

# ‘Probatum est’. The Medical Recipes in London, Wellcome Library, MS 3009

*Miriam Criado-Peña, University of Malaga*

## *Abstract*

Recipe books are frequently encountered in Early Modern English scientific writing. They are of paramount importance to understand medical practice in the period and they usually gather collections of culinary and/or medical recipes. The present paper investigates the medical recipes contained in MS Wellcome 3009 (ff. 17r–90r), a 17th-century recipe book housed at the Wellcome Library in London. The medical recipes are analyzed in terms of their structural and linguistic features and, in this sense, five different stages are distinguished within the recipes: a) title; b) ingredients; c) preparation; d) application; and e) efficacy phrase.

Keywords: Early Modern English; medical recipes; recipe books; MS Wellcome 3009; textual organization

## *1. Introduction*

Among the different genres belonging to the functional literacy, recipe books stand out in the early modern period because they were regarded as ‘the principall part of Physick’ (Primrose 1651: 196). Recipe books are of crucial importance to comprehend medical practice in early modern England. They constitute the main source for understanding the gathering, circulation and dissemination of medical information in the pre-modern era (Pennel 2004; Leong & Pennel 2007). These medical texts are practically oriented as they are focused on providing practical remedies for different illnesses, with little information on medical theory. The recipes are conservative, and they are based on remedies found in earlier books. Collections of such recipes form the major group of recipe books, although they also occur within surgical texts and other specific medical treatises belonging to the learned tradition of writing (Taavitsainen 2001: 86).

The primary arena for the storage and employment of recipes was the household, where they were mainly used by women, either the housewives of the families or those who visited and took care of their friends, neighbors or the poor who required help (Slack 1979: 260). English housewives were then responsible for cooking and household medicine, a fact that explains why culinary and medical recipes are

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commonly found together in the same volumes. These medical manuscripts were the main type of texts found in the household at the time as ‘the link between cooking food and making medicines placed medicine squarely in the realm of the kitchen and women’s work’, and therefore the preparation of medicines required ‘household skills’ (Wear 2000: 52). In fact, medical recipes are often referred to as *kitchen physick* in the literature insofar as both types of recipes were prepared in a similar way (de la Cruz-Cabanillas 2017: 14). Women wrote down notes and gathered their knowledge in the form of recipe collections, later inherited by their daughters. Recipe books were therefore regarded as gifts among families, but they were also a way of socializing since they were shown to visitors for an exchange of knowledge in which they shared their recipes and obtained others from their guests (de la Cruz-Cabanillas 2016: 81). Leong and Pennell (2007: 138) comment on the process of circulation of recipes stating:

Instructions to make medicaments for all sorts of ailments and illnesses were exchanged during social visits, circulated in letters, and were recorded into bound notebooks. Sometimes they were even merely bundled together as batches of paper. The onward circulation of individually inscribed recipes and prescriptions, indeed of entire manuscripts, provided other compilers with an important source for their own collections.

In this way, a recipe collection is regarded as an ‘active, dynamic compilation that would create new texts’ and that ‘could be erased, expunged and altered’ (de la Cruz-Cabanillas 2016: 82). New additions were often added to recipes, and collections were completed by their inheritors, who continued the work of their mothers or mothers-in-law.

The rationale behind these recipes was never articulated. They represent ‘the debris of many different systems of thought’ and the procedures followed were similar to those used in medieval England (Thomas 1971: 185). The humoral theory consisting of hot and cold elements was still popular in the early modern period. This theory endorses the tenet of the existence of four basic elements (i.e., fire, water, air and earth) and four qualities (i.e., hot, cold, wet and dry), which were related to the four bodily fluids (i.e., blood, phlegm, yellow and black bile). In this vein, there was a connection between the dominant fluid or humor of a person and their temper in such a way that the abundance of blood resulted in a sanguine individual, the dominance of phlegm made the person phlegmatic, the prevalence of yellow bile

choleric and that of black bile was the cause of melancholy. The imbalance of humors was the reason for diseases and therefore, for recipes aimed at restoring health through the recovery of the lost balance (de la Cruz-Cabanillas 2016: 85). The ingredients employed in the recipes were mainly herbs and the vehicles used for the application of the recipes were multiple, such as syrup, sugar and honey, pills, powders and salves (Hunt 1990: 45).

