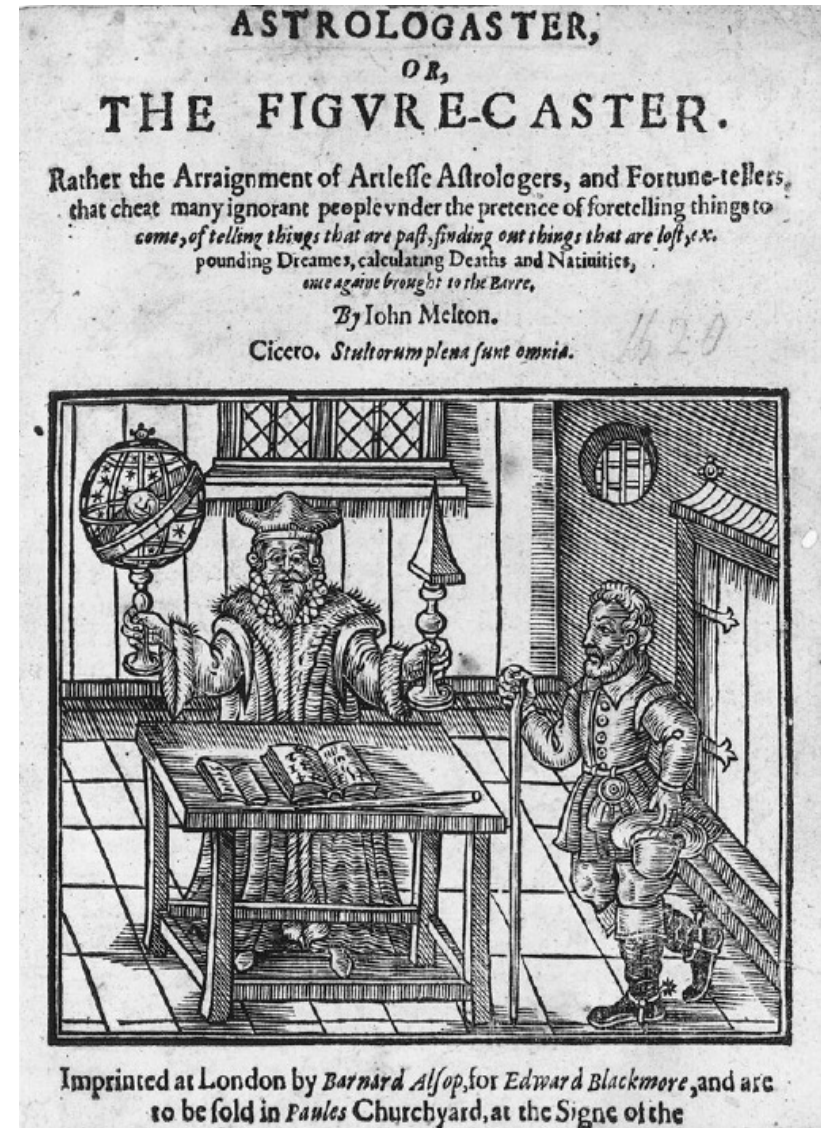


# 11. Med and Magic in Elizabethan London.

1. Forman's Casebooks
2. Importance of Astrology
3. Physician/Patient Dynamic
4. Gender & Authority

## III. The Casebooks

"Before a Square Table, covered with a greene Carpet, on which lay a huge Booke in *Folio*, wide open full of strange Characters, such as the *Aegyptians* and *Chaldaens* were never guiltie of; not farre from that, a silver Wand, a Surplus, a Watering Pot, with all the superstitious or rather fayned Instruments of his cousening Art. And to put a fairer colour on his black and foule Science, on his head hee had a four-cornered Cap, on his backe a faire Gown (but made of a strange fashion) in his right hand he held an Astroblae, in his left a Mathematicall Glasse." (Melton 1620)



