Contents

I

THE MAKING OF JEWISH DOCTORS

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On Becoming a Jewish Doctor in the High Middle Ages[1]

The involvement of many hundreds, indeed thousands, of Jews in the medical profession during the Middle Ages is recognized by many modern observers as an outstanding feature of the social and intellectual history of the time. So profound and continuous was their commitment to the profession then, that some of us today even go to the extreme and see a medical doctor in almost every medieval Jewish scholar. While we all should, naturally, be advised not to draw hasty conclusions, we should, in my opinion, encourage one another to further study the reasons for this relationship between Jews and medicine, its patterns, and no less, its significance for their political, economic and of course intellectual destiny. In this present inquiry, however, I propose to focus on two rather technical issues: where did the doctors acquire their medical education and how did they formally become part of the profession? Let me start with the second issue.

In southern Europe, in the High Middle Ages, an individual was unable to engage in medical practice just because he decided to do so. By 1250 the medical profession was already so structured and so well regulated in the regions of Italy, southern France and Spain, that whoever felt he was well prepared to

1 Thanks are extended to the Hannah Institute for the History of Medicine for the support given to this study.

engage in the profession first had to pass examinations and to obtain a license, (*licentia practicandi* as it was generally called, or *licentia curandi et practicandi*) from the right authorities. An unlicensed practitioner would be considered as "empiricist" in the sense of a "charlatan" and would have to answer to the court for his medical activities. Civil authorities were quite adamant on this point and did not mince words in order to make their policy clear to all those concerned. The Angevines of Naples, who governed areas where medicine and law were particularly developed, left abundant data in their archives about theories and practices of their licensing policy. In the statutes of Charles II of Provence, issued on July 12, 1296, the royal policy is thus formulated:[2] "We forbid anyone, of whatever condition or status he be, to dare practice medicine or surgery, unless his expertise and fitness in the area are beforehand established." A decree to the same effect, restating a previous law, was issued in Montpellier on July 20, 1272,[3] while the old municipal laws of Arles which go back to the years around 1200 already included the following warning:[4] "No doctor who comes to this city from abroad to practice medicine or surgery, will be able to practice in this city unless beforehand examined by a doctor and a surgeon." Identical legislation was also passed in Spain: we find it as part of the decisions of various courts of Aragon, such as the one in Monzon in 1289, in Cervera in 1359 and that of Monzon again in 1363.[5] That such legislation did not remain a "dead letter of the Law", can be seen by fines that were levied upon individuals who were caught practicing without authorization. In Bayonne near Talard, on the northern border of Provence, we have the case of a Jewish lady, Marrona, who was practicing "*sine licentia*" and "without having been authorized by those who

2 Ch. Giraud, Essai sur l'histoire du droit français au Moyen Age, Vol. 2 (Paris, 1846), p. 49. Prohibemus, ne quis, cujuscunque conditionis aut status sit, in medicine aut cirugia practicare presumat, nisi prius de ipsius fide et legalitate in curia nostra testimonio sufficienti perhabito, in eadem curia, ad cuius officium spectare consetur, de suae artis peritia, idoneus approbetur. Practicantes autem contra preasentis nostrae prohibitionis it determinationis edictum poenam quinquaginta librarum turonensium fore sanximus nostro aererio applicandam.

3 J. Régné, History of the Jews in Aragon (Jerusalem, 1978), p. 46 (no. 525); A. Germain, Cartulaire de l'université de Montpellier, Vol. 1 (Montpellier, 1890), pp. 202–203. …illorum audaciam reprimamus, qui presumunt ibidem sine examin(atione) et licentia practicare, per quod non solum nomen et fama ejusdem studii denigratur, sed et multa incumbunt mortis pericule et rerum dispendia interuntur. Et… prohibemus in perpetuum et districte omnibus utriusque sexus, Christianis et Judeis ne quis in villa Montispessulani et tota ejus dominatione audeat in Facultate Medicine aliquod officium practicandi exercere, nisi prius ibi examinatus et licentiatis fuerit.

