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On Anthimus and his work²

A substantial fraction of those constituting the Christian Church in Antiquity, including the Church Fathers, were neither ignorant of³ nor hostile to medical knowledge⁴. Neither were they indifferent to

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³ This is visible on the basis of the Church Fathers' output, and especially that by Augustine of Hippo (M.E. Keenan, *Augustine and Medical Profession*, "Transactions of the American Philosophical Association" 67 (1936) p. 168-190; B.J. Marciniak, *Medical metaphors in Augustine's letters*, VoxP 71 (2019) p. 373-388), Basil of Caesarea (A. Touwaide, *Medicine and Pharmacy*, in: *A Companion to Byzantine Science*, ed. S. Lazaris, Leiden – Boston 2020, p. 386), Gregory of Nazianzus (M.E. Keenan, *St. Gregory of Nazianzus and Early Byzantine Medicine*, "Bulletin of the History of Medicine" 9 (1941) p. 8-30; V. Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, London – New York 2005, p. 304, 307; Touwaide, *Medicine*, p. 386), Gregory of Nyssa (M.E. Keenan, *St. Gregory of Nyssa and the Medical Profession*, "Bulletin of the History of Medicine" 15 (1944) p. 150-161; J.D. Penniman, *Blended with the Savior: Gregory of Nyssa's Eucharistic Pharmacology in the Catechetical Oration*, "Studies in Late Antiquity" 2/4 (2018) p. 512-541) and John Chrysostom (W. Ceram, *Jan Chryzostom o leczeniu i lekarzach*, "Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Historica" 8 (1993) p. 3-26; Ch.L. de Wet, *Grumpy Old Men?: Gender, Gerontology, and the Geriatrics of Soul in John Chrysostom*, JECS 24/4 (2016) p. 491-521; Ch.L. de Wet, *The Preacher's Diet: Gluttony, Regimen, and Psycho-Somatic Health in the Thought of John Chrysostom*, in: *Revisioning John Chrysostom: New Approaches, New Perspectives*, ed. Ch.L. de Wet – W. Mayer, Leiden – Boston 2019, p. 410-463 etc.).

⁴ Keenan, *St. Gregory of Nyssa*, p. 151; D.W. Amundsen, *Medicine and Faith in Early Christianity*, "Bulletin of the History of Medicine" 56 (1982) p. 326-350; V. Nutton, *From Galen to Alexander: Aspects of Medicine and Medical Practice in Late Antiquity*, DOP 38 (1984) p. 5-6; Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, p. 302-303; G.B. Ferngren, *Medicine and Health Care in Early Christianity*, Baltimore 2009, p. 13, 25-41.

dietetics⁵, which was a field of medicine dating back to Hippocrates. The Christian interest in the study was not only based on the common traditions of the Mediterranean but also encouraged by the importance of food regulations in ecclesiastic debates⁶.

Although the subject of Christian expertise in medical dietetics has yet to be researched into thoroughly, a quick glance at the extant Christian literary output proves the rich and topical material available. A good example is constituted by John Chrysostom's (4th/5th c. AD) works. Not only did this Church Father fairly frequently take from medical knowledge in general but he also was in the habit of illustrating his moral teachings with dietetic imagery⁷. As far as his competence in the field is concerned, he is said to have followed Galen's medical doctrines⁸. Though John Chrysostom fails to mention the doctor from Pergamum in his writings, his familiarity with the physician's thoughts are not surprising⁹, since by the time John Chrysostom was composing his speeches, ancient medicine had taken on the form which is termed

⁵ Select contributions on the topic of diet – Keenan, *St. Gregory of Nyssa*, p. 155-157; Ferngren, *Medicine and Health Care*, p. 17; B. Caseau, *Nourritures terrestres, nourritures célestes: la culture alimentaire à Byzance*, Paris, 2015, p. 138-151; M. Kokoszko – J. Dybała – K. Jagusiak – Z. Rzeźnicka, *Chleb nieodpowiedni dla chrześcijan: moralne zalecenia Klemensa Aleksandryjskiego w konfrontacji z naukowymi ustaleniami Galena*, VoxP 64 (2015) p. 249-291; de Wet, *The Preacher's Diet*, p. 410-463; D. Robinson, *Food, Virtue, and the Shaping of Early Christianity*, Cambridge – New York 2020, p. 22-68 etc.

⁶ Caseau, *Nourritures*, p. 47-74, 251-277, 280-284.

⁷ John Chrysostom was apt to advise his congregation against any excess in eating and drinking – S.E. Hill, *Eating to Excess: The Meaning of Gluttony and the Fat Body in the Ancient World*, Santa Barbara – Denver – Oxford 2011, p. 104, 115-120; Robinson, *Food, Virtue*, p. 24-25. Drawing from the inventory of philosophical and medical thought, he speaks in favor of moderation, which is a state of balance (or symmetry), i.e., “εὐκράσια (balance)”, which, first, is able to produce health in the body, secondly, it is the prerequisite for spiritual health, and, eventually, contributes to achieving personal salvation – Robinson, *Food, Virtue*, p. 25-39, especially 38-39. On moderation, abstinence and gluttony – Caseau, *Nourritures*, p. 195-208.

⁸ de Wet, *The Preacher's Diet*, p. 410-412.

⁹ Galen was accepted by Christians both as a philosopher as well as a medical doctor – O. Temkin, *Byzantine Medicine: Tradition and Empiricism*, DOP 16 (1962) p. 95-115, especially 106-107; Nutton, *From Galen to Alexander*, p. 1; Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, p. 302; V. Nutton, *Galen in Byzantium*, in: *Material Culture and Well-Being in Byzantium (400–1453). Proceedings of the International Conference (Cambridge, 8-10 September 2001)*, ed. M. Grünbart – E. Kisslinger – A. Muthesius – D.Ch. Stathakopoulos, Wien 2007, p. 173.

Galenism¹⁰. The doctrine relied heavily, *inter alia*, on Galen's interpretation of ancient dietetics and his version of *materia medica*. As an in-depth analysis of Chrysostom's dietetic knowledge is not the subject of the present article, let three examples of his competence in the field suffice in order to prove his familiarity with the ancient doctrine in question. Notably, he classifies dietetics as a typical element of contemporary therapeutics, which he considered useful in a number of cures¹¹, for instance, in those appropriate for the feverish¹². Moreover, he is also fully aware of the fact that, in order to make use of their dietetic competence, his listeners had to know the characteristics of the ingested food as presented by *materia medica*. One can prove this on the basis of Chrysostom's teachings on the differences in the properties between wild and fattened poultry¹³. Indeed, it is easy to show that the above view of this Church Father is correct because it bears an almost *verbatim* accuracy to Galen's topical knowledge presented, for instance, in his *De alimentorum facultatibus*¹⁴.

