

Articoli/Articles

MEDICAL WORKS IN THE LIBRARY
OF GIOVANNI PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA.
A PRELIMINARY SURVEY

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SUMMARY

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) spent his short life exploring Ancient and Medieval philosophy and Christian, Jewish and Islamic theology in order to show the basic harmony of all beliefs. He used his considerable means to put together a library for study, with thousands of manuscripts and printed books in Latin, Italian, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, among others. The library was acquired by Cardinal Domenico Grimani in 1498 and brought to the chapter of Saint Anthony at Castello in Venice a few decades later. Contrary to what has frequently been asserted, far from all of Pico's and Grimani's books were destroyed in the fire of 1687 that left Saint Anthony's in ruins. The reconstruction of Pico's library is now being carried out in a new research project. This article is a preliminary survey of the medical works listed in the inventories drafted in 1494 and 1498.

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) spent his short life exploring Ancient and Medieval philosophy and Christian, Jewish and Islamic theology. His attempt at demonstrating the concordance of the philosophical and theological systems of Antiquity and the Middle Ages in 900 *Conclusiones* in 1486, to be discussed in the scholastic way, drew the wrath of Pope Innocent VIII, who first had some, then all the theses condemned as heretical by the Inquisition. Pico fled to France in order to escape imprisonment. Thanks to

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Charles VIII, King of France, and Lorenzo de' Medici, who sheltered him in Florence between 1488 and 1492, he did not suffer the consequences of his condemnation. It was only Alexander VI who put an end to Pico's difficulties with the Church in 1493. After Lorenzo's death in 1492, Pico stayed for the rest of his life in Florence, in close contact with Girolamo Savonarola, joining the Dominican order some months before his death¹.

Pico's library, which he had been putting together since his young years, was, according to his nephew and biographer, Gianfrancesco Pico (1470-1533), one of the reasons for his prodigious intellectual activities and output.

Ad quos mirabiles effectus tam paruo t(em)p(or)is spatio producendos: qui(n)q(ue) ego causas co(n)uenisse repperi: incredibile ingeniu(m); tenacissima(m) memoria(m): facultates amplas: quibus ad coeme(n)dos tum nostrae: tum graecae; tum barbarae linguae libros adiutus est. Septe(m) quippe aureor(um) nummu(m) milia rettulisse mihi memoria repeto; in asciscendis sibi usq(ue) ad die(m) illam: omnifariae litteraturae uoluminibus: erogasse; iuge (et) infatigabile studiu(m) conte(m)ptionem postremo terrenaru(m) rerum (Vita Ioannis Pici. In: Opera[...]. Venetiis 1498: f. <Avi v>)

In 1493, Pico bequeathed the books to his brother Antonio Maria, with the proviso that within two years he should sell them to a community of regular clerics at a price of 500 ducats or more; should this not come to pass, he could dispose of the books as he wished².

A first inventory, probably made soon after Pico's death on the removal of the library from Pico's house in Florence to the convent of St Mark³, transmitted in Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica lat. 3436, lists, in considerable disorder, altogether 1132 items⁴. It seems to have been difficult to find a buyer. A second inventory⁵ was drafted by Antonio Pizzamano, protonotary, secretary of Cardinal Domenico Grimani (1461-1523), a noted scholar and bibliophile. Grimani pur-

chased Pico's library in 1498. In his 1523 testament the Cardinal disposed of his library, bequeathing the Latin parchment manuscripts as well as all manuscripts in Greek, Hebrew, Armenian, Aramaic and Arabic to the chapter of canons of Saint Anthony of Castello in Venice, and all other manuscripts to his nephew Marino Grimani, patriarch of Aquileia⁶. Despite Domenico Grimani's measures to protect the library after his death (e.g. a special library building constructed at Saint Anthony's), a dispersion of the collection bequeathed to the chapter already started in the mid-sixteenth century. The celebrated bibliophile H.J. Fugger purchased 20 volumes, now at the Bavarian State Library⁷. Further sales took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. In 1650 G.F. Tomasini presents a considerably depleted list for Saint Anthony's⁸. Consequently, when the library burnt down in 1687, far from all of Pico's books were destroyed, contrary to what has been frequently maintained⁹.

