The Charlatan’s Trial: An Italian Surgeon in the Court of King Philip II, 1576-1577

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One of the more curious features of the history of early modern science as it has been interpreted in Anglo-American scholarship is the almost complete absence of Iberian contributions. As long ago as 1979, the eminent Spanish historian of science José María López Piñero called attention to “la escasa o nula presencia de la España de los siglos XVI y XVII en las exposiciones generales de los historiadores de la ciencia de otros países y en sus estudios acerca de la evolución de una disciplina o un tema determinados.”1 More than two decades later, the situation has not much changed. Despite the flourishing state of Spanish research on the history of Iberian science, to date, David Goodman’s masterful Power and Penury, first published in 1988, remains the only comprehensive study of early modern Spanish science so far published in English.2

This situation is all the more puzzling in light of the attention that historians have recently paid to princely patronage.3 When one considers that Spain in the early modern era possessed the world’s greatest empire and that its monarchy was the most powerful in Europe, it is at least counter-intuitive that it should have played little or no role in the period’s greatest cultural movement. A world without Spain is certainly not the world that early modern Europeans thought they were living in. The Spanish Empire under the Hapsburgs reached from Madrid to Potosí and from Naples to Antwerp, not to mention the distant Philippines. It even included in its orbit Rome, where tens of thousands of Spaniards settled, colonizers for a kind of ‘informal’ Spanish imperialism that until recently has received little attention.4

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1 Ciencia y técnica en la sociedad española de los siglos XVI y XVII (Barcelona, 1979), 34.
3 See, in particular, Mario Biagioli, Galileo Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism (Chicago, 1993); and Bruce T. Moran, ed., Patronage and Institutions: Science, Technology and Medicine at the European Court, 1500-1750 (Woodbridge, 1991).
Nor were contemporaries unaware of Spain's political power and cultural importance. As Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra points out in a recent review article, the Spanish and Portuguese "confidently saw themselves as the first 'moderns' surpassing the ancients [and] the English were the first to recognize this fact and... to imitate the institutions of knowledge-gathering created by the Iberians."\(^5\) Spain was a rising giant that would become the world's first modern global empire and would produce the first world-wide scientific network, a fact that in the predominant interpretation of the history of science is met with stubborn ignorance or mute puzzlement. Remarkably, as far as concerns the historiography of science outside of Spain, the situation is not very different today than it was when, in 1914, Julián Juderías coined the term "Black Legend" to describe the stereotype of early modern Spain as "Inquisitorial, ignorant, fanatical, incapable of taking a place among the cultured nations, always inclined toward violent repression, an enemy of progress and innovation."\(^6\) Yet it is not without significance that it was the Inquisition in Rome, not Spain, that prosecuted Europe's leading Copernican, Galileo, while the major Spanish defender of the Copernican doctrine, Diego de Zúñiga, was allowed to publish his opinions freely, without threat of persecution.\(^7\)

This essay is intended as contribution to rectifying the imbalance in modern scholarship that excludes Spain from the overall picture of early modern science. My essay has several specific aims. First of all, I want to show that Spain was by no means an isolated outpost of Renaissance scientific culture. As the example of the Italian surgeon Leonardo Fioravanti will make clear, Philip II's court was a magnet for natural philosophers from Catholic Europe as well as for émigré natural philosophers from Protestant countries. I also hope to demonstrate that scientific activity in Philip's court illustrates many of the same patterns of scientific patronage that scholars have observed in other European courts.

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\(^{6}\) Julián Juderías, La leyenda negra. Estudios acerca del concepto de España en el extranjero (Valladolid, 1977), 24. In accounting for the neglect of Spain in scholarship on the Scientific Revolution, Cañizares-Esguerra notes that the "remarkably enduring narratives of the Spanish Black Legend... are still with us, blinding historians every day": "Iberian Science in the Renaissance," 117. To cite one example of the persistence of such stereotypes, Allen G. Debus, one of the leading American historians of Renaissance science, recently asserted that the supposed lack of scientific innovation in early modern Spain was a result of "Philip II's effort to maintain Spain as a Roman Catholic country." "Paracelsus and the Delayed Scientific Revolution in Spain: A Legacy of Philip II," in Reading the Book of Nature: The Other Side of the Scientific Revolution, ed. A. G. Debus and M. T. Walton (Kirksville, MO, 1998), 147-61, p. 160.

Indeed, in some respects Philip's court was more modern, not less, than other courts; for not only did Philip support scientific activity through his personal patronage, he also created and supported institutions for the advancement of science, such as the Casa de Contratación (House of Trade), which promoted the sciences of navigation, cosmography, and cartography. As the guardian of the world's greatest empire, Philip found science and technology to be useful, and he opened his court to foreigners who might help him advance his aims. When Fioravanti visited Spain in 1576, the court in Madrid was a bustling center for the investigation of what then held out the promise of becoming one of the most powerful of all sciences: alchemy.8 Finally, I bring to light a hitherto unknown document that sheds new light on the control of medical practice in sixteenth-century Spain.9

When Fioravanti arrived in Spain in 1576, he was already a famous surgeon and empirical healer known throughout Italy for his unorthodox medical doctrines.10 Nearly sixty years old, he was nearing the end of a long a controversial career as the proponent of what he called 'the new way of healing.' His patent drugs, which were available not only in Venice but also in pharmacies in Naples, Rome, and Milan, were a standard part of the pharmacist's stock. His disputes with the medical establishment were legendary and he had disciples as far away as England, where the apothecary John Hester sold an assortment of his nostrums at his shop in Paul's Wharf.11 He was also well known in Spanish circles. Having served as a personal physician to the Spanish viceroys of Sicily and Naples during the 1540s, he had made acquaintance with numerous Spanish officers and officials. In 1550, he was a surgeon in the Spanish navy during the siege of the north African city of Mahdiya, known to the Europeans as Aphrodisium or, simply, Africa, which was then held

9 The document, British Library, Add. MS 28.353, is published for the first time in the appendix to this article.
10 Born in 1517 in Bologna, Fioravanti began practicing as an empiric or apprentice surgeon around 1533. In 1548, he seems to have experienced some sort of epiphany. According to his autobiography, which begins in October of that year, he left Bologna to "go out into the world" in search of the secrets of nature: Il Tesoro della vita humana (Venice, 1570), 17v. The best biography of Fioravanti, though still not entirely adequate, is Davide Giordano, Leonardo Fioravanti Bolognese (Bologna, 1920). In addition, see Piero Camporesi, Camminare il mondo: Vita e avventure di Leonardo Fioravanti medico del Cinquecento (Milan, 1997). See also my forthcoming imaginative reconstruction, The Charlatan's Tale: A Renaissance Surgeon's World.
by the notorious Turkish pirate Dragut. News of the victory in Africa was greeted with jubilation in Spain and with the publication of several volumes celebrating the victory. Fioravanti's service to the Spanish crown would be remembered years later in Madrid.

Fioravanti's medical doctrines were also well known in Spain. The author of seven controversial books published in Venice between 1561 and 1570, his works gained a wide circulation in Spain and southern Italy. Fioravanti was notorious for his uncompromising critique of Galenic medicine. According to the conception of disease that he advanced, illness was not some benign imbalance of humors that could be rectified by diet and regimen. It was an invasion of the body by corruptions that had to be forcefully expelled with potent drugs. Only then could the body be restored to its ‘pristine health.’ It is not difficult to understand why Fioravanti was such a famous healer: it was because his methods connected with the ordinary person's conception of the body. As the Italian historian Gianna Pomata points out, patients tended to view illness as "something that moves inside the body," that 'something' being not the limpid humors-out-of-balance of Galenic medicine, but foul corruptions and rotten matter that swelled and collected in abscesses, pustules, and seeping boils. Fioravanti wanted to attack corruptions at their source, the stomach, and drive them out. Then as now, people wanted results; remedies that produced no physiological changes were easy targets for unorthodox healers like Fioravanti.

