

Italian Books of Secrets Database: Study Documentation

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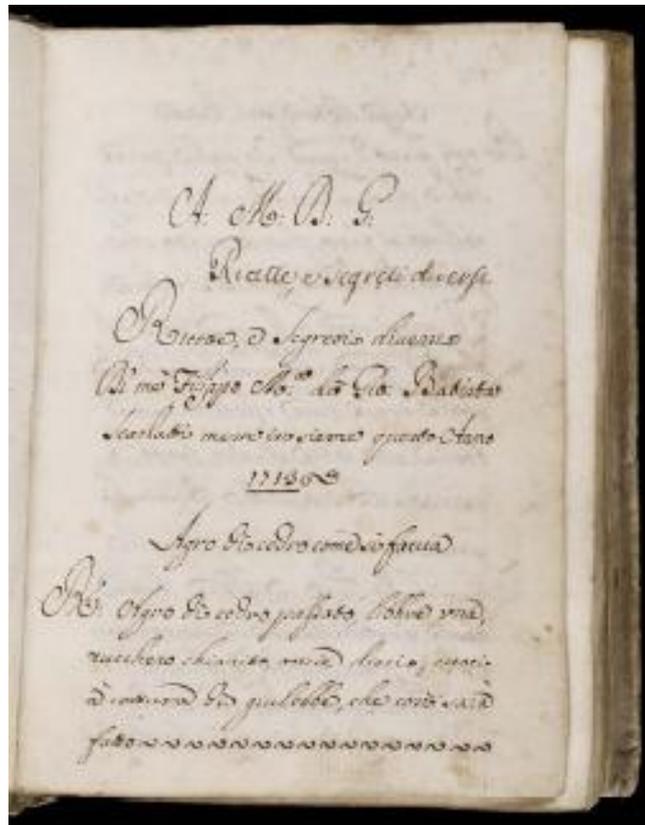


Figure 1. The first page of an eighteenth-century manuscript book of secrets. *Ricette e Segreti diversi di Me Filippo Maria De Giovanni Batista Scarlatti, etc.* 1713 (Wellcome MS 4383).

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1. Introduction

As a genre, ‘Books of Secrets’ (*Libri di Secreti* or, more generically, *ricettari*) first flourished during the middle ages. They were technical, crafts-based ‘how-to-do it’ manuals, ‘secret’ because they were written in Latin and available only to the privileged few. With the advent of the printing press, vernacular editions started to appear—the first in Italian was the *Opera Nuova intitolata Dificio di ricette* in 1527¹—and by the mid-sixteenth century secrets books were flooding off the presses. They tended to contain instructions for the making of medicines, recipes for preserving food, recipes pertaining to domestic management (such as making inks and removing stains), some for cosmetics and some ‘alchemical’ recipes, for refining chemicals. This mix was to remain characteristic of the genre, (although some dispensed with cookery and others with household management), which persisted well into the nineteenth century.

The importance of the genre lies in the fact that, as manuals for ‘domestic’ medicine with a huge circulation, they are central to the history of medicine and health. They reveal much about the kind of medical practices, approaches and ingredients adopted in the home amongst the general population, which may well have been quite different to those taught in Latin, at the university, or advocated by official pharmacopoeias. Closer study will enable us to track the dissemination of key developments in medical history, such as the shift from herbal to chemical medicine and from the ‘humoral’ to the ‘modern’ body.

Italy was at the vanguard of medical developments during the Renaissance and although the genre soon became popular in other European countries, many of these were Italian texts in translation. Despite this, there has been little research on Italian recipes and ‘secrets’ themselves, particularly in English, a state which this project was devised to rectify.

Given the thousands of ‘books of secrets’ and *ricettari* which appeared in print and manuscript between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, this database cannot claim to be representative of the genre as a whole.² We have nonetheless sought to include representative samples of different kinds of texts across the period so as to enable us to consider chronological changes and developments within the genre as a whole, as well as to compare the various kinds of text, such as the printed pamphlets, and manuscripts with the larger printed books.

The ‘Italian Books of Secrets Database’ project was initiated and overseen by Professor David Gentilcore (School of Historical Studies, University of Leicester) as a

pilot study based on sources held in London libraries, mainly the Wellcome Library and British Library. It was carried out and funded within the auspices of the Wellcome Trust Strategic Award in the 'Cultures and Practices of Health', which was based at the Universities of Warwick and Leicester, during the period 2003-8. The construction of the database and data entry were carried out by Dr Tessa Storey, whilst a research assistant in the School of Historical Studies, University of Leicester. Sandy Person, senior computer officer in the Faculty of Social Sciences, has provided invaluable advice and assistance throughout the preparation of the database. We would like to take this opportunity to thank both the Wellcome Trust and the University of Leicester for providing funds and infrastructural support in the realisation of this project.

2. What the Database Contains

2.i. Terminology

The term '*libri di segreti*' or 'books of secrets' has been widely used in the historical scholarship on the topic, and this reflects the titles of many of the individual volumes. However, these books/manuscripts were also often referred to as '*libri di ricette*' or *ricettari* (recipe or 'receipt' books) and the term '*rimedi*' (remedies) also appears frequently. I will use the term 'secrets' as a more general collective term here, whilst preferring 'remedies' or 'recipes' when referring to individual entries.

The titles and location of all the recipes in the selected volumes have been entered into the database. All recipes relevant to the maintenance of health and care of the body have been translated and transcribed in full in such a way as to enable scholars to search for remedies for specific ailments, or for specific ingredients within single volumes, and to make comparisons between volumes.

2.ii. Texts Entered in the Database

The earliest text is the anonymously published *Opera Nova Intitolata Dificio de Ricette* (*A new work entitled the house of recipes*), published in Venice in 1532 by Giovanantonio et Fratelli da Sabio. This was selected because it was the first successful Italian book of secrets to be published and was very popular, reprinted at least twelve times by 1550. (The *Dificio de ricette* accounts for 182 entries and is identified as Source Book 5.)

Also published in 1532 was the *Recettario Novo probatissimo a molte infirmita, e etiandio di molte gentilezze utile a chi le vora provare*. It was published in Venice, by Zuan Maria Lirico. It was selected because its publication date coincides with that of the better known *Dificio de ricette* but the two compilations were probably aimed at different markets. The *Recettario novo* is much shorter, smaller and printed on poorer quality paper in the style of a chapbook which might have been sold cheaply by a pedlar. I thought it would be interesting to be able to compare these two early texts, and to enable the comparison of this kind of very early chapbook with later ones. It also seemed valuable to be able to see to what extent the 'secrets' in 'Piemontese' (see immediately below) were taken from both these two earlier publications or, at least, to what extent his 'secrets' were already in the public domain. (The *Recettario novo* accounts for 80 entries and is identified as Source Book 8.)

