Witnesses to Medieval Medical Practice in the Harley Collection

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The Harley collection of manuscripts is rich in medieval medicine, perhaps surprisingly given that Robert Harley (1661-1724), the first Earl of Oxford, and his son Robert (1689-1741), the second Earl, who between them assembled the library, had no obvious reasons for taking an interest in such arcane matters. Of course Humfrey Wanley, their principal agent, had wide-ranging interests in all kinds of medieval subject matter, and this catholicity of interest must have extended to medical books, though he was no medical man either. Yet more surprising than the inclusion of so many medical manuscripts in the Harley collection is to find that, whether by chance or Wanley's design, the Harley manuscripts provide vital witnesses to the kind of medicine practised in late medieval England. These witnesses to medical practice are comparatively rare, whereas surviving medical books from the Middle Ages are plentiful enough, to judge from their representation not just in the Harleian collection but also in those other English collections of Sir Hans Sloane, Elias Ashmole, and William Hunter. How does a manuscript serve as a witness to medical practice? A select few of Harley's books provide the most direct evidence we have of the business of medicine as they record cures carried out by practitioners of different kinds in the fifteenth century in England, and give us our best idea of what these practitioners actually did for their patients. Whether this vivid kind of witness was in itself particularly attractive to Wanley we have no means of knowing.

There are reasons for more of these memoranda of medical practice surviving from the fifteenth century than earlier (as well as simply the higher attrition rate for books from previous centuries). The increasing availability and cheapness of paper made it more likely that individuals would be inclined to write in books themselves in order to make records for their personal use. They would be less worried about the waste of a scarce and expensive resource. But other reasons have to do with the development of medicine as a science. In the fourteenth century England followed the lead of other more advanced countries in beginning to bestow prestige and reward on those medical practitioners who mastered rational Galenic medicine as taught in the medical faculties of European universities.[1] Oxford and Cambridge developed medical faculties of their own, copying the Parisian model where medicine was a higher faculty, studied by masters of arts. Doctors of medicine emerged as the highest paid and most prestigious of the clerics who had claims to medical learning; outside the universities they were employed at courts and in noble households as personal physicians to their clients.[2] Correlated with this was an explosion of writing activity in medicine. After 1375 the numbers of medical manuscripts in circulation began to increase sharply, even if the number of practitioners with medical degrees remained very small in fifteenth-century England. In addition a great translation movement took shape, turning Latin medical writings into Middle English and Anglo-Norman.[3] This brought medical

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1 This development is best described in Michael R. McVaugh, *Medicine before the Plague: Practitioners and their Patients in the Crown of Aragon, 1285-1345* (Cambridge, 1993).

2 Faye Getz, 'The Faculty of Medicine before 1500', in Jeremy Catto, Ralph Evans (ed.), *The History of the University of Oxford*, vol. ii, *Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford, 1992). More generally, see Faye Getz, *Medicine in the English Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1998), ch. 1; Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine & Society in Later Medieval England* (Stroud, 1995), ch. 5.

3 Linda E. Voigts, 'Scientific and Medical Books', in Jeremy Griffiths, Derek Pearsall (eds.), *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 345-402; Peter Murray Jones, 'University Books and the Sciences, c. 1250-1400', in N. J. Morgan, R. M. Thomson (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. ii, *The Manuscript Book c. 1100-1400* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 453-62.

learning to a new readership beyond the bounds of universities and monasteries. All these developments certainly made it more plausible that individual practitioners might decide to undertake the recording of their own experience in practice, both for their own sakes and that of other would-be practitioners who might benefit from those records of experience.

The new catalogue of medical manuscripts in the Harley collection enables us to see how records of medical practice relate to the medical books in which they are embedded. An exhaustive description of the contents of each manuscript, which pays attention to successive layers of addition to the original texts in a book, helps us to understand the role of records of practice within that book. Of course the physical description of the manuscript book is equally vital. Many late medieval books as we see them today are the results of compilation of a whole from many parts, some of which had circulated independently as booklets before being bound into the manuscript.[4] The medical practitioner himself was the owner of the book in which he decided to write at one stage in its long history, and we can best understand his writing practice in relation to his ownership, as part in other words of the process by which he used and customized the book. He may also have decided to add features other than written records to the book – for instance by providing it with a table of contents or index, or by marking it in ways that draw attention to the features in its text he finds useful (for instance by putting nota bene or other indexical marks in the margins of the text). In the case of all three of the manuscript books we shall examine in this article the owner adds drawings in his own hand to illustrate the text he or others have written. The description provided for each item in the Harleian catalogue of medical manuscripts also affords the occasion to work out the provenance of the manuscript in question, to appreciate the succession of owners it enjoyed. Sometimes there is enough provenance information in the description to provide clues to the social status or occupation of the owners and to the circles in which medical information was transmitted.

Before concentrating on the three manuscripts that emerge as the key witnesses to medical practice in late medieval England it will be as well to remember that medical practice was not just for professionals. It was not monopolized by those for whom medicine was a way of making a living, nor were medical practitioners the only people who recorded information in manuscripts, and thus give us valuable insights into medical practice. Harley MS 3371, for example, is a Latin manuscript of the works of the English surgeon John of Arderne, dating from the towards the end of the fifteenth century, but with later additions. The description of the manuscript in the Harleian catalogue tells us it was owned before 1500 by one Richard Hutton, but the most interesting addition to the manuscript is a note in Middle English on the price of medicines obtained for his wife by John Balwyn, wax-chandler of Chester. He paid these sums to a physician of Wells in Somerset in 1496 or 1497 (f. 116v). Presumably the record was made by the wax-chandler for financial purposes, as the outlay on medicines was considerable. These are the sorts of transactions between doctor and patient that are hard to trace, and for once we have the patient's eye view of the transaction that so often escapes the historian of medical practice.

