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The Astronomical Treatise *Von den 11 Himmelssphären* and Its Relation to the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch*

Abstract: The article examines the manuscript tradition of the treatise *Von den elf Himmelssphären*, written in Middle High German. The treatise is preserved in a total of 29 manuscripts and existed in two different versions in the Middle Ages. The older version is more extensive and is dated to the second half of the fourteenth century on the basis of the oldest textual witness. The second, broader surviving version was most likely written at the beginning of the fifteenth century and in connection with the conception of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch*. The latter, younger version of the treatise *Von den elf Himmelssphären* was shortened in comparison to the older one by some text sections and, according to the conception of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch*, regularly equipped with an illustration. The illustrations often show scholars looking at or pointing to the stars. The presented study confirms, on the one hand, the thesis formulated by researchers that the author or better compiler of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch* also used already existing texts and edited them for his work, which was especially widespread in the fifteenth century. On the other hand, it shows that both versions of the treatise were copied at the same time but in clearly separate contexts of transmission. It has turned out that the abridged version of the treatise can be used as an indicator helpful in the identification of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch*.

A medieval parchment folio¹ was offered for auction by the London auction house Bernard Quaritch Ltd. in 2019. This single folio was presented in the accompanying sales catalog as number 7 under the rubric “Manuscript Fragments, Leaves and Cuttings” (Bernard Quaritch 2019). Its contents were classified under the keyword “Astronomy.” The fragmentary specimen transmits a text concerning the Eleven Heavenly Spheres and is skillfully penned in a painstakingly written Textualis script. The sales catalog’s description, which includes an image of the fragment’s recto side (Figure 1), reads:

¹ The fragment is presently held by a private collection in Luxembourg and was sold in 2019. Cf. <https://handschriftencensus.de/26150>. – Thanks to Max Schmitz (Luxembourg) for valuable information regarding the fragment as well as for his permission to publish its digital reproduction.

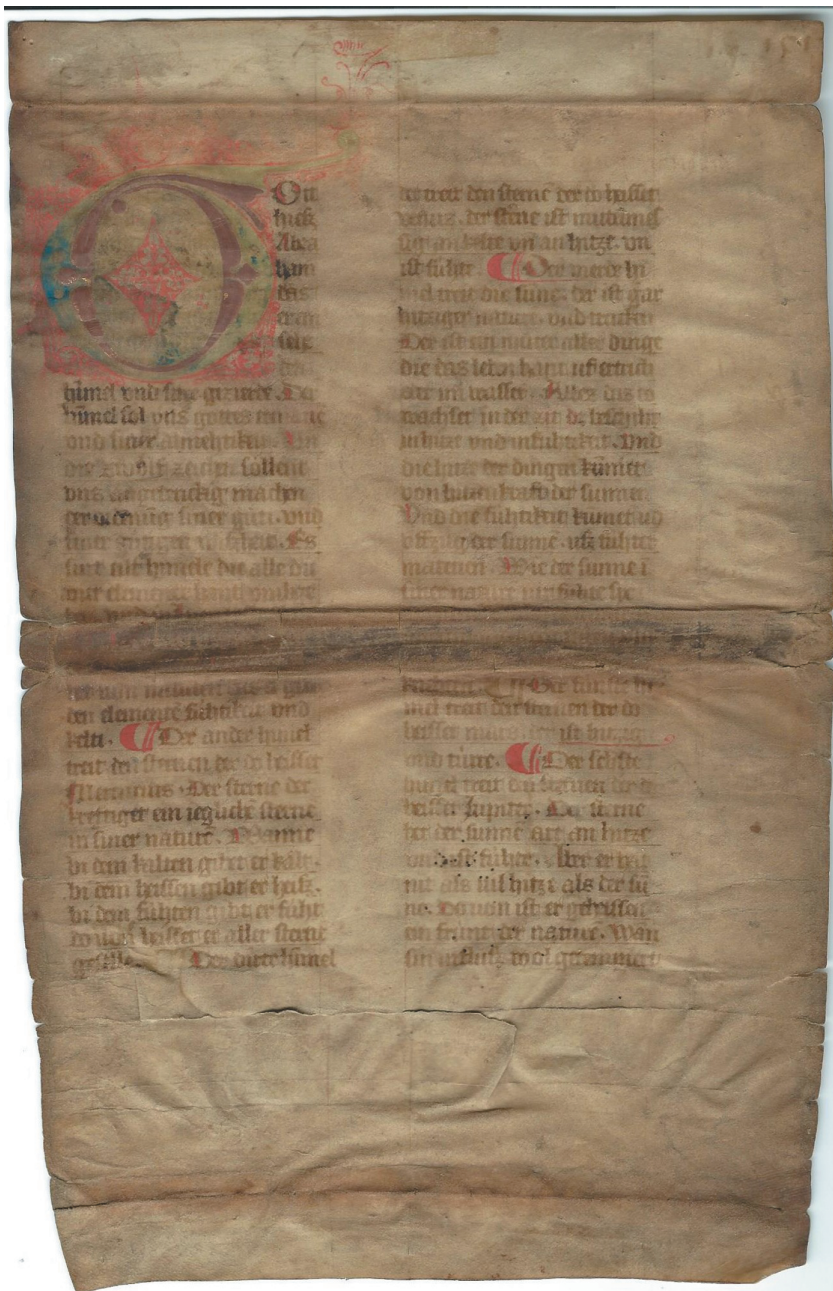


Figure 1: Private Collection Max Schmitz, Luxembourg, no shelfmark, fol. 1r.

