CHAPTER 10

Foreign Ingredients in Early and Late Modern English Recipes

Isabel De la Cruz-Cabanillas

During the Early and Late Modern English periods[1] medical writing experienced an increasing growth of interest as a result of different factors: the position of English as the language of science and medicine, the adoption of unknown products from the New World, the proliferation of old and new diseases, and a fast-developing print culture, among others (Pahta & Taavitsanen 2011; see also Taavitsainen, Jones, & Hiltunen 2019). Likewise, recipe compilations witnessed a dramatic increase in their production and publication during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Cabré (2011: 170) claims that 'vernacular genres compiling practical knowledge flourished in Western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from the so-called books of secrets to commonplace books, conduct books, manuals of healthcare and, especially, collections of medicinal receipts'. Furthermore, even if the printing press made the recipe collections available to a wider audience, the manuscript tradition continued being an important source of transmission. Thus, 'the printed handbooks, designed to appeal to a broad range of people as aides to ordinary life, coexisted with manuscript domestic guides in the form of recipe collections and compilations, notebooks and so on' (Cabré 2011: 170).

The focus of this chapter is on manuscript medical recipes in early and late modern England as a reflection of the time period, to learn about the novelties introduced in terms of ingredients. From a long-standing tradition inherited from Antiquity and preserved in the Middle Ages, recipes retain their prototypical features over the centuries, but will also incorporate innovations, especially in the ingredients section. Since recipes often tell us 'about the cultural expectations and parameters of any given society'

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[1] The Early Modern English period is understood to cover the years from 1500 to 1700 and Late Modern English from 1700 to 1800.

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(Pennell 2009: 15), changes in society will be mirrored in recipe collections. Probably no other genre is so permeable to alterations in the cultural and social spheres, reflecting fashion, traditions, and conceptions of their time of writing. The food and medicine culture of modern Europe was revolutionised in the wake of the 1492 encounter with America.[2] Thus, the importation of substances from the New World would have an impact not only on European diet and medicine, but also on social, economic and cultural history (López-Piñero et al. 1992: 13).

Regarding the structure of the present chapter, after the introduction to the topic the methodology is explained, followed by a section on the new commodities from America and other products incorporated mainly from Europe. The newly introduced substances are examined in medical terms and illustrated with passages extracted from the corpus of manuscript recipes compiled for the research. Finally, the conclusions drawn from the analysis are presented in the final section.

10.1 Methodology

The methodology followed here has been refined through a series of processes: first, through reading a wide range of relevant works by historians and contemporary authors; second, by the selection of representative recipe collections ranging from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries kept in Glasgow University Library (henceforth GUL). The corpus has been balanced to include *receptaria* from the three centuries, even though the number of recipes in each manuscript varies. Thus, Hunter MS 93 and Hunter MS 95 are sixteenth-century texts, whereas Hunter MS 64, General MS 831, and Ferguson MS 61 are seventeenth-century collections. Finally, samples of eighteenth-century manuscripts, Hunter MS 43, Ferguson MS 15, and Ferguson MS 43, have been included in the present study.

Before analysing the material, it is worth mentioning that the contents of the manuscripts under consideration have not been examined thus far, with the exception of Hunter MS 93 (Ortega-Barrera 2014) and the present author's studies based on three of them (De la Cruz-Cabanillas 2016, 2017, 2020). This explains why the material of this study is

[2] I follow Barrera-Osorio's use of the word *America* to refer to the American continent. According to him, 'this usage was already in place in the sixteenth century and is still current in many American countries, with the exception of the United States, where "America" means only the United States' (2006: 12).

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remarkably valuable. Additionally, no images are available on the University of Glasgow website, which made the visit to the Library Special Collections Reading Room essential. In addition, the transcription of the texts was necessary to process the information contained in the manuscripts.[3] After this, the ingredients were identified manually by reading the manuscripts. Finally, the products were classified according to their origin: whether they came from America, Asia, or continental Europe.

