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- 1 Scientific and technical dictionaries published in the early 19th century are only a part of the broader genre of scientific communications, including a variety of diverse publications – ‘encyclopaedic’ and specialised journals, books and booklets, as well as works published in periodical instalments. While the boundaries of this ‘cloud’ of information hovering over Europe and the Americas may be difficult to define, its role was probably crucial in transforming and shaping sciences, scientific practices, and their uses. Articles and case reports, as well as various fragments of information—written by and addressed to an audience that consisted mainly of professionals in different scientific disciplines—were exchanged, copied, commented and translated, with little regard for authorship, and sometimes even for accuracy. In many instances, dictionaries functioned as hubs of exchange between different genres: by offering translations, excerpts, or even reproductions of texts that were already published in other media, they enlarged their readership and facilitated their diffusion. Medical prints loomed large in the output of many publishing enterprises engaged in producing these hybrid genres, a fact that comes as no surprise when one considers the numbers and comparative weight of medical professionals in the scientific world of revolutionary and Restoration Europe.²
- 2 Three well-known and vastly diffused Italian medical dictionaries were published in Venice—even though Italy did not yet exist as a political entity at the time—beginning with the 1820s and continuing until the 1860s: the *Dizionario Compendiato*, the *Classico* and the *Economico*.³ They were the result of the cooperation between a shrewd and very successful publisher, Giuseppe Antonelli (1793–1861), and the physician Mosè Giuseppe

Levi (1796–1859), two representatives of a group of bourgeois and learned professionals. The three *Dizionari* distinctly show a pattern of evolution from simple translations from the French, the European leading language—and civilization—for science and medicine, to an increasingly complex textual collage. Foreign and French texts were translated in Italian and published alongside Italian texts, or with strong injections of contributions by Italian authors, coming from books and booklets, pamphlets and journals—the ‘cloud’ of scientific information we were referring to. Foreign techniques, achievements, and scientific innovations were thus heavily Italianised, and not only from the linguistic point of view.

- 3 The Venetian printing press has a long and glorious history.⁴ At the beginning of the 19th century, this glory was rapidly fading away, as was the political prominence of the *Serenissima*, no longer an independent Republic. However, the Venetian publisher Giuseppe Antonelli was, arguably, the founder of the largest and most successful publishing enterprise in Restoration Italy.⁵ As it has been pointed out, he had an ‘industrial’ vision of his job, mainly publishing in instalments and by association.⁶ And even if his scientific and medical prints have unjustly been downplayed, and considered devoid of intellectual depth and meaning, he contributed both to the diffusion in Italy of foreign medical culture and to the development and diffusion of Italian medical culture itself, by helping in the creation and circulation of a reliable corpus of works concerning scientific doctrines and healing practices.⁷ It is true that Antonelli’s best known prints, celebrated for their intellectual meaning, are neither scientific nor medical. Starting in 1836, he published the *Nova scriptorum latinorum bibliotheca*, a collection of annotated Latin texts, and the *Biblioteca degli scrittori latini*, its successful Italian translation. This was more or less the same operation as the one he had already experimented with in the previous years by publishing translated French medical dictionaries. Even the French publisher of the original texts was the same, the prestigious Panckoucke firm.⁸ However, there is no reason at all to consider the medical dictionaries less intellectually challenging or interesting than the collection of Latin texts. They were at the centre of highly controversial issues, such as the balance to be found between the developing biological disciplines and clinical medicine, the professional issues concerning surgeons and physicians, or the lively linguistic discussions concerning the creation of scientific neologisms.
- 4 Mosé Giuseppe Levi, Antonelli’s contemporary by a small number of years, was in fact the main protagonist of the compilation and diffusion of the medical *Dizionari*. A Jew by religion, born in Guastalla, he received an excellent medical education at Padua University, where he was a pupil of the physician and scientist Valeriano Luigi Brera (1772–1840). Levi was a good practitioner, but he gained a high reputation as an even better translator and journalist.⁹ His works and his letters show the extent of the network of learned practitioners he participated in, and that was crucial for his work at the *Dizionari*.¹⁰ Antonelli published the whole of his works. Levi lived in what was arguably the most integrated Jewish community in Northern Italy.¹¹ As Levi’s and Asson’s cases show, they felt not only Venetian, but Italian. However, even if they were active, and in many cases respected, members of their civic community, Jews were in fact walking a fine line between assimilation and rejection. In 1837, for instance, Levi was the object of a report by the Austrian police concerning his behavior when his young son died during the cholera epidemics. He was accused of a public manifestation of bereavement, something

“persone eterodosse” (heterodox persons) were not supposed to be permitted to express.

