

The *Codex Medicamentarius seu Pharmacopoea Parisiensis* – 5th edition of 1758

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Introduction

In 1598, the Parliament in Paris commissioned the first version of the Parisian Pharmacopoeia. The work was to be published 40 years later in 1638, entitled *Codex Medicamentarius seu Pharmacopoea Parisiensis*. This first Parisian Codex featured the following motto borrowed from Seneca; “*Until we have begun to go without them, we fail to realize how unnecessary many things are*”¹.

The presence in this official pharmacopoeia of a monograph dedicated to emetic wine – a concoction obtained by macerating antimony in Spanish wine containing potassium antimonytartrate – deserves some detailed explanation. In fact, this mention of a stibium-based composition was the origin of the dispute over the use of antimony, and would become a way of legitimizing the therapeutic use of antimony derivatives – despite the fact that the Faculty of Medicine in Paris had outlawed the use of antimony in its decree of August 1566: *Decretum Facultatis Medicinae Parisiensis, quo statuitur “stibium esse deleterium ...”*, simultaneously banning apothecaries from delivering antimony after 1615. This dispute over antimony reflected a more general opposite of the “Ancients” – unwavering partisans of the Hippocratic-Galenic theory – and the “Modernists” – ready to accept new theories such as iatrochemistry – as well as rivalries between the Faculty of Medicine in Paris – indeed its renowned doyen Guy Patin wholeheartedly condemned the tenets of iatrochemistry – and that of the medical faculty of Montpellier – more open to therapeutic innovations. The inclusion of a monograph detailing the use of emetic wine in the *Codex Medicamentarius seu Pharmacopoea Parisiensis* however allowed defenders of the use of antimony, which included the Parisian Royal medic Jean Chartier, to point out the obvious contradiction between outlawing all prescription and use of all stibium- (antimony) based medicine and the presence in the official pharmacopoeia of the time of a preparation containing the incriminated metal. After much vigorous debate, parliament finally adopted a decree (enacted on the 10th August 1666) authorising emetic wine and allowing “*all doctors to use wine in the curing of diseases, to document and to debate it*”².

This pharmacopoeia was however better known by its version of 1758, named *editio quinta* (5th edition). In 1758, the 5th and final edition was published with a preface containing the Court of Parliament decree of the 23rd July 1748 which henceforth required all the apothecaries of Paris and its suburban areas to adhere to the new dispensary [= volume containing the description of simple and compound medicines, and the formulas for officinal preparations] as set out by the Faculty of Medicine in Paris and to faithfully record the preparations that they dispensed, also expressly prohibiting them from selling other preparations not listed in this dispensary, or from dispensing preparations without a dated, signed prescription, at risk of a five hundred franc fine. The four previous editions dated respectively from 1639, 1645, 1732 and 1748. However, according to certain authors, the 1639 version was not the first, but the second edition, whereas a first edition dating from 1638 is claimed to have existed; moreover, yet another edition, dating from 1760 and published in Germany (in Frankfurt / Main), may also have been lost to history. According to

this theory, the 1758 edition would in fact be the sixth edition of the Parisian Pharmacopoeia. However, for the purposes of the remainder of this article, we will accept the theory that the editions of 1638 and 1639 are so similar that the edition of 1758 would effectively be the fifth³.

The fifth edition of the *Codex Medicamentarius seu Pharmacopoea Parisiensis* (1758)

This edition of the *Codex Medicamentarius seu Pharmacopoea Parisiensis* begins with an introductory preface; this is followed by the Court of Parliament decree that apothecaries must henceforth adhere to the Faculty of Medicine dispensary, and ends by listing the Royal Doctors from the Paris Faculty of Medicine.

It is then organised into four major parts: the first – entitled *Medicamenta simplicia* – lists the different substances for pharmaceutical use and their origins, animal, lichen, vegetal or mineral; the second is dedicated to the *Praeparationes*, that is, the pharmaceutical preparations; the third concerns the *Compositiones galenicae*, that is, the Galenic forms; finally the fourth discusses the various *Operationes chymicae* or chemical processes by which the medicines are obtained.

