

Pharmaceutical and Medical Miscellany, including possible extracts from GIOVANNI SARACINO, *Recettario di Galieno*, and a untitled recipe collection attributed to PIETRO D'ABANO

In Italian with some Latin, manuscript on paper

Northeastern Italy (Veneto), c. 1490-1530; before 1533?

143 + 5 folios on paper, watermarks similar to Briquet no. 5167, Croissant, Brescia, 1336, Briquet no. 2572, Balance, Geisenfeld(?), 1493, Briquet no. 12165, Oiseaux, Verona, 1520, Briquet no. 9467, Lettres assemblées, Vicenza, 1527, 1538, Briquet no. 3406, Chapeau, Bergamo, 1524, 1525, Briquet no. 2599, Balance, Udine, 1512, modern foliation, upper outer recto, 1-143 and 1-5 (collation, I. ff. 1-7v, i^s [-1, rough-edged stub remains where leaf has been canceled or excised]; II. ff. 8-25v, ii¹² [+1 +2 +15 +16 +17 +18; singletons ff. 8 and 9 have been sewn onto the beginning of the quire and bifolia ff. 26-29 have been sewn onto the end]; III. ff. 26-82v, iii¹⁰ iv¹² [-9; leaf lacking between ff. 43 and 44, but for a corner, now loose, with loss of text; its companion leaf, f. 39, is now loose in the quire] v^s vi-vii¹² viii⁴; IV. ff. 83-104v, ix²²; V. ff. 105-143v, x⁴⁸ [-36 -41 -42 -43 -44 -45 -46 -47 -48; rough-edged stubs remain where leaves have been canceled or excised, with loss of text between ff. 139 and 140] VI. ff. 1-5v, xi¹ [+2; singleton f. 2 slipped into loose quire]), layout varies, I. 1-7v, no ruling (justification 120-180 x 106-135 mm.), ff. 2-7v, written in cursive in fifteen to twenty-one long lines, with f. 1 written in a different cursive hand, II. ff. 8-25v, no ruling (justification 171-180 x 128-132 mm.), written chiefly in an elegant humanistic cursive band showing cancelleresca influence in twenty to twenty-two long lines (ff. 8-21v), with at least three additional cursive hands in the final leaves of the booklet; III. ff. 26-82v, ruled in crayon with one full-length vertical bounding line and one full-length horizontal bounding line (justification 160-172 x 138 mm.), written above top line in a humanistic cursive script with some Gothic letterforms, sometimes in thick, calligraphic strokes, but more often in close, regular strokes showing some mercantesca influence in eighteen to twenty-two long lines, initials set off from the text and sometimes enlarged, with embellishment, rubrics in red, one- to two-line red initials (ff. 40v-79v), rough anatomical drawing on f. 40, possibly of a distilling apparatus, triangular diagram on f. 77v, later additions in at least four hands; IV. ff. 83-104v, no ruling (justification 185-195 x 133-136 mm.), written in an elegant, compact humanistic cursive in thirty-two to thirty-six long lines, paraps and pointing hands likely added by the scribe, additions in a later hand on f. 98v, including two circular diagrams; V. ff. 105-143v, ruled in crayon with full-length vertical bounding lines (justification 168-172 x 131-133 mm.), written in the same hand as booklet III, above top line, in sixteen to eighteen long lines, one- to two-line initials in scribe's dark brown ink, sometimes with embellishment, additions in a number of hands; VI. ff. 1-5v, no ruling, written in three different cursive hands, some text loss throughout along the outer edges on account of trimming, wear, and dampstaining, outer corners of leaves torn and folded in booklet I, small hole in f. 102, possibly from a flame, with some loss of text, but overall in very good condition. CONTEMPORARY BINDING of "carta rustica" pasteboards, with quires sewn on three parchment thongs, some wear to spine and outer edges of boards, with horizontal tears along the fore-edges of the upper and lower cover where fore-edge ties may once have been attached, boards dampstained, circular stain on bottom board, sixteenth-century inscription on the inside of the lower board. Dimensions 201-213 x 150-160 mm.

