



**A Middle English Text Revised by a Renaissance Reader:
John Wotton's Annotations to
British Library MS Sloane 249 (ff. 180v-205v)**

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ABSTRACT

BL MS Sloane 249 ff. 180v-205v is a fifteenth-century gynaecological treatise in the tradition of Gilbertus Anglicus' *Compendium medicinae*, classified by Green as *Sickness of Women 2* (Green, 1992: 81-82). Unlike other Middle English gynaecological treatises, the text of this manuscript is thoroughly glossed by his Renaissance writer, one John Wotton, MD (Green, 2003: 383), who considered its language obsolete and unusual. His annotations, which include corrections, additions, eliminations, substitutions, etc. shed light on the changing vocabulary, morphology, grammatical constructions and even on stylistic preferences. The aim of this paper is to classify and comment on these annotations and to stress their importance for the historians of the English language.

KEYWORDS: *marginalia*, in-text, annotations, glosses, Early Modern English, John Wotton, scientific discourse, Sloane 249

I. INTRODUCTION

Our knowledge on older stages of a language is based by force on written evidence. Major literary works, minor ones, documents, diaries, letters, handbooks, dictionaries, grammars and other written materials constitute the main sources of information for the historians of the

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English language. Many of these texts have generated a response in their later readers recorded under the form of annotations, glosses, deletions, marginal notes, etc.—the so-called *metatext*—which may also provide a valuable insight into the changing state of the language. However, they have not received considerable attention. Occasionally, they have even been omitted in academic editions (see Alonso-Almeida & Rodríguez-Álvarez, 1996) neglecting thus an excellent working ground for the philologists.

With this article, we intend to claim the importance of the metatext. Devised to clarify the reading of the text, the metatext reveals the reader, copyist or corrector's knowledge of a previous stage of the language and, so, it allows us to establish the progress of linguistic changes.¹ Our main concern will be to make a classification of the different annotations to BL MS Sloane 249 (ff. 180v-205v), paying attention to their contents, form and place in the manuscript. Since the text is heavily annotated, we have made a selection of those notes that best illustrate the most frequent modifications. Therefore, punctual changes will not be included in our general classification, as they do not conform a pattern of recurrence which may help to understand the glossator's aim. The methodology we will follow has already been tested by scholars working on Propertian manuscripts (López-Cayetano & Rodríguez-Herrera, 2000; García de Paso-Carrasco & Rodríguez-Herrera, forthcoming; Rodríguez-Herrera & Curbelo-Tavío, forthcoming) and has proved effective and appropriate to our purposes.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

MS Sloane 249 ff. 180v-205v² (henceforward S249) is housed in the British Library, London. This English manuscript³ was copied following the tradition of Gilbertus Anglicus' thirteenth-century Compendium *medicinae*, and it has been listed by Green under the heading of "The *Sekenesee of Wymmen*" Version 2 (1992: 81-82). Originally, the Compendium *medicinae* was devised as a comprehensive work in seven distinct books with the aim of covering both "universal" and "particular" diseases.⁴ Here, the gynaecological content is included in the last book (*Rubrice septimi libri*), together with some venereal diseases, a discussion on venoms and other miscellaneous medical topics. The novelty of S249, and of several other fifteenth-century texts in Anglicus' line,⁵ consists in compiling all the gynaecological information into a monographic treatise. In fact, S249 began its existence as an independent fascicle on obstetrics and gynaecology until an almost unknown Dr. John Wotton bound it to his own collection of remedies entitled *Collectiones medicinales ordine alphabetico instructae* (Green, 1992: 62).

S249 is a relatively slim volume composed of fifty-one folios comprising a thirty-two lines prologue (f. 180v), an introduction to the female physiology and its natural tendency to moistness (ff. 180v-181v), and a total of twenty-three chapters dealing with women's diseases. As a rule, all chapters observe the essential two-fold pattern found in most gynaecological *corpora*⁶ of the Middle Ages. First, there is a short theoretical framework of the sickness, where a basic etiologic and symptomatic description is given.⁷ Secondly, each chapter counts with a

therapeutic or practical side (whose beginning is sometimes signalled by the Latin word *Cura* [f. 182v, l. 26; f. 188r, l. 33; f. 193r, l. 29]) that contains a number of suitable remedies (in form of recipes) to prevent, heal or, in extreme cases, alleviate the effects of the sickness just introduced. This therapeutically-based part is the longest in the chapter and denotes an instructive mood.

III. THE GLOSSATOR AND HIS PURPOSE

Even though the authorship of the glosses is not definite, several facts hint at John Wotton's hand. First of all, this gynaecological treatise was bound in the sixteenth century together with other writings on women's diseases by a John Wotton —also spelled Woot and Walton (Green, 1992: 62; Rowland, 1979). Although no biographical or professional information on John Wotton is available. Green (2003: 382) has related him to an Edward Wotton (1492-1555), an Oxford born doctor learned in Greek and very fond of correcting and annotating his own published works (Leclerc, 1855: 251). In addition, Edward Wotton's professional background and even his relationships with Conrad Gessner, the editor of the Byzantine translation of Muscio's Latin *Genevia*, suggest a possible connection with John Wotton, a doctor himself greatly concerned with obstetrics and gynaecology, as his compilation of remedies shows (see *II. Description of the manuscript*). Therefore, we think that John Wotton possibly corrected and annotated the manuscript in an attempt to update its fifteenth-century English.

Our initial assumption was that Wotton simply corrected old-fashioned words and spellings to make the text closer to a Renaissance reader. However, the clarity and consistency of his corrections and additions throughout the volume point to a different intentionality. He not only replaces obsolete words or spellings sparsely, but also changes most occurrences of function words or suffixes otherwise easily identifiable. As a result, he consistently changes initial thoms for *th-* in definite articles, or deletes final *-(e)n* of infinitives. Besides, he often makes it clear where additional passages must be inserted by using carets, and, if a new recipe is added at the bottom of the page, a cross signals the exact place of inclusion in the body of the text (f. 191r); vertical strokes bracing successive lines indicate deletion of complete paragraphs (f. 192r); and he even makes second decisions by putting already corrected excerpts between square brackets (f. 192r, ll. 7-13).

To sum up, the insertion and deletion of letters, words and texts are accurately indicated as if another reader were to use and had to understand Wotton's notes. He does not only make great efforts in correcting S249, but also wants his annotations to be read in the right place and the deletion of certain passages to be unmistakably distinguished, as our survey of glossographical marks will show. Having this in mind, we do not consider it unreasonable to think that his ultimate purpose was to arrange the manuscript to be copied, or rather, printed, a hypothesis which may explain the volume, clarity and consistency of his glosses.