# 11. Med and Magic in Elizabethan London.

1. Forman's Casebooks
2. Importance of Astrology
3. Physician/Patient Dynamic
4. Gender & Authority

## III. The Casebooks

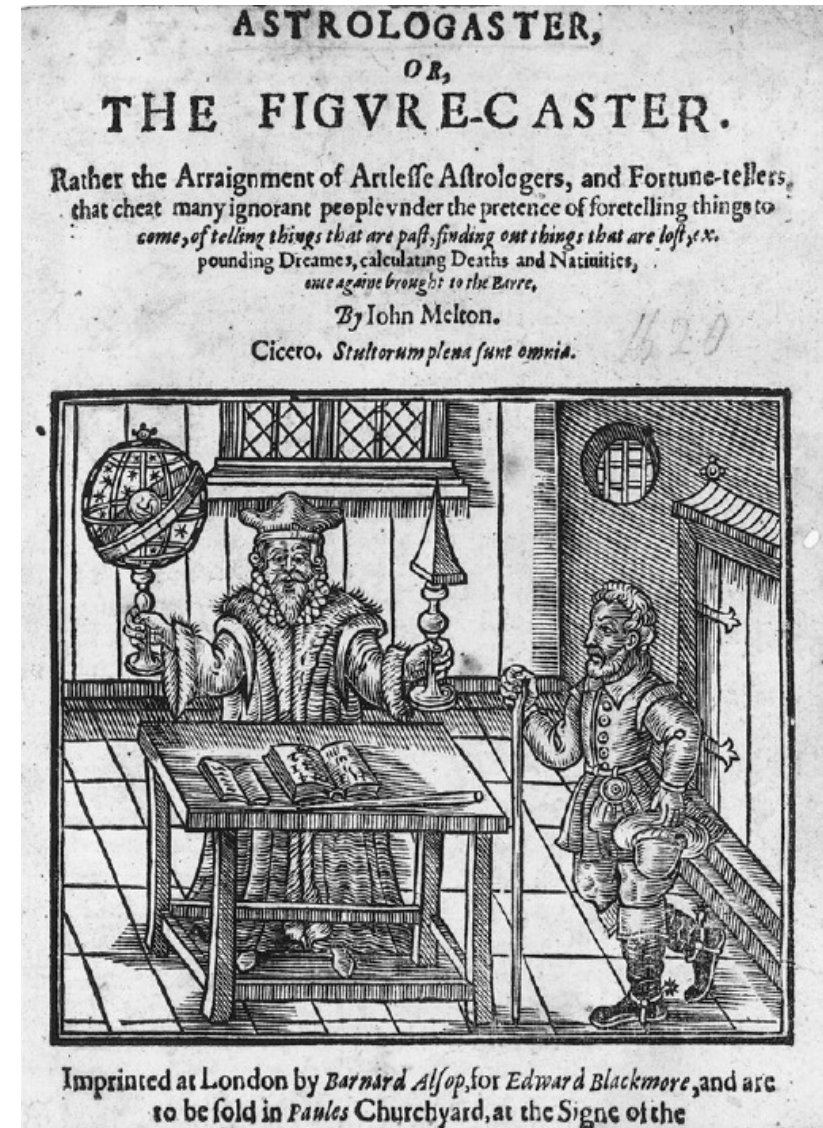
Motivations for belief in astrology in early modern England.

