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Caterina Sforza and *Experimenti*

Translation into English and historical-linguistic analysis of some of her recipes

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Introduction

When I first heard about the 15th century collection of beauty and medical remedies “Experimenti”, I was instantly drawn to finding out more about it: I have always been fascinated by make-up, skincare, haircare and other remedies from past times.

Little did I know that the author of this collection was Caterina Sforza, Countess of Forlì from 1480 to 1500. She was an intrepid and shrewd ruler, a mother, a lover, a woman with an eager interest in every field of knowledge, especially in science and experiments. Throughout her whole life, she devoted herself to experimenting and collecting hundreds of alchemical, cosmetic and medical recipes in a manuscript today known as “Experimenti”.

Upon finding out that her life and the birth of her collection were so deeply intertwined with the town I have lived and studied in for the past three years, I decided to conclude this course of study with a thesis on this subject.

The paper will include two chapters: in the first one, a biography of Caterina Sforza will be presented, together with a paragraph dedicated to her passion for botany and chemistry, which represent the foundation for her collection of recipes. Then, the reader will find a narration of the many changes of ownership and adventurous vicissitudes her manuscript experienced, thanks to which it is today possible to access Caterina’s remedies.

The second chapter will contain the translation into present-day English of six recipes found in “Experimenti”. Each translation will be followed by the historical-linguistic analysis of some key words extracted from the original recipes: the analysis will base on the comparison between their Renaissance Italian translation and their current English meaning and spelling. An essential tool for this will be John Florio’s dictionary, first published in 1598 and considered the first extensive Italian-English dictionary.

The aim of this work is not only to make Caterina’s experiments accessible to an English public, but also to explore the development of the English language on different levels: firstly, its evolution in time, from Early Modern English to today’s English. Secondly, its evolution in space, taking into consideration its immense spread all over the world through colonization (which, at the time Caterina Sforza and John Florio were alive, had only just begun), and the consequent many varieties of English existing now. Thirdly, its evolution with regard to the Italian language and culture, from the Renaissance, an era when Italian played “a prominent international role, especially in the arts and sciences” (Haller, 2013: I), to today’s status of English as lingua franca across the world.

1. Caterina Sforza and “Experimenti”

1.1. Biography of Caterina Sforza

Although there is no sufficient evidence on Caterina Sforza’s date and place of birth, it is supposed that she was born in 1463 in Milan. Her father Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Duke of Milan, was the grandson of Giacomo Attendolo, a mercenary from a village near Ravenna, Cotignola, who was later nicknamed “Sforza” from the Italian adjective “forte”, which means “strong”. Attendolo was therefore the founder of the Sforza dynasty. The Sforza were a noble family of proud and able *condottieri*¹, and throughout her life Caterina proved to be worthy of her ancestors’ courage, distinguishing herself for her eager braveness in defending her possessions.

Caterina’s mother, Lucrezia Landriani, was Galeazzo Maria’s mistress, with whom he had three more children. When Galeazzo Maria’s father died in 1466 and he became Duke, he decided that also his illegitimate children would be raised at court, under the supervision of his mother, Bianca Maria Visconti. Galeazzo Maria’s second wife, Bona of Savoy, adopted all of his children, lovingly treating them as her own. To Caterina, Bona “was not a stepmother, but a real mother full of love and attention” (Brogi, 1996: 26; my translation).

Caterina was educated at court, where she acquired knowledge on Latin and classics, but also on the use of arms, governmental and political skills, and hunting.

At the age of 10, Caterina was betrothed to Girolamo Riario, Pope Sixtus IV’s nephew. They married in 1473, and young Caterina became Lady of Imola, a fief her husband received from the Pope. The couple spent the following years in Rome, in the Vatican court. Even though she was just a teenager, Caterina quickly became part of the Roman upper class, respected and admired by everyone, partially owing to her sociable personality, and partially to her beauty. She was also extremely interested in her husband’s involvement in politics.

In 1480, Girolamo and Caterina acquired the fief of Forlì as well. When the Pope died in 1484, a dark cloud descended over Caterina and Girolamo’s lives, which had been so far protected by Girolamo’s powerful uncle. Upon Sixtus IV’s death, Rome fell prey to anarchy and disorder, with the late Pope’s supporters being violently attacked. Caterina, who at the time was eight months pregnant with her fourth child, did not hesitate to occupy the Vatican fortress of Castel Sant’Angelo

¹ Condottiere: the leader of a troop of mercenaries. The name arose in Italy, but the system prevailed largely over Europe from the 14th to the 16th c. (OED Online, March 2017: “condottiere, n.”).

to protect it from the plunderers. Caterina was determined to defend the fortress until the election of the new Pope, but after two months of resistance she had to surrender: her husband had agreed to leave Rome in exchange for money. Caterina followed him to Forlì, where Girolamo was soon forced to increase taxes, which resulted in growing popular discontent. The local noble Orsi family organized a conspiracy against him, with the aim of gaining control over the city. In 1488, Girolamo was in fact killed, while Caterina and her children were made prisoners. Caterina managed to escape leaving her children as hostages, but determined to defeat her enemies, which she finally succeeded in.

Caterina's firstborn child Ottaviano became Lord of the city, but due to him being just nine years old, his mother took on the role as regent. She undauntedly decided to avenge the murder of her husband by imprisoning everyone who had contributed to hatching or carrying out the conspiracy. Their houses were destroyed and their belongings given away to the poor of Forlì. In spite of this violent action, Caterina proved to be a skilful and wise ruler, wholeheartedly involved in the city government. She personally took care of training her soldiers, abolished taxes and negotiated profitable marriages for her children in order to strengthen her power.

In 1488, Caterina married Giacomo Feo, a loyal servant of her late husband she had fallen in love with. She however decided to keep the marriage secret since she was afraid of losing custody of her children and the regency of Imola and Forlì. Their relationship was nevertheless public, and many feared that Caterina might pass the regency and lordship on to her lover, thus depriving her son Ottaviano of his future power. Because of that, several plots were organized against both Giacomo and Caterina, who managed to uncover them and promptly imprisoned or put to death those who were involved. One of the conspiracies was however successful, and Giacomo was murdered in 1495. Once again, a furious Caterina vindictively took action against the conspirators by torturing and executing not only the plotters, but also their wives, lovers and children.

Two years later, Giovanni de' Medici known as "il Popolano"² became Caterina's third husband. In 1498 they had a son, Ludovico, later known as Giovanni dalle Bande Nere³.