The books catalogued for the Wellcome-funded Harleian project also include some that are not medical books at all, but do contain added material of medical interest. Harley MS 1260 is a book of hours and devotional prayers written originally in the second quarter of the fourteenth century, probably for a member of the Percy family. In the fifteenth century three extra items were added. These are Latin prayers for the relief of tooth pain addressed to St Appollonia (the patron saint of dentistry), a Middle English recipe for colic, and five more Middle English recipes at the end of the book, all for teeth and mouth problems (ff. 233v, 235, 238-9). These medical records added to the devotional book bring us close to domestic medical practice in a noble household, one where prayers and recipes have equal claims to efficacy when it comes to the painful business of tackling mouth problems.

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[4] P. R. Robinson, ' "The Booklet": A Self-Contained Unit in Composite Manuscripts', *Codicologica*, iii (1980), pp. 46-69.

Nevertheless I propose to turn now to records of practice compiled not by patients but by medical practitioners in the fifteenth century. It is remarkable that so much of what we know of occupational medical practice in this period is contained in three Harley manuscripts, Harley MS 2558, Harley MS 1735, and Harley MS 1628. The first two of these are well enough known to warrant entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* for the individuals who created them, Thomas Fayreford and John Crophill.[5] In both cases what we know of them and their practice is almost entirely derived from the two Harley manuscripts they owned and in part wrote. They are the more valuable for their insights into medical practice because Fayreford and Crophill were rural practitioners, not embedded in the better known city or noble household settings. The third manuscript, Harley MS 1628, is annotated by several anonymous apothecaries, and is equally valuable for what it tells us about this relatively little known area of medical practice. Unlike Fayreford or Crophill these anonymous apothecaries seem to have frequented the rarefied heights of practice at the English royal court.

Let me begin with Harley MS 2558, a manuscript which has an illuminated cartouche inserted with the name of its owner and part writer, Thomas Fayreford (f. 72v). The parts of the manuscript written by Fayreford include a list of his cures, and two longer texts on medicine and surgery compiled by the writer, mostly written in Latin but with sections in Middle English and Anglo-Norman. The list of cures by Thomas Fayreford, occupying two sides of paper, gives details of patients' names, sometimes their occupations and places of residence, the ailments from which they suffered, and occasionally the prognosis — 'quod omnes disperaverunt de vita eius' ('that all despaired of his life') — and subsequent treatment. It is titled 'the list of cures performed by Thomas Fayreford in different places', and the list contains 103 entries, though some entries refer to more than one patient. Unfortunately there are no dates for the cures, though many of the places named can be identified. Fayreford's own hand suggests a date of writing in the second quarter of the fifteenth century.

Bridgewater in Somerset was one centre of Fayreford's medical activity, Tiverton in Devon another, but there is also a group of cases lying in the far north-west of Devon, near the coast between Linton and Barnstaple. His patients came from diverse social backgrounds, from a Lady Poynings to one 'cook Geffrey', and included various clergy, a miller, and a cellarer. He treated men, women, and children – sixty-three definitely male, and forty-two female, and among both sexes, seventeen children. The most prominent, and unexpected, ailment he records himself treating was suffocation of the womb, diagnosed in many of his female patients from Lady Poynings down the social scale. Fayreford's expertise in gynaecological matters belies the once prevalent idea that male medieval doctors did not meddle in female complaints. On the contrary, in Fayreford's case female ailments seem to have been something of a speciality, as is borne out by the considerable attention devoted to them in the medical section of his remedies. Otherwise the complaints mentioned in the list of cures range from straightforward surgical problems like burns, thorns, or fractures, to categories of fever that were normally regarded as the domain of the physician rather than the surgeon.

Fayreford's remedies were drawn from unimpeachable academic sources in some cases; in others they were validated by experience, Fayreford's own or that of others. This is revealed by a study of the medical and surgical texts that he compiled in his own hand in Harley MS 2558. These texts are in effect commonplace books, gathering under the headings of particular diseases various remedies, written into the book by Fayreford at different times.

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[5] Peter Murray Jones, 'Crophill, John (d. in or after 1485)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6780, accessed 27 Feb. 2008]; Peter Murray Jones, 'Fayreford, Thomas (*fl.* 1400–1450)', ODNB [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/45762, accessed 27 Feb. 2008].

Many of these remedies are quoted from academic sources like Avicenna, Bernard de Gordon or Gilbertus Anglicus. On the other hand his patient Lady Poynings gave him a remedy for 'demigreyne', and Fayreford testified to his own success with certain 'experiments' he had tried. The reference to a cure performed by Nicholas Colnet in Oxford suggests that Fayreford himself might have spent some time in Oxford at the university there, though he took no medical degree. Like other respectable medical practitioners of this period Fayreford also made use of healing charms, making little distinction between a charm for epilepsy and a 'rational' remedy for the same complaint. The number of charms to be found in Fayreford's text distinguishes it from the practice of his academic sources like Bernard and Gilbertus – there are as many as forty-three charms written out in Fayreford's hand.[6] The very eclecticism of Fayreford's approach to sources of medical authority, whether academic or lay, may have encouraged him to think of making a record of remedies in this way.

