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FROM A STOREKEEPER TO THE PHYSICIAN'S COOK? EARLY ENGLISH REFERENCES TO PHARMACISTS

The aim of this article is to examine early English references to those involved in storing, selling and making medicinal preparations. Also, we will attempt to find out how early pharmacists were perceived by other medical practitioners. The study is mainly based on the language material from two medical corpora *Middle English Medical Texts* (MEMT) and *Early Modern English Medical Texts* (EMEMT). In order to make the list of references to early pharmacists as comprehensive as possible, the online editions of the following dictionaries have been consulted: *Historical Thesaurus of English* (HTE), *Middle English Dictionary* (MED), and *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED).

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1. Introduction¹

Early English medical lexicon and its development have attracted various degrees of attention. Although some works offer an in-depth examination and overview of a number of lexical fields, e.g. names of body parts, diseases, medical preparations or instruments, and references to physicians (Norri 1992, 1998; Sylwanowicz 2011, 2014, 2018; Toupin 2018, among others), there are still areas that require intensive research. The present paper aims to examine the

¹ A part of this section is based on Sylwanowicz (2018: 43–46); the material has been revised and extended.

earliest references to a group of people involved in storing, compounding and selling medicaments in Middle and Early Modern English medical writings.

The earliest English “pharmacists” were pepperers and spicers who were mostly involved in a trading activity. Hence the Guild of Pepperers (established in 1180) and the Guild of Spicers (1184). With time, some spicers began to dispense compound medicines and soon began to use the title of apothecary (Anderson 2005: 41, 117, Zebroski 2016: 70). Thus, originally pepperers, spicers and apothecaries were members of the same group that by the mid-14th century was called the Fraternity of St. Anthony. The only difference was that apothecaries were dealing with drugs for medicinal purposes, whereas the former mostly sold spices and other products employed for domestic purposes (Thompson 1929: 88, Getz 1991: xxix). In the 15th-16th centuries the group of pepperers, spicers and apothecaries became known as the Grocer’s Company, which, apart from pharmaceutical services, had import monopoly on drugs. In this powerful group of traders, apothecaries formed a small group of individuals who felt overshadowed by other guild members. Therefore, in 1617, by the consent of king James I, apothecaries formed their own guild, The Worshipful Society of the Art and Mystery of the Apothecaries, which granted them monopoly on selling and preparing medicines (Anderson 2005: 53, 117).

Although the earliest status of the English apothecary in medical practice and his relationship with physicians is not clearly defined, there are some records which give us a general idea of the position of the compounder of medicines. From Chaucer’s *General Prologue* to his *Canterbury Tales* we learn that the doctor “Ful reddy hadde he his apotecaries; To sende him drogges and his letuaries” (Chaucer, CT, G. Prologue (Benson), 425–426), which suggests that there must have been some kind of cooperation with and reliance on the skills of apothecaries. However, when there was no apothecary at hand, as Lanfranc² notes, a physician had to be ready to make medicines on his own, cf.:

- (1) If þou be sent after into a cuntre, þere ben noon apotecarijs, þan if þou canst make þese medicyns þat ben forseid (...). (Fleischhacker, a1400 *Sciencie of Chirurgie I* (MS Ashm 1396),330/15–18)
 ‘If you are sent out of town and there are no apothecaries, then make the medicaments, as described earlier (...).’³

² Guido Lanfranc was a leading medieval authority that laid foundations for the French Surgery. His works were translated into many European languages, including Middle English (Power 1910, Sylwanowicz 2018).

³ All translations of Middle English fragments are made by the author of this paper.

There are also documents referring to early English apothecaries that used to be spicers to the kings. For instance, the Pipe Roll of Henry II (1180) states that an apothecary accompanied the king during his journey. The apothecary, known by name and of whom much is known, is Robert de Montpellier, a merchant trader who served Henry III (1207–1272). Although nothing is known of his duties, the records reveal that the king's physician "was required to prepare wines or medicinal substances in the apothecary's presence" (Thompson 1929: 86, Getz 1991: xxix).

