

CAMBRIDGE, MAGDALENE COLLEGE
MS PEPYS 1661, PP. 245-266: AN EDITION

edited by

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1. Introduction

Although the nineteenth century was a flourishing period for the recovering and editing of Old and Middle English manuscripts, scientific prose was comparatively neglected.¹ Utilitarian texts were probably not very attractive to the editors and publishers of the time: in opposition to literary, religious, philosophical or historical texts, which can be used as ideological weapons in the political arena or any other chauvinistic purpose, scientific ones are much more difficult tools to handle for those purposes — if possible at all.²

Among the texts which seemed consigned to oblivion, medical works were not an exception. But this particular area met with comparatively more editorial interest, and this gave Medicine composed in Middle English bigger visibility among the learned community. Printed works include Lanfrank's *Science of Chirurgie*, John de Arderne's *Treatises of Fistula in Ano*, or Chauliac's

¹ I. Taavitsainen and P. Pahta, "Vernacularisation of Scientific and Medical Writing," in I. Taavitsainen and P. Pahta (eds.), *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 3.

² D. Moreno Olalla, "A Plea for Middle English Botanical Synonyma," in V. Gillespie and A. Hudson (eds.), *Probable Truth. Editing Medieval Texts from Britain in the Twenty-First Century*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2013, pp. 387-390.

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Cyrrurgie (separately edited by Björn Wallner in several issues since the mid 1960s, and Margaret S. Ogden in 1971).³ But, all in all, it is fair to say that even after the recent interest in Middle English *Fachprosa* there is still plenty of unedited MSS to be studied, particularly those written in Middle English. Some of the most singular ones within this category are medical *synonoma*. Synonyma are “an uneven mixture of (a) a glossary, either bilingual or trilingual (at least Latin-English but frequently supplemented with Anglo-Norman or Middle French) [...]; (b) a thesaurus [...]; and (c) a proper dictionary.”⁴ Those parts resembling a *thesaurus* typically provide a series of synonyms for each of the languages (e.g. “Allipiados, laureola, herba catholica” 3), whereas those parts that are close to a dictionary contain either descriptions of illnesses or some notes about a plant or substance (e.g. “Aatramentum it is a veyne of þe erthe, of whiche þer beþ tweyn: on ys blak, an-oþer is grene, coprose, þe whiche is clepid vitriole” (55-56). Although several Middle English lexicographical works — some of which keep a modicum of scientific vocabulary — have been edited,⁵ as a whole medical synonyma in the vernacular are still *terra incognita*. Other than John L. G. Mowat’s editions of *Sinonoma Bartholomei* and *Alphita*,⁶ only the word-lists drawn from London, British Library, Harley MS 978, ff. 26r-27r and Erfurt, Wissenschaftliche Bibliothek, HS Amplonianische Q.351, ff. 130r-133v are as yet published.⁷

2. The manuscript

One of the many Middle English medical synonyma that awaited an edition is Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 1661, pp. 245-266. According

³ R. von Fleischhacker (ed.), *Lanfrank’s “Science of Cirurgie,”* Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co, London, 1894; D. Power (ed.), *Treatises of Fistula in Ano, Hæmorrhoids and Clysters,* Oxford University Press, London, 1910; B. Wallner (ed.), *The Middle English Translation of Guy de Chauliac’s Anatomy,* C.W.K. Gleerup, Lund, 1964 and *An Interpolated Middle English Version of the Anatomy of Guy de Chauliac,* Lund University Press-Chartwell-Bratt, Lund-London, 1995; M. S. Ogden (ed.), *The Cyrurgie of Guy de Chauliac,* Oxford University Press, London, 1971.

⁴ D. Moreno Olalla, “A Plea for Middle English Botanical Synonyma,” p. 391.

⁵ See for instance S. J. H. Herrtage (ed.), *Catholicon Anglicum, an English-Latin Wordbook, dated 1483,* Trübner, London, 1881 or A. L. Mayhew (ed.), *The Promptorium Parvulorum. The First English-Latin Dictionary,* Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, London, 1908.