The detailed outline of this pharmacopoeia – which is formulated around these four parts is as follows.

The preface (*Praefatio*)

Kind of introduction outlining the recourse to alphabetic order for the classification of the monographs, explaining the various animal, vegetal or mineral origins of each of the substances listed and referring back to the previous editions of 1732 (3rd edition) and 1748 (4th edition) of this *Codex*. The 5th edition of this *Codex* is then justified by the obsolescence, irrelevance or redundancy of certain remedies mentioned in these previous editions; it is however specified that some older remedies remained valid and current in the 18th century, in particular theriac, mithridate or certain distilled waters – these could be used to compensate for shortages of certain plants. Finally, this pharmacopoeia is known as *promptuarium universale* (universal promptuary) – this archaic term denoting a report or an abridged text of the law, philosophy or any other discipline, in use during the Middle Ages or during the Classical age, which could be “promptly” consulted⁴. This term was also used to denote some relatively short pharmacopoeia, based on its equivalent, the “breviary” [= succinct summary containing a vital teaching].

The Court of Parliament decree ordering apothecaries to use the dispensary set out by the Faculty of Medicine

This decree insists on the obligatory nature of the use of the new Codex and the simultaneous prohibition of preparing remedies not contained therein: “*Thus, all apothecaries of the city and suburbia of Paris will be obliged to conform to the new dispensary drawn up by the Faculty of Medicine fait entitled: Codex Medicamentarius seu Pharmacopoea Parisiensis ; within six months from the date which a copy has been brought before the Clerk of the aforementioned Court in virtue of the decree whose purpose is to proscribe the aforementioned apothecaries from offering for sale any preparations and compositions other than those stated and described by the supplicants in the aforementioned apothecary, both in their quality and their quantity, or face a penalty of five hundred pounds*”.

Furthermore, this text limits the apothecaries' prerogatives to execute medical prescriptions – thus excluding all possibility of them advising in officinal preparations: “*Also ordering them to dispense the aforementioned compositions, and no other made by themselves, to the sick or to other people, nor made up from prescriptions other than those given by doctors of this faculty, or those from ordinary King’s doctors, nor without dated and signed prescriptions from the aforementioned doctors, of which the apothecaries will be obliged to keep faithful and accurate records, at risk of a penalty in accordance with the regulations and decrees laid out by the Court, amounting to five hundred pounds, half of which shall be payable to the King, the other half to the Faculty of Medicine*”.

Le Catalogus doctorum-regentium Facultatis Medicinae Parisiensis (anno MDCCLVIII): this was a list of all the Royal doctors of the Faculty of Medicine for the year 1758; the list includes the Dean (*decanus*) Jean-Baptiste Boyer.

Royal Privilege (Louis 15th), Versailles, 28th December 1757

Pondera: in order to facilitate the reading and comprehension of medical compositions presented in the work, the units of measurement including grains (*granum*), scrupula (*scrupulus*), the drachma (*drachma*), the ounce (*uncia*) and the pound (*libra*) are defined in this section.

Part 1 – Medicamenta simplicia, tam in Pharmacopoeae Parisiensis compositiones, quam in usum familiarem adhibenda

This first section lists - in alphabetic order – the various substances of natural origin used in the formulation of medicines listed in the rest of the volume. The majority are substances from species endemic to France or Europe, but also a few drugs with more exotic origins, for example North-American: the Canadian fir *Abies canadensis*, which could be used to make Canadian balm, as well as the Canadian wild ginger *Adiantum canadense*⁵.

Part 2 – Praeparationes: preparations

This second part describes the different methods of preparation of simple substances. It is subdivided into three sub-sections, as indicated below.

- I. Simplicium purgatio:** cleaning of simple substances
- II. Simplicium pulveratio and laevigatio:** grinding and crushing of simple substances
- III. Simplicium ustio:** incineration of simple substances

Part 3 – Compositiones galenicae: Galenic compositions

This third part lists numerous formulae for pharmaceutical preparations, categorized by their Galenic forms into thirty-two sub-sections, as described hereafter. Liquid pharmaceutical substances destined for oral administration are cited first; followed by solid pharmaceutical substances destined for the oral administration and finally pharmaceutical substances for external usage.

