Introduction: A user's guide to the Trevelyon miscellany of 1608

What better fare, than well content, What mirth to godly wealth?
What better guest then trusty friend, in sickness and in health?

This rhyming couplet, framed as two rhetorical questions, appears alongside sixteen other verses on fol. 28v of Thomas Trevelyon's miscellany (Folger Shakespeare Library MS V.b.232). Copied from Thomas Tusser's *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry* (London, 1573), it reminds the reader of the richness of a virtuous everyday life balanced by faith in divine providence and the comfort of trusted friends. It is one of six mottos that Tusser designates "Posies for thine own bedchamber"—that is, sententious statements that could be painted or carved directly onto walls, ceiling beams, or furniture or embroidered onto pillow covers, bed hangings, or wall hangings and contemplated before falling asleep and upon awaking. Given Tusser's designation, it is not surprising that this posy and others have survived in several wall paintings in Hertfordshire, such as a sixteenth-century wall painting at Pirton Grange and the interior wall of a farmhouse at Ansells End, Kimpton.[1] Such a posy exemplifies both the multimedia quality of Trevelyon's texts and images and the impetus for creating his masterpiece. While Trevelyon gathered his material from print sources, transforming black-and-white woodcuts, engravings, and texts into a colorful oversized hand-illustrated manuscript, his devout contemporaries were converting these same sources into embroidered and painted works of art.

Thomas Trevelyon finished his magisterial 654-page miscellany in 1608 at the age of sixty. According to prognosticators, 1608 was to be a tumultuous year, with snow, tempests, floods, shipwrecks, earthquakes, corruption, scarcity, death to fish, damage to fruit, and an eclipse on 1 August, which "betokeneth the death of some great Personage."[2] However, English men and women could find consolation in the fact that all of these events, predicted from the movements of the planets and the heavenly spheres, "the good and almighty God can change, if it please him, and make as nothing, proving us vain liars." In keeping with this providentialist world view, the time line that serves as the first surviving page of the Trevelyon miscellany (the first two leaves are missing) consists of religious, political, and astrological events woven into a single chronology, beginning and ending with two definitive moments for humankind: the creation of the world and the accession of a Scottish king, James VI, to the English throne. In between, other transformative events are listed, such as the exodus from Egypt, the destruction of Troy, the construction of the Temple by Solomon, the building of Rome, the birth of Christ, the arrival of William the Conqueror, the invention of the printing press, the camp at Tilbury, outbreaks of plague and sweating sickness, a blazing star, a blizzard, and an earthquake.

Learning moral and political lessons from the exploits and conflicts of the past was considered a profitable exercise in early modern England. History had a tendency to repeat itself, and therefore awareness of past events could guide individuals to the best course of action in the present. In the aftermath of the Reformation, chroniclers such as John Stow, Richard Grafton, Ralph Holinshed, and William Camden published massive chronologically arranged annals of British history that began with the mythical founding by Brutus and emphasized a continuous and ancient lineage that led logically to the (Protestant) present day. Chronicles had to be tweaked after the accession of James I: the king's ambitions to unite Scotland and England meant that he needed to be portrayed as the link between two dynastic histories, recalling the joining of the houses of York and Lancaster to form the Tudor dynasty. In the Trevelyon miscellany, James is described as "the next inheritor to henrye the seventh and Elyzabeth his queene."[3]

This is the mental world of Thomas Trevelyon: a world where looking to the past was a key means of understanding the future, where faith in the providence of a merciful God was the primary comfort against life's unpredictability. While he reveals little biographical information about himself in his miscellany, Trevelyon's selection and adaptation of textual and visual material for his miscellany provides rich insight into the availability and malleability of different kinds of media in London in early Jacobean England, which was awkwardly transitioning into a new era. The invention of the printing press in the 1450s had created a sense of information overload not unlike today's. Protestantism was a relatively new religion, introduced in the 1540s, briefly repealed by Queen Mary between 1557 and 1559 and under constant threat by conspiracies such as the 1605 Gunpowder Plot. Since 1582, England had lagged ten calendar days behind the Catholic Continent because it refused to adopt the new Gregorian or "New Style" calendar, created by a bull of Pope Gregory XIII and introduced in order to compensate for an increasing divergence between the solar year and the Julian or "Old Style" calendar year. Ubiquitous *memento mori*, along with frequent outbreaks of plague and other illnesses, served as constant reminders of the transience of earthly life and the need to repent one's sins in preparation for death. As well, England now had a Scottish king, James I, who had grand ideas about forming a united "Great Britain." Trevelyon's curious miscellany touches on all of these issues, giving us a window into the concerns and interests of a London craftsman trying to create order, beauty, and continuity out of the fracture and stress caused by his country's growing pains.

