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## THE ‘ENGLISHING’ OF THE PSEUDO-HIPPOCRATIC ZODIACAL LUNARY CONTAINED IN OXFORD, BODLEIAN LIBRARY, ASHMOLE MS 210 (FF. 36V–42R)

### ABSTRACT

The vernacularisation of fifteenth-century medical Middle English texts deserves further study regarding those treatises that have remained unidentified in manuscripts (Voigts 1995: 185). Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole MS 210 (hereafter Ash210) contains a zodiacal lunary in ff. 36v–42r attributed to Hippocrates. Catalogues have traditionally associated this treatise with *De boke of ypocras*. De la Cruz-Cabanillas and Diego-Rodríguez (2018) collated and compared several Latin manuscripts entitled *Astrologia Ypocratis* to see if it was the Latin exemplar of the Middle English translations of *De boke of ypocras*. Their study proved that the Latin tract does not stand for the exemplar of this vernacular treatise. Therefore, this paper aims to collate the lunary contained in Ash210 (ff. 36v–42r) to demonstrate that Ash210 contains a lunary which is not a parallel copy of *De boke of ypocras*, but which may be the Middle English translation of the Latin tract entitled *Astrologia Ypocratis*.

KEYWORDS: Ashmole MS 210, *De boke of ypocras*, *Astrologia Ypocratis*, vernacularisation, zodiacal lunary

### STRESZCZENIE

Badania nad zjawiskiem wernakularyzacji piętnastowiecznych angielskich tekstów medycznych wskazują, że nadal nie zidentyfikowano i nie opisano wielu traktatów medycznych (Voigts 1995: 185). Na przykład, w manuskrypcie Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole MS 210 (dalej Ash210) znajdziemy Zodiak Księżycowy (ff. 36v–42r), który jest przypisywany Hipokratesowi, i który był zwykle katalogowany jako fragment traktatu *De boke of ypocras*. Jednakże, De la Cruz-Cabanillas i Diego-Rodríguez (2018) porównali manuskrypty łacińskie, znane jako *Astrologia Ypocratis*, aby sprawdzić czy te teksty były podstawą dla średnioangielskich tłumaczeń *De boke of ypocras*. Ich badanie ujawniło, że łaciński tekst nie ma związku z angielskim traktatem. W związku z tym, celem niniejszego artykułu jest wykazanie, że tekst Zodiaku Księżycowego, który znajdziemy w Ash210, nie jest paralelny z kopią *De boke of ypocras*, oraz że być może jest średnioangielskim tłumaczeniem łacińskiego traktatu *Astrologia Ypocratis*.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Ashmole MS 210, *De boke of ypocras*, *Astrologia Ypocratis*, wernakularyzacja, zodiak księżycowy

## INTRODUCTION

Hippocratic medical treatises represent one of the earliest examples of scientific writing (Siraisi 1990: 1), and they constitute the first collection of scientific texts inherited from Antiquity (López-Pérez 1987: 253). The Hippocratic Corpus comprises about sixty medical works written between 430 and 330 B.C. that vary widely in length, content and style. Despite other distinguishing formal and stylistic features, the Hippocratic Corpus shows two fundamental perceivable characteristics: its treatises were written in Ionic dialect and they are all closely related to medicine (Potter 1988: 37). The conception of medicine represented in the collection needs to be understood together with the idea of *physics*, which is responsible for the assumption that man was a microcosm of the universe (Alby 2004: 5). According to this idea, man comprises four humours or bodily fluids (black bile, yellow bile, blood and phlegm), which reflect the four cosmological elements (fire, air, water, earth). It is therefore essential for the physician to acquire a great knowledge of both, since a good combination of the humours stands for health, whereas a bad balance causes disease (Ibou-Zahir 2010: 181).