- I. Decocta pro potu:** decoctions to be drunk
- II. Decocta pro clisteribus:** decoctions to be administered using a clyster

- III. **Vina medicata:** medicinal wine
- IV. **Aceta medicata:** medicinal vinegar
- V. **Mellita:** mellites
- VI. **Emulsiones:** emulsions
- VII. **Syrupi simplices alterantes:** simple alterative syrups
- VIII. **Syrupi simplices purgantes:** simple purgative syrups
- IX. **Syrupi compositi alterantes:** composite alterative syrups
- X. **Syrupi compositi purgantes:** composite purgative syrups
- XI. **Rob et sapae:** rubs and soaps
- XII. **Extracta:** extracts
- XIII. **Jura et gelatinae:** juices and jellies
- XIV. **Eclegmata:** eclegmas (or looches)
- XV. **Conservae:** conserves
- XVI. **Pulveres:** powders
- XVII. **Confectiones:** confections
- XVIII. **Electuaria alternantia:** alterative electuaries
- XIX. **Electuaria purgantia:** purgative electuaries
- XX. **Tabellae purgantes:** purgative tablets
- XXI. **Tabellae alternantes:** alterative tablets
- XXII. **Pilulae purgantes:** purgative pills
- XXIII. **Pilulae alterantes:** alterative pills
- XXIV. **Trochisci purgantes:** purgative trochiscs
- XXV. **Trochisci alterantes:** alterative trochiscs
- XXVI. **Collyria:** eye drops
- XXXVII. **Olea per expressionem:** oils obtained through expression
- XXVIII. **Olea per infusionem et coctionem:** oils obtained through infusion and heating
- XXXIX. **Balsama:** balms
- XXX. **Cerata, pomata et unguenta:** waxes, pomades and unguents
- XXXI. **Emplastra:** poultices
- XXXII. **Appendix pro cadaverum conditura:** appendix of products used for the conservation of cadavers

Through this enumeration of the various sub-parts relating to galenic compositions, the recurring use of the descriptive terms “alterative” and “purgative” to characterise the same galenic form became apparent: thus, simple as well as composed syrups or even electuaries, tablets, pills and trochiscs are distributed respectively into two sub-categories, according to whether they are considered alterative or purgative. These two terms should be interpreted in the context of the theory of humours in use at this time, according to which a disease was caused by an imbalance between the four bodily humours: in this context, alterative⁶ remedies are medicines which fight against bad humours by changing their nature – whereas purgative⁷ remedies encourage the purging of these flawed or excessive humours.

4th part – *Operationes chymicae*: chemical operations

This fourth and last section outlines the main chemical operations involved in obtaining the aforementioned medicines. The formulae for chemical operations are listed here. All these operations and formulae are divided into sub-sections, as detailed hereafter.

I. **Distillationum modi:** modes of distillation

1. **Aquae distillitae simplices:** simple distilled waters
2. **Aquae distillitae compositae aut spirituosae:** composed distilled waters or alcoholates
3. **Appendix ad aquas:** appendix of waters
- II. **Spiritus volatiles:** volatile alcohols
- III. **Spiritus acidi:** acid alcohols
- IV. **Salia volatilia alkalina:** volatile alkaline salts
- V. **Olea distillata essentialia:** distilled essential oils
- VI. **Balsama:** balms
- VII. **Butyra:** butters
- VIII. **Flores:** flowers
- IX. **Tincturae:** tinctures
- X. **Salia essentialia:** essential salts
- XI. **Salia fixa acida:** fixed acid salts
- XII. **Salia alkalia:** alkaline salts
- XIII. **Salia lixivialia:** lixiviated salts
- XIV. **Sapones:** soaps
- XV. **Salia neutra:** neutral salts
- XVI. **Croci:** saffron-coloured preparations
- XVII. **Magisteria:** master medicines
- XVIII. **Reguli:** regulates (alloys including antimony regulate or alloy⁸)
- XIX. **Calces et calciformia:** limes and substances obtained by calcination
- XX. **Vitra:** vitrified matter

Index rerum alphabeticus: alphabetical index of things

This is an alphabetical index of ingredients and preparations cited in other parts of the Parisian Pharmacopoeia.

