

Learned Physicians from the Prince-Bishopric of Trento at the Habsburg Courts in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century

Social and Intellectual Resources of Successful Medical Careers*

by Alessandra Quaranta

Abstract

Dieser Beitrag legt den Fokus auf jene sozialen und intellektuellen Ressourcen, auf die dreizehn gelehrte Ärzte aus dem Fürstbistum Trient zurückgriffen, um ihren medizinischen Werdegang im 16. Jahrhundert voranzutreiben. Da den akademischen Ärzten in dieser Region nur wenige lukrative Berufsaussichten angeboten wurden, übersiedelten Trienter Ärzte jenseits der Alpen und stellten sich in den Dienst der Habsburger, die mit Trient durch politische, administrative und militärische Verhältnisse eng verbunden waren. Um in den Zentren der kaiserlichen Macht als Hof- oder Leibärzte angestellt zu werden, nahmen die Trienter Ärzte einflussreiche Empfehlungen in Anspruch. Dagegen erwies sich ihre medizinische Gelehrsamkeit für die Beibehaltung der erworbenen Anstellungen erst im Nachhinein als vorteilhaft. Damit diese Karrieren lange währten, war allerdings die Treue zur kaiserlichen Familie von größerer Bedeutung. Diese Treue bezog im weiteren Sinne die Fähigkeit, dauerhafte Beziehungen zu den hochgestellten Patientinnen und Patienten aufrechtzuhalten, mit ein. Schließlich entwickelten die Trienter Ärzte berufliche Netzwerke zur gegenseitigen Unterstützung am Hof und in der Gelehrtenrepublik, da die Gunst des Kaisers volatil und unbeständig war.

Job Opportunities for University-trained Physicians

The present article investigates the immaterial resources – meant as social, professional and intellectual abilities – of thirteen university-trained physicians from the prince-bishopric of Trento drew on in order to undertake and advance successful medical careers in the second half of the sixteenth century. They were Giovanni Betta (fl. 1530s and 1540s), Andrea Marini (1523–1570), Andrea Gallo (d. 1561),¹ Pietro Andrea Mattioli (1577), his son Ferdinando (1565/1570–1625), Giulio Alessandrini

* This research work has been funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). I have to thank the scholars of the Department of History at the University of Innsbruck, who consulted with me on the themes discussed in the present chapter.

1 On the date of Gallo's death cf. Georg Handsch to Pietro Andrea Mattioli, 26.4.1561, in: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (hereafter ÖNB), Sammlung von Handschriften und alten Drucken (HAN), cod. 9650, Epistolae ad varios 1545–1562, fol. 77r.

(1506–1590), Andrea Alessandrini (dates of birth and death unknown), Giulio's son, Francesco Partini (1500–1569), Antonio Grotti (dates of birth and death unknown), Giovanni Odorico Melchiori (d. 1589), Bartolomeo Guarinoni (1534–1616), Cristoforo Guarinoni-Fontana (d. 1604),² and Ottaviano Rovereti (1556–1626).

The prince-bishopric of Trento embraced the territories of the modern Province of Trento and a portion of the current Province of South Tyrol. It was tightly connected with the imperial Habsburg family by numerous political, administrative and military bonds. In fact, the prince-bishop recognized the Roman Emperor in his person as its suzerain and exercised the temporal power at the court of Trento on the latter's behalf.³ Furthermore, several feudal jurisdictions within the prince-bishopric belonged to the House of Austria.⁴

All of the physicians mentioned above, except Cristoforo Guarinoni-Fontana, Ottaviano Rovereti, Francesco Partini, Antonio Grotti, and Pietro Andrea Mattioli, were originally from the city of Trento, seat of the government in the prince-bishopric. Guarinoni-Fontana was born in Verona, where a branch of his family, native of Trento, had settled down. Both Rovereti and Partini came from Rovereto, located twenty kilometres from the capital of the principality. From the 1470s onwards, several households – including the Partini family – gradually flourished in socio-economic terms, investing in both commercial activities and ground rents, and became a local aristocracy. Antonio Grotti came from Riva, a small town on the banks of the Garda Lake, close to Rovereto. By contrast, Pietro Andrea Mattioli came from Siena (in the current region of Tuscany), ruled by the Medici family from 1559 onwards. However, since Mattioli served the prince-bishop Bernardo Cles for eleven years (1528–1539) and cultivated stable relationships with local physicians, Trento can be considered Mattioli's second homeland. His son, Ferdinando Mattioli, was eventually even born there.

The medical careers the learned physicians from the prince-bishopric of Trento pursued depended on both the socio-economic resources of the contexts in which they acted (*sozio-ökonomische Ressourcen*), and on their personal resources (*persönliche Kapazitäten und interessen geleitete Ressourcen*). In fact, since the prince-bishopric of Trento provided only a few attractive job opportunities for scholarly physicians (*Mangel an sozio-ökonomischen Ressourcen*), they moved to other places, where their medical services were requested and better remunerated. In order to get into new professional contexts, the physicians from Trento extensively relied on influential

2 On the date of Guarinoni-Fontana's death cf. Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (hereafter ÖStA), Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv (hereafter FHKA), Alte Hofkammer (hereafter AHK), Niederösterreichische Herrschafts-akten (hereafter NÖHA), W 61/A/22, Konvolut zu den Medici und Physici am kaiserlichen Hof in Wien im Zeitraum 1528–1730 (hereafter Konvolut), fol. 136r, 26.7.1604.

3 Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Empiricism and Community in Early Modern Science and Art: Some Comments on Baths, Plants and Courts, in: Anthony Grafton/Nancy G. Siraisi (Ed.), *Natural Particulars. Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe*, Cambridge (MA) 1999, 401–417, here 407.

4 Marina Garbellotti, *Confini giurisdizionali in tempo di epidemia. L'ufficio di sanità di Trento tra potere cittadino e potere principesco nel Seicento*, in: Walter Panciera (Ed.), *Questioni di confine e terre di frontiera in area veneta. Secoli XVI–XVIII*, Milano 2009, 269–286, here 270–271.

recommendations, which represented unassailable social resources (*Sozialressourcen*) to achieve respectable medical positions.

Subsequently, to hold onto the positions acquired, the physicians needed to use personal abilities (*persönliche Kapazitäten*) as well as target-oriented strategies (*interessensgeleitete Ressourcen*). In particular, the physicians from Trento, who were hired at the Habsburg courts and attended to the health status of their employer – the emperor –, had to carefully nurture the relationship with him and his family members. This implied an accurate consideration of the dynamics of the court as well as the circumstances. In this context, the physicians tried to show a devotional attitude towards the Habsburg family, matched up to their patients' expectations, and displayed academic medical skills and other professional competences. Furthermore, forms of collaborations at scientific level and in the field of medical practice indirectly made the physicians' position at court more stable: in fact, as we shall see, by interacting with other local scholars, the physicians bolstered their reputation and social prestige, and thus the emperor's esteem. It could however happen that a social resource was unexpectedly withdrawn (*Ressourcenentzug*) when, for instance, the emperor's favour ebbed, causing a negative impact on the physicians' medical careers.

Finding a stable job within the early modern medical marketplace was not easy for university-trained physicians, who had to compete with many different medical care providers, more or less authorized: surgeons, barbers, experts of uroscopy, astrologers, mountebanks and midwives represented fearsome rivals, also because their medical performances were less expensive than those rendered by learned physicians.⁵ Besides this competitiveness, which characterized all European territories, scholarly physicians had to face another difficulty in the prince-bishopric of Trento, i. e. the shortage of attractive professional prospects. Trento being a small economic reality, the municipality imposed low fees for medical performances as well as the obligation to treat people of the lower classes for free.⁶ More importantly, the lack of independent medical institutions in the city urged the learned physicians from Trento to seek more tempting job opportunities elsewhere. It was not by coincidence that, after studying in Padua, Bologna and Paris, Andrea Marini entered the service of different Italian courts; in 1541, he settled down in Venice.⁷ In 1557 or shortly

5 On lay medicine and itinerant practitioners cf. Jana M. Schütte, *Medizin im Konflikt. Fakultäten, Märkte und Experten in deutschen Universitätsstädten des 14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts*, Leiden/Boston 2017, especially chapter four; David Gentilcore, *Medical Charlatanism in Early Modern Italy*, Oxford 2006; Id., *Charlatans, Mountebanks and Other Similar People: The Regulation and Role of Itinerant Practitioners in Early Modern Italy*, in: *Social History* 20 (1995) no. 3, 297–314. Furthermore, self-medication and home-made medicine were widespread practices within both rural and urban environments throughout Europe. On household medicine cf. at least Sharon T. Strocchia, *Forgotten Healers. Women and the Pursuit of Health in Late Renaissance Italy*, Cambridge (MA) 2019; Elaine Leong, *Making Medicine in the Early Modern Household*, in: *Bulletin of History of Medicine* 82 (2008) no. 1, 144–168.

6 Marina Garbellotti, *Al servizio della comunità. Medici, chirurghi e speciali nel Principato vescovile di Trento nell'età moderna*, in: Giovanni Ciappelli/Alessandra Quaranta (Ed.), *Medicina e sanità in Trentino nel Cinque-Seicento tra saperi, società e scambi culturali*, Trento 2019, 127–151, here 139–140.

