

Text's transmission of *pe boke of ypocras*: editing and studying its Early Modern English witness contained in London, Wellcome Library. MS 7117 (ff. 92r–94v)

Transmisión textual de *pe boke of ypocras*: edición y estudio de una copia en inglés moderno temprano albergada de Londres, Wellcome Library. MS 7117 (ff. 92r–94v)

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Abstract: *pe boke of Ypocras* is a zodiacal lunar which outlines the effects that the moon causes in each of the twelve zodiacal signs upon parts of the body leading to different diseases. During the Late Middle Ages this tract circulated extensively and was translated from Latin into different European vernaculars. Middle English manuscript witnesses have been recently studied (Diego Rodríguez, *pe boke*). However, post-1500 witnesses remain unidentified and unedited. This paper aims to bring to light the sixteenth-century witness of *pe boke of Ypocras* contained in London, Wellcome Library. MS 7117 (ff. 92r–94). Its edition enables the identification of this witness and to place it in the line of transmission. Also, it provides new insights to reflect on how this treatise influenced the ongoing interpenetration of medical astrological thought in the sixteenth century.

Keywords: *pe boke of Ypocras*; Early Modern English manuscripts; astrological medicine; Wellcome Library MS 7117.

Summary: Introduction: English Medical astrological literature. *pe boke of Ypocras* in Late Middle English manuscripts. *pe boke of Ypocras* in London, Wellcome Library. MS 7117. The text transmission line of *pe boke of Ypocras* contained in London, Wellcome Library. MS 7117. Conclusions.

Resumen: *Pe boke of Ypocras* es un lunario zodiacal que resume los efectos que la luna produce a su paso por cada uno de los doce signos zodiacales sobre las diferentes partes del cuerpo, causando diferentes enfermedades. Durante la Baja Edad Media, este texto circulaba ampliamente y fue traducido del latín a diferentes lenguas vernáculas europeas. Manuscritos en inglés medio que albergan este lunario zodiacal han sido recientemente estudiados (Diego Rodríguez, *Pe boke*). Sin embargo, copias que daten más allá de 1500 no han sido identificadas ni editadas. Este artículo saca a la luz la copia del siglo XVI de *Pe boke of Ypocras* que alberga el manuscrito Londres, Wellcome Library. MS 7117 (ff.92r–94). Su edición permite establecer la identidad de esta copia y situarla dentro de la línea de transmisión. Además, ofrece nuevas perspectivas que permiten la reflexión acerca de cómo este tratado influyó la transmisión del pensamiento médico astrológico en el siglo XVI.

Palabras clave: *Pe boke of Ypocras*; manuscritos en inglés moderno temprano; medicina astrológica, Wellcome Library MS 7117.

Sumario: Introducción: Literatura medico astrológica inglesa. *Pe boke of Ypocras* en manuscritos en inglés medio tardío. *Pe boke of Ypocras* en Londres, Wellcome Library. MS 7117. La transmisión textual de la versión de *Pe boke of Ypocras* en Londres, Wellcome Library. MS 7117. Conclusiones.

INTRODUCTION: ENGLISH MEDICAL ASTROLOGICAL LITERATURE

From the earliest periods to the present day, scientific writing in English language is the register which reveals almost unbroken continuity (Pahta and Taavitsainen, “Vernacularisation” 1). Medical writing in English is, according to Robbins, a “territory crying out for exploitation” (413). Medical writings in English are closely connected with astrology and the interpretation of the sky. During the Middle Ages, astrological medicine was a recognized practice whose main aim was to diagnose a disease, apply the right treatment, and determine its outcome (Voigts, “The Medical”). Therefore, astrological considerations underpinned diagnosis, prognosis, and therapy (Taavitsainen, “A Zodiacal”).

The belief that each zodiacal sign ruled each of the twelve parts in which the human body was divided (*homo signorum*) was widely disseminated across western Europe.¹ The association between zodiacal signs and parts of the body (organs and limbs) is intimately connected with the animals associated with them and built “upon the idea of shared virtues or characteristics” (Rawcliffe 86): Scorpio is linked to “the secret parts and bladder” (London, British Library. MS Sloane 2270 f. 3r.) as the power of scorpions is in their tail. Astrological medicine relies on the connection between “celestial influences and humoral physiology” (Chapman 287). In addition, planets present a natural affinity with zodiacal signs (Däath).

¹ For further information on the doctrine of the Zodiac Man see Gleadow, and Clark.

Finally, human beings are constituted of four qualities (dry, moist, heat, cold) in combination with the four primary elements (earth, water, fire, air). Their natural character is determined by the command of the four constituent and vital fluids of humors in their body: blood (air), yellow bile (fire), phlegm (water) and black bile (earth). Health depends on the balance of these humors.

Writings on astrological medicine were attributed to a wide range of medical authorities; however, Hippocrates was the supreme authority (Pahta and Taavitsainen, “Authorities”). This attribution to the great physician of Cos awarded medieval writings with prestige. Thus, spurious treatises, mere “fabrications of the Middle Ages” (Kibre, “Hippocratic Writings” 371), circulated extensively in many medieval manuscripts. *Pe boke of Ypocras* is not part of the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, but its ascription to Hippocrates was “unquestioned by medieval physicians” (Kibre, “Hippocratic Writings” 400).²

Astrological medical literature was classified into different prognostic text-types with the purpose of categorizing all individual astrological writings.³ Lunaries were by far the most prevalent and widely disseminated prognostic genre during the Middle Ages (Means, “Electionary” 378). Lunaries are defined in detail by Taavitsainen (“Identification” 18–19):

Lunaries are perpetual prognostications for the lunar month arranged either according to the thirty days of the moon’s cycle from one new moon to the next, or according to the moon’s passage through the signs of the zodiac. They predict the outcome of actions undertaken at a given point of time, advise people in medical matters, and prophesy the fact of children.