4 Ch. Giraud, Essais sur l'histoire etc., p. 49. infirmo vel amicis infimi. Et nullus medicus extraneus qui veniat in hac villa operari de fiscia vel cirologia non possit operari in hac villa nisi primitus fuerit per unum fisicum vel unum chirurgum examinatus.

5 C. Roth, "The Qualifications of Jewish Physicians in the Middle Ages", Speculum 28 (1958): 834–843, especially p. 839.

usually have the authority to do so". We have no idea how her trial went, and what, if any, was her defense. What we are left with in this case is just a short statement (done around 1305) by the administrator of the bailiwick that she was fined the sum of 40 shillings.[6] Similar entries were found in similar registers in the Archives of Valencia, entries that concern Jewish practitioners of Calatayud around the year 1400.[7] Faron the Jew is fined 1.5 florins on January 18 of that year "*Por usar la medicina sin licencia*", while Saulvadia 5 florins (he might have been an apothecary), "*por haber administrado medecinos sin examen*." A Jewess by the name of Jamila is fined 10 florins for unlicensed practice of medicine, and two Jewish surgeons who are even labeled "mestre" and "Cirujano" are fined 3 and 4 florini. Leopoldo Piles Ros, who published these cases, was interested in the Jewish medical practitioners and their status in the Law! He assures us that the same procedures were applied to Christian practitioners and that basically the same monetary fines imposed on them as well. Thus, four apothecaries of Calatayud were fined in sums varying between 1.5 and five florins. Equally, two Christian surgeons, one of Maluenda and the other of Vilaroya, were fined 4 florins-each for practicing medicine "*sin licencia*."[8]

Therefore medical practitioners found it useful to pass the necessary examination and get licensed. As for the procedure of licensing itself, we have for these regions of southern Europe, much documentation numbering in the hundreds, if not thousands of texts, which explains clearly how such a *licentia practicandi* was obtained. For Sicily, Cecil Roth counted more than one hundred cases of licensing amongst the documents published by the brothers Langumina[9]. For Southern Italy, Rafaele Calvanico and his collaborators were able to trace in the registers of the Angevines of Naples more than 3.000 such documents for the fifty years that preceded the Black Death[10]. There is virtually no city in Southern France whose notarial registers, or administrative rolls, do not contain similar data. In most cases the documents, which specify notably where the candidate is authorized to practice, have only the names of the examiners and their

6 Archives de Provence, Marseille, B2017, fol. 5r°. D. Talardo: Marrona Judea quia contra ordinationem regiam praticavit de arte phisice in castro de Bayonia ne quis sine licentia curie regie et nisi aprobatur fuisset per expertos in talibus praticavit in castro de Bayonis predicto condemnata fuit in sol. XL.

7 L. Piles Ros, "Notas sobre judios de Aragon y Navarra", Sepharad 10 (1950): 176–181, especially pp. 176–178.

8 Ibid., p. 178.

9 See note 5 supra. Cecil Roth; "Bartolomeo e Giuseppe Lagumina", Codice diplomático del Giudei di Sicilia, vols. 1–3 (Palermo, 1884–1895), passim, especially Vol. 1, pp. 69–77.

10 R. Calvanico, Fonti per la storia della medicina e della chirurgia per il Regno di Napoli nel periodo Angioino (Naples, 1962).

statements as to the aptitudes of the candidate. But in a few instances they go a bit further, and provide us with some glimpses as to the examination itself. Thus in Arles, Salomon Avigdor, a member of a very distinguished local family, passed his examination in May of 1402[11]. He was examined by four doctors, among them one Christian, and answered, "in high and clear voice, with all reverence. First, he elegantly set out his introduction or poem, and then put forward his problem in the manner of a discussion, expanding the subject in the accustomed manner and intimating that he was prepared to support or to defend it against any opponent so far as his sense, knowledge and discretion would permit; he stated, moreover, many arguments, and in support thereof, adduced texts and glosses out of books, institutes and canons of the most learned doctors." Not surprisingly, after such a brilliant defense, the formal license to practice was conferred upon him by the representative of the royal authority.

