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Italian Physicians in Exile and the First Medical Book in Lithuania

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Abstract. The article analyses the historical episodes in which the first medical book published in Lithuania, *Commentariola medica et physica* (1584), was prepared by the Italian physician Simone Simoni (1532-1602). Assuming that the medical practice was directly affected by confessionalisation, tensions between heterodox physicians and Jesuits, the circumstances for the concentration of Italian heterodox physicians in the region of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Transylvania in the second half of the sixteenth century are discussed. Simone Simoni, a former Protestant and refugee *religionis causa*, in 1582 converted to Catholicism, and from 1583 served as a physician to the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania Stephen Bathory (1576-1586), undertook criticism of Italian physicians belonging to the early Socinian circle. In 1584-1589 Simoni developed two major controversies against Marcello Squarcialupi (1538-1592), who worked at the manor of the Transylvanian duke Sigismund Báthory (1573-1613), and Niccolò Buccella (died in 1599), the chief physician of Stephen Bathory. *Commentariola medica et physica* was the first fruit of this controversy. Simoni criticised the nature philosophy methods of the Socinian Squarcialupi, who focused not on theory but on the observation of phenomena. The medical controversy between Italian exiles reflected the early modern intersections of medicine and confession. Simoni considered the theoretical system of classical Aristotelian philosophy of nature to be the basis of medicine. After the opportunistic conversion to the Roman Church, he dedicated himself to the fight against his Socinian colleagues in exile. He did not recognize the experiments and observation practices of Socinians who delved into the particular phenomena of nature and human nature, used empirics and sought the secrets of a 'Christian medicine'.

Keywords: Simone Simoni, Marcello Squarcialupi, Italian physicians in exile, Vilnius, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Transylvania, medical controversy.

Introductory remarks: the state of learned medicine in sixteenth-century Lithuania

The first medical work published in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (hereinafter the GDL) was *Commentariola medica et physica* (*Commentaries on medicine and nature*) by the Italian physician Simone Simoni, which appeared in Vilnius at the beginning of 1584 in the printing house of Jan Karcan (died in about 1611).¹ The purpose of this article is to evaluate the circumstances of the emergence of this book in the historical context of Italian physicians in exile and confessional interactions in the East Central Europe.²

¹ Simoni, Simone, *Commentariola medica et physica ad aliquot scripta. Cuiusdam Camillomarcelli Squarcialupi Plumbinensis, nunc Medicum agentis in Transilvania. Varijs authoribus. Quae omnia pagella sequens minutius indicabit. Satius est honeste latere, quam cum infamia prodire in lucem*, Vilnae: Iohannes Kartzanus, 1584. See also: *XV-XVI a. Lietuvos lotyniškų knygų sąrašas = Index librorum latinorum Lituaniae saeculi quinti decimi et sexti decimi*, compiled by Daiva Narbutienė, Sigita Narbutas, Vilnius: Lietuvių literatūros ir tautosakos institutas, 2002, No. 285. The source is available and digitized online. Access at: <https://books.google.lt/books?id=fp5kAAAAAJ&pg=PA1&hl=lt&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

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The state of learned medicine in the early modern times of Lithuania is vividly illustrated by the fact that *Commentariola* is not only the first, but also the only medical book published in the GDL in the sixteenth century.³ Vilnius was not a city of medical press. In this article we will not discuss the complex circumstances of the vague development of learned medicine in Lithuania. Nevertheless, the main reason for the lack of learned medical thought should be stressed: until the very end of the eighteenth century there were no academic medical studies in Vilnius. The Society of Jesus, which in 1570 founded and administered Vilnius Jesuit College, (in 1579 raised to the rank of an academy), prohibited medicine as a subject of studies in their schools not only in Vilnius but also throughout Europe.⁴ Such situation had various consequences for the history of the printing, books, libraries and medicine as a whole in Lithuania, where Vilnius Academy was the only university: in early modern times, there was no systematic accumulation of medical knowledge, and there was a lack of medical literature. For example, it is known that the Jesuits did not take most of the books on medicine and nature philosophy from the library donated by the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania Sigismund II Augustus for their library, considering them unnecessary.⁵

In the sixteenth century, the Lithuanians studied medicine at the University of Cracow (medical studies there were of a low standard), some studied at the faculty of Medicine of the University of Königsberg in Prussia (from 1544), and those seeking prestigious medical education – in Italy (primarily Padua and Bologna), less often in Germany and other foreign universities.⁶ Due to the most developed medical studies in the Italian universities, the majority of trained physicians in the market of medical practice in the GDL and Poland (in the estates of kings and aristocracy) were either the locals who had studied in Italy or the Italians who widely dominated the field of medical services throughout sixteenth-century Europe. The history of medicine and the trained physicians in the GDL and Poland are inextricably linked, because in the sixteenth century larger corps of trained physicians were consistently formed mainly in the courts of the rulers of Poland and Lithuania. Some trained physicians or their smaller groups also worked in the estates of high aristocracy and bishops. Italians, who escaped the persecution of the Inquisition, in the second half of the sixteenth century, started to play an important role in the European market of medical practitioners. Most of them settled down in Switzerland and other German-speaking European territories,⁷ but heterodox refugees especially antitrinitarians, unable to act due to their confessional identity in the institutions (universities, estates) of magisterial Protestantism (Lutheran, Reformers), looked for opportunities in the East Central Europe, primarily in Poland-Lithuania. The most unique situation in this respect occurred during the reign of Stephen Bathory in Transylvania (from 1571) and in Poland-Lithuania (1576-1586): although Bathory was Catholic, his estates were dominated not by

³ On this occasion, it is necessary to clarify the information provided by the book historians of the GDL about two medical books printed in Vilnius in the 16th century and a statement, that at a similar time Simoni's second book was published in Vilnius *De vi quinque amygdalarum in ebrietate retardanda* (*On the power of five almonds to stop drunkenness*), see: XV-XVI a. Lietuvos lotyniškų knygų sąrašas, No. 286. Such a book was prepared and published in Switzerland (Poschiavo) not by Simoni, but by his opponent Marcello Squarcialupi, see: Zucchini, Giampaolo, 'Per la ricostruzione dell' epistolario di Marcello Squarcialupi: alcune lettere inedite dai Grigioni (1586-1588)', in: *Antitrinitarianism in the Second Half of the 16th Century*, edited by Robert Dán, Antal Pirnát, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó; Leiden: Brill, 1982, p. 335.

