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The Friulan Expatriate Ephraim Luzzatto, Physician, Hebrew Poet, *épateur des bourgeois*. Part II: Satirising Medicine in Hebrew Verse: Ephraim Luzzatto from Georgian England. With a Selective Survey of Satirising Medicine

Abstract: The 18th-century physician and Hebrew poet Ephraim Luzzatto, born in San Daniele del Friuli and based in London, is the subject of in-depth treatment in three recent articles by the present author. In this couple of articles, instead, we briefly consider what is known about his temperament and irreverent attitudes (in Part I), as well as (in Part II) his satire in Hebrew verse of practitioners of the medical profession. The present Part II combines a review of satire of physicians from Europe in early modern times to the United States in Pasteur's times (we consider cartoons from *Puck* magazine), with a focus on the Hebrew poems of satire about his fellow physicians, which Ephraim Luzzatto, who had graduated in 1751 at the University of Padua, published in 1768 in London, where he had moved in 1855, as claimed by Mirsky (rather than 1763, as claimed in earlier scholarship). We translate and discuss those poems.

Key words: Ephraim Luzzatto, medicine in literature, Hebrew poetry (Italy, England).

1. The Genre of Mock-Prescriptions, and the Mock-Encomium

Hugh Roberts [1] analysed nonsensical **mock-prescriptions**, parodies of medical prescriptions, especially from sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century France. Mock-prescriptions from Italy are the subject of papers by Armando Bisanti [2] and Diego Zancani [3]. Birlinger [4] was concerned with an early 15th-century mock-prescription from Germany, purportedly the medicines a Dutch doctor prescribed to a countess. Zancani [3] was concerned with mock-prescriptions in the works of Giulio Cesare Croce (1550–1609), medical parodies by which include *Secreti di medicina mirabilissimi del poco eccell. e tutto ignorante... dottor Bragheton*, and *Secreti medicinali del Dottor Gratian*.

Moreover, **mock-encomium** is the subject of Patrick Dandrey [5], Annette Tomarken [6–8], and Volker Kapp [9]. Both genres are relevant for an anecdote about Ephraim Luzzatto we discussed in a companion paper [10] — his was an ornate and panegyric prescription he wrote for a rabbi on the Sabbath in his patient's presence (thus, unnecessarily breaking the Sabbath by devising florid text where the bare medical details would have sufficed) can be considered as a special case of the genre of mock-prescription — but the mock-encomium is more so than the mock-prescription, because the latter genre comprises nonsensical prescriptions, whereas Luzzatto wrote in Latin, after all, a real medical prescription, augmenting it with a mock-encomium.

2. Ephraim Luzzatto's Eighteenth-Century Poems Satirising his Colleagues in the Medical Profession

This section comprises poems about medical doctors, and especially poems satirising the medical profession, authored and published in Hebrew by the Italian Jewish physician and Hebrew-language poet Ephraim Luzzatto [10–14], born in San Daniele del Friuli in 1727. He graduated at the University of Padua, then settled in London in 1763, and published his poetry book in 1768. His later poems are lost [12–14]. In 1792, on his way to Italy, he died in Lausanne, having been seeking medical advice there from the famous physician André Tissot (a family friend). In a separate article [10], we consider how he combined his being a deliberately irritant social gadfly with his medical practice in London.

Ephraim Luzzatto was witty in how he used language in his poems, and he resorted to wordplay. Sporadically among Ephraim Luzzatto's poems, one comes across one that is satirical. The satire is about physicians, thus, Luzzatto's colleagues. Humour about physicians or pharmacists has a long tradition, and there exist studies concerning that. Let us consider Luzzatto's poems mocking physicians. Was Luzzatto writing by introspection, when claiming that when a patient is a comely lady, her doctor would try to stay with her longer and touch her out of improper motives?

A sonnet, poem no. 21 in the 1768 edition of his collected poems, is entitled¹

על הרופא הנופל שדוד ברשת האהבה:

The Physician Who Falls Prey into the Network of Love.

¹ I reproduce the vowel diacritical marks the way they appear in that edition, imprecise details included.

יִלְדָּה יָפָה אַחַת וּמֵאֹד אֶהְבֵּת
בָּאָה בֵּיתָה רוֹפֵא מְזוֹר לִקְחַת,
לֵאמֹר כִּי זֶה יָמִים נִפְשָׁה כּוֹאֶבֶת,
אֶף בַּלִּילוֹת רָחֵק מִמֶּנָּה נַחַת.

עוֹד הַשִּׁגְלָה הַזֹּאת אֶצְלוֹ נִצְבֶּת,
שָׁלַח יָדוֹ לַחֲקֹר אִם יֵשׁ קִדְחַת,
וּתְצִת בְּלִבָּבוֹ פְּתָאוֹם שְׁלֵהְבֶת,
אֶהֱבֶה, נִלְכַּד גַּם הוּא אֶל תּוֹךְ הַפִּחַת.

נִדְהָם אֶף מִשְׁתָּאָה הִיָּה הַגָּבֵר,
עַד הַחוֹלָה שְׁנִית הִטִּיבָה טַעַם,
בִּי הָאֲדוֹן הָאֵין מִרְפָּה לִשְׁבֹּר?

אֵז הוּא: הֵה רַעִיתִי, אֶל נָא תַחֲשׂוּכִי
חֲבֹשִׁי אֶת אֶתְפָּצְעִי, אִמְנָם הַפַּעַם
לֹא הָרוּפֵא, אֶךְ הַחוֹלָה אֲנִי כִי.

Text 1. Poem no. 21 in the 1768 edition of Ephraim Luzzatto's collected poems.

I translate it as follows (I did not try to make a translation of it in verse):

A beautiful girl who was very much in love /
Came to a doctor's home to obtain healing, /
Saying that it is already a few days her spirit is in pain, /
By night, too, rest is afar from her. //

While still this lass was standing near, /
He extended his hand to check whether there was fever, /
And suddenly in his heart a flame was kindled, /
He was in love, he, too, was captured in the trap. //

Astonished and amazed the man was, /
Until the patient said sensibly again:
"Sir, is there no cure for this illness?"

Then he: "Oh, my beloved, do not refrain,
Dress thou my wound, as this time,
Not the physician, but the patient am I".