In Aragon, according to a royal attestation of March 22, 1382, the doctor Benedit Caravida, in his examination, had to answer not only questions on medicine but also on astrology which some considered germane to it. "(*Non soum*) *in arte medicine et fisice, sed etiam in metafisica, in naturis et in aliqua parte astrologie.*" Only then did he acquire his license[12].

Such *licentie practicandi*, once obtained, had to be registered with the authorities of a locality where the doctor wished to practice. Each of the licenses preserved in the Angevine registers was addressed to the province where the doctor or surgeon intended to practice. Such was also the case in other holdings of the Angevine as well. In 1455, a doctor by the name of David, who migrated from the Provence to the Dauphiné, brought with him a license obtained at the court of the famous "bon roi Renée" at Aix[13]. The document was endorsed by the court of Dauphiné, which in its turn took special care to delineate the area of the country where Master David would be allowed to practice. Another example of the procedures that the administrators of the "receiving end" had to take once presented with such a license, can be seen in Arles, where "Master David" in 1305 or 1306, brought before the vicarius of the Archbishop his license and asked that it be approved by the authorities, as it was his intention to practice medicine there.[14] They were all enregistered in the vicar's register.

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11 The document was published by P. Hildenfinger, "Documents relatifs aux Juifs d'Arles", Revue des Études Juives 47 (1903): 299. The translation is Cecil Roth's, "The qualifications of Jewish physicians, etc.", pp. 939–840.

12 F. Baer, Die Juden im christlichen Spanien, Bd. 1 (Berlin, 1929), pp. 578–579.

13 A. Prudhomme, "Notes et Documents sur les juifs du Dauphiné", Revue des Études Juives, 9 (1884): 231–263, especially pp. 260–261.

14 Archives de Provence, B 1352, fol. 54r°.

Starting a medical career in a medieval city required therefore a lot of paperwork and procedural steps on the part of the doctors. What many of them probably considered a nuisance, an imposition and awkward formalities, turns out to be for historians today a source of valuable information. Yet, although these documents make us cogniscent of the supervision surrounding the profession, they are not very helpful when we face our next problem, which concerns the education these medical practitioners acquired.

Where, actually, did all these hundreds of medical practitioners acquire their knowledge? The authorities who were awarding the licenses did not record this information in the documents they issued. What they tended to record, in general, was the name, or names of the specialists who served on the board of examinors and the limitations of the license, if there were any (for example, to perform surgery of certain wounds, of dislocation, or eye surgery), and of course the fact that he passed the examination successfully. The most we get in terms of information about the studies and previous preparation of a candidate will be a statement that we find in Avignon in 1460, concerning Salomon Mosse of Vitry, a candidate for surgical examination. There it is stated at least that[15] "*quod ipse Salomon Mosse de Vitri studuit in arte cirurgie per longat tempora tam in predicta civitate Avionis quam alibi, in tantum quod in eadem arte est expertus tam in theorica quam in practica*". In the vast majority of cases, however, one does not find even that much information. Actually it is evident from the registers of the Angevines of Naples that many of the surgeons did have very little education to speak of (and no latin at all) and relied rather on experience to justify their application. Thus when Adenulfus de Montemarrono was licensed on March 13, 1300, the following was stated about his preparedness "*Experientium habet in practica cirurgie quamvis instructus non sit in theorica dicte artis.*"[16] On many similar instances the statement would read, "*Peritus tamquam ydiota*" or as in the case of Nicolai Campanini of March 2, 1305, "*Peritus tamquam ydiota in cura vulnera.*"[17] At least two of the licensed surgeons in Southern Italy were simply illiterate: Master Andrea Barba de Ravello satisfied the standards of the examinors who stated: "*Sufficiens sit inventus licet alias illiteratus existat.*" Similarly, a surgeon from Gesauluo was described as: "*peritus in arte cirugie tamquam illicterata et ydiota.*"[18] This illiteracy did not disturb the authorities, who counted on the opinion of the official examinors.

