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'Secrets of Women': Translating the Female Body in Early Modern Books of Secrets (1555-1700)

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**‘Secrets of Women’: Translating the Female Body in  
Early Modern Books of Secrets (1555-1700)**

Julia Gruman Martins  
King’s College London

Thesis Submitted for  
Doctor of Philosophy

2022

## Acknowledgments

My PhD journey was more turbulent than I expected it to be, which means I am incredibly grateful to the people who have helped me get to where I am now. I started my MPhil/PhD studies at the Warburg Institute, before transferring to King's College London a year later after my first supervisor left the UK following the Brexit vote. So, I need to thank, first and foremost, my wonderful first supervisor at KCL, Laura Gowing. Thank you not only for accepting to help me in this unique situation, but for always being reassuring and patient, and guiding me in such an intelligent way. I also want to thank my second supervisor, Evelyn Welch, who taught me to always take a few steps back and look at the big picture – whether in my thesis or in finding my career path. They both taught me how to be more confident, assertive, and less meandering, and for that, I am thankful. I would also like to thank my Warburg Institute supervisors, Guido Giglioni and Joanne Ferguson, for brainstorming with me in the early days of my research, and for their full support when I needed to change universities. I must also thank Elma Brenner, not only for teaching me so much about working in a museum and library so incredible as the Wellcome Collection in two separate occasions, but also for her kindness, calm, and sensible advice. I would surely have abandoned the programme had it not been for her help. Thank you also to my friends Jens Olesen and Ben James, for their generosity in discussing ideas, giving me feedback, and commenting on my writing. Finally, thank you to my fabulous husband, João, without whom none of this would have been possible. And to my daughter, Lili, for urging me to finish this thesis and play with her in the garden instead. I am grateful for all the help and support I have received these past six years. It made everything less lonely.

## COVID-19 Impact Statement

Writing a thesis during a global pandemic was a unique experience, which each of us faced differently. In my case, half of my time as a PhD candidate was spent in ‘pandemic-mode’, with limited access to libraries and archives and, most importantly to me, without childcare or family support. I had my daughter two weeks before our first national lockdown in March 2020, and it would be absurd not to acknowledge the way in which being a new mother with no family in the UK shaped my PhD journey.

The impossibility of travelling not only meant that my husband and I could not count on family support for almost the whole of our daughter’s first two years, but also that I could not personally consult the sources I expected to in France and in Italy. I also needed to rethink my research plans according to the UK libraries’ ever-changing openings, especially the British Library and the Wellcome Library. The main consequence of this limitation was that I could not explore the intersection between recipes in manuscript and print form as much as I intended, as I did not have access to as many annotated copies of the same books as I hoped. I was also unable to consult as many manuscript recipe collections as I expected, which limited the examples of transcribed recipes taken from printed sources into these manuscripts and made me cautious to find patterns and trends using fewer primary sources than I would have liked.

I was lucky to have photographed several books (both in manuscript and print) before giving birth, and these amateur digitisations composed the bulk of the sources for this research. I am also grateful for the many online resources I was able to use, especially through EEBO and the BNF’s *Gallica*. So, some primary sources could not be included in this research as I had originally planned, as I needed to adapt to the resources available to me. Having said that, being forced to reconsider my sources also proved to be a valuable lesson, as I discovered materials that I might not have otherwise come across. I believe this experience has made me – and my fellow PhD candidates writing during the pandemic – more adaptable, resilient, and willing to work with the sources we have available, which can often prove equally or even more compelling than what we had originally envisioned.

## Abstract

Hundreds of recipes about reproduction and the female body were available to a growing number of readers in the early modern period, most of them in Italian or vernacular translations, such as English and French. This thesis examines printed books of secrets, in particular recipes about women's bodies, in the light of their increasing circulation and translation in this period. The thesis analyses the Italian books that were translated and re-edited the most to study how 'secrets of women' were reshaped and adapted in their diffusion process. Recipe books have recently become the focus of many historians, yet there are few studies about translated recipes, especially where gender is concerned. Because books of secrets circulated in virtually all of Europe in multiple languages, which shaped the genre to specific contexts, considering their translation is crucial. Translators often provided alternative ingredients to make sure a recipe could be followed, and 'corrected' or 'improved' recipes according to their own expertise. They could also omit parts of the text they felt were superfluous or problematic, such as abortifacient recipes. The first part of the thesis examines the role of printers and translators in reshaping this kind of knowledge and how readers could adapt it to their lives. In the second part, each chapter is dedicated to a 'professor of secrets', the authors who compiled recipe collections. Through this process of refashioning 'secrets of women', medical and editorial trends become clear: they illustrate cultural perceptions of the body. Disseminating knowledge about the body was not a neutral activity in the past. Translation in this period was a creative, often collective activity, that reshaped knowledge between genres, material formats, languages, cultures, readerships, and, crucially, theory and practice. By understanding how 'secrets of women' were transformed, it is possible to see social and cultural shifts in values, priorities, and preoccupations, going beyond medical understandings of the body. This intricate network of meanings was constantly changing, which was partly due to the flexible nature of the genre of recipes, malleable to reworkings by the many people who participated in it and 'translated' this knowledge into their everyday lives. Therefore, all the people involved in the production, circulation, and reception of recipes were, in a way, 'translators' of medical knowledge, who were actively engaged in the (re)making of how the human body was conceptualised.

## Note on Language, Names, and Translation

Throughout this thesis, I have used the word ‘vernacular’ to refer to the most common forms of European languages published in the early modern period, such as Ile-de-France French and Tuscan Italian, unless specified otherwise (such as Neapolitan/Venetian). In all transcriptions of printed or manuscript sources, I have kept the original punctuation, majuscles/minuscles, and spelling wherever possible. I have added or corrected only what was essential to make the text understandable. Unless stated otherwise, all English translations are my own. In these, I have modified spelling and punctuation, written abbreviated words in their full form, and modernised letters such as Latin extended vowels. As for personal names, I have chosen to call people by the name that appeared most often in print: Alessio Piemontese in Italian instead of Alexis Piemontois in French, for instance. Where two spellings coexisted (such as Ludovico Avanzo/Avanzi or Hugh Plat/Platt), I have also opted for the spelling most often found in the primary sources. Because many of the books cited here have very long titles, I have used shortened versions of the titles both in the text and in the footnotes after the first mention of the text, in the original language the text was published, such as *Secreti* for *I Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese*. Lastly, throughout this thesis, I have used the gender-neutral pronouns they/them for situations in which an individual person’s identity is unknown. In the world of print, it is more likely that these people were men; however, women were also a part of this universe, even if in smaller numbers. This is why I chose to use these pronouns, as I do not want to contribute to the erasure of women or non-binary people from history by assuming their absence.



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## Introduction

The Renaissance quest for the ‘secrets of nature’ was closely connected to the increase of dissection practices, and the idea of knowing the secrets of the human body, especially the mysteries revolving around the womb.<sup>1</sup> Historians have long described the early modern period as an age of discovery and exploration, from the contact with the ‘new world’ to the development of the ‘scientific revolution’. But it was also a time when ideas about expertise and authority (and even authorship) were rethought. As literacy spread and the printing press made the medical and natural worlds increasingly accessible to a growing number of people reading in the vernacular languages, which gradually came to compete with Latin in publishers’ presses, the body itself came to be the object of human curiosity, and its mysteries unveiled to non-specialised readers. However, these secrets of nature had a crucial gendered aspect since nature itself was associated with the feminine. As William Eamon described her,

Nature is modest; she deceives; she devises various stratagems to fool those who wish to probe her secrets, allowing a glimpse of one aspect of herself but concealing her identity from those (males) who would attempt to know her intimately’.<sup>2</sup>

Long studied in Latin in universities, the secrets of the body started to be discussed in print in the sixteenth century, in the form of recipes promising readers ways to ‘regulate’ or ‘manage’ it. But, as these books became commercially successful, they were constantly translated and reedited, and changed in the process. Readers consuming these recipes were quick to adapt them as well. This thesis argues that translation in this period was almost synonymous with rewriting and reshaping knowledge and that we need to broaden our definition of ‘translation’ to include myriad practices and people. Recipes migrated from manuscript to print and vice-versa, and translators transformed texts into different languages while adapting their contents to new readerships.<sup>3</sup> Readers in their turn modified recipes as they used them. By rethinking how these books were produced and consumed, I argue that we need to reconsider ideas such as ‘authorship’ and ‘authority’, to encompass a wide range

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<sup>1</sup> Andrea Carlino, *La Fabbrica del Corpo: Libri e Dissezioni nel Rinascimento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 352.

<sup>3</sup> For an overview on knowledge and movement, see James Secord, ‘Knowledge in Transit’, *Isis* 95 (2004), pp-654-72.

of activities including multiple people, especially where gender is concerned. These concepts, especially that of ‘author’, were loosely understood in the early modern people: recipes could be perceived as ‘authorless’, as common property, or as collective knowledge. But, as the name of the genre suggests, the appeal of books of secrets lied partly in the inherent tension of paradoxically unveiling secret knowledge and rendering it accessible to a wide readership.<sup>4</sup>

This thesis aims to show how ‘secrets of women’ both shaped and were influenced by early modern perceptions of the female body and reproduction (‘generation’) in Italy, France, and England, through a comparative study of the translations of recipes. In this thesis, I will show how the fluidity and malleability of recipes made this genre susceptible to constant reworkings and rewritings, making recipes relevant for centuries. This is perhaps best exemplified by secrets of women, which were adapted to reflect social and cultural changes. By virtue of wanting to sell as many books as possible, ‘professors of secrets’, translators, and printers/publishers give us an insight into early modern attitudes about the gendered body.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, male and female readers’ practical use of recipes hint at how these texts were personalised in everyday life. Gender was central to the world of secrets; not only were female bodies the *object* of study, but women were active *subjects* in the production of this kind of knowledge.

Recipe books made up almost a quarter of the medical books in the early modern period.<sup>6</sup> Usually written in the vernacular, they tended to be printed in small formats such as octavo and contained few or no illustrations. As they became more well-known, woodcuts were added depicting the professor of secrets behind the collection, or indicating what vessels were most appropriate for a specific formula. Still, they were mostly produced with a wide readership in mind, to be used in the home. Most recipes were short and straight-forward and written in the imperative. While instructions tended to be simple, the quantities of ingredients

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<sup>4</sup> For a broader analysis of veiled/unveiled knowledge and medicine, see Michel Foucault, *La Naissance de la clinique: Une Archéologie du regard médical* (Paris: PUF, 1963), especially Chapter VIII.

<sup>5</sup> In this thesis, I am using ‘printers’ and ‘publishers’ interchangeably unless otherwise stated. Although there were differences in their activities, in many instances the same person acted as both. This was an European phenomenon. Not only were the two words used as synonyms in the early modern period, but historians have tended to assimilate them, as there was so much overlap between the roles. See Evelyn Lincoln, ‘Printers and Publishers in early Modern Rome’, in Pamela Jones, Barbara Wisch, and Simon Ditchfield (eds.), *A Companion to Early Modern Rome, 1492-1692* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 546-63. As I will argue in Chapter 2, these activities could even make them co-authors of the books they published. William Engel makes a similar case for a slightly later period in *The Printer as Author in Early Modern English Book History: John Day and the Fabrication of a Protestant Memory Art* (London: Routledge, 2022).

<sup>6</sup> This percentage was calculated by Mary Fissell considering the period between 1640 and 1740. Recipe books were one of the most important genres in early modern medical print, along with regimens. Mary Fissell, ‘The Marketplace of Print’, in Mark Jenner and Patrick Wallis (eds.) *Medicine and the Market in England and its Colonies, c. 1450–c. 1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 108-32.

and other aspects of the recipe were often left out, inviting the reader to complement the recipe using their own knowledge, as I will show in the first and second chapters.

Many of the recipes about the body concerned reproduction, and the female body specifically, usually accounting for 10% of the recipes in these collections.<sup>7</sup> Secrets of women, as this knowledge came to be known, started to be published in the sixteenth century in books of secrets, general household guides with recipes to be used in the domestic world. As Monica Green has shown, the term ‘secrets of women’ signalled a medical shift in the understanding of the female body, while Katharine Park used the expression to cover a range of practices connected to exploring the interior of the (gendered) human body, as the womb became the primary organ associated with dissection.<sup>8</sup> ‘Secrets of women’ is a rich expression because of the genitive: were these recipes *for* women, did they come *from* women, or were they written *by* women? They were certainly secrets *about* women. These recipes were published in virtually all books of secrets of the period, and, as I will show, contained all these meanings. I use the expression in its original, all-encompassing sense, referring to everything pertaining to the normal process of reproduction and typical conditions of women, such as menstrual disorders, while considering scholarship about gender and secrecy.

In this thesis, I combine quantitative and qualitative approaches to study the history of the translation of secrets of women.<sup>9</sup> To track recurring ingredients, I have developed a database that considers the kind of recipes in which they were used (abortifacient or aphrodisiac recipes, for instance). I have used tables to compare the translation of specific recipes in different languages and track changes and additions in the titles and ingredients (Appendix 1). To compare the number of recipes for the same goal, I have created a

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<sup>7</sup> This percentage was calculated based on the tables of contents of the recipe books examined in this thesis, in their original languages as well as translation. See the appendix for details.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion about this expression, see Monica Green, ‘From “Diseases of Women” to “Secrets of Women”: The Transformation of Gynecological Literature in the Later Middle Ages’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 30.1 (2000), 5–40; Katharine Park, *Secrets of Women: Gender, Generation, and the Origins of Human Dissection* (New York: Zone Books, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> I have also relied on many recent studies about early modern translation and science, such as Michèle Goyens, Pieter de Leemans, and An Smets (eds.), *Science Translated: Latin and Vernacular Translations of Scientific Treatises in Medieval Europe* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2008); Sietske Fransen, Niall Hudson, and Karl Enenkel (eds.), *Translating Early Modern Science* (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Jaime Marroquin Arredondo and Ralph Bauer (eds.), *Translating Nature: Cross-Cultural Histories of Early Modern Science* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019); Scott Montgomery, *Science in Translation: Movements of Knowledge through Cultures and Time* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Andrea Rizzi, *Trust and Proof: Translators in Renaissance Print Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Rocio Sumillera, Jan Surman, and Katharina Kühn (eds.), *Translation in Knowledge, Knowledge in Translation* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2020).

bibliographic table of all the editions and reprints of works by the same author I could find (Appendix 2). Finally, I have tracked all versions of a single book I could find to compare changes (Appendix 3), as well as all editions by the same professor of secrets (Appendix 4). Combining all these resources, quantitative and qualitative approaches have complemented each other to paint a clearer picture of the world of printed books of secrets.

I have also reviewed the table of contents of the main books in this study to find out the percentage of secrets of women in them and divided them into subcategories, such as menstruation and conception recipes. I have compared these tables to the recipes printed in the books themselves – as they could often be different. Finally, I have compared the main synonyms and translations of recurring verbs and ingredients in the recipes, in Italian, English, and French. However, it is the qualitative aspect of this research that is my primary focus. By comparing the language used in the original recipes and their translations, it is possible to see how they were transformed and adapted to the new readerships that printers and translators expected them to have.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, as readers annotated, translated, and copied recipes from printed sources, their language also tells us much about how the body was perceived and what their interests were.

Early modern recipe compilations attained a wide readership through print, and mainly thanks to translation. However, most scholars interested in recipe books have not concentrated on translation, even though historians of science have recently embraced its study.<sup>11</sup> This thesis aims to help fill this gap, analysing translation and recipes literature through the lens of gender: if women were both *subjects* and *objects* in the world of recipes, this dichotomy becomes untenable, and serves to illustrate broader points about how and by

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<sup>10</sup> On translators as mediators, see Peter Burke ‘The Renaissance Translator as Go-Between’, in Andreas Höfele and Werner von Koppenfels (ed.), *Renaissance Go-Betweens* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), pp. 17-31 and ‘Lost (and Found) In Translation: A Cultural History of Translators and Translating in Early Modern Europe’, *European Review* 15 (February 2007), pp. 83-94; Federico Federici and Dario Tessicini (eds.), *Translators, Interpreters and Cultural Negotiators: Mediating and Communicating Power from the Middle Ages to the Modern Era* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Kapil Raj, ‘Go-Betweens, travelers, and Cultural translators’, in Bernard Lightman (ed.), *Companion to the History of Science* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), Chapter 3.

<sup>11</sup> A noteworthy exception is the recent *Osiris* volume edited by Tara Alberts, Sietske Fransen, and Elaine Leong, *Translating Medicine across Premodern Worlds*, *Osiris* Series 37, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2022). For recent works on the history of science and translation, see Bettina Dietz (ed.), ‘Translating and translations in the History of Science’, Special Issue, *Annals of Science* 73, n. 2 (2016); Sven Dupré (ed.), ‘Translating Science over Time’, Focus Section, *Isis* 109, n. 2 (2018), pp. 302-45; Marwa Elshakry and Carla Nappi, ‘Translations’, in Bernard Lightman (ed.), *A Companion to the History of Science* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), Chapter 26; Henry Fischbach, *Translation and Medicine* (Amsterdam: Benjamins 1998); H. Floris Cohen (ed.), ‘Historians of Science Translating the History of Science’, Focus section, *Isis* 109, n. 4 (2018), pp. 774-95; John Pickstone and Michael Worboys (eds.), ‘Between and Beyond ‘Histories of Science’ and ‘Histories of Medicine’ Focus section, *Isis* 102 n. 1 (2011), pp. 97-133.

whom knowledge was made and who should have access to it. Secrets of women were one of the main kinds of recipes in these collections, and as the books were reprinted and translated, dozens of new recipes about women's bodies were added, indicating that publishers expected readers to be interested in this subject. Books of secrets were 'best-sellers' in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially in Italy, where they originated. While other genres, such as the German technical manuals (*Kunstbüchlein*), were aimed at vernacular readers comprised mostly of craftsmen, books of secrets were first addressed to urban people of middling and wealthier status, with ideal readers often described as *virtuosi*.<sup>12</sup> These included but were not limited to medical practitioners, consisting mainly of people who had the time and means to collect cabinets of curiosities and investigate the secrets of nature. As I will show, in reality, this readership was more varied than the authors expected, but the link between the *virtuosi* movement and the development of scientific academies in Italian cities was at the origin of books of secrets.<sup>13</sup> Two of the professors of secrets mentioned in this thesis were directly involved with these academies, inhabiting a world of experimentation and empirical knowledge.<sup>14</sup> Printed books of secrets were, therefore, very much part of a growing interest in Italian cities to understand and appropriate nature and investigate her mysteries.

Besides Italy, books of secrets were also particularly commercially successful in England and in France, where they were reprinted multiple times. Most of the ones analysed in this thesis come from these countries. I use the somewhat anachronistic expression 'best-seller' throughout this thesis to refer to books reprinted more than 20 times between 1550 and 1700, which is roughly the period when printed books of secrets attained their highest commercial success. However, these dates are somewhat arbitrary, with examples occurring both before and after this temporal span. These best-selling books were constantly being updated, reedited, and translated, because printers believed they would sell well. As I will show, most of these books were compiled by men; only one professor of secrets was a woman. Yet women could often be the original source of recipes. Moreover, as paratexts such as letters to the reader indicate, they were among the readership these books were expected to have. Printed recipe books could be found in many libraries of the time; their

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<sup>12</sup> William Eamon, 'Arcana Disclosed: The Advent of Printing, the Books of Secrets Tradition and the Development of Experimental Science in the Sixteenth Century', *History of Science*, 22.2 (1984), pp. 111–50.

<sup>13</sup> Massimo Rinaldi, 'Le Accademie del Cinquecento', in *Il Rinascimento Italiano e l'Europa, II, Umanesimo ed Educazione*, ed. by Gino Belloni and Riccardo Drusi (Treviso: Angelo Colla, 2007), pp. 337–59.

<sup>14</sup> Antonio Clericuzo, 'Le Accademie Scientifiche del Seicento', in Antonio Clericuzio and Saverio Ricci (eds.) *Enciclopedia Italiana. Il Contributo Italiano alla Storia del Pensiero. Ottava Appendice. Scienze* (Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 2013), pp. 38–45.

wide readership was geographically diversified, encompassing myriad readers transcending gender, age, and social status. Alessio Piemontese's 1555 *Secreti*, one of the most successful collections of the time, was read from Spain to Poland, by kings, midwives, and craftsmen alike.<sup>15</sup>

One of the reasons why books of secrets were such a commercial success was undoubtedly because of their miscellaneous nature. Amid cosmetic preparations and alchemical formulas, medical recipes constituted an essential part of these collections; indeed, reproduction was one of the main themes in books of secrets, composing up to 10% of the total recipes. These books were constantly reprinted, promising readers ways of manipulating, understanding, and controlling the female body in straightforward recipes. The comparison of these recipes and their translations can help us to understand how knowledge about the female body circulated in early modern print and how translations changed it, rendering it accessible to new readers, while also creating models for domestic medicine, describing actual practices, and offering readers tools from which to create their own experiments.<sup>16</sup>

Piemontese first introduced himself to readers in the preface to his recipe collection, the *Secreti*.<sup>17</sup> The legendary Piemontese was probably the best known of the early modern professors of secrets, a group first defined by the Venetian canon and chronicler Tommaso Garzoni as those who 'professed secrets', mainly in print.<sup>18</sup> Piemontese's books were reprinted more than a hundred times in a century, translated into more than ten languages, and sold in virtually all Europe. Piemontese told readers he had been born into a wealthy

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<sup>15</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *I Secreti di Donno Alessio Piemontese* (Venice: Sigismondo Bordogna, 1555).

<sup>16</sup> As many historians have remarked, 'experiment' and 'experience' were not straightforward concepts in this period. While these terms were usually used interchangeably, the first became increasingly connected to alchemy, magic, and other manipulated events. Michael McVaugh, 'The *Experimenta* of Arnald of Villanova', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 1.1 (1971), pp. 107–18; Charles B. Schmitt, 'Experience and Experiment: A Comparison of Zabarella's View with Galileo's in *De Motu*', *Studies in the Renaissance*, 1969, pp. 80–138. I use both these terms to mean a practical trial of a recipe, as they were often used as synonyms in recipe books. For earlier uses, see Chiara Crisciani and J. Agrimi, 'Per una Ricerca su Experimentum-Experimenta: Riflessione Epistemologica e Tradizione Medica (Secoli XIII-XV)', in P. Janni and I. Mazzini (eds.), *Presenza del Lessico Greco e Latino nelle Lingue Contemporanee* (Macerata: Univ. di Studi di Macerata, Pubbl. della Facoltà di Lettere e filosofia 55, Sussidi didattici, 2, 1990); Pierre Michaud Quantin, *Etudes sur le vocabulaire philosophique du Moyen Age* (Rome: Ateneo, 1970). For the case of Latin recipes and *experimentum*, see Carmélia Opsomer, 'Prolégomènes à l'étude informatique des recettes médicales anciennes', in *Mémoires III, Médecins et médecine dans l'Antiquité* (Saint-Etienne: Centre Jean Palerne, Univ. de Saint-Etienne, 1982), pp. 85–104.

<sup>17</sup> For a bibliographical study of Piemontese, see John Ferguson, 'The Secrets of Alexis: A Sixteenth Century Collection of Medical and Technical Receipts', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 24.2 (1930), 225–46. I will discuss Piemontese's case in more detail in Chapter 3.

<sup>18</sup> Tommaso Garzoni, *La Piazza Universale di Tutte le Professioni del Mondo* (Venice: Giovanni Battista Somasco, 1589).

family and, having studied ancient and modern languages, had dedicated his life to travelling in the pursuit of the secrets of nature, compiling a vast collection of practical knowledge of medicine, alchemy, distillation, and cosmetics. Piemontese was reluctant to share this information as part of the value of this knowledge was its assumed ‘secrecy’ – even if it meant not saving another man’s life with one of his medicines. In the preface to his book, readers were told how, tormented by guilt, he eventually decided to publish his secrets ‘for the common good’: the collection of recipes readers had in their hands corresponded to the result of Piemontese’s ‘epiphany’ that knowledge’s worth was in its openness, not in its secrecy. This realisation was a central part of the legendary narrative Piemontese crafted about himself, and was echoed in several similar stories in early modern print, particularly in recipe books:

Therefore, good reader, in the years past (not without my great work and effort), I had the pleasure of assembling and accumulating several kinds of tried recipes, which can teach a great number of beautiful secrets. I had shown these secrets to some of my friends, who requested me (or rather constrained me) into publishing them for the common good.<sup>19</sup>

These tales, which were very likely an editorial invention, illustrate a significant shift in the early modern period towards broader dissemination of knowledge, which in turn was profoundly linked to the growing importance of print. Practical knowledge had been transmitted in the form of recipes since antiquity, but with the advent of the printing press, recipes literature became one of the best-selling genres in the early modern period. Recipes unveiling the secrets of nature were available in vernacular collections, with compilers capitalising on readers’ growing interest in recipes. Many of these collections were cheaply printed, becoming particularly successful in northern Italy at first (especially in Venice), where they were reprinted dozens of times. But books of secrets quickly became a European phenomenon, with local versions and translations competing in the marketplace for readers’ attention. In an economy of secrets that was transcending linguistic borders, translation was of central importance. Recipes had to be adapted to their new readerships, and knowledge

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<sup>19</sup> ‘Comme ainsi fust, bening Lecteur, que ces ans passez, non sans mon grand travail & fatigue, i’eusse prins plaisir d’assembler & accumuler plusieurs sortes de receptes experimentees, lesquelles peussent enseigner grand nombre de beaux secretz, & lesdits secretz eusse monstrez & conferez avec aucuns de mes amis; iceux en fin m’ont prie, ou plustost contraint pour l’utilite publique, de les faire imprimer...’. ‘Epistre au lecteur’, *Bastiment de Receptes* (Paris: Jean Ruelle, 1560).



was almost always transformed at the same time as it was disseminated. Likewise, readers of recipes adapted them in their turn to suit their skills, budget, and interests. Therefore, early modern books of secrets composed a rich, live body of knowledge, which in turn created even broader networks of printers, translators, professors of secrets, and readers themselves, who were expected to be interested in improving their lives through recipes. Because of their international circulation thanks to print, I have avoided focusing too much on regional comparisons.<sup>20</sup> Differences in reception of a book could vary locally but, as I will show, readers' habits transcended their immediate surroundings as they became part of a broader, European culture of recipes.<sup>21</sup>

By the time the 1595 English translation of Piemontese's *Secreti* was published, it seemed only natural to its translator that

there is no man so bestiall, so rude, and so blunte of witte, but that hee is (by a certaine instinct of naturall inclination) desirous to knowe thinges not before knowen, to heare newes not before heard, and to understand bookes in his naturall tongue, written first in foreigne language. [...] I have taken in hand to translate this noble and excellent worke, called The Secrets of the reverend father Maister Alexis of Piemont, first written in the Italian tongue, and after turned into French, and of late into Dutch, and now last of all into English; because that as well English men, as Italians, French men or Dutch men, may lucke knowledge and profite heereof, beeing a worke come out of the hands of so famous a man as Alexis.<sup>22</sup>

These collections had varied readerships, as I will discuss in the first chapter. However, it was not uncommon for publishers to have gendered expectations of who the readers might be. In the English translation of Piemontese's *Secreti*, it was mostly men who were imagined to be interested in the recipes, while later publications were aimed at female readers, such as the ones attributed to royal women.<sup>23</sup> Despite this gradual transformation of printed recipe

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<sup>20</sup> Several historians have focused on regional medical marketplaces, offering models for broader social contexts while being careful about not generalising regional trends. See Katharine Park, *Doctors and Medicine in Early Renaissance Florence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) and Doreen Evenden, *The Midwives of Seventeenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> A regional focus is arguably more useful for the study of earlier collections of recipes, especially in manuscript form. See Maria Sofia Corradini Bozzi (ed.), *Ricettari Medico-Farmaceutici Medievali nella Francia Meridionale* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1997).

<sup>22</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piedmont* (London: Thomas Wight, 1595).

<sup>23</sup> Laura Knoppers, 'Opening the Queen's Closet: Henrietta Maria, Elizabeth Cromwell, and the Politics of Cookery', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 60 (2007), pp. 464–99.

collections from general books addressed to a mixed readership or male readers into a genre aimed at female readers, recipe collections were consumed by all kinds of people. This was partly due to their heterogeneous character, including medical and cosmetic recipes as well as alchemical formulas.

Their eclectic composition might make these books seem like disjointed collections. But these recipes all had something crucial in common. Books such as the *Secreti* were ‘how-to’ manuals of practical knowledge: the causes of phenomena were rarely alluded to; the focus was on the ‘*how*’, not the ‘*why*’. Since there were multiple ways to achieve a goal (such as treating sore nipples from breastfeeding), more recipes could always be added to new versions of the book. By their very nature, recipe collections could constantly be augmented, updated, and even corrected, and they were. This flexible nature of the genre also arguably allowed room for readers’ experiences: printed books of secrets could act as the basis for further experimentation, and readers could test and modify recipes at their will. Besides raising the question of authorship and authority because they were constantly in flux, recipes remind us that texts were far from fixed in the early modern period. Perhaps the ever-changing nature of recipes was one of the reasons why this genre flourished in the period: it allowed readers in.

While medicine taught in universities was underpinned by the traditions of Galen and Hippocrates, being often theoretical and inaccessible to most people (mainly because of the literacy and language barriers, as these texts were usually written in Latin), readers interested in treating everyday ailments could look for advice in recipe books. Collections such as the *Secreti* also relied in a humoral framework where medicine was concerned, but they did not usually discuss the theory behind the practical recipes. These books abounded with remedies for fevers, wounds, aches, and the plague, which would likely be treated at home. Among these medical recipes were secrets of women. Readers were offered a variety of solutions to different complaints including, but not limited to, ways of stimulating or stopping menstruation, facilitating conception, speeding childbirth, and regulating milk production. These recipes were often the ones to be most changed in translation: ingredients might be added or omitted, whole recipes could be censored, and formulas might be adapted to the new readers that translators and printers expected the book would have, with more budget-friendly versions of a remedy being added if the book was aimed at less wealthy readers.

As Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin have argued, following William Eamon, the hunt for secrets in early modern Europe (*venatio*) was one of the main ways for people to quench

their thirst for knowledge about the natural world and the human body.<sup>24</sup> The importance of ‘secrets’ is not questioned within academic circles, as the 2008 conference about them at the University of Cambridge’s Centre for Research on the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities and the book resulting from it indicate.<sup>25</sup> The study of recipes literature currently finds itself at the crossroads of book history, history of science and of medicine, the history of commerce, gender history and craft history, which has broadened the definition of secret and recipe, including manuscript and printed media, written by different actors, to become ‘little bits of information’, as Rankin and Leong defined them.

The genre of secrets, whether in printed or manuscript form, has a long history, stretching from the third century BC to the nineteenth century. In the early modern period, it encompassed a variety of actors, from noblewomen to publishers, humanists, midwives, surgeons, artisans, compilers, and translators. Despite this, recipe compilations in general, and printed books of secrets specifically, have only recently become a popular object of study among historians. Interest in recipes has grown a lot in the last thirty years, following a long interval since John Ferguson’s (1838-1916) work on the subject. Ferguson was a chemist and bibliographer from the University of Glasgow, who in the 1880s compiled an extensive list of sixteenth-century books of secrets as well as notes about them, which were published following his lectures between 1882 and 1915. His detailed work identified many early modern printed books of secrets, and he was the first to classify them as a genre.<sup>26</sup>

Almost a century later, books of secrets were still a subject little analysed by historians, with rare exceptions, such as Claire Lesage’s study about Isabella Cortese, the (probably fictitious) noblewoman ‘*secretista*’ to whom a best-selling book of secrets was attributed.<sup>27</sup> Recipes were not usually seen as important sources beyond food history and the history of medicine. The publication of William Eamon’s pioneering monograph *Science and the Secrets of Nature* in 1994 analysed books of secrets deeper, inspiring a surge of historical research on the topic.<sup>28</sup> Using much of Ferguson’s bibliography, Eamon described how early modern presses flooded the market with secrets, underscoring the number of sources neglected by historians and how secrets were central in the Renaissance scientific and

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<sup>24</sup> William Eamon, ‘Science as a Hunt’, *Physis*, 31 (1994), pp. 393–432; Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin, ‘Introduction: Secrets and Knowledge’, in *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science 1500-1800*, ed. by Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 1–20.

<sup>25</sup> Alisha Rankin and Elaine Leong (eds.), *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science*.

<sup>26</sup> John Ferguson, *Bibliographical Notes on Histories of Inventions and Books of Secrets* (London: Holland Press, 1959); John Ferguson, ‘The Secrets of Alexis’.

<sup>27</sup> Claire Lesage, ‘La Littérature des “secrets” et *I Secreti* d’Isabella Cortese’, *Chroniques Italiennes*, 36 (1993), 145–78.

<sup>28</sup> William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*.

cultural context. These books embodied the paradox of making secret knowledge public, describing themselves as full of obscure knowledge yet as the keys to unlocking these secrets.<sup>29</sup> This alchemical metaphor was later extended to seventeenth-century books such as *The Queens Closet Opened* (1655) by Walter Montagu.<sup>30</sup> The apparent contradiction between secrecy and openness was inherent to books of secrets, at the crossroads between many traditions.<sup>31</sup>

For Eamon, books of secrets were the ‘missing link’ between the alchemic and esoteric medieval tradition of secrets and the modern Baconian ‘experience’, which would constitute the basis of the new empiricism characteristic of the so-called scientific revolution.<sup>32</sup> The ‘Baconian sciences’ (such as chemistry and magnetism) would have developed partly through secrets and the empiricism they stimulated, therefore departing from the theoretical models of the scholastic tradition which had shaped natural knowledge until then, an interpretation which has also been more recently argued by Deborah Harkness.<sup>33</sup> Based on Thomas Kuhn’s theory of scientific revolutions, Eamon postulated that the practices connected to the secrets tradition contributed to creating the scientific method and scientific investigation. Books of secrets’ role in a growing culture of experimentation was central to a legitimisation of empirical knowledge as a complement, if not a replacement, of rational and theoretical knowledge.

I will argue that recipe books as a genre, whether in manuscript print, are an example of early modern ‘making of knowledge’ as a collaborative endeavour, involving different kinds of activities. Through translators, publishers, and readers’ practices, knowledge about the female body and reproduction was reshaped as it was diffused, transformed, and adapted to new contexts. The ideas of ‘authorship’, ‘authority’ and ‘expertise’ were influenced by such a fluid, malleable genre, and its constant translations, reeditions, and corrections, but also by readers’ activity and their appropriation of recipes for their everyday lives. I propose to understand books of secrets as more than a link between two traditions, but as a long tradition in its own right, which peaked in the early modern period through print. While print did not fundamentally change the genre, it made recipes available to a much wider

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<sup>29</sup> Lauren Kassell, ‘Secrets Revealed: Alchemical Books in Early Modern England’, *History of Science*, 49 (2011), 61–87.

<sup>30</sup> Jennifer Stine, ‘Opening Closets: The Discovery of Household Medicine in Early Modern England’ (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 1996); Laura Knoppers, ‘Opening the Queen’s Closet’.

<sup>31</sup> Pamela Long, *Openness, Secrecy, Authorship: Technical Arts and the Culture of Knowledge from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> Deborah Harkness, *The Jewel House: Elizabethan London and the Scientific Revolution* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007).

readership, and susceptible to constant changes in multiple re-editions and translations. Recipes literature was a part of most people's lives in one way or another, and the way reproduction was depicted in these books was both shaped by the people who produced and consumed them and responsible for how the female body was understood by their readers.

Finally, while it is undeniable that the genre reached its greatest success in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Renaissance Europe, continuity needs to be considered, since books of secrets can be understood as part of a process of change from medieval esotericism to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scientific practices. Despite the thorough research about the actors involved in the publication of books of secrets in sixteenth-century Italy, William Eamon's main arguments were based on the acceptance of a 'scientific revolution' as such, since his main goal was to look for the 'prehistory of the Baconian sciences'. Furthermore, while his work considered the 'popularisation' of science, the definition of 'popular' was not clear, especially since he did not consider the prices of the books nor explored the potential and actual readerships for these works, disregarding their reception. The concept of 'popular' itself needs to be rethought in the case of recipe books: is 'popular' what is meant for unlearned readers, or best-selling texts, or books produced for or by the 'people'? This is a contested expression, and in this thesis, I use 'popular' to mean texts intended to the lay public.<sup>34</sup> In the case of secrets of women, they were 'popular' in the sense that they were medical recipes not aimed at medical practitioners.<sup>35</sup> Naturally, they could be and were read by all kinds of people. That is one of the ways I propose to rethink printed recipe books, by focusing on how they were read and how print interacted with the manuscript tradition of recipes.

Following Eamon's book, several scholars have explored the secrets literature, from medical, scientific, and technical points of view. Coming from the fields of intellectual and cultural history, history of science, of technology, of medicine, they approached books of secrets in different ways. This was possible primarily thanks to the richness of this corpus – thousands of printed and manuscript recipes circulated in Europe between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries (the period of the editorial 'boom' of the genre), translated and reprinted several times. Some of these studies have investigated the early modern interest in

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<sup>34</sup> On 'popular' medical texts and vernacular traditions, see the essays in *Nuncius Special Issue: Printing Medical Knowledge: Vernacular Genres, Reception and Dissemination* 36.2 (2021), especially the ones by Sandra Cavallo ('Early Vernacular Medical Advice Books and Their Popular Appeal in Early Modern Italy', pp. 264-303) and Sabrina Minuzzi ('15th-Century Practical Medicine in Print', pp. 199-263).

<sup>35</sup> This use of 'popular' is inspired by Mary Fissell's work, especially 'Popular Medical Writing', in Joad Raymond (ed.), *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660* (Vol. 1), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 417–30.

the secrets of nature in a broad sense, whether alchemical, medical, or astrological, and how reading the ‘book of nature’ related to the ‘scientific revolution’.<sup>36</sup> Historians have also analysed popular medical books and the process of vernacularisation and ‘popularisation’, including recipes, as illustrated by the work of Andrew Wear and Mary Fissell.<sup>37</sup> Manuscript recipes have arguably received more attention than printed ones, often connected to the study of early modern women, such as the work of Linda Pollock and Catherine Field.<sup>38</sup> The domestic environment and food have also been analysed, as in Madeline Shanahan’s study about Irish manuscript culinary recipe books and how these can be understood as archaeological artefacts, reminding us of the importance of materiality.<sup>39</sup>

Exploring the link between secrets and the craft tradition has also been a subject for historians, especially Pamela Long and Pamela Smith. These scholars have studied the relationship between artisans’ work, authorship, and secrecy and how craft knowledge circulated in the early modern period.<sup>40</sup> As they have argued, books of secrets can also be considered part of the early modern debate about the authority and authorship of technical knowledge. Recipes could be copied from old sources, be added by practitioners, and transcribed from contemporary books, which made most authors of books of secrets closer to compilers than to ‘authors’ in the modern sense of the word. Furthermore, the question of openness, secrecy, and accessibility to craft knowledge by people outside of the trade, be they

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<sup>36</sup> Lawrence Principe, *The Aspiring Adept: Robert Boyle and His Alchemical Quest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Allen Debus and Michael Walton (eds.), *Reading the Book of Nature: The Other Side of the Scientific Revolution* (Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1998); Simon Varey, Rafael Chabran, and Dora Weiner (eds.), *Searching for the Secrets of Nature: The Life and Works of Dr Francisco Hernandez* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); William Newman and Anthony Grafton (eds.), *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011).

<sup>37</sup> Andrew Wear, *Knowledge and Practice in English Medicine, 1550-1680* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Among Mary Fissell’s work, see ‘Readers, Texts, and Contexts: Vernacular Medical Works in Early Modern England’, in Roy Porter (ed.), *The Popularization of Medicine, 1650-1850* (London: Routledge, 1992); ‘Making Meaning from the Margins: New Cultural History of Medicine’, in Frank Huisman and John Harley Warner (eds.), *Locating Medical History: The Stories and Their Meaning* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), pp. 264–89; ‘Making a Masterpiece: The Aristotle Texts in Vernacular Medical Culture,’ in Charles Rosenberg (ed.), *Right Living: An Anglo-American Tradition of Self-Help Medicine and Hygiene* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), pp. 59–87.

<sup>38</sup> Catherine Field, ‘“Many Hands Hands”: Writing the Self in Early Modern Women’s Recipe Books’, in Michele Dowd and Julie Eckerle (eds.), *Genre and Women’s Life Writing in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 49–63; Linda Pollock, *With Faith and Physic: The Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman* (New York: St Martin’s, 1993).

<sup>39</sup> Madeline Shanahan, *Manuscript Recipe Books as Archaeological Objects* (London: Lexington, 2015).

<sup>40</sup> Pamela Long, ‘Power, Patronage, and the Authorship of Ars: From Mechanical Know-How to Mechanical Knowledge in the Last Scribal Age’, *Isis*, 88.1 (1997), 1–41; *Artisan/Practitioners and the Rise of the New Sciences, 1400–1600* (Corvallis: Oregon State Univ. Press, 2011); Pamela Smith, *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

physicians or goldsmiths, can also be analysed through books of secrets.<sup>41</sup> As Robert Halleux pointed out, recipes link medical, scientific, and technical knowledge, connecting several actors in the process when they start to be published, from the production and writing of the recipe to its transmission and use by readers.<sup>42</sup>

The question of access to knowledge and what defined a ‘secret’ in this period is crucial. The popularity of pseudonymous authors such as Alessio Piemontese and Isabella Cortese hints at the nature of the genre: the heterogeneous composition of books of secrets, with what we might term as plagiarism amongst compilers of secrets, was well-suited to fictitious authors. For example, the fictional narratives of collecting recipes along their travels might have been a clever way to avoid problems with the original source of specific recipes; moreover, problematic recipes, such as abortifacient formulas, might have been safer to publish under pseudonyms. Furthermore, the topos of publishing ‘for the common good’ rendered the original author of a secret almost irrelevant, as recipes became common property. However, what defined a ‘secret’ when the private became public, with several authors claiming to unveil all of nature’s secrets? Piemontese told readers of his long doubt about whether to publicise his secrets, since they would cease to be ‘secrets’:

And I would always say, that if all knew the Secrets, they would not be called secrets, but rather public [knowledge].<sup>43</sup>

The connection between empiricism, know-how, and scientific knowledge through the study of nature has therefore been a topic of interest to historians, some drawing broad overviews of the subject while others focused on transnational approaches and the Atlantic world.<sup>44</sup> Allison Kavey and Jo Wheeler have explored ‘secrets’ more directly, questioning what constituted a secret and how that changed with publishing as well as the relationship

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<sup>41</sup> Pamela Long, *Openness, Secrecy, Authorship*, p. 143-174; Pamela Smith, ‘What is a Secret? Secrets and Craft Knowledge in Early Modern Europe’, *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science*, p. 47–66.

<sup>42</sup> Robert Halleux, *Le Savoir de la main: Savants et artisans dans l’Europe pré-industrielle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2009).

<sup>43</sup> ‘*Et sempre io diceva, che se i Secreti si sapessero da ogn’uno, non si chiamarebbono più secreti, ma publici.*’ Alessio Piemontese, *De’ Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese* (Milan: Giovanni Antonio de gli Antonii, 1559), p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Antonio Barrera-Osorio, *Experiencing Nature: The Spanish American Empire and the Early Scientific Revolution* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2006); Brian Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Pamela Smith and Benjamin Schmidt (eds.), *Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007).

between ‘secrets’ and ‘recipes’.<sup>45</sup> These terms were not always synonymous, although in early modern Italy they were often were. ‘Secrets’ could be both objects, like medicines, and secret practical knowledge, accessible only to a few, such as craftsmen working in the same trade. This knowledge in its turn could be transmitted in the form of recipes, a set of ingredients and instructions to follow.

However, just as not all secrets were recipes, not all recipes were secret, even if secrecy could add to a recipe’s value. For printed books, ‘secret’ could help marketability, evoking wonders of nature and mysterious knowledge usually reserved to a few initiated. A ‘secret’ meant different things depending on the time and place but also, crucially, the cultural context of those using this category.<sup>46</sup> As I will show in later chapters, secrets could create communities, both virtual, such as the networks of readers, and physical, such as the ‘academies of secrets’. Despite the many overlaps between secrets and recipes and the fact that the terms’ definitions were not stable, I believe that it was the way people produced and used this knowledge that gave it meaning.

While it is important to consider these nuances, I have decided to use the terms ‘secret’ and ‘recipe’ interchangeably in this thesis. There are two reasons for that choice. The first one is that early modern recipe collections in most languages, and especially in Italian, used these expressions as synonyms. The second reason is that ‘secrets’ have long been connected to the world of reproduction and the knowledge residing in the womb, as Katharine Park and Monica Green have shown.<sup>47</sup> This gendered dimension of the word makes ‘secrets’ a particularly apt expression to discuss recipes about the female body and reproduction. I have therefore used both terms, while keeping in mind their multiple meanings and pointing out instances where a different interpretation of the expressions might be more appropriate.

Since these concepts can vary, studies focused on individual professors of secrets have been instrumental, highlighting the polysemic definition of ‘secret’. For instance, in Alfredo Perifano’s work about Leonardo Fioravanti, printed secrets were associated with

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<sup>45</sup> Jo Wheeler, *Renaissance Secrets, Recipes, and Formulas* (London: V&A, 2009); Allison Kavey, *Books of Secrets: Natural Philosophy in England, 1550-1600* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

<sup>46</sup> For a deeper discussion on the differences between ‘secrets’ and ‘recipes’, see Alisha Rankin and Elaine Leong (eds.), *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science*, pp. 7-11. See also William Eamon, ‘How to Read a Book of Secrets’, in *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science*, pp. 23–46.

<sup>47</sup> Katharine Park, *Secrets of Women*; Monica Green, ‘From “Diseases of Women” to “Secrets of Women”’.



‘popularisation’, while manuscript ones were linked to an elite interest in curiosities.<sup>48</sup> Because Fioravanti was such an intriguing figure, often accused of being a charlatan as well as a renowned professor of secrets, his life has also been a topic of study, as the journey of an early modern itinerant empiric.<sup>49</sup> William Eamon’s series of case studies about professors of secrets concentrated on alchemical secrets and the social background to the development and testing of recipes.<sup>50</sup> Eamon showed how the quest for secrets was often collective, with recipes being created in ‘academies of secrets’, whose members had to contribute a recipe to be accepted. In these collaborative enterprises, authorship over secrets was particularly complicated to ascertain. As Claire Lesage argued, while the mystery surrounding the identity of professors of secrets such as Piemontese and Cortese still intrigues historians, with theories about these characters being both pseudonyms of the polygraph (*poligrafo*) Girolamo Ruscelli, Cortese could have indeed existed. However, there is no evidence of her in the archives.<sup>51</sup> More creative authors, such as Massimo Rizzardini, understand the name itself (‘Cortese’) as an anagram for ‘*secreto*’, encapsulating the fictitious nature of the author, which sounds less probable than Cortese simply being a pseudonym.<sup>52</sup> It is perhaps more likely that whoever was behind the name might have wanted to highlight the ‘courtly’ aspect of the book, with the recipes coming from a noblewoman. In that case, Cortese’s *Secreti* predated the many English printed recipe compilations attributed to noblewomen by almost a century.

Historians have illuminated women’s role in scientific experiments and the development of family recipe books in connection to the question of authorship. These studies revealed how recipe books shaped the way medicine was understood in the early modern period, and how they were read and used by women, arguing they could be authors of

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<sup>48</sup> Alfredo Perifano, ‘La Théorie cachée ou de la pratique vulgarisée dans le *Compendio de i secreti rationali* (1564) de Leonardo Fioravanti’, in Dominique de Courcelles (ed.), *Ouvrages miscellanées et théories de la connaissance à la Renaissance* (Paris: Ecole des Chartes, 2003), pp. 117–29.

<sup>49</sup> William Eamon, *The Professor of Secrets: Mystery, Medicine, and Alchemy in Renaissance Italy* (Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 2010); Piero Camporesi, *Camminare il mondo: Vita e avventure di Leonardo Fioravanti medico del Cinquecento* (Milan: Garzanti, 2007).

<sup>50</sup> William Eamon, ‘Alchemy in Popular Culture: Leonardo Fioravanti and the Search for the Philosopher’s Stone’, *Early Science and Medicine*, 5.2 (2000), 196–213; William Eamon and Françoise Paheau, ‘The Accademia Segreta of Girolamo Ruscelli: A Sixteenth-Century Italian Scientific Society’, *Isis*, 75.2 (1984), pp. 327–42; William Eamon, ‘Natural Magic and Utopia in the Cinquecento: Campanella, the Della Porta Circle, and the Revolt of Calabria’, *Memorie Domenicane*, n.s. 26 (1995), pp. 369–402.

<sup>51</sup> Claire Lesage, ‘La Littérature des “secrets” et I Secreti d’Isabella Cortese’.

<sup>52</sup> Massimo Rizzardini, ‘Lo Strano Caso della Signora Isabella Cortese, Professoressa di Secreti’, *Philosophia II*, 1 (2010), pp. 45–84.

recipes.<sup>53</sup> Several scholars have focused on domestic recipes and how this knowledge was compiled in household guides and tested, using mainly manuscript sources.<sup>54</sup> Scholarship about early modern women and recipes has also considered social standing, with Meredith Ray's work about women alchemists such as Caterina Sforza and elusive characters such as Isabella Cortese.<sup>55</sup> The intersection between women and authority/authorship was further explored by Montserrat Cabré in her study of the Trotula translations.<sup>56</sup> Alisha Rankin and Tara Nummedal's works about noblewomen and how their position and authority in court was connected to their secrets, therefore, complement studies such as Tessa Storey's about women of more humble origins.<sup>57</sup>

Indeed, a growing area of research within recipes literature highlights the economy of secrets, both commercial and symbolic, which can be illustrated by Elaine Leong and Sara Pennell's study of the role recipes had as currency within social networks and gift exchanges as well as Allison Kavey's work about the position the books themselves held in the marketplace.<sup>58</sup> These historians' works make an important connection between the domestic world and the wider economy of medical knowledge. Regardless of social differences, women were directly engaged in the world of recipes; their participation went beyond the confines of the home, including other aspects of what we came to call the medical

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<sup>53</sup> Elaine Leong, "'Herbals She Peruseth': Reading Medicine in Early Modern England", *Renaissance Studies*, 28.4 (2014), pp. 556–78; 'Read. Do. Observe. Take Note!', *Centaurus* 60 (2018), pp. 87–103; 'When the Tallamys Met John French: Translating, Printing, and Reading *The Art of Distillation*', in Tara Alberts, Sietske Fransen, and Elaine Leong (eds.), *Translating Medicine across Premodern Worlds*, Osiris Series 37, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2022), pp. 89–112.

<sup>54</sup> Lynette Hunter, 'Women and Domestic Medicine: Lady Experimenters, 1570–1620', in Lynette Hunter and Sarah Hutton (eds.), *Women, Science and Medicine, 1500–1700: Mothers and Sisters of the Royal Society* (Thrupp: Sutton, 1997), 89–107; Laura Knoppers, 'Opening the Queen's Closet'; Sara Pennell, 'Perfecting Practice? Women, Manuscript Recipes and Knowledge in Early Modern England', in Victoria Burke and Jonathan Gibson (eds.), *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Writing: Selected Papers from Te Trinity/Trent Colloquium* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 237–58; Jennifer Stine, 'Opening Closets'; Catherine Field, "'Many Hands Hands'"; Elaine Leong, 'Making Medicines in the Early Modern Household', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 82.1 (2008), pp. 145–68.

<sup>55</sup> Meredith Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy: Women and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

<sup>56</sup> Montserrat Cabré, 'Female Authority in Translation: Medieval Catalan Texts on Women's Health', in Tara Alberts, Sietske Fransen, and Elaine Leong (eds.), *Translating Medicine*, pp. 213–232.

<sup>57</sup> Alisha Rankin, 'Duchess, Heal Thyself: Elisabeth of Rochlitz and the Patient's Perspective in Early Modern German', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 82.1 (2008), 109–44; Tara Nummedal, 'Anna Zieglerin's Alchemical Revelations', *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science*, pp. 125–41; Tessa Storey, 'Face Waters, Oils, Love Magic and Poison: Making and Selling Secrets in Early Modern Rome', *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science*, pp. 143–63. See also Montserrat Cabré, 'Women or Healers? Household Practice and the Categories of Health Care in Late Medieval Iberia', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (Special Issue on 'Women, Health and Healing in Early Modern Europe') 82 (2008), pp. 18–53.

<sup>58</sup> Elaine Leong and Sara Pennell, 'Recipe Collections and the Currency of Medical Knowledge in the Early Modern "Medical Marketplace"', in Patrick Wallis and Mark Jenner (eds.), *Medicine and the Market in England and Its Colonies c. 1450–c. 1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 133–52; Allison Kavey, *Books of Secrets*.

marketplace. These case studies illustrate how people were involved in the production of recipes both in textual and practical form; they were authors as well as readers, and inhabited the print and manuscript cultures.<sup>59</sup> Kavey's work illustrated another way of exploring books of secrets, as a part of cheap print in general. For her, books of secrets could usually be characterised as 'cheap print', since most of them cost six pence or less, and as part of a 'popular culture', though not in the same way earlier French scholars such as Robert Mandrou and Geneviève Bollème had understood them.<sup>60</sup> Recipe books in England could be sold for as little as one or two pennies, with labourers making up to a shilling a day in the seventeenth century. While wages were not constant and reliable, and book prices increased in the seventeenth century, it was possible for most people to buy printed recipe books if they chose to do so.<sup>61</sup>

Although not all these historians identify themselves as working with 'secrets' or 'recipes' specifically, the collective work on this subject has complemented much of William Eamon's study in his *Science and the Secrets of Nature*, adding new aspects to the analysis of recipes literature, such as gender, social status, spatial settings, and the focus on different periods, which has been especially useful to show continuities and ruptures in the secrets' tradition from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries. This growing scholarship has legitimised the study of recipes as a way to gain access to technical, medical, scientific, and empirical knowledge across several areas of study, with recent collections of case studies exploring new areas of research.<sup>62</sup> The field has come far since Eamon's seminal book, but most scholarship still focuses on the sixteenth century, the period in which books of secrets reached the height of their success, aptly named by Eamon 'the age of how-to'. Moreover, while historians have focused on both manuscript recipes and printed books of secrets, there are still few examples of studies about annotated secrets, or the integration of passages from printed books into manuscript collections. Printed books of secrets are a growing subject of interest in academia. Still, the recent renewed interest in recipes literature has not yet been

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<sup>59</sup> On the continuity between manuscript and printed medical literature in the vernacular, see Elizabeth Mellyn, 'Passing on Secrets: Interactions between Latin and Vernacular Medicine in Medieval Europe', *I Tatti Studies in the Italian renaissance*, 16.1 (2013), pp. 289-309.

<sup>60</sup> Robert Mandrou, *De la Culture populaire aux 17e et 18e siècles: La Bibliothèque Bleue de Troyes* (Paris: Imago, 1999); Lise Andries and Geneviève Bollème, *La Bibliothèque Bleue: Littérature de colportage* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2003); Geneviève Bollème, *Les Almanachs populaires aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: Essai d'histoire sociale* (Paris: Mouton et EPHE, 1969).

<sup>61</sup> Francis Johnson, 'Notes on English Retail Book-Prices, 1550-1640', *The Library*, 5th Ser., 1950, pp. 83-112.

<sup>62</sup> Michele DiMeo and Sara Pennell (eds.), *Reading and Writing Recipe Books, 1550-1800* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

matched by studies about the translation of recipes, nor by specific analyses of the recipes about the female body in the corpus.

Indeed, one of the most significant gaps in the study of secrets concerns their translations. Works such as Geneviève Deblock's annotated edition of the French translation of the *Difício di ricette* and Laura Balbiani's monograph about the translated *Magia naturalis* in Italian and German both drew compelling comparisons of translations of the same work. Still, they focused on one single book of secrets.<sup>63</sup> A comparative study of translated recipes would provide us with a deeper understanding of how medical ideas circulated in the early modern period, and especially how knowledge was transformed as it was diffused. What I will show in this thesis is how their translations helped reshape early modern understandings of secrets of women, by broadening the sources to include several recipe books in their original versions as well as in translation, while limiting the comparison of recipes to the ones concerning the female body and reproduction.

My goal in this thesis is to contribute to the study of vernacular non-fiction translations, specifically medical ones, and their gendered aspects. While translators' gender has received some attention, texts about gender and their translations, such as secrets of women, have not been the focus of recent scholarship.<sup>64</sup> By bringing translation, recipes, and gender together through a comparison of translated secrets of women, I will shed light on the polyglot Renaissance environment in which these books were published. My transnational approach, comparing English, Italian and French versions of the same recipes, is based on the francophone character of the first two generations of English printers in the sixteenth century and the abundance of vernacular translations from French into English in the period, allowing French to serve as a model for comparing other vernaculars translated into English, such as Italian. In the case of books of secrets, these were also the languages in which recipes were published the most often, and indeed in Italy's case, the birthplace of this literature in print. I have considered recipes in German, Latin, and Spanish as well, where the comparison seemed useful.

Because I am interested in the transformation of knowledge in translation in the eclectic universe of how-to books of the early modern period, the main sources in this thesis are the most famous printed books of secrets from the early modern period, both in

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<sup>63</sup> Geneviève Deblock (ed.), *Le Batiment des Recettes: Présentation et Annotation de l'édition Jean Ruelle, 1560* (Rennes: PUR, 2015); Laura Balbiani, *La Magia Naturalis di Giovan Battista Della Porta: Lingua, Cultura e Scienza in Europa all'inizio dell'Età Moderna* (Milan: Peter Lang, 1999).

<sup>64</sup> Marie-Alice Belle (ed.), 'Locating Early Modern Women's Translations: Critical and Historiographical Issues', *Renaissance and Reformation*, Vol. 35, n. 4, Special Issue, pp. 5-23.

quantitative terms (as the books reprinted and translated the most) and in how they were seen by their contemporaries – beginning with Tommaso Garzoni himself, the first to define professors of secrets as a professional category.<sup>65</sup> Among the professors cited by Garzoni, I have excluded those who wrote before the age of print, such as Aristotle and Albertus Magnus, as they belong to separate intellectual traditions, as well as spurious attributions, such as Gabrielle Falloppio, whose name was wrongly attributed to a recipe book. Therefore, the remaining professors of secrets have composed the main body of sources in this research, as my goal was to understand how knowledge about the female body and reproduction was reshaped in translation – and these books were widely translated.

So, books of secrets by Alessio Piemontese, Leonardo Fioravanti, and Giambattista Della Porta constitute the main sources of this study. Isabella Cortese's book is briefly analysed as well, even though it was not reprinted as much, and it was only translated into German. To these authors, I have added Timotheo Rossello, as his book of secrets closely resembled Cortese's, and it was printed similarly. I have also considered other contemporary recipe books and other books about secrets of women. Finally, I have added an anonymous recipe book not mentioned by Garzoni to this corpus of sources: the *Dificio di ricette*, a best-selling Italian collection translated into French and Dutch. I have considered as many versions of these books as I could find – reprints, reeditions, translations, and other works by the same authors. Most of these books were originally written in Italian, except for Della Porta's Latin *Magia naturalis*. I have compared their French, English, and Latin translations and Della Porta's Italian versions, occasionally taking German into consideration as well. I have excluded Dutch and other European languages due to my linguistic limitations.

All the sources mentioned so far are printed books. However, I shift the focus to manuscript sources for the first chapter of this study, in which I consider how secrets of women and recipe books were received by readers. In this chapter, I have used early modern manuscript recipe collections into which passages from printed books of secrets had been copied, in both Italian and English. Most of these sources are anonymous, but we can hypothesise the existence of female readers among them. I have also considered printed recipe books with annotations in Italian, Latin, French, and English. Most of these manuscript sources are available at the Wellcome Library and British Library. I was able to access material from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France online through Gallica, and Early English Books Online (EEBO) has proved a valuable resource as well.

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<sup>65</sup> Tommaso Garzoni, *La Piazza Universale*.

Translators and printers made individual linguistic and editorial choices but followed general trends which I will outline in the second chapter. For instance, the extensive use of synonyms for plants and offering alternative ingredients and more accessible methods indicate a preoccupation with the recipes being possible to replicate at home. At the same time, the omission and addition of content could relate to both moral and religious worries and marketability concerns. Furthermore, new editions of books of secrets could add nuance to formulas, manage readers' expectations, or alternatively render professors of secrets sensational claims even more incredible. The flexibility of the genre of recipes meant that these books could continually be reshaped, adapted, transformed to their new readers and contexts. That is probably why they had such a long life, being published well into the nineteenth century.

By analysing how secrets of women were translated through a bibliographical and linguistic comparison, I propose in this thesis to think broadly about questions of access to knowledge in the early modern period, of openness vs secrecy, especially where medicine and gender were concerned. I also argue that transmission of knowledge was not a neutral process: knowledge was transformed as it was diffused, subject to the activity of agents such as a printer or translator.<sup>66</sup> I take readers of recipes into consideration to show that the reception of knowledge was not neutral either: readers modified the recipes they consumed, actively participating in the making of knowledge. Throughout this thesis, I propose to rethink categories such as 'translation', broadening it to include the transformation from one medium to another as well as from one genre to another; I also suggest that 'annotation' should be rethought to include many non-verbal ways in which readers interacted with texts. Additionally, I argue that 'reader' as a concept can encompass a multitude of people with a range of skills – 'reading' was not an activity only for those who were literate, as aural/oral readers participated in the universe of recipes. By questioning received ideas of translating, reading, and 'making' knowledge, I aim to include people often left out of the history of medicine – especially women. I will discuss female authorship in the universe of recipes as well as female agency in the circulation of secret knowledge.

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<sup>66</sup> On rethinking translation and the translators' role, see Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (eds.), *Translation, History, and Culture* (London: Pinter, 1990); Umberto Eco, *Experiences in Translation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Rosalind Morris 'Introduction' in *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea* edited by Morris (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 1-20; Mark Polizzoti, *Sympathy for the Traitor: A Translation Manifesto* (London: MIT press, 2018); George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

The first section of this thesis is focused on the people who participated in the universe of secrets of women, the agents in the world of recipe books: translators, printers, and readers. The first chapter will focus on readers and how they used their recipe books. Considering annotations in printed books as well as the incorporation into manuscript recipe collections of extracts from printed books, I will show how readers interacted with recipes and how translated bodily experiences were met with in practice. Recipes could be read for pleasure, to satisfy one's curiosity, or for fun, but they could be put to practical use and indeed often were. Chapter 2 will draw two complementary models to analyse translated recipes, the first dealing with their individual translations and the second with the translation of the genre of books of secrets. This chapter will deal with broad trends in translating books of secrets, by discussing their incorporation into genres and collections that were already successful in their respective countries. The *Difício di ricetta*'s translation into French will serve as a case study to show how individual recipes could be reshaped to suit a new, more medicalised version of the book.

The following three chapters are thematic studies of publishers', translators', and professors of secrets' strategies. I will examine how recipes about menstruation, abortion, aphrodisiacs, conception, childbirth, and womb ailments were translated, and what consequences that may have had for early modern understandings of the (female) body. I will compare the vocabulary of secrets, such as the ubiquitous 'flowers' to denote menstruation, considering etymology and the context of the use of the word, while being careful not to presume equivalencies. The ways in which words were translated could bring the reader closer to the female body or create a sensation of estrangement. Female bodies could be made distant or accessible depending on the language. Focusing on translators and printers, as well as the readers reception of these texts, I will reconstruct, from thematic case studies, how secrets of women were translated in print, how this knowledge was changed in translation, and what consequences the spread of those texts might have had to early modern perceptions of the female body.

For the second part of the thesis, therefore, I will focus on specific changes these books went through where secrets of women were concerned, and each chapter is dedicated to a best-selling professor of secrets. Delicate questions such as the difference between stimulating menstruation and provoking an abortion had religious and medical consequences. I will explore the world of menstruation in Chapter 3, in which Piemontese's case illustrates how translation could often mean the addition of new content to keep readers interested in buying more books by the same author. 'Sensitive' recipes about women could also be

entangled in witchcraft polemics of the time. In Chapter 4, dealing with Della Porta's translations, I will analyse how the power of a recipe for 'witches' ointment' was such that it tainted a book filled with hundreds of unrelated recipes, revealing how secrets of women could become embroiled in gender polemics of the time, such as demonological debates. Finally, Chapter 5 will explore the nature of a 'mother' (both in the usual sense and in its early modern use as a synonym for 'womb'), interrogating the role of women as sources of knowledge, as the original creators of recipes, and how their role changed in the world of print. This chapter will depart from the translations of Fioravanti's recipes, to relay how professors of secrets could 'repackage' their recipes to new audiences by linking them to alternative sources of knowledge.

Early modern people were offered a glimpse into the mysterious world of secrets of women through the new medium of print. However, this world was by no means a static one but an ever-changing and intricate network of relationships, meanings, and intellectual traditions. The '*secretisti*' who claimed to profess these secrets – and their printers, publishers, and translators – were not neutral agents in this process, but active (re)makers of knowledge about reproduction, as were the readers consuming these books. In this thesis, I will show their role in reshaping the knowledge they promised to reveal, as they translated recipes: between languages, media, genres, countries, social groups, and traditions.



# Chapter 1: Readers and Their Recipe Books

## 1. Introduction

In this chapter, I propose to rethink some of the categories historians typically use in studying the history of the book, such as ‘reader’, ‘annotation’, and ‘translation’. By broadening these definitions, I argue that we can better grasp how early modern recipes were consumed, including people often left out of our reimagining of the past. As the examples in this chapter indicate, there were not as many geographical variations in the reception of recipes as we might expect. Individual people varied in the way they consumed (and produced) recipes, but they were part of a European tradition of domestic ‘making’ of knowledge, which was further developed as printed books of secrets became available. Because I am interested in the cultural and social significance of reading, the interdisciplinarity inherent to the history of reading has allowed me to keep the reader (and their actions) as the centre of my inquiry, even as most people mentioned in this chapter remain anonymous and could be described as non-specialised readers.<sup>1</sup> Readers actively decoded recipes, in a dialogue between themselves and the text, to which they brought their own assumptions, expectations, and knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

Isabella Cortese, one of the few female professors of secrets in early modern Italy, described the tirelessness of human curiosity in her dedication to Mario Chaboda, the archdeacon of Ragusa. According to Cortese, this curiosity did not know idleness:<sup>3</sup>

From there [are born] speculations, from which the sciences are made, and other things born from the intellect; from there is also born the search for the secrets of

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<sup>1</sup> James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor (eds.), *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Sabrina Baron, Elizabeth Walsh, and Susan Scola (eds.), *The Reader Revealed* (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2001); D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For the centrality of the reader in the construction of meaning, see Elizabeth Freund, *The Return of the Reader: Reader-Response Criticism* (New York: Methuen, 1987).

<sup>2</sup> While we should be wary of anachronisms, Hans-Georg Gadamer famously described the interpretation of texts as a dialogue, not between writer and reader, but between the reader and the text, which is particularly apt for the reading of practical texts such as recipes. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> On Isabella Cortese’s existence and possible biography, see Meredith Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy: Women and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015); Claire Lesage, ‘La Littérature des “secrets” et *I Secreti d’Isabella Cortese*’, *Chroniques Italiennes*, 36 (1993), pp. 145–78; Massimo Rizzardini, ‘Lo Strano Caso della Signora Isabella Cortese’, *Philosophia*, 1.II (2010), pp. 45–84.

nature. But what do I mean, the search? When not only does man satisfy himself with this research, but seeks in everything to imitate nature, even to surpass it, while trying to do impossible things. And this is true; it is possible to find secrets, which are heard every day and put into execution.<sup>4</sup>

According to Cortese, this natural human instinct of ‘hunting’ secrets of nature motivated professors of secrets, such as herself, to travel and ‘investigate’, collecting and perfecting recipes from different sources. This topos of the travelling professor of secrets was perhaps best exemplified in Alessio Piemontese’s narrative about his quest for the secrets of nature and became a familiar trait in contemporary recipe books’ prefaces.<sup>5</sup> Professors of secrets claimed to have perfected the recipes that they offered to their readers through their research. As in Cortese’s collection, their goal was transforming and surpassing nature, which was especially true in the case of alchemy.<sup>6</sup> However, while professors of secrets inhabited a world of experimentation, they often discouraged readers from developing their recipes further or even coming up with their own. The recipes printed in their books should be followed to the letter for the best results, which underscored the professors’ authority, validated their knowledge, and helped create their own legacy. Writing to her brother about alchemical recipes, Cortese highlighted how he should follow what she had written instead of deviating from the recipes:

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Da qui le speculationi, dalle quali son fatti poi le scienze, & l’altre cose trouate dall’intelletto son nate; Da qui parimente, è nato l’inuestigare gli occulti secreti della natura; ma che dico l’inuestigare? quando non solamente l’huomo si contenta della inuestigatione, ma cerca in tutto & per tutto mettendo in opera, di farsi Scimia della natura, anzi che superarla, mentre tenta di fare quello, che alla natura è impossibile, & che cio sia uero, si puo cauare da’ Secreti, che tutto il giorno si odono & ueggono mettere in essecutione’. Isabella Cortese, *I Secreti de la Signora Isabella Cortese* (Venice: Giovanni Bariletto, 1565), p. 2r.

<sup>5</sup> This narrative first appeared in the 1555 first edition of Piemontese’s *Secreti*, and was reprinted in virtually all reeditions and translations, as well as Girolamo Ruscelli’s own collection, in which he explains the creation of Piemontese. Girolamo Ruscelli, *Secreti Nuovi di Maravigliosa Virtu del Signor Ieronimo Ruscelli i quali continovando a quelli di Donno Alessio, cognome finto del detto Ruscelli, contengono cose di rara esperienza, & di gran giovamento* (Venice: Marchio Sessa, 1567). These versions sometimes added to the story, mentioning ‘new letters’. Alessio Piemontese, *Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese* (Venice: Sigismondo Bordogna, 1555); ‘Altra Lettera di Donno Alessio Piemontese ai Lettori in questa Seconda Editione’, in *De Secreti di Donno Alessio Piemontese* (Lyon: Theobaldo Pagano, 1558).

<sup>6</sup> Robert Halleux, *Le Savoir de la main: Savants et artisans dans l’Europe pré-industrielle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2009); Lawrence Principe, *The Aspiring Adept: Robert Boyle and His Alchemical Quest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

I ask you [dearest brother] not to waste your time with these books by philosophers but follow what I write for you, and do not omit or diminish anything, but do instead what I tell you and write [for you], and follow my instructions below.<sup>7</sup>

We have evidence, however, that readers did modify the recipes they followed, as many home cooks adapt recipes from cookbooks today. Whether because of the availability of ingredients, financial reasons, the ovens they might have at home, or their skill level, readers could make substitutions to suit their needs, personalising the recipes.<sup>8</sup> These modifications varied locally, but as I will show in this chapter, readers transcended their regional confines. In the same way that books of secrets printed in Venice in the early sixteenth century soon became a European genre transcending borders, so too did readers' activities, as they became an integral part of a European culture of recipes. One of the main characteristics of this world of recipes was exactly the urge to add, improve, and personalise recipes, taking regional variations (such as the availability of ingredients) into account. In so doing, readers were actively translating knowledge to fit their lives.

But recipes were not only transformed to adapt to the readers' context so that they could follow them in the best way they could. In the same way that professors of secrets desired to surpass nature rather than just imitate it, readers wanted to outdo and improve upon the knowledge professors of secrets offered them. As marginal annotations show us, tested recipes were judged not only for their efficacy and dosage but also for how ingredients interacted with the body.<sup>9</sup> It is not uncommon to find notes next to a recipe saying whether it worked or not; these notes could be reworked and rewritten as the recipes were put to the test.<sup>10</sup> Corrected and improved recipes could then be transcribed into personal or family recipe books, with readers going beyond the original text. Readers were not passive receptacles of knowledge but active participants in its construction.

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<sup>7</sup> Isabella Cortese, *I Secreti de la Signora Isabella Cortese*, p. 20.

<sup>8</sup> Many reeditions (and especially translations) tried to anticipate these adaptations with different recipes for the same goal, and a variety of substitutions for individual ingredients within recipes. Julia Martins, 'Understanding/Controlling the Female Body in Ten Recipes', in Sara Ritchey and Sharon Strocchia (eds.), *Gender, Health, and Healing, 1250-1550*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), pp. 167–88.

<sup>9</sup> For marginal annotations and reading practices, see William Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Ann Blair, 'Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload ca. 1500–1700', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1.64 (2003), pp. 11–28; Sietske Fransen and Katherine Reinhart 'The Practice of Copying in Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe: An Introduction', *Word & Image* 35 (2019), pp. 211–22.

