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THE STRUCTURE OF THE EARLY MODERN ENGLISH CULINARY RECIPE[1]

ABSTRACT

The structure of the recipe has been already discussed by such scholars as Stannard (1982), Görlach (1992), Hunt (1994), Carroll (1999), Taavitsainen (2001), and Grund (2003). These studies dealt with a variety of recipes: medical, culinary, alchemical, etc., mostly from the Middle English period; and divided the recipes into a set of components regularly present in the analysed text type.

In the present paper, we will concentrate on the structure of the culinary recipe in the later period, i.e., from the end of the fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth centuries. It is argued, after Görlach (2004) that it is in the Early Modern English period when the form of the culinary instruction should become standardised. The corpus for the present study consists of culinary recipes taken from seven Early Modern English collections, and comes to over seven hundred texts. Additionally, a number of examples from the Middle English period will be shown in order to provide a certain background for the development of the analysed text type.

KEYWORDS: culinary recipe, structure, heading, procedure

STRESZCZENIE

Analiza strukturalna przepisu przedstawiona została już w takich publikacjach jak: Stannard (1982), Görlach (1992), Hunt (1994), Carroll (1999), Taavitsainen (2001), czy Grund (2003). Badania te jednak koncentrowały się na poszczególnych typach przepisu (medycznym, kulinarnym, czy alchemicznym) z okresu średnioangielskiego, omawiając regularnie występujące w nich komponenty.

Przedstawiony artykuł skupia się na strukturze przepisu kulinarnego z późniejszego okresu w historii języka angielskiego, tj od piętnastego do końca siedemnastego wieku. To właśnie w tym okresie struktura omawianego przepisu ustandaryzowała się (Görlach 2004). Materiał źródłowy wykorzystany w badaniu składa się z ponad siedmiuset receptur znalezionych w siedmiu rożnych kolekcjach kulinarnych. Dodatkowo, przedstawione zostaną przykłady z okresu średnioangielskiego celem zilustrowania zmian jakie zaszły w badanych tekstach.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: przepis kulinarny, struktura, nagłówek, procedura

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of the present paper is to discuss the structure of the Early Modern English culinary recipe. A number of similar studies have already been published. However, they either dealt with other types of the recipe (e.g. medical recipe) or concentrated on medieval texts. Scholars who have dealt with the text type distinguished a number of components which build up a typical instruction (be it medical, culinary, alchemical, or any other). Due to the fact that they differ in terms of terminology used, as well as in the statement which of the components are necessary and which are optional, a brief summary of some of the previous studies will be offered.

– Most of the available publications were based on the **medical** material. Among these, Hunt (1994) distinguished: rubric, indication, composition (ingredients), preparation, application, and statement of efficacy (cure). Later, Taavitsainen (2001) referred to: title (or rubric), indication of use, ingredients, preparation and dosage, application, and efficacy.

– Following Grund (2003), the **alchemical** recipes consist of: heading, substances, procedure, result and closing formula.

– Mäkinen (2004) divided the structure of **herbals** on the basis of Stannard's (1982) approach, and distinguished: purpose, ingredients, equipment and procedure, application and administration, rationale, and incidental data.

– The **culinary** recipes seem to be the least complex in terms of their structure. Görlach (1992) enumerated: title, ingredients, procedure and 'how to serve up' component. Additionally, Eggins (1994), who wrote about the structure of the Present Day English recipes, distinguished: title, enticement, ingredients, method, and serving quantity.

A few studies concentrated on the structure of more than one type of recipe. For instance, Alonso Almeida (2013) investigated the culinary, medical and magical recipes from the 17th and 18th centuries. On the basis of the available studies, he developed his own schema of the recipe, adding a few components which had not been found in the previous publications. And thus, in his opinion, the recipe consists of: title, ingredients, preparation, application, evaluation/efficacy, storage, expiry date, and virtues. Additionally, Bator and Sylwanowicz (2016) offer a comparison of the components found in the medieval culinary and medical instructions. They adopted the following division of the recipe: the heading, which consists of the title and/or the statement of purpose; the procedure, which consists of the list of ingredients and/or the preparation; the application/serving; and additional information.

Apart from these publications, which deal with the structure of the recipe in general, a few articles devoted to individual recipe components are also available. For instance, Jones (1998) and Mäkinen (2011) concentrate on the efficacy phrases in medical texts; and Bator (2016a) compares the structure of the heading and the procedure in Anglo-Norman and Middle English recipes.