The text which accounts for the majority of recipe entries in the Italian Books of Secrets Database is one of the most important and substantial of the sixteenth-century

Italian 'books of secrets': *De' Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese*. (Known as the 'Piemontese', it was probably by Girolamo Ruscelli). The first volume was published in 1555 and three additional volumes were rapidly issued. Within forty years it had already been reprinted seventeen times in Italian and translated into most European languages. For example, editions in English were already appearing as early as 1559. It was selected because it is a key text, eminently suitable for comparative purposes with any other lesser known Italian texts, and also of value to those studying 'books of secrets' published elsewhere in Europe. (These four 'Piemontese' books account for 1,714 recipe entries in the database, although each volume has been categorised separately, so as to facilitate comparisons between the different volumes. They are identified as Source Books 1-4)

Chronologically speaking the next two texts are both chap-books. The *Tesoro di varii secreti naturali* was printed in Venice by Gio. Battista Bonfadino in 1600. It is probably an editor's compilation. (It accounts for 27 recipes, and is identified as Source Book ID 6)

The *Centuria di Secreti Politici, Cimichi, e Naturali*, was written or compiled by Francesco Scarioni da Parma and was printed in 1626. It was published in Venice, Verona, Parma, Lodi, Milano, Bologna and Padova by Pietro Paolo Tozzi. (It accounts for 100 recipes, and is identified as Source Book ID 7).

The remaining *ricettari* entered in the database are eighteenth century manuscripts. The original intention was to find some manuscripts compiled in a domestic environment, for 'domestic' use, perhaps something compiled by a woman, since much of the scholarship on England and Germany has identified the role played by women in the making of and 'receipt' books. The aim was also to cover the chronological span evenly. However, this proved unfeasible on both counts and the chronological leap reflects the availability of suitable material in the Wellcome Library. Manuscripts from the late seventeenth century were either too long, virtually illegible, or clearly not compiled in a 'domestic' environment. Indeed, where there are any indications of authorship, texts always appear to have been authored by male health professionals, never by women.³ Sometimes this emerges from the text itself, as in comments about how much profit could be made on a particular mixture;⁴ receipts for payments received;⁵ books containing only the names of preparations but not their functions, suggesting that the compiler/owner of the recipes knew their functions so well that the remedies they were being made up for sale, not concerned with their uses,⁶ and so on. As a result, two of the final texts selected are drawn from modern published transcriptions of

manuscripts, (which also made the process of data entry much faster). The third is a manuscript from the Wellcome.

The *Libro contenente la maniera di cucinare e vari segreti e rimedi per malattie et altro* is from Reggio Emilia. It is the transcription of an eighteenth-century manuscript '*Libro di Casa*' from the archive of a family from Reggio Emilia.⁷ (Sadly an estimation of whether it dates from early or late in the century is not given by the editors.) The manuscript itself is divided into sections. The first part, 'Materie per uso di cucina', has not been entered into the database, because of the clear reference to the kitchen, and the way this has been separated off from a smaller section entitled '*Segreti e rimedi*'. This implies that kitchen cookery and medicinal preparations were no longer assimilated under the same rubric at this point in time. There is also a final section, 'Robe per uso di credenza', also not included here, which includes more of the technical secrets which were also once part of the more general '*Libro di segreti*'. Overall, the manuscript contains far more recipes for the kitchen than anything else. However, even within the sub-section '*Segreti e rimedi*' only 71 directly concern the medicine and care of the body, with a further 30 preparations whose function is not named, although they were probably used for the body. Thus approximately one-third of the recipes (101 out of 313) concern medicine and/or cosmetics. The greatest proportion (155) concern the care and maintenance of household furnishings. (The *Libro contenente la maniera di cucinare e vari segreti e rimedi per malattie et altro* accounts for 313 entries, and is Source Book ID 9)

The second late-eighteenth-century manuscript, recently edited, is drawn from a domestic archive, and is known as *Il Ricettario Savelli-Pratilli*.⁸ It is thought to have been compiled by the Sienese family, the Savelli of Sinalunga, and taken as part of a dowry in the second half of the eighteenth century when a daughter married into the Southern Italian family, the Pratilli in Capua. It is a small book, which the editors believe to have been written out by a couple of apothecaries, because of the way in which the text was laid written out: the use of abbreviations, conventional signs, terms etc.⁹ (*Ricettario Savelli-Pratilli* accounts for 113 entries and is Source Book ID 10.)

Finally, the manuscript from the Wellcome collection is *Ricette e Segreti diversi di me Filippo Maria De Giovanni Batista Scarlatti messe in sieme questo Anno 1713*.¹⁰ There is no indication of its provenance, although comments in the manuscript suggest the author may have lived in Tuscany, since he refers to the costs of buying ingredients in Florence and Livorno.¹¹ *Ricette e Segreti diversi* was started in 1713, but the volume was created over sixty years, by two men, the second presumably the son of the first, who took over its

compilation after twenty years. This is made clear on page 171 where a different hand notes: 'Aggiunta d'altri diversi segreti fatta da me Gio Batista di Filippo Scarlatti, alla quale ho dato principio questo presente anno 1735'.

The son continued adding recipes to the manuscript for forty years, since 1773 is the last date on which he refers to having been given a certain secret. Although the two men may have been health professionals, the numerous other secrets included (such as for paints, varnish, fireworks and inks), suggest that the volume was nonetheless intended as an all-purpose household manual, and was not merely a list of a doctor's remedies. (The *Ricette e Segreti diversi* accounts for 517 entries in total: 271 by the first author and 246 by the second. The two parts are identified as SB 11 and SB 12.)



Figure 2. Water colour and pen illustration of the plant known as *Cinoglossa*. Taken from *Ricette e Segreti diversi di Me Filippo Maria De Giovanni Batista Scarlatti*, 1713.

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3. Translations of plant names and technical terms

Where possible I have translated into English. There is considerable ambiguity however about what some of the plant names refer to. And, as the illustration above suggests, this was also a problem for writers and readers of recipes. Sometimes, though not often, elaborate descriptions of the plant are given or alternative names.

Given that the Italian Books of Secrets Database is a pilot project and the emphasis was to collect data rather than present it, I have not always achieved this. Those terms of which I am less sure have a {?} beside them. For plant ingredients I have relied mostly on a polyglottic dictionary of plant names.¹² For those which did not appear there I used John Florio's Italian-English Dictionary (both the 1690 printed version and the on-line 1611 version);¹³ Nicolas Culpeper's *Physical Directory*;¹⁴ the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) and the *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca*. I have also had free access to the glossary compiled by James Shaw as part of his project with Evelyn Welch on the apothecary trade in Renaissance Florence.¹⁵

On the whole I do not specify my source of information, except where it seemed problematic or uncertain, in which case it is indicated with an abbreviation in brackets. A brief list of these with abbreviations used can be found in the appendices.

4. Explanation of Tables and Fields

The data has been divided into four principal tables. Data on the source texts is contained in the Table 1 *Books of Secrets Table*. Data on the functions, aims, nature and use of the recipes are contained in Table 2 *Recipe Table*. Details of the ingredients, quantities and methods employed in making the recipes are in Table 3 *Ingredients and Methods Table*, whilst an English glossary of the ingredients used can be found in Table 4 *Glossary of Ingredients Table*.