### (i) Psychological:

- *The need for information and advice which no other agency could provide.*

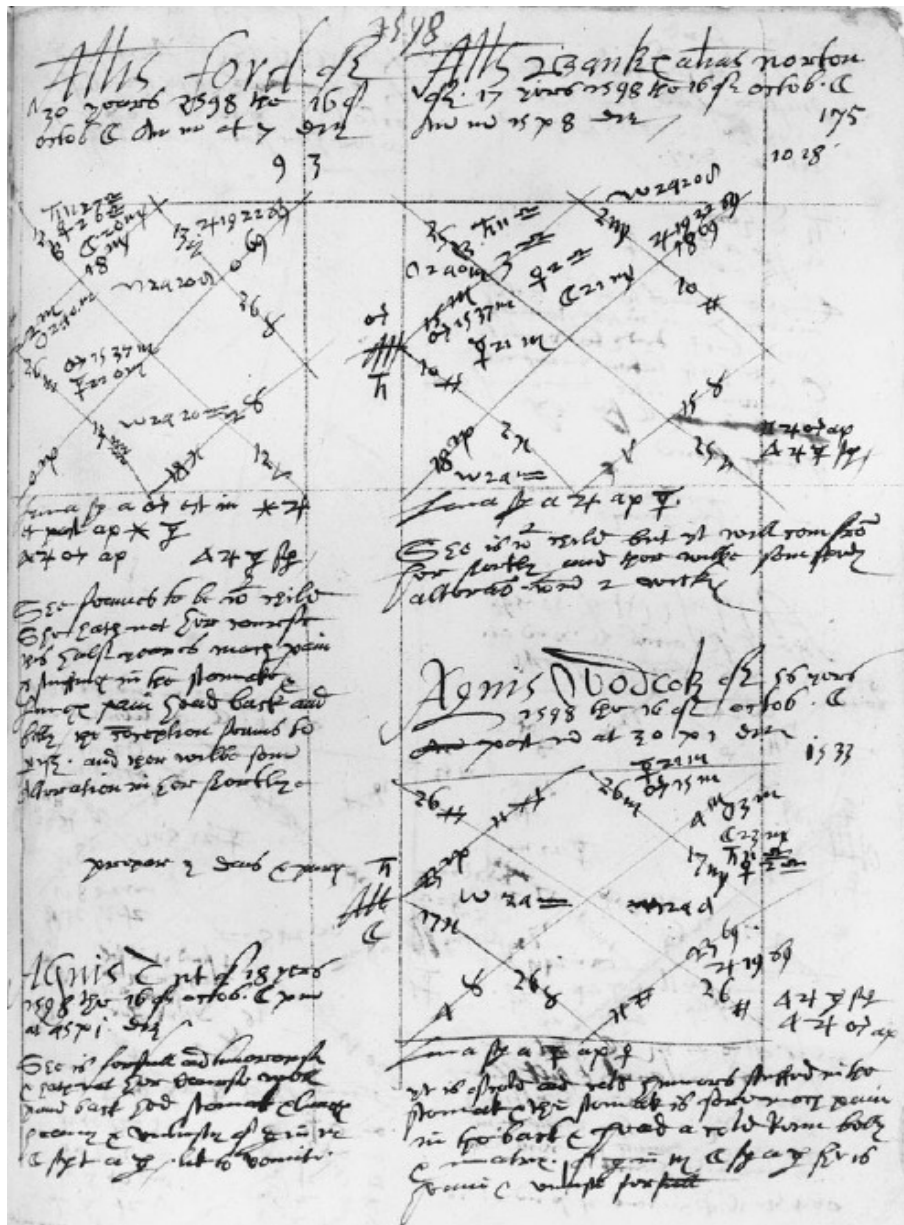
### (ii) Social and therapeutic:

- *The astrological figure as an opportunity for interaction and negotiation between practitioner and patient.*
- *Astrological physic as providing a holistic framework within which disease could be rationalized and treated.*



# 1. Forman's casebooks (March 17, 1596–Nov. 29, 1601)

- Average of 1,200 consultations/year.
- March 1596–Feb 1598:
  - 92% *medical questions*.
  - 60% *women*.
- Three questions to begin each consultation:
  - *Patient's name*.
  - *Patient's age*.
  - *Whether or not inquiring person was sent at patient's request*.
- Figure is drawn, books are consulted.
- Verdict is delivered.



