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An Edition of

The Book of Sovereign Medicines
MS X3346

compiled by
John of Feckenham DD

DAPHNE E. LALOR

Abstract

This thesis is an edition of a manuscript of medical remedies, MS X3346 (now stored in the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington) which belongs to the Medical Historical Society of the Auckland branch of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians. The manuscript is one of five known copies of a compilation by a sixteenth century Benedictine monk, John of Feckenham, who became Abbot of Westminster during the reign of Mary Tudor. In the dedication to the manuscripts, which is almost identical in each, the Abbot states that 'This Book of Sovereign Medicines' was collected by him for 'the poor who have not at all times the learned physicians at hand'. The scribal handwriting, and the names of various people in MS X3346, indicate that it was penned between 1665 and 1675, or about seventy-five years after Feckenham's death.

Research into the life of the compiler was undertaken, as was an overview of the medical ideas of the period, together with a study of the popular genre of which the Abbot's work was an example. Also included in this thesis is a provenance of the manuscript, a description of its state, a comparison of it with the other known copies, and the story of its donation to the Medical Historical Society.

A transcript of the manuscript was prepared, maintaining the scribal spelling, punctuation and capitalization as accurately as possible. Following this, a modernized version was made, aiming at a readable text. The layout of the original manuscript and the transcript was maintained as far as possible, to facilitate keying of annotations and comments to the text. The Oxford English Dictionary was used as the standard for spelling and grammar, and an attempt was made to conform to the principles used by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor in the compact edition of Shakespeare's Complete Works. A glossary was prepared defining herbs, ingredients, medical terms and so on. Annotations to the remedies indicate the same or similar examples in other works, especially in the Folger edition of 'This Booke of Sovereigne Medicines' (edited by E.R. Macgill in 1990). Also in the annotations are explanations of words and phrases specific to a remedy, and identification of many of the people mentioned in the work. Quotations from authors of the time of Chaucer to the modern day are included in the glossary and annotations to help define and illustrate medical terms and ingredients perhaps not familiar today. Early herbals were studied, especially those of William Turner and John Gerard. As Eleanor Sinclair Rohde (The Old English Herbals, p.98) has pointed out, Gerard was justly condemned by critics of his own time as well as modern ones for 'having used Dr Priest's translation of Dodoen's Pemptades without acknowledgement'. Nevertheless, this editor, like Rohde, has found such pleasure in Gerard's delightful language, his descriptions of plants, with their habitats and their virtues, that many quotations from his Herball have been included.

There is an index of authors and quotations, and also a general index to the contents of the modern version.

1 Named for convenience throughout this edition, 'The Book of Sovereign Medicines'.
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An Edition of

The Book of Sovereign Medicines
MS X3346

Volume I

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THE MODERN VERSION OF MS X3346

Daphne E. Lalor
Preface and Acknowledgements

In 1994 during a casual conversation between Dr David Caughey (then Chairman of the Auckland branch of the Medical Historical Society, of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians) and his houseman, Dr Eoin Lalor, mention was made of an old manuscript that had been recently donated to the Society. Reading the book was proving a problem, and it was thought it might be written in Early or Middle English. Dr Lalor suggested that as his mother was at the University of Auckland, studying Old English at Masters level, she might be able to tell them what it was about. She showed the photocopy which was sent to her to Professor MacDonald P. Jackson, and he advised that the manuscript was an early seventeenth century work, the scribal handwriting and abbreviations causing the reading difficulties. Fascination with the book led the houseman's mother to full time study of it, and this edition is the result.

My special thanks go to the Medical Historical Society for giving me the opportunity to study their treasured manuscript.

It is impossible to mention by name each of the people whose time and advice has been so freely given to me over the last six years. The staff of libraries, universities and research institutes, and also private persons, from various parts of America and Great Britain have all contributed. Individual thanks must go, however, to Elizabeth Rawson Macgill who edited the Folger Shakespeare Library copy of the 'Book of Sovereign Medicines'. Her transcript and notes have been extremely useful. In addition I would like to thank Laetitia Yeandle from the Folger Shakespeare Library for her letters of helpful, scholarly advice. Thanks are due, too, to the staff at the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, to the research people in Bristol and Somerset Record Offices, and especially to the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine in London, whose Curator of Early Printed Books, H.J.M.Symons, spent unstinting time and effort at the British Library on my behalf.

To Dr Stephanie Hollis of the English Department at Auckland University go sincere thanks for supervising my work for the year that Professor Jackson was on leave, for her helpful advice, and her wide knowledge of Anglo-Saxon medical writings. I warmly acknowledge the time and help given by Dr W. Barnes and Dr W. Richardson of the Classics Department of Auckland University, who wrestled valiantly with the peculiar Latin of the scribe of this manuscript. On this same topic, heartfelt gratitude goes to Dr M.P.Earles of London, whose letters containing medical Latin translations proved invaluable.

My family and friends have always been enormously supportive and encouraging, especially my two special proof-readers and checkers, Helen M. Boland, and Margaret R.O'Dowd, without whose help omissions and errors would abound. The periods of concentration, the perceptive comments, the laughter, the companionship, and in particular, the hours of work will not be forgotten.

