

An Edition and Study of *The Cure of Bytyng* in London, Wellcome Library, MS 411 (ff. 56r–61r)

Abstract: London, Wellcome Library, MS 411 is a codex in one volume which houses a collection of practical treatises and tracts in English and Latin, in verse as well as in prose, on different topics including prognostications, nativities, medical astrology, toxicology, bloodletting, etc. It dates from the late fifteenth century.

This chapter focuses on the Middle English treatise on venomous bites, held in folios 56r to 61r of MS Wellcome 411, in order to provide an edition of the text and an analysis of its main features. The treatise, written in prose, is anonymous and has received little scholarly attention so far. The objectives are threefold: first, to assess the contents, transmission and sources of the text; second, to explore palaeographical and codicological characteristics of the manuscript; and third, to offer the first edition of the treatise, which remains hitherto unedited.

Keywords: MS Wellcome 411; *The Cure of Bytyng*; Middle English; medieval medicine.

1. Introduction

The present chapter deals with a short treatise on venomous bites held in London, Wellcome Library, MS 411 (ff. 56r–61r), entitled *The Cure of Bytyng*¹ (after the opening words of the treatise, hereafter *CoB*). An exploratory analysis of the *CoB*'s contents, sources and transmission, as well as of physical features is carried out, which may provide clues about the function or purpose underlying its composition and that of the manuscript in which it is housed. In addition, the analysis may supply information on medieval science and on socio-cultural aspects of the period in which the book was written and used. This is thus viewed as an artefact or material object for the transmission of different types of knowledge (scientific, cultural, linguistic, etc.). Moreover, the first edition of the *CoB* in MS Wellcome 411 is rendered. Figure 1 shows the first folio of the treatise (the *CoB* starts in the second half of the folio).

¹ In the treatise the initial letter of this word is written with a lower-case letter, there is a dot over the first y and a stroke at the end of g, which has been expanded to e in the edition (i.e. “bÿtynge”).

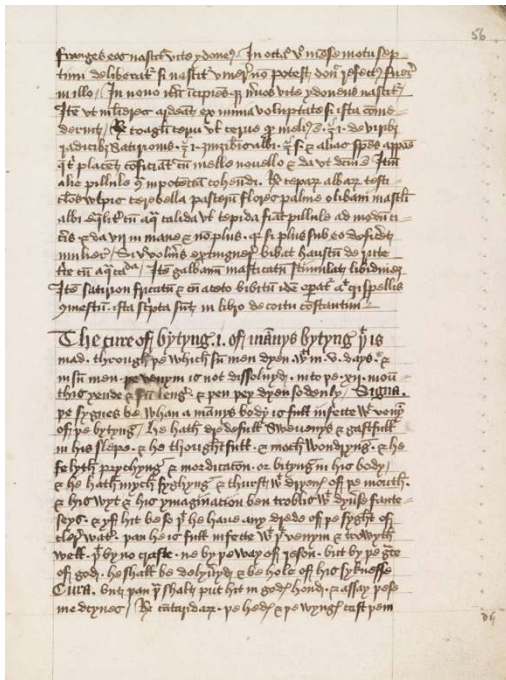


Figure 1. First folio of the CoB treatise (f. 56r).

MS Wellcome 411 is a one-volume codex which holds a collection of practical and medical texts in English and Latin on different topics including prognostications, nativities, medical astrology, reproduction, how to deal with the bites of animals, bloodletting, etc. Some of these are in verse. The contents of the codex are the following:² (i) Prognostication according to the day on which Christmas Day falls (ff. 1r–2r; anonymous); (ii) *Dietaarium salutissimum* (ff. 2v–3v; anonymous); (iii) Treatise on lucky and unlucky days (ff. 4r–9r; anonymous); (iv) Book of Nativities (ff. 9v–18v; anonymous); (v) On perilous days (ff. 18v–19r; anonymous); (vi) Almanac (ff. 21r–26v); (vii) *Flores dietarum* (ff. 27r–30r; anonymous); (viii) *The Wise Book of Astronomy and Philosophy* (ff. 32r–37v; anonymous); (ix) Notes and extracts on medical astrology in Latin (ff. 38r–51v; anonymous); (x) *De conferentibus et nocentibus* (ff. 52r–53r; Arnold of Villanova); (xi) *De coitu* (ff. 53r–56r; Constantine the African); (xii) Treatise on venomous bites (ff. 56r–61r; anonymous); (xiii) *Canon pro minutionibus et purgationibus recipiendis* (ff. 61v–63r; Nicholas of Lynn).³ Although it is a long list, some of the texts are extracts or abridged versions. The majority of the texts are anonymous and all of them date from the late fifteenth century.⁴

² This follows the database description found in the “Archives and Manuscripts catalogue” of the Wellcome Library, available online at <https://wellcomecollection.org/collections>, which is based on Moorat (1962–1973).

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⁴ Esteban-Segura (2019) has carried out a palaeographical and codicological study, as well as a linguistic analysis, of the *The Wise Book of Astronomy and Philosophy* held in MS Wellcome 411.

2. Contents, transmission and sources

Folios 56r to 61r of MS Wellcome 411 hold a treatise on venomous bites, whose title is *The Cure of Bytyng*, as previously mentioned, and which remains hitherto unedited to the best of our knowledge. It is concerned with the treatment of different types of bites on humans. It contains remedies for bites on humans (*Prima doctrina*), as well as for more specific bites done by horses (*Secunda doctrina*), dogs (*Tercia doctrina*), snakes (*Quarta doctrina*) and scorpions (*Quinta doctrina*), referred to in the text as first, second, third, fourth and fifth doctrine, respectively. Then, simple and complex medicines (*Medicines simplices et generalis*) as well as complex and expert medicines (*Medicina composita et experta*) that can be used for bites and poison are discussed. The treatise ends with the conclusion, in which the nine rules to follow for curing poisonous wounds are explained (*Prima to Nona regula*).

For each type of bite, a number of symptoms or signs (*Signa*) are described; for the bite of a snake, for instance, the symptoms or signs, among others, are:

- (1) “grete akyngē · and swellyngē · and þe coloure |⁵ of his face chaungythe nowē to whitnesse · palenyse · or | to blacknyse” (‘great aching and swelling and the colour of his [the sick person] face changes now to whiteness, paleness or to blackness’; f. 58r, biting of a snake, *Quarta doctrina*).

Possible cures (*Cura*) are provided, which specify the procedure. Example 2 presents one for the bite of a dog:

- (2) “take myntes y stampid · and medle þem with honý · | and ley þer to / and geve hym · egrimonye to drynke y medlyd | with wyne” (‘take crushed mints and mix them with honey and lay thereto and give him [the patient] agrimony to drink mixed with wine’; f. 57r, biting of a dog, *Tercia doctrina*).

