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CORPOREAL ALMANACS, FATE, AND MEDICINE
Nahua and European Traditions

"In the preceding Treatises I have pointed out the suspicion that this noun, hiciti in the Mexican language gives rise to...we have arrived at its proper place where we will deal more completely with the deceptions that this noun involves, there being concealed in it things that in no way are licit to the faithful and that should be banished with great care."
Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón
Treatise on Heathen Superstitions

"Y así también los médicos usaban esta figura cuando curaban; y según el día y la hora en la cual alguno se enfermaba, así veían si la enfermedad estaba conforme con el signo que reinaba. Por esta razón se sabe que esta gente no era tan bestial como algunos la han retratado, ya que tenían tanta cuenta y en sus cosas, y usaban el mismo medio que usan los astrólogos y los médicos entre nosotros..."
Pedro de los Ríos
Codex Vaticanus A/Ríos

Extensive exploration of the colonial experience in New Spain has prompted James Lockhart and others to point out that, "[I]n one branch of Nahua life after another, it has been seen that remarkable similarities to or points of contact with European patterns existed."
These commonalities are concurrently credited with facilitating the Spaniards' establishment of a permanent colony in the Valley of Mexico, and with enabling Nahuas to retain many aspects of their own cultural identity well into the colonial period. Thus, the concepts of cultural similarity and cultural difference can be fruitfully employed in attempting to understand and define the colonial culture that developed in New Spain. Fortunately for ethnohistorians and art historians, similarities between Nahua and Spanish concepts of writing and the book allowed indigenous

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cultural production, in the form of indigenous-style manuscripts, to continue until the late sixteenth-century. Although, it is well-known that such manuscripts often manifested European influence. In this paper, specific almanacs derived from the Codices Borgia, Tudela, Vaticanus A/Rios, and Vaticanus B and a drawing from an unedited colonial manuscript housed in the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam will be analyzed, compared to and contrasted with zodiac men, visually similar images from European sources. This will be done in order to elucidate concepts of personality and fate as associated with calendrical signs, and to clarify concepts of medical diagnosis and treatment among the Nahuas, early modern Europeans, and the inhabitants of New Spain.

INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL SOURCES

The visual sources employed in this paper that originate from Central Mexico, whether from the pre-contact or colonial period, are classified by Elizabeth Hill Boone as corporeal almanacs. These corporeal almanacs serve to link the twenty Aztec day signs to various parts of the body, whether the body is that of a god, an animal, or a human being. They qualify as general purpose almanacs that were consulted for various auguries, and were employed in determining the fates of infants, and in diagnosing and curing illnesses. Boone classifies the corpus of deerskin almanacs, including Borgia 53, Vaticanus B 96, and Tudela 125r, along with the human male on Vaticanus A/Rios 54r as "unmotivated" because the body, in these examples, "is neutral although the position [of the day sign] is not." (Figs. 1-4). Borgia 53 and Vaticanus B 96 are cognate almanacs that because of their deer hide element, metaphorically represent

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4 Hill Boone, Elizabeth. Cycles of Time and Meaning in the Mexican Divinatory Codices. pending publication: 97; see Boone pp. 97-101 for a full description of all types of corporeal almanacs.
6 See Boone, p. 98.
Deer were also hunted by the Nahuas and constituted an important part of their diet, suggesting a connection between the animal and sustenance, or life. Both of these plates picture the frontally splayed skin of a deer with the day signs associated with various body parts. In each case, crocodile and wind are associated with the feet and the sequential day signs rise, in order, up the body, with monkey appearing at the stomach or breast. The face of the god Xochipilli, who is associated with monkey, is also seen peering out from under the face of each hide. The colonial deerskin almanac on Tudela 125r manifests slight differences and is glossed in Spanish. In the Vaticanus A/Ríos 54r image, the day signs are associated with the body parts of a human male rather than those of a deer, suggesting some European influence. This image is glossed in Italian. Finally, Anders, Jansen, and Reyes García include a fascinating drawing from an unedited manuscript housed in the Tropenmuseum in their analysis of the Codex Vaticanus A/Ríos. (Fig. 5). The drawing depicts the twelve European zodiacal signs in association with various body parts, and also includes the sun, the moon, and the seven known planets in relation to certain organs. The diagram is glossed in Spanish, Latin, and Nahuatl and is part of a Nahuatl-language manuscript that discusses European astrology. This diagram may be classified as an unmotivated image. The distribution of day signs is not uniform throughout all of these almanacs and the reasons for differentiation are often unclear.

