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Naučno društvo za istoriju zdravstvene kulture je svojim osnivanjem 2010. uspostavilo kontinuitet s nekadašnjim Savezom naučnih društava za istoriju zdravstvene kulture Jugoslavije.

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- 1979–1980 *Acta historica medicinae, stomatologiae, pharmaciae, veterinae*;
- 1981–1991 *Acta historiae medicinae, stomatologiae, pharmaciae*, *medicinae veterinariae*;
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HEADACHES THROUGH THE PAST OF MEDICINE

Abstract: The understanding of the etiopathogenesis of headache through the evolution of medicine has closely followed the civilizational and social development of the human species – from primitive prehistoric medicine to two medical scientific philosophies, humoral and cellular, which changed countless medical concepts, causes, diagnostic principles and therapeutic bases. The treatment of headaches throughout the history of medicine was based on common principles respecting the symptomatology of the ruling medical philosophies, initially based on the empiricism of folk medicine, including herbal preparations and craniotomy, and then on alchemy and the scientific development of pharmacy.

Keywords: Headache, Migraine, History of medicine, Therapy

Non MeSH: etiopathogenesis

Introduction

The understanding of headache through the evolution of medicine has closely followed the civilizational and social development of the human species – from primitive prehistoric medicine to two medical scientific philosophies, humoral and cellular, which have changed countless medical concepts, causes, diagnostic principles and therapeutic bases.

The original, primordial, demonic-theurgic period of the development of medicine firmly distinguished the influence of nature on health and life, and supernatural forces and demons on disease and death, and it seems that headaches and their forms have been known since the earliest developmental periods of civilizations and medicine, as confirmed by numerous paleoanthropological evidence, especially the millennia-old evidence of skull trepanation (craniotomy), as the first surgical procedures.

The terminology, pathophysiology, diagnostics and treatment of headache are therefore also evident as a monosymptomatic painful condition, as a symptom in polysyndromic conditions or other systemic diseases or disorders (e.g. fever, meningitis). [1-8]

In this review, we present etiopathogenetic considerations and therapeutic procedures through medical evolution.

Etiopathogenesis of headaches in premodern and modern medicine

The evil spirit "in the head" was the cause of all diseases that originated in the head, including headaches, epilepsy, often associated with psychic components in the period of pre-humoral ancient scientific medical philosophy. Thus, the Sumerians and Babylonians in their tablets from about 5,000 years ago described headaches as a consequence of the action of demonic-magical and theurgic forces. Early civilizations in Mesopotamia from 3000 BC mentioned headaches and eye disease, in what was later known as migraine syndrome, while Egyptian papyri from 1200 BC provide testimony of a migraine attack, "half-head disease", with described photophobia and visual aura. The ancient Chinese, based on their own philosophy of pentaism and meridians and the vital energy *Qi*, attributed headaches exclusively to women, although they believed that it could also occur in men, albeit very rarely. The ancient Chinese considered sudden and severe, short-term or constant headaches to be the result of excess *Qi*, while chronic and moderate headaches were a sign of an internal *Qi* deficiency. Thus, they distinguished between classic frontal headaches as a disorder of the colon-stomach meridian axis, headaches during sleep as a disorder of the gallbladder meridian, neck pain with headaches as a disorder of the relationship between the bladder and small intestine meridians, and pain during stress due to excess liver and Yang, and the acupuncture treatment was directed accordingly. [1-4]

Disturbed relations between cold and hot, wind and moisture, and the accumulation (*stasis*) of mucus and thickened mucus (*turbid mucus*), as well as blood stagnation, along with other disorders of the organism based on the humoral theory, would for centuries become significant factors in the occurrence of various headaches, including migraines, until the second scientific theory: the cellular theory. [1-8]

Hippocrates (460 BC – 370 BC), based on the teachings of Empedocles, taught that the body contains four bodily fluids or four essences: blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. Thus, the humoral theory, which would be difficult to dispute for centuries, was born, and it would last until the mid-19th century. Hippocrates described headaches and migraines with associated symptoms such as vomiting and nausea, and even fever. Erasistratus blamed excessive eating (*plethora*) for the occurrence of various diseases, including headaches, for which it was believed that harmful essences or their excess accumulated in the head, accompanied with a description of flushed and red plethoric patients, which we see today in a condition often associated with hypertensive crisis. The ancient Greek and Roman physician Galen (129 AD – 200 AD) was first to use the name

hemicrania in his work from 180 AD *Decompositione medicamentorum secundum locos*, describing a unilateral headache, migraine, and he interpreted the cause according to the aforementioned Hippocratic humoral theory – the accumulation of excess body fluids in the head. His contemporary, the Cappadocian physician Aretaeus (2nd century AD), mentions the *heterocrania* as the unilateral migraine headache, which is described today in two forms: *cephalalgia*, similar to a sudden attack, and *cephalea*, a chronic tension headache. He describes the severe clinical picture of a migraine attack and "the patient's desire to die, because it is so hard for them"... [1-8] Avicenna interpreted that migraine can arise from the skull bone, and also intraparenchymally from the skull under the membrane, by the arrival of substances from the painful side or extracranially, or from the brain and meninges. [9,10]

It was known that the German nun, healer and herbalist St. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) believed that severe headaches could not occur on both sides of the head, but only on one side. She had severe migraines with auras, manifesting her visions inspired by God, which provided afflatus to write her works. So, based on her example and other cases, doctors and medical historians of the time put forward the psychogenically (mentally) conditioned theory of migraine. And later, over the centuries until today, there were numerous cases of patients suffering from severe headaches who had a religious – fanatical perception of suffering, due to sins committed. [11-13]

In the book *De cerebri morbis* from 1549, Jason Pratensis (1486-1558) describes migraine headaches, which he interpreted according to the theory of the accumulation of black bile and mucus, and he believed that the meninges are the cause of headaches. The famous British neuroanatomist Thomas Willis (1621-1675) gives a vascular theory of the origin of migraine, formulated in the chapter *De Cephalalgia* of his book *De anima brutorum* from 1672, on the basis of neuropathological autopsy findings of unilateral vasodilatation of cerebral blood vessels. He thought that they irritate the meninges and cause headaches. However, he continues to associate the Hippocratic cerebral stagnation of mucus and hyperaemia with the onset of migraine, as well as emotional tension and excitement, and brain injury. The Swiss physician Johann Jakob Wepfer (1620-1695) explained migraine as a relaxation of cerebral vessels with increased pulsations, i.e., rhythmic increase and decrease in blood vessel volume, thus supporting the vascular theory. However, there are other descriptions of the etiopathogenesis of migraine that are the result of the transformation of medicine during the Enlightenment, such as the French physician Samuel Tissot (1728-1797) who expounded that irritation of the stomach, which reaches the eye via nerve fibres, irritates the brain via supraorbital nerves, so this paradoxical theory is actually neurogenic. Tissot thus distinguished between true migraine (*migraine vraie*) and secondary migraine (*migraine accidentale*) as a sign of a disease of the viscerocranium, nasal mucosa, or eye. [2,4,13,14]

During the development of neurology at the beginning of modern medicine, various vascular theories were supported. In 1850 Peter Mere Latham (1789-1875) believed that

migraine was the result of narrowing of the arteries in the area of the posterior cerebral artery. In 1860 Hughlings Jackson (1834-1911) interpreted migraine as a separate form of epilepsy, and Emil du Bois-Reymond (1818-1896) as spasms of vascular muscles and thus prepared a two-phase theory of pain formation due to intravascular pressure according to Wolff, with initial vasoconstriction and secondary vasodilation. However, in 1886, William Gowers (1845-1915) opposed vascular etiopathogenesis and supported neurogenesis, explaining disturbed activity of nerve cells in the brain in his research, while in 1873, Edward Liveing (1832-1919) described such events in the thalamus and interpreted migraine as a "nerve storm", an attack that affects autonomic nerve fibres, which in turn affect the reactivity of blood vessels. The British physician Thomas Lauder Brunton (1844-1916) in his 1883 book *On the Pathology and Treatment of Some Forms of Headache* interpreted headache as a warning sign for the patient to stop bad habits before it is too late, emphasizing headache as a possible occurrence of other intracranial processes, and not just a monosymptomatic painful condition. [13-15]

These two theories of 19th century scientists support the statements of unfortunate patients suffering from various types of headaches, most notably migraines, who described their experiences as: "a red-hot, writhing snake dancing on a reel" (1809); "as if a red-hot knife was piercing or twisting into the flesh" or "like hot tongs for tearing bones…" (1816). The following experiences and descriptions of headaches during the 19th century are also mentioned: "…as if a hundred windmills were turning in a circle..", "…..like the top of the head is being unscrewed….", "….that the eyes will fall out of the head…", "… that the headache is sparkling how awful it is…" [2,4,13,14,15]

The 19th century witnessed the rising popularity of theories of psychogenic etiopathogenesis, which were at that time associated with the French neurological authority Jean Martin Charcot (1825-1893) and his research on hysteria and neurosis. He interpreted migraine as a disease of a hysterical nature which only occurred in women, thus actually drawing on Hippocraticism and its theory of hysteria from 2000 years ago. However, during the 20th century, there were also reports of psychopathological personality traits in patients with migraines, as well as headaches in mental disorders, so these psychogenic and sexological theories would obviously persist in the collective neuropsychiatry of the past. Thus, Harold Merskey (born 1929) reported in 1968, based on the facial expressions of women suffering from neuralgia, that the typical patient was a "lower-middle-class working woman, perhaps once beautiful and attractive, never satisfied with her sex life, and now faded and sad..." [13,14,15]

In 1937, Graham and Wollf interpreted the neurovascular theory of migraine by combining previous experiences and obtained results from the treatment of migraine attacks with ergotamine, which will be the accepted theory of migraine origin today, along with the genetic one. However, bad habits and a disordered lifestyle have been considered a significant risk factor for the occurrence of various forms of headaches from Hippocratic times to neo-Hippocratism, as well as today. [13-16]

Table 1. Theories of etiopathogenesis and headache therapy throughout the past

Period of medical evolution	Theories of the etiopathogenesis of headaches throughout the past	Therapeutic modalities
Premodern medicine	Humoral	Trepanation Natural opioids (opium from poppy, cocaine from coca)
Modern medicine	Psychogenic Vascular Neurogenic Neurovascular Genetic	Herbal preparations of analgesics / analeptics Opioids Ergotamine derivatives Triptans

Headache treatment in premodern and modern medicine

Various methods were often prescribed as a monotherapeutic approach, intertwined and combined depending on civilizational, religious, cultural and social customs. For example, there is evidence from the earliest periods of civilization and medicine, that craniotomy was a ritual method of exorcism. These were:

- spiritualistic and mythological non-medical therapy, worship of Deities (shamanism, religious rituals, exorcism)
- dietary and natural healing factors (heliotherapy, thalassotherapy, thermal springs and medicinal waters), electrical energy
- ethnopharmacological (mainly herbal medicine with animal and mineralogical preparations)
- surgical methods (trepanation – craniotomy, extension methods, evacuation methods) [1-16]

Although the ancient Egyptians were familiar with poppy and opium, they often resorted to prayer rituals and the worshiping the Gods, including the God Horus, who suffered from "one-sided headaches," according to legends. Prayers included wishes "that heaven sends him [a patient] a replacement head, as he greatly suffered from headaches". Also, a good-natured crocodile with grain in its mouth was placed next to the sick person's pillow, on which there was a sheet with names of the Gods: that was supposed to drive away evil spirits. Ancient Greek mythology provided countless historical data, including the legend that Zeus suffered from unbearable headaches, so he asked to have his head split open with an axe. It was done and, at the same time, Athena was born from his head, a scene which was illustrated by numerous painters. [1-8, 12-15]

Traditional Chinese medicine used all of the above-mentioned methods of treating headaches and migraines, using numerous dietary and phytotherapeutic preparations, along with the use of acupuncture, auriculoacupuncture, acupressure and moxibustion methods. The psychological and somatic exercises are still used today in the system of

ancient Chinese traditional medicine that was transferred to modern medicine, along with the indispensable craniotomy of the ancient Chinese era. About 3,000 years ago, the Chinese "yellow emperor" Huang Ti published *Ling Shu*, the second volume of the *Nei-Jing*, in which he mentions acupuncture treatment – the oldest record of this method. Treatments for headaches and their types are described in detail in traditional Chinese textbooks in which acupuncture is recommended as monotherapy, or with other listed components of traditional Chinese medicine. [1-6, 11-15]

Craniotomy (trepanation) was performed for three reasons: therapeutic (in the case of headaches, brain and skull injuries), magical-ritualistic (demonistic–exorcistic) and combined therapeutic–magical reasons, according to the medical knowledge and understanding of the time (treatment of headaches and epilepsy as a consequence of the actions of evil spirits). It was performed as a literal opening of a painful or diseased skull, without any intervention on the brain. Thus, as mentioned, craniotomy has survived as an indispensable operation from prehistoric times and the exorcism of spirits, to today's modern neurosurgical stereotaxic operations on individual focal lesions in the brain that are associated with the outbreak of attacks of certain types of headaches. Celsus described trepanation in his works, and Aretaeus shaved the hair and cauterized the muscles up to the skull bones in severe migraine attacks. Hippocrates treated headaches, migraines, and epilepsy with diet therapy, herbal remedies, and craniotomy for severe headaches. The headaches of the Roman emperor Claudius were treated with a quivering eel that produced electricity in contact with the skin, and this method was also used for centuries by ancient African peoples. [3-10, 13-15]

Evacuation methods of treatment were for centuries the favourite methods based on the accumulation of "excess" or "bad mucus" and "bad blood" in the head or body. Venesection (phlebotomy) was also used in the treatment of headaches due to "bloodiness" or "blood congestion of the brain", the accumulation of harmful blood and mucus in the head and therefore poor blood flow through the brain. In addition to phlebotomy, leeches were also used for the same purpose, as were hot foot baths. Purgatives and enemas were given to expel impurities from the body and "prevent the evaporation of harmful gases towards the head so that it remained cheerful, the mind clear, physical activity complete, the heart healthy and content, the skin colour healthy...." [1-8, 13-15]

However, not all recommendations were effective, as harmful lifestyle habits and overconsumption of food and drink were not eradicated from everyday life, and even medical journalists at the time, at the end of the 19th century, emphasized in the media that "based on their own experiences with headaches, that one should 'treat' oneself with lots of soup, steaks and oysters, washed down with good wine or port, and not with alcohol"…….. [1-8, 13-15]

Analgesics have been known since the ancient times and were used exclusively from natural sources for painful conditions and during surgical procedures. Later, numerous modern analgesics of various compositions were synthesized and are still used

today, based on centuries of use (mandrake, opium from poppy, salicylates from willow bark, quinine from the cinchona tree). The native Americans and ancient Egyptians knew about the willow bark (lat. salix), which they initially used for fevers. Its strong analgesic effect due to salicylates is empirically demonstrated, and it would become an indispensable essence in the production of acetylsalicylic acid (synthesized in July 1899) and numerous preparations that are still used today in the treatment of painful conditions, as well as various types of headaches. Ancient and medieval physicians used mandrake root in sweet wine for pain relief, while Arab physicians prescribed inhalation through a sponge soaked in extracts of hemlock, mandrake, mulberry, wild lettuce, ivy, henbane, and opium (Ar. *afyun*) juice or alcohol. In the post-Columbian period, the importation of numerous herbal cultures launched a new wave of analgesics and antipyretics. Thus, the English physician and pharmacist Nicholas Culpeper (1616–1654) introduced tobacco into medicine and pharmacy, and, in addition to other indications for the treatment of "all diseases," it was also used to treat headaches and other painful conditions by inhaling, chewing, drinking tinctures and teas, enemas, and even by placing a lit tobacco cigarette in the anus! [1-5, 7-9, 13-15]

During the Enlightenment, which was accompanied by the rise of iatrochemistry, iatrophysics and pharmacy, numerous prescriptions and new synthetic drugs were developed from ingredients that were previously successfully used for centuries as analgesics. Thus, the analgesic prescriptions of Hoffmann's drops (Friedrich Hoffmann, 1660-1742) with the pharmaceutical name *Aethanolum aetheris* (*Solutio aetheris spirituosa*), which consisted of 75 g of 90% alcohol and 25 g of ether, and *Laudanum liquidum Sydenhami* (*tinctura opii crocata*), as a strong opioid analgesic, were extremely well known and used. At the same time, the homeopathic treatment method was also developed (the aforementioned Friedrich Hoffman, Samuel Hahnemann 1755-1843), which uses numerous herbal, animal and mineral preparations in very low concentrations to treat headaches and related conditions. For four thousand years, various prescriptions made from poppy seeds, such as poppy syrup or opium pellets, were given to treat severe pain, and in 1802/1803, the German pharmacist Friedrich Wilhelm Adam Serturner (1783-1841) discovered a crystalline alkaline substance from opium, that he called *principium somniferum* (sleeping substance) and named it *Morphi* (*Morphium*, from the Greek *Morpheus*, dream), and in 1820, Heinrich Emmanuel Merck (1794–1855) began producing and marketing morphine on the world market in various forms, and later in the form of subcutaneous injections. [2-7, 13-15]

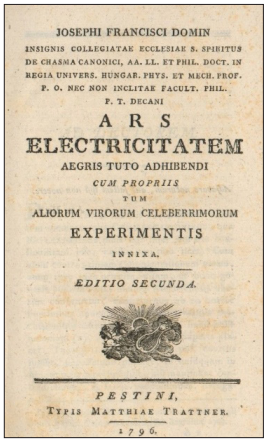
The invention of the electric machine (Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790) and galvanization (Luigi Galvani, 1737-1798) marked the beginning of the period of use of electrical energy in numerous treatment procedures, which became part of physical therapy. The iatrophysical interpretations of the time believed that electrical fluid activates the nervous fluid, improves circulation and reduces pain. This theory was also followed by the famous Croatian theologian, philosopher, physicist and chemist Josip Franjo Domin

(1754-1819), who began to use electrotherapeutic procedures (as *cura externa*, *stimulantia*) for numerous diseases, especially headaches, migraines, neuralgia, plegia, paresis, febrile conditions in children and adults, rheumatism, arthritis and resuscitation. In his four books, published in the second half of the 18th century, he presented his knowledge and experience of applied medical physics and electrotherapy in the treatment of numerous painful conditions (Figure 1). [4, 13-19]

However, in the world of non-surgical and surgical methods of treating headaches, George P. Hachenberg (1824-1904) mentioned in his textbook (1893) as many as 96 prescriptions for various headaches and another 119 medicines that could be used by headache patients. In 1906, an elixir-laxative called "Bile beans" of unknown chemical prescription was put on sale, composed of Aboriginal ethnoherbals, which were interpreted as being needed in neuralgia precisely because it "nourished and strengthened the blood and kept the nerves healthy". Therefore, the humoral theory of blood and bile will continue to exist in useless tonics and elixirs of unknown or "secret" chemical composition. [4,11,13-15]

