Victoria, University of Victoria Libraries, Ms.Brown.It.1
Acc. 1992-044
Fifteenth-century leaf from a medicinal and culinary miscellany (fol. 38)
Italy s. XV^{2}

This study was completed by ENSH MA student Kerri Li for a manuscript studies course taught by Dr. Adrienne Williams Boyarin in Fall 2023.

Folio 38 as a Whole

UVic's MS.Brown.It.1, a "Medicinal and Culinary Miscellany," is a collection of single paper folios bound together to form a composite manuscript. Inside there are recipes detailing various types of cabbage, cures for common illnesses, and even doodles. The collection of individual leaves were clearly collected by an individual who deemed them useful or interesting, and bound together for personal use. Texts included are written in a combination of vernacular Italian and Latin. Previous work by Dr. Joseph Grossi based on internal evidence locates the manuscript's production in Bologna and dates the compilation of the manuscript to the seventeenth century. Starting from the first half of the seventeenth century, upper-class women began to collect and produce such compilations of recipes, medicinal and culinary, as a means to help family members and neighbours in an extension of the "motherly role" (Whaley 152-8). Thus, the manuscript as a whole, though odd in its composition of single loose leaves, is embedded in a tradition of what Leigh Whaley calls "motherly medicine" (150), likely used in a local collective.

This study focuses on a single folio within MS.Brown.It.1, folio 38. This single fifteenth-century leaf contains well-known medical recipes, and, surprisingly, on the recto, a poem rebuking women, or what I call 'the whore poem'. What is such a text doing in a medical compilation that at first glance seems to be used by women? A simple answer is that, within the collection, the poem is simply included because the collector deemed the recipes surrounding the text to be of importance. What interests me more is what the function of such a poem would have been in its original

context—before it was placed into this miscellany. My study—which includes a transcription and translation of the poem, and critical commentary—contextualizes the poem within its original cultural milieu. I will also provide information for the recipes and other texts included on folio 38, where I believe further research can be done.

Folio 38's Background: Date, Function, and Location

Folio 38 is written in an Italian Semigothic script and contains texts in both Italian and Latin. Italian Semigothic script was used from the late fourteenth to early fifteenth century, and the fragment was thus likely composed during that same period of time (Clemens and Graham 172-3). The script itself is heavily abbreviated and arranged into two columns in a cramped style similar to that of Gothic Cursiva. However, on the verso side of the folio, the scribe seems to have made an error with the page layout, and an extra column was created to accommodate the end of the poem on women. Furthermore, the initial "m" in *mvlier* (the first word of the whore poem) is quite small with an unusual amount of space between it and the following letter. I am confident that the "m" was originally a guide letter, and that a decorative initial was never completed. The entire folio is plain and undecorated, and clearly content and use were placed before aesthetics.

Natasha O'Reilly has identified the watermark on fol. 38 and locates the production of the paper used for the leaf to either Pistoia or Lucca, Italy (O'Reilly 4). Expanding on O'Reilly's analysis, I have identified that the paper as one that could have been produced in Lucca, Pistoia, Florence, Udine, Rome, or Palermo, but also that the time of production for paper use this watermark is firmly from the period between 1415-1422 (Briquet-Online 15864). Unfortunately, time and location of paper production does not tell us much about the time and location of the use of the paper. Nonetheless, a paper production date of the first quarter of the fifteenth century does not preclude a dating in line with the script later used to write on it. For more information on the

physical description and watermarks, see the UVic Libraries Medieval and Early Modern Manuscripts Collection site.

Folio 38 Contents and Notes for Further Research

What follows is a numbered list of contents for fol.38, and, subsequently, a summary of my own (admittedly brief) research into individual texxts, which may be helpful to future scholars.