Normally, the proposed cures include recipes, in which the ingredients and quantities required for the treatment are provided. Recipes have a clear writing purpose, which is that of giving instructions on how to prepare some kind of medicine, meal or utility. The one for the bite of a horse goes as follows:

- (3) “*Recipe* A noynon and bake hym and medle hym with · dragme ij · of salt · and | dragme i · of comyn oyle and dragme iij · of melle roset · and with þis medcyne | þe wonde shalle be helyd” (‘Recipe: bake an onion and mix it with two drams of salt and one dram of olive oil and three drams of a distillation of honey and roses and with this medicine the wound shall be healed’; f. 57r, biting of a horse, *Secunda doctrina*).

As is the case of most recipes, the previous one contains an efficacy phrase (“and with þis medcyne | þe wonde shalle be helyd”), which is a subtype of tags or phrases which “attest to the value of a given remedy” (Jones 1998: 199–200).

The ingredients used are generally common and, except for some herbs, they are likely to be found in the kitchen of any household, such as wine, garlic, vinegar, honey, etc. See, for instance, example 4:

- (4) “wyne rwe and garlyk nuttes and figes” (‘wine, rue, garlic, nuts and figs’; f. 59r), “hony and vynegre” (‘hony and vinegar’; f. 60v), “poudere | of kanelle” (‘cinnamon powder’; f. 60v).

As far as the transmission of the treatise is concerned, the text is anonymous and the identity of the author, translator and/or compiler who wrote it, or of the scribe who

⁵ This vertical bar indicates a change of line in the text of the manuscript.

copied it, remains unknown. Remedies against the biting of animals were commonplace in late medieval leech books and surgical treatises (Rawcliffe 2013: 155). Other manuscripts in which information about biting can be found are the following: (i) London, British Library, MS Harley 2390 (f. 148v); (ii) London, British Library, MS Sloane 5 (f. 25v); (iii) London, British Library, MS Sloane 983 (ff. 24v, 72v); and (iv) London, Wellcome Library, MS 564 (ff. 82v, 84r). The latter, MS Wellcome 564, contains the work *Chirurgia* by Henri de Mondeville, who is one of the sources mentioned in the text. As of yet we have been unable to find a manuscript containing the same treatise.

With regards to MS Wellcome 411, there is not either definite proof of provenance, although the names found throughout it and later additions reveal that it passed through a number of hands: (i) “Doctor rydlei byschoppe of london” (f. 19r); (ii) “Recyvvyd of my master Wyllyam Watnor the sum of iii li. xiii s. iiiii d. and a quarters wagys” (f. 30r); (iii) “Wyllyam Davy” and “Thomas champe” (in early sixteenth-century Anglicana hands); “Georg Sheffeld” (note dated 1610) (f. 63v). The account on folio 30r suggests that the manuscript was being used by a man employed by a certain William Watnor at some point in the sixteenth century. Some signatures on folio 63v indicate that it was in circulation at the beginning of the seventeenth century. MS Wellcome 411 was acquired at Sotheby’s on 12 November 1929 (Lot 237) and since then it has been housed at the Wellcome Library (for further information, see Southmayd [1970: v–viii]).

As for sources present in the *CoB*, overt allusion to authorities such as Galen, a physician and one of the most influential medical authors from antiquity (example 5), and to the Arabic philosophers Avicenna (example 6) and Averroes (example 7) can be found in the treatise.

(5.1) “as Galyon seythe” (‘as Galen says’; f. 59r).

(5.2) “þe triacle þat Galien makythe” (‘the treacle that Galen makes’; f. 59r).

(6.1) “As Avicen seythe” (‘As Avicenna says’; f. 58r).

(6.2) “But Auecen | seythe” (‘But Avicenna says’; f. 60r).

(7) “Averoyes seythe in his | bokys of tryacle” (‘Averroes says in his books of treacle’; f. 60r).

A certain “Harre de hermeda villa” is mentioned (example 8). This most likely makes reference to Henri de Mondeville, a medieval French surgeon who wrote about anatomy and surgery.

(8) “after þe doctrine of Harre de hermeda villa” (‘after the doctrine of Henri de Mondeville’; f. 57v).

The influential work *Antidotarium Nicolai*, widely translated and excerpted in vernacular remedy collections is also cited. In the *CoB* we find a direct quote:

(9) “þe reseyte | is in þe Antidore of Nycholas” (‘the recipe is in the Antidotary of Nicholas’; f. 60r).

Furthermore, authors in general are mentioned, as in example 10. All these references seem to try to corroborate the validity of the treatments.

(10) “Anoþer medcyn · in þe whiche alle | Auctorys a cordynge in oone” (‘Another medicine in which all authors agree’; f. 58v).

3. Physical description

This section describes some physical features of the manuscript, paying special attention to those folios in which the *CoB* is held. The text, in a single column, is written in the

same clear book hand throughout. The handwriting is neat and careful. The number of lines per folio is uniform as it has 32 lines (except the first folio, which has 16 lines, and the last one, which consists of 18 lines). The manuscript has been refoliated in pencil, at the top of the folio, on the right-hand side of each recto (see figure 2).

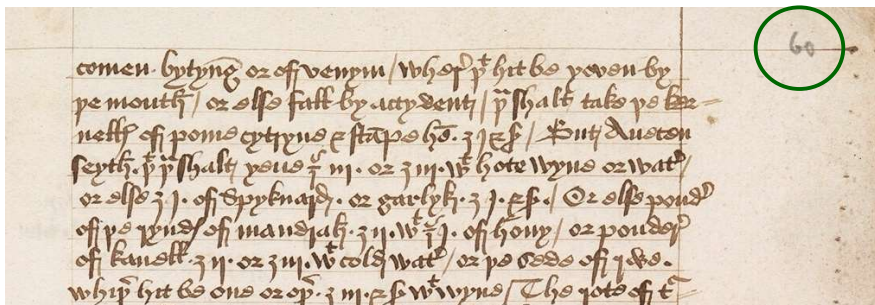


Figure 2. Example of foliation (f. 60r).

Folios are ruled in order to aid the scribe to keep a regular line of writing. Signs of pricking are evident on the right of rectos and left of versos (see figure 3). Pricking involves the piercing of a series of holes on the leaf to assist with the ruling of lines.

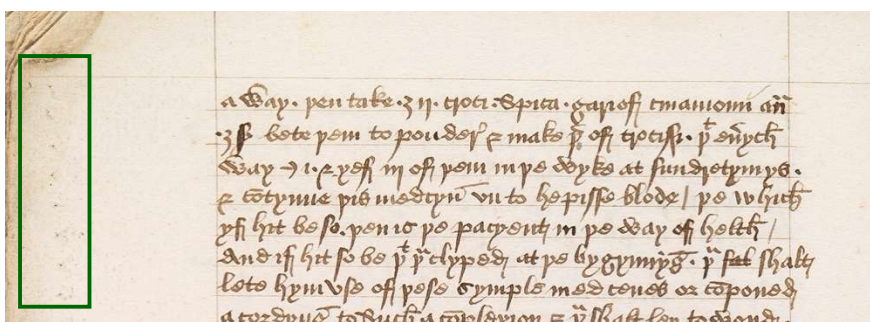


Figure 3. Example of pricking (f. 56v).

