



De la Cruz-Cabanillas, Isabel. (2023). *A Collection of Sundrie Approved Receipts: Study and Edition of Glasgow University Library, Ferguson MS 43*. Alcalá de Henares: Editorial Universidad de Alcalá. Pages: 140. ISBN: 978-84-18979-42-2

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A Collection of Sundrie Approved Receipts: Study and Edition of Glasgow University Library, Ferguson MS 43 presents an edition of a hitherto unedited Early Modern English medical recipe collection attributed to Lady Stanhope. Even though “women [...] have frequently been categorized [...] as “marginal” practitioners” (Allen, 2016, p. 90) in the history of medicine, their role in the domestic sphere has attracted recent scholarly attention (e.g., Brandt, 2022; Withey, 2019, pp. 113–128). By investigating how medical knowledge was disseminated and produced through recipe collections, this book proves to be a noteworthy contribution to this growing body of research. Isabel de la Cruz-Cabanillas not only provides a complete analysis of the codicological and paleographical features of this manuscript and semi-diplomatic edition, but she also offers ample information concerning the contents, structure, and linguistic traits of the text under

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consideration, drawing links between these aspects and the wider linguistic context of the recipe genre and the sociocultural setting of the period.

In addition to the lists of Abbreviations, Figures, Tables, and References, this book is divided into four chapters. The first one opens with a short “Introduction” (pp. 13–16), where de la Cruz-Cabanillas (2023) gives a clear account of how the conventions of a semi-diplomatic edition are followed to reproduce the source text as faithfully as possible. These guidelines, which I will address below in this review, are explained in more detail in chapter 3. Then, the motivations behind the choice of the type of edition are well justified by the author. To provide an accessible text to the readership, on the one hand, she maintains original linguistic features such as punctuation and abbreviations “to enable the reader to taste the real flavour of the language as it was at the beginning of the eighteenth century” (de la Cruz-Cabanillas, 2023, p. 13), and, on the other hand, the author adds appropriate contextual explanations, as she is well aware that a twenty-first-century audience may not be familiar with the background of the manuscript and the characteristics of the recipe genre. The introduction ends with an overview of the contents of the volume, which helps the reader understand the main topics that will be covered in the book.

In the second chapter, “Study of Ferguson MS 43” (de la Cruz-Cabanillas, 2023, pp. 17–56), the author first embarks on a detailed presentation of the Ferguson Collection held at Glasgow University Library, indicating the most relevant aspects of Ferguson’s biography. Information on the provenance of this manuscript is exclusively based on the catalog provided by this library, which further shows the importance of this recipe book for scholars. As the author claims, “this lack of references implies that the collection still holds a number of hitherto unexplored English medical compilations” (de la Cruz-Cabanillas, 2023, p.18). In the next subsection, the focus is shifted to the physical description of the manuscript under scrutiny. Following the study of the script and hand observed, a careful analysis of the marginalia, catchwords, layout, corrections, flourishes, and abbreviations is accompanied by a selection of images, allowing the reader to have rich visual evidence of each of the features examined. The author chooses the well-known classification suggested by Petti (1977, pp. 22–23) to categorize the abbreviations. In addition, this work touches on punctuation, providing a concise yet comprehensive explanation of all the symbols in the text, namely, the comma, hyphen, period, semicolon, colon, and apostrophe. Quantitative data on their distribution and frequency in the text of the manuscript, together with graphs and tables that summarize and display the information, help us to get a more complete picture of the use of these punctuation symbols.

As far as the authorship of the manuscript is concerned, de la Cruz-Cabanillas (2023, pp. 29–33) aims to trace Lady Stanhope’s life, including a genealogical tree of the origins of her family. In her contribution, the intricate web of familial connections of different branches, social networks, and their corresponding biographical information is meticulously researched, as the

large number of sources examined attests. Despite this, it still remains unclear whether Lady Stanhope was the compiler of the recipes or the recipient of the recipe book. In fact, identifying the author is quite challenging, since several members of the family are referred to as “Lady Stanhope”. In her short discussion of the methodology employed to consult the biographical data, the author reflects on the lack of entries for women in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. This is a matter of significant concern, as it contributes to the invisibility of women in science and reinforces male-centric narratives. Thus, de la Cruz-Cabanillas (2023, p. 32) has to resort to their male counterparts for her research. In relation to Ferguson MS 43, the Stanhope family had a longstanding tradition of preserving handwritten medical recipes, so it is likely that this example of private writing was a wedding present for the bride (de la Cruz-Cabanillas, 2023, p. 55).

