

Medical treatise (unidentified); Recipes for artists and scribes

In Italian, manuscript on paper

Northern Italy (Lombardy?), c. 1450(?)

*i* (nineteenth-century paper) + 78 + 1 (parchment) + *i* (nineteenth-century paper) folios on paper, watermark: Couronne à trois fleurons et deux demi (cf. Briquet 4737, Piacenza 1450), original foliation in brown ink, 12-89 (parchment leaf at the end unnumbered), lacking eleven leaves in the beginning (one complete quire and the first leaf of the second quire), otherwise complete (collation [lacking *i*<sup>10</sup>] *ii*<sup>10</sup>[-1, lacking one leaf before f. 12, with loss of text] *iii-viii*<sup>10</sup> *ix*<sup>10</sup>[-10, +10, the last leaf replaced with a parchment leaf at the time of making the manuscript, possibly with no loss of text]), alphanumeric leaf signatures with Arabic numerals and letters ("2b, 3b, 4b, 5b ... i1, i2, i3, i4, i5"), quire signatures in Arabic numerals at the beginning and end of the quire in the middle of the lower margin, horizontal catchwords, ruled in pale gray ink (justification 105 x 64 mm.), written in brown ink in a small Italian hybrid script (*hybrida libraria*) on c. 27-29 long lines, numerous contemporary notes and manicules in the margins, paragraph marks (*pieds-de-mouche*) in red, 2-3-line initials in red throughout, two large initials in red (8 and 9 lines), red ink smudged on some of the pages (e.g. ff. 42, 54), a large tear across f. 72 carefully repaired on the verso with two small strips of a thirteenth-century manuscript, tears on ff. 13, 14, 15, 53, 54, 56, 61, 66 and a few other leaves, stains and signs of frequent use, in overall good condition. Half-bound c. 1840 in black morocco over pasteboards, spine with three raised bands, title in gilt on the spine "TRATTATO DI MEDICINA E DI COMESTIBILI" and "MS. DEL SEC. XV.," marbled pastedowns and endleaves, leather rubbed on the spine and corners, in overall very good condition. Dimensions 153 x 97 mm.

Secular texts from the Middle Ages and Renaissance are always of special interest, and texts related to the practicalities of daily life are particularly fascinating. The texts (in the vernacular) in this manuscript include both a treatise on medicine (not yet identified), and a collection of recipes for making illuminated manuscripts. There are recipes for dyes and pigments, painting with egg tempera, writing with gold, and repairing damaged books. It is an exciting new source for studies in the history of medicine, Italian philology and lexicography, the history of art, and the production of illuminated manuscripts.

## PROVENANCE

1. The style of the script and the evidence of the watermark are evidence that this was copied in northern Italy around the middle of the fifteenth century, c. 1450.

The small hybrid script, close to humanistic script, in our manuscript can be compared to the script used in a copy of Horatius's *Odae*, copied in Pesaro in 1457 (Clermont-Ferrand, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 242; Derolez, 2003, pl. 135). The watermark on the paper used for this manuscript appears very similar, or identical, to the crown watermark localized in Piacenza in 1450 (Briquet 4737).

The colophon on f. 87 informs that the manuscript was ordered by Jacopino, "Hoc scribi mihi fecit opus tute Jacopino." (Jacopino had me write all this work), and that it is written in a mixture of French and Lombard dialect, "Gallica lumbarda confusa loquela

serendo." (French and Lombard language serenely intermixed). Aspects of the text, reflecting the dialect of the scribe (or the author of the exemplar), suggest localizing the manuscript in Lombardy (we are grateful to Mara Calloni for her observations on the language).

2. Bound around 1840 probably in Italy (cf. title in Italian on the spine).
3. Modern notes in a small hand in French in pencil on the verso of the front flyleaf: "ximv.vii.45." and "Manuscrit de préceptes medicaux et culinaires. Italie. XVe siècle." and "rel. vers 1840" and the number "66" encircled.

## TEXT

[Now beginning imperfectly, lacking ff. 1-11]; ff. 12-87, incipit, "///possa have ben ni male senza el corpo ... e mal sangue, e tole talento d'usare le ferre. Deo gracias. Amen. Hoc scribi mihi fecit opus tute Jacopino. Gallica lumbarda confusa loquela serendo";

Unidentified medical treatise in three parts, begins imperfectly in the eighth chapter of the first book.

The chapters in the first part of the medical treatise concern the drawing of blood (ch. 9-11, f. 12v-19; drawing on Avicenna), purging (ch. 12, f. 19v-26v), vomiting (ch. 13, f. 27-28), plague (ch. 14, f. 28-29v), health according to the humoral theory, seasons and astrological signs (cf. 15, f. 30-32), dying (ch. 16, f. 32-33v), purge (ch. 17, ff. 33v-35), childbirth (ch. 18-19, f. 35-40), and health at different ages of life (ff. 40-41v). The second part of the work is about different parts of the body (ff. 41v-53v), and the third part about the nature of food and drink (ff. 53v-87). A blank space was left at the beginning of the second and third part of the work, on ff. 42 and 54, undoubtedly intended to accommodate illustration (never executed). There was probably also an illustration planned for the beginning of the work. The theory of four humors is discussed in chapter 15 of the first book, was developed by Hippocrates in *De natura humana*. According to him, the body contains within itself the power to re-balance the four humors (blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile) and heal itself. More research is needed to identify this text, and its sources.