The provenance of the ingredients, as well as the dates of their introduction into the English language, relies on the information provided by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (henceforth OED). Nevertheless, other lexicographic references have also been taken into consideration, such as the *Lexicons of Early Modern English* (https://leme.library.utoronto.ca), the *Middle English Dictionary* (https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary), and the *Dictionary of Medical Vocabulary* by Norri (2016), to check whether the word had already appeared in the Middle Ages, even if the OED dated the first occurrence in the Renaissance period.

10.2 New Commodities in the Early Modern Period

10.2.1 From the New World

The encounter with the New World from the fifteenth century onwards made possible the regular movement of people, plants, diseases, products, and cultural practices back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean (Canny & Morgan 2012: 1). This exchange between the Old and the New Worlds was intense. On the one hand, Spaniards carried food from Spain with them. Thus, grains and pulses – such as lentils and chickpeas – were transported from Europe, as well as vegetables like 'lettuce, escarole, edible thistles, chard, cabbage, cauliflower, artichoke, spinach, eggplant, turnips, radishes, beets, and carrots; fruits such as quince, peaches, cherries, pomegranates, melons, mangos, and, especially, citrus fruits including oranges, lemons, and grapefruit' (Pérez-Samper 2014: 19).

On the other hand, Spain also benefited from the new goods found in the Americas, which made available a whole new range of products to be employed both in the kitchen and in household medicine. Most recipe

[3] In the transcriptions of the texts, the original spelling has been maintained, whereas the abbreviations have been silently expanded.

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collections in early modern England were compiled to be used in the author's domestic environment and relied upon easily accessible ingredients (Leong & Pennell 2007: 136). However, remedies prepared in the period also made use of new substances, especially from America, as shown in the *receptaria* analysed below.

Furthermore, European nobles and middle classes were keen on using new products as a sign of identity to show their status. New foodstuffs percolated into Britain, through a well-established trade with continental countries that brought spices, fruits, and herbs from all over the world. Several products had already shown their efficacy in their places of origin. Nonetheless, the employment of plants from the New World for medicinal purposes was not always obvious. As Barrera-Osorio notes, there were insufficient references to their properties according to humoral theory, which was still prevalent in Europe:

> Perhaps the single most important difference between the development of natural history in the Atlantic world and in the Old World was that the natural products of the Atlantic world lacked a reference in classical traditions. Not a single classical or religious text could provide information on an avocado or cochineal (an organic red dye). Sometimes the texts did provide a clue, but it was never specific enough. (Barrera-Osorio 2006: 102)

European physicians sometimes disagreed on the classification of American plants (Estes 1995: 12). Thus, having no proof of their real qualities, the products were used because American Indian people had proven their efficacy in the treatment of some diseases, but often also because they were considered sophisticated, being new to the market. In addition, the outbreak of unknown diseases in the Old World made it necessary for physicians to resort to new remedies. This could be the case for ailments such as syphilis, or new episodes of the plague, to which several medical preparations were applied. Many of these included newly introduced American commodities.

Several of the substances coming from America may have had a direct medical use, but others, like tobacco, were definitely employed for other purposes. First of all, Stewart (1967: 229) and López-Piñero et al. (1992: 45) mention the fact that tobacco was not the name of the plant, but referred to the instrument used by indigenous Americans to inhale it. Secondly, 'Monardes reported that the Spanish had brought tobacco to the Old World as an ornamental flower' (Estes 1995: 9). Nonetheless, it had also entered medical practice by 1570s, and it became the focus of learned pamphlet controversies arguing both for and against its medicinal uses (see Ratia 2011). Matthee claims that

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> tobacco was considered to be a disinfectant in a time in which frequent outbreaks of the plague left people desperate for preventive medicine. Praised as such during the 1635–6 epidemic in Holland, tobacco maintained that reputation during the 1665 plague of London and the epidemic that afflicted Vienna in 1679. (1995: 29–30)

De la Cruz-Cabanillas (2020: 51) records 'A Receipt for Buggs' in Wellcome MS 1322, where tobacco is used as a disinfectant:

(1) Take a pail of Water and put to it some unslaked Lime and let it stand all Night then pour of the Water clear and Boyle in it Tobacco stalks and Coloquintida, boyl them well and strain it wash the floor of the room & all the wainscott and Jester & Bedstead let it dig on & do it 3 times or more together it was never known to fail [. . .]. (Wellcome MS 1322, f. 50v)

In addition to preventive use for sanitary purposes, tobacco could be used together with other herbs to treat a quartene fever, as said in General MS 831 (2) and diseases, such as asthma (3) and gout (4), as mentioned in Hunter MS 93:

(2) Take Currants and bruse them and strew uppon it the pouder of Tobaco; and it to the wrest of the handes, and lett it remaine till the Medcine be drie.//. (GUL, General MS 831, f. 55)

(3) This is excellent for Asthmaticall and Consumptive distempers for ye Lungs in case of arSthysis for any sore cough and difficulty of breathing the best time to make it is in Aprill./ Take two twenty shilings of apaned hould waight of Bitteny, and ye same quantity of Sweet Margerum, dryed bery green in a fier shobell or Ouen, then pound it in a Woden Morter and Sarce them through Tiffeny or Leume then take 15 gould waight of Spanish tobacco dryed and Sarced likewise; then you may put thervnto twenty graines of Muskell, let them all be well mixed togeather and put up in boxes. This being used to be snufft up once or twice a day morning & euening into ye Llostwitt that is most stopt soe much at a time as wilbe held betweene ye Thumbe and ye finger end, is a rare experienct remedy against ye Gout [. . .]. (GUL, Hunter MS 93, ff. 269–70)

(4) The Tobacco must bee bruised to a fine powder, ye Cloves dryed and beaten and soe sifted through Tistiney, then mixe ye muske and Ambergreece with the Cloves and beate them and then bruise them with a knife together and then after that mixe both Cloves & Tobacco

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powder, and soe reserve it a close boxe for your use but first wrapt vp in paper. you must take above ye quantity of a greate pins head in each nostril. [. . .]. (GUL, Hunter MS 93, f. 270)

American substances were also employed to heal several rampant diseases in the period, one of which was the French pox or syphilis, which was known to Europe since the end of the fifteenth century. The first outbreak took place in Italy in 1495 and its origin is often linked to the return of Christopher Columbus two years earlier with ten natives of the West Indies and a crew of forty-four men, some of whom are said 'to have joined the troops of Gonzalo de Cordoba who marched with Charles VIII to Naples' (Cartwright & Biddiss 2000: 44).

In modern Europe several procedures were used to treat the French pox, especially mercury and guaiac, a resin obtained from *Guaiacum officinale* and *Guaiacum sanctum*, indigenous trees to South America and the West Indies. The guaiac was the usual remedy among Indian people (López-Piñero et al. 1992: 16). The product became very popular in Europe, even though it was expensive, due to the fact that 'the monopoly in its trade was sold by the Spanish Crown to the Fuggers, the wealthiest bankers in Europe' (Wear 2000: 70) and, therefore, it was available only to patients who could afford the treatment. Estes refers to the cost of guaiac, which 'seems to have been prescribed chiefly by physicians whose clientele included those who could pay most for the new drug, while the cheaper mercurials were more likely to be prescribed by barber-surgeons, whose patients were less affluent' (1995: 7).

The popularity of guaiac is evidenced due to the fact that several treatments recorded in the corpus refer to using it for the French pox. One of them is included in Hunter MS 43, whereby not only guaiac but also sarsaparilla,[4] 'the most popular remedy from the New World in the sixteenth century' (Estes 1995: 7), are mixed with other ingredients:

(5) A Wonderfull good Diet for ye French Pox. Take Coloquintida drachm ij. The bark of Guajacum, Sarsaparilla, Liquerishe ana. ounce semisse [. . .]. (GUL, Hunter MS 43, f. 3)

In turn, in Hunter MS 95 there are several similar remedies for the same disease. In the next example, apart from guaiac and sarsaparilla, sassafras, another American plant, is prescribed. The demand for sassafras was so

[4] These ingredients were not only used for the treatment of the French pox, but also for the different episodes of the plague in the modern period. Tanturri, in Chapter 6 in this volume, also reports on their use in Italy in the nineteenth century.