While for such Church Fathers as Chrysostom dietetic knowledge was merely an easily available resource of morally elevating metaphors useful in their preaching of Christian ethics to their congregations, for Anthimus dietetics was his vocation and life's work. The treatise he penned is known as *De observatione ciborum*. It was composed in vulgar Latin, most probably in the first part of the 6th c. AD¹⁵, and addressed to Teuderich, ruler of the Franks (511-534 AD). Its author is said to have been the physician mentioned by Malchus of Philadelphia (6th c. AD), who, on a charge of involvement in a plot against emperor Zeno (474-491

¹⁰ On Galenism – Nutton, *From Galen to Alexander*, p. 1-3; Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, p. 292, 294-301; Nutton, *Galen in Byzantium*, p. 171-174.

¹¹ Joannes Chrysostomus, *Ad populum Antiochenum homilia* 4, PG 49, 51, 59-52, 4.

¹² Joannes Chrysostomus, *De virginitate*, 17, 30-39.

¹³ Joannes Chrysostomus, *In Matthaeum homilia* 54, PG 57, 470, 43-59. Robinson, *Food, Virtue*, p. 26-27.

¹⁴ Galenus, *De alimentorum facultatibus*, 681, 1-10. The teachings must have been important, and commonly known because they were preserved and quoted by Oribasius – Oribasius, *Collectiones medicae* II 41, 1, 1-2, 3.

¹⁵ Circa 516 or 523 AD. – M. Grant, *Introduction*, in: Anthimus, *On the Observance of Foods. De observatione ciborum*, ed., tr. M. Grant, Blackawton – Totnes 2007, p. 9-42, especially 23-24. Grant considers the former date to be more likely – J. Scarborough, *Anthimus (of Constantinople?) (ca 475 – 525 CE)*, in: *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists. The Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs*, ed. P.T. Keyser – G. Irby-Massie, London – New York 2008, p. 91.

AD), was condemned to exile from Constantinople in 478 AD¹⁶. The doctor's later fate is uncertain, though Valentin Rose, the first editor of Anthimus' output, believed that the physician spent the remainder of his life among the Goths from whom he was sent by Theodoric the Great (471-526) as an envoy to the Frankish king Theuderic's court to present his work as a token of friendship¹⁷. How ungrounded, in fact, such conclusions turned out to be, has been proved fairly recently by Yitzhak Hen, who suggests that the author of *De observatione ciborum*, after a short stay with the Goths, returned to the capital on the Bosphorus from exile between 491 and 497 AD, and was sent on at least two diplomatic missions to the Franks by Byzantine emperor Anastasius (491-518 AD). Moreover, Hen conjectures that Anthimus' work was commissioned by Theuderic himself, rather than being composed at Theodoric the Great's instigation¹⁸.

We know Anthimus was a Christian from his address to Jesus Christ included in the introduction to his treatise¹⁹. There is no evidence, however, implying Anthimus' active involvement in the ecclesiastic developments of his lifetime. Neither is it possible to consider his work to be a sufficient source of information on his personal attitude towards faith. In fact, we do not know whether he was orthodox or displayed some other religious leanings. Whatever the case, he must have spent at least some years among the Goths (who were followers of Arianism), while he dedicated his work to Theuderic, who, like other Franks since the time of Clovis' (c. 466-511 AD) baptism in 508, was Catholic.

As far as the role of his religious convictions in practicing medicine is concerned, Anthimus' words prove that although he considered God to be the one and only true giver of long life and good health, he was convinced that physicians like himself assisted the Lord in this act of divine

¹⁶ Malchus, *Historia Byzantina* 15, p. 422, 30-39.

¹⁷ Such a course of events was proposed by Valentin Rose and his later followers – V. Rose, *Die Diätetik des Anthimus an Theuderich König der Franken*, in: *Anecdota graeca et graecolatina. Mitteilungen aus Handschriften zur Geschichte der griechischen Wissenschaft*, t. 2, ed. V. Rose, Berolini 1870, p. 43-62, especially 44-56. Bibliography – C. Deroux, *Anthime, un médecin gourmet du début des temps mérovingiens*, "Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire" 80/4 (2002) p. 1107-1108.

¹⁸ Y. Hen, *Food and Drink in Merovingian Gaul*, in: *Tätigkeitsfelder und Erfahrungshorizonte des ländlichen Menschen in der frühmittelalterlichen Grundherrschaft (bis ca. 1000): Festschrift für Dieter Hägermann zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. B. Kasten, München 2006, p. 99-110, especially 100-103.

¹⁹ Anthimus, *De observatione ciborum*, proemium, p. 4, 1-6.

benevolence through their knowledge, which (although entirely secular and defined as a body of topical advice, i.e. the “*praecepta diversorum auctorum*”, developed by generations of medical doctors), was, in fact, sent, and suggested to the doctor by God. Accordingly, a physician (and, therefore, Anthimus himself) was Christ’s envoy, who was supposed to fulfil the Saviour’s will by means of his intellectual capacities, i.e. his “*intellectus*”²⁰, and medical competence.

Short as it may be, *De observatione ciborum* is a compelling work that can be interpreted from a number of perspectives. For historians of medicine, the text illustrates the evolution of dietetic thought and the development of *materia medica*. Historians of culinary art tend to analyse the treatise as belonging to Mediterranean cuisine, while perceive it as fascinating material from which to explore the lexical richness and philologists the evolution of Latin. Interestingly, ancient historians classify the *opusculum* as a source written in late Antiquity, while Byzantinists recognise it as an example of Early Byzantine thought, whereas medieval historians as a phenomenon belonging to the Merovingian world.

De observatione ciborum contains three entries, namely Chapters 25, 26 and 33, which have been unsatisfactorily interpreted so far in terms of what they say about Anthimus’ work and fate²¹. The starting point in the present analysis should be Chapter 25, where Anthimus appears to make a reference to his medical practice when describing wildfowl. This is how we should probably interpret the words: “*istud et ego in tempore meo probavi in provincia mea* (this is what I experienced in my lifetime in my province)”²², which are followed by a story of two peasants (“*duo*

²⁰ Anthimus, *De observatione ciborum*, proemium, p. 4, 5.

²¹ With the exception of Carl Deroux’s study (*Anthime et les tourterelles: un cas d’intoxication alimentaire au très haut moyen âge* in: *Maladie et maladies dans les textes latins antiques et médiévaux. Actes du V^e Colloque international « Textes médicaux latins »* [Bruxelles, 4-6 septembre 1995], ed. C. Deroux, Bruxelles 1998, p. 366-381).