² Giovanni de' Medici and his brother Lorenzo nicknamed themselves "Popolani", which means "of the people", to underline their distance from the main branch of the Medici family, led by Lorenzo the Magnificent. Under his rule, Florence flourished, but part of the population disliked him, and saw him as tyrannical. Giovanni il Popolano and his brother were against Lorenzo the Magnificent and his son Piero, being in favour of a more democratic ruling. (Dizionario Biografico Treccani Online, 2009: "Medici, Lorenzo de' (Lorenzo il Popolano)", "Medici, Lorenzo de' (Lorenzo il Magnifico)"; Enciclopedia Treccani Online, 2017: "Medici, Giovanni de', detto il Popolano")

³ Born in April 1498, he was christened Ludovico, but after the sudden death of his father in September of the same year, Caterina decided to change his name to Giovanni, in honour of her late husband. He became a soldier of fortune, and "Bande Nere" (Black Bands) was the name of his infantry troops. According to some, the name comes from the black bands Giovanni's soldiers started to wear across their shoulders to mourn his death (1526), while others think that the bands were worn to mourn Pope Leo X's death (1521), who came from the Medici family like Giovanni. (Dizionario Biografico Treccani Online, 2009: "Medici, Giovanni de' (Giovanni dalle Bande Nere)").

Some months later, Caterina's husband passed away, but she did not have much time to mourn his death: the Republic of Venice was threatening her dominions. Its intention was to reach Tuscany marching through Imola and Forlì, in order to assist Pisa in a war against Florence. Caterina had been personally training her army, together with which she managed to face and defeat the Venetian militia. From this heroic manoeuvre, she earned the moniker "La Tigre", "The Tigress". There was however little time for celebration: a new enemy was approaching. In fact, Pope Alexander IV, who had been elected in 1492, issued a Bull in 1499 to deprive all Vatican feudal lords of their fiefdoms, including Caterina, because he wanted his illegitimate son Cesare Borgia to conquer and rule over the whole Romagna region. Caterina was left alone to defend her territories, so she bravely began to prepare herself and her soldiers for the imminent attack. Cesare Borgia reached Imola in November 1499, and the population soon surrendered to him. Caterina, who was in Forlì, asked the inhabitants if they would rather give up too or fight and withstand the siege. Since they did not seem as committed as she was to defending the city, she decided to leave the population to its fate and fight alone to protect Forlì's fortress of Ravaldino. In December, Cesare Borgia attacked Forlì. Caterina's army and Caterina herself fought tenaciously for a month, until the Tigress was taken prisoner in January 1500. She remained imprisoned under Pope Alexander IV in Castel Sant'Angelo, the same castle she had protected at the time of Pope Sixtus IV's death. In June 1501 she was released and obliged to formally renounce her fiefs of Imola and Forlì. She later moved to Florence, where her children were being taken care of. When Alexander IV died in 1503, she staunchly engaged herself in trying to take back her previous dominions. The new Pope Julius II was in favour of her request, but the people of Imola and Forlì would not accept Caterina's return as their governor, so she gave up trying to restore her power. She spent her last years in Florence, and died of pneumonia on 28 May 1509.

Caterina is considered the progenitrix of the Medici grandducal dynasty, since Giovanni dalle Bande Nere's son Cosimo I de' Medici became the first Grand Duke of Tuscany.

1.2. A lifelong passion

Caterina is described as extremely clever and curious since her early years (Brogi, 1996: 25). Her thirst for knowledge gravitated mainly towards alchemy, medicine and cosmetics, which are the

three fields that serve as leading thread for the recipes in “*Experimenti*”⁴. She cultivated this keen interest in scientific experiments throughout her whole life: her fascination with botany emerged when she was just a child. Her stepmother Bona of Savoy’s apothecary Cristoforo de Brugora kept a medicinal garden at the Sforza court. It is likely that thanks to this, Caterina was first introduced to the world of medicinal plants she would later explore more in depth in her manuscript (Ray, 2012: 18). Another chance for her to come into contact with the world of botanic and herbal remedies might have been provided by the legacy left by her great-great grandfather: at the court of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan between 1395 and 1402, one of the most accurate and valuable herbals of the Middle Ages was created. Known as “*Historia Plantarum*” (“*History of Plants*”), it thoroughly described the medicinal and therapeutic properties of plants, roots and minerals, offering a detailed overview of the pharmacological knowledge of the late Middle Ages. It is likely that Caterina knew of this botanical manuscript, and probably drew inspiration from it (Pasolini, 1894: XXVII).

When she moved to Forlì with her husband in 1484, she did not abandon her interest for experimenting. In fact, she had medicinal gardens designed in Forlì and Imola where she could cultivate the ingredients she needed to create cosmetics and medicines. One of these gardens was within the walls of the fortress of Ravaldino, next to her palace. The latter hosted a laboratory where she could carry out her experiments and test her recipes; furthermore, a large park where she could grow fruit trees was established along the outer border of the fortress (Ray, 2012: 19).

Caterina’s trusted apothecary Lodovico Albertini, who never failed to provide her with all the ingredients she requested for her creations, was based in Forlì. Even after losing the fief of Imola and Forlì, she kept referring to Albertini as her supplier, asking him to send her whichever material she was in need of. Their professional relationship was one of mutual trust and respect until the very end, as attested by the many letters they exchanged. Proof of such strong and deep relationship is the fact that when Caterina died she left behind a considerable debt to him: “[T]he illustrious Lady - bless her memory - owed me 587 florins, and more, for materials I provided her with in Forlì, as my account books clearly show.” (ibid.: 27)⁵

Caterina was in constant pursuit of new ingredients to experiment with, was in touch with alchemists and kept correspondence with several convents, since over the course of the 15th century,

⁴ See paragraphs 1.3. and 1.4.

⁵ The original text reads: “[...] mi essere vero creditore dela prefata bona memoria di Madonna mia illustrissima de fiorini 587 et ultra in maggiore somma per resto de robbe date a prefate sua llustrissima Signoria in Forli como appare uno clarissimo conto per li mei libri.” (ibid.: 177)

herbal medicine had begun to blossom in convents and monasteries. Caterina developed connections with nuns, and in particular relied on the support of the Dominican convent of Annalena and the Benedictine convent of Le Murate, both in Florence, with which she exchanged recipes, advice on scientific matters and gifts of flowers and fruits. Caterina felt so close and thankful to the convent of Le Murate that she made the wish of being buried in the convent church. Her intense passion for experimenting was not even dimmed by the most troublesome period of her years as regent: as she was preparing to withstand the siege by Cesare Borgia, she dedicated time to her alchemical experiments. Only a few weeks before her enemy's arrival she wrote to her confessor asking to send alchemical equipment and a series of ingredients, some of which capable of causing seizures and death. It is therefore possible to think that

Caterina's request to her confessor certainly raises the prospect that she was entertaining some creative solutions to her dire political situation, [...] integrat[ing] her political significance with her involvement in scientific culture. [...] Pharmaceutical and alchemical methods were sometimes employed in political contexts. (ibid.: 42)

Caterina's enthusiasm for experimenting outlived her 46 years of life. Not only is she the progenitrix of the Medici dynasty of grand dukes, but also the progenitrix of its profound engagement with scientific experiments, which characterized the noble Medici family in the following decades. Her grandson Cosimo I de' Medici built several private laboratories and a foundry in his residence of Palazzo Vecchio, together with establishing the first public botanical garden of Europe in Pisa (1544) and one year later in Florence; Cosimo I's son, Francesco, and grandson, Antonio, equally dedicated themselves to alchemy and medicine, and the latter even exchanged correspondence with Galileo Galilei.