Scholars not only follow different divisions of the recipe, but they also have different opinions concerning which components are necessary and which are optional. For instance, Stannard (1982) and Grund (2003) claim that it is the procedure which is the only obligatory part of every recipe; for Alonso Almeida (2013) it is only the list of ingredients which is required for a text to be categorised as a recipe. Bator and Sylwanowicz (2016) conclude that at least one of the elements of the procedure is obligatory (preparation or list of ingredients). Additionally, they write that "[t]he heading was also a crucial element for the structure of recipes (although not obligatory)".

THE CORPUS

The corpus for the present study consists of 708 recipes taken from seven Early Modern English culinary collections (for the full list see Primary Sources in the References).

Due to the fact that the Early Modern English collections were hardly ever purely culinary (they usually included advice on how to be a good housewife, and thus, apart from culinary instructions they contained medical recipes, guiding the lady of the house how to deal with some frequent health problems; as well as general instructions, such as tips how to get rid of a stain, etc.), any non-culinary recipes which were found within the collections were excluded from the analysis. Additionally, in what follows some reference will be made to the structure of the medieval culinary recipes (based on Bator and Sylwanowicz (2016)).[2]

THE HEADING

Following Carroll (1999: 29), "Most of the recipes begin with a title or heading. The heading includes the name of the dish (or main ingredient) to be prepared, often in an infinitive phrase". Carroll seems to be using the terms 'title' and 'heading' interchangeably. She also does not distinguish between the title and the statement of purpose, treating both, the nominal and infinitival phrases as the same type of the heading. We prefer to follow the approach that the heading may be divided into the title (in the form of a noun or a nominal phrase) and the statement of purpose (usually in the form of an infinitive), cf. for instance Hunt (1994) or Taavitsainen (2001).

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[2] The medieval corpus used for that study consists of 1,379 recipes, found in culinary collections from the 14th and 15th centuries (see References).

In the earliest culinary material, the heading was definitely a crucial element of the recipe. In the two Anglo-Norman collections from the 13th and early 14th centuries, every recipe started with either a title or a statement of purpose, the former definitely prevailed.[3] Figure 1 illustrates the ratio of the two heading components in the Anglo-Norman manuscripts dated to 1290 (MS A) and 1320 (MS B). The earliest recipes written in English also illustrate the importance of the heading. The analysis of 1,379 Middle English recipes from the 14th and 15th centuries revealed that 99% of the instructions contained a heading (for the ratio of its components see Figure 2).[4] Similarly to the Anglo-Norman texts, the title was the dominant element in the English medieval cookery collections.
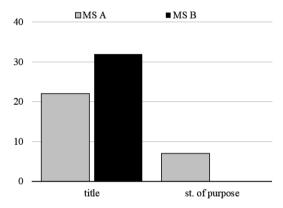

Figure 1. The ratio of occurrence of the particular heading components in two Anglo-Norman manuscripts (Bator 2016a).
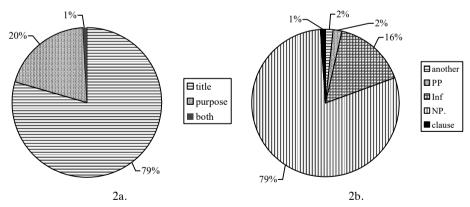

2a.   2b.

Figure 2. The ratio of occurrence of the particular heading components in the Middle English culinary recipes (Bator and Sylwanowicz 2016).

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[3] For details see Bator (2016a).
[4] For details see Bator and Sylwanowicz (2016).

Whilst in the early recipes, both the Anglo-Norman and the Middle English ones, the majority of headings took the form of a title, composed of a noun or a nominal phrase, the analysis of the Early Modern English material shows an opposite tendency. Only 21% of these headings were represented with a title (a noun or a nominal phrase), see (1)–(3); however, the name of a dish might have also been included in the statement of purpose, as in (4). The rest of the headings were represented by infinitives (e.g., (5)–(7)), prepositional phrases and imperatives. Seven of the recipes did not start with a heading; instead, the purpose of the instruction was incorporated into the procedure, as in (8). For the ratio of occurrence of each of the types, see Figure 3. The differences between the Medieval and Early Modern English recipes are very well seen if we compare Figures 3 and 2b.