In *Cycles of Time and Meaning* Boone states that, “the friars may have taken a special interest in these body almanacs because superficially they resemble the ‘zodiac men’ or ‘Homo Signorum’ of Europe.” Zodiac men are visually similar to these Nahua body almanacs and, like

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7 Ibid, 98.
9 Motivated almanacs employ convention to indicate association with particular realms. For example, Quetzalcoatl and Miclatlanecuhtli appear back to back on Borgia 56 and 73 and Vaticanus B 75 and 76 with day signs associated with their various body parts. This pairing seems to emphasize the antithesis of life and death, thereby lending more specificity to the almanac. See Boone for a full explanation.
the Nahua almanacs, they were employed in diagnosing and treating illness in medieval and early modern Europe. They constitute the European visual sources employed in this paper. They more closely resemble the human male depicted on Vaticanus A/Ríos 54r and the figure in the Tropenmuseum diagram. Each depicts a frontal human male, and the signs of the European zodiac are associated with various body parts. (Figs. 6-9). In some cases body parts are also associated with the planets. (Fig. 10). In contrast to the Nahua examples, the association between body parts and zodiacal signs is standardized, beginning with the placement of the ram representing Aries at the head and continuing, in order, down the body and ending with the fish representing Pisces at the foot. Zodiac men and instructions on how to employ them in diagnosis and healing were published frequently in Reportorios de los Tiempos, or almanacs, in late medieval or early modern Spain. A 1606 example of such a repertorio that was published in New Spain, suggests that they were also important among medical professionals in the colony.\(^{10}\)

Despite evident visual similarities, there are differences between these two sets of almanacs. First, Mexican corporeal almanacs enjoyed broader application than European zodiac men, which were employed only in healing. In addition, Boone states that European zodiac men, “operate in the reverse of the Mexican almanacs: In the Mexican ones, the day signs take meaning from body parts; in the zodiac men, the body parts derive meaning from the zodiac.”\(^{11}\)

While this statement seems to have held true when the Mexican corporeal almanacs were employed to derive birth auguries, it is not clear, however, that it held true when those almanacs were utilized in healing. This suggests that perhaps there were also important functional

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\(^{10}\) See Martinez, Enrique. Reportorio de los Tiempos México: 1606. Chapter IV directs the reader in the employment of astrology in determining the type and severity of illness. Martinez explains how the cycles of the moon and the relative locations of planets can be consulted to determine the humoral imbalance underlying a patient’s illness. Once the result of the imbalance is determined, whether it be excess heat, cold, moistness, or dryness, proper treatment can be determined.

\(^{11}\) See Boone, pp. 100-101.
similarities between these images, although they originated from different cultural traditions. These concepts will be further explored throughout the paper. The visual likeness of these images is provocative, as are questions regarding their usage. As this paper will show, these almanacs are excellent tools with which to analyze the similarities and differences that existed between the two most prominent cultural traditions in New Spain.

PERSONALITY AND FATE AS RELATED TO THE BODY AND CALENDRICAL SIGNS

In his prologue to Book Four of the Florentine Codex, Sahagún observes that, “These natives of all of New Spain took and take great care in knowing the day and hour of the birth of each person, in order to divine his or her character, life, and death.” The sign governing the day on which a child was born played a central role in determining his or her fate in the Aztec world. While the ceremonies accompanying birth in early modern Europe were Christian in nature, zodiacal signs were believed to exercise control over personality and fate as well. In fact, Mesoamerican almanacs as, “containers of universal knowledge,” can be compared to the Reportorios de los Tiempos that circulated throughout early modern Europe and the New World. In essence, the reportorios demonstrate a desire, “to mark out the year by relating it to the astronomical bases of chronology in the zodiacal signs and...finally to relate it to the...humans that produced it.” Mesoamerican almanacs also served to invest time with human meaning. While the reportorios discussed personality and fate in relation to the zodiac, the visual images of zodiac men were utilized mainly in diagnosing and treating illness.

Nonetheless, the development of correlations between parts of the body and certain zodiacal

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13 See Boone, p. 23.
signs relied, to some extent, upon metaphor. Thus, this section will rely mainly on Nahua visual sources and text from repertorios, with some use of zodiac man images.

