πᾶσιν καὶ γερονσιασταῖς καὶ Ταυ-
 ριασταῖς καὶ ἱατροῖς καὶ παιδευταῖς καὶ τοῖς ἰδίᾳ
 καὶ ἐξ ὀνόματος καλουμένοις ἐκ δύο κατ' ἄνδρα
 δηναρ[ί]ων διανο[μ]ήν, ἣν οὐπω τις ἄλλη πρότερον,
 ἔδωκεν τοῖς δὲ ἐ[ν] ταῖς φυλαῖς κατὰ πεντηκονταρ-
 χίαν διανενομημ[έ]νοις, ἔτι μὴν καὶ ὑμνωδοῖς καὶ τέ-
 κτωσιν καὶ ἱεροπ[λα]τεῖταις καὶ Ἡρακλειασταῖς οἰ-
 νοπό[σ]ιον, ὅσον οἱ ἐ[πὶ τ]οῖς μεγάλοις ὀνόμασιν φιλοτει-
 μούμ[εν]οι, μετὰ [δὲ τοῦ]το πάσῃ νεομηνία καὶ πά-
 σαις τα[ῖς ἐ]ν ἐκάστῳ μην]ὶ θυσίαις καὶ ἑορταῖς καὶ πα-

[πόλεως βουλευταῖς — — — —]

(Dionysopolis, Balčik, Bulgaria; late second-early third c. AD; IGB I², 15 ter).

9. Ωκύμορον ξεῖνον | Διονύσιον, ἐσθλόν, | ἱητρόν,

ἀντὶ πάτης Κρουῶν γῇ κατέχει | Ο[ὐ]ασάδων.

(Vasada, Asia Minor, Isauria; second-third c. AD; SEG 19, 1963, 866; Samama 2003, n°. 345).

10. Ασκληπιάδης Ἀπελλᾶ τοῦ Δημητρίου ἀρχιατρὸς

καὶ δημοφίλητος καὶ ἱερεὺς Θεοῦ Μεγάλου καὶ γυμνασίαρχος

καὶ ἀριστεὺς καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ Ἀννὶ Νεικομήδους χαίρετε.

(Odessos, Varna, Bulgaria; second century AD; IGB I², 150; Samama 2004, n°. 94).