(1)   A Cambridge Pudding.

(A new booke of cookerie)

(2)   Plummes condict in Syrrope.

(The treasurie of commodious conceits)

(3)   Master Rudstones Posset.

(The compleat cook)

(4)   To make Tarts called Taffaty Tarts.

(The compleat cook)

(5)   To boyle a capon in Browes.

(A book of cookrye)

(6)   For to stewe mutton.

(A proper newe booke of cokerye)

(7)   How to make a Pudding in a Turnep root.

(A book of cookrye)

(8)   If you will boyl Chickens, young Turkeys, Pea-hens, or House fowl daintily you shall after you have trimmed them, drawn them, trust them, and washt them, fill their bellies full of parsley as they can hold; then boyl them with salt and water only till they be enough; …

(The English housewife)

Contrary to the medieval recipes, in the Early Modern English collections it is the statement of purpose (in the form of an infinitive) which prevails rather than the title (which took the form of nominal phrases). The possible reasons for such a shift could lie in the purpose of writing recipes and the intended audience. The medieval texts were aimed as memory aids for the chief cook rather than true instructions guiding an unexperienced housewife, as was the case with the later texts (cf. Hammond 1993, Scully 1995). And thus, the professional cooks knew the

names of particular dishes, whilst for lay readers and "the middle class mistress" (at whom, according to Görlach (2004: 132), the Early Modern English recipes were directed) the statement of purpose was more informative than the name of the dish.[5]
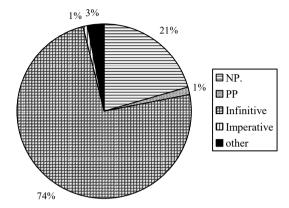

Figure 3. The ratio of occurrence of the particular types of headings
in the Early Modern English recipes.

In terms of the information the headings convey, the majority enumerate the main ingredient(s) used for preparing a dish (e.g., (9)–(11)), the way of cooking (e.g., (12)–(13)), the origin of the dish (e.g., (14)–(16)), as well as the way of serving it (e.g., (17)–(18)), and some qualities of the dish (e.g., its colour, taste, etc., as in (19)). Additionally, some of the headings inform about the vessel in which the dish should be prepared (e.g., (20)), the author of the recipe (e.g., (21)–(22)), the way of storing the dish, and even the person to whom the dish should be served. A few recipes begin with a heading such as "Another way" (*A new booke of cookerie*), "Another in a Frying-pan" (*A new booke of cookerie*), "An other to boyle a capon in white broth" (*A book of cookrye*), or a certain cross-reference to other recipes in the collection is included, as in (23). Figure 4 shows the frequency of occurrence of the particular pieces of information in the analysed recipes.

(9)   A Sallet of Rose-buds, and cloue Gilly-flowers.

(*A new booke of cookerie*)

(10) To make pyes of grene apples.

(*A proper newe booke of cokerye*)

(11) To dresse Flounders or Playce with Garlick and Mustard.

(*The compleat cook*)

(12) Another to bake Quinces.

(*A book of cookrye*)

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[5] For a brief discussion on the purpose and the intended audience of recipes at different periods, see also Bator (2016b).

(13) To poach eggs.

(*The compleat cook*)

(14) To make paste of Genoa, or any other paste.

(*The English housewife*)

(15) To boyle a Gurnet on the French fashion.

(*A new booke of cookerie*)

(16) To make a Devonshire White-pot.

(*The compleat cook*)

(17) To bake a Neatest tongue to be eaten hot.

(*A new booke of cookerie*)

(18) To roast a Leg of Mutton to be eaten cold.

(*The compleat cook*)

(19) To make Pancakes so crispe that you may set them vpright.

(*A new booke of cookerie*)

(20) To make blauncht Maunchet in a Frying-pan.

(*A new booke of cookerie*)

(21) To make Mrs. Shellyes Cake.

(*The compleat cook*)

(22) To make Posset, the Earle of Arundels Way.

(*The compleat cook*)

(23) Partridge as a Phesant, but no Fether.
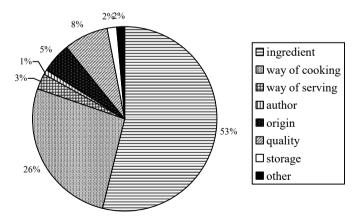
(*A book of cookrye*)

Figure 4. Semantic information included in the headings.