As far we know, Pico did not enroll in medicine at any of the numerous universities (Bologna, Padua, Ferrara, Florence, among others) that he attended¹⁰. The inventories show, however, that he possessed a significant amount of medical works current in the second half of the fifteenth century, not only in Latin but also in Greek, Arabic and Hebrew. Starting with the *Articella*¹¹ and covering essential Arabo-Latin medical authorities, such as Avicenna¹² and Averroes¹³ (both in Latin), the collection also contains essential commentaries on Avicenna by such luminaries as Gentilis of Foligno (d. 1389)¹⁴ and James of Forlì (d. 1413)¹⁵. As regards Ancient medicine, Galen is present with *Ars parva* and his commentary on Hippocrates' *Aphorisms*, among others¹⁶, whereas Cornelius Celsus figures twice with *De medicina*¹⁷. Maimonides' *Aphorisms* also figure in the collection¹⁸. A university bestseller such as the *Septem sermones medicinales* of Niccolò Falcucci (d. 1412)¹⁹ further attests to Pico's knowledge of current academic medicine. Falcucci's well-documented reference work covers the medical teaching of Aristotle, Galen, Dioscorides,

Haly Abbas and Avicenna; extensive quotations of authors, all well identified, are combined with remarks inspired by personal clinical work²⁰. Surgery is well represented by such authorities as Abulcasis²¹ and Bruno of Longobucco²². The whole of Abulcasis' encyclopaedia was, however, present in Hebrew translation²³. Arnald of Villanova is present with *Practica medicine* and *De gradibus*²⁴ and Peter of Abano with *Conciliator*²⁵. Gynaecology is represented by the thirteenth-century bestseller Ps.-Albertus Magnus, *De secretis mulierum*²⁶. Near-contemporary medical authors feature Giovanni Michele Savonarola (d. 1462?) with *De balneis*²⁷ and Ugone Benci of Siena (d. 1448) with his *Consilia*²⁸.

This is but a brief overview of the most striking features of Pico's library from the medical point of view. The inventories attest to his extraordinary intellectual curiosity and thirst of knowledge. The hunt for more of the surviving physical volumes, rarely identifiable by Pico's ex-libris²⁹, sometimes by his shelf-marks³⁰, more often by Grimani's ex-libris³¹ and still more often by Pico's own annotations³², will make it possible to take into consideration all the aspects, material and immaterial, of this library, carefully built up and diligently put to use, witnessing the intellectual biography of an *incredibile ingenium*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND NOTES

1. The research conducted for this paper was financed by the Academy of Finland and University of Jyväskylä project Late Medieval and Early Modern Libraries as Knowledge Repositories, Guardians of Tradition and Catalysts of Change (Lamemoli, 2017-2021). I have the pleasure of thanking in particular Giovanna Murano, co-member of the Lamemoli sub-project on Pico's library, for providing extensive coverage of her previous research on Pico's library, and generously allowing me to use her forthcoming article on Pico's miscellanies (n. 2). For Pico's biography, see Bacchelli F, Pico Giovanni Conte della Mirandola e Concordia. In: Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani, 2015; 82. URL:

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2. Milanesi C, Testamento olografo e codicillo di Giovanni Pico dei conti della Mirandola. *Giornale storico degli archivi toscani* 1857;1(2):88; Murano G, Inspecting inventories. *Miscellanies and composite volumes in Pico's library*. In: Corbellini S, Murano G, Signore G (eds.), *Collecting, organizing and transmitting knowledge. Miscellanies in Late Medieval Europe*. Turnhout: Brepols; 2018. p. 165.
 3. Hermann W, Per la biblioteca di Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. L'inventario anonimo nel cod. vat. lat. 3436, foll. 263r-296v, *Studi umanistici Piceni* 2004;24:119-128; Murano, ref. 2, p. 166.
 4. The Vatican inventory was edited by Kibre P, *The library of Pico della Mirandola*. New York: Columbia University Press; 1936. A new edition is being prepared by the Lamemoli project. Thanks to Anders Kirk Borggaard (University of Aarhus), trainee of the project in winter-spring 2018, for a new transcription of this inventory and its copy in Milan, *Bibl. Ambr. J 110 inf*.
 5. Now Modena, Archivio di Stato, Cassaforte 5, Autografi, b.1, fasc. 47, edited by Calori Cesis F, *Giovanni Pico della Mirandola detto la Fenice degli Ingegni. Cenni biografici con documentazione ed appendice*. Mirandola: Gaetano Cagarelli; 1897. A new edition of this inventory is being prepared by the Lamemoli project by Outi Merisalo and Lucrezia Chieffallo.
 6. Murano, ref. 2, p. 170; for Marino Grimani's volumes, also see Mercati G, *Codici latini Pico Grimani Pio e di altra biblioteca ignota del secolo XVI esistenti nell' ottonobiana e i codici greci Pio di Modena*. *Studi e testi* 75. Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana; 1938. pp. 1-38.
 7. Murano, ref. 2, p. 170. For Fugger, whose library was purchased in 1571 by the Dukes of Bavaria, Kellenbenz H, Hans Jakob Fugger. *Weisshorn: Konrad*; 1980. p. 89.
 8. Tomasini Ph, *Bibliothecae Venetae manuscriptae publicae (et) privatae [...]*. I. Utini: Nicolaus Schirattus; 1650. pp. 1-19. Murano, ref. 2, p. 170.
 9. During the sixth Venetian-Ottoman War, aka the Morean War (1684-1699), the Venetian authorities had a gunpowder deposit established next to the library, with foreseeable consequences, see e.g. Cicogna EA, *Delle iscrizioni veneziane* 1. Venezia: Giuseppe Orlandelli; 1824. pp. 188-189.
 10. Rabin SJ, Pico on magic and astrology. In: Dougherty MV (ed.), *Pico della Mirandola. New essays*. Cambridge - New York - Melbourne - Madrid - Cape Town - Singapore - São Paulo - Delhi: Cambridge University Press; 2008. p. 175.

11. I shall be quoting Kirk Borggaard's transcription of Vat. lat. 3436: here, f. 264v, *Artisella*, with the shelfmark *capsa 30, numerus 479*, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 92. Kibre's edition contains references to Calori Cesis' edition of the 1498 inventory, which often presents a better identification of works than the 1494 inventory, see above nn. 4-5.
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13. Vat. lat. 3436, f. 274: *P. Collig(et) Auerois problemata Alex(andri)*, 2.2, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 617. The second work is *Problemata* attributed to Alexander of Aphrodisias and translated by Giorgio Valla.
14. Vat. lat. 3436, f. 263v: *Gentilis super toto* (= *tercio*), 30.482 (= *Gentilis' comm. on Can. 3, fen 4*), Kibre, ref. 4, no. 26; f. 264v: *Gentilis super p(rim) a phen. Avicennæ*, 30.498 (i.e. *comm. on Can. 3, fen 1*), Kibre, ref. 4, no. 27; f. 273: *P. Scriptum gentilis super Phen.* (= *comm. on Can. 3, fen 19*), 30.567, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 542; *p. Gentilis in (secunda) (et) (terci)a fen.* (= *comm. on Can. 3 [?], fen 2-3*), 31.517, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 549.
15. Vat. lat. 3436, f. 264v: *Iacobus super p(rim)o Avicennæ*, 14.478 (= *Expositiones in primum librum Canonis Avicennæ*), Kibre, ref. 4, no. 83; for biographical information, see Kibre, ref. 4, no. 118. The library also contains James of Forlì's commentary on the Hippocratic Aphorisms, f. 265: *Iacobus super aphorismos Marsilius super eisdem*, 30.475, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 118. The second work in the ms. is Marsilius of Santasofia's (d. 1405) commentary on the same text.
16. Vat. lat. 3436, f. 271v: *P. Amphorismi cu(m) galieno graeco*, 29.275, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 433; f. 271: *P. Ars p(ar)ua Galieni graeci*, 29.563, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 454; f. 279v: *Introductorium Galieni. (et) or(ati)o(n)es philelphi*, 12.501, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 910.
17. Vat. lat. 3436, f. 273v: *P. Cornelius Celsus*, 28.382, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 578; f. 275v: *Cornelius Celsus*, 10.920, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 699.