1.3. History of "Experimenti"

1.3.1. The original manuscript

In accordance with her will, after her death Caterina's manuscript was passed down to her and Giovanni de' Medici il Popolano's son, Giovanni dalle Bande Nere (1498-1526). It was then

inherited by Cosimo I and handed down from one generation to the next within the Medici family, evidence of which is the fact that some alchemical recipes attributed to Grand Dukes of Tuscany are actually already included in Caterina Sforza's collection of experiments. After some generations, however, all traces of the manuscript went lost, until the 19th century: Pier Desiderio Pasolini, a 19th-century historian from Ravenna who wrote extensively on Caterina, states that his friend and senator Marco Tabarrini (1818-1898) told him that

...searching through the manuscripts owned by Bigazzi⁶ in Florence [...] he found one with the title "A FAR BELLA" ("TO MAKE BEAUTIFUL"). It was a book of cosmetics and medicine recipes. [...] The book was *in sexto-decimo*⁷; it was thick; the binding was undone; [...]. The manuscript could be dated back to the end of the fifteenth century. [...] [W]ithout any doubt, it had been written by the same hand, from the first page to the last, but it was noticeable that it had been written throughout several years and with many different inks [...]. And on the first page it was possible to read the name of Caterina Sforza, written with energy. (Pasolini, 1894: 17; my translation)

"A far bella" was then bought by the bookseller and publisher Casimiro Bocca (1832-1883), who sold it to an unknown buyer. To this day, the original manuscript by Caterina Sforza is still missing. Luckily, a copy of it was made just some years after Caterina's death.

1.3.2. The transcription

When Caterina died in 1509, her manuscript was bequeathed to her son from her Medici marriage, Giovanni dalle Bande Nere (1498-1526). Giovanni was a soldier of fortune, and one of the men who served under him was the colonel Lucantonio Cuppano (died 1560). Towards 1525, Cuppano copied the recipes from Caterina's manuscript in a book entitled "Expimeti d la ex.^{ma} S^r Caterina da furlj Matr d lo inllux^{mo} s Giouani d medici" (ibid.: 11), better known as "Experimenti de la ex.^{ma} S^r Caterina da furlj Matre de lo inllux^{mo} Signor Giouanni de Medici" (Pasolini, 1894), which translates

⁶ Pietro Bigazzi (1800-1870) was a book collector from Florence

⁷ A size of paper produced by folding a printing sheet four times to form sixteen leaves; a page of this size, or a book composed of such pages (OED Online, March 2017: "sexto-decimo, n.").

to “Experiments of the most excellent Lady Caterina of Forlì mother of the most illustrious lord Giovanni de’ Medici”. Whenever Caterina’s collection of recipes is mentioned as “Experimenti”, reference is therefore actually made to the title given to Cuppano’s transcription of the now lost original. This does not however call into question that the remedies contained in “Experimenti” were originally written by Caterina: many of her letters prove that during her lifetime she often shared her own recipes, which can be found in “Experimenti”, with alchemists and nobles. Furthermore, Cuppano emphasizes several times that he is not the author of the content of the book, but simply the copyist. He does so in the preface:

“In the name of God, in this book you will find some experiments taken from the original by the most illustrious madonna Caterina of Forlì, mother of the most illustrious signor Giovanni de Medici my lord and patron; and since the original was written in said madonna’s own hand ... I will not mind the fatigue I undergo in copying them.”

(Ray, 2012: 23)⁸

Cuppano takes particular care to stress Caterina Sforza’s authorship of the remedies by even sometimes adding comments to the instructions for an experiment, such as “[...], as madame of furli used to do” (Pasolini, 1894: 20)⁹.

In the preface, the copyist gives further credit to Caterina as author by declaring that he has tested many of the recipes and found them successful, and that he is certain that the ones he has not tried cannot but be just as reliable, “seeing that so great a woman has recorded them” (Trollope, 1859: 264). By transcribing Caterina’s experiments, he wishes to avert that such precious remedies remain secret and might go lost.

Lucantonio Cuppano’s copy is a 554-page volume, and the format is *octavo*¹⁰. On the first page, he provides a key to decode some encrypted passages in the book, although it is not certain whether Cuppano came up with the code himself to keep some of the recipes secret or if, more possibly, Caterina’s original manuscript already included coded passages. Below the key, Cuppano adds his first name both coded and deciphered to show the reader how to use it (each vowel is replaced with

⁸ The original text reads: “In nome de Dio in questo libro senoteranno alcuni experimenti Cauati da lo originale de la illux.ma madonna Caterina da furli Matre de lo jllux.mo S.re joanni de medici mio S.re et patrone et per essere lo original scripto de man propria de dicta madonna ... non me curaro durare fatiga arescriuerli” (Pasolini, 1894: 19)

⁹ The original text reads: “[...], como usava madama da furli”

¹⁰ A size of page traditionally produced by folding a standard printing sheet three times to form a section of eight leaves; (also) a book with pages of this size (OED Online, March 2017: “octavo, n. and adj.”).

a consonant: A with B, E with F, I with H, O with P and U/V with X). This makes think that coded passages were part of “A far bella”, but not the key to encode them, given by Cuppano to facilitate reading. In fact, it has to be kept in mind that by copying the original, he intended to make Caterina’s recipes more accessible and known. His wish of spreading Caterina’s knowledge and if possible extending it, is repeated at page 4, where he adds a note that reads:

“I will leave space in this volume so that if anyone should acquire additional knowledge, they may deign to communicate it [because it is] a mortal sin to keep such treasure hidden.”¹¹ (Ray, 2012: 24)

On top of the second page, a note gives indication on one of his successive owners: “Ex lib Io Bap Mannajoni” (Pasolini, 1894: 19), which stands for “From the books of Giovan Battista Mannajoni”, a 17th-century physician and member of the Società Botanica Fiorentina (Botanical Society of Florence). It was later bought by Pietro Bigazzi, the same book collector who was also in possession of what is thought to be the original manuscript “A far bella”. Cuppano’s transcription “Experimenti” was then owned by the publisher Casimiro Bocca, the antiquarian bookseller Dario Giuseppe Rossi, the French collector Henri Le Lieure and, finally, by the historian Pier Desiderio Pasolini. Today, the manuscript “Experimenti” is preserved in a private collection.