Ordo Pharmacopoeorum Parisiensis: Parisian Pharmacists order

The term “Order” is currently used to denote the national Order of Pharmacists (created under this name by the decree of the 5th May 1945⁹), it therefore seems a little anachronistic to speak here of the Order of Pharmacists of Paris. It is however true nonetheless that this part of the appendix consists of a list of Parisian pharmacists practising their art in 1758.

This pharmacopoeia concludes finally by explicitly listing all of its eight authors:

- Pierre Hugot, known as the *Syndicus* [= “representative” of the co-authors of the pharmacopoeia];
- Bernard Geniès;
- Jacques Trudo;
- Jean-Louis Lesbaupin;
- Jean-François Morice;
- François Le Sieur;
- Jean-Louis Poitevin;
- Jean-Pierre Trochereau.

From the *Codex Medicamentarius seu Pharmacopoea Parisiensis* (5th edition of 1758) to the *Codex Medicamentarius seu Pharmacopoea Gallica* (1st edition of 1818/1819)

Within a context of anarchic explosion of local or regional pharmacopoeia at the beginning of the 19th century, article 38 of the law of the 21 germinal an XI¹⁰ (11th April 1803) recommended the creation of a standardised nationwide pharmacopoeia: “*the government will commission Medical School professors, together with the Schools of Pharmacists, to write a Codex or Formula containing the medicinal and pharmaceutical preparations that must be upheld by all pharmacists. This formula must contain sufficiently varied preparations as to take account of the differences in climate and regional productions throughout the French territory: it shall be published only with the sanction of the government and by its orders*”¹¹. This article 38 set out the method for the production of these Pharmacopoeia, which two centuries later, is still in use: a minister responsible for technical commission is charged with preparing the texts which will then be published in the Pharmacopoeia.

This desire to create a standardised national pharmacopoeia was also formulated by the Consul for civil (public) hospices: “*We are impatient to see a volume which encompasses this knowledge, presenting it together with the developments which it may undergo; a Pharmacopoeia where finally all the medicines will be adequately given their full place, and which will deserve the title of National Pharmacopoeia. It will be the fruit of the meditations of a small number of wise men chosen from among the three orders of citizens occupying the three areas of the art of healing*” (i.e. doctors, surgeons and pharmacists)¹².

This task commissioned to Fourcroy (who was not a pharmacist but a doctor and chemist) was for the writing and definitive codification of remedies – a decision which resulted in the first edition of the *Codex Medicamentarius Gallicus* (this name was still in use until 1963; or its abridged version, *Codex*) which was published in 1818 (in its original Latin version) then in 1819 (in its French version) and which finally became the official pharmacopoeia for all the pharmacists of France¹³. This first national edition was the subject to considerable criticism, as much for its style as for its content, emanating both from French pharmacists (members of the Paris pharmacists’ society for the most part) and from scholars and foreign journalists¹⁴.