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15 P. Pansier, "Les médecins juifs à Avignon au XIII^e^, XIV^e^ et XV^e^ siècles", Janus 15 (1910): 421–451, especially p. 438.

16 R. Calvanico, Fonti per la storia della medicina, etc., p. 45 (no. 391).

17 Ibid., p. 99 (no. 756).

18 Ibid., p. 71 (no. 512) and p. 101 (no. 771).

Given the preponderance of the examination for the licensing considerations, one understands better why our documents are of such little use for the history of medical education in the High Middle Ages. These documents do not allow us to establish, in other words, how many of these doctors were graduates of universities, how many studied privately with a licensed master and how many acquired experience "empirically", practicing even illegally. However, in the case of the very distinctive group of the Jewish doctors, a group which in Provence and in Spain at least was very noticeable in terms of its numbers, we are in somewhat of a better situation. In their case, it is almost certain that up to 1348 none of them attended university. Even in cities like Montpellier and Salerno, where there existed some degree of scientific collaboration between Jewish doctors and Christian masters of the University, none of the Jews seem to have attended the University prior to 1348[19]. And when, in the second half of the fourteenth century, some Jewish students attended the University of Montpellier, this must have been a limited participation (as auditors, probably) as well as a short termed phenomenon. As there were no Jewish universities around, Jewish doctors had to acquire education privately. The Hebrew writer and social critic Kalonymos ben Kalonymos, writing in the first quarter of the 14th century, had thus rightly in his satire *Even Boḥan* his physician studying privately with a licensed doctor. The credulous populus, if we believe Kalonymos, greatly admired the doctor's learning, and spread the rumour of the long period of education he had undergone[20]. "They say that he was apprenticed for fourteen years in the house of Ever the Gileadite, the chief physician of Gilead. He learnt much from his master and acquired superior knowledge." Although there must be some exaggeration as to the period of fourteen years of study, the situation Kalonymos depicts of a one-to-one relationship between the master and his apprentice seems to have been the prevalent one then and was well known to his readership. Dependable also is his statement that the medical candidate had to pay for his studies with "Ever the Gileadite." Once a practicing doctor himself, the one-time student tells his patient[21]: "Pay my fee, fifty shillings or

19 For medical collaboration in Montpellier and Salerno, see my article "In search of the Book of Figures: Medicine and Astrology in Montpellier at the Turn of the Fourteenth century", Association for Jewish Studies Review, 7–8 (1982/83): 383–407 and "Doctors and Medical Practice in Germany around the year 1200: The Evidence of Sefer Asaph" (Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research, 50,1983, pp. 149–164; forthcoming). It is my intention to deal with the story of Abraham Avigdor and his fellow Jewish students in Montpellier in the future.

20 See A.M. Habermann (ed.), Kalonymos ben Kalonymos: Even Boḥan (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv, 1956), p. 45.

21 Ibid.

else I shall drop the case. I paid plenty to become a doctor. My teacher did not teach me for nothing!" That we are on safe ground with Kalonymos as far as medical education is concerned, can be gathered, as I shall suggest now, from corroborating notarial data to be found in the Provençal Archives.

The two most outstanding documents in this respect were discovered by Dr. Pierre Pansier, the great authority on medical history[22]. In the first, a notarial deed issued in Avignon on October 11, 1487, recorded an agreement concerning the surgical studies of Mordecassius Astruc Abraham. It established that he would stay at the house of his Master Jacob Leon de Cavallion for a period of two years and would pay him as fees, twenty-five florins. In return, master surgeon took it upon himself to "instruct and teach him this art of surgery in a good and decent manner, in accordance with the science and the doctrine given to him by God." The agreement states very clearly that the aim of all these studies was a *licentia practicandi* and that the master took it upon himself to prepare the young man for the examination for a license[23]. Accordingly, only fifteen florins were given to Jacob immediately at the beginning of the instruction; the other ten would be paid only after the young man passed the examination and obtained a license. It was also agreed that the young graduate could eventually practice in Avignon, side by side with Jacob Leon de Cavallion. For this privilege he had to pay ten florins a year to his master to compensate him for the clientele he would be forfeiting.