⁶ J. L. G. Mowat (ed.), *Sinonoma Bartholomei. A Glossary from a Fourteenth-Century Manuscript in the Library of Pembroke College, Oxford,* Henry Frowde-Oxford University Press, London-Oxford, 1882 and *Alphita. A Medico-Botanical Glossary from the Bodleian Manuscript, Selden B.35,* Henry Frowde-Oxford University Press, London-Oxford, 1887.

⁷ T. Wright & R. P. Wülcker, *Anglo-Saxon and Old English vocabularies* (3 ed.), 2 vols. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1968; M. Förster, “Kleinere Mittelenglische Texte.” *Anglia* 42 (1918), 145-224, pp. 156-162. J. Stannard, “A Fifteenth-century Botanical Glossary.” *Isis* 55.3 (1964), 353-367 analyses the synonyma in San Marino, Huntington Library MS 64, ff. 184r-190v in quite a cursory way and does not include an edition.

to the catalogue, the dimensions of its parchment leaves are 212x140 mm (170x97-120 of writing space), with 29-33 long lines to a page.⁸ This is not completely accurate, as the synonoma displays twenty-eight lines per page; only page 259 contains thirty lines. The volume is composed of five booklets: the synonoma edited here being part of the third one, together with other eight treatises. Decoration is rather poor, with only alternate *litterae notabiliores* in red and blue in quires I, II and IX and some rudimentary doodles in a few pages.⁹

An analysis of the different hands in the MS suggests that the manuscript was copied by, at least, six scribes who usually employed *anglicana* hands. The script used to copy the synonoma section is a type of *anglicana formata semi-quadrata media* “with a spiky and angular aspect, suggesting the influence of secretary in the cut of the pen and the angle at which it was held” done by a competent scribe who had little medical knowledge — if one is to judge from the quantity of mistakes detected.¹⁰ The overall aspect of the hand suggests that the text must have been copied during the first half of the 15th century.

Pepys 1661 is a medical miscellany which includes the following contents: 1. a medical receipt; 2. the *Treasure of Poor Men* (the famous treatise by Peter Hispanus); 3. a surgical treatise; 4. various medical receipts; 5. notes on unguents; 6. study of the lucky days of the year; 7. miscellaneous medical receipts; 8. tracts on the seven planets and the four elements; 9. a synonymy of (mostly) herbs; 10. medicinal properties of some plants; 11. properties of rosemary; 12. a versified herbal; 13. a medical receipt; 14. the virtues of cabbage; 15. treatise on waters and oils and 16. miscellaneous medical receipts and remedies.¹¹ The synonymy is item 9 in that list.

George Keiser has proposed a tentative division of the different synonoma based on their first lemma, and included the synonoma in Pepys 1661 within group G, the opening line of which is “Amarusca, anglice maythe.”¹² Still, this wants revision: the first line of the *synonoma* in Pepys 1661 is actually “Alleluya, panis cuculi, payn de cukulle, wodesowre, stubwort.” Consequently,

⁸ R. MacKitterick & R. Beadle, *Catalogue of the Pepys Library at Magdalene College*, Boydell & Brewer, Cambridge, 1992, p. 26.

⁹ R. MacKitterick & R. Beadle, *loc. cit.*, p. 27.

¹⁰ R. MacKitterick & R. Beadle, *loc. cit.*, pp. 27-28. The scribe was probably not too proficient in Anglo-Norman either, as he seems to have taken an exemplary *WY DE KEYNE, i.e. Fr. *gui de chêne*, “mistletoe” as a miscopied English word, then emended it into a nonsensical <wilde keyne> 784.

¹¹ Taken from R. MacKitterick & R. Beadle, *loc. cit.*, pp. 25-26. Item 10 is in fact a Southern rendering of a hitherto unpublished ME translation of Macer Floridus’ *De Viribus Herbarum*, while item 12 is a copy of the very popular *Tretys of diverse herbis* (see D. Moreno Olalla, “The Textual Transmission of the Northern Macer Tradition,” *English Studies* 94.8, 2013, 931-957, pp. 936-937 for details).