The recipes found in the collections normally dealt with common physical pains and diseases. Among them, recipes for the treatment of toothaches and corns, smallpox and dropsy were recurrent. Webster (1979: 263) gathered the most common complaints in two collections together with the number of remedies provided for them as displayed in Table 1.<sup>1</sup>

Table 1. Common complaints and the number of remedies given for them

Agues and fevers	46	Sore eyes, webs in eyes	22
Stone (in bladder) and 'collic'	41	Headache and megrim	17
Coughs and phlegm	38	Bruises	17
Burns and scalds	33	Pain in reins (kidneys)	15
Aches and sciatica	31	Boils	15
Plague	30	Spots, pimples, skin diseases	12
Urinary complaints	29	Flux and bloody flux	11
Bleeding	27	Canker in mouth	11
Pain in back	24	Jaundice (black and yellow)	11

Early modern recipe books normally contain recipes for the treatment of similar pains and diseases, but they also share a common structure and a number of characteristics. Explanations in the texts are often provided with temporal adverbs such as *then* and *after*, and the range of transitive verbs used in recipes is often narrow, including verbs like *burn*, *boil*, *cut*, *do*, *put*, *make*, *let*, *drink*, *distil*, *melt* and *lay*, among others. These verbs normally occur in the imperative form following the instructive text type, although passive constructions are also found. Imperatives tell the reader what to do and how to do it and second person pronouns are commonly used to give instructions (Taavitsainen 2001: 98–106).

<sup>1</sup> The sources of study are *An Hospital for the Diseased* (1579) and *A Rich Store-house or Treasury for the Diseased* (1596).

In light of the importance of medical recipes for understanding medical practice in early modern England, the present paper delves into the medical recipes contained in MS Wellcome 3009 (henceforth W3009), a 17th-century recipe book housed at the Wellcome Library in London. These medical recipes are studied in terms of their textual organization and linguistic features and, in this sense, five different stages are distinguished within the recipes: a) title; b) ingredients; c) preparation; d) application; and e) efficacy phrase.

## 2. *The Witness*

The text under study, W3009, belongs to *The Málaga Corpus of Early Modern English Scientific Prose*, a research project that undertakes the electronic editing and corpus compilation of several hitherto unedited early modern scientific texts in the vernacular. The rationale behind this project can be explained in terms of a twofold objective: a) the electronic editing of unedited Early Modern English scientific manuscripts housed at Glasgow University Library, the Wellcome Library in London and the Rylands Library in Manchester, displaying both the digitized images together with the corresponding semi-diplomatic transcription; and b) the compilation of a POS-tagged corpus of Early Modern English *Fachprosa*.

W3009 is a 17th-century recipe book attributed to Elizabeth Jacob, although there are continuations by unknown hands. It is an example of hybrid recipe collections, as it includes medical recipes (ff. 17r–90r) and culinary recipes (ff. 179r–224r). The present work is only based on the medical material, which falls within the domain of therapeutic literature and contains instructions describing procedures to cure an ailment, maintain health or help restore a patient's general condition. In medieval collections, the normal order to follow in these recipes was *de capite ad pedem* (i.e., from head to foot) so as to facilitate their consultation. However, this arrangement is only respected in some early modern texts. As with W3009, recipes do not follow an established order, as shown in the index at the beginning of the volume. The index follows an alphabetical order enabling the reader to find with ease the illness or the part of the body that needs to be treated. In order to find a cure for the 'biting of mad dogs', for example, the index brings the reader to folios 50 and 139, while in the case of 'miscarriage' the recipes are found in

folios 68 and 126, thus demonstrating the random distribution of recipes throughout the text.

### *3. The Medical Recipes in W3009*

Medical recipes in Middle English and Early Modern English are normally characterized by different distinctive features. In this light, Mäkinen (2011: 160) proposes three criteria that need to be fulfilled by these recipes: they must have a) a passage stating the recipe's medical purpose; b) a passage specifying the ingredients; and c) an instance of a VP in the imperative denoting 'take', either in Latin or English. In addition to this, recipes also follow a standard pattern consisting of different stages. These steps have been extensively discussed in the literature, although some scholars treat them differently regarding the terminology used and the stages included during the process. Stannard (1982: 60–71) was the first to divide the components of medieval recipes distinguishing four steps: a) purpose; b) requisite ingredients and equipment; c) rules of procedure; and d) application and administration. This division of the structure of recipes has later been reformulated by different scholars. Carroll, for example, does not regard the enumeration of ingredients as a distinct stage within a recipe, as she states that 'according to the palaeographic evidence [...] the ingredients do not constitute a distinct section at all' (2006: 310). In this vein, she claims that any division of a recipe into more than two constituents (i.e., title and body) is not justified. This tenet is also held by Marttila (2014: 314–315), who classifies the recipes of six Middle English recipe collections into the same two steps, as the body 'is presented as a single block without further divisions'. Other authors, however, propose more elaborate divisions as more elements are identified within the recipes. Alonso-Almeida (2013: 72) suggests the following schema for Early Modern English recipes, in which the brackets indicate the optional stages and the asterisks imply variability of order:

