

## “ALL THAT PERTAINS TO MEDICINE”: *PROTOMEDICI* AND *PROTOMEDICATI* IN EARLY MODERN ITALY

by

DAVID GENTILCORE \*

In 1621 the *vice-protomedico* of the Papal States was arrested while inspecting an apothecary's shop and charged with committing financial irregularities in the course of his duties. Giacomo Giacobelli had received his doctorate in 1598 and, in addition to being physician at St John Lateran in Rome, was serving for the third time as *vice-protomedico*. As Giacobelli told the judges of the Apostolic Chamber, his authority as *vice-protomedico* in the Papal States outside Rome was analogous to the *protomedico*'s power within the city.

That is, to punish, whether civilly or criminally, any crime whatever concerning medicine, and discover and bring to an end every civil, criminal and mixed case which concerns the said profession. And furthermore, to examine and license surgeons and apothecaries, and confirm the licences already obtained by barbers and surgeons, or withdraw them . . .<sup>1</sup>

Two apothecaries had denounced Giacobelli. One, Pietro Buonaugurio, an apothecary with forty years' experience in Tivoli, declared that Giacobelli had fined him twenty-five *scudi* even though he had no faulty goods in his shop. When Buonaugurio had protested, Giacobelli reduced the fine, first to fifteen *scudi* and then to ten. When Buonaugurio refused to pay even this, Giacobelli sent in the *sbirri*,<sup>2</sup> who removed Buonaugurio's bronze mortar as surety. On his own initiative, Buonaugurio took the offending drugs to Rome. Here they were examined by three members of the College of Apothecaries and found to be of good quality.<sup>3</sup>

Other medical practitioners testified against Giacobelli. A barber named Andrea Lucchese had refused to appear before Giacobelli and pay the licence fee, claiming he had never needed a licence before. Giacobelli had the *sbirri* clear his shop, at which point Lucchese paid the fee of six *giuli*. Bartolomeo Giovannini, also a barber, at first refused

\* David Gentilcore, PhD, Churchill College, Cambridge CB3 0DS.

I should like to thank Alvar Martínez Vidal, Ottavia Niccoli and Alessandro Pastore for their assistance. My gratitude also to the staffs of the Archivi di Stato of Naples, Rome, Bologna, and Siena, in particular Giuliana Adorni (Rome) and Tiziana di Zio (Bologna). Finally, my thanks to the Wellcome Trust for a travel grant to carry out this research.

<sup>1</sup> Archivio di Stato, Rome (hereinafter A.S.R.), *Università*, busta 1, 'Processo contra D. Iacobum Iacobellum V. Protho.cum, 1620', fol. 90v. All translations are my own, except where noted otherwise.

<sup>2</sup> Armed guards employed as a rudimentary police force. For the low repute in which the *sbirri* were held and their role in enforcing justice, see Steven Hughes, 'Fear and loathing in Bologna and Rome: the Papal police in perspective', *J. soc. Hist.*, 1987, **21**: 97–116.

<sup>3</sup> 'Contra Iacobum Iacobellum', op. cit., note 1 above, fols. 26 and 150v–2.

to pay for a licence, on the grounds that he was already licensed but had lost the certificate.<sup>4</sup> A widow named Sarra Vitale was imprisoned and fined twenty-five *scudi* “for teaching a young shoemaker called Giacomo Lombardo a remedy of drinking a certain wood water [i.e., *lignum vitae*] to free himself from certain frigid pains he had”. In addition, she stated, Giacobelli sought to have her pay ten *scudi* for a “licence to medicate”, plus the expenses Giacobelli had incurred during his stay, but “I did not want to give anything, since I am not a healer” (*medichessa*).<sup>5</sup> Finally, two sisters, both midwives in Tivoli, testified against the vice-*protomedico*. They declared that they had been practising for many years without a licence before Giacobelli came along. Their justification was that “no one in Tivoli has ever heard that to be a midwife a licence was needed”. Giacobelli had forced each woman to pay eight *giuli* for her licence.<sup>6</sup>

The court of the Apostolic Chamber, the state’s massive financial organ, was concerned to ascertain how Giacobelli charged licence fees and enforced fines. Giacobelli asserted throughout the trial that there had been no wrong-doing. Rather ruefully, he described how much of his time had been spent collecting the money owed to the *protomedicato* and the College of Physicians, often paid in instalments which licensees did not always respect. The taking of sureties was a necessary precaution. He denied ever taking payments which he did not note in his register. As for demanding payment for the expenses of room, board and stabling, this was part of his due recompense as vice-*protomedico* during tours of inspection, though he had waived it in the case of the woman Vitale.<sup>7</sup> Presumably, the court found Giacobelli guilty of fraud, because twenty years later, when it felt sure of support, the *protomedicato* launched a lawsuit against the Apostolic Chamber for its proceedings against Giacobelli.<sup>8</sup>

The trial against Giacobelli is a fitting way to begin this introductory study of the *protomedici* and *protomedicati* of early modern Italy. Whether Giacobelli was innocent or guilty, it is obvious that an office created to oversee the medical profession and the practice of medicine had to contend with much else as part of the power structures in society. The trial hints at the financial preoccupations which were so much a feature of office-holding in early modern Europe. It also suggests the tensions caused by conflicting and overlapping jurisdictions and authority that pitted one magistracy against another, as well as the multiplicity of interests involved in bringing offenders to law. As we shall see, this is true whether the *protomedicato* in question was a creation of the monarch or lay within the local medical college. The activities of such bodies were conditioned by the “political culture and the institutional and legal framework of the larger society”<sup>9</sup> in which they operated. Early modern Italy was a myriad of different states, so this essay will begin with a brief survey of the origins of the various Italian *protomedicati*. As the office is generally associated with Spain and its empire, it will be useful to compare its Italian

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 155.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 66 and 157–9.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 165–6.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 94v., 101 and 106–7v.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Fausto Garofalo, *Quattro secoli di vita del Protomedicato e del Collegio dei Medici di Roma (Regesto dei documenti dal 1471 al 1870)*, Rome, Pubblicazioni dell’Istituto di storia della medicina dell’Università di Roma, 1950, p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> As Matthew Ramsey has noted in the context of late *ancien régime* France, in ‘The repression of unauthorized medical practice in eighteenth-century France’, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 1982, 7: 118–35, on p. 119.

versions. In part II we shall turn to the functions and activities of the *protomedicati*, before concluding with an examination of their jurisdictional limitations and their characteristics as offices in the early modern state. All the *protomedicati* will be included in this survey, although the limitations posed by surviving archival records necessitates a geographical emphasis on those of Rome, Bologna, and Siena, and a chronological emphasis on the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

## I

Although health legislation and mechanisms for supervising the day-to-day practice of medicine in the Italian states certainly existed during the Middle Ages, they gained force in the sixteenth century with the establishment of specific structures like the *protomedicati*. These took three forms: collegial, royal (or Spanish), and municipal. The magistracies in both Rome and Siena were of the first type, having grown out of the medical colleges of these cities. The Rome College of Physicians is said to have been founded in the twelfth century, as a guild, though the earliest surviving reference to it is the confirmation of the college's statutes by papal bull in 1471. In Rome the *protomedico* gradually took over the authority of the college's prior. Likewise in Siena, the first *protomedico*, to judge by surviving records, held office from 1562, while the post of prior became largely ceremonial.<sup>10</sup> The *protomedicato* of Bologna was a similar outgrowth of that city's medical college, which established the tribunal in 1517. Its origins, however, lay in the disciplinary norms contained in the 1378 Statutes of the College of Medicine and Arts. These granted the college jurisdiction over disputes between doctors and patients and over the inspection of apothecaries' shops and the charging of fines. It was also responsible for the licensing of "charlatans"; for this reason, the three people appointed to carry out these tasks were called the "assumpti contra empyricos".<sup>11</sup> In 1553 Bologna and its immediate territory was declared exempt from the jurisdiction of the Roman *protomedicato*. But, although this gave the Bolognese *protomedicato* formal independence, a recognition of that city's importance in medicine, Rome continued to claim a certain superiority. Beginning with a papal brief of 1576, Rome asserted that all physicians wishing to practise in Rome and the Papal States had to be examined before the Roman *protomedico* and several members of the Rome College of Physicians, regardless of where they had taken their doctorates. This enraged the Bolognese authorities; the dispute lasted until 1727, when Pope Benedict XIII—who had himself studied at Bologna—recognized the privileges of Bologna University.<sup>12</sup>

The story in Naples and Sicily is quite different. Here, due to a relatively strong central administration, royal ordinances regulated the medical profession from early on.<sup>13</sup> Both

<sup>10</sup> A. Garosi, 'I protomedici del collegio di Siena dal 1562 al 1808', *Bullettino senese di storia patria*, 1938, 9: 173–81.

<sup>11</sup> Edoardo Rosa, 'L' Assunteria di sanità nella difesa della salute pubblica a Bologna durante il XVIII secolo', in *Famiglie senatorie e istituzioni cittadine a Bologna nel Settecento*, Bologna, Istituto per la storia di Bologna, 1980, pp. 179–234, on pp. 182–3.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Antonio Brighetti, 'Documenti inediti sulla controversia fra il Collegio dei Medici di Bologna e di Roma circa l'esercizio della professione', *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia di storia dell'arte sanitaria*, 1965, 44: pp. 67–73.