1.3.3. The printed edition

Pier Desiderio Pasolini (1844-1920) was a count and historian from Ravenna who shared some common ancestors with Caterina Sforza (her great grandfather Giacomo Attendolo came from Cotignola, near Ravenna). In the late 1800s, this kinship aroused a certain curiosity in Pasolini, who spent more than five years collecting documents about and by Caterina, “Experimenti” included. After purchasing Cuppano’s manuscript in October 1887, in 1888 Pasolini commissioned its transcription to Romolo Brigiuti, a paleographer specialized in ancient books on medicine and science. Brigiuti meticulously transcribed “Experimenti”, “scrupulously respecting the mistakes in

¹¹ The original text reads: “lassaro inquesto uolume lo spatio a causa si mai persona ariuasce aquesta cognitione si degni comunicarlo perche e mortale peccato Tenere ascoso tanto tesoro” (Pasolini, 1894: 20)

the text (correcting them, when possible, in the notes)” (Pasolini, 1894: 12; my translation)¹². In 1893, Pasolini entrusted Paolo Galeati, a typographer and editor from Imola, with the printing of the results of his research: a three-volume work entitled “Caterina Sforza”, made up of a two-volume biography and a third book which collected more than 1400 documents. Among these was the first printed edition of “Experimenti” four centuries after its writing. Pasolini chose however to publish only part of “Experimenti”, omitting those recipes that offered remedies for sexual problems or gave instructions on how to make aphrodisiacs, as well as censuring ingredients and parts of the body because he was afraid that those passages might offend the readers. One year later, he decided to republish “Experimenti”, this time in its integral version. He once again turned to Galeati, commissioning him the printing of just 102 copies, thus targeting a limited elite of readers, mainly book collectors.

1.4. Content of “Experimenti”

The manuscript contains a total of 454 recipes, organized in no particular order. The last one is followed by an index, which lists the experiments alphabetically, subdividing each letter into three groups: “Medicine” (“Medicine”), “Lisci” (“Cosmetics”) and “Chimica” (“Chemistry”). A side note in the 1888 transcription by Brigiuti informs that the handwriting of the index is to be dated back to the 17th century, and is different from any other handwriting in the manuscript (ibid.: 237). The recipes can be divided into three main categories, according to their general nature: alchemy, cosmetics and medicine. It is however hard to sort the experiments with certainty into these categories, since they often overlap, and many beauty and medicinal recipes rely on alchemical ingredients and procedures.

¹² The original text is from a letter sent to Pasolini by Brigiuti, and reads: “Ho altresì rispettato scrupolosamente [...] gli errori del testo (correggendoli, per quanto mi è stato possibile, nelle note).”

2. Translation and historical-linguistic analysis

2.1. Structure of the chapter and main sources

In this chapter, some of Caterina's recipes from 15th-16th century Italian will be translated into present-day English. Some key words will then be collected from each recipe, the translations of which will be analysed from a historical-linguistic point of view, in order to highlight the changes they have been subject to in English throughout the centuries, from Renaissance to today. To do so, there will be a comparison between John Florio's 1611 Italian-English dictionary's translation of these words and their current meaning and spelling. The reader will then be provided with an example sentence containing each word in their Early Modern English translation. Whenever possible, the source for the example sentences will be the "Málaga Corpus of early Modern English Scientific Prose", a compilation of unedited medical manuscripts written between 1500 and 1700. Since the author of most of them is unknown, and so is the exact page number from which the quote will be drawn, the cite for each work will be indicated by the name of reference within the corpus and the original title of the publication.

John Florio (1553-1625), also known as Giovanni Florio, was an English lexicographer and translator of Tuscan origin. His 1598 compilation "A Worlde of Wordes" is regarded as the first comprehensive Italian-English dictionary. Before that, only one similar dictionary existed: it was William Thomas' "Principal rules of the Italian grammar, with a dictionarie for the better understandyng of Boccace, Petrarcha, and Dante", which was published in 1550 and consisted of about 8,000 entries. Forty-eight years later, Florio produced a much larger lexicon, which contained the translation into English of about 46,000 Italian words. In 1604, Florio became Queen Anne's Italian preceptor and private secretary, at a time when "[i]t was a sign of sophistication to be able to speak Italian, and proficiency in Italian was highly prized among queens and patrons" (Haller, 2013: D). To his royal pupil, Florio dedicated the revised and expanded second edition of the dictionary, "Qveen Anna's New World of Words", which was made up of 74,000 entries. These were drawn from many different sources, ranging from contemporary Italian literary works to Italian-Latin and Latin-English dictionaries, and even publications listed on the "Index librorum prohibitorum", a list of books banned from the Catholic Church. Florio's dictionary includes terms from numerous fields of knowledge, together with proverbs, idioms and regional and stylistic variations.

In his introduction to the critical edition of Florio's lexicon, Haller describes it as "[a] work of art in itself" (ibid.: II), underlying its importance by adding that

the dictionary is an extraordinary resource not only for the history of Italian in Italy and abroad, but also for the history of early Modern English. [...] [W]e find in it a wealth of words listed as first attestations in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. (ibid.)

Finally, there will be a paragraph to illustrate the main features of Early Modern English spelling, which have been encountered in the course of the historical-linguistic analysis.

2.2. Handcream

Questa e una pasta che la excellentissima madonna Caterina adopaua per le mano cosa excellentissima.

Piglia libbra una de amandole amare bem monde et piste e lassale stare una nocte in acqua amollo poi descola e bucta uia lacqua cum un panno et salua le amandole piste, Poi piglia oncie duj de irios de levante ben pisto. on. dui de senepe bianco ben piste oncie . 4 . de senepe de saracirocho | Mel crudo oncie . 4 . poi mecti tucte le sopradicte cose, in una pigniacta noua inuetriata ben necta incorporate tucte insieme et ponile al foco et dalli el focho adaggio adagio et destempera cum tanta acqua rosa quanto staria in una cocia douo

This is a cream that the most excellent madonna Caterina used for the hands. It is excellent.

Take one pound of clean and ground bitter almonds, and leave them to soak overnight in water. Strain them through a cloth and discard the water.