7 Cf. Prefazione, in: Arnaldo Segarizzi, *Discorso sopra l'aere di Venezia e discorso sopra la laguna di Venezia di Andrea Marini*, Venezia 1923, VI.

before, he arrived at the court of Vienna.⁸ Likewise, after taking his medical degree from the University of Padua in 1580, Ottaviano Rovereti began to exercise medical practice in the Venetian Lagoon.⁹

In the sixteenth century, there was no university in Trento, thus the local physicians could not go through an academic education and career there. Similarly, an association of professional physicians (*Collegium medicum*) did not exist in the city, whereas, in Brescia, Verona, Padova and Vicenza – to mention only the closest cities to Trento –, such an institution had already been established in the fifteenth or in the sixteenth century at the latest. The *Collegium medicum* had three purposes: granting professional dignity to university-trained physicians, protecting their interests, and wielding control on the municipal medical assistance. Its lack in Trento penalized learned physicians.

The first attempt to establish a professional consortium of physicians was made in 1593 but failed for still unclear reasons. Another unsuccessful try dates back to 1666. Its failure is ascribable to the tensions between two political institutions ruling the city of Trento: the *Magistratura consolare* (i. e. the municipal consuls) on the one hand, and the prince-bishop on the other. In that period, a group of learned physicians proposed the foundation of a *Collegium medicum* to the *Magistratura consolare*. The consuls, who already presided over medical professionals, enacted necessary measures to limit contagion during periods of plague and aimed to acquire more responsibilities in the municipal health care system, enthusiastically endorsed this initiative. However, the prince-bishop Ludovico Madruzzo vigorously opposed it since he was reluctant to extend the duties of the *Magistratura consolare*.¹⁰

Like the *Collegium medicum*, a health care board (*Ufficio di sanità*), i. e. an office responsible for public health, was established in Trento only in 1575, during a particularly violent pestilence onslaught – much later than in other Italian cities. There, by contrast, health care boards were founded immediately after the Plague of 1348. Once again, such a delay was due to the reluctance of public authority to give up some of its prerogatives. In particular, the *Magistratura consolare* did not want to cede its function of managing public health to a recently established authority.¹¹ Even after the establishment of an *Ufficio di Sanità*, however, the number of job opportunities for learned physicians in Trento did not increase since the attainment of the doctor degree in medicine did not represent a preferential requirement to join the health care board. Social rank and experience in the administrative field counted much more.¹²

8 Cf. the patent of nobility granted to Andrea Marini by Ferdinand, King of Bohemia: ÖStA, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv (hereafter HHStA), Reichsarchive, Reichshofrat (hereafter RHR), Miscellanea Gratialis latein Exped 23–1–27, 19.5.1557, fol. 1v.

9 [Augusto Panizza (Ed.)], *Alcune lettere di Ottaviano Rovereti medico trentino precedute da cenni sulla sua vita*, Trento 1867, 5.

10 Marina Garbellotti, *Le risorse dei poveri. Carità e tutela della salute nel principato vescovile di Trento in età moderna*, Bologna 2006, 76–81.

11 Garbellotti, *Confini giurisdizionali*, 273–274.

12 Garbellotti, *Le risorse dei poveri*, 74.

In light of the scenario described above, the court of the prince-bishop represented one of the best professional opportunities for learned physicians from Trento. In fact, a position in a princely household did not only offer financial stability in the form of steady wages and various kinds of benefits.¹³ Princely courts also provided a safe harbour from the overcrowded medical marketplace and represented a valuable alternative to academic environments, characterized by intellectual constraints and torn apart by internecine conflicts. It helped learned physicians both to acquire a distinguished social status and, in some cases, to fulfil their scientific aspirations.¹⁴ However, compared to other cities, like Rome, where, alongside the papal court, the cardinals' residences were further sources of employment and social acknowledgement, Trento offered only one court space with limited financial resources.¹⁵ In fact, when, in 1541, the learned physician Pietro Andrea Mattioli asked Cristoforo Madruzzo, prince-bishop of Trento from 1539 to 1572, to be appointed his personal physician, the bishop replied that he already had a personal physician, and could not afford to pay another.¹⁶

The lack of medical institutions and positions in the prince-bishopric of Trento (*Mangel an sozio-ökonomischen Ressourcen*) led the local physicians to look for better job opportunities in other regions. Thus, they decided to enter the service of the imperial courts of Vienna and Prague.

Key Factors in the Hiring Process: Influential Recommendations

A medical career at the Habsburg courts implied two functions: that of imperial physician, who treated the emperor, and that of court physician, who treated members of the imperial family and courtiers. These two roles were not precisely separate though. Documental evidence shows that, according to both the circumstances and the imperial family's needs, an imperial physician might attend to the health of members of the imperial family and courtiers, whereas a court physician might also provide medical consultations to the emperor. For instance, Giovanni Odorico Melchiori, who was the personal physician to Maximilian II's wife, was called upon a medical consultation related to Emperor Ferdinand I in 1564 since the remedies

13 Dries Raeymaekers, In the Service of the Dynasty: Building a Career in the Habsburg Household, 1550–1650, in: Robert von Friedeburg/John Morrill (Ed.), *Monarchy Transformed Princes and their Elites in Early Modern Western Europe, Part 2: Elites, Rhetoric and Monarchy*, Cambridge 2017, 244–266, here 247–248.

14 Bruce T. Moran, Patronage and Institutions: Courts, Universities, and Academies in Germany; an Overview: 1550–1750, in: Id. (Ed.), *Patronage and Institutions: Science, Technology and Medicine at the European Courts, 1500–1750*, Woodbridge 1991, 169–184, here 169–170.

15 Cf. respectively Richard Palmer, *Medicine at the Papal Court in the Sixteenth Century*, in: Vivian Nutton (Ed.), *Medicine at the Courts of Europe 1500–1837*, London/New York 1990, 49–78; Elisa Andretta, *Les multiples visages d'un archiatre pontifical du XVIe siècle. Activités et fonctions de Michele Mercati a Palais Apostolique*, in: Elisa Andretta/Marylin Nicoud (Ed.), *Être médecin à la cour (France, Italie, Espagne, XIIIe–XVIIIe siècle)*, Florence 2013, 161–182.

16 Alfonso Cetto, A proposito di un manoscritto di Mattioli esistente nella Biblioteca Comunale di Trento (Ms. 1795), in: *Studi Trentini di Scienze Storiche* 38 (1959), no. 1, 233–257, here 240.

previously administered to him by the imperial physicians had not brought any improvement.¹⁷

To achieve the position as court or imperial physician, the physicians from Trento relied on networks of social contacts which, at the onset of their career, counted decidedly more compared to both academic titles and medical competencies.

Let us start with the professional path covered by Giovanni Betta. As mentioned above, in 1541, he provided medical assistance to Cristoforo Madruzzo. Only four years later, in 1545, Betta became personal physician of Ferdinand I's children, King of Bohemia and Hungary, i. e. Maximilian (future Emperor Maximilian II) and Ferdinand (future Archduke Ferdinand II).¹⁸ It is difficult to assume that Betta landed a position at the court of King Ferdinand without a recommendation made by Madruzzo, political ally of the Habsburg Empire. In 1551, the physician still occupied the same post.¹⁹ Betta took advantage of his court position: first, in 1545, he was granted by King Ferdinand the prestigious title of *aulae familiaris*, i.e. member of the imperial *familia*.²⁰ Usually, the *familiares domestici* lived inside the private space of the imperial household and enjoyed the emperor's protection.²¹ Secondly, Betta received an annual salary, a detail that cannot be taken for granted in the sixteenth century.²² In fact, at the European early modern courts, the remuneration for the services provided was understood as a gracious concession made by the open-handed prince, and, accordingly, could be late or in kind.²³ Furthermore, in the 1540s, the court personnel at the Habsburg political hubs and their functions were still not completely structured and this aspect, too, negatively impinged on payments.²⁴

Like Betta, the other physicians from Trento were hired with the support of influential personages. Giovanni Odorico Melchiori began to work at the court of Vienna in December 1556 thanks to a recommendation made by Pietro Andrea Mattioli,²⁵ who, in turn, had become the personal physician of Archduke Ferdinand

17 Cf. Sendschreiben der Kaiserlichen Medicorum, in: Des Allerdurchleuchtigsten Römischen Keyzers Ferdinand des Ersten (Dresden: durch Melchior Bergens 1674), 173–179, here 178; and ÖStA, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (hereafter AVA), Adelsarchiv (hereafter Adel), Reichsadelsakten (hereafter RAA), 271–225, fol. 4v–5r, 3.11.1562.

18 ÖStA, FHKA, Sonderbestände Sammlungen und Selekte (hereafter SUS), Nachgeordnete Dienststellen, Hof- und Kameralzahlamtsbücher, Hofzahlamtsbücher (hereafter HZAB), 3 (1545), fol. 72r–v.

19 Robert Holtzmann, Kaiser Maximilian II. bis zu seiner Thronbesteigung (1527–1564). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Übergangs von der Reformation zur Gegenreformation, Berlin 1903, 139, footnote 6.

20 ÖStA, HHStA, Reichsarchive, RHR, Miscellanea Gratitalia latein Exped 23–2–19, fol. 1v, 27.7.1545.

21 Gisela Beinhoff, Die Italiener am Hof Kaiser Sigismunds (1410–1437), Wien 1995, 17; Martin Kintzinger, Familie (weitere), in: Jan Thorbecke/Werner Paravicini (Ed.), Höfe und Residenzen im spätmittelalterlichen Reich, Vol. 15.II.1: Begriffe, Ostfandler 2005, 57–60, here 57–58.

