

# DOMESTIC MEDICINE IN AN EARLY EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPT, GUL, FERGUSON MS 43\*

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## ABSTRACT

This article delves into Early Modern English<sup>1</sup> manuscript domestic medicine with special attention to a recipe compilation, Glasgow, University Library, Ferguson MS 43. Household recipe books were an important repository of practical medical knowledge for families. Recipe collections were often brought by women to their new households upon marriage, and were subsequently passed down through generations, highlighting the significant role that women played in the production and dissemination of household practical knowledge. Ferguson MS 43, attributed to Lady Stanhope, showcases the female recipe collections' ability to provide valuable information regarding eighteenth-century domestic medical practice and, more specifically, women's contribution to it. The manuscript physical characteristics and its contents are analysed to place the text in its proper social, cultural and linguistic context as a representative instance of the recipe genre.

**KEYWORDS:** GUL, Ferguson MS 43, medical recipes, women scientific writing, household medicine.

LA MEDICINA DOMÉSTICA EN UN MANUSCRITO DE PRINCIPIOS DEL SIGLO XVIII, GLASGOW, BIBLIOTECA UNIVERSITARIA, FERGUSON MS 43

## RESUMEN

Este artículo indaga en la medicina manuscrita doméstica en inglés moderno temprano con especial atención a una recopilación de recetas, Glasgow, Biblioteca Universitaria, Ferguson MS 43. Los libros domésticos de recetas constituían un importante repositorio de conocimiento médico práctico para las familias. Las mujeres llevaban consigo las colecciones de recetas a su nueva residencia al contraer matrimonio y, de esta forma, se pasaban de generación en generación, lo que pone de manifiesto el papel relevante que las mujeres desempeñaban en la producción y transmisión de este tipo de conocimiento práctico. El manuscrito Ferguson 43, atribuido a Lady Stanhope, resalta la habilidad de las colecciones de recetas para proporcionar información valiosa sobre la práctica de la medicina doméstica y, más concretamente, sobre la contribución femenina. Se analizan las características físicas del manuscrito, pero también el contenido, para ubicar el texto, como elemento representativo del género de las recetas, en el contexto social, cultural y lingüístico adecuado.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** GUL, Ferguson MS 43, recetas médicas, escritos científicos de mujeres, medicina doméstica.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, both men and women produced recipe compilations at home, since domestic medicine even in wealthy households “consisted of self-treatment, family members creating remedies and administering care, and purchased medical guide and products” (Allen 2017, 334). Modern housewives and household managers moved across a wide range of activities, one of which was taking care of the people in their estates and households. Thus, “home remained the central place of medical care throughout the eighteenth century” (Hiltunen and Taavitsainen 2019, 13).

Handwritten recipe books were an important repository of practical knowledge for families. They included culinary recipes, medical remedies and household tips that recorded the work of women at home. Subsequently, sharing recipes was a great interest in the period for several reasons: recipe books worked as manuals to be consulted in case of need, but it was also a way of socializing. In fact, many recipes were passed round in manuscript form through social networks. The recipes were often collected by women from family members, neighbours and friends. Leong and Pennell comment on the process of circulation of recipes claiming that:

Instructions to make medicaments for all sorts of ailments and illnesses were exchanged during social visits, circulated in letters, and were recorded into bound notebooks. Sometimes they were even merely bundled together as batches of paper. The onward circulation of individually inscribed recipes and prescriptions, indeed of entire manuscripts, provided other compilers with an important source for their own collections. (Leong and Pennell 2007, 138)

The recipes obtained through social contact could be copied down as such or the compilers could alter dosages, substitute ingredients and change production methods to reflect their own preferences (Leong 2018, 163). In this way, a recipe collection is regarded as an “active, dynamic compilation that would create new texts” and that “could be erased, expunged and altered” to suit the compiler’s needs and interests (De la Cruz-Cabanillas 2016, 82).

On occasions, complete copies of recipe books were made as gifts from a family member, like in London, Wellcome Library, MS 7113, which reads “K. Fanshawe. Give mee by my Mother March 23th 1678” (after the cover, before folio 1). In this sense, Leong states that “the leather or vellum bound books of recipes were seen as heirlooms – material objects to be bequeathed to the next generation within the narrow confines of a lineage family” (2013, 95). They could also be presents by servants, “where patronage and service were implied” (Leong and Pennell 2007, 142), as in London, British Library, Sloane MS 3842, which shows the following

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<sup>1</sup> Following Lass (1999), the dates for the Early Modern English in this article are 1476 to 1776.



inscription: “This book humbly begs Madam Elizabeth Butler her acceptance from her faythfull servant: Poore Colly. march the last 1679” (f. 1r).