In its original unassuming binding and including more than 750 recipes, the present volume offers a vivid glimpse into the actual teaching and practice of medicine in Renaissance Italy. This is not a typical school book; rather it is a working compilation. A group of physicians or pharmacists put together the booklets from a vast range of sources (including Galen, Saracino, Pietro d'Abano), noting what purposes recipes served, how they were tried and proven (and sometimes even on whom), and occasionally what prayer to say when undergoing a specific procedure. The Venetian dialect and occasional Venetian name offers fruit for further study.

PROVENANCE

1. This manuscript has been assembled from a number of discrete booklets, all originating in northeastern Italy, judging from watermarks and distinctive orthography. The first two booklets may have been produced as early as the late fifteenth century, based on the evidence of watermarks and script, but the bulk of the manuscript originated in the early sixteenth century, and was almost certainly bound before 1533. An administrative note on the inside of the back cover records obligations for that year: "A di 20 aprilo [1]533 / toni de zende scribere[?] / de dar per tanto formento libra 3 soldi 86 / a di [...?] iacomo de santori de / dar tanto farmento libra 3."

More than that, however, this inscription may identify an early user and contributor to this volume. The same person who wrote it (perhaps the Tonio Zende who is mentioned in it?) also added to the manuscript's contents (see ff. 115v, 138, 139, and 141). These additions indicate that this person was probably a medical specialist (eg. a pharmaceutical recipe added on f. 115v, in a space left blank by the original scribe). In fact, this person may have been one of a group of apothecaries or physicians collaborating on this working collection.

Alternations in hands (including this one) across multiple booklets strongly suggest that this volume was produced, and possibly even used, in a collaborative context. While in some booklets, notably II and IV, the primary scribe of each booklet copied a single free-standing stint, with subsequent hands filling empty spaces at the end of the booklet or adding marginal or interlinear notes, the main scribe of booklets III and V, who was the manuscript's most prolific scribal contributor, continued to add to these booklets after subsequent hands had added recipes and notes of their own, with his additions very clearly following theirs (see, for example, ff. 79v-80 and ff. 121v-122). These two substantial booklets, at the very least, were likely produced collaboratively, with the primary copyist continuing to make additions even after his largest stints were completed.

This kind of accretive composition makes sense if this manuscript was the work of medical practitioners themselves, all working in the same environment. It may have been made by apothecaries working in the same *spiciaria*, or pharmacy, or by physicians working in the same surgery. It is also possible that this book was produced by a network of apothecaries and/or physicians affiliated with a medical faculty, perhaps the University of Padua.

2. Private European Collection.

TEXT

I. ff. 1-7v, [Nineteen recipes for remedies and medical ointments] *Per rompere una fistula senz [...?]*, incipit, "Pilia vna lumaga de quele de vie ... suso aprobato"; ff. 2v-3v nearly completely blank; f. 4, *Vnguento bono per far crescer la carne*, incipit, "Recipe, alee onze iij, Mele onze iij ...";

II. ff. 8-21v:

ff. 8-12, [Medical advice for diagnoses, for health regimens and bleeding for each month, and on dangerous moons] *Signo de morire o de guarire*, incipit, "A volere cognoscere se lo infermo de morire o guarire ... per lo excelente maistro Zuane saracino e a veduto tuto queste Recett de latino in vlgare"; f. 11v, [Notes on veins] *Queste sono quele doe vene se chiamomo angulare in pero che sono in li chantoni ...*, incipit, "Le vene che sono in cima la testa conferiseno dolore ... conferisse mirabelmente a lo dolore de le Rene";