22 ÖStA, HHStA, Reichsarchive, RHR, Miscellanea Gratitalia latein Exped 23–2–19, fol. 1v, 27.7.1545.

23 Sandra Cavallo, Artisans of the Body in Early Modern Italy, Manchester/New York 2007, 104–105.

24 The tasks of the imperial officials were gradually fixed over the course of the early modern era, and the rules they had to comply with were elucidated in the *Kammerdienerordnung* emanated in 1651: Martin Scheutz/Jakob Wührer, Dienst, Pflicht, Ordnung und „gute Policy“. Instruktionsbücher am Wiener Hof im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert, in: Irmgard Pangerl/Martin Scheutz/Thomas Winkelbauer (Ed.), Der Wiener Hof im Spiegel der Zeremonialprotokolle (1652–1800). Eine Annäherung, Innsbruck/Wien/Bozen 2007, 15–228, here 19.

25 Giovanni Melchiori to Ulisse Aldrovandi, 12.12.1556, in: Giovan Battista De Toni (Ed.), Un pugillo di lettere di Giovanni Odorico Melchiori trentino a Ulisse Aldrovandi, Venezia 1925, 19.

II at the court of Prague at the beginning of 1555.²⁶ As mentioned above, he functioned as the personal physician of Queen Maria, Emperor Maximilian II's wife, and also delivered medical assistance to Emperor Ferdinand I. Mattioli helped Melchiori by virtue of a double tie: on the one hand, Melchiori was Mattioli's nephew;²⁷ on the other, he had been Melchiori's preceptor.²⁸ On his part, Melchiori reciprocated Mattioli's support, contributing to the production of various editions of Mattioli's *Discorsi sopra la materia medica* by Dioscorides (first edition, Venice 1544). He relentlessly provided Mattioli with specimens of dried and alive plants and drawings of them and revised the texts for publication.²⁹ Melchiori was also granted the imperial noble status with an imperial diploma dated 3 November 1562.³⁰

The best chances to pursue a career as court or imperial physician arose when recommendations and kinship bonds went hand in hand. More generally, as Heinz Noflatscher has conveniently observed, Italian experts at the Habsburg courts were often children of people who had already served the Habsburg family.³¹ This trend is particularly evident in Giulio Alessandrini's career, as well as the career of his sons Giovanni and Andrea, and his brother Francesco. Over three family generations, the Alessandrini prospered within the court environment at a socio-professional level. The basis of such a success had been laid down by both Pietro, Giulio's father, and Manfredo, who is thought to be Pietro's brother. Both had served Emperors Maximilian I and Charles V in the first decade of the sixteenth century. Pietro, doctor of Both Laws, had been imperial ambassador in Trento as well as imperial counsellor.³² Manfredo had worked as both attorney and party consultant in lawsuits conducted by the *Reichskammergericht*.³³ Furthermore, Emperor Maximilian I had ascribed Pietro to imperial noble status and had granted him the title of Count Palatine (*comes palatinus* or *Pfalzgraf*) on 4 October 1518. Maximilian I also established that, if Pietro's sons had achieved a doctoral degree, they would be granted the same title.³⁴

26 Paula Findlen, *The Formation of a Scientific Community: Natural History in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, in: Anthony Grafton/Nancy G. Siraisi (Ed.), *Natural Particulars: Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe*, Cambridge (MA) 1999, 369–400, here 374.

27 De Toni, *Un puggillo di lettere*, 19, footnote 4.

28 Giovanni Melchiori to Pietro Andrea Mattioli, 20.10.1549, in: Pietro Andrea Mattioli, *I Discorsi nei sei libri della materia medicinale di Pedacio Dioscoride Anazarbeo*, In Vinegia: appresso Vincenzo Valgrisi 1555, fol. B5r.

29 Alessandra Quaranta, *Medici-physici trentini nella seconda metà del Cinquecento. Sapere medico, identità professionale e scambi cultural-scientifici con le corti asburgiche*, Trento 2019, 155–156.

30 ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA, 271–25, 3.11.1562.

31 Heinz Noflatscher, *Sprache und Politik. Die Italienexperten Kaiser Maximilians II.*, in: Friedrich Edelmayer/Alfred Kohler (Ed.), *Kaiser Maximilian II. Kultur und Politik im 16. Jahrhundert*, Wien/München 1998, 143–168, here 160.

32 ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA 5–15, fol. 2v, 1.5.1573.

33 Steffen Wunderlich, *Das Protokollbuch von Mathias Alber. Zur Praxis des Reichskammergerichts im frühen 16. Jahrhundert*, Vol. 1, Köln/Weimar/Wien 2011, 1097, 1101, 1103, 1104.

34 ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA 5–16, 4.10.1518, fol. 2r–v. The relevant imperial diploma was released in the imperial castle of Kaufbayern (Hungary). The office of Count palatine implied the faculty to exercise some imperial rights in the Holy Roman Empire, like the right to appoint public judges. Beinhoff, *Die Italiener*, 20.

It was by virtue of the merits gained by his father Pietro that Giulio Alessandrini was able to land a position as *protophysicus* to Emperor Ferdinand I in 1553.³⁵ This role was thereafter confirmed under Maximilian II.³⁶ Furthermore, with an imperial diploma issued on the 22 June 1558, Giulio was granted the title of *comes palatinus*, whose awarding was first justified by the privilege of the palatinate previously conferred to his father. According to the same document, Giulio obtained it also because of his loyalty towards the House of Austria and „good customs“.³⁷ This expression has to be understood more as synonym of „faith towards the imperial family“ than as an irreproachable moral and/or religious conduct. By contrast, Giulio’s medical scholarship barely contributed to the conferment of the title of *comes palatinus*.

Giulio’s brother, Francesco, and Giulio’s sons, Giovanni and Andrea, were destined to have the same success. In 1558, Francesco, doctor of Both Laws and clergyman of the Cathedral of Trento, was granted the title of *comes palatinus* with the right to appoint public judges.³⁸ Giovanni, doctor of Both Laws and clergymen of the Churches of Trento and Brixen, took on a role of imperial counsellor, tackling questions of great breadth regarding Habsburg politics.³⁹ On 26 August 1573, Emperor Maximilian II granted Giovanni an annual pension of one thousand golden florins.⁴⁰ The pension was renewed by Emperor Rudolf II in 1580, not only because Giovanni had faithfully carried out his task, but also because of the merits accumulated by his father Giulio.⁴¹ Giulio’s other son, Andrea, offered his medical services to Emperor Maximilian II. In 1573, along with his brother Giovanni, Andrea was elevated to the rank of *Aulae caesareae familiaris*, and both of them obtained the imperial noble status.⁴² Due to his high role, Andrea was also summoned to the court of Graz in 1608, in order to treat Maria Anna, the wife of Charles II, archduke of Innerösterreich-Steiermark.⁴³

Like Giulio Alessandrini, Pietro Andrea Mattioli exploited his court position to lay the foundations for the career of his son Ferdinando. In particular, confident of Archduke Ferdinand’s favour, Mattioli asked the latter to fund Ferdinando’s medical studies and the Archduke met his request.⁴⁴ In doing so, Ferdinand made sure he could rely on both a skilled and trusted employee in the future, i. e. an academic physician whose father had already honourably served the imperial family.

35 Cf. Gabor Almásy, *The Uses of Humanism: Johannes Sambucus (1531–1584), Andreas Dudith (1533–1589), and the Republic of Letters in East Central Europe*, Leiden/Boston 2009, 127.

36 ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA 5–15, fol. 2v, 1.5.1573.

37 The original term used in the diploma is „spectata tua probitas et integritas“. Cf. ÖStA, HHStA, Reichsarchive, RHR, *Miscellanea Gratitalia* latein Exped 23–1–70, fol. 1r–2r, 22.6.1558.

38 ÖStA, HHStA, Reichsarchive, RHR, *Miscellanea Gratitalia* latein Exped 23–1–70, fol. 2r, 22.6.1558.

39 ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA 5–15, fol. 2v, 1.5.1573: „multis arduis, magnique momenti in rebus et negotiis“.

40 ÖStA, HHStA, Reichsarchive, RHR, *Miscellanea Gratitalia* latein Exped 22–2–3, fol. 1r–v, 26.8.1573.

41 *Ibid.*, fol. 2r–v.

42 *Ibid.*, fol. 2v–3r.

43 ÖStA, HHStA, Habsburgisch-Lothringische Hausarchive, Hausarchiv (hereafter HausA), Familienakten, 65–13, fol. 2v, 28.4.1608.

44 Harry Kühnel, Pietro Andrea Matthioli. Leibarzt und Botaniker des 16. Jahrhunderts, in: *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 15 (1962), 63–92, here 90.

Ferdinando became personal physician to Emperor Rudolf II who, on January 20, 1604, recognized the value of his medical education and conferred the title of *comes palatinus* upon him.⁴⁵ In the same year, Ferdinando was appointed „member of the Imperial Council“.⁴⁶

A similar dynamic also concerned the brothers Andrea and Girolamo Gallo. Andrea began to practise medicine in 1525.⁴⁷ In 1543, he functioned as the personal physician of Emperor Charles V, who stayed in Innsbruck at that time.⁴⁸ Afterwards, in 1553, he entered the service of Archduke Ferdinand II at the court of Prague.⁴⁹ In 1557, Andrea's brother, Girolamo Gallo, doctor of Law, was in Prague several times and the court paid for his lodging. The payment order was given by the „Zallmaister“, i. e. the *Zahlmeister*, the head of the court account office.⁵⁰ It is evident that the close kinship between Andrea and Girolamo led to the latter's sojourn in Prague. Perhaps, Girolamo only visited his brother Andrea, but we cannot exclude that he may have been called upon by the emperor for a juridical consultation.