Taavitsainen (*Middle* 46) identifies three different categories of popular lunaries:

² Glasgow, Glasgow University Library, Hunter MS 513 contains one late fifteenth-century witness of *Pe boke of Ypocras*. William Hunter, in the late eighteenth century, wrote himself an index of the different treatises contained in Hunter MS 513 and entitled *Pe boke of Ypocras* “A pretended book of Ypocras.” In Young and Aitken’s catalogue on manuscripts from the Hunterian Collection, *Pe boke of Ypocras* appears as “Pseudo-Hippocratis” (421).

³ For further information on English medical astrological writings and their classification, see Taavitsainen (*Middle English Lunaries*), Means (“Electionary,” *Medieval Lunar Astrology*).

- (1) Days of the Moon (lunaries proper) give their prognostications according to the varying light of the moon.
- (2) Mansions of the Moon give their prognostications according to the light into the mansions.
- (3) Signs of the Zodiac (zodiacal lunaries) give their prognostications according to the moon's passage in the zodiac.

Lunaries gained significant circulation from the mid-fourteenth century onward, achieving considerable popularity and readership during the fifteenth century, until the mid-sixteenth century, when they started to be replaced by printed almanac adaptations (Braswell 188). However, this is not the case of *Pe boke of Ypocras*, a zodiacal lunar which circulated extensively during the late Middle Ages, which was transmitted during the first decades of the early modern period, but which was never printed. In the mid-sixteenth the Ptolemaic system which placed the man in the centre of the universe, and which survived well until the seventeenth century, was gradually disappearing (Taavitsainen and Pahta, *Medical* 97), and physicians' approaches to study sickness objectively decry aids of astrology (Copeman 3). Moreover, these changes fostered the quest for an alternative to classical authors like Hippocrates (Siraisi, *History*). This implies that attributing astrological medical knowledge to the Father of Medicine was no longer an effective procedure to persuade readers to trust that there is no reason to question the correctness of the doctrine (Pahta and Taavitsainen, "Authorities" 97–98). This gradual decay of astrological medicine⁴ has contributed to the absence of the tract on this subject in manuscripts from after the sixteenth century. However, the study of *Pe boke of Ypocras* in early modern manuscripts reflects the ongoing interpenetration of medical and astrological thought in the sixteenth century,⁵ as well as it contributes to the study of a prognostic subgenre which remains ill-defined and little analyzed. There remains much work to be done, as many individual treatises still need to be edited, and affiliations still to be established (Means, "Electionary" 402).

1. *PE BOKE OF YPOCRAS* IN LATE MIDDLE ENGLISH MANUSCRIPTS

⁴ For further information on the history of astrological medicine during the early modern period, see Capp, Tester, Wear, Siraisi (*History*) and Dooley.

⁵ For further information about the history of the transmission of the tract in English and Spanish sixteenth-century witnesses see De la Cruz Cabanillas, Isabel and Irene Diego Rodríguez, "*Astrologia Ypocratis*."

De boke of Ypocras is a zodiacal lunary which outlines the effects the moon produces in each of the twelve zodiac signs upon parts of the body leading to diverse kinds of sicknesses.

De boke of Ypocras appears in ten fifteenth-century medical miscellanies (Table 1).⁶ It opens by crediting the treatise to Hippocrates and includes an introduction before presenting the signs of the Zodiac (Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces). The treatise closes with a text relating to apostemes or abscesses.⁷ These fifteenth-century witnesses of *De boke of Ypocras* have been recently edited (Diego Rodríguez, *De boke*) and thoroughly studied (De la Cruz Cabanillas and Diego Rodríguez, “Astrological Medicine”; Diego Rodríguez, “Englishing”).

⁶ Three uncomplete fifteenth-century witnesses are disregarded for this study. For further information on *De boke of Ypocras* in late Middle English manuscripts, see Diego Rodríguez, *De boke*

⁷ In the transcriptions, the original spelling has been maintained, whereas the abbreviations have been silently expanded.

Table 1. Fifteenth-century witnesses of *þe boke of Ypocras*

MS	Folios	<i>Incipit</i>
Cambridge, Gonville & Caius College. MS 336/725	102v–105r	This is the techinge of ypocras. In þis booke he techiþ for to knowe bi what planete syknes comeþ lyf & deþ
Cambridge, Gonville & Caius College. MS 457/395	77v–78v	Thys ys þe boke of ypocras in þis booke he techith for to knowe by what planete Sykenesse lyf & deth
Cambridge, Trinity College. MS R.14.52	143r–145r	This is the booke of ypocras in this booke he techith to knowe the planete Sikenes lif and deth
Glasgow University Library. MS Hunter 513	98r–104r	This is the boke of ypocras in this boke he techith for to knowe by planette Sykenesse lyfe & deth
London, British Library. MS Additional 12195	185r–190v	Thys bok of ypocras tech for to knowe Be þe planetes of seknes both of lyf & deyth
London, British Library. MS Harley 1736	232r–234v	This ys þe boke off ypocras in this boke he techyth ffor to know be planets both lyffe & dethe
London, British Library. MS Harley 2378	7r–11v	hys his þe booke of ypocras in þis booke he techyt for to knowe be planete seknesse lyf & deth
London, British Library. MS Sloane 340	75v–78v & 81r	this is þe techyng of jpocras. jn þis boke he techyth for to knowe be what planete siyknsse comeþ liyf & deþ
London, British Library. MS Sloane 73	128r–131r	This is þe techinge of ypocras In þis booke he techiþ for to knowe bi what planete syknes comeþ. lyf and deþ
London, Royal College of Physicians. MS 384	85r–86r	Tthis is þe boke of ypocras in this booke he techith forto knowe by planet sekenessis liffe & deþe

Source: Prepared by the author.