1. **fol.38ra1 *Libellus de conservatione sanitatis* (Book on the Conservation of Health)**
   Osia diceci ello dosso ella faccia … Expicit libellus de conseruatione sanitatis deo gra(tia)s Amen.
2. **fol.38ra22 Unidentified couplet**
   Virtu nona ne … aqui stare anere
3. **fol.38ra24 *Ad restringendum sanguinem de naribus* (To stop a nosebleed)**
   Ad Restri(n)gendu(m) sanguinem de na(r)ib(u)s … et statim Restringetur
4. **fol.38ra28 *Ad paxionem matricis in muliere* (To remove maternal pain in women)**
   Ad paxionem mat(ri)cis in muliere … qualibet vice
5. **fol.38rb1 *Pulvis Imperatoris Federici quo ipse vtebatur* (Powder used by Emperor Frederick himself)**
   Puluis Inp(er)atoris federici q(u)o ip(s)e vtebatur … hec e(st) receptta
6. **fol.38rb31 Unidentified medical recipe with ingredients for preserving dead bodies**
   Rx origani bectonice basili … (et) fiat puluis
7. **fol.38va1 *Ad acuendum visum* (To sharpen the sight)**
   Ad acuendu(m) visum … (et) fiat †cleituariu(m)†
8. **fol.38va13 *Colirium pro oculis* (A salve for the eyes)**
   Colirium p(ro) ochulis … (et) fiat coliriu(m)
9. **fol.38va21 *Pille ad purgandum capud* (A pill to clear the head)**
   Pille ad purgandu(m) cap(u)d … fia(n)t pille cu(m) aq(u)a †fe(me)n†
10. **fol.38va25 *Synonyma herbarum* (Synonyms of herbs)**
    Aqua strictiua … Mortole.
11. **fol.38vb1 *Mulier est capud peccati* (Woman is the head of sin)**
    S(an)c(t)us Ioh(ann)es boccha doro … Intolerabile malor(um)

1. *Libellus de Conservatione Sanitatis* (Book on the Conservation of Health)

Only the end of this text is present on fol.38. It is written in Italian verse, except for the explicit, which is written in Latin. *Libellus de conservatione sanitatis* is evidently associated with a learned tradition. Two manuscripts—Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 1475 and MS Digby 111—include

versions of the *Libellus* in Latin. Both contain place it with other medical texts. Whether the portion of the *Libellus* in Ms.Brown.It.1 is a translation of these examples remains to be studied.

Sources: "Ms.Ashmole 1475," *Medieval Manuscripts in Oxford Libraries* and **"**Ms.Digby 111," *Medieval Manuscripts in Oxford Libraries*.

3. *Ad restringendum sanguinem de naribus* (To stop a nosebleed)

This text prescribes a powder made with pig dung to stop a nosebleed. Ranke De Vries outlines how there is a strong medieval medical tradition associating pig dung with staunching blood flow. Charles Burnett and David Pingree's article on medical recipes also seems to share some similarities to the text in Ms.Brown.It.1.

Sources:

De Vries, Rankem "A short tract on medicinal uses for animal dung," *North American Journal of Celtic Studies,* 3.2 (2019): 111–36, at https://muse.jhu.edu/article/781234/pdf.

Burnett, Charles and David Pingree, "Between the Ghaya and the Picatrix, II: The Flos Naturarum Ascribed to Jabir," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 72 (2009): 41–80, at http://www.jstor.org/stable/40593764.

6. Unidentified medical recipe in Latin with ingredients for preserving dead bodies

This text has similar ingredients for preserving dead bodies to those outlined in Romney David Smith's 2016 PhD dissertation from University of Toronto.

Source:

David Smith, Romney. "Across an Open Sea: Mediterranean Networks and Italian Trade in an Era of Calamity," PhD thesis, University of Toronto, Centre of Medieval Studies, 2016, at https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/82589/3/Smith_Romney_D_201611_PhD_thesis.pdf.

7. *Ad acuendum visum* (To sharpen the sight)

There is a recipe with this title in Oxford, Magdalen College, MS 221.

Source:

"Index of Incipits," *Index of Middle English Prose: Index to Volumes I to XX*, ed. Kari Anne Rand, Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2014, pp. 134–362.

8. *Colirium pro oculis* (A salve for the eyes)

This recipe was widely circulated. The sources I have found are all published in the mid to late fifteenth century, when there seem to have been many similar recipes circulating—some even written by well-known medical practitioners.