Nowadays, "Hippocrates is no longer assumed to be the repository of all medical wisdom" (Lloyd 1978: 9). However, "in the annals of medieval medical as well as cultural history the name and the authority of Hippocrates of Cos knows no rival" (Kibre 1977: 1). The Hippocratic Corpus reached the West at the beginning of the Middle Ages, when it was translated from Greek and Arabic sources into Latin and afterwards, during the late medieval period, when it was translated into different European vernaculars. The extensive circulation of Hippocratic writings during the medieval period originated the appearance of several works inaccurately attributed to Hippocrates, a fact that contaminated the Corpus with spurious treatises. They were clearly "fabrications of the Middle Ages" and have been usually referred to as the "medieval Hippocratic collection" (Kibre 1945: 371). In this sense, it is possible to assert that some of the medieval "Hippocratic writings are Hippocratic in the sense that our medieval manuscripts and printed editions routinely label them of Hippocrates" (Potter 1988: 13).

This fact has undoubtedly encouraged arduous research in the last decades (see Robbins 1966; Pahta Taavitsainen 1995; Tavormina 2009; Minnis 2010) in order to establish reliable criteria to distinguish those authentic Hippocratic treatises from the non-genuine ones. The existing controversy that surrounds the authenticity of the works ascribed to Hippocrates has come to be called the "Hippocratic question" (Craik 2015: xxi). Nevertheless, the present investigation will not enter the core debate on the authenticity of Hippocratic writings. I aim to study one specific treatise that widely circulated during the Middle Ages in Britain written in Middle English, which modern scholars have "entirely rejected and omitted from the Hippocratic Corpus", although it was "unquestioned by medieval physicians" (Kibre 1945: 400): *Astrologia Ypocratis* in Latin and *Pe boke of ypocras* in English. It is a tract on astrological medicine which deals with "the incidence and course of diseases and their treatment, as well as the

imminence of death, according to the phases of the moon in the twelve Signs of the Zodiac” (Kibre 1977: 94).

Hippocrates reflects the importance of medicine and astrology in his work *De Aeribus, Aquis et Locis*: “astronomy plays a very important part in medicine since the changes of the seasons produce changes in the mechanism of the body” (Chadwick, Mann 1950: 91). This sentence can easily be misinterpreted since there are no references to the zodiac signs and astrological medicine in the *Corpus Hippocraticum*. Hippocrates emphasised the importance of the seasons and weather, two key elements of meteorological medicine, and he intended to “clarificar la influencia del clima sobre el hombre” (Capel 19989: 79).

Regarding the relationship established between astrology and medicine, it is possible to assert that “Astrology found its culmination in medieval Medicine” (Taavitsainen 1988: 91), when the belief that each of the twelve parts in which the body was divided was ruled by a zodiacal sign spread in western Europe (see Figure 1). The widespread credence that “the planets, together with the sun and the moon and the signs of the Zodiac, exerted thorough power and governed the different organs and parts of human anatomy” extensively circulated throughout the Middle Ages (Diego-Rodríguez 2018: 125). The body was divided into twelve houses, and since there are twelve zodiac signs, each one played a determining and crucial role ruling the different extremities. The connection of each sign with particular organs and limbs is closely related to the animals associated to them, and constructed “upon the idea of shared virtues or characteristics” (Rawcliffe 1995: 86). Scorpio is linked to the genital organs, because the power and strength of scorpions is located in their tail; Leo is represented by a lion whose vigour is to be found in the heart and as a result, it is connected to the chest. It was assumed that the Moon “had a negative influence on the part of the body in whose sign it was” (Taavitsainen 1994: 289). Thus, physicians advised people to “abstain from phlebotomy, medical treatment, or operating on that particular part”, if the prognostic lunary suggested to do so (*ibidem*: 290). Astrological considerations were therefore taken into account regarding diagnosis, prognosis and therapy. This knowledge promoted a specific writing called *zodiacal lunary*, defined as “a perpetual prognostication according to the moon’s passage in the zodiac” (*ibidem*: 288).