Recipe collections like the one in Ferguson MS 43, attributed to Lady Stanhope, were often brought by women to their new households upon marriage, and were subsequently passed down through generations, highlighting the significant role that women played in the production and transmission of household knowledge. In fact, the pages in blank in this manuscript could be designed for the new owner to accrue the initial recipe compilation with more material. Leong contemplates that the documents produced by women in charge of an important estate “add a much-needed female voice to histories of household and estate management, shedding light on the managerial role taken on by elite women and emphasizing the range of knowledge, skills, and expertise the household collective needed to carry out these tasks” (2018, 49).

Indeed, manuscript recipe collections authored by women are a reflection of their contribution to the field, their concerns and the world surrounding them. In this sense, they are paramount in the transmission and dissemination of knowledge within families and their social networks. They are also witnesses of the role of women in documenting, making and administering medicines in the home. Thus, Ferguson MS 43 showcases the female recipe collections’ ability to provide valuable information regarding eighteenth-century domestic medical practice and, more specifically, women’s contribution to it.

Like in many other cases in the Ferguson Collection, the volume is not included in big reference works and the only information available is that provided by the online catalogue of Glasgow University Library, where no further indication of authorship is given.<sup>2</sup> Thus, Lady Stanhope could be the compiler or the owner of the manuscript. This absence of information is in line with other household recipe books of the period, since, as noted by Leong,

[they] tend to lack contextual information in multiple senses. Many offer only recipe after recipe, with few additional instructions or clear articulations of historical actors’ intentions, ideas, and goals. Second, most manuscript recipe books now housed in libraries or archives have survived with little or no accompanying biographical information. Consequently we have scant knowledge about the creators, readers, and users of these texts, and it is difficult to locate the historical actors and spaces that shaped their creation. (Leong 2018, 14)

The volume under consideration, Ferguson MS 43, will be analysed from different perspectives. Firstly, the physical description with the codicological and

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<sup>2</sup> Thanks to the information provided by the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, several candidates to be this Lady Stanhope have been identified. For instance, Elizabeth Savile (d. 1708, wife of Philip Stanhope, third Earl of Chesterfield), Katherine (d. 1718, wife of Philip Stanhope, second Earl of Chesterfield), Anne (d. 1719, wife of William Stanhope, first Earl of Harrington) and Lucy (d. 1723, wife of James Stanhope, first Earl of Stanhope). For a more detailed account of who this Lady Stanhope might have been, see De la Cruz-Cabanillas (2023, 29-33).



palaeographical features is presented to be followed by the spelling description to assess the degree of standardisation of the text. Secondly, the contents and the recipe structure will be examined to place the text in its proper social, cultural and linguistic context.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The present study has been carried out after having produced a semi-diplomatic edition of the text, which has been transcribed using the digitised images provided by Glasgow University Library together with an in-situ examination of the original manuscript (De la Cruz-Cabanillas 2023). The tenets of semi-diplomatic editions have been followed, showing minimum editorial intervention to provide a reproduction of the original witness as accurate as possible. Subsequently, the following set of practices has been adopted: (a) foliation and lineation have been kept as in the source; (b) spelling, capitalisation and word division remain as in the original text; and (c) punctuation and paragraphing have been faithfully rendered.

Additionally, the software *AntConc* (Anthony 2020) has been used for the automatic retrieval of the instances, although manual disambiguation was required for the classification of several occurrences. Multiple searches have been carried out depending on the features to be analysed. The results were filtered manually, since the programme does not discriminate between alternative spellings for the same lexical unit. For instance, the word *fire*, can appear with <i>, <y> and also with double <f>. Disambiguation of meaning is also needed in cases like *tyme*, which appears ten times in the text, but on only two occasions the ingredient *thyme* is meant; the other occurrences correspond to the modern spelling *time*. Likewise, the category of the word needs to be revised by the researcher, since the programme does not establish the difference between word categories, inasmuch as the word *ground* can be used as a verb and as a noun in the text. The present analysis is based on a total of thirty-one recipes that amount up to 3,945 words.

