A Prescriptions List of 1546*

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ABSTRACT
A prescriptions list for Santo Spirito patients dated 1546, the earliest of its nature found to date, is discussed. Light is thrown on the activities of the hospital, its medical staff, the patients, and the state of the art of medicine in Malta at the time. The document is transcribed in toto.

A hospital at Rabat, Malta, was already functioning by 1372 under the rectorship of a Franciscan, appointed by the king himself, and under the name of the Hospital of St. Francis. In 1433 the hospitals of these islands were given over by the king to the Università as they were being mismanaged. The change of name from Hospital of St. Francis to Santo Spirito very probably took place then; it was already referred to by this latter name in 1467. The records of the town council that yield this information also show that the hospital functioned normally from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards; procurators were appointed regularly and the financial position of the institution was healthy enough not only to make the place economically viable but also to warrant the Università to dip into its surplus funds to finance other enterprises. However, these early records give precious little information about the inmates of the hospital and much less about their state of health. Doctors (physici and chyrurgici) and aromatarii (or pharmacists) are recorded as being appointed to serve the town and island of Malta, but hardly ever in connexion with Santo Spirito; only towards the end of the fifteenth century can any link be established between town-doctors and doctors serving Santo Spirito.

Detailed information about the day-to-day activities of the institution begins to be available from 1494 when the records of the hospital accounts start to unfold and reveal a wealth of information. These records give minute details of all the expenses incurred by the hospital in caring for the poor, the sick and infirm living there but again relatively little is given away about the state of their health, illnesses, and the art of medicine at the time. The earliest relevant document known to date has been the important inventory of 1590 of the contents of the Santo Spirito pharmacy, published by Paul Cassar. The situation is now somewhat altered; a fortunate chance encounter with an odd single sheet of paper among the hundreds of others in Miscellanea 441 of the ACM Series in the Mdina Cathedral Museum now enables one to go back further another half a century to 1546.

THE DOCUMENT
Miscellanea 441 consists of some 300 unbound single sheets of paper, in varying degrees of preservation, most of which are clipped, crumpled and/or pierced as if by an awl. They were discovered by the late Dott. Mario Borg Olivier (to whom this note is dedicated) as padding in the old binding of volumes ACM Misc. 34-37 (Università) and Punteria (1587-1720). They are all mid-sixteenth century material.

Folio 30-30v. measuring 26cm x 19 cm, is one of a few papers relating to Santo Spirito. It is pierced in two places, in no way impairing the text, but neatly cut down one side and at the bottom, shearing away the last line of the writing on each side and cutting short the text on the right hand side of 30r and on the left of 30v.

The contents of this sheet, neatly written in four columns as transcribed in Appendix II of the important inventory of 1590 of the contents of the Santo Spirito pharmacy, published by Paul Cassar. The document is transcribed in toto.

Facsimile of folios 30 and 30v of manuscript Miscellanea 441 of the Cathedral Archives.

AUTHORSHIP
Although unsigned, it is safe to infer that it is the work of some aromatario serving the
hospital at the time. Between 1495 and 1520, the town apothecary was Hieronimus Callus, the father of the famous Joseph, alias Matthew Callus artium et medicinae doctor; it is clearly documented that he also served Santo Spirito. 1 Towards the end of his career (he drew up his will in 1521) 10 he was not the only pharmacist made use of by the hospital: Antoni Zammit was also on the hospital pay-roll in 1520 per tanti medicamenti come per sua policza. 11 He continued to be of service in the 1540s and into the 1560s 12 even when Antonio Callus, Hieronimo’s eldest son, took over after his father’s death. 13 In the middle of the sixteenth century these were not the only two aromatari. In 1549 Joannes Mondellus aromatarius de Fidelissima Civitate Syracusarum 14 appears in Malta and marries Becta, the widow of Petro Zarb of Mdina. 15 The marriage was short-lived and limits the authorship, in all probability, to the hospital pay-roll in 1520 and marries Becta, the widow of Petro Zarb the town-apothecary was Hieronimus Callus, the father of the famous Joseph, alias Matthew Callus doctor; 16 from 1563 onwards, yet his practice. 17 From 1563 onwards, yet his practice. With Bonello as the new medico cirurgico, 18 the hospital also employed a physician, Joannes d’Inca, 19 who, in 1546, took over the hospital. His presence is confirmed by his signature as medico. 20 during the years 1540, 1541, and 1542. 21 In 1549, Bonello’s successor, M.ro Rainelio Bonello appears on the scene. However, the year 1546 when the document was drawn up limits the authorship, in all probability, to either Antoni Zammit or Antoni Callus.