<sup>13</sup> Carlo Cipolla, *Public health and the medical profession in the Renaissance*, Cambridge University Press, 1976, pp. 5–6, and Richard Palmer, 'Physicians and the state in post-medieval Italy', in A. W. Russell (ed.), *The town and state physician in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment*, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, 1981, especially pp. 57–9.

kingdoms owe the first appointment of *protomedici* to Aragonese kings. Initially, the *protomedico*'s role as "first among physicians"<sup>14</sup> was an extension of his status as the personal physician of the king. In 1397 King Martin II of Sicily appointed the first *protomedico*, Ruggero de Camma, with authority over the whole island.<sup>15</sup> It was de Camma who compiled the statutes of the apothecaries in 1407<sup>16</sup> and was present at the king's deathbed two years later, among the king's followers during his campaign in Sardinia.<sup>17</sup> The 'Capitula et ordinaciones' of the Sicilian *protomedicato* were compiled in 1429 by the *protomedico* Antonio d'Alessandro and approved by King Alfonso the Magnanimous, according to Giovanni Filippo Ingrassia, who revised them.<sup>18</sup> Alfonso also appointed a *protomedico* for the Kingdom of Naples when he became king there in 1444, apparently following what was established local practice.<sup>19</sup> In fact, his immediate predecessor, Queen Giovanna II, had set up a medical college in the city of Naples, naming her personal physician, Salvatore Calenda of Salerno, as its prior.<sup>20</sup> More formal recognition of the office came in an imperial "privilege" issued by Charles V in 1530 to the then *protomedico* of Naples Narciso Verdugno, who was having difficulty enforcing his powers. He was given the authority "to examine, recognize, and castigate all non-graduate physicians, surgeons, apothecaries, grocers, alchemists, barbers, enchanters, healers, midwives, and any other persons subject or attached to the said offices".<sup>21</sup>

Both *protomedicati* were closely linked to the Spanish viceregal administration. It was not unusual for well-connected physicians to circulate amongst the various medical offices in the two kingdoms, to the annoyance of local physicians. Domenico Bottoni, for instance, was appointed Sicilian *protomedico* by the viceroy, the Marquis of Villafranca, an office which he continued to hold under the two succeeding viceroys. In 1688 he was nominated *protomedico* general of Naples by the viceroy there, the Count of Santo

<sup>14</sup> Antonio Santorelli, *Il protomedico napoletano, ovvero dell'autorità di esso. Dialogo raccolto da un discepolo . . . e data in luce dal signor Fabio Cava*, Naples, Roberto Mollo, 1652, p. 3. For studies based on Santorelli's treatise, cf. Pasquale Franco, 'Il protomedico napoletano', *Pagine di storia della medicina*, 1965, 9: 15–32, and Luigi de Rosa, 'The "protomedicato" in southern Italy, XVI–XIX centuries', *Annales cispalines d'histoire sociale*, 1973, 4: 103–17.

<sup>15</sup> Giuseppe Pitrè, *Medici, chirurghi, barbieri e speciali antichi in Sicilia, secoli XIII–XVIII*, Rome, Biblioteca delle tradizioni popolari siciliane, 1942, p. 162.

<sup>16</sup> Archivio di Stato, Palermo, *Cancellaria*, reprinted in Pitrè, op. cit., note 15 above, pp. 392–9.

<sup>17</sup> Alberto Boscolo, *La politica italiana di Martino il Vecchio re d'Aragona*, Padua, CEDAM, 1962, p. 150. As part of the Aragonese realms, Sardinia eventually acquired its own *protomedicato*. Cf. Ignazio Lai, 'Farmacopea e farmacoterapia nella Sardegna seicentesca. Spigolature d'archivio', *Studi sardi*, 1987, 17: 315–47, on pp. 315–16.

<sup>18</sup> Giovanni Filippo Ingrassia, *Constitutiones, capitula, iurisdictiones, ac pandectae regii protomedicatus officii*, Palermo, Nicolai Bua, 1657, introduction. The book was first published in 1564; the 1657 edition was revised by the then *protomedico* Paolo Pizzuto. Ingrassia (1510–80) taught anatomy in Naples before becoming Sicilian *protomedico* general. As the result of his experiences during the Palermo plague of 1575, he wrote the *Informazione del pestifero et contagioso morbo, il quale affligge et have afflitto questa città di Palermo*, Palermo, G. M. Mayda, 1576.

<sup>19</sup> Alan Ryder, *The kingdom of Naples under Alfonso the Magnanimous. The making of a modern state*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1976, p. 79.

<sup>20</sup> Miguel Muñoz, *Recopilación de las leyes, pragmáticas reales, decretos y acuerdos del Real Proto-medicato hecha por encargo y dirección del mismo Real Tribunal*, Valencia, 1751, reprint Valencia, Librerías París, 1991, p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> Santorelli, op. cit., note 14 above, pp. 25–6.

Stefano. For the next four years he was forced to use a pseudonym, since statute required that the office be filled by a local physician.<sup>22</sup> Bottoni was not the only Sicilian to be offered the post. Several decades earlier, the then viceroy of Naples, Juan Alonso Enriquez de Cabrera, had offered the post to the Messinese Marco Antonio Alaimo. Before becoming Neapolitan viceroy, De Cabrera had been viceroy in Sicily and no doubt came across Alaimo there. Alaimo had gained renown during the Palermo plague of 1624–5, publishing a treatise on the subject.<sup>23</sup> But Alaimo refused the appointment, preferring to remain in Sicily, thereby avoiding a dispute with Neapolitan physicians. In 1634 he was appointed consultor *protomedico* in Palermo.<sup>24</sup>

Despite these close links with the Spanish administration, the royal *protomedicati* in Italy never achieved the authority of their Spanish counterpart. In Spain, much more so than in Italy, the *Tribunal del Protomedicato* developed into a vast and powerful bureaucracy, branching out into all areas of the kingdom and overseas possessions. It appointed medical personnel to hospitals and the armed forces, regulated the publication of books on medical subjects, and directed efforts against plague and contagion.<sup>25</sup> However, just as the Iberian tribunal faced the overlapping jurisdiction of other state offices and medical corporations, so the tension between royal prerogative and the medical colleges surfaced in the other Italian *protomedicati* of Milan, Parma, and Savoy. When the Duchy of Milan became a Spanish possession in 1535 the post of *protofisico regio* was established as an imperial appointment. He was normally chosen from amongst the ranks of the Milanese medical college (composed entirely of noblemen); such was Milan's most famous *protofisico*, Ludovico Settala, appointed to the office in 1628 by Philip IV.<sup>26</sup> This proximity did not, however, guarantee tranquil relations between the two. Spanish influence was also behind the founding of the *protomedicato* in the Duchy of Parma-Piacenza more than two hundred years later, after the duchy was assigned to the Spanish Philip of Bourbon at the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748. The institution of the *protomedicato* by decree in 1749 deprived the "college of doctors of arts and medicine" of

<sup>22</sup> Santorelli does not mention this regulation, though he may take it for granted. Bottoni was Neapolitan *protomedico* until 1692, when he returned to Messina for health reasons. In 1695 he was made corresponding member to the Royal Society in London, to supply information about the 1693 Messina earthquake. His son, Federico (c.1670–c.1745), served throughout the Spanish world: in addition to offices in Naples and Sicily, he was court physician first in Madrid and then in Lima. Cf. Alvar Martínez Vidal, *El nuevo sol de la medicina en la Ciudad de los Reyes: Federico Bottoni y la Evidencia de la circulación de la sangre (Lima, 1723)*, Saragossa, Aragón y América, 1992.

<sup>23</sup> Marco Antonio Alaimo, *Discorso . . . intorno alla preservazione del morbo contagioso e mortale che regna al presente in Palermo*, Palermo, Angelo Orlandi, 1625.

<sup>24</sup> Roberto Zapperi, 'Marco Antonio Alaimo', *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Rome, 1960, vol. 1, pp. 561–2.

<sup>25</sup> Juan Riera and Juan Granda-Juesas, introduction to Pascual Iborra, *Historia del Protomedicato en España (1477–1822)*, Universidad de Valladolid, 1987, p. 10; Luis Granjel, *Historia general de la medicina española*, vol. 2, *Medicina española renacentista*, Universidad de Salamanca, 1980, pp. 76–7; for Spanish America, cf. John Lanning, *The royal protomedicato. The regulation of the medical profession in the Spanish empire*, ed. J. Tepaske, Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 1985.

<sup>26</sup> Settala (1552–1633) served as a *deputato* during the Milan plague of 1576 and wrote a successful treatise on the subject (*De peste et pestiferis affectibus*, 1622). Cf. Pietro Capparoni, *Profili bio-bibliografici di medici e naturalisti celebri italiani dal sec. XV al sec. XVIII*, Rome, Istituto nazionale medico farmacologico, 1928, vol. 2, pp. 131–2; Silvia Rota Ghibaudi, *Ricerche su Ludovico Settala*, Florence, Sansoni, 1959, pp. 18 and 41.

Piacenza University of the authority to examine physicians and surgeons and license apothecaries and non-graduate practitioners.<sup>27</sup>

A final example of the close relationship between *protomedico* and ruler is in the Duchy of Savoy. Here we have a mixing of the first two types of *protomedicato*. In 1565 Duke Emmanuele Filiberto gave his “*protomedico* and counsellor”, Marc’Antonio Capra, authority to inspect apothecaries’ shops and proceed against them for any malpractice. In 1568 this authority was extended over all other medical practitioners. However, the establishment of a *protomedicato* did not eliminate the medical college in Turin. Later edicts refer to the examination of doctors by the *protomedico*, the prior of the college and college members, though the *protomedico* could also hold the post of college prior.<sup>28</sup>

A third distinct type of *protomedicato* existed in Italy, and can be designated the municipal. Here the *protomedico* was a local physician elected for a short period by the town or city council. In many cases the office was a survival from the days of communal autonomy, as at Gubbio or the papal enclave of Benevento, not far from Naples. The *protomedico* here was elected by city counsellors, and had the authority to inspect apothecaries’ shops, establish fines for malpractice, and issue licences to non-graduate practitioners in the city of Benevento and its immediate vicinity. Although he was independent of the Roman *protomedico*, serious offences amongst the medical profession had to be referred to the papal legate.<sup>29</sup>

*Protomedici* in different states had various terms of office. In Sicily, the office remained a royal appointment, independent of the island’s medical colleges. It was a prestigious position and the Sicilian *protomedico* general’s entry into the city of Palermo was an occasion for pomp. In 1581 Francesco Bisso was accompanied by city nobles, senators and knights.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, in the Kingdom of Naples, the *protomedico* received an annual salary of one thousand ducats from the state. Originally a life appointment, in 1573 it was changed by the viceroy Cardinal Granuela to a one year term.<sup>31</sup> In Rome, however, the office continued to be an integral part of the medical college. Here, the *protomedico* general was elected annually each December from amongst the ranks of the college to be its head. He had to have been a member of the college for at least three years, be at least forty years of age, and reside in the city. His first task was to publish an edict outlining the rules and regulations for the practice of medicine, and to choose two vice-*protomedici* and various provincial *protomedici* to carry out the actual tours of inspection. Although not a prerequisite for office, the *protomedico* general was often the pope’s archiater as well, as was the anatomist Giovanni Maria Lancisi in 1711.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, in Siena, the *protomedico*

<sup>27</sup> *Costituzioni del Regio-Ducale Protomedicato de’ nostri stati di Parma, Piacenza e Guastalla*, Parma, 1749, cited in Emilio Nasalli-Rocca, ‘Il Collegio dei dottori di arti e medicina di Piacenza’, *Atti e memorie dell’Accademia di storia dell’arte sanitaria*, 1951, 17: 17–26, on p. 26.