⁴ On the Jesuits' relationship with medicine, see: Welie, Jos V.M., 'Ignatius of Loyola on Medical Education: Or, Should Today's Jesuits Continue to Run Health Sciences Schools?', *Early Science and Medicine*, 2003, Vol. 8, pp. 26-43; Pociūtė, Dainora, 'Nuo *medicus philosophus* prie *medicus religiosus*, arba kodėl Vilniaus jėzuitų akademijoje nebuvo medicinos studijų', *Problemos. Annex*, 2020, pp. 120-129.

⁵ Kawecka-Gryczowa, Alodja, *Biblioteka ostatniego Jagiellona: pomnik kultury renesansowej*, Wrocław: Zakł. Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1988, pp. 76-77; Płaszczynska-Herman, Katarzyna, 'Unknown Books of Kings Sigismund Augustus in the Congregation of the Mission Library in Stradom', *Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*, 2020, Sp. Issue, pp. 163-173.

⁶ Detailed data on the GDL medical students abroad have not been collected; it should be noted that mostly students from Lithuania appear in the documents of the universities of Padua and Bologna as members of the corporate community (*natio*) with Poles, denoted by the reference *Polonus*.

⁷ Celati, Alessandra, 'A Digital Exploration of 16th-Century Heretical Networks in the Italian Medical Context', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History of Ideas*, 2018, Vol. 14, pp. 1-36.

the learned Catholic but rather Evangelical physicians.⁸ One of the fathers of European modern-times antitrinitarianism, Italian physician Giorgio Biandrata (ca. 1516-1588), had the greatest impact on the formation of the network of heterodox physicians in Transylvania and Poland-Lithuania. From 1540 he worked as a physician in the Jagiellonian courts in Poland-Lithuania, later in Transylvania, maintaining the position of the main physician in this Principality when Stephen Bathory came to power.⁹

The Jesuits of the Polish province, to which Transylvania was also subordinated, the growth of the number of heretical physicians considered to be an extremely dangerous phenomenon. After visiting Transylvania, a Jesuit diplomat Antonio Possevino (1533-1611), who worked at Bathory's court, summarized:

I have met another heretic physician who has established himself with the young duke of Transylvania, this is a credit to the king's heretical physicians. I talked about it with His Majesty [Stephen Bathory], because it was through the physicians that all of Transylvania went down the path of Arianism and the worst heresies.¹⁰

In the ninth decade of the sixteenth century, the Jesuits of Polish province took steps to re-Catholicize medical practice and convert heretical medical practitioners to Catholicism. They never managed to convince such main heterodox physicians as Giorgio Biandrata and Niccolò Buccella. However, the efforts were not without results. The first success of the Jesuits in preventing the further growth of the network of Socinian physicians in the region was the young antitrinitarian physician Gaspar Wilkowski (died after 1608), whom the Jesuits converted to Catholicism in the spring of 1583, soon providing him with a particularly high-paying medical service in the estate of Lithuanian duke Mikalojus Kristupas Radvila (Radziwiłł Sierotka, 1549-1616), leader of the Counter-Reformation. As early as in 1583, in Vilnius, the former heretic published the region's first Catholic propaganda work in Polish, *Przyczyny nawrócenia do wiary powszechny od sekt nowokrzęćców samosateńskich* (*The Causes of the Conversion to the Universal Faith from the Anabaptist Samosatene Sects*) in which he took up criticism of heterodoxy.¹¹ Soon, on the eve of his activities in Poland-Lithuania, Simone Simoni, an Italian exile physician who converted to Catholicism with a help of the Jesuits, also began to manifest himself as a representative of the Counter-Reformation forces by eroding the power of the Socinian medical practitioners, concentrated in the region, and discrediting their prestige.¹² The book *Commentariola*, published in Vilnius, directed against Marcello Squarzialupi, was prepared by Simoni as soon as he received the position of a physician to the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, Stephen Bathory.

⁸ See more: Pociūtė, Dainora, 'Eterodossia e medicina nella prima età moderna. I «medici ariani» alla corte di Stefano Báthory', *Rivista di Storia del Cristianesimo*, 2019, Vol. 16, pp. 37-62; Pociūtė, Dainora, 'L'esilio come eutopia. Note sul consolidamento della prima comunità sociniana nei territori della Lituania-Polonia', in: *Utopie e comunità religiose tra età moderna e contemporanea*, edited by Guido Mongini, Alessandria: Orso, 2021, pp. 25-54.

⁹ Balázs, Mihály, 'Giorgio Biandrata (1516-1588) – a Physician between Politics and Theology in Early Modern East Central Europe', in: *Isabella Jagiellon, Queen of Hungary (1539-1559)*, edited by Ágnes Máté, Teréz Oborni, Budapest: RCH, 2020, pp. 277-303.

¹⁰ 'Trovai anco un medico heretico che già si era attaccato co'l principe giovinetto di Transilvania, et questo per opera dei medici heretici del Re. Io ne ragionai con S. Mtà, poiché per questa via de' medici tutta la Transilvania è caduta in arianismo et in perniciosissime heresie. A. Possevino to the cardinal of Como, 17.04.1583', in: *Alberti Bolognetti Nuntii Apostolici in Polonia epistolae et acta 1581-1585*, A Ludovico Boratyński P. M. collecta. Pars II: 1583 (Monumenta Poloniae Vaticana, tomus V), Cracoviae: Sumptibus Academiae Polonae Litterarum et Scientiarum, 1938, pp. 239-240.