<sup>10</sup> Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the boom of recipes literature, in large part thanks to print making them widely and (cheaply) available. Manuscript collections, which had long existed, were joined by printed recipe books, most of them written in vernacular languages, offering ‘how-to’ knowledge to readers. As recipes literature was ‘translated’ from manuscript to print, how did that change how people related to recipes? The dynamic interaction between manuscript and print cultures and between the genre of recipes and other medical texts, such as herbals, surgical treatises, and midwifery manuals, makes us imagine how early modern readers ‘translated’ these categories into their everyday lives.

In the next chapter, I will discuss how professors of secrets, translators, and printers, understood their work diffusing recipes to a broader public through print. As books of secrets indicate, there was an expectation in early modern Europe that laypeople would have some understanding of medicine and cooking, especially if they came from wealthy families. As historians have shown, compiling recipes was a central practice in household management, and exchanging (and indeed selling) recipes had significant social and economic meanings.<sup>11</sup> Early modern people often related to their natural environment and their bodies through recipes: by participating in this world of experimentation readers of recipes actively produced knowledge.<sup>12</sup> Whether we call it ‘kitchen physic’, ‘household science’, or ‘domestic medicine’, early modern homes were well-equipped to develop ‘recipes knowledge’, as Elaine Leong has demonstrated.<sup>13</sup> As several recent studies have shown, many of these readers were women, who were directly involved in the worlds of science, technology, and the human body, through the making of knowledge.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Elaine Leong, ‘Collecting Knowledge for the Family: Recipes, Gender and Practical Knowledge in the Early Modern English Household’, *Centaureus*, 55.2 (2013), pp. 81–103; Elaine Leong and Sara Penell, ‘Recipe Collections and the Currency of Medical Knowledge in the Early Modern Medical Marketplace’, in Patrick Wallis and Mark Jenner (eds.), *Medicine and the Market in England and Its Colonies c. 1450- c. 1850* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 133–52; Tessa Storey, ‘Face Waters, Oils, Love Magic and Poison: Making and Selling Secrets in Early Modern Rome’, in Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin (eds.), *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science 1500-1800* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 143–63.

<sup>12</sup> For the role of the domestic sphere in early modern medicine and science, see Anne Stobart, *Household Medicine in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); Donald Opitz, Staffan Bergwik and Brigitte Van Tiggelen, *Domesticity in the Making of Modern Science* (New York: Springer, 2016); Carole Shammas, ‘The Domestic Environment in Early Modern England and America’, *The Journal of Social History*, 1.14 (1980), pp. 3–24.

<sup>13</sup> Elaine Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge: Medicine, Science and the Household in Early Modern England* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2018). Steven Shapin had made a similar point for the household of renowned men of science, ‘The House of Experiment in Seventeenth-Century England’, *Isis*, 79.3 (1988), pp. 373–404.

<sup>14</sup> Recent examples of work on women and reading include Debra Blumenthal, ‘Domestic Medicine: Slaves, Servants and Female Medical Expertise in Late Medieval Valencia’, *Renaissance Studies*, 28.4 (2014), pp. 515–32; Victoria Burke, ‘Ann Bowyer’s Commonplace Book (Bodleian Library Ashmole Ms 51): Reading and Writing Among the “Middling Sort”’, *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 2001, pp. 1–28; Julie Crawford, ‘Reconsidering Early Modern Women’s Reading, or, How Margaret Hoby Read her De Mornay’, *Huntington*

Furthermore, other household members (both men and women), including servants, participated in the process, hinting at the collective nature of this endeavour.<sup>15</sup> Steven Shapin aptly called them ‘invisible technicians’, as they left few traces for historians. Their relationship to recipes was varied, involving copying, adapting, testing, changing, ‘correcting’, sharing, and producing formulas. These activities could be as simple as memorising a recipe for a remedy or as complex as trying out a series of variations on a recipe to find the ‘best’ one. Annotated or transcribed recipes, therefore, could record both knowledge and its testing in practice, highlighting how making and knowing were intertwined.<sup>16</sup> This domestic experimentation was a crucial part of household management, with foods and medicines being prepared to support everyday life. It was also connected to developing social networks and economic relationships through the gifting of recipes.<sup>17</sup>

Tracing the reception of books of secrets in the early modern period also implies considering book ownership, their circulation, and the multiple ways of reading and following recipes.<sup>18</sup> The mention of recipe books in libraries, inventories, wills, and letters, as well as signatures, ex libris, ownership marks, and other material evidence, can give us some indication of their provenance, albeit frequently an incomplete one.<sup>19</sup> Because this chapter focuses on how readers participated in the making of knowledge, I am more interested in how these books were read and the recipes used – often by anonymous readers. Through their practices, readers not only actively engaged with individual recipes by personalising them,

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*Library Quarterly*, 2010, pp. 193–224; Nina Lerman, Ruth Oldenziel, and Arwen Mohun (eds.), *Gender and Technology: A Reader* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Lynette Hunter, ‘Women and Domestic Medicine: Lady Experimenters, 1570–1620’, in Lynette Hunter and Sarah Hutton (eds.), *Women, Science and Medicine, 1500–1700: Mothers and Sisters of the Royal Society* (Thrupp: Sutton, 1997), pp. 89–107; Carole Shammas, ‘The Domestic Environment in Early Modern England and America’.

<sup>15</sup> For men’s role in domestic recipes culture, see Lisa Smith, ‘The Relative Duties of a Man: Domestic Medicine in England and France, ca. 1685–1740’, *Journal of Family History*, 3.31 (2006), pp. 237–256.

<sup>16</sup> Pamela Smith and Benjamin Schmidt, ‘Introduction: Knowledge and Its Making in Early Modern Europe’, in Pamela Smith and Benjamin Schmidt (eds.), *Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 1–16.

<sup>17</sup> For recipe exchanges/gifts and ‘economies of obligation’, see also Paula Findlen, ‘The Economy of Scientific Exchange in Early Modern Italy’, in Bruce Moran (ed.), *Patronage and Institutions: Science, Technology, and Medicine at the European Court, 1500–1750* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 1991), pp. 5–24; Anne Stobart, ‘The Making of Domestic Medicine: Gender, Self-Help and Therapeutic Determination in Household Healthcare in South-West England in the Late Seventeenth Century’ (PhD dissertation, Middlesex University, 2008); Meredith Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy*.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Jones, ‘Book Ownership and the Lay Culture of Medicine in Tudor Cambridge’, in Hilary Marland and Margaret Pelling (eds.), *The Task of Healing: Medicine, Religion and Gender in Early Modern England and the Netherlands, 1450–1800* (Rotterdam: Erasmus, 1996), pp. 49–68.

<sup>19</sup> Other sources include early modern drama, which can give insights into contemporary reading practices and the growing presence of books. Jonas Barish, ‘Judith Shakespeare Reading’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 47.4 (1996), pp. 361–73; Alan Dessen and Leslie Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 134.

but also with a broader empirical and medical culture, thanks in large part to recipe books being widely available in print.<sup>20</sup>

As printed collections became increasingly successful, readers included them in their domestic practices, which involved manuscript recipes as well. Therefore, the collections analysed here can be divided into two big groups, both of which acted as ‘paper technologies’ to organise information: printed recipe books with marginal annotations or other evidence of use and manuscript recipe books into which were transcribed recipes initially published in printed collections.<sup>21</sup> I propose to consider recipe books as material objects to investigate how manuscript and printed recipes dialogued, and how people used them in building their experimental toolkits.<sup>22</sup> Since secrets of women are my focus, it is primarily recipes about reproduction and the female body that I discuss in these sections and women’s role as makers of secrets, not only in the manuscript tradition but in the interconnected and vibrant world of print.<sup>23</sup> Combining cultural history with a focus on materiality, this chapter starts not with the standard socioeconomic categories of readers but with the objects themselves to trace their readers.<sup>24</sup> I propose to understand recipe books not only as sources that can inform us about material culture but as material culture in themselves, as archaeological artefacts that can

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<sup>20</sup> In sixteenth-century England, recipe books were usually sold for 3 or 4 pence, rarely amounting to more than 6 pence. Allison Kavey, *Books of Secrets: Natural Philosophy in England, 1550-1600* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), p. 31.

<sup>21</sup> This expression was created by Anke te Heesen, ‘The Notebook: A Paper-Technology’, in Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (eds.), *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), pp. 582–89. For note-taking and knowledge management, see also Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010); Michelle DiMeo, ‘Authorship and Medical Networks: Reading Attributions in Early Modern Manuscript Recipe Books’, in *Reading and Writing Recipe Books, 1550-1800* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2013); Richard Yeo, *Notebooks, English Virtuosi, and Early Modern Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Lorraine Daston, ‘Taking Note(s)’, *Isis*, 95.3 (2004), pp. 443–48.

<sup>22</sup> On note-taking in the early modern period and the idea of ‘toolbox’, see Dana Jalobeanu, ‘The Toolbox of the Early Modern Natural Historian: Notebooks, Commonplace Books, and the Emergence of Laboratory Records’, *Journal of Early Modern Studies* 4 (2015), pp. 107–23.

<sup>23</sup> On noblewomen’s involvement in the recipes world, see Sheila Barker, ‘Christine de Lorraine and Medicine at the Medici Court’, in Judith Brown and Giovanna Benadusi (eds.), *Medici Women: The Making of a Dynasty in Grand Ducal Tuscany* (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2015), pp. 155–81; Sheila Barker and Sharon Strocchia, ‘Household Medicine for a Renaissance Court: Caterina Sforza’s Ricettario Reconsidered’, in Sara Ritchey and Sharon Strocchia (eds.), *Gender, Health, and Healing, 1250-1550* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), pp. 139–65; Tara Nummedal, ‘Anna Zieglerin’s Alchemical Revelations’, in *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science*, pp. 125–41; Alisha Rankin, *Panacea’s Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2013). For an English example, see Linda Pollock, *With Faith and Physic: The Life of a Tudor Gentlewoman* (New York: St Martin’s, 1993). For women recipe books scribes, see Helga Müllneritsch, ‘The “Who” of Manuscript Recipe Books: Tracing Professional Scribes’, *Sjuttonhundratal*, 14 (2017), pp. 40–59.

<sup>24</sup> The traditional socio-economic study of readers is perhaps best exemplified by Robert Mandrou, *De la Culture populaire aux 17e et 18e siècles: La Bibliothèque Bleue de Troyes* (Paris: Imago, 1999); Lise Andries and Geneviève Bollème, *La Bibliothèque Bleue: Littérature de colportage* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2003). For a methodological model of this approach, see Madeline Shanahan, *Manuscript Recipe Books as Archaeological Objects* (London: Lexington Books, 2015).

inform us how people translated knowledge for their everyday lives. This chapter, therefore, shifts the focus from the production to the reception of texts, which implies the (re)production of texts, and their reshaping for future readers of that copy. This chapter asks who read recipe books, with whom else, to what ends, where and when, and, most importantly, in which ways?

## 2. Reading and Annotating Recipes

To focus on *how* books were read, historians have traditionally used annotations as a starting point to reconstructing early modern reading practices.<sup>25</sup> This focus on paratexts produced by readers is very different from the paratexts produced by authors, printers, or translators that I analyse in other chapters.<sup>26</sup> These were aimed at guiding the reader, framing the book's reading, and defining the intended or ideal reader of the book.<sup>27</sup> In these paratexts, anxiety over the circulation and multiple interpretations of a given text were frequent. The fear that a text might be read in a way not intended initially gives us clues about the diversity in the period's readerships. Whether from an age, gender, social status, or education perspective, people read and absorbed texts differently. For instance, in early modern midwifery texts, authors often worried about the text (and especially illustrations) being used for lewd purposes, as in the case of Thomas Raynalde.<sup>28</sup> In a later edition of his *Birth of Mankind*, realising he could not control the reception of his book, Raynalde used the preface to distance himself from any inappropriate interpretations.<sup>29</sup>

As Gerard Genette described it, a paratext is

a zone not only of transition but also of transaction: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that – whether

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<sup>25</sup> On medical reading in this period, see Peter Jones, 'Reading Medicine in Tudor Cambridge', *Clio Medica* (1995), pp. 153–83.

<sup>26</sup> On translation and paratexts, see Marie-Alice Belle and Brenda Hosington (eds.), *Thresholds of Translation: Paratexts, Print, and Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Britain (1473-1660)* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

<sup>27</sup> Evelyn Tribble, *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993).

<sup>28</sup> Gail Paster has described how printers worried that (male) readers would read medical books for this purpose, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), especially pp. 186–87.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Raynalde, *The Birth of Mankind: Otherwise Named, The Woman's Book*, ed. by Elaine Hobby (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), Preface. (First published in London in 1540 as *The Byrth of Mankynd: Otherwise Named, The Womans Booke*.)

well or poorly understood and achieved – is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it.<sup>30</sup>

This kind of paratext does not include readers' activity. Printed marginalia were usually made by translators, publishers, or other writers, though it is not always clear. Traditionally printed in a different type, these marginalia aimed to shape the reading of the main text. Handwritten annotations made by readers, on the other hand, could also complement, but often question the main text, address the author, add information, act as an index, cross-reference, and define vocabulary (especially foreign words). Both kinds of paratexts can be descriptive or prescriptive, but manuscript annotations give us insight into how these books were read.

Tracing early modern readers through annotation first requires a definition of what annotation is. In this chapter, all material evidence of use is considered as annotation in a broad sense, from worn pages to faded ownership inscriptions, marginal writings, signatures, underlining, drawings, and crossings – most of which cannot be linked to specific individuals. The narrower sense of annotation, as written textual marks, should not be considered the only incontestable evidence of reading, as it excludes too many (if not most) readers, privileging the professional, goal-oriented, and often contestatory readings of exceptional (and mostly male) readers.<sup>31</sup> Not many annotations in the narrow sense can be attributed to women in the early modern period, for instance, even though many owned books.<sup>32</sup> By combining clues from a broader understanding of 'reading' and 'annotating' with scholarship about early

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<sup>30</sup> Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 2. On the spatial hierarchy of annotations and guiding readers, see Jacques Derrida, 'This is Not an Oral Footnote', in Stephen Barney (ed.), *Annotation and Its Texts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 192–205 (p. 193).

<sup>31</sup> Carol Meale, "'... Alle the Bokes That I Haue of Latyn, Englisch, and Frensch'": Laywomen and Their Books in Late Medieval England', in Carol Meale (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain, 1150-1500*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 128–158. On exceptional readers, see Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy", *Past & Present*, 129 (1990), pp. 30–78; William Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1995) and 'What Did Renaissance Readers Write in Their Books?', in Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (eds.), *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp. 119–37; Steven Zwicker, 'Reading the Margins: Politics and the Habits of Appropriation', in Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker (eds.) *Refiguring Revolutions: Aesthetics and Politics from the English Revolution to the Romantic Revolution*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 101–15.

<sup>32</sup> Despite private libraries becoming increasingly common among well-off readers in the seventeenth century, women's libraries have long eluded book historians, with the incorporation of these collections into husbands' libraries as one of the possible causes. Still, women's libraries point to a much higher level of female literacy and book ownership than previously thought, even in earlier periods. Susan Bell, 'Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 4.7 (1982), pp. 742–768; John Friedman, *Northern English Books, Owners, and Makers in the Late Middle Ages* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995).



modern reading, it is possible to abandon the idea of the singular reader in favour of plural readers of recipe books.

Since the emergence of the academic interest in recipe books, book historians have faced a wide and varied readership. The history of early modern reading, pioneered by William Sherman, Anthony Grafton, and Lisa Jardine, focused on the reading of scholars such as John Dee and Gabriel Harvey based on their annotations, which indicate a goal-oriented, intensive reading.<sup>33</sup> These more traditional approaches were inspired by intellectual history and the history of ideas. Later studies of learned physicians and their notebooks have also been helpful to understand reading and writing practices.<sup>34</sup> However, these were extraordinary readers, whose habits hardly represented most readers in this period, especially non-specialised readers. The idea of an ‘ordinary’ reader’ is itself problematic, as it gives us a false sense of homogeneity among readers. As Mary Fissell has convincingly argued, medical books aimed at a broad audience were often full of ambiguities, allowing myriad readings. Therefore, these books were shaped by their readers, as they denied themselves absolute authority, with the reader’s interpretation of the text being considered essential to the construction of knowledge.<sup>35</sup> A similar case could be made for early modern books of secrets, a malleable genre that could easily be personalised.

People could annotate with pencils, ink, charcoal, nails, pinpricks, or wax. Page-folding or tearing can also be understood as ‘annotation’ in this broader sense, with each method suiting specific practices. Annotation methods were dependent on the availability of materials (such as quill pens and ink, for instance) and readers’ skill. For example, writing in the margins of books with ink usually required a desk or table. Pencils were more versatile but typically required a writing surface. On the other hand, the use of pinpricks could be preferred by women, who not only had easy access to them but could mark pages this way

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<sup>33</sup> Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, “‘Studied for Action’: How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy”; William Sherman, *John Dee*. See also Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, ‘Pragmatic Readers: Knowledge Transactions and Scholarly Services in Late Elizabethan England’, in Anthony Fletcher (ed.), *Religion, Culture, and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 102–24; William Sherman, ‘The Place of Reading in the English Renaissance: John Dee Revisited’, in James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor (eds.), *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, pp. 62–76; Robert Evans, ‘Ben Johnson’s Marginalia: New Evidence from the Folger Collection’, *Philological Quarterly*, 66 (1987), pp. 521–28.

<sup>34</sup> Deborah Harkness, *The Jewel House: Elizabethan London and the Scientific Revolution* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007); Lauren Kassell, ‘Casebooks in Early Modern England: Medicine, Astrology, and Written Records’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 4.88 (2014), pp. 595–625 and *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan London: Simon Forman, Astrologer, Alchemist, and Physician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Nancy Siraisi, *History, Medicine, and the Traditions of Renaissance Learning* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), especially Chapter 2.

<sup>35</sup> Mary Fissell, ‘Readers, Texts, and Contexts: Vernacular Medical Works in Early Modern England’, in Roy Porter (ed.), *The Popularization of Medicine, 1650-1850* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 72-96.

while reading books on their laps. These practicalities of gendered reading make annotation by women much less frequent than by men. Reading in convivial spaces might also have made annotation less practical – where secrets of women are concerned, the darkened delivery room or lying-in room comes to mind. Besides practical circumstances, annotating by ink, and therefore marking a book permanently was usually reserved for readers who might be thought to increase the book's value by these additions, such as humanists. 'Lesser' readers could make fainter or erasable marks, especially on more expensive books.

More confident, wealthier readers, on the other hand, often annotated larger and more expensive books far more than cheaper ones, as they 'merited' a closer, more engaged reading.<sup>36</sup> Smaller books such as chapbooks were often less annotated in comparison. In the case of printed recipe books, which were usually cheaply printed in octavo format, readers likely were not reluctant to make annotations because of their price. The fact that these books were rarely mentioned in inventories indicates their perceived low value; their almost 'disposable' character may have made them less precious and more susceptible to permanent marks.<sup>37</sup> In any case, it is more probable that these markings were determined by the readers' skills and the practical use of the recipes.

In the same way that the asymmetries of early modern literacies must be considered if we want to include a greater variety of readers and ways of reading, it is vital to expand our understanding of reading practices. 'Reading' as holding a book and visually deciphering letters is too narrow a definition of the term; concurrently, writing on the margins of a book is too narrow a definition of 'annotating'. But even this relaxing of definitions can offer limited clues since recipe books, as indeed much of cheap print, were often communal or household property, not warranting such marks. That does not mean they were not read or used but indicates the perception of their value as being very different from a private prayer book, for instance. However, by broadening the concept of 'annotation' to include non-verbal markings, it is possible to include readers usually absent from the history of the book, such as women.

Printed recipe books appeared in many different libraries in the period, almost everywhere in Europe, from kings and noblemen to 'middling sort' readers, as well as alchemists, artisans, physicians, and readers of more modest backgrounds. Francis I of France

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<sup>36</sup> Heidi Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 89.

<sup>37</sup> Matthew Johnson argued for inventories' significance as evidence of a heightened sense of materialism and a changing relationship with goods, *The Archaeology of Capitalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

famously collected these books, such as the sixteenth-century *Grand Calendrier et compost des bergers* and the *Tresor des povres*, costing respectively three and two sous.<sup>38</sup> William Eamon also described Cosimo I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany and Philip II of Spain as readers of cheaply printed recipe collections, besides minor noblemen, who might incorporate these books into their cabinets of curiosities.<sup>39</sup> The proliferation of printed books in the sixteenth-century (especially inexpensive ones) meant that they were increasingly common objects. In England, for instance, only around 1% of the population owned books in Tudor Oxfordshire. By the Restoration, approximately 17% did; a huge increase in just eighty years.<sup>40</sup> Most people could buy cheaply printed vernacular books, such as octavo recipe collections. While illiteracy ran across social divides, it was more common among people of lower social status, meaning that even poorer and illiterate people could own printed recipe books.<sup>41</sup> These illiterate readers could focus on the woodcuts instead of the text, for instance.

Where gender is concerned, early modern female readers can only be a part of the history of reading if, besides rethinking the category of 'annotation', we reframe how we think of 'readers'. For instance, it may be useful to focus on consumption, as annotations by women were rare. In her study about gender and the materiality of reading, Heidi Hackel stated her surprise at women's silence in early modern book margins. After all, they represented the largest category of new readers in the early modern period. However, women's reading was potentially disruptive because of its link to women's writing.<sup>42</sup> It is indeed no coincidence that women were often found in the margins of authorship, acting as translators, for instance. Besides many women being partially literate, which could explain this absence in the margins, silence was increasingly seen as a female virtue. Prescriptive how-to books in the seventeenth century praising silence and modesty as virtues might have encouraged less participative readers, even though scholars have convincingly explored

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<sup>38</sup> Prices mentioned in Natalie Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Malden: Polity Press, 1975), p. 197.

<sup>39</sup> William Eamon, 'Appearance, Artifice, and Reality: Collecting Secrets in Courtly Culture', in Mar Rey Bueno and Miguel López-Pérez (eds.), *The Gentleman, the Virtuoso, the Inquirer: Vincencio Juan de Lastanosa and the Art of Collecting in Early Modern Spain* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), pp. 127–43.

<sup>40</sup> Carole Shammas, 'The Domestic Environment in Early Modern England and America', p. 8.

<sup>41</sup> David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Keith Thomas, 'The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England', in Gerd Baumann (ed.), *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 97–131 (p. 112); Tessa Watt, 'Publisher, Pedlar, Pot-Poet: The Changing Character of the Broadside Trade, 1550–1640', in Robin Myers and Michael Harris (eds.), *Spreading the Word: The Distribution Networks of Print, 1550–1850* (Winchester: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1990), pp. 61–81 (pp. 62–63).

<sup>42</sup> On the early modern discourse of gender difference and reading, see Mary Ellen Lamb, *Gender and Authorship on the Sidney Circle* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), p. 19.

female resistance to these norms.<sup>43</sup> Literacy appropriate for women was often limited in its use and fluency, with the prescribed forms of female silence including restraint from vocal criticism, limitations of linguistic skills, and abstention from public reading. Therefore, the domestic setting, and oral readings, become even more significant.

While helpful, considering consumption to trace female readers implies reconstructing early modern book ownership, which is methodologically delicate and necessarily partial. Copies available to historians can give us a glimpse into the world of women book owners. For instance, a seventeenth-century female reader wrote in her copy of Nicholas Culpeper's *Directory for Midwives* 'Elizabeth Hunt her book not his' three times, emphasising that the book was not her husband's property.<sup>44</sup> Books kept in the same family could also display several ownership marks as they changed owners. Elaine Leong described a 1562 copy of Piemontese's *Secreti* in which Mary, George and John Holmes had all signed their names.<sup>45</sup> However, examples like this are the exception, and even broadening our sources does not always allow historians to grasp female readers fully: even books dedicated to women were rarely annotated by them.<sup>46</sup>

Not only are there fewer inventories available than for male readers, but widowers could claim their wives' property, including books.<sup>47</sup> To study these women, historians often must consider different kinds of evidence, such as plays, letters, diaries, and portraiture.<sup>48</sup> A comparison of Anne Clifford's (1590-1676) portraits as a young woman and a middle-aged matron, for instance, offers a glimpse into her reading life and how it changed as she grew older.<sup>49</sup> By contrasting these representations with Anne Clifford's cousin Frances Egerton's

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<sup>43</sup> On the Reformation and the gendering of reading, see Eve Rachele Sanders, *Gender and Literacy on Stage in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 18–19. For a historiographic review, see Margaret Ferguson, 'Moderation and Its Discontents: Recent Work on Renaissance Women', *Feminist Studies*, 20.2 (1994), pp. 349–66. On prescriptive books, see Anne Rosalind Jones, "'Nets and Bridles': Early Modern Conduct Books and Sixteenth-Century Women's Lyrics", in Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (eds.), *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality* (New York: Methuen, 1987), pp. 39–72. On resistance to norms of femininity, see Tina Krontiris, *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1992); Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 236; Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), especially pp. 101–25.

<sup>44</sup> Heidi Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, pp. 214–15.

<sup>45</sup> Elaine Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge*, p. 162.

<sup>46</sup> Franklin Williams Jr., *Index of Dedications and Commendatory Verses in English Books before 1641* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1962).

<sup>47</sup> Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England*, pp. 139–43.

<sup>48</sup> Margaret Ezell, 'The Politics of the Past: Restoration Women Writers on Women Reading History', in Sigrid King (ed.), *Pilgrimage for Love: Essays in Early Modern Literature in Honour of Josephine A. Roberts* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), pp. 19–40.

<sup>49</sup> Heidi Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, pp. 221–55.

(1583-1635), Heidi Hackel argued that, while the former was an ‘exceptional reader’, the latter was a ‘normal exception’ in the microhistory sense, a statistically rare case that contradicts most others which are silent or distort the social reality, a useful methodology for studying early modern women.<sup>50</sup>

Frances Egerton’s case highlights the importance of considering book ownership. She owned the most significant library among women of the time, apart from royal women. It could be argued that the physical possession of books allowed women to engage with printed books the most in their organising, binding, colouring, and illuminating.<sup>51</sup> But, as with much scholarship about women’s history, this line of inquiry can only be followed in the case of wealthier women. Poorer readers are rarely represented in these studies; poor female readers are still rarer to find. Of course, that does not mean that average women book owners are nowhere to be found. For instance, Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing argued that annotating printed medical recipes might have helped women form female networks that transcended social positions.<sup>52</sup> This is certainly the case where secrets of women were concerned: noblewomen could cooperate with and instruct servants (female or not) to produce remedies, which could be used by many women in their social circles. These relationships left few traces in book margins, however.

Frustratingly, even books explicitly addressed to women were rarely annotated by them, which undoubtedly indicates the anxieties surrounding female writing and makes us think about how annotating was socially seen.<sup>53</sup> The often-cited case of Anne Boleyn ‘annotating’ William Tyndale’s *Obedience of a Christian Man* for Henry VIII using her fingernail (*ad unguem*) reminds us not only of the materiality but the physicality of annotation.<sup>54</sup> Anne Boleyn’s bodily intervention in the book can be seen as bold, but it is not interpretive (indeed, not even verbal). She did not complement or challenge the text but merely marked relevant passages. It is also a fleeting mark, which could fade away and be

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<sup>50</sup> Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Poni, ‘The Name and the Game: Unequal Exchange and the Historiographic Marketplace’, in Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (eds.), *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), pp. 1–10 (p. 8).

<sup>51</sup> A similar point about provincial Englishwomen in late medieval England can be made. John Friedman, *Northern English Books, Owners, and Makers in the Late Middle Ages*, p. 21.

<sup>52</sup> Laura Gowing and Patricia Crawford, *Women’s Worlds in Seventeenth-Century England: A Sourcebook* (Oxon: Routledge, 2000), p. 14. More recently, a similar point was made by Amanda Herbert, *Female Alliances: Gender, Identity, and Friendship in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

<sup>53</sup> Kim Walker, *Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (London: Prentice Hall, 1996). For a case study of women’s writing, power, and the stylistic performance of humility, see Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

<sup>54</sup> Maria Dowling, ‘Anne Boleyn and Reform’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 35.1 (1984), pp. 30–46 (p. 36).

seen as secretive.<sup>55</sup> This close engagement with a religious text is contrasted with an episode of Anne Boleyn scolding one of her ladies for writing poetry in a prayer book, highlighting the ambiguous relationship between early modern women and printed books.<sup>56</sup>

So, even though book margins ‘would seem to offer a place for women’s voices to be uttered silently and privately’, it is essential to consider, when thinking about early modern marginalia by women, that books’ margins were not as private as we might imagine them today.<sup>57</sup> Books circulated in households, guilds, families, among friends, and in court, creating and cementing communities in the process.<sup>58</sup> This meant marginalia were unlikely to be completely private. This is particularly true of printed recipe books, which could be owned collectively by a guild or family and were frequently borrowed. Writing about the efficacy of an abortifacient on the margins of such a book would be a dangerous idea. However, women could write about books they read elsewhere, such as journals, letters, or personal notebooks, which they could keep private. For instance, in her manuscript recipe book, Ann, Lady Fanshawe (1625-1680) copied a recipe for a ‘red powder good for miscarriage’, using ingredients such as red coral and dragon’s blood.<sup>59</sup> This powder, diluted in claret wine, should be drunk mornings and evenings for three to four days. The recipe had been copied for her own use, and indeed a later annotation underneath the recipe attested to its efficacy, making it clear that the formula had been followed and attained the desired result.<sup>60</sup>

Another way to trace these elusive readers, including but not limited to practitioners such as midwives or herb women, is focusing on what was highlighted in miscellaneous

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<sup>55</sup> Heidi Hackel highlighted how inkless annotations could be associated with students as well, citing the *Ludus Literarius: Or, The Grammar Schoole* by John Brinsley (London, 1612): ‘The very little ones [pupils] which reade but English, may make some secret markes thus at every hard word; though but with some little dint with their naile, so that they doe not marre their bookes’ (pp. 46-47). Cited in Heidi Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, p. 205.

<sup>56</sup> Valerie Wayne, ‘“Some Sad Sentence”: Vive’s Instruction of a Christian Woman’, in Margaret Hannay (ed.), *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1985), pp. 15–29 (pp. 21–22).

<sup>57</sup> Heidi Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, pp. 203–4. She mentioned Frances Egerton, Countess of Bridgewater (1585-1636), Frances Wolfreston (1607-77), and Elizabeth Puckering (c. 1621-89), all of whom owned hundreds of books, but, while they may have initialled them or written other marks of ownership, made no other annotations to them.

<sup>58</sup> For a case study, see Elaine Leong, ‘Transformative Itineraries and Communities of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe: The Case of Lazare Rivière’s The Practice of Physick’ in J. Andrew Mendelsohn, Annemarie Kinzelbach, and Ruth Schilling (eds.), *Civic Medicine: Physician, Polity, and Pen in Early Modern Europe* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), pp. 257-79. See also, for the idea of ‘knowledge itineraries’, ‘When the Tallamys Met John French: Translating, Printing, and Reading *The Art of Distillation*’, in Tara Alberts, Sietske Fransen, and Elaine Leong (eds.), *Translating Medicine across Premodern Worlds*, Osiris Series 37, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2022), pp. 89-112.

<sup>59</sup> Peter Davidson, ‘Fanshawe, Ann, Lady (1625–1680)’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>60</sup> Lady Anne Fanshawe, *Mrs Fanshawes Booke of Receipts of Physickes, Salves, Waters, Cordialls, Preserves and Cookery* (Wellcome Library Ms 7113), p. 73.

recipe books. A telling example of this is a Spanish incunable book preserved at the Wellcome Library, the 1495 *Epilogo en Medicina*.<sup>61</sup> Almost everything underlined or commented was connected to secrets of women. As a medical manual available to vernacular readers, it is possible that this reader was not only interested in recipes for herself, but for her family, friends, or the broader community, in which she might have helped with deliveries. While a complete provenance would allow us to know for sure who this anonymous annotator was, I think we should assume that this book was used by a female practitioner closely involved with the care of women, possibly professionally.<sup>62</sup> Most annotations in the margins and recipes underlined dealt with reproduction. The woodcuts of male bodies with zodiac signs assigned to specific body parts and the typical ailments and urine charts were not coloured or annotated. This probably female reader was primarily interested in women's bodies, and how to help them with common ills. Annotating also meant direction for other readers (just like Anne Boleyn's marks mentioned above). This book was regularly used and engaged with, presumably even amid the chaos of childbirth, if not in the darkened birthing chamber itself.

Recipe collections could also be developed within a family, often by the lady of the house. It was not uncommon for these compilations to include secrets of women, often taken from printed sources. This is a topic I will explore in more depth in the next section of the chapter, but which serves here to illustrate readers' relationship to margins. While not a printed recipe book, the manuscript collection owned by the Worcestershire Dineley family is a great example of how recipes were annotated.<sup>63</sup> The Dineley collection, composed between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was written in many hands, both in Latin and in English. The book started with medical recipes, and gradually became focused on genealogy and heraldry. Its recipes, mostly written in English, include many passages copied from Leonardo Fioravanti's books, especially his famous cure-all elixirs. Many of his celebrated recipes were transcribed, presumably from an Italian original rather than the English translation: the Italian names were kept, and it seems the person transcribing these entries was simultaneously translating them. Fioravanti's *aromatico*, *electuario angelico*, *balsamo*,

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<sup>61</sup> This was a reprint of Joannes de Ketham's *Epilogo en medicina*, (Pamplona: A.G. de Brocar, 1495). Wellcome Library: EPB/D/3547, especially the *tratato quarto (de las dolencias de las mugeres)*, p. 26-33.

<sup>62</sup> On the perils of assuming the gender of readers based on a book's contents, see Sabrina Minuzzi, *Sul Filo dei Segreti: Farmacopea, Libri e Pratiche Terapeutiche a Venezia in Età Moderna*, (Milan: Unicopli, 2016).

<sup>63</sup> Wellcome Ms 244. Ownership marks indicate Henry Dineley (1552 - 1640) and others in his family (also known as Dyneley, Dingley, Dyngley).

and *siruppo magistrale*, appeared alongside his recipe for the Philosopher's Stone and the celebrated 'imperial electuary for the mother', a general formula for uterine ailments.

These recipes encompassed a wide range of health matters, including menstrual disorders, conception and childbirth issues, and breastfeeding problems. What is remarkable about the way this collection was compiled is that, despite the text being written in tight columns, ample space was left in the margins. This book was meant to be consulted in a domestic setting by different members of the household from the master and mistress to hired servants, who could modify the recipes as they tried them out. These empty spaces were presumably left not only for other people to add new information and other recipes, but to comment on the ones already included. Someone made drawings in the margins of necessary tools to follow specific procedures, for instance, while another person added manicules. Recipes were crossed out in red diagonal lines, and tiny descriptions were written attesting the (in)efficacy of a recipe. This was not a printed recipe book which had been annotated, but rather a manuscript collection. Yet the way it was annotated is almost identical to the interventions we find in print. These marginalia were so commonly made that space was left on purpose to that effect. Once more, it is apparent that the divide between print and manuscript cultures is artificial, especially for vernacular recipe books. Readers annotated recipes in myriad ways, but there was not a perceptible difference in the ways they annotated printed and manuscript collections. If anything, the small octavo format of printed collections did not allow for as many annotations as readers might have liked to make. This is a possible reason why so many chose instead to transcribe extracts from printed recipe books into their own collections, where they could leave room for themselves or others to annotate should they wish to.

We know that thousands of people owned recipe books, even though it is not always clear what they thought of them or how they were used. A possible way into the minds of these readers is once more through Fioravanti, who, because he spent considerable effort in his books fashioning his public persona as a celebrity healer, published many extracts from letters that readers sent him in his books. These paratexts further demonstrate the aforementioned need that professors of secrets felt to underline their authority and insist that readers followed their words and did not diverge from the recipes. Fioravanti likely edited these letters somewhat to better fit the narrative he was creating about himself, but this practice still gives the historian clues about his readership. The poet Dionigi Atanagi, for instance, wrote of how he would rather stay home reading Fioravanti's *Capricci medicinali* than join the Carnival festivities,



... which [the *Capricci*] I have read with attention, and judiciously considered, to my great satisfaction, not only not only because it is a work by Your Excellency, whom I esteem so much, but also, because of the excellent subjects it treats and for the novel, quick, and safe way in which you teach medicine and surgery.<sup>64</sup>

This passage highlights how recipe books could be read for pleasure instead of just being consulted; they were used in multiple ways, including for the writer's style or for overviews on a subject, as in Atanagi's case. It also reminds us that published authors were a part of the group we broadly define as 'readers': Fioravanti often commented on what he read in his books, as many contemporaries did, including printers and translators, the 'first readers' of new books. As in the case of the *Epilogo de medicina* mentioned above, this hints at how reading and annotating practices could transcend geographical borders, with readers participating in trans-European reading cultures.

Even experienced readers such as Atanagi might have different readings, such as recreational browsing, and not annotate. Analysing annotations necessarily excludes all readers who did not know how to, or simply did not want to, write in or about their books.<sup>65</sup> Historians' surveys delineated possible methodological frameworks for the history of reading in connection to national contexts, positing the question of whether these methodologies could be transferred to other countries.<sup>66</sup> This is a central question to this study, since I argue that, even though people adapted recipe collections to regional, linguistic, cultural and

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<sup>64</sup> '... i quali [*Capricci*] ho letti attentamente, & con maturo giudizio considerati tutti, certo con mia grandissima satisfattione: sì per essere opera di Vostra Eccellenza, laquale io meritamente tanto amo, & osseruo; sì, & molto più, per le tante belle, & utili materie, che in essi si trattano: et per lo nuouo, presto, & sicuro modo, che ui si insegna, di medicare così in fisica, come in chirurgia'. Letter dated 17 February 1564, published in Leonardo Fioravanti, *Capricci Medicinali* (Venice: Ludovico Avanzi, 1564). It was reprinted in several reeditions of the *Capricci*.

<sup>65</sup> On recreational reading, see Roger Chartier, 'Stratégies éditoriales et lectures populaires, 1530-1660', in Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin (eds.), *Histoire de l'édition française, Tome I, Le Livre conquérant, du Moyen Age au milieu du XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), pp. 698–721; Robert Darnton, 'First Steps Towards a History of Reading', *Australian Journal of French Studies*, 23 (1986), pp. 5–30. On 'popular culture', see Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Temple Smith, 1978). For a more recent study, see Lori Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

<sup>66</sup> For overviews and introductions to the history of reading and of the book, see Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998); Roger Chartier and Guglielmo Cavallo (eds.), *A History of Reading in the West*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999). For national studies of England, see Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (eds.), *Books and Readers in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Vol. 4 (1557-1695)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Sasha Roberts, 'Reading in Early Modern England: Contexts and Problems', *Critical Survey*, 2.12 (2000), 1–16. For methodology, see David Hall, *Cultures of Print: Essays in the History of the Book* (Amherst: University Massachusetts Press, 1996), especially pp. 169–87.

individual contexts, the broad ways in which recipes were produced and used in early modern Europe followed similar trends.

Many different lines of inquiry into the history of reading have broadened the discussion about reading practices, connecting print and the marketplace, or the emergence of literary systems and the history of reading, both of which have informed this chapter.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, because I am interested in non-specialised readers, I have taken inspiration from the methodologies of microhistorians.<sup>68</sup> Microhistory's alternative methodological frame complements broader surveys, allowing us to add nuance to our interpretation of reading practices of the past and the flow of information.<sup>69</sup> Individual practices delineate broader trends in the everyday use of recipes, especially in a domestic setting.

Historians trying to find these readers, created categories such as 'popular' and 'middling sort', which, though useful, are not without their problems. French social historians such as Robert Mandrou and Geneviève Bollème wrote respectively of '*petits gens*' and '*milieux populaires*', especially in the countryside, inferring their readers' social standing from the books' contents and outlook.<sup>70</sup> Economic historians have argued that the spread of print into the life of people of lower status, especially in the countryside, was not only a function of literacy but of cost and availability of books in a known language.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, the existence of social or professional settings in which books would be used or read aloud (whether for entertainment or practical reasons) determined the readership for a given book. However, as many scholars have shown, 'popular' books such as vernacular recipe books were not only written for 'popular' readers nor exclusively penned by 'popular' authors. For example, a French 1530s compilation of household recipes aimed at female readers was penned by master Andre Le Fournier, a regent of the faculty of medicine in Paris.<sup>72</sup> Swiss physician Johann Jacob Wecker (1528–1586) and English pharmacist John Hester (d. 1593),

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<sup>67</sup> Alexandra Hallasz, *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). See also Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975). For post-structuralism, see Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975); and especially Jacques Derrida, 'This is Not an Oral Footnote'.

<sup>68</sup> Carlo Ginzburg, *Il Formaggio e i Vermi: Il Cosmo di un Mugnaio del '500* (Torino: Einaudi, 1976). See also *Books and Readers in Early Modern England*, pp. 9–10.

<sup>69</sup> Filippo de Vivo's analysis of how information moved in this period can be extended to include medical knowledge, for a microhistory of recipes. Filippo de Vivo, 'Microhistories of Long-Distance Information: Space, Movement and Agency in the Early Modern News', *Past & Present*, 242.14 (2019), pp. 179–214.

<sup>70</sup> Robert Mandrou, *De la Culture populaire aux 17e et 18e Siècles*; Geneviève Bollème, *Les Almanachs populaires aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*.

<sup>71</sup> Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Les Paysans de Languedoc* (Paris: Flammarion, 1966), pp. 345–47. For an overview of the spread of literacy in France, see François Furet and Wladimir Sachs, 'La Croissance de l'alphabétisation en France (XVIIIe-XIXe Siècle)', *Annales*, 3.29 (1974), pp. 714–37.

<sup>72</sup> Andre le Fournier, *La Decoration d'humaine nature et aornement des dames* (Lyon: Claude Veycellier, 1532).

who will appear in the next chapter, were the specialised translators responsible for Piemontese and Fioravanti's recipes, respectively. That is why I am reluctant to use these categories, preferring to keep in mind a varied readership, which included (but was not limited to) the kind of people described by these scholars.

The search for ordinary readers prompted gender historians to consider alternative sources, such as cheap print and ephemera.<sup>73</sup> However, readers such as women are still more often analysed through their representation than through their actual practices, which makes sense given the scarcity of direct sources available to historians.<sup>74</sup> The questions raised by literary theory should be complemented with historical research to find the readers of the past, moving from the idealised readers to real ones, avoiding the pitfalls of the transhistorical notion of essentialised readers.<sup>75</sup> With the growing interest in recipes literature, historians have focused on women as both readers and producers of knowledge, such as (among others) in Elaine Leong's work about domestic manuscript recipe books produced by women.<sup>76</sup>

However, the relationship between printed and manuscript recipes has received much less attention. Yet this focus on medium presupposes an artificial divide between print and manuscript that says more about how history has evolved as a discipline than about how early modern people related to the reading and writing of recipes. For instance, in his well-known book, *The Jewell House of Art and Nature*, the Elizabethan experimenter Hugh Plat (1552-1608) tackled this question directly. Discussing professors of secrets, he cited the 'magical

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<sup>73</sup> Mary Fissell, 'Making Meaning from the Margins: The New Cultural History of Medicine', in Frank Huisman and John Harley Warner (eds.), *Locating Medical History: The Stories and Their Meaning* (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), pp. 264–89; 'Readers, Texts, and Contexts: Vernacular Medical Works in Early Modern England'; Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>74</sup> A non-comprehensive list includes Mary Ellen Lamb's work, such as 'Constructions of Women Readers', in Susanne Woods and Margaret Hannay (eds.), *Teaching Tudor and Stuart Women Writers* (New York: Modern Language Association, 2000), pp. 23–34; 'The Agency of the Split Subject: Lady Anne Clifford and the Uses of Reading', *English Literary Renaissance*, 22.3 (1992), pp. 347–68; 'Margaret Hoby's Diary: Women's Reading Practices and the Gendering of the Reformation Subject'. See also Valerie Traub, Lindsay Kaplan, and Dymphna Kallaghan (eds.), *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Jacqueline Pierson, 'Women Reading, Reading Women', in Helen Wilcox (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain, 1500-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 80–99; Margaret Ferguson, *Dido's Daughters: Literacy, Gender, and Empire in Early Modern England and France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Mary Erler, 'The Books and Lives of Three Tudor Women', in Jean Brink (ed.), *Privileging Gender in Early Modern England* (Kirkville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1993), pp. 5–17; Helen Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>75</sup> David Hall, *Cultures of Print*, p. 182.

<sup>76</sup> Elaine Leong, "'Herbals She Peruseth': Reading Medicine in Early Modern England", *Renaissance Studies*, 28.4 (2014), pp. 556–78; Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin, 'Testing Drugs and Trying Cures: Experiment and Medicine in Medieval and Early Modern Europe', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 91.2 (2017), pp. 157–82; Elaine Leong, 'Making Medicines in the Early Modern Household', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 82.1 (2008), pp. 145–68; Elaine Leong, 'Collecting Knowledge for the Family: Recipes, Gender and Practical Knowledge in the Early Modern English Household'.

crew', Albertus Magnus, Alessio Piemontese, Girolamo Cardano, Leonardo Fioravanti, and Johann Jacob Wecker (Piemontese's German and Latin translator), among others.<sup>77</sup> Plat criticised secrecy and argued for the practical need for open diffusion of knowledge; his own 'secrets' were meant to be revealed, disseminated, and modified by readers.<sup>78</sup> While the professors of secrets mentioned by Plat varied in their relationship to secrecy and openness of knowledge, most of them had in common the fact that no further experimentation on the part of the reader was encouraged. This was, of course, not the only way to engage with readers in the period; some authors might even allow extra room at the end of their books for readers to write their thoughts, such as Owen Feltham's section for (male) readers: 'for the *Comments* of the man that reads'.<sup>79</sup>

Plat's indexing methodology invited readers to engage, constructing their own readings, following the commonplacing practices of his day.<sup>80</sup> Plat was a medical practitioner and a campaigner for open communication of knowledge and the importance of 'public good'. For him, Della Porta's or Piemontese's secrets were imperfect and needed verification to be made more precise and straightforward in terms of language so that they could be included in his *Jewell House*. As a compiler and 'polisher' of recipes, Plat illustrated how writing and reading practices should complement each other. Naturally, as a reader, Plat was an avid annotator; his copies of Della Porta's *Magia* (1584), Wecker's *De secretis* (1588), and William Warde's three-volume translation of Piemontese's *Secreti* (1562, 1563, 1566) were all heavily annotated.<sup>81</sup> Plat's notes were informal and meant for his own use. He ranked recipes with symbols in the margins, with an elaborate private coding system indicating the times the recipes were put to trial, which meant that recipe books could be considered his 'laboratory'. Plat used the same method for his own handwritten notebooks of recipes. These were also heavily underlined, and the marginal notes included cross-references and reminders as well as questions about whether ingredients or vessels were fit for a particular formula. The recipes were dissected: vagueness was questioned, and possible alterations suggested. These recipes were tried in practice, as they often were by many readers working in laboratories, kitchens, stillrooms, or workshops.

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<sup>77</sup> Hugh Plat, *The Jewell House of Art and Nature* (London: P. Short, 1594).

<sup>78</sup> For a discussion of Plat's relationship to secrecy, see Ayesha Mukherjee, 'The Secrets of Sir Hugh Platt', in Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin (eds.), *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science*, pp. 69–86.

<sup>79</sup> Owen Feltham, *Resolves: A Duple Century* (London: Felix Kyngston, 1628), sig. A2r. Cited in Heidi Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, p. 9.

<sup>80</sup> Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Ann Blair, 'Humanist Methods in Natural Philosophy: The Commonplace Book', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 4.53 (1992), pp. 541–51.

<sup>81</sup> Of Plat's 70 volumes, 19 were annotated. Ayesha Mukherjee, 'The Secrets of Sir Hugh Platt', p. 77.

As an active reader, Plat did what professors of secrets often feared: he went beyond what the recipes prescribed and improved them in the same way that Cortese described man surpassing nature. In his translation and expansion of a formula for the multiplication of corn by Della Porta, Plat promised his readers four times more corn than in the original recipe, using the same seeds.<sup>82</sup> This scrutiny level in reading clarifies the relationship between Plat's own practice and his reading and writing. Having spent so long testing recipes, Plat wondered why he should not suggest to his 'well-disposed readers' to do the same, so that they

... may either to their great good make use of my labors, if they have been well bestowed, or else by my example learn to employ both their wittes and time in a course more commendable for themselves, and more profitable for their Countrey?'.<sup>83</sup>

Hugh Plat was an experimenter and medical practitioner. However, he does not seem to have had any qualms about urging his own readers to use recipes as a basis for further trials. While Piemontese, Cortese, Della Porta, and Fioravanti all hoped to keep their readers from modifying their recipes, insisting on the professors of secrets' expertise and the 'perfection' of their tested recipes, Plat broke with this prescription, encouraging his readers to do as he did, and be actively involved with recipes, not only putting them in practice but improving them as well. Undoubtedly, in a time before patents for drugs and formulas, much of these warnings not to deviate from the original recipe had to do with preserving the composition – and its link to a specific person and book. Fioravanti seems to have been particularly worried about building his name in this way, using the books to connect his remedies sold in pharmacies to himself, often through their names – *Olio Leonardi*, for example.<sup>84</sup> In Plat's model, on the other hand, readers were told that the only way of preserving the knowledge in his books was to engage with it actively and not just follow the recipes blindly. Whether professional or non-specialised, readers transformed recipes. This is what kept them alive, as readers translated them into their own worlds, often using them as a starting point that could be built upon and changed, absorbed into other practices. By

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<sup>82</sup> Hugh Plat, *The New and Admirable Arte of Setting of Corne* (London: Peter Short 1600), sigs C2r-C3r, cited in Ayesha Mukherjee, 'The Secrets of Sir Hugh Platt', p. 80-81.

<sup>83</sup> Hugh Plat, *The Jewell House of Art and Nature*, sig. B4v.

<sup>84</sup> William Eamon, 'Alchemy in Popular Culture: Leonardo Fioravanti and the Search for the Philosopher's Stone', *Early Science and Medicine*, 5.2 (2000), pp. 196–213; William Eamon, 'Pharmaceutical Self-Fashioning or How to Get Rich and Famous in the Renaissance Medical Marketplace', *Pharmacy in History*, 3.45 (2003), pp. 123–29.

understanding them as sites of active understanding and engagement, Plat highlighted the connection between making and knowing and a dynamic understanding of reading, necessarily a transformative act.<sup>85</sup>

However, reading in this active way was not the only way to participate in the early modern culture of recipes. In Cortese's dedication to Chaboda mentioned above, it is striking that she described how secrets were *heard* every day and put into execution. This highlights the essential practical aspect of recipes and shows how early modern people learned and followed them. It is telling that Cortese describes secrets as being *heard* rather than *read*. There were many ways in which recipe books were used. I argue that an essential part of finding these readers of secrets is to rethink some of these categories, such as 'reader', to include people who did not visually read the text themselves but who heard them read aloud (or recited by memory) by someone else.

Reading and writing were skills mostly taught separately in early modern Europe. Both in Northern Italian cities and in England, readers of recipes included women and people of low social status, who could often read but not write. Reading was taught first, and often family obligations meant pupils had to abandon school before learning how to write, especially young girls. Therefore, using signed documents as evidence of literacy can prove problematic, as it excludes many readers because of social status, gender, or age. Furthermore, partial literacy was common in this period, especially among women.<sup>86</sup> That is another reason signatures studies do not help scholars interested in female readers much; we will likely never know how widespread literacy was among women.<sup>87</sup> Historians like David Cressy acknowledged the limitation of studying signatures but argued that they are one of the only ways to measure literacy in the period, even if they underrepresent it.<sup>88</sup> While servants and labourers, as well as women (regardless of social background), are largely absent from

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<sup>85</sup> Plat's discourse famously influenced Francis Bacon and the Hartlib circle, and Plat's own books were often extensively annotated by his readers. Ayesha Mukherjee, 'The Secrets of Sir Hugh Platt', p. 84-85.

<sup>86</sup> On female literacy, see Frances Dolan, 'Reading, Writing, and Other Crimes', in *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>87</sup> Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and Its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

<sup>88</sup> David Cressy, 'Literacy in Context: Meaning and Measurement in Early Modern England', in John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 305-19. For the limitations of signatures as markers of literacy, see R.S. Schofield, 'The Measurement of Literacy in Pre-Industrial England', in Jack Goody (ed.), *Literacy in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 311-25. More recently, Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000); Margaret Ferguson, *Dido's Daughters*. An alternative source, the test of oral performance of reading and legal privileges such as 'benefit of clergy' for more lenient punishments can suggest a far more widespread reading literacy than studies of signatures have shown. C.B. Herrup, *The Common Peace: Participation and the Criminal Law in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

this kind of study, being considered illiterate *en masse*, scholars acknowledged that overall literacy increased throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, although unevenly.<sup>89</sup> However, it is crucial to consider the regional, social, and gender variations in the spread of literacy: Cressy contrasts a parish in Westmorland where 6% of people were literate to another one in Huntingdonshire with a 93% literacy rate in the 1640s.<sup>90</sup> If we compare this to Italian cities such as Florence, the difference is striking. As early as in fourteenth-century Florence, 45-60% of children between the ages of 6 and 13 attended school, hinting at many potential readers, at least in the vernacular.<sup>91</sup>

There is also the question of the language of print. In the case of printed recipe books, the ones in the vernacular undoubtedly had a wider reach, although regional differences in language were considerable. Furthermore, different kinds of literacy depended on script: more people could read printed texts than handwritten ones.<sup>92</sup> Of course, the problem of literacy, regardless of medium, has been tackled by many historians, with assessments ranging anywhere from 1 to 60% in the sixteenth century.<sup>93</sup> David Cressy's seminal study of legal documents and ecclesiastical records puts the literacy rate at 80% for men in the 1640s, which can and has been questioned, but still offers us a baseline for comparison.<sup>94</sup> Different sources provide different numbers, depending on the kind of record. Also, this kind of estimate only considers the ability to sign one's name or make a mark, which does not necessarily correlate to being literate. Some people could write with charcoal or marking stone, but not ink, to complicate things further.<sup>95</sup> Different materials allowed for different skills, both for the one writing and the one reading words. Multiple literacies implied not only that some readers could only understand print and not manuscript writing, but even different kinds of hands (secretary, court, or chancery). Moreover, this hierarchy of difficulty changed

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<sup>89</sup> David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order*, p. 106.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 191-201.

<sup>91</sup> Roger Chartier, 'Les Pratiques de l'écrit', in Philippe Ariès and George Duby (eds.), *Histoire de la vie privée (tome 3): de la Renaissance aux Lumières* (Paris: Seuil, 1986) pp. 112-61.

<sup>92</sup> Keith Thomas, 'The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England', p. 100. On multiple kinds of literacy, see David Carlson, *English Humanist Books: Writers and Patrons, Manuscript and Print, 1475-1525* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1993); Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), especially pp. 141-76.

<sup>93</sup> H. S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers, 1475-1557* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 27-29.

<sup>94</sup> David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order*, table 4.1. See also Eleanor Hubbard, 'Reading, Writing, and Initialing: Female Literacy in Early Modern London', *Journal of British Studies*, 54.3 (2015), pp. 553-577. For a more nuanced analysis of how Inquisitorial records recorded literacy, see the case of the miller Menocchio, immortalised by Carlo Ginzburg, *Il Formaggio e I Vermi*.

<sup>95</sup> Juliet Fleming, 'Graffiti, Grammatology, and the Age of Shakespeare', in Patricia Fumerton and Simon Hunt (eds.), *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 315-51.

over time. While the Black letter ('English' type) was widely considered the easiest one in the sixteenth century, it was the Roman type that was believed to be more accessible in the following centuries.

More competent readers could move easily from one medium or script to the other, but their reading was also influenced by social practices and physical spaces, among other factors.<sup>96</sup> Throughout Europe, recipe books could be read or consulted in a professional setting, such as a workshop, laboratory, or domestic space. Whether in Italy, France, or England, communal or collective reading would be frequent in laboratories as well as domestic environments, with bed chambers and book closets not always guaranteeing privacy.<sup>97</sup> Indeed, the 'Montaigne model' of the private library or book closet as a solitary space was rare, if not entirely fictional.<sup>98</sup> The early modern book closet was a place of multiple meanings, used in many ways.<sup>99</sup> It could be a site of relative privacy and privilege for both male and female readers, although only readers of certain social groups would have had access to one.<sup>100</sup> As we can see in manuscript recipe books, the fluidity and flexibility of reading spaces are comparable to other early modern reading practices. Medicinal remedies, proverbs, poems, cooking recipes, and accounting notes were often written side by side, attesting how reading and other household activities could be done in different spaces.

Women's reading was often confined to domestic spaces, which could be busy, and not private.<sup>101</sup> Early modern people could read sitting down, standing up, reclining in beds, in studies, gardens, courts, taverns, and infinite other places.<sup>102</sup> Even whitewashed domestic walls could act as writing surfaces in early modern English houses – which is especially likely for recipes.<sup>103</sup> On the other hand, we should be wary of imagining all recipe books to

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<sup>96</sup> For the relationship between setting and the experience of the reading experience, see Robert Darnton, *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History* (New York: Norton, 1990), especially p. 167. On the spatial influence on an 'extraordinary' reader, see William Sherman, 'The Place of Reading in the English Renaissance'.

<sup>97</sup> For an introduction to the implications of writing and privacy, see Roger Chartier, 'The Practical Impact of Writing', in *A History of Private Life, Vol. 3: Passions of the Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1989), pp. 134–37. See also Cecile Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print: Reading and Writing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), pp. 1–2.

<sup>98</sup> William Sherman, *John Dee*, p. 47.

<sup>99</sup> Lena Orlin, 'Gertrude's Closet', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 1998, pp. 44–67 (p. 65).

<sup>100</sup> On the relationship between the book closet and and secrecy in Italy, see Dora Thornton, *The Scholar in His Study: Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997). On gender and privacy in England, France and Italy, see Orest Ranum, 'The Refuges of Intimacy', in *A History of Private Life, Vol. 3*, pp. 225–29, and also Eve Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990).

<sup>101</sup> Richard Rambuss, *Closet Devotions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), p. 166.

<sup>102</sup> On spatial changes in domestic architecture, see Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), pp. 253–54.

<sup>103</sup> Juliet Fleming, 'Grafitti, Gramatology, and the Age of Shakespeare', p. 329.



have been used in the kitchen: Sara Pennell noted how surprisingly few recipe books from the period show grease stains or food marks, as it would be natural for an object daily used in the kitchen.<sup>104</sup> It is possible that they were kept and consulted elsewhere or that the ones more likely to survive were not the everyday versions but rather fair copies kept more carefully.

However, although it is a material practice, reading is an activity that rarely leaves traces, composed by an infinity of singular actions, forgotten gestures ‘embodied in acts, spaces, and habits’.<sup>105</sup> According to Kevin Sharpe, this archaeology of reading practices seeks to deal with the limitations of the history of the book and reception theories through a ‘historicised reception theory or historical reader-response criticism’.<sup>106</sup> The dichotomies of how peoples read – silently or orally, or a combination of visual, oral/aural ways, alone or with others – can obscure the variety and richness of early modern reading experiences.<sup>107</sup> For instance, Jennifer Richards has convincingly explored how Thomas Raynalde’s *The Womans Booke* might have been read aloud by women.<sup>108</sup> Those hearing a text read aloud were the majority, with the difference between ‘literate’ and ‘illiterate’ less significant than today. Richards argued that ‘hearing’ a book was not epistemologically inferior to visually reading it, echoing Cortese’s dedication in her book about secrets being *heard*. Women read aloud among themselves, as Natalie Davis described in the context of pregnancy and childbirth.<sup>109</sup> Praying and reading complemented each other, such as in reading about the life of St Margaret, a patron of pregnant women often invoked in childbirth. So, reading from printed or manuscript books did not silence or replace oral culture, but rather added a new layer to it.

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<sup>104</sup> Sara Pennell, ‘Perfecting Practice? Women, Manuscript Recipes and Knowledge in Early Modern England’, in Victoria Burke and Jonathan Gibson (eds.), *Early Modern Women’s Manuscript Writing: Selected Papers from Te Trinity/Trent Colloquium* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 237–58. See also the Introduction by Michele DiMeo and Sara Pennell in the collection (edited by them) *Reading and Writing Recipe Books 1550-1800*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).

<sup>105</sup> Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe Between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 1–3. See also Adrian Johns, ‘The Physiology of Reading’, in Marina Frasca-Spada and Nicholas Jardine (eds.), *Books and the Sciences in History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 291–316; Jennifer Richards, ‘Useful Books: Reading Vernacular Regimens in Sixteenth-Century England’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 73(2) (2012), pp. 247–71.

<sup>106</sup> Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books*, p. 22; Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, p. 37.

<sup>107</sup> Similarly, the eighteenth-century shift from ‘intensive’ to ‘extensive’ described by Rolf Engelsing could be questioned. See Rolf Engelsing, ‘Die Perioden der Lesergeschichte in der Neuzeit: Das statistische Ausmass und die soziokulturelle Bedeutung der Lektüre’, *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens*, 10 (1969), pp. 944–1002. See also David Hall, ‘Introduction’, in Hugh Amory and David Hall (eds.), *A History of the Book in America, Vol. I: The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. II.

<sup>108</sup> Jennifer Richards, ‘Reading and Hearing the Womans Booke in Early Modern England’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 89.3 (2015), pp. 434–62.

<sup>109</sup> *La Vie de ma Dame Sainte Marguerite, vierge et martyr* (1520), cited in Natalie Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Malden: Polity Press, 1975), p. 214.

Vocalised reading is often thought to have been used when someone was reading to others or dictating texts to be copied. Literate people could prefer to have texts read to them even if they could read them themselves. Margaret Hoby had herbals read aloud to her, and Anne Clifford famously dictated marginalia to servants who read aloud to her, including from medical books.<sup>110</sup> So, not only was Anne Clifford an aural reader in some instances, but the servant acted as an oral reader, a scribe, and, crucially, a translator.<sup>111</sup> Less literate listeners, such as a maid attending her, would also be reading the book in this case, illustrating how both aurality and orality force us to expand the definition of ‘reader’. Less experienced readers could follow the text this way even when alone.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, texts read aloud could be discussed, making reading collective and social.<sup>113</sup>

All this shaped reading experiences; recipes were read and followed in multiple ways, in settings of varying degrees of privacy. Readers could be alone or with others, reading aloud or silently.<sup>114</sup> The contrast between a more passive female reading, with fewer annotations, and a more active male reading, while helpful in creating typologies, can be dangerously simplistic. Also, illiterate people would not only have access to printed material through aural reading. Broadsheets, pamphlets, ballads, almanacks, recipe books, and all kinds of printed material were widely available in the early modern world, especially in urban environments. In the case of recipes, it is possible to imagine someone reading the recipe aloud while another person executed the instructions, such as a master to a servant.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, many of these printed materials contained woodcuts, which could also be useful to

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<sup>110</sup> Margaret Hoby, *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady: The Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599–1605*, ed. by J. Moody (Stroud: Sutton, 2001); Mary Ellen Lamb, ‘Margaret Hoby’s Diary’.

<sup>111</sup> Paul Bandia (ed.), ‘Orality and Translation’, Special Issue, *Translation Studies* 8.2 (2015).

<sup>112</sup> Heidi Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, p. 45. Roger Chartier described the shift from vocalized to silent reading as the ‘other revolution’, parallel to the printing revolution. See Roger Chartier, ‘Reading Matter and “Popular” Reading: From the Renaissance to the Seventeenth Century’, pp. 276–78; ‘The Practical Impact of Writing’, pp. 125–26; ‘Leisure and Sociability: Reading Aloud in Early Modern Europe’, in Susan Zimmerman and Ronald Weissman, *Urban Life in the Renaissance* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989), pp. 103–20.

<sup>113</sup> On the oral discussions of medical texts, see Mary Fissell, ‘Making a Masterpiece: The Aristotle Texts in Vernacular Medical Culture’, in Charles Rosenberg (ed.), *Right Living: An Anglo-American Tradition of Self-Help Medicine and Hygiene* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), pp. 59–87.

<sup>114</sup> ‘Aurality’ in relation to reading was a term coined by Joyce Coleman to describe the communal reading favoured by elite readers in late medieval English and Scottish settings. It was not associated with illiteracy until the sixteenth century. Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 85–88. Natalie Davis argued that aural reading was equally engaging for literate and illiterate listeners/readers. Natalie Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, p. 225.

<sup>115</sup> Rachel Monroy discussed a similar scene in a blog entry for the Recipes Project, describing how a female slaveowner read and explained recipes to the slaves who would prepare them. “‘You know I am no epicure’: Enslaved Voices in Eliza Lucas Pinckney’s Receipt Book”, posted on 8 April 2021. <https://recipes.hypotheses.org/17859>. (Last consulted on 22/06/22.)

illiterate ‘readers’, illustrating appropriate vessels for a determinate formula. In the case of medical texts, woodcuts could be useful to teach about foetal presentations, for instance. A midwife could use a printed manual to teach her deputy or the person giving birth – even if none of them could read.<sup>116</sup>

While there are material differences between manuscript and print, they have been exaggerated by modern research methodologies and tools, such as how documents are classified in libraries and how collections receive different curators and are referenced in separate catalogues. In the early modern period, however, print and manuscripts comfortably coexisted. While manuscripts could have been seen as potentially more private or subversive, with a greater possibility of avoiding censorship due to a smaller circulation, it is essential to avoid generalisations.<sup>117</sup> Where recipes are concerned, they could be written down by hand or printed but also copied in notebooks. While recipe literature was a genre in itself, recipes often appeared in other kinds of collections as well. These recipes would often have something considered novel or exotic, maybe including ingredients from the New World: for instance, an anonymous French traveller in the early eighteenth century wrote down a chocolate recipe in his travel diary.<sup>118</sup> It was not uncommon for travellers to include recipes into their travel journals, recalling the connection between collecting recipes and travel underlined by Piemontese in his own book. In Piemontese’s case, travel was at the origin of his manuscript recipe compilation, which had later been published in print. As I mentioned above, it is likely that this narrative was an editorial invention. But it does highlight the fluidity between manuscript and print cultures, especially where recipes were concerned.

Moreover, words such as ‘scribble’ and ‘print’ had more fluid meanings in the period and reflect a network of oral, aural, visual, and tactile reading experiences, which overlap, blurring the line between manuscript and print culture.<sup>119</sup> Arguably, describing early modern England as a ‘culture of print’ can only be justified if we retain print’s complex contemporary

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<sup>116</sup> For a survey of midwives and their instruction in England, see Doreen Evenden, *The Midwives of Seventeenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Helen King, “‘As if None Understood the Art That Cannot Understand Greek’: The Education of Midwives in Seventeenth-Century England,” in Vivian Nutton and Roy Porter (eds.), *The History of Medical Education in Britain* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), pp. 184–98.

<sup>117</sup> Giorgio Caravale, *Censorship and Heresy in Revolutionary England and Counter-Reformation Rome: Story of a Dangerous Book* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 19.

<sup>118</sup> ‘Pour faire le Chocolat. Prenez vingt livres de Cacao, qui est une espèce de Fève qui vient des Indes, qu’il faut faire brûler comme le Caffé, dix livres de Sucre, quatre onces de Canelle, cinquante Banilles. Il y en a qui ajoutent à cela demi once de Poivre d’Inde, qui est le poivre rouge, & une dragme de Musc.’ Anonymous, *Voyages faits en divers temps en Espagne, en Portugal, en Allemagne, en France, et ailleurs par Monsieur M\*\*\*\**, (Amsterdam: George Gallet, 1700).

<sup>119</sup> Heidi Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, p. 25.

meanings.<sup>120</sup> That is why it is essential to deconstruct the categories of ‘reading’ and ‘annotating’ in the period. The same can be said about the ‘translation’ of recipes, which can be understood in its broadest sense as a transformation: between media, genres, and languages.

Recipe literature is an interesting genre to see the intersection of these categories, as recipe books were not only read but used; the reception of recipes did not only involve theoretical debates, but practical questions, the main one being whether a recipe ‘works’ or not. A reader of Piemontese’s 1580 *Secreti*, for instance, crossed out several passages of the book and wrote that ‘All theas receipts ar verye falsely written, but being corrected heer they ar trew’.<sup>121</sup> While readers might cross out recipes because there were better ones or because they had been wrongly transcribed, it was more common for the recipes to have been simply considered ineffective. This was a very common practice. William Eamon described a 1562 edition of Piemontese’s *Secreti* preserved at the Regenstein Library as containing extensive marginalia, including crossed-over recipes, as well as notes such as ‘very good’.<sup>122</sup> Many printed recipe books were likely worn out of existence since many extant copies are very worn-out and full of stains, indicating their use in a kitchen or laboratory, in contrast to Sara Pennell’s argument mentioned above.

I have discussed so far how recipe books were translated between manuscript and print. But the linguistic dimension of ‘translation’ should not be forgotten. Readers could annotate their books in different languages, giving us some clues about reading practices. For instance, both Giambattista Della Porta (1535-1615) and his contemporary Girolamo Cardano (1501-1576) wrote about physiognomy and books of secrets.<sup>123</sup> The study of human heads, from the shape of the skull to facial features and expressions, and the connection between these signs and the person’s temperament and humoral complexion was a vast field of study in the early modern period, and it was not uncommon for humanists to be interested in physiognomy as well as secrets of nature and craft. They could often complement each other, with physiognomy giving clues to medical treatment. In a seventeenth-century Italian notebook preserved at the British Library, pen and ink drawings of the same eight model heads were marked with pencil: spots and wrinkles were drawn, and their meaning was

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<sup>120</sup> For contemporary uses of ‘print’ including manuscript practices, see Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).

<sup>121</sup> William Sherman, ‘What Did Renaissance Readers Write in Their Books?’, p. 126.

<sup>122</sup> William Eamon, ‘How to Read a Book of Secrets’, p. 34.

<sup>123</sup> On early modern physiognomy, see Ian Maclean, ‘The Logic of Physiognomy in the Renaissance’, *Early Science and Medicine*, 16 (2011), pp. 275–295.

described according to Cardano's and Della Porta's writings on the subject.<sup>124</sup> What is remarkable about this physiognomy study is not that this person read both authors and compared them, but that their annotations were made in Latin or Italian depending on the writer: Latin for Cardano and Italian for Della Porta. Since it is the same hand throughout, this distinction presumably stems from the fact that Della Porta's text was consulted in Italian and Cardano's in Latin. Therefore, this case indicates how readers could adopt different languages and even mindsets depending on the context of their annotating practices.

So, readers interacted with recipes in a plurality of ways. One of them was through writing, such as annotating on the margins of printed recipe books, copying recipes into diaries or letters, and transcribing recipes into their notebooks (which could also contain marginal annotations). These practices, especially when accompanied by modifications in the recipes, make us reconsider the notion of 'authorship'.<sup>125</sup> As active makers of knowledge, some readers of recipes should be considered 'co-authors' of the books they read, in the same way that I will argue in the next chapter that translators should be. These new readers often behaved as negotiators and 'translators' in a broad sense: between media, languages, genres, forms of reading and knowing, in a world in which the printed word was increasingly a part of people's lives. Because of print, the sixteenth century is when the 'great variety of readers' often described in the prefaces of books of secrets can first be perceived.<sup>126</sup> However, it did not fundamentally alter the way people read and consumed recipes. What printed books of secrets did was make recipes ubiquitous, demystifying the exclusivity of the knowledge contained in recipe collections and potentially making authorities feel closer to readers' worlds.

Furthermore, the constant revision and addition of recipes (such as the five parts of Piemontese's *Secreti*) indicated to readers that knowledge was being augmented and increased as it was diffused. I argue that, although professors of secrets did not encourage readers to modify recipes, the dynamic nature of printed recipe collections contributed to the understanding of the natural and medical worlds as susceptible to constant human

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<sup>124</sup> Girolamo Cardano and Giambattista Della Porta, Extracts from *Medici Mediolanensis, Metoposcopia and Methoposcopiae liber unus singularis*, British Library Ms 22687.

<sup>125</sup> Margaret Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Joseph Loewenstein, *The Author's Due: Printing and the Pre-History of Copyright* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

<sup>126</sup> The first authorised English bibles are some of the earliest examples of books addressed to a universal readership. H. S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers, 1475-1557* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), especially p. 30-35.

intervention – including from readers.<sup>127</sup> Consulting a printed copy of Piemontese, readers could select potentially useful recipes for their lives and copy them into their collections, appropriating them and translating them into their worlds. While annotated books of secrets have received some attention from historians, this transcription and the transformation recipes went through from printed books into manuscript form has been less studied and is my focus in the next section of this chapter.

