Attending to Women -- Milwaukee 2015: It's About Time

Workshop: Marking Lives: Women Readers and Print Almanacs

Summary: Early modern printed almanacs were often bound with blank sheets for memoranda, but relatively few examples survive with marks written by women. This session contextualizes known examples of woman-owned and woman-authored English almanacs amidst other forms of early modern life-writing. We'll raise larger questions about time-keeping texts and how early modern women may have used them to record impressions of their lives, their bodies, and their families by examining these objects from the perspectives of a literary scholar and a rare-book librarian.

Organizers: Lori Newcomb, English, University of Illinois
Sarah Lindenbaum, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Illinois

Contact: lnewcomb@illinois.edu
Lori Humphrey Newcomb
1717 Mayfair Rd
Champaign IL 61821
Cell 217 390-3926

English Department, University of Illinois
608 So. Wright St.
Urbana IL 61801

Full description: The most commonly owned and inscribed type of printed book in early modern England, after the Bible, was the printed almanac, often bound with blank leaves for notes. However, few almanacs with women’s marginalia have survived, even allowing that almanacs are ephemeral objects and that women’s opportunities for writing were constrained. This session contextualizes known examples of woman-owned and woman-authored English almanacs in order to raise larger questions about time-keeping texts and their uses to record impressions of women’s lives, bodies, activities, and relationships. How does writing in almanacs participate in the emergence of life-writing?

In England, the 1650s, a few almanacs represented themselves as authored by women, although only the authorship of Sarah Jinner is generally accepted. What were the features of these woman-authored almanacs, as distinct from normatively male and occupation-specific almanacs? What do these differences suggest about how women were expected to use (or not use) almanacs?

Even when almanacs annotated by women survive,* the casual intimacy of their use presents real challenges for interpreters. Were almanacs individual or family property? Can notes in almanacs be considered life-writing? What motivations led to preserving almanacs? To what extent did the inscription styles of almanac authors invite women’s use? How did the graphic features of almanacs invite women to read or write in their pages? How did readers use added sheets to expand their spaces for writing?
To widen the scope of analysis, we will compare almanac use to the keeping of diaries which in this period was emerging as a preoccupation of women, especially of northern European women. How does women’s writing in almanacs differ from diaries or other records of life-writing (such as women’s words as reported in funeral sermons)?

These examples should raise broader questions about reconstructing and interpreting lives in retrospect. When a printed object is designed to structure timekeeping, what habits of mind and self-reflection are encouraged? How might that structure be transformed by an individual?

Comparative focus: The presenters are a librarian specializing in rare books but creative writer by temperament, and an English literature scholar specializing in the history of readership; they are collaboratively researching books owned by one seventeenth-century Englishwomen. In almanacs, marginalia and other marks of ownership are fitted in the blank space surrounding the printed calendar, prognostications, and (usually male) zodiacal body. The workshop will help participants interpret these fragmentary annotations left in early modern almanacs by drawing on the evidentiary assumptions and working vocabularies of both library science and literary criticism.

1. To bring in intercultural comparison, participants will be invited to submit examples of personal timekeeping genres from other early modern cultures for our discussion.

2. Preparation: Participants will read the first chapter of Adam Smyth’s book on early English life-writing, which embeds representative pages from seventeenth-century English almanacs with annotations by women and men. Optional suggested readings are listed below.

A few weeks before the conference, participants will be asked to submit two one-page images of timekeeping artifacts. One should be an early modern object or text that keeps or reflects on time; the other may be from a later timekeeping artifact: an ancestor’s scrapbook or daybook, a commercial calendar from 2015, or a sample page from an idiosyncratic timekeeping device, manuscript, print, or digital. (Non-English examples are especially welcome. Participants should provide transcriptions or translations so the objects can be shared.)

3. Session: 20-minute lead-in by the organizers: each of the organizers brings a sample page from an early modern woman-owned almanac, along with a single-page handout (critical quotations, tools, vocabulary) enabling further analysis.

Sarah Lindenbaum will discuss the form of almanacs, their rarity, and the forms in which they now are preserved and shared. She will discuss the process of cataloguing printed objects with manuscript notes, focusing less on bibliographic identification than on description of the marginalia. How may scholars locate almanacs in library databases? How are manuscript notes dated and described?
Lori Newcomb will then discuss the almanac as a form subject to imitation and parody, noting features of the major almanac series, including those published under women’s names. She will highlight some recent historical claims for the meanings of literacy, writing, astrology, and timekeeping in almanacs and in diaries and other women’s life-writing. How are these claims supported or complicated when considering how a particular reader uses a given almanac writer’s mise-en-page?

4. For the next 40 minutes, participants will work in pairs or small groups on a commonplace book exercise. The organizers will prepare commonplace “books” (packets or perhaps envelopes) for each group, assembling several artifacts from their research and from participants’ submissions. In our small groups we will consider the interpretive challenge posed by each object in the packet. How might a librarian classify and describe the object? How might a literary scholar deduce gendered practices from the composition of the printed object and the manuscript traces of its use? How do more modern examples invite us to think creatively the use of early books?

5. Final discussion, up to 30 minutes: participants will share the findings of the small group work and chart questions for the future. How else should we look at timekeeping texts? What other genres might we consider as timekeeping texts?

Optional readings:


Commonplace books may include:

✓ Single-page excerpts from almanac pages annotated by Twysden, Standish, Sale, etc.*

✓ Excerpts from the diaries of Lady Margaret Hoby (ed. Meads), Isabella Twysden, ed. Bennitt (1939), or Anne Clifford (ed. Acheson),

✓ Life-writings, calendars, prayer books, etc. from various cultures, as suggested by workshop participants.

✓ Representative pages from the following almanacs: John Partridge; Sarah Jinner, An Almanac and Prognostication (1658–60); “Sarah Ginnor,” A Woman’s Almanac (1659); William Winstanley, Poor Robin’s Almanac (1670s), 2 to 4 pp. each. Also available in facsimile on EEBO, or in open-access transcription on EEBO-TCP.