Sources:

Guaynerius, Antonius. *De matricibus, sive De propiis mulierum aegritudinibus*. Accessed through *Gallica*: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k584768.image

Van den Hooff, Peter. "Antonio Guaineri's De matricibus, sive De propriis mulierum aegritudinibus." MA Thesis. University of Leiden, 2013, at https://studenttheses.universiteitleiden.nl/access/item%3A2610567/view.

Paracelsus. *Medicorum et philosophorum summi, Aureoli Theophrasti Paracelsi… de Tartaro libri septem perquam utiles*. Contributed by Biblioteca de la Universidad de Sevilla, published by Per Petrum Pernam, 1570, https://archive.org/stream/ARes04610/ARes04610_djvu.txt.

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9. *Pille ad purgandum capud* (A pill to clear the head)

This recipe is especially interesting because it functions similarly to a chant/charm: *pillarum cochiarum. pillarum lucis*. *pillarum sine quebus esse nolo* (fol.38va22-3). Even more interesting is that all three of the recipes (pillarum cochiarum, lucis, and sine quebus esse nolo) can be found in a single manuscript. Further research might explore why the recipe shows up in this chant-like form in MS.Brown.It.1 and/or how it correlates to a more or less learned medical tradition.

Sources:

"Tariffa pharmaceutica nuper ... a ... Reipublicæ Genuensis ... artis aromatariorum consulibus et consiliariis recognita ac nova ... medicaminum additione locupletata," *Google Books*, originally published in 1657, digitized 2015.

10. *Synonyma herbarum* (Synonyms of herbs)

This little text in MS.Brown.It.1 is a clear *synonyma herbarum.* Charles Burnett writes that "[*s*]*ynonyma* is a term used to describe medical works that provide synonyms in the same or different languages for the ingredients of medicines—the medical simples" (Burnett 132). Bos Gerrit

argues that *synonyma* were particularly important "[d]uring the Middle Ages, when there was no uniform system for identifying plants and herbs [meaning] there was a genuine risk of a doctor administering the wrong drug to a patient" (Gerrit 7), and *synonyma* helped reduce that risk significantly. What is puzzling in this case is that most synonyma are encyclopedic (Gerrit 6), that is, a vast number of entries arranged alphabetically and spanning many pages. The *synonyma* in Ms.Brown.It.1 is an excerpt of one entry (treating trees and flowers). Both Gerrit and Burnett reveal that *synonyma* are ways for knowledge to transition between medical traditions.

Sources:

Bos, Gerrit, et al. "Introduction." *Medical Synonym Lists from Medieval Provence Shem Tov Ben Isaac of Tortosa : Sefer Ha-Shimmush, Book 29.* Brill, 2011.

Burnett, Charles. "The Synonyma Literature in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries." *Globalization of Knowledge in the Post-Antique Mediterranean, 700-1500 / Edited by Sonja Brentjes and Jurgen Renn.* Routledge, 2016, doi:10.4324/9781315585147.

Van Hilten, Femke. *Synonyma medicinae, abbreviata per Mundinum* by Simon lanuensis, Utrecht University, 2017, at https://www.uu.nl/en/special-collections/collections/manuscripts/medieval-medical/synonyma-medicinae-abbreviata-per-mundinum-by-simon-ianuensis.

Conclusions About Folio 38 as a Whole

All recipes on fol. 38 have connections to other learned medical texts. However, the recipes included are charm-like and lack the organization and structure of other Italian medieval medical texts, such as one by Gilbertus Anglicus (ed. Faye Getz). The medical traditions present in the folio share many qualities with the Florentine doctors that Katherine Park describes: "[t]rained in the scholastic tradition but allied by background and intellectual interests to the early humanists, Florentine physicians could act as mediators between university and non-university culture. The[y participated in] activities as readers, writers, teachers, patrons of the arts, and practicing scientists" (10).

Fol. 38 is part of a vast medical tradition, one that seems to bridge the gap between the intellectual, university traditions and popular medicine—acting as a practical reference book for practicing physicians, the kind of collection that Faye Getz says would "seem to represent a

popularization and simplification of Latin medical learning" (Getz xv). Despite the accessibility, supported by presence of the vernacular, the scribe makes clear attempts to establish authority—attributions to both Emperor Frederick II and John Chrysostom bring a level of intellectual weight that not needed for recipes belonging to more popular traditions. However, if fol.38 does include elements of popular medicine (such as charms), commonly associated with women, why include a poem denouncing all women? This is the topic of the second part of my study.

