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Medieval Debates on Foreknowledge. Future Contingents, Prophecy, and Divination. Acts of the XXVII Annual Colloquium of the SIEPM, Trento 12-15 September 2023

Edited by
Alessandro Palazzo, Francesca Bonini, Amalia Cerrito

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Cover illustration: Ptolemy dressed in royal attire next to a table containing the 16 diagrams (figurae) used in the geomantic method. Tübingen, Universitätsbibliothek, Md 2, f. 286v.

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Introductory Remarks

Francesca Bonini - Alessandro Palazzo

This volume stems from the 27th Annual Colloquium of the SIEPM, held in Trento on the 12-15 September 2023 and titled "Medieval Debates on Foreknowledge: Future Contingents, Prophecy, and Divination". Rather than focusing on a specific type of prediction, the conference aimed at exploring the debates that revolved around the concept of foreknowledge during the Middle Ages. This approach had the advantage of investigating foreknowledge both as a subject of philosophical and theological enquiry and as a technique employed by the sciences. In this way, it addressed issues related to the cognition of the future across several disciplinary fields and from different conceptual and doctrinal perspectives. The twenty-six contributions collected in this volume are mostly refined versions of the papers presented at the colloquium. However, also new studies have been added to elucidate aspects and themes that received limited attention at the time.

It is important to emphasize that this publication is one of the expected outcomes of the project Prin PNRR 2022 "Social, Political, and Religious Prognostication and its Roots: Philosophical Strategies for Coping with Uncertainties and Planning the Future", financed by Next Generation EU. The project, involving five Italian universities (Trento, Firenze, Foggia, Lucca, and Pisa), aims at studying – across the different linguistic and religious areas of the Middle Ages – a number of sciences, disciplines, and techniques that were designed to foretell the future (precisely conjunction astrology, geomancy, prophecy, and medicine), as well as their connections with political events and eschatological expectations.[1]

[1] The project has so far produced two volumes: *Medical and Philosophical Perspectives on Illness and Disease in the Middle Ages*, ed. A. Palazzo, F. Bonini (Quaderni di Noctua. La tradizione filosofica dall'antico al moderno. Studi e testi 7 [2024]), doi: 10.14640/QuadernidiNoctua7; *Prescienza, profezia, determinismo e futuri contingenti tra Antichità e Medioevo*, a cura di A. Rodolfi, M. Sartini (Studi e ricerche del Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze. Filosofia 2), Firenze 2025.

Turnhout, 2025 (Rencontres de Philosophie Médiévale 31) *pp. IX-XX*
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More generally, the scholarship on medieval discourses on foreknowledge has substantially expanded over the last decade or so, thanks to the publication of numeorus articles, monographs, and critical editions, as well as long-term projects involving large teams of scholars.

The International Consortium for Research in the Humanities (ICRH) "Fate, Freedom and Prognostication. Strategies for Coping with the Future in East Asia and Europe" in Erlangen, for instance, recently ended its long-term research activities. Within its framework, a large international team of scholars carried out comparative analyses of the theories, practices, and methods of prognostication in both medieval European and Mediterranean societies and the Chinese civilization. As a result, many publications have been produced in recent years, dealing with the medieval people's views of and attitudes towards the future, especially from a historical perspective. Particular attention was paid to past futures and strategies for handling uncertainties,[2] to eschatologism,[3] to prophecy,[4] to divination,[5] to the sciences of the stars, and to manticism in legal sources.[6] The 2021 two-volume book "Prognostication in the Medieval World. A Handbook", in my opinion, epitomizes the part of this project pertaining to medieval Western civilization very well: its editors (Matthias Heiduk, Klaus Herbers, and Hans-Christian Lehner) decided to subsume a wide range of subjects and fields (apocalypticism, prophecy, the science of the stars, divination, medicine,

[2] E.g., *Zukunft im Mittelalter. Zeitkonzepte und Planungsstrategien*, hrsg. v. K. Oschema, B. Schneidmüller, Ostfildern 2021.

[3] E.g., *Mittelalterliche Zukunftsgestaltung im Angesicht des Weltendes. Forming the Future Facing the End of the World in the Middle Ages*, hrsg. v. F. Schmieder (Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 77), Köln-Weimar-Wien 2015; *The End(s) of Time(s). Apocalypticism, Messianism, and Utopianism through the Ages*, ed. H.-C. Lehner (Prognostication in History 6), Leiden-Boston 2021.

[4] H.-C. Lehner, *Prophetie zwischen Eschatologie und Politik. Zur Rolle des Vorhersagbarkeit von Zukünftigem in der hochmittelalterlichen Historiographie*, Mainz 2015.

[5] *Mantik, Schicksal und Freiheit im Mittelalter*, hrsg. v. L. Sturlese (Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 70), Köln [u.a.] 2011; *Die mantischen Künste und die Epistemologie prognostischer Wissenschaften im Mittelalter*, hrsg. v. A. Fidora (Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 74), Köln [u.a.] 2013; *Unveiling the Hidden–Anticipating the Future. Divinatory Practices Among Jews Between Qumran and the Modern Period*, ed. J. Rodrígues-Arribas, D. Gieseler Greenbaum (Prognostication in History 5), Leiden-Boston 2021.

[6] *Mittelalterliche Rechtstexte und mantische Praktiken*, hrsg. v. K. Herbers, H.-C. Lehner (Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 94), Köln [u.a.] 2021.

divination according to secular and canonical law) under the concept of "prognostication", "used as the standard term for anticipating the future, free of all connotations", preferred over the more traditional "future-oriented forms of prophecy and divination", and able to also include "purely mathematical-calculative methods".[7]

Other publications focused on a specific form of prediction. Prophecy stood out as one of the key subjects due to its roots in the religious traditions of the Middle Ages and its relevance as a unique modality of knowledge at the intersection of natural mechanisms of cognition and supernatural forms of revelation,[8] while the interplay between prophetism, the eschatological conception of history and political affairs were emphasized by some scholars.[9] Other publications dealt with the cultural, religious, and philosophical role and implications of prophecy in Islamic and Jewish traditions, building on a rich and well-established tradition of studies.[10]

It would be impossible to list all crucial volumes and essays that have been published on astrology in the last years here. Critical editions of fundamental sources of medieval astrology were made available, such as William of Moerbeke's Greek-Latin translation of Ptolemy's *Quadripartitum* and the Arabic version of Abū Maʿšar's *Great Introduc-*

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[7] *Prognostication in the Medieval World. A Handbook*, ed. M. Heiduk, K. Herbers, H. C. Lehner, 2 vols., Berlin-Boston 2021, vol. 1, 5.

[8] *Prophètes et prophétisme*, éd. A. Vauchez, Paris 2012; B. Fitzgerald, *Inspiration and Authority in the Middle Ages. Prophets and their Critics from Scholasticism to Humanism*, Oxford 2017; *Dante e la dimensione visionaria tra Medioevo e prima età moderna*, a cura di B. Huss, M. Tavoni, Ravenna 2019; *Poesia e profezia nell'opera di Dante*, a cura di G. Ledda, Ravenna 2019; *Prophecy and Prophets in the Middle Ages*, ed. A. Palazzo, A. Rodolfi (Micrologus Library 103), Firenze 2020.

[9] G.C. Garfagnini, *Una città e il suo profeta: Savonarola a Firenze*, Spoleto 2021; *Prophetie, Prognose und Politik. Personengeschichtliche Perspektiven zwischen Antike und Neuzeit*, hrsg. v. C. Hoffarth, S. Brenner, Frankfurt a.M. 2022; G.L. Potestà, *Segni dei tempi. Figure profetiche e cifre apocalittiche*, Milano 2023.

[10] O.L. Lizzini, "Representation and Reality: On the Definition of Imaginative Prophecy in Avicenna", in *The Parva naturalia in Greek, Arabic, and Latin Aristotelianism. Supplementing the Science of the Soul*, ed. B. Bydén, F. Radovic (Studies in the History of Philosophy of Mind 17), Cham 2018, 133-154; R.C. Taylor, "Averroes and the Philosophical Account of Prophecy", in *Studia Graeco-Arabica*, 8 (2018), 287-304; M. Sebti, *Avicenne: Prophétie et gouvernement du monde*, Paris 2021.

tion.[11] In general, our knowledge of the Ptolemaic works, translations, and manuscripts has greatly benefited from the research conducted within the framework of the project *Ptolemaeus Arabus et Latinus*, which, among others things, has led to the publications of seven volumes, five in the series *Ptolemaeus Arabus et Latinus – Texts* and two in the series *Ptolemaeus Arabus et Latinus – Studies*, which are now available via open-access.[12] Important studies have also been produced on the political and social impact of astrological theories and predictions.[13]

Likewise, it is impossible to offer an exhaustive overview of the publications dealing with divination and its specific forms (geomancy, physiognomy, dream divination, chiromancy, spatulomancy, etc.). In this case, it is worth referring to the numerous volumes that appeared in the series *Micrologus Library* as well as elsewhere.[14] Editions of key divinatory sources were also published.[15]

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[11] *Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos in the Translation of William of Moerbeke. Claudii Ptolemaei liber iudicialium*, ed. G. Vuillemin-Diem, C. Steel, Leuven 2015; *The* Great Introduction to Astrology *by Abū Maʿšar*, 2 vols., ed. K. Yamamoto, C. Burnett (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies 106), Leiden-Boston, 2019.

[12] https://ptolemaeus.badw.de/publications

[13] See, e.g., *Astrologers and their Clients in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. W. Deimann, D. Juste (Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 73), Köln 2015; *Quaestio. Yearbook of the History of Metaphysics*, 19 (2019), "Stars, Kingdoms, Beliefs, and Masses. Political Astrology in the Mediterranean Area from Middle Ages to the Renaissance", ed. M. Benedetto, P. Arfé, P. Porro; J.-P. Boudet, *Astrologie et politique entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance* (Micrologus Library 102), Firenze 2020.

[14] See, e.g., *Geomancy and Other Forms of Divination*, ed. A. Palazzo, I. Zavattero (Micrologus Library 87), Firenze 2017; *De Frédéric II à Rodolphe II. Astrologie, divination et magie dans les cours (XIIIe-XVIIe siècle)*, éd. J.-P. Boudet, M. Ostorero, A. Paravicini Bagliani (Micrologus Library 85), Firenze 2017; *Dialogues among Books in Medieval Western Magic and Divination*, ed. S. Rapisarda, E. Niblaeus (Micrologus Library 65), Firenze 2014; *Anglo-Norman Chiromancies*, ed. T. Hunt, S. Rapisarda (Textes littéraires du Moyen Age 57), Paris 2020; *Textes médiévaux de scapulomancie*, ed. S. Rapisarda, C. Burnett (Textes littéraires du Moyen Age 43), Paris 2017; A. Fidora, "Divination and Scientific Prediction. The Epistemology of Prognostic Sciences in Medieval Europe", in *Early Science and Medicine*, 18 (2013), 517-535.

[15] See, e.g., Guillelmi de Morbeca *Geomantia I-IV,4*, ed. E. Rubino (Corpus philosophorum medii aevi. Testi e studi 26), Firenze 2021; *Geomantia IV,5-VIII*, ed. E. Rubino (Corpus philosophorum medii aevi. Testi e studi 28), Firenze 2023; *Thabit ibn Qurra «On Talismans» and Ps.-Ptolemy «On Images 1-9». Together with the «Liber prestigiorum Thebidis» of Adelard of Bath*, ed. G. Bohak, C. Burnett (Micrologus Library 106), Firenze 2021; Michel Scot, *Liber particularis. Liber physionomie*, ed.

Scholars of medieval medicine have also acknowledged the importance of prediction within medical theory and practice, for instance, by analyzing the role of medical prognostication and investigating the sources of the doctrines of crises.[16] Further, they have explored the relations between medical and astrological theories and concepts.[17]

In the philosophical and theological field, an impressive body of literature concerned with foreknowledge, predestination, and future contingents has been published in the last years, with studies focusing on single authors or periods or on general overviews.[18]

O. Voskoboynikov (Micrologus Library 93), Firenze 2019.

[16] D. Jacquart, "La prudence dans l'énoncé du pronostic médical au tournant des XIIIe et XIVe siècles", in *Die mantischen Künste und die Epistemologie*, hrsg. v. A. Fidora, 113-129; M. McVaugh, "The Future of a Disease: the Impact of Galen's *De Crisi* on Medieval Medical Thought", in *Die mantischen Künste und die Epistemologie*, 131-150; G. M. Cooper, "The Reception of an Empirical Medical Theory: Galen's Crisis Theory in the Arabic Commentaries on the Hippocratic Aphorisms", in *The 1st International Prof. Dr. Fuat Sezgin Symposium on History of Science in Islam Proceedings Book*, ed. F. Basar et al., Istanbul 2020; Id., "Medical Crises and Critical Days in Avicenna and After: Insights from the Commentary Tradition", in *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World*, 6.1-2 (2018), 27-54, L. E. Demaitre, "Traditions and Practices in the Medieval Western Christian World", in *Prognostication in the Medieval World. A Handbook*, ed. by M. Heiduk, K. Herbers, H.-C. Lehner, vol. 1, 551-566.

[17] C. Schabel, F. S. Pedersen, "Miraculous, Natural, or Jewish Conspiracy? Pierre Ceffons' Question on the Black Death, with Astrological Predictions by Gersonides and Jean de Murs / Firmin de Beauval", in *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales*, 81.1, 137-179; J.-P. Boudet, "Naissance et conception: autour de la proposition 51 du *Centiloquium* attribué à Ptolémée", in *De l'homme, de la nature et du monde: mélanges d'histoire des sciences médiévales offerts à Danielle Jacquart*, éd. N. Weill-Parot, Genève 2019, 165-178; F. Bonini, "Prognostication and Medical Astrology in 14th-Century Italy: Three Case Studies", in *Medical and Philosophical Perspectives on Illness and Disease in the Middle Ages*, ed. A. Palazzo, F. Bonini, 264-293; A. Palazzo, "Pestilences and Contagious Diseases in the Middle Ages. Albert the Great and the Fourteenth-Century Plague Treatises", in *Epidemics and Pandemics. Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. M. Nicoletti, A. Palazzo, Turnhout 2024, 53-104.

[18] C. Schabel, "Henry of Langenstein, Henry Totting of Oyta, Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl and the Vienna Group on Reconciling Human Free Will with Divine Foreknowledge", in *Philosophical Psychology in Late-Medieval Commentaries on Peter Lombard's Sentences*. Acts of the XIVth Annual Colloquium of the Société Internationale pour l'étude de la Philosophie Médiévale, Radboud Universiteit, 28-30 October 2009, ed. M. Brînzei, C. Schabel, Turnhout 2020, 327-406; R. Fedriga, R. Limonta, *Il trattato sulla predestinazione e prescienza divina riguardo ai futuri contingenti di Guglielmo di Ockham*, Roma 2020; D. Torrijos-Castrillejo, "Divine foreknowledge

The present volume fits into this rich scholarly landscape. The essays collected in the volume provide analyses of manuscripts, works, and translations, explore the theories of medieval authors, and reconstruct debates across the cultural and religious traditions (Christian, Jewish, Islamic) of the medieval civilization. The volume is structured in three sections corresponding to three major conceptual constellations: future contingents (1.), prophecy (2.), and divination and prognostic sciences (3.). All of the most important discussions concerning foreknowledge and prognostication that took place during the Middle Ages are documented, with papers addressing the relationship between divine prescience and human freedom, future contingents from a theological, logico-semantical, and political perspective, demons' predictive abilities, divinely inspired and natural prophecy, eschatology, astrology, meteorological prognostication, the relationship between manticism and mental diseases, medical prognostication, physiognomy, dream divination, and geomancy.

The volume opens with a long section dedicated to the medieval debates on future contingents, divine foreknowledge, and human freedom. Three papers focus on the doctrines of three key figures of the Latin tradition, Augustine, Boethius, and Anselm of Canterbury, delineating conceptual models that shaped the discussions throughout the Latin Middle Ages. Enrico Moro ("Anatomia della caduta. Agostino sulla compatibilità tra prescienza divina e libertà del primo peccato [*Lib. Arb*. III, 3, 6-8]") analyzes Augustine's compatibilist reflection on foreknowledge as it emerges from the opening section of Book III of *De libero arbitrio*. Pasquale Porro ("How Does God's Knowledge Differ from Tiresias' Oracles? Revisiting Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, Book V") reconstructs the compatibilist solution advanced by Boethius in Book V of his *Consolation* to reconcile God's absolute and

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and providence in the commentaries of Boethius and Aquinas on the *De interpretatione* 9 by Aristotle", in *Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia*, 13 (2020), 151-173; J.-F. Genest, "Richard FitzRalph and Future Contingents", in *A Companion to Richard FitzRalph*, ed. M.W. Dunne, S. Nolan, Leiden 2023, 272-292; J. Kaukua, "Future contingency and God's knowledge of particulars in Avicenna", in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 32.4 (2024), 745-765; S. Knuuttila, "Medieval Theories of Future Contigents", in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (first published 2006, revised 2025, update by G. Frost), ed. E.N. Zalta, U. Nodelman; *Lexicon Philosophicum. International Journal for the History of Texts and Ideas*. Thematic Issue 13 (2025): *Praedestinatio*, ed. M. Lenzi.

infallible omniscience with the "impredictability" inherent in human agents endowed with free will. In her final paper ("Anselm's Boethius: Necessity and Future Contingents in *De concordia*"), the late Marcia Colish examines how Anselm, in his *De concordia*, appropriates and reshapes Boethius's account of divine foreknowledge, necessity, and human free will, drawing on the *Peri Hermeneias* commentaries and the *Consolation of Philosophy*.

Three papers deal with Chapter 9 of Aristotle's *Peri Hermeneias*, which is the seminal source of the long-standing debate on the truth value of contradictory statements made of future events, the so-called future contingents. These papers particularly explore the reception of this text in the Arabic context. Josep Puig Montada ("Aristotle's *Peri Hermeneias* [c. 9] and Its Medieval Arabic Translation. The First Step Toward a Fruitful Reception") investigates the translational process of this seminal work into Arabic, focusing on the difficulties encountered by the translator Isḥāq Ibn Ḥunayn and the strategies that he devised to make the arguments intelligible to Arabic readers. These difficulties were not only due to the structural differences between Greek and Arabic, but also to the peculiar nature of the *Peri Hermeneias*, a text so condensed and ambiguous that it required an explanatory translation. Particular attention is paid to the concepts of necessity and possibility. Terence J. Kleven ("Alfarabi on Necessity and Possibility in the *Commentary on Peri Hermeneias*, Chapter 9 18a28-19b4") delves into al-Fārābī's commentary on *Peri Hermeneias*, arguing that al-Fārābī explains and articulates Aristotle's account of the nature of possibility more detailedly. Moreover, al-Fārābī's defense of possibility has important consequences for the practice of true religion, for the life of the political community, and for the right understanding of God, nature, and science. According to Ginevra Tozzi ("Future Contigents in Arabic Logic: Towards a Genealogy of Fārābī's and Avicenna's Commentaries on the Ninth Chapter of *De Interpretatione*"), while Alfarabi is said to continue a late antique tradition by incorporating theological concerns in his commentary and arguing in favor of free will and deliberation, Avicenna is described as departing from this approach, rejecting moral and theological elements and offering a purely logical-linguistic analysis of future contingents revolving around the form of propositions, the modal relationship between their constituents, and the concept of possibility.

The majority of papers in the first section deal with future contin-

gents as discussed in the medieval Latin tradition. Martha Beullens ("Connaître le futur. Le cas des futurs contingents *ut in pluribus* chez Albert le Grand") reconstructs Albert the Great's views on the future contingents *ut in pluribus*, that is, that class of events whose cause is in itself ordained towards its effect, but can be impeded, or in other words events whose cause is undetermined, but can be determined by nature. These events can only be known in a conjectural way, as examples from natural knowledge, prophecy, astrology, and divination show.

Riccardo Fedriga and Constantino Marmo ("Rodolfo Brito sui futuri contingenti") deal with Radulphus Brito's theory, showing that this master of Arts distinguishes necessity from determination in his analysis of future contingents. According to him, such propositions are neither true nor false until realized. The paper interprets Brito's views in relation to the theories of other prominent University Masters (Peter of Auvergne and Siger of Brabant) by combining semantic, causal-metaphysical, and epistemic-theological approaches.

Amos Corbini ("Alcune polemiche di Ugolino di Orvieto sulla preconoscenza divina dei futuri contingenti") describes the theory of the Augustinian Ugolino of Orvieto that God eternally knows all future entities and propositions as contingent. Since God's operation is absolutely free and all reality depends on it as on its first Cause, contingency is intrinsic to all creation; but what is created as contingent must also be known, in the utmost simplicity of God's essence, in a contingent manner. Therefore, God's timeless foreknowledge is said not to cause or determine future events.

The knowledge of the past is the subject of Peter Hartman's paper ("The Presence of the Past: Durand of St.-Pourçain and Peter of Palude on Intuitive Cognition"). Durand of St.-Pourçain argues that the mind, both human and angelic, can know things by their mere presence without the intermediation of representations or *species*. However, such a theory presents a challenge when it comes to the mind dealing with past things, that is, things that are not present to it. With regard to angels, Durand's solution is that they have a kind of intuitive knowledge of past things, akin to their perception of present things.

Gonzalo Tinajeros Arce ("Future Contigents in Arguments of Political Censorship: Modal Propositions in Contrast. Solorzano Pereira Standes up to the Censors of *De Indiarum Iure* [1639]") examines the political implications of the use of modal propositions concerning the

future in the work by Juan de Solorzano Pereira (1575–1655), a thinker of the Ibero-American Baroque. In his *De Indiarum Iure*, he challenged abuses against indigenous people in the West Indies by delineating morally compelling alternatives to existing colonial laws.

The second section of the volume is concerned with prophecy, discussing texts and authors from the Jewish, Islamic, and Latin traditions. Meryem Sebti ("Déchiffrer l'Invisible: interprétation [*ta'bīr*] et exégèse [*ta'wīl*] dans la philosophie islamique") argues that Islamic philosophers such as al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, and Avicenna link prophecy and veridical dreams to divine influence, acknowledging the crucial role played by the imagination. In particular, Avicenna, on account of the mimetic function of human imagination, considers dream interpretation akin to exegesis, a view later expanded by thinkers such as al-Ghazālī, Suhrawardī, and Mollā Ṣadrā. Germano Gorga ("The Epistemology of Astrology and Prophethood from Abū Maʿšar to Avicenna's *Metaphysics*") sheds light on Avicenna's different attitude toward prophecy and astrology. While accepting celestial influence on the sublunary realm, Avicenna criticizes astrology, lamenting its lack of demonstrative evidence and its neglect of inferior causes. On the other hand, he grounds prophecy in divine revelation. The sharp distinction between the two forms of knowledge serves to preserve prophetic authority while limiting astrologers' claims to knowledge of the future.

Ying Zhang ("The Most Perfect Prophet for Maimonides: Moses and Abraham in the Guide of the Perplexed") discusses Maimonides' fundamental analysis of prophecy in the *Guide of the Perplexed*, paying particular attention to the features of Moses and Abraham, regarded as complementary models of prophecy and excellence. While Moses, as the supreme legislator and as a practical prophet, embodies political and moral guidance through revelation, Abraham is the exemplar of speculative perfection, able to attain intellectual knowledge of God through reason.

Latin prophetology is the subject of Anna Rodolfi's paper ("Angels and Prophets in Thirteenth-Century Latin Prophetology"). She analyzes the role of angels and prophets as intermediaries in the communication between God and man. While Islamic thinkers stress the principle of continuity between intelligences-angels and human souls, Latin authors consider angels and prophets occasional mediators of divine guidance. Both convey divine light without fully knowing God's plan

and are concerned with guiding individual souls rather than grasping ultimate truth. Andrea Colli's paper ("The Church at the End of Times. Prophecy and Eschatology in Albert the Great's Sermons and Biblical Commentaries") highlights the interconnectedness between eschatology and prophecy in some Biblical commentaries by Albert the Great. The Dominican master's interpretations of the prophecies expounded in some New Testament texts and some passages from his sermons are meant to outline a virtuous, contemplative community supplanting a hierarchical model of Church. Moreover, these texts seem to have a relevance also for the reform of the Church. Paul Clarke ("Prophecy's Future and Prophecies Past: Thomas Aquinas, Peter of John Olivi, and the Prophetic Economy") clarifies that knowledge of the future is only one dimension of prophecy, which primarily concerns that which is distant or hidden and goes beyond human cognition. This is evident in the accounts of Thomas Aquinas and Peter of John Olivi, both of whom give prophecy social and practical significance, situating it within the economy of salvation, more precisely within the providential order by which God directs history towards its ends. For both Aquinas and Olivi, prophetic figures and fulfillments find their meaning within this economic framework.

The third section deals with prognostic sciences and divinatory disciplines. The science of stars, the queen of predictive sciences, is discussed by Charles Burnett ("*Scientia stellarum ex te et illis est*: The Two Sources of Knowledge for Predicting the Future, in Pseudo-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium* and Michael Scot's *Liber introductorius*"). Burnett discusses the distinction between two forms of astrological knowledge, one based on observation, the other grounded in divinely inspired perception, as reflected in the first aphorisms of Pseudo-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium*. These ideas are also present in other sources, such as Michael Scot's *Liber introductorius*. The critical edition and English translation of passages from *distinctio* 3 of this work complete Burnett's contribution. Giulio Navarra ("Celestial Influence and Astral Magic. Between the Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm and the 'Kindī-circle Alexander'") examines the role of al-Kindī's circle in translating and adapting Neoplatonic and Aristotelian texts to Islamic principles and producing a blend of philosophical, astrological, and magical ideas that later reached Latin Europe via Toledan translations. In particular, the paper focuses on the cosmology of the *Fī l-tadbīrāti al-falakiyyah*, which was an Islamic reworking of Alexander of Aphrodisias' *De providen-*

tia, and on the astral magic of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* (*Picatrix*). Barbora Kocánová's paper ("Non-astrological Methods of Weather Forecasting in Medieval Latin Astrological Works: A Contradiction?") addresses methods of weather forecasting different from astrology. Interestingly, the main sources for meteorological prognostication are astrological summae and compendia. Weather forecasting relied primarily on astrology, especially on Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*, often combined with empirical signs like those derived from atmospheric phenomena, animal behavior, and folk knowledge. Prominent medieval astrologers, such as Leopold of Austria, Guido Bonatti, and John Ashenden, blended astrological and observational methods, combined astrology with natural philosophy, and integrated diverse sources. Alessandro Palazzo's paper ("The Reworking of the Earliest Latin Texts on Geomancy [*Ars geomantiae*, *Estimaverunt Indi*, *Si quis per artem geomanticam*, *Desiderantibus*] in the Context of Geomantic Collections and Compilations") deals with geomancy, a divinatory art that was extremely popular during the late Middle Ages. The paper describes the reworking and reconfiguration processes that the earliest medieval Latin treatises on geomancy undergo in later anonymous medieval collections and important compilations, such as the *Geomantia* ascribed to Moerbeke and the *Compilatorium* by Rolandus Scriptoris.

Roberto Limonta ("Demons' Foreknowledge and Semiotics of Lying in Augustine's *De divinatione daemonum*") analyzes Augustine's *De divinatione daemonum*, composed between 406 and 410 AD and destined to become a seminal text of the Medieval Latin controversies on divination. According to Augustine, even though demons are able to predict some events thanks to their extraordinary natural qualities (acute sensitivity, rapidity of movements, and long experience), they cannot access the ultimate and hidden causes from which the causal chain of events originates. Limonta's thesis is that Augustine links demonic predictions to lying, emphasizing that demons aim to deceive human beings. They can manipulate human beliefs by presenting accurate but morally false signs.

The remaining papers focus on prognostication in medicine and related fields. Jen Ole Schmitt's paper ("Barhebraeus on Phyiognomical Prognosis") deals with physiognomy, which is a form of divination whose medical relevance is well known, in particular with the views of the theologian and polymath Barhebraeus, a Syrian Orthodox of the

thirteenth century. He discusses physiognomy extensively throughout his works, but he rarely uses it for explicit predictions about the future. He often draws on earlier texts or Arabic sources (e.g. Avicenna) and, although he appears cautious about predictive claims, he endorses physiognomy as a general method. Anna Gili ("Between Tradition and Medical Practice. Prognosis in al-Maǧūsī's *Kitāb al-Malakī*") analyzes the evolution of prognostic knowledge in early Arabic medicine, focusing on ʿAlī b. Sahl Rabban al-Ṭabarī's *Firdaws al-ḥikma*, which integrates Hippocratic and Galenic ideas on critical days, death signs, and bodily indicators. She traces Greek influences through Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq and late antique models, noting how later physicians, such as al-Rāzī and al-Maǧūsī, systematized prognosis by blending inherited texts with new observations. By the late tenth century, prognosis became a central, theoretically grounded aspect of Arabic medicine. Mario Loconsole ("*Somnium coadiuvat ad curationem*. The Curative Power of Dream in Pietro d'Abano's *Conciliator*") traces the development of dreams as diagnostic and prognostic tools from Aristotle through Arabic interpreters to the Latin tradition. He shows how Peter of Abano, in the *Conciliator*, naturalizes dreams, recognizing their potential to indicate future events and facilitate medical treatment. While many dreams are false or humoral, Pietro emphasizes that some follow natural principles, offering practical guidance for medicine and decision-making. Vesa Hirvonen ("Madmen's Special Capacities in Nicole Oresme") reconstructs Nicole Oresme's understanding of madness, highlighting how natural causes like humoral imbalances and brain defects influence cognitive disorders such as mania, melancholy, lunacy, and lovesickness. Oresme explains that these conditions may lead to erratic thoughts, extraordinary perceptions, or temporary glimpses of hidden truths, but he maintains that true prophecy requires a pure, focused mind, blending natural, medical, and psychological perspectives.

Università di Trento

Medieval Doctrines and Debates on Future Contingents, Prescience, and Freedom

Anatomia della caduta. Agostino sulla compatibilità tra prescienza divina e libertà del primo peccato (*Lib. arb.* III, 3, 6-8)

Enrico Moro

Sì, il caso, il libero arbitrio e la necessità,
in nessun modo incompatibili,
che tutti, intrecciandosi, lavorano insieme.
(H. Melville, *Moby Dick o la Balena*
trad. C. Pavese, Milano 1987, 245)

1. Introduzione

Nell'ampia cornice della riflessione di Agostino sul tema della prescienza,[1] la sezione iniziale del libro III (cc. 2-4) del *De libero arbitrio* spicca indubitabilmente per la sua rilevanza.[2] Di seguito, innanzi tutto, ne esaminerò dettagliatamente il contenuto, con particolare riferimento al capitolo 3; tenterò poi di tracciare un bilancio dell'analisi svolta, con il duplice intento di esplicitare il significato delle principali nozioni operanti nel testo e di enunciare sinteticamente alcuni elementi di discussione concernenti la coerenza concettuale della soluzione agostiniana.

2. Posizione del problema

La questione della compatibilità tra prescienza e volontà libera, o più esattamente tra prescienza divina e non-necessarietà del peccato, si

[1] Cfr. P.-M. Hombert, "Praescientia", in *Augustinus Lexikon (vol. 4, fasc. 5/6)*, hrsg. v. R. Dodaro, C. Mayer, C. Müller, Basel 2016, 871-879.

[2] Farò riferimento, di seguito, alla più recente edizione critica del dialogo: Augustinus, *De libero arbitrio*, ed. W. M. Green, K. D. Daur (CCSL 29), Turnhout 1970, 205-321.

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pone con urgenza nel capitolo 2.[3] Nel capitolo precedente,[4] erano stati individuati tre caratteri distintivi nel peccato, cioè nel moto difettivo della volontà, con cui essa si distoglie dal Bene incommutabile per volgersi ai beni mutevoli.[5] In quanto tale, il moto peccaminoso è:

> α. Proprio esclusivamente dell'animo, in virtù di un'appartenenza avvertita interiormente e con certezza.[6]
>
> β. Volontario, e precisamente in nostro potere.
>
> γ. Giustamente biasimevole e punibile (in virtù di α e β).[7]

Al termine del capitolo 2, tuttavia, tali conclusioni non paiono ancora sufficienti a chiarire l'origine del peccato.[8] Evodio, infatti, non vede ancora come esso possa essere ritenuto non necessario se, al pari di quello di tutte le cose future, il suo accadere è stato preconosciuto da Dio.[9] Evodio, conseguentemente, consegna la propria incertezza al seguente argomento "fatalista":[10]

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[3] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 2, n. 4, ed. Green, Daur, 276.1-3.

[4] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 1, nn. 1-3, ed. Green, Daur, 274.1-276.104.

[5] Tale definizione è desumile dalla conclusione del libro precedente: cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, cc. 19-20, nn. 53-54, ed. Green, Daur, 272.57-273.41. Sui tre caratteri distintivi del peccato, cfr. O. Boulnois, *Généalogie de la liberté*, Paris 2021, 265-297.

[6] La volontà è percepita come principio di movimento spontaneo: cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 1, n. 3, ed. Green, Daur, 276.89-93; *De diversis quaestionibus ocotginta tribus*, q. 8, ed. A. Mutzenbecher (CCSL 44A), Turnhout 1975, 15.1-10. In proposito, cfr. K. Trego, "L'âme et la volonté chez saint Augustin", in *Saint Augustin*, éd. M. Caron, Paris 2009, 261-306: 296; C. Michon, "Le libre arbitre", in *Saint Augustin*, 307-341: 310; Boulnois, *Généalogie*, 267-268. Il contributo di Trego, in particolare, enfatizza la rilevanza del radicamento psichico della volontà, vedendo in esso un fattore di limitazione residuale della concezione agostiniana della libertà (cfr. anche K. Trego, "De l'éthique de la sagesse à l'éthique de la liberté: la doctrine de la liberté d'Augustin à la lumière de ses sources philosophiques antiques", in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 4 [2005], 641-653).

[7] Sulla correlazione tra volontarietà e retribuibilità degli atti, cfr. N.W. Den Bok, "Freedom of the Will. A Systematic and Biographical Sounding of Augustine's Thoughts on Human Willing", in *Augustiniana*, 44 (1994), 237-270: 239, n. 7; W.L. Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will", in *Augustinian Studies*, 15 (1984), 41-63; Trego, "L'âme et la volonté", 284, n. 1; Boulnois, *Généalogie*, 44.261-262. Per una più ampia trattazione teorica della questione, cfr. M. De Caro, *Il libero arbitrio. Una introduzione*, Roma-Bari 2004, 99-127.

[8] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 1, n. 2, ed. Green, Daur, 276.82-88.

[9] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 2, n. 4, ed. Green, Daur, 276.1-3.

[10] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 2, n. 4, ed. Green, Daur, 276.4-277.16. Sulla

[Arg.Fat. 1]

1. Se Dio ha prescienza di qualcosa, ciò non può accadere diversamente da come è stato preconosciuto [premessa].

2. Se ha prescienza di tutte le cose future, Dio ha preconosciuto che l'uomo buono avrebbe peccato [premessa].

3. Dio ha prescienza di tutte le cose future [premessa].[11]

4. Quindi, Dio ha preconosciuto che un uomo (Adamo)[12] avrebbe peccato [2, 3].

5. Ciò che non può accadere diversamente da come è stato preconosciuto è necessario che accada [premessa].

6. Dunque, è necessario che accada tutto ciò di cui Dio ha prescienza [1, 5].

7. Poiché Dio ha preconosciuto che l'uomo avrebbe peccato, era necessario che il peccato dell'uomo accadesse [4, 6].

8. Ciò che è necessario che accada non può accadere per libera volontà [premessa].

9. Poiché era necessario che il peccato accadesse, l'uomo non ha peccato per libera volontà, ma per inevitabile necessità [7, 8].

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struttura dell'argomento di Evodio, cfr. W. J. Rowe, "Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will", in *The Review of Metaphysics*, 18/2 (1964), 356-363: 356-357; J. Hopkins, "Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will", in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 8/2 (1977), 111-126: 115-117; D. DeCelles, "Divine Prescience and Human Freedom in Augustine", in *Augustinian Studies*, 8 (1977), 151-160: 152; T. J. Kondoleon, "Augustine and the Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Free Will", in *Augustinian Studies*, 18 (1987), 165-187: 168; Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 46-48; C. Michon, *Prescience et liberté. Essai de théologie philosophique sur la providence*, Paris 2004, 40-41; Michon, "Le libre", 316-317; C. Huges, "Augustine on Will, Freedom, and Foreknowledge: *De libero arbitrio*, III, 1-3", in *Religious Studies*, 52 (2016), 315-332: 315.

[11] Nel libro I, la prescienza non era stata menzionata tra gli attributi che è opportuno credere propri di Dio (Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 6, ed. Green, Daur, 278.8-9). Negarla o limitarla, tuttavia, sarebbe a un tempo empio e irrazionale: cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, I, c. 2, n. 5, ed. Green, Daur, 213.19-36; *De civitate dei (I-IX)*, V, c. 9, nn. 1.4, ed. B. Dombart, A. Kalb (CCSL 47), Turnhout 1955, 136.13-14, 140.152-158.

[12] Il problema formulato da Evodio concerne specificamente il primo peccato di Adamo: cfr. Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 42; Den Bok, "Freedom of the Will", 257-260; D. P. Hunt, "Augustine on Theological Fatalism: The Argument of *De Libero Arbitrio* 3.1-4", in *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, 5 (1996), 1-30: 16. Il paradigma di volontà libera che emerge nel corso della sua soluzione, conseguentemente, è come tale applicabile alla natura umana nella sola condizione pre-lapsaria.

L'argomento di Evodio sarà riproposto da Agostino all'inizio del capitolo 3, con una formulazione che non introdurrà differenze significative rispetto alla precedente.[13] Vale la pena segnalare, tuttavia, che in essa comparirà il riferimento esplicito alla compossibilità tra prescienza e non-necessarietà del peccato, e che al suo interno il problema assumerà compiutamente la forma dilemmatica[14] con cui, a distanza di alcuni decenni, sarà enunciato nel libro quinto del *De civitate dei.*[15]

[13] Così ritengono Hunt, "Augustine on Theological Fatalism", 9 e Michon, *Prescience et liberté*, 40, n. 2. Al contrario, Huges, "Augustine on Will", 316 giudica la riformulazione inesatta, a motivo dell'ingiustificata sostituzione della nozione di volontà libera con quella di volontà. La riformulazione dell'argomento (Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 6, ed. Green, Daur, 277.1-278.11) prevede i seguenti passaggi: (Arg. Fat. 2) 1. Se Dio ha prescienza (di tutte le cose future e dunque ha prescienza) del fatto che l'uomo peccherà, è necessario che l'uomo pecchi; 2. Se è necessario che l'uomo pecchi, l'uomo non pecca per arbitrio della volontà, ma per inevitabile e fissa necessità; 3. Dunque, o Dio non ha prescienza del fatto che l'uomo peccherà (e dunque non ha prescienza di tutte le cose future) o l'uomo non pecca per volontà, ma per necessità; 4. Non può essere il caso che Dio non abbia prescienza di tutte le cose future (e dunque del fatto che l'uomo avrebbe peccato); 5. Dunque, l'uomo non pecca per volontà, ma per necessità.

[14] Questo aspetto è enfatizzato da Hopkins, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 115, la cui comprensione della struttura dell'argomento è criticamente discussa da Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 47-48.

