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*La scuola medica Salernitana. Gli autori e i testi* edited by Danielle Jacquart and Agostino Paravicini Bagliani

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When Benjamin of Tudela visited Salerno in the 1160s, he reported that it was a place ‘where Christians have a school of medicine’. The late 16th-century translator of Benjamin’s travel book, the Seville theologian Benedictus Arias Montanus (d. 1598), rendered the sentence slightly differently to assert that Benjamin went to Salerno, a city famed for its medical schools (*urbem medicorum scholis illustrem*). Was there a single, distinct, formal institutionalized medical school in 12th-century Salerno? Or does Montanus’ corrupt translation, stressing a multiplicity of schools, reflect more accurately a contemporary sense of fluidity regarding the institutional reality of the medical school in Salerno?

It is now hardly debated that the medical school in 11th- and 12th-century Salerno was not an institutionalized system of education but an ‘open’ school of thought defined by its members’ adherence to a specific philosophy of medicine and style of representation. But who were the driving forces behind such a school? Was it bishop Alphanus of Salerno [*fl.* 1058–1085], who translated Nemesius’ *On the Nature of Man* from the Greek, thereby providing the Latin West with the terminology necessary for the reception of Islamic medicine? Was it the community of monks at Monte Cassino where Alphanus was a monk before answering the call to the archbishopric?<sup>1</sup> Or was it the enduring Greek presence in southern Italy in and around Salerno? Or was it perhaps Islamic medicine itself? Once translated into Latin, this superior scientific knowledge which

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<sup>1</sup> Constantinus Africanus translated there the *Pantegni* and much more in the 1080s.

used the natural part of Aristotelian philosophy as a basis for medical practice and introduced the *quaestiones* as a key tool of thought and presentation could have inspired Western thinkers to acquire and then disseminate it [Jacquart and Micheau 1996, 87–129]. A comprehensive history of medicine in 11th- and 12th-century Salerno would have to be based on a balanced account of all these variables.

In early 12th-century Salerno, historians tell us, a historic shift took place when Salernitan masters, confronted with newly translated Arabic works grounded in a theoretical framework of elements, humors, qualities, and complexions, became aware of the need to establish a firmer philosophical foundation for their discipline and consequently transformed the Latin medical discourse. In Salerno, the commentary tradition began. And in Salerno, basic texts on *materia medica*,<sup>2</sup> diagnosis,<sup>3</sup> and medical ethics were composed and became standard manuals for decades and even centuries to come. This thesis is supported by the close association of the earliest surviving copies of the core collection of medical works, henceforth constituting the standard curriculum of medicine, with medical education in southern Italy, more specifically in early 12th-century Salerno [see Kristeller 1986; Jordan 1990; García-Ballester 1994: 13–29; Skinner 1997: 127–36; O’Boyle 1998, 95–102]. This core collection of five or six texts heavily loaded with theory—Joannitius’ *Isagoge* (normally appearing first), Hippocrates’ *Aphorismi* and *Prognostica*, Theophilus Protospatharius’ *De urinis*, Philaretus’ *De pulsibus*, and, from the last quarter of the 12th century, Galen’s *Tegni*—was sometimes called *Ars medicinae* or *Ars medica*. Renaissance editors named it *Articella*. Some of these manuscripts attest to an intensive production of commentaries on these core texts, based on sources translated or taught at Salerno and attributed to Salernitan medical practitioners such as Matthaëus Platearius, ‘Archimatthaëus’, Bartholomaeus of Salerno, and Maurus of Salerno.

All these texts suggest the emergence of a rift between pre-12th-century Salernitan physicians who showed not the slightest interest in the natural part of philosophy and rational methods of analysis,

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<sup>2</sup> To name just the two most famous of the pharmaceutical treatises: *Circa instans* and the *Antidotary of Nicholas*.

<sup>3</sup> Giles of Corbeil’s treatise on urine, for example.

and who remained indifferent to or ignorant of the work of Constantinus Africanus, and the Salernitan physicians of the second or third decade of the 12th century who dramatically changed their attitude and transformed their scientific discourse. But is this account correct at all? What is the connection between such 11th-century Salernitan physicians as Gariopontus or Petrocellus and their 12th-century successors who produced the Salernitan commentaries? And if the above change did happen, who were its carriers? Practicing physicians? Members of the ecclesiastical *milieu*? The mid-12th-century physicians who produced new-style commentaries on the *Ars medica*? And what role did the social and political conditions in southern Italy play in allowing the initiation and the further development of such an intellectual process?