I return to the images on Codex Borgia 53 and Vaticanus B 96 (Fig. 1 and 2). Given scholarship on Mesoamerican almanacs and the information contained in the text and glosses appearing on Tudela 124 and 125r (see page 6), it is likely that birth auguries were derived from these two images. While they suggest utility in reading the fates of a child, they leave no direct explanation of precisely how they functioned. Nonetheless, the association between the body and fate or personality inherent in these images is intriguing, and logical, given the rich concept of body propagated among Nahua. The human body was complex and intimately associated with the terrestrial world, the mythical world, and the Mesoamerican calendrical system. For example, the primary term for body in Nahua is tonacayo, or “our flesh.” This term is also applied to corn and other produce, suggesting, according to López Austin, “a metaphoric tie between man’s corporeal being and the food to which he owed his existence.”15 Additionally, it has been speculated that the Mesoamerican 20-day count may have originated from “humankind’s four five-digit appendages.”16 Finally, López Austin also asserts that, “the horizontal plane [among the Nahua] received the corporeal distribution of the course of the stars: in front of them was the west; behind them, the east; to the left, the south; and to the right, the north.”17 Thus, while the calendar governed human fate from birth, the human body also served as an important reference point. Just as time was endowed with cultural meaning, so too was the body.

16 See Boone, p. 16.
17 See López Austin, 165.
The Codex Tudela is another deerskin almanac, visually similar to Borgia 53 and Vaticanus B 96, but it is not associated with Xochipilli. On plate 125r, the Tudela’s Spanish annotator states that the “signs around the deerskin indicated the fate of one born on that day sign,” thus providing a clue regarding the employment of corporeal almanacs.\(^\text{18}\) Those born on crocodile or wind, signs associated with the feet, were fated to be walkers of roads. Those born on water or dog, signs associated with the arms, would be thieves. And those born on eagle or vulture, signs associated with the eyes, would be sharp and wise.\(^\text{19}\) These associations correspond to the functions performed by the respective body parts. Yet, the complexity of the Mesoamerican calendrical system, and the great variety of almanacs employed by Aztec sages, suggest that birth auguries could be extremely detailed and informative. Nonetheless, metaphors relating personality to body parts actually provide relatively little information. In addition to the information yielded by this corporeal almanac, a child’s \textit{trecena} and its associated gods and direction would influence fate and personality. Furthermore, as evidenced by analyses of \textit{trecena} signs offered by Sahagún and other chroniclers, signs carried an inherent ambiguity that allowed people to influence their own fates through responsible or irresponsible actions. The annotator was aware, to some extent of this complexity, yet he believed, as did most Europeans, that the day signs and meanings associated with them were the result of the Devil’s trickery.\(^\text{20}\)

One also wonders, based on knowledge of Mesoamerican cosmology, whether important animistic centers like the head, which houses the \textit{tonalli}, or the navel, which was the center of dignity, figured into auguries. The annotator does not provide that type of information.

While it is difficult from plate 125r to determine the annotator’s familiarity with the meaning and usage of Nahua corporeal almanacs, knowledge of the European zodiac would have

\(^\text{18}\) See Boone, p. 99.  
\(^\text{19}\) See Codex Tudela, 125r.  
\(^\text{20}\) Ibid, 124v.
facilitated understanding of Aztec associations between calendrical signs and fate or personality.

Andrés de Li describes associations between character and the various astrological signs in his sixteenth-century *Reportorio de los Tiempos*. He says of those born under Aries, "It is a movable sign and it shows fire. Its quality is hot and dry. And because of this those who are born under this sign anger suddenly for the smallest reasons."\(^{21}\) Of those born under Cancer he writes, "This is a water sign and its quality is cold and humid. And he who is born under this sign will be beautiful and possess a valiant, vigorous body."\(^{22}\) The zodiac man in Figure 6 shows that Aries, symbolized by a ram, is related to the head and Cancer, symbolized by a crab, is related to the breast.\(^ {23}\) There are obvious metaphorical links between body parts and the characteristics associated with them, as there are in the Nahua corporeal almanacs. For example, Aries is associated with the head and is said to anger easily suggesting terms like *hotheaded* or *headstrong*. Cancer is associated with the breast, a metaphor for beauty, and those born under Cancer will be beautiful. While these metaphors are fully European they function here just as the Tudela annotator claims they do in Nahua almanacs. This suggests, in turn, that while zodiac men were employed primarily in healing, astrological signs can, as in the Nahua tradition, derive meaning from the body parts. In the European tradition, the day of the week on which a person was born also influenced his or her fate or personality, just as it did in the Mesoamerican tradition, but the European days of the week were ruled over by planets rather than gods and volatiles. Someone born on Tuesday, which was ruled by the planet Mars, would be a warrior, a thief, a blacksmith, or a doctor.\(^ {24}\) Mars, in turn, ruled over the gall bladder. This recalls Mesoamerican corporeal almanacs where certain day signs, as opposed to planets, are associated