Please note: The database must be deposited as a series of fields; but this is not the best way to view much of the information in this database, particularly for those interested in methods and comments rather than single word entries. It is recommended that the viewer creates a ‘form’ through which to view the information. This is a tool for presenting the data in a more user friendly way-particularly for anybody wishing to read all the information on a single record in a table at a glance. This can be done very easily. Once the database is open, and the first ‘home’ screen visible, click on the ‘Forms’ option and then on ‘Create form by using wizard’ option. Follow the instructions so all fields are made visible in the form, and if necessary go into ‘design view’ to alter the size of the boxes to accommodate the text and move them about as desired.

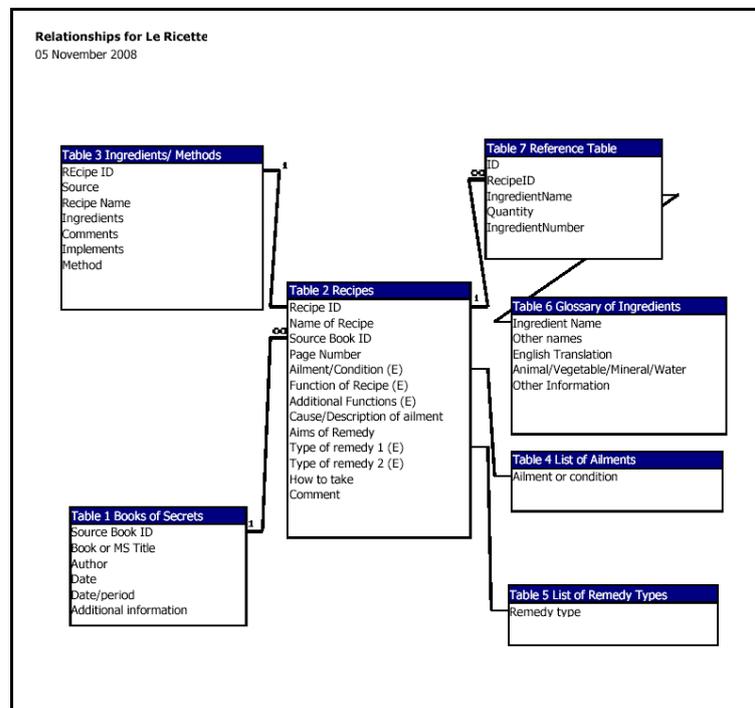


Figure 3. Showing the Relationships between Tables in the Database

Table 1. Books of Secrets Table

This table presents bibliographical information on the sources used. *Sourcebook ID* assigns each source a unique identifier. This number reflects the order in which texts were entered, and they are not in chronological order. Since Alessio Piemontese's *Secreti* was issued in four parts, which are sometimes found in a single edition, sometimes separately, for ease of referring to the contents of the separate parts, I have assigned them each a unique identifier. Thus the first part is SB1, the second is SB2 and so on. This is also true for the MS by the Scarlatti father and son, written over a period of about 60 years. To facilitate comparisons between the two parts, these are assigned SB11 (father) and SB12 (son).

By clicking on the + sign on the left of the table all the records in this volume can be called up; one way of searching on a specific volume.

Title The title of the volume

Author When known this is entered

Date For texts whose year of publication is known.

Date/Period For texts without a definite publishing date

Place/Publisher Records where and who published the text.

Additional Information This records additional comments about the title page, the layout of the text, and the present physical location of the source consulted.

Table 2. Recipe Table

This table records two kinds of information. Principally it contains the information given in the source texts about each individual recipe entry. Secondly, for the benefit of the researcher, secondary analytical categories have been added, to facilitate quick comparisons and searches amongst kinds of remedies.

The *Recipe ID* assigns a unique number to each recipe heading from the source text. (Sometimes several recipes are contained under a single recipe-heading. When this occurs these are not transcribed as separate recipes in the database, but are all entered under the same heading). This number is linked to the ingredients contained in the recipes-and by clicking on the + to the left of the table, a drop down list of the ingredients in a given recipe can be obtained.

Source book ID refers to the source from which the recipe has been taken.

Name of Recipe is an English translation of the recipe title –although when the meaning is unclear it has been left in the original. Sometimes words from the original have been placed in brackets; either because their meaning is obscure, or because they are particularly interesting.

Page Number refers to the page in the source from which this recipe was taken.

Aims of Remedy Where the author makes a comment as to how the remedy works this is recorded.

Cause/description of ailment Where the author explains the cause of the illness this is recorded.

How to take Any instructions about how the remedy is to be administered are recorded.

Comment This field records any further comments made in the text, such as circumstances in which the author learned about the recipe, detailed descriptions of its efficacy, references to costs and so on. It represents an attempt to preserve the textual integrity of the remedy, aspects which cannot be categorised or quantified.

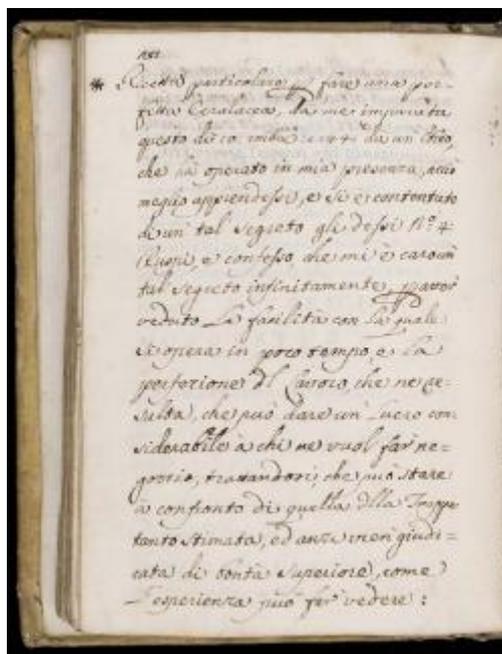


Figure 4. Shows the author's comments on when and from whom he acquired the recipe. From Scarlatti, *Ricette e Segreti Diversi*, c 251. With Permission of the Wellcome Library.

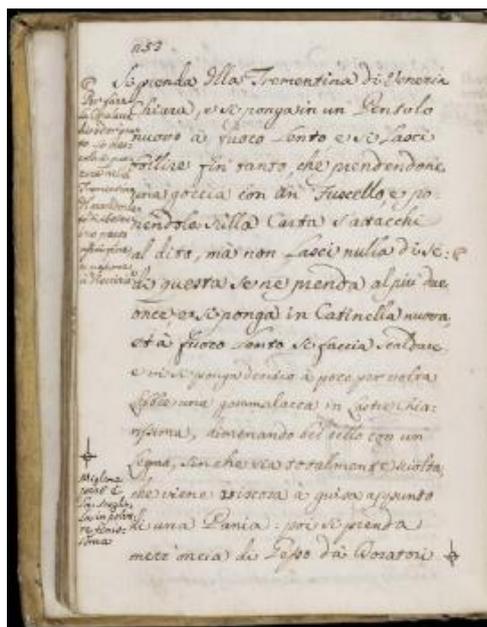


Figure 5. Shows the author's use of marginalia. From Scarlatti, *Ricette e Segreti Diversi*, c 253.

With Permission of the Wellcome Library.

As an exception to this, since huge numbers of the recipes are described as being ‘marvellous’ or ‘wonderful’, such generic comments have not been recorded.

My own comments, observations or questions about the recipes are also included here: whether noting difficulties in transcription, or observations on style or content.