The situation is problematic, but the poem is delicate, limpid, with levity. It expressed the situation with humaneness, and the doctor, albeit the butt of the humour (more so than the girl), is portrayed sympathetically.

Not so this other sonnet (poem no. 38), which is heavy-handed in its sarcasm against physicians. It is an indignant whistle-blower filing charges. It is entitled

השיר הזה לשונו חרב חדה ורופאים משחק לו:

This poem's language/tongue is a sharp sword, and physicians are its butt.

רופא, ימין ידיו צרי כותבת,
ושם אל מל' א כפה כבר הציעה;
יבטח ארוכתו לכל-עצבת,
נחפז יקבל פז ובל הגיעה.

אם נערה תתחל יאחר שבת
על ירکت ערשה עדי הרגיעה;
אך אם זקנה היא אשר כואבת,
ישלים פקודתו בעד ארגיעה.

עת אחזה ידו, אשר הפילה
יום יום, לפי נוצה, חללים אלה,
בינו ובין ש'טר מעט אבדילה.

רק מה? הל' א ערכם רח'קה, עקב
כי הוא ימותת רק ענושי סלף,
זה יהר'ג נקי ונשא עקב.

Text 2. Poem no. 38 in the 1768 edition of Ephraim Luzzatto's collected poems.

My translation into English follows:

A physician, his right hand writing a prescription
[literally: writing a medication], /

And his left hand already opens its palm; /
He promises his healing for any ailment, /
In a hurry he gets gold, though undeserved. //

If a maiden falls ill, he sits a long time /
On the side of her bed until she is calmer; /
But if it is an old woman who is in pain, /
He completes his visit in an instant. //

Whenever I see his hand, which has caused to fall, /
Day after day, by its pen, one thousand fallen, /
I find but little difference between him and an executioner. //

But what? Their [respective] value is far apart, because
That one only smites ones convicted for a felony, /
This one kills the innocent and carries a reward. //

The sonnet that comes after, namely, poem no. 39, has a rather clumsy long title that ascribes to physicians the three capital sins which Judaism consider so severe, that one is to rather suffer martyrdom than perpetrate them under duress. The title of this is composed of modified fragments of three biblical verses (*1 Kings* 1:22, *Genesis* 4:4, *Amos* 1–2 *passim*), then an early rabbinic enumeration of the three major sins:

עוד זה מדבר וזה בא, והבל הביא גם הוא על שלשה פשעי בני הרופאים הלא המה עבודה זרה גלוי עריות ושפיכות דמים:

While this one was speaking, this one came, and Abel [a pun: empty talk], too, brought concerning the three crimes of *the children of the physicians* [patterned after: children of Israel] namely, idolatry, fornication, and bloodshedding.

The poem itself ascribes wickedness to “all physicians”, whereas the poem that follows it (poem no. 40) describes the honest and well-meaning physician. The poem about the wicked physicians returns to the motif of the doctor who touches a girl, his patient, with libidinous intent. Poem no. 39, whose lines were printed without separating its stanzas, actually comprises two stanzas of six lines each, then a stanza of four lines, and finally a stanza of three lines. Each stanza is thematically and syntactically self-contained. My translation of that poem is as follows:

The physicians, all of them, /
are evil and sinful wrongdoers; /
religion is not a legacy for them, /
G-d is not king over them, /
it is only after their profit that their heart goes, /
and they made for them a god of silver. //
Their way is most corrupt, /
as while visiting a lovely girl, /
apart from their touching [to find] whether there is fever, /
they extend a hand beneath, /
and grope anywhere, /
lest the bowels of her belly are occluded. //
These, uttering falsehood, /

rise to dress every fracture, /
but they ambush for blood like men of wickedness, /
and they hurry to shed it inordinately. //
How then shall they see the light of redemption, /
given that they sinned thrice, /
as they murdered, fornicated, and apostasised?

Poem no. 40, about the ideal physician, is a sonnet. I translate it as follows:

But the physician who is good and pursues nature, /
places his rules on his heart as though they were inscribed on a plaque; /
he knows all humours, ponders any spirit, /
a in the plain it becomes heavier, and lighter on a hill. //
Still he considers the four [humours], he who watches *šéva* '
[a pun, 'seven' or 'oath', but here: he who is mindful of the Hippocratic oath], /
and a treatment he would not give unless he is sure; /
he quickly opens the source of putrid blood, /
probes its texture, examines its colour. //
Those afflicted with pain, as there is just one step /
from their bed of affliction to the netherworld, /
he with his skilful hands leads to deliverance. //
He, in the circumstances of any illness researches exceedingly; /
grace is poured in his lips, in his utterances nectar, /
as even when there is no cure he does good to the spirit. //

The title of poem no. 40 means: “Into the mouth of the third poem [of the three about physicians] nothing unclean has entered, and its intent [literally: hit has placed in his heart] to instruct, what the norm of a physician and his behaviour is to be”.

3. The Genre of Humour about Medical Doctors or Pharmacists

Humour about physicians or pharmacists, or that resorts to the motif of a physician or a pharmacist in order to hit a different target — such as in Italian political caricatures in 1848–1914 [15]² — has a long tradition, and there exist many studies concerning that [15–44].³

In 1983, the *Revue d'histoire de la pharmacie*, 71(259), published on p. 339 a cartoon, “Caricature politique italienne à sujet médico-pharmaceutique”, with a pointer to p. 355, and with this explanation: “Lithographie d’Augusto Grossi dans *La Rana*, 16 juin 1871” (concerning Prussia, her attempt to get allies, and the indemnification imposed to France). In the same journal issue, on p. 333 a cartoon was published, again with the title “Caricature politique italienne à sujet médico-pharmaceutique”, with a pointer to p. 355, and with this explanation: “Lithographie anonyme parue dans *La Rana*, 28 avril 1871” (Prussia intends to amputate France’s leg). In the same journal issue, on p. 341 a cartoon was published, with the same title, the same pointer, and the explanation: “«Conférence en pharmacie» Lithographie en couleurs, dessin d’Augusto Grossi, dans *Papagallo*, [corr. *Pappagallo*,] 19 juin 1884” (Italy wants Malta, which is represented as a sieve, but in his shop, the pharmacist Bismarck tries to maintain the equilibrium).