## 3. STUDY OF FERGUSON MS 43

### 3.1. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: CODICOLOGICAL AND PALAEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

The manuscript under study is held in Glasgow University Library. It is a bound volume of thirty folios, fifteen of which are blank. The manuscript measures 19.5 by 15 cm and is written on paper with no watermarks. The paper has been lined in red to delimit the physical boundaries of the text, since all the margins have been clearly marked. As the lines are handwritten, the text box space within the lines differs slightly from page to page. The text is written in one single column and the number of lines per folio varies, being the average twenty lines, except for



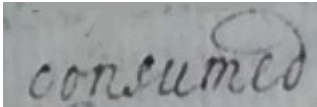


Figure 1. *consumed* (f. 3r).<sup>3</sup>

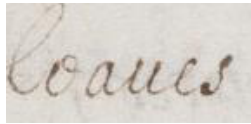


Figure 2. *leaves* (f. 15v).

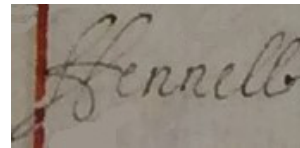


Figure 3. *ffennell* (f. 1v).

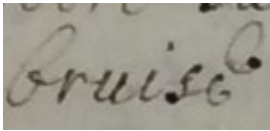


Figure 4. *bruise* (f. 3r).

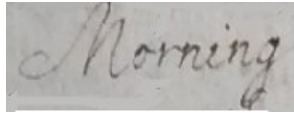


Figure 5. *Morning* (f. 12r).

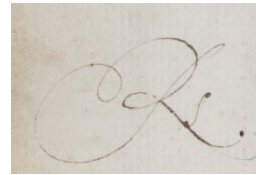


Figure 7. *R* for *Recipe* (f. 2v).

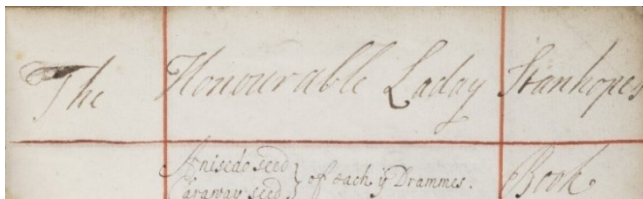


Figure 6. *The Honourable Lady Stanhopes | Book* (f. 2r).

folio 1r, which functions like a cover. The catalogue of Glasgow University Library indicates that the volume is early eighteenth century.

Regarding the script, it is written in a mixed cursive hand, combining italic and secretarial letter forms. The italic script with several particular features prevails, though some reminiscence of secretarial traits can be identified. Thus, the handwriting retains the letter <d> represented with a left-curved stem from secretarial hand, as in Figure 1 and the double-compartment <e>, which alternates with the cursive <e>. Both forms of <e> can be seen in the word *leaves*, in Figure 2.

Other characteristic features of Ferguson MS 43 are the letter <f>, distinguished from long <s> because of its medial horizontal stroke (Figure 3) and the letters <b> and <g> with a double lobe (Figures 4 and 5, respectively).

Marginal notes in Ferguson MS 43 are scarce. They are witnessed in a few instances in the manuscript. For example, there is an inscription at the top of the second folio that continues in the right margin indicating the owner of the volume written in a different hand (Figure 6).

The reader will also find the traditional abbreviation for the word *Recipe* on the left margin on folios 1v and 2v (Figure 7).

<sup>3</sup> I am grateful to the staff in the Special Collections Room at Glasgow University Library for their help during my visits to the library and for allowing me to transcribe from manuscript Ferguson 43 and to take images and reproduce them here. The copyright belongs to Glasgow University Library.

Likewise, each folio presents a catchword at the bottom right. This device is employed by the scribe to avoid mistakes in the sequence of the quires of the manuscript, since no foliation is observed. Thus, the scribe of Ferguson MS 43 follows this practice consistently all along the volume.

### 3.2. SPELLING: DISTRIBUTION OF GRAPHEMES

In this subsection, the degree of orthographic standardisation of Ferguson MS 43 will be assessed taking into account different aspects of the language, such as the distribution of graphemes. One of the main indicators of the degree of standardisation of Early Modern English texts is the complementary distribution of graphemes. Their regularisation occurred mostly during the seventeenth century, although their use was not normalised simultaneously. This fact will be observed in the analysis of the alternation of the graphemes <u> and <v>; <i> and <y>; <i> and <j>; and <ou> and <ow>.