¹¹ Pociūtė, Dainora, 'Converting Physicians: the Apostasy of Socinian Gaspar Wilkowski and the Confessional Boundaries of Medicalization in 16th Century Poland-Lithuania', in: *Beyond Devotion. Religious and Literary Communities in the 16th and 17th Century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Texts and Contexts*, edited by Kristina Rutkovska, Łukasz Cybulski, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022, pp. 206-234.

¹² Socinianism, as a systematic doctrine of the antitrinitarian tendencies that spread in Europe in the second half of the 16th century (later acquired the name of Unitarianism), developed fruitfully in Poland and Lithuania from 1579, when the Italian religious dissident Fausto Sozzini (1539-1604) settled down in Cracow and became the leader of the philosophical and religious thought of heterodox community.

Simone Simoni: a converted Catholic physician in Stephen Bathory's court

Italian physician and philosopher Simone Simoni (1532-1602) is a prominent sixteenth-century European figure, whose activities represent the early modern models of religious behavior in the era of confessional fragmentation and illustrate the trajectories of Italian physicians' exiles in the late humanist era.¹³ Born in Tuscany, Lucca, one of the hotbeds of Italian evangelism, in his first book of commentaries on Aristotle's philosophy *In librum Aristotelis de sensuum instrumentis* (1566) he stated that he began his studies at the age of 12 in his hometown. From 1555 Simoni studied philosophy and medicine in Bologna, Ferrara, Naples, Pavia, and finally in Padua, where he obtained his doctorate in medicine around 1562.¹⁴ At the University of Padua, which was an important academic place of Italian heterodoxy, Simoni turned to evangelism. After returning to Lucca in 1562, he started a private medical practice, but due to suspicions of heresy, after a couple of years of work in 1564 he emigrated to Geneva, where he was accepted from the spring of 1565 as a preacher of the Italian church.¹⁵ On 21 April 1565, in Geneva Simoni married Angela Cattani, the daughter of Francesco Cattani, a refugee of the first generation of Italian exiles, and Simoni's father Giovanni soon moved to Geneva, too. In Geneva, Simoni became friends with the Reformation leader Theodor Beza (1519-1605), who helped Simoni from 1565 to get a position as a philosophy lecturer at the university. Already at the beginning of his university career, Simoni's conflicting character became apparent. In just a half of a year, from the end of May 1566 to the middle of October 1566, Simoni gave two warnings of possible resignation while demanding a salary increase. On 25 February 1567, Simoni proposed to teach a medical course and few days later, on February 27, he already gave a demonstration lecture. In March of 1567, Simoni received the position of the first professor of Medicine with an annual salary of 600 florins.

In Geneva Simoni began to write and publish his philosophical works, informing Beza that he was writing on Aristotle's formal logic and syllogisms: in 1566, the above-mentioned *In librum Aristotelis de sensuum instrumentis* appeared, and in 1567 – *Commentariorum in Ethica Aristotelis* was published.¹⁶ Encouraged by Beza, Simoni also got involved in religious polemics. Appreciating Simoni's argumentative manner, Beza decided to assign him the response to a German Lutheran theologian Jacob Schegk (1511-1587), who extensively proved the Lutheran thesis about the omnipresence of Christ. On 14 December 1565, Beza informed Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575), the leader of the Zurich reformers, about this idea.¹⁷ The latter supported Beza's choice and confirmed, that he believed that Simoni would give a suitable rebuttal to it.¹⁸ By the end of March 1567, Bullinger already had the first Simoni's publication against Schegk (*Interpretatio eorum quae continentur in praefatione Simonis Simonii Lucensis*) and through Beza sent his thanks to Simoni.¹⁹ The work, which refuted Lutheran theory by using rationalist

¹³ For more about Simoni and his works, see: Madonia, Claudio, 'Simone Simoni', in: *Bibliotheca dissidentium. Répertoire des non-conformistes religieux des seizième et dix-septième siècles*, edited by André Séguenny, Baden Baden & Bouxwiller: Valentin Koerner, 1988, Vol. IX, pp. 25-110.

¹⁴ By the way, there is no information about Simoni's doctorate in the surviving lists of Padua graduates. See: *Acta Graduum Academicorum Gymnasii Patavini. Ab anno 1551 ad annum 1565*, edited by Elisabetta Dalla Francesca Hellman, Emilia Veronese, Roma, Padova: Editrice Antenore, 2001.

¹⁵ Madonia, Claudio, 'Simone Simoni', p. 162.

¹⁶ In the 16th century medical studies were most developed in Italy, primarily at the universities of Bologna and Padua. Here the studies of medicine and philosophy formed an interrelated system: philosophy was a prerequisite for medical subjects; the medical doctorate degrees awarded were also double, covering the fields of philosophy and medicine (*physicus et philosophus*). A trained physician was also a philosopher, many famous physicians wrote philosophical works.

¹⁷ 'T. Beza to H. Bullinger, 14.12.1565, Geneva', in: *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, edited by Hippolyte Aubert, published by Fernand Aubert, Henry Meylan, et al., Vol. VI, pp. 219-221.

¹⁸ 'H. Bullinger to T. Beza, 09.10.1566, Zurich', in: *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, Vol. VII, p. 244; Later Simoni continued the controversy against Schegk. T. Beza to H. Bullinger, 17.10.1566, Rolle, in: *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, p. 253.