The phenomenon of the medical school in Salerno has so far remained a hypothesis, and historians have consistently qualified their words with conditional clauses and quotes. The nature of the change which took place in 12th-century Latin medicine is relatively clear. The school's prominence is plainly attested by a series of thinkers who made a special effort in the 12th century to visit Salerno and to export all over Europe ideas learned there as well as practices, theoretical terms, and teaching methods.<sup>4</sup> But how exactly, when, and where this change took place is less clear. The lack of evidence that there was any institutional structure in Salerno for the teaching of the *Ars medicinae*, and the wide gap between these works with their commentaries and all we know about medical practice and teaching in 11th-century Salerno, have consistently fed doubts. The Salernitan texts, whose exact chronology is far from certain, are all too often transmitted in several versions, which makes it difficult to determine their original form and renders all available printed editions practically unreliable. And not only are the texts volatile; the identity of many of their authors is shrouded in heavy mist. This applies to prominent Salernitan figures like the famous Trota, and to less known figures who are unjustly understudied. For example, Raphaela Veit draws our attention here to the *Liber aureus*, an understudied medical manual composed by Afflacijs, Constantinus Africanus' disciple and heir of his books. Veit's preliminary investigation suggests that

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<sup>4</sup> To name just a few: Adelard of Bath, Herman of Carinthia, Giles of Corbeil, William of Conches, Alexander Neckham.

the book is among the sources for the two essential versions of the *Practica pantegni* attributed to Constantinus Africanus.

On top of all these doubts and uncertainties, Piero Morpurgo [1990, 1993] has more recently claimed that many of the exegetical innovations attributed to Salerno were the product of the schools of northern France (Paris, Tours, and Chartres) and not of Salerno. According to Morpurgo, the northern schools were not only centers for the diffusion of Salernitan medicine, they also trained the Salernitan medical masters in using the new tools of logic before these masters then returned to southern Italy in their search for medical works newly translated from Greek and Arabic. So, although southern Italy played a crucial role in the recovery of medical texts, it was in northern France that they were first subjected to the new pedagogical techniques of glosses and commentaries (largely borrowed from theological and philosophical discourses at the schools) and then taught within the framework of Aristotelian natural philosophy. Thus, a unique cultural encounter between the medical sources circulating in southern Italy in and around Salerno and physicians trained at the French schools, is the key to understanding the Salernitan innovation.

The phenomenon of Salerno requires, therefore, not only the philological analysis of Salernitan texts and manuscripts. For it is also the story of a multicultural society, a center of international commercial activity, and part of a network of centers of learning to the north (in Italy and beyond). It is also the story of a successful attempt to claim a place for medicine in the schools. For this to happen, medicine needed to be considered a *scientia* capable of being conveyed by *doctrina*. This depended on establishing medicine on authoritative texts from antiquity, hence the creation of the *Articella* (an anthology of medical semiotics based on Greek material and introduced by a theory-oriented text with a Greek title, *Isagoge*) by the Salernitan masters. And it is also the story of some harsh criticism leveled against the folly and perversity of the Salernitans whose innovations were not always well received. These Salernitans were occasionally suspected of introducing a material approach to the soul governed by elemental influences and manipulated, for example, by dietary regulations. John of Salisbury even denounced vehemently in his *Metalogicon* 1.4 the vanity, folly, and avarice of physicians who

return from studying medicine in Salerno and Montpellier, cite Hippocrates and Galen, throw in aphorisms, and market themselves as omnipotent against all diseases.

The story of Salerno as an intellectual center derives from the undeniable wealth of medical texts emanating from that region from at least the 10th century. But the systematic study of these texts and manuscripts has relied heavily on the monumental 19th-century compilation by Salvatore de Renzi, who in five volumes published many of these texts in his *Collectio salernitana*. Though very helpful, the very nature of such an uncritical compilation prevented it from becoming a reliable research tool for those wishing to reconstruct the intellectual reality in 11th and 12th-century Salerno. The Salernitan connection of some texts published by de Renzi is doubtful (e.g., the versed *Speculum hominis*, discussed here by Paul Gerhard Schmidt).