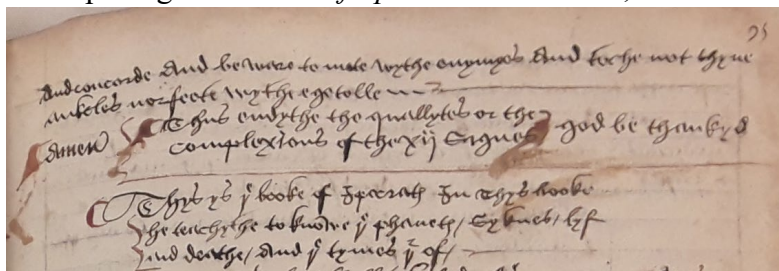
There are three more medical miscellaneous manuscripts which, according to manuscript catalogues (Means, “Electionary,” *Medieval Lunar Astrology*; Keiser), contain fifteenth-century copies of *Pe boke of Ypocras*. However, direct examination of the manuscripts reveals that they contain only fragments of the tract under study: 1) Oxford, Bodleian Library. MS Ashmole 393 (ff. 32r–32v) contains the introduction and the three first signs (Aries, Taurus, and Gemini); 2) Oxford, Bodleian Library. MS Selden Supra 73 (ff. 19r–21r) lacks the introduction and the first zodiacal signs, beginning with Cancer; 3) in Durham, Durham University Library. MS Cosin V.IV.7 the signs of Virgo, Libra, Scorpio and Sagittarius are missing.

Another miscellaneous medical manuscript that is regularly mentioned in manuscript catalogues as a witness of *Pe boke of Ypocras* is Oxford, Bodleian Library. MS Ashmole 210 (Kibre, “Hippocrates Latinus”; Means, “Electionary”; Keiser). However, it has already been demonstrated that what Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 210 contains in ff. 36v–42r is a vernacular translation of the Latin tract entitled *Astrologia Ypocratis* (Diego Rodríguez, “Englising”). This Latin treatise has been conceived, for a very long time, as the Latin exemplar responsible for the Middle English existing witnesses of *Pe boke of Ypocras*.

Finally, there is another manuscript mentioned in catalogues as container of *Pe boke of Ypocras*: London, Wellcome Library. MS 7117 (Henceforth MS 7117).⁸ The identification of this early modern English witness has been an arduous task. Firstly, because *Pe boke of Ypocras* seems to be included in medical manuscripts which compiled more extensive and well-known scientific treatises. Therefore, scholarship tends to focus on these relevant works (Voigts, “Golden” 123). According to Taavitsainen, “zodiacal lunaries are often incorporated into medical codices in sections of astrological medicine without further notice” (“Identification” 20). Secondly, because sometimes manuscripts do not distinguish one work from another, as there is no clear division between texts (Means, “Electionary” 370). MS 7117, f. 92r deploys a red line to indicate the end of the previous tract and the beginning of *Pe boke of Ypocras* (Fig. 1).

⁸ I am grateful to the Wellcome Library for their permission to reproduce images from MS 7117.

Figure 1. Red line indicating the end of the previous treatise and the opening of *Pe boke of Ypocras* in MS 7117, f. 92r.



Thirdly, manuscript catalogues and reference books are rarely comprehensive and lack cross-references to other catalogues (Kibre, “Hippocratic Writings,” “Hippocrates Latinus”; Voigts and Kurtz). Furthermore, manuscript catalogues, such as Means (*Medieval Lunar Astrology*) or Keiser tend to omit the date of *Pe boke of Ypocras* contained in MS 7117, and to list them together with the medieval manuscript copies listed in Table 1.

2. *PE BOKE OF YPOCRAS* IN LONDON, WELLCOME LIBRARY. MS 7117

London, Wellcome Library. MS 7117 (ff. 92r–94v) is a sixteenth-century English medical miscellany compiled for the usage of an unknown Elizabethan practitioner. It contains an incomplete English copy of John of Arderne’s *treatise on fistula in ano*, medical recipes, astrological tracts and a series of lists and classifications of diseases and medicaments. It contains one hundred and forty folios written mainly in dark brown ink, on ruled paper with headings and underlining in red and with almost no decoration (illustrated guide to urine diagnosis in ff. 118v–122r).

The manuscript contains various annotations regarding ownership (Wellcome Library online catalogue), which pointed to the fact that this manuscript circulated until the mid-seventeenth century:

Various marks of ownership: ‘by me Steven Dallymond Draper’ in a contemporary hand, on front paste-down, which also bears, apart from a few additional recipes, the following verse, ‘The hand ys bad/The matter ys good/peepe of the barke/And aprove the wode, Sir William Knyghtle. In mensis december [sic] anno domini 1576. Reade & then judge’; on front cover ‘This Booke was given to me by Mr George Filding [?George Fylding,

surgeon of Lubbenham, Leics. (fl.1603)] in November 1652, & to Mr Samuell Wallis by D. Burton in June 1658.'

The treatise under consideration appears from f. 92r to f. 94v:

f. 92r

Thys ys þe booke of jpocrats jn thys booke
 he teachythe to know þe planetes, syknes, lyf
 and deathe, and þe tymes þer of
 Fyrst sayth jpocrates þat a leche shall take hede of þe moone
 When she ys at þe full, for them woxethe blod þe marowe & brayne
 and other humores which dothe followe þe course of moone
 Wherefore when yo take a cure be yt phisyke or surgery, take
 hede of þe moone & of þe tyme when þe syknes toke hym, and
 yn what singe yt begane first þe moone ys then, an exsample
 j shall shewe yde by all þe xii signis everyone by hymselfe,
 when þe moone ys yn a signe callyd aries, thys signe hathe
 of man þe head & þe chyne that signe ys of kynde hot & drye
 coloure wherefore when þat a planet /signe/ þat hath mars or sole
 the whyche be also hot & drye þe syknes mvst needs be yn þe head
 of hete & of fevers & maye not well speke & þe longes
 & þe brest doth brene wythe heate, yt ys a poynt of frenesy
 jf so be þat saturne be with þe moone at þat tyme he shale esager
 þe xiiij daye after þe syknes take hym remedy ys to
 let hym blad on þe hart vayne & vse cold medecynes in
 hys meate & drykne
 when þe moone ys in þis signe of taurus, þat signe ys of the
 kynd of þe erthe cold & dry, and in a planet calyd saturne
 wythe þe moone jn thys signe of mars þat ys a planet be
 contrarie to þe moone þe sykenes shalle of coldness & drye
 nese thys signe hath of man þe throte þat siknes
 shalle fever quartain cold goute cold dropseye
 & other that be passions of the splene. Wherefore
 yf þe moone be yn thys signe & þe planet whyth hym
 colde that siknes maye not be healyd tyll þe moone be
 f. 92v

contrarie to the planet and yf þe moone holde wythe mars and
 cast light to hym wytheyn xxvij days he shall dye. Jf ye wyll
 a medecyne. When þe moone or venus or þe sonne
 be together of surgerye of cancers & of marmolls and
 other woundes with dead flesshe ever yn thy styme. For
 all other tymes medecyn workth nott to any affect