(Title) \* Ingredients \* (Preparation) \* (Application) \* (Efficacy) \*  
(Storage) \* (Expiry date) \* (Virtues)

The same constituents are also identified by Marqués-Aguado (2018) in her study of the recipe book contained in MS Wellcome 8086. Other

scholars, however, consider more elements to be compulsory in recipes. Mäkinen (2011) recognizes five rhetorical moves: a) purpose; b) ingredients; c) procedure and equipment needed; d) application and administration; and e) rationale and incidental data. Among them, he only deems the last stage as optional insofar as it does not contain essential information for the identification of the text type.

The present work considers recipes as containing five different stages with the following structure: a) title; b) ingredients; c) preparation; d) application; and e) efficacy phrase. The fourth and fifth stages are regarded as optional since they were sometimes excluded in view of the fact that the information provided is not obligatory for the preparation of recipes. W3009 contains a number of medical recipes presented in no particular order, from f. 17r to f. 90r. These recipes describe the different steps to follow in the preparation of remedies aimed at curing numerous ailments and physical pains. Intertextuality among recipe books was commonplace in the period, and individual texts normally have ‘complicated and layered transmission histories’ (Taavitsainen, Pahta & Mäkinen 2006: 86). However, originality did not play an important role and therefore the sources were not indicated in the process of creation of new texts (Marqués-Aguado & Esteban-Segura 2020: 15). An excellent example of this exchange of information is seen in one of the recipes of W3009 (2), which has been compared to one of the recipes found in Elizabeth Grey’s *Choice Manual*<sup>2</sup> published in 1653 (1).<sup>3</sup>

(1) Doctor Stephens Sovereign Water.

Take a gallon of good Gascoign wine, then take Ginger, Galingal, Cancel, Nutmegs, Grains, Cloves, Annise-seeds, Caraway-seeds, of each a drachm, then take Sage,

(2) A Water vsed by Doctor Steuens For all Diseases

Take A Gallon of good Gascoigne wine, ginger, gallingall, Nutmegg, Canella, craines of paradice, Anyseeds, fenell seeds, and Caraway seeds

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<sup>2</sup> The complete title of the text is as follows: *A CHOICE MANVAL OF Rare and Select SECRETS IN PHYSICK AND CHYRURGERY; Collected and practised by the Right Honourable, the Countesse of Kent late deceased. As also most Exquisite ways of Preserving, Conserving, Candyng, &c.*

<sup>3</sup> The text is part of the corpus *Early Modern English Medical Texts* (EMEMT; Taavitsainen et al. 2010) from where it has been extracted.

Mints, red Roses, Thyme, Pellitorie, Rosemary, wild Thyme, Cammomile, Lavender, of each one handful; then bray both the Spices and the Hearbs, and put them all into the Wine, and let them stand for twelve houres, divers times stirring them, then still that in a Limbeck, but keep that which you still first by it self, for that is the best, but the other is good also, but not so good as the first. (p. 36).

of Each A drame add therto Sage, Time, red roses, mints, Cinament, pelitory, rosemary, wilde marjoru, Organy, or penyroyall, wild time, Cammomile, Lauender, and Auens of Each A handfull, bruise the spice small, and stamp the hearbes, put all into the foresaid wine, with A Quantity of fine muske, and let it soe continue for 12 houres, during which time, stire it often, and still it in A limbeck, and keep the first, and Second waters by themselues / (f. 83r).

(1) and (2) are the recipes of a water recommended by Doctor Stephens for the treatment of different diseases ('For all Diseases'). The similarities between the two are evident insofar as they share a similar title, most of the ingredients used to prepare the water, the indications provided in the preparation stage and the absence of the application step, which is not found in any of the texts. However, some differences are also seen in the two texts. The personal character of the recipes is noted in the presence of first-person recommendations of the scribe in (1), as they comment on the quality of the waters and give their opinion ('for that is the best, but the other is good also, but not so good as the first').