Later records, i.e. those from the 16th-17th centuries, give us a better picture of the apothecary and his duties. In the mid-16th century *Government of Health* by William Bullein⁴ we find a thorough description of the apothecary, cf.:

- (2) He must fyrst serve God, forsee the end, be clenly, pity the poor. Must not be suborned for money to hurt mankynde. (...) His garden must be at hand with plenty of herbs, seeds and roots. To sow and gather, preserve and kepe them in due tyme. To read Dioscorides, to know the nature of plants and herbes. To invent medicines, to choose colours, taste, odour, figure, etc. (...) That he neither increase nor diminish the Phisician's bill and kepe it for his discharge. (...) That he delyte to reede Nicholas Myrepsus, Valerius Cordus, Johannes Placaton, the Lubik, etc. That he do remember that his office is only to be ye physician's cooke. That he use true measure and weight (...). (after Thompson 1929: 162–163)

As the description above reveals, an apothecary was required to have an extensive knowledge about the qualities and ways of preservation of the herbs, spices and other substances used in fixing medicines. In addition, he was expected to be familiar with the works of various medical authorities and be able to invent his own medicines. But, most importantly, an apothecary should be modest and trustworthy, and remember that his primary duty was to be the "physician's cooke" (Thompson 1929: 162–163).

On account of the above, it is expected that the changing position and function of early pharmacists is reflected in the choice of the terms used with reference to these practitioners. Therefore, we will start with determining (i) what terms were used with reference to pharmacists in the examined period, and (ii) which of these terms are recorded in a medical context. The examination of the terms will also reveal the ways in which those who prepared and sold medicaments were pictured in early English medical texts.

The choice of the period to be examined, i.e. 14th – 17th centuries, is partly determined by the available sources (to be described in the following section). Also, the aim of the paper is to concentrate on the perception of pharmacists

⁴ William Bullein was a 16th century physician, botanist and rector of Balxhall, Suffolk.

before they started to be recognized as fully skilled medical practitioners who, apart from supplying medicines, could legally give advice on medical treatment.⁵

2. Corpus material

2.1. Corpus texts

The material examined for the present study consists of medical writings included in two electronic corpora: the *Middle English Medical Texts* (MEMT) and the *Early Modern English Medical Texts* (EMEMT). The former includes a representative collection of medical writings (the total of half-a-million words) from c. 1375–1500 and divides the texts into three main categories: surgical treatises, specialized texts, and remedy books (Taavitsainen-Pahta-Mäkinen 2005). Apart from the major categories of texts, the MEMT corpus contains two collections written in the first half of the 14th century, which are included in the Appendix section to MEMT. The second corpus, EMEMT, is a collection of two-million word representative sample of works published between 1500 and 1700 (Taavitsainen *et al.* 2010). The corpus divides the material in more categories than MEMT. In addition to the above listed types of texts, we will find regimens of health, medical journals and texts which, according to the compilers of EMEMT, could be described as “texts at the fringes of medical writing, representing the fuzzy edges of the field” which show “that the medical topics are prominently discussed also in non-medical discourse” (Taavitsainen-Suhr 2010: 134). These texts (e.g. theoretical treatises, religious and moral texts) are part of the Appendix to EMEMT, and are also examined in this study as they reveal how the society viewed medical practice and its practitioners, including pharmacists.

⁵ The activity of apothecaries as general medical practitioners was legitimized in 1704. This legal recognition of an apothecary as a medical practitioner is often referred to as “the Rose case”. William Rose was an apothecary who visited and treated a patient, and administered medicines without acting under directions of a physician. The Royal College of Physicians took action in the courts against William Rose and he was accused of acting against the rules stated in the physician’s charter, “which prohibited any persons, not members of the College, from practicing medicine in London or for 7 miles round” (Anderson 2005: 66). However, Rose appealed to the House of Lords and the decision was reversed in his favour. The decision was based on “that it was in the interest of the public to allow apothecaries to give advice as well as to compound and sell medicines” (Matthews 1962: 114).