This text refers to the *Recettario di Galieno* of Giovanni Saracino, where the same text appears again in booklet V (specifically on ff. 109-113, 114-115), it is explicitly attributed to him. The *Recettario di Galieno* is an Italian translation of the Galenic receptary, a collection of medical recipes attributed to the Greek physician Galen (129-c.200/216). Saracino was a physician from Piedmont who was active during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. (He should not be confused with Johannes Afflacijs, also known as Johannes Saracenus, who was also a translator and was a student of Constantine the African, the first major translator of Arabic medical works into Latin, at Monte Cassino in the eleventh century.) He most likely produced this translation for circulation in print; it was first printed as the *Recettario di Galieno a tutte le infirmita acadeno a li corpi umani ... Tradutto in volgare per Maistro zuane Saracino ...*, in Venice in 1508 and was printed in over thirty editions over the course of the sixteenth century (see EDIT16 in Online Resources). Both this copy and that in booklet V may well have been made from one of these editions; they do not appear to have been copied one from the other, since there are variations of order, word choice, and orthography. They warrant closer examination side by side and alongside contemporary print editions of the text. The text of ff. 11v-12 runs in two columns from the outer edge of f. 12 to the outer edge of f. 11v.

ff. 12v-21v, [Thirty-six recipes and other remedies, including prayers, for ailments, including pestilence] *Qui seguita le recete de li retorj ...*, incipit, "Anaturata e smarzata che sia la postematione conuen per alcuno modo fare ... Christus Rex venit in pace et deus homo factus est yhesus christus et maria sint nobis semper in via. Amen"; [followed by a prayer added in a different hand];

The recipes and remedies on ff. 12v-20 also appear in booklet V (specifically on ff. 113v, 116-122, 123-127). Since in both booklets they immediately follow texts explicitly linked to Giovanni Saracino's *Recettario di Galieno*, it is possible that these recipes may also derive from the *Recettario* or from a text that traveled with it.

f. 22rv, prayer, two recipes, and many calculations added in at least two hands;

ff. 23-24, [Five recipes, mostly for syphilis], *Recepta contra el mal franzoso*, incipit, "Recipe ragia de pino biancho ... Recipe pillole arabjce et Inde drama .j. fato questo comenza a ongere[?];

f. 24v, blank but for a few notes at the bottom, upside down;

f. 25rv, [Five recipes for curing leather and obtaining colors] *Per hamocare pele*, incipit, "Primo meti le pele qu la calcina et lasa stare ... fara belo colore et come oltra";

The text is upside down and begins at the bottom of the verso.

III. ff. 26-82v:

f. 26rv, [Medical notes, some of which are gynecological] incipit, "Se tu voi sapere se la dona e grossa de maschio femena toij la sua orina emetila in uno miolo ... in sulo lat do drito";

The primary hand has recopied one of the two additions on the verso.

f. 27rv, [Rules for bloodletting and the optimal days for it to be done or not done] *Questa e la regola de santo zuane batista sopra lo facto de tor lo sangue ...*, incipit, "O a primo di e reo: impero auera granda infirmitta de feuer[?] ... O el resto som o tuti Catinj etc.";

ff. 27v-28, [Two recipes to help women produce breast milk] *A romper la p̄da*, incipit, "Et toi la berbona e fane poluere e toi losso de luzo ... Se portara grane amore et perfeto sempre morij et e prouato";

An additional hand has added further material in the margins and between entries in the primary hand.

ff. 28v-32, [Dietary and sanitary advice, with reference to ancient and medieval philosophy, keyed to days of the week and liturgical feasts] *Comenzano i tempi di libri segundo ano pensato algunj philosophi in el tempo di salamone, Re di Corona*, incipit, "Se la natiuita nostro signor sera in dominica ... questa gratia che ti domando pur che la non sia [...?]"

ff. 32v-79v, [Receptary attributed to Pietro d'Abano; table of contents] *Questo sie lo ordine del mondo lo quale e trouato da li philosophi et sapientissimi doctori lo quale ordine fo de magistro piero padoano de abanno per conseruare la uita de li homeni in sanitade*, incipit, "Del meso de zenaro, capitulo primo, Del meso de feuraro, capitulo secundo ... A sanar ognj piaga de gambe, capitulo 287, A guarir el spasemo, capitulo 288"; f. 40v, [main text] *Questo sie lo ordine del mondo lo quale e trouato dali philoxofi et sapientissimj doctorj lo quale ordine fu de maistro piero padoano ede abano per conseruare la vita deli homeni in sanita*, incipit, "1 PRima In lo meso de zenaro non de fare salasare ... e sera libero de la infermitade et a probato";

