

DOI: 10.18778/2084-140X.07.14

ZOFIA RZEŹNICKA, MACIEJ KOKOSZKO, *Ab ovo ad γάλα. Jajka, mleko i produkty mleczne w medycynie i w sztuce kulinarnej (I–VIII) [Ab ovo ad γάλα. Eggs, Milk and Dairy Products in Medicine and Culinary Art (1<sup>st</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.)] [= Dietetyka i sztuka kulinarna antyku i wczesnego Bizancjum (II–VII w.), część III; Dietetics and the Culinary Art of Antiquity and Early Byzantium (2<sup>nd</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.), vol. III], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2016, pp. VI + 263 [= Byzantina Lodziensia, 28].*

The twenty-eighth volume within the series entitled *Byzantina Lodziensia* is devoted to issues common to the fields of the history of medicine, dietetics and culinary art of the period bracketed by the chronological timeframe of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D. Its authors focus on the issue of the consumption and the medical application of animal products which can collectively be described as dairy products.

It is worth emphasising here that Zofia Rzeźnicka and Maciej Kokoszko have been performing research on the cuisine and medicine of Antiquity and Byzantium for the last several and a dozen or so years, respectively, and that their scientific achievements in this matter, which consist of monographs, chapters in collective works, as well as a series of articles published in Polish and foreign periodicals, include descriptions of various food groups, medical procedures that involve the application of food-stuffs, and the dietary characteristics of individual ingredients and complex dishes<sup>1</sup>.

The authors' activity in this field of research fits squarely into the dynamically developing trend of studies on Antique gastronomy

and its Byzantine branch. The work performed within the scope of this subject matter returns fruitful results in the form of studies devoted either to more general and introductory issues or more profoundly scrutinised individual areas of research. Simultaneously, the scientific activity of Rzeźnicka and Kokoszko incorporates research in another branch of historiography, which has a significantly older and more grounded place in science, namely the history of ancient (and Byzantine) medicine. The reviewed book is the outcome of the research the authors conducted in both aforementioned fields.

The work, which is divided into ten sections, consists of two major chapters: I. *Jajka w dietetyce, farmakologii, procedurach terapeutycznych i sztuce kulinarnej* [Eggs in Dietetics, Pharmacology, Therapeutic Procedures and Culinary Art], p. 9–58, and II. *Mleko i produkty mleczne* [Milk and Dairy Products], p. 59–182, within which there is a total of eleven sub-chapters (see: therein after) as well as *Wstęp* [Introduction], p. 1–7, *Wnioski końcowe* [Final Conclusions], p. 183–195, *Słownik podstawowych terminów greckich* [Dictionary of Basic Greek Terms], p. 197–203, *Wykaz skrótów* [List of abbreviations], p. 205–206, *Bibliografia* (Bibliography), p. 207–242, including a division into source texts and studies, an English-language abstract (p. 243–252), an *Indeks osób* (Name Index), p. 253–256 and, finally, *Indeks nazw geograficznych i etnicznych* (Index of Geographic and Ethnical Names), p. 257–258. Individual sections (excluding the indexes, the list of abbreviations and the bibliography) have been signed, which, on the one

<sup>1</sup> E.g. M. KOKOSZKO, *Ryby i ich znaczenie w życiu codziennym ludzi późnego antyku i wczesnego Bizancjum (III–VII w.)*, Łódź 2005; IDEM, *Smaki Konstantynopola*, [in:] *Konstantynopol – Nowy Rzym. Miasto i ludzie w okresie wczesnobizantyńskim*, ed. M.J. LESZKA, T. WOLIŃSKA, Warszawa 2011, p. 471–575; M. KOKOSZKO, K. JAGUSIAK, Z. RZEŹNICKA, *Zboża i produkty zbożowe w źródłach medycznych antyku i wczesnego Bizancjum (II–VII w.)* [=Dietetyka i sztuka kulinarna antyku i wczesnego Bizancjum (II–VII w.), vol. I], Łódź 2014.

hand, shows each author's input and contribution in the making of the book, and on the other hand, it demonstrates the scope of mutual research which they have been conducting.