Not surprisingly, purgation occupied a prominent place in Fioravanti's therapeutics. He was, evidently, obsessively concerned with purifying the body of putrid and corrupting substances. To accomplish his aims, he assembled an imposing armory of emetics and purgatives whose active agents included hellebore, veratrum, antimony, and mercury. He gave them catchy trade-names like 'angelic electuary' (elettuario angelico), 'magistral syrup' (siroppo maestrale), 'blessed oil' (olio benedetto), and his powerful and trusty standby, *dia aromatic* a, the 'fragrant goddess' he prescribed as the first course of action against almost every ailment he

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13 Contemporary histories of the war include Juan Cristobal Calvete de Estrella, *La conquista de la ciudad de Africa en Berberia* (Salamanca, 1558); Horatio Nucula, *Commentariorum de bello Aphrodisiensi libri quinque* (Rome, 1552); Pedro de Salazar, *Historia de la guerra y presa de Africa* (Naples, 1552); idem, *Hispania victrix* (Madrid, 1570); and Cornelius Scepper, *Rerum à Carolo V cesare augusto in Africa bello comentarii* (Antwerp, 1554).


encountered. In the struggle between sickness and health that Fioravanti and other popular healers waged, therapeutic intervention necessarily took on heroic dimensions.

The fact that Fioravanti's 'ontological' conception of disease seems to have resonated with the tense religious climate of post-Tridentine Europe may help to explain the sympathetic hearing that his doctrines received in Spain. For we cannot help noticing the resemblance between the Fioravanti's therapeutics of purgation and the Church's most extreme medicine, exorcism. Piero Camporesi has observed that the therapeutics of purgation reached its peak in popularity during the second half of the sixteenth century, the decades that also knew the highest rate of diabolism, and when exorcisms were more widely practiced than ever before. Exorcisms, often publicly performed in spectacular demonstrations, dramatized the Church's jurisdiction over supernatural forces, thus making them effective instruments of anti-Protestant propaganda. Like King Philip II, Fioravanti was an ardent champion of the Counter-Reformation. Whether or not these factors help account for Fioravanti's popularity in sixteenth-century Spain, certainly his medico-ecclesiastical ideology of supercatharthis would have worked to his advantage.

Fioravanti was also well known as a devotee of alchemical medicine. All of his drugs were prepared by alchemical processes, and he was an ardent defender of distillation. His alchemical activity had begun in the 1540s in Naples, when he was in the service of the Spanish Viceroy, Don Pedro of Toledo. Taking up residence in a house near the Castel Nuovo, he bought distillation vessels and set up an alchemical laboratory. His residence became the center of experimental activity, where "alchemists and distillers from various nations began to practice." These individuals, many of whom, doubtless, were Spaniards, made up the core of what Fioravanti later described as an "academy" that met in his house and made experiments in distillation and other alchemical processes.

It was in the 1560s in Venice that Fioravanti's conversion to 'philosophical' alchemy took place, when he came into contact with a circle of natural philosophers and literati who were intensely interested in the alchemical doctrines of pseudo-Ramon Lull. By far the most important

16 Fioravanti's drugs are described in Capricci medicinali (Venice, 1564), Book II.
18 Tesoro, 50.
19 Fioravanti mentions the academy in a letter to the Neapolitan physician Alfonso da Rienzo, dated 14 April 1568. Tesoro, 234. Fioravanti's academy may have imitated another, almost contemporary Neapolitan academy called the Accademia Segreta, which was formed in the 1540s with similar purposes in mind. For the latter, see William Eamon and Françoise Paheau, "The Accademia Segreta of Girolamo Ruscelli. A Sixteenth-Century Italian Scientific Society," Isis 75 (1984): 327-42.
member of Fioravanti's Venice circle, at least from the standpoint of his development as an alchemist, was Ettore Ausonio, a little known but prolific natural philosopher from Milan. Ausonio exerted a major influence upon Fioravanti. Although there is no record of when the two met, it can be established that Fioravanti knew Ausonio before 1567, when he published the *Specchio di scienze universale*, where Fioravanti mentions the Milanese alchemist as “un huomo rarissimo & dottissimo.”

Prior to meeting Ausonio, Fioravanti was a practical alchemist whose principal interest had been in making new drugs through distillation. Ausonio introduced him to the arcane doctrines of pseudo-Ramon Lull and stimulated his interest in alchemical theory. A fervent follower of pseudo-Lullian alchemy, Ausonio wrote voluminously on the pseudo-Lull's philosophy.

Very little is known about Ausonio. His obscurity is easy to understand. Although he was a prolific author, he published nothing. Ausonio's entire oeuvre consists of scattered works on mathematics, astrology, medicine, and alchemy contained in several dozen codices preserved in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan. These manuscripts reveal a man of intense energy and wide-ranging interests, a fervent and devoted compiler of the works of others, but also one who had little discipline for sticking with a work to its completion. A cosmographer, astrologer, alchemist, and inventor of scientific instruments, Ausonio began dozens of projects but completed few. None of his works were carried through to the final stage of publication. He bounced from project to project, starting each one with passionate dedication and hurried impatience but just as quickly losing interest in it, only to begin a new one.

But Fioravanti positively adored Ausonio. In the *Specchio* he calls the Milanese alchemist “un grandissimo filosofo e fisico.” In a dedication letter to Ausonio in his *Cirugia* (1570), Fioravanti praised Ausonio as a physician “so expert in medicating, that you not only heal the sick of their illnesses, but you almost raise the dead from their sepulchers, with your divine and precious liquors.” Yet it was not only for his accomplishments as a physician that Fioravanti admired Ausonio. More important was Ausonio's fervent advocacy of pseudo-Lullian alchemy: Shifting

20 *Specchio*, 83v.
22 The principal work is the *Trattato sopra l'arte dell' alchimia*, Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Q 118 Sup. See the discussion in Pereira, *The Alchemical Corpus Attributed to Raymond Lull*, 48-9.
23 *Specchio*, b7v.
his interests from practical alchemy to an attempt to comprehend the complex theory underlying the art, Fioravanti became disciple not only of Ausonio but (as he believed) of the Majorcan philosopher himself. From about the mid-1560's, Fioravanti's principal and most frequently cited authority on the art of alchemy became Ramon Lull.

No one in the sixteenth century doubted that the recondite alchemical doctrine attributed to the thirteenth-century philosopher and mystic Ramon Lull was genuine. Yet the alchemical works ascribed to Lull actually began to appear only around 1332, more than a decade after Lull's death. By the end of the century, a full-blown legend about Lull the alchemist had taken shape. Several factors contributed to the appeal of pseudo-Lullian alchemy to Fioravanti and his contemporaries. First of all, pseudo-Lull's doctrine was an alchemical expression of the age-old dream of prolonging human life. Its centerpiece was the medical elixir, a 'quintessence' produced by distillation. Although the theory of the elixir originated in Hellenistic alchemy, it underwent a major transformation in the fourteenth century, first in the works of the Franciscan friar and prophet John of Rupescissa and then in the pseudo-Lullian corpus. John stated that because the four elements are subject to decay, no medicine made of them can serve the purpose of preserving the body. Therefore, one must seek something that bears the same relation to the four bodily humors as the heavens bear to the four elements. This 'heavenly' medicine is called the quintessence, after the fifth element of which the heavens are composed. For John, it was spirit of wine, alcohol, which he regarded as 'miraculous' in its faculty of preserving matter from corruption and in treating diseases characterized by corruption of the whole body, such as plague. In the pseudo-Lull's alchemical doctrine, however, that unique alchemical panacea was transformed into essences that could be the distilled from any substance. This new, 'reformed' version of the doctrine of quintessences provided an erudite and powerful argument for the superiority of alchemicall-prepared 'essences' of drugs versus Galenic remedies made from the same substances. Pseudo-Lull's

25 Michela Pereira, "La leggenda di Raimondo Lullo alchemista," Estudios lulianos 27 (1987). According to Ausonio's version of the legend, Lull learned the art of alchemy from Arnald of Villanova, a native of Valencia and one of the most famous physicians of his age. The major pseudo-Lullian alchemical text, the Testamentum, has recently been edited by Michela Pereira and Barbara Spaggiari, Il 'Testamentum' alchemico attribuito a Raimondo Lullo (Florence, 1999).


alchemical doctrine gave rise to an entirely new pharmacopoeia, driven partly by science and partly by fashion. 28

Another reason for the appeal of pseudo-Lullian alchemy in the Renaissance was its construction of an image of a perfect physician (medicus perfectus) who possesses a universal medicine. 29 While fashionable in many quarters, alchemical medicine was looked upon with suspicion by orthodox practitioners. Often condemned as charlatans, the iatrochemists fought back by appropriating the pseudo-Lullian image of the medicus perfectus and contrasted their ‘perfected’ remedies from the ‘inferior’ Galenic drugs. Finally, pseudo-Lull’s alchemy contained a deeply religious subtext that appealed to many medical reformers, presenting alchemy as one part of movement that aimed at overall cultural regeneration.