The following fields do not contain material transcribed from the source, but categorise the recipe according to a number of criteria developed by the compiler. This is signalled with an (E)(editor) after the title of the field.

(E) *Type of remedy 1* *Type of remedy 2* These two fields assign the remedy to a category which describes it in pharmaceutical terms. The second field is used when more than one remedy is described under the same heading. The classifications used here are based on the work of Jean Pierre Bénézet.¹⁶ The meanings of these categories and terms are briefly explained in the glossary below, based on Bénézet. Classification has been difficult and in many cases a remedy could be described differently. For example, is a remedy in which a fruit is boiled down in water with honey until it is reduced, a syrup or a mellite? (ID 1090) I have opted for ‘syrup’ but in such cases the assignation of a classification has often been rather arbitrary. Uncertainties notwithstanding, it gives the researcher an overall sense of the principle remedy categories employed, and to link these to specific ailments.

A large number of remedies—about 10% of the total—did not fit into any of the official pharmaceutical classifications supplied by Bénézet and I have therefore added several more general classifications which are explained at the end of the glossary.

The remedy categories can be found listed in a separate table, *Drop down list of Remedy types*, which is linked into the recipe and ingredients and methods table. Clicking on the + sign to the left of the remedy name will result in the appearance of a drop down list of all the remedies which are assigned to this category. By clicking once more on the + sign, the ingredients of the specific remedies appear.

(E)Ailment / condition The aim of this field has been to enable researchers to quickly identify specific medical conditions, their remedies and hence the ingredients associated with them. For the sake of facilitating searches I have created ninety-two categories based on the names and stated aims of each remedy. In the course of this process some of the variety and subtlety of early modern understandings of the body have been lost, but it is expected that having selected the broader groups of remedies the individual researcher will be able to explore the more detailed information given in the remedy title or in the additional comments. Where possible I have kept as close as possible to early modern terminology and to humoral understandings of the body when deciding on these categories.

For example, although individual remedies distinguish between bloody flux, flux of the body, and other disorders of the bowel, such as constipation, these have all been placed in two general categories. One focuses on ailments characterised by loose stools: it includes flux, dysentery, diarrhoea, etc. The other includes disorders associated with blockages and hard stools. Likewise, rather than create several categories for disorders such as phthisis, coughs, catarrh and pleurisy these have all been categorised together as respiratory tract disorders.

I depart from an attempt to reflect early modern medical understandings of the body in a decision to categorise some ailments under broad umbrellas—such as ‘women’s health’ or ‘men’s health-fertility’ or ‘children’s ailments.’ Similarly both French disease and gonorrhoea are classified as ‘venereal diseases’, even though this was not how these illnesses were understood in early modern Europe. These categories explicitly reflect the interests of modern scholarship, and are intended to speed up searches, rather than to reflect early modern medical categories.

Inevitably, not every remedy is for only one ailment, in which case I have categorised under the first given in the title. However, I have made observations in the comments field on unusual combinations, such as a remedy intended for both chapping on the buttocks and spots on the face.

Decisions have frequently had to be made as to whether to classify something in one of several categories. As a rule, a condition which is attributed to another ailment, such as ‘skin sores caused by French disease’, will be categorised under the stated primary cause—Venereal disease.

(E) Function of Recipe This field shows a number, from 1-9, which represents a category assigned to it which aims to describe the function of the recipe.

One of the questions which this database is intended to answer regards the kind of information contained in each book. What proportion of each is devoted to medicinal remedies, to the preparation of cosmetics, to dispensing general household advice and to cookery recipes? This is intended to be used by researchers in several ways.

It should make it easy to search amongst the recipes according to specific interests. All the medicinal remedies, or all recipes which deal with the care of household fabrics—whether in specific texts, or all texts—can quickly be sorted and selected for further analysis. Categorising the recipes, naturally enough, creates its own problems—largely because there are some recipes which could be classed in more than one category. The categories adopted and the identifying number used are below:

1 Health/Hygiene Recipes

This category contains all recipes aimed at treating medical conditions – whether of mind or body—or specifically preventing disease.

2 *Advice and Regimen*

Recipes included here are those aimed at promoting general well being, good health and granting a long life, etc. Also general advice on the body, as in how to ascertain whether someone is a virgin.

3 *Beauty/cosmetics*

Humoral understandings of the body meant that maintenance of the skin and hair contributed towards overall bodily health; for example, by cleaning the blocked pores which might otherwise prevent expulsion of excess fluids, resulting in a humoral imbalance in the body. Recipes with a cosmetic function cannot then be

considered to lack a health-giving dimension. This said, the titles of many cosmetic recipes specify that they are aimed at modifying one's appearance in order to make it more pleasing, with no mention made of any health implications. For example, those intended to improve the texture and appearance or colour of skin and hair, or for example, to eradicate freckles. These have been classified separately from 'health and hygiene' recipes not because they are *not* related to health, but because it may be helpful for researchers to have a tool for quickly separating such remedies from the others.

On the other hand, there are many remedies intended to improve one's appearance by removing unsightly scars and boils produced by illness, such as French Disease or Leprosy. In such cases, recipes mentioning disease origins for the blemishes have been classified in group 1, linked to health.

4 The domestic environment: general cleansing and upkeep of soft furnishings/fabrics

These are recipes concerned with cleaning or scenting the house, in cases where no specific link is made with possible therapeutic functions-(in which case they would be assigned to category 1).

It also includes recipes intended to rid the home-rather than the body-of pests and those dedicated to the care of soft furnishings and clothing fabrics, but also including activities such as curing leather and dyeing textiles.

5 The domestic environment: Upkeep of wooden furniture, craft secrets such as, metalworking, jewellery making, writing and painting materials.

The recipes categorised here are dedicated to the upkeep of the hard surfaces and furnishings, as in the preparation of varnishes and lacquers for wood, recipes for plasterwork, the care of metals. They also concern writing materials and paintings; making inks, removing stains from paper, gilding books, making colours and so on. Recipes in this category also include the counterfeiting of stones, jewels, and metals.

(NB) I have not transcribed the recipes found in categories 4/5-unless specifically concerned with cleaning the house. The titles, page numbers etc are all present in the database for scholars wishing to follow up the references, but since the main purpose of this project was to explore medicinal recipes and ingredients, time

pressure meant these had to be left out-particularly since most of these craft-based recipes are extremely long and complicated.)

6 Food and drink

Recipes for foodstuffs and drinks other than wine are in this category.

7 Animals and plants

These are recipes which focus on agriculture and animal husbandry. For example, concerned with growing or preserving flowers and vegetables, increasing yields, and remedies for animals. (Only the titles have been transcribed.)

8 Practical jokes/tricks/clever feats

These are the recipes which teach people what were essentially party-tricks: such as making a lamp burn green, making meat look rotten when it isn't and so on. (Only the titles have been transcribed).

9 Oils, tinctures, chemicals and ointments

This category is for recipes making substances for which no specified use is mentioned. These may have been used alone, or-as in the case of some of the alchemical processes, in combination with other ingredients, but evidently it was presumed that the reader knew what these preparations were for. For example, "How to make Oils which do not go rancid", "For making sublimate of mercury," and "Tincture of Marte del Lemerj."