### 3.1. *Title*

The title is usually emphasized from the main text and it indicates what the recipe is for. It may contain the pain or disease to be treated and sometimes the author of the recipe is also added to the title (e.g., 'Mistress Middletons Receipt for a Cold'). The medical recipes in the manuscript under study amount to 604, which are indicated to readers in the index section at the beginning of the volume. The table of contents comprising the 'Deseases and wounds' (e.g., *aches*, *bladder*, *canker*, *measles*, etc.) is arranged alphabetically and after that, the index is

subdivided into sections according to the types of recipes, including the following groups: a) oils, ointment and pomatums; b) balsams and salves; c) diet drinks, possets and posset drink; d) electuaries and powder; e) spirits; f) waters; g) to make; and h) virtues of ye. The layout of the different sections is shown in Figures 1 and 2, in which the recipes are given along with the page numbers where they are found.<sup>4</sup>

Figure 1. Alphabetical table of contents

Figure 2. Table of contents according to the type of recipe

Titles usually follow a general structure in the recipes. Those found in W3009 are often short and display a similar structure. They have been classified according to Alonso-Almeida's taxonomy (2013: 73) and de la Cruz-Cabanillas's taxonomy (2017: 16), identifying up to 10 different formulaic templates. The additional group 'other' has also been included in order to cover those titles that do not conform to these structures.

- *To + inf. + NP*: To make pomander (f. 84v)
- *For + NP*: For The Plurasy (f. 83v)
- *For + v-ing*: For stoping of the liuer (f. 65v)

<sup>4</sup> The text presents a double foliation, and page numbers provided in the table of contents coincide with those appearing at the upper right-hand corner of rectos and at the left-hand side of versos.

- NP + *for* + NP: A Jelly For A consumption (f. 64r)
- NP + *against* + NP: A Preseruatiue Against the Plague (f. 77v)
- NP + *to* + inf. + NP: A medicine to stop the Tooth-ach (f. 86v)
- *How to* + inf.: How to make A Sear : cloth (f. 81v)
- NP: A purge (f. 40v)
- *Another* (+NP): Another (f. 81v)
- *Another for the same*: Another For The same (f. 81v)
- Other: Of the Stomach (f. 58r)

According to Taavitsainen, the most recurrent structure of headings contained in medieval recipe books is that of ‘a noun phrase accompanied by a prepositional phrase or an evaluative adjective’, although she also identifies other frequent formulae, such as ‘*for* + NP/VP’ (2001: 99). This is also the case of the text at hand since the most common pattern followed in the titles is ‘*for* + NP’, that is, *for* + the name of the disease or physical pain that is to be treated as, for instance, ‘for a Cold’ (f. 35r) or ‘for a stopage of vrine’ (f. 42v). Other usual titles are ‘NP + *for* + NP’ and ‘*to* + inf. + NP’ with 110 and 104 instances, respectively. The former presents the same structure as ‘*for* + NP’, although the type of recipe is also specified in the title (e.g., ‘a powder for the wind’ (f. 25v) or ‘a diet drink for the grief in the breast’ (f. 49v)). The latter, on the other hand, contains *to* + an infinitive verb followed by a noun phrase and is found in phrases such as ‘to Cure the Itch’ (f. 35r). Among the last type, two different groups are distinguished: those pointing out the material of the recipe, e.g., ‘to make Sirup of Hisop’ (f. 48r), and those indicating what the remedy is for ‘to stop Bleeding at the Nose’ (f. 42r).

The category ‘other’ includes 51 different formulae used in W3009 that differ from the previous structures. In most of the cases, titles are slightly different, normally with only one of the elements varying from the rest, as it occurs, for instance, with the constructions ‘*for the same*’ and ‘NP + *to* + NP’ (e.g., ‘Aptness to Conception’ (f. 78v)). The variations of the latter are commonly found in the text insofar as scribes employ two NPs and modify the element between them. These variants include ‘NP + *good for* + NP’, ‘NP + *from* + NP’ and ‘NP + *that* + NP’. The raw frequencies accounting for the formulae of the titles in W3009 are offered in Figure 3 below.