2.2. Lexical items concerned: selection and classification

The present study centres on Middle English and Early Modern English lexemes referring to ‘one who stores, prepares and sells medicaments of all sorts’ (OED and MED, *apothecary* n.).

In order to establish the list of lexemes⁶ in question a number of dictionaries were consulted. These include online editions of the *Historical Thesaurus of English* (HTE), *Middle English Dictionary* (MED), and *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED)⁷. The next step was to read through the medical writings (included in MEMT and EMENT) in order to look for items that are not present in dictionaries.

The preliminary list of the lexemes resulted in the body of material consisting of 26 items (24 listed in the dictionaries plus 2 items (*medicine maker*, *pharmacopaeus*) found in the examined medical texts), cf.:⁸

spicer (1297), *apothecary* (1366), *ointment maker* (1382), *pothecary* (c1387–95), *pigmentary* (a1398), *pottingar* (1474), *pottingary* (1487), *pothecar* (?a1505), *ypothecar* (1509), *potycaryar* (1533), *pharmacopole* (?1541), *medicine maker* (1569), *drugger* (1594), *confectioner* (1606), *druggist* (1608), *drugster* (1611), *pharmacopoeian* (1618), *druggister* (1632), *drugard* (1637), *chemic* (1637), *pharmacopaeus* (1638), *pharmacopolist* (1651), *pharmacopolitan* (1657), *pharmacian* (1658), *spicerer* (1665), *pot-carrier* (1683)

For practical reasons, to enhance the clarity and quality of the following discussion the collected items will be divided into six groups. The first five include items that share a common combining form: (i) *spicer*, (ii) *apothec-*, (iii) *pharmaco-*, (iv) *drug*, (v) *maker*, whereas the last group includes three unrelated items: *pigmentary*, *confectioner*, *chemic*.

⁶ Most discussions of lexical fields concentrate on single words and exclude compounds and phrases from their analysis. The present study adopts Lipka's (1992: 152) understanding of a lexical field “consisting of simple and complex lexemes”. This way, such items as *ointment maker* and *medicine maker* are included in this study. Compounds and phrases are treated cumulatively as there is no clear distinction between the two formations, especially in historical texts (cf. Sauer 1992).

⁷ There is also *A Dictionary of Medical Vocabulary in English, 1375–1550* by Juhani Norri published in 2016. Since the dictionary does not include any references to medieval medical practitioners, as it focuses on four lexical fields: terms for body parts, sicknesses, instruments, and medicinal preparations (cf. Norri 2016: 2), it is excluded from this study.

⁸ The items are sorted by their first attested date (based on HTE (24 items) and EMENT – (*medicine maker* and *pharmacopaeus*).

3. Analysis of data

The first items to be considered are two obsolete forms *spicer*, *spicerer*, whose primary sense is ‘a dealer of spices’ (OED *spicer* and *spicerer*, n.). The first is an adoption of OF *especier* and AF *especer*, *spicer* and, according to the OED, entered English in late 13th century (see example 3 below). The second item is a later development (derived from *spicer*) and was first recorded in the second half of the 17th century (example 4). Although spices had been mostly used for culinary purposes, apart from flavouring they were “credited with marvellous healing properties and became ingredients of many medical recipes” (Sylwanowicz 2018: 66). Therefore, with time *spicers* were no longer regarded as mere traders but as individuals skilled in the nature of spices. This is partly confirmed by the references to *spicers* in a number of Middle English medical texts (12 records), whose compilers refer the reader to *spicer*’s shops in search for the ingredients (cf. examples 5 and 6). Also, we learn that *spicers* had their own nomenclature for the ingredients used in making medicines (example 7). And, most importantly, they relied on physicians’ expertise (example 8).