Ergot alkaloids were introduced into migraine therapy by Graham and Wollf in 1937, and triptans in the 1980s. Today's headache treatment methods are based on holistic principles that were established centuries ago by a different medical philosophy, but with numerous preparations and treatment methods derived from empirical folk medicine that became part of the "evidence-based medicine", as this chapter has shown. [15,19]

Figure 1. Cover of Domin's book on electrotherapy, printed in Pest in 1796, showing electrotherapeutic treatment of headaches


JOSEPHI FRANCISCI DOMIN

INSIGNIS COLLEGIATAE ECCLESIAE S. SPIRITUS DE CHASMA CANONICI, AA. LL. ET PHIL. DOCT. IN REGIA UNIVERS. HUNGAR. PHYS. ET MECH. PROF. P. O. NEC NON INCLITAE FACULT. PHIL. P. T. DECANI

A R S

ELECTRICITATEM

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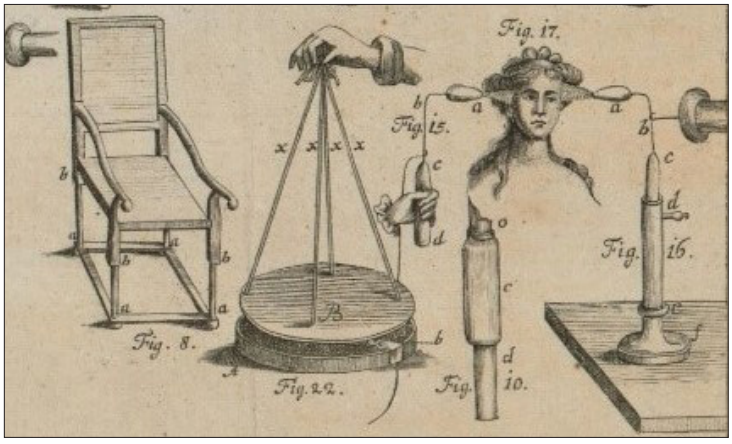

Discussion

The humoral (then scientific) theory of centuries-old pre-modern medicine was based on the disruption of bodily fluids and the driving, vital energy (force) in various developments of the medical-historical ribbon of pathophysiology from *spiritus* (Hippocrates, Galen, Arabs), *pneuma* (Diogenes), *ether* and *fire* (Aristotle), vital energy *Qi* (Chinese traditional medicine), *prana* (Indian traditional medicine), *anime* (soul, psyche in various cultures), *archeus* (Paracelsus, Helmont) and *phlogiston* (Lavoisier; the accumulation of harmful fluids and mucus in the head is the main cause of headaches). [4-10] Only the cellular theory of modern medicine from the mid-19th century will explain a different approach by introducing the morphological theory and the discovery of cellular metabolism during the 20th century, and thus the approach to headache and various forms of headaches and the development of numerous pathophysiological theories: psychogenic, pathomorphological (meningeal, vascular, neurogenic, neurovascular) and genetic. [13-15] Thus, various names for headache originate from traditional medical Greek or Latin derivatives based solely on descriptive terms, on the description of painful events "in the head", and not on a causal diagnosis: *Cephalgia*, *Kephalgia*, *Kephalalgia*, *Cephalaea*, as well as *Heterocrania*, *Migraine* and *Haemicrania* as the most frequently described forms of headache throughout the history of medicine and civilization. [4-10]

Treatment of headaches throughout the history of medicine was based on conventional methods, respecting the symptomatology of the prevailing medical philosophies, initially based on the empiricism of folk medicine, and then on alchemy and scientific evidence of the development of pharmacy. Numerous theriacs and elixirs as omnipotent medicines have been used for centuries as all-powerful healing agents, with panacea-placebo or most often with no effect, a charlatan approach to medicine by numerous quacks, but also doctors of ancient times and the Middle Ages until today. Today's modern approach to treating headaches and migraines is primarily pharmacotherapeutic (medicinal): analgesics from various pharmaceutical groups as monotherapy or polychemotherapy combinations (e.g. paracetamol, acetylsalicylic acid, ibuprofen), various forms of biomodulators (e.g. triptans) are utilised, and the indispensable complementary method of treatment with acupuncture as a proven and recognized treatment method which, like acetylsalicylic acid and opioids, has its roots in the medicines of ancient peoples through thousands of years of medical development.

Rezime

Poimanje etiopatogeneze glavobolje kroz evoluciju medicine čvrsto je pratilo civilizacijski i društveni razvoj ljudske vrste od primitivne prethistorijske medicine pa sve do dvije medicinske znanstvene filozofije, humoralne i celularne, koje su mijenjale bezbroj medicinskih pojmova, uzroka, dijagnostičkih principa i terapijskih osnova. Liječenje glavobolja kroz povijest medicine temeljila su se na uobičajenim načelima poštivajući simptomatologiju vladajućih medicinskih filozofija isprva temeljena na empiriji narodne medicine uključujući herbalne pripravke i kraniotomiju, a potom alkemiji i znanstvenom razvoju farmacije.

Humoralna (tada znanstvena) teorija višestoljetne predmoderne medicine bila je temeljena na poremećaju tjelesnih sokova i pokretačke, životne energije (sile) u raznim razvojima medicinskopovijesne lente patofiziologije od *spiritusa* (Hipokrat, Galen, Arapi), *pneume* (Diogen), etera i vatre (Aristotel), životne energije *Qi* (Kineska tradicijska medicina), *prane* (Indijska tradicijska medicina), *anime* (duša, psiha u raznim kulturama), *archeusa* (Parazelsus, Helmont) te *flogistona* (Lavoisier; nakupljanje štetnih sokova i sluzi u glavi glavni uzrok glavobolja). Tek će celularna teorija moderne medicine od sredine 19. stoljeća objašnjavati drugačiji pristup uvođenjem morfološke teorije i otkrića staničnoga metabolizma tijekom 20. stoljeća, pa tako i pristup glavobolji i raznim oblicima glavobolja te razvitku brojnih patofizioloških teorija: psihogene, patomorfološke (meninge, vaskularna, neurogena, neurovaskularna) i genetske. Tako razni nazivi za glavobolju potječu od medicinsko-tradicijskih grčkih ili latinskih izvedenica temeljenih isključivo deskriptivno, na opisu bolnih zbivanja „u glavi", a ne kauzalnoj dijagnozi: *Cephalgia, Kephalgia, Kephalalgia, Cephalaea*, te kao i *Heterocrania, Migrena i Haemicrania* kao najčešće najteži opisivani oblici glavobolja kroz prošlost medicine i civilizacije.

Liječenje glavobolja kroz povijest medicine temeljila su se na uobičajenim načinima poštivajući simptomatologiju vladajućih medicinskih filozofija isprva temeljene na empiriji narodne medicine, a potom alkemiji i znanstvenim dokazima razvoja farmacije. Brojni terijaci i eliksiri kao svemogući lijekovi koristili su se stoljećima kao svemoćna ljekovita sredstva, sa panacejsko-placebo ili najčešće nikakvim učinkom, šarlatanskom pristupu medicini brojnih nadriliječnika, ali i liječnika staroga doba i srednjega vijeka sve do današnjice. Današnji je suvremeni pristup liječenju glavobolja i migrena prvenstveno farmakoterapijski (medikamentozni) analgeticima raznih farmaceutskih skupina kao monoterapije ili polikemoterapijske kombinacije (npr. paracetamol, acetilsalicilna kiselina, ibuprofen), raznim oblicima biomodulatora (npr. triptani) te nezaobilazni komplementarni način liječenja akupunkturom kao dokazanom i priznatom metodom liječenja koja, kao i npr. acetilsalicilna kiselina i opioidi imaju temelje u medicinama drevnih naroda kroz tisuće godina razvoja medicine.

Ključne reči: glavobolja, migrena, istorija medicine, terapija, etiopatogeneza

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WHEN LOVE AILS: LOVESICKNESS AND THE AUTHENTICITY OF EMOTIONS IN PLAUTUS' *CISTELLARIA*[1]

Abstract: This paper examines the first extant instance of the medicalization of love in Roman literature. In Plautus' *Cistellaria*, love is not just conceived through a conventional comic lens of erotic desire but as a psychosomatic disorder, expressed through symptoms that blur the boundary between mental disturbance and bodily illness. The analysis shows how Plautus integrates medical and popular knowledge to construct a model of *amor* that ancient audiences could recognize as pathological. This medicalization of passion serves a distinctly literary purpose: by grounding emotion in physical and cognitive symptoms, Plautus grants psychological depth and credibility to his protagonists. The authority of medical thought thus legitimizes what comedy typically trivializes, sincere feeling and genuine distress. *Cistellaria* emerges as a case study in how Roman literature appropriated scientific discourse to substantiate and shape narrative coherence. The study situates this medicalization of passion within broader ancient discourses on disease and affects, revealing how Plautus' comedy participates in the cultural translation of medical knowledge.

Keywords: Mental Disorders, Emotions, History of Medicine, Amor, Plato, Aristotle, Galen, Aretaeus

Non MeSH: Lovesickness, Plautus, Roman Comedy, Ancient Medical Thought, Gender and Emotion, Medical Humanities, Disability and Affect

Introduction

This article discusses Plautus' portrayal of love in *Cistellaria* ("The Story of a Casket") where *amor* emerges not simply as erotic or romantic desire, but as lovesickness – a medical

[1] This paper is a revised and extended version of the homonymous presentation delivered at the Annual Conference of the Classical Association of Canada, held on May 14–16, 2025 at the University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

condition with both physical and mental manifestations.[2] I argue that the play reflects how the concept of lovesickness, together with Greek medical thought more broadly, was already sufficiently widespread in Rome during Plautus' time for him to rely on his audience's recognition of medical allusions and double entendres. I also argue that by framing love as a genuine illness, Plautus also authenticates the depth of emotion experienced by both male and female protagonists and grants narrative legitimacy to their suffering.

We'll begin with an overview of the ancient understanding of lovesickness and a brief chronological survey of its development across various genres. Through close textual analysis I then show how *Cistellaria* aligns with earlier medical and literary traditions that describe this condition, as well as with later ones that consolidate it as a distinct nosological category. I conclude arguing that Plautus' medicalization of love serves to authenticate the emotional legitimacy of his characters' experience.

The Medical Framing of Lovesickness

Lovesickness had long been imagined as a disorder with recognizable psychosomatic symptoms and appropriate cures. Although it formally entered medical discourse only in the second century CE, in the works of Aretaeus and Galen, its literary tropes circulated widely centuries earlier. Archaic Greek poetry established enduring metaphor of love as an illness, with symptoms that spanned both physical and psychological dimensions. In Sappho's famed *Fragment 31*, the encounter with her beloved triggers a precise symptomatology: hot and cold flashes, tremors, irregular heartbeat, loss of speech, and sensory breakdown.

φαίνεταί μοι κῆνος ἴσος θέοισιν
ἔμμεν' ὤνηρ, ὄττις ἐνάντιός τοι
ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἆδυ φωνεί-
σας ὑπακούει
καὶ γελαίσας ἰμέροεν τό μ' ἦ μὰν
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν·
ὠς γὰρ ἔς σ' ἴδω βρόχε', ὠς **με φώναι-**
σ' οὐδ' ἔν ἔτ' εἴκει,
ἀλλὰ **κὰμ μὲν γλῶσσα <μ'> ἔαγε**, λέπτον
δ' αὔτικα **χρῷ πῦρ ὐπαδεδρόμηκεν**,
ὀππάτεσσι δ' οὐδ' ἔν ὄρημμ', ἐπιρρόμ-
βεισι δ' ἄκουαι,
κὰδ δέ μ' ἴδρως κακχέεται, τρόμος δὲ
παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω 'πιδεύης
φαίνομ' ἔμ' αὔτ[α.

He seems as fortunate as the gods to me,
the man who sits opposite you
and listens nearby to your sweet voice and
lovely laughter. Truly, that sets my **heart**
trembling in my breast.
For when I look at you for a moment, then
it is no longer possible for me to speak;
my tongue has snapped, at once a **subtle**
fire has stolen beneath my flesh, **I see**
nothing with my eyes, my ears hum,
sweat pours from me, a trembling seizes
me all over, I am greener than grass, and
it seems to me that I am little short of dying. [1]

[2] Unless otherwise noted, all Latin quotations and English translations are taken from the most recent Loeb Classical Library edition of *Cistellaria*, edited and translated by Wolfgang de Melo (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Most of the symptoms resurfaced in later literary traditions, and were often framed in medical terminology and disease metaphors. By the 5th century BCE, Greek tragedy had linked *erôs* to madness: "the phenomenology of *erôs*, with its many points of contact with that of madness – sleeplessness, restlessness, pain, obsession, delirium, hallucination and physical distress – appropriated in tragedy the pre-existing poetics of the erotic emotion." [2]

This conceptualization extended beyond poetry and drama. Philosophical prose also engaged with the pathology of love. Plato, for instance, explores *mania* in connection with love in multiple dialogues. In *Phaedrus*, [3] he frames it as divinely inspired; in *Timaeus*, [4] Plato's most overtly medical treatise, he describes excessive pleasures, including sexual love, as a disease of the soul rooted in the body. Specifically, he attributes the mad state into which men fall (*ἐμμανής*) to a humoral imbalance caused by an excess of semen. Aristotelian tradition elaborates on this physiological view. In *Pseudo-Aristotle's Problems*, [5] lovesickness is redefined as a pathological condition rooted in excessive and unfulfilled sexual desire, closely associated with melancholy. Melancholic madness is, in turn, described as an atrabiliar condition provoked by thermo-sensitivity of the black bile. The treatise presents black bile as a substance whose thermal modulation determines whether an individual becomes pathologically insane or not.

Aside from philosophical engagement with medical aspects of lovesickness, early medical writings did not yet systematize this condition. Nevertheless, anecdotes preserved by later authors suggest that lovesickness was already regarded as clinically real before Plautus' time. Soranus of Ephesus (1st – 2nd century CE), in *Vita Hippocratis*, [6] attributes to Hippocrates the diagnosis and cure of Perdiccas, Macedonian king afflicted with lovesickness for his father's wife. Another well-known case involves Erasistratus of Ceos (304 – 205 BCE), who reportedly identified Antiochus I Soter's lovesickness for his stepmother Stratonice – a story recounted by Plutarch (c. 46-120 CE) in *Demetrius* [7], Heliodorus (4th century AD) in *Aethiopica* [8], and Appian (2nd century AD) in *Syriake* [9], to name a few. While the historical accuracy of these legendary accounts is questionable, they still "preserve [contemporary] medical debates on the diagnosis, prognosis and therapy of *erotomania*." [10]

The first clinical conceptualizations of lovesickness appear in the works of Aretaeus of Cappadocia (2nd century CE) and Galen (129–216 CE). Yet, some scholars question whether even these authors classified it as a distinct medical disorder. Salas, for instance, argues that "neither author [Aretaeus (and Rufus from Ephesus)] discusses lovesickness as a class of disease," suggesting instead that it only emerged as a discrete nosological category in the 4th century CE. [11] Contrary to this and similar claims, the present study demonstrates that medical categories can be conceptualized rigorously outside medical literature. What Salas calls "the stuff of literature" often provides deeper insight into contemporary medical thought than the surviving medical corpus itself. This point is especially pertinent given the scarcity of extant medical writings during certain periods:

for instance, the four-century gap between the last preserved Hellenistic treatises and Celsus' *De Medicina* (1st century CE).

In the specific case of lovesickness, numerous scholars have successfully argued for its inclusion in ancient nosological classifications, from Pigeaud [12] and Mazzini [13,14] to more recent contributions by McNamara [15] and Ribeiro [10], to name a few. McNamara offers a particularly intriguing explanation for the absence of lovesickness in Hippocratic texts: rather than denying its medical status, this omission may reflect professional rivalries between *ἰατροί* (*iatroi*, "physicians") and folk, particularly female, healers within what she describes as "a competitive and pluralistic [professional] environment." [15]

Both, the anecdotal evidence and philosophical engagement, a discipline closely intertwined with medical thought, suggests that lovesickness was already treated as a recognizable clinical condition by the time Plautus was writing. Stories such as those of Perdiccas and Antiochus I Soter attest to a medical and cultural landscape that the audience of *Cistellaria* would have readily recognized.

Lovesickness in *Cistellaria:* Female Love and the Embodiment of Affect

Cistellaria or "The Story of a Casket", written between 209 and 207 BCE, is an adaptation of *Synaristosia* "The Women Lunching Together" a play originally written by the Greek playwright Philemon. In the Plautus' reworking the story follows Alcesimarchus and Selenium, lovers living together in an unofficial union, whose relationship is jeopardized when Alcesimarchus' father arranges an advantageous marriage for him. Nobody knew though that Selenium was actually a citizen woman, conceived through rape, exposed and then secretly raised by the courtesan Melaenis.

As Alcesimarchus descends into madness upon learning of his father's plans, he begs Melaenis to give Selenium to him. She refuses, prompting his violent threats and near-suicide. Meanwhile, a slave sent by Selenium's biological parents arrives, triggering Melaenis' revelation of her true identity. In the final moments, Selenium is recognized as a citizen's daughter, and the play ends with the promise of her and Alcesimarchus's legitimate union.

The opening scene of the play immerses the audience in the secluded, feminine space of free, non-citizen sex workers, unveiling their precarious life circumstances. In this safe space, the authentic emotions of these women are brought to life: their solidarity, camaraderie, loyalty, empathy, and even filial love. This nuanced portrayal challenges conventional depictions and reframes the courtesan as a fully realized character with genuine emotional depth.

Into this unusually emotionally layered world Plautus introduces a radical innovation for Roman comedy – a courtesan capable of sincere, transformative love. While her fellow courtesans indeed exhibit loyalty and affection toward one another, they remain incapable of love for men and continue to treat them as mere sources of income. Thus Selenium emerges as a singular figure from the outset.

Indications of her sincerer love, and of her lovesick condition are given very early in the play when her friend Gymnasium provides the initial description of her:

Gym. […] meus oculus, mea Selenium, numquam ego te **tristiorem** uidi esse. quid, cedo, te opsecro, tam abhorret hilaritudo? **nec munda adaeque es, ut soles** (hoc sis uide, ut petiuit **suspiritum alte**) et **pallida es**.	You, apple of my eye, my dear Selenium, I've never seen you **more melancholic**. Tell me, please, why has cheerfulness shrunk back from you so much? You're **not as neat as usual** (just look how **she heaved a deep sigh**), and **you're pale**. (lines 53 – 57)

Gymnasium describes here some of the classic signs of love-induced illness, like pallor, sighing, unkemptness, emotional withdrawal, that we meet both in lyrical poetry and in drama. For instance, in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, at the outset of the play, Aphrodite describes Phaedra as afflicted by love – a disease not readily discernible to external observers, that manifests through moaning and a loss of speech. [16] Chorus too observes unusual traits of Phaedra: when the old nurse accompanies her outside of the palace, the chorus marvels at Phaedra's looks – she is miserable, her clothes are ragged and her complexion very pale. [16] Selenium, as we've seen, echoes this tradition. She shares with Phaedra the signs of a lovesick heroine marking her the part of a venerable dramatic lineage of suffering women.

