

William Langland's *Piers Plowman* is) but rather is conflicted on the topic of being both wealthy and devout. Making your own hand your heir (l.7) Gower figures, ingeniously if optimistically, as a final, irrevocable (8 *Auferet hoc nemo*), self-reflexive (6 *tue*, 7 *tibi*, 7 *propria*, 8 *ipse*) act of charity (7 *Da*).

At only eight lines, Gower's *Dicunt scripture*, one of the very last pieces of literature he composed, is thus a considerably more interesting and multifaceted pronouncement on death and personal finance than the manuscript marginalia or spotty postmedieval commentary make it out to be.

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AN UNRECORDED FRAGMENT OF A FOLDING ALMANAC

Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 3303(3) is a single leaf of parchment that once formed part of a late medieval English folding almanac, of the kind described and analysed by Hilary Carey and J.P. Gumbert.¹ It is not recorded among their published lists, though its textual contents are noted in part in the *Catalogue of incipits of mediaeval scientific writings in Latin*.² Thanks to the data assembled by Carey and Gumbert concerning manuscripts of this kind, and to the digitization of many by the libraries that hold them, it is a straightforward undertaking to place this further example in context. Add. 3303(3) has itself been photographed and is now available to view on the Cambridge Digital Library.³

¹ Hilary M. Carey, 'What is the Folded Almanac? The Form and Function of a Key Manuscript Source for Astro-medical Practice in Later Medieval England', *Social History of Medicine* 16 (2003), 481–509; J.P. Gumbert, *Bat Books: A Catalogue of Folded Manuscripts Containing Almanacs or Other Texts* (Tumhout, 2016). Gumbert added a further example to Carey's list, now London, Wellcome Library, MS 8932. He remarked, correctly, 'I am almost certain that the publication of this book will provoke new finds!' (18 n. 5).

² Lynn Thorndike and Pearl Kibre, *A catalogue of incipits of mediaeval scientific writings in Latin* (London, 1963), 1680g, eTK t0319930000 (text accompanying Vein Man). The text accompanying Zodiac Man is recorded as 129m, eTK t0024680000 / t0024690000, though Add. 3303(3) is not noted among the manuscript sources.

The presence of both the Vein Man and Zodiac Man schematic diagrams, which are not found among the contents of continental folding calendars, confirms that this leaf is English, bringing the total number of such almanacs at the time of writing to 32.⁴ All of the evidence points to Add. 3303(3) belonging among the earlier manuscripts in the corpus. Most examples that date to before c. 1450 fold—like this one—into 2 × 3 compartments, whereas most later ones folded into 2 × 4 compartments.⁵ Without the accompanying calendars and astronomic tables and canons, precise dating is not possible, but the style of decoration suggests that it was made at the very end of the fourteenth century or at the very beginning of the fifteenth century, perhaps in London.⁶

The tab that once connected Add. 3303(3) to other leaves is still visible beneath the feet of Zodiac Man. Since the leaf has been flattened and is mounted on a paper guard along its left-hand edge, it is not now possible to reconstruct the pattern of folding (as Gumbert has done for other examples). Its dimensions when open are 290 × 205–10 mm and when closed approximately 145 × 65–72 mm, placing it among the larger of the surviving examples. It bears no evidence of having been trimmed along any edge.⁷ The measurements of height, both

³ <<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-ADD-03303-00003/1>> (accessed 20 July 2022). My thanks to Blazej Mikula for so nimbly responding to my request for photography.

⁴ This total includes a further example, similarly unrecorded, which was sold by Tennants Auctioneers (Leyburn, Yorkshire), 24 November 2021, and which is now in private hands.

⁵ Carey, 'What is the Folded Almanac?', 495.

⁶ My thanks to Nicholas Rogers and Lynda Dennison for these observations. Lynda Dennison suggested further that the style of hair and the beady eyes of the two figures may be a late reflection of the Westminster style of the Litlington Missal. On the dating of folding almanacs on the basis of their data on lunar conjunctions, oppositions and eclipses, and the problems that sometimes arise, see: Hilary M. Carey, 'Astrological Medicine and the Medieval English Folded Almanac', *Social History of Medicine*, 17 (2004), 354.