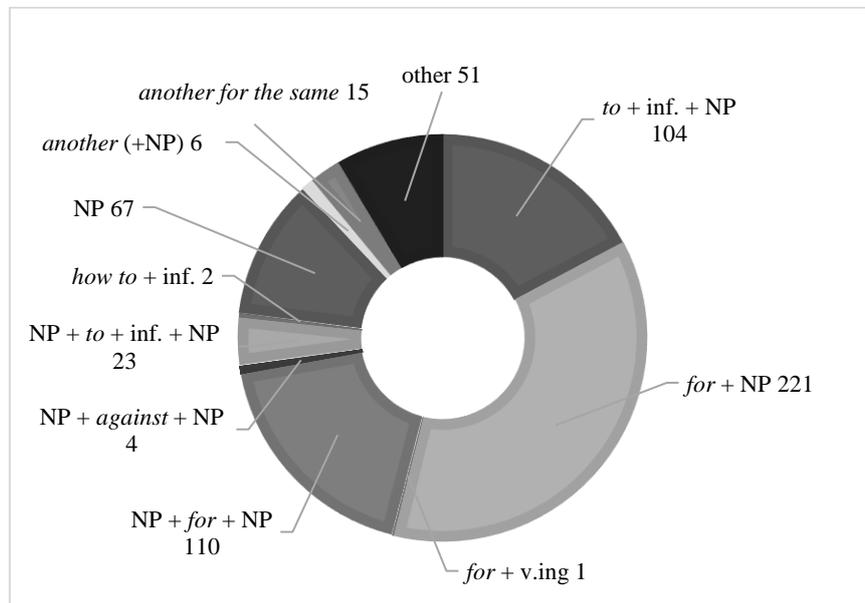


Figure 3. Title of recipes in W3009 (raw frequencies)

Interestingly enough, the quality of the recipe is sometimes stated in the title section using expressions such as ‘a very good’, ‘a sure’, ‘an approved’ and ‘an excellent/most excellent’, among others. In W3009, 40 out of 604 recipes (6.62%) contain evaluative adjectives used as ‘mechanisms to strengthen the validity of the recipe’ (Marqués-Aguado 2018: 250) as it occurs in ‘an Excellent receipt for A Quinsey’ on f. 46v. The following evaluative adjectives are found in the medical recipes in the present text: ‘excellent’, ‘most excellent’, ‘good’, ‘very good’, ‘best’, ‘comforting’, ‘precious’, ‘approved’ and ‘sovereign’.

### 3.2. Ingredients

The indication of ingredients is the most important recipe component and therefore this step cannot be disregarded. After the title, the ingredients section starts with the verb *take* in the vast majority of the recipes, followed by the enumeration of the ingredients necessary for their preparation. They are plants that often have to be taken with wine, juice of fruits, such as lemon or orange, and water. These plants are repeated in numerous recipes and include rosemary, mugwort, mint, parsley and

spearmint, to name but a few. Animals, dried fruits and nuts are also used in some of the recipes, as well as other substances like honey, wax and sugar. An increasing tendency towards the use of lavish ingredients is noted in Early Modern English recipes, plausibly as an attempt to sound exotic. This trend is seen in both culinary and medical recipes. Their employment may be a clue to the changes that were occurring in the surrounding world, making available products that could not be found in medieval England (de la Cruz-Cabanillas 2017:17). Table 2 shows the herbs and plants used in the recipes contained in W3009 and their frequency. As can be observed, the recipes include a wide range of ingredients, which are usually repeated to treat different maladies. The most frequent are aniseed, rosemary, saffron, wormwood and hyssop, while others such as celandine, burdock, costmary and hollyhock are rarely used for medical purposes in W3009. Even though new substances were made available from America after the encounter with the New World in the 15th century (see de la Cruz-Cabanillas 2020: 50), recipe collections that were used in the household still depended largely on easily accessible ingredients for their preparation.

Table 2. Herbs and plants found in W3009

Aniseed	59	Marigold	11
Rosemary	47	Mugwort	11
Saffron	34	Pimpernel	11
Wormwood	31	Agrimony	10
Hyssop	29	Lavender	10
Angelica	24	Tormentil	10
Ginger	24	Turmeric	10
Parsley	24	Chamomile	8
Mint	22	Woodbine	8
Rhubarb	20	Comfrey	7
Coriander	19	Southern wormwood	7
Fennel	19	Spearmint	7
Cinnamon	17	Peony	6
Violet	16	Cumin	5
Chicory	14	Liverwort	5
Sorrel	14	Celandine	4
Scabious	13	Burdock	3
Thistle	13	Costmary	3
Borage	11	Hollyhock	2

The quantity of ingredients to be consumed is sometimes specified precisely (3), in some cases it is vaguely defined by means of a quantifier or the comparison of a well-known common quantity or another ingredient, e.g., 'as big as a walnut' (4), whereas in other cases they are just enumerated without any indication of the amount required (5).