The description of Harley MS 2558 in the catalogue provides us for the first time with an exhaustive list of all the texts in this manuscript, a total of thirty-seven in all. Fayreford seems to have assembled this miscellany of anatomy, botany, surgery, medicine, charms, astrology and prognostic texts himself. Most of the texts were written originally by scribes operating in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The booklets of which the manuscript was made up are a mixture of parchment and paper, and the different gatherings are of various page sizes. His own writings in the book included a herbal, a medical treatise by the French physician Ponce de Saint Gilles, and short texts on diagnosis by urine and prognostication, as well as his own commonplace books of surgery and medicine, indexed near the beginning of the manuscript. All of these writings in Fayreford's hand were inserted amongst these earlier booklets at various points in the manuscript, probably by Fayreford himself. It is noteworthy that Fayreford provided the occasional pen illustration to his own writings as well as annotation and sketches to accompany other texts. The fact that he took the trouble to have his own name illuminated in the book, and that he includes the list of cures performed by himself, suggests he may have intended to leave the book as a monument to his successful career in medicine, but also meant it to survive as a practical resource for later owners – perhaps immediately for his own heirs or an apprentice. Until recently I had not come across any other contemporary notice of Fayreford or his book, so it seemed as if his intention to give the manuscript contemporary circulation might have been frustrated. But in a mid-fifteenth-century recipe collection (Harley MS 2381, f. 67) I discovered that a remedy for dropsy written in a mixture of Latin and English, and employing watercress as its principal ingredient, is attributed to Fayreford, so we must assume that Harley MS 2558 did achieve some fifteenth-century currency after leaving his hands.

Harley MS 1735 is our source for knowledge of John Crophill (*d*. in or after 1485), and is described by the catalogue as his commonplace book. It is a relatively slim book compared to that by Fayreford, and quite possibly accompanied its owner on his travels on business. He was only a part-time medical practitioner in the countryside, of a lower social rank than Fayreford, and the manuscript is all the more valuable as a record of his intellectual interests and practical concerns. The manuscript has been studied by several medical historians and most recently was made the focus of a thesis by Lois Ayoub.[7] Crophill compiled, owned and partly wrote Harley MS 1735, a volume written on both parchment and paper, which contains several pieces in his own handwriting, as well as others written by a professional scribe and afterwards annotated by Crophill. His main occupation was that of bailiff of Wix Priory, a small but well-endowed house of Benedictine nuns in Essex; he took up the post in

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[6] L. T. Olsan, 'Charms and Prayers in Medieval Medical Theory and Practice', *Social History of Medicine*, xvi (2003), pp. 342-66.

[7] L. G. Ayoub, 'John Crophill's Books. An Edition of British Library MS Harley 1735', D.Phil. diss., Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto (1994).

1455. Two years later his salary was apparently 40s. per year. He continued as bailiff until at least 1477 and his activities, principally the collection of rents and administration of the demesne lands of Wix, are recorded in the court rolls of the manor. His additional medical activities would not be known at all, were it not for this manuscript. The first part of the manuscript, on parchment, seems to have been acquired and then annotated by John Crophill: it deals with astrology, prognostication and cookery. The second part on paper was written for Crophill by a scribe localized in Norfolk, and deals with such concerns as perilous days, the zodiacal signs governing parts of the body, the planets and their influences, the four prime qualities and elements, the four complexions and their effect throughout the year, the cycle of the moon, uroscopy, alchemy, prognostics, and divination. By the mid-fifteenth century texts of this character were widely available in Middle English, many of them having been translated out of Latin. They prove that a man of business like Crophill, who is not known to have received any university training (unlike Fayreford), might still have had access to the practical sciences of medicine, astrology, and divination.[8]

The third part of Harley MS 1735, written mostly by Crophill himself, and spanning dates between 1456 and 1485, contains lists of patients treated by him, rents owing from tenants, a list of medical authorities on diagnosis by urine, and a variety of other practical texts, with a focus on medical treatment, charms and prognostication. A full list of the texts is given in the description in the catalogue. Crophill, like Fayreford, was happy to include in his therapeutic armoury charms for childbirth and a wound-charm, alongside herbal recipes and a regimen of health. He notes the occupations of several of his patients: these include carpenters, a cordwainer, a sheepman, a shearman, a herdsman, a merchant, a tailor, and a sexton. As was the case with Fayreford, Crophill also drew some sketches to accompany astrological and cookery texts in his book. Crophill clearly treated many of his patients when riding his rounds as bailiff and some of these patients would have been able to afford only very small fees, or gifts in kind, given their social background. His income as medical practitioner would have been only marginal in comparison with his income as bailiff. He must have been welcome as a convivial man, as well as a medical practitioner. Crophill composed some doggerel verses, addressed to five named ladies of Wix, telling how a certain Friar Thomas Stanfeld has made a gift of drinking cups to him; and he in turn presents each lady with a cup. It is clear that Crophill not only brewed ale himself at home in 1457, but liked a good drinking party. He is last recorded in 1485.

Now to the last of our three witnesses to medical practice. It is less well known and studied than the other two. Harley MS 1628 is an oblong shaped book, in form rather like the recording notebooks used by the contemporary English antiquary and sometime medical practitioner William Worcester.[9] His medical notebook of record is to be found in Sloane MS 4. Probably the shape of both these manuscripts was dictated by its convenience for carrying in a deep pocket or a saddlebag. Harley MS 1628 is described in the catalogue as a collection of medical glossaries, texts and recipes dating from the second half of the fifteenth century. Once again it is a composite manuscript, like Harley MS 2558 and Harley MS 1735; in this case there are five different codicological units distinguished in the description of the manuscript. The first encloses the rest of the book (and was probably added last), and consists of two gatherings of four leaves, with notes and recipes by various English hands. These are in some cases recipes for named individuals at the courts of Edward IV and Richard III, and in this respect they continue the recording practices which are evident in all but the last unit of the book.