The last three parts of this chapter are devoted to the contents of the recipe collection, its structure, and its linguistic features, both in terms of the spelling, grammar, and lexical characteristics of the text under scrutiny in particular and of the linguistic characteristics of recipes in general. The author fittingly includes a very succinct introduction to the recipe genre and the typical contents found in remedy books, which are not substantially different from those of Ferguson MS 43, as the majority of the recipes in this collection refer to common diseases such as consumption. With regard to the sources, there is only one physician mentioned in the recipes, which suggests that medical knowledge was transferred across different social groups. De la Cruz-Cabanillas contends that “this compilation should be interpreted as a reference book for domestic medicine” (2023, p. 35).

Concerning the recipe structure, several models have been proposed to identify the prototypical elements of the discursive structure of recipe collections. They have served as the framework for a rising number of case studies (for instance, see Esteban-Segura, 2023, pp. 93–115). Taking into consideration the schema for the different stages identified by Alonso-Almeida (2013, p. 71), this book examines: (i) titles, (ii) ingredients, (iii) preparation, (iv) application, (v) efficacy phrases, (vi) storage, expiry dates, and virtues. The analysis of the use of set phrases, structural patterns, and fixed formulas for each of these stages will surely be an interesting read for specialists in pragmatics. The information is well structured and easy to digest; for example, an exhaustive list of the different clause structures of the titles is provided, together with examples from the text. In addition, a brief definition for many of the ingredients, drugs, and electuaries that are not used today is supplied. This ensures that readers who are not experts in this field can understand these technical terms. By making intertextual allusions, the author aptly establishes lexical and content relationships with other contemporary recipe collections, such as Glasgow University Library, General MS 831. Moreover, the discussion of foreign ingredients in particular, supported by her extensive knowledge of the new commodities from the colonies, leads to valuable

insights regarding the owner's socio-economic status. In the conclusion, it is suggested that the content of these medical recipes displays a fascinating duality of innovation and continuity, as many of the herbs referenced in the text were employed in the Middle Ages and, at the same time, others were only produced in the New World (de la Cruz-Cabanillas, 2023, p. 56).

A sizeable section of the author's work is devoted to the transcription (de la Cruz-Cabanillas, 2023, pp. 57–118) of Ferguson MS 43 in chapter 3, which is preceded by a summary where she recapitulates the conventions that have been followed. Original punctuation, foliation, lineation, abbreviations, capitalization, word divisions, and line breaks have been kept. Preserving the original spelling is crucial for the assessment of the level of orthographic standardization. The layout of the text and red frame ruling have also been preserved. Readers can compare the transcription of each of the folios on the left page side-by-side with the high-resolution images of the manuscript on the right page, in a very accessible layout.

The reader will find a glossary in the fourth and final chapter (de la Cruz-Cabanillas, 2023, pp. 119–134). It mainly contains technical and rare words including ingredients, utensils, diseases, remedies, and measurements which are not widely employed nowadays. Each lexical word is supplemented by information about the word class, the meaning, the folio where it can be found, and its corresponding concordance line in Ferguson MS 43.

Overall, by placing the text in its socio-linguistic context from a holistic perspective and by furnishing a wealth of information regarding medicine, history, provenance and authorship, de la Cruz-Cabanillas not only achieves but surpasses the ambition set in the introduction, that is, to offer an edition which caters to a diverse readership. Through this book, the author demonstrates her remarkable depth of analysis, methodological rigor, and attention to detail in the impeccable edition. Furthermore, she incorporates up-to-date sources and expands upon previous research in the field of Early Modern English, as this recipe collection has never been studied before. In conclusion, this outstanding work can be approached from an interdisciplinary perspective, as it is a valuable resource for those interested in the history of English and medicine. It demonstrates the importance of documenting the role of women in the development, production, and transmission of knowledge to address historical gender bias.

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