THE PROCEDURE

If we look at the previous studies dealing with the recipe, we may conclude that the heading should be followed by a list of ingredients, see for instance Hunt (1994), Taavitsainen (2001), Mäkinen (2004), etc. However, it is not always the case when it comes to culinary recipes, in which the heading is mostly followed by the preparation component, into which the ingredients are incorporated. Carroll's statement, which referred to medieval recipes, is also true in terms of the later culinary instructions: "Like many Middle English recipes, it [culinary recipe] does not separate the ingredients section from the procedure. It is the procedure which comprises the largest part of the text" (2004: 179). In the present paper the approach adopted in Bator and Sylwanowicz (2016) will be followed, i.e., the procedure section will be divided into two elements: the list of ingredients and the preparation. However, only the earliest English recipes, many of which were translated from Anglo-Norman, had a clear cut division of the two components, i.e., they either contained the list of ingredients or the preparation, see for instance (24)–(25). In the majority of the culinary recipes the ingredients are incorporated into the preparation. In his analysis of medical recipes, Alonso Almeida suggested an easy way to separate the two elements: "This section [list of ingredients] is easily recognisable because the opening element is a verb in the imperative form, such as *tak, take, let*, followed by a number of noun phrases connected by ‹and› (…) or a punktum" (1998–99: 56), whilst the preparation section "is easily recognisable by readers thanks to a small set of verbs involving cooking procedures related to heating, as, for instance, *boyle, brent, fried, medull, temper, hete* and *warmed*" (pp. 59–60). However, in the analysed culinary material it is rarely that simple, since the verbs suggested by Alonso Almeida as typical of one of the components, may introduce the other one as well, see for instance (26) in which *boil* introduces the list of ingredients.

The analysis of the Early Modern English recipes has shown that the preparation element definitely prevails, however there are also recipes which consist rather of a list of ingredients than a set of instructions on how to prepare a dish, as in (27).

(24) Vert desire. Milke of alemaundes, flour of ris, braun of chapoun, red wyn, sucre, percelie; þe colour schal beo grene.

(*Diversa Cibaria*)

(25) Anopour mete þat hatte amydon. Nim amydon & grind in an morter, & make boillen wyþ alemauns, & soppen nim þe alemaundes ihwyted & saffron & make boillen togederes in water. & soppen fryen in oylee oþur in grecee, & vnder þe metee þat is ihwyted schulen beon iset alemauns icoloured, & abouen þe mete icoloured schulen beon iset alemauns iwyted & rys & penides.

(*Diversa Cibaria*)

(26) To boyle Flounders, or Goodgeons, on the French fashion.
Boyle a pint of white wine, & a pint of faire water, a few sweet Hearbs, tops of yong Time, sweet Marioram, winter Sauory, tops of Rosemary, a peece of whole Mace, a little Parsley pickt small: when all is boiled well together, put in your Fish, and scum it well. Then put in a little crust of Maunchet, a quarter of a pound of sweet Butter. Season it with Pepper, and Uergis, and so serue it in.

(*A new booke of cookerie*)

(27) To make fine Pies after the French fashion.
Take a pound and half of Veale, two pound of suet, two pound of great Raisins stoned, half a pound of Prunes, as much of Currans, six Dates, two Nutmegs, a spoonfull of Pepper, an ounce of Sugar, an ounce of Carrawayes, a Saucer of Verjuyce, and as much Rosewater, this will make three fair Pyes, with two quarts of flower, three yolks of Egges, and halfe a pound of Butter.

(*The compleat cook*)

(28) Roste a Phesant.
As a Capon, and when you serve him in, stick one of his fethers upon his brest.

(*A book of cookrye*)

A few recipes which did not contain the preparation section (i.e., 1% of the corpus), included some cross reference to another recipe, in which the reader could find the proper instructions, see for instance the recipe for a pheasant under (28) above.