Apart from this intrusive reader, a second hand has also been identified in the manuscript

who is responsible for the addition of a few Latin words that point to an author learned in classical sources —e.g. *Gordonius* (f. 191v, l. 19).⁸ Besides, this second glossator seems to be familiar with the proper Latin scientific names of plants —e.g. Archie [*Arthemisia*] (184v, l. 12)— or body parts—they must take the marice of an hare & the Cunt [*et uuluam eius*] (f. 205v, ll. 17-18). Finally, he is also concerned with the identification of topics by Latin headings —*Secreta mulieris* (f. 184v and f. 185r, head niargin) or *Semenis generatio* (f. 189r, right margin).

IV. A CLASSIFICATION OF THE GLOSSES IN S249

The gynaecological treatise included in S249 is heavily annotated. Our examination of the manuscript has rendered an average number oscillating between 60-62 annotations per folio. Folios 191r, 193r, 194v, 195r or 198v, for instance, surpass the limit of 85 glosses each, whereas, at the other end of the scale, folios 180v, 203r and 203v are the least glossed (all of them being under 20).⁹

The principal glossator of the manuscript, namely doctor John Wotton, improves the rendering of the original text by applying a personal glossographical technique. By glossographical technique we mean the way in which Wotton decided to gloss, remark and correct the manuscript's format, internal structure and contents, thus changing both the initial arrangement of the text and the medical information. His choice to gloss S249 neither results in a fixed scheme of frequency nor of presentation but varies in manner, size, location and function, as explained below.

IV.1. Manner

The glosses written in S249 pursue a triple objective: (a) to delete, (b) to replace and (c) to add new letters, words, phrases or even sentences. In order to fulfill such tasks, Wotton uses different methods:

(i) *Underlining* the letters, words, phrases or sentences to be modified. This type of incursion predominates over the rest. If the glossator offers an alternative for the underlined element, a caret (^) is often inserted in the exact place where the new letter(s) or word(s) should be located.

(ii) *Crossing* out the element that has to be changed, either with a single or a double line.¹⁰ This happens less commonly in S249. Even though the first three lines of the text (f. 180v) count with five instances, the practice suddenly decreases to the point of sporadic appearance (as on f. 183v [l. 2], f. 188v [ll. 13-14], or f. 198v [l. 6]).

(iii) *Inserting marginal braces* (⎵) with the purpose of deleting whole sections of the manuscript. With the exception of the first two lines on f. 204v (linked in content with f. 204r), there are two left-margin braces for all the remaining lines. One indicates that a *stuphe* (ll. 3-6),

two *drynkes* (ll. 7-14) and a *plastre* (ll. 15-18) intended to provoke the woman's menstruation should be elided; the other brace refers to the suppression of a whole chapter ([inc. f. 204v] Dyvers *tymes* it happeth *of diuers* women a mischeuous; [expl. f. 205r] [...] *but* when tyme *of voydaunce ben in þe ix dayes forseid*). In this case, the meaning of the brace is reinforced by the systematic underlining of each line's first word, thus hinting to the glossator's insistence on the need to remove this passage.

(iv) *Inserting square brackets* to eliminate an excerpt. It is only used three times on three consecutive folios (192r [ll. 7-13], 192v [ll. 17-22] and 193r [ll. 33-38]). On each folio, there is a bracket in the margin—the right in the two rectos (]) and the left in the verso ([)—that extends vertically all over the relevant lines. All three brackets are also accompanied by the word *dott;ed?* that may also point to the need of expuncting" such content.

(v) *Cancelling*, that is, using a superimposed 'X' for deletion. This method is found just once in S249.¹² The right margin of f. 191r records an extra recipe to elaborate a stewfro the *mother* which is cancelled and then rewritten at the bottom margin as if it were a footnote.

(vi) *Superimposing letters* on others, with the purpose of correcting an old-fashioned spelling of the word (ley-they [f. 181v, l. 2], *þin-thin* [f. 182r, l. 25], *þies-thies* [l. 182v, l. 3], *þerof-therof* [f. 188r, l. 27]).¹³ Sometimes, it is combined with underlining, as in *yif-ylf* (f. 181r, l. 12) or come *þe orifice-come the orifice* (f. 196v, l. 22).

IV.2. Size

The glossator's intervention in S249 ranges from the substitution, deletion or addition of letters (*kalament-calamint* [f. 201r, l. 17]),¹⁴ words (*Also done yeven a woman* [f. 199r, l. 38]) or short phrases (But *neuerthelesse ^/they haue naturall purgations /of bledynge* [f. 181r, l. 1]) to the paraphrasing of medium-length passages (f. 199r, ll. 10-11; f. 201v, ll. 24-28). Although rarely, Wotton also eliminates longer sections of S249; there are examples on f. 186v (ll. 1-6), f. 200v (ll. 20-24) or f. 204v (ll. 3-36). Normally, the deleted passages do not present any gloss to their content.

IV.3. Location

The glosses in S249 are variously placed both inside and outside the main text. They are chiefly located *inter lineas*, the rule being to note the letters or words above the underlined element using a smaller sixteenth-century handwriting (e.g. ff. 181r, 184r or 187v). To a lesser extent, the glossator also writes in the lateral margins, aligning his words with the line in question (f. 185r, f. 196v). Finally, Wotton's glosses are seldom displayed in the head and bottom margins (f. 191r, f. 205v), often resulting from lack of interlineal space.

IV.4. Function

From a contemporary point of view, the writing of glosses and commentaries in S249 performs a double function: (i) it indicates how the glossator's grammatical, semantic and organising mind works, and (ii) it may provide the subsequent reader with plenty of information on the historical development of the English language, especially on its transition from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century. Due to the heavy annotation, the reader obtains abundant examples of the evolution of linguistic levels such as morphology, syntax and lexicon, as well as of Wotton's stylistic changes to improve the scientific discourse in S249.

V. MORPHOLOGICAL CHANGES

Wotton's modifications in the morphology of determiners, nouns, adjectives, pronouns and verbs show some sixteenth-century changes that can ultimately be reduced to the deletion of suffixes still used in late Middle English.