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- 5 But Levi and Antonelli also lived and worked in the wake of the political turmoil of the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, which had seen the end of the *Serenissima* as an independent state, and its submission for a short period of time to French power, before its annexation by the Austrian empire. Despite this, or probably because of the end of the glorious Republic, a new class of bourgeois professionals, among them many medical practitioners, many of them Jews, was emerging. Venice shared with other Italian regions a controversial, ambivalent relation to French culture and civilization, admired at the time of the Revolution, resented and almost rejected when the French, in Napoleonic times, had become invaders and conquerors rather than fellow citizens engaged in the destruction of the *Ancien Régime*.¹³
- 6 By offering a space in their compilations to a wide array of previous publications (some of them dating to the last decades of the 18th century) Levi and Antonelli also contributed to the diffusion and knowledge of works that were not written by academic physicians but by surgeons, pharmacists, and other practitioners, often working in hospitals, who were emerging as one of the most active, and upwardly mobile, sections of the medical professions.¹⁴ In what follows, I will briefly deal with the thriving milieu of Venice’s scientific and medical journalism, in order to contextualize the *Dizionari* which was translated and compiled by Antonelli and Levi, and in particular their controversial relation with French language and science. I will then present the attempts, in the first half of the century, by Levi himself and some of his friends and followers, and especially the Veronese Michelangelo Asson (1802–1877), at creating an Italian medical language and science—a political attempt that can be explained by the development of the Italian Risorgimento and of an Italian ‘national’ culture.

Vindicating Italian as a scientific language

- 7 In order to better contextualize Antonelli’s and especially Levi’s work, as well as their preoccupation with the creation of a specific dictionary for Italian medicine, we may begin by looking at a different genre, the learned periodicals, and at a different generation, the one that preceded Levi’s. In May 1836, Francesco Aglietti (1757–1836) died in Venice. A physician and a journalist, he had participated in two well-known periodicals. The first, the *Giornale per servire alla storia della medicina di questo secolo* (1783–1800), was founded with two colleagues, Stefano Gallini (1756–1836), who left it in 1786 to begin a successful academic career in Padua, and with Antonio Gualandris (?–1798), later to become Protomedico in Feltre.¹⁵ It had a specific medical character, and it has been celebrated as one of the first, if not altogether the first, of its kind in Italy.¹⁶ However, Aglietti’s second—and solitary—enterprise, a learned and nominally general or ‘encyclopaedic’ journal, the *Memorie per servire alla storia letteraria e civile* (1793–1800), was also rich in scientific annotations.¹⁷ The two journals were published by Antonio Fortunato Stella.
- 8 After his death, Aglietti’s life was the object of two conflicting biographies, the first by Paolo Zannini and the second by Levi himself. Zannini stressed Aglietti’s engagement in the numerous scientific societies active in the city, and particularly in medical journalism, and also gave a list of those who collaborated in the first and second journals that he directed.¹⁸ Their abrupt end in 1800 is not explained by the biographer, but

arguably there were political reasons for their discontinuation. Zannini, who was a pupil and a long-time friend of Aglietti, also mentioned a project the latter did not have the time to complete, namely, the Italian translation, with the addition of a wealth of new cases, of Giovan Battista Morgagni's *De sedibus et causis morborum* (1761), the work that has become famous as the foundation of pathological anatomy.¹⁹ Journalism and translations—in this case from the Latin, whose scientific primacy was rapidly losing ground—were closely associated and often practiced by the same persons, many of them physicians. Aglietti's culture was still typical of the late Enlightenment: he believed in introducing, to the reluctant Italian public, science and medicine that came from abroad. The effort of translating Morgagni's difficult Latin pointed to the necessity of circulating the work of the founder of pathological anatomy—by now a French and Scottish discipline—in a wider circle than the one of academically educated physicians.

- 9 Levi's work on Aglietti, that its author labelled a eulogy, was allegedly approved by Levi's friend and colleague Michelangelo Asson, who was to become one of the strongest advocates of the creation of an Italian medicine and medical language.²⁰ This work was more politically oriented than Zannini's. At times, it was also harshly critical of the eulogized. The two necrologies are good illustrations of the transition from a generation of physicians still engaged in late Enlightenment cosmopolitanism to another one more interested in the Italian national revival. Levi mentions Aglietti's bent for Jacobinism, criticizing his brief and youthful flirtation with what he calls 'libertinism', saying that he had let himself be trapped by those who encouraged an indecent liberty.²¹ But he also remembers his support for the use of vaccination, as well as his preoccupation for public health and welfare in the city of Venice.²² In this instance, Levi repeatedly uses the word "patria", motherland, in reference to Venice but also, ambiguously, to Italy as a whole. This was a rather brave move at the time: Aglietti, in Levi's intentions, was to be seen as a Venetian hero, but also, and perhaps even more, as an Italian one. This is also apparent from Levi's detailed account of Aglietti's participation in a number of scientific institutions, especially the *Italiano Istituto di scienze, lettere ed arti*, an academy created in revolutionary times in 1797 and whose name changed in *Imperial Regio Istituto del Regno Lombardo Veneto* when Venice became a part of the Austrian empire.²³
- 10 Aglietti's journalistic activities were analysed in close details by Levi, as was the physician's love for the arts: he had been a friend of Antonio Canova.²⁴ Levi underlines Aglietti's proficiency in languages: he knew not only Latin, but also English and French.²⁵ However, on this specific point, Levi became overtly critical of Aglietti's works, whose clarity and elegance he admired, but whose richness in foreign expressions he found almost intolerable. In a remarkable digression, he reported at length a conversation between Aglietti and himself. Allegedly, he had told the older, respected practitioner, that, in writing, he should have used the style and language of the best scientific authors of the Italian tradition: Lionardo Di Capua, Magalotti, Redi, Cocchi, Galilei. These authors were all from the 17th century, and Tuscan, or—in the case of Di Capua, who was Neapolitan—employing a heavily Tuscanised Italian. Against Aglietti's style and language, Levi vindicated the importance and richness of Italian, that must not be presented, he said, like a poor girl who might need somebody who could offer her marriage, or at least a dowry. In fact, Levi insisted, Italian language had a long history, beginning in the Trecento, and ought to be treated as it deserved: as a noble and independent woman, whose honesty could not be doubted. He concluded on a rather strident note, accusing Aglietti of having made Italian instead a "zambracca", a prostitute who accepted anyone

