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Ethnopharmacognostic survey on the natural ingredients used in folk cosmetics, cosmeceuticals and remedies for healing skin diseases in the inland Marches, Central-Eastern Italy☆

Andrea Pieroni[a,b,*], Cassandra L. Quave[c], Maria Lorena Villanelli[d], Paola Mangino[d], Giulia Sabbatini[d], Luigina Santini[d], Tamara Boccetti[d], Monica Profili[d], Tamara Ciccioli[d], Loredana Giovanna Rampa[d], Giovanna Antonini[d], Claudia Girolamini[d], Marcello Cecchi[d], Marco Tomasi[d]

[a] *Department of Pharmacy, School of Life Sciences, University of Bradford, Richmond Building, Richmond Road, Bradford BD17DP, UK*
[b] *SCH Group, Department of Social Sciences, Wageningen University and Research Centres, Postbus 8060, NL-6700 DA Wageningen, The Netherlands*
[c] *Department of Biology, HLS 320A, Center for Ethnobiology and Natural Products, Florida International University, Miami, FL 33199, USA*
[d] *Herbal Science Bachelor Degree, School of Agricultural Sciences, University of Ancona, c/o UNIFABRIANO, Via Don Riganelli 20, Fabriano (Ancona) I-60044, Italy*

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Abstract

An ethnopharmaceutical study focused on domestic cosmetics, cosmeceuticals, and remedies to heal skin diseases traditionally used in the inland part of the Marches region (Central-Eastern Italy) has been conducted. At present, traditional knowledge concerning home-made phytocosmetics is represented by both the remnants of an orally transmitted folk heritage and also by new forms of knowledge, sometimes coming from popular phytotherapeutical books and the mass media (out of the scope of this survey), but also as a result of recent migration trends from Eastern Europe.

We recorded approximately 135 cosmetic or cosmeceutical preparations prepared from more than 70 botanical species and a very few animal or mineral ingredients. Among the recorded preparations, developing a clear distinction amongst cosmetics, cosmeceuticals and pharmaceuticals for skin diseases is very problematic, confirming that in folk knowledge systems medicinal products for healing skin diseases and cosmetics have often been perceived as two poles of a continuum.

Many of the quoted species represented well-known medicinal plants of the European phytotherapy, although we also recorded a few unusual plant taxa, which are briefly discussed under the perspective of their eventual phytochemical and/or phytopharmacological potentialities. Exotic drugs or precious essences, even native of the Mediterranean, were not quoted as ingredients for preparing perfumes and fragrances by the interviewees of the present study, thus indicating that popular cosmetic practices in rural Central Italy have taken a much separated path away from the cosmetic "know-how" of the aristocracy and high bourgeois classes of the last centuries.

Keywords: Ethnobotany; Cosmetics; Cosmeceuticals; Ethnopharmacology; Folklore; Migrations

1. Introduction

1.1. Cosmetics

"Cosmetic products" have been defined by the European Directive 93/35/EEC (European Commission, 1993) as "any substance or preparation intended to be placed in contact with the various external parts of the human body (epidermis, hair system, nails, lips and external genital organs) or with the teeth and the mucous membranes of the oral cavity with a view exclusively or mainly to cleaning them, perfuming them, changing their appearance and/or correcting body odours and/or protecting them or keeping them in good conditions". Over time, people have developed and used cosmetic products as fragrances and perfumes (Brunello, 1989; Manniche and Forman, 1999; Morris, 1999; Aftel, 2002). Differently from the widely spread idea that diffusion of cosmetics is a by-product of acculturated rich Western so-

☆ This article is dedicated to the memory of Jo Castle, pharmacy historian and passionate researcher of the history of cosmetics, unforgettable colleague and friend, who died January 9th 2004.

* Corresponding author.
E-mail address: a.pieroni@bradford.ac.uk (A. Pieroni).

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cieties, or have been only used by aristocratic and upper middle classes in the recent centuries in Europe, they also belong to the heritage of indigenous cultures (Vigueras and Portillo, 2001) and popular classes as well, as, for example, in southern Europe (Tammaro and Xepapadakis, 1986; Guarrera, 1994), although field investigations on these products have been much neglected in recent ethnobiological and ethnopharmaceutical studies.

1.2. Cosmeceuticals

If "drugs" have been defined as compounds used in the treatment and prevention of disease, or are intended to affect a physiologic function or structure of the body, and "cosmetics" have been labelled as substances that cleanse, or enhance the appearance of the skin without therapeutic benefits, there is also a "grey" area bordering these two fields, for which the term *cosmeceuticals* has been defined. Cosmeceuticals represent hybrids between drugs and cosmetic products and are intended to enhance both the health and beauty of the skin by external application (Elsner and Maibach, 2000; Millikan, 2001). As in the case of *food-medicines*, where food plants are consumed because they are thought to have more or less specific beneficial effects on health (Etkin, 1996; Pieroni, 2000, 2001; Pieroni et al., 2002), *cosmeceuticals* cover a border field between pharmaceuticals for skin diseases and cosmetics (Fig. 1).

1.3. Traditional knowledge (TK) on cosmetics and cosmeceuticals

The traditional use of plants against skin diseases and especially for "cosmeceutical" purposes is a common practice in the domestic medicine of many cultures. However, medical anthropological aspects of the aetiology of some skin affections are very complex and are not always completely understood (Grabner, 1963; Bartoli et al., 1997; Quave and Pieroni, 2001). In contrast to *food-medicines*, *cosmeceuticals* are much more difficult to be defined due to the fact that the concept of "improving the aesthetic value of the body" can change considerably by subjects even inside the same cultural framework. On the other hand, cosmetics as perfumes and deodorants have always been used by women in the rural peasant societies in southern Europe. Specific interdisciplinary studies on traditional knowledge (TK) related with cosmetic products have been never carried out so far.

1.4. The Marches

In this field study, we recorded the traditional use of home-made cosmetic and dermatological products in the inland territory of the Marches, in Central Italy. The Marches is the region of Central Italy located between the Adriatic side and the Umbria-Marches Apennins, it is mainly mountainous (highest mountain is the Mount Vettore, 2476 m, part of the Sibillini Mountains on the Umbrian border), but from the ridge of the Apennines it slopes gradually towards the Adriatic coast, which for long stretches is flat and straight, a narrow ribbon of sand lying against the fringes of the hills beyond. The natural vegetation has been greatly modified by man, originally to obtain arable land, later for tourist resorts. The woods that once spread over most of the area now cover only 16% of the region.

A demographic analysis of the regional population does not indicate a great degree of urbanisation. Ancona, the administrative centre, is the only town with over 100,000 inhabitants; and even the populations in the four provinces are fairly balanced. Intra-regional migration has thus been towards the many craft businesses on the hills and the factories and tourist attractions along the coast. Apart from those in the provinces, the main urban settlements are Fano, Iesi, Fermo, Civitanova Marche, San Benedetto del Tronto and Senigallia, all with over 30,000 inhabitants.