¹² G. R. Keiser, *Manual of the Writing in Middle English 1050-1500. Works of Science and Information* 10, Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, New Haven (Connecticut), 1998, p. 3827.

this MS belongs rather to Group F, which begins “Alleluia, anglice wodesour.” This would make the Pepys version into yet another copy of John Bray’s “Synonyma de nominibus herbarum secundum magistrum Johannem Bray,”¹³ a textual tradition that would now be composed by 13 MSS.

As for the dialect of the synonyma, the text seems to be written in a Midlands dialect, perhaps in the SE. It is not idle to mention here that the herbal that follows the *synonyma* and was written in the same hand displays a dialect that has been located in NW Suffolk.¹⁴ In the case of the nouns, for example, the reader will find traces of more Northern areas — such as the conformation of plurals and genitives by means of *-(e)s* and *-(i)s* as in the case of ⟨wermes⟩ 770, ⟨leuys⟩ 454 or ⟨mouses⟩ 700 — together with weak forms that are typical from the South¹⁵ (e.g.: ⟨slon⟩ 57, 738, ⟨vlyen⟩ 192 or ⟨hondyn⟩, 487). As for adjectives, plural forms keep *-e* in most instances (cf. ⟨blak elebre⟩ 242, ⟨blak pepir⟩ 274 vs. ⟨blake beries⟩ 471, ⟨blake beryes⟩ 467, or ⟨smal docke⟩ 370, ⟨smal caul⟩ 737 vs. ⟨smale slon⟩ 57, ⟨smale stones⟩ 118), and also in weak positions, cf. ⟨þe blynde nettyl⟩ 13, ⟨þe grete clowe⟩ 66, ⟨þe wise malwe⟩ 241. Still, there are a few instances suggesting that *-e* might have been already on its way to becoming a mere length diacritic (see below).

The verbal flexion, while of course numerically less representative than nouns in this kind of text, also offers valuable traces. In the South and South-West Midlands the Old English prefix for past participles *ge-* (derived into *i-*, *y-*) was kept longer but became rarer as one proceeded to East and the North;¹⁶ the *synonyma* follows this tendency yet only 8.69% of the participles display the mark. The present participle endings *-ing(e)*, *-yng(e)* in the text also point to the same area.¹⁷ The same happens with the plural endings of the present indicative forms, as they end in *-(y)n* and (in the case of the verb “to be”) *-þ*: ⟨beþ⟩ 15, 20, etc. and ⟨ben⟩ 20, 57, etc. but ⟨pulschyn⟩ 331, ⟨makyn⟩ 488, etc.¹⁸ The pronominal system, and particularly the 3rd person plural forms, also supports the idea that the text was composed somewhere in the Midlands: the *synonyma* merges *þ*-forms in the nominative (⟨þei⟩ 717) with *h*- object forms such as ⟨hem⟩ 15, 162, etc.¹⁹

Phonology and spelling are also instrumental in locating the text in the South-East Midlands. One of the most outstanding features of this MS is the voicing

¹³ About Bray (†1381), see the appropriate entry in C. H. Talbot and E. A. Hammond, *The Medical Practitioners in Medieval England: A Biographical Register*, Wellcome Historical Medical Library, London, 1965. See further fn. 27.

¹⁴ D. Moreno Olalla, “The Textual Transmission of the *Northern Macer* Tradition,” p. 937.

¹⁵ F. Mossé, *Handbook of Middle English* (J. A. Walker, Trans.), Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1968, p. 48.

¹⁶ F. Mossé, *loc. cit.*, p. 80.

¹⁷ N. Blake (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, 2, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 176.

¹⁸ F. Mossé, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

¹⁹ F. Mossé, *loc. cit.*, p. 58.

of some initial fricatives, which can be clearly seen here in ⟨vlyen⟩ “flies” (<OE *flēoge*, **192**) and ⟨vnese⟩ (<OE *fnēsan*, **513**) and which is a typical feature of the dialects in the South of England.²⁰ The same happens with the adverbial endings: /ʃ/ disappears at the end of some morphemes in dialects from the North, so OE *-lice* in adverbs are seen as *-ly* in those dialects during the Middle English period.²¹ The *synonoma* presents 83.33% of adverbial endings corresponding to the South (⟨sympleleche⟩ **311**, ⟨symplelich⟩ **524**), whereas Northern endings correspond to just 16.67% of the adverbial endings (⟨symplely⟩ **530**).