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18. Vat. lat. 3436, f. 271: *P. Amphorismi (et) alia*, 6.459, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 448.
19. Vat. lat. 346, f. 264: *Septimus Nicoli sermo*, 13.566, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 75; *Sermo quartus nicoli*, 15.932, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 76; *Sextus nicoli*, 11.530, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 77; *Primus nicoli*, 15.940, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 78; *Sermo tercius Nicoli*, 15.934, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 79; f. 264v: *Sermo secundus Nicoli*, 31.528, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 80; *Quintus sermo nicoli*, 15.928, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 86. For Falcucci's reputation, see Merisalo, O, Les cinq sens chez Niccolò Falcucci. In: Palazzo E (ed.), *Les cinq sens au Moyen Âge*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf; 2016. pp. 725-726; for the popularity of the work, Ibid. pp. 726-727.
20. Ibid. p. 726.
21. Vat.lat. 3436, f. 263v: *Cirurgia Albugasis* (= Abulcasis, i.e. Abū al-Qāsim Khalaf ibn al-'Abbās al-Zahrāwī, d. 1013, author of a comprehensive encyclopedia (Al-Tasrif) on medicine, the last book of which concerns surgery and was translated by Gerard of Cremona into Latin c. 1000; for the circulation of the *Chirurgia*, see Green MH, *Moving from philology to social history. The circulation and uses of Albucasis's Latin surgery in the Middle Ages*. In: Glaze FE, Nance B (eds.), *Between text and patient. The medical enterprise in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Micrologus' Library 39. Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo; 2011. p. 332), 33.725, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 51.
22. Vat. lat. 3436, f. 263v: *Cerugia del bruno*, 29.464, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 48.
23. Vat. lat. 3436, f. 279v: *Liber hebreus in medicina* (tr. of Abulcasis' Al-Tasrif, Sefer ha-Shimmush, by Shem-Tov ben Isaac, from 1254 onwards, see Bos G, Hussein M, Mensching G, Savelsberg F (eds.), *Medical synonym lists from Medieval Provence. Shem Tov Ben Isaac of Tortosa, Sefer ha-shimmush, book 29. Part 1 [...]. Études sur le judaïsme médiéval 37*. Leiden: Brill; 2011. p. 10), 21.130, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 897.
24. Vat. lat. 3436, f. 264: *Pratica Arnaldi*, 31.616, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 55; f. 264v: *De gradibus mag(ist)ri Arnaldi de uilla noua (Aphorismi de gradibus*, see McVaugh M (ed.), *Aphorismi de gradibus. Arnaldi de Villa Nova opera omnia medica 2*. Barcelona: Universidad de Barcelona; 1975. p. 82), 10.916, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 97.
25. Vat. lat. 3436, f. 264v: *Conciliator*, without shelf-mark, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 82.
26. Vat. lat. 3436, f. 273v: *P. De secr(et)is mulierum*, 30.686, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 591.
27. Vat. lat. 3436, f. 264: *Sauenarola de balneis*, 30.524, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 56.
28. Vat. lat. 3436, f. 264: *Consilia ugonis*, 30.410, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 68.
29. E.g. Oxford, Bodleian library, Laud. gr. 18, f. 288 v: *Hic liber est Johannis Pici de la Mirandula*. While the 1494 inventory does not show any volume

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identifiable with this manuscript, it figures as no. 885 in the 1498 inventory (Calori Cesis, ref. 5, p. 45) and as no. 18 in the catalogue of Grimani's Greek manuscripts, see Murano, ref. 2, p. 171.

30. E.g. Berlin, SBB-PK, Ham. 438, a copy of Pico's *De ente et uno* bears the shelfmark *C. 14*, corresponding to Vat. lat. 3436, f. 263v: *Io(annis) Pici de ente (et) uno*, 14, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 41.
31. E.g. Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, 622, a copy of the commentary of Albertus Magnus on the *Physics* of Aristotle, f. 1: *Liber D(ominici) Grimani C(ardina) lis S(ancti) Marci*, corresponding to Vat. lat. 3436, f. 263: *Albertus in physica*, 7.49, Kibre, ref. 4, no. 3.
32. E.g. Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, 622, ff. 149, 169.

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