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[8] See Lister M. Matheson (ed.), *Popular and Practical Science of Medieval England* (East Lansing, 1994); and M. Teresa Tavormina (ed.), *Sex, Aging, & Death in a Medieval Medical Compendium*, 2 vols (Tempe, 2006) for examples of such texts.

[9] Nicholas Orme, 'Worcester, William (1415–1480x85)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept. 2004; online edn, Oct. 2006 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29967, accessed 27 Feb. 2008].

The second and third units consist of two medical glossaries, copied in the fifteenth century, giving Latin equivalents to Arabic pharmacological terms used in the *Practica* of Serapion. The *Breviarium medicinae* or *Practica Serapionis* is the Latin translation by Gerardus Cremonensis (c. 1114–87), or Gerard of Cremona, of the Arabic version of a work known as the 'Small Compendium' and originally written in Syriac by Yūhannā ibn Sarābiyūn (second half of the ninth century), or Serapion the Elder as he was called in the West.[10] The most interesting part of the book as evidence for contemporary apothecary's knowledge is the fourth unit, called in the manuscript 'Dispensatorium' or Dispensatory.[11] At its heart is a series of recipes for compound medicines put together by or for the use of an English apothecary, probably before or in the year 1483, though there are some later additions. So far it has not been identified in another manuscript. The fifth and last unit of the manuscript contains the text of Pseudo-Serapion, *Liber aggregatus in medicinis simplicibus*, now identified as the treatise by Ibn Wāfid (d. 1067), *Kitāb al-Adwiya al-mufrada* (Book on Simple Drugs) in the Latin translation made by Simon of Genoa and Abrāhām ben Shem-Tōb of Tortosa around 1290.[12] This was listed as required reading for all apothecaries by Saladino Ferro D'Ascoli, physician to the Prince of Taranto, in his *Compendium aromatariorum* of c. 1450. At the end of this text there is the signature of a Johannes Whelar, and there is a date on f. 130 which suggests that it may have been written out in 1491.We can draw some conclusions from the assembly of these texts as to the intentions of its compilers and owners. Book two of the *Liber aggregatus* (all that we have in this manuscript) is a listing of medicinal simples in the usual order of vegetable, mineral and animal, and within each category within the system of degrees and paired qualities (hot and dry, etc.). Dioscorides and Galen are the main classical authorities cited for the description of these simples and the statements of the medicinal effects of each. No doubt the apothecary who compiled the preceding Dispensatory would have seen that text as providing the perfect accompaniment to the *Liber aggregatus* text about medicinal simples. With both simples and compound medicines described in this way an apothecary was going to be equipped with complementary guides to the knowledge of simples and compounds he needed to practice his art. The two Latin glossaries would help him to cope with the unfamiliar Arabic terminology he found in texts on pharmacology.

An apothecary was not supposed to make up prescriptions for individual patients except under the guidance of a physician. The prescriptions added to blank leaves, to gaps in the texts, or to the margins of the textual units of Harley MS 1628 in various hands, show us the interaction of physicians and apothecaries as allied practitioners. We do not know who the individuals were who recorded these prescriptions at different times, but we can make assumptions about the type of apothecary involved because of the exalted social standing of the patients named in the prescriptions. The owner of the book, and probably the scribe of some of the prescriptions, must have been someone like John Clark or Clerk, Warden of the Grocers Company in 1467 and in 1475. He was appointed grocer and apothecary to Edward IV on 17 February 1462. John Clark owned another manuscript now in the Harley collection, Harley MS 273, a compilation of Anglo-Norman religious and secular texts of the first half of the fourteenth century, to which many charms were added. His ownership inscription is found on f. 1, 'Iste liber constat John clerk grocero ac ap[othec]ario / regis Edwardi quarti post conquestum', and he seems to have owned Harley MS 273 circa 1461–1483, at about the same time that Harley MS 1628 was being used to record prescriptions.

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[10] P. E. Pormann, 'Yūhannā ibn Sarābiyūn: Further Studies into the Transmission of his Works', *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, xiv (2004), pp. 233–62.

[11] The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'Dispensatory' as 'A book in which are described the composition, method of preparation, and use of medicinal substances; a pharmacopoeia'.

[12] See P. Dilg, '*The Liber aggregatus in medicinis simplicibus of Pseudo-Serapion:* An Influential Work of Medical Arabism', in *Islam and the Italian Renaissance*, ed. C. Burnett and A. Contadini, Warburg Institute Colloquia, 5 (London, 1999), pp. 221–31, with further bibliography on Simon of Genoa and Abrāhām ben Shēm-Tōb; *Ibn Wāfid (m. 460/1067). Kitāb al-Adwiya al-mufrada (Libro de los medicamentos simples*), edición, traducción ... L. F. Aguirre de Cárcer, 2 vols (Madrid, 1995); P. E. Pormann, 'Yūhannā ibn Sarābiyūn: Further Studies into the Transmission of his Works', *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, xiv (2004), pp. 236–8.

But there is no clinching evidence to associate him with Harley MS 1628, only the presumption that the owner of this manuscript would have moved in just the same court circles[13] It is worth noting that at two points there are personal references amongst the added prescriptions (f. 2r 'draget for my mastres'; f. 154r 'Pro Thoma Bledlow & pro meipso': both could be in the same hand).