The Marches dialects can be divided into four main groups: the Emilia-Romagna dialect prevails to the north (province of Pesaro and Urbino, and part of the province of Ancona); in the centre (Ancona, Loreto, Iesi, Fabriano) the dialect is a mixture of northern and Umbrian–Tuscan fea-

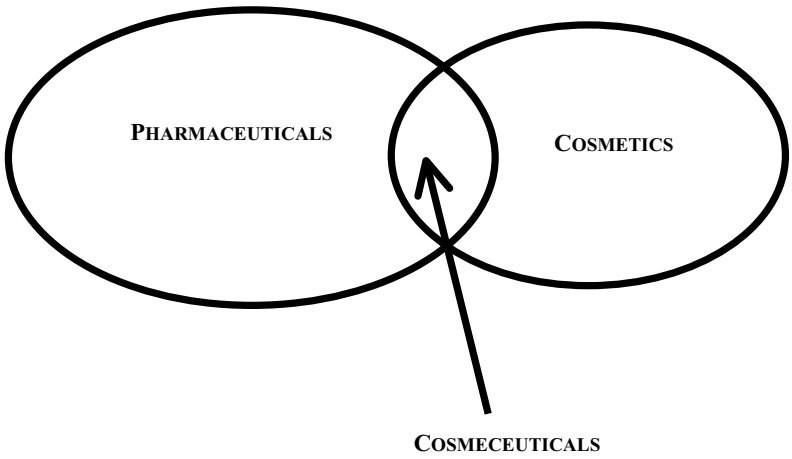

Fig. 1. Cosmeceuticals.

tures; a little farther south (province of Macerata, Fermo) the Umbrian–Latian type prevails; in the far south (province of Ascoli) the inflection acquires southern characteristics, especially those of Abruzzo.

Environmental conditions appear to be fairly satisfactory, given the absence of large industrial and urban concentrations, generally the source of high levels of pollution. Though farming methods are not particularly efficient, agriculture still employs one-sixth of the working population. There are two main reasons for this: farmers are strongly attached to their land and small craft businesses (nearly 50,000) which often provide part-time jobs or work at home, so that farming is a spare time activity. Livestock resources are nowadays rather limited.

Industrial development has spread mainly along the coast and mussels are traditionally harvested through a semi-craft system, although in the last few decades, large concerns have evolved regarding development, particularly near ports. Industry plays an increasing role in the local economy—and especially in the inland areas of the region—by middle and small industries, producing footwear, textiles, furniture, and paper (Fabriano). The development of these new sources of profit has affected the traditional socio-economic structure and a vast portion of traditional agro-pastoral activity has disappeared, sometimes substituted by newly conceived organic farming and integrated agro-tourist systems.

1.5. Studies on traditional ethnobotanical knowledge in the Marches

Very few ethnobotanical field studies have been carried out in the Marches in the last 50 years (Guarrera, 1981; Bellomaria, 1982; Bellomaria and Della Mora, 1982; Bellomaria and Lattanzi, 1982; Guarrera, 1982, 1990; Leporatti et al., 1985) and they have mainly investigated medicinal plants. The present work addresses anthropological issues regarding the remembrances of remedies and means of healing skin disease in the last 20th Century, whose practices today for the most part have been abandoned. In addition, it offers a look at the new dynamics and changes of TK in rural societies: in the inland Marches, as in many other rural areas in Western Europe, migrations and cultural *metissage* phenomena are greatly changing and transforming domestic *know-hows* and supposed "traditions". In this case, recent migration flows from Albania, Kossova, Macedonia, Romania, Poland and Ukraine (Caritas, 2002) have become particularly relevant.

2. Methods

Field work was conducted during the period, March–October 2002 and March–June 2003 in a few municipalities, mainly located in the inland part of the Marches (Central Italy, Fig. 2): Pergola, San Lorenzo in Campo, Serra Sant'Abbondio (Pesaro and Urbino Province), Arcevia, Cerreto d'Esi, Genga, Fabriano, Montecarotto, Sassoferrato, Senigallia (Ancona Province), Bolognola, Camerino, Corridonia, Civitanova Marche, San Severino Marche, Tolentino (Macerata Province), Montegiorgio, S. Elpidio a Mare (Ascoli Piceno Province) as well in the bordering Osimo (Ancona Province) and Gualdo Tadino (Perugia Province, Umbria region) territories.

Information concerning cosmeceuticals was collected using semi-structured interviews with 97 consenting participants (61 women, 36 men) whose age ranged from 28 to 94 years, and who still retain TK. A few nursing homes for the elderly were visited as well.

Interviewees were asked to quote all the home-made preparations which are or have been used for cosmetic purposes (for the hygiene of the face, the hair, the skin, the oral tract, including gargles and other antiseptic means for treating inflammations of the mouth), for the maintenance

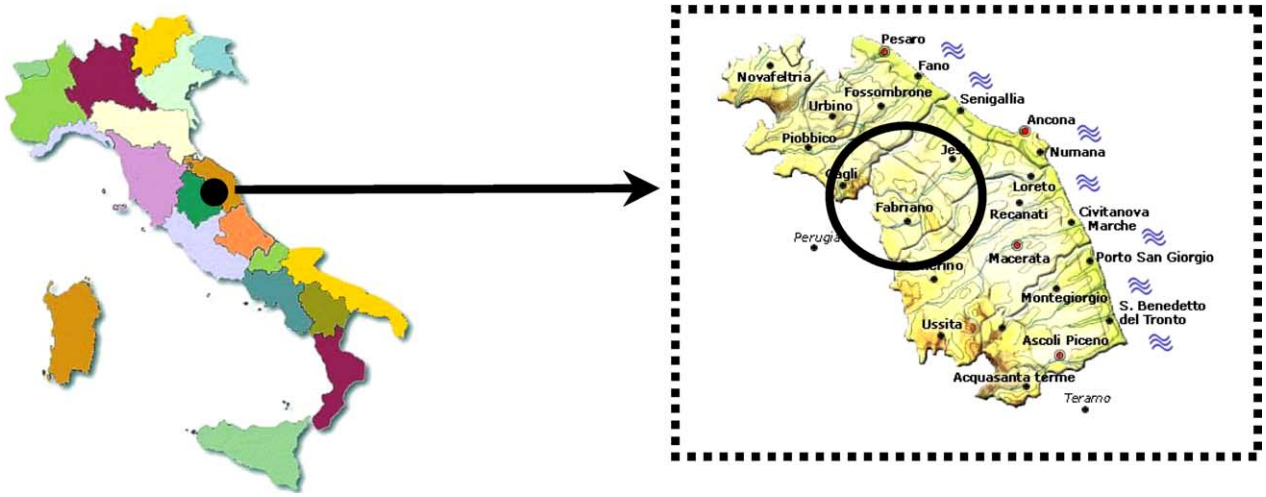

Fig. 2. The studied area.

of skin health or to increase its beauty (proper cosmetic field) or for healing skin diseases.

Species and uses that were cited with very precise quantitative details, and for which the knowledge probably came from popular media are not reported here. This kind of problem, due to a "contamination" of a supposed original knowledge with modern phytotherapeutical news, spread by the media (television and newspapers), is very well-known among ethnobiologists in the methodological approaches in rural Southern Europe (Cappelletti et al., 1983).