[15] Cfr. Augustinus, *De civ.*, V, c. 9, n. 2, ed. Dombart, Kalb, 137.25-138.75. Pur se composti a distanza di alcuni decenni, il *De libero arbitrio* e il *De civitate dei* propongono una riflessione sul tema della prescienza sostanzialmente coerente. In proposito, cfr. DeCelles, "Divine Prescience", 151, n. 2; Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 42.49.52-53; Kondoleon, "Augustine and the Problem"; A.A. Pang, "Augustine on Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will", in *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 40 (1994), 417-431: 417; Michon, "Le libre", 318-319; Hunt, "Augustine on Theological Fatalism", 12. Nella misura in cui l'ambito di indagine del presente studio è circoscritto a una sezione limitata del dialogo, invece, lascio da parte le pur importanti questioni legate alla datazione del *De libero arbitrio* e all'eventuale evoluzione della riflessione sul tema della volontà maturata a cavallo della composizione dei tre libri: per ulteriori dettagli in merito, cfr. S. Harrison, *Augustine's Way into the Will. The Theological and Philosophical Significance of* De Libero Arbitrio, Oxford 2006; G. Van Riel, "Augustine's Will, an Aristotelian Notion? On the Antecedents of Augustine's Doctrine of the Will", in *Augustinian Studies*, 38/1 (2007), 255-279; Trego, "L'âme et la volonté", 282, n. 1, 292-293; Boulnois, *Généalogie*, 260; E. Moiseeva, *La notion de volonté dans les écrits de Saint Augustin entre 388 et 404*, Paris 2024, 85-91.

3. Soluzione del problema

La strategia adottata da Agostino nel capitolo 3 per disinnescare l'argomento fatalista prevede la confutazione della tesi seguente, ricavabile da entrambe le sue formulazioni[16] ed esplicitamente avvallata da Evodio:

[T.1] Tutte le cose, che Dio preconosce, accadono non per volontà, ma per necessità.[17]

L'obiettivo primario, conseguentemente, sarà quello di dimostrare che, compatibilmente con gli irrinunciabili requisiti epistemici propri della prescienza:

Non tutte le cose, che Dio preconosce, accadono per necessità,

e dunque che:

Tra le cose che Dio preconosce, qualcosa (segnatamente, la volontà umana) accade per volontà.[18]

Propongo di analizzare il capitolo 3, suddividendo l'analisi della confutazione di T.1 in cinque sezioni (*A*.-*E*.).

A.[19] In primo luogo, si mostra che Dio è sia unico "soggetto" sia "oggetto", benché non unico, della prescienza. Assumendo implicitamente che solo le nature razionali possono conoscere, ed escludendo provvisoriamente dalla considerazione la natura angelica,[20] tale conclusione può essere ricavata dall'accordo espresso dai dialoganti sul fatto che l'uomo non è in grado di preconoscere la propria volontà futura, mentre è innegabile che Dio preconosca le volontà future degli uomini, che non gli sono proprie. *A fortiori*, dunque, l'uomo non può preconoscere né le volontà né gli atti che non gli sono propri, mentre Dio preconosce con la massima certezza ciò che gli è proprio, e dunque le sue opere e

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[16] A rigor di termini, però, solo nella prima formulazione compare il riferimento esplicito, che risulterà rilevante, all'accadere/essere fatto (*fieri*) di ciò che è preconosciuto: cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 2, n. 4, ed. Green, Daur, 276.14.

[17] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 6, ed. Green, Daur, 278.13-15.

[18] Sarà questa la conclusione raggiunta al termine del capitolo: cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 8, ed. Green, Daur, 280.119-121.

[19] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 6, ed. Green, Daur, 278.16-28.

[20] Sul tema della prescienza angelica, cfr. Hopkins, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 125.

ciò che Egli stesso farà. Conseguentemente, pare lecito concludere che:

[T.2] Dio prevede nel modo più certo le sue opere e che cosa Egli stesso farà.[21]

B.[22] La confutazione procede assumendo T.1 e T.2 come premesse del seguente sillogismo:

P_1: Tutte le cose, che Dio preconosce, accadono non per volontà, ma per necessità [T.1];

P_2: Dio prevede con certezza (e dunque preconosce) ciò che Egli stesso farà [T.2];

C: Dunque, ciò che Dio farà accadrà non per volontà, ma per necessità.

La conclusione del sillogismo, dedotta validamente dalle premesse, è falsa: il suo essere vera, infatti, implicherebbe una forma inammissibile di necessitarismo teologico.[23] La premessa minore, invece, è vera, poiché la sua negazione comporterebbe una limitazione della prescienza, perdipiù relativa a ciò che concerne Dio stesso. Conseguentemente, la premessa maggiore è falsa. Di conseguenza, il problema posto da Evodio risulta precisato, nella misura in cui il presupposto da cui muove, per essere mantenuto, deve essere inteso in termini più circoscritti. La sua nuova formulazione, dunque, può essere così enunciata:

[$T.1_{bis}$] Tutti gli eventi, che Dio ha preconosciuto che saranno, accadono per necessità.[24]

L'insieme di ciò che si suppone necessitato dalla prescienza, ora, è limitato a quanto «accade nella creazione».[25] Tale limitazione, nello specifico, non implica l'esistenza di un ambito differente dalla creazione,

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[21] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 6, ed. Green, Daur, 278.28.

[22] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 6, ed. Green, Daur, 278.29-279.50.

[23] Sull'impiego di questa linea argomentativa per contrastare la tesi dell'onniprescienza divina, cfr. Michon, *Prescience et liberté*, 26.35.

[24] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 6, ed. Green, Daur, 278.33-36. Diversamente da J. Van Gerven, "Liberté humaine et prescience divine d'après saint Augustin", in *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, 55 (1957), 317-330: 323, dunque, non ritengo che tale affermazione costituisca una semplice «messa a punto» con cui Evodio intenderebbe correggere l'errato tentativo di *retorsio argumenti* attuato da Agostino, così come non sono dell'idea che questi, nel corso successivo della discussione, si limiti a lasciare cadere la precisazione del proprio interlocutore.

[25] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 6, ed. Green, Daur, 278.34-35.

quello divino, nel quale le cose accadrebbero senza essere preconosciute, o sarebbero preconosciute senza accadere per necessità. Piuttosto, essa si giustifica perché, in Dio, le cose preconosciute non accadono, ma sono sempiterne. Dio, pertanto, certo preconosce le cose che farà, ma queste, poiché e nella misura in cui non accadranno, non saranno rese necessarie.

Quando opera nella creazione, infatti, Dio lo fa:

δ. Secondo un decreto definitivo, e non con una volontà nuova.[26]

ε. Nel momento stesso in cui gli effetti si producono.[27]

ζ. Preconoscendo da sempre che tali effetti sarebbero accaduti, se effettivamente destinati ad accadere.[28]

La sezione del dialogo appena considerata, dunque, autorizza a ricavare le seguenti conclusioni:

- Non tutto ciò che Dio preconosce accade, né dunque accade per necessità.

- Dio preconosce (anche) cose che non accadono, ma che sono sempiterne. Tutte le cose che Dio preconosce, dunque anche quelle sempiterne, non possono essere diversamente da come sono preconosciute.

- Le cose sempiterne, che Dio preconosce, sono per volontà.

- La prescienza non implica necessariamente la non-volontarietà del preconosciuto.

- Il fatto che qualcosa non possa essere diversamente da come è preconosciuto non esclude *de iure* la volontarietà del preconosciuto (assumendo provvisoriamente l'opposizione tra volontà e necessità, il cui significato sarà da precisare).

Prima di procedere oltre, è opportuno rilevare come le considerazioni sull'invariabilità della volontà di Dio potrebbero essere estese alla sua

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[26] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 6, ed. Green, Daur, 278.38-40.

[27] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 6, ed. Green, Daur, 278.43. Quest'affermazione è ritenuta sorprendente da Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 50; Michon, *Prescience et liberté*, 36, n. 1; 218-219. Essa, tuttavia, stupisce di meno se compresa nella cornice di una teoria mentalista e causale dell'azione: cfr. Boulnois, *Généalogie*, 267-268.

[28] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 6, ed. Green, Daur, 279.3-4.

conoscenza. Il punto è rilevante, e tuttavia non viene qui esplicitato, probabilmente perché ritenuto non immediatamente funzionale alla soluzione della questione della compatibilità e al perseguimento delle finalità complessive del dialogo.[29] Lo sarà invece in altri contesti, dove Agostino proclamerà l'equivalenza tra prescienza divina e scienza delle cose future, precisando che per Dio, il quale trascende il tempo, queste ultime non sono future, ma presenti.[30]

C.[31] I princìpi precedentemente stabiliti sono applicati e verificati in relazione al caso particolare della felicità. Sulla base del precedente corso della discussione, è lecito supporre che per "felicità" si intenda:

η. L'oggetto permanente di ogni volontà umana.[32]

θ. L'affezione dell'animo aderente a Dio e ai beni immutabili.[33]

ι. Il giusto premio concesso da Dio agli esseri umani che vogliono sia essere felici sia vivere rettamente.[34]

Come ribadito nel paragrafo 6, è Dio che fa felice l'essere umano.[35] Secondo quanto sopra stabilito, dunque, bisogna concludere che, nel fare felice l'uomo, Dio opera:

δ. Con volontà stabile.

ε. Nel momento stesso in cui l'effetto, cioè la felicità, è prodotto.

ζ. Preconoscendo, da sempre e incessantemente, il proprio atto futuro.

D'altra parte, è manifesto che:

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[29] In proposito, cfr. HUNT, "Augustine on Theological Fatalism", 22-25.

[30] Cfr. AUGUSTINUS, *De diversis quaestionibus ad Simplicianum*, II, c. 2, n. 2, ed. A. MUTZENBECHER (CCSL 44), Turnhout 1970, 76.27-54.

[31] AUGUSTINUS, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 7, ed. GREEN, DAUR, 279.51-60.

[32] Cfr. AUGUSTINUS, *De lib. arb.*, I, c. 12, n. 25, ed. GREEN, DAUR, 227.25-28; cc. 14-15, nn. 30-31, ed. GREEN, DAUR, 231.1-233.41; II, c. 9, n. 26, ed. GREEN, DAUR, 254.37-41; c. 10, n. 28, ed. GREEN, DAUR, 255.1-3.

[33] Cfr. AUGUSTINUS, *De lib. arb.*, I, c. 13, n. 29, ed. GREEN, DAUR, 231.98-109; II, c. 9, nn. 26-27, ed. GREEN, DAUR, 254.30-255.106; c. 13, nn. 35-36, ed. GREEN, DAUR, 261.1-262.47; c. 14, n. 39, ed. GREEN, DAUR, 261.1-262.47; c. 16, n. 41, ed. GREEN, DAUR, 265.1-22; c. 19, n. 52, ed. GREEN, DAUR, 272.36-41.

[34] Cfr. AUGUSTINUS, *De lib. arb.*, I, c. 6, n. 15, ed. GREEN, DAUR, 220.46-55; c. 13, n. 28, ed. GREEN, DAUR, 230.57-89; II, c. 1, n. 1, ed. GREEN, DAUR, 236.17-21.

[35] AUGUSTINUS, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 7, ed. GREEN, DAUR, 278.41-42.

κ. L'essere umano è una creatura di Dio (T.3).

λ. La felicità accadrà/sarà fatta in lui (T.4).[36]

Ora, combinando T.3 e T.4 con $T.1_{bis}$, si ricava la seguente argomentazione:

P_1: Tutti gli eventi, che Dio ha preconosciuto che saranno, accadono per necessità [$T.1_{bis}$].

P_2: L'essere umano è una creatura [T.3].

P_3: La felicità è un evento, e dunque accadrà/sarà fatta nell'essere umano [T.4].

C_1: La felicità accadrà/sarà fatta nell'essere umano non per volontà, ma per necessità.

Ergo:

C_2: La felicità accadrà/sarà fatta nell'essere umano senza/contro la sua volontà.[37]

Queste battute del dialogo suggeriscono almeno due osservazioni. La prima di esse concerne C_1: poiché l'essere umano, fatto felice da Dio, è reso tale per necessità, e poiché Dio opera nella creatura per volontà, la necessità della felicità può essere ricondotta, sul versante della causalità efficiente, alla volontà divina.[38] Sotto questo rispetto, la necessità sembra escludere la volontarietà dal lato dell'effetto, ma non certo da quello della causa.[39] In tal senso, per la volontà dell'essere umano, la felicità è necessaria perché, pur volendola, non è essa stessa a farla essere, ma Dio.[40]

La seconda osservazione concerne C_2. Il fatto che la felicità sia per necessità trova conferma nel corso del dialogo a partire dalla seguente considerazione: benché l'essere umano voglia sempre essere felice (η.), non sempre lo è (lo è, infatti, solo quando Dio lo rende tale). Sulla base di tale discrasia, i dialoganti giungono a esplicitare il fatto che essere

[36] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 7, ed. Green, Daur, 279.53.

[37] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 7, ed. Green, Daur, 279.57.

[38] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 7, ed. Green, Daur, 279.56.

[39] Il punto sarà approfondito, con riferimento al potere causale della volontà divina, in: Augustinus, *De civ.*, V, c. 9, n. 4, ed. Dombart, Kalb, 138.103-140.167.

[40] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 7, ed. Green, Daur, 279.54-55.

felice non è in potere dell'essere umano.[41] Ora, muovendo dalla relazione oppositiva precedentemente stabilita tra "per necessità" e "per volontà", si può ricavare una correlazione, comunque bisognosa di ulteriori precisazioni, tra "per necessità/non in potere" e "per volontà/in potere".

D.[42] Muovendo dalle sue stesse conclusioni, il corso successivo dell'argomentazione ribalta l'esito del ragionamento precedente, con riferimento specifico all'implicazione tra C_1 e C_2. In primo luogo, Agostino dimostra a Evodio che la volontà è sempre in potere dell'uomo:[43]

[Arg.1]

1. Se l'uomo fa essere qualcosa quando vuole, ciò è in suo potere [premessa].

2. Se l'uomo fa essere la sua stessa volontà quando vuole, la sua stessa volontà è in suo potere [1].

3. La volontà è presente all'uomo quando (non appena) egli vuole [premessa].

4. La volontà dell'uomo è (più di ogni altra cosa) in suo potere [2, 3].[44]

5. Se la volontà dell'uomo è in suo potere, non può darsi il caso che, quando vuole, l'uomo voglia non per volontà, ma per necessità [premessa].

6. Non può darsi il caso che, quando vuole, l'uomo voglia non per volontà, ma per necessità [4, 5].

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[41] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 7, ed. Green, Daur, 279.58-60. Si dovrà tornare a considerare questo passaggio, che, se considerato isolatamente, non sembra essere conseguente: il semplice dato per cui un essere umano sempre vuole, ma non sempre può essere felice, infatti, non autorizza a concludere, *simpliciter*, che la felicità non è in suo potere. Occorrerà, nello specifico, chiarire il significato dell'impiego della nozione di *potestas* nel contesto della presente trattazione.

[42] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 7, ed. Green, Daur, 279.61-83.

[43] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 7, ed. Green, Daur, 279.63-71. Sulla struttura dell'argomentazione agostiniana, cfr. Hopkins, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 119-120.

[44] Cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, I, c. 12, n. 26, ed. Green, Daur, 228.54-55; *De civ.*, V, c. 10, n. 1, ed. Dombart, Kalb, 140.10-13.

Questa sezione del dialogo suggerisce almeno quattro osservazioni.

In primo luogo, è significativo che in queste righe, per chiarificare la propria argomentazione, Agostino contrapponga il caso della volontà a quelli dell'invecchiamento, della malattia, della morte.[45] Nel *De civitate dei*, dove proprio l'esempio del morire servirà a precisare il senso dell'opposizione tra volontà e necessità, quest'ultima sarà infatti intesa nell'accezione specifica di «ciò che non è in nostro potere, ma effettua il suo potere anche se noi vogliamo il contrario».[46] A quanto posso vedere, non sussistono difficoltà di rilievo nell'assumere che un'accezione molto prossima a questa sia operativa nella sezione del *De libero arbitrio* in esame.

In secondo luogo, ritengo che la conclusione dell'argomento proposto da Agostino autorizzi a ricavare un'ulteriore delimitazione della supposta validità di $T.1_{bis}$. Si pongano infatti le seguenti premesse, la cui validità è ricavabile dal corso precedente della discussione:

1. Dio ha prescienza di tutti gli eventi [$T.1_{bis}$].

2. Nessun evento può accadere diversamente da come è stato preconosciuto [$Arg.Fat._{1}$].

3. La volontà è un evento [T.4].

4. La volontà non può accadere per necessità [$Arg.1_{6}$].

Ne deriveranno le seguenti conclusioni:

5. Non tutti gli eventi, che Dio ha preconosciuto che saranno, accadono per necessità [$T.1_{ter}$].

Ergo:

6. Non tutti gli eventi, che non possono accadere diversamente da come sono stati preconosciuti, accadono per necessità.

In terzo luogo, è necessario, seppur non semplice, individuare l'esatto

[45] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 7, ed. Green, Daur, 279.65-79. Il senso di queste righe è stato variamente inteso dagli studiosi: all'interpretazione di Rowe, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 358-360, sembrano preferibili quelle, ad es., di Hopkins, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 119; Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 51-52.55.

[46] Augustinus, *De civ.*, V, c. 10, n. 1, ed. Dombart, Kalb, 140.6-10.

significato della locuzione 'in (nostro) potere'.[47] Con essa, a mio parere, Agostino non intende designare una generica capacità o abilità della volontà di produrre un qualche effetto. In senso stretto, piuttosto, in potere di una volontà è ciò che dipende eminentemente ed esclusivamente da essa,[48] e che dunque, in quanto tale, è presente solo a causa sua e fintantoché essa lo vuole, e parallelamente non è presente se e fintantoché rimane da essa non voluto.[49] In altri termini, una data volontà ha in proprio potere ciò che essa sola può produrre o impedire, e in rapporto a cui, conseguentemente, l'esercizio del proprio potere causale è condizione insieme necessaria (è indispensabile che essa lo voglia) e sufficiente (basta che essa lo voglia).[50] Due volontà umane, ad esempio, possono avere l'identica capacità di produrre, con la mediazione dei rispettivi corpi, un determinato effetto nel mondo esterno, il cui accadere, pertanto, può risultare indifferentemente dall'azione dell'una o dell'altra, così come dal concorso di entrambe. Il prodursi dei moti di un corpo umano, ancora, dipende ordinariamente e primariamente dal comando della volontà appartenente all'anima in esso presente, e tuttavia può talora essere indotto da cause esterne, senza che la medesima

[47] A tal proposito, cfr. Rowe, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 358; Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 52; Pang, "Augustine on Divine Foreknowledge", 14; Hunt, "Augustine on Theological Fatalism", 13-15.

[48] E che, precisamente per questo, le appartiene pienamente: cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, I, c. 5, n. 12, ed. Green, Daur, 218.51-54.

[49] Cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 8, ed. Green, Daur, 280.101-102; *De civ.*, V, c. 10, n. 1, ed. Dombart, Kalb, 141.28-29; *De spiritu et littera*, c. 31, n. 53, ed. C. F. Urba, I. Zycha (CSEL 1960), Turnhout 1960, 210.23-26.

[50] Nella misura in cui, stando così le cose, causa (volere) ed effetto (ciò che è in potere della volontà) si coimplicano, si può concludere che il secondo è legato alla prima da una dipendenza causale di tipo esclusivo (non può essere che la volontà, cioè, a volere efficacemente ciò che è in suo potere). Cfr. S. Harrison, "Do We Have a Will? Augustine's Way in to the Will", in *The Augustinian Tradition*, ed. G. Matthews, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1999, 195-205: 199; Michon, *Prescience et liberté*, 43.69; A. de Libera, *La volonté et l'action: Cours du Collège de France 2015*, Paris 2017, 176, n. 8. Sul punto, si vedano i rilievi critici di Huges, "Augustine on Will", 321-326.331, a giudizio del quale la linea di ragionamento perseguita da Agostino risulta insoddisfacente, perché non adeguatamente esplicita e non sufficientemente stringente. Per valutare in prospettiva storico-filosofica questo aspetto della riflessione agostiniana, infine, ci si può avvalere con profitto delle ricostruzioni di: S. Bobzien, *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*, Oxford 2001, 330-345; E. Eliasson, *The Notion of That Which Depends on Us in Plotinus and Its Background* (Philosophia Antiqua 113), Leiden-Boston 2009.

volontà concorra con esse o abbia la capacità di impedirle.[51] Nessuna volontà, sia essa più,[52] meno o ugualmente potente, potrà al contrario volere efficacemente che una qualunque altra volontà voglia, ad esempio, vivere rettamente o non rettamente,[53] almeno fintantoché ciò risulti essere in potere di quest'ultima.

In quarto luogo, si può notare come l'approfondimento della correlazione tra "accadere per volontà" ed "essere in potere" consenta di invalidare l'implicazione tra C_1 e C_2. Come è stato precedentemente ammesso, infatti, ogni essere umano, in quanto tale, vuole sempre essere felice, pur non essendolo sempre. Se ne può ricavare, dunque, che, fintantoché è voluta e non presente, la felicità non è in potere della sua volontà. Ancor più radicalmente, tuttavia, sembra doversi concludere che non possa mai darsi il caso che la felicità divenga in potere della sua volontà. Se divenisse tale, infatti, in quanto e fintantoché voluta, essa non potrebbe essere fatta da nessun'altra causa (non si vedrebbe, infatti, la ragione per ipotizzare un concorso causale, data una causa necessaria e sufficiente in relazione a un effetto), e dunque non potrebbe più essere Dio a produrla. Poiché però non si può negare che la felicità dipenda da Dio, e da Lui solo, non resta che ammettere che essa accade all'essere umano per necessità, e dunque, non essendo in suo potere, non per sua volontà. Benché non sia in potere della sua volontà e, conseguentemente, debba dipendere da un'altra causa, è tuttavia possibile che la felicità sia voluta, come di fatto sempre è, dall'essere umano. Ciò che non è in potere di quest'ultimo, in ultima analisi, non può accadere per sua volontà, e ciononostante non necessariamente accade senza o contro di essa. Quando sarà reso felice, conseguentemente, l'essere umano potrà esserlo volendolo.[54]

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[51] Cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 1, n. 2, ed. Green, Daur, 275.74-77.

[52] Dio, tuttavia, ne avrebbe la facoltà: cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, I, c. 10, n. 21, ed. Green, Daur, 225.1-4.

[53] Cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 1, n. 2, ed. Green, Daur, 275.64-68; *De div. qu.*, q. 4, ed. Mutzenbecher, 13.1-20.

[54] Cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 7, ed. Green, Daur, 279.71-74; *De duabus animabus*, c. 10, n. 14, ed. J. Zycha (CSEL 25.1), 69.7-19. In proposito, cfr. Pang, "Augustine on Divine Foreknowledge", 423-424; quanto Agostino afferma, tuttavia, non pare sufficiente a concludere, come fa invece Michon, "Le libre", 319-320, che l'uomo non sarà reso felice se non essendolo «liberamente».

E.[55] A seguito di quanto precedentemente chiarito sulla natura del volere, l'argomento fatalista viene riformulato e, conseguentemente, confutato. La sua nuova e terza versione si articola nel modo seguente:[56]

[Arg.Fat.3]

1. Dio preconosce (tutte le cose future, e dunque) quale sarà la mia volontà futura [premessa].

2. Nulla può accadere diversamente da come Dio ha preconosciuto [premessa].

3. Quindi, è necessario che io voglia ciò che Dio ha preconosciuto [1, 2].

4. Se è necessario che io voglia ciò che Dio ha preconosciuto, non vorrò per volontà, ma per necessità [3].

In estrema sintesi, la confutazione dell'argomento si articola in tre passaggi:

i. Combinando le premesse 1. e 2., dalla prescienza della volontà è possibile ottenere una prima conferma a sostegno del pieno «potere di autodeterminazione» del volere:[57] proprio perché è preconosciuta come volontà integra, quest'ultima non può non accadere e non può accadere in altro modo che essendo in potere di sé.[58]

ii. Dunque, sulla base dell'opposizione precedentemente stabilita tra "per volontà" (o "in nostro potere") e "per necessità" (o "non in nostro potere"), affermare 3. equivale ad affermare: «Io voglio per necessità, e non per volontà», cosa appena dimostratasi impossibile.[59]

iii. Ugualmente, affermare 3. assumendo la non equivalenza di "per volontà" e "in nostro potere" è illegittimo. Al riguardo, Agostino argo-

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[55] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 8, ed. Green, Daur, 280.84-121.

[56] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 8, ed. Green, Daur, 280.84-88.

[57] G. Catapano, "Agostino teologo del libero arbitrio", in *Libertà va cercando. Percorsi di filosofia morale* (Filosofie), a cura di M. Ferrari, Milano-Udine 2016, 11-25: 24.

[58] Cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 8, ed. Green, Daur, 280.88-91.110-118; *De civ.*, V, c. 9, n. 3, ed. Dombart, Kalb, 138.96-102; c. 10, n. 2, ed. Dombart, Kalb, 141.40-45. Per ulteriori considerazioni su questa linea argomentativa, cfr. De-Celles, "Divine Prescience", 155-156; Kondoleon, "Augustine and the Problem", 168; Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 52-53; Michon, *Prescience et liberté*, 43.60-61.120; Boulnois, *Généalogie*, 286.

[59] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 8, ed. Green, Daur, 280.91-95.

menta nel modo seguente:[60]

[Arg.2]

1. Fintantoché vogliamo, se la nostra volontà non è presente, non vogliamo [premessa].

2. Fintantoché vogliamo, la nostra volontà è presente [1].

3. Se qualcosa è presente fintantoché vogliamo, allora esso è in nostro potere [premessa].

4. La nostra volontà è in nostro potere [2, 3].[61]

5. Ciò che è in nostro potere è libero per noi [premessa].

6. La nostra volontà è libera per noi [4, 5].

La sezione del dialogo presa in esame, a questo punto, può concludersi, con Evodio a riconoscere che la necessità connessa all'accadere di tutto ciò che è preconosciuto da Dio non esclude il carattere libero e potestativo, e dunque peccaminoso, della volontà.[62]

4. Prescienza, volontà, necessità: precisazioni semantiche

La riflessione, precedentemente esaminata, intorno alla compatibilità tra la necessità legata alla prescienza e la libertà connessa al volere si inserisce all'interno di un contesto specifico, quello di un'opera di natura dialogica, e di una cornice più ampia, quella di un'investigazione teologica sull'origine e sulla responsabilità del male. Analizzarne le premesse, lo sviluppo e i risultati astraendo totalmente da tali elementi, così da considerarla alla stregua di un'argomentazione isolata e indipendente, sarebbe pertanto non solo improprio, ma anche fuorviante.[63]

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[60] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 8, ed. Green, Daur, 280.96-110. Sul corso dell'argomento, cfr. Hopkins, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 120-123; Pang, "Augustine on Divine Foreknowledge", 422; Huges, "Augustine on Will", 317-323.

[61] Non potrebbe altrimenti essere una volontà: cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 8, ed. Green, Daur, 280.107-108.113-114. Nella condizione post-lapsaria, conseguentemente, è possibile parlare di "natura" e di "volontà" umane solo in senso derivato o improprio: cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 19, n. 54, ed. Green, Daur, 307.34-39. In proposito, cfr. L. Karfíková, *Grace and the Will according to Augustine* (Vigiliae Christianae, Supplements 115), Leiden-Boston 2012, 39-40.

[62] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 8, ed. Green, Daur, 280.119-121.

[63] Si vedano, in tal senso, le considerazioni di Hopkins, "Augustine on Foreknowl-

Quella agostiniana, per giunta, intende essere una riflessione efficace, ma non certo analitica e sistematica, a supporto dell'inammissibilità del fatalismo teologico. Lo si comprende, ad esempio, osservando come, nelle pagine del dialogo, i protagonisti non avvertano l'esigenza di approfondire un nodo rilevante quale quello del rapporto tra esercizio della prescienza e statuto ontologico del soggetto conoscente.[64] Più in generale, quello di tracciare un quadro teorico esaustivo, alla luce del quale rimuovere ogni possibile ostacolo alla negazione di un presunto influsso coattivo della prescienza sul conosciuto, non si impone ai loro occhi come un obiettivo primario.[65] Nel *De libero arbitrio*, ancora, Agostino non fa espresso ricorso a nozioni o definizioni di natura logico-modale, né si premura di esplicitare compiutamente lo spettro semantico e il valore polisemico delle principali nozioni in uso.

Ciò, evidentemente, rende più che mai urgente il lavoro dell'interprete,[66] il quale è chiamato, innanzi tutto, a portare alla luce la trama delle relazioni semantiche che interessano i concetti fondamentali operanti nel testo: su tutti, quelli di prescienza, volontà e necessità.

1. La prescienza, della quale solo Dio è capace, è intesa in termini

edge", 126; Pang, "Augustine on Divine Foreknowledge", 431. In continuità con questa prospettiva metodica, si può leggere la proposta interpretativa di Hunt, "Augustine on Theological Fatalism", 18.26, a giudizio del quale l'argomentazione del capitolo 3 non può essere scorporata da quella del capitolo 4, dalla quale verrebbe non solo tematicamente proseguita, ma anche concettualmente completata.

[64] Nella sezione del *De libero arbitrio* presa in esame, come si è detto, Agostino non fa espresso riferimento al carattere atemporale della scienza divina: da un punto di vista teorico, tuttavia, ciò sarebbe stato utile per disinnescare le difficoltà derivanti dalla tesi dell'inesistenza del futuro: cfr. Michon, *Prescience et liberté*, 201-212. In merito a tale difficoltà, cfr. Van Gerven, "Liberté humaine", 320-324; DeCelles, "Divine Prescience", 160; Kondoleon, "Augustine and the Problem", 177, n. 43; Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 58-63; Hunt, "Augustine on Theological Fatalism", 22-25.

[65] Il punto, pur se rapidamente, è fatto oggetto di approfondimento nel capitolo 4. In proposito, cfr. Rowe, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 362-363; N. Pike, "Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action", in *The Philosophical Review*, 74/1 (1965), 27-46: 40-46; Hopkins, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 123-126; DeCelles, "Divine Prescience", 153-154; Kondoleon, "Augustine and the Problem", 169-170; Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 56-57; Pang, "Augustine on Divine Foreknowledge", 429-430; Hunt, "Augustine on Theological Fatalism", 11.18-25; Michon, *Prescience et liberté*, 42-43.

[66] Come notano opportunamente Hunt, "Augustine on Theological Fatalism", 3; de Libera, *La volonté et l'action*, 39.262-263.

canonici e annovera tra i suoi tratti essenziali la completezza,[67] la stabilità,[68] la certezza[69] e l'infallibilità,[70] tutti, eccetto il primo, riconducibili al suo statuto epistemico: essa è scienza, e in quanto tale non è che del vero.[71] La certezza della conoscenza è garantita dall'evidenza della corrispondenza veritativa allo stato dell'oggetto[72] e, conseguentemente, implica l'invariabilità, cioè una forma di necessità, di quest'ultimo in quanto conosciuto.[73]

2. L'impiego del termine "volontà" è meno agevole da precisare,[74] come si intuisce anche solo considerando il suo indistinto utilizzo in relazione tanto all'omonima facoltà dell'animo[75] quanto ai suoi atti volitivi particolari.[76] Confinando il discorso alla sezione analizzata, tuttavia, pare importante osservare come il carattere della volontarietà possa essere inteso in un duplice senso. In un primo senso, più ampio, esso può attribuirsi anche a termini che, pur non essendo in potere della

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[67] Cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 2, n. 4, ed. Green, Daur, 276.1-2; c. 3, n. 6, ed. Green, Daur, 277.2-278.3.7-9; *De civ.*, V, c. 10, n. 1, ed. Dombart, Kalb, 140.17-18.

[68] Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 6, ed. Green, Daur, 279.49-50.

[69] Cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 6, ed. Green, Daur, 278.27-28; c. 3, n. 7, ed. Green, Daur, 279.81; c. 4, n. 10, ed. Green, Daur, 281.22-23.

[70] Cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 8, ed. Green, Daur, 280.117-118. Sull'infallibilità essenziale di Dio, cfr. Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 42; Michon, *Prescience et liberté*, 32-33.63.88; Huges, "Augustine on Will", 315; Boulnois, *Généalogie*, 286.

[71] Su questo aspetto, in particolare, cfr. Pang, "Augustine on Divine Foreknowledge", 426-429; Michon, *Prescience et liberté*, 60.

[72] Cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 3, n. 6, ed. Green, Daur, 279.49-71; c. 3, n. 7, ed. Green, Daur, 279.81-82.

[73] Cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 2, n. 4, ed. Green, Daur, 276.3-5; c. 3, n. 7 ed. Green, Daur, 279.75-77. In proposito, si vedano le osservazioni di Michon, *Prescience et liberté*, 65-66 sul rapporto tra fatalismo teologico e fatalismo aletico.

[74] Come nota, in particolare, Hunt, "Augustine on Theological Fatalism", 7. S. Knuuttila, "The Emergence of the Logic of Will in Medieval Thought", in *The Augustinian Tradition*, ed. G. Matthews, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1999, 206-221: 209, analogamente, ritiene che nella teoria agostiniana possano essere rinvenuti almeno quattro distinti significati connessi al volere.

[75] Cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, II, c. 19, n. 50, ed. Green, Daur, 195.7-8. Su queste linee, si veda il commento di H. L. Kantzer Komline, *Augustine on the Will. A Theological Account*, Oxford 2020, 45-46.

[76] In proposito, cfr. Den Bok, "Freedom of the Will", 239-242.255; Michon, "Le libre", 309; Boulnois, *Généalogie*, 283-284.

volontà, non accadono tuttavia senza o contro di essa: è il caso, lo si è visto, della felicità. In un secondo senso, più circoscritto, tale attribuzione interessa tutto e solo ciò che può essere fatto o impedito per volontà, e che dunque è in potere di quest'ultima e per essa libero:[77] è il caso, ad esempio, della volontà stessa e, almeno nella condizione pre-lapsaria, del vivere giustamente o ingiustamente.[78] È in relazione a quest'ultima accezione, nello specifico, che l'ambito della volontarietà si inserisce in un rapporto oppositivo rispetto a quello della necessità.

3. Lo spettro semantico della necessità risulta non meno stratificato e articolato.[79] Nelle trame del testo, la nozione di necessità assume primariamente una connotazione pragmatica, causale, estrinseca, a partire dalla quale l'ambito della necessità si definisce per opposizione a quello, *strico sensu* considerato, della volontarietà.[80] Rispetto a una volontà, dunque, avviene per necessità, e dunque non liberamente, ciò che essa non ha in proprio potere; ciò che, cioè, si produce o le è impedito coattivamente in virtù di una causa, naturale o volontaria,[81] ma comun-

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[77] Cfr. ad esempio Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, II, c. 20, n. 54, ed. Green, Daur, 273.29-30.

[78] Cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, II, c. 1, nn. 2-3, ed. Green, Daur, 236.33-38; III, c. 18, n. 51, ed. Green, Daur, 305.27-31; n. 52, ed. Green, Daur, 306.56-57. In seguito al peccato, la volontà umana è in grado di rapportarsi al bene solo parzialmente e inefficacemente. In proposito, cfr. P. Pagani, "Agostino. Volere e potere", in Paradeigmata voluntatis. *All'origine della concezione moderna di volontà*, a cura di E. Cattanei, S. Maso (Lexis Supplementi 5), Venezia 2001, 199-232; Trego, " L'âme et la volonté", 263.279, n. 2; Michon, "Le libre arbitre", 332-341; de Libera, *La volonté et l'action*, 224-227.337-350; Boulnois, *Généalogie*, 272-276. Per una più ampia contestualizzazione filosofica del problema, cfr. T. D. J. Chappell, *Aristotle and Augustine on Freedom. Two Theories of Freedom, Voluntary Action and Akrasia*, New York 1995; *Das Problem der Willensschwache in der mittelalterlichen Philosophie*, hrsg. v. T. Hoffmann, J. Müller, M. Perkams (Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales: Bibliotheca 8), Leuven-Paris-Dudley 2006; *Weakness of the Will from Plato to the Present*, ed. T. Hoffmann (Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy 49), Washington D.C. 2008.

[79] A tale riguardo, cfr. DeCelles, "Divine Prescience", 155; Michon, *Prescience et liberté*, 44.

[80] Su questo punto, cfr. Hunt, "Augustine on Theological Fatalism", 12; Michon, *Prescience et liberté*, 61. Più che di "necessità", dunque, sarebbe più opportuno parlare di "necessitazione": sulla differenza tra i due termini, cfr. De Caro, *Il libero arbitrio*, 13-14.68.

[81] Cfr. ad esempio Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 1, n. 2, ed. Green, Daur, 275.52-57; c. 3, n. 7, ed. Green, Daur, 279.65-69; *De civ.*, V, c. 10, n. 1, ed. Dombart, Kalb,

que altra. Definito in questi termini, pertanto, qualcosa può accadere per necessità tanto in assenza quanto in presenza della volontà. Se in presenza della volontà, poi, o contrariamente o conformemente a essa: se nel primo caso interverrà una necessità coercitiva,[82] derivante da costrizione (impossibilità di evitamento) o inibizione (impossibilità di attuazione),[83] nel secondo si registrerà invece una necessità efficiente riconducibile alla mera indipendenza causale (è il caso, ad esempio, dell'insorgenza della felicità, che, pur essendo effettualmente indipendente dal volere umano, non produce in quest'ultimo alcuna inibizione, cessazione o coercizione).[84] In un secondo senso, intrinseco e non coattivo, qualcosa può poi dirsi necessario se, per sua natura, è in un certo modo e non può essere altrimenti:[85] è il caso di Dio,[86] per esempio, o della volontà stessa, che, nella misura in cui e fintantoché (in senso stretto) vuole, non può mancare di volere liberamente.[87] Analogamente, è in un senso non coattivo, connesso alla condizione di invariabilità epistemica, che ciò che è preconosciuto, in quanto tale, può dirsi inevitabilmente necessario. In ultima analisi, necessità e impossibilità di essere altrimenti si implicano vicendevolmente, benché secondo forme e con esiti differenti.

5. Libertà obbligatoria?

La soluzione offerta da Agostino al problema della compatibilità tra prescienza e libertà costituisce un contributo significativo nel panora-

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140.6-10, 141.30-35; *De trinitate*, III, c. 17, n. 47, ed. W. J. Mountain, F. Glorie (CCSL 50), 145.58-65.

[82] Tale forma di necessità non discende dalla prescienza: cfr. Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 17, n. 47, ed. Green, Daur, 303.3-5.

[83] Sulla distinzione tra costrizione e inibizione, cfr. de Libera, *La volonté et l'action*, 75-76.

[84] Cfr. Augustinus, *De natura et gratia*, c. 26, n. 54, ed. C. F. Urba, J. Zycha (CSEL 60), 272.24-273.3. Si veda, al riguardo, il dossier testuale riportato da Den Bok, "Freedom of the Will", 265, n. 87.

[85] Cfr. Augustinus, *De civ.*, V, c. 10, n. 1, ed. Dombart, Kalb, 140.13-15.

[86] Cfr. Augustinus, *De civ.*, V, c. 10, n. 1, ed. Dombart, Kalb, 140.16-24. Si veda, in proposito, il dossier testuale riportato da Den Bok, "Freedom of the Will", 245, n. 27.