Many of the prescriptions in Harley MS 1628 are headed by the name of the patient, 'For the King' (by far the commonest, referring both to Edward IV and Richard III), 'For lady Richmond', 'For Thomas Grayson', 'For my lord the Duke of Clarence', or 'For Thomas Rotherham Bishop of Lincoln'. These are all prominent figures at the royal court; all the names are listed below in folio order. One of the individuals most frequently named seems to have been Sir John Dynham, and his wife is mentioned several times too. Sir John became Lord Dynham, as a prominent soldier and supporter of Edward IV, and was awarded by the grateful King much of the confiscated property of the Courtenay earls of Devon.[14] On 31 July 1483 Sir John was prescribed an electuary. Not every patient mentioned was as prominent at court. For instance we find a prescription for master William Walker, 'person of Radmyll & Ardyngle in sussex'. As well as mentioning the name of the patient, the name of the type of compound medicine in the prescription is often included in the title, thus 'Preservative of [King] Richard' and 'Stomaticon Richard' (these prescriptions presumably date from 1483-85, slightly later than most of the others). The prominence of remedies and preservatives for pestilence or plague in this manuscript gives a good indication of how much contemporaries feared epidemic disease. The prescriptions sometimes indicate who the prescribing doctor was. One prescription is headed 'Diatessaron treacle [i.e. one made of four ingredients] composed for King Edward IV against poison according to the orders of master James Fries'. Fries or Frise was a doctor appointed as royal physician to Edward IV. Originally, as his name suggests, he was from Friesland; however he incepted in medicine at Cambridge in 1460-1, and built a successful career at court. After Edward's death, he continued in favour with Richard III, and died in 1488.[15]

The full prescription for Diatessaron treacle runs as follows:

> Tiriaca dia tasseron compositum pro Rege Edwardo quarto contra venenum secundum ordinacionem magistri Jacobi ffriis
>
> Recipe radicum diptani aristologie longe et rotunde tormentille bistorte vicetoxi ypericon herbe tinnee seminis cardomomis benedicti foliorum rute radicum enule seminis absinthii ana uncia i contundantur grosso modo et buliantur in aqua omnium predictorum vel aliquarum et parum vini aromatici ficuum pingnium passularum ana uncie iiii coletur in qua colatura admisceatur cum melle et succare ana libra i et buliant ad perfectam decoccionem et cum isto misceatur Recipe radicum diptani tormentille bistorte cornu cervi usti aristologie utriusque ossis de corde cervi nigelle deroinge ana drachme iii terre sigillate mitridati ana uncia semi tiriace dia tasseron libra i mista omnia in modum Electuarium solidum[16]

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[13] For Clark or Clerk see L. G. Matthews, *The Royal Apothecaries* (London, 1967), p. 52; *The Household of Edward IV, ed. A. R. Myers* (Manchester, 1959), p. 245; Rawcliffe, op. cit., p. 164. The place of the apothecary within the royal household is described in Myers, op. cit., p. 125.

[14] Michael Hicks, 'Dynham, John, Baron Dynham (c.1433–1501)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept. 2004; online edn, Jan. 2006 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50234, accessed 27 Fe.b 2008]

[15] For Fries see C. H. Talbot, E. A. Hammond, *The Medical Practitioners in Medieval England: A Biographical Register* (London, 1965), pp. 96-8; Myers, op. cit, pp. 245, 296; Rawcliffe, op. cit., pp. 109-11.

[16] Harley MS 1628, f. 29r.

Versions of the famous theriac or treacle, which originated in the classical world, were well known from the thirteenth century onwards. The *Antidotarium Nicolai*, which was the best known source of authoritative guidance on the make-up of medicines, has a version called 'Tyriaca diatesereon'. As stated there the poison for which this remedy was indicated included the bite of rabid dogs or other poisonous animals. In the fifteenth century such antidotes were also prescribed to counteract the poison of pestilence. The prescription of James Fries differs from that in the *Antidotarium Nicolai* in many particulars – for example in including mithridate, itself a medicine of legendary power – and has instructions for making up the medicine into an electuary not found in the earlier text. It is evidence for the central role and authority of the royal physician in his role as protector of the King's person as well as for the nature of the prescriptions that court apothecaries might be required to fulfil.[17]

Another well-known Cambridge physician and royal doctor William Hatteclyffe is the source of three prescriptions – one is that for 'Tutty ointment [a crude oxide of zinc, for eyes] according to the prescription [receptum] of Master William Hattecliffe'.[18] Four other contemporary physicians are mentioned by name and we must assume that this court apothecary or his associates executed the prescriptions of all these prominent doctors. The kinds of medicine favoured by these prominent doctors also becomes clear. A high proportion of these prescriptions for royal and noble patients were the product of distillations – aqua vitae and other medicinal waters. Thus we find for instance a 'water against pestilence distilled in a glass alembic and kept for future use'. On f. 155r of the manuscript occur some drawings of distilling apparatus in the bottom margin of the page. These alchemical instruments presumably were drawn because they very much represented the advanced technology of the leading contemporary apothecaries. We know from other sources that prominent English doctors were enthusiastic proponents of alchemical remedies in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.

I have transcribed here the titles of prescriptions in Harley MS 1628 that bear the names of individual patients or practitioners, or that witness to the fear of plague. Many of them were originally listed in the first Harleian catalogue of 1759 under the description of Harley MS 1628, but have not been printed since. Some were missed – the outer gatherings in particular are very dirty and difficult to read. I have indicated where the names are particularly problematic. Footnotes indicate identifiable individuals. Where more than one prescription occurs on a page I have used letters in brackets to distinguish them.