Only uses described by at least two diverse informants were considered. Moreover, data regarding the personal history of the informants, as well as migrant status, was recorded. Each non-cultivated botanical species recognised by the interviewees to be used for cosmetic or related aims was collected and identification was carried out by the first author; nomenclature follows the standard botanical work for the Italian flora (Pignatti, 2002). Voucher specimens were gathered and are deposited at the first author's address.

3. Results

Natural cosmeceuticals in the rural Marches are nowadays more frequently bought from herbal shops ("*erboristerie*") or from pharmacies. Nevertheless, in a few cases they are still prepared at home, especially for minor illnesses (gargles against sore throats, topical preparations for burns or skin inflammations), while the remembrance of many domestic practices is still popular amongst the elderly population.

The knowledge of domestic phytocosmetics is represented nowadays by both remnants of a folk heritage orally transmitted and also by new forms of knowledge, often originating in modern phytotherapeutical popular books and/or mass media (which we did not included in this study), and also by recent migration phenomena from Eastern Europe.

In Table 1, the phytocosmetics, phytocosmeceuticals and plant remedies traditionally used for healing skin diseases in the studied area are reported. Plant species representing the major ingredients of these compositions (and often the unique "active principle") are organized in the table in alphabetic order, while excipients (such as olive oil, bees wax or pig fat) are discussed only in the description of the preparations, with the exception of the cases in which they also represent the possible "active ingredients" of the formulation.

Plant-derived home-made cosmetics, cosmeceuticals and remedies for skin diseases include approximately 135 preparations coming from roughly 70 botanical species. A few animal or mineral derived remedies are listed in Table 2.

Distribution of TK about cosmetics, cosmeceuticals and remedies to treat skin diseases is widely spread among the studied population, although the variability of this knowledge is very high, suggesting that many remedies represent a sort of "familiar" tradition, where the domestic *know-how* of the women of the household was not regularly exchanged with those of other households inside the same community. Women played a primary role in the preparation and administration of many remedies. Their home-made remedies were prepared for the whole family in the form of simple poultices or compresses, often using bees wax, pig lard, butter or olive oil as excipients. Women were also the only producers and "consumers" of home-made cosmetics, including simple fragrances and perfumes.

Among the plant-derived preparations, it is very difficult to clearly distinguish between plants used as cosmetics, cosmeceuticals and pharmaceuticals for skin diseases, confirming that amongst popular cultures, these categories are indeed quite artificial. In other words, in traditional folk medical systems, medicinal products for healing skin diseases and cosmetics seem to have been often perceived as two poles of a continuum.

3.1. Folk cosmetics and aesthetic values among rural classes

Cosmetic preparations used for toning or colouring the skin, lightening or colouring the hair, inhibiting hair loss, or to perfume the skin have been recorded in our field study. They have been mainly used in the past and primarily by women. Most of the plant ingredients (oat, walnuts, camomile, pot marigold, carrot, almonds, cucumber, lavender, bay leaves, mint, rose and sweet violet petals) are used also today in the modern phytocosmetics (Roth and Kormann, 1996; D'Amelio, 1999), while a few ingredients (mainly represented by aromatic species) are less known nowadays for cosmetic purposes (basil, yarrow, corn flowers, lemon verbena, marshmallow, silver birch, hazel, apple fruits, corn poppy petals, oregano, thyme). A similar picture in the tradition of preparing popular "perfumed waters" has been recorded in Latium (Central-Western Italy, Guarrera, 1994 and in Central Spain, Verde López, 2002).

Under an anthropological point of view, it is interesting to note how until the recent past, women of rural classes tended to find diverse ingredients for the whitening of their skin, because a dark colour of the face and hand skin was considered synonymous with poverty and self-stigmatised: so the use of boiled chestnuts and potatoes, elderberry flowers and rice infusions indicate changes in the cultural concepts of aesthetics, which has taken place in the last decades. Nowadays, in fact, to have darkened skin, tanned by sunshine or cosmetic products, is normally considered a sign of wellness in Western societies.

On the other hand, art and aesthetics are definable only inside given cultural categories, and they are greatly affected by political, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions. The same definitions of art, representation, expression, beauty, quality, style, signs and meaning (semiotics) are historically and culturally dependent: for example, the fresh sensation of perfumes prepared with a prevalence of flower essences (as in *Eau de Cologne*, *Eau de Cananga*, *Eau de Floride*, *Eau de Lubin*) was very much appreciated by the bourgeois

Table 1
Plant-derived folk cosmetics, cosmeceuticals and remedies to heal skin diseases in the inland Marches