²² We are not able to fully understand what Anthimus meant. The words in *provincia mea* were for Valentin Rose (*Die Diätetik*, p. 49) the basis for a hypothesis that Anthimus was a provincial governor under Theodoric the Great’s rule. The suggestion was subsequently questioned by Edward Liechtenhan (*Ad lectorem praefatio*, in: *Anthimi de observatione ciborum ad Theodoricum regem Francorum epistula*, ed. E. Liechtenhan, Berlin 1963, p. X; E. Liechtenhan, *Index verborum memorabilium*, in: *Anthimi de observatione ciborum ad Theodoricum regem Francorum epistula*, ed. E. Liechtenhan, Berlin 1963, p. 74), Carl Deroux (*Anthime et les tourterelles*, p. 366, n. 2), and Yitzhak Hen (*Food and Drink*, p. 102-103). I share the opinion of Liechtenhan and Deroux that in the passage *istud et ego... probavi...* the verb suggests that the case of poisoning was Anthimus’ first-

rustici”) who consumed the flesh of a turtledove (“turtur”) that fed, *inter alia*, on hellebore (“elleborus”)²³, which made one of the men so sick that he suffered from internal haemorrhage and died. Anthimus adds that in such cases aged wine²⁴ and warm olive oil²⁵ were the antidotes to be served to the patient²⁶, which is definitely in agreement with the medical theory of Antiquity.

hand experience. Cf. the German translation by Liechtenhan (*Brief des Anthimus des erlauchten Comes und Gesandten an den ruhmreichen Theoderich, der König der Franken, über Speisediät* in: *Anthimi de observatione ciborum ad Theodoricum regem Francorum epistula*, ed. E. Liechtenhan, Berlin 1963, p. 39), and the French translation by Deroux (*Anthime et les tourterelles*, p. 370).

²³ There were two plants which could have been meant by Anthimus. One was the white hellebore (*Veratrum album* L.) and the other the black hellebore (*Helleborus niger* L.). Deroux (*Note sur l'ellébore et le faux ellébore*, “*Latomus*” 35/4 (1976) p. 875-878 especially 877) maintains that it was the black hellebore that was mentioned by Anthimus.

²⁴ Let us choose one example only. When Galen delves into the issue of treating poisoned patients, he enumerates multiple superior wines as antidotes, including wine from Lesbos, “Φαλερῖνος καὶ Σουρῆρεντῖνος, Ἀριούσιός τε καὶ Τμολίτης ὁ αὐστηρὸς (Falerinos, Surrentinos, and dry Tmolites)”, i.e., expensive types of wine – Galenus, *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis a facultatibus* 603, 11-605, 9. Gradation of quality wines – D. Thurmond, *From Vines to Wines in Classical Rome. A Handbook of Viticulture and Oenology in Rome and the Roman West*, Leiden – Boston 2017, p. 219-222, 224 (Italian); P. Komar, *Eastern Wines for Western Tables: Consumption, Trade and Economy in Ancient Italy*, Leiden – Boston 2020, p. 87-94, 102, 120 (eastern). The list of prestigious wines from Italy and other locations in the Mediterranean is provided by Pliny (Plinius, *Historia naturalis* XIV 59, 1-76, 8), and referred to by David Thurmond (*From Vines to Wines*, p. 219-231). We should, of course, expect that to be an effective antidote, the vintage wine recommended by Anthimus must have been a high-grade wine. What is more, Galen recommended large amounts of it to be served to the patient.

²⁵ Because of the overabundance of sources, let us rely on select examples. Olive oil is depicted as an antidote in Dioscorides’ *De materia medica* – Dioscorides, *De materia medica* I 30, 2, 3-4. On Dioscorides – J.M. Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine*. Foreword by J. Sarborough, Austin 1985, p. 1-24; Touwaide, *Medicine*, p. 364-366, 376-377, 381-382. Galen refers to the same method in the treatise *De antidotis*. For instance, after Asclepiades of Bithynia (2nd/1st cent. BC – J. Scarborough, *Asklēpiadēs of Bithynia [in Rome, ca 120 – 90 BCE]*, in: *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists. The Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs*, ed. P.T. Keyser – G. Irby-Massie, London – New York 2008, p. 170-171), he recommends a mixture of water and olive oil to be served repeatedly to the patient until emesis occurs – Galenus, *De antidotis libri II* 138, 6-10. To those poisoned with cantharidin he prescribes olive oil mixed with grape syrup – Galenus, *De antidotis libri II* 141, 10-12. Warm olive oil with no additions is recommended in cases of white lead poisonings – Galenus, *De antidotis libri II* 144, 3-4.

²⁶ Anthimus, *De observatione ciborum* 25, p. 14, 6-8.

Let us commence our analysis with information on the birds which eat hellebore. In the literature that Anthimus may have been familiar with, we come across a thread, but it refers to quails, not turtledoves. In this context, quails are mentioned not only in *De plantis* – a treatise ascribed to either Aristotle (4th c. BC) or Nicolaus of Damascus (1st c. BC)²⁷ – but also in Pliny's *Historia naturalis* (1st c. AD)²⁸, *De alimentorum facultatibus*²⁹, *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus*³⁰, *De theriaca ad Pisonem*³¹, *In Hippocratis librum VI epidemiarum commentarii*³² by Galen, *Problemata* by Alexander of Aphrodisias (2nd/3rd c. AD)³³, *Collectiones medicae* by Oribasius³⁴, in *Cyranides* (dated 4-8th c. AD)³⁵, in Homily 5 within commentaries to *Hexaemeron* by Basil of Caesarea

²⁷ Nicolaus Damascenus, *De plantis* 820b, 5-6. On the treatise – M.F. Ferrini, *Introduzione*, in: [Aristotele]. *Le piante. Testo greco a fronte*, intr., tr. M.F. Ferrini, Milano 2012, p. 7-241; A. Touwaide, *Botany*, in: *A Companion to Byzantine Science*, ed. S. Lazaris, Leiden – Boston 2020, p. 305-306.

²⁸ Plinius, *Historia naturalis* X 69, 4-5.

²⁹ Galenus, *De alimentorum facultatibus* 567, 12.

³⁰ Galenus, *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus* 382, 5-6; 612, 14-15.

³¹ Galenus, *De theriaca ad Pisonem* 227, 14.

³² Galenus, *In Hippocratis librum VI epidemiarum commentarii* VI 307, 1-3.

³³ Alexander Aphrodisiensis, *Problemata* I, *proemium* 48, 4, 25. On the author – S. Fazzo, *Alexander of Aphrodisias [T. Aurelius Alexander] [ca 200 CE]*, in: *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists. The Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs*, ed. P.T. Keyser – G. Irby-Massie, London – New York 2008, p. 54-55; A. Madigan, *Introduction*, in: *Alexander of Aphrodisias, On Aristotle Metaphysics 4*, tr. A. Madigan, London – New Delhi – New York – Sydney 2013, p. 1-7; R.W. Sharples, *Introduction*, in: *Alexander of Aphrodisias, Quaestiones, 1.1 – 2.15*, tr. R.W. Sharples, London – New Delhi – New York – Sydney 2014, p. 1-7.