And thy sys for þe kynde jmpression þat the planet hath
 There cold in kynde whythe ys syknes
 Gemine ys a signe þat ys hot moyste of kynd of þe blod when
 the moone ys yn þis signe & þe planet wythe hym as ys venus
 or moystness then þe syknes mvst be of blod & collar as be
 the fever tercians causyd or apostemes þat bone blad red
 collar & soft in fellyng. When þat a man hath þis siknes
 and þe moone be yn thys signe & other planets contarie
 then ys yt good to geve medecynes. But yf saturne
 and mars be together when þe siknes takyth hym with
 yn xv days he shall dye this signe hath of man the
 armes & sholdres & all þat siknes that longyth to hym
 Therfore þe mone in thys signe he hym self gevyth non
 Medecyn in þese members for þe medecyns shall not profytt
 nother wytheyn nor wytheoute
 Cancer ys a signe þat ys cold & moyste of kynd of fleme
 when þe mone ys yn þis signe he ys in hys proper house jf
 a man fall sike at thy styme & þe siknes be of fleme þat
 ys cold & moyste as ys þe dropsye fever cotydain apostem
 thes be in cullor whyte & in fellynh soft they csnot be
 curyd tyll þe mone com into a signe callyd leo and yf
 the mone have wyth hym saturne & no planet that ys
 good to geve light wetge þe mone he shall never be hole
 but he shall dye þe next cold wynter after And wynd þat
 comyth oute of þe sowthe be contrary & cause of encreasyng
 of thys siknes. Cancer hath of a man þe brest and
 siknes

f. 93r

siknes of þe brest be yn þis tyme moste grevouse
 Leo ys signe hot & dry by kynd of freze when þe mone ys
 yn þis signe and a man fall ynto any siknes þat ys hot & drye
 as ys þe jaundes or hot dropsye or other passions þat longe
 to þe lyver þat maye not be curyd tyll þe mone be yn a signe þat
 ys contrary yn kind to þat signe leo ys þe signe scorpio
 pisses or cancer yf a man fall syke when þe mone
 ys yn þis signe and mars & sole be wyth þe mone he
 shall dye yn þe hot somer wytheyn ij ere mone daye
 when þe sonne ys hottyst abowte none. Thys signe hath
 of man þe stomake þe lyver & galle therfor all sicknesses
 & all sores þat be of þe galle & of þe lyver grevythe moste
 when þe money ys yn thys signe
 Virgo ys a signe cold & dry of þe kynde of þe erthe

when þe money s in þis signe yf a man fall into anye siknes þat ys cold & dry that guiwyth in the wombe signesy eth death & colica paysio & jllica passio thys siknes maye not he be hoahel tyll þe mone com to a signe þat ys contrarie to þe kynde of thys signe as libra aquarius & gemine jf þe mone haue wyth hym saturne he shall dye sone after harvyst yn September and all worthe maner of syknes þat are from þe navyll to þe stomok grevytg moste when þe mone ys in thys signe
 Libra ys a signe hot & moyste when þe mone ys yn þis signe all maner of syknes þat ys in þe raynes as the red stone or in þe bladder as þe whyte stone or swelling of the members of blod he shalle non medecyne receve but when þe mone ys yn a signe lyke scorpio pisses or cancer jf þe mone haue wythe hym sone or mars hyt siknes shall never leve hym during lyf thys signe hath of a man þe raynes & lyndes & bladder for therefore all syknes þat be yn f. 93v

þe members growth moste when þe mone ys in þis signe Scorpio ys a signe cold & moyste of þe kynd of water when þe money s yn thys signe and yf a man take anye siknes in hys foundemet as be þe emoroyds fygg & condolona/te/ no medecyne þes for þis syknes tyll þe mone com owte of thys signe that is callyd taurus virge & capricornis jf venus & mars be wythe þe mone yn þis synge in serten tymes they shold bleede þat ys when þe mone meltythe sole mercury and venus

Sagitario ys a signe hot & dry of þe kynde of fyere when þe money s in thys signe yf a man fall yn any siknes yn the hauche or yn the thyghes or in þe knee lyke as yt ys yn artica passio þer shall no medecyn be gevyw hym þerto tyll þe mone com to a signe callyd capricorns or virgo jf þe mone haue wyth hym a planet that ys callyd venus hys siknes ys vncurabull he shalle torne to a palsey wytge yn ji ere the shythe shalle non hyme of hyt loynes from þe gyrdylstod downward and all maner passyons that be from hyp bone down to the knee grevyth moste when þe mone ys in þis signe for thys sygne hath thys parte of a man

Capricornus ys a signe cold & drye of þe kynde of þe erthe when the mone ys in thys signe all maner of siknes that ys

yn þe knee of coldness & dryness shall no medecyne resseve tyll
 jf þe mone haue wyth hym saturnes or venus yf þe signe
 be contrarie & the knee haue no swellyng þat passion
 t ys vncurable thys signe hathe of a man the knee and
 the hame and therfore all sores þat fallyth þerto when þe
 the mone ys yn thys signe be vncurable

Aquarius ys a signe hot & moyste when þe mone
 ys yn thys signe all maner siknes that be from the
 knee to the ankele shall take no medecyne at the
 crampe in þe calf of þe legge & þe marmolle and the
 dropsye jf the mone haue wythe hym jp jupiter
 and

f. 94r

and saturnus þat syknes þat takyth hym yn þe lymbe shall last hym
 tyll the mone haue gon iij tymes abowte that ys three quarters of
 a yere do thy medicine what time ever thowe wyll saving
 when þe money s yv thys signe