Francesco Partini from Rovereto, too, was supported in his career by influential intermediaries. In 1531, he functioned as a municipal physician in his native town.⁵¹ Successively, Partini was assigned diverse tasks and honours by Cristoforo Madruzzo,⁵² and produced a medical consultation for him.⁵³ As early as 1538, Ferdinand, King of Bohemia and Hungary, stated that Francesco had been recommended to him by a trustworthy witness, alluding either to Cristoforo himself or his older brother Nicolò, commander of the imperial troops.⁵⁴ In fact, Partini had offered his medical assistance to Nicolò and his first and second wife between 1536 and 1539.⁵⁵ Afterwards, during the two-year Schmalkaldic War (1546–1547), Partini worked for the Bishop of Augsburg, Otto Truchseß von Waldburg, and made great efforts to cure the plague which, in the meantime, had spread in the town.⁵⁶ Since Otto had become a close friend of Cristoforo Madruzzo in 1531 during his studies at

45 ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA 265–16, fol. 3v–4r, 20.1.1604.

46 Ibid., fol. 5r: „Imperialis Consistorii Comes“.

47 This can be derived from what the learned physician Georg Handsch, Gallo's pupil in Prague, stated in one of his collections of medical notes: cf. ÖNB, Medizinische Sammelschriften, cod. 11205, Georgius Handschius, Praxis et adversaria medica anni 1554. Scripta aliorum inserta sunt, fol. 516r.

48 Andrea Gallo to Cristoforo Madruzzo, 10.12.1543, in: Francesco Gambara, Ragionamenti di cose patrie ad uso della gioventù del conte, Vol. 6, Brescia 1840, 51–52, here 52.

49 Giangrisostomo Tovazzi, Medicaeum Tridentinum, id est, Syllabus medicorum Civitatis ac Diocesis Tridentinae, Trento 1889, 28.

50 ÖStA, FHKa, SUS, HZAB, 13 (1557), fol. 85r, 88r, 128r, 131r.

51 Girolamo Tartarotti, Saggio della biblioteca tirolese o sia Notizie istoriche degli scrittori della provincia del Tirolo, Rovereto: presso Pierantonio Berno Libraio 1733, 114.

52 Petrus Andreas Matthiolus, Commentarii secundo aucti, in libros sex Pedacii Dioscoridis Anazarbei de medica materia, Venetiis: in Officina Valgrisia 1560, fol. B1.

53 Cf. the medical casebook compiled by Partini and kept in: Biblioteca Civica Girolamo Tartarotti of Rovereto (hereafter BCRO), Manoscritti, cod. 24, Consulti medici e ricette sec. XVI di Francesco Partini (hereafter Consulti medici), fol. 29r–v.

54 ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA 307.49, fol. 2r, 8.2.1538: „fidedigno testimonio“.

55 Partini produced five medical consultations in total for Nicolò, his first and second wife: BCRO, Manoscritti, cod. 24, Consulti medici, fol. 43v–49v; 50r–54r; 55r–58v; 59r–v; 60r–61r; 63r, 64r, 74r–76r.

56 ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA 307–50, 9.9.1561, fol. 3v.

the University of Padua,⁵⁷ it is likely that Cristoforo recommended Partini to Otto. However, Partini was hired by the imperial family only in 1557, when he became the personal physician to Emperor Ferdinand I's son, Maximilian II.⁵⁸ That he reached the court of Vienna only 19 years after his first recommendation to the emperor implied that a further recommendation was necessary. In this respect, we can assume that it was Otto Truchseß von Waldburg who finally persuaded the emperor to hire Partini. In fact, the historical sources at our disposal suggest a close relationship between Otto and the emperor.⁵⁹

The recommendations in favour of Partini were not accidental. It rather seems that the physician knowingly nurtured relationships with high-ranking people with the goal of advancing his career. This assumption is the result of a scrupulous analysis of the medical casebook in which Partini recorded consultations for his patients between 1536 and 1567.⁶⁰ This register contains medical consultation papers (*consultationes medicinales*) mainly formulated for imperial family members, exponents of the Tyrolean aristocracy, and outstanding personalities tightly connected with the House of Austria or belonging to the emperor's *entourage*: Margarethe (Emperor Ferdinand I's daughter),⁶¹ prince-bishop of Trento Bernardo Cles,⁶² baron Cristoforo Madruzzo (Cles's predecessor),⁶³ Nicolò Madruzzo (commander of the imperial troops),⁶⁴ Giangaudenzio Madruzzo (Cristoforo and Nicolò's father),⁶⁵ Ludovico Madruzzo (prince-bishop of Trento from 1567 to 1600),⁶⁶ Sigismondo Count of Arco (d. 1563), who fought among the Habsburg troops against the Protestant princes during the Schmalkaldic War,⁶⁷ the imperial advisor Lucas Landstraßer,⁶⁸ the Oztrosichs, a prominent Hungarian noble family with administrative roles at the imperial courts,⁶⁹ some relatives of Otto Truchseß von Waldburg, mentioned above,⁷⁰ the Archbishop of Salisbury Michael von Kuenburg (d. 1560),⁷¹ and Zaccaria Dolfin (Bishop of

57 Bernhard Schwarz, *Kardinal Otto Truchseß von Waldburg Fürstbischof von Augsburg. Sein Leben und Wirken bis zur Wahl als Fürstbischof von Augsburg (1514–1543)*, Hildesheim 1923, 21; cf. also Conradin Bonorand, *Mitteleuropäische Studenten in Pavia zur Zeit der Kriege in Italien (ca. 1500 bis ca. 1550)*, in: Pluteus 2–5 (1986–1987), 295–357, here 344; Walter Ansbacher, *Kardinal Otto Truchsess von Waldburg (1514–1573). Zwischen reichskirchlicher Tradition und wachsender Konfessionalisierung*, in: Veronika Lukas/Julius Oswald/Claudia Wiener (Ed.), *Otto Truchsess von Waldburg (1514–1573)*, Regensburg 2016, 29–51, here 33.

58 Tartarotti, *Saggio della biblioteca tirolese*, 115.

59 Cf. respectively Staatsarchiv Augsburg, Altbestände, Geistliche Reichsstände, Hochstift und Domkapitel Augsburg, Hochstift Augsburg MüB 262, folia not enumerated, and ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA 307–50, fol. 3v, 9.9.1561.

60 The most ancient piece of advice with a chronological reference in Partini's medical register dates back to 1536: cf. BCRO, Manoscritti, cod. 24, *Consulti medici*, fol. 60r–61r. The latest medical consultation was written for the prince-bishop of Trento Ludovico Madruzzo, who was elected in that capacity in 1567; *Ibid.*, fol. 61r.

61 *Ibid.*, fol. 180v–181v.

62 *Ibid.*, fol. 73r-v; 164r–165v.

63 *Ibid.*, fol. 29r–v.

64 *Ibid.*, fol. 43v–49r, 49r–49v; 50r–54r, 55r–58v, 59r–v, 61v–63r, 64v–68v.

65 *Ibid.*, fol. 27r–v.

66 *Ibid.*, fol. 61r.

67 *Ibid.*, fol. 86v–87v; 88r; 88v–89v; 96r–v.

68 *Ibid.*, fol. 84r–86r.

69 *Ibid.*, fol. 151v–152r, 152v–154v, and 155r–156v.

70 *Ibid.*, fol. 155r–156v.

71 *Ibid.*, fol. 170r–174r.

Győr in Hungary from 1565).⁷² These wealthy and noble patients represented a source of pride for the physician, and also helped him in his career advancement. This strategy paid off in the long run: in 1557, Partini was offered a post as imperial physician.

Furthermore, on his part, Partini capitalized on his role at court to help the physician Antonio Grotti achieve a similar position. In fact, since Partini and Grotti had collaborated in medical practice at least twice in 1552,⁷³ it is very likely that Partini supported his colleague in acquiring a position as *Leibmedicus* to the Emperor in 1578.⁷⁴

The importance of influential contacts can also be seen in the cases of Bartolomeo Guarinoni and Cristoforo Guarinoni-Fontana. Bartolomeo was hired as the physician of both Emperor Maximilian II and his son, Rudolf II, in 1572.⁷⁵ On 5 May 1589, Rudolf stated that he had accepted Bartolomeo at court „thanks to a trustworthy testimony“, although he did not mention any specific person.⁷⁶ Cristoforo landed a position as the personal physician of Emperor Rudolf II at the court of Prague in 1590.⁷⁷ It was Vespasiano I, Duke of Sabbioneta and cousin of the Duke of Mantua Guglielmo Gonzaga, who convinced the emperor to hire Cristoforo.⁷⁸ Vespasiano supported the physician probably since he had been successfully treated by him in the past. In fact, before being hired at the court of Prague, Cristoforo had provided medical assistance to many nobles in Italy.⁷⁹ Cristoforo's position at the RudolFINE court was also probably supported by Giulio Alessandrini.⁸⁰ As shown by the letters sent by Cristoforo to Giulio in 1578 and in 1583, both had known each other before Cristoforo's imperial position.⁸¹

Finally, Ottaviano Rovereti's professional path, too, shows the relevance of influential recommendations. In 1587, Rovereti accepted a post as the personal physician of Bartolomeo Pezzen from Trento, imperial ambassador in Constantinople. Rovereti reached the Turkish capital in 1589,⁸² where he treated some of Pezzen's servers as well as the court official himself.⁸³ In the letter in which Pezzen asked

72 Ibid., fol. 126r–127v.

73 Ibid., fol. 63r, 64r, 74r–76r.

74 ÖStA, FHKA, AHK, NÖHA, W 61/A/22, Konvolut (hereafter Konvolut), fol. 19r, 23.12.1578.