✓ Brief, thought-provoking quotations about early life-writing from scholarship, e.g.: Adam Smyth, “Diaries,” in Oxford Handbook of English Prose, 1500–1640,

*Three women’s annotated seventeenth-century English almanacs are available through the Perdita Project for women’s manuscript writing (see chart below). The organizers will also present excerpts from a fourth example, which we recently identified in a UK collection (we have ordered digital reproductions for non-publication use).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diary in almanac</th>
<th>Isabella Twysden</th>
<th>1651</th>
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<td>Diary in almanac</td>
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<td>Astrological and horticultural notes</td>
<td>Cecilia Bindloss Standish</td>
<td>mid 17th century c. 1625–1675</td>
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<td>Notebook, 1679–90, of Sarah Sale</td>
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Cover sheet for participants’ advance reading for

**Marking Lives: Women Readers and Print Almanacs**

Sarah Lindenbaum and Lori Newcomb, organizers

**Attending to Women: It’s About Time. Milwaukee, June 2015.**


Questions to consider as you read:

1. What do the common features of printed almanacs suggest about the structuring of early modern women’s time? How might this differ from, say, books of hours?

2. What do almanacs’ organization and graphic features tell us about how authors expected them to be used? In what ways do women's writings in almanacs conform to or subvert those expectations?

3. How do almanacs draw on both Christian and astrological models of time? How much does the almanac user accept the almanac’s temporal structure(s)? How much does she bring in other structures, from institutions (the church) to personal and family histories?

4. What is the value of considering almanac annotation as life-writing? How do almanacs challenge us to rethink our assumptions about what constitutes life-writing?

5. How might marking time in an almanac inform a woman’s quotidian experience or sense of self?
problematic assumptions, and to illuminate the instability of forms of early modern written lives. The difference and variability of early modern life-writing thus comes more clearly into focus. This variability has often been seen as a problem for criticism: one account of autobiography opens with a wish to ‘frame a definition which excludes the bulk of random or incidental self-revelation scattered through seventeenth-century literature’; another focuses on narrative autobiography, precisely defined, ‘to clear the air by imposing limits on autobiographical emissions’. But a sense of generic unfixity and experimentation was a central trait of early modern life-writing, and any account must acknowledge and tackle this sense of shifting, evolving, various forms. It is not a problem that needs cordonning off, or a pollution clouding the skies, but a defining characteristic of early modern autobiography.

I shall start with the form that arrived at my desk most frequently as I ordered up materials in local archives: the annotated almanac.


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CHAPTER I

Almanacs and annotators

selections.

The World’s a Book in Folio, printed all
With God’s Great Works, in letters Capital:
Each Creature is a Page, and each Effect
A fair Character, void of all defect.

*William Winstanley, Poor Robin* (1694), title page

When Richard Brome set out to mock John Suckling’s folio edition of his play *Aglaura*, he depicted readers filling the wide margins with handwritten notes,

As Swains in Almanacks their counts doe keep
When their cow calv’d and when they brought their sheep.1

The figure of the ‘swain’ adding annotations to his almanac was, for Brome, an effectively bathetic means to ridicule Suckling’s grand textual ambitions. But the annotated printed almanac was more than a stock comic device (although it was this too): it was also an extremely widespread textual form, produced by annotators right across literate English society – men and women, urban and rural, elite and non-elite, from John Dee and John Evelyn to farmers counting their herd. Indeed, the occasional spelling of ‘Allmanacks’ puns, perhaps unconsciously, on this inclusivity. That the annotated almanac has been largely ignored by criticism is in part due to familiar issues of access: many annotated almanacs reside not in national libraries but in English local archive offices, in sometimes lightly catalogued collections.2 Indeed, until recently, major libraries preferred to acquire ‘clean’ copies of texts, rather than copies decorated with readers’ notes. This chapter, built on research in those archives as well as on work in

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Almanacs and annotators

Almanacs in England flourished from the middle of the sixteenth century to about 1700. Their peak years were 1640 to 1700, but across the course of the entire seventeenth century they were the most popular printed books in England: they sold in numbers so large they scarcely seem credible. In 1666, 43,000 copies of Vincent Wing's almanac alone were printed; among other leading sellers print runs for Poor Robin, and texts by compilers Rider, Saunders, Gallen, and Andrews were 20,000, 18,000, 15,000, 12,000, and 10,000, respectively. Many thousands of copies of other almanacs appeared in the same year. The market was crowded, frantic, and profitable: in 1596, Thomas Nashe said selling almanacs was 'readier money than ale and cakes'. Indeed, almanacs perhaps at times acquired a kind of cultural invisibility in the seventeenth century owing to their sheer ever-presentness; the ways readers responded to these texts were surely often similarly naturalised.

The figure of the almanac compiler was roundly ridiculed in jest books, character collections, and drama: 'an annual Author', who 'imps his illiterate

9 Almanacs were hugely popular in eighteenth-century America: the first American printed almanac was Samuel Atkins, Kalendarium Pennsylvanicum, or, America's Messenger: Being an Almanack for the year of Christ, 1686... all of which is accommodated to the Longitude of the Province of Pennsylvania, and Latitude of 40 Degr. north, with a Table of Houses for the same, which may indifferently serve New-England, New York, East & West Jersey, Maryland, and most parts of Virginia (Philadelphia, 1689). For American almanacs, see Robb Sagendorph, America and her Almanacs: Wit, Wddsom and Weather, 1639-1796 (Yankee Inc., Boston, Mass., 1970). In 1800, the Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia, presented 'Benjamin Franklin's Poor Richard's Anomy of an Almanac', an exhibition featuring Franklin's eighteenth-century almanacs, many of which had been extensively annotated by Isaac Norris. The Rosenbach holds a number of American almanacs with significant annotations: in addition to Franklin's series, see, in particular, Titian Leids, The American Almanack For the Year of Christian Account, 1728 (Philadelphia, 1729), 1727; Titian Leids, The American Almanack For the Year of Christian Account, 1729 (Philadelphia, 1728), 1728; and Der Teutsche Pilgrim: Mitbringenende Eines Siessen-Calendar (Philadelphia, 1731), 1731, with German annotations.


11 Cyprian Blagden, 'The Distribution of Almanacs in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century', in Studies in Bibliography: papers of the bibliographical society of the university of Virginia 11 (1910), 107-16, Table I.

12 Thomas Nashe, Have With You To Saffron Walden (1596). Quoted in Capp, Almanacs, p. 44.
Autobiography in Early Modern England

Thomason Stephens, Gent...by their names appearing among the licenses. The confluence of these vast production and low survival rates means that almanacs, while intensely, perhaps even prosaically familiar to early modern individuals, remain far less familiar to scholars of the period.