THE SERVING

This part of the culinary recipe (referred to as 'how to serve up' by Görlach 1992) corresponds to the application component found in the other types of recipes (cf. Stannard 1982, Hunt 1994, Taavitsainen 2001, Alonso Almeida 2013, etc.). Alonso Almeida (2013: 77–78) enumerates some differences between this part as found in the culinary and medical recipes, such as the indication of dosage and duration, or more precise verbal forms in the latter. In his opinion, in the culinary material "'serve' is still the commonest way to express application", less frequent are verbs such as 'garnish' and 'dish'. The data found in the analysed material agree with this assumption. Within the Early Modern English corpus fewer than half (47%) of the recipes contain any mention of serving/application. Among these recipes *serve* was definitely the dominant verb, *garnish* and *dish* being found only in 26 and 15 cases (i.e., 3.7% and 2%), respectively. It must be argued, however, opposite to what Alonso Almeida (2013) or earlier Görlach (1992) suggested, that not all the occurrences of the verb *serve* should be treated as belonging to the 'serving component'. Statements such as 'and serve forth' found at the end of a recipe[6] (see for instance (29)–(30)) should be interpreted as belonging rather to the preparation component, since they

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[6] These were also very frequent in medieval culinary recipes (see Bator 2014).

inform the reader only that the preparation has been completed and the dish is ready to be taken to the table, without specifying any details concerning the way of serving it.[7] And thus, fragments such as 'and serve (up/forth/in/out/etc.)' should be excluded from our discussion of the serving component. In the analysed Early Modern English material these phrases (composed of the verb *serve* (or its synonym) optionally followed by a preposition) were found in 20% of the recipes. They were not counted as the serving component. In other recipes the actual details specifying the process of serving a particular dish which were found, included:

– the ingredients with which the dish should be served, e.g., (31)–(32);
– the temperature of serving, e.g., (33)–(34);
– the vessel in which it should be taken to the table, e.g., (35);
– the time of serving, e.g., (36)–(37);
– information on how to decorate the plate;
– where to serve it;
– and others (the amount of food to be served, the quality of the dish, etc.).

In a few recipes the serving component is the only element present within a recipe, as in (38), however, such instructions contain some cross-reference to other recipes in the collection. Figure 5 shows the ratio of occurrence of the particular serving details in the analysed material.

(29) (…) and when it tastes of the Onyon, pour the liquor from it on the meat, setting it a while on the coales, and **serve it in**.
(*The compleat cook*_To make a Dish called Olives)

(30) and so let it bake the space of foure houres, **and serve them**.
(*A book of cookrye*_To bake Crane or Bustard)

(31) serve them with Rose-water, Sugar and Butter or Sauce.
(*The compleat cook*_To make a green Pudding)

(32) …and serue it with a few large Mace, and a little Uergis.
(*A new booke of cookerie*_To boyle the common way)

(33) …and serue them hot in to the Boorde.
(*A new booke of cookerie*_A Cherry Tart)

(34) … and serve it to the Table when it is cold.
(*The compleat cook*_To make a Gooseberry Foole)

(35) …Then put it in a platter and serve it without Sops.
(*A book of cookrye*_To boyle Stockdoves)

(36) …serue them hot, eyther at Dinner or Supper.
(*A new booke of cookerie*_A Pudding stued betweene two Dishes)

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[7] They are treated as formulaic phrases, which tell the reader that no further work is required (cf. for instance Jones 1998).

(37) …and serue it hot at dinner, but not at Supper.

(*A new booke of cookerie*_To make an Italian Pudding)

(38) Larkes, or Sparrowes.
Serue them as before was shewed in the Woodcockes and Blacke-birds.

(*A new booke of cookerie*)
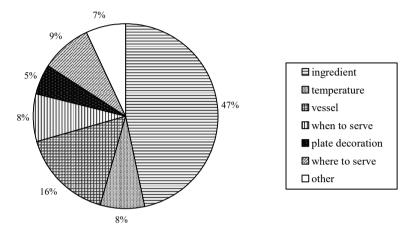

Figure 5. The ratio of occurrence of the particular details found
in the serving component (Early Modern English corpus).

THE STORAGE

The introduction of this component as a regular part of the recipe has been suggested by Alonso Almeida. In his article, he writes: "this element is most commonly associated with medicinal and preserving recipes, rather than culinary ones" (2013: 80). It has been found in the analysed Early Modern English culinary material as well (68 times). These pieces of information mostly referred to the length of time a particular dish could be stored, e.g., (39)–(41), to the place/container in which it is best to keep the food, e.g., (40)–(42), and to the purpose of storing the dish. Additionally, the reader/cook was given advice on how to prepare a particular dish depending on the length of time they wanted to keep the food, e.g., (43). Usually, if a recipe contains the storage component, it does not have the serving part.