*La Scuola Medica Salernitana. Gli autori e i testi*, a collection of 18 articles written in four different languages, come with an elegant and thoughtful introduction by Danielle Jacquart and a panoramic concluding paper by Giovanni Vitolo laying out the view of the updated Salernitan story arising from these papers and the after-history of Salerno in the 13th-century under Frederick II. It treats the school of Salerno as a real intellectual phenomenon and does not set the term in scare quotes. But, given the volume's title, its editors clearly believe that studying the authors and the texts associated with Salerno is still the main key to understanding the phenomenon of Salerno, which was more a center of book production and diffusion than a formal school. These editors convened a similarly entitled conference in 2004 at the University of Salerno on the occasion of the acquisition of a mid-13th-century manuscript containing the *Curae magistri Platearii* or his *Practica brevis* by the Biblioteca Provinciale in Salerno (discussed here by Maria Galante). That conference launched a new project aiming at a critical republication of Salernitan texts to provide the basis for an updated study of Salerno within the broader context of the history of Western culture, science, and thought in the Middle Ages. This volume, which is based on papers read in this conference, promises to be the first in a rich series that in the coming years should provide us with a whole range of Salernitan texts published for the first time in critical editions—a major contribution to the history of medicine and science in the Middle Ages.

We may hope that it will render De Renzi's magisterial enterprise at least partially redundant.<sup>5</sup>

This explains the nature of most papers in this collection: they are based on philological and codicological discussions, and normally target a single text or author that should be edited. Many of the articles include appendices that expose for the first time partial editions and sometimes translations of the discussed text, thus providing the expert reader with a unique tool. Taken together, they point to two main conclusions. First is that there is an absolute need to produce scientific editions of key Salernitan texts because of the unreliability of the Renaissance editions as well as De Renzi's. Second is that we must be constantly aware that the phenomenon of 12th-century Salerno should not be described as a sudden leap but as the continuation of a long-term development which owes much to Monte Cassino, as well as to the heritage of continuous Latin-Greek exchanges in southern Italy.

Among the Salernitan texts and authors which should be studied anew, free of blind reliance on De Renzi's editions, are those attributed to Trota of Salerno. Monica Green reconstructs the complex picture of the medical works by (and attributed to) this perhaps most famous of all Salernitan heroes, who ignited international attention and represented the phenomenon of the *mulieres salernitanae*. Green's starting point is the great *De aegritudinum curatione*, a compilation by a 12th-century Salernitan editor who synthesized bits and pieces of the *Practicae* by seven of Salerno's greatest physicians. Included in this compilation are major portions of Trota's work. This shows her lasting reputation as a contributor to Salernitan practical medicine. Green, who is presently engaged in editing various original versions of Salernitan writings on women's medicine (including the *Practica secundum Trotam*), shows that despite the enigmatic fact that no Salernitan writer cites her by name, Trota was in dialogue with her fellow male practitioners in Salerno (Copho, for example). Her texts are highly practical, far removed from the philosophical speculations that her male peers were developing in Salerno, and evince unrestricted access to the bodies of her female patients. The

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<sup>5</sup> At the time of my writing this review, the first text had already been published: see [García González 2008](#).

dating of her texts (possibly within the first half of the 12th century) remains, alas, a subject for speculation.

Laurence Moulinier draws our attention to the unedited *Sinthomata magistri Mauri*, a practical manual on the semiology of urine attributed with great probability to Maurus of Salerno (ca 1130–1214), nicknamed *Galienus salernitanus* because among other things of the rich body of commentaries on the *Articella* that he left behind. This text is not included in De Renzi's compilation, which does include Maurus' other clinical treatise dedicated to urine and entitled *Regulae urinarum*. It goes beyond the conventional nosology based on an analysis of urine colors and teaches how the symptoms must be taken into account in an efficient uroscopy. Uroscopy played a major role in 12th-century Salerno. Isaac Israeli's *Liber urinarum* was translated from the Arabic by Constantinus Africanus, and Theophilus' *De urinis* from sixth- or seventh-century Byzantium was possibly translated in Salerno. Maurus' role as a theoretician and practitioner of Salernitan uroscopy is attested by his pivotal position in the Salernitan *quaestiones* dealing with urine (11 of 13 such *quaestiones* cite him, not Isaac) and eternalized for future generation in the verses of his disciple Giles of Corbeil. A detailed codicological examination of the entire body of Maurus' treatises on urine is thus necessary to reassess Salerno's role in disseminating theories and practices of uroscopy.

Marilyn Nicoud lays the foundation for a critical edition of the versed, emblematic *Regimen sanitatis salernitanum* and a study of its presumed Salernitan origins. This treatise, the authorship of which is still debated, was widely diffused—there are over 100 manuscripts, transmitting manifold versions—and thus is historically significant.

Bruno Laurioux introduces the *Summula de preparatione ciborum et potuum infirmorum*, a unique treatise linking medicine and cookery, food and therapy, and attributed by several of the 15 manuscripts preserving it to the Salernitan Petrus Musandinus, active in the late 12th century. Here too the unsatisfactory edition of a version of the treatise in De Renzi's compilation is a severe obstacle to a proper historical appreciation of this important text.