Readers frequently inscribed almanacs with handwritten notes, and this kind of interaction between manuscript and print might plausibly be considered the most common form of self-accounting in early modern England, played out around the edges of countless almanacs. In this literal sense, life-writing began as a marginal activity. Almanacs encouraged reader annotations, explicitly in title pages and prefatory instructions, and implicitly through the inclusion of empty pages for readers to occupy. Almanacs with these inserted vacant pages were known as 'blanks'; regular almanacs were called 'sorts'. Readers might also pay binders to insert blank pages. Blanks were generally interleaved between the printed pages of the calendar – Thomas Bretmorn announced his almanac had 'turned Blanke' in this way, with inserts facing each printed month. Blanks might also be collected at either end of the book. Less commonly, the pages of an almanac calendar might be cut out and pasted into a manuscript book, or the calendar might be bound into the centre of a larger manuscript. The earliest extant example of a blank known to me is Thomas Purfoot's A Blanke and Perpetuall Almanacke (1566), a text, the title page proclaims, which will serve 'as a memoriall... for any... that will make & keepe notes of any actes, deedes, or thinges that passeth from time to time (Worthy of memory, to be registred'). Five years later, Thomas Hill published An Almanack... in forme of a booke of memorie necessary for all such, as haue occasion daylye to note sundry affaires, eyther for recytes, payments, or...
such lyke.\(^2\) Certainly, by the seventeenth century annotations were widely and systematically added: about one in seven almanacs I have examined contains some form of sustained handwritten additions.

And it is worth pausing to re-emphasise this terminology: the word 'blank' in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries denoted not just unfilled space, as we understand it, but also a specific textual form (the interleaved almanac) – and, moreover, the bestselling textual form of the period. Once one realises this, certain familiar dramatic lines acquire new potentials. 'My father had a daughter loved a man', says a disguised Viola to Orsino, in Twelfth Night, hinting at her love for him. 'And what's her history?', asks Orsino. 'A blank, my lord. She never told her love.'\(^4\) Twelfth Night is a play that is hyper-alert to bibliographical metaphors for identity, and Viola's 'blank' suggests not just absence, but, more specifically – by invoking the almanac – an absence that anticipates annotation: a history that might soon be told. Given the extraordinary popularity of almanacs, this connotation would have been available, indeed perhaps irresistible, to playwrights and dramatists in 1602.

In fact, it is possible to recontextualise other literary texts in the light of this recovered practice. Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar appeared in 1579, just as almanac annotating was emerging as a widespread form; Spenser's text, constructed as a calendar, features a sea of annotations by EK. And Shakespeare's Sonnet 77 – 'Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear' – describes a narrator bequeathing three gifts that track passing time: a mirror, a sundial, and 'a book of vacant leaves'. When the narrator urges the recipient to annotate those vacant leaves – 'Look what thy memory cannot contain / Commit to these waste blanks' – one form that springs to mind, but has not been noted by previous editors, is the annotated almanac.

Although diverse in form and matter, annotations return to seven topics with particular frequency: family births and deaths ('13 [April] my Wife was delivered of Will; within a quarter after 8 in ye Evening'); health and the body ('9 [July]. My Wifes decay'd tooth, supposed to be ye Occasion of ye Sore on ye left side of her Tongue, drop't out'); the weather ('a stormy day, and ye wind being full against us, in so much yr ye ury watermen began to be afraid'); travel ('[16 January] Went from Milgate to Rochester'); financial accounting ('[21 July] . . . Paid Rumsey for making me a Coat and Britches of Broad Cloth & a linnen wescot – . . . – 0 – 12 – 0 gave him sixpence over & above'); legal or employment contracts ('[16 January] My Man came to my service'); and husbandry ('2 Cheeses from Hereford weid the one 15 pound the other 18 pounds'). These topics constitute the central concerns of what might be called a discourse of almanac annotations, and represent a rich form of autobiographical writing.

That this practice has barely been registered in recent critical work on autobiography has much to do with the low cultural status of these texts – now, and then. 'Thou listest worst than hee that made the last Almanacke', declares one 'scoiling' woman in a 1657 jest.\(^3\) In early modern England the almanac reader and annotator was a resonant (if ridiculous) figure: he or she was, in fact, ceaselessly ridiculed as provincial, uneducated, and hopelessly aspirational. And mock almanacs – that is, printed texts that parodied the almanac form – took particular delight in lampooning gullible annotating readers. Poor Robin includes mock reader notes printed in the margins: 'Lost my best Shirt off the hedge'; 'Nell laught at the story of the Fryer & Boy till she pitt'; 'Rainy weather, and yet the Almanack said it would be fair'.\(^3\)

\(^{27}\) Thomas Gallen, A New Almanack for the Said Year (1651), BL C.194.A.139.

\(^{28}\) Calendarium Carolinum: or, a New Almanack After the Old Fashion (1661), Folger v.4.474, annotated by Thomas Colepepper, baron, 1635. 89, governor of the Isle of Wight from 1661 to 1667.

\(^{29}\) Thomas Gallen, A New Almanack for the Said Year (1673), BL C.194.A.45. This accounting might not only be financial: while at Cambridge, seventeen-year-old John Sawyer meticulously listed his hours of prayer and religious study in the blank spaces opposite the printed calendar his copy of Thomas Gallen's A New Almanack (1662), BL C.194.A.339.

\(^{30}\) Calendarium Carolinum (1665), Folger v.4.474.

\(^{31}\) Rider Britishe Merth (1719), Herefordshire Record Office 137/171, unpaginated. 'Thomas Howarth' is inscribed on the text.


\(^{33}\) Poor Robin 1675, An Almanack After a New Fashion (1673), sig. a2r. Noted by Capp, Almanacs, p. 62. For further mockery of almanac readers, see Thomas Middleton, No Wit, No Help Like a Woman (1611) and Thomas Middleton and William Bowley, A Fair Quarrel (1617). It was not only readers of almanacs who were mocked: almanacs themselves were also subject to sustained ridicule. For a sample of typical abuse, see Matthew Stevenson, Norfolk Drollery (1673), pp. 30–1, 'Observations upon Lillie's Almanack' (An Almanack's a store-house, where old wives. I May furnish be with Fables all their Lives'); and Sporting Wit (anon., 1666), pp. 39–6, 'The Mercury' (I'll that wret this, ne'er writ before).
Weather-Glass records mock-reader annotations such as ‘My son John born’, ‘The black cat caught a mouse in the barn’, and ‘The red cow took bull’. In fact, if these mock notes possess a comic bathos, genuine handwritten annotations — ‘June 12 the black cow tooke the Bull’ — frequently match them: there is a curious alignment of parody and original, a sense, even, of satire lagging behind its object.