ELEVEN HEAVENS

7. [ASTRONOMY.] Von den elf Himmelsphären, in Early New High German; a complete leaf written in a good formal gothic bookhand in double columns of 32 lines, dark brown ink, ruled lightly in ink, EIGHT-LINE INITIAL 'G' (*Gott hiess Abraham das er ansehe den himel*) in burnished gold and blue with elaborate penwork flourishing in red, paragraph marks alternately in red and blue (faded), capitals touched in red; recovered from use in a binding and with consequent wear, fading, soiling and tears, gold largely rubbed away from initial, but mostly legible. 246 x 159 mm (154 x 115 mm)

Germany, 2nd half of 14th century.

£2500

'Von den elf Himmelsphären' is a short anonymous text in Early New High German on the Ptolemaic model of the planetary system. The present fragment, doubtless once part of a larger manuscript containing a number of texts, is early and of notably high quality in terms of script and decoration. It comprises almost half of the text.

Matthias Miller and Karin Zimmermann record six extant manuscripts, most (possibly all) later than the present fragment: Heidelberg, Cod. Pal. germ. 291, ff. 26v–28v (Bavaria, after 1477 but before 1496), and Cod. Pal. germ. 226, ff. 97r–98v (Alsace, 1456–1469); Munich BSB MSS Cgm 349, ff. 51v–55r ('second half of 15th century'), and Cgm 730, ff. 53r–57r ('last quarter of 15th century'); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS Allemand 106, f. 215v ('15th century'); and Strasbourg, Bibliothèque municipale M 711, f. 38v (no date given). See M. Miller and K. Zimmermann, *Die Codices Palatini germanici in der Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg*, 2005, p. 151.

According to the description, the single parchment leaf, offered starting at £2,500, originated during the second half of the fourteenth century in a German-speaking area. The erstwhile complete codex to which the fragment belonged measured approximately 246×159 mm. Its layout of two columns and 32 lines, as well as its fine decoration (eight-line initial 'G', alternating red and blue paragraph marks), correspond to a manuscript type widely disseminated in the fourteenth century.² The Quaritch sales catalog opines that the single folio was "doubtless once part of a larger manuscript containing a number of texts." The full codex, now lost, in all likelihood contained a collection of various technical and instructional texts. It is quite conceivable the codex was an example of a collective manuscript of astronomical and astrological texts, which may well have also contained medical texts and prescriptions. However, such suppositions have to remain speculative in the absence of the original. The codex must have been rendered into binder's waste at a later point in time, which is difficult to determine with any exactness. Binder's waste is produced by dismembering codices in order to utilize the recovered parch-

² A search of corresponding characteristics in the *Handschriftencensus* (handschriftencensus.de) databank (i.e. Codex/fragment, 2 columns, 32–34 lines, 1350–1400) yields 253 hits (1 June 2022). This finding does not contradict estimates. Providing full information as to the details of the search results is beyond the scope of the present chapter.

ment for new purposes.³ The folio in question was used in its second application as a protective covering for a more modern, perhaps printed book, the measurements of which, based on an analysis of the folio's discoloration and creasing, were approximately 160×115 mm.

The text transmitted by the single folio belongs to an astronomical treatise known among medievalists as *Von den 11 Himmelssphären*, which has received little attention from the research community. The fragment does not transmit the entire text of the treatise. *Der elffte himel dar ob in allen* is written at the foot of the second column on the verso side (Figure 2). The section about the eleventh heavenly sphere begins with these words. About a third of the entire treatise is missing in the fragment, to judge from a textual comparison with the treatise's easily accessible parallel transmission.⁴ This missing last section would presumably have taken up two further columns in the manuscript. Other parchment folia which belonged to this collective manuscript or were connected to the fragmentary specimen in question have yet to be identified. The single folio remains the only evidence for the treatise *Von den 11 Himmelssphären's* existence as early as the second half of the fourteenth century.

The contents of the treatise have a straightforward structure.⁵ A statement recognizing that the heavens should evoke the remembrance of God's omnipotence and that there are eleven heavens, which possess "alle die vier elementen" ["all of the four elements"], follows the opening statement: "Got hiess abraham daz er ane sehe die himmel vnd sin gezierde" ["God told Abraham to look at the heavens and its beauty"]. Thereafter, each of the eleven heavenly spheres is named and subsequently described in its own dedicated section. In such manner, a series of several numbered text sections begins with respective formulaic introductions in numerically ascending order: "Der erst hymmel" ["the first heaven"], "Der ander hymmel" ["the other heaven"], "Der drytte hymmel" ["the third heaven"] etc., whereby an inscribed red 'D' lombardic capital, taking up two lines, marks the head of each new heavenly sphere section. The first seven heavens deal with the heavenly bodies known in the Middle Ages: the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. It is striking that the sections vary greatly in regard to their scope and

3 The recovery of binder's waste from medieval parchment manuscripts begins as early as the fifteenth century, especially in the wake of the introduction of the printing press. The demand was high for stable, durable material for book binding and covering, and parchment manuscripts, outdated for whatever reason, presented book binders with a valuable resource not to go unused. For research into binder's waste, cf. Neuheuser (2015), as well as the seminal work of Haebler (1908).

4 I draw for comparison on the manuscript held by the Salzburg university library, the digitization of which is available online: Cod. M III 3, fol. 21ra–21vb (<https://handschriftencensus.de/5238>).