Above all, to Professor MacDonald P. Jackson, are due my profound thanks for his untiring supervision of this edition, for patient direction, and expert advice always given with gentle good humour, and without whose unfailing scholarship this thesis might never have been completed.
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASE</td>
<td>Anglo-Saxon England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNB</td>
<td>Dictionary of National Biography</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDD</td>
<td>English Dialect Dictionary</td>
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<tr>
<td>EETS</td>
<td>Early English Text Society Publications</td>
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<tr>
<td>L.P. 1618</td>
<td>Pharmacopoeia Londinensis of 1618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MED</td>
<td>Middle English Dictionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OED</td>
<td>Oxford English Dictionary (Compact Edition)</td>
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<tr>
<td>RACP</td>
<td>Royal Australasian College of Physicians</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>MS(S)</th>
<th>Manuscript(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Cambrai MS 910</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folger or F</td>
<td>Folger MS V.b.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Hunterian MS 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Sloane MS 3919</td>
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Dating of MS X3346

Photocopies of the different handwritings included in MS X3346 were sent to Laetitia Yeandle at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC. She pointed out the difficulty of giving more than an approximation of dates of penmanship, but wrote that she considered that the main bulk of the manuscript (which accounts for all but ten remedies) dates from about 1650-1675.

The watermark on the manuscript paper is nearest to one from Cologne (Heawood No.552), dated 1654 (see below, Volume III, p.1, ‘Description of the Manuscript’, and also p.3, ‘The Loose pages’). A section on bones, which does not occur in the other four copies of the Feckenham book, was found to derive from a 1665 edition of Friar Thomas Moulton’s *The compleat bone-setter* (see below, Volume II, ‘Annotations’ to [MS Sig.C7r] 46/Title, Robertus Turner). Elsewhere, one remedy refers to the writer’s uncle, Matthew Hazard, a minister in Bristol, who died in 1671 (see below, Volume II, ‘Annotations’ to No.586/Title and line12). In the scribal hand, but probably a late addition to the book, is a prescription of a Dr Dunning, who was known to be working in Dorchester in the 1690s (see below, Volume II, ‘Annotations’ to No.463/Title).

These facts indicate that the main part of this copy of Feckenham’s 'Book of Sovereign Medicines' was probably written between 1665 and 1671.
Editorial Principles.

Square brackets at the top of each page are editorial additions, and indicate the manuscript page in terms of gathering, leaf, and side of leaf, thus: [MS Sig. A3r], where MS is an abbreviation of 'Manuscript', 'Sig.' is an abbreviation of 'Signature', and 'A3r' stands for gathering 'A', leaf '3', 'recto'; superscript 'v' is used for the verso of the leaf. The figure outside the square bracket is the page number as in the manuscript. In the transcript, where these numbers are missing or illegible, the probable figure is enclosed in angled brackets (e.g. 2<1>, <70>). In the modern transcript page numbers are assumed.

In the transcript, angled brackets enclosing points (e.g. <...>) indicate illegible letters and words, due to page damage, ink blots and so forth. Angled brackets enclosing letters or words (e.g. <e>, or <it>) are used for doubtful readings and interlined words, and these are marked with an asterisk and explained in the footnotes. Asterisks also mark the manuscript words which have tildes suggesting omitted letters. These, and which syllables they cover, are indicated in the footnotes. Square brackets (e.g. [...] in the transcript indicate deletions or alterations made by the scribe. Where possible the letters have been transcribed, but where these are illegible, points represent them.

In the modern transcript illegible letters and doubtful readings are corrected from the other manuscripts where possible. All textual changes are marked with an asterisk and footnotes explain the emendations. Spelling, capitalization and punctuation have been modernised, and all abbreviations silently expanded.

The manuscript's lineation has been retained in the transcript, and also in the modern version, to allow comparisons between the three. Where a line from the manuscript runs on to the next line its end is marked with a virgule, thus '/'. Marginal titles in the manuscript often run into the text proper. In this thesis these have been hyphenated, with virgules indicating the end of the manuscript lines.

Remedy numbering is an editorial addition, to enable cross references to the manuscript, to the two versions, and to the annotations which define herbs, identify people mentioned, explain the ingredients, and clarify meanings, unusual terms, and grammatical structures. Line numberings, noting every five lines, are on the right side of each page and are also editorial additions for reference purposes.

Sometimes in the manuscript there is a cross in the margin. Macgill suggests this indicates a remedy of special worth. No verification of this has been found, and the crosses are omitted in the modern version.

The large capital letters at the top of most pages are varied, and often elaborate, but they are transcribed uniformly in large bold form. When missing or replaced by words, the transcript footnotes indicate this.

Latin words and phrases are italicized. In the modern version, a desire to suggest correct or more conventional Latin has been resisted, as the scribal intention may only be guessed at. Attempted translations will be found in the annotations.
This Booke of sundrie vses: against the contention of knowne defences of men, and women was by god against long desiring (checke out of Dr. Heckeram Late abate) written by Mr. by the room with my most dear all things the Earned lythings att, and s. s. s. s.

To make Cointes in Brie, knowe

Take if feallow of your fruit seed, & fast it in the half, and in holler, cut them over; after the hoppers of the bappes of wine kind of wine: all seed: it in the frame but in days; & it will be pour Cointes.

Take Lye, and wey it in wine: one whole day. & then shall have Cointes.

else take wine and put it in an earthen pot; & fast it in holler. will thousand web. An stunt short time you shall have good Cointes.

Characters.

The characters of eberrings of saffron are: to be used:

- 100 grains of which make a strong, ir stonger & more, make an ordain.
- 100 grains of which make a strong, ir stronger & more, make an ordain.
- 100 grains of which make a strong, ir stronger & more, make an ordain.
- 100 grains of which make a strong, ir stronger & more, make an ordain.
- 100 grains of which make a strong, ir stronger & more, make an ordain.
- 100 grains of which make a strong, ir stronger & more, make an ordain.
- 100 grains of which make a strong, ir stronger & more, make an ordain.
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