Prior to discussing the content of individual sub-chapters, it is worth devoting a few words to the sources used by the authors, paying attention to four issues. Firstly, Rzeźnicka and Kokoszko analysed a vast corpus of Greek and Latin medical treatises (from Celsus to Paul of Aegina) well-known to them, complementing their contemplations with other works, both Greek (e.g. Athenaeus of Naucratis) and Latin (e.g. agronomic treatises). Secondly, the book considers late Antique and early Byzantine authors who wrote after Galen of Pergamon as basic sources of information. Here, their treatises are as important and approached with the same attention as the writings by the famous Pergamenian and earlier medical works. To my mind, such an approach to the sources from between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries makes the book by Rzeźnicka and Kokoszko a unique item on the publishing market. Next, despite narrowing the chronological timeframe of their work to a 'mere' 600 years, the authors have, in fact, used sources originating from a much longer period. Admittedly, the base of their research may have been treatises written between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D., but in their studies, they occasionally ventured much deeper, from as early as the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (*Corpus Hippocraticum*) to the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (writings by Simeon Seth). And this was not limited by the aforementioned two extreme examples, since the sources used by Rzeźnicka and Kokoszko include numerous works created before the 1<sup>st</sup> century and after the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. This approach allowed the authors to demonstrate the origins of a large number of phenomena which are present in the period of history they scrutinise, and to show – on the one hand – the continuity and permanency of certain phenomena, and on the other hand, the evolution and changes that regard these phenomena. Finally, the reviewed book is not exclusively based on sources which could be described as professional or specialist treatises on such fields as medicine and agronomy, since the authors broadened the spectrum by includ-

ing works classified as the canon of *belles-lettres* (Homer, Aristophanes, Horace, Martial, etc.), epistolography (Cicero, Michael Psellos), edicts and official letters (Diocletian's edict on prices, *The Book of the Prefect*, etc.), philosophical treatises (Plato, Aristotle), and also the works which I would categorise as lexicography (the lexicon by Hesychius of Alexandria, *The Suda*). One must appreciate the effort the authors put into working on such varied groups of sources that require different approaches and interpretative skills. Undoubtedly, the picture of the issue being explored, generated by the comparison of the quoted writings with the medical, dietary, and culinary literature, is more comprehensive and offers a more precise description of reality to the reader.

Naturally, Rzeźnicka and Kokoszko never confined themselves to only analysing the sources. In their work, they made extensive use of the reference literature, both older publications, which nowadays can be described as classical for the issue being scrutinised, and more recent papers on historiography, archaeology, biology and literary studies.

Let us now discuss some of the substantive extracts of the reviewed book. The first chapter opens with Subchapter No. 1 (p. 9–12), in which Rzeźnicka provides the reader with a collection of general information on eggs in the analysed period (e.g. the manners in which they were stored). In Subchapter No. 2 (p. 12–17), she presents the dietary characteristics of the described product, focusing on Galen's opinions, which she complements with descriptions authored by Oribasius. Other medical authors are mentioned more superficially, which is explained by the fact that they were unoriginal, reproductive and dependent on the two aforementioned figures in the field. Subchapter No. 3 (p. 17–20) focuses on the pharmacological nature of eggs within the medical sources and is based almost exclusively on Galen. First, Rzeźnicka discusses the properties he attributed to albumen and yolk, and then focuses on individual types of eggs related to the manner in which they were cooked. In the following Subchapter No. 4 (p. 20–49), she discusses the application of eggs in therapeutic procedures, listing a range of diseases

for which various applications of the described product were recommended (as an ingredient of ointments, compresses, diet, plasters, enemas, suppositories, etc.). Rzeźnicka devoted the last, fifth subchapter (p. 49–58) to the role of eggs in the cuisine of the said period, since medical sources contained a certain amount of information on the issue. On reading this extract, not only do we learn the most typical dishes, which are also present in modern cuisine (boiled and soft-boiled eggs, scrambled eggs), but also much less known, much more complex and multi-ingredient dishes, which are significantly more exotic to the 21<sup>st</sup> century reader, e.g. sea urchin casserole or *afrutum* (p. 51). Rzeźnicka complements her text with some information stemming from non-medical sources (mainly *De re coquinaria*), which fully demonstrates the multitude of culinary applications of eggs and makes a significant contribution to determining their actual role in the diet of the people living in that period. This is perfectly illustrated by the extract (p. 52–53) in which Rzeźnicka throws light on the issue of the nearly topical Horatian expression (partially present also in the title of the reviewed book) *ab ovo usque ad mala*. She explains that the author of *The Satires* did communicate (I, 3, 6–7) that, customarily, Romans began their feasts by eating eggs, but in other texts he completely ignored them in the context, and, from other sources, it is known that they could appear on the menu at other stages of the feast.