THE DOCTORS

The document yields the names of two medical practitioners issuing prescriptions: Matthew Callus and La Magnifico Joseph Callus. The general format of the document suggests that these were two exceptional cases and that some other medici, whose names are unmentioned because understood, issued all the others. Again, one needs to go to other documents to shed light on the situation. M.ro Raynelli Bonello, 22 medico cirurgico, 23 had been in the employ of the hospital regularly since 1517. 24 By 1540, work at the hospital had increased to such an extent that one full-time surgeon could not cope alone, so that the town council considered appointing a second. 25 Although the name of the appointee is not recorded in the minutes, between 1540 and 1543, M.ro Rainello Bonello appears on the hospital staff together with M.ro Johann Ferriolo medicus. 26 But between 1545 and 1547 only Bonello is encountered among hospital payees, whereas Ferriolo signed another contract of work with the hospital in September 1560. 27 This explains why Ferriolo’s name is specifically mentioned in the prescriptions list and that is because he was not in the regular employ of the hospital in 1546.

Besides a surgeon (medicus chyrurgicus), the hospital also employed a physician (medicus physicus). In 1520, medicus physicus Bernardo de Munda held a conjoint post as town-doctor and hospital physician and the contract was extended by another six years at an annual salary of 32 unciae; he was then also recognized as protomedicus of the island. 28 He was still active in 1536, but in November of that year one encounters Joseph Callus artium et medicinae doctor requesting, through the Jurati, and being granted by the Grandmaster a salaried post as town-doctor to relieve De Munda who could not properly see to his duties on account of variæ liguittæ de grandi Imporiantia comu ancora per la sua gravi infrimta. 29 De Munda was dead by October 1540, 30 and Callus is found deriving an annual income of 40 unciae from the Università alone for his service as town-doctor. 31 He does not ever appear on the Santo Spirito pay-list and the wording in the prescriptions list, per comendamento di lu procuraturj per ordinacionj di lo magnifico Joseph Callus, tends to confirm that he was not employed there.

THE PATIENTS

From an analysis of the books of accounts one can deduce that in 1546 the hospital was catering for three main categories of people in need. There were the patients who, sick or injured, came or were brought to the hospital. There was a number of habitanti poviri who were given alms, food, lodging, medical attention if they needed it, and a burial when they died. There was also an increasing number of “exposed infants”, mostly of unknown parentage, who were farmed out to wet nurses, reared and eventually placed with fostering or adoptive parents. In 1546, this last service to the community was still in its early stages, the first cases recorded occurring in 1518, 32 whereas the number of habitanti poviri was being cut down, presumably for lack of space; there is no more mention of habitanti after 1554 but the same people remained under the wings of the hospital receiving alms and medication.

The patients mentioned in the prescriptions list represent all three categories. Joanna di Miresib, who hailed from Rabat itself, was one of the ten habitanti poviri listed on 5th July 1544: 33


This description shows how these indigent people flocked to the Santo Spirito haven from all over the island. The prescriptions list also shows how one of the patients came all the way from Mosta or Naxxar. The exposed infants inevitably needed medical attention ever so often. The accounts records are replete with such references, typical entries being de una creatura...dilo hospitali malata di mal di la tinia in 1540, 34 or per achito per la tinia dilu pichottu the following year, 35 or per succaro per una creatura and per una pichotta menzu di vino di saboca perche era malata in 1554, 36 and so on. In the prescriptions list one encounters the pichotta in the care of Andrea di Bonu and another pichottu who had kidney trouble. Another connexion with the pichottu was Zana Merkiki, most probably to be identified with la mogleri di Petro Merkiki, who was one of the mammene chiereri croco li figliuji gettanuti in 1554 and in 1554. 37 Another wet nurse that year was la mogleri dilo monaco, perhaps the same friar as Frati Joannello of the prescriptions’ list and whose daughter was ill in 1542. 38

The patients background was mixed indeed. There was the priest Don Ioanni Francisci next to the prostitute figlia di Tere, the Friar’s son and other innocent children, next to a writer and other people like Pavli Chutaga Pujus ferato and la feruta di la Musta oy di lu Naxaro, and others yet about whom we know only their names and what was prescribed to them: Ximuni Maneli, Ramundo Zinkil, Grigorgi Bartolo, Apert from the two cases of wounding, only two maladies are specifically identified in the list, namely: a kidney ailment and venereal disease (morbo gallico); other illness can only be identified by inference from the prescriptions given. The high incidence of morbo gallico among Santo Spirito patients in somewhat surprising. In the accounts records of 1544, it is recorded that medico M.ro Raynelli Bonello ordered treatment for two females suffering from venereal disease, 39 and in 1547 similar (authorizations for payment) were issued in respect of Antonio Machnuc and of Magdalena daughter of the late Manso besides two others for the daughter of Littere, 40 who receives, no less than five mentions in the 25 prescriptions recorded in the list; in all cases the cost of treatment was 6 tari 18 grani. What must explain the high incidence is the presence of a surprisingly large number of prostitutes in the Mdina/Rabat community of the mid-sixteenth century; this situation was, incidentally, repeated in Gozo a couple of decades later. 41 It took the relevant Baptistical records of the Mdina Cathedral to shed light on the real extent of the problem. Each of the following is recorded as peccurtrich who had given birth to and baptized her offspring: Isabella ta Hapap (1.xi.1542), Joanna Jourdina (22.xi.1546), Agatha ta Sihaytira (6.iv.1547), Margarita Pauli Vella Sandar (3.i.1561) and Luchia ta Xifit (29.i.1576). The figlia di mibyhese is recorded as having passed away (23.xi.1568); she may well have been indentical with Clara meretrici dicta mihaye who in August 1537 was ordered to move house under the pain of a birching and a fine. 42