Then take two ounces of ground iris orientalis, two ounces of ground white mustard, four ounces of black mustard and four ounces of raw honey. Place all the above-mentioned ingredients in a clean and new glazed pot. Mix all the ingredients and cook over very low fire. Dilute with as much rose water as would fit in an eggshell, then let it cool down. It is amazing.

Poi lassa refredare et e facta mirabil cosa --

Monde (adjective)

Florio translates “mondo” with “cleane, cleansed, pure, neate, spotlesse, purged”. The many synonyms offered have preserved their meaning in today’s English, while their spelling has changed. In fact, it is possible to notice the dropping of the final vowel “-e”, a feature that many English words share. The final -e, which was formerly pronounced, progressively became silent between late Middle English and Early Modern English. Beside the change in sound, the orthography of many of these words slowly started to change.

Example sentence containing *cleane*: “Take 2 or 3 garlick heads well pilled and *cleane*” (MS Hunter 487, Medical Receipts).

Piste (adjective from the verb “pistare”)

Under the term “pistare”, Florio’s dictionary refers the reader to “pestare”, which he translates with “to stampe, to punne, to bray, to bruse or breake with a pestell”.

Today, the verb “to stampe” has lost the final -e, as well as “to breake”; moreover, “to stamp” can now be used as a synonym for “to crush, to grind” only with reference to the act of pulverizing ore (OED Online, March 2017: “stamp, v.”).

Example sentence containing *to stampe*: “Take greene acornes and *stampe* yem a litle [...]” (MS Hunter 487, Medical Receipts).

On the verb “to punne”, Singer writes that “[i]n the first edition of Florio’s Italian Dictionary, *pestare* is *to pound*; but in the second edition [...] it is *to punne* or *pun*” (Singer, 1834: 354).

Example sentence containing *to punne*: “[R]oaste it vnder the ashes by the space of .vi. houres, then *punne* it in a mortar” (Gesner, 1559: 132).

The orthography of “to bruse” has changed into “to bruise”, and today’s acceptance of the verb as a synonym for “to grind” is secondary (OED Online, March 2017: “bruise, v.”).

Example sentence containing *to bruse*: “Take the rootes of lylles and *bruse* them well in a mortar [...]” (MS Hunter 135, Medica Qvaedam).

Amollo (adverb derived from the verb “ammollire”)

Florio only enters “ammollire”, and the English translation reads “to molifie, to soften. Also to steepe in water”.

Both spelling and meaning of “to molifie” have changed: today, the verb “to mollify” does not literally mean “to soften” anymore, but instead, in a more metaphorical way, “to allay the anger or indignation of” or, more rarely, “to reduce the severity of” (OED Online, March 2017: “mollify, v.”).

Example sentence containing *to molifie* (with slightly different spelling): “Take vnguentum refrigerans galeri [...] *To mollifie* & cole the Raynes & intrayles.” (MS Hunter 64, Book of Receipts).

The final -e in “to steepe” has been dropped, and today the verb has the same meaning as to infuse, to brew, to soak so as to extract an essence or a flavour, rather than indicating the mere act of soaking in order to soften.

Example sentence containing *to steepe*: “[...] wash these oiles carefully in rose water: *steepe* the foresaid skinne as before in these oiles” (MS Hunter 303, Treatise on the Diseases of Women).

Irios (noun)

According to Florio, “irios” is “the Oris-roote”. In both languages, the spelling of the flower formerly called “oris” (English) and “irios” (Italian) has changed to “iris”. Today, “orris root” indicates “The fragrant rhizome of any of several irises of the *Iris germanica* group; a powdered preparation of such rhizomes, used in perfumery and formerly in medicine” (OED Online, March 2017: “orris root, n.”).

Example sentence containing *Oris-roote* (with slightly different spelling): “Take [...] *Orris Rootes* and lignum Aloes of each halfe á dram” (We 8086, Receipt book).

Senepe (noun)

In Florio’s dictionary, the translation for this noun can be found under the term “senape” and reads “the hearbe senvie”. The word “senvie”, which is now obsolete, was used as a synonym for “mustard” for several centuries (OED Online, March 2017: “senvy, n.”). Although Florio did not

use “mustard” to translate “senape”, a 1611 French-English dictionary translates the French equivalent “senevé” with “Mustard Seed, or Senvie seed, whereof mustard is made; also the herb that beares it.” (Cotgrave, 1611: column “SEN”), thus attesting that in Florio’s time the term “mustard” was already in use.

Mel (noun)

In Florio’s dictionary, “mele” is translated with “hony”, and “miele” with “honnie”, therefore showing that the spelling of this word was not fixed. The same term spelt as “honye” can also be found.

Example sentences containing *honye / hony / honnie*:

“Take vj vneces of *honye* and one vnce of the iuce of spurge and put therto this powder.” (MS Hunter 135, De Chirvrgia Libri IV).

“Take x spoonefull of *hony* and ij sponefull of vinegar” (MS Hunter 135, De Chirvrgia Libri IV).

“[...] shall be made [...] with the powder of bennet, or of hiera simplex, mercuriall *honnie* [...]” (MS Hunter 303, Treatise on the Diseases of Women).

Cocia duovo (noun)

This expression, which means “eggshell”, was mainly written as two separate words in Early Modern English, with the word “egg” still preserving its final -e.

Example sentence containing *egge shell*: “Take in ye month of may ye fairest running water you can get, and put it into an *egge shell*.” (MS Hunter 487, Medical Receipts).

Translation Problems

Irios de levante (noun)

No direct translation was found for the species of Iris flower mentioned in this recipe; however, since the Italian word “levante” is a synonym for “east”, it is probable that Caterina meant the kind of Iris known as “iris orientalis”.

Senepe de saraciroscho

A proper term to translate “saraciroscho” was also not found, but there was similarity between this word and the Italian “saraceno”. In the Middle Ages, “saraceno” was the Italian denomination for “Arab”, and the dark complexion of the Arabic population led to the hypothesis that “saraciroscho” could metaphorically mean “black”. For this reason, “senepe de saraciroscho” has here been translated with “black mustard”, a mustard species scientifically known as “*Brassica nigra*” (OED Online, March 2017: “mustard, n.”).

2.3. To make the face white

A fare la faccia Bianchissima et Bella et Lucente, et colorita.