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[17] For the *Antidotarium Nicolai* and *'tyriaca diatesereon'*, see Dietlinde Goltz, Mittelalterliche Pharmazie und Medizin : dargestellt an Geschichte und Inhalt des Antidotarium Nicolai: mit einem Nachdruck der Druckfassung von 1471 (Stuttgart, 1976). See also Gilbert Watson, Theriac and Mithridatium: A Study in Therapeutics (London, 1966).

[18] Rosemary Horrox, 'Hatteclyffe, William (d. 1480)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept. 2004; online edn, Jan. 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12603, accessed 27 Feb. 2008]. Myers, op.cit, pp. 293, 296.

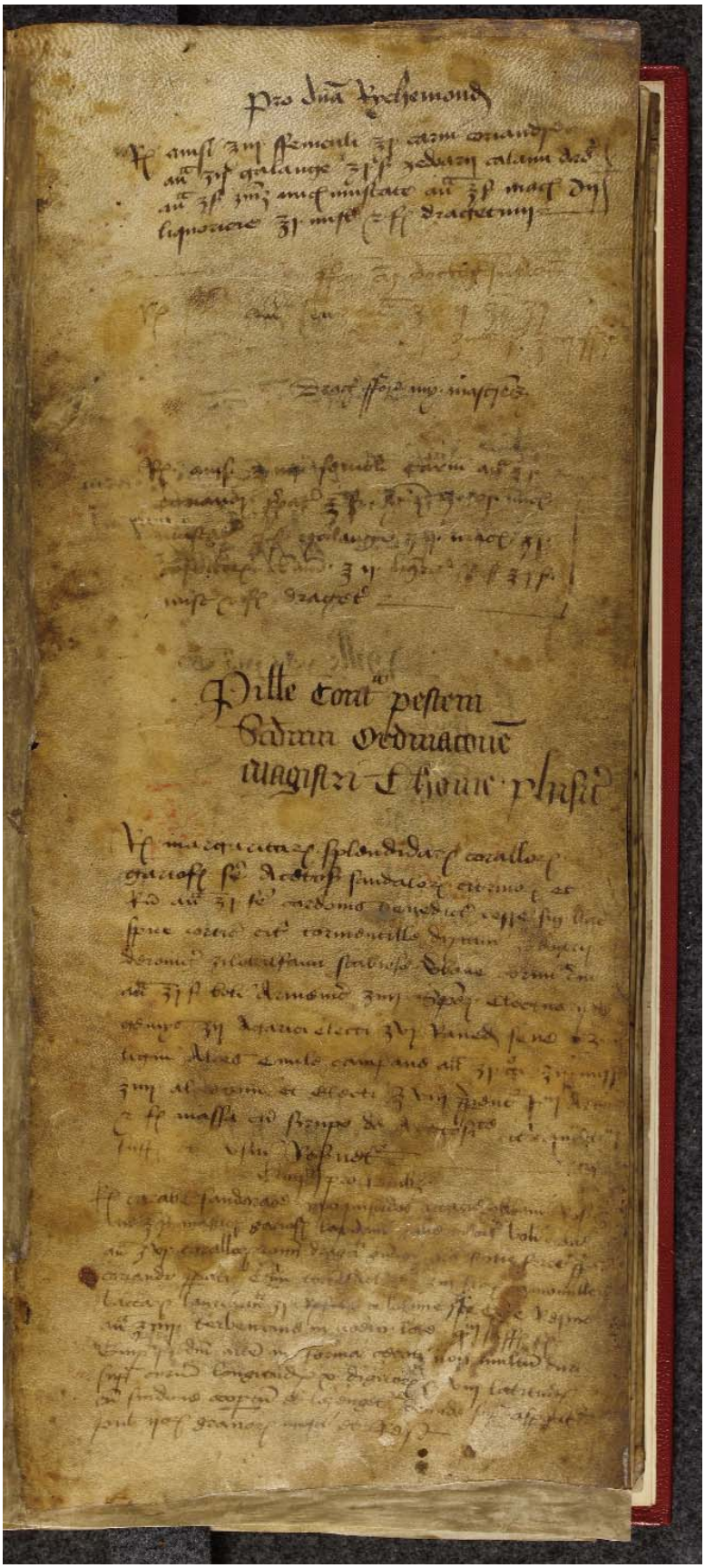

Fig. 1. Harley MS 1628, f. 2r.

f. 1v Pro magistro lyme
f. 2r (a) Pro domina richemond[19]
(b) draget for my mastres
(c) Pillule contra pestem secundum ordinacionem magistri Thome phisici (fig.1)[20]
f. 2v Pro domina cantlow[21]
f. 3r Pro thome grayson[22]
f. 3v (a) Electuarium pro domina denham le xxxi de Jull 1483[23]
(b) Pro uno homine okynggam

f. 14r (a) Pro nicolao lenthorp[24]
(b) Pro Johanne clerk de stauro[25]
f. 14v Pro magistro willelmo trymsbe
f. 18v Pro magistro nenbrow

f. 22v (a) Pro rege
(b) Aqua vite composita pro rege
f. 23r Pro rege
f. 23v Emplastrum qui dicitur emanuel maior secundum ordinacionem magistri bertholomei
f. 24r (a) Preservativum Ricardi
(b) Stomaticon Ricardi
(c) Pro magistro willelemo walker person of Radmyll & Ardyngle in sussex
f. 24v (a) Aqua contra lacrimatis oculis pro johanne fitzherbert[26]... secundum magistrum Willelmum hatteclif
(b) Henry brynkell dwellyng with ye chanceler of lyncolln
(c) Pro magistro martyn vyner de oderbery
(d) Pro domino [thoma : inserted over] matraver[27]

f. 28v Aqua contra pestem
f. 29r (a) Tiriaca dia tasseron compositum pro Rege Edwardo quarto contra venenum secundum ordinacionem magistri Jacobi Friis
(b) Pro magistro sapcottis electuarium[28]
f. 29v Electuarium de succo pomorum pro domina ducissa burgundie[29]
f. 30v (a) Secundum ordinacionem magistri Bartholomei
(b) Pro domino cancelario[30]
f. 31r Pro domino thoma Rothram episcopo lincoln

