

Doctoral Diploma in Philosophy and Medicine from the University of Padua
In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Italy, Padua, dated November 17, 1628

6 folios on parchment, complete, single quire of six leaves, written in a calligraphic italic script on twenty-one lines, majuscules within the text in gold, decorative capitals in blue and gold, text pages framed with two sets of triple fillets in blue and gold, one four-line gold initial, surrounded by delicate vine and leaves in gold, in a double blue and gold frame, full-page illuminated frontispiece with a large gold historiated initial depicting the Virgin and Child, surrounded by six heraldic shields, all set within a floral border, in excellent condition. Unbound. Dimensions 230 x 167 mm.

Doctoral diplomas from the Northern Italian universities such as this one were proud symbols of the new graduate's place in society. This doctoral diploma in medicine and philosophy from the University of Padua – the most important medical school in Europe in the early seventeenth century -- is copied in an elegant script and includes a full-page illuminated frontispiece. Diplomas from Padua and other northern Italian universities are a significant continuation of the Renaissance tradition of manuscript illumination into the early modern period.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied and illuminated in Padua, and issued on November 17, 1628;
2. European private collection.

TEXT

f. 1, full page illuminated frontispiece with an historiated initial of the Virgin and Child and six heraldic shields; at the top, the coat of arms of Lorenzo Magalotti (1568-1644), cardinal (and relative) under Pope Urban VIII (Pope from 1623-1644) and bishop of Ferrara from 1628 until his death, lettered "Praesidium et dulce decus/ Floret in asperis/ plebs tua laetabitur in te"; the arms below are presumably those of the recipient of the diploma, Cesare Monitus; the arms of his professors, Cesare Cremonini, Giovanni Domenico Sala, Giovanni Colle and Benedictus Silvaticus, are depicted on either side;

ff. 1v-6v, *In Christi nomine, Amen*, incipit, "Vniversis et singulis praesens hoc publicum Doctoratus Privilegium visuris, lecturis, et auditoris nos Camillus Pancetta Nobilis Saravallensis ... per illustrem D. Caesarem Monitvm ... sic itaque summa cum laude ... D. Caesar Monitus ad summum Doctoratus apicem Philosophiæ et Medicinae Deo fauente pervenit ... datum et actum Paduae in episcopali palatio in loco solito examinum anno a Christi Nativitate M DC XX IIX ... Die vero XVII Mensis Novembris ... ac praemissa testibus omnibus vocatis et rogatis," L[aus] D[eo]. O[ptimo] M[aximo].

This illuminated diploma granted to Cesare Monitus, son of Vincent, by Camillus Pancetta, Vicar General of the diocese, who signed it on f. 6v (partially erased; only "Camillus" remains), the doctorate in philosophy and medicine from the University of Padua. As was customary, the names of the professors who served as sponsor and co-sponsors for the diploma are listed by name: Cesare Cremonini (1550-1631), friend and sometimes rival of Galileo; Giovanni

Dominico Sala (1579-1649), and Benedictus Silvaticus (1575-1658), both famous for their brilliant teaching, and for their medical practice at the hospital of San Francesco (Sala was the author of an introductory medical textbook, *Ars Medica*, Venice, 1620); and Giovanni Colle (d. 1651).

The University of Padua, founded in 1222, was one of the oldest European universities and the second oldest in Italy. It originally taught law and theology, but in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it became known as well for medicine and astronomy. Its medical school pioneered clinical medicine at the nearby hospital of San Francesco and observations based on actual autopsies. By the late sixteenth century this availability of practical bedside training distinguished it from medical schools outside of Italy, and it attracted students from across Europe. Many foreign students would come for a year or two of practical training after their theoretical training at home.

Among its famous students and professors are the English physician William Harvey (1578-1657), the scientist Galileo, who held a chair in Physics there from 1592-1610, Nicolas of Cusa (1401-1464), Pietro Bembo (1470-1547), Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543), and Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564). Under the protection of the Republic of Venice, the University of Padua was known for its spirit of tolerance. Helena Lucretia Cornaro Piscopia (1646 – 1684), the first woman to obtain a doctorate in philosophy, graduated from the University of Padua in 1678.

The historical importance of the surviving Doctoral diplomas from Italian Universities in general, and in particular those from Padua, long neglected in scholarship, is now the subject of considerable academic interest, focusing on a broad range of topics, from their value as historical and institutional sources, to their interest as artifacts, studied for their binding, script and illumination. These diplomas, which survive in both private collections and archives, have been the subject of two important exhibitions with significant catalogues (Baldissin Molli, *et al.*, ed., 1998, and *Honor et meritus*, 2005), they are discussed in Mariani Canova's 1999 survey of Paduan Illumination, and have been the subject of numerous studies published in *Quaderni per la storia dell'università di Padova* (see Literature, below).

Illuminated diplomas in quarto format, usually illuminated and elaborately bound, appear c. 1580-90 in the Universities of Northern Italy, and continued into the nineteenth century; earlier diplomas were copied as large documents on flat sheets. This format has been compared to the Dogale from Venice (Padua was part of the Republic of Venice from 1495-1797).

LITERATURE

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