- (3) Willam þe **spicer** & geffray of hencsei. (OED, 1297 R. Glouc. (Rolls) 11204)
- (4) In the Colledge of Fryer Joseph Masagna, a famous **Spicerer**. (OED, 1665 G. Havers P. della Vallis Trav. E. India 82)
- (5) þanne I sente to þe **spiceris** schoppe. (MED, a1400 Lanfranc (Ashm 1396) 67/18)
‘Then, I sent to the *spicer*’s shop.’
- (6) Take surmonnteyn that **spycers** haue and bete it wele in a brasyn mortar (MEMT, Remedies, *Leechbook I*)
‘Take surmountain (or the French hartwort) that *spicers* have and beat it well in a brass mortar.’
- (7) Tak bugle, synagle, avance, violett, waybrede, (...) white pik þat þir **spicers** calles pik album (MEMT, Remedies, *Liber de diversis medicinis*)
‘Take bugle, sanicle, wood avens, violet, (...) crude resin that *spicers* call pik album.’
- (8) And a **spicer** þat was þat mannys frende besought me to hele þat man. And I sawe in hym tokens of dethe and bad he **spicer** lede hym home to his house þat he myght dy in his bed. And he answerd, maister is þer noon othir helpe with the? And I be þought me and said, for sothe if þou haue eny nobill triacle to 3eue hym a good [f. 29v] quayntyte percase he myght lyffe. The **spycer** had hym home and yafe hym a noble triacle (...) anoon he was hole. (MEMT, Surgical texts, Lanfranc, *Chirurgia Parva*)

'And the spicer, who was that man's friend, begged me to heal that man. And I saw the man was about to die and asked the spicer to take him home so that he could die in his bed. And he (spicer) said "Master, is there no other way to help him?'. I thought for a while and said "If you have a treacle of a very good quality, then give it to your friend, and he might live". The spicer took him home and gave him the treacle (...) and soon he was healthy.'

The last fragment (8) is an example of a case report, commonly found in medical compilations (especially in surgical texts). Their authors describe unusual or challenging medical conditions or surgical operations in order to confirm their expert status as medical professionals. In the above fragment, the case is reported by Lanfranc who helped some spicer find a cure for his troubled friend.

With time, the term *spicer* started to be replaced by other references to the makers of medicines. In the examined Early Modern English medical texts the term is recorded only once, along with other commonly used term *pothecary* (example 9). In addition, we learn that the author of the fragment seems very critical about the establishment of a new class of practitioners who took over from physicians the role of the preparer of medicines⁹, cf.:

(9) But sins these five hundred yeres or there about, this kind of busines hath bene committed, or rather deriued from the phisitions (not withoute as I beleue the danger of the pacientes) vnto certayne, which are called **spicers**, or **Poticaries**. &c. (EMEMT, Appendix, John Securis, *Detection of daily enormities*)

The replacement of *spicer* with *apothecary* (and related forms) in Early Modern English medical compilations might be explained by the fact that at the turn of the 17th century, apothecaries established their own guild. This separation might have diminished the position of *spicers* in the community of early pharmacists, and they were possibly perceived as mere dealers in spices.

Apothecary and its variant forms (aphetic *pothecary*, *pothecary*, *potycaryar* and their corrupted forms *pottingar*, *pottingary*, *pot-carrier*, and *ypothecar*) are recorded in the surviving Middle and Early Modern English writings. The noun *apothecary* (from OF *apotecaire*, *apoticaire* and L *apothēcārius* 'store-keeper') is a form composed of Latin *apotheca* 'a shop, store-house'¹⁰ and a suffix *-ārius*

⁹ According to Matthews (1962: 1) and other sources on the history of medicine and pharmacy, originally there was "no real separation of the practice of medicine by the physician from the gatherer of herbs and preparer of remedies".

¹⁰ In ancient Rome *apotheca* was first used with reference to the part of the house where wine, herbs and other products were stored, whereas the shop selling medicines was called *medicina* (Thompson 1929: 22–26).

‘a man (or male) belonging to or engaged in’ (OED *apothecary* n.). When the term entered English in the mid-14th century it was used to indicate ‘one who kept a store or shop of non-perishable commodities, spices, drugs, comfits, preserves, etc.’ (example 10). With time, it came to mean someone who did not only sell drugs but also fixed them for medicinal purposes (example 11).