5 I refer in the following to the already mentioned textual witness held in Salzburg, Cod. M III 3 (cf. Figure 3). All citations are taken from its textual transmission and are, in part, slightly adapted in print to aid in their readability. All translations are my own.

exhaustiveness. Whereas “der vierde hymmel” (the forth heaven, the Sun) and “der sechste hymmel” (the sixth heaven, Jupiter) are addressed extensively with sixteen and ten lines respectively, merely a brief note about “der funften hymmel” (the fifth heaven, Mars) suffices: “[er] treyt den steren der da heysset mars der ist hitzig vnd durre” [“it contains planet Mars that is hot and dry”]. Following the seventh *hymmel*, Saturn (“von nature kalt vnd durre” [“dry and cold by nature”]), come heavens eight to eleven, which are no longer defined by specific heavenly bodies. The eighth heaven corresponds to the *firmament*, which coalesces all the stars together with the above named heavenly bodies and also exercises influence over the things “wahsent uff dem ertrich” [“grown on earth”]. Last follow the *Primum mobile* (9), the crystal heaven (10), and the final heavenly sphere, “[der] fürn hymmel in dem got richset mit den ix kören der engel” [“the fiery heaven in which God rules with the nine choirs of angels”] (11). Attention to the contents focuses one on the significance of the heavens to the human soul with the information that “Dyß sy genuck geseit von den hymmelnn” [“it is enough said about the heavens”], culminating with the admonition: “Ach mentsch da by gedencke war zu du syst geschaffen” [“O Man, consider what you were created for”]. In closing, the twelve signs of the zodiac are mentioned, as is their location in the firmament and the fact that “die meister” [“the masters”] designated these twelve parts with “eynen namen vnd ein gelichnyse eins tieres” [“a name each and an animal as a simile”].

Von den 11 Himmelssphären is as yet unlisted in reference books relevant to German Medieval Studies.⁶ Scholarly research papers concerned with the history of the text’s tradition are almost completely lacking.⁷ The designation of the work’s title as used in the research community as well as in the above mentioned sales catalog is based upon reference to particular manuscript repertory catalogs, which among other things, follow medieval titles. Therefore, the difficulty emerges that the treatise has been designated with inhomogeneous titles, for example *Planetenkindertraktat* (Kalning et al. 2016, 159) and *Über die 11 Himmel* (Weimann 1980, 40). Because of the small size of the treatise, it has failed to garner recognition as a stand-alone text and has not been accordingly highlighted by scholarly descriptions (Petzet 1920, 46). Such circumstances make it difficult to get an overview of the actual status of the textual tradition.

⁶ Recently, the *Katalog der illustrierten Handschriften* (Catalog of illustrated manuscripts) highlighted the treatise within the framework of Subject Group 81 (Medicine) as a stand-alone part of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch* collective manuscript. Cf. Freienhagen-Baumgardt et al. (2021), 170–175.

⁷ Bernard Schnell recently offered the first listing of the *Von den 11 Himmelssphären* treatise’s textual witnesses known to him (Schnell 2021, 236) as a companion to the manuscript catalogs, which also document paper manuscripts individually (cf. Miller et al. 2005, 151).

The compelling details mentioned in the 2019 Quaritch sales catalog serve as a starting point for the search for additional complete manuscripts and fragments containing the treatise *Von den 11 Himmelssphären*. Its parallel tradition as elucidated therein as well as in the repertory manuscript catalogs already provide indications of additional textual witnesses. Specific searches of incipit-indices, printed manuscript registers and online databases such as *Manuscripta Mediaevalia* (currently being replaced by *Handschriftenportal*)⁸ can be conducted via the text's initial words. In such manner, so far, the existence of a total of 29 textual witnesses of the treatise *Von den 11 Himmelssphären* can be established. This provisional list, however, does not likely represent the extent of all existing textual witnesses.⁹ On the contrary, forthcoming, methodical examinations and evaluations of the extensive body of astronomical and astrological collective manuscripts dating to the fifteenth century will almost certainly lead to the discovery of yet more textual witnesses.¹⁰

1. **Berlin, State Libr., Ms. germ. quart. 20, fol. 69v–71v**
Codex – paper – second half 15th century – illustr. not completed
<https://handschriftencensus.de/11796>
2. **Berlin, State Libr., Ms. lat. fol. 262, fol. 18r–18v**
Codex – paper – second/third quarter 15th century
<https://handschriftencensus.de/26349>
3. **Edinburgh, Libr. of the Royal Observatory, Cr. 4.6, fol. 37r–38v**
Codex – paper – second half 15th century – illustr.
<https://handschriftencensus.de/14955>

⁸ Cf. <https://handschriftenportal.de/>. This site is set to replace <http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de>, but not all features of the previous database have been implemented yet. (Accessed 15 July 2024).

⁹ I confine myself to information essential to the present paper as drawn from the brief textual witness descriptions. Further, more in-depth information as to the contents as well as to significant research literature can be found on the *Handschriftencensus* website: <https://handschriften-census.de>.

¹⁰ The growth in German-language medieval manuscript digitization, consistently undertaken by many libraries, facilitates successful research even when the accompanying metadata provide too little information as to the contents of the shorter texts. The systematic examination by Zinner (1925) is decidedly worthwhile.

4. **Frankfurt a. M., University Libr., Ms. germ. qu. 17, fol. 23ra–24va**
Codex – paper – first quarter 15th century
<https://handschriftencensus.de/13225>

5. **Heidelberg, University Libr., Cod. Pal. germ. 1, fol. 1r–3v**
Codex – paper – c. 1538
<https://handschriftencensus.de/10691>

6. **Heidelberg, University Libr., Cod. Pal. germ. 226, fol. 97r–98v**
Codex – paper – 1459–1469
<https://handschriftencensus.de/10370>

7. **Heidelberg, University Libr., Cod. Pal. germ. 291, fol. 26v–28r**
Codex – parchment and paper – after 1477/before 1496 – illustr.
<https://handschriftencensus.de/4903>

8. **Heidelberg, University Libr., Cod. Pal. germ. 557, fol. 52v–54v**
Codex – paper – 1468 – illustr. not completed
<https://handschriftencensus.de/4951>

9. **Heidelberg, University Libr., Cod. Pal. germ. 718, fol. 1r–4r**
Codex – paper – before 1500
<https://handschriftencensus.de/10455>