Going through the list of patients systematically, one is introduced to:

(1) Ximuni Maneli who received treatment twice in July and three times in October for what appears to have been a respiratory ailment. In July he was prescribed
ointments, made from all-heal, of gonorrhoea. She was also given electuari succi rosa rum diafencon, the form of tincture of aloes, meant to free wounds from the presence of lesions, it is strongly supposed to purge the

Joanni Francisi.

in the form of

Don Joanni Francisi was only different from the usual excipient and sweetening agents in syrupus uiolarum, medicina turhith, whereas the first three sufficed for

1 2 3 4 5 were also prescribed; the oil, made from red roses, was a sedative used to oint the temples, soles of feet and palms of hands, to induce sleep and relaxation.

(3) La figla di Tere was easily the longest suffering patient. Described as stricken by morbo gallico and having had prescribed various unguenta vulneraria like the Aegyopiaco and the Masticino, implying the presence of lesions, it is strongly suggested that this was a case of syphilis or of alita di turdust eran in Nicatorina in the latter case the prescription consisted in dragon’s blood, frankincense, myrrh, aloes and a mundificatium, containing the same substances, known from Biblical times for their cicatrizing virtues. In the former, however, the plaster cataplasmata quinque farinarum was ordered, indicating also the presence of swellings besides open wounds

for which he was prescribed unguentum fusco and unguento Aegyeciaco. In both cases medications based on roses, oleum rosarum and mel rosarum were given; the oil, made from red roses, was a sedative used to oint the temples, soles of feet and palms of hands, to induce sleep and relaxation.

(4) Li digistivi 1 2 3 4 5 were also prescribed to Zuna Merkie and to Ramundo Zinkil, whereas the first three sufficed for Joanni Francisi. It is not at all clear what Zuna was suffering from, but she certainly needed a purgative which was administered in the form of turpeth, a drug extracted from the root of Ipomea Turpethum. Besides the usual excipient and sweetening agents in the form of aquae, zucro violato and syrups imperatorum, Zinkil’s mixture or medicina contained daecatholcum, a kind of all-heal, 41 electuarium Indi majoris, which was supposed to purge the pituita 45 (whatever that might have meant), and diafenocon, which was an antipyretic and analgesic. 46 As fever and pain are present in many conditions one cannot be at all sure of the causes. The medicina that was given to Don Joanni Francisi was only different from Zinkil’s in that he was prescribed electuarui succi rosarum instead of Indi Majoris; these were supposed to be effective against the gotta calda and the colera rossa. 47

(5) Besides Grigori Bartalo and Joanna di Miresib who was prescribed a theriaca or

antidote against snake-bite or similar poisoning, there are also listed three paediatric cases. La picchotta che nutriua Andrea Dibono was a suckling who was given syrups de mentha; it is hard to tell what he was suffering from as this syrup was prescribed at the time both as a carminative and for epilepsy. La figlo di Frati Joannello was prescribed the sedative oleum rosarum and rose and bilberry powder and lily oil, all meant to “fortify the stomach”, arrest vomiting and dispel wind. 48 There was finally la picchotta alu hospitalis, perhaps in his teens, who is clearly stated to have had kidney trouble and who was treated by Callus. The emplastrum consistrictivum prescribed, which was intended per le durezza e per i calori...delle reni, 49 would certainly not have met with the approval of present-day medicine. He was also given pillale foetidae and opopanax, which “evacuated” l’umore freddo, pituitoso, crudo ed anche bilioso, 50 jera gira Galeni, given per purgare lo stomaco e dispersive, il turchesio, 49 and pillule aggregatovae, which achieved the same effect by first “aggregating the humours prior to dispelling them”. 50 One is tempted to identify this child with an adoptive son, called Matteo, Callus is known to have had, 51 but this is mere speculation.