- (10) Also be good the pillettys pestillencials, the whiche you shal hauet yt vnto the **apothecarijs**, (MEMT, Specialised texts, Canutus, *Plague treatise*)
 ‘Also, pills used against the plague are recommended, and you should get them at the apothecaries.’
- (11) Or þou may put to common vnguentum album þat **apotecharie3 makeþ**. (MEMT, Surgical texts, Arderne, *Fistula*)
 ‘Or you can apply white ointment that is made by apothecaries.’

In the Middle English medical material, the noun is documented only three times as *apothecary* and twice as an aphetic form *pothecary*. In the later texts, i.e. 16th and 17th centuries, there is a noticeable increase in references to *apothecary*. The noun is recorded 148 times, whereas its variant form *pothecary* has 69 records. This growing interest in the work of apothecaries partly overlaps with the establishment of the Apothecary Guild, which strengthened their position in the society by giving them the monopoly on trading and fixing drugs. Also, many apothecaries started to act independently, without the guidance of physicians, and this arrogant behaviour is frequently commented on and criticised in the examined sources, cf.:

- (12) There be also an other sorte of **Poticaries**, which be so arrogant and scornfull (by reason that they be growen in greate richesse God knoweth how) that they disdayn the Physition, and haue hym in no estimation, where as in the ancient tyme, the **poticaries** (as Galene and other wytnesseth) were but as seruauntes and ministers vnto the Physition. (EMEMT, Appendix, John Securis, *Detection of daily enormities*)

In addition, it is often implied that without physicians’ instruction and supervision medicaments are not made properly, as apothecaries are either negligent in fixing ingredients (example 13) or think of financial profits rather than of the good of the patients (examples 14 and 15).

- (13) (...) compoundes of the **Apothecaries**, which are costly, euill gathered without knowledge of the Physician oftentimes vnperfectly mixed, and vnskilfully confused, and as vnskilfully boyled, oftentimes putrified, and by age of force wasted, slouenly and with great negligence confected. (EMEMT, Recipe collections, Timothy Bright, *Sufficiencie of English medicines*)

- (14) **Apothecaries** which seeke not for the common saftie, but for the profit of their trade, (EMEMT, Appendix, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, *Vanitie and vncertaintie*)
- (15) let them likewise beware of naughty, covetous, dishonest, unlearned, and unskilfull **Apothecaries**, who greedy of wealth and profit, (...). (EMEMT, Recipe collections, Guillaume Rondelet, *Countray-man's apothecary*,)

The critical comments on the practice of pharmacists are found in the works written by physicians¹¹ who often highlighted the fact that the division between physicians and apothecaries, which gave the latter more independence, was an unfortunate decision, cf.:

- (16) The dividing and separating of that part of the Art of Physick, which concerns the Preparation and Composition of Medicaments, (...) was never heard of in the Ages of Hippocrates, Galen, and other ancient Physicians; and hath been judged by some of the cheif Authors in Physick, to be of unhappy consequence to it, upon several accounts. (EMEMT, Appendix, Jonathan Goddard, *Unhappy condition of physick*)

Therefore, stricter control of apothecaries, was often advised. For instance, physicians should visit and control apothecaries' shops, cf.:

- (17) It were also good and expediente that the Phisitions shold haue licence of the byshop, to searche and vewe the poticaries shoppe once a yere at the leaste, and see whether their stuffe and medecines be good and lawfull or not. (EMEMT, Appendix, John Securis, *Detection of daily enormities*)

At the turn of the 17th century, we can observe the introduction of yet another group of terms for those involved in selling preparations for medicinal use. These include the following items: *drugger*, *druggist*, *drugster*, *druggister*, and *drugard*, (*drug* (from Fr. *drogue*) plus suffixes used to form agent nouns), cf.:

- (18) The hungrie **druggier**..agrees to anything, and to Court he goes. (OED, 1594 Nashe Terrors Nt. E ij)
- (19) Drogueur, a **druggist**, or drug-seller. (OED, 1611 Cotgr.)
- (20) With the best tricks of any **drugster's** wife in England. (OED, 1611 Middleton & Dekker Roaring Girl ii. i)

¹¹ The following medical practitioners express their concerns and critique of pharmacists' work (the dates in brackets refer to the year of their publications; all included in EMEMT): Noah Biggs (1651), Timothy Bright (1580), Robert Couch (1680), Hugh Chamberlen (1694), Nicholas Culpeper (1659), Thomas Emes (1695), Jonathan Goddard (1670), John Securis (1566).