¹⁹ 'H. Bullinger to T. Beza, 31.03.1567, Zurich', in: *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, Vol. VIII, p. 99. Later Simoni continued the controversy against Schegk.

aristotelian arguments, served the Genevan reformers.²⁰ However, Simoni's relationship with the Swiss became complicated. During the years of Simoni's career in Geneva, Calvinists carefully controlled the rising wave of antitrinitarianism after the burning of Servetus, the most active participants of which were Italian religious dissidents. Unable to stay in Switzerland due to their opposition to Calvin, the Italians moved further across the Europe, thus encouraging the development of antitrinitarianism in the GDL and Poland, and eventually maturing the movement of early Socinianism. In the East Central Europe a whole group of Italian antitrinitarians, who had left Switzerland, became active, first of all the leader of the heterodox network, physician Giorgio Biandrata, as well as his friends Valentino Gentile (ca. 1515-1566), Gian Paolo Alciati della Motta (ca. 1515-1573) and others. In Geneva, in June of 1566 Simoni was sent to a meeting with his compatriot antitrinitarian Valentino Gentile, who left Poland-Lithuania recklessly for Geneva and was imprisoned there, but his efforts to persuade Gentile to to abjure his heresy were fruitless.²¹ Finally, Simoni himself received a complaint of suspicion of heresy by the catechist of the Italian church of the city, the aforementioned exile from Lucca Niccolò Balbani (1522-1587), who remained loyal to Calvin's orthodoxy. Simoni was forced to do public repentance and lose his professorship, although he maintained quite good relations with both Beza and Bullinger. In the summer of 1567 Simoni arrived in Paris, where he was invited to teach a course in philosophy at the *Collège Royale*, but after the edict of the French King Charles IX, issued on 25 September 1568, forbidding the teaching by non-Catholics in the schools of the Kingdom, in late 1567-early 1568 he returned to Switzerland again and lived in Zurich, Basel and Geneva (where the rest of his family was). He communicated with compatriots of the heterodox network, the famous Italian Protestant printer in Basel Pietro Perna (who emigrated from Italy in 1541) and Celio Secondo Curione (1503-1569).²²

In 1568, after Beza wrote a letter to Bullinger,²³ the latter arranged for Simoni to be invited to Heidelberg, the court of Frederick III (Elector Palatine Frederick III, 1515-1576), where Simoni worked as a court physician and brought up the duke's son Christopher, and began teaching a course in Aristotelian philosophy at the university. Angela Cattani, Simoni's first wife, who remained in Geneva, died that year. The Swiss tried to continue to use Simoni on the front of disputes with the Lutherans, Beza made plans to involve Simoni in polemics with the leader of Lutheranism at the time, Matthias Flacius (1520-1575).²⁴ Thanks to the recommendations, in 1569 Simoni received the position of physician at the court of the Elector Augustus of Saxony and soon a place at the University of Leipzig. The Lutheran environment encouraged Simoni to abandon ties with the Helvetii. When favorable circumstances arose in Germany, Simoni converted to Lutheranism and lived successfully in Leipzig for twelve years, joining the activities at the University of Leipzig, where he first taught philosophy, and later (from 1575) a medical course. In late 1569 or early 1570, in Leipzig he married for the second time, a miss Magdalena von Hülsen, who came from a prominent Leipzig family. The Reformers' side continued to suspect him of antitrinitarianism, and finally a word reached Bullinger that Simoni was preparing to write a treatise against his former patron Beza himself.²⁵ However, while avoiding religious polemics Simoni devoted himself to teaching medicine, introducing practical surgery and anatomy classes at the university, and in 1567 preparing a project to reform medical studies at the University of Leipzig. In 1572, in Leipzig Simoni published one of his most famous works, *De vera nobilitate*, which was later re-published in the seventeenth century. He also published a series of medical works in which he was working on the traditional humoral theory *De partibus animalium* (1574), *De vera ac indubitata ratione [...] februm humoralium* (1575), *Artificiosa*

²⁰ In 1568-1573 three of Scheg's publications appeared in Tübingen in response to Simoni's criticism.

²¹ 'T. Beza to H. Bullinger, 19.06.1566, Geneva', in: *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, Vol. VII, p. 142. Gentile suffered the fate of Miguel Servetus and was soon beheaded.

²² Madonia, Claudio, 'Simone Simoni', pp. 166-167.

²³ 'T. Beza to H. Bullinger, 13.04.1568, Geneva', in: *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, Vol. IX, p. 105.

²⁴ 'T. Beza to Hubert Languet, 27.02.1570, Geneva', in: *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, Vol. XI, p. 60.

²⁵ 'H. Bullinger to T. Beza, 20.02.1574, Zurich', in: *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, Vol. XV, p. 45.

curandae pestis methodus (1576), and *Synopsis brevissima* (1577). While still in contact with the Swiss reformers (Beza and Simler), Simoni visited Basel, where he began to print his books at Pietro Perna's printing house. There he encountered his compatriots who had emigrated from Italy, physician Marcello Squarzialupi and Venetian historian Griovanni Michele Bruto (1517-1592), who were soon active in Transylvania and Poland-Lithuania.

In August 1581, when the Elector Augustus of Saxony once again issued an order that all professors of the University of Leipzig must sign the Lutheran confession of faith, Simoni refused to sign the document presented to the professors by theologian Nicolaus Selnecker (1530-1592) (*Formula di Concordia*), thereby incurring the Lutheran sentence to excommunicate him. Beza, learning that Simoni had 'betrayed' not only the Swiss Calvinists but also the German Lutherans, wrote his famous phrase in a letter to Rudolf Gwalther (1519-1586), that Simoni 'has no other God but Aristotle'.²⁶ Forced to withdraw from Leipzig, Simoni looked for another place to work and live, which he was helped to find by an influential figure in the network of intellectuals of Central Europe, Andrea Dudith-Sbardellati (1533-1589). He admired natural history and medicine and knew most of the physicians who worked in the courts of East Central Europe, as well as the chief physician of the King king of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania Stephen Bathory, the religious dissident from Padua Niccolò Buccella (died in 1599), who at that time was just looking for an additional physician for the court of the ruler Stephen Bathory. On 14 August 1581, Dudith informed his fellow physician Peter Monau (1551-1588) that Simoni wanted to move to Cracow.²⁷ In the summer of 1581, after leaving his second wife and three children in Leipzig, Simoni arrived in Prague. There he got closer to the Jesuits and once again confirmed his fame as a man without religion (T. Beza knew about his transition to the Catholic side as early as 22 September 1581).²⁸ Simoni's second wife soon died and the children were placed in the care of their grandfather Adrian von Hülsen. In February of 1582, in Prague, at the estate of the magnate Vratislav II Pernstein (Vratislav von Pernstein, 1530-1582), Simoni officially renounced Protestantism and made a public confession of the Catholic faith.²⁹ Many Jesuit testimonies show that they regarded Simoni's loyalty to the Roman Church with caution. While in Prague Simoni temporarily worked at the court of the Emperor Rudolph II in Breslau, but was unable to finally establish himself there due to Johannes Crato von Craffheim (1519-1585), the leader of the imperial court physicians, who was critical of him. It was then that Simoni, an active participant in the international medical network, who had not only enemies but also companions, received confirmation from Stephen Bathory about his admission to the court. From January 1583, together with the Socinian Buccella, who soon became his opponent, he served as a physician to ruler Stephen Bathory for four years.³⁰ In Poland, in the spring of 1583, Simoni married for the third to the time: his wife became Magdalena Krzyżanowska, the daughter of the Cracow mayor. After the death of Stephen Bathory in Grodno on 12 December 1586, Simoni began a long controversy with Buccella about the causes of the king's death, however, not receiving any support he had to withdraw from Poland-Lithuania and lived, for some time, in Olomouc, Moravia, Vienna and Prague. In 1600 the Inquisition requested him to present himself in Rome, but there is no record of Simoni's reaction to this. His literary activities ended with the polemic against Buccella. Simoni died in Cracow on 2 April 1602 and was buried in the Franciscan Church of Cracow within the care of his wife.