[87] Cfr. Augustinus, *De civ.*, V, c. 10, n. 1, ed. Dombart, Kalb, 141.25-29. Il che non implica che la volontà sia necessitata rispetto alle volizioni poste in suo potere: cfr. *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 1, n. 2, ed. Green, Daur, 280.91-95.

ma del pensiero tardo-antico e medievale, del quale la tradizione successiva, che pur avrà modo di affinare i propri strumenti teorici e concettuali (guadagnando, ad esempio, la consapevolezza delle distinzioni tra necessità del condizionale e del conseguente,[88] tra comprensione *de dicto* e *de re* in rapporto all'operatore di necessità, tra applicazione della modalità in senso composito o divisivo), resterà largamente debitrice.[89]

L'indiscussa rilevanza di tale soluzione, naturalmente, non esime l'interprete che intenda valicare l'ambito circoscritto dell'analisi testuale dall'obbligo di testarne la tenuta teorica, innanzi tutto misurando la coerenza dei risultati raggiunti rispetto agli intenti perseguiti. In tal senso, bisognerà notare che, come è emerso in sede di analisi, Agostino definisce il libero arbitrio della volontà sulla base di due requisiti essenziali. Il primo, di carattere potestativo, è riconducibile alla capacità della volontà, avvertita dall'agente come propria e non condizionata, di determinare causalmente, in autonomia e con efficacia, un certo effetto. Il secondo, invece, fa capo alla possibilità della volontà di produrre, in relazione a un dato scenario futuro, esiti effettuali opposti, secondo il duplice registro della contrarietà e della contraddizione.[90]

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[88] La maggioranza degli studiosi, tuttavia, è concorde nel ritenere che tale distinzione, benché non esplicitata, sia implicitamente operativa nell'argomentazione agostiniana: cfr. Rowe, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 360-362; Kondoleon, "Augustine and the Problem", 170.178; Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 53; A. Plantinga, "On Ockham's Way Out", in *Faith and Philosophy*, 3 (1986), 235-269: 235-236; Pang, "Augustine on Divine Foreknowledge", 421.423.426-431; Hunt, "Augustine on Theological Fatalism", 2.27-28; Michon, *Prescience et liberté*, 61; Michon, "Le libre", 317.

[89] Non sembra dunque improprio vedere in Agostino l'iniziatore di tale tradizione, come suggerisce De Caro, *Il libero arbitrio*, 15, n. 34: «Inoltre, una vasta tradizione (iniziata da Agostino) ha fornito interessanti argomenti per pensare che quando il determinismo è declinato in senso epistemologico, esso non rappresenta una vera minaccia per la libertà».

[90] Cfr. ad esempio Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 1, n. 2, ed. Green, Daur, 276.92-93; *De duab. an.*, c. 12, n. 17, ed. Zycha, 73.23-74.6. Cfr. le osservazioni di: Den Bok, "Freedom of the Will", 243.249-250.256.261; Craig, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 43-45.51.53.55; Chappell, *Aristotle and Augustine*, 140-148; De Caro, *Il libero arbitrio*, 9-11 (cfr. anche 49-55, sul modello libertario dell'*agent causation*, a cui l'esposizione agostiniana sembra fortemente assimilabile); Trego, "L'âme et la volonté", 285.299; Michon, "Le libre arbitre", 314-315; de Libera, *La volonté et l'action*, 59-63; 134-135; 262-263; Boulnois, *Généalogie*, 30-31.42.262-263.270-271.275. Nell'ambito della riflessione contemporanea, a tale riguardo, il tradizionale riferimento teorico è

A questo punto, dunque, sarà inevitabile interrogarsi sulla capacità della soluzione agostiniana di garantire, fatta salva la prescienza, entrambi i requisiti. La decisa negazione di qualsivoglia esito coattivo della prescienza, per un verso, autorizza a pensare che, per ciò che interessa la presente trattazione, il primo requisito non sia a rischio. Più controverso, invece, sembra essere il discorso concernente il secondo requisito. Forti del fatto che Agostino non si spinge a discutere nessuno dei due princìpi cardine della tesi fatalista (quello della necessità del passato, da un lato, e quello della sua trasferibilità, dall'altro), alcuni interpreti hanno infatti dubitato della sua salvaguardabilità: la soluzione agostiniana, in linea di principio, non inficerebbe certo la possibilità di attribuire alla volontà la facoltà di produrre scenari alternativi, e tuttavia, in concreto, escluderebbe la traducibilità di tale facoltà nell'esercizio di un effettivo potere controfattuale.[91]

Se così fosse, occorre notare, l'esito della discussione sulla prescienza colliderebbe parzialmente, e pur non marginalmente, con l'impostazione che nel dialogo Agostino, in modo manifesto, intende dare alla questione dell'ascrivibilità morale.[92] Altri studiosi, viceversa, si sono mossi in senso contrario, enfatizzando la presenza nei testi agostiniani di elementi teorici che consentirebbero di scongiurare una simile conclusione: tra questi, ad esempio, l'idea di una condizionatezza e flessibilità relativa della prescienza in rapporto alla contingenza degli atti liberi.[93] La questione, è facile intuirlo, è di non poco conto e me-

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costituito, innanzitutto, dai contributi di: H.G. Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility", in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 23/66 (1969), 829-839; Id., "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person", in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 68/1 (1971), 5-20; R.M. Chisholm, "He Could Have Done Otherwise", in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 13/64 (1967), 409-417. Con riferimento specifico al pensiero medievale, invece, cfr. H.G. Gelber, *It Could Have Been Otherwise. Contingency and Necessity in Dominican Theology at Oxford, 1300-1350*, Leiden-Boston 2004.

[91] O, detto in altro modo, la soluzione di Agostino assicurerebbe la possibilità di agire altrimenti in termini unicamente "controfattuali", ma non "categorici" (De Caro, *Il libero arbitrio*, 46). Sulla questione, cfr. Michon, *Prescience et liberté*, 44.54.203; Michon, "Le libre arbitre", 323; Huges, "Augustine on Will", 326-331; Boulnois, *Généalogie*, 287.

[92] Cfr. ad esempio Augustinus, *De lib. arb.*, III, c. 18, n. 50, ed. Green, Daur, 304.1-11. La rinuncia al potere degli opposti obbligherebbe a ridefinire la responsabilità in termini monovalenti: cfr. Boulnois, *Généalogie*, 50-51. Sulla distinzione tra ascrizione e attribuzione, cfr. de Libera, *La volonté et l'action*, 151.

[93] Cfr. DeCelles, "Divine Prescience", 157-161; S. Knuuttila, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy*, London 1993, 69.

riterebbe un supplemento di analisi complesso e articolato, che tanto i limiti quanto le finalità del presente studio non consentono di offrire. In mancanza di tale possibilità, dunque, mi accontenterò di osservare come, quand'anche dovesse imporsi l'esigenza di sacrificare l'effettivo potere degli opposti sull'altare della compatibilità (conclusione tutt'altro che piana), al paradigma concettuale agostiniano non sarebbe per questo necessariamente preclusa di essere riportato nell'alveo della prospettiva libertaria,[94] nella quale, a mio giudizio opportunamente, si è soliti collocarlo.[95]

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[94] La soluzione agostiniana, in tal senso, potrebbe comunque essere interpretata nei termini di un «libertarismo modificato»: in mancanza del potere fattuale di sortire esiti alternativi, cioè, la libertà e la responsabilità dell'azione verrebbero assicurate dall'inerenza del principio causale all'agente e dall'adozione dell'indeterminismo causale quale paradigma di riferimento in rapporto alla concettualizzazione del volere libero: cfr. AUGUSTINUS, *De duab. an.*, c. 10, n. 14, ed. ZYCHA, 68.23-25. Cfr. HUNT, "Augustine on Theological Fatalism", 29-30; E. STUMP, "Augustine on Free Will", in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, ed. E. STUMP, N. KRETZMANN, Cambridge 2001, 124-147: 130-133.

[95] Con riferimento al *De libero arbitrio* e, certamente, alla concezione della volontà nella fase prelapsaria: cfr. ad esempio CRAIG, "Augustine on Foreknowledge", 54-56; G.E. GANSSLE, "The Development of Augustine's View of the Freedom of the Will (386-397), in *The Modern Schoolman*, 74 (1996), 1-18: 11; STUMP, "Augustine", 133; J. BRACHTENDORF, "Deterministic, Libertarian, or Compatibilistic?", in *Augustinian Studies*, 38/1 (2007), 219-231: 230; BOULNOIS, *Généalogie*, 271.289.293-295.

How does God's Knowledge Differ from Tiresias' Oracles? Revisiting Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, Book V

Pasquale Porro

1.

As formulated by Boethius himself, the well-known question raised in Book V of *The Consolation of Philosophy* appears to share certain features with some of the puzzles discussed today under the heading of the paradox of predictability.[1] On the one hand, we encounter an oracular intelligence ("Laplacean Intelligence") capable of predicting all events that will occur; on the other, an agent who, while not strictly counter-predictive, nonetheless claims the possibility – *qua* a being endowed with free will – of escaping any form of epistemic determination. If the Oracular Intelligence is genuinely capable, on the basis of its own knowledge or science, of predicting everything that will happen – even the intention of certain agents to act counter-predictively – then the universe in question can only be strictly deterministic, and the very possibility of acting counter-predictively becomes meaningless. If, by contrast, we admit the possibility that those subject to the knowledge of the Oracular Intelligence can in fact act in a counter-predictive manner,

[1] The paradox was famously formulated by Michael Scriven; see M. Scriven, "An Essential Unpredictability in Human Behavior", in *Scientific Psychology: Principles and Approaches*, ed. B. B. Wolman, E. Nagel, New York 1965, 411-425. See also D. K. Lewis, J. S. Richardson, "Scriven on human unpredictability", in *Philosophical Studies*, 17 (1966), 69-74; L. D. Roberts, "Scriven and MacKay on Unpredictability and Free Choice", in *Mind*, 84 (1975), 284-288. I refer here primarily to the way in which Jennan Ismael revisited the paradox in terms of the contrast between (natural) oracles and counterpredictive devices. See J. Ismael, "The Paradox of Predictability", in Ead., *How Physics Makes Us Free*, New York-Oxford 2016, 169-182; Ead., "Determinism, Counterpredictive Devices, and the Impossibility of Laplacean Intelligences", in *The Monist*, 102 (2019), 478-498.

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the Oracular Intelligence thereby ceases to be such, and its predictions prove to be merely probabilistic or doxastic.

What, then, would happen if we were to posit the existence of a rational agent or epistemic subject who, like the Laplacean Intelligence, is able to know the universe both in its general laws and in its individual details, and therefore to predict everything, but who is external to the universe itself and does not belong to it? In such a case, no interfering effect would arise – as occurs when the intelligence in question is itself part of the universe whose events it anticipates – and the predictions of this rational subject would, by definition, be infallible. In short, what would happen if we replaced Laplace's 'demon' with the God of the late antique and medieval Christian tradition, for instance with Boethius' God? This is precisely the issue I wish to address: namely, the problem of the compatibility between an omniscient and infallible rational subject – who knows everything with absolute certainty – and the possibility of preserving a margin of unpredictability, and thus of free will, within such a determinate (or indeed so deterministic) system.

There are, of course, many elements that distinguish the scenario of Book V of the *Consolation* from contemporary debates on predictability. I shall confine myself to mentioning two. First, the Laplacean Intelligence may be conceived as an 'extrinsic predictor', but may also, in a certain sense, belong to the very system whose behaviour it predicts; Boethius' God, by contrast, as already anticipated, is entirely external to the system itself and shares none of its characteristics. Secondly, Boethius explicitly speaks of human free will, not of counter-predictive behaviour. And yet what most clearly characterises Boethius' approach to the problem of free will – distinguishing it from that of his predecessors, and in part also from that of later authors who engage with it – is precisely the issue of unpredictability, or rather the relationship between human action and an epistemic subject (an Oracular Intelligence) that is omniscient and, above all, by definition infallible. The "epistemic objection" that Boethius raises against Philosophy in the third prose of Book V is far less naïve than it is sometimes taken to be, and in fact constitutes the very core of Boethius' argument. If God knows in a determined and necessary way events that are in themselves contingent and unpredictable (first case), then He is mistaken in every act of knowledge concerning events of this kind, and therefore cannot be infallible or omniscient at all; if God knows in a contingent

way events that are genuinely unpredictable and contingent (second case), then His knowledge is of a doxastic nature, and His predictions are reduced to mere conjectures of human soothsayers – depowered natural oracles – such as Tiresias; if, finally, God is able to predict all human behaviour in an absolutely infallible manner (third case), then such behaviour is not unpredictable at all, but rather subject to absolute predictability. In this last case, the problem becomes that of determining whether such predictability – precisely what Lady Philosophy and Boethius uphold – is compatible or incompatible with effective freedom on the part of human beings.

I believe that insufficient attention has been paid to the way in which the epistemic objection raised by Boethius in the third prose gives rise, from that point until the conclusion of Book V, to two distinct problems:

[P1] how God can know in a determinate and infallible way events that are contingent in themselves, without deceiving Himself as to their nature and without resorting to merely opinion-based or doxastic knowledge;

[P2] how human free will can remain indeterminate even if we admit God's infallible knowledge of all events, including those brought about by human agents.

The failure to distinguish clearly – or the tendency to conflate – these two problems lies, in my view, at the root of several of the interpretative difficulties that have characterised the reception of Boethius' solution.

It is from this perspective, then, that I intend to reread the fifth book of the *Consolation*. More specifically, I propose to show four things:

(a) that at least two of the three pillars traditionally regarded as fundamental components of Boethius' solution (or even as its very core) – namely, the principle according to which everything that is known depends essentially on the faculty that knows it, and not vice versa, and the doctrine of the absolute timelessness of divine knowledge – must be interpreted as specific arguments devised to circumvent the epistemic objection raised by Boethius [P1], rather than as arguments directly intended to support the freedom of human agency [P2];

(b) that Boethius' true solution in fact rests on the distinction between absolute necessity and hypothetical necessity, and, at a deeper level, on the distinction between the absolute modal status intrinsic to events and their relative and extrinsic modal status;

(c) that Boethius' solution only makes sense if we abandon any "libertarian" interpretation of it and instead adopt a strictly compatibilist (or even super-compatibilist) perspective;

(d) that the freedom of choice Boethius seeks to safeguard is essentially 'potestative', that is, grounded in the fact of making one's own choices and being the source of one's own agency, rather than freedom understood in a synchronic and counterfactual sense (as the possibility of acting otherwise at that very moment).

2.

In Book I of the *Monarchia*, Dante laments the fact that everyone has the Boethian definition of free will on their lips, while very few truly understand it – just as the logicians of his time do with the definition of the triangle:

> […] principium primum nostre libertatis est libertas arbitrii, quam multi habent in ore, in intellectu vero pauci. Veniunt nanque usque ad hoc: ut dicant liberum arbitrium esse liberum de voluntate iudicium; et verum dicunt, sed importatum per verba longe est ab eis, quemadmodum tota die logici nostri faciunt de quibusdam propositionibus, que ad exemplum logicalibus interseruntur (puta de hac: "triangulus habet tres duobus rectis equales").[2]

Dante is clearly referring here to the formula used by Boethius in his second commentary on the *De interpretatione*, in which free will is in effect defined as *liberum nobis de voluntate iudicium* ("free judge-

[2] Dante Alighieri, *Monarchia*, I xii 2, ed. P. Chiesa, A. Tabarroni, with the cooperation of D. Ellero (Nuova Edizione Commentata delle Opere di Dante [NECOD] 4), Roma 2013, 48; tr. P. Shaw, Cambridge 1995 (https://danteonline.it/opere/index.php?opera=Monarchia%20-%20ed.%20Shaw): "[…] the first principle of our freedom is free will, which many people talk about but few understand. For they go so far as to say that free will is free judgment in matters of volition. And what they say is true, but they are very far from understanding what the words mean, just like our logicians who daily enunciate certain propositions by way of example in their discussions on logic, such as 'a triangle has three angles equal to two right angles".

ment in matters of volition").[3] Yet what Dante writes could, without difficulty, be applied to Boethius' more extensive and celebrated treatment of human free will in the fifth book of the *Consolation of Philosophy*. In this sense, Dante's words may be taken not merely as a bitter observation, but almost as a kind of curse: for it seems to have been impossible, so far, to arrive at a shared interpretation of the solution Boethius proposes concerning the relationship between divine science and human free will.

I do not pretend to resolve this issue definitively in the present paper – such a claim would be an intolerable presumption. What I would like to attempt, however, is a clarification, or rather a disambiguation, of certain elements of Boethius' solution, and especially an examination of the way in which they fit together. Since, as mentioned above, one of my aims is to show that Boethius does not hold a 'libertarian' conception of free will, as we would describe it today, but rather a strictly 'compatibilist' one – and since this conviction diverges from what is explicitly or implicitly assumed by some of the most authoritative interpreters of the fifth book of the *Consolatio*[4] – it seems appro-

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[3] A. M. S. Boethius, *In librum Aristotelis De interpretatione, editio secunda,* III, c. 9, ed. K. Meiser, Leipzig 1880, 196.14.

[4] My main interlocutor in this case will be perhaps the most refined interpreter of Boethius' philosophy, i.e. John Marenbon. I will refer primarily to J. Marenbon, "Divine Prescience and Contingency in Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*", in *Rivista di storia della filosofia*, 68 (2013), 9-21 and even more to *Le temps, l'eternité et la prescience de Boèce a Thomas d'Aquin*, Paris 2005, ch. 2, 21-54. To summarise the points of convergence and divergence between my interpretation and Marenbon's: I agree with Marenbon in believing that the interpretation of eternity as timelessness alone does not constitute the true fulcrum of Boethius' solution. However, I do not agree with Marenbon's choice to identify this core in the peculiar nature of divine knowledge (an "epistemic" solution), his inclination, in my view, to describe Boethius as a "libertarian", and his decision to separate the question of foreknowledge from that of providence or causality. By contrast, I would argue that: (i) Boethius adopts a "compatibilist" rather than a "libertarian" perspective; (ii) in Boethius, divine science is inseparable from providence, and from the causal order of the world; (iii) that the core of Boethius' solution lies in the distinction between absolute necessity and hypothetical necessity, which in turn refers to the idea that *in se* – that is, considered independently of the constraint or epistemic clause of divine knowledge – human events and actions retain an intrinsically contingent nature (the same events are, however, necessary when related *ad aliud*, that is, extrinsically, to divine science and providence). An indeterministic interpretation of Boethius is also defended, as far as I can see, in S. Knuuttila, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy,* London-New York 1993, 45-62, esp.

priate to clarify in advance what I mean, in this specific context, by these positions ('compatibilism', 'incompatibilism'). This is not done in order to explain what is already well known, but rather to avoid any possible misunderstanding or *fallacia aequivocationis*, since in matters of this kind it is the nuances, even the smallest ones, that make the difference.

By 'libertarians' I mean the proponents of that form of incompatibilism which denies precisely the compatibility of freedom with one or more forms of determinism (for instance, natural causal determinism), and therefore maintains that freedom is possible only if a certain degree of indeterminacy is postulated. Not all incompatibilists, of course, are 'libertarians': an incompatibilist might also be a 'hard determinist', that is, someone who believes that the world has a deterministic structure and that, because of the incompatibility between determinism and freedom, the latter is impossible.

By 'compatibilism' I mean, in a symmetrical and corresponding manner, the position of those who hold that freedom is by no means incompatible with determinism – and, this is the crucial qualification in the present context, with any form of determinism, and not merely with that imposed by physical or natural laws. Even this initial and general characterisation does not, in itself, commit one either to affirming or to denying the existence of freedom: compatibilism, taken simply as such, allows that freedom is possible even within a deterministic structure or system, that is, that there are "possible worlds that contain free beings, even if all the events that occur in those worlds are determined".[5] A super-compatibilist position, by contrast, is one which maintains that freedom is possible only within a deterministic system.

49-55; R. W. Sharples, "Fate, prescience and free will", in *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius*, ed. J. Marenbon, Cambridge 2009, 207-227; R. Fedriga, *La sesta prosa. Discussioni medievali su prescienza, libertà e contingenza*, Milano-Udine 2015, 39-58. In contrast, K. Rogers does not seem to rule out a compatibilist perspective; see K. Rogers, "Defending Boethius: Two Case Studies in Charitable Interpretation", in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 51 (2011), 241-257. I find Noble's recent interpretation, in an openly compatibilist sense (with an interesting reference to the possible Proclean roots), very convincing and plausible; see C.I. Noble, "All That Heaven Allows: Boethius on Divine Foreknowledge, Contingency, and Free Choice", in *Phronesis*, 69 (2024), 182-225.

[5] See, for instance, M. De Caro, *Il libero arbitrio. Una introduzione*, Roma-Bari 2009, 24, footnote 55.

Having made these elementary clarifications concerning the relationship between freedom and determinism, it is perhaps necessary to explain how I understand 'freedom' and 'free will' in the present discussion. First of all – and this may again seem a superfluous clarification – the two notions do not coincide, not only in contemporary debates, but already in medieval ones, to the point of legitimising formulas that may appear pleonastic or tautological to us, such as (for example, in Anselm of Canterbury) *libertas liberi arbitrii*, "freedom of free will". The dividing line between these two notions, however, does not always correspond, in the Middle Ages, to the one we might draw today.[6] In very general terms, freedom may be understood as the self-determination that characterises a rational agent or power, regardless of the manner in which it acts, whereas free will concerns precisely the way in which that same agent decides to act or operate. Freedom is thus – for most medieval philosophers and theologians – a feature pertaining to the nature or essence of a rational agent (and hence to its will, its intellect, or the combination of the two), and which underlies the possibility of choosing and acting; free will, by contrast, is the actual capacity to make choices, that is, to opt among the various alternatives available. Nevertheless, it would be misleading to assume constancy or homogeneity in the use of these notions throughout the Middle Ages, which span no less than ten centuries.

Thus, in medieval debates, freedom may signify, for example:

1. the mere absence of external coercion or compulsion;

2. independence with respect to any material condition, that is, the capacity to direct oneself towards an end identified by abstracting from sensible data, and thus from matter in general;

3. the ability to do otherwise, in a synchronic and counterfactual sense;

4. or, finally, full mastery or dominion over one's own acts and the objects of one's own acts, in accordance with what is commonly referred to as the 'potestative' aspect of acting.[7]

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[6] I take the liberty of referring in this regard to P. Porro, "Trasformazioni medievali della libertà/1. Alla ricerca di una definizione del libero arbitrio" and "Trasformazioni medievali della libertà/2. Libertà e determinismo nei dibattiti scolastici", both in *Libero arbitrio. Storia di una controversia filosofica*, ed. M. De Caro, M. Mori, E. Spinelli, Roma 2014, 171-190 and 191-221.

[7] See G. Alliney, *Il nodo nel giunco. Le questioni sulla libertà di Enrico di Gand*,

At this preliminary stage, this suffices to show that there may exist agents endowed with freedom, in one or even several of the senses just distinguished, but not with free will in the strict sense, if the latter – understood as an operative capacity to choose – implies a form of mutability or the possibility of opting for a lesser good or even for evil (a full capacity to choose evidently entails, in this sense, the possibility of sinning, which Christian theology denies to certain free agents – God, the angels, and the blessed). Conversely, there may be agents endowed with free will, but not properly with freedom. To cite an example predating medieval discussions, it suffices to recall that, in responding to perhaps his most difficult and challenging opponent, Julian of Eclanum, Augustine had already observed that, as a result of Adam's sin, humanity lost its freedom to possess full justice together with immortality (a freedom that can only be restored through grace), but did not lose the free will by which the sinner consents to sin. Freedom is understood by Augustine, at least in this context, as freedom from sin or injustice, whereas, inversely, sinners are freed from justice through their will.[8] Thus, for Augustine, as a consequence of original sin, human beings lost their freedom, but not their free will – and this, too, may be an important indication for understanding, in my view, Boethius' later position.[9]

As for the Boethian definition of free will recalled above – the one taken from the second commentary on the *De interpretatione: liberum nobis de voluntate iudicium*[10] – it conveys a manifestly 'intellectualist' interpretation of free will: free will is not a judgement made by the will, but a judgement of reason concerning matters of volition, that is, what pertains to the will. The Latin formulation leaves no room for alternative interpretations, and the act of judging is very explicitly referred by Boethius to the sphere of reason. Alongside Siger of Brabant, Godfrey of Fontaines, and Dante, Boethius may thus rightly be regarded as one of the most radical intellectualists of the Middle Ages.[11]

Bari 2009, 35-36 and 47.

[8] See Augustinus Hipponensis, *Contra Iulianum <opus imperfectum>*, I, cc. 79 and 82, ed. M. Zelzer (CSEL 85/1), Wien 1974, 94.16-17 and 96.16-20.

[9] Indeed, Boethius himself seems to distinguish, in the *Consolatio*, between free choice and the freedom we can attain by turning towards the divine mind (IV, pr. 6; V, pr. 2).

[10] Cf. *supra*, footnote 3.

[11] Boethius, *In librum Aristotelis De interpretatione, editio secunda,* III, c. 9, ed.

By contrast, we do not find in Boethius an equally explicit definition of freedom, and it is probably precisely his understanding of freedom that is decisive for a correct or at least plausible interpretation of the solution proposed in Book V of the *Consolation*. For present purposes, and by further specifying what has already been said, it may be useful to recall that freedom can, in general, be traced back to two essential conditions – conditions that are still, to some extent, accepted today and that do not necessarily coincide or overlap:

- mastery over one's own actions, that is, the agent's 'potestative' capacity mentioned earlier: the fact that actions proceed from the conscious and deliberate activity of the agent;
- the possibility of acting otherwise.

The latter condition clearly involves a counterfactual dimension, insofar as it refers to the possibility for a subject to do something different, or even contrary, to what he or she is doing, with reference to the same instant (according to the model that John Duns Scotus would later formalise in terms of strictly synchronic possibility or contingency).[12] This counterfactual dimension, however, may itself be understood at different levels: for example, with respect to the current order of things; with respect to another possible world; or with respect to the totality of possible worlds.

The first condition of freedom – conscious or deliberate mastery over one's own actions – primarily concerns voluntariness: I am free to the extent that I do what I (consciously) want to do. As noted above, these two conditions are not always found together and can indeed come apart, as is famously illustrated by the thought experiment proposed by John Locke in Book II of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, to which I shall return shortly.

Meiser, 196.25-197.2: "hoc est enim uti ratione, uti iudicatione. omne enim commune nobis est cum ceteris animantibus, sola ratione disiungimur. quod si sola etiam iudicatione inter nos et cetera animalia distantia, cur dubitemus ratione uti hoc esse quod est uti iudicatione?". On the history of intellectualism in later scholastic debates (13th century), see F.-X. Putallaz, *Insolente liberté. Controverses et condamnations au XIIIe siècle*, Fribourg-Paris 1995.

[12] See S. D. Dumont, "The Origin of Scotus's Theory of Synchronic Contingency", in *The Modern Schoolman*, 72 (1995), 149-167.

3.

I have not recalled all these distinctions and elements for the sake of redundancy, nor for merely didactic purposes (which would in any case be inappropriate here). Rather, I believe that they are directly implicated in Boethius' solution to the question that dominates Book V of the *Consolatio*, to which it is now time to turn.

The first point to be emphasised – if Book V is considered within the work as a whole, and not as an entirely detached and independent section – is that, when we begin to address the last and perhaps most intractable of the problems Boethius raises to Lady Philosophy, we already know the solution for the most part, much as in those detective stories in which the solution is presented from the outset and it is merely a matter of guiding the reader towards an understanding of how it is to be reached. Indeed, Boethius has already made it clear in Book IV (sixth prose) that fate is nothing other than "the arrangement present in things subject to movement, through which providence binds each thing in its own proper order": "fatum vero inhaerens rebus mobilibus dispositio, per quam providentia suis quaeque nectit ordinibus".[13] Everything that is subject to fate is therefore subject to providence, which in truth also embraces those realities that lie beyond the mutability of fate. And since providence extends to all things, we already know that all earthly events or states of affairs are included within an immutable and all-encompassing order:

> Ordo enim quidam cuncta complectitur, ut quod ab adsignata ordinis ratione decesserit, hoc licet in alium, tamen ordinem relabatur, ne quid in regno providentiae liceat temeritati.[14]

To forestall any possible misunderstanding or objection, it should be recalled that already in Book IV of the *Consolation* Boethius (through

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[13] A. M. S. Boethius, *Cons. Phil.*, IV, pr. 6, ed. C. Moreschini, in Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae. Opuscula theologica. Editio altera* (Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana), München-Leipzig 2005, 122.32-33; tr. R. W. Sharples in Cicero, *On Fate (De Fato)* and Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy (Philosophiae Consolationis)*, IV.5-7, V, ed. with an Introduction, translations and commentaries by R. W. Sharples, Warminster 1991, 107.

[14] Boethius, *Cons. Phil.*, IV, pr. 6, ed. Moreschini, 128.186-129.189; tr. Sharples, 115: "For a certain ordering embraces all things, so that what departs from its place in that order falls back into an order, admittedly a different one, so that in the kingdom of providence nothing should be permitted to random chance".

Lady Philosophy) shows no hesitation in including human actions within the 'connection' of what is subject to fate and providence:

> Haec actus etiam fortunasque hominum indissolubili causarum connexione constringit; quae cum ab immobilis providentiae proficiscatur exordiis, ipsas quoque immutabiles esse necesse est.[15]

In the course of illustrating her theodicy, Philosophy goes so far as to explain to Boethius that the states and actions of the good and the wicked in this world themselves constitute the rewards and punishments of their conduct. The eschatology of the *Consolatio* is thus largely intramundane rather than otherworldly, and coincides with the providential ordering itself.[16]

That chance – and thus the Aristotelian sphere of accidental causality, to which contingent events belong – has no place in Boethius' universe is further confirmed by the first prose of Book V, which develops Aristotelian assumptions in a markedly more deterministic direction than Aristotle himself. Boethius in fact concedes what Aristotle denies (especially in *Metaphysics* VI, 3), namely the possibility of tracing all accidental causes back to a form of essential causality. If, for Aristotle, chance arises from a spontaneously generated cause that interrupts a natural chain of causal connections, for Boethius:

> Licet igitur definire casum esse inopinatum ex confluentibus causis in his quae ob aliquid geruntur eventum. Concurrere vero atque confluere causas facit ordo ille inevitabili conexione [*sic*] procedens, qui de providentiae fonte descendens, cuncta suis locis temporibusque disponit.[17]

At this point, the question with which the discussion of free will opens in V, 2 – "Sed in hac haerentium sibi serie causarum estne ulla nostri

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[15] Boethius, *Cons. Phil.*, IV, pr. 6, ed. Moreschini, 124.82-86; tr. Sharples, 109: "It also constrains the actions and fortunes of human beings by an indissoluble connecting of causes; since this has its starting-points in the immobility of providence, the causes too must be unalterable".

[16] As the sixth prose of Book IV clearly shows.

[17] Boethius, *Cons. Phil.*, V, pr. 1, ed. Moreschini, 138.51-56; tr. Sharples, 127-129: "[…] chance may be defined as an unexpected outcome, as the result of causes that come together, in these things that are being done for the sake of something. But the coincidence and coming together of causes is brought about by that order, advancing by unavoidable connections, which descends from providence as its source and arranges all things in their proper times and places".

arbitrii libertas, an ipsos quoque humanorum motus animorum fatalis catena constringit?"[18] – is already circumscribed and situated within a well-defined framework. On the basis of what we have seen, we can already establish – even before following the entirety of Boethius' discussion of free will – that if Boethius is an incompatibilist, he can only be a hard determinist. If, however, we rule out incompatibilism on the grounds that Boethius clearly seeks to affirm the existence of free will, we must *a fortiori* rule out any 'libertarian' reading of his position. The only remaining option, then, is to recognise Boethius as a compatibilist – and I hope that, at this point, the conclusion anticipated earlier no longer appears arbitrary.

To present the existence of providence (understood as a causal order) as a final obstacle that undermines what Boethius elaborates throughout Book V – as, for example, John Marenbon, in his influential interpretation, does – and to speak in this regard of a "*bouleversement inattendu de ce que la Philosophie avait établi par ses arguments serrés*" ("an unexpected upheaval of what Philosophy had established by her tight arguments"),[19] is to commit a *hysteron-proteron*, an inversion of terms. The problem of an all-encompassing causal connection and of providence is not a residue, an additional and external difficulty that ultimately weakens the solution devised by Boethius; rather, it is the presupposition from which – or, more precisely, the horizon within which – the Boethian solution must be situated and interpreted.

4.

Let us therefore begin from this fixed point: if Boethius intends to defend the freedom of human free will, he can do so only from a compatibilist perspective, and it is therefore Boethius' compatibilism that must be explained and interpreted. It is commonly acknowledged that Boethius' solution rests on at least three distinct pillars or building blocks:

(i) the thesis according to which everything that is known is grasped not according to its own nature, but according to the capacity of the

[18] Boethius, *Cons. Phil.*, V, pr. 2, ed. Moreschini, 138.1-139.4; tr. Sharples, 129: "But in this sequence of causes that are fastened together, is there any freedom for our choice, or are the very movements of human minds also constrained by the chain of fate?".

[19] Marenbon, *Le temps, l'éternité et la prescience de Boèce à Thomas d'Aquin*, 54.

knower ("omne enim quod cognoscitur non secundum sui vim, sed secundum cognoscentium potius comprehenditur facultatem");[20]

(ii) the timelessness or atemporality of divine knowledge or science ("Quoniam igitur omne iudicium secundum sui naturam quae sibi subiecta sunt comprehendit, est autem deo semper aeternus ac praesentarius status, scientia quoque eius, omnem temporis supergressa motionem, in suae manet simplicitate praesentiae infinitaque praeteriti ac futuri spatia complectens, omnia, quasi iam gerantur, in sua simplici cognitione considerat");[21]

(iii) the distinction between absolute and hypothetical necessity ("Duae sunt etenim necessitates, simplex una, veluti quod necesse est omnes homines esse mortales, altera condicionis, ut, si aliquem ambulare scias, eum ambulare necesse est").[22]

While everyone acknowledges these three building blocks – as indeed they are explicitly formulated in the text – the real difficulty lies in determining the function each of them performs and the way in which they are related to one another. What must not be overlooked is that these elements, or at least the first two of them, are introduced by Boethius not primarily in relation to the main issue discussed in Book V (namely, that of free will), but rather in response to the celebrated 'epistemic objection' raised at the outset of the discussion, which undoubtedly constitutes Boethius' most original and significant contribution to the problem of the relationship between divine knowledge and contingent future events. The objection, in my view, is formulated with great precision:

> Sicut enim scientia ipsa impermixta est falsitati, ita id quod ab ea concipitur, esse aliter atque concipitur nequit. Ea namque causa est cur

[20] Boethius, *Cons. Phil.*, V, pr. 4, ed. Moreschini, 149.72-75; tr. Sharples, 143.

[21] Boethius, *Cons. Phil.*, V, 6, ed. Moreschini, 157.58-64; tr. Sharples, 153: "Since therefore it is in accordance with its own nature that all judgement comprehends the things that are subject to it, and God's condition is always eternal and present, his knowledge too, surpassing all temporal change, abides in the simplicity of its own present, embracing the infinite extent of past and future, and in its simple act of knowing considers all things as if they were happening now".

[22] Boethius, *Cons. Phil.*, V, 6, ed. Moreschini, 158.100-159.103; tr. Sharples, 155: "For there are two types of necessity; one is simple, as with its being necessary that all men are mortal, the other depends on a condition, as, if you know that someone is walking, it is necessary that he be walking".

> mendacio scientia careat, quod se ita rem quamque habere necesse est uti eam sese habere scientia comprehendit. Quid igitur, quonam modo deus haec incerta futura praenoscit? Nam si inevitabiliter eventura censet quae etiam non evenire possibile est, fallitur; quod non sentire modo nefas est sed etiam voce proferre. At si ita uti sunt, ita ea futura esse decernit, ut aeque vel fieri ea vel non fieri posse cognoscat, quae est haec praescientia, quae nihil certum, nihil stabile comprehendit? Aut quid hoc refert vaticinio illo ridiculo Tiresiae: quicquid dicam aut erit aut non? Quid etiam divina providentia humana opinione praestiterit, si uti homines incerta iudicat quorum est incertus eventus?[23]

It is evidently to this passage that the question formulated in the title of this paper refers: "How does God's knowledge differ from Tiresias' oracles?". For, as anticipated, if God knows in a necessary way – and as necessary – events that are in themselves contingent, He would be constantly and structurally deceiving Himself; indeed, one might say that in this case God would be far more ignorant and fallible than most human beings. If, on the other hand, God knows human events as contingent and therefore as uncertain and mutable, how would His knowledge differ from human opinion, or indeed from Tiresias' prophecies, which grasp only the truth in a composite sense – namely, the truth of a disjunction of states of affairs (for example, 'tomorrow there will or will not be a sea battle', preserving the principle of excluded middle even if the principle of bivalence is suspended) – but not the determinate truth that concerns individual events or states of affairs?

It is in order to remedy this difficulty that Lady Philosophy introduces the first of the principles listed above – (i) that everything that is known is known not according to its own nature, but according to the

[23] Boethius, *Cons. Phil.*, V, pr. 3, ed. Moreschini, 143.59-144.77; tr. Sharples, 135: "For just as knowledge itself is unmixed with falsehood, just so that what is grasped by it cannot be otherwise than it is grasped as being. This indeed is the reason why there is no deception in knowledge, that each thing must be as knowledge understands it to be. What then? In what way does God have foreknowledge that these uncertain things are going to be? For if he judges that those things will come about inevitably which can also not come about, he is mistaken – a view that it is wrong (for us) not only to hold but even to utter. But if he judges that these things are going to be in the way that they actually are going to be, so that he realises that they can equally well come about or not come about, what is this 'foreknowledge', which grasps nothing firm or certain? Or how is this different from that ridiculous prophecy of Tiresias, 'Whatever I say either will happen or won't'? And how would divine providence be superior to human opinion, if, like human beings, it judged those things as uncertain of which the outcome is uncertain?".

capacity of the knower. This principle encapsulates the essence of that 'Copernican revolution' which philosophy textbooks are accustomed to attribute emphatically to Kant, but which in fact belongs to the centuries-old tradition of Proclean Neoplatonism.

The application of this principle to the present case allows us to maintain that what human reason apprehends as contingent may be known, at a higher level, by the divine intellect as necessary, just as what appears multiple, individual, and mutable to sense perception and imagination can be grasped as universal and stable by human reason.[24] Yet it is equally clear that this principle contributes nothing, in itself, to the central problem of human free will, except insofar as it enables us to circumvent the epistemic objection initially raised by Boethius. On the contrary, to claim that what human beings know as contingent is in fact necessary from the standpoint of a higher and truer form of knowledge does not argue in favour of the actual contingency of human actions, but rather the reverse.

The same holds true of the second principle, that of the timelessness of divine knowledge, which for many interpreters – and (at least in part) for contemporary philosophers such as Linda Zagzebski[25] – constitutes the true hinge or fulcrum of the Boethian solution.[26] Lady Philosophy explains that the manner in which God knows must be derived from the divine nature or essence, and that this nature is characterised by eternity understood as absolute timelessness. God knows everything as present, not as past or future. This principle, too, helps to clarify more fully in what sense God does not deceive Himself when knowing contingent things as necessary: for God there are no future contingents; everything is known with certainty and necessity in an eternal present.