\(^{21}\) See Delbrugge, 66. Translations from the Spanish are my own.

\(^{22}\) Ibid, 68.

\(^{23}\) It is noted, of course, that there is no correlation between Aztec day signs and astral constellations.

with certain body parts. Among Europeans, Mars' movements could affect the functioning of
the gall bladder. While Borgia 53 associates monkey with the stomach or womb, it is unclear in
healing procedures if monkey was believed to exercise control over the stomach or if the
stomach somehow influenced the day sign monkey. This debate will be approached in the
section of this paper entitled Corporeal Almanacs and Zodiac Men in Diagnosis and Healing.

Having examined similarities between Nahua corporeal almanacs and European zodiac
men, one can ask how well a European might have understood the image on Vaticanus A/Ríos
54r. Boone states that, "European models influenced the body almanac in the Vaticanus A/Ríos,
although its core remained indigenous."²⁵ In terms of European influence, this is one of only two
corporeal almanacs containing a human figure, rather than either a deerskin or a god.²⁶ In
addition, the annotator, Pedro de los Ríos, glossed the plate in Italian, noting that, "These are the
20 letters or figures that they used for all of their numbers, those which they say have dominion
over men, as is here represented."²⁷ He does not indicate that it could yield birth auguries, and
his comment seems to suggest in a general sense that day signs influence body parts in this
diagram. When, in the European tradition, zodiac men were used for healing, the zodiacal signs
indicated which parts of the body should be bled or where poultices should be applied. Did Ríos
interpret this figure according to Nahua or European application? Another interesting aspect of
this image lies in the fact that the distribution of day signs around the body differs entirely from
that of Borgia 53, Vaticanus B 96, and Tudela 125r, three other unmotivated corporeal almanacs.
Is this due to European influence? In particular, flower is associated with the breasts. As
previously stated, those born under Cancer in the European tradition are said to be beautiful, and
beauty and Cancer are both associated with the breast. Perhaps a similar (though distinct)

²⁵ See Boone, p. 101.
²⁶ A human form appears in the Codex Mexicanus, but its deteriorated state prevents any analysis.
²⁷ See Vaticanus A/Ríos accompanying guide, p. 247. Translation from the Spanish is my own.
metaphorical association exists here, linking two beautiful objects, the flower and the breasts. In addition, the lizard is associated with the penis in both Borgia 53 and Vaticanus B 96, while lizard appears where the penis would be, if it had been drawn, in Tudela 125r. In Vaticanus A/Ríos, the serpent is associated with the penis and Ríos' annotation identifies it as, "serpent, the male’s virile member, the thing from which evil originated..." Did the biblical association between the snake and original sin prompt the illustrator of Vaticanus A/Ríos 54r to link the serpent and the penis rather than the lizard and the penis? Finally, death is linked with the head, perhaps because the skull is the sign representing death. In other corporeal almanacs it is associated with the stomach. Similarities between Nahua and European traditions provoked misinterpretation, syncretism, and change in this image and whether its core is, in fact, indigenous is difficult to determine.

The Tropenmuseum diagram is visually similar to the Vaticanus A/Ríos 54r image. It is part of a larger, unedited colonial manuscript, written in Nahuatl, that discusses European astrology. In contrast to Vaticanus A/Ríos 54r, this diagram seems to have been derived from European models and influenced only superficially by an indigenous hand. The quality of the drawing is poor, but it is clearly similar to a zodiac man. The human body parts are related to the zodiacal signs, beginning with Aries, at the head, and ending with Pisces, at the foot. In addition, the planets are related to certain body parts in a way that corresponds exactly with the zodiac man in Figure 10. The labels surrounding the figure’s head mirror those in Figure 10 and the zodiacal figures in the Tropenmuseum diagram are clearly modeled on those appearing in that same figure. In fact, these two images appear to be cognates, suggesting that the author of the Tropenmuseum almanac may have had access to the anonymous 1554 diagram in Figure 10 or to a very similar image. The difference between these images lies in extra annotations

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28 Ibid, 247. Translation from the Spanish is my own.
appearing in the Tropenmuseum diagram. As part of a Nahuatl language document, this image seems to have been drawn by an educated Indian, in the colonial period, perhaps in an attempt to explain European astrological concepts to a Nahuatl-speaking audience.