**JOHN WYNDHAM: ‘& THENCE TO UPHAUN’**

A close examination of three particular annotated almanacs can help to illuminate this practice and suggest how annotated almanacs might contribute to ideas of early modern autobiographical writing and subjectivity. The first is a 1687 manuscript, now in the Somerset Record Office, attributed to a John Wyndham from Taunton. Wyndham’s manuscript is a long, narrow volume: a material form associated with financial accounting. But while there are some notes of money spent, the text in fact presents a farrago of inclusions that defy modern conceptions of genre: there are rough sketches of mechanical devices; notes for measuring volumes of wine and ale; a recipe ‘To stew carps’; memoranda (‘Speake to my Broth’ Wallcott’); a series of prose vignettes titled ‘Suspicious persons’; and summaries of local news (‘John Goodwyn told me that / A Heriott Cow is in his hands / unsold which belongs to me’). But the most striking feature of the manuscript is Wyndham’s habit of pasting in printed calendars, cut from almanacs.

Figure 1 shows a page from this manuscript, on which Wyndham has glued May’s calendar. The printed page is typical of most almanac calendars: headed with the number of days in the month and the day and time of the moon’s positions, and featuring six columns that record the numerical day of the month, letters indicating the day of the week, with Sunday marked in a bold ‘B’, and a list of what almanacs call ‘Remarkable days’ — church festivals (Whit Sunday on the fifteenth), saint’s days (Ambrose, on the fourth), and anniversaries (the return of King Charles II, on the twenty-ninth). The remaining columns record the ascendant sign, the latitude of the moon, and the weather, variously described as ‘Fine clear serene’, ‘Cold now with rain’, and ‘Seasonable . . . & windy with black clouds and thunder’.

Wyndham’s notes, scrawled in a difficult hand, work through cross-referencing symbols that trace a path to the printed page:

goe to the Horse race at Amesbury†6 & thence to Uphauen be with my tenants at the scene be at Chilmarke betwenee 10 & 11 to meet farm’ Biffin & be or leaque word at the parsons house

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34 Rider, Merlinus, Cambro-Briannus (1644), Folger F12249.5.
35 Somerset Record Office no/uv/185. The annotator was related to the Wyndham family established in Somerset and Norfolk: see H. A. Wyndham, A Family History 1410-1688: The Wyndhams of Norfolk and Somerset (Oxford University Press, London and New York, 1939).
36 Amesbury, Wilton, Uphauen (or Upavon), and Chilmakere are towns and villages in Wiltshire.
Wydham's annotations record events to come. The notes record particular moments: they do not provide a continuous narrative, but specific, staccato instances. The notes place Wydham in Amesbury and Uphaven, in the towns and villages around Taunton – but beyond this geographical unity there is no attempt to explain the connection between events; there is no first-person 'I' to unify notes, and the records remain commands from the writing Wydham to a future reading Wydham. The horse race, the meeting with tenants, and the appointment with the stonemason remain disconnected.

In some ways the almanac might appear a surprising text in which to inscribe notes about a life. Almanacs were, after all, powerfully associated with transience – they were texts, as the poet and antiquary John Weever wrote, 'serving especially for the yeare for which they are made', that would dissipate once their time had passed. So it seems paradoxical to find readers using them as 'booke[s] of memorie'; as spaces in which otherwise ephemeral notes, 'Worthy of memory', might endure. Furthermore, the kinds of notes annotators supply are not a sense of textual agency and, to some degree, self-determinacy. And yet these notes are being added to almanacs which lay out prognostications for the year to come: prognostications which would seem to suggest a reader passive before determining astrological forces. In his 1688 *Epemeris*, John Gadbury tried to resolve precisely this tension between free will and astrological determinism by arguing that 'I deliver my Predictions, not as Oracle, but as Conjectures', and that 'The Stars act mediatly, and not irresistibly upon Humane Bodies: agunt, non cogunt.' I believe the Soul a free Agent', Gadbury proclaimed, 'and not to be constrain'd by Starry Energy' – which is an elegant sentence, but as an unsubstantiated assertion it does not quite quash the tension.

In order to begin to understand why and how readers introduced annotations, it is worth exploring the correspondence, in Wydham's text, between the printed almanac's calendar and the handwritten notes. There exists a dialogue, or a flow of influence, between the printed calendar, which subjects the month to multiple modes of definition, and the manner in which Wydham occupies this month with one further kind of definition, a record of his various activities.

The printed calendar conveys the month not as a single unit, but as a body of time organized by several different frames: by numerical date, day,
anniversary (both Christian and monarchical), astrological position, lunar position, and meteorology. The calendar is simultaneously retrospective and prophetic: it defines time by looking back to anniversaries, but it is also and more fundamentally a predictive text, looking forward to what will happen (‘black clouds . . . thunder’) – occupying time, before time has occurred.

This is not the only system of time included in almanacs. Texts also feature tables of chronologies, listing the years since certain events. Cardanus Riders’s *British Merlin* (1693) provides a typical example in its ‘Computation of the most Remarkable Passages of the Times, from the Creation to this present Year 1693’, which lists, in chronological order, what are implicitly canonical events, and which defines time by its distance from the present. So we have:

The Creation of the World according to Chronology 5643
Noah’s Flood 3686
The destruction of Troy 2877

A little further on:

The Bible Translated into Greek 1958
The first use of Guns 235
The first use of Coaches 138
Gunpowder–Treason, Nov. 5, 88
The River of Thames frozen, that people for many days walked over, and fires roasting on the Thames 57.

This compressed chronology, like the chronicles that inform it, was perhaps the most common mode of organising a particular idea of history. In these tables time is organised as a looking back from the present of 1693 over a series of events which, like waves, draw closer and closer: the table ends on the next page with ‘King William went to Ireland . . . After that to Flanders; whom God preserve.’ The word ‘since’ hovers territorially in the two left margins, heightening this linear sense of a past culminating, inexorably, in the present.

This teleological chronology was accompanied, in some almanacs, by a geographical equivalent in the form of tables listing the distance, to quote one particular example, ‘of some of the most famous Cities in the world, from this Honourable City of London’; Mexico 5710 miles, ‘Calecut’

4840, Jerusalem 2320, Alexandria 2120, ‘Morocco’ 1270, Rome 890, Prague 640, ‘Antwerp’ 120, ‘Middleborough’ 140. The final entry is London, listed as 0 miles from the reader. Just as the chronology culminated in the reader’s present year, so this geographical list concludes in the reader’s location. And while this text assumes a London reader, many almanacs were organised around other towns: astrological predictions in Wharton’s *Calendarium Carolinum* (1662) were calculated ‘Respecting the Meridian and Latitude of Kirkby-Kendall’, in Westmoreland; and Thomas Langley’s *A New Almanack and Prognostication* (1640) referred to the Meridian of the famous Mayor Towne of Shrewsbury. Many other examples exist of such regionalism, which would have had the effect of encouraging readers in those towns to imagine themselves as central, to see themselves as subjects, in the double sense of being ‘held in place’, and of acquiring agency.