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Paracelsus.*Medicorum et philosophorum summi, Aureoli Theophrasti Paracelsi… de Tartaro libri septem perquam utiles*. Contributed by Biblioteca de la Universidad de Sevilla, published by Per Petrum Pernam, 1570, https://archive.org/stream/ARes04610/ARes04610_djvu.txt**.**

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Woman is the Head of Sin, or, The 'Whore Poem'

Introduction:

After the wave of bubonic plague in 1348, medical practitioners in Italy became targets of ridicule—both guild and university-trained practitioners were slighted in favour of popular remedies (Park 35). Park gives a notable example where Ser Lapo Maazei, a florentine notary tells a friend to avoid "pills" (or physician-prescribed remedies) in favour of natural remedies such as a well-cooked and crushed onion. Fol.38 of Ms.Brown.It.1 was produced in such a turbulent time for medical practitioners. Their social status was diminishing, and the populace was turning in favour of popular remedies—like those commonly associated with female witches. At the same time, "humanist" physicians were emerging. Influenced by Roman Stoicism, such physicians wrote not only on medicine, but on all aspects of a 'good life', such as Christian confession. Faye Getz writes that the "medieval medical practitioner was a "priest, physician, friend, and advisor" (4) rather than merely a doctor. Given this complex cultural background surrounding practicing medicine in the late fourteenth to early fifteenth century, I have two main hypotheses as to why the "whore poem" would find itself in a learned medical compendium: 1) that such a poem is intended to re-establish and restore the exclusive status of practicing physicians or 2) that the poem functions as a sort of 'remedy' or 'cure' in-and-of itself—one that is intended for moral health rather than physical health.

The plague weakened the status of medical practitioners by raising doubts about their competence. Physicians became easy targets for writers to "lamented the avarice and cowardice of doctors in times of plague" (Park 35). To restore their public image, physicians issued a "series of reforms intended to restore public confidence in the medical profession by enforcing standards of conduct among doctors" (Park 37). Such reforms prohibited doctors from

frequenting brothels and taverns, or similar "improper" behaviour. The poem, with its blatant repudiation of women, could be an effort to enforce such standards of conduct, while working to discredit the increasingly favoured practitioners of popular medicine.

However, I personally increasingly lean towards my second hypothesis. Faye Getz writes that humanist health is characterized by "openness, simplicity, practical advice, and writing in the vernacular" (86), all aspects which are present within fol.38. Spiritual health was within the realm of a physicians duties as much as physical health. Gilbertus Anglicus, a famous physician who wrote *The Compendium of Medicine*, remarkably helped an Archbishop with his spiritual health rather than his physical health before his death: it was "[c]onfession, not potions, [that] brought the archbishop relief" (Getz 4). In England, Getz observes that this style of medical writing/advice came about at around the year 1379, lining up quite well with the time around when this fragment would have been produced. Furthermore, Getz stipulates that such traditions of medical writing came to England from Italy and France, where they would have been circulated first. As such, it is no stretch to hypothesize that such a fragment could have been produced in such a climate of humanist understandings of health. The idea of desire for women as an negative impact on health is not unprecedented either, Getz writes that the "duke of Gloucester['s …] appetite for women, rather than for food, seems to have worried his physician" (86), who accordingly wrote a medical regimen for him. Many medical recipes made use of rhyme, meter, and musicality to pneumatically help readers to remember recipes (Almeida 34-5). It would make sense that a highly unusual, and incurable "disease" (i.e., women) would require an equally unusual "cure" in the form of a highly introspective and antithetical poem.

The 'whore' poem, whose own position is precarious and contradictory–occupying space in a compilation of texts ultimately used by women—itself contains antithetical themes and

tensions. The poet himself struggles between disgust and desire for women—antitheses which are emphasized because of the pithy form of the poetry. Almost every line of the poem is two words, most often a combination of a predicate noun (the main verb of the entire poem being "est" or "to be") and a possessive. Since each line is short and punchy, the irony behind phrases such as "desired misery" is heightened as each phrase stands alone. The poet spends the entire poem frantically establishing how undesirable and disgusting women are, yet each line is aflame with desire. Women are "sweet death" and "delicious destruction" (l. 8-9). Antithesis galore. Even the most damning lines such as "*inobedientia publica*" or "disobedient whore" reveal the poets own inability to stop himself from finding women desirable. The word "whore" needs a qualifier in order to make it displeasing. It is her "disobedience" rather than her status of being a sexual being, that makes her completely undesirable.