³⁴ Oribasius, *Collectiones medicae* XIV 41, 4, 4-5. On Oribasius – B. Baldwin, *The Career of Oribasius*, "Acta Classica" 18 (1975) p. 85-97; M. Grant, *Oribasios and Medical Dietetics or the Three Ps*, in: *Food in Antiquity*, ed. J. Wilkins – D. Harvey – M. Dobson, Exeter 1995, p. 368-379; R. de Lucia, *Oreibasios v. Pergamon*, in: *Antike Medizin. Ein Lexikon*, ed. K.-H. Leven, München 2005, col. 660-661; K. Jagusiak – M. Kokoszko, *Pisma Orybazjusza jako źródło informacji o pożywieniu ludzi w późnym Cesarstwie Rzymskim*, *VoxP* 59 (2013) p. 339-357.

³⁵ *Cyranides* III 53, 3. On the treatise – A. Zucker, *Kuranides (50 – 200 CE?)*, in: *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists. The Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs*, ed. P.T. Keyser – G. Irby-Massie, London – New York 2008, p. 497-498; A. Zucker, *Zoology*, in: *A Companion to Byzantine Science*, ed. S. Lazaris, Leiden – Boston 2020, p. 288.

(4th c. AD)³⁶, in Procopius of Gaza's teachings (5th-6th c. AD)³⁷, in commentaries to Aristotle's *Metaphysica* by Asclepius of Tralles (6th c. AD)³⁸, in Hesychius' lexicon (6th c. AD)³⁹, in Pseudo-Caesarius'⁴⁰ questions and answers (6th c. AD)⁴¹, and in an extract within *Geoponica* (10th c. AD), which originated from *Georgica* by Didymos of Alexandria⁴² (dated to the late 4th or the early 5th centuries AD)⁴³.

³⁶ Basilius Caesariensis, *Homiliae in hexaemeron* V 4, 31. On the author and his literary output – G. Karamanolis – D.L. Schwartz, *Basil of Caesarea (Kappadokia) (ca 365 – 379 CE)*, in: *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists. The Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs*, ed. P.T. Keyser – G. Irby-Massie, London – New York 2008, p. 189-190; H. Inglebert, 'Inner' and 'outer' knowledge: the debate between faith and reason in late Antiquity, in: *A Companion to Byzantine Science*, ed. S. Lazaris, Leiden – Boston 2020, p. 27-52, esp. 35-38; Touwaide, *Medicine*, p. 386-387.

³⁷ Procopius Gasensis, *Commentarii in Genesim* I 8, 72-73. On Procopius – R.A. Layton, *Catenae*, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation*, ed. P.M. Blowers – P.W. Martens, Oxford 2019, p. 223-224.

³⁸ Asclepius Trallianus, *In Aristotelis metaphysicorum libri A-Z commentaria* 276, 17. On the author – Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, v. 2, p. 229; G. Irby-Massie, *Asklepios of Tralleis (Math.) (515 – 565 CE)*, in: *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists. The Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs*, ed. P.T. Keyser – G. Irby-Massie, London – New York 2008, p. 172.

³⁹ Hesychius, *Lexicon*, ἐλλέβορος, ε, 2147, 1. On the author – Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche*, v. 2, p. 35-36; E. Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship: A Guide to Finding, Reading, and Understanding Scholia, Commentaries, Lexica, and Grammatical Treatises, from their Beginnings to the Byzantine Period*, Oxford – New York 2007, p. 88-90; S. Matthaios, *Greek Scholarship in the Imperial Era and Late Antiquity*, in: *Brill's Companion to Ancient Scholarship*, ed. F. Montanari – S. Matthaios – A. Rengakos, Leiden – Boston 2015, p. 289-290.

⁴⁰ F. Curta, *The Making of the Slavs. History and Archaeology of the Lower Danube Region c. 500-700*, Cambridge 2001, p. 43-44; I. Perczel, *Finding a Place for the Erotapokriseis of Pseudo-Caesarius: A New Document of Sixth-Century Palestinian Origenism*, "Aram" 18-19 (2006-2007) p. 49-83.

⁴¹ Pseudo-Caesarius, *Quaestiones et responsiones* 85, 19.

⁴² R.H. Rodgers, *Didymos of Alexandria (II: Agric.) (ca 350 – 450 CE)*, in: *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists. The Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs*, ed. P.T. Keyser – G. Irby-Massie, London – New York 2008, p. 245.

⁴³ *Geoponica* XIV 24, 2, 1. On *Geoponica* – J.L. Teall, *The Byzantine Agricultural Tradition*, DOP 25 (1971) p. 40-44; Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche*, v. 2, p. 273-274; I. Tilelis, *Meteorology and physics in Byzantium*, in: *A Companion to Byzantine Science*, ed. S. Lazaris, Leiden – Boston 2020, p. 192-193; A. Zucker, *Zoology*, in: *A Companion to Byzantine Science*, ed. S. Lazaris, Leiden – Boston 2020, p. 286-289; S. Lazaris, *Veterinary medicine*, in: *A Companion to Byzantine Science*, ed. S. Lazaris, Leiden – Boston 2020, p. 415-417.

Interestingly, the story on quails eating hellebore is often followed by accounts claiming that starlings eat hemlock, a fact which is also mentioned by Anthimus in Chapter 26⁴⁴. Before the 6th century AD, it can be found in *De temperamentis*⁴⁵, *De alimentorum facultatibus*⁴⁶, *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus*⁴⁷, in Galen's *De theriaca ad Pisonem*⁴⁸, *Problemata* by Alexander of Aphrodisias⁴⁹, in *Cyranides*⁵⁰, in Homily 5 within commentaries to *Hexaemeron* by Basil of Caesarea⁵¹, in Procopius of Gaza's writings⁵², in Pseudo-Caesarius' work⁵³, amongst others.

We cannot trace the journey these two pieces of information travelled to reach Anthimus' treatise, but what we can do is, especially when we consider his educational background, assume that he may have derived them from the repertory of medical texts. It was Galen, who, statistically, most often referred to the two facts in his treatises, and since he did so on the grounds of the medical knowledge which Anthimus also studied, there is every likelihood that his works, and particularly *De alimentorum facultatibus* and *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus*, were the foundations of the system of knowledge presented in Chapters 25 and 26 of *De observatione ciborum*.

The reasons behind Anthimus substituting turtledoves for quails is unclear and usually put down as the author's error⁵⁴, perhaps an effect of the inaccurate recollection of material that he read in his studies in Constantinople⁵⁵, which he could not verify when compiling his treatise as

⁴⁴ Anthimus, *De observatione ciborum* 26, p. 14, 9-11.

⁴⁵ Galenus, *De temperamentis* 684, 2.

⁴⁶ Galenus, *De alimentorum facultatibus* 567, 13.

⁴⁷ Galenus, *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus* 382, 3-4; 551, 18; 600, 7-16; 601, 4-5.

⁴⁸ Galenus, *De theriaca ad Pisonem* 227, 12.

⁴⁹ Alexander Aphrodisiensis, *Problemata* I, proemium 49, 4, 26.