The next stage in the gradational progression of Selenium's character building is marked by her own account of her condition:

Sel. […] **doleo ab animo**, **doleo ab occulis**, **doleo ab aegritudine**. Quid dicam, nisi **stultitia mea me in maereorem rapi**?	Sel. **I feel pain in my heart, I feel pain in my eyes, I feel pain in my sorrow**. What should I say, except that **I'm driven to sadness by my own silliness**? (lines 60-1)

The language employed by Selenium to articulate her experiences is inherently medical in nature yet used in colloquial context. The verb *dolere* in Plautus typically conveys the sense of physical pain. However, in this context, I argue that Selenium is referring to mental suffering. When combined with the ablative of cause, the phrase could be rendered as: "I am in pain because of my mind, I am in pain because of my eyes, I am in pain because of my sickness."[3] It is her *animus* – her mind, that is playing tricks on her. Her senses too: her eyes are torturing her; she's downright sick and tormented by this condition of lovesickness. This interpretation, suggesting psychosomatic anguish, is further supported by her use of the noun *aegritudo*, which from early on in Latin carries dual connotations, referring both to bodily illness and mental affliction, encompassing grief and sorrow.

[3] These and similar translations are not intended as a commentary on De Melo's Loeb translation. They are offered simply as alternatives that more clearly highlight the medical implications in passages where de Melo, quite rightly, aimed to preserve stylistic harmony rather than provide a drier, more technical rendering.

In the following sentence, two additional terms likely indicate mental aberration. Paschall observes that a major group of terms denoting madness in Roman comedy originates in words that convey divine causation. [17] These figurative expressions often semantically borrow from the roots meaning "to be taken, possessed, or struck," specifying a divine agent, or standing alone. In this instance, the verb *rapere* ("to seize, to take violently, to abduct") is employed alongside the noun *stultitia*, denoting "sluggishness or slowness in reasoning" but also extending to "insanity." Both words thus suggest some sort of aberration, either intellectual disability or a mental disorder. Moreover, together, the construction *stultitia mea me rapi* closely parallels well-established Plautine formulations such as *intemperiae tenent/agitant aliquem* or *insania tenet/agitat aliquem* ("to be seized or agitated by insanity").[4] Interpreted in this way, the translation of the line should be slightly adjusted to: "What can I say, if not that my very own insanity has driven me to this sorrowful state!"[5]

These alternative readings aim to better reflect the mélange of everyday and medical terminology that, I believe, underlies Plautus' puns. So far, we still do not know what Selenium is suffering from, but the discussions in the play strongly suggest some sort of medical condition.

Expanding on the interplay between colloquial and scientific discourse, in lines 63–64 Gymnasium advises Selenium to conceal her *stultitia* deep within her *pectus* ("chest"). In this instance, *pectus* is not used metaphorically but rather in its literal anatomical sense, referring to the part of the human body that houses vital organs such as the heart. Selenium's response reinforces this interpretation: *At mihi cordolium est!* ("But I have a heartache," line 65). Her bafflement implicitly challenges Gymnasium's advice – how can Selenium hide her insanity within the very organ afflicted by this illness?

The medical undertones reach their peak in Gymnasium's subsequent lines (65–67):

Gym. quid? id unde est tibi cor? commemora opsecro; quod neque ego habeo nec quisquam alia mulier, ut perhibent uiri.	Gym. What? Where have you got a heart from? Tell me, please; it's something neither I nor any other woman have, so men say.

While Gymnasium's remark aptly underscores the main theme of the scene – emotional life of women, where the heartfelt emotions of Selenium are juxtaposed to the

[4] Cf. "*Quae te intemperiae tenent, qui me perperam perplexo nomine appelles?*" (Mil. 434-35); "*nescio pol quae illunc hominem intemperiae tenant*." (Aul.71); or "*Quae te intemperiae tenent? quas tu mihi tenebras trudis?*" (Ep. 475-6).

[5] The primary meaning of the noun *stultitia* conveys a lack of intellect, often manifested as sluggishness or rigidity in reasoning (*stultitia* < *stultus* < *PIE stell-* "to be stiff"). With this meaning, it is frequently used synonymously with *inscitia* meaning "ignorance" or "lack of knowledge". However, it is notable that in Plautus, *inscitia* is occasionally employed as a euphemism for the seduction and abuse of young women (cf. *Truculentus* 845). This raises the possibility that Plautus may also be alluding to this particular connotation in the context of *Cistellaria*, given Selenium's sense of betrayal and abuse by Alcesimarchus. Finally, *stultitia* is often employed as a synonym for *insania* ("insanity"), which reinforces the complexity of the term in this specific narrative context.

perceived emotional emptiness of her fellow courtesans who are supposedly incapable of feeling affection for their clients, it also carries a much deeper significance. Even if taken ironically, these lines reflect and reinforce prevailing Greco-Roman beliefs regarding the supposed physical and intellectual inferiority of women. Within the framework of the cardiocentric theory which held that the heart was the primary organ responsible for both cognition and emotions, Gymnasium's statement takes on deeper significance. By suggesting that women lack a heart altogether, the passage implies not only an absence of emotional depth but also a fundamental deficiency in intellect aligning with broader ancient medical and philosophical discourses that positioned women as inherently weaker, less rational beings.

Ancient medical writers consistently framed the female body as physiologically and intellectually inferior to the male. Aristotle argued that women were biologically defective, possessing colder and more porous bodies that rendered them incapable of generating the vital heat associated with rational thought and physical strength.[6] Within this paradigm, female physiology was often linked to passivity, excess of moisture, and an inherent lack of self-control, all of which contributed to the perception of women as less capable of independent reasoning. The notion that women were deficient in *cor* (heart), the very organ believed to govern both intellect and emotion, thus functions as an exaggerated expression of this ideology, reducing women to irrational beings who exist outside the realm of true wisdom and self-governance.

After further description of her state Selenium is finally diagnosed by her more experienced friend.

Gym. amat haec mulier.
Sel. eho an amare occipere amarum est, opsecro?
Gym. namque ecastor Amor et melle et felle est fecundissumus; gustui dat dulce, amarum ad satietatem usque oggerit.
Sel. ad istam faciem est morbus qui me, mea Gymnasium, macerat.
Gym. perfidiosus est Amor.
Sel. ergo in me peculatum facit.
Gym. bono animo es, erit isti morbo melius.
Sel. confidam fore, si medicus ueniat qui huic morbo facere medicinam potest.
Gym. ueniet.
Sel. spissum istuc amanti est uerbum "ueniet," nisi uenit.

Gym. This woman's in love.
Sel. What! Falling in love isn't bitter, is it?
Gym. To be sure, Love abounds in honey as well as in gall; if you taste him, he gives you sweetness, but then he piles you up with bitterness till you're full.
Sel. The illness that's tormenting me is of that sort, my dear Gymnasium.
Gym. Love is treacherous.
Sel. Yes, he's embezzling all I have.
Gym. Take heart, that illness will get better.
Sel. I trust it will, if the doctor comes who can cure this illness.
Gym. He will come.
Sel. That phrase "he will come" is a sluggish one for a lover, unless he does come.
(lines 69-77)

[6] Cf. e.g. *Politics* 1.1254b, or *G.A.* I.728 a.15-25. For more on Aristotle's view on sexual differences, see Deslauriers 2022.

This passage humorously encapsulates the idea of love as a disorder. Selenium's condition is first diagnosed externally by an observer, her friend Gymnasium, before she herself acknowledges it. This course of action mirrors a pattern found in later medical writings and dramatic literature. Following the traditional framing, lovesickness, infamous for its diagnostic elusiveness, is initially described through the symptoms exhibited by the afflicted. Outsiders first detail these symptoms which the sufferers themselves later reiterate. Once the symptoms are listed and interpreted, a diagnosis is made typically again first by an outsider, before being unquestionably confirmed by the sick person.

After identifying the nature of the illness as lovesickness, the next step is to seek a cure. Here again, *Cistellaria* closely adheres to the literary and medical construction of love as a disease: the cure for the lovesick lies beyond the afflicted individual. Selenium can take or do nothing to heal herself; the only remedy is the object of her lovesickness – the person she loves *graviter* ("madly").

This trajectory is evident in poetry, drama, and medical literature alike. The medical tradition did not so much invent the condition as codify a set of symptoms and metaphors already circulating in the broader literary culture. The persistence of this conceptual framework across genres from lyric and tragedy to philosophical prose, demonstrates how closely intertwined the medical and literary understandings of emotional pathology had become by Plautus' time.

This convergence finds its first explicit clinical articulation in the works of Aretaeus of Cappadocia (2nd century CE) and Galen (129–216 CE), who identify and classify the physiological and psychological effects of unfulfilled desire. Their writings mark a turning point, translating the metaphorical and philosophical language of passion into a medical discourse of diagnosis and cure. Although their formal systematization occurs later than Plautus, it reflects intellectual patterns already visible in the cultural environment that informed *Cistellaria.*

Discussing melancholy in his *On Causes and Symptoms of Chronic Diseases* Aretaeus recounts the case of a man, initially misdiagnosed with melancholy and later revealed to be lovesick. [18] His condition was ultimately cured, not by medical intervention but by the fulfillment of his romantic longing. Like in the case of Selenium, the man's disease was not easy to diagnose at first.[7]

In his *Prognosis*, a survey of case studies, Galen describes the case of a Roman woman, the wife of a certain Justus. Justus' wife suffered from an enigmatic condition, which, after initial troubles, Galen managed to diagnose as lovesickness. [19] Her symptoms included persistent insomnia, antisocial behaviour, and a notably erratic heartbeat whenever the name of her love interest was mentioned. Palpitations, long associated with lovesickness since the time of Sappho, were the key symptom that led Galen to settle

[7] Aretaeus' case marks a shift away from the humoral theory used to explain the aetiology of lovesickness, reflecting a broader trend in the medical circles of the 2nd century CE.

on lovesickness as a diagnosis.[8] Galen's case echoes Erasistratus famously diagnosis of Antiochus I with lovesickness for his stepmother, Stratonice. Galen situates his own case within this tradition, framing it as an evolution of Erasistratus' methods.

All three cases – those of Erasistratus, Aretaeus, and Galen, begin with the assumption that melancholic madness and lovesickness are related ailments. They were commonly mistaken for one another, especially among the lay community.[9] While Galen's account does not detail a cure, the cases of Erasistratus and Aretaeus suggest that the only effective treatment for lovesickness was fulfilling the patient's romantic desires. This cure, already prevalent in literary depictions of lovesickness, underscores a thematic continuity between medical and literary traditions.

In tragedy, the unattainability of such a remedy frequently drives the dramatic plot to its tragic conclusion. In philosophical discourse, there is no explicit mention of requited love as a cure for lovesickness. However, sexual intercourse is often prescribed as a remedy for the related ailment of melancholy. Outside of specific discourse of madness and lovesickness, regular sexual activity and orgasm were already present in the Hippocratic corpus as a part of a healthy regimen for both men and women alike.[10] Approaching love and madness, Plato in *Timaeus* prescribes a regimen that includes appropriate sexual activity to mitigate such disorders.[11] In later medical explorations of the tensions between love and madness, authors like Rufus from Ephesus (1st – 2nd century CE), expanded on the idea that unfulfilled desire could lead to melancholic madness, recommending sexual intercourse as a therapeutic remedy. The idea of reciprocated love or sexual fulfillment as a cure for lovesickness, or melancholic madness, respectively, remained influential for ages to come.[12]

[8] The practice of diagnosing illnesses based on pulse activity gained prominence as early as the 3rd century BCE with Erasistratus of Ceos. By the time of Galen, it had become a central method in medical diagnostics, integral to the analysis and treatment of various conditions.

[9] While they may share the symptoms, such as insomnia and erratic behaviour, melancholy and lovesickness differed in both cause and treatment. Although Galen did adhere to humoral theory in general, his diagnosis of Justus' wife challenged the notion that lovesickness arises from bodily imbalance. Instead, Galen located its origin in the emotional realm, positioning lovesickness as a psychological, rather than physiological, condition.

[10] See, e.g. *Aff.* 1, *Epid.* 6.8.23.

[11] Here, Plato attributes the diseases of the soul, including lovesickness, to a somatic origin – namely, humoral imbalance: "Indeed, almost all those affections reproached as 'incontinence in pleasure', as though the wicked acted voluntarily, are wrongly so reproached; for no one is voluntarily wicked" (*Tim.* 86b–d, trans. W.R.M. Lamb). This view firmly embeds lovesickness within the framework of somatic and humoral theory, blending its physical and psychological dimensions.

[12] This idea, however, was not without its detractors. Caelius Aurelianus, a 5th-century CE physician, explicitly rejects the notion that lovesickness can be cured by indulging the very cause of the ailment: "Some physicians hold that love is a proper remedy for madness … they are not aware of the obvious truth that in many cases love is the very cause of it (*furoris amor fuerit causa*) … surely it is absurd and wrong to recommend, of all the remedies for the disease, the very thing that you are trying to treat" (Caelius Aurelianus, *On acute diseases and on chronic diseases,* Drabkin 1950:557–559, *apud* Ribeiro 2020, 64).

Plautus' depiction of Selenium's condition closely follows both literary tropes and medical beliefs. Just as physicians struggled to distinguish lovesickness from other maladies, Selenium's condition is initially unclear, diagnosed only through her friend Gymnasium's external observation of symptoms. All the symptoms, as well as the proposed cure – union with the object of desire, also mirror the medical case studies where relief is achieved through the fulfillment of romantic longing.

By echoing the established trajectory of lovesickness found in medical and literary traditions, Plautus lends credibility to Selenium's emotional suffering. Her feelings are validated through their alignment with the symptoms and behaviors attributed to other canonical lovesick figures, and she remains consistent in these traits throughout the play. Unlike her fellow courtesans, Selenium does not feign love. She is unable to follow the old procuress' advice to love only in appearance (lines 96–97). Instead, she loves wholeheartedly, rejecting the calculated detachment expected of her. This stark contrast between Selenium, embodying the unusual role of an "honest prostitute," and the other courtesans is rooted in her hidden identity: as the audience will soon learn, Selenium is, in fact, a freeborn citizen.

It is precisely this ambivalence of Selenium's status, positioned between the world of free courtesans and that of marriageable citizen women, that allows Plautus to grant her a level of agency that is otherwise nonexistent among citizen female characters. In Roman comedy, agency is typically reserved for courtesans, while citizen women remain flat, passive, and largely uninfluential figures. However, while courtesans' agency is usually tied to morally dubious intentions, Selenium's distinctiveness lies in her refusal to conform to such expectations. The intensity of her emotions reinforces her moral integrity and is also validated, in turn, through the literary and medical condition of lovesickness.

Lovesickness in *Cistellaria:* Male Love and Madness

Selenium is not alone in her affliction: Alcesimarchus too suffers from lovesickness, only his case displays traits bordering on pure madness. In New Comedy and Roman *palliata*, male characters are more often the lovesick parties, but their condition is typically framed is an obsessive, sexual desire. Just like Selenium, Alcesimarchus, too, deviates from the comic norm. While his passion retains the urgency typical of comic lovers his condition is much deeper and dramatically extreme.

Already Alcesimarchus' opening monologue is a tour-de-force of emotional collapse:

Alc. credo ego Amorem primum apud homines carnuficinam commentum.
hanc ego de me coniecturam domi facio, ni foris quaeram, qui omnis homines supero, [atque] antideo **cruciabilitatibus**
animi. iactor [crucior], agitor, stimulor, uorsor
in amoris rota, miser exanimor,
feror, differor, distrahor, diripior,
ita nubilam mentem animi habeo.
ubi sum, ibi non sum, ubi non sum, ibi est animus:
ita miomnia sunt ingenia;
quod lubet, non lubet iam id continuo
ita me **Amor lassum animi ludificat**,
fugat, agit, appetit, raptat, retinet,
lactat, largitur

Alc. I believe it was Love who first devised torture among us men. I draw this inference from home, from my own experience – no need to look outside: I outdo and surpass everyone in **mental agony. I'm being thrown around, tossed around, pierced, turned on the wheel of love; poor me, I'm being destroyed, driven, driven apart, dragged apart, torn apart: so clouded is my mind**. Where I am, there I'm not, where I'm not, there my heart is; all my moods are like this. What I like I dislike at once: **this is how Love tricks me – I am mentally exhausted** – how he puts me to flight, drives me off, lays hands on me, drags me back, holds me back, entices me, bestows on me.
(lines 203-17)

At first glance, Alcesimarchus appears to follow the well-established comedic tradition of the lovesick young man. His speech is saturated with the conventional vocabulary of romantic suffering common to nearly every *adulescens amans* in *palliata*. Adjectives like *miser* ("poor, wretched") and verbs such as *pereo* ("I'm done for") and *distrahor* ("I'm torn to pieces") are standard components of their lexicon, reinforcing the image of the desperate, emotionally overwhelmed lover. The tropes are likewise not without precedent. He speaks of being turned on love's wheel, dragged, torn, tricked, driven to the point of mental exhaustion – *lassum animi*. However, while the imagery is familiar, the intensity is not. The theme *amor cruciabilitates animi*, which runs through the monody, sets the emotional tone for the portrayal of *Cistellaria's* male protagonist and lays the groundwork for the dramatic escalation that follows. [20]

The damaged state of the text prevents us from tracing the gradual escalation of Alcesimarchus' behaviour. The next relatively intact section appears only in the scene where he encounters Gymnasium and learns of his father's plans to marry him to another woman. In response, he loses his wits. In a delusional fit, he commands his servant to fetch armour, summon horses, and prepare armies for war.

Alc. i, affer mihi arma, et loricam adducito.
Ser. loricam adducam? sa * * * ned * *
<add>ucere.
Alc. i, curre, equom affer.
Ser.perii hercle**, hic instanit miser.**
Alc. abi atque hastatos multos, multos uelites,
multos cum multis—nil moror precario.
ubi sunt quae iussi?
Ser. **sanus hic non est satis**.
Gym. **manu esse credo nocitum**, quom illaec sic facit.
Ser. **utrum deliras, quaeso, an astans somnias**,
qui equom me afferre iubes, loricam adducere,
multos hastatos, postid multos uelites,
multos cum multis? haec tu peruorsario
mihi fabulatu's.
Alc. dixin ego istaec, opsecro?
Ser. modo quidem hercle haec dixisti.
Alc. **non praesens quidem**.