The rubric of this receptary of 290 recipes suggests that it represents the work of Pietro d'Abano (1250-1315), a professor of medicine, natural philosophy, and astrology who trained at the University of Paris and taught at the University of Padua. He is best known for his *Conciliator differentiarum quae inter philosophos et medicos versantur*, completed in the early fourteenth century. This Latin work purports to address questions disputed between physicians and philosophers – or, in other words, follows of Galenic and Aristotelian traditions – but it largely addresses differing medical opinions regarding diseases and their treatment. It was still widely read in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; ten sixteenth-century editions survive (see EDIT16 in Online Resources). He also translated works of Galen into Latin. It would be worth investigating whether one of these Galenic translations or some of the more practical content of the *Conciliator* supply the basis for this collection of recipes for various ailments and the maintenance of health. A rubricated table at the opening of the text lists and numbers its chapters, though the chapter names and numbers do not always correlate exactly with those used within the text itself. Towards the end of the text, additional unnumbered chapters are interspersed with those indicated in the table of contents.

ff. 79v-82v, nineteen recipes added in at least four hands, including the primary hand active throughout the rest of the booklet;

IV. ff. 83-104v:

ff. 83-104v, [239 medical and cosmetic recipes] *Ellectuario de scoria et fece de ferro per O pillatio e de [...?]* *de questo guarisene vestrorum*, incipit, "Recipe Seminis Leuistici, Seminis basaliconis ... Recipe Semper uia et pistela cum sonza de porcho maschio mettila suso lo callo e andara uia";

V. ff. 105-143v:

ff. 105-113, 114-115, *Recitario de galieno de latino in vulgare per lo excelente medico Maistro zouane saracino Mandato a lo Imperatore ze nota che per questo libro molti feno honore per le perfete che ge sono dentro scrite Come nel seguitare de lo lezere tu lo uederai, El primo titolo dele orine e ha Capituli*, incipit, "Nota prima che noi uegniamo a le medicine bisogna prendere modo de Cognosere ... et aprobate e sutile per lo Excelente Maistro zuane saracino e a reduto tute quiste Rezet de latino in vlgare"; f. 114, *Queste sono quelle doe vene che se chiamano angulare Imp[...?] che sono In li Cantonj ...*, incipit, "Le vene che sono In cima la testa Conferiseno dolore ... In lo Culo ge sono tre vene le quale sono In lo fine delo budello zentillo e constrisse mirabelmente a lo dolore dele Rene. *Finis*";

Material drawn from the *Recettario di Galieno* of Giovanni Saracino; (see above) the same content appears in booklet II on ff. 8-12.

ff. 113v, 116-127, [Thirty-four recipes and remedies] *Qui seguita le rezete de li rectori ...*, incipit, "Amaturata e smarzata che sia la postumatione conuen per alcuno modo fare ... Recipe solfaro epistalo benissimo et toli la cima del late emisia in seme e onzi senza altro et e prouato non fala";

These recipes and remedies also appear in booklet II on ff. 12v-20. In booklet II the text of f. 12v corresponds to that of f. 113v and the heading for the text at the top of f. 116 has been written at the bottom of f. 113v and then added in a later hand to the top of f. 116. This may indicate that the leaves of this quire were bound out of order or that the scribe made an error or was forced to pause in the midst of copying this text. Other hands appear to have added to this booklet while this text was being copied; some of the recipes are interspersed with material added in these other hands and not present in the version of the text in booklet II (see ff. 121v-122 in particular).

f. 115v, Recipe added in another hand, possibly that of Tonio Zende (see Provenance);

ff. 127-143v, Over a hundred recipes, including six for syphilis, added in a series of additional hands;

VI. ff. 1-5v:

ff. 1, 2, 3v-4, Recipes in three other hands;

ff. 1v, 2v-3, 4v-5v, largely blank.