#### 3.2.1. <u> and <v>

The use of <u> and <v> seems to correspond mainly to the common practice in Early Modern English, whereby both letters were used to represent a vocal and a consonant sound. On the one hand, <v> appears at the beginning of words with *untill* being the most frequent word (13x), but also in *vpon* (10x), *very*, *vp* and *vse* (7x each) or *vnder* (1x). On the other hand, <u> occurs in the middle, as in *haue* (4x), *fiue* and *giue* (3x each), *proued* (2x) and *grauel* (1x). However, in several cases both spellings can be found, as in *ouer* (6x) / *ouer* (1x). In turn, medial <v> is also witnessed in other examples, where medial <u> is not attested even once: *cover* (6x), *canvas* (2x), and *approved*, *evaporated*, *evening*, *everie*, *every*, *inveterate*, *ivy*, *liver* and *liverworte* (1x each). Taking the above-mentioned data into consideration, the standardisation of both graphemes seems to be an ongoing process, which still shows Early Modern English practices but also more recent uses.

#### 3.2.2. <i> and <y>

Ferguson MS 43 alternates the use of <i> and <y> in word-medial position in a number of items: *firefyre* (2x each) alternating with *ffire* (10x), *pipkin* (7x) / *pipkyn* (1x), *plaister* (1x) / *playster* (4x), and in initial position in *ivorielivoirie* (1x each). In the other instances, the data suggest a regular standardised use of <i> when it occurs at the beginning of a word: *it* (185x), *in* (63x), *into* (36x), *is* (24x), *inveterate* (1x), *ivy* (1x) and in medial position in cases like *pinte* (8x), *white* (16x), *will* (9x), etc. but not in *strayne*, which appears 15x as a verb with this spelling and none with <i>. In turn, some lexical units only occur with <y> in medial positions, such as *oyle* (14x), *ayre* (5x), *slyced* and *synammon* (4x each). In word-final position



the use of <y> aligns with Present-Day English practice in *by, bay, day, dry, finely, gently, lay, may, quantity, slowly, they*, etc. with the exception of *every* and *very* that occur as *everie* and *verie*, respectively, on one occasion each.

### 3.2.3. <i> and <j>

Consonant <j> is always yielded as <i> in initial position, in cases like *iuiçe(s)* (5x), which alternates with *juice* (1x), *iulep* (2x), *iaundes/iaundies* (1x each), *Iohns*, *iugges* and *Iune* (1x each). According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the use of <j> representing the sound /dʒ/ was established soon after 1630 (s.v. *J*). No instances of <j> in word-initial position in Ferguson MS 43 are found. On the contrary, letter <j> is found in final position in Latin words, *Christij, cusentj* and *nolj*, as well as to indicate numbers, as in *ij, iij, vij, xij*.

### 3.2.4. <ou> and <ow>

The French grapheme <ou> was adopted in English in the fourteenth century to represent the long vowel /u:/ (Scragg 1974, 47). Over time, the grapheme <u> was acquiring many different sound values and could appear to represent the various sounds that are nowadays conveyed by the digraphs <ou> and <ow>. This alternation of the digraphs <ou> and <ow> is witnessed in Ferguson MS 43 in the numeral *four*, which appears as *fower* (4x) and *foure* (1x). In other instances, one digraph or the other is present. Thus, *powder* appears 13x as a noun and 2x as a verb, whereas no form with <ou> is documented. The uses in the sequence <ow> correspond to the present practice: *downwarde, flowere, knowledge, marrowe, owne, strowe, towe, yellow*. The only exception is *howers* that only occurs with <ow>. Likewise, the use of <ou> is in line with the present practice in items such as *about, enough, fountayne, goute, ounce, out, pound, pretious, through* and *wound*, whereas several non-standardised practices are still observed in words like *bloud*. This spelling could be an indicator of the fact that the Early Modern English shortening of /u:/ in words like *flood* and *blood* was not completed at the time when the manuscript was produced or, at least, not in the specific variety of the scribe.