Consequently, it is possible to find a large number of medieval manuscripts containing prognostic treatises where this material relating to astrological medicine was gathered. One of these late Middle English prognostic treatises written in Middle English is *De boke of ypocras*, a fifteenth-century zodiacal lunary which “depends upon the moon’s successive ascendancy in each of the twelve zodiacal signs, from Aries to Pisces”<sup>1</sup> (Means 1992: 379) and which “techith for to knowe by planette Sykenesse lyfe & deth”, and urges the leech to “take kepe of þe mon” (GUL, Hunter MS 513, f. 98r).

<sup>1</sup> It is what Means (1992: 382) calls a sign – or month – type of zodiacal lunary as it focuses “on medical and phlebotomy prognostics” with “an obvious connection due to melothesia and the governance by signs of parts of the body”.

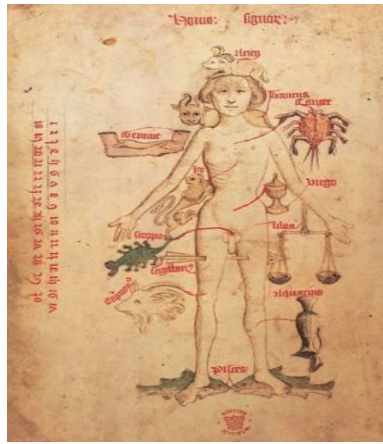


Figure 1. The Zodiac Man (British Library, Egerton MS 2572, f. 50v)

### *DE BOKE OF YPOCRAS VS ASH210 (FF. 36V–42R)*

*De boke of ypcoras* always appears incorporated into medical codices which contain more extensive and relevant works and therefore, the focus tends to be on these pertinent lengthy texts (Voigts 1994: 123). The position of astrology during the Middle Ages could be described as interdisciplinary, in the sense that it was connected to many other different areas such as medicine, theology, physiognomy or herbology (Means 1992: 370). This fact implies that it was frequent that astrological treatises were inserted aimlessly into other works, which explains why they have been overlooked so far. It is also common that some manuscripts fail in the distinction of one work from another, as they appear one after another in such a way that there is no clear division between texts (*ibidem*: 370). This also explains why they have remained comparatively unknown, and the only way to identify parallel copies is by consulting different catalogues and checking the original medical manuscripts (Taavitsainen 1987: 20). An important hindrance is the fact that even specialised catalogues are rarely comprehensive and do not include cross-references to other catalogues (Kibre 1977, 1978; Voigts, Kurtz 2000), which makes the identification of parallel texts an arduous task and, consequently, their edition and study.

The second obstacle to overcome is the fact that the treatise under consideration appears associated to or receives a wide variety of titles, and it is attributed within its title not only to Hippocrates, but also to other well-known physicians. The fact that copies of the treatise occur under different names in catalogues makes the information they provided sometimes unreliable. The two most common problems with catalogue entries are: a) authors do not properly identify the works contained within a manuscript, b) they rubricate the works unvaryingly. This is explained by Means (1992: 368–369):

While Latin titles (...) generally assume some implications about form, those in Middle English may not. This is due no doubt to initial uncertainties about what these titles actually mean in Latin, but it may also be the result of confusion arising from intermediary Anglo-Norman titles. I have counted over fifty different generic works; most are never used consistently, and many have no reference at all to definition of form or subject matter (Means 1992: 368–369).

Consequently, tracing a brief text, which does not always appear in catalogues, and when it does appear, it is almost never entitled in the same way, undoubtedly entails a great difficulty for the researcher who aims to localise it and identify its parallel copies. The first step is to embark on a complex and long voyage through all the available and accessible catalogues traversing and facing all the difficulties of the lack of cross-references among them in order to establish and bring up to light these non-existing connections. What is more, it is a very brief tract on astrological medicine, and this brevity is sometimes responsible for the fact that it is not even mentioned in catalogues, which makes the direct examination of manuscripts an essential step in this research.