10. **Karlsruhe, State Libr., Cod. K 2790, fol. 128v–130v**
Codex – paper – mid 15th century
<https://handschriftencensus.de/9848>

11. **London, British Libr., MS Add. 17987, fol. 81r–84v**
Codex – paper – mid 15th century – illustr.
<https://handschriftencensus.de/14262>

12. **London, University College, MS Germ. 1, fol. 49v–52r**
Codex – paper – 1471 – illustr. not completed
<https://handschriftencensus.de/5408>

13. **Munich, State Libr., Cgm 28, fol. 25r–26r**
Codex – parchment – mid 15th century – illustr.
<https://handschriftencensus.de/5102>

14. **Munich, State Libr., Cgm 349, fol. 51v–54r**
Codex – paper – second half 15th century – illustr.
<https://handschriftencensus.de/6038>

15. **Munich, State Libr., Cgm 596, fol. 24r–26r**
Codex – paper – c. 1500
<https://handschriftencensus.de/6183>

16. **Munich, State Libr., Cgm 730, fol. 53r–56r**
Codex – paper – fourth quarter 15th century – illustr. not completed
<https://handschriftencensus.de/6267>

17. **Munich, University Libr., 2° Cod. ms. 578, fol. 7v–9r**
Codex – parchment – 1474, 1475 – illustr.
<https://handschriftencensus.de/6436>

18. **Nuremberg, State Archive, Rep. 52a (Reichsstadt Nürnberg), Hs. Nr. 426, fol. 23r–24r**
Codex – paper – c. 1460 – illustr.
<https://handschriftencensus.de/5502>

19. **Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS Allemand 106, fol. 215v–216v**
Codex – paper – 1490
<https://handschriftencensus.de/11393>

20. **Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), Univ. of Pennsylvania, Rare Book & Manuscript Libr. Collections, LJS 463, fol. 40r–41v**
Codex – parchment – 1443 – illustr.
<https://handschriftencensus.de/7307>

21. **Pürglitz / Křivoklát (Czech Republic), Castle Libr., Cod. I e 7, fol. 77v–81v**
Codex – parchment – c. 1455 – illustr.
<https://handschriftencensus.de/15171>

22. **Saint Louis (Missouri), Concordia Seminary Library, Rare Book Collection, no shelfmark (1), fol. 26v–27v**
Codex – parchment – 1429 – illustr.
<https://handschriftencensus.de/24273>

23. **Salzburg, University Libr., Cod. M III 3, fol. 21ra–21vb**
 Codex – parchment and paper – third quarter 15th century
<https://handschriftencensus.de/5238>

24. **St. Gall, Monastery Libr., Cod. 760, p. 54–58**
 Codex – paper – second third 15th century – illustr.
<https://handschriftencensus.de/5704>

25. **Solothurn, Central Libr., Cod. S 386, fol. 178r–179v**
 Codex – paper – 1463–1466
<https://handschriftencensus.de/3770>

26. **Strasbourg, City Libr., Ms. 258 (olim Ms. 711), fol. 38v–40v**
 Codex – paper – second half 15th century – illustr. not completed
<https://handschriftencensus.de/26631>

27. **Zurich, Central Libr., Ms. C 54, fol. 32v–33v**
 Codex – parchment – c. 1469 – illustr.
<https://handschriftencensus.de/4014>

28. **Private Collection Antiquarian Bookstore Dr. Jörn Günther, Hamburg, Nr. 1997/5,24, fol. 48r¹¹**
 Codex – paper – c. 1458 – illustr.
<https://handschriftencensus.de/15857>

29. **Private Collection Max Schmitz, Luxembourg, no shelfmark, fol. 1r–1v**
 Fragment – parchment – second half 14th century
<https://handschriftencensus.de/26150>

Reliable accounts of the treatise's scribal tradition and dissemination can be constructed based on this new and significantly expanded body of knowledge. Already at first glance, the fragmentary single parchment folio dating to the fourteenth century stands markedly apart from the other textual witnesses. It represents the old-

¹¹ The current repository of the manuscript sold in 1997 is unknown. The information relayed in the research literature does provide no indication about the version of the text it transmits. The placement of the text within the entire manuscript is also uncertain. Because of the similarity this manuscript has to the Munich manuscript, Cgm 349, and other manuscripts transmitting the short version, it is indicated with some certainty, that this manuscript transmits the short version (cf. Freienhagen-Baumgardt et al. 2021, 205).

est textual witness, as well as the only fragmentary one. As to the remaining body of textual witnesses, the following characteristics and commonalities are to be adduced: in three quarters of the cases we have paper (20 times), or partially paper, manuscripts (2 times), as contrasted with parchment manuscripts. The tradition is focused in the fifteenth century, culminating in the middle and towards the end of that century. Among the complete manuscripts, the Frankfurt Codex (Nr. 4) represents the oldest and the Heidelberg Cod. Pal. germ. 1 (Nr. 5) from the sixteenth century represents the latest example. Linguistically, the manuscripts reveal Upper German tendencies, whereby Bavarian and Alemannic dialects predominate. The vast proportion of manuscripts are painstakingly annotated as well as extensively adorned with rubricated lettering and, in part, colored initials and lombardic capitals, which take up multiple lines. Over half of our manuscripts (18 times) feature illustrations. In five of these cases (Nos. 1, 8, 12, 16, 26), the illustration of the manuscript was discontinued, judging from the dedicated spaces left blank.¹²

The fact that the treatise is typically, and unsurprisingly, included in extensive collective manuscripts, must be attributed to its brevity. Astronomical, astrological and medical subject matter predominates in these collections. A detailed analysis of other text traditions usually accompanying our treatise in these collections is beyond the scope of the present examination. Such analysis, as well as that of the codicological aspects (i.e., dimensions, material, layout, decoration and origin) of these collective manuscripts would be indispensable, however, for future elaborative and in-depth studies of our treatise. An analysis of the text's form could also lead to conclusive evidence as to the interdependence and relationship of the texts found in these collective manuscripts. The present chapter is intended as an introductory essay exploring the potential of further studies expanding on the treatise's wider significance, particularly in light of the expanded body of materials it presents.