—that is, any and every word or expression coming from other languages.²⁶ Aglietti was seemingly not offended, and the two went on in their conversation to discuss medical portraits and engravings, as well as ancient and rare books, and book collecting in general.

- 11 Levi's preoccupation with words, and with the status of Italian as a learned and scientific language, was by no means only a linguistic issue. In his *Ricordi*, a collection of brief biographies of Venetian physicians of the late 18th and early 19th centuries that he published in 1835,²⁷ he began with a polemic against the French, "our neighbors beyond Piedmont."²⁸ Not content with extolling the virtues and merits of their motherland, they were scorning Italians and Italy itself, calling it "the land of remembrances", and seldom, if ever, acknowledging Italian discoveries or achievements. The *Biographie universelle*, Levi remarked, was in fact almost totally limited to eulogies of French authors. This went so far that the illustrious physician Giovanni Rasori (1766–1837) had been reported as recently dead in the text, while he was still living, as attested by his correspondence with Levi himself.²⁹ The *Ricordi* were thus born from the wish of its author to contribute to revamping the neglected glory of Italian science, beginning with Venice, one of its most important centres. It is remarkable, in this instance, that many practitioners remembered by Levi in his work belonged to the vast, and comparatively yet unexplored, world of practicing physicians, surgeons, apothecaries and pharmaceutical chemists. This is a feature that would show up also in Levi's other works, translations and compilations, and especially in the *Dizionario*, where a wealth of small works, articles, and simple case reports were used to integrate the skeleton provided by the French original. Venice at the time had no university—in fact, its medical practitioners had developed a complicated relationship with Padua and its fame, lengthy history, and intellectual prowess in the field of medical studies. This may account for the strong practical, anti-bookish orientation of medical mentality in the city, reflected in Levi's collection of biographies. Aglietti and his fellow practitioners, as well as those of the younger generation, as Levi or Asson, were engaged in a battle for the introduction of pathological anatomy as a crucial discipline in medical theory and practice, as opposed to the ongoing systematic and theoretical temptation shown by late 18th century medicine, and best represented by the case of Brownism. But the central role played by 'practical' disciplines also points to the intended public of the dictionaries, and offers a clue to the understanding of their fortune and extraordinary diffusion in Italy.

French and Italian in the *Dizionario compendiato* (1827–1830) and the *Dizionario Classico* (1835–1846)

- 12 The *Dizionario compendiato delle Scienze Mediche*, published from 1827 onwards, is the first work of this kind published by Levi and Antonelli.³⁰ The original work, the *Dictionnaire abrégé des sciences médicales*, had been published by Panckoucke in fifteen volumes, between 1821 and 1826. It is easy to underestimate the impact of this and other works by this publishing firm specialised in European science and medicine. As it has been said, Panckoucke's dictionaries "epitomize the transition between the encyclopaedic and the positivist modes in the medical sciences."³¹ In comparing the *Dizionario compendiato* to its French original, one finds altogether new entries: many of them are geographical and pertain to the Italian medical landscape, e.g. *Abano*, a celebrated place for mineral waters

and therapeutic baths.³² All the additions and the new entries are kept anonymous.³³ The translation is accurate.³⁴