- (21) A **Druggister**, drogueur. (OED, 1632 Sherwood)
 (22) None can cure her ill, Not Physick potions, or the **druggards** skill. (OED, 1637, N. Whiting *Le Hore di Recreatione* 94)

Of the above listed examples, only two items (*druggist* and *drugster*, 11 and 1 record respectively) are documented in the examined Early Modern English medical corpus. As examples (23) and (24) below show, druggists should not be confused with apothecaries, and represented a separate group specializing in drug trading. According to available sources, the main difference between the two professions was that apothecaries, apart from making and selling drugs could also visit patients and look after them. Druggists, on the other hand, together with chemists were solely involved in the business of purchasing and distributing drugs (Matthews 1962, Anderson 2005, Zebroski 2016). This, in turn, explains why in the examined material there are no fragments that would criticize the work of druggists. Thus, it might be concluded that unlike apothecaries, druggists were not interfering with the physicians' work.

- (23) The Gums, Balsams, Oyls, Juices, and the like, which are sold by **Apothecaries** and **Druggists**, are added to this Herbal; (EMEMT, Recipe collections, John Pechey, *Herbal of physical plants*)
 (24) And here I shall finish my Account, recommending to those which desire further Satisfaction in the Materia Medica the Book it self, which is of excellent Use to all Physicians, Philosophers, **Apothecaries**, Chirurgions, and **Drugsters**. (EMEMT, *Philosophical transactions*)

The next group of nouns includes items including a word-forming element derived from a Latinized form of Greek *pharmakon* 'drug, poison', cf.:

- (25) With the apotycaries, wherof they haue ye name of **pharmacopoles**. (OED, 1541 R. Copland Galyen's Terap. 2 A j b)
 (26) The family of **Pharmacopolists**. (OED, 1651 Biggs New Disp §64)
 (27) The most renowned Physitians..were **Pharmacopœians**..diligent and careful in the preparing of their own Medicines. (OED, 1668 Maynwarding Compl. Physician 83)
 (28) **Pharmacopaeus** in Calecut, by using Amber lived to one hundred and sixty yeeres of Age, and the Nobility of Barbary, by using the same drugge, are longer liv'd than the common people. (EMEMT, Regimens of health, Francis Bacon, *Historie of life and death*)
 (29) Something, that neither the **Pharmacopolitans** [L. *pharmacopolarum*] shops, nor gardens affoord. (OED, 1657, R. Tomlinson tr. J. de Renou *Physical Inst.* iv, in *Medicinal Dispensatory* sig. V4)

- (30) At first he was admitted only as **pharmacian**, afterwards also as surgeon (OED, 1658, A. Duncan *Mem. Faculty Physicians & Surgeons Glasgow* (1896) 239)

The examination of the usage of these items and their marginal frequency (in EMEMT only singular records of *pharmacopaeus*, *pharmacopolist* are documented) suggests that these forms may have functioned as “umbrella terms” for the references to all members of a group involved in preparing and dispensing medicines, forming in a way a family of apothecaries (cf. examples 25–27 above). In addition, *pharmacopaeus* (example 28), which is documented only once in the examined medical material, occurs in the text describing some historical figure that might have contributed to the development of pharmacy. It might be the only use of the term in English texts, as the OED does not list the form as English term for drug makers. As regards *pharmacian* (a hybrid formation of *pharmacy* (from Lat. *pharmacia*) plus an Engl. suffix *-an*, possibly modelled on Fr. *pharmacien*), its first record dates back to mid 17th century (example 30 above). The term is related to *pharmacist*, which nowadays is a commonly used term for ‘one skilled or engaged in pharmacy’, and whose status is definitely much better than that of early pharmacists active in the 16th and 17th centuries. The form *pharmacist*, however, occurs much later. As evidenced by the OED, there is only one record in the early 18th century text and the remaining records occur in the 19th century and later sources (cf. examples 31 - 33). That is at the time when those engaged in making medicines started to be finally recognized as skilled and knowledgeable professionals.¹²