Notes and bibliography

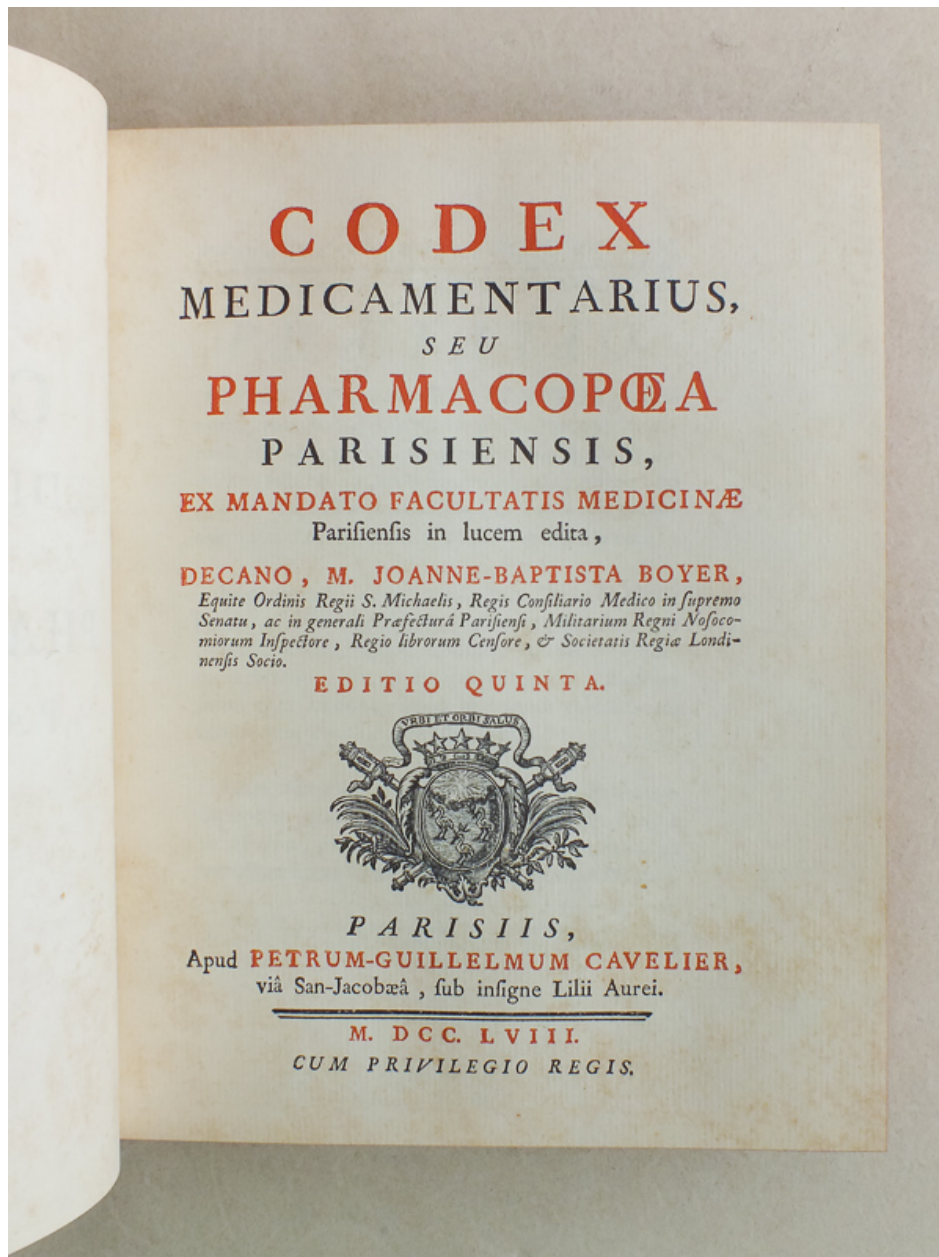
- (1) Concerning the publication of the Parisian Pharmacopoeia and the related comments, see the article “L’orageuse naissance du Codex ” (The tempestuous birth of the Codex), online since June 2018 on the SHP website: <http://www.shp-asso.org/expositioncodex/>.
- (2) Concerning the “antimony dispute”, see the eponymous chapter from the work by Prof. O. LAFONT, *Galien glorifié, Galien contesté* (Galen glorified, Galen contested) ..., Pharmathèmes, 2013, pp. 37-41.
- (3) The French national library has made a digital version of this Parisian pharmacopoeia of 1758 available and it is clearly entitled “*editio quinta*” (5th edition); this edition can be read and downloaded at the following address:
<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9671905p.r=Codex%20medicamentarius%20parisiensis%201758?rk=150215;2> .
- (4) On the subject of the definition of “promptuary”, see the “Ortolong” website (“tools and resources for correct usage of the language”) created and published by the CNRTL (National Centre for textual and lexical resources) of the University of Lorraine: www.cnrtl.fr/definition/promptuaire .
- (5) The Canada fir, Canada balm and Canadian spruce can also be found in certain modern Quebecois pharmacopoeia or those published after the *Codex Parisiensis* under study, and especially in the *Traité élémentaire de matière médicale et guide pratique des sœurs de charité de l’Asile de la Providence de Montréal* (Elementary treaty of medical matters and practical guide of the sisters of Charity and Asylum of Providence, Montreal) whose second edition was published in 1870.
- (6) Regarding alterative medicines, see the pamphlet “ALTERATIVE” written by Olivier LAFONT, in the *Dictionnaire d’histoire de la pharmacie. Des origines à la fin du XIX^e siècle* (Dictionary of the history of pharmacy, from its origins to the end of the 19th century) under the direction of Olivier LAFONT, 2nd revised and improved edition, Pharmathèmes, Paris 2007, p. 23.
- (7) Regarding purgative medicines, see the pamphlet “PURGATIVE” also written by Olivier LAFONT, in the *Dictionnaire d’histoire de la pharmacie. Des origines à la fin du XIX^e siècle* (Dictionary of the history of pharmacy, from its origins to the end of the 19th century) under the direction of Olivier LAFONT, 2nd revised and improved edition, Pharmathèmes, Paris 2007, pp. 391-393.
- (8) A “regulate” during the 17th century denoted the purest form of a metal. Antimony regulate or “pure” antimony was used to make emetic wine, as explained by Pierre LABRUDE, author of the pamphlet “Regulates”, in the *Dictionnaire d’histoire de la pharmacie. Des origines à la fin du XIX^e siècle* (Dictionary of the history of pharmacy, from its origins to the end of the 19th century) under the direction of Olivier LAFONT, 2nd revised and improved edition, Pharmathèmes, Paris 2007, p. 404.
- (9) Order n°45-919 of the 5th May 1945 creating a National Order of Pharmacists, *Journal officiel de la République française (Official Journal of the French Republic)* of the 6th May 1945, p. 2569.
- (10) Regarding the law of the 21 Germinal An XI, see article by Eric FOUASSIER entitled “Le cadre général de la loi du 21 Germinal An XI” (background of the law of the 21 Germinal