### 3. Transcribing and Translating Secrets in Manuscript Recipe Books

I have argued so far, along with many other historians, for the deconstruction of the artificial divide between manuscript and print cultures in the early modern period. Elizabeth Eisenstein's seminal work on the revolutionary impact of the printing press has been challenged by multiple scholars who highlighted the continued importance and vitality of manuscript culture until the eighteenth century.<sup>128</sup> However, this argument still implies a dichotomy between print and manuscript cultures, which were often intertwined. With the proliferation of printed books, manuscript books also multiplied: reading growth went hand in hand with that of writing. The importance of the dissemination of reading in the period, in considerable measure thanks to print, should not be understated, from the political sphere to the 'scientific revolution'.<sup>129</sup> As incunabula remind us, early printed books imitated the script and layout of manuscripts. They were displayed side by side with them in bookshops, highlighting the continuities between manuscript and print.<sup>130</sup> It is not surprising, then, that manuscript recipe books did not lose their relevance when printed books of secrets became widely popular, nor were they replaced by recipe collections in this new form. Readers of both print and manuscript collections annotated them, with these paratexts illustrating a constant dialogue between media and the malleable character of recipes literature. Not only

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<sup>127</sup> Catherine Lanoë, 'Galien ou Paracelse, conserver ou transformer? Les Cosmétiques à la Renaissance', *Journal de la Renaissance*, III (2005), pp. 193–206.

<sup>128</sup> David Carlson, *English Humanist Books*; Harold Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England*; Peter Beal, *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and Their Makers in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Margaret Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print*.

<sup>129</sup> For the English revolution as a 'revolution in reading', see Sharon Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Sabrina Baron, 'Licensing Readers, Licensing Authorities in Seventeenth-Century England', in Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (eds.), *Books and Readers*, pp. 217–42.

<sup>130</sup> Peter Blayney, 'John Day and the Bookshop That Never Was', in Lena Cowen Orlin (ed.), *Material London, ca. 1600* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000). Early histories of print often described it as a 'counterfeit' of handwriting. Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book*, especially pp. 349–51.

did these two traditions develop alongside each other, but they were often so intertwined as to force us to understand recipe books as a single genre, regardless of the medium.<sup>131</sup>

The materiality of recipe collections and the reader physically interacting with recipes through books as objects can perhaps be best illustrated by an Italian manuscript recipe collection, the *Secreti diversi*, into which an unknown writer copied extracts from printed recipe collections. This small, unpretentious notebook, bound using recycled vellum papal documents from the 1420s, contained recipes from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, in two hands, both anonymous.<sup>132</sup> The early compiler of this manuscript recipe book relied mainly on contemporary printed books to compose their compilation, which acted as a ‘starter’ collection.<sup>133</sup> This included best-selling books of the day, by Piemontese, Rossello, and Cortese.<sup>134</sup> Pier Andrea Matthioli’s *Discorsi*, Castore Durante’s *Herbario*, and Agostino Gallo’s *Vinti giorni di Agricoltura* were also important sources, but there were entries from several other authors.<sup>135</sup> This earlier compiler probably composed the index, while the later writer added secrets from an eighteenth manuscript recipe book by a Franciscan monk.<sup>136</sup> The domestic nature of most of these recipes (everyday medicines, cosmetics, secrets of women, food recipes) was gradually replaced by more technical entries about dyes and metals by the later hand, which included bookkeeping and financial management. However, I am more interested in the sixteenth-century recipes and what they can tell us about early modern readers and recipe books.

In the last section, I discussed how readers annotated the margins of printed recipe books. They might try recipes from these books and write whether they worked or not and suggest corrections to quantities or ingredients. In the case of this manuscript, on the other

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<sup>131</sup> There are many instances of entries from English recipe books transcribed into manuscript collections, such as passages from Nicholas Culpeper and Gervase Markham’s works, as shown by Elaine Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge*, pp. 81-83.

<sup>132</sup> Anonymous, *Secreti diversi*, c. 1600-1745. Wellcome Library, Ms. 215. Microfilm reference: AMS/MF/233. Published (in microfilm form) in Sara Pennell (ed.), *Women in Medicine: Remedy Books, 1533 - 1865* (Woodbridge, Connecticut: Primary Source Microfilm, 2004).

<sup>133</sup> Elaine Leong described in detail the composition of household recipe books using ‘starter’ collections, which could come from either the manuscript or print worlds. Elaine Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge*.

<sup>134</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese*; Timotheo Rossello, *Della Summa de i Secreti Universali* (Venice: Giovanni Bariletto, 1565); Isabella Cortese, *I Secreti de la Signora Isabella Cortese*.

<sup>135</sup> Pedanius Dioscorides and Pietro Andrea Mattioli, *Di Pedacio Dioscoride Anazarbeo Libri Cinque della Historia, et Materia Medicinale* (Venice: Nicolo de Bascarini, 1544); Castore Durante, *Herbario Nuovo* (Rome: Bartholomeo Bonfadino, 1585); Agostino Gallo, *Le Vinti Giornate dell’ Agricoltura et de’ Piaceri della Villa* (Venice: Gratosio Perccacino, 1569); Girolamo Calestani, *Osservationi di G. C. Parmigiano nel Comporre gli Antidoti et Medicamenti, che più si costumano in Italia all’uso della Medicina, Secondo il Parere de’ Medici Antichi, e Moderni Esaminate* (Venice: Francesco Senese, 1564).

<sup>136</sup> A heading on page 150 reads ‘*Secreti cavati dai M.S. dal P. F. Gio[vanni] da S. Gio[vanni] Pred[icatore] Cap[puccino] nel suo libro composto nel 1745*’.

hand, the same marginal notes attesting the efficacy of recipes appear alongside the text, meaning that whoever copied them down did so before actually trying them out in practice. They did not transcribe their favourite, tested recipes from printed books, but rather potentially useful recipes to be tried in the future, which several were. Elaine Leong described recipe trials as a multiple-step process in which people evaluated them (often writing in separate notebooks) before assimilating them definitively into their personal or familial recipe collections.<sup>137</sup> This meant the constant (re)assessing and testing of recipes, in which authority (and authorship) could shift. In the case of this manuscript, Timotheo Rossello's method for making metallic letters was deemed 'proven and true: however the letters are not very attractive'. The following two recipes to remove stains were simply judged 'not true'.<sup>138</sup> Some recipes under the heading 'from Isabella Cortese's book' were taken from Rossello's book, indicating that both were consulted simultaneously, with the compiler mixing up recipes.

Amid these recipes for cosmetics, medicines, glassmaking, stain removal, and golden letters, several secrets of women appear, many of them with marginal notes on their efficacy, such as a recipe for sore nipples due to breastfeeding and another one about how to avoid conception, both taken from Piemontese's *Secreti*. Sections from Mattioli's herbal were also transcribed, including uterine remedies. As with Piemontese and Rossello, the transcription was faithful to the source material, although some passages were omitted, presumably to fit the compiler's interests. That was often the case with recipes with multiple uses: readers might choose to copy just some parts of the recipe. Similarly, herbal entries in which a plant was described as useful to multiple ailments, a reader might transcribe just the passages relevant to their life, leaving out part of the text. In recipe books, books of simples, and herbals, there were often multiuse formulas; individual readers could select only a part of these entries, going from multiuse to single use.

Contraception remedies and several other secrets of women taken from Mattioli's book were among the passages copied in this notebook. Recipes for treating sores or epilepsy using menstrual blood as an ingredient were transcribed alongside entries using animal milk or blood.<sup>139</sup> The connection between these fluids and recipes about reproduction is not surprising, which can also be said about recipes using plants shaped like wombs or phalluses

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<sup>137</sup> Elaine Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge*, pp. 72-91.

<sup>138</sup> 'A far lettere d'oro, d'argento, o d'altro metallo', p. 15. On the margin: 'Provato, è vero: quantunque le lettere non vengano molto belle'. This is followed by two recipes to remove stains annotated 'non è vero'.

<sup>139</sup> Marginal note: 'Il sangue della donnola ungesi ultimi alle scrofole, e giova al mal caduco' (cap 24. 209. 35).



or red ingredients (crimson roses, for instance).<sup>140</sup> The milk from a dog just delivered could induce labour in a woman whose baby had died and needed to be expelled, for example.<sup>141</sup> Cosmetic recipes could also use these ingredients, suggesting hare blood for a better, healthier-looking complexion.<sup>142</sup>

Foods that could induce the ‘appetites of Venus’, delay labour, treat sore nipples or produce milk were also listed. Still, amid these entries about reproduction, there were several contraceptive methods and explicit abortifacient recipes: ‘to kill the creature in the matrix’.<sup>143</sup> This notebook, starting from the seemingly benign reproductive recipes from Piemontese and other recipe books, gradually moves on to abortion recipes and ways of removing a dead foetus. These were mostly taken from medical texts aimed at learned readers, which often dealt more explicitly with these matters than recipe books aimed at a wider public, which tended to contain fewer anticonception and abortifacient recipes.<sup>144</sup> It could be argued that the difference between removing a dead foetus and provoking an abortion is somewhat fraught, as the former could be used once the latter had succeeded, but also after an involuntary miscarriage.

Once more, we cannot definitively know how these recipes were used. However, it is intriguing that the middle of this book deals so explicitly with these matters through Mattioli, bookended by Piemontese’s recipes in the beginning, and dye recipes from different authors in the end. These entries were straightforward and explicit, and, while they were transcribed from printed sources, it is telling that most of these were aimed at elite readerships, such as physicians – and not, like most vernacular books of secrets, at lay readers. The same ingredients were used to attain different goals: an infusion of the flowers could abort a foetus

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<sup>140</sup> On the medieval origins of sympathy/antipathy and humoralism, see Vivian Nutton, ‘Medicine in Medieval Western Europe, 1000-1500’, in Lawrence Conrad et al. (eds.), *The Western Medical Tradition, 800 BC to AD 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 139–213.

<sup>141</sup> For the early modern connection between humans, animals, and childbirth, see Ambroise Paré, *Des Monstres et prodiges* (Paris: Folio, 2015 - first edition published in 1573); *Aristotles Master-Piece, or, The Secrets of Generation Displayed in All the Parts Thereof* (London: J. How, 1684).

<sup>142</sup> ‘Dicono alcuni, che il latte del primo parto d’una cagna unto fa cadere i peli, e bevuto vale contro i mortiferi veleni, e fa partorire le creature, che sono morte nei corpi delle madri. Il latte è nocivo a difettosi di milsa, ai fegatori, alle vertigini, al mal caduco, a malattie de nervi, alle febri, et alli dolori di testa’, p. 90. Marginal note: (cap. 63. 238.8).

<sup>143</sup> ‘Il seme del nasturti caccia fuori i vermini del corpo. amassa le creature nella madrice.’, p. 99. Marginal note: ‘cap.145.322.60.’ ‘Il seme del [illegible] bensto amassa le creature nella madrice’. Marginal note: ‘cap. 145.322.3.’ ‘Il pepe bevuto, overo impiatrato giova ai morsi de serpenti: fa partorire. Credeti, et meno nei luoghi naturali delle donne subito dopo al parto, impedisca l’ingravidanza, giova alla tosse...’ Marginal note: ‘cap. 148.325.27’, p. 100. ‘La radice del ciclamino, o vero par por[illegible] [...] fa presto partorire. La radice ungendosi, o impiastrandosi sul ventre, solve il corpo et amassa le creature nella madrice.’

<sup>144</sup> ‘La ruggine del ferro bevuta non lascia ingravidare’, p. 119. Marginal note: ‘cap. 52.680.35’.

and expel it, while the seed of the same plant could provoke menstruation.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, some ingredients could cause infertility in humans but make animals more fertile, such as a recipe that would make hens produce more eggs but render women sterile.<sup>146</sup> Hemlock placed over the nipples of newly delivered women could cause milk supply to diminish, but placed on virgins' nipples, it could prevent them from darkening and getting bigger.<sup>147</sup> White and black hellebore were listed as abortifacient and poisons to kill horses, cattle, and pigs.<sup>148</sup> We are reminded that the difference between poisons and medicines was often not of kind but instead of dose.<sup>149</sup>

As with the same ingredients being used to attain different goals mentioned in other chapters (aphrodisiacs, emmenagogues, and childbirth recipes), much is assumed of the (often presumed female) reader.<sup>150</sup> It was the quantity of an ingredient, as well as the part of the plant or way it was used, that determined what the recipe was for; furthermore, it was the patient's bodily state that would make a recipe either provoke an abortion or speed the delivery. The physicality of secrets of women goes hand in hand with the materiality of making this knowledge – and the medium in which the recipes appear, in a manuscript or printed form. Several of these secrets of women would have been useful to female readers, not least the contraception and abortifacient recipes. However, it would be an exaggeration to assume that the person who transcribed (and tested) these recipes was necessarily a woman. That is a possibility, but as is often the case with early modern women writers and readers, they can remain elusive. For some familial recipe collections, it is virtually impossible to gender the production of knowledge. However, men's involvement in the making of 'recipes knowledge' in manuscript collections does not render them invaluable as sources to learn

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<sup>145</sup> *'La decotione dei fiori delle mole bevendosi amassa il parto, e lo caccia fuori. Il seme si crede, che non solamente, sia molto conveniente se applicato di latte, o dato a bere per provocare i menstrui: ma che possa amassare le creature nel corpo, e far partorire le morte. Sono parimi le radici d'egual facultà. I fiori secchi sono piu efficaci de i verdi. Le miole [...] gialle sono le migliori'*, p. 108. Marginal note: 'cap. 132. 468.14'.

<sup>146</sup> *'Il seme della canape mangiato copiosam[ente] estingue la virtu del generare, Mangiato dalle galline gli aumenta il generar del ova.'*, p. 109. Marginal note: 'cap. 159. 487.20.'

<sup>147</sup> P. 114. Marginal note: 'cap. 81. 556.56'. *'La cicuta messa su le mamelle delle donne dopo parto disicca il latte: e messa su quelle delle vergini, non le lascia crescere'*, p. 115. Marginal note: 'cap. 152. 606.58'.

<sup>148</sup> *'L'elleboro bianco applicato di sotto amassa la creatura nella madrice. Similmente la carne, quando si cuoce con essa. Et molto accomodato, secondo Galeno, alla rognà.'*, p. 115. Marginal note: 'cap. 153.607.22'. *'L'elleboro nero giova al mal caduco. [...] amassa il parto. Amassa i cavalli, buoi e porci.'*

<sup>149</sup> Alisha Rankin, *The Poison Trials: Wonder Drugs, Experiment, and the Battle for Authority in Renaissance Science* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 2021).

<sup>150</sup> Madeline Shanahan, *Manuscript Recipe Books as Archaeological Objects*, p. 47-48. Shanahan explained the absence of bread recipes arguing that recipes were usually for things people did not know how to make by memory. 'Simple' things did not require recipes, and these absences can tell us as much as the presences of recipes. Carol Gold, *Danish Cookbooks: Domesticity and National Identity (1616-1910)* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2007).

more about early modern women.<sup>151</sup> The collaborative nature of recipe collecting means that nuance is needed where gender is concerned.

Like most printed books of secrets, the recipes in this manuscript were for everyday life, to be used in a domestic setting, to take care of the house and the bodies of its inhabitants. Nevertheless, the presence of so many recipes to control the number of children makes the possibility of a female transcriber tempting. Another recipe supporting this hypothesis is a short extract about eagle stone, a kind of stone ‘pregnant’ with another, smaller stone, which was often used in symbolic ways during pregnancy and childbirth. Not only was it thought to prevent miscarriages while attached to the arm during pregnancy, but eagle stones also helped the delivery if tied to the thigh.<sup>152</sup> There were few recipes to deal with childbirth pain in early modern printed recipe books: most of the ones we can find focus on speeding the delivery, which could help minimise pain – or at least its duration. In this manuscript, however, one of the few extracts in which pain is tackled is copied down among other secrets of women, indicating this compilation’s focus on female experiences.<sup>153</sup>

Finally, recipes to make nipples more attractive and ‘virgin-looking’, as well as how to help ‘corrupted’ women appear virgins, could indicate a reader preoccupied with marital prospects, if not her own, maybe her daughters’.<sup>154</sup> In the *Secreti diversi*, there were more than two dozen ways of aborting an unwanted foetus, a dozen contraceptive recipes, and ten recipes to provoke sterility, but only two entries about facilitating conception. There were also more recipes to ‘provoke lust’ than to diminish it. All of this could indicate the aim of keeping sex just a pleasurable and not a reproductive activity. The concern of controlling the size of the family could indicate this was a family recipe book, but it could also have been a more individual, female-compiled collection. Most of these recipes could be found in contemporary printed recipe books – and indeed, many of them were transcribed from them. What is unique about the way they were copied is that this compiler took scattered entries from multiple books aimed at non-specialised and learned readerships alike and organised them into a domestic notebook, presumably for household use.

Early modern printed books of secrets presented readers with ‘toolkits’ from which to create their own collections of recipes, and that is exactly what this reader did. Of the 41

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<sup>151</sup> Sara Pennell, ‘Perfecting Practice?’, especially pp. 241-242.

<sup>152</sup> ‘La pietra Aetie, o vero pietra d’Aquila, legata al braccio sinistro delle donne grosse da ri[t]ener il parto: ma quando è il tempo del partorire si debbe scogliere dal braccio, e legare alla coscia, accio si partorisca senza dolore.’

<sup>153</sup> P. 120. Marginal note: ‘cap. 208.126.43’.

<sup>154</sup> *Artemisia* could help ‘corrupted’ women appear as virgins and to make nipples more attractive. Castore Durante, *Herbario Nuovo*, p. 122.

secrets of women in Piemontese's *Secreti*, five were transcribed in this collection, for instance. The mixed index, by ingredient and by the goal of the recipe, indicates how different genres of books were consulted: mostly medical manuals, recipe books, and herbals. A new collection emerged from this selective reading of multiple books, suited to this reader's needs and interests. Furthermore, by compiling different recipes for the same goal, they could be tried one after the other if they did not work; once more, it seems these recipes were copied first and tested later.<sup>155</sup> This is not a collection of favourite, tried and tested recipes, but instead of recipes to be used in the future, which explains why there are so many entries for the same goal. Because some of these were taken from herbals and others from recipe books, secrets of women were both classified by ingredients and by use, making this a rich collection that could be consulted in either way.

The selective transcription of the original texts can offer us clues about how this knowledge was used. For example, in a passage about the medicinal uses of roses, copied from Mattioli's herbal, roughly a tenth of the original text has been transcribed, personalised to suit the compiler's interests, which included womb ailments. Curiously, this transcription has not included extracts of the text dealing with menstruation and the white flowers. On the other hand, a passage has been added about roses as a contraceptive medicine, which I could not find in the original text.<sup>156</sup> It is possible that this has been copied from a different printed or manuscript source or added as the compiler of this recipe collection learned this information through an acquaintance. Once more, red roses, followed by crimson ones, were described as the best ones to treat these conditions, probably because of the symbolic meaning of the colour red in its connection to blood, and specifically menstrual blood.<sup>157</sup> Finally, a marginal note has been added to the text about when it is best to pick the roses: when the buds were still unopened, and the flowers were somewhat red to last around two years once dried.<sup>158</sup>

In the same way that early modern people often copied favoured passages into commonplace books for easy access, readers could do the same with printed books such as compilations of recipes.<sup>159</sup> People could even write down recipes in commonplace books.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Elaine Leong argued that 'trials on paper' were not an uncommon practice; readers copied and assessed recipes in their notebooks before testing them in practice, sometimes using several notebooks for the trial process. Elaine Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge*.

<sup>156</sup> '*Le frondi delle radice [delle rose] cotte con acqua non lasciano ingravidare le donne*, p. 76.

<sup>157</sup> P. 75. Marginal note: '*cap 24.135.2*'.

<sup>158</sup> This has been taken from a different passage in the original text. Marginal note: '*lib. 1 cap. 109*'.

<sup>159</sup> For the commonplace method of recording notable fragments of authoritative texts for easy recovery, see Ann Blair, 'Humanist Methods in Natural Philosophy'.

By transcribing or translating passages of these texts into personal books, usually in the form of individual recipes, readers created their own ‘commonplace books’ of practical knowledge. This repository of ‘know-how’ taken from ‘how-to’ guides could arguably provide the empirical counterpart to the more theoretical commonplace books. Readers could select these recipes either before testing them, as in the manuscript above, or afterwards. Sometimes, multiple recipes were copied from the same source, while often, it was only a few selected recipes that were transcribed into personal recipe books. Crucially, readers could translate this knowledge to their lives: in this instance, secrets of women in general and contraceptives and abortifacients in particular were the focus. Furthermore, these collections could have a very long life, being passed on for generations in families or given as gifts.<sup>161</sup> As in the case of the *Secreti diversi*, the character of these compilations could change according to its new owner’s interests.

Manuscript recipe books can show us how widely read early modern people could be, combining entries from printed books of secrets, medical manuals, alchemical texts, herbals, and other scientific texts (as well as manuscript sources). But they also indicate how these books were read in multiple languages or translation, reminding us of the broader Western European character of recipes literature. This is illustrated by the fact that manuscripts often had additions in multiple languages. For instance, in *Chemistry: Chemical receipts, processes and experiments*, a recipe collection started in the fifteenth century with additions until the seventeenth century, there were English, French, German, Latin, Italian, Dutch, and Spanish recipes.<sup>162</sup> This was a miscellaneous compilation of recipes received as gifts in manuscript form and recipes copied from printed books of secrets. Among recipes received as presents are included remedies by Scottish physicians, a pox remedy from a prisoner in the King’s Bench, and a diet drink obtained from a preacher, and the transcribed texts include charms and recipes copied from Latin texts as well as entries from Piemontese’s *Secreti*.<sup>163</sup> Although these recipes appeared in English, it is likely that the person transcribing them was reading in Latin and translating them, as Piemontese is referred to as A. Pedemontanus, his Latin name, instead of the usual English translation appearing in his English publications, Alexis of Piedmont.

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<sup>160</sup> Elaine Leong mentioned Sir Edward Dering (1625-1684) doing just that, adding a section of ‘physicall practises’ to his commonplace book. Elaine Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge*, p. 14.

<sup>161</sup> For their transmission from mother to daughter, see Jennifer Stine, ‘Opening Closets’.

<sup>162</sup> British Library Sloane Ms 3692.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 51b.

This manuscript, full of annotations and an index, illustrates how knowledge from different traditions was combined. Manuscript recipes given by acquaintances and printed secrets available to all who bought the books were given the same value in this compilation; the exclusivity or presumed secrecy of the knowledge does not seem to make manuscript recipes intrinsically more valuable than printed ones. Moreover, the use of seven languages in this manuscript indicates the geographical provenance of recipes collected and a variety in the medium. With some entries undoubtedly translated and others copied as received, this recipe compilation suggests the richness of possible uses for recipe books. In this collection, ‘translation’ can be seen in all its forms. The compiler translated between languages, manuscript/print, and genres, to compose something unique to them, negotiating authority as well as authorship.

Moreover, it is clear how practice and theory dialogued: it was the testing of recipes in practice that allowed readers to correct or nuance them. Recipes often promised to solve a problem in their title, although naturally not all these recipes delivered on their promises. In an octavo eighteenth-century manuscript compilation bound in calfskin, written mainly in French (with a few entries in Italian), the author corrected some recipes’ ambitious titles.<sup>164</sup> The scepticism of this compiler of alchemical recipes (including entries from Cortese’s book of secrets) can be perceived in a recipe for kidney stones. In the original title, ‘to cure of the stone’ (*Pour guérir de la pierre*), ‘cure’ is crossed over, with ‘soulager’ (to alleviate) replacing it.<sup>165</sup> It is likely that this recipe was tested after being transcribed and, while it might have helped, did not completely solve the problem. Other modifications included a formula to treat syphilis titled *Pour guérir du mal de Jean*, in which *Jean* was crossed over and replaced by *Naples*.<sup>166</sup>

Unfortunately, many leaves in this manuscript are lost. Still, we can gather that of the six parts composing the book, section three is copied from Cortese and section five from the priest Marcantonio Crassellame, with the other parts coming from anonymous sources.<sup>167</sup> These were likely incomplete manuscripts themselves, as missing words have been added in brackets, and there were multiple additions in the margins, from corrections to missing

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<sup>164</sup> Wellcome Ms 3565. For a full description, see S.A.J. Moorat, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts on Medicine and Science in the Wellcome Historical Medical Library* (London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1962-1973).

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82. The same happened on p. 83, 96, 100, and 104.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>167</sup> Pages 67-81 have been cut out, as well as 2 leaves between p. 116 and p. 117. Some leaves are also missing both at the beginning and at the end. Besides Cortese, one of the main sources for this manuscript was Fra’ Marcantonio Crassellame, *Lux Obnubilata Suapte Natura Refulgens, Vera de Lapide Philosophico Theorica* (Venice: Alexandrum Zatta, 1666).

elements. Of the medical recipes, several entries were accompanied by extensive marginalia, including a note saying ‘taken from the original’ (*pris sur l’original*), which implies other entries were not.<sup>168</sup> Of the few recipes with attributions, a Spanish gentleman is mentioned, as well as a M. de Camieux and the German alchemist Basil Valentine, indicating that besides printed and manuscript books, oral sources also informed this compilation, with no difference in the perceived value of the recipe.<sup>169</sup> Indeed, one of the only unifying elements in these recipes is their difficulty: amateur alchemists were told to avoid them.<sup>170</sup>

The person who compiled these recipes considered themselves a thorough and critical reader, an alchemist, and a translator. The extract from Cortese’s book begins in a hand similar to black letter type, with the instruction ‘look’ (*voyez*), followed by the rest of the text in italic. The Italian poem is copied and translated into French, presumably by the same person, with both versions side by side.<sup>171</sup> The following thirty pages include side by side Italian transcriptions of the original and French translations, in different hands. It is not clear if the copyist and the translator were different people or if a different handwriting style was chosen to indicate the difference in the provenance of the texts. However, it is a rare occasion where we can see the work that often happened behind manuscript compilations of recipes, especially the ones including translation between languages. It is also a reminder of how highly instructed readers used vernacular recipe books.

This is perhaps best illustrated by Fioravanti’s reception in France. While he was a contested figure in Italy, often accused of charlatanism, he became well known and respected in France. Not only were there dozens of reprints of his French translations, but Fioravanti’s remedies were included in several medical treatises and botanical works in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, printed alongside famous physicians.<sup>172</sup> In manuscript form, Fioravanti’s recipes were often transcribed next to extracts from contemporary physicians, especially Paracelsians. Four manuscript recipe collections preserved at the British Library contained entries from Fioravanti, in one of which Fioravanti was even described as a

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<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>169</sup> ‘*D’un Gentilh. Espagnol*’, p. 115. Medical remedies by M. de Camieux, p. 147.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 134-5.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112.

<sup>172</sup> A few examples include François de Gerzan and Leonardo Fioravanti, *Sommaire de la medecine chymique. Où l’on void clairement beaucoup de choses, que les auteurs ont tenuës jusques icy dans l’obscurité. Avec un recueil de divers secrets de medecine* (Paris: Pierre Billaine, 1632); Jean-Baptiste Chomel, *Abrégé de l’histoire des plantes usuelles, dans lequel on donne leurs noms différens françois et latins, la manière de s’en servir, la dose et les principales compositions de pharmacie dans lesquelles elles sont employées* (Paris: Charles Osmont, 1715); Nicolas Lemery, *Pharmacopée universelle, contenant toutes les compositions de pharmacie qui sont en usage dans la medecine* (Paris: Laurent d’Houry, 1716).

‘count’.<sup>173</sup> This recipe collection had been compiled by J. du Poirier (probably a medical practitioner) in the seventeenth century, and included passages from physicians such as Paracelsus, Conrad Gesner, and Johann Rudolph Glauber. Fioravanti was not considered inferior to these celebrated physicians. Extracts from his *Tesoro della vita humana*, *Capricci medicinali*, and *Chirurgia*, had been translated into Latin by du Poirier, including Fioravanti’s famous ‘imperial electuary for the mother’, his womb elixir. Known in Italy as an itinerant empiric and surgeon, Fioravanti’s Latin recipes and his description as a ‘count’ legitimised his medical knowledge and cemented his position next to the great physicians of the time.

Readers often copied passages from printed recipe collections into their manuscript compilations for domestic use. But in Fioravanti’s case, many physicians included him in their collections meant for professional use. The Swiss Paracelsian physician Theodore Turquet de Mayerne (1573-1655), who attended the kings of France and England, translated passages from the *Tesoro* and the *Capricci* into Latin and incorporated them into a Paracelsian framework.<sup>174</sup> Many associated Fioravanti with chemical medicine and Paracelsianism, as we can see from the English apothecary John Hester and his English translations of Fioravanti’s work. If in the beginning of his career in Italy he was often described as a charlatan, his reception outside of Italy, and especially in France, show how his image underwent a transformation.<sup>175</sup> Fioravanti was not an ‘outsider’ of the medical world anymore, but a pioneer.

Manuscript recipe books composed by physicians show how they saw Fioravanti as one of them. They developed recipes using Fioravanti’s formulas as a central ingredient, such as his famous elixir, and translated his works into French and Latin. This linguistic choice assimilated Fioravanti to the other physicians in these collections, validating his knowledge and authority.<sup>176</sup> Most of the passages from Fioravanti were for his cure-all formulas, but there were many womb remedies selected by these physicians as well, indicating how these recipes would be useful to their medical practice. By analysing what readers selected from what they read, it is possible to see how they appropriated this knowledge, and which authors they considered experts on the subject. It is worth noting that, among these medical practitioners, there were not many recipes taken from Piemontese’s or Cortese’s books

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<sup>173</sup> British Library Sloane Ms 3119.

<sup>174</sup> British Library Sloane Ms 1991.

<sup>175</sup> William Eamon, ‘Pharmaceutical Self-Fashioning or How to Get Rich and Famous in the Renaissance Medical Marketplace’.

<sup>176</sup> See for instance, British Library Sloane Ms 2077 and British Library Ms 62.



(although they abound in recipe books meant for domestic use). These collections were written with a professional interest, and so Fioravanti seemed relevant whereas Piemontese and Cortese did not. However, when they were originally produced in Venice in the 1550s, there was no discernible difference between them, even for contemporaries.<sup>177</sup> It was Fioravanti's later reception that changed how he was perceived, not the content of his books.

However, it would be unwise to draw too sharp a dichotomy between medical men compiling recipes for professional use and lay people doing the same for their everyday lives. The two categories could and did overlap. The naval surgeon John Conny (active between 1648-1665) also compiled an eclectic recipe collection using best-selling printed recipe books of his day. In a manuscript later augmented by his son, the physician Robert Conny (1646?–1713), he collected recipes in English received from acquaintances, usually colleagues, together with entries from vernacular manuals, recipe books, and more learned, Latin medical texts.<sup>178</sup> While some entries do not have any attribution, several were described as having been given to him by physicians or copied from Latin medical texts. Long passages taken from the famous writer Gervase Markham, who wrote *The English Huswife*, were transcribed in Latin and secrets from Piemontese's books in English. While in other cases so far, a compiler seemed to be particularly interested in a specific subject, such as secrets of women, John and Robert Conny's collection did not limit itself to medical recipes, despite both men having been medical practitioners. This collection was destined as much to entertain as it was to inform medical practice and seems to encompass subjects that were merely found interesting, from mathematics to fireworks.

Therefore, it is no surprise that a miscellaneous book such as Piemontese's *Secreti* was a valuable source for the Connys. Among the recipes copied from it were dye formulas, cosmetic recipes for the skin, and ways of preventing fruits from rotting. While some of these were useful in a domestic setting, such as recipes to make soap, others, such as how to make gunpowder and printer's ink, seem to have been transcribed because they were interesting or 'curious', rather than useful. The contrast between a recipe titled 'to make hens lay eggs' and 'to make metals like silver' may appear striking for modern readers. Still, it is typical of early modern printed recipe books – and their manuscript counterparts followed the same eclectic logic. Mundane needs such as how to kill fleas or how to treat baldness were not necessarily

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<sup>177</sup> They were all described under the umbrella term 'professors of secrets' by Tommaso Garzoni, *La Piazza Universale di Tutte le Professioni del Mondo* (Venice: Gio. Battista Somasco, 1589).

<sup>178</sup> John Conny's medical journals (British Library Sloane Ms 2766 and 2779) cover his naval practice from 1648-1652 and 1661-1665. The manuscript mentioned here is British Library Sloane Ms 2818.

seen as inferior to ways of making invisible ink or ‘letters that cannot be erased’ since all of these can be seen as ‘wonders’: things of which the cause is not known.<sup>179</sup> The juxtaposition of recipes of seemingly different status reminds us that the only characteristic that arguably identifies recipe books as a genre, whether in manuscript or print, is an interest in the *how*, and not the *why*, of knowledge.<sup>180</sup>

This miscellaneous character of recipe books can be easily seen in the Conny collection: recipes from different sources, in Latin or English, for many goals: ‘high arts’ such as alchemical pursuits and everyday domestic needs. The practical aspect of some recipes contrasts strikingly with the more theoretical use others might have had – reminding us that recipe books were not only read for practical use but possibly for entertainment or intellectual curiosity, as the poet Atanagi’s reading of Fioravanti’s text illustrates. Amid the medical recipes from Piemontese’s book, there were entries about haemorrhoids, gonorrhoea, constipation, hypochondria, falling sickness, king’s evil, plague, burnings, warts, and how to keep a tooth from falling. In terms of secrets of women, there were few entries: a pessary for the ‘fallings of the matrix’ and a remedy for a ‘womans inner flowers’.<sup>181</sup> As it is often the case with recipes copied from printed sources, they were transcribed in the order they originally appeared in the book, indicating how the author of this collection of recipes copied passages from the books they were consulting as they progressed in their reading – presumably before testing the recipes. This way of reading is similar to the *Secreti diversi* mentioned above: selecting recipes and writing them down preceded trying them out in practice.

Moreover, while we could imagine a way of reading miscellaneous books of secrets in which the reader had a particular interest in mind and mainly transcribed recipes from that category (as with the *Secreti diversi* and secrets of women, for instance), other readings were possible. Instead of going from the general to the particular, John Conny’s book is as eclectic as Piemontese’s original; even more so, if we consider the diversity of sources. But, instead of it being Piemontese’s miscellaneous recipes, they were now the Connys’. Their character was maintained, but by adapting them to the compiler’s interests, there is a perceptible shift in authorship; the recipes were appropriated, translated. For instance, we could compare this to a contemporary cookbook edition of ‘best pasta recipes’, taking inspiration from printed

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<sup>179</sup> Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature* (New York: Zone Books, 2001).

<sup>180</sup> William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Rudolph M. Bell, *How to Do It: Guides to Good Living for Renaissance Italians* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).

<sup>181</sup> British Library Sloane Ms 2818, p. 129r, 137v.

cookbooks and Italian home cooks. The editor of such a book would not be seen as the author of all recipes she published, but it would be difficult not to think of her as the book's author, just like John Conny. The main difference is that Conny's recipe collection was composed with no commercial intent: it was a compilation for his own use, and later, for other family members. He might have shared these recipes with colleagues or acquaintances, but there is no indication he was looking for fame or economic gain. Instead, Conny was likely pursuing his own intellectual curiosity as well as composing a potentially useful collection of recipes, both for his professional practice and domestic life. Therefore, becoming the 'author' of such a recipe book meant an appropriation of the natural and medical worlds around him, a translation of knowledge in the literal sense as well as in the sense of a *translatio*, a movement to bring knowledge closer.

#### 4. Conclusion

As Robert Darnton famously said, 'reading has a history. It was not always and everywhere the same'.<sup>182</sup> Darnton described the dynamic life cycle of books, how they circulated through a network of communications, from the author(s) to printers/publishers, translators, shippers, booksellers and, finally, readers.<sup>183</sup> However, the importance of these relationships is often overlooked, as historians focus on only one segment of this network. That is why it seemed appropriate to start this thesis with readers, before discussing professors of secrets, translators, and printers and delving into more thematic approaches of secrets of women.

This chapter has interrogated the relationship between print and manuscript, as well as oral and aural cultures: to include the varied readership of recipes, it was important to consider materiality as well as different kinds of reading practices. 'Illiterate' or 'semi-literate' people could have heard recipes read aloud, and readers might interact with recipes in myriad ways: following them in practice and adapting them, but also by trying them out on paper. They wrote on the margins, crossed out recipes, marked entries, folded or tore pages, and copied recipes into personal notebooks. Additionally, I have described translation practices in a broad sense; not only were recipes translated from one language into another, but between genres and media, as readers participated in the making of knowledge. Readers translated knowledge into their lives.

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<sup>182</sup> Robert Darnton, 'First Steps Toward a History of Reading'.

<sup>183</sup> Robert Darnton, 'What is the History of Books?'.

This broader understanding of ‘translation’ has been accompanied by rethinking categories such as ‘annotation’ and ‘reader’ to study the early modern reception of printed recipe books. Both annotating printed recipe books and transcribing recipes into manuscript collections enriched recipes literature. Books of secrets, herbals, and medical manuals from different origins complemented each other as individual readers composed their experimental toolkits using printed recipe books as their starting point. This chapter has also aimed to understand recipe books as archaeological objects, as material culture themselves rather than just sources that can inform us about material culture.<sup>184</sup> Recipe books were more than simple vehicles for how-to texts; they are historical and cultural phenomena in their own right. However, with a few notable exceptions, archaeological examinations of recipes are still extremely rare, but a material focus can undoubtedly be useful to historians of recipes.<sup>185</sup>

I argued that annotating recipe books and transcribing recipes into manuscript collections allowed readers to create their own ‘commonplace books’ of practical knowledge, a counterpoint to the traditional, humanist, commonplace book focused on ideas. Because most recipes seem to have been copied and then judged (and often corrected), notions of expertise and authorship necessarily shifted. So, did recipe books offer readers a more predictable view of the natural world, susceptible to human manipulation, as Allison Kavey suggested?<sup>186</sup> As Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer have demonstrated, ‘expertise’ was often constructed through collaborative experimentation. ‘Scientific experiments’ and recipes were part of the same world, as knowledge was created in social contexts ranging from laboratories to domestic spaces.<sup>187</sup> I propose that the main effect of using recipe books was not the disenchantment with nature’s wonders, but rather the idea that authority (and even expertise) over knowledge shifted from unquestioned authorities – whether famous writers such as Piemontese or ancient sources – to a more collaborative understanding of authority (and indeed authorship), which included translators and readers.

By picking and choosing from printed books, appropriating these texts, and composing personal recipe collections, readers created their own experimental toolkits,

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<sup>184</sup> On the disciplinary divide between documents and objects, see John Moreland, *Archaeology and Text* (London: Duckworth, 2001).

<sup>185</sup> A particularly interesting example of written recipes as a form of ‘proto-material culture’ or ‘proto-artefact’ is Helen Leach and Raelene Inglis, ‘The Archaeology of Christmas Cakes’, *Food & Foodways*, 2003, pp. 141–66. It was later transformed and expanded into a book for the general public, with recipes, which reiterates of the constant practical side of recipes literature. Helen Leach and Raelene Inglis, *The Twelve Cakes of Christmas: An Evolutionary History, with Recipes* (Otago: Otago University Press, 2011).

<sup>186</sup> Allison Kavey, *Books of Secrets*.

<sup>187</sup> Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994); Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*.

personalised to their needs. Most of the manuscripts analysed here were probably not planned collections but compilations born organically from practical needs and interests. By commenting, judging, and improving the content of these books, readers became ‘authors’ of their own recipe books. This combined effort of author and reader (as well as printers, translators, and others) makes recipe books carriers of relationships, material evidence of social and cultural networks.<sup>188</sup> In other chapters, I will argue how translators and printers shaped the knowledge they were diffusing and became ‘co-authors’ of the books they published in consequence. Readers went a step further: having the freedom to write whatever they wanted, unrestricted by commercial concerns, they chose the recipes most useful or interesting, reshaped them, and added extra material from different sources. It is challenging to gender these activities since both men and women were involved in this process: it is possible that a medical practitioner such as a midwife was the one to mark the secrets of women entries in the *Epilogo de medicina*, and it is likely that family planning and management meant both sexes would be concerned with recipes to control the number of children, as in the case of the *Secreti diversi*. Recipe books produced within a family could therefore counter the idea of gendered books aimed at a specific readership, be that later printed recipe collections aimed at women or midwifery manuals.

Printed books of secrets in particular offered readers the perfect starting point to begin their own recipe books, with several recipes for the same goal. According to their skills, budget, availability of ingredients or tools to follow the recipe, readers could choose the entries that best suited them, and later, put them to the test. While those who professed secrets, like Cortese, urged their readers to follow the recipes to the letter and not modify them, the readers mentioned in this chapter engaged deeply with the recipes they consumed. The contrast between the intended readers described in prefaces and the actual people who used these books recalls Cortese’s description of people wanting to surpass nature, not just copy it.<sup>189</sup> Readers often wished to go beyond what was offered to them by printed books of secrets and be makers of their knowledge. This was how many readers used recipe books, as exemplified by Hugh Plat’s reading practices. While Plat’s attitude in suggesting his readers behave the same way about his own texts was not always the norm, it acknowledges a

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<sup>188</sup> Natalie Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, p. 192.

<sup>189</sup> Conventional prescriptions of ‘gentle readers’ in prefaces or letters to the reader often described these ideal readers as compliant. These early modern literary conventions about the ‘gentle’ reader have arguably survived in post-structuralist theory in the shape of the generic, single reader of reception theory. Heidi Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*, p. 17.

broad understanding of authorship and authority, and indeed of the construction of knowledge.

Readers might have felt authorised to interact in this way with recipes because the tacit portion of the instructions allowed for interpretation and for readers to rely on their own experiences. Several recipes mentioned herbs without specifying which part of the plant should be used, when it should be harvested, or how. Furthermore, many instructions were vague, relying on readers' previous knowledge on the subject, such as 'make a powder' – without specifying how the herbs should be dried first and any objects such as a pestle and mortar that might be needed in the process. Temperatures for distillation were often left unclear, and medicines to be drunk were often not accompanied by details: at what time of day, how often, or in what quantities. The breakdown of the main procedure and its complementary actions were left open to the reader. This naturally meant that different readers followed recipes differently. Some people might have had difficulty recognising a plant, while others would know where to find it, and how to use it. However, professors of secrets assumed that recipes would be shared, read collectively, and discussed. These knowledge gaps could be filled in this process, even if not completely. Even though recipes are ostensibly how-to texts, there is always a little bit left for the reader to decipher; the 'how' component is hardly ever fully explained, possibly because to grasp a recipe in its entirety, one is required to follow it in practice.

Initiatives such as the Making and Knowing Project, among others, often try to recreate recipes, making it clear how much is left unsaid in recipes that we might overlook at a glance but that someone trying to make the recipe would notice.<sup>190</sup> It would be helpful if practising herbalists, language scholars, and historians worked together, especially where translation is concerned. Unfortunately, while historians have embraced recipes literature as a valid entry point into the early modern world, it is still rare to find these interdisciplinary collaborations. In the early modern period, missing information must have proven a challenge to readers. Still, it also allowed them in, authorising them to bring their own experiences to the book they were consulting. By annotating and transcribing recipes, readers engaged with this knowledge actively, 'making' it in the process of appropriating it. If it is true that all written recipes are 'half-recipes', they required readers to complement them with their own knowledge, leaving room for their growing authority and even authorship over recipes.

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<sup>190</sup> About the Making and Knowing Project, see <https://www.makingandknowing.org/>. (Last consulted on 22/06/22.)

Whether in manuscript or print, the boundaries between ‘author’ and ‘reader’ of recipes were fluid and dynamic. The original recipe was modified through this negotiation, and new knowledge was created – even if the changes were minor.

Recipes literature was malleable and adaptable, and readers’ personalisation was a constant aspect of their reception. Differences in reading can be partially explained by how much space is left for readers in a recipe – some offer much more detail than others. But they can also be due to the readers themselves, as some were more willing to supply the recipes with their knowledge, and indeed improve them. It is the case of Plat transforming Della Porta’s recipe to make it yield four times more grain. As I will show in the next chapters, modifications in printed recipe books attest to the malleability of knowledge transmitted in this form and its adaptability to new contexts. If translators and printers changed recipes to what they imagined readers would want or need, this chapter has shown how readers did the same on an individual level, adapting recipes to their own needs.

While it is impossible to know precisely how these collections of recipes were compiled and how they were consulted, the ones cited in this chapter give us some ideas. As with professional translators and printers (themselves readers, after all), the activities of readers of recipes often involved translating – between languages, genres, and media – and editing. The variety of sources consulted is often striking, indicating how widely readers searched for practical knowledge. In the examples analysed here, recipes taken from manuscript texts, printed books or received from acquaintances, whether orally or in writing, were usually given the same status. It was not exclusivity that made a recipe valuable, but rather its efficacy, a point already made in the period by Tommaso Garzoni.<sup>191</sup> The long life of some of these books, with entries centuries after the original text, indicates how they could be valued and kept carefully in families. The presence of early modern professors of secrets’ recipes in manuscript collections centuries after the books were initially published also indicates the long and fertile afterlife recipes literature had.

While noblewomen often kept manuscript recipe books, which they used to care for their families and community, recipes taken from contemporary printed books of secrets rarely appear in these compilations. As Elaine Leong and other historians have shown, it was often recipes exchanged with acquaintances or prescribed by physicians that composed the bulk of these books.<sup>192</sup> Some of the manuscript recipe books mentioned here may have been

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<sup>191</sup> Tommaso Garzoni, *La Piazza Universale*.

<sup>192</sup> Among her other publications, see in particular Elaine Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge*.

compiled by women – as some of the marginal annotations in printed recipe books. However, these sources do not allow us such direct insight into the lives of early modern women as readers and healers. It is possible that this difference has to do with wealth; that noblewomen (and indeed men) considered printed recipes to be less valuable than the ones obtained from people they knew. It is certainly a possibility. If that is the case, the authors of the recipe compilations analysed in this chapter did not share this view, as they all abound with passages from Piemontese, Cortese and other vernacular recipe writers. It is also possible that as the status of these professors of secrets gradually changed as they became more successful, so did the perception readers had of their secrets, even if they were available in print.<sup>193</sup> What is clear is that readers chose recipes based on their interests and needs: the *Secreti diversi* full of entries about contraceptives and abortifacients is an example of that. By broadening our understanding of critical concepts such as ‘translation’, ‘annotation’, ‘reader’, and even ‘authorship’, we can include many people traditionally excluded from the study of recipes literature and understand how printed collections inspired a culture of experimentation and the active making of knowledge.

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<sup>193</sup> In a woodcut preserved at the Wellcome Library, Piemontese was represented alongside celebrated physicians such as Hippocrates and Galen. (Wellcome closed stores iconographic 567664i.)



## Chapter 2: Translating Recipe Books and Secrets of Women

### 1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the ways ‘how-to’ books such as books of secrets were translated: how was knowledge changed in the process? It also raises the question of accessibility to knowledge and what constitutes ‘authorship’ in the early modern period. While not all examples deal with gender issues directly, the main subject of my analysis is how knowledge about women was transformed; how recipes dealing with the female body were adapted to their new readers in translation, and what that can tell us about gendered knowledge in the period.

In this chapter, I will focus on how publishers and translators altered the texts they rendered accessible to new readerships, how they adapted recipes for readers imagined by them, reshaping the knowledge they diffused through the strategies adopted, and what consequences that might have had for readers.<sup>1</sup> I have split the chapter into three main sections. In the first, I will discuss how individual books were reshaped, examining translations between Italian and Latin, an indirect translation via French, and a translation from Italian into English. In the subsequent section, I will show how the genre of books of secrets was ‘rebranded’ in translation, allowing it to become popular in new areas by connecting it to well-known texts. In the concluding part of this chapter, I will present a case study of precisely how secrets of women were translated, analysing a French version of an Italian anonymous recipe collection.

Since the first part of this thesis is centred around the people who participated in the universe of books of secrets, this second chapter is dedicated to those involved in the production of these books, those who prepared recipe collections for readers: professors of secrets, professional writers such as polygraphs, compilers, translators, and printers. As I will show, the distinctions between these activities were often blurred and ever-changing, with translators and publishers becoming ‘co-authors’ of the books they printed. Therefore, the

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<sup>1</sup> William Eamon, ‘Arcana Disclosed: The Advent of Printing, the Books of Secrets Tradition and the Development of Experimental Science in the Sixteenth Century’, *History of Science*, 22.2 (1984), pp. 111–50; Lauren Kassell, ‘Secrets Revealed: Alchemical Books in Early Modern England’, *History of Science*, 49 (2011), pp. 61–87; Scott Montgomery, *Science in Translation: Movements of Knowledge through Cultures and Time* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

very idea of ‘author’ needs to be rethought if we are to include them and polygraphs such as Girolamo Ruscelli (1518-1566). The first chapter looked at the other side of this story by focusing on the readers and how recipe books were received. Personalities and authors mentioned in these two opening chapters will receive closer analysis in the second section of the thesis. These chapters will be thematic and dedicated to professors of secrets: Alessio Piemontese, Giambattista Della Porta, and Leonardo Fioravanti.

In the preface to his recipe collection, Piemontese, probably the most well-known early modern professor of secrets, described his quest for the secrets of nature. Piemontese told his readers how he came from a noble family, how he knew ‘Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldean, Arabic, and many other languages’, and had a ‘natural inclination for philosophy and the secrets of nature’ from an early age.<sup>2</sup> Having decided to collect secrets from ‘people of all sorts’, Piemontese travelled fifty-seven years throughout Europe, which was greatly possible thanks to his knowledge of foreign languages. Although he is usually thought to be a fictitious character, maybe a pseudonym for the prolific Venetian compiler and polygraph Ruscelli, Piemontese’s tale about collecting recipes indicates the importance of communication with other cultures for a professor of secrets.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, it is through his knowledge of languages that Piemontese could combine classical recipes taken from ancient sources with the secrets he gathered from his European contemporaries to create his celebrated recipe book.

The biography attributed to Piemontese is typical of books of secrets. Travel narratives were often associated with this fluid genre in which pseudo-authorship and anonymity were common. It is possible that the vagueness of the author's identity offered more liberty to readers to create their own experiments, a void that the reader’s practice could fill. Narratives such as these also added authority to the recipes in the book, while reminding the reader of the difficulty in gathering secrets, through travel and the mastery of foreign

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<sup>2</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese* (Venice: Sigismondo Bordogna, 1555). See also William Eamon, ‘The Secreti of Alexis of Piedmont, 1555’, *Res Publica Litterarum*, 2 (1979), pp. 43–55.

<sup>3</sup> Girolamo Ruscelli is usually thought to be the one behind the Piemontese’s name, both in bibliographies and historical studies. This assumption is largely based on a posthumous book in which Ruscelli ‘confessed’ how he had developed an academy of secrets and created the fictitious Piemontese: see William Eamon and Françoise Paheau, ‘The Accademia Segreta of Girolamo Ruscelli: A Sixteenth-Century Italian Scientific Society’, *Isis*, 75.2 (1984), pp. 327–42; John Ferguson, ‘The Secrets of Alexis: A Sixteenth Century Collection of Medical and Technical Receipts’, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 24 (1930), pp. 225–46. However, this hypothesis was contested persuasively by Zbigniew Bela, who suggested that, while Ruscelli may have worked on the production of the *Secreti*, he was not its main author. In this thesis, therefore, I treat Piemontese as the professor of secrets behind this recipe collection, since I am not persuaded of Ruscelli’s role. Zbigniew Bela, ‘The Authorship of the Secrets of Alexis of Piedmont (Venice, 1555)’, *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki*, 61.1 (2016), pp. 41–64.

languages. But the pseudonymous authors to whom secrets were attributed also hinted at an essential question in the early modern period: who had (or should have) access to knowledge? Translation of a text from one language to another allowed for that text to be accessible to readers who could not read the original. In this way, accessibility and translation were deeply connected. As professors of secrets travelled into unknown places, not only did they bring back knowledge, but the words they had heard or read, through the medium of translation. Therefore, people reading a translated recipe book were arguably faced with multiple levels of translation, if we understand translation as the act of mediating knowledge. Furthermore, translations often reduced the author's control over their work, becoming increasingly shared property. Professors of secrets were, therefore, contributing to a shared corpus of medical texts that were in circulation at the time.

Printed books of secrets became a European publishing success thanks to translation, having originated as an Italian genre in the early sixteenth century, with publications such as the 1529 *Dificio di ricette*.<sup>4</sup> As Piemontese's tale illustrates, professors of secrets drew on the figure of the 'secret hunter' and the idea of scientific pursuit itself as a hunt. This image suggested that engaging with other cultures and languages was essential, not only to popularise the genre through translation but also to create a good compilation of recipes in the first place.<sup>5</sup> Once books of secrets were printed, commercial interests were the main factor to motivate translations to reach new markets and new readers.<sup>6</sup> However, the myth of recipes gathered through a lifetime of travelling was still predominant in paratexts, which described translation as part of this project of unveiling secrets for the 'common good'. Piemontese, who adopted a monastic lifestyle after his travels, told readers how he allowed his manuscript recipes (written in Latin) to be taken to Venice to be published in an Italian translation.<sup>7</sup> That was the first edition of his secrets and is considered the original text, the fiction of the Latin manuscript just adding to his image of sharer of knowledge.<sup>8</sup> Piemontese described his joy at seeing the book published, 'quite well translated and organised in its

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<sup>4</sup> Anonymous, *Opera nuova intitolata Dificio de ricette* (Venice: Giovannantonio e fratelli da Sabbio, 1529); William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). The *Dificio* was first published in 1525 in Venice, but I use the 1529 edition in this chapter, as it attained a much broader circulation in the period.

<sup>5</sup> William Eamon, 'Science as a Hunt', *Physis*, 31 (1994), pp. 393–432.

<sup>6</sup> Between 1550 and 1660, 200–400 translations were published by decade in England. Around 25% of all books published were translations, according to the *Oxford History of Literary Translation in English: 1550–1660*, ed. by Gordon Braden, Robert Cummings, and Stuart Gillespie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). These statistics unfortunately do not consider medical or scientific texts.

<sup>7</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese*.

<sup>8</sup> John Ferguson, *Bibliographical Notes on the Histories of Inventions and Books of Secrets* (Staten Island, NY: Pober, 1998).

whole', although there were parts missing, as well as mistakes in several places. He admitted that these could happen but agreed they did not diminish the book's value, as could be attested by the fact that its first impression was sold out in Venice<sup>9</sup>.

This preface hints at a significant trait that characterises the translation of recipes: missing words, corrections and additions, false translations, and an overall considerable reworking of the original text. However, Piemontese also reminded readers that adaptations were not a problem to the success or quality of the book. They did not substantially alter its content or render it less valuable since the author's aim of benevolently disseminating knowledge was still present. Much more than today, translation in the early modern period was understood as a creative act, as an opportunity to rework the original text.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, this preface also suggested that a translator's activity was characterised by more than the strict rendition of a text in a new language: transformations and adaptations in the text – all of which would characterise an editor's activity today – were the translator's usual practice. This broader definition of 'translator', bordering on 'editor' or 'co-author' of the book, is the one I employ in this thesis, since it was the general understanding in early modern Europe of the role of a translator, with modifications often advertised as positive.<sup>11</sup>

Recipes were meant to be used, regardless of how often (and to what degree of success) they were. This practical goal was also emphasised by translators, if only to sell more copies of recipe books. Translated books of secrets embodied a paradox: translators clearly felt free to modify much in the recipes they translated yet tried to preserve the book's original ethos. On a microlevel, translators changed ingredients, quantities, methods described in recipes. Yet on a macrolevel, it is surprising how little was changed. Translations strove to preserve the same models of problems of the original text, while trying to render it accessible to new readers in the best way they could imagine, so that they could follow the recipes in practice. It was typical of translators to acknowledge their best efforts while stating their limitations and the reason for translating the text, often the diffusion of knowledge for the common good.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Alessio Piemontese, 'Altra lettera di Donno Alessio Piemontese ai lettori in questa seconda edizione', *De Secreti di Donno Alessio Piemontese* (Lyon: Theobaldo Pagano, 1558), p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> On creativity and change as essential to translation, even of scientific texts, see the essays in Sietske Fransen, Niall Hodson, and Karl Enenkel (eds.), *Translating Early Modern Science* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

<sup>11</sup> For the changes in how active or visible translators can be, see Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 2008). See also Jean Selisle and Judith Woodsworth (eds.), *Translators through History* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995).

<sup>12</sup> It is important to keep in mind the scarcity of resources such as bilingual dictionaries available to translators, as the European vernaculars were still in the process of establishing themselves. Louis G. Kelly, *The Faithful*

## 2. Translating Individual Books of Secrets

In 1589, the Venetian canon Tommaso Garzoni wrote a description of ‘all the professions in the world’.<sup>13</sup> It was the first time professors of secrets were classified as a professional category, who diffused secrets to the public, mainly in print. While some were fictional creations, such as Piemontese, most professors had an Italian origin and were the authors of several best-selling books of secrets translated throughout Europe. They mainly wrote in Italian, except for Giambattista Della Porta, a Neapolitan intellectual who founded his own ‘academy of secrets’ to test recipes.<sup>14</sup> His books were published in Latin first and subsequently translated into Italian and other vernaculars.<sup>15</sup> Piemontese’s went through the most reprints. His name became so famous, associated with the tradition of recipes, that several other works were attributed to him, following the success of the first one. By 1650, there were five extra volumes of his recipes circulating in Europe, all of them originally written in Italian. By 1700, a hundred and four versions of Piemontese’s secrets had been published, twenty-four in Italian, ten in Latin, and twenty-eight in French, attesting to his success.<sup>16</sup>

The ways in which translators and publishers approached the recipe collections of these ‘hunters of secrets’ can give us insight into printing and translation practices, hinting at strategies that were used to adapt recipes to their new readerships.<sup>17</sup> While the examples I use

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*Interpreter: A History of Translation Theory and Practice in the West* (New York: St Martin’s, 1979), pp. 126–30.

<sup>13</sup> Tommaso Garzoni, *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo* (Venice: Giovanni Battista Somasco, 1589).

<sup>14</sup> Claire Lesage, ‘La Littérature des “secrets” et I Secreti d’Isabella Cortese’, *Chroniques Italiennes*, 36 (1993), pp. 145–78; Massimo Rizzardini, ‘Lo Strano Caso della Signora Isabella Cortese, Professoressa di Secreti’, *Philosophia II*, 1 (2010), pp. 45–84; William Eamon and Françoise Paheau, ‘The Accademia Segreta of Girolamo Ruscelli’, William Eamon, ‘Natural Magic and Utopia in the Cinquecento: Campanella, the Della Porta Circle, and the Revolt of Calabria’, *Memorie Domenicane*, n.s. 26 (1995), pp. 369–402; Laura Balbiani, *La Magia Naturalis di Giovan Battista Della Porta: Lingua, Cultura e Scienza in Europa all’Inizio dell’Età Moderna* (Milan: Peter Lang, 1999); Piero Camporesi, *Camminare il mondo: Vita e avventure di Leonardo Fioravanti medico del Cinquecento* (Milan: Garzanti, 2007); William Eamon, ‘Alchemy in Popular Culture: Leonardo Fioravanti and the Search for the Philosopher’s Stone’, *Early Science and Medicine*, 5.2 (2000), pp. 196–213.

<sup>15</sup> Julia Martins, ‘Les Livres de secrets italiens et leurs traductions en Europe: Exemples de circulations de savoirs entre 1555 et 1650 (Médecine, Alchimie, Magie et Empirisme)’, (MRes dissertation, Université Paris Diderot – Paris VII and Università di Bologna – Alma Mater Studiorum, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> Isabelle Pantin, ‘The Role of Translations in European Scientific Exchanges in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, in Peter Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia (eds.), *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 163–79 (p. 178); William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*, p. 252.

<sup>17</sup> On the principles underlying and guiding improvisation in translation (*habitus*), as opposed to commercial strategies, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Outlines of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

in this section to illustrate trends are not secrets of women, but general medical recipes, the translators' practices were very similar, as all of these recipes were practical instructions for making medicines at home. Therefore, this section aims to reconstruct the broader context of translation in the period, helping to situate secrets of women in a wider medical culture of translation. The books I have selected to represent each trend in the early modern translation of the genre are not comprehensive of all strategies followed. Instead, they aim to demonstrate points to be discussed, such as the most recurrent adaptations or the problems translators most frequently faced.

## 2.1. From Italian into Latin

Books of secrets were often translated from Italian into Latin, not only to increase their status as 'learned books', but also to facilitate their circulation in places where vernaculars had not yet been definitively established or where the local linguistic variation made Latin easier for their circulation, as it was often the case in Eastern Europe.<sup>18</sup> There was an assumed hierarchy of languages, with Latin traditionally associated with learned circles, but also an expectation that Latin would act as a mediator between languages, allowing printed works to attain a broader geographical reach.<sup>19</sup> For example, Alessio Piemontese's recipes were quickly translated into Latin following their publication in 1555.<sup>20</sup> The Latin translation was published in Basel in 1560, reprinted in Antwerp that same year, and again in Basel in 1561, 1563, 1568, and 1603.<sup>21</sup> It was made by Johann Jacob Wecker (1528-1586), a Swiss physician who had authored several medical works published in French, German, and Latin. While this period saw the rise of the professional translator, it was still more usual for translation to be a complementary practice to other activities, with many books of secrets being translated by physicians and apothecaries.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Peter Burke, 'Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe', in Peter Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia (eds.), *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 7–38.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Gordon (ed.), 'Linguistic Hegemony and the History of Science', Focus section, *Isis* 108.3 (2017), pp. 606–50.

<sup>20</sup> William Eamon, 'The Secreti of Alexis of Piedmont, 1555'.

<sup>21</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *De Secretis libri sex mira quadam rerum varietate referti ex italico in latinum sermonem nunc primum translati* (Basel: Petrum Pernam, 1560); Alessio Piemontese, *De Secretis libri sex mira quadam rerum varietate referti ex italico in latinum sermonem nunc primum translati* (Antwerp: Ioannis Latij, 1560). All subsequent reprints in Basel were also published by Petrum Pernam.

<sup>22</sup> Women could also work as translators, even though I could not find any printed translations of books of secrets penned by them. For female translators in the period, see Margaret Hannay, *Silent But for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1985); Tina Krontiris, *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the*

Wecker was responsible for the best-selling German translation of Alessio Piemontese's secrets as well, which was also published in Basel.<sup>23</sup> It was not rare for the same translator to undertake two translations of the same text; while Wecker translated Italian secrets into Latin and German, the Antwerp printer Christophe Plantin was responsible for both the French and the Dutch translations of Alessio Piemontese. Translators also frequently had their compilations of secrets added to the texts they translated. It was the case with Wecker's recipes published along with Alessio Piemontese's, as well as John Hester (d. 1592), responsible for the English translation of Leonardo Fioravanti's recipes which included works by him as well, as I will discuss below.

Wecker's 1560 Latin translation of Alessio Piemontese's *Secreti* was more sophisticated than the original, including changes in structure, syntax, and vocabulary. Moreover, it was combined with other Latin compilations directed to more educated readers, indicating an expected diversification in readership. In 1563 in Basel, the same year this translation was reprinted, a new Latin version was published, using the same title as the 1560 version. However, this edition included two compilations written by Wecker himself. The two Latin versions, with and without Wecker's recipes, coexisted, but it was the one that made him a co-author of the book that was reprinted the most from then on.<sup>24</sup> Except for this addition, it was the same translation as 1560. However, this translation had several new recipes. These validated Wecker's expertise as a physician and an appropriate translator for the book. The new recipes also raised the status of Piemontese's collection, which was 'updated' with new knowledge, in a typical reciprocal legitimisation of professor of secrets and translator.

This Latin translation was mindful of the original text. Still, the publisher transformed the dedication and the format of the book, such as the table of contents (from organised thematically to alphabetically) and commended the extra compilations for the new medical formulas available to readers.<sup>25</sup> However, the main modification in the Latin version of the

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*English Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1992); Deborah Uman, *Women as Translators in Early Modern England* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2012).

<sup>23</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Kunstbuch des wolerfarnen Herren Alexii Pedemontani, von mancherleyen nutzlichen unnd bewerten Secreten oder Künsten, jetzt newlich auß welscher und lateinischer Sprach in Teutsch gebracht, durch Doctor Hanß Jacob Wecker* (Basel: König, 1616).

<sup>24</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *De Secretis libri septem, a Ioan Iacobo Veckero Doctore Medico, ex italico sermone in latinum conversi, & multis bonis secretis aucti. Accessit hae editione eiusdem Weckeri Opera, octavus de artificiosis vinis liber* (Basel: Petrum Pernam, 1563).

<sup>25</sup> For the different ways of classifying knowledge and tables of contents, see Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), especially the first chapter 'Information Management in Comparative Perspective', pp. 11-61.

text was the expectation of more sophisticated readers. In Latin, recipes were introduced with a little ‘R.’, for ‘recipe’, and the instructions were detailed and less imperative than their vernacular counterparts. The title was also followed by a list of ingredients with their quantities, like our contemporary cookery books. That is a significant change compared to vernacular books of secrets, in which there were not always ingredient lists, and quantities were often not mentioned, as it was usually assumed the reader would be familiar with them and know how much and which part of an ingredient to use.<sup>26</sup> However, it is also possible that vernacular readers were thought to be less learned and less rigorous with quantities in a recipe. The expected readers for the Latin version were attentive, and their reading, more thorough. It might have been expected that these readers were more likely to put the recipes into practice since the recipes became more detailed, precise, and didactic. However, in the version that was more often reprinted, the table of contents was still organised thematically, indicating that, although Wecker’s expected readership might be more sophisticated, they would still be used to a thematic classification of knowledge.

Although there are no drastic modifications in this translation from Italian into Latin, the adaptations indicate that the imagined new readers would be more educated, read the text more attentively, and arguably put the recipes into practice more than their vernacular counterparts. Since the two versions were both in octavo and cheaply printed, there does not seem to be an idea that the Latin version would be purchased by wealthier readers necessarily, though that might often have been the case, as Latin literacy and social status were connected. Latin readers were expected to be more instructed than the vernacular readership, which would mean they would read the recipes differently. The addition of new recipes, especially those by the translator himself, indicates a wish to reciprocally legitimise the authority of the professor of secrets and his translator in their medical and linguistic expertise, adding value to the book. At the same time, a new element was added to an already well-known collection, ‘updating’ it and maybe making it desirable even for people who already had the original vernacular version.

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<sup>26</sup> Sheila Barker and Sharon Strocchia make a similar point about gender and recipes’ ingredients and procedures in a courtly context: Sheila Barker and Sharon Strocchia, ‘Household Medicine for a Renaissance Court: Caterina Sforza’s Ricettario Reconsidered’ in Sara Ritchey and Sharon Strocchia (eds.), *Gender, Health, and Healing, 1250-1550* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), pp. 139–65.



## 2.2. From Italian into English

While the differences between Latin and Italian versions of the same book can be striking, horizontal translations (from one vernacular to another) can also present rich examples of cultural and linguistic adaptations. For many years, English printers had relied on translated material from continental Europe to sell, with translations being commissioned by publishers themselves, as well as writers, translators, or patrons. As entrepreneurs of the book world, printers were central to deciding which texts to translate, and their networks connected publishing centres such as Venice to Lyon, Antwerp, and London. Translators could be commissioned for a specific work but could also suggest books for translation, especially those they believed would sell well.

Publishers hoped to answer demands they perceived from the readership, usually prioritising translations from the dynamic world of publishing in Italian.<sup>27</sup> Translations between vernaculars were also more significant in number than the ones into and from Latin, since printed books of secrets were a vernacular genre, often considered to be ‘popular print’.<sup>28</sup> This was the case with the English translation of the collection of recipes by Leonardo Fioravanti (1517-1588), a Bolognese empiric practitioner. His recipes were published several times in England, along with other compilations written by different authors, as with Alessio Piemontese’s Latin translation.

But the most intriguing aspect of this translation were the ‘untranslatable’ words and how the translator dealt with terms either inexistent in English or at least unknown to him. This is a particularly compelling case, as John Hester was qualified to translate (and indeed edit in the modern sense) Fioravanti’s books. In one of his own works, Hester told readers how he had decided to focus on distillation and become an apothecary.<sup>29</sup> He eventually became interested in Paracelsian medicine and decided to translate the complete works of Fioravanti, who he saw as a visionary. While he never completed the project, he acted as

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<sup>27</sup> Peter Burke, ‘Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe’, p. 22.

<sup>28</sup> About the classification of books of secrets and recipe compilations in general as ‘popular print’, see Robert Mandrou, *De la Culture populaire aux 17e et 18e siècles : La Bibliothèque Bleue de Troyes* (Paris: Imago, 1999); Lise Andries and Geneviève Bollème, *La Bibliothèque Bleue : Littérature de colportage* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2003); William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*. For a criticism of the assimilation of the genre into ‘popular culture’, see Roger Chartier, ‘Culture as Appropriation: Popular Cultural Uses in Early Modern France’ in Steven Kaplan (ed.), *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Berlin: Mouton, 1984), pp. 229–53. While the concept of ‘popular’ has been problematised, recipe books are still usually treated as ‘popular print’, especially due to their cheap nature, such as in Roger Chartier, ‘France and Spain’, in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660 (Vol. 1)*, ed. by Joad Raymond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 175–86.

<sup>29</sup> John Hester, *The First Part of the Key of Philosophie* (London: Richard Day, 1580).

Fioravanti's English 'editor', combining extracts from different books in his translations and shaping how the Bolognese would be read in Britain.<sup>30</sup> His first translations of the empiric, published in the 1580s, were reprinted until well into the seventeenth century, with Hester's text unchanged, his 'untranslatable' words untranslated to several generations of readers.<sup>31</sup>

Even though Fioravanti was less famous than Alessio Piemontese, he was also a very successful author, having written about surgery and his own life, and compiled medical recipes. While he did not hold a medical degree until his fifties, Fioravanti presented himself as a 'doctor in surgery and medicine', arguing how only through experience could one unveil the secrets of nature and mocking the Galenic university physicians who relied on book-learning.<sup>32</sup> As Piemontese with Johann Jacob Wecker, Fioravanti received a qualified translator interested in medicine and the 'secrets of nature'. John Hester's English translations were consistent with the perception the Bolognese had of his talent, as it was Hester who sought out to translate his book rather than being commissioned by a printer: the title of 'Knight' was even symbolically added to Fioravanti's name in the cover of the books to add more status to him. 'A Treatise of Chirurgery published with many Excellent Experiments and Secrets', was published together with 'Phioravants Secrets' and the 'Chyrurgery', works by him already successful in Italy, and 'The Iewell of Practice', a text written by Hester.<sup>33</sup> Hester explained how he decided to publish these works again in a letter to the reader since they were sold out. It is unclear whether he meant the Italian or English markets since I could not find an English edition before his own. In any case, Fioravanti's works were compiled with similar texts, including one by the translator himself. Not only were these books associated because of their subject, but it was also a way to publicise works by the translator while showing his expertise in the same subject as the author of the translated book.

These secrets were addressed to a specialised readership already connected to the experimentation universe, the 'ingenious practitioners in physic', such as medical students and members of the College of Physicians. Regardless of other readers the book certainly

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<sup>30</sup> Isabelle Pantin, 'John Hester's Translations of Leonardo Fioravanti: The Literary Career of a London Distiller', in S.K. Barker and Brenda M. Hosington (eds.), *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads: Translation, Print and Culture in Britain, 1473-1640* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 159–83.

<sup>31</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *A Short Discours of the Excellent Doctour and Knight, Maister Leonardo Phioravanti Bolognese upon Chirurgerie. With a Declaration of Many Thinges, Necessarie to Be Knowne, Never Written before in This Order: Wherunto Is Added a Number of Notable Secrets* (London: Thomas East, 1580).

<sup>32</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *Il Tesoro della Vita Humana, dell'Eccell. Dottore & Cavaliere M. Leonardo Fioravanti Bolognese* (Venice: The Heirs of Melchior Sessa, 1570).

<sup>33</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *A Treatise of Chirurgery Published with Many Excellent Experiments and Secrets* (London: G. Dawson, 1652).

had, it is telling that this is one of the few cases in which recipes were not addressed to the general public but aimed at physicians – and yet the ‘untranslatable’ words were not perceived as a problem. Books of secrets were a fluid genre, mainly being (though not exclusively) read by urban middling sort of people.<sup>34</sup> Learned readers could also find recipes of interest, especially since this translation presented Fioravanti as a physician. The line between ‘elite’ and ‘popular’ readers is often blurred where books of secrets are concerned, reminding us that literacy levels varied and that ‘learned’ and less sophisticated readers often had access to the same materials.<sup>35</sup> As I argued in the first chapter, how they read and appropriated these recipes can determine how ‘popular’ readers were.