## 3.3. CONTENTS

The organisation of the contents of the recipes in Ferguson MS 43 does not follow the usual medieval arrangement, i.e., *de capita ad pedem* (i.e., from head to foot). The recipes seem to adopt no specific order. There are thirty recipes for diverse medical ailments and one more to bake a venison, which includes no medical instructions. At this time, humoral theory was giving ground to more evidence-based medicine. Accordingly, no indication of the humoral theory can be found in the collection, nor any sickness caused by the imbalance of humours. On the







Physicke Ale	1	ffor y <sup>e</sup> yellowe Iaundies ffor y <sup>e</sup> Iaundies	2
A yellow plaster called fflos vngentorum Oyntment called Flos Vnguentorum	2	For y <sup>e</sup> Wormes A Playster for y <sup>e</sup> Wormes	2
for y <sup>e</sup> Purge	1	A pretious drinke to comfort y <sup>e</sup> Stomake	1
ffor y <sup>e</sup> Glyster	1	A Receipt to open y <sup>e</sup> Stomake & Spleene	1
A Water to stay y <sup>e</sup> fflux	1	Another Medicine as good for a bruise if it be taken in tyme	1
A most Sovereaine greene oyntment good for all bruises, smellings, Ague sores, and aches y <sup>e</sup> be not inveterate	1	The Receipt for making Wound oyle	1
A Plaister for an Ache	1	To make y <sup>e</sup> White Salue excellent for all Wounds & Aches	1
A Receipt for a Consumption ffor a Consumption A Medicine for a Consumption	3	A Receipt to make y <sup>e</sup> blacke plaster	1
A Medicine for y <sup>e</sup> third third Ague	1	ffor y <sup>e</sup> hard bellye w <sup>ch</sup> Children are Subiect to	1
ffor the Stone ffor y <sup>e</sup> Stone Collicke or Grauell	2	A purging and clensing iulep	1
For a Canker	1	A Receipt of y <sup>e</sup> Rose perfume	1
To make a perfume to smell vnto against y <sup>e</sup> plague	1	A pretious Oyntment for a Woman nere her trauel	1

contrary, there are remedies for diseases rampant in the period, such as consumption, a form of tuberculosis, and other diseases which are of concern to women because they are suffered by them or by their children. Thus, the reader will find recipes for child delivery, but also for “ffor y<sup>e</sup> hard bellye w<sup>ch</sup> Children are Subiect to” (f. 13r). There is no clue to discern whether the collection was gathered from oral material, printed sources or other manuscripts, but in the period, it was common to shape the material according to the compiler’s interests. In this case, the needs and interests are in line with those of an early modern woman. This selection of the material evidences that “handwritten recipe compilations are to be seen as dynamic artifacts that are personalized to suit the creator’s needs” (De la Cruz-Cabanillas 2020, 43). The reader finds the remedy for the ailment that is meant to be treated in the title. In Table 1, the purposes of the medical recipes and the number of recipes for them can be consulted.

As can be seen, the most frequent remedy is for consumption; recipes for the jaundice, worms and the stone and to make *fflos vngentorum* can be found on two occasions each. Bruises, aches and wounds also appear in different recipes. However, in some of the texts, the purpose is not stated. Thus, the reader should know what the *physicke ale* was used for, since no indication is given. Likewise, no medical specification of the purpose of the *blacke plaster* is offered. The absence of medical rationale is in line with Stobart’s (2016) observation for seventeenth-century



medical recipes, since they “focused almost exclusively on the making of medicinal preparations rather than providing explanations of mechanisms of action and medical theory” (2016, 29). In the same vein, the preparation of baked venison provides no clue as to whether the dish can have a medical restorative function. In another case, a cock is to be boiled with some other ingredients and the reader is instructed to drink the broth to treat consumption (f. 5r-5v). Like the broth just mentioned, most remedies in Ferguson MS 43 are prepared as liquids to be drunk, as plasters to be applied to a particular part of the body, as ointments to be smeared and as perfumes twice: a rose perfume and one specific for the pestilent odour of the plague.

### 3.4. THE RECIPE STRUCTURE

The recipe compilation in Ferguson MS 43 follows the usual stages found in this genre: title, ingredients, preparation, application and efficacy phrase. The titles have been shown above in Table 1 with the overriding presence of the formula of *for + noun phrase*, where the head noun corresponds to the name of the disease. The construction *to + infinitive + direct object* is also frequently attested, as well as only a noun phrase indicating the name of the remedy to be prepared (e.g., *a purging and cleansing iulep*). The structure *for + verb in -ing* is only witnessed in the cooking recipe: *for baking a venison*.

