

## Original Documents,

ILLUSTRATING THE ARTS, &c. OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

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### EARLY ENGLISH ARTISTICAL RECEIPTS.

THE following receipts are taken from a manuscript in the British Museum (MS. Sloane, No. 73), written in the earlier part of the fifteenth century, and are therefore about a century more modern than those we gave in our first number. Compared with those, and other similar documents, they afford information on the composition and nature of the colours used by the medieval artists at different periods. The receipt for softening glass is particularly curious.

[Fol. 173, v<sup>o</sup>.]

For to make reed wex. Take a pound of whijt wex, and throwe therinne a quartoun of terbentyne, and melte hem two togidere; and if thou wolt asaye it if it be weel gummed, caste a litil in coold watir, and thanne asaye it if it be tendre, and if it be tendre it is weel gummed. Thanne loke thou have redy oꝝ. l of vermyloun, smal grounde, al so smal as ony poudre, and whanne thi wex and thi terbentyne is hoot molten, anoon riȝt throwe yn thi poudre of thi vermeloun, and sette it adoun of the fier, and styre it weel, and meynge it weel togidere til it be coold, and thanne thou hast good reed wex y-mad.

For to make grene wex. Take lj. l of whijt wex, and quart l. of terbentyne, and medle hem togidere, and asaye if it be weel gummed as thou haddist the rede wex riȝt in the same maner, and thanne take an ounce of vertegrece smal broken, and y-grounden upon a marbil stoon, and throwe it in the matere, and styre it til it be coold, and thanne thu hast good grene wex.

[Fol. 138, v<sup>o</sup>.]

Here it techith how thou schalt make good vermyloun to alle maner preves where thou wolt.

Take a pound of quyk silvyr, and v. lj. of quyk brimstoon, and putte it in a pott of erthe, and loke that thi pott have a wide mouth that thou myȝt se al to the botme, and loke that thou have a lid of tree<sup>a</sup> upon the pottis mouth weel y-closid, and thanne sette it on a fewe coolis, and alwey have thin yȝe into the pott, and styre it otherwhile, and whanne thu seest the leyt<sup>b</sup> fle out of the pott, anoon smat adoun the lid, and holde adoun the leyt ij. or iij. tymes

<sup>a</sup> Wood.

<sup>b</sup> Flash of fire.

til thou seest the mater in the pott wex blak y-now<sup>3</sup>, for thanne is thi quik silvir slayn. Thanne sette it adoun of the fier, and grinde it weel on a stoon, and thanne make a fayr coole fier, and loke thou have a good thicke jordan<sup>c</sup> of glas, and take good cley and hors-dounge, and make a good lute therof, and therwith daube thi jordan al aboute half ynche thicke, and putte al thi mater in the jordan, and hange it over the fier by the necke that the glas be almoost an hond-brede fro the coolis; and ordeyne thee anothir glas that the mouth be almoost as the jordans mouth of largenes, and sette that litil glas upon the jordans mouth, mouth ajens mouth, and the botme upward of the lesse glas, and the botme downward of the more glas, and thanne thou schalt se the leyt of the mater rengynge upward into the upper glas, and thanne bigynne first esy fier and aftirward make good fier, and alwey be blowynge the fier, and othirwhile styre the jordan with a smal ȝerde of yren at the botme for to make the hatt arise out of the mater, and thanne thou schalt se manye dyvers colouris of the leyt arise into the uppere glas; and whanne thou seest the leyt arise riȝt blood reed, thanne is thi vermyloun maad, thanne breke thi jordan, and loke what thou fyndist therinne. And al I forbede thee that the jordan be not lenger on the fier than the leyt bigynneth to wexe rede, for if it be it is lost al togidere; and also another thing I forbede thee, that day that thou wolt make it, go not therto fastynge, for thou schalt fynde a wickid breeth of smel, and therefore ete a mossel and drinke; and also another thing, make but esy fier at the firste tyme, lete it be sokyng fier.

[Fol. 138, r<sup>o</sup>.]

Here it techith how thou schalt make fyn vertgrece and good.