Yet it is not difficult to see that this second principle, taken in itself, contributes very little to the defence of human free will. Once again, it is only indirectly relevant, insofar as it allows the epistemic objection to be definitively overcome. On the contrary, for an expert commentator on Aristotle's *De interpretatione* such as Boethius, the principle of

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[24] As is extensively illustrated in the fourth prose of Book V.

[25] See L. Zagzebski, *The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge*, New York-Oxford 1991, esp. 43-63.

[26] On this specific point, I fully agree with Marenbon.

the timelessness of divine knowledge, when directly applied to the contingency of human actions, raises more difficulties than it resolves. In the famous ninth chapter – however one interprets it – Aristotle appears to allow an exception to the principle of bivalence for propositions concerning the future, but not for those concerning the present. Paradoxically, the fact that God apprehends all events as present imposes a very strong necessity upon the events themselves: if God knows infallibly and timelessly that I shall go for a walk today, then this event could not fail to occur, not even at a purely counterfactual level, since otherwise divine knowledge would be fallible. Thus, even the principle of the timelessness or atemporality of divine knowledge – so often regarded as the keystone of the Boethian solution – does not, strictly speaking, advance the cause of human free will. If God knows infallibly everything that happens as present, then everything that happens is subject, at least, to the so-called necessity of the present (*omne quod est, quando est, necesse est esse*).

It is therefore no coincidence that Lady Philosophy hastens to introduce the third principle, almost compelled to do so by Boethius' – this time implicit – objection:

> Hic si dicas quod eventurum deus videt id non evenire non posse, quod autem non potest non evenire id ex necessitate contingere, meque ad hoc nomen necessitatis adstringas […] respondebo namque idem futurum, cum ad divinam notionem refertur, necessarium, cum vero in sua natura perpenditur, liberum prorsus atque absolutum videri.[27]

The distinction between absolute necessity and hypothetical necessity – also of Aristotelian origin – is thus, among the three pillars listed above, the one that bears most directly on the central problem of Book V, namely the question of free will, rather than on the preliminary epistemic objection raised by Boethius. Obviously, the condition or hypothesis that serves as the protasis here does not depend on human action, but on divine knowledge. Thus – however obvious this may be

[27] Boethius, *Cons. Phil.*, V, pr. 6, ed. Moreschini, 158.92-100; tr. Sharples, 155: "Here you may say that what God sees is going to happen cannot happen, and that what cannot not happen happens of necessity. If you tie me to this term of 'necessity' […] I will reply that the same thing that is going to be in the future is seen to be necessary, in relation to divine knowledge, but absolutely free and unrestricted when it is considered in its own nature".

– the hypothetical necessity to which Boethius refers is not expressed by a formula of the type 'if I do this, it is necessary for God to know' (which would also fall within the scope of the necessity of the present), since, as Boethius himself says (V, 6) it would be unworthy or even blaspheme to say that our actions are the cause of divine knowledge. The hypothetical necessity is rather expressed by a formula of this type: 'if God knows that I do this, it is necessary for me to do it'. Or to stay with our example: it is not because I have accepted to write this paper that God cannot help but know it, but: since God knows eternally and timelessly that I have accepted to write this paper, I necessarily could not help but bore the readers with this paper.

In what sense then would not the hypothetical necessity imposed by the condition of divine knowledge compromise human free will? In the first instance, one could appeal here[28] to the distinction between *necessitas consequentiae* and *necessitas consequentis*, between the necessity of the consequence [necessarily, if *p,* then *q*; $L(K_G p \dashrightarrow p)$] and the necessity of the consequent [if *p*, then necessarily *q*; $K_G p \dashrightarrow Lp$]. This is evidently a distinction known to Boethius, which we can cross with that between modality *de dicto* and modality *de re.* In other words: it was and it is not necessary in an absolute sense for me to write this paper; but under the condition of divine knowledge, that is, taking into account the fact that God from eternity knew (or, better, knows) that I would write this paper, the fact that I am writing it becomes necessary. If we were to apply the distinction, we would have to say that I, and not God, chose to accept the invitation to write this paper, however necessary my writing under the condition of divine knowledge (i.e. once God knows in his eternal present my being writing today). It is to this that Boethius seems to refer with the example of the charioteers' gestures in *Cons.* V, pr. 4 or when, in V, pr. 6, he states that our gaze adds no necessity to the things it sees present.[29]

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[28] Marenbon, on the other hand, seems rather perplexed about the real significance, in Boethius, of the distinction between absolute necessity and hypothetical necessity (as well as that between the necessity of the consequent and the necessity of the consequence) because of Boethius's fidelity to Aristotelian logic (as the logic of terms), which would prevent him from analysing inferences in a propositional sense. See Marenbon, *Le temps, l'éternité et la prescience de Boèce à Thomas d'Aquin*, esp. 44-47.

[29] Boethius, *Cons. Phil.*, V, pr. 6, ed. Moreschini, 157.73-77: "Num enim quae praesentia cernis, aliquam eis necessitatem tuus addit intuitus? Minime. Atqui si est divini humanique praesentis digna collatio, uti vos vestro hoc temporario praesenti quaedam

5.

Is this distinction sufficient to safeguard human freedom? For those interpreters who read Boethius in a 'libertarian' sense, the answer is affirmative, as – according to their interpretation – the exhortation with which the *Consolatio* concludes would demonstrate.[30] Almost all such interpreters, however, rely at this point on the principle of the timelessness of divine knowledge.[31]

I believe that the effectiveness of Boethius' solution must instead be assessed in light of the two conditions of freedom outlined above. With respect to the first condition, Boethius' account fully satisfies the requirement according to which we are free insofar as we are the origin or source of our actions. For Boethius, we are indeed the source of our actions: we deliberate about them and we perform them voluntarily;

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videtis, ita ille omnia suo cernit aeterno"; tr. SHARPLES, 153: "Surely, when you see present things, your gazing does not impart any necessity to them? Certainly not. But, if it is right to compare the divine present with the human, then, just as you see some things in this temporal present of yours, just so does God see all things in his eternal present".

[30] BOETHIUS, *Cons. Phil.*, V, pr. 6, ed. MORESCHINI, 161.165-171: "Nec frustra sunt in deo positae spes precesque, quae, cum rectae sunt, inefficaces esse non possunt. Aversamini igitur vitia, colite virtutes, ad rectas spes animum sublevate, humiles preces in excelsa porrigite. Magna vobis est, si dissimulare non vultis, necessitas indicta probitatis, cum ante oculos agitis iudicis cuncta cernentis"; tr. SHARPLES, 157: "Nor are hopes placed in God and prayers made to him in vain; if they are righteous they cannot be without effect. So turn aside from vices, cultivate virtues, lift up your mind to righteous hopes, extend humble prayers on high. A great necessity to be good is laid upon you, if you do not want to pretend otherwise, when you act before the eyes of a judge who sees all things". But in reality, as Thomas Aquinas shows (for instance in the *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, q. 6, art. 6), the effectiveness of prayers can also (and indeed, according to Aquinas, *must*) be understood in a compatibilist sense: prayers contribute to producing the effect of divine decision, and are effective only in this role of subordinate secondary causes, but their effectiveness falls entirely within the order already established by God. In other words: it is the First Cause that enables the secondary causes to contribute to the production of the effect, and it is the foundation of their effectiveness. In this sense, it must therefore be understood that prayers are a tool that predestination uses to achieve the effect that has already been immutably established, and in this – and only in this – does their effectiveness consist. See P. PORRO, "Dalla parte di Giacobbe. Predestinazione, prescienza e provvidenza in Tommaso d'Aquino", in *Lexicon Philosophicum*, 13 (2025), 139-165.

[31] Marenbon, who questions the weight of this pillar, remains rather perplexed, complaining that Boethius ultimately remains a prisoner of the contradiction denounced above.

in this regard, the gaze of divine knowledge in no way supplants our 'potestative' capacity. In short, Boethius never doubts that our actions are deliberate and voluntary, as is clear from a crucial passage in the sixth prose:

> […] haec divina praenotio naturam rerum proprietatemque non mutat taliaque apud se praesentia spectat qualia in tempore olim futura provenient. Nec rerum iudicia confundit unoque suae mentis intuitu tam necessarie quam non necessarie ventura dinoscit, sicuti vos cum pariter ambulare in terra hominem et oriri in caelo solem videtis, quamquam simul utrumque conspectum tamen discernitis et hoc voluntarium illud esse necessarium iudicatis.[32]

Here, however, Boethius appears to be appealing to more than the mere distinction between the necessity of the consequence and the necessity of the consequent. Rather, he seems to rely on a distinction between the intrinsic modal status of a thing and its extrinsic modal status – a distinction that will later be systematised by Avicenna and the Latin scholastics in terms of an intrinsic modality (belonging to the nature of the thing, event, or state of affairs itself) and an extrinsic modality (arising from the relation of that thing, event, or state of affairs to external factors or conditions). Thus, the rising of the sun, or human mortality, are necessary *ex se*, by their very nature, just as the choice to take a walk at a given moment is contingent in itself. Yet *ex suppositione causae* or *ex suppositione finis* – or even through the mere addition of a condition or an epistemic clause – even such an event, which is contingent in an absolute sense, becomes necessary. This is ultimately the modal framework that Siger of Brabant, in *De necessitate et contingentia causarum*, contrasts with the strongly extrinsicist causal determinism defended by Thomas Aquinas. Thus, even for Boethius – if my interpretation is correct – human actions, insofar as they are voluntary, may be contingent in themselves.

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[32] Boethius, *Cons. Phil.*, V, pr. 6, ed. Moreschini, 157.77-158.85; tr. Sharples, 153: "divine foreknowledge does not change the nature and character of things, and sees things present to itself in the same way as they are going to come to be at some future time. And he does not make confused judgements about things; rather, with a single gaze of his mind he distinguishes both things that are going to come to be necessarily and those that are not, just as, when you see together a man walking on the earth and the sun rising in the sky, although you see both at the same time, you make a distinction and say that the one is voluntary, the other necessary".

The second fundamental requirement of freedom, however – the possibility of doing otherwise, that is, the counterfactual dimension of freedom – raises a more delicate issue. In this respect, the answer cannot but be qualified. In this universe, in this world, even a voluntary action could not, for Boethius, occur otherwise once divine knowledge is assumed. In an absolute or radical counterfactual scenario, by contrast – that is, in a world in which God does not exist, or in which God, in accordance with the Aristotelian position, neither cares about nor knows human affairs – voluntary actions would remain entirely contingent. This, in my view, constitutes the core of Boethius' compatibilism: human freedom of will and agency satisfies the criterion of self-determination, deliberation, and voluntariness (being the source of one's own actions), and, in an absolute sense, also satisfies a very broad counterfactual condition – namely, that of a possible world in which God either does not exist or does not know human actions, or, more simply, a world in which divine knowledge is not infallible and cannot be distinguished from the charlatan prophecies of Tiresias.

To be more precise, the counterfactual dimension of freedom is preserved for Boethius only if contingent events are isolated from external conditions (and in particular from the epistemic clause of God's knowledge) and considered solely with respect to their intrinsic modality in an absolute sense. It is not inscribed in my nature (in my DNA, as we would say today) that I must write this paper on this particular topic and at this particular time; this is a voluntary and contingent choice. Yet this is no longer the case if an oracular intelligence – returning to the question with which we began – is able to predict all my actions and behaviours infallibly and timelessly, without any possibility of interference. Thus, for Boethius, with respect to the present ordering, to this world – which for him is not merely the actual world, but perhaps also the only metaphysically possible one – a voluntary action remains non-free insofar as there is no possibility that it might not be performed, or might be performed otherwise.

Can voluntariness or self-determination, however, be dissociated from full (counterfactual) freedom? As noted earlier, Locke famously answered this question in the affirmative, through the thought experiment of a man who is transported, while asleep and without his knowledge, into a room he recognises, in which there is a person he knows and with whom he takes pleasure in conversing. The room is locked,

and he cannot leave; yet he is unaware of this constraint and, in fact, deliberates and wills to remain in the room.[33] For Boethius, human beings find themselves in an analogous situation: they will something and act freely in this respect, without knowing (except in the case of the wise) that, under the condition of divine knowledge, they could not will or act otherwise. This, ultimately, is the essence of Boethius' compatibilism:

> Fient igitur procul dubio cuncta quae futura deus esse praenoscit, sed eorum quaedam de libero proficiscuntur arbitrio, quae, quamvis eveniant, exsistendo tamen naturam propriam non amittunt, qua prius quam fierent etiam non evenire potuissent.[34]

6.

This brings me to a few concluding remarks.

(1) I hope to have shown that Boethius' solution can be properly understood only if we abandon the attempt to portray Boethius himself as a libertarian incompatibilist, and instead regard him – together with Augustine, and in particular the late Augustine of the semi-Pelagian controversy (as in *De gratia et libero arbitrio*) – as one of the founders of Christian compatibilism. It remains true that Augustine and Boethius articulate compatibilism in markedly different ways, beginning with the elementary observation that the central themes of Augustinian thought from 397 onwards – predestination, original sin, and undeserved and irresistible grace – are entirely absent from Boethius' work. Nevertheless, in both cases the possession of free will is, as such, compatible with the absence of effective (and fully counterfactual) freedom. Broadly speaking, Augustine's compatibilism is grounded in predestination and the divine will, and radically excludes the role of foreknowledge; Boethius' compatibilism, by contrast, rests primarily

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[33] J. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II, ch. xxi, § 10 ("Of Power"), London 1690; as is well known, Locke introduced this example precisely to demonstrate the dissociation between freedom and volition.

[34] Boethius, *Cons. Phil.*, V, pr. 6, ed. Moreschini, 159.116-120; tr. Sharples, 155: "And so all the things which God knows beforehand will happen do without doubt come about, but some of them proceed from free choice; and these, although they do come about, do not by existing lose their own proper nature, through which, before they came about, they were also able not to come about".

(or almost exclusively) on the epistemic and metaphysical constraint imposed by divine knowledge.

(2) Secondly, I hope to have shown that at least two of the usual pillars or building blocks of Boethius' solution must be understood as arguments devised to resolve the epistemic objection that Boethius himself raises at the outset of the discussion, rather than as direct arguments in defence of human free will. The core of Boethius' solution lies more directly in the distinction between absolute necessity and hypothetical necessity, and, even more fundamentally, in the distinction between an intrinsic modal status and an extrinsic modal status – that is, between the modal status an event or state of affairs possesses in itself, when considered independently of any connection with its extrinsic causes (efficient and final causes, or the epistemic constraints linked to an external knowing subject), and the modal status it acquires *ex suppositione finis*, *ex suppositione efficientis*, or even merely by virtue of being infallibly known as present. This same difference may also be correlated with that between an absolute counterfactual scenario, in which human events remain contingent in themselves, and a narrow counterfactual scenario, in which the epistemic and metaphysical constraint imposed by the infallibility of divine knowledge applies.

(3) Thirdly, I hope to have shown that Boethius dissociates the voluntariness or self-determination of an action from its full counterfactual freedom. The conception of human free will defended by Boethius satisfies the first condition of freedom, but not entirely the second – unless one is willing to consider a possible world in which there is no God endowed with infallible and timeless knowledge. For Boethius, however (or so it seems), such a world would be an impossible world rather than a genuinely possible one, and therefore does not constitute a real counterfactual alternative, but merely a theoretical or absolute one.

(4) Finally, I believe that a reconsideration of Boethius' position contributes more generally to questioning a long-established historiographical cliché, easily found, for instance, in Gilson's interpretation of medieval philosophy: namely, the idea that medieval Christian thought introduces and defends contingency in opposition to the necessitarianism of the Peripatetic Greek–Arabic tradition. Historical reality, I suggest, is rather more complex. By postulating a provident God endowed with timeless and infallible knowledge, Christian thought – or at least some of its most influential strands – drastically reduces the margin

of indeterminacy present in the universe, almost to the point of eliminating it altogether. This can be seen in the way Aquinas rereads *Metaphysics* VI, 3, contesting the Aristotelian thesis that not all accidental causes can be traced back to an essential cause; it can also be seen, as noted earlier, in the criticism that Siger of Brabant – who is himself commonly regarded as a 'necessitarian', and was perhaps condemned as such in 1277 – levels against Aquinas' position.[35] And it is, I think, what we encounter in Boethius' own position with respect to Aristotle. In the latter, setting aside the Proclean tradition, we do not find the necessitating constraint of an omniscient, infallible, and timeless agent – a constraint to which I might, with a certain cunning, trace and attribute the necessity that compelled me to write this paper. By contrast, appealing to my intrinsic modal status and to my free will, I can, voluntarily, thank you for your patience and indulgence in reading it.

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[35] See P. Porro, "*Lex necessitatis vel contingentiae*. Necessità, contingenza e provvidenza nell'universo di Tommaso d'Aquino", in *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 96 (2012), 401-450; Id., "Contingenza e impedibilità delle cause. Presupposti e implicazioni di un dibattito scolastico", in *Rivista di storia della filosofia*, 68 n.s. (2013), 113-147.

Anselm's Boethius: Necessity and Future Contingents in *De concordia*

Marcia L. Colish

When Anselm addressed divine foreknowledge and human free will in Book 1 of *De concordia* he had already mastered Boethian logic, as available in his day, and had applied it to theology. So it is no surprise that he now turned to Boethius, both as commentator of Aristotle's *De interpretatione* and as author of the best-selling *Consolation of Philosophy*.[1] How did Boethius resolve this issue and

[1] While incorporating earlier scholarship documenting Anselm's familiarity with Boethian logic and agreeing that his use of it outstripped that of Lanfranc recent scholars have turned to where he acquired it. Opting for Bec or a locus north of the Loire is S. J. Nelis, "What Lanfranc Taught, What Anselm Learned", in *Haskins Society Journal*, 2 (1990), 75-82. T. J. Holopainen, *A Historical Study of Anselm's Proslogion Argument, Devotion, and Rhetoric* (Anselm Studies and Texts 2), Leiden 2020, 65-76, 100-102 argues for Italy, but without taking account of R. G. Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures and the Foundations of Renaissance Humanism in Medieval Italy*, Cambridge 2012, 145-146, 153-154, 158, 160, note 181, who notes that mss. of the Boethian logical corpus and commentaries on it in tenth- and eleventh-century Italy, found only at Monte Cassino, were more fully available at Fleury and Chartres. Surveying its accessibility from the ninth century onward, J. Beaumont, "The Latin Tradition of the *De consolatione philiosophiae*", in *Boethius: His Life, Thought, and Influence*, ed. M. Gibson, Oxford 1981, 278-315 notes at 278 that "there is scarcely a library in Europe without at least one copy of that text". Of the fourteen mss. of this work in England by the late eleventh century most were copies at Canterbury from a Fleury exemplar; see D. K. Bolton, "The Study of the *Consolation of Philosophy* in Anglo-Saxon England", in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, 44 (1977), 33-78: 39-40, 50, 59-60; R. C. Love, "The Latin Commentaries on Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae* from the 9th to the 11th Centuries", in *A Companion to Boethius in the Middle Ages*, ed. N. H. Kaylor, Jr., P. E. Phillips (Brill's Companion to the Christian Tradition 30), Leiden 2012, 75-133 with a more detailed study of nine mss. listed by Bolton, "The Study of the *Consolation*", 117-121; on the Fleury connection see E. Weaver, "Finding Consolation at the End of the Millennium", in *The Legacy of Boethius in Medieval England: The Consolation and Its Afterlives*, ed. J. Mcmullen, E. Weaver (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 525), Tempe 2018, 89-102.

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how did Anselm use him? The address to this question in much recent scholarship would have baffled Boethius and Anselm alike. When not tracking Boethius' sources many scholars criticize Boethius for failing to meet modern philosophical standards and, if including *De concordia* at all, extend the same judgment to Anselm.[2] This paper will not debate

[2] Philosophical commentators rarely recognize that applying the criteria of modern logic to Boethius' and/or Anselm's arguments on necessity and contingency is a recipe for misunderstanding them. Exceptions include M. Mignucci, "Boezio e il problema dei futuri contingenti", in *Medioevo*, 13 (1987), 1-50: 1-38; W.L. Craig, *The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents from Aristotle to Suárez* (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 7), Leiden 1988, 79-98; J. Marenbon, "Le temps, la prescience et le déterminisme dans la *Consolation de philosophie* de Boèce", in *Boèce ou la chaîne des savoirs. Actes du colloque international de la fondation Singer-Polignac (Paris, 8-12 juin 1999)*, éd. A. Galonnier (Philosophes médiévaux 44), Louvain-la-Neuve-Louvain-Paris 2003, 531-546: 534 notes 4-5; Id., *Le temps, l'éternité et la prescience de Boèce à Thomas d'Aquin* (Conferences Pierre Abelard), Paris 2005, 13-17, 19 note 2, 21-41, 43, 53-54, 164-170, where his critique includes his own earlier publications; K.A. Rogers, "The Necessity of the Present and Anselm's Eternalist Response to the Problem of Theological Fatalism", in *Religious Studies*, 43 (2007), 25-47: 40-45; K. Trego, *L'Essence de la liberté: La refondation de l'éthique dans l'œuvre de saint Anselme de Cantorbéry* (Études de philosophie médiévale), Paris 2010, 247-259, 263-267, 269-272. Scholars who continue to merit that critique include N. Kretzmann, "Boethius and the Truth about Tomorrow's Sea Battle", in *Logos and Pragma: Essays on the Philosophy of Language in Honor of Prof. G. Nuchelmans*, ed. L.M. De Rijk, H.A.G. Braakhuis (Artistarium: Supplementa 3), Nijmegen 1987, 63-94; reprinted in Boethius, *On Aristotle's On interpretation 9*, tr. N. Kretzmann, Ithaca NY, 1998, 24-52; S. Knuuttila, "Anselm on Modality", in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, ed. B. Davies, B. Leftow (Cambridge Companion to Philosophy), Cambridge 2004, 111-131; Id., "Medieval Commentators on Future Contingents in *De interpretatione* 9", in *Vivarium*, 48 (2010), 75-95; T.J. Holopainen, "Necessity in Early Medieval Thought: Peter Damian and Anselm of Canterbury", in *Cur deus homo, Atti del congresso anselmiano internazionale, Roma, 21-23 maggio 1998*, a cura di P. Gilbert, H. Kohlenberger, E. Salman (Studia Anselmiana 128), Roma 1999, 221-234: 230-234; Id., "Future Contingents in the Eleventh Century", in *Mind and Modality: Studies in the History of Philosophy in Honour of Simo Knuuttila*, ed. V. Hirvonen, T.J. Holopainen, M. Tuominen (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 141), Leiden 2006, 103-120: 103-109, 112-120. Passing and disparaging mention of *De concordia* appears in S. Visser, T. Williams, "Anselm's Account of Freedom", in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, ed. Davies, Leftow, 179-203: 201, note 22 and Visser, Williams, *Anselm* (Great Medieval Thinkers), Oxford 2004, 149-191: 150, note 4; but it is omitted in M. Parodi, M. Rossini, "Libertà necessaria e libertà contingente in Anselmo d'Aosta", in *Rivista di storia della filosofia*, 68 (2013), 43-64. R.W. Sharples, "Fate, Prescience, and Free Will", in *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius*, ed. J. Marenbon (Cambridge Companion to Philosophy), Cambridge 2009,

Boethius' sources or his, or Anselm's, shortcomings in modern eyes. Its aim is simply to understand Anselm's Boethius, and Anselm's *De concordia* I, in their own terms.

Regarding Boethius' *De interpretatione* commentaries we are helped by Karl Meiser, who prefaces his critical edition of them with Boethius' translation of Aristotle's text.[3] The comparison this facilitates shows how Boethius adds to and reframes Aristotle's arguments. He agrees with Aristotle that logic is not an end in itself. The ultimate test of the truth of statements is their correspondence with the realities

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207-229 concedes Boethius' influence on Anselm if not the tenability of his position on necessity and contingency; neither S. NASH-MARSHALL, "Boethius' Influence on Theology and Metaphysics to c. 1500", nor P. CASEY, "Boethius' Works on Logic in the Middle Ages", both in *A Companion to Boethius in the Middle Ages*, ed. KAYLOR, PHILLIPS, 163-191 and 193-219 respectively, includes that topic in their surveys. S. J. NELIS, "The Boethian Anselm", in *Haskins Society Journal*, 3 (1991), 131-139 treats *Proslogion* 2 alone. Boethius' Neoplatonic sources continue to draw attention; see MIGNUCCI, "Boezio", 38-50; R. GASKIN, *The Sea Battle and the Master Argument: Aristotle and Diodorus Cronus on the Metaphysics of the Future* (Quellen und Studien zur Philosophie 40), Berlin 1995, 15-16, 129-137; F. REGEN, Praescientia*: Vorauswissen Gottes und Willens Freiheit des Menschen in der* Consolatio Philosophiae *des Boethius*, Göttingen 2001; S. EBBESEN, "Boethius on Aristotle", in *Greek-Latin Philosophical Interaction*, ed. ID. (Ashgate Studies in Medieval Philosophy), Aldershot 2008, 107-113; ID., "Boethius as an Aristotelian Commentator", in *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentaries and Their Influence*, 2nd ed., ed. R. SORABJI, London 2016, 403-421 and J. SHIEL, "Boethius' Commentaries on Aristotle", in *Aristotle Transformed*, ed. SORABJI, 377-402. Conversely, Augustine is considered Boethius' basic source by W. L. ROWE, "Augustine on Foreknowledge and Free Will", in *Review of Metaphysics*, 18 (1964), 356-363, reprinted in *Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. R. A. MARKUS, Garden City, NY 1972, 209-217: 214, 216, note 7; M. S. BURROW, "Another Look at the Sources of *De consolatione philosophiae*: Boethius' Echo of Augustine's Doctrine of *Providentia*", in *Proceedings of the Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance Conference*, 11 (1986), 27-41. These scholars ignore the fact that the relevant works of Augustine were not available and cited until the Carolingian era; see C. LEYSER, "Augustine in the Latin West, 430-ca. 900", in *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. M. VESSEY, Oxford 2012, 450-464. Although condemning his *magnum opus* as a failure, J. C. RELIHAN, *The Prisoner's Philosophy: Life and Death in Boethius' Consolation*, Notre Dame 2007, is a useful guide to its literary sources and interpretations.

[3] BOETHIUS, *Commentarii in librum Aristotelis Peri Hermeneias*, ed. C. MEISER, Leipzig 1877-1880; reprinted New York 1987, 1, 9-12 for the translation. In what follows, this edition of the commentary texts will be cited as *Comm*. I and *Comm*. II.

they express.[4] Boethius agrees that past events, once having occurred, are unchangeable. Accurate statements about them are thus necessarily true, as are statements about things whose attributes are intrinsic, such as the whiteness of snow, or about events that follow ineluctably from natural causes, such as the movements of the planets. Accurate statements about such beings and events are true by unconditional necessity (*simpliciter*). Some phenomena and events do not have to be as they are and do not have to behave as they do. Accurate statements about them are true by conditional necessity. Both of Boethius' commentaries give one of Aristotle's examples of conditional necessity (*condicionis*). Someone who sits is necessarily sitting right now, but does not have to sit and is free to stand up.[5]

Having established that some present events and statements about them are necessary conditionally, Boethius moves, with Aristotle, to future contingencies, from whether Alexander will eat breakfast to whether a sea battle will be fought tomorrow. He agrees that we can frame accurate statements about future events that either will or will not occur (*utrumlibet*), although they will not become necessarily true *simpliciter* until after they have occurred. Some future events are not contingent, as with phenomena governed by natural laws, such as to-

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[4] Boethius, *Comm*. I, c. 1.1, I, c. 1.2, I, c. 1.9; *Comm*. II, c. 3.9, ed. Meiser, I, 36, 46, 109-111; II, 186-193, 200. Appreciations of this point are found in L. Obertello, *Severino Boezio*, Genova 1974, I, 594-614, 713-728; L. M. De Rijk, "Boèce logician et philosophe: Ses positions semantiques et sa métaphysique", in *Atti del congresso internazionale di studi boeziani, Pavia, 5-8 ottobre 1980*, a cura di L. Obertello, Roma 1981, 141-156: 144-147; Mignucci, "Boezio", 11-33; Gaskin, *The Sea Battle*, 129-137; E. Sweeney, *Logic, Theology, and Poetry in Boethius, Abelard, and Alan of Lille* (The New Middle Ages), New York 2006, 10-15; A. Tisserand, Pars theologiae*: Logique et théologie chez Boèce* (Sic et Non), Paris 2008, 236; T. Suto, *Boethius on Mind, Grammar, and Logic: A Study of Boethius' Commentaries on Peri Hermeneais* (Philosophia Antiqua), Leiden 2012, 23-24, 36, 37, 41-42, 75, 101-107, 109-113, 124-127, 230-236. My thanks to Mary Sirridge for the Suto reference. H. Chadwick, *Boethius: The Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy*, Oxford 1981, 152-163 provides an excellent summary of the overall argument, focusing on *Comm*. II.

[5] Boethius, *Comm*. I, c. 1.9; *Comm*. II, c. 3.9, ed. Meiser, I, 103-109; II, 186-193. On the point that statements expressing simple necessity, conditional necessity, or possibility are all comprehensible and coherent since they accurately indicate the natures and capacities of the things and events to which they refer see Obertello, *Severino Boezio* I, 713-734.

morrow's sunrise and our own eventual mortality. Others are contingent, and Boethius' list includes those resulting from human free will (*liberum arbitrium*) and those resulting from choices made by human agents that have unintended outcomes.[6]

In *Comm*. II Boethius illustrates this last-mentioned circumstance with the hidden treasure example given in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. One man buries a treasure in a field, intending to hide it. Another man digs it up, intending to cultivate the field. For Aristotle this example simply explains accidental causation. For Boethius it is a weapon against Epicureanism. While the outcome is accidental and unexpected, it has fully comprehensible causes. It is not totally random.[7] *Comm*. II clearly has Epicurean occasionalism in Boethius' sights; but an even bigger target is Stoic necessitarianism. As Boethius argues, the very existence of accidents and of contingencies of various kinds, already established, disproves the Stoic position. We should not oversimplify. We should not ascribe all events either to necessities of one kind or another, to chance, or to human free choice alone, since all occur in real life.[8] As for the defense of human free will, Aristotle himself, or "our Aristotelians" take the prize, offering the strongest and most authoritative arguments against Stoic necessitarianism.[9]

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[6] Boethius, *Comm*. I, c. 1.9; *Comm*. II, c. 3.9, ed. Meiser, I, 109, 114-117, 120-126; II, 205-206, 241-243.

[7] Boethius, *Comm*. II, c. 3.9, ed. Meiser, II, 194-195, 223-224.

[8] Boethius, *Comm*. II, c. 3.9, ed. Meiser, II, 224. At *Comm*. II, c. 3.9, ed. Meiser, II, 237-238, Boethius gives as an example an outcome that may be caused by any one of these three causes: A cloak may fall into pieces because of natural wear and tear, or it may be torn apart as the result of an accident, or it may be in pieces because someone deliberately cuts it up. The anti-Stoic polemic starts at II, 193 and continues through the rest of the work passim.

[9] Boethius, *Comm*. II, c. 3.9, ed. Meiser, II, 197: "Melius igitur nostri Peripatetici et casum in rebus ipsis fortuitum dantes et praeter ullam necessitatem et liberum quoque arbitrium neque in necessitate neque in eo quod ex necessitate quidem non est, non tamen in nobis est ut casus, sed in electione iudicationis et in voluntatis examinatione posuerunt". See also *Comm*. II, c. 3.9, ed. Meiser, II, 293-294: "Peripatetici enim, quorum Aristoteles princeps est, et casum et liberi arbitrium iudicii et necessitatem in rebus quae fiunt quaeque aguntur cum gravissima auctoritate tum apertissima ratione confirmant".

If this accolade as a defender of free will would have bemused Aristotle, since the term never appears in *De interpretatione*,[10] so also would the God Boethius includes in *Comm*. II, who has little in common with Aristotle's Unmoved Mover. In addition to being eternal and immortal, the God of *Comm*. II is omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent toward other beings. How does this God's foreknowledge square with the variety of contingent future events already described?[11] Boethius' God foresees that some events will occur, when they do, with simple necessity, some with conditional necessity in a variety of ways. These events in no way affect God's omniscience, his omnipotence, or the freedom with which he confers benefits.[12] The truth-value of the statements we make about any of these alternatives, be they past, present, or future, depends not just on the time factor but also on their accuracy with respect to realities as they are, actually or potentially. These realities include free will as a basic attribute of human nature as well as the nature of God as Boethius envisions him in *Comm*. II.

How the deity of *Comm*. II knows what he knows is a topic developed in the *Consolation of Philosophy*, where Boethius' God looks even less like Aristotle's. Although in the *Consolation* Boethius is not that interested in assessing the truth-value of statements, Lady Philosophy's account of divine foreknowledge and human free will has won a guarded nod even from modern philosophers who think she trashes her own argu-

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[10] As is noted pointedly by D. Frede, *Aristoteles und die 'Seeschlacht': Das Problem der* contingentia futura *in* De interpretatione 9 (Hypomnemata 27), Göttingen 1970, 117-121. She observes quite rightly that free will is not an Aristotelian idea; just as free will is absent from *De interpretatione*, so it is absent from Aristotle's ethical works as well.

[11] Boethius, *Comm*. II, c. 3.9, ed. Meiser, II, 186, 224-225, 228-229. On this point see the excellent comment of F. Beets, "Boèce et la sémantique du regard", in *Boèce ou la chaîne de savoirs*, ed. Galonnier, 547-568: 557: "Les dieux d'Aristote et ceux des Stoïciens ne se préoccupaient guère des affaires de ce monde. Que leur importait la connaissance du future?" Also excellent on this point are Obertello, *Severino Boezio*, I, 676-699; A. Galonnier, "Boèce et la connaissance des futurs contingents", in *Boèce ou la chaîne de savoirs*, ed. Galonnier, 571-597: 572-586. Sweeney, *Theology and Poetry*, 112, thinks that Boethius' God also functions as "the guarantor of the union of words and things, of the truth of language" but this does not seem to be a function he clearly assigns to God in this text.

[12] Boethius, *Comm*. II, c. 3.9, ed. Meiser, II, 225-227, 231-243.

ment for their compatibility.[13] Her position is best appreciated in terms of the *Consolation*'s expanded notions of both God and free will. In addition to the attributes Boethius gives him in *Comm*. II, God is now the creator of the universe and source of all beings, which he governs providentially and binds together with his love. He ordains the natural laws endowing creatures with their operations and capacities, which include discernment and free will in human beings. Further, this God interacts personally with us. He grants us enlightenment. And, since our souls survive after death, he justly rewards or punishes us for the merits or demerits accrued by our ethical choices in this life. We can, and should, converse with this God in prayer which, if righteous, will be heard, granting us the hope of eventually seeing and uniting with him. Quoting Parmenides, Lady Philosophy also refers to God as the fixed point in the universe that moves all else. But the strikingly un-Aristotelian features of the *Consolation*'s God clearly outweigh that description.[14]

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[13] See, for example, J. Marenbon, *Boethius* (Great Medieval Thinkers), Oxford 2003, 145; Id., *Le temps, l'éternité et la préscience*, 143, 145; slightly modified in Id., "Divine Presence and Contingency in Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*", in *Rivista di storia della filosofia*, 68 (2013), 9-19; Sharples, "Fate, Prescience, and Free Will", 207-208. Plato is the authority for the view that the words we use should correspond to the things to which they refer cited by Lady Philosophy in Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae*, III pr. 12, ed. C. Moreschini, München 2000, 96: "[…] cum Platone sanciente didiceris cognatos, de quibus loquuntur, rebus oportere esse sermones". This text will be abbreviated in the notes that follow as *CP*. Among scholars writing on the *Consolation of Philosophy* those found most helpful for this paper have been Chadwick, *Boethius*, 163, 242-246; C. Moreschini, *Introduzione,* in Boethius, *La consolazione della filosofia*, ed. and tr. by C. Moreschini, Torino 1994, 27-29; Galonnier, "Boèce", 586-597; Sweneey, *Logic, Theology, and Poetry*, 36-61; and P. J. Chance, "Boethius on Human Freedom", in *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 78 (2004), 309-327. On the importance of prayer in this text, which Relihan, *The Prisoner's Philosophy*, 29 oddly claims "is a surprise in the *Consolation*", see A. Di Pilla, "L'elemento della preghiera nella discussione su prescienza e libertà nella *Consolatio philosophiae* di Boezio", in *Boèce ou la chaîne des savoirs*, ed. Galonnier, 507-529 and W. J. Hankey, "*Ratio, Preces, Intuitus*: Prayer's Mediation in Boethius' *Consolation*", in *Praying and Contemplating in Late Antiquity*, ed. E. Pachoumi, M. Edwards (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 113), Tübingen 2018, 71-96, both of whom note the perceived compatibility of prayer and reasoning in ancient philosophy. S. Blackwood, *The Consolation of Boethius as Poetic Liturgy* (Oxford Early Christian Studies), Oxford 2015 accents both poetry and prayer in this work as well as specific poetic meters that contribute to this principle.

[14] Boethius, *CP*, I, met. 5; I, met. 6; II, met. 2; II, pr. 4; II, pr. 5; II, met. 8; III, met. 9; III, pr. 10; III, pr. 12; IV, pr. 1; IV, met. 1; IV, pr. 3; IV, pr. 6; IV, met. 6; V, pr. 3; V, pr.

In addition to readjusting Boethius' *Comm*. II argument on divine foreknowledge and human free will to accommodate this revised version of God, the *Consolation* also takes account of his handling of free will throughout the dialogue's narrative rhetoric as well as in his characterization of its interlocutors. The Prisoner has a large psychic investment in his self-understanding as a victim of injustice. He keeps backing and filling, repeating his grievances, resisting and objecting to the Lady's tutelage well after he has accepted it.[15] The Lady understands the Prisoner's tendency to complain and to regress, requiring her to zig and zag, to repeat arguments already made, and to warn him not to look back.[16] Her tactics are diverse. She offers consolation as a challenge, not as an empathetic warm bath or as a confirmed reservation on a flight from the alone to the Alone. She acts as a logician, a metaphysician, a catechist, a counselor, and a motivational speaker, first disabusing the Prisoner of his false worldly values and then pointing him to God as the true good and source of happiness. The Lady knows that is one thing for the Prisoner to give intellectual assent to abstract principles and well-framed syllogisms and quite another to take her lessons to heart. Her goal is not just to convince him but to move him to take ownership of, and responsibility for, his internal moral state, making him an active participant in the step-by-step demolition of his false values and the construction of his bridge to the true good.

The Lady also knows that the Prisoner is a savant with a classical education, who will appreciate and be inspired by her use of historical and literary examples in both prose and poetry. Unlike the poetry of lament which she expels at the beginning of the *Consolation* as reinforcing the Prisoner's self-pity, her poems are designed to mobilize his aversion from false values and his attraction to the good. She uses metaphors stressing his own agency in accomplishing the attitude ad-

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6, ed. Moreschini, 18-20; 23; 33; 37; 42; 55-56; 79-80; 81-86; 91-96; 100; 102; 109; 129-131; 140-145; 155-161 for these divine attributes; III, met. 9; III, pr. 12 for God as unmoving mover, ed. Moreschini, 80; 95; IV, pr. 4 for the survival of the human soul after death, ed. Moreschini, 113.

[15] Boethius, *CP*, III, pr. 8; III, pr. 10; III, pr. 11; III, pr. 12, for the Prisoner's agreements with the Lady, followed at IV, pr. 1 by the return to his grievances, ed. Moreschini, 79; 80-86; 86-90; 91-96; 100.