Another tension exists between the bodily and the spiritual. Within the first few lines of the poem, women are referred to as the "matter of fault" (l. 3). The poet constantly reminds himself and readers that women are a worldly desire and fleshly being. Their fleshliness aggravates and contradicts his own desire for spiritual salvation, because, of course, at the same time he lusts for their bodies. Many of the words in the poem can be understood in more than one way, and their multifaceted meanings would not have been lost on a medieval reader. For example, *invitabilis pena* can mean both unavoidable and irresistible pain. The poet himself is caught between a hatred for, and an unending lust for women. I suggested earlier that the readers would have understood the deliberate word choice and subsequent internal tensions—I also argue that the audience share that same discordance in their own souls, the same struggle between desire and repulsion. As the poem goes on, the poet's own argumentation cracks. In a critical line about community and marriage, the poem ultimately asks whether women are evil

in-and-of themselves, or whether they become sinful because of the male gaze. In the aftermath of such a question, the poet himself vacillates between continuing to disparage women, and reluctantly accepting the part he himself plays in this never-ending contradiction. Yet the poem never answers such questions, we are left with one last line calling women "*intolerabile malorum*" meaning either an "intolerable," 'invincible," or "irresistible" evil. The layers of meaning and contradiction are left unresolved. However, despite a lack of resolution, the poem "cures" readers on a surface level by discouraging them from sinning sexually, but also "cures" on a much deeper level by encouraging readers to face their internal contradictions head on, and confront the unwarranted slander they throw at others during their own quest for spiritual salvation.

Stylistic Choices:

In the transcription, I have footnoted spelling when words come close to a well-known and well-used word, but there is a significant letter that is mistaken/missing. Otherwise, I have kept with standard transcription rules, recording exactly what is on the manuscript.

For the translation, I tried as best as possible to keep the original Latin pattern of nominative and genitive. Any regards to meter and rhyme were not considered–sense was valued above all else, though there is some room for interpretation as there is in any poetry. Any areas where words have multifaceted meanings have been footnoted and their significance explained in detail there. I have, admittedly, leaned towards reading the poem as merely misogynistic, hoping to provide a level of depth and understanding that goes beyond reading the poem as simply a 'whore poem'.

Transcription:

[f. 38vb: “Mulier est capud peccati”]

S(an)c(t)us Ioh(ann)es boccha doro[2]

mVlier[3] e(st) capud peccati

Expulsio paradisi

Materia culpe

Trasgresio[4] legis

Inobedientia publica

Inuentio mo(rti)s

Blandium demonium

Suauis mo(rti)s[5]

Sapida p(er)ditio

Diminutio vite

Temperatu(m) venenu(m)

Amica dam(m)ni

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[2] This initial address is written in Italian, but the rest of the poem follows in Latin.

[3] The initial “m” here is off to the side and quite far away from the sequential “v.” Given that there is an (otherwise) unusual empty space surrounding this small, separated “m”, there is a good chance that this letter was supposed to function as a guide letter. Given the plain, undecorated nature of the entire folio fragment–it is likely that the person responsible for decoration/illumination never got to this folio (or perhaps even book) before it was used.

[4] *Transgressio* (*Logeion*, “transgressio”; *Vocabula.Lat*, “transgressio”)

[5] There is an abbreviation above “mos” distinctly different from the scribes usual minims. Cappelli Online includes an entry that is almost exact to the one found in Ms.Brown.It.1, and cites the transcription of such an abbreviation as “modos” (*Capelli* 225). This transcription, however, is unlikely. “Modos” is an accusative plural, and given that the verb for the entire poem is “est,” (which takes a nominative), the word “modos” would not work here. Furthermore, an accusative would disrupt the general pattern of each verse of the poem containing a nominative and a genitive. Given the themes surrounding the poem, and the pattern of nominative + genitive in each verse, I decided that “mortis” would make the most sense here.

