

it down and moisten it well throughout on the flesh side with a linen cloth that is well moistened in good cow milk, or else in stale ale, or in water – but milk is better than is either ale or water. And when your skin is moistened enough (as previously said) take it and fold it together on the same flesh side that is moistened, and wind it in some old linen cloth, and lay it down on a moist ground, and lay some other thing that is heavy above it to hold it down, and so let it lie the length of two hours or somewhat less. And then take up your skin and stretch it all out flat on a *polling stake*⁹⁹ as the manner is. And when the skin is stretched out in its length and breadth, take a paring iron such as is intended for this, and pare it well and completely on the flesh side. And when it is completely pared as the manner is, take it and fold it up nicely, the coloured side inward and the flesh side outwards, and then lay it up in a clean place, for then it is done.

§8 Red *bazene*¹⁰⁰

To make of white *bazene* a manner of red leather which people call ‘red *bazene*’, the which red *bazene* serves for cordwainers¹⁰¹ and saddlers; you shall do like this. Take a nice white *bazene* skin that is completely without faults that is from Spain or from Portugal; but the Spanish leather is the better. And plunge it once or twice in a vessel with cold water, so that the skin may be more supple to handle, then wring out all the water. And take a good large *quarrel needle*¹⁰² and a double thread and sew the edges of your skin together, from the top to the tail. And when you come to the leg tie it about well with a double thread, and leave no more length unsewn than a little hole where you shall put in your colour with a funnel or with your hand. Then lay down your skin, and take half a *quartroun* of alum and dissolve it in a pint of water and somewhat more. And when it is dissolved, take it and pour it into your skin, then tie the skin above where it is open with a tie, and then take it and rub it well to and fro upon a *wool hurdle*¹⁰³ until all the

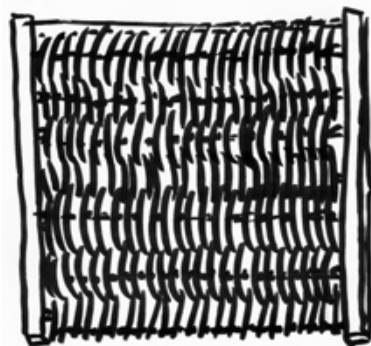


Figure 3 Wool hurdle.

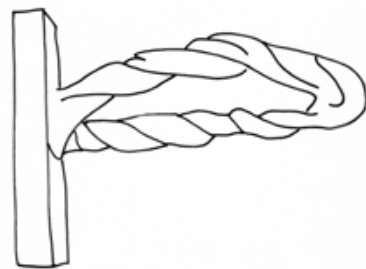


Figure 4 Withy.

99 *Polling stake*: probably a broad blade-like ridge arranged horizontally (wooden or metal, perhaps sharpened), across which a skin is to be stretched (and drawn) to soften and possibly slightly shave it, but in this case it may be identical with a *fleshing beam* (see the Glossary and Fig. 2).

100 *Bazene*: imitation red Córdoba leather (see the Glossary).

101 *Cordwainer*: a shoemaker and/or a worker in Cordovan leather.

102 *Quarrel needle*: a needle for use on skin (see the Glossary).

103 *Wool hurdle*: a movable framework (see the Glossary and Fig. 3).

alum is completely taken into your skin. Then take it and untie your skin, and go to a *withy*¹⁰⁴ and wring out all the water completely, so that it really leaves nothing in it; and if you have no *withy* get some other person to help you to wring out all the water that is in it as completely as you can. Then see that you have a good large vessel (whether a cauldron or pan or pot such that your skin may be plunged well into it) that is standing over the fire with hot water in it. Then take half a pound of nice crop madder¹⁰⁵ and divide it in two *quartrouns*. Then [take] a *quartroun* and put it in your skin with a funnel or with some other thing; and then put into it a little thin ale, the amount of a good saucerful and somewhat more. Then tie your skin again, and then rub that skin well under your hands to and fro upon the *wool hurdle*.