Pisses ys a signe cold & moyste when þe money s yn thys signe
 all maner of siknes þat ys yn þe foote as þe gowte artetica podagra
 sacer ygnis hiersipala nole me tangere to the foete sholde
 no medecyn take whylle þe mone ys yn þat signe & yf sole mars
 or saturns be wythe the mone in thys signe yt ys vncurable
 but yf be so þat the medecyn be gevyn anon afte the mone
 and saturne departe and so of sole and mars afterward
 a man maye see hym and cure hym

For to knowe of all maner of sores wytheyn and wythe
 owte of what complexion they be know thys rule and
 yf ye soe a sore or apostems þat ys wytheowte in what parte of
 the body se ever yt be / Fyrst take hede of the cullor for yf
 yt be red yn sight and soft yn feeling yt ys engendryde
 of blod and yf yt be hot and moyst hys signe ys gemine l
 libra and aquarius hys planets are Jupiter & marcurie
 and whythe þe mone ys yn this signe wyth the planets nevell
 not wythe suche a sore / Jf the cullor of the sore be
 red ynsyght and somewhat hard yn feeling yt ys engendryd
 of collor & drye hys signes are aries leo and sagitarius
 hys planets are sole and mars whylle the money s in these
 signes wythe the planets medyll not wythe suche a sore
 / Jf there be a sore that ys graye whyte or blake yf yt be hard
 yt ys ongendryd of coldness and dryness hys signes are taurius
 virgo and capricorne hys planet ys saturne and yf yt be of the
 cullore a sore sayde þat yt to suye greye whyte or blake & syt be

somewhat softe & in fellyng yt ys engendryd of fleme & coldeness
 moyste hys signes be cancer scorio and pisses hys planets
 be venus and libra thys rule ys generall of all maner
 surgerye of appostems wythowte sor the /amen/
 f.94v
 here endythe the booke of ypocras of
 lyfe and deathe translatyd of astrolamyors
 the best vpon avecen

3. THE TEXT TRANSMISSION LINE OF *PE BOKE OF YPOCRAS* CONTAINED IN LONDON, WELLCOME LIBRARY. MS 7117

The comparison and collation of *Pe boke of Ypocras* contained in London, Wellcome Library. MS 7117 with the late Middle English witnesses will determine where it lies in the text's transmission history, its concrete place in the line of transmission. It will demonstrate first that it is an early modern witness of a late medieval text that widely circulated throughout the Middle Ages and secondly, that the medical astrological ideas contained in *Pe boke of Ypocras* were still valid during the sixteenth century.

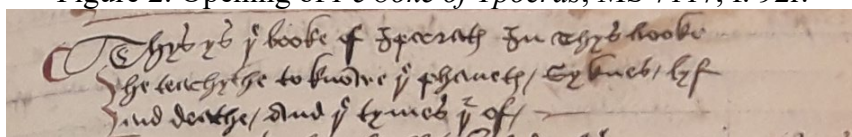
To carry out this collation, first the witness contained in W 7117 (ff. 92r–94v) has been transcribed.⁹ Then, the *incipits* and *explicit*s are collated, which facilitates to reduce significantly the list of Middle English witnesses which can be the exemplar from which *Pe boke of Ypocras* in W 7117 derives. After, the introduction of the treatise is compared. The order in which the zodiacal signs appear in the treatise is also considered, as it stands for a valuable resource to establish the line of transmission. The sign of Capricorn is collated in the remaining witnesses with the text in W 7117, as well as some sections from the treatise on apostemes which close the tract. Some observations on the marginalia are provided at the end of the analysis.

In the medieval medical field, the authority and prestige of Hippocrates had no rival (Kibre, “Hippocrates Latinus” 1). Hippocrates' name is frequently mentioned on the title pages or within the introductory sentences of various medical treatises. Consequently, a considerable

⁹ See Appendix 1 for the paleographical transcription of *Pe boke of Ypocras* contained in MS 7117 (ff. 92r–94v). The paleographical transcription of late Middle English witnesses can be found in Diego Rodríguez (*Pe boke*).

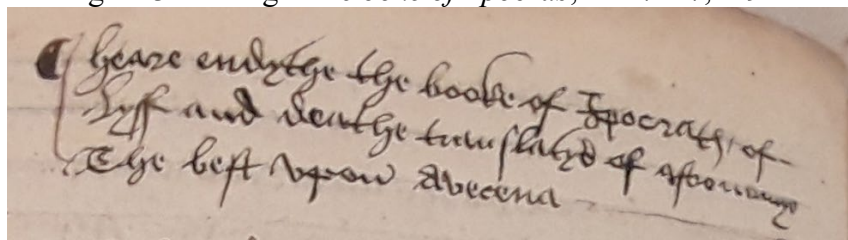
number of apocryphal texts have been erroneously attributed to Hippocrates, with minimal or no substantive connection to his authentic writings (Taavitsainen and Pahta, *Early* 72). The incidence of ancient authorities at the beginning of medical and/or scientific treatises decreases during the early modern period (Taavitsainen and Pahta, *Early* 153). A noteworthy feature is that the Early Modern witness in MS 7117 f. 92r preserves the attribution to Hippocrates in the incipit: “*Thys ys þe booke of jpocrats jn thys booke he teachythe to know þe planetes, syknes, lyf and deathe, and þe tymes þer of*” (Fig. 2).

Figure 2. Opening of *Pe boke of Ypocras*, MS 7117, f. 92r.



This attribution to the great physician of Cos reappears at the end of the tract: “*Thys rulle ys generall of all maner Surgerye of apostems wythowte for the Amen heare endythe the booke of jpocrates of lyf and deathe translatyd of astronomye the best vpon avecena*” (f. 94v). This feature is inherited from the Middle English versions.

Figure 3: Ending of *Pe boke of Ypocras*, MS 7117, f. 94v.