What is known about the history of the treatise's tradition gives rise to two justifiable conclusions: Firstly, judging from the observable unity of text and illustration, the representative function of the collective manuscripts played a significant role for their patrons. Secondly, the numerical extent of the surviving textual witnesses as well as their proximity in age point particularly to the treatise's popularity and to that of astronomical texts in general in the late fourteenth and the entire fifteenth century.

¹² Freienhagen-Baumgardt et al. offer information on the illustrations (2021, 170–174). The illustration titled “Sternseher” (stargazer) is described therein. In most cases, the illustrations show one or more learned people who direct their gaze towards the sky (Figure 5), sometimes with the aid of scientific apparatus.

I was able to view, examine and compare digital representations of nearly all 29 textual witnesses of the treatise.¹³ The present cursory examination and comparison primarily takes into account the text form, leaving aside the comparison of word and spelling variables and deviations in various textual witnesses for future in-depth studies. Through the present inquiry, however, it becomes readily apparent that the range of the text tradition is anything but homogeneous. Identical deviations are to be found among about a third of the textual witnesses. These are of such a fundamental nature that they can be used to attribute a particular version of the treatise to said textual witnesses. A result of this initial examination is the determination that there are two disparate versions of the treatise between which must be distinguished. In the following, I present the text of the most commonly passed-down version, corresponding with the manuscript Ms. C 54 in the Zurich Central Library (No. 27; Figures 4 and 5).¹⁴ The printed copy is rendered true to the letter, whereas scribal abbreviations are replaced by the full word, given in italics, and the various forms of the letter ‘s’ are standardized.¹⁵

[Bl. 32v] Nu saget dis puch | hie nach von den vbrichen koren der himel vnd von | irem lauff vnd natur vnd hebt an an dem der da | hayset das firmament : ~ |

Got hieß abraham das er ansehe den himel vnd | sein gezire der himel sol got ermonen vnd sein al | mechtikayt Di czwelff zaichen sollen andechtig machen | der ordenung seiner güt vnd seiner weishayt Es sind | alf himel mit den siblen planeten di alle di vir elementen | haben vmb geben vnd Inbeschlossen vnd hebet also hie nach | von dem achtem himel an zu sagen wann von den siblen | planeten das sind siblen chôr der himeln vnd ir natur Ist | vormals geschriben vnd gesagt ~ |

Der acht himel ist das firmament |

Der acht himel hayst das firmament an dem himel | stend di anderenn sternn alle mit ein ander an di siblen | steren vorgeant das gestirnn hat manigfaltige krafft | von natur yeglicher sterne nach seiner natur vnd art vmb | das di ding di auß dem ertrich wachsent in manigval | tiger natur wachsent vnd davon so wachsent manigerley | kreuter vnd blumen auß der erden di nimant gezelen kan | [Bl. 33r] Also sind auch manicherley vische vnd tire vnd das kompt | alles sampt von der manigultikeit des gestirnes das an dem himel ist ~ |

¹³ The only copy which was not accessible to me, because of the reasons mentioned above (cf. note 11), is the copy in Nr. 28. Thanks are due to Pia Rudolph (Munich) and her colleagues, who are affiliated with the *Katalog der illustrierten Handschriften*, for their invaluable help and sharing of information and images.

¹⁴ Cf. the facsimile edition Keil, Lenhardt and Weißer 1981–1983.

¹⁵ In the printed text, **bold print** indicates lombardic capitals taking up multiple lines. A vertical line (|) indicates line breaks in the manuscript, and underlined text is written in red in the original.

Rye wil der mayster weysen wi di sunne lauffet in dem
 moneth des jars in dem gener ist dy sunn in dem garchen
 des wassermonats in dem hornung in dem garchen des ristes
 in dem merzen schlauffet si in dem zachen des wider in
 dem aprilten soist sie in dem zachen des jars in dem mayen
 soist sie in dem zachen des zwinlung in dem beachme soist
 di sunn in dem krebs in dem herwindet ist dy sunn in dem
 lewen in dem augsten ist dy sunn in der nuchtfraue in dem
 september ist die sunn in der wag in dem october ist die sunn
 in dem scorpion in dem nouember ist dy sunn in der schirge in
 dem december soist dy sunn in dem stampock als dem vor
 bie in dem kalender gemalt stett ist **Nu saget das buch**
hie nach von den vberichen bochen der himel vnd von
seiner lauff vnd natur vnd hebt an an dem der da
hantet das firmament :

Got hieß abraham das er ansehe den himel vnd
 sein gezeir der himel sol got ermonen vnd sein al
 mechtikait Di zwelff zachen sollen andechtig machen
 der ordnung seiner gut vnd seiner weisheit Es sind
 als himel mit den siben plaeten di alle di vnt elemetey
 haben vmb geben in beschlossen vnd hebet also hie nach
 von dem achten himel an zusagen **hymn von den siben**
planeten das sind siben chör der himel vnd ir natur In
 vor-mals geschriben vnd gesagt

Der acht himel ist das firmament

Der acht himel heist das firmament an dem himel
 stend di anderu sternen alle mit ein ander an di siben
 sternen vorgenant Das gestirne hat mangfaltige krafft
 von natur veglicher sterne nach seiner natur in art vmb
 das di ding di auß dem ertrich wachsen in mangual
 tiger natur wachsen in da von so wachsen mangigerley
 kreuter vnd blumen auß der erden di nimet gezeilen kan

Figure 4: Zurich, Central Libr., Ms. C 54, fol. 32v.