The first manuscript witness containing *De boke of ypocras* was Glasgow University Library, Hunter MS 513 (hereafter H513). Therefore, H513 will be taken the prototype in this research. The following sources have been used in order to obtain information about H513 and its zodiacal lunary: Young and Aitken (1908), Cross (2004), and University of Glasgow Special Collections Website<sup>2</sup>.

The result of this complex inquiry leads to the elaboration of a closed list of manuscripts containing *De boke of ypocras* as it has never been offered before. This new index is made of thirteen fifteenth-century complete parallel copies and three sixteenth-century parallel ones:

1. Cambridge, Gonville & Caius College MS 336/725 (ff. 102v105r);
2. Cambridge, Gonville & Caius College MS 457/395 (ff. 77v78v);
3. Cambridge, Trinity College MS 1404 (ff. 6v10r);
4. Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.14.52 (ff. 143r145r);
5. Durham, Durham University Library Cosin MS V.IV.7 (ff. 2r5v);
6. Glasgow University Library, Hunter MS 513 (ff. 98r104r);
7. London, British Library, Additional MS 12195 (ff. 185r190v);
8. London, British Library, Harley MS 1736 (ff. 232r234v);
9. London, British Library, Harley MS 2378 (ff. 7r11v);
10. London, British Library, Sloane MS 340 (ff. 75v78v & 81r);
11. London, British Library, Sloane MS 73 (ff. 128r131r);
12. London, Royal College of Physicians MS 384 (ff. 85r86r);
13. London, Wellcome MS 7117 (ff. 92r94v);
14. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole MS 393 (ff. 32r32v);

<sup>2</sup> A detailed list of all the manuscript catalogues, reference books and online resources used in order to compose a closed list of manuscripts containing *De boke of ypocras* is offered as an appendix.

15. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole MS 1405 (pp. 139–147);
16. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Selden Supra MS 73 (ff. 19r21r).

In the sources and catalogues used in order to make the complete index of manuscripts containing the *Pe boke of ypocras*, there is a manuscript constantly mentioned as a parallel copy. However, since the very first moment I directly examined the manuscripts, I have disregarded it from the corpus of manuscripts containing *Pe boke of ypocras*: Ash210. Means (1992: 383) mentions different folios from Ash210: “BoldL MSS. Ashmole 210 (pt. 2), ff. 1621, 2525v, 36v42”. Kibre (1977: 170) named the same last folios as Means: “Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 210 (ff. 36v42r)”, which coincides with what Keiser (1998: 3779) states: “MSS. 1, Bodl 6678 (Ashmole 210), ff. 36b42a (15 cent)”. Finally, Eldredge points to the fact that “The text translates the anonymous Latin translation of Pseudo-Hippocrates’ *De medicina astrologica*” (Eldredge 1992: 10):

f. 36v

As sayeth ypocras best of phesicians who knowiþ by astronomy þat no man shuld put hym selfe into þe hondys of an vnkonnyng leche that knowiþ not in astronomy and I lokyd in a boke of ipocras and I founde ry3t grete and good knowlych and necessary to al phesicians in thys sayde boke sayeth ypocras loke whan the moon hath ful his lyght ...

f. 42

... and drangk water and schal hauer payne in his yees and schal schak with an agwe of cold and after with hete inwardly and it shalbe necessary for hym to be lete blode and if fortune behold hyr ... et sinanter morietur et sufficit explicit liber ypocratis de naturis signorum iuxta presentia lune et aspectus aliorum planetarum ad ipsam insignis variis existencium.

Zodiacal lunary spelling out the medical implications of the moon’s position. The correct order of folios is 36v, 37, 3940, 38, 34 (= [22] above), 4142. The text translates the anonymous Latin translation of Pseudo-Hippocrates’ *De medicina astrologica* (cf. Thorndike 1944).