75 Bohdana Divišová, *Ärzte mit dem Nachnamen Guarinoni – oder: All die kaiserlichen Guarinoni*, in: *Studia Rudolphina. Bulletin Centra pro výzkum umění a kultury doby Rudolfa II.* 11 (2011), 89–101, here 91.

76 ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA 159–25, fol. 2r, 24.5.1589.

77 Bohdana, *Ärzte mit dem Nachnamen Guarinoni*, 94.

78 Guidobono Guidoboni to Vincenzo I Gonzaga, duke of Mantua, 23.6.1590, in: *Archivio di Stato di Mantova* (henceforth ASMn), *Archivio Gonzaga* (henceforth AG), Corte Cesarea, 464–V, fol. 474r–v.

79 Cf. Christophorus Guarinonius, *Consilia medicinalia, in quibus universa praxis medica exacte pertractatur, Venetiis: apud Thomam Baglionum*, 1610.

80 On this see also: Ivo Purš/Josef Smolka, *Martin Ruland starší a mladší a prostřední císařských lékařů*, in: Ivo Purš/Vladimír Karpenko (Ed.), *Alchymie a Rudolf II.: Alchymie a Rudolf II: Hledání tajemství přírody ve střední Evropě v 16. a 17. století*, Prag 2011, 581–606, here 583.

81 Guarinonius, *Consilia medicinalia*, *Consultatio XXXI*, 13.6.1578, 44–45, and *Consultatio CLXXIX*, 9.6.1583, 192–193.

82 Quaranta, *Medici trentini*, 98–99.

83 Remo Stenico/Italo Franceschini (Ed.), *Giangrisostomo Tovazzi, Biblioteca tirolese o sia memorie istoriche degli scrittori della Contea del Tirolo*, Trento 2006, 547.

Rovereti to work for him, the ambassador also reported that Bartolomeo Guarinoni, imperial archiater at the court of Prague at that time, had exhorted him to persuade Rovereti to move to the Bohemian court. In fact, by virtue of his imperial position, Guarinoni would be able to make Rovereti obtain a post as court physician.⁸⁴ However, when Rovereti was invited to Prague, he did not head towards the Bohemian capital. After leaving Constantinople in 1590, Rovereti returned to Trento.⁸⁵ A year later, he was summoned by the *Magistratura consolare* to face the wave of petechial fever which was ravaging the town.⁸⁶ The physician Ludovico Tremeno from Trento was also called upon by the consuls. Tremeno had been the personal physician to Charles, Archduke of Austria at the court of Graz and, after the latter's death in 1590, Tremeno retained his function as the personal physician of Charles's wife and sons.⁸⁷ Since Rovereti and Tremeno spent a lot of time together, discussing at length the nature, causes, symptoms and therapies of the petechial fever, it is quite likely that Tremeno, satisfied with his previous court position, encouraged Rovereti to move to the Habsburg regions. In 1597, Ottaviano entered the service of the court of Prague as personal physician to Emperor Rudolf II.⁸⁸

Rovereti's career also reveals the importance attributed by the physicians from Trento to their common geographic provenance. When Pezzen reported Guarinoni's proposal to Rovereti, the ambassador also stressed the bond connected to the geographic origin they shared, interpreting the belonging to the prince-bishopric of Trento as a strong professional glue.⁸⁹ In the same sense, we should read the mention made by Rovereti in his work *De peticulari febre* (1592). In particular, he praised Giulio Alessandrini as one of the most precious sources of esteem for their homeland, referring to Alessandrini's *De Theriaca Quaestio* (Basel, 1581), a work on the use of theriac in pestilential lenticular fevers.⁹⁰ Alessandrini was also worshiped when, in 1578, he arrived at the court of Prague to help Giovanni Odorico Melchiori treat Queen Maria. Writing to the physician Johann Crato von Krafftheim, Melchiori underscored that „the excellent doctor Giulio“ was his „compatriot“.⁹¹

It remains to point out one last aspect. Compared to the hiring processes examined so far, Mattioli's career represents an exception. While Mattioli was working for prince-bishop Bernardo Cles between 1528 and 1539, he collaborated with both

84 Bartolomeo Pezzen to Ottaviano Rovereti, 10.8.1587, in: [Tommaso Gar (Ed.)], *Lettere inedite di Ottaviano Rovereti medico trentino del secolo XVI*, Trento 1854, 10.

85 Lukas Oberrauch, *Medizin*, in: Martin Korenjak/Florian Schaffnerath/Lav Šubaric/Karlheinz Töchterle (Ed.), *Tyrolis latina. Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur in Tirol*, Vol. 1: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gründung der Universität Innsbruck, Wien/Köln/Weimar 2012, 362–377, here 373.

86 Ottaviano Rovereti to Ludovico Madruzzo, 15.06.1592, in: Ottaviano Rovereti, *De peticulari febre*, Tridenti Anno 1591. *Publice Vagante. Deque vesicatorium in ea potissimum usu*, Tridenti: apud Ioannem Baptistam Gelminum, Sabiensem 1592, fol. 2r–v.

87 *Ibid.*, 4. Charles was the third son of Emperor Ferdinand I, and ruler of Inner Austria from 1564 to 1590.

88 The first trace of Rovereti's medical activity in the Habsburg territories dates back to May 31, 1597. It deals with a medical consultation done by him at the court of Vienna: cf. Diomedes Cornarius, *Consiliorum Medicinalium Tractatum*, Lipsiae: Michael Lantzenberger 1599, 139–151.

89 Bartolomeo Pezzen to Ottaviano Rovereti, 10.8.1587, in: [Gar], *Lettere inedite di Ottaviano Rovereti*, 10.

90 Rovereti, *De peticulari febre*, 325.

91 Giovanni Odorico Melchiori to Crato von Crafftheim, 12.2.1578, in: *Biblioteka Uniwersytecka we Wrocławiu* (hereafter BUW), ms. R 248, letter no. 188, fol. 522r: „meus compater optimus doctor Iulius“.

Alessandrini and Gallo to manipulate mineral substances for therapeutic purposes.⁹² However, Mattioli's professional advancement was not so much contingent upon his relationship with Alessandrini and Gallo, who had entered the imperial service before him, but rather with the increasing success of his major botanical-pharmaceutical treatise, the *Discorsi*. In fact, when the fame of his work reached Ferdinand I's ears, the emperor appointed Mattioli personal physician of his son at the court of Prague.⁹³ The broad circulation of the *Discorsi* is also mentioned in an imperial act dated 5 January 1558, which granted Mattioli a ten-year printing privilege for the German version of his work.⁹⁴

Long-Term Careers: Successful Strategies

The position as physician at the Habsburg courts was precarious. This instability first depended on the understanding of the role as *Hofdiener*. In the society of the *ancien régime*, the state and its institutions did not exist alone but coincided with the sovereign and drew their legitimacy from his will. Court officials were bound up with the ruler by a personal relationship and, only by virtue of the trust the monarch in person accorded to each official, they were warranted to exercise the functions they had been assigned. If, for any reason, the ruler's trust ebbed, the officials were no longer allowed to exercise their tasks. For instance, if the emperor changed his mind, this was sufficient to depose his employees from their positions. Therefore, successfully fulfilling the functions assigned did not guarantee per se a long duration of the position held. Rather, a lasting career was mainly contingent upon both the monarch's will, which was often unpredictable, and the court officials' ability to maintain a loyal behaviour towards the emperor.

Furthermore, from the 1550s onwards, physicians began to speedily follow one another at the Habsburg courts. Many remained in charge for a brief period or were summoned only for one medical consultation. These rapid shifts made the rivalries between physicians at court increase and caused an atmosphere filled with expectation and anxiety. For instance, when, in 1581, the Paduan professor Girolamo Mercuriale wondered who would take over as imperial archiater after Crato von Crafftheim's leave from Prague, he did not manage to find a plausible response since he deemed the emperor's will completely unstable.⁹⁵

An additional factor which made the physicians' positions unsteady concerned the patients' great awareness. As pointed out in the recent literature, early modern patients were not passive subjects at all; they had a great deal to say with reference

92 Luca Ciancio, "Per questa via s'ascende a magior seggio". Pietro Andrea Mattioli e le scienze mediche e naturali alla corte di Bernardo Cles, in: Studi Trentini. Storia, 94 (2015), no. 1, 159–184, here 164.

93 Findlen, *The Formation of a Scientific Community*, 374.

94 ÖStA, HHStA, Reichsarchive, RHR, Miscellanea Gratialis latein Exped 23–1–30, folia not numbered, 5.1.1558.

95 Girolamo Mercuriale to Crato von Crafftheim, 17.2.1581, in: Jean-Michel Agasse/Concetta Pennuto (Ed.), *Girolamo Mercuriale, Johann Crato von Krafftheim. Une correspondance entre deux médecins humanistes*, Genève 2016, 238.

to the diagnoses formulated and the treatments suggested by physicians and their narratives formed the centrepiece of the early modern examination.⁹⁶ In such a context, physicians struggled to match up to the patients' expectations in terms of therapeutic success, and contradicting them implied a non-negligible risk. This risk became higher in the case of court and imperial physicians: for instance, a municipal physician was at risk of not being paid for the medical performance provided but would not have lost his job; in the case of a court or imperial physician, his high position and the related prestige were both at stake.