- (3) Take **one pound** of Figgs , **one pound** of Reasons of the sun , stoned or beaten in a Morter **halfe a pound** of deates , **two ounces** of Liquerish **two ounces** of fennel seedes Colleander seedes and Caraway seedes two handfulls of maiden haire and two handfulls Coultis foote , boile all these in four quarts of springe water until halfe be Consumed (f. 23r)
- (4) Take three pints of Muscadine and boile therein **a handfull** of Sage and **a handful** of Rue till a pint be wasted (f. 29r)
- (5) Take Lilly rootes bruised , Onions cutt , Wormwood , Nutmegg , Chicken weede , wild mallows with the rootes , sorrell , Cammomel , Mellolot flowers , boile all in the tappings of stronge ale , adding there to Leven till the hearbs are saft (f. 21v)

### *3.3. Preparation*

The preparation stage contains the indications of how to prepare the recipes after the description of the ingredients. Linguistically speaking, this stage is characterized by the use of the imperative mood and the second person present tense, as shown in the following excerpt from W3009:

- (6) Sir Thomas Mannerings Receipt *against* the Stone ./.  
Take of erude Antimony four ounces grosly beaten and tie it up in a linning bagg , and hang it in a barrell of small ale , containing four gallons , when it is tunned up , and lett it stand nine or ten dayes , it may be drank at meales or any other , time , you may dry the Antimony and keepe it for another time , if any of it be wasted , you may add more to it , the vertue of it will not wast ./ (f. 28v)

The terminology used in this stage is also more specialized than that observed in medieval texts. The verb *take* still predominates in early modern recipes, although a wider range of verbs is employed for the instructions. The indications of weights, measures and types of instruments are conveyed by means of technical terms. In order to express the amount of liquids, for instance, quarters, pints or gills are used, whilst the weight of ingredients is described with ounces, drachms, pounds, grains and measures like *pennyworth*. Instructions are vaguely given insofar as the amount of ingredients or the duration of the procedures are sometimes hard to interpret. Statements such as ‘as much green young parsley as you can hold betwixt y<sup>r</sup> four fingers’ (GUL Ferguson MS 15) or ‘keep it stirring upon ye fire till its brown’ (GUL Ferguson MS 15) are ambiguous since the hand size of readers may vary and the color scheme is not clear (de la Cruz-Cabanillas 2017: 18). In the particular case of W3009, the instructions are given following a similar pattern: verbs are often repeated, including both general ones such as *put*, *let* and *take*, and more specific verbs like *dry*, *boil*, *mix*, *bruise* and *mingle*, among others. The different steps are introduced by means of the connectors *and*, *then* and *after* in most of the instances (7), although in some exceptional cases they are not employed (8).

(7) Take one penyworth of conserue of roses and spread that first vpon lether , **then** A penyworth of methirdate on that **then** A penyworth of disacordium vpon that , **then** A penyworth of saffron powder’d strew’d on that , **then** lay it to the pit of the stomach (f. 42r)

(8) put all these together into A glass still , let them stand all night uery close , next morning Still it , putting into the receiuer halfe A pound of white Suger Candy or double refin’d Suger finely beaten , you may draw from this two quarts , you must set your still uery fast with Hay and water in an Iron pot , and soe keep the water in the pot gently boiling / (f. 46v)

The most common material found in W3009 is *powder* (195 instances), followed by *sugar* (143 instances), *syrup* (64 instances) and *salve* (35 instances), also referred to as *ointment* (25 instances) and *unguent* (7 instances). *Honey* (35 instances) and *pills* (15 instances) are also

employed in the preparation of the remedies. In order to prepare the solutions, different utensils are mentioned, e.g., mortars, alembics, frying pans as well as containers like basins, glasses, vessels, gallipots, plates and sacks. The type of utensils needed to prepare the recipes together with the employment of common ingredients support the idea that medical recipes were intended to be used by non-specialists in the household.

#### *3.4. Application*

The application step differs from the preceding stages in that it does not follow a defined structure and it is not compulsory. The omission of this step in certain recipes may be an indication of the varying importance that scribes gave to their different sections. It could also be explained by the fact that authors assumed readers would know how and when to take or apply the different solutions. The exclusion of this section in some of the recipes in W3009 is illustrated in (9), which only contains the title, ingredients and preparation stages.