If the chronology or ‘computation’ is involved in the organising of time, three of its entries acquire a particular significance:

Clocks & Dials first set up in Churches 1087
Printing first used in England 253
Register-books in every Parish 155.

Amid the records of classical and Biblical pasts, these notes might appear incongruous – dials and parish registers alongside the Creation and Noah’s Flood. But they feature in many almanac chronologies, and what they record are the technologies that enable this conception of time: the punctual ordering of hours and minutes; the standardisation that print facilitated; the keeping of what aspired to be regularised records. Within this printed ‘computation’, then, there is a laying bare of the means by which chronology is constructed. There is a similar emphasis in that self-reflexive first entry, ‘The Creation of the World according to Chronology’. This is a version of time that lends itself a history – that de-naturalises itself, makes itself contingent, even as it unfolds. As a result, other possible ways of ordering time are suggested.

This idea of time as pliable may seem incongruous, discordant, even, to a twenty-first-century western culture whose conception of time as linear is largely naturalised. But a seventeenth-century almanac reader like Weydham would have been repeatedly presented with just such an idea. The most prominent expression of temporality as debatable came in the controversy over Pope Gregory’s calendrical reform, which resulted

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in 4 October 1582 being followed immediately by 15 October. While the reform was rejected in England as an instance of papal imperialism, it nonetheless induced intense debate about possible schemes for altering time's organisation: cutting days and hours; doing nothing; returning to the calendar's condition at the Council of Nicea in AD 325; returning the calendar to apostolic times. Time, in these debates, was explicitly malleable, and subject to various possible modes of configuration, each conveying a political agenda. Almanacs make apparent this issue of time being subject to multiple modes of categorisation: _Poor Robin_ mockingly boasts 'a twofold calendar viz. the Julian, English, or other account; and the roundheads . . . maggot-heads . . . or fanarick account', and another edition contrasts 'The Loyal Chronology' (including familiar entries like 'The Creation of the World' and 'The deluge of Noah's Flood') with 'The Fancricks Chronology' ('Tobacco was first sold 3 Pipes for 2d'; 'The Art of Complementing was first invent.'); 'Geese went barefoot'.

Thus the printing of chronologies and calendars in almanacs, far from fixing a particular way of conceiving time, in fact emphasised and enacted the idea that time might be imagined according to various systems. (Readers sometimes scribble notes about ways of calculating time — 'To Turn Minutes into Seconds Multiply 60m by 60 seconds' — in their almanacs; manuscript miscellanies and commonplace books often contain texts such as 'A new (stile) Perpetual table of Time . . . for fifty years to come', adapted from printed almanacs.) One consequence of this was that readers were encouraged to consider, construct, and foreground their own relationship to temporality: to consider themselves, whether they were in London or Kirby-Kendall, the point around which the almanac might be ordered. In a 1710 copy of _Parker's Ephemeris_, the owner has added elaborate astrological charts organised around his name (John Folds); his birth date ('November

y\(^{16}\)h 7\(^{th}\) 50\(^m\) pm 1694 The Nativity of John Folds 1694'); and the present writing moment ('July y\(^{16}\) 22\(^{d}\) 7\(^{th}\) 15\(^m\)') — making this printed almanac, like the personalised fifteenth-century manuscript almanacs that preceded it, a text that orbits around a particular individual. More spectacularly, as seen in Figure 2, Folds has sewn into the back of his almanac a paper wheel, made from cut up printed pages, that can be rotated to reveal the astrological alignment of the present moment, and whether the 'Conjunction [is] good . . . indifferent good . . . very Good . . . very bad . . . most excellent . . . bad . . . or [worst of All]', Folds's annotations provide one of the more striking instances of a reader appropriating the temporal contents of the printed almanac to order their lives — of a reader being prompted by the almanac's calendrical and astrological inclusions to inscribe details of their lives on to the texts. But with their interest in detailing a reader's life through annotations, such life notes are entirely typical. In the case of John Wyndham, to the several ways of organising time that the calendar presents — of time as a date, a day, a looking back to a Christian martyr, a looking forward to the weather — Wyndham presents one more way of ordering, privatising time with his prospective notes of appointments around Taunton, adding one further use to the 'several Uses' almanacs suggest can be extracted from their calendars. The almanac demonstrates that various records may be inscribed on the month ahead, and so provides a cue for the creation of Wyndham's annotations.

This flow of influence, this sense of the almanac creating expectations for what might be written, can be tracked across two other annotated texts. If the printed calendar encouraged the fundamental idea that readers might, in the words of one almanac, 'have occasion daily to note sundry affairs', other features of the almanac endorsed or shaped particular kinds of annotation.

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**MATTHEW PAGE: 'GREATE TEETHE'**

The second example that I shall examine is a Bodleian copy of Arthur Hopton's _New Almanacke_, from 1613. Little is known about the owner: notes suggest a Puritan minister from Norfolk, probably occupying a

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48 _Poor Robin_ (1624), title page; _Poor Robin_ (1669), sigs a2r–a3r.

49 Thomas Langley, _Langley 1649_ A New Almanack and Prognostication (1640). BL. 5832f.1, facing February calendar. The annotation reads: 'Every hour is 60m. And every minute is 60 seconds. To Turn Minutes into Seconds Multiply 60m by 60 seconds (wch is a min) & ye prod. is 3600. 3600 is 1 hour. 2700 is 3 quarterns of an hour. 900 is 1 quarter of an hour. 1800 is 3/2 an hour. All wch sumns are found to bee as they are named above by dividing them by 60m wch is one hour, & by multiplying yt hour by 60 wch is one minnit.'

50 Folger v.2.193, f. 1. The note invites readers to compare the table 'with an Almanack'.

51 Bosniaquet, _Almanacks_, p. 1.

52 George Parkes, _Parker's Ephemeris for the Year of our Lord 1730_, (1730). Folger 182–194q. The cited annotations appear on blanks before and after the printed almanac.


54 Thomas Hill, _An Almanack Published at Large_ for 1571 (1571).

model of reading operating in almanacs shows an even more dynamic version of this idea: not only do readers improvise with an apparently imposed culture, but that imposed culture, in the form of the printed almanac, is materially reworked as a result of the consumers' creative response to the book - their 'guileful ruses', to use a de Certeauian phrase.