<sup>28</sup> Giovanni Battista Borelli, *Editti antichi e nuovi de’ sovrani principi della Real Casa di Savoia*, Turin, 1681, edicts of 1565, 1568, 1604, and 1646, pp. 965–89.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Statuta civitatis Beneventi’ (1588), Museo del Sannio, Benevento, *Fondo civico*, ms. 5362, 1, ch. 15, ‘De protomedico’; reprinted in appendix to Gaetana Intorcchia, *Civitas beneventana. Genesi ed evoluzione delle istituzioni cittadine nei secoli XIII–XVI*, Benevento, Auxiliatrix, 1981, pp. 185–6.

<sup>30</sup> Pitre, op. cit., note 15 above, p. 161.

<sup>31</sup> Santorelli, op. cit., note 14 above, pp. 98 and 115.

<sup>32</sup> *Statuta Collegii DD. Almae Urbis Medicorum*, Rome, 1676, A.S.R., *Biblioteca: Statuti*, 322. In fact between 1530 and 1745, of the 102 *protomedici* general listed, 20 were also papal archiaters. This can be confusing, as the term *protomedico* sometimes indicates a ruler’s personal physician, regardless of his other roles.

## Protomedici and protomedicati in early modern Italy

was chosen every March from those who had been college members for at least eight years.<sup>33</sup> The situation in Bologna was somewhere between the two poles of state versus college control. Although *protomedici* were elected from among college members, their salary was paid by the city Senate. This overlap resulted in increasing tension as the government tried to assert its authority over health matters. So, for example, in 1575 when, without consulting the college, the governor appointed the naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi *protomedico*, to prepare the city's *Antidotario*, or official pharmacopoeia, the college expelled Aldrovandi (with the support of the city's apothecaries, it must be said). Recourse by Aldrovandi to the city's governor led eventually to the intervention of Pope Gregory XIII two years later, who ordered the college to reinstate him. In fact, there developed a hierarchy in state-medical relations in Bologna, as elsewhere. The medical profession as a body was favoured over the chaotic mass of charlatans and empirics, the college over physicians in general, and, finally, the *protomedicato* over the college.<sup>34</sup>

## II

Despite their differences, the activities and responsibilities of the *protomedici* and their deputies were remarkably similar throughout the peninsula. There was the grinding reality of tours of inspection. These "visitations", as they were called, were the *raison d'être* of the *protomedicati*. In their reports, the inspecting vice-*protomedici* emphasized the ritual and formal tone of the inspections, designed, no doubt, to impress, if not intimidate, those who were subject to inspection and the payment of licence fees and fines.

We, the aforementioned *protomedici* of the bounteous city of Bologna for the second trimester of the year 1677, eager carefully to undertake our office, devised for the public good, according to custom . . . did assemble in the church of S. Giacomo Maggiore, summoned by note, his excellency D. Raimondo Abello vice-*protomedico*, D. Agostino Stanzani steward of the [Company of] Apothecaries, D. Giovanni Battista Cavazzi secretary of the College [of Physicians], D. Giulio Gallici porter and I, Ippolito Poggioli *protomedico*, and, having heard mass, we ascended by carriage and travelled on our route to Castel Budrio, directed towards the inspection of apothecaries' shops . . .<sup>35</sup>

Roads could be bad, especially in the mountains. A Roman vice-*protomedico* for 1711, Giacomo Marchetti, wrote to the *protomedico* from a very small town near Imola, remarking how he had arrived there over a "very bad mountain road, slightly worse than the pass between Umbria and Romagna in the mountains of the Apennine Alps of Florence".<sup>36</sup> The mere official title of the Turinese *protomedico* suggests difficulties: "*protomedico* general both on this side and beyond the mountains". Need isolated villages be visited personally? When vice-*protomedico* Marchetti was informed of a surgeon near Lugnano who was administering internal medicines in violation of his licence, he had an

<sup>33</sup> *Constitutiones collegij senensis philosophiae et medicinae doctorum*, Siena, Matthaeum Florimum, 1612, Archivio dello Stato, Siena, *Archivio dello Studio* (hereinafter A.S.S., *Studio*), b. 44. Cf. A. Garosi, 'Medici, speziali, cerusici e medicastri nei libri del protomedicato senese', *Bullettino senese di storia patria*, 1935, 6: 1-27, on p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Giuseppe Olmi, 'Farmacopea antica e medicina moderna. La disputa sulla teriaca nel Cinquecento bolognese', *Physis*, 1977, 19: 197-245, on p. 237.

<sup>35</sup> Archivio di Stato, Bologna (hereinafter A.S.B.), *Assunteria di Studio*, b. 87, 7 June 1677.

<sup>36</sup> A.S.R., *Università*, b. 62, fol. 169.

injunction served by the local physician rather than go there himself, “since there is no apothecary’s shop in the place and it is rather inconvenient to any itinerary”.<sup>37</sup> Rain or bandits could make travel worse. Plans had to be changed. When heavy rains blocked the roads into Romagna, one *vice-protomedico* went into part of Umbria and conducted inspections there instead.<sup>38</sup> Another was kept away from certain towns on his route “by fear of bandits, since there was no safe road”.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, in the Kingdom of Naples members of the inspection team were permitted to bear arms and were accompanied by an armed guard of a handful of soldiers.<sup>40</sup>

The adventures met with on the road were those experienced by most travellers. In 1735, the Sienese *protomedico* and his following, whilst on their way from Castel del Piano to Radicofano, encountered terrible mountain roads, blocked by “rocks, thickets, gorges, and horrible things”, as well as a fierce storm of rain, wind, and fog. As they were approaching the village of Abbadia for the night they were soaked by a sudden downpour, and then found that the only inn could offer them neither supper nor a bed. They were taken in by a local official. On the following morning, as they were about to leave, it began to pour again, and so they found refuge in the local monastery. As guests, they were served a special vegetable soup that evening, which contained a local delicacy: mushrooms known as *olientole*. However, “all of us who ate [the soup] were so sick that we thought we were going to die that night, and we did nothing but go to vomit or defecate”. They finally managed to get to Radicofani the next day, “after having suffered further great cold, wind and rain”, but without additional mishap.<sup>41</sup>

Upon arrival in a town the Roman *protomedico* or his deputy was to call upon the governor or other local official. “You will kiss his hands”—advised a 1620 ‘Instruttione’—“on behalf of the *Protomedico* General and all of the College, explaining that you have been sent for the public good and benefit of that place, so that delinquents are punished and the people well served in all that pertains to medicine”.<sup>42</sup> He was to ask the governor’s consent to carry out the inspections of apothecaries’ shops, inviting him to participate if he so wished. It was important to make a good impression with the local governors, as they could make life difficult for inspecting *protomedici*.<sup>43</sup> And with town after town to visit, it was important that things should go as smoothly as possible.

Inspecting apothecaries’ shops was the *protomedico*’s most important activity, to judge by the amount of space devoted to it in both the regulations and the reports.<sup>44</sup> The “visitation” was to take the apothecary by surprise. In the words of the Neapolitan *protomedico* Antonio Santorelli, it was to be like death: “the apothecary knows it will come, but he does not know the day or time”.<sup>45</sup> This was to prevent him from disposing of

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., fol. 1435.

<sup>38</sup> Allegedly with the permission of the *vice-protomedico* responsible for that area. A.S.R., *Università*, b. 2, xi.

<sup>39</sup> A.S.R., *Università*, b. 2, v, fol. 3v.

<sup>40</sup> Lorenzo Giustiniani, *Nuova collezione delle prammatiche del Regno di Napoli*, Naples, Stamperia Simoniana, 1805, vol. 12, p. 223.

<sup>41</sup> A.S.S., *Studio*, b. 62, fol. 64v.

<sup>42</sup> ‘Instruttione e Capitoli da osservarsi dal S.r Iacomo Iacobelli da Colle Vecchio Viceprotomedico fuora di Roma per lo Stato Ecc.co del anno 1620’, A.S.R., *Università*, b. 1, fol. 42.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. A.S.R., *Università*, b. 62, fols. 169–70.

<sup>44</sup> The registers of the Bolognese *protomedicato* give a good idea of the tribunal’s day-to-day activities. ‘Registri degli atti del protomedicato’, A.S.B., *Archivi dello Studio*, bb. 318–27 (hereinafter A.S.B., *Studio*).