- 13 Levi's name is not to be found on the title page—where one can only read the names of the French authors who contributed to the original—nor anywhere else in the volumes. Levi's fame as a translator was yet to come, or, possibly, he still preferred to seek fame by other means than by the somewhat 'minor' activity of translator and compiler. The dedicatee of the work is Aglietti, who, as already mentioned, acted as an operative "padre nobile", a Nestor, in Levi's words, to the community of Venetian progressive physicians. Throughout the seventeen volumes of the *Dizionario compendiato* Levi remained anonymous, but the *Prefazione del traduttore* that can be read before the first volume is interesting, because it was in itself a manifesto of Levi's, and possibly Antonelli's, interest in linguistic issues, in a spectrum that goes from the technical to the overtly political and nationalistic.
- 14 Levi's brief introduction tackled the difficulties and the issues related to his translation of French scientific and medical articles. He aptly mentioned Melchiorre Cesarotti (1730-1808), whose theories and practice of translations had been the staple for Italians wishing to transform a language best known for its musical and literary uses into a reliable scientific instrument.³⁵ He also offered a detailed justification for his effort in translating from the French by always using Italian roots (e. g., in words such as *anidina*, *brounismo*, *cranioscopia*...). He also insisted on the double use he made of words and expressions coming from the learned academic world, alongside those used by practitioners, who were not considered of a lower standing anymore, but who would still not know about Latin or Greek derivations. So, for instance, the French *astriction* was translated by *astrizione*, used in practice, and by *stringimento*, more educated. French, in Levi's mind, was an inescapable point of departure for the establishment of an Italian medicine, not only in linguistic issues, but more broadly in scientific and cultural ones. But, in actual fact, Levi's work moved from a simple translation to a more meaningful attempt at defining a canon or dictionary of Italian medical words.
- 15 This is apparent also by the first—and last—text in the work that is signed by Levi. At the end of the seventeenth and last volume, one can read a note addressed to the reader by the translator.³⁶ The note is followed by a meaningful list of words to be avoided or rejected when writing about medicine, either because they are un-Italian, or un-medical, or altogether unnecessary. Others are to be used with due parsimony, and these include artificial neologisms or, again, words that have a different meaning in Italian from the one assigned them by some medical authors writing under the influence of foreign languages.³⁷
- 16 In 1835, Levi and Antonelli followed up with another medical dictionary, the *Dizionario classico di Medicina*.³⁸ This is a translation, with meaningful additions, of the *Dictionnaire de Médecine* published in Paris from 1821 to 1828.³⁹ While more research is needed to assess the reason and timing of this second translation, it may be argued that the success of the *compendiato* triggered the decision. This time, however, both the French and the Italian version avoided anonymity, with signed entries resembling short articles. The Italian *Prefazione dell'editore* was a passionate vindication of the importance of Italian medicine, an aspect that, while also present in the *Compendiato*, was not as prominent as it was to become. This time, indeed, Levi and Antonelli proceeded to a systematic integration of the French entries with contributions coming from a vast array of Italian medical works. The names of French contributors were thus followed by a proud list of the works of the

“illustrious” Italians, whose activity and indeed identity is in some cases very difficult to retrace.⁴⁰ I have dealt elsewhere with this list, in itself a compendium of sorts of medical activity in Italy in the period from the last decades of the 18th century to the 1830s—a period that has received scant or no attention by historians, and that deserves a thorough analysis, especially in regard to medical specialties such as anatomy, surgery, and anatomical pathology.⁴¹ Antonelli explicitly asked professors of medicine in the peninsula to offer their works, so that they could be placed in the right alphabetical entry.⁴² This was arguably a measure of caution, since we do not know how many of the contributions were voluntary and how many were simply copied from past publications. Many of the Italian authors were already dead at the time. However, their number is impressive and it gives an idea of the thriving activity of clinics as well as experimenters. It is remarkable that the vast majority of the works were written by medical men living in Northern Italy, with some exceptions for Roman anatomists and Neapolitan naturalists. Equally remarkable is the number of contributions that came from other scientific genres, especially journals. This points to the porosity, indeed lack of a separation, between different kinds of periodical publications: journals on the one side, and dictionaries and other systematic works published at regular intervals, on the other.