10 Wine and vinegar

Recipes concerning the making or maintenance of wines and vinegars are classified here. These were used in both a medicinal and a culinary context.

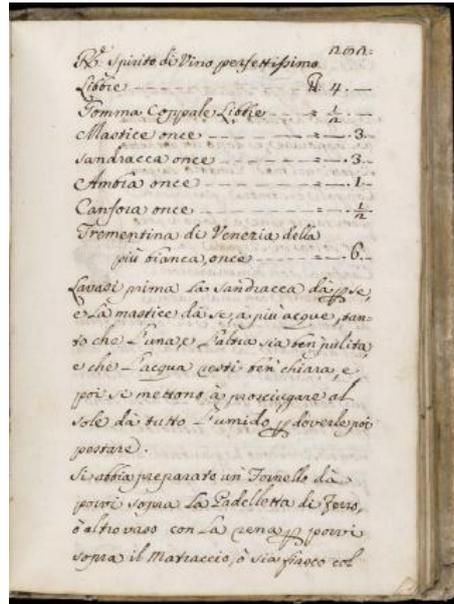


Figure 6. Shows typical layout of ingredients in later manuscripts and printed books of secrets. From Scarlatti, *Ricette e Segreti Diversi*, c 282. With Permission of the Wellcome Library.

Table 3. Ingredients and Methods Table

Information regarding the ingredients, implements and methods used in the recipes are stored in this table. This information has been separated from the recipe table to make it easier to consult.

Recipe Id This is the unique identifier assigned each recipe and corresponds to that found in the *Recipe Table*

Source book Id The number of the source text

Name The name of the recipe as given in the source-corresponding to that in the *Recipe Table*

Methods An abbreviated/translated description of how to prepare the recipe. The sources—particularly Alessio Piemontese—tended to group a number of ingredients together, and then give instructions as to what to do with those ingredients. Since the ingredients are given here in a drop down table, rather than being incorporated into the methodology, I have indicated groups of ingredients with a number in a bracket: as in ‘Place the ingredients at 4) in the mixture. Or “place ingredients 1-5 in a pot”. It is possible to identify these ingredients either through the ingredient *order* number assigned in the drop-down *ingredient sub-form*, or they are identified in the *ingredient* field.

Where I cannot find a translation for terms/words, I leave the text in the original.

Implements Although all implements needed are mentioned in the methodology field, this separate field notes when more unusual implements, pots and tools are called for.

Comment Any additional information, whether comments from the text, interesting use of language in the original, or my observations.

When viewing the ingredient and method table as a table, (not in form view) it is possible to bring into view the related data from the recipe table and the drop down ingredients list, by clicking on the small box containing a + sign to the left of the row. The first + will bring into view the related *recipe table* information, and this brings a second + into view, which when clicked, brings the ingredients into view. This is the ingredient sub-form. (see below)

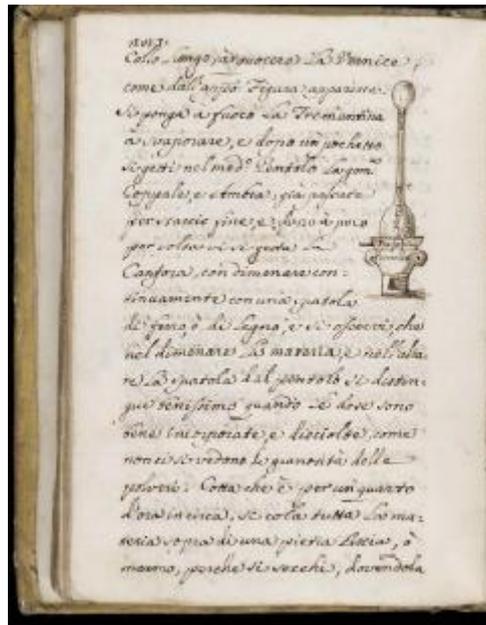


Figure 7. Shows the author's sketch of tools needed for making varnish. From Scarlatti, *Ricette e Segreti Diversi*, c 251. With Permission of the Wellcome Library.

Ingredient sub-form

This is viewed as a drop down table within the Ingredient and Method table, by clicking on the + signs for a given recipe. It is however immediately integral to view if the table is being viewed in 'form view'.

Ingredient name. This shows the name of each ingredient. For ease of alphabetical searches the plant/mineral/animal name appears first, with any

descriptors (roots, leaves, bark etc.), afterwards. Commas have been omitted for the sake of consistency.

Quantity. Shows the quantities of given ingredients as given, when they are stated. For a list of abbreviations used see the glossary below.

Order Number. The order in which the ingredients were entered into the database, usually reflecting the order in which they are stated in the text. This is only of interest when the reader is following the methodology. (See Method above)

Table 4. Drop-Down List of Ailments

This is the glossary of ailment categories used as a drop down menu in the ‘ailment’ field of the Recipe table. These categories are explained above. By clicking on the + to the left of each ailment a drop down list will appear of all the recipes –with associated data from the recipe table-intended to treat this specific ailment.

Table 5. Drop-Down list of Remedy Types

This is the glossary of ailment categories used as a drop down menu in the ‘Type of remedy’ field in the Recipe Table. The categories are explained in the glossary section. By clicking on the + to the left of each remedy type, a drop down list will appear of all the recipes –with associated data from the recipe table- which fall into this particular category.

Table 6. Drop down list and glossary of ingredients table

This table contains the names of 2, 293 ingredients which appear in the texts. The aim has not been to provide a systematic/detailed glossary (i.e. as in providing Latin names and full explanations), but more to provide a working tool for the majority of the entries in the database. For those interested in knowing more about the plants themselves and their medicinal uses detailed herbals and glossaries are available. For example, 858 English terms with their Latin equivalents and medicinal uses can be found on the website of the recently finished project ‘The Health of the Cecils’s, (<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/History/Research/cecils/project>)

In Italian, Ernesto Riva’s text on medicinal plants provides a comprehensive explanation of the medicinal uses for and properties of 400 plants, with a detailed historical background.¹⁷

David Gentilcore's *Italian Charlatans Database*, deposited in the AHDS archive as SN 5800 has a lengthy glossary of remedies and ingredients.

Ingredient name. This is the name as found in the source-or, in its most commonly used variant

Other names. This shows other variations or spellings which appear, including modern spellings.

English Translation. This is supplied where possible. (See notes on translations above)

Animal/Vegetable/Mineral. A letter indicates the nature of the ingredient, which also includes the category 'H' for specifically human body parts or waste products, for those wishing to search ingredients according to their category. Those unknown are left blank. As are those containing multiple ingredients-creams, unguents, etc. Waters made with plant extracts are defined as of Vegetable origin.

Additional comments. Supplementary information taken from the source used to provide the translation

Notes on entries

There are some ingredients which the modern researcher may find hard to track down, given that the term commonly in use in the sixteenth century may be different to more modern versions. Most striking are honey, which appears as '*Mele*' (not to be confused with apples: *pomi appie*). Also *Zafframe* for saffron.