Within this model of reading, print culture, in the form of the almanac, did not induce connotations of fixity or stability, but signalled rather a conception of the book as reworkable - negotiable not only in terms of its readings but also its inclusions and its physical form. One recalls Areopagitica's metaphors of wrestling with little texts, of reading as a physical, embodied struggle - which, in the case of these almanacs, cease to be metaphors. Such interactions also stretch the limits of certain bibliographical terms that previously seemed axiomatic. Are these almanacs still books, or have they become some other object: a depository, a cabinet, a little room? And can we still talk about readers, or is some other term necessary to accommodate the process in play?54

ISABELLA TWYSDEN: 'UNKNOWN TO ANY'
The issues highlighted by Page's account are presented in a more sustained way in a third and final annotated example, written by a more prominent figure - Lady Isabella Twysden (née Saund; of Roydon Hall, Kent.55 Twysden (1605–57), was the third and youngest daughter of Sir Nicholas Saund; of Nonsuch, Surrey. In 1635 she married Sir Roger Twysden (1597–1672), antiquary, who was arrested in 1642 and imprisoned by Parliament for supporting the Petition of Kent. His estates were sequestrated in 1643 and Isabella was granted a fifth of the incomings for her maintenance at Roydon Hall.56 Isabella Twysden's 1647 notes float around John Booker's almanac of that year, Mercurios Coelicus, a text in which, in the title page's

54 This conception of the almanac as a potentially collaborative text is sustained in The Ladies Diary: or, the Woman's Almanack (1707), which prints riddles sent in by readers ('The 11th [riddle] was sent by an Ingenious Gentleman in Norfolk, the 13th by a Lady in Derbyshire' (sig. e3)), and requests future submissions, so that the editor can continue 'inserting in this Book such Verses, Anagrams, and Pleasant Stories, as any of you should please to send me.' 55 BL Add MS 34169 (hereafter Twysden). Twysden continued her almanac life-writing in BL Add MSS 34170–34172. Twysden's manuscript additions are transcribed in F. W. Bennett, 'The Diary of Isabella, Wife of Sir Roger Twysden, Baronet, of Roydon Hall, East Peckham, 1645–1651', in Archivologia Canticana: Being Transactions of the Kent Archaeological Society 51 (1939), 113–36. Sir Roger Twysden also kept an almanac-diary, written in Swallow: An Almanack for the Year of our Lord God 1658 (Cambridge, n.d.), now held at the Centre for Kenilworth Studies, Maidstone (1194/119). 56 Bennett, 'Diary of Isabella', p. 113; David L. Smith, 'Twysden, Sir Roger, Second Baronet (1597–1672)', in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004).

As with the previous two almanacs, these notes do not constitute a seamless narrative; there is little reflection back upon the entries and no clear sense of a hierarchy to events. In fact, there is a compelling levelling of 'mat gigs', whoever he was, and the lower case King, both of whom, simply, 'went away'. If we demand a moralised account with a clear order of meaning, this text, like Forman's diary, remains unyielding.

Twysden's notes maintain a careful layout, with the passing of time registered spatially in the gap between entries. This sense of spatial decorum is maintained throughout the volumes, and is a feature of the overwhelming majority of annotated almanacs. In his copy of Gallen's New Almanack (1674), for example, Sir John Nicholas distributed his daily records relating to King, Parliament, and Privy Council on the recto of each calendar insert, and notes relating to personal and family matters on the verso. Nicholas also redrafted many annotations originally on inserts facing the printed calendar, entering the revised notes at the back of the text as financial accounts. Thus, for instance, the note '11 y Measles came out upon Pen.'
opposite the February calendar, is rewritten at the back of the volume as ‘11 to D’ Nedham for Pen – 01: 01: 06’.100

Nicholas’s use of different spaces within the almanac for different kinds of record is found in most annotated almanacs. Financial expenses tend to cluster before or after the printed pages;101 family genealogies and notes of book ownership feature at the beginning; and Biblical quotations, spiritual resolutions, and devotional verses feature at the very end of texts, like Lewis Trenayne’s ‘This life is full of greife for things past / full of labo’ for things absent / full of fear for things to come’, which appears at the back of several of his almanacs.102 Aphorisms — say not any thing false all that’s true — and medical recipes — ‘Receipt to Cure A mad dogg or any thing else’103 — tend similarly to congregate at the end of the book. Annotations rarely intrude on to the printed text: when they do, the notes often constitute alterations to the printed almanac’s predictions: in one almanac an annotator has swapped the ‘North’ and ‘South’ headings on the printed figure of the sun104 in another, above the printed prediction ‘Fair Scence’, is the handwritten note ‘Great Rain’;105 in another, the baffling printed prediction that an English April will be ‘very hote and dry’ is undercut with ‘you were deceived’.106 And an owner of Poor Robin (1669) seems to have been offended by this mock almanac’s bawdier inclusions, striking through racier passages of print: ‘There is like to be a very great Conjunction betwixt married men and their wives this

100 Folger v.a.430.
101 See, for example, Vincent Wing, Wing’s Ephemera for Thirty Years (1660), Folger 154-1590; William Wraggley, Psalms 1684,1694, Folger A2113; Cardamaus Rale, British Merlin (1720), Annenberg Rare Book Library, University of Pennsylvania, Ay 701 R443 1720.
102 Cornwall Record Office 101 T 1239 and 1395. To the blank page after his printed almanac, Sir John Newdigate added notes of resolutions: ‘Tuesday 2 August. Flee lust. lope thy Eyer. assist evil company. be chaste.’ In part, Newdigate seems to be extracting his resolutions from Arthur Dent’s The Plain Man Not to Sing in Heaven. Wherein every man may clearly see whether he shall be saved or damned. See Pounds 1668. A President for Propagation, Warwickshire Record Office CR 156/159, f. 54.
103 Added by Henry Maiten in his copy of Gullen, 1655. A New Almanack for the Said Year, Berkshire Record Office 165/26/8, unpaginated.
104 John Gadbury, Ephemerides of the Celestial Motions for X. Years (1672), Folger 155-619q, ext fly leaf.
105 The Bloody Almanack (1651), BL PP 2466b. Similar corrections to printed tables appear in John Gadbury, Ephemerides (1672), Folger 155-619q.
106 Thomas Robie, An Almanack (1737), Annenberg Rare Book Library, University of Pennsylvania Ay 53 A43 1737. ‘January’.
107 William Matthew, A Propugnisation for the Yeare of our Lord God (1651), Bodleian Ash. 66, sig. 86v. The annotator is the aforementioned Matthew Page: this text was bound with eleven other almanacs from 1651. In John Keene’s A Briefe Propugnisation (1653), Page adds the notes ‘at Ham’, and ‘at Ashforde’, to the printed ‘Note containing the Moneth, Day, and place of the principall Fayres of England’. Bodleian Ash. 66, sig. 35v.
moneth'; 'a great controversie will arise amongst the Chyrurgions in Utopia, whether men first got the Pox from women, or women from men'.