- (31) Who knows these, save the Philosopher, the Anatomist, the Chymist, the Mathematician, the **Pharmacist**, and the learned Observer. (OED, 1721, E. Strother *Dr. Radcliffe's Pract. Dispensatory* (ed. 4) v. 110)
- (32) The Pharmacopoeia, generally a stickler in legality, speaks of ‘**pharmacists**’, which, strictly speaking, chemists and druggists are not. (OED, 1898, *Rev. Brit. Pharmacy* 29)
- (33) Any educational institution should be proud of the opportunity of training both **pharmacists** and druggists. (OED, 1918, *Amer. Jrnl. Pharmacy* 90 838)

Ointment maker and *medicine maker* are two other instances used with reference to early English pharmacists. These examples are found in two 16th

¹² The beginnings of modern pharmacy in Britain are marked by the foundation of the Pharmaceutical Society in 1841. This resulted in the establishment of schools for future pharmacists or drug dealers, and the introduction of uniform standards of training and examination (Anderson 2005: 72–77).

century texts commenting on the art of medical practitioners, including apothecaries (examples 34 and 35). Both authors claim that the role of apothecaries (or *ointment/medicine makers*) is to be servants or cooks of the physicians.

- (34) The ministers of the phisition, are gatherers of herbes, **oyntemente makers**, cookes,
playster makers, clyster geuers, scarifiers, letters out of bloud. (EMEMT, Appendix, John Securis, *Detection of daily enormities*)
- (35) They call also Potecaries & **Medecine makers** theire Cookes, whose titles (as y~ Prouerbe is) haue remedies, & their boxes, poison (...). (EMEMT, Appendix, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, *Vanitie and vncertaintie*)

The last group of nouns to consider includes *pigmentary*, *confectioner* and *chemic*. These items are not recorded in the examined medical texts, but according to available dictionaries they could be treated as possible references to drug dealers (examples 36–38). Unlike earlier instances discussed in this study, these nouns denote makers of one type of compound medicines. For instance, *pigmentary* (from Lat. *pigmentāri-us*, OED *pigmentary* n.) was a dealer in scents, spices, and aromatic confections or ointments. Some of these could have been applied medicinally, hence the assumption that a pigmentary sold medicinal compounds. This is partly confirmed by example (36b) below, where spicers and apothecaries are called makers of pigmentaries.

- (36a) Ensence of moost clene swete smellynge spices, with the werk of **pymentarye** [Vulg. opere pigmentarii; 1388 a makere of oynement; 1609 Bible (Douay) pigmentarie]. (OED, 1382 Wyclif Exod. xxxvii. 29)
- (36b) Makers of **pygmentaries**, spicers and apotiquaries. (OED, 1474 Caxton Chesse iii. v. 101)
- (37a) One Locusta..apeached and brought to light divers **confectioners** of poysons. (OED, 1606 Holland Sueton. 195)
- (37b) Pedling Quacksalvers, Mountibanks, **Confectioners**. (OED, 1651 R. Wittie tr. J. Primrose *Pop. Errours* iv. xxxvi. 356)
- (38a) 1598 Florio, Alchimista, a **chimicke**. (OED, 1651 R. Wittie tr. Primrose's *Pop. Err.* iv. xxxvi. 356)
- (38b) Every petty **Chymick** in his little shop. (OED, 1646 Suckling *Acc. Relig.* 117)

Confectioner (from OF *confeccion* / Lat. *confection-em* ‘making, mixing’ plus *-er*, denoting agent nouns) is defined as a maker of medicines, poisons or sweet compounds, such as sweetmeats, candies, or light pastry (OED *confectioner* n.). As suggested by the quotations, where *confectioner* is used on a par with such terms as *mountebank* or *quacksalver*, the noun may have also functioned as a derogative term for drug dealers.