Alc. Go, bring me arms, and get me a breastplate.
Ser. I should get you a breastplate? *** get ***.
Alc. Go, run, bring me a horse.
Ser. (aside) I'm ruined**, he's mad, poor chap**.
Alc. Go and fetch many men with spears, many light-armed soldiers, and many soldiers with many things—I'll accept no entreaties. Where are the things I ordered?
Ser. (to Gymnasium) **This man isn't in his right mind**.
Gym. Because he's behaving like this **I believe he's been bewitched**.
Ser. (to Alcesimarchus) **Are you mad or dreaming while standing upright**? You're telling me to bring you a horse, get you a breastplate, many men with spears, then many light-armed soldiers, and many soldiers with many things? You've been prattling this sort of thing to me in a wrongheaded way.
Alc. Please, did I say these things?
Ser. Just now you said them.
Alc. **I wasn't present**.
(lines 284-96)

His detachment from reality is immediately recognized as a sign of madness. His servant, in genuine alarm, exclaims: "I'm ruined, he's mad, poor chap." As the delusion deepens, the desperate slave turns to Gymnasium for guidance. Accustomed to the bewilderment of men, Gymnasium responds with composure. In a measured, almost clinical tone, she offers what reads as a diagnosis, both in phrasing and in certainty: "Because he's behaving like this, I believe he's been bewitched." By attributing Alcesimarchus' behaviour to supernatural influence, Gymnasium demonstrates an informed understanding of love-madness and its association with magic. This diagnosis momentarily casts her as a *doctrix amoris*.

McNamara argued that in ancient Greece and Rome lovesickness, notoriously difficult to treat, was not typically the concern of professional physicians. Instead, female traditional healers, *pharmakeis* and *pharmakides*, or sorceresses, addressed such ailments through charms and love potions. [14] In comedy, female sex workers often stood accused of such sorcery. Possessing expertise in matters of love, they could thus appear both as the cause of lovesickness and as those capable of curing it. In *Cistellaria*, Gymnasium, a free sex worker, embodies this dual role perfectly: she can use her knowledge of love to enchant when she finds it useful or amusing, as seen in her exchange with Alcesimarchus' father (lines 305-44), or she can use it to diagnose and explain the lovesickness. In fact, she first diagnosed her friend Selenium, and now Alcesimarchus. Only, in Alcesimarchus' case, Gymnasium's assessment proves particularly revealing:

Gym. Video te **Amoris** valde tactum **toxico**, adulescens.

Gym. I can see that you've been struck hard by **Love's poisoned shaft**, young man."
(line 298)

The choice of *toxicum Amoris* ("Love's poisoned shaft"), instead of the more conventional *sagitta Amoris* ("Love's arrow"), is deliberately evocative of Gymnasium's association with love medicine. The word *toxicum*, closely linked to both poison and antidotes, further reinforces her role as a *Doctor of Love* within the comedic framework.

This hallucinatory episode finds its parallels elsewhere in Plautus. Similar instances occur in *Mercator* (930–949), where the *insanus amator* Charinus embarks on an imaginary chariot ride, and in *Menaechmi* (835–871), where Menaechmus of Syracuse engages in a delirious dialogue with Dionysus and Apollo. In all three cases, the hallucinating character exists in a separate reality from their interlocutors, and all three characters are immediately labelled as insane by those around them. Yet, the key distinction between Charinus, Menaechmus and Alcesimarchus lies in the authenticity of their madness: while Charinus and Menaechmus are merely feigning insanity, Alcesimarchus genuinely experiences a fit of madness. His whole character is constructed around the unrestrained intensity of his emotions, and therefore it would be dramatically inconsistent for him to engage in conscious deception and false representation of such emotions.

In a subsequent confrontation with Selenium's adoptive mother, Melaenis, Alcesimarchus remains true to his character, displaying an "irrational, self-contradictory, and highly farcical reaction." [20]

Alc. at ita me di deaeque, superi atque inferi et medioxumi,
itaque me Iuno regina et Iouis supremi filia
itaque me Saturnus eius patruos—
Mel.ecastor pater.
Alc. —itaque me Ops opulenta, illius auia—
Mel. immo mater quidem.
Iuno filia et Saturnus patruos et pater Iuppiter?
Alc. tu me delenis, propter te haec pecco.

Alc. But as truly as the gods and goddesses, the ones above and below and in the middle, and as truly as Juno, their queen and the daughter of Jupiter on high, and as truly as Saturn, her uncle—
Mel. (interrupting) Goodness, her father.
Alc. —and as truly as opulent Ops, her grandmother—
Mel. (interrupting again) No, her mother, surely. Juno the daughter, Saturn the uncle, and Jupiter the father?
Alc. You're bewitching me, because of you I'm making these mistakes.
(lines 512-17)

This time, Alcesimarchus' love-sick madness manifests as a loss of cognitive abilities. His attempt to swear vengeance is so confused that he muddles the divine genealogy. The comic correction by Melaenis underscores his confusion, but the emotional breakdown is real. Mixing up such fundamental knowledge signals the depth of his cognitive collapse. He blames Melaenis for his state: "propter te haec pecco."

This builds up toward an explosive oath:

Alc. enim uero ita me Iuppiter itaque me Iuno itaque Ianus ita—quid dicam nescio. iam scio. immo, mulier, audi, meam ut scias sententiam. di me omnes, magni minuti, et etiam patellarii, faxint ne ego dem <uiuae> uiuos sauium Selenio, **nisi ego teque tuamque filiam aeque hodie optruncauero**,**poste autem cum primo luci cras nisi ambo occidero**, **et equidem hercle nisi pedatu tertio omnis efflixero**, nisi tu illam remittis ad me.	Alc. But as truly as Jupiter and as truly as Juno and as truly as Janus – and as truly – I don't know what to say. Now I know. Listen, woman, so that you may know my decision. May all the gods, the great and the minor ones, and even the domestic ones, prevent me from giving a kiss to Selenium while we're both alive, **if I don't butcher you and also your daughter today, if I don't kill you both afterwards, tomorrow, at the crack of dawn, and if I don't exterminate you all in a third and final stage, unless you send her back to me**. (lines 512-27)

Alcesimarchus' delirium escalates significantly in this scene. This stage of his emotional collapse manifests as an uncontrollable outburst of rage (Lat. *ira,* Gr. *orgē*), that borders on the irrational and further complicates the clinical reading of his condition. While earlier in the play the underlying condition of lovesickness drew him to hallucination, this scene pivots to a different conceptual framework: rage. From Homeric heroes to tragic figures like Ajax, characters overcome by rage often enter a liminal state in which reason gives way to emotional extremity.

Ira as an exaggerated emotional state was undoubtedly pathologized in antiquity. The idea that intense passion could corrupt judgment and impair reason was not merely literary; it belonged to a medical and philosophical understanding of the passions as pathological forces that sicken the soul. Haris points to how Aristotle's definition of *orgē* in the *Rhetoric* reinforces the performative and actionable dimensions of anger. For Aristotle, anger that did not lead to violent action, or at least urged to act, hardly counted as *orgē*. [21] Hellenistic, and later Roman, moral philosophies support this equation, categorizing violent anger as indicative of madness and symptomatic of a loss of *sophrosynē*.[13] Later medical literature, notably Galen, similarly identifies rage as "sickness of soul," analogous to madness due to its physiological intensity and the absence of rational restraint. "You can see that rage is a madness from the things men do when they are in the grip of rage […] Don't you not think that anger is a sickness of the soul? Or do you think that men of old were wrong when they spoke of grief, wrath, anger, lust, fear, and all the passions as diseases of the soul?" [22]

Within this intellectual context, Alcesimarchus' condition in *Cistellaria* becomes paradigmatic. His anger is loud and theatrical, much like the furious and intense expressions of *orgē* that Harris identifies across ancient sources. His revenge fantasy culminates in brutal threats of violence that escalate systematically through three distinct phases:

[13] From Cicero (cf. *Tusc. Disp*. 4) to Horace (cf. *Odes* 1.16.5-9, Epist. 1.2.62), to Seneca (cf. *De Ira*), excessive anger or rage has been seen as a form of loss of rationality, that is as madness, and as such was to be avoided at all costs.

immediate action, near-future violence, and indefinite annihilation (lines 525–529). The repetitions of these threats should not be viewed as mechanical dittography; [23] rather, their variations in timing (*hodie*, line 524, *cum primo luci cras*, line 525; and *pedatu tertio*, line 526) and verb choices create a carefully structured rhetorical crescendo. Furthermore, contrary to De Melo's translation, the masculine plural *ambo* in the line 525 suggests that Alcesimarchus includes himself among the victims, hinting at suicidal ideation.

Soon after, he explicitly calls on Death:

Alc. recipe me ad te, Mors, amicum et beneuolum. [...] ecquid agis? remorare. lumen linque. Sel. amabo, accurrite, ne se interemat.	Alc. Receive me unto thee, o Death, your friend and well-wisher. […] Won't you do something? You're delaying. Leave the light. Sel. Please, come to my aid, so that he doesn't kill himself! (lines 640-4)

Although no blood is ultimately shed, the visual intensity of this moment, heightened by Selenium's immediate alarm, creates a climactic turn in the emotional arc of the play. The attempted suicide swiftly gives way to an impassioned abduction of Selenium, a narrative pivot that does not reduce the dramatic tension but rather reconfigures it. What we witness in these final scenes, then, is not only the culmination of a romantic plot but the dramatization of mental instability triggered by emotional excess. Alcesimarchus' suicidal impulse, his abrupt reversal, and the physical seizure of his beloved – all point to a psychic state marked by affective extremity, a disordered mind oscillating between despair and possessive fervor.

This abduction, though not unprecedented in Roman comedy, marks him as unusually agentive. Only a handful of comic lovers, like Sostratus from Dyscolos or Chaerea from Eunuchus, display this level of agency and independent initiative. Yet a stark contrast separates *Cistellaria*'s protagonist from these counterparts. While Sostratos and Chaerea are in love with women who are passive and largely devoid of agency, Alcesimarchus' beloved actively participates in shaping her own fate. Selenium's agency, her ability to act independently places her outside the normative binaries of citizen wife and meretrix. Her anomalous character enables a representation of female subjectivity that is both emotionally complex and narratively active. Alcesimarchus, too, exceeds the expectations of his character type through his emotional excess and volatility.

Conclusion

It is the authenticity of emotion between the two that gives rise to their respective displays of agency. This agency, in turn, finds its narrative justification in the trope of lovesickness. In Selenium's case, the playwright needs only attribute the standard literary symptoms of lovesickness, well-established in both literary and scientific discourses, to elevate her emotional status. For Alcesimarchus, however, the balance demanded something stronger: a commensurate intensification of his condition, such that his role as *adulescens amans* transforms into something more extreme – *amans amens*, the lover-turned-madman. His lovesickness must escalate to the point of pathological rupture to match Selenium's emotional autonomy. This escalation is essential to play's narrative symmetry. In other words, "If Selenium *trahitur* from lovesickness (line 115), Alcesimarchus, at a minimum, must *distrahitur* (line 209)." [24]

The emotional logic of the play drives its protagonists beyond conventional roles and into a space where the legitimacy of their affection is measured not by social resolution alone, but by the extremity of their suffering. As such, the lovers' mutual *amor* is not merely affective but diagnostic: the depth of their passion is revealed through their respective departures from healthy condition, either physiological or psychological. The final tableau – Alcesimarchus' violent desperation and Selenium's simultaneous fear and concern – thus encapsulates the play's central thesis: lovesickness destabilizes identity and renders madness a tragic counterpart to desire.

Rezime

Rad se bavi motivom ljubavi i njegovom medikalizacijom u Plautovoj komediji *Kovčežić* (*Cistellaria*), najranijem poznatom primeru takvog pristupa u rimskoj književnosti. Umesto uobičajenog komičkog tropa, ljubav je ovde prikazana kao psihosomatska bolest, u antičkoj medicini poznata kao „ljubavna bolest". Rad upoređuje Plautov prikaz ljubavi sa tadašnjim, pre svega helenskim, medicinskim razumevanjem ovog fenomena. Pokazuje se da je patologizacija ljubavi imala jasnu narativnu funkciju: osećanju koje je u rimskoj komediji često trivijalizovano Plaut ovde daje ozbiljnost i autentičnost, čime psihološki produbljuje likove i pokreće radnju. Rad, takođe, ukazuje na to da je već u krajem III i početkom II veka pre nove ere uticaj helenske medicine bio dovoljno snažan da je Plaut mogao računati na razumevanje svojih medicinskih aluzija i dosetki među publikom različitog porekla i obrazovanja.

Ključne reči: Plaut, *Cistellaria* (*Kovčežić*), ljubavna bolest, rimska komedija, antička medicina, emocije, mentalna oboljenja, Platon, Aristotel, Galen, Aretej iz Kapadokije

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PETER OF SPAIN AND THE MEDICINAL USE OF PILGRIM SCALLOP SHELLS*

Abstract: Petrus Hispanus, also known as Peter of Spain (c. 1210-1277 CE), was a Portuguese physician who later became Pope John XXI. In his work *Thesaurus Pauperum (Treasure of the Poor)*, which was one of the most popular books during the Middle Ages, he mentioned that "scallop shells carried by the pilgrims" could be used to manage menstrual overflow. He adapted this recipe from the Arabic physician Avicenna (c. 980–1037 CE). Interestingly, this leads us to consider the medicinal use of coral as well. Current scientific knowledge indicates that scallop shells are primarily composed of calcium carbonate, which can influence blood clotting. Additionally, the concave shape of scallop shells, which helped pilgrims drink during their journeys, evolved into a powerful symbol of their spiritual quest. Beyond their chemical properties, scallop shells represented aspects of spiritual well-being and beneficial healing forces, adding significant cultural meaning to their practical use.

Keywords: Coral, Calcium carbonate

Non MeSH: Peter of Spain, Scallop shells, Saint James Way

Introduction

Bivalve molluscs, such as clams, oysters, mussels, and scallops, belong to the class Bivalvia, of which there are more than 15,000 species. Each of these species presents a shell divided from front to back into left and right valves, connected at a hinge, protecting an inner organic body. [1] Lying at the intersection of the organic and inorganic, bivalve molluscs have a rich history intertwined with human fascination. According to the anthropologists Christian Rätsch and Andreas Guhr:

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> Bivalvia, composed of calcite, a mineral that forms entire mountains, are unique because a living organism forms their shells. These living organisms create a stone in which they live, protected and safe. When the soft mollusc dies, the flesh disappears, but the shell remains. Sometimes, they are preserved for millions of years, with solid rock forming around them. The bivalve fossilizes, but the embedded shell still bears witness to its life, providing crucial insights into the evolution of the earth and consciousness, a significance on par with any human life. [2 p8-9]

Bivalvia, with its deep-rooted association with the magical rituals of primitive societies, have a deep and rich cultural significance. Their concavity served as drinking vessels and water containers. [3 p72] In medieval times, the scallop shells (Conchas de Vieira in Portuguese and Spanish), which were abundant in the Portuguese and Galician Atlantic Coast (Fig. 1), became a symbol of the Way of Saint James, one of the most popular Christian medieval pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, in the north of Spain.

Fig. 1 – Scallop shells from the Portuguese Atlantic coast. Author's collection. Photo credit: Ivo Miguel Barroso.

Scallop shells, an unexpected medicinal ingredient, are highlighted in a recipe from the *Thesaurus Pauperum (Treasure of the Poor),* written by the Portuguese physician and Pope John XXI, Petrus Hispanus (Peter of Spain, c. 1210-1277 CE). This essay will explore this historical use. Recent studies in ethnomedicine have examined the medicinal properties of marine mollusc shells, providing new insights and updates to this ancient practice:

> Remedies based on marine animals have been little studied and almost all relegated to the world of curiosities. However, many of these resources, which may seem unusual in our European context, have survived through time, and can inspire ethnopharmacological works. [4 p12-20]

The Way of Saint James

The foundation of the city Santiago de Compostela goes back to the legends about the journeys, death and miracles of the Holy Apostle Saint James (?-44 CE), who, in his wanderings in spreading the Christian faith, preached in Galicia, founded a church in Iria, but then returned to Jerusalem, where, by order of King Herod, he was beheaded, apparently, to please the Jews. [5 p19-20]

Legends, dating back to the 12th century, surround the return of Saint James' remains to Galicia, during which the scallop shell became his emblem and talisman. The disciples of the Apostle, accompanied by an angel of God, took charge of the holy body, which they bore by night to Joppa, where they found a miraculous ship ready prepared for them. They set sail with favourable breezes and calm sea until, on the seventh day, they came to the harbour of the river at Iria on the Galician coast:

> We read of a miracle being accorded to them. When nearing the end of their journey, they beheld a man riding on the sea-shore, whose horse being restive, plunged into the sea, and then walked on the crests of the waves towards them. Suddenly, as they watched, both horse and rider sank beneath the water; but, after a brief space, they again appeared, covered over with shells. The shells were the convex bivalve, white inside. And the holy scallop shell thus became the emblem of St. James, being formed by skilful craftsmen as talismans, which should guard from all harm those who sought the Apostle's shrine. [5 p21]

The legends recounted in the *Liber Sancti Iacobi* (Book of St. James) from the *Codex Calixtinus* are the source of medieval veneration of St. James of Compostela whose original manuscript dates from 1139-1733. [6 p140] The scallop shells figure in the Banner (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 – Banner of St. James (Pendón de Santiago) in Liber Sancti Iacobi, Codex Calixtinus, 14th century. Biblioteca General Histórica de Salamanca (Public domain).

The manuscript, "*The Miracles of St. James*" from the 14th century, also based on the *Codex Calixtinus*, recounts the miracles of St. James the Apostle, buried in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. The miracle about the power of the Scallop of St. James healing a knight suffering from a massive swelling in his throat in the lands of Apulia in the year 1106, is of particular interest for healings mediated by the saints in Christianity:

> In the year one hundred and six of the Lord's incarnation, a certain knight in Apulia felt his throat swell like a wineskin full of air. And, since he could find no remedy from any physician to cure him, he placed his unwavering trust in the Apostle Saint James, who told him that if he could find one of those shells that pilgrims bring from Santiago and touch his sore throat with it, he would heal immediately. Finding a shell in the house of a neighbour pilgrim and putting it on his throat, he was cured. Filled with gratitude and awe, he journeyed to the tomb of the Apostle in Galicia.
>
> (Corriendo el año mil ciento seis de la encarnación del Señor, a cierto caballero en tierras de Apulia se le hinchó la garganta como un odre lleno de aire. Y como no hallase en ningún médico remedio que lo sanase, confiado en Santiago apóstol dijo que si pudiese hallar alguna concha de las que suelen llevar consigo los peregrinos que regresan de Santiago y tocase con ella su garganta enferma, tendría remedio inmediato. Y habiéndola encontrado en casa de cierto peregrino vecino_ suyo, tocó su garganta y sanó, y marchó luego al sepulcro del Apóstol en Galicia.) [7 p353]

While the scallop shell is rich in Christian symbolism, this specific association with miraculous healing is unique among its legendary meanings.