The script is mixed, showing features from the Anglicana and Secretary scripts. A typical Anglicana letter-form is the tight g, sometimes described as shaped like the numeral 8 and resembling a pair of spectacles seen sideways on (as shown in figure 4) and long forked r, descending below the line of writing (figure 5). As for the Secretary script, one of the typical letter-forms that distinguishes it from Anglicana is the neat single-compartment or single-lobed a with a pointed head (figure 6). Different Secretary forms of r are commonly found in any position within the word (figures 7 and 8).

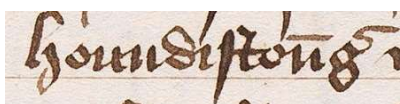


Figure 4. "houndistounge"

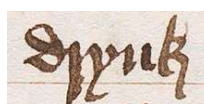


Figure 5. "drynk"

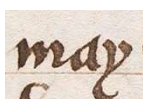


Figure 6. "may"



Figure 7. "vnderstonde"



Figure 8. "forthe"

Abbreviations are frequent, as in most medieval scientific manuscripts. Their main function is to save time and writing space. The techniques employed in the *CoB* are suspension, contraction, superior letters and other special signs or brevigraphs.

Suspension may be considered the most common method of abbreviation. It involves the omission of the final letter or letters of a word and in the *CoB* it is indicated by means of different signs: (i) an upper curved line on the last letter of a word representing *e* or *er* (as illustrated in figures 9 and 10); (ii) a horizontal stroke over a final *h* or *ll* standing for *e* (figures 11 and 12); and (iii) a downward flourish in the last letter of a noun signalling the plural form of that noun, and therefore generally replacing *es* (figure 13).



Figure 9. “fyere”

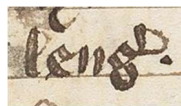


Figure 10. “lenger”



Figure 11. “suche”

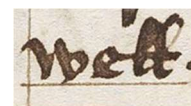


Figure 12. “welle”



Figure 13. “wynges”

Contraction denotes the omission of one or more letters in the middle of a word. The most common representation of this kind of abbreviation is the expansion mark for the nasal consonants *n* (figure 14) and *m* (figure 15). It can also stand for *i* (figure 16).

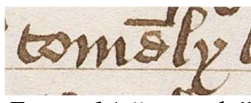


Figure 14. “comenly”

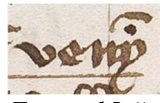


Figure 15. “venym”

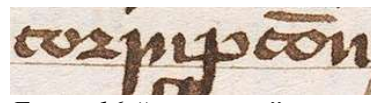


Figure 16. “corrupcion”

Superior letters or superscripts are characters that appear over the line of writing and mark the omission of one or more letters in a word. Two of them occur frequently in the *CoB*: a *t* above a thorn representing the word “*þat*” (figure 17) and a *t* above *w* to indicate the preposition “*with*” (figure 18).



Figure 17. “þat”

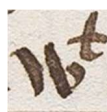


Figure 18. “with”

Other special abbreviation signs or brevigraphs have normally the same meaning irrespective of context, for example, the commonly occurring curved flourish that symbolises *er* (figure 19) or the symbol that stands for *ur* (figure 20).

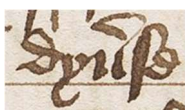


Figure 19. “dyuerse”

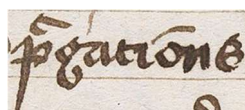


Figure 20. “purgacions”

The meaning of other signs depends on the context. A vertical stroke, sometimes curved, over the line of writing normally signals the consonantal group *ri* (figure 21), but it can also indicate the vowels *ui* (figure 22). A horizontal stroke situated in the descender of letter *p* can represent a number of combinations of letters such as *ar* (figure 23) and *or* (figure 24). A wavy stroke placed above the thorn mainly replaces the pronoun “*pou*” (figure 25), but it can also be used to signal *a* (figure 26), *ra* (figure 27) and *ua* (figure 28) in other environments.



Figure 21. “triacle”



Figure 22. “quik”

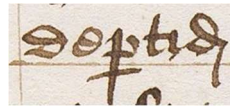


Figure 23. “departid”

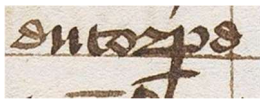


Figure 24. “encorpore”



Figure 25. “pou”



Figure 26. “ana”



Figure 27. “grace”

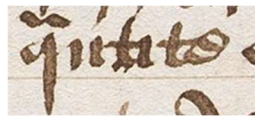


Figure 28. “quantite”

Apart from these common abbreviations that appear at word level, there are some others which denote a whole word on their own, such as the symbols for the conjunction “and” (figure 29) and the noun “recipe” (figure 30). Besides, apothecaries’ symbols are accompanied by Roman numerals to express the quantities of the remedies recommended. Among the symbols found in the *CoB* are those for the dram (figure 31), the ounce (figure 32) and the scruple (figure 33).



Figure 29. “and”



Figure 30. “Recipe”



Figure 31. “dragme”

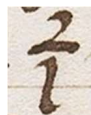


Figure 32. “ounce”



Figure 33. “scruple”

There is not any type of decoration in the folios containing the *CoB*. Marginalia, on the other hand, are frequent and contemporary to the text. Some of the annotations are keywords which make reference to what is being dealt with in the text (figure 34), and thus they act as textual markers to help the reader find information quickly. Scribal corrections can also appear in the margins (figure 35), which are used to write a word or

words that have been left out in the process of copying the text. Since they are common, this somehow implies a not very careful scribe.