MATERIA MEDICA

The prescriptions list exhibits a representative cross-section of the materia medica available in Malta at the time as can be deduced from a comparison with the complete inventory of the Santo Spirito pharmacy in the hands of Antonio Bisci till 1590, 49 even though the two documents are not strictly comparable since the earlier list is comprised of compounded preparations whereas the later one is a catalogue of simple, constituent drugs used in such preparations. To look at the list in its right historic perspective, one needs to view it both against the backdrop of the medieval medical tradition of which it was the outcome as well as in contrast with the developments of later centuries, both on Malta and abroad. This is perhaps best achieved by drawing up a concordance (see Appendix I) of the materia medica in the list with that in classical and Arabic sources such as Galen and Dioscorides, Al Razi, Al Samargandi, Al Kindi, Ibn Jazlah and Mesue, with that in contemporary sources particularly an anonymous Ricettario printed in Florence in 1550, 52 and works such as that of Paracelsus of Germany (1493-1541) and of Mattioli of Italy (1500-1577), 49 and with that in subsequent formularies and catalogues including chronologically Bisci’s inventory of 1590 from Malta, the work of Donzelli of Naples (mortuus 1660s), and Lemery’s in France (1645-1715), 50 as well as with a very useful second inventory of Santo Spirito drawn up in 1769 by Lorenzo Farigiani. It is seen that Maltese medicine in 1546 was very much in the mainstream of the Arabo-Hellenic medical tradition, flourishing on the continent at the time.

One cannot help noting the overwhelming preponderance of vegetable sources for the drugs and only the minor presence of substances derived from the animal and mineral kingdoms. Of the latter, worthy of note is the use of nitric acid, of cupric oxide, of calcium, of lead, and of alum, all of which, except possibly nitric acid, were also known to Arab doctors. 49

Although a number of substances had to be imported, it was perhaps less so in 1546 than in 1590. In the earlier list more was made of locally obtainable herbs, such as roses, violets, almonds, barley, salvia, mint and myrtle, than in the much more sophisticated later inventory. Several of the simple ingredients that went into the compounded mixtures were also locally produced such as vinegar, honey, animal fats, cummin, fennel, thyme and perhaps also sugar! Already in the eleventh century, Ibn Jazlah had described how sugar could be obtained from sugar-cane (canna mile). 49 That sugar-cane was grown and very probably also used in Malta is fairly certainly indicated by the toponym Vved el Kasab hela, recorded by Abela as late as 1647, and located by him west of Rabat. 44

The presence of imported elements, even in the earlier list, is not surprising given the close contact Malta had had with Sicily, 53 not least in the medical sphere: fifteenth century documents testify to this rapport, with special reference to pharmacists. 66 That the 1590 inventory should reflect an augmented availability of foreign material is all the more probable due to the increasing influence of the Hospitalers.

Also of interest is the fact that the Farigiani list of 1769 includes practically all items of materia medica found in 1546. This is hardly surprising if one notes that quite a few of the herbs used then, such as aloes, linseed, almonds, ginger, camomile, mentha and turpentine, remain valuable to this day for their medicinal worth, 56 although admittedly, several of these same substances are obsolete. This process in time of weeding out substances considered worthless or even harmful can be seen working from one particular entry that highlights the prescriptions list as a product of its time: the cataplasmata farinarum in which Joannes Ferriuolo prescribes the use of flours, includes barley, lentils, chickpeas, beans and lupins, all of which, with the exception of chickpeas, are among the recommended flours for this poultice a century later, 49 yet at a contemporary date, Paracelsus was still recommending cicer. 56

The prescriptions’ list was not without its idiosyncrasies. An interesting entry is “per la traggia turbicotita more nostro”, that is, the powder enriched with turpeth according to our custom and usage. This suggests that the mixture was not entirely orthodox and
that some formula of local invention was being adopted. The medical terminology used in Malta must also have had its own peculiarities. Although not mentioned in the prescriptions list, a particular term used in contemporary documents is worth recording here. When the same Joannes Ferriuol was signing a contract of employment at Santo Spirito in 1550, one of the conditions imposed on him was that he was bound to provide at his own expense "omnia unguenta ut dicuntur di basula minima". He was also required to take a second surgeon at the hospital: the appointee was held to provide "Inguenta ut vulgo dicunt di basula minima". The same term was employed when the town council was deliberating on appointing a second surgeon at the hospital: the appointee was held to provide "Anguenta ut vulgo dicunt di basula minima". The symbol me.a has been rendered "=". "Ut vulgo dicitur" suggests vernacular usage; the term has not been encountered anywhere else and its meaning remains obscure.