ff. 87-90v, Recipes mainly for illuminators and scribes, to make green water, "A fare aqua verte," to write in gold with the pen, "A scriver oro con la penna," to prepare azurite (blue pigment), "A conzare lazuro," to make pink colors of iron, "A fare roseta firra," to make sizing (a solution of glue and water for preparing supports), "A fare sisa," to make cinobrium (red pigment, also called cinnabar, cynobre, minium, sinobrium, vermilion), "A fare cenabrio," to make fine green, "A fare virde fino," to make mordant, "A fare mordente," to make fine brasil wood (for yielding red dye), "A fare bon Brasilio da fiorire," to make green water, "A fare aqua verde," to make perfect sizing *scraps* of paper, "A fare perfecta sisa de rascadure d'carta," to paint with an egg tempera, "A incolare per da una ovo osvegli de terra," to paint terracotta or wooden vases, "A incolare uno vaso de terra o de ligno," to repair a damaged book whether of goat parchment or paper, "A conzare uno libro de carte d'capreto o d'papreo ch' fosse imbrata," to make green water, "A fare aqua verde," to make brasil wood (three recipes), "A fare Brasilio..." ending with "Operatio. Quando tu voi metere in operatione..."; ending with "Laus domino. Pax vivis.

Requiem eternam de sanctis." (Followed by two lines of poetry and two four-line inscriptions added later by different scribes.)

These fascinating practical recipes related manuscript illumination may be unpublished. They do not appear to be among the numerous recipes of medieval and renaissance treatises on the arts of painting published and translated by Mary Merrifield in 1849 (see the modern edition, Merrifield, 1967). The first recipe in our manuscript is one of three recipes included in the book for making green water, "A fare aqua verte" (f. 87). The text instructs that the water is made from the leaves of pomelo (grapefruit) at the time of the feast of St. Michael (29 Sept), "In nel tempo san michiele fogli d'pomeli ...." Jean Lebègue includes several recipes of colored waters in his work *Experimenta de coloribus*, which he compiled in 1431 from earlier works on painting by Jean Alcerius. A fifteenth-century scribe who copied Lebègue's work mentions that the recipes were brought to France from England: the "true method of working in England with (colored) waters ... in England the painters work with these waters upon closely woven cloths, wetted with gum-water made with gum-arabic, and then dried ... and the painters, walking with their clean feet over the said cloths, work and paint upon them figures, stories, and other things" (Merrifield, 1967, pp. 84-88). The recipes also include instructions for making pigments, including azurite, pink, vermilion, mordant, green and brazil wood. The red dye yielded from brazil wood was used as a pigment or as underpainting for gold leaf. Mordant is a dye used on fiber, as well as an adhesive which was used in gilding, and in manuscript illumination as an adhesive for gold leaf against which it was burnished. The paragraph about egg tempera painting specifies "una ovo osvegli de terra" (f. 89), that is, "an egg from a land bird" (i.e. chicken, duck...).

These recipes are mostly related to manuscript illumination, and also include instructions for writing in gold or repairing a book whose leaves, whether parchment or paper, are damaged. Further research is needed, including comparisons with contemporary manuals, including Cennino's *Libro dell'Arte*, written in fifteenth-century Florence. This is especially true now, since there has been important recent research on artistic recipe books that circulated in Italy in the late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries. See especially ArDIRE, a project directed by Margherita Quaglinò, which combines the work of philologists, lexicographers, and art historians, and is planning for a digital archive of these texts (see Online Resources). Our manuscript promises to be of great value both to scholars studying the art and science of illuminated manuscripts, and to students of the history of medicine.

## LITERATURE

Cennino D'Andrea Cennini, *The Craftman's Handbook: The Italian "Il Libro dell'Arte,"* translated by D. V. Thompson, New York, 1960.

Derolez, A. *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books: From the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge, 2003.

French, R. K. *Medicine Before Science: The Rational and Learned Doctor from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment*, Cambridge, 2003.

Garcia-Ballester, L. *Galen and Galenism: Theory and Medical Practice from Antiquity to the European Renaissance*, London, 2002.

Merrifield, M. P. *Medieval and Renaissance Treatises on the Arts of Painting: Original Texts with English Translations*, New York, 1967.

Nutton, V. *Ancient Medicine*, London and New York, 2004.

Panayotova, S., ed. *Colour: The Art & Science of Illuminated Manuscripts*, London and Turnhout, 2016.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

ArDIRE

<https://dium.uniud.it/en/ricerca/progetti-corso/archivi-biblioteche-edizioni/ardire-archivio-e-dizionario-digitali-dei-primi-ricettari-artistici/>

Tesoro della lingua Italiana delle Origini (TLIO)

<http://tlio.ovl.cnr.it/TLIO/>

Dupont, M. *Dictionnaire historique des médecins dans et hors la médecine*, Paris, 1999, pp. 38-39 (Avicenne)

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k33643326/f54.item>

TM 1341