The English translation of Fioravanti was quite close to the original text. Still, its interest lies in the ‘untranslatable’ words. While it may appear to be a specific difficulty of this translator, it was frequent for early modern translations to contain them, especially from romance languages into English. Several herbs and even diseases and symptoms fell into this category, with the unknown expressions kept in Italian, in Romanic characters to differentiate them from the main Gothic (Blackletter) text, as was often the case with English and German translations.<sup>36</sup> This can be easily seen in a recipe about pellagra since even the title kept the illness in Italian: ‘Of *Pellarella* that causeth the hair to fall off’. Key elements of the recipe were in Italian, such as the symptoms, ‘*carvoli*’ or sores, typical of the illness. Moreover, the names of the medicines to treat the ailment were in Italian, and the recipes to produce them at home were contained in a different work by Fioravanti, not published in England. In Venice, however, the reader would have had easy access to these formulas and could also have bought them directly at pharmacies that stocked Fioravanti’s products.<sup>37</sup> This recipe probably had little practical use for English readers:

*Pellarella*, or Morpherre, is a kind of Pox, and it is one of the first *Praesagia* of that disease, and is a corrupt humour, and so drying, that in short time it mortifieth the haire of the head and beard, and eye-browes, and causeth them to fall off. (...) The

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<sup>34</sup> Allison Kavey, *Books of Secrets: Natural Philosophy in England, 1550-1600* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

<sup>35</sup> Andrew Wear, *Knowledge and Practice in English Medicine, 1550-1680* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 40–45; Andrew Wear, ‘The Popularization of Medicine in Early Modern England’, in Roy Porter (ed.), *The Popularization of Medicine 1650–1850* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 7–41.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 50 and 136; Thomas Hope, *Lexical Borrowing in the Romance Languages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971).

<sup>37</sup> Richard Palmer, ‘Pharmacy in the Republic of Venice in the Sixteenth Century’, in Andrew Wear, Roger French, and Iain Lonie (eds.) *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 100–117.

secret is this, that Thou shalt understand, that the beginning of *Pellarella*, is one *Carvoli* or more that cometh upon the Yeard, (...) and in that time the hair is mortified, and then within two or three moneths the hair will fall. (...) You shall purge him nine dayes every morning with our *Sirupo Magistrale*, and fast thereon four hours. (...) That being done, you shall give him of *Electuaria Angelica*, according to the receipt, and in the mean time annoint all his face and head with our *Magno Liquore*, and doing thus, it is not possible that the haire should fall off.<sup>38</sup>

We can question whether a recipe like this would have been helpful to an English reader. The illness is in Italian, making it harder for readers to identify it; symptoms and treatments are also in Italian and virtually unavailable to them, as it is improbable that English pharmacists would have Fioravanti's remedies in stock. However, these recipes could be of value to English readers in other ways, for instance, legitimising Fioravanti's medical authority and, therefore, the knowledge contained in other entries in the book. While the 'untranslatable' words might have rendered specific recipes challenging to use, they may also have cast a veil of mystery about the universe from which came the recipe, rendering the secret as well as its author, 'mysterious'. While the translator could have excluded these seemingly problematic recipes, their permanence is indicative of how recipe collections acted as encyclopaedias of practical knowledge, as a collection in which individual items validated each other. Furthermore, these recipes could present the reader with methods of understanding and treating disease, serving thereby as examples from which the readers could develop their own experiments.

### 2.3. From Italian into English via French

Some translations achieved a high status in early modern Europe when the translator and/or the printing workshop were respected, and the work was considered particularly meticulous. This was the case with the French translation of Piemontese's *Secreti*, published in Antwerp.<sup>39</sup> Although the translator was not named, this translation was probably done by Christophe Plantin (1520-1589), who was likely the translator of Piemontese's recipes into

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<sup>38</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *A Treatise of Chirurgery*, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Les Secrets du Sieur Révérend Alexis le Piémontais* (Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1557); Henri-Jean Martin, 'Christophe Plantin à Anvers (Annexe)', in Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin (eds.), *Histoire de l'édition Française* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), pp. 404–35.

Dutch as well, with both versions being published by his workshop.<sup>40</sup> The translation into French was highly regarded by contemporaries.<sup>41</sup> Plantin even denounced the practice of other printers, who would often ‘recycle’ old recipes, and affirmed that it was not his case. As for his new compilation of recipes, Plantin told readers how they had been tested by ‘experts in medicine and other sciences’. Plantin was a respected and successful publisher of Latin, French and Dutch works, and his edition was considered of such quality that when the *Secreti* were translated in England, the printer had them translated from the French version instead of the original, creating one of the rare cases of indirect translations of books of secrets.

There was not a general idea of the inferiority of indirect translations compared to direct ones in early modern Europe, as there is today. Instead of an additional person involved in the transmission of the text being considered an issue, it could enhance the book’s marketability, especially when ‘expert’ names were involved. This is attested by the fact that the title itself advertised that the book is a translation of the French version of the Italian text: ‘Translated out of Frenche into English, by Wyllyam Warde’. As a Cambridge-trained physician, Ward lent further weight to Piemontese’s authority. In later editions, Ward’s role was emphasised even more, as his career progressed and he became a reader in medicine in Cambridge, a professor, and finally a royal physician. Plantin’s workshop was also mentioned multiple times, cementing the authoritative source of the book:

...like as Christopher Plantine of Antwarpe, the printer of this worke in Frenche, chose the Prince of Piemount, to protecte and adourne the frutes of his labours, vnder the honoure of his name: euen so I the translatour hereof into our Englishe tounge, haue thoughte it my duety (with your honours fauour) to presente this my translation vnto you...<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Christophe Plantain had obtained *privilèges* for both translations, indicating he was confident of their commercial success. Alessio Piemontese, *De Secreten van Den Eerweerdigen Heere Alexis Piemontois. Inhoudende Seer Excellente Ende Wel Gheapprobeerde Remedien, Teghen Veel-Derhande Cranckheden, Wonden, Ende Andere Accidenten: Met de Maniere van Te Distilleren, Perfumeren* (Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1561).

<sup>41</sup> Leon Voet, ‘Christophe Plantin, a Prince of Printers’, in *The Golden Compasses: The History of the House of Plantin-Moretus* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 3–135.

<sup>42</sup> William Ward, ‘To the Right Honorable Francis, Lord Russel Earl of Bedford One of the Queenes Maiesties Privy Counsell, and Knight of the Most Honorable Order of the Garter’, in *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piemont Containing Excellent Remedies against Diverse Diseases, Wounds, and Other Accidents, with the Maner to Make Distillations, Perfumes, Confitures, Dying, Colours, Fusions, and Meltings, Newly Corrected* (London: John Kingstone for Nicolas Inglande, 1558).

Although indirect translations were not a rare phenomenon in early modern Europe, this is one of the few cases I have found of an indirectly translated recipe book. Although it could have been a choice motivated by translators available, it seems that it was because of Plantin's reputation that the English publisher, Thomas Wight (d. 1608), associated his name with the famous Antwerp printer. As with books from other genres, sometimes indirect translations were the only way to reprint a book whose success was highly likely – but they could also be an editorial choice to make the book more prestigious. The choice of translator, the English physician William Ward (1534-1609), also lent further weight to the work.

There are minimal changes in the translated recipes, with the English translation closely reproducing the French one, which was already quite faithful to the Italian original. However, the publisher's typographic character choice can tell us something about the universe of secrets, comparable to the translation from Italian into English mentioned above. Most of the text was printed using Gothic characters, which also happened when books of secrets were published in German. Still, the printer kept everything 'continental' in Romanic characters.<sup>43</sup> Citations in Latin were always in these characters, as we would use italics today. Whenever continental cities were mentioned, or when the name of someone who is not British appears, such as Plantin and Piemontese themselves, Romanic type signalled this distance. This strategy used by the publisher marked a gap between the world of readers and Piemontese's mysterious universe. The 'foreignness' of Piemontese's secrets would have been apparent to readers, in a different type than the rest of the text, contrasting against the Blackletter characters to which the reader would have been accustomed. While in John Hester's translation, the type marked the words he kept in Italian, here the words were translated (*Alessio* became Alexis, *Roma* became Rome). Still, their linguistic translation was not accompanied by typographic cultural proximity. The type, therefore, underlined how, even if translated, these words belonged to a different universe, one that readers were not familiar with.<sup>44</sup>

This translation was also typical of its time because the new recipes added to the original compilation were announced to the reader as positive changes. Besides emphasising the traditional qualities of books of secrets (how useful they were to all readers, how morally correct it was to share knowledge with the 'people'), the dedication also stated how important

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<sup>43</sup> About the evolution of Gothic/Blackletter and Romanic types as well as their use, see S. H. Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1979).

<sup>44</sup> Roger Chartier and Guglielmo Cavallo, *A History of Reading in the West* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), p. 279.

it was to disseminate these secrets in the readers' 'natural tongue'. After all, even the less instructed had a 'natural desire to learn', which once more stressed how books of secrets were aimed at wide readerships, subverting the idea that the mysteries of nature should only be revealed to a few. Thanks to this translation, all readers had access to secrets, since the knowledge was now in their vernacular:

I have taken in hand to translate this noble and excellent worke called The secrets of the reverend father Maister *Alexis of Piemont*, first written in the Italian tongue, and after turned into French, and of date into Dutch and now last of all into English, because that as well English men, as Italians, French man or Dutch man, may lucke knowledge and profite heereof, being a worke come out of the hands of so famous a man as *Alexis* is.<sup>45</sup>

The translation of Italian books of secrets had a commercial goal. Publishers and translators' topos of how their work was for the 'common good' may seem a purely rhetorical device, but their practices show how they perceived translating as necessary not only to render the text legible to new readers but to improve upon it. There were several strategies to render the book more appealing to a new readership, and translations were not immune to severe problems, such as the 'untranslatable' words and the occasional omission of dangerous recipes. Regardless of alterations, it is essential to stress how modifications were often presented as neutral, if not positive. They were not generally considered to diminish the value of the book nor to change its 'spirit'; keeping the ethos of the original text was something translators were particularly careful to do while enhancing their own status and legitimising the author in the 'updated' and 'upgraded' translation.

### 3. Translating the Genre of Secrets

Thanks to translation, books of secrets became a Western European phenomenon in the sixteenth century. While in the previous section I aimed to show how individual books were adapted to their new readers to illustrate trends in translation, in this section, I analyse two strategies to translate books of secrets as a genre, by their 'rebranding' and association to texts that were already best-selling in the areas where recipe books were translated. The

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<sup>45</sup> William Ward, 'To the Right Honorable Francis'.

second way recipe books became an editorial phenomenon concerns their assimilation into commercially successful groups of texts. After all, books of secrets continued to be printed until well into the eighteenth century partly because of these strategies.<sup>46</sup> The first example of this phenomenon concerns their French editions, and the second, their German.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Oudot family, publishers from Troyes, in France, began to publish several titles of books aimed at a broad readership. Almanacks, hagiographic poems, ballads, and recipe books were printed on cheap paper and in octavo format and often sold by itinerant peddlers in the countryside as well as in the towns. These books were in the vernacular, and although some of them had a French origin, many were translations of Italian texts, such as the anonymous recipe collection *Dificio di ricette* and Piemontese's *Secreti*. Because their cover was blue, these books became known as the Bibliothèque Bleue.<sup>47</sup> This vast corpus has been thoroughly studied on its own, from the folklorists of the nineteenth century, such as Charles Nisard, to social historians such as Robert Mandrou, Lise Andries and Geneviève Bollème, who have used it as a departing point in their search for early modern 'popular' culture.<sup>48</sup> Mandrou argued that the Bibliothèque Bleue was an instrument of alienation of the masses.<sup>49</sup> However, scholars such as Roger Chartier have shown how one should be careful studying 'popular' culture and literature more recently. Associating the 'popular' with one specific group of texts can prove false and not particularly useful.<sup>50</sup>

As Chartier demonstrated, popular culture was fragmented and shared by different social groups through the same objects – in this case, vernacular books of secrets. It is not the sole study of these texts that allows us to understand 'popular' readers (if we can use such a problematic concept), but rather their ways of reading and appropriating the content of books. Sharp oppositions can be misleading, whether it is between elite and popular readers, literate and illiterate people, regional and standard forms of writing, cities and countryside, expensive and cheap books. As Chartier suggested about individual silent reading and the more

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<sup>46</sup> Robert Mandrou, *De la Culture populaire*, p. 23.

<sup>47</sup> Andries and Bollème, *La Bibliothèque Bleue*.

<sup>48</sup> Charles Nisard, *Histoire des livres populaires ou de la littérature de colportage depuis le XVe siècle jusqu'à l'établissement de la Commission d'examen des livres du colportage (30 Novembre 1852)* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1864); Lise Andries and Geneviève Bollème, *La Bibliothèque Bleue*; Geneviève Bollème, *Les Almanachs populaires aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles : Essai d'histoire sociale* (Paris: Mouton et EPHE, 1969); Michel de Certeau, Dominique Julia, and Jacques Revel, 'La Beauté du mort: Le Concept de culture populaire', *Politique Aujourd'hui*, 1970, pp. 3–23.

<sup>49</sup> Robert Mandrou, *De la Culture populaire*, pp. 179–181.

<sup>50</sup> Roger Chartier, *Lectures et lecteurs dans la France d'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Seuil, 1987); Roger Chartier, 'Culture as Appropriation'.



common collective reading aloud, there were often many other ways people engaged with texts.<sup>51</sup>

Without entering too much into this debate, it is worth stressing the importance of translated Italian books of secrets having been inserted into the Bibliothèque Bleue to their continued success. The Bibliothèque Bleue corpus was composed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with 7-9% of the books containing recipes.<sup>52</sup> From the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, these books circulated in virtually all France.<sup>53</sup> Published in Troyes, they were sent to other important urban centres and sold in the countryside by peddlers, as well as traded in fairs. Although many Italian books of secrets were translated and sold outside the Bibliothèque Bleue corpus, becoming successful on their own, the insertion of these recipe books in the Bibliothèque Bleue collection allowed them to profit from an already existing network of publishers, bookshops, and peddlers, and they became easily recognisable.

It could also be argued that books of secrets were partly responsible for the editorial success of the Bibliothèque since, as Mandrou and other scholars have shown, they were best-sellers within the corpus.<sup>54</sup> Because books of secrets had become successful in Italy, foreign printers saw them as potential best-sellers when translated. In the French case, these books were translated and published as single recipe compilations and as part of the Bibliothèque Bleue corpus, following different printing strategies.<sup>55</sup> As a part of the collection, they attained a broader circulation and became even more successful in France. Not only were books of secrets associated with an already best-selling group of texts, but their circulation was facilitated by the distribution of the Bibliothèque Bleue.

The second way Italian secrets were ‘rebranded’ concerns their German translations. In Germanic areas, books of secrets also became successful, but whereas in France they were not associated with a specific genre, but to the heterogenic corpus of the Bibliothèque Bleue,

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<sup>51</sup> Roger Chartier, ‘Loisir et sociabilité : Lire à haute voix dans l’Europe moderne’, *Littératures Classiques*, 12 (1980), pp. 127–47.

<sup>52</sup> Besides the *Difício di ricetta*, Alessio Piemontese’s *Secreti* were best-sellers within the collection. Louis Morin, ‘Les Oudot: Imprimeurs et libraires à Troyes, à Paris, à Sens et à Tours’, *Bulletin du Bibliophile* (Paris: H. Leclerc, 1901); Alfred Morin, *Catalogue descriptif de la Bibliothèque Bleue de Troyes* (Geneva: Droz, 1974); Henri-Jean Martin, ‘Culture écrite et culture orale, culture savante et culture populaire dans la France d’Ancien Régime’, *Journal des savants*, (3-4) 1975, pp. 225-282.

<sup>53</sup> Laurence Fontaine, *Histoire du colportage en Europe: XVe – XIXe siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1993); Pierre Brochon, *Le Livre de colportage en France depuis le XVIe siècle: sa littérature, ses lecteurs* (Paris: Gründ, 1954).

<sup>54</sup> Although works of piety were the most successful books of the collection, recipe books were the most reprinted ones after the religious genre. Robert Mandrou, *De la Culture populaire*, p. 45.

<sup>55</sup> Roger Chartier, ‘Stratégies éditoriales et lectures populaires, 1530-1660’, in Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin (eds.), *Histoire de l’édition française, Tome I, Le Livre conquérant, du Moyen Age au milieu du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), pp. 698–721.

when Italian recipe books were translated into German, they were assimilated into the genre of technical manuals. For instance, the usual title for the translation of Piemontese's book was *Kunstbuch des wolerfarnen Herren Alexii Pedemontani* – Book of the Art of the Experienced Mr Alexis Piedmontese.<sup>56</sup> *Kunstbücher* (books of the arts) were technical manuals containing domestic recipes and complex technical procedures such as distillation.<sup>57</sup> While in Italy, secrets were usually understood as a synonym of 'recipes', in German-speaking areas, secrets became synonymous with 'arts'.

Although we should be careful not to assimilate different genres, it is also essential to keep in mind that books of secrets were translated as 'books of the arts' for a commercial reason. Associating them with technical manuals, with which readers were already familiar, helped introduce them into a new market. While in France, one of the most successful editorial strategies was to integrate books of secrets into the Bibliothèque Bleue and its widely-read books, in Germanic areas, publishers' primary strategy of associating secrets to already successful works did not concern a specific corpus of texts, but rather a genre of books. Assimilating secrets into the tradition of the technical manual helped the genre of secrets to be successful since they addressed readers already interested in recipes about distillation, metallurgy, medicine, alchemy, and other crafts. Secrets and arts became intimately connected, and the genre of books of secrets became almost a sub-category of *Kunstbücher*.<sup>58</sup> As in the French case, the association between books of secrets and technical manuals was an interesting editorial strategy. Recipe books, as *Kunstbücher*, had a practical goal, addressing everyday domestic problems and containing practical 'how-to' knowledge.<sup>59</sup> Readers familiar with technical manuals would be more open to new translations from Italy if they saw these books as a part of the tradition of 'books of the arts'.

In both the French and the German cases, it is crucial to emphasise publishers' editorial work in the modern sense. These strategies were clever ways of adapting Italian books to their new French or German-speaking readerships and to the books they were already used to reading. Italian books of secrets went through several changes, from a

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<sup>56</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Kunstbuch des wolerfarnen Herren Alexii Pedemontani*.

<sup>57</sup> For the technical meaning of 'art', and its relationship to secrets, see Robert Halleux, *Le Savoir de la main: Savants et artisans dans l'Europe pré-industrielle*. See also Pamela Smith, 'What Is a Secret? Secrets and Craft Knowledge in Early Modern Europe', in Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin (eds.), *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science 1500-1800* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 47–66; Catherine Lanoë, 'Galien ou Paracelse, conserver ou transformer? Les Cosmétiques à la Renaissance', *Journal de La Renaissance*, III (2005), pp. 193–206.

<sup>58</sup> Pamela Long, *Openness, Secrecy, Authorship: Technical Arts and the Culture of Knowledge from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

<sup>59</sup> William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*.

linguistic point of view as well as from an editorial perspective, being associated with other genres and integrated into existing groups of texts. But they were also published with other books, including compilations of recipes, and printed in the same volume as other texts. That is the case of the German translation of Piemontese's *Secrets* by Wecker and Fioravanti's English translation by Hester, in which compilations by the translators were printed in the same volume. Modifications can be conscious or not, and they could be explained to the reader or not. In Plantin's famous translation of Piemontese's *Secreti*, for instance, the printer combined the first and the second parts of the secrets, which had been published separately in Italy, in one single volume, also adding a new collection of recipes to it.<sup>60</sup>

Besides associating books of secrets with other genres and integrating them into a corpus such as the Bibliothèque Bleue, publishers also created specific strategies to adapt the Italian books for their new audiences, and translators were concerned with language and cultural differences. Titles and vocabulary were adapted, recipes were shortened or augmented, and the structures of the texts were modified. The already polysemic 'secret' became associated not only with recipes but also with arts. Being malleable texts, books of secrets could transform into distinctive styles to better suit their new readerships, connected to local traditions – and new content could always be added. Publishers and translators had a pivotal role in this process, rendering professors of secrets' recipes available to new readers. Printers combined several books in one volume using an already famous name to publish other texts. Recipes were added, suppressed, and 'corrected', in a process that profoundly transformed books of secrets while making characters such as Piemontese famous outside of Venice, despite, or maybe because of, the fluidity of the authorship their names entailed.

Books of secrets continued to be printed in Italy, Germany, and England until the end of the eighteenth century. Even though their popularity diminished after the French Revolution, they were still published in France in the nineteenth century.<sup>61</sup> Although these books were reprinted less frequently from the end of the seventeenth century, they continued to circulate, especially as part of the Bibliothèque Bleue. The genre was successful all over Europe for several reasons: readers were curious about the miracles of nature and the secrets of crafts, and recipes offered practical solutions to everyday problems, especially complementing domestic medical practices, but also offering ludic recipes to amuse the

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<sup>60</sup> 'Les secrets du S. Alexis Piemontois divisez en six livres. Ausquels avons adjoint autres secrets de nouveau adjoustez par iceluy, qu'aucuns ont appelé, le second volume : et les receptes de divers auteurs toutes bien expérimentées, et approuvées', Alessio Piemontese, *Les Secrets du Sieur Révérend Alexis le Piémontais*.

<sup>61</sup> Geneviève Deblock (ed.), *Le Bâtiment des recettes: Présentation et annotation de l'édition Jean Ruelle, 1560* (Rennes: PUR, 2015).

reader. Publishers and translators were the main actors in rendering these Italian secrets available to readers from other areas. They made changes at a micro-level, adapting each book to their expected readership, and in a macro-level, associating the genre of books of secrets to technical manuals in German areas or to the corpus of the Bibliothèque Bleue in France. Books of secrets became best-sellers in their own right. Still, one of the reasons why they continued to attract interest throughout the centuries were the strategies printers and translators adopted. Because books of secrets were flexible, containing several types of recipes and a variety of knowledge, they could easily be integrated into other groups of texts.

#### 4. Translating Italian Secrets of Women to French Readers<sup>62</sup>

In 1529, an anonymous book called *Opera nuova intitolata Dificio di ricette*, or ‘new work called House of Recipes’, was published in Venice.<sup>63</sup> It was a short, cheaply printed octavo booklet containing miscellaneous recipes to aid and amuse readers in their everyday lives. It addressed the readership in an informal tone, and in its preface, the utility of the book was underscored since it had been published for the ‘benefit of all people’ (*‘beneficio universale’*). The *Dificio di ricette* was a commercial success and one of Italy’s first vernacular printed recipe books, inaugurating more than a century of best-selling vernacular compilations of recipes in Europe and profoundly influencing the following works by Piemontese, Fioravanti, Della Porta, and others.<sup>64</sup> The *Dificio* promised to reveal secrets to its readers in the form of straightforward recipes illustrated by woodcuts.

Among magic tricks, cosmetic, culinary, and medical recipes, the reader was presented with eight practical secrets about women’s bodies. These recipes aimed to instruct but also to allow the reader to manage the female body, especially where fertility and reproduction were concerned. Through this book, menstruation’s periodicity, quality, and quantity could be regulated, conception could be assured, and questions about future children could be answered. Having served as an inspiration to most books of secrets that followed it,

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<sup>62</sup> This section is further developed in Julia Martins, ‘Understanding/Controlling the Female Body in Ten Recipes’ in Sara Ritchey and Sharon Strocchia (eds.), *Gender, Health, and Healing, 1250-1550* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), pp. 167–88.

<sup>63</sup> Anonymous, *Opera nuova intitolata Dificio de ricette*.

<sup>64</sup> One of the most well-known precursors to the *Dificio di ricette* was the *Thesaurus pauperum*, a fourteenth-century collection of medical recipes for self-care. It was translated into the vernacular, and later appeared in print. See *Il ‘Thesaurus Pauperum’ Pisano: Edizione Critica, Commento Linguistico e Glossario*, ed. by Giuseppe Zarra (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2018). For the continuity between manuscript and print in this genre, see Elizabeth Mellyn, ‘Passing on Secrets: Interactions between Latin and Vernacular Medicine in Medieval Europe’, *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 1.16 (2013), pp. 289–309.

the *Difício* continued to be printed until well into the nineteenth century, being particularly successful in France (even more than in Italy), in no small measure thanks to its translation.<sup>65</sup> It can also be considered a turning point toward broader dissemination of knowledge about the female body, unveiled in the vernacular to a general readership.

In this section, I analyse how the recipes about the female body were translated from Italian into French and how that process altered them, adapting them to the new readers they were expected to reach. This case study will delineate the methodology I employ in this thesis and outline general trends in the translation of secrets of women between vernaculars. By focusing on one book, I also intend to show how the translation of individual recipes helped to ‘rebrand’ the book and even the genre of secrets to new readerships, reshaping the content and goal of the book. I use this case as an introduction to the comparison of other books of secrets because this is one of the works that marked a transition from medieval writings about the female body, usually aimed at a specialised readership and written in Latin such as the *Trotula* and the *Secreta Mulierum*, to early modern vernacular texts directed to a much broader audience.<sup>66</sup> Through the eight recipes published in the *Difício* that offered easy solutions to reproductive problems, readers were confronted with the possibility not only of better understanding the female body but to change and control it, potentially allowing female readers to actively operate on their own bodies, in the sense of actively engaging in its management.

The *Difício* was addressed to a wide readership, not presuming the reader had any specialised knowledge about secrets of women. It is unclear if, how, and by whom these recipes were used, but there is no reason to believe laywomen were excluded, as I have shown in the previous chapter. When the *Difício* was published in Venice, claiming to be a new work, it consisted of a hundred and eighty-seven recipes, most of them simple and easy to follow, with short lists of ingredients and few steps to make the recipe. For instance, a recipe to prevent hair from greying consisted simply of spreading dog’s milk on one’s head.<sup>67</sup> Reflecting its Venetian context, the *Difício* was directed at urban elites and middling sort of people, often more literate than their counterparts in other European cities.<sup>68</sup> Responding to the increase of vernacular literacy among members of these groups, the *Difício* was meant to

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<sup>65</sup> There were 60 French versions of the book, 28 Italian ones, and 6 editions in Dutch.

<sup>66</sup> *The Trotula: A Medieval Compendium of Women’s Medicine*, edited and translated by Monica Green (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); *Women’s Secrets: A Translation of Pseudo-Albertus Magnus’ De Secretis Mulierum with Commentaries*, edited and translated by Helen Lemay (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992).

<sup>67</sup> *Difício di ricette* (1529), Recipe 14.

<sup>68</sup> *Le Bâtiment des recettes* (1560).

be both practical and amusing. It was a household manual, including recipes about domestic needs, but its imagined readers would also entertain at home and be interested in cosmetics and general hygiene recipes. Therefore, the recipes contained in the *Dificio* could be divided into two categories: the fun, social ones meant to entertain, and those useful to readers' daily lives. In the first group, we find magic tricks such as 'how to make a candle burn underwater' or 'how to cook an egg without fire'; amusing recipes to be used in popular festivities or to play pranks, such as 'how to dye a horse green', or 'how to paint a man's beard blue'.<sup>69</sup> When the *Dificio* was translated into French, these recipes lost their relevance somewhat, especially since new medical treatises were added to the original text, indicating the shift of readership the publishers expected to happen. Indeed, new readers were expected to be more concerned with domestic medicine and the care of the body and less so with magic tricks for guests.

While the first group of recipes was mainly entertaining, the second group was composed of useful recipes, secrets that could be used in the household in many ways. Some of them teach how to make fruit preserves, make ink to write, and produce soaps. But most of the recipes in this category concerned medicine, to be practised by the family members (and often by the women) in the household. Of the hundred and eighty-seven recipes in the *Dificio*, the ones concerning the female body account for roughly 6% of the total, or ten recipes. However, for this section, I will only concentrate on eight, which deal with reproduction, not considering the two about venereal diseases. While these recipes were an important part of books of secrets, they do not pertain to the normal reproductive process, which I analyse in this thesis.

Although the *Dificio* had been successful in Italy, being reprinted twenty-eight times, it was in France that it reached its broadest readership.<sup>70</sup> Translated as the '*Bâtiment des recettes*', it was reprinted sixty times, the last edition I found dating from 1830 – while in Italy, there were no editions after 1562.<sup>71</sup> The translation kept the title metaphor of a 'House of Recipes', which was not a foreign image to French readers.<sup>72</sup> While the continued interest

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<sup>69</sup> Geneviève Deblock, 'Astuces, farces, magie : Les Recettes de divertissements du "Bâtiment des recettes" (XVIe-XIXe Siècles)', *Techniques & Culture*, 59 (2012), pp. 25–39.

<sup>70</sup> *Le Bâtiment des recettes* (1560).

<sup>71</sup> *Le Bâtiment des recettes, traduit de l'italien, et augmenté d'une infinité de beaux secrets, avec un autre traité de recettes intitulé le Grand Jardin* (Troyes: Jean-Antoine Garnier et Baudot, 1830).

<sup>72</sup> Michel de Nostre Dame (*Nostradamus*) wrote a recipe book with a similar title: *Bastiment de plusieurs receptes pour faire diverses senteurs, et lavements pour l'embellissement de la face et conservation du corps en son entier : aussi de plusieurs confitures liquides, et autres receptes secretes et desirees non encore veues* (Paris : Guillaume de Nyuerd, 1567).

in this collection lasted four centuries, the reasons for this changed, with the *Bâtiment* illustrating how readerships could gradually change within the same country. The French edition also acted as a ‘cultural mediator’ to use Geneviève Deblock’s apt expression since, in 1545, the Dutch translation was done via the French version and subsequently reprinted six times.<sup>73</sup> As with the English translation of Piemontese via French and others in the period, this indirect translation was not considered inferior to direct ones.<sup>74</sup>

Because the *Dificio* had this international circulation, one of the main questions arising from its study must concern translation. The first French edition was made in 1539 and published by Jean III Du Pre, a printer from Lyon. There is another (possibly earlier) translation, entitled ‘*Difficile des receptes*’, probably printed between 1529 and 1560 in Lyon.<sup>75</sup> But as the title indicates, it is an inferior translation, and it has not been reprinted elsewhere that I could find. In the long history of the *Dificio*, every publisher changed something, leaving the mark of his workshop in the book. However, Jean Du Pre transformed the nature of the *Dificio*, making it more focused on secrets of women. He added an obstetric compilation of recipes to it, called ‘other medical secrets, besides those proposed by the Italian compilation, specifically for women’ (*espressement pour les femmes*), composed of twenty-six recipes, which made this kind of recipe 17% of the total entries in the book.

As discussed above, it was usual for publishers to add compilations to translations. In this case, however, the collection of secrets of women is anonymous, as are the *Dificio* and its translator. However, the fact that the publisher decided to add these recipes ‘specifically for women’ indicated how he saw the recipes already in the book as useful or valuable enough to the reader to justify adding a whole new section on the subject, accompanied by a woodcut depicting a woman touching her belly attended by a male medical practitioner, one of the few illustrations in the book.<sup>76</sup> Significantly, this focus on women’s bodies and reproduction did not mean to exclude men, such as physicians or surgeons, from the world of childbirth, even though the text described a mostly female environment where reproduction was concerned.

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<sup>73</sup> Geneviève Deblock, ‘Le Bâtiment des recettes : Un Livre de secrets réédité du XVIe au XIXe siècle’ (MRes dissertation: EPHE, 2012); Emile Van Heurck, *Les Livres populaires flamands* (Antwerp: J. E. Buschmann, 1931), pp. 144–45. The ‘Pleasant Garden’ was also translated from French into Dutch and printed independently from the other parts of the *Bâtiment* in 1657.

<sup>74</sup> Tania Demetriou and Rowan Tomlinson, “‘Abroad in Mens Hands’: The Culture of Translation in Early Modern England and France”, in Tania Demetriou and Rowan Tomlinson (eds.), *The Culture of Translation in Early Modern England and France, 1500-1660* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 1–21.

<sup>75</sup> Anonymous, *Difficile des receptes* (Lyon: Jacques Moderne, probably 1540).

<sup>76</sup> This addition might have a French origin, according to Geneviève Deblock (ed.), *Le Bâtiment des recettes*. On translation and images, see Suzanne Karr Schmidt and Edward Wouk (eds.), *Prints in Translation, 1450-1750: Image, Materiality, Space* (London: Routledge, 2017).

These secrets of women could be used by practitioners of either sex but were mostly aimed at women themselves. This becomes clearer as the collection was transformed by new additions.

In 1551, another compilation was added to the *Bâtiment des recettes*, called ‘the pleasant garden’ (*‘le plaisant jardin’*). It was also a translation of Italian recipes, which had been printed elsewhere in France, edited by the father-in-law of Jean Ruelle, who became the most important printer of the *Bâtiment* in France.<sup>77</sup> The original Italian compilation has unfortunately never been found. The ‘pleasant garden’ was a mixed compilation of medical recipes, with just one concerning the female body, namely ‘how to treat sore nipples’. The translator’s name was mentioned, which is not the case with the other two parts of the book, as ‘Quiller or Quilleri de Passebreve’. His name was often modified in other versions of the book, but he seems to have been a French physician known for his alchemical and astrological interests.<sup>78</sup> Unfortunately, I could not find the original Italian version of this text to compare them. It could be the case of creating an inexistent lineage for the recipe without there being one: it could have been a new creation, slipped into the collection to make it look like it came from an Italian source while simply being a new addition. However, from then on, these two recipe collections were always printed with the translation of the *Difício*, making the French *Bâtiment* more than twice the size of the original book: to the hundred and eighty-seven recipes from the original *Difício* had been added twenty-six recipes ‘concerning women’ and two hundred and two from the ‘pleasant garden’.

These French printers changed the nature of the *Difício*. From a general household guide focused as much on entertaining as on domestic recipes, it became explicitly oriented towards the care of the body and ‘self-medicine’, with the recipes about the female body becoming central to the book. This transformation included many actors involved in the printing world: ‘compilers’ of texts, publishers, correctors, different collaborators, and especially translators, whose shared project seems to have been to adapt the empirical knowledge contained in the *Difício* to reach French readers. From the middle of the seventeenth century, as the *Bâtiment* became part of the Bibliothèque Bleue, it started to be sold in the countryside and cities, reaching an even more diversified readership.<sup>79</sup> Some authors suggested that Paris alone corresponded to half the potential readers in the sixteenth

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Jean Chrétien Hoefer, *Nouvelle biographie générale, depuis les temps les plus reculés jusqu’à nos jours* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1863).

<sup>79</sup> Roger Chartier, ‘Stratégies Éditoriales et Lectures Populaires, 1530-1660’.



century since roughly 50% of literate adults in France lived there.<sup>80</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, the problem of statistics like these is that reading and writing abilities were often learnt separately, meaning that ‘being able to sign one’s name’, the traditionally used indicator of literacy, may prove false.<sup>81</sup> Far more readers likely existed than it is usually thought, especially since collective reading was a usual practice in early modern Europe, and medical books were often collectively owned as well.<sup>82</sup>

What the *Bâtiment* itself told readers was that it was directed to refined men and women who could read, most likely social elites from urban centres. In her survey of the sixty French reprints of the *Bâtiment*, Geneviève Deblock argued that the annotations in the books indicate readers who knew how to write very poorly or not at all.<sup>83</sup> However, it is also possible that more educated readers simply did not write on the margins or made their notes in separate notebooks. In some copies there are marks next to recipes underlining their importance, as well as one case in which the book had been bound together with a notebook precisely to allow the reader more space for their thoughts. This is the case of the *Secreti diversi*, in which readers did add notes to recipes copied from printed recipe books.<sup>84</sup>

As the *Bâtiment* attained its final shape, in the 1560 edition by Jean Ruelle, the recipes in more significant number were about medicine, particularly secrets of women. Therefore, in my comparison of translated secrets of women, I use the original *Difício* of 1529 and the French translation of 1560. This was the ‘definitive’ one, from which most successive versions were reprinted.<sup>85</sup> I do not include in this analysis the twenty-seven recipes about the female body which were added by French printers, since even though they may be translations of an Italian text, the original has not been found, rendering the comparison impossible.

The first secret of women in the book is

To know whose fault it is that a couple cannot have children, the man’s or the woman’s

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<sup>80</sup> Jean-Dominique Mellot, ‘La Capitale et l’imprimé à l’apogée de l’absolutisme (1618-1723)’, *Histoire et civilisation du livre*, 5 (2009), pp. 17–44.

<sup>81</sup> Natalie Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Malden: Polity Press, 1975), pp. 194–95.

<sup>82</sup> Peter Jones, ‘Book Ownership and the Lay Culture of Medicine in Tudor Cambridge’, in Hilary Marland and Margaret Pelling (eds.), *The Task of Healing: Medicine, Religion and Gender in England and the Netherlands 1450–1800* (Rotterdam: Erasmus, 1996), pp. 49–68.

<sup>83</sup> Geneviève Deblock (ed.), *Le Bâtiment des recettes*, p. 33.

<sup>84</sup> Anonymous, *Secreti diversi*, c. 1600-1745. Wellcome Library, Ms. 215.

<sup>85</sup> Anonymous, *Opera nuova intitolata Difício de ricette* (1529); Anonymous, *Bastiment de receptes* (1560). All further comparisons are drawn from these books and indicated by D (for *Difício di ricette*) or B (for *Bâtiment des recettes*) and the page number. See Appendix 1 for a table comparing these recipes.

*A voler saper per chi manca a ingravedare o per lhuomo o per la donna (D. 1)*

*Pour savoir à qui il tient que la conception ne se face, ou s'il tient à la femme, ou s'il tient à l'homme, en cas qu'ils ayent longtemps este mariez ensemble (B. 2)*

Note that in this recipe the French translator stressed the length of the marriage, suggesting that readers be patient and only consult this recipe after several years of childless marriage, which does not occur in the original title. The most intriguing aspect of this recipe, however, is that the main ingredient in Italian, semolina, (*'semola'*), appears in the French text as *'forment ou seigle ou orge'*, meaning respectively wheat, rye, or barley; three grains were offered to the French reader, whereas only one was given in Italian. Interestingly, their order seems to be decrescent in price.<sup>86</sup> The translator probably had a diverse readership in mind; readers with different budgets or living in other areas where access to grains may vary were considered. Therefore, the translator created options for the semolina in the original. In this recipe, both the man and the woman should urinate in the grain, and if worms appeared in one of the grain samples after three days, that person was responsible for the couple's infertility. Whether the same could be obtained with alternative grains does not seem to have worried the translator.

The following recipe, is another example of how the titles were rendered more complex in French:

To know whether one is a virgin, meaning if the seed has been expelled

*A conoscer se uno o una e verzene dico se lha sparso il seme (D. 2)*

*A cognoistre si une personne est vierge, soit malle ou femelle, j'entens si elle est corrompue, ou de soy ou autrement (B. 9)*

The French translator added that the loss of virginity could happen through one's actions or someone else's. That may indicate a more substantial concern about self-corruption through

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<sup>86</sup> Andrew Appleby, 'Grain Prices and Subsistence Crises in England and France, 1590-1740', *The Journal of Economic History*, 39.4 (1979), pp. 865–87.

masturbation, or it might be that the Italian version was more pragmatic, only dealing with corruption that might jeopardise the marriage, such as an unwanted pregnancy. It is likely, however, that the French text indicates a more significant concern with the medical aspect of releasing seed to one's health and bodily state, transcending the question of the context in which the seed was expelled to privilege the physiological part of the action, which would amount to the same, medically.<sup>87</sup>

The third translated recipe,

To produce the terms for a woman who had them irregularly or not at all

*A far produr el suo tempo a una donna che lo variasse o perdesse* (D. 7)

*Pour faire avoir les fleurs à une femme qui les eust perdues, ou qui en fust desreiglée* (B. 64)

dealt with stimulating menstruation. Several herbs were known to provoke contractions of the womb, therefore inducing menstruation.<sup>88</sup> These recipes were widespread in this period since purging the womb was understood as central to women's health, and a 'clean' womb was a more favourable environment for conception.<sup>89</sup> These recipes could also occasionally cause miscarriages or abortions, depending on the intent of the one using them and the state of the woman's womb. In this recipe, 'flower' and 'time' or 'terms' are synonyms, as was often the case in early modern Europe. The herb feverfew ('*madrigale*') was translated as '*espargoutte ou madrigal*', indicating how the translator had in mind that readers might know the plant by different names depending on their level of instruction or geographical region; therefore, the Latin-derived *madrigal* was complemented by the popular *espargoutte*.<sup>90</sup> The same happened in the *Plaisant Jardin* section of the book, with plants appearing both in French and Latin in some recipes. This phenomenon of translating one word as two or more synonyms often

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<sup>87</sup> For a discussion on the one- and two-seed models, see Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), especially pp. 117-130; Thomas Lacqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 145-147.

<sup>88</sup> Cathy McClive, 'Bleeding Flowers and Waning Moons: A History of Menstruation in France c. 1495-1761', PhD dissertation (London: University of Warwick, 2004); Bethan Hindson, 'Attitudes Towards Menstruation and Menstrual Blood in Elizabethan England', *Journal of Social History*, 43.1 (2009), pp. 89-114.

<sup>89</sup> Michael Stolberg, 'Menstruation and Sexual Difference in Early Modern Medicine', in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howe (eds.), *Menstruation: A Cultural History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 90-101.

<sup>90</sup> '*Espargoutte*' could be used in baths as well as drunk in solutions, according to Jean Renou, *Les Œuvres Pharmaceutiques de Jean Renou* (Lyon: A. Chard, 1626), Chapter 14.

occurred in recipe books, indicating the practical use the books were expected to have and the consequent need to indicate the herb properly to a diverse readership.<sup>91</sup>

With such a variety of names for herbs, it is not surprising that some of them could not be translated. The phenomenon of the untranslatable words was typical of early modern recipes, as I have argued above in Fioravanti's case. The usual solution was to leave the word untranslated, rendering the recipe less practically usable to the reader but keeping a certain mystery and authority about the universe from which came the secret. That is what happened in the fourth recipe,

To contain the natural flux of a woman who has it abundantly

*A far restrenzer el corso natural de una donna se li abondasse (D. 7)*

*Pour faire restraindre le cours naturel a une femme qui l'eust trop abondant et oultre mesure (B. 65)*

In this recipe, women were instructed to make an ointment using something called 'linardo' and to spread it around their vulvas and pubic area. Although I could not definitively identify the untranslated ingredient in either language, it must have been common enough in early modern Venice, considering the book's original readership. A possible explanation for it is found in a seventeenth-century Spanish-Italian dictionary, in which it appears as a synonym for 'asarabacca', our modern wild ginger or hazelwort.<sup>92</sup> In that case, 'linardo' would be a diuretic, laxative and emetic. It is unclear why it would be used to stop menstruation, and it might be that the clue provided in this dictionary is false. However, it is interesting to see how its use in French indicates the translator's inability to translate it correctly. Indeed, had they understood the word, they might have opted for one of the many synonyms for the plant in early modern France: 'asaret', 'cabaret', 'oreille-d'homme', or one of its regional names, such as 'oreillette' or 'rondelle'.<sup>93</sup> Instead of suppressing the recipe with the untranslatable word, the translator kept it not to diminish the collection's overall value.

The fifth recipe,

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<sup>91</sup> Different levels of language or origins of the word coexisted in other, less 'popular' works as well, such as Pierandrea Mattioli, *Commentaire sur les six livres de Pedanius Dioscoride* (Lyon: Guillaume Rouillé, 1579). Mattioli even finished his chapters with lists of synonyms for relevant words.

<sup>92</sup> Lorenzo Franciosin Florentin, *Vocabulario Espanol e Italiano* (Rome: Rev. Camera Apostolica, 1638).

<sup>93</sup> Dictionnaire Larousse <http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/asaret/5613>. Last consulted on 23/06/22.

To make women pregnant

*A far ingravedar le donne* (D. 11)

*Pour trouver moyen de faire engrossir une femme qui ne peut avoir enfans de son mary* (B. 107)

further exemplifies the trends in translation mentioned so far. Women should make a pessary of lemon and honey using the juice of wormwood (*'ascenzo'*). Again, two French synonyms were offered to the reader, *'aluine'* and *'absinthe'*, and ingredients absent in the original were added, such as lily of the valley and balm leaves. Furthermore, the title was modernised as *'pour la stérilité des femmes'* in later editions, suppressing the final section of 'for a woman who could not have children by her husband'. It may also be significant that, from the 49<sup>th</sup> reprint of the *Bâtiment des recettes*, this recipe was omitted, along with the seventh recipe on this list, 'how to know how many children a woman will have by looking at her first', which appeared separately. Other differences between Italian and French concerned the bath the woman should take, which in French should be using herbs 'appropriate to her case' (this was not specified in Italian). It seems that there was an expectation that the reader would be familiar enough with herbs not to need specific instructions; while in French the herbs should be 'appropriate', in Italian they were not even mentioned. Furthermore, the woman should drink a mixture of herbs diluted in Moscato wine. In the French version, the Moscato is omitted, probably because it would not have been available or even well-known in France. Instead, women should use the more common mead or wine, which were also common in other recipes.

The sixth recipe,

How to know if a woman can have children or not

*A sapere se la donna pol haver figlioli overo no* (D. 11)

*Pour savoir si la femme pourra concevoir ou non* (B. 108)

illustrates once more the French translator's practice of multiple translations to one herb. Again, the translator seems to worry that the recipe should be 'usable' to its new reader, which means that the text should be understandable, and that the reader should have access to the ingredients, considering varied budgets and geography. Although we do not know the translator's identity (which sadly is often the case with early modern books of secrets), they intended to render the recipe available to new readers in all its complexity so that they could use it as the basis of their own experiments.

The specifying of ingredients also hints at a more significant contrast between the spoken and unspoken and between deeds and words in the medical world. Prescription and practice often differed and complemented each other. The imagined readers (and 'real' readers) were not passive; recipes did not offer prescriptive models of what the reader should do. Instead, they composed a 'toolkit' from which people could pick up different ideas and compose their own domestic and empirical medical world.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, common mallow ('*malba salvatica*') was translated as '*mauve sauvage ou guimauve*', offering the reader more 'tools' from which to build on.

The seventh recipe was eventually transformed into a new recipe in French reprints,

How to know how many children a woman will have by looking at her first

*A saper quanti figlioli die haver una veduto il primo parto* (D. 11)

*Pour savoir combien d'enfans doit avoir une femme en voyant son premier* (B. 109)

The first difference between Italian and French concerns the title. While in Italian, it was the first labour that indicated the number of children the woman may have, it was the first baby in French. This could signal a shift from a 'mother-centric' recipe to a 'baby-centric' one, but it would be a stretch to assume it just based on this example. In this recipe, we can again see the over-translating of words such as the matron ('*comare*'), which became a '*sage-femme ou matrone*'. It is significant how the French specifically placed the midwife in the birth scene. In contrast, that word ('*levatrice*') was not used in Italian, but rather 'matron', meaning an older woman who already had children and would help with childbirth, often acting as an

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<sup>94</sup> David Gentilcore makes a similar point, concerning vernacular regimens, in David Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe: Diet, Medicine and Society, 1450-1800* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

empirical midwife, but was not a specialised practitioner. The French version appears more open to childbirths attended to by a midwife, a matron, or both, while in Italian, the midwife was not central. The relation of these terms to actual practice merits further investigation. Still, regardless of the practitioner's identity, the translation practice reveals an interest in localising knowledge oriented around women's bodies.

This recipe also exemplifies another trend in the early modern publishing of recipes: their rearranging. Printers would often cut a recipe considered too long into two or more, rendering them more accessible to readers with limited reading skills, especially since recipes often had to be learned by memory. While in Italian this recipe ended with a section on how to know whether and how many of this future offspring would be male, in French, this part was transformed into a new recipe,

How to know how many male children a woman can have

*Pour savoir combien d'enfans masles pourra avoir une femme* (B. 110)

in which the reader should count the number of 'crowns of hair' on the first baby's head.

In conclusion, medical recipes tell us many things about the circulation of knowledge about the female body and reproduction in early modern Europe. The first of which is that, despite this book having been cheaply printed and appearing low quality, with its small format and inexpensive paper and binding, there was serious and meticulous work put into its translation. Cheap print is often associated with mispagination and uncared work from publishers and translators, but whoever translated the *Difcicio* into French tried to do a thorough job, mentioning vernacular herbals as useful in the translation process. Because most recipes offered readers synonyms to ingredients, it seems the translator and publisher had in mind the varied readership the book might encounter, which also indicates too sharp a divide between 'elite' and 'popular' readers to prove false or useless in the study of early modern vernacular recipe books. The synonyms could have been added to appeal to readers with different skills, levels of instruction, more limited or more generous budgets, as well as readers living in parts of France in which the same plant was known by other names, or some grains might be more readily available than others.

While this phenomenon was widespread in translation, even books of secrets written in Italian were concerned with vocabulary. For instance, in one of Piemontese's editions, a

list of ‘difficult words, which are not very common’ appeared at the end of the book, with the origin of the words and their meanings. Regional variations were considered, as printers worried about readers’ ability to understand and follow the recipes. In translation, this issue becomes, of course, even starker. Translations hint at different social and reproductive contexts, while maintaining a constant ethos and preoccupation with fertility, paternity, and marriage. Yet, if these concerns were what prompted recipe compilers in the first place, translators were careful to keep them. Translators added to the different reproductive models which existed where their translations would circulate, as I will show in the next chapters.

In the case of the *Dificio*, it is therefore telling that the main modifications in translated recipes concerned the over four hundred ingredients in the book. The procedures followed were usually quite simple – and sometimes not even mentioned, which indicates a presumption that the reader would be familiar with methods of preparing herbs such as distillation. In that case, most readers could know what to do with the ingredients (which were usually turned into a solution or ointment), and the recipes’ primary use would be to name the plants appropriate to each condition, therefore rendering books of secrets closer to herbals in terms of use. The rearranging of recipes into shorter ones could also indicate that the imagined readers the translator had in mind might be more comfortable with short and simple texts, showing again how the perception of the intended readership was unequivocally plural and complex, comprising people from different social groups and with varying skills of literacy. Moreover, the precision added to the recipes could indicate how translators understood them as something that readers would concretely try out and therefore worried about them achieving the intended goal.

The *Dificio* was one of the first printed books of secrets, inaugurating a genre that flourished in early modern Europe. It inspired its successors and influenced other genres, such as medical and technical manuals. The success it attained in France was partly due to the original recipes. But it was also largely due to the work of French publishers and translators, who adapted them to a new readership, rendering the book more medical than a general household guide. The shift from domestic life to the care of the body is easily perceptible, and the place secrets of women held in it is central. The translation was an essential part of the success this book attained in early modern Europe, and so were the often-anonymous translators. They reshaped recipes about the female body to render them as understandable and useful to their new readers as possible. It is a shame that in the *Dificio*’s case, we know so little about the editing activity and even less about the translator’s practice – considering they were indeed different people. Despite their name, books of secrets aimed precisely to



unveil knowledge to a general readership, breaking with the tradition of secrecy in areas such as women's medicine. Because women often had a complex relationship to healthcare in general, the commercial success of the *Difício* in France is particularly intriguing since its new focus on self-medicine, and the female body may have appealed even more to female readers who looked for ways to deal with their health.<sup>95</sup>

Recipes about women offered readers ways of managing bodies, a vernacular 'toolkit' from which they could pick and choose, creating their arsenal of medical knowledge, combining printed recipes to their own compilations of recipes.<sup>96</sup> While it could be argued that books like these present the male reader with ways of managing the female body as well, a closer reading indicates that the nature of these recipes is of self-medicine, medical recipes to be prepared and used on one's own body, or at the most one's friends and family. Recipe books like this seem to be closer to a resource for female readers than a way for male readers to 'manage' women's bodies, contrary to many midwifery manuals published in the period, written mainly by and for male practitioners. The presumption that the reader of these secrets of women knew so much about the appropriate herbs, quantities, and procedures to follow indicates that they were meant (albeit not exclusively) for women's use since manuals about the subject addressed to men have a completely distinctive style.<sup>97</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

What happened to knowledge when recipes were translated into another language? Translation was (and still is) as complex a process as writing itself and central to transmitting knowledge and culture. Translations were not stable but alive, continuously moving and making connections, produced with specific communities and readers in mind.<sup>98</sup> The coexistence of many versions highlights this migratory nature of knowledge: every new edition could be understood as a 'new original', not only a replacement or improvement. As Jorge Luis Borges famously wrote, 'the original is unfaithful to the translation'. So instead of

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<sup>95</sup> Sara Pennell, 'Perfecting Practice? Women, Manuscript Recipes and Knowledge in Early Modern England'.

<sup>96</sup> Elaine Leong, "'Herbals She Peruseth': Reading Medicine in Early Modern England', *Renaissance Studies*, 28.4 (2014), pp. 556–78.

<sup>97</sup> A famous example of this trend is Thomas Raynalde's 1540 translation of *Der Rosengarten* (1513) by Eucharius Rösslin. See *When Midwifery Became the Male Physician's Province: The Sixteenth-Century Handbook, The Rose Garden for Pregnant Women and Midwives, Newly Englished*, translated and introduced by Wendy Arons (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1994).

<sup>98</sup> Karen Newman and Jane Tylus, *Early Modern Cultures of Translation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).

looking for equivalencies, it is more useful to track changes in translation, and why and how these happened.<sup>99</sup>

While translations reflected the new medical and social contexts in which the book would be read, it is striking how the original spirit of recipe compilations was preserved, even if their character shifted. In the *Dificio*'s case, the contrast between a Catholic Italy and a France plagued by religious conflict (1562-1598) did not mean the book was completely reimagined. Instead, the *Dificio*'s case makes us rethink the genre of recipes in a broader European context. The same could be said about Piemontese's English translation, made from a French translation of the original Italian. Comparisons between French, Italian, and English reproductive and medical contexts can be useful, and will inform the following chapters. Yet, as recipe books make clear, many of the everyday concerns people had about gender and reproduction transcended borders.<sup>100</sup> Secrets of women, the knowledge hidden in the womb, were a part of most people's lives; the ways in which people engaged (and participated in the making) of this knowledge was not theoretical, but practical in nature. Translations of recipes therefore concentrated on practical matters, such as herb names and measurements, which could affect the way recipes would work in practice. Therefore, while different medical traditions and practices framed the texts, translators and printers had new readers in mind more than theory.

In this chapter, I have shown how vertical and horizontal translations differed since the change in readership in translation was not only cultural and geographical but often of a social nature, with literacy levels being connected to what knowledge one should have access to and in what measure. That is particularly clear with the 'purification' of the translation of Della Porta's *Magia Naturalis*, and Piemontese's 'upgraded' Latin version. Accessibility to the recipes, allowing different readers to understand (and potentially use) recipes was central to this process, as the trend of translating one word as several indicates in the *Dificio*'s case. However, the opposite trend of leaving 'untranslatable' words in their original form also

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<sup>99</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, 'Sobre El Vathek de William Beckford', *Otras Inquisiciones* (Buenos Aires: Sur, 1952), p. 163.

<sup>100</sup> For an overview of the French medico-reproductive context, see Susan Broomhall, *Women's Medical Work in Early Modern France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004) and *Women and the Book Trade in Sixteenth-Century France* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2002); Cathy McClive and Nicole Pellegrin (eds.), *Femmes en fleurs, femmes en corps: Sang, santé, sexualités du Moyen Age aux Lumières* (Saint-Etienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Etienne, 2010); Cathy McClive, *Menstruation and Procreation in Early Modern France* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015). On England, see David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Mary Fissell, *Vernacular Bodies: The Politics of Reproduction in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). For an European overview, see Anne McClanan and Karen Rosoff Encarnacion (eds.), *The Material Culture of Sex, Procreation, and Marriage in Premodern Europe* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

existed, particularly perceptible in translations not between romance languages, such as Fioravanti's English version. While translations sought to be as helpful as possible, the 'foreignness' or 'otherness' of the texts was often maintained, with typographic styles signalling the Italian universe from which these recipes emanated (Romanic type) and the universe to which the reader belonged (Blackletter). While, in some cases, this use of type marked the distance between readers and the professor of secrets, in several other situations, this served to signal to the reader when a foreign word could not be translated, which also highlighted the difference between the two cultures.

Still, it is essential to note that most recipe books were meticulously translated despite mistakes or 'untranslatability', with serious work being put into their new versions. Therefore, their classification as 'cheap print' needs to be questioned since, despite their materiality being unarguably of this category, the work publishers and translators did was complex and often highly specialised.<sup>101</sup> The fact that reputed printers such as Plantin decided to translate books of secrets should remind us of how false the division between books aimed at educated or a general readership proved in the early modern period. That indirect translations were made from his French version of Piemontese is undoubtedly a sign of its prestige.

Translators had much more autonomy to change texts in the early modern period than they do today; modifications (whether conscious, voluntary, or explained to the reader) were abundant, with translators often having their recipes added to the translated book, rendering them co-authors of the work. The fluidity of early modern authorship is particularly striking where translations are concerned, with translators often 'improving' and 'correcting' their texts, frequently acting as editors in the contemporary sense. Mistakes and misunderstandings in translation, as well as the 'untranslatable' words question, do not seem to have been perceived as significant issues to the value of a translation, or indeed to its commercial success, so long as translators and publishers kept the 'spirit' of a recipe book, and the goal of diffusing practical knowledge 'to the common good'. Translations were often perceived as 'updates' to the original texts since they were presented as more correct and revised and usually containing new recipes. They could even be 'upgrades' to the original, when a famous printer or translator associated their name to the book, or when they moved from a vernacular to a more highly regarded language such as Latin.

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<sup>101</sup> On the economics of books of secrets, see Allison Kavey, *Books of Secrets*. As in most other countries, recipe books were sold in England for around 3 to 6 pence, making them affordable to a large portion of the population.

Where gender is concerned, modifications in translation were abundant, and the translator's editing activity is apparent. Gendered knowledge was often at the centre of debates about openness and secrecy, one of the central questions discussed by professors of secrets in the early modern period. While striking cases of gendered 'purifications', such as Della Porta's translation, were not the norm, using gender as a category of analysis for translation can offer us unique insight into early modern perceptions of the female body and reproduction, especially in the universe of print. Translation is a crucial aspect of the study of vernacular texts because it shows how medical knowledge was adapted from one context to another, how it offered the reader different degrees of autonomy and how readers could be seen as active or passive in the process in various degrees. In the *Difcicio*'s French translation, ingredients were systematically translated as two or more synonyms, indicating concern about the diverse readership (regarding geography, climate, social status, literacy, abilities, and maybe even gender), and the possibility for readers to make actual use of recipes. While the Italian text seems more prescriptive than the flexible French translation, both presumed their non-specialised readers to have considerable knowledge of herbs and how to prepare simple solutions and ointments. Neither of them specified which part of a plant one should use, for instance, assuming the reader would be aware of that. Cultural translations, such as the Moscato wine being translated as 'mead or wine', make it clear the effort that went into adapting secrets to their new readers' context.

While the previous chapter considered the other central character in the early modern printing world, the reader, this chapter has focused on the practices of publishers and especially translators, hinting at the connection between gender and translation. With scholars' growing interest in material culture, translation can be particularly useful, since it allows us to confront not only the 'imagined' and the 'real' readers, but rather several 'imagined' readers in different contexts, to which corresponded an infinity of 'real' readers, some of whom left material traces. I argue in this thesis that, while diffusing and adapting secrets of women, translators reshaped knowledge about the female body and reproduction in the very process of making it available to myriad new readers, who would, in their turn, appropriate this knowledge in different ways.

## Chapter 3: An Abundance of Flowers: Compiling and Translating Menstruation Recipes

### 1. Introduction

A simple solution of boiled feverfew to drink in the morning for three days and a herbal ointment to spread over the pubis: these were the two recipes available to female readers of the *Dificio di ricette* wishing to either stimulate or stop excessive menstruation. As noted in the previous chapter, in one of the first printed books of secrets in early modern Europe, only two of the almost two hundred recipes available to vernacular readers concerned menstruation, one for ‘women who either had their time irregularly or not at all’ (*A far produr el suo tempo a una donna che lo variasse o perdesse*), and the other to be used when ‘a woman’s natural flow or flower was too abundant’ (*A far restrenzer el corso natural di una donna se el suo fior labondasse troppo*).<sup>1</sup>

These two recipes, one dealing with excessive menstruation (menorrhagia) and the other with its absence (amenorrhea), represent around 1% of the total recipes in the book. While that might seem like a small percentage, it is typical of early modern books of secrets, in which recipes about menstruation constituted between 1 and 3% of the total recipes printed in the book, with secrets of women in general adding up to around 10% of the total. Most of these recipes were aimed at treating menorrhagia or amenorrhea, even though there were some concerned with menstrual pain or discomfort (dysmenorrhea), and some specifically for the ‘white flowers’ (vaginal discharge). Recipes about how to deal with menopause and its symptoms, on the other hand, were virtually absent from books of secrets.<sup>2</sup>

While several new recipes were added to translated and re-edited books of secrets, ranging from cosmetic to veterinary recipes, one of the categories to grow the most was that of secrets of women. That was not always the case, which can be seen in Leonardo

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<sup>1</sup> Anonymous, *Opera nuova intitolata Dificio de Ricette* (Venice: Giovannantonio e fratelli da Sabbio, 1529), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> As Rudolph Bell observed, while menopause is a frequent topic of discussion in self-help and popular medicine books today, early modern Italian ‘how-to’ books hardly ever included it. Rudolph Bell, *How to Do It: Guides to Good Living for Renaissance Italians* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999). Monica Green makes a similar point about the medieval period. Monica Green, ‘Flowers, Poison and Men: Menstruation in Medieval Western Europe’, in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie (eds.), *Menstruation: A Cultural History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 51–64.

Fioravanti's book, *Capricci medicinali*. The first edition, published in 1561, contained two menstruation recipes among the more than one hundred and twenty entries in the book (1.5%).<sup>3</sup> Books of secrets were frequently rearranged, with parts being omitted often for editorial rather than medical reasons. So, the 1565 version of the *Capricci*, in which most of the first part of the book was suppressed, also omitted one menstruation recipe, leaving the 'Imperial electuary for the mother', a cure-all menstruation recipe, as the only entry on the subject among the more than seventy recipes published in the collection and constituting 1.3% of the total of the book.<sup>4</sup> While some collections of recipes maintain a similar percentage of menstruation recipes, in most printed recipe books there was a steady growth in the percentage of these entries during the century of the editorial boom of books of secrets, from 1555 to 1650, with this group often doubling in quantity. Alessio Piemontese, arguably the most well-known early modern professor of secrets, is the best example of this trend, as I will show in this chapter.

The number of menstruation recipes undoubtedly grew in the period. Fewer menstruation recipes were added to shorter books, and more of them were included in longer collections, in which the total of recipes could reach a few thousand. But in virtually all these books, the category of menstruation recipes was expanded. It is not my goal to focus on quantitative changes books of secrets went through, but merely to indicate this general trend concerning menstruation recipes: their number unequivocally grew in the period, increasing roughly from 1 to 3% of the total entries. To situate this percentage, it is worth remembering that books of secrets were general domestic manuals, in which medicine coexisted with alchemy, cosmetics, astrology, and veterinary recipes. Domestic medicine, while usually constituting around a third of books of secrets, was itself divided into categories, such as secrets of women (roughly 10% of the recipes in these books); of these, menstruation recipes account for around a third of the total. Even though they never became the central focus of books of secrets, by their very nature heterogeneous and miscellaneous collections, these recipes were present in virtually all the ones printed in the period. Indeed, they were considered part of the essential information the reader should have about general living and domestic medicine.

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<sup>3</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *Capricci Medicinali di M. Leonardo Fioravanti Medico Bolognese* (Venice: Ludovico Avanzi, 1561).

<sup>4</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *De Capricci Medicinali dell'Eccelente Medico & Cirugico M. Leonardo Fioravanti Bolognese* (Venice: Ludovico Avanzi, 1565).

It would be misleading, therefore, to think menstruation recipes have only a marginal role in recipe books. While they rarely amount to more than 3% of the total (as plague and syphilis recipes often do), the increase in the percentage of these recipes from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century not only indicates publishers perceived a growing interest in such recipes, but also that books of secrets were slowly moving from general, cure-all recipes, such as Fioravanti's 'Imperial Electuary for the Mother', to more specific remedies to distinct medical issues.<sup>5</sup> That Piemontese's first edition included no menstruation recipes at all and forty years later its English translation offered the reader more than sixty remedies to menstrual problems, is telling both of this increase in the quantity of menstruation recipes in books of secrets as well as of a growing specialisation, with more specific recipes replacing broader ones.

While in the original *Dificio di ricette* menstruation entries represented around 1% of the recipes, new material connected to menstruation was included when the book was translated in France, which appeared in most of the French versions. To the two Italian menstruation recipes, seven new ones were added, bringing the number of menorrhagia entries to five and of amenorrhea recipes to four. The new recipes were part of a series of twenty-six short entries entitled 'other medicinal secrets, besides the ones the Italian book has proposed above, specifically for women' ('*Autres secretz medicinaux, oultre ceux que l'exemplaire italien ha cy dessus proposé, expressement pour femmes*').<sup>6</sup> With the addition of this collection, menstruation recipes constituted 2.2% of the total, illustrating this trend in the publishing of early modern books of secrets, which saw an increase in recipes dealing with the female body from the mid-sixteenth century to the seventeenth century.

Piemontese's *Secreti* are representative in that regard, while also unique because of their ubiquity and commercial success based on the topos of the itinerant 'hunter of secrets'.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, while recipes about menstruation vary greatly in structure from one book of secrets to another, the progressive compilation of menstruation recipes in Piemontese's *Secreti* allows us to contrast shorter three-line recipes with others with several pages of instructions. Although ingredients and procedures were often similar, readers could be offered a simple treatment as well as half a dozen 'sub-recipes' in a single entry. Therefore,

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<sup>5</sup> See the table and graph in Appendix 3 for the increase in menstruation recipes.

<sup>6</sup> *Le Bâtiment des Recettes: Présentation et annotation de l'édition Jean Ruelle, 1560*, ed. by Geneviève Debloc (Rennes: PUR, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> William Eamon, 'Science as a Hunt', *Physis*, 31 (1994), pp. 393–432; William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

to compare menstruation recipes in Italian and in translation, I will not proceed to the systematic comparison of ingredients of each individual recipe in a book, as in the previous chapter with the French translation of the *Dificio*. Additions, omissions, mispagination, ‘borrowings’, and the fact that we rarely know from which specific reprint one book was being translated render that almost impossible.

Furthermore, as I have shown, the process of translation in the early modern period was much looser than what we understand as translation today. Adaptations, additions and suppressions, interventions by publishers and translators, and the transformation of the content of the book were commonplace and a usual part of their practice. This is clear in the case of menstruation recipes, not only because as they are the biggest category of secrets of women (almost doubling conception and lactation recipes, and only matched by childbirth recipes), but also because of the often euphemistic language chosen to discuss the subject. It therefore offers us the possibility of following the composition of a single book, the 1595 English edition of the *Secreti* of Piemontese.<sup>8</sup>

The analysis of these recipes, in their Italian, French and English versions, allows us a fascinating glimpse into the worlds of early modern translation and medicine, in which the combining and reshaping of the content of more than twenty editions of Piemontese’s *Secreti* preceding it can be seen. I will concentrate on how these recipes were transmitted, through the activity of translators and publishers, and what the language used in menstruation recipes can tell us about perceptions of the female body in different contexts as well as the trends in publishing that characterised the diffusion of this knowledge.<sup>9</sup> To do so, the first part of this chapter will focus on the bibliographical and editorial composition of this book, while the second will compare its recipes for healthy menstruation, with the last section discussing the frequent overlap between abortifacients and emmenagogues (recipes to provoke menstruation) illustrated by Piemontese’s secrets.

Piemontese was a unique character, a pseudonymous creation with a still-disputed identity, but he is also representative of the universe of books of secrets in general, both in terms of printing and medical trends.<sup>10</sup> In 1555, when the first edition of his *Secreti* was published, there were only five secrets of women included, none of which concerned

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<sup>8</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piedmont* (London: Thomas Wight, 1595).

<sup>9</sup> For an overview of early modern menstrual language, see Cathy McClive, ‘Menstrual Knowledge and Medical Practice in Early Modern France, c.1555–1761’, in Andrew Shail and Gillian Howie (eds.), *Menstruation: A Cultural History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 76–101.

<sup>10</sup> Zbigniew Bela, ‘The Authorship of the Secrets of Alexis of Piedmont (Venice, 1555)’, *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki*, 61.1 (2016), pp. 41–64.



menstruation. By 1595, the book had been translated into multiple languages, and several new ‘parts’ had been added throughout the decades. Hundreds of secrets of women were offered to readers, of which sixty-one menstruation recipes (3.6% of the total entries in the book).<sup>11</sup> While this increase is sharper than in most books of secrets, in which menstruation recipes usually grew from around 1% to roughly 2.5 or 3%, it is a good example of how recipes were compiled from different versions of the same book, often combining content from translations and new parts published in Italian.

By reading the 1595 edition of the *Secreti*, readers had access to a compilation including the translation of Italian recipes, additional recipes from the French version, and further recipes added by the English publishers. The composite nature of this book was not evident to most readers, as printers rarely explained the provenance of the recipes compiled. However, by tracing the origins of the recipes it becomes possible to understand how recipes about menstruation circulated, were modified, and were complemented by new content. Piemontese’s case illustrates how knowledge was diffused in the early modern period, as well as reshaped and even augmented. Whether readers realised the extent of these transformations or not, recipe books were depicted as ever-changing collections. The 1595 *Secreti* became the perfect example of what publishers, printers, and booksellers marketed books of secrets as: not simple translations, but rather ‘reviewed, corrected and augmented’ versions of the originals.

## **2. Compiling Alessio Piemontese’s Menstruation Recipes**

When Sigismondo Bordogna, a Venetian librarian and typographer, published Piemontese’s *Secreti* in 1555, readers were first introduced to the legend of Piemontese, told in a preface from the author to his readers, as I mentioned in the previous chapter.<sup>12</sup> Born into a noble family, Piemontese had studied ancient and modern languages before spending fifty-seven years travelling, going three times to the Levant. Because of his reluctance to share the secrets collected during his travels, Piemontese had failed to help an artisan suffering from kidney stones. After the man’s death, a crisis of conscience tormented Piemontese, and he

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<sup>11</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese* (Venice: Sigismondo Bordogna, 1555); Alessio Piemontese, *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piedmont* (1595).

<sup>12</sup> Little is known about Sigismondo Bordogna, except that he was active in Venice between 1555 and 1585. Fernanda di Ascarelli, *La Tipografia Cinquecentina Italiana* (Florence: Sansoni Antiquariato, 1953).

decided to publish his secrets for the ‘common good’.<sup>13</sup> Having adopted a monastic lifestyle on the outskirts of Milan, Piemontese compiled his secrets in Latin in manuscript form, before having them sent to Venice to be translated into Italian and printed.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, according to Piemontese, the version we consider his original book of secrets was itself a translation, although this is likely an editorial invention, as I have highlighted in the previous chapter. The *Secreti* were divided into six books, and medical secrets were not as prominent as alchemical and cosmetic recipes. Of the five secrets of women available to readers, most of them concerned lactation, such as recipes for sore nipples and to increase the production of milk.

Christophe Plantin, the Antwerp publisher who was responsible for translations of several books of secrets (including Giambattista Della Porta’s *Magia Naturalis*), was particularly interested in Piemontese’s *Secreti*, and by 1557 started publishing translations of the recipes from the Venetian collection.<sup>15</sup> Not only was he a respected printer, which added legitimacy to Piemontese’s *Secreti*, but he published the recipes in four languages, reminding us of the international character of the early modern book trade as well as Antwerp’s central role in it.<sup>16</sup> While the *Secreti* went through more than a hundred editions and translations from 1555 to 1700 (not including reprints), Plantin was arguably the most prolific publisher of the book outside of Italy and had a pivotal role in its diffusion.<sup>17</sup> By 1557, he had the book translated into French and by 1558 into Dutch.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, he reprinted the Latin translation made in Basel by Johann Jacob Wecker in 1560, and a Spanish version of the book in 1564.<sup>19</sup> While translators were rarely named, the translations of the *Secreti* made in

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<sup>13</sup> ‘Beneficio universale’, in ‘Ai Lettori’, in Alessio Piemontese, *Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese* (1555).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Giambattista Della Porta, *Magiae Naturalis, sive de miraculis rerum aturalium* (Naples: Matthias Cancer, 1558). Christophe Plantin published the *Magia* in 1560, 1561, 1564, 1566, 1567, 1570, 1576, 1577, and 1585 (in the original Latin), as well as a Dutch translation in 1566.

<sup>16</sup> Anne Coldiron, *Printers without Borders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Leon Voet, ‘Christophe Plantin, a Prince of Printers’, in *The Golden Compasses: The History of the House of Plantin-Moretus* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 3–135; Henri-Jean Martin, ‘Christophe Plantin à Anvers (Annexe)’, in Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin (eds.), *Histoire de l’édition Française* (Paris: Fayard, 1989), pp. 404–35.

<sup>18</sup> Plantin reprinted Piemontese’s original recipe collection in French in 1558, 1559 (with two added books by other authors), 1561, 1564 (twice), and 1567. By 1567 he also started publishing the second part of Piemontese’s secrets. Following the 1558 Dutch translation, he reprinted it in 1559, 1561, 1562 (twice), 1571, 1574 (twice), 1596, and 1597. Alessio Piemontese, *De Secreten van Den Eerweerdigen Heere Alexis Piemontois* (Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1558).

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Pettegree and Malcolm Walsby (eds.), *Netherlandish Books: Books Published in the Low Countries and Dutch Books Printed Abroad before 1601* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 1184–85.

Plantin's workshop circulated widely and were often the basis for further translations, such as the later English version.