When sequences of almanacs survive, annotated by the same owner — whether a whole collection of different almanacs bought for the same year (the aforementioned Matthew Page bound together twelve almanacs for 1619), or, more commonly, a run of almanacs extending over a number of years — texts demonstrate a consistent methodology of annotation. The Wiltshire doctor John Merewether (c. 1655–1724) bought a copy of Riders British Merlin each year — eleven of his texts survive, dating from 1688 to 1719 — and he carefully annotated these texts according to a particular method. Among other things, he interleaved and divided blank pages in a consistent fashion, and inserted the headings 'Praxis Medica', 'Moneys Lent', 'Moneys Received', 'Disbursements', and sometimes 'Books Lent' and 'Books borrowed'. Even annotations that appear chaotic are in fact often the product of a system, albeit a system that is not immediately apparent to modern eyes.

If the layout of Twysden's records suggests that almanac annotations, in general, followed patterns of spatial decorum, the grammar and punctuation of the records can help answer the question of when notes were added. Twysden's notes are in the past tense and indicate actions already completed. Most annotated almanacs are similarly retrospective, although notes of future appointments, usually titled 'Memoranda', also feature in many texts. These notes are sometimes struck through upon completion, rendering them past tense, in the almanac of the politician and regicide Henry Marten: 'send for Mr Read', 'venture a letter to F. Tuckwell', 'ask Gabriel about Trinder', 'turn ye dining-room at ye new house into lodgings for our own family'. Sir John Newdigate returned to his agenda to itemise the completion of tasks: next to 10 July's 'Sheer sheepes', he has added, in a later ink, 'wch I did'. More unusually, to his copy of The Royal Almanack (1675), Richard Newdigate added not only upcoming appointments ('On the 7th instant ye Painter will come'), but also questions to resolve:

Mem: I find in Martin Knights accts 1–4d a day given to each man that loaded or empyed Cart in Harvest Qu. Was it so in J. Overtons?

The almanac might function as both prospective agenda and retrospective account — like those printed calendars that look simultaneously forward to what will happen and look back to past events.

In Twysden's past tense text, the commas at the end of the first four entries, followed by the period after the final note, suggest a conception of this page as a textual unit that concludes only after the note of Mrs Dendy's death. This suggests, although it does not prove, that Twysden added these entries at one sitting, some time after the events, and perhaps at the end of the month. Indeed, Twysden's note that 'k. went away unknowne to any', for the 11 November, is a record it would have been impossible to transcribe on that day. Thus, while it may be tempting to assume almanac annotations — which produce the effect of immediacy, artlessness, and haste — were added directly after the event they record, Twysden's page suggests annotating might be a more retrospective — and presumably therefore deliberative and selective — process. And while it is nonetheless true that the majority of almanac annotations appear to have been added at a time close to, and generally within the month of, the event they record, there are many examples of a more patient, even byzantine compositional process at work. Many annotations include blank spaces amid notes, indicating annotators intending (but failing) to return to complete the entry at a later date: 'The way to Thornbury', penned in an almanac from 1673, lists villages to be traversed (Cold Harber, Little Blunsden, Purton Stoke, Mabsey Charten) but concludes, elliptically, 'Ouer [blank] heath'. Furthermore, this note, while appearing in a 1673 almanac, was in fact added around 1730: such use of an almanac long after its notional year had passed is unusual but not exceptional, and suggests an enduring utility, despite the threat of a rapid transformation into pie wrappings.

Evelyn's records, noted above, further complicate the question of when annotations recorded events — and so shed some light on the amount of deliberation and selection involved in the process of annotating. The addition to his almanac of 1637 in fact temporally more complex than at first appears: within his entry 'A oxfor I first Receved the holy communio being yn in Bal Coll Chap Mr Cooper preacht', the words 'holy' and

108 Poor Robin (1669), Folger 154–230.129, notes on the May calendar.
109 Matthew Page's collection of twelve almanacs from 1619 is Bodleian Ash. 66. For other examples of blocks of almanacs bought for the same year, bound together, see Folger 154–230 (1669), and BL 18253 (1649).
110 Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office 2010/01.1–9.
111 Gallus. 1659. A New Almanack for the Said Year, Berkshire Record Office 1659/15, unpaginated. Some items remain uncrossed: 'visit Mrs Holland & ask for my furred coat', 'visit poore', 'Call ye gardiner'.
112 Pond 1668. A President for Pragmaticus, Warwickshire Record Office CB 1668/39, F. 34.
113 The Royal Almanack: or, A Diary (1675). Warwickshire Record Office CB 1668/35. F. 44.
115 An annotated Poor Robin from 1694 has notes at the end of the volume that run up to 1704 (Folger X2133); one Sarah Sale continued annotating her 1680 almanac until 1690 (X2134).
'preacht' have been added in Evelyn's later hand. And beneath this (largely) 1637 annotation, Evelyn has added a much later note: 'Mr Bro: G: Evelyn went from Trinity Coll: Oxon: to Wotton, & we were both entred in ye Middle Temple but I remained at Oxford.' These subsequent interventions presumably were made when Evelyn, returning to his almanacs in preparation for the writing up of his retrospective diary, augmented the original annotations with notes drawn from memory or from other, uncited sources.  

In Twysden's annotations, the writer's position varies in relation to the events she describes. The notes are not organised around a consistent first-person 'I'. Notes record the actions of an unidentified man ('mat gigin'; an event connected to her household ('mary hearne came to serve me'); the travel of Twysden's husband ('he went by gravensend'); the movements of the King ('to the ille of wire'); the death of Twysden's friend ('in demed'). The notes indicate occurrences Twysden must have experienced first hand; things she must have been told ('theather my bro: Tho: lent him horses'); things which determine no clear relation ('mat gigin went away'); and, in the case of the King's travels, news 'unKnowne to any', at the time. The source of these notes, and the authority behind them, varies.  

The complicated issue of Twysden's presence in the text is also illustrated in a passage from the second volume, in January 1648. Twysden writes:

the 5: of Janu: about 7. a clock in the evening, there was a light in the north as light as if day had broke, all the rest of the skie being very darke, this many sawe, amongst which my selfe was one.