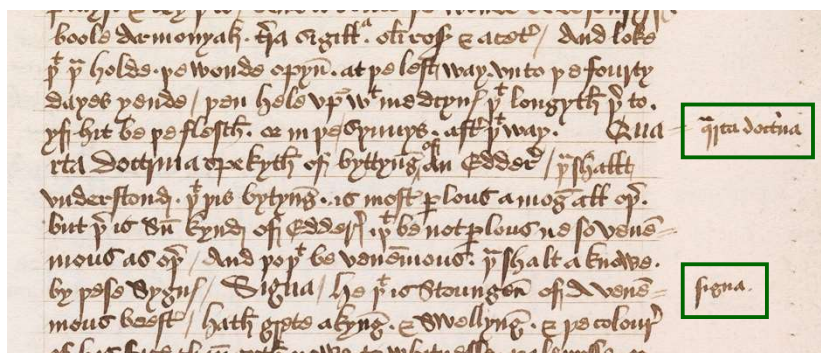


Figure 34. Marginalia: keywords

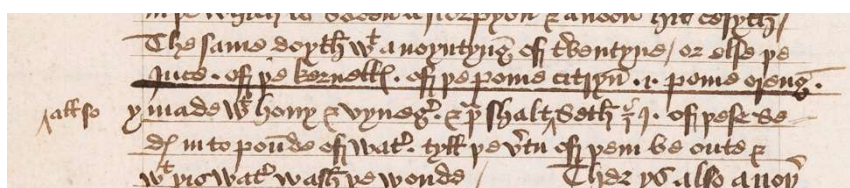


Figure 35. Marginalia: scribal correction

The scribal errors and the techniques used by the scribe to correct them will be explained next. One of them is cancellation, which involves crossing out mistakes with one or two horizontal lines and rewriting the correct word or words immediately afterwards (figure 36). Another one is expunction, that is, placing a dot under one or more erroneous letters to indicate that they should be omitted (figure 37). In obliteration, the error is covered with ink either by blotting, blurring or obscuring the letter(s) or word. The correction generally appears above the obliterated letter(s), as in figure 38. Another type of scribal correction is insertion. When a word is left out, insertion is made above the line of writing, the missing letter or letters are thus interpolated in superscript (figure 39). Words can also be interpolated; the omission is normally indicated in the margin and the exact point of insertion is also signalled by a caret (see figures 35 and 41).



Figure 36. Cancellation

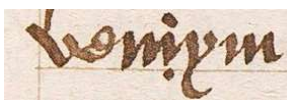


Figure 37. Expunction

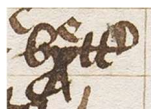


Figure 38. Obliteration



Figure 39. Insertion

The last point of discussion is punctuation. The inventory of punctuation marks in the *CoB* includes the punctus, the virgule, which can be double, and the caret. The punctus normally works at word and phrasal levels, whereas the virgule at the sentence one, that is, to delimit its end. The double virgule is used to indicate that the word continues in the following line, and therefore occurs always at the end of one. As mentioned before, the

caret marks the omission and point of insertion of a letter, word or words. All these marks are displayed in figures 40 (punctus, virgule and double virgule) and 41 (caret).

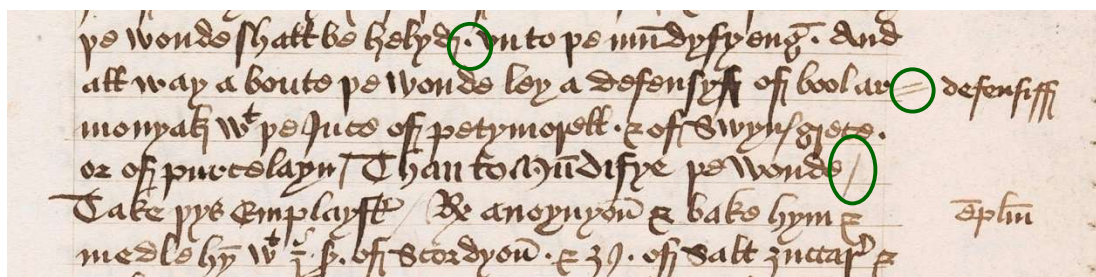


Figure 40. Punctus, virgule and double virgule

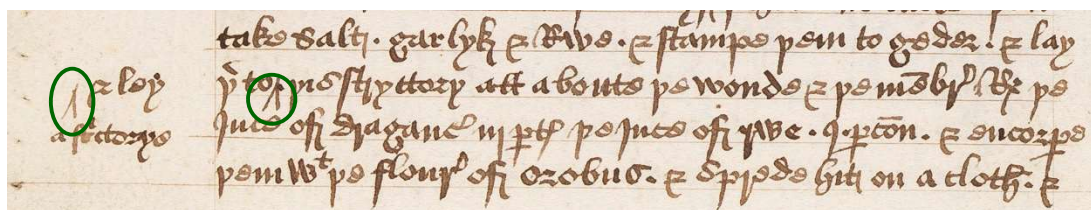


Figure 41. Caret marks

4. Editorial policy

The edition provided in the next section follows the conventions of the semi-diplomatic editorial method, that is, a single manuscript—and thus one version of the text—is chosen and there is not an attempt to establish the “best” reading of the original work from which the different witnesses stem. In the case of the *CoB*, the witness in MS Wellcome 411 seems to be the only one extant, although the existence of other remnant copies cannot be discarded. The text has been fully transcribed and reproduced closely so that the outcome is as faithful to the witness as possible. Therefore, the layout has been maintained, keeping the same distribution of lines on every page, with the only exception of the insertion of the number of folios and lines, which has been indicated to the right. The original punctuation has been preserved, as well as capital letters, spelling variants and word division. Letters or words which are written above the line as a form of scribal correction are marked by means of angular brackets in the edition.

Abbreviations and apothecaries’ weights have been expanded and the expansion has been conventionally indicated by means of italics. In the case of ambiguity concerning abbreviations, the most frequent spelling of the word when not abbreviated has been chosen or, if the word is not written in full, the spelling recorded in the *Middle English Dictionary* has been selected. Some instances of final *-e* are the result of the expansion of extended strokes at the end of words. This has been done with the understanding that they may be otiose. Some letter-forms, such as <s> or <r>, have different graphs depending on the position that they occupy within the word. This distinction, however, has not been retained in the transcription, which is graphemic rather than graphetic. Nonetheless, obsolete spellings, such as the runes thorn and yogh, have been retained. Letters *u*, *v*, *w*, *i*, *y* and *j* have been transcribed exactly as they appear in the manuscript.

One textual apparatus is supplied at the end of the page. This includes notes in the margins or marginalia and scribal errors and corrections. Editorial intervention has been kept to a minimum.