While the translator, William Ward (1534–1604?), a Cambridge physician, told readers his translation was made from French into English, he very likely had access to the Dutch version as well, since the full title of the book in both Dutch and English was almost identical:

*De secreten van den eerweerdigen heere Alexis Piemontois. Inhoudende seer excellente ende wel gheapprobeerde remedien, teghen veelderhande cranckheden, wonden, ende andere accidenten: met de maniere van te distilleren, perfumeren, confituren maken, te verwen, coleuren, ende gieten.*

*The Secrets of the Reverende Maister Alexis of Piemount. Containyng excellente remedies against diuers diseases, woundes, and other accidents, with the manner to make distillations, parfumes, confitures, dynges, colours, fusions and meltynges.*

It is intriguing that the Dutch translation also alleged it had been made via French, but none of the French editions shares the long title with the English and Dutch versions. This is likely a stylistic choice, which can also be found in the German titles of recipes collections. In any case, it seems that the first, French translation, acted as a cultural and linguistic mediator between the original Italian text and other vernaculars.

Where secrets of women were concerned, there were very few modifications in Plantin's translation, with simplified titles consisting the main difference between the original Italian and the French version. The long and confusing title of a recipe for sore nipples, for instance, was changed from 'To ripen soon & treat a sore, or injury, that is, every nascent evil, which needs to ripen, & to break, like those that come to the thighs, & above the nipples of Women, & such others' to 'Against the pain in women's nipples, very excellent remedy'.<sup>20</sup> When the first English edition was made from the French translation, this recipe became

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<sup>20</sup> 'A far maturar presto & venire a capo un tencone, o pannocchia, cioe ogni mal nascente, che habbia bisogno di maturarsi, & di rompersi, come quei che vengono alle cosce, & sopra le mammelle delle Donne, & altri tali', Alessio Piemontese, *Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese* (1557), p. 84; 'Contre la douleur des tetins des femmes, remede tres-excellent', Alessio Piemontese, *Les Secrets de Reverend Seigneur Alexis Piemontois* (1557), p. 30.

‘Agaynst the payne of wemens breastes, a very excellent remedye’. The first French edition did not add recipes to the Italian text, maintaining the number of secrets of women low.

As menstruation was absent from the Italian text, so it remained in the French translation and in the English version published in 1558.<sup>21</sup> This translation made by Ward would be the basis for all future English editions of the book. Ward acknowledged his translation was made from Plantin’s French edition, underlining the international circulation of the book after having been published only three years earlier:

I haue taken in hand to translate this noble and excellent woorke called, *The Secretes of the Reueuerende Master, Alexis of Piemount*, firste written in the Italian tounge, and after tourned into Frenche, and of late into Dutche, and nowe laste of al into English, because that as well Englishe men, as Italians, Frenche menne, or Dutchmen, may sucke [search] knowlege and profit hereof.<sup>22</sup>

The following year, a new version of Piemontese’s *Secreti* was published in Italy, in which further recipes were offered to readers.<sup>23</sup> For the first time, a menstruation recipe appeared, namely ‘To stench [staunch] the menstrual blood in women’ (*A stagnar’il sangue menstruale alle donne*). Several versions of the first and second parts of Piemontese’s secrets were published almost simultaneously in different cities since the French system of *privilège* did not exist in the same way in Italy, which could prevent the same book from being printed in multiple places at once.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, in 1559 another version of the book was published, including both the first and second parts as well as a new, third part, also attributed to Piemontese. It was simply entitled *De’ Secreti del reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese*, which made its reprints and the ones made from the 1555 original as well as those including the second part hard to distinguish without going through them.<sup>25</sup> Besides a reprint of the 1555 text (divided into six books), this edition included the two new collections of recipes, expanding the role medicine played in Piemontese’s collection. While the first part still did

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<sup>21</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Secretes of the Reuerende Maister Alexis of Piemount* (London: John Kingstone for Nicholas Englande, 1558).

<sup>22</sup> William Ward, ‘To the Right Honorable Francis, Lord Russel Earl of Bedford One of the Queenes Maiesties Privy Counsell, and Knight of the Most Honorable Order of the Garter’, in Alessio Piemontese *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piemont* (1558).

<sup>23</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *La Seconda Parte de’ Secreti del Reuerendo Donno Alessio Piemontese* (Pesaro: Bartolomeo Cesano, 1559).

<sup>24</sup> For an overview of this system, see Annie Charon-Parent, ‘Le Monde de l’imprimerie Humaniste: Paris’, in Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin (eds.) *Histoire de l’Edition Française, Volume 1*, pp. 280–302.

<sup>25</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *De’ Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese* (Milan: Giovann’Antonio de gli Antonii, 1559).

not include any menstruation recipes, the recipe about menorrhagia was introduced in the second part ('To stench the menstrual blood in women'). and part three offered the reader two new menstruation recipes, one to provoke it and one to limit it: 'To a woman who could not have her courses' ('*A una donna che non potesse haver'il menstuo*') and 'To restrict women's terms' ('*A restringere il menstuo alle donne*'), bringing menstruation recipes to 1.4% of the total entries in the book.<sup>26</sup>

From the appearance of this edition, Piemontese's *Secreti* could include part one, two, or three, all of them or any combination of the three collections of recipes, depending on the publisher. Less than five years after its appearance, the *Secreti* had become a live body of 'how-to' knowledge, to which new content was constantly being added – much more frequently than it was being suppressed. Whether in Italian or in translation, Piemontese's bibliography became a story of additions and modifications, with most new editions of the book being somewhat enlarged versions of the previous ones. Translations could be made from the first, second or third parts of the *Secreti*, and often combined them. As it might be expected, there was often a slight delay in these enlarged translations. In 1559, for instance, Ward's translation of the first part of Piemontese's *Secreti* was reprinted, not including the second and third parts.<sup>27</sup> The following year, however, a translation of the second part of the *Secreti* by Ward was published, including the recipe 'To stench the menstrual blood in women', the only menstruation recipe to appear in the Italian text.<sup>28</sup> The English publisher also included ten new secrets of women, most of which promised to facilitate conception and to ensure the child would be male. This edition also further developed Piemontese's biography in a way that did not happen in Italian, with the translator telling readers how 'he hath kept touche':

In the ediciō of the first parte of the worthie secretes, of the reuerend Senior Alexis of Piemont, it was promised you (gentill readers) euen of hym self in his Epistle, that he would labour in the collecciō of others, tried and experimented, for the vtilitie, profite, and pleasure of all soche, as either delited in them, or would by them be eased, of soche infirmities, as thei might casually haue been greeued withall. (...) I therefore (bicause he hath kept touche, performing his promes, in collectyng a

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7 (II) and p. 48 (III).

<sup>27</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Secretes of the Reuerende Mayster Alexis of Piemount* (London: Henry Sutton, 1559).

<sup>28</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Seconde Part of the Secretes of Master Alexis of Piemont* (London: John Kingstone for Nicholas Englande, 1560).

seconde part) could no lesse dooe herein, then I did in the firste parte, that is to saie, no more to spare my labour in translatyng it, into our natiue tounge, nor hide the commoditie of so eccellente thinges, from those that haue not the vnderstandyng of the Frenche tounge, then I did before. And bicause you should not haue onely, the hed without the taile, that is, the biginnyng without the ende, you shall haue here, no lesse good and profitable matters (althoughe not so many) then was presented you in the other, as by your iudgement in readyng, you shall easely perceiue.<sup>29</sup>

The source text for Ward's translation was probably Plantin's new translation of the augmented *Secreti*, including the second part.<sup>30</sup> However, while Plantin's edition added more than twenty-five new menstruation recipes to the translation of the Italian text, Ward's translation was strictly limited to the recipes that formed the Italian second part, without considering the new content Plantin had added. Therefore, this translation only offered one menstruation recipe to the reader, the same 'To stench the menstruall blood of women' as in previous editions. It is telling that this recipe is to treat menorrhagia and not amenorrhea. In most later books, it was emmenagogues that were more prominent, with recipes to stop excessive menstruation having a secondary role. It is possible that, due to the problematic link between emmenagogues and abortifacients, publishers were reluctant to print these recipes, especially since books of secrets were marketed as vernacular domestic guides, in which the family life, health, and especially reproduction were central.<sup>31</sup>

However, the cause for the gradual inclusion of new menstruation recipes under Piemontese's name is not completely clear, even if it seems a commercial and editorial response to readers' growing interest in secrets of women. For instance, after the death of the typograph Bartolomeo Cesano, who worked as a publisher in Pesaro and Venice, his heirs published a new version of Piemontese's *Secreti*, including the three parts known by then as well as several additional menstruation recipes.<sup>32</sup> In this 1561 edition, fourteen recipes were added to the second part of the *Secreti*, and three to the third. The recipes available to readers who wanted to treat menstrual problems included 'To stench the menstrual blood in women',

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<sup>29</sup> 'The translatour to the Readers', *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Les Secrets du S. Alexis Piemontois* (Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1559).

<sup>31</sup> John M. Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992). For a critique of Riddle's approach to emmenagogues and abortifacients, see also Etienne van de Walle, 'Flowers and Fruits : Two Thousand Years of Menstrual Regulation', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 28.2 (1997), pp. 183–203.

<sup>32</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *La Prima [-Terza] Parte de' Secreti del Reverendero Donno Alessio Piemontese* (Pesaro: Heirs of Bartolomeo Cesano, 1561).

present in most editions, but also plasters, powders, and ointments for the womb (to treat excessive coldness, hotness, slipperiness, or windiness), and emmenagogues.<sup>33</sup> This contrasted with the trend of naming remedies in vague and euphemistic terms such as ‘for the red and white flowers’. While these recipes were not directly copied from Plantin’s 1559 French edition, which included a considerable number of new recipes, they seem to be inspired by them, since many of them were similar in terms of ingredients and instructions. In most subsequent English reprints, these additions were maintained, with a few extra recipes being included.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, it serves as a reminder of the dynamism in the early modern world of print: not only did original texts inspire translations and translations influenced each other, but translations often added content that was incorporated into new versions of the text in the source language, in an intricate textual network.

Piemontese’s *Secreti* continued to grow through the sixteenth century, with secrets of women in general and menstruation recipes specifically being added continuously to new versions of the book. Menstruation recipes were the category of secrets to increase the most. In the first English translation of the third part of Piemontese’s *Secreti*, done by Ward as the first two parts had been, no less than thirty new menstruation recipes were incorporated, including several ways to prepare pills, plasters and fumigating recipes.<sup>35</sup> It is telling that new versions of the editions without the added recipes also continued to be printed, both in London and in Venice.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Some of these include ‘Proven plaster for the Matrix’ (*Empiastro provato per la matrice*); ‘Miraculous recipe to provoke the menses, and make the woman able to conceive’ (*Ricetta mirabile da provocare il mestruo, & fare, che la donna si disponga a generare*); ‘Plaster for the Matrix, which helps conception’ (*Ceroto per la matrice, il qale aiuta per concipere*); ‘Plaster very useful for the Matrix’ (*Empiastro molto utile alla matrice*); ‘For the extreme heat or abscesses of the Matrix’ (*Al caldo estremo, overo, apostema della matrice*); ‘Recipe for the Matrix’ (*Ricetta per la matrice*); ‘Plaster to delay childbirth, and a remedy for the red and white flowers’ (*Ceroto per ritenere il parto, & rimedi per mestruoi rossi, & bianchi*); ‘Nicolio’s electuary to stop the menses, which is proven for the red flowers and others’ (*Elettuario per ritenere i mestruoi del Nicolio, il qual e provato ne’ mestruoi rossi, & ne gli altri*); ‘To retain the baby in the womb, proven remedy’ (*Per ritenere il figliuolo nel ventre, rimedi provati*); ‘Proven powder to provoke the menses’ (*Polvere provata a provocare i mestruoi*); ‘To stop the red flowers’ (*A raffrenare i mestruoi rossi*); ‘Ointment for the white flowers’ (*Unguento per mestruoi bianchi*), *Ibid.*, pp. 24-29.

<sup>34</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Thyrd and Last Parte of the Secretes of the Reverende Maister Alexis of Piemont* (London: Henry Denham for John Wight, 1566); Alessio Piemontese, *The Third and Last Part of the Secretes of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piemont* (London: Thomas Dawson for John Wight, 1578).

<sup>35</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Thyrd and Last Part of the Secretes of the Reuerende Maister Alexis of Piemont* (London: Roulante Hall for Nicholas England, 1562).

<sup>36</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Second Part of the Secretes of Maister Alexis of Piemont* (London: Rowland Hall for Nicholas England, 1563); Alessio Piemontese, *De’ Secreti Del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese* (Venice: Luigi Giglio, 1564); Alessio Piemontese, *The Seconde Parte of the Secrets of Maister Alexis of Piemont* (London: Henry Bynneman for John Wight, 1568).

These reprints coexisted with the editions with extra recipes, which were especially frequent in Plantin's workshop.<sup>37</sup> These editions were often the source text for translations and reprints, and a big part of the recipes to be added in English came from Plantin's additions. Just as manuscripts and printed books coexisted so too did augmented texts exist alongside the shorter versions that were closer to the original texts. While we can perceive trends in the early modern world of books, there were few ruptures in which one tradition supplanted another; as this case illustrates, there was often such an amalgamation of texts, that readers could choose between virtually dozens of versions of the same collection, published in a short period of time.

While the three parts of Piemontese's *Secreti* continued to be printed, translated, and combined, a new book of secrets was published in 1567, which claimed to be directly connected to this corpus. It was Girolamo Ruscelli's (1518-1566) own posthumous collection of recipes, which he declared to be the fruit of the activity of his 'academy of secrets', in William Eamon's translation.<sup>38</sup> Ruscelli even laid claim to Piemontese's works, claiming in the frontispiece of the recipes collection published under his name that Piemontese was his pseudonym: 'the fake name of Ruscelli'. Ruscelli was a polygraph working in Venice, and, since his claim of authorship over Piemontese's *Secreti*, is usually considered the pseudonymous compiler of these recipes, even though almost no other sources corroborate his claim.<sup>39</sup> More study on this subject would be helpful; for now, we can only say that Ruscelli is possibly the person behind Piemontese.<sup>40</sup>

This new book contained twenty-two menstruation recipes, which would eventually find their way into other books of secrets, in the constant borrowing and circulating of recipes.<sup>41</sup> Other kinds of secrets of women, such as childbirth recipes, also had a prominent role in his collection. But the main innovation of this book was the adoption of commonplaces to organise the table of contents, which became a frequent classification system from then on, in books of secrets published in Italian as well as in other languages. The most usual classification in tables of contents of recipe books until then was the 'head-to-toe' system, which was very common in medical texts. However, with the frequent addition

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<sup>37</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Les Secrets du Seigneur Alexis Piemontois* (Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1564).

<sup>38</sup> William Eamon and Françoise Paheau, 'The Accademia Segreta of Girolamo Ruscelli: A Sixteenth-Century Italian Scientific Society', *Isis*, 75.2 (1984), pp. 327-42.

<sup>39</sup> William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*.

<sup>40</sup> On Piemontese's authorship, see note 3 in the previous chapter, especially Zbigniew Bela, 'The Authorship of the Secrets of Alexis of Piedmont (Venice, 1555)'.

<sup>41</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Secreti Nuovi di Maravigliosa Virtù del Signor Ieronimo Ruscelli i Quali Continovando a Quelli di Donno Alessio, Cognome Finto del detto Ruscelli, Contengono Cose di Rara Esperienza, & di Gran Giovamento* (Venice: Marchio Sessa, 1567).



of new recipe collections in new editions, tables of contents in books of secrets could become a confusing sequence of several ‘head-to-toe’ lists, with entries about the same subject being dispersed in different parts of the book. By abandoning the model most recipe collections used until then and adopting commonplaces instead, this book became one of the easiest for readers to consult when they were looking for a specific recipe.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, with the publication of the fourth part of Piemontese’s *Secreti* in Italian and its subsequent translation into other vernaculars, even more menstruation recipes were added to the corpus of secrets that had been forming for decades, in both Italian and its various translations.<sup>43</sup> The fourth part of Piemontese’s *Secreti* included between fifteen and twenty-five menstruation recipes, depending on the edition, constituting between 2.5% and 3.6% of entries about secrets of women.<sup>44</sup> It was translated directly from Italian into English in 1569, and reprinted in 1578.<sup>45</sup> While subsequent versions kept roughly the same quantity of menstruation recipes (the 1615 English edition included twenty-eight of them), it was the 1595 English edition that combined recipes from different origins the most.<sup>46</sup> It contained parts one to three, translated by Ward, as well as part four, translated by Richard Androse, and a new part entitled ‘*Of phisicke and chirurgerie, verie excellent good, and aprooved receiptes*’. Furthermore, while later editions such as the one printed in 1615 claimed to be enlarged and corrected, they did not include all the sixty-one menstruation recipes found in the 1595 book, but less than half of it.<sup>47</sup>

This 1595 version of the *Secreti* combined all the additions and changes mentioned so far: recipes from the Italian parts one to four, additions by Plantin to these texts, new recipes included by different London printers, and recipes copied from Ruscelli’s own collection of

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<sup>42</sup> Books written in Latin by authors who addressed a more sophisticated readership, such as Della Porta, often received alphabetical tables of contents. Ann Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Michael Stolberg, ‘Medizinische Loci Communes’, *NTM Zeitschrift Für Geschichte der Wissenschaften, Technik Und Medizin*, 21.1 (2013), pp. 37–60.

<sup>43</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Della Quarta e Ultima Parte de’ Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese*, (Venice: Olivier de’Alberti, 1596); Alessio Piemontese, *Della Quarta et Ultima Parte de’ Secreti del R. D. Alessio Piemontese* (Venice: Lucio Spineda, 1603).

<sup>44</sup> Mary Scott, ‘Elizabethan Translations from the Italian: The Titles of Such Works Now First Collected and Arranged, with Annotations’, *PMLA*, 13.1 (1898), pp. 42–153.

<sup>45</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *A Verry Excellent and Profitable Booke Conteyning Sixe Hundred Foure Score and Odde Experienced Medicines, Apperteyning unto Phisick and Surgerie, Long Tyme Practysed of the Expert and Reuerend Mayster Alexis, Which He Termeth the Fourth and Finall Booke* (London: Henry Denham, 1569). Reprinted with the same title in London by Henry Denham in 1578.

<sup>46</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Secrets of Alexis of Piemont* (London: W. Stansby for R. Meighen and T. Iones, 1615).

<sup>47</sup> For the printed history of this book, see Isabelle Pantin, ‘John Hester’s Translations of Leonardo Fioravanti: The Literary Career of a London Distiller’, in S.K. Barker, and Brenda Hosington (eds.), *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads: Translation, Print and Culture in Britain, 1473-1640* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 159–83 (p. 160).

secrets.<sup>48</sup> This multiplication of recipes can be partly explained by what Catherine Lanoë has called the ‘principle of accumulation’. Not only did the growing number of recipes invite readers to manipulate them more directly, but it also reinforced their symbolic value.<sup>49</sup> This European trend became even more apparent in translated recipes.<sup>50</sup> Collecting variations could indicate the fear of losing knowledge as well as the goal of appropriating the totality of the natural world through the enumeration of singularities. Moreover, by resuming and organising this technical knowledge, it was made more accessible to potential readers.<sup>51</sup>

However, the 1595 edition of Piemontese’s *Secreti* did more than accumulate a growing body of knowledge. It modified these recipes, corrected them, and sometimes even rendered them nonsensical, as I will show in a ‘toad necklace’ recipe below. Having traced the bibliographical composition of this edition from its Italian, French and English sources, it is now possible to compare menstruation recipes thematically.

### 3. Healthy Menstruation as a Sign of Female Health

For women of fertile age, maintaining healthy and regular menstruation in the early modern period had two main goals, often related: to keep them healthy and to facilitate conception.<sup>52</sup> Recipes about menstruation and conception were usually similar, with their ingredients overlapping. Menstruation was also frequently mentioned in conception recipes as the best time to follow some procedures. It is the case of ‘To make a woman pregnant’ (*A far che una donna s’ingravidà*), a pessary recipe by Piemontese divided into instructions for after intercourse and for the end of the woman’s menstrual period:

Take one dram of cerussite [white lead] and incense, and as soon as you have been with the woman, put it inside her mother [the womb]. If you can also give her mare

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<sup>48</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piedmont* (1595).

<sup>49</sup> Catherine Lanoë, *La Poudre et le fard : Une Histoire des cosmétiques de la Renaissance aux Lumières* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2008), p. 153.

<sup>50</sup> Geneviève Deblock made a similar point for the translated *Dificio di ricetta*, in which recipes for dog bites included variations on how to use onions. She called this the ‘principle of variation’, in which the multiplication of recipes was a key structuring element of books of secrets. Geneviève Deblock (ed.), *Le Bâtiment des Recettes: Présentation et annotation de l’édition Jean Ruelle, 1560* (Rennes: PUR, 2015).

<sup>51</sup> Hélène Vérin, ‘Rédiger et réduire en art : Un Projet de rationalisation des pratiques’, in Pascal Dubourg-Glatigny and Hélène Vérin (eds.), *Réduire en art : De la Renaissance aux Lumières* (Paris : MSH, 2008), pp. 17-58, p. 25.

<sup>52</sup> Patricia Crawford, *Blood, Bodies, and Families in Early Modern England* (Harlow: Pearson, 2004).

milk to drink, or the ventricle of a hare to eat, or the testicles of a goat after the menstrual purgation comes, it will be very useful.<sup>53</sup>

It is important to note how this was not addressed to the woman, but to the husband, which we can see from the expressions ‘as soon as *you* have been with the woman’ and ‘give *her* to drink’. That was often the case in books of secrets, and several of the recipes concerning the female body in Piemontese’s books were directly addressed to men, in sharp contrast to recipe collections such as the *Dificio di ricette*, in which secrets of women were aimed at a female readership, as I have shown in Chapter 2. This recipe, while short, is composed of two parts: the pessary in the beginning and the advice about consuming animal milk, ventricle, and testicles after the woman has menstruated, likely associated with this recipe because of their symbolic value.<sup>54</sup> As a bodily cavity, the ventricle could be related to the female body and the womb, although the recipe was not specific. As for the goat’s testicles, goats were often associated with sexual power and male potency. Since this recipe was aimed at men, could this indicate anxiety about the male power to implant a child into the mother? Unfortunately, this recipe does not offer us any more clues.

As this short recipe illustrates, conception and menstruation were intimately linked. Excessive humours in the matrix, be they blood or phlegm, could hinder conception by suffocating or strangling the womb. Not only was conception widely thought to be facilitated by a clean and purged womb, but most physicians understood the regular evacuation of the uterus as necessary for women of childbearing age. Therefore, it was common for university physicians to question patients about their menstrual cycle, not only to maximise the chances of conceiving but also to look for imbalances that might make the woman ill.<sup>55</sup> The absence of menstruation and the blocking of the womb with excessive blood were considered severe medical problems, and vicarious menstruation and blood-letting coexisted with recipes to stimulate menstruation.<sup>56</sup> As Helen King demonstrated, lack of menstruation was thought to cause a series of medical problems, including green sickness, a disease which typically

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<sup>53</sup> ‘Piglia cerusa e incenso ana dramma una, e subito che tu hai usato con la donna metineli dentro nella madre. Se tu le dai ancora da beber latte di cavalla, over da mangiar il ventriculo d’una lepre, over li testicoli d’un becco dopo che le è venuta la sua purgatione menstruale, le gioverà molto.’ Alessio Piemontese, *De’ Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese* (1559), p. 8r [Book II].

<sup>54</sup> Pamela Smith, ‘What is a Secret? Secrets and Craft Knowledge in Early Modern Europe’, in Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin (eds.), *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science 1500-1800* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 47–66.

<sup>55</sup> Luigi Arata, ‘Menses in the Corpus Hippocraticum’, in *Menstruation: A Cultural History*, pp. 13–24.

<sup>56</sup> Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason: The Modern Foundations of Body and Soul* (London; New York: W. W. Norton, 2003).

affected young women and was defined by amenorrhoea.<sup>57</sup> As the abundance of menstruation recipes in the early modern period indicate, there was a real concern for encouraging menstruation. The quantity and quality of the blood were important factors, as well as the periodicity of the purgation.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, while recipes to stop menstruation and avoid excessive loss of blood existed, they were not as common as recipes to stimulate the evacuation of blood. Windiness and pain in the uterus, while unpleasant, seem to have been considered secondary problems. Indeed, there were much fewer of those recipes, and they often overlapped with entries about cancer and tumours in the womb.<sup>59</sup>

These recipes took different forms, and in the 1595 English edition of Piemontese's *Secreti* we can find virtually all of them. This is possible because of the sheer quantity of these recipes, as I have shown in the previous section. These recipes were medicines either for internal or external application, with both methods of treating menstrual problems often combined. The difference between internal and external medicines was not usually mentioned in early modern recipe books, which tended to combine them. Plasters, ointments, and washing/medicinal bath recipes composed the group of external treatments, as well as advice about amulets or sympathetic magic; while solutions, electuaries, pills, 'edible remedies', and fumigating recipes constituted internal treatments. Most of these formats of medicine coexisted in the same book and were offered to the reader as different ways of treating the same ailment.

Furthermore, recipes tended to use the same ingredients, whether they were aimed at treating amenorrhea or menorrhagia. Mint, mugworts, juniper, chamomile, calamine, nutmeg, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, cardamom, aniseed, basil, savin, parsley, and fennel, among others, were some of the most frequent ingredients, combining calming and laxative/purgative qualities as well as heating the blood and therefore cleaning the womb and facilitating conception. These ingredients were often combined with less common ones including dragon blood, mandrake, salamander, red coral, human hair or milk, in specific recipes in which they have a symbolic or sympathetic role connected to colour or bodily function. In an

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<sup>57</sup> Helen King, *The Disease of Virgins: Greensickness, Chlorosis and the Problems of Puberty* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>58</sup> Michael Stolberg, 'Menstruation and Sexual Difference in Early Modern Medicine'.

<sup>59</sup> The most frequently reprinted of these recipes, a solution titled 'Remedies against the payne, swelling, and ventositie of the Matrice' and first introduced by Plantin in 1559, was reprinted in the original French and in English six times (1562, 1564, 1566, 1578, 1595, 1615). It was a solution of *matricaria* (mayweed), wild carrot (in its Latin form, *daucus*), honey, hen broth, and aniseed. Since Plantin's introduction of the recipe, it underwent no changes in reprints or translation. Alessio Piemontese, *Les Secrets du S. Alexis Piemontois* (1559), p. 15.

emmenagogue recipe published in 1562, for instance, pills containing the patient's hair should be used to 'perfume her nostrils'.<sup>60</sup>

Short recipes such as these were the rule in popular books of secrets such as Piemontese's. For example, in the first recipe to be included in this corpus, in the 1559 Italian edition, a way to treat menorrhagia was presented to the reader. It was almost more of a magic trick than a recipe in a strict sense, reminding us of the broad meaning of early modern recipes. Readers were told that hanging a small stone around the woman's neck would stop excessive menstruation:

*A stagnar'il sangue menstruale alle Donne. Piglia un zatto, e legalo con un bindello, e metilo al colo a quella donna che patisce tal'infermita, che infra pochi giorni si liberara.*<sup>61</sup>

'Zatto', the only ingredient in this recipe, was a common way of referring to toadstone or batrachite, a mythical stone thought to be found in toads' heads.<sup>62</sup> When the recipe was first translated into English in 1560, however, Ward replaced 'zatto', toadstone, with 'toad', changing the medical necklace from one where a magical stone is the remedy to one in which it was the animal itself that should hang around women's necks:

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<sup>60</sup> This recipe first appeared in the 1562 English edition, as 'Agaynst the same. Take two dragmes of *castoreum*, a dragme of the same womans heare, mixt with a litle Rosen of a Pyne tree, and make thereof greate Pilles as bigge as Filberdes, with one of the whiche Pilles perfume her nostrels, at the tyme of the prefocation or stranglinge of the Matrice, and incontinent she shalbe eased', Alessio Piemontese, *The Thyrd and Last Part of the Secretes of the Reuerende Maister Alexis of Piemont* (1562), p. 18. It was reprinted in the 1595 English edition and translated into French as '*Contre la mesme. Pren 2 drach. de castoreum, vne drach. des cheueus de la paciente, melle avec resine de pin, & fay pillules grosses, comm'auelaines, avec l'vne desquelles perfume ses narines, à l'heure de la prefocation, incontinent elle sera allégée.*' Alessio Piemontese, *Les Secrets du Seigneur Alexis Piemontois* (1564), p. 92. It is one of the few instances in which English additions were incorporated into Plantin's French versions. While it was more frequent for the opposite to happen, this case reminds us of how frequent 'borrowings' were and how recipes circulated.

<sup>61</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *De' Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese* (1559), p. 7r (II).

<sup>62</sup> '*Of the Garatromo or Toadstone.* This stone is of a brownish colour somewhat tending to rednes, convex on the one side; & on the other side, sometimes plain, sometimes hollow. Some say this stone is found in the head of an old Toad; others say that the old toad must be laid upon the cloth that is red and it will belch it up, or otherwise not; you may give a like credit to both these reports, for as little truth is to be found in them as may possibly be', Thomas Nicols, *Lapidary, Or, The History of Pretious Stones: Part II* (Cambridge: Thomas Buck, 1652), pp. 158–59.

To stench the menstrual blood of women. Take a toad and bind him with a little band, and hang it about the womans necke that hath that infirmitie, and in few daies she shalbe cleered of it.<sup>63</sup>

It is likely that Ward meant toad in the alchemical sense (*'bufo'*), meaning bufonite, or toadstone.<sup>64</sup> However, by choosing to use 'toad', non-specialised readers would have thought this meant the animal. It is possible that Ward intended to make this recipe accessible only to those initiated in the alchemical arts. But if so, why would he not have done similar changes to other recipes? Lack of clarity and confusion, misunderstandings, and the alchemical tradition of leaving some things unsaid meant that readers were presented with a 'toad necklace' in this recipe. This would not have happened in Italian, in which *zatto* (toadstone) bears no resemblance to *rospo* (toad).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, mistranslations were not rare in books of secrets, and it is telling that all subsequent versions of this recipe suggested that women wear 'toad necklaces', without the recipe ever being corrected. It certainly indicates the amount of work that publishers and translators had to do in a very short period. The opposite phenomenon happened as well though, with some recipes amended or rendered more specific in translation, such as an ointment added to the 1559 edition of Piemontese's *Secreti* by Plantin. In the original French text, this recipe to treat menorrhagia read:

*Oignement contre le mesme. Pren jus de plantain, jus de solatrum, jus de joubarbe de chacun demie once: coral rouge, encens, mastic, de chacun drach. & demie: coriandre préparé, semence de roses rouges, de chacun 2 onces: semences de jusquiam blanc, ecorces de racines de mandragore, de chacun demie drachme: de vin-aigre rouge trefort demie once: puluerise bien delie ce qui se peut pulueriser, & melle tout ensemble, dequoy estant tiede, oin-en les plantes des pies de la femme, chaque soir a l'entree du lit, tu en voiras bonne & heureuse issue.*<sup>65</sup>

This formula, to be applied warm to the woman's feet before sleep, contained several red ingredients as well as white, in a sympathetic association with the white and red flowers. When it was incorporated into the English version, Ward corrected '*jubarbe*', probably a

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<sup>63</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Seconde Part of the Secretes of Master Alexis of Piemont* (1560), p. 124r.

<sup>64</sup> See 'Toad', in the Oxford English Dictionary, <https://www.oed.com/>. Last consulted on 27/06/22.

<sup>65</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Les Secrets du S. Alexis Piemontois* (1559), p. 95.

printing error, rendering it '*rubarbe*'. But he also specified that the incense should be of the male kind, symbolically linking this menstruation recipe to conception anxieties:

An oyntment agaynst the same. Take the iuyce of Plantan, the iuyce of *Solatrum*, the iuyce of Rubarbe, of eche halfe an vnce, red Coral, Frankensence of the male kynde, Mastick, of eche a dragme and a halfe: Coriander prepared, seedes of redde Roses, of eche two Scruples, seedes of whyte *Iusquiamum*, the ryne of the rootes of Mandragora, of ech half a dragme: strong red Uinaigre half an vnce, make in fyne poudre all that may be made, and mingle al together, with the whiche beinge luke warme, annoynt the soules of the womans feete euerye night whan she goeth to bed, and you shal see a good & fortunat effect.<sup>66</sup>

Ward also rendered '*jusquiam*' as '*Iusquiamum*', translating white henbane into Latin rather than English. While this nightshade was a powerful anaesthetic, as the mandrake roots included in the recipe, it may have been the toxicity of the plant that made Ward opt for the Latin term, which he also did for '*mandragora*'. The same happened to the word '*solatrum*', another toxic ingredient employed in Latin by Plantin and kept that way by Ward, instead of the more usual English 'black solanum' or Italian '*belladonna*'. As mentioned before, translators were often more careful in vernacular translations, given their broader reach, preferring to keep certain words in Latin. It is also significant that, despite books of secrets having often been modified in subsequent reprints, the Latin terms were kept in the 1566, 1595 and 1615 editions, despite revisions.

This unveiling of secrets through print while keeping some knowledge less accessible from a linguistic perspective (like the toadstone recipe above) highlights how printers and translators kept their readers in mind. The specificity of language or its lack of clarity both indicate how recipes were expected to act as starting points, rather than just steps to be followed to the letter. By reading recipes, readers were invited into the conversation, bringing their empirical knowledge as well as other readings. Recipes encouraged exchange, further reading, and exploration. These seemingly contradictory practices, such as making language more precise in one recipe and more confusing in another, indicate how readers were perceived, and expected to engage directly with the books' contents.

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<sup>66</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Thyrd and Last Part of the Secretes of the Reuerende Maister Alexis of Piemont* (1562), p. 18.

In the case of Latin words, it is also possible that some recipes employed the Latin names of plants because they were addressed to physicians, and not to non-specialised readers. Because of the composite nature of these books, recipes aimed at laywomen, midwives, surgeons, and physicians were printed side by side. This is particularly clear in editions such as the 1595 *Secreti*, which combined many of its predecessors. While some recipes addressed women specifically, indicating they were to be followed at home and used on oneself, others seemed addressed to husbands, or physicians the woman might consult. In a recipe added to the third part of *Secreti* in 1562, for instance, it seems the expected reader is a medical practitioner:

A plaister or cere clothe to laye vpon the Matrice yf the grieve be olde or inuerate. Take an vnce of dryed *Matricaria*, with as much of the flowers of *Cheiri*, dried: half an vnce of *Gallia muscato*. or els *alefangine*, if the woman be poore of *Galbanum*, *Bdellium*. *Serapini*, of eche two Dragmes: *Olibani*, Masticke, of eche a Dragme and a halfe: Dissolue these gomme in oyle of *Cheiri*, makeinge into pouder the rest that maye be made: and make thereof a playster wyth a lytle pitche, waxe and oyle of *Sefanni*, spreadyng it vppon some leather, and layinge it vpon the place of the Matrice, and renewe it euery eyght dayes.<sup>67</sup>

While not all further reprints (1566, 1595, 1615) of the recipe kept the change of typographical characters, with the main text in black letter and the Latin words in Roman type, the part about using different ingredients if the woman is ‘poor’ remained an important part of the recipe. This indicates that the recipe was probably aimed at a practitioner, either a physician or the apothecary who would prepare the plaster for the patient. There were many recipes in which readers with different levels of ability were considered, but this is one of the few examples of recipes in which social status is a clear aspect of how the recipe was created.

Other adaptations, such as replacing a challenging ingredient with another more readily available in the country where the book was being translated, were much more common. It is the case of the addition from the 1559 version, ‘*A ristringere il menstuo alle donne*’, in which powder of pomegranate peel should be drunk in water or wine.<sup>68</sup> In Italian reprints, the recipe was not modified, but, when it was translated into English, it was the

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>68</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *De’ Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese* (1559), p. 48r (III).



‘inward skinne that covered the kernels of wilde silverberries’ that should be used.<sup>69</sup> In another recipe to purge the matrix, tansy, a well-known emmenagogue/abortifacient, was replaced with nettle. The reason is not clear, as both plants were common in the early modern period, but it is possible that, because tansy was often more closely associated with inducing abortions, the publisher might have opted for replacing it with nettle. These substitutions were common, and often the recipes themselves suggested alternative ingredients. When this recipe was first introduced into Piemontese’s *Secreti*, it told the reader:

To purge the matrix of women. Take of the leaues of Tansey, and drie them, and bray them into powder, of the which cause the woman to drinke halfe an ounce in good whyte wine, and it will purge the matrix commodiously: the lyke effect doth the iuice of Paritorie [nettle] giuen do drinke.<sup>70</sup>

When it was reprinted in 1595, however, the reader was told: ‘Take the leaves and stalkes of Paritorie...’, without ever mentioning tansy.<sup>71</sup>

In other instances, however, simple and unproblematic ingredients found almost anywhere in Europe appeared in Latin, as if by elevating the register from the mundane to the academic the recipe too would be lifted from the purely domestic to the medical. For instance, in a recipe to stimulate menstruation, wild carrot appeared as ‘*daucus*’, in Latin:

Agaynst the same. Take water distiled of the rootes of *Daucus*, of wylde Poppye fyue vneces, Honnye roset an vnce and a half: mixe al together, and giue the woman drinke of it.<sup>72</sup>

In its subsequent editions (1595, 1615), that form was kept. When the recipe was translated into French, Plantin also maintained it in its original form: ‘*Contre la mesme. Pren eau*

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<sup>69</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *La Prima [-Terza] Parte de’ Secreti Del Reverendero Donno Alessio Piemontese* (1561), p. 34; Alessio Piemontese, *The Third and Last Part of the the Secretes of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piemont* (1578), p. 19; Alessio Piemontese, *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piedmont* (1595), p. 211r; Alessio Piemontese (1615), *The Secrets of Alexis of Piemont*, p. 211r.

<sup>70</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *A Verye Excellent and Profitable Booke Conteyning Sixe Hundred Foure Score and Odde Experienced Medicines* (1569), p. 19 (IVb).

<sup>71</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piedmont* (1595), p. 274r.

<sup>72</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Thyrd and Last Part of the Secretes of the Reuerende Maister Alexis of Piemont* (1562), p. 18.

*distillee de racines de daucus, de pauots sauuages 5 onces, miel rosat once & demie: melle tout ensemble, & en donne a boire a la femme.*<sup>73</sup>

It was also common for ingredients to be simply suppressed, either because they were considered superfluous or to simplify the recipe, demonstrating how recipes often acted as lists of ingredients to treat medical problems, from which readers could choose which ones to use. Indeed, by comparing these recipes it is possible to see the same ingredient, such as cinnamon, being employed on its own, with a few other ingredients, and as a part of long lists. That could mean that readers with only partial access to the ingredients in one recipe could still follow it and profit from it, since most of the ingredients treated the ailment, with the absence of some not being detrimental to the recipe.

It seems their combination could often enhance the effect of the medicine, but recipes could be followed only partly. In a rare recipe to delay childbirth and to treat white and red flowers disorders, among red and white ingredients such as roses, sandalwood, and coral, two synonyms of the plant resin mastic were offered to the reader, in different quantities: '*Piglia mastici onc. 2 odano onc. 1 cera citrina onc una & mezza*'.<sup>74</sup> In the French version, the reader was just told '*Pren 2 onces de mastic*'.<sup>75</sup> When this recipe was reprinted in 1567 as part of Girolamo Ruscelli's 'new' secrets, however, the publisher kept it as it was in the original. It is possible that Plantin found the recipe redundant and sought to simplify it, as he did with overly complicated titles since there were already more than fifteen ingredients in it.<sup>76</sup> Regardless of eventual suppressions, however, the translation of dozens of recipes to keep women healthy by the frequent (but not excessive) purgation of the womb was characterised by the addition of new elements. Some of the recipes became almost like inverted herbals, long lists of ingredients to treat one ailment. While herbals consisted of lists of plants with their properties, in books of secrets, we find lists of ailments with their herbal remedies.

Whereas short recipes such as the ones cited above were more frequent and numerous, longer recipes were also common, in which the content of other recipes was often summarised. In a recipe added to the 1561 Italian version, and later translated into French and incorporated into Ruscelli's secrets, more than thirty ingredients were suggested to the

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<sup>73</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Les Secrets du Seigneur Alexis Piemontois* (1564), p. 92.

<sup>74</sup> '*Ceroto per ritenere il parto, & rimedii per menstrui rossi, & bianchi*', Alessio Piemontese, *La Prima [-Terza] Parte de' Secreti Del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese* (1561), p. 18 (II).

<sup>75</sup> '*Cyrop pour retenir l'enfantement, & le remède pour les fleurs des femmes blanc & rouges*' Alessio Piemontese, *De' Secreti Del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese* (1564), p. 93.

<sup>76</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Secreti Nuovi di Maravigliosa Virtù del Signor Ieronimo Ruscelli* (1567), p. 257v.

reader.<sup>77</sup> This ‘Miraculous recipe to provoke the menses, and make it easier for women to conceive’, included plants (such as calamine and endive) and animals (bull’s tongue), which should be cooked separately in two different ways. With this recipe, readers had a general guide for treating menstrual problems and facilitating conception, be it by stimulating menstruation and cleaning the womb, or by stopping the purgation when it became excessive.

#### 4. Between Emmenagogues and Abortifacients

In a recipe added to the Piemontese corpus by Plantin in 1559, called ‘Remedy to make women’s terms come, if they are detained or hindered for some reason’, women were advised to be careful when drinking it, since ‘everything that provokes the flowers makes them miscarry’:

*Remède pour faire venir le temps des femmes detenu & empeché. Pren deux onces de suc de savina, & le purifie, mellant ensemble deux drachmes de canelle bien pulverisée: quatre grains de saffran: deux onces d’eau de raue distillée, avec vn peu de sucre, pour deux fois: cela provoque les fleurs a merveille. Parquoy se faut bien garder de le donner a la femme enceinte. Car tout ce qui prouoque les fleurs, les fait aussi avortir.*<sup>78</sup>

This recipe contained many of the ingredients frequently used in menstruation recipes, such as savin, cinnamon, and saffron, adding radish possibly because of its symbolic colour. The recipe was reprinted in French only once, in 1564, but it was incorporated into the English version in 1562, and reprinted in 1566, 1595, and 1615. The English translation made one significant change, however. It was less direct than the French version about the danger of abortion:

Remedies to make a womans time to come, that is let or hindered by some cause. Take two onces of the iuyce of Sauyne, and purifie it, miring with it two dragmes of Synamon well made into powder: fower graines of Saffron, two onces of the water of Radish rootes distilled with a little Suger, for two times: this provoketh marveilously

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<sup>77</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *La Prima [-Terza] Parte de’ Secreti del Reverendero Donno Alessio Piemontese* (1561), p. 25; Alessio Piemontese, *Les Secrets du Seigneur Alexis Piemontois* (1564); Alessio Piemontese, *Secreti Nuovi di Maravigliosa Virtù del Signor Ieronimo Rucelli* (1567), p. 255r.

<sup>78</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Les Secrets du S. Alexis Piemontois* (1559), p. 15.

the flowers of a woman. Wherefore beware ye give it not onto a woman great with childe: For all that provoketh hir flowers, and maketh hir also to labour before hir time.<sup>79</sup>

In the translation, the danger of abortion/miscarriage was more subtly suggested to the reader. Neither of these words was used, and it is the possibility of anticipating childbirth, rather than that of miscarrying, that is underlined. Once more, it is relevant that this recipe was not addressed to women in general (though undoubtedly, they could have used it), but to medical practitioners, including midwives.

There is a long historiographical debate about the overlapping nature of emmenagogues, remedies to provoke menstruation, and abortifacients, which induced abortions, by their nature very similar.<sup>80</sup> Most menstruation recipes dealing with amenorrhea could be understood as either or both since they shared the same methods and ingredients. Indeed, as the goal in both traditional emmenagogues and abortifacients recipes is to provoke uterine contractions and purge the womb, thereby voiding it of its contents (be it a foetus or accumulated blood/phlegm), it is difficult and, I think, not particularly useful to draw this distinction in early modern books of secrets. As demonstrated above, since a clean and empty womb was often thought to be a precondition to conception, purging it regularly by following emmenagogue recipes was not unusual.<sup>81</sup> Naturally, women could use these same recipes to get rid of unwanted pregnancies, even if that was not the recipes' primary goal.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, recipes such as the one cited above rendered this connection even more evident by advising women of their dangers. Alternatively, it could also be argued that this was a way of making female readers understand this was an abortifacient recipe as well, without drawing too much attention to it in print.

While there is no sure way of knowing what publishers meant by the addition of this last sentence, whether it covertly signed to women that this was an abortifacient recipe, or whether it genuinely alerted them to its dangers, the recipe could, and probably was, used to both ends. As with many of the recipes to purge the womb, it seems it was not so much the ingredients and procedures that determined whether the recipe would cause an unwanted

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<sup>79</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piedmont* (1595), p. 210v.

<sup>80</sup> Edward Shorter, *A History of Women's Bodies* (New York: Basic Books, 1982); John Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance*.

<sup>81</sup> Angus McLaren, *Reproductive Rituals: The Perception of Fertility in England from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth Century* (London; New York: Methuen, 1984).

<sup>82</sup> Bethan Hindson, 'Attitudes Towards Menstruation and Menstrual Blood in Elizabethan England', *Journal of Social History*, 43.1 (2009), pp. 89–114.

miscarriage, provoke a voluntary abortion, stimulate menstruation, induce childbirth, or expel a retained placenta, but rather the bodily condition of the woman using that pessary or drinking that solution. This is made clear by the fact that several recipes in Piemontese's *Secreti* combined different goals in their titles, as if the female body would know how to react to the recipes in the appropriate way. I have shown in previous chapters how much knowledge was expected of readers of recipes. In the case of menstruation recipes, it becomes clear that this was often a *bodily* knowledge, a *physical* understanding of secrets of women.

If we consider recipes for the expulsion of a retained placenta, that is easy to see, with titles such as 'Against the difficultie of bringing forth child, and the retention of the skynne that the childe is wrapped in, called in Latine *Secundina* or *Secundae*', which aimed to facilitate childbirth as well as to help expel a retained placenta.<sup>83</sup> Expelling a dead foetus was also often associated with these recipes, such as in 'A remedie to cause a woman to bring forth the deade creature, or the skin that the childe is wrapped in, called in Italian *Secunda*'.<sup>84</sup> Other recipes linked the placenta even more closely with menstruation, such as 'To prouoke the flowers, and the Secunda vnto women', added in the 1569 version of the *Secreti*.<sup>85</sup> Several variations of this recipe appeared in the same book and were reprinted along with new recipes in 1566, 1595 and 1615. As these recipes attest, while the reason for purging the womb may vary, ingredients and procedures often overlapped, with the line between emmenagogues and abortifacient becoming tenuous.

While almost all recipes to provoke menstruation could be seen as indirect abortifacient remedies as well as emmenagogues to keep women healthy and facilitate conception, some were very direct in their intent. In another of Plantin's additions to the Italian text, which was reprinted in most English versions, readers were offered a way to purge the womb after a miscarriage:

*Autre remède fort bon aussi pour faire jecter l'avortement. Melle deux grains de saffran, & deux drachmes de sucre, en quatre onces d'eau de pimprenelle, en faisant*

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<sup>83</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Thyrd and Last Part of the Secretes of the Reuerende Maister Alexis of Piemont* (1562). This English addition is one of the first 'placenta recipes' to appear in early modern books of secrets and appears in most reprints.

<sup>84</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *A Verye Excellent and Profitable Booke Containing Sixe Hundred Foure Score and Odde Experienced Medicines* (1569), p. 14.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

*breuvage pour une fois: & le donne a la femme, a deux fois, au point du jour, & a l'entrée du lit.*<sup>86</sup>

While this recipe contained saffron and pimperl, both frequently used in menstruation recipes due to their purgative properties, when it was translated into English the title was changed entirely, although the procedure to make the drink remained the same:

An other remedie verie good also, to cause a woman to bring forth the childe before the time, if the woman be in daunger of it. Mixe two grained of Saffron, and two Dragmes of suger in fower onces of Pympernell water, making thereof a drinke, and give it to the woman twice, at the breake of the day, and when she goeth to bed.<sup>87</sup>

First incorporated into the English version in 1566, and reprinted in 1595 and 1615, the new title adopted indicated this recipe was being restyled an overt way to provoke an abortion, provided that the woman's life was in danger. Like many of these recipes, it seems addressed to a medical practitioner, even though readership could vary, as I discussed in the first chapter. This is one of the few cases in the translation of early modern secrets in which nothing changed in the recipe itself, but the title was transformed. While in French the recipe seems addressed to women who had a spontaneous miscarriage and needed to purge their wombs of anything remaining, in English it was women with risky pregnancies that should be treated, thereby provoking an abortion. This change corroborates the idea that it was not ingredients and procedures that turned recipes into emmenagogues or abortifacients, but rather the intent of the one following them, and the bodily state of the woman ingesting the remedy.

It was not rare for publishers to warn readers of the potential dangers of menstruation recipes and, while I do not think we should assume it was always a way to indirectly let women know that this was an abortifacient recipe, that was a reasonable conclusion to any woman reading the recipe.<sup>88</sup> For instance, in another remedy added to the 1595 edition of Piemontese, which I could not find reprinted elsewhere, readers were advised of the danger of the recipe:

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<sup>86</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *Les Secrets du S. Alexis Piemontois* (1559), p. 15.

<sup>87</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piedmont* (1595), p. 210v.

<sup>88</sup> Etienne van de Walle, 'Flowers and Fruits'.

Another remedie verie good, but yet such one that may not be given, but in great necessitie, or when the childe is dead within her bellie. Mixe together two onces of the iuice of Savin, a dram of Boras minerall wel made in pouder, and an once of odoriferous white wine, and give it the woman to drink and the effect will soone follow.<sup>89</sup>

This recipe summarised what the two versions of the previous recipe stated: this was a recipe to expel a dead foetus after a miscarriage, but it could also terminate a (possibly dangerous) pregnancy.

Although many of these recipes had telling titles, for readers who perused more than one book or even read all the recipes in the same collection to provoke menstruation, it surely would be apparent that most recipes tended to use the same ingredients, albeit in different forms. Besides solutions to drink in the morning and/or before going to bed, readers could make ointments or medicinal baths or washings, using virtually the same ingredients of drink recipes. In a recipe to purge the womb added to the *Secreti* in 1562 and, as most others, reprinted in 1566, 1595 and 1615, readers should:

Take Calamint, *Matricaria*, flowers of Cammomille, of Sage, of Rosemary, of eche a handefull: Seeth all in lye, or ashye water of a sufficient quantitie, vntil the thyردة part be consumed with the whych water washe the legges of the woman, from the knees to the feete.<sup>90</sup>

In a variation added to the 1564 French edition, another recipe for a herbal wash to be applied to women's legs also contained calamine, as well as wisteria and cyclamen roots, both common ingredients in these recipes.<sup>91</sup> Yet another example is a recipe printed in the

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<sup>89</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piedmont* (1595), p. 215r.

<sup>90</sup> 'Another [way to purge the womb]', Alessio Piemontese, *The Thyردة and Last Part of the Secretes of the Reuerende Maister Alexis of Piemont* (1562), p. 18.

<sup>91</sup> 'Contre prefocation de matrice. Fay bouillir en vin puissant tant qu'il est besoin, racines de glayeul, racines de calament, racines de ciclamen, de chacunes vne poignée, tant que le vin soit a la moitié consumé: puis coule les, & de ce qui est coule laue-en les genouils de la femme au matin & au soir. Cela y vaut beaucoup', Alessio Piemontese, *Les Secrets du Seigneur Alexis Piemontois* (1564), p. 91. It was incorporated into the 1595 edition as 'Against the presofocation or strangling of the Matrice. Sceth in strong Wine the rootes of Gladiolus, the rootes of Calamint, the rootes of Ciclamen, in Englishe Rare Violet, of eche a handfull, untill halfe the wine be consumed: then straine them, and with that which is strained out, washe the womans knees morning and evening for it is very good', Alessio Piemontese, *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piedmont* (1595), p. 211r.

same 1562 book (and reprinted in the same versions of the *Secreti*). In this recipe, readers should put similar herbs over a hot brick, and lay it over the womb:

A fomentation or nouryshyng. Take a handfull of Artemisia, with as much of the flowers of Camomille, Mynte, and Calamynte, make hote a tyle, and powre some good and odoriferous wyne vpon it, and after put also the herbes vpon it for to laye them so hote vpon the Matrice, at euerye tyme that the payne commeth. Neuertheles, take heede that you washe or bath her not, because that all moysture is euil for her.<sup>92</sup>

This recipe, which would warm the womb, thereby making it more suitable for conception, while at the same time making the herbal remedies penetrate the skin, used several of the ingredients mentioned so far. It reminds us not only of a conception of the body being porous, and how the line between internal and external was often blurred, with the herbal remedies penetrating the skin, but it also indicates how ‘porous’ recipes themselves were. How the same ingredients migrated from one recipe to another, composing a web of different ways to treat the same issues. Different budgets, availability of ingredients or the reader’s skill were all elements favoured by this way of disseminating knowledge, allowing the reader to decide which recipe (or recipes) they would follow.

Therefore, not only did menstruation recipes in Piemontese’s *Secreti* multiply in number in the fifty years that followed the publication of the first Italian edition in 1555, but so did the ways to treat menstrual troubles, from ingredients to formats of medicine. With the successive versions of the *Secreti*, increasingly more ingredients were offered to readers, creating a network of recipes that, read together, arguably formed something close to a herbal in reverse. But the same process happened with the formats of medicine offered to readers willing to regulate menstruation, or to the medical practitioners who would treat them. Pessaries, solutions, ointments, fumigating recipes, and pills composed an arsenal of ways to provoke or stop excessive menstruation, in which the same group of roughly forty ingredients was combined in myriad ways. Readers could follow simple instructions to produce a solution of nutmeg and *matricaria*, but they could also find a similar, more complicated

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<sup>92</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Thyrd and Last Part of the Secretes of the Reuerende Maister Alexis of Piemont* (1562), p. 18.



recipe, in which it was not a common solution, but a rare ‘edible remedy’ that was produced.<sup>93</sup>

This is one of the most unusual menstruation recipes in Piemontese’s *Secreti*, in which a roasted apple filled with nutmeg and cinnamon should be eaten to provoke menstruation and treat dysmenorrhea, or menstrual pain. It could also be used to treat other painful uterine ailments, including tumours. It was, like several others, a recipe added by Plantin in the 1559 French edition, and it was reprinted in 1564, as well as translated and incorporated into the 1562, 1566, 1595, and 1615 editions.<sup>94</sup> Like many of the other recipes to treat menstrual disorders, from the typically sweet electuaries to solutions, sugar and heat composed a central part of the remedy:

An other remedie verie good, and well knowen of women. Take a sweet Apple, and make him hollow within, make a powder of Nutmegs, Mace, Synamon, of each halfe a dragme, Cloves halfe a scruple: put all this within the Apple with a little Suger, and rost it under hote ashes, and give of it onto the woman ever when the paine commeth onto hir. But if the paine increase so much that hir life is in doubt, put to all this two graines of Opium, and sodainly the paine will depart.<sup>95</sup>

This recipe for an edible remedy not only combined ingredients usually connected to menstruation remedies, but it also offered readers yet another format of medicine to treat menstrual disorders, by eating a roasted, spiced, sweet apple, which was supposed to alleviate menstrual pain as well as to purge the womb. But, because the last sentence emphasised the

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<sup>93</sup> ‘Autre experiment par aucunes femmes. Pren une drachme de noix muscate: drachme & demye de racines de matricaire: un scrupule de spica, fay tout bouillir en six onces de bon vin blanc, tant que la troisième partie soit consumée. Coule-le après, mettant en ce qui sera coule, deux drachmes de sucre tre-blanc, & en-donne ainsi a la femme, au point du jour, & a toute heure, que la douleur la molesterá’, Alessio Piemontese, *Les Secrets du S. Alexis Piemontois* (1559), p. 15. This recipe was reprinted in French in 1564, and was translated into English in 1562 as ‘Another tryed of some women. Take a dragme of Nutmegges, a dragme and a half of y<sup>e</sup> roots of Matricaria, a scruple of Spica, seeth al this in sixe vneces of good whyte wyne, vntil the thirde parte be consumed. Than strayne it out, putting into that whiche shalbe strayned two Dragmes of verye whyte sugre, and so gyue of it vnto the woman, at the breake of the daye, and at all tymes when the payne shall take her’, Alessio Piemontese, *The Thyrd and Last Part of the Secretes of the Reuerende Maister Alexis of Piemont* (1562), p. 18. It was reprinted in 1566, 1595 and 1615.

<sup>94</sup> ‘Autre remède fort bon, & bien connu des femmes. Pren une pomme douce, & la creuse par dedans, puluerise noix muscate, macis, canelle, de chacun demie drachme: clous de gyroffle demy scrupule: mets tout cela dedans cette pomme avec quelque peu de sucre, la laissant cuire sous cendres ardentes, & en-donne a la femme chaque-fois que le mal luy revient. Que si la douleur rengrege tellement que la vie en-soit en doute, adjoute a tout cela deux grains d’opium, soudain se retirera la douleur’, Alessio Piemontese, *Les Secrets du S. Alexis Piemontois* (1559), p. 15.

<sup>95</sup> Alessio Piemontese, *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piedmont* (1595), p. 210r.

patient's life might be in danger, readers could understand pain in this recipe not only as the normal discomfort of menstruation but rather the pain of the purgation itself. Indeed, the suggestion that if the pain was excessive two grains of opium should be used as well suggests that the author of this recipe could have anticipated readers who might use it to provoke an abortion. Otherwise, if the aim was to simply stimulate menstruation and lessen uterine cramps, the addition of opium might seem excessive. Once more, one of Piemontese's recipes combined traditional ingredients while offering the reader something new. In this case, both the format of medicine and the suggestion of additional opium for the pain built on previous knowledge.

Menstruation recipes were rarely just one thing; instead, they condensed and combined knowledge in new ways, encouraging different kinds of moral agency and choice from the reader while at the same time alerting/suggesting that many of these emmenagogue recipes could be used as abortifacients. Once more, the difference between the two does not seem to be perceptible in the actual recipes, but rather in the intent of the one using the recipe as well as the condition of the body, and especially the womb, in which the remedy would be applied.

## 5. Conclusion

Most early modern books of secrets saw an increase in secrets of women, and specifically menstruation recipes, from the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century. This trend included cases such as the *Dificio di ricette*, which in its first edition contained two menstruation recipes (1%), more than doubling that number in its French translation (nine, or 2.2%). Nowhere was this publishing trend clearer than in Piemontese's case, since the first edition contained no menstrual entries, while the 1595 version offered readers more than sixty remedies for menstrual disorders (3.6%). Although almost all recipe books included some form of menstruation recipe, most of them saw this kind of recipe increase rapidly in number, with the editorial trend being complemented by a medical one, namely the transition from cure-alls to more specialised recipes.

At the same time, the addition of recipes throughout the decades kept a corpus such as Piemontese's *Secreti* alive, continuously reshaped and enlarged. Not only did the growing list of ingredients to treat menstrual disorders multiply but so did the formats of medicine available to readers, with internal and external medicines complementing each other. Translators and publishers aimed to make recipes more detailed, specifying 'male

Frankincense' rather than 'incense', and adding symbolic elements of colour to sympathetically make recipes more effective. However, while there was undoubtedly a growing specialisation in the procedures to treat menstrual problems, and particularly the formats of medicine, ingredients tended to be the same to treat different issues. I have described in the first chapters how much knowledge was expected of readers, and how ideal and real readers contrasted. But in this chapter, I highlighted how much knowledge (and even agency) was expected of the body as well.

The body would know how to use the remedy for what was needed, such as whether to stimulate or stop menstruation. Therefore, several of these recipes were very similar, with the recurrent ingredients being combined and used in different ways, from edible remedies to solutions and pessaries. The variations in ingredients and format of medicine were likely due to the expectation of a diversified readership. By offering distinct ways of treating the same ailment, readers with different budgets and expertise were considered; they could effectively pick which recipe suited them best, as I have argued in previous chapters. However, this personalisation of recipes had a crucial physical aspect as well. Long titles list the ways in which a recipe could be useful, but it was the body of the patient that determined what the recipe was for in practice.

As I have shown, since most of these recipes stimulated the purgation of the womb, they could be used in different ways. That recipes could combine the expulsion of a retained placenta with the purgation of retained flowers should come as no surprise. For most recipes stimulating uterine evacuation, it was therefore not so much the ingredients and procedures that determined whether the recipe would cause an abortion (voluntary or not), merely regulate menstruation, induce labour or even help to expel a retained placenta or dead foetus. By suggesting similar recipes to treat different conditions, books of secrets indicated that the body would know what it needed from the medicine offered. The intent of the one using the recipe, as well as the physical condition of the woman, was what ultimately determined the nature of the recipe used, thereby blurring categorisations such as abortifacient and emmenagogue.

Because of the dynamic nature of the universe of secrets, in which recipes frequently incorporated new ingredients and methods as well as general medical advice, an edition such as the 1595 English version of Piemontese's *Secreti* offered readers an intricate web of ways to treat similar problems. However, it was not only different social backgrounds but also the availability of ingredients or the reader's skill which were considered in this way of disseminating knowledge, with the result being that the reader could decide which recipe (or

recipes) they would follow, in which way, and to what ends. The juxtaposition in the same book of recipes aimed at male (such as physicians) and at female readers (midwives and laywomen) also allowed the *Secreti* to disseminate knowledge otherwise unavailable to the latter group, in more overt or subtle ways. The language used in recipes can usually indicate the intended reader of the remedy, such as the use of Latin for specific ingredients in recipes aimed at physicians. But it could also mean a desire to keep this knowledge less available to non-specialised readers, and arguably even more so to female readers, notably where abortifacients were concerned.

The paradoxical nature of these secrets, veiled and unveiled to readers at once, illustrates the complex early modern universe of vernacular medical texts. Although some mistranslations were never corrected, most of these books were carefully translated, amended, and enlarged. Emmenagogue/abortifacient recipes were usually aimed at male readers, likely to protect translators and publishers from the accusation of disseminating advice about abortion; but this was an editorial choice, as these recipes were not fundamentally different from others in the book. They combined similar spices, herbs, and sweet ingredients such as sugar and honey to heat the womb, thereby purging it and facilitating conception. To the plurality of ingredients and procedures corresponded a plurality of different readers and, while publishers might opt to address problematic recipes to medical practitioners and not women in general, most of them could be followed in a domestic environment.

While the Antwerp publisher Christophe Plantin had a fundamental role in adding new secrets of women to Piemontese's corpus of recipes, gradually changing the character of the book and making it more focused on domestic medicine, most printers and translators added something to their versions of the book. The four Italian parts, their French and English translations, and additional compilations of recipes such as Ruscelli's 'new' secrets were the main elements to compose the later versions of Piemontese's *Secreti*. New editions tended to add and adapt recipes but rarely suppressed content. That way, almost every new edition of the *Secreti* constitutes a longer version of the former. With the additions being kept in most reprints, translations became a source of innovation and creation, as well as of transposition of a text in a different language. Some kinds of recipes attracted more interest than others (there are few recipes for menstrual cramps and none about menopause, as I mentioned), and most translators and publishers seemed concerned with the young, fertile woman. By building on what previous versions of the book offered, Piemontese's *Secreti*

became increasingly close to an herbal in reverse, with a growing list of ways to treat menstrual problems, and several ‘sub-recipes’ combined in one.

Books of secrets were live bodies of practical knowledge, moving through the decades and transforming, with new content added continually, in translation and in re-editions. Their menstruation recipes were rarely just one thing; they instead condensed and combined knowledge in new ways, considering people of distinct social status and levels of skill, offering readers different levels of agency. The unique expansion of menstruation recipes made them particularly capacious and flexible to the reader’s world. Their fluidity was unusual in that menstruation recipes connected seemingly dissimilar medical issues. By doing so, these recipes also indirectly suggested to readers that they too might combine and recreate the recipes according to their goals, budgets, expertise, and, where women were concerned, physical condition.

By reading these recipes together, it is possible to see the adaptability of early modern medical knowledge and the flexibility of remedies to the readers’ personal context – and their bodies. To the lists of ingredients often corresponded a list of problems that could be solved by a particular remedy – depending on the person’s goal and physical state. An electuary to stop excessive menstruation added to the corpus in 1562 and reprinted in Ruscelli’s 1567 *Secreti* was also useful for ‘red and white menses, haemorrhoids, loss of seed, and for those who urinate blood’.<sup>96</sup> As in Piemontese’s case, books of secrets might not have been directly aimed at female readers, even if they included myriad menstruation recipes. Yet the constant additions of recipes increasingly marketed as specific, but which were in reality increasingly fluid, disseminated knowledge in a way that allowed for information to be embedded in the idea that recipes were the tools from which readers could build their own experiments, to whatever goals they set for themselves and their bodies.

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<sup>96</sup> ‘*Elettuario per ritenere i mestrui del Nicolio, il qual e provato ne mestrui rossi, & gli altri. E certo rimedio alle maroelle, a scolamento di sperma, & per chi orina sangue*’, Alessio Piemontese, *La Prima [-Terza] Parte de’ Secreti Del Reverendero Donno Alessio Piemontese* (1561), p. 28. Reprinted in Alessio Piemontese, *Secreti Nuovi di Maravigliosa Virtù del Signor Ieronimo Ruscelli* (1567), p. 257v.

## Chapter 4: Translating the Controversial Secrets of Women: Virginity, Aphrodisiacs, and Conception

### 1. Introduction

In his *Piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo* ('The Universal Workplace of All the Professions in the World'), the Augustinian ecclesiastic Tommaso Garzoni (1549-1589) first described the occupation of 'professors of secrets', starting with the definition of 'secret' (and its value as currency):<sup>1</sup>

Since a secret is nothing else (as Cardano says in his treatise *de Secretis*) than something obscure, veiled, and occult, whose reason is not completely clear that it should be known to all, but by its nature to very few manifest, although it contains some seeds of invention in itself, which help investigators to find all that with their intellect they can desire, to see some attend to this profession of secrets, and with all their hearts long for this, that the daily nourishment is necessary to man. [...] These are the conditions to good secrets: that they are not misleading; that they are useful and cause big advantages; that they do not harm [people's] conscience; that they be things easily sellable; that they do not take too much time [to produce]; that they do not need intolerable effort; and finally that they be about things worthy of a noble man.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> About recipes as 'currency', see Elaine Leong and Sara Penell, 'Recipe Collections and the Currency of Medical Knowledge in the Early Modern Medical Marketplace', in Patrick Wallis and Mark Jenner (eds.), *Medicine and the Market in England and Its Colonies, c. 1450- c. 1850* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 133–52.

<sup>2</sup> 'Non essendo il secreto altra cosa (come dice il Cardano nel suo Trattato de Secretis) che una cosa oscura, velata, & occulta, la cui ragione non è talmente chiara, che debba a tutti esser nota, ma per natura a pochissimi manifesta, benché ritenga alcuni seminarij in se d'inventione, che vanno agevolando a'speculativi la via di ritrovare quanto con l'intelletto loro sanno desiderare, si veggono alcuni attendere a questa professione de'secreti, & con tutto il cuore bramar più questo, che il vitto quotidiano si necessario all'huomo. [...] Queste son poi le condizioni de' buoni secreti; che non sian falacci; che arrechino utile e guadagno grande; che non nuocano alla coscienza; che sian di cose facilmente vendibili; che non sian di longhissima aspettatione; che non v'intervenga fatica intolerabile; & finalmente che versino attorno a cose degne di huomo nobile.' Tommaso Garzoni, *La Piazza Universale di Tutte le Professioni del Mondo* (Venice: Gio. Battista Somasco, 1589), pp. 182-83.

Garzoni went on to cite famous professors of secrets, including Giambattista Della Porta. The authors mentioned by Garzoni in his *Piazza* formed an eclectic mix, with a wide temporal and geographical range represented. But the biggest difference among the professors of secrets cited by Garzoni was arguably of social status: some of them were highly instructed authors who wrote in Latin, while some were itinerant empirics writing in the vernacular for a wide readership. Della Porta, whose recipes about the female body form the basis of this chapter, could be situated somewhere in the middle of these trends: he addressed sophisticated readers in Latin, but had no connections to the university network (which was in its turn mostly unfavourable to him), combining theory with empiricism and the craft tradition. The quick translation of his works into the vernacular added another dimension to the reception of his recipes, as they reached new audiences.<sup>3</sup>

In this chapter, therefore, I propose to reintegrate Della Porta to his more ‘popular’ peers, since the difference between them is artificial. Vernacular readers could look for recipes among Piemontese’s or Della Porta’s collections in Italian; more instructed readers often owned Latin translations of Piemontese’s secrets as well as Della Porta’s original works. Latin readers were interested in what historians later called ‘popular’ works, and vernacular readers often had access to Italian or German versions of Latin texts. Contemporaries such as Garzoni clearly understood these professors of secrets to have pertained to the same profession and to have written books of the same genre. By focusing on Della Porta, it becomes apparent how misleading is the opposition between domestic recipe books and university medicine, as humanists’ practices dialogued with vernacular knowledge. To illustrate this, I will show in this chapter how Della Porta’s secrets of women were reshaped in translation, what that tells us about readers, and how the polemic surrounding one specific recipe tainted the whole collection.

Garzoni’s work was part of an early modern literary genre about trades and professions known as *letteratura dei mestieri*.<sup>4</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti also published his own version, *Dello Specchio di Scientia Universale* (‘On the Mirror of Universal Knowledge’), which discussed the professions of his day as well.<sup>5</sup> Garzoni based his classification of

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<sup>3</sup> Maria Luisa Biagi, ‘Lingua della Scienza fra Seicento e Settecento’, *Lettere Italiane*, 28.4 (1976), pp. 410–61.

<sup>4</sup> Luca Mocarelli, ‘Attitudes to Work and Commerce in the Late Italian Renaissance: A Comparison between Tommaso Garzoni’s *La Piazza Universale* and Leonardo Fioravanti’s *Dello Specchio di Scientia Universale*’, *International Review of Social History*, Special Issue 56 (2011), pp. 89–106.

<sup>5</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *Dello Specchio di Scientia Universale dell’Eccell. Dottore et Cavalier Leonardo Fioravanti Bolognese* (Venice: Heredi di Marchio Sessa, 1583).

secrets mostly on a short tract entitled *De Secretis*, by the physician Girolamo Cardano (1501-1576), in which Cardano characterised science as a hunt (*venatio*) for knowledge.<sup>6</sup> In his description of professors of secrets, Garzoni mentioned authorities such as Pliny, Albertus Magnus, and Roger Bacon, as well as contemporaries including Piemontese, Ruscelli, ‘the glorious Fioravanti’, Cortese, and Della Porta.<sup>7</sup>

Modern historians have tended to study the *secretisti* in this group separately. Agrippa von Nettesheim and Cardano have traditionally been analysed from a history of science or intellectual history perspective, whereas Piemontese and Fioravanti have been mostly relegated to studies of history of the book or cultural history.<sup>8</sup> A notable exception to this is William Eamon’s work, which considers Della Porta alongside his contemporaries.<sup>9</sup> While Latin and vernacular books were not usually addressed to the same readership, Della Porta’s works were translated just a few years after publication and attained a bigger circulation in the vernacular than in Latin. Furthermore, as mentioned in the second chapter, books by authors such as Piemontese were often translated into Latin and advertised as ‘upgraded’ versions of the text. In this chapter, I will discuss Della Porta’s role as a reluctant populariser, as someone who wrote in Latin for learned readers and who became embroiled in the polemics of his time in great part because his work was translated into the vernaculars, thereby becoming accessible to a wide readership.

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<sup>6</sup> *De Secretis* was originally published with Cardano’s treatise on dreams in 1562, and subsequently as part of the *Opera* in ten volumes. Girolamo Cardano, *Opera Omnia* (Lyon: Huguetan & Ravaut, 1662).

<sup>7</sup> Tommaso Garzoni, *La Piazza Universale di Tutte le Professioni del Mondo*, p. 184.