In the glossary I have not made a distinction between the juice of a plant and the plant itself; so 'Succo d'appio' is categorised under the plant 'Appio'. This because the juice is extracted from the plant, with nothing added, unlike a 'water'. However, the fact that juice is specified is noted in the ingredient field. Likewise, when an ingredient is qualified in a way which seems only to measure the quality of the ingredient, as in whether it is 'excellent' sugar, this is not noted in the glossary, but appears in the ingredients field.

Table 7. Reference Table: Ingredients Subform

This has been created to assist with consistency of data entry and it is not intended to be of use to the researcher.

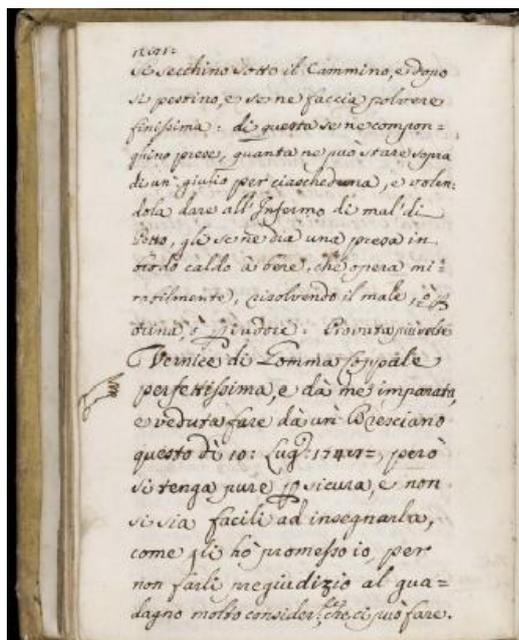


Figure 8. Shows the typical use of the 'pointing finger' to draw the reader's attention to something in the text. From Scarlatti, *Ricette e Segreti Diversi*, c 285. With Permission of the Wellcome Library.

Appendix

5. Bibliography

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- Anonymous. *Tesoro di varii secreti naturali. Tratta da diversi Autori famosissimi e più volte sperimentati in molte persone. Opera molto giovevole alla sanità de' corpi humani. Con la dichiarazione di molti dubij. Et il modo di far e conservar il Vino*. Venice: Gio. Battista Bonfadino, 1600.
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Ricettario Fiorentino, 1696. (RF)

Shaw, James. Glossary (JS)

Torresi, Antonio. *Il Ricettario Savelli-Pratilli*: (AT)

Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca, compendiato, secondo la Quarta, ed ultima impression di Firenze, cominciata 1729. (BL 1560. 1889)

AR=Antidotarium Romanum

AT=Antonio Torresi

AL=Alchemical Lexicon (Martinus Rulandus)

ATS=Alessio the Secretes

DSP=Dizionario dei Simboli Pesi e Misure Alchemiche

DTGC=Dictionary of Traded Goods and commodities

JF=John Florio

JS=James Shaw

KCS=Kramers Alternate names of Chemical Substances

MM=Materia Medica

NC=Nicholas Culpeper

RF=Ricettario Fiorentino

When all these failed I have also turned to a range of web sites for the odd term:

www.british-history.ac.uk/report

(Dictionary of Traded Goods and commodities 1550-1820 (2007)(Abbreviation, DTGC)

www.labirintoermetico.com/01Alchimia/

(Dizionario_dei_Simboli_Pesi_e_Misure_alchemiche.pdf -) (Abbreviation DSP)

<http://www.historiabari.eu/Articoli/Tessere>

www.biodiversita.info/

www.plantpress.com/dictionary

www.funghiitaliani.it

www.kramers.org/chemical.htm (Alternate names of chemical substances) (Abbreviation KCS)

6. Glossaries



Figure 9. Shows author's drawings of specific implements and tools needed and his description of them.

From Scarlatti *Ricette e Segreti Diversi*, c 252. With Permission of the Wellcome Library.

6.i. Glossary of Commonly Encountered Terms for Measurements and Utensils	
Boccale (bocc)	About one quart
Bicchiere (bic)	A Glass
Carrato (car)	4 grains
Ciottola (ciot)	Bowl
Denari	Small coin or weight: corresponds to 24-30 grams (AT)
Dramme (drm)	apothecaries' weight=60 grains, 1/8 th oz
Gotto	A mug or glassful: elsewhere, 4oz
Grani (gr)	The weight of 4 grains of barley. According to the <i>Vocabolario Della Crusca</i> , 1866, it weighs a little over a modern gram. 24 <i>grani</i> made one <i>scrupolo</i> ; 3 <i>scrupoli</i> made a <i>dragma</i> .(AT)
Inghistare (Ing)	A wine jar
Libre (lbs)	1 lb: 12 oz: 370-400 grams (according to the region)
Matraccio	A Measuring Flask
Once (oz)	Ounces
Pista	?
Pugno (pug)	A handful

QB	Quanto Basta (=as required)
Scodella (scod)	Bowl
Scrupolo (scr)	Apothecaries' weight =20 grains or 1/3 rd of a drachm, or 1/24 th oz.
Un 'pane' di zucchero.	A loaf of sugar
Un cesse	A basket
Un ottavo, etc.	One-eighth (unclear of what)
Un quarto uno	?
Un quattrino	A Small Coin (unclear whether in cost or weight)

6.ii. Implements and Tools	
Albarello :	A Stillatory, limbeck, a certain measure, a gally-pot
Ampollette	An ampoule
Bocale	It carries about an English quart, made of earthenware or glass.
Boccia:	Plain round vial or cupping glass,
Canevacchio:	A piece of canvas or cloth.
Canevaccio	Rough hemp, used as a sieve.
Catinella/o	A small basin or bowl
Cazza di ferro	An Iron ladle
Cucurbita	A distilling vase. Rounded with a wide neck
Fecce:	Dregs, lees, filth of honey, oil, wine etc.
Inghistara	A special wine jar
Madiella	Something you put a mixture in. Probably a dough trough, or basin.
Mastello	A large hooped wooden vessel, like a vat.
Matraccio	A Glass flame proof container used for chemical experiments
Orinale di vetro	A distilling vase (Cucurbita) Probably similar to that used for collecting urine: a rounded vase with a wide neck
Pezze	Cloths, rags, pieces of linen
Pezzette di levante	Spanish clouts, or painting coths to rub women's faces

	with, especially red.
Pignatta	Any earthen pot or pipkin, to boil things in.
Remolazzo	?
sacchetto aguzzo	A jelly bag
Spaghi	Pieces of pack-thread
Stamegna	A muslin
Storta	A spherical receptacle with a large flat base and long narrow neck used for distilling.
Tegame	Frying pan; crucible, melting-pot, shallow pan
Teglia	Crucible?, pie dish
Trocisci/Trocisco	A round pill formed from various powders.
Un fornello da riverbero	A specialised oven used in Alchemy.
Vaso	A jug

6.iii. Glossary of Ailments and Conditions	
Apoplexy (apoplessia)	A stroke
Apostema	Abscess
Cancaro	Inflammation of a limb accompanied by intense heat and ubrning. (Matthioli, npp)
Carioli	In one translation, from JF, this is worms in the teeth. But another translation it is 'knobbes' as in a woman's vagina.
Cimici	Bedbugs
Crepature	Cracks, chapping, ruptures, hernias
Crescenze ficose	Flesh which ulcerates and resembles open figs. (Mattioli: npr)
Dropsy (Idropsia)	A morbid condition, characterised by accumulation of water in serous cavities and connective tissues of body
Eresipole /Erisipila	Erysipelas. A kind of inflammation, ulcer or swelling full of heat and redness. Some call it 'running scurvy' or St. Anthony's fire.
Fistula	A long, pipe-like ulcer
Flusso	A discharge, flux