Concerning the vowel system, OE *a* followed by a tautosyllabic nasal is rendered as ⟨a⟩, seldom ⟨o⟩. See for instance ⟨olyfant⟩ **35**, ultimately from Greek ἐλέφαντ- via OF, or ⟨cambes⟩ **331**, from OE *camb*, together with ⟨hondyn⟩ **487**.²² OE *ā* is unexceptionally rendered as ⟨o(o)⟩: OE *stān* appears as ⟨stones⟩ **118**, OE *gāt* appears as ⟨goot⟩ **694** and OE *twā* as ⟨to⟩ **585**, **693**.²³ OE /æ/ is found as ⟨a⟩, cf. ⟨smal⟩ (**370** <OE *smæl*), or ⟨assch⟩ (**253** <OE *æsc*). These features suggest that the text was neither composed in the North, Kent or the West Midlands areas.²⁴

As for the reflex of West Germanic **ā*, i.e. the so-called “OE *æ₂*”, only one instance has been observed in the *synonoma* (⟨sed⟩ **59**, **62**, etc. <OE *sæd*), which again points to a composition place in an Eastern location (cf. OE (Anglian) *sēd*).²⁵ The development of OE *y*, *ȳ* is on the other hand not clear-cut.²⁶ The MS offers ⟨kynde⟩ **506** (<OE *cynd*) together with ⟨wermes⟩ **192**, **770** (<OE *wyrm*) and ⟨kernelys⟩ **54** (<OE *cyrnel*) on the one hand and ⟨homelok⟩ **122**, **341**, ⟨homeloc⟩ **316** (<OE *hymlice*) on the other. Even so, ⟨i, y⟩-spellings seem hegemonic, particularly among function words, ⟨buþ⟩ **449** (<OE *bīoþ*) being the sole noted exception — but even here, cf. ⟨beþ⟩ 18x (<OE *bēoþ*). Content words, and particularly nouns, display on the other hand a few ⟨o⟩- and ⟨u⟩-spellings (e.g. ⟨brusewort⟩ **142** “bruisewort”). This may arguably be an indication of a SW origin for the exemplar of Pepys (or even the archetype for the whole tradition)²⁷ but needs further research.

²⁰ R. Jordan, *Handbook of Middle English Grammar: Phonology* (E. J. Crook, Trans.), Mouton, The Hague-Paris, 1974, §215.

²¹ R. Jordan, *loc. cit.*, §167.

²² R. Jordan, *loc. cit.*, §§30, 268.

²³ R. Jordan, *loc. cit.*, §44. Concerning the spelling ⟨to⟩ instead of expected ⟨two⟩, see §§45.1, 162.3. The number is spelt ⟨two⟩ in **693**.

²⁴ R. Jordan, *loc. cit.*, §§32, 265.

²⁵ R. Jordan, *loc. cit.*, §§47-50.

²⁶ R. Jordan, *loc. cit.*, §§39-43.

²⁷ According to the information we possess about him, Master John Bray had strong connections with Dorset, and particularly with Shaftesbury: in 1372 he was granted £10 per annum from the receipts of Kingston Manor near Dorchester, and in 1377 his wife, Joan, was sent to the care of Shaftesbury convent where she probably died. The Abbess of that convent had already granted him £12 just the year before, apparently part of a royal annuity of 20 marks to be drawn from that house (C. H. Talbot and E. A. Hammond, *The Medical Practitioners in*