(9) *Mister Rayes Receipt for the Stone ./.*

Take one pound of Figgs , one pound of Reasons of the sun , stoned or beaten in a Morter halfe a pound of deates , two ounces of Liquerish two ounces of fennel seedes Colleander seedes and Caraway seedes two handfulls of maiden haire and two handfulls Coultis foote , boile all these in four quarts of springe water until halfe be Consumed ./ (f. 23r)

The application stage provides information about the use, dosage and duration of the treatment. The authors describe how the remedies need to be used, the quantity to be taken or applied, and for how long patients are required to receive the treatment. The instructions of time vary from the indications of the months the remedies must be taken to the number of days of application and even the time of day, distinguishing between the morning, afternoon, evening and night. The number of times that a solution is to be taken or applied is also provided in some of the recipes. The following excerpt from f. 17r constitutes an illustrative example of the directions regarding the time of consumption of the solutions in W3009:

(10) *Mister Iohnsons cure for the Ricketts ./.*

Take of the juyce of Scury grass four pennyworth to every two spoonfulls of it add one spoonfill of Ieane treacle , begin in **February March Aprill and May** takeing it **nine daies** in each moneth the spoonfulls **in the morning fasting** , and as much **in the evening after a sleepe** , then **in the begining of Iune** take twenty black Snailes and balme leaves beate together [...] (f. 17r)

The necessary dosage is sometimes explicitly specified by means of the construction ‘the dose is’. Interestingly enough, the section ‘the dose’ is separated from the rest of the body in one of the recipes (11) so as to emphasize the differences in the dosage according to the age of the patient (i.e., young patients and those of strong constitutions versus elderly patients).

(11) *The Dose*

To young and those of strong constitutions the weight of 2 or 3 scruples alone , or in wine , or Aqua mulsa , or other liquor – the aged people one drame , and the same weight to be giuen , for poisons , and the plague / (f. 79r)

### *3.5. Efficacy phrase*

The efficacy phrase is an optional element that aims at offering a validation for the suggested remedy: it is a ‘passage [...] that testif[ies] to the value of effectiveness of the end product: the medicine itself’ (Mäkinen 2011: 158). Different types of efficacy phrases are recognized, as the authors employ both general set phrases and more specific ones. The Latin phrase ‘probatum est’ prevails in the text, totalling 15 instances, whereas its English counterpart ‘proved’ only appears twice.

The free formula, on the other hand, presents a further distinction: specific phrases and stock phrases. The former refers to the ailment in question and the latter is a general cure for a malady (Mäkinen 2011: 159). Examples (12) and (13) illustrate these two types of efficacy phrases, alluding to the efficacy of the remedy for toothache and making a general reference to the validity of the recipe, respectively.

(12) For The Tooth Ache

Take spearmint , and bruise it , and then put it into the halfe of Nutshell , and lay it to the middle finger on the same side , the middle Ioint between the fingers , this must be done 24 houres if possible , and when the blister is risen doe not wash that hand till it be well Again , this done thus , or in the hole vnder the Eare **will cure the toothache** / (f. 78r)

(13) For the Plurasy

To preuent it before it come , vse the Exercise of ringing , or stretch , your Armes vpwards soe that they may beare the weight of your body , and haueing caught A plurasy , feeling the gripes , stitches , and paines therof , presently be let blood then take the hearbe Althea , or hollyhock , and Boyle it with vinegar and lintseed till it be A thickness fitt for A plaister , then spread it vpon Allum leather , plaister wise , and soe lay it to the side that is griued , and **it will help** / (f. 77v)

Mäkinen (2011) analyzed the different types of efficacy phrases across time (i.e., from 1500 to 1700) and across text-type (i.e., lay and learned texts), and classified them into three groups: general, specific and stock phrases. In his study, he shows that the number of these passages in medical recipes aimed at lay audiences become rarer over time and drop dramatically during the second half of the 17th century, probably indicating ‘a sign of a new era in medicine’ (2011: 172). The data from W3009 confirm the scarce presence of efficacy phrases in medical recipes at that time in that they are found only in 60 out of 604 recipes (9.93%). The belief that the popularity of this element declined in recipes during the 17th century is also reinforced if we compare the results with Marqués-Aguado’s work (2018). She observes that efficacy phrases are only present in 22% of the recipes included in W8086, a medical text from the first half of the century, a frequency slightly higher than that of W3009. The results then demonstrate a downward trend in the use of this constituent in recipes, probably suggesting an ideological shift towards empiricism (Mäkinen 2011: 175).