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great that 'expeditions were sent to New England in 1602 and 1603 to collect it for English entrepreneurs, who hoped to sell it for fifty pounds a ton' (Estes 1995: 8). Hunter MS 95 has the following recipes:

(6) Recipe. ligni guiaci libra ij, Cortexe ounce ij, sarsaperilla libra semis. sarsafras Cardus benedictus.manipulus. 4. Camamell flowers melelott flowres ana manipulus ij pollipodi libra semis liquerish ounce .6. sene libra .j. hermodacteles ounce 6. turbit ounce 8. blacke helebor ounce .6: pulp Colloquinted a ounce iiij aneseedes ounce iij ginger. ounce: v semis. Cinamon. ounce ij put all these beinge prepared in aglasse boddye and Couer them ij fingers on with speritt of wine or distilled vineger. (GUL, Hunter MS 95, f. 2r)

(7) Recipe guiaci libra. semis. sarsaparilla ounce iij. China. ounce. j. seep these in :8: libra of faire water. 20: houres then ad ounce. ij of the rootes of vipers grasse, of Cardus benedictus, ffumitory, ana. manipulus. j. then boyle these till the halfe be spente & when it is almost enough boyled ad: ounce ij of sarsaphras & ounce j. of liquerish & when it is cold strayne it for. vse [. . .]. (GUL, Hunter MS 95, f. 9v)

In (7), along with other herbs, one finds China root or China-grass, which is 'a small shrubby plant with broadly cordate leaves, native to China and Sumatra' (OED). China root is included in recipes to prepare restorative broths. Albala claims that these kinds of recipes 'verge on the medicinal' (2012: 326). Thus, the mixture of cooking and medical recipes is common in the period, and diet and medicine are clearly interconnected. Furthermore, Thirsk claims that plants served two purposes, as food and as medicine, and 'these two separate interests mingled instinctively in the minds of contemporaries whenever they sat down to eat' (2007: 287). In fact, a medical recipe collection, such as the one in Ferguson MS 61, also includes what could be considered culinary instructions for a strengthening broth:

(8) Take halfe An ounce of prepared woormes A spoonefull of shaveings of harts horne and halfe a spoonefull of Ivory, ty those up in A Cloth and boyle them with A Chickening and A suffitient quantity of water ading a spoonefull of ffrench Barly nine or ten prums and a halfe A handfull of Raysons of the sun stooned A Crust of manchet one spoonefull of Currants A Sprig of Rousemary and time, Sucory Sparrowgrasd fennell Rootes of each one ounce steepe these in whitte wine thet night beefore and halfe a Spoone full of Capers well wayshed from the Salt Drinke A Draught of this Brath every morneing worme by seaven of the Clocke [. . .]. (GUL, Ferguson MS 61, f. 3)

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Often the newly introduced herbs were used to treat new diseases, but they were also employed to treat several already well-known ones. *Crab-tree* or *eryngo* is first attested in 1769 in the OED meaning 'a South American tree, *Carapa guianensis*'. Despite this dating, *crab-tree* is already documented in Hunter MS 64, a seventeenth-century text, in a recipe for healing a canker or any other wound:

(9) Take the barke of a crabtre that groweth in a wood & seath it in ale till it hath sodd to the third parte then cast away the barke & straine it well & then put to it a pinte of milke then sethe them together till it be as thicke as honey & ever more washe the canker with womans milke & make a playster and change it twise in a daye . [. . .] (GUL, Hunter MS 64, f. 10r)

These several products are among the most widely used introduced from America, but they were not the only ones. The corpus records other gums and resins, such as tacamahaca. This is mentioned by Monardes, a Spanish botanist and physician, whose main work was *IOYFVLL NEWES out of the newfound world, wherein are declared the rare and singular vertues of diuers and sundrie Herbs, Trees, Oyles, Plants, & Stones*.[5] Similarly, a resin known as carana, obtained from a West Indian tree, *Bursera acuminata*, has medical applications. Both are present in Ferguson MS 43 in a description of a plaster for an ache:

(10) Take of ij Gummes ye one called Tackame-hacka & ye other Carana ye one being a hard Gumme must be first spread on with a hot knyfe vpon a peece of leather, and then you must spread on ye other Gume and lay it to ye place where ye paine is, and lett it remaine till ye paine be quite gone [. . .]. (GUL, Ferguson MS 43, f. 4v)

In turn, in Hunter MS 64 carana is used in a recipe for sciatica:

(11) Take caranna iiij ounce & put to it of the strongest sacke you can get put in almost halfe a pinte melt them together in a peuter bason & so sone as it is molten strenie it then boyle it till the sacke be wasted then tak fine shepes lether & spread this thereon making your plaister fit for the plane. [. . .] (GUL Hunter MS 64, f. 54v)

Likewise, several GUL manuscripts document the use of *Benjamin*, whose name refers to three different trees. According to the OED, they are '*(a) Styrax benzoin*, the tree from which benzoin is obtained; a native of

[5] For an analysis of Monardes, see Taavitsainen (2009).

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Sumatra, Borneo, etc.; *(b)* the *Benzoin odoriferum* or *Lindera Benzoin*, a North American shrub, which has an aromatic stimulant tonic bark, and berries yielding an oil of similar properties; called also Benjamin-bush and in U.S. Benjamin; *(c)* sometimes applied to *Ficus Benjamina*'. We cannot know for certain which one the recipe compiler meant. The plant could serve diverse purposes: in Hunter MS 64 it is used to make a pomander (12), for washing the teeth (13), and for a perfume for the head (14), whereas in Ferguson MS 43 (15) it appears only once in a recipe for a perfume:

(12) To make a very Excellent Pomander

> Take halfe an ounce of gum dragagant & infuse it in Rosewater till it becum all a musklage this done heate your morter very hote pestell & all then take this receite as followeth storax calamite halfe an ounce beniamin ij drames labdanum one ounce cloves yealow sanders of each one dram musk xv graines sevet tene graines first take your gumes & beate them in your hote morter then take the cloves & sanders beinge in fine powder & beate it all together with the muske and sevet then take of the foresaid gum infused to a musculage & put therto as muche as you thinke shall suffice then beate all together and Rowle them vp as you woulde have them [. . .]. (GUL, Hunter MS 64, f. 1r)

(13) A decoction to washe & scoure the mouthe to fasten lose tethe to consolidate, & make sounde the gummes & to make the fleshe to growe agayne beinge decayed./

> Take halfe a glasse full of vineger with as muche water of lettis of Rosemary mirre masticke boule-armoniacke, the moysture that distilleth put of dragons bloud roche allom burned of eache of them an ounce fine sina mon halfe an ounce well, Ryver, or fountaine water three glasse full mingle all well together, & let it boyle with a small fier addinge to it halfe a pounde of honey scuminge it then put in a little beniamyn, when it hath boyled a quarter of an hower cole yt & put it in a clene viall & washe your tethe often therewith as well before as after meate & houldinge it a while in your mouthe yt is very good for the heade & maketh a sweet breath bringe a thinge of greate excellencye . [. . .] (GUL, Hunter MS 64, f. 8r)

(14) A perfume for the heade./

> Take olibanum, veruxxe, beniamin & storax of eyther on once beate them together grosley to perfume the head & soe imbast A pece of

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graye paper with flax & hould it over the perfume beinge burnt vpon coles & then soe lay it to the fore parte of the heade . [. . .] (GUL, Hunter MS 64, f. 16v)

(15) A Receipt of ye Rose perfume.