Although in the modern world we usually think of recipes as instructions for preparing food, in the Middle Ages and well into the early modern era a "recipe" was understood in a much broader sense as a how-to instruction, usually brief, related to various crafts (including

disciplines such as alchemy and medicine), as well as guides to making various things related to the household and agriculture. A vast and wide-ranging collection of recipes – medical, pharmaceutical, and cosmetic – supplies the backbone of this medical manual. Contributed in a number of hands in what appears to be a collaborative working volume, these recipes represent the combined learning and expertise of a number of physicians or apothecaries working in Renaissance Veneto.

Most of the recipes here are medical, dealing with all parts of the body and treating a very wide range of maladies, from problems with the teeth, eyes, ears, hips, stomach, breasts, sexual organs, chest, and head to specific ailments like migraine (f. 103v), gout (ff. 60v-61), catarrh (f. 59rv), scrofula (f. 85). A number of recipes offer remedies for the plague (*peste*), syphilis (*mal franzoso*), and malaria (*febbre quartana*). There are recipes for hair loss, whitening teeth, aiding sleep, and “to make the face beautiful and shining” (f. 33). There are recipes for “waters,” ointments, powders, pills, and so forth, using various herbal and mineral ingredients. In some cases recipes prescribe prayers, as in the case of a recipe titled, “A Cauar ogni ferro o ligno o che Cosa sia de[?] una ferita diraj La sequente Oratione” (f. 89), which specifies prayers to be said while removing iron or wood or other foreign objects from a wound. Many of the recipes begin or conclude with affirmations that they are “prouato,” that they have been proven to work. In some of these instances, notes accompanying recipes even specify by whom they have been tried, as in a note, “Remedio optimo contra la pestilentia probatissimo per mi[?] Bartholomio sopra ditto[?] mi facta e poi di multi altri person[...?]” (f. 86), which identifies the recipe’s source, one Bartholomio, and notes the repeated success with which others have used the recipe after him.

The sources for these recipes merit careful study. Most are anonymous, but a few people are named. Several recipes proven by “Bartholomio” or “Jo. Bartholamio” or “Jo. F. B.,” for example, are clustered on ff. 85v-86, suggesting that this source carried some weight. These identifications may refer to Bartholomaeus of Salerno (fl. 1150-1180), author of a widely circulated manual of practical medicine. Beyond the attribution of an entire receptary to Pietro d’Abano (ff. 32v-79v), his name is invoked elsewhere as well (f. 85). A recipe for an “aqua mirabilis” is identified as a “secreto de maistro Jacomo hebraico[?] doctissimo in Arte” (f. 95v), possibly in reference to the teacher of the great medical writer Ibn Sina, or Avicenna (c. 980-1037), referred to as Jacob the Jew.

Giovanni Saracino’s textual presence in the volume is particularly noteworthy, since he was active while this manuscript was being copied, and because his work, the *Recettario di Galieno*, was published in Venice around this time. The evident interest in the *Recettario* in this compilation (not one, but two copies of materials attributed to him were included) suggests that its compilers were eager to include up-to-date sources. Part of the appeal of the *Recettario* was no doubt its accessibility – Saracino’s text was an Italian translation of a text already circulating in Latin translations – but part of it may well have stemmed from the humanist revival of interest in ancient Greek medicine, and in particular in Galen’s works, beginning at the university of Ferrara, and spreading to other medical faculties in Italy and beyond. If this manuscript was produced in circles connected to the University of Padua, as suggested above (see Provenance), the prominence of this Galenic work might reflect the university’s embrace of this revival in the 1530s and 1540s.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

EDIT16, Censimento nazionale delle edizioni italiane del XVI secolo, Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico delle biblioteche italiane e per le informazioni bibliografiche

http://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/web_iccu/ihome.htm

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