**CORPOREAL ALMANACS AND ZODIAC MEN IN DIAGNOSIS AND HEALING**

Even prior to detailed examination of these mages, it is clear that similarities in medical practice existed between indigenous peoples of Central Mexico and Europeans. Louise Burkhart states that, "In Nahua thought, morality and health were closely linked: acts classed as immoral were physically debilitating; ritual breaches could be punished with disease." While the link between morality and health was less consistently applied among Europeans, disease was often similarly considered divine punishment for sin. Furthermore López-Austin notes that, "The divine, human, or purely natural origins of illnesses, that so influenced their nature, justified the importance that diagnosis held for the Nahuas." Diagnosis was of paramount concern for Europeans as well, and illness was often tied to imbalance, which was also a concern among Nahuas. In terms of treatment, both ethnic groups shared a belief in the efficacy of herbal healing remedies. This resulted in the production in New Spain of manuscripts such as the 1552 *Badianus Herbal* that describe and classify plants indigenous to New Spain. Finally, as indicated in the quote from the Codex Vaticanus A/Ríos at the opening of this paper, Europeans and Nahuas acknowledged similarities between visual devices used among either culture to diagnose illnesses and determine proper remedies.

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29 Many of glosses appearing on this image are illegible because I was not, despite consultation with Professor Bricker, able to locate a high quality reproduction. I was, however, able to decipher those glosses that are related to Figure 10.


32 Humoral imbalance, a theory developed by Galen, was considered the source of illness among Europeans. See Burkhart for more detail regarding imbalance among Nahuas.
While Borgia 53, Vaticanus B 96, Tudela 125r and Vaticanus A/Ríos 54r were employed in determining the fates of infants, they were also, as suggested by Ríos’ comments on Vaticanus A/Ríos 54r, likely employed in diagnosing and treating illness. Ríos states there that, “the doctors used this figure when they cured; and according to the day and hour in which someone became sick, they would see if the illness conformed to the sign that reigned.”

Louise Burkhart, shows that illness, for Nahuas, resulted when moral transgressions were committed and the body was thus allowed to enter a state of disequilibrium. In other words, Nahua life revolved around ritual observance that was designed to establish balance between chaos and order, illness and health. Ritual prescriptions served to prevent sickness in human beings and when preventative measures were not observed, infections could enter the body. In other words, “Just as penitential ‘meriting’ ensured health and well-being, failure to merit things by proper ritual observances could cause disease.”

Perhaps corporeal almanacs were consulted in cases of illness, to determine the type of ritual breach that a sick person had committed, and which god he or she had offended in order that offerings could be made and proper ceremonies could be conducted. The Tudela annotator seems to suggest just that in his commentary on folio 99r of the manuscript which depicts the Lords of the Night and the thirteen volatiles. He says that, “if someone got sick, they looked at which god reigned on the day when the illness had begun, and they appeased the demon that reigned, with sacrifices.”

Burkhart alludes to the survival of this association between gods and illness when she says that the Indians often blamed sickness on the anger of a saint.

33 See Vaticanus A/Ríos, accompanying guide 247. Translation from the Spanish is my own.
34 See Burkhart, p. 171.
35 See Codex Tudela, 99r.
36 See Burkhart, p. 171.
Burkhart also states that exposure to *tlazolli*, or filth, could, “bring on illness more directly.” 37 Falling down or being knocked down brought a person into contact with dirt, and that alone was believed to cause illness. 38 Perhaps the associations made between day signs and body parts in corporeal almanacs helped Nahua doctors and priests decide how to diagnose and remedy illness caused by exposure to *tlazolli*, based upon the day on which the exposure occurred and the characteristics that reigned on that day. One wonders, in addition, if illness was endowed with certain tendencies or characteristics based on the body part to which it was related. Were illnesses that plague the feet somehow related to the characteristics of the day signs crocodile or wind, and their positions in different *trecenas*? Or, was an illness contracted on the day sign dog somehow linked to thievery, as suggested on Tudela 125r? The lack of information detailing directly how these almanacs were employed results in tenuous interpretations. It is impossible to determine for sure whether meaning was derived from body parts or from day signs in diagnosing illness and determining cures.