And when it is well rubbed three or four times, take up that skin and go to your vessel that is standing over the fire with hot water in it, and plunge it in there four or five times, and sometimes one end downwards and sometimes the other end downwards, so that your skin is thoroughly hot throughout; and always as soon as you have put it down in the hot water immediately take it up again without pausing, and let the water drop and run off. Then straight away, without any pausing, take and carry your skin and lay it up upon your wool hurdle, and press out all the water under your hands, as hard as you can in the world. And when all the water is completely pressed out of the skin, take it and rub it well, always to and fro, up and down, with your hands on the hurdle until it begins to grow somewhat cold.

Then take your skin and plunge it again in the hot water four or five times (in the same manner previously said and written). Then carry your skin again to the hurdle and press out all the water completely from it (in the manner previously written) then rub well your skin on that same hurdle between your hands (in the same manner previously written) until it grows cold again under your hands.

Then take your skin the third time and plunge it again four or five times in the hot water, and always the one end of the skin downwards [two or three] times, and at the other end of the skin either two or three times downwards, so that your skin is equally hot throughout; then immediately let the water drop off, and then carry it and lay it upon the wool hurdle and press out the water under your hands (in the manner previously written) and rub it well between your hands on the hurdle (in the manner previously written) until you see that your skin [grows] cold under your hands through your working.

104 *Withy*: a hoop, here attached to a post. In this case the skin should be looped through the *withy* while wringing it (see the Glossary and Fig. 4).

105 *Crop madder*: this is just madder (see the Glossary).

take a fleshing knife with two handles²²⁴ and flesh the skin on the flesh side on a beam²²⁵ like someone who would flesh leather. Then take to one sheepskin a *quartroun* of alum, [and] half a *quartroun* of nice white salt, and dissolve it in a pint of water. And when your alum and your salt are completely dissolved, then take your



Figure 5 Fleshing knife.



Figure 6 Fleshing beam: without (L) and with (R) skin.



Figure 7 Fleshing beam in use with curved fleshing knife.

sheepskin and lay it on a table or else in a good long *corntray*, the wool side downwards and the flesh side upwards. Then with a cup or with a dish take up a portion of your alum and your salt dissolved together, and lay it on your skin upon the flesh side, then rub it well with your hands upon the skin until it is all taken up into the flesh side; then take up more of your dissolved alum and salt and lay it on the skin and work it into your skin with rubbing, always on the flesh side; and sometimes take and rub your skin together flesh to flesh, and side-to-side; and do so incessantly until all your alum and your salt are completely taken up into your skin on the flesh side. Then let your skin lie still like this in the same vessel, or else in another vessel that is clean, until the next day. Then the next day, if there is any alum water left take a pint of it, or else of other clean water, and put it into a vessel, and add to it three ounces of nice flour, or else a good handful of flour will serve well enough, then stir them well together and make it into a manner of soft pap; then set it on the fire and heat it until it is as hot as a person may easily endure his hand in it, to guard against [excessive] heat. Then take your skin and lay it on a table or else in a *corntray*, the wool side downwards and the flesh side upwards; then take a portion of your soft pap and lay it on your skin upon the flesh side, and then rub it well into your skin with your hands, continually working to and fro, flesh to flesh, and side to side, continually and repeatedly until it is all completely taken up into your skin on the flesh side, in just the same manner as you did first with your alum water. Now then, when you have prepared your alumed skin in this manner, hang it up to dry, the flesh side outwards and the wool side inwards, on a wall or on a line, and so let it hang until it is dry enough. And when it is dry go to a *withy* and *withy* it well in it, and fold the wool side inwards.²²⁶ And when it is well *withied* pare it nice and clean on the flesh side with a knife such as parers of glove

224 *Fleshing knife with two handles*: see Fig. 5.

225 *Beam*: see the Glossary (s.v. *Fleshing beam*) and Fig. 6.