Botanical taxon (voucher specimens code)	Botanical family	Vernacular name in the Marches	English name	Quotation frequency (referred to the species)	Status	Part(s) used	Preparation	Popular use
Achillea millefolium L. (FABACHI)	Asteraceae	*Erba del soldato; erba pennina*	Yarrow	♣♣	W	Flowering tops	Macerate in white wine (ca. 10 days), in external application	To heal Chapped skin; cicatrising
							Decoction, in external washes	Haemostatic; cicatrising
						Flowers	Infusion, in external application	To "clean" the skin
Aesculus hippocastanum L. (FABAES)	Hippocastanaceae	*Castagna bastarda*	Horse chestnut	♣♣	W	Bark and leaves	Ointment made by mixing the decoction with olive oil or pig fat	Anti-haemorrhoids
Allium cepa L.	Liliaceae	*Cipolla*	Onion	♣♣♣	C	Bulb	Boiled and eaten as a soup	To heal throat and vocal chord inflammations
							Slices are rubbed on the skin	To heal insect bites; anti-burns**; against black-heads
							Compress made by grinding the bulb with salt	To heal finger bruises
							Compress made by adding ground onions to roasted soap and cheese	To heal furuncles
Allium sativum L.	Liliaceae	*Aglio*	Garlic	♣♣	C	Bulb	Cold macerate prepared from the crushed bulb, sometimes adding also bread and olive oil	Antiseptic; to heal dry and flaky skin of feet
							Nails scrape into the bulb	To strengthen the nails
							Cut, and externally applied	To heal rheumatisms and corns
							Rubbed on the skin	To relieve insect bites
							Macerate in olive oil	Anti-rheumatic; anti-otitis
						Bulb membrane	Applied in the mouth	To heal mouth ulcers
Althaea officinalis L. (FABALT)	Malvaceae	*Altea*	Marsh mallow	♣	W	Root	Decoction, in external washes	To prevent hair loss
Avena sativa L.	Graminae	*Biada*	Oats	♣♣♣	C	Seeds (oat meal)	Compress made by mixing one spoon of oat meal with one egg yolk and a spoon of honey	To treat "tired" skin
Balsamita major (L.) Desf. (FABBAL) (syn.: *Tanacetum balsamita* L.)	Asteraceae	*Erba della Madonna "lilla"*	Alecost; costmary	♣♣♣	C	Leaves	Dried, added in the bath (sometimes also adding yeast); as ingredient of the "St. John's water" (cold macerate in water of a few species, prepared at St. John's night, on 24th June)	To strengthen the skin of babies; skin toner and perfuming (ritual)
Beta vulgaris Alef	Chenopodiaceae	*Bieta*	Beet	♣	C	Leaves	Compress	Anti-haemorrhoids
Betula pendula Roth (FABBET)	Betulaceae	*Bidollo betulla*	Silver birch	♣	W	Bark	Decoction, in external washes	To prevent hair loss
						Buds and leaves	Decoction, in external application	cicatrising
Borago officinalis L. (FABBOR)	Boraginaceae	*Borragine*	Borage	♣	W	Leaves	Compress of raw or boiled leaves	To heal eczema and acne; anti-burns
Brassica oleracea L.	Brassicaceae	*Cavolo*	Cabbage	♣♣	C	Leaves	Topical applications	Cicatrising; to heal mastitis; anti-rheumatism
Bryonia dioica Jacq. (FABBRY)	Cucurbitaceae	*Zucca selvatica*	Bryony	♣	W	Fruits	Compress of crushed fruits	To heal bone pains; against toothache
Calendula officinalis L. (FABCAL)	Asteraceae	*Fiorarancio*	Pot marigold	♣♣♣	C	Flowers	Infusion, in external washes	Skin toner; to heal skin tears; anti-burns
							Ointment made with olive oil by infusion in the sunshine (ca. 5 days long)	To treat reddened skin
						Flower juice	Topical application	To enhance hair growth*
Capsicum annum L.	Solanaceae	*Peperoncino*	Chilli	♣	C	Fruits	Macerate in olive oil	Anti-rheumatic; anti-otitis
Carica papaya L.	Caricaceae	*Papaya*	Papaya	♣	C	Fruits flesh	Topical application	To lighten the skin; emollient***
Castanea sativa L.	Fagaceae	*Castagna*	Chestnut	♣♣♣	SC	Fruits	Decoction, in external washes	To enhance the colour of light hair and give a brown gloss
							Compress made from the boiled fruit pulp	Emollient; to whiten facial skin
						Bark	Decoction, in external washes	To treat reddened and inflamed skin
Centaurea cyanus L. (FABCEN)	Asteraceae	*Fiordaliso*	Cornflower	♣♣♣	W	Flowers	Infusion, in external application	To treat reddened eyes
							Infusion, in local application	To heal eye inflammations; to give a special gloss and blue nuance to grey and white hair (avoiding the yellowing of hair)
Ceratonia siliqua L.	Fabaceae	*Teghe marine*[pl]	Carob	♣	C	Seeds	Decoction, also made with almond epicarp and corn poppy stems and fruits	Against sore throat
Chelidonium major L.	Papaveraceae	*Celidonia*	Greater celandine	♣♣	W	Sap	Topical application	Against warts and calluses
Cirsium arvense (L.) Scop. (FABCIR)	Asteraceae	*Strummelli*[pl] *stoppoloni*[pl]	Creeping thistle	♣♣	W	Leaves	Compress of leaves juice or topic applications of chewed leaves	Antiseptic; cicatrising
Citrus aurantium L.	Rutaceae	*Arancio amaro*	Bitter orange	♣	C	Epicarp	Decoction	To heal cold#

Table 1 (*Continued*)

Botanical taxon (voucher specimens code)	Botanical family	Vernacular name in the Marches	English name	Quotation frequency (referred to the species)	Status	Part(s) used	Preparation	Popular use
Citrus limon (L.) Burm. f.	Rutaceae	*Limone*	Lemon	♣♣	C	Fruit juice	Poultice made with a boiled potato	To whiten the skin of the hands
							Compress made by mixing the juice with scrambled egg albumen	To soften facial skin
							Mixed with oil, in external application	To give a special gloss to the hair
							Gargles	To heal sore throat
							Instilled in the eye	To given a special effect to the glance
						Leaves	Compresses	To heal furuncles
Citrus sinensis (L.) Osneck	Rutaceae	*Arancio*	Orange	♣	C	Leaves	Compresses	to heal furuncles
Clematis vitalba L. (FABCLE)	Ranuncolaceae	*Vitalba*	Traveller's joy	♣	W	Stems	Decoction of the stems, after having eliminated the bark, in external washes	Anti-warts
Cocos nucifera L.	Palmae	*Cocco*	Coconut	♣	C	Flesh	Ground, applied externally on the hair	To give a special gloss and maintain soft hair***
Corylus avellana L. (FABCOR)	Betulaceae	*Ciaccarelle*[pl]	Hazel	♣	W	Leaves	Decoction, in external washes	To make the skin "younger" and to give it colour
Crataegus monogyna Jacq. (FABCRA)	Rosaceae	*Biancospino; perelle rosse*[pl]	Hawthorn	♣♣	W	Fruits	Decoction, drunk	Against sore throat
						Flowers	Compress of boiled crushed flowers	Skin emollient
Cucumis sativus L.	Cucurbitaceae	*Milangula*	Cucumber	♣♣	C	Seeds	Compress of crushed seeds	against wrinkles
Cydonia oblonga Mill.	Rosaceae	*Mela cotogna*	Quince	♣	C	Fruits	Decoction	Emollient for the skin
Daucus carota L.	Apiaceae	*Carota*	Carrot	♣♣♣	C	Root	Compress prepared with crushed boiled carrots, a spoonful of honey and the water remaining after boiling rice	Skin toner; against Burns
							Ground, in external application	Against burns
							Decoction, topical application	Against burns; cicatrising*
Dianthus caryophyllus L.	Caryophyllaceae	*Garofano*	Carnation	♣	C	Petals	As an ingredient of the "St. John's water" (cold macerate in water of a few species, prepared at St. John's night, on 24th June)	Skin toner and perfuming (ritual)
Equisetum arvense L. (FABEQUI)	Equisetaceae	*Coda di cavallo*	Field horsetail	♣♣	W	Aerial parts	Decoction, instilled in nose	Haemostatic
							Compresses	To strengthen the hair
							Compress of crushed aerial parts and honey	To reinforce finger and toe nails
Eupatorium cannabinum L. (FABEUP)	Asteraceae	*Erba rozza*	Hemp agrimony	♣	W	Flowering tops	Ointment prepared by grinding flowering tops with pig fat in a mortar	Cicatrising
Euphorbia sp.	Euphorbiaceae			♣	W	Latex	Topical application	Anti-warts
Ficus carica L. (FABFIC)	Moraceae	*Fico*	Fig	♣♣	W	Latex	Applied externally	Cicatrising; anti-warts (also#); to heal calluses/corns on the skin; to whiten dark skin spots
						Leaves	As an ingredient of the "St. John's water" (cold macerate in water of a few species, prepared at St. John's night, on 24th June)	Skin toner and perfuming (ritual)
Fragaria vesca L. (FABFRA)	Rosaceae	*Fragola*	Strawberry	♣	C & W	Leaves	Decoction, gargled	Against sore throat*
Hedera helix L. (FABHED)	Araliaceae	*Edera; ellera abbracciabosco*	Ivy	♣♣♣	W	Leaves	Infusion, in external washes	To give a gloss or colour to white hair
							Infusion, in external washes	To treat swollen feet and legs
							Decoction, in external washes	to Strengthen the hair
							Macerate in olive oil	To heal haematoma
Hypericum perforatum L. (FABHYP)	Guttiferae	*Scacciadiavoli; erba di San Giovanni; erbe del perico*	St. John's wort	♣♣♣	W	Flowers	Macerate in olive oil with German camomile flowers, in external application	To heal eye inflammations; to heal shingles
						Flowering tops (sometimes also adding in a second phase the fruits)	Macerate in olive oil	To heal burns; to treat skin tears; vulnerary
						Leaves	As an ingredient of the "St. John's water" (cold macerate in water of a few species, prepared at St. John's night, on 24th June)	Skin toner and perfuming (ritual)
						Leaves	Compress	To strengthen legs of babies