- 17 In the first volume, an *Avvertimento*, unsigned but possibly again written by Levi, was a justification for the use of the dictionary form to present a full discussion of medical science. The *Avvertimento* echoed the long history of medical compendia, culminating in the early modern *commonplace book*, that is, a list or repertory of meaningful entries and quotations that learned medics used as a memory aid as well as a practical handbook.⁴³ Levi and Antonelli’s project, however, had a broader scope, to actively participate in the creation of an Italian medical language, but also, and more ambitiously, to the renovation of Italian medical culture. This was meant as a political action, as a contribution to the Italian Risorgimento and unification. It also was meant to be a vindication of the Italian medical tradition, formerly one of the strongest in Europe, and that could still have a claim to excellence, at least in some centres such as Padua or Pavia. Levi and Antonelli were thus engaged in making ‘Italian’ what had previously been French, or simply cosmopolitan. They achieved this goal by developing an original translation method, that has elicited the attention of historians of the Italian language, but also, and perhaps mainly, by inserting Italian works and contributions in French dictionary entries.⁴⁴ At the same time, by republishing in their *Dizionari* works by Italian authors that had been originally meant for little-known, or illustrious, journals, or for pamphlets and books published at a local level, Antonelli and Levi contributed to the creation of a wider Italian medical and scientific space, potentially open to authors living in the different states of the Italian peninsula. They were in no way isolated or alone, but theirs was one of the most systematic and successful efforts in this direction.⁴⁵
- 18 In 1851, Antonelli and Levi published yet another medical dictionary, their last, the *Economico*.⁴⁶ This time, the names of contributors were given without national distinctions: the title page mixed French and Italian names in alphabetical order. The *Proemio* began in an elegiac mood, remembering past history and past dictionaries published by the two of them in the “polished” medical Italian language that Italy deserved.⁴⁷ The *Economico* followed the pattern of its predecessor, and was compiled by the successive addition of different texts, whose source, this time, was almost never specified—a procedure that was, and still is, likely to drive the diligent reader or scholar almost crazy. Accordingly, this dictionary did not receive good reviews. An anonymous A.

G. G., publishing on the Venetian *L'età presente* in 1858, gave a harsh judgment of the text, because of its French derivation, and especially because of the method that had been followed in compiling it, a method likely to confuse the mind of the reader with a disorderly heap of doctrines, essays and additions.⁴⁸ Arguably, behind this review we may see a political stance, or even an attempt at crushing the competition in the editorial market. However, the age of casual heaping of news and of easy-going compiling was finished and Antonelli's *Dizionario economico* was one of the casualties on the road towards other, more scientifically-minded translations, especially from German, that dominated the Italian medical scene in the second half of the 19th century.

Toward 1848: from an Italian medical language to the history of Italian medicine

- 19 The role of the *Congressi degli Scienziati Italiani* in shaping a common and national Italian scientific identity has been repeatedly underlined.⁴⁹ Held from 1839 to 1847 in different localities, including Florence and Naples, Pisa and Venice, crossing borders and political loyalties, they represented a sort of prefiguration of the issues, debates and problems a unified scientific Italy would face in the 1660s. The 1847 congress, the ninth of the series, was held in Venice in September, only some months before the political upheaval of 1848. Levi participated in the *Congresso*, and so did one of his most loyal friends and followers, the Veronese Michelangelo Asson (1802-1877), possibly also a Jew, and yet another friend and follower of Aglietti, and a regular contributor to Antonelli's printing house.⁵⁰ Asson, like Levi, was a hospital physician in Venice, writing on cholera and surgery, and later the author of a number of works on the history of medicine and literature.⁵¹ Asson's contribution, *Intorno la formazione di un gran codice di medicina, ossia di un dizionario delle scienze mediche originale italiano*,⁵² was examined by a commission of benevolent colleagues, among them Levi himself.⁵³ In fact, Asson's project was something more than a dictionary, and at least one of those called to judge it, Levi, was implicated in it. However, the "gran codice originale italiano" never materialized, and the two, Levi as well as Asson, went on with their activity as translators.⁵⁴ This was by no means their only project or engagement: in the following year, the ominous 1848, Asson was fighting on the front line of the Venetian anti-Austrian upheaval that ended tragically.
- 20 In 1868, four years before his death, and seven years after the unification of Italy, Asson published a brief lesson, *On the present state of surgery in Italy*, that is to be read as a testament or balance of his activity, in the form of a communication to the *Ateneo Veneto*, one of the scientific societies in his hometown.⁵⁵ Here, he was more cautious than in his previous works, and eventually able, after many years of dutiful patriotism, to show his awareness of the shortcomings and failures of surgical practice in his country. He insisted on the necessity of regular publication of a bibliography giving account of Italian works on surgery, a task he was willing to undertake; and he remembered his proposal for an institution that could reconstruct the history of Italian medicine by means of "exact biographies, compiled, in each city, by its best physicians, and collected by a central committee through the work of provincial commissions."⁵⁶ This was the same task undertaken by Levi with his *Ricordi*.⁵⁷ He also went back to his proposal of 1847 for a *Dizionario delle scienze mediche originale italiano*, describing it as follows:

A work that might describe the national character, by means of the most exact and well ordained biographical and historical studies; by means of the methods and

criteria adopted by our national philosophy in the institution of doctrines, that is, by observation, experience, and strict induction; by means of enquiries on the climate and endemics specific to each Italian province, and of their special production and therapeutic efficacy; and finally, by means of a common medical legislation, something impossible to attain at the time.⁵⁸