Take three ounces and a halfe of Beniamine and lay it a night in Rose water, then beate it fine and take halfe a pound of Dammaske Roses ye whites being taken away, beate them fine, then take ye beniamine and put them to ye Roses, and beate them together vntill it come to a past, then mingle with it half a quarter of an ounce of Muske finely beaten, then put to it halfe a quarter of an ounce of Ciuett finely beaten, and an ounce and halfe of sugar finely searsed, then make them vp in little Cakes betwixt Rose leaues on both sides, and dry them on sheetes of paper where no Ayre comes. [. . .] (GUL, Ferguson MS, 43 ff. 15r–15v)

Other products, such as cochineal, found in 'several species of cactus in Mexico and elsewhere' (OED), were prescribed along with other medical ingredients in recipes:

(16) To make Tincture of Carroways

Tis good for ye Cholick or Gripes
Take a quart of spirit's of wine & put it in to ½ a pound of sugard carroway's & shake it every day for a week then put in a quarter of a pound of powder sugar & shake it well together & put in 6 grains of cochenele & keep it close stop't [. . .]. (GUL, Ferguson MS 15, f. 119)

10.2.2 From Europe

By the end of the fifteenth century, England had an established trade not only from the Netherlands and France, but also from the Mediterranean (Thirsk 2007: 10). Apart from figs, raisins, oranges, dates, and pomegranates, not to mention all the currently familiar spices like turmeric, cinnamon, and cumin, several other products that are present in the recipe collections of the period came from the Mediterranean area. Among those was, for instance, alkermes, 'the dried bodies of scale insects (females of *Kermes ilicis* and *K. vermilio*, family Kermesidae), found in the Mediterranean region on the kermes oak (*Quercus coccifera*) and formerly used medicinally and as a source of red dye; a medicinal preparation containing these insects' (OED).

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In Hunter MS 93 it is recorded along with other substances as ingredients for a surfeit water:

(17) Put three quarts of Anniseeds water into a new earthen glased pot or pipkin with soe many red feild poppies as can be wett in it when they grow pale straine away the water and if it be high Coulored as Alligant put into it 3 ounces of browne sugar candie and a quarter of a Ounce of Alcarmes afterwards keep it close stopt in a Glasse if the first poppies doe not sufficiently staine ye water put in more before you add ye two last Ingredients
Giue one or two or three spoonfull of it as ye degree of ye surfeit requiers and ye age and strength of ye patient permitts. [. . .] (GUL, Hunter MS 93, f. 260)

Likewise, in an extensive recipe of a mixture that was thought to prevent miscarriage, alkermes is listed along with other ingredients:

(18) Take 2: ounces of Barley water, Cinaman water 2 ounces, Juce of Citrons ½ an ounce on dram of Confect Alkermes without muske, & 2 ounces Cordiall frigida Saxoniae, mix all well together [. . .]. (GUL, Ferguson MS 61, f. 62)

Also from the Mediterranean area is angelica, the 'angelic herb' or 'root of the Holy Ghost', so named on account of its reputation against poison and pestilence, probably from the fragrant smell and aromatic taste of its root. The plague was particularly pestilent, and several recipes against the smell can be found in different manuscripts of the corpus. One of them is *To make a perfume to smell vnto against ye Plague*:

(19) ffirst take halfe a pinte of red Rosewater and putt thereto the quantitie of a hasellnutt of Venice Treacle or Metredate stirring them together vntill they be well infused, then putt therto a grain of an ounce of Synnamon broken into small peeces and bruised, in a Morter, xij Cloues bruised, ye quantitie of a good hasell nutt of Angelica Roote slyced very thyn, as much of Zedoarie rotte slyced, 3 or 4 spoonfulls of white wyne Vinigar, so putt them altogeather into a glasse, and stop it verie close, and shake it two or three tymes a day for two or three dayes [. . .]. (GUL, Ferguson MS 43, f. 10r)

Apart from angelica root, a new ingredient in the period mentioned in (19) is *Venice treacle*, which is 'an electuary composed of many ingredients and supposed to possess universal alexipharmic and preservative properties', according to the OED. The term was first attested in 1617.

