



HAL
open science

In search of Laurentius de Rubeis

Dina Bacalexi

► **To cite this version:**

Dina Bacalexi. In search of Laurentius de Rubeis: a Renaissance medical library in Rome and its (mysterious) owner. *Scientiae* 2024, Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for science and the Arts, Jun 2024, Bruxelles, Belgium. hal-04616555

HAL Id: hal-04616555

<https://hal.science/hal-04616555>

Submitted on 18 Jun 2024

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



Distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial 4.0 International License

In search of *Laurentius de Rubeis*: a Renaissance medical library in Rome and its
(mysterious) owner

Renaissance libraries are not mere evidence of antiquarianism or the prerogative of bibliophiles. The development of the publishing activity and the emergence of important printing centers all over Europe facilitates knowledge dissemination. New editions of ancient texts are issued by printers who introduce technical innovations and collaborate with the humanists in charge of the philological accuracy. New works, inspired by the ancient “authorities”, pursue and update knowledge.

The personal marks of library owners and book readers, *ex libris* and *marginalia*, provide information about intellectual communities in their socio-economic and historical context. Ownership and exchange of books leads to humanistic networking: commerce “of” books meets commerce “with” books.

Renaissance physicians’ libraries shed light on books as tools for advancing doctrine, practice and professional skills. Examination of these libraries contribute to assessing “societal” issues such as diseases threatening the population of countries or cities in a given period, methods of and controversies about healing, human reproduction, remedies and their efficiency, and relation with “paramedics”, mainly druggists.

It is within this framework that we will focus on a new library, 317 books printed between 1501 and the mid-17th cent., whose owner, *Laurentius de Rubeis*, has not yet been identified. Currently in the National Library in Rome, they are of Jesuitic provenance.

We will describe this library, formulate hypotheses about its owner, present the BUDE database which centralizes data pertaining to the transmission of ancient texts in the Renaissance, and provide insights into the context of this collection, in comparison with other important Renaissance medical libraries: Conrad Gesner’s, Georg Palma’s and Ulisse Aldrovandi’s.

1. Description

Libraries are mirrors. They reveal the intellectual interests of their owners, but also their capacity to access books and keep them. Concerning humanistic libraries, in particular the physicians’ ones, they also reveal the state of the art, the connection with other fields of knowledge (cf. the proportion of non-medical books in the library), the relation with the Greek and Medieval past, and with the owners’ counterparts. Rubeis’ library is no exception.

1. 1. Let us describe it in a nutshell, providing some statistical data:

- It is an almost exclusively medical library, including only 20 non-medical books.
- Among these non-medical books, two subject-matters are close to medicine (alchemy and natural science), while the majority have no direct connection with it (“ethnology”, physics and astrology, history, law, politics, monastic life, and preaching).
- Even though the dominant language is Latin, bilingual (Greek and Latin), Italian and Spanish books highlight the erudition of the owner, as well as his interest in learned subject-matters dealt with in vernacular.
- The vast majority of the books are of Jesuitic provenance, mainly the Collegio Romano.
- Printing location includes the most important European printing centers, starting with Venice.

1.2. The non-medical books

There are only two Aristotelian works: one on natural science, *Praefationes sex in omnes Aristotelis libros philosophiae naturalis...* by a certain Ascanius Comitius (dates unknown, fl. 1570) who “gave lectures about these prefaces in the gymnasium of Messina”, according to the title page (1570), the second on mechanics, *Parafrasi di monsignor Alessandro Piccolomini arcivescovo di Patras, sopra le Mecaniche d’Aristotile* (1582). No other ancient Greek or Latin philosophers’ work: philosophy in general is almost absent.

Neither are there any classical authors, Greek or Latin: no literature in this library. Religion is represented by two “practical” books, one of them concerns monastic life (a treatise of Cassian and the Latin translation of the “*regula Sancti Pachomii*”), the other is a book of preaching during Lent, Easter day, and the two days after Easter, by the Jesuit Luigi Quilgaris (1607-1653; posthumous edition 1669), *Quaresimale*. No theology or exegesis.

In comparison, Conrad Gesner’s library includes some books of philosophy, mainly Aristotle, as well as of classical literature and history, Greek and Latin. Religion is represented by theological works¹.

Six out of twenty non-medical books are in Italian: a high proportion of works in vernacular, compared with the medical books.