An XI), published and available online at:
artetpatrimoinepharmaceutique.fr/Publications/p17/Lecadre-general-de-la-loi-du-21-Germinal-An-XI.

- (11) The full text of the law of the 21 Germinal An XI can be found in volume 1 of the 6th edition of the *Codex medicamentarius sive Pharmacopoea Gallica*, Oberthur publications, Rennes, 1937.
- (12) Consult the article published for the bicentenary of the National Academy of Pharmacy (formerly the Parisian Pharmacists' Society, then the Pharmacists' Academy), *L'Académie nationale de Pharmacie de 1803 à 2003*, Pharmathèmes, 2003.
- (13) Cf. B. BONNEMAIN, "Année 2018 : le 200^e anniversaire de la publication de la première Pharmacopée française (*Year 2018 : the 200th anniversary of the publication of the first French Pharmacopoeia*)", forthcoming in a special volume of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Geschichte der Pharmazie, *Veröffentlichungen zur Pharmaziegeschichte*, Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft Stuttgart, 2019.
- (14) Cf. J. FLAHAUT, "La vie difficile du premier Codex national français (*The difficult genesis of the first national French Codex*)", in *Revue d'histoire de la pharmacie*, (*Review of the history of pharmacy*) 88th year, n° 327, 2000, p. 337-344.