The document is fairly technical in content and economical in presentation in the sense that profuse use if made of abbreviations, standard current pharmacopoeial jargon and terminology. This has necessitated a certain amount of judicious interpretation in expanding these abbreviations. Thus for example, the symbol a.s. has been freely used converting at least two distinct meanings: syrups or semen. Since the prescriptions invariably involve compounded drugs, the former meaning has been consistently preferred. The symbol me.a has been expanded into medicina but it could equally well have been rendered mixtura, admitting a reading me.a, conscious of the fact that the letter i has only been dotted at random. On safer ground, because encountered in near-contemporary texts, are f. = fiat/fiant (let it/them be made/formed, as in fiat pocio or fiant pillular), and q.s. = quantum satis/sufficit (as much as necessary); clearly written in full is sinumeg, taken to mean "generous (helping)", from the context. The Hippocratic ana is quite standard and means "equal parts of each". Meteer (difficult reading in all instances) has been rendered mane et seno (morning and evening) as the phrase, in full, occurs elsewhere. Other difficult readings have been R., whose meaning from the context has been taken to be recepta (recipe/prescription) and rescrip., rendered rescripta/rescribatur (re-written/to be repeated so many times).

The numerals used are roman, though not consistently so. The symbol for a half is although is more common in contemporary script; is also taken to mean a half, by comparison with A used in Lernery. Symbols for weights are: lb = 1 libra (a pound of 12 ounces),

The modern equivalent of 1 grain is 60 mg.

The symbols for currency are tr. = 1 tari of 12 minima. The symbol for a tari is tr. = 1 tari of 12 minima.

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APPENDIX I

The Materia Medica of the Prescriptions List

Adeps gallinae. Chicken fat; used as base for ointments.

Dioscorides, al-Kindi, Al-Razi, Al-Samarqandi, Al-Zabidi (G. 201); Ricettario 25; Farigiani 7.

Aegypiacum, Unguentum. A depurative of wounds and ulcers; made from vinegar, honey and verdigris.

Egyptian origin (L. 415); Ibn Jazlah (G. 78); Ricettario 177; Donzelli 390; Lemery 415; Farigiani 35.

Aggregative, Pillulae. An analgesic; composed of aloes, turpentine, absinth and other herbs.

Mesue (D. 328); Ricettario 142; Donzelli 328; Lemery 204; Farigiani 21.

Aloe. The juice of leaves of several varieties, such as aloes Socotrina; used in many preparations as a stomachic and purgative.

Dioscorides, Al-Baytar, Al-Kindi, Al-Samarqandi (G. 221), Ricettario 11; Paracelsus 94; Bisci 67; Mattioli 84; Donzelli 402; Lemery 378; Farigiani 26.

Althaea, Unguentum de. A haemostatic; compounded from the roots of althaea and various seeds including linseed and seeds of trigonella foenum graecum.

Paracelsus 1077; Ricettario 174; Mattioli 977; Donzelli 388; Lemery 415; Farigiani 13.

Alum. (Coctum). A mineral salt obtained by burning (alumen ustum) a type of rock; used for cicatrization of wounds.

Dioscorides, Al-Kindi (K. 292); Al-Baytar, Al-Samarqandi (G. 217); Ricettario 11; Paracelsus 662; Mattioli 1429; Donzelli 24; Lemery 363; Farigiani 17.

Amygdalarum dulcie, Oleum. A stomachic and diuretic; made from distilled sweet almonds.

Ibn Butlan (G. 132), Mesue (D. 402); Paracelsus 408; Bisci 42; Mattioli 84,292; Donzelli 402; Lemery 378; Farigiani 26.

Aqua fortis. Nitric acid or saltpetre acid said to be discovered by the eighth century arabian alchemist Geber, who prepared it from potassium nitrate (saltpetre); a resolvent.

Paracelsus (657); Donzelli 1493; Donzelli 282; Lemery 8,364; Farigiani 17.

Butyrum. Butter; used as base for ointments.

Dioscorides (M. 395); Mattioli 394; Lemery 9; Farigiani 8, (18).

Canellae, Oleum. A tonic and antipyretic; made from distilled cinnamon.

Galén (M. 56); Paracelsus 851; Mattioli (94), 565; Donzelli 317.

Cochiae, Pillulae. Composed of turpentine, scammony, hiera picra and syrup; supposed to "purge the puritulary.

Al-Razi (D. 338); Paracelsus 719; Ricettario 143; Donzelli 332; Lemery 192; Farigiani 28. These pills are also found prescribed in 1661 (MUM AIM Spogli A20) (24.1b.1661b f.1).

Constrictivum, Emplastrum. Composition unknown; in the prescriptions' list it is given pro renibus; Lemery (436, 7) prescribes a ceratum sive emplastrum santalinum... per le dureze e per i calor... delli reni, not described however as constrictivo (p. 21) of unknown composition and use; see also Farigiani (23, 29).