[16] Boethius, *CP*, III, met. 12 (citing Orpheus); repeated at IV, met. 7, ed. Moreschini, 96-98; 134.

justment he needs, freeing his neck from the halter and breaking the chains of earth that constrain him.[17] The Lady argues that it is not the Prisoner's misfortunes that constitute his problem but his lack of self-mastery.[18] At every stage along the way, the Prisoner's free will determines his condition. Initially, he wills to self-identify in terms of worldly values. Then, he wills to engage with the Lady. Occasionally, he wills to backslide from positions he had accepted. He wills to pray, as the Lady advises. And, recognizing that he may relapse, she adjures him to commit to constancy in her final peroration.[19]

It is in light of this treatment of human free will as an operational reality, as well as in light of the *Consolation*'s God, that its interlocutors deal with divine foreknowledge and the exercise of human free will as a contingency at the dialogue's end. The Lady first clears the decks of divination, fate, and chance as possible objections to her solution. Cicero has disposed of divination, so it needs no further comment.[20] Fate is simply the name given to the dispositions of divine providence over things that change. Fate is not an independent force with any power of its own.[21] Chance needs more attention. The Lady agrees with Boethius' *Comm*. II definition and cites the buried treasure example. The existence of accidental causation disproves both occasionalism and necessitarianism. While praising Aristotle on this point she omits the protracted anti-Epicurean and anti-Stoic polemics of *Comm*. II.[22] The Lady adds that, while accidents can occur in the case of natural phenomena, the ones pertinent to the Prisoner are those caused by free human choices. Here, she makes an important distinction. How free the human will actually is depends on how we use it. It is most free when oriented to the contemplation of the divine mind. It is less free when

[17] Boethius, *CP*, I, met. 4; III, met. 1; III, met. 5; III, met. 10, ed. Moreschini, 11; 59; 70; 86.

[18] Boethius, *CP*, I, met. 4; I, met. 7; II, met. 4; IV, met. 3, ed. Moreschini, 11; 26; 40-41; 112.

[19] Boethius, *CP*, V, pr. 6, ed. Moreschini, 161.

[20] Boethius, *CP*, V, pr. 4, ed. Moreschini, 146.

[21] Boethius, *CP*, IV, pr. 6-IV, pr. 7, ed. Moreschini, 121-133.

[22] Boethius, *CP*, V, pr. 1-V, met. 2, ed. Moreschini, 136-140. As is often noted, Lady Philosophy here cites Aristotle's *Physics*, not his *Metaphysics* as her source. In this work Boethius mentions Epicurus by name only when arguing against the pleasure principle as the true good at III, pr. 2-3-III, pr. 8, ed. Moreschini, 61-75.

oriented to physical or worldly ends. It is least free of all when oriented to the service of vice.[23]

These matters settled, the interlocutors agree that God's foreknowledge is not causative. God is well aware that some future events will occur as the effects of natural causes and that others will occur as the result of contingencies such as free human choices. It is at this juncture that the Lady introduces the distinction between simple and conditional necessity, illustrated by an example different from but equivalent to that of *Comm*. II. Someone who stands necessarily stands at that moment, although assuming and maintaining that position are matters of free choice. The larger conclusion of the *Consolation* is that, just as God's foreknowledge does not affect the freedom of human choices, so also human free will does not affect God's omniscience in any way, a notion which the interlocutors agree to reject as sacrilegious (*nefas*).[24]

As additional support for this conclusion the Lady includes a mini-treatise on comparative epistemology. Whatever is known is known according to the capacity of the knower.[25] In contrast with our human mode of knowledge, involving the sequential operation of our senses, imagination, and reason, God's knowledge is total, eternal, and simultaneous: "What is, was, and will be / In a single glance he sees".[26] Lady Philosophy analogizes God's knowledge to the gaze of someone who observes what we do without affecting it. She includes this analogy in the advice with which the *Consolation* ends: "Turn away

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[23] Boethius, *CP*, V, pr. 2, ed. Moreschini, 139: "Humanas vero animas liberiores quidem esse necesse est cum se in mentis divina speculatione conservant, minus vero cum dilabuntur ad corpora, minusque etiam, cum terrenis artubus colligantur; extrema vero est servitus, cum vitiis deditae rationis propriae possessione ceciderunt". This point is noted by Obertello, *Severino Boezio*, I, 710-711 and Chadwick, *Boethius*, 245.

[24] Boethius, *CP*, V, pr. 3, ed. Moreschini, 140-141, 143.

[25] Boethius, *CP*, V, pr. 4, ed. Moreschini, 149: "Omne enim quod cognoscitur non secundum sui vim, sed secundum cognoscentium potius comprehenditur facultatem". Boethius appears to have been the Latin source of this principle, perhaps better known as it was put by Thomas de Aquino, *Commentum in primum librum Sententiarum,* d. 38., q. 1., a. 5, ed. P. Mandonnet, vol. 1, Paris 1929: "Omnis enim cognitio est secundum modum cognoscentis".

[26] Boethius, *CP*, V, met. 2, ed. Moreschini,140: "Quae sint, quae fuerint veniantque / uno mentis cernit in ictu". My translation of the *CP* here and elsewhere in this paper. On the contrast between divine and human knowledge see Obertello, *Severino Boezio*, I, 676-699, 711-713.

from vices; cultivate virtues. Raise your mind to righteous hopes; offer humble prayers to heaven. Do not deceive yourself. You have a solemn need to behave uprightly, since you act under the eyes of a judge who sees all things".[27]

While modern scholars may disagree on the presence, or absence, of crypto-Christianity in the *Consolation*, its message was not problematic to medieval readers, Anselm included. Its many fans could easily identify with the Prisoner, substituting their troubles for his. As Archbishop of Canterbury Anselm certainly had troubles of his own, defending papal policies and the rights of his see against Kings William II and Henry I. But these conflicts, which twice led to Anselm's exile, were settled in 1107,[28] the year he wrote *De concordia*. As an educator and a practitioner of the cure of souls, comfortable with the use of reason to support Christian doctrines, Anselm is more likely to have identified with Lady Philosophy than with the Prisoner. Her strategy was recognizable to him, as were her omissions from and additions to the arguments in Boethius' *Comm*. II. Her tactics valorized Anselm's own adoption, and adaptation, of both Boethian works, adjusting his argument to the needs of a putative interlocutor who, to the extent that he appears at all, has little resemblance to the Prisoner.

While Boethius considers divine foreknowledge and human free will at the end of *Comm*. II and the *Consolation* alike, Anselm asserts their fundamental reality and coexistence at the very beginning of *De concordia*. Speaking as "I", he addresses a query from an interlocutor identified only as "You", worried about whether we are forced to sin. This interlocutor vanishes after the second chapter of *De concordia* I, as Anselm moves from mini-dialogue to treatise. With or without this ephemeral vis-à-vis, Anselm continues to argue, in the first person singular, for the compatibility of these two realities against objections

[27] Boethius, *CP*, V, pr. 6, ed. Moreschini, 161: "Aversamini igitur vitia, colite virtutes, ad rectas spes animum sublevate, humiles preces in excelsa porrigite. Magna vobis est, si dissimulare non vultis, necessitas indicta probitatis, cum ante oculos agitis iudicis cernentis". It is not clear why Lady Philosophy now addresses the Prisoner in the second person plural; I have taken the liberty of phrasing it as aimed at the Prisoner as an individual.

[28] Anselm's exiles in 1097-1100 and 1103-1107, resulting from conflicts with these rulers and their resolution, are well known; see A. L. Poole, *Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1966, 172-180.

that Christians might pose. Anselm is crystal-clear about his objectives in *De concordia* I. They account for what he omits, for what he draws from, and for what he adds to Boethius. Anselm is not interested in God as ruler of the cosmos or in necessity and contingency in general. He is not interested in accidental causation but in moral choices deliberately made by human agents. Even more than Lady Philosophy, he focuses on contingencies as ethical issues and their outcomes. As Anselm states forthrightly, "the question here is that choice, and that freedom, without which a human being cannot be saved".[29] He mentions other kinds of causation and contingency only to clarify, by contrast, how free will operates in our current and future moral choices.

Prayers for enlightenment book-end Anselm's arguments and he invokes another of his signature techniques in *De concordia* I, semantic analysis. Sometimes the grammatical conventions of the *usus loquendi* prevent our words from adequately describing their referents. Thus, when we say that God is immortal or that he cannot do anything unjust, these statements refer to divine perfections, not deprivations, despite their negative grammatical form.[30] Thus, the noun "foreknowledge" does not apply literally to a God whose omniscience is eternal and simultaneous.[31] The noun "necessity" and its adjectival and adverbial forms do not apply in the same way to all kinds of causes. As applied to God, "necessity" does not bind him in any way, in himself or in relation to us, but simply refers to intrinsic attributes which he cannot be imagined not to have. Hence, God's eternal omniscience does not prevent or impel our exercise of free will.[32] Beyond his need to interpret "foreknowledge" and "necessity", Anselm observes that biblical texts pertinent to this theme also need linguistic interpretation. When Job confirms God's decree that we are mortal, this does not mean that we

[29] Anselmus Cantuariensis, *De concordia praescientiae et praedestinationis et gratiae dei cum libero arbitrio*, I, c. 6, in *Opera omnia*, ed. F. S. Schmitt, Edinburgh 1940-1961 (repr. Stuttgart 1968), II, 256: "Pro illo autem arbitrio et pro illa libertate ista ventilatur quaestio, sine quibus homo salvari nequit, posquam illis uti". Although her concern is not a comparison between Boethius and Anselm, S. Vanni Rovighi, *S. Anselmo e la filosofia del sec. XI*, Milano 1949, 129-135 offers a valuable treatment of Anselm's argumentative strategy and concerns in *De concordia*.

[30] Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, c. 2, ed. Schmitt, II, 248-249.

[31] Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, c. 2, ed. Schmitt, II, 247.

[32] Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, c. 2, ed. Schmitt, II, 249-250 and passim in the rest of the text.

cannot hasten or delay our eventual death-dates by our moral choices.[33] And, when St. Paul says in Romans that God predestined, called, justified, and glorified his saints from all eternity, we should recognize that, because of "the poverty of our language", the Apostle perforce uses verbs in the past tense to refer to events that lie in the future for the as yet unborn saints, since we have no verbs that can signify the eternal present.[34]

There are additional parallels with and departures from Boethius in *De concordia* I. Anselm does not use the terms simple and conditional necessity but this distinction undergirds his own examples. Instead of a person who chooses to sit or stand right now but is free to assume and to change that position, Anselm offers himself: I am now necessarily writing, he observes, but I choose to do so and I am free to stop.[35] A

[33] Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, c. 5, ed. Schmitt, II, 253.

[34] Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, c. 5, ed. Schmitt, II, 253-254; for the larger passage see II, 254: Nondum enim quos praescrivit adhuc nascituros iam temporaliter 'vocavit', 'iustificavit', 'magnificavit'. Unde cognosci potest eum propter indigentiam verbi significantis aeternam praesentiam usum esse verbis praeteritae significationis; quoniam quae tempore praeterita sunt, ad similitudinem aeterni praesentis omnino immutabilia sunt". Scholars sensitive to the semantic and grammatical issues typical of Anselm's thought have ignored *De concordia* I in this connection. It is not included by G.R. Evans, "The Secure Technician: Varieties of Paradox in the Writings of St. Anselm", in *Vivarium*, 13 (1975), 1-21 or in Ead., "*Inopes sunt latini*: Technical Language and Technical Terms in the Writings of St. Anselm and Some Commentators of the Mid-Twelfth Century", in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, 43 (1976), 113-119. Ead., *Anselm and Talking about God*, Oxford 1978, 7 characterizes *De concordia* I as bland and mechanical, adding nothing important to the Anselmian legacy; this text is also omitted by M.L. Colish, "Anselm's Philosophy of Language Reconsidered", in *Anselm Studies*, 1 (1983), 113-123; reprinted in Ead., *The Fathers and Beyond: Church Fathers between Ancient and Medieval Thought* (Variorum Collected Studies), Aldershot 2008, ch. 13.

[35] Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, c. 5, ed. Schmitt, II, 255. That Anselm is in tune with contemporary Scholasticism on this issue can be seen by comparing him with William of Champeaux, writing during his period as a master in Paris (1100-1108), who observes that a person choosing to sit is now sitting necessarily and that this fact in no sense contravenes God's omniscience, so that divine foreknowledge and human free will are compatible; as with Anselm, William does not expressly frame this point in terms of simple and conditional necessity. See Guillelmus Campellensis, *Sententiae*, c. 238, in O. Lottin, ed., "Les 'Sentences' de Guillaume de Champeaux", in Id., *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles. V: Problèmes d'histoire littéraire. L'école d'Anselme de Laon et de Guillaume de Champeaux*, Gembloux 1959, 189-227: 197. William, but not Anselm, is seen as a key forerunner of Peter Abelard on this

more telling shift is his treatment of an entity that is white. Boethius' example is snow, intrinsically white by simple necessity. Anselm's white object is a piece of wood that has been made white. It is necessarily white only conditionally, in Boethian terms. Anselm implies that its color derives from the decision of someone who paints it, not from an unavoidable natural process.[36]

Anselm prefers to describe present circumstances and future contingencies in terms of antecedent and subsequent causation.[37] Whatever his chosen terminology, he joins Lady Philosophy in omitting Aristotle's fabled sea battle. Anselm substitutes his own contingent future event, a rebellion that may occur tomorrow. This is a pointed example, since Henry I faced a rebellion led by his brother, Robert Duke of Normandy, from 1101 until Robert's defeat in 1106. Robert was Henry's captive when Anselm wrote *De concordia*, at which time no one knew that he would remain in custody for the rest of his life.[38] With Boethi-

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topic by I. Binini, "Contingenza e infallibilità divina nei tesi logici di Pietro Abelardo", in *Libertà e determinismo: Riflessioni medievali*, a cura di M. Leone, L. Valente (Flumen Sapientae 4), Roma 2017, 111-142 with discussion of William at 121-127; Ead., *Possibility and Necessity in the Time of Peter Abelard* (Investigating Medieval Philosophy 16), Leiden 2022, 2, 17, 41-43, 44 gives more credit to Anselm, but with no mention of *De concordia*. Even prior to Anselm's writing of the *De concordia* his oral teaching on this subject was known to and reproduced by his disciple Honorius Augustodunensis, writing ca. 1096-1100, who also omits simple/conditional or antecedent/subsequent necessity language, in his *Elucidarium* II, q. 23, in *L'Elucidarium et les lucidaires: Contribution, par l'histoire d'un texte, à l'histoire des croyances religieuses en France au moyen âge,* ed. Y. Lefèvre (Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 180), Paris 1954, 413-414. For his biography and the dating of this work see V. I. J. Flint, *Honorius Augustodunensis of Regensburg* (Authors of the Middle Ages 2.6), Ashgate 1995, 89-183: 96, 97, 100-106, 108, 110, 113-117, 125-128.

[36] Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, c. 2, ed. Schmitt, II, 249: "Lignum enim non est semper necessitate album, quia aliquando priusquam fieret album, potuit non fieri album; et postquam est album, potest fieri non album".

[37] On his shift to antecedent and subsequent causation see, most recently, E. C. Sweeney, "Anselm on Evil and Eudaimonism", in *New Readings of Anselm of Canterbury's Intellectual Methods*, ed. J. T. Slotemaker, E. C. Sweeney (Anselm Studies and Texts 6), Leiden 2022, 180-191: 183-184.

[38] Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, c. 3, ed. Schmitt, II, 250 for the rebellion example; see I, c. 2-I, c. 3, ed. Schmitt, II, 250-251 for more on antecedent and subsequent causation. On Robert's rebellion and defeat see Poole, *Domesday Book to Magna Carta*, 115-116, 120-121. For more on Robert and his failed cause see W. M. Aird, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy c. 1050-1134*, Woodbridge 2008.

us, Anselm thinks that we can make cogent statements about future contingencies, and extends the analysis to statements about concurrent events that look to be mutually exclusive. To the coherence of "either/or" (*utrumlibet*) statements Anselm adds the coherence of "both/and" statements. When we say that a person in transit between two points is equally, and simultaneously, going away from one place and toward another, we speak with accuracy and without contradiction. Anselm includes a natural phenomenon, the sun's daily transit from east to west.[39] But his real concern is the choices of human agents, now and in the future. Anselm is as fully convinced as Boethius that the freedom of the will with which these agents act in no sense compromises God's eternal and omniscient foreknowledge, even as these divine attributes in no way compel or prevent our exercise of free will. On this central point Anselm's main shift from Boethius is one of emphasis. Where Lady Philosophy elaborates the contrast between our human mode of knowledge and how God knows, Anselm seconds her conclusion but accents the contrast between time and eternity.[40]

That emphasis aside, having addressed the objections he poses to the compatibility of divine foreknowledge and free will, Anselm turns to the proper and improper uses of free will in the last two chapters of *De concordia* I, reprising what he says about rectitude, justice, and evil in four earlier works, *De veritate*, *De libertate arbitrii*, *De casu diaboli*, and *De conceptu virginali*, cited by name.[41] He restates the distinction between free will as a basic human attribute and free choice as its deliberate use. He analogizes free will to swords and words that we may wield for whatever purpose.[42] He repeats that the choices we actually do make are always attached to the rectitude condition. With an eye to Lady Philosophy's assertion that our will is most free when oriented to God, less free when oriented to physical or worldly ends, and enslaved when oriented to vice, Anselm maintains that our will is more free when we act with rectitude, choosing truth and goodness for their own sake, than when we choose what is merely advantageous, or even

[39] Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, c. 4, ed. Schmitt, II, 255.

[40] Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, c. 5, ed. Schmitt, II, 255. This accent on time and eternity is brought out well by Sweeney, *Anselm*, 348-53.

[41] Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, c. 6 for the first two works and I, c. 7 for the second pair, ed. Schmitt, II, 256 and 258.

[42] Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, c. 7, ed. Schmitt, II, 259.

disadvantageous. Since we are not forced to sin, we alone are responsible for the sins we commit, however extreme the provocation. Nothing justifies the abandonment of rectitude, turning an upright will from justice to injustice.[43] Anselm also reminds the reader that the rejection of rectitude and justice is a turning from good to evil. In *De concordia* I evil is not metaphysical non-being. As the absence of goods, evils really exist. Evils are not confined to defective moral choices, failures to will what we should will, but may also be disabilities or experiences that cause pain.[44] We should regard any such difficulties we face as tests of virtue, for the just, and as punishments, for the unjust.[45]

In refuting objections to the compatibility of divine foreknowledge and human free will and in explaining how our free will works in practice, Anselm's *De concordia* I reflects his selective appropriation of the Boethius of both the *De interpretatione* commentaries and the *Consolation of Philosophy* on necessity and future contingents. He omits some arguments and examples in both these works because they are not pertinent to the task he sets for himself in *De concordia* I, some of which Boethius also omits in the *Consolation*. Anselm's most notable omissions, along with the sea battle and the hidden treasure account

[43] Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, c. 6-I, c. 7, ed. Schmitt, II, 256-259. In arguing that no provocation justifies the abandonment of rectitude, including lying to save one's life, Anselm here forecasts the case of St. Peter's denial which he discusses in *De concordia* 3, on which see M. L. Colish, "Free Will and Grace: Method and Model in Anselm's *De concordia*", in *Anselm of Canterbury: Nature, Order, and the Divine*, ed. I. Logan, A. R. E. Forbes (Anselm Studies and Texts 8), Leiden 2024, 501-520. The rectitude condition attaching to good moral choices is ignored by Parodi, Rossini, "Libertà necessaria e libertà contingente", 64, who hold that Anselm is concerned only with sin and evil. Visser and Williams, "Anselm's Account of Freedom", 185, 201, note 22 and Iid., *Anselm*, 171, deplore the absence of "garden-variety freedom" in an Anselmian ethics always conditioned by rectitude.

[44] Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, c. 6, I, c. 7, ed. Schmitt, II, 257, 258. On moral and circumstantial evils as real for Anselm see A. Vanderjagt, "Obedience Simple and True: Anselm of Canterbury on How to Defeat the Devil", in *How the West Was Won: Essays in Imagination, the Canon, and the Christian Middle Ages for Burcht Pranger*, ed. W. Otten, A. Vanderjagt, H. Devries (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 188), Leiden 2010, 393-407: 400, 405; M. M. Adams, "Evil as Nothing: Construals in Boethius and Anselm", in *Anselmo e la 'nuova' Europa*, ed. G. Cipollone (Miscellanea historiae pontificiae 70), Roma 2014, 57-76: 62-73; Sweeney, 'Anselm on Evil", 182-190.

[45] Anselmus, *De concordia*, I, c. 7, ed. Schmitt, II, 258-259.

of accidental causation, are Lady Philosophy's detailed comparison of the divine and human epistemologies and her summary mention and dismissal of divination and fate. Anselm often agrees with Boethius, whether or not he uses different, if equivalent, terminology and examples. Anselm's most distinctive addition to his Boethian inheritance is his treatment of the poverty of language, and how to correct for it, given a grammar and a lexicon that we cannot avoid in discussing divine foreknowledge and human free will, whether in Boethius or the Bible. Anselm's most underappreciated debt to Boethius is Lady Philosophy's principle that our will is more, or less, free depending on how we direct it, clearly echoed in the rectitude condition fundamental to Anselmian ethics. In all, as this paper hopes to have shown, Anselm's Boethius makes an important, and nuanced, contribution not only to his ethical reading of the issue of necessity and future contingents but also to his larger project of *fides quaerens intellectum* in *De concordia*.

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Aristotle's *Peri Hermeneias* (c. 9) and Its Medieval Arabic Translation. The First Step Toward a Fruitful Reception

Josep Puig Montada

Introduction

In 1963, Nicholas Rescher published a chapter in his *Studies in the History of Arabic Logic*, in which he examined how the Arab philosopher Alfarabi (dead ca. 950) interpreted Aristotle's doctrine about "future contingent statements", as summarized in chapter 9 of Aristotle's *Peri Hermeneias*.[1]

Aristotle held the Principle of Bivalence and the Law of Excluded Middle. The Principle of Bivalence states that propositions must be necessarily either true or false, and the Law of Excluded Middle states that in the case of contradictory propositions, one must be true, and the other must be false. *Tertium non datur*. However, he excluded statements about future contingents from the principle and the law, and the well-known instance is *De Int*. 9, "A sea-fight must either take place tomorrow or not, but it is not necessary that it should take place tomorrow, neither is it necessary that it should not take place".[2]

Rescher was decisive for the study of the issue concerning the Arabic tradition, but the study of the issue itself, and that of the Greek tradition, was pressed forward by Dorothea Frede and her monograph *Aristoteles und die "Seeschlacht". Das Problem der Contingentia Fu-*

[1] N. Rescher, "An Interpretation of Aristotle's Doctrine of Future Contingency and Excluded Middle", in Id., *Studies in the History of Arabic Logic*, Pittsburgh 1963, 43-54.

[2] Aristoteles, *De interpretatione*, 9, 19a30-32, tr. E. M. Edghill, in *The Works of Aristotle*, ed. W. D. Ross, vol. 1, Oxford 1928 (reprint 1963).

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tura in De Interpretatione *9*.[3] Since then, the bulk of research has become almost unmanageable, attesting to the great interest for the topic by, in particular, logicians and analytical philosophers.

Among the many contributions, I would like to point to two: Richard Gaskin and Gerhard Seel.[4] Gaskin did an exhaustive examination of both classical and contemporary literature and produced a masterpiece of research with his own interpretations. Since there is always room for further research, new publications have come out, and I would like to mention Seel who has brought together several excellent scholars who have shed light on the figure of Ammonius.

The scope of this paper is limited to a preliminary discussion, in which I will examine the Arabic translation of the *Peri Hermeneias*, the difficulties the translator faced and the ways in which he solved them in order to enable the Arabic reader to understand the arguments. In a pending publication, I will definitively establish the position of Ammonius' commentary among Alfarabi and the Arabs, as well as the efforts of Avempace and Averroes to understand and explain the key passages.

ʿIbārah, the Arabic *Peri Hermeneias*

Aristotle's *Peri Hermeneias – On Interpretation*, the second book of his *Organon* – was translated into Arabic by Abū Yaʿqūb Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn (c. 830 Baghdad – c. 910-1). Isḥāq is a well-known scholar who translated medical and scientific works (Euclid's *Elements* and Ptolemy's *Almagest*), as well as philosophical treatises, such as Aristotle's *On Interpretation*, the *Categories*, *Physics*, *On Generation and Corruption*, Book A and other parts of the *Metaphysics* (with Themistius' commentary on book Λ), *Nicomachean Ethics* and perhaps *On the Soul*, *On Sophistical Refutations*, *Rhetoric*, and *Poetics*.

Fritz W. Zimmermann expressed the view that Isḥāq made the

[3] D. Frede, *Aristoteles und die 'Seeschlacht': das Problem der Contingentia Futura in* De Interpretatione *9* (Hypomnemata 27), Göttingen 1970.

[4] R. Gaskin, *The Sea Battle and the Master Argument. Aristotle and Diodorus Cronus on the Metaphysics of the Future* (Quellen und Studien zur Philosophie 40), Berlin-New York 1995; G. Seel, *Ammonius and the Seabattle. Texts, Commentary, and Essays* (Peripatoi. Philologisch-historische Studien zum Aristotelismus 18), Berlin-New York 2001, 121-211.

translation "probably from an intermediate Syriac version by his father Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq".[5] There were already Syriac translations, and the two known to us have been published on the website https://hunaynnet.oeaw.ac.at/ as the outcome of the ERC Project *Hunaynnet* (2016-2021). One of them is anonymous but the other one is the work of George "the Bishop of the Arabs" (d. 724) who translated also *Categories* and *Prior Analytics*.[6] Whether Isḥāq relied on a Syriac version and in the case that he did, which one was remains an issue for enquiry.

Isḥāq's translation has come to us in two ways: as an independent text, or embedded in a commentary or study. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arabe 2346, ff. 179r 1-191v 18,[7] preserves his translation accompanied by numerous marginal glosses, many of which are the authorship of al-Ḥasan ibn al-Suwār (d. after 1017) who is associated with the Baghdadi circle around Yaḥyá ibn ʿAdī (d. 974).

The text was first edited by Isidor Pollak.[8] The indefatigable Abdurrahman Badawi published it again in his edition of the Arabic *Organon* but both editors omitted the marginal annotations.[9] Finally, Farid Jabre edited the text with these marginal notes.[10]

Zimmermann informs us that Hoffmann's published PhD dissertation included a fragment of Isḥāq's translation of the *Peri Hermeneias* preserved in a Berlin manuscript.[11] He further reported the existence of another manuscript, Istanbul, Ahmed Kütüphanesi, 3362.[12] Therefore, two manuscripts contain the full text:

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[5] F. W. Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle's De Interpretatione* (Classical and Medieval Logic Textes 3), London 1981, lxviii.

[6] U. Vagelpohl, "The Prior Analytics in the Syriac and Arabic Tradition", in *Vivarium*, 48.1-2 (2010), 134-158.

[7] W. Mac Guckin De Slane, H. Zotenberg, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, Paris 1883-1895.

[8] Aristoteles, *Die Hermeneutik des Aristoteles in der arabischen Übersetzung des Ishak Ibn Honain*, ed. I. Pollak (Abhandlugen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 13.1), Leipzig 1913.

[9] Aristoteles, *Manṭīq Arisṭū*, ed. ʿA.A.R. Badawī (Dirāsāt Islāmiyya 7), Kuwait-Beirut, vol. I, 1980.

[10] Aristoteles, *Al-Naṣṣ al-kāmil li-Manṭiq Arisṭū*, ed. F. Jabre, J. Jihāmī, R. al-ʿAjam, 2 vols., Beirut 1999.

[11] J. G. E. Hoffmann, *De Hermeneuticis apud Syros Aristoteleis*, vol. 1, Leipzig 1873.

[12] Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, lxix, cxliii.

a) Paris, BnF, Arabe 2346, ff. ff. 179r 1-191v 18;

b) Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmed Kütüphanesi, III, 3362, ff. 45a-60a;

and another one, partially:

c) Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Ms. Syr. 88 (Petermann I 9), ff. 69b-72b.[13]

However, the three published editions are based on the Paris manuscript. The second way in which Isḥāq's translation has come down to us is in the form of the commented texts – lemnata – within Alfarabi's commentary on Aristotle's *De interpretatione* and in a treatise by Yaḥyá Ibn ʿAdī. Alfarabi's commentary is preserved at least in three manuscripts, as Zimmermann notes in his study:[14]

a) Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmed Kütüphanesi, III, 3439;

b) Tehran, Majlis-e Shūrā-ye Mellī, 949;

c) Tehran, Ketābkhāne-ye Majlis-e Shorā-ye Mellī-e Irān, 370/*ʿayn*.

William Kutsch and Stanley Marrow used only the Istanbul manuscript for their edition.[15]

As for the treatise of Yaḥyá Ibn ʿAdī, it was edited by Carl Ehrig-Eggert.[16] The editor mentions three manuscripts:

a) Tehran, Ketābkhāne-ye Markazi-ye Dāneshgāh 4901;

b) Tehran, Ketābkhāne-ye Majlis-e Shorā-ye Mellī-e Irān, 949;

and partially only in:

c) Tashkent, Akademiya Nauk, 2385.

Ehrig-Eggert relied on Dāneshgāh 4901 for his edition. The text largely agrees with that edited by Pollak, Badawi and Jabre, but it forgets some words and gives different readings, albeit in a few cases.

The aforementioned ERC Project *Hunaynnet* used Paris, BNF, Arabe 2346 and digitized Pollak's and Badawi's editions but not Jabre's and it did not take into account the text transmitted by Alfarabi. The editorial team writes that "At all places of disagreement between Ba-

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[13] Hoffmann, *De Hermeneuticis*, 55-61.

[14] Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, cxl-cxliii.

[15] *Sharḥ al-Fārābī li-kitāb Arisṭūṭālīs fī al-ʿibārah,* ed. W. Kutsch, S. Marrow, Beirut 1960.

[16] C. Ehrig-Eggert, "Yaḥyá Ibn ʿAdī. Fī ṭabīʿat al-mumkin", in *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften*, 5 (1989), 63-96.

dawī and Pollak, cod. [Paris] has been consulted additionally" (https://hunaynnet.oeaw.ac.at/de interpretatione.html#de int ara ishaqibnhunayn). The reader will find there the Greek text as edited by Lorenzo Minio-Paluello,[17] carefully divided according to Bekker's edition as well as the parallel Arabic, Syriac or English texts corresponding to the divisions made by the editors. I took advantage of the digitized Arabic text to avoid tedious typing and the many copying errors that result. Changes, if any, are because I follow Jabre's reading. The comparison between the Greek text and Isḥāq's Arabic of chapter 9 *De Interpretatione* provides material for discussion on several points, from the very beginning.

I.

(18a28-33)

Ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν ὄντων καὶ γενομένων ἀνάγκη τὴν κατάφασιν ἢ τὴν ἀπόφασιν ἀληθῆ ἢ ψευδῆ εἶναι· καὶ ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν καθόλου ὡς καθόλου ἀεὶ τὴν μὲν ἀληθῆ τὴν δὲ ψευδῆ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστα, ὥσπερ εἴρηται· ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν καθόλου μὴ καθόλου λεχθέντων οὐκ ἀνάγκη εἴρηται δὲ καὶ περὶ τούτων.

In the case of that *which is or which has taken place*, propositions, whether positive or negative, must be true or false. Again, in the case of a pair of contradictories, either *when the subject is universal and the propositions are of a universal character*, or when it is individual, as has been said, one of the two must be true and the other false; whereas *when the subject is universal, but the propositions are not of a universal character*, there is no such necessity. We have discussed this type also in a previous chapter.[18]

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[17] Aristoteles, *Categoriae et Liber de interpretatione*, ed. L. Minio-Paluello, Oxford 1949.

[18] Aristoteles, *De interpretatione*, tr. E. M. Edghill, in *The works of Aristotle,* ed. W. D. Ross, vol. 1, Oxford 1928 (Edghill's translation does not have its own pagination and follows Bekker's). The reference is to chapter 7, 17b26-33: "Of such corresponding positive and negative propositions as refer to universals and have a universal character, one must be true and the other false. This is the case also when the reference is to individuals, as in the propositions 'Socrates is white', 'Socrates is not white'. When, on the other hand, the reference is to universals, but the propositions are not universal, it is not always the case that one is true and the other false, for it is possible to state truly that man is white and that man is not white and that man is beautiful and that man

Ella M. Edghill as well as Harold P. Cooke[19] introduce the term "propositions", i.e., sentences, to make their translation understandable, although the term is not always explicit in the Greek, and Isḥāq also had to struggle for the right understanding, as we will see. On the other hand, John L. Ackrill is very literal in his translation, he does not add the term "proposition" and ends: "but with universals not spoken of universally it is not necessary".[20]

As for the phrase: Ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν ὄντων καὶ γενομένων, here Edghill translated the Greek terms "existing" and "generated" as "that which is or which has taken place", Cooke wrote: "things present or past", and Ackrill, "what is and what has been".

Then, for ἐπὶ μὲν τῶν καθόλου ὡς καθόλου, Edghill felt required to make an explanatory translation: "when the subject is universal and the propositions are of a universal character".

Finally, for ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν καθόλου μὴ καθόλου λεχθέντων she explained: "whereas when the subject is universal, but the propositions are not of a universal character". No doubt, there are reasons for an explanatory translation and centuries earlier the Arabic translator had done so:

ونقول إن المعاني الموجودة الآن أو التي قد كانت فيما مضى فواجبٌ ضرورةً أن يكون الإيجاب أو السلب فيها إما صادقاً وإما كاذباً، أما في الكلّية على معنى كلّي فأحدهما أبداً صادقٌ والآخر كاذبٌ وكذلك في الأشخاص على ما قلنا، وأما الكليّة التي لا تقال على معنًى كلّي فليس ذلك واجباً فيها، وقد قلنا في هذه أيضًا.[21]

Isḥāq translated the first phrase as "the meanings existent now or that have existed in the past" according to the three editors and the second – μὲν τῶν καθόλου ὡς καθόλου – as "the universal meanings [*maʿānī*] in

is not beautiful; for if a man is deformed he is the reverse of beautiful, also if he is progressing towards beauty he is not yet beautiful" (tr. E. M. Edghill, vol. 1).

[19] Aristoteles, *On Interpretation*, tr. H. P. Cooke (Loeb Classical Library 325), Cambridge 1938, 131, 133.

[20] Aristoteles, Categories *and* De interpretatione, tr. J. L. Ackrill, Oxford 1965, 50.

[21] Aristoteles, *Al-Naṣṣ*, ed. Jabre, Jihāmī, al-ʿAjam, vol. 1, 124 (tr. of *De int.* 18a28-33, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 75: "We say that an affirmation or negation about referents [*maʿānī*] which exist now or were in the past must of necessity be either true or false. Similarly, about individuals, as we have said. In the case of universal [referents] not spoken of in a universal sense, this is necessary. We have talked about these too").

a universal sense [*maʿná*]".[22] The third one reads "the universal [meanings] that are not predicated in a universal sense [*maʿná*]". As for the text published in the Ḥunayn's website and the one edited by Kutsch and Marrow,[23] they both agree with the reading, and as it is usually the case.

Thus, the same term, *maʿná*, refers to both the name "propositions" as well as to the adverbial modifier "in a universal sense". The ambiguity of the term *maʿná* raised the question of what an Arabic reader would understand. Zimmermann chose the term "referent" to translate it, but it is not clear to me that "referent" really helps with understanding.

II.

(18a33-39)

Ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστα καὶ μελλόντων οὐχ ὁμοίως. εἰ γὰρ πᾶσα κατάφασις ἢ ἀπόφασις ἀληθὴς ἢ ψευδής, καὶ ἅπαν ἀνάγκη ἢ ὑπάρχειν ἢ μὴ ὑπάρχειν· εἰ γὰρ ὁ μὲν φήσει ἔσεσθαί τι ὁ δὲ μὴ φήσει τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο, δῆλον ὅτι ἀνάγκη ἀληθεύειν τὸν ἕτερον αὐτῶν, εἰ πᾶσα κατάφασις ἀληθὴς ἢ ψευδής ἅμφω γὰρ οὐχ ὑπάρξει ἅμα ἐπὶ τοῖς τοιούτοις.

When the subject, however, is individual, and that which is predicated of it relates to the future, the case is altered. For if all propositions whether positive or negative are either true or false, then any given predicate must either belong to the subject or not, so that if one man affirms that an event of a given character will take place and another denies it, it is plain that the statement of the one will correspond with reality and that of the other will not [if every affirmation is true or false]. For the predicate cannot both belong and not belong to the subject at one and the same time <with regard to the future>.[24]

"But with particulars that are going to be it is different", and Ackrill is again very brief in his translation.[25]

فأما المعاني الجزئية المستقبلة فليس يجري الأمر فيها على هذا المثال وذلك أنه إن كان كلّ إيجاب أو سلب إما صادقًا وإما كاذبًا فواجبٌ في كلّ شيء أن يكون موجودًا أو غير موجود. فإن قال قائل في شيء من الأشياء إنه سيكون وقال آخر فيه بعينه لا فمن البيّن أنه يجب

[22] Paris, BnF, Arabe 2346, f. 182v line 10, reads *kullīya*, but Jabre reads *kalimah*, "the verb" (ῥῆμα) instead of the "universal", obviously a mistake.

[23] *Sharḥ al-Fārābī*, ed. Kutsch, Marrow, 81.

[24] Aristoteles, *De int.*, tr. Edghill.

[25] Aristoteles, *De int.*, tr. Ackrill, 50.

ضرورةً أن يصدق أحدهما إن كان كلّ إيجاب فصادقٌ أو كاذبٌ وذلك أنه لا يمكن أن يكون الأمران جميعًا في ذلك وما أشبه.[26]

(18a33) But with particular meanings [*maʿānī*] in the future it is not like this.[27]

(18a34-35) For if every affirmation or negation is either true or false, then it is necessary for everything to exist or not to exist.[28]

(18a35-38) So if someone says of something that it will be and someone else says of the same thing 'it will not be', one of them must obviously be speaking the truth if it is that every affirmation is true or false[29]

(18a39) or it is not possible that both alternatives should be together, in this and similar cases.[30]

The plural *maʿānī* appears again, and Zimmermann translated "But with particular referents in the future it is not like this". The adverbial expression ὁμοίως was rendered "according to this model" *ʿalá hādhā al-mithāl*, but more practically, Zimmermann preferred a shorter form.

Isḥāq translated ὑπάρχειν as *mawjūd*, "to be existent", completely admissible, but in the logic of Aristotle – following Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott[31] – ὑπάρχειν denotes the subsistence of qualities in a subject, and Edghill translated it accordingly. Hyparxis, "existence", is central to Aristotle's ontology but its import and connotation is not found in the Arabic translation.

There is a difference between ὑπάρχειν and εἶναι, and the future infinitive ἔσεσθαι is translated by Isḥāq as *sa-yakūn*, and literally by Zimmerman as "it will be". Thus, Isḥāq was not very clear about the distinction and Alfarabi, who lived centuries later, would face the difficulty and would explain his view saying: "The meaning of existence is expressed by a specific term, like our words *existent, it existed, it exists* and *it was* and *it will be*".[32]

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[26] Aristoteles, *Al-Naṣṣ,* ed. Jabre, Jihāmī, al-ʿAjam, vol 1, 124.

[27] Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 76.