Fifteen years earlier (to turn now to the second document),[24] we encounter the same master establishing a similar teaching relationship, only this time the student was of Christian descent, by the name of Thomas of Basel. Another difference between the previous arrangement was that on that occasion Josee Farrusol, also a Jewish surgeon of Avignon, joined Jacob Leon, and both served as instructors to Thomas. The fee was established at 30 scudi, and it was to be paid at the end of the year. The surgeons undertook to teach him the book of the classic authorities in medieval surgery, namely Langfranc, Avicenna and Gui de Chauliac. Although they used in all likelihood a latin book in Thomas' case, it is worthwhile mentioning that for Jewish students they had at that time translations of these three authors in Hebrew.[25] Licensing — the aim of

22 P. Pansier, « Les médecins juifs à Avignon, etc. », pp. 443–444.

23 Ibid., p. 443. Item fuit de pacto quod dictus magister Jacob de Cavalhon teneatur et debeat eidem Mordecassio infra dictos duos facere habere et oblinere licentiam a dicto domino viguerio hujus civitatis Avinionis practicandi de arte predicta.

24 Ibid., p. 442.

25 M. Steinschneider, Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher (Graz, 1956), pp. 677–702, 802–803, 807–808.

the whole exercise — is mentioned indirectly only: the student was expressly forbidden to practice in Avignon for eight years after the receipt of his license, unless he got one of the masters to agree to it.

The doctor's home, as well as the one-to one relationship, is envisioned as the framework for the medical education of a Jewish young man by the name of Bonjudas Durant of Bauclaire. From a marriage contract done in Marseille on March 7, 1431, we learn that he was about to marry Mandina, the daughter of a doctor and surgeon Mosse Bonsegnor[26]. The young man's relatives, who in all likelihood arranged the deal, saw to it that a special clause in contract stipulated that in the event young Bonjudas Durant wanted to learn his father-in-law's "science or art", the doctor would have to teach him medicine or surgery "for free" and "Keep him in his house for a whole year without payment."[27]

For the period that preceded the Black Death (the period in which Kalonymos wrote) when hundreds of Jewish physicians and surgeons were practicing medicine in every village and city of the Provence, we only have one notarial document concerning medical education.[28] It is the often quoted agreement executed in Marseille on August 28, 1326, between Sara de Sancto Aegidio and her disciple Salvetus de Burgonoro, an inhabitant of Salon in Provence. The relationship that this agreement created, which was to endure not more than seven months, until "next Faster", (12.4.1327) was very close to the then prevalent relationship between a master and his apprentice. Indeed, besides being labeled "student" (*scholaris*) and disciple (*discipulus*), Salvetus is mentioned in an agreement in the capacity of a beadle (*nuntius*) to his teacher, and his stay with her is designated as "*servitium*". Yet there is no doubt that medicine was the subject of study and that Sara had the knowledge that Salvetus wanted to acquire. The aim of his stay, besides the "*servitia*" he was to perform, was "*ad addiscendum artem medecine et phisice*." Sara was also to provide her apprentice with food and clothing and engaged herself principally "*eum docere artem predicatam*". No fee is mentioned in the document, but Sara insisted that whatever gain her pupil would make during this period from medical practice would belong to her.

The document contains some apparent idiosyncrasies and peculiarities: we notice, for one, that the period of study is a rather short one, a fact that might lead us to believe that Salvetus was by then quite advanced in his studies. Most

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26 L. Barthélemy, Les médecins à Marseille avant et pendant le Moyen Age (Marseille, 1883), p. 32.

27 Ibid., Dictus socer teneatur debeat docere ipsi genere suo scientiam suam libere et bene et sufficienter sine custu et eum enere eper unum annum in domo sua sine custu.