- 21 The past glory of Italian achievements in the fields of surgery and pathological anatomy, in Asson's opinion, were a sad comparison to their current state; however, those who persisted in extolling only foreign countries were still his enemies. In a passionate defence, he blamed those Italians who called scientific Italy "la terra dei morti", the land of the dead, or even "la terra dei mai vivi", the land of those who were never alive, thus forgetting the past, when European nations flocked to Italian schools to get their education.
- 22 However, he said, this did not detract from the acknowledgment of the progress in the medical disciplines that had gone on in other countries—not in France, as one may expect, but in Germany. The admiration for German achievements, he said, had become exaggerated to the point of abuse. This had happened not only in Italy, but in France as well.⁵⁹ The controversial subjects were changing, in fact, and the myth of 'Latin' science and medicine was already under construction, while Germany was now holding the place of excellence in the sciences that had been France's preserve in the first decades of the century. Unsurprisingly, the umbrella of Hippocrates was invoked in order to limit the pretensions of the histologists 'à la' Laennec, now Germans. Clinical activity at the bedside, privileging specific (that is, individual) "diatheses", temperaments or constitutions, was opposed to laboratory medicine and histology. This motif would have a long, and even sinister, history in Italy; constitutional medicine was to become one of the means by which Fascism legitimated medical racism. However, Asson also underlined that histology, much admired by Germans, was in fact Italian, coming from no less than Malpighi. It was a melancholic conclusion of Asson's career that his passionate effort to build, through translations and study, a 'new' and innovative Italian medical science should end with what would have been called, in the Fascist era, "rivendicazioni nazionali" (national vindications) of the Italian priority of discoveries unjustly attributed to foreign authors. But these developments were yet to come. In a move that was common to a great number of physicians and medical authors of his time, Asson used history as a strong support of the claims of Italian medicine to excellence, and also as a means of exploring the diversity of Italian local cultures. Only after a long historical and ideological introduction did he finally proceed to a detailed catalogue of the events and advancements in surgery in Italy in the 1850s and 1860s, where regional and local schools all received due attention, from Turin to Sicily.
- 23 The history of Levi's and Antonelli's translations from the French medical dictionaries can only be understood against the backdrop of a country, Italy, in transition. Politically, Italy moved from French domination during the revolutionary and Napoleonic years, to the Restoration, when the hopes for a united Italy slowly began to grow. Scientifically and culturally, Italy shifted from a commitment to the cosmopolitan ideals of the Enlightenment to a national rhetoric that included the re-invention of a tradition, even decades before the actual political unification. Medicine was the discipline that had ensured Italy a place of pride in European science throughout the Renaissance and the early modern era. However, the heritage it had left was controversial and difficult to reconstruct. Venice was an ideal point of departure, both because of the proximity to one of the most important academic centres in the country, Padua, and because of the rich

tradition of its printing press. Moreover, Venice had a bourgeoisie that was comparatively more active and open than in other centres, with the possible exception of Milan, as Levi's and Asson's cases show: they were two integrated, learned and respected Jews; this shows that while religious prejudices were still alive in Northern Italy, they were not as strong as in previous times.

- 24 However, no unified and integrated "Italian medicine" had yet existed in the real world. As it happened in many other disciplinary fields, the so-called Italian medical tradition was such mainly, if not only, because of the unifying factor of language; instead, a multitude of medium-size centres in the peninsula had produced a lively and often diverse array of local traditions and research styles, be they academic, theoretical, or centred on practical medicine.⁶⁰ Despite the passion with which Levi vindicated its dignity, the one point these different traditions had in common, the language, was in itself controversial and unsettled, also because of strong regional variations within Italian. However, up to the late 18th century, many medical texts, especially in the fields of observations and cases, anatomy, surgery, midwifery and pharmacy, had been written in Italian, while Latin remained the language in use for academic exchanges. Levi's and Antonelli's dictionaries well show how translations also meant creating a new Italian, a scientific language modelled on the French, but also able to overcome the extreme diversity, in terms of both geography and practices, of medical Italian. Unification implied uniformity, something very difficult to attain, as the 1870s would show, but worth attempting. This was also a way to vindicate the Italian vernacular tradition of practical medicine and surgery, and to use it in order to create a 'new', unified Italian medicine—and its history.