The incipit of *Pe boke of Ypocras* in W 7117 opens with a reference to *Pe boke of Ypocras*: “*Thys ys þe booke of jpocrats*” (f. 92r). Despite the homogeneous (mis)attribution to Hippocrates in the Late Middle English witnesses, there three manuscripts which do not emphasize the book, but the teaching of Hippocrates:

- (1) This is *the techinge of ypocras*. In þis booke he techiþ for to knowe bi what planete syknes comeþ lyf & deþ (Cambridge, Gonville & Caius College. MS 336/725, f. 102v)

- (2) this is *þe techyng of ypocras*. jn þis boke he techyth for to knowe be what planete syknsse comeþ liyf & deþ (London, British Library. MS Sloane 340, f. 75v)
- (3) This is *þe techinge of ypocras* In þis book he techiþ for to knowe bi what planete syknes comeþ. lyf and deþ (London, British Library. MS Sloane 73, f. 128r)

The comparison of the *explicit*s of the late Middle English witnesses with the ones from W 7117, also allows to reduce the list of possible medieval exemplars. The *explicit* of W 7117 starts at the very end of f. 94r (*thys rule ys generall of all maner surgerye of appostems wythowte sor the /amen/*) and continues in f. 94v a reference to the end of *þe boke of Ypocras* (“here endythe the booke of ypocras”), a mention to the kind of book (“of lyfe and deathe”), a note about who translated this tract (“*translatyd of astrolamyors*”), and it closes with an allusion to Avicenna, the prince of physicians (“the best vpon *avecen*”). There are two late Middle English manuscripts which lack the reference to Avicenna at the very end of the treatise, and which close the tract with a *that*-clause after the reference to the translation of *þe boke of Ypocras*:

- (1) “þese rulis ben generall for all maner Surgeons of postumus outewarde here endith þe boke of ypocras of deth and lyfe translate of Astrolamyors *þe best þat euer were founde*” (Glasgow, Glasgow University Library MS Hunter 513, f. 104v)
- (2) “These rulys ben generall for al maner surgeons of postemus outward here endith þe boke of ypocras of deþe and liffe translate of astronomyers *þe best þat euyr were fownde & Explicit.*” (London, Royal College of Physicians MS 384, f. 86v)

Moreover, two other medieval witnesses do not only lack the reference to Avicenna but even lack the allusion to the end of *þe boke of Ypocras* as well as the reference to the translation. This is the case of the following medieval witnesses:

- (1) “Thes rewl is generall for all maner of surgery & for all maner of pastoms outwarde” (London, British Library MS Additional 12195, f.190v)
- (2) “This rewle ys general for all maner off surgery off apostemes owtwarde” (London, British Library MS Harley 1736, f. 234v)

This collation reveals that considering the Late Middle English witnesses listed in Table 1, only three share the same sentence structure regarding the *incipits* and *explicit*s with W 7117. This implies that to establish the line of transmission of *Pe boke of Ypocras* contained in MS 7117 (ff. 92r–94v), the late medieval witnesses included in Table 2 need to be further scrutinized.

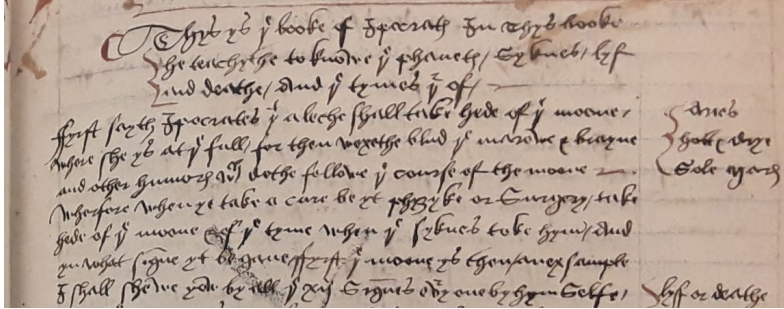
Table 2. *Incipits* and *explicit*s of three witnesses of *Pe boke of Ypocras*.

MS	<i>Incipit</i>	<i>Explicit</i>
MS 457/395	Thys is þe boke of ypocras in þis booke he techith for to knowe by what planete Sykenesse lyf & deth & þe tymys therof	þis rule is generall for al maner of Surgyrye of postemys outward here endyth the booke off jpocrase off lyffe & dethe translateyd of astronomyers the beste vpon Avysenit
MS R.14.52	This is the booke of jpocras in this book he techith to knowe the planete. Sikenes. lif and deth and the tymes therof	This rule is general of al maner Surgery of postemes outward here endith the Booke of jpocras of lif and deth translated of Astronomers the best vpon Avicen
MS Harley 2378	hys his þe booke of ypocras in þis book he techyt for to knowe be planete. seknesse. lyf. & deth. and þe times þerof	þis rewle is general for all maner surgerye of apostemus. owtward. her endyth þe boke of ypocras of deth & of lyf translat of astronomers þe beste super Avicenna

The introduction to *Pe boke of Ypocras* consists of an explanation of its main purpose: to teach about the influence of the planets as far sicknesses and their denouement—life or death—are concerned, as well as to offer a training regarding prescriptions. There are three main points that ought to

be considered prior to treatment. First, to observe the moon thoroughly; secondly, to be aware of the time when the disease was contracted; and finally, to know in which sign of the Zodiac it falls.

Figure 4. Introduction of *Be boke of Ypocras*, W 7117, f. 92r.



