

Dietary prescriptions for Juan de Alarcón, secretary of Juan Rena

1. ACTIVITIES (1 TO 3 ACTIVITIES)

1. Comment on the text following the general instructions of the text commentary.
2. Do some internet research on the actual foundations of modern dietetics, paying special attention to the issues reflected in the text of this sheet, such as the importance nowadays given from a medical viewpoint to physical activity, recommended hours of sleep and state of mind as main elements to enjoy good health.
3. Point out the differences and similarities between Renaissance and current dietary proposals.

2. TECHNICAL SHEET

1.1.	"Title" of the document	Dietary prescriptions for Juan de Alarcón, secretary of Juan Rena.
1.2.	Document date	[1538]
1.3.	Documentary typology	Dietary prescriptions
1.4.	Language	Spanish
1.5.	Hand style	Humanist with certain court-hand style features
1.6.	Archive	Royal and General Archive of Navarre (AGN)
1.7.	Signature	AP_Rena, caj. 82, n.º 9-1
1.8.	Number of folios	1
1.9.	Support material	Support

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The socio-medical context of the document reflects the weight of health regimes in the Hispanic medical literature during the Renaissance, due to the number of treatises published along the 16th century in both Latin and Romance (Castilian or Catalan) and the frequent reissuing of ancient medieval texts. This medical literature can be traced to the medieval Galenic theory, which placed special emphasis on six things natural and six unnatural affecting bodily elements – i.e. humours, tissues and organs, and their organic functions. They also contributed to a better maintenance of health, in the case of 'air and environment', 'exercise and rest', 'food and

drink', 'sleep and wakefulness', 'excretions and secretions' and 'accidents of the soul or of the mind'. This knowledge began to spread through vernacular languages and largely reflecting certain attitudes of the social elites of the time, among which Galenism remained dominant until the 17th century.

4. SELECTED TEXT

“El señor Alarcón tiene una complexión muy regalada y delicada porque tiene el hígado algo flaco en virtud y el stómago húmedo y el bazo muy ventoso y la digestión primera y segunda débiles y tardías, y para esto a mí me parece que será bien que continúe para el reparo de su stómago a traer sobre él el **talegoncito** que le preparé bien faxado.

También que tome cada mañana mientras viva, una tableta de las que se ordenaron, con un trago o dos de vino blanco muy bueno, serenado de noche con dos o tres oijas de **acensiones** amargas machacadas puestas dentro, porque aunque al tomar del dicho vino le parezca amargo le será muy provechoso.

También tomará para comer, o la **pólbora** que tiene o una poca de **dragea** de canela y de anís.

También hará ejercicio en ayunas jugando a la pelota un rato, hasta que comience a sudar, y otro tanto antes que cene. Coma de su ave y carnero cocido en las mañanas con **hierbasanta** y perejil, y asado en las tardes. Beba buen vino blanco o tinto claro **maduro**, anisado medianamente. No beba agua cruda, no coma fruta cruda ni coma cosa agria ny salada, ni **pelaguda** ni legumina ni pescado sino fuese de alguna trucha. Coma algunos huevos frescos y de alguna manteca fresca. No duerma entre día ni haga , beba poco durante los comeres, quítese de enojos y tome cuanto placer pudiere, excepto que no converse con mujeres porque le pesará.

Haga buscar un poco de hígado de lobo, y yo le diré lo que ha de hacer para su salud, y con tanto Dios le tenga de su mano y quedo a su servició.

Doctor Medrano (*rubricado*)”.