5. Edition

f. 56r

The cure of bytynge · i · of mannys bytynge þat is 1
mad · through þe whiche sum men dyen · with in · v · days · and
in sum men · þe venym is not dissoluyd · in to þe · xij · moun //
this yende and sum lenger · and þen þey dyen sodenly / Signa ·
þe sygnes be whan a mannys body is fulle infecte with venym 5
of þe bytynge / he hathe dredefulle sweuenys and gastfulle
in his slepe · and he thoughte fulle · and moche wondrynge · and he
felythe prychyng and mordicacion · or bitynge in his body /
and he hathe myche syghyng and thurst with dryenes of þe mouthe ·
and his wyt and his ymaginacion ben troblis with dyuerse fante // 10
seys · and yf hit be so þat he haue any drede of þe syghte of
clere water · þan he is fulle infecte with þat venym and trowythe
welle · þat by no crafte · ne by þe way of reson · but by þe grace
of god · he shalle be delyueryd and be hole of his syknesse
Cura · but þan þou shalt put hit in godes hond · and assay þese 15
medcynes / *Recipe cantaridarum* · þe hedes and þe wynges cast þem

a way · þen take · *dragme ij · croci · spica · gari of cinamomi ana* 1
 · *dragme semis* bete þem to poudere *and* make þer of crociffi · þat eueryche
 way *scruple i · and yef iij* of þem in þe wyke at sundretymys ·
and contynue þis medcyne vn to he pisse blode / þe whiche 5
 yf hit be so · þen is þe pacyent in þe way of helthe /
 And if hit so be þat þou clyped at þe bygynnýng · þou shalt
 lete hym vse of þese symple medcenes or componed
 a cordynge to suche a complexion *and* þou shalt ley to wond ·
Vnguentum Nigrum halý · þat is made of wax taloughe 10
piche and galbanum · þis oynement is ryghte *profitabile and*
generalle to alle maner of wondes · where þat any fleyshe is
departid / And alle so þis *Emplaystre* is good to þe same
 cause / *Recipe* houndistounge rwe ana *and* stampe þem in a mor //
 ter · *and* put þer to oolde swynes grece *and* hony *and* medle þem 15
 to geder ouer þe fyere *and* lay hit hote þer to / this *emplaistre*
drawythe oute þe venym *and* helythe þe wond / And alle
 so in þis case þou shalt lete þe pacyent drynk *triacle* · And
 also ley *triacle* to þe wond / And in case þou shalle specially
 worke with þe Juce of *Caprifolys Rwe* garlyk nuttes *and*
 salt figes myntes farina orobi · alle þese medcynes · or 20
 else *sum* of þem medlyd with *vynegre and* with hony · býthe
 ryghte holsum to be put þer to / But first þou shalt
 late þe pacient blode in þe same place · þat he was by //
 ten in · þat alle þe maleceous blode a boue þe sore maý
 com oute in þe same place / Or þou may worke in þis 25
 wyse · þou shalt cuppe hym · in þe same place þat he is betyne /
 þa<n> aftere þis blode lest · þou shalt ley þer to a pelet with
tryacle · and þer a bouen / *Emplastrum Nervale* · *and* so yf þe by //
 tynge be in þe fleshe procede forthe with þy cure · as hit
 is taughte in þe wondes of fleshe / *and* yf hit be in Syn // 30
 wys · after þe techynge þat longithe to þe Synwys ·

6 þou? followed by double cancellation: ~~sa~~ 9 *Vnguentum* in left-hand margin: *vnguentum* 13
 cause in left-hand margin: *emplastrum* · 16 *drawythe* in left-hand margin: *pocio* · 27 þa<n>
 obliteration of letter n 31 *Synwys* · followed by cancellation: ~~after þe techynge þat longithe to~~
~~synwys~~ /

The Secunde Doctrine · hit is tretid of þe bytyng of
 horses / So here þou shalt vnderestond · þat þis bytyng is ryghte 1
 perlouse / Signa · þe sygnes be accordyng to þe sygnes ·
 þat be rehersed by fore / Cura · þe cure also is myche a
 cordyng to þe cure · next be fore / but not in alle / ffor 5
 in þis cause þe pacyent shalle blede in þe contraye parte ·
 and he shalle be kepte lax and ley to hym þis Emplaystre
 Recipe A noynon and bake hym and medle hym with · dragme ij · of salt · and
 dragme i · of comyn oyle and dragme iij · of melle roset · and with þis medcyne
 þe wonde shalle be helyd · vn to þe mundyfyenge · And 10
 alle way a bouthe þe wonde ley a defensyff of bool ar //
 monyak with þe juce of petymorelle · and of swynes grece ·
 or of purcelayn / Than to Mundifye þe wonde /
 Take þys Emplaystre / Recipe anoynoun and bake hym and
 medle hym with ounce · semis · of scordyoun · and dragme j · of salt zuccare and 15
 oyle · ana dragme ij · melle roset · ounce iij · and make a playstre and do
 þer to / þis emplaystre mundifieth wonderlyche þe wond
 and remevythe þe akyng of þe bytyng / þen where þe by //
 tyng be in fleshe · or in synowe / þou shalt procede forthe
 as by fore rehersed / The iij doctryne spekythe 20
 of þe bytyng of an hound · þis is to be notified · þat
 whan a man is bytten of an hound · where þat he be
 wod or not / for yf he be wode · hit is to þe more
 perelle · but yf þe pacient be more dyscrete likere gouerynd
 he shapithe not with þe lyff / Neuerþelatter comenly hit is 25
 seyn for to be shewyd with in viij dayes after þe bytyng /
 Cura · þe cure of bytyng of an hounde yf he be not
 wood · is · ryghte as a wound made in fleyshe / Or
 else take myntes y stampid · and medle þem with hony ·
 and ley þer to / and geve hym · egrimonye to drynke y medlyd 30
 with wyne / But and yf hit be bytten · with a
 wode hounde · þe cure standythe · in · iiij · maner of

1 of²] in right-hand margin: · secunda doctrina · 7 Emplaystre] in right-hand margin: emplastrum
 11 defensyff] obliteration of ff 11 ar //] in right-hand margin: defensiff 14 and²] in right-hand
 margin: emplastrum 20 spekythe] in right-hand margin: · tertia doctrina · 28 Or] in right-hand
 margin: emplastrum · 30 medlyd] in right-hand margin: pocio ·

ways · after þe doctrine of Harre de hermeda villa · þat is to 1
sayn / Balneum · pocio · dieta · and localia / and þis is
as myche to say · as bathis · drynkes · dyete and surgere ·
or handwork / As to þe first · what so euer man or
beyste is bytten · of an wode hounde · or of any oþer ve // 5
nemes beyste · and be nwe bytten · Brynge þe pacient
to þe see and plunge hym ix tymes and he nedithe no more
cure · but as to symple wonde / Secunda · a noon
after þe byttinge let þe pacient drynke triacle contynually ·
vn to xl · days y yendid / Anoþer · Recipe seins althee 10
dragme v · and sethe hem in iiij pound of water and dragme i · vini and drynke þer of
at morow tyde and at evyn · / Anoþer / Recipe sole althee dragme j ·
and semis · cum dragme ij · sirupi seins canabi or coriaunder poudere and zugre
ana · dragme j · and semis and d_rynk hit with þe juce som colde erbe as letu //
se purcelayne and oþer suche / Or else drynke þe forty dayes 15
a for sayde / Take dragme j · and semis of þis medcyne / Take gencianum
thures ana dragme j · cinis cancrorum fluuialium adustorum dragme x · and make
þem in poudere · and drynk hit with cold water / But be ware
þat þou yef not to hym no laxativys / ne noone purgacions · ne
clistres · ne suppositorijs · ne late hym no blode · þo iij dayes · 20
þen opene þe wonde with a fle_yme or with a launce · to lete þe
blod / and to purge hym with a lyghte purgacion · þat purgythe þe malen //
colye / as with þe decoccion of Epithimi with gotes whey · and wa //
she his hede · with þe water in þe whiche þe feet and þe legges of
a wethire were soden in / Tercia dieta / Thou no // 25
ryshe hym with metes and drynkes to make hym glad · and þat he
suffre no hunger · ne thurst · ne travelle / and euery day tulle a
mownthis yende / he shalle vse sum of þese symple med //
cynes · or componed / Quarta localia / After þe wonde 30
is welle ventysed · hit shalle be openyd with an hote yrone
to þe dypthe of þe wonde / and afterwarde ley a bouene þe
wonde Attracta <is> · to drau ovte þe venyme as Emplastrum

