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[Gynecology]. A Compilation of Medical Treatises  
In Hebrew, manuscript on paper and parchment  
[northern Italy (?), c. 1415-25]

*iv + 63 + iv (collation i<sup>++1</sup>, ii<sup>18++1</sup>, iii<sup>18</sup>, iv<sup>18</sup>, v<sup>2++1</sup>) on paper and vellum (ff. 6, 7, 15, 16, 24, 25, 33, 34, 41, 42, 50, 51, 59, 61, 62), paper size 217 x 133 mm., vellum size 208 x 133 mm., two watermarks (compare to Briquet 3296: Cerf entier, Ferrara, 1406; Reggio-d'Emilia, 1407; Ferrara, 1407-20; Bologna, 1409-30; Pistoia, 1411-1417; Lucca, 1415; Rome, 1418; and Briquet 11662: Monts, montagnes ou collines, Florence, 1432), modern foliation in pencil with errors (ff. 39, 39A, 40), catchwords, written in Sephardic semicursive script in brown ink, single column text, 25 lines per page, text ruled in hard point, writing space 145 x 95 mm., marginalia in hand of primary scribe, marginal annotations and in text underlining in modern pencil on ff. 26rv, 27v, 29v, 30r-32r, 33v, 34v-35v, 36v, 37r, 40v, 44v, 46v, 49r, 50rv, 54v-59r, and 61r-62r, modern annotations in Hebrew written in brown ink and in pencil on recto side of rear flyleaf iv, all quires sewn to stubs as part of preservation, modern preservation and repairs to paper and vellum on all folios, f. 60 is a fragment and mounted, f. 59 has heavy staining affecting text, faded and worn text affecting legibility on ff. 1r-5v, 8, 17, 50r-51v, 60rv. Bound in modern green cloth with green morocco leather on spine and corners, gilt ornamentation and modern catalogue on spine. Flyleaves of cardstock and modern paper. Dimensions 228 x 168 mm.*

Exceptional medical compendium of medieval gynecology, including three texts in Hebrew of Muscio (who borrowed heavily from the Greek physician Soranus), of the celebrated woman physician Trotula of Salerno, and of an unedited work spuriously attributed to the Greek physician Galen. Also included are a still-unedited original Hebrew work on diseases of the genitalia and another on hemorrhoids. This manuscript occupies a central place in the study of the history of medicine, helping chart the exchange of knowledge between Latin, Greek, Arabic, and Hebrew cultures. No other extant Hebrew manuscript includes so many gynaecological texts.

## PROVENANCE

1. Watermarks suggest a dating just before the second quarter of the fifteenth century probably in northern Italy (or perhaps Spain or Provence) by German emigres writing in Sephardic script.
2. Solomon Hayyim Halberstam (1832-1900), his MS 253, stamped on spine, on inside front pastedown, and on ff. 1r and 62v. Polish scholar and bibliophile, Solomon Halberstam was a wealthy and avid collector and scholar of Hebrew manuscripts, including codices from Luzzato's estate and Zunz's private library.
3. Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885), his MS 440, stamped on spine, inside front pastedown, and written in modern pencil on recto of front flyleaf. Most famous English Jew of his time, Montefiore became a legend in his lifetime, fighting worldwide for the lives and rights of Jews. He founded after the death of his wife Judith Lady Montefiore a college in Ramsgate, which with the appointment of Haham Moses Gaster in 1887, acquired many manuscripts including the Halberstam Collection (see Hirschfeld, no. 440; and Steinschneider, 1883, pp. 102-112).
4. London, Jews' College, on deposit since 1899, as part of the Montefiore Endowment.

## TEXT

ff. 1r-15r, *Ma'amar be-Tehorim* (Treatise on Hemorrhoids) by Solomon be Joseph ibn Ayyub (without the author's short preface). Solomon was a Spanish physician lived at Beziers in the middle of the thirteenth century, who translated into Hebrew from the Arabic several works, including texts by Maimonides, Averroes, and Avicenna. This original treatise by Solomon is extant in ten other manuscripts, two of them dated in 1330 and 1342 and the others from the fourteenth and mainly fifteenth centuries. It is unpublished and unedited (see Steinschneider, 1893, p. 722).

ff. 15v-25r, *Zikhorn ba-Haliim[!] bi-kbeli herayon*, a record of the diseases occurring in the genitalia, written by an anonymous author. This manuscript is the only known copy of this text and is edited Barkai, pp. 109-144.