Due to the reasons illustrated above, the physicians from Trento had to devise specific strategies to secure long-term careers. Showing a devotional attitude towards the imperial family was crucial to retain their position, reinforce it, and even obtain benefits for family members. In the imperial diploma issued in 1562, Mattioli's obedience to the House of Austria was mentioned among the merits which made him earn the title of imperial counsellor and physician.⁹⁷ Furthermore, thanks to the „loyal and useful services and qualities“ Francesco Partini had provided to Maximilian II and, previously, to his predecessor Ferdinand I, the emperor arranged for Partini's son, Giovanni Battista, to be appointed as canon of the Cathedral Church of Mantua.⁹⁸

By contrast, if a court or imperial physician, who already had proven his loyalty, even only once manifested a behaviour which was considered unsuitable by the court, he risked his position. In 1596, Cristoforo Guarinoni-Fontana left the court of Prague to make a devotional pilgrimage to Rome. Although such journeys were not interdicted, Cristoforo's leave was interpreted by the courtiers as a serious outrage to the emperor, who decided to dismiss him from the court.⁹⁹ After his return to Prague, Cristoforo no longer enjoyed Rudolf's favour and, in 1601, did not live at court anymore.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, when pope Clemence VIII offered a position to Guarinoni-Fontana, Rudolf's resentment further increased.¹⁰¹ It is thus apparent that the failure of the physician to align his will with the emperor's led to the loss of his privileges. This dynamic occurred when a social resource at the physician's disposal, such as the emperor's trust, was suddenly withdrawn (*Ressourcenentzug*). A reference to the unreliability of the court of Prague was also made by Giovanni Odorico Melchiori in 1577, who agreed with Crato von Cratfheim on the fact that the court was full of calumnies. Melchiori also likened this characteristic to an incurable disease, for which only palliative remedies existed.¹⁰²

96 Mary Lindemann, *Medicine and Society in Early Modern Europe. New Approaches to European History*. Cambridge 1999, 238, 273–275; Alicia Rankin, *Duchess, Heal Thyself: Elisabeth of Rochlitz and the Patient's Perspective in Early Modern Germany*, in: *Bulletin of History of Medicine* 82 (2008), no 1, 109–144, here 111–112.

97 ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA 265.15, fol. 2v–3r, 13.7.1562.

98 Maximilian II of Habsburg to Guglielmo Gonzaga, 21.8.1567, ASMn, AG, Corte Cesarea, 431–II, fol. 66r–v: „fidelia ac utilia obsequia atque merita“.

99 Guarinonius, *Consilia medicinalia, Consultatio DCXX*, 23.1.1596, 739–741, here 741.

100 Manerbio Aderbale to Vincenzo I Gonzaga, 9.10.1600, in: ASMn, AG, Corte cesarea, 477–I 10, fol. 319r.

101 Nicolaus Comnenus Papadopolis, *Historia gymnasii Patavini*, Vol. 2, Venetiis: apud Sebastianum Coletum 1726, 263.

102 Giovanni Odorico Melchiori to Crato von Cratfheim, 8.3.1577, in: BUW, ms. R 248, letter no. 189, fol. 524v.

Alongside loyalty, medical skills represented a resource to draw on. Bartolomeo Guarinoni gained the title of Count Palatine due to his medical skills as well as his loyalty towards the emperor. In 1589, Rudolf II argued that he had personally ascertained Guarinoni's scrupulous medical practice, and that the physician had shown „good customs and integrity“.¹⁰³ As already noted, the concept of „good customs“ helped Giulio Alessandrini obtain the privilege of the Palatinate, and it was not so much understood as a good reputation but rather as fidelity to the imperial family.

In some cases, medical skills alone turned out to be indispensable for the preservation of the post gained, although, as mentioned above, they were not crucial at the onset of a court medical career. On May 1st, 1573, Emperor Maximilian II conferred the noble title upon Giulio Alessandrini for having accurately attended to the health of Maximilian II and his father Ferdinand I at the court of Vienna and during their journeys abroad.¹⁰⁴ Mattioli's surgical skills contributed to obtaining social-economic privileges. He had acquired these competencies in Perugia, while studying under the guidance of the surgeon Bartolomeo Caravita from Bologna.¹⁰⁵ Subsequently, as a court physician, Mattioli treated eighty wounded soldiers during the military campaign Archduke Ferdinand led in Hungary from August to October of 1556.¹⁰⁶ His surgical ability must have impressed the Archduke, since Emperor Ferdinand I praised the surgical services Mattioli provided in Csanád, the Hungarian fortress where the imperial troops were lodged during the war against the Turks.¹⁰⁷ Along with his devotion to the emperor, surgical skills also contributed to appointing Mattioli imperial counsellor and physician.¹⁰⁸

Medical skills also often entailed a respectful attitude towards patients. For instance, since Bartolomeo Guarinoni had great difficulty treating Emperor Rudolf II due to his stubborn reluctance to take medicines, the physician asked the imperial archiater Crato von Craffheim for advice on what healing methods he could adopt without contradicting the emperor.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, when, in February of 1563, Archduke Ferdinand refused all of the remedies suggested by Mattioli, sustaining that they weakened and even damaged him, Mattioli did not reproach the archduke. In contrast, in face of the patient's reluctant – and perhaps, in Mattioli's eyes, even disrespectful – attitude, the physician did try to convince the patient, with kind words of persuasion, of the effectiveness of the therapies recommended.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, while treating the archduke, Mattioli had to conciliate two opposite needs. On the one hand, he had to safeguard Ferdinand's health, and, on the other, he had to pay attention to the expectancies of Ferdinand's father, the emperor. The latter had

103 ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA 159.25, fol. 2r, 24.5.1589: „morum honestate atque integritate“.

104 Ibid. 5.15, fol. 3r, 1.5.1573.

105 Alisha Rankin, *The Poison Trials. Wonder Drugs, Experiment and the Battle for Authority in Renaissance Science*, Chicago/London 2021, 88.

106 Kühnel, Pietro Andrea Matthioli, 68.

107 ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA 265.15, fol. 3r, 13.7.1562.

108 Ibid., fol. 5r, 13.7.1562.

109 Bartolomeo Guarinoni to Crato von Craffheim, 26.3.1576, in: BUW, ms. R. 248, letter no. 50, fol. 74r.

110 ÖStA, HHSa, Habsburgisch-Lothringische Hausarchiv, HausA, Familienakten, 65–15, fol. 7r, 13.2.1563.

ordered his son Ferdinand to leave Prague and head to Innsbruck. However, when the emperor learnt that Ferdinand had become ill, he hastened to ask Mattioli for more information on his son's health status. On his part, Mattioli deemed Ferdinand still unable to undertake a journey to Innsbruck since he had not completely recovered. For this reason, the physician had to find adequate words to inform the emperor that his order could not be executed. At the same time, Mattioli tried to defend his medical skills and opinions, illustrating the health status of the archduke as detailed as possible, and making references to the risks the patient would take with such a long journey.¹¹¹

Other professional competencies contributed to a durable professional path. When, in 1545, Archduke Ferdinand appointed Giovanni Betta *aulae familiaris*, he laid emphasis not only upon the physician's expertise in health care activity, but also upon his ability to fulfil diplomatic offices. In fact, Betta followed Emperor Charles on his expedition to France, and took part in other campaigns both in Austria and abroad.¹¹² A reference to another diplomatic task, carried out by Betta in Wurmsham (Germany), is mentioned in the official court payroll (*Hofzählambuch*) of 1545. The related remuneration amounted to 100 florins.¹¹³ Furthermore, with his diligent, prompt and clever activity, the physician Andrea Marini, mentioned above, increased imperial incomes, bringing benefits to the imperial Exchequer, and this success got him the noble status.¹¹⁴ Perhaps, Marini worked as a financial advisor, and ran economic business on its behalf. He may have even suggested ways to improve tax revenues or to sell state-owned goods.

Scientific Exchanges as Socio-Professional Resources

Given that the Habsburg courts were cosmopolitan cultural realities, the physicians from Trento were offered the possibility to join an intellectual community made up of natives of many lands. As of the reign of Ferdinand I, and during those of his successors, scientists, painters, and architects from all over Europe were drawn to Vienna and Prague. Ferdinand I collected books and especially coins of the Roman Empire. Maximilian II, a lover of antiquity and nature, botanist, bibliophile and student of foreign languages, fetched artists from Italy to rebuild the royal castles in Bohemia and planted exotic plants in their gardens.¹¹⁵ Rudolf II turned Prague into a cosmopolitan culture centre by hiring scholars from all parts of Europe and of any confession.¹¹⁶ The ecumenical scientific world Rudolf created was well represented in the *Kunst- und Wunderkammer* he set up.¹¹⁷

111 Ibid., fol. 6r, 10.2.1563.

112 ÖStA, HHStA, RHR, Miscellanea Gratitalia latein Exped 23-2-19, fol. 1v, 27.7.1545.

113 ÖStA, FHKA, SUS, HZAB 3, fol. 72r-v.

114 ÖStA, HHStA, Reichsarchive, RHR, Miscellanea Gratitalia latein Exped 23-1-27, fol. 1r, 19.5.1557.