In terms of the ingredients found in the collection, they are particularly revealing for various reasons. We do not know whether Lady Stanhope was the author or compiler of the volume or the recipient, but the fact that her last name is preceded by the address term *Lady* places her in an upper-class environment. Furthermore, noble and gentry families were especially keen on documenting several pieces of information, as Leong claims (2018, 126) that “recipe writing was firmly a part of wider practices of household archiving.” Thus, recipe books can be considered primary sources for writing history.

Lady Stanhope’s social and economic position will be reflected in the ingredients to be used in the collection, since recipes are a clear example of the mixture of well-known herbs with a long therapeutic tradition and more lavish ingredients. Among the former, in Ferguson MS 43, around eighty herbs and derivatives from plants, such as resins, oils, etc., which were already present in medieval times, are identified (Table 2).<sup>4</sup>

Other ingredients were introduced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thus, the reader finds *Venice turpentine*, first recorded in 1577 by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and plants, gums and resins from Asia and the Americas, for instance, *Beniamin*, *cacha*, *carana*, *tackame-hacka*.

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<sup>4</sup> For a recent study of medical herbs in Middle English, see De la Cruz-Cabanillas and Diego-Rodríguez (2022).



TABLE 2. PLANTS, FRUITS AND RESINS ALREADY IN USE IN MEDIEVAL ENGLAND.

agrimonie/agrimony (2x)	mayden-haire (2x)
almonds (1x)	nutmeg(g)(s) (5x)
aloes (1x)	olibanum 1x)
anisedo sedes/anniseeds (2x)	oringe (1x)
ashen keys (1x)	parsely (2x)
barberries (1x)	penywhite (1x)
berries (1x)	pepper (2x)
betony (1x)	per-rosin (1x)
borage (1x)	plantayne (3)
brome (1x)	polipodium (1x)
bruscus (rootes) (1x)	raysons (1x)
buglosse (1x)	red nettle (1x)
camomile (1x)	rhrubarb/rubarbe (2x)
camphire (4x)	ribworte (1x)
camapiteos (1x)	rose (5x)/damaskes roses (1)
capers (1x)	rosemarie (4x)
caraway (1x)	rosin (4x)
carduus benedictus (2)	saffron (1x)/English saffron (1x)
cetrache (1x)	sage (2x)
ciuett (1x)	sanders (1x)
cloue (1x)	saxifrage (1x)
comfrey (2)	sena/sene (2x)
coriander (1x)	setwell (1x)
currans (1x)	shepheards purse (1x)
dates (1x)	southernwood (1x)
elder (1x)	St Iohns-wort (1x)
f(f)ennel (4x)	stone crap (1x)
ffumitorie (1x)	succory (1x)
frankinsence (3x)/ffrankinsense (1)	synammon (4x)/synamon (1x)
ginger (2x)	tamariske (1x)
ground ivy (1x)	turmericke (1x)
grunsell (1x)	turpentyne (3x)/turpentine (2x)
hasellnut (2x)	tyme (2x)
hay (2x)	valerian (1x)
hypeberryes (1x)	violet (1x)
knotgrasse (1x)	wheate cornes (1x)



lauender cotton (1x)	woodbyne (1x)
liverworte (1x)	wormwood (2x)
mace (3x)	zedoarie (2x)
margerom (1x)	

*Benjamin* refers to a gum benzoin and is also the name applied to three trees, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*:

(a) *Styrax benzoin*, the tree from which benzoin is obtained; a native of Sumatra, Borneo, etc.; (b) the *Benzoin odoriferum* or *Lindera Benzoin*, a North American shrub, which has an aromatic stimulant tonic bark, and berries yielding an oil of similar properties; called also Benjamin-bush and in U.S. Benjamin; (c) sometimes applied to *Ficus Benjamina*. (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

In turn, *cacha* is “a name given to several astringent substances, containing from 40 to 55 per cent of tannin, which are obtained from the bark, wood, or fruits of various Eastern trees and shrubs. They are used in medicine, and in tanning, calico printing, and dyeing” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. *cutch*). Finally, *carana* and *tackame-hacka* are both resins from the Americas. The former is obtained from a West Indian tree (*Bursera acuminata*) and the latter was originally yielded by a Mexican tree, *Bursera (Elaphrium) tomentosa*, and later extended in the West Indies and South America to similar resins obtained from other species of *Bursera* (s.v. *tacamahac*, *tacamahaca*).