Yet, it is clear that the almanacs were but one integral tool available for curing illness among Nahua. In his *Treatise on Heathen Superstitions*, Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón recounts seventeenth-century indigenous cures for illnesses afflicting many parts of the body, beginning with the head, and includes cures for bone fractures and insect bites. 39 In addition, for a fever, he states that Nahua employed a compound of four herbs – hueinacoztli, xochimecaíl, coanenepíll, and xiuhcocólin – which the patient was instructed to drink. Meanwhile a priest recited ritual orations designed to draw out the illness. 40 In other cases corn kernels were conjured and then ground, mixed with atole or chocolate, and consumed by the patient in order to cure the illness.

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37 Ibid., 171.
36 Ibid., 172.
39 See Ruiz de Alarcón., pp. 167-208. Ruiz de Alarcón’s European bias pervades this source.
40 Ibid., 200.
The orations recited by Nahua priests and healers in healing illness consistently included invocations to gods, either soliciting their aid or blaming them for a person’s illness. Illnesses themselves were also addressed rhetorically and ordered to leave the body. Perhaps the corporeal almanacs helped priests decide which orations to employ, which gods to invoke, or which herbs or hallucinogens to rely upon in curing ceremonies.

Finally, in describing the ideal Nahua physician, Sahagún states that in addition to being familiar with herbs and roots he should be, “experienced in curing, [and] it is his job to know how to set bones, purge, bleed and *sajar, y dar puntos*, and finally to save people from death’s door.”\(^{41}\) *Sajar y dar puntos* refers to a practice similar to bleeding, but less traumatic, in which tiny cuts were made in a person’s body and blood was drawn out by means of the suction created by cupping glasses.\(^{42}\) These techniques were all employed by European doctors, and they were incorporated very quickly into the indigenous medical regimen in the colonial period. The corporeal diagram housed in the Tropenmuseum corroborates this assertion. Despite having been written in Nahuatl, it is almost identical to images of European zodiac men. It may have been included in the larger manuscript on European astrology to teach an indigenous audience how to bleed and purge according to the positions of the planets and the reigning zodiacal sign, as was done in the European tradition. It may, also, have looked very familiar to the author, had he been previously exposed to Mesoamerican corporeal almanacs.

Despite Church doctrine, Spaniards in New Spain readily subscribed to indigenous curing practices. Members of all social classes sought the aid and expertise of *hechiceros, curanderos*, and *ticiti*, or indigenous doctors, in treating both physical and emotional illness. They combined indigenous resources with their own medical practices. Extant *Reportorios de los Tiempos*

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\(^{41}\) See Sahagún, 555.

provide information regarding the employment of astrology and zodiac men, particularly in treatment of illness. The zodiac man, as a medical tool, was developed in the Middle Ages and was employed for centuries. According to Charles West Clark, these images, “formed part of the general ancient astrological conception of the intimate connections of all things above with those which are below.”\textsuperscript{43} Relationships between parts of the body and astrological signs are directly related to illness. Those born under Aries, associated with the head, are likely to experience problems with the head. Those born under Pisces might have trouble with the feet.\textsuperscript{44} The zodiac men were also used in curing illnesses. Folio 135v. of Andrés de Li’s 16\textsuperscript{th} century Repertorio de los Tiempos contains a standard image of a zodiac man, and a set of glosses that lists the zodiacal signs and the body part with which each sign is associated (Fig. 7). The heading on that page can be paraphrased as follows:

“Here following is the depiction of the signs associated with the parts of the human body over which they have dominion and ownership. And here also is a table by which you can clearly identify under which signs it is good, bad, or indifferent to bleed or purge. You should note that one should not bleed a part when the moon is in the sign associated with it.”\textsuperscript{45}

More specifically, each astrological sign was classified as a fire sign, an air sign, a water sign, or an earth sign. Those four elemental designations were related to four principal qualities – hot, cold, wet, and dry, respectively. These, in turn, were related to the body’s four humors - blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. Thus fluctuation of humors was related to the changing of the seasons and to illness, and bloodletting was thought to help restore humoral balance. Zodiac men and text accompanying the images instructed physicians on where cuts should be made, the amount of blood that should be drawn, and the position the patient should assume during the