A substantial number of the articles are devoted to Salernitan treatises dealing with *pharmacopoeia*. This is hardly a coincidence, given that this field served as a continuous source for Salernitan fame throughout the Middle Ages. Mireille Ausécache discusses the

authorship and the contents of the 12th-century *Liber iste* (a compilation of medicines and their recipes extracted from previous books of *pharmacopoeia*) attributed to Matthaeus Platearius. She presents two versions of the text, determines which is probably the original and thus the proper basis for an edition, and reopens the debate on its author's identity. In doing so she lays the foundations for the production of a critical edition of this treatise, which is preserved in some 33 manuscripts. Similarly, Corinna Bottiglieri prepares the ground for an edition of the *Liber* or *Opus pandectarum medicinae* compiled by Matteo Silvatico, who practiced and taught medicine in Salerno in the first half of the 14th-century. The *Pandectae* mark the fruition of intensive Salernitan interest in *pharmacopoeia* over the preceding two centuries. This immense dictionary of *materia medica* was preserved in at least 14 manuscripts. From mid 14th-century Montpellier comes the anonymous *Summa medicinae*<sup>6</sup> which is studied here by M. Jesús Pérez and Cristina de la Rosa. They show convincingly that among the sources of the text one can detect long and accurate citations from Salernitan texts. Specifically, sections from the *Anatomia porci* by the Salernitan Copho and from the *Alphita* are cited verbatim in the author's chapters on anatomy and simples. Thus, Salernitan texts remained useful 200 years after their composition, and their later life after the 11th- and 12th-centuries and in various academic contexts demands further study. Such later treatises may shed intriguing light on the form of the original Salernitan texts, and highlight their diffusion and impact over time.

Iolanda Ventura studies the readership, the later diffusion, and consequent reception of *Circa instans*, a famous pharmacological compilation by an anonymous Salernitan author of the third quarter of the 12th century, which encompasses both theoretical and practical pharmacological data. The text, deriving most of its substances from Dioscorides and the Constantinian textual tradition available in Salerno during the first half of the century, was organized according to some 250 alphabetically arranged headings describing the therapeutic property of simples emerging from plants, animal bodies, or minerals. It enjoyed fast and copious diffusion beyond the Salernitan *milieu* in France and Germany. Ventura uncovers the complex

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<sup>6</sup> This treatise has been attributed to Aranu de Vilanova, since it relies heavily on his *Speculum medicinae*.



codicological tradition of the text, and its two fundamental versions (the earlier shorter one, and the longer one which emerged towards the end of the 13th century and ranges through some 480 headings), and lists guidelines for an edition of such a text.

Another group of papers highlights the Greek-Latin nexus in the story of Salerno. Charles Burnett discusses the possibility of a concomitant 11th-century Salernitan translation from Greek and Arabic of Nemesius' *On the Nature of Man* as well as of a 12th-century Salernitan translation from the Greek of Hippocrates' *On the Nature of Man*. He studies the treatise entitled *Epistola Ypocratis de elementis* and identified as the chapter on the elements in Nemesius' *On the Nature of Man*. Then, he traces the rich Salernitan tradition starting from the late 11th century of citing from or referring to Hippocrates' elemental approach in *On the Nature of Man*. Attached as an appendix to the article is an edition of the chapter on elements from Constantinus Africanus' *Pantegni* that quotes from the Hippocratic text even more profusely and became the most important source of Hippocratic elemental theory for Western thinkers in the 12th century. From this paper, a *Civitas Hippocratica* emerges, with a vibrant, continuous, and ever-growing interest in Hippocratic ideas and direct access to Hippocratic texts from the late 11th-century on.

Anna Maria Ieraci Bio shows the infiltration of Salernitan gynecological knowledge, terms, and modes of expression into Byzantine medical treatises and discourse (more specifically, the *Dynameron* of Nicola Mirepso and an unedited *quaestio* linking coitus and leprosy). This suggests close links between the three different cultures (Greek, Arab, Latin) in southern Italy and the Salernitan school, and a greater need to explore them and to include them in the story of the school of Salerno.

M. Cruz Herrero Ingelmo and Enrique Montero Cartelle show how in translating medical treatises from Greek, Salernitan users created new Latin terms based on the original Greek term which was rendered intelligible by assimilating it etymologically to a Latin word with a similar sound.