Piglia chiare de oua fresca quante tu voli et falli destillare a lanbiccio et con quella aqua laua la faccia, che e perfettissima a far Bello et leua li segni et cicatrice della faccia

Ad idem

Piglia fiori de faua assai quantitta et fanne aqua destillata et con questa aqua Lauati la faccia

Ad idem

Piglia Cepolla lilij et coprila con pasta de farina et ponila in forno et lassali stare per finche sia Ben cotta da poi leua la pasta et

To make the face white, beautiful, glowing and bright

Take as many fresh egg whites as you want and distil them in an alembic. Use that water to wash your face. It is perfect for making the face beautiful and it removes marks and scars from the face.

To make the same

Take a large number of broad bean flowers and distil them. Use this water to wash your face.

To make the same

Take one white onion, cover it in flour paste and bake it in the oven until thoroughly cooked, then remove the paste

taglia la cepolla minuta in pietra et poni oleo de tartaro ala quantita della Cepolla et ponile argento viuo soblimato et poluerizato et mestica tutte bene insieme | et quando le voli adoperare desoluile con aqua rosa | etponile in mano, et fregate el viso che e optima.

and cut the onion into small pieces. Add the same amount of oil of tartar and of sublimed and crushed quicksilver, then mix all the ingredients together. When you want to use it, dissolve it in rose water and place some in your hand, then rub your face with it. It is excellent.

Bello (adjective)

The translation provided by Florio is “faire, beautifull, sheene”. Orthographically, “faire” and “sheene” have lost the final –e, and “beautifull” the double –l. Apart from the latter, the meaning of these adjectives has changed: “fair” now means just or light in colour, whereas “sheen” has become a noun and means shine, gloss.

Example sentence containing *faire*: “I haue knowne two verie *faire* and honest damsels in the age of fourteene” (MS Hunter 303, Treatise on the Diseases of Women).

Example sentence containing *beautifull*: “[...] to smooth the Skim and make it *beautifull*, and louely.” (MS Wellcome 762, Remedybook).

Example sentence containing *sheene*:

“[...] To spoile her daintie corse so faire and *sheene*” (Spenser, 1596: Book II, Canto 10, lines 3-5)

Lanbiccio (noun)

Florio’s translation for “alambico” is “a Limbeck or still”. In today’s English, it is possible to trace back the origin of “alembic” to both “limbeck” and “alambico”. “Still” has maintained its meaning, whereas “limbeck” is now an archaic term (OED Online, March 2017: “limbeck, n.”).

Example sentence containing *limbeck* (with slightly different spelling): “[...] let all these bee maserted 3 dayes, stirring them seuerall times a day then destill them in a *limbecke*” (We 3724, “A Booke of Preserues Cookerie and Phisicall Medicines”).

Cicatrice (noun)

This noun is translated by Florio as “a skar or marke of a hurt”, but the spelling “skarre” can be found as a possible translation for “segno” as well. The word is now spelt with a –c instead of a –k and without final –e.

Example sentence containing *skar*: “[...] applie it and by the grace of god it will heale it without *skar*” (MS Hunter 64, Book of Receipts).

Example sentence containing *skarre*: “The vicer that is hard to bring to a *skarre* commeth most commonly of the poxe.” (MS Hunter 303, Treatise on the Diseases of Women).

Faua (noun)

Florio simply translates this word with “a beane”, but today it is more specifically known as “broad bean” (British English) or “fava bean” (American English) (OED Online, March 2017: “fava, n.”). According to the same source, the first use of the former dates back to 1783, and that of the latter to 1893 (ibid). It can be supposed that the American version has kept the Italian “fava” due to the many millions of Italian that emigrated to the New World in the 19th century.

Farina (noun)

According to Florio’s dictionary, the translation for this term is “all manner of meale or flower”. Today, “meale”, which has lost the final –e, can be used to describe a kind of flour just to indicate oatmeal in Scottish and Irish English or maize flour in American English (ibid.: “meal, n.”). Moreover, the spelling of “flower” with the meaning of “ground grain” has changed into “flour”; “flower” is still used to indicate some kind of powder only in chemistry (ibid.: “flower, n.”).

Example sentence containing *meale*: “[M]ake some potage with the yolk of an egge wheat *meale*, butter and oile of sweet almonds” (MS Hunter 303, Treatise on the Diseases of Women).

Example sentence containing *flower*: “[T]ake the whites of egges mixed with wheat *flower* & wet a linnin cloth” (MS Hunter 64, Book of Receipts).

2.4. To make the hair grow

**Acqua da far crescere li capelli Belli
Longhi insino at terra**

Piglia maluauiscio de trifoglia | et Radice et
foglie de petrosemelo | tanto de Luno
quanto de Laltro | et falli Bollir in una
pignatta noua con acqua et aceto | et poi che
haranno alquanto Bollito | colale per feltro
et spremili Bene | et con tal colatura
Bagniate spesso la testa che vederai
Mirabile et marauiglioso effetto |

**Water to make the hair grow beautiful
and long to the ground**

Take the same amount of three-leaved
marshmallows, parsley roots and parsley
leaves. Boil the ingredients in a new pot
with water and vinegar. After some time,
strain the liquid through a felt cloth and
squeeze well. Wet your head often with this
water and you will see amazing and
extraordinary results.

Maluauiscio (noun)

Florio's translation is "marsh-mallowe", a species of plant now spelt "marshmallow". Its roots were once used to make chewy sweets, which is why today's white and soft confection still bears the same name (OED Online, March 2017: "marshmallow, n.").

Example sentence containing *marsh-mallowe* (with slightly different spelling): "[...] putt to these the blossoms of Beanes, of lillies and Elder of all one handfull, Fower wilde deasie roots, Fower *Marsh Mallow* roots [...]" (MS Wellcome 762, Remedybook).

Petrosemelo (noun)

Under the term "petrosemolo", Florio refers the reader to "petroselino", the translation of which is "stone Parselie". In today's English, this particular species of parsley is known as "parsley breakstone" or "parsley piert" (OED Online, March 2017: "parsley, n.").

Example sentence containing *parselie*: "Take *parselie* , saxifrage peritorie of the wall [...] weshe them and stringe them in a clothe" (MS Hunter 135, Medica Qvaedam).

Capelli biondi (noun, adjective)

In Florio’s dictionary, this expression can be found as one single entry. The translation reads “golden, or bright haire”. It is possible to notice that the adjective “blond(e)”, which translates the Italian “biondo”, is not contemplated in the definition, and in general in Florio’s whole lexicon. Further evidence for this are his translations offered for some Italian words that derive from “biondo”, such as “*biondeggiant*e: shining yellow; *biondello*: a goldy-locke younge man; *biondezza*: sunne-shine colour”. In spite of this absence in Florio’s dictionary, the Oxford Dictionary states that the first use of the adjective “blond(e)” in the English language is to be dated back to the 15th century (OED Online, March 2017: “blonde | blond, adj.”), hence years before Florio’s birth (1553). This goes to show how slowly languages can develop, and how gradual the process that allows a new term to enter common usage can be. Originally, “blond(e)” was a French loanword: the alternative spellings with or without final –e indicate the feminine and masculine forms in French, but today the English language does not strictly follow this rule anymore. For both genders, both alternatives are accepted (blond woman - blonde woman; blond man - blonde man) (ibid.).