Collating the introduction of *Be boke of Ypocras* in W 7117 with the three medieval tracts starts highlights similarities with MS R.14.52 and differences with MS 457/395 and MS Harley 2378. The introduction in MS R.14.52 contains a very similar length and number of words, while the other two witnesses are considerably longer. They provide additional details concerning recommendations for treatment:

- (1) This is the booke of ypocras in this book he techith to knowe the planete. Sikenes. lif and deth and the tymes therof ffirist sayth ypocras that a leche shcal take kepe of the mone wher he is at the ful. whan woxith bloode and marow bearyne and *other humores the whiche folowen the cours of the mone* Wher for whan thou takest a cure be it of phisik or of surgery take kepe of the mone and of the tyme whan the sikenes toke and in what signe it bigan first the mone is than a sample j shal shewe the bi al the xij. signes everich on bi hymself. (MS R.14.52, 143r)
- (2) Thys ys þe booke of ypocrats jn thys booke he teachythe to know þe planetes, syknes, lyf and deathe, and þe tymes þer of Fyrst sayth ypocrates þat a leche shall take hede of þe moone When she ys at þe full, for them woxethe blod þe marowe & brayne and *other humores which dothe folowe þe course of moone* Wherefore when yo take a cure be yt phisyke or surgery, take hede of þe moone & of þe tyme when þe syknes toke hym, and yn what singe yt begane first þe moone ys then, an exsample j shall shewe yde by all þe xii signis everyone by hymselfe (MS 7117, f. 92r)
- (3) Thys is þe boke of ypocras in þis booke he techith for to knowe by what planete Sykenesse lyf & deth & þe tymys therof ffyrst sayth ypocras þat

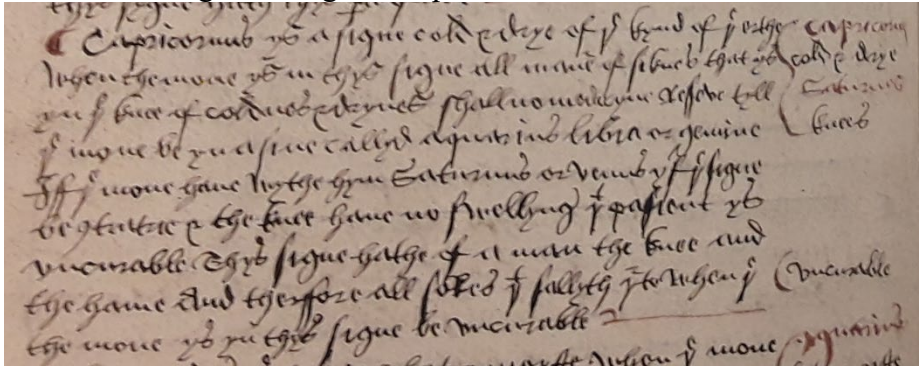
a leche schal take kepe of the mone whan he ys atte þe fulle þan wexit þe blod of man or woman And marowe & braynn & oper humoris *þe whyche both moyst & cold or moyst And hote these sekenesses þat ben cold & drye or hote & drye he schewyth þe coris of the mone* wherfore whan þou takyst An cure be it of physyke or ells off Surgerye take kepe of the mone & off þe tyme whan the sekenesse toke hym & in what sygne it began ffyrst the mone is þan An ensampyll asj schall shewe be alle þe xije sygnys eueryche on be himself (MS 457/395, f. 77v)

- (4) hys his þe booke of ypocras in þis book he techyt for to knowe be planete. seknesse. lyf. & deth. and þe times þerof. ffyrst seyth ypocras þat a leche xal take kep of þe mone wanne he is atte þe full. þan waxith blod & marwe & brayne & hoþer humours *þe wyche be moyst & colde. moyst & hote. þilke sikenesse þat be cold & drye. or hote & drye. schewe also þe cowrse of þe mone.* werefor wan þou takest a cure be it of hysykenesse. or ellis of surgery ta keep of þe mone & of þe time wan þe seknesse took & in wat sygne it began. ¶ ffyrst þe mone is þanne a saumple j xal schewe þe be alle þe .xij. sygnes euereilk on be hymself. (MS Harley 2378, f. 7r)

After the introduction to the tract, the twelve signs of the Zodiac follow. Comparing the order in which the signs of the Zodiac appear is also relevant to establish the line of transmission of W7117. Two Late Middle English witnesses, MS 475/395 and MS R.14.52, reveal the following succession of zodiacal signs: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces. The collation reveals that order coincides with the one in the Early Modern English witness under study. However, it also discloses that in MS Harley 2378 Virgo precedes the sign of Leo. It seems unlikely that the scribe who copied *þe boke of Ypocras* into W7117 rearranged the order of the zodiacal signs to not reproduce the order where Leo follows the sign of Virgo.

The content of the Zodiac signs is also revealing. The sign of Capricorn is collated with the three Late Middle English versions.

Figure 5. Sign of Capricorn, MS 7117, f. 93v.



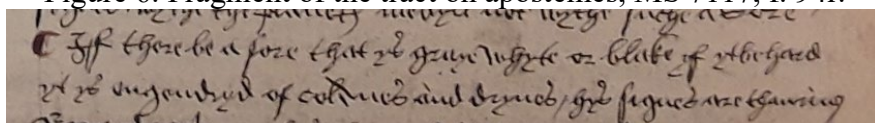
This comparison evidences once again the similarities shared between W 7117 and MS R.14.52. They lack a sentence contained in MS 457/395 and MS Harley 2378 which refers to the moment to avoid taking medication (when the moon is a sign that hits Aquarius, Libra or Gemini):

- (1) Capricornus is a signe that is cold and drye of þe kynde of the Erth whan the mone is in this signe al maner of sikenes that is in the knee of coldnes and drynes shal no medycyne receive. or the mone be in a signe that hight Aquarius libra. or Gemini jf the mone have with hym Saturnus or Venus if the signe be contrary and the knee have no bolnyng that passioun is vncurable. this signe hath of a man the kne and þe hamme and therfor al sores that fallith therto whan the mone is in this signe bien vncurable. (MS R.14.52, f. 144v)
- (2) Capricornus ys a signe cold & drye of þe kynde of þe erthe when the mone ys in thys signe all maner of siknes that ys yn þe knee of coldness & dryness shall no medecyne resseve tyll jf þe mone haue wyth hym saturnes or venus yf þe signe be contrarie & the knee haue no swell yng þat passion t ys vncurable thys signe hathe of a man the knee and the hame and therefore all sores þat fallyth þerto when þe the mone ys yn thys signe be vncurable. (MS 7117, f. 93v)
- (3) Capricornius is a sygne þat is cold & drye off þe kynde of þe erþe whan the mone is in þis sygne all maner sekenesse þat is in þe kne coldnesse or drynesse schall no medysyn receyve or þe mone be in A sygne þat hyzth Aquarius or libra or gemyny yff þe mone haue with hym saturnus or venus & yf þe sygne be contrarye & þe kne haue no bollwyng þat passion is vncurable þis sygne hape of man þe kne & þe hamme & þe perfor al soris þat falle þerto whanne capricornius cold & drie Saturnus þe mone is in þis sygne þey ben vncurable. (MS 457/395, f.78v)