In 1984, the *Revue d'histoire de la pharmacie*, 72(260), published on p. 79 a cartoon, “Caricature politique italienne à sujet médico-pharmaceutique: «Distillation politique»”, with this explanation: “Caricature par A. Grossi, dans le *Papagallo*, [recte: *Pappagallo*,] 6 novembre 1881 (Milan, Bibl. Naz. Braidense)”, the setting being “Dans le laboratoire

² Cf. [16], which deals with Italian political cartoons with a medical theme from the Risorgimento, reproduced in 1996 in the 1997 calendar of the Laboratori Guidotti in Pisa.

³ At <http://www.persee.fr> one can access several of the bibliographical entries in French.

chimique des associés Chambre et Sénat”. Moreover, the *Revue d'histoire de la pharmacie*, 72(262), published on p. 1 a cartoon, “Le pharmacien: Caricature par Draner (Jules Renard, dit), Liège 1833 – Paris 1926”, with a pointer to p. 272.

The Italian physician, naturalist, and poet Francesco Redi (Arezzo, 1626 – Pisa, 1698) was one of several 17th-century Italian physicians who were also writers. Humour in his correspondence has been discussed in scholarship [45]. Sometimes, it is the social or physiological function of an object that makes some event, or place, or news, related to it, amusing: such is the case of Pierre Julien [46] announcing “Le premier musée au monde du bourdaloue et du pot de chambre”, concerning some items decorated with humorous intentions, e.g., “plaisanteries d'un goût douteux (comme ces vases à sujet militaire décorés sur un thème de... canonnade”.

Articles by Screech [47] and Fontaine [48] are concerned with Rabelais and medicine. Jeff Persels [49] discusses medical humour in the French Reform theatre during the Renaissance ascribing intestinal distress to the Roman Catholic Church, and mocking the belief in the therapeutic power of excrement. A study by Bert Hansen [50] is about 1880s humour from the United States against physicians.

Kenneth Calman [51] is concerned with resorting to humour in medicine, and more specifically, Athena du Pré [52], and already Cousins [53], have been concerned with therapeutic humour. Nevo and Shapira [54, 55] discussed the use of humour to assuage the anxiety of children in care of a dentist. As for medical clowning, it has even been applied to fertility treatments [56].

Bert Hansen [50] has shown the transformative effect on attitudes, of Pasteur’s discovery of the anti-rabies vaccine; the hope in medical progress is still with us today. Arguably, older anti-physician humour was inspired by scepticism concerning physicians’ effectiveness. Even as in our own days, people have become used to medical progress, from experience they tend to know that some doctors are caring, others do not care, and whereas some doctors are good, trust in some others is bleak.

There exists in Italian a proverb about the dire effects of medical inexperience: *Il medico giovane fa la gobba al cimitero* (“A young physician gives the graveyard a hunch”, i.e., it becomes a hill, as so many people are caused to die). Now consider that in Italy, one overhears sometimes some nervous mother rebuking her child: “Non fare gobbetta!” (“Stand upright, do not make a hunch!”). The humour in the following joke of my own making depends upon the overlap between those two scripts:

Domanda: A che bambino è più importante dire «Non fare gobbetta!»?
Risposta: A quello di cui si vuol fare un medico. Infatti, vuole il proverbio che «Il medico giovane fa la gobba al cimitero».

Q. Which child is better told “do not make a hunch!”?
A. The one you want to become a medical doctor.
As the proverb has it, [etc.]

In contrast, the stereotype about physicians whose prescriptions are supposedly unreadable is behind the following (just mildly) humorous riddle I am making up:

Domanda: Già nell’antichità c’era il problema dei medici
la cui scrittura era indecifrabile?
Risposta: In effetti. Faceva eccezione (e suppongo che fosse la sua
principale attrattiva) il medico Scribonio Largo.

- Q. Is it the case that already in antiquity there was the problem that the longhand of some physicians could not be deciphered?
- A. Indeed. An exception must have been (in fact I presume this may have been his main attractive) the physician Scribonius Largus [“one who writes large”, as though].

In the following, we consider satirical cartoons about physicians from the United States in the last quarter of the 19th century. We have seen that in Ephraim Luzzatto’s poem no. 40, Luzzatto is still adept at humoral medicine. Traditionally, sarcasm against the medical profession was because of no progress being perceived. Attitudes, and humour, started to change with Pasteur’s discovery of the anti-rabies vaccine.

We reproduce here, in full and as enlarged details of individual panels (Figures 1 to 5), the cartoon “The Profession Gone Mad”, published in the American satirical magazine *Puck* of 13 January 1886, p. 314, reproduced in Hansen [50, Fig. 7 on p. 402]. An American six-panel cartoon from a leading satirical magazine, inspired by medical enthusiasm for Pasteur’s anti-rabies vaccine. Panel captions from upper left: “No more use for the human skeleton”, “Cat-snatching instead of body-snatching”, “A fine opening for rabbits”, “The doctors race for a case” [of rabies], “No time for common sick folks: Doctor. — ‘Excuse me, but I have an experiment to make’”, “What the physicians are coming to”.

Next (Figures 6 and 7), we reproduce the cartoon “OUR MERCILESS MILLIONAIRE. VANDERBILT. — ‘The Public Be — Doctored!’”, *Puck*, 29 October 1884, cover, reproduced in Hansen [50, Fig. 1 on p. 379]. A donation to build a new medical college is not applauded by *Puck*; it is, it claims, by the cruel medical profession (professors and members are waving their surgical saws) and its allies, the undertakers. *Puck* tries to retain him by his jacket.

It was only in 1884 that the first medical research laboratory in America was established, when the industrialist Andrew Carnegie donated the funds to the Bellevue Hospital Medical College in New York City. Also in 1884, the railroad magnate William Henry Vanderbilt offered a half-million dollars to aid the expansion of another New York City medical school, the College of Physicians and Surgeons. But in marked contrast to the post-Pasteur world of experimental and scientific medicine where such a donation would be universally praised, this act was satirized in glowing color on the cover of a popular magazine as a threat to people’s health and as a boon only to avaricious medical students and undertakers. [50, p. 378]

We also show a detail from the cartoon about the donor Vanderbilt: undertakers are as glad as the medical profession is. The cover of a bier near the door of the undertaker’s shop lists his references, who are several medical doctors. At present, these professions are no longer the butt of such malicious humour; lawyers are: see a discussion by Christie Davies of the American cycle of lawyers jokes [57]. Incidentally, E. Rosenberg authored a study of humour among funeral directors [58].