Confusio ho(min)is

Inuitabilis pena

Manifestu(m) malu(m)

Naturabilis te(m)ptatio

Desiderata miseria

Amicabile p(er)ichulu(m)

Arma diaboli

Insatiabilis bestia

Cotidiana sollicitudo

Contentio sup(er)bia

Expensar(um) inveectio[6]

Inexstiguibilis ig(n)is

Perseuerabile danum[7]

Domus litium

Inpedimetu(m)[8] boni

Suffocatrix stultor(um)

Porta inferni

Via iniq(ui)tatis

Inpedimet(u)m[9] castitatis

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[6] Looking at the manuscript, there seems to be a visible line connecting the two e's to the c in "inveectio." This could possibly be a badly placed minim or abbreviation. However, the Law of Parsimony causes me to conclude that this is simply "invectio" with two e's, and the scribe, writing in a semi-gothic script with distinct cursive features, simply did not let his pen leave the paper while writing the letters.

[7] *Danum* means "Dane" (*Logeion*, "danum"; *Vocabula.Lat*, "danum"), which seems like a rather unlikely word for the poet to use here. Rather, I believe that the word here is *damnum*, and the "m" which is often not pronounced would have been removed (as letters that are often not pronounced are in medieval Latin). I translate this line as if the word is *damnum*.

[8] *Impedimentum* (*Logeion*, "impedimentum"; *Vocabula.Lat*, "impedimentum")

[9] *Ibid.*

Scorpio venenosus

Tentatio o(mn)ium malor(um)

Sotietas[10] p(er)iculosa

Contraria gr(atia)e

Inimica salutis

Consumame(n)tum mariti

Desperatrix virtutu(m)

Perditio seruitior(um)

Mentis (et) cecitatis

Incogitatu(m) malu(m)

Desperatrix prouita

Amor sui

Hodium[11] dei

Mundi delectatrix

Desperatrix gule

Captrix anima[12]

Latronu(m) ospitium

[39vc]

Suauis cogitatio

[10] *Societas* (*Logeion*, "societas"; *Vocabula.Lat*, "societas"). Evidence of palatalization.
[11] *Odium* (*Logeion*, "odium"; *Vocabula.Lat*, "hodium").
[12] The nominative "anima" does not work grammatically here. I have transcribed it as it is originally written, but chose to translate it as a genitive, in line with the general pattern of each individual verse.

Dulcis ietura[13]

Rosa fetida

Dileata[14] i(n)formitas

Pestis arma amara

Turpitudo a(n)i(m)e

Destrutio corporis

Alienatrix cordis

Euacuatrix ma(r)sup[[pia]][15]

Destructio pulcritud[[inis]]

Vas ad viterii[16]

Perditio salutis

(Christ)i offensio

Proximi destuctio[17]

Principui(m) mali

Radix o(mn)ium malor(um)

Secretor(um) Reuelatrix

Intolerabile malor(um)

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[13] *Iactura* (*Logeion*, "iactura"; *Vocabula.Lat*, "iactura"). Possible scribal error that mistakes a "c" for an "e."
[14] *Dilecta* (*Logeion*, "dilecta"; *Vocabula.Lat* "dilecta"). Possible scribal error that mistakes a "c" for an "a"
[15] This estimation was done with the help of Vocabula.Lat.
[16] The closest word I can find is *vitera* (*Logeion*, "vitera"), which is a type of flower that has medicinal uses. The double "i" makes me unsure as to whether "viterii" or "vas" is the prepositional object as neither would end with an "i." However, I believe the verse makes much more sense when "viterii" is taken as the object of "ad," and have translated it as such.
[17] *Destructio* (*Logeion*, "destructio"; *Vocabula.Lat* "destructio")

Translation:

[f. 38vb: "Mulier est capud peccati"]

Saint John the Golden Mouth[18]

Woman is the head of sin

The expulsion of Paradise

The matter of fault[19]

A violation of law[20]

A disobedient whore[21]

