

# Codices Chiromantii Bodleiani

A catalogue of academic, bibliographic and  
pre-1700 works on chiromancy and palmistry  
in the Duke Humphrey's Library, of the  
Bodleian Library, Oxford

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## Chiromantic Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library

These manuscripts are all to be found in the Duke Humphrey's Library

### **Ms Ashmole 399 c.1292**

Medical text including a copy of a chiromancy first scribed at Canterbury c.1160. This copy scribed c.1292 with an additional chiromancy and four drawings of hands at fol.17 and fol.59. *The earliest known extant mediaeval Latin text to include work of chiromantic significance.*

Reproduced and translated in Burnett J Warburg & Courtauld Inst 1987.

### **Ms Rawl C 677 C14th**

Short treatise on chiromancy in Latin at fols. 1-3 in a larger text with works on alchemy and medicine.

### **Ms Digby 95 c.1375-1400**

'Cyromancia et Palmestria' fol.8 A small Latin fragment on chiromancy with one illustration in a larger text on herbalism and mediaeval medicine.

### **Ms Ashmole 1471 c.1375-1400**

Two hundred page treatise on various subjects including astrology and alchemy, with two small Latin fragments on chiromancy at fol.82 & fols.121- 124 'Tractatus Chiromancie' attributed to Johannes/John the Philosopher.

### **Ms Bodl 177 c.1375-1400**

Compilation of four manuscripts written in Middle English and Latin towards the end of the C14th. 'Ars Chiromantia' and 'Ars de Chiromancie' at fols.41 45,46,48. Attributed to Rodericus de Majoricus. Five large diagrams of hands at fol.39,50,51. Also treatises on astrology with charts, symbols etc

### **Ms Bodl 607 c.1400**

Early C15th treatise 'De Chiromancia Tractatus' in Middle English attributed to Johannes/John the Philosopher.

### **Ms Rawl D 1362 c.1400**

C14th and C15th ecclesiastical collection of works including a short treatise on chiromancy at fols. 1-8 dated from c.1400

### **Ms Digby Roll IV c.1400-1450**

'A Smalle Tretyse of Palmestrie' A seven foot long scroll seven inches wide, the oldest known document on chiromancy in the English language. One large drawing of the hand with twenty-five further illustrations in the text alongside explanatory paragraphs (See also Derek Price 1953).

**Ms Digby 88 c.1450**

C15th treatise on astrology with some chiromancy and physiognomy in Latin and Middle English. Fols.44-46 give five illustrations of hands with text inscribed on and between the fingers to interpret the various markings.

**Ms Douce 45 fol. 63-78 c.1450**

C15th alchemical text with an eight page treatise on chiromancy in Latin and Middle English. Fols.71-77 include one large illustration plus twelve further drawings of pairs of hands with various markings. Fingers labelled mercury-sol-saturn-jupiter.

**Ms Rawl D 247 fol. 2-12 c.1450**

C15th Latin treatise on chiromancy with nine illustrations. Fol.2 fingers labelled sol-mercurius-saturnus-jupitus.

**Ms Bodl 266 c.1477**

C15th astrological treatise in Latin, Italian and Middle English by Michael Scotus with a fragment on palmistry.

**Ms Rawl D 1028 c.1590**

Complete treatise on palmistry in fourteen chapters, a handwritten copy and English translation of Indagine, dated towards the end of the C16th, with further notes on astrology and physiognomy. Owned by a Smart of Durham in 1709. Illustrations carefully copied into the text as in the original.

**Ms Ashmole 177.198 c.1650**

Early C17th handwritten astrological notebook including the medical case notes of the physician Dr Richard Napier and a fragment on horary astrology by William Lilly. Two page fragment on palmistry in Latin at fol.163-164 refering to works by R Goclenius.

## Renaissance Chiromantic Texts in the Bodleian Library

The following works are all to be found in the Duke Humphrey's Library of the Bodleian unless otherwise indicated.

Achillinus A 'De Chyromantiae Principiis et Physiognomiae' (Bologna 1503)

'De Principiis Chyromantiae et Physionomie'(Venice 1508)

Bodleian Reference: S 8.9 (3) Th

Very large Latin volume in three main sections a) a treatise on theology in six parts b) a mathematical treatise on algebra and Euclidian geometry, in six parts and c) a copy of Cocles' 'Anastasis'.