[28] Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 79.

[29] Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 79.

[30] Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 79.

[31] H.G. Scott, R. Liddell, *A Greek-English Lexicon. Revised and augmented throughout by Sir* Henry Stuart Jones*, with the assistance of* Roderick McKenzie, Oxford 1940, 1853-1854.

[32] *Sharḥ al-Fārābī*, ed. Kutsch, Marrow, 17.8-9. Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Com-*

Finally, ἄμφω γὰρ οὐχ ὑπάρξει ἅμα ἐπὶ τοῖς τοιούτοις, is made somewhat easier by Isḥāq, who again translates ὑπάρξει as *yakūnu*: "because the two things cannot be together in this and what is its like", while Zimmermann gives a more stylish translation "For it is not possible that both alternatives should be together, in this and similar cases".

III.

(18a39-b4)

- εἰ γὰρ ἀληθὲς εἰπεῖν ὅτι λευκὸν ἢ οὐ λευκόν ἐστιν, ἀνάγκη εἶναι λευκὸν ἢ οὐ λευκόν, καὶ εἰ ἔστι λευκὸν ἢ οὐ λευκόν, ἀληθὲς ἦν φάναι ἢ ἀποφάναι· καὶ εἰ μὴ ὑπάρχει, ψεύδεται, καὶ εἰ ψεύδεται, οὐχ ὑπάρχει· ὥστ' ἀνάγκη τὴν κατάφασιν ἢ τὴν ἀπόφασιν ἀληθῆ εἶναι.

Thus, if it is true to say that a thing is white, it must necessarily be white; if the reverse proposition is true, it will of necessity not be white. Again, if it is white, the proposition stating that it is white was true; if it is not white, the proposition to the opposite effect was true. And if it is not white, the man who states that it is, is making a false statement; and if the man who states that it is white is making a false statement, it follows that it is not white. It may therefore be argued that it is necessary that affirmations or denials must be either true or false.[33]

فإن قولنا في شيء إنه أبيض أو غير أبيض إن كان صادقاً فواجبٌ ضرورةً أو يكون هو أبيض أن غير أبيض. وإن كان الشيء إما أبيض وإما غير أبيض فقد كان إيجابنا أو سلبنا فيه صدقاً وإن لم يكن فكذباً وإن كان كذباً فليس هو فواجبٌ إذاً ضرورةً أن يكون الإجاب أو السلب إما صادقاً وإما كاذباً[34]

Isḥāq changes the order of the first phrase, saying literally: "For our statement of a thing that it is white or not white, if it is true, then it must necessarily be white or not white", or in Zimmerman's wording: "For

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mentary, 1: "This notion of hyparxis [*wujūd*] can be signified by an expression of its own, such as *mawjūd*, *wujida*, *yūjad*, *kāna*, or *yakūn*".

[33] ARISTOTELES, *De int.,* tr. EDGHILL.

[34] ARISTOTELES, *Al-Naṣṣ,* ed. JABRE, JIHĀMĪ, AL-'AJAM, 124-125. ZIMMERMANN, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 80: "For if in saying of a thing that it is white or not white we speak the truth, it must of necessity be white or not white. And if the thing is white or not white, as the case may be, our affirmation or negation of it has been true; if it is not it (has been) false. And if it is false, it is not. † Thus, an affirmation or negation must of necessity be either true or false †".

if in saying of a thing that it is white or not white we speak the truth, it must necessarily be white or not white".[35]

Isḥāq's translation of the following sentences καὶ εἰ μὴ ὑπάρχει, ψεύδεται, καὶ εἰ ψεύδεται, οὐχ ὑπάρχει shows again the difficulties of translating ὑπάρχειν. Isḥāq reads "If it is not, then [it is] false. And, if it is false, it is not". The Arab reader should be puzzled by the shortness of the expression.

IV.

(18b5-9)

- οὐδὲν ἄρα οὔτε ἔστιν οὔτε γίγνεται οὔτε ἀπὸ τύχης οὔθ' ὁπότερ' ἔτυχεν, οὐδ' ἔσται ἢ οὐκ ἔσται, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἅπαντα καὶ οὐχ ὁπότερ' ἔτυχεν (ἢ γὰρ ὁ φὰς ἀληθεύει ἢ ὁ ἀποφάς) · ὁμοίως γὰρ ἂν ἐγίγνετο ἢ οὐκ ἐγίγνετο· τὸ γὰρ ὁπότερ' ἔτυχεν οὐδὲν μᾶλλον οὕτως ἢ μὴ οὕτως ἔχει ἢ ἕξει.

Now if this be so, nothing is or takes place fortuitously, either in the present or in the future, and there are no real alternatives; everything takes place of necessity and is fixed. For either he that affirms that it will take place or he that denies this is in correspondence with fact, whereas if things did not take place of necessity, an event might just as easily not happen as happen; for the meaning of the word 'fortuitous' with regard to present or future events is that reality is so constituted that it may issue in either of two opposite directions.[36]

English translators have given οὐδ' ἔσται ἢ οὐκ ἔσται in different ways: "and there are no real alternatives",[37] "contingency can there be none",[38] "by chance or as chance has it".[39] Isḥāq translates differently:

فليس شيء من الأشياء إذًا ممّا يتكوّن أو ممّا هو موجود يكون بالاتفاق أو بأحد الأمرين اللذين لا يخلو الشيء منهما، أيّهما كان، ولا شيء من الأشياء مزمَعٌ بأن يكون أو لا يكون على هذه الجهة، بل الأمور كلّها ضرورية، وليس يكون شيء منها على أي الأمرين اتفق. وذلك أن الموجب يصدق فيها أو السالب، ولو لم يكن كذلك لكان كونها وغير كونها على مثال واحد. وذلك أن الشيء الذي يقال فيه إنه يكون على أي الأمرين اتفق، فليس هو بأحد الأمرين أولى منه بالآخر ولا يصير كذلك.[40]

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[35] See previous note.

[36] Aristoteles, *De int.*, tr. Edghill.

[37] Aristoteles, *De int.*, tr. Edghill.

[38] Aristoteles, *On Int.*, tr. Cooke, 133.

[39] Aristoteles, *De int.*, tr. Ackrill, 51.

[40] Aristoteles, *Al-Naṣṣ*, ed. Jabre, Jihāmī, al-'Ajam, 125. Zimmermann, *Al-*

The initial ἔστιν is *mawjūd* and γίγνεται, *yatakawwanu*, Isḥāq seems to have had another original before him. He then introduces the term *muzmaʿ*, to indicate possibility which in Greek is expressed by the future tense. Since I use Zimmermann's original terminology, I write "impending", and I suggest following translation:

> Therefore, none of what comes to be or what exists will take place by coincidence, or in one of the two things [*amrāni*] which are necessary for it, whichever it may be, and nothing is impending to be or not to be under this aspect, but all things are necessary. There is none of the two things that happen by chance.

Καὶ οὐχ ὁπότερ' ἔτυχεν is extended as *wa-laysa yakūnu shay' minhā ʿalá ayy al-amrayn ittafaqa*, Zimmermann uses the term "alternatives" for *amrāni* and produces a freer translation for the whole paragraph. Isḥāqʿs efforts were intended to clarify the original.

V.

(18b9-16)

- ἔτι εἰ ἔστι λευκὸν νῦν, ἀληθὲς ἦν εἰπεῖν πρότερον ὅτι ἔσται λευκόν, ὥστε ἀεὶ ἀληθὲς ἦν εἰπεῖν ὁτιοῦν τῶν γενομένων ὅτι ἔσται εἰ δ' ἀεὶ ἀληθὲς ἦν εἰπεῖν ὅτι ἔστιν ἢ ἔσται, οὐχ οἷόν τε τοῦτο μὴ εἶναι οὐδὲ μὴ ἔσεσθαι. ὃ δὲ μὴ οἷόν τε μὴ γενέσθαι, ἀδύνατον μὴ γενέσθαι, ὃ δὲ ἀδύνατον μὴ γενέσθαι, ἀνάγκη γενέσθαι. ἅπαντα οὖν τὰ ἐσόμενα ἀναγκαῖον γενέσθαι. οὐδὲν ἄρα ὁπότερ' ἔτυχεν οὐδ' ἀπὸ τύχης ἔσται· εἰ γὰρ ἀπὸ τύχης, οὐκ ἐξ ἀνάγκης.

> Again, if a thing is white now, it was true before to say that it would be white, so that of anything that has taken place it was always true to say 'it is' or 'it will be'. But if it was always true to say that a thing is or will be, it is not possible that it should not be or not be about to be, and when a thing cannot not come to be, it is impossible that it should not come to be, and when it is impossible that it should not come to

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Fārābī's Commentary, 80 (for 18b5-6): "† Hence nothing coming to be or existing will be by coincidence † … or by one, whichever it may be, of two alternatives which are inevitable for a thing. Nor is anything going to be or not to be in this manner, but everything is necessary".

Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 81 (for 18b7-9): "† Nothing will be such that either of two alternatives may happen. For the affirmation or negation about something is true. If it were not so, it would be the same for something to be or not to be. For a thing which is said to be such that either of two alternatives may happen is not one of the two alternatives rather than the other, nor will it become so †".

be, it must come to be. All, then, that is about to be must of necessity take place. It results from this that nothing is uncertain or fortuitous, for if it were fortuitous, it would not be necessary.[41]

وأيضاً إن كان شيء من الأشياء أبيض في الوقت الحاضر فقد كان القول فيه من قبل بأنه سيصير أبيض صادقاً. فيجب أن يكون القول في شيء من الأشياء ممّا يتكوّن، أيّها كان، بأنه سيكون قد كان دائماً صادقاً. وإن كان القول في شيء بأنه في هذا الوقت أو سيكون فيما بعد كان دائماً حقّاً فليس يمكن أن يكون هذا غير موجود ولا يصير موجوداً. وما كان لا يمكن ألّا يصير موجوداً فمن المحال ألا يصير موجوداً. والشيء الذي من المحال ألا يصير موجوداً فواجبٌ ضرورةً أن يكون. فجميع الأشياء إذاً المزمعة بالوجود فواجب ضرورةً أن تكون فليس يمكن إذاً شيء من الأشياء على أيّ الأمرين اتفق ولا بالاتفاق وذلك أنه إن كان شيء بالاتفاق فليس كونه واجباً ضرورةً.[42]

Μὴ εἶναι οὐδὲ μὴ ἔσεσθαι, "[it is not possible that] it should not be or not be about to be" is converted as *yakūnu hādhā ghayr mawjūd wa-la yaṣīr mawjūdan*, "this [the said thing] cannot not exist or not come to exist".[43] As for ἅπαντα οὖν τὰ ἐσόμενα, Isḥāq introduced *muzmaʿ* again, *fa-jamīʿ al-ashyā' idhan al-muzmaʿa bi-l-wujūd* "everything, then, whose existence is impending".

VI.

(18b17-25)

- ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδ' ὡς οὐδέτερόν γε ἀληθὲς ἐνδέχεται λέγειν, οἷον ὅτι οὔτ' ἔσται οὔτε οὐκ ἔσται. Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ οὔσης τῆς καταφάσεως ψευδοῦς ἡ ἀπόφασις οὐκ ἀληθής, καὶ ταύτης ψευδοῦς οὔσης τὴν κατάφασιν συμβαίνει μὴ ἀληθῆ εἶναι. Καὶ πρὸς τούτοις, εἰ ἀληθὲς εἰπεῖν ὅτι λευκὸν καὶ μέλαν, δεῖ ἄμφω ὑπάρχειν, εἰ δὲ ὑπάρξειν εἰς αὔριον, ὑπάρξει εἰς αὔριον εἰ δὲ μήτ' ἔσται μήτε μὴ ἔσται αὔριον, οὐκ ἂν εἴη τὸ ὁπότερ' ἔτυχεν, οἷον ναυμαχία· δέοι γὰρ ἂν μήτε γενέσθαι ναυμαχίαν μήτε μὴ γενέσθαι.

[41] ARISTOTELES, *De int.*, tr. EDGHILL.

[42] ARISTOTELES, *Al-Naṣṣ,* ed. JABRE, JIHĀMĪ, AL-'AJAM, 125-126. ZIMMERMANN, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 81 (for 19b9-14): "† Again, if a thing is white at present, it was true before to say of it that it would become white. Hence saying of anything whatever of the things which become that it will be must have always been true. If it was always true to say of a thing that it is at this time or will be later, the said thing cannot not exist or not come to exist. And it is impossible for a thing not to come to exist, it must of necessity come to be †".

[43] ZIMMERMANN, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 81.

> Again, to say that neither the affirmation nor the denial is true, maintaining, let us say, that an event neither will take place nor will not take place, is to take up a position impossible to defend. In the first place, though facts should prove the one proposition false, the opposite would still be untrue.
>
> Secondly, if it was true to say that a thing was both white and large, both these qualities must necessarily belong to it; and if they will belong to it the next day, they must necessarily belong to it the next day. But if an event is neither to take place nor not to take place the next day, the element of chance will be eliminated. For example, it would be necessary that a sea-fight should neither take place nor fail to take place on the next day.[44]

> وأيضاً فليس يجوز أن يقال إنه ليس ولا واحد من القولين حقّاً كأنك قلت القول بأنّ الشيء سيكون والقول بأن الشيء ليس يكون، أمّا أولًا فلأنه يلزم من ذلك أن يكون الإجاب وهو كذبٌ سلبه غير صدق والسلب وهو كذبٌ، إجابه غير صدق. ثم مع ذلك فإنه إن كان القول في الشيء بأنه أبيض وبأنه أسود صادقاً فيجب أن يكون الشيء الأمرين جميعاً. وإن كان القول فيه بأنه يصير كذلك في غدٍ صادقاً فواجب أن يصير كذلك في غدٍ. وإن كان القول فيه بأنه لا يصير كذلك وليس لا يصيّر كذلك في غدٍ حقّاً فليس هو على أيّ الأمرين اتفق ومثال ذلك الحرب فإنه يجب لا أن تكون حرباً ولا ألّا تكون.[45]

Isḥāq closely follows the Greek and ἐνδέχεται "it is received" is translated as *yajūz* "it passes" and we will read "nor it is not possible to say that no one of the two sentences is right".[46] Δεῖ ἄμφω ὑπάρχειν "both these qualities must necessarily belong to it",[47] becomes "the thing must be both [things] at the same time.

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[44] Aristoteles, *De int.*, tr. Edghill.

[45] Aristoteles, *Al-Naṣṣ*, ed. Jabre, Jihāmī, al-ʿAjam, 126. Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 81 (for 18b16-20): "Nor can we say that it is not [*laysa*], not one of the two sentences, right † as if you asserted that something will be and that it will not be. For, first of all, it follows from this that the affirmation, though false, has its counterpart a negation that is not true and that the negation, though false, has as its counterpart an affirmation which is not true †". Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 82 (for 18b20-23): "Moreover, if it is true to assert of something that it is white and that it is black, the thing must be both at the same time. If it is true to assert of it that it will become so tomorrow, it must become so tomorrow. If it is right to say of it that it will not become so tomorrow, it is not such that either of the two alternatives may happen". Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 83 (for 18b23-25): "An example of this is a battle. For it is neither necessary that I should be a battle nor that it should not be".

[46] Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 81.

[47] Aristoteles, *De int.*, tr. Edghill.

A sea-fight was seemingly something unusual in Isḥāq's time, for he writes "an example of this is the war". Here γενέσθαι is translated as *kāna*, which has the meaning of "come about".

VII.

(18b26-36)

Τὰ μὲν δὴ συμβαίνοντα ἄτοπα ταῦτα καὶ τοιαῦθ' ἕτερα, εἴπερ πάσης καταφάσεως καὶ ἀποφάσεως, ἢ ἐπὶ τῶν καθόλου λεγομένων ὡς καθόλου ἢ ἐπὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστα, ἀνάγκη τῶν ἀντικειμένων εἶναι τὴν μὲν ἀληθῆ τὴν δὲ ψευδῆ, μηδὲν δὲ ὁπότερ' ἔτυχεν εἶναι ἐν τοῖς γιγνομένοις, ἀλλὰ πάντα εἶναι καὶ γίγνεσθαι ἐξ ἀνάγκης. ὥστε οὔτε βουλεύεσθαι δέοι ἂν οὔτε πραγματεύεσθαι, ὡς ἐὰν μὲν τοδὶ ποιήσωμεν, ἔσται τοδί, ἐὰν δὲ μὴ τοδί, οὐκ ἔσται. Οὐδὲν γὰρ κωλύει εἰς μυριοστὸν ἔτος τὸν μὲν φάναι τοῦτ' ἔσεσθαι τὸν δὲ μὴ φάναι, ὥστε ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἔσεσθαι ὁπότερον αὐτῶν ἀληθὲς ἦν εἰπεῖν τότε.

These awkward results and others of the same kind follow, if it is an irrefragable law that of every pair of contradictory propositions, whether they have regard to universals and are stated as universally applicable, or whether they have regard to individuals, one must be true and the other false, and that there are no real alternatives, but that all that is or takes place is the outcome of necessity. There would be no need to deliberate or to take trouble, on the supposition that if we should adopt a certain course, a certain result would follow, while, if we did not, the result would not follow. For a man may predict an event ten thousand years beforehand, and another may predict the reverse; that which was truly predicted at the moment in the past will of necessity take place in the fullness of time.[48]

فهذا ما يلزم من الأمور الشنعة وغيره ممّا أشبه إن كان كلّ إيجاب وسلب إمّا ممّا يقال كلّياً على معنى وإمّا ممّا يقال جزئياً فواجب ضرورة أن يكون فيه أحد المتقابلين صادقاً والآخر كاذباً ولم يكن فيما يحدث ما يكون حدوثه على أيّ الأمرين اتفق بل الأشياء جميعاً وجودها وكونها واجبٌ ضرورةً. وعلى هذا القياس فليست بنا حاجة إلى أن نروّى في شيء ولا أن نستعدّ له أو نأخذ أُهبة كأنّا إن فعلنا ما يجب كان ما يجب وإن لم نفعل ما يجب لم يكن ما يجب. فإنه ليس مانعٌ يمنع من أن يقول قائل في شيء من الأشياء إنه يكون إلى عشرة ألف سنة مثلاً ويقول آخر إنه لا يكون فيصحّ لا محالة أحد الأمرين الذين كان القول حينئذٍ بأنه يكون صادقاً.[49]

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[48] Aristoteles, *De int.*, tr. Edghill.

[49] Aristoteles, *Al-Naṣṣ*, ed. Jabre, Jihāmī, al-ʿAjam, 126-127. Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 83 (for 19b36-31): "† This and similar things are the absurdities

Mā yalzamu "what necessarily follows" translates συμβαίνοντα and adds the condition of necessity to what occurs. The ἄτοπα are rendered as *al-umūr al-shaniʿah* "the ugly things" (Zimmermann: "absurdities"). The restrictive ὡς καθόλου "as universally applicable" becomes *kullīyanʿalá maʿnan* "universal in the meaning". Although ἀνάγκη and its derivatives are translated as *ḍarurah* and the corresponding derivatives, it is sometimes expressed by *wājib ḍaruratan*, "necessarily obligatory" in order to emphasize the value, as here: ἀνάγκη [εἶναι τὴν μὲν…].

Isḥāq knows how to make a translation that explicates the compacted meaning of the Greek asserting that μηδὲν δὲ ὁπότερ' ἔτυχεν εἶναι ἐν τοῖς γιγνομένοις, "that there are no real alternatives" in Edghill's version, "that contingency can be there none" in Cooke's,[50] or "that nothing of what happens is as chance has it", in Ackrill's.[51] Isḥāq writes "that in what occurs is nothing whose occurrence [*ḥudūth*] is in both things [*amrayn*] by chance",[52] where "things" indicates the two cases, universal or particular propositions, in my view. Isḥāq has replaced the former *fī mā yatakawwanu* in the expression ἐν τοῖς γιγνομένοις by *fi mā yaḥduthu*.

VIII.

(18b36-19a6)

- ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲ τοῦτο διαφέρει, εἴ τινες εἶπον τὴν ἀντίφασιν ἢ μὴ εἶπον· δῆλον γὰρ ὅτι οὕτως ἔχει τὰ πράγματα, κἂν μὴ ὁ μὲν καταφήσῃ ὁ δὲ ἀποφήσῃ οὐ γὰρ διὰ τὸ καταφάναι ἢ ἀποφάναι ἔσται ἢ οὐκ ἔσται, οὐδ' εἰς μυριοστὸν ἔτος μᾶλλον ἢ ἐν ὁποσῳ οὖν χρόνῳ. ὥστ' εἰ ἐν ἅπαντι τῷ χρόνῳ οὕτως εἶχεν ὥστε τὸ ἕτερον ἀληθεύεσθαι, ἀναγκαῖον ἦν τοῦτο γενέσθαι, καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν γενομένων ἀεὶ οὕτως

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that follow if it is the case that with every affirmation and negation, whether from among those said universally of a universal notion or from among those said particularly, one of the two opposites must of necessity be true and the other false; and <if> among things that come to be there is none whose coming to be is such that either of the two alternatives may happen, but rather, all things must exist and come to be of necessity †".

[50] ARISTOTELES, *On Int.*, tr. COOKE, 137.

[51] ARISTOTELES, *De int.*, tr. ACKRILL, 51.

[52] ARISTOTELES, *Al-Naṣṣ*, ed. JABRE, JIHĀMĪ, AL-ʿAJAM, 126: ".ولم يكن فيما يحدث ما يكون حدوثه على أيّ الأمرين اتفق".

ἔχειν ὥστε ἐξ ἀνάγκης γενέσθαι· ὅ τε γὰρ ἀληθῶς εἶπέ τις ὅτι ἔσται, οὐχ οἷόν τε μὴ γενέσθαι· καὶ τὸ γενόμενον ἀληθὲς ἦν εἰπεῖν ἀεὶ ὅτι ἔσται.

Further, it makes no difference whether people have or have not actually made the contradictory statements. For it is manifest that the circumstances are not influenced by the fact of an affirmation or denial on the part of anyone. For events will not take place or fail to take place because it was stated that they would or would not take place, nor is this any more the case if the prediction dates back ten thousand years or any other space of time. Wherefore, if through all time the nature of things was so constituted that a prediction about an event was true, then through all time it was necessary that that should find fulfillment; and with regard to all events, circumstances have always been such that their occurrence is a matter of necessity. For that of which someone has said truly that it will be, cannot fail to take place; and of that which takes place, it was always true to say that it would be.[53]

وأيضاً فلا فرق في هذا المعنى بين أن تقال المناقضة وبين ألّا تقال وذلك أنه من البيّن أنّ الأمور تجري مجا ريَها وإن لم يوجب مُوجبٌ شيئاً منها ولم يسلبه آخر وذلك أنّ الشيء ليس إنما يكون أو لا يكون من قبل أنه قد أُوجب أو قد سُلب ولا حكمه بعد عشرة ألف سنة غير حكمه بعد زمان آخر كم مقداره.

فإذ كانت حاله في الزمان كلّه حالاً يصدق فيه معها أحد القولين دون الآخر فواجبٌ ضرورةً أن يكون ذلك الصدق حتى يكون كلّ واحد من الأشياء التي تكون حاله أبداً حال ما يكون ضرورةً وذلك أنّ ما كان القول فيه بأنه سيكون صادقاً في وقت من الأوقات قليس يمكن ألّا يكون وما يكون فقد كان القول فيه بأنّه سيكون صادقاً أبداً.[54]

Although there is a radical negation οὐδέ at the very beginning, Isḥāq modulates it by saying "in this respect" *fi hādhā al-maʿná*. He then translates οὕτως ἔχει τὰ πράγματα "this is how the actual things are"[55] as "the things run their course" and the concessive sentence κἂν μὴ ὁ μὲν καταφήσῃ [ὁ δὲ ἀποφήσῃ] as *wa-'in lam yūjib mūjib*, "even if

[53] ARISTOTELES, *De int.*, tr. EDGHILL.

[54] ARISTOTELES, *Al-Naṣṣ,* ed. JABRE, JIHĀMĪ, AL-'AJAM, 127. ZIMMERMANN, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 86 (for 18b37-19a1): "For it is clear that events take their course, even if none of them is affirmed by someone and negated by someone else. For it is not the case that something will or not be just because it has been affirmed or negated. Nor is his judgement after ten thousand years different from his judgement after another time, whatever its extent".

[55] My translation from Arabic.

someone who affirms does not affirm [or does not deny]". Later, when the Greek uses the impersonal infinitive διὰ τὸ καταφάναι, Isḥāq turns to the passive voice *'ūjiba*, "it is affirmed".

Edghill introduced "if the prediction dates back" where the Greek is elliptical, Isḥāq had already done this centuries before, and he had written "if its judgement dates back" using *ḥukm*, "judgement".

The second example of οὕτως εἶχεν is found in the sentence εἰ ἐν ἅπαντι τῷ χρόνῳ οὕτως εἶχεν and it is explained by introducing 'state, case' *ḥāl*, in this way: "if its case throughout all the time is a case in which [one of the true statements is true and not the other]", *fa-idhā kānat ḥālu-hu fi l-zamān kulli-hi ḥālan* [*yaṣduqu fi-hi maʿa-hā aḥad al-qawlayn dūna al-ākhar*]. Isḥāq turns again to *ḥāl* in the following sentence "it was necessary […] for the state of things always to be such that everything that happens, happens of necessity",[56] the elliptical ἀναγκαῖον ἦν becomes *wājib ḍarūratan* and continues "this to be the truth so that everything that comes to be, its state will necessarily the state of coming to be".[57]

To sum up, Isḥāq's version helps to understand the message of the Greek original, being explanatory while keeping faithful to the original.

IX.

(19a7-22)

Εἰ δὴ ταῦτα ἀδύνατα, ὁρῶμεν γὰρ ὅτι ἔστιν ἀρχὴ τῶν ἐσομένων καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ βουλεύεσθαι καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πρᾶξαί τι, καὶ ὅτι ὅλως ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς μὴ ἀεὶ ἐνεργοῦσι τὸ δυνατὸν εἶναι καὶ μή, ἐν οἷς ἄμφω ἐνδέχεται καὶ τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ μὴ εἶναι, ὥστε καὶ τὸ γενέσθαι καὶ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι· καὶ πολλὰ ἡμῖν δῆλά ἐστιν οὕτως ἔχοντα, οἷον ὅτι τουτὶ τὸ ἱμάτιον δυνατόν ἐστι διατμηθῆναι καὶ οὐ διατμηθήσεται, ἀλλ' ἔμπροσθεν κατατριβήσεται· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὸ μὴ διατμηθῆναι δυνατόν· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ὑπῆρχε τὸ ἔμπροσθεν αὐτὸ κατατριβῆναι, εἴγε μὴ δυνατὸν ἦν τὸ μὴ διατμηθῆναι· ὥστε καὶ | ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων γενέσεων, ὅσαι κατὰ δύναμιν λέγονται τὴν τοιαύτην· φανερὸν ἄρα ὅτι οὐχ ἅπαντα ἐξ ἀνάγκης οὔτ' ἔστιν οὔτε γίγνεται, ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν ὁπότερ' ἔτυχε καὶ οὐδὲν μᾶλλον ἢ

[56] My translation from Arabic.

[57] Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 86 (for 19a1-4): "So since in the whole of time its state is such that one of the two statements about it is true but not the other, this truth must of necessity come about. Consequently, the state of anything that will come about is always such that it will come about of necessity".

ἡ κατάφασις ἢ ἡ ἀπόφασις ἀληθής, τὰ δὲ μᾶλλον μὲν καὶ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ θάτερον, οὐ μὴν ἀλλ' ἐνδέχεται γενέσθαι καὶ θάτερον, θάτερον δὲ μή.

Yet this view leads to an impossible conclusion; for we see that both deliberation and action are causative with regard to the future, and that, to speak more generally, in those things which are not continuously actual there is potentiality in either direction. Such things may either be or not be; events also therefore may either take place or not take place. There are many obvious instances of this. It is possible that this coat may be cut in half, and yet it may not be cut in half, but wear out first. In the same way, it is possible that it should not be cut in half; unless this were so, it would not be possible that it should wear out first. So it is therefore with all other events which possess this kind of potentiality. It is therefore plain that it is not of necessity that everything is or takes place; but in some instances there are real alternatives, in which case the affirmation is no more true and no more false than the denial; while some exhibit a predisposition and general tendency in one direction or the other, and yet can issue in the opposite direction by exception.[58]

فإذ كانت هذه الأشياء محالاً لأنّا قد نرى أمورا يحدث مبدؤها من الرويّة فيها وأخذ الأُهبة لها وقد نجد بالجملة في الأشياء التي ليست ممّا يفعل دائماً الإمكان لفعل شيء وترك فعله على مثال واحد حتّى يكون فيها الأمران جميعاً ممكنين أعني أن يكون الشيء وألّا يكون وهاهنا أشياء كثيرة بيِّنٌ من أمرها أنّها بهذه الحال: ومثال ذلك أنّ هذا الثوب قد يمكن أن يتمزّق فلا يتمزّق بل يسبقه إليه البلى: وعلى ذلك المثال قد يمكن ألّا يتمزّق فإنّه لم يكن البلى ليسبق التمزيق إليه لو لم يكن إلّا وكذلك يجري الأمر في سائر ما يتكوّن ممّا يقال على هذا الضرب من القوّة فظاهر إذاً أنّه ليس جميع الأشياء فوجودها أو كونها ضرورة بل بعض الأشياء يجري على أي الأمرين اتّفق وليس الإيجاب بأحرى من السلب بالصدق فيها وبعضها أحد الأمرين دون الآخر أحرى فيها وأكثر إلّا أنّه قد يمكن أن يكون الأمر الآخر ولا يكون ذلك.[59]

[58] Aristoteles, *De int.*, tr. Edghill.

[59] Aristoteles, *Al-Naṣṣ,* ed. Jabre, Jihāmī, al-'Ajam, 127-128. Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 87 (for 19a7-9): "But since all this is absurd † for we can see things whose origin arises from deliberating on them and form making provisions for them †". Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 88 (for 19a 9-11): "And we can find, in general, in things which do not act permanently, the possibility of performing their action and of refraining from it likewise. Consequently, both alternatives are possible with them † I mean, of coming about and of not coming about †". Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 89 (for 19a12-18): "† There are many things that are clearly in this case. For example, it is possible for this dress to be torn. Yet it will be not torn, but it will be worn out first. But its not being torn is just as possible. For it could not wear out first if it were not possible for it not to be torn. This is how it is with such other things that come to be † as are spoken of in terms of this kind of power". Zimmermann,

Εἰ δὴ ταῦτα ἀδύνατα is a self-objection, "now, if these things are impossible?", and thereupon Aristotle explains his reasons. However, Isḥāq does not hesitate: "Now, these things are an absurdity", and introduces the causal sentence justifying it: "There are things whose origin [*mabda'*] happens due to deliberation on them and due to making some preparations [*akhdh al-uhbah*] as we can see it".

Isḥāq writes: "We can generally find in things that do not belong to that which does not act [*mā yafʿalu*] permanently, the possibility of performing their action or of abstaining from performing it equally", but we have read the Greek that "in things that are not always acting [ἐνεργοῦσι] there is the possibility of being and of not being". The difference in meaning is significant and the Arabic text is not coherent with the continuing sentence, in which it coincides with the Greek "the thing can exist or not exist" in these situations.

οὐ γὰρ ἂν ὑπῆρχε [τὸ ἔμπροσθεν αὐτὸ κατατριβῆναι] "unless this were so" is *law lam yakun illā*, without any distinction between εἶναι, γίγνεσθαι, ὑπάρχειν on the part of Isḥāq who saves the essential meaning.

κατὰ δύναμιν […] τὴν τοιαύτην is translated as *ʿalá hādhā l-ḍarb min al-qūwah* "according to this kind of potentiality". The Arabic *qūwah* is also a "multipurpose" term: "strength, power, potency, potentiality", and Isḥāq differentiated it in the same way as the modern translator.

Thus, despite the ambiguity of some terms, we observe a successful tendency to faithfully transmit the core of the discourse.

X.

19a23-29

Τὸ μὲν οὖν εἶναι τὸ ὂν ὅταν ᾖ, καὶ τὸ μὴ ὂν μὴ εἶναι ὅταν μὴ ᾖ, ἀνάγκη· οὐ μέντοι οὔτε τὸ ὂν ἅπαν ἀνάγκη εἶναι οὔτε τὸ μὴ ὂν μὴ εἶναι· οὐ γὰρ ταὐτόν ἐστι τὸ ὂν ἅπαν εἶναι ἐξ ἀνάγκης ὅτε ἔστιν, καὶ

Al-Fārābī's Commentary, 89 (for 19a18-22): "It is then manifest that not everything exists or comes to be of necessity, but some things are such that either one of two alternatives may happen † so that affirming them is no more likely to be true than negating them; and with some of them one alternative rather than the other is more likely and frequent, except that it is just possible that the other alternative will be and that the former will not †".

τὸ ἁπλῶς εἶναι ἐξ ἀνάγκης· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος. – καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς ἀντιφάσεως ὁ αὐτὸς λόγος· εἶναι μὲν ἢ μὴ εἶναι ἅπαν ἀνάγκη, καὶ ἔσεσθαί γε ἢ μή· οὐ μέντοι διελόντα γε εἰπεῖν θάτερον ἀναγκαῖον.

Now that which is must needs be when it is, and that which is not must needs not be when it is not. Yet it cannot be said without qualification that all existence and non-existence is the outcome of necessity. For there is a difference between saying that that which is, when it is, must needs be, and simply saying that all that is must needs be, and similarly in the case of that which is not. In the case, also, of two contradictory propositions this holds good.

Everything must either be or not be, whether in the present or in the future, but it is not always possible to distinguish and state determinately which of these alternatives must necessarily come about.[60]

فنقول الآن إنّ الوجود للشيء إذا كان موجوداً ضروريّ وإذا لم يكن موجوداً ففي الوجود عنه ضروريّ وليس كلّ موجود فوجوده ضروريّ ولا كلّ ما ليس بموجود فعدم الوجود له ضروريّ وذلك أنّه ليس قولنا إنّ وجود كلّ موجود فهو ضرورةً إذا وجد هو القول بأنّ وجوده ضرورةً على الإطلاق. كذلك أيضاً ما ليس بموجود وهذا بعينه قولنا في المناقضة أيضا وذلك أنّ كلّ شيء فوجوده الآن أو غير وجوده واجب ضرورةً ووجوده فيما يستقبل أو غير وجوده واجب ضرورةً، غير أنّا إذا فصّلنا فقلنا أحد الأمرين لم يكن واجباً ضرورةً.[61]

Τὸ μὲν οὖν εἶναι τὸ ὂν ὅταν ᾖ […] ἀνάγκη, "Now that which is must needs be when it is" is solved by "Let us now say: existence [*wujūd*] necessarily belongs to the thing whenever it exists [*mawjūd*]", and Isḥāq goes on: "If it does not exist, the deprivation [*nafī*] of existence is necessary to it", so that τὸ ὄν "that which exists" becomes "the thing",

[60] Aristoteles, *De int.*, tr. Edghill.

[61] Aristoteles, *Al-Naṣṣ,* ed. Jabre, Jihāmī, al-ʿAjam, 128-129. Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 89 (for 19a23-27): "† Therefore, we say now that the existence of something when it exists is necessary, and that it is necessary to negate existence of it when it does not exist. But not every existent's existence is necessary, and not for everything that does not exist is non-existence necessary. For in saying that the existence of everything existing is of necessity when it exists, we do not assert that its existence is of necessity without qualification. † Similarly also with what does not exist". Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 90 (for 19a27-28): "We say the same of a contradiction too". Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 91 (for 19a28-29): "† For the existence or non-existence now of everything is necessary, and its existence or non-existence in the future is necessary. But if we split and maintain one of the two alternatives, it is not necessary".

al-shay'. By contrast, I would like to touch on Boethius' concise translation: *omne quod est quando est necesse est.*[62] Otherwise, the next occurrences of τὸ ὄν are translated as *mawjūd*, and those of εἶναι, as *wujūd*.

As for the possible distinction between absolute and hypothetical necessity in the passage 19a25-26, Isḥāq seems to be clear enough contrasting the two kinds: "necessarily" facing "necessarily and absolutely". Zimmermann translated it as follows: "For in saying that the existence of everything existing is of necessity when it exists, we do not assert that its existence is of necessity without qualification", where "without qualification" corresponds to "absolutely", i.e., "unrestrictedly".[63]

The compacted οὐ μέντοι διελόντα γε εἰπεῖν θάτερον ἀναγκαῖον (19a29) is expanded by Isḥāq as "However, if we make the division and assert one of the two [alternative] matters, it is not necessarily needed".[64] What is not necessarily entailed is something that will be elucidated in the next paragraph.

XI.

(19a29-b4)

- λέγω δὲ οἷον ἀνάγκη μὲν ἔσεσθαι ναυμαχίαν αὔριον ἢ μὴ ἔσεσθαι, οὐ μέντοι γενέσθαι αὔριον ναυμαχίαν ἀναγκαῖον οὐδὲ μὴ γενέσθαι· γενέσθαι μέντοι ἢ μὴ γενέσθαι ἀναγκαῖον. ὥστε, ἐπεὶ ὁμοίως οἱ λόγοι ἀληθεῖς ὥσπερ τὰ πράγματα, δῆλον ὅτι ὅσα οὕτως ἔχει ὥστε ὁπότερ' ἔτυχε καὶ τὰ ἐναντία ἐνδέχεσθαι, ἀνάγκη ὁμοίως ἔχειν καὶ τὴν ἀντίφασιν·

ὅπερ συμβαίνει ἐπὶ τοῖς μὴ ἀεὶ οὖσιν ἢ μὴ ἀεὶ μὴ οὖσιν· τούτων γὰρ ἀνάγκη μὲν θάτερον μόριον τῆς ἀντιφάσεως ἀληθὲς εἶναι ἢ ψεῦδος, οὐ μέντοι τόδε ἢ τόδε ἀλλ' ὁπότερ' ἔτυχεν, καὶ μᾶλλον μὲν ἀληθῆ τὴν ἑτέραν, οὐ μέντοι ἤδη ἀληθῆ ἢ ψευδῆ. ὥστε δῆλον ὅτι οὐκ ἀνάγκη πάσης καταφάσεως καὶ ἀποφάσεως τῶν ἀντικειμένων τὴν μὲν ἀληθῆ τὴν δὲ ψευδῆ εἶναι· οὐ γὰρ ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν ὄντων οὕτως ἔχει καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν μὴ ὄντων, δυνατῶν δὲ εἶναι ἢ μὴ εἶναι, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ εἴρηται.

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[62] Boethius, *Commentarii in Librum Aristotelis Peri Ermeneias*, ed. C. Meiser, Leipzig, 1880 , t. 1, 121-122; t. 2, 12.

[63] See note 61.

[64] Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 91: "But if we split and maintain one of the two alternatives, it is not necessary".

Let me illustrate. A sea-fight must either take place tomorrow or not, but it is not necessary that it should take place tomorrow, neither is it necessary that it should not take place, yet it is necessary that it either should or should not take place tomorrow. Since propositions correspond with facts, it is evident that when in future events there is a real alternative, and a potentiality in contrary directions, the corresponding affirmation and denial have the same character.