The discoverer of death

[18] Also known as Saint John Chrysostom. Called "the Golden Mouth" for his oratory skills.
[19] This verse introduces the theme of physicality and visibility. In a poem surrounded by texts for physical health and for the health of eyes in particular, here, woman is crucially described as matter–a visible, physical manifestation of fault that also leads men to fault.
[20] This line refers to the fall of Adam and Eve, but also suggests, in tandem with the idea of "faulty" matter from the previous line, that women are somehow "unnatural," a violation of the natural law, that is, the word of God.
[21] Note that "whore/prostitute" needs a qualifier to make it displeasing. Calling a woman a whore is insulting, but at the same time makes her an object of desire for some. The word "disobedient" ensures that such a woman (i.e., all women) is completely undesirable to men.

The temptation of demons[22]

A sweet death[23]

A delicious destruction

The diminishment of life

A mild poison[24]

A friend of damnation

The ruin of man

An unavoidable[25] pain

A flagrant evil[26]

A natural temptation[27]

A desired misery

A friendly danger[28]

The weapons of the Devil

An insatiable beast[29]

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[22] *Blandium* includes connotations of "alluring" and "attractive" (*Vocabula.Lat*, "blandium") meaning that the poet recognizes that women, in part due to their physicality, have an irresistible quality.

[23] In medieval Latin "suavis" has connotations of being both agreeable to sight and touch. The fleshliness of women, and the surrounding context (i.e., that the poem is contained within a guide to bodily and visual health) are constantly alluded to throughout the poem.

[24] This line brings to mind the form of the snake the Devil took to trick Eve. This line is also the first instance of a slightly more temperate or "mild" tone to the poem (which the poet, of course, abandons in the very next line).

[25] *Invitabilis* means both "unavoidable" and "attractive" (*Logeion*, "invitabilis"). Both meanings are invoked here, once again reinforcing that the issue at stake here is that women are physically enticing and irresistible to men. The poet here also reveals his own sinful thoughts(one that he attributes to all of mankind); his harsh renunciations reveal that he also lusts after, and grapples with how to withstand, the irresistible fleshliness of women.

[26] *Malum* means "bad thing" but can also mean "apple" (*Logeion*, "malum"; *Vocabula.Lat*, "malum"), once again referencing the fall of Adam and Eve.

[27] This line contrasts with the poet's previous allusions to women being "unnatural." The poet's contradictory language reflects his own discordant struggle between desire and disgust for women.

[28] *Amicabile* here can mean both "friendly" and "suited to one's tastes" (*Logeion*, "amicabile"). Women are thus accused as natural deceivers that pretend to be "friendly," but there is once again an underlying admittance of desire.

[29] After all the admissions of desire and lust (both overt and underlying), this line reads almost ironically. It is clear that the poet, along with what he assumes to be all other men, are also "beastly" with desire.

An everyday concern[30]

A dispute because of pride

A bringing in of expenses[31]

An inextinguishable fire

An enduring injury

A house of quarrels[32]

Impediment of good

Suffocator of fools

The gate of Hell[33]

The path of wickedness

An impediment of purity

A venomous serpent[34]

The temptation of all evils

A dangerous community[35]

Contrary to the grace of God

An enemy of salvation[36]

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[30] Calling the lust for women an "everyday" or "ordinary" concern supports my reading of this poem as a sort of poetic "cure". Women, being an "everyday" sort of sickness or malady, should naturally get a place in a recipe book full of well-known cures for ordinary medical issues.

[31] Here we see again, even more notably, the tension (or in a way amalgamation) between the physical and spiritual world. Women would, of course, result in more physical expense for men, but also moral expense as the entirety of the poem has been referring to.

[32] *Litium* here means "quarrels," but is also a reference to a thorn or honeysuckle plant with medicinal uses. This is the first instance of the poet's use of words that fit within the poem, but also refer to the medical context it is situated within. References that would not have been lost on its relatively learned audience.

[33] Sexual innuendo

[34] Allusions to the fall of Adam and Eve continue

[35] In medieval Latin *societas* can refer to a group of people, but also a particularly close partnership, such as matrimony (*Logeion*, "societas"). The idea conveyed here is two-fold—women are dangerous in-and-of themselves as a group, and dangerous for men to become associated with. This is also a moment of inquiry for the reader–are women really dangerous in-and-of-themselves, or is it because they exist alongside men who cannot help but desire them?