Agrippa HC '*The Vanity of Arts and Sciences*' (London 1684)

Bodleian Reference: Vet A 3 f 1337

Agrippa's opportunity to vent his spleen against many arts and sciences, including chiromancy which he describes as an 'altogether fallacious art' in chapter 35.

*'The Occult Philosophy'* (London 1651)

Bodleian Reference: Ashmole 322

General survey of the occult arts and sciences, including astrology, prophecy and cabalistic teachings, but positively presented this time. Includes some remarks on chiromancy in his discussion of astrological physiognomy.

Anon '*Palmistry Displayed*' (London c1680)

Bodleian Reference: Wood 69 (3)

One page pamphlet on the significance of some line markings of interest to young lovers in pursuit of courtship.

Belot J '*Les Oeuvres de Jean Belot*' (Rouen 1662)

Bodleian Reference: 80 I Linc 8

Extensive volume in several parts, the first of which is the chiromancy of 210pp followed by a treatise on physiognomy, metoposcopy and the Lullian art of Memory. Very much an astrological chiromancy with strong cabalistic influences. Innovates astrological correspondencies to the phalanges, uses symbolism of the Three Worlds & looks for 'Sacred Letters' in the lines of the hand. However, also maintains many traditional associations and interpretations.

Bulwer J '*Chirolgia, naturall language of the Hand*' (London 1644)

Bodleian Reference: Douce BB 574

A work on the significance and meanings of gesture rather than chiromancy, showing how much we can and do communicate through the movements of our hands. Illustrates various hand gestures and movements and explicates their meanings.

*'Philocophus - The Deaf and Dumb Man's Friend'* (London 1648)  
Bodleian Reference: Douce B 202  
Companion and supplementary volume to the above.

Cardan H *'De Rerum Veritate'* (Basil 1557)  
Bodleian Reference: A 4.2 Art  
Liber XV is entitled 'De Divinatione Artificiola' & chapter 79 of this book deals with chiromancy. Cardan cites Aristotle and Albertus Magnus and lists Cocles, Tricasso, Indagine, Corvus & Tibertus as famous chiromancers.

Cocles B *'Chiromantiae Principiis... Anastasis'* (Bologna 1504)  
Bodleian Reference: S 8.9 (3) Th  
Two very large chapters in Latin on physiognomy & chiromancy the chiromancy being some 178 pages. Traditional names used; many strange lineal markings are discussed.

*'Physionomiae et Chiromantiae Compendium'* (Argentorati 1533)  
Bodleian Reference: 265 K 59  
Small book in Latin in two sections, the physiognomy of Cocles and the chiromancy of Corvus. The chiromancy is in two parts, the first explaining the theory with the second half of the work being a series of woodcuts of hands depicting various lineal markings, with explanatory text. 66 of these diagrams depict the three main lines alone. The parts of the hand are given the traditional names.

*'Le Compendion de Physiognomie et Chiromancie'* (Paris 1546)  
Bodleian Reference: 80 C 11 (1) Art  
French translation of the Argentorati 1533 text.

Corvus A *'Opera Nova de Maestro Corvi, La Trattata de la Chiromantia'*  
Bodleian Reference: Don F 193(Venice 1513)  
Italian translation of Corvus from Argentorati 1533 text.

*'Physionomiae et Chiromantiae Compendium'* (Argentorati 1533)  
Bodleian Reference: 80 C 11 (1) Art or 265 K 59  
Small book in Latin in two sections, the physiognomy of Cocles and the chiromancy of Corvus. The chiromancy is in two parts, the first explaining the theory with the second half of the work being a series of woodcuts of hands depicting various lineal markings, with explanatory text. 66 of these diagrams depict the three main lines alone. The parts of the hand are given the traditional names.