115 Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, *Princes and Artists: Patronage and Ideology at Four Habsburg Courts 1517-1633*, London 1991, 82.

116 Ibid., 91.

117 Norbert Wolf, Giuseppe Arcimboldo, *Wunderliche Gesichter*, München/Berlin/London/New York 2008, 61.

In such a lively context, the physicians from Trento extended their networks of scientific and professional exchanges. In particular, Bartolomeo Guarinoni got in touch with Johann Jassenius (Johann Jesenský), Paul Weidner from Udine (1525–1585), Peter Monau and Crato von Craffheim, both from Breslau, the Hungarian Johannes Sambucus (János Zsámboky), and Tadeáš Hájek, a Czech imperial physician.¹¹⁸ Jassenius was a medical professor at the *Collegium Carolinum* of Prague and, in 1602, became imperial physician.¹¹⁹ Weidner did his degree in medicine at the University of Padua and, later on, he moved to Vienna.¹²⁰ In 1558, he held a public dissertation at the Medical Faculty of the imperial city to obtain the license to practice medicine there. In 1578, he was hired as the imperial physician to Emperor Rudolf II.¹²¹ Peter Monau was another imperial physician hired on Crato's recommendation in 1580.¹²² Sambucus studied in Vienna for a long time, and definitively settled there in 1564. In that year, he was appointed both historian and court physician by Maximilian II. He held these positions simultaneously for the rest of his life. Under Maximilian's patronage, he also practised medicine in Vienna.¹²³

Several scholars active in Vienna or Prague are known to have been friendly with Mattioli: the Lusatian Paulus Fabricius, university professor of medicine at the University of Vienna and court mathematician; the Viennese Johann Aicholz, professor of medicine at the same university; the Flemish botanist Rembert Dodoens (1517–1585); the Netherlander Carolus Clusius (Charles de l'Écluse, 1526–1609), and the Silesian Crato.¹²⁴ Mattioli also collaborated with both Claudius Ricardus, imperial surgeon,¹²⁵ and Georg Handsch from Leipa (1529–1578?). The latter undertook a traineeship in medical practice under the supervision of Andrea Gallo. After Gallo's death, Handsch continued his internship under Mattioli's guide, with the precise goal of carrying out further scientific activities.¹²⁶

Networks of scientific relationships, like those just traced, served to exchange scientific information and related objects, like books, drafts, notes, drawings, substances of vegetal, mineral and animal origin, and medicines. These interactions turned out to be very useful as forms of support for medical research and writing and, in this sense, they can be understood as types of socio-cultural resources the physicians relied on to either improve or extend their medical production.

For instance, different scholars significantly contributed to Giulio Alessandrini's publications in scientific and material terms. Tadeáš Hájek provided Alessandrini with information on the method to produce a beverage prepared with wheat, i. e. beer. Alessandrini intended to add this information in his *Salubrium sive de sanitate tuenda*

118 Quaranta, *Medici-physici trentini*, 108–111.

119 Robert J. W. Evans, *Rudolf II and His World*, London 1997, 137.

120 Weidner, Paulus, in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol. 20, Detroit/New York 2007, 699.

121 Archiv der Universität Wien, Archivbestände, Rektoratarchiv und Studierendenevidenz, Universitätskonsistorium, CA 1.4.1436, 147, 134, fol. 2r–v and 15r.

122 Evans, *Rudolf II*, 203.

123 Nancy G. Siraisi, *History, Medicine, and the Traditions of Renaissance Learning*, Ann Arbor 2007, 217.

124 DaCosta Kaufmann, *Empiricism and Community*, 408.

125 Alisha Rankin, *On Anecdote and Antidotes: Poison Trials in Sixteenth–Century Europe*, in: *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 91 (2017), no. 2, 274–302, here 276, footnote 5.

126 ÖNB, HAN, cod. 9650, *Epistolae ad varios* 1545–1562, fol. 77r.

(1575), a detailed volume on what foods, drinks and climates were appropriate for human beings according to their natural temperaments.¹²⁷ Subsequently, Alessandrini sent a manuscript copy of his work to Hájek with the request of proofreading it.¹²⁸ Thus, Hájek did not only enrich the content of the treatise *De sanitate tuenda* with new information but also revised the text, guaranteeing its scientific quality. Furthermore, Crato von Craffheim supported the publication of Alessandrini's *In Galeni praecipua scripta annotationes* (Basel, 1581). In particular, Crato put Alessandrini in touch with Theodor Zwinger, notable physician and naturalist from Basel, who found a printer ready to publish Alessandrini's work. As the correspondence between the Italian physician and the archiater shows, without Crato and Zwinger's efforts, understood as precious socio-professional resources, Alessandrini would not have completed the publication of his *Annotationes*.¹²⁹

Like in Alessandrini's case, Pietro Andrea Mattioli's reputation as scholar profited from scientific exchanges. There is general consensus about the fact that the *Discorsi* by Mattioli were the offspring of collective efforts: in fact, over the course of decades, Mattioli consulted many botanists who provided him with a lot of different specimens of dried and alive plants, drawings and botanical information. Furthermore, when Georg Handsch and Tadeáš Hájek became close collaborators of the Sieneese physician, the circulation of the *Discorsi* extended to German- and Czech-speaking territories. On the one hand, in 1563, Handsch published the first German version of the *Discorsi*, entitled *Kreuterbuch*.¹³⁰ On the other, Hájek prepared the first Czech edition of the *Discorsi*. Issued in 1562, this edition enabled the circulation of the Italian botanical knowledge in the Reign of Bohemia.¹³¹ Once again, and like in Alessandrini's case, Mattioli relied on indispensable socio-professional resources, i. e. his colleagues' skills, to disseminate his botanical knowledge. Emperor Rudolf II noticed the great circulation of Mattioli's *Discorsi*, emphasizing that the book was read by everyone in the Habsburg regions due to its great utility.¹³²

By increasing scientific contacts, Alessandrini and Mattioli could enhance their reputation within the European Republic of Letters. In return, enjoying the scholars' respect contributed to maintaining the emperor's esteem and, as seen above, keeping the imperial trust was a fundamental strategy to stabilize court careers. It was not by coincidence that, after Alessandrini had retired from the imperial service in 1570,¹³³ Rudolf II summoned him again in 1578, so the physician would attend to his health.¹³⁴ Rudolf's decision could have been influenced by the opinion of Thomas Jordan from Klausenburg (today Cluj, in Romania), the official physician

127 Thaddaeus Hagecius, *De cervisia, eiusque conficiendi ratione, opusculum*, Francofurti: apud heredes Andreae Wecheli 1585, 6–7.

128 Andreas Dudith to Tadeáš Hájek, 17.2.1572, in: Lech Szczucki/Tibor Szepessy (Ed.), *Andreas Dudithius Epistulae, Pars II: 1568–1573*, Budapest 1995, 332, letter no. 275.

129 Quaranta, *Medici-physici trentini*, 123 and 125.

130 Rankin, *On Anecdote and Antidotes*, 289, footnote 51.

131 Mirjam Bohatcová, *Prager Drucke der Werke Pierandrea Mattiolis aus den Jahren 1558–1602*, in: *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 60 (1985), 167–185, here 172; Evans, *Rudolf II*, 118.

132 ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA 265–16, fol. 3v, 20.1.1604.

133 Moritz Alois Becker, *Die letzten Tage und der Tod Maximilians II.*, Wien 1877, 1–44, here 16.

134 Giulio Alessandrini to Crato von Craffheim, 14.4.1578, in: BUW, ms. R 248, letter no. 60, fol. 88r.

to the imperial army. Jordan reported to the emperor and his courtiers that he had treated many sick people in Vienna together with Alessandrini and, when an unusual symptom appeared, he might count on Alessandrini's considerable expertise.¹³⁵ In terms of medical practice, Jordan held Alessandrini in high regard and this opinion reached the emperor's ears.

Physicians from Trento: A Cohesive Medical Community at the Habsburg Courts

Like other early modern princely households, the imperial family consulted different medical practitioners, both learned and not-trained university physicians. According to the circumstances and the family's needs, they could be either summoned occasionally or hired for a certain period. They came from different European regions, including the prince-bishopric of Trento, the Republic of Venice, the hereditary lands of the House of Austria, the Reign of Bohemia, German-speaking principalities, the historical region of Silesia, and Flemish regions.

Within this broad medical community, it seems that the physicians from the prince-bishopric of Trento stood out at least in three respects. First, five of them succeeded in pursuing particularly long careers. Giovanni Odorico Melchiori, hired in 1556, occupied his post for 33 years until 1589.¹³⁶ As seen above, Bartolomeo Guarinoni was hired as physician to Maximilian II in 1572, and continued to serve as personal physician to both Rudolf II and Mathias, Rudolf's successor. Guarinoni remained at the court of Prague until his own death in 1616. Two years later, in 1618, the Emperor allocated 2.000 gold florins to his family as a form of reimbursement due to the loss of the physician.¹³⁷ Ottaviano Rovereti, hired in 1597, returned to Trento shortly before 1626, when he was appointed *Ufficiale di Sanità* in that city.¹³⁸ Alessandrini, who began his court career in 1553, obtained a permission to retire from the imperial service in December 1566,¹³⁹ but returned to Italy only in 1570.¹⁴⁰ Mattioli went back to Trento on 24 April 1569, after a fourteen-year service, but, on 16 April 1575, he was hired again at the court of Innsbruck with a salary of 600 florins per year.¹⁴¹

By contrast, most of the non-*Trentini* physicians were either consulted only once or hired for a decade – a time span decidedly shorter than the period the physicians from the prince-bishopric of Trento spent at the Habsburg courts –, and no other physician was summoned again after leaving the court. Girolamo Mercuriale from Forlì (1530–1636) was called upon the court of Vienna in August 1573 to examine

135 Thomas Jordan to Giulio Alessandrini, 18.10.1580, in: Thomas Iordanus, *Luis novae in Moravia exorthae descriptio*, Francofurti: Apud And. Wechelum 1580, fol. A2r-A4v, here A3r.