Juglans regia L.	Juglandaceae	*Noce*	Walnut	♣♣♣	SC	Leaves	Decoction, in external compress	Cicatrising; antiseptic of genital skin parts
						Leaves	As an ingredient of the "St. John's water" (cold macerate in water of a few species, prepared at St. John's night, on 24th June)	Skin toner and perfuming (ritual)
						Unripe fruits	Compress	To colour the hair (brown)
Laurus nobilis L.	Lauraceae	*Lauro*	Bay tree	♣♣	SC	Leaves	Decoction, in external washes	To prevent hair loss
							Compress made by grinding the leaves with wheat flour	To treat various skin inflammations
						Leaves	As an ingredient of the "St. John's water" (cold macerate in water of a few species, prepared at St. John's night, on 24th June)	Skin toner and perfuming (ritual)
Lavandula angustifolia Mill.	Lamiaceae	*Lavanda*	Lavender	♣♣♣	C	Flowering tops	Macerate in cold water together with rosemary and thyme flowering tops, then mixed with alcohol	Perfume
							Beaten with a stone and applied externally	Against viper bite
							Macerate in cold water (sometimes also adding rose petals)	To perfume and tonify the skin
Lavandula latifolia Medicus	Lamiaceae	*Spigolo*	Spike lavender	♣	C	Aerial parts	As an ingredient of the "St. John's water" (cold macerate in water of a few species, prepared at St. John's night, on 24th June)	Skin toner and perfuming (ritual)
Lawsonia inermis L.	Lythraceae	*Hennè*	Henna	♣	C	Leaves	Ground and suspended in water, compresses	To dye hair+
Linaria vulgaris Mill. (FABLIN)	Schrophulariaceae	*Linaiola*	Yellow toadflax	♣	W	Aerial parts	Compress made from a macerate of fresh aerial parts	Anti-haemorrhoids
Linum bienne Miller (FABLINU)	Linaceae	*Linu sarvaggiu*	Wild flax	♣	W	Seeds	Compress made by boiling the seeds in water	Anti-acne; against ear pains
Linum usatatissimum L.	Linaceae	*Linu*	Flax	♣	C	Seeds	Compress made by boiling the seeds in water	To relieve shoulder pains; anti-otitis
Lippia triphylla (L'Hér.) O. Kuntze	Verbenaceae	*Limoncella*	Lemon verbena	♣♣	C	Leaves and flowers	Rubbed on the skin and the clothes	Perfume
						Leaves	Poultice prepared with olive oil and petrol for application to the hair	Anti-lice; to give a special brightness to the hair
Lupinus albus L.	Fabaceae	*Lupino*	White lupin	♣	C	Seeds	Compress made by macerating the dried seeds in cold water for one day	Anti-lice
Lycopodium clavatum L. (FABLYC)	Lycopodiaceae	*Erba strega*	Common club moos	♣		Spores	Ointment made by mixing and heating olive oil with the spores	Against dermatitis
							Ground, external topical application	To treat reddened skin in babies
Malus domestica borkh.	Rosaceae	*Mela*	Apple	♣	C	Fruit	Very thin slices applied externally	Facial skin toner
Malva sylvestris L. (FABMAL)	Malvaceae	*Marva*	Mallow	♣♣♣	W	Leaves and flowers	Chewed	Against toothache
							Decoction, in gargles or washes	To treat gingival inflammations*; against sore throat and mouth inflammations; to treat diverse skin inflammations
							Decoction, in external washes or compresses	To treat diverse skin inflammations (especially on the face skin)
							Compress made crushing the leaves with sweet violet flowers and wax in a mortar	To perfume facial skin
						Aerial parts	Compress obtained by boiling the plant (sometimes also adding bread)	To heal furuncles and abscesses; cicatrising; to heal nail infections against gingival inflammations and toothache
Matricaria recutita L. (FABMAT)	Asteraceae	*Camomilla*	German camomile	♣♣♣	W	Flowering tops	Infusion or decoction, in washes or gargles	To make the hair blond; to heal skin, eyes and mouth inflammations;
							Infusion	To heal sore throat and eye inflammations
							Macerate in olive oil with St. John's wort flowers, in external application	To heal eye inflammations; to heal shingles
						Root	Decoction, in gargles	Against throat inflammations
Melissa officinalis L. (FABMEL)	Lamiaceae	*Melissa*	Lemon balm	♣	W	Leaves	Compress of crushed fresh leaves	To heal insect bite
Mentha spicata L.	Lamiaceae	*Menta*	Spearmint	♣♣	C	Leaves	Infusion, in washes or gargles	Mouth antiseptic; perfume for skin and mouth
Mentha suaveolens Ehrh. (FABMEN)	Lamiaceae	*Mentone*	Round-leaved mint	♣	W	Leaves	As an ingredient of the "St. John's water" (cold macerate in water of a few species, prepared at St. John's night, on 24th June)	Skin toner and perfuming (ritual)
Mespilus germanica L.	Rosaceae	*Nespolo*	Medlar	♣	W	Leaves	Decoction, in gargles	Against sore throat and mouth inflammations
Morus alba L.	Moraceae	*Gelso*	Mulberry	♣	SC	Leaves and fruits	Compresses	To heal toothache
Ocimum basilicum L.	Lamiaceae	*Basilico*	Basil	♣♣♣	C	Leaves	Inserted behind the ear	Perfuming

Table 1 (*Continued*)