- Cureau de la *'L'Art de Connaitre les Hommes'* (Paris 1662)  
 Chambre M (containing *'Discours sur les Principes de la Chiromancie'*)  
 Bodleian Reference: 40 O 24 Art or Vet B 3 f 5  
*'The Art How to Know Men'* (trans J Davies) (London 1665)  
 (Contains the essay: *'Upon the Principles of Chiromancy'*)  
 Bodleian Reference: 80 B 226 Linc  
 A general text on what might now be termed 'constitutional psychology' rather than chiromancy, discussing why it is the hand should reveal the virtues of man. No drawings of hands with multitudes of line formations and their meanings! Also sections on physiognomy, metoposcopy and astrology.
- Dryander *'De Chiromantia Antiochi Tiberti'* (Marguntiae 1538)  
 Bodleian Reference: (RSL) RR Z 62 (2)  
 Work by Dryander containing the chiromancy of Tibertus, with a preface to the chiromancy by Dryander himself.
- Elsholtz JS *'Anthropometria'* (Patavii 1654)  
 Bodleian Reference: D 12.6 (2) Linc  
 Artists workbook on measurements/proportions of human body, the section on arms/hands including a 3 page chiromancy.
- Finella F *'De Planetaria Naturali Phisionomia'* (Naples 1649)  
 Bodleian Reference: Ashmole 454  
 A Latin work on physiognomy with a chapter on the hand at pp175-189 discussing astrological symbolism and the mounts and various line formations.
- Flisco M *'Decas De Fato Annisque Fatalibus'* (Frankfurt 1665)  
 Bodleian Reference: 40 S 61 Th  
 Collection of books bound together in one volume including an astrological text and some theological essays, with a dozen pages on physiognomy and chiromancy.
- Fludd R *'Utriusque Cosmi Historia'* vol II (Oppenheim 1619)  
*'De Scientia animae naturalis cum vitali seu astrologia chiromantica'*  
 Bodleian Reference: P 2.14 Med  
 The divinatory section of this vast tome considers all seven traditional prophetic arts. The chiromancy, in Latin, is at pp 140-178. No extensive discussion of astrology, humours or cabalistic ideas; merely a straightforward & standard exposition on the meanings of the lines of the hands. He seems to have confused some of the lineal nomenclature.
- 'Integrum Morborum Mysterium: Medicinae Catholicae'*  
*'De Signis sive praesagus Chiromanticis'* (Frankfurt 1631)  
 Bodleian Reference: P 2.2 Med  
 Huge volume on medicine & the hermetic sciences, the second book of the second part of the third volume at pp 221-231 being the chiromancy. Considerably shorter and not as

detailed as the earlier work, from which it is derived.

Gedalia R *'Liber Catena Cabbalae'* (Venice 1587)

Bodleian Reference: 40 G 27 Th Seld

Rabbi Gedalia is said to have written a work on chiromancy.  
The only work in his name in the Bodleian; its in Hebrew.

Goclenius R *'Uranoscopia, Chiroscopia, Metoposcopia'* (Lichae 1602)

Bodleian Reference: Ashmole 271 or 80 G 11 Med

Small book in Latin containing a treatise on astrology followed by a treatise on chiromancy. Traditional names used for the lines & mounts. Eight illustrations of hands and line formations, with explanatory text, together with detailed chapters on each of the lines. Lifeline timed as in Taisnier/Belot/Saunders, but Goclenius has muddled it up.

*'Physiognomica et Chiromantia Specialia'* (Marpurgi 1621)

Bodleian Reference: 80 G 89 (1) Art

Volume of several works bound together including two of his chiromancies, Lichae 1602 above and Marpurgi 1621 below. The book opens with the 66 pages of the physiognomy, to be followed by the first of the chiromancies at pp 67-157. Five drawings of hands. This is followed by a copy of:

*'Memorabilia experimenta et observationes*

*Chiromanticae cum specials iudicio'* (Marpurgi 1621)

Bodleian Reference: 80 G 89 (1) Art or Ashmole 939 (2)

Short Latin treatise on chiromancy of 31 pages containing 'new' observations. Concentrates more on the chiromancy of the hand and the significance of the right & left hands. Includes 11 diagrams of hands depicting various formations of the major lines not included in Lichae 1602.

Hill T *'The Contemplation of Mankind'* (London 1571)

Bodleian Reference: Antiq F E 1571.1

Containing 'A Pleasant Discourse of Physiognomy' in 236pp, a later and more extensive edition of the 'Brief Epitome of Physiognomie' of 1556. At pp166-177 is a chapter on hands considering the physiognomy and the lineation of the hand with two hand illustrations showing the locations of lines. However, most of the text deals with the fingers; the following chapter is on the nails. Hill informs us that this work is a summary/translation of Cocles' physiognomy.

Indagine J *'Introductiones Apostelesmaticae'* (Strasbourg 1522)

Bodleian Reference: 80 I 30 (2) Art

Original Latin version of Indagine's work.