Gozzo	Goitre
La renelle /renella	Kidney stones
La Volatica / Fuoco / volatico / Mal volatico	A skin rash. Mattioli also calls it <i>impetigine</i>
Lendine	Nits/scurf/dandruff
Mal di fianco	Perhaps kidney pain (or is this like <i>mal di costa</i> , which is pleurisy, which manifests as severe pain in the side?)
Mal di pondi /pondis	Dysentery
Mal di punta	Stitches
Milza	Spleen
Oppilation	Obstruction
Panarizio /Panarizzo	A callous on the finger tips or toes
Pedeseli / Pedicelli	Grubs or wormlets breeding between the skin and the flesh
Pedignoni	Chillblains
Petecchie	Freckles or measles
Pettignone	The groin/public bone around where the hair grows
Phthisi / I Tisici	Tuberculosis
Piattole	Cockroaches/Black beetles
Pidocchi / lendini	Head Lice
Podagra: gotta dei piedi	Gout
Porotide	<i>Poro</i> 'is the brawn or hard thick skin which joyneth and fasteneth the breaking of gristiles and bones. Also a kind of hard stone. And Pori are swellings proceeding of thick and earthly humours flowing unto them'. (JF)
Porri	Warts, verrucas
Porrifichi	Piles/Haemorrhoids
Pulci / Pulesi	Fleas
Rappe	Puckers or wrinkles
Renella	Kidney stones
Rogna	Also 'Rogna Grassa': Scab, scabies, mange, itch or scurvy
Scolatura /discolatione/La scolatione:	Gonorrhoea. This is linked to an ailment of the kidneys, perhaps a flux perceived to be from the kidneys

Scrofula	Disease of the neck, known as the 'King's Evil'
Squiantia	A disease of the throat called Asquince or Squinancy
Stincature	Bruises on the shins
Tencone / pannocchia	A plague sore, or a 'boil about the privies'
Tegna / Tigna,	'The head-scurf, the dead scald. Tegnoso, is head-scaldy, skurvy'.

6.iv. A Guide To Remedy Categories Used Here¹⁸

They are classified according to three levels: the mode of absorption, the consistency of the medicine, and its form.

Taken by Mouth: Liquids

Bouillon-soups: Liquids, cooking animal substance, dietary/medical, hot and wet, enriching. Food for the sick. (557-8)

Decotions: Any aromatic part of plant cooked/infused in water or wine, used alone or mixed or dissolved. (558-560)

Infusions: Pouring a boiling liquid on a medical substance to extract soluble parts. Some mix with maceration in cold water. (560-561)

Simple distilled waters: The plant is put in the cucurbit/gourd part of the alembic and some water. Vapour is used to extract the volatile part of plant (561)

Complex distilled waters: These are veritable medicines, mixtures of simple waters, or mineral elements. They contain some sugar, which differentiates them from potions. It is a sweetener, not for conserving it. Waters are distinguished from confections and electuaries, which are viscous or semi-solid. Distilled waters are clear.(561-563) Complex waters using salts, or sugars are mostly employed externally because of their toxicity. Those of vegetable mixes are taken internally.

Juices: Problematic to class. They don't figure in pharmacopoeias as medicines. Nor are they simples. They were primary Galenic materials, prepared in the workshop. (566)

Wines: Seen as fundamental component 'because of intoxicating power'. Seen as a vehicle for medicine/remedy. Red wine more nourishing, re-establish heat, spirit, blood. White is more subtle, more therapeutic. (567)

Vinegars: Useful as solvent. Acidity makes it easy to conserve.

Elixirs: a tincture of mixed quintessential substances, pure, for internal use. Or, liquors, purest part of substance, for internal use. 16th century preference for complex polypharmacy.

Potions: A mixture or dissolution of several powders, confections, electuaries, syrups in diverse liquors, taken by mouth. Can be dissolved in waters, or alcoholic solution. The syrup can be simple . Quick to make. (572-3)

Juleps: From the Arabic, meaning rose water. They are like syrups, with half water half sugar-though becoming less sweet. A pleasant medicine-a potion of mixed distilled waters and syrups. (572- 574).

Loochs: From the Arabic. A thick liquid medicine, syrupy, with an oil suspension in it. particularly used for respiratory tract infections

Syrups: Very sugary liquid medicines. You can have simple and complex syrups. They are transparent, unlike loochs which are cloudy. They are filtered (576)

Taken by Mouth: Soft Consistency

Robs: Fruit juices with a thick consistency. Like confections: usually simples, (580)

Jelly:

Mellites: Cooked petals, juice or infusion of the plant, with honey, to a soft consistency, over low flame, or in the sun in a bottle during the summer, to create 'digestion.' Often, honey was aromatised with rose and violet. Especially for digestive tract.

Conserves. Flowers or fruits, conserved with sugar or honey. Preparation as with mellites and comfits. Often left for 30, 40 days in the sun in sealed containers.

Comfits and condits. Synonymous with one another by 16th century and similar to preserves. Solid consistency. Preparation as with confectionary-blanching in boiling water, then cooked in syrup

Electuaries or confections. Very widespread general term. Confections are solid, electuaries are soft. Sugar or honey are main ingredient, to sweeten the bitter vegetables. (587)

Opiates. Presence of opium distinguishes this.

Taken by Mouth: Solid or powdered medicaments.

Pastilles: flat and rounded.

Pills: spherical, small.

Trochisques: oval, conical or cubical-

(the above owe their consistency to dryness and presence of gums and mucilage.

Tablets: Flat and parallel sides.

Pills and trochisques have unpleasant taste, or are used for purging.

Pastilles and tablets are sugary.

Rectal

Clysters: An enema

Suppositories: In the form of an acorn, replaces a clyster, using honey, soap, egg white.

Taken Via the Skin

Lotions: Mostly washing with mineral ingredients- pharmaceutical from 17th century. (609) previously the term 'waters' was used (Where I find fluid external remedies –usually containing waters and minerals I put them in this category).

Oils: Mostly used hot

Liniments/embrocation: basically the same thing. Liniments are oily medicines, more viscous than oil, less so than unguents. Used externally. Deriving from unguents probably. More fluid than most dermatological remedies. Aim to permeate the skin quickly, to calm pain, etc.

Embrocation- liquid destined for skin hygiene.

Soft

Waxes Unguents and plasters: These are divided according to whether they are held together with oil, wax, pitch or resin and their consistency. Waxes and unguents correspond to contemporary creams and pomades.

Waxes/cere: are thicker and harder. Some liquefy on contact with the skin. These and unguents are massaged, rubbed on the skin.

Unguents: are richer in lipids (vegetable oils or animal fats). They spread more easily. They may have some wax, but not so much as to prevent their liquefying on contact with skin.