Botanical taxon (voucher specimens code)	Botanical family	Vernacular name in the Marches	English name	Quotation frequency (referred to the species)	Status	Part(s) used	Preparation	Popular use
							Infusion, in gargles	Against sore throat
							Compress made from crushed leaves	To heal skin inflammations
							Infusion, in baths	Skin toner and perfume
						Leaves	As an ingredient of the “St. John’s water” (cold macerate in water of a few species, prepared at St. John’s night, on 24th June)	Skin toner and perfuming (ritual)
							Crushed	To relieve the pain caused by insect bites
							Decoction, in external application	suppurative
Olea europaea L.	Oleaceae	*Olivo*	Olive tree	♣♣	C	Fruits → oil	Topical application	Anti-lice (children); emollient for the skin; to heal labial herpes
							Topical application	Skin toner in case of inflammations caused by averse atmospheric events or in babies
							Mixed with water, in external application	Anti-burns; to relieve anal inflammations in babies
Origanum vulgare L.	Lamiaceae	*Origano*	Oregano	♣	C	Aerial parts	Added in baths	Body perfume
Oryza sativa L.	Graminae	*Riso*	Rice	♣♣	C	Seeds	Decoction, in external washes	To “whiten” facial skin
							Boiled and mixed with egg yolk, compresses	To relieve bruises
Papaver rhoeas L. (FABPAP)	Papaveraceae	*Papavero*	Corn poppy	♣♣♣	W	Stems and fruits	Decoction, also made with walnut epicarp and carob seeds	Against sore throat
						Petals	Decoction, in external washes	Against sore throat
							Rubbed on the skin	To colour the cheeks
Parietaria officinalis L. (FABPAR)	Urticaecae	*Erba muraria; erba muraiola; vetriola*	Pellitory of the wall	♣♣	W	Leaves	Compress of crushed fresh leaves	To heal arthritis and rheumatic pains; anti-haematomas; against furuncles
Petroselinum crispus (Mill.) Nyman ex AW Hill.	Apiaceae	*Prezzemolo*	Parsley	♣	C	Leaves	Decoction	To give the hair a special gloss
Plantago laceolata L. (FABPLA)	Plantaginaceae	*Orecchie di lepre rapocciò*	Ribwort plantain	♣♣	W	Leaves	Applied externally	Cicatrising; against furuncles; against snake and insect bites
Prunus cerasus L.	Rosaceae	*Cerase*[pl]	Sour cherry	♣♣	SC	Fruits	Poultice made from fruit flesh and lemon juice	To refresh and lighten the colour of the skin
Prunus dulcis (Miller) D.A. Webb	Rosaceae	*Mandulini*[pl]	Almond	♣♣♣	C	Epicarp	Decoction, also made with carob seeds and corn poppy stems and fruits	Against sore throat
						Endocarp	Compress made by mixing crushed almonds with an egg yolk	To treat “tired skin”
							Compress made by mixing crushed almonds with honey	To “clean” the skin
Punica granatum L.	Punicaceae	*Melagranata*	Pomegranate	♣	C	Fruit juice	Applied externally	To “clean” the face; to eliminate black heads
Quercus sp.	Fagaceae	*Cerqua*	Oak	♣	W	Bark (of young branches)	Decoction, in external washes	To treat oily hair
Ranunculus bulbosum L. (FABRAN1)	Ranuncolaceae	*Ranuncolo*	Bulbous buttercup	♣	W	Bulb	Slices rubbed carefully on the skin (not too much time: this could generate burns)	Anti-warts
Ranunculus sceleratus L. (FABRAN2)	Ranuncolaceae	*Ranuncolo*	Celery-leaved buttercup	♣	W	Aerial parts	Compress	Anti-sciatica
Raphanus sativus L. (FABRAP)	Brassicaceae	*Ravanello*	Radish	♣	C	Root juice	Juice, drunk	Against sore throat
Rapistrum rugosum (L.) All.	Brassicaceae	*Rapetta*	Wild radish	♣	W	Leaves	Externally applied	To heal legs furuncles
Rosa canina L. (FABROS) and *R. damascena* L.	Rosaceae	*Rosa*	Rose	♣♣♣	W C	Petals	Macerate in cold water (sometimes also adding lavender flowers or a few drops of vinegar)	Skin toner and perfume
							As an ingredient of the “St. John’s water” (cold macerate in water of a few species, prepared at St. John’s night, on 24th June)	Skin toner and perfuming (ritual)
Rosmarinus officinalis L.	Lamiaceae	*Rosmarino; rosmarinu*	Rosemary	♣♣♣	C	Leaves	Infuse with sage leaves and nettle roots, then make into an ointment with castor oil; macerate in olive oil	To treat oily hair; to strengthen the hair
							Decoctions, in bath	Tonic for the skin
						Flowering tops	Macerate in cold water together with thyme and lavender flowering tops, then mix with alcohol	Perfume
							Infusion	To “clean” and “smoothen” facial skin

Rubus fruticosus L. (FABRUB)	Rosaceae	*Rovo*	Blackberry	♣♣♣	W	Leaves	Compress of crushed fresh leaves	Against furuncles; suppurative; cicatrising; anti-bruises; anti-haemorrhoids
							Macerate in olive oil; compress with pig fat (sometimes after letting the fat go bad or rot)	Suppurative
							Decoction	Anti-sore thoat
Rumex crispus L. (FABRUM)	Polygonaceae	*Romice*	Curled dock	♣	W	Leaves	Compress obtained by quickly boiling the leaves	Against furuncles; to heal bruises and haematomas
Ruta graveolens L.	Rutaceae	*Ruta*	Rue	♣	C	Leaves	Poultice made by crushing the leaves in a mortar	Anti-acne
							Macerate in alcohol, in external applications	To heal muscular pains, and as anti-diaphoretic[##]
Salvia glutinosa L. (FABSAL)	Lamiaceae	*Erba delle emmorroidi*	Jupiter's distaff	♣	W	Roots	Macerate in olive oil	Anti-haemorrhoids
Salvia officinalis L.	Lamiaceae	*Salvia sarvia*	Sage	♣♣♣	C	Leaves	Infusion (sometimes also with rosemary leaves and nettle roots, and then in an ointment with castor oil)	To heal gingival and mouth inflammations; antiseptic
							External rubbing on the teeth	To whiten the teeth
							Decoction, externally applied	Antiseptic on wounds
Sambucus nigra L. (FABSAM)	Caprifoliaceae	*Sammucu*	Elderberry	♣♣♣	W	Flowers	Decoction	Skin toner and whitener
							Compress of boiled crushed flowers	Skin emollient
						Flowers and leaves	Poultice made by mixing and boiling the plant parts with milk	Anti-haemorrhoids
						Leaves	Dried, then grounded and inserted in the nose	Haemostatic
							Boiled, in compresses	Anti-burns
						Bark of young branches	Cut in small slices and externally applied	To heal swollen feet and hands
							Poultice	Anti-burns
Satureja montana L. (FABSAT)	Lamiaceae	*Persichina rosa, santoreggia*	Wild savory	♣♣	W	Aerial parts (including flowering tops)	As an ingredient of the "St. John's water" (cold macerate in water of a few species, prepared at st. John's night, on 24th june)	Skin toner and perfuming (ritual)
Solanum tuberosum L.	Solanaceae	*Patata; patielli*[pl]	Potato	♣♣♣	C	Tubers	Tuber slices applied externally	To heal eye inflammations, eye sockets and conjunctivitis; anti-burns; cicatrising; anti-bruises
							Poultice made from a boiled potato and lemon juice	To whiten the skin of the hands
Stachys sp. (FABSTA)	Scrophulariaceae	*Erba della Madonna*		♣	W	Aerial parts with flowers	Compresses	Anti-headache
Spartium junceum L. (FABSPA)	Fabaceae	*Ginestra*	Spanish broom	♣♣♣	W	Flowers	Crushed, in external application	Anti-lice
						Leaves	As an ingredient of the "St. John's water" (cold macerate in water of a few species, prepared at St. John's night, on 24th June)	Skin toner and perfuming (ritual)
Symphytum officinale L. (FABSYM)	Boraginaceae	*Erba di San Lorenzo*	Comfrey	♣	W	Leaves	Crushed, in topical applications	Cicatrising; anti-burns
Syzygium aromaticum (L.) Merr. et Perry	Myrtaceae	*Garofano*	Clove	♣	C	Flower bud	Inserted around the teeth	Against toothache
Taraxacum officinale Web. (FABTAR)	Asteraceae	*Piscialletto; soffione*	Dandelion	♣	W	Whole plant	Decoction, in washes	Anti-haemorrhoids; to heal varicose veins; to treat diverse skin inflammations
Tilia cordata Mill.	Tiliaceae	*Tiglio*	Lime	♣♣	SC	Flowers	Infusion, in gargles or washes	To heal sore throat and skin inflammations
Tricticum aestivum L.	Poaceae	*Grano*	Wheat	♣	C	Seeds	Heated, in compresses	Anti-arthrosis
Thymus vulgaris L.	Lamiaceae	*Timo*	Thyme	♣	C	Flowering tops	Cold water infusion together with rosemary and lavender flowering tops, then mixed with alcohol	Perfume
Ulmus minor Mill. (FABULM)	Ulmaceae	*Olmo*	Elm	♣	W	Bark	Decoction	Cicatrizing
						Bark (especially that extracted from young stem)	Topical application	Anti-wounds
						Galls	The internal content externally applied	Anti-wounds
Urtica dioica L. (FABURT)	Urticaceae	*Ortica*	Nettle	♣♣♣	W	Leaves	Decoction, drunk or more often externally applied in washes	Anti-dandruff; to strengthen hair and prevent hair loss; anti-haemorrhoids