²⁶ 'Homo enim ille prorsus est impius, nec alium Deum habet quam Aristotelicum. T. Beza to Rudolf Gwalther, 28.02.1581, Geneva', in: *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, Vol. XXII, pp. 50-52.

²⁷ 'A. Dudith to P. Monau, 14 August 1581, Breslau', in: Dudithius, Andreas, *Epistulae*, edited by Lech Szczucki, Tiburtio Szepessy, Pars VII, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó-Argumentum Kiadó, 2019, No. 1073, p. 90.

²⁸ 'T. Beza to Rudolph Gwalther, 22.09.1581', in: *Correspondance de Théodore de Bèze*, Vol. XXII, pp. 188-189.

²⁹ Firpo, Massimo, 'Alcuni documenti sulla conversione al cattolicesimo di Simone Simoni', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, 1974, Vol. 4, Serie III, pp. 1485.

³⁰ L. Szczucki assumed that Simoni went to Cracow in 1583 together with the German philosopher, a pioneer of atheistic thought Christian Francken (ca. 1550-after 1610), see: Szczucki, Lech, *W kręgu myślicieli heretyckich*, Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków, Gdańsk: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich, Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1972, pp. 139-141.

Simoni's published works on philosophy, ethics and medicine (a total of 22 of which are currently known)³¹ were determined by his own mobility. While serving as Bathory's physician and after his death, in a period of six years (1583-1589 Simoni published his last eight books, two of which were the works of his polemic with Squarcialupi and four (after the king's death) – controversy texts with Buccella. As soon as he arrived in Cracow (preface published on 8 February 1583), Simoni published his first medical work of the Polish-Lithuanian period, *Historia aegritudinis ac mortis Dominis a Niemsta*. Lord Lieutenant of Warsaw (since 1579), favorite and chamberlain (*cubicularius*) of Stephen Bathory, Jerzy Niemsta, educated in Wittenberg, Leipzig and Basel, was one of Simoni's first patients who fell ill in early 1583. Simoni failed to save the patient: only 32-year-old Niemsta died after five weeks of pneumonia. Simoni published an academic medical history-type work immediately after the patient's death in order to defend himself against possible criticism, which, nevertheless, he did not escape. Simoni's second work, published in Cracow, disputing with the Swiss Reformed physician and theologian Thomas Erast (1524-1583) on the topic of the decomposition of bodies (*Disputatio de putredine*, 1584), was written while Simoni was still living in Leipzig. Two books of Simoni's controversy with Squarcialupi were published in Vilnius (1584) and Cracow (1585), the places of publication of the polemic with Buccella were Nysa (Silesia, 1587), Cracow (1587) and Olomouc (Bohemia, 1588-1589). As Stephen Bathory's physician, and thus obliged to accompany the king, Simoni lived where the king resided. From December 1583 until August 1584, Stephen Bathory resided in Lithuania, Grodno and Vilnius. It was the longest uninterrupted residence period of this ruler in Lithuania during the entire decade of his reign. After spending almost nine months in Lithuania, Simoni prepared and published *Commentariola*, a work directed against Squarcialupi, which became the first medical publication in the capital of the GDL.

Marcello Squarcialupi – a physician of the early Socinian medical network

The Italian physician Marcello Squarcialupi (1538-1592), criticized by Simoni in his Vilnius publication, was a member of the emerging early Socinian community in the late sixteenth century in East-Central Europe, primarily in Poland-Lithuania.³² His gravitation to heterodoxy and his second emigration to East-Central Europe were similar to those of the other Italian heterodox Christian, who were forced to leave Switzerland in the sixth and seventh decades. Originally from Piombino, Squarcialupi studied in Pisa from 1556, where he defended his doctorate in medicine and philosophy on 17 June 1562. In 1565, in Milan he published his first book, a work written in Italian about the plague, *Difesa contro la peste*. The circumstances of Squarcialupi becoming a Protestant are unknown, but the facts presented to his father Michelangelo in the case filed after his son's departure leave no doubt that the father also into the evangelical movement. Between 1565 and 1566 Squarcialupi escaped from Italy and never returned to his homeland. The first stop was Graunbünden, from 1567 to 1571 he lived in Poschiavo and other places. He married the daughter of a local Reformed pastor from Naples, Armenios Gutolla, and they had children. He became close to his heterodox compatriots, but the Reformed leader of medical community, Theodor Zwinger (1533-1588), remained his friend and patron. In 1572, at the invitation of the printer Pietro Perna (1519-1582) Squarcialupi arrived in Basel, in February enrolled in the university (*M. S. Plumbinensis Tuscus*). The city was home to the famous Italian Pietro Perna, as well as many other printing houses, making Basel the European center of Neoplatonism, Hermeticism and Kabbalism.³³ For several months Squarcialupi worked as a proofreader at Pietro Perna's printing house.