Take copur y-vilid<sup>d</sup> as myche as thou wolt aftir thi pott is of greetnesse, for thou myȝt not fille thi pott but litil more than half ful of copur; thanne take fyn vynegre, and helde into thi pott, to the vynegre vilynge of the copur, and styre it weel togidere, and thanne loke thou have to v. li of copur a potel of vynegre, and therto li. ij. and half a quart of vynegre, and this is the proporciouns of this craft, and thus thou maist chese how myche thou wolt make. But whanne thou hast proporcioned thi vynegre and thi copur, thanne putte it in a pott, and hele it clos that no breth go out, and sette it in hors-dounge, and loke that ther be two feet bitwene the pottis botme and the ground of hors-doung, and ij. feet thicke on ech side, and tweie feet above on the mouth, and so that it be over al lich in hors-doung; and so lete hem stonde ij. monethis stille on hors-doung or evere he be removed; and at the ij. monethis ende take it up, and thou schalt fynde fyn vertgrece and riȝt good for sothe.

<sup>c</sup> A *jordan* was a kind of pot or vessel used by physicians and alchymists, of the form represented in the accompanying figure, which is taken from the margin of our receipt in the Sloane MS. The word is used



in this sense by Chaucer and other writers of that age. At a later period it was used in the sense of a chamber-pot, as in Shakespeare.

<sup>d</sup> Filed copper, i. e. copper filings.

[Fol. 213, r<sup>o</sup>.]

For to make whit leed. Tak a gret erthen pot or a barel, and put thereynne a porcioun of good strong reed wyn drestis<sup>e</sup>, and hong in the pot faire brode platis of newe leed so that noon touche other an ynche fro the drestis, and close it in hoot hors-dunge so that now eyer com yn ne out, and let it stonde so vj. wokus or more, for legger it stondith the betre is. Whanne thu wilt opene thy vessel, and tak owt al thi platis of leed, take an hamor and smyte of al the white leed that is gederid above upon a faire whit lether or a clene vessel, and thanne hast thu whit leed faire and good. But if thu wilt make this leed into picis as summen usen for to sellen, tak the white poudre of the leed that thu hast of thi plates, and put it in a newe erthen pot, and put clene water therto that the leed be biwose<sup>f</sup> in the water, and stere it wel togidre, thanne covere wel thi vessel, and let it stonde so stille to thi water be drunken up, and that it be as it were thikke pappe; thanne gedre it out of the pot with a sponne, and sprede it abroad on papere leves, or on a fair table, and thanne sete it in a faire clere sonne and let it drie up, and thanne breke it on faire square gobetis<sup>g</sup>.

Now for to make reed leed. Whane thi whit leed is drie, grinde it to smale poudre, and thanne put it in a pot of erthe, and ley that pot asid as thu wost, and make under fire, and evere among stere it as thu wost with a ladle, and so alwey make fire therunder till thou se that thi leed be as fyne of colour as thou wilt have.

For to make vertegrece. Take platis of clene coper, or ellis of pannes or caudrones, but nether pot-bras ne of basenes, for that is latoun<sup>h</sup>, and is not therfore; and hong thes platis in the same maner as ȝe doth platis of leed, and vynegre or stronge lies in the botme of the vessel as bifore of leed, and that the vessel stonde hote as in hors-dunge or in mattis or in good pese straw, but hors-dunge is the beste and most kinde therfor; and whanne it hath stonde a vj. wokes or more as bifore is seid, thanne opene ȝoure pot, and if ȝoure platis beth wel gederid with faire grene poudre aboven and al aboute in colour of fair vertegrece; and if the thynkith that ther is gadered aboven bote litel in quantité, late hem hange stille in the same vessel, and close wel the vessel aȝeyn, and whanne ȝe opene it and fynde hem grene, take out ȝoure platis, and scrape hem clene with a knyf al the grene poudre into a clene panne or a skyn, and thanne grynd it on a clene ston, and put it in a clene cornetrey, and medle it with good strong vynegre in manere of nesche past, and thanne lat it stonde so still in the same cornetrey to it be waxen sumdel more stef, and thanne gadere it clene out of thi cornetrey with a croked knyfe that be ordeyned therfore, and put it up in a clene letheren bagge toward the greyn side, and thanne presse it down togidres al on a gobet, and lat it drie so up in the same bagge, and thanne is don; and alle the platis that ben scraped so bifore times, hong hem aȝeyn in her vessel as bifore is seid, and so doith alwey to thei be al defied<sup>i</sup> and clene rotid into faire vertegrece.