Now, a general remark. Conceivably, a character may be claimed to be a physician, and separately be made the butt of jokes. This is found in Japanese folklore about the octopus: “Legendary physician to the dragon king of the sea, the octopus is also the butt of jokes for its odd face. With wrinkled brow, round eyes, and short, tube-like mouth, [the artist] Gyokuzan’s anthropomorphized netsuke (pl[ate] 248 [an early 19th-century red and black Negoro lacquer with inlays]) resembles the humorous, pursed-lip masks — sold at every shrine — that are used to portray Hyottoko, a staple character of Japanese folk plays. In other tales, the octopus is shown as voracious. [...]” (HG [= Hollis Goodall] on p. 273 in Singer and Masatomo 2019 [59]).



Fig. 1. "The Profession Gone Mad", *Puck*, 13 January 1886, p. 314.



Fig. 2. The first two panels from the same cartoon.



Fig. 3. The fourth and fifth panels of the same cartoon.



Fig. 4. The third panel from the same cartoon.



Fig. 5. The sixth and last panel from the same cartoon. The little boy with the pen is Puck, the personification of the magazine bearing that name. In this panel, Puck fingers a psychiatric hospital for physicians who have gone crazy.

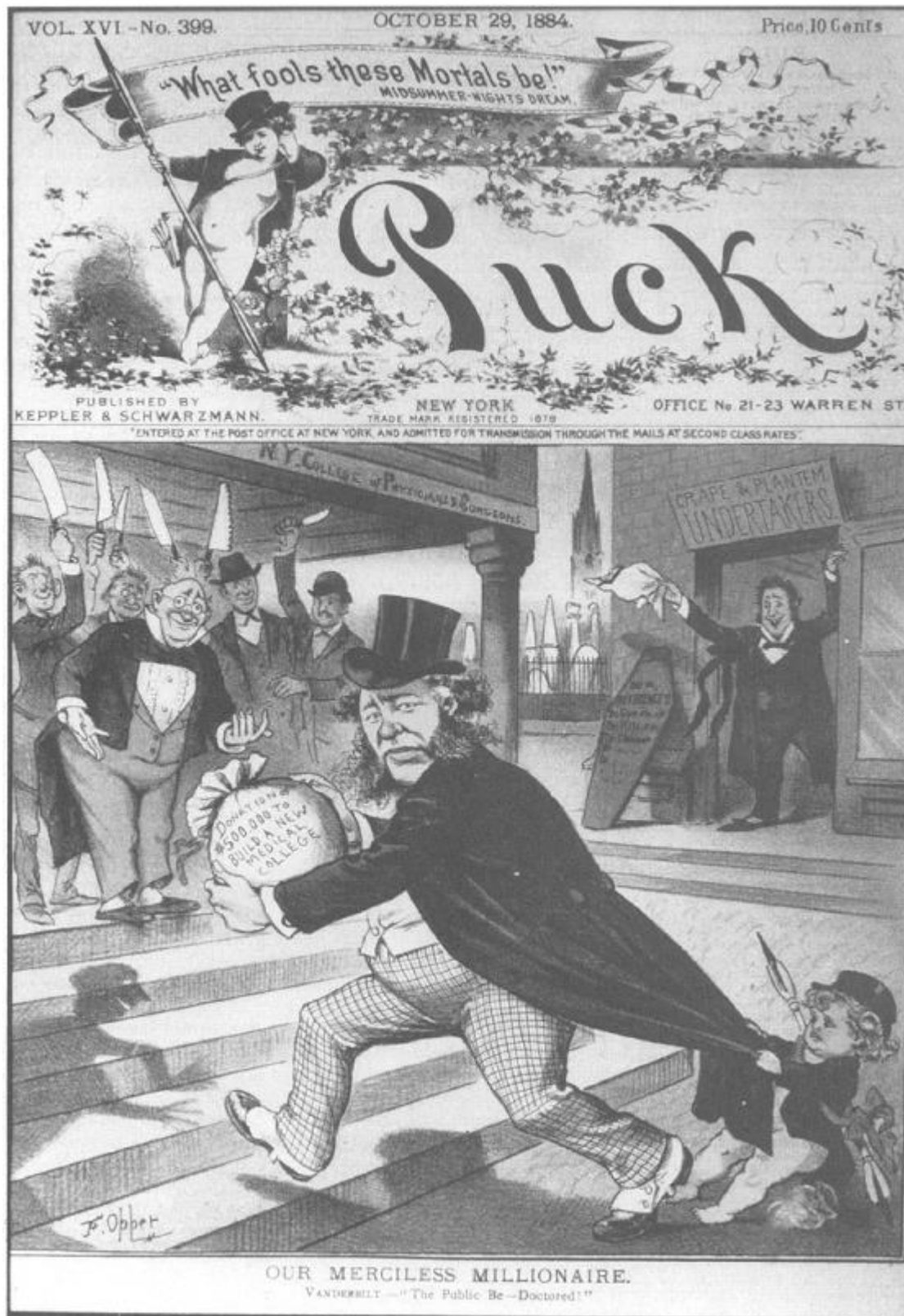


Fig. 6. "OUR MERCILESS MILLIONAIRE. / VANDERBILT. —“The Public Be — Doctored!”", *Puck*, 29 October 1884, cover.