V.1. Determiners

Regarding determiners, Wotton eliminates the Middle English forms *the too* and *the toþer* as a result of a misdivision of *þat one* and *þat oþer*— and uses *the one* and *the other* instead:

[1]
 on the too [one] foote (201r. 35)¹⁵
 the oþer on the toþer side (197r, 11)

The Middle English *thilke*, apparently a fusion of the + *ilke* was abandoned progressively and was replaced with these during the sixteenth century (OED 1992; Rissanen, 1999: 195):

[2]
þilke / membres [these] [partes] (201v, 10-11)

V.2. Nouns

(i) Plurals in *-(e)n* are substituted by *-s* plurals in the text. This fact calls our attention, for both plural forms were frequent in the sixteenth century, e.g. *ashes/ashen* (Lass, 1999: 141). The plural form *eyen* is usual by mid-seventeenth century (Wallis, 1653: 77, quoted by Lass, 1999: 141) and it can still be traced in the eighteenth-century (Greenwood, 1711: 49, quoted by Lass, 1999: 141):

[3]
 the eyen (181v, 18)
 as it were axen [ashes] (182r, 26)
 her grete toon [toos] (189r, 18)
 the yolkes of eyren [egges] (193r, 4)

(ii) Although in Middle English biological gender had already superseded the grammatical one (Lass, 1992: 106), the fifteenth-century scribe still used some pronouns that retained the old

grammatical gender of their referents. Wotton makes them agree with the natural sex of their referents in the real world changing thus their gender:

[4]

lierre vryn is discolered & thin & hathe iii [^][it] hym small grauell (182r, 25)
 inaketh tie liert to closyn hym [^][it seelfe] to gedre more than he [^][it] shuld do by kynde
 (187v, 37-38)
 it shuld makc tykelyng in the marice / & for she [^][it] wyll come adownewards (189v, 6-7)

V.3. Pronouns

(i) With respect to the pronominal system, th- forms are used in the manuscript for the nominative and genitive cases of the third person plural, whereas the h- form is still present in some oblique cases. Wotton extends the th- forms for all cases since "by the beginning of the sixteenth century the modern paradigm is fully established" (Lass, 1999: 120):

[5]

nouglt accordyng to hem [^][not fit for them] (181v, 24)
 & maketh hem [^][cause the them] (181v, 31)
 to bete hem [^][pownde them] in a mortere (184v, 6)

(ii) Although *self* had been added after the pronouns since Old English times, simple personal pronouns with reflexive meaning, as the ones in S249, are still in use up to the end of the fifteenth century (Mustanoja, 1960: 153). The glossator adds *self* or *selves*, depending on the number of the pronoun. *Themselves*, with final *-s*, which emerges at the end of the fifteenth century (OED 1992; Mustanoja, 1969: 147), is one of the forms added by Wotton:

[6]

they dcliucre them [^][selves] of iiiiater (182v, 24-25)
 & kcpt hyr [^][selfe] froiii all drinkes (193v, 20-21)

(iii) Occasionally, possessive pronouns are preceded by the preposition *of* in Middle English (Mustanoja, 1960: 158). The glossator deletes it and uses the synthetic form instead:

[7]

the [^][her] woinbc of her (200v, 17)

V.4. Adjectives and adverbs

The relic suffix *-lich* from OE *-lic* is eliminated by the annotator in adjectives and adverbs, a change that according to Nevalainen took place in late Middle English (1999: 405):

[8]

Aiid that conieth swyftlich forth oute (185r, l 1-12)
 bringeth it forth the dede childe marvelouslich (190r, 18)
 whcn the iiodir falleth from hir kyndeliche place (190r, 29-30)
 ydresscd hym rightlich (196v, 30)

V.5. Verbs

(i) Wotton consistently deletes from the text the infinitive suffix *-en* which, according to Lass (1999: 98), had almost disappeared well into the fifteenth century.

[9]

they also ben shamefull to shewen and to tellen (180v, 9)
it is profitable to vsen such suppositories (183v, 3-4)

(ii) In the same vein, our Renaissance annotator removes 3rd person plural final *-en* and *-th*:

[10]

there ben many women that haven (180v, 7)
they that ben of high coinplexion & beth norissed with liote metes (181r, 4-5)
women þat ben of a high complexion & faren well & lyvynⁱⁱⁱ moche ease haven this
purgacion offer than oons in a moneth (181r, 14-16)

(iii) Likewise, initial *y-* (formerly the Old English prefix *ge-*) to form past participles, which had survived throughout the Middle English period as a southern form but had almost ceased to be used by the late fifteenth century (Lass, 1999: 147), is also deleted:

[11]

And woinen that ben y stopped contynuelly (182r, 29-30)
to be y batlied in suche herbes (183r, 16)
medycyns & plastres there ywriten (184v, 23-24)

(iv) The expressions of command addressed to the second person singular in S249 render the author's instructions to the reader/healer. In the fifteenth-century text, the formulation of these orders fluctuates from the combination of the periphrasis *let + plain infinitive* (in [12]) or *do + plain infinitive* (in [13]) —constructions for the first person plural (Mossé, 1952: 108; Mustanoja, 1960: 475)—to the plain infinitive alone. The annotator levels out this variation and reduces them all to the bare infinitive:

[12]

let make a stowe of herbes (183r, 1)
operwhiles lette inake here right sory (183r, 6-7)
let bath herre (183r, 9)
But seth all these thinges in water till that water be blak & thyk & lete wrap the man oper
þe woman in a shete (186v, 29-30)
Aiid froin the navell downwards to herre priue membre let anoynnten Iier (188v, 26-27)

[13]

than do dric her with a clothe (183v, 28-79)

The following passage records the different formulations of command: *let* seth, *do stuphe* and *lay* in coordinate constructions as a clear instance of their identical function:

[14]

let seth them yn water & do stuphe her in that sething oftho herbes Also long as she may
And when she gothe of the stuphe lay the herbes to the moder A good suppositoric (193r.

37-38; 193v, 1-2)

(v) According to Lass (1999: 176) *hen* as the third person plural of the verb *to be* survives as an archaic form to the 1530s, and although *are* begins to be used by sixteenth-century writers, the form *he* emerges as the first choice. The fifteenth-century text and Wotton's sixteenth-century corrections match this scene: the annotator erases final *-n* of the form *ben*, which prevails in the original treatise against a few occurrences of *he*, but does not introduce the form *are*.

[15]

they also ~~ben~~ shamefull (180v, 9)

they that ~~ben~~ of high complexion & ~~beth~~ norished with hote metes (181r, 4-5)

woitieii that ~~ben~~ with childe (181r, 7)

yif such humours ~~ben~~ resolved in to wynde (182v, 8)

VI. SYNTACTIC CHANGES

The glossator is aware of the syntactic changes that English has undergone since mid-fifteenth century and consequently modifies the text updating those constructions that we specify in more detail below.