October 16, 1598

# Construction of a "figure"

- Square divided into 12 sections ("houses").
- Zodiac signs, planets, moon and sun mapped onto houses.
- Positions with respect to houses determine diagnosis and treatment.

- 1st house = patient; house of life.
- 2nd house = patient/physician relationship.
- 3rd house = patient proxy.
- 4th house = medicines.
- 5th house = four virtues.
- 6th house = infirmity.
- 7th house = patient.
- 8th house = life and death.
- 9th house = physician.
- 10th house = God (indicates if disease is supernatural).
- 11th house = nature of medicine.
- 12th house = nature of disease (natural/unnatural).

### Zodiac

- ♈ Aries
- ♉ Taurus
- ♊ Gemini
- ♋ Cancer
- ♌ Leo
- ♍ Virgo
- ♎ Libra
- ♏ Scorpio
- ♐ Sagittarius
- ♑ Capricorn
- ♒ Aquarius
- ♓ Pisces

### Planets

- ♃ Jupiter
- ♂ Mars
- ☉ Sun
- ♀ Venus
- ☿ Mercury
- ☾ Moon
- ♄ Saturn



To knowe in what place of the body every planet doth cause distemperatures or diseases & what pt they rule

	♈	♉	♊	♋	♌	♍	♎
♈	hart bark	head face	thighs	feete	leggs	knees	stomach
♉	belli mawe	neck throte	knes	hande face	fete	lege	hart bark
♊	veins Armys	Armys shouldes	Legs	neck throte	head face	fete	belly mawe
♋	pryncipale parte	stomach	fete	arms shouldes	neck throte	head face	veins kidneis
♌	thighs	hart e bark	head face	stomach	Armys shouldes	necke throte	veins e pryncipale parte
♍	knees	belly e mawe	necke throte	hart e bark	stomach	Armys shouldes	thighs
♎	Legs	veins e kidneis	Armys shouldes	belly e mawe	hart e bark	stomach	knes
♏	feete	pryncipale e bones	stomach	veins e kidneis	belly e mawe	hart e bark	Legs
♐	head e face	thighs	hart e bark	pryncipale e bones	veins e kidneis	belly e mawe	feete
♑	necke throte	knes	belly e mawe	thighs	pryncipale e bones	veins e kidneis	head e face
♒	Armys shouldes	Legs	veins e kidneis	knees	thighs	pryncipale e bones	necke throte
♓	stomach	feete	pryncipale e bones	lege	knes	thighs	shouldes e Armys

Writtable haue I set downe by experience 1602. forman. numbr 8

## 2. Importance of Astrology

- Used to establish authority and *negotiate* a diagnosis and therapy.
  - *Necessary in dealing with women's diseases because women were perceived as deceitful.*
- Minimizes contacts that could lessen a physician's prestige:
  - *Association of talk with women.*
  - *Physical operations with the manual craft of surgeon.*
- Can produce an accurate diagnosis in absence of either patient or her urine.



"Not for that the disease or life death can be perfectly discerned by a urine, but by bringinge the urine yt is a token from the sicke to knowe his diseases by makinge ye question for the sicke."

"...ther is no true way to knowe a mans disease by his water, pulse, sedge or talk, but by arte Astronomicalle."



### 3. Physician/Patient Dynamic

- Authority.
  - *Treatment cannot proceed until patient respects and trusts authority of physician.*
- Why some patients refused physic:
  - *they were too busy.*
  - *it did not agree with their nature.*
  - *physic was abused by physicians (over-prescribed).*

*Remedies as defining professional boundaries:*

"Officially, surgeons ministered to the surface of the body, set broken bones, and might specialize in procedures to mend hernias or remove stones; physicians advised on a regimen to preserve health and prescribed therapies to maintain and restore the balance of humours, whether through diet, blood-letting, or prescribed purgatives, emetics, or cordials; apocatheries filled the prescriptions written by the physicians, while barbers-surgeons performed the requisite phlebotomy." (Kassell, pg. 152.)