NOTES

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19. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
20. Mosè Giuseppe LEVI, *Delle lodi di Francesco Aglietti, medico e letterato veneziano*, Venezia, tipografia Antonelli, 1836.
21. "accalappiare dalle utopie degli scalzati banditori di lascivissima libertà", *ibid.*, p. 12.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-29.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
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28. “I nostri vicini d'oltre Piemonte”, LEVI, *Ricordi*, op. cit., p. 1.
29. “terra delle ricordanze”, *Ibid.*, p. 2.
30. *Dizionario compendiato delle Scienze Mediche, ossia Epitome del grande Dizionario medico composto dai signori Adelon, Alibert, Barbier [et al.] epilogato da parte degli stessi compilatori. Prima traduzione riveduta e corretta, con varie giunte spettanti alla italiana medicina, teorica, pratica, e legale*, Venezia, dalla tipografia di Giuseppe Antonelli, 1827–1830, 17 tomi, 34 fascicoli. The *Dizionario compendiato* is followed by three volumes of *Supplimenti*, published between 1830 and 1832.
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32. *Dictionnaire abrégé des sciences médicales de MM. Adelon, Alibert, Barbier [et al.]*, C.L.F. Panckoucke éditeur, 1821–1826.
33. On anonymity in science, see Mario Biagioli, Peter Galison (eds.), *Scientific Authorship. Credit and Intellectual Property in Science*, New York and London, Routledge, 2003.
34. Another Italian edition of the same dictionary is published in Milan by Fontana in 1820–1830. The two editors, Lorenzo Martini and Giorgio Ricci, were also interested in the difficult relations between the French model and the Italian language.
35. On Italian and its relation to foreign languages at the time, Luca SERIANNI, *Il primo Ottocento: dall'età giacobina all'Unità*, Il Mulino 1989 (a volume of the series *Storia della lingua italiana*, edited by Francesco Bruni); Gianfranco FOLENA, *Volgarizzare e tradurre*, Torino, Einaudi, 1991; Silvia MORGANA, “L'influsso francese”, in Luca Serianni and Pietro Trifone (eds.), *Storia della lingua italiana*, vol. III, *Le altre lingue*, Torino, Einaudi, 1994, pp. 671–716.
36. “Al Lettore benevolo - Il volgarizzatore”, *Dizionario compendiato*, t. XVII, part II (1730), pp. 333–335.
37. “da escludersi affatto perché non italiane, nè di arte medica, o non necessarie; o da adoprarsi con parsimonia perché neologismi non indispensabili; o da usarsi perché pertinenti al nostro favellare, ma però in senso diverso di ciò che suole annettervi da taluno degli scrittori di medicina”, *ibid.*, p. 337.
38. *Dizionario classico di Medicina interna ed esterna (o di Chirurgia e d'Igiene pubblica e privata) composto da Adelon, Andral, Beclard [et al.]*. Prima traduzione italiana di M. G. Levi dottore in Medicina e Filosofia; membro del veneto Ateneo, ec. con parecchie giunte spettanti alla medicina teorica e pratica, in ispezieltà italiana, Venezia, Giuseppe Antonelli editore, 1835–1846 (with *Supplimenti*).
39. *Dictionnaire de Médecine par MM Adélon, Béclard, Bielt [et al.]*, Paris, chez Bechet jeune, 1821–1828.
40. “Delle opere principali spettanti ai più illustri professori italiani di medicina, colle quali vuolsi arricchire la presente traduzione”, *ibid.*, t. I, pp. xiii–xviii.
41. Maria CONFORTI, “Compendiato, Classico, Economico. Tre dizionari filosofici franco-italiani nella prima metà dell'Ottocento”, in Eugenio Canone (ed.), *Lessici Filosofici di età moderna. Linee di ricerca*, Firenze, Olschki, 2012, pp. 137–154, *Appendice*.
42. “agli esercenti tutti italiani dell'arte medica nobilissima acciocché [...] vogliano ringraziarci dei loro lavori sulle discipline mediche, che noi collocheremo per esteso quali ci verranno trasmessi nella nicchia ripettiva”, *Dizionario classico*, t. I (1835), p. ix.
43. “I principali moventi che produssero la nostra associazione, e diedero incominciamento alla nostra intrapresa sono, la bramosia di giovare alla scienza medica, raccogliendo in un'opera

unica e breve tutte le sue reali ricchezze; il vantaggio che trova ciascuno di noi nel fare, componendola, la rivista dell'arte che pratica o professa", *Dizionario Classico*, t. I (1835), p. xxiv. See also Ann BLAIR, "Humanist Methods in Natural Philosophy: The Commonplace Book", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 53, 1992, pp. 541–551.

44. Luca SERIANNI, "Lingua medica e lessicografia specializzata nel primo Ottocento", in *La Crusca nella tradizione letteraria e linguistica italiana*, Firenze, Accademia della Crusca, 1985, pp. 255–287.

45. See also the *Enciclopedia delle scienze mediche, ossia Trattato generale, metodico e compiuto dei diversi rami dell'arte di guarire prima traduzione italiana di M. G. Levi*, Venezia, G. Antonelli 1834–47, in 118 fascicoli; reviewed by Michelangelo ASSON, "Analisi dell'Enciclopedia delle scienze mediche", *Antologia medica*, 1834 (I semestre), pp. 565–570.

46. *Dizionario economico delle scienze mediche compilato da M. G. dottor Levi*, Venezia, Antonelli, 1851–1860, voll. I–IV.

47. "Scorsero ormai 25 anni dacchè pubblicammo il primo Dizionario delle Scienze mediche che vide l'Italia nella sua propria e tersa favella, e 18 dal comparire del nostro secondo", *ibid.*, vol. I (1851), p. v.