1.3. The medical books

1. 3. 1. Greek medicine²

Hippocrates is the most represented author: 45 books, 17 of them are editions/commentaries of the *Aphorisms*. He is also the only Greek author whose original text is included. While there is no particular place for Hippocrates’ gynecological works in this library, we notice the reference Latin translation of *De morbis mulierum* (1585) by the French physician Maurice de la Corde, a specialist.

The prominent place of Hippocrates is confirmed by two famous books, the bilingual edition of the complete works (1595) and the *Oeconomia Hippocratis* (1588) by Anutius Foesius (physician from Metz, 1528-1596). Foesius’ edition is regarded as the last “monumental” one in the Renaissance, the most innovative concerning the page layout and the order of the treatises; its textual reliability was praised by 19th cent. editors such as Daremberg and Littré, but also by modern scholars³. The *Oeconomia* is an accurate selection of the Hippocratic terms considered difficult or obscure, translated into Latin by Foesius. Each lemma is completed by citations of Hippocratic treatises or Galen’s commentaries on them, variants and contextualization⁴.

Far behind Hippocrates comes **Galen**, with only 19 books, no complete works and no major edition or edition including the Greek text. All the treatises pertain to practical medicine: as we have already noticed concerning the non-medical books, there is no particular interest in philosophical works. Some of the main works of Galen are included:

¹ Urs B. Leu, Raffael Keller and Sandra Weidmann, *Conrad Gesner’s private library*, Leiden/Boston 2008 p. 13-18.

² There is only one book of Latin medicine, *Annotationes in libros octo Cornelii Celsi de re medica* (1616) by Girolamo Rossi (physician from Ravenna 1539-1607).

³ Jacques Jouanna, “Foës éditeur d’Hippocrate : deux énigmes résolus” in *Lire les médecins grecs à la Renaissance : aux origines de la pensée médicale*, éd. par Véronique Boudon-Millot et Guy Cobolet, Paris 2004, p. 1-26.

⁴ Marie-Laure Monfort, “L’*Oeconomia Hippocratis* de Foes”, in *Lire les médecins grecs...*, p. 27-41.

the seminal *Ars medica* and its Arabic “Isagoge” by Hunain translated into Latin, as well as the *Plus quam commentum* on “Tegni” (= *Ars medica*) by the medieval physician/monk Torrigiano de’ Torrigiani called “Plusquamcommentator”, against whom Leonhart Fuchs levels much criticism for his alleged “Arabic” influence; the *De pulsibus ad tirones*, the only pulse treatise of Galen, whose reception in the Renaissance is broad in inverse proportion to its length; the commented edition of *De morbo et accidenti* (and the same treatises transformed into tables in order to facilitate study).

Although the aforementioned treatises are part of the Alexandrian Canon (16 works of Galen used for medical education in 7th cent. Alexandria), there is no attempt to reconstruct either the Canon or any coherent study path.

There is no special interest in Galenic pharmacology or anatomy.

While Galen plays the main role in Renaissance medical education, de Rubeis is more eager to collect the works of Hippocrates. This particularity is worth noticing, given that in the university curricula and the everyday practice Galen surpasses Hippocrates. See, for instance, the polemic of Charles Guillemeau against the midwife Louise Bourgeois/Bourcier who endorses Hippocrates to the detriment of Galen.

As far as **Dioscorides** is concerned, the library includes: a Latin edition of the *Materia medica* (1543) translated by the French physician and botanist Jean Ruel (1474-1537) with the commentaries of the Swiss-German physician, botanist and druggist Walther Hermann Ryff (ca. 1500-1548) and an index of Greek, Latin, Hebrew and German names by the German professor of Greek, Hebrew and theology Johann Lonicer (1499-1569); also a collection of medical advice on nephritis and lithiasis, drawing on Hippocrates, Dioscorides, Galen, Avicenna, Aetius and Paul of Aegina “and some other very famous physicians” (1601), by Jean Ferrand the elder (French physician active ca. 1570).

1. 3. 2. Arabic medicine

One can find in the library Arabic medical works, starting from **Avicenna** (15 books), whose treatises were part of the Medieval and Renaissance university curricula.