Table 1 (*Continued*)

Botanical taxon (voucher specimens code)	Botanical family	Vernacular name in the Marches	English name	Quotation frequency (referred to the species)	Status	Part(s) used	Preparation	Popular use
							Decoction, externally applied to the skin	Emollient
						Aerial parts (with fruits)	Rubbed on the skin	To heal swollen feet an legs; against rheumatism; anti-sciatica
						Roots	Infusion with rosemary and sage leaves, then made into an ointment with castor oil	To treat oily hair
Vicia faba L.	Fabaceae	*Fava*	Broad bean	♣	C	Fruit	Compress made with the dried and ground legume and egg albumen	Anti-bruises
						Seed	Macerate in water, than applied on the eye	To heal haemorrhages in the eye
Viola odorata L. (FABVIO)	Violaceae	*Violetta*	Sweet violet	♣♣♣	W	Flowers	Macerate in cold water; compress made crushing the leaves with mallow leaves and wax in a mortar	Facial skin toner and perfume
Vitis vinifera L.	Vitaceae	*Vite*	Grape	♣♣♣	C	Sap (from young shoots)	Topical application	To treat eye inflammations; to prevent split ends in hair
						Wine	Drunk by the mother, retained in the mouth, then expelled, applied in external washes, adding corn meal	To strengthen the legs of babies
							Washes	To strengthen the legs
						Wine that is going to become vinegar	Externally applied	Antiseptic for wounds
						Vinegar	Applied externally (sometimes with petrol)	Anti-lice; prevent hair loss
							Gargles with salt	To heal sore throat
							Applied externally for one week	To treat hard, flaky skin of the feet
Zea mais L.	Graminae	*Granturco*	Corn	♣♣	C	Corn meal and semolina	Added in the bath	Skin toner, especially used for babies
diverse tree species				♣♣		Coal; ashes	Put in water, and then filtered, in washes	To clean the hair; against scabies

pl: plural; C: cultivated; SC: semi-cultivated (including plants "managed in the wild"); W: wild; *quotation frequency*: ♣: quoted by less than 10% of the informants; ♣♣: quoted by more than 10% and less than 40% of the informants; ♣♣♣: quoted by more than 40% of the informants. (∗) usage quoted by German migrants; (∗∗) usage quoted by Ukrainian migrants; (∗∗∗) usage quoted by Philipino migrants; (#) usage quoted by Paraguayan migrants; (##) usage quoted by Spanish migrants; (+) usage quoted by Moroccan migrants.

Table 2
Animal or mineral derived folk cosmeceuticals and popular remedies to heal skin diseases in the inland Marches

Ingredient	Preparation	Folk use
Antinomy and lead sulphides	Externally applied	To decorate eyes^{+} relieve burning eyes^{+}
Ashes	Externally applied	To heal sore throat
	With water applied on the hair	To give hair a special gloss and softness
Bees wax	Externally applied	To heal the hard, flaky skin of feet
Brick	Heated and externally applied on the breast	Anti-tussive
Calcium bicarbonate	Mixed with honey	Facial skin emollient
Charcoal	Pulverized, and applied on the teeth	To whiten the teeth
Clay	Suspended in water, topically applied	To give a special softness to skin and hair
Cobweb	Topical application	Cicatrising
Cow faeces	Topical application	Anti-burnes
Egg yolk	Applied externally	To strengthen the hair
Egg shell	Crushed and mixed with olive oil, in external application	Anti-otitis
Honey	Externally applied	To avoid swollen skin after a syringe injection
	Mixed with flour and egg yolk, externally applied	Suppurative for furuncles
	Mixed with calcium bicarbonate	Facial skin emollient
Human milk	A few drops instilled in the ear of babies	Anti-otitis
Petrol	Topical application	Anti-lice
Pig fat	Let rot and use as an excipient	Suppurative
Rabbit internal skin	Dried and used as a plaster, adhesive agent	Cicatrising
Salted water	Topical application	Cicatrising
Sand	Heated and applied on the lumbar region	To heal respiratory infections
Sea stone	Heated and applied on the breast	Against cough
Shell	Topically applied	To relieve sore throat (ritual use)
Snail	Topical application	Anti-warts$^{\#}$
Snake skin	Compresses on the head	To heal headache
Sulphur	Mixed with pig fat, externally applied	To heal scabies
Urine	Externally applied	Cicatrising
	Washes	Against wrinkles and chilblains
Water (naturally) containing colloidal sulphur	Compresses	Anti-wounds and anti-acne

(#) Usage quoted by Spanish migrants; (+) usage quoted by Moroccan migrants.

during the 19th Century (Cristiano, 2001) but it is not appreciated by the youngest generation nowadays. A broad spectrum of field studies would be necessary for analysing aesthetic systems under a cross-cultural perspective in order to better understand the socio-cultural significance of, and dynamic historical changes in, the use of traditional appearance-changing products.

3.2. Ethnocosmeceuticals

Many recorded formulations belong to the middle field of cosmeceuticals: they have been or still are used in fact to both enhance the appearance of the skin and produce not well definable benefits (as emollients, skin toners and strengtheners). Little is known about the phytopharmacology of the ingredients used in these preparations, they often had an emollient action, and were thought to restore and optimise the functions of the skin and skin annexes, which were highly affected by a lifestyle characterised by hard daily agro-pastoral activities.

This group of remedies includes onions, alecost, lime, hawthorn, nettle, ivy, flax, cherry fruits, radish, rosemary, pomegranate, rue, potatoes and even wine. A few of these species are in fact medicinal plants *tout-court*, very well-known in the European modern evidence-based phytotherapy (Schilcher and Kammerer, 2000; Barnes et al., 2002; Fintelmann and Weiss, 2002; Wichtl, 2002; Jäniche et al., 2003), and also in the most important southern European herbal treatise of the past five centuries (Mattioli, 1578).