<sup>45</sup> Santorelli, op. cit., note 14 above, p. 69.



deficient or inferior medicines, or borrowing good ones from another apothecary (crimes that took place nevertheless). In addition to the inspection's formalistic and somewhat ominous nature, it could turn into a real social event, further adding to the ritual. In an unusually detailed description, a physician named Antisari, delegated to inspect an apothecary's shop in the town of Vitorchiano, related the event to the Roman *protomedico*:

[The apothecary] asked for time to put his shop in order. And this was agreed to, on condition that neither he nor his shop boy could leave the shop and would have to put everything in order in my presence and that of the aforementioned apothecary [Cammilli, accompanying Antisari on his inspection], and that no one would enter the shop during the time set aside for this preparation. And so it went. The *potestà*, the syndic of the place, who is the chief magistrate, and two of their peasants, his [the apothecary's] companions, participated in the inspection. There was the archpriest, a doctor, and a quantity of people. The inspection followed, enquiring item by item and diligently examining all the things demanded in the List . . . and nothing deficient was found . . . but everything was well made and in abundance.<sup>46</sup>

The presence of so many people at the inspections was meant to guarantee they were carried out properly. But this was not always easy. Apothecaries were often reluctant to have their shops inspected and pay the visitation fee. They frequently justified this by pleading poverty. Normally apothecaries were not paid immediately, "as are butchers or bakers", but sometimes after many years, if at all.<sup>47</sup> The Bolognese apothecary Pastarino (a nickname) lamented the need to hire a "collector", whose task it was to go to people's homes, often repeatedly, to demand payment, "like some pauper begging for alms".<sup>48</sup> In small towns and villages the result could be penury. Petitions to be exempted from the payment of inspection duties because of poverty—the latter due to "the high cost of medicines which the poor cannot afford to pay for", as one apothecary complained<sup>49</sup>—may therefore have been quite genuine. Where, as in the Papal States, the vice-*protomedici* depended on the apothecaries for their room, board and stabling expenses while in a town on inspection, they had to ensure that they got what was due to them without upsetting their hosts. In 1618, for example, the apothecary of Monte Marciano complained that the vice-*protomedico* had come to his village "with three horses and stayed here for two days, entirely at my expense, because of some bad weather, even though he could have left in the evening . . . I am a poor fellow, with the burden of a family, and, for the small amount of trade I do, this was a blow to me".<sup>50</sup> Vice-

<sup>46</sup> A.S.R., *Università*, b. 62, fol. 1579.

<sup>47</sup> Santorelli, op. cit., note 14 above, p. 108.

<sup>48</sup> *Ragionamento del Pastarino sopra l'Arte della Speciarìa. Alli Mag.ci et Illustri Senatori di Bologna. Accioché si pigliano cura di questo utilissimo essercitio*, Bologna, 1575, cited in Piero Camporesi, *La miniera del mondo. Artieri, inventori, impostori*, Milan, Il Saggiatore, 1990, p. 250.

<sup>49</sup> Archivio di Stato, Naples (hereinafter A.S.N.), *Dipendenze della Sommaria: Protomedicato*, series II, fascio 35, "cautele".

<sup>50</sup> A.S.R., *Università*, b. 1, fol. 239. The Bolognese *protomedici* had to pay for their own expenses, which were then reimbursed by the *Assunteria di studio*. This meant one less source of tension during inspections. Petitions by *protomedici* to the *Assunteria* suggest that this payment (it amounted to 50 *lire*) was not always prompt in coming, nor was it always sufficient to cover expenses. A.S.B., *Assunteria di studio*, b. 87, 28 May 1586 and 16 May 1638.

*protomedico* Papi thought he had got the balance right. While admitting to his superiors in Rome that his inspections had been somewhat summary, he boasted “of having carried out the inspection as a man of honour, clean-handed, with all modesty and respect, without provoking and burdening the apothecaries, with whose wretchedness I sympathized, and I even reduced part of what they owed me for expenses”.<sup>51</sup> Yet all the goodwill in the world did not prevent an unwilling apothecary from locking his shutters, and going into hiding<sup>52</sup> or even seeking sanctuary in the parish church when accused of illegal trading.<sup>53</sup> Apothecaries were not defenceless, however, having their own colleges to look after their interests. This they did, bringing them into frequent dispute with medical colleges and *protomedicati* up and down the peninsula.

It must be said that the *protomedici* were relatively lenient when it came to fines, although their enforcement may seem somewhat arbitrary. Their bark was always worse than their bite. A 1939 study of the Sienese *protomedicato* ridiculed the contrast between the “wordy and high-sounding intransigence” of the edicts and the clemency shown to actual offenders, especially when they pleaded poverty. A mattress-maker who specialized in treating leg sores and ringworm, was pardoned because he was “very poor” and “the father of three small children”.<sup>54</sup> This may strike the present-day reader rather differently: as a pragmatic, if not enlightened, approach. In any case, it was typical of *ancien régime* law enforcement. This often came down to levels of bargaining, the final punishment being a compromise between the harshness of the edicts and the pretensions of the accused.<sup>55</sup> In 1711 the apothecary Cesare Floridi complained to the *protomedicato* in Rome that he had been fined too much for not having a certificate on his vase of theriac. The inspection itself had been a farce, according to Floridi: “he came [to my shop] with a young apothecary who knew about as much of the profession as his stable boy (begging Your Illustrious Lordship’s pardon), and when he examined the medicaments he did nothing but shrug his shoulders”. Floridi was fined ten *scudi*, but, he commented, the *protomedico*’s deputy was clearly not adverse to a little bribery, in the form of wine and chickens, which Floridi refused to give. He concluded his complaint by noting that another apothecary was fined only six *scudi*, which included the visitation fee, for a similar offence. In the end, Floridi was fined five *scudi*.<sup>56</sup>

The *protomedici*’s difficulties did not merely concern apothecaries. In Forlì, vice-*protomedico* Marchetti lamented,

you cannot get anyone at short notice, whether physicians, midwives or surgeons. And, although the bailiff is sent for everyone, he comes back saying the doctors are on call, he could not find the surgeons and, of the midwives, some come with their licences, others are either not at home or he did not find them, they being who knows where. You wait a few more hours before recommencing the trip; but it serves no purpose . . .

<sup>51</sup> A.S.R., *Università*, b. 2, xi.

<sup>52</sup> A.S.B., *Studio*, b. 197, fol. 156.

<sup>53</sup> A.S.R., *Università*, b. 62, fol. 1439.

<sup>54</sup> Garosi, *op. cit.*, note 33 above, p. 15. Garosi’s article contains no references, but the trial can be found in A.S.S., *Studio*, b. 58, fols. 239–46.

<sup>55</sup> For an example of how this process of negotiation worked to preserve individual interests, cf. John Brackett, *Criminal justice and crime in late Renaissance Florence, 1537–1609*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 74.

<sup>56</sup> A.S.R., *Università*, b. 62, fols. 1469 and 1481.

This was clearly ruining Marchetti's plans to "get on with the Romagna and, having finished this, enter the Marches".<sup>57</sup> Examining barber-surgeons and midwives, issuing licences, and collecting fees was never a straightforward or popular business. Merely carrying out one's duty was bound to cause resentment, as the not always legitimate accusations against Giacomo Giacobelli suggest (see above, pp. 121–2). Licence renewals were particularly difficult. The *vice-protomedico* for 1700, the physician Pietrangelo Papi, cynically noted that "it is the long-established practice in most towns that upon the arrival of the *vice-protomedico* all the licensees who must carry out renewals hide themselves, and the contumacious flee, until the *vice-protomedico* and the notary (who comes with me and is responsible for the said tasks) have left".<sup>58</sup>

Barber-surgeons were generally grouped into three different levels of skill, and licensed accordingly. First-degree barbers, according to a list compiled by the Bolognese *protomedicato* in 1682, were licensed only "to draw blood from the arm and foot, to apply leeches and cupping glasses". Second-degree barbers were permitted "to draw blood from every part of the body and to treat simple wounds". Finally, third-degree barbers "can practise every surgical act on the exterior part of the body, draw blood, place leeches, treat ulcers, simple wounds, bone fractures and luxations".<sup>59</sup> In addition to the relevant licence fees, there were very heavy fines for exceeding the limits of one's licence as granted by the *protomedico*. This was true for the rest of the Papal States as well. The *vice-protomedico* could only issue one-year licences for "light surgery" (*in casibus levibus*), the granting of perpetual licences for full surgery being up to the *protomedico* general.

Similar restrictions not to exceed the bounds of their profession also applied to midwives. The 'Instruttione' issued to the Roman *vice-protomedico* in 1620 stated that women were not to be licensed to treat the sick but only to practise midwifery.<sup>60</sup> The first of the edicts issued by the Roman *protomedici* general upon taking office to mention midwifery was that of 1628.<sup>61</sup> The Neapolitan *protomedico* Santorelli, writing in 1652, commented that midwives need not be examined on what the pregnant woman should do before and after the birth; she need only know what to do during the birth.<sup>62</sup> In Bologna the first edict obliging midwives to present themselves and undergo examination and approval by the *protomedici* dates from 1674.<sup>63</sup> This was repeated three years later, advising every midwife "to present a testimonial from her curate, *de vita et moribus* [on her life and morals], into the hands of the prior or the *protomedici*", to be approved by them.<sup>64</sup> These edicts were repeated at regular intervals, but that of 1746 is particularly harsh. It suggests that many midwives outside Bologna still practised without a licence, "fooling themselves

<sup>57</sup> A.S.R., *Università*, b. 62, fols. 170 and 173.

<sup>58</sup> A.S.R., *Università*, b. 2, xi.

<sup>59</sup> 'Catalogo de' barbieri e comari . . . ordinato l'anno 1682', A.S.B., *Studio*, b. 235. Cf. Gianna Pomata, 'Barbieri e comari' in *Cultura popolare nell'Emilia Romagna. Medicina, erbe e magia*, Milan, Cassa di Risparmio di Emilia Romagna, 1981, pp. 162–83.

<sup>60</sup> 'Instruttione . . .', A.S.R., *Università*, b. 1, fol. 44.

<sup>61</sup> A.S.R., *Università*, b. 24, *bando* 22. Formal instruction for Roman midwives began in 1782 (A.S.R., *Università*, b. 59, xl).

<sup>62</sup> Santorelli, *op. cit.*, note 14 above, p. 56.