Peter of Spain

Peter of Spain (Petrus Hispanus, c. 1210-1277 CE), the Portuguese Pope John XXI (Papacy 1276-1277 CE) (Fig. 3), was an outstanding medieval philosopher and "the only physician ever to sit on the chair of Saint Peter." [8 p365] His work *Tesaurus Pauperum* (*Treasure of the Poor*), a practical recipes book written in simple language for the poor, brings together a set of easy and effective remedies for almost all illnesses. It was widely circulated until the 16th century. [8 p367] It is consigned to the "Father of the Poor", God, who presides over the help of the doctor in the treatment of his patients, as can be read in Peter of Spain's Prologue to the work. [9 pVIII] However, the importance of experimentation is stressed, as well as the effectiveness of the recipes. [10]

Peter of Spain was a key figure in introducing Arabic medicine to Europe, where the use of minerals, precious stones, and animal concretions was particularly valued, although this practice was already partially documented in European literature as early as Theophrastus (c. 372- 287 BCE). [11]

Fig. 3 – Portrait of Peter of Spain. Art collections of the Veste Coburg. Public domain.

His therapeutic arsenal includes gold, alum, clay, marble powder, plaster, earths such as bolo Armenia and terra sigillata, as well as precious and semi-precious stones like topaz, sapphire, emerald, jasper, and lodestone, fossils like Jewish stones (identified with echinoid fossils), amber, jet (fossilized wood), and substances of animal origin like pearl, coral, Scallops of St. James, ivory shavings, deer horn (unicorn), spodium (calcined bones), oculi cancrorum (crab's eyes), calcareous concretions of the stomach (bezoars), enteroliths, concretions of the epiphysis, parotid gland, and others. [12]

A recipe borrowed from Avicenna (Abū ʿAlī al-Husatn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Sīnā (980-1037), the "Prince of Physicians", featured fish shells brought from Santiago de Compostela as the main ingredient for metrorrhagia (menstrual overflow). This one is the only instance in which Peter of Spain resorts to scallop shells in the Portuguese edition translated by the classicist Maria Helena da Rocha Pereira (1925-2017), which encompasses the manuscript 2235 from the Sainte-Geneviève Library and the manuscript Pal. Lat. 1259 from the Vatican Apostolic Library. Dating from the 14th century, these are the manuscripts that contain more recipes. [9 pVIII] In this edition, the recipe reads as follows:

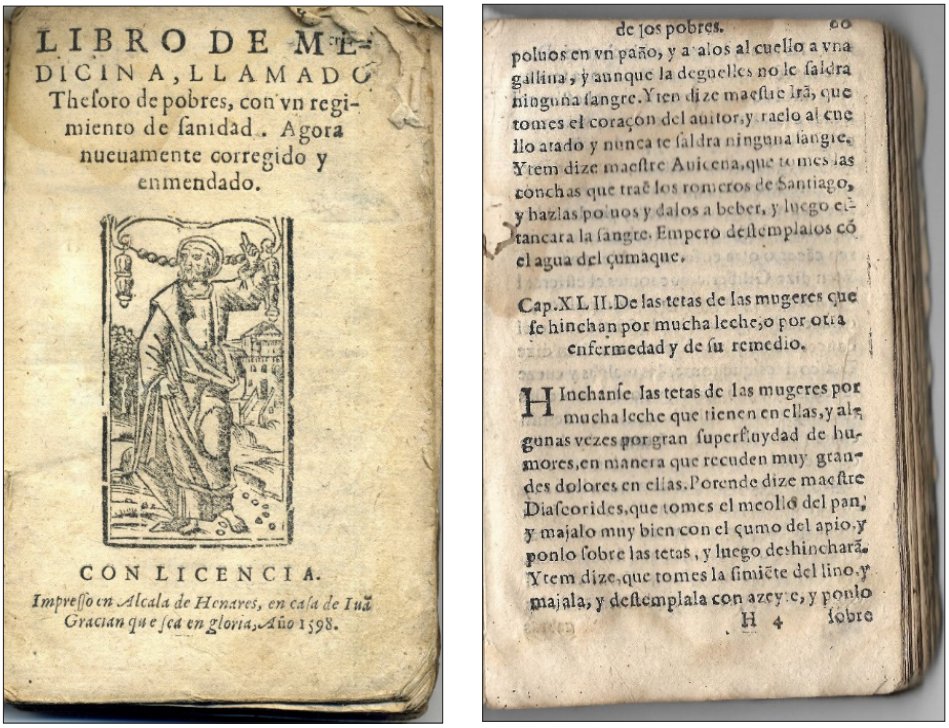
[Avicenna]. Item. Fish shells, brought from Santiago, burned and given as a drink with sumac water, do much good.

([Auicenna]. Item conchule piscium, que apportantur de Sancto Jacobo, combuste et date potui cum aqua sumach, multum ualet.) [9 p276-277]

In a Spanish edition of the *Thesaurus Pauperum* (1598), printed without the author's name, with a 'Prologue to the author', it was explained that the book was commissioned by Pope John from a doctor named Juliano, a very learned and experienced physician. [13 p3] (Fig. 4). In this publication, the recipe is more detailed and precise, referring to "the shells that the pilgrims bring from Santiago" (Fig. 4a):

Item advises Master Avicenna to take the shells brought by the pilgrims from Santiago, grind them into powder, and administer them as a drink, as it will promptly stop the bleeding. However, make them [the shells] work with sumac water.

(Ytem dize maeſtre Auicena que tomes as conchas que traē los romeros de Santiago, y hazlas polvos y dalos a beber, y luego estancara la ſangre. Empero deſtempla os cō el agua del çumaque.) [13 p60]


LIBRO DE ME-
DICINA, LLAMADO
Theſoro de pobres, con vn regi-
miento de ſanidad. Agora
nueuamente corregido y
enmendado.

CON LICENCIA.

Impreſſo en Alcala de Henares, en caſa de Iuã Gracian que ſea en gloria, Año 1598.

de los pobres. 60

poluos en vn paño, y a alos al cuello a vna gallina, y aunque la degueller no le ſaldra ninguna ſangre. Ytem dize maeſtre Auicena, que tomes las conchas que traē los romeros de Santiago, y hazlas polvos y dalos a beber, y luego estancara la ſangre. Empero deſtemplalos cō el agua del çumaque.

Cap. XLII. De las tetas de las mugeres que ſe hinchan por mucha leche, o por otra enfermedad y de ſu remedio.

HInchanſe las tetas de las mugeres por mucha leche que tienen en ellas, y algunas vezes por gran ſuperfluydad de humores, en manera que recuden muy grandes dolores en ellas. Porende dize maeſtre Diaſcorides, que tomes el meollo del pan, y majalo muy bien con el çumo del apio, y ponlo ſobre las tetas, y luego deshinchará. Ytem dize, que tomes la ſimiēte del lino, y majala, y deſtemplala con azeyte, y ponlo

H 4 ſobre

Fig. 4 – Libro de Medicina, llamado Thesoro de los pobres, con vn regimiento de sanidad (1598). Author's collection. Fig. 4a- p. 60.

Scallop shells, Avicenna, Peter of Spain

When examining Peter of Spain's recipe, what struck us was the attribution of the prescription for scallop shells, brought from Santiago de Compostela, to Avicenna, a Persian author. We diligently searched the recipe in Avicenna's volume on *Natural Pharmaceutics* but found no entry for scallop shells.

In an entry dedicated to sea shells, Avicenna lists the properties and indications of sea shells for extracting arrows, cosmetic use, relieving swellings, managing pimples, alleviating joint pain, and whitening teeth. There is no mention of haemostatic properties or menstrual overflow. The shell with the pulp and the pulp alone are employed for other purposes. [14 p989-991] Conch shells are listed with the following healing properties:

> "The conch shell reduces hotness of the blood." [14 p108]

Could this be Peter of Spain's source? Instead of scallop shells and the "hotness of the blood," could the haemostatic properties be interpreted as the source? Avicenna prescribed burnt conch shells for the visual organs and for treating ulcers of the eye, [13 p308] not as haemostatic.

Coral as haemostatic

Peter of Spain was the 75th archbishop of the city of Braga, in the north of Portugal, not far from Santiago de Compostela. [15 p152] He would be familiar with the pilgrimages, the scallop shells and St. James miracles. In another recipe, he indicates red coral as haemostatic for menstrual overflow:

> Drinking coral plant retains menstruation. [9 p277]

Coral, a calcareous skeleton secreted by marine animals, was highly valued for its beauty and its versatility. It served as an ornament and an amulet, but it was also a key ingredient in life elixirs, love potions and all-healing potions during the Middle Ages. The precious red coral was particularly valued for these purposes. [2 p103] Coral (Fig. 5) was held as a marine plant that hardened since Theophrastus:

> Coral, which is like a stone, is red in colour and rounded like a 33 root, and it grows in the sea. And in a way the petrified Indian reed is not very different in its nature from coral. But this is a subject for another inquiry. [11 p53]

Coral (red, black and white) is listed in Avicenna's treatise, as a well-known drug with the following healing properties, as haemostatic although not mentioned to manage metrorrhagia:

> Coral constricts the tissues or canals of the body. It stops profuse bleeding. It has a strong drying property. This property is stronger than its potency to constrict the tissues or canals of the body. [14 p313-15]

Fig. 5 - Coral branch mounted on a black wooden stand. 17th century. Credit: Lisbon Museum of Pharmacy and Health.

Coral was widely prescribed by Peter of Spain for several conditions. [10] However, it is worth to note that scallop shells, sea shells in general, and corals share the same chemical composition. Bivalves and coral are mainly composed of calcite, [2 p8-9, 102] which was medicinally employed as calcium carbonate to manage several conditions, including stopping bleeding since calcium is an important co-factor in blood clotting. [16 p49] Whether Peter of Spain hinted at similar haemostatic properties of coral and scallop shells is a question for which we have no answer.

During the Middle Ages, coral was also charged with spiritual symbolism, such as the St. James shell. Coral branches resembling a cross were charged with Christian symbolism to ward off the devil. In the French translation, *Le Jardin de Santé (Hortus Sanitatis),* attributed to Johannes de Cuba (1430-1504?), a coral-like natural representation resembling a cross is depicted on a blue background as a marine plant. [17 f140] (Fig. 6). Crosses and other precious liturgical and devotional objects are frequently made of coral or adorned with it, like a reliquary cross from Italy, dating from the 14th century. [18] (Fig. 6a).

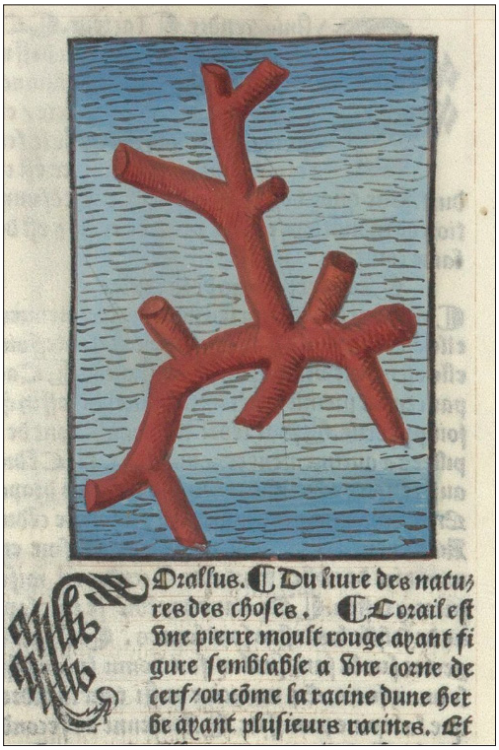


Fig. 6 – Coral in the shape of a cross. In Le Jardin de Santé. French translation by Antoine Vérard (1450?-1514?), fol. 140.

Fig. 6a – Reliquary cross. Italy. 14th century. Materials: T ranslucent enamel, silver, silver-guilt, coral, glass, rock crystal, gold leaf. Object number: 17.190.497. New York. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In the 14th century, Rosarius, a French Dominican friar from Soissonnais, but of whom no further data are available, after listing the benefits and protections of coral, compares it to the Virgin Mary as the tree of Life, in a manuscript from after 1328, *Poème moralisé sur les proprietés des choses,* from the National Library of France (B.N.F. fr.12483):

> To the coral, Mary (I) compare,
> Who was the tree of life...
> (Au coral Marie (je) compaire,
> Qui fu fust el arbre de vie...). [19 p457]

Rosarius' association of the coral to the Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus, as the Tree of Life has possibly echoed in religious artworks such as the Red Coral Reliquary of Queen Saint Elizabeth of Portugal (1271-1336), a masterpiece of Portuguese goldsmithing, which holds significant historical value. Crafted by an unknown author in the 14th century, it

Fig. 7 – Red Coral Reliquary of Queen Saint Elizabeth of Aragon (1271-1336). (MNMC 6036;O7) • Material: Coral, Gold silver and enamels. Unknown author. 14th century. PortPhoto credit: DGPC/ADF - Museu Nacional de Machado de Castro - Museus e Monumentos de Portugal, E.P.E.

is an elaborate construction that features the shield of Aragon in enamel, symbolizing the Royal House of Queen Saint Elizabeth of Portugal. The reliquary, supported by silver pieces, is designed to resemble to coral tree, with three branches that bear a striking resemblance to tree crosses. [20] (Fig. 7).

Sumac water

Sumac, the other ingredient, is listed in an entry of Avicenna's treatise, with haemostatic properties:

> (…) Sumac stops bleeding. Some physicians are of the view that even by suspending it around the neck, it acts as an anti-haemorrhagic drug. (…) Sumac causes constipation, stops excessive menstrual flow and profuse bleeding. [14 p1057-1060]

Sumac water, made from Sumac berries, is the other ingredient. Sumac berries are the fruits of the sumac (or Sumach) tree (Fig. 8), *Rhus coriaria* L. and related species like

Rhus glabra L. They are good for digestive problems as stomachics and as adstringents, especially for oral cavity and pharynx, often as a gargle. [21 p541]

Sumac berries are currently known to be rich in antioxidant compounds, which include tannins, anthocyanins and flavonoids, which stand as the primary reason for their broad therapeutical potential. [22]

The use of sumac water in Peter of Spain's recipe establishes without any doubt the origin of part of this recipe to Avicenna's treatise.

Fig. 8 – Rhus Sumac. In Blackwell, 1737, p. 541.

Conclusion

The recipe for Scallop shells borrowed from Avicenna raises questions to which we have no answers. However, it presents fascinating challenges to the modern scholarship:

1 – We do not know if Peter of Spain had access to Avicenna's manuscripts.
2 – Scallop shells do not figure as medicines in the modern English translation of Avicenna's treatise.
3 – Peter of Spain and Avicenna prescribed red coral for menstrual overflow.
4 – The main chemical component of scallop shells (and shells, in general) and coral is calcium carbonate, an important co-factor of the coagulation process.
5 – Considering the similar chemical composition of scallop shells and coral, it is plausible that they could produce similar therapeutic effects, which science could not prove at the time.
6 – The only support for the origin of Peter of Spain's recipe in Avicenna's treatise is the second ingredient, sumac water, which would have synergistic antihemorrhagic effects in managing menstrual overflow.

Would Peter of Spain be aware of this similarity from his empirical experience? It seems reasonable. The revolutionary advances in chemistry made by Antoine Lavoisier (1743–1794) allowed physicians to understand the exact properties of the medicines they prescribed. Starting in the 18th century, not only doctors, but also pharmacists gained the ability to evaluate the chemical composition and effectiveness of drugs. At the same time, the development of modern anatomy, physiology, pathological anatomy, and other medical sciences gradually replaced earlier, unscientific medical and therapeutic practices. This progress led to many expensive but ineffective medicines being discontinued and preserved only in medical and pharmaceutical museums. [23,24]

Despite the religiosity surrounding the scallop shells, pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela and the figure of Peter of Spain himself, the recipe does not directly contain anything that indicates healing by religious or spiritual means. The same applies to the coral's recipe. It is possible that the healing potential of the scallop shells carried by pilgrims of the St James Way, which were themselves considered to work miracles, underlined the choice based on their beneficial value.

While the origin of Peter of Spain's recipes remains a mystery, as we do not have direct access to his sources, there is much to be clarified and discovered. In his medical works and, specifically, in this prescription, we may conclude that he gave primacy to experience, reason and, possibly, his clinical sense since:

> Reason seeks to safeguard what has been acquired through experience. [25 p22]

Martin von Fulda, the author of a chronicle detailing the popes and emperors up to 1379 (printed in Eccard, Corp. I, 1642), was referenced by Johann Tobias Köhler

between 1760 and 1768. Köhler compiled the known information on Peter of Spain in 1760, mentioning him in the following terms:

> He was a great physician, but in other sciences, he was a generalist.
> (Hic fuit magnus medicus in allis autem Scientiis generalis). [26 p12]

Therefore, Peter of Spain remains a challenging and fascinating figure in the 21st century. Heinrich Schipperges (1918-2003), philosopher, psychologist, physician, Arabist, a specialist in Arabic Studies, and a great enthusiast of Peter of Spain, stated the following:

> What increasingly captivates us about the life and work of Peter of Spain is not just his originality and mastery in constructing a natural philosophical architecture within medieval scholasticism. It is the sheer elegance with which he assimilated the diverse currents of tradition from both the West and the East and then interwove and dissolve them with his dialectic. This process, repeated with grace, gradually made these traditions transparent, offering us a new level of understanding and enlightenment in a truly dialogic manner. [25 p125]

Rezime

Petrus Hispanus, takođe poznat kao Petar Španski (oko 1210-1277), bio je portugalski lekar koji je kasnije postao papa Jovan XXI. U svom delu „Thesaurus Pauperum“ (Blago siromašnih), koje je bila jedna od najpopularnijih knjiga tokom srednjeg veka, pomenuo je da se „morski češljevi koje nose hodočasnici“ mogu koristiti za upravljanje menstrualnim izlivom. Ovaj recept je adaptirao od arapskog lekara Avicene (oko 980–1037. godine nove ere). Zanimljivo je da nas ovo navodi da razmotrimo i medicinsku upotrebu korala. Trenutna naučna saznanja ukazuju na to da su morski češljevi prvenstveno sastavljeni od kalcijum karbonata, koji može uticati na zgrušavanje krvi. Pored toga, konkavni oblik školjki, koji je pomagao hodočasnicima da piju tokom svojih putovanja, evoluirao je u moćan simbol njihove duhovne potrage. Pored svojih hemijskih svojstava, morski češljevi predstavljali su aspekte duhovnog blagostanja i korisnih isceliteljskih sila, dodajući značajno kulturno značenje njihovoj praktičnoj upotrebi.

Ključne reči: koral, kalcijum karbonat, Petar od Španije, morski češljevi, put Svetog Jakova

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"EVERY EVIL PALES IN COMPARISON TO THOMAS'S WICKEDNESS"

THE PHYSICAL PUNISHMENTS AND TORTURE INFLICTED BY THOMAS PRELJUBOVIĆ, ACCORDING TO THE AUTHOR OF THE CHRONICLE OF IOANNINA[1]

Abstract: The Chronicle of Ioannina is a 15th-century prose chronicle and represents the longest and most comprehensive preserved text about medieval Epirus. This source describes the tyrannical rule of Thomas Preljubović in Ioannina (1366/7–1384). According to the author of the Chronicle of Ioannina, Thomas Preljubović's governance in this city is depicted as a time of fear and terror. The chronicler portrays numerous hardships and abuses suffered by the inhabitants of Ioannina with undisguised bitterness, often repeating the phrase, *"Every evil pales in comparison to Thomas's wickedness"* thereby emphasizing the scale of the terror sown by Thomas Preljubović during his reign of terror, which lasted from 1366/1367 to 1384. Among the many atrocities attributed to Thomas Preljubović, the chronicler most frequently mentions imprisonment, enslavement, executions, as well as blinding, mutilation, hanging, quartering by horses, water torture, and other forms of punishment characteristic of the medieval period.

