
The essays in this volume use the new electronic corpus of *Early Modern English Medical Texts (EMEMT)*, the second part of the *Corpus of Early English Medical Writing*, as the basis for research into the ways medical practices and understandings developed in early modern England (1500-1700). *EMEMT* includes six text types: general treatises and textbooks; treatises on specific topics; recipe collections and *materia medica*; regimens and health guides; surgical and anatomical treatises; and texts published in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society, the earliest scientific journal in English. In truly interdisciplinary fashion, the contributors to this volume use the *EMEMT* to shed light on the ways early modern medicine and linguistics are linked. This is rigorous, carefully designed research. The essays are important contributions to the field of medical history.

The volume begins with two introductory chapters. The first provides an overview of methodology in which the editors argue that the context of communication shapes the way ideas are formulated. The second describes the electronic corpus of *Early Modern English Medical Texts (EMEMT)* and provides a brief history of medical writing. It focuses on the circulation of medical works in the period and, in particular, considers the relationship between manuscript and print. The authors of this collaboratively written second chapter (the editors, several members of the Helsinki Thought-Styles project in English language, and Cambridge medical historian and librarian Peter Murray Jones) describe the growing body of early modern printed books as part of a “process of dynamic interaction” with spoken communication and handwritten books and not as a simple “replacement” of manuscript culture. They also describe important changes in the period such as an agreement between the physicians and the newly formed Society of Apothecaries that restricted apothecaries to providing medicines found in the Latin *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis* (1618).

Following the introductory chapters are ten essays organized to move from broad ideas to specific case studies. In “Medical Literacies and Medical Culture in Early Modern England,” Peter Murray Jones discusses the audiences for medical writing and three places in which medical works would have been read: public spaces such as market squares and in the streets; the private household “closet” which holds the “books and private papers and the equipment to make up household remedies” (35); and the library or study. Jones reflects on the differences among consumers of medical writing in the period and provides useful reminders about the prestige of Latin over the vernacular.

Chapters four through seven employ linguistic analysis to investigate the status of early modern medical knowledge. “Verbs of Knowing: Discursive Practices in Early Modern Vernacular Medicine,” by Turo Hiltunen and Jukka Tyrkkö, considers knowing-verbs in the electronic corpus. The study reveals a broad shift in vernacular medical writing from the period “from a predominantly practical discursive orientation to
an assertive one” (73) and provides a framework for considering the nature of knowledge as it develops over time. In “Defining in Early Modern English Medical Texts,” Rod McConchie and Anne Curzan use the EMEMT to study early modern terms used to indicate definition (betoken, call, clepe, etc.). The authors conclude that writers of medical texts employ definitional practices in these works (such as use of etymology) in advance of English lexicographers. The essay is particularly effective in demonstrating the importance of interdisciplinary work (medical history, lexicography, linguistics) for understanding early modern medicine.

In “Dissemination and Appropriation of Medical Knowledge: Humoral Theory in Early Modern Medical Writing and Lay Texts,” Irma Taavitsainen analyzes a specific lexical item, “humour,” to understand how medical theory was transmitted and applied by a variety of audiences. She concludes that professional writing is concerned with exposition and definition and lay writing is inflected by moods and attitudes, but she is also careful to note that the transformation of learned medicine into popular medicine was “gradual” and the borders between the two kinds of medicine “fuzzy” (114). “Code-switching in Early Modern English Medical Writing,” by Päivi Pahta, studies multilingual passages in the corpus of the EMEMT. Pahta observes that code-switching (moving from English to another language) was used in three ways: for specialized medical terminology; in direct, intertextual reference to other texts; and in recipes embedded within longer works. She notes that this is similar to medieval practices but increasingly differed from them as English was becoming “a fully fledged written language” (132).

Moving from broad analyses of medical writing, the final four essays concentrate on particular types of medical texts. The eighth and ninth chapters look at the genre of medical recipes. In “New Arguments for New Audiences: A Corpus-based Analysis of Interpersonal Strategies in Early Modern English Medical Recipes,” Ville Marttila analyzes personal references in medical recipes. Martilla finds that some authors create intimate relationships with readers by way of personal references and by employing vernacular terminology and allusions to widely known authorities. Correlations between level of intimacy and simple terminology are not necessarily direct: sometimes, for example, works include a high level of impersonality even as lay terminology is employed. “Efficacy Phrases in Early Modern English Medical Recipes,” by Martti Mäkinen, performs a close analysis of phrases in medical recipes that claim that the recipe will work. Common phrases of this sort include the Latin “probatum est” and vernacular “and he will be cured.” Mäkinen suggests that the use of efficacy phrases changes over time: by the seventeenth century evidence of “the ideological shift towards empiricism” (175) is discernible.

The tenth chapter, “Medical Pamphlets: Controversy and Advertising,” by Maura Ratia and Carla Suhr, analyzes this growing genre. The authors consider the proliferation of medical pamphlets of two sorts: the advertisement and the pamphlet that addressed controversial issues. The first was aimed at a general audience, the second at medical professionals. Ratia and Suhr’s analysis focuses on first and second person pronouns as indicators of the relationship between author and audience and discourse deictic markers (direction signs—something is mentioned earlier or later in the