28 L. Barthélemy, Les médecins à Marseille avant et pendant le Moyen Age, p. 31. The notarial acts are preserved today at the Archives de Provence, Marseille, 381E32, fol. 122.

noticeable, of course, is the fact that Sara was a woman and that in no place does the document call her "Master", "physician", or "surgeon". She was not, by any means, the only woman of her period to practice medicine. Already we had occasion to mention for the year 1305 the Jewish practitioner Marrona near Talard. Well known also is the case of the "empiricist" Jaqueline Felice de Almmania, who in 1322 managed to have quite a thriving practice in Paris, a practice she tried to salvage and protect after the faculty of medicine sued her in court for charlatanism[29]. From time to time such women, like male empiricists, would even obtain a *de facto* recognition from the authorities. Francisca, the wife of Matheus Romano of Salerno, obtained a license to practice surgery on September 10, 1321, as the registers of Angevine of Naples show us, although she did not have any formal education: "*Tamquam idiota, sufficiens est.*" As stated in the official document[30]. Similar cases in these registers concern ladies by the name of Maria Gallicia, Maria Incarnata, Margarita de Ruga, Raymunda de Taberna and others, all, by the way, surgeons,[31] and none in quality of physician. We notice, as a matter of fact, a certain reticence and uneasiness on the part of the authorities when granting licenses to women. They would go out of their way to justify why women should get involved in what was generally considered a man's profession, claiming that sick women would be much more comfortable this way[32]. From Aragon we have records concerning two Jewish women, both married into the Galipapa family of Lerida, who, in 1387, obtained licenses from King Pedro the Fourth and his son Juan[33]. The long years of experience they had in the profession — insists the document — justifies such licensing.

It is therefore not at all impossible that Sara de Sancto Aegidio — whose name, unfortunately, I have so far been unable to retrieve in other notarial records in Marseille — was such an empiricist, who enjoyed an official or semi-official status in the city of Marseille. Salvetus obviously esteemed her knowledge and expertise, and was ready to go along with the conditions and

29 P. Kibre, "The Faculty of Medicine at Paris: Charlatanism and Unlicensed Medical Practices in the Later Middle Ages", Bulletin of the History of Medicine, 27 (1953): 1–20.

30 R. Calvanico, Fonti per la storia della medicina, etc., p. 194–95 (no. 1872). See also p. 156 (no. 1413) where Lauretta the wife of Giovanni di Ponte is defined as "Perita ut ydiota".

31 Ibid., p. 141 (no. 1165), 261–262 (nos. 3571/2). See also p. 159 (no. 1451).

32 See the statement on p. 262 (no. 3572) which is, with minor alterations, repeated in all others: Licet alienum sit feminis conventibus interesse virorum, ut in matronalis pudoris contumeliam metuant, propter quod culpam vetite transgressionis incurrant: quo quia inde jure edicto medicine officium mulieribus est concessum expedienter, actento quod ad mulieres curandas egrotas precipue in morbis eisdem de honestate morum virorum sunt femine aptiores.

33 L. Comenge y Ferre, La Medicina en el reino de Aragón (Siglo xiv), (Valladolid, 1974) pp. 65–66.

requirements she made in the contract. As a document for the history of medical education, therefore, the contract Sara made with her disciple Salvetus joins the ones that were found in fifteenth century Avignon and Marseille, and sustains the description Kalonymos has for the first quarter of the 14th century. They all testify to a private line of transmission of medical education and to a licensing procedure that was not interested, at least ostensibly, in the origin of the candidates' knowledge. It is under such conditions that the medical profession flourished and proliferated among the Jews of the High Middle Ages.

2

Apprenticeship or Academic Education: The Making of Jewish Doctors[1]

The story of education has fascinated Jewish scholars since at least the nineteenth century and remains today of paramount interest to modern students of history. Immensely learned scholars, like Moritz Güdemann at the end of the nineteenth century, or Simha Assaf at the beginning of the twentieth century, assembled a host of many hundreds of eye-opening items. The two volumes of Professor Assaf's documentation were re-edited and augmented twofold in 2001 by Samuel Glick[2]. The vast majority of these documents concern theoretical teachings, some legalistic and theological on how to conduct life religiously and others concerning auxiliary sciences for the study of the medical profession. These documents reflect the importance of intellectual pursuits within the Jewish communities of the Middle Ages. However, in Iberia and

1 Most of the data presented in the present paper, as well as some general statements, rely on some of my previous studies, notably J. Shatzmiller, Jews, Medicine and Medieval Society, Berkeley 1994 and my Cultural Exchange. Jews, Christians, and Art in the Medieval Marketplace, Princeton 2013. In order not to overload this text with notes and references, interested readers are referred to the bibliographies, indices and tables of content of these books, where they will easily find the indexes that they search for.