Example 1: Brigit Allen. 5 consultations in May 1596.

- At issue: authority of physician (Allen is difficult).
- First consult: Forman concludes Allen suffering from false conception.
- 5th consult: Will she "mend or peir"?



The stars "showeth she will run into ill her self for she will not be ruled to doe as she is bid but will forsake thee shortly and goe and seke to sm other body or fellowe som others councell, & she will urge thee moch & stand in her owne light, & wil be ruled but for a season".

- Takes her to dinner, becomes friendly.
- Treatable because disease is *natural*.

"...her diz is by constellation of the heavans & naturall & hath bin long on her..."



Example 2: Margaret Altam. 7 consultations, Sept 1596 to April 1597.

- Contrast with Allen: severity of condition and distant patient.
- First consult:

"she is full of melancholy and the vains of her body be stoped".



- Cause: Change in the state of her body during the birth of her last child.
- Subsequent consults:



"This woman hath bin long sick & weke and she hath taken phisick that hath done her moch harm & mad her worse then she was as she saith herself... [her disease is] hard or not at all to be cured, but will bring deth in thend".

- Kassell (pg. 147): "Forman assessed the gravity of Altam's case, and when he judged an imminent decline, he did little or nothing to amend her condition."



## 4. Gender, Authority, and Astrology

- Distrust of women:
  - *Stress on astrological diagnosis for female patients.*
  - *College of Physicians: One sign of quackery = large female following.*
- Diseases of women framed in terms of sexual activity and moral accountability:
  - *For female patients, physician should inquire about marital status...*



"for then yf she be within yeares, she maie be with childe oftentimes, or she may have impedments in her matrix by child bearinge the which maids have not."

- *...but the stars are always more reliable:*

"And for because I have seene so much falls hoode in them, I have written this chapter for thy farder ayde & assistance in this behalfe. That when thou lookest in the chapter of the 5 house to see whether they be with child, thou maisest first looke to this whether she ever lay with any man or no or deserved for it."



## Historical context: Hysteria

- Alleged disorder unique to women (up until 1952!).
- Symptoms: anxiety, shortness of breath, fainting, displays of emotion, etc.
- Greek origins:  
"hysteria" = "proceeding from the womb"