The Latin commented edition of the *Canon* in 5 volumes is worth noticing. The last volume includes Averroes’ commentary on the *Canticum*, the only work of Averroes in the library. The commentators are prominent scholars of the late Middle Ages such as Gentile da Foligno, physician and professor of medicine in Bologna, Padova, Sienna and Perugia (d. 1348; according to one version of his biography, he contracted the plague from his patients), criticized by Fuchs because of his “verbosity”. Gentile’s was the reference commentary on the *Canon* and drew on many other important commentators, including his master Taddeo Alderotti (ca. 1206-1295)⁵. The *Canon* is abundantly annotated by at least three different hands. Because of these extended marginalia, one can deduce that these books were probably used as learning and practical tools.

In this category we came across a polemic work (1533) by the *Nova Academia Florentina*, an “informal caucus of physicians” founded in the first half of the 16th cent. in order to rehabilitate Galen and tarnish the reputation of the Arabic medicine: *Opuscula aduersus*

⁵ *Medieval medicine: a reader* ed. by Faith Wallis, Toronto 2010, p. 205: “In the Middle Ages, [Gentile] was surnamed the soul of Avicenna’ and ‘the Theoretician’. His commentary continued to be studied and printed well into the 16th century”.

Auicennam & *medicos neotericos, qui Galeni disciplina neglecta, barbaros colunt*. This is the only book published by the Academy⁶.

As far as **Razi** is concerned, the library includes two important works: *Continens* (Kitab al-Hawi, “The comprehensive book”), edited by Girolamo Salio (physician and astrologist from Faenza, fl. 1488-1509) with the Latin translation by Faraj ben Salim, a Jewish physician from Salerno (13th cent.); and *Mansuri* (Almansor), in particular a treatise by Marco Gatinaria (ca. 1442-1496) and a commentary by Giovanni Battista Da Monte (edited by Walenty Lublin fl. 1541-1554), on the 9th book. While *Continens* is a collection of Razi’s personal notes and experiences, including medical debates and bibliography, *Almansor*, in particular its 9th book, brings together recipes aimed for immediate practical use.

The other Arabic book (1531) brings together three famous authors: al-Muhtar Ibn-al-Hasan **Ibn-Butlan** (Ellohasem/Elluchasem Elimithar d. ca.1068), **ibn-Wafid** al-Lahmi (Albegnefit, physician and pharmacologist from Andalusia specialized in agriculture; ca. 998-1075), and Yaqub ibn-Ishaq **al-Kindi** (Iacobus Alkindus, philosopher, physician, musician, mathematician from Bagdad d. ca. 870).

1. 3. 3. Pharmacology, botany

There are roughly 10-15 books in this category. Some of them worth noticing:

- Otto Brunfels (German physician and botanist ca. 1488-1534), *Herbarum vivae icones* (1532). Includes engravements, description and therapeutic use of plants.
- Thibault Lespleigney (the druggist from Tours 1496-1550), *Encheiridion (Dispensarium qui vulgo vocant) compositorum... medicamentorum* (1543). This is Thibault’s Latin treatise for erudite professionals, while the other one (*Promptuaire des médecines simples*), intended for “his brothers apothecaries”, is in French. Thibault is the first to write didactic treatises for his counterparts. Usually, pharmacological works were written by physicians⁷.
- A comprehensive survey, in 4 books (printed 1543-1553) by Antonio Musa Brasavola (1500-1555), of drinks, pills, cataplasms, eye drops, oils, powders, unguents etc. These treatises are handy tools for everyday practice.

1. 3. 4. Hygiene/healthy life

Let us examine three books which are not scholarly works strictly speaking, but useful manuals one may consult to resolve trivial problems that may occur in everyday life:

- Blas de Villafranca, *Methodus refrigerandi* (1550), where the word “refrigerare” appears for the first time with the meaning of “cooling”. Villafranca presents an innovative method of refrigeration based on “the so-called Salernitrum”. This mixture of salt and sodium carbonate protects from scorching heat (*canicula*) and cools aliments and beverages. Includes an illustration of the device imagined by Villafranca and instructions for its use.
- Alessandro Trajano Petroni (ca. 1510-1585), *De aqua Tiberina* (1552). As a practicing physician in Rome and a personal physician of senior church officials, Petroni exposes the natural characteristics and the curative qualities of this water.