Obviously, these gums and resins were not available to any patient. This idea is in line with Allen’s claim, whereby “the fashionability of a disease was inherently tied to the medical advice and treatment a wealthy individual was able to access” (2017, 335). Thus, the fact that the recipes were elaborated to be produced in a well-off household is also evidenced in the use of other ingredients. The reader finds *ivory*, *gold* and other elements like *sperma ceti* and *musk*. *Sperma ceti* is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “a fatty substance, which in a purified state has the form of a soft white scaly mass, found in the head (and to some extent in other parts) of the sperm-whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) and some other whales and dolphins.” *Musk* is “a reddish brown substance with a strong, persistent odour secreted by a gland of the male musk deer, esp. *Moschus moschiferus*, and highly prized in perfumery. Also: any of various substances secreted by other mammals, esp. for scent marking” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Both were known in the Middle Ages and so was *mastic*, which is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as

[a]n aromatic gum or resin which exudes from the bark of the lentisk or mastic tree, *Pistacia lentiscus* [...], used chiefly in making varnishes and, formerly, in medicine (also *mastic gum*). Also with distinguishing word: any of various similar resins derived from other trees. Mastic is generally sold in the form of roundish, pea-



sized tears, transparent with a pale yellow or faint greenish tinge. It is produced almost exclusively on the Greek island of Chios in the Aegean Sea. (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

Likewise, another product which is exclusively produced in one specific area of France is *Burgoine pitch*, first recorded in 1678 in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. *Burgundy*), which explains that this resinous substance “is still chiefly obtained from the neighbourhood of Neufchâtel, which was once Burgundian territory. So French *poix de Bourgogne*.” Along with these expensive ingredients, we find wines like *malmsey*, *muscatel* and *sack*.

The ingredients appear as part of the preparation stage where the presence of the verb *take* is overwhelming. Other verbs frequently found in this section are *mingle*, *mix*, *pound*, *put*, *slice*, *wash*, etc. In the instructions provided to get the proper combination of ingredients, the appearance of technical implements is common. Apart from well-known containers, such as *bowls*, *cups*, *dishes*, *glasses*, *kettles*, *mortars*, *pots*, *pans* and *saucers*, other implements like *knife*, *spoon*, *strainer*, etc. are mentioned. Some of the objects are not so commonly found today, for they are considered obsolete or archaic by the *Oxford English Dictionary*. For instance, *chaffer*: “A vessel for heating something: (a) A vessel for heating water, a saucepan; (b) a portable grate, a chafing-dish.” Likewise, *pipkin* is defined as “[a] small (usually earthenware) pot or pan. Also: a drinking vessel; a bottle.” Another container, especially for liquids is *pottle* “[a] pot, tankard, or similar container, (usually) *spec.* one having the capacity of a pottle.” Additionally, among the cutting instruments, *trencher* could be understood as such, but it has other meanings: (a) *plate* (Yeoman 2017) and (b) *slice of bread*. The latter proves more appropriate taking into account the context: “then crush out all y<sup>e</sup> Moysture betweene 2. Trenchers, strowe some powder of Aloes vpon y<sup>e</sup> Plaster, and renewe it Morning & Evening” (f. 12r).

This section is followed by the application stage, which is characterised by the presence of vocabulary related to body parts. In the text, several parts of the body are mentioned: the head, the brain, the ears, the navel, the sinews, the wrists, among others. The linguistic realisation of this stage is carried out by means of verbs in the imperative mood. In Ferguson MS 43 the verbs in this section are *apply*, *anoint*, *drink* or *put* depending on the remedy. The dosage and duration of treatment are usually indicated by means of time and metrical units. Thus, this section instructs the reader on how to use the remedy with the verb of the sentence in the imperative: “and giue it y<sup>e</sup> partie three Mornings together” (f. 8r) or with a more attenuated form: “may be taken two spoonfulls everie <sup>other</sup> day” (f. 13v). The instructions can be very precise in terms of the suitable time to administer the remedy: “drinke of it in y<sup>e</sup> Morninge fasting, and at foure of y<sup>e</sup> Clocke in y<sup>e</sup> afternoone” (f. 2r-2v). On some other occasions, even if the time is specified through a sequence of events, it seems difficult to apply, given the fact that the patient needs to predict when the fit will occur: “binde it to yo<sup>r</sup> Wrists halfe an hower before y<sup>e</sup> fitt cometh” (f. 6v).