(39) it will very well keep two or three moneths.

(*The compleat cook*_To bake Brawn)

(40) Then putt them in a close basket & so you maye kepe them all the yere.
(*The commonplace book of Countess Katherine Seymour Hertford*_
To kepe Barberryes Drye)

(41) they will keep best in Caper barrels, they will keep very well six weeks.
(*The compleat cook*_To Pickle Oysters)

(42) so put in the Glasse and keep for your use.
(*The compleat cook*_To make Jelly of Harts Horn)

(43) if you will have it [= cheese] mellow to eate within an yeare, it must be laid in Hay in the Spring; if to keep two yeares, let it dry on a Shelfe out of the Wind all the next Summer, and in Winter lay them in Hay a while, or lay them close one to another
(*The compleat cook*_To make scalding Cheese towards the latter end of May)

THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Some of the Early Modern English recipes contain additional information, such as: evaluative details, warnings to follow the instructions accurately, pieces of advice on various options of the dish preparation, or personal preferences of the writer.

The evaluative information was included either within the heading, e.g. (44) or in the body of the recipe, e.g., (45). In most cases this is a positive piece of information, which is supposed to encourage the reader to prepare this particular dish, or to ensure him/her that this particular dish is tasty.

(44) How to make Lamprons **fine**
(*A book of cookrye*)

How to make a **good** Marchpaine
(*A book of cookrye*)

To make **the best** Sausages **that ever was eat**
(*The compleat cook*)

To bake Fallow-Deere **in the best manner**
(*A new booke of cookerie*)

(45) (…) and they will look as yellow as golde, beside the taste.
(*A new booke of cookerie*_To make Pancakes)

(…) and you shall have a good Pyke sauce.
(*A proper newe booke of cokerye*_A Pyke sauce for a Pyke, Breme, Perche, Roche, Carpe, Eles, Floykes and al maner of brouke fyshe)

This makes an excellent dish of Meat.
(*The compleat cook*_A way of stewing Chickens or Rabbets)

(…) and you will find it to be excellent
(*The compleat cook*_A Spanish Olio)

In some of the recipes, the reader was warned against violation of the instructions:

(46) for otherwise it will make it to taste rancke.

*A new booke of cookerie_*To boyle Pidgeons with Rice, on the French fashion)

   but if you make it not faithfully and justly according to this prescript, but shall neither put Mace, or Rosemary, or Tyme to the Herbs as the manner is of some, it will prove very much the worse.

(*The compleat cook_*A Spanish Olio)

On the other hand, more frequently a certain freedom as to the choice of ingredients was allowed, as in (47). Moreover, the reader was advised what other dishes could be prepared following a particular recipe. And when such a choice was given, the author might have expressed his own preferences (which was not found in the medieval recipes), see (48).

(47) (…) and for want of Wine you may take Uergis and Sugar

(*A new booke of cookerie_*A Marrow toast)

   (…) with this boyling you may boyle Capon, Pigeon, Rabbet, Larke, etc.

(*A new booke of cookerie_*To boyle Chickins in soope)

(48) I seldome lay any in Hay, I turne and rub them with a rotten cloth especially when they are old

(*The compleat cook_*To make scalding Cheese towards the latter end of May)

   Earthen [pot] I thinke is the best

(*The compleat cook_*A Spanish Olio)

CONCLUSIONS

The present paper aimed to analyze the structure of the culinary recipe in the Early Modern English period. The investigation has shown that cooking instructions do exhibit a certain organisational pattern, and share some common features with other types of recipes (be it medical, general, or others). When compared to medieval culinary recipes, the Early Modern English material seems to be slightly more complex and contains a wider variety of information than in the earlier period.

A typical recipe of the Early Modern English period consists of a heading, procedure, serving component, storage and additional information. Only the first two seem to be obligatory, the other elements being optional. Both the heading and the procedure take the form which is much more informative than in the case of the respective medieval recipe-components. The cook is often instructed how to

serve or store a particular dish. Moreover, the author tries to persuade the reader/ cook not only to choose a particular dish by praising it, but also to follow his instructions carefully. And finally, we may find some personal preferences of the author, which were not included in the medieval cookbooks.

To conclude, we might say that the structure of the Early Modern English culinary recipe fits perfectly between the schemes of the medieval instruction proposed by Görlach and the contemporary one proposed by Eggins (see Introduction).

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