7 to] in left-hand margin: balneum 9 after] in left-hand margin: pocio 12 at¹] in left-hand margin:
p_ocio (obliteration of first o) 15 se] in left-hand margin: pocio 19 þat] in left-hand margin: nota
bene ·

Nervale / or else Emplastrum Gran dei maior · / Stampe	1
Netlys with salt and a noone hythe doythe a way þe akyng · Anoþer / Take red nettlys and pety morelle ana and fresche grece and þe moste part of butter · and ley hote to þe wonde / Anoþer	
Take nutkernelles salt and garlyke and ffiges ana and make a playstre and ley þer to / And a boutte þe wonde a defensyff ·	5
boole Armonyak · terra sigillata · olium roses and acete / And loke þat þou holde · þe wonde opyne · at þe lest way · vn to þe fourty dayes yende / þen hele vpe with medcynes þat longythe þer to ·	
yf hit be þe flesche · or in þe/ synuys · after þat way · Qua //	10
rta Doctrina spekythe of byttinge ^ <of> an Eddere / þou shallt vnderstond · þat þis byttinge · is moste perlous a mong alle oþer · but þer is sum kynd of Edderes · þat be not perlous ne so venem //	
mous as oþer / And þo þat be venemous · þou shalt a knowe · by þese Sygnes / Signa / he þat is stoungene of a venem //	15
mous beeste / hathe grete akyng · and swellyng · and þe coloure of his face chaungythe nowe to whitnesse · palenysse · or to blacknysse / þe whitnesse · as þe hete and þe sprytes fleene in to þe warde of þe pacyent · to þe greuousse · as whan þe spyrites goythe a yene to þe vtterpartes · and þer is alle wey in þe	20
place grete hete / As Avicen seythe / As for þe Edderes arne hote in þem sylf / But When þou Seyst þes Sygnes · folowyng in þe pacyent · after þe byttinge of a Eddere · de //	
me hym outwardly for dede / Signa mortis / þese sygnes are dedlyche / whan þe pacient hathe any colde swetes ·	25
and his extremetes arne colde · and he is wondryng · in his thoughte · or whan he hathe þe spasme · i · þe crampe · or Sounyng · and þe coloure of his body · is tourned in to gre //	
nesse · or palenesse · or in to blaknesse / þan shortly he shalle not a scape þat syknesse / Cura · / þe first	30
cure in þis case · is for to opyn þe wond · with a flyme · þat þe malycious blood may passe oute · And after þat Set þer on ·	

2 hythe| followed by cancellation: ~~aw~~ 10 Qua //] in right-hand margin: quarta doctrina 15 venem
//] in right-hand margin: signa · 22 Sygnes ·] in right-hand margin: nota per totum 24 þese] in
right-hand margin: signa mortes · 30 first] in right-hand margin: cura

ventuse for þat drawythe oute þe ventuse fume 1
 as welle as þe blod / Or else take · a cok or an hene *and*
 pulle a way alle þe federes a boutte þe fundament / *and* þen
 set his fundament to þe wond / *and* threste hit harde þer to ·
and yf þe Cok dye · þat is a sygne · þat þe vemom is drauythe 5
 outward / þen do away hym *and* put þer to / anoþer / vn to
 þe tyme þat þe hete *and* þe swellynge passe a way / And hit
 is ryghte good / to stampe þe croppes of brome *and* take þe juce
 þer of · *and* anoynte alle þe place a boutte þer with / for þis kepithe 10
 þe vemym · þat hit passithe no ferthere / And also Jpericon ·
 · i · Seynt Jhon is wort doythe þe same · yf hit be playstred ·
and leyd vn þe bytynge / Anoþer medcyn · in þe whiche alle
 Auctorys a cordyng in oone / *and* is þis · þat þe membre shalle
 be streyly y bounden · a boue þe bytynge · ij · ynches · for 15
 þis maner of byndyng shulde vppon þe halfe · lette þe venym
 to passe vppeward / And vppon þe oþer syde þe spirites · *and*
 þe humurous shulden drau vn to þe Akyng of þe sore
 byndyng / *and* so þe cours of venymmes fume is for boden · þat
 hit may not passe *and* fle a brode · among oþer lymes / These 20
 remedies by ryghte good / while þat þe wondes be new *and*
 freshe / But alle way holde þe wonde opyne · tulle þat þe
 vemym be drau oute / *and* yf hym triakle maior *and* garlyk
 y stampid with þe juce of serpentarys · i · dragance hony
and genciane to drynk · And þen take tryacle *and* do hit on a
 paillet · *and* lay hit to þe wond / for hit drawythe oute þe 25
 venym / *and* lettythe hit not passe more inward / þen a boue
 þe tryacle ley Apostolicon · Syrgicum · or Emplastrum Ner //
 uale · or Gra dei maior / And yf þou haue no triacle · þen
 take salt · garlyk *and* Rwe · *and* stampe þem to geder · *and* lay
 þer to [^] · <[^] *and* ley> þis stryctory alle a boutte þe wonde *and* þe membre *Recipe* þe 30
 juce of dragance iij partes þe juce of rwe · j · periconn · *and* encorpore
 þem with þe floure of orobus · *and* sprede hit on a clothe · *and*