³¹ Madonia, Claudio, 'Marcello Squarcialupi', in: *Bibliotheca dissidentium. Répertoire des non-conformistes religieux des seizième et dix-septième siècles*, edited by André Séguenny, Baden Baden & Bouxwiller: Valentin Koerner, 1994, Vol. XVI, pp. 34-35. This bibliography does not include the last publication of Simoni's life, *Appendix scoparum* (1589).

³² Madonia, Claudio, 'Marcello Squarcialupi', pp. 119-126.

³³ Rotodò, Antonio, 'Pietro Perna e la vita culturale e religioso di Basiliae fra il 1570 e il 1580', in: *Studi e ricerche di storia ereticale del Cinquecento*, Torino: Ed. Giappichelli, 1974, Vol. 1, pp. 273-391, 343-344.

As mentioned before, in Basel Squarcialupi met Simone Simoni, with whom he did not avoid competitive conflicts. Italian evangelical physicians, who left their homeland, were patronized by leading German-speaking physicians in Northern and Central Europe, who themselves mostly received their medical education in Italy. After returning to their homeland, they worked as physicians at prestigious universities and imperial estates. One such person was Johannes Crato von Craffheim (1519-1585), the aforementioned court physician of Rudolf II, whose intercession helped the migrants to establish themselves in the diaspora. Thanks to Zwinger, having received a recommendation from Crato Squarcialupi set out for Vienna, but when the ship began to sink during the voyage he lost all his belongings, including books and manuscripts. Crato sheltered him and helped obtain a position of physician in Moravia, Třebíč, where he arrived in December of 1574. The work of a physician in Moravia did not bring enough income and in 1577 he sent his family to Graunbünden to live with his wife's parents. At that time, his successful Cicero dictionary *Nizolius, sive thesaurus Ciceronianus* (1576) was published in Basel. Squarcialupi also became close with Dudith, who settled in his estate in Paskow near Olomouc after Stephen Bathory won the election of the King of Poland-Lithuania. He came to visit him in February-April of 1578.³⁴ In September of 1578, with hopes of establishing himself in Poland Squarcialupi went to Cracow.³⁵ Squarcialupi failed to get a job there but, through the mediation of Buccella and Biandrata, he received an offer for 400 florins to work at the estate of the young Duke of Transylvania, Stephen Bathory's nephew, young Sigismund Bathory (1572-1613), to which he went in December of 1579. In Alba Julia Squarcialupi spent a rather long and successful period, until the spring of 1585. There he worked on various writings, maintained close relations with Giorgio Biandrata, who enjoyed a great medical authority. Socinians were active in Poland-Lithuania, and their leader Fausto Sozzini lived in Cracow from 1579. Although Squarcialupi's salary rose to 500 florins in February of 1583, longing for a milder climate, around 1585 he decided to return to Switzerland, Poschiavo, but, after returning and experiencing little interest in his work he began to regret leaving Transylvania. He complained to Zwinger about the intellectually unstimulating environment and returned to Transylvania with his family in the summer of 1588.³⁶ Not much is known about Squarcialupi's last years. In September 1592, Jesuit Alfonso Carrillo (ca. 1553-1618) announced a message about his death in Alba Julia.

The Comet of 1577 and the Protestant debates in natural philosophy

Squarcialupi prepared a series of philosophical and medical works, published in Switzerland, Transylvania and Poland, which reflected the current trends in natural philosophy in the Protestant *respublica medicorum* community of the time. Squarcialupi's interests in natural philosophy were stimulated by the famous so-called Great Comet, which appeared over Europe in November 1577, and inspired at least 36 known works.³⁷ In March 1578, when Squarcialupi visited the emperor's diplomat Dudith in Paskov, he finished the work on *De cometarum significatione Commentariolus*, dedicated to Crato von Craffheim, which was published in Basel in 1579 in Pietro Perna's printing house by Dudith's friend, the historian of Stephen Bathory and Venetian convert to evangelism Michele Bruto (1517-1592). Sixteenth-century flourishing natural philosophy and astronomy were closely intertwined with astrology, prophecy, confessional and even political contexts. In his preface, Brutus criticized the prophecies and joined the so-called 'scientific' approach of Dudith, who interpreted comets as natural phenomena. The natural philosophy of

³⁴ Squarcialupi visited him in February – April of 1578, see Madonia, Claudio, 'Marcello Squarcialupi', p. 121.

³⁵ Crato and Dudith did not support this decision, see Johannes Crato to Theodor Zwinger, 16.07.1578 [S.l.], in: Dudithius, Andreas, *Epistulae*, Pars VI, p. 922.

³⁶ Madonia, Claudio, 'Marcello Squarcialupi', p. 126.

³⁷ For more see: Tessicini, Dario 'The Comet of 1577 in Italy: Astrological Prognostications and Cometary Theory at the End of the Sixteenth Century', in: *Celestial Novelties on the Eve of the Scientific Revolution*, edited by Dario Tessicini, Patric Boner, Firenze: Leo S. Olschi editore, 2013, pp. 57-84.

the sixteenth century was based on Aristotelianism, but its interpretations differed, and those differences were also determined by confessional identities. Dudith, who at that time was already turning towards heterodoxy, invited Aristotle's teaching to be read in the light of 'true Christianity' and to delve into particular causes of natural phenomena. Such appeals drew a wide-ranging criticism, both from the forces that resented the denial of the divine nature of the comet, and from traditional Aristotelian theorists who denied the significance of the experiment and criticized 'Arian' science. Impressed by Dudith, Squarcialupi joined the circle of comet discussants, producing a treatise in February of 1579. Squarcialupi's work *De cometa in universum*, dedicated to Dudith, was published in Basel in 1580 in a collection of works dedicated to the analysis of comets under the common title *De cometis dissertationes novae*, together with Erast, Simon Grynaeus (1493-1541) and again re-published Dudith's work.³⁸ In Squarcialupi's natural philosophy writings there was also a debate with the authors that natural phenomena as supernatural signs.³⁹ In his work on the comet, Squarcialupi criticized some aspects of Aristotle even more than Dudith, and completely rejected the astrological interpretation of comets.⁴⁰ But this time, like many others he was wrong, explaining the causes of the appearance of the comet, just like Aristotle, by connecting them to meteorological processes. Only the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe (1546-1601) found out that comets are celestial bodies rather than meteorological phenomena.⁴¹ In 1581, another small work extending the naturalistic interests of Squarcialupi appeared, *De coeli ardore opinio*, dedicated to the phenomenon of the *aurora borealis* (northern lights, polar dawn) that appeared in Transylvania on 10 September 1580.⁴² This work was re-published for the second time in Cracow, in the printing house of A. Rodecki (presumably also in 1581). The latter Squarcialupi's work is considered to be the first observational description of the northern lights, which proved that it is a phenomenon based on the principles of physics, like fog or rain, which does not form in the sky but in the air, and is a meteorological phenomenon.⁴³