Chapter 2 is the fruit of the collaboration between both authors. In the first subchapter (p. 59–62), the stereotypical role of dairy products in the Antique diet (food eaten by simple or even primitive people such as shepherds and nomads) is explained, which – contrary to popular belief – were not only permanently present in the diet of the poorer and shepherd-related part of society within the Mediterranean region, but also, occasionally, they were a delicacy of the elites who were not normally associated with this type of food (cheese seems to be the only product that does not fit into this popular opinion). The second subchapter (p. 63–95) focuses on the pre-Galenic galactology, i.e. on messages from Celsus and Dioscorides. Besides

discussing the properties attributed to milk and its derivatives, and the therapeutic applications of the products described by both authors, there is also a significant amount of additional information, which reveals – somewhat by the way – more than just the everyday consumption and disease treatment aspects of daily life related to dairy products. The authors focus on such issues as the technology of milk preservation and the prioritised (in the conditions of the times) breeding of milk animals. Subchapter No. 3 (p. 96–127) focuses on the writings by Galen and medical doctors who were active between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century. Rzeźnicka and Kokoszko begin their reasoning with the Galenic division of milk into whey, coagulum and fat, and then go on to discuss the issue of the influence that consuming various types of milk has on people. A particularly interesting extract seems to be the fragment in which the authors quote remarks related to the relationship between the food eaten by breastfeeding mothers and the health of children, and between the fodder for milk animals and the wellbeing of people who drink their milk (p. 98–99). Rzeźnicka devoted the fourth subchapter (p. 128–134) to present the nature of soured milk (as explained by the Greek term *oksygala*), whose – almost unvaryingly unfavourable – dietary characteristics, medical applications and usage in gastronomy she provided in accordance with the previously applied scheme. Somewhat by the way, she also discusses two other similar products: *schistón gála* (p. 131–132), i.e. the so-called coagulated milk, and *mélke* (p. 133), i.e. a mixture of milk with hot vinegar. In Subchapter No. 5 (p. 134–169), constructed in accordance with the previously applied scheme, the authors focused on cheese, providing detailed information on its production methods, the regions best known for the manufacture of its most famous types, and an extensively long list of ways in which it was served. The final, sixth subchapter, following this pattern, discusses the properties of butter, its medical applications and its role in cooking. The text commences with a presentation of some information derived from Galen, which, in terms of accuracy and specificity, is inferior to the writings by Oribasius, Aetius

and Paul of Aegina, as far as therapeutics is concerned. Apart from extremely detailed descriptions of the medical applications of butter in e.g. gynaecology, urology and laryngology (in the form of cataplasms, ointments, enemas, suppositories, etc.), it is also worth paying attention to other observations made by the authors, who write that for the creators of the analysed source texts, the consumption of butter – as opposed to olive oil – indicated an affinity to the world of northern barbarians (thus, it ought to be noticed here that this was another such pair of products, besides wine and beer, and – to a certain extent – cheese and soured milk, the consumption of which was associated with belonging to either the Greek and Roman culture or the world of the so-called barbarians).

We must not forget that the reviewed book is designed as the third part of the series entitled *Dietetics and Culinary Art of Antiquity and Early Byzantium* (2<sup>nd</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.). It may function as a fully independent volume, the reading and understanding of which is not preconditioned by having read the two previous publications (*Byzantina Lodziensia* 16 and 19). And yet, only when accompanied by them can it become a well-organised and clear picture of dietary schemes, medical applications of food, and dietary opinions and statements known in the Mediterranean world in the analysed period. In previous volumes, these aspects were described in reference to cereals (part 1), and legumes, vegetables, meat and offal (part 2). Thus, the book by Rzeźnicka and Kokoszko is, in this respect, a natural and logical complementation of the contemplations on animal products contained in the previous volume.

The author's work is not free of certain inconsistencies. Although they do not significantly impact the general quality of the book, they do require a few words of explanation. One of the issues which ought to be brought up here is the manner of quoting Latin systematic names of species and genera of plants and animals which appear in the book. Occasionally, and it also seems that in reference to names which are less common and not well-known among contemporary readers (e.g. *ajwain*, p. 179), the

authors provide in brackets the Latin terminology binding within the contemporary systematics. Their policy, however, happens to be inconstant, since the rather unknown *portulaca* (p. 39) lacks such an accurate description, and, at times, the same sentence contains several names of plants, some of which are provided in Polish and Latin and some are not. Another doubtful issue is the manner in which Rzeźnicka and Kokoszko refer to the Latin culinary treatise entitled *De re coquinaria*. As determined by the contemporary science (and confirmed by the authors [e.g. on pages 52, 125, 181 and 254]), this is an anonymous work, a compilation most likely written in the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Therefore, any participation of Apicius – a Roman gourmet who had lived approximately 300 years earlier, or any other potential cuisine experts bearing the same name (although it cannot be ruled out that the compiler included some extracts signed by an Apicius or somebody writing under this name) – has already been excluded. And yet, in the footnotes, Rzeźnicka and Kokoszko consistently refer the reader to Apicius while referring to the fragments of *De re coquinaria* (according to their record, numbered as I and II, where I means the Polish and II the English edition). What is more, contradicting their own statements, at a certain point, they even recognise him as the author of the treatise (p. 54).