226 The *withying* softens the otherwise stiff skin (in place of an oily or fatty dressing – the omission of dressing treatment may be why this process is termed ‘in haste’). The wool side is folded inwards while *withying* to protect the fur.

leather use. Then if the wool of your skin is too thick, take it and rasp off thereof as much as you want with a skinner's rasp, or else card it well and carefully on the wool side with a card such as these skimmers card these lambskins with, on a nice even table intended for that same craft, or else on what other table that is even and smooth is good enough for that, and then it is done.

§32²²⁷ Leather of Hungary²²⁸

To make leather of Hungary. Which leather serves to make saddle lappets²²⁹ and skirts²³⁰ and other harness that serves for carts and carriages.²³¹ At the first beginning take a neat's²³² hide when it is newly slain, and cast it into the water, and let it lie in it two or three days. And then take it out of the water and flesh it on the flesh side with a shaving knife on a fleshing beam.²³³ Then when you have fleshed your skin well, take another knife that is sharper, and do away the hair on a beam, and the grain also with the same knife, as the manner is. Then scrape off the water.

Then if your skin is large, take three pounds of alum, a pound and a half of common salt, and dissolve them together in three *potels* of water over the fire. Then when your alum and your salt are completely dissolved, take your skin and cut it evenly in two parts straight along the spine, and lay it in a long trough, the flesh side upwards. Then take your alum water with a cup or with a dish and lay it on your skin, and rub it well into it with your hands. And rub well each side of your skin to each other, and continually rubbing your alum water well into it, until your alum water is well taken up in it. Then wring your skin. And heat your water again over the fire, and then apply it again on your skin in the same manner as you did the first time. And then wring your skin again straight away. And heat it the third time [yet hotter²³⁴] over the fire, and do in the same manner previously written. And then let your skin lie like this still in the alum water all of a night or two. And then the next day take your alum water, and mix it with two pounds of nice wheat meal in the manner of soft pap, then set

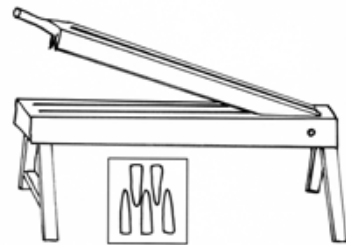


Figure 8 Brake: linen brake. Inset: end view of intermeshing 'blades'.

227 §32: this recipe is the most corrupt (or confusingly phrased) in MS T (somewhat less so in MS S).

228 Hungary leather is that which is tanned with alum and salt. The three quotations in *MED* (s.v. *Hungari*, n.) all show Hungary leather used for horse harness, which is consistent with the uses itemised here.

229 *Lappets*: MS *lappis*, 'reins', 'traces', 'strips of leather', but also 'flaps'.

230 *Skirts*: MS *skirthes*. Saddle skirts are the flaps or lower parts of a saddle (but perhaps understand 'girths', i.e. straps).

231 *Carts and carriages*: MS *chares and charettes*, types of horse-drawn vehicles.

232 *Neat*: a generic bovid such as a cow or bull.

233 *Fleshing beam*: see the Glossary and Fig. 6.

234 *Yet hotter*: in MS S only, MS T omits, but the summary at the end of this recipe supports it ('at the third ... as hot as you can endure', etc.).

Concordance T–S

T	S	T	S	T	S
§1	§C7	§28	§C15	§34	§C20
§2	§C8	§29	§C3	§36	§C9
§9	§C17	§30	§C4	§46	§C10
§11	§C13	§31	§C5	§50	§C18
§12	§C14	§32	§C6	§58	§C1
§26	§C16	§33	§C19	§59	§C2

Substantial variants in MS S

Given here in translation.

MS T §1 = MS S §C7

The beginning of this recipe is very compressed in MS S:

‘Take a large earthenware pot or a barrel, and put in it a portion of good strong red wine dregs, and hang in the pot nice broad plates of new lead such that none touch another, an inch from the dregs, and enclose it in hot horse dung so that no air comes in nor out, and let it stand thus for six weeks or more, for the longer it stands the better it is. When you want to open your vessel and take out all your plates of lead ...’