## METHODOLOGY

For the present study, the zodiacal lunaries contained in H513 (ff. 98r104r) and Ash210 (ff. 36v42r) have been transcribed and collated, in order to study the similarities and differences between them.

Afterwards, Thorndike’s (1960) methodology will be adopted to study whether the tract in Ash210 is the Middle English translation of *Astrologia Ypocratis*. Thorndike (1960) dealt with the Latin versions, looking for copies and their filiation. She grouped the extant Latin copies of *Astrologia Ypocratis* according to three different translations: 1) William Moeberke’s translation from Greek into Latin; 2)

Peter Abano's translation from Greek into Latin; 3) An anonymous translation from Arabic into Latin. In order to carry out this classification, she focused on some specific fragments of the treatises: a) the *incipit* and a following paragraph about physicians behaving like blind people if they do not know Astronomy; b) Taurus and Pisces signs; c) the final part or explicit; d) a passage on the fixed stars (*Stelle fixe*). The Latin manuscripts provided by Thorndike (1960) and Kibre (1977, 1978) have been complemented with some manuscripts that I have directly examined: Gerona, Gerona Cathedral MS 75; Glasgow, Glasgow University Library, MS Hunter 461; Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional MS 3370, MS 10063, MS 17961; Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana MS Ashb. 206 and London, British Library, MS Harley 2375. Therefore, this study has a double aim: first, to find out if the English tract in Ash210 is a translation from *Astrologia Ypocratis*; second, to determine whether it is a translation by William Moerbeke, Peter of Abano or an anonymous one from Arabic.

## FINDINGS

The direct examination of Ash210 and its transcription demonstrated that, despite what scholars have remarked in catalogues (Kibre 1977; Keiser 1988; Eldredge 1992; Means 1992), it does not contain a parallel copy of *De boke of ypocras*. They are two different treatises (Table 1). Both open with the attribution of the text to Hippocrates. This attribution aims to “persuade their readers to trust that there is no reason to doubt the correctness of the doctrine” (Pahta and Taavitsainen 1995: 98). However, Ash210 uses a concrete formula of attribution which consists of a verb denoting saying: “As sayeth ypocras” (f. 36v). It continues highlighting the importance that knowing astronomy<sup>3</sup> has for the physician. On the other hand, *De boke of ypocras* explains its purpose: to indoctrinate about the influence of the planets as far as sicknesses and their denouement – life or death – are concerned, as well as to offer a training regarding prescriptions. Their opening passages only resemble in the fact that both encourage physicians to observe the moon thoroughly: “a leche shulde take kepe of þe mon whan he is at þe full” (H513, f. 94r) and “loke whan the moon hath ful his lyght”.

<sup>3</sup> “In the ‘high’ Middle Ages authors did not have our distinction between astrology and astronomy. (It is a distinction made by post-Renaissance astronomers and post-Enlightenment historians)” (French 1994: 33). Moreover, writers used both terms interchangeably, “only using them in the modern sense when speaking of the two complementary aspects – theoretical and practical – of the same science of stars” (Page 2002: 7). Therefore, the distinction was blurred during the Middle Ages (Pedersen 1978: 304).

Table 1. Opening passages of the zodiacal lunaries contained in H513 and Ahs210

H513 (f. 94r)	Ash210 (f. 36v)
This is the boke of ypocras in this boke he techith for to knowe by planette Sykenesse lyfe & deth and the formes therof ffirist seyth ypocras a leche shulde take kepe of þe mon when he is at þe full þan wexith blode mary brayn & oþer vmerus þe which beth moyst & colde moist & hote þat sikekenesse colde & drye or hote & drye Sewe the cowns of þe mone wherefore whan þou takyst cure be hit fisike or els of surgery / take kepe of þe mone & of þe tyme whan þe sikenesse toke & began first & in what signe is þan a sample y shall shewe þe be al þe xij signes euerych be hemsilfe	As sayeth ypocras best of phesicians. who knowiþ by astronomy þat no man shuld put hymselfe into þe hondys of an vnkonnyng leche that knowiþ not in astronomy and j lokyd in a boke of jpcoras and j founde ry3t grete and good knowlych and necessary to al phesicians jn thys sayde boke sayeth ypocras loke whan the moon hath ful his lyght & as the lyght growes in the moon so growith blode