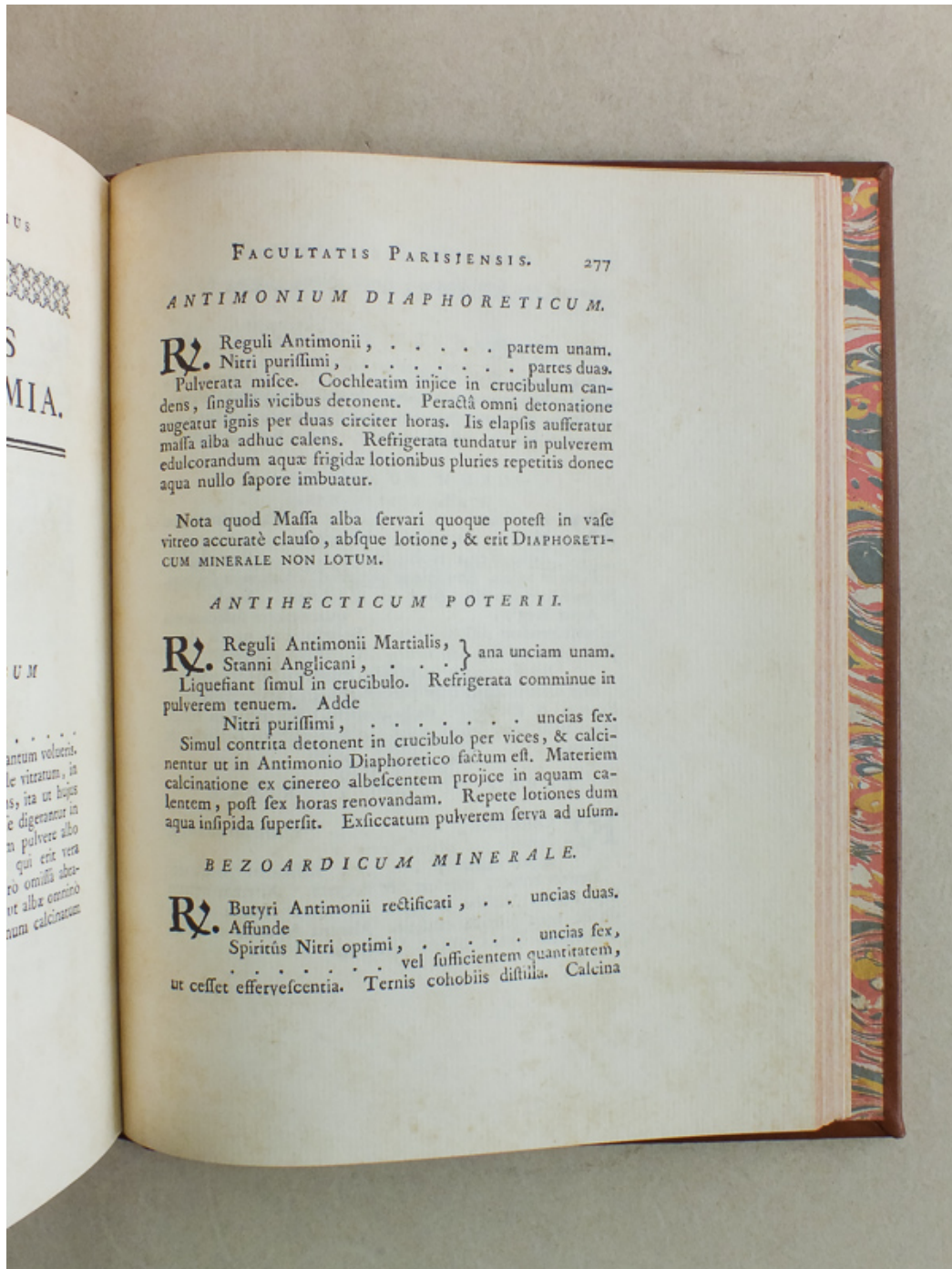
Illustrations

Title page of the *Codex Medicamentarius seu Pharmacopœa Parisiensis*, 5th edition, 1758



Source: https://www.librairie-du-cardinal.com/produit/36023_2.jpg

Example of preparations featured in the *Codex Medicamentarius seu Pharmacopoea Parisiensis*, 5th edition, 1758



Source: https://www.librairie-du-cardinal.com/produit/36023_7.jpg