48. "la mente si perde nella vaga congerie di dottrine e di aggiunte che inondano questo libro, e ne formano un confuso repertorio di oscure o troppo vaste monografie", *L'età presente, giornale politico-letterario*, Venezia, 10 luglio 1858, p. 31.

49. An overview by Maria Pia CASALENA, "Una scienza utile e patriottica : i congressi risorgimentali degli scienziati, 1839–1847", *Passato e Presente*, 24, n. 68, 2006, pp. 35–60.

50. On Asson Loris PREMUDA, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 4, Roma, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1962, pp. 452–453.

51. Michelangelo ASSON, *Sulla sapienza anatomica e chirurgica d'Omero*, Venezia, dalla stamperia Andreola, 1856; *id.*, *Intorno le conoscenze biologiche e mediche di Dante Alighieri*, Venezia, tip. Antonelli, 1861.

52. Museo Galileo, Florence, Archivio Riunioni degli scienziati italiani (1839–1862), *Congresso di Venezia. IX. Sezione di medicina*, ms. 29.14.

53. Museo Galileo, ms. 29.26.

54. Asson participated instead in a new translation: *Biblioteca del medico pratico o compendio generale di tutte le opere di clinica medica e chirurgica, di tutte le monografie, di tutte le memorie di medicina e chirurgia pratiche, antiche e moderne, pubblicate in Francia e fuori, composto da una società di medici sotto la direzione del dott. Fabre*, versione italiana arricchita di note a cura dei signori M. Asson e G. Cohen, Venezia, tipi di Pietro Naratovich editore, 1845–1864.

55. Michelangelo ASSON, *Sullo stato attuale della chirurgia in Italia. Memoria letta nelle Adunanze 18 giugno e 2 luglio del Veneto Ateneo*, Venezia, tip. Antonelli, 1868.

56. "fondare la storia della medicina nostra sulla base di esatte biografie stese, nelle singole città, de' proprj illustri medici e, per mezzo di commissioni provinciali, raccolte poi da un comitato centrale", *ibid.*, p. 7.

57. See *infra*.

58. "opera dalla quale io voleva derivare l'impronta nazionale da' più esatti e bene ordinati studj storici e biografici; dall'uso dei criteri e del metodo della filosofia nazionale per istituire le dottrine, cioè dall'osservazione, dall'esperienza, dalla più stretta induzione; dalle indagini sugl'influssi del clima e delle endemie proprie delle varie provincie d'Italia, non che sugli speciali prodotti e mezzi terapeutici da quelle somministrati; e infine da tentativi allora impossibili ad attuare d'una comune medica legislazione", *ibid.*, p. 7.

59. "fu tirata ad abuso", *ibid.*, p. 3.

60. The debate on the origins and periodization of an Italian cultural and scientific space has been extremely lively and is not yet concluded. See, for example, Salvatore De Renzi, *Storia della*

medicina in Italia, Napoli, tip. Filiale-Sebezio, 1845–48. For a recent assessment, Claudio Pogliano, Francesco Cassata (eds.) *Scienze e cultura dell'Italia unita*, Torino, Einaudi, 2011.

RÉSUMÉS

Trois dictionnaires médicaux italiens bien connus et largement diffusés ont été publiés à Venise à partir des années 1820 et jusqu'aux années 1860 : le *Dizionario Compendiato*, le *Classico* et l' *Economico*. Ils étaient traduits du français et étaient le résultat de la coopération entre un éditeur à succès et très perspicace, Giuseppe Antonelli (1793-1861), et le médecin Mosè Giuseppe Levi (1796-1859), deux représentants d'un groupe de professionnels bourgeois et savants. Les trois *Dizionari* montrent distinctement un modèle d'évolution allant des simples traductions du français, la principale langue européenne pour les sciences et la médecine, à un collage textuel de plus en plus complexe. Les dictionnaires de Levi et Antonelli montrent bien comment traduire signifiait aussi créer un nouvel italien, un langage scientifique calqué sur le français, mais aussi capable de surmonter l'extrême diversité, en termes de géographie et de pratiques, de l'italien médical.

Three well-known and vastly diffused Italian medical dictionaries were published in Venice in the 1820s, continuing until the 1860s: the *Dizionario Compendiato*, the *Classico* and the *Economico*. They were translated from the French and were the result of the co-operation between a shrewd and very successful publisher, Giuseppe Antonelli (1793–1861), and the physician Mosè Giuseppe Levi (1796–1859), two representatives of a group of bourgeois and learned professionals. The three *Dizionari* distinctly show a pattern of evolution from simple translations from the French, the European leading language—and civilisation—for science and medicine, to an increasingly complex textual collage. Levi's and Antonelli's dictionaries show well how translations also meant creating a new Italian, a scientific language modelled on the French, but also able to overcome the extreme diversity, in terms of both geography and practices, of medical Italian.

INDEX

Mots-clés : traductions scientifiques, dictionnaires médicaux, Mosè Giuseppe Levi

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