Figure 5: Zurich, Central Libr., Ms. C 54, fol. 33v.

Der neund himml haisß primum mobile

Der neund himel der haisß *primum mobile* das ist dy erst | wewegung di gibt webegnus vnd den vmb gang den acht | himel von den ich gesprochen han vnd das geschicht dar | vmb das di sternn all haben ein wrckung nach ir natur In | den elementen wann ein Iglich ding reuchet auß steinen smack | so es wirt wewegt mer denn so es In rwe ist da von stund | das gestirne stille So het es kain wrckung Inden elementen |

Der czehend himel Ist dem cristallen gleich an der na | turen vnd dem wasser wann er ist vber alle masse kalt | vnd feucht vnd warmm das der himel ob dem andernn nit | enwer das er ir hicze miltrote mit seiner kelten So verschwin | dote der schnell lufft der neun himelnn dar vmb das di feuch | tikeit der elementenn zu mal icht verschinde dar vmb so hot | got den neun himelnn gegebenn ainen sternn vmb gang das di | kelten des czehenden himels di hicze der neün himelnn zu | mal icht erlesche Der aylfft himel das ist der fewrnn himel

Der älfth himel das ist der feuren himel vnd ist ob In | allen Indem got regniret mit den neün koren der engelnn | vnd mit allnn menschnn di in seinen gnadnn werdnn sündnn | ¶der himel ist weder hays noch kalt vnd weder feucht noch | kalt warmm wann er ist erhoht vber alle soliche laiplich | aygenschafft wann kayn gebrest hafftiger zu val mag In | nit beruren Er ist da von feuren genant wann er aller sampt | leuchtet als das lauter feweren vnd doch nit brennet wann | das er die gayste enhaltet di enczundet sind Inder minne der | warhayt wann erleuchtet Indem himel oder lichte der lau | terkayt Dys sey genüg gesagt von den himelnn nach der | warhayt gesprochen als es inden naturen ist Nach den neun | erstnn himelnn vnd als es in dem glauben nach den Jungsten | zwain himelnn ist vnd In dem sol der mensch gedencken | [Bl. 33v] wi loblichen got Im dar Inne erczayget ist Sider alles das | inden elementen lebt von der krafft der himelnn fleusset | vnd auch geschlossen ist | da pey merck das | des menschnn sele di | in dem leibe lebet In | dem oberstnn himelnn | gewrczel ist Siderdas | laub gras kreuter | vnd plümen Als hoch | herkumen ist sind | wer ist denn der gayst | der alle ding gepilden | vnd erkennen mag Aus | so hoher reichhat ge | flossen wann indem | auß fluß ist so hohe | art das kein creatur | vber dencken Ach mensch da pey gedenck war czu du seist | geschaffnn furbas wissent das Indem firmament czwelff zaich | en sind das sind czwelff taile des selbnn himels mit dem ge | stirnn das an dem selbenn himel stet ¶Des nement di maister | also war vnd sahent das dy sunne vnd die andernn planetnn | In aynem tail des himels het ein ander krafft den Inden | andernn vnd da von so gabent si ydem tail des firmamencz einen | namen vnd ayn gleichnus aynes tirs ~ |

The particular text tradition offered here is doubtlessly representative of the abridged version. The incipit and introduction are laid out identically with the alternative version. However, the text of the Zurich manuscript, instead of describing the first seven heavens, skips over them entirely, beginning its series directly with the eighth. Were these deviations only to surface in one or two manuscripts, one could realistically attribute them to scribal error and/or a faulty text tradition stemming, perhaps, from a flawed prototype. According to this scenario, the flawed texts would have to have been passed down in close temporal and spatial proximity to each other, which turns out to not have been the case. The entire tradition of the treatise *Von den 11 Himmelssphären* is listed below, with textual witnesses classified according to the version they represent:

Complete version (11 textual witnesses):

2. Berlin, State Libr., Ms. lat. fol. 262, fol. 18r–18v
4. Frankfurt a. M., University Libr., Ms. germ. qu. 17, fol. 23ra–24va
5. Heidelberg, University Libr., Cod. Pal. germ. 1, fol. 1r–3v
6. Heidelberg, University Libr., Cod. Pal. germ. 226, fol. 97r–98v
9. Heidelberg, University Libr., Cod. Pal. germ. 718, fol. 1r–4r
10. Karlsruhe, State Libr., Cod. K 2790, fol. 128v–130v
15. Munich, State Libr., Cgm 596, fol. 24r–26r
19. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS Allemand 106, fol. 215v–216v
23. Salzburg, University Libr., Cod. M III 3, fol. 21ra–21vb
25. Solothurn, Central Libr., Cod. S 386, fol. 178r–179v
29. Private Collection Max Schmitz, Luxembourg, no shelfmark, fol. 1r–1v

Abridged version (18 textual witnesses):