1 ventuse²] followed by cancellation and obliteration of first e: ~~fume~~ **15 þis]** in left-hand margin:
 byndyng **23 y stampid]** in left-hand margin: pocio **26 venym]** obliteration of letter i: venym
30 <[^] *and* ley>] in left-hand margin **31 juce¹**] in left-hand margin: a stryctorye

ley hit alle a boutē / Or elle se þou myghte worke in þis case 1
 on þis maner · þou shalt take sum frynde of þe pacyent · and lat
 hym soke strongly þe same wond and alle way spete hit
 oute / but be ryghte ware þat he swolowe not hit · be no
 mene · þer of · þat he sokythe / But fyrst loke · þat his stomake · 5
 be replet with wyne rwe and garlyk nuttes and fyges · and þat he wa //
 she alle way his mouthe with wyne and oyle / And yf þou may
 not spede by þis way · ne by noon oþer a forne sayde ·
 þen yf hit be a smalle membre · kut hym of · for hit b<e>tter
 to lese oon membre · þen to lyse his lyf / Dieta / 10
 þe dyet of þis doctrine þou shalt fynd in þe nexte doctryne
 of bytynge / Quinta doctrina · hit is tretid of þe
 bytynge of a scorpion · and of oþer smalle beestes · where þat
 þou shalt vnder stond · þat he is ryghte venemmys / and his punc //
 ture is so sotylle þat hit may vnnethe be seen / Signa / 15
 þe sygnes of þe puncture · of þe scorpyon byn þese / þe lypes
 of þe puncture wexen harde as þe sole of þe fete · þer
 is no grete swellynge · ne rednys · hit a kythe sodenly /
 And oþer while hit goythe a way / Whan þe akyngē lastithe
 longe · þe pacyent shalle swete · and oþer whilis · his extre // 20
 meteys bygyn to quake / Cura / þe cure in þis cause ·
 as Galyon seythe · is þis · þou shalt take garlyk or Asafetida
 or triacle with wyne and make a playstre and ley hit to þe sore · for
 hit drauythe oute þe venym · and put hit away · and comfor //
 tythe kynd · and dystroythe þe qualyte of þe venym / An oþer 25
 good medcyn · is þe triacle þat Galien makythe · as þus /
 Take Aristologe dragme iiij · piperis dragme iij · seins Apij dragme j and semis ·
 piretrum
 dragme iiij · make here of pelletes with hony · to þe quantite of benys ·
 and yf hym ij pelletes with dragme iij · of stronge wyne / An oþer · yf
 hym dragme j · and semis of pure olibanum / Or else take grene warmō // 30
 de and grynde hit and incorpore hit with buttur and hony · and þe juce
 of smalache · yf hym dragme iij · and anon hit staunchithe / Or let

9 b<e>tter] obliteration of letter y (bytter) 12 þe] in right-hand margin: quinta doctrina 15 Signa
 /] in right-hand margin: signa 17 as] followed by obliteration: þþ 21 cause ·] in right-hand margin:
 cura 24 venym] obliteration of letter i: venijm

þe pacyent be fulle filled *with fyges nuttes garlyk and rwe and ge* // 1
 ue hym *with good wyne* / And hit nedythe no *noþer medcynne* ·
 This medcynne [^]<by fore> is alle so for þe bytyng of an Addere *and oþer ve* //
 nym bestes / But here þou shalt vnderstonde · þat what
 medcynne euer þou gyve · for a bytyng of a scorpyoun · or of a 5
 serpent / hit shalle be gevyne *with good wyne* / yf þe pacy //
 ent · be stronge of vertu · / Or else yeve hit *with water* of þe
 decoccion of Annys/ But here þou shalt haue a lyghte
 medcynne *and an expert* / A noynt þe same place *with oyle* ·
 in þe whiche is sodene a scorpyoun *and a noone hit cesythe* / 10
 The same doythe *with a noyntynge of terbentyne* / or else þe
 juce · of þe kernelles · of þe pome citryne · i · pome orange ·
 y made *with hony and vynegre* · and þou shalt [^]<[^]alle so> sethe ounce j · of þese se //
 des in to pounce of water · tulle þe vertu of þem be oute *and*
with þis water washe þe wonde / Ther ys also a *noþer* 15
 maner of beeste / *and þer* be of þem bothe male *and* female · þe
 male · whan he styngythe · he makythe but only ij · holis /
 but þe female makythe many / *and þat wond castythe an oyle*
 lyke bloody quyttur · þe whiche · þere as hit goithe / hit makithe
 þe body to rotene / Signa / þese be þe sygnes · firste þe 20
 akyng þat is in þe same place · *and after hit is sparkelyd* ·
and rynt in to alle þe body · / Cura / þe cure in þis case · is
 for to drynk triacle *and oþer* of þe same kynde · as hit is seyde
 by fore · in þe styngynge of þe Eddres / But here þou shalt
 note a generalle rule · þat yf þe pacyent be so yonge · þat he 25
 passe not þe Age of x yere / Or else þat he be in [^]<a> passand
 age / hit is ryghte harde to hem for to a scape þe dethe ·
 but þat not ayen stondynge · lat hym vse þe quantite of þe iiij ·
 part · of þe lyghtyste · of þese symple medcynnes · aforne
 sayde / *and also for to be syker* · þe moste soughtest componed · 30
 as triacle *and oþer suyche* / Medicine simplices *and generalis* ·
omnibz comunis morsure / Symple medcynys *and generalle* to alle

3 This] in left-hand margin: nota · 4 nym] preceded by cancellation: ~~my~~ 13 <[^]alle so>] in left-hand margin

comen · bytynge or of venym / where þat hit be yoven by 1
 þe mouthe / or else falle by accydent / þou shalt take þe ker //
 nelles of pome cytryne *and* stampe hem · *dragme j and semis* / But Auecen
 seythe · þat þou shalt yeue *ounce iij · or dragme iij · with hote wyne or water /*
 or else *dragme j · of spyknard · or garlyk · dragme j · and semis · /* Or else poudre 5
 of þe ryndes of mandrak · *dragme ij · with ounce j · of hony / or poudere*
 of kanelle · *dragme ij · or dragme iij · with cold water /* or þe sede of rwe ·
 whiþer hit be one or oþer · *dragme iij · and semis with wyne /* The rote of tur //
 mentille in poudre · *and* geve hit hym in his mete / or in
 his drynk · as myche as a man wylle / hit helythe alle maner 10
 of bytynge or styngyng / And hit is good also fore venyme /
 Medicine composite · *and generalis omnibz causis per dictes /* þose
 are medcynes compond · *and* þey be generalle to alle maner of ve //
 nym / whiþer hit be yoven by mouthe or else · falle by accid //
 ens · as þo oþer symple a for sayde / Of þe whiche þe first · 15
and þe principalle is þe grete triacle · Averoyes seythe in his
 bokys of tryacle · þat hit sholde be youene *with wyne a lytelle*
 lymphate · i · y warmed · of þe whiche triacle · þe reseyte
 is in þe Antidore of Nycholas / Or þe triacle þat Galyen 20
 makythe · whiche y made of iij · spices *and* is rehersid in þe
 same doctrine aforne / yf hit be vsyd fro *dragme j · vnto dragme ij ·* And
 euery of þese iij spices · is triacle by hit self · yf ye take but
 one allon · *with his doble of hony dyspumate /* Olde men
 vsyd to yeue · þis triacle first a forne alle oþer · for alle maner of
 venym / An oþer / take triacle *and* asafetida · þe whiche is 25
 most apropred *and* most profitable to cold venymes / þe [^] _^ whiche > shuld
 be vsed in hote Regyones · fro *dragme j · vnto dragme ij · / and* in colde regyones
 fro *dragme j · in to dragme iij* as þus / *Recipe mirre foliorum rwte sicci costi*
mentrasti sicci pipere nigri p[^]retri ana ounce j · asfetide ounce j and semis ·
 dissolue asa fetida in wyne *and* make poudre of alle þe oþer / 30
and þen encorpore þem *with hony soden and welle dispumate /*
 Medicina simplex / here is a symple medcyne for getyne