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Unlike the previously mentioned plants, the origin of scurvy grass is unknown. As can be deduced from its name, scurvy grass, 'a cruciferous plant, *Cochlearia officinalis*, believed to possess anti-scorbutic properties' (OED), was the most widely used herb to treat the scurvy. The disease had been known for centuries, but its prevalence was probably higher in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially in sailors. In fact, according to Elmer's estimations, 'on long voyages a ship could lose between a quarter and a third of its crew to the disease, not to mention those who were temporarily incapacitated' (2004: 276). The high mortality rate among navy personnel inspired James Lind, a Scottish surgeon in the Royal Navy, to carry out a dietary experiment on those sailors who fell ill with scurvy. The experiment is described by Porter:

> Twelve scurvy patients were chosen. Lind gave two of them a quart of cider a day; two had oil of vitriol; two vinegar; two sea-water; two had oranges and lemons; and two an electuary of garlic, radish, Peru balsam and myrrh. The pair on oranges and lemons were fit for duty in six days, and put to nurse the other, who remained sick. (1997: 295)

Finally, Lind published his results in *Treatise of the Scurvy*, in 1753. No immediate action was taken after Lind's findings, but his proposals for preventing the illness were eventually adopted in 1795, when measures were taken to provide lemon juice to 'crews who had been on salted provisions for six weeks' (Elmer 2004: 276). Nonetheless, the fact that citrus fruits were good for the scurvy was already known in the sixteenth century, as recorded in Dr John Feckenham's *Book of Medical Receipts*, extant in Hunter MS 93:

(20) The Cofernes of skiruie grasse, roman wormod and of ginger of each two ounces. Of the flowers of rosemary, ye pulpe of Cyterne, cofernes of roses woodsorrell, succory; gilliflowers, of each one ounce [. . .]. (GUL, Hunter MS 93, f. 259)

Even if some panaceas, such as *Aqua Vitae*, were also used to treat the illness, as in 'any disease where any gross humour aboundeth, as in ye Gout, dropsie, french poxe, scurvey & þe like' (GUL, Hunter MS 43, f. 25), scurvy grass was the most widely used herb. A sample of this is in *An approved drink for ye scurvy*:

(21) Take of water cresses brookcyme of scurvey grass as much as will yeild 3 pints or 2 quarts of juice let your scurvy grass be ye greatest quaintity then take of saxifrage & sarsaparilla of each a good hand full thin shave'd & sew them in a bag of lawn. or some thin cloth but

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> bruise ye woods be fore you put them into the bag & then have a small firkin of ale of 8 gallons after it hath worke'd put into it ye juice of those herbs befor name'd & ye bagg of saxifrage then stick an orange full of cloves & hang it by a thred in ye firkin it will be fitt' te drink after one day it must be drunk. in ye morning tasting & fast 2 hours after it drink it again at 4 in ye afternoon [. . .]. (GUL, Ferguson MS 15, f. 124)

Another ailment that was thoroughly described in the British medicine of the period was rickets. It was not defined as a specific medical condition until 1645, when an English physician, Daniel Whistler, provided the earliest known description of the disease in his *De Morbo puerili Anglorum, quem patrio idiomate indigenae vocant 'the Rickets'*. However, it is Glisson who is credited with having discovered the illness when he published a treatise, *De Rachitide sive morbo puerili*, in 1650. An English edition by Nicholas Culpeper appeared a year later with the title *A treatise of the rickets, being a disease common to children*.

Remedies for rickets appear in the corpus in Hunter MS 93, but especially in Ferguson MS 61. The latter is a compilation by a woman, Mary Harrison, who was married and pregnant, as she claims in her recipe 318, where she states 'at Aston 1710 I was with child'. Subsequently, her concern about a disease that affected children seems to be a natural one. Recipes for rickets are documented five times in her book: in recipe 36, *A Dyet Drinke for the Rockettes*; recipe 181, *A Drink for ye Rickets*; recipe 189, *An Ointment for ye Rickets*; recipe 232, *Lady Sharlowes receipt for the Ricketts*; and recipe 272, *for ye Ricketts*. One of these, Lady Sharlowe's recipe, reads as follows:

(22) Recipe of speedwell Liver wort, dandelyon, heart Tongue, of each one handfull, penyroyle ½ a handfull, strawberrye Leaves, & vilet Leaves of each a handfull, of Liqurish & anniseed a ¼ of a pond of Each: 2 or 3 Leaves of Lovage bojle al these in 3 pintes of strong ale tell a pint be consumed, so sweeten it with browne suger & give ye child 2 or 3 spoonfulls [. . .]. (GUL, Ferguson MS 61, f. 97)

Except for *speedwell*, which was first attested in 1578 according to the OED, none of the ingredients in (22) is new. Liverwort, dandelion, hart's tongue, pennyroyal, strawberry, violet, liquorice, aniseed, and lovage are all herbs used extensively in medieval English recipes.