Diacathichoic. An analgesic; made from various herbs including cassia, tamarind, rhubarb, violets, aniseed and sugar. Attributed by Donzelli (p. 217) to Arnaldo de Villanova; Ricettario 122; Farigiani 20; found also in the 1661 prescription.

Dialciton, (Ceratum). Composed of alum, calcium and verdigris; use unknown. Ricettario 184.

Diaphoenicin. An antipyretic and analgesic; made from dates and other herbs.

Mesue (L.13); Ricettario 123; Bisci 34; Donzelli 218; Lemery 13; Farigiani 21.

Diaquilon (Diachylon) Nigrum, Emplastrum. An emollient and resolvent of tumours; made from the mucilaginous roots of althaea, litcharge (lead monoxide) and oils.

Mesue (L. 444); Ricettario 182; Bisci 89; Lemery 12,444; Farigiani 21.

Digestivi, (Unguenti). Liquid ointments that promote suppuration; made from

The bibliographic notation D, G, K, L, M, R stands for contemporary script: elsewhere. Other difficult readings have been taken to be respectively the quoted works by Donzelli, Graziani, al-Kindi, Lemery, Mattioli and the anonymous Ricettario.
**Turpentine, Egg-yolk, Basil and Tincture of Aloe**

Lemery 14; Farigiani 35.

**Farinarum (Quinque), Cataplasma: v2 oxerum, fabrum, lentium, lippinorum, hordae.** A resolvent; poultice made with flour of chickpeas; beans; lentils, lupins, and barley. Galen (M. 444); Dioscorides, Al-Kindi (K. 240, 261; 293, 309); Al-Samarqandi, Al-Zabidi (G. 220); Ricettario 180; Paracelsus 461; Bisci (83, 91); Mattioli 420, 444, 452, 460; Lemery 3, 10; Farigiani 19, 23.

**Foetidae, Pululae.** Pills made from turpeth, sagapenum, bdellium, myrrh, and opopanax, which fétid herb gives these pills their name; prescribed to "purge the pituitary". Mesue (L. 215); Ricettario 145; Bisci 18; Donzelli 332; Lemery 215; Farigiani 28.

**Fuscum, Unguentum.** A vulnerary ointment that promotes suppuration of tumours; made of "Greek pitch", "black pitch", sagapenum, mastic, frankincense, and turpentine. Attributed by Lemery to Nicholas (L. 433); Ricettario 172-3.

**Hamech, Confectio.** A compound of several herbs including thyme, ginger, absinth, scammony and anise; it is prescribed in cases of venereal and other diseases including prurigo. Named after Ibn Hamech, alias Al-Razi (D. 207); Ricettario 123; Donzelli 207; Lemery 304; Farigiani 19.

**Indi Majoris, Electuarium.** An electuary made with sweet almond oil, scammony, sugars, and herbs including turpeth; given "to purge the pituitary". Attributed by Lemery to Nelli (L. 314) to "medici Indiani Orientali".

**Jera (Hiera) cum Agarico.** A compound of aloes, cinnamon, mastic, spikenard, honey and agaric; a vesimugnef that stimulates the appetite and supposedly "fortifica il ventricello". Galen, Mesue (M. 673-4); Paracelsus 177; Bisci (71); Mattioli 673; Donzelli (181, 230); Lemery 320; Farigiani (7), 29. It is also found in the 1661 prescription.

**Jera (Hiera) Picra Galeni.** As the preceding but excluding agaric; given to "purge the stomach and purify the blood". Galen (D. 230); Paracelsus 173, 690; Donzelli 230; Lemery 319; Farigiani 24.

**Julep Violarum.** A cordial that quenches thirst and allays fevers; made of distilled violets and white sugar. Galen (M. 1243); Ricettario 91; Mattioli 1243; Donzelli 258; Lemery 37.

**Lili, Oleum.** Oil made from lilies and herbs including mastic, calamus, cinnamon, cloves and carpobalsamum; prescribed for pains in the chest, stomach and lower abdomen. Mesue (L. 380); Dioscorides, Al-Baytar, Al-Kindi (G. 219); Ricettario 163; Paracelsus 104; Mattioli 90, 922; Lemery 389; Farigiani 27.

**Masticum, Unguentum.** Ointment made from mastic, absinth, nard, mint, red roses and other herbs, purported to resist gangrene. Al-Razi, Al-Zabidi, Al-Baytar (G. 210); Paracelsus 42; Bisci (57); Donzelli 121-2; Lemery 429; Farigiani (12, 22, 27).

**Menthya, Syrupus de.** A syrup made from mint, thyme, lavender, oregano, calamintha, pepper, cinnamon, anise and other herbs; prescribed at the time both as a carminative and for disorders of the nervous system and the brain including epilepsy, spasms and paralysis. Dioscorides, Mesue (D. 256, L.114); Al-Kindi (K. 257, G. 130); Ricettario 98,99; Mattioli 749; Donzelli 256; Lemery 114; Farigiani 33.