It was presumably out of his devotion to the pseudo-Lullian alchemical doctrine that in 1576 Fioravanti accepted an invitation to travel to Madrid and to the court of Philip II. In the 1570s, Philip’s court was a center of Lullist philosophical activity. 30 Whether the king saw Lull’s doctrine as the key to universal knowledge, as a means to converting the infidels, or as providing the key to the philosopher’s stone is unclear. What is known is that pseudo-Lullian works comprised a large share of the king’s collection of alchemical books in the library at the Escorial. 31 It is also known that Philip himself engaged in the art. Although his confidence in the transmutation of base into precious metals was shaken by the results of experiments conducted under his supervision in the 1560s, he retained his faith in the medicinal possibilities of alchemy. 32 As early as the 1550s, he was hiring foreign alchemists to prepare medicines by


29 Testamentum, 112. In addition, see Michela Pereira, “Medicina in the Alchemical Writings Attributed to Ramon Lull (14th-17th Centuries),” in Alchemy and Chemistry in the 16th and 17th Centuries, ed. P. Rattansi and A. Clericuzio (Dordrecht, 1994), 1-15.


distillation, and by the 1580s, he had installed an elaborate alchemical laboratory at the Escorial to further these researches. 33

Fioravanti was one of the first foreign alchemists that Philip invited to Spain during this period. 34 Having resided for seven years in Sicily and Naples, he had longstanding contacts with the Spanish nobility. His service to the Spanish Crown as a military surgeon during the African war, his growing reputation as a healer, and his outwardly pro-Spanish sympathies would have been to his advantage. Moreover, his books were widely known in Spain; the king himself had four of them in his library at El Escorial. 35 Besides, Fioravanti had grown weary of his disputes with the physicians. The Venetian College of Physicians refused to license him until he forced their hand by returning to Bologna and obtaining a medical degree. Then he moved to Milan, where, in 1573, he was thrown into prison for allegedly killing a patient. He responded with characteristic combativeness, by issuing a challenge to the town physicians: "that there be consigned to me alone twenty or twenty-five sick people with diverse ailments, and an equal number with the same infirmities to all the physicians of Milan, and if I do not cure mine faster and better than they do theirs, I am willing to be banished forever from this city." 36

In 1576, battle-scarred but no less convinced of the rightness of his views, Fioravanti set his sights on Spain.

The journey from Milan to Madrid normally took about a month, three weeks by land and sea to Barcelona, another week by coach or horse to Madrid. It would have given Fioravanti plenty of time to contemplate the things he'd heard about Spain in Naples, Rome, and Milan, and would soon discover for himself. Contrary to the opinion that seems to prevail among non-Spanish historians of science, the royal court in Madrid was alive with scientific activity. 37 Philip was deeply interested in the sciences of the day and spent lavishly on scientific pursuits. Although like most monarchs of the period his motives were political and economic rather than purely scientific, he patronized royal institutions for the advancement of science and financed costly voyages of scientific discovery.

33 The most comprehensive treatment of medicinal distillation in the court is Rey Bueno, Los señores del fuego.
34 Confirmation that Fioravanti was invited to the court and given instructions by Juan Rodriguez Ortega, one of the royal physicians, is contained in the British Library manuscript published for the first time in the appendix.
35 The inventory of Philip's library at El Escorial is published in Documentos para la historia del monasterio de San Lorenzo el Real de El Escorial, vol. VII, ed. Gregorio de Andrés (Madrid, 1984). As early as 1561, a section of Fioravanti's Capricci medicinali was translated into Spanish: Discorso de Fioravanti sobre la medicina universal y conservación del cuerpo, Biblioteca Nacional MS 6149, f.66.
37 An important exception is David C. Goodman, Power and Penury. Government, Technology and Science in Philip II's Spain (Cambridge, 1988).
Since the beginning of the sixteenth century, Spain had been a center for the study of navigation and cosmography, subjects of immediate practical interest in maintaining the overseas empire. The Casa de Contratación (House of Trade) in Seville, founded by the Catholic Monarchs in 1503, was charged with the responsibility of training pilots in the art and theory of navigation, a union of theory and practice so admired by the English navigator Stephen Borough, who visited the Casa in 1558, that he pressed for the founding of a similar institution in England. Indeed, the extended dispute between practical-minded pilots and theoretically-trained cosmographers that took place in the Casa de Contratación during the sixteenth century underscored one of the central debates of early modern science: the extent to which mathematics might be used to describe the physical universe. In 1582, Philip founded an Academy of Mathematics at Madrid, where courses on military engineering, navigation, and architecture were taught.

Prompted by a desire to realize the economic potential of his vast American empire, King Philip solicited information about the geography and natural history of the New World. In 1570, he commissioned a court physician, Francisco Hernández, to make an extensive survey of the medicinal plants of the New World and ordered his Portuguese viceroy of India to gather information about the medicinal plants of that region. In 1571, he appointed Juan López de Velasco to the newly-created post of cosmographer-chronicler of the Indies, instructing him to compile maps, cosmographic tables, records of tides and eclipses, and an extensive natural history of the Indies. As a consequence of these projects, the court became a center of news and research about America. Philip developed extensive botanical gardens at the Royal Palaces in Aranjuez and Madrid, where species from distant parts of the empire were cultivated. Far from being an obstacle to the reception and advancement of new scientific ideas, as one historian has recently claimed, from the standpoint of supporting science Philip II was one of Europe's most enlightened monarchs. Indeed, Spain under Philip II ushered in the beginning of modern, state-sponsored 'big science'.

39 Hernández's manuscripts have not been published in a modern edition; however, selections are available in The Mexican Treasury: The Writings of Dr. Francisco Hernández, ed. S. Varey (Stanford, 2000).
The occult sciences fascinated Philip, as they did many of Europe’s intellectuals and princes. A passionate adherent of the philosophy of Ramón Lull, he purchased many Lullist works for his library at El Escorial and invited Lullist philosophers to the court.42 The king was especially captivated by pseudo-Lull’s recondite alchemical doctrine, which all contemporaries believed were genuine. He vigorously promoted the development of new drugs and the search for the Lullian quintessence.43 In 1564, Philip appointed a Fleming, Francis Holbeeck, as royal distiller and assigned the task of distilling medicinal waters for the royal family. A few years later he established a distillation laboratory at the royal palace in Aranjuez. By 1575, the laboratory had 185 alchemical flasks and forty-three alembics of various capacities.44 The king’s thirst for alchemical products seemed unquenchable. In 1585, Philip began the construction of an immense distillation laboratory at El Escorial, where he installed a gigantic ‘philosophical tower’ (torre filosofal) over twenty feet high, capable of producing two hundred pounds of distilled medicinal waters per day.45 If you were interested in the spagyrical arts, Philip’s court was obviously the place to be.

Fioravanti quickly made his way into the alchemical community at the royal court and, as he had done elsewhere, gathered around himself a circle of devoted alchemists. The group included Juan Cornejo, one of the hypochondriac king’s legion of court physicians, whom Fioravanti credits with having discovered the secret of the bezoar. Cornejo wrote a treatise on making potable gold entirely of plant substances which supposedly relieved the king’s gout so well that Cornejo dedicated the printed version of the treatise to the Pope.46 Fioravanti’s close-knit alchemical circle also included Agustín Bravo, “un hombre diabolico” who, because of his familiarity with alchemical furnaces, supposedly “knows more than all the devils of the Inferno,” the court physician Juan Fernández, and Giovanni Angelo di Santini of Bologna, the “alchimista terribilissimo” who became one of Fioravanti’s devoted disciples.47


44 Ibid., 38.
46 Juan Cornejo, Discurso y despertador preservativo de corrimiento y enfermedades dellos… (el modo y traça de hazer el oro potable del lentisco, y sus diferentes cosimientos, y la elección de la plantas, para que se hagan puntual) (Madrid, 1594). This work also exists in a manuscript in the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, MS 3385.
47 Leonardo Fioravanti, Della fisica (Venice, 1682), 296, 352, 362, 372.
Also present at Philip’s court was an Italian aristocrat named Lorenzo Granito, a native of Salerno, whom Fioravanti says was the equal of Ramon Lull, Arnald of Villanova, and John of Rupecsissa. According to Fioravanti, Granito demonstrated for him how to make an elixir that would enable one to make the finest twenty-two carat gold from any metal. Granito also showed Fioravanti a manuscript containing a Spanish poem that supposedly held the secret of the philosopher’s stone. Fioravanti reprinted obscure allegorical verses at the end of Della fisica, although it is far from clear whether he understood them, for he made no effort whatsoever to explicate them.