<sup>63</sup> It is mentioned in A.S.B., *Studio*, b. 214, no. 6. Siena had to wait until 1713 for a similar edict, though a number of midwives had been licensed by the *protomedico* in 1686, following a complaint from the Balia. A.S.S., *Studio*, b. 51, fol. 267, and *ibid.*, b. 49, fol. 271.

<sup>64</sup> 'Editto per li speciali, barbieri, comari et altri', 1677, A.S.B., *Studio*, b. 233.

into thinking that they can do so".<sup>65</sup> This particular edict would seem to have come in the wake of a warrant against an unlicensed midwife in the village of Castagnolo, described in the registers of the *protomedicato*.<sup>66</sup> The situation was less the result of any intent to deceive than due to the traditional way of selecting a community midwife. By the mid-eighteenth century it was becoming a conflict between two different levels of society.<sup>67</sup> This can be inferred from the naturally hostile comments of one Roman *vice-protomedico* that "the pregnant women and the people create midwives at their own whim, who then openly pass themselves off as such, without any recognition or experience at all, to the great harm of mothers and infants".<sup>68</sup> Generally, midwives were chosen by the community because of acquired experience, skills frequently passed from mother to daughter, but it was the fact that this was done without official sanction that the *vice-protomedico* objected to. The records do contain testimonials from parish priests or physicians, commending the ability of a local midwife and requesting her licensing by the *protomedico*, though the normal practice was most likely to await the annual inspections.<sup>69</sup> In Siena, there was a tacit acknowledgement that, in the absence of taught courses, the only way a woman could gain the knowledge of midwifery necessary in order to be approved and licensed was through previous, unlicensed, experience.<sup>70</sup>

Another important aspect of the activity of the *protomedicati* regarded the licensing of charlatans. The *protomedici* were not out to extinguish the presence of charlatans in their states, but to regulate their circulation and the goods they peddled. The Neapolitan *protomedico* Santorelli explained that charlatans must be tolerated and licensed because, in the case of syphilis, "many victims would go to them who, because of shame, would not dare go to a doctor or surgeon".<sup>71</sup> This detached attitude was not shared by all *protomedici*, primarily because so many charlatans seemed to escape licensing. The licensing of charlatans had begun with the medical colleges, like the "assumpti contra empiricos" within the college at Bologna. Sixteenth-century edicts were usually directed against the activities of unlicensed healers in general, but as early as 1572 the *pretore protomedico* of Palermo issued an edict specifically against mountebanks and charlatans who distributed internal remedies without a licence.<sup>72</sup> Twenty-two years later, an edict issued by the cardinal legate of Bologna declared all previous licences void and obliged all charlatans to submit their drugs to the college for examination. To be approved, the drug in question would have to receive favourable votes from two-thirds of the college members present.<sup>73</sup> The Roman *vice-protomedico* of 1620 was instructed to use "excellent diligence

<sup>65</sup> 'Notificazione . . .', 1746, A.S.B., *Studio*, b. 233.

<sup>66</sup> A.S.B., *Studio*, b. 322, fols. 38v and 46r. From this year the examination and approval of midwives becomes a regular feature of the registers, with an average of two or three midwives licensed every year. A noteworthy exception is 1772, when twenty-seven midwives were approved in two sittings, held at the Archiginnasio (A.S.B., *Studio*, b. 327).

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Claudia Pancino, *Il bambino e l'acqua sporca. Storia dell'assistenza al parto dalle mammane alle ostetriche (secoli XVI-XIX)*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1984, p. 52.

<sup>68</sup> A.S.R., *Università*, b. 62, fol. 1648.

<sup>69</sup> A.S.R., *Università*, b. 62, fols. 1659 and 1679.

<sup>70</sup> A.S.S., *Studio*, b. 63, fol. 79v. The Siense *protomedicato* was the most flexible—indeed lenient—when it came to the licensing of medical practitioners of all kinds.

<sup>71</sup> Santorelli, *op. cit.*, note 14 above, p. 48.

<sup>72</sup> Cited in Pitrè, *op. cit.*, note 15 above, p. 293.

<sup>73</sup> A.S.B., *Studio*, b. 233.

in locating the medicasters, maimers [*stroppiatori*], charlatans or others who treat without legitimate licence”, charging them for the room, board and stabling expenses necessitated by examinations. He was supplied with a list of such charlatans and other unlicensed healers, whom he was to keep an eye out for.<sup>74</sup>

Of the Roman edicts that of 1672 was the most detailed and severe. The Roman *protomedico* general Antonio Piacenti, noting that most charlatans were “outsiders and from other countries”, warned that they must all submit their wares for examination and approval to the *protomedico* in Rome (and outside Rome, to his *vice-protomedici* or the physicians of the place).

They must obtain the licence, authority and privilege to prepare, sell and distribute any electuary (as against poisons), oils, ointments, plasters, balms, preserves, quintessences, waters, decoctions and other things of whatever kind and quality, and . . . they must not make any preparation of them if the ingredients they want to dispense and use in the work have not been personally examined and approved first . . . and a reasonable price assigned.

In order “to attract the public to buy [their goods]”, they were not “to expound upon or discuss anything concerning medicine in any way, but only what they have been permitted to dispense”. Those with patents to sell electuaries against poison, or ointments for wounds were not “to swallow poisons of any sort, nor have themselves bitten by snakes or other poisonous animals, nor to cut or burn their own flesh . . . without our permission . . . so that people are not deceived”. They were not to administer the remedies themselves, even free of charge, since this was the province of surgeons. The patent could not be transferred to another person, even a relative, without authorization.<sup>75</sup> Even at this, its most restrictive, the activity of the *protomedicati* was not aimed at eliminating the “scourge of quackery”, but at gaining some control, however minimal, over it. The presence of the “without permission” clause in so many of the regulations meant that permission could be granted, and frequently was. In fact, each of the regulations regarding charlatans which make up this edict is reflected in the surviving licensing and criminal records of the various *protomedicati*. These contain detailed applications from charlatans for patents to sell their drugs, some approved, others rejected. Charlatans were also tried for selling goods without a licence or selling goods other than those for which they were licensed. Descendants of the original licensee would also petition for the patent to be passed on to them as heirs.

Because a number of *protomedici* also wrote treatises on plague, it is worthwhile asking at this juncture what relationship the *protomedicati* had with the peninsula’s health boards. In Palermo, for example, the consultor *protomedico* compiled the statutes of that city’s *Magistrato di sanità*, which was reorganized in 1575 to consist of the city’s *pretore*, the captain of justice, the *protomedico* and nineteen members of the aristocracy.<sup>76</sup> More often, however, the health boards were in the hands of non-medical administrators.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74</sup> ‘Istruzione . . .’, A.S.R., *Università*, b. 1, fols. 44r.–v.

<sup>75</sup> ‘Bando generale del protomedico’, 1672, A.S.R., *Università*, b. 25.

<sup>76</sup> *Statuti del Magistrato della sanità della felice città di Palermo, compilati da Agostino Gervasi consultore protomedico per comandamento del senato palermitano*, Palermo, 1728, cited in, Calogero Valenti, ‘Due episodi di peste in Sicilia (1526 e 1624)’, *Archivio storico siciliano*, 1984, 10: 5–88, on p. 25.

<sup>77</sup> Cipolla, *op. cit.*, note 13 above, pp. 21–3.

*Protomedici*, given their status, might serve on them or furnish advice. Nothing in the registers of the Bolognese *protomedicato*, however, suggests any official involvement with the city's health board.<sup>78</sup> The contribution of *protomedici* to the health boards was of a more *ad hoc* nature. Such was the role of the Roman *protomedico* Benedetto Rita in supplying the *Congregazione della sanità* with a consultation on the treatment of plague during the epidemic of 1656.<sup>79</sup> The actual administrative and bureaucratic arrangements were left to the boards. These arrangements, or lack of them, could be the source of dispute. In 1629 the aging *protofisico* of Milan criticized the laxity of the *Tribunale di sanità* in recognizing the presence of plague in the city and surrounding towns.<sup>80</sup> But there was not much he could do. Nor is there much evidence that the Italian *protomedicati* communicated with one another, at least on an institutional level. Aside from the lengthy dispute over jurisdiction with Rome and an edict from the Milanese *protofisico*,<sup>81</sup> the only communications received by the Bolognese *protomedicato* from other offices concerned false doctorates.<sup>82</sup>

### III

The various *protomedicati* differed from one another in the extent of their jurisdictions. Yet to some degree they all competed, or at least overlapped, with trade corporations and other organs of the state. Although the state apparatus grew in size during the early modern period, this did not mean that it replaced or even weakened other centres of power. Local elite groups and traditional institutions maintained their importance in European states.<sup>83</sup> Even the most powerful *protomedicato*, that of Spain, had to share its authority with local medical corporations, especially in cities outside Castile.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, the Supreme Council of the Inquisition also assumed the right to license charlatans, inspect apothecary shops and examine and approve foreign physicians in certain circumstances.<sup>85</sup>

As far as Italy is concerned, let us begin by considering geographical limitations. The royal *protomedico* of Sicily had jurisdiction over the entire island, but nonetheless had to contend with the presence of municipal *protomedici* in Palermo, Catania, Messina, and Modica. The essentially honorific post of *pretore protomedico* is mentioned in the

<sup>78</sup> The only noteworthy shift in their activities as a result of plague was the very high number of apothecaries examined and licensed in 1631, in the wake of the 1630 epidemic. A.S.B., *Studio*, b. 213, no. 6. No records of the Roman *protomedicato* survive for 1656–57, the year of the epidemic there.

<sup>79</sup> Biblioteca Corsiniana, Rome, ms. 34.D.17, fol. 11v., cited in Pietro Savio, 'Ricerche sulla peste di Roma degli anni 1656–1657', *Archivio della società romana di storia patria*, 1974, 95: 113–42, on p. 123.

<sup>80</sup> Fausto Nicolini, 'La peste del 1629–1632', in *Storia di Milano*, Milan, Fondazione Treccani, 1957, vol. 10, pp. 509–10.

<sup>81</sup> A.S.B., *Studio*, b. 233.