VI. 1. Word order

(i) In Middle and Early Modern English SV order is the most usual; however, we may encounter cases of inversion. In the next example from S249, inversion is triggered by the fronting of the object (Mossé, 1952: 127), which is also supported by the presence of a heavy subject (Rissanen, 1999: 266):

[16]

this inedycyne taught the Prior of Bermondeseye to [^]taught] A woman (185v, 8-9)

In this case, the glossator does not only place the verb after the subject but also deletes the preposition *to* before the indirect object. The reason is evident: once the possible confusion as regards the syntactic functions of *the prior of Bermondeseye* and *A woman* is removed by the new word order, the preposition *to* before the indirect object is not considered necessary. This is then another instance of the careful and thorough correction undertaken by Wotton.

(ii) As Rissanen remarks, in the course of the Early Modern English period "there seems to be a trend from [adjectival] postmodification to premodification" (1999: 209). That could explain why Wotton alters the few cases of noun+adjective order present in S249, even though it was "especially common in scientific and legal texts [...] and persists into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries" (Lass 1999: 116):

[17]

take [^][fine] bole fyne (187r, 21)

take [^][comone] oyle coiitiiiune (188v, 22)

with [^][claret] wyne clarre (190v, 25)

This trend to premodification has also affected the common Middle English construction adj+noun+*and/or*+adj (Mossé, 1952: 123; Fischer, 1992: 214; Rissanen, 1999: 208-209) which is gradually superseded by adj+adj+noun in Early Modern English. Following this drift, whenever two modifiers are involved, Wotton places a post-positive modifier before its head and next to other premodifiers:

[18]

it is profitable to vsen such stippositories a fowre daves other a fyve [^][or five dayes]
before that tyme (183v, 3-4)
four yer ober [^][or] fyve [^][yeares] (200v, 7)

VI.2. Expression of subject and object

(i) A pleonastic use of personal pronouns is not rare in Middle English, mainly in order to avoid ambiguity where the subject is detached from its verb (Mustanoja, 1960: 137-138), as in [19]. Wotton avoids these cases of double subjects deleting the personal pronouns:

[19]

for women aftir they ben with childe for to they be delyuered they iie haue nought this
purgacioii (181r, 9-10)

[20]

the iiiyddewyf she shall ordeyie (197r, 16)

(ii) Regarding direct objects, they are not often expressed in S249, as they can be easily inferred from the context. Nevertheless, Wotton took the trouble to insert object personal pronouns wherever needed:

[21]

And yif þow take stuffe mawe of a sokyng hare / or of a sokyng Calfe & dost bryne it to
poudre / & medliest [^][it] with poudre (186r, 28-31)

take lynsedc / all hole & sethe it in shepes mylke ober gotes mylke & let [^][her] ete it
(186r, 34-35)

lete wrap the man ober þe woman in a shete & sit [^][them] yn þat bathe
& let [^][them] vsen rosted inetis (186v, 30-31)

withholden there wombe & clippen [^][it] hard to gedre with her liiides (188r, 11-12)

But before & aftir thou niyght yeven [^][her] rnedycyns (189r, 9-10)

And first anynte [them] with hotc oyle of roscs (201r, 25-26)

VI.3. Articles and possessive adjectives

(i) The definite article was not felt necessary in Middle English if the noun was already specified by any other means, e.g. an *of*-phrase (Fischer, 1992: 219; Mustanoja, 1960: 268). Mustanoja adds that in many of the cases where the definite article is left out, the noun is preceded by a preposition, as in [22] (Mustanoja, 1960: 269). The examples below illustrate these articleless uses modified by Wotton, who introduces definite articles following the Early Modern English practice:

[22]

Aiid thay have such purgaciouis froni [^][the] tyme of twelve wynter (181r, 2-3)
in [^][the] tyiic of hir a3es yif her triacle (189r, 1-2)

[23]

pat plastre shall be [^][the] quaiititc of a pawiiie of the haiide (192r, 14-15)

(ii) Likewise, the annotator inserts indefinite articles, which were quite infrequent in Middle English (Fischer 1992: 230). By the sixteenth century, the absence of *a* was considered an archaism (Traugott 1972: 134):

[24]

let the woman stande there ouere & lerte þe siiioke come in to here priue membre or in to
[^][a] mannes fundamnt (186v, 19-21)

(iii) Possessive adjectives for bodily functions and body parts are used consistently in the Middle English treatise; Wotton just corrects the instances without a determiner or, alternatively, with a definite article:

[25]

ʒIf they liave [^][theire] purgacion in this tyme (181r, 12)
so that the pipe entre in to that [^][the her] priue membre (191v, 29-30)
mending his hede on the best nianerc & the [^][his] feet rightlych (197v, 9)

VI.4. Coordinate constructions

In coordinate constructions where the coreferential element (verb, preposition, article, adjective, etc.) is repeated, the annotator eliminates the second occurrence:

[26]

iiorished with liotc iiietes & with liote diyiiikes (181r, 5)
[for as moche as ther maii woiiien that have iiiany diwers maladics] & haue humours
(181r inferior margin – 181v, 1)
botli iii A man & in A woman (189r, 28)
as it wre a child quyk & meveth but nocht so swyftly / But it meveth dedely (199v, 29-30)

VI.5. Number agreement

According to Fischer, Middle English is characterised by looseness of concord or agreement (Fischer, 1992: 364; Mossé, 1952: 110); agreement awareness, she adds, had its origins "in rules laid down by grammarians and schoolmasters in the Renaissance and after" under the influence of Latin. Wotton endorses this concern making corrections where appropriate:

[27]

Many of the sekenesse[s] (181r, 21-22)

ffor to help women ofthese sekenesse[s] (182v, 26-27)

VI.6. Impersonal constructions

Impersonal constructions without an expressed subject were frequent in Old English, their number even increased in Middle English, but, conversely, during Early Modern English the tendency was to express the subject. Thus, impersonal constructions of the type *me repenteth* became gradually personal ones in Early Modern English, resulting in either *it repenteth me* or *I repent* through a process of reanalysis (Rissanen, 1999: 250). The only example of such an impersonal construction in S249 was modified by the glossator, who also replaced the verb:

[28]

Also yif hir benke that it brvnneth [she perceve it hot and burninge] (187r, 34-35)

VI.7. Relative constructions

(i) The combination *the which* was extensively used during the late Middle English period, probably under the influence of French, although native origins have also been pointed to (Mustanoja, 1960: 198). In [29], Wotton eliminates the article before *which*, but this is not the norm because he maintains *the* elsewhere in the manuscript (e.g. *Jois of arthiem with the which medle all the oper poudres* [196r, 10-11] or *Thurgh reson of the which thing* [199v, 14-15]):

[29]

Other medycynes there Beth the which yif / woman drynke hem they will niaken here to haue a purgacion (184r, 2-3)

a bathe of herbes in to the which the women (199v, 33-34)

(ii) *Which* is preferred to *that* for no evident reasons as in:

[30]

fenugrek that [whiche] is moche better (185r, 36)

the inoder that it ne is [which is not] nought myght to defie (193r, 27-28)

In [31], though, the proximity of a previous relative clause introduced by *that* may have moved

Wotton to replace *it* by *which* in order to avoid repetition. Once again, he reveals his meticulous character as an editor.