Nevertheless, these inaccuracies do not influence a general evaluation of the book, which constitutes a valuable and unique complementation of the aforementioned research fields (the history of medicine and the history of nutrition). And this can primarily be attributed to a vast and profound analysis of the achievements of the Byzantine *ars medicina* (which until today has often been ignored as a reproductive stage between Antique and Arabic therapeutics) within the context of dietetics and nutrition. As a result of the work conducted by the authors, we are presented with a monograph of a high substantive level, closed within a well-constructed and approachable form, which is crucial and uneasy to achieve with such a specific source base and topic.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

KOKOSZKO M., *Ryby i ich znaczenie w życiu codziennym ludzi późnego antyku i wczesnego Bizancjum (III–VII w.)*, Łódź 2005.

KOKOSZKO M., *Smaki Konstantynopola*, [in:] *Konstantynopol – Nowy Rzym. Miasto i ludzie w okresie wczesnobizantyńskim*, ed. M.J. LESZKA, T. WOLIŃSKA, Warszawa 2011, p. 471–575.

KOKOSZKO M., JAGUSIAK K., RZEŃNICKA Z., *Zboża i produkty zbożowe w źródłach medycznych antyku i wczesnego Bizancjum (II–VII w.)* [= *Dietetyka i sztuka kulinarna antyku i wczesnego Bizancjum (II–VII w.)*, vol. I], Łódź 2014.

Krzysztof Jagusiak (Łódź)\*

\* Uniwersytet Łódzki, Centrum Ceraneum

DOI: 10.18778/2084-140X.07.15

**АНЕТА ДИМИТРОВА, *Златоструят в преводаческата дейност на старобългарските книжовници* [The Zlatostruy in the Translation Work of Old Bulgarian Writers], Авалон, София 2016, pp. 456.**

The book is dedicated to the *Zlatostruy*, one of the most famous monuments of Old Bulgarian literature from the period of the reign of tsar Simeon (893–927). In particular, the study focuses on the first 45 texts (sermons, or 'slovo's) from the long Slavic redaction. The miscellany's remarkable popularity in medieval Bulgaria (and in the sphere of *Slavia Orthodoxa* in general), attested to by tens of copies, was the effect of several factors. On the one hand, it resulted from the tsar's personal involvement in its compilation, as well as from the reputation of the author of the texts, St. John Chrysostom (350?–407) – one of the most renowned preachers of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The primary reason, however, is probably to be sought in the texts themselves – providing the still newly Christian community with interpretations of the basics of the faith, commenting on fragments of the Holy Bible, glorifying virtues, and condemning sins.

The book by Aneta Dimitrova is an exceedingly meticulous and accurate study of the linguistic and stylistic features of the *Zlatostruy*. It is divided into four parts.

The first part (*Въведение / Introduction*, pp. 9–78) is an extensive introduction into the topic of the research. Following a presentation of the aims and methods applied in the analysis of the sources (which include 6 Slavic and 23 Greek manuscripts), the author contextualizes

the material in both the Slavic and the Greek tradition, lucidly outlining the relations between the various redactions of the *Zlatostruy* (long, short and 'Hilandar') and the compilation of Simeon I the Great; she also describes the latter's links to the Preslav literary school. The introduction features a separate commentary on the biblical quotations found in the *Zlatostruy* and their role in the analysis of the text. Although the author points out (p. 61) that the issue requires a separate, detailed study, she feels she cannot skip it entirely in her description. This is due to its importance and its organic relation with the type of texts involved (an ideal environment for biblical quotations in view of both genre and topic). The author points out the obstacles that may be encountered in the course of such research, especially the high degree of variation in biblical quotations in the Greek text, the fact that the original Slavic translation is lost, and the many discrepancies observed among the existing Slavic manuscripts and redactions of the *Zlatostruy*. The final issue discussed in the introduction is the character of the language of the original Greek text.

The second part (*Коментар на словата L1–L45 / Commentary on the sermons / 'slovo's* L1–L45, p. 79–308) is the core of the monograph, comprising extensive commentaries on all 45 texts of the *Zlatostruy*. Each commentary includes the general information on the text's