<sup>82</sup> Thus, the Milan *protofisico* advised that it had caught a certain Giovanni Palavicino of Sondrio with a false doctorate from Bologna University, dated 7 February 1742 and signed "with fake cardinal and archdeacon, fake vicar, fake notary and seals all fake", A.S.B., *Studio*, b. 214, no. 2.

<sup>83</sup> Tommaso Astarita, *The continuity of feudal power. The Carracciolo di Brienza in Spanish Naples*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 202.

<sup>84</sup> Granjel, *op. cit.*, note 25 above, p. 78; cf. José Mariá López Piñero, 'The medical profession in 16th century Spain', in Russell, *op. cit.*, note 13 above, p. 85.

<sup>85</sup> J. L. Valverde and F. Sánchez L. Vinuesa, 'Controversias jurisdiccionales del protomedicato castellano', *Asclepio*, 1979, 30–31: 403–23. The case of a Neapolitan physician in Cadiz, found without licence from the *protomedicato*, went before the Inquisition, who exiled him, despite petitions from the *protomedicato*. Cf. Guadalupe Albi Romero, *El protomedicato en la España ilustrada (Catálogo de documentos del Archivo General de Simancas)*, Universidad de Valladolid, 1982, items 226–226b, pp. 101–2.

Palermo city statutes of 1478.<sup>86</sup> The real work of examinations, inspections, and licensing was done by his consultor *protomedico*, who might, like Francesco Bisso, go on to become *protomedico* of Sicily. The *protomedico* of the Kingdom of Naples had supposedly universal authority, reflected in his title “regio e generale protomedico”. But there were the notable exceptions of Salerno and Benevento.<sup>87</sup> Salerno was the only city in the kingdom to have a collegial entity, the Medical College, completely autonomous from its Neapolitan counterpart (until 1810 and the reforms of Joachim Murat). Although Salerno’s medical school lost its preeminence during the early modern period, its college continued to be an important tool in the city’s local power structure.<sup>88</sup> Benevento, as a papal enclave, was also independent. Indeed, the *protomedico* of Benevento was even independent from the Roman *protomedico*, though he did not escape the ultimate authority of the papal legate. In other ways the extent of the territory under the Roman *protomedico* general was less than his title of “generalis protomedicus totius status ecclesiastici” implied. We have already mentioned Bologna, which became part of the Papal States in 1506 and jealously sought to retain remnants of local autonomy. In addition, the towns of Castro and Ronciglione, Ravenna, Rimini, and Urbino were similar exceptions, as were places like Macerata, Fermo, and Perugia, with their medical colleges. There were even exceptions to the exceptions. Whilst the former Duchy of Urbino, since 1631 under the control of the papal legate, retained its own *protomedicato*, the latter was itself subject to the claims of Gubbio, whose “first physician” claimed local authority there.<sup>89</sup>

There were also personal exemptions. Unlike the Spanish tribunal, the Italian *protomedicati*—even those created on the Spanish model—did not have jurisdiction over university educated physicians and surgeons. At the most, newly-graduated or foreign physicians would have to undergo an additional examination by the *protomedico* before being able to practise. The *protomedico* of Naples was typical in having precedence over all other physicians in the kingdom, but he could proceed against them only if they were suspected of preparing medicines.<sup>90</sup> In medical matters the Sicilian *protomedico*’s power was supposed to supersede that of the viceroy. In his edition of the *Constitutiones* the *protomedico* Paolo Pizzuto even gives the example of a licence granted to a distiller by the viceroy, the Marquis de los Velez, which because of Pizzuto’s firm opposition the viceroy was forced to withdraw and seek the *protomedico*’s forgiveness. Pizzuto was clearly staking a claim here; but because the appointment was made by the king, upon the viceroy’s recommendation, this cannot have been a regular occurrence.<sup>91</sup> It suggests, moreover, that the viceroy regularly issued patents to non-graduate practitioners.

In Bologna, the *protomedico* had to contend with similar powers possessed by the cardinal legate. Though the relationship seems to have been generally harmonious, their powers overlapped when it came to the issuing of patents to charlatans and mountebanks.

<sup>86</sup> L. Siciliano (ed.), *Consuetudini di Palermo*, Palermo, 1894, p. 451, cited in Pitrè, op. cit., note 15 above, p. 110.

<sup>87</sup> Santorelli, op. cit., note 14 above, pp. 8–11.

<sup>88</sup> Salvatore De Renzi, *Storia della medicina italiana*, Naples, 1845–48, vol. 3, pp. 142–3.

<sup>89</sup> ‘Breve dei medici e speciali’, Archivio di Stato, Gubbio, *Fondo comunale*, fol. 73, cited in Pier Luigi Menichetti, *Medici e speciali in Gubbio*, Città di Castello, Rubini e Petrucci, 1974, p. 79.

<sup>90</sup> Santorelli, op. cit., note 14 above, p. 34.

<sup>91</sup> Ingrassia, op. cit., note 18 above, p. 40–2.

Technically, the examination and approval of their remedies fell under the jurisdiction of the *protomedicato*, but the cardinal legate had authority over all outsiders wishing to trade within Bologna. The licence fees charged represented a steady source of income for the legate's office. In one year from October 1595 to October 1596 fifteen licences were issued, at four *lire* each, valid for one month.<sup>92</sup> In one case, the *protomedicato* specifically requested the cardinal legate not to issue a licence and safe-conduct to a maker and seller of an electuary against poison.<sup>93</sup> Yet the combined licensing activities of both the *protomedico* and the cardinal legate did not manage to snare all of the mountebanks circulating in the city. The following case, from the warrants (*mandati*) issued by the legate, is but the tip of the iceberg. Two men, imprisoned for "selling oils, ointments and distilled waters in the square without a licence", were released because of their poverty and ordered not to sell anything without a licence from the legate.<sup>94</sup>

Another perennial thorn in the side of the Bolognese *protomedici* was the issuing of *privilegi in camera*, chamber or court diplomas granted by noblemen for personal service in their households. These were seen as a threat to the authority of the *protomedicato*, for they could only be invalidated, and physicians so licensed prohibited from practising, in the area under its jurisdiction: Bologna and immediate vicinity. Despite such prohibitions, Bolognese physicians continued to administer summary examinations as requested, prior to countersigning these diplomas.<sup>95</sup> The fine for physicians practising in Bologna with only the *privilegio di camera* was 100 gold *scudi* in 1594; but such was the menace, that it was raised to 500 *scudi* in an edict forty years later.<sup>96</sup>

The *protomedici* were generally powerless against apothecary shops belonging to religious orders. "If one tries to punish them", as one Roman *protomedico* put it in 1619, "one encounters nothing but considerable distress, troubles, interference, and vexations".<sup>97</sup> This was the norm throughout Italy, until the reforms of the late eighteenth-century limited the autonomy of the religious orders.<sup>98</sup> Further jurisdictional limitations varied from state to state. Barbers were generally approved and licensed by the *protomedici*, but in the city of Naples—though not outside it—barbers were subject only to their own guild, the Quattro dell'Arte.<sup>99</sup> In Milan, the separation of the *protofisicato* and the city's medical college resulted in occasional conflict between the two over jurisdiction. The *protofisico* also had to come to terms with the demands of the duchy's five colleges of apothecaries regarding fees. In Cremona, for example, a compromise had to be reached in 1718, whereby apothecaries were required to obtain a double licence from both the local

<sup>92</sup> A.S.B., *Studio*, b. 117. Charlatans were also obliged to pay an annual tribute of forty-four *bolognini* to the Company of Apothecaries, according to the *Riforma de' statuti dell'Onoranda Compagnia de' Speciali*, A.S.B., *Assunteria delle Arti speciali*, b. 22, cited in Camporesi, op. cit., note 48 above, p. 274.

<sup>93</sup> A.S.B., *Studio*, b. 320, 10 Oct. 1680.

<sup>94</sup> A.S.B., *Legato: Expeditiones*, b. 65, 9 May 1570, fol. 39.

<sup>95</sup> One case concerned a "physician" in the service of the Prince of Armstatt, made all the worse because he was only a surgeon, cf. 'Processo contro a Sebastiano Poggi davanti al Magistrato de' Sig.ri Protomedici', 1725, A.S.B., *Studio*, 213, no. 21.

<sup>96</sup> A.S.B., *Studio*, 233.

<sup>97</sup> 'Discorso dell'inconvenienti che nascono nella medicina, fatto da Lorenzo Garzonio Protomedico Generale, 1619', A.S.R., *Università*, 61, fol. 780.

<sup>98</sup> In Siena, for instance, the apothecaries' shops of the religious orders were first inspected in 1776, by order of Grand-Duke Leopold, A.S.S., *Studio*, b. 63, fols. 112–14.