[31]

gret sykencsse that the woman hathe y hadde & bat [wich] hath y febled hir moche (198r, 35-37)

(iii) When a preposition precedes the relativiser and the antecedent is a person, whom is favoured:

[32]

Ther be also other women in the which [whome] often tymes there marice will come doune (205r, 12-13)

yif it be so a womaii desire to conceyve of a man that [by whome] she wolde conceyve (205r, 36-37)

(iv) Finally, Wotton's decision to delete short relative clauses enlivens the rhythm of the text which becomes more fluent:

[33]

comfort of the child bat is withyn hir (195r, 37)

A precious stone bat [caled] hight jsapis (199r, 36-37)

to help women that they [to be] were deliuered of child (199r, 37-38)

VI.8. Negative constructions

The few negative correlative constructions *ne ... nought* in the fifteenth-century text are substituted by postverbal *not*, which has become the common negator by late Middle English (Fischer, 1992: 280; Rissanen, 1999: 271). In S249, Wotton preserves the particle *not* (written originally as *nought*), which is the prevailing form used in isolation in postverbal position [34]; however, he does modify the correlative construction [35]:

[34]

And yif the child conieth nought [not] outwards (198v, 12)

[35]

for womcn aftir they ben with childe for to they be delyuered they ne haue nought [not] this purgacioii (181r, 9-10)

that it ne is [wliieli is not] nought niyght to defie the fleumatyk huniours that both (193r, 27-28)

VI.9. Modal auxiliaries

(i) By the use of modal auxiliaries we convey emotional and cognitive processes, since they alter the meaning of a statement by implying certain attitudes, convictions, feelings, deductions, etc. In his choice of auxiliaries, the glossator shows again his discriminating use of the language; nevertheless, he cannot escape from the changing state of the language and, as a result, is not consistent. *May*, for instance, is replaced by *can* in [36], but is maintained elsewhere in the text

probably because the meaning “have the physical power to” was just shifting from *may* to *cun* at the moment (Traugott, 1972: 118). Wotton just shows a change in progress by using both modal verbs with the same meaning:

[36]
 ffor to help women of these secknessc there ben many diuers mclyccnes as blode lettynge
 in oþer places to deliuere hein of blode that they maw [could] nought [not] ben ypurged
 of (182v, 26-29)
 feblenessc of the woman that may nought [cannot] withholden the blode withyn here (185r,
 7-8)

In the next example *cannot* introduces overtones of a higher degree of impossibility than *may*:

[37]
 The dropsy of the modir cometh oþerwhiles of witioldyng of blode that a womaii shulde
 be purged of & than she may [cannot] nought be yheled But slie be purged of that blode
 (193r. 6-9)

(ii) If the doctor/annotator relies on the efficacy of a treatment, the sense of prediction is better expressed by *shall* or *will* than by *may*: that is why already in Middle English *shall* is frequently used in prophecies (Fischer 1992: 264):

[38]
 lette hir vseii to be y bathed in suche herbes as j spake of rather Sr she may [shall] be
 holpen (183r, 16-17)
 Also yif the mydwyf wette her handes in oyle of puliol [...] Sr þan aiioynt thic orifice / of
 here priue membre it shuld [will] iiiake tykelyng in the marice (189v, 4-7)

(iii) Finally *must* is used instead of *owen* to emphasise the necessity to do something, or, rather, the prohibition to do something:

[39]
 they owen [must] resceyven none stron medycyns to purgen hem (188v. 6)

VII. LEXICAL AND SEMANTIC CHANGES

There is a high percentage of lexical modification in S249. The deletion, substitution and addition of new meanings to the text is, again, part of Wotton's attempt to update and make it as comprehensible as possible to a sixteenth-century audience. Whenever the glossator underlines a word or phrase for the semantic improvement of the manuscript, he is also showing us his disagreement or non-familiarity with that element. Moreover, Wotton is fully conscious of the internal workings of the text as well as of the grammatical rules to collocate words into meaningful sentences. In this way, he even adapts the semantic context surrounding the new term to obtain a coherent lexical set.

The semantic glosses in S249 do not only affect words but also complex structures which are rewritten using alternative combinations of English lexis. The next pages of this article are

devoted to outlining the changes in the primary signification of our manuscript. This analysis discloses a twofold characteristic scheme: (i) modifications by which the underlying (or intrinsic) meaning remains unaltered, and (ii) modifications by which the underlying meaning varies.

VII.1. The underlying meaning remains essentially the same

Wotton's intervention in the lexicon of S249 produces no change in the denotational meaning (Lass, 1992: 464-465) whenever he resorts to synonymy or to the substitution of an obsolete term for another.

VII.1.1. Synonymy

If synonyms are words or expressions that "are identical or similar in meaning and that can be used interchangeably in at least some contexts" (Greenbaum, 1996: 420), a considerable number of the lexical substitutions found in S249 can be said to have a synonymic nature. However, the lexical substitutes of the underlined words are not always strictly speaking synonyms; they rather tend to be near-synonyms. The presence of two words doing the same work in a language is considered to be 'unconventional'; for this reason, differences in style, collocation, meaning and grammatical potential emerge among them (Greenbaum, 1996: 409).

In S249, the glossator frequently uses synonyms to reformulate the scribe's lexical idiosyncrasy, mainly by means of replacement and addition of terms and expressions.

VII.1.1.a. Absolute synonymy

In absolute synonymy, one word is often replaced by an equivalent of the same grammatical category; here, the meaning in context does not vary and there is no moving or insertion of new elements [40]. If necessary, Wotton also changes the orthographic shape of the contiguous words [41] or makes them concord [42].