Mäkinen’s approach to the different types of efficacy phrases has been followed in the present study. They have been categorized into

three groups: stock phrases (e.g., ‘probatum est’); specific phrases (e.g., ‘it will cure the cold rhume’); and general phrases (e.g., ‘it will help in 2 or 3 or 4 times taking of it’). The results gleaned from Figure 4 show a preference for the use of stock phrases, which represent 61.67% of the passages found in W3009. They are followed by specific phrases (21.67%) and finally, by general phrases, which are only used in 16.66% of the cases. Formulaic efficacy phrases are then favored over those in which the name of the malady is given and the nonformulaic passages, as also suggested by Mäkinen (2011) in his study of the different types of phrases in lay texts. Thus, it can be tentatively concluded that although this stage is not frequent within the medical recipes in the second half of the 17th century, they still illustrate the old ways of thinking.

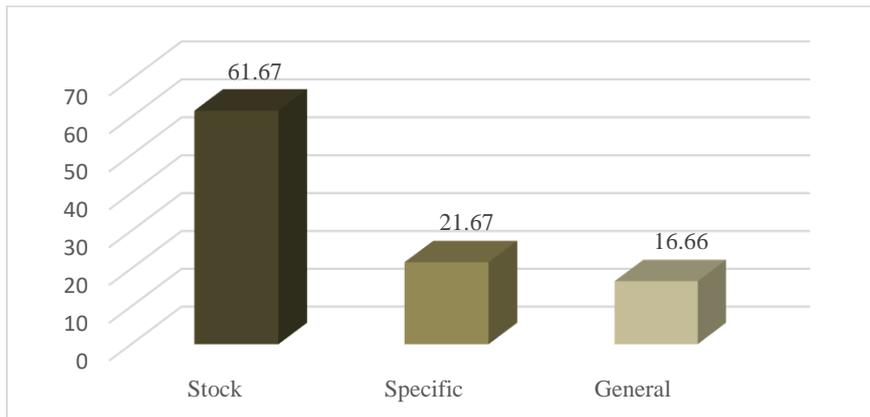


Figure 4. Efficacy phrases in W3009 (%)

All this considered, the schema of the different stages in the medical recipes of W3009 is as follows:

Title ^ Ingredients ^ Preparation ^ (Application) ^ (Efficacy Phrase)

The circumflex implies fixed order and the use of the parentheses indicates that the steps ‘application’ and ‘efficacy phrase’ are optional within the recipes.

#### *4. Conclusions*

The present study has examined the medical recipes contained in the 17th-century recipe book MS Wellcome 3009, focusing on both the linguistic and structural features. Linguistically speaking, the manuscript under scrutiny conforms to the practice expected in Early Modern English medical recipes, especially in the use of the imperative voice and the second person pronoun *you*. In addition to this, the verb *take*, which predominates in the text, is used for instruction at the beginning of the recipes in the vast majority of the cases.

In terms of textual organization, the medical recipes are organized into five different stages: title, ingredients, preparation, application and efficacy phrase. The number of elements identified in the recipes and the optional stages within the recipes differ from the previous findings in the literature. Only the last two constituents (i.e., application and efficacy phrase) are regarded as not compulsory in W3009, probably because scribes assumed the reader's knowledge of the information these provide or that the information is not deemed as essential.

There are 604 titles in W3009 and they have been classified into 11 different formulaic templates. They adhere to the typical structure of medieval and early modern recipes, with '*for + NP*' as the most frequent pattern found in the titles, followed by '*NP + for + NP*' and '*to + inf. + NP*'. The second stage, in which ingredients are given for the preparation of the recipes, shows that although new substances were made available from America at the time, medical recipes still depended largely on easily accessible ingredients for their preparation. Thus common herbs and plants, such as aniseed, rosemary or saffron were often employed to treat the different maladies. Finally, the analysis of the efficacy phrases in W3009 confirms the decline of popularity of this element in the second half of the 17th century, as it is present in less than 10% of the recipes. A closer examination of these passages reveals the preference for the use of stock phrases, especially for the Latin phrase '*probatum est*', followed by specific phrases and, to a lesser extent, by general phrases. The distribution of the different types of phrases therefore confirms the idea that, in spite of the ideological shift towards empiricism that was occurring during the period, efficacy phrases still reflected the old ways of thinking.

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