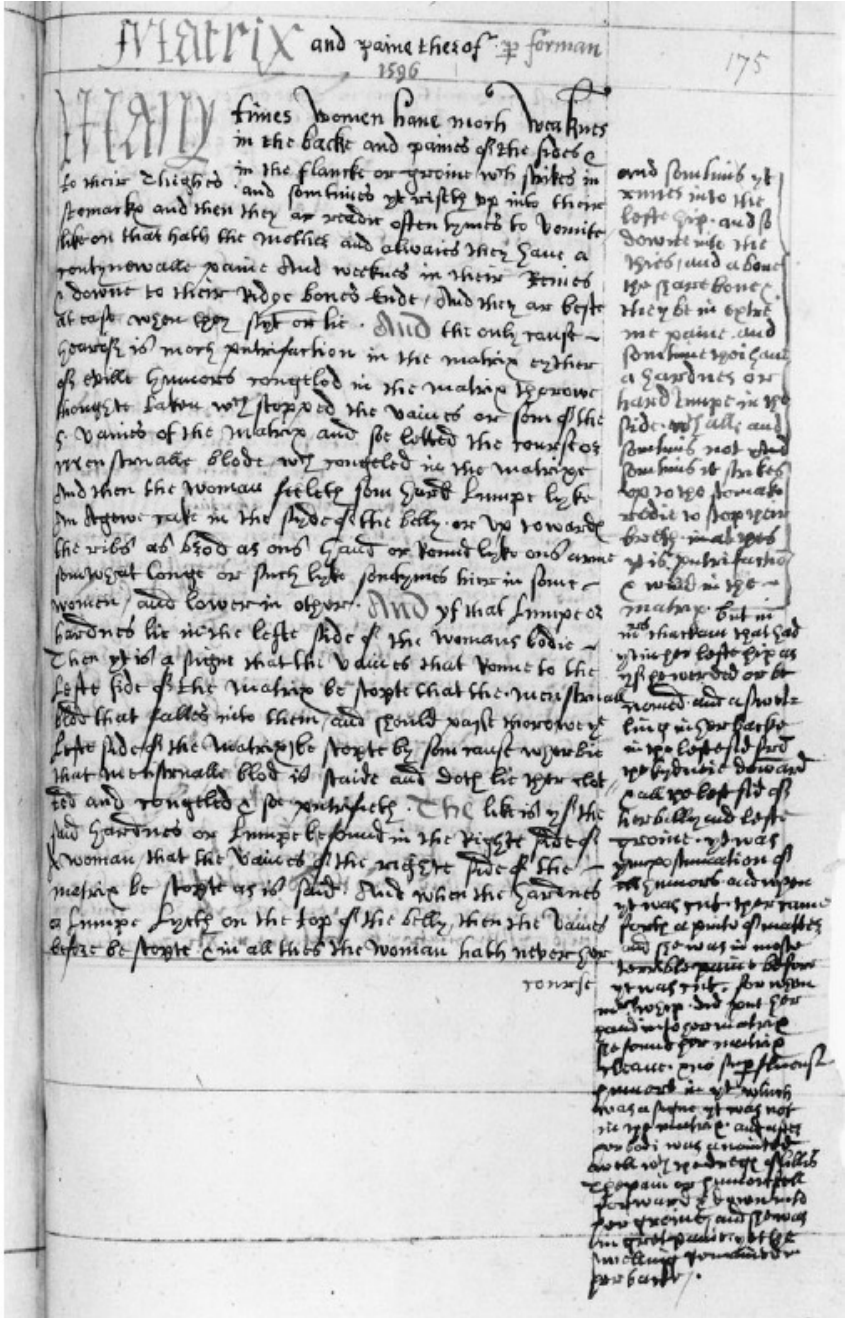
"In women...what is called the matrix or womb, a living creature within them with a desire for child-bearing, if it be left long unfruitful beyond the due season, is vexed and aggrieved, and wandering throughout the body and blocking the channels of the breath, by forbidding respiration brings the sufferer to extreme distress and causes all manner of disorders..." (*Timaeus* 91c)

- Pejorative connotations: femininity, irrationality.

"...there is no analogous word 'testercial' to describe, for example, male sports fans' behavior during the Super Bowl..." (Maines 1999, pg. 21.\*)

Forman's (1596) "Matrix and paine therof"

- Essay on diseases of women.
  - Women afflicted with more than 70 gender-specific diseases (due to Eve "harkening" the serpent).
- Empirical aspect: consults advice and observations of midwives.
- Women's diseases caused by evil humours in womb ("matrix").
  - sexual activity too soon after child-birth
  - false conception
  - midwife leaving womb open too long after child-birth
- Physician's task: evacuate womb.
  - For best effect, "joine arte and nature together": prescribe physic to purge womb at times that correspond to natural evacuations.



## Case of adulterous gentlewoman: negotiating a therapeutic relationship

- Figure shows "the course of heaven yielded no disease, but some paine of her head and eyes".
- Conclusion: Disease is in her head.
- But: Patient resists diagnosis.
- Proposal: Patient had been "familiar" with a man not her husband who had threatened to inform husband, and:



"for feare hereof thou art much perplexed in thy mind, which made thee come to me for good counsell to prevent the misc heefe and harme that may and is ike to inssue hereof".

- Resolution:

"So I adviseth her so wisly that wee stopt the gentlemans mouth, and made them frinds againe, but in such sorte that thay should never come together againe as thay had done before, and so saved her creadit and cureth her disease".