[40]

Aiid yif tliis withholdyng [stoppinge] be of colde (182r, 17-18)

& tliis medycyn bothe bringeth forth boþe dede childe & quyk wliere etier it be in the woinais wombe & that [speedely] sonc (184v, 23-25)

Also there with gotes mylke þat is full profitable for this sekenesse for [because] it niaketh þe blode thyk... (186r, 10-11)

Aiid tliis akses [fite] ciidurcth oþer whils two daies or þre (188r, 2-3)

[41]

Withholdyng of this blode tliat they mowc nought have here purgacions in due tymes coinyri in [^][divers waics] diuers inancrs (181v, 7-8)

Takc mummie olibanum iustak tlic harte horne y Brent till it be white & of euerych ofthes vliche inoche [^][alike quantitie] (186r, 23-25)

[42]

And oþer whiles ther wexeth wannesse in thir visage ^ in their faces] (181v, 26-27)

Regarding phrases and short sentences, absolute synonymy refers to the paraphrasing of the same idea, this time using a construction with modified spelling, word order and lexis:

[43]

but yif a man oþer a woman be iiiore v febled [verie inuche weakned] tlierby for thaii men shall sesen it as sone As men may ^ [it should be stopped with speedc] (185r, 31-37)
 & hir sides swollen & the haven greuance to brethen & to dr [fcele a difficultic of breath when] awe wynde Also But [and drawene there winde &] (194v, 5-6)
 First yif she be repleted of her menstruys [their inonethlie sickies be stopped]; do clense hir with niedyciis in retencione menstruorum (201r, 15-16)

In the examples included so far, Wotton repeatedly replaces a word or expression with an absolute synonym. Less frequently, our glossator redefines the lexicon in S249 by adding synonyms. With this practice, he expresses the same concept through another lexical item:

[44]

And profitable bledyngs ben atte the veynes of the grete ton / & to be ygarscd ^ [or skarrefied on the] of the leggs byneth the sperlyuere (182v, 30-32)

& lette her sitten ouer the [vapor or] smoke therof þat it iiiij coinc to here priue ineinbre (201v, 7-8)

But nethelesse this oynement is good therfore & for zuthing also & blaynes [or pimples] that ben in the inoder. (202r, 15-17)

then take coton right well y tosed [or carded] & put that coton csclly in to a lyiinen poket (202r, 30-31)

VII.1.1.b. Near-synonymy

This term refers to the substitution of a word for another exchangeable in a limited number of contexts. Although both options have identical referential meaning, the glossator's choice is affected by two major parameters:

(i) Register

When Wotton introduces a more formal alternative in the manuscript, he is being conscious of the specific linguistic needs of scientific discourse. A distinction between everyday and technical jargon should be made, even though the dynamics of the language prevents a clear-cut "dividing line between technical terms [and expressions] and terms in general use" (Greenbaum, 1996: 416-417). With his choice of vocabulary, Wotton upgrades the degree of formality in the text and characterises it with a new scientific touch where precision and clarity are fundamental.

[45]

And long withlioldyng of this blode maketh women other whiles to fallen in to A dropsy

and otherwhiles & iiiiaketh hem ^ [causethe them] to have þe Emerawdes (181r, 30-32)

Also the vtuiust es bathes y made of water that alym de plume is soden yn for it experte [is proved] & Auicci techeth it in the 2ⁿ Chapitre (187v, 11-13)

it haue [suffer] the grettest sekciocesses of tie body the whiles they leuen than to ben y heled (188v, 1)

Also doth xv . grayiics of pyonys soden in wyne & ydronke fordo þe suffocacion of the modir & helpeth that sorowe [disease]. (192v, 27-28)

(ii) Collocation

The cocurrence or juxtaposition of words into prefabricated lexical units is known as collocation (Greenbaum, 1996: 427). In a number of occasions, the glossator substitutes a word for another with the intention of making the collocations more appropriate to the context. Two grammatical categories stand out:

ii.a. Prepositions

[46]

The first is stoppyng of the blode that they shuld haue in [by] purgacion and be purged as I haue saide (180r, 24-25)

Also stupes ben profitable to [for] them ymade of herbes that will & mowe open the veynes of tie iiiiodcr (182v, 34-35)

let hir bleden a litell on [in] þe Arnie & sethe lete her drynke a litell Rubarbe 3 · ij . (185v, 15-16)

Aiid amonge [of] all thinges that nieii vse Rys & whete thikketh nioche a mannes blode (186r. 19-20)

And she niadc a plastre of diptayne of Jsope & of saueray & leyde it to [aboute] her priue shape with outeii (193r, 34-35)

ii.b. Adjectives

[47]

& that is ^ [conueniente] profitable list [leaste] they fall in to a Cardiacle other in to A dropsey (182v. 29-30)

Also a worshipfull [good] scrup that myghtlich bringcth forth the corupt blode fro the moder (184r, 15-16)

Also in tie dropse / of the inodir the chekes beii nesse & sowfte and feblisch [of a waned] ycouleied ... (193r, 19-20)

they hauc contynuallych a contynual feuer but nough to strong [sharpe] (194v, 10-11)

VII.1.2. *Obsolescence*

Not infrequently, the glossator crases obsolete or old-fashioned words. Indeed, the majority of glossaries and "old-word dictionaries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries indicate the extent to which Old and Middle English texts had become incomprehensible" (Nevalainen, 1999: 347). Although obsolescence is a relative concept, often depending on the reader's standards and linguistic background, Wotton's practice in S249 may provide us with a set of lexical items—mainly, nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives and conjunctions that either had already lost currency by his age or were beginning to fall into disuse:

[48]

Withholdyng of this blode that they inowe nougtht haue licke purgaciouis in due tymes
conyn in diuers inaners And of diuerse enchesons [occasions] (181v, 7-9)

Anoper suppositorie · take the rote of smallache the mountaunce [quantetic] thyrrre fyngre
all grene (183v, 14-15)

& seth it eftsones [again] a litell & let it kele (185v, 6-7)

& lete hir vsen to drynk water of roses or of planter obcr cles [or] rycne water or els water
that mastyk is sodeii yii oper [or] wyiic y iiii edd with water (186v, 33-35)

Also take a quyk turtle & brenne lier all quyk [burne him alive] with the feberes (187r,
1-2)

Also nym ^ [take] liede that al iiiiaier stiiikyng thinges in this cause shall be put beneþe
forþ (192r, 21-22)

& þer þo foulc grete huinours makeii grete sswellyng as it wce a nother iiiiaier of fydropsie
that is cleped [called] aschites (199v, 24-26)

VII.2. The underlying meaning is modified

Sometimes, Wotton's massive annotation of S249 is directed to change the textual meaning by including more specific information on a topic. Such a modification of the underlying meaning in the manuscript is carried out through the following methods.