Indagine J *'Introductiones Apostelesmaticae'* trans F Withers as:

'The Book of Palmistry and Physiognomie' (London 1651)

Bodleian Reference: Tanner 67 (1) or 80 I (1) 17 Art  
in Manuscript form: Ms Rawl D 1028  
In three sections, the first being the chiromancy followed by a section on natural astrology and the physiognomy of the sun signs. The chiromancy has a strong astrological slant and is in 14 short chapters covering each of the mounts and the main lines of the hand. The nomenclature used aligns with traditional allocations, as do the interpretations of the line features and markings that are given. A short treatise of 108 pages with many illustrations throughout.

Lutz L *'Cheirosophia Concentrata'* (Nuremburg 1679)

Bodleian Reference: Ashmole 660

Small Latin/German text in standard format and using traditional nomenclature. Bulk of the text given over to illustrations of line formations, markings and signs and their various meanings. Follows Taisnier's timing system.

Mascardus A *'Romanae Dissertationes'* (Paris 1639)

Bodleian Reference: A 1.3 (1) Linc

Latin essays/dissertations, ch.VII p76-90 being a chiromancy

Moldenaro C *'Exertationes Physiognomiae Quator Libris: Physiognomiam, Cheiromanteiam, Metoposcopiam, Oneirocriticam'* (Italy 1616)

Bodleian Reference: 80 M 112 Art

Standard Latin work on chiromancy in amongst the other three subjects, at pp 113-209. Discusses the astrological significance of the planets, the lines of the hand in turn and the markings to be found on these.

Paracelsus *'Opera Omnia'* (Geneva 1658)

Bodleian Reference: R 2.34 Med

Brief mentions of chiromancy in amongst a wider discussion of the interreflectivity of all things, physiognomy and the doctrine of signatures. He considered there was a chiromancy of trees, plants, rocks, rivers and hills as well!

Peruchio S de *'La Chiromancie, Physiognomie et Geomance'* (Paris 1663)

Bodleian Reference: (RSL) 16559 d 28

In three sections, the first being the chiromancy at pp1-85. Very much an astrological chiromancy, in the spirit of Belot with chapters on the zodiac in the hand, sacred letters and how to tell the day of birth from the hand. Traditional nomenclature used, traditional 'signs & symbols' approach.

Piccioli A *'De Manus Inspectione'* (Bergomi 1587)

Bodleian Reference: 80 P 46 Art

A small Latin text on chiromancy in three books. 216 pages and 1 illustration. Traditional locations of planets in the hand. Chapters on each of the lines, the mounts & fingers.

Praetorius J *'Cheiroscofia et Metoposcopia'* (Jena 1659)

Bodleian Reference: Douce PP 146

Chiromantic work of Praetorius included in:

*'Ludicrum Chiromanticum'* (Jena 1661)

Bodleian Reference: Douce PP 146

Small, very thick, volume in Latin as a compendium of texts on chiromancy and related subjects. Includes his own work on chiromancy, physiognomy and metoposcopy and others, including the text by Robert Fludd.

*'Philologemata Abstrusa de Pollice'* (Leipzig 1677)

Bodleian Reference: Diss B 197 (1)

Latin text on the significance of the thumb.

Raguseus G *'Epistolarum Mathematicarum seu de Divinatore'* (Paris 1623)

Bodleian Reference: 80 M 38 Th Seld

Latin work in two books, covering astrology, chiromancy, physiognomy, geomancy, numbers, cabala, magic in 643 pages. The chiromancy at pp 237-269 discusses basic principles, natural & accidental lines, planets & mounts, length/brevity of life etc plus comments on the differing views of the allocation of the planets to the parts of the hand. Sees chiromancy as a natural art closely related to physiognomy.

Rothmann J *'Chiromantiae Theorica Practica'* (Erphordiae 1595)

Bodleian Reference: Ashmole 127

Original Latin version of Rothmann's work.

Rothmann J *'Chiromantiae Theorica Practica'* trans G Wharton as:

*'Cheiromantia or the Art of divining by the lines and signatures engraven in the hand of man'* (London 1652)

Bodleian Reference: Ashmole 120 or 80 R 13 Art BS

Extensive treatise considering the relations between hands and astrological birth charts and seeking to demonstrate their coherence & inter-reflection. First section outlines the theory & explains how the lines of the hand manifest the disposition of the planets in the geniture by considering the mounts and associated lines. The second section is an anthology of birth charts and hands, with interpretations set out to show their concordances. A highly original and ingenious approach to chiromancy, but fatally flawed.