⁵⁰ *Cyranides* III 53, 2-3.

⁵¹ Basilii Caesariensis, *Homiliae in hexaemeron* V 4, 26-28.

⁵² Procopius Gasensis, *Commentarii in Genesim* I 8, 72.

⁵³ Pseudo-Caesarius, *Quaestiones et responsiones* 85, 18-19.

⁵⁴ An error was suggested by Rose (*Die Diätetik*, p. 56) and later by Deroux (*Anthime et les tourterelles*, p. 377).

⁵⁵ During Anthimus' lifetime, Constantinople was not only the imperial capital but also a growing centre for medical education. At the end of the 5th c. AD Galen's work was certainly a medical classic, and thus there is nothing to suggest that It was not known in Constantinople – V. Boudon-Millot, *Introduction générale*, in: *Galien. v. 1: Introduction générale, Sur l'ordre de ses propres livres, Sur ses propres livres, Que l'excellent médecin*

he may not have had access to well-equipped libraries, e.g., in the region of Ravenna under the reign of Theodoric the Great⁵⁶, or in Metz, the capital of the Frankish ruler Theuderic⁵⁷. If we do consider it to be an error on

est aussi philosophe, tr. V. Boudon-Millot, Paris 2007, p. CXXXVII. It is true that by 500 AD, except for his glossary to Hippocrates, all his philological works had vanished. The same fate met his philosophical treatises, whose Greek originals had fallen out of use before the early sixth century – Nutton, *From Galen to Alexander*, p. 2; Nutton, *Galen in Byzantium*, p. 171-176, especially 174. However, the vast majority of his works survived, and were reworked by eminent medical authors into multiple writings, including those which are certain to have been composed and circulated in the Constantinopolitan milieu. To recap, the city of Constantinople had satisfactory resources to provide Anthimus with vast medical knowledge, including those pieces of information which Anthimus discusses in Chapters 25 and 26 described herein.

⁵⁶ Ravenna was proposed to be the place where *De observatione ciborum* was composed by Rose (*Die Diätetik*, p. 56), when he called Theodoric the Great “der Auftraggeber” of the *opusculum*, and set as *terminus post quem* for the compilation of the work years after 511 AD (the beginning of Theuderic’s rule in Metz) and as *terminus ante quem* Theodoric the Great’s death (526 AD). The same view can be deduced from Bonnie Effros’ (*Creating Community with Food and Drink in Merovingian Gaul*, New York – Houndmills, Basingstoke 2002, p. 65-66) discussion on Anthimus and his work. On the other hand, this is dismissed by Hen (*Food and Drink*, p. 102-103). At the time of Anthimus’ supposed stay in the city, Ravenna was no stranger to medical studies, and the city’s students followed a course similar to that in Alexandria – S. Corcoran, *Roman Law in Ravenna*, in: *Ravenna: Its Role in Earlier Medieval Change and Exchange*, ed. J. Herrin – J. Nelson, London 2016, p. 181; J. Herrin, *Ravenna: Capital of Empire, Crucible of Europe*, Princeton 2020, p. 240. During Anthimus’ supposed stay in the city, Ravenna would have been an environment inductive to medical studies and promoted an interest in Greek medical heritage. As a result, one can surmise that, even if the city’s medical library did not possess adequate literature, had Anthimus wanted to consult the Greek-speaking doctors practising and teaching there (Herrin, *Ravenna*, p. 239) on the peculiarities of the diet of wild birds, they would have had enough resources and knowledge to assist him with this issue.

⁵⁷ Anthimus was a legate, and the mission he undertook would have entailed a stay of some duration in Gaul. The fact of physicians being used as diplomats is not an oddity because it was common practice – V. Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, p. 301. As for Anthimus in particular, Hen (*Food and Drink*, p. 103) suggests that he might have been sent to the Franks not once but at least on two diplomatic missions (the first, in 508, still during the reign of Clovis, when he met Theuderic for the first time, and the other after 511). In the light of Hen’s hypothesis, Anthimus would have had an opportunity to familiarize himself with Frankish dietary habits and subsequently include his experience in his final work. Although the fact that Anthimus addressed his letter to Theuderic proves the Franks’ growing interest in medicine, there is no evidence to say that Metz under Theuderic’s rule was a major centre of medical activity or formation. This does not mean that the city

the part of the author, it could lead us to the conclusion that Anthimus had erred with regard to accepted knowledge, a mistake which might lead us to question his overall competences.

Such a generalisation seems, however, to have its weaknesses. As a dietician and gourmet Anthimus was knowledgeable about foodstuffs, including fowl. Carl Deroux, who studied his letter in detail, has demonstrated Anthimus' competence in a number of his articles, never having been able to prove him wrong except for this one and only case⁵⁸. As far as turtle-doves and quails are concerned, they were ubiquitous in the Mediterranean, and thus well-known. The former nested across the areas of Europe, North Africa and West Asia, which is reflected both in literary sources as well as by results of archaeological research⁵⁹. The latter crossed the region twice

and Francia as a whole were devoid of physicians. Such must have been available where urban areas and royal courts created an environment able to provide enough wealthy patients – Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, p. 304. Medics are also certain to have travelled extensively from one noble household to another when summoned to the ailing rich. The powerful also tried to protect the population from epidemics, and to create a network of hospitals – P. Horden, *Public Health, Hospitals and Charity*, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Biblical Interpretation*, ed. P.M. Blowers – P.W. Martens, Oxford 2019, p. 299-313, especially 305-307. Though there is no doubt that doctors in Gaul could become prominent figures, there is little evidence of extensive knowledge of classical medicine there – V.J. Flint, *The Early Medieval 'Medicus', the Saint – and the Enchanter*, "Social History of Medicine" 2/2 (1989) p. 127-145, especially 128-133. The last major compilation written in the milieu, and based on ancient and contemporary Greek medical achievements before Anthimus' lifetime was *De medicamentis*, compiled by Marcellus of Bordeaux around the year 408. One can, therefore, claim that some Roman medical knowledge survived in the region – E. James, *A Sense of Wonder: Gregory of Tours, Medicine and Science*, in: *The Culture of Christendom: Essays in Commemoration of Denis L.T. Bethell*, ed. M.A. Meyer, London – Rio Grande 1993, p. 45-60, especially 54-55; Effros, *Creating Community*, p. 55-67, especially 55-58. Due to the lack of major medical schools in the area, local expertise had to be upgraded either by means of contacts with the Byzantine capital (and later with Ravenna) or by luring such medics as Anthimus to Gaul. Consequently, it is hard to assume that in the part of Gaul visited by Anthimus on his diplomatic missions, there were enough Greek-speaking doctors or works written in Greek to provide him with specific knowledge (especially in terms of the contents of Chapters 25 and 26), if he had wanted to consult them there.