Keywords MeSH: Torture

Non MeSH: Corporal Punishment, Chronicle of Ioannina, Thomas Preljubović

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Introduction

The expansion of the Serbian state to the south, under the rule of King and Emperor Stefan Dušan, reached its peak with the conquest of Epirus (1347) and Thessaly (1348), bringing significant political and territorial changes to these regions. The Serbian ruler appointed his half-brother, Symeon (Sinisha) Palaiologos, as governor of Epirus and the military commander Preljub as governor of Thessaly. The death of Stefan Dušan in December 1355 was followed by turbulent events in this area: Preljub passed away shortly thereafter, while Symeon (Sinisha) Palaiologos succeeded in proclaiming himself emperor and establishing a small Greek-Serbian empire on the territories of Thessaly and extensive parts of Epirus in 1359/1360. [1 p242-246, 2 p567-568, 3 p573-577, 4 p872]

The inhabitants of Ioannina, Vagenetia, and the surrounding areas sent a delegation to Symeon (Sinisha) Palaiologos, requesting that he appoint them a new lord. In response, he sent his son-in-law, Thomas Preljubović, the son of Dušan's caesar Preljub and Irene. In 1366, Thomas Preljubović ceremonially entered Ioannina with Serbian troops. In the autumn of 1382, Thomas sent the abbot of the Ioannina monastery of Archimandrion, Gabriel, to Byzantium. Gabriel returned from Thessaloniki with the symbols of the despotic dignity, granted to Thomas by Manuel Palaiologos, the son and co-emperor of Byzantine Emperor John V Palaiologos. Thomas was awarded the title of despot not only due to his marital ties to the imperial Palaiologos family—being married to Maria Angelina, the daughter of Sinisha Palaiologos, who had since passed away—but also under the condition of recognizing the sovereignty of the Byzantine emperor. This arrangement was a means to secure the legitimacy of his rule in Ioannina. [5 p80, 6 p143-157, 7 p143-160]

After the assassination of Despot Thomas Preljubović on December 23, 1384, the Albanians laid siege to Ioannina. Monk Joasaph, the brother of Maria Angelina, after consulting with the city's prominent figures, offered authority over Ioannina to Esau Buondelmonti, a member of a distinguished Italian feudal family. The population of Ioannina welcomed their new lord on January 31, 1385. Esau married Maria Palaiologina, the widow of Thomas Preljubović. In 1385/1386, Esau Buondelmonti received the title of despot from the highest possible authority, Emperor John V Palaiologos in Constantinople, likely under the condition of recognizing Byzantine sovereignty. This act served to ensure the loyalty of Thomas's successor. After the death of his wife in 1394, Despot Esau married Irene, the daughter of Albanian lord John Spatas, in 1396. [5 p81-82]

Torture and Corporal Punishment

The concept of torture is not easy to define, and it is crucial to understand that there is no clear boundary between torture and punishment. Since the dawn of civilization, it has been customary for societies and states to attempt to justify torture by categorizing it as punishment, thereby denying that any form of torture is being

employed. Any act involving cruelty, suffering, or pain inflicted upon an individual, under any circumstances and for any purpose—whether or not the punishment concludes with that act or is followed by the deprivation of life—constitutes torture. From a theoretical standpoint, however, these two concepts differ. Torture involves the infliction of severe physical or psychological pain or suffering for the purpose of extracting information or coercing a confession. It is typically carried out by a public official or another person vested with authority. As such, both the innocent and the guilty could be subjected to torture. Corporal punishment, on the other hand, entails the infliction of physical pain as a penalty for a crime or offense. Forms of corporal punishment include whipping, beating, branding, maiming, and blinding, which, at least in theory, were carried out on convicted individuals whose guilt had been proven. Death, by itself, when intentionally caused, is often not classified as a form of physical torture. However, torture is deemed to exist when acts involving unwarranted suffering or pain precede death. Psychological or mental torture includes imprisonment, given that the living conditions in medieval dungeons were far from humane, even by the standards of that era. [8 p1-4, 9 p9-11, 10 p31-36]

Virtually every European state employed torture to extract confessions of guilt in criminal trials, adhering to the principle embodied in ancient Roman law. Initially, the entire question of procedure was in a highly ambiguous state, but over time, as human ingenuity contributed to the variety of methods applied, specific rules and regulations were established and enforced with considerable thoroughness. The perceived success of torture was the primary reason for its development and proliferation. The ancient Roman principle that it should be used only in cases where evidence strongly pointed to the guilt of the accused, with their confession being the sole missing element, was largely ignored. Mere suspicion of complicity in a crime became a sufficient pretext for the application of torture. [8 p61-63]

Legislation, as a means of maintaining order, stability, and peace in medieval states, along with certain provisions of customary law, prescribed corporal punishments in specific cases. The purpose of these punishments was to deter the commission of criminal acts. In Byzantium, corporal punishments were stipulated in the *Farmer's Law* and the *Soldier's Law*. With the enactment of the legal codex *Ecloga*, various corporal punishments were prescribed for certain offenses, such as whipping, branding, and the shaving of hair and beards, as well as mutilation by cutting off hands, noses, tongues, or genitals. These punishments generally served as substitutes for the death penalty, which had been prescribed for the same offenses under Justinian's legislation. However, the death penalty remained the ultimate punishment for the most severe crimes. Legal codices such as *Procheiron* and *Basilika*, authored during the reign of the Macedonian dynasty emperors Basil I (867–886) and his son Leo VI (886–912), formally abolished the amputation of hands and feet through specific provisions. Yet, this reform was not consistently enforced. For instance, the amputation of hands was prescribed within the

same chapter of *Procheiron* that prohibited such punishments. [11 p265, 672, 12 p1725, 13 p235-236, 14 p216-240]

The first significant step in the adoption of Byzantine law in Serbia was taken by the first Serbian Archbishop, Sava Nemanjić, around 1220, with the compilation of a legal codex known as *Zakonopravilo*, the Serbian adaptation of the *Nomocanon*. Its 55th chapter, titled *Zakon gradski* ("The Urban Law"), is a translation of the *Procheiron*. This chapter prescribes corporal punishments such as flogging, exile, the cutting off of the tongue or nose, shaving, and execution. [15 p93, 16 p446-448, 17 p5] It is possible that the *Farmer's Law* was at least partially known in the Serbian state at the beginning of the 14th century. The medieval Serbian translation of this legal monument is preserved in a Hilandar manuscript dating from the fourth decade of the 15th century. [18 p15-16, 19 p15] This manuscript also contains provisions prescribing corporal punishments. [20 p290-291]

During the reign of King and Emperor Stefan Dušan (1331–1355), there was a notable expansion of the system of corporal punishments. In his *Code of Laws* from 1349 and 1353/1354, he closely aligned with the Byzantine penal system, incorporating a wide range of corporal punishments. [21 p463, 22 p313-314] These included branding, flogging, exile, amputation of hands, noses, or ears, burning of hair and beards, hanging, blinding, execution, gouging of eyes, and imprisonment. [20 p292-296]

The Chronicle of Ioannina on the Cruelty of Thomas Preljubović

The *Chronicle of Ioannina* is a 15th-century prose chronicle originally misattributed to the fictitious authors "Komnenos and Proklos". Written around 1440, it stands as the most extensive and comprehensive preserved text about medieval Epirus. The chronicle vividly portrays the tyrannical rule of Thomas Preljubović in Ioannina (1366/7–1384), emphasizing his cruelty and the chronicler's evident hostility toward him. The second part of the chronicle focuses on Thomas's widow, Maria Angelina, and her marriage in 1385 to the Florentine Esau Buondelmonti, who ruled Ioannina until 1408 or 1411. It also provides valuable information on the settlement of Serbs and Albanians in Epirus during this period. The chronicle concludes with the year 1399; however, the Oxford manuscript includes additional entries extending to 1417/18. There is also a folk version of the chronicle, written in the 18th century, which ends with the death of Thomas Preljubović. This important historical source offers a unique and detailed insight into the social, political, and demographic changes in medieval Epirus. [11 p445] Since this is a piece of local chronicle, it provides unique information about the rule of Thomas Preljubović in Ioannina—details that cannot be found in any other source. Precisely for that reason, it must be approached with caution and understood as inherently one-sided. Yet its accounts are so vivid and so rich in detail that, in the absence of alternative testimony, they cannot be disregarded. They unquestionably merit concise presentation, all

the more so because the chronicler himself does not record a single piece of evidence that might justify, or even suggest, a more favorable view of Thomas's governance of the city.

According to the author of the *Chronicle of Ioannina*, the period of Thomas Preljubović's rule in this city is depicted as a time of fear and horror. The chronicler vividly portrays numerous hardships and abuses endured by the inhabitants of Ioannina with undisguised bitterness, often repeating the phrase, "*Every evil pales in comparison to Thomas's wickedness*." This expression underscores the extent of the terror that Thomas Preljubović unleashed during his reign of tyranny, which lasted from 1366/1367 to 1384.In addition to the brutal corporal punishments he imposed, Thomas Preljubović is accused of other misdeeds. [23 p160-161]

His notoriety for cruelty was so great that the chronicle records: "Among his household, who were honorable Serbs, some fled secretly, while others, unable to endure his maddened cruelty, abandoned him openly." This testimony highlights not only the suffering of the city's residents but also the alienation and defection of his own followers due to his unrelenting savagery. [24 p81, 25 p244-245]

The chronicler notes that Thomas initially won over the inhabitants of Ioannina through cunning, but soon after revealed his true nature. His first victim was the Church, whose property he unlawfully seized. He then imposed various taxes, levies, and forced labor, surrounding himself with dishonorable individuals. Because of these malicious tongues, he became estranged even from his wife, Angelina, whom the chronicler praises highly. "The deeds he carried out in secret cannot even be spoken of by man. He disregarded the sacred boundaries of his ancestors and became an apostate." [24 p80-86, 25 p244-253]

Many victims of Thomas Preljubović's wrath endured enslavement, blinding, or both. "That Apsaras cunningly slandered his nephew, Nikephoros Vatalas, and Despot Thomas had his eyes gouged out. He then sent him, along with his parents and other relatives, into exile. (...) Shortly thereafter, a great and deadly plague appeared in the town of Ioannina. This plague was not ordinary or simple but can be said to have poured out the intensity of Thomas's great evil in the year 1368."[2] [24 p82-83, 25 p246-247]

His prisons were also infamous, and it seems unlikely that anyone could leave them alive. "But Thomas could find no peace and continually tormented the town, later persecuting and exterminating the Albanians by every possible means. He filled the town with Albanians, gathered children around him, established prisons and cages, erected thorny enclosures, and devised every imaginable cruelty. (...) In 1374, a deadly plague struck the town of Arta, and Despot Peter Leosas perished. (...) In 1375, yet another deadly plague afflicted the town of Ioannina, during which Thomas's daughter Irene, the wife of John Leosas, passed away." [24 p84-85, 25 p250-251]

[2] Although the source itself dates events according to the Byzantine era, we have chosen to present the chronology in the Christian era for the sake of easier reference - an approach regarded as both customary and methodologically justified within established historical methodology.

The chronicler particularly emphasizes Thomas's duplicity and dishonesty as integral to his unrelenting cruelty: "A certain Huhulitsa imposed penalties on the prominent citizens of Ioannina whom Thomas had imprisoned. He held Manuel, the chief judge, locked in the city for two months, then released him, restored him to favor, and ultimately poisoned him. Constantine, the senior official, was kept chained in a cage for six years, had his eyes gouged out, and was sent to Vourssina, where he was subjected to punitive labor until his death and burial. Others were imprisoned in the city, their eyes were gouged out, and some were sold across the border." [24 p90, 25 p258-259]

The chronicler also informs us that Thomas Preljubović imprisoned and tortured people to extract personal gain or seize their property: "Even the most virtuous among the hieromonks, Kyr Isaiah, could not escape the greed of the Tyrant. Thomas, driven by avarice, imprisoned him in a cage as if he were a criminal. Pious men ransomed his eyes for 200 aspra, yet the tyrant gouged them out regardless and then sold Isaia." [24 p91, 25 p260-261] "Every evil pales in comparison to Thomas's wickedness (...) One of the honorable citizens, named Elias Klasa, invited him to be the godfather to his newborn child. Elias owned great wealth and possessions, which is why Thomas subjected him to cruel and merciless torture. He had water droplets drip onto Klasa's abdomen, burned his armpits with flaming torches,[3] forced a knife into his mouth, and poured water mixed with ash down his throat. (...) The most ruthless murderer of men..." [24 p82, 25 p246-247] His reign of terror, according to the author of the *Chronicle of Ioannina*, became progressively worse over time. He was arrogant and oppressive towards individuals, but the source often speaks of victims in the plural: "And the stronger he grew, the more ruthless he became, for he continuously tormented the Albanians and mistreated and beat the people of Ioannina. [24 p91, 25 p260-261] (...) Some were slaughtered on wagons and buried, while others were imprisoned and subsequently sold off." [24 p86, 25 p252-253]

The chronicler particularly emphasizes the suffering inflicted upon the Albanians by Thomas: "At that time, Thomas gathered the more prominent Albanians in the city and distributed the rest among the nobles and the people, instructing them to sell them. Other Albanians, who found themselves on the island, were likewise divided among the populace and ordered to be sold. As for the Bulgarians and Vlachs who happened to be there, he commanded their noses to be cut off. Ioannina became a cauldron of blood, as in the times of the martyrs. Thus, Thomas tormented the Albanians and aspired to become and be called the 'slayer of Albanians.' Every evil pales in comparison to Thomas's wickedness (...) Thomas did not cease tormenting the Albanians; he hanged some from towers, mutilated others, and gouged out the eyes of some, sending them in a basket as a gift to Spatas." [24 p88-89, 25 p256-257, 26 p135, 27]

[3] This method of torture closely resembles one of the trials by ordeal practices. Such trials were intended to determine the guilt or innocence of the accused. Trial by ordeal was practiced for centuries before being abolished by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. It was based on the belief that, if the accused were innocent, God would protect them from harm during the ordeal, such as enduring red-hot iron without sustaining injury. [28 p31-33, 58, 8 p227-229]

Conclusion

Based on the accounts of the *Chronicle of Ioannina* regarding the actions of Thomas Preljubović towards numerous individuals who suffered physical and mental abuse at his hands, we can conclude with a high degree of certainty that all these instances constitute torture. Regardless of the fact that many of the punishments inflicted on the victims are mentioned in Byzantine and, consequently, Serbian legislation for specific crimes, the chronicle itself provides no indication of what Thomas's victims were accused of or whether they underwent any form of judicial process. This is further corroborated by the fact that Thomas Preljubović himself met his end at the hands of his closest associates, who clearly could no longer endure his tyranny and likely feared for their own lives. As the chronicle records:"In the same year (1385), on the 23rd of December, on the eve of Thursday, at five hours of the night, Thomas was slain by his own bodyguards." [24 p64, 25 p262-263]

One instance where a semblance of a legal process is hinted at is when certain officials participated in the issuing of punishments. However, even in this case, there is no evidence of the guilt of the condemned, and the source itself notes that all of them were innocent: "Then the elders appear and condemn Ioannis, a Bulgar, to be thrown from a height, Theochares to be beheaded, Gastritsiotes to be torn apart by horses, and others to have their eyes gouged out, though they had committed no wrongdoing. Some were exiled, and others were thrown into prison. Fearing the tyrant and his servant Apsaras, some fled their homeland voluntarily." [22 p89, 25 p256-257] Of all the cruelties attributed to Thomas Preljubović, the most frequently mentioned in the chronicle are imprisonment, selling people into slavery, taking lives, blinding, mutilation, hanging, tearing apart by horses, and water torture – all practices characteristic of the Middle Ages.

Rezime

Janjinska hronika je prozna hronika iz 15. veka i predstavlja najduži je i najsadržajniji sačuvani tekst o srednjovekovnom Epiru. Ovaj izvor opisuje tiransku vladavinu Tome Preljubovića u Janjini (1366/7–1384). Prema rečima pisca Janjinske hronike, period uprave Tome Preljubovića u ovom epirskom gradu predstavljen je kao vreme straha i užasa. Hroničar slika brojne nedaće i zlostavljanja koje su stanovnici Janjine doživeli sa neskrivenim ogorčenjem često ponavljajući rečenicu „Svako je zlo malo naspram zla Tominog", time naglašavajući razmere terora koje je Toma Preljubović sejao za vreme svoje strahovlade koja je trajala od 1366/1367. do 1384. godine.

Na osnovu iskaza Janjinske hronike o postupcima Tome Preljubovića nad brojnim ličnostima koje su od njega propatile fizičko i mentalno nasilje, možemo sa velikom dozom sigurnosti da zaključimo da se u svim pomenutim slučajevima radilo isključivo o torturi. Bez obzira na činjenicu da se brojne kazne koje su izvršavane nad žrtvama pominju i u vizantijskom, a sledstveno tome i u srpskom zakonodavstvu za određenje zločine, u samoj hronici nema nikakvog pomena o tome zašta su Tomine žrtve bile optuživane, niti da je

nad njima sproveden bilo kakav sudski proces. Jedni slučaj gde se nazire nekakav pravni proces je kada su određene starešine učestvovale u izricanju kazni. Mada ni u tom slučaju nema nikakvih svedočanstava o krivici osuđenih, a sam izvor beleži da su svi bili nevini. Od svih svireposti koje hroničar pripisuje Tomi Preljubovićу najčešće se spominje tamničenje, prodavanje u ropstvo, oduzimanje života, ali i oslepljivanje, sakaćenje, vešanje, rastrzavanje konjima, mučenje vodenim kapljama, sve karakteristične za srednji vek.

Ključne reči: mučenje, telesno kažnjavanje, hronika Janjine, Toma Preljubović

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CONTAGIOUS DISEASES, FAITH, SUPERSTITIONS AND THE CULT OF SAINT CHARALAMBOS

Abstract: Since the first half of the 16th century until almost the middle of the 19th century, the part of Balkan Peninsula inhabited by Serbs was hit by waves of deadly infections, most often of the plague type. The high mortality rate and epiphenomena of the disease: fear, mutilation, loss of loved ones influenced the social-religious construct, placing the Church in a horizontal social plane and confronting it with particular challenges in the process of its missionary work. The sought-after protection from the effects of infections, a pronounced prayerfulness and emphasized forms of piety also influenced the formation of the cults of saints. The cult of St. Charalambos, an early Christian martyr from the 3rd century, stands out as a protector from plague and infections, whose mediation was invoked and further encouraged the picturesque ideological world that emerged from dogmatic and liturgical texts and corresponding forms of behaviour.