⁶ Stefania Fortuna, “La Nova Academia Florentina”, in A. Serrani (ed.), *Atti della XXXVI Tornata dello Studio Firmano per la Storia dell’Arte Medica e della Scienza (Fermo, 16-18 maggio 2002)*, Fermo 2003, p. 95-100.

⁷ Claude Viel, “Thibault Lespleigney, apothicaire tourangeau (1496-1550)”, in *Pratique et pensée médicales à la Renaissance : Actes du 51^e Colloque international d’études humanistes (Tours, 2-6 juillet 2007)*, éd. par Jacqueline Vons, Paris 2009. p. 161-171.

- Giovanni Battista Donati (1530-1591), *De aquis Lucensibus* (1580): description of the place where one can find this medicinal water (the Italian city of Lucca), as well as its therapeutic use, including baths.
- Marsilio Gagnati⁸ (1543-1612), *De Romani aeris salubritate* (1599). Gagnati is part of the Roman Jesuit milieu and personal physician of high-level ecclesiastical officials. He praises the excellent quality of the Roman air.

1. 3. 5. Gynecology, “andrology” and reproductive medicine

Among the few books on gynecology, there is an obstetrical one, dealing with the cesarean section (1601), by François Rousset (French physician in the court of Savoy; mid-16th cent.), translated into Latin by Gaspard Bauhin (Swiss physician, translator and professor of Greek 1560-1624). Obstetrics was mostly the task of surgeons, while gynecology mostly that of physicians. Yet as the century goes on, these boundaries become more or less blurred.

There is only one “andrological” treatise: Pieter Van Foreest (physician from the Netherlands 1522-1597), *Observationum medicinalium libri 26 & 27. De penis, virgae et testiculorum affectibus* (1597). In the preface, Foreest explains his interest in these genital parts of the body. Thanks to them a man accomplishes the “divine task” of procreation. Although some people think that they are not worth including in the medical curriculum, Foreest, on the contrary, states that they cannot be absent.

One of the two works on human reproduction by Jean Hucher (physician, professor of medicine and university chancellor in Montpellier, d. 1603) deals with sterility “of both sexes”. Its 4th book is devoted to the “occult causes” of male sterility: the evil eye of women (*Lamiae*) or men (*Magi*). Superstition or serious medicine?

1.3.6. Miscellanea

Books on the so called “French disease” (*morbis Gallicus*) are frequent “ingredients” of the Renaissance medical libraries. There are at least three of them in Rubeis’ library, including the well-known one by Gabriele Fallopio (1566-1567).

Two books on “local events” confirm Rubeis’ interest in everyday life: Ottaviano Rovereti, “doctor in medicine and philosophy, knight in the Jerusalem order” from Trento describes a peculiar disease which occurred in his native city in 1591. His book is published “for the benefit of the community of his *patria*”. Although the book is on a local disease, it enriches medical skill because a similar fever may occur elsewhere.

Marsilio Gagnati, *De Tiberis inundatione medica disputatio* (1599). This disastrous flood occurred twice in Rome, 1591 and 1593.

The commentary on *Thucydidis historiam, seu narrationem, de peste Atheniensium...* (1603) by the physician, philosopher and professor of Greek, links history to medicine. Thucydides not only describes the disease, but also emphasizes the decay the Peloponnesian War caused to Athens, the “exemplary” city, the role model of democracy.

The two books on Paracelsus are both the most important works of their authors: the treatise of Petrus Severinus⁹ (Peder Sørensen, Danish physician 1542-1602), an ardent supporter of the so-called “Paracelsian revival” (1571), and the one by Germain Courtin

⁸ [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/marsilio-cagnati_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/?search=CAGNATI,Marsilio%2F](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/marsilio-cagnati_(Dizionario-Biografico)/?search=CAGNATI,Marsilio%2F)

⁹ <https://www.biusante.parisdescartes.fr/histoire/medica/presentations/medecine-revolution-scientifique/severinus.php> Hiro Hirai

(professor of surgery in Paris d. 1597), opposed to Paracelsus (1579). Given that Severinus' book dissemination was limited to a specialized readership, one may deduce that Rubeis was a connoisseur of the Paracelsian doctrine.