As an international center of news and research about the Indies, Philip’s court provided Fioravanti with ample opportunity to talk to people who had been to the New World. From a Corsican sailor, he learned about the Peruvian Indians and their customs, their weaponry and bellicose nature, and their wars with other tribes. The sailor also told him (doubtless with tongue in cheek) about an island inhabited by ape-like creatures that threw stones and feared fire, like satyrs. From a Peruvian Indian, he learned firsthand about strange birds, magical stones, and herbs with marvelous properties, including a magical plant called bacaza that glows in the dark and enables one to foretell the future.

What was an American Indian doing in King Philip’s court? In fact, Indians and mestizos were fairly common in early modern Spain. Some arrived in the service of Spanish hidalgos, others were shipped to Spain as slaves. Some were caciques sent by their villages to request a favor from the king, others were sent by their families to be educated at one of the universities. Some returned to America, others stayed in Spain. Nothing else is known about the Indian that Fioravanti met in Philip’s court, not even his name. Possibly he was one of those caciques who occasionally came to pursue their prerogatives; or maybe he was a captive brought to the court as a kind of curiosity, put on display as an exotic artifact of the king’s personal empire.

48 Ibid., 374.
50 Della fisica, 304.
51 Della fisica, 302-4.
52 For this information I am grateful to Professor Berta Ares of the Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos in Seville (personal communication, 11 October 2001). One of the first mestizos to arrive in Spain was Garcilaso de la Vega, the son of a prominent conquistador captain and an Inca princess, who arrived in Spain in 1560 and studied at the University of Seville. Garcilaso became an illustrious historian of the Inca people, and proudly displayed his heritage on the title pages of his books by styling himself ‘the Inca’.
Although Fioravanti lived in Spain for less than two years, between 1576 and 1577, he managed to travel extensively in the Iberian peninsula. He visited Lisbon, Pamplona, and Salamanca. In Barcelona, he accomplished cures so marvelous "that people began to say that I was a necromancer, because it wasn't possible by natural means to cure so quickly." They said the same in Pamplona, Fioravanti claims, when he cured the viceroy with his Philosopher's Stone. In Seville, a gentleman named Vázquez Durango showed him a marvelous bezoar stone. It was also in Seville that he discovered Nicholas Monardes's *Natural History of the New World*, one of the most important scientific treatises of the sixteenth century. Ultimately, however, Fioravanti arrived at a low view of Spanish surgery. In Spain, he said, "the surgeons just want to extract money from the purse." Nor did he hold Spanish medicine in high regard. The reason? Because, he said, the Spanish physicians did not properly understand alchemy.

Fioravanti reconstructed his experiences in Madrid in his last book, *Della fisica* (Venice, 1582), which he wrote upon his return to Italy. He dedicated the work to King Philip II, "porque sin duda ninguna el es Catolicissimo y Christianissimo sobre todos los otros Reis del mundo." The work is a characteristic example of his supreme skill at self-fashioning. For all that we can tell from reading the book, he was accepted in Philip's court—in all of Spain, for that matter—as a prophet of a new art of healing. However, it is difficult to take Fioravanti's word at face value. Prone to hyperbole and boastfulness, he typically made more of his importance than the evidence supports. Indeed, Puerto suggests that Fioravanti's alchemical circle actually occupied a marginal status in the court. Even so, Fioravanti wrote fondly of the alchemists and naturalists he knew and leaves the impression that the king gratefully received his efforts, and that his fame spread far and wide. If his word were all that we had, we might paint just a rosy a picture—and indeed, many historians have.

However, there is another side to the story. It is told in a British Library manuscript that was evidently unknown to previous biographers of Fioravanti. The manuscript, which is published here for the first time, as far as I know, the only historian who has noticed this document is David Goodman: *Power and Penury*, n. 140.

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53 *Della fisica*, 230.
54 *Della fisica*, 235.
55 *Della fisica*, 352.
56 *Historia de las cosas que se traen de nuestras Indias Occidentales* (Seville, 1565-74), ed. facs., intro by J. M. López Piñero (Madrid, 1989).
57 *Della fisica*, 246.
58 Ibid., a2v.
60 British Library, Add. MS 28.353. The manuscript is published in full in the appendix to this article.
contains Fioravanti's plea to the Royal Protomedicato, answering to the charge of practicing medicine illegally. By then, of course, the accusation was familiar to him, but behind the affair lay powerful enemies and accusations of heinous crimes. This time Fioravanti stood accused of having poisoned a servant of one of the king's courtiers with his cures. The man who would judge him was his bitter enemy, Prince Carlos's personal physician Don Diego Olivares. If previously Fioravanti could brush aside accusations of malpractice with bravado and bold challenges, this time he was in real trouble.

The Real Tribunal del Protomedicato, or Royal Protomedicato, was established in 1477 by the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabela. It was the main legal body for the control of the medical professions in the Spanish Empire. The tribunal's reach extended to all of the Spanish territories, from Madrid to Mexico and from the Kingdom of Naples to the Duchy of Milan. Although the institution underwent a number of changes under Charles V and Philip II, when Fioravanti lived in Spain the Royal Protomedicato in Castile consisted of a Protomédico (selected from the royal family's personal medical staff) and a tribunal of three alcaldes, or examiners, who were chosen from among the court physicians. The tribunal's function was to examine and license all medical practitioners in the realm, whether physicians, surgeons, or apothecaries. The Protomedicato's purpose was to ensure the quality of medical care, and to root out dangerous and untrained practitioners. By setting minimum standards and examining candidates for the title of physician, the Real Protomedicato hoped to raise the quality of practitioners. Similar bodies were established throughout the Spanish Empire, in Lima and Mexico City, for example.\[61\] The Spanish Royal Protomedicato was the first world-wide system of medical regulation.

Regrettably, the archives of the Castilian Real Tribunal del Protomedicato were destroyed in a fire during the Spanish Civil War. Lacking records, it is difficult to know what actually took place at individual examinations and appeals before the board. Although the laws and decrees under which the Royal Protomedicato operated are known, in themselves they tell us little about how individuals charged with infractions might have defended themselves.\[62\] Fioravanti's original appeal presumably was destroyed during the 1939 fire. By chance, he kept a copy, and that is the document that is preserved in the British Library. Although it cannot have been a typical appeal - nothing about Fiora-

\[61\] J. Tate Lanning, The Royal Protomedicato in the Spanish Empire (Durham, 1985).

\[62\] Miguel Eugenio Muñoz, Recopilacion de las leyes, pragmaticas, reales, decretos, y acuerdos del Real Proto-Medicato (Valencia, 1851).
Fioravanti faced six charges. The first was that, not having a license from the Protomedicato, he had been practicing medicine without proper authorization. The Royal Protomedicato strictly forbade unlicensed practitioners and fined them heavily: the penalty for practicing without a license was a stiff 6,000 maravedís.

In the second place, Fioravanti relates, “I am charged with making harmful cures with my medicaments, and with using lethal medicine to poison Tristan de la Torre’s servant.” Tristan’s identity is uncertain, but it seems clear from the document that he was a well-connected member of the court.

The third accusation was that Fioravanti did not have the proper academic titles to practice medicine. According to Castilian law, only those who had graduated from one of the three Castilian universities, Valladolid, Salamanca, or Alcalá, were legally authorized to practice medicine in the Kingdom of Castile. In addition, they had to pass an examination administered by the Protomedicato.

The fourth charge against Fioravanti was that he had made his own drugs in his home and had used them to treat his patients, whereas Castilian law prohibited anyone but pharmacists from making and selling drugs.

The last charge accused Fioravanti, rather vaguely, of practicing surgery “against the precepts of the authorities.” It was the one charge that gave Fioravanti the opportunity to respond with an extended discourse on his ‘new way of healing.’