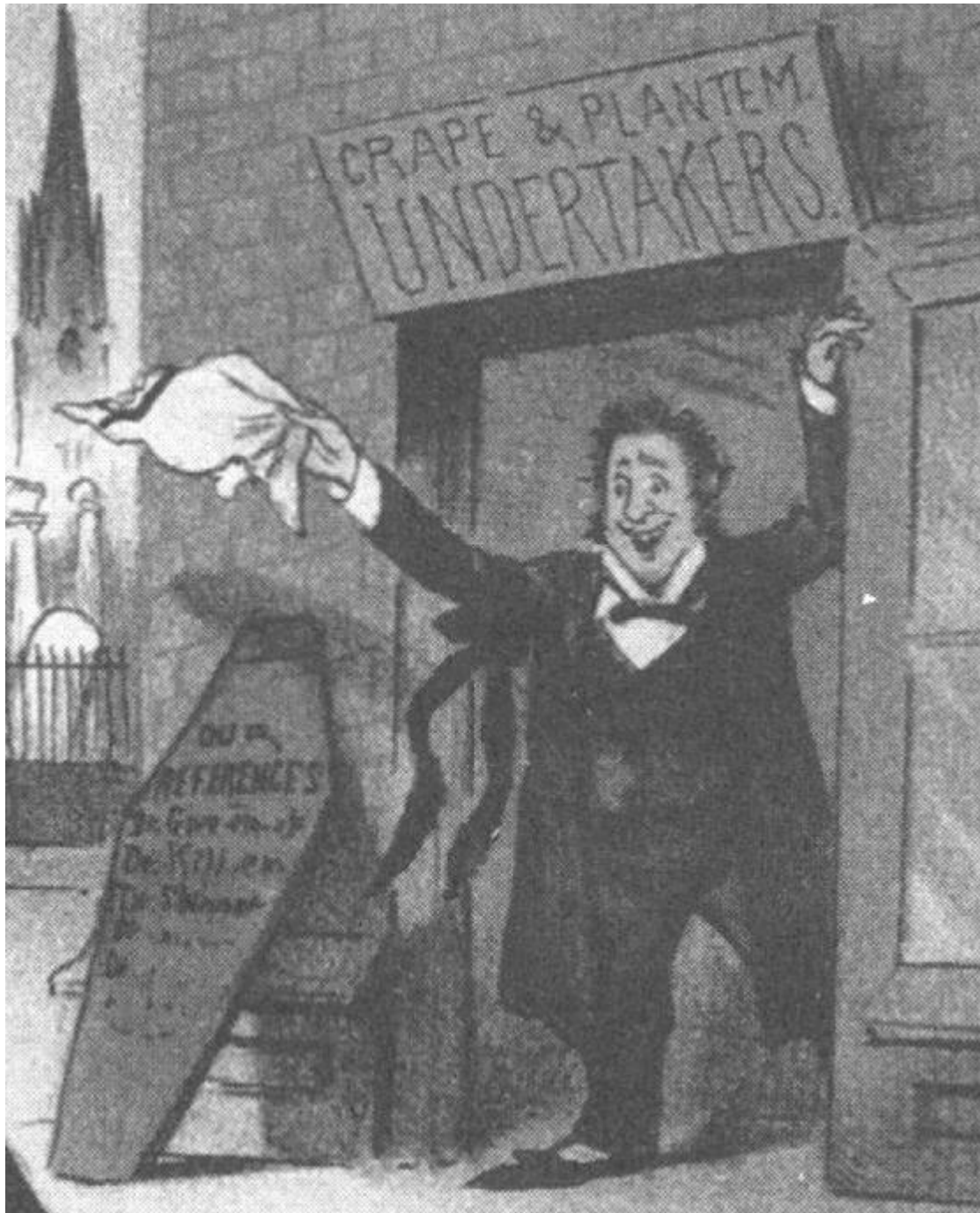


Fig. 7. Detail: undertakers are as glad as the medical profession is. The cover of a bier near the door of the undertaker's shop lists his references, who are several medical doctors.

In an article entitled “Anstey and Anapestic Satire in the Late Eighteenth Century”, by Martin Day [60], the following is stated on pp. 142–143:

Mason had established the heroic epistle as the standard satiric device to review prose works, but in *The Doctor Dissected* (1771) Mrs. Ireland, mother of William H. Ireland, the forger of Shakespearian documents, selected anapests to ridicule William Cadogan's *Dissertation on the Gout* (1771). Dr. Cadogan's treatise, immensely successful in its day, achieved numerous editions and evoked many replies from contemporary physicians. The dissertation asseverated that gout, caused by indolence, intemperance, and mental

disturbance, could not be cured medically, but by proper diet, exercise, and sanitation. England of that day must have wondered, as did Mrs. Ireland, if the cure was not worse than the disease. For example, Cadogan recommended that everyone wash his feet daily. Mrs. Ireland's poem is virtually a burlesque paraphrase of the original, versifying every important declaration, often incorporating the same learned Latin and medical terms. Cadogan admonished even those who claimed to be eating moderately and wholesomely:

If ever they eat a steak or a chop, if it is sometimes without pepper, I believe it is never without pickles, the worst of all poisons. They are surprised that such meals should rise on their stomachs with flatulence, sour and bitter hiccups and eructations, which, if they did not keep them down with a sufficient quantity of wine or sometimes a dram, they would be troubled with all the time of digestion.

This passage is burlesqued:

Nay more, on a chop if you dine — 'tis but just
That pickles you eat — of all poisons the worst.
If sauce, and provocatives, thus you will sip up,
No wonder you're plagu'd with a sour, bitter hiccup.

Mrs. Ireland excelled in concocting humorous rhymes:

“In *Gath* do not tell, nor in *Askalon* blab it” —
(You're strictly forbidden to eat a welch rabbit).

Welsh rabbit, or Welsh rarebit, is a dish with no meat in it; it consists of seasoned cheese melted and poured over toast.

4. Parodies of Medical Prescriptions in Hebrew Literature

Parodies of medical prescriptions appear in medieval Hebrew literature, in Ch. 48 of Judah Al-Ḥarizi's early 13th-century picaresque book *Taḥkemoní*, and also appear in Ch. 11 of the *Maḥbarót* by Immanuel Romano (Schirmann 1997 [61], p. 206, and Ezra Fleischer's note 241, *ibid.*; and, on the occurrence in Immanuel's *Maḥbarot*, see Scheiber 1967, repr. 1985 [62]). Both Al-Ḥarizi's and Immanuel's books are in rhymed Hebrew prose with interspersed poems. Judah Al-Ḥarizi was born in 1165/6 in Toledo of Granada or Barcelona. He died in Aleppo, aged sixty, on 3 December 1225 (Sadan 1996 [63], p. 52). His *Taḥkemoní* is a picaresque Hebrew book of *maqāmas*, rhymed prose interspersed with poems. Also Immanuel Romano's *Maḥbarót* consist of rhymed prose interspersed with poems, but it is a fictional autobiography of the poet's adventures. It is he who is the picaresque protagonist, whereas typically in Arabic *maqāmas*, as well as in *Taḥkemoní*, the first-person narrator is one who observes and describes the mischief of the actual protagonist, a cultured adventurer out to spill money from those who would listen to him (hence the character of the *pícaro* in Spanish literature). As I wrote in Nissan (2016a [64], pp. 145–146 [cf. in Nissan 2016b [65]]):⁴

Manoello Giudeo, i.e., Immanuel Romano, or Immanuel of Rome, was a greater author in Hebrew than in Italian, one with comic verve in both languages, and the father of the

⁴ The publications cited in this quotation, as well as in its footnote, are [66] ff. (listed in alphabetical order).