Irene Caiazzo and Faith Wallis attempt to remove some of the obscurity which surrounds the origin, the stages of the formation, and the motives underlying the creation and dissemination of the *Ars medica* in 12th-century Salerno. Caiazzo introduces a hitherto unedited

commentary on Joannitius' *Isagoge* (in Paris BnF, MS lat. 554) whose provenance is Saint-Martial in Limoges and which is clearly linked to the Salernitan tradition, but in a most surprising way. She cautiously suggests that the commentaries in the famous Chartres and Digby manuscripts (regarded as the earliest products of 12th-century Salernitan exegesis on the *Articella*) seem to follow and elaborate this shorter commentary, and not the reverse. If confirmed, this finding will transform the narrative of the exegetical output of 12th-century Salerno which has hitherto relied on the chronological priority of the 'Chartres' and 'Digby' commentaries. Furthermore, it will add more substance to the debate on the role of northern Europe in initiating 'Salernitan' ideas and approaches, not just disseminating them. The paper thus highlights the urgent need to prepare critical editions of the key Salernitan exegetic output.

Faith Wallis studies the *Articella* commentaries by Bartholomaeus of Salerno, who belongs to the first generation of identifiable masters teaching the *Articella* and under whose name appeared around 1175 the first full set of commentaries on the six-book compilation. By placing the *Tegni* after the *Isagoge*, Bartholomaeus may have tried (unsuccessfully) to reorganize the *Articella* to make the *Isagoge* an introduction to Galen. These commentaries acquired great acclaim in northern Europe, to judge by the number and provenance of the manuscripts which contain them. To reassess Bartholomaeus' common image as a principal agent of the shift in Salernitan medicine to its reinvention as *physica* or natural philosophy, Wallis focuses on Bartholomaeus' commentary on Hippocrates' *Aphorismi* and compares it with the 'Digby' gloss. Bartholomaeus appears as an innovator in reinventing medical practice as an locus of disinterested benevolence or common utility worthy of a philosopher, and in furthering the theoretical turn in medicine. He presents it as an academic discipline to be studied in a disinterested way as an end in itself, hence free of market and profit considerations.

Finally, two papers tackle the wider cultural and political contexts of Salerno. Piero Morpurgo describes the broader setting of 12th-century Salerno as a major meeting place in a European network of traveling men of science, political agents, and clerics. The Salerno

phenomenon is not only about medical men interacting among themselves to produce a new medicine. It must be studied in the larger political and institutional setting of southern Italy (the relationship between the Norman kingdom of Sicily and the powers to its north, the papacy, France, and England) as well as in the more extensive bookish culture of the Byzantine world, southern Italy, and northern Europe. Situated on the land-route that connected northern Europe and the kingdom of Sicily, Salerno was a conventional stopover for kings and pontiffs, whose entourages provided a natural setting for cultural, not only political, encounters. Courts and *curia* made Salerno a hub, and disseminated the medical ideas and terms it created well beyond the medical and scientific *milieu*. It is, thus, necessary to check the infiltration of Salernitan knowledge and terms into non-medical texts, namely, literature, poetry, chronicles, and encyclopedias.

Agostino Paravicini Bagliani shows the substantial impact of Salernitan ideas, texts, theories, and individual physicians on the way people associated with the papal *curia* around 1200 discoursed about the human body and took care of it. It is significant that Giovanni Castellomata, the first person to hold the title *medicus papae*, thus launching a long tradition of the new office of papal physician, was evidently a member of a distinguished Salernitan family. He served Innocent III, and was later associated with the first treatise dedicated to the delay of old age. Gregorio da Montesacro (d. 1239) was the author of an encyclopedic poem entitled *De hominum deificatione*, which drew on the 12th-century Salernitan Dioscorides for its botanical part (rather than the old sixth-century Latin translation of Dioscorides, which was still in circulation) and also relied heavily on Salernitan sources for its medical part. Salerno thus opened the gates to new fields of interest and activity, namely, the *cura corporis* and *prolongatio vitae* which became central in papal circles from the pontificate of Innocent III onward.

This fine and rich collection of essays by great experts in the history of medicine and science and the history of medieval southern Italy shows how far we are from a real understanding of the phenomenon of Salerno, and how much hard work is needed to construct an accurate picture of the texts and people responsible for the flourishing of medicine there. The amount of primary work still to be done is overwhelming indeed. But, at the same time, it creates real hope that the impetus to produce working editions and the paths charted

by many of the articles in this collection will open the way to a new, and more accurate story of the school of Salerno and its impact on medieval medicine and science. Any expert interested in the story of the medical school at Salerno will act wisely if he or she first delves into this book before leaping into his or her own specific topic. One may now look forward to the forthcoming books in this series with great anticipation.

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