The goal of the newly converted Catholic Simoni, who considered himself a scholar of traditional Aristotelianism, which he undertook in his Vilnius work *Commentariola medica et physica*, was not only the criticism of natural science experiments but also of the 'heretics' (the Socinians), their authors.⁴⁴ The book consisted of several parts: first of all, Simoni provided various data about the unpublished works of Squarcialupi known to him, commented on heterodox mutual correspondence, and tried to discredit the so-called network of heretical physicians and their competences.⁴⁵ Spreading the views already expressed in his earlier philosophical works, Simoni criticized both Squarcialupi's manuscript on the treatment of drunkenness he had access to, and his published natural philosophy works. The foundations of the polemic between Squarcialupi and Simoni stemmed from the different principles of natural philosophy. The evangelical philosophy of nature and medicine, which was developed by Squarcialupi as well as

³⁸ *De cometis dissertationes novae clariss. virorum Thom. Erasti, Andr. Dudithij, Marc. Squarcialupi, Symon Grynaei*, [S.I.]: Ex officina Leonardi Pstensis, sumptibus Petri Pernaie, 1580.

The work by Squarcialupi comprised the second part, pp. 27-77: *De cometa in universum, atque de illo qui anno 1577, visus est, opinio Marcelli Squarcialupi Plumbinensis: ad Ampliss. & Sapientem virum Andream Dudithium, Caesaris Consiliarium*. New edition: Andreas Dudithius, *Epistulae*, Pars VI, pp. 108-133.

³⁹ By the way, out of all Italian publications, only this work by Squarcialupi was included in the famous astronomer's Tycho Brahe's review of the literature on the comet *De mundi aetherei recentioribus phaenomenis* (1603), see: Tessicini, Dario 'The Comet of 1577 in Italy', p. 58.

⁴⁰ Vasoli, Cesare, 'Andreas Dudith-Sbardelati e la sua disputa sulle comete', in: *Rapporti veneto-ungheresi all'epoca del Rinascimento*, edited by Tibor Klaniczay, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1975, pp. 299-342.

⁴¹ Brahe, who did not acknowledge the heliocentric system and stuck to the geocentric one, believed the comet to be the confirmation of Aristotle's teaching about the immobility of the celestial spheres.

⁴² For more see Kázmér, Miklós; Timár, Gábor, 'The first scientific description of aurora borealis: the 10 September 1580 event in Transylvania, recorded by Marcello Squarcialupi', *Geoscience Letters*, 2016, Vol. 3. [accessed 08 March 2022]. Access at: <<https://geoscienceletters.springeropen.com/track/pdf/10.1186/s40562-016-0047-2.pdf?site=http://geoscienceletters.springeropen.com>>.

⁴³ Madonia, Claudio, 'Marcello Squarcialupi', pp. 154-155.

⁴⁴ *Commentariola* was dedicated to Bathory's secretary, vice-Chancellor of the Transylvanian Chancellory in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth the Hungarian Paul Gyulay (Pál Gyulay, Paul Iulay, Paweł Dziulay).

⁴⁵ Simoni, Simone, *Commentariola*, pp. 30-31.

other Socinian physicians, looked for a divine plan in nature based on the principles of Christian natural philosophy, and for particular explanations and reasons for various phenomena. Simoni saw nature as a force *per se* operating according to independent physical laws based on Aristotle:

Quod est per se et primo principium motus & quietis, ipsum non habet principium. Natura est principium per se & primo motus et quietis. Ergo ipsa non habet principium. Hoc autem soli Deo convenit, qui intra omnia est (dicebat vir divinus) sed non tamen inclusus in ipsis: extra omnia, sed non tamen exclusus ab illis, intimus rector, eorum quae creavit extimus.⁴⁶

He considered hypotheses and interpretations based on observations to be unreliable empiricism, inferior to systematic theory. For him, there were two forces at work in nature manifested in the movement of two natures – the expanding heat and the contracting cold, which influence matter and create what is in the heavens and the earth. By the way, the Jesuits, who wanted the converts to take up the criticism of the theology of heretics instead of the topics of nature and medicine, which they themselves avoided, evaluated Simoni's efforts with restraint. In a letter dated 19 April 1585, Tommaso Natale informed Possevin that he had received Simoni's work written in a slanderous manner (It. *oltraggioso*), and indicated that he had urged him to undertake more serious work.⁴⁷ Simoni ignored these warnings: in Vilnius publication only the seeds of Simoni's aggressive rhetoric appeared (for example, constantly calling the opponent an 'ass' or a 'bachelor'), which acquired even more colours in his later polemic with Buccella.