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19 Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond, 1443-1509.
20 Thomas Bemmesley, royal physician, c. 1483? Talbot and Hammond, op. cit., p. 333.
21 Wife of Henry Cantelowe, merchant of the staple of Calais. Calendar of Patent Rolls 1467-77, p. 487; 1976-85, p. 243.
22 Wife of Thomas Grayston, Grayson, Greyson, groom of the chamber 1476, yeoman of the chamber 1478. Myers, op. cit., p. 243.
23 See n. 13 above.
24 Nicholas Leventhorpe, esquire. Calendar of Close Rolls, 1476-85, p. 23.
25 Probably not John Clark, royal apothecary (see n. 12 above), but possibly a Clerk of the Closet.
26 John Fitzherbert, remembrancer in the Exchequer, CPR, 1476-85, pp. 202, 315, 451, 534.
27 Thomas Arundell, Lord Matravers. Succeeded to earldom of Essex 1488. CPR, 1476-85, pp. 50, 78, 112, 165, etc.
28 John Sapcote, Squire of the body, Myers, op. cit., pp. 199, 263.
29 Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy (1446–1503).
30 Thomas Rotherham 1423-1500, bp of Lincoln 1472-80, Lord Chancellor.

f. 32r Electuarium camphoratum Magistri Lowes doctor in medicinis[31]
f. 32v (a) Pro magistro Thoma wylkynson[32]
(b) Trocisci de agarico ex ordinacione magistri johannis marie
f. 33v Electuarium contra pestem
f. 34r (a)Emplastrum pro renibus secundum discripcionem magistri Jacobi baraza de la rosa
(b) Pro rege edwardo aqua vite
(c) Unguentum pro stomaco secundum discretionem magistri bartholomei
(d) Electuarium contra pestem
f. 34v Monsenior hary dewke de bokynghame[33]
f. 35v (a) Pro rege
(b) Pro rege fumigatio
(c) Pro rege pomum ambre
f. 37r Pillule allesangine ducis mediolani
f. 59v (a) Pro domina warwyk[34]
(b) Electuarium mirobalanorum secundum magistrum faceby[35] [title crossed through]
f. 62v Pro domina ducissa de bokingham[36]
f. 64v Pro domino johanne denham domino de denham[37]
f. 68r Pro Rege
f. 69r Pro magistro Ricardo noressle [?]
f. 73v Pillule mirabolanorum pro magistro filloll[38]
f. 78r (a) Pro domino johanne denham militis domino de denham
(b) For sir thomas mongomery knyght[39]
(c) Pro johanne foster armigero (fig. 2)[40]
f. 78v (a) Pro Rege Edwardo 4to
(b) Pro magistra bathel pro frenesia
f. 96v (a) Preservativus contra pestem
(b) Dragetum pro domino duce gloucestrie[41]
(c) Dragetum pro domino duce clarence[42]
f. 98r Ypocras pro domina matre regis ducissa eborace[43]
f. 98v Pro domino henrico lowys militi[44]

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31 Lewes Kery, c. 1472-1510, physician to Mary, Princess of Castile, sister of Henry VIII., Talbot and Hammond, op. cit., p. 204.
32 Thomas Wylkynson, clerk. CCR, 1476-85, p. 251.
33 Henry Stafford, second Duke of Buckingham 1455–1483.
34 Anne Beauchamp, Countess of Warwick, 1426–1492.
35 John Faceby, physician Southwark and London, temp. Henry VI, Talbot and Hammond, op. cit., p. 143.
36 Katherine Woodville, Duchess of Buckingham, 1457/8-1497.
37 See n. 13 above.
38 John Filoll, esquire, will executed 1478. CPR, 1476-85, p. 83.
39 Sir Thomas Mongomery or Montgomery, knight of the body, Myers, op. cit., pp. 199, 240, 262.
40 John Foster, yeoman of the crown, Myers, op.cit., p. 243.
41 Richard, Duke of Gloucester, in 1483 became King Richard III (1452-1485).
42 George, Duke of Clarence, 1449-78.
43 Cecily, Duchess of York, mother of Richard III, 1415-95.
44 Henry Lewys?, CPR, 1476-85, p. 22.