1. Berlin, State Libr., Ms. germ. quart. 20, fol. 69v–71r
3. Edinburgh, Libr. of the Royal Observatory, Cr. 4.6, fol. 37r–38v
7. Heidelberg, University Libr., Cod. Pal. germ. 291, fol. 26v–28r
8. Heidelberg, University Libr., Cod. Pal. germ. 557, fol. 52v–54v
11. London, British Libr., MS Add. 17987, fol. 81r–84v
12. London, University College, MS Germ. 1, fol. 49v–52r
13. Munich, State Libr., Cgm 28, fol. 25r–26r
14. Munich, State Libr., Cgm 349, fol. 51v–54r
16. Munich, State Libr., Cgm 730, fol. 53r–56r
17. Munich, University Libr., 2^o Cod. ms. 578, fol. 7v–9r
18. Nuremberg, State Archive, Rep. 52a (Reichsstadt Nürnberg), Hs. Nr. 426, fol. 23r–24r
20. Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), Univ. of Pennsylvania, Rare Book & Manuscript Libr., fol. 40r–41v
21. Pürglitz / Křivoklát (Czech Republic), Castle Libr., Cod. I e 7, fol. 77v–81v
22. Saint Louis (Missouri), Concordia Seminary Library, Rare Book Collection, no shelfmark (1), fol. 26v–27v
24. St. Gall, Monastery Libr., Cod. 760, p. 54–58
26. Strasbourg, City Libr., Ms. 258 (olim Ms. 711), fol. 38v–40v
27. Zurich, Central Libr., Ms. C 54, fol. 32v–33v
28. Private Collection Antiquarian Bookstore Dr. Jörn Günther, Hamburg, Nr. 1997/5,24, fol. 48r

The complete version, exemplified by our older fragment among other textual witnesses, is represented by eleven manuscripts, whereas the abridged version of the treatise is to be found contained in 18, at almost double the frequency. The consideration of this numerical relationship makes it highly unlikely that the truncation of the text resulted from scribal error and/or the use of a flawed prototype. Even when the existence of the complete version is attested to as early as the second half of the fourteenth century, the abridged version clearly was copied more prolifically. The earliest surviving example of the abridged version is the St. Louis manuscript,

which dates to 1429. During the fifteenth century, the text tradition is marked by the coexistence of both versions running parallel to each other. Despite the emergence of the abridged version, the complete version continued to be copied. No tendency of the newer, shorter version displacing the earlier, longer version is evidenced. This suggests that each version was associated independently with certain affiliations, which intentionally required a particular version to suit their own purpose.

It is striking that a survey of the illustration presented in the manuscripts of both versions shows that none of the eleven examples of the complete version are illustrated or, judging from spaces left blank, were intended to have illustrations added to them later. In contrast, eighteen specimens of the abridged version are illustrated, or are at least laid out in such manner as to accommodate later illustration. An illustrated text is, in fact, an obligatory component of the abridged version manuscripts. The interplay of text and image was quite possibly a part of the conceptional design behind the emergence of the abridged version.

A closer look at the relationships among the various text traditions is necessary in order to come to an understanding of the significance of the two divergent text versions, both of which continued in production and coexisted parallel to one another. For what possible reason could the abridged version have been truncated to nearly a third of the original text, while having the manuscript laid out, as a rule, for illustration? Indications can be discerned through an examination of the amalgamation of contents found in the collective manuscripts containing our textual witnesses. Further exploration leads to the recognition of consistent companion traditions or ‘communities of texts’ present in the respective version manuscripts.

Bernhard Schnell was able to convincingly show in the field of astronomical, astrological and medical texts of the Middle Ages that, time and again, traditions of stable and predictable ‘text communities’ are observable in collective manuscripts (Schnell 1987; Schnell 2019). Particular texts with related themes were consciously grouped together into standard combinations. Texts compiled in such manner made up fixed groupings, which would be repeatedly reproduced and thus prolifically coalesced into established entities. This principle is not limited solely to text selection, but extends to the structure of the compilations as well. The order of the various texts is arranged according to overarching thematic configurations.

Schnell designated the collective manuscript: the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch*¹⁶ as a compelling representative of just such a ‘community of related texts’ compiled in such a way as to acquire the character of an autonomous work. He

¹⁶ Cf. the *Handschriftencensus* entry (<https://handschriftencensus.de/werke/2939>) as well as the primary work: Lenhardt and Keil 1983/2004. The most up-to-date research is offered by Freienhagen-Baumgardt et al. 2021, 166–214 with Fig. 45–65.

postulates that an unnamed compiler/editor must have emerged who seized upon extensive fixed works out of the astronomical, astrological and medical traditions, adopted them nearly unchanged, and then deliberately revised and arranged them (Schnell 2019, 231–232). He goes on to posit that this compiler/editor even modified the included texts according to his or her purpose (Schnell 2019, 243). He estimates that the origin of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch* goes back to the beginning of the fifteenth century (Schnell 2019, 231–232).

To aid in better recognizing these ‘text communities’, Schnell formulated the *Schürstab* version as a model of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch* based upon manuscript C 54 held by the Zurich Central Library (Schnell 2019, 234–242). In so doing, he identifies three overarching thematic sections in the collective manuscripts, which are composites of various stand-alone texts of similar content-related themes: the first section deals with texts about human health in the course of the seasons; the second section presents texts concerning the influence of celestial bodies on human health; and the final, third section consists of texts instructive about healthy lifestyle, especially by way of purging harmful bodily fluids.

The treatise *Von den 11 Himmelssphären* is found in the abridged version towards the end of the second thematic section of the *Hausbuch* about the influence of celestial bodies. Because we know the earlier complete version was already in existence in the late fourteenth century, it could have well been a work which the compiler/editor came upon among texts circulated at the time, and then adapted and included in his compilation. An examination of all manuscripts of the abridged version confirms that the noted connection between the abridged version and the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch* is in no way an isolated case. On the contrary, all known copies of the abridged version are found in the context of the tradition of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch*. On the other hand, the complete version may also surface in collective manuscripts with astrological, astronomical and medical themes. However, it is yet to be evidenced in the *Schürstab* version, which has been asserted as the standard of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch*.