Commentariola provoked further polemics, in which philosophical, confessional, and medical issues were interwoven, demonstrating that in the sixteenth century naturalistic polemics were not independent of religious processes. Although both Crato and Zwinger in their letters urged Squarcialupi not to react to criticism, the latter responded. In the dedication of the work *Simonis Simonii primus triumphus*, published in Transylvania in 1584, Squarcialupi stated that he could not be humiliated in front of the Polish King.⁴⁸ Using Crato, Dudith, Zwinger, Biandrata and others as witnesses, Squarcialupi emphasized that he was seeking a dispute, not a fight, which was undertaken in Simoni's work published in Vilnius. Simoni-Squarcialupi polemic did not end with these two books printed in Vilnius and Transylvanian Cluj (Kolozsvár). In 1585, Simoni produced a voluminous response to Squarcialupi's criticism – the *Simonius supplex*.⁴⁹ The first part of this work was devoted to the criticism of Squarcialupi's activities in Basel and Transylvania, selectively using the details of the wider Protestant medical panorama, and the second part to the problem of peripneumonia, which caused the death of Simoni's patient Niemsta, and the defense of the treatment tactics. In 1586, in Poschiavo Squarcialupi published the continuations of the polemic with Simoni: *Censurae Simonianae confutatio* and *De amygdalarum vi contra ebrietatem*.⁵⁰ Although the author suffered great financial losses during their preparation, both works were re-published together with other unpublished works prepared in Transylvania under the title *Marceli Squarcialupi Plumbinensis opusculorum pars* (Poschiavo, 1587).⁵¹ Squarcialupi's later works continued to discuss Simoni's patient Niemsta, polemics with other works by Simoni, especially his work *De putredine*,

⁴⁶ Simoni, Simone, *Commentariola*, p. 47.

⁴⁷ Tommaso Natale to A. Possevin, 19.04.1584, Cracow, in: *Alberti Bolognetti Nuntii Apostolici in Polonia epistolarum et actorum pars III: Fasc. 2 (M. Junio 1584-Maio 1585 (Monumenta Poloniae Vaticana, tomus 7), Appendix M. Jan. 1584-Febr. 1585, Kraków, 1950, p. 189.*

⁴⁸ Squarcialupi, Marcello, *Simonis Simonii Lucensis primus triumphus de Marcello Squarcialupo Plumbinensi ab eodem Squarcialupo adornatus & promulgatus*, Claudiopoli: Gaspar Heltai, 1584.

⁴⁹ [Simone Simoni], *Simonius supplex ad incomparabilem virum, praeclarissimisque suis facinoribus, de universa Republica literaria egregie meritum, Marcellocamillum quendam, Squarcilupum Thuscum Plumbinensem triumphantem*, Cracoviae: A. Rodecius, 1585.

⁵⁰ Zucchini, Giampaolo, 'Per la ricostruzione dell' epistolario epistolario di Marcello Squarcialupi', p. 335.

⁵¹ Madonia, Claudio, 'Marcello Squarcialupi tra Poschiavo e Alba Iulia. Note biografiche', in: *Riforma e società nel Grigioni, Valtellina e Valchiavenna tra '500 e '600*, edited by Alessandro Pastore, Milano, 1991, p. 101.

published in Cracow.⁵² Simoni, who after the death of Stephen Bathory in December 1586 got involved in a long polemic with another Socinianist physician, Buccella, did not respond to these writings. As the Simoni-Buccella controversy continued to develop, Squarcialupi took the opportunity to intervene with a short work, *Simonis Simonii summa religio* (1588), in which he exposed his opponent as a godless man who changed confessions on demand.⁵³

Afteward. Gaspar Wilkowski and Simone Simoni: the first Catholic converts contesting the heterodox physicians of Poland-Lithuania

The first two physicians, who were converted to Catholicism by the Jesuits in 1582-1583, fulfilled their mission in the history of the Counter-Reformation in Poland-Lithuania by publicly criticizing the heterodoxy. Local physician Gaspar Wilkowski, who, in Polish, prepared the first propaganda work of a convert in Vilnius in 1583, and the Italian Simone Simoni who in 1584 started a medical controversy against the Socinianist physicians of the region, became the first critics of the 'Arians' and shapers of negative public opinion towards them.

In 1584, Stephan Bathory's physician Simone Simoni's *Commentariola*, which appeared in Vilnius, was directed against the Socinian physician Marcello Squarcialupi, who worked at the Transylvanian Court. This first and only sixteenth-century work of the learned medicine published in Lithuania started a wave of medical and nature philosophy debates in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Transylvania. The controversy was the fruit of the Italian physicians, who retreated from their homeland due to religious persecution and held prestigious medical positions in the estates of the rulers, reflecting the tensions of the early Socinianism maturing in Poland-Lithuania, and the Jesuits' struggle against heterodoxy in the second half of the sixteenth century. The Simoni-Squarcialupi polemic of 1584-1586 was the first step of this controversy. After the death of the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania Stephen Bathory in December 1586, its second phase began: Simoni continued the heterodox criticism until 1589, polemicizing with Bathory's first physician, Squarcialupi's associate and Socinianist Niccolò Buccella. During this polemic an even larger group of Latin works was published in Lithuania, Poland, Transylvania and Moravia. The topics of the works were manifold and the personal ambitions and confessional aspects were mixed with the professional matters of medicine and natural philosophy.

Simoni's polemic with Squarcialupi, and later with Buccella, demonstrates the crossroads of confession, medicine and natural philosophy that emerged in the second half of the sixteenth century. Simoni, Stephen Bathory's physician during the second period of his reign (from 1583), a convert from Protestantism to Catholicism, initiated the polemic and tried to exploit the emerging intolerance of the concentration of heterodox physicians in Stephen Bathory's environment. While seeking to please the Jesuits, Simoni sought to disgrace the tendencies of the humanistic medicine and high prestige of 'Arian physicians', whose most prominent figures were in service at the courts of Transylvania and Poland-Lithuania during Stephan Bathory's era. Simoni's own religious views were rather indifferent, but he manipulated his confessions for the sake of his career. While denying theoretical competencies in medicine and natural philosophy of his opponents, Simoni criticised the Socinian investigations of 'Christian medicine' and did not recognise the value of observation and experiments, considering Socinian physicians to be worthless empiricists and heretics.

Translated by Audronė Gerdauskaitė

⁵² Madonia, Claudio, 'Marcello Squarcialupi', p. 159.

⁵³ Squarcialupi, Marcello, *Simonis Simonii Lucensis, primum Romani, tum Calviniani, deinde Lutherani, denuo Romani, sempre autem Athei summa religio*, Cracoviae: A. Rodecius, 1588.

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