

# DELTOS

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## Editorial

*The Deltos Editorial Board*

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# Editorial

We are proud to publish the new version of the Greek journal “Deltos”, which in its original form was devoted exclusively to the history of “Greek medicine”. Its name is a derivation of the Greek letter delta ( $\Delta$  in Greek), because this triangular shape made it easy to inscribe on wooden writing tablets covered with beeswax. This is where the English word deltiology comes from, i.e. the hobby of collecting postcards. Later on it took the rectangular shape (Fig. 1, 2) and even Hippocrates was using deltos for writing some of his recipes (Begbie JW, Hippocrates: His Life and Writings. Br Med J. 1872, Dec 21;2(625):674-7). The journal was launched in 1991 and has since become the only forum for the Greek history of medicine written in a very correct - but not archaic - Greek language. It grew out from the Society of the Friends of the Museum of Hellenic Medicine. Its initial nucleus were Army Medical Officers and University Professors. Georgios Antonakopoulos, Professor of Anatomy with teaching experience in the field of the History of Medicine, was appointed Editor in Chief and held the office till recently through happy and difficult times. The driving force was the redactor Grigorios Scampardonis (1935-2020), a cardiologist and at the end of his career a lieutenant colonel in the Army’s Medical Division. He never failed to meticulously edit the journal, even in the last seven years of his life when he fell ill with acute leukaemia. The standard of the articles published was very high, but, written in Greek, they were inaccessible to an international readership. However, gradually the readership aged, the appreciation of the correct form of the Greek - as well as of any any other language - diminished and after the death of Scampardonis, Georgios Antonakopoulos took solely over him the management of the journal and managed to keep it alive, a fact for which we would like to thank him. The Louros Foundation for the History of Medicine, the International Hippocratic Foundation of Kos and the Athens Medical Association saved the journal financially. But times are changing and the new generation of medical historians is gradually orienting itself towards the ethics and sociology of medicine, which is internationally dominated by the English language. Therefore, after elections seven months ago, the Friends of the Museum of Greek Medicine elected a new board and appointed Professor Athanasios Diamandopoulos as its president and, through new elections, Editor-in-Chief of Deltos. The editorial board and the scientific committee include well-known historians of medicine and related sciences from Greece and abroad. With some wistfulness, it was decided to abandon the Greek language used by Hippocrates and Galen for their writings and to print Deltos in English. However, an abstract for each article published in English will be printed in Greek. The journal will be open access, only on the internet, and will have two publications per year. Papers will be rigorously and anonymously reviewed. We are now calling for original papers on the history of medicine and related sciences from Greece, the Old World, the New World and especially from the rest of the world.

We look forward to receiving your contributions.

The Deltos Editorial Board

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Fig. 1, 2 see on the next page.



**Figure 1.** A Greek writing exercise from Egypt written on a wax tablet (Deltos). 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the British Museum, AD: Add MS 34186: A teacher wrote two iambic maxims (gnomai) on two ruled lines. A student copied them, twice with errors.



**Figure 2.** A 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD Hellenistic wax tablet stored in the British Museum: It shows two lines written in Greek, carved on the wax with a “stylus” by a child believed to be possibly eight or nine years old.