The final stage of recipes is the efficacy phrase, a tag phrase to indicate that the remedy is effective. In the medieval period, it was common to find formulas and routine idioms often given in Latin (Taavitsainen 2001, 104). Thus, *sanabitur* and



*probatum est* were frequently attested in medieval remedybooks, but other set phrases could also be found in English, such as “he will be whole.” In Ferguson MS 43 two efficacy phrases are registered in: “This hath byn often proued and hath holpen a great many of my owne knowledgē” (f. 6v) and “hath bin proued, but yo<sup>u</sup> must not putt in y<sup>e</sup> Oyle vntill it be boyled. I dare warrant it to helpe any bruise” (f. 9v).

When discussing the structural pattern of the genre, Lehto and Taavitsainen (2019) claim that “in the eighteenth century the scheme is no longer followed to the same extent as before and the efficacy phrases, for example, did not survive” (2019, 284). Instead, free formulas can be found. All in all, they do not appear in Ferguson MS 43 on a regular basis. Only once the efficacy phrase is witnessed formulated with a verb in the future tense. Thus, in a recipe entitled “For y<sup>e</sup> Wormes,” the efficacy phrase states that “it will destroy all manner of Wormes” (f. 8r).

#### 4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present article aims to acknowledge recipe books as important historical witnesses of women’s writings. In this sense, the recognition of the unique contribution of recipe books authored or compiled by women is underscored, as well as the expansion of the understanding of the history of medicine through the consideration of the genre. Recipe books bear witness to a practice in which women’s official role is greatly restricted to early modern social norm, where housewives were responsible for the wealth of the members of the household. This specific role of women is examined in an early eighteenth-century recipe book, Ferguson MS 43, focusing on both palaeographic, and linguistic and structural features.

Lady Stanhope’s recipe book is representative of other household recipe books in early modern England. Consequently, linguistically speaking the text under study conforms to the practices expected in Early Modern English recipe collections, especially in the personalisation of the contents to reflect the individual interests of its owner. Selecting those materials, the author created a personalised recipe collection suited to their needs. In this way, the manuscript reveals itself as a dynamic artefact whose contents can be modified and accrued. In fact, the blank pages in the volume could be left for future additions.

Linguistically speaking, the examination of the manuscript demonstrates that the standardisation process is not fully completed in this text. The scribe’s spelling shows major tendencies from the two previous centuries but is far from being fixed. In fact, the use of the graphemes <u> and <v>, <i> and <y>, and <i> and <j> presents practices compatible with old traditions and certain level of standardisation as well.

As for the textual organisation, the recipes are structured in the usual stages: the title stage, showing the purpose of the remedy, is realised by means of different linguistic formulas. After this, the contents are examined thoroughly to demonstrate that the household practice in the eighteenth century is heavily rooted in the medieval tradition, due to the great number of herbs that were already used in the Middle Ages to prepare medicines. All in all, the contents of this section show



innovative elements, such as the introduction of new plants and their derivatives found in the New World, such as *carana* and *tackame-hacka*. Along with these new ingredients, the recipes contain other items not easily available to any patient, such as *gold*, *ivory* or foreign wines. The introduction of such elements evidences the fact that the recipe collection was compiled for a prosperous home.

The third stage is the preparation phase, which shows continuity from previous methods and so does the application stage. Unlike these two sections, the efficacy phrase has little presence in the recipe collection. This fact is in line with the findings in other scholars' studies (for instance, Lehto and Taavitsainen 2019, 284) that mention the absence or gradual disappearance of the formula as a specific trait of the period.

Ferguson MS 43 proves to be a valuable recipe collection to better understand both the eighteenth-century linguistic usages and domestic medical culture, particularly in terms of female engagement with the text. Nonetheless, there is still much work left to do, including more detailed research on its authorship and textual transmission to find the sources of the material or other witnesses containing similar recipes.

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