Salmon W *'Polygraphice'* (London 1675)

Bodleian Reference: 80 170 M 107 or Vet A 3 e 1514

A book on drawing, sketching and how to become a good artist with two short chapters on chiromancy! One is theoretical whilst the other considers the meanings of lines and mounts. Both sections closely follow the first part of Rothmann's

work, though the text has been re-arranged & edited a little to accommodate an artistic audience. Most peculiar.

Saunders R *'Physiognomie, Chiromancie, Metoposcopia'* (London 1653)

Bodleian Reference: M 4.13 Art

Although this is Saunderson's first work and he is applauded and congratulated by William Lilly for his achievement, this work is not by Saunderson! Virtually the whole text, including the sections on physiognomy, metoposcopy and the Lullian Art of Memory is an entire plagiarisation from Jean Belot. That it is such a close copy is unnoticed by Lilly & unmentioned by Saunderson himself. The only differences in the chiromancy is the addition of 47 diagrams of hands illustrating various line markings, together with 700 aphorisms to interpret them. The 81 previous pages of text are pure Jean Belot.

*'Palmistry, the secrets thereof disclosed'* (London 1664)

Bodleian Reference: Ashmole 654 or Ashmole 656

Actually an original work by Saunderson! A small 'pocket-book' edition, quite different from his first work. The chiromancy covers the first 131 pages and is followed by a treatise on physiognomy and moles and a section on electional astrology. The first 40 pages cover general principles whilst the bulk of the chiromancy is considered under headings of interest to his readers, with interpretations of the various marks of death, riches, poverty, length of life, lust & whoredom and childbirth in a handy and easy-to-use reference format with a hand illustration for each set of indications.

*'The English Fortune Teller'* (London c1680)

Bodleian Reference: Wood 69 (3)

Short treatise of chiromantic aphorisms of superstitious interest included in book obviously compiled for the young lovers and wooing couples of the day. Perhaps not actually written by Saunderson but simply lifted from his texts.

Taisnier J *'Opus Mathematicum Octos Libros'* (Cologne Agrippinae 1583)

Bodleian Reference: M 2.9 Art

Very large Latin volume on chiromancy with some astrology & physiognomy. Eight extensive chapters on chiromancy with hundreds of small drawings of hands with various line formations, each given specific interpretations. Copious in its consideration of detail. Traditional nomenclature used.

Tibertus A *'Libellum de Chyromantia'* (Bononiae 1494)

*'De Chiromantia Libri III'* (Marguntiae 1538)

Bodleian Reference: (RSL) RR Z 62 (2)

Two versions of the same work, also found in the volume printed by Dryander, in three sections totalling 142 pages. Tibertus allocates the planets to the hand quite differently

to the usual chiromantic tradition, giving Venus to the little finger, Mars to the thumb and Mercury to the hollow of the hand! Strong astrological emphasis in interpretation. First part considers planets and special marks (geometric & alphabetical); second part considers the main lines. The significance of the nails are also discussed.

Tricasso J *'Epitoma Chyromantico di Patritio Tricasso'* (Venice 1538)  
Bodleian Reference: 265 K 24  
Italian version of Tricasso's main work.

*'La Chiromance de Patrice Tricasse'* (Paris 1546)  
Bodleian Reference: 80 T 40 Art  
French version of Tricasso's main work, a small text of 95 pages. 49 illustrations given showing various line markings and followed by 'sign & symbol' interpretations. Standard nomenclature used, though with some cabalistic influence as shown by the interest in the meanings of letters to be found in the parts of the hand.

*'Opus Chiromanticum absolutissimum'* (Noribergae 1560)  
Bodleian Reference: 40 S 6 (2) Art  
Latin version of Tricasso's chiromancy.

Wharton G *'The Works of George Wharton'* (London 1683)  
Bodleian Reference: Ashmole 306  
Volume of Wharton's works compiled by John Gadbury including many astrological treatises on mundane and meteorological astrology, together with a chapter of his poetry and his translation of Rothmann's 'Chiromantia Theorica Practica'.

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