⁷ An unpublished description of the fragment by Basil Atkinson, one-time Head of the Manuscripts Department at Cambridge University Library until his retirement in 1960, recorded that the leaf had come 'from [a] binding in the Library' (see: Cambridge University Archives, ULIB 7/3/72/21). The presence of two symmetrical worm holes on either side of the horizontal fold suggest that the leaf was kept folded in half for a prolonged period; the more grimy condition of the verso of the lower half indicates that it was facing outwards. However, the lack of trimming, and the unusual proportions of the leaf with respect to most bound codices, provide good reasons to doubt Atkinson's claim. Other fragments bound into the album that is MS Add. 3303 were simply 'found in the Library' and this seems a more

open and closed, fall in the middle of the range, but Add. 3303(3) is wider than most other almanacs: only British Library, Harley MS 5311 is larger, which has compartments of 76 mm width, and also folds 2×3 .⁸ Add. 3303(3) is blank on the verso, though this need not undermine the hypothesis that it was once accompanied by other leaves: the calendar leaves of Chicago, Newberry Library, MS Case 127 contain titles on the verso, but those bearing various tables (f. 5) and the unexecuted Zodiac Man and Vein Man diagrams (f. 6) do not.

Add. 3303(3) joins nine other almanacs in containing both the Vein Man and Zodiac Man diagrams.⁹ A further two have the accompanying text, with spaces for the diagrams left unfilled.¹⁰ Three other examples feature only Vein Man,¹¹ and three only Zodiac Man,¹² plus a further one where that diagram was not executed.¹³ Twelve almanacs feature neither diagram.¹⁴ Most of those that contain both Vein Man and Zodiac Man date from the second half of the fifteenth century, so Add. 3303(3) joins only two other earlier survivals: Harley MS 5311 and the privately owned almanac studied by C.H. Talbot in 1961.¹⁵

probable, if equally unsatisfying, explanation of its provenance. For further information regarding the work of Atkinson and other members of staff in cataloguing the Library's medieval manuscript collections, see: James Freeman, 'Unpublished Descriptions of Western Medieval Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 17 (2021), 131–57 <<https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.71290>> (accessed 20 July 2022).

⁸ There is no correlation between compartment width and folding pattern, however, with both 2×3 and 2×4 represented across the spectrum of sizes, indicating that the different manner of folding was guided more by the way in which textual contents needed to be presented than by a desire to further reduce the dimensions of the almanac. See: Carey, 'What is the Folded Almanac?', 495.

⁹ For the sake of brevity, in this and subsequent footnotes, I will refer to these using the numbers assigned by Gumbert's catalogue. Gumbert nos 35–36, 47, 51, 55–56, 58–59, 61.

¹⁰ Gumbert nos 54 and 60.

¹¹ Gumbert nos 38, 48, 52.

¹² Gumbert nos 33, 37, 44.

¹³ Gumbert no. 53.

¹⁴ Gumbert nos 32, 34, 39–43, 45–46, 49–50, 57.

¹⁵ C.H. Talbot, 'A Mediaeval Physician's Vade Mecum', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 16 (1961), 213–33. It remains in private hands, but was recorded as the possession of A.A. Houghton, Jr, of Queenstown, Maryland in 1977. See: Linda Ehrsam Voigts, 'Scientific and Medical Books', in Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (eds.), *Book production and publishing in Britain 1375–1475* (Cambridge, 1989), 392 n. 40. Citing: Sandra Hindman and James Douglas Farquhar, *Pen to Press: Illustrated Manuscripts and Printed Books in the First Century of printing* ([College Park, Baltimore], 1977), pl. 63.

As is typical, Vein Man is a drawing, here executed in black ink, with slight shading in places and splotches on the nose and shoulder. Again typically, the image occupies a rectangular field with the text in columns on all four sides, rather than in roundels floating or arranged into a circular pattern as in other instances. It is common too, albeit mostly among the earlier examples, for Zodiac Man to be painted, as here, and to occupy an arrow-shaped space.¹⁶ The figure of Zodiac Man is now very dark: this may have once been silver, which has since oxidised, or some other dark pigment.¹⁷ Either way, this is unique among the corpus of English almanacs and may be unusual among depictions of Zodiac Man in other manuscripts besides almanacs. The figure is on a coloured ground with hatched pattern, and surrounded by a gold border, in similar style to the 'Talbot' almanac, Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys MS 1662, and Harley MS 5311. In its complete form, and given the quality of decoration, Add. 3303(3) would probably have belonged among Gumbert's 'luxury group': like those examples, it may have been accompanied by another leaf showing the Ring of Urines, as well as the usual calendars and lunar tables, featuring illuminated initials and other decorative flourishes. Given the expense lavished on this leaf, it seems fair to echo Peter Jones' judgement that the almanac to which it belonged would have been 'owned with pride and [was] not just [a] working tool'.¹⁸

Both the Vein Man and Zodiac Man diagrams belong to a much broader visual tradition, in both folding calendars and manuscripts, to say nothing of their continued transmission in print.¹⁹ Further

¹⁶ Carey, 'Astrological medicine', 360 and n. 67 for further references. Later fifteenth-century almanacs that feature a painted Zodiac Man: Gumbert nos 47 and 61.