This is the case with regard to that which is not always existent or not always nonexistent. One of the two propositions in such instances must be true and the other false, but we cannot say determinately that this or that is false but must leave the alternative undecided. One may indeed be more likely to be true than the other, but it cannot be either actually true or actually false. It is therefore plain that it is not necessary that of an affirmation and a denial one should be true and the other false. For in the case of that which exists potentially, but not actually, the rule which applies to that which exists actually does not hold good. The case is rather as we have indicated.[65]

ومثال ذلك أنّ قولنا إنّ الحرب ستكون غداً أو لا تكون واجب ضرورةً فأمّا قولنا إنّ الحرب ستكون غداً فليس بواجب ضرورةً ولا قولنا إنّها لا تكون غداً بواجب ضرورةً لكنّ الواجب ضرورةً إنّما هو أن يكون أو لا يكون فيجب من ذلك إذ كانت الأقاويل الصادقة إنّما تجري على حسب ما عليه الأمور فمن البيّن أنّ ما كان منها يجري على أي الأمرين اتّفق وتحتمل الضدّين فواجب ضرورةً أن تكون المناقضة أيضاً تجري فيه ذلك المجرى.[66]

وهذا شيء يلزم فيما ليس وجوده دائما أو فيما ليس فقده دائماً فإنّ ما جرى هذا المجرى فواجب ضرورةً أن يكون أحد جزئيّ النقيض فيه صادقاً أو كاذباً غير أنّه ليس هو أو أحد المشار إليه بعينه بل أيّهما اتّفق وربّما كان أحد المتناقضين أحرى بالصدق إلّا أنّه ليس ذلك بموجب أن يكون صادقاً أو كاذباً فقد بان بذلك أنّه ليس كلّ إيجاب وسلب متقابلين فأحدهما صادق ضرورةً والآخر كاذب ضرورةً وذلك أنّه ليس مجرى الأمر فيما ليس بموجود إلّا أنّه ممكن أن يكون وألّا يكون مجراه فيما هو موجود بل الأمر يجري فيه على ما وصفنا.[67]

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[65] ARISTOTELES, *De int.*, tr. EDGHILL.

[66] ZIMMERMANN, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 91 (for 19a29-35): "For example, saying that the battle will or will not take place tomorrow is necessary, while saying that the battle will take place tomorrow is not necessary; nor is saying that it will not take place tomorrow necessary. What is necessary is that it will or will not take place. Consequently, since true statements follow the course of events, it is clear that in the case of events which are such that any of the two alternatives may happen, and admit the two contraries, the contradiction too must of necessity follow the same course".

[67] ARISTOTELES, *Al-Naṣṣ,* ed. JABRE, JIHĀMĪ, AL-'AJAM, 129. ZIMMERMANN, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 91 (for 19a35-b 4): "† This is something which follows for what is not permanently present or permanently absent. For as regards things like this, one of the two parts of the contradiction about them must of necessity be true or false. But it is not this or that one and the same, but whichever happens [to apply]. Sometimes one of

Isḥāq says: "Whether the war will be tomorrow or not, it is necessarily needed", and he does not mean a naval battle, as indicated above.

ἐπεὶ ὁμοίως οἱ λόγοι ἀληθεῖς ὥσπερ τὰ πράγματα, "Since true propositions are just as facts" is slightly reformulated as "since true statements correspond with how the things are" *idh kānat al-aqāwīl al-ṣādiqah innamā tajrī ʿalá ḥasab mā ʿalay-hi al-umūr*, where *umūr* "things" here translates πράγματα, but πρᾶγμα is as ambiguous as *amr,* and "thing".

δῆλον ὅτι ὅσα οὕτως ἔχει ὥστε ὁπότερ' ἔτυχε καὶ τὰ ἐναντία ἐνδέχεσθαι, "it is clear that whenever these [things] are such as to allow of contraries as chance has it"[68] is explained: "whenever things take the same course that each one of the two things happens by coincidence, and the two contraries are probable [*taḥtamil*]",[69] and the same apodosis follows. However, ἐνδέχεσθαι has less strength than *iḥtimāl*.

οὐ μέντοι τόδε ἢ τόδε ἀλλ' ὁπότερ' ἔτυχεν, "not, however, this one or that one but as chance has it".[70] Isḥāq is much more exact, the deictic pronoun is extended into a phrase: *aḥad al-mushār ilay-hi bi-ʿayni-hi* "one itself determinate", the concrete, individuated thing.

γὰρ ὥσπερ ἐπὶ τῶν ὄντων οὕτως ἔχει καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν μὴ ὄντων, δυνατῶν δὲ εἶναι ἢ μὴ εἶναι, "For what holds for things that are, does not hold for things that are hot but may possibly be or not be".[71] I believe that the extant Arabic translation presents difficulties, because it literally says: "the matter does not run the same way in what is not existent, but it can be and cannot be, and in what is existent".[72] Zimmermann translated it according to the true sense, but the Arabic is not so clear.

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the contradictories is more likely to be true. But this does not necessitate its becoming true or false. Thus it has become clear that not of every pair of an affirmation and a negation one is true of necessity and the other false of necessity. For with what does not exist but has the possibility of coming to be and of not coming to be, it is not as it is with what does exist, † but it is as we have described".

[68] Aristoteles, *De int.*, tr. Ackrill, 53.

[69] Aristoteles, *Al-Naṣṣ*, ed. Jabre, Jihāmī, al-ʿAjam, 29.6-7: ".فمن البيّن أنّ ما كان منها يجري على أي الأمرين اتّفق وتحتمل الضدّين".

[70] Aristoteles, *De int.*, tr. Ackrill, 53.

[71] Aristoteles, *De int.*, tr. Ackrill, 53.

[72] Aristoteles, *Al-Naṣṣ*, ed. Jabre, Jihāmī, al-ʿAjam, 125.5-6: ".ولا شيء من الأشياء مزمَعٌ بأن يكون أو لا يكون".

The medieval Arabic reader had a correct translation at his disposal, that is undeniable, but Isḥāq Ibn Ḥunayn the Arabic translator had faced serious difficulties to carry it out.

One was of a general nature. The structure of Greek is very different from that of Arabic. The Greek verb has a rich variety of tenses and forms, whereas the Arabic verb has two basic forms. The nominal forms derived from the Greek verb are also much richer than those of the Arabic verb. The resulting translations cannot retain all the temporal and modal qualities of the original. However, these difficulties are not unique to the present translation, but are common to all translations from classical Greek to medieval Arabic.

In the case of the *Peri Hermeneias*, Isḥāq Ibn Ḥunayn had to deal with a text that is often so concentrated that it requires an explanatory translation. This is already the case in the first paragraph of *De int.* 9, where contemporary translators feel obliged to provide it too. We have seen that the phrase μὲν τῶν καθόλου ὡς καθόλου has been translated by Edghill as "when the subject is universal and the propositions are of universal character". Isḥāq Ibn Ḥunayn did not go so far and he translated literally "the universal meanings [*maʿānī*] in a universal sense [*maʿná*]". Unfortunately, the term *maʿná* is a complex one and Zimmermann's English translation of *maʿná* as "referent" proves this. The Arabic reader needed to read further to understand what this *maʿná* meant here.

In other cases, the richness in tenses and modes of the Greek requires also an explanatory translation. You can also find terms like *muzma* "impending" – in Zimmermann's translation – that are not present in the Greek. In the case οὐδ' ἔσται ἢ οὐκ ἔσται (18b6), *wa-lā shay' min al-ashyā' muzmaʿ bi-an yakūna aw an lā yakūna*, Isḥāq not only developed an explanatory translation but also introduced a term to describe the meaning of possibility in the future tense.

Another difficulty has to do with ambiguity, and both compression and ambiguity can come together. The Greek makes a clear distinction between terms like ὑπάρχειν and εἶναι, but Isḥāq did not seek an exact translation, he did not provide standardized parallel terms in Arabic, and he preferred a more understandable expression. Alfarabi, his somehow disciple, faced with the question what hyparxis means, answered by giving different names: *wujūd*, *wujūdī, mawjūd*, *wujida*, *yūjadu*, *kāna*, or *yakūnu*.

The notions of necessity and possibility play a key role in this chapter 9. *Quwwah* is another example of ambiguity: that was already present in the original Greek, but only once do we find κατὰ δύναμιν and it is rendered *bi-l-quwwah*. On the other hand, τό δυνατόν is consistently translated as *imkān*, and the derivatives in analogous way. In addition to *yumkinu*, Isḥāq employs *yajūz* "it is permitted" for ἐνδέχεται. Yet ἀδύνατον is *min al-muḥāl* "something unthinkable".

Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn provided the Arab philosophers with a reliable text, and this is a contribution that I have emphasized. They knew that Greek commentators had worked on it and were looking for their interpretations. However, Isḥāq's translation was the first step in their way.

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Alfarabi on Necessity and Possibility in the *Commentary on Peri Hermeneias*, Chapter 9 18a28-19b4

Terence J. Kleven

I. Introduction

Aristotle's treatise, *Peri Hermeneias*, Περὶ Ἑρμηνείας, (in Latin *De Interpretatione*), dominates, as well it should, all subsequent philosophical analysis regarding the inquiry into the nature of the existence and of our knowledge of future contingents. Although the treatise needs to be understood as a whole, the particular passage which contains his analysis of future contingents is presented in chapter 9 18a28-19b4. His examination of future contingents is an evaluation of the truth of statements made of future entities or events which are not or at least may not be necessary in their being or occurrence. In particular, his inquiry examines the veracity of contradictory statements, that is, statements which formulate accounts of contradictory existences or occurrences, both of which cannot be true in the future. An example which Aristotle gives at one point is the question whether there will be a sea battle tomorrow since it either will or will not happen (18b23-25). The question is whether statements made ahead of time can be considered either true or false. The answer, to be sure, is one of common sense because we do not know definitely which of the future events, in the case of the sea battle, will take place, but there are arguments, derived from natural science, political history, and religion, which assert that the truth or falsity of events or existences can be known, and because they are known, they are determined ahead of time. While the recurrence of events and existences is the basis of natural science, the question is whether the elimination of possibility pertains to all of nature. When these arguments are used in all areas, possibility is eliminated, and with it, the need for knowledge, deliberation, and will.

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Aristotle's treatise as a whole is an analysis which avoids generalities because it sticks to an examination of words, of the ways these words are formed into wholes to make statements, and of the question of the truth of these statements when they are contradictory. His treatise begins with comments on the nature and use of both spoken and written words and of the ways in which they are combined to make unified thoughts about subjects. In the second sentence of the treatise, Aristotle states: "Now spoken sounds are symbols of the affections of the soul, and written marks symbols of spoken sounds. And just as written marks are not the same for all men, neither are spoken sounds. But what these are in the first place signs of – affections of the soul – are the same for all; and what these affections are likenesses of – actual things – are also the same".[1] This precise and remarkable statement of the nature of words can and certainly should be transformative of our sense of language, for words, according to Aristotle, are not techniques, skills, nor garments of our ideas but links to and representations of the deepest recesses of the soul, to sensations, to imaginings, to deliberation, to intelligibles, and to knowledge, whether these be true or false. The Greek word translated here into English by J. L. Ackrill as 'affections' and by Harold P. Cooke as 'mental affections'[2] is *pathēma* (πάθημα), which points to the 'intelligibles', but the term is sufficiently comprehensive to include the sensations and imaginings which are present in the soul. Alfarabi, our Arabic commentator in this essay, translates Aristotle's term here, following Isḥāk ibn Ḥunayn's Arabic translation,[3] as *āthār* (آثار), 'traces', which includes, Alfarabi says, "intelligibles, and representations, and imaginings" (معقولات ومتصوّرات ومتخيّلات, *ma'qūlāt, wa-mutaṣawwarāt, wa-mutaḫayyalāt*, p. 24, l. 3) and "all that arises in the soul after the absence of the sensations from the senses" (كل ما يحصل في النفس بعد غيبة المحسوسات عن الحسّ , p. 24, l. 17) and these "traces which are in the soul are the likenesses for the meanings of the existences outside the soul" (والآثار الّتي في النفس مثالات للمعاني الموجودة خارج النفس , p. 24, l.

[1] ARISTOTLE, *Categories* and *De Interpretatione*, tr. J. L. ACKRILL (Clarendon Aristotle Series), Oxford 1963, 43.

[2] ARISTOTLE, *The Categories, On Interpretation,* tr. H. P. COOKE (The Loeb Classical Library 325), Cambridge MA 1938, 114/115.

[3] I. POLLAK, *Die Hermeneutik des Aristoteles in der arabischen Uebersetzung des Isḥak b. Ḥonain*, Leipzig 1913.

24-p. 25, l. 1).[4] Aristotle's *Peri Hermeneias* examines the ways in which words are formed into wholes, in particular into statements or propositions, and, following this, it examines whether these statements are either true or false. In chapter 9, Aristotle analyzes in particular whether propositions about the future are true or false. His analysis, in summary, is a definition and defense of the notion of 'possibility'.[5]

Aristotle's arguments about the truth or falsity of future contingent propositions are germane to inquiries into our current accounts of the science of nature as well as the understanding of the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In regard to the science of nature, it is necessary to distinguish between causes which are the necessary consequences of essential natures and causes which are brought about by human deliberation and will. Causes of this second type may lead either to the existence or non-existence of a being or event. In regard to the science of religion and to participation in beliefs and devotions of religion, it is necessary to recognize that these religions taught and continue to teach that future events were spoken of ahead of time by prophets, that human actions are

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[4] ALFARABI, *Commentary on Aristotle's* PERI EPMHNEIAΣ (*De Interpretatione*), ed. W. KUTSCH, S. MARROW (Recherches publiée sous la direction de L'Institut de Lettres Orientales de Beyrouth XIII), Beyrouth 1960, 24. In order to avoid confusion with his short commentary, I will call this treatise the *Long Commentary*.

أبو نصر محمّد بن محمّد الفارابيّ، شرح الفارابيّ لكتاب أرسطوطاليس في العبارة، عني بنشره وقدّم له ولهام كوتش وستانلي مارو، بيروث، 1960، 24.

[5] For the English translation, see ALFARABI, *Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle's* De Interpretatione, tr. F. W. ZIMMERMANN (The British Academy: Classical and Medieval Logic Texts I), Oxford 1981 (printed with corrections 1991). The Arabic edition of the *Long Commentary*, which I cite in the previous footnote, is based upon a single manuscript, Istanbul MS Topaku [sic] Ahmad III 3439 dated to AH 538/AD 1144. The *Short Treatise* is found in Bratislava MS Bratislava 231 TE 41 and Istanbul MS Hamidiye 812. In his translation, Zimmermann consulted two other manuscripts of Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn's Arabic translation. These two manuscripts are: Paris MS Bibliothèque nationale de France 2346 and Istanbul MS Ahmad III 3362. He also consulted two manuscripts containing Alfarabi's commentary. These manuscripts are: Tehran MS Majlis 949 and Tehran MS Melli 370. Thus, Zimmermann's translation of the *Long Commentary* includes readings, either of the Arabic translation or Alfarabi's commentary, which are not found in Kutsch and Marrow's edition. Zimmermann does not make reference to Istanbul MS Hamidiye 812, which was copied in AH 1133/AD 1721, seventeen years after MS Bratislava and in the same Istanbul scribal school led by al-Yanyāwī (or, in some manuscripts spelled as al-Yānyawī).

efficacious, and also that all creatures are governed by the sovereignty of God, whatever the term 'sovereignty' means exactly in these contexts. In certain versions of theology, there is a tendency to exalt the attribute of God's 'power' as the primary meaning of this sovereignty; Alfarabi, however, at a crucial point in this argument, introduces the attribute of 'justice'. A thoroughly deterministic theology, that is, a theology which denies that human deliberation and action are efficacious, leads to the conclusion either that God's ways are completely unknowable or that he is, simply, unjust. We shall return to this topic. Alfarabi's *Commentary on Peri Hermeneias*, one of the two Long Commentaries we have of his works, is of especial interest because it is written by a Muslim within an Islamic literary and devotional tradition.[6] Alfarabi extends Aristotle's account both in his scientific analysis and in his explanation of the consequences for religion. Alfarabi's commentary on chapter 9 is considerably longer than Aristotle's text in this chapter; in the Loeb edition of Cooke, there are five pages of Aristotle's Greek in comparison with Kutsch and Marrow's eighteen pages of Arabic, which include both Aristotle's text in Arabic translation and Alfarabi's commentary. Alfarabi is aware of Aristotle's laconic and dense style of examination and Alfarabi extends Aristotle's discussion considerably, recognizing, as he asserts, that the majority of commentators have misunderstood Aristotle's account (p. 83, ll. 8-13 and p. 84, ll. 10-16). Alfarabi explains that Aristotle's chapter is the defense of the notion of possibility in future events and occurrences, making at least some of them truly contingent, and this section is a refutation of the various strategies of previous commentators that result in, whether these commentators intend it or not, the elimination of possibility in future events and existences. In the context of the Islamic world, Alfarabi argues that the elimination of possibility, that is, the promotion of determinism, is a misguided attempt to defend religious truth and is in fact a teaching contrary to what exists in nature and in true religion. The elimination of possibility and, consequently, the elimination of deliberation, leads to unbelief.

[6] The other long commentary that has been discovered is the *Book of Syllogism* (*Kitāb al-Qiyās* , كتاب القياس).

II. Alfarabi's Account of Future Contingents

Alfarabi begins chapter 9 with a statement of the way opposite propositions are either true or false of times past and present. In the *Long Commentary,* immediately following the Arabic translation of Aristotle's treatise in 18a28-33, Alfarabi writes:

> يريد أن يكون الإيجاب والسلب المتقابلين فيها يصدق الصادق منهما على التحصيل والكاذب منهما على التحصيل ما علمناه منها وما جهلناه. فما علمنا منه فأن الصادق منهما صادق على التحصيل في نفسه وعندنا. والكاذب منهما كاذب على تحصيل في نفسه وعندنا. (ص 82 ، س س 4-7)

> He [Aristotle] intends that with the affirmative and the negative opposites, the true one is true definitely and the false one is false definitely, whether we know it or do not know it. Whenever we know them, the true are true definitely in themselves and according to us and the false are false definitely in themselves and according to us. (p. 82, ll. 4-7)

In this explanation Alfarabi distinguishes between things existing and our knowing them. If these events or entities are past or present, they exist 'definitely' (على تحصيل , *ʿalā taḥṣīl*) and we are able to know them 'definitely'. Because their existence is definite, our knowing them can also be 'definite', but they exist independently of our knowledge and they can exist without the knowledge existing definitely in our minds. Thus, Alfarabi says, Aristotle's statements are references to our knowledge, not to the existence of the thing. The existence of the matters and our knowing them are distinct.

Then, according to Alfarabi, Aristotle uses this analysis to distinguish past and present events from future events. Alfarabi cites the translation of Aristotle's treatise: "For particular future referents, the matter is not like this case" (فأمّا المعاني الجزويّة المستقبلة فليس يجري الأمر فيها على هذا المثال, p. 82, ll. 19-20). Thus, the analysis of future contingents must be different from the analysis he had already done.[7]

Following this comment by Aristotle, as translated by Isḥak ibn Ḥunayn, Alfarabi writes:

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[7] Cooke provides a note on this line near the beginning of chapter 9. The note says: "This chapter deals largely with contingency. However, it is hard to determine whether Aristotle held that contingency could anywhere be found in the universe. See W. D. Ross, *Aristotle*, 31,75-78 and elsewhere". Cooke, *op. cit.*, 132. Despite Cooke's acumen with Aristotle's Greek text, it is puzzling that Cooke so fundamentally misunderstood this chapter. Alfarabi's *Long Commentary* certainly preserves us from such a misunderstanding.

المعاني الجزويّة تعني الأشخاص وتعني أنّ الأمر في متقابلين فيها ليس الصادق منهما صادقاً على التحصيل ولا الكاذب منهما كاذبا على التحصيل لا في نفسه ولا عندنا. وأنّ الإيجاب والسلب المتقابلين منها حالها كحال وجودها. فإنّ وجودها لمّا كان غير محصَّل كان أيضاً صدق أحد المتقابلين غير محصَّل. وكذلك لمّا كان لا وجود ما لا يُجود منها غير محصَّل كان كذب أحد المتقابلين منها غير محصَّل لا في نفسه ولا عندنا.
(ص 82 ، س س 21-25)[8]

By 'particular referents,' he [Aristotle] means the individuals. He means that concerning the matter of opposites [in the future], the true one is not true definitely and the false one is not false definitely, neither one in itself and neither one according to us, and the affirmation and negation of opposites depend on the mode of their existences. Since the existence of each, when they are indefinite, the existence of the truth of each one of the opposites is indefinite. Similarly, when a particular thing does not exist without indefiniteness, the falsity of each one of the opposites is indefinite, both in itself and according to us. (p. 82, ll. 21-25)

According to this argument, future possibilities, whether they will become true or become false, are indefinite both in their existence and in our knowledge. We are unable to know them definitely because they do not exist definitely. At this point Alfarabi reminds us that Aristotle is not speaking about matters that recur regularly, such as particular eclipses (p. 83, ll. 1-2).

Next, Alfarabi distinguishes what is found in Aristotle's chapter from how it is explained by the history of the commentators. The commentators err in what they think Aristotle is actually arguing. Alfarabi writes:

وليس الأمر في ذلك على ما يقوله جُل المفسرين فإنّهم يقولون أنّه يفحص في هذا الموضع عن الممكن هل هو موجود في طبيعة الأمور أم لا. ويأخذ حال المتقابلات في الأمور الممكنة في إقتسامها الصدق والكذب على أنّها هي الأعرف أو هي المعلومة بنفسها حتى يكون علمنا أن المتقابلات في كثير من الأمور المستقبلة إقتسامها للصدق والكذب على غير التحصيل في أنفسها معلوما بنفسه بعلم أوّل بيّن لا يشك فيه. وأنّتم تعلمون أن الأمر ليس كذلك. بل نحن من أوّل أمرنا ربّما فطرنا عليه. نعلم أن كثيراً من الأمور ممكنة أن تكوت وأن لا تكون واوّل شي هو الّذي يعلم أنّه إلى إختيارنا وإرادتنا. (ص 83 ، س س 8-15)

The matter in this is not as the majority of commenters said, for they said that he [Aristotle] examined in this treatise concerning the 'possible', whether it is in the nature of things or not. And [they said] he took the condition of opposites in possible things in their divisions

[8] My version of the Arabic texts in this essay follows Kutsch and Marrow closely. However, they have inconsistently included unnecessary vocalization, omitted otherwise useful vocalization, and sometimes misplaced punctuation. I have, therefore, clarified certain ambiguities.

> into truth and falsity according as they are known and are determined in themselves until we know the opposites in many of the future things in their division into truth and falsity without their coming into existence in themselves. Moreover, [these commentators say that] they [the opposites] are known in themselves according to the first knowledge which is certain and there is not doubt in them. But you know that the matter is not like this. Rather, we, from the beginning, say, perhaps we have a natural disposition. We know that many of the 'possible' things that are and are not. And the primary thing we know is that there are things according to our choice and our will. (p. 83, ll. 8-15)

Thus, according to the commentators, opposites in the future can be known by us before they exist, without their being attained (تحصيل , *taḥṣīl*), that is, having come into existence, and this constitutes primary knowledge of future contingents. Alfarabi, in criticism, explains that Aristotle holds as first knowledge or as a first premise that there is 'possibility' in particular future events, but, according to Alfarabi, this primary knowledge of 'possibility' is not argued by Aristotle in *Peri Hermeneias*, but is accepted as a first principle. Alfarabi's criticism of the previous commentators is that knowledge of the truth and falsity of these opposites cannot be definite prior to their attainment; we cannot have definite knowledge of what does not exist. Alfarabi's explanation is that Aristotle accepts that it is by our nature (ἡ ἀρχή, *archē*, فطرة , *fiṭra*) that Aristotle maintained as first knowledge that there is 'possibility' (p. 82, ll. 13-15). Alfarabi criticizes the commentary tradition comprehensively, and thus we presume he included both Greek and Syriac commentators, because they claimed that Aristotle argues for certain knowledge in future opposite events or existences in this chapter which leads to an elimination of possibility. In contrast, Alfarabi explains that Aristotle accepts 'possibility' as first knowledge.

Alfarabi clarifies this position in the following quotation:

> وإنّما صار قوم يرفعون الإمكان عن الأمور لا بالمعرفة الأوّلي ولكن بالوضع والشريعة والقول. وفطرهم تضطرهم إلى أن تكون أعمالهم وأفعالهم تابعة لمّا في فطرهم. فليس تلتفت فيما هو معلوم بالفطرة إلى ما يظنّه قوم أنّه غير ذلك بالشريعة. وعلى أنّ الفحص في المنطق وفي الفلسفة بالجملة إنّما هو بأشيا وعن أشيا معلومة بالفطرة ، وأمّا أشيا لازمة عن الأشيا المعلومة بالفطرة من غير أن تستعمل فيها مقدّمات شرعت أو لزمت عن أشيا شرعت ، ولا أشيا صارت مشهورة في قوم ما (45 و) لازمة عن راي إنسان مقبول القول عندهم. فإنّ الفلسفة والمنطق ليس بحتفظ فيها بامثال هذه الأمور. (ص 83 ، س س 16-23)

> Some people proceed to eliminate possibility from things, not by arguing from first knowledge, but by convention and legislation and speech. Even so, their innate constitution compels them to act and behave in accordance with what is in their innate constitution. What is determined in the innate constitution is not annihilated by what a people suppose is other than this in the law. However, the investigation in logic, and in philosophy as a whole, is about the things and concerning the things which are known in the natural constitution and is about the things which follow from the things which are determined in the natural constitution, without premises which are legislated or which follow from things legislated being used in it. The things [in logic] do not proceed from the generally accepted opinions amongst a people according to what follows from the opinion of a person whose speeches have come before them [the generally accepted opinions]. Philosophy and logic are not concerned with instances of these matters. (p. 83, ll. 16-23)

Alfarabi is artful in his description here because he intends the analytical terminology to be universal. These opinions, gleaned from conventional teachings or legislation or speeches, may be presented as religious law, even as شريعة (*šarīʿa*) and as decreed (شرع , *šaraʿa*), which is the root he uses more than once in this context, but the opinions are not identical with religious *šarīʿa*. The term *šarīʿa* (as is *šaraʿa*) is equivocal and may mean either 'Islamic law' or the 'general legislation' of any community; thus, Alfarabi does not identify these teachings definitively with Islam, despite the proximity of description and despite the fact that he does indeed intend the analysis to be applied to certain theological formulations in Islam. Legislation of this type of 'generally accepted opinions' (مشهورات , *mašhūrāt*), promulgated by a human leader, is found in all communities, even those who do not see themselves as religious. Alfarabi's argument here is that it is the task of logic or philosophy to evaluate and rank the premises perpetuated by these communities and to evaluate their truth. If these communities claim they have definite knowledge of future contingents, they, like the misguided commentators on Aristotle, eliminate possibility, replace it with determinism, and deny human responsibility for deliberation and good judgement. To be sure, Alfarabi here is criticizing the type of theology of the *kalām* schools, not because he opposes Islam, but because their supposed theology is a misrepresentation of God's nature and purposes. In order to move the community to a better understanding of religion, certain formulations need to be criticized. Concomitantly, he invokes and stresses Islamic teaching in his use of the Qur'ānic term

fiṭra, which I have translated as 'natural constitution' to distinguish it from طبيعة , *ṭabī'a*, 'nature'.

He concludes his commentary on 18a33 by noting that Aristotle says in the *Posterior Analytics* 74b24 that a first principle does not need to be commonly accepted to be true. In other words, just because a group of people do not accept that 'possibility' is an *archē* does not deny its nature. In the same way, it is possible for someone to eliminate possibility in future contingents while acting with deliberation and choice. First principles do not cease to be living realities even if they are denied by generally accepted opinions.

Alfarabi supplements his criticism of the commentators by showing an inconsistency in their understanding of logic. On p. 84, lines 10-22, he says that they make logic an investigation of the nature of existing things in respect to how they exist, that is, to the mode of their existence. The two modes are the 'necessary' and the 'possible'. Alfarabi's criticism is that in respect to their treatment of the ten categories in Aristotle's *Book of Categories* (*Kitāb al-Maqūlāt*), the commentators proceed as if logic cannot and does not address the topic of the mode of existence. In contradiction to this practice, in their explanation of this section in Aristotle's *Peri Hermaneias*, they use logic to argue for the existence of 'possibility' because they think it proper for the science of logic to establish the existence of the modes of possibility and necessity. In contrast, Alfarabi says that Aristotle says that logic uses these modes of being as first principles, not as conclusions from other premises.

III. Alfarabi's Explanation of Aristotle's Account of Possibility or Contingency

After Aristotle makes the statement that future propositions are different from past and present propositions, he spends, as does Alfarabi, considerable time (18a36-19a6) showing that, if these statements are either true or false, nothing happens by 'chance' (τύχη, *tuchē*) or by 'contingency' (ἔσται ἢ οὐκ ἔσται). Alfarabi explains Aristotle's argument accurately; if a statement regarding future events must be either true or false prior to its occurrence or existence, then there is no contingency in actions or events. In the next section, in 19a7, Aristotle and Alfarabi make a criticism of this argument. Aristotle's Greek is:

> Εἰ δὴ ταῦτα ἀδύνατα – ὁρῶμεν γάρ ὅτι ἔστιν ἀρχὴ τῶν ἐσομένων καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ βουλευεσθαι καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πρᾶξαί τι, καὶ ὅτι ὅλως ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς μὴ ἀεὶ ἐνεργοῦσι τὸ δυνατὸν εἶναι καὶ μή … (19a6-11)
>
> All of this, however, is impossible.[9] We know that the first principle of future events is in deliberation and in particular actions, and in general, in things that are not always actual, there is a possibility of being and not being.

Ibn Isḥāq's Arabic translation is:

> فإذ كانت هذه الأشيا محالاً لِأنّا قد نرى أمورا تحدث مبداوِها من الرويّة فيها أخذ الأهبة لها. وقد يجد بالجملة في الاشيا الّتي ليست مما تفعل دايماً الإمكان لفعل الشي وترك فعله على مثال واحد حتى يكون فيها الأمران جميعاً ممكنين أعني أنّ يكون الشي وأنّ لا يكون. (ص 93 ، س س 5-6 و19-22)
>
> And since these things are absurd because we see the future things originate from deliberation in them and the preparation is taken for them. And we find in general in these things which are not in act continually, there is the possibility of doing something and not doing something. For a single example, both matters are possible in it, I mean that the thing is and is not. (p. 93, ll. 5-6 and 19-22)

Aristotle's conclusion is that: "But we cannot determinately say *which* alternative *must* come to pass".[10] This point brings Aristotle's chapter 9 to an end. Aristotle has argued that necessary causation is when an existence or occurrence proceeds from a natural essence, and scientific knowledge is the result of this necessary causation. But future contingents are guided by human deliberation and human will, and therefore neither of the opposite statements are necessary before they happen or come into existence. Future contingents are possible, and this category of possibility cannot be eliminated.

IV. Alfarabi's Explanation of the Consequences of Aristotle's Account of Possibility

Alfarabi continues his explanation of the significance of this recognition of possibility as a first principle. In particular, Alfarabi addresses the question of God's knowledge of future contingents in comparison

[9] Following Cooke's translation for εἰ. See the use of εἰ with the omission of an apodosis and with the meaning of an adversative 'otherwise'. H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, founded on the Seventh Edition, Oxford 1889, 226. See entry II, 3. Aristotle is opposing the previous argument, as Isḥāq captures.

[10] Aristotle, *The Categories, On Interpretation,* tr. H. P. Cooke, 139.

to our knowledge. He sets forth two alternatives: in matters of possibility, they are not known by us, not because of a deficiency on our part, but because their nature prohibits them from being known; and in matters of necessity, if they are not known by us, it is because of a deficiency in our nature. Then he turns to the theological question:

فإذاً كان الأمر كذلك فقد يسل السايل عن علم الله عزّ وجلّ باحد المتقابلين في الأمور الممكنة هل هو محيط به. فأن كان كذلك فكيف حال صدق احد المتقابلين عنده جل ثناوه. هل صدقه عنده بحسب علمه به على التحصيل أو لا. فإن لم يكن دال على التحصيل عنده فقد صار في عدم التحصيل عنده مثل ما هو عندنا. فإذاً الله تعالى لا يعلم في الأمور المستقبلة الممكنة أيّ المتقابلين يحصل هل الموجب أو السالب. فتكون تلك مجهولة عند الله تعالى. فيكون الله تعالى غير عالم بالأشيا قبل كونها. وذلك شنع وغير مقبول. والملل كلها واردة بغير ذلك. ويشبه أن يكون ضارا جداً في أن يعتقد الناس ذلك. فإذاً كان كذلك وكان الله تعالى يعلم صدق أحد المتقابلين على التحصيل فليس عدم التحصيل فيه من نفس طبيعة الأمر. ولا جهلنا نحن بها سببه طبيعة الأمر بل نقص طبيعتنا نحن. فإذاً كان كذلك فصدق أحد المتقابلين هو في ذاته على التحصيل .وأن لم نعلم نحن ذلك. فيكون على مثال عدم التحصيل عندنا في الضروريّة المجهولة (ص 97 س 27- ص 98 س 10)

If so, someone may ask concerning the knowledge of God, Mighty and Majestic, does he, in one of the opposites in possible things, comprehend it? For if he does, then what is the mode of the truth of one of the opposites according to him, may his Majesty be exalted? Is the truth according to him in respect to his knowledge of it either definite or not. If it does not indicate definiteness [existence] according to him, it is non-existence according to him as it is to us, and thus God Most High does not know in future possible things whether or not the opposites are attained, either affirmative or negative. This ignorance would be found in God Most High. Thus, God Most High is without knowledge of the things before their being. This is absurd and unacceptable. All religions occur without this [absurdity] and, it would seem that it is very erroneous that the people believe this. For if this is so that the God Most High knows the truth of one of the opposites definitely, then its indefiniteness is not from its own nature. And our ignorance would not be caused by the nature of the thing but a deficiency in our nature. If so, then one of the opposites is true definitely in its nature and we do not know this. Thus, we have an absence of definiteness in our minds even as in necessities of which we are ignorant. (p. 97, l. 27-p. 98, l. 10)

Alfarabi concludes in the next paragraph that deliberation and will and all else that Aristotle mentioned would be eliminated in this account. Alfarabi writes:

فترتفع الإرادة والرويّة وساير تلك الأشيا الّتي ذكرها أرسطوطاليس. ويلزم في الملل كلها أن لا يكون الإنسان مختارا لفعل (54 ظ) شي أصلا. فيكون ما يلحقه من العقاب في الدنيا والأخرة لا عن شي منه كاين بارادته ولا باختياره. فيكون الله تعالى الّذي هو المثيب والمعاقب غير عادل في فعله. وهذه أيضا كلها شنعة ومستنكرة في الملل كلها وضارة أن يعتقد الناس ذلك جداً جداً.

(ص 98 ، س س 14-19)

> For this eliminates the will, and deliberation, and the rest of these things which Aristotle mentions. It follows in all religions that man does not choose to do anything at all. Whatever comes to him in regard to punishments in this world or in the next are not from the will or from his choice. Thus, God Most High, who rewards and punishes, is unjust in his actions. This also, all of it, is absurd, and is rejected in all religion and is very, very erroneous for this people to believe. (p. 98, ll. 14-19)

The elimination of possibility leads to absurdity in religion. Not only is it a rejection of human responsibility and the need for deliberation based upon true knowledge, but it leads to a view of God that cannot be and is not believed in by people. Alfarabi speaks here of God's justice. If God is unjust, he will not be believed in and will not be loved.

However, this argument in favor of possibility in the nature of things also leads to a perplexity: If things that are possible are indefinite in being and knowledge, how can God know them definitely? The final paragraphs of Alfarabi's commentary address this dilemma.

In order to set the context of his explanation, Alfarabi makes reference to two Greek philosophers, Plato and Hesiod (p. 99, l. 26-p. 100, l. 4).[11] Alfarabi explains that Plato says that something may be eternally possible but that, at all temporal points, past, present, and future, it is possible for it not to exist. The permanence of existence does not deny the possibility of non-existence. Concomitantly, the permanence of non-existence does not deny the possibility of existence. Alfarabi says Hesiod says that it is possible for God Most High to do injustice though he has never done and may never do injustice in the past, now, nor in the future. Alfarabi then uses this argument to say that God has knowledge of future events and existences even if they have not happened yet and even though they are possible either to be or not to be. Alfarabi says, by way of an example, that:

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[11] Zimmermann rejects the identification of both names given in Kutsch and Marrow's edition. Zimmermann says there is "no doubt" that *Aflāṭun* refers to Philo, not Plato, and *Asīdūs* does not refer to Hesiod, as is suggested in a note by Kutsch and Marrow. See notes 1 and 2 on p. 95 of Zimmermann's translation. Zimmermann's rejections of the readings of the text are arbitrary, and I have, therefore, followed Kutsch and Marrow's names which entail no emendation of the Arabic text. We note that Zimmermann does not cite any alternative spellings or identities for these philosophers from the other manuscripts he consults. See p. 250.

يلزمه أن يطلق في أن الله تعالى يعلم علما يقينا أن زيداً سيسافر فيسافر زيد ولا يرتفع من قدرة زيد أن لا يسافر وأن كان ذلك غدا لا محالة. والثواب والعقاب ليس إنمّا يقع على ما يقال أن زيداً لا يمتنع من فعله أو أنّه يمتنع من فعله بل على ما في قدرته أن لا يفعله. فإذاً تقدّم علم الله تعالى به أنّه سيفعل ذلك الشي ، فعلم الله تعالى أنّه سيفعل ليس بمزيل قدرته على أن لا يفعل. ولكن يلزم ضرورة ، أن يفعل ما قد علم الله تعالى أنّه يفعله ولا يمتنع زيد من فعله. (ص 100 ، س س 6-12)

Then it follows that it must be the case that God Most High knows with certainty that Zaid will set out on a journey and that Zaid sets out on the journey and his power to do so will not be eliminated for the journey and he will do so tomorrow without fail. Reward and punishment are not established, as it is said, according as he cannot be prevented from doing or according to what he is prevented from doing, but according to what with his power he is able not to do. Since God Most High knows that he will act, God does not cause a cessation of his power such that he does not act. But it follows necessarily that he does what God Most High knew that he would do, and Zaid is not prevented from his action. (p. 100, ll. 6-12)

God's knowledge of the future action does not in any way limit the possibility that Zaid will act in one way or in the opposite way. Zaid's action is not a necessary action but comes about due to Zaid's deliberation and will to act. Possibility is not eliminated because of God's knowledge of how he will act in the future.