Fioravanti’s appeal was addressed to the Royal Protomedico, who at the time was Diego Olivares. A sworn enemy of the alchemists who were increasingly gaining favor with the king, Olivares must have seen the death of Tristan de la Torre’s servant as an opportunity to get rid of one of the most famous foreign alchemists in Philip’s court. By discrediting Fioravanti’s ‘new way of healing,’ he would disgrace the alchemists.

It is clear from Fioravanti’s manuscript that he countered the charges against him with a spirited defense, on one hand pleading ignorance of...
the laws and on the other arguing that, even if he did break the law, it was for the good of the realm, since the 'new way of healing' was superior to the methods practiced by the Spanish physicians. "I knew nothing of these laws," he insisted. "If I broke any law, it's because I'm a foreigner newly arrived in these parts, and I'm not familiar with the laws of the land." Of course, he was being disingenuous. With his experience, it seems incredible that he did not assume that such laws prevailed in Spain as they did in Spanish Italy, with which he was intimately familiar. Did he feel that his proximity to the court would protect him? Did he assume that Philip's known sympathy for the alchemists would clear his name? Whatever went through Fioravanti's mind, the combative tone of his defense bares witness to a hubris of monumental proportions.

Fioravanti responded to the remaining charges in his customary way: he went on the attack, boldly proclaiming that his methods were superior to those of the Spanish physicians, because his ways were nature's ways. "If Tristan's servant died while in my care, it wasn't because of the way I treated him but because of his grave and mortal illness, and because afterwards he was treated by other doctors who didn't understand his sickness and applied remedies contrary to mine." Death is natural. Dying and curing are in God's hands, not in the hands of doctors or in the power of drugs. To believe otherwise is contrary to the Holy Catholic Faith.

As for his titles, he could truthfully say that his Bologna medical degree came from one of Europe's most respected medical schools, even if it was Italian and not Castilian. When the Protomedicato charged that he was ignorant of Latin, evidence that his degree could not be legitimate, Fioravanti responded that "speaking in Latin is no proof that you know medicine or how to heal." All of the authorities wrote in their mother tongues, Hippocrates and Galen in Greek, Avicenna in Arabic, and so on. "For medicine originates not in books but in experience, which various authors later wrote down in their own language and not in Latin. Afterwards their books were translated from Arabic and Greek into Latin, because in those times the Latin language was more common and universal."

To the accusation that he made medicines in his own house, contrary to the law forbidding anyone but pharmacists from making drugs, Fioravanti responded with a discourse on the methods and superiority of the 'new way of healing,' pitting himself squarely against the 'Arabists' who dominated Spanish medicine. "My method is founded upon the true doctrine of Hippocrates, which Avicenna understood poorly. But the moderns, such as Ramon Lull, Arnald of Villanova, Abacue the Jew, Paracelsus, Cornelius Celsus, and Philip Ulstadius, understood it well and used the
same methods.” Fioravanti’s ‘moderns’ were all connected to the tradi-
tion of iatrochemistry, or alchemical medicine. Paracelsus had by then
become the dominant figure in the movement, but his works arrived in
Italy too late to have had any significant influence on Fioravanti. To the
Bologna surgeon, Paracelsus was a brand name, not an influence. Fio-
rvanti’s style of alchemy went straight back to the fourteenth-century
tradition of distilling quintessences, a way of purifying medicines, sepa-
rating the pharmaceutical ‘spirit’ from the murky concoctions that con-
stituted Renaissance drugs.

With his feet firmly planted in the pseudo-Lullist alchemical tradition,
Fioravanti proceeded to launch an attack on the Spanish apothecaries,
saying that they used poor distillation techniques and outdated equip-
ment that ruined the process. His method was superior to the Spanish
practice, he asserted, because it is “approved by the ancient and modern
writers on medicine and is demonstrated by experience.” That is why
his drugs had such “miraculous effects in evacuating peccant and super-
fluous humors,” which they do “by an occult virtue of nature.” Appealing
to experience and the authority of ‘the moderns,’ Fioravanti brashly
argued that the superiority of his medicines should acquit him of break-
ing the letter of Spanish law.

In his defense, Fioravanti vigorously defended his surgical practice
against the charge that he worked contrary to the precepts of the author-
ities. “My method conforms to nature and natural reason,” he declared.
The “common way” of treating wounds, he went on, was to use diet and
to open the wounds by palpating them, both of which are contrary to
nature. “The intention of nature is to consolidate and join the wound as
it was before.” This Fioravanti did by using wound balsams (“licores con-
solidativos”) made from purified quintessences, chief amongst which
was his famous balsamo artificiale.

The outcome of the proceeding is not known. However, it is difficult to
believe that the court gave Fioravanti permission to, as he impertinently
demanded, “practice my method freely anywhere in the realm.” Whatever
records might have existed concerning the trial were destroyed in the
fire of 1939; very likely, we shall never know. He was plainIy guilty of at
least two of the charges, namely of practicing without a degree from a

65 Reference here is to the alchemical corpus of pseudo-Ramon Lull and pseudo-Arnold of
Villanova. The identity of ‘Abacuc the Jew’ is uncertain; possibly the name refers to the
‘Abacuc’ quoted in Guy de Montanor’s Scala sapientiae, in Jean-Jacques Manget, Bibliotheca
chemica curiosa (Geneva, 1702), 2:134-147. Abacuc is quoted in the chapter on separatio on
pp. 139-40 as follows: “Dicit enim Abakuc: Ignis est terra nigra in fundo vasis relicta, quae
dum nigra fuerit, corrumpit. Ergo calcinatur ipsa ut candescat, et suum oleum omnino
recedat, ita quod ab omni pinguedine privetur, ne ad bibendi opere impediatur, ut fiat sicca
ignea, quae prius humida frigida fuit, ut terra.” (I am grateful to Michela Peireira for this refe-
rence).
Spanish university and of manufacturing his own medicines rather than having them made by pharmacists. Whatever rationale he might have offered in his defense, it is difficult to believe that the Protomedicato would have exonerated him of these charges. Moreover, Olivares's aim was to rid the court of foreign alchemists, who "who come in through the back door and leave through the front." Surely he would have slapped Fioravanti with a heavy fine and used his influence to make Fioravanti unwelcome at the court. Whatever the outcome might have been, not long after the trial Fioravanti returned to Italy and settled in Naples, where he recorded his memories of his experiences in Spain in _Della fisica._

Fioravanti's humiliation was a triumph for Olivares and a setback for the proponents of alchemical medicine. Yet while Olivares could claim a temporary victory, after his death in 1584 the pendulum swung back in favor of the alchemists. Francisco Valles, the king's most trusted physician and a devotee of alchemy, was appointed Protomedico. Valles vigorously promoted Philip's design to manufacture all the alchemical medicines described by pseudo-Ramon Lull. In 1585, a gigantic distillation laboratory was built at the royal retreat in El Escorial. Nor was Fioravanti the last of the foreign alchemists invited to the royal court. In 1579, Philip invited a Neapolitan, Giovanni Vincenzo Forte, to come to the court in order to "prepare quintessences according to the practice of Ramon Lull for the health of the human body." In addition to Italians like Fioravanti and Forte, Catholic scientists from Protestant countries came to escape religious persecution as well as to continue their research in the Royal Pharmacy (Real Botica), the greatest pharmaceutical laboratory in the world. One of the exiles, the Irish poet Richard Stanyhurst, composed an alchemical tract, _Toque de Alquimia,_ which captures the excitement and the expectation that the scientific community still felt for the chemical philosophy of nature.

Although the date of Fioravanti's departure from Spain is not known, we know from a document in the Florentine archive that he was in Italy by August, 1577, when he penned a letter to Grand Duke Cosimo d'Medici from Rome promising to reveal "un' secreto col quale in breve tempo potrà cavare ogni anno deli suoi stati di Toscana buona quantità di denari, et questo senza metere balzelli ne nisuna sorte di graveza a sudi-

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66 Qu. Rey Bueno, _Los señores del fuego_, 53: "Estos estrangeros entran por la manga y salen por el cabezon."

67 On Valles's career and publications, see ibid, 91-8.


ti suoi ma solamente racore alcune cose perdute, senza che giamai per­
sona viva habbi causa di potersi dolere in modo alcuno" —on condition
that he receive six percent of the profits from the venture. He was in
Naples in 1582 writing the dedication of Della fisica to Philip II, but
disappears from the historical record not long afterwards. The exact
date of his death is not known. The traditional date, 1588, has so far
not been documented from any contemporary source.