Keywords: Diseases, Natural disasters, Famine, Astronomical phenomena

Non MeSH: Protective power of the saint's cult, St. Charalambos

Wars, diseases and natural disasters have attracted the attention of authors of past centuries. The compilers of old Serbian inscriptions and writers of ancient chronicles paid attention to diseases and portrayed them as accompanying phenomena of other social and natural disasters. Serbian written sources, created by monks and people connected to the Orthodox Church and its ideological world, create a feeling of eschatological tension in the reader when they mention diseases, which ultimately leads to the tension and strain of the apocalyptic expectation of the Last Judgment.

The fear of the unknown led literate people to also understand astronomical phenomena as heralds of the misfortunes that were befalling the Serbian land. Shooting stars would often "announce" illnesses, sometimes comets were interpreted as omens of "changes of empires and governments", and eclipses and other manifestations of the "great luminaries" – the Sun and the Moon – were taken as indications of war.

In Serbian language, the term "čuma" is used to designate plague, as well as other serious, deadly infectious diseases, and it has a mythological connotation. It refers to the evil mythical creature that lurks at night to scratch its victims and infect them with its dirty nails, or shoots poisonous arrows from a green pot. According to some beliefs, it also sneaks into the house at night through the chimney and attic in order "to take away the children". During the time of the Jakšić brothers, who ruled Syrmia, one chronicle records that there was "drought and famine and plague" in 1509, and a few years earlier, one "year was faminous, and the other was pestilent". [1 p259]

The other name "Moria", which also refers to the plague, with a capital "M", is also a mythical personification of the disease, and its name comes from a widespread Indo-European root. Moria did not spare people and their treasures, as an inscription from around 1540 testifies: "Moria took sheep on Šar mountain, and on all mountains", [2 p74] and a note from Cetinje from 1541 says: "Death reigned".... [2 p74] That particular interval of the disease in the Balkans affected the Troyan Mountains, Krstac Gora, Mokrenska Gora and Matora Planina, or, according to today's nomenclature, Prokletije, Šar, Vodno near Skopje and the Balkan Mountains.

The chronicler's notes are particularly interesting:

(7060 = 1552) "A comet appeared,

(7062 = 1554) Kyriopascha occured, (i.e. the Gospel fell on the very day of Easter),

(7063 = 1555) There was a plague spread throughout the Serbian land,

(7064 = 1556) Death reigned,

(7063 =1555) There was a great earthquake, and the city of Skopje was demolished and other cities and many buildings and temples were demolished". [2 p76, 1 p265-6]

And in 1585, "a plague broke out throughout the Serbian land," as one inscription states, [1 p269] and at the same time in another place, it is said that "there was such a great famine and executions by the Ishmaelites that words could not express so much evil and malice," and all of this is related to the arrival of the "godless Scythians," who, as "ferocious tongues, came to the inheritance." [3 p189]

The word čuma (чоума, чюма) in classical Serbian medieval works meant a contagious disease, what would be called *pestis* in Latin. [4 p480] It thus survived and exists among all great and historical Orthodox peoples: Bulgarians, Serbs and Russians, as plague, and it even penetrated the Hungarian and Romanian languages as *csuma* and *чꙋмъ*. [5 p1128]

In older European medical literature, at the turn from the 16th to the 17th century, Turkish soldiers, especially those recruited from the depths of Asian expanses, were identified as the main culprits for the spread of plague and other infections. Thus, a doctor from Syrmia, i.e. the Syrmia County (Comitatus Syrmiensis), Martin Marikowzky, referred to a book by John Pringle, in which he found information that during the wars with the Turks in 1566: "Fide digni namque scriptores testantur, tempore bellorum turcicorum in

patria nostra gestorum, maiorem exercitus christiani partem morbis epidemicis, quam armis Ottomannicis esse interemtam".[1] [6 p3]

Towards the end of the 16th century, a comet was mentioned, whose tail went from the direction of Constantinople. [1 p269] The biblical representation of the four horsemen from Revelation, i.e. the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, speaks of the horsemen who come out after the opening of the seals, namely: the First Horseman with arrows on a white horse, the Second Horseman on a red horse with a great sword, the Third Horseman on a black horse with scales and the Fourth Horseman on a pale horse, "whose name is Death". These four horsemen of the Apocalypse represent the Antichrist himself, and are the personifications of war, famine and disease, and finally the terrible death that takes its toll on human souls, following the first three horsemen. (Rev. 6:1-8) All Serbian inscriptions that speak of famine and food shortages, as a rule also record the current price of grain, as if they were guided by the words of the last New Testament book in which it is said about the Third Horseman, i.e. Famine: "a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." (Rev. 6:6)

Atanasije Daskal, who wrote in Russia, could also be called the Serbian chronicler of the Great Migration and the accompanying circumstances of the Great Turkish War of 1683–1699. He compiled a geographical and historical description of the Serbian lands for the Russian princess Sofia Alekseevna (1657–1704), the older sister of the Russian Tsar Peter the Great. Namely, this writer described the situation in the areas populated by Serbs around 1691 in the following way, where a certain stylization of the 6th chapter of the Revelation of John can be seen: "And so the Lord sent all those three plagues, of which David received only one upon his city, at the present time upon the Serbian land; first the pestilence, then the sword and pestilence together, and slavery and severe famine, so that the Serbian people ate canine meat and the flesh of men who had died of hunger. All this was in my days and my eyes saw it. The corpses of the dead Serbian people lay in all the streets of great Belgrade. The dead lay in all its fields and on all its roads, and there was no one to bury them." [7 p41] Atanasije Daskal provides a theological-intuitive dimension to everything: "Listen, beloved ones, let me tell you what signs and fears there were at that time. In those days, at first, many signs appeared from heaven, and then there was an earthquake, a change in the air, and much confusion and indignation and famine among people. And some strange prophecies were spoken."[7 p42]

The Roman Catholic chronicler, Fra Stipan Margitić, left testimony that matches the horrors recounted by Atanasije Daskal, namely his record from 1690 was indirectly preserved in the Chronicle of Fra Nikola Lašvanin. The famine and the time of illness in Bosnia are described there in the following way: "Wherever I went, the dead lay: they

[1] "(Merito itaque conqueritur Celeb. D. Ioh. Pringle in cedro dignis Observationibus suis morborum castrensium, pag. 211, scqq. febris castrensis hungaricae, (quae anno primum 1566. in Imperatorio orta exercitu, sparso dein per maximam parte Europae contagio (naturan nondum satis distincte esse enodatam)".

were not buried, and there was noone who could do it. People ate catkins of the hezel, the bark of trees, the vine, dogs, cats. In Sarajevo, children ate their dead mother; in Banja Luka, whoever was hanged, would have been eaten by the hungry people overnight."[8 p164-5, 9 p192]

Such difficult times gave birth to superstition, and the practice of superstitions and similar communications with the flock were not foreign to spiritual figures who engaged in this dangerous pseudo-spiritual game, which, for example, could be witchcraft with divination. [10 p173-85]

When we consider the social and political circumstances in the Serbian lands at the end of the 17th century, it is not surprising that apocryphal prayers were used, which often left a much stronger impression on the common people in their daily devotions than the usual Orthodox acolouthia. On a Trebnik from the Usora region, which is today kept in Teslić, we find evidence of a "headache inscription" and a pattern of a six-pointed star that was "inscribed" for the sick, as well as the "Solomon's seal", i.e., a stylized pentagram, a five-pointed star made from a single stroke. A priest who used this type of medicine gave the impression of a true medicne man (healer), and the effect of his "spiritual" work cannot be traced in more detail in the sources. One can only assume how much he was valued and respected in society if someone, after his "spiritual" activity, for some unknown reason, recovered. The aforementioned Trebnik also contains a previously unknown form of the "Prayer against the Nežit",[2] in which this unclean force, i.e. the one responsible for the patient's disability, responded to Christ's question by saying that it had decided to "go after the head of a man... to consume his brain and eyes". The priest himself read the prayer, repeating the words of the Lord, threatening: "Return to the Nežit, to the mountain and to the desert and to the depths of the sea, and you will not be with the people of Christ, and peace will be upon this servant of God and his family. Amen!"[11]

The treatment of those infected, according to the advice of Grigorović's collection, which dates back to the 17th century, looked like this: "When a person has a pimple, rub it until it becomes large. Take a piece of soap and a little pepper and garlic, fresh sage and red chicken dung and mix everything and stick it on the pimple and let it stand for a night or more. It will not grow". [12 p59] This kind of alternative medicine, seen from today's perspective, was prevalent. One therapy for how to treat a toothache is also written in the book "History of Montenegro" by Metropolitan Vasilije Petrovic Njegoš, which was published in Moscow in 1754, and it all comes down to mixing "salt, pepper and brandy spirit" and applying the balm to the affected tooth. [13]

Writing for the Russian princess, the Serb Atanasije Daskal confirmed a manner and Christian Orthodox intuition that was also characteristic of Russian chroniclers. All Russian chronicle news about diseases has the formulation "бистъ моръ" [lit. there was death, i.e., death reigned] and always goes along with other catastrophic reports: strange astronomical phenomena, earthquakes and everything in between. On the other

[2] Type of a demon from Slavic folklore.

hand, in the Russian chronicle tradition, the "Novgorod Mor[ia]" is famous, through which a description is given of both natural celestial phenomena and the condition of people-sufferers affected by diseases. Through the Christian prism, they received a well-known deserved punishment for their persistently sinful state. [14 p304-9] The lunar eclipse is perhaps best and most directly described for Serbian lands in the record from 1661: "the Sun was eclipsed at noon and the stars were visible, on the second of March on Wednesday of the week of the Veneration of the Holy Cross of the Holy Lent and it was dark for an hour and more". [15 p156]

The impossibility of regular church life, the destruction of churches and the suffering of the clergy during the Great Turkish War of 1683–1699, have become etched in the folk tradition of Western Serbia, which says that a hieromonk from the ancient Peter's Church in Ras would go to a hill from where he would pray to the Lord: "God, let everyone who has been born be baptized; let everyone who has been bethroted be married, and let everyone who has died be served funerary rites. Amen!" [16 p190]

A couple of decades later, the chronicler of Ravanica describes the difficult situation after the war year of 1739, that is, after the record of the Srem plague in Ledinci. He tells the story of a serious disease that left people crippled: "On January 24, 1740, there was an earthquake, twice, at noon and midnight, very strong. That summer, there was a great disease (болѣзань крепкая) and bitter bone pain (горкая костоболя), and many people and women and young men and maidens lost their legs and arms, and many were left crippled and without arms. At that time, there was great sorrow (скорбь) among the people and sadness and inconsolable crying, and many homes were wasted by the plague." [1 p317-8, 2 p159] Four years later (1744) "a sign appeared in the sky: a comet moved in the evening to the west, and its tail to midday (!?), and so it rose and shone until it set, from the of December 25 to February 15. Then at dawn this star appeared in the east, its head upwards, and its tail towards the north, and so it rose for seven days at dawn and shone until daylight overtook it (overpowered it)." [1 p318, 17 p1-22]

The description of the plague and other accompanying disasters is indicative, because one evil never comes alone, as in the case of Livno: "In the year of our Lord 1743, in the month of June, on the 30th, it was by God's permission that the earth shook and the old city of Livno collapsed, and in other places as well, and the shaking of the earth was so great that the old people said that they had never seen anything like it. Then the plague also came to the city of Livno in the year written above." [18 p349]

News of the plague in the Balkans, which was raging from the central regions, was heard in Bosnia as early as 1759, when a Roman Catholic monk wrote: "A severe plague has been raging in Turkish territory since last year, and it has reached as far as Ušćup (Skopje) and closer to here...". [2 p172, 19]

According to the Sarajevo chronicler Mula-Mustafa Bašeskija, the plague raged in Sarajevo and its surroundings in 1784, and the disease first appeared in the "village of Slatina near Goražde". This Janissary veteran believed that the inevitable signs and heralds of this disease were the following: "when many people are born, when quarrels

begin in the neighborhoods, when the sky turns red, when old customs are not respected". And it is precisely then that one should not be surprised that the infection does not stop. [20 p69-70]

During a time of infectious diseases and plagues on the Balkan Peninsula, the common people expressed their belief in St. Charalambos, an early Christian saint, and the trans-temporal ability of this saint to protect against the evil influence of infectious diseases. His cult, nurtured and spread by monastic circles – icons of unknown authors from the 18th century, made in the style of the Holy Mountain and Italo-Crete tradition, can be seen in monasteries such as Gomionica and Žitomislić, unexamined in the history of art, and exhibited in local treasuries, further testify to the church-folk, clerical-popular piety and prayerful invocation of the early Christian protector. Old people, perhaps not too chronologically distant to be antiquated and placed in the objective past, emphasized the overlap of natural disasters (major earthquakes, for example) and the development of epidemics. This was the case with some epidemics of the 18th century and later. [21 p153] The traditional culture of western Bulgaria, leaning on Serbian lands and incorporated into the jurisdiction of the Peć Patriarchate until 1766, up to the line that encircles Ćustendil and the Rila Monastery, and leaving outside Samokov and Tatar Pazardžik, is filled with prayers, folk songs and incantations, and actions related to St. Charalambos. [22 p80-2] This saint captured the people's imagination and collective hopes in difficult times of the spread of infections. In the village of Trypi near Sparta, there is a monument stating that "God Almighty and St. Charalambos" stopped the plague that raged there in 1753. [23] Periodic pulsations of the plague were evident in the Balkans and in the following years, as in 1762 when a Sarajevo priest wrote: "In the summer of our Lord 1762, November 12, a *моровое повєтріе*[3] (pestilence) appeared in Sarajevo and on that day we left our home in Sarajevo and came to Gacko for the čitluk in the village of Garevo on the 18th day of that month"... [24] Collection of icons from the old Orthodox church in Baščaršija of St. Archangel Michael and Gabriel has several copies with iconographic representations of St. Charalambos.

St. Hieromartyr Charalambos was a bishop in Magnesia who died in 202, during the persecution under the Roman emperor Septimius Severus. This early Christian saint eventually received the epithet of protector from pestilence and plague in the piety of the Balkan Orthodox peoples. At the end of March of 2020, and by decision of the Holy Municipality of Mount Athos, on March 27, an all-night vigil was served in all monasteries, sketes and monastic cells in memory of St. Hieromartyr Charalambos, "for protection from the coronavirus pandemic." During this service, special priestly prayers were read to stop infectious diseases.

Saint Charalambos is particularly revered on Mount Athos. Namely, there is a tradition that is connected with the plague epidemic, "sometime during the time of

[3] It is interesting that the Russified phrase "моровое повєтріе" is used here, which was unusual for the contemporary Serbian literary and liturgical language.

Turkish slavery", when the infection struck the Holy Mountain, the surroundings of Thessaloniki and the southern Macedonian regions and when the monks, fearing for their lives, left the "Garden of the Virgin". Tradition says that a monk was preparing to leave Mount Athos, but he had a vision of an old man with a long gray beard in episcopal robes. He said that the Most Holy Mother of God had sent him to stop death, that she had counted all the steps of the monks in the litanies they had made and that if they obeyed him, i.e., if they remained in the places of their monastic vows, joy would light up their faces. Hearing the words "joy" and "light", in Greek "ΧΑΡΑ και ΛΑΜΠΗ", realizing that he was speaking with Saint Charalambos, the monk made a great bow, but the saint disappeared before his eyes.

In southeastern Europe, outbreaks of plague of varying intensity were documented throughout the 17th century, and Mount Athos was struck by the plague in 1622. [25,26] In the same century, Europe was hit by a plague so severe that it reminded us of the time of the "Black Death" of the 14th century. The London Plague (1665–1666) and the Moscow Plague (1654–1655) are remembered as "моровое поветрие". The first found its place in literature, in Daniel Defoe's novel *Journal of the plague year* (1722).

The first treatises on the plague, printed in a wave of printed and distributed incunabula, also give some advice on how the disease can be treated, prevented, and what the ways of its spread would be. In essence, all this advice, whether coming from retired alchemists or from official clergymen of the Catholic Church, was reduced to some kind of frivolous alternative medicine. Thus, the doctor Guglielmo Gratarolo in his manual advises to use aromatic herbs in the diet, which has a good effect on human immunity. [27] In 1641, the Orthodox priest Synadenos in Serres described the plague in the city with authentic insight into the problem, providing certain advice based on folk medicine, adding that the plague killed Bulgarians, Serbs, Vlachs and Albanians. The Ravanica Chronicle left heartbreaking notes about the plague in Srem that killed cattle and people in 1738 and 1739. At the end of December 1739 it said: "there was an earthquake, at the time of Asr, at night, at midnight, and many houses collapsed from the shaking, and many city walls collapsed. At that time, many people died of the plague in the village of Ledinci." [17]

Upper Syrmia, the surroundings of Irig, the town itself, then the surrounding villages of Neradin, Grgeteg, Rivica, Jazak, Krušedol, Šatrinci, Veliki Radinci, Grgurevci, Bešenovo and Sremska Kamenica, but also Vukovar were hit by a new plague outbreak in 1795 and 1796. This more famous "Syrmian plague" entered history thanks to the doctor who worked on its suppression, Franz Schraud (1761–1806), and who described it in the two-volume book *Historia pestis sirmiensis*. According to official Austrian statistics, 3,435 citizens died of the plague in Srem, and 2,548 people in Irig itself, which amounted to 53% of the population of the town, and out of 912 houses there, 402 were burned for hygienic reasons. It is recorded that in the old Irig church, St. Father Nicholas, there was an icon depicting St. Charalambos blessing with his right hand and standing with his foot on a

crouching woman with horns on her head and terrible claws. Such a personification of the plague also existed in the neighboring village of Ledinci. [28] The Irig plague ceased on St. Charalambos' day, 10/23 February 1796, and at that time the custom of giving male children the name Charalambos became particularly widespread, as a sign of gratitude for being spared from illness and for having been saved. This name was certainly given for apotropaic reasons, that is, that in Serbian lands there was already a respect for St. Charalambos, transferred from Mount Athos. In the southern and southeastern Serbian regions, especially in Šopluk, the St. Hieromartyr Charalambos has the prerogative of "Čumnik" (plague doctor). The akathist to St. Charalambos states that "there will be no disease where there are particles of his relics". In the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Podvrh Monastery in the Diocese of Budimlje-Nikšić preserves a particle of the saint's relics.