VII.2.1. *Introduction of nrw words*

With the insertion of new words and expressions in context, the essential meaning of sentences is affected. As a result, there arises a deviation from the original sense which can range from a minimal shade of meaning to a totally different idea, as represented in the passages below:

[49]

For as moche as thiere ben many women that haue many diuers iiiialadyes and sekncsses
nygh [cuen] to the deth (180v, 1-2)

The adverbial substitution *nygh-euen* implies a qualitative change in meaning; *euen to the deth* has much more drastic connotations than *nygh to the deth*. The first expression emphasises the malignity of certain exclusively female diseases, as surprising as it may seem; *nygh to the deth* is somewhat milder, carrying the sense of "closely related".

[50] other of moche wakyng othier of iiioclie thenkyng [ssadnes] othier of grete Angre
other of inoche sorowe othcr of iiioche fastyngc / (181v, 12-14)

Thenkyng, as a synonym of meditation, does not necessarily involve the feeling of sadness, although it may be responsible for such a state of unhappiness. By replacing the general term *thenkyng* for the specific *ssadness*, Wotton is reformulating one of the possible causes for the *withholding of this blode* (181v, 7)

[51] & bringen forth children that ben meselles [lepers] or have some other such fowle
sekenesse (181v, 28-30)

Here, the infectious disease known as *meselles* (variant form of ME *measles*, in Latin *rubeola*) is substituted by *lepers*. Notwithstanding their similarity (both are characterised by the presence of pustules in the skin), an expert on gynaecology and obstetrics may have preferred to distinguish *meselles*, a term formerly "applied to the pustules of the eruptive diseases in general" (*OED*, 1992), from *lepers*, a more precise word.

A variant version consists in combining the replacement of a word or phrase with the addition of (a) new one(s) to present a finely-tuned scientific discourse:

[52]
The ncyieetli is thic ^ [fallynge downc and] goyng oute of the iiioder benethen forth (181v,
3)
And otherwhiles in this tynge they have will to [desire and have] coiipany with men (181v,
27-28).
Aiid yif it be in the fite iiiaiere thow myght knowe it by the feblesse ^ [weaknes &
fayntnes] of the womans body (185r, 21-23)
Aiid lete licre blodc atte the vayic of liir Arinc Aiid to be cupped vndire liir tetes Aiid
abouten the reynes and the lendes & to be garsed on her legges to withdrawen the blode
awewwards from he ^ [withdrawe & divert the blood from ye another] moder / (185r, 35-
39)

W1.2.2. Introduction of time-referetices

Wotton also attempts to be more concrete in the overall arrangement of the gynaecological content. The introduction or change of time-references turns to be an organising technique that helps the reader to understand better the internal relationships among the elements in a recipe. Therefore, the interpretation of the theoretically-based content and the application of therapeutics to female patients are stepped as accurately and orderly as Wotton believes pertinent. For this purpose, he made use of time and spatial connectors and expressions:

[53]

Therfor ffirste of all ye shall vnderstandyn that wonien have lesse hete in therre bodies than men hauen (180v, 33-34)

And aboute that tyme of the mone that they shuld have there purgacioii yif they have none let them bledyn a good quantite of blode atte hurr grete toe And a nober the next day ther oþer grete too (183r, 12-15)

& lete but stande till hit be colde & clense thereof it as nioclie as she may drynke atte oons by the morowe (184v, 19-20)

whan then it shall do it to delyuere a woman from hir childe (184v, 32-33)

& do then wrap all her body all aboute with an Iiote double shete // than and afterward make her a fumigacion (200r, 3-5)

ffirst immediatlie after þat she is anoynted & þan wrapped in a shete & the balles forseid (200v, 9-10)

VZZ.2.3. Zntroduction of extra information

The modification of the meaning underlying the text is also accomplished by inserting new medical or remedial data. Once more, concreteness and effectiveness in the transmission of the scientific discourse are guiding the glossator. He is specially concerned about anatomical precision, as seen in:

[54]

The fite is whan the moder is flawe fro flared wythin aiid wtilioute . / withynforth (181r, 31)

And is cleped Colre than they felen breiinyng & prikyng of heate with yn forth outward & herre vryn is of an high coloure & fatty & yn tyiie of liir purgacioii a thre dayes or iiij that they be delyvered (182r, 12-16)

let them bledyn a good quantite of blode atte the paiiie in hurr grete toe (183r, 14-15)

The precipitation of the moder is a noþer sekenesse when the modir falleth from hir kyideliche & naturall place (190r, 28-30)

Aiid also y haue seid inola wexetli in the inarice as it were a child that is quyk & irieveth by the matrice but noht so swyfily (199v, 27-29)

Furthermore, Wotton is also retrieving his medical expertise and general knowledge on the topic to fill in the evident contentual *lacunae* probably due to scribal errors. The information is introduced here without making any changes to the sentential syntax and hence preserving the overall coherence of the text:

[55]

But neuerthesse they haue iiatrall purgations of bledyng to make therrc bodies clene & hole froin sykeiiesse (181r, 1-2)

& þeron strawe the poudre of mastik & of [Franke] encense & of hartes hornes (190v, 32-33)

Woiien when they ben with child ^ [have often tymes] therre legges wollen swollen [and for this disease] (202v, 5-7)

VIII. SCRIBAL EHRORS

As just mentioned in the previous section, Wotton introduces or deletes some words that the original scribe seemingly forgot or repeated:

[56]

The noder is a skyn that that the childe / is enclosed in (181r, 20-21)

Makeii oþer ^ [wo] meii oþer whiles to thirst hir wombe to gedre (188r, 12-13)

let hcr ^ [be] dieted (191r, 32)

IX. TOWARDS A MORE SCIENTIFIC STYLE

We have already seen how some words with general meaning (nouns and verbs mainly) have been replaced by more specific words or even medical terms (see examples in [45] above). Wotton also added notes that explain physiological processes more accurately [S?], and time adverbs and linkers were inserted to indicate the different steps of a treatment with more precision [53]. However, these are not the only modifications that suggest an intention to reshape the text into a more scientific pattern. Wotton wanted to avoid any confusion that could arise in the reading of the original text and made use of strategies such as repetitions [57], deictics [58] or endophroric references [59] to contribute to a clearer understanding of the treatise:

[57] many of the sekenesse that woineii havyn comen of greuances of this moder that we clepyii the marys / The first ^ [greefe] is stoppyng of the blode (181r, 21-24)

[58] CURA ffor to help women of these sekenesse there ben many diuers medycenes as blode lettynge ... And [these] profitable bledyngs (182v, 26-30)

yif thou yeve her drynk of hier clarette made with ^ [this] syrup (184r, 32-33)