<sup>8</sup> About Agrippa and Cardano, see Christopher Lehrich, *The Language of Demons and Angels* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003); Charles Nauert, *Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965); Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1964); Nancy Sirasi, *The Clock and the Mirror: Girolamo Cardano and Renaissance Medicine* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Anthony Grafton, *Cardano’s Cosmos: The Worlds and Works of a Renaissance Astrologer* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2001). See also the many articles by Guido Giglioni such as, ‘Scaliger versus Cardano versus Scaliger’, in David Lines, Marc Laureys, and Jill Kraye (eds.), *Forms of Conflict and Rivalries in Renaissance Europe* (Bonn: Bonn University Press, 2015), pp. 109–30; ‘Humans, Elephants, Diamonds and Gold: Patterns of Intentional Design in Girolamo Cardano’s Natural Philosophy’, *Gesnerus*, 71.2 (2014), pp. 237–47; ‘The Many Rhetorical Personae of an Early Modern Physician: Girolamo Cardano on Truth and Persuasion’, in Stephen Pender and Nancy Struever (eds.), *Rhetoric and Medicine in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, Surrey and Burlington: VT, 2012). About Alessio Piemontese and Leonardo Fioravanti, see John Ferguson, ‘The Secrets of Alexis: A Sixteenth Century Collection of Medical and Technical Receipts’, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 24.2 (1930), pp. 225–46; John Ferguson, *Bibliographical Notes on Histories of Inventions and Books of Secrets* (London: Holland Press, 1959); Zbigniew Bela, ‘The Authorship of the Secrets of Alexis of Piedmont (Venice, 1555)’, *Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki*, 61.1 (2016), 41–64; Alfredo Perifano, ‘La Théorie cachée ou de la pratique vulgarisée dans le *Compendio de i Secreti Rationali* (1564) de Leonardo Fioravanti’, in Dominique de Courcelles (ed.), *Ouvrages miscellanées et théories de la connaissance à la Renaissance* (Paris: Ecole des Chartes, 2003), pp. 117–29; Piero Camporesi, *Camminare il Mondo: Vita e Avventure di Leonardo Fioravanti Medico del Cinquecento* (Milan: Garzanti, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).



One of the most translated early modern recipe collections was Della Porta's *Magia naturalis*, published in Latin in Naples in 1558, comprising four books.<sup>10</sup> It was reprinted nineteen times in Italy, Germany, France, and the Netherlands, having been translated into Italian in 1560, into French in 1562, into Dutch in 1566, into German in 1612 and finally into English in 1658.<sup>11</sup> In 1589, a second Latin edition with twenty books appeared, more than doubling the secrets in the original one.<sup>12</sup> From 1558 to 1700, the Latin editions were reprinted twenty-four times, six of which followed the amplified version after its publication in 1589. To these twenty-six Latin versions were added twenty Italian reprints, thirteen French ones, two English ones, one German, and one Dutch translation. Confronting them, we can see there are many modifications in the text.<sup>13</sup> The Italian translation is particularly noteworthy because it is distant from the original text, going beyond the usual modifications we find in translated recipes.<sup>14</sup> The translator 'purified' the book of polemic recipes, transforming it completely (and in some instances even explaining why they decided to do so). This Italian translation is one of the most striking cases of how books of secrets were altered in the translation process because of the new readership they addressed. Unfortunately, we do not know the identity of the translator. Some historians suggested that Della Porta himself could be responsible for the translation, but Laura Balbiani argued convincingly that the many comprehension mistakes render that hypothesis unlikely.<sup>15</sup>

Many recipes were suppressed in this process, with the translator effectively keeping them 'secrets'. The most controversial of these was a hallucinogenic recipe, the 'ointment of witches', the most infamous and polemical of Della Porta's secrets.<sup>16</sup> In this case, the translator explained how they knowingly omitted this recipe not to stimulate the curiosity of *malvagie femine* (wicked women):

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<sup>10</sup> Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturalis, Siue de Miraculis Rerum Naturalium* (Naples: Matthias Cancer, 1558).

<sup>11</sup> About the publisher Matthias Cancer, see Pietro Manzi, *La Tipografia Napoletana nel Cinquecento* (Florence: Olschki, 1971).

<sup>12</sup> Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturalis* (Naples: Horatium Saluianum, 1589).

<sup>13</sup> For more details, see the Appendix.

<sup>14</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*.

<sup>15</sup> Laura Balbiani, *La Magia Naturalis di Giovan Battista Della Porta: Lingua, Cultura e Scienza in Europa all'inizio dell'Età Moderna* (Milan: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 27-28.

<sup>16</sup> Michaela Valente, 'Della Porta e l'Inquisizione', *Bruniana & Campanelliana*, 1999, pp. 415-35 (especially pp. 421-22); Luigi Amabile, *Il Santo Ufficio della Inquisizione in Napoli* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 1987), p. 147.

But, so as not to entice the curiosity of impious people who can do evil, we shall stay silent on these compositions, [so that they are not] used by wicked women, instigated by the devil and wild wants.<sup>17</sup>

The changes are clear especially where secrets of women were concerned. Most collections of recipes in print appeared directly in Italian, and were later translated horizontally into other vernaculars, and sometimes vertically into Latin. This made Della Porta's book substantially different from its vernacular counterparts, since its intended readership was composed of Latin-readers, such as physicians and humanists.<sup>18</sup> While translations of vernacular books of secrets by authors such as Piemontese considered new readerships the books might have, adaptations were usually due to geographical, cultural, or linguistic differences. In Della Porta's case, however, the original Latin text was aimed at a minority of learned readers. Therefore, when the book was translated into vernacular languages, an additional factor needed to be considered: the social differences between the original intended readers and the book's new audience, composed of urban people, ranging from laywomen to midwives, empirical practitioners to craftsmen, who would not have been able to read the book other than in the vernacular. This created a unique situation in which translators and publishers felt not only the language, but the content of the book – and especially secrets of women – had to be rethought, with sensitive subjects being adapted or simply omitted from translation.

This problem became even more apparent with the debate around a controversial recipe published in the book called the *witches' ointment*, which, although not focused on reproduction, was allegedly used by women. The mixed reception of this recipe, and consequently of the book, culminated in Della Porta being investigated by the Roman Inquisition and becoming entangled in the demonological debates of his time. The infamous recipe was suppressed in several instances in reeditions, but the image of Della Porta was from then on connected to controversial (and gendered) knowledge. Therefore, other recipes specifically about the female body had to be considered in translation, since the polemic

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<sup>17</sup> 'Di qua nasce l'origine di quelli unguenti i qualli fanno le streghe, nelle quali benche vi mettino molte, superstitioni, nondimeno fanno quegli effetti di fargli parere esser portate, per aria, et sentire suoni, canti, vedere giovani bellissimi per virtu di cose naturali; ma per non fomentare la curiosità degli huomini, et de gli empij, che adoperarebbono queste cose in mala parte, taceremo quelle compositioni, che simili malvagie femminelle, instigate dal demonio et da sfrenate voglie adoperano.' Giambattista Della Porta, *De i Miracoli et Meravigliosi Effetti dalla Natura Prodotti Libri IIII* (Venice: Ludovico Avanzi, 1560).

<sup>18</sup> On vernacular translations and censorship, see Simona Munari, 'Translation, Re-Writing and Censorship during the Counter-Reformation', in José María Pérez Fernández and Edward Wilson-Lee (eds.), *Translation and the Book Trade in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 185–200.

about the ointment was added to the social differences in readership. However, not all versions approached the problem of translating secrets of women in general (and the ointment in particular) in the same way; often a recipe suppressed from the Italian edition appeared in the German translation, while the French publisher changed individual recipes and the English translator combined entries from the first and the second editions of the *Magia naturalis*. In this chapter, I will explore how recipes about virginity and conception were adapted in the translation of Della Porta's book, considering the change in readership as well as to the polemic surrounding the infamous ointment.

## 2. The *Magia Naturalis*

Della Porta published his first book, *Magia naturalis*, when he was only twenty-three years old.<sup>19</sup> Born into an aristocratic family from Vico Equense who later moved to Naples, Della Porta was brought up in a stimulating and learned environment. His uncle and brothers collected curiosities and were interested in ancient texts and contemporary developments in natural philosophy. This rich environment fostered Della Porta's interest in nature, which he could investigate without the constraints of institutions such as universities.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, had he been part of one, the magnitude of progressively abandoning traditional sources for empirical methods might have been more deeply felt. As he stood apart from this world, Della Porta did not see any problem in writing:

[...] by attentive observation it is known, and we know for sure, that those [authorities] are more eager to write than to experiment, from the moment in which they write many things which are far from the truth and which they have copied one from the other, as if they were their work. [...] there is no one in this long series [of writers] who has experimented directly, because in reality the opposite [of what they wrote] happens, and we do not know from what reasoning or which experience they were guided.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> For a thorough biography of Della Porta, see Giuseppe Gabrieli, 'Giovann Battista Della Porta Linceo, da Documenti per Gran Parte Inediti', *Giornale Critico Della Filosofia Italiana*, VIII (1927), pp. 360–97; Paolo Piccari, *Giovann Battista Della Porta: Il Filosofo, il Retore, lo Scienziato* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> Laura Balbiani, *La Magia Naturalis di Giovan Battista Della Porta: Lingua, Cultura e Scienza in Europa all'inizio dell'Età Moderna* (Milan: Peter Lang, 1999), p. 184.

<sup>21</sup> '[...] crebra est animadversione perspectum, clareque novimus in scribendo potius, quam explorando avidiores eos extitisse, cum a veritate multa longe aliena scribant, ex aliis alio commutante, ac si ardua esset

Della Porta's cultural milieu made him a man of his time, who saw himself as a 'cortegiano' who avidly pursued the secrets of nature, combining theory and practical knowledge.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, he was a part of two worlds, interested in the interpretation of authoritative texts as well as experimental practice. Placing equal epistemic value on both, Della Porta expected his readers to be like himself: they should have some knowledge about natural philosophy and the time and money to pursue studies in how to artificially reproduce nature's miracles – which was what Della Porta understood as natural magic. In the preface to the *Magia*, the author wrote how he expected real readers to differ from the ones who he intended to read the book; hypercritical and ignorant readers were both anticipated. However, Della Porta reaffirmed his hope for an 'aspiring magus' reader since he saw himself as the 'magus' who would instruct him.<sup>23</sup>

The Latin *Magia naturalis* went through seventeen editions in various countries from its publication in 1558. Of these, most were almost identical: the few insignificant changes usually concerned pagination and type.<sup>24</sup> The value of practical knowledge was underlined in the preface, and Della Porta affirmed that he 'only wrote what experience had proven', which, given the length of the book and his age, was unlikely. However, the preface was typical of the period. Della Porta explained how the book was conceived and defended it from possible criticism. It was a research programme as well as a rhetorical device.

The *Magia*, as most reprints and reeditions, had no illustrations.<sup>25</sup> It contained a dedication to Philip II of Spain and Naples and an analytical table of contents in alphabetical order, which were both changed in later editions and translations. The chapters varied in length, ranging from a few lines to several pages, many of them composed of multiple recipes. They started with an informative incipit, and were usually connected to the next entry, with Della Porta's conclusions summarising what had been said as well as introducing the next chapter. The use of synonyms in recipes was frequent; the necessity of stabilising inter and intra-linguistic equivalencies also acknowledged the coexistence of different

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*eorum operatio. [...] neque est aliquis tam longa successionis serie, qui id experiatur, nam contrarium apparet, nec scimus qua ratione, aut experientia fuerint ducti.*' Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturalis, Siue de Miraculis Rerum Naturalium* (Naples: Matthias Cancer, 1558), (*Praef.*) pp. 1–2.

<sup>22</sup> Baldassarre Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano* (Venice: Heirs of Aldo Manuzio e Andrea Torresano, 1528).

<sup>23</sup> Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturalis* (1558).

<sup>24</sup> Marco Santoro (ed.), *La Stampa in Italia nel Cinquecento: Atti del Convegno Roma, Ottobre 1989* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1992).

<sup>25</sup> An exception is the 1677 Italian translation by Pompeo Sarnelli, which contains Della Porta's portrait. Giambattista Della Porta, *Della Magia Naturale del Signor Gio. Battista Della Porta Napolitano Libri XX* (Naples: Antonio Bulifon, 1677).

traditions, thereby teaching the reader and enlarging their vocabulary.<sup>26</sup> Most chapters introduced the subject by a panoramic summary: how it was understood by several ancient and contemporary authorities, with anecdotes and recipes the author (allegedly) tested.<sup>27</sup> This eclectic style rendered the chapters closer to overviews of a determined subject than a ‘recipe’ in a strict sense, as we can see in this entry, entitled ‘That a Woman may conceive’:

There are many Medicines to cause Conception spread abroad, because they are much desired by Great Persons. The Ancients did applaud Sage very much for this purpose: And in Coptus after great Plagues, the Egyptians that survived, forced the Women to drink the juice of it, to make them conceive, and bring forth often. Salt also helpeth Generation: for it doth not only heighten the Pleasures of *Venus*, but also causeth Fruitfulness. The Egyptians, when their Dogs are backward in Copulation, make them more eager by giving them Salt-meats. It is an Argument also of it, That Ships in the Sea, as *Plutarch* witnesseth, are alwayes full of an innumerable company of Mice. And some affirm, That Female-Mice will conceive without a Male, onely by licking Salt. And Fish-wives are insatiably lecherous, and alwayes full of Children. Hence the Poets feigned *venus* to be born of Salt or the Sea. The Egyptian Priests (saith the same Author) did most Religiously abstain from Salt and Salt-meats, because they did excite to lust, and cause erection.<sup>28</sup>

This chapter closely resembled contemporary conception recipes from other books of secrets and contained the usual ingredients to render the body more fertile. Both the Italian and the English versions of the recipe were addressed to men: ‘Several medicines desired by great Lords, so that a woman, who was sterile for many years, may conceive’ (*Molti rimedij vanno a torno per essere molto desiderati da gran Signori, che una donna, che sia stata molti anni sterile possa concepire*).<sup>29</sup> The English version goes further in expecting male readers, with the final sentence mentioning erection as a result of the consumption of salt and meats,

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<sup>26</sup> For the expansion of technical vocabulary and linguistic ‘trading zones’, see Pamela Long, *Artisan/Practitioners and the Rise of the New Sciences, 1400–1600* (Corvallis: Oregon State Univ. Press, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Della Porta’s approach is characterised as ‘historical-experimental’ by Gabriella Belloni, ‘Conoscenza Magica e Ricerca Scientifica in Giovan Battista Della Porta’, in Gabriella Belloni (ed.), *Criptologia: Giovan Battista Della Porta* (Rome: Centro Internazionale di Studi Umanistici, 1982), pp. 45–101, (especially pp. 15–16 and 81–84).

<sup>28</sup> The English translation reproduced the original Latin closely: Giambattista Della Porta, *Natural Magick* (London: Thomas Young & Samuel Speed, 1658), p. 225.

<sup>29</sup> ‘*Che una donna concepa*’ (Chapter VIII), Giambattista Della Porta, *De i Miracoli et Meravigliosi Effetti dalla Natura Prodotti Libri IIII* (Venice: Ludovico Avanzi, 1560), p. 288.

where the Italian and Latin texts only spoke of the ‘itch of Venus’ (*il prurito di Venere*).<sup>30</sup> Modifications like this, in which the contents of the recipe remained identical, but the reader addressed changed, were common. They can often be explained by editorial changes made by the publisher and are not my focus in this chapter, since such changes were not particular to Della Porta’s case but could be found in virtually all books of secrets.

In the *Magia naturalis*, Della Porta addressed a singular reader (*tu*), usually in the imperative, as most early modern books of secrets did. He often alternated between the *pluralis modestiae* for the general text and the first person singular when he described experiments that he had conducted himself or witnessed. This difference disappeared in most translations, which tended to adopt the first-person singular throughout the book. This change highlights the loss of authorial voice in translation and reminds us of the deeply interventionist nature of publishers and translators’ work. The *Magia* was divided into four books, the first of which dealt with the theoretical fundamentals of natural philosophy and magic, while the other three focussed on how readers could actively operate on nature. The second book was composed of mixed ‘wonders of nature’ and consisted of botanical and medical recipes (including secrets of women), while the third focussed on alchemy, and the fourth explored mirrors and optics, which Della Porta would continue to study until his old age.

Della Porta taught readers *how* to imitate nature’s miracles, but he did not explain *why* these phenomena occurred. Like other ‘how-to’ books, the *Magia* gave readers advice, not worrying about the reason behind effective recipes.<sup>31</sup> This is one of the main differences between Della Porta and his contemporaries such as Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639), who tended to focus much more on the causes behind miracles of nature.<sup>32</sup> Della Porta’s emphasis on *how* rather than *why* makes him much closer to Piemontese than Campanella, and a typical professor of secrets in the sense that he aimed to diffuse knowledge without worrying about

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<sup>30</sup> By ‘itch’ in this instance, Della Porta meant a strong erotic desire. This recipe bears no resemblance to other recipes of the time for treating venereal diseases.

<sup>31</sup> Antonio Perez-Ramos, *Francis Bacon’s Idea of Science and the Maker’s Knowledge Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Pamela Smith, ‘What Is a Secret? Secrets and Craft Knowledge in Early Modern Europe’, in Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin (eds.), *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science 1500-1800* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 47–66.

<sup>32</sup> William Eamon and Françoise Paheau, ‘The Accademia Segreta of Girolamo Ruscelli: A Sixteenth-Century Italian Scientific Society’, *Isis*, 75.2 (1984), pp. 327-42.

the cause behind phenomena.<sup>33</sup> In that sense, some things were kept secret; the book revealed only part of this wonderful knowledge.<sup>34</sup>

The *Magia* was a didactic book: the chapters became progressively more complex and most sentences were independent from each other, acting as a collection of the knowledge the author had compiled on a subject. The fragmentary character of the original book was connected to several important characteristics of the *Magia* and its later diffusion. Firstly, the text was coherent but not exhaustive; it could easily be expanded if the author so wished. The 1558 *Magia* acted, therefore, as the basis for much of Della Porta's writing, not only in its second edition, but for much of his later works.<sup>35</sup> It also allowed readers to add to the *Magia* by their own experiments, since it did not presume the readers' (or the translator's) own recipes to be less valuable or superfluous. Della Porta was also aware of the varied readership the book would have, which is probably why many recipes were destined to specific groups, determined socially or by gender. The varying degree of complexity among recipes also indicates how Della Porta expected readers who could improve them, as well as sceptical and completely ignorant readers:

But you, who have this treasure in your hands, can add, remove [things] and, which will be simple [to you], find out the deep meaning [of the text]. If there are bad or experiments already known, go through them without annoyance, for we have not written them for you, but for others, so that everyone finds the food they crave.<sup>36</sup>

The *Magia* was a complex and multiform work which, as Laura Balbiani described, attained 'unity in its multiplicity'.<sup>37</sup> The heterogeneous nature of the book (as a domestic encyclopaedia, wonder book and recipe book) meant that it was widely circulated as well as

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<sup>33</sup> Rudolph Bell, *How to Do It: Guides to Good Living for Renaissance Italians* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999).

<sup>34</sup> Enrico Peruzzi, 'Aspetti della Medicina nell'opera di Giovan Battista Della Porta', in Eugenio Garin and Maurizio Torrini (eds.), *Giovan Battista Della Porta nell'Europa del suo Tempo* (Naples: Guida Editori, 1990), pp. 101–12.

<sup>35</sup> The 1589 *Magia naturalis* contained 16 extra books, mostly about magnetism, lenses, and mirrors (including a study on the telescope). It was translated into Italian in 1611 and was followed by translations into French (1606), English (1658) and German (1680). It was probably done by Della Porta himself using a pseudonym. Giambattista Della Porta, *Della Magia Naturale Libri XX* (Naples: Giov. Sal. Carlino e Cost. Vitale, 1611); Giuseppe Gabrieli, 'Giovan Battista Della Porta Linceo', p. 371.

<sup>36</sup> 'Vos autem qui thesaurum prae manibus habetis, addite, demite, et quod facile vobis fuerit, germanum sensum eruite, et si experimenta occurrunt, aut vilia, aut nota, sine nausea praetermittantur, vobis enim non scripsimus, sed aliis, ut quaesitum quisque hauriat sibi cibum.' Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturalis* (1558), (*Praef.*) p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> Laura Balbiani, *La Magia Naturalis di Giovan Battista Della Porta*.

incorporated into and influencing a range of genres. In Germany, it was connected to domestic, technical, and wonder-books, and indeed the German translation of the *Magia* highlighted this connection in the very title of the book: *Des Vortrefflichen Herren Johann Baptista Portae von Neapolis Magia Naturalis, oder Haus-Kunst-und Wunder-Buch* ('*Magia Naturalis* from the Excellent Giambattista Della Porta from Naples, or House-, Technique/Art, and Wonder-book').<sup>38</sup> The composite character of the book was also indicative of the author's relationship with authorities and empiricism. Della Porta cited more than 130 sources in the *Magia* as well as his own experiments.<sup>39</sup> That number could even be higher, but Della Porta considered several recipes as 'common patrimony' of the literature of secrets, publishing them without acknowledging their origin, as was typical of the period.<sup>40</sup> The faith in established authorities and the growing need for empirical verification permeate Della Porta's writing, and this constant tension is perceptible throughout the book. By using a complex structure, Della Porta was better able to demonstrate the relative flexibility of his approach. At points in the book, he relied exclusively on authorities, elsewhere, on his experiments and in other places, he combined these two approaches.

The composite nature of the book also makes clear Della Porta's position on a sliding scale between hermeticism and an open diffusion of knowledge in the vernacular. Although his recipes were a step away from medieval esotericism, that did not mean Della Porta intended for his work to be read by everyone (as the choice of Latin indicates). Once the book was printed, he had little control over its circulation and translation. The book's diffusion in the vernacular was a process independent from him. This sometimes meant that Della Porta's original intent was changed, rendering it closer to books written for non-specialised readers such as Piemontese's *Secreti*. The *Magia* was therefore located somewhere between restricted diffusion of knowledge and openness, with the question of accessibility to knowledge being considered by translators. Della Porta's ambiguity is perceptible throughout the book:

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<sup>38</sup> William Eamon, 'Arcana Disclosed: The Advent of Printing, the Books of Secrets Tradition and the Development of Experimental Science in the Sixteenth Century', *History of Science*, 22.2 (1984), pp. 111–50.

<sup>39</sup> Laura Balbiani, *La Magia Naturalis di Giovan Battista Della Porta*, p. 50.

<sup>40</sup> That is the case of several recipes in book II by Pliny the Elder. Other more surprising absences include Agrippa and Cardano, whose works shared thematic and structural traits of the *Magia*.



Here you will not hear any boastfulness, nor empty words. [...] Instead, we spoke in the most unadorned and uncomplicated way possible, we have named simples with descriptions and distinctions, without which it is possible to cause much confusion.<sup>41</sup>

However, I do not deny to having silenced some things [...] but not so much that it prevents one who is clever to perceive them and find them out. But do not think that I have done that without a reason, which is so that the [...] readers not initiated in the mysteries of philosophy cannot understand them, so that these things, placed in their hands, do not turn bad; this would damage [the work] more than anything else.<sup>42</sup>

These contradictions about secrecy indicate the tension between Della Porta's ideal reader and the complex readership he knew the book would have.<sup>43</sup> However, Della Porta's predominant attitude, since he was writing in Latin for presumably educated readers is that they were sensible enough to be trusted with sensitive knowledge, such as abortion or poison recipes.<sup>44</sup> Contrary to the preface in Piemontese's book, which had a quasi-religious epiphany about the moral obligation of disseminating knowledge, Della Porta thought that recipes should become part of a common patrimony without seeming to question this choice nor proffering a justification.<sup>45</sup>

Della Porta's work can be situated between the 'old' and the 'new' in two senses: accessibility to knowledge and the evolution from theoretical to practical knowledge. This is why professors of secrets such as him can be seen as a 'missing link' between medieval hermeticism and modern empiricism. Della Porta and his work represented a transition from dependence on ancient authorities to a more practical knowledge based on experiments.<sup>46</sup> Both traditions appeared in the *Magia naturalis*. In the preface, Della Porta criticised his

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<sup>41</sup> '...ubi non iactantiam, non verborum involucra audietis [...] sed rarius et planius, ut potuimus, sumus loqui, simplicia circumlocutionibus et distinctionibus nominavimus, sine quo multum tenebrarum effundi solet.' Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturalis* (1558), (*Praef.*) p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> 'Id tamen non inficior, obticuisse me aliqua [...] non sic tamen, ut ingeniosus quisque non detegat et percipiat: nec ab re id me potius fecisse censeatis [...] nec dum philosophiae sacris initiata assequi ea possit, neque ad eorum manus delata vilescant, id praecipue in noxiis, quaeque maioris fuerint ponderis'. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Gabriella Belloni, 'Conoscenza Magica e Ricerca Scientifica in Giovan Battista Della Porta', p. 78.

<sup>44</sup> How to cause madness, leprosy, fever or even death were recipes in the poison section of the book. Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturalis* (1558), pp. 81–84; 87; 88; 90–91.

<sup>45</sup> For a comparison of types of secrecy (social, epistemological, epistemic), see William Eamon, 'Arcana Disclosed', p. 11.

<sup>46</sup> Even though Della Porta wrote in the preface: '*Quis credat insignes in nostra lingua authores Plinium, et Albertum saepissime falli?*' (Who could believe the most famous writers of our language, Pliny and Albertus, could be wrong so often?), Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturalis* (1558), (*Praef.*) p. 2.

contemporaries who were dependent on the old authorities, urging them to experiment for themselves. However, he rarely questioned these authorities in the text, and often relied on them, especially when he had not performed or seen the experiment for himself. So, even though he criticised his contemporaries for doing the same, Della Porta failed to be self-critical and remained enmeshed in structures of thought and practices that he seemingly rejected.

Lastly, the mosaic-like structure of the book renders apparent Della Porta's main interest: wonders of nature.<sup>47</sup> The *Magia*'s main trait is arguably how the recipes aimed to dazzle readers with the wonderful: Della Porta portrayed recipes as a spectacle in themselves.<sup>48</sup> The theatricality of the book is surely no coincidence. Della Porta wrote many comedies throughout his life and was as well-known as a playwright as he was as a scientific figure.<sup>49</sup> The *Magia* must indeed have stimulated readers' imagination: surprising magic tricks and ways of fooling others form the sense of wonder which is the guiding principle of the book.<sup>50</sup> Looking for the wonders of nature, the Latin text combined different traditions of knowledge, including empirical practices such as the verification of recipes performed at academies.<sup>51</sup> Many earlier texts were founded on these practices, and authors such as Piemontese (allegedly) based their work on academies' findings. Della Porta forged a different path by combining these two traditions to make his recipes - and indeed himself - authoritative.

These characteristics, as well as the didactic aspects of the book, were further developed in translation. While the content of the *Magia* was not necessarily new or original compared to contemporary books, its presentation was, since it taught natural philosophy in a less hermetic, more straightforward way, influencing other genres as well as helping

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<sup>47</sup> About recipes as being about the exceptional and wonderful rather than the norm, especially where *experimenta* were concerned, see Michael McVaugh, 'Two Montpellier Recipe Collections', *Manuscripta*, 3.20 (1976), pp. 175–80.

<sup>48</sup> The sense of wonder and artifice in Della Porta's medical recipes did not require logical explanations or causality. 'Dazzling' readers was more important than the efficacy of the recipe or its utility. Enrico Peruzzi, 'Aspetti della Medicina nell'opera di Giovan Battista Della Porta'.

<sup>49</sup> Significantly, Della Porta's scientific writings were published in Latin, while his plays were written in the vernacular. Despite this difference, however, both genres often had the same audience. Louise Clubb highlighted the link between Della Porta's comedies and his scientific work, such as the 'delight in marvels'. Louise Clubb, *Giambattista Della Porta Dramatist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 144–45.

<sup>50</sup> Gabriella Belloni, 'Conoscenza Magica e Ricerca Scientifica in Giovan Battista Della Porta', pp. 78–80.

<sup>51</sup> Besides his own 'academy of secrets', Della Porta probably frequented Girolamo Rucelli's academy when he was younger; Della Porta also later co-founded the Accademia dei Lincei. William Eamon and Françoise Paheau, 'The Accademia Segreta of Girolamo Rucelli'; William Eamon, 'Natural Magic and Utopia in the Cinquecento: Campanella, the Della Porta Circle, and the Revolt of Calabria', *Memorie Domenicane*, n.s. 26 (1995), pp. 369–402; William Eamon, 'Arcana Disclosed'; Giuseppe Gabrieli, 'Giovan Battista Della Porta Linceo'.

consolidate the success of printed books of secrets. The ample use of synonyms and repetition made the text easy to memorise, and publishers and translators continued to use this strategy to facilitate the reading of non-expert readers. While this is particularly clear in translations from Latin into the vernaculars, the use of synonyms was a recurring tactic of translators, as I have shown in the second chapter. When the *Magia* was translated into vernacular languages, however, Della Porta's ambiguous position of the writer of a non-hermetic text in a language read only by a minority became increasingly problematic, as did his role as a reluctant populariser. His translators exacerbated his didactic tendencies while being cautious about overly sensitive recipes, often about virginity, aphrodisiacs, and conception, which Della Porta had not considered too controversial to publish in Latin – even before the polemic around the 'witches' ointment'.

### 3. The Translated *Magia Naturalis*: Linguistic Changes

The *Magia Naturalis* was quickly translated into Italian and published in 1560, followed by French, Dutch, German and English translations.<sup>52</sup> Frequent reprints and reeditions rendered its diffusion widespread: the 1558 *Magia* in Latin was reprinted sixty times by the 1630s, making it a commercial success.<sup>53</sup> The circulation of this book became even more complex with the publication of the Latin edition of the enlarged *Magia* in 1589. By the time the first German translation was published in 1612, the Italian version had been reprinted more than ten times, and it continued to be even after the new edition of the *Magia* in 1589. From then on, translations based on the 1558 and the 1589 versions coexisted, and translators and publishers had several versions of the text available in other vernaculars, which they could use for their own translations, both as models to follow and to avoid.

While each translation of the *Magia* had its specific traits, most of them tended to further develop the didactic aspects of the original text while reshaping the content of the book for a growing readership. From a linguistic point of view, the use of synonyms, repetitions and explanations continued to be used both to teach the reader and to help the memorisation of recipes, since books of secrets could be read collectively and were

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<sup>52</sup> Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturale* (Venice: Ludovico Avanzi, 1560); Giambattista Della Porta, *La Magie Naturelle* (Lyon: Jean Martin, 1562); Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Ofte de Wonderlycke Wercken Der Naturen, Beschreven in Vier Boecken* (Antwerp: Christophe Plantin, 1566); Giambattista Della Porta, *Natürliche Magia, da ist ein ausführlicher und gründlicher Bericht von den Wunderwerken natürlicher Dinge* (Magdeburg: Martin Rauscher, 1612); Giambattista Della Porta, *Natural Magick* (London: Thomas Young & Samuel Speed, 1658).

<sup>53</sup> Without considering the editions and reprints of the enlarged *Magia naturalis*, which appeared in 1589.

connected to an oral culture of knowledge.<sup>54</sup> The 1560 Italian translation kept the table of contents in alphabetical order as it had been in Latin, but added another one, which listed contents in the order they appeared in the book, in consideration of the fact that vernacular readers were more accustomed to this editorial layout and classification. Structurally, chapters were shortened, and long citations omitted, while shorter ones were inserted in the text in indirect speech, making the reading easier and more fluid.<sup>55</sup>

Translations also had to deal with the problem of finding equivalencies to technical terms in the vernacular, which did not always exist, or which had not been well established. So, translators could enrich the language, by consolidating and creating new terms, but they could also render it less specific when the technical term in Latin was replaced for something vague. This is not surprising, as the translations mentioned here were made before the standardisation of taxonomy in the eighteenth century. So, a plant's name might be translated under the broader name of its family, such as *daucus carota* (wild carrot) turned into *apiaceae* (*apiaceae*).<sup>56</sup> The simultaneous specialisation and amplification of vocabulary in translation was a phenomenon developing throughout Europe, which is why it is useful to study books of secrets beyond national confines.<sup>57</sup> The European dimension of the genre makes it important to consider synchronic and diachronic perspectives as well as combine philological and linguistic comparisons with cultural history.<sup>58</sup>

In the case of expanding vocabulary, the German 1612 translation (which contained the full original text) is perhaps the best example. Although it was considered a faithful

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<sup>54</sup> See Roger Chartier's works, especially 'Loisir et sociabilité: Lire à haute voix dans l'Europe moderne', *Littératures Classiques*, 12 (1990), 127–47; 'Stratégies Éditoriales et Lectures Populaires, 1530-1660', in Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin *Histoire de l'édition Française, Tome I, Le Livre conquérant, du Moyen Age au milieu du XVIIe siècle*, ed. by (Paris: Fayard, 1989), pp. 698–721; Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, *Storia della Lettura nel Mondo Occidentale* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1995).

<sup>55</sup> See, for instance, Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturale*, pp. 21–24.

<sup>56</sup> Della Porta does not seem to have created any neologisms himself; but he did feel the need to define 'difficult terms', which is further developed in translation. He argued how the efficacy of a recipe depended on the specific definition of a botanical category. On Della Porta and the precision of scientific terms, see his correspondence to Ulisse Aldrovandi. Giuseppe Gabrieli (ed.), 'Lettere Inedite di G. B. Della Porta ad Ulisse Aldrovandi, Conservate Nella Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna (Appendix)', in *Bibliografia Lincea I: Giambattista Della Porta* (Rome: Atti dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Rendiconti, 1932), pp. 206–77 (especially pp. 262–66).

<sup>57</sup> Hugo Steger, 'Revolution des Denkens im Fokus von Begriffen und Wörtern. Wendungen der Theoriesprachen im 17. Jahrhundert', in Peter Stein, Andreas Weiss, and Gerold Hayer (eds.), *Festschrift für Ingo Reiffenstein* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1988), pp. 83–125 (p. 86).

<sup>58</sup> Leonardo Olschki, *Geschichte der neusprachlichen wissenschaftlichen Literatur, Volume I, Die Literatur der Technik und der angewandten Wissenschaften vom Mittelalter bis zur Renaissance* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1965), p. 345. For a recent overview, see Claudia Stein, 'Introduction: The Early Modern Cultural History of Medicine', in Claudia Stein and Elaine Leong (eds.), *A Cultural History of Medicine in the Renaissance* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), pp. 1–22.

translation, it employed lexical couplings throughout the text, usually formed of a well-established *foreignism* with a Latin origin and a German term. As the text progressed, the foreignism was gradually replaced by the German word, which helped crystallise it in the vernacular. The new term was taught and incorporated into the readers' world, provided they read the book from beginning to end rather than just consulted isolated passages. This use of lexical couples was not rare in early modern translation, as I have shown in Chapter 2. The fragmentary nature of national contexts – both from a linguistic and geographic perspectives – rendered it necessary to balance dialects, regional, social, and economic differences. While this happened more often in translations from Italian into French (as in the *Difício di ricette*) or Latin into German (as in the *Magia naturalis*), even the Italian translation of the Latin book employed this tactic, with the second term acting as an explanation or paraphrase for the first.

Rather than a stylistic choice, lexical couples were often translators' solution to the difficulty of translating scientific texts. What the comparison of multiple translations shows us in this case is how translators working independently and in different contexts often developed similar strategies to deal with translation problems. Translation was not simply the substitution of one word for another but rather the reframing, rephrasing, and clarification of an entire text into a different language. This required translators to develop strategies in order to confront both the lexical and structural differences of languages, which often equated to the expansion of the text. This could mean both the addition of recipes, as in the previous chapter about Alessio Piemontese's menstruation recipes, and the inclusion of synonyms to help the reader, apparent in the translation of the *Magia naturalis* and the *Difício di ricette*.

Despite writing in Latin, Della Porta was concerned about how readers would understand his book, but when the *Magia* was translated, this became even more worrisome since readers from all backgrounds could have access to the recipes in the vernacular. Broadly speaking, the Italian translation tended to simplify the text as well as suppress sensitive recipes, reducing the number of recipes in the book; the French one added new recipes, thereby amplifying the text; the German version took the didactic character of the Latin original further by adding synonyms to facilitate the reader's understanding of complicated terms; and the English version tended to keep all the polemic recipes, combining the content of the two Latin editions (1558 and 1589). Other general trends included synthesising long sentences and overall simplifying the text, as well as standardising the

vernacular language used as the translations were reprinted.<sup>59</sup> Although most reeditions tended to keep the pagination of the first translation, spelling and punctuation often changed. The 1582 Italian edition rendered the text more Tuscan, while keeping the pagination the same as the 1562 edition, which was kept in the 1584 and 1611 versions as well.<sup>60</sup> However, these modifications were mostly linguistic, and not exclusive to secrets of women.

It was not uncommon for the vernacular translations of Latin recipe collections to have an unknown translator. Both translations into Italian and German (made respectively in 1560 and 1612) had anonymous translators but, while the Italian one was reprinted multiple times, the German translation was not.<sup>61</sup> Italian and German readers were later offered new, expanded, and commented translations of the *Magia*, including recipes from the 1589 Latin edition. The second German translator, Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636-1689), commented thoroughly on his translation of the book.<sup>62</sup> As for the second Italian translation, by Pompeo Sarnelli (1649-1724), it contained a biography of Della Porta, and Sarnelli discussed Della Porta's problems with the Roman Inquisition. In both cases, a first, anonymous translator was replaced by a named, very involved second translator, whose presence was perceptible throughout the text. Although the translator of the 1560 Italian edition omitted several recipes and changed the text significantly, they presented themselves as the guardian of moral and Christian values. Sarnelli, on the other hand, was arguably a co-author of the text he translated. In both instances, the change from anonymous to a named translator indicates how the perception – and the commercial success – of books of secrets changed from the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries, with translators seeking to associate their names to these recipe collections.

Similarly, in a new French edition published in 1650, a preface written by the royal physician Lazare Meyssonnier (1611-1673) appeared. Called '*Introduction à la belle magie*', Meyssonnier's preface was a defence of Della Porta, legitimising both book and author. Although the translator was unknown, it is clear that one of Louis XIII's physicians was

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<sup>59</sup> Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), especially pp. 79-91.

<sup>60</sup> Paolo Trovato, *Con Ogni Diligenza Corretto: La Stampa e le Revisioni Editoriali dei Testi Letterari Italiani (1470-1570)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991).

<sup>61</sup> It has been argued that the 1612 German translation, dedicated to 'lovers of knowledge', had been made by a member of the *Accademia dei Lincei*, which Della Porta had co-founded. See Giuseppe Gabrieli's work on German members of the academy, Giuseppe Gabrieli, *Contributi alla Storia dell'Accademia dei Lincei, Vol. I* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1989). However, I have found no documents to confirm this hypothesis among the correspondence of the members of the group, which makes it unlikely. See also Laura Balbiani, *La Magia Naturalis di Giovan Battista Della Porta*, p. 36.

<sup>62</sup> Giambattista Della Porta, *Des Vortrefflichen Herren Johann Baptista Portae von Neapolis Magia Naturalis, Oder Haus-Kunst-Und Wunder-Buch* (Nuremberg: Christian Peganium or Rautner, 1680).

happy to appear alongside Della Porta in print. When books of secrets started to be published in the early sixteenth century, it was not clear how successful the genre would become. Recipe collections were not always perceived as having a high status (unless they were attributed to a respected authority), which explains why publishers did not commission translations from respected physicians, and why translators may not have insisted on having their names linked to the work.<sup>63</sup> A century later, however, Della Porta was well known throughout Europe, which probably made publishers and translators more interested in the *Magia*'s reedition. But it is also possible that, after the polemic around the heretical ointment recipe had subsided and Della Porta had died, more translators were willing to have their names printed alongside his – even a priest like Sarnelli, who later became a bishop. I will explore the role that this infamous ointment played in the *Magia*'s story for the rest of this chapter.

#### 4. The Polemic *Witches' Ointment*

The linguistic changes in the vernacular translations of the *Magia* stemmed from the fact that translators needed to adapt it for a broader readership, both from a point of view of social status and language. This need became even more apparent at the level of the contents of the book, determined by religious, social, and moral norms. Among several controversial recipes, the 'witches' ointment' became the most infamous of Della Porta's recipes, particularly at a time when the Roman Inquisition's control over printed books in Naples had increased following the 1559 Pauline *Index* of prohibited books (reiterated in 1564), which heavily censored magical texts.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, this recipe defined the way the whole book was received, and influenced the changes that translators, publishers, and Della Porta himself would make in subsequent versions of the text.

The infamous flying ointment appeared in chapter XXVI of the second book of the *Magia naturalis*, among foods difficult to digest, which could cause nightmares, as well as aphrodisiac and hallucinogenic plants. It was called:

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<sup>63</sup> It is also possible that the German translation, being made at a small printing workshop, did not have the resources to pay for a more well-known translator. Martin Rauscher's workshop was only active from 1612 to 1617. Josef Benzing, *Die Buchdrucker des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts im deutschen Sprachgebiet* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1963), pp. 290–94.

<sup>64</sup> Mario Infelise, *I libri proibiti: da Gutenberg all'Encyclopédie* (Rome: Laterza, 2013), pp. 31–32.

How to induce clear and pleasant dreams, as well as frightening and obscure ones (*'Insomnia clara et iucunda, obscura meticulousaque inducere'*).

Certain foods, the author stated, could stimulate melancholic humours and induce the semblance of 'weird, troublesome, twisted and tenebrous things'. The ointment provoked a deep sleep, during which the body would heat, and the woman, oblivious to her surroundings, would feel as though flying, 'above rivers, seas, and cities; coming across the dead and storms, against dark winter skies'.<sup>65</sup> Della Porta described the ointment as being used by women, saying that it was particularly effective since it was for credulous people, who were prone to 'fixate themselves on their own obsessive fantasies'.<sup>66</sup> Although Della Porta hinted at the 'placebo effect' of the ointment, he also stated that the effects of this formula were caused by the plants' occult properties, not the Devil, which would make this a natural phenomenon or 'wonder of nature': made with natural ingredients, the ointment produced natural effects. In his reasoning, Della Porta followed an early modern understanding of natural magic, defined a century later by Antoine Furetière as a 'science of secrets to make things that are extraordinarily produced by natural causes'.<sup>67</sup>

Maybe anticipating scepticism, Della Porta told readers how he had personally witnessed the use of this recipe by a witch (*'strix'*).<sup>68</sup> Having met this old woman by chance, she promised to let him witness the ritual, together with an unspecified group of people. They remained behind a closed door, looking into a room through the gaps in the wooden door, and saw the old woman undress and spread the ointment all over her body, applying pressure and warming the body up with the friction; after that, she fell into a deep sleep, insensible to their

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<sup>65</sup> 'At si quaerimus somnia obscura et tumultuosa, fabas edimus [...] et fere legumina omnia, phaseolos [...] crassum et melancholicum humorem excitantes [...] et tandem radices fere omnes: inter haec vinum, quia spirituosus vapurolentiaque sunt, inflationem, calidum, mordacem et noxium humorem parientia, insomnia ingerunt, in quibus phantasmata deluxata, laccessita, tortuosa, turbida. Sic per aera delatus maria fluentaque transare videberis, civitates multas lustrare, casus, mortes, tempestatum saevitiam, nubilos dies videre, imbres decidere, Solis fulgorem infuscari, caelum hyemare ac non nisi meticulousa omnia demonstrari'. Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturalis* (1558), p. 101.

<sup>66</sup> '[...] tanta est imaginationis vis, impressionum habitus, ut fere cerebri pars ea, quae memorativa dicitur, huiusmodi sit plena, cumque valde sint ipsae ad credendum naturae pronitate faciles, sic impressiones capessunt, ut spiritus immutentur, nil noctu diuque aliud cogitantes, et ad hoc adiuvantur, cum non vescantur nisi betis, radicibus, castaneis et leguminibus'. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>67</sup> 'Magie naturelle... une science des secrets pour faire des choses qui sont produites extraordinairement par des causes naturelles', Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel contenant généralement tous les mots françois, tant vieux que modernes, et les termes de toutes les sciences et des arts* (La Haye et Rotterdam: A. and R. Leers, 1690).

<sup>68</sup> Della porta described *lamiae* in this entry: ignorant and deluded old women, whose practice was characterised as 'superstitious'; in the demonological discourse it was usually *veneficae* who were said to be involved with black magic (*veneficium*). Both terms were frequently translated the same way, which did not help Della Porta's case.



cries and attempts to wake her, which included beatings. When the ointment's effect wore out, she woke up, and told them of her flight and travels, not believing the group's assurance that she had never left the room, which they tried to prove by showing her the marks in her body where they had hit her.<sup>69</sup> It is telling that Della Porta called her story of flying 'false' and 'delirious'; despite the complicated reception of this recipe, the author's intention seemed to be, rather than to disseminate heretical beliefs, to demonstrate how witchcraft could sometimes be no more than hallucinations.

However, the Italian translator, anticipating problems with the inclusion of this recipe in the book, told readers:

[...] but so as not to enflame the curiosity of people, and of the impious, who might use these things for evil, we shall silence these compositions, which evil women, inspired by the devil and by unbridled desires, could use.<sup>70</sup>

The witches' ointment was one of the most well-known recipes in the *Magia*.<sup>71</sup> Della Porta offered two ways to prepare it, which would cause women to hallucinate and dream of flying to Sabbaths. But it would also heat the body, as an aphrodisiac, facilitating sexual activity – and indeed the recipe mentioned how the witches would have lascivious dreams in which they had intercourse with 'handsome youths'. Since it opened the pores, it would also enhance the permeability of the body, as the ointment's spirits (and according to Della Porta's detractors, the devil) could penetrate through the skin. This recipe was between an aphrodisiac and hallucinogenic formula, and allowed female fantasies to, quite literally, 'take flight' during an opioid-induced sleep. Given the importance of this recipe in the reception of the *Magia*, I have translated it in full:

Ointments of the witches, with which many superstitions are mixed, but which act, on closer inspection, by natural virtue. I refer what I have learnt from them [the

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<sup>69</sup> '[...] a sonno sevocata, multa incipit fari deliria, se maria montesque transmeasse, falsa que depromens responsa, negamus, instat, livorem ostendimus, pertinaciter resistit magis'. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>70</sup> '[...] ma per non fomentare la curiosità degli huomini, et de gli empij, che adoperarebbono queste cose in mala parte, taceremo quelle compositioni, che simili malvagie femminelle, instigate dal demonio et da sfrenate voglie adoperano.' Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturale* (1560), p. 92r (Book II).

<sup>71</sup> For studies contextualising this recipe it in the demonological debates of the time, see Germana Ernst, 'I Poteri delle Streghe tra Cause Naturali e Interventi Diabolici: Spunti di un Dibattito', in Eugenio Garin and Maurizio Torrini (eds.), *Giovan Battista Della Porta nell'Europa del Suo Tempo*, pp. 167–98; Italo Battaifarano, 'Spee - Harsdörffer - Knorr von Rosenroth: La Ricezione di Giovan Battista Della Porta in Germania dalle Polemiche Demonologiche alla Genesi del Linguaggio Scientifico Tedesco', in *Giovan Battista Della Porta nell'Europa del Suo Tempo*, pp. 311–36.

witches]. They boil children's fat in a bronze receptacle and skim off the layer which floats on the water, they set what remains after evaporation, let it settle again and keep it to use it when necessary. Into this they mix apiaceae<sup>72</sup>, aconite, poplar leaves, and soot. Or in another way: water parsnips, common yellow iris, potentilla, bat blood, solanum which makes you sleep [*solanum nigrum?*] and oil; other diverse things can be mixed, which are not in small contrast to each other, they obtain from them an ointment as well, they anoint all the parts of their bodies, after having first rubbed them until they turned red and released heat, so that that which the cold makes thicker it becomes thinner: that way the flesh relaxes and the pores open. They grease themselves with fat or, in its place, with oil, so that the strength of these juices penetrates on the inside and is strong and more effective: I think that this is without doubt the cause. This way they believe they fly through the air on gibbous moon nights, they see banquets, music, parties and mate with good-looking young men, who they crave ardently. Such is the strength of their imagination and the quality of the impressions, that that part of the brain, called of the memory, is in this way completely full. They are nonetheless strongly inclined to let themselves be suggestioned by natural dispositions and absorb the impressions in such a way that their spirits are changed.<sup>73</sup>

I have found the two preparations offered to the reader by Della Porta in no recipe books other than the *Magia*. Although not all its translations and reeditions omitted it, it is apparent that most other authors and publishers were reluctant to include them in other recipe

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<sup>72</sup> *Apiaceae* or *Umbelliferae* are a family of plants which include many of the ingredients often used in secrets of women, from parsley to carrots, aniseed, parsnips, asafoetida, chervil, coriander and fennel. It also includes many toxic plants, such as hemlock. In this recipe, Della Porta employed the botanical family, which may have indicated a wide array of possibilities to readers.

<sup>73</sup> '*Lamiarum unguenta, Quae quanquam ipsae superstitionis plurimum admiscent, naturali tamen vi evenire patet intuenti: quaeque ab eis acceperim, referam. Puerorum pinguedinem ahaeno vase decoquendo ex aqua capiunt, inspissando quod ex elixatione ultimum, novissimumque subsidet, inde condunt, continuoque inserviunt usui: cum hac immiscent eleoselinum, aconitum, frondes populneas, et fuliginem. Vel ALITER sic: Sium, acorum vulgare, pentaphyllon, vespertilionis sanguinem solanum somniferum, et oleum, et si diversa commiscent, ab is non parum dissidebunt, simul conficiunt, partes omnes perungunt, eas antea perfricando, ut rubescant, et revocetur calor, rarumque fiat, quod erat frigore concretum: Ut relaxetur caro, aperiantur pori, adipem adiungunt, vel oleum ipsius vicem subiens, ut succorum vis intro descendat, et fiat potior, vegetiorque: id esse in causam non dubium reor. Sic non illuni nocte per aera deferri videntur, convivia, sonos, tripudia, et formosorum iuvenum concubitus, quos maxime exoptant: tanta est imaginationis vis, impressionum habitus, ut ferè cerebri pars ea, quae memorativa dicitur, huiusmodi sit plena: cumque valdè sint ipsae ad credendum naturae pronitate faciles, sic impressiones capessunt, ut spiritus immutentur [...]*'. Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturalis* (1558), p. 102 (Book II).

collections.<sup>74</sup> However, the recipe was cited many times in demonological treatises, starting with its inclusion in *On the Tricks of Demons (De praestigiis daemonum et incantationibus ac veneficiis libri sex)*, by the Dutch physician Johann Weyer.<sup>75</sup> Weyer made a similar point in his book as Della Porta did in the recipe, making its inclusion natural, since Weyer too argued that witchcraft did not exist: witches who claimed to do magic and have dealings with demons were merely suffering from delirious beliefs. Taken out of its original context, the ointment recipe became entangled in the demonological debate, serving as an example of the dangerous argument that witchcraft was not real. From then on, it was often mentioned by authors who were sceptical about witches.<sup>76</sup> This made Della Porta infamous and bordering on heretical, especially in Catholic areas.<sup>77</sup>

The controversial recipe created problems for Della Porta with the Roman Inquisition in two instances, probably also because of its use of traditional elements of popular (and sometimes, ‘dark’) magic, such as excrements, bodily fluids, poisonous herbs, frogs, bats, and the horrific ‘children’s fat’ – all of which composed the witches’ ointment.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, in the period when Della Porta was writing, religious authorities were already suspicious of

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<sup>74</sup> The only other similar witches’ ointment I have found is in Cardano’s work. It differs, however, from Della Porta’s recipe, although they contain many of the same ingredients. The books are also structurally similar and share many themes as well as a Neoplatonic influence: ‘Witches’ ointment. To this an ointment is useful, with which they cover themselves fully. It is composed, according to what it is believed, of the fat of children unearthed from their tombs, apiaceae juice, aconite, potentilla, and wheat. It is incredible the things they are persuaded to see: only happy things, spectacles, gardens, brooks, clothes, jewellery, attractive young men, mating of the kind they long for, even kings and officials with their entourage, and all the glory and the splendour of humankind, and many other magnificent things, as for instance [one sees] in dreams.’ ([Marginalia] *Lamiarum unguentum. Iuvantur ergo ad haec unguento, quo se totas perungunt. Constat ut creditor, puerorum pinguedine a sepulchris eruta, succisque apij, aconitique tum pentaphylli, siligineque. Incredibile dictu quanta sibi videre persuadeant: modo laeta, theatra, viridaria, piscationes, vestes, ornatus, saltationes, formosos iuvenes, concubitusque eius generis quales maxime optant reges quoque et magistratus cum satellitibus, gloriamque omnem ac pompam humani generis, multaque alia praeclara, velut et in somniis*). Girolamo Cardano, *De Subtilitate* (lib. XVIII) in *Opera Omnia* (Vol. III), p. 639.

<sup>75</sup> Johann Weyer, *De Praestigiis Daemonum* (Basel: Oporinus, 1563), Chapter XVII, (*De Lamiis*). Della Porta’s recipe was kept in all further reprints, including after the book was republished in Johann Weyer, *Opera Omnia* (Amsterdam: Petrum Vanden Berge, 1660), p. 222.

<sup>76</sup> Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft, Wherein the Lewde Dealing of Witches and Witchmongers is Notablie Detected, in Sixteen Books ... Whereunto is Added a Treatise upon the Nature and Substance of Spirits and Devils* (London: E. Cotes, 1584); Johann Georg Godelmann, *Tractatus de Magis, Veneficis et Lamiis deque His Recte Cognoscendis et Puniendis in Tres Libros Distributus* (Frankfurt: Nicolai Bassaei, 1591); Jean de Nynauld, *De la Lycanthropie, Transformation et Extase des Sorciers* (Paris: Jean Milot, 1615).

<sup>77</sup> For the Inquisition’s role in different national and religious contexts, including Italian cities, Spain, France, and England, see Mario Infelise, *I Libri proibiti*, especially pp. 13–24. For a temporal overview, see also a European chronology of censorship in Infelise, pp. 139–143.

<sup>78</sup> The first process against Della Porta started in 1577 and lasted until the following year, when he received a sentence of ‘canonical purgation’. It was likely motivated by the publication of the *Magia naturalis* in 1558. For more detail, see Michaela Valente, ‘Della Porta e l’Inquisizione’, *Bruniana & Campanelliana*, 1999, pp. 415–35; Luigi Amabile, *Il Santo Ufficio della Inquisizione in Napoli* (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 1987), especially pp. 326–29; Giovanni Aquilecchia, ‘Appunti Su G.B. Della Porta e l’Inquisizione’, *Studi Secenteschi*, 9 (1968), 3–31; Francesco Fiorentino, ‘Della Vita e delle Opere di Giovan Battista de la Porta’, *Studi e Ritratti della Rinascenza* (Bari: Laterza, 1911), p. 233–340.

writings on magic, partly because of the spread of the Waldesians and their teachings. It is possible that Della Porta's reputation as a magician might have been considered problematic, as it could be potentially associated with the Waldesians.<sup>79</sup>

But the problematic recipe also suggested that witchcraft was either the product of natural formulas or simply a fantasy, both dangerous implications. The suspicion around Della Porta and his ambiguous fame increased after the French jurist Jean Bodin (1530-1596) explicitly accused him of heresy, and culminated in the inclusion of the Latin *Magia naturalis* into the Spanish Index in 1583, among other books condemned.<sup>80</sup> It was considered to 'contain some things superstitious, some truly scandalous, and, besides, some against the Christian faith' ('*continens nonnulla superstitiosa, nonnulla vero scandalosa; aliquid etiam contra Christiana fidem*').<sup>81</sup>

Some ingredients in Della Porta's recipe, such as apiaceae, yellow iris, and aconite plants, had toxic properties, while others acted as sedatives (such as *solanum nigrum*). These plants could induce sleep and purgation by vomit, diarrhoea, and sweating, as well as hallucinations. The suggestive title, and ingredients such as children's fat and bat blood, however, rendered the recipe problematic, and created an association with demonic magic, which explains how this recipe (and consequently Della Porta) became entangled in demonological controversies.<sup>82</sup> The ointment of witches was a gendered recipe, about and for women, allegedly obtained from a woman. Although the recipe consisted of a hallucinogenic formula, its aphrodisiac properties would surely be recognisable to early modern readers, since the ointment heated the body. Moreover, several of the ingredients listed were typical of other secrets of women. This indicates that in early modern print, secrets of women could include more than just matters connected to reproduction. In the ointment's case, the source of the recipe was said to be a woman, it was meant for female use, and dealt specifically with female sexuality and desire. Furthermore, not only were the same ingredients used in fertility and conception recipes and the witches' ointment, but they suffered a similar treatment when

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<sup>79</sup> Luigi Amabile, *Il Santo Officio della Inquisizione in Napoli*, p. 147.

<sup>80</sup> Jean Bodin, *De la Démonomanie des Sorciers* (Paris: Jacques du Puys, 1580). Bodin also mentioned Della Porta ('whose book deserves to be burnt') several times in his refutation of the physician Johann Weyer's thought, which aligned with Della Porta's in many instances. Jean Bodin, *Réfutation des Opinions de Jean Wier* (Paris: Jacques du Puys, 1587).

<sup>81</sup> Michaela Valente, 'Della Porta e l'Inquisizione', p. 429.

<sup>82</sup> Giuseppe Bonomo, *Caccia alle Streghe: La Credenza nelle Streghe dal Secolo XIII al XIX con particolare Riferimento all'Italia* (Palermo: Palumbo, 1971), p. 179. Della Porta became even more well-known in the period through his feud with Bodin, who had accused him of heresy following the publication of the 'witches' ointment'. Jean Bodin, *De la Démonomanie des Sorciers*.

translated, which indicates how translators and publishers perceived them as pertaining to the same category.

## 5. Translating the Female Body: Content Changes

Among secrets of women, recipes about virginity and conception were very common. Determining a woman's virginity prior to marriage and conceiving children once the couple was married were important concerns in the period, which is why aphrodisiac recipes were so prevalent in books of secrets. As social historians have shown, fertility and reproduction were central worries for married couples; childlessness could even be used in insults among women.<sup>83</sup> However, as books of secrets show us, infertility was a family concern: while both men and women's social status partly depended on having children, infertility was first and foremost a problem concerning the family.<sup>84</sup> The increasingly popular vernacular medical texts made knowledge about how to ascertain virginity, treat infertility and help conception widely available to early modern readers. In most of them, it was the family ideal that was to be attained and safeguarded. Books by Alessio Piemontese and Leonardo Fioravanti offered to help (male) readers to avoid imprudent marriages with 'corrupted' women, and to aid childless couples. In Della Porta's unorthodox *Magia*, on the other hand, the author presented readers with other recipes as well, which could potentially undermine the more traditional recipes and the family entity, such as how to terminate pregnancies, simulate virginity, and avoid conception.

These subjects, as well as ways to seduce someone and avoid or incite love, were all delicate topics to appear in vernacular, popular print, in the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>85</sup> While most Latin texts enjoyed more freedom to diffuse sensitive knowledge, vernacular texts, by their nature aimed at a wide readership, were usually less open about such matters, frequently omitting them altogether. Indeed, recipes contradicting religious and social norms were rarely available in vernacular books such as Piemontese's or Fioravanti's, in which recipes were usually limited to assuring a woman's virginity and facilitating conception, both in the

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<sup>83</sup> Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

<sup>84</sup> David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Jacques Gélis, *History of Childbirth: Fertility, Pregnancy, and Birth in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

<sup>85</sup> Simona Munari, 'Translation, Re-Writing and Censorship during the Counter-Reformation', in José María Fernández and Edward Wilson-Lee (eds.), *Translation and the Book Trade in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 185–200.

original text and in translation. The *Magia*'s vertical translation from Latin into vernacular languages meant structural and linguistic changes for translators and publishers but they also worried about the consequences of giving access to sensitive knowledge to a wide readership. This concern rarely appeared in horizontal translations. The problem became increasingly perceptible after Della Porta became linked to witchcraft accusations and the polemic around the witches' ointment.

With the controversy surrounding the gendered ointment (a recipe *by, for* and *about* women) the whole *Magia* became 'contaminated', and Della Porta himself was compromised as a respected scientific figure and humanist. Nowhere was this more deeply felt than where other secrets of women were concerned. A new layer of why unorthodox recipes might be thought of as problematic, especially in translation, was added to the already controversial recipes. By comparing how different translators dealing with English, French, German and Italian adapted these recipes, especially considering the demonological polemic around the witches' ointment, it is possible to understand how controversial knowledge was transformed from Latin into vernacular languages along with the more current medical recipes about the female body, which were usually adapted just from a linguistic point of view. In this section, therefore, I explore how the witches' ointment tainted all secrets of women by Della Porta. Translators mostly opted either to keep all sensitive recipes about the female body – thereby including the ointment and taking a stand defending Della Porta – or to remove them altogether to avoid any controversies and jeopardise sales.

The 1560 Italian translation was the first vernacular version of the *Magia* and probably the one to change it the most.<sup>86</sup> It was published by Ludovico Avanzi (1556-1576) in Venice, who had also published books by Fioravanti. While it has been argued that Della Porta himself might be behind the translation, the many mistranslations render that hypothesis unlikely.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, this edition omitted many recipes and rendered several specific technical terms vague, which indicates it is improbable that Della Porta undertook

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<sup>86</sup> From 1560, Ludovico Avanzi published almost all Italian editions of the *Magia*, all based on the same translation, with the exception of the 1582 edition. Giambattista Della Porta, *Dei Miracoli et Maravigliosi Effetti dalla Natura Prodotti* (Turin: Heirs of Bevilacqua, 1582). Avanzi had published many other books of secrets, such as Leonardo Fioravanti's *Secreti Medicinali* (Venice: Ludovico Avanzi, 1561) and *Capricci Medicinali di M. Leonardo Fioravanti Medico Bolognese* (Venice: Ludovico Avanzi, 1564). He also published works by many other professors of secrets, such as Pietro and Ludovico Rossettini, Gabriele Falloppio, and Levinus Lemnius. See Marco Menato, Ennio Sandal, and Giuseppina Zappella (eds.), *Dizionario dei Tipografi e degli Editori italiani: Il Cinquecento* (Milan: Bibliografica, 1997), p. 641; Ester Pastorello, *Tipografi, Editori, Librai a Venezia nel Secolo XVI* (Florence: Olschki, 1924), p. 4.

<sup>87</sup> Gabrieli named Della Porta as the probable translator in Giuseppe Gabrieli, *Contributi alla Storia dell'Accademia dei Lincei*, p. 705.

the translation. While he did ‘self-censor’ his works later in life, after the dealings with the Inquisition, by 1560 there would have been no reason for Della Porta to suppress the recipes from a translation.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, he had written, in the preface to the first edition of the *Magia*, how he worried about the possibility of his text being censored and told readers the pain he would feel over the mutilation of his text and the suppression of important parts.<sup>89</sup> However, he linked these omissions to ‘envy’ and the publishers’ hurry to reprint the book; the fact that some parts of it might be thought of as ‘profane’ seems to have been secondary.<sup>90</sup>

The anonymous Italian translation, published only two years after the original text, did exactly what Della Porta feared, modifying and omitting parts of the book. If in the previous chapter of this thesis Piemontese’s case illustrated the more typical situation in which books of secrets were enlarged in translation, with the addition of new recipes, in Della Porta’s case, the opposite happened: the Italian *Magia* is a perceptibly shorter version of the original. While the witches’ ointment was the most well-known recipe in Della Porta’s work, which rendered its suppression in translation particularly relevant, it was by no means the only occasion in which the anonymous Italian translator acted as a ‘guardian’ between what Latin readers could read and what vernacular readers should not. The 1560 text was purged of all problematic subjects, especially the ones which contradicted the Catholic moral and were connected to women.

For instance, in the second book of the *Magia*, several recipes were suppressed without any explanation. This happened to chapter 15 (23 in the Italian version), in which the secrets of women disappear, such as how to restore virginity to a woman. The first Latin part was missing in the following chapter, containing recipes to enhance the female libido and abortifacient recipes. The following section, on how to diminish women’s ‘lustful appetite’, was still present in the translation, indicating what recipes the translator and/or the publisher felt would be appropriate for the vernacular readership to access. Another case of omission

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<sup>88</sup> After having been investigated by the Inquisition a second time, Della Porta was required to ask for approval before the publication of any new works. Michaela Valente, ‘Della Porta e l’Inquisizione’, pp. 420-422. For censorship in Naples, see Pasquale Lopez, *Inquisizione, Stampa e Censura nel Regno di Napoli tra '500 e '600* (Naples: Delfino, 1974).

<sup>89</sup> Mario Infelise, *I libri proibiti*, p. 78.

<sup>90</sup> ‘*Multaque praeterea acri censorum virga nimis examinata delentur, lacerantur et tolluntur, non sine meo dolore, quae potius admirando et philosopho ingenioso dignissima quam profane erant operis. [...] sic multa de philosophorum famigerato pharmaco illo non iniucunda inutiliaque omittuntur, pensique maioris, quae cum longum expostulassent tempus, in via erant*’. Cited in Giuseppe Gabrieli, ‘Giovanni Battista Della Porta: Notizia Bibliografica dei suoi Manoscritti e Libri, Edizioni ecc. con Documenti Inediti (Vol. VIII)’, in *Bibliografia Lincea*, pp. 206-77 (p. 230). On the relationship between Della Porta and official censorship, see Pasquale Lopez, *Inquisizione, Stampa e Censura nel Regno di Napoli tra '500 e '600* (Naples: Delfino, 1974), especially pp. 153-59.

was chapter 19 of the Latin edition (28 in the Italian version), about poisons. While the recipes concerning the female body had been utterly suppressed with no explanation, in this case, the translator told readers why, as with the ‘ointment of witches’ (*unguento delle streghe*): a recipe such as how to turn a man into a leper should not be written, since wicked people could use it to do evil deeds.

Love philtres, for instance, were among the recipes pertaining to the domain of the *veneficum*, or black magic; abortifacients and poison recipes, as well as other entries connected to sex and reproduction, were among the suppressed parts of the text in Italian. The chapter about hippomane, a well-known ingredient in love philtres, was omitted with the same justification as those about poisons: these were ‘impious’ things, and ‘evil people could operate evil things’ with them.<sup>91</sup> While not all omissions were acknowledged or justified as in this instance, when translators became ‘censors’ of books we get a glimpse of why such changes were seen as necessary.<sup>92</sup> Conscious or not, acknowledged and justified or not, it is apparent how these omissions were understood by the translator as a requirement for the book’s wider circulation in the vernacular.<sup>93</sup>

Della Porta reiterated in the original text how these recipes were caused by natural (and not demonic) means; however, he also argued how one should be familiar with demonic magic to protect oneself from it, as some of his contemporaries did.<sup>94</sup> This ambiguous position, after the polemic around the witches’ ointment began, became untenable for many publishers and translators. It is not clear whether the unknown translator of the 1560 edition of the *Magia* undertook these changes of their own accord or whether he was pressured to do so, even if ‘self-censorship’ seems more likely.<sup>95</sup> Since the establishment of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* at the behest of Pope Paul IV in early 1559, the Catholic control over

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<sup>91</sup> Namely chapter XXVII in the Latin edition: ‘*Quomodo amor conciliari possit, deque rebus amatorii medicamenti vim retinentibus*’ (p. 102-105). The Italian translator explained the omission: ‘... benché il modo di operar queste cose non ci paia convenevol lo scrivere per esser cose impie’ (p. 82v); ‘però bisogna saper il modo, il qual non si conviene scriverlo, come abbiamo detto, acciocché non imparino, né si dia campo alle persone maligne di operare simil cose in mala parte’ (p. 83r), Giambattista Della Porta, *De i Miracoli et Meravigliosi Effetti dalla Natura Prodotti Libri IIII* (1560). Hippomane also appeared similarly in Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *De Occulta Philosophia Libri III* (Cologne: Johannes Solter, 1533), p. 42.

<sup>92</sup> On gender, magic, and censorship, see Sharon Strocchia and Sheila Barker’s, ‘Household Medicine for a Renaissance Court: Caterina Sforza’s Ricettario Reconsidered’, in Sara Ritchey and Sharon Strocchia (eds.), *Gender, Health, and Healing, 1250-1550* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), pp. 139–65.

<sup>93</sup> On publishers’ trials and punishments, see Grendler, Paul, ‘The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 47, March 1975, pp. 48-65, pp. 57-59.

<sup>94</sup> William Eamon, ‘Natural Magic and Utopia in the Cinquecento’.

<sup>95</sup> Canon law allowed for both the censorship of works before publication and afterwards, so it is unclear what happened in Della Porta’s case. For an introduction to these mechanisms, see Elisabeth Ladenson, ‘Censorship’, in Michael Suarez, S. J. and H. R. Woudhuysen (eds.), *The Book: A Global History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 169-182.



printed books had increased, especially where vernacular books (or translations into the vernacular) were concerned, since these texts would reach a less instructed audience, which could arguably be more easily influenced.<sup>96</sup> It is quite possible that it was an editorial choice to purge the book of its problematic recipes to avoid problems with the Catholic church.

The Latin *Magia* offered readers many recipes that could safely be assumed to be directed at male readers. Where virginity was concerned, however, it would seem some recipes were aimed at use on women while still remaining a family matter. As I have explored in the first chapter, female literacy (and especially Latin literacy) was not straightforward. Collective readings might have helped, but it is difficult to imagine it in the case of some of these recipes. Della Porta's Latin readers, including some women, were offered ways to restore lost virginity and to trick a new husband into thinking his bride was chaste. While it would be a mistake to assume that these recipes were primarily aimed at helping women deceive prospective husbands, since Della Porta (and his ideal, male readers) was interested in everything that caused wonder, which often included 'tricks', it is undeniable that recipes such as these would have been of use to female readers – provided they could read the Latin edition. As with the other problematic entries, however, the Italian translator thought it best to suppress these recipes, probably thinking that the knowledge and sense of wonderment gained through this recipe was less important than the possible ill-use one could make of it. Such problematic recipes, aimed at deceiving one's spouse and circumventing social and religious norms, rarely appeared in translation. In one of the few cases where it did, English readers could follow this recipe:

A woman deflowred made a virgin again. Make little Pills thus: Of burnt Allome, Mastick, with a little Vitriol and Orpiment: make them into very fine Powder, that you can scarce feel them: when you have made them Pills with Rain-water, press them close with your fingers; and let them dry, being pressed thin, and lay them on the Mouth of the Matrix, where it was first broken open: change it every six hours, always fomenting the place with Rain or Cistern-water, and that for twenty four hours, and it will here and there make little Bladders; which being touched, will bleed much blood, that she can hardly be known from a Maid. Midwives that take

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<sup>96</sup> Following the Council of Trent, in 1564 a more comprehensive version of the *Index* was composed, which served as the basis for subsequent lists. On resistance and compliance to Catholic censorship, see Grendler, Paul, 'The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press', pp. 53-54. See also Rudolf Hirsch, *The Printed Word: Its Impact and Diffusion* (London: Variorum, 1978), p. 100.

care of this, do it another way. They contract the place with the Decoction of the forementioned things, then they set a Leech fast on upon the place, and so they make a crusty matter or scab; which being rub'd will bleed. Others when they have straightned the part, inject the dried Blood of a Hare or Pigeon; which being moistned by the moysture of the Matrix, shews like live fresh Blood. I found out this noble way: I powder Litharge very finely, and boyl it in Vinegar, till the Vinegar be thick; I strain out that, and put in more, till that be coloured also: then I exhale the Vinegar at an easie fire, and resolve it into smoak.<sup>97</sup>

This recipe offered readers four ways of simulating virginity. The first two consisted of creating painful sores which would bleed when penetration occurred, so that the woman would indeed bleed during intercourse, not from having her hymen punctured, but from the sores previously inflicted. The other two were ways of simulating bleeding by inserting dried animal blood or a lead solution, which would look like blood when intercourse took place. The anonymous English translation cited here, published in 1658 and based on the combination of the first and second editions of the *Magia* (1558 and 1589), tended to keep most of the recipes that had been omitted in earlier translations.<sup>98</sup> The main reason for that seems to be that, being published half a century later, and after the debates surrounding the demonological polemic of the witches' ointment had subsided and Della Porta had died, it was safer to publish this content. Equally important, however, is the fact that it was well outside the Inquisition's jurisdiction.<sup>99</sup> It is telling that the German translation, which also kept the integral original text, was also published outside of the Inquisition's area of influence, in the Protestant Magdeburg, which had its distinctive legal system.<sup>100</sup>

Although the German and English translations kept the original Latin text in full, not omitting any recipes, modifications did occur, which could change the way the recipe was understood. For instance, in the Latin *Magia*, Della Porta offered his readers several love recipes, ranging from how to seduce someone to love charms, ways of making women take off their clothes, and how to make someone stop loving another person. As in the rest of his book, Della Porta combined traditions, and most recipes could be used in more than one way.

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<sup>97</sup> Giambattista Della Porta, *Natural Magick*, pp. 252–53.

<sup>98</sup> The second edition of the *Magia* was also translated into German (*in primis*) and into Italian, but it was never translated into French that I know of.

<sup>99</sup> Pasquale Lopez, *Inquisizione, Stampa e Censura nel Regno di Napoli tra '500 e '600*; Michaela Valente, 'Della Porta e l'Inquisizione'.