The singular/plural distinction of the adjectives (see above) strongly suggests that final schwa was still pronounced. Spellings such as <di-le> **19** (<OE *dile*) and on the one hand <bon> **540, 726**, <fet> **693** or <sed> (**59, 62**, etc.; <OE *bān, fēt, sād*), where *-e* might have been used to indicate a long vowel in the preceding syllable, also speak for that hypothesis. There is yet a small number of instances where *-e* (and lack thereof) seems to have been used as a mere length diacritic: cf. <þe litil fynger> **692**, <for hem þat beþ loue-sek> **715** (weak **lit(i)le* and plural **seke* are expected) and conversely <blynde nettel> **789** (strong singular **blind* is expected; note <þe blynde nettyl> **13**). The information provided by old **ja-/jō-* stems such as <swete> **42** or <wilde> **40, 50**, etc. is unfortunately inconclusive. Within nouns, the main counterexamples are <rote> (**23, 34**, etc. <ON *rót*) and <dunge> (**694-700**), cf. OE *dung*. Although it would be debatable whether the latter word is actually a SW spelling for OE *dyncge* (Gmc. **ðungjō*, cf. ON *dyngja*), the possibility that *-e* functions as a feminine ending (cf. OE *netel(e)* and *dung*, ON *rót*, all of which are etymologically feminine nouns) may be worth considering here.²⁸

3. The edition

In this edition, capitalisation and punctuation have been modernised. Punctuation is seldom found in the original: the *punctus* is used with certain regularity to separate synonyms and entries in the first half of the opening page, then used very sparsely in the following four pages; by the last folios it has all but disappeared except to mark the end of each paragraph, or added randomly to separate lemmata. Equally irregular is the scribal use of the hyphen, which is formed by two small slanting lines. In this edition, periods and commas are used in the usual way, while the semicolon marks the passage from one language to another.

Word-division has been standardised according to the spelling used in Tony Hunt's *Plant Names of Medieval England*.²⁹ Words which form a single unit but were separately written in the MS have been hyphenated (as in <synk-foyl> **51**), while editorially-split items are square-bracketed (as in [rasca lini] **627**) and the original spelling included in the second apparatus criticus.

Medieval England: A Biographical Register, Wellcome Historical Medical Library, London, 1965, 125).

²⁸ See D. Moreno Olalla, "Nominal Morphemes in *Lelamour's Herbal*," in J. Thaisen and H. Rutkowska (eds.), *Scribes, Printers, and the Accidentals of their Texts*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt a. M., 2011, 53-71, p. 70, where this idea is tentatively put in connection with the *Harley Lyrics*. Already F. H. Stratmann, in his *Middle-English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 1891), spelt old feminine nouns with a final *-e* in the headword, hence *rote* or *dunge* as opposed to, say, *blōd* or *drūnch*, which were masculine in OE.

²⁹ T. Hunt, *Plant Names of Medieval England*, D. S. Brewer, Cambridge, 1989.

Lineation and paragraphing are also editorial. The text of the MS is divided into paragraphs, each one containing all synonyms that begin with the same letter. To give the impression of a continuous block, the scribe filled the gaps at the end of the last line of each paragraph with simple geometrical patterns. To better mark the beginning of a new paragraph he also accommodated a Lombardic letter in a box usually two-line high. The exceptions are letter “A” (never executed), which is five-line high, “D”—“H” (three lines), “I” (four lines but in fact written in the margin) and “M”, which is not boxed but written in a larger size as it appears in a orphan line.

As a rule the scribe used a slightly larger red Lombardic to mark the beginning of a new gloss, but in so doing he made some mistakes (some or all of them carried over from its exemplar),³⁰ and so a few entries have been split as they were copied as a single unit by the scribe. This is a list of those glosses that were copied as part of the previous lemma: <dionisia> 227, <glaucia> 291, <eringi> 357, <vespertilio> 775 and <zinziber> 816. This has also meant that some entries (to wit, <labrusca> 363, <lapis iudaicus> 379 and <olium lenci>³¹ 519) now offer no synonym, as those in the MS actually belong to the lemmata that follow them.

The text presented here is accompanied by two sets of notes. The first one collects all the annotations that an almost-contemporary reader made on the margins of the text. The word used as reference in the apparatus is the one closest to the annotation — being, therefore, the first or the last one in the original MS line — and hence does not always refer to the word that the reader was highlighting or commenting. Part of those inscriptions had to be reconstructed editorially as they were cut off when the volume was bound, probably during the early sixteenth century; such reconstructed parts are square-bracketed.