Hebrew sonnet. In his output in Italian, he was invariably a comic poet, unless engaged in an exchange of poems with another poet, requiring him to engage in serious discussion. Manoello was in contact with the poet and politician Bosone da Gubbio (they exchanged poems), and perhaps also with the poet Cino da Pistoia, who in correspondence in verse with Bosone, refers to Immanuel and Dante together (see a discussion in Roth 1953).

In his more copious extant Hebrew output, a humorous intent does occur, but it is not necessarily prevalent. (Of course, humorous intent is not relevant for the several Hebrew commentaries to books of the Hebrew Bible that Immanuel also authored.) It is quite possible, indeed likely, that to gain acceptance as a poet in Italian for a non-Jewish audience even though he was Jewish, let alone for earning purposes, the easier course, if not the only course, was to be a comic poet. Even regardless of his Jewishness, for a poet in medieval Italy for whom earning was paramount, performing as a comic poet was the easier course of action. From 1312 at the court of Cangrande della Scala in Verona (b. 1291, d. 1329, sole ruler from 1311), the role of Manoello was as a *poeta giocoso*, a funny poet providing comic relief along with adulation⁵ — which he did for Cangrande della Scala in *Bisbidis* (amenable to the genre of the *frottola*) — as well as self-deprecation, which is found in his few extant Italian sonnets. See Alfie ([1998]) concerning those sonnets. Immanuel was born in Rome, ca. 1261 (but ca. 1270 according to Leonello Modona, revised to 1261 by Roth 1953, p. 26, fn. 3), and died in Fermo after 1328, but before Cino da Pistoia's death in 1336–1337. Guy Shaked's (2002) revision of Immanuel's chronology (b. ca. 1292, d. after 1352) was cogently criticised by Simona Foà (2004), whose entry "Immanuel da Roma" in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* is authoritative. After leaving Rome, Immanuel also resided in towns in central Italy: Fabriano, Gubbio, Perugia, Orvieto, Ancona, and Camerino.

Concerning the vexed question of whether Immanuel and Dante were acquainted, it seemed for a long while clarified, and the myth of a friendship between Dante and Manoello discarded, in Umberto Cassuto's book *Dante e Manoello* (1921) — cf. Cassuto's German paper "Dante und Manoello" (1921–1922), and see Fortis (1996) about Cassuto's stance — but the situation is reversed if the conclusions of Giorgio Battistoni (1994–1999, 2004) are accepted.

Battistoni considers Immanuel and Dante to have been friends, and (as per a hypothesis of the German Theodor Paur and with reservations, of Abraham Geiger, accepted by Alessandro D'Ancona and Giosuè Carducci, but rejected by Leopold Zunz, to whom Franz Delitzsch in turn objected in 1886) identifies with Dante the character of Daniel who accompanies Immanuel on the journey in the hereafter, in his emulation of the *Divine Comedy*. Leonello Modona in a posthumous text printed in 1898, and Cecil Roth nearly thirty years later, flatly rejected the identification of Daniel with Dante, as Battistoni points out (2004, p. 92) before remarking that in an important study in instalments of 1905–1906, Cassuto refused to flatly reject the possibility that Immanuel, by Daniel, meant Dante, as such an identity would befit a parallel with the guide roles of Virgil and Beatrice in the *Divine Comedy*.

5. More Jibes at Physicians: In Ancient Rome, and in Medieval Spain's Hebrew Literature

Jefim Schirmann wrote (1997 [61], p. 337, my trans.): "Deriding physicians is quote widespread in world literature, from antiquity to the present. It is easily understood that this was the only venue open for such patients who sought to exact revenge from their tormentors". Joseph ben Meir Ibn Zabara (Barcelona, ca. 1140–ca. 1210) was a physician,⁶ as well as an author of Hebrew poetry and rhymed prose. He is best known for his *Sefer Sha'ashu'im* (*Book of Delight*, ca. 1170, a work of entertainment in rhymed prose), whose first person narrator is a physician, but he also wrote a

⁵ See studies by Fabian Alfie (1998, 2016) [66, 67], Mario Marti (1956) [75], Maurizio Vitale (1956) [80], Carmelo Previtera (1939, 1953) [76, 77].

⁶ Samuel (Shmuel) Kottek published about him (1981a) at a conference in the history of medicine, and (Kottek 1981b) in a journal in that same domain.

didascalic poem conveying medical knowledge the human body. In both Ibn Zabara's *Book of Delight*, and the Hebrew *Book of the Seeker* (*Sefer hamevaqqesh*), this one by Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera (northern Spain, ca. 1225 – after 1290), an epigram was included that states what follows (my translation; the Hebrew text appears in Schirmann 1997 [61], p. 337):

Time told a fool: Be a physician,
Thou shalt kill people for their money.
Thou hast an advantage over the angels [sic] of death:
As they kill man free of charge.

The early modern Jewish poet and rabbi Immanuel Frances (b. Mantua, 1618?, d. Livorno?, after 1703) wrote in Hebrew a mock-epitaph (my translation; its Hebrew text appears in Hebrew in Schirmann 1997 [61], pp. 337–338):

Render thanks, o reader, to the Rock, thy Creator,
As into the hands of this physician thou hast never come,
Because [had that been the case,] now this epitaph of mine thou wouldst not have read,
Had he, while he was alive, been thy doctor.

In the *Book of the Seeker*, Ibn Falaquera meets various human types, including members of various professions. He is amazed at how he sees a physician work; he expresses this in Hebrew rhymed prose (my translation; the Hebrew text appears in Schirmann 1997 [61], p. 338):

Somebody has said, upon seeing these tricks,
That of witchcraft, none remained among people, except medicine.