The Trevelyon miscellany unites much of the familiar religious and allegorical visual and textual imagery of the period, as well as a good deal of ancient proverbial wisdom into a single source. Gathered from the bestsellers of the period—the Geneva Bible, almanacs, chronicles, husbandry manuals, commonplace books, pattern books, sets of prints imported from Antwerp, and hastily printed English broadside ballads and woodcuts—these images were part of a common vocabulary. Most came from compilations and derivations in and of themselves, or were recycled from other sources, usually written and assembled by the most popular and important writer of the Renaissance, Anonymous. The miscellany operated on multiple levels: it was a book that could be read from beginning to end, but individual pages could be contemplated as needed. It was not just for reading, however. It could also be plundered as a source book for embroidery and exterior and interior home design. Further, the texts and images could be considered separately or together, since, as Michael Bath writes, "both sententious sayings and visual icons belong to a system in which, through the arts of rhetoric and particularly of memory, image could always be used to locate text, and text was committed to memory through its association with significant images."[4] As one component of a well-developed multimedia edification and memory system that encompassed oral, print, and manuscript cultures, the miscellany reinforced virtuous thought and behavior by its similarity to images and texts found and heard elsewhere.

The first part of the manuscript consists of at-a-glance historical and practical information: a time line; an illustrated calendar; moralizing proverbs; a series of computational tables and astronomical diagrams; lists of families linked to William the Conqueror; distances between London and cities around the world; a rule for determining the dates of legal terms; a list of fairs; geographical accounts of Britain, Wales, and Cornwall; descriptions of the Cambridge and Oxford colleges; a list of the shires, cities, and boroughs of England; a list of the wards and parish churches of London and environs; and a table providing distances between London and other notable towns in England. The manuscript then turns to a series of biblical and monarchical chronologies, beginning with the account in Genesis of the creation of the world and the Fall of man, followed by the generations of Adam, the sons of Noah, the kings of Israel, the genealogies of

Mary and Joseph, the twelve tribes of Israel, the early rulers of Britain, the kings and queens of England, and the kings and queens of Scotland. The next section contains edifying and cautionary verses, with illustrations, on the Twelve Degrees of the World, the Five Alls, the Ten Commandments, the Nine Worthies, the Nine Muses, the Seven Deadly Sins, the Seven Virtues, the Seven Liberal Sciences, and the Twelve Apostles. Figures important to Protestant history (such as the Gunpowder Plot conspirators and the Protestant reformers) are included as well, as are additional parables, proverbs, and lists of virtues and vices accompanied by scriptural and secular verses. The next two hundred pages are devoted to patterns, most of them without text: mazes, marquetry, knotwork, strapwork lettering, floral and abstract borders and motifs, repeating patterns, and alphabets suitable for embroidery and other applied arts, plasterwork, woodwork, painting, and garden design.[5] These patterns could be traced either through vellum or paper made transparent with oil, or by pricking holes in the original and working charcoal dust through the holes onto the new surface.[6] The manuscript ends, curiously, with lists of sheriffs and mayors of London from 1190 to 1601.

Eight years after Trevelyon completed the Folger miscellany, he made a longer version, now in the Wormsley Library, Buckinghamshire, England (and hereafter referred to as the great book). Regardless of whether or not Trevelyon authored or copied it, the prologue to the great book suggests his intentions in creating both manuscripts (FIG. 1):

The matter handled in this booke is three folde, historicall, propheticall, and evangelicall, the first teacheth examples, the second manners, and the laste a spirituall and heavenly institution. . . . It is a miscelane and noe otherwise to be respected, not learned and therefore the easyer to be pardoned. All I hope that see it are my frynds and accept it frendlye . . . So willing your frendlye favor, I leave it to your viewing.