Appendix

Fioravanti's Plea to the Real Tribunal del Protomedicato, 1577

Fioravanti's appeal to the Royal Protomedicato is contained in the British
Library, Additional Manuscript 28.353, folios 57-61. The manuscript is
undated, although we know from external evidence that the trial took
place in 1577. A copy of an original addressed to Diego Olivares, the
Royal Protomedicato, the manuscript is composed in a highly formal
and legalistic Castilian and written in a notary's hand. Although prob­
ably transcribed by a scribe or civil lawyer, its content was evidently
dictated by Fioravanti: even in Spanish, the Bologna surgeon's combat­
tive voice is unmistakable. As the work is important both as a summary
of Fioravanti's medical ideas and as one of the few surviving documents
from the Royal Protomedicato of Castile during this period, it is pub­
lished in full here.

Here I wish to record my deep gratitude to María Luz López Terrada
(Instituto de Historia de la Ciencia y Documentación, Universitat de
València) for her invaluable assistance in transcribing this manuscript,
and for much helpful information about early modern Spanish medicine
and the Royal Protomedicato. I would also like to thank Miguel López
Pérez and Mar Rey Bueno (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), for
helping to clarify details about the manuscript and its significance.

British Library, Add. MS 28.353, fols. 57-61 (undated)

Copia del memorial que el Fioravanti dio al doctor Olivarez.

[1] IllustriSSime Señor:

El Doctor Leonardo Fiereavanti, respondiendo a las acusaciones contra
mi puestas por Martin Ramon fiscal que se dice ser de su audiencia y a

70 Archivio di Stato, Florence, Medici del Principato, 703, fols 106r-107r.
71 Page numbers of the original manuscript are indicated in brackets.
lo por el contra mi allegado. Digo que sin embargo de lo en contrario dicho y de las dichas denunciaciones. Vuestra merced debe absolver y dar por libre y mandar que yo pueda libremente curar en todas las partes que me hallare en estos reynos de su jurisdiccion lo primero por lo general que se suele decir y allegar que aqui por expresado. Lo otro porque en mis curas yo no he cometido delitto alguno y si yo hubiese excedido de la ley que debe haber en estos reynos en haber curado sin aprobachion de vuestra merced. Esto habria sido por ser como soy extranjero y nuevamente venido en esta corte por servicio de su Magestad de tres meses a esta parte y no saber ni tener noticia de las dichas leyes y haberseme en si mandado de los diputados de su Magestad y de los señores del Consejo de Estado que curase e hizesse experiencia de lo que habia propuesto por servicio de su Magestad. Y por entender que teniendo mis titulos de Doctor en fisica y cirugia de Colegios y Universidades tan famosas y aprobadas como es la de Boloña y Napolis que no seria menester otra licencia y tambien por estar en costumbre y posesion de cuarenta anos a esta parte y mas, y que curando y haciendo bien a pobres por amor de Dios a los mas dellos que he curado que no seria menester la licencia de suerte que si en tal caso hubiese errado ha sido por ignorancia de no saber las dichas leyes y por las causas arriba dichas y en cuanto a este particular me someto a la correpcion de vuestra merced y si necesario es le pido la dicha licencia con la decencia que conviene y debo.

Y en cuanto al imputarseme yo haber hecho malas curas y dañado con mis medicamentos a algunos particulares esto con verdad no se hallara y lo contrario es verdad como parece por esta informacion que presento y juro. Por la qual constara las muchas y muy buenas curas que en esta villa he hecho y si el creado de Tristan de la Torre murio. Esto no fue por los remedios y medicamentos que yo le di, sino por la grave y mortal dolencia que tenia y por haberse despues curado con otros medicos que quicas no entendieron su dolencia le curaron y apropiaron remedios contrarios porque con el propio medicamento que yo le cure con el mismo he curado en esta villa y otras partes muy muchas de la mesma dolencia y de la misma calidad y complision y entiendo que aunque la dicha dolencia era grave y mortal: que si el suso dicho hubiera continuado mis medicamentos: por ser el moço y los dichos medicamentos confortativos que tan bien se hubiera curado. Empero como despues de haberlo curado no me llamaron ni jamas me enviaron a dezir cosa alguna ni de la operacion que habia hecho el medicamento que yo le havia dado. No es maravilla que alcabo de diez o quinze dias se moriese pues el morir es natural, y el morir y el curar esta en la mano de Dios y no de los medicos y fuerza de medicinas: porque si ansi fuesse los hombres no reconocieran en este caso a Dios nuestro señor y ternian [sic] a los medicos por Dios es en la tierra y siendo los hombres mortales necesaria cosa es que mueran cuando es llegada la hora. Dios cumpla su voluntad mas no porque
cada día mueran se ha de atribuir culpa a los médicos que los curan que hacen todo lo que pueden por darles salud cuanto mas que los medicamentos que yo le apropié fueron canonicamente apropiados conforme a su dolencia y calidad y complesion.