2. The owner, Laurentius de Rubeis

Conducting a quasi-detective investigation on Rubeis is exciting even though it has not yet yielded concrete results on his identity. Yet the "mirror" of his library gives a thumbnail sketch and good news: the ex libris in the title page of almost all of the 317 books, written by the same hand, "ex legato D. Laurentii de Rubeis", sometimes completed with the words "insignis in Urbe medici", evidences the coherence of the collection, as well as Rubeis' profession and prominent position in Rome.

Rubeis' key interests are: practice (given the number of practical books), including practical pharmacology; urban everyday life and its impact; and ancient Greek and Arabic medicine. The careful selection of learned and non-learned treatises, the focus on seminal works, fist-class editions but also less known yet innovative works, the inclusion of treatises that criticize Avicenna and Paracelsus shows Rubeis' eclecticism and open mind.

Rubeis certainly belongs to the Roman Jesuit milieu. Donating his library to the Collegio Romano, the prominent Jesuit institution, transforms a private possession into a semi-public good and confirms his affiliation. Ulisse Aldrovandi, who is not linked to a religious milieu, bequeathed his library to the Bologna Senate. Georg Palma to the city of Nuremberg where he worked during his entire life.

Rubeis' library includes censored books. Some of them feature the mention and the date (1607) of the expurgation, in some others one can only find names (in particular of Protestant or Jewish scholars and printers) and parts of texts blacked out. This would probably mean that Rubeis' fame sheltered him from surveillance: he collected books for their utility and quality, regardless of their conformity with any "orthodoxy".

Bad news: Rubeis' life and dates remain a puzzle whose pieces are difficult to assemble:

- In the **1638** edition of the *Antidotarium Romanum*, the name Laurentius de Rubeis is the second one, after the "general first physician" (*protomedicus generalis*) Paolo Zacchia (1584-1659), in the list of the "very famous chief physicians (*perillustri archiatri*) [members] of the Collegium of Rome".
- A manuscript unsigned note in what could be seen as the half-title page of the last book of the collection, *Quaresimale del padre Luigi Giuglaris*, printed in 1669, states: "I bought this book in Rome, on **July 7 1675**, paying out money (*numerata pecunia*) to Laurentius de Rubeis, my authentic brother (*meo germane fratre*)".
- Thanks to Lorenzo Mancini, a colleague who works in the Archivio Storico of the Pontificia Università Gregoriana (the successor of the Collegio Romano), we learned that Laurentius de Rubeis was the personal physician of the Jesuit cardinal Roberto Bellarmino (1542-**1621**). This is confirmed in Bellarmino's biography¹⁰. Furthermore, like Bellarmino, Rubeis donated his books to the Collegio Romano.

So far, we have no confirmation that the Rubeis in these three cases is the same person.

3. A database dedicated to text transmission, prosopography and humanistic networks

¹⁰ Ambrogio Fiocchi, *S. Roberto Bellarmino della compagnia di Gesù, Cardinale della S. Romana Chiesa*, 1930, p.473. See also the project *Monumenta Bellarmini* https://gate.unigre.it/mediawiki/index.php/Monumenta_Bellarmini

BUDE (**B**ase **U**nique de **D**ocumentation **E**ncyclopédique), named after the famous Guillaume, is an ongoing project initiated some 15 years ago. It contains more than 200.000 records concerning the transmission of ancient texts from the late Middle Ages to the Renaissance, up to the middle of the 17th cent. Its aim is not to replace library catalogues, but to centralize data, especially sparse ones, scattered all around libraries and archives, and sometimes stemming from “unexpected” sources such as auction catalogues.

BUDE provides information on: all kinds of persons involved in the transmission process (authors, editors, printers, members of the political or ecclesiastical “elite” etc.); works transmitted (full description of printed books and manuscripts, and, if available, links to their digitized copy); pictures (portraits, title pages, samples of humanists’ handwriting, marginalia etc.); letters exchanged by humanists (including their handwritten copies, if available); and bibliography on authors and works. It also includes diagrams whose aim is to illustrate the humanistic networks in the Renaissance Europe. So far, visualization of networks is limited to intellectual relations, i.e. masters and disciples. Our aim is to use the same method concerning family relations, and, most importantly, geographical mobility, physical (travels) and intellectual (correspondence).

As part of the network *Europa Humanistica*, BUDE’s objective is to present a comprehensive image of humanism all over Europe, highlighting the circulation of persons, ideas and works transcending frontiers and favoring debates or controversies.