136 Tovazzi, *Medicaeum Tridentinum*, 32.

137 ÖStA, FHKa, AHK, NÖHA W 61/A/22, Konvolut, fol. 24r, 20.3.1618.

138 Garbellotti, *Le risorse dei poveri*, 74.

139 ÖStA, HHStA, Reichsarchive, RHR, *Miscellanea Gratialis* latein Exped 79–34, fol. 1v, 28.12.1566.

140 Becker, *Die letzten Tage*, 16.

141 Kühnel, Pietro Andrea Matthioli, 71–72.

Emperor Maximilian II and returned home after three months.¹⁴² Renato Musa Brasavola from Ferrara (1529–1576) produced only one medical consultation for Archduke Ferdinand, king of Bohemia, in February 1554.¹⁴³ Giovanni Planerio from Brescia (1509–1600) and Andrea Camuzzi from Lugano (1512–1587) worked as imperial physicians at the court of Vienna respectively from 1556 to 1566 and in the 1570s. From his part, Pietro Merenda from Brescia (ca. 1510–1567) served the imperial family for quite a long period: he was hired at the court of Innsbruck in 1542 and went back home in 1560.¹⁴⁴

Secondly, among the non-*Trentini* court physicians, only a few regularly attended to the health status of the imperial family members. They were the Italian Planerio, Merenda, and Camuzzi, mentioned above; the archiater Crato von Craffheim from Breslau, who served three emperors (Ferdinand I, Maximilian II and Rudolf II) from 1561 to 1580; Diomedes Cornarius from Zwickau (1535–1600) and Johann Neefe from Saxony (1499–1574), who were both personal physicians to Maximilian II.¹⁴⁵ Other non-*Trentini* physicians who served the imperial family did not provide medical services: both Johannes Sambucus, mentioned above, and the Austrian Wolfgang Lazius (1514–1565) functioned as imperial historians;¹⁴⁶ Paulus Fabricius from Silesia (1529–1589) was appointed as court mathematician,¹⁴⁷ and the Flemish Rembert Dodoens, already mentioned, carried out botanical studies.¹⁴⁸ The Moravian Matthias Cornax from Vienna (1508–1564) was appointed personal physician to Archduke Ferdinand in 1549 but, as member of the Medical Faculty of Vienna as of 1542, was predominantly committed to academic activities.¹⁴⁹

As to the third and last aspect which made the *Trentini* physicians a special group, we have to notice that they enjoyed more socio-economic privileges compared to their colleagues. In fact, four of them obtained the noble status, two were granted the title of *comes palatinus*, and two others that of *aulae familiaris*. Furthermore, as mentioned above, Giulio Alessandrini, Pietro Andrea Mattioli and his son Ferdinando were awarded the honour of imperial counsellor. From his part, Bartolomeo Guarinoni held a position as „counsellor of both the imperial court and the imperial Council“.¹⁵⁰

142 Cf. ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA, 272–53, 10.10.1573.

143 Cf. ÖNB, HAN, cod. 11155, fol. 1r–24v.

144 Cf. Alessandra Quaranta, Italian Physicians at the Habsburg Courts (1550–1620). Hiring Processes, Professional Networks and Integration into the Court Space, in: *European History Quarterly* 53 (2023), no. 4, forthcoming.

145 On Crato cf. Charles D. Gunnoe Jr./Jole Shackelford, Johannes Crato von Krafftheim (1519–1585): Imperial Physician, Irenist, and Anti-Paracelsian, in: Marjorie E. Plummer/Robin B. Barnes (Ed.), *Ideas and Cultural Margins in Early Modern Germany: Essays in Honor of H. C. Erik Midelfort*, 2009, 201–216, here 203. On Cornarius cf. Crystal M. Lee, *Medicine in Vienna in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, PhD Thesis University of Virginia (USA) 1994, 118, 163; on Neefe cf. David Schirmer (Ed.), *Sendschreiben der Kaiserlichen Medicorum*, Dresden: Melchior Bergens Witwe, 1674, 173.

146 Siraisi, *History*, 196.

147 Elaine Fulton, *Catholic Belief and Survival in Late Sixteenth-Century Vienna: The Case of Georg Eder (1523–87)*, New York 2016, 53–54.

148 Siraisi, *History*, 217.

149 Schütte, *Medizin im Konflikt*, 282–283.

150 ÖStA, AVA, Adel, RAA, 159–25, 24.5.1589, fol. 2v: „Aulae Caesareae et Imperialis Consistorii Comes“.

Among the other physicians, only Johann Neefe was granted a similar title: „Rath und Leib-Medicus“.¹⁵¹

The question now arises as to how the physicians from the prince-bishopric of Trento became a special group. In this respect, it seems that they precociously realized that the emperor's favour could ebb at any moment for different reasons and were thus ready to exploit it before it could diminish. As seen above, by timely capitalizing on the emperor's benevolence they had earned, Pietro Andrea Mattioli and Giulio Alessandrini managed to „transmit“ their court roles to their respective sons. Such a direct „transmission“ never occurred for the other court and imperial physicians.

Another relevant factor that guaranteed the *Trentini* physicians' success was their strong sense of geographic and political identity. Their native territory, the prince-bishopric of Trento, was a small region, in which learned physicians were only few and the medical positions available were concentrated either at the small court of Trento or in the two civic institutions mentioned above (the *Magistratura consolare* and the *Ufficio di Sanità*). In such a narrow context, the physicians could both know each other and develop a solid cohesion. This particularly transpires from three different behaviours.

First, when some physicians from Trento landed a medical position at the Habsburg courts, they continued to nurture contacts they had previously established in the prince-bishopric of Trento. For instance, Mattioli had collaborated with Andrea Gallo and Giulio Alessandrini at the court of the prince-bishop Bernardo Cles in Trento,¹⁵² and he maintained these forms of cooperation after moving to Prague. As seen above, he worked with Gallo as medical mentor in the Bohemian capital and also interacted with Alessandrini. In fact, in February 1563, while he was treating Archduke Ferdinand, Mattioli constantly reported details on the Archduke's health status to Alessandrini, who worked as imperial physician at the court of Vienna. Mattioli was sure that Alessandrini would keep Emperor Ferdinand I, Ferdinand's father, updated on his son's health conditions.¹⁵³ Secondly, those physicians who had landed a position at court, like Bartolomeo Guarinoni, encouraged their fellow countrymen, to do the same. Finally, the *Trentini* physicians supported each other in facing professional rivalries. In 1577, after Crato von Craftheim had definitively left the court of Prague, Bartolomeo Guarinoni and Rembert Dodoens rivalled to take over as archiater. In this context, Giovanni Odorico Melchiori argued for Bartolomeo and, in a letter to Crato, defined him „our sir Guarinoni“.¹⁵⁴

151 Schirmer, Sendschreiben, 173.

152 Ciancio, „Per questa via s'ascende“, 58.,

153 ÖStA, HHStA, Habsburgisch-Lothringische Hausarchive, HausA, Familienakten, 65–15, fol. 2r, 6.2.1563, fol. 4r, 8.2.1563, fol. 10r, 10.2.1563.

154 Giovanni Odorico Melchiori to Crato von Craftheim, 8.3.1577, in: BUW, ms. R 248, letter no. 189, fol. 524v: „nostro Domino Guarinonio“.

Concluding Remarks

The prince-bishopric of Trento did not offer appealing job opportunities for learned physicians. This aspect mainly depended on the local authorities who controlled the city's medical institutions and whose decisions did not always meet the learned physicians' expectations. Thus, the physicians from Trento tried to enter the service of the Habsburg courts and, to this end, drew on influential social relationships. In fact, since the prince-bishopric of Trento and the House of Austria were connected by social and political ties, the *Trentini* physicians managed to find distinguished personalities able to introduce them to the imperial court and this represented an undisputable advantage. Other physicians, like Giovanni Odorico Melchiori, Antonio Grotti and Cristoforo Guarinoni-Fontana, exploited the court positions their fellow countrymen had already landed, and the fact that the latter could advise the emperor on the recruitment of new court physicians.

However, recommendations did not per se guarantee a long-standing imperial service. In fact, as discussed above, although Cristoforo Guarinoni-Fontana had been hired thanks to noteworthy recommendations, he was dismissed ten years later. Thus, to promote long-term careers, the physicians also needed to adopt target-oriented strategies. First, they earned and maintained the emperor's favour; secondly, they displayed therapeutic skills to win the patients' trust; thirdly, they built networks of mutual support with colleagues from the prince-bishopric of Trento to restrain potential calumnies within the extremely competitive court environment.

Finally, collaborations with local scholars in the field of both scientific production and medical practice can also be understood as valuable socio-professional resources. These interactions did not aim per se to advance medical careers, but made the physicians get into a virtuous circle. By carrying out scientific exchanges, the physicians enhanced their reputation as scholars, and thus indirectly reinforced the emperor's esteem. This regard, which now found confirmation beyond the court, made the physicians' court positions more stable.