26 [^] whiche > | in right-hand margin

a monge oþer symple medcynes / *and* is a grete sedatyf of a // 1
 kyng a mong many · *Recipe* · a culuer peione *and* slytt hym alle quik *and*
 by clyppe þe wonde þer in / *and* when hit ys colde · þen take
 hit away / *and* take a noþer · *And* yf þou haue no culuer birdes ·
 take chyrones · *and* dyghte þem in þe maner / *And* yf þou haue chy // 5
 kones / take vynegre *and* warme hit *and* put hit in to wonde lewke
 warme / *Medicina composita et experta* / here is an
 expert medcyne y componyd · *and* he is a grete a bater *and* vn //
 byndythe *and* lessithe sorowe *and* akyng · *and* drauythe oute þe
 venym · in euery maner of bytyng *and* styngyng / *Recipe* · serapine 10
 castorie ase fetide sulphures stercores columbine mentrastum
 calamentum ana · *tempere* hit with oolde oyle actualle hote encorpore
 þem welle to gedire *and* vse hit / *Anoþer* / *Recipe* · Galbanum sera //
 pini mirre ase fetide oppopanaces piperis sulphures ana *tempere*
 þem to geder *and* encorpore hem with wyne *and* vse hit forthe / 15

Than the conclusyon of thys purpos · for to Rehers
 shortly · þe entente of þis processe by goode ordere · þe
 intencion shalle openly be tochild þese · ix · rulis folow //
 yng / *Prima Regula* · / of þe whiche · þis is þe first · 20
 þat þou shalt · yf hit nedythe · opene þe wonde with a
 flyme / *Secunda regula* / þat þou shalt be a boue / after
 þe wonde is opyne · to drawe oute · þe venymes mater ·
 with a stronge ventuos · or else with a maner of sokyng of
 man · or of water leche · or with a cokes fundament · oþer suche · 25
Tercia regula / when þe wond is þis sokyn · yf hyt
 nedythe · þou shalt canteryon hire · with an hote yrone to þe bottum /
Quarta regula / whan þou hast þus canteryed þe wond ·
 þou shalt ley þer to þyne emplasteres · þat ben atractatif / *Quinta*
regula · yf þese atractativis wyll not a vayle · but þe 30
 mater is alwey encresyng / þan þou shalt bynde straytely
 þe membre · ij ynches a boue þe venym · þat hit passe not

21 shalt] followed by cancellation: ~~openly~~

no hygher · <i>and</i> ley a <i>strictorye</i> a bouen / <i>Sexta regula</i> /	1
yf þis byndynge is so myghty · þat hit may not constreyne ·	
þe venymes fume of þis cause · but þat hit passythe · to þe	
spiryтуalle membrys / þan þe <i>pacientes</i> body shalle be <i>pur</i> //	
gyd / or made to be <i>laxatife</i> · <i>with</i> clystres or <i>suppotorijs</i> /	5
<i>Septima regula</i> / whan þe <i>pacient</i> is þus <i>purged</i> · þou sh //	
alt <i>stanche</i> <i>Akynges</i> · yf þer be any <i>with</i> <i>sedatyffes</i> <i>medcynes</i> · þat	
a <i>batythe</i> <i>akynges</i> / <i>Octaua regula</i> / þat whan þe <i>achynge</i> is	
<i>cesid</i> / <i>and</i> þe wond <i>castithe</i> <i>kyndly</i> <i>quyttur</i> · þou shalt hit · in þe	
<i>maner</i> as hit is <i>seyde</i> a <i>forne</i> in þe same <i>chapitur</i> / <i>Nona</i>	10
<i>regula</i> / yf <i>alle</i> þe <i>crafte</i> · ne <i>medcynes</i> · wolle not a <i>vayle</i> ·	
þen þe <i>Auctores</i> a <i>corden</i> <i>and</i> <i>seyne</i> · þat yf þe wond · be in a //	
<i>lytelle</i> <i>membre</i> · hit shuld be cut of · at þe next <i>joynt</i> a	
<i>boven</i> þe <i>corrupcion</i> / as þus · þe <i>fynger</i> to þe <i>hande</i> · þe	
<i>hand</i> to þe <i>elbou</i> · þe <i>arme</i> to þe <i>body</i> <i>and</i> so <i>forthe</i> of <i>oper</i> <i>mem</i> //	15
<i>brys</i> / but by my <i>counseylle</i> · þou shalt not do þys · ffor many	
<i>dyuerse</i> <i>accidentes</i> · þat myghte be <i>falle</i> / Take hede of þe <i>dyet</i>	
of þese <i>doctoures</i> by þem self a <i>fore</i> <i>sayde</i>	

6. Concluding remarks

The treatise under consideration might have been used by a physician who practised during the late Middle Ages. Although in general the remedies are relatively simple and some may be considered to be not very scientific (for instance, the one which advises to “take *sum* *frynde* of þe *pacyent* · *and* *lat* | *hym* *soke* *strongly* þe same wond *and* *alle* way *spete* *hit* | *oute*” (‘take some friend of the patient and let him suck strongly the same wound and then spit it out’) in folio 59r, some sort of medical instruction must have been required to carry out the surgical procedures mentioned such as cauterising the wound in order to extract the poison or amputating the infected limb. Both the lack of decoration and the presence of marginalia suggest a practical function of the text.

The treatise bears witness to the close connection between medicine and religion in the Middle Ages, as exemplified by fragments which highlight the reliance on God’s aid or grace to heal the patient: “but by þe *grace* | of *god* · he shalle be *delyueryd* *and* be *hole* of his *syknesse*” (‘but by the grace of God he shall be delivered and be healed of his sickness’); “but þan þou shalt put hit in *godes* *hond* · *and* *assay* þese | *medcynes*” (‘but then you shall put it in God’s hand and try out these medicines’) in folio 56r.

The *CoB* proves to be a valuable treatise to better understand the diffusion of scientific knowledge in the Middle Ages. There is still much work left to do, including more detailed research on provenance, textual transmission so as to find other copies or witnesses containing it, as well as dialectal assessment.

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