**Mirtillorum, pulvis.** Powdered myrtle; used for various purposes including to stop continuous lacrimation, for burns and as a stomachic. Dioscorides, Ibn Jazlah, Al-Ghafiqi, Al-Razi, Al-Samarqandi (G. 138, 195); Mattioli 247-251.

**Mundificativum meliss rosarum.** It is not clear what the preparation consisted in, except that the name suggests some cleansing agent. An unguentum mundificativum is attributed to Dioscorides and to Mesue (D. 393-47) whose use was the cicatrization of wounds. A prescription of 1648 lists mundificativa of various vegetable substances including ordei (barley), passularum (raisins), and turbit (turpeth) (MCM AIM Spogli A 10(25a);1648 (154v)). Ricettario 176.

**Myrrha.** A gum resin; used for various purposes including as a stimulant, expectorant, astringent, emmenagogue, antipyretic and anti putrescent. Dioscorides, Ibn Sina, Al-Razi, Al-Kindi (K.333); Al-Samarqandi, Al-Bayatar (G. 2(0); Ricettario 40; Paracelsus 180; Mattioli 1415; Donzelli 339, 392; Farigiani 14.

**Rosarium, Electuarium de Suceo.** An electuary made from red roses, white sugar and scammony; given "to purge the bile". Attributed to Niccolo Alessandrino (D. 229); Paracelsus 512; Donzelli 225; Lemery 254; Farigiani 21.

**Rosarium, mel.** Made from the juice of red roses, eggs and honey; used as astringent and detersive in gargles for inflamed gums and throat. It is also quoted in the 1648 prescription. Dioscorides, Mesue (D. 263); Donzelli 263; Lemery 77; Farigiani 25.

**Rosarium, Oleum.** Made from red roses; used as tonic and antipyretic. Dioscorides, Mesue, Ibn Jazlah (G. 127); al-Kindi (K. 344) Ricettario 161,162; Mattioli 87; Donzelli 394; Lemery 389; Farigiani 27.

**Rosarium, Pulvis.** Powdered red roses, cinnamon, spikenard, ginger, nutmeg, cardamom, given to "fortify the stomach", arrest vomiting and ease colic. Lemery 151-1; Farigiani 10.

**Salviae Rosarium, Licivium.** Water alkalized by lixiviation of ashes of salvia flowers, kneaded with flours to make poultice; used to arrest haemorrhage and to cleanse ulcers. Galen (M. 749); Paracelsus 279,794; Mattioli 748; Donzelli 267, 398; Farigiani (10, 25).

**Sanguis draconis.** A red resin that exudes from various plants of the family Dricaeae cinnabar; used to inhibit catarh, and arrest all kinds of flux including haemorrhage. Dioscorides, al-Kindi (K. 268); Al-Samarqandi, Al-Bayatar (G. 200); Ricettario 40; Paracelsus 180; Mattioli 1415; Donzelli 339, 392; Farigiani 14.

**Terebinth.** Turpentine, a pine resin; used in many preparations including those against podagra, sciatica, gonorrhea. Dioscorides (D. 184); Paracelsus 1022; Mattioli 124-7; Donzelli 184; Farigiani (31).

**Theriaca.** Various compounds of several ingredients including terra Lemniae, trochisci viperarum, and peppers; used as antidote against the plague, "malignant fevers", and venemous bites. Al-Razi, Ibn Jazlah, Al-Kindi (G. 121, 200, K. 267); Paracelsus 846; Ricettario 127-129; Mattioli 1511; Donzelli 447-50; Lemery 272-3; Farigiani (18, 31, 34). It is also quoted in the 1648 prescriptions list.

**Thus.** Frankincense, an aromatic gum resin from the trees of the genus boswellia. Mattioli 102-3; Donzelli 182; Farigiani 15.
Tragea turbicata. Powdered preparation including turpeth, a drug extracted from the roots of Ipomea turpethum; turpeth is employed in diverse conditions including nervous disorders.

Ibn Jazlah, Al-Razi, Al-Samarqandi, Ibn sina, Al-Kindi (K. 247, G. 133, 220); Ricettario 47; Mattioli 1358; Donzelli 220; Lemery 26}; Farigiani 15. It is also quoted in the prescriptions list of 1648.

A list of prescriptions for patients at Santo Spirito Hospital

Violarum, Conserva (= Violarum Zucro). Violet petals cooked in sugar; a cordial that alleviates chest congestion.

Donzelli 266.

Violarum, Syrupus. Violet syrup; used for fevers, headaches, cough, quinsy, bourseness and epilepsy.