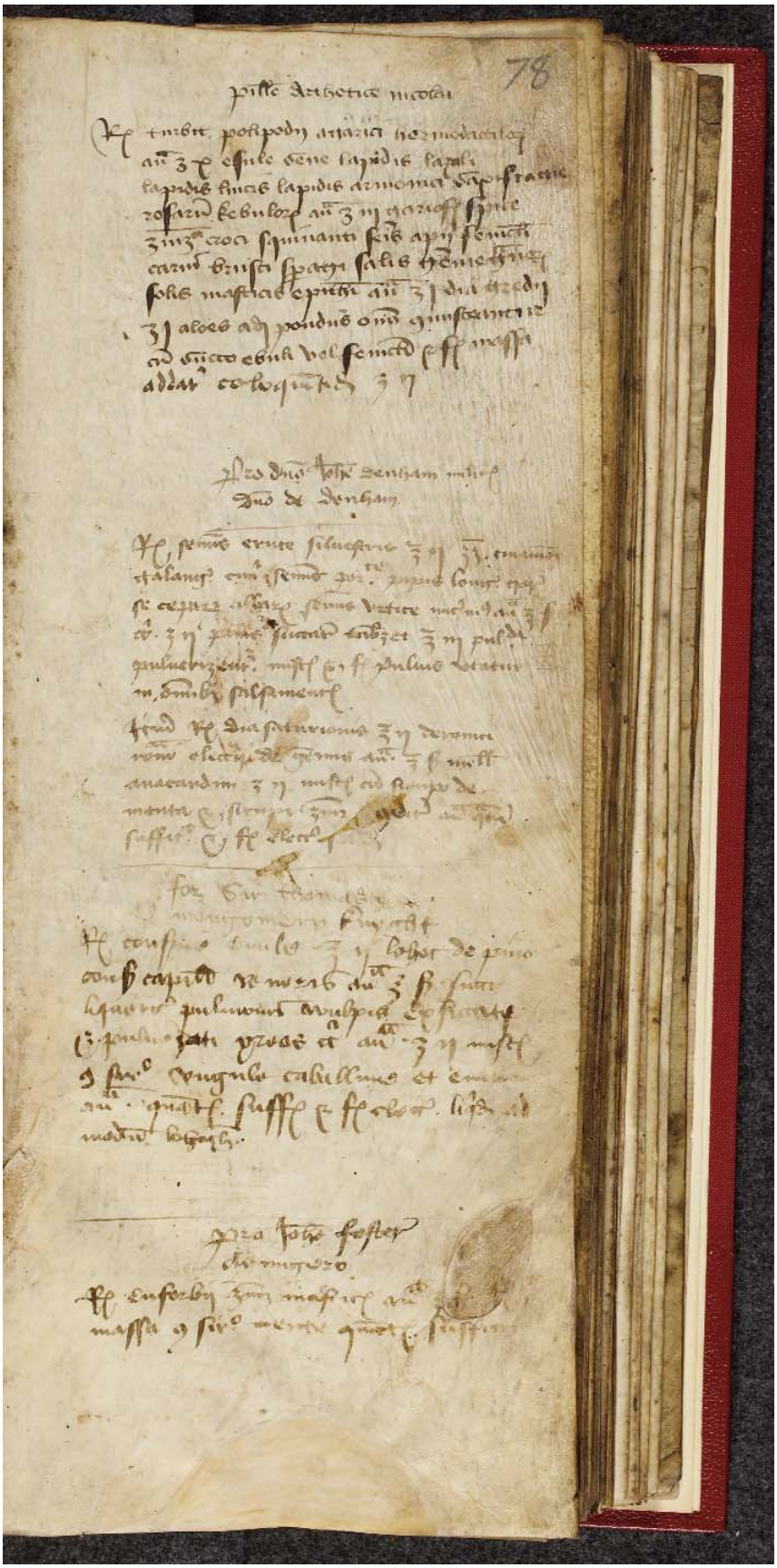

Fig. 2. Harley MS 1628, f. 78r.

f. 153v Pillule pro magistro Johanne Stanford the quenys audeter[45]
f. 154r Pro Thoma Bledlow[46] & pro meipso Electuarium
f. 154v (a) Aqua imperialis pro Rege Edwardo 4
(b) Pro domina margareta[47]
f. 155r Pro rege Edwardo
f. 155v Unguentum tuthie secundum Reseptum magistri Willelmi Hatliff
f. 156r (a) Magister Herry grymysby
(b) Pro domino thesararyo[48]
(c) Pro domino gloucestre
(d) Pro aleycoun ? de boston
(e) Aqua tuthie secundum reseptum magistri Willelmi Hatliff
(f) Fumigacio pro Rege
f. 156v (a) Pro domina yngelstorp [?][49]
(b) Unguentum pro magistro lee
f. 157r (a) Electuarium conta guttam secundum receptum magistri Johannis de latone
(b) Pro magistro thoma grayson anno 1489[50]
(c) Pro magistra uxore eius
f. 158r Jacopo scottorum principe magnifico[51]

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45 John Stanford, CPR, 1476-85, p. 480.

46 Thomas Bledlowe, grocer and alderman, CPR, 1467-77, pp. 120-1, 322, 509; CCR, 1468-76, pp. 44, 128, 174, 194, etc.: CCR, 1476-85, pp. 28, 65, 519.

47 See n. 16 above.

48 Henry Bourchier, Earl of Essex, d. 1483. G.E.C., Complete Peerage, V (1926), p. 137.

49 Joan, late wife of Edmund Ingoldesthorp, knight. CPR, 1476-85, p. 409.

50 See n. 18 above.

51 Presumably the future James IV of Scotland, 1473-1513.

The relationship between theory and practice in medieval medicine is an important topic. for research and discussion. Even though most studies on the subject have dealt mainly.Â provide a direct insight into medieval medical theory and practice, mainly from the. eleventh to the thirteenth century, and reveal a unique potential for resurrecting lost. knowledge.15.Â that team, I have studied three Genizah collections in the UK for my research on medieval. 9Stefan C. Reif, A Jewish Archive from Old Cairo: The History of Cambridge Universityâ€™s Genizah Collection. (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2000), 1â€“22. Regulation of medical practice had begun with the establishment of the British Medical Association in 1856 and the General Medical Council in 1858. Medical training became more formalised with the establishment of medical schools, and the number of doctors rose considerably, from 14,415 in 1861 to 35,650 in 1900. Nursing became one of the few occupations a middle-class girl might contemplate. However, women remained largely unwelcome in the medical world. The exception to this was nursing. Although nurses had been active in hospitals long before she appeared on the scene, Florence Nighting