2 M. Güdemann, Geschichte des Erziehungwesens und der Cultur der abendländischen Juden während des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit, 5 vols., Wien 1880–1891 [Reprint Amsterdam 1966–1968]. S. Assaf, Mekorot le-Toldot ha-Ḥinukh be-Yisrael (= A Sourcebook for the History of Jewish Education), ed. S. Glick, 4 vols., Jerusalem – New York 2001.

in Northern Europe there existed Jewish professionals that gained their living as manual laborers such as silversmiths or bookbinders, painters (artists and artisans) or cloth dyeing decorators. Existing scholarship provides very little information about the way these laborers acquired the proficiency needed to handle their trades. Like non-Jewish artisans they presumably had to attach themselves to a master and spend years of apprenticeship before becoming independent tradesmen. Hebrew sources are not of much help in our quest for knowledge, and Latin documentation is rather sparse. As luck would have it, we have evidence from the city of Trapani on the Island of Sicily that is very valuable in this respect. Hundreds of documents attest to the fact that Jews were heavily involved as manual laborers in the coral industry. Several dozens of these Sicilian documents consist of contracts of apprenticeships between masters and the parents of an apprentice (in many cases the mothers of young teenagers). Once these Jewish youngsters became trained artisans, they fashioned many hundreds of "*Pater noster*" rosaries for the use of the local faithful as well as for exportation[3].

In Germany, Jewish professionals would bind books of Christian prayers and theology, while in Spain we see them producing – for the institutions of the "rival religion" – golden chalices, silver reliquaries and also, in at least one case, a standing cross. A Jewish painter of Saragossa was specialized in painting and producing altar tables (retables) in which episodes of the Sacred History of Christianity were illustrated. Little wonder, then, that Jewish doctors served not only their own community but offered their services to the larger society that surrounded them[4].

I.

During the centuries of the High and Late Middle Ages, medicine was a "Jewish profession" second in importance only to their involvement in the practice of money lending and of pawn broking. Every Jewish community of significance would count among its members one or two or several health care practitioners. This had to do with the general development of western society, which enjoyed

3 Cf. N. Coulet, Autour d'un quinzaine des métiers de la communauté Juive d'Aix en 1437, in: Minorités, Techniques et Métiers, Aix-en-Provence 1980, as well as A. Sparti (ed.), Fonti per la storia del corallo nel Medievo mediterraneo, Trapani 1986 and S. Simonsohn, The Jews of Sicily, 18 vols., Leiden – New York 1997–2010, passim.

4 Cf. Shatzmiller, Cultural Exchange (nt. 1).

a considerable growth in the economy during the eleventh century and, mostly, in the twelfth century. City dwellers and villagers alike grew accustomed to putting aside part of their income against the risk of incurring future medical expenses. Families would form private associations that would contract a doctor to assure his services when needed. City councils would hire a municipal doctor yearly, or several of them, whose task it was to treat all citizens of a locality. Hence historians today rightly refer to the "medicalization" of medieval society[5].