Plasters: are characterised by their strong adhesive quality, thanks to the presence of pitch or resin. Used externally. Friction is not used. They make a stable continuous covering on the skin. Used particularly by barbers/Surgeons rather than physicians.

Pomanders: Balls made with scented resins, balsams. Carried .

Sachets: A cloth container, carried on the body.

Cerecloth or sparadrap: Basic ingredients are Ceruse, white lead pigment, litharge, olive oil and myrrh, but 16th century many additions to this. These are used to impregnate linen/cloth.

Sinapism: A poultice or plaster using mustard powder.

Cataplasm: This is a thick medicament, applied on the skin: a poultice-often using clay or meal or bread, spread on cloth, with adhesive properties.

Cautery: Used for cauterization-burns on touch. Using heat, or corrosive agents to cause blistering.

Categories which I have added:

Crushed herbs (may have liquids added): These are herbs which are not boiled, or left to infuse. They are either left intact, or crushed, sometimes with another ingredients added-(such as honey or water) and placed directly on the wound. They are effectively used as a kind of poultice, but the ingredients lack the adhesive qualities of a true poultice as described above; they are much simpler and faster to make.

Lessia (Lissia): This is based on ashes which were used in the making of soaps and other cleaning products. Sometimes a liquid is added. They are often used for the hair. Often it is assumed the reader knows how to make a lessia.

Magical: By 'Magical' I do not mean the use of an incantation or formula, but rather a remedy which does not need to be eaten, or applied to the body: something which by virtue of being carried, or worn, or actions taken, has healing properties of its own. Sometimes sympathetic magic clearly underlies the otherwise inexplicable connection between the objects and the patient. Dancing the Tarantella as a cure for a spider bite for example. (ID 589) Others are more obscure. For example, ID 3011 is a remedy for a sore throat in which you take a crimson thread, threaded in a needle, take a live mole, and pass the needle through it's heart, until it is covered in blood, then leave to dry and then tie around the neck. Presumably the redness of the thread, and some properties associated with moles, explain why this should cure or prevent sore throats.

Less easy to explain is this magical remedy (ID 2693) for one who has been enchanted. 'Urinate through the neck of the shirt belonging to the person who has entangled you and through the right arm and you will get free.'

Other External medicament: This is a general category for remedies applied externally which simply differed too greatly from those described by Bénézet.

There are many foundations/rouges for cosmetic purposes, which do not really fit into the medicinal categories: they do not contain enough wax, or gum to be plasters, etc.

Many involve crushed herbs, minerals and sometimes a binding agent like honey, -rather than the oils/fats mentioned by Bénézet. This seems to exclude them from categories like 'embrocation/liniment' or 'unguent'.

Other Oral medicament: Sometimes a distilled water is produced using animal body parts, rather than purely vegetable or mineral ingredients-in which case I would class it as 'other.' Also, remedies involving food-stuffs and other assorted ingredients will be categorised here.

Animal body parts: Very often excrement is used in remedies –usually in powdered form- and this is not mentioned in Bénézet's classifications. Sometimes, if it seems otherwise to be a fairly standard remedy type-perhaps the dried excrement being used as the firm ingredient in a poultice, then I describe it as a poultice. Otherwise, it is classed here. More extreme and obvious are recipes such as ID 421 which calls for a fish to be opened and placed on the breasts. Or the many which use lungs, livers, galls and so on.

Sometimes animals are cooked and crushed, the ashes mixed into a liquid to drink.

Poultice (honey base): Many external remedies call for ingredients to be mixed with honey and applied to skin. I am unsure how Bénézet would categorise these, so have called them honey-based poultices.

Waters (For external application) There are several remedies using mixtures of scented waters and other ingredients for external application. It is not clear how they should be classified.

7. Notes

- ¹ The most comprehensive study of the genre is by William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, (Princeton, New Jersey; Princeton University Press, 1994). An earlier work, which catalogues and describes a great many books of secrets, in various languages, is John K. Ferguson, *Bibliographical Notes on Histories of Inventions and Books of Secrets*. 2 vols. (London: Holland Press, 1959).
- ² For a fuller bibliography of sources held in the UK see the appendix.
- ³ This may of course reflect the purchasing/acquisition criteria of the Wellcome Library. Possibly the aim has been to purchase manuscripts owned/compiled by medical professionals. Further research would be needed in Italian libraries/archives to identify any authored by women.
- ⁴ Wellcome MS 3742: Panelli, Francisco and another. 1675-1748. *Segreti di diversi specifici per vantaggio della salute, tanto in Fisica, come in Chimica e spagirica*.
- ⁵ Wellcome MS 4202. *Ricette per diverse Malattie*: (c1775).
- ⁶ Wellcome MS 4908. *Varie Segreti ad uso di medicinali da servirsine ne bisogni occorrenti*: (c1770).
- ⁷ Giulio Bizzarri e Eleonora Bronzoni, eds., Intro. Emilio Faccioli, *Libro contenente la maniera di cucinare e vari segreti e rimedi per malatie et altro. 'Libro di casa' di una famiglia reggiana del Settecento*. (Bologna: Il lavoro editoriale, 1986).
- ⁸ Antonio P. Torresi, ed., *Il Ricettario Savelli-Pratilli. Un manoscritto senese del Settecento di farmacopea, gastronomia e tecnica artistica*. (Ferrara: Liberty house, 2001)
- ⁹ Torresi, ed., *Il Ricettario Savelli-Pratilli*, 11-16.
- ¹⁰ This volume is MS 4383 of the Western Manuscripts collection in the Wellcome Library, London.
- ¹¹ *Ricette e Segreti diversi*, c251.
- ¹² A.K Bedevian, *Illustrated Polyglottic Dictionary of Plant Names in Latin, Arabic, Armenian, English, French, German, Italian and Turkish Languages* (Cairo: Argus and Papazian Presses, 1936).
- ¹³ John Florio, *Vocabolario Italiano e Inglese, a Dictionary, Italian and English*; Eds. G. Torriano. T. Warren for J. Martin, J. Allestry, and T. Dicas, (London; R. H. [Ralph Holt] & W. H. [Horton] for R. C. [Richard Chiswell], etc., 1659. Sold by Thomas Sawbridge, etc.: London, 1690,
John Florio's 1611 Italian/English Dictionary: Queen Anna's New World of Words.
(<http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/florio/>)

- ¹⁴ Nicolas Culpeper, *Physical Directory or a Translation of the dispensatory made by the colledge of physitians of London*, etc. Second Edition, (London; Peter Cole, 1650)
- ¹⁵ This is soon to appear as a book: *Selling Health in Renaissance Italy: Consumers and Consumption in the Tuscan Apothecary, 1350-1600*.
- ¹⁶ Jean Pierre Bénézet, *Pharmacie et médicament en Méditerranée Occidentale, XIIIe-XVIe siècles*, (Paris : Champion, 1999).
- ¹⁷ Ernesto Riva, *L' Universo delle piante medicinali: Trattato storico, botanico e farmacologico di 400 piante di tutto il mondo*, (Bassano del Grappa: Ghedina e Tassotti, 1995).
- ¹⁸ This is based on Bénézet, *Pharmacie et médicament*, op. cit.