The primary purposes of the Trevelyon miscellany and the great book, then, are didactic and mnemonic. The extracts and examples from secular, allegorical, and Protestant texts are an enduring monument for improving one's moral conduct in this life and preparing for the next. It is a miscellany; that is, "a book, volume, or literary production containing miscellaneous pieces on various subjects."[7] It is a friendly book rather than a learned one, a compilation rather than the work of one mind. The next page, headed "To the reader,"[8] further explicates the intentions of the miscellany and the great book (FIG. 2):

I tooke this laboure in hande to accomplysh my minde, to pleasure my fryndes. . . . For what I haue done hath bin of my selfe without mans teaching, God onlye infusing his celestiall blessings: And though I in my rashenesse presume to write this booke, yet I trust in gathering the fragments and broken sentences, as a beginning vnto others that are better stored, it will be of some considered, though of others defamed and mocked.

Trevelyon's gathering of "fragments and broken sentences" into a storehouse or miscellany both for the entertainment and edification of himself and for a sympathetic audience was not an unusual undertaking in and of itself. Indeed, miscellanizing and commonplacing (organizing rhetorical, moralistic, or sententious sayings by theme or in simple alphabetical order in a blank book with preordained headings) were popular humanistic activities, the logical next steps after reading and digesting. The moralists Plutarch and Erasmus recommended that readers think of themselves as bees gathering nectar from a variety of blossoms and depositing it in their honeycombs. Readers were encouraged to note particularly meaningful passages as they read, and then transfer them to their personal commonplace books, or memory storehouses. Even after *florilegiae*, or gatherings of "flowers" of *sententiae* (wise, moralistic, and memorable sayings extracted from longer works) became readily available in print, readers continued to create personal miscellanies as well, since the act of writing was an essential component of the act of memorizing. One could imagine Trevelyon compiling such a book, in which he maintained headings such as boasting, chastity, death, flattery, fortune, free will, malice, manslaughter, marriage, mercy, perjury, poverty, presumption, prosperity, and usury and which he filled with quotations from scriptural and secular sources such as the Geneva Bible, Thomas Tusser's *Five hundred points of good husbandry*, and Thomas Rogers' commonplace book of emotions, *A paterne of a passionate minde* (London, 1580). He then could have transferred this material to his grand miscellany, supplementing each topic with colorful illustrations taken from woodcuts and engravings.[9]

Biblical scenes, personified abstractions, historical heroes, proverbs, and scriptural verse were part of a long visual tradition inherited by Trevelyon and his contemporaries, a tradition that had a powerful impact at all levels of society. This familiar iconography had its roots in classical antiquity and medieval religious imagery, where it was employed in Books of Hours, and later, emblem books. Both image and text triggered the memory of devotional or moralistic thoughts and narratives, signifying something beyond what lies on the page. Even if the text and image were separated from one another, the reader would still be reminded of both by looking at one or the other. The strength of the images lay not in their originality but in their familiarity, through their diffusion in a range of media—books, broadsides, canvases, walls, ceilings, tapestries, clothing, tableware, and furniture—spurring viewers to good works and thoughts by prompting their memories.

What makes the Trevelyon miscellany unique is its color, size, and range of multimedia material. It is unlike any other manuscript

FIG. 1: Wormsley Library, "The Great Book of Thomas Trevilian," p. 1, "The Prologue" [sic.]. All images from the great book reproduced by permission of the Wormsley Library, England. Although the Folger Trevelyon miscellany does not have a prologue or other preliminary material, the first four pages (fols. 1–2), which are no longer extant, may have originally contained such matter.

FIG. 2: The great book, p. 2, "To the reader."

or printed book from this period, or from any period before or after, for that matter (aside from its cousin at Wormsley). Densely packed with illustrations, patterns, secular verse, and scripture (he includes verses from fifty-nine of the eighty books in the Geneva Bible), the subject matter leaps from the practical to the mythical, connecting the compiler and his readers to spatial and cyclical patterns and to broader religious and national continuities. All are united by similar borders and decorative space fillers. The miscellany is a series of series, beginning with chronologies (calendrical, religious, and historical) and ending with patterns (for alphabets, caps, walls, furniture, and clothing)—a library of edification, entertainment, and design.