[59] lette the woman sitte þeryn afterwards a good while & sethen lette hir wash her prevy iiiiibre as depe as she may reche jnwards & thus do a good while with ^ [the sayed] water (183v, 26-28)

References to other parts of the text, though, were already present in the original copy, but their formulation nearly always involved the presence of the author in the form of the first person. Wotton removed this personal implication, and new expressions in the passive voice, a distinctive characteristic of scientific texts, were introduced (Taavitsainen, 1994):

[60 1994: 33] in the bathes ymade of siich herbes as v speke of right nowe ^ [ar before mentioned] (183r, 10)

in suche herbes as j [ar] spake of rather [before] (183r, 16-17)

bathen hir wyth such herbes as v seid rather [ar before spoken of] (183r, 30-31)

put it yp ayeti as [is sayed] we have before (197v, 4)

X. CONCLUSION

The numerous sixteenth-century annotations to the fifteenth-century text of S249 have proved an outstanding corpus to trace some of the most relevant changes in progress during the transitional stage from late Middle English to Early Modern English. The glosses seem to be the work of a John Wotton, a former owner of the manuscript, who took the pains to delete, replace and add letters, suffixes, words, constructions and even complete passages to update the language of this gynaecological treatise. His selective and punctilious character has thus provided us with an excellent real testimony of those language issues that may have posed difficulties to a sixteenth-century reader. Likewise, the text has turned out to be a good sample of the development of scientific style. Many of the changes Wotton has made reveal an awareness of some of the features that characterise the scientific/medical discourse: an adequate terminology, use of deictic and repetitions to make references clear, absence of the first person personal pronouns, use of the passive as a formula of detachment and an accurate time sequence of treatments.

For all this, we consider it necessary to devote some time to the transcription and study of the glosses and modifications added or made to any historical written piece since they may constitute as good a source for the history of the English language as the text itself. In the case of S249, our view is that conventional editorial methods, such as the inclusion of glosses within the body of the text or in ancillary notes, are unsuitable for a clear rendering of the original text and its metatext. The number, length and elaboration of the glosses reach such an extent that they almost constitute a rewriting of the fifteenth-century manuscript, somehow resulting in a new 'text'. A face-to-face arrangement of both text and metatext would eliminate an otherwise entangled layout of the edition and would facilitate their reading and comparison. Besides, it would allow an overall perusal of S249 and its sixteenth-century glosses, which eventually would help modern readers to tackle with some of the ongoing changes in Early Modern English, and, particularly, with the evolution of medical discourse.

NOTES

1. For a recent study of glosses in another gynaecological manuscript, see Domínguez-Rodríguez, forthcoming.
2. Keferciçe eVK 1956.00 (Voigts & Kurtz, 2000)
3. S249 is predominantly written in English, except for the folios 202v-204r where three Latin chapters are included, namely: (inc.) *Ad menstrua prouocanda* (ff. 202v-203r), (inc.) *Ad restringendum coytum* (ff. 203r-203v) and (inc.) *De tumore mamill* (ff. 203v-204r).
4. In Iacobus Saccii's 1510 edition of the *Compendium medicine Gilberti anglici tam morboru[m] vniuersaliu[m] qua[m] particularium nondum medicis sed [et] cyrurgicis vtilissimum*, the *Tabula rubricarum librorum compendii Gilberti anglici* is preceded by a brief indication of the general contents and structure to be found in the volume: *Presens opus tam morborum vniuersalium quam particularium Gilberti anglici diuiditur in septem libros* (second folio after the frontispiece).
5. See Grech (1992: 78-82) for the complete classification.
6. Alonso-Almida (2002-2003: 15-18) has established the outline of the internal organization of four treatises (MS Yale 47, MS Sloane 5, MS Sloane 3486 and MS Hunter 307) belonging to "The *Sekenesse of Wymmen*" Version 1. Apart from certain differences in content, his outline could be also extended to S249.
7. In S249, the medical theory is normally preceded by a short title like *The .12. chapitre is to make u woman able to conceyuen children / yif god will* (f. 201r, ll. 13-14). But there are also a few other chapters without a title; in these, the topic is explicit in the first two lines (e.g. *Greuances that wymen haven in beryng of here children cometh in two maners* [f. 196r, ll. 36-37]).
8. Additions by this second hand are marked in italics.
9. There is no definite explanation for the lower quantity of glosses in those three folios. To our understanding, it is possible that the content of f. 180v influenced the glossator's decision of not annotating it so much. Folio 180v shows the prologue to the gynaecological treatise, expressing the original author's intentions when writing the text (*I will writen of women preyv sekenesse the helpyng & that oon woman may help another in herre sykenesse & nought diskuren hir preyvtees to sich vncurteys man* [ll. 23-26]); therefore, the glossator's incursion would hide or alter its function in the overall manuscript. On the other hand, ff. 202v-204r present three chapters fully written in Latin. Both f. 202v and f. 204r undergo the phenomenon of code-switching: f. 202v moves to Latin after 14 lines (dealing with uterine cancer and the swelling of legs during pregnancy), whereas f. 204r reintroduces the vernacular by line 28 (to speak about different techniques to provoke women's menstruation). Although the English passages in those two folios are correspondingly annotated, the Latin part has almost no glosses. The same happens with the Latin in folios 203r-203v: it is scantily glossed. If it is understandable that the glossator of S249 wanted to modernize and improve its medical discourse, we wonder whether he thought of no use to annotate the words of a language that had been long established as the vehicle of science.
10. The glossator's crossing out is to be distinguished from the original scribe's correction of errors (such as repeated words or misspelling) when copying the text. See, for example, f. 181v (l. 23), f. 183v (l. 11) or f. 191v (l. 2).
11. Expunction is an unobtrusive indication of erasure in medieval manuscripts, where a row of dots is placed beneath the letter(s) or word(s) to be deleted (Reitz, 2004. *Online Dictionary for Librarians and Science*

Information).

12. Folios 180r-180v in S249 contain "a brief spiritual 'regimen' for alleviating all inainer of illnesses and other grievances of life" (Green. 2003: 380), which originally preceded the gynaecological conteit of this iiianuscript but was cancelled out at soine time (iiiaybe, by John Wotton himself).

13. The corrected item in each pair of examples comes in second position

14. See note 13

15. In all the examples we have maintained original underliningaiid crossing out only in the word(s) relative to the discussion; other glosses in the passages have not been recorded to avoid coiifusion. The words between [...] reproduce *supra lineam* annotations; the words between square brackets refer to marginal notes. At the end of each example, the number of folio and the corresponding line(s) are included between brackets.

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