⁵⁸ On the contrary, he appears rather to have proved that Anthimus was precise in using his terminology. Cf. Deroux' conclusions concerning terms referring to the fish salmon – C. Deroux, *La définition du nom de poisson esox (isox, isicius...)*, in: *Hommages à André Boutemy*, ed. G. Cambier, Bruxelles 1976, p. 55-68, especially 63-64.

⁵⁹ W.G. Arnott, *Birds in the Ancient World from A to Z*, London – New York 2007, p. 364-366; H. Kroll, *Tiere im Byzantinischen Reich Archäozoologische Forschungen im*

a year and their bones have been excavated in Italy, the Balkans and North Africa⁶⁰. Accordingly, it should be assumed that the author of *De observatione ciborum* knew the creatures from his own experience, and thus was able to tell one from the other⁶¹. His topical competence is corroborated by the fact that it is impossible to demonstrate that Anthimus slips up when he refers to “turtures” as a dietician. He was right that the birds, although they generally live in the wild, were also kept in captivity for fattening purposes⁶². He was equally well-informed about their dietetic influence, and in his evaluation followed in Galen’s footsteps, who assessed them as hard-fleshed⁶³. The above-characteristic resulted in their contribution to the production of black bile⁶⁴, which was also alluded to by Anthimus⁶⁵. It is of the utmost importance that Galen’s opinion was retained by later physicians who practiced up to the time when Anthimus was compiling his treatise, and consequently is present in Oribasius’ works⁶⁶, and also cited in Aetius of Amida’s teachings⁶⁷.

One has, however, also to admit that the dietetic assessment of quails was not far from that of turtledoves. A good example is the fact that Archigenes of Apamea (1st/2nd c. AD)⁶⁸ prescribed both turtledoves’ and quails’ meat to those suffering from dropsy because it was relatively dry⁶⁹.

Überblick, Mainz 2010, p. 188; H. Kroll, *Animals in the Byzantine Empire: An Overview of the Archaeozoological Evidence*, “Archeologia Medievale” 39 (2012) p. 105.

⁶⁰ Arnott, *Birds*, p. 237; Kroll, *Tiere*, p. 122, 187; Kroll, *Animals*, p. 105, 116.

⁶¹ Deroux, *Anthime et les tourterelles*, p. 377-378.

⁶² Confirmed by Varro, *Res rusticate* III 8, 1, 1-3, 8; Columella, *De re rustica* VIII 9, 1, 1-4, 7; *Geoponica* XIV 24, 1, 1-4.

⁶³ Galen, *De alimentorum facultatibus* 700, 13-16.

⁶⁴ Galen, *De victu attenuante* 69, 1-71, 9.

⁶⁵ I do not agree with Deroux’s conclusion that Galen spoke highly of turtledoves – Deroux, *Anthime*, p. 372-374. I am of the opinion that the culinary information referred to by Deroux is inconclusive because it says nothing about the principles of the dietetics Anthimus adhered to.

⁶⁶ Oribasius, *Collectiones medicae* II 42, 1, 1-5, 8; III 18, 5, 1-3; Oribasius, *Synopsis ad Eustathium filium* IV 17, 3, 1-3; Oribasius, *Libri ad Eunapium* I 35, 3, 1-2.

⁶⁷ Aëtius Amidenus, *Iatricorum libri*, II, 130, 5-7. On teachings and practice of Aëtius of Amida – H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche*, v. 1, München 1978, p. 294-296; J. Scarborough, *Early Byzantine Pharmacology*, DOP 38 (1984) p. 224-226; A. Garzya, *Aetios v. Amida*, in: *Antike*, col. 19-20; Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, p. 295.

⁶⁸ A. Touwaide, *Archigenēs of Apameia (95 – 115 CE)*, in: *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists. The Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs*, ed. P.T. Keyser – G. Irby-Massie, London – New York 2008, p. 160-161.

⁶⁹ Archigenes, *Fragmentum* 72, 5-11.

In fact, quails did not attract Galen's attention at all except for his testimony saying that they were hunted and consumed in Greece (in Doris, Boeotia, Thessaly and Attica) and that their meat could pose a threat to those who ate it (giving them muscle cramps), when the birds took a temporary liking for hellebore⁷⁰. Galen's silence about the quality of the birds' meat is, in fact, its assessment, as, if it had been a foodstuff regarded as worth advocating, he would not have refrained from writing about it. In fact, we can conjecture that other medical doctors who were active after Galen shared his low appreciation of the meat. Such an opinion was already long-standing when he was composing his works, and that is why Athenaeus of Attaleia's (1st c. AD)⁷¹ teachings on the birds (preserved by Oribasius in his *Collectiones medicae*) are limited to a mere statement that quails were fattest (that is best to eat) in autumn⁷². In fact, Rufus of Ephesus (1st/2nd c. AD)⁷³, a fragment of whose work on a diet appropriate for women has been preserved in writings attributed to Oribasius, is another physician who, while classifying quails as the worst of all wildfowl, alluded to their dietetic characteristics, opining that the creatures' meat moistens the body but is not easy to concoct⁷⁴. It is noticeable that Rufus' evaluation contradicts what Archigenes claimed, and is a clear sign of how the assessments of quails in ancient medicine are at variance. Apart from corroborating the validity of the above assumptions concerning the quality of quails, Rufus' remark on their moistening quality suggests that they were not believed to contribute to the production of black bile (as the humour's characteristics included dryness) but rather to phlegm (being watery and cold). In conclusion, the evidence presented above is important because it appears to prove that Anthimus did not make a mistake in Chapter 25 of *De observatione ciborum* when naming the bird he was writing about but, as his description concerns a foodstuff which is melancholic and not phlegmatic, he made a choice in his teaching, and, out of two pathways of medical tradition, he embarked on the one which was also preferred by Rufus.

⁷⁰ Galen, *In Hippocratis librum vi epidemiarum commentarii* 306, 14-307, 3.

⁷¹ A. Touwaide, *Athēnaios of Attaleia (or Tarsos?)*, in: *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists. The Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs*, ed. P.T. Keyser – G. Irby-Massie, London – New York 2008, p. 176-177.

⁷² Oribasius, *Collectiones medicae* I 3, 4, 2-3.

⁷³ J. Scarborough, *Rufus of Ephesos (ca 70–100 CE)*, in: *The Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists. The Greek Tradition and its Many Heirs*, ed. P.T. Keyser – G. Irby-Massie, London – New York 2008, p. 720-721.

⁷⁴ Oribasius, *Collectiones medicae (libri incerti)* XX 24, 1-25, 1.