What is further extraordinary about Trevelyon's miscellany and great book is that they preserve texts and images from popular print sources that no longer survive. Tessa Watt's exhaustive search for English pre-1640 single-sheet prints resulted in just 145 titles, and she estimates that only one in ten thousand sixteenth-century broadside ballads has survived. Chapbooks and pamphlets had similarly low rates of survival.[10] While we know from the Stationers' Register and other sources that the majority of early modern English print materials no longer exist, Trevelyon provides us with actual samples from lost texts. For example, titles of series in the miscellany and the great book such as "Princeps Proditorum: The Popes Darling: or, a Guide to his twelue Apostles" (FIG. 3), "The Green Dragon for Joyners and Gardners[11](FIG. 6)," and "the verie true Pictures of the most famous and learned men,"[12] are the only evidence that these titles once existed in print form, and certainly warrant further study.

Other titles—such as "The Five Alls," "A View of all the Right Honourable, the Lord Mayors," "A right godly and Christian A.B.C.," and almanacs compiled by Thomas Bretnor, Thomas Buckmynster, and Edward Pond—survive in only one copy or (in the case of Bretnor and Jaggard) are only known from editions printed in other years.[13] "A true description of the noble race of the stewards" and "A briefe abstract of the genealogie of all the kynges of England" survive in only two copies. The Nine Worthies survive in only two complete sets.[14] The low survival rate of these titles is a sign of their popularity and ephemeral quality, rather than indicating a small print run that would have made them scarce from the beginning.

Since printmaking was still in its infancy in England, most of the biblical and allegorical images that Trevelyon copied had their beginnings as loose sets of copperplate prints from Antwerp, which could be collected, bound, or dispersed as the purchaser saw fit. Engravings and woodcuts were copied freely over many generations and passed down from printer to printer, often without crediting the original source. Illustrations found in Trevelyon were derived from later versions of prints originally made by Flemish and Dutch artists and engravers such as Cornelis Anthonisz, Adriaen Collaert, Hans Collaert the Elder, Philip Galle, Jacques de Gheyn II, Jacob Matham, Crispijn de Passe I, Jan Sadeler I, Maarten de Vos, and Hieronymus Wierix (see "Trevelyon's sources"). If Trevelyon lived in London, he would have had access to the prints published by the French Huguenot Giles Godet (d. 1571), who entered numerous sets of pictures (almost entirely nonextant) in the Stationers' Register between 1562 and 1568 that have analogous titles to sets of illustrations in Trevelyon: "the Creation of the World," "The genealogy or line of our Savior Christ as touching his humanity from Noe to David," "The duty of children towards their masters," "An abstract of the genealogy and Race of all the Kings of England," and others.[15]

The miscellany and the great book give us a sense of the extensive range of graphic imagery that was available in London bookshops in the early seventeenth century. They also give us a sense of the circular and transformative relationship between print and manuscript in the century after the invention of the printing press, showing how readers consumed printed images and texts, not just by reading and note taking, but by actually tracing and copying images and texts into a new format that amplifies their meanings through color, mise-en-page, and context. The miscellany and the great book reinforce the now-foreign concept of printed text as public property that could be appropriated into a limitless array of formats. As Barker writes, "it is difficult to distinguish, through the successive filters of intermediate transformations (themselves hard to follow), the ultimate source of all Trevilian's different texts and pictures" (4). Indeed, it is both confounding and illuminating to compare Trevelyon's texts and images against their possible sources. Wheatley observes, "In his skillful combination and recombination of verbal and visual matter, Trevelyon makes the printed texts he appropriates speak new political truths."[16] Today, we might consider it plagiarism, but then it was gathering and framing and not at all unusual. Peter Beal aptly summarizes the loose and generally unproblematic grasp that authors and artists had on their own productions when they circulated them in manuscript: "Transmission [was] subject to the common process of manuscript culture whereby texts were liable to be copied, sometimes adapted, to suit the tastes, standards and requirements of compilers and readers."[17] Trevelyon's process of selection, adaptation, and conflation of secular and scriptural extracts and images reveals much about his own personal interests and about reading and writing practices in Shakespeare's England.