<sup>99</sup> Santorelli, op. cit., note 14 above, pp. 51–2.



college of apothecaries and the *protofisico*.<sup>100</sup> There were sometimes restrictions on the right of *protomedici* to inspect and proceed against wholesale grocers, who traded in many of the same goods as apothecaries and frequently supplied them. While the Rome *protomedico* could inspect grocers and fine them for misdemeanours,<sup>101</sup> his Turinese counterpart could proceed against them, in concert with the city's *vicario*, only by appealing to the Senate.<sup>102</sup> In Naples, the *protomedico* Prospero Bove assumed control over the grocers in 1581 after a spate of deaths resulted from poisons they had sold. Henceforth they were to keep records and be inspected like the apothecaries.<sup>103</sup> This immediately incurred the wrath of the grocers and the authority was withdrawn by the viceroy and the Collateral Council (the kingdom's highest political-administrative organ) in 1604. It was argued that poisons like arsenic and verdigris were necessary for the work of artisans and, in any case, could be just as easily obtained from other sources. In addition, it was unnecessary to inspect the grocers' shops since the goods they sold were inspected upon their manufacture or importation, and what medical goods were bought by apothecaries would undergo further inspection by the *protomedico*.<sup>104</sup> But the problem did not go away. For the tax farmers awarded the contract to collect the dues of the *protomedicato*, the "right of inspection" of those grocers' shops dealing in compound medicines was an additional source of income which they sought to enforce.<sup>105</sup>

The collegial and municipal *protomedicati* were subject to various organs of the state, though they clearly had more authority and room to manoeuvre, not to say prestige, than the limited magistracies of other trade corporations.<sup>106</sup> In Rome, the Apostolic Chamber could intervene when petitioned to do so, as the *vice-protomedico* Giacomo Giacobelli found out to his dismay in 1621. It is clear that the *protomedicato* and the College of Physicians would have preferred to deal with the matter themselves and regarded the proceedings of the Apostolic Chamber against Giacobelli as an intrusion. These impediments to its authority formed the subject of a complaint made by the *protomedico* general, Lorenzo Garzonio, two years earlier. He noted that the College of Physicians and the *protomedicato* were founded so that "intelligent and leading people" would oversee the medical profession, checking the audacity of those who dared to treat the sick despite "knowing no more than a stone about medicine". However, they were obstructed in conducting criminal and civil trials against these transgressors, so that "the affairs of medicine are no longer conducted with suitable authority, decorum, and esteem". In addition to preventing Garzonio from proceeding against Giacobelli, the Apostolic Chamber had obstructed Garzonio's actions against certain grocers in the city. They had been illegally selling inferior theriac and mithridatum, both college monopolies. Garzonio wanted to take legal action to defend the college's authority, but the general lack of

<sup>100</sup> Anita Malamani, 'L'organizzazione sanitaria nella Lombardia austriaca', in A. De Madalena, E. Rotelli, G. Barbarisi (eds), *Economia, istituzioni, cultura in Lombardia nell'età di Maria Teresa*, vol. 3, *Istituzioni e società*, Bologna, il Mulino, 1982, pp. 995–6.

<sup>101</sup> *Statuta collegii*, op. cit., note 32 above, p. 21.

<sup>102</sup> Borelli, op. cit., note 28 above, edict of 1604, p. 970.

<sup>103</sup> Giustiniani, op. cit., note 40 above, pp. 202–6.

<sup>104</sup> Santorelli, op. cit., note 14 above, pp. 13–24.

<sup>105</sup> Carlo Antonio Broggia, *Trattato de' tributi, delle monete, e del governo politico della sanità*, Naples, P. Palombo, 1743, pp. 292–3.

<sup>106</sup> For a discussion of the guilds in seventeenth-century Rome, cf. Laurie Nussdorfer, *Civic politics in the Rome of Urban VIII*, Princeton University Press, 1992, pp. 128–35.

revenues prevented this. The same legal step should have been taken, Garzonio remarked, when the city governor issued him with an injunction preventing him from proceeding against the seller of a remedy made with castor seeds, which had caused the deaths of several people. The diminution of the college's authority resulted in other "disorders". Physicians formed forbidden alliances with apothecaries, but when the *protomedico* went to proceed against them he found himself issued with an injunction. These abuses extended to surgeons, midwives, and charlatans, who could no longer be disciplined for exceeding the limits of their professions. Midwives treated the sick and then pleaded poverty when the *protomedico* sought to punish them. Harking back to a golden age, Garzonio concluded: "If the college had the authority which it had before, it would not admit such people to so noble a profession, nor would it permit the affairs of medicine to be dealt with by anyone other than physicians and apothecaries".<sup>107</sup>

In the Papal States, as elsewhere in early modern Europe, conflicts of jurisdiction were common. Each state organism had its own tribunal to investigate cases affecting its interests and employees. This meant that one person could find himself on trial before different tribunals for the same charge.<sup>108</sup> Edicts regarding the *protomedici* of Turin prohibited other magistrates from interfering in their activities, but it is difficult to say how effective these were.<sup>109</sup> The authority of the ecclesiastical tribunals, inquisitorial and episcopal, also overlapped with that of the *protomedicati* regarding popular healing rituals. In Naples, according to the *protomedico* Antonio Santorelli, those who treated wounds with "meaningless words" were subject to the *protomedicato*, "but those who heal with words and characters must be recognized by ecclesiastics, who are to judge whether to permit such a form of healing or prohibit it as superstitious and containing some tacit pact with the devil".<sup>110</sup> Jurisdiction in such matters was never clear. Women performing healing rituals could find themselves denounced before either of the two tribunals, regardless of the actual nature of their cures (never easy to determine in any case, given the mixture of sacred and profane). This was true throughout Italy. Certainly there is little to distinguish the cures for "haemorrhoids, shingles, ringworm, leg sores" administered by Anna Maria Belavia, charged before the Bolognese *protomedicato* in 1698 for healing without a licence, from those denounced before the Inquisition in nearby Modena.<sup>111</sup> It was a case of which court was notified of such healers first, since a woman using magical remedies to treat the sick was also most likely doing so without any sort of licence. Most accusations before the *protomedicato* were made by physicians and surgeons, perhaps

<sup>107</sup> Garzonio, op. cit., note 97 above, fols. 776–80.

<sup>108</sup> Hanns Gross, *Rome in the age of the Enlightenment. The post-Tridentine syndrome and the ancien régime*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 217–21.

<sup>109</sup> For instance, the 1646 edict issued by Duchess Christiana, in Borelli, op. cit., note 28 above, p. 989.

<sup>110</sup> Santorelli, op. cit., note 14 above, p. 33. In Spain, the royal pragmatic of 1477 gave the *protomedicato* the authority to make certain no one made use of "spells, conjurations and incantations", especially when they were "administered medically", though the Supreme Council of the Inquisition (established 1483) was to be the prime mover in this area. Cf. Granjel, op. cit., note 25 above, p. 147; Jaime Contreras and Gustav Henningsen, 'Forty-four thousand cases of the Spanish Inquisition (1540–1700): analysis of a historical data bank', in G. Henningsen and J. Tedeschi (eds), *The Inquisition in early modern Europe. Studies on sources and methods*, Dekalb, Northern Illinois University Press, 1986, pp. 100–29.

<sup>111</sup> A.S.B., *Studio*, 321, 27 Nov. 1698. For Modena, see Mary O'Neil, 'Magical healing, love magic and the Inquisition in late sixteenth-century Modena', in S. Haliczzer (ed.), *Inquisition and society in early modern Europe*, London, Croom Helm, 1987, pp. 88–114.

fearing illicit competition, and because they were most familiar with the tribunal's functions. Those outside the medical profession might denounce the same women before the Inquisition or the episcopal courts, made wary—by preachers, confessors, and missionaries—of the “superstitious” or diabolical element present in such cures.<sup>112</sup>

The nature of the *protomedicato* as an office closely linked to the state is reflected in other ways. This was particularly true of those based on the Spanish model, as in Naples. Whereas in Rome the various fees and fines paid to the *protomedicato* funded college salaries and costs, in Naples the income went to the state treasury. Here, the *protomedicato* was one of many *arrendamenti* or tax farms (from the Spanish *arrendar*, to contract). This was a system by which the tax farmer, or *arrendatore*, would offer an anticipated sum of money at public auction based on the annual revenues due to that office. The *arrendatore*, usually by means of a system of sub-contracts, then undertook the collection of the taxes or duties.<sup>113</sup> The *arrendamento* of the *protomedicato* was set up in 1610, for which the first contractor bid 8,330 ducats, keeping for himself the emoluments derived from the granting of licences and diplomas, the inspection of apothecaries' shops, and the payment of fines.<sup>114</sup> Earnings remained relatively low during the seventeenth century, but in the eighteenth it became a lucrative source of income for the crown.<sup>115</sup>

The *arrendatore* or his deputy was part of the “team” which went about the kingdom inspecting apothecaries' shops, collecting licence fees, examining non-graduate practitioners, and settling medical disputes. Accompanying him were the *protomedico*, or his deputy, the proto-apothecary, and three soldiers.<sup>116</sup> While relations between physicians and apothecaries generally seem to have been good, as early as 1743 there were complaints that farming out the collection of duties seriously harmed the practice of medicine. Because the *arrendatore*'s motivation was purely financial, it was alleged that diplomas and licences were issued without the required examination, resulting in the “mushrooming” of practitioners. Inspections of apothecaries' shops were carried out only after notice had been given, allowing apothecaries to dispose of inferior goods and borrow good quality ones, so that, especially in the provinces, the inspection became a mere formality. Seeking to intervene and remedy these ills, the *protomedico* “finds the way blocked by the pestiferous cause of the tax contract”.<sup>117</sup> These comments were made by a grocer-cum-fiscal reformer with his own axe to grind, but by 1780 even the president of the Royal Academy of Sciences, the influential Prince of Francavilla, was also advocating

<sup>112</sup> On the role of popular healing, see David Gentilcore, *From bishop to witch. The system of the sacred in early modern Terra d'Otranto*, Manchester University Press, 1992, pp. 128–61.

<sup>113</sup> Luigi de Rosa, *Studi sugli arrendamenti del Regno di Napoli. Aspetti della distribuzione della ricchezza mobiliare nel Mezzogiorno continentale (1649–1806)*, Naples, Arte Tipografica, 1958.

<sup>114</sup> Lidia Castaldo Manfredonia, *Gli arrendamenti, fonti documentarie conservate presso l'Archivio di Stato di Napoli*, Naples, Arte Tipografica, 1986, vol. 1, p. 162.

<sup>115</sup> Annual earnings were under 5,000 ducats for most of the 1600s, rising to around 9,000 during the years of Austrian occupation (1707–34), and running between 15,000 and 19,300 during the late 1780s. (A.S.N., *Dip. Somm.: Protomedicato*, series I, fasci 280 I, 280 II, 281, 282.) But, to keep things in perspective, the gabelle on playing cards brought in more money, whilst the tobacco *arrendamento* earned the state over ten times as much (cf. Antonio Calabria, *The cost of empire. The finances of the Kingdom of Naples in the time of the Spanish rule*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 134–41; Antonio Di Vittorio, *Gli Austriaci e il Regno di Napoli, 1707–1734*, vol. 1, *Le finanze pubbliche*, Naples, Giannini, 1969, p. 207.)