Unusual natural occurrences, particularly in the sky, are a refrain in Twysden's notes, and she often wonders at their prophetic significance. In such descriptions Twysden works hard to establish a sense of truthfulness, and here the light in the dark is doubly verified: first by the crowd ('this many sawe'), and then by Twysden's own presence ('amongst which my selfe was one'). But Twysden's position here is complicated. The passage suggests her significance as an individual witness, but it also places her as merely 'one' in a crowd. It is an assertion of 'my selfe', but appears as an afterthought, secondary to the collective. While expectations of the diary, or the later autobiography, demand an organising of records around a central first-person writer-narrator, Twysden, as she oscillates between the individual

and the collective, between the present and the marginalised, writes a more dispersed version of herself.

A similar shuffling between the first-person and the collective is evident when annotators shift from personal notes to inscribe records of their family's activities. Sir Robert Markham's copy of John Gadbury's Diary Astronomical, Astrological, Meterological is extensively annotated with notes relating to his family, both past and present, drawn from printed sources and from his own lived experience. After Markham's death in 1690, a new hand takes over in the manuscript and records the life and death of 'My Father'. A later edition of this same Gadbury almanac has been annotated with a sketch of a family tree, tracing the generations that followed from the book's original 1684 annotator, Thomas Howarth. Such family records recall annotations to Books of Hours — calendrical texts, like almanacs, of enormous popularity — common in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Twysden concludes her page with the note of her 'very good friend' who 'left this life, for a better'. This is one of a number of records of deaths in the almanac. Others include:

the.17. Desem: 1648. old goddy dene died, and left this life for a better
the.2. Janu: 1649. my la: morton left this life to be a blessed saint in heauen, she died of the smallpox, at London
Mr Johanes Hird a right good religeus gentell man he left this life the 15 mar: 1650/i at 9 a clock at night at peckham, he was in his 73 years of his age, a strong able man... he gave all he had to a maide, on[e] Mary Mills, whom he had long been in love with.

What seems most striking here, aside from the romance of Mary Mills, is the rhetorical template that Twysden employs. While Twysden nuances details, the various deaths maintain a constant form.

107 Thomas Gallen, A New Almanack for the Said Year (1668), Folger v.3.419, contains notes that were interlined between earlier records at a later date.
We might expect this consistency of form in these particular records; even today, notices of deaths borrow from particularly entrenched vocabularies and tropes. But in fact throughout the volume, across several subjects, there is a sustained appropriation of existing models. More specifically, the almanac itself functions as a paradigm of the kind of events and vocabularies that the annotator might register.

We can detect Twysden responding to an agenda set by the almanac in her notes of political actions. The almanac Twysden used for 1651, George Wharton’s *Hemerocæpiæon* (1651), contains printed political notes opposite the calendar, in the space where manuscript inscriptions might appear. Thus, facing May, and corresponding to particular days, are the records ‘Cheap-side-crosse demolished 1643’; ‘K. Ch. came to the Scots Army 1646’; ‘Fairfax march ag. the Levellers 1649’; ‘E. Strafford beheaded’; and ‘King Charles came to Newcastle 1646’. Twysden’s own political notes, written in the blank pages of earlier interleaved almanacs, show a discernible correspondence: ‘the 15 [April 1647] the independence petition was burnt’; ‘the 11 of Sep 1645 prince rupert delivered up bristol on treaty to S’ Tho: farfax’; ‘the 21 of august 1647 the K. came to hamton corte’; ‘the 15 of Janu 1647/8 some of S’ Tho: farfax soulsard came to billit at whilt’.

Twysden’s notes are striking because they show a female writer describing topics that scholars have traditionally gendered male and considered beyond the writing scope of early modern women. That high politics was so writable for Twysden has much to do with her family situation. With her husband arrested, with family lands sequestered, with troops entering the estate, any separation of public politics from the private domestic sphere collapsed, as she spectacularly notes:

the 26 april 1651 at 4 a clock in the morning came troopers to our hous at peck: to serch as they sed for armes, and letters ... and they carried a waye my husband, and my bro: cha: to leeds castell prisioners, for no cause.

This merging of the political and the domestic must be one reason why the Civil War led to a greater literary and political agency for many women. But another, rather less dramatic catalyst for Twysden’s agency was textual: the almanac, by creating a template for the kind of writing she might produce, by providing a model of political notes inserted opposite a calendar, sanctioned a political cataloguing. And Twysden’s female textual agency was not exceptional: many almanacs were owned and annotated by women, and while annotations do not always suggest political activity, they do consistently show a variety of textual, financial, and business engagements which scholarly assessments of early modern women need to absorb. Sarah Sale, from a far less lofty socio-economic position than Twysden, entered detailed notes that show her taking over financial and agricultural affairs after the death of her husband. In her interleaved copy of Rider’s *British Merlin* (1680), Sale records the repayment of debts (‘1682: Sept. 13. Recued of my Daughter Westle of Bledlow Ridge 2nd pound’); purchases (‘p’d for a dust gown and pericato i 18’); records of ‘Corn: sewed 1679’; instructions on ‘How to make Buckthorne Surup [syrop]’; and a list of ‘all maner of Implements of Husbandry’ including ‘platters, poringers, Kittles, a Cheesepres with tub Cheese’, ‘Brewing usells’, and ‘andisouns and [fire] doggs’. Sale’s annotations indicate she was also reading and responding to earlier almanacs annotated by her dead husband: interleaved opposite April is the record

I find in my Husbands Acomt money pd. for hay which I knew not before the money dew to me for hay is 5 - 0 the money for pease is 4 10.

Effie Botonaki has recently suggested that women’s autobiographical writing was limited to the middle and upper classes, and that lower socio-economic groups lacked the necessary money, literacy, free time, and solitary space. This may well be accurate for the kinds of autobiographical texts that Botonaki considers, but if we expand the category of the autobiographical to include texts like annotated almanacs, and annotators like Sarah Sale, there emerges a much greater degree of agency among women across a broad socio-economic range.

Alongside the political cataloguing that Twysden records, her almanacs present templates for other kinds of records, too. Twysden’s notes on the weather — ‘a light in the north’; ‘it did so raine’ — echo the almanac’s predictions. Her writing of journeys and in particular the narration of each journey stage (‘I came to peckham I came to gravesend by water, and wrid home’) is informed by almanac lists of distances between towns. (As a rhetorical form, the list features in many almanac annotations, informed by the frequent printed lists of fairs, distances, and

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123 For details of one unknown reader using her or his almanac to inscribe almanac notes, see Anne Lake Prescott, ‘Getting a Score: Stubbs, Singleton, and a 1579 Almanac’, in the *Sidney Journal* 22.2 (2004), 131–7.