The abridged version of the treatise is passed down without exception in specimens of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch*. It raises the question: why did the compiler/editor see fit to truncate the original text, excluding the first seven heavenly spheres? By comparing both versions, it becomes readily apparent that the changes already occur at the very beginning of the text. Two passages are particularly striking in this regard. Even before the body of the text begins, the compiler/editor placed an introductory inscription in advance of the incipit, “Got hieß abraham [. . .]” [“God asked Abraham . . .”], which reads as follows: “Nu saget dis puch hie nach von den vbrichen koren der himel vnd von irem lauff vnd natur vnd hebt an an dem der da haysset das firmament” [“This book tells of the remaining heavenly spheres and of their course and nature, and it begins with the

firmament”]. This entry highlights that the text presented shall only deal with the remaining heavenly spheres continuing after the first seven, the “vbrichen koren der himel” [“remaining heavenly spheres”].

This deliberate curtailment of the text gives way to the hypothesis that the first seven heavenly spheres were already dealt with in other passages contained within the collective manuscript and thus need not be repeated. The abridged version native to the *Hausbuch* begins with the eighth heavenly sphere for exactly this reason. In a later passage the compiler/editor inserted yet another textual change directly before the section on the eighth heavenly sphere. He writes: “vnd hebet also hie nach von dem achtem himel an zu sagen wann von den siblen planeten das sind siblen choer der himeln vnd ir natur Ist vormals geschriben vnd gesagt” [“and (the book) now tells of the eighth heaven, for the seven planets, which are the seven heavenly spheres, and their constitution have already been written about”]. Thus, he again points out that the first seven planets have already been dealt with in the *Hausbuch*.

Both of these textual interventions, not present in the older, complete version, serve to explain the extensive truncation of the text by way of editorial commentary. Had the compiler/editor instead simply submitted the text’s complete version unchanged, then unnecessary content-related redundancies regarding the seven heavenly spheres and the planets associated with them would have resulted. Against this backdrop, the observed editorial intervention is plausible and even to be anticipated because it constitutes a qualitative upgrade to the text in the context of the *Hausbuch*. This conclusion arises through consideration of the structure of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch*’s second section as modelled by Schnell (2019, 235–236), whereby the placement of the passage concerning the seven heavenly spheres within the collective manuscript is shifted:

2. Texts about the influence of celestial bodies on human health
 - 2.1. About the 12 constellations; illustrated
 - 2.2. About the 7 planets; illustrated
 - 2.3. About the course of the planets
 - 2.4. Weather forecasting according to the planets
 - 2.5. *Von den 11 Himmelsphären*, with one illustration

The text about the seven planets to which the revised version of our treatise refers is found under item 2.2 and often only a few pages before *Von den 11 Himmelsphären* in the manuscripts. *Von den 11 Himmelsphären* begins on folio 32v in the specific case of the Zurich manuscript, while the text about the seven planets takes up folios 24v–31v. Both texts stand in close proximity to another. It was necessary to avoid the redundancy of presenting two texts about the seven heavenly spheres in this specialized tradition grouping. Therefore, the conscious deci-

sion of the compiler/editor to conceptionally tailor the second section of the *Hausbuch* superseded concerns about preserving the integrity of a single text. He or she was acquainted with the textual contents of the compilation and viewed this amalgamation of single texts as a cohesive unity.

The abridged version exists exclusively within the *Hausbuch* tradition because the contents of a significant part of the complete heavenly sphere treatise was already covered by another text included in the collective manuscript. The abridged version is yet to be evidenced outside of this particular tradition's context, which leads one to surmise the text was purposefully revised to be incorporated into the *Hausbuch* compilation. Along with the treatise's adaption followed the addition of accompanying illustration, which conveyed elements of the contents through images. The compiler/editor introduced this newly fashioned version wonderfully into the concept of the comprehensive illustration of his or her compilation, which, according to Schnell makes up an important hallmark of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch* (Schnell 2019, 233).

Examinations such as the present one show how productive such explorative soundings can be. They can pave the way for further insights into the tradition history and aid in the understanding of the contemporary significance and function of such treatises as *Von den 11 Himmelssphären*. The consideration of information stemming from the entire tradition makes it possible to resolve apparent contradictions and irregularities, which otherwise would be difficult to explain. As a rather unusual textual witness, the fragment of *Von den 11 Himmelssphären* served as a starting point for future investigations. The parallel examination of both versions of the text shows that the respective traditions follow explicable patterns and the existence of the abridged version need not be ascribed to supposed flawed prototypes or scribal error. This version appears only in the context of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch* for which, in all likelihood, it was tailored. The dissemination of the abridged version is much more prolific than its older and lengthier counterpart's, which is owed to the great popularity of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch*. Our treatise profited enormously from its inclusion in this widespread collective manuscript. The present examination could well add to nascent theories as to the emergence of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch* (Schnell 2019). The example of this text might be consulted as a resource in exploring the additive method of compilation employed by the *Hausbuch* compiler/editor.

Two distinct versions of the treatise *Von den 11 Himmelssphären* exist according to our present understanding of its tradition. The abridged version takes on great significance as well as a special function for the present examination. While, according to findings of the research community, the earlier, complete version is associated with astronomical and astrological collective manuscripts in general, the later, abridged version clearly belongs specifically to the tradition

complex of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch*, so much so that its presence can be used as an indicator helpful in the identification of the *Schürstab* version of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch*. This identification can be reliably verified by checking whether a particular fifteenth century collective manuscript of astronomical, astrological and medical texts contains the abridged version of our treatise, as well as whether it finds itself copied in close proximity to a distinct text about the seven heavenly bodies. In such a case, one has, in all likelihood, a textual witness of the *Iatromathematisches Hausbuch* at hand.

While looking more closely at the interrelations of textual traditions, it is to be anticipated that further findings about fixed text and tradition communities as embodied in collective manuscripts are to follow. The present chapter provides an initial stage which, when added to the mosaic of medieval astronomical, astrological and medical literature, makes way for much-needed further investigation into the subject.¹⁷

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¹⁷ Translated by Robert Whitley (Houston).

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