Medicinal treatments that were offered down to this period as part of Christian charity were now offered more and more by professionals who were remunerated for their services. The medical discipline itself changed course. Instead of relying on customs and local tradition, practitioners discovered the Greco-Roman scholarly literature (Hippocrates, Galen, etc.) that had been taught centuries before by the Arabs in their vast empires. Centers of learning emerged now in Spain and Southern Italy, where these classics were translated from the Arabic into Latin and also into Hebrew. Some Jewish translators were of help to their Christian colleagues, others devoted their time exclusively to the Hebrew language[6]. An overwhelming number of practitioners that acquired their knowledge from this Greco-Roman source emerged quite rapidly; of no less significance was the handsome role that Jews played in this revival. While in the Early Middle Ages we notice here and there in Western Europe the existence of Jewish doctors, several of them distinguished and famous, our documentation now reveals a massive presence of Jewish doctors. As expected, it is on the borders of the Mediterranean and its islands where we identify most of them. However, their presence is noticed also in England, Northern France and Germany of today. Research in the archives of the city of Frankfurt can provide an example. We find that in this city a certain Ysaac *medicus judeorum* (or: Ysaac der *Juden Arzit*) functioned as early as the mid-thirteenth century. In the second half of the next century, the city council engaged two practitioners, both Jewish, as municipal doctors. Their task, as said, was to treat all inhabitants of the city. Treatments were differentially provided to the ailing according to their social status. Their names were Jacob von Straspurg der *Juden Arzt* and Salman Pletch. Salman is referred to as a *Wundarzt* (a surgeon). Added to the list should be the names of Zusschin Gerden *Arzt* who may have been Jewish and

5 Of great importance are the studies of Professor Danielle Jacquart of Paris. See among others, hers and Françoise Micheau's La médicine arabe et l'Occident médiéval, Paris 1990, or La médicine médiévale dans le cadre parisien, XIV^{e}-XV^{e} siècle, Paris 1998.

6 Cf. M.T. D'Alverny, Avendauth?, in: Homenaje a Millás Vallicrosa, 2 vols., Barcelona 1954–56, vol. 1, 19–43, and also M. Steinschneider, Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher, Berlin 1893 [Reprint Graz 1956].

Vilfand or Vinllfand who was certainly a *Juden Arzt*. The names of other non-Jewish doctors surface in the documents of Frankfurt as well at this late period: They were *Meyster Hein(rich) der Arzt* and Meister Johan *der Arzit*. This may be a partial list only. The group of medics may have been more extended. Frankfurt, in other words, may have profited at least from the service of half a dozen health practitioners, three or four of them being Jewish[7].

The Church expressed its reservation as to these new developments in medicine and notably in surgery. This was its typical attitude, also to many other novel developments in society. Enraging its leaders in particular was the part that the Jews played in the medicalization of society. A doctor has authority over the patient: He orders what action is to be taken and what is to be avoided. Is it conceivable therefore that, in lands ruled by Christianity, the "child of the maidservant" (= the Jew) has power over the "son of the mistress"? Papal mandates and conciliar decrees tried to prevent the faithful from turning to the Jews, but had to admit (in an assembly of the year 1336 in Avignon) that such a prohibition was impossible to follow. Society could not function without the services of doctors even if they were Jewish[8].

II.

Where and how were these Jewish doctors formed? The question is of crucial importance considering that as of 1250 and certainly around the year 1300 the medical profession was regulated by public authorities. Candidates were required to pass a formal examination before getting a *licentia practicandi*. A committee of established doctors, or a *proto medicus*, would decide whether to confirm or to fail the candidate or to award him a partial and conditional license[9]. The lost archives of Naples kept more than 3600 of such verdicts before their destruction; they were luckily copied before the outbreak of the Second World War by Dr. Raffaele Calvanico and published by him in Naples in 1962 when

7 Cf. I. Kracauer, Geschichte der Juden in Frankfurt a. M. (1150–1824), 2 vols., Frankfurt a. M. 1925–27, vol. 1, 283 and 410 (Ysaac), 315 et passim (Jacob), 199–200 (Salman), 718 (Zusschin) and 790 (Vilfand) – all Jews, as well as 698 (Johann?) and 516 (Heinrich). I thank the scholars of the Arye Maimon-Institut at the University of Trier and its director Professor Alfred Haverkamp for sharing this information with me.

8 Cf. my Jews, Medicine and Medieval Society (nt. 1), 90–93.

9 Cf. L. García-Ballester e.a., Medical Licensing and Learning in Fourteenth-Century Valencia (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 79/6), Philadelphia 1989.