Y en cuanto al redarquir mis titulos y privilegios de falso por haber yo dicho que no sabia latin que pues respondiendo que no sabiendo latin que las dichas universidades y colegios no me habrian dado los dichos privilegios y que por lo consequente son falsos. Digo que los dichos titulos y privilegios son buenos, ciertos y verdaderos como de la inspeccion dellos paresçe y por el mismo no se me debia preguntar si sabia latin pues tenia presentado los dichos mis titulos por do estaba si sabia latin, o no, y constaba haberseme concedido precediendo examen y nemine descrepante por haber en mi persona hallado doctrina y experiencia y nuevo modo y mas acertado de curar que el que los antigos patriarcas de la medicina usaron y si en mi confesion dije que no sabia Latin; no fue porque yo realmente no supiesse entender y hablar Latin: pues lo se y a la razon hablaba en latin mas fue para dar a entender que para saber medicina y saber curar no era menester saberlo como en mi libros he escrito, probado y sustentado y sustentare siempre que para saber medicina no es de escencia saber latin pues la medicina no fue escrita si no en propia lingua materna por los que la inventaron y pusieron por escrito como fue Ipocrates, Avicena y Galeno, y otros que escribieron en arabigo y griego y no en latin; pues los medicamentos y medicinas no tuvieron origen si no de las experiencias las quales habiendo puesto por escrito de diversos autores en su propia habla; se vino después a recopilar y juntar de los dichos autores que la escribieron en su propia lengua materna y no en latin y si despues se traduxo de arabigo y griego en latin fue como vuestra merced bien sabe porque en aquel tiempo la lengua latina era más comun y universal y ansi yo dixe verdad que no sabia latin ni lo habia estudiado para saber medicina; pues para saber-la no es menester; y aunque la medicina no se puede saber ni alcanzar sin saber filosofia no por esto se sigue que no pueda ser uno filosofo y saber filosofia sin saber latin. Pues filosofo no es otra cosa mas que por razon natural venia conocimiento de las operaciones de naturaleza en las cosas elementadas [sic] y con aquellas conocer los efectos por sus propias causas, lo qual se puede muy bien saber y alcanzar sin latin; pues los primeros que fueron filosofos no alcanzaron filosofia por libros latinos si no por la horden ya dicha ny lo que alcanzaron lo escribieron en latin. Y ansi los dichos colegios visto mi doctrina y inteligencia y con ellas la experiencia que es madre de la sabiduria en esta profesion, me concedieron los dichos titulos y privilegios los cuales como tengo dicho son ciertos y verdaderos y como tales hago presentacion de ellos y juro.
Y en cuanto al nuevo modo de curar con nuevos medicamentos hechos de mi invencion y en my casa lo confieso y digo que el verdadero modo de curar ansi en fisica como en ~erugia, es el que tengo escrito en mis libros, el qual modo es fundado y tomado de la doctrina de Ipocrates y mal entendida de Avicena y bien de otros modernos como de Raymundo Lulo, de Arnaldo de Villa Nova, de Abacue hebreo, de Theofrasto Paracelso, de Cornelio Celso, de Felipe Valtadio y de otros que tuvieron la misma horden porque como vuestra merced muy mejor sabe Ipocrates dixo que *extrema mala morba, extremis medicamentis sunt curanda*; la qual proposicion fue mal entendida y mal interpretada de Avicena y mal puesta en praction de sus seguaçes porque las dolencias estremas y graves y de mala calidad con medicinas fuertes y graves y estremos se han de curar y no por las ordinarias y leves y pues los medicamentos de comun consentimiento se han de hacer de animales, o minerales, o vegetales y de los tres dichos aquellos se haran mejores que de los mas perfectos fueren hechas y sacados. Cierta cosa es que sin comparacion seran mejores medicamentos aquellos que se sacaron de animales mas que de minerales y que por lo consiguiente mejor seran los que se sacaren de animales que aquellos que se sacaren de vegetales; porque son algunos de los minerales incorruptibles como es el oro y la plata y el azogue y ansi como en los animales el hombre exceda a todos en perfeccion y los tres dichos minerales a todos los otros minerales y medios minerales y el licor de la miel y vino y açeite a los demas vegetables [sic] ansi mismo los medicamentos que fueren sacados de los suso dichos sin comparacion seran mas perfectos y de mayor efecto que los ordenados y canonizados de los dichos autores antiguos que los compusieron de cosas menos perfectas por no haber alcanzado esta filosofia y modo de curar. Y muy bien sabe vuestra merced que todos concuren que *simile juvantur a suo simili et ipsum apetit*, y sierto es ansi claro se nos da a entender que si habemos de curar los ojos de alguno mejor los curaremos con otros ojos de animales conforme a la orden de Abecue hebreo que tanto alcanzo y supo y de los otros arriba dichos y que si tenemos de curar una pierna, o brazo, o otro miembro que mejor lo curaremos con medicamentos sacados de otros semejantes miembros de otros animales cuando del perfecto no se podiese haber a lo menos de los que fueren mas semejantes a el que no de çumo de hierbas, o otros medicamentos. Tambien es comun proposicion de todos los antigos medicos que *natura hominis gravata semper fortificanda agenda et roboranda*. Y pues esto es ansi y el vigor y fuerza de naturaleza consiste en la sangre, claro esta que sacandola en todas enfermedades que tiene agravada naturaleza por las partes extremas; por la autoridad de Galeno que no [4] entendio lo que dixo y quiso decir Ipocrates quando dicho que *extremis morbis estrema remedia sunt adhibenda*; que no se guarda el precepto y que se hierra la cura porque con sacar la sangre se viene a debilitar la virtud de naturaleza y
que curar contra su mismo parecer. También es cosa sin duda que todas las dolencias que al cuerpo humano puedan venir naturalmente tienen origen y causa y se engendran de la corrupción del cibo y mantenimiento que cotidianamente se hace en estómago donde con el discurso del tiempo se viene a recojer y a sobrepasar el humor pecante a las otras tres calidades de humores que le sostienen mientras entre sí no hay extensión y sobrepunanza del uno al otro y así naturaleza queriendo desagrar enbia y expelle el tal humor maligno por diversas partes del cuerpo y causa diversas enfermedades. Una sola causa, y muchas veces se bien a injicionar la sangre de lo cual suceden fiebres agudas pestilenciales y dolor de costado y taurarillo, y antes que al cuerpo humano y causa tantas especies de enfermedades dañando el hígado libianos, y bajo y otros interiores y exteriores el cual sino se expelle luego del dicho estómago y venas a el mas cercanas que son las traqueas [in margin: venas de la garganta] y no de las extremas que nunca se podrá hacer cura tan acertada y pronta como será evacuar luego las traqueas que son mas cercanas y luego el estómago con vomitos; pues el mal no está en el ventrículo ni en los intestinos ni en las venas exteriores y con menos peligro y trabajo del enfermo se expelle por vomitos que por suceso; porque por vomito en una hora, o media se expelle y por suceso es menester primero con xaraves ir preparando los humores y después expellerlos con purgas, y pasan tantos días con tanto daño del paciente y a las veces cuanto el humor es maligno y de mala calidad resiste a los xaraves y purgas y primero mata el enfermo antes que se expella por suceso y de aquí viene que en humores malignos mueren tantos los cuales no morirán ni luego se expelisser por vomito a quella mala calidad ponsoñosa que está en el estómago sin sangrar ni purgar enflaqueze naturaleza. Pues por experiencia cada día se ha visto que cuando alguno se libra queda tan desflaquezido y debilitado que por un mes mas no puede volver en sí y así se la orden que yo he tenido y tengo encurar las enfermedades que tienen causa intrínsecas ha sido evacuar el uno y el otro por vomito y sangría en las traqueas [in margin: venas de la garganta] ha sido y es la verdadera orden y racional que se debe tener y guardar en especial en fiebres malignas que tienen causa intrínseca, pues con la experiencia se comprueba como podra vuestra merced ver de las muchas curas que en esta corte he hecho en diversas enfermedades y en fiebres malignas de taurarillo que con solo hacer vomitar y darles a beber el licor contra veneno; en cuatro días se han curado sin sangrarlos ni hacer otra cosa lo cual podra vuestra merced ver de la dicha información y con la misma orden he curado muchas enfermedades vie-
Y en cuanto al haber curado y curar con medicamentos hechos de mi invencion y en mi casa contra la orden y leyes de estos reynos. Digo que como extranjero y recién venido en esta corte nunca tuve ni he tenido noticia de tal orden y así no sabiendo nada delito he cometido; pues los medicamentos con que he curado y curo los he sacado y saco de los materiales aprobados de los patriarcas de la medicina que con animales, minerales y vegetales, y fuera de ello no se hallara con verdad yo hubiera hecho ni ordinado hacer medicamento alguno, y si yo no me he servido de los que aquí tienen los boticarios, ha sido porque ellos no tienen semejantes medicamentos ni tienen noticia de ellos ni los sabrian hacer, pues todos los medicamentos que yo uso son sacados por distilaciones en basos de vidrios, o vidriados y no en basos minerales corroídos y de mala calidad como son las alquitaras que aquí tienen en uso, la cual orden es reprobada de los antiguos y modernos escritores de medicina y de experiencia lo muestra, pues allende de los malos efectos que hacen todas las aquas destilladas que sacan por alquitaras y que se corrompen y pudren por no ser sacadas con basos de vidrio por lo cual exhalan los espiritus incorruptibles y sostanciales y toman y reciben en si la calidad corrosiba del metal que es causa de la su corrosión y putrefaccion de lo cual resulta que los medicamentos no hacen el efecto que debrían como vuestra merced muy bien sabe y entiende. Lo otro porque habiendo yo propuesto a su magestad que le serviría en Italia en curar su armada real y ejército de tres dolencias que lo mas del tiempo tienen maltrado uno y lo otro como es de heridas, fiebres pestilenciales y putridas, y de cámaras de sangre, y habiendo venido de Italia para hacer la experiencia y habiendoome el Consejo de Estado y las confidencias y diputados por su magestad; mandando que hiciese la experiencia con los dichos medicamentos: y no hallándolos aquí ni sabiéndolos hacer necesariamente [6] los avía demandar hacer y hacerlos yo mismo en mi casa para con ellos hacer la dicha experiencia como he hecho y consta por la dicha informacion mandada tomar por mandato del Señor Alcalde Ortega.72 Los quales dichos mis medicamentos hacen milagrosos efectos en ebacuaciones de humores pecantes y superfuisos por oculta virtud de naturaleza aptos a expeller los pecantes y no otros por ser tan perfectos y la mayor parte de ellos destilados, y la pura sustancia sacada de animales, minerales y vegetales y por ser hechos espirituales y penetrantes y tener en si la dicha oculta propiedad de naturaleza. Los quales quanto

sean mejores que los que por otra orden hasta que se han hechos se dexa muy bien entender de qualquier mediano juicio quanto mas del de vuestra merced de tan excelente y exquisita inteligencia como muy mejor que yo lo entiendo y lo entienden todos los de mas excelentes medicos de esta corte y la experiencia lo testifica y saben que si lo dexan de obrar y ordenar es por no estar en uso la confecion y composicion de ellos y por no saberlos los boticarios hacer como ya tengo dicho.