Unlike what he does upon meeting other professionals, the narrator in the *Book of the Seeker* does not ask the physician to accept him as a pupil. At the end of their dialogue, in rhymed prose, the physician cynically admits to being a fraud, but blames his foolish patients (my translation; the Hebrew text appears in Schirmann 1997 [61], p. 339):

The seeker asked: "What need there was to resort to those tricks in ailments,
And to mislead these listeners and onlookers?"
The physician replied: "[It is] in order to make this profession unattainable for the masses,
Otherwise the physician would not obtain the money,
And he would not be asked to heal even free of charge".

In Ibn Zabara's *Book of Delight*, the first person narrator, the physician Joseph (standing for Joseph Ibn Zabara himself) is convinced by a total stranger who introduces himself as a colleague, to join the latter in his town. Too late does Joseph discover, to his dismay, that this colleague, Enan, is an ignoramus, very stingy, and on top of that, a demon. Joseph, the guest, insists on being served dinner at Enan's house, and Enan reluctantly has his servant set the table. They are served insipid unleavened bread, lettuce, and vinegar. Enan insists this is healthy eating, and cites philosophers of old who recommended only eating sparingly. The two physicians debate, then Enan reluctantly orders his servant to serve a roasted lamb. Time after time during that dinner, Joseph extends his hand, but Enan prevents him, arguing that that particular body part of the lamb is harmful. Enan claims that the best parts are the bones, and orders his servant to take away the rest of the lamb. Joseph grabs the plate

and devours the whole lamb — something for which there is a parallel in Cervantes, as Schirmann (1963) [81] first pointed out.

A physician trying to dissuade a guest from eating anything from the roasted lamb, on medical grounds is also found indeed in an episode by Cervantes (*Quijote*, II, 47): Sancho Panza is the victim, on Barataria Island, of the “court physician” Pedro Recio, whom in the end, like Joseph [Ibn Zabara], Sancho disobeys. The doctor was advising Sancho not to eat any of the delicious foods at a banquet, and this as part of the prank played on him for the dukes’ entertainment. Joseph instead is advised not to eat, because his host is extremely stingy.

Arie Schippers [82] pointed out: “An important passage with respect to the transmission of wisdom from East to West⁷ is a discussion between Joseph ibn Zabāra and Enan on harmful food, part of which was literally taken from the *Physician’s Dinner* by Ibn Buṭlān. Earlier Schirmann stressed the analogy between Zabāra’s harmful food passage and a passage from Cervantes’ *Don Quijote* (See for this Appendix II)” (Schippers 1999 [82], p. 154). In his Appendix II, Schippers relates that an Oxford professor of Arabic, Geert Jan van Gelder, signalled to him that passages from Chapter 8 from *Sefer Sha’ashu’im* “made him recall the second chapter of Ibn Buṭlān’s *Risālat Da’wat al-Atibbā’*. (‘Physicians’ Dinner Party’)” (Schippers 1999 [82], p. 159).

In imperial Rome, one comes across the following, in Martial’s *Epigrams*, Book 1, poem 47:

Nuper erat medicus, nunc est vispillo Diaulus
Quod vispillo facit, fecerat et medicus.

[Diaulus used to be a physician,
Now he is a caretaker.
What he is doing as a caretaker,
He used to do as a physician.]

The classicist Michael (Mike) Fontaine (2010) [83] considered, in Plautus, the charge about a physician being worthless. Fontaine discusses [83, p. 155] wordplay from Plautus’ comedy *Rudens*: “How are you?” (*ut vales?*) “What’s that? You aren’t a *medicus* (doctor), are you?” (*quid tu? num medicus, quaeso, es?*) “Lord, no! I’m one letter more than a *medicus* (doctor)” (*immo edepol una littera plus sum quam medicus*) “Then you’re a *mendicus* (beggar)?” (*tum tu mendicus es?*) “*Touché*” (*tetigisti acu* — “You have touched with a needle”).

Then Fontaine explores [83, pp. 155–156] instances of occurrences of another pun, *merdicus* ‘shitty’ as opposed to *medicus* ‘physician’. This only occurs in texts not earlier than the Humanist period, 15th century and later. In an epigram by Jacopo Sannazzaro (Naples, 1457–1530), *In Picentem medicum* (*Against Picente, the Physician*), Sannazzaro taunted his victim: “But, because you wish to be called *cynicus* and *clinicus* at one and the same time, you can be *merdicus* and *medicus* wrapped in one” (*sed quia tu Cynicus vis dici, et Clinicus idem, Esse idem poteris Merdicus, et Medicus*).⁸

⁷ In contrast, Schippers (2008) discussed Ibn Zabāra in relation to Muslim authors, and to the Arab narrative repertory in medieval Europe.

⁸ Fritz Spiegel (1926–2003), a British journalist BBC broadcaster, once remarked (in a popularistic book on language) that some colleagues of his pronounce *Nicaragua* as though it was “Nick, a rag you are”. It is quite possible that his own foreign birth (in Austria: he reached England with his sister in 1939, whereas his Jewish parents, in the wake of the Anschluss of 1938, escaped to Bolivia) made him

Something similar is found in an epigram by Johan van der Does (Janus Dousa the Elder). Fontaine also quotes from *Pulcinella medico a forza* (*Pulcinella/Punch, forced to be a physician*), a *Commedia dell'Arte canovaccio* (script summary) found in Placido Adriani's *Zibaldone* of 1739. The protagonist, the buffoon Pulcinella, is dressed as a doctor, and cries: *Ego sum merdicus!* ("I am...") uttering an adjective for 'shitty', while intending *Ego sum medicus!* ("I am a doctor!").

6. Wahram II's Charge against Mani of Being a Quack Doctor, vs. Zoroaster's Gaining Favour Because Deemed a Good Healer

Mani (216–275 C.E.), the founder of Manichaeism, a Gnostic, syncretic, and universal religion, was a physician, painter, as well as the founder of that religion, and one who claimed to understand Jesus better than Christians did, and Buddha better than Buddhists did. A Sassanian emperor of Persia (Wahram II, who came to the throne in 274 C.E.), inebriated and flanked by Kerdir, then the most senior Zoroastrian cleric (and one engaged in persecuting the non-Zoroastrians in the empire), ordered Mani imprisoned (and then executed and gibbeted). When Wahram II gave that order, he accused Mani of being an ineffectual physician, indeed a quack. From a Zoroastrian perspective, Mani being blamed for being a quack doctor is reminiscent, by opposition, to how Zoroaster became successful at a king's court, which was after he managed to heal the favourite horse of that king. Albert de Jong stated (2005 [84], p. 9934):

Success [for Zarathushtra] only came after a lengthy stay at the court of King Wištāsp. After a series of philosophical debates, an episode of treachery leading to his arrest and incarceration, and Zarathushtra's success in curing the king's favorite horse, he finally found an audience willing to listen to his words. He recited the revelation for the king and his family, and they were the first to convert outside his own family. From the conversion of Wištāsp onward, the history of Zoroastrianism was to be a history of growth and success, but hostilities continued nonetheless.