<sup>e</sup> Lees.    <sup>f</sup> Washed.    <sup>g</sup> Lumps.

<sup>h</sup> Latoun, or latten, was a hard mixed metal closely resembling brass, but the precise nature of its composition does not

appear to be known. It is very frequently mentioned in old writers.

<sup>i</sup> Consumed.

[Fol. 213, v<sup>o</sup>.]

To multiplie vertegrece. Tak a pound of fyn vertegrece of Spayne, and breke it to poudre on a ston, and with that poudre medle another pounce of fyn lymayle<sup>j</sup> of coper, with good vynegre that be strong in manere of nosche, pappe<sup>k</sup>; thanne take al that matere so medlid and put it in a clos erden pot, and stoppe it wel and clos, and sete it in hot hors-dungge, bynethe, above, and al aboute, and let it stonde so to the lemaile of coper be al turnyd into Vertegrece, as is the other of Spayne that is medled therwith; and whanne it so is, tak it out and medle it aȝeyn with more lymayl of coper, and with more vynegre, in manere bifore seid. And on this manere thou myȝt multeplie evermore; for wete wel that this is kyndely therfore, and of his owen rote that he cometh first of, and therfor this the beste maner of multeplynge of vertegrece that is, for it is ful fyn and faire.

[Fol. 215, v<sup>o</sup>.]

For to make glas nesche<sup>l</sup>. Take the gotes blode, lewke, and the juse of senevey, and boile hem wel togederis, and with tho tweye materes boyle wel thi glas, and thi glas schal bycome nesche as past, and if it be cast aȝeyne a wal it schal not breke.

For to make fyn azure withoute past. Take and grynde salarmonyak on a marbel ston, and put it to dissolve, and thanne take lapis lazuli the ston al hol, and make it reed hoot in the fire, and al hot qwenche it in the water, and lat it reste awhile therynne, and it schal be smal and fyn of colour; after wasche the salt clene fro the colour with faire comoun water, etc., thanne drye it up with the sonne or with a cler smal fire, and thanne put it up.

Lapus lazuly, that be a fyne blew colour, and with many strakes of gold schewinge ther among as it were strakes on a towche, and also loke that if ther be in the ston as litil gravel schewing in colour as whit, for if ther be the ston is not fyn. Also loke wel evermore if thu schalt bye eny manere of lapis lazuly, and it have not withynne him many smale specklez as it were golde, loke that thu bye it not bi no manere of wey; but if thu assay it first er than thu bye it with the moste verrey assay that longith therto; thus thu schalt assaye it: Tak a ston therof, and make it reed hoot in the fire, as it were reed glowyng yren, and thanne tak it out and lat it kele bi itself on a clene tyle, and whanne it is cold if it be fynere of colour and as hard as it was bifore thanne it is lapis lazuli; and whanne the ston is cold, if he turne eny thing blak liche syndre, and that it be more brokel than it was bifore, triste wel that it is not lapus lazuly, but it is lapis almanie, of whiche men maken a blewe bize azure.

On this manere thu myȝt make azure bis. Take and grynd faire poudre of whit leed, or of ceruse, on a marble ston with the juse of a blewe flour that groweth in corn in somer, and lat it drie up, and thanne grynd aȝeyn with more juse of the blewe flour, and drye it aȝeyn, and thus grinde it and drie it evermore to the colour be as fyn as thou wilt have it; for wite wele the ofter that it is so grounde with juse of the blewe flour and dried after, the more fyn of colour wole it be whanne it is al maad.

T. WRIGHT.

<sup>j</sup> Filings.<sup>k</sup> Soft.<sup>l</sup> Soft.