\textsuperscript{43} See Delbrugge, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{44} See Bricker, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{45} See Delbrugge, p. 82.
procedure. Humors influenced both emotional and physical state and if unbalanced, they could cause both emotional and physical illness. One source says:

"It was held that physiological imbalance (produced by an excess of one of the humors, for example) would be reflected in bodily illness in exaggerated personality traits. Thus, if a person had an excess of blood (one of the four humors), he was expected to have a sanguine temperament; that is, to be optimistic, enthusiastic, and excitable..."  

This suggests that excess of certain humors was not always bad. It also suggests that Europeans, like Nahuas, believed that emotional imbalance could be cured. Ruiz de Alarcón includes a separate chapter in his Treatise that is dedicated to rituals used to placate anger and inspire affection. His refusal to classify these rites as curing rituals is intriguing and revealing with regard to Nahua and European concepts of illness. According to Catholic doctrine, influencing a person's emotions or actions without his or her consent is equivalent to interfering with free will, thus excess anger and deficient affection are not curable by medical means. However, "the Nahuas desired to maintain bodily equilibrium, avoid pollution, and obtain divine favor," and this included avoiding emotional extremes. Excessive emotion and apathy were problematic according to Nahua cosmology and that cosmology allowed doctors and priests to ritually remedy them as illnesses. European medical beliefs suggesting that physical and emotional illness both derive from humoral imbalance, and can both be regulated through purging and bleeding indicate that European religious figures like Ruiz de Alarcón were concerned more about the nature of indigenous ceremonies and tools than about the ends indigenous curers hoped to achieve.

Mesoamerican corporeal almanacs appear in a variety of codices and they constituted one of many available healing tools among pre-contact and colonial Nahuas. Indigenous doctors

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46 Ibid., 11.  
47 See Bricker, 28.  
48 See Burkhart, p. 130.
employed them to identify and cure illnesses based on the characteristics associated with day
signs and trecentas. Sacrifices and offerings were made, ceremonies were performed, and
orations were recited based on information provided by corporeal almanacs. Birth auguries
yielding information about fate and personality were also derived from corporeal almanacs. In
the European tradition, the zodiac influenced personality, fate, and illness. A person's zodiacal
sign provided information regarding personality and proneness to illness. Zodiac men were
utilized in bleeding, purging, and other healing procedures. While there are distinct differences
between Mesoamerican and European corporeal diagrams and the cosmologies that underlie
them, they are visually and functionally similar and they provide an interesting, comparative
portrait of two different societies.
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FIG. 5
TROPENUMUSM DIAGRAM
The Anatomie of mans body, as the partes thereof are governed by the xii. Celestial Signes.

Aquila. The head and face.

Taurus. Breast and thighs.

Capricornus. The brain.

Aquila. The heart and liver.

Virgo. The sides.

Virgo. The spleen.

Cancer. The breast, stomach, and lungs.

Libra. The heart and liver.

Sagittarius. The thighs.

Aquarius. The legs.

Leonis. The brain.

Leo. The heart and liver.

Gemini. The arms.

Lupus. The knees.

Cancer. The side.

Virgo. The spleen.

Cancer. The breast, stomach, and lungs.
Aries significa la cabeza
Taurus el pescuezo
Geminis los braços
Cancer los pechos
Leo el corazón
Uirgo el vientre
Libra las ancas
Scorpius los genitales
Sagitarius las piernas
Capricornus las rodillas
Aquarius la spinilla
Piscis los piez

[fol. 136r]
Signos  Purga  indifferent  indifferent  mala  mala  indifferent  buena  buena  mala
Aries  buena  buena  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala
Aries  mala  buena  buena  buena  buena  buena  buena  buena  buena
Aries  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala
Taurus  indifferent  indifferent  indifferent  indifferent  indifferent  indifferent  indifferent  indifferent  indifferent
Taurus  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala
Geminis  indifferent  indifferent  indifferent  indifferent  indifferent  indifferent  indifferent  indifferent  indifferent
Geminis  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala
Cancer  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala
Cancer  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala
Leo  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala
Leo  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala
Leo  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala
Uirgo  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala  mala
Fig. 9
From Astrology in Medieval Manuscripts, p. 5