MS T §58 = MS S §C1

The beginning of this recipe as far as this point is very abbreviated in MS S. It also differs in using ashes of bean straw ‘or of wood’, and it adds quicklime:

‘Black soap shall be made of capital and of oil together; ‘capital’ is a lye, it is made of ashes of bean straw, [margin adds: ‘or of wood ashes’], and quicklime, but the ashes shall be double [in quantity] to the lime, and it shall be made in the manner of lye [i.e. by repeatedly pouring water through the ash-lime mixture], but after it has [taken up] the strength of the strength of the first ashes that you poured it on, you shall pour it onto new ashes until it is well made. It must be clear as lye, and so strong and thick that it will support an egg such that it does not sink to the ground. And then put the clear lye in a vessel well-closed until the next day.’
 [Thereafter as MS T §58: *And then the next day ...*]

Additional recipes not in MS T

Edited in *The Crafte of Lymmyng and the Maner of Steynyng* (Clarke 2016: 204–6).

[§C11] Black soap

Here is another recipe for black soap. Take one bushel⁴⁰⁴ of wood ashes, and one bushel of quicklime,⁴⁰⁵ and two bushels of common ashes, and mix them well together. Then take three or four or five or six tubs made of half barrels or half tuns,⁴⁰⁶ according to whether your work is more or less [in quantity], and set every vessel next to another, and make a hole in every vessel's bottom, and lay in every vessel a quantity of straw. Then divide up your aforesaid ashes and put into every vessel the same amount. Then take water and put it into every vessel such that the ashes are wet through, and see that a little of the water comes through and out,⁴⁰⁷ and treat every vessel like this. Then take whatever water you want, and add to your first vessel whatever quantity you want according to how much ashes you have, and let it run through and out, and run like that through the second, and so through all,⁴⁰⁸ until the time that you lay a woollen cloth in your lye and it dissolves in there, and that is the test.

Then take a vessel with a deep bottom, a pan or a cauldron such as you need, larger or smaller according to that which your work is. And put in four gallons of lye and a gallon of olive oil, and preferably Seville [oil]⁴⁰⁹ rather than any other, and preferably the dregs of tuns⁴¹⁰ rather than clear oil. And seethe it with a strong fire, and stir in it well, and continue like that until it grows thick and black. And this is the test: take a spatula and take [some of the mixture] up and away, and lay it on a cold stone, and when it is thick and black enough, take it from the fire, and put it in a barrel or another vessel such as you want.

[§C12] White soap

Take two bushels of wood ashes, and a bushel of lime, and three bushels of common ashes, such that there are no ashes of oak in there.⁴¹¹ And burn the common ashes twice. And make a lye in the same way as I gave an account before, and put it in a vessel with a flat bottom. And in two gallons of that lye, put four pounds of tallow, whatever tallow it is,⁴¹² and now and then as it seethes add more lye to it, until the time that one gallon is added in shortly after, and see that it is stirred well. And repeatedly take up [a sample] of it until it is such as you want to have it, and continue the fire well and you shall not fail.

404 *Bushel*: 8 gallons.

405 *Quicklime*: MS *lym unquent*.

406 *Tuns*: large barrels.

407 *Through and out*: to ensure that the ash is truly saturated.

408 That is, take the liquid that has run out of the first vessel and pour it into the second vessel, then when it comes out, pour that same liquid into the third vessel and so on, thus each time increasing the concentration of the lye.

409 *Seville*: MS *Cyvyle*. Regarding Seville oil see n. 352.

410 *Dregs*: MS *groundis*. The dregs, lees or sediment, i.e. (here) the part that is already somewhat aged and oxidised.

411 *No ashes of oak*. This seems odd, since hardwoods, notably oak, have a higher potash, calcium and potassium content than most woods, so presumably would be the most desirable for making lye.

412 *Whatever tallow*: i.e. regardless of the animal origin.