Y en quanto a decir que yo he curado y curo con venenos y ponsoñas al dicho fiscal no esta en lo cierto: antes lo contrario es verdad, pues la experiencia que yo hecho testifica lo contrario y que son medicamentos que directamente son contra veneno y defienden de la ponsoña de la hierba que dicen de ballesteros y curan los heridos con hierro emponçoñado de la tal ponsoña como consta de la experiencia que por orden de su magestad he hecho en esta Real Corte, por lo qual consta haber tomado hierro salvo que como persona no experimentada y que no es de la profesion de medicina entendiessse que obrar minerales como yo los obro y acostumbro a obrar: es usar ponsoña y veneno mas como vuestra merced muy mejor sabe que todos los minerales y medios minerales son producidos de naturaleza para servicio del hombre y engendrados de exalaciones y vapores de la tierra que los antiguos filosofos llaman sulfur y arger [sic] vivo que por continua conversion se concentran en la tierra y algunos de ellos son de su natura incorruptibles y los otros de fuerte complision y menos corruptibles que otros materiales animales y vegetales y que estos se devenian en tres partes, en spiritus adurentes, media sustancia y tierra sulfurea, y corrosiba, y en media sustancia incorruptibles y que separada de ellos los spiritus adurentes y calidad sulfurea y tierra corrosiba que dara la dicha media sustancia de cada uno de ellos incorruptible vivificatiba y conservativabila del genero humano por oculta propiedad de naturaleza. Y pues esto es ani, con muy mal titulo se podra decir ponsoña y veneno: si bien se podra con muy justo decir contraveneno; pues en efecto lo son y la experiencia lo muestra a ojos vista, pues con el licor sacado de ellos se cura la ponsoña de la dicha hierba [7] y con ellos se defiende el cuerpo humano del veneno de la ponsoña de la peste y tavardillo como se ve por la experiencia y tanto mas perfecta cuanto se es sacada de cuerpos mas perfectos, e incorruptibles, como es del oro y arger [sic] vivo, padre y primera materia de todos los demas minerales y medios minerales y ansi no hay que responder acerca deste particular mas de que si fuese veneno no harian contrarios efectos como lo hacen: pues curan las enfermedades incurables respecto a los otros medicamentos y aquellas que con los dichos medicamentos no se pueden curar como consta de la experiencia que est omnium rerum magistra quanto mas que si el bulgo sopiesse sacar y separar solo la media sustancia del arger [sic] vivo y separarla de sus spiritus adurentes y tierras y calidad sulfurea y corrosiba como tengo dicho;
entiendo cierto que no tendría necesidad para de usar y conservar de otros medicamentos ni médicos: pues es acto nacido y creado de naturaleza, por propiedad oculta para vivificar y acrecentar la virtud vegetativa no solo de los animales y en especial del hombre, empero de los metales y por esto fue dicho de filósofos argen vivo vivo vivificando. Y porque en donde el esta no sufre ni compadece cerca de sí corrupción o putrefacción y cosa que destruya la vida humana como de la experiencia se puede ver. Es verdad y no lo niego que tomado así crudo sin preparación y como cierto fugitivo que lo llamaron los filósofos y no hecho domestico y separado de los dichos espíritus y calidad sulfurea que no sea corutibo y violento y quanto sea verdad se me ha de creer a la experiencia que es la sabiduría de las cosas en esta profesión: y así confieso que mis medicamentos no son mas que liques y quintas esencias sacadas de materiales animales, minerales y vegetales y la pura sustancia de ellos y que aunque la orden de curar parezca en la física y cirugía contraria a la que tuvo Avicenna y Galeno no lo es: porque observo los mismos preceptos que ellos mal entendieron y peor se han observado de los médicos modernos.

Y en cuanto a la cirugía aunque yo curo y mando curar los apostemados y heridos contra al precepto de los ya dichos autores y el abuso que hoy acostumbra por el interes [intiesse?] y codicia humana. Mi orden es conforme a naturaleza y a razón natural que es a lo que los médicos y cirujanos deben mas atender porque el intento del médico ha de ser fortificar y corroborar naturaleza que por accidente padece y esta debilitada y quien otra cosa hace no esta en lo cierto. Y estoy para decir que mira mas al particular interes es propio que al daño del [8] enfermo y herido; porque devilitar naturaleza y no conformarse con su intento y operación es hacer contra el precepto y intento que se debia tener aquí comúnmente así en heridos de cabeza como de otros miembros y contusiones procurar y dar dos cosas. La una dieta. Las otra tener abiertas las heridas con muchas mechas y entrambas cosas son contrarias a su intento de naturaleza; porque estando ya debilitada naturaleza de la efusión de la sangre e inzision de heridas y dando al herido la dieta esta claro que va contra el prectetto y su propio intento que debiera fortificar naturaleza y así mismo va contra el intento de naturaleza teniendo como tienen las heridas abiertas con mechas y tantas, pues la intención de naturaleza es de consolidar y juntar como primero estaba antes de herido y a este hice rro se da una sofistic color con decir que así se ha de hacer porque no le cause alteracion y la putrefacción se haya penetrante sin mirar que dando al paciente dieta le viene mas a debilitar y que estando debil y flaco con mas dificultad y mas tiempo se cura que con el tiempo se puede sejeder nuevo accidente y peligrar el herido y siendo intento de naturaleza de cerrar luego la herida, teniendo la abierta y entrando el aire aliento y ambiente, vienen accidentes parasismos y dolores grandes y
pasan peligro de la vida por chica que sea la herida especialmente si es en la cabeza o en partes nerviosas y cartilaginosas y mas calurosas y esta orden de curar es muy mala y estoy para decir que se ha introducido para hacer largas curas. Yo he curado y curo conformandome con naturaleza y lo primero procuro que el herido coma y beva bien, y use los mismos mantenimientos que primero usava pues antes de herido con aquellos se hallava fuerte y regio y sano. Lo segundo cosa y juntar luego los heridas y apropiarles licores consolidativos y sin corrupción sacados y destilados de los dichos tres materiales, animales, minerales y vegetales. Los quales como son quintas essencias incorruptibles y sin corrupción luego a limpiar la herida y la defienden que en ella no se engendre putrefacion y corrupción que es causa de dolor y parasismo y ansi luego como yo las curo aunque el herido tuviese mucho dolor en ella; los dichos mis medicamentos por ser puros y sin corrupción las alimiapan y quitan el dolor y naturaleza estando robusta y fuerte la cierra y consolida con mucha presteza que pareze milagro; lo que naturalmente no puedan hacer los otros medicamentos por ser corruptibles y tener en si corrupción; por lo qual no pueden alimiapan siendo ellos sucios y esto podra vuestra merced mandar ver de las curas que yo he hecho y mandado hacer con solo mis medicamentos conforme a lo que requiere naturaleza; he curado y curo apostemas y otros males tocantes a la cirugía con remover luego la causa intrinsicas de la tal postema que es lo que se debia hacer de principio y despues curado la herida con las mismas distilaciones y quintas essencias sacadas de miembros semejantes a los que padescen, los quales como son puros e incorruptibles y penetrantes es fuerza natural que se han de curar con presteza como yo tengo declarado y provado en mys libros y experienzia lo aprueba que es a quien se debe dar credito y no debe esto paraçer extrañó que un miembro cure otro antes mejor que ninguno otro medicamento extrañó, pues es proposicion comunemente aprobada, quod omnes simile suum apetit simile est juvantur a suo simili de aqui vino a decir Abacue hebreo que en la libraria de Eduardo Rey que fue de Ingliterra se guardaba por libro sacro y divino uno que tratando de la quinta essencia de la sangre humana decia que un hombre muerto y desmembrado valia mas que diez mill vivos para la salud humana y este mismo efecto hacen los otros animales: y tanto mejor quanto mas se acercan a la naturaleza y calidad del hombre, y por esto mi nuevo modo de curar en la una y la otra facultad y los medicamentos hechos por la dicha orden son los ciertos y verdaderos y razionales como tengo dicho, y aprovados de la experienzia y quien no lo quisiere creer a la prueba y experienzia me remito; lo mismo podria decir de los medicamentos sacados de los materiales minerales y vegetables y lo dexo por entender que vuestra merced muy mejor que yo lo entiende y sabe y por no ser mas prolixo por todo lo cual y por lo que del proceso resulta en mi favor ansi en el hecho como en el derecho a
vuestra merced pido y suplico me mande absolver y dar por libre de lo en contrario pedido y mande aprobar la dicha orden y modo de curar en la una y otra facultad de física y cirugía y los dichos medicamentos y que el poco tiempo que hubiere de estar en estas partes pueda libremente curar con los dichos medicamentos como perfectos y razonables conforme a justicia lo cual pido y consta y para ello.