Here, I would like to propose a solution to the riddle. One can venture a slightly different way of interpretating the meaning Chapter 25 has. The beginning of the fragment (“de agrestibus vere avibus” [out of wildfowl]⁷⁵) suggests that its contents refer to wildfowl in general, and, consequently, the facts mentioned in the narrative concern all wild birds (including turtledoves). Accordingly, Anthimus’ statement worded “sicut auctoris nostri dicent (how our authorities teach)”⁷⁶ implies a mere fact (known from medical literature) that, if wild birds have eaten hellebore, their meat can pose a threat to the health of those who would like to consume it. The story that followed is one which exemplified these general teachings that Anthimus had learned from his reading, but on the basis of a case which proved the theory true (and which concerned “turtures” in particular). As a result, the story about treating the two “rustici” poisoned with turtledove meat may well be a description of an actual intervention which Anthimus made on the basis of correct therapeutic premises. Presumably, the fact that he knew medical sources that reported food poisonings caused prevalingly by quail meat entitled him to believe that he had encountered a similar case (in terms of aetiology) with much the same symptoms induced by another bird belonging to the same class (i.e. wild fowl), namely turtledoves. Even though the case was not identical to the accounts he knew from the literature, having generalised from the teachings his literary repository, he may have come to the conclusion that the two poisoned peasants required the same, standardised, treatment with aged wine and olive oil.

If this interpretation is accurate, Chapter 25 should be recognised as evidence that Anthimus was not only an active but also a creative physician, who – just like Galen – related his own professional experience (“ἐμπειρία”) in his writings⁷⁷. In all probability, he decided to add this information to inform the reader about his small contribution, which not only remained in line with medical theory but, at the same time, was able to authenticate the content of his treatise, differentiating *De observatione ciborum* from works of medical theoreticians and authors who were not

⁷⁵ Anthimus, *De observatione ciborum* 25, p. 13, 3, 6.

⁷⁶ Anthimus, *de observatione ciborum* 25, p. 13, 10-11.

⁷⁷ Nutton, *From Galen to Alexander*, p. 1-14, especially 4. Alexander of Tralles, who wrote in Constantinople somewhat later (but still in the 5th c. AD), was equally proud of his practical experience – J. Duffy, *Byzantine Medicine in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries: Aspects of Teaching and Practice*, DOP 38 (1984) p. 25; P. Bouras-Vallianatos, *Galen in Late Antique Medical Handbooks*, in: *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Galen*, ed. P. Bouras-Vallianatos – B. Zipser, Leiden – Boston 2019, p. 45-46, 56.

professional medical practitioners, e.g., Diphilus of Siphnos (3rd c. BC)⁷⁸, Cato the Elder (3rd/2nd c. BC)⁷⁹, iatrosophists of his times⁸⁰, Michael Psellos (10th/11th c. AD)⁸¹, and Symeon Seth (11th/12th c. AD)⁸². One may, therefore, modify the conclusions of Deroux expressed in his study on Chapter 25 of *De observatione ciborum* that the case was a mere verification of “un savoir figé et éminemment livresque”⁸³, and add the described poisoning and its cure to other elements of Anthimus’ creativity, rightly recognised in the researcher’s earlier article⁸⁴.

As the story of the two poisoned “rustici” is not explicit enough for us to determine the exact time and place of the events, it still leaves leeway for speculation on the matter. First of all, there is *terminus post quem*, which relates to the general background of the story. Before his exile from Constantinople, as a city dweller, Anthimus mostly had contact with residents of the capital (“urbani”), not “rustici”, while the fragment worded “[turtures] in campo vero qui nascuntur ([turtledoves] which live in the fields)” and the profession of the poisoned victims allow us to conclude that Chapter 25 tells a story that is more likely to have happened in the countryside, i.e., in a setting very different from that typical of the Byzantine capital. If so, the story is not a report from Anthimus’ young years before exile but would instead refer to the period of his life when he was absent from the city upon the Bosporus. As a result, it must have taken place after 478, i.e. the year when he was forced to leave Constantinople.

⁷⁸ J. Scarborough, *Diphilus of Siphnos and Hellenistic Medical Dietetics*, “Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences” 25/2 (1970) p. 194-201.

⁷⁹ J. Draycott, *Roman Domestic Medical Practice in Central Italy: From the Middle Republic to the Early Empire*, London – New York 2019, p. 46-48, 140-141.

⁸⁰ On iatrosophists – de Wet, *The Preacher’s Diet*, p. 414; I. Garolafo, *Galen’s legacy in Alexandrian Texts Written in Greek, Latin, and Arabic*, in: *Brill’s Companion to the Reception of Galen*, ed. P. Bouras-Vallianatos – B. Zipser, Leiden – Boston, 2019, p. 62-67, 71; Touwaide, *Medicine*, p. 366-367.

⁸¹ A. Hohlweg, *Medizinischer ‘Enzyklopädismus’ und das ΠΟΝΗΜΑ ΙΑΤΡΙΚΟΝ des Michael Psellos*, *ByZ* 81 (1988) p. 39-49; Bouras-Vallianatos, *Galen’s Reception*, p. 439, 443, n. 40, 446, n. 55, 447.

⁸² P. Bouras-Vallianatos, *Galen’s Reception in Byzantium: Symeon Seth and his Refutation of Galenic Theories on Human Physiology*, *GRBS* 55 (2015) p. 436-457.

⁸³ Deroux, *Anthime et les tourterelles*, p. 381.

⁸⁴ C. Deroux, *Tradition et innovation dans la Diététique d’Anthime*, in: *Tradición e innovación de la medicina latina de la antigüedad y de la alta edad media. Actas del IV Coloquio Internacional sobre los “textos médicos latinos antiguos”*, ed. M.E. Vázquez Buján, Santiago de Compostela 1994, p. 171-182.

The words “in villa duo rustici (two peasants in the estate)” reveals that the author considers the two men poisoned with turtledove meat to be either peasants, or farm labourers who worked at a large mansion. They cannot have been rich as, if they were, they would have purchased fattened fowl which was said to be better than the wild turtledove they happened to catch. Neither could they have owned their own estate each as the noun “villa” would then have been used in the plural, most likely with an additional possessive pronoun, e.g., “in villis suis (in their farms)”. If so, it seems reasonable to presume that the men could have afforded to pay neither for medical consultation nor for necessary medicaments, one of which – namely, “vinum vetus (vintage wine)” – would have been more expensive than regular table wine because of its maturity, and also due to the fact that it belonged to the class of top-quality wines.

Anthimus writes that he encountered the case during his time “in provincia mea”. Here, we may consider two possibilities for the situation to have happened. If we follow Valentin Rose’s suggestion that Anthimus was a governor of one of the provinces in Theodoric’s Gothic state, the situation must have occurred most probably after 493, when the Gothic leader established his rule in Ravenna, as it was only after this date that the political situation in the kingdom of Theodoric the Great allowed farm labourers to lead a peaceful life and landowners to care about their staff. On the other hand, provided we accept Ytzhak Hen’s hypothesis that Anthimus returned to the city on the Bosphorus between 491 and 497, stayed there for good, was never a provincial governor⁸⁵, and was sent on diplomatic missions, the medical intervention is likely to have happened after the date. This is also provided Anthimus actually practiced as a medical doctor commissioned by landowners to treat either themselves or their staff.