Afterwards, both treatises provide an overview of each of the twelve signs of the Zodiac from this medical astrological perspective. This first sign to be Aries and the last one Pisces. H153 defines Aries according to its prime qualities and anthropomorphic characteristic and both, H513 and Ash210 associate the sign with the planets which share the same qualities and also to the specific part of the body where the disease is likely to appear. However, the lexicon and structures are completely different (see Table 2):

Table 2. The sign of Aries

H513 (f. 94r)	Ash210 (f. 36v)
whan þe mone is in a signe callid Aries on englissh a Ramme þis signe hath a man þe hed þe chyn / þis signe is kynde of fyre hote & drye colerike wherefore for whan þat a planet þat hyght Mars or els þe sonne þe which be hote & drye os þy sykenesse moste nedis be in þe hed of hete & of feueres	When any infirmyte to any man comyth when the moon is in the signe of Aries with these too planetts mars or sol he hath grete sekenes in the hed by cause of grete hete

The same happens with the ending of the treatises. Middle English versions of *De boke of ypocras* contain a brief text related to sores right after the sign of Pisces. It advises the reader regarding a general rule to recognise the different kinds of abscesses, and to know their connection to different parts of the body in order to apply a treatment:

143 \*For to knowe of all maner soris within and withoute

144 and of what complexion / they be knowe be þis rule



145 if þou se a sore or apostyme þat is withoute and of what  
 146 party þat þey be in þe body, ffirst take kepe of þe colour if hit  
 147 be rede and nesh in felyng he is gendred of evell blode &  
 148 if he be hote and moyste his signes beth Gemyny lybra  
 149 and Aquarius and the planettis is jubiter and mercurij  
 150 while þe mone is in þis signe with þe planet do no med –  
 151 syne to no suche sore / \*Iff þe colour of þe sore be rede insight  
 153 and somewhat harde he is gendred with colde & he is hote  
 154 & drye his signes beth Aries and leo a Sagittar / his planettis  
 155 ben Sol and mars while þe mone is in þis signe with  
 156 þese planettis do no medisyn þerto / \*Iff þer be a sore þat  
 158 is white or grey or blakyssh if hit be harde he is gendred  
 159 of coldenesse and drynesse and his signes ben tawrus  
 160 virgo and Capricornyo his planettis ben Satourmus / \*Iff hit  
 162 be of the chis colour and nesh in felyng hit is kynde of  
 163 fleme gendred of Colde and moystnesse þe signes ben  
 164 Cancer Scorpyo pisses / his planettis ben Venus and luna  
 165 þese rulis ben generall for all maner Sorgeons of postu –  
 166 mus outewarde

These versions conclude by emphasising the professionalism and the accuracy of this translation: “here endith þe boke of ypocras of deth and lyfe translate of Astrolamyors þe best þat euer were founde” (H513 f. 104r). Nevertheless, Ash 210 does not contain this tract on apostemes, and it ends right after the sign of Pisces, with an *explicit* in Latin: “liber ypocratis de naturis signorum iuxta presentia lune et aspectus aliorum planetarum ad ipsam insignis variis existencium” (Ash, f. 42r).