FIG. 3: The great book, p. 265, "Princeps Proditorum: The Popes Darling: or, a Guide to his twelue Apostles." This leaf (fol. 136) is now missing in the miscellany.

THOMAS TREVELYON, THE MAN AND THE COMPILER

Trevelyon has always been described as a shadowy figure, but in fact his presence is strongly felt, if not biographically, then certainly biobibliographically. The biographical information is slim indeed. We can deduce that Trevelyon was born ca. 1548, since he states in the Wormsley great book (FIG. 5) that he was sixty-eight years old in 1616. His surname, more frequently spelled Trevilian (as it is in the great book), suggests that he was from Cornwall or Devon, and the contents of the miscellany and the great book indicate that he was Protestant, despite the fact that many Trevilians were Catholics. Given his access to a wide array of prints, engravings, and printed texts, which he used as his source material, it is generally assumed that Trevelyon lived in London (foreign prints were relatively expensive, and were sold by specialist booksellers in London, while cheap single-sheet woodcut images were sold throughout England by chapmen). Given Trevelyon's apparent access to images before they appeared in printed books, Anthony Wells-Cole surmises that he "must have copied the portraits while they hung in shops in Blackfriars, the Strand and elsewhere."[18] Given the time it must have taken to create two volumes, he may have been retired and living comfortably. The inclusion of ornate alphabets and detailed patterns for embroidery, marquetry, and other applied arts suggests that he was a craftsman of some sort, perhaps a professional drawer of patterns. It remains to be determined whether or not the patterns and letterforms are original to Trevelyon or copied from other sources.[19]

Nicolas Barker's search for biographical information among fragmentary parish records, marriage registers, and other London archival records turned up a number of people by the name of Thomas Trevelyon, including one with connections to the Dyers' Company, but none that perfectly match the dates of our miscellany maker. The most likely figures noted by Barker are a Thomas Trevelyon, father of another Thomas, the barber-surgeon who died in 1646 and who owned a dye house[20]; a Thomas Trevelyon whose funeral fees on 3 May 1621 are recorded in an account book from the parish of St. Martin Vintry; and perhaps the unnamed father of Thomas Trevillian, a silk weaver who married Mary Browne on 30 May 1633 at St. Dunstan's, Stepney, and whose will was administered in 1639. Parish records for Stoke-in-Teignhead, Devon, at the Devon Record Office record a Thomas Trevillian who married on 21 January 1582, while the Kingsbury Episcopi, Somerset, parish records (now at the Somerset Record Office) include a Thomas Trevillian who married Joan Stillerd in 1594. Another Thomas Trevelyon married Dorothy Hatch on 12 October 1567, in South Molton, Devon.[21]

Trevelyon personalizes the miscellany and the great book in a few places by incorporating his initials, name, and date. In the miscellany and the great book, the illustration for the month of June depicts a man holding an iron in the shape of the letter "T," and on the hill behind him, a newly-branded sheep with a "T" on his back. In the miscellany, the letter T stands on a hillock as a decorative feature, and an opening in the middle of a series of knotwork patterns consists of his name.[22] The T and M of the first name and the T, V, L, and O of the surname are in highly ornamental strapwork lettering; the remaining letters are in bold minuscule Roman lettering with the "a" playfully askew (and, to a lesser extent, the first "e" and the "y"). His name appears in similar fashion in the great book, although in this version the year "1616" appears on the facing page (653–64; "1616" also appears on 646). On p. 49 of the great book, he writes his name and the year in roman letters: "Thomas treuilyan 1616" (FIG. 4), and on p. 456 (FIG. 5):

Thomas treuilyan Being 68 yeares of age when he made an end of this Booke, And in the Yeare of our Lorde God: 1616: And in the 12 day of September: And in the 14 yeare of Kyng James his Raigne the First of England, To this Princely James, and his Progenie, Whom heauenly Angels guard from tratcherie.

Most manuscript miscellanies record neither the compiler's name nor the date: Trevelyon is compelled to supply it multiple times, in multiple ways.

