

## Mojżesz (Mosé) Josef Allerhand

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Mojżesz (Mosé) Josef Allerhand graduated in medicine in Florence in 1939. Interned in the camp at Ferramonti in 1940, he remained in Italy after the liberation.

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### Emigration from Poland and studies in Italy

Mojżesz, the son of Chaim Jacob, was born in the small centre of Podwołoczyska near Tarnopol. At the time Galicia was part of Austria-Hungary. The region subsequently became part of Poland and was then ceded to Ukraine after the second world war. Prior to the Nazi invasion, Jews formed the majority of the population of Podwołoczyska<sup>1</sup>.

In 1931, Mojżesz obtained a high school leaving certificate from the private boys' classical gymnasium (new type) run by the Association of Jewish elementary and middle schools in Lviv<sup>2</sup>.

During the academic year 1932-33 Mojżesz enrolled at the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery at the University of Siena. After completing some examinations in Siena, he moved to the University of Florence from the academic year 1935-36<sup>3</sup>. Although the law of 15 November 1938 (RDL n. 1779) allowed foreign Jewish students already enrolled in the academic year 1937-38 to continue their studies, subsequent provisions of Bottai specified that students who had not completed their examinations within the set time period (*fuori corso*) were excluded from this possibility<sup>4</sup>. At that date Mojżesz

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<sup>1</sup> See the entry in Yad Vashem, *Encyclopedia of the Ghettos* <<https://www.yadvashem.org>> (accessed 31 March 2019).

<sup>2</sup> ASUFI, AC, SS, f. «Allerhand Mosé», certified translation of high school leaving certificate, 21 October 1932.

<sup>3</sup> Ivi, R. Università degli studi di Firenze, Facoltà di Medicina e chirurgia, list of examinations taken.

<sup>4</sup> RDL 15 November 1938, no. 1779, *Integration and co-ordination into a Consolidatig Act of the regulations already enacted for the Defence of the Race in Italian schools*; ASUFI, AC, 1939, f. 5A,

still had to complete his first year examinations. He managed to take his last five examinations between June and October 1939 and graduated on 11 November, obtaining a result of 90/110. His thesis in clinical surgery was supervised by Professor Antonio Comolli<sup>5</sup>. It is conceivable that the university authorities allowed Jewish students who were *fuori corso* to finish their course of studies during the academic year 1938-39, which included the extraordinary examination session of November 1939, by postponing the application of the ministerial circular to the following year.

After attaining his degree, Mojżesz began his practical traineeship in clinical medicine at the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova in Florence but it is not clear if he was able to complete the semester<sup>6</sup>.

### The Experience of Internment

Mojżesz, as a foreign Jew, was interned in the camp at Ferramonti on 29 September 1940, and was released at the end of September 1943<sup>7</sup>. He recorded his participation in the organization of a kind of internal cooperative which took charge of offering breakfast and lunch to those in his barracks, with him quickly becoming responsible for the kitchen:

After a brief internship as «a kitchen boy», I became «head of the kitchen». Evidently I adapted very well to my new work, meeting the needs of the various communities in our camp, and I remained in this post for the entire period of my internment. In our kitchen we tried to do the best we could and many inmates from other barracks came to eat

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circular from Bottai, 16 January 1939.

<sup>5</sup> ASUFI, AC, SS, f. «Allerhand Mosé», application for admission to degree examination addressed to the *Rettore*, 27 September 1939; *ivi*, R. Università degli studi di Firenze, Facoltà di Medicina e chirurgia, report on degree examination. On Comolli, see the entry by Giuseppe Armocida and Giovanni Verga, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 27, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1982 (available online <<http://www.treccani.it>>, accessed 31 March 2019).

<sup>6</sup> ASUFI, AC, SS, f. «Allerhand Mosé», Allerhand's request to the *Rettore* to change rotation in his practical traineeship, n.d. but end of 1939 or beginning of 1940; on the request is noted a 'no'.

<sup>7</sup> See *Indice generale degli ebrei stranieri internati in Italia 1940-1943, ad nomen*, available online through the web-portal of the Centro di documentazione ebraica contemporanea in Milan <<http://www.cdec.it>> (accessed 31 March 2019).

with us [...] The secret of our success was our seriousness and technical ability as well as the extreme honesty of the kitchen staff.<sup>8</sup>

In September 1943, when liberation was imminent, Mojżesz found refuge with a peasant family who were living a few kilometres from the camp.

We were housed in a hayloft together with chickens, pigs and a donkey. We tried to reciprocate with medical assistance (we were two doctors in the group) as there was extreme need in the area. During a nearby bombardment we provided care for a forty-two year old peasant woman who was giving birth for the firsttime. Everything went well and we probably savedher life which considerably increased our prestige as doctorsamongst the peasants in the area.<sup>9</sup>

Subsequently Mojżesz was recruited as an interpreter for a unit in the British Army, accompanying the advance of the front for more than a year. He remembered having been present at the Battle of Cassino, «a terrible spectacle which one can never forget; there was no longer a tree standing, and for a long time the surroundings were permeated with the smell of gunpowder»<sup>10</sup>.

On 9 March 1945 Mojżesz wrote a letter from Rome to the administration of Florence university requesting a copy of his graduation certificate<sup>11</sup>. He subsequently worked as a medical practitioner in Rome<sup>12</sup>.

### Principal Publications

- Degree thesis «*L'accesso polmonare*», Università degli studi di Firenze, Facoltà di Medicina e chirurgia, a.a. 1938-39.

### Archival Sources

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<sup>8</sup> Testimony of Allerhand in Carlo Spartaco Capogreco, *Ferramonti. La vita e gli uomini del più grande campo d'internamento fascista, 1940-1945*, Florence, Giuntina, 1987, pp. 53-4.

<sup>9</sup> Ivi, p. 149.

<sup>10</sup> Ivi, p. 155.

<sup>11</sup> ASUFi, AC, SS, f. «Allerhand Mosé», request to *Rettore*, 9 March 1945.

<sup>12</sup> Information made available to the author by Carlo Spartaco Capogreco.

- ASUFi, AC, SS, f. «Allerhand Mosé».
- *Indice generale degli ebrei stranieri internati in Italia 1940-1943, ad nomen* <<http://www.cdec.it>>.

## Bibliography

- Carlo Spartaco Capogreco, *Ferramonti. La vita e gli uomini del più grande campo di concentramento fascista, 1940-1945*, Florence, Giuntina, 1987.

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