Other ingredients are also mentioned in the corpus. Venice turpentine is well documented for different purposes. Turpentine, 'the semifluid resin

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of the terebinth tree', was known in the Middle Ages, but for this specific variety the first record in the OED is from 1744. In General MS 831, a seventeenth-century text, it is used *for an ague*:

(23) Take venice Turpentine. Bole armanick and Mastick spread thes upon sheepes lether and soe apply it to the wrest 2 or three times before the fitt comes [. . .]. (GUL, General MS 831, f. 63)

The ingredients mentioned thus far seem to have been common currency in the period, since they appear in most manuscripts, whereas others not so widespread are recorded in at least one of the chosen manuscripts, such as *coccus indi*, mechoacham, and tetter-berry. The latter is a perennial climbing vine indigenous to Central and Southern Europe, which is known in Britain as *white bryony*, also as *English mandrake* or *ladies' seal.*

It is documented for the first time in Gerard's *Herball* (1597). In the GUL corpus it appears in Hunter MS 64 in a recipe for the colic and the stone in the kidneys:

(24) Take a pinte of Saxifrage water & an ounce of titerbery kerneles one ounce of gromewell seed one ounce of alisander seed & ij or iij ackhornes make all these in pouder & put the pouder into the Saxifrage water drinke it every day three morninges conty minge you per may heate it soe hott as you can abyde it [. . .]. (GUL, Hunter MS 64, f. 43r)

Our main topic of interest has been herbs, but other products are also found in medical recipes. *Sack*, a term used for French dry wine (included in Example 11), and Spanish Canary wine both rank high in the frequency of items recorded in the corpus. They provide evidence of the intense trade that took place during Britain and other European nations during the modern period and of how the new products were introduced into medical recipes.

10.3 Conclusions

In this chapter we have explored early and late modern English recipes as a reflection of their time period. In order to do so, a representative compilation of recipe manuscripts was selected from GUL. Since most of them are unexplored texts, the examination of the recipe collections from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries contributes to research on what remains largely uncharted territory. The analysis of the manuscript contents reveals several conclusions. The *receptaria* held at GUL are a good

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example of how recipes reflect the period in which they were written. They deal with the contemporary society's concerns: the outbreak of new diseases, such as syphilis, and other old illnesses that were particularly rampant in the period, such as the plague, rickets, and scurvy.

The remedies used to treat these ailments make use of age-old ingredients known from Antiquity, and also of new products imported from America. It is uncertain whether some of these substances have a specific positive effect, but they seem to be fashionable among and particularly embraced by the better-off population, since these substances were considered exotic. One of the most common goods was guaiac, whose monopoly was granted to the Fuggers, a family of bankers. Tobacco, in our day a major health problem, was used as a disinfectant or even for the treatment of some specific diseases, like asthma, gout, or quartene fever. Of American origin are also sarsaparilla, sassafras, and crab-tree, along with cochineal, among others. Other goods came from Asia or from a territory nearer to Europe, as in the case of angelica and alkermes that grew in the Mediterranean area, or from an unknown origin, like scurvy grass.

Regarding the appearance of new terms in the English language, the focus here was on terms for herbs adopted from the sixteenth century onwards. The OED was taken as the main reference, but some antedatings have been identified, such as the use of *crab-tree*.

The adoption of new ingredient terms has proven significant in a medical context. The exploration of other product words not recorded in the corpus, such as chocolate, could be a topic for further research. It would be intriguing to find out how these commodities were accepted among the European population and how they were introduced as food and medicine into the British diet.

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