“Wahram II came to the throne in 274 CE and may have needed Kerdir's support in bypassing Narseh, who was now the Great King of Armenia, and it is in this period that Kerdir begins his real ascent to power. Kerdir also began the persecution of the non-Zoroastrians in the empire, such as the Jews, Christians, Manichaeans, Mandeans and Buddhists” (Daryaei 2009 [85], pp. 10–11). Daryaei also remarks (*ibid.*, p. 11):

sensitive about British pronunciation. But then, as well as a musician, he was a historian of his hometown of Liverpool, and the otherness of working-class Liverpudlians inside Britain is associated with their pronunciation. Spiegel's being a humorist is reason enough for his interest in puns. There is playfulness in interpreting *Nicaragua* as though it was “Nick, a rag you are”, but this is a case in which he rendered fellow broadcasters' pronunciation. The propositional attitude is such that neither he, nor his audience believe, claim, or are made to believe that “Nick, a rag you are” is an etymology of *Nicaragua*, or that the broadcaster whose pronunciation is such, were intentionally implying such an interpretation (let alone etymology). If however one is after some playful aetiological tale, then some narrative trajectory would have to be invented to bridge the semantic gap between Nicaragua the country and a situation (underlying a foundation mock-myth) where the utterance “Nick, a rag you are” is pronounced “for the first time”, thus motivating the name for the place.

It is important to realise however that reanalysis of words is not necessarily driven by playful intent. Sometimes bona fide attitudes, indeed keen beliefs, motivate or result from such endeavours. Or then, the process can be found in folktales without humour being intended. For example, in Elswit (2014, p. 31), tale 40 is an aetiological tale from Japan about why the Japanese word *kumo* means both ‘spider’ and ‘cloud’.

During the rule of Wahram II (274–293 CE) Kerdir achieved higher rank and status, and it is during this period that the Sasanian kings lost much of their religious power as caretakers of the Anahid fire temple to Kerdir,⁹ making him the judge of the whole empire. This meant that from now on, the priests acted as judges throughout the empire and probably court cases were now based on Zoroastrian law except when members of other religious minorities had disputes with each other.

Daryaee explains: “Kerdir and company made sure that Mani was stopped and later met an early death and that the King of Kings remained *mazdēsn* [a Mazdean, Zoroastrian] and that the Zoroastrian religion was spread at any cost to the empire” (Daryaee 2009 [85], p. 14). The circumstances of Mani being condemned to death were such that the king was intoxicated (*ibid.*, p. 75):

From the episode told in a Manichaean text, it appears that Wahram I [sic] was angry with Mani, perhaps due to the instigation of Kerdir and others who had precipitated this anger. He may also have been drunk, since the same fragment states that after feasting, he had one hand on the shoulder of the Saka queen [i.e., a vassal, who rules the Sakas or *sagān* of Sakastān] and the other over the shoulders of Kerdir, the son of Ardawān, when coming towards the prophet.

Clearly, the Persian king’s drunkenness made the situation all the more dramatic and unmanageable for his victim. Mani had claimed to an earlier king, the tolerant Shabuhr I, that he was a physician (Daryaee 2009 [85], p. 72).

7. Concluding Remarks

This article is concerned with a few examples from the history of satirising the medical profession. We began with a brief section concerned with the genre of mock-prescriptions, and the mock-encomium. We then turned to a long section, in which we translated and discussed Ephraim Luzzatto’s eighteenth-century poems satirising his colleagues in the medical profession. Section 3 is a survey, “The Genre of Humour about Medical Doctors of Pharmacists”, which concludes with two complex cartoons from the United States during the Gilded Age [50], from the time of the transition from low expectations to high expectations in medical progress. Scepticism about the effectiveness of medicine gave way to new hopes associated with the inroads made by Pasteur in treating rabies.

There is a rumour about Ephraim Luzzatto having translated into Hebrew Camões’s *Lusiades* while in London. If he actually did so, his efforts were lost to posterity along with his poems authored after his only published book was printed. In Georgian England, the very title of Camões’s *Lusiades*, known in English as *The Lusiad*, was involved in a pun. We devote to this a companion article [11], entitled “Hygiene in the royal household of George III: did Ephraim Luzzatto rework into Hebrew a fellow physician’s satire, *The Lousiad*, rather than Camões’s *Lusiades*?”. If such was the case, this is constrained to have taken place between 1785, when the first instalment of *The Lousiad* appeared, and some time before Luzzatto’s death in 1792.

⁹ Cf. Chaumont (1955 [86], p. 85): “Il apparaît en définitive que le porteur des titres d’āyēnbad et de pātixsāy du temple d’Anāhitā était le gardien de ce pyrēe [i.e., temple of fire] et le grand-prêtre du culte de la déesse de Staxr. Il n’est pas invraisemblable que dans cette charge considérable, Kartīr ait succédé au roi des rois lui-même qui, par cet abandon de son sacerdoce héréditaire, aurait détruit le fondement de son autorité spirituelle. Il résulte de cette étude que Kartīr a été le promoteur de la hiérarchisation du clergé, de laquelle sortira une église d’Etat fortement coordonnée, l’emportant en prestige et en autorité sur la noblesse elle-même”.

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¹⁰ <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40540783>

¹¹ In English, with a facsimile reproduction of Ephraim Luzzatto’s 1768 Hebrew book of poems.

¹² <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29777698>

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¹³ Cf. e.g. Giuseppe Matarelli, *Farmacia franco-italiana*, caricatura da *Il Lampione*, anno V, n. 73, 22 settembre 1862.

¹⁴ www.jstor.org/stable/41110036 The abstract appeared on p. 170 in the same issue.

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