*De boke of ypocras*, as well as the tract contained in Ash210, are allegedly a translation from a Greek treatise by Hippocrates, and scholars (Kibre 1945, 1977, 1978; Means 1992) have stated that comes from the Latin treatise entitled *Astrologia Ypocratis*. However, De la Cruz-Cabanillas and Diego-Rodríguez (2018) demonstrated and concluded that there must be a missing exemplar from which all the Middle English versions of *De boke of ypocras* derive, as after studying and collating them with Latin exemplars, the expected correlation between both was non-existent. Therefore, it is indispensable to abandon the idea that Middle English versions of *De boke of ypocras* are a translation of the Latin tract entitled *Astrologia Ypocratis*. The alternative route to spot the Middle English translation of *Astrologia Ypocratis* has to do with exploring the lunary in Ash210 (ff. 36v42r), taking Eldredge’s note as a point of departure: “the text translates the anonymous Latin translation of Pseudo-Hippocrates’ *De medicina astrologica*” (1992: 10). Therefore, following Thorndike’s (1960) methodology, the tract in Ash210 will be collated with the different Latin exemplars of *Astrologia Ypocratis* that I was able to access, in order to see if it derives from any of them.

According to Thorndike (1960), the three Latin versions are clearly different in their *incipits* (see Table 3):

Table 3. Incipits of the different Latin translations

Moerbeke	Peter of Abano	Arabic anonymous translation
Sapientissimus Ypocras, omnium medicorum peritissimus ait: Cuiusmodi medicus est qui astronomiam ignorat, nemo quidem in manus illius se committere debet, quia imperfectus est et cecus, et ideo non merito talis medicus reputatur (Thorndike 1960: 105)	Cum legerem libros Ypocratis medicorum optimi inveni hunc parvum sed magne utilitatis librum, et valde necesse est omnibus medicis. Qui hunc bene sciverit, sanitatem mortem vel vitam infirmi poterit pronunciare (Thorndike 1960: 116)	Dixit Ypocras, qui fuit medicus et magister optimus, Cuiusmodi medicus est qui astronomiam ignorat, nullus homo debet committere se in manus illius, qui non est medicus perfectus (Thorndike 1960: 113)

This is the transcription of the *incipit* in Ash210: As sayeth ypocras best of phesicions. who knowiþ / by astronomy þat no man schuld put hymselfe into þe / hondys of an vnkonnyng leche that knowiþ not in astronomy /And I lokyd in a boke of ypocras & I founde ri3t grete / & good knowlych & necessary to al phesicions. It seems possible just by looking at the opening of the treatise to classify it as a translation from the Arabic anonymous version of *Astrologia Ypocratis*. The Latin “Dixit Ypocras” coincides with “As sayeth ypocras”, as well as the way they use to refer to the authority of Hippocrates: “qui fuit medicus et magister optimus” in Latin or “best of phesicions” in Middle English. After, both put the emphasis on a physician who needs to know astronomy. It is important to consider that it is highly unlikely to find “word-for-word” or “sense-for-sense” translations in the Middle Ages. Translators “come close to original compositions” (Taavitsainen, Pahta 2004: 13), and they often adapt their exemplars, that is why the rest of the Latin *incipit* is not exactly reproduced in the Middle English translation.

The short passage which describes physicians as blind people when they are unacquainted with Astronomy is characteristic of Abano’s translation. It non-existent in the Arabic anonymous one, and it does not either appear in Ash210. Then, the focus ought to be in the two signs indicated by Thorndike (1960). The first one is Taurus. Peter of Abano pictures a patient who “non potest dormire et habet voluntatem bibendi vinum et res calidas” (Thorndike 1960: 123), whereas the other two versions represent him as wanting to drink also wine but “res frigidas” (*ibidem*: 119, 121). Concretely, the Arabic anonymous translation says “et habet voluntatem bibendi vinum aut res frigidas, et est necessarium ei minuere sanguinem et dare ei medicinam que reddat eum frigidum et humidum” (*ibidem*: 121). Ash210 f. 37v says “to drynke wynes & / cold thyngs & it is necessary for hym to be / blode & to geue hym medicines þat ben cold / & moyste. Therefore, both recommend to drink wine and cold things. What is more, both agree that it is necessary for the patient to be phlebotomised and to give him cold and moist medicines.