<sup>100</sup> Karin Friedrich, *The Other Prussia: Royal Prussia, Poland and Liberty, 1569-1772* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

In a 'remedy against love', readers who wanted to discourage another person's romantic attention should avoid eye contact (since seduction happened when someone's spirits penetrated another person through the eyes), which indicated that the opposite behaviour might encourage love. Furthermore, the same recipe suggested that readers should purify their bodies of excrements such as blood and sweat, in order to drive away the foreign spirits that might remain in the body.<sup>101</sup> While in Latin and in the Italian translation it was the spirits sent forth by the eyes that could cause unwanted love and should be expelled through the purification and purgation of the body, the English translation places the emphasis on the medical aspect of this phenomenon, underlining the 'infection':

Some preservatives against Love. There are many prescribed by wise antiquity. If you would endeavor to remove the scharms of love, thus you may expel them. Turn your face away, that she may not asten her eyes on yours, nor coupld rays with you; for you must remove the cause from the place, where it useth to make its impression: forsake her company, avoid idleness, employ your mind in business of concernment; evacuate blood, sweat, and other excrements in a large quantity, that the infection may also be voided with them.<sup>102</sup>

It may sound striking today that when the spirits entered the body and reached one's heart, one could be perceived to be 'infected'. In many instances in Della Porta's text, desire could cause harm, and it is not a coincidence that most of these recipes concerned women. As with the witches' ointment that rendered the skin 'porous', the permeability of the human body was underlined in Della Porta's secrets of women, and it was often linked to pollution. The contaminating nature of menstrual blood has long been discussed by historians; in Della Porta's text, however, women could infect men without the need for bodily fluids or touch, bewitching men in a medical sense, since women's gaze could itself be 'contagious'.<sup>103</sup> Recipes like these could help men protect themselves against women. Reading this recipe alongside the witches' ointment and the recipes to 'restore' virginity, it is striking how much

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<sup>101</sup> 'Rimedij contro l'amore (...) Se vorrai da te tor il fascino amoroso cosi lo tormai, fuggi di mirarla, ne far che gli occhi tuoi s'incontrino con i suoi, ne s'accompagnino i tuoi guardi con i suoi, che di qui nasce la radice, poi toglì la cagione, togliendo la conversatione a poco a poco, toglì l'otio, occupandoti in cose piu gravi, cava fuor del tuo corpo, sangue, sudore, & ogni altro escremento, che con quelli scacci fuora quei spiriti, che sono rimasti nel tuo corpo.' Giambattista Della Porta, *Della Magia Naturale* (1677), p. 300.

<sup>102</sup> Giambattista Della Porta, *Natural Magick*, p. 232.

<sup>103</sup> Patricia Crawford, 'Attitudes to Menstruation in Seventeenth-Century England', *Past & Present*, 91.1 (1981), pp. 47–73.

power women seem to have in the original text, especially to trick and to manipulate men. While it is likely that Della Porta's interest in these recipes was based on his curiosity and research around the 'wonderful', rather than a fear or admiration of women, it is undeniable that in the original text female agency is a recurring aspect of 'wonders of nature'. However, while that aspect survived in translation, practically unaltered in French, English and German, it was completely omitted in the Italian version.

If in the case of the English and German translations a possible explanation for the inclusion of controversial recipes is the little power the Inquisition held in these areas in the period, in the case of the French translation, which also kept the text mostly as it was in the original, a possible explanation has to do with the rebranding of the book, more than with the fact that Royal censors would have more power over printed books. As mentioned in Chapter 2, in Germany the *Magia* was adapted from a domestic book (albeit 'full of wonders') into a technical one, and incorporated into the genre of *Kunstbücher*, which also happened to other books of secrets translated in the period.<sup>104</sup> In France, where the *Magia* was particularly successful (in Latin, Italian and French), the book underwent a similar process of genre transformation, which happened gradually.<sup>105</sup> As earlier historians have pointed out, books of secrets were often 'degraded' in France into the corpus of popular literature, exemplified by collections such as the *Bibliothèque Bleue*. This rendered the book's new readership even wider, and made publishers and translators adapt the book's contents, often making them more 'sensational'. In a recipe to attest if a new bride was chaste, for instance, the French version rendered the original text almost fantastical:

How to prove if a woman is chaste. Writers often brag about this [recipe], and one should do what follows. [...] if it [the magnet] is placed under the head of the woman asleep, if she is a virgin she will embrace her husband lovingly and sweetly:

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<sup>104</sup>Most notably Isabella Cortese, *Verborgene heimliche Kuenste unnd Wunderwerck Frawen Isabellae Cortese in der Alchimia, Medicina und Chyrurgia* (Hamburg: Heinrich Binder and Hans Scherenberg, 1592). Reprinted in 1596 (unknown translator). See also Alessio Piemontese, *Kunstbuch des Wolerfarnen Herren Alexii Pedemontani, von mancherleyen nutzlichen unnd bewerten Secreten oder Künsten, jetzt newlich auß Welscher und lateinischer Sprach in Teutsch gebracht, durch Doctor Hanß Jacob Wecker* (Basel: König, 1616). In both cases, the 'rebranding' is evident in the title, as I have shown in Chapter 2.

<sup>105</sup> The 1559 Latin edition included the witches' ointment, which was translated twice in France, in the 1565 *Magie naturelle*, and in the French translation of Weyer's *De praestigiis daemonum* – this is the translation Bodin used to accuse Della Porta. Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturalis* (Lyon: Unknown publisher, 1559) and *La Magie Naturelle* (Lyon: Jean Martin, 1565); Johann Weyer, *De Praestigiis Daemonum* and *Cinq Livres de l'imposture et Tromperie des Diables: Des Enchantements et Sorcelleries* (Paris: Jacques du Puys, 1567).

but if she is something else, she will be as if pushed by a violent hand: she will be thrown away from the bed.<sup>106</sup>

The Italian version, which kept this recipe, was much less creative, simply reproducing the Latin text: ‘...if she is chaste, she will sweetly embrace her husband, if not, she will struggle, and toss and turn from the bed, as if she were pushed by a hand’.<sup>107</sup> While the Italian text seems perverse for associating female submission with virginity and non-conformity to intercourse with corruption, the French text took the recipe even further in a vividly visual way, with the image of a woman thrown away from the bed by the magnet’s power. It is likely that the translator and publishers considered the new, popular readership the book would have when making these changes.

While the French version did not omit many secrets of women, keeping them in translation (often in a fantastical form), it suppressed the polemic witches’ ointment from the translation. Given the text tendency for sensational recipes, it can seem surprising that a recipe such as the ointment was omitted. However, that was probably due to the same reason why it had been suppressed from the Italian translation; in France the wide readership included people of lower social status. Indeed, this recipe does not figure in any of the Italian versions that I consulted, from the first anonymous translation in 1560 to the revised translation by Pompeo Sarnelli in 1677. It is also absent from the French translation and its reprints, which makes its publication in the English and German editions even more significant. In the French case, because the text was not only vertically translated from Latin into the vernacular, but addressed and incorporated into the corpus of popular literature sold cheaply by peddlers in the countryside, the editorial choice of omitting the ointment and of rendering recipes sensational seems to be based on this rebranding and transformation of the genre, to which we could add the fear of becoming entangled in the polemic around the ointment, which had in large part developed in France with Jean Bodin.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> ‘Comme on pourra esprouver si vne femme est chaste. Cela est vante souuent entre les Escrivains, & doit-on faire ainsi qu’il sera deduit cyapres. [...] que si elle est posee sous le chef d’une femme dormante, si elle est chaste elle embrassera son mari d’amoureux & doux embrassements: mais si elle est autre, elle comme poussee de violente main, sera iettée hors du lict.’ Giambattista Della Porta, *La Magie Naturelle* (Lyon: Charles Pesnot, 1571), p. 154v.

<sup>107</sup> ‘A far prova se una donna è casta. Farai a questo modo, la calamita ha questa proprieta di mostrare la castità della donna, & io l’ho lungo tempo diligentemente osservata, & hollo visto per isperienza. Metti questa calamita sotto il capo della donna quando dorme, che se glie casta, ella abbraccia dolcemente il marito, caso che no, la si sbatte del letto, come se la ne fusse spinta con mano.’ Giambattista Della Porta, *De i Miracoli et Meravigliosi Effetti dalla Natura Prodotti Libri IIII* (1560).

<sup>108</sup> Bodin and most of Della Porta’s detractors used the translation of the ointment printed in Johann Weyer’s book, which was more damaging to Della Porta, with sentences such as ‘they boil a child in a copper pot’

This had the consequence of making translators and publishers rethink all other secrets of women. Because the author himself had become troublesome, especially where knowledge about the female body was concerned, the ointment indirectly tainted secrets of women in the *Magia* overall, in different measures depending of the content of the recipe. In general, though, translators either omitted recipes to avoid problems or had to take a stand in defending Della Porta by publishing them – and the ointment – in full. This choice, perceptible in the English translation and in the German ones, especially the later one by Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, who openly defended Della Porta, was made possible by a relative distance (geographic, legal, temporal, and symbolic) from the Catholic sphere of influence. In Germany, Rosenroth was able to rehabilitate Della Porta in his translation of the second edition of the *Magia*, after an initial unfavourable reception, with Della Porta becoming central in shaping the growing technical vocabulary in German.<sup>109</sup> However, in other instances, especially in the Italian versions, the witches' ointment had effectively compromised Della Porta, and his secrets of women.

Even though the flying ointment seems very different from the other recipes mentioned here, it is important to remember how deeply witchcraft was connected in the early modern period with secrets of women and (in)fertility.<sup>110</sup> Witches were frequently accused of causing men's impotence, women's barrenness and even the death of crops and animals. Besides this thematic proximity, these recipes were also for/about and – most importantly – secrets produced by women. It was, therefore, unavoidable that other recipes would be contaminated by the controversy surrounding the witches' ointment, especially given how women were frequently mentioned in anecdotes about how this knowledge was acquired and used. The misogynistic idea that women could not be trusted and that they would trick and manipulate men, confirmed the notion that some knowledge should be restricted, and not accessible to them. This issue was central to translators working in the vernacular since the goal of this kind of print was precisely to reach wide readerships.

Translators dealt with this problem in different ways: the Italian version was purged of all problematic recipes, the English and German translations kept the integral text, partly

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instead of simply having 'children's fat' as an ingredient. For a detailed analysis of the demonological debate and translation, see Jean-Michel Gardair, 'L'immagine di Della Porta in Francia', in Eugenio Garin and Maurizio Torrini (eds.), *Giovan Battista Della Porta nell'Europa del suo Tempo*, pp. 273–90; Johann Weyer, *Cinq Livres de l'imposture et Tromperie des Diables*.

<sup>109</sup> Italo Batafarano, 'Spee - Harsdörffer - Knorr von Rosenroth'; Giambattista Della Porta, *Des Vortrefflichen Herren Johann Baptista Portae von Neapolis Magia Naturalis* (1680). Knorr von Rosenroth's version in two volumes had more than 2000 pages; it was reprinted in 1713.

<sup>110</sup> Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality, and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994).

because of a perceived distance from the polemic, partly due to a rebranding of the text and a shift in readership, and the French translation was ambiguous in omitting the ointment but keeping other controversial recipes, even augmenting them for effect. As for the versions based on the second edition of the *Magia*, it had already been censored by Della Porta, who, to avoid any more controversy, cleared it of problematic passages, most notably the ointment. Therefore, no further cuts were necessary. If the first *Magia* could be perceived as a threat to the Christian family and the community, the second version steered clear from such topics, becoming a much more technical book, in which magnetism and optics were central. Della Porta, however, could not refrain from commenting on this on the preface to the second edition of the *Magia*, arguing that the use of polemic secrets by evil people did not seem to him enough of a reason not to pursue his research for nature's secrets – and true knowledge.<sup>111</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

Many recipes published in the Latin *Magia* did not follow Garzoni's definition of 'good secrets'. Some of them were misleading and could harm people's conscience, and some were arguably not 'worthy of a noble man', most notably the ones connected to witchcraft and 'restoring' virginity. Della Porta's disregard for what a 'worthy' secret was indicates how he prioritised intellectual curiosity and the search for the wonders of nature, leading him to break social norms regarding the accessibility of controversial knowledge. It also indicates the young Della Porta's inexperience and privilege, since he did not anticipate being accused of immorality and even heresy because of these recipes. Even though the Latin text had polemic passages, their heretical character became more problematic when the book was translated into the vernacular languages. Publishers and translators were forced to decide if the new, less discerning readers could be trusted with this knowledge. Editorial and translation strategies varied depending on whether and how recipes should be altered or suppressed altogether, adding a new layer of complexity to the circulation of the book, which was also adapted from a linguistic point of view. As Sharon Strocchia and Sheila Barker have argued in the case of Caterina Sforza's recipes moving from the private to the public realm

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<sup>111</sup> '*Praeterea multa sunt noxia et malefica, quae in manus impiorum improborumque hominum pervenientia, damnum alicui inferre possent. Quid igitur faciendum? Profligetur, reiiciatur invidia, vincat posteris iuvandi voluptas, augustissimae Naturae magnalia non occultanda, non reticenda, ut in eis summa Dei potestas, benignitas et sapientia laudetur, colatur et veneretur.*' Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturalis* (1589), p. 2.

through print, the censoring of recipes can tell us much about local cultures of sex and patriarchal anxieties.<sup>112</sup> While we should be careful not to minimise differences between Northern and Southern Italy, Della Porta's case indicates how there were broader, European trends in how vernacular recipes were understood, and similar worries about a growing accessibility to sensitive knowledge.

Content and linguistic changes complemented each other in the translation and circulation of the book in the vernacular: the use of synonyms, simplification of the text, and shortening of recipes indicate how publishers perceived the new readers of the book as less literate, having a smaller vocabulary, and not being used to complicated texts. While the *Magia* had several didactic aspects to it, from its use of synonyms and examples to its theoretical flexibility and openness to new knowledge, these trends became increasingly important in translation. But vernacular readers were perceived not only to be less instructed and used to reading complex texts, but also to be less sensible where sensitive knowledge was concerned. As vernacular literacy became more common (and especially female literacy), translators and publishers added content changes to the linguistic adaptations, transforming the *Magia* while doing so. As the polemic around the witches' ointment and Della Porta developed, so did the practice of content changes and the omission of recipes. By the time the second edition of the book was published, Della Porta himself had censored it, and rendered the book more technical and focused on optics and magnetism – and much less so on medical recipes and secrets of women.

The witches' ointment recipe raises the question of (old) women and female sexuality, desire, and fertility. It would be an oversimplification to attribute its suppression to pure misogyny, the witch craze or even the Inquisitorial power in Naples and Rome. However, the witch who allegedly gave Della Porta the recipe is connected to the tradition of secrets of women, which did not limit themselves to reproduction and fertility. The feminine wisdom about the body and the level of agency women were expected to have in this entry – and in many others in the book – illustrate how accessibility to knowledge had an important gendered aspect in the early modern period. This became more perceptible in translation. That is why, in most translations, if the ointment recipe was kept, so were the recipes about 'restoring' virginity, procuring abortions, avoiding conception, and seducing a man. These apparently disparate recipes were all part of the universe of secrets of women; although Della

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<sup>112</sup> Sheila Barker and Sharon Strocchia, 'Household Medicine for a Renaissance Court: Caterina Sforza's Ricettario Reconsidered'.



Porta saw no problem in publishing them in Latin, for educated (male) readers, diffusing such knowledge in the vernacular (and to female readers), was a different matter. Therefore, most translations either kept the ointment recipe and all other problematic entries or suppressed all of them altogether.

The time of the publication, Della Porta's investigation by the Inquisition, and whether the book was printed in a mainly Protestant or Catholic area were surely important factors in making this editorial choice; but as the French translation indicates with the sensational recipes, so too were the publishing strategies, such as what kind of public the book was aimed for. Ultimately, the controversy surrounding the ointment tainted the rest of the book and Della Porta himself, making publishers and translators take a clear stand in the debate simply by deciding to include the recipe or not. The increasing popularity of the book, both in the sense of its editorial success and of its growing 'popular' readers, shaped the reception of Della Porta and of controversial secrets of women. Outside of Italy, and especially in English and German, publishers opted for printing the book in full, focusing more on linguistic changes. In France, its circulation was mainly shaped by the change in readership that was expected, and the role played by cheaply printed collections such as the *Bibliothèque Bleue*.

In Italy, even after Della Porta's death, these recipes continued to be omitted from translation, even though Pompeo Sarnelli, the second translator of the book, was sympathetic to Della Porta's plight. As a clergyman, he probably could not afford to include the ointment in his version of the book, regardless of his personal views on the matter. The various ways in which publishers and translators transformed the *Magia naturalis* in the vernacular (both in terms of linguistic and content changes) indicate the complex ways in which gender and accessibility to knowledge were perceived in the period, and the strategies used to restrict, clarify, and change that knowledge.

## Chapter 5: What is a ‘Mother’? Experience and ‘Womb Knowledge’ in Leonardo Fioravanti’s Secrets

### 1. Introduction

There may come a time in which we will all be doctors in a way; for today I can see that most of us, *even the women*, speak of philosophy, of medicine, of astrology, of mathematics and of several other sciences that exist, without being doctors. And, this way, no one can be tricked, since anyone who desires to tire one’s brain a little, can be learned: and the cause for this has been the printing press, which has so benefitted the world.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter, I will use the works of Leonardo Fioravanti (1517-1588) to discuss a broader kind of translation than in previous chapters, considering the issue of authorship and authority/expertise. I will show that Fioravanti’s recipes were the result of collaborative work: as he described it, he had learned from many different people throughout his life, including ‘poor old women’. Although anonymous, they remained constant in Fioravanti’s works in Italian reeditions and reprints. However, when Fioravanti’s recipes were translated (and heavily edited), most of the people from whom he had learned disappeared. Not only recipes themselves were changed, but the texts were completely recreated, and Fioravanti’s persona was refashioned as well. In translation, Fioravanti was the only authority, the exclusive expert. I will show that this is particularly true where gender was concerned: women were the source of much medical knowledge in the original texts, especially secrets of women. Fioravanti was merely conveying this knowledge to his readers. By reinventing Fioravanti in translation, this feminine knowledge (or at least the sense of female knowledge) was lost.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Forse un giorno verrà tempo che tutti saremo dottori a un modo; perciocché a questi tempi vedo che la maggior parte, anzi fino alle donne parlano di filosofia, di medicina, di astrologia, di matematica e di quante scienze sono al mondo senza esser dottori; e così nissuno può esser più gabbato, poiché ogni uno che voglia affaticarsi un poco il cervello, può esser dotto: e la causa di ciò è stata la stampa, quale ha fatto tanto beneficio al mondo.’ (My emphasis.) Leonardo Fioravanti, *Dello Specchio di scientia universale* (Venice: Melchior Sessa, 1572), pp. 69v-70r.

To show why these contributions by myriad people were central to Fioravanti's work in Italian, and why their omission in translation is so telling, I will briefly discuss his life and work. It might seem paradoxical that someone who sought fame so ardently as him would be willing to share his authority and authorship over the recipes with 'common people', even 'poor old women'. Yet, as I will show, this is precisely how he constructed his persona. By turning him into the sole expert in translated versions, translators might have made Fioravanti more appealing to new readerships, but they also completely changed the way Fioravanti chose to present himself – and his knowledge – to readers.

Fioravanti was fully aware of the impact printed books, especially medical ones, were having on his contemporaries, women included.<sup>2</sup> He was what Tommaso Garzoni defined as a professor of secrets; not only someone who collected secrets (a *secretista*) but a person who diffused this knowledge to a broad audience in print.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Fioravanti was the most prolific professor of secrets of his day.<sup>4</sup> He wrote or co-authored more than ten books in Italian, most of which were translated into English, French and/or German. Between 1582, when he published his last book, and the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there were forty-five reprints in Italian – an average of four per decade –, while between his first book in 1561 and 1682, more than eighty-three editions of his works appeared, around six per decade for 140 years. The last edition that I found of a book by Fioravanti dates from 1720, and some of his remedies were still sold at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup>

Overall, between his first book, published in 1561, and the last reprint, in 1720, seventy-eight Italian versions of his books were published, to which ninety-three translated

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<sup>2</sup> For Leonardo Fioravanti's biography, see the recent works by Piero Camporesi, *Camminare il mondo: Vita e avventure di Leonardo Fioravanti medico del Cinquecento* (Milan: Garzanti, 2007); William Eamon, *The Professor of Secrets: Mystery, Medicine, and Alchemy in Renaissance Italy* (Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 2010). More traditional studies tended to be less sympathetic, often considering Fioravanti a charlatan, as in Davide Giordano, *Leonardo Fioravanti Bolognese* (Bologna: Capelli, 1920), pp. 49–50; Giuseppe Gentili, 'Leonardo Fioravanti Bolognese alla luce d'ignorati documenti', *Rivista di Storia delle Scienze*, XLII (1951), pp. 16–40 (especially pp. 19, 29–33). On his prestige and fame, see the letters in Leonardo Fioravanti, *Il Tesoro della vita humana, dell'Eccell. Dottore & Cavaliere M. Leonardo Fioravanti Bolognese* (Venice: The Heirs of Melchior Sessa, 1570); see also Piero Camporesi, *Camminare Il Mondo*, pp. 233–34. For the archival records about Fioravanti, see Domenico Furfaro, *La Vita e l'opera di Leonardo Fioravanti* (Bologna: Azzoguidi, 1963).

<sup>3</sup> Garzoni therefore traced a clear line between earlier *secretisti* and the early modern professor of secrets, defined by the publishing of recipes. Tommaso Garzoni, *La Piazza Universale di tutte le professioni del mondo* (Venice: Giovanni Battista Somasco, 1589).

<sup>4</sup> Arguably the only one to have published as many books in the period was Della Porta, due to his several comedies; see Louise George Clubb, *Giambattista Della Porta Dramatist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965). Excluding theatrical texts, however, Fioravanti remains the most prolific of the professors of secrets.

<sup>5</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *Del Reggimento della peste* (Naples: Muzio e Ricciardi, 1720). The '*balsamo di Fioravanti*' was still sold in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, according to Piero Camporesi, *Camminare il mondo*, p. 67.

editions were added, amounting to almost two hundred versions of his books circulating in early modern Europe.<sup>6</sup> Fioravanti enjoyed particular success during the peak of chemical medicine between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. His remedies were published in official pharmacopoeias in the period, indicating how widespread were his formulas outside of Italy.<sup>7</sup> Fioravanti's books ranged from recipe collections to surgery treatises, plague tracts, autobiography, and writings on 'trade literature', but his medical secrets were the reason why he became so well-known.<sup>8</sup>

Fioravanti was born in Bologna and, from what he told readers in his *Tesoro della vita humana*, remained there until 1548.<sup>9</sup> By 1533, at sixteen years old, he had started studying medicine, and at twenty-two to practise it, probably as an apprentice to a surgeon or empiric. There are no records of him graduating, and he was not listed as a city physician, meaning he probably dropped out of the university and practised as an unlicensed *medico*.<sup>10</sup> He did not formally receive a diploma from the Bologna university until 1568, at more than fifty years old.<sup>11</sup> It is not clear why he left Bologna when he did; Fioravanti only told readers that he decided to travel in search of the secrets of nature and what he described as an ideal, 'primitive' medicine, such as the one the 'first physicians' had learned by observing animals – before medicine had been corrupted, and which survived among 'simple people' from the

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<sup>6</sup> For a compilation of the main editions of Fioravanti's books, see Appendix 4.

<sup>7</sup> The '*Electuarium Leonardo Fioravanti*' for the plague appeared in Hannover's official pharmacopeia in 1631. See Bruce Moran, 'A Survey of Chemical Medicine in the 17th Century: Spanning Court, Classroom, and Cultures', *Pharmacy in History*, 38.3 (1996), pp. 121-133.

<sup>8</sup> In 1686, Marcello Malpighi reported Fioravanti's remedies continued to be sold in the Caneletto pharmacy in Venice. Howard Adelman et al. (eds.), *The Correspondence of Marcello Malpighi, Vol. III* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 117.

<sup>9</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti's baptismal record, dating from 10 May 1517, is in the Archivio Arcivescovile in Bologna. A copy is available in the Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio, also in Bologna. For his autobiography, see the second book in Leonardo Fioravanti, *Il Tesoro della vita humana* (1570).

<sup>10</sup> While Fioravanti knew some Latin, he was not fluent in it, which distanced him from the academic medical tradition. The classic authors he read were probably the ones available in Italian translation, such as Dioscorides, published in the vernacular in 1544, translated and commented by Pietro Andrea Mattioli. Pedanius Dioscorides, *Di Pedacio Dioscoride Anazarbeo libri cinque della historia, et materia medicinale tradotti in lingua volgare italiana da M. Pietro Andrea Matthiolo Sanese Medico, con amplissimi discorsi, et comenti, et dottissime annotationi, et censure del medesimo* (Venice: Nicolo de Bascarini, 1544).

<sup>11</sup> Fioravanti became a doctor in Bologna in 1568, having received a bachelor's degree from Naples years before. It is not clear if he obtained the diploma in medicine and philosophy, if he received the degree of *magister atrium*, or a less prestigious degree such as a diploma as a surgeon, which was likely. Piero Camporesi, *Camminare Il Mondo*, p. 91. Fioravanti told his readers, however, that 'even though I had received a doctor's degree three times, I was made in March of the year 1568 to once again obtain the degree in philosophy and medicine; that way, I returned to Bologna, my homeland and *mater studiorum* [...] And besides the degree of doctor, by their grace, I was made count and knight, with all their authority'. ('*Non ostante che tre volte fossi dottorato, mi è stato forza questo anno 1568 del mese di marzo andarmi di nuovo a dottorare in filosofia e medicina; e così sono ritornato a bologna, mia patria e mater studiorum [...] Ed oltra il grado di dottore, per lor benignità, mi hanno fatto conte e cavaliere, con grandissima autorità*'). Leonardo Fioravanti, *Il Tesoro della vita humana* (1570), p. 83. Documents about the belated Bolognese diploma can be found in the Archivio di Stato in Bologna.

countryside.<sup>12</sup> The reform of medicine dreamed of by Fioravanti was also based on the extension of the principles of barber-surgery to medicine in general.<sup>13</sup> Understanding all diseases as the production of pollution and imbalance, purgation (natural or provoked) was the way to restore health, as the first physicians had learned by observing animals.

Fioravanti decided to look for this original way of healing in Sicily, where empiricists such as Akron of Agrigento had practised.<sup>14</sup> There, Fioravanti learned about empiric medicines, distillation, and herbal remedies, from varied and often unlikely sources. From Sicily, he moved to Naples, where he founded an Academy of Secrets: a group of people who met regularly in his house to test recipes and experiment with alchemical formulas.<sup>15</sup> In 1558, Fioravanti moved to Venice, where not only did he continue to practise medicine, but he also became a successful published author – and something of a celebrity, a controversial populariser of medical knowledge. Through his Naples connection with the polygraph Girolamo Ruscelli, who Fioravanti described as ‘the most glorious [professor of secrets] of our age’, Fioravanti was introduced into the vibrant publishing world of Venice, in which distillation practices were thriving among apothecaries and empirics.<sup>16</sup> Fioravanti even wrote about Ruscelli’s knowledge on distillation and his then-upcoming book, in which he had ‘collected a sea of very rare secrets’.<sup>17</sup> Ruscelli became one of Fioravanti’s closest

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<sup>12</sup> The knowledge about how the original medicine was based on the way animals ‘healed themselves’ by eating certain herbs to provoke vomiting could be connected to the knowledge about simples and their virtues, as in Fioravanti’s case. Alfredo Perifano, ‘La Théorie cachée ou de la pratique vulgarisée dans le *Compendio de i Secreti Rationali* (1564) de Leonardo Fioravanti’, in Dominique de Courcelles (ed.), *Ouvrages miscellanées et théories de la connaissance à la Renaissance* (Paris: Ecole des Chartes, 2003), pp. 117–29.

<sup>13</sup> William Eamon, *The Professor of Secrets: Mystery, Medicine, and Alchemy in Renaissance Italy*.

<sup>14</sup> Ludwig Edelstein, ‘Empiricism and Skepticism in the Teaching of the Greek Empiricist School’, in O. Temkin and C. L. Temkin (eds.), *Ancient Medicine* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins, 1967), pp. 195–203.

<sup>15</sup> Fioravanti lived in the Contrada San Giuliano in Venice, where he stayed for 4 years. He later moved to the area next to the church of San Luca, where he developed his alchemical experiments, often with Ruscelli, who also had an ‘academy of secrets’, while both lived in Naples in the 1540s. William Eamon, ‘Alchemy in Popular Culture: Leonardo Fioravanti and the Search for the Philosopher’s Stone’, *Early Science and Medicine*, 5.2 (2000), pp. 196–213; William Eamon and Françoise Paheau, ‘The Accademia Segreta of Girolamo Ruscelli: A Sixteenth-Century Italian Scientific Society’, *Isis*, 75.2 (1984), pp. 327–42. On secrecy and the networks disseminating information in Venice, see also Filippo de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Richard Palmer, ‘Pharmacy in the Republic of Venice in the Sixteenth Century’, in Andrew Wear, Roger French, and Iain Lonie (eds.) *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 100–117.

<sup>17</sup> ‘... sapientissimo Girolamo Ruscelli, poeta e scrittore in ogni genere eccellentissimo... il più glorioso di tutti quelli della nostra età che oltra l’arte distillatoria ha raccolto un mare di secreti rarissimi... e de i più veri ne ha fatto un volume, il quale presto andará in luce.’ Leonardo Fioravanti, *Dello Specchio di scientia universale* (Venice: Vincenzo Valgrisi, 1564), p. 129v.

companions in Venice, and the pair frequented each other's homes and developed experiments together in the Orso pharmacy.<sup>18</sup>

Fioravanti saw Venice as the ideal crossroads wherein medical knowledge from different cultures and regions was shared and from which he could distil knowledge, and share it through print.<sup>19</sup> He was closely connected with Giovan Giacomo from the Fenice pharmacy in the Campo San Luca, next to his house, and Sabba di Franceschi from the Orso family at Santa Maria Formosa, in the area where he practised medicine.<sup>20</sup> Both pharmacies stocked his medicines; indeed, readers were told in his books that they could buy Fioravanti's distilled formulas directly from the apothecaries, which in turn recommended Fioravanti's recipe collections to buyers.<sup>21</sup> Fioravanti was acquainted with more than a dozen pharmacists in Venice, most of who produced and sold his recipes. He is the ultimate example of how the medical and publishing worlds were interrelated and inter-reliant in early modern Venice: 97.5% of the Italian editions and reprints of his works came from Venice, with only occasional ones emerging from the presses of Turin.

As Ruscelli, Fioravanti also started his publishing career working as an editor in Vincenzo Valgrisi's printing house, which was one of the biggest in Venice.<sup>22</sup> Ruscelli had been there since 1549, working as a polygraph, or 'tradesman of the pen'.<sup>23</sup> Fioravanti edited a surgical manual by Pietro and Ludovico Rostinio in 1561, to which he added a brief treatise on surgery.<sup>24</sup> As explored in Chapter 2, editors and translators often started their own careers

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<sup>18</sup> William Eamon, *The Professor of Secrets*, p. 189. Ruscelli even mentions Fioravanti's military inventions (which he tried unsuccessfully to sell to Cosimo de' Medici). Girolamo Ruscelli, *Precetti della militia moderna, tanto per mare, quanto per terra. contiene tutta l'arte del bombardiero* (Venice: Heirs of Marchiò Sessa, 1568). Fioravanti saw Ruscelli as the great classicist who was open to new times, and they corresponded and visited each other often. Piero Camporesi, *Camminare il mondo*, p. 151.

<sup>19</sup> 'Ella è il centro del mondo perché da tutte le parti vi concorreno varie e strane sorti di gente e di mercanzie e di lì si distribuiscano in tutta l'Asia e l'Europa, ed è tale che come mancasse il traffico in essa, molte parti del mondo ne partivano, perché in Venezia viene la cannella, il reubarbo, l'aloë, il turbit, la siena, la scamonea e tante cose solutive che farieno cacare una grandissima squadra di vacche, ancor che fossero pregne. Si che in Venezia è il fiore di tutte quante le sorti di semplici che si truovano nel mondo.' Leonardo Fioravanti, *Della Fisica* (Venice: Melchior Sessa, 1582), pp. 342–43.

<sup>20</sup> Tommaso Garzoni, *La Piazza Universale di Tutte le Professioni del Mondo*, (Discorso 89).

<sup>21</sup> William Eamon, 'Pharmaceutical Self-Fashioning or How to Get Rich and Famous in the Renaissance Medical Marketplace', *Pharmacy in History*, 3.45 (2003), pp. 123–29 (p. 125).

<sup>22</sup> By the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, around five hundred printers worked in Venice, producing between fifteen and seventeen thousand titles – more than a hundred and fifty a year – and possibly as many as eighteen million copies over the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Ester Pastorello, *Tipografi, editori, librai a Venezia nel secolo XVI* (Florence: Olschki, 1924).

<sup>23</sup> *Poligrafi* worked in the trades of the pen (*mestieri della penna*). Claudia di Filippo Bareggi, *Il Mestiere di scrivere: Lavoro intellettuale e mercato librario a Venezia nel Cinquecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1988); Paolo Trovato, *Con Ogni diligenza corretto: La Stampa e le revisioni editoriali dei testi letterari italiani (1470-1570)* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991).

<sup>24</sup> Fioravanti also started publishing with the young editor, Ludovico Avanzi, who was particularly interested in natural philosophy. Active between 1556 and 1576, he published several other books by 'professors of secrets',

by adding their texts to the books they worked on. In Fioravanti's case, it was an exercise in 'self-fashioning' as well as a way of advertising his remedies and forthcoming publications.<sup>25</sup>

The construction of his persona was based on critical revisionism of traditional humoral medicine, rendered easy to read thanks to the many anecdotes, memories, and stories Fioravanti intertwined in his text. John Martin characterises this 'performative self' as a 'self-consciously theatrical demonstration of the individual', while William Eamon, describing Fioravanti, talks about his ambition to become an 'author-supersurgeon'.<sup>26</sup> Eamon highlights how becoming an author was, for Fioravanti, not so much a means to grow wealthy or independent or to further develop relations in court, but a way to attain fame. Reading Fioravanti's texts, it is clear how important it was for him to become widely known and respected as a medical reformer, which he mostly did by publishing his secrets and repackaging empirical rural cures to urban, middling sort readers. His insertion in the printing world with Ruscelli's help was instrumental for him to become 'Europe's first medical celebrity and the largely self-invented focus of an alternative medical movement', in Eamon's words.<sup>27</sup>

In his first book, *Capricci Medicinali*, published in 1561, Fioravanti introduced his 'new way of healing', based on alchemical procedures and the distillation of herbs used in the countryside. Until then, Fioravanti had mostly relied on the humoral theory inherited from Hippocrates and Galen, as most of his contemporaries did. The *Capricci* was the first step towards building an alternative way of understanding medicine, which became more explicit in his following book, the *Specchio di scientia universale* (1564), in which the surgeon argued that one could not see phlegm, bile, or melancholy in a dissected body: anatomies, highly criticised by Fioravanti, demonstrated there were only 'organs, muscles and bones' in the body, which meant the cause for illness had to come from something other than humoral imbalance.<sup>28</sup> The criticism of the humoral framework was one of the reasons why Fioravanti

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such as Levinus Lemnius, *De gli Occulti Miracoli et varii ammaestramenti delle cose della natura* (Venice: Ludovico Avanzi, 1563); Giambattista Della Porta, *De i Miracoli della natura* (Venice: Ludovico Avanzi, 1560); Gabriele Falloppio, *De Medicatis aquis atque de fossilibus tractatus pulcherrimus* (Venice: Ludovico Avanzi, 1569).

<sup>25</sup> The translators Johann Wecker and John Hester did the same with their translations of Alessio Piemontese and Leonardo Fioravanti, respectively. William Eamon, *The Professor of Secrets*, p. 151. The term 'Renaissance self-fashioning' is borrowed from Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> William Eamon, 'Pharmaceutical Self-Fashioning or How to Get Rich and Famous in the Renaissance Medical Marketplace'; John Martin, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2004).

<sup>27</sup> William Eamon, *The Professor of Secrets*, p. 214.

<sup>28</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *La Prattica universale in chirurgia. Di nuovo riformata, et dal latino ridotta alla sua vera lettura* (Venice: Marco Ginammi, 1647), pp. 50v-51v.

became so well-known; he was a polemicist, who argued that all ills originated in the stomach.<sup>29</sup> As the historian Piero Camporesi remarked, Fioravanti was an iconoclast, determined to revolutionise medicine – and to attain fame while doing it.<sup>30</sup>

He underlined the value of practice over theory and argued that doctors (and patients) should be able to produce their own medicines, even though pharmacies were a practical way of obtaining the same formulas. In a time in which there was no formal patent for drugs, Fioravanti combined his influence in the pharmaceutical and publishing worlds to render his medicines well-known. To do so, he chose catchy trade names for the remedies, which made them easy to remember: ‘angelic electuary’ (*elettuario angelico*), ‘philosopher’s stone’ (*pietra filosofale*), or ‘aromatic goddess’ (*dia aromatica*).<sup>31</sup>

Several other books followed the success of the *Capricci*, which answered to the medical market’s demands for novelty – even though many of the recipes were similar ‘cure-all’ elixirs. Fioravanti’s idea that all medical issues were caused by the stomach rendered the humoral understanding that cures should depend on the patient’s individual complexion irrelevant. Most of his medicines had several uses and were advertised as panaceas, with many of them consisting of long lists of herbs commonly used to treat various ailments, which should be distilled. Many of these were emetics that caused the violent purgation of whatever was corrupting the stomach, but Fioravanti also advocated urinating and sweating, as well as the widespread use of laxatives, to restore the body to health.

By denouncing the ‘great lie’ of the humoral theory, Fioravanti opposed the medical establishment directly, denouncing physicians as, at best, ignorant and, at worst, as deceivers of the public. With the theory that illness derived from the stomach’s indisposition and that treatments did not have to be adapted to the individual’s constitution, Fioravanti offered readers his distillates and other alchemical medicines, which were quickly becoming fashionable. As Eamon has argued, the prominence of *ciarlatani*, *secretisti*, and other empirics in the early modern medical marketplace can be explained by a growing scepticism about traditional medicine. Physicians and humoral medicine had been under attack in the piazzas, after a wave of epidemics and plague outbreaks followed by the spread of syphilis,

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<sup>29</sup> Although there was much overlap in this period between food and medicine, as the expression ‘kitchen physic’ indicates, there were few culinary recipes in printed books of secrets. Conserves, preserves, and electuaries were the exception, as they were often considered medicines. Dietary advice was usually available to readers in regimens. Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari (eds.), *Histoire de l’alimentation* (Paris: Fayard, 1996).

<sup>30</sup> Piero Camporesi, *Camminare il Mondo*, p. 60.

<sup>31</sup> Fioravanti advertised the qualities of his medicines, which was especially apparent in *Il Tesoro della vita humana* (1570), pp. 94v-95r.



which the doctors had not been able to successfully treat. With the impatience with traditional regimens and treatments, there was a renewed interest for novelty and cure-all medicines.<sup>32</sup> Fioravanti's panaceas were therefore very well received in Italy, and the success his books attained in Germany, France, and England attests the fact that the hunger for novel treatments was a European phenomenon. After his period in Spain, Fioravanti even wrote in Spanish, with some of his other works being translated into Castilian and his remedies being widely used at the Spanish court.<sup>33</sup> Fioravanti's straight-forward recipes for elixirs that readers could follow at home proved to work well in translation, and he became one of the most famous professors of secrets of his time.

Later in his life, when Fioravanti published his autobiography, several letters were printed at the end of the book, the correspondence with grateful patients and admiring colleagues a testimony of his prowess as a healer.<sup>34</sup> The surgeon also had a successful 'mail-order' business, particularly active between 1565 and 1568, the same period of publication of his most successful works, in which patients would write to him, and he would prescribe remedies through correspondence.<sup>35</sup> As early as 1568, enough Londoners were seeking Fioravanti's medicines for John Hester, the apothecary who acted as Fioravanti's English translator, to start producing and selling them directly at his pharmacy in Paul's Wharf.<sup>36</sup> Many of these exchanges were inserted into the *Tesoro della vita humana*, which described Fioravanti's journey from the 'darkness of ignorance' to the enlightenment of the 'new' medicine he advocated through the rediscovery of the 'original' way of healing, reconstructed through the contributions of common people, including not only empirics, but also herb women and midwives.

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<sup>32</sup> William Eamon, 'Alchemy in Popular Culture'.

<sup>33</sup> Fioravanti's books were even sold in the New World; a document in the Archivo General de Indias in Seville confirms that in 1603, three of his books in Italian were included in a booksellers' shipment to be sold in Mexico. William Eamon, *The Professor of Secrets*, p. 305. In some instances, Fioravanti was an almost bilingual writer, adding parts in Castilian to his Italian books after his stay in Spain between 1576 and 1577. Leonardo Fioravanti, *Il Tesoro della vita humana* (1570), p. 29r.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> As Fioravanti mentioned in his *Tesoro*, his remedies were sold in France, England, Germany, and Poland – and they opened the way to the translations of his works. Leonardo Fioravanti, *Il Tesoro della vita humana* (1570), p. 228r; Piero Camporesi, *Camminare il Mondo*, p. 153.

<sup>36</sup> John Hester's successor at the pharmacy, James Forester, also produced Fioravanti's drugs and reported a sizable continental market for Hester's secrets as well. Isabelle Pantin, 'John Hester's Translations of Leonardo Fioravanti: The Literary Career of a London Distiller' in S.K. Barker, and Brenda Hosington (eds.), *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads: Translation, Print and Culture in Britain, 1473-1640* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 159–83.

## 2. Women in Fioravanti's Books

Fioravanti spent his life travelling, from Bologna to Sicily, Naples, Rome, Venice, Ferrara, Milan, Spain, and back to Northern Italy. Probably because of that, he does not seem to ever have bought a house anywhere, choosing instead to rent. Domestic life did not seem to interest him much; he never married nor had any children – at least legitimate. He often wrote about the ‘strains the family gives a man and the nuisance of a wife, the thought of children, the needs of the home and servants’ salaries’.<sup>37</sup> Travel was his main interest. As Piero Camporesi demonstrated in his study of the empiric’s life, except for Rome, Fioravanti had always chosen to live by the sea, in places like Genoa, Palermo, Messina, the coast of Calabria and Campania, Pesaro, Naples, Pola and, of course, Venice. For Fioravanti, ‘travelling the world was the only, immutable, obsessive focus, changeable and uncertain, of his existence’.<sup>38</sup>

Fioravanti’s travels had many aspects in common with his contemporary professors of secrets, fictitious or not, from Piemontese to Cortese and even Paracelsus, especially the idea of science as a hunt (*venatio*) and the importance of travelling to learn recipes from different people.<sup>39</sup> In this process, the professor of secrets acted as a translator, not only from a linguistic perspective, but by appropriating this knowledge and reshaping it for future readers. Just like the fictitious Piemontese had learned his secrets through travelling and speaking with ‘all kinds of people’, Fioravanti also gathered his recipes from ‘people of all sorts’:

I have travelled the world for 57 years to know learned people of all sorts, and naturally, I have acquired many beautiful secrets not only from great learned men, and great nobles, but also from *poor little women*, from craftsmen, from peasants, and from all kinds of people.<sup>40</sup> [my emphasis]

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<sup>37</sup> ‘... la fatica che dà la famiglia ad un uomo e la importunità della moglie, i pensieri de’ figliuoli, i bisogni della casa, il salario de’ servitori’, Leonardo Fioravanti, *Dello Specchio di scientia universale*, p. 283v.

<sup>38</sup> Piero Camporesi, *Camminare il Mondo*, p. 249.

<sup>39</sup> William Eamon, ‘Science as a Hunt’, *Physis*, 31 (1994), pp. 393–432.

<sup>40</sup> ‘... son’andato LVII anni cercando il mondo per haver conoscenza di persone dotte d’ogni sorte, & per certo moltissimi bei secreti ho acquistati nō solamente da grandi huomini per dottrina, & da gran Signori, ma ancora da povere femelle, da artigiani, da cōtadini, & da ogni sorti di persone.’ Alessio Piemontese, ‘Ai Lettori’, *De’ Secreti del Reverendo Don Alessio Piemontese: Di nuovo riveduta, corretta, ampliata in più luoghi* (Venice: Alessandro Gardano, 1580). This was almost verbatim what had appeared in the original 1555 edition – as well as in most reprints and reeditions.

Many years have passed since I left my sweet home, Bologna, solely with the goal of travelling around the world to gain knowledge of natural philosophy, so that I might practise medicine and surgery better than I could when I began my work. [...] I always looked for precious experiments, whether from learned physicians or simple empirics, from all kinds of people, peasants, shepherds, soldiers, clerics, *simple women*, and people of all sorts.<sup>41</sup> [my emphasis]

Both authors acknowledged contributions from a vast group of people, ranging across social and gender barriers. Where women were concerned, they were referred to slightly pejoratively, as ‘simple’ or ‘poor little’ women, meaning women of lower social status. While they were not always mentioned in connection to specific recipes, it is safe to assume these women were at the origin of some secrets in these authors’ recipe collections.

Fictitious or not, both narratives also implied how travelling to gather knowledge led to a solitary existence. Fioravanti never mentioned any interest in marriage and having a family, and Piemontese told readers he led a mostly monastic life. Fioravanti believed little in the passions of the heart and still less in marrying for love: ‘falling in love with women’ was one of the ‘most potent causes of infirmities in the [male] body’.<sup>42</sup> Love could lead to melancholy and men could struggle with the dangerous ‘lustful nature of women’.<sup>43</sup>

Despite his interest in reforming medicine, Fioravanti was a man of his time where marriage was concerned: the woman’s place was in the home, raising children, and taking care of her family. However, he told readers that ‘the household was ill-served by men who want to have such power that they treat women as slaves’, since fathers and husbands should not oppress the women in their families.<sup>44</sup> Fioravanti attributed men’s complaints about women (and vice-versa) to the fact that their nature and upbringing was so different; each should support the other in their role and find balance in the household.<sup>45</sup> That might explain

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<sup>41</sup> ‘*Son gia passati molti anni che io come per auanti ho detto, mi parti della mia dolce patria Bologna, solamente con intentione di andare caminando il mondo per hauer cognitione della natural filosofia, accio potessi meglio essercitare la medicina & chirurgia, di quello che io faceuo in quei primi tempi, che gli incominciai a dare opera. [...] [Io non mi son mai stancato [di] andar cercando bellissimi esperimenti, cosi di dottissimi medici, come ancora di semplici Empirici, & d’ogni altra sorte di gente, come uilani, pastori, soldati, religiosi, donniciole, & d’ogni altra qualita’.* Leonardo Fioravanti, *Il Tesoro della vita hvmana* (Venice: Melchior Sessa, 1582), pp. 17v-18r.

<sup>42</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *Capricci Medicinali* (Venice: Lodovico degli Avanzi, 1561), p. 222v.

<sup>43</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *Dello Specchio di scientia universale*, p. 226v.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

<sup>45</sup> ‘*dapoi che io nacqui ho sempre sentito gli uomini lamentarsi delle donne e le donne degli uomini e certamente che gli uomini hanno ragione di quello che dicono delle donne e le donne similmente hanno ragione di quelle cose che si lamentano contra de gli uomini; percioche quanta differenza e tra la creazione dell’uomo e quella della donna, tanti contrarii sono nelle loro nature*’, Leonardo Fioravanti, *Dello Specchio di scientia*

why there are so few recipes about the female body and reproduction in Fioravanti's books: 'secrets of women' were women's expertise. He merely related some he had learned from women to the reader. In this sense, Fioravanti was the opposite of contemporary authors who wrote specifically about secrets of women in the vernacular and addressed their books to women.<sup>46</sup>

While neither Piemontese nor Fioravanti seemed particularly interested in domestic life or women, both acknowledged them as essential and valid sources of the knowledge they shared with the reader. In both cases, the women who were cited as contributors of recipes were vaguely referred to and unnamed; the little information we know about them regards their social standing. 'Simple women', 'little women', 'poor women' were the sources of recipes, not noblewomen. Not surprisingly, these women were important sources of *medical* knowledge: reproduction matters, fevers, or everyday ailments were domestic matters in which they would have experience. This general invocation of common women as recipe sources in works like these was usually limited to medicine. Isabella Cortese, on the other hand, presented herself as a noblewoman who travelled East to find out the secrets of nature. Most of her recipes were cosmetic or alchemical: these subjects were aimed at wealthier women, with the resources and the time to pursue them. These recipes might complement and improve family life, but they were not immediate needs as cleaning a wound or delivering a child. It is no accident, therefore, that in both Fioravanti and Piemontese's works these noblewomen were rarely mentioned, even though noblemen were. In Cortese's books, common women were virtually non-existent, since her focus was not domestic medicine, but rather what she understood as the 'higher pursuit' of alchemy.

To gender and social status, another element was often added to characterise the women contributing to the collection to recipes: age. Whether professional midwives or peasant women, these contributors were usually older women. In Fioravanti's case, his books were filled with anecdotes of remedies taught to him by them. Always prizing experience above theory, Fioravanti often used these women as extreme examples of how empiric knowledge was more worthy than the physicians' book-learning. In his *Capricci medicinali*, Fioravanti described the physicians' confusion at a complicated case:

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*universale*, p. 345r. It is likely that Fioravanti had read popular tracts about the subject, such as Cherubino da Siena, *Regola della Vita Spirituale e Regola della Vita Matrimoniale* (Florence: Nicolaus Laurentii Alamanus, 1482).

<sup>46</sup> The most well-known examples of midwifery manuals of the time were Giovanni Marinello, *Le Medicine appartenenti alle donne* (Venice: Francesco de' Franceschi, 1563); Girolamo Mercurio, *La Commare o Riccogliatrice* (Venice: Gio. Battista Ciotti, 1596).

...and then some experienced old woman will appear, and with the rules of life and an enema will make the fever stop, and with an unction will make the pain disappear, or with some fomentation will make [the patient] sleep. In so doing, the old woman will know more than the physician.<sup>47</sup>

The archetypal old wise woman is a constant presence in Fioravanti's works.<sup>48</sup> Not only had she the experience of her age, but also of having birthed and nursed children as well. Fioravanti reminds us of how women were often the first port of call in the medical world: domestic treatments were usually tried before recurring to a paid practitioner, and women were expected to care for the family members' health.<sup>49</sup> This caring was not necessarily limited by gender and economic barriers: women could treat several ailments, going beyond secrets of women, and could help in their local communities. For Fioravanti, they were especially knowledgeable in treating the female body, as they were the 'natural' experts.

Since one of Fioravanti's strategies in his books was to repackage country cures to an urban audience, herb women, midwives and experienced old women in general permeated his recipe collections.<sup>50</sup> In fact, Fioravanti's persona itself included traits from charlatans and mountebanks: he was often involved in disputes against other medical practitioners, especially physicians.<sup>51</sup> He was inspired by healers, whether male or female, combining three elements: the medical, the theatrical and the itinerant.<sup>52</sup> These healers were probably at the origin of the catchy trade names Fioravanti chose for his medicines, which combined the medical with the religious. By fashioning himself as a new kind of healer, Fioravanti appropriated several identities, from the country healer to the travelled empiric to the

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<sup>47</sup> '...Et poi verrà una vecchiarella pratica, la quale con la regola di vivere e con servitiale li farà cessar la febbre, con una unzione li farà mancare il dolore e, con qualche fomentatione lo farà dormire. E in tal caso la vecchiarella saperà più del medico.' Leonardo Fioravanti, *Capricci Medicinali* (1561), pp. 107v-108r. This passage appeared, with small variations, in the 1570 and 1582 editions of the *Capricci*, as well as in the 1570 edition of *Della Fisica*.

<sup>48</sup> William Eamon has also noticed the presence of these *vecchiarelle* in Fioravanti's texts. However, while translating the same passage, Eamon used 'hag' for *vecchiarella*, instead of 'old woman'. I believe this to be an inaccurate translation, that says more about our current beliefs about women and age than sixteenth-century perceptions. William Eamon, *The Professor of Secrets*, pp. 186–87.

<sup>49</sup> Lynette Hunter, 'Women and Domestic Medicine: Lady Experimenters, 1570-1620', in Lynette Hunter and Sarah Hutton (eds.), *Women, Science and Medicine, 1500-1700: Mothers and Sisters of the Royal Society* (Thrupp: Sutton, 1997), pp. 89–107.

<sup>50</sup> William Eamon, 'Pharmaceutical Self-Fashioning', p. 127.

<sup>51</sup> For an analysis of the competitive early modern medical marketplace, see Margaret Pelling, *Medical Conflicts in Early Modern London: Patronage, Physicians and Irregular Practitioners 1550–1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Although her focus is on London, much of her analysis can be extended to Italian cities.

<sup>52</sup> M. A. Katritzky, 'Marketing Medicine: The Image of the Early Modern Mountebank', *Renaissance Studies*, 15.2 (2001), pp. 121–53.

*ciarlatano* and the wise woman, seeing eclecticism as a strength in the criticism of conventional medicine.<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, these elements could make the books more appealing to a varied readership. The *vecchiarella* (old woman), for instance, was a relatable source of recipes, not only recognisable but possibly respected by Fioravanti's readers as well.<sup>54</sup> Throughout his books, he offered readers myriad examples of her empiric knowledge, a hidden world of secrets Fioravanti had penetrated and promised to unveil. These stories often saw physicians dumbfounded at the old woman's cunning and supremacy over Hippocrates and Galen.<sup>55</sup> They were not always described as *vecchiarelle*: called '*sagae*' (wise women), '*aniculae*' (old women), '*comari*' (midwives), '*buone e sagge donne*' (good and wise women), these women knew herbs, and followed a long tradition of female knowledge, unknown even to physicians, which was repackaged to urban readers in the forms of recipes and anecdotes by Fioravanti.<sup>56</sup>

For Fioravanti, 'real' mothers were not those who gave birth to children, but the ones who nursed them.

She should also nurse the baby with her own milk, since it is a monstrous thing to have delivered the baby from her own insides and wish for it to be nursed with someone else's milk.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> David Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing in Early Modern Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

<sup>54</sup> Several anecdotes about healing women permeate Fioravanti's books; illnesses that baffled physicians were healed by 'a common simple woman with a little secret' (*una vil femminella con un suo secretuzzo*). Fioravanti had treated women 'rich and poor' in Palermo and Messina, and learned from the '*mammane*'. Piero Camporesi, *Camminare il Mondo*, p. 77. Women often treated people with their own recipes, such as the one in Naples who healed eye ailments with an ointment. Leonardo Fioravanti, *Capricci Medicinali* (1561), p. 47r.

<sup>55</sup> '*... quella spagnuola dette una drama in circa di una certa polvere di erba stemperata con un brodo all'ammalato in presenza di tutti noi altri medici; e la cosa passo quasi come una comedia: fu si fatta burla che tutti noi altri ridessimo un pezzo e tutti ci partissimo irresoluti, con il medicamento della vecchia. [...] un giorno la vecchia spagnuola venne in casa mia e mi porto quell'erba a mostrare. [...] in vero è cosa da far impazzir tutti noi altri medici e da mandare ippocrate e galeno al bordello e mai piu aprirli*', Leonardo Fioravanti, *Capricci Medicinali* (1561), pp. 107r-108r. This ingredient was unknown to him and most writers, and Fioravanti weighed in the polemic against pure theory with anecdotes about the value of empiricism based on the *vecchiarella*'s knowledge and the 'holy experience'. Similar stories appeared in Leonardo Fioravanti, *Della Fisica*, pp. 177–80.

<sup>56</sup> Fioravanti was careful to tell readers how he only recommended treatments he had learned in his travels that he had personally seen or performed himself. Next to the Baia castle, for instance, he had stumbled across '[waters] chiamato da Napolitani il bagno da fare impregnare le donne... sterili' but '*io non lo so affermare* [if it works] *per non averne veduto esperienza piu che tanto*', Leonardo Fioravanti, *Capricci Medicinali* (1561), p. 12v and following pages.

<sup>57</sup> '*... atte a gouernare, & lattare i loro figliuoli; & principalmente dico, che il giorno, che la donna ha partorito il figliuolo, o la figliuola dee ringratiare Iddio di esso; & parimente della vita, che l'ha scampata;*

Fioravanti argued that no wild animal would expect for its progeny to be nursed by another one, not swans or birds or boars. Furthermore,

And if I am told by the great ladies they are too delicate to nurse them, but instead would find wet nurses to feed them, who are good and perfect, I would reply that little love would the wet nurse who raises the child bring him, because in truth the mother, who births the child, is the only one who can nourish him with love.<sup>58</sup>

Such an opinion was doubtless polemic in a time when most wealthier women would not nurse their own children; however, it may have proved popular among Fioravanti's readers of middling and lower social status, who could feel their way of living validated by him. By legitimising nursing one's children, Fioravanti was not only criticising noblewomen in favour of his more modest readers but making them superior mothers to their more comfortable counterparts. If he intended to validate his readers' habit of nursing the children themselves, this was also – as much of Fioravanti's texts – a rhetorical device.

If the mother was not the one who birthed children, but the one who nursed and raised them, Fioravanti created the association that women should be active in their family life to be respected, and not passive. The daily experience made a mother; bringing up children and nursing family members composed the social role Fioravanti expected them to fill: merely birthing children was not enough. If these were the women the reader should respect and aspire to be, they were also the ones whose medical advice should be followed, especially as they grew older and accumulated knowledge.

By alternating between the roles of the provincial surgeon and the world-wise empiric, between outsider and insider of medicine, Fioravanti created a persona in whose discourse famous women from antiquity and the experienced old woman from the countryside both had their place, and both illustrated the importance of the lived experience and empirical learning. Motherhood and experience were closely linked in Fioravanti's work;

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*perché la donna, che scampa del parto, può dire, che quel giorno nasce al mondo. [...] Dee così parimente la Donna lattare la sua creatura del proprio latte, imperoché per cosa mostruosa hauer partorito il figliuolo delle proprie uiscere, & volere, che sia notrito con l'altrui latte.*' Leonardo Fioravanti, 'Discorso sopra le conditioni di molte Donne' (Cap. XXX), *Dello Specchio di scientia universale* (Venice: Heredi di Marchio Sessa, 1583), p. 240.

<sup>58</sup> *'Dice platone, che mai i figliuoli non sono tanto ben voluti, come quando la madre gli latta del suo latte [...]. Et se mi dicessero le gran Signore, che son delicate, & che non possono lattarli; ma che in luogo di esse d'hanno trouate balie per lattarli, che son buone, & perfette; io rispondo, che poco amore li porterà la balia, che lo allieua; quando uede il poco amore, che li porta la madre, che l'ha partorito: perché in uero la madre, che partori il figliuolo, ella sola lo nutrica con amore.'* Ibid.

experience turned mothers into a repository of knowledge, especially the ones illiterate enough not to have been corrupted by what Fioravanti saw as the ‘great lie of physicians’ – the humoral theory. Furthermore, their being ‘simple’ (which Fioravanti often used as synonym for illiterate) meant these women were closer to the original, primitive medicine he promised to reveal in his recipes, and which could be recovered from humble people living outside of cities, who were the keepers of this forgotten knowledge. While these recipes included secrets of women, they encompassed the health of the whole body, which meant these women were not only mothers to their children, but to a reformed, idealised medicine based on experience – itself the ‘mother of all things’.<sup>59</sup>

### 3. The ‘Mother’ Translated

Most professors of secrets, such as Piemontese, wrote for a wide readership, which comprised men and women from all social backgrounds, medical practitioners and laypeople, urban and rural readers. Even Della Porta, who originally published his secrets in Latin, told readers he expected all to find ‘the food they craved’ in his books.<sup>60</sup> Fioravanti used the same metaphor when describing his readers:

And that is why there should be multiple kinds of writer, since some write for high and exalted minds, some for the middling sort, and some for those who do not understand very much at all. Therefore, if my work is not for intellectuals and men of learning, nor even for those of middling quality, at least it will be for those who understand little. For they are the hungriest, and I want everyone to have some food for thought.<sup>61</sup>

Fioravanti commented on the other printed books of secrets in the vernacular available at the time, and how they were very cryptic and often did not include a *dichiarazione*, a list of

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<sup>59</sup> Experience was ‘the mother of all things’ (*la madre di tutte le cose*). Leonardo Fioravanti, *Capricci Medicinali* (Venice: Ludovico Avanzi, 1573), p. 2r.

<sup>60</sup> Giambattista Della Porta, *Magia Naturalis, Siue de Miraculis Rerum Naturalium* (Naples: Matthias Cancer, 1558), p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Et così anco bisogna che ui sia più sorti di scrittori, che ue ne sia per gli spiriti letterati, & grandi, & per quelli, che son mezzani: & similmente per quelli, che non intendono più che tanto: & a questo modo ui sarà cibo per tutti.’ Leonardo Fioravanti, *Secreti Medicinali* (Venice: Ludovico Avanzi, 1561), p. 176v.



‘difficult words’ explained with synonyms; that was the reason why he had decided to publish his own books, he told readers.<sup>62</sup>

Fioravanti’s readers included people from various backgrounds, especially urban middling sorts, who were interested in novel medical and cosmetic recipes for ‘self-improvement’.<sup>63</sup> This varied readership was clear to Fioravanti who, despite underlining the importance of feeding his ‘hungry’ humble readers, also wrote how he did not want to cast ‘pearls before swine’, keeping some parts of the text in cypher. These were often in the vernacular and are not difficult to read (each word was written from right to left); at other times, he mixed Italian and Latin, usually when writing about his most precious secrets. He also told readers how ‘some medicines I keep to myself so that I have something secret of my own’. For these secrets, readers had to write to him, and he would send them the recipes for a fee.<sup>64</sup> Always attuned to the commercial side of publishing, Fioravanti was a deft reader of his own readership, and his ambivalence seems to stem from wanting to reach different readers.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, he also commented on the ‘placebo effect’ language could have when writing about medicine:

... with learned men, to whom the truth is known, you should use common and clear words, but with ignorant people [such as] simple old women and that kind of person, even the things that could be easily said in Latin or in the vernacular should be said with an obscure language, or with Greek and Moorish words’.<sup>66</sup>

This indicates Fioravanti’s ambivalence towards wise women, even if they were a valuable source of empirical knowledge. For Fioravanti, both complicated and straightforward language could be rhetoric devices used in his books: they could make

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<sup>62</sup> ‘... sono stati assai huomini et donne che hanno scritto libri di Secreti, I quali son stampai et posti in luce. Ne i quali vi sono di molte cose buone e vere, ma scritte in mo[d]o che, ancor che le genti li leganno, non restano pero satisfatti, perché sono scritti on tanta brevità et senza [a]lcuna dichiarazione che non se ne cava frutto nissuno’. Leonardo Fioravanti, *Del Compendio dei Secreti Rationali* (Venice: Andrea Ravenoldo, 1566), p. 1v.

<sup>63</sup> Rudolph Bell, *How to Do It: Guides to Good Living for Renaissance Italians* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999).

<sup>64</sup> ‘...alcuni altri rimedij mi riservo, per avere alcuna cosa secreta appresso di me’, Leonardo Fioravanti, *Il Tesoro della Vita Humana* (1570), pp. 95r-95v.

<sup>65</sup> About the importance of easy-reading, see Alfredo Perifano, ‘La Théorie cachée ou de la pratique vulgarisé dans le *Compendio de i Secreti Rationali* (1564) de Leonardo Fioravanti’; Armando Petrucci’s ‘Introduction’ in Armando Petrucci (ed.), *Libri, Editori e Pubblico nell’Europa Moderna: Guida Storica e Critica* (Bari: Laterza, 1989), p. ix-xxiii; Claudia di Filippo Bareggi, *Il Mestiere di Scrivere*, pp. 282–314.

<sup>66</sup> ‘...con gli uomini dotti, a quali è nota la verità, dee usare parole comuni e chiare, ma col volgo ignorante e con le vecchierelle e cotali persone, anche quelle cose che si potranno dire commodamente in latino o in favella volgare le dirà con parlare piu oscuro e con parole o greche o arabesche’. Piero Camporesi, *Camminare il Mondo*, p. 66.

medicine accessible or mysterious, in different ways. Therefore, it was not uncommon for his recipes to list ingredients sometimes with their popular names, and at others with their Latin versions. As reeditions and reprints augmented the contents of these recipes (and the number of secrets themselves), this phenomenon became clearer. Undoubtedly, adapting this hybrid writing style in translation was one of the main challenges Fioravanti's translators had to contend with. However, the biggest challenge in translating Leonardo Fioravanti's books was arguably in the way he spoke of women – and 'mothers' specifically. While most early modern writers used 'mother' to describe both women who had children and the womb itself (*madre/matre*), Fioravanti added a third dimension to 'mother': a repository of empiric knowledge.

As I have shown in this thesis, Fioravanti was by no means the first to write about secrets of women in the vernacular. Contemporary recipe books by Piemontese and Della Porta, as well as the *Dificio di ricette*, included recipes about the female body, ranging from menstruation to lactation. Furthermore, midwifery manuals and tracts about female ailments were a growing genre in Europe. These books were mostly published in the vernacular, often written by male physicians to instruct female readers in general and midwives in particular.<sup>67</sup>

In Italy, the two most successful of the genre were the *Medicine partenenti alle donne* (1563), by the Modenese Giovanni Marinello (1500-1550), and *La Commare o riccoglitrice* by the Roman Girolamo Mercurio (1550-1615), published around 30 years later.<sup>68</sup> While most midwifery treatises appeared slightly later than books of secrets, both genres' novelty was aiming to diffuse medical knowledge in the vernacular.<sup>69</sup> As most professors of secrets, Marinello and Mercurio told readers their motivation was not only humanitarian but political and cultural, opposing the secrecy from earlier medical texts. While Marinello's book addressed all women (it was dedicated to 'gentle and honest women'), Mercurio's later

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<sup>67</sup> Eucharius Rösslin, *Der swangern Frawen und Hebammen Roszgarten* (Strassburg: Arnt von Aich, 1513); Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book: Or the Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered*. (London: Simon Miller, 1671); Louise Bourgeois, *Recueil des Secrets de Louyse Bourgeois, dite Boursier* (Paris: Melchior Mondière, 1635); Anonymous, *Aristotles Master-Piece, or, The Secrets of Generation Displayed in All the Parts Thereof* (London: J. How, 1684).

<sup>68</sup> Giovanni Marinello, *Le Medicine Partenenti alle Donne*; Girolamo Mercurio, *La Commare o Riccoglitrice*.

<sup>69</sup> The vernacular books about medicine in Italian until then were mostly case studies (*casi*) translated from Latin or other vernaculars, such as the 1316 *Anatomia* by Mondino de' Liuzzi, which became a university manual, and 16<sup>th</sup>-century *Anatomia del corpo humano* by Juan Valverde, a translation published in Rome in print in 1660. Some of these books appeared at the outbreak of a plague, as the university physician Girolamo Manfredi's, *Tractato de la Pestilentia* (Bologna: Johannes Schriber, 1478), written when the physician had been 'moved by compassion and pity' to write in the vernacular.

midwifery manual was directed to midwives, which meant adopting the vernacular (not of the Tuscan, but the Roman style in his case):<sup>70</sup>

... having seen often the danger that mother and child suffer in difficult births due to the lack of knowledge of midwives [...] I decided to publish instructions to the midwife [...] since I have not seen anyone who has written a work of the sort in the vernacular. [...] The errors in this [book] are not due to ignorance, but to cunning, and are on purpose. [...] To me, that seems a good thing, for my midwife does not understand Latin.<sup>71</sup>

Both Marinello's and Mercurio's books were successful and part of a broader trend of publishing secrets of women in the vernacular to female readers.<sup>72</sup> But they also presumed that women, even female practitioners, should be instructed by male physicians. While later midwifery manuals such as Jane Sharp's and Louise Bourgeois' were authored by women, most midwifery manuals had been written by male authors, presuming women to be the recipient, not a valid source of, medical knowledge. However, Fioravanti's books went in the opposite direction: the interspersing of anecdotes where the experienced old woman knew more than physicians with practical recipes indicated to readers that the source of recipes were women. If Piemontese briefly mentioned the countryside 'simple old women' among other unlikely sources in his preface, Fioravanti's experienced mothers were a constant presence throughout most of his works. Their approaches are part of a spectrum of representations of female knowledge. With print, these attitudes became even clearer, as this could be a problematic aspect when a book was translated.

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<sup>70</sup> Mercurio had been influenced by Giovanni Marinello, and he mentioned Marinello's daughter Lucrezia among 'illustrious women', p. 4. However, *La Commare* was original in Italy in that it was directed to midwives, as earlier books elsewhere in Europe, such as Eucharius Rösslin, *Der Swangern Frawen und Hebammen Rosgarten*; Jacob Rueff, *De Concepto et Generatione Hominis* (Zurich: Christophorus Froshoverus, 1554).

<sup>71</sup> '...vedendo cisi spesso pericolare nei parti viziosi e le madri e i figli per il poco sapere delle commari [...] determinai di porre in luce un'istruzione per la commare [...]. [perché] non ho veduto alcuno che in volgare abbia fatto opra di questa sorte. [...] gli errori fatti in esse [libro] non sono fatti per ignoranza, ma per malizia, cioè a bella posta. [...] a me pare di avere fatto bene, perché la mia Commare non intende favella latina [...]'. Girolamo Mercurio, *La Commare o Riccogliatrice*, 'Prefazione dell'autore'.

<sup>72</sup> For instance, *La Commare* was reprinted more than twenty times in the century following its publication, and translated into German. Arturo degli Ancarani, *Il Più Antico Trattato di Ostetricia per Levatrici* (Siena: S. Bernardino, 1912); Felice La Torre, *L'Utero Attraverso i Secoli: Da Erofilo ai Giorni Nostri* (Castello: Unione Arti Grafiche, 1917), p. 316. It had an intense circulation until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when it was effectively replaced by Sebastiano Melli, *La Comare Levatrice Istruita nel suo Ufizio Secondo le Regole Più Certe* (Venice: Gio Battista Recurti, 1721).

The validation of this empiric knowledge and its diffusion through the recipes printed in the books proved a complicated issue in translation. Translators and publishers mostly omitted the anecdotes about *vecchiarelle*, keeping only the recipes instead. This was likely a strategy not to alienate potential readers and to enhance the marketability of the books. By removing these anecdotes (among other changes), the texts were made similar to other contemporary books of secrets aimed at a general readership, losing some of what made them unique. Moreover, this eliminated any potential conflict between the growing genre of midwifery manuals aimed at women, which marked a ‘masculinisation of women’s medicine’, and books of secrets, which published similar recipes about the female body.<sup>73</sup>

Despite already being well-known outside of Italy in the 1560s, when he started publishing in Italian as well as sending recipes to patients via an epistolary network, Fioravanti’s works were not immediately translated.<sup>74</sup> The slow but significant translation of his secrets started in 1579, in England, with the publication of *A Joyfull Jewell*, a collection of recipes from different books.<sup>75</sup> It had been translated by Thomas Hill (d. 1599) and edited by the apothecary John Hester (d. 1593) who, the following year, translated *A Short Discours* by the Bolognese surgeon.<sup>76</sup> Two years later, a translation of his *Compendio* appeared, and in 1594 Hester’s *Pearle of practice* was published posthumously, containing extracts translated from Fioravanti’s texts.<sup>77</sup> In 1652, a collection of Fioravanti’s experiments and a surgery treatise appeared, followed by a miscellaneous volume the following year with passages from different authors, including Fioravanti, Della Porta, and Paracelsus.<sup>78</sup> Except for the first book translated by Hill, all these translations had been done by Hester.

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<sup>73</sup> Monica Green, *Making Women’s Medicine Masculine: The Rise of Male Authority in Pre-Modern Gynaecology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>74</sup> Piero Camporesi, *Camminare Il Mondo*, p. 226.

<sup>75</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *A Joyfull Jewell; Containing as Well Such Excellent Orders, Preservatives, and Precious Practices for the Plague; as Also, Such Various Medicines for Divers Maladies, as Hitherto Have Not Been Published in the English Tung* (London: Thomas Hill, 1579).

<sup>76</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *A Short Discours of the Excellent Doctour and Knight, Maister Leonardo Phioravanti Bolognese upon Chirurgerie. With a Declaration of Many Thinges, Necessarie to Be Knowne, Never Written before in This Order: Wherunto Is Added a Number of Notable Secrets*. It was reprinted in London by Edward Allde in 1626, when both the author and the translator were deceased, under the name *A Discourse upon Chirurgery, augmented by R. Booth*.

<sup>77</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *A Compendium of the Rationall Secretes, of the Worthie Knight and Most Excellent Doctor of Phisicke and Chirurgerie, Leonardo Phioravante Bolognese* (London: John Kingston, 1582); Leonardo Fioravanti, John Hester and others, *The Pearle of Practise, or Practisers Pearle, for Physicke and Chirurgerie, Found out by J. H. (a Spagericke or Distiller) amongst the Learned Observations and Prooved Practises of Many Expert Men in Both Faculties* (London: R. Field, 1594).