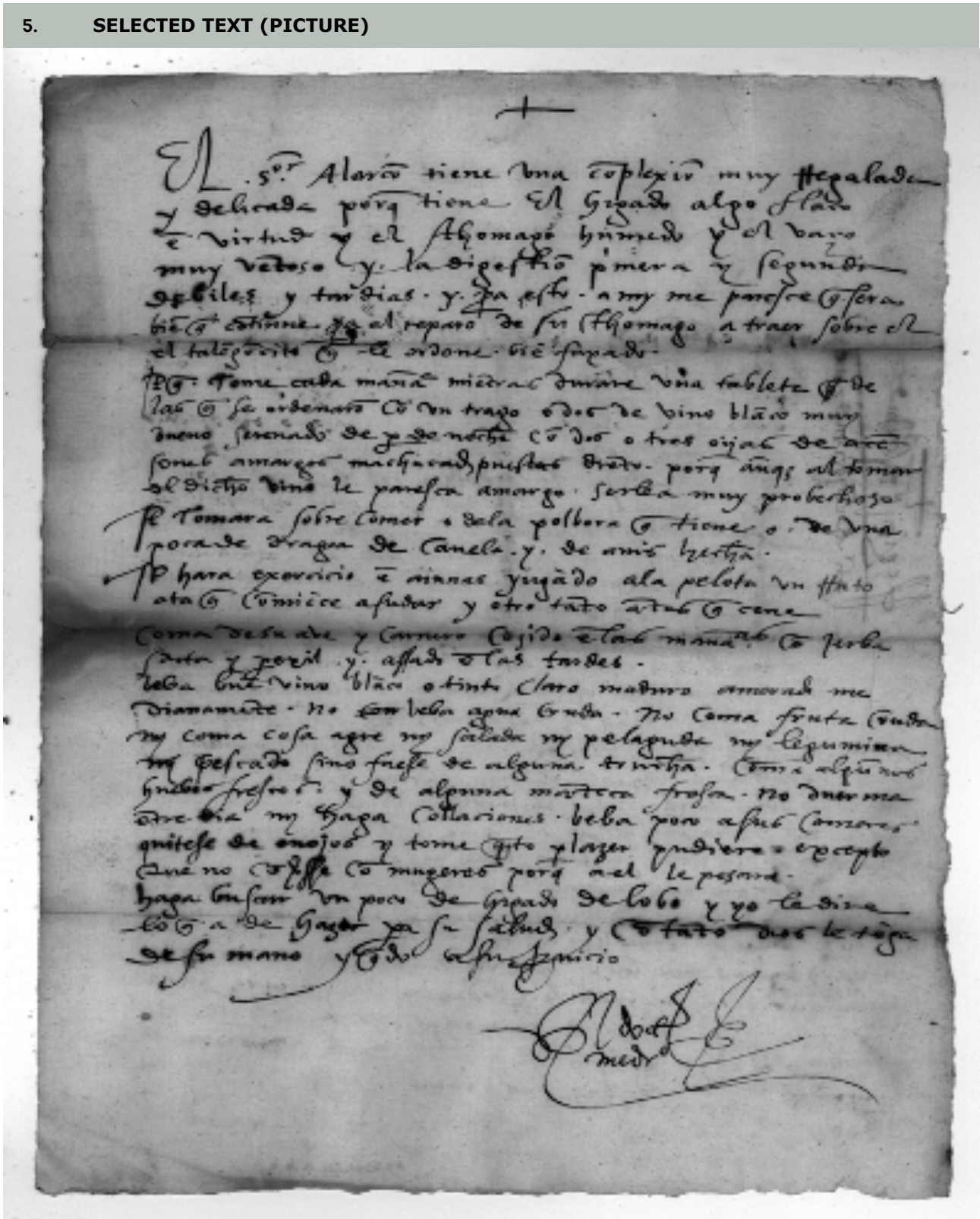
KEY WORDS

- **Talegoncito**: a small bag that contains a medicinal remedy and is applied on the parts of the body that are affected.
- **Acensiones**: wormwood (bitter and aromatic plant. There are many varieties).
- **Pólbora**: medication based on powdered substances.
- **Dragea**: pill.
- **Hierbasanta**: Fewerfew.
- **Maduro (vino)**: Wine that has achieved the necessary alcohol content.
- **Pelaguda**: rabbit and hare meat.
- **Colaciones: comidas; Kolazioa**: Snacks.

KEY WORDS ABOUT MEDICINE

- **Complexi3n:** typical quality of each individual or its members resulting from the mixture or interaction of its four qualities (coldness, heat, moisture and dryness of a substance).
- **Cualidad:** person's ways of being.
- **Digesti3n:** set of processes by which ingested food is converted into assimilable substances; three digestions occur: in the stomach, in the liver and in the veins and limbs.
- **Galenismo:** medical doctrines based essentially on classical Greek medicine and on the contributions of the Islamic world. The body and the world were conceived from the theory of the four elements of Empedocles, which Hippocrates (5th century BC) and his entire school proposed, according to which all the parts of the organism were formed by mixtures of variable proportions of the four humors: blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. Galen (2nd century AD) applied and completed this theory to create a closed system of interpretation of health and the illness. The humors were then related to the hours of the day, the seasons of the year, the stages of life...For them, health was a correct and balanced mixture of the four humors of the body.

5. SELECTED TEXT (PICTURE)



Archivos Particulares-Rena, caj. 82, n.º 9-1