Rabbi Isaac Lampronti (1679–1756)

Rabbi Isaac Lampronti was born in Ferrara, Italy. He studied Torah under the great Italian rabbis of his generation: Manoach Provençal and Isaac Chayim Cantarini. In addition, he studied philosophy and medicine at the University of Padua. Padua was an important center for Hebrew studies by virtue of its rabbinical academies and the fact that Jews were drawn there from all over Europe to study in its university, which was open to Jews.

At the age of 22, he began to teach in the *talmud torah* of the Italian community. He introduced many improvements in the curriculum, insisting on the teaching of the humanities concurrently with the study of Torah. In 1718 he was ordained rabbi and in 1743 was appointed head of the Yeshivah – a position which gave him the status of senior rabbi of the city.

Rabbi Lampronti practiced as a physician. He was an outstanding doctor who gave his services for free to those of limited means. He had a great reputation as physician, and his contemporaries generally added to his name the epithet "the famous physician."

Rabbi Lampronti's main reputation, however, rests on the fact that he wrote the first Jewish Encyclopedia *Pachad Yitzchaq*. Pachad Ytzchaq is arranged alphabetically, each article including material from the Mishnah, the Talmud, the posekim, the rishonim, and the responsa literature.

In 1872, the city of Ferrara publicly honored the memory of Rabbi Lampronti. A stone tablet was placed on the house in which he had lived bearing the following inscription: *"Abitò in questa casa Isacco Lampronti, nato nel MDCLXXIX., morto nel MDCCLVI. Medico Teologo tra i dotti celebratissimo. Onorò la patria. Riverenti alla scienza alcuni cittadini posero MDCCCLXXII."*

See here the First Edition of Pachad Yitzchaq, Venecia, 1750