Trevelyon's presence is felt in other ways as well, by his inclusions, omissions, and adaptations and by the way he unites texts and images from different sources, altering their original formats so that each page in the miscellany has continuity with the next. For his depiction of the departure of Mordecai (175v, from the book of Esther), Trevelyon appropriates Crispijn de Passe the Elder's engraving of "The Prodigal Son Leaving his Father's House" (ca. 1599–1600, after Maarten de Vos). He adapts a print from the workshop of Jacques de Gheyn the Younger, "A Man Ruled by his Wife" (ca. 1595), to depict a leaf titled "Malice" (186r), which includes scriptural quotations relating not only to the malice and wickedness of women, but also to proud, rich, and distrustful men. In another instance, Trevelyon reproduces a frontispiece used by the printer John Day to compartmentalize verse from Thomas Tusser's *Five Hundred Points of Husbandry* (FIG. 10).[23] Day's printer's mark at the base of the frontispiece was a visual pun on his name: a sleeper being awakened before a rising sun, illustrating his motto, "Arise, for it is Day" (FIG. 11). In *his* version of the frontispiece, Trevelyon omits the textual pun but includes the illustration of the sleeper being awakened (minus the sunrise), and then fills the compartment and surrounding area with verse relating to Christmas, the stages of man's life, and how to be a good housewife. Three adjacent leaves have the same format: ornate cartouches filled with Tusser's verse.

Trevelyon devotes a total of seven pages to Tusser (19r–20v, 27v–28v). While his extracts generally follow the order in which they appear in the printed source, they diverge considerably from Tusser's physical layout. Stanzas and posies from different verses and chapters are run together into single blocks of text, and it is difficult to tell where one stanza ends and another begins. While everywhere else in the manuscript Trevelyon attempts to make his formats simpler than his printed sources, here he omits all of Tusser's useful textual apparatus and places the burden on the viewer to read the extract as a single narrative or as individual couplets and quatrains. Why Trevelyon selects and omits certain verses or reverses their order is hard to ascertain, but one could guess based on certain omissions. For example, on fol. 28v he includes a series of six posies titled, "Posies for the guest's chamber." He omits only posy 5, "Some make the chimney chamber pot, to smel like filthy sinck, / yet who so bold, so soone to say, fough how these howses stinck." Did he find this humorous posy inappropriate for the walls of a guest chamber?

In the case of the calendrical tables for each month, with separate columns for the prime, day, dominical letter, saints' day, sunset, good and evil days, prognostication, epact, and symbols for red-letter days and astrological signs, Trevelyon seems to have relied on multiple almanacs rather than a single source.[24] He included the "saints' days" found in customary early modern English almanac calendars—which, besides the saints, consisted of the first days of Michaelmas and Hilary terms, the days when the sun entered a new astrological sign, the beginning and end of the "dog days," the Gunpowder Plot ("Papists consp[iracy]," November 5) and the Gowrie conspiracy ("K James

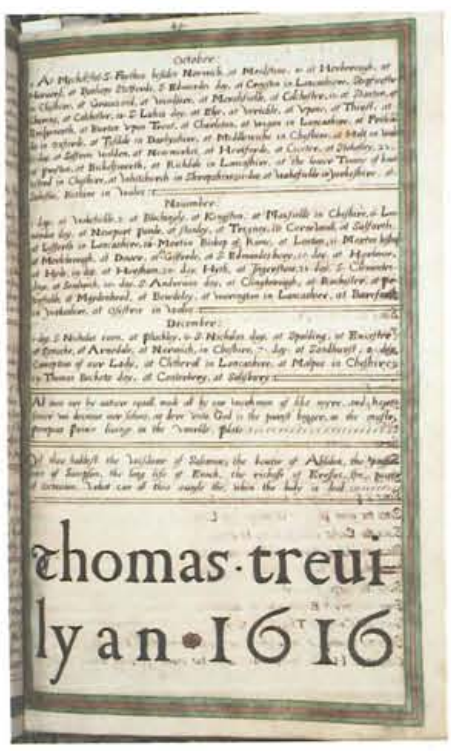

FIG. 4: The great book, p. 49, "Thomas treuilyan 1616." The name is spelled "Trevelyon" in the miscellany (fols. 264v–265r).

FIG. 5: The great book, p. 456, "Thomas treuilyan."