[36] *Salutis* in medieval Latin can mean both "salvation" and "health" (*Logeion*, "salutis"). Women here are seen as a genuine "illness" that threatens spiritual health.

A consumer of husbands[37]

Hopeless of virtue[38]

The destruction of worship

Of mind and of blindness[39]

A thoughtless evil

One in despair before the heavenly life[40]

A lover of herself

The hatred of God

A delighter of the world[41]

One desperate of appetite[42]

A despoiler of the soul

The lodging of plunderers[43]

[39vc]

[37] In the Middle Ages appetite for food and sexual appetite were linked together; food was seen as a cause of lust, and abstaining from food as a way to control sexual appetite (Bynum 214). As such, *consumamentum* (the idea of consuming uncontrollably) indicates that the poet is concerned with the excess of sexual appetite—one that cannot be controlled even by husbands.

[38] *Desperatrix* can refer to a person "hopeless (of cure)" (*Vocabula.Lat*, "desperatrix"). The "cure" in this line, and the one being "administered" by the poem as a whole being virtue.

[39] This is the first and only line of the poem to not include a nominative and instead continue on from the previous verse. *Caecitatis* (meaning blindness) is also a direct call back to the medical context surrounding the poem, especially given that many of the recipes are for the eyes in particular. Furthermore, *caecitatis* is metaphorical. "Blindness" here is a virtue that women destroy–the poet is likely referring to a moral blindness to lust that men assumedly possess before becoming tempted by women.

[40] *Desperatrix* is used again here (ref. to footnote 37), reminding readers the cure prescribed here is virtue that leads to a heavenly life.

[41] *Mundi* can mean both "world" and "purity/pure things" (*Logeion*, "mundi"; *Vocabula.Lat*, "mundi"), and can thus function ironically as well.

[42] Once again linking appetite for food with sexual appetite.

[43] Strong sexual innuendo here.

A sweet thought[44]

A sweet sacrifice[45]

A fetid rose[46]

A beloved deformity

The bitter weapons of plague

The shamefulness[47] of the soul

The destruction of the body

The remover of the heart

The destroyer of wealth

The devastation of beauty

A vessel for the Valerian flower[48]

The destruction of salvation[49]

An offence to Christ

The destruction of those close to her

The beginning of wickedness

The root[50] of all evils

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[44] There is an abrupt change in tone here, which coincidentally coincides with the start of a new column. Here, the poet is much less harsh, even whimsical. The focus also shifts from physicality and fleshliness to the world of the mind and thoughts. Devoid of fleshliness, women can simply be sweet.

[45] Mentions of sacrifice could be alluding to the crucifixion of Jesus, who women in the Late Middle Ages often imitated physically and focused on mentally (Bynum 246). Holy women saw themselves physically becoming one with Christ. This line, then, takes us back into the physical, fleshly world.

[46] Beginning from this line and the next, with the return to the physical world, the newly-introduced sweet tone intermingles with the previously malicious one to create a bittersweet tone. The rest of the text alternates between bittersweet and malicious–once again at odds with itself.

[47] *Turpitudo* in medieval Latin is also associated with meanings of nakedness and private parts (*Logeion*, "turpitudo"). Emphasis is once again placed on physicality.

[48] A flower which, in the Middle Ages, came to symbolically represent an accommodating disposition (Dweck 13), but was also known for its "bitter and aromatic qualities" (Dweck 13). The plant was used medically throughout history and is even dedicated to Saint Bernard (Dweck 13). Plants closely related to the Valerian are mentioned in the Bible as part of the ointment rubbed on Jesus' feet (Dweck 13). These are some leads for further research as to why the Valerian specifically is mentioned here.

[49] Again, *salutis* here also refers to health.

[50] *Radix* is commonly used in medical texts (*Logeion*, "radix"). Again, gesturing to the overarching medical context.

The revealer of secrets

An intolerable[51] evil

[51] *Intolerabile* can also mean “invincible” or “irresistible” (*Logeion*, “intolerabilis”), each of which is provocative in its own way.

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