As regards *chemic* (from Fr. *chimique*, Lat. *chim-*, *chymic-us*, for medical Lat. *alchemic-us*), the noun entered English in the late 16th century as another form for 'one who studies and practices alchemy' (OED *chemic* n.). Eventually, it started to be used with reference to drug dealers (example 38b). This change might have resulted from the fact that in the 17th century more chemical substances were used in compounding medicines, which led to some degree of specialization in manufacturing drugs (Matthews 1962: 67). For instance, many young men who finished apprenticeship with an apothecary, started their own businesses, concentrating on selling chemicals. These men started to be called *druggists* or *chemists* or *druggists* (Anderson 2005: 67, Matthews 1962: 67).

4. Conclusions

The present study aimed at giving a comprehensive review of early English references to people involved in storing, preparing and selling mixtures used for medicinal purposes, as found in the available medical works produced in the 14th – 17th centuries, and in a number of dictionaries.

The lexical field pertaining to medicine makers consists of at least 26 lexemes, 9 of which are documented in the examined medical material (*apothecary*, *druggist*, *drugster*, *medicine maker*, *ointment maker*, *pothecary*, *pharmacopaeus*, *pharmacopolist*, *spicer*).

The study has revealed that at least three terms (*spicer*, *apothecary* and *druggist*) could have served as potential general terms for 'one who stores, prepares and sells medicaments' in early English. The first two were already recorded in the Middle English period, whereas *druggist* entered the lexical field at the turn of the 17th century. With time, *spicer* started to be replaced by *apothecary* and its variant forms, which is reflected in the use and distribution of these items in the medical material (cf. Table 1 below).

Table 1. The distribution of *spicer*, *apothecary* and *druggist* in Middle and Early Modern English medical writings

	MEMT	EMEMT
<i>spicer</i>	12	1
<i>apothecary</i>	5	217 ¹³
<i>druggist</i>	-	12

¹³ This figure refers to the records of *apothecary* (148) and its variant forms (69).

The analysis of early medical writings has also allowed to observe the changing position of early pharmacists and how they were perceived by other medical practitioners, especially physicians. The following stages in the development of the profession can be distinguished:

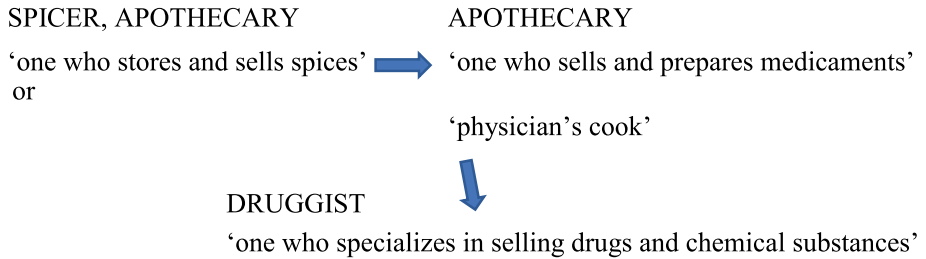


Figure 1. *Spicer*, *apothecary* and *druggist* in early English medical texts

Thus, they started as those occupied in storing and selling spices, herbs or other ingredients used, among others, by physicians (*spicer*, *apothecary*), only to take over from the physicians the role of the preparer of medicines (*apothecary*). With time, as seen in the examined medical material, apothecaries were not only “physicians’ cooks” but were also involved in the treatment of patients, often without the supervision of a physician. This change met with much criticism from physicians (cf. examples 12–16), who saw independent apothecaries as a threat to patient safety. According to them apothecaries, among other things, (i) had insufficient knowledge to act as independent medical practitioners, (ii) disrespected doctors’ advice, and (iii) focused on profit making than on patients’ health.

At some point (i.e. the turn of the 17th century) we can observe the emergence of yet another group (*druggists*). Unlike apothecaries, they did not interfere in physicians’ work and specialized solely in trading drugs (cf. also Matthews 1962: 67). This lack of involvement in the medical practice explains, in a way, why there are no records of critical comments on their work in the examined medical writings.

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