

SZTERN Stern Adolf Abram (1785-1861), doctor, social activist, philanthropist. He was born in 1785 in Krzepice, the son of Icchak Icek.

Already at an early age, Sztern wanted to become a doctor. In 1811, he came to Berlin and undertook medical studies at the university there. He graduated in 1817 with a doctorate in medicine. As a student, he involved himself in communal life. He belonged to the *Chevrat Chinuch Nearim*, the society of the first Jewish free school for boys, which pursued the goals of enlightenment and which included reducing the role of religion in education. He also belonged to the Berlin-based Friends of the Hebrew Language society. (This organisation was to disseminate this language around the world.)

Sztern felt the responsibility to share his medical knowledge. So, in 1817, in Hebrew, he wrote and published the booklet entitled *Mozor utrufa (Illness and Medicine)*, which dealt with the alleged harm of onanism [masturbation] which was, according to the author, widespread amongst Jewish youth. The publication was reprinted several times (Warsaw 1857, Wilno 1871, Biłgoraj 1909).

Shortly after his graduation (probably in 1819), Sztern settled in Częstochowa, where he was the first Jewish doctor in the city. He remained there until the end of his life, conducting his practice in his own home in the Stary Rynek (now the Old Market Square No.13).

He belonged to almost all the local societies and fraternities. He spoke Polish poorly, but his German was good. (He wrote his will in that language.) In the city, he was popular and well-liked. This is evidenced by the thanks of grateful patients which were published in the Polish press. Sztern financially supported his relatives and siblings who lived in Prussia. He also provided scholarships to talented youth, in Częstochowa, who wished to study medicine, for example, the sons of → Jakub Bursztyński, who became medical doctors.

In his private life, he was met with misfortune. His young wife fell in love with the excise office Tchorzewski, left him, was baptised and remarried. Sztern never formed another relationship.

He died on 17th May 1861, in Częstochowa, and was buried in the local cemetery. Sztern's grave has been preserved (No. 1263A II).

Although he was seventy-five years old at the time of his death, it was rumoured that he had been poisoned by his relatives. The main suspects were the

Fridlender couple - Sztern's sister and her husband – who lived with him and were allegedly unable to wait for their inheritance. The authorities carried out an exhumation and sent the body's internal remains to Warsaw for analysis. The matter dragged on for many years. In 1872, Sztern's will had still not been executed. (The heirs were represented by Adolf W. Landau, a defence lawyer, known in the city as a *mecenas*.) In 1870, Landau's opponents accused him of enriching himself at the expense of his staving clients .

Szarejko, *Słownik lekarzy polskich*, vol. V, p. 431; Michalski, *Częstochowa i jej lekarze*, p. 506; Złotkowski, *Testamenty*, vol. 3, pp. 470-473. - "Częstochower Cajtung" 1933, No. 34, pp. 3- 4.

Wiesław Paszkowski