In Serbian popular belief, and even in folk Orthodoxy, the plague, čuma or Hellenized panukva, from the modern Greek "πανουκλα", was equated with a woman dressed in black, who walks through settlements at night and stalks victims by the notebook to infect them and lead them to their death. The famous Balkan fresco painter Dmitar Krstević, known as Dičo Zograf, a Mijak from Galičnik (Western Macedonia), painted in 1844 the plague as a demon of infection "which was bound by the prayers of St. Charalambos" in the village of Tresonče near Debar in the church of St. Apostles Peter and Paul. An older iconographic source about St. Charalambos as the protector against "the plague or *čuma*" (Βοηθος εναντιον της πανουκλας; Заступникъ противъ мора или чумѣ), standing triumphantly on the vanquished demon of disease, is found on a copperplate icon carved in Venice in 1764, commissioned at the request of the abbot of the Vatopedi monastery. The bilingual inscription (Greek-Church Slavonic) below the icon reads: "This image was carved on a copperplate at the instigation of the venerable kyrios Gabriel of Vatopedi, at the expense of the honorable lady Jovana Loverdi, for the sake of pious veneration, in the year 1764, in Venice."

Conclusion

Old Serbian chronicle-type records and inscriptions record the occurrence and effects of mass infections and diseases (from the 16th to the 19th century), which decimated the population and sowed fear, placing contemporaries deeper into a psychotic irrational state. Man's need for ontological security and the religious concept provided by church dogma creatively resulted in the strengthening of old cults of saintly figures in which apotropaic and healing power was rediscovered. In uncertain times of plague and disease, marked by mystical signs of astronomical phenomena and similar symbolism of the unfathomable, the cult of St. Charalambos as a protector against disease gained particular importance.

Rezime

Stari srpski zapisi i natpisi hroničarskog tipa beleže pojave i dejstvo masovnih zaraza i bolesti (od XVI do XIX veka), a koje su proređivale stanovništvo i svojom smrtnošću sejale strah postavljajući savremenike sve dublje u psihotično neracionalno stanje. Čovekova potreba za ontološkom sigurnošću i religiozni koncept koji pruža crkvena dogmatika stvaralački je rezultirala pojačavanjem starih kultova svetiteljskih likova kod kojih je iznova otkrivana apotropejska i isceliteljska moć. U nesigurnim vremenima vladanja kuge i boleština, obeleženim mističnim znamenjem astronomskih pojava i sličnom simbolikom nedokučivog, kult Sv. Haralampija kao zaštitnika od bolesti naročito je dolazio do značaja.

Ključne reči: bolesti, prirodne katastrofe, glad, astronomski fenomeni, zaštitna moć kulta svetitelja, Sveti Haralampije

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Review

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ABOUT SEX AMONG CROATS: "OH GOD, LET MY PRIDE BE ABLE."

Only a few streets on the outskirts of settlements in Slavonia and Baranja are named after a doctor or educator, while the central square and several streets in the centre are usually named after a patron saint, the founder of the settlement, a feudal lord or a deceased politician, with the exception of Kutjevo, which has Graševina[1] Square, and Pleternica, with its Bećarac[2] Square. However, nothing is named after the researchers of Croatian sexuality, Dr. sc. Friedrich Salom(on) Krauss, an ethnologist from Pleternica, and Dr. Ilijaš Abjanić – Jakšin, a doctor from Stari Mikanovci – there are no monuments, or at least a sign in the public space. Research on sexuality in today's neoconservative era is taboo and everything is being done to forget such scientists.

Abjanić

Ilijaš Abjanić – Jakšin (1868-1946) was born in Stari Mikanovci, where he attended elementary school. He finished high school in Vinkovci, where he stood out for his lucidity and curiosity. While still in high school, he was an opponent of Germanization and Magyarization and an animator of Matica Hrvatska, while he was active in the Croatian Students' Club in Vienna. He completed his medical studies in Vienna (1895).

He wrote about politics, history, the Burgenland Croats, orthography, religion, philosophy, hygiene and dietetics, anthroponyms, toponyms, oronyms and hydronyms. He was dismissed from the civil service in 1905 for political activity and had to return his scholarship.

He was a fierce opponent of prostitution and consummation of alcohol. He published the booklet *Protiv pijanstva* [Against drunkenness] (1904) and a play based on the work of Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy *Kako je Đavo naučio ljude žestu variti* [The First Distiller: How the Imp Earned a Crust] (1908). His indispensable works are *Erotica Croatica* (1930) and *Ljekarsko vještačko nazivlje općeg hrvatskog govora* [Medical nomenclature of general Croatian speech] (1931), in which he collected Croatian medical terminology – he collected 66,500 terms of folk medical expressions. In *Erotica Croatica*, he wrote Croatian

[1] Welschriesling, or Italian Riesling.

[2] Type of a popular genre of folk songs, usually teasing and lascivious.

terminology for intimate acts, sexual organs, pregnancy, childbirth, genital diseases and an impressive number of curses and swear words of erotic content. Thus, he collected 35 terms for copulation (grinding, smearing, winking, ploughing, pumping…), 111 folk names for the vagina (hairy one, small basket, mouse trap, solitary confinement…), and 133 folk names for the penis (grinder, up-to-the-elbow, jangler, hanger…). He also described the metaphorical use of the sexual organs and intercourse – as character traits of individuals or groups, not omitting zoological terms incorporated into erotic content, curses and swear words. A polemicist, observant and critical of his contemporaries, with a refined sense of social justice, an incorrigible romantic and idealist, he found himself under attack from all regimes and all levels of government – from the municipal authorities in Imotski to the authorities of the Independent State of Croatia and various professional associations. Although he was wealthy (*he even proposed establishing his own foundation for the printing of educational medical books*), he died in poverty in Vinkovci.

Krauss

In 2022, a sculpture titled "Whisper Your Bećarac to Him," dedicated to Friedrich Salom(on) Krauss (1858-1938), a Croatian ethnologist of Jewish origin, was erected on Pleternica's Bećarac Square. Although most documents state that he was born in Požega, he himself stated that he was born in Pleternica, and that he completed elementary school and matriculation there. He studied classical philology and history in Vienna, subjects on which he obtained his doctorate.

While still in high school, he collected stories about fortune-telling, the effects of witchcraft on fate, and apparitions of phantasmagorical beings. Under the influence of Freud, he collected and interpreted material on sexuality and unusual sexual relationships in Croatian lands. Emperor Franz Joseph sent him on an expedition to collect information on the sexual habits of the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Viennese court. In his report, he stated that the position of the Viennese authorities – that there were only a few ethnic and religious groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina – was wrong. These notions were probably based on reports of clerics-informants of the Orthodox churches and the notes of Matija Mažuranić, brother of Ivan Mažuranić. However, Krauss claimed that there were ten Christian churches, five Islamic and three Jewish provenances, countless polytheistic communities led by shamans, and at least 190 ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The process that took place gradually in Pannonia from the 18th to the end of the 19th century, happened in Bosnia and Herzegovina during three decades of lightning-fast modernization and the influx of skilled labour from all parts of the Monarchy, resulting in shaping of a few very distinct religious groups: Muslims, Jews, Catholics, and Orthodox Christians. In the following decades under the Karađorđević dynasty, Catholics became Croats, Orthodox became Serbs, Bosniakism developed as a nation among Muslims, and Sephardim became Jews, unlike the Ashkenazim, who considered themselves Swabians (Germans) and then Croats of the faith of Moses.

Krauss analysed the sexual customs of Slavonians, collected Bećarac and other poetic forms of erotic content, published in German language in the periodicals *Legende i bajke Južnih Slavena* [Legends and Fairy Tales of the South Slavs] (1882) and subsequently translated them into English in his books. He gained worldwide fame among ethnologists and psychiatrists with works in which he thematized the phenomena of South Slavic eroticism: *Artemidoros Symbolik der Träume* (1881), *Sagen und Märchen der Südslaven* (2 volumes, 1883/84), *Südslavische Hexensagen* (1884), *Südslavische Pestsagen* (1884), *Sitte und Brauch der Südslaven* (1885), *Volksglaube und Religiöser Brauch der Südslaven* (1900); with L. Scherman *Allgemeine Methodik der Volkskunde* (1899), *Die Volkskunde in den Jahren 1897-1902.* He also wrote several plays.

Epilogue

Shortly after the installation of Krauss' sculpture, the clergy of the Požega diocese pressured the Pleternica Magistrate, which removed the work of art by academic sculptor Tatjana Kostanjević from the square. It is now located in a tiny basement room of the Bećarac Museum, on the door which is marked by the sign "16+". Hopefully to prevent the corruption of young people. Abjanić was excommunicated by the Catholic Church.

Review

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REVIEW: *MADNESS, RACE AND INSANITY IN A JIM CROW ASYLUM: CROWNSVILLE STATE HOSPITAL*, BY ANTONIA HYLTON, NEW YORK: LEGACY LIT, 2024, P. 368. ISBN (HARDBACK): 9781538723692, ISBN (EBOOK): 9781538723715

Michael Foucault's theses about psychiatric power as a disciplining discourse that, attached to prisons, schools and state bureaucracy, actually formed the basis of contemporary models of biopolitics and population control rarely find such explicit confirmation as in societies characterized by systemic racism. American journalist and activist Antonia Hylton's book *Madness, Race and Insanity in a Jim Crow Asylum: Crownsville State Hospital* is one in a series of publications[1] which shed light on the relationship between two regimes of oppressive social control that gained their greatest momentum in the era of enlightened modernity: racism and carceral institutional psychiatry.

The discursive pillar on which these surveillance regimes rested is the division of the population into categories, which institutions needed to manage, separate and isolate in different ways. The creation of barely porous boundaries in society, its territorialization through the designation of certain population groups as inherently disruptive and even dangerous. Psychiatry created the madman as the fundamental category of social deviations – a person whose behaviour is so dangerous for the environment that he needs a type of supervision that requires his isolation. What was visible from the very beginnings of medical psychiatry in the second half of the 18th century was the promulgation of a category of mentally ill people who are inherently disturbed and "irremediable" – throughout the history of psychiatry they were called "moral lunatics", "moral idiots", "psychopaths", "degenerate personalities", "natural born criminals". Their threat to society was twofold. In the first place, their behaviour was almost always interpreted as violent and uncontrolled; secondly – especially from the middle of the 19th century – they began to be considered as carriers of "hereditary degeneration", a population that would pass on its alleged hereditary tendency for deviant behaviour, violence and criminality to future generations, thus

[1] We should mention psychiatrist Jonathan Metzl's book *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease* (2010), Daniela Arbex's book *Holocausto Brasileiro* (2013) and Jennifer Lambe's study *Madhouse, Psychiatry and Politics in Cuban history* (2017).

creating a society of weak, sick and "depraved individuals". Of course, the moralistic views of the bourgeois class and their emotional regime were generally key in defining deviance itself – in the works of German psychiatrists of the late 19th century, such as Krafft-Ebing and Kraepelin, these were often behaviours interpreted as sexually promiscuous or those that violated the traditional patriarchal division of gender roles, which assigned women to the domestic sphere and intended them to be submissive to male authorities. In the works of American psychiatrists, the term "drapetomania" was formed as a specific disorder of the enslaved African-American population. According to the description of the physician Samuel Cartwright, "drapetomania" meant the uncontrolled urge of slaves to escape from slavery. The rationalization of "drapetomania" as a disorder was the perception of slavery as an institution that morally and vitally elevates the "African race" and civilizes them, leading to the conclusion that only a deranged slave would want freedom.

Since the beginning, racism served the purpose of establishing hierarchies based on the supposed biological superiority of the white race. In the case of the United States of America, after the Civil War and the unsuccessful period of the Reconstruction in the South, a series of federal states introduced Jim Crow laws that introduced strict segregation of public spaces: there were separate hospitals, schools and catering facilities for the "coloured, non-white" population. Thus, the hierarchies of structural racism are materialized in the public space.

Crownsville State Hospital in the Baltimore area was a place where two regimes of isolation and exclusion intertwined and touched – it was a place for individuals who experienced multiple marginalization at the intersections of different power structures. The residents of Crownsville were marginalized as African-Americans in a regime that prescribed their segregation until the 1960s, and intensified carceralization and impoverishment after the 1960s. They were marginalized as mentally ill or neurodivergent persons, often forcibly removed from society because of their own perceived deviance and exposed to visible stigmatization. In the end, they were marginalized as poor people, often forced to exist in poverty and misery since childhood. Drawing on a number of sources, Antonia Hylton lets these people speak, if not in their own direct voice, then at least through a detailed and layered narration of their life experiences. Historical documents will sometimes serve to convey their experiences: articles in medical journals, newspaper sources, their patient records and photographs of hospital wards. In some places, Hylton will rely on direct testimony from themselves or their relatives. In doing so, the author, apart from her journalistic and historical investigative instincts and professional ethics, also applies her own experience of caring for a mentally ill loved one, as well as the experience of an African-American woman who grew up and works in a racially fraught American society. The book is opened with honest and emotional presentation of the author's personal experience of encountering a mental illness with specific socially marked symptoms,[2] which actually serves as an introduction to thinking about

[2] The author's close person believed that she was being persecuted by a group of white supremacists.

the relationship between trauma, history and the reality of the "black" experience in the USA. This reflection leads to an awareness of the intertwined roles of the psychiatric and prison systems in the creation and maintenance of systemic racism in the United States throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

The first part of the book entitled "Breaking ground" provides a description of the beginnings of Crownsville Hospital, built in 1912, and the period of its operation until 1940. The interesting thing is that the hospital was mostly built by future patients, under the supervision of the first director of the hospital, Dr. Robert Winterode. A group of twelve patients were clearing the forest, draining the swampy ground and laying the foundation for the building where many of them would die. Their work, as well as the subsequent field work of numerous patients was never paid, but was treated as part of "work therapy", a therapeutic method extremely popular during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The fact that complex construction works were conducted by people who were considered incapable of living independently in society, underlines one of the paradoxes of the psychiatric regime of the time: institutions for the mentally ill, especially state ones that were often faced with a lack of funds, were financially dependent on population that psychiatrists stigmatized as "inferior". Apart from the construction, in the first part we learn about the hospital staff, the experiences of the first patients and the architecture of the hospital.

The second part of the book covers the period from 1940 to 1960. After the Second World War, the mental problems of the veteran population and the overcrowding of mental hospitals triggered the first discussions about the deinstitutionalization of care for the mentally ill. In Crownsville, two phenomena attracted the attention of the public. The first was the frequent rebellions and escapes of patients, due to the difficult living conditions in the hospital, as well as the fact that African-Americans who were not for hospitalization often ended up there. The second is the arrival of Vernon Sparks, Crownsville's first African-American psychologist. Before that, even though it was a segregated hospital, all the doctors and psychologists were white, while the African-American population was limited to low-paid manual jobs within the hospital. Through the experience of Sparks himself and several other employees, Hylton actually tells how political debates about desegregation and civil rights in the 1940s and 1950s from the wider society penetrated into Crownsville, and how discourses about the rights of mental hospital inmates became intertwined with discussions about ending racial discrimination.

The third part of the book covers the twenty-five-year period between 1945 and 1970. Although chronologically intertwined with the previous period, the author in this chapter actually puts more focus on the process of ending Jim Crow laws and desegregation. The number of African-Americans employed at Crownsville in therapeutic occupations grew, and a new generation of doctors and nurses came to the hospital and increasingly witnessed the inhumane conditions in which residents were kept. Hylton documents how therapeutic practices such as hydrotherapy and electroconvulsive therapy were often used

to punish inmates. Although the use of painful and unpleasant therapies as punishment in mental hospitals is an extremely well-documented practice, the dimension of racial and class discrimination in the application of these practices that occurred in Crownsville resulted in increasingly systematic resistance from some of the staff. In a particularly emotional and poignant chapter, Hylton, using medical documents and statements from family members and employees, reveals how during the 1960s Crownsville was used for medical experiments on residents. In doing so, the ethical norms of the medical profession were not respected, the families and guardians of the residents did not give their consent, nor were informed about the medical experiments, and in the case of the death of the resident, the procedures that led to it were covered up.

The fourth part of the book entitled "Black power and pathology" talks about the pathologizing of activists of the civil rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s. The topic is addressed through a study of the famous case of the "Elkton Three", three activists who in 1961 refused to leave a restaurant that refused to serve them because of the colour of their skin. After protesting with a hunger strike in prison, they were transferred to Crownsville for treatment, but after a series of protests, they were released after only a few days. The case attracted a lot of media attention and served as a catalyst for exposing the fates of numerous people who were held in mental institutions because they refused to submit to the racist regime of American society. We see how concepts such as "drapetomania" actually spilled over into the application of modern diagnostic categories, including schizophrenia. Descriptions of the clinical picture of schizophrenia between white and non-white residents differed significantly: while white schizophrenics were described as calm, cooperative, even-tempered, and withdrawn, the clinical picture of non-whites was characterized by aggression, rebelliousness, and antisocial behaviour.

The final, fifth, part deals with the consequences of the deinstitutionalization of the American mental health hospital system, which began in the 1960s and was completed in the 1980s with the closing of many state mental hospitals. The number of residents at Crownsville gradually decreased from the beginning of the 1960s, until the institution was finally closed in 2004. Hylton discusses the fates of the last residents of Crownsville, and looks at the biggest broken promise of the movement to deinstitutionalize mental health care. Namely, in the United States, carceral-type institutions like Crownsville were closed due to the termination of state funding, but they were not replaced by infrastructure that would enable widely available outpatient mental health care in poor communities, nor programs to integrate former residents into the community. The results were often the return of the mentally ill to the "streets" where they were exposed to homelessness and violence, or their transfer to the prison system.

The book "Madness, Race and Insanity in a Jim Crow Asylum: Crownsville State Hospital" serves primarily as a deep and stimulating critique of structural racism that is still present in American society today, as well as a thorough and poignant study of the lives of marginalized groups, which are rare today. The history of the marginalized is not

written through the prism of a rigid historiographical methodology, and the book itself is devoid of complex theoretical explanatory models, but it is influenced by the voices of the mentally ill themselves, people close to them, and those who worked with them, giving a layered picture of intertwined narratives that revolve around poverty, racism and mental illness. For those who intend to study the history of medicine, the book is useful because it brings awareness to the history of the medical field as part of a complex history of social and cultural relations. Even those who do not deal with the history of the United States of America, will receive a satisfactory insight into the problems of the historical relationship of psychiatry and other regimes of control, and gain insight into a study that perfectly exemplifies the validity of intersectional approaches to the problems of race, gender, class and mental health, even in books that are not written for a narrower academic audience.

UPUTSTVO ZA AUTORE O PISANJU RADOVA ZA ACTA HISTORIAE MEDICINAE STOMATOLOGIAE PHARMACIAE MEDICINAE VETERINARIAE

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ACTA HISTORIAE MEDICINAE STOMATOLOGIAE PHARMACIAE MEDICINAE VETERINARIAE – INSTRUCTION FOR AUTHORS

Acta historiae medicinae, stomatologiae, pharmaciae, medicinae veterinariae is a journal which covers topics from the history of health culture (medicine, pharmacy, dentistry and veterinary), mentality, private life, urban and rural everyday life and life conditions, structures of urban and rural habitats, history of demographics, borders (structures, institutions, movement of people and transport of goods, infection spreading, regulations and regulation breaches), health deontology, as well as the history of architecture and urbanism in the context of history of health culture and institutions. The journal publishes two issues per year. The journal publishes: original scientific articles, review articles, short scientific articles, reviews and bibliographies.

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