ff. 25v-53r, *Sefer Toledet* (Book on Generation), a Hebrew adaption of Muscio's work of *Gynaecia* on gynecology in the form of a dialogue between Dinah and her father. Muscio's sixth-century work, derived from a Greek text by the second-century physician Soranus, itemized the characteristics of a good midwife and the information she needed to manage normal births. He also addressed pathological conditions, including malpresentations of the fetus. The Hebrew version is extant in only three manuscripts, and the present manuscript

served as the basis for the critical edition, which used variants from two Vatican manuscripts (Cods. ebr. 360 and 366) (ed. Barkai with a French translation by Garel, 1991).

ff. 53v-59v, *Sefer ha-Em* (Book of the Womb), anonymous Hebrew translation of *De gynaeceis*, a work on gynecology spuriously attributed to Galen. This text is unedited and is extant in only two other manuscripts: Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Cod. Parm 2646 and Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Or. Ou. 1027 (see Steinschneider, p. 656, listing this as one of Galen's apocryphal writings and noting that the incipit appears in no printed edition; he compares it to *De gynaeceis sive de passionibus mulierum*, Opera Galeni, ed. Chartres VII 7830 and under the title *De mulierum morbis sive de Matrice*, as a work by Constantinus Africanus). This treatise demands further study.

ff. 60r-62r, [*Sefer ha-Seter*] (Book on the Hidden Places), a Hebrew translation of *Liber de sinthomatibus mulierum* by Trotula of Salerno, probably her *Passionibus mulierum curandorum* (The Diseases of Women) also known as *Trotula Major* (b. 1090), the earliest female physician to write a significant medical treatise. The beginning is missing. This is the only known copy, and was edited from this manuscript by Barkai, pp. 181-191. Trotula earned the reputation of being an expert in feminine matters, and it is believed she occupied the chair of medicine at Salerno. Her book was written to educate male medics about the female body. She gives information about menses, conception, pregnancy, childbirth, included are many remedies mostly of herbs, spices, and oils.

Barkai mentions Monica H. Green, "The development of the Trotula," *Revue d'Histoire des Textes*, 26 (1996), pp. 119-203, and adds: "The translator refers to one of 3 texts which form the treatise traditionally attributed to Trotula." (p. 25). Green identified its own title when it was circulating independently: *Liber de sinthomatibus mulierum*. There is only a fragmentary Hebrew translation of this text, which, based on the English translation, Green identified as the version 3 of the treatise.

Medical miscellanies are quite common. The catalogue at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts in Jerusalem lists about 300, of various sizes (from two to dozens of works in each manuscript). However it is very unusual to find so many gynecological texts in one manuscript. In fact, in Barkai's book there is only one other manuscript with more than one such text (a manuscript in Oxford) and it has only two texts. Barkai's two studies (1991 and 1998) break new ground on the history of gynecology in medieval Jewish communities. Following a general introduction to the history of medieval Jewish medicine, Barkai studies its origins in Muslim countries, explores the main Arabic and Judeo-Arabic texts, and charts the renaissance of Hebrew as a language of science in the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries. He includes a study of fifteen extant medieval Jewish gynecological texts (including translations from Greek, Latin and Arabic as well as original Hebrew

treatises) and a comparison of the particular characteristics of Jewish gynaecology to the Latin and Arabic traditions.

Three of the four gynecological texts in this manuscript figure prominently in Barkai's study, and he presents critical editions and translations of them.

## LITERATURE

Barkai, Ron. *A History of Jewish Gynaecological Texts in the Middle Ages*, Leiden, Brill, 1998.

Barkai, Ron. *Les infortunes de Dinah ou la gynécologie juive au Moyen-Age, la traduction du traité médiéval et de ses notes par Michel Garel*, Paris, Cerf, 1991.

Hirschfeld, H. *Descriptive Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts of the Montefiore Library*, London, MacMillan, 1904 (reprint from *JQR*, 1902 and 1903), no. 440; see the separate catalogue of the Halberstam collection of 412 manuscripts published as *Qehillath Shelomoh*, Vienna, 1890.

Steinschneider, M. *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters*, Berlin, 1893.

Steinschneider, M. "Medicinisches Handschriften im Besitz des Herrn Halberstam" in *Magazin für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* 10 (1883), pp. 102-112.