

Abstract: The Authority of words. The healing power of vernacular, Latin and other languages in an Occitan remedy collection

This article focuses on a collection of thirteenth-century medical recipes in Occitan. While this anonymous collection is characterized by many elements of learned medicine, it also reflects a rich culture of popular beliefs and practices. However, traditional classical and medieval medical authorities are not cited. Therefore this article investigates how the remedy collection produces authority by other means, e.g. by the use of multilingual elements. The multilingualism in recipes is analyzed through the concept of code-switching. Special attention is paid to cryptic language, often associated with medicinal magic, and its assumed healing power among other languages. The analysis suggests a rather self-sufficient medical community in vernacular in Southern France.

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