Pisces stands for another relevant passage. It is interesting to draw special attention to the end of this sign and concentrate on the dissimilarities found among the three Latin versions to collate them with the vernacular translation in Ash210 (see Table 4):

Table 4. Ending of Piscis of the different Latin and Middle English translations

Moerbeke	Peter of Abano	Arabic anonymous translation	Middle English translation
et quando pervenerit luna ad locum in quo erat, si Venus aut Iupiter fuerit cum ea, evadet. Si autem fuerit Mars cum ea, erit infirmitas ex colera et sanguine. Et per auxilium fortunarum ad lunam liberabitur et per nocumentum malorum morietur (Thorndike 1960: 126)	si autem fuerit Mars cum ea, erit infirmitas ex colera et sanguine et per auxilium fortunarum ad lunam liberabitur, et per nocumentum malorum morietur (Thorndike 1960: 129)	cum luna fuerit in Piscibus et Mars cum ea, erit infirmitas ex nimio calore interiori et est opus ei ut minuat sanguinem. Et si fortuna aspexerit eam, vivet; sin autem morietur (Thorndike 1960: 128)	and after with hete inwardly and it shalbe necessary for hym to be lete blode and if fortune behold hyr et sinanter morietur et sufficit (Ash210, f. 42r)

In Ash210 f. 42r, it is possible to read “hot inwardly” as the Arabic-Latin translation says “calore interiori”. However, the two most important aspects to highlight about the ending of the treatise are: 1) Ash210 contains the “word-by-word” translation of “et si fortuna” – “& if fortune”; 2) Ash210 shows the same Latin sentence to close the tract: “sin autem morietur”

Some manuscripts of Moerbeke’s version also contained “a passage on the fixed stars (*Stelle fixe*) which is appended at the ending, after the treatment of the influence of the moon in the twelve signs which terminates the treatise with the consideration of Pisces” (Thorndike 1960: 109). This passage is non-existent either in the anonymous Arabic translation and in Ash210.

## CONCLUSIONS

“Middle English prognostic material based upon astrological principles still remains ill-defined and little analyzed” (Means 1992: 367). Zodiacal lunaries in general and *Pe boke of yprocras* in particular, have been finally identified in many late medieval English manuscripts. Its importance has been brought to light thanks to the research carried out by Diego-Rodríguez (2017, 2018 and 2019) and De la

Cruz-Cabanillas and Diego-Rodríguez (2018). This piece of work has contributed to dismiss the treatise contained in Ashmole 210 (ff. 36v42r) from the index of manuscripts which *De boke of ypocras*.

It has also demonstrated that the treatise contained in Ashmole MS 210 (ff. 36v42r) is a vernacular translation of *Astrologia Ypocratis*, more concretely from the Latin text translated from an Arabic version. The translation of *De boke of ypocras* into the vernacular, has followed the same patterns as the great majority of astrological medical tracts. This translation, first into Latin from Greek and Arabic sources, has been widely studied (Kibre 1945, 1977, 1978; Thorndike 1960). The subsequent translation into Middle English has, however, been largely neglected by scholarship. This neglect has been responsible for the wrong associations of *De boke of ypocras* with the Latin exemplar entitled *Astrologia Ypocratis*. This article has successfully managed to end the bond between these two treatises.

This research is yet another example of how fifteenth-century Middle English texts remain partially understood as “the great majority of these texts remain unidentified in infrequently consulted fifteenth-century manuscripts” (Voigts 1995: 185). This constitutes an obstacle for the study of the process of vernacularization of thousands of scientific and medical texts in late medieval England. In conclusion, zodiacal lunaries are a genre worthy to be further explored and therefore, this article leaves the door open for future research as parallel copies to Ash210 (ff. 36v42r) need to be found as well as the Latin exemplar of *De boke of ypocras* or the Middle English translations of the other Latin versions of *Astrologia Ypocratis*.

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