



Doctor of the Middle Ages Italian Archangelus Melfesius De Terras Sancto Archangelo Provinciae Basilicate in Chirurgia Doctor – A.D. 1584

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Introduction

He graduated from the Scuola Medica Salernitana in 1584, the first medical school in the world which allowed and supported the birth of universities all over the globe. The man by chance discovered that a leaf of a tree placed to heal an evil on the body performed its task for which the herbs and plants and the fruits were the first medicines of man whose beneficial actions were handed down only orally; later animal products were used and finally the mineral world also gave its contribution. To discover remedies for the "diseases of man" each people did its part to be the first to use the medicines with the best effect.

We will illustrate how the SCUOLA MEDICA SALERNITANA was born and to which cultures, including medical ones, it referred to lay the foundations necessary to create and disseminate knowledge all over the world. The "School" founded its foundations on the union between the Greco-Latin tradition, the notions acquired from the Arab, Egyptian and Asian cultures. The theoretical bases were formed by the system of humors elaborated by Hippocrates and Galen while the scientific background was from the experience gained in the daily activity of assistance to the sick acquired from the medicine of neighboring populations as well as. with the translation of texts written in Arabic, to which was added the vast culture of care with plants that acted to combat man's ills.

There was in Salerno in the IXSEC a great legal culture, an ecclesiastical school but also a medical one. who cared for the body and taught the dogmas of the art of health. Among these, the role also played by women in the practice and teaching of medicine

who became the first and famous with the name of MULIERES SALERNITANAE. In the 10th century the city of Salerno was already very famous for its healthy climate and the wisdom of its doctors.

The geographical position certainly played a fundamental role. Salerno, located in the center of the Mediterranean, underwent and metabolized the influences of Arab and Greek-Byzantine culture. From the sea come the books of Avicenna and Averroes, of Hippocrates Galen and Theodore of Antioch; the Carthaginian doctor Constantine the African also arrived in Salerno from the sea Under this cultural drive, the classical works long forgotten in the monasteries are rediscovered. Thanks to the "Medical School", medicine was the first scientific discipline to leave the abbeys to face the world and experimental practice again.

The monks and monasteries of Salerno and the nearby Badia di Cava were of great importance in the dissemination of the scientific discipline at its dawn in Italy and especially of the Benedictines. In fact we note in the city in the 11th century the presence of three important figures of this order: Pope Gregory VII, the Abbot of Montecassino Desiderio (future Pope Victor III) and Bishop Alfano I. In this context, the "School" of Salerno grew and developed until it reached its maximum splendor between the 10th and 13th centuries. At that time, people from all over Europe came to the Schola Salerni, both sick people hoping to be healed and students wanting to learn the art of medicine. The prestige of the doctors of Salerno is largely testified by the chronicles of the time and by the numerous manuscripts conserved in the major European

libraries. Arcangelo Molfese from Santo Arcangelo, a small town in Basilicata, graduated in Surgery in 1584 at the SCUOLA MEDICA SALERNITANA, the first medical school in the world that left behind

so many teachings useful for giving rise to universities in different parts of Italy.



Figure 1: Costantino L'Africano

The real scientific baggage was given by the experience gained in the daily activity of assistance to the sick, after in-depth studies of the subject. The doctrine supported by ALFANO I (Archbishop of Salerno), who wrote *DE QUATTOR HUMORIBUS CORPORIS HUMANI*, described the 4 humors that sustained man's life when he was not in balance; this could be achieved by DIET, MEDICINES (provided by herbs), BLESSING, LEECHES AND LABALNEOTHERAPY. In the 10th century the supremacy of the Salerno doctors was recognized, in fact, although they were of little literary culture, they were provided with great practical experience given by the teachings; these notions, thus acquired, were handed down orally. The geographical position certainly played a fundamental role in the growth of the school; thanks to it, medicine was the first scientific discipline to emerge from the monasteries to complete itself again with the world.

In this context the SCUOLA MEDICA SALERNITANA was born and reached its maximum splendor between the X and the XII century. At that time, both sick people hoping to be healed and students who wanted to learn the art of medicine came to Salerno from all over Europe. In 1231, FEDERICO II, through the CONSTITUTION OF MELFI, established that the activity of doctor could only be carried out in possession of a degree from the SCUOLA MEDICA SALERNITANA and in 1280 CARLO D'ANGI' approved the first statute with which it was recognized as a STUDIUM GENERALIUM in MEDICINE.

The regulations provided for the CURRICULUM STUDIORUM: 3 years of logic, 5 years of medicine, including surgery and anatomy,

and 1 year of practice with an elderly doctor. At the end of the curriculum there was an exam before the commissioners of the CURIA REGIA and, once passed, the MEDENDI LICENSE and the PRACTICE LICENSE were obtained. The art of surgery also appeared in Salerno by RUGGIERO DI FUGALDO who wrote the first treatise on surgery and was spread throughout Europe. Consequently, Salerno became a destination for foreign students eager to learn this new science. The medical college was an ACADEMIC body INDEPENDENT FROM THE SCHOOL WHICH HAD THE TASK OF SUBJECTING THE STUDENTS TO A RIGOROUS EXAMINATION TO OBTAIN THE DOCTORAL PRIVILEGE, NOT ONLY TO PRACTICE MEDICINE, BUT ALSO TO TEACH.

Arcangelo Molfese of Santo Arcangelo (PZ) was a surgeon graduated from the SALERNITAN MEDICAL SCHOOL in 1584. The Holy Archangel territory of Basilicata, part of the kingdom of Naples was a poor country. Medical practice was based above all on religious beliefs, popular traditions and superstitions, to the point that the progressive thinking of Greek and Roman scholars and the great Arab texts on medicine and science seemed to have never existed. Monasteries were among the few places that had book production. Learning, safeguarding the wealth of knowledge, while awaiting the awakening of interest in medicine, occurred in the mid to late Middle Ages. The Catholic Church was the only unifying element. Only in the 12th century did the translation of ancient texts and the circulation of new ideas give a boost to scientific knowledge: medical practices, the study of the body and the approach to disease. The use of natural remedies, especially herbs, as well as balneotherapy, bloodletting and diet was recognized and

considered as a gift from God. In the Middle Ages, religious orders founded several hospitals in Europe, most of which were used as hospices where they provided medical care, shelter and spiritual guidance to the needy. At that time, the doctor took care of the external part of the patient's body, while the surgeon took care of the inside, as surgery was still in its infancy in those matters.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the survival of infants and women during childbirth represented one of the greatest challenges, due to the demographic decline caused by diseases and conception and childbirth were considered a priority, but access to maternal care was limited and linked to social status. Only aristocratic women were assisted by a doctor, who had, for the most part, theoretical and not practical knowledge on the subject; the other women managed the delivery with the help of the "experienced woman", later *mamma*, who had learned the trade by practice, but she had little or no scientific training. She introduced the care of patients with daily medical assistance, elaborated the development of

phytotherapy on the curative properties of herbs, of pharmacology and finally of the art of surgery. She allowed medicine to make giant strides in the diagnostic and therapeutic fields and numerous doctors made discoveries in the first universities, including that of France, Spain and Germany. In ITALY it was the universities of BOLOGNA PADUA NAPLES that experimented with the microscope, surgery, anesthesia and x-rays, up to the point of curing most of the tumors that affect humans. The SALERNI MEDICAL SCHOOL was the first medical school in the world to disseminate science for the treatment of human diseases, for which it deserves to have the recognition of world cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO.

Acknowledgment

None.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.