The second set of notes is the apparatus criticus, and includes all the editorial emendations on the original version of the MS. Vernacular synonyma contain a substantial quantity of vocabulary from languages, such as Classical and Bizantine Greek, Arabic or Hebrew, which the unknowing medieval scribes had routinely defaced into forms that are sometimes beyond recognition. The editing labour would be made much lighter had medical encyclopedias such as Serapion the Younger’s *Aggregator* or Matthaeus Sylvaticus’s *Opus Pandectarum* been edited following modern criteria, and the several thousand entries included there discussed at large and normalized into spellings that the

³⁰ It is unlikely, for example, that the Pepys scribe would have mixed the entry on <eringi> 357 into the paragraph devoted to letter “I” unless it was already copied immediately after the entry <iuniperus> in his exemplar. Similarly, it is to be doubted that a competent scribe would have twice miscopied an exemplary *PSYLLIUM in his original (<ypsillum> 794 and <ypsillum> 810) yet included the word as an entry under letter “Y” unless it was already so in his exemplar. More intriguing is the case of <juncus> 313, which is preceded by a blank probably intended to house a *Littera notabilior* — theoretically, a <G> as the entry ends the paragraph devoted to that letter.

³¹ The word intended was likely to be *OLEUM LENTISCINUM “mastich oil.” *Alphita* reads *oleum leue*, but this does not appear to be a designation of olive oil.

scholarly community could agree upon.³² Until the time comes when those medieval encyclopedias are thoroughly re-examined, we must make do with Renaissance editions, the readings of which are usually only slightly better than the medieval MSS.

Emendation of the Greek and — most of all — Arabic items in particular has been done less freely than those related to Latin, French and English, and only when the editors were under the impression that the emended spelling enjoys universal currency or would at least give a plausible image of the intended word. A substantial number of words, therefore, have been left as they appear in the original even though we know their spellings to be wrong but are wary to emend them — all the more so since we are not experts in those fields.³³ Spellings of such Latin words as <barbastus>, <butimen> or <sancsucus> have also been kept over Classical *barbatus*, *bitumen*, *sampsuchus* as they are regularly found in texts of the period. Orthographic variation between <c>, <s> and <z> before a front vowel, <i> and <y>, <c> and <ch>, <t> and <th>, voiceless and voiced stops in consonantal clusters, or forms with missing <h>, and the like have similarly been ignored for the same reason. Otherwise, the MS orthography has been maintained, including the scribal usage of <i> and <j>, <u> and <v>. As for Middle English, <whic> has not been emended into **which* as it is repeated 4x in the text: we take it therefore as a scribal quirk rather than a mistake. French words have not been added accents or diacritics other than an apostrophe in <lentil d'ewe> **388**.

³² The closest to this desideratum that we know of is A. García González (ed.), *Alphita*, SISMEL, Firenze, 2007. There is also an online version of Simon of Genoa's *Clavis Sanationis* (simonofgenoa.org) but it is still very much work in progress.

³³ The MS reading <fussules beth> **275**, for instance, has been emended into *fulfulesbeth* in light of Arabic *fulful aswad* "black pepper," (cf. <fulfel> in *Aggr.*, Ch. 357 and <falfel> in *Pand.*, Ch. 250), but the plant spelt <demachian> **224**/~~<domachian>~~ **460**/~~<demathian>~~ (emended since <ch> is regularly used in the period to represent Arabic ح), **651** in the MS, <demalochoen> in *Aggr.* (Ch. 331) and <demalachoem> in the *Pand.* (Ch. 206), stands as is written in the MS since none of these forms represents with any precision the original Arabic word *dam al-ahwayn* "(the resin from) some *Dracaena* Vand. ex. L. species." Concerning Greek words, cf. <hirenía & huenea> **330**, both of which probably stand for ἵππουρις, <lectórica> **389**, formed after λεπτοκάρυα; <yriana> **798** apparently from οἰνάνθη, or <oygia> **548**/~~<ygia>~~ **807**/~~<ygida>~~ **70** from κνίδη. Discussion of each emendation, while of course the desirable policy, is beyond the space allotted to this piece.