- (4) Capricornus is a sygne þat is colde & drie of þe kynde of þe heþr wan þe mone is in þis sygne al maner syknesse þat is in þe kne of coldnesse and dry nesse xal no medicyne receyue *or þe mone be in a sygne þat hyth aquarius or libra. or gemini.* if þe mone haue wyth hym saturnus or venus yf þe sygne be contrarie & þe kne haue no bolnyng þat passioun is vncurable. þis sygne hatyth of a man þe kne & þe hamme and þerfore al sorys þat falle þerto wan þe mone is in þis sygne be incurable. (MS Harley 2378, f. 10r)

De boke of Ypocras finishes with a treatise on apostemes, which advises the reader how to recognize the different types of abscesses, and to establish their connection to different parts of the human body to apply the right treatment.

Figure 6. Fragment of the tract on apostemes, MS 7117, f. 94r.



When this tract on apostemes describes the different colors sores may reveal, it is easy to identify differences in the four witnesses under consideration. W 7117 and MS R.14.52 mention grey, white or black sores whereas MS 457/395 and MS Harley 2378 use the term blackish:

- (1) "If there be a sore that ys *graye whyte or blake* yf yt be hard yt ys ongendryd of coldnesse and drynesse." (MS W 7117, f. 93v)
- (2) "if ther be a sore þat is. *gray. white. or blac.* if it be hard he is engendred of coldenes and drynesse." (MS R.14.52, f. 145r)
- (3) "yef þer be a sore þat ys *graye & whete or blakkysshe* yeff it be hard he is ingendred off coldnesse & drynesse." (MS 457/395, f. 78v)
- (4) "yf þer be a sore þat is *grey or wyth or blakyssh* if it be hard he is gendryd of coldnesse & drynesse." (MS Harley 2378, f.11v)

De boke of Ypocras contained in W 7117 is clearly most closely related to MS R.14.52.¹⁰ The lexical and syntactical structures employed by both witnesses are consistent, distinguishing them from the other two

¹⁰ Tavormina identifies *De boke of Ypocras* in R.14.52. However, the study and the edition of the Hippocratic treatises gathered in this manuscript focuses on ff. 64r–104r Commentary on the Hippocratic Prognosis.

manuscripts under examination. Moreover, both contain the same *marginalia* at the beginning of each Zodiac sign: the Zodiac sign, its qualities and the planet associated with the sign under consideration:

- (1)[Margin] “Taurus cold and dry Saturne.” (MS R.14.52, f. 143r)
- (2)[Margin] “Taurus cold & dry Saturnus.” (MS W 7117, f. 92r)

The feature in R.14.52 that has not been transmitted to the early modern witness contained in MS 7117 is the use of a red-ink *littera notabilior* surrounded by a blue-ink border at the beginning of the treatise and at the beginning of each zodiacal sign. This probably points to the fact that the sixteenth-century owner of MS 7117 was more interested in the content than in decorative feature that raise the price of producing the manuscript.

CONCLUSIONS

In early modern England, the prevailing medical paradigm was heavily influenced by the principles of humoral pathology, along with the authoritative texts of classical medicine and astrological considerations. The spread of medieval medical and astrological knowledge, often (mis)attributed to the authority of Hippocrates, persisted through the sixteenth century. This has been demonstrated with the edition and the study of the line of transmission of the sixteenth-century witness of *Pe boke of Ypocras* contained in Wellcome MS 7117. This article demonstrates first, a continuous degree of confidence of sixteenth-century society in astrological physic which proves the continuation of astrology as one of the cornerstones of medicine during the sixteenth century. Secondly, this study also demonstrates the success *Pe boke of Ypocras* enjoyed for centuries.

Pe boke of Ypocras gathers medical and astrological knowledge, and appears in thirteen fifteenth-century manuscripts, considering also uncomplete versions. The examination of manuscript catalogues, and the subsequent examination of the manuscript allows its identification in MS 7117. The first step consisted in collating the *incipits* and *explicit*s of all late Middle English witnesses with MS 7117. This initial analysis demonstrates that the structure and lexicon of only three medieval manuscripts coincides with the *incipit* and *explicit* in MS 7117. The subsequent collation of MS R.14.52, MS 475/395 and MS Harley 2378 with MS 7117 shed further light to establish the genetic filiation of the

sixteenth-century witness under study. MS 475/395 and MS Harley 2378, in their introduction and sign of Capricorn, contain sentences that do not appear in the other two witnesses. In the closure, they also use different lexicon as in the case of “blackish.” On the contrary, the collation of the sections highlights the similarities *Pe boke of Ypocras* shared in MS R.14.52 and MS 7117. Therefore, *Pe boke of Ypocras* contained in the late Middle English manuscript MS R.14.52 (ff. 143r–145r) is the exemplar from the scribe of *Pe boke of Ypocras* contained in MS 7117 (ff. 92r–94v) copied from.

The increasing skepticism towards astrology and the rise of Galen as the classical authority of reference were probably responsible for the disappearance of post-sixteenth-century witnesses of *Pe boke of Ypocras*. The theories supported in *Pe boke of Ypocras* were no longer valid, as well as the concepts of medical practice it contains. This tract was lost in the sixteenth century—or perhaps it is more challenging to think that future examination of Early Modern English manuscripts that remain unexplored in library collections worldwide will allow the continuation the study of the text's transmission history.

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Cambridge, Gonville & Caius College. MS 457/395.

Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.14.52.

Durham, Durham University Library. MS Cosin V.IV.7.

Glasgow, Glasgow University Library. MS Hunter 513.

London, British Library. MS Additional 12195.

London, British Library. MS Harley 1736.

London, British Library. MS Harley 2378.

London, British Library. MS Sloane 73.

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London, British Library. MS Sloane 2270.

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