As far as “capelli” is concerned, today’s English translation has lost the final –e and is always used in the singular form.

Example sentence containing *haire*s (the texts in the Málaga Corpus never mention the adjective *blond(e)* either): “[...] she will haue verie few *haire*s soft, thinne, slow in growing and *yellow* or whitish” (MS Hunter 303, Treatise on the Diseases of Women).

2.5. To make the hair blond

A far li capelli Biondi che durano doi mesi

Piglia delle foglie di ellera et falle Bollir in lissia cio e in quella che tu fai in casa et che Bolla Bene et con quella Lauati el Capo et farai li capelli Belli | et volendo far meglio piglia del Legnio de hellera et Brusalo et fanne Cenere et con quella cenere et ditte foglie fa la tua lissia et adopera

To make the hair blond for two months

Take ivy leaves and boil them in the kind of lye you make at home. Boil vigorously and use the concoction to wash your head, and your hair will become beautiful. If you want to achieve even better results, take ivy wood, burn it and use the ashes and the leaves to make your lye.

Ellera, hellera (noun)

Florio translates this term with “the hearbe Iuie”, today spelt “ivy”.

Example sentence containing *iuie*: “Appease the paine, by washing of the mouth with the decoction of the leaues of willowes, sage, *iuie*, the barke of the mulberrie trie, galles in binding wine” (MS Hunter 303, Treatise on the Diseases of Women).

Liscia (noun)

Florio’s translation for “liscia” is “all manner of buck-lye”. According to Partridge, “buck” is a synonym for “beech”, and the expression “buck-lye” may indicate that lye was originally made only from beech ashes (Partridge, 1966: “beech”). Today, lye is “any solution obtained by leaching, such as the caustic solution obtained by leaching wood ash” (Collins English Dictionary Online, 2014: “lye, n.”), not necessarily beech ash. However, another possible explanation for the etymology of “buck lye” is provided by the OED, which describes “buck” as “[a] washing tub, a vat in which to steep clothes in lye”, specifying that this acceptance is now archaic and out of common usage (OED Online, March 2017: “buck, n.”).

Example sentence containing *buck lye*: “Take . 2 . or . 3 . handfulls of Oaken barke from the Tanner before it be vsed . and boyle it in á pottle of *buck lye* , (halfe an hower)” (We 8086, Receipt book).

Brusare (verb)

This sixteenth-century Italian alternative to the verb “bruciare” is translated by Florio as “to burne”. Today, the verb has lost the final -e.

Example sentence containing *to burne*: “[...] Then take an yron read hote and burne it in the same place” (MS Hunter 135, De Chirvrgia Libri IV).

2.6. To make someone urinate a kidney stone

A far vrinare la pietra

To make someone urinate a kidney stone

Piglia Dellerba chiamata Saluo vero
Corniola che nasce in le stoppie et non se
troua ad altro tempo se non quando se
tagliano li fromenti at fa vna gamba come
el radicchio et el fior come vna viola | quale
streppalo Come vien Su o taglialo | poi
ponilo in Loco se secchi a Lonbra et metti
sotto qualche Cosa per Salvare quello che
Casca perche e La Bonta poi come lo voli
adoperare pistalo Bene Sottili et omne
matina Danne allo Malato a Beuere in in
vino o in Brodo Come te piace intanti che
magni altro et Secondo andara Beuendo |
vrinara la pietra | che questa polvere ha
questa virtu che rosecha come vna Lima
ditta polvere et Cusi Danne per finche che
vedi La vrina chiara che in 4 | o 5 mesi mesi
la vrinara tutta Seconda Sera grossa |

Take the plant called Salvo or Corniola
(broom), which grows among the stubble
and can only be found when mowing
wheat. The stalk of this plant looks like that
of the radicchio plant, and its flowers look
like violet flowers. Uproot it or cut it, then
let it dry in a shady place. Put something
under it in order to collect what will fall
from the plant, since it is of great value.
When you want to use it, grind it well into a
fine powder. While the sick person is
having a meal, have them drink it in wine
or broth, whichever you prefer. After
drinking it, they will urinate the stone,
because this plant has the power of scraping
like a file. Have the sick person take the
powder until their urine is clear. Depending
on the size of the stone, it will take them
four to five months to urinate it all.

Vrinare (verb)

Today's verb "to urinate" was first used in 1599 (OED Online, March 2017: "urinate, v."), and Florio's 1611 dictionary did not include it yet. Instead, it translates "vrinare" with "to vrine", a verb that was in frequent use until the 18th century (ibid.: "urine, v.").

Example sentence containing *to vrine*: "[Y]ou shall make *vrine* and avoyde the stone therein without any paine or greefe" (MS Wellcome 373, Remedybook).

Tagliare (verb)

Gamba (noun)

Malato (adjective)

These three words have not been subject to any change in meaning, but only in spelling, since all of them have lost their final –e. In fact, Florio respectively translated them as “*to mowe*”, “*a stalke*”, “*sicke*”.

Example sentence containing *to mowe*: “[...] Also in the later ende of June is tyme to begyn to *mowe*, if thy medowe be well growen” (Fitzherbert, 1523: fol xv).

Example sentence containing *stalke*: “[W]hen you will teint it put in a mallow *stalke* with a little egipsiacum” (MS Hunter 64, Book of Receipts).

Example sentence containing *sicke*: “[S]have a sponfull of white soope & give it the *sicke* person & it will make him make water presently after” (ibid.).

2.7. Against hardness of hearing

Contra langustie de lorecchie

Piglia lo succo de la fronde del citriolo agresto cioe el seluagio eposto in lorechie descacia lo dolore e ripara laudito |

Ancora tolli li lombrichi de laterra et oua de formiche e fronde de ruta e trita insieme et fa bolire in olio rosato e poy cola emette una goccia de quello tepido in lorechie e poi serra quelle cum la bambagia e poy unge defora dentorno alorechie elodito perduto se arauera |

Against hardness of hearing

Take the juice of wild cucumber leaves (the variety of cucumber that grows spontaneously). Place it on the ear and it will get rid of the pain and restore the hearing.