 Dioscorides, Ibn Jazlah, Al-Kindi (K. 247, G. 114, 196); Ricettario 95; Mattioli 1238-42; Donzelli 238; Lemery 90-91; Farigiani 33.

Zucro fino. Fine crystalline sugar; sweetening agent in several preparations.

Ibn Jazlah (G. 63, 218); Al-Kindi (K. 284); Paracelsus 336; Baci 64; Mattioli 409-11.

APPENDIX II


A list of prescriptions for patients at Santo Spirito Hospital

f.30(a)

Die xviiij Octobbri per liga de la medicina vu la dicta feruta

Violarum, Conseru ( = Violarum Zucro). Violet petals cooked in sugar; a cordial that alleviates chest congestion.

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 Dioscorides, Ibn Jazlah, Al-Kindi (K. 247, G. 114, 196); Ricettario 95; Mattioli 1238-42; Donzelli 238; Lemery 90-91; Farigiani 33.

Zucro fino. Fine crystalline sugar; sweetening agent in several preparations.

Ibn Jazlah (G. 63, 218); Al-Kindi (K. 284); Paracelsus 336; Baci 64; Mattioli 409-11.
per Emplast(ro) constri(cti)vo
per aluminis Coctj(?) J 5
22 aprilis per lu pichotto alu hospitalj
per la meedicina vz El(ec)tr(ua)rj Suc(c)i ro(sa)rum dia gall(ico) 1 2 3 4 5 
tr.jsij gr.X
per olej ros(arum) J iij


9. MCM ACM Misc. 438 No.2 (1518-1520) 4v,19.

10. MCM ACM Ms.368 “Libro dei Testamenti” (1400-1700) 100; Testamento di Girolomo Callus
quondam Jacobis in actis Not. Antonii Rapa (27.x.1521); will untraced. He was certainly dead by 26.iv.1522 (MCM ACM M1 (Mandati) f.310).

11. MCM ACM Misc. 438 No.2 (1518-1520) 17v.

12. MCM ACM Misc. 440 (1540-1562) 21v, 123v

13. Ibid. ff.21v, 49v.


15. Ibid. R175/27 (8.xii.1550) 1143v.

16. Ibid. R175/60 (5.x.1559) 232.


19. AACC Liber Baptizatorum I (17.i.1541) 43.

20. MCM ACM Misc. 438 No. 2 (1517-1520) 3v,10v, 7v.


23. Ibid. f.122 (Comandamenti 6,3,64).

24. Ibid. f.49v.


27. BV Univ. 84 ff.8,321v and especially 328v.

28. MCM ACM Misc. 438 No.2 (1518) 3v, 4v, 6, 10, 11.


30. Ibid. Pt.I f.10.


32. MCM ACM Misc. 438 No.4 (1554) 6,8v.


34. Ibid. Pt. I (17.xi.1542) 17.

35. Ibid. f.22 (Comandamenti 6,3,64).

36. Ibid. f.49v.


38. AACC Liber Bapt. Matr., Mort. I ff.46, 64, 67, 137, 224, 774.

39. BV Univ. 13 (4.viii.1537) 144.

40. M. Lemery, Farmacopea Universale (Venezia, 1742 430.)

41. Ibid. 414.

42. Ibid. 380.
43. Ibid. 14.

44. G. Donzelli, Teatro Farmaceutico, (Venezia, 1743) 217.

45. Lemery, op.cit. 314.

46. Donzelli, op.cit., 218.

47. Ibid. 225.


49. Ibid. 436-7.

50. Ibid. 314.

51. Ibid. 174; (21.x.1462) 174; (23.iv.1470)392v; (19.iii.1473)355v; (19.x.1473)345v. He was, in all probability, of Sicilian origin (Univ. 13 (13.iii.1468)13v) and certainly kept professional ties with Sicily and specifically with Palermo; on 28th January 1468 (Univ. 13 f.10v) he protested with the Mdina town council that he should be reimbursed for travel to and from Palermo in connexion with his duties. When the same town council in 1472 was looking for a replacement for Passa, it was suggested that a pharmacist be sought in Agrigento (Univ. 11 (15.1.1472)217v). The following year M.ro Paulo of Noto was considered for the post under the conditions that he should be in possession of the necessary warrant from the protomedico (of Sicily) to exercise his profession and that the prices he would be charging for his drugs should be the same as those then current in the city of Palermo (Univ. 11 (2.xi.1473)280v). What became of these appointments is not known, but in 1476 yet another aromatarius from Noto, M.ro Johannes Rufrigiatan was being considered for the post of town-apothecary. (Univ. 11 (10.ii.1476)347v).

60. Nicolò Lemery, Farmacopea Universale (Venezia, 1742).