BUDE has a data management plan and complies with the Open Science requirements: open access and FAIR data.

One can search the database by: humanists, works, images, and letters. An important part of the Rubeis’ library is in BUDE.

4. A library in context: follow the money and the relations

A comparison with other important 16th century libraries allows us to estimate the financial investment: scholars were not rich and books were expensive¹¹. Rubeis may have spent a considerable amount of money to buy his 317 books, a quite large library. Some of the books are important editions and in-folios which may be costly. Like Georg Palma (city physician in Nuremberg, d. 1591¹²), Rubeis left no personal work: book collection was an indispensable professional tool and a legacy left to other physicians. Rubeis seems an informed bibliographer: his concern is to buy the whole series of important medical works (Avicenna), as well as a variety of medical books, not only by Greek authors, but also by Medieval and contemporary ones commenting and transforming this heritage.

Humanists also resorted to rich patrons, exchanges, and donations from colleagues or printers: Gesner had a “good contact with several printers” who used to give him books. Rubeis may have been linked to the cardinal Roberto Bellarmino: in order to increase his intellectual aura, this important member of the Roman Jesuit milieu may have facilitated

¹¹ Urs B. Leu, Raffael Keller and Sandra Weidmann, *Conrad Gesner’s private library*, Leiden/Boston 2008 p. 22-23. A medical book like Vesalius’ *De humani corporis fabrica* (Basle 1543) was sold 10 pounds (11,75€): compared to the stipendium of some eminent church leaders in 16th cent. Zürich mentioned by the authors (700 pounds/year = 822€), the price was high. P.26: 3 books of Gesner’s library annotated by him were sold for “ca. 50 pounds” (ca. 58€ = ca. 19€/each) in 1580.

¹² Hannah Murphy, “Common places and private spaces: libraries, record-keeping and orders of information in sixteenth-century medicine”, *Past and Present* (2016), Supplement 11, 253-268. Palma’s library = 800 books.

the acquisition of the books. He may also have given Rubeis *carte blanche* to buy books, including “prohibited” or expurgated ones.

The manuscript note in the last book of the collection does not mention the exact price, only the fact that the buyer gave Rubeis cash, “*numerata pecunia*”, i.e. he made no credit agreement with him. Does this mean that he was rich enough to pay without delay? Or that the book was cheap enough so he did not need to borrow money or ask for credit?

If we examine the printing locations, we see that, unsurprisingly, the majority are in Italy, with Venice in the first place, then Rome, Padova and Bologna. Books are printed in many other Italian cities but not in significant numbers (1 to 4, depending on the city): Pavia, Ferrara, Florence, Palermo, Naples, Torino, Macerata, Verona, Urbino, Parma, Bergamo, Messina, Perugia, Milano, Brescia. The important printing centers in other countries are also represented: Lyon, Paris and Basle, but very few titles from other centers such as Zürich, Geneva, Strasbourg, Cologne, Leiden, Hamburg, Antwerp, Louvain, Madrid, or Lisbon. It is worth noticing that Rubeis’ books come from many different countries: this may mean that he was able to purchase them and have them transported to Rome; it also implies his integration in a network broad enough to attract the attention of its members on books of interest and facilitate their acquisition. If we compare with the libraries of Ulisse Aldrovandi¹³ and Conrad Gesner, we notice that neither of these has books from Spain or Portugal, while the other countries of provenance are roughly the same.

Conclusion

The investigation on Laurentius de Rubeis and his library is still in its early stage. Like detectives, we pursue the quest for knowledge stemming from this physician’s library. Our objective is to draw a full-length portrait of the physician immersed in his Roman milieu, but also to open up to his possible interrelation with scholars, professionals and personalities in other parts of Europe. This will contribute to our endeavor to expand the BUDE database and increase its outreach.

Linking history of medicine and history of book/reading with the intellectual and social history prompts us to regard books not as mere objects or “containers” of erudition, but as vivid illustrations of the transformation of the venerable past into present and future.

Dina Bacalexi

¹³ David A. Lines, “La biblioteca di Ulisse Aldrovandi in Palazzo Pubblico: un inventario seicentesco”, in *Biblioteche filosofiche private. Strumenti e prospettive di ricerca*, ed. by Renzo Raghianti and Alessandro Savorelli, Pisa 2014, p. 133-152