<sup>116</sup> Fabio Cava, ‘Istruzioni che s'hanno da osservare dal Protomedico, Protospesiale e Affittatore’, in Santorelli, op. cit., note 14 above, pp. 85–95.

<sup>117</sup> Broggia, op. cit., note 105 above, pp. 289–91.

reform. The Prince recommended that the *arrendatore* be stripped of “the authority to dispense licences to practise medicine, whether in physic or in surgery or obstetrics”. Apothecaries’ shops should be inspected directly by physicians of the crown or the *protomedico*, “without the involvement of the *arrendatore*, whose task is to represent the treasury, allowing him to claim only the *jus visitationis* [inspection fee], which is six *carlini*”.<sup>118</sup> Indeed, the records of the *arrendamento* of the *protomedicato*—all that survives with reference to the tribunal’s activities—contain numerous complaints from apothecaries against the *arrendatori*. But the *arrendamento* was then at its most profitable, and nothing was done.

Needless to say, the collection of these emoluments could lead to abuses whether it was carried out directly by tax collectors or not. These are present in all three types. As early as 1484–86, in an early example of the literature of roguery, Teseo Pini included *protomedici* in his list of swindlers, charlatans and false vagabonds. Under the guise of overseeing the practice of medicine, they really acquired the position in order to fill their own pockets, Pini commented. They were in fact like the charlatans they licensed. They pretended to prohibit from healing those lacking the proper rank, but when money was handed over, “this man may heal and that man may sell medicines”. Everyone profited, Pini concluded, but the sick.<sup>119</sup>

This was certainly within the range of possibilities. From the point of view of licensees, at least, there was precious little difference between a *protomedico*’s assiduity in collecting fees or merely lining his pockets. In 1639 the *protomedico* of Benevento, Pietro Piperno, was accused of excessive zeal in exercising his office by the city’s barbers. They claimed that his earnestness simply masked his desire for the extra income it brought in. The city council agreed, deciding that the barbers should be inspected only once during the *protomedico*’s three-year term.<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, because the office of *protomedico* was often sold, office-holders were keen to make the most of their acquired position. In the Papal States the cost of the various provincial *protomedicati* varied according to the province’s importance.<sup>121</sup> When the viceroy of Sicily decreed that the office of consultor *protomedico* in Palermo would become a lifetime appointment (1743), it had already been sold for some time. The viceroy hoped that it would be sold to the most senior and experienced candidate, at a price not inferior to that paid in the past.<sup>122</sup> In fact, Gerlando Fasulo paid 7,500 *onze* for the office in 1779; three years later the going rate was 8,260 (earnings amounted to 1,000 *onze* per annum).<sup>123</sup>

<sup>118</sup> The *protomedico* himself, Francesco Serrao, was opposed to any change. ‘Relazione del Principe di Francavilla relativa alle visite di protomedici’, A.S.N., *Dip. Somm.: Protomedicato*, series II, fascio 34, no. 16.

<sup>119</sup> Teseo Pini, ‘Speculum cerretanorum’, in Piero Camporesi (ed.), *Il libro dei vagabondi*, Turin, Einaudi, 1973, p. 66.

<sup>120</sup> Museo del Sannio, Benevento, *Deliberazioni consiliari*, 1631–40, fol. 380, cited in Alfredo Zazo, ‘Spigolature sull’autore del *De magicis affectibus*: Pietro Piperno’, *Samnium*, 1975, 48: 103–5, on p. 104. Piperno is best known for his work on magical afflictions, *De magicis affectibus*, published together with a treatise on the witches of Benevento in 1634. Cf. Michele Miele, ‘Malattie magiche di origine diabolica e loro terapia secondo il medico beneventano Pietro Piperno (+1642)’, *Campania sacra*, 1973, 4: 166–223.

<sup>121</sup> Garofalo, *op. cit.*, note 8 above, p. 15.

<sup>122</sup> V. Parisi, *Capitoli et ordinazioni della felice e fedelissima città di Palermo*, Palermo, 1768, pp. 96–8, cited in Pitre, *op. cit.*, note 15 above, p. 164.

<sup>123</sup> Pitre, *op. cit.*, note 15 above, p. 261. Cf. Vittorio Sciuti Russi, ‘Aspetti della venalità degli uffici in Sicilia (secoli XVII–XVIII)’, *Rivista storica italiana*, 1976, 88: 342–55, p. 348.

## Protomedici and protomedicati in early modern Italy

Of course venality was typical of early modern office-holding and should not be regarded as synonymous with corruption. But *protomedici* had to recoup the costs of their office, *vice-protomedici* the costs of their tours of inspection, and the colleges the salaries they paid. Nobody admitted to corruption in any case. The guilty would either hide the fact by pleading innocence or falsifying entries on balance sheets or cite extenuating circumstances for their actions, removing any moral culpability.<sup>124</sup> A Roman *vice-protomedico* in 1618, accused of not listing payments in the register and pocketing the money, simply admitted that he was unable to account for the irregularities. In any case, he added, he had been given no particular instructions by the college on his duties, not even the printed instructions, so “I therefore acted for myself”.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, abuses seem to have been a functional part of the system, each element of which sought to protect its individual position. This was akin to the strategy of bargaining and negotiation which was a normal feature of criminal cases, mentioned above (part II). Thus apothecaries in the Kingdom of Naples routinely claimed exemptions from the inspection duty (which in many cases were genuine, but sometimes not). Others shut their doors and fled upon the *protomedico*'s approach, as we have seen. Still others petitioned that they had been charged too much. It is the nature of complaints by medical practitioners that they are always plausible, at least as far as the historian is concerned. What are we to make of the legions of midwives who had no idea that licences were required for their profession? Or those who petitioned for exemption, claiming to be, like a Neapolitan woman, “inabile e stupida” (unfit and slow)?<sup>126</sup>

### IV

As offices so closely linked to the workings of the early modern state, most *protomedicati* met their end in the wake of Enlightenment reforms. Thus, in Milan, the reforms of the late eighteenth century sought to replace the autonomous jurisdictions of the colleges and the *protofiscato* with a single centralized and accountable bureaucracy, dependent on the state. A commission of experts was set up at the behest of the director of the medical faculty in 1766. Two years later, its report concluded that the *protofiscato*'s authority seemed to derive more from custom than from the authority of its ‘Costituzioni’. Its licensing of surgeons into three classes was arbitrary and the various fees exacted owed more to the examiners’ greed than the candidate’s abilities. In 1774 a reformed Medical College with wide powers over health matters was established; the *protofiscato* was suppressed and the last *protofiscato* retired with an annual pension of 1,100 *lire*.<sup>127</sup>

The story in Siena is similar, where the *protomedicato* surrendered its powers to try offenders to the state courts in 1777, part of the physiocratic reforms of Grand-Duke

<sup>124</sup> Jean-Claude Waquet, *Corruption: ethics and power in Florence, 1600–1770*, transl. L. McCall, Cambridge, Polity, 1991, pp. 107–14.

<sup>125</sup> ‘Processo contro Rocco Montano V. Protomedico et altri’, 1618, A.S.R., *Università*, b. 1, fols. 247–8v.

<sup>126</sup> A.S.N., *Dip. Somm.: Protomedicato*, series II, fascio 35, “cautele”.

<sup>127</sup> Malamani, *op. cit.*, note 100 above, pp. 993–5 and 1001–2. At present, it is difficult to say how effective these reforms were. In France, the Société Royale de Médecine, established in 1776, “was relatively successful only in those areas where it had a clear royal mandate and did not infringe on the privileges of the local corporations”, according to Ramsey, *op. cit.*, note 9 above, p. 130. Both the Société Royale and the corporations were swept away by the Revolution, but real reform came only in 1803, with the *jurys médicaux*.

Leopold.<sup>128</sup> The office of *protomedico*, integral to the Medical College, survived until 1808, when the college itself fell victim to Napoleonic reforms. By this time, the Bolognese *protomedicato* had already ceased to exist, a victim of the aftermath of the 1796 French invasion.

Where the office survived, it was in a weakened form, deprived of the authority to try offenders. The *protomedicato* of Naples survived late-eighteenth-century calls for financial reform, as noted above.<sup>129</sup> Under the reforms of Joachim Murat in the first decade of the nineteenth century, its fee-collecting activities merely passed from the ministry of finance to the ministry of the interior. Like its counterpart in Sicily, it came to an end with the unification of Italy. The Rome *protomedicato* outlived them all, surviving until 1870, when the city became part of a united Italy. By this time, however, its geographical extent had been reduced to the city itself and its activities confined to meetings of the Medical College at which university business was discussed.

This essay has sought to give an Italian connotation to words—*protomedico* and *protomedicato*—that are generally thought of as exclusively Spanish. In fact, the *protomedicati* in Italy differed markedly from their Spanish counterpart, and even from one another. We have divided them into three types: those which formed part of a medical college, those which were based on the Spanish model, and those which consisted of a single physician appointed by a town or city council. Nowhere did the Italian *protomedicati* have the influence and authority of the Spanish tribunal. To a much greater extent than in Spain they shared power with other magistracies, both of the state and the corporations. Relations between the *protomedicati* and these other bodies were generally harmonious, as exemplified by the tours of inspection which brought *protomedico* and proto-apothecary together. Yet the overlap of authority created questions of jurisdiction which could erupt into open disputes. And, like all office-holding in the *ancien régime*, the *protomedicato* was open to abuse and corruption. Finally, a survey of the surviving records suggests that there was relatively little change in their basic characteristics and the ways in which they functioned throughout the early modern period.

<sup>128</sup> Garosi, *op. cit.*, note 33 above, p. 26.

<sup>129</sup> By comparison, the Spanish *protomedicato* was suppressed in 1799 by royal decree, re-established and finally abolished in 1822. Granjel, *op. cit.*, note 25 above, vol. 4, p. 92.