There is one more piece of evidence worth considering in the context of Anthimus’ career. Notably, in Chapter 33 Anthimus recommends that Teuderich eat bustards, saying that they are absent from Gaul. Since this piece of information implies that the author lived in a place where bustards were hunted for while he was writing *De observatione ciborum*, and therefore appreciated as food, and since, (according to the data collected by D’Arcy W. Thompson⁸⁶, Lawrence Feinberg⁸⁷, and

⁸⁵ Hen appears not to have approved of this supposition by Rose.

⁸⁶ D’A.W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds*, Oxford 1895, p. 199-200.

⁸⁷ Lawrence Feinberg (*The Tetrax in Athenaeus*, GRBS 11/2 (1970) p. 129-136, especially 129, n. 2) disproves Filippo Capponi’s (*Il tetrax ed il tarax di Nemesiano*, “*Latomus*” 21/3 (1962) p. 572-615) conclusions that the bird τέτραξ, whose mention is

W. Geoffrey Arnott⁸⁸) bustards were ubiquitous in the Balkans and to the east of the region in antiquity yet there is no evidence that they were hunted for in the west (with the exception of Spain) or in the middle of the Mediterranean (with the exception of North Africa), it could be argued that *De observatione ciborum* was not compiled in Gothic Italy⁸⁹ but rather in the eastern part of the Empire⁹⁰. Certainly, such a conclusion supports Hen's hypothesis (which locates Anthimus for a longer period in the region of Constantinople) and disproves that of Rose and his followers which implies that Anthimus stayed close to Theodoric the Great's court. If so, it also becomes likelier that in Chapter 25 Anthimus told us a story that happened somewhere in the countryside (but not that far from Constantinople as the city was in the region inhabited by bustards, and Anthimus was summoned to the capital by the emperor at least twice) during the period between the beginning of the nineties of the fifth century AD and his diplomatic mission to the Franks (during which he was carrying the final version of his work to Theuderic). Consequently, if we accept other results of Hen's line of reasoning, *De observatione ciborum* was most probably also completed in a similar location after Anthimus' first encounter with the Franks (and possibly with Theuderic himself, who, having been impressed by Anthimus' competence in dietetics, commissioned the work) in 508, before the supposed second legation. One which might have been despatched after Theuderic's enthronement (i.e. after 511), and was definitely prior to Theuderic's death in 534. Such a course of events appears to be more congruous with pieces of information extant in Anthimus' work than that postulated by Rose, whose ideas, though modified, were shared by Grant, the translator of the text into English, suggesting that *De observatione ciborum* was compiled in north-eastern Gaul, and handed over to Theuderic by a Gothic legation sent by Theodoric the Great either in 516 or in 523⁹¹.

To recapitulate, the information in Chapters 25, 26 and 33 of *De observatione ciborum* implies that the work was composed in the

made by Atheaneus of Naucratis in Book 9 of his *Dipnosophistarum libri* (IX 398d-399a [58, 28-50]), is the bustard.

⁸⁸ Arnott, *Birds*, p. 239-240. On Fishbourne finds – M.G. Allen, *The Re-Identification of Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) from Fishbourne Roman Palace, Chichester; West Sussex, as Common Crane (*Grus grus*)*, "Environmental Archaeology" 14/2 (2009) p. 180-186.

⁸⁹ Where bustards were not hunted for.

⁹⁰ Where bustards were common.

⁹¹ Grant, *Introduction*, p. 21-28, especially 23-24, 27-28.

Constantinopolitan milieu after 508, possibly circa 511. One can also maintain that Anthimus could competently (and creatively) apply in his medical practice the purely secular (but at the same time considered not to be against the Christian religious doctrine) theories he learned. Therefore we may surmise that he did not err when he mentioned turtledoves in chapter 25, but his topical teachings were a creative application of the knowledge he had acquired through reading medical classics.

On Anthimus and his work

(summary)

In the Church Fathers' teachings there are numerous references to medical knowledge, including those concerning dietetics. They were, however, not meant to be used to heal the faithful but they were a resource of morally elevating metaphors appropriate in preaching Christian ethics. The first fully extant work on dietetics penned by a Christian author is entitled *De observatione ciborum*. It is a Latin collection of dietetic advice addressed to Teuderich, ruler of the Franks (6th c. AD). Its author, Anthimus, was a Greek physician exiled from Constantinople, first seeking refuge among the Arian Goths, and later sent to the Catholic Franks on diplomatic missions. The present article provides a fuller picture of Anthimus' medical competence and shows arguments to pinpoint the date when the treatise was compiled. The analysis is based on three entries of the treatise, namely Chapters 25, 26 and 33. The method adopted in the research is a heuristic analysis of Anthimus' work, and select, mainly medical, literature. The author of the present study argues that the work was composed in the Constantinopolitan milieu after 508, possibly circa 511. Its author was a competent physician, able to creatively apply theories he had learned.

Keywords: history of medicine; history of dietetics; Anthimus; *De observatione ciborum*; Joannes Chrysostomus; John Chrysostom

O Antimusi i jego dziele

(streszczenie)

Ojcowie Kościoła zawarli w swej spuściźnie liczne uwagi odnoszące się do medycyny, nie pomijając także tej jej gałęzi, która nazywana jest dietetyką. Ich wiedza nie miała jednak zwykle na celu zastosowania kompetencji medycznych w praktyce leczniczej, ale raczej stanowiła zasób uwznioślających metafor, które przydatne im były w nauczaniu chrześcijańskiej etyki. Pierwszym w pełni zachowanym traktatem dietetycznym napisanym przez chrześcijanina jest dziełko zatytułowane *De observatione ciborum*. Jest to zbiór porad żywieniowych dedykowany Teuderykowi, królowi Franków (VI wiek po Chrystusie). Jego autor, Antimus, był greckim lekarzem wygnanym z Konstantynopola, który po opuszczeniu stolicy wpięrow szukał schronienia wśród ariańskich Gotów, by potem zostać posłany

w misjach dyplomatycznych do katolickich Franków. Obecny artykuł stara się uzupełnić obraz medycznych kompetencji Antimusa oraz prezentuje argumenty pozwalające datować kompozycję jego traktatu. Przeprowadzony dowód opiera się na analizie 25, 26 i 33 rozdziału *De observatione ciborum* oraz wybranych innych źródeł (głównie prac z zakresu medycyny). Autor studium prezentuje argumenty wskazujące, że traktat *De observatione ciborum* został skomponowany w okolicach Konstantynopola po 508 roku, najpewniej blisko 511 roku. Sam Antimus był kompetentnym medykiem, który potrafił kreatywnie zastosować teorie przyswojone wskutek lektury dzieł klasyków swojej profesji.

Słowa kluczowe: historia medycyny; historia dietetyki; Antimus; *De observatione ciborum*; Jan Chryzostom

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