Here is another method: take earthworms, ant eggs and rue stalks. Mince them together and boil them in rose oil. Strain and place one drop of lukewarm liquid in the ear, then insert some cotton wool to plug it. Apply some oil outside and around the ear and the hearing will come back.

(*L*)*angustia* (noun – “*l*” stands for the determinative article “*l*”)

In Florio’s dictionary, “angustia” is translated with “straitnesse, narrownesse”, terms that signalize some kind of scarcity or difficulty. The most appropriate collocation in this context appears therefore to be “hardness of hearing”. Today, both “straitnesse” and “narrownesse” are spelt without final –e.

Succo (noun)

Florio’s translation for this noun is “iuiice”, today spelt “juice”.

Example sentence containing *iuiice*: “[D]rink [...] boiled with the *iuiice* of the limon” (MS Hunter 303, Treatise on the Diseases of Women).

Citriolo (noun)

This exact term is not included in Florio’s dictionary, probably because it is considered a regional alternative for “cetriolo” (Vocabolario Treccani Online, 2017: “cetriòlo”). Instead, Florio inserts “cedriolo”, yet another regional and obsolete variation of “cetriolo” (ibid.). The translation for “cedriolo” reads “a little cowcumber”, the spelling of which is now “cucumber”.

Example sentence containing *cowcumber* (with slightly different spelling): “Take the roote of wylde *Coucumber*, and boyle it in harse redde wyne” (Blundeville, 1566: The .xviiij. Chapter.).

Dolore (noun)

Florio offers multiple words to translate this term: “griefe, paine, ache, smart, dolour, anguish, sorrow, teene, vexation”. While most of them have not changed in meaning (but partially in spelling), “teene” is the one synonym that has fallen into disuse. This now obsolete word was used synonym for “injury, hurt” since the 10th century (OED Online, March 2017: “teen, n.1”), while the homograph meaning “The years of the life of any person [...] of which the numbers end in -teen” (ibid.: “teen, n.2”) was first used in 1664, thus after Florio’s death.

Example sentence containing *teene*: “The lesse I see, the more my téene, / The more my *teene* the greater griefe” (Tuberville, 1567: 124).

Tepido (adjective)

This adjective is translated by Florio with “lew warme”. “Lew” is now an archaic and chiefly

Scottish word meaning “warm, sunny” from which today’s “lukewarm” originated (OED Online, March 2017: “lew, adj.”).

Example sentence containing *lew warme*: “[P]ut into the eare something hotte, or *lew warme*” (Lupton, 1579: 186).

Bambagia (noun)

Florio translates “bambagia” with “bumbage or soft cotten”. The only legacy left in today’s English, by the word “bumbage” is the adjective “bombastic”, which describes a pretentious and pompous style of writing or speaking. Originally, the meaning of the adjective was “stuffed, padded”, terms related to the consistency of cotton (OED Online, March 2017: “bombastic, adj.”).

The spelling of “cotten” has changed to “cotton”.

Example sentence containing *cotten*: “[T]ake a peece of white *cotten* & laie it double vpon the place to kepe it warme” (MS Hunter 64, Book of Receipts).

Dentorno (adverb)

Florio translates this adverb with “about, giring, reeling”. Today, the best translation would be “around”, the use of which was however rare until the end of the 16th century (OED Online, March 2017: “around, adv. and prep.”): it is likely that Florio did not include this adverb in his translation because it had not entered common usage yet. “Giring” comes from the verb “to gyre”, spelt “to gire” in the 16th century. It is now used only in poetry (ibid.: “gyre, v.”).

Example sentence containing *about*: “[T]ake a long narrow towell and roll yt *about* the thighe” (MS Hunter 135, De Chirvrgia Libri”).

Lorecchie (noun – “l” stands for the determinative article “le”)

Seluagio (adjective)

Ripara (from the verb “riparare”)

The common feature of these three words is the disappearing of the final –e. In fact, Florio translates them respectively with “the eare of any creature”, “wilde”, “to reparaire.”

Example sentence containing *eare*: “[...] put it into that *eare* of which side the toothe that trooblethe you is” (MS Hunter 135, Medica Qvaedam).

Example sentence containing *wilde*: “The things that may be vused [...] ar the seeds of turneps, *wilde* mintes, sperage,…” (MS Hunter 303, Treatise on the Diseases of Women).

2.8. Main features of Early Modern English spelling

Early Modern English is a phase in the history of the English language that lasted approximately from the 16th to the 18th century, coinciding with the Tudor (1485-1603) and Stuart (1603-1714) dynasties (Weiner, 2016). It therefore covers almost perfectly the years Caterina Sforza was alive (1463-1509).

During these two centuries, the main differences in spelling from today’s English were as follows:

- Widespread presence of the final silent –e. Before the 16th century, this vowel was usually pronounced, but then it started to lose its phonetic aspect. Instead, its function became that of signalling the presence of a long vowel in the preceding syllable. However, many Early Modern English words preserved the final silent –e, even though they did not meet the particular requirement of having a long vowel in the penultimate syllable.

Examples: *to stampe, egge, skarre, marsh-mallowe, stalke, sicke*.

- “V” and “U” were variants of the same letter: “V” was used at the beginning of a word, while “U” within the word.

Examples: *iuie, vrine*

- “I”, “J” and “Y” were interchangeable.

Examples: *honye – honnie, iuice, giring*

Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, one of the purposes of this paper was to analyse the development of the English language from several points of view. From the temporal one, the main characteristics of Early Modern English spelling have been encountered during the course of the historical-linguistic analysis, and illustrated in the last paragraph of the second chapter. Besides the orthographical changes, it was particularly fascinating to see how some words have evolved semantically, acquiring new meanings, such as *flower* or *marshmallow*.

As far as the evolution of English in space is concerned, different variants and meanings for the same word have been encountered. It was possible to notice that such differences exist across varieties of English that have developed as a result of overseas colonization (in this paper, American English), and also across varieties of English within the United Kingdom itself (in this paper, Scottish and Irish). Interesting cases were *meal* and the English equivalents of the Italian *fava*, where even immigration from a non-English-speaking country may have played a role.

The actual translation of the recipes from Renaissance Italian into today's English has felt like a tridimensional process, a travel across time, space and cultures. It has been a stimulating experience, an intriguing opportunity to challenge myself and to find out more about my own mother tongue, Italian.

Through this thesis, I hope to have instilled in the reader a sense of curiosity for Caterina Sforza, her life and her manuscript, as well as for the constant evolution languages are subject to, which makes them more than a simple communication tool, but rather living and lively entities among us. Lastly, in my own small way, I hope to have paid homage to Forlì, a place that I will forever associate with the absolutely beautiful experience of this chapter of my life.

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