¹⁷ The figure has been examined under magnification in the Conservation and Collection Care Studio at Cambridge University Library. None of the tamish or sheen that is typical of oxidised silver leaf was visible, though this does not eliminate the possibility that it was powdered or 'shell' silver applied with a brush. Where the dark pigment has worn away at the folds, there is evidence neither of there having been a pale pigment underneath what is now visible, nor of the original shade of the dark pigment before discolouration. Further examination under XRF-spectroscopy would be required for a definitive answer. My thanks to Anna Johnson, Emma Nichols and Rachel Sawicki for investigating and providing these details.

¹⁸ Peter Murray Jones, *Medieval Medicine in Illuminated Manuscripts* (London, 1998), 53.

¹⁹ For further details, see: Harry Bober, 'The Zodiacal Miniature of the Très Riches Heures of the Duke of Berry: Its

stylistic comparisons within this small corpus would probably not be instructive; wider analysis of the figures, variations in their gestures, the emblematic zodiac signs and other features would benefit from art-historical expertise. It was a more than purely ornamental object, however. The accompanying instructional texts, which tailored the diagrams for the correct application and appropriate timing of blood-letting, indicate the intention to put it to practical use.²⁰ This is in all likelihood a further example of Carey's 'specialist medical almanacs', designed to aid the practice of lunar medicine at a simple level.²¹

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, MS Add. 3303(3) is one of only two examples in which Vein Man and Zodiac Man are directly juxtaposed with one another on the same leaf.²² Besides concentrating the artist's work on a single leaf, which may have been more convenient to execute, this arrangement makes visually explicit the conceptual connection between the two diagrams: that blood-letting from a particular part of the body was governed both by the ailment to be addressed (Vein Man) and the position of the moon in relation to specific constellations (Zodiac Man). This is one step from 'fused' diagrams, with Vein Man and Zodiac Man overlain in a single figure and the accompanying texts brought together.²³

By a recent count, Cambridge University Library possesses some 2,250 fragments of medieval manuscripts, arranged into 91 collections among the Additional manuscripts that range in size from a single 'standalone' fragment to as many as over 100 physically discrete items.²⁴ Most of the collection originated from the Library's own early printed

books, being retained after rebinding, but several significant items were acquired by purchase, notably by Francis Jenkinson (University Librarian, 1889–1923), whose appreciation of the ephemeral is well-known.²⁵ To date, little information has been made available publicly about the University Library's fragments, but a forthcoming partnership between Cambridge University Library and Fragmentarium, the 'laboratory for medieval manuscript fragments' based at the University of Fribourg, will support the cataloguing and digitization of a substantial proportion of the collection. At the present state of our knowledge, very few are known to contain scientific, astronomic or medical texts, and none so beautifully illuminated.

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²⁴ This is just the tip of the iceberg: as as yet unknown quantity survive 'in situ', bound as pastedowns, endleaves, sewing guards, spine strengtheners or other such components of the binding trade, in the Library's medieval manuscripts and early printed books.

²⁵ See, e.g.: Mark Nicholls, 'A Reason for Remembering: Francis Jenkinson and the War Reserve collection', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 11 (1999), pp. 497–515.

THE IDENTITY OF ROBERT PARKE, TRANSLATOR OF JUAN GONZÁLES DE MENDOZA'S *HISTORIA DE CHINA* (1585, 1588)¹

One of the earliest histories of China written by a European, Juan González de Mendoza's best-selling *Historia de las cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del gran reyno de la China*, was first published in Rome in 1585. While this book has often been criticized as inaccurate and plagiaristic, Donald F. Lach has demonstrated that it is actually an effective synthesis of virtually all the European materials available in the mid-1580s.² The book was apparently influential in English policy-making

Sources and Meaning', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 11 (1948), 1–34.

²⁰ Comparison of the text in Add. 3303(3) with that found in other folding almanacs reveals no significant difference in wording. Some folding calendars included Vein Man and Zodiac Man but not these texts, while another contains the text but not Zodiac Man (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole MS 6), which Carey considers more suggestive of 'an active interest in astrology, but not necessarily medical astrology'. See: Carey, 'What is the Folded Almanac?', 487 and n. 36; Carey, 'Astrological medicine', 358–59.

²¹ Carey, 'Astrological medicine', 359 (Gumbert nos 36, 47, 56, 59), 363; Gumbert, *Bat books*, 22 (nos 35–38, 47).

²² The other is Ballarat (Victoria), Fine Art Gallery, MS Crouch 4, made approximately a century later.

²³ Bober, 'Zodiacal Miniature', 22, pls 6a-c, 7c-d. Those cited by Bober are all found in codices and none in almanacs, except for one on a single sheet of parchment (Copenhagen, Kgl. Bibliotek, NKS 84 b 2^o, f. 6r).

¹ Supported by the China Postdoctoral Science Foundation, grant number 003024.

² Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe* (Chicago, 1965), I, 744.