3.3. Skin phytotherapeuticals

This third group of plants includes species used to heal well-defined afflictions of the skin apparatus. Some of these well-known medicinal plants are, in fact, widely used in modern phytotheraphy to heal skin diseases, and include horse chestnut, St. John's wort, mallow, and plantain.

An external or topical application of some of these plants has been never recorded before in modern ethnobotanical studies in Italy or the Marches: this is the case for such plants as borage, bulbous buttercup, briony, cabbage, common club moose, cornflower, Jupiter's distaff, and Spanish broom.

3.4. Phytochemical and phytopharmacological considerations

In the following paragraphs the most uncommon species recorded, and whose phytochemistry and phytopharmacology should be maybe better investigated in future surveys, are discussed.

3.4.1. Balsamita major

Balsamita major (alecost or costmary, also known as *Tanacetum balsamita* L.) represents a species that has been very popular among rural classes: it was and is mainly cultivated in the home-garden. It has been used in Italy not only for cosmetic and cosmeceutical purpose (as in the Marches), but also as sedative, anti-tussive, carminative, diuretic (Gastaldo, 1987) and even for aromatizing food in home-made omelettes (Sella, 1992). Nevertheless, its phytopharmacology is poorly known: while sesquiterpene lactones (Todorova and Ognyanov, 1989) and many volatile compounds (among them, carvone and α-thujone, as major constituents; Bylaite et al., 2000; Monfared et al., 2002) have recently been identified in the leaves and in the essential oil of this species, so far, biological assays have only shown a certain anti-microbial (Kubo and Kubo, 1995), antioxidant activity in rapeseed oil (Bandoniene et al., 2000), and insect anti-feedant (Kubo et al., 1996) activities.

3.4.2. Centaurea cyanus

The cornflower also represents a species that, despite its widespread use in the Italian medical phytotherapy for minor ocular inflammations (Campanini, 1998) (in the Marches we recorded both this use and a hair dyeing usage, which gives a special gloss blue nuance to the white hair of elderly women), is not still very well-known phytochemically.

Recently, polysaccharides found to be mainly composed of galacturonic acid, arabinose, glucose, rhamnose and galactose, and extracted from its flower-head, have shown anti-inflammatory and immunological effects (Garbaci et al., 1999).

3.4.3. Lycopodium clavatum

Common club moss (*Lycopodium clavatum*) has been subject to thorough toxicological screening because of its poisoning alkaloids (Roth and Kormann, 1996), and also for having been often confused in Central Europe with the very toxic fir club moss (*Lycopodium selago*), which contains a potent inhibitor of the acetylcholinesterase, huperzine A (Felgenhauer et al., 2000).

Nevertheless, recently methanolic extracts from the species have shown propyl endopeptidase inhibitory activity (Tezuka et al., 1999). This enzyme plays a role in metabolism of proline-containing neuropeptides (PEP), such as vasopressin, substance P and thyrotropin-releasing hormone (TRH), which are suggested to be involved with learning and memory processes and the specific inhibitors of PEP are expected to have antiamnesic effects.

Moreover, two new serraten triterpenes isolated from an ethanolic extract of *Lycopodium cernuum* have shown propyl endopeptidase inhibitory effects against *Candida albicans* secreted aspartic proteases (Zhang et al., 2002). Interestingly, in the studied area we recorded a very rare use of the spores of *Lycopodium clavatum* for preparing ointment to heal dermatitis. Further pharmacological studies taking account of this traditional use could be worthwhile.

3.5. Ingredients of animal and mineral origin

Bee products (wax and honey), pig fat, eggs, and even urine and cobwebs represent the most commonly reported ingredients of animal origin in the cosmetic apparatus of rural women (Table 2). A few of these ingredients were used as excipients and active ingredients at the same time, mainly as emollients.

3.6. Historical considerations

From the gathered data, it is possible to point out that traditional knowledge in producing domestic home-made cosmetics, cosmeceuticals and remedies for healing skin diseases as well, never includes exotic drugs (as Oriental spices or other Southern American or Asian essences such as vetiver, patchouli, Perù and Tolu balsams, benzoin, etc.), nor expensive ingredients from the Mediterranean (such us saffron, laudanum, iris, bergamot) or exclusive animal essences (as like civet, ambra, castoreum). The only exception to this is represented by the use of violets and roses.

In this sense, the folk cosmetic practices have taken a much separated path away from the historical “schools” of cosmetics. While this is also generally true in ethnopharmaceutical studies in the Mediterranean (Pieroni, 2000), the differences in the field of cosmetics are even more dramatic. This could be explained by the fact that while in the phytotherapy a certain osmosis between practices of the poor classes and those of the aristocrats and upper bourgeois existed during the Middle ages, especially due to the gardens of the monasteries, which passed through many forms of “high knowledge” to rural people, a similar process did not happen at all in the field of cosmetics. Moreover, many of the plant species, from which the most precious essences were and are extracted, and widely used in the last four centuries in the cosmetics, have never been widely cultivated in the South-European areas. The difficulty in acquisition of such exotic plants could also explain why they have been considered rare and have represented objects of prestige and symbols of status. Moreover, folk cosmetics in the Marches do not have also much in common with the natural ingredients that the industry nowadays generally uses for cosmetic preparations (Aburjai and Natseh, 2003).

3.7. Folklore versus multicultural societies: anthropological considerations

Today, the traditional rural culture of the inland Marches has quite disappeared. Information collected in this study basically represents the last traces of a rural world in the 20th Century. Most of the young people in the study areas are no longer dedicated to agricultural or pastoral activities, and new migrant waves from Eastern Europe are producing interesting and complex cross-cultural “hybridisations”, “creolisations”, “syncretisms”, “collages” and “bricolages” phenomena (Greverius, 2002). In the Marches, the most rele-

vant new migrant groups are from Albania, Morocco, Macedonia, Romania, Tunisia, Greece, Senegal, Poland, and Germany (Caritas, 2002) (the last "alternative" migration is not obviously due to economic reasons). The very few remaining pastoral activities are carried out by Kossova and Albanian shepherds and Eastern European women have brought their knowledge about food, medicinal and cosmetic plants into the region. The diverse home-made cosmetic preparations used by migrant women are reported in Table 1 with asterisks.

Among the ingredients quoted by migrants, it is interesting to see how *kohl* (antimony and lead sulphide), despite of its toxicity, is used among northern African women. The use of these materials has a long history: Egyptian women were using to ground antimony trisulfide to darken their eye-lids, and the same practice is nowadays spread among many Arabic countries and in the Near East (Bellakhdar, 1997; Hardy et al., 1998; Lev and Amar, 2000, 2002; Lev, 2000).

It is reasonable to assume that the influx of this new TK due to migration flows will continue to spread amongst the women in autochthonous Italian communities. Future studies should aim to gain a better understanding of how the newly introduced traditional knowledge of migrant groups merges with that of the autochthonous populations.

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