<sup>78</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *A Treatise of Chirurgery Published with Many Excellent Experiments and Secrets* (London: G. Dawson, 1652); Leonardo Fioravanti, *Three Exact Pieces of Leonard Phioravant Knight, and Doctor in Physick, Viz. His Rationall Secrets, and Chirurgery, Reviewed and Revised* (London: G. Dawson, 1652); Leonardo Fioravanti, *An Exact Collection of the Choicest and More Rare Experiments and Secrets in Physick and Chirurgery... of Leonard Phioravant* (London: G. Dawson, 1653). The *Exact Collection* was later

While in England Fioravanti was considered an ingenious innovator, an experimenter and medical reformer (as Hester characterised him in the prefaces), in German-speaking areas his books were marketed towards readers interested in the wonders of nature, alchemy and medical secrets, and often linked to Paracelsus. Furthermore, the technical aspect of the books gained importance, as it did when Della Porta, Piemontese, and Cortese's recipes had been translated into German and assimilated into the genre of *Kunstbücher*. However, the German publication of Fioravanti's texts followed a similar pattern to what had happened in English, in the sense that translators and publishers chose what to publish from Fioravanti's many books, recreating compilations while editing them at the same time. Rarely in English or German does one translation correspond to one original Italian book; most of them are rearrangements of the original works, with content being added and, more often, suppressed, to reach new readers. All German translations of Fioravanti were published posthumously and were connected to the spread of chemical medicine.<sup>79</sup> However, while Fioravanti's principal English translator is known, the German translator or translators remain anonymous.

In France, Fioravanti's two translators were Gabriel Chappuys (1546-1613), a humanist polygraph who worked as a royal secretary and prolific translator, and Claude Rocard, an apothecary like John Hester.<sup>80</sup> In both Chappuys' and Rocard's translations, the French versions corresponded to one Italian original and were much more straight-forward than the English and German translations.<sup>81</sup> While Chappuys changed some aspects of Fioravanti's books, there was no major rearranging of the internal structure of the book, even though some anecdotes (especially the ones about wise women) were suppressed. In Claude Rocard's translation of the *Capricci*, there was an apparent effort to streamline the text and reduce repetitions, mostly by eliminating stories of how Fioravanti came about a particular

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reprinted as *An Exact Collection of the Choicest and More Rare Experiments and Secrets in Physick and Chyrurgery (Both Cymick and Galenick) Viz. of Leonard Phioravant, Knight and Doctour in Physick and Chyrurgery, His Rational Secrets and Chyrurgery &c.* (London: William Shears, 1659).

<sup>79</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, *Corona; oder, Kron der Artzney* (Frankfurt: Nicolaus Hoffman, 1604), reprinted in 1618; Leonardo Fioravanti, *Physica, das ist Experientz unnd Naturkündigung* (Frankfurt: Nicolaus Hoffmann, 1604); Leonardo Fioravanti, *Allgemeyner Kunst vnd Welt-Spiegel: in drey schöne, nützliche, vnd vnterschiedene Bücher getheylt* (Frankfurt: Nicolaus Hoffmann, 1618); Leonardo Fioravanti, *Compendium, oder Auszug der Secreten, gehaymnissen und verborgen Künsten* (Darmstadt: Johann Leihosen, 1624); Leonardo Fioravanti, *Regiment und Ordnung der Pestilenz* (Frankfurt: Johan Nicolt Stoltzenberger, 1632). See Appendix 4 for the table of Fioravanti's books. For possible alternative and earlier versions of the *Regimento della peste*, *Specchio di Scientia universal* and the *Tesoro della vita humana*, see also Piero Camporesi, *Camminare Il Mondo*, p. 228.

<sup>80</sup> Peter Burke, 'Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe' in Peter Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia (eds.), *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 7–38.

<sup>81</sup> These editions attained great commercial success. In 1586 the same printer did a second edition of the same book, slightly shorter than the previous one. In 1602, the publisher David Douceur printed it a third time. So, there were three editions of the *Specchio* published in less than fifteen years.

medicine to make the writing less ‘Italian’. For instance, Rocard told readers how he had removed ‘all useless superfluity of language’, which was ‘a natural vice not only to Fioravanti but to many from his nation’.<sup>82</sup>

Both the French and the German translations adapted Fioravanti’s texts, from a linguistic, social, and cultural perspective, but the English versions of his secrets were probably the ones to change the originals the most. Not only were there linguistic changes, but the texts were also rearranged and reassembled to create new volumes based in more than one book, with much of the autobiographical anecdotes figuring countryside healers disappearing. Hester chose to translate the books that contained recipes, to which he added medical commentary, leaving aside miscellaneous books such as the *Capricci* or the *Tesoro*. By transforming the texts into manuals of practical medicine, Hester diminished the importance of the narrative aspect of Fioravanti’s books, not hesitating to suppress what he saw as superfluous.<sup>83</sup>

For instance, about women suffering from the ‘pains of the mother’, Fioravanti wrote how a lustful old woman had told him the problem could often be solved by releasing seed – ideally through sexual intercourse:

... And she told me I was mistaken [to think there might be a remedy], for to treat the pains of the mother, there was nothing but the father, and I believe it because after infinite experiences I found that to be the truth. [...] However, for almost all women that remedy is difficult, since it involves the woman’s honour and the honour of the house.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> ‘...toute superfluité de langage inutile’, ‘un vice assez naturel non à Fioravanti seulement, mais a plusieurs de sa nation’. Leonardo Fioravanti, *Les Caprices de M. Leonard Fioravanti Bolognois* (1586), ‘Preface’.

<sup>83</sup> Isabelle Pantin, ‘John Hester’s Translations of Leonardo Fioravanti’, p. 174.

<sup>84</sup> Full citation: ‘... per quello che ho potuto intendere io da alcune donne, che tale infermità hanno patito, non si può cavare altro concetto se non che sia il seme soprabondante, che vorria uscire, e questo crederò io che sia il mal di madre, perché ho parlato con diverse donne che tale indispositione hanno patito e tutte convengono in uno, cioè che prima che li venga tale indisposizione, tengono grandissima voglia di lussuriare, e perché non hanno la comodità, se la passano e subito gli viene il mal di madre che le tormenta. E sopra questo caso mi disse una donna di età già vecchia, che pativa tanto della lussuria, che si sentiva morire. E poi della madre non dico niente; e questa mi disse che piglio per partito di trovar modo di poter sborrare la natura quando li venivano quelle terribil voglie, e che fatto questo, si passava senza più sentir mal di madre. E questa mi disse che io mi disingannasse, che al mal di madre non li voleva altro che il padre, e così lo credo perché dipoi ne ho visto infinite esperienze e trovato esser la verità. Se adunque il mal di madre viene per tal causa, che bisogna rompersi la testa in cercar rimedi contra tale infermità, essendovi il rimedio prontissimo? Nondimeno quasi in tutte le donne quel rimedio è molto difficile, perciòche vi interviene l’onore e della donna e della casa.’ Leonardo Fioravanti, *Della Fisica*, p. 152.

Since Fioravanti could not advise against the honour of women, he only suggested a palliative in an ambiguous recipe in rhyme, resembling the playful *cantimbanchi*'s music.<sup>85</sup> This passage does not appear in the English versions of Fioravanti.

Hester was not only translating Fioravanti's texts to new readers but Fioravanti's persona as well. While in Italian he was a travelling surgeon who was open to learning from unlikely sources, illiterate old women included, Hester's readers were mostly men of middling and high social status, including physicians and apothecaries. Therefore, to make Fioravanti appealing, he was presented as a great alchemist and distiller – an image not very compatible with the itinerant empiric who marvelled at experienced wise women's remedies. Furthermore, in the Italian books, Fioravanti aimed to reform medicine by rediscovering a lost, idealised knowledge, the primitive medicine forgotten by physicians. Hester, on the other hand, was not interested in looking back to a bucolic past, but to the new, forward-looking medicine exemplified by Paracelsus and the rise of chemical medicine, which he associated with Fioravanti as well.<sup>86</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that anecdotes about expert old women were suppressed. In translation, expertise and authority were Fioravanti's alone.

Something similar happened in the French versions. The translator Rocard advised readers that recipes brought risks to unlearned people, who would not know how to follow them correctly. The authorship of the outlandish methods Fioravanti shared with readers – which had mostly been gathered from unlikely sources in his travels – was established as Fioravanti's, a 'great doctor'. It was in him that readers should trust:

...as the medicines invented by the long practice, judgement, and experience of our Fioravanti [may] seem bizarre, fantastic and of a strange composition, one should think that their effects are so marvellous and excellent because they are created by

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<sup>85</sup> *'Se la lussuria adunque verrà a molestare, bisogna viver parco, e non mangiare se non cose fredde, al mio parere, e se questo saprai fare, nissuna cosa più ti puo giovare, e se il dolor ti viene a molestare, bisogna sapere che rimedio fare, e perche il male è di molta importanza, bisogna avertir sopra di quello, dando sempre all'inferma gran speranza, e li rimedi freddi hansi da usare, e tu donna non ti maravigliare, perche il calor e quello che ti molesta, fa infiar la pancia e doler la testa, pero per questo non si resta di ontar con succhi freddi tutte le reni co i fianchi, per smorzare il fuoco che dà pena e questa è la vena da curar la madre senza pena.'* *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>86</sup> Paul Kocher, 'John Hester, Paracelsian', in Brenda Hosington, and S. K. Barker (eds.), *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads: Translation, Print and Culture in Britain, 1473-1640* (Boston: Brill, 2013), pp. 1576–93.

such an able hand, with a judgement so solid and expert, such as the one to have originally published them'.<sup>87</sup>

Hester's English translations of Fioravanti often underlined the translator's lack of expertise in medical matters, despite working as an apothecary. While this was a conventional rhetorical device in translations, Hester was careful to keep words he was unsure of in the original language, as most early modern translators did. According to Isabelle Pantin, his fidelity to the source material was 'relative and intermittent', with chapters suppressed, contents transformed and reordered to suit Hester's London clients.<sup>88</sup> The praise of experience and its superiority over book learning remained central in Hester's translations. However, it was disconnected from its original sources, such as countryside herb women and midwives, to focus on Fioravanti himself.

While praising Fioravanti, 'the great distiller', Hester was also associating his image to that of the surgeon, as a medical reformer: someone forward-looking, learned, and ambitious, who questioned the medical establishment. Hester's career and translation of Fioravanti's texts remind us of the intricate relationship between the book trade and the medical world in early modern London: print contributed to the diffusion of medical knowledge, while also transforming it. This knowledge was irrevocably changed by intermediaries such as translators and publishers. In Elizabethan England, Hester turned Fioravanti into a precursor of chemical medicine, who arguably opened the way for Paracelsianism.<sup>89</sup> However, this understanding of Fioravanti, and the translation of medical recipes without their narrative aspect explaining how the origin of these secrets was often humble, eliminated in the process the tales about the experienced old women, the 'wise mother' who, through daily practice, had learned much about medicine in general, and secrets of women in particular.

Fioravanti had lauded Marinello's writings about reproduction and praised his choice to publish in the vernacular, as Fioravanti himself. Nevertheless, while midwifery manual writers such as Marinello saw women mostly as the recipient of knowledge, Fioravanti

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<sup>87</sup> '... comme les remèdes inventés par la longue pratique, jugement et expérience de notre Fioravant, semblent bizarres, fantastiques et d'une estrange composition, aussi faut-il penser, que leurs effects sont d'autant esmerveillables et excellents, quand ils sont maniez par une main aussi adroite, un jugement aussi solide et expert, qu'estoit celuy qui les a premièrement mis en lumière.' Leonardo Fioravanti, *Les Caprices de M. Leonard Fioravanti Bolognois* (1586), 'Au Lecteur'.

<sup>88</sup> Isabelle Pantin, 'John Hester's Translations of Leonardo Fioravanti', p. 178.

<sup>89</sup> Deborah Harkness, *The Jewel House: Elizabethan London and the Scientific Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).



acknowledged the value of their contributions, in a much more direct manner than the fictitious Piemontese.<sup>90</sup> In Fioravanti's case, the 'mother' was more than an organ or a woman who had children; she was a repository of forgotten knowledge, which, if recovered, could help to reform medicine. Yet, in French and German, she was relegated to an occasional and unimportant presence, and in English, she disappeared altogether.

#### 4. Conclusion

Fioravanti was not shy about praising the printing press and how it had revolutionised the medical world, allowing knowledge to circulate in an unprecedented way. But, while doing so, the printing world would also change this knowledge, through the activity of translators, publishers, and editors. Linguistic and cultural changes were widespread, but so were adaptations from a social, gender, and ideological perspective. If printing broadened access to knowledge, allowing a wider audience to read medical texts in the vernacular, agents such as Hester reshaped whose knowledge was valid in the process. Translators decided not only what should be known by whom, but even from whom this knowledge was said to come. Adapting books to their new readerships was an essential factor in the process of translating a foreign text, but so too were the way of thinking and the intentions of the ones making these changes. In Fioravanti's case, his success during the peak of chemical medicine in Germany and England derived in significant part from the surgeon's interest in the subject as well as in distillation and alchemy' but it was also partly due to having been 'repackaged' to new markets by translators and publishers.

The transformation of Fioravanti from an itinerant empiric who learned from countryside healers to a great distiller illustrates the link between the medical, pharmaceutical, and printing worlds in the early modern period: Rocard and Hester were apothecaries as well as translators, who had their own views on medicine. The process of suppressing the wise women anecdotes from Fioravanti's texts was different in French, German and English. But in all three cases, particularly in English, there was a perceptible shift in authority and expertise, and even, arguably, in authorship over the recipes. A collective, collaborative, and eclectic medicine, based on the knowledge of old and poor women, was replaced by a medicine practised by a single, exceptional man: the only expert was Fioravanti. The *vecchiarelle* were considered a problematic source of knowledge, in a

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<sup>90</sup> Marinello was mentioned among the '*virtuosi e letterati*' in Leonardo Fioravanti, *Del Compendio de i Secreti Rationali [di] M. Leonardo Fioravanti Bolognese* (Venice: Vincenzo Valgrisi, 1564).

similar way that I argued in the previous chapter that Della Porta's recipe learned from an old witch had been. Of course, witchcraft added a new layer to Della Porta's reception: but in both cases, these old women were considered an illegitimate, even potentially dangerous, source of knowledge.

Furthermore, in all three translations (German, French, and English) we see the diminishing of the entertaining factor which characterised Fioravanti's Italian books. With narrative losing its importance, readability changed as well: the books became more direct, practical, less meandering. Arguably, the texts became less enjoyable and validating to less expert readers – but possibly more appealing to more instructed ones. In German and even more so in English, Fioravanti was transformed from a reformer of medicine who looked to the past for inspiration to a forward-looking reformer, much closer to Paracelsus.<sup>91</sup> With the rise of chemical medicine and Paracelsianism, it was probably more interesting from a commercial point of view to 'rebrand' Fioravanti as a Paracelsian, especially when his translators were Paracelsians themselves, such as Hester. There was no room for Fioravanti's tales of incredible cures by old peasant women he met in his travels.

I have argued in previous chapters that medical translation in the early modern period was often a process of addition as well as suppression of content, or the transformation of the knowledge being diffused. Fioravanti's case shows us how translation was also an editing process. Through the selection of texts and passages, not only were the contents of the book transformed, but the perception of the author was reshaped. Translators not only acted as co-authors, censors, and editors of the works they published; they also curated the content in a way that could transform readers' perception of the book and its author. In Fioravanti's case, the translation of his books meant a deep shift of authority and authorship. Translators changed the narrative of where Fioravanti's knowledge came from. To adapt to their new, expected readerships, translators edited Fioravanti's texts (and the stories within them) and changed them, excluding the women who had 'translated' experiential feminine knowledge to Fioravanti in the first place. Fioravanti himself had acted as a translator, a mediator of their knowledge to his readers. When the texts were translated into other vernaculars, however, an additional layer of translation was added, as translators and publishers thought Fioravanti should be the ultimate authority over medical knowledge, and a pioneer in a new kind of medicine. This meant letting go of the past: the *vecchiarelle* that Fioravanti admired and that

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<sup>91</sup> For later medical reformers and the connection to broader intellectual trends, see Charles Webster's classic, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform, 1626–1660* (London: Duckworth, 1975).

he had intentionally used to legitimise his recipes. The result was the erasure of these women who, although anonymous in Fioravanti's books, were an important presence in his writing and made the case for empirical, bodily knowledge where secrets of women were concerned.

Fioravanti's main goal was to attain fame, to become well-known through his ideas about reforming medicine by looking back to an idealised past and retrieving a lost knowledge largely forgotten through his travels and contact with 'all sorts of people'. In his books in Italian and the correspondence printed in the *Tesoro della vita humana*, it was apparent that his interest in chemical medicine was more connected to alchemy than to Paracelsianism since he was mostly interested in the distillation of herbs he would learn about from people living in the countryside. In translation, the importance of chemical medicine was exaggerated, as was his connection to Paracelsus, while the contributions of 'simple people', such as herb women, were downplayed. While that might have made him a more appealing author in translation, as someone in tune with the current discussions in medicine, it also made him less unique compared to his contemporaries. The translation of Fioravanti's texts also followed patterns underlined in previous chapters: addition of content, a mixture of Latin and vernacular terms for ingredients, a tendency to keep 'difficult' words in the original language, cultural adaptations, and the inclusion of regional words, were just some of them. Where uterine ailments were concerned, he mostly offered readers panaceas which combined long lists of ingredients he had compiled throughout his travels. Due to the volume of his writings, however, translators could easily pick and choose which passages to include in their versions: translating Fioravanti was a process of selectively editing.

William Eamon and, more recently, Deborah Harkness, have argued that early modern professors of secrets and their empirical recipes were the basis for the development of the Baconian Sciences.<sup>92</sup> In Fioravanti's case, and to a lesser degree in Piemontese's as well, that included validating and disseminating medical knowledge from humble sources, such as illiterate people from the countryside, including women. For Fioravanti, the anatomical 'mother' should be treated with the 'mother's knowledge', which intertwined the ideas of the womb as 'mother' and 'mother' as a woman who, through experience, had acquired a considerable body of practical knowledge. In translation, however, this female knowledge was either excluded or lost its importance, as part of two separate trends: the gradual masculinisation of the world of secrets of women, and the rise of Paracelsianism as the main alternative to humoral theory and traditional medicine.

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<sup>92</sup> William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature*; Deborah Harkness, *The Jewel House*.

## Conclusion

The secrets of women and the people who shaped them, which I have explored in this thesis, had a long afterlife. For instance, a reader browsing the Parisian magazine *Le Grillon* in 1898 would come across an advertisement for a refreshing, stimulating, and antiseptic *eau de cologne* called *Isabella Cortese*. Produced following a ‘very ancient formula’ by a chemist, it was made of ‘true and natural essences’ from plants and flowers, rather than ‘chemical and artificial’ ones.<sup>1</sup> This product ranged in price from 6.50 to 12.50 francs by litre and was sold in multiple Parisian outlets. More than three hundred years after her recipe book was first published, Isabella Cortese’s name was still a marker of excellency in the world of cosmetics and medicine.

The marketing behind Cortese’s *eau de cologne* highlighted the ancient origin of the product and the importance of recipes in establishing authority. As in the early modern period, recipes structured knowledge and power, established expertise and authorship. Throughout this thesis, I have aimed to showcase various kinds of recipes. Most of them tended to delineate illnesses and diseases as clutters of symptoms, with the ingredients and the instructions as the original medical technology behind the text.<sup>2</sup> Some were pages long, with dozens of ingredients, specific procedures, and precise measurements. Others were just one line with a brief recommendation, sometimes skipping ingredients altogether. In the same way that I needed to broaden other concepts, ‘recipes’ became to me any practical recommendations to attain a specific result (or results). Recipe books, including printed books of secrets, became to me a genre of how-to books that transcended format (print or manuscript), that could be transmitted orally as well as through writing.

My original plan with early modern secrets of women was to follow these recipes to their source. But that quickly proved itself to be an impossible task, as establishing authorship where recipes are concerned is incredibly tricky. There always seems to be another recipe behind the ‘original’ one: even before the printing press, recipes were modified as they were transcribed or learned by memory. Print only made this process quicker, with agents in the

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<sup>1</sup> Advertisement: Eau de Cologne Isabella Cortese, in *Le Grillon* (September 1898, 12<sup>e</sup> année, no. 3). Available on *Gallica*. (Last consulted on 27/06/22.)

<sup>2</sup> Olivia Weisser, ‘A Cultural History of Disease from the Patient’s Perspective’, in Elaine Leong and Claudia Stein (eds.), *A Cultural History of Medicine in the Renaissance (1450 - 1650)*, vol. 3, (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), pp. 63-83.

book world such as publishers and professors of secrets actively transforming books of secrets' contents. By comparing these translated recipes in reeditions of the collections, we can see that they hardly ever remained identical. The constant, if often small, changes, beg the question: who was the 'author' behind a recipe? For a start, it might be wiser to think of 'authors'. But understanding the authorship over books of secrets goes beyond a shift from singular to plural.

In the early modern period, a growing number of books dealing with medicine and the body were available to readers, often in the vernacular. Amongst a cacophony of regimens, midwifery manuals, surgical treatises, and herbals, books of secrets occupied an important place, offering myriad recipes to readers. In the same way people could choose among a variety of medical practitioners in a vibrant medical marketplace (especially in urban environments), they could gather information from a plurality of written sources, which represented different medical traditions coexisting in the period. Recipes are perhaps the best example of syncretism in the early modern medical world. Gathered from earlier books, but also from physicians, empirics and midwives, humanists, travellers, and peasants, their heterogeneous character invited the reader in, to contribute to the making of this knowledge through their own experiences.

Recipe books have a long history, one which is still being written. Historians have adopted recipes as a way into the way people understood the world around them and their own bodies in the past and explored how knowledge was created and remade. A crucial aspect of the world of recipes is how they circulated, and how they were changed in the process, which is best exemplified by translated recipes. This thesis has sought to address the historiographical gap in the connection between translation and recipes, especially where gender is concerned. As I have shown, many changes in translation can be seen the most clearly in recipes about reproduction and the female body. Translation was (and still is) a complex and vital activity in the production of knowledge: all the people involved in the world of recipes, from professors of secrets to translators, printers, and readers, were, to some extent, 'translators' and 'makers' of knowledge.

I started this thesis by looking to understand secrets of women in terms of whose knowledge it was. Where did it come from, to whom was it intended, how was it transformed? The books themselves offer us many clues. Fioravanti and Piemontese mentioned their sources, Della Porta's ointment illustrated how entangled women were in the world of recipes, and individual recipes were sometimes addressed to medical practitioners, other times to husbands, and often, to women themselves, giving us a glimpse into how the

book was expected to be used. Paratexts by translators and printers also helped to paint a complex picture: secrets of women were everyone's and no one's knowledge. They were called 'secrets', but the main goal of books of secrets was to unveil them to readers, demystifying the female body and its mysteries. This tension between secrecy and increasing openness where secrets of women were concerned is perhaps best illustrated by the later publishing trend of 'opened closets'<sup>3</sup>. The apparent paradox between veiled and unveiled knowledge also indicates the fluidity of recipes, always malleable to new interpretations. The rhetoric device of calling this knowledge 'secret' only made it more appealing, as new knowledge could always be uncovered.

Books of secrets were polymorphic, fragmented works, which changed through time. Recipe collections shaped and were influenced by commercial and editorial trends in the period, as well as social and cultural changes. I have argued that the structure of this genre was particularly favourable to this constant reworking. 'How-to' books offered readers access to knowledge, but, crucially, this knowledge was open to reinterpretations, including by readers themselves.<sup>4</sup> New elements could always be added – and additions were much more common than content being omitted. I have also argued that this character of books of secrets was empowering to readers (even when they were explicitly told not to change recipes): by showing the compilation of recipes as an ongoing process, readers were invited into a world of experimentation. This was most clearly seen through translators' practices, however. I have shown how the addition of new material, especially of extra ingredients to recipes, virtually turned recipe books into herbals in reverse, with lists of plants being suggested to a particular ailment rather than the other way around.

These transformations did not all happen at once. Translators and printers often changed recipe collections gradually, constantly 'updating' and 'upgrading' the books. This meant the books could be advertised as improved versions of their predecessors: not only did they include extra material, but the original contents of the collection had been revised, reorganised, and 'corrected'. Translators could express opinions contrary to the texts' original authors: Peter Burke described these translations as 'tradaptations', but they can also be understood as 'transmissions'.<sup>5</sup> To render texts accessible to new readers,

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<sup>3</sup> Laura Knoppers, 'Opening the Queen's Closet: Henrietta Maria, Elizabeth Cromwell, and the Politics of Cookery', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 60 (2007), pp. 464–99.

<sup>4</sup> On the idea of 'open knowledge', (*savoir ouvert*), see Christian Jacob, 'La Loupe et le miroir', *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident*, 36 (2013), pp. 211–217 (p. 213).

<sup>5</sup> Peter Burke, 'Cultures of Translation in Early Modern Europe', in Peter Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia (eds.), *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 7–38 (p. 33);

decontextualizing and recontextualizing them, translators actively engaged with books of secrets. As I have shown, these modifications could occur at a micro level, such as the way the translator adapted individual recipes to their new, French readers in the case of the *Dificio di ricette*'s translation. But the books could also be reshaped where their genre was concerned. In the *Dificio*'s case, this meant a gradual transformation from a miscellaneous collection (in which magic tricks and alchemical recipes abounded) to a domestic book, in which self-medicine was central. This transformation occurred partly through modifications in the existing recipes, and partly through the addition of new material that changed the overall character of the book.

At a macro level, we can see this rebranding of books of secrets as they were assimilated into other genres in Alessio Piemontese's translated books. By being incorporated into the genre of technical manuals (*Kunstbüchlein*), Piemontese was introduced to readers who were interested in distillation and alchemy. In France, where Piemontese's recipes were integrated into the collection of books known as the *Bibliothèque bleue*, sold virtually everywhere at moderate prices, this also meant that his books could profit from an already existing distribution network. These modifications invariably changed the way in which these books were marketed and consumed.

Perhaps what is most striking about these transformations is how they make us question the nature of reading and readership. Through translators and printers' activity, and the paratexts they included in the books, we can see the kinds of readers they expected (and hoped) the recipes would have. What ingredients would be available to them, and how capable would readers be of following the recipes in their own homes? Although these imagined readerships varied from one book to another, it is clear that the people producing books of secrets worried about readers being able to follow the recipes as much as possible. This meant that they offered readers options: not only did synonyms appear often, but also alternative ingredients. Readers' context was considered. Budget, skills, gender, linguistic limitations, and the tools available to them in a domestic setting were all things that translators imagined.

As I have shown in the first chapter, to a plurality of imagined readers corresponded an infinity of real readers, who engaged with recipes in different ways. In the same way

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On translations as 'transformissions', see Marie-Alice Belle and Brenda Hosington, 'Introduction: Translation as 'Transformission' in Early Modern England and France', *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, 46 (2019), pp. 201-4.

translators and printers changed recipes, readers ‘corrected’ them in marginal annotations, added ingredients to improve them, crossed them out as false, and transcribed recipes to try out in their personal manuscript recipe books. These practices bridged the divide between print and manuscript cultures: printed books were annotated, and extracts from printed sources were transcribed into manuscript recipe books. All these activities are a form of ‘translation’ if we understand translation as the modification of knowledge made in order to diffuse it. Whether translators in a strict sense, printers, or readers, the people who engaged with the recipe world made and remade knowledge. As I have argued, by thinking more broadly about translation, as a deeply creative act, the very meaning of authorship must be reconsidered. Authorship over recipes, I have shown, was not only collective, but ever-changing, fluid, variable, and open to interpretation.

This understanding of authorship also means that ‘authority’ (and even ‘expertise’) should be re-examined. As I have argued in the third chapter, the translation and reedition of a collection of recipes often meant the addition of new content. In Piemontese’s case, menstruation recipes proliferated from none in the first Italian edition of the book to more than sixty in the English translation forty years later. Printers and translators were behind these additions, and they tended to keep contributions made in previous versions of the book. The books did not indicate which recipes were original and which ones were new additions: they were given equal weight within the collection regardless of their origin. Being confronted with dozens of recipes to treat the same issue validated the expertise contained in the book and the professor of secrets’ authority; the same goes for the translators’ and printers’ expertise. It is no coincidence that the first versions of books of secrets have unnamed translators while later editions had celebrated physicians and apothecaries behind them. As professors of secrets became well-known and respected, translators and printers became more inclined to associate their name to these recipe collections, in a process of reciprocal legitimisation.

If the growing number of recipes was a way to construct authority, so too was their increasing specialisation. Both in Piemontese and Fioravanti’s cases, there was a perceptible shift from more general, cure-all recipes, to specialised medicines in different formats. These could be used internally and externally on the body and were often combined. As Fioravanti’s case illustrates, expertise and authority were constructed through his process of publishing books. By advocating for a reform in medicine and praising an ideal, lost way of understanding the body, Fioravanti questioned university physicians’ monopoly over medical knowledge. As Piemontese before him, Fioravanti celebrated unusual sources of medical



knowledge, including peasant women. The inclusion of people of low social status, and especially illiterate women, among the experts who informed their medical recipes, was undoubtedly a way to appear accessible to non-specialised readers. It was advertised as a reason why readers should buy the book. But this was not the only reason why including women (and especially older women who had experienced having children) was significant. Fioravanti's legitimisation of female knowledge (and the women behind the secrets of women) was a validation of practice over theory, of lived bodily experience over book-learning.

Fioravanti knew that, among his readers, there would be people like these matrons whom he had consulted: people whose bodies, not books, formed the basis of their knowledge. With print, these people became a growing part of his readership, paradoxically receiving back this original medical knowledge through him. This was not only the case for Fioravanti's books. By reading books of secrets, it is apparent how much knowledge readers were expected to have, and how it was known (for better or worse) that readers would change recipes. This appropriation of medical knowledge into their everyday lives implied adapting recipes to their personal contexts, but also to their bodily states.

As I have argued, secrets of women tended to use the same ingredients, and the recipes were similar in terms of methods as well. So, what made a recipe appropriate for a particular case was the intent of the person preparing them and their bodily state. It is telling that most secrets of women served to purge the uterus. Whether to provoke menstruation, facilitate conception, speed childbirth, or deliver a retained placenta, the womb (or 'mother') needed to be emptied: it made sense that the woman using this formula (the other 'mother') was what determined the nature of the recipe. Women were behind many of the recipes printed in these collections, whether acknowledged or not. But they were also crucial in determining how recipes would be received, to what use they were put, and in which ways.

However, this level of female agency was not always straightforward, as I have argued about Della Porta's infamous 'witches' ointment', a recipe made and used by women. This aphrodisiac was deeply connected to witchcraft polemics of the time, and ended up tainting not only Della Porta's book, the *Magia naturalis*, but his reputation as well. Translators and printers had to take a stand about the problematic ointment: stand by it and get involved in the demonological debate, or omit it from the translation, along with many other 'problematic recipes'. This case illustrates how malleable the genre of recipes was: it could be reshaped in different ways to suit people's personal beliefs, but also different

cultural contexts. The translation of polemic knowledge indicates how the transmission of knowledge was not a neutral process: the ointment required taking a position.

This collective body of knowledge was alive and dynamic. Besides people involved in the world of print, readers actively engaged with recipes. Recipe books could be used in a plethora of ways: readers who modified recipes could leave their legacy and be part of a network, an interweaving of people, objects, and texts. This ‘interconnectedness’ was also apparent in how people picked and chose from these collections and composed their own experimental toolkit using printed recipes.

In the (re)making of knowledge, translation was central. But translators were not neutral; nor were the languages into which they translated secrets of women. The process of knowledge construction and circulation was a collaborative one. I have argued in this thesis that translation was a creative act: *translatio* literally means to carry across, to transfer something from one point to another. The translation of recipes went beyond the technical linguistic skill of rendering a text into a different language. It even went beyond the medical knowledge behind the text; makers and interpreters translated knowledge into their own world, so that a recipe could be used. Genre, format, and languages were all factors in this process but by understanding additions, corrections, omissions, annotations, and all editorial work as ‘translation’, and by broadening our understanding of author and authorship, we can include people traditionally excluded from these narratives.

Women were one of the main groups that appeared as ‘translators of knowledge’. By rethinking these key concepts, it is possible to reframe female agency. As studies of manuscript recipe collections show, women were an integral part of the recipe world, both as producers and users of recipes. They are arguably harder to find in the world of printed recipes but women are there, even if not immediately visible. People of more modest social status are also difficult to find. Nevertheless, they are there in the books, in Fioravanti or Piemontese’s descriptions of where they learned a recipe, for instance, or in Ruscelli’s brief description of servants who helped him at his academy of secrets.

These people have left traces, even if they remain anonymous. As I have shown, authorship and authority were often reciprocally constructed in printed recipe books. But they were also fluid notions; by keeping them open to interpretation, professors of secrets, translators, and printers left room for readers to collaborate in the making of knowledge. Further analyses exploring the relationship between manuscript and print, the material culture of recipes, women’s involvement in the book trade, and the reception of recipes would all help paint a more complete picture of what the early modern world of recipes was like. I am

confident that in pursuing these studies we as historians will shed light on the role women, people of lower social status, and those from other races played in the development of medical knowledge. Decolonising this history and looking for missing slave voices, and indigenous people's contributions to the making of natural knowledge and secrets of women is a particularly interesting path for historians to pursue.

In my own study, I have been amazed by how dynamic the world of secrets of women was, and how they were constantly being reimagined. By 'translating' secrets of women to their own lives, all the people mentioned in this thesis participated in the (re)making of knowledge about the female body. For the historian, defining these concepts in a broader way allows us to write a more inclusive history.

## Appendices

### 1. Secrets of Women in the *Dificio di Ricette* (1529) and in the *Bâtiment des recettes* (1560)

Title in Italian	Title in French	Ingredients (Italian)	Ingredients (French)
<i>A voler saper per chi manca a ingravedare o per lhuomo o per la donna (D. 1v)</i>	<i>Pour savoir à qui tient que la conception ne se face, ou s'il tient à la femme, ou s'il tient à l'homme, en cas qu'ils ayent longtemps este mariez ensemble (B. 2)</i>	<i>Semola</i>	<i>Forment ou Seigle ou Orge</i>
<i>A conoscer se uno o una e verzene dico se lha sparso il seme (D. 2r)</i>	<i>A cognoistre si une personne est vierge, soit masle ou femelle, j'entens si elle est corrompue ou de soy ou autrement (B. 9)</i>	<i>Ace over spago</i>	<i>Fillet ou Fisselle</i>
<i>A far produr el suo tempo a una donna che lo variasse o perdesse (D. 7r)</i>	<i>Pour faire avoir les fleurs à une femme qui les eust perdues ou qui en fust desreiglee (B. 64)</i>	<i>Madrigale</i>	<i>Espargoutte ou madrigal</i>
<i>A far restrenzer el corso natural de una donna se li abundasse (D. 7r)</i>	<i>Pour faire retraindre le cours naturel a une femme qui l'eust trop abundant et oultre mesure (B. 65)</i>	<i>Incenso Linardo Gala Bon vino caldo Ascenzo verde</i>	<i>Encens Linardo Noix de galle Bon vin vermeil Aluine verde</i>
<i>A far ingravedar le donne (D. 10v)</i>	<i>Pour trouver moyen de faire engrossir une femme qui ne peult avoir enfans de son mary (B. 107)</i>	<i>Citrone Mele Ascenzo Herbe odorifere Ovo fresco Bon vino Moscato</i>	<i>Citrons secs Miel Absynthe ou Aluine Herbes odorantes et propices Œuf frais Bon vin ou hydromel</i>

			<i>Citron</i> <i>Melisse</i> <i>Muguet</i>
<i>A sapere se la donna pol haver figlioli overo no (D. 11r)</i>	<i>Pour savoir si la femme pourra concevoir, ou non (B. 108)</i>	<i>Malba salvatica</i>	<i>Mauve sauvage ou guimauve</i>
<i>A saper quanti figlioli die haver una veduto il primo parto (D. 11r)</i>	<i>Pour vouloir savoir combien d'enfans doit avoir une femme, en voyant son premier (B. 109)</i>	<i>No ingredients</i> – <i>Guardar i nodi del boligolo</i>	<i>No ingredients –</i> <i>Regarder combien de neuds au nombril de la creature</i>
<i>(Part of the previous recipe)</i>	<i>Pour savoir combien d'enfans masles pourra avoir une femme (B. 110)</i>	<i>Second part of the previous recipe:</i> <i>No ingredients</i> – <i>Guardare le coronelle dei capelli</i>	<i>No ingredients –</i> <i>Prendre garde aux cercles ou chappelets de cheveux</i>
<i>A purificar el sangue laqual purification e contra la magior parte di ogni infirmita e massime contra li mal franzosi et rogne leurose (D. 17r)</i>	<i>Pour purifier le sang, qui est chose propre à la plus grand' partie de toutes les maladies, mesmement a la maladie de Naples, et toute roignes lepreuses qui pour onction quelconque ne se veulent partir (B. 147)</i>	<i>Sene</i> <i>Polipodi</i> <i>Epitimi</i> <i>Mirabolani citrini</i> <i>Sebeste</i> <i>Iua artice</i> <i>Acqua di lupuli</i> <i>Siropo di lupuli</i> <i>Fiori di boragine</i> <i>Bugolose</i> <i>Fiori di basilico</i> <i>Siropo di fumo</i>	<i>Fueilles de sené mundeas</i> <i>Polipode</i> <i>Eptime</i> <i>Mirabolans citrins</i> <i>Sebesten</i> <i>Reglisse</i> <i>Germansree ou yua arthretica</i> <i>Fleurs de buglosse</i> <i>Bourroche</i> <i>Baselic</i> <i>Syrop de houbelon</i> <i>Oximel</i>

		<i>Oximellis</i> <i>Siropo violato</i> <i>Zaffrayan</i> <i>scropulo</i> <i>Ambra</i> <i>Muschio</i>	<i>Syrop violat</i> <i>Scrupule de</i> <i>saffran</i> <i>Ambre</i> <i>Musc</i>
<i>Ad ogni dolia o si adel mal franzioso over delle gotte e de ogni altra sorte (D. 17v)</i>	<i>Contre toutes gouttes de quelque sorte qu'elles soient, ou de la verole ou autrement (B. 148)</i>	<i>Canuzole</i> <i>Vermi</i>	<i>Cannes</i> <i>d'hyebles</i> <i>Vers ou lombriz</i>

\* In the *Bâtiment* (B.), the number refers to the number of the recipe in the book (not the page number). In the *Difício* (D.) the number refers to the page.

## 2. Menstruation Recipes in Alessio Piemontese's *Secreti*

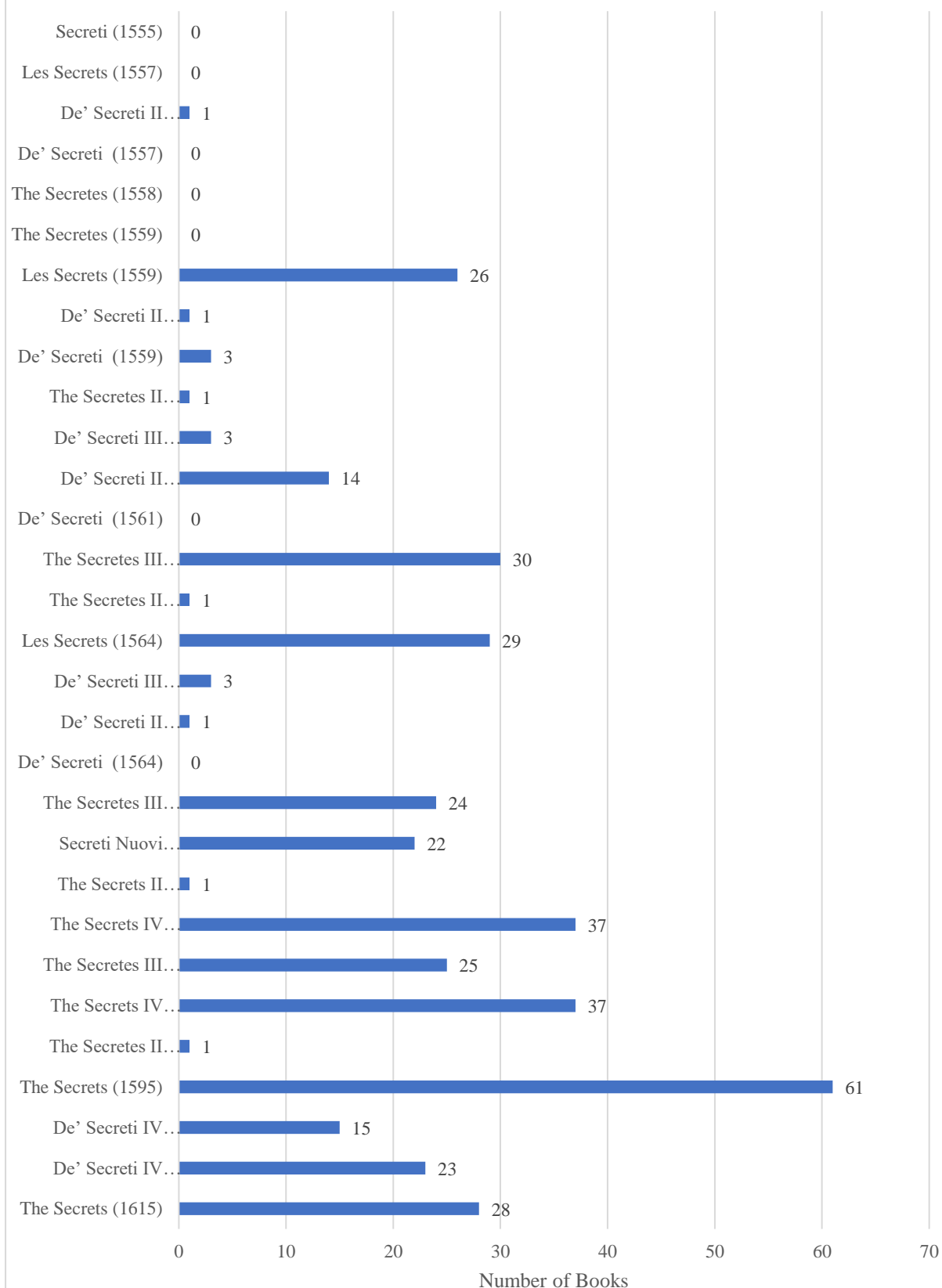
Title	City	Publisher	Year	Menstruation Recipes	Language
<i>Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese</i>	Venice	Sigismondo Bordogna	1555	0 (fallen womb recipe)	Italian
<i>De' Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese</i> (includes 2nd part printed by Giovan'Antonio degli Antonii in Milan)	Milan	Valerio & Hieronymo fratelli da Meda	1557	0 (1st part) 1 (2nd part)	Italian
<i>Les Secrets de Reverend Signeur Alexis Piemontois</i>	Antwerp	Christophe Plantin	1557	0 (same fallen womb recipe)	French (unknown translator)
<i>The secretes of the reuerende Maister Alexis of Piemount</i>	London	John Kingstone for Nicholas Englande	1558	0 (same recipe)	English (William Ward)
<i>De' secreti del reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese</i>	Milan	Giovann'Antonio de gli Antonii	1559	3	Italian
<i>La seconda parte de' secreti del reuerendo donno Alessio Piemontese</i>	Pesaro	Bartolomeo Cesano	1559	1	Italian
<i>Les Secrets de Reverend Signeur Alexis Piemontois</i>	Antwerp	Christophe Plantin	1559	26	French
<i>The secretes of the reverende Mayster Alexis of Piemount</i>	London	Henry Sutton	1559	0	English (William Ward)
<i>The seconde part of the Secretes of Master Alexis of Piemont</i>	London	John Kingstone for Nicholas Englande	1560	1 ('To stencche the menstruall blood of women')	English (William Ward)
<i>La Prima [-terza] parte de' Secreti del reverendero donno Alessio Piemontese</i>	Pesaro	Gli heredi di Bartolomeo Cesano	1561	0 (1st part) 14 (2nd part) 3 (3rd part)	Italian
<i>The thynde and last part of the Secretes of the reuerende Maister Alexis of Piemont</i>	London	Roulande Hall, for Nicholas Englande	1562	30	English (William Ward)

					Ward)
<i>The second part of the Secretes of Maister Alexis of Piemont</i>	London	Rowland Hall for Nicholas Englande	1563	1 ('To stenche the menstruall blood of women')	English (William Ward)
<i>De' Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese</i>	Venice	Luigi Giglio?	1564	0 (1 <sup>st</sup> part) 1 (2 <sup>nd</sup> part) 3 (3 <sup>rd</sup> part)	Italian
<i>Les Secrets du Seigneur Alexis Piemontois</i>	Antwerp	Christophe Plantin	1564	29	French
<i>The thyarde and last parte of the Secretes of the reverende Maister Alexis of Piemont</i>	London	Henry Denham for John Wight	1566	24	English (William Ward)
<i>Secreti nuovi di maravigliosa virtu del Signor Ieronimo Ruscelli i quali continovando a quelli di Donno Alessio, cognome finto del detto Ruscelli, contengono cose di rara esperienza, &amp; di gran giovamento</i>	Venice	Marchio Sessa	1567	22	Italian
<i>The seconde parte of the Secrets of maister Alexis of Piemont</i>	London	Henry Bynneman for John Wight	1568	1	English (William Ward)
<i>Della Quarta et ultima parte de' Secreti del R. D. Alessio Piemontese Nella quale si contengono diversi medicamenti, veri &amp; approuati, tolti tutti da' principali Auttori della Medicina</i>	Venice	Gio. Andrea Valuassori detto Guadagnino	1568	?	Italian
<i>A verye excellent and profitable booke (...) of the expert and Reuerend Mayster Alexis (fourth part)</i>	London	Henry Denham	1569	37	English (Richard Androse)
<i>A verye excellent and profitable booke (...) of the expert and Reuerend Mayster Alexis (fourth part)</i>	London	Henry Denham	1578	37	English (Richard Androse)
<i>The third and last part of the Secretes of the reverend</i>	London	Thomas Dawson for John Wight	1578	25	English (William



<b><i>Maister Alexis of Piemont</i></b>					Ward)
<b><i>The seconde part of the Secretes of Maister Alexis of Piemont</i></b>	London	John Kingston for John Wight	1580	1 ('To stencche the menstruall blood of women')	English (William Ward)
<b><i>The secrets of the reverend Maister Alexis of Piemont</i></b>	London	Peter Short for Thomas Wight	1595	61	English (William Ward/Richard Androse)
<b><i>Della Quarta e Ultima Parte de' Secreti del Reverendo Donno Alessio Piemontese</i></b>	Venice	Olivier de' Alberti	1596	15	Italian
<b><i>Della Quarta et ultima parte de' Secreti del R. D. Alessio Piemontese</i></b>	Venice	Lucio Spineda	1603	23	Italian
<b><i>The Secrets of Alexis of Piemont</i></b>	London	W. Stansby for R. Meighen and T. Iones	1615	28	English

## Number of Menstruation Recipes per Piemontese Book



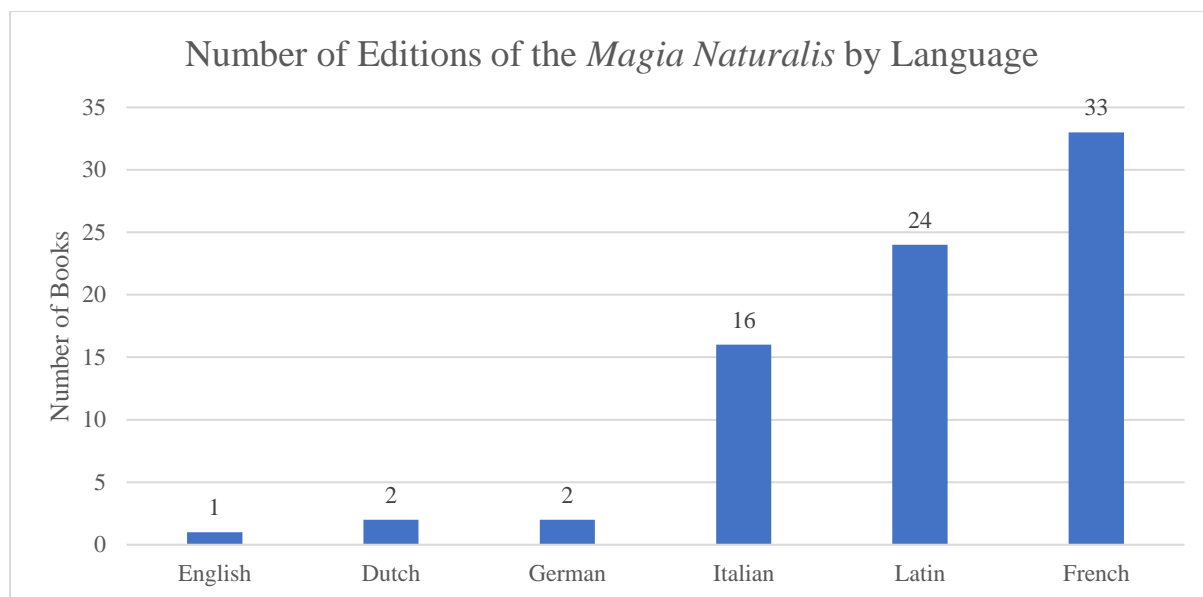
### 3. Editions of Giambattista Della Porta's *Magia naturalis*

Title	City	Year	Publisher	Language
<i>Magia naturalis sive de miraculis rerum naturalium libri IIII</i>	Naples	1558	Matthias Cancer	Latin (original language)
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Lyon	1559	Unknown publisher	Latin
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Antwerp	1560	Christophe Plantin	Latin
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti libri IIII</i>	Venice	1560	Ludovico Avanzi	Italian (unknown translator)
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Lyon	1561	Guillaume Rouille	Latin
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Antwerp	1561	Christophe Plantin	Latin
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti</i>	Venice	1562	Ludovico Avanzi	Italian
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Antwerp	1562	Johann Steels	Latin
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Cologne	1562	Johann Birckmann & Werner Richwin	Latin
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Lyon	1562	Jean Martin	French
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Cologne	1563	Johann Birckmann & Werner Richwin	Latin
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Antwerp	1564	Christophe Plantin	Latin
<i>La Magie naturelle, qui est Les secrets &amp; miracles de nature, mise en 4 livres</i>	Lyon	1565	Jean Martin (reprinted the same year)	French
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti</i>	Venice	1566	Ludovico Avanzi	Italian
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Antwerp	1566	Christophe Plantin	Latin
<i>Magia ofte de wonderlycke wercken der naturen, beschreven in vier boecken</i>	Antwerp	1566	Christophe Plantin	Dutch
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Antwerp	1567	Christophe Plantin	Latin
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Poitiers	1567	Unknown Publisher	French
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Lyon	1569	Guillaume Rouille	Latin
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Lyon	1569	Guillaume Rouille	French

<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Antwerp	1570	Christophe Plantin	Latin
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Paris	1570	Michel de Roigny	French
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Lyon	1571	Charles Pesnot	French
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Lyon	1571	François Durelle et Benoît Rigaud	French
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Paris	1571	Michel de Roigny	French
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti</i>	Venice	1572	Altobello Salicato	Italian
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Antwerp	1576	Christophe Plantin	Latin
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Amsterdam	1576	Unknown Publisher	Latin
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Antwerp	1577	Christophe Plantin	Latin
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti</i>	Venice	1579	V. Bonelli	Italian
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Lyon	1579	Benoist Rigaud/Charles Pesnot	French
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Lyon	1579	Jean d'Ogerolles et Benoist Rigaud	French
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti</i>	Venice	1579	V. Bonelli	Italian
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Frankfurt	1581	A. Wechel	Latin
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti</i>	Turin	1582	Heirs of Bevilacqua	Italian
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti</i>	Venice	1584	Marco Antonio Zaltieri	Italian
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Poitiers	1584	Unknown Publisher	French
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Paris	1584	Unknown Publisher	French
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Antwerp	1585	Christophe Plantin	Latin
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Rouen	1587	Jean Crevel	French
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti</i>	Venice	1588	Heirs of Giacomo Simbeni	Italian
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Rouen	1588	Unknown publisher	Latin
<i>Magia naturalis (expanded edition with 20 books)</i>	Naples	1589	Horatium Saluianum	Latin
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Rouen	1590	Thomas Mallard	French
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Lyon	1591	Benoist Rigaud	French
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Frankfurt	1591	Claude de Marne &	Latin

			Johann Aubry	
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Frankfurt	1597	Claude de Marne & Johann Aubry	Latin
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti</i>	Venice	1600	Giovanni Alberti	Italian
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Rouen	1606	Th. Daré	French
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Lyon	1608	Benoist Rigaud	French
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti</i>	Venice	1611	Lucio Spineda	Italian
<i>Natürliche Magia, Da ist ein ausführlicher und gründlicher Bericht von den Wunderwercken natürlicher Dinge, in vier Bucher abgetheilet</i>	Magdeburg	1612	Martin Rauscher	German
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Rouen	1612	Th. Daré	French
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Lyon	1615	François Arnoullet le vieux	French
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti</i>	Venice	1618	Gio. Battista Bonfadino	Italian
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Hannover	1619	Andrew Wechel	Latin
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Rouen	1620	Loudet	French
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Rouen	1626	Unknown publisher	French
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti</i>	Venice	1628	Iseppo Imberti	Italian
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Rouen	1630	Unknown publisher	French
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Rouen	1631	Du Mesnil	French
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Rouen	1640	Ferrand	French
<i>Magia naturalis</i>	Leiden	1644?	Hieronymum de Vogel	Latin
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Lyon	1650	Pierre Compagnon	French
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Lyon	1650	Vincent de Coeursilly	French (translator: Lazare Meyssonier)
<i>Magia ofte de wonderlycke</i>	Leiden	1655	Johann Meyer	Dutch

<i>wercken der naturen, beschreven in vier boecken</i>				
<i>Natural Magick</i>	London	1658	Thomas Young & Samuel Speed	English
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti</i>	Venice	1665	Carlo Conzatti	Italian
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Rouen	1668	Unknown publisher	French
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Lyon	1669	Bariter	French
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti</i>	Naples	1677	Antonio Buliffon	Italian (translator: Pompeo Sarnelli)
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Lyon	1677	Simon Potin	French (translator: Lazare Meysonnier)
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Lyon	1678	Simon Potin	French (translator: Lazare Meysonnier)
<i>Dei miracoli et maravigliosi effetti dalla natura prodotti</i>	Venice	1679	B. Miloco	Italian
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Lyon	1679	Charles Pesnot	French
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Rouen	1680	J. Lucas	French
<i>La Magie naturelle</i>	Rouen	1680	P. Amiot	French
<i>Des Vortrefflichen Herren Johann Baptista Portae von Neapolis Magia Naturalis, oder Haus-Kunst-und Wunder-Buch</i>	Nuremberg	1680	Christian Peganium (or Rautner)	German (translated by Christian Knorr von Rosenroth)



#### 4. Editions of Leonardo Fioravanti's Works

Title	City	Publisher	Year	Language
<i>Secreti Medicinali</i>	Venice	Ludovico Avanzi	1561	Italian
<i>Capricci Medicinali</i>	Venice	Ludovico Avanzi	1561	Italian
<i>Compendio di tutta la cirurgia (including the Discorsi sopra la chirurgia, con la dichiarazione di molte cose da sapere...)</i>	Venice	Ludovico Avanzi	1561	Italian (Pietro and Ludovico Rostini as co- authors)
<i>Capricci Medicinali</i>	Venice	Ludovico Avanzi	1564	Italian
<i>Compendio dei Secreti rationali</i>	Venice	Vicenzo Valgrisi	1564	Italian
<i>Dello Specchio di Scientia universale</i>	Venice	Vincenzo Valgrisi	1564	Italian
<i>Capricci Medicinali</i>	Venice	Ludovico Avanzi	1565	Italian
<i>Del Reggimento della Peste</i>	Venice	Andrea Ravenoldo	1565	Italian
<i>Compendio dei Secreti rationali</i>	Venice	Andrea Ravenoldo	1566	Italian
<i>Dello Specchio di Scientia universale</i>	Venice	Andrea Ravenoldo	1567	Italian
<i>Capricci Medicinali</i>	Venice	Ludovico Avanzi	1568	Italian
<i>Compendio di tutta la cirurgia (including Fioravanti's Discorsi sopra la chirurgia, con la dichiarazione di molte cose da sapere...)</i>	Venice	Ludovico Avanzi	1568	Italian (with Pietro and Ludovico Rostini)
<i>Scelta di diversi capitoli importantissimi alla cirurgia, estratti dalle opere dell'eccellentissimo dotor Leonardo</i>	Venice	Andrea Ravenoldo	1568	Italian



<i>Fioravanti</i>				
<i>La Chirurgia</i>	Venice	Heirs of Melchior Sessa	1570	Italian
<i>Il Tesoro della vita humana</i>	Venice	Heirs of Melchior Sessa	1570	Italian
<i>Compendio dei Secreti rationali</i>	Venice	Heirs of Melchior Sessa	1571	Italian
<i>Del Reggimento della Peste</i>	Venice	Heirs of Melchior Sessa	1571	Italian
<i>Dello Specchio di Scientia universale</i>	Venice	Heirs of Melchior Sessa	1572	Italian
<i>Capricci Medicinali</i>	Venice	Ludovico Avanzi	1573	Italian
<i>Tesoro della vita humana</i>	Venice	Brigna	1573	Italian
<i>La Pratica universal in chirurgia ...Aggiuntivi molti capitoli estratti dalle opere dell'eccellentissimo dottor Leonardo Fioravanti</i>	Venice	Michele Bonelli	1576	Italian (with Giovanni de Vigo)
<i>A Joyfull Jewell; containing as well such excellent orders, preservatives, and precious practices for the plague; as also, such various medicines for divers maladies, as hitherto have not been published in the English tung</i>	London	Thomas Hill	1579	English (translated by Thomas Hill, edited by John Hester)
<i>A Short discours of the excellent doctor and knight, maister Leonardo Phioravanti</i>	London	Thomas East	1580	English (translated and edited by John Hester)

<i>Bolognese upon chirurgie</i>				
<i>Compendio dei Secreti rationali</i>	Turin	Heirs of Bevilacqua	1580	Italian
<i>Compendio dei Secreti rationali</i>	Venice	Heirs of Marchio Sessa	1581	Italian
<i>La Pratica universal in cirurgia ...Aggiuntivi molti capitoli estratti dalle opere dell'eccellentissimo dottor Leonardo Fioravanti</i>	Venice	Agostino Zoppini	1581	Italian (with Giovanni de Vigo)
<i>Capricci Medicinali</i>	Venice	Heirs of Marchio Sessa	1582	Italian
<i>Tesoro della vita humana</i>	Venice	Heirs of Marchio Sessa	1582	Italian
<i>La Chirurgia</i>	Venice	Heirs of Marchio Sessa	1582	Italian
<i>Della Fisica</i>	Venice	Heirs of Marchio Sessa	1582	Italian
<i>A compendium of the rationall secretes, of the worthie knight and most excellent doctor of phisicke and chirurgie, Leonardo Phioravante Bolognese</i>	London	John Kingston	1582	English (translated by John Hester)
<i>Dello Specchio di Scientia universale</i>	Venice	Heirs of Marchio Sessa	1583	Italian
<i>La Pratica universal in cirurgia ...Aggiuntivi molti capitoli estratti dalle opere dell'eccellentissimo dottor Leonardo</i>	Venice	Ghirardo Imberti	1584	Italian (with Giovanni de Vigo)

<i>Fioravanti</i>				
<i>Miroir universel des arts et sciences</i>	Paris	Pierre Cavellat	1584	French (translated by Gabriel Chapuys)
<i>Les Caprices touchant la medicine</i>	Paris	Pierre Cavellat	1586	French (translated by Claude Rocard)
<i>Miroir universel des arts et sciences</i>	Paris	Pierre Cavellat	1586	French (translated by Gabriel Chapuys)
<i>Compendio di tutta la chirurgia (including the Discorsi sopra la chirurgia, con la dichiarazione di molte cose da sapere...)</i>	Venice	Heirs of Iacomo Simbeni	1588	Italian (with Pietro and Ludovico Rostini)
<i>Compendio dei Secreti rationali</i>	Venice	Giacomo Cornetti	1591	Italian
<i>Compendio dei Secreti rationali</i>	Turin	Domenico Tarino	1592	Italian
<i>Del Reggimento della Peste</i>	Venice	Heirs of Melchior Sessa	1594	Italian
<i>The pearle of practise, or practisers pearle, for physicke and chirurgerie, found out by J. H. (a spagericke or distiller) amongst the learned observations and prooved practises of many expert men in both faculties</i>	London	R. Field	1594	English (translated by John Hester)
<i>Capricci Medicinali</i>	Venice	Marcantonio Bonibelli	1595	Italian

<i>La Chirurgia</i>	Venice	Marcantonio Bonibelli	1595	Italian
<i>Compendio dei Secreti rationali</i>	Venice	Altobello Salicato	1596	Italian
<i>Compendio dei Secreti rationali</i>	Venice	Marcantonio Bonibelli	1597	Italian
<i>La Pratica universal in chirurgia ...Aggiuntivi molti capitoli estratti dalle opere dell'eccellentissimo dottor Leonardo Fioravanti</i>	Venice	Ghirardo Imberti	1598	Italian (with Giovanni de Vigo)
<i>Miroir universel des arts et sciences</i>	Paris	Pierre Cavellat	1598	French (translated by Gabriel Chapuys)
<i>Capricci Medicinali</i>	Venice	Lucio Spineda	1602	Italian
<i>Miroir universel des arts et sciences</i>	Paris	David Douceur	1602	French (translated by Gabriel Chappuys)
<i>Della Fisica</i>	Venice	Lucio Spineda	1603	Italian
<i>Dello Specchio di Scientia universale</i>	Venice	Lucio Spineda	1603	Italian
<i>Tesoro della vita humana</i>	Venice	Lucio Spineda	1603	Italian
<i>Corona; oder, Kron der Arzney</i>	Frankfurt-am-Main	Nicolaus Hoffman	1604	German (unknown translator)
<i>Physica, das ist experientz unnd Naturkündigung</i>	Frankfurt-am-Main	Nicolaus Hoffmann	1604	German (unknown translator)
<i>Compendio di tutta la chirurgia (including the Discorsi sopra la</i>	Venice	Lucio Spineda	1607	Italian (with Pietro and Ludovico

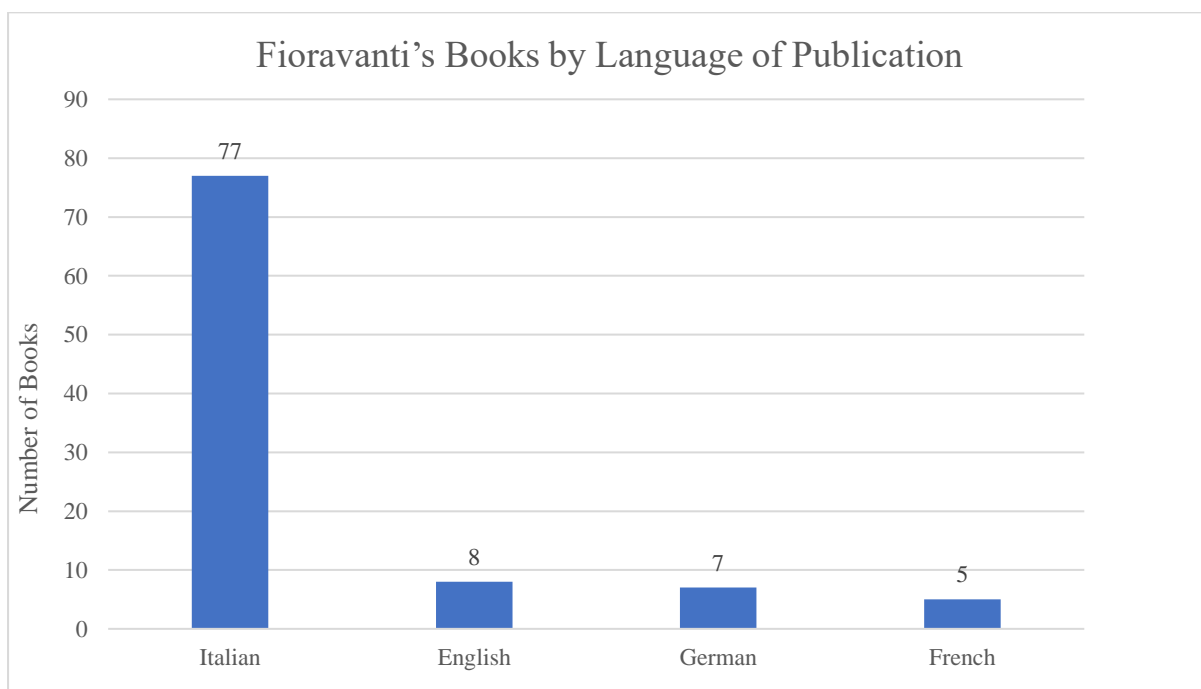
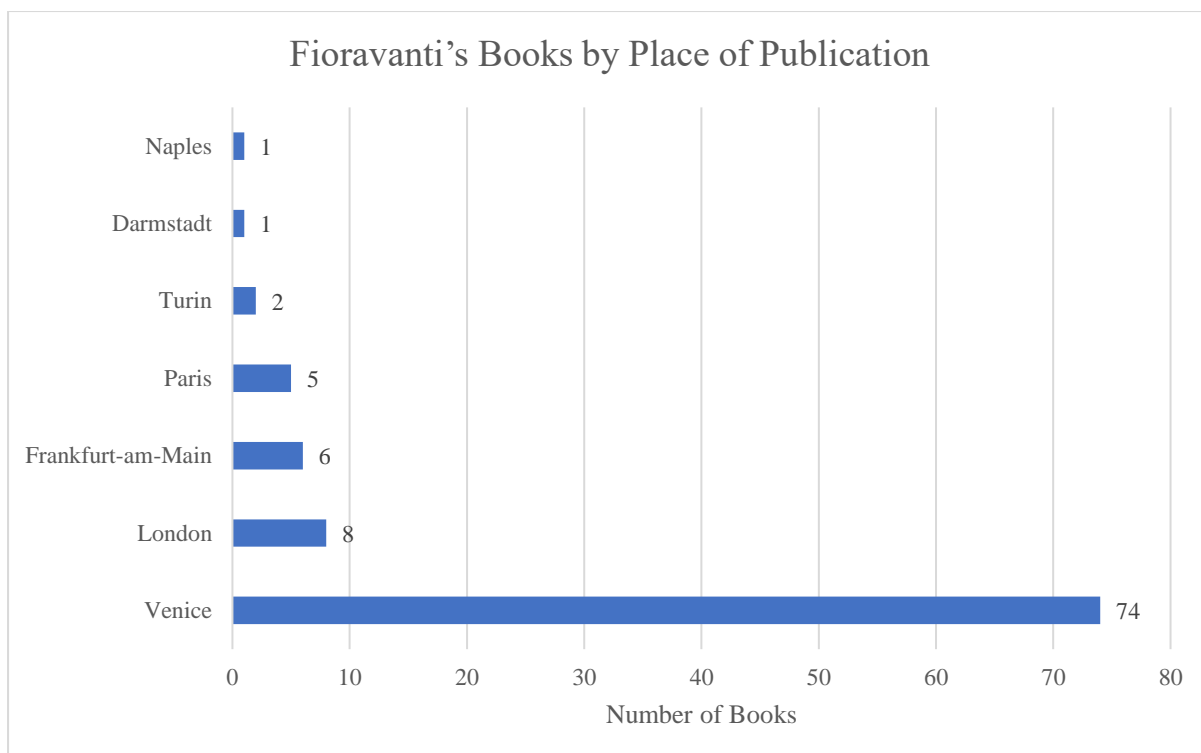
<i>chirurgia, con la dichiarazione di molte cose da sapere...)</i>				Rostini)
<i>La Chirurgia</i>	Venice	Lucio Spineda	1610	Italian
<i>Capricci Medicinali</i>	Venice	Comino Gallina	1617	Italian
<i>Corona; oder Kron der Arztney</i>	Frankfurt-am- Main	Anthoni Hummen	1618	German (unknown translator)
<i>Physica, das ist experientz unnd Naturkündigung</i>	Frankfurt-am- Main	Nicolaus Hoffmann	1618	German (unknown translator)
<i>Allgemeyner Kunst vnd Welt-Spiegel: in Drey schöne, nützliche, vnd vnterschiedene Bücher getheylt</i>	Frankfurt-am- Main	Nicolaus Hoffmann	1618	German (unknown translator)
<i>Compendio dei Secreti rationali</i>	Venice	Pietro Miloco	1620	Italian
<i>Dello Specchio di Scientia universale</i>	Venice	Giorgio Valentini	1624	Italian
<i>Compendium oder Auszug der Secreten, Gehaymnissen und verborgenen Kunsten</i>	Darmstadt	Johann Leinhosen	1624	German (unknown translator)
<i>Del Reggimento della Peste</i>	Venice	Lucio Spineda	1626	Italian
<i>A Short discours of the excellent doctor and knight, maister Leonardo Phioravanti Bolognese upon chirurgie</i>	London	Edward Allde	1626	English (translated by John Hester, augmented by Richard Booth)
<i>Capricci Medicinali</i>	Venice	Lucio Spineda	1629	Italian
<i>Della Fisica</i>	Venice	Lucio Spineda	1629	Italian
<i>Tesoro della vita humana</i>	Venice	Lucio Spineda	1629	Italian

<b><i>La Chirurgia</i></b>	Venice	Lucio Spineda	1630	Italian
<b><i>Compendio di tutta la cirurgia (including the Discorsi sopra la chirurgia, con la dichiarazione di molte cose da sapere...)</i></b>	Venice	Lucio Spineda	1630	Italian (with Pietro and Lodovico Rostini)
<b><i>Della Fisica</i></b>	Venice	Gianluca (?) Sessa	1632	Italian
<b><i>Regiment und Ordnung der Pestilenz</i></b>	Frankfurt-am- Main	Johan Nicolt Stoltzenberger	1632	German (unknown translator)
<b><i>Dello Specchio di Scientia universale</i></b>	Venice	Gianluca (?) Sessa	1633	Italian
<b><i>Compendio dei Secreti rationali</i></b>	Venice	Ghirardo Imberti	1640	Italian
<b><i>Capricci Medicinali</i></b>	Venice	Cestaro	1647	Italian
<b><i>Three exact pieces of Leonard Phioravant Knight, and Doctor in Physick, viz. his Rationall secrets, and Chirurgery, reviewed and revised</i></b>	London	G. Dawson	1652	English (translated by John Hester)
<b><i>An exact collection of the choicest and more rare experiments and secrets in physick and chirurgery... of Leonard Phioravant</i></b>	London	G. Dawson	1653	English (translated by John Hester)
<b><i>An exact collection of the choicest and more rare experiments and secrets in physick and chyrurgery (both cymick and Galenick) viz. of Leonard Phioravant,</i></b>	London	William Shears	1659	English

<i>Knight and doctour in physick and chyrurgery, his Rational secrets and chyrurgery &amp;c.</i>				
<i>Compendio dei Secreti rationali</i>	Venice	Zaccaria Conzatti	1660	Italian
<i>Dello Specchio di Scientia universale</i>	Venice	Zaccaria Conzatti	1660	Italian
<i>Capricci Medicinali</i>	Venice	Valentino Mortali	1665	Italian
<i>Capricci Medicinali</i>	Venice	Valentino Mortali	1670	Italian
<i>Tesoro della vita humana</i>	Venice	Brigna	1673	Italian
<i>Compendio dei Secreti rationali</i>	Venice	Prodotti	1675	Italian
<i>Compendio dei Secreti rationali</i>	Venice	Ghirardo Imberti	1675	Italian
<i>Compendio di tutta la chirurgia (including the Discorsi sopra la chirurgia, con la dichiarazione di molte cose da sapere...)</i>	Venice	Brigna	1677	Italian (with Pietro and Lodovico Rostini)
<i>La Chirurgia</i>	Venice	Giacomo Zattoni	1678	Italian
<i>Della Fisica</i>	Venice	Giacomo Zattoni	1678	Italian
<i>Dello Specchio di Scientia universale</i>	Venice	Giacomo Zattoni	1678	Italian
<i>Tesoro della vita humana</i>	Venice	Giacomo Zattoni	1678	Italian
<i>La Chirurgia</i>	Venice	Giacomo Zattoni	1679	Italian
<i>Dello Specchio di Scientia universale</i>	Venice	Giacomo Zattoni	1679	Italian
<i>Capricci Medicinali</i>	Venice	Giacomo Zattoni	1680	Italian
<i>Del Reggimento della Peste</i>	Venice	Giacomo Zattoni	1680	Italian
<i>Capricci Medicinali</i>	Venice	Stefano Civiti	1680	Italian
<i>Tesoro della vita</i>	Venice	Heirs of Melchior	1682	Italian

<i>humana</i>		Sessa		
<i>Del Reggimento della Peste</i>	Naples	Muzio e Ricciardi	1720	Italian





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