V. Conclusion

Aristotle's argument is that 'possibility' is in the nature of things and is a first principle of knowledge and action. Alfarabi identifies this Aristotelian argument and distinguishes it from "the commentators" who, in various ways, eliminate possibility in the nature of things and resort to a deterministic account of the world and of human action. In particular, the elimination of possibility makes human knowledge, art, deliberation, and will inconsequential and vain. Alfarabi's argument is that this elimination of possibility is no less of a problem in religion and in political communities as it is in the science of nature. If possibility is eliminated from religion in order to present a notion of God's overwhelming sovereign power, the result is the notion of a God who makes human deliberation foolish and human action of no consequence. Punishment and reward are, therefore, not a result of human deliberation and action but are determined. Alfarabi's argument is that the consequence of this opinion is that God cannot be believed in because he is unjust; thus, the elimination of possibility leads to

unbelief. Although Alfarabi may initially appear (p. 83, ll. 16-23) to be critical of religion, this supposition in the end is far from the truth; he begins with a type of negative theology to introduce the possibility of a more accurate and more responsible theology. This initial criticism of religion is necessary for a deepening of understanding and of action which emerge with the recognition that 'possibility' exists in the nature of things. In contrast, determinism or fatalism is an undermining of religion and of an understanding of God, of nature, and of the place of human deliberation and proper action. Alfarabi's commentary rightly articulates and explains more fully Aristotle's succinct but brilliant account of the nature of possibility. Alfarabi conducts this careful and artful exposition in order to preserve the right understanding of nature and science, including human nature, and in doing so he also explains the consequences of the argument for the practice of true religion and of human community. Alfarabi's immediate context is Islam, but he does not write exclusively or even very directly about Islam, and what he says is sufficiently universal to be germane also to the analysis of Judaism and Christianity, to say nothing of other religions as well. At the starting point of Arabic Philosophy, Alfarabi shows himself well able to be, as tradition calls him, the 'second teacher' (المعلّم الثاني , *al-mu'allim al-thānī*) after Aristotle. Alfarabi's *Commentary on the Peri Hermeneias* provides one of the best, if not the best, available accounts of Aristotle's arguments in chapter 9 of the *Peri Hermeneias*.

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Future Contingents in Arabic Logic: Towards a Genealogy of Fārābī's and Avicenna's Commentaries on the Ninth Chapter of *De Interpretatione*

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It is widely recognized that the argumentative core of the *De Interpretatione* was greatly expanded by late antique exegetes and the reflections of Christian authors, who, on the one hand, sought an answer to the riddles of *Int*. in other works of the Aristotelian corpus, but on the other hand, also gave it a theological and libertarian twist, by incorporating different terminologies and theories into the Aristotelian text, whose origin is not peripatetic.

In her groundbreaking article, "The Inadvertent Conception and Late Birth of the Free-Will Problem",[1] Bobzien argues that the "discovery"[2] of the problem of causal determinism and freedom of choice in Greek philosophy stems from a blending of Aristotelian and Stoic ideas during later antiquity. To be more specific, it arises from a "(mis-)interpretation"[3] of Aristotle's views on deliberate choice (προαίρεσις), influenced by the Stoic perspective on determinism and moral responsibility. Presumably in the early 2nd century, a synthesis of (1) Aristotle's modal theory, (2) his theory of the truth values of future contingent propositions (together with the idea, outlined in *Int*. 9, that contingent events have equal potential for occurrence or non-occurrence,) and (3) the discussion on deliberation from the *Nicomachean Ethics* III.3, led to the interpretation of the concept of "what depends on us" (ἐφ'ἡμῖν) as implying the freedom to do otherwise.[4] This process culminated in the exposition

[1] S. Bobzien, "The Inadvertent Conception and Late Birth of the Free-Will Problem", in *Phronesis*, 43/2 (1998), 133-175.

[2] Bobzien, "The Inadvertent Conception", 133.

[3] Bobzien, "The Inadvertent Conception", 133.

[4] Bobzien, "The Inadvertent Conception", 151-152.

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of the *problem of free will* in two treatises attributed to Alexander of Aphrodisias (*De Fato*, *Mantissa*), where he elaborated on this indeterminist concept of freedom, displaying two further developments: (1) "the addition of choice to action […] reflects a refinement of theory of action and moral responsibility, which focuses more […] on the choice of good or bad, and the culpability of that choice".[5] Here, according to Bobzien, the influence of Stoicism and Platonism becomes evident. (2) The second change in Alexander's account: from "*being capable* of doing and not doing something" to "*having the power* of doing and not doing something"[6] seems to be relevant to the evolution of the concept of freedom of decision. According to Bobzien, this probably is the result of a fusion of Epictetan and Aristotelian elements.[7] Anyways, after "Alexander, the problem of determinism and freedom to do otherwise is most clearly present in the commentaries on Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*".[8]

This paper aims to demonstrate the applicability of Bobzien's argument to the commentaries of Fārābī and Avicenna on the ninth chapter of *De Interpretatione*. On the one hand, Fārābī (d. 950) shows his dependence on this layered tradition, to the point of including a theological section in his commentary where he argues in favor of free will and deliberation. He also struggles with the notion of responsibility and the complex relationship between divine foreknowledge and human freedom. On the other hand, Avicenna, who proposes to de-ontologize logic[9] and emphasizes its specificity and autonomy as a science (*Madḫal* I.4),[10] proceeds "per forza di levare".[11] He tries to retrieve Aristotle's logico-linguistic perspective, purging his commentary of mor-

[5] Bobzien, "The Inadvertent Conception", 174. See also: 159.

[6] Bobzien, "The Inadvertent Conception", 164.

[7] Bobzien, "The Inadvertent Conception", 174.

[8] Bobzien, "The Inadvertent Conception", 173.

[9] See S. Di Vincenzo, *Avicenna, The Healing, Logic: Isagoge* (Scientia Graeco-Arabica 31), Berlin 2021, xix; A. Bertolacci, *The Reception of Aristotle's Metaphysics in Avicenna's Kitāb Al-Šifāʾ. A Milestone of Western Metaphysical Thought* (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies 63), Leiden-Boston 2006, 272.

[10] See Di Vincenzo, *Avicenna*, xxiii.

[11] M. Buonarroti, *Le lettere di Michelangelo Buonarroti*, ed. G. Milanesi, Firenze 1875, 522.

al and theological arguments, extraneous to the "First Teacher's" text.[12] We will soon see the applicability of Bobzien's argument to Fārābī's case. However, to try to establish the sources of his commentary, we must review the works of the Greek tradition available in Arabic at his time, along with the main bibliographical entries in the 10th century Arabic tradition.

Source Review

The *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, written by Ibn al-Nadīm in the 10th century, is an Arabic bibliographic encyclopedia. It serves as a comprehensive catalog, indexing approximately 10,000 books and 2,000 authors from various fields. Towards the end of the 10th century, al-Nadīm reported that there were two translations of *De Interpretatione*, along with some Greek and Arabic commentaries (*tafsīr*) and several Arabic epitomes, circulating in the Arabic world:

> Ḥunayn translated the text into Syriac, and Isḥāq into Arabic. The commentators [are]: Alexander, whose commentary is not extant, Yaḥyā al-Naḥwī,[13] Iamblichus, Porphyry, the epitome of Stephanus;[14] there is a rare commentary of Galen; it is not extant; Quwayrī, Abū Bishr Mattā, al-Fārābī, Theophrastus;[15] [the] epitomizers [are]: Ḥunayn, Isḥāq, Ibn al-Muqaffa', al-Kindī, Ibn Bahrīz, Thābit ibn Qurra, Aḥmad ibn al-Ṭayyib, al-Rāzī.[16]

The Arabs had early access to a summary of Porphyry's *Isagoge*, *Cat-*

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[12] The reference is to Aristotle, who was referred to as the "First Teacher" by Arab scholars.

[13] The notable absence is Ammonius; nevertheless, his disciple John Philoponus (known in the Arab tradition as John the Grammarian, Yaḥyā al-Naḥwī) is mentioned, and perhaps one could speculate that Ammonius' commentary has been attributed to his disciple.

[14] Stephanus' work probably circulated in a different form, since al-Nadīm describes it as a work in an "abridged form", a ǧawāmi'.

[15] Apparently, the title of Theophrastus' lost work was *On Affirmation and Negation*. See also: Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *Commentarii in librum Aristotelis Peri Hermeneias*, II, ed. C. Meiser, Leipzig 1880; reprinted New York 1987, 12.3-7; F. W. Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle's De Interpretatione*, Oxford 1981, 6. It is unclear why al-Nadīm includes the Greek author among the Arabic commentators.

[16] Ibn al- Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ed. G. Flügel, Leipzig 1871, 249.

egories, *De Interpretatione*, and *Prior Analytics*.[17] This compendium is attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ (d. 760) and has been published by M. T. Dāneshpazhūh (Tehran 1978) together with the *Ḥudūd al-Manṭiq* (*Definitions of Logic*) by Ibn Bihriz.

To the best of our knowledge, the extant Arabic compendia and commentaries include: *al-Manṭiq* by Ibn al-Muqaffa‘ (d. 760), *Hudūd al-Manṭiq* by Ibn Bihriz (d. early 9th century), *Šarḥ Kitāb Arisṭūṭālīs fī al-‘Ibāra* (*Commentary on Aristotle's De Interpretatione*) by al-Fārābī (d. 950), and an epitome which has been attributed alternatively to Isḥāq ibn Zur‘a (942-1008) or Abū al-Faraj b. al-Ṭayyib (d. 1043).[18] The others are known only through the bibliographical sources (*Fihrist*; *Tārīḫ al-Ḥukamā’*). As for Quwayrī and his pupil, Abū Bishr, the contents of their commentaries seem to have found their way into some of Parisinus' glosses (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. ar. 2346).

Fārābī

Zimmermann attempts to reconstruct the exegetical tradition of *De Interpretatione* by comparing the Greek commentaries of Ammonius and Stephanus, the two Latin commentaries of Boethius,[19] and al-Fārābī's *Great Commentary*. He identifies two competing prototypes:[20] (A) one follows Porphyry's commentary, shaped by Alexander's model, later taken up by Boethius. (B) The other involves Iamblichus' commentary, initially rejected by Syrianus, rehabilitated by Proclus, resumed by Ammonius (its most influential exponent), and summarized by Stephanus. Fārābī drew influence from both branches of the exegetical tradition,

[17] M. Geoffroy, "Aristotle, Arabic", in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy,* ed. H. Lagerlund, Dordrecht 2020*,* 188-203.

[18] See also A. Hasnawi, "Avicenna on the Quantification of the Predicate (with an Appendix on [Ibn Zur‘a])", in *The Unity of Science in the Arabic Tradition*, ed. S. Rahman, T. Street, H. Tahiri (Logic, Epistemology, and the Unity of Science 11) Dordrecht 2008, 295-328: 315-316.

[19] Although the medieval Arabic tradition was not familiar with Boethius' commentaries, it was nevertheless "influenced by Boethius' sources and by Ammonius possibly through the derivative commentary of Stephanus": Ammonius, *On Aristotle: On Interpretation* 9, tr. by D. Blank, with Boethius, *On Aristotle: On Interpretation 9, First and Second Commentaries*, tr. by N. Kretzmann, London 1998, 3. See also Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, xciv.

[20] Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, xcii.

as we will observe in his commentary on chapter 9. Although Fārābī's text is known to include significant innovations, this article will not focus on them.[21] It will instead examine the exegetical expansion of Fārābī's commentary, as opposed to Avicenna's textual and doctrinal contraction.

In the second section of his commentary on *De Interpretatione*, which corresponds to *Int.* 9, Fārābī discusses the Aristotelian treatment of contradictory pairs with verbs in the present, past, and future tenses, and how they distribute truth and falsehood. Specifically, he examines whether they do so in a definite, indefinite, or sometimes definite and sometimes indefinite way. When examining how truth values are distributed in pairs of contradictory statements about possible events, Aristotle "works on the assumption that possibility is part of the very nature of things, and of self-evident existence".[22] Each of us knows that many things are contingent, meaning they may or may not occur, especially those that depend on our will and choices.[23] This knowledge comes from an innate instinct (*fiṭra*)[24] that is indubitable and primary.

"Some people have come and eliminated possibility from things".[25] The *people* Fārābī refers to are the scholars of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and *kalām* (rational theology): the *mutakallimūn*, who denied the existence of human free choice. They allegedly deduced their ar-

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[21] See A. Hasnawi, "Fārābī et la pratique de l'exégèse philosophique (remarques sur son Commentaire au *De Interpretatione* d'Aristote)", in *Revue de Synthèse*, 106 (1985), 27-59; G. Cuadrado, J. Angel, "La distinción nombre-verbo en los comentarios al Perihermeneias de Al-Fārābī y Averroes", in *Revista Española de Filosofia Medieval*, 10 (2003), 157-169. See also C. Baffioni, M. Nasti De Vincentis, *Il cap. 9 del* De interpretatione *di Aristotele nel commentario di al-Fārābī*, Napoli 1981.

[22] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. F. W. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 76. Here and in the following occurrences, the term 'possibility' is used in the sense of two-sided possibility (or contingency).

[23] See also: Boethius, *Commentarii*, III, ed. Meiser, 218.26-219.9; 220.14.

[24] See also Ammonius, *In Aristotelis De Interpretatione Commentarius*, ed. A. Busse (Commentaria in Aristotelem graeca 4.5), Berlin 1897, 147.28-29 and P. Adamson, "The Arabic Sea Battle: al-Fārābī on the Problem of Future Contingents", in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 88 (2006), 163-188: 169.

[25] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 77.

guments in favour of determinism from Islamic Law.[26] These people claimed to rule out the existence of contingency and freedom "not by arguing from primordial knowledge, but simply by legislation and indoctrination".[27] However, individuals are naturally inclined to act on the basis of our immediate knowledge, according to which contingency does exist, and hence "the possibility [of acting one way or another] in voluntary matters where the choice is left to us".[28] Therefore, even if we verbally reject the existence of free will and contingency, denying them does not eliminate their presence or absolve us of the need to make choices. Our belief in contingency is not affected by any arguments in favour of determinism.

If the truth values of a contradictory pair "about particular referents in the future"[29] were distributed in a definite manner, possibility would be eliminated from things. However, as we have seen, the existence of possibility is indubitable. This leads to a *reductio ad absurdum*: in a contradictory pair with the verb in the future, the truth values can: (1) be distributed definitely; (2) not be distributed, since the statements are (2.1) both true or (2.2) both false; (3) be distributed indefinitely.[30] The first and second hypotheses are rejected as they lead to absurd consequences and imply the removal of possibility: "If possible affairs are eliminated, it is unnecessary to worry about anything. We need not de-

[26] Cf. Al Fārābi, *Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm*, ed. O. Amīn, Cairo 1968, 107-110; Al Fārābi, *Kitāb al-ḥurūf*, ed. M. Mahdi, Beirut 1969, 108-113, 129, 140-153. An in-depth treatment of the 10th-century Kalāmic debate on free will and divine omnipotence that may have influenced the reception of Greek philosophical sources by Fārābī and Avicenna exceeds the scope of this contribution; see the following key references on the topics: Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, cxiii–cxviii; Adamson, "The Arabic Sea Battle"; R. Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, Ithaca 2003, 227-243. See also: L. Gardet, M.-M. Anawati, *Introduction à la théologie musulmane. Essai de théologie comparée*, Paris 1981; R. M. Frank, *Beings and their attributes. The teachings of the Basrian school of the Mu'tazila in the classical period*, Albany 1978; Id., "The Science of *Kalām*", in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 2 (1992), 7-37; D. Gimaret, *La doctrine d'al-Ash'arī*, Paris 1990.

[27] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 77.

[28] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 77.

[29] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 77

[30] See also: Boethius, *Commentarii*, III, ed. Meiser, 213.18-214.9.

liberate mentally or prepare for it physically or make provisions for it outside ourselves, such as asking other people's help or using tools".[31] This attitude is in keeping with the inner dialogue that one has with oneself when one is striving for something: in order to achieve the desired result, one has to remove all the elements, including passions and negative impulses such as laxity,[32] that might prevent him from obtaining it. But if possibility did not exist, this self-conversation would be superfluous; no action could cause an event or prevent its occurrence. Everything, on the contrary, would happen *naturally.*[33] But this is absurd: we know that many events happen because we want them to, while certain others are prevented by someone who, with considerations opposite to our own, acts in such a way as to thwart the decision we have made.[34] Fārābī favours the third hypothesis, which suggests that contradictory pairs about possible events distribute truth and falsity *in an indefinite way* (ġayr *al-taḥṣīl*): that is, each member of a contradictory pair (P; ¬P) with the verb in the future tense is either-true-or-false.[35] If this were not the case, the true alternative would necessarily take place, regardless of any effort to produce or prevent a certain state of affairs.

Fārābī states that the truth of opposites about any state of affair depends on its mode of existence.[36] Therefore: "if something exists definitely (*al-taḥṣīl*), the truth[-values] of the contradictories concerned are [allocated] definitely (*al-taḥṣīl*)".[37] However, when dealing with pairs

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[31] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 84.

[32] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 85.

[33] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 84.

[34] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 88. See also Boethius, *Commentarii*, III, ed. Meiser, 220.10-223.5.

[35] The modal operator has as its object the Principle of Bivalence, considering both truth values conjunctively: [N(T'a' ∨ F'a')]. For further discussion on this topic, please refer to the next section of this paper.

[36] See also Alexander Aphrodisiensis, *De Fato,* ed. I. Bruns (Supplementum Aristotelicum 2.1/2), Berlin 1961, 201.14-21 and Boethius, III, *Commentarii*, ed. Meiser, 226.1-13.

[37] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 91. To exist "definitely" means that

of contradictories about necessary states of affairs, the distribution of truth values can change depending on whether we refer to: (1) the intrinsic nature of things or (2) "our impression of them".[38]

On matters of possibility, contradictory pairs distribute truth and falsehood in a way that is not defined for us, nor *per se*. It is in the nature of possibilities to be unknown, precisely because they are possibilities. "If so, someone might ask about the knowledge of God Almighty: does He know the truth of one of the opposites on matters of possibility?"[39] It is precisely in this context that Fārābī addresses the problem of how God knows contingent future events, and the relationship between divine foreknowledge and determinism.[40]

If God did not have definite foreknowledge of which part of a pair of opposites on possible affairs will come true in the future, then His knowledge of such affairs would be as deficient as ours: "This is absurd and unacceptable. All religions have it differently, and it would seem a very detrimental belief for people to hold".[41]

On the other hand, if God knew the truth of one of the opposites definitely, then its indefiniteness would not be part of its own nature, and our ignorance of such matters would be caused by a deficiency in our nature: "If we accept this, the dilemma mentioned by Aristotle returns, namely, that if it is known to be true that something will happen, it cannot not happen. […] Free will, deliberation, and everything else that Aristotle has mentioned will again be eliminated".[42] This is why religions are forced to conclude that man is not responsible for his

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each member of a contradictory pair is necessarily true or necessarily false: the two truth values are now considered disjunctively [N(T'a') ∨ N(F'a')].

[38] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 92.

[39] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 92.

[40] See also Boethius, *Commentarii*, III, ed. Meiser, 225.10-226.25.

[41] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 92-93. See also Stephanus, *In librum Aristotelis De interpretatione commentarium*, ed. M. Hayduck (Commentaria in Aristotelem graeca 18), Berlin 1885, 35.11-15.

[42] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 93.

actions.[43] If this were the case, divine rewards and punishments would not take into account decisions and actions freely performed, but rather actions performed only because they were necessitated by an omniscient and omnipotent God. However, this belief raises the question of whether God can be blamed for evil if it is not committed by humans. "This again is altogether absurd, rejected by all religions and very, very detrimental for people to believe".[44]

Fārābī attempts to offer a solution by re-proposing the traditional distinction between absolute and relative necessity in different terms. His answer lies in the distinction between (1) what is necessary in the sense of being a consequence of something else, and (2) what is intrinsically necessary. A singular future event may be necessary in the sense that it necessarily follows: (1a) from premises that are contingently true;[45] (1b) from the fact that God has certain knowledge of it. But that does not mean that the event itself is no longer contingent. For instance, if God has true knowledge that an individual (Zayd) will travel tomorrow, it necessarily follows that he will travel; but from the necessity of this implication it does not follow that his travelling is in itself necessary, that it does not take place according to his will, and that Zayd does not retain the *capability* of staying home; the fact that God has certain knowledge of it, in short, does not imply that the event becomes intrinsically necessary.[46] Thus, something may be necessary in one respect (1a. according to the validity of a modal inference, or 1b. according to God's true knowledge of it), possible in another (*per se*). Fārābī refers here to inactualized possibilities: something that, by its very nature, has the possibility of existing or not existing, although it is found to be in one state in a definite and permanent way, without any interruption in the past or future.[47]

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[43] See also Boethius, *Commentarii*, III, ed. Meiser, 223.6-225.10 and Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, cxvii.

[44] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 93.

[45] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 94. See also Adamson, "The Arabic Sea Battle", 163-188.

[46] In fact, "this element of necessity […] does not affect its possibility": Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 95.

[47] An example of an unactualized possibility would be: "Injustice on the part of God

At this stage, an investigation is necessary to ascertain whether such a thing can exist:

> This is something about which philosophers in antiquity disagreed.[48] Some held that of what exists without interruption in the past and future one must not say that it has the possibility of not existing. Similarly, of what has never existed and will never exist in the future it cannot be admitted that it is possible to say that it has the possibility of existing.[49] But others thought it admissible. And those who admitted it held that God Most High knows definitely [*al-taḥṣīl*] that one of the opposites will be the case, and so it will, without its possibility being eliminated, while its opposite will not be the case, again without its possibility being eliminated. Its non-existence is permanent, but its existence remains possible without interruption in the past or future.[50] From a religious point of view, this opinion is more helpful than that of its opponents.[51]

Fārābī confines himself to listing the controversy between two philosophers, likely Diodorus Cronus and Philo of the Megarian School.[52] Diodorus argues that something that has never existed and will never exist cannot retain the possibility of existing. Philo, on the other hand, argues that it is permissible. Fārābī does not take a stance on either solution, but he does give more attention to the second option ("the Philonic, non-statistical understanding of modality", as Adamson puts it)[53] and argues that this "opinion" is "more helpful" than that of Diodorus.

Most High, though possible, is permanently non-existent, without interruption in the past or future": AL-FĀRĀBĪ, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. ZIMMERMANN, in ZIMMERMANN, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 95.

[48] See also ALEXANDER APHRODISIENSIS, *In Aristotelis analyticorum priorum librum I commentarium*, ed. M. WALLIES (Commentaria in Aristotelem graeca 2.1), 184.1-15 and BOETHIUS, *Commentarii*, III, ed. MEISER, 197.10-198.3, 234.10-236.4 in the way he reports on the definitions of the possible by Diodorus Cronus, Philo and the Stoics.

[49] This refers to Diodorus Cronus. See also ZIMMERMANN, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 95.

[50] This refers to Philo.

[51] AL-FĀRĀBĪ, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. ZIMMERMANN, in ZIMMERMANN, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary,* 96.

[52] See also *Metaphysics* Theta 3, where Aristotle discusses the view of the Megarics. On the "Megarian actualism", see: C. WITT, *Ways of Being: Potentiality and Actuality in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Ithaca 2003, 17-20.

[53] ADAMSON, "The Arabic Sea Battle", 185.

Preliminary conclusions

From this brief discussion, it is clear that there is a strong exegetical continuity between Fārābī and his late antique predecessors.[54] Fārābī follows this tradition in the way he schematizes and extends the Aristotelian argument in Chapter 9, in distinguishing between contradictory pairs that divide truth values in a definite and indefinite way (holding that contradictory pairs about future and possible events divide truth and falsehood in an *indefinite* way), and in including a reference to the Megarian debate on possibility. Furthermore, similar to Iamblichus, Ammonius and Stephanus before him, he raises the theological issues of the nature of divine knowledge and theodicy.

Avicenna

Avicenna is conversant with the exegetical tradition that preceded him. He reflects some of the commentators' *topoi* in certain lexical choices and in his arguments in favour of the existence of contingency and our capacity for deliberation. However, it is important to note that Avicenna combines respect for tradition, which he is extremely critical of,[55] with a profound drive for innovation. This is evidenced by Avicenna's enhanced lexical precision and his emphasis on the exclusion of metaphysical arguments from logic, as well as the removal of theological and moral arguments[56] from his reworking of *De Interpretatione* (*al-'Ibāra*),[57] which is instead accompanied by a notably rigorous logical analysis. As Bertolacci stated[58] "Reform and abandonment, continuity

[54] "We cannot fully understand [Fārābī's] questions or appreciate his answers without reference to this tradition": Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, lxviii.

[55] In *'Ibāra* 9, he describes the commentators as "lovers of redundancy, those who forced others to devote themselves to what is of no use": see Ibn-Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Šifā'*, *Al-Manṭiq*, *Al-'Ibāra*, ed. M. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, I. B. Madkūr, Cairo 1970, 65.

[56] He will discuss providence and evil in the metaphysical section (*Ilahiyyāt*) of the *Kitāb al-Šhifā'*, especially in *Il.* IX.6-7.

[57] *Al-'Ibāra* is the third book of the Logic section of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'* (*Book of The Cure*). According to D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, Leiden-Boston 2014, 107-108: "*The Cure* was composed intermittently during a period of approximately eight years, from 1020 to 1027". Avicenna wrote *al-'Ibāra* in Hamaḏān in 1024.

[58] Bertolacci, *The Reception of Aristotle's Metaphysics*, ix.

and rupture, tradition and innovation: this two-fold attitude of Avicenna […] is the essence of his "interpretation" of this work".

Determination in *'Ibāra* 8-10: between "mutual assignment" and "realization"

This section expands on Hasnawi's article "Avicenna on the Quantification of the Predicate (with an Appendix on [Ibn Zur'a])". The same passages (56.7-12; 70.10-18)[59] are referred to, but with a new translation and original analysis aimed at examining a linguistic innovation introduced in Avicenna's reworking of Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*. Focusing on these two passages in chapters 8 and 10 of *'Ibāra*'s First Treatise, we will highlight terminological consonances with texts of the earlier exegetical tradition which Avicenna expanded by introducing terminological distinctions aimed at clarifying the text and addressing potential ambiguities.

Chapter 8 is titled: "On Deviating Singular Propositions". It discusses propositions whose subject is particular, indefinite, or quantified, and whose predicate is quantified. Aristotle referred to the possibility of doubly universally quantified propositions in two *loci*: *Int.* 7, 17b12-16, and *Prior Analytics* I.27, 43b15-22. He held that statements such as "Every man is every animal" or "Justice is every good" are "useless and impossible". It was left to the commentators to explain what Aristotle meant, and whether his comments also applied to other examples of propositions with quantified predicates. The most comprehensive discussion of this topic in the Greek tradition is found in Ammonius' work. In the Arabic tradition, it is found in Avicenna's work, who devotes two chapters to this subject (*'Ibāra* 8-9).

In the opening of *'Ibāra* 8, Avicenna discusses individual propositions that have a universally quantified predicate:

> Now, if the predicate is universal and we say: "Zayd is every man", or "[…] every animal", or "[…] every scribe", this is undoubtedly false. If we say: "Zayd is none of the A's", if the matter is impossible it is true, if the matter is necessary it is false.[60]

Avicenna's view is that matter is the implicit modal relation that links

[59] Hasnawi, "Avicenna on the Quantification", 299.

[60] Ibn-Sīnā, ʿIbāra, I.8, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 56.5-6.

subject and predicate. This relation can be either permanently true (matter of necessity) or false (matter of impossibility), or neither permanently true nor false (matter of possibility).[61]

> If the matter is possible, it is not in itself [*bi-ʿaynihi*] necessary for [the proposition] to be false and it is not [necessary for it to be] true; rather, it is possible, for example, that Zayd is writing [*kātib*], and in that case it would be false [to say] that Zayd is none of the writers [*kuttāb*]. It is [also] possible that it is not so; then, in that case, it would be true that Zayd is none of the writers. As for the proposition itself, and its form, it does not necessitate anything. In sum, when contingent [predicates] are attributed to individuals, a determination [*taʿyīn*] of truth or falsehood is not necessary in the propositions in which they appear.[62]

It is important to note that *taʿyīn*, with the technical meaning of "determination", is the first attestation of the root *ʿ-y-n* (in the second form) in *ʿIbāra*. Interestingly, Avicenna uses the same term in the *Kitāb al-Najāt: al-Manṭiq* (*Book of Deliverance: Logic*),[63] in a section titled "On Perfect and Imperfect Syllogisms".[64]

As stated by Hasnawi, this passage (*ʿIbāra* 8, 56.8-12), both in terms of the idea it conveys and the terminology it uses, is strikingly similar to *ʿIbāra* 10, 70.10-18.

> It might, however, be necessary for us to ascertain a principle that we cannot neglect, namely, that it is not necessary that the states of contradictory [propositions], in their mutual distribution [*iqtisām*] of true and false, are identical. For, in quantified [propositions], truth and falsity are determined [*yata'ayyana*] by the essence of the proposition and the nature of the thing. Similarly, [for] singular temporal propositions whose tenses are past or present, the time which obtained [*ḥaṣala*] has rendered one of the two things[65] necessarily attached [*lāḥiqan*] to the nature of the thing.[66]

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[61] Ibn-Sīnā, *ʿIbāra*, I.8, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 47.4-9: "*Matter* is called the state of the predicate with respect to the subject, according to the affirmative relation about the permanence of truth or falsity, or the non-permanence of both".

[62] Ibn-Sīnā, *ʿIbāra*, I.8, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 56.8-12.

[63] "Jūzjānī says in the Biography (66.4) that Avicenna wrote *The Salvation* [*al-Najāt*] en route to Šābūr-Ḫwāst right after completing the last books of *The Cure*". For this quotation and *al-Najāt*'s chronology (1026/1027), please refer to Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 115.

[64] A. Q. Ahmed, *Avicenna's Deliverance: Logic*, Karachi 2011, 43.

[65] One of the two truth values.

[66] Ibn-Sīnā, *ʿIbāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 70.10-14.

It is unclear what "the essence of the proposition and the nature of the thing" are. The proposition's essence is presumed to be its form, while the nature of the thing relates to the implicit modal status of the predicated thing. Avicenna seems to suggest that time, rather than just "the essence of the proposition and the nature of the thing", contributes truth or falsity to the contingent thing described by the proposition when used in contradictory pairs with the verb in the past and present tense. In fact, sentences with the verb in the past tense describe things that are unchangeable (and thus determined, insofar as their truth value is fixed); whereas sentences with the verb in the present tense describe a thing that currently exists (or does not exist), and thus also susceptible of being predicated in a determinately true or determinately false way. The term *lāḥiq* is highly significant as it indicates that the truth value is attached to the nature of the thing and not intrinsic to the nature of things themselves.

We believe that the following passage, along with 72.10-14, is where Avicenna discusses *Int*. 19a32-39.

> As for singular contradictory propositions about future things, there is no necessity in them, with respect to the natures of things, that truth or falsehood be determined [*yata'ayyana*]; nor [does it happen that] either of them can be determined in this[67] by the obtaining [*ḥuṣūl*] of a determinate cause. For determination occurs either by virtue of the thing itself, or by the existence of a determinate cause (since it is not necessary, by virtue of its essence, that it be determined). For every necessary thing is either necessary in virtue of its essence, or it is necessary by the obtaining of a cause that necessitates it.[68]

When the verb is in the future tense, the truth value of a pair of contradictory singular propositions is not determined.[69] The state of affairs corresponding to one of the two statements (P; ¬P) has not yet been realized – in the sense that no cause has brought it into being. Only when the thing (say, P) is caused, it becomes actualized: the event then imposes itself as determined, verifying one side of the contradiction and falsifying the other.

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[67] In its truth value.

[68] Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 70.14-18.

[69] See also: Ibn-Sīnā, *Najāt*, in Ahmed, *Avicenna's Deliverance*, 20: "[As for] future possible predication, well the truth and falsity [of the proposition] is not determined [*yata'ayyana*] for either side of the opposition".

It is important to remember that we are talking here about *possible* things: it is their modal status itself that imposes that the truth values of the propositions describing them are not determined. As he will later state:

> If, on the other hand, [truth and falsity] are not determined [*yata'ayyana*], for this case there are three configurations: the first of these is that both [contradictory propositions] share truth, the second is that both share falsity, and the third is that neither is now necessary to be true or false, rather, that[70] is possible in each of the two, though it is impossible for that to be in other than these two, and [it is impossible] for them to be removed together, so that truth or falsity are external to both [propositions].[71]

The pair of Greek adverbs used by Aristotle's commentators to characterize the relation of contingent contradictory propositions to truth and falsity is *aphōrismenōs*/*aoristōs*. Avicenna uses the root *'-y-n* (especially its fifth form: *yata'ayyana*) and its negation to express this opposition. As shown in the translated texts, *yata'ayyana* means something like: "to mutually determine", "assign" or "specify", and is used in reference to those pairs of contradictory propositions whose subject matter is either contingent or future and contingent.

While *yata'ayyana* is a technical term in Avicennian logic, *ḥ-ṣ-l* is the root he reserves for ontological matters, such as the coming into existence of something.

As Fārābī only uses the root *ḥ-ṣ-l*[72] in his commentary, it appears that Avicenna introduced this dichotomy (*'-y-n*; *ḥ-ṣ-l*) to disambiguate between a logical and an ontological realm of determination.

Originality of Avicenna's inclusion of a technical terminology of the root *'-y-n* in his reworking of *De Interpretatione*

The following analysis starts with the Arabic translation of *Int.* by Isḥāq b. Hunayn, on which both Fārābī and Avicenna relied.

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[70] The fact that the proposition is true or false.

[71] Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 72.10-14.

[72] In particular, the pair: *al-taḥṣīl*/ġayr *al-taḥṣīl*, usually translated as: *definitely*/*indefinitely*.

Although Isḥāq traditionally uses the root *ḥ-ṣ-l* to express a sense of "determination" and "obtainment" in Arabic, he translates:

> τούτων γὰρ ἀνάγκη μὲν θάτερον μόριον τῆς ἀντιφάσεως ἀληθὲς εἶν αι ἢ ψεῦδος, οὐ μέντοι τόδε ἢ τόδε ἀλλ' ὁπότερ' ἔτυχεν[73]

in this way:

> it is necessary that one of the two parts of the contradiction is true or false, except that it is not *per se* [*bi-'aynihi*][74] one of them in particular, but rather whichever of the two chances.[75]

It is unclear whether Avicenna introduced a technical use of the root *'-y-n* into *'Ibāra* because of this *bi-'aynihi*. However, it seems unlikely that this is the case, since this term is usually used as an adverb (with the meaning: *per se*), and has a well-attested technical meaning that differs from Avicenna's usage in this context.

To signify "determination" in the *Categories*,[76] Avicenna follows the rendering of Isḥāq and uses the root *ḥ-ṣ-l* instead of *'-y-n*. *Categories*, however, need to be discussed separately, and it is important to stress the distinction between *Cat*. and *Int*. in the Avicennian system. Avicenna considers the *Categories* to be more closely related to the domain of metaphysics than to logic, since he regards them as species of the existent *qua* existent. In fact, Avicenna considers the categories "irrelevant" to the study of logic,[77] although he acknowledges their usefulness: by cataloguing entities and organizing them into genera and species, they can indeed help the logician to formulate correct definitions.[78]

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[73] Aristoteles, *De interpretatione*, 9, 19a36-38.

[74] *Bi-'aynihi* contains the root *'-y-n*. See also Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.8, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 56.7-12.

[75] An eleventh-century copy of Isḥāq b. Ḥunayn's translation is preserved in the Parisinus manuscript (BnF, ar. 2346). For a digitized version of the translation see the ERC project HUNAYNNET: https://hunaynnet.oeaw.ac.at/index.html.

[76] Ibn-Sīnā, *Maqūlāt* VI.4, which corresponds to Aristoteles, *Cat.* 11 a20-b38. It is a section discussing Avicenna's interpretation of what D. Sedley has labelled the "Principle of Cognitive Symmetry". See: D. Sedley, "Aristotelian Relativities", in *Le style de la pensée: Recueil des textes en hommage à Jacques Brunschwig*, éd. M. Canto-Sperber, P. Pellegrin, Paris 2002, esp. 327.

[77] Ibn-Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Šifā'*, *Al-Manṭiq*, *Al-Maqūlāt*, I.1, G.C. Anawati, M. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, A.F. Al Ahwānī, S. Zāyid, Cairo 1959, 4.16-21.

[78] Ibn-Sīnā, *Maqūlāt*, I.1, G.C. Anawati, M. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, A.F. Al Ahwānī, S. Zāyid, Cairo 1959, 5.17-6.8.

We said that the pair of adverbs: *aphōrismenōs*/*aoristōs* was used by Aristotle's commentators. In fact, in *Int*. 19a32-39, we read:

> So, since statements are true according to how the actual things are, it is clear that wherever these are such as to allow of contraries as chance has it, the same necessarily holds for the contradictories also. This happens with things that are not always so or are not always not so. With these it is necessary for one or the other of the contradictories to be true or false – not, however, this one or that one, but as chance has it; or for one to be true rather than the other, yet not already true or false.[79]

Scholars traditionally believe that the commentators derived this adverb from a passage in *Cat*. 10, 12b38-40 where Aristotle discusses contraries such as black and white, hot and cold. According to the Stagirite, one of these contraries can belong to a thing by nature (so that the thing has no affinity with the other contrary), "as being hot belongs to fire and being white to snow; and in these cases it is necessary for definitely [*aphōrismenōs*] one or the other to belong, and not as chance has it".[80] As we can see, the terminology is strikingly similar to *Int*. 9.

To the best of our knowledge, the earliest text to include such terminology in relation to future contingents is the last section of Alexander of Aphrodisias' *quaestio* 1.4, which introduces the notion of definite (*aphōrismenōs*) future truth from a polemical standpoint. Here Alexander argues that "*determinate* future truth or falsity is incompatible with contingency".[81] It is important to note that the text does not explicitly claim that indeterminate future truth or falsity is compatible with contingency, according to Sharples and Mignucci.[82] Later ancient authors may have attributed more significance to our present text than the original author did. However, this view is adopted as the standard interpretation of Aristotle's *Int*. 9 by later ancient commentators,[83] ac-

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[79] ARISTOTLE, Categories *and* De Interpretatione, tr. with notes by J. L. ACKRILL, Oxford 1963, 53.

[80] ARISTOTLE, Categories, tr. ACKRILL, 35.

[81] ALEXANDER APHRODISIENSIS, *Quaestiones* 1.1-2.15, tr. by R. W. SHARPLES, London 1992, 35.

[82] ALEXANDER APHRODISIENSIS, *Quaestiones* 1.1-2.15, tr. by R. W. SHARPLES, London 1992, 35 Sharples' footnote 81.

[83] See AMMONIUS, *In De Int*., ed. BUSSE, 154.34-155.3; PHILOPONUS, *In Analytica Priora*, ed. M. WALLIES (Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca 13.2), Berlin 1905, 51.7-23; STEPHANUS, *In De Int*., ed. HAYDUCK, 38.37-39.7, BOETHIUS, *Commentarii*, III, ed. MEISER, 125.16-22.

cording to which statements about future contingents distribute truth and falsity in an indefinite way.

Fārābī's commentary on *Int*. 19a32-b4 will later exemplify this tendency:

> Aristotle declares that the truth of opposites about any kind of affair depends on [the mode of] its existence. If something exists definitely [*taḥṣīl*], the truth [values] of the contradictories concerned are [allocated] definitely [*taḥṣīl*]; and if something exists indefinitely [ġayr *al-taḥṣīl*], the truth [values] of the contradictories concerned are [allocated] indefinitely [ġayr *al-taḥṣīl*]. If something is necessary in any of the specified ways, one of the contradictories about it is true definitely [*taḥṣīl*]. But if something is possible in some way, the truth [values] of the contradictories about it are [allocated] indefinitely [ġayr *al-taḥṣīl*].[84]

Throughout his commentary, Fārābī consistently uses the term *taḥṣīl* to denote this type of determination. Similarly, in the extant Arabic compendia on *Int*., Ibn Bihriz and [Ibn Zur'a] also use the root *ḥ-ṣ-l* in reference to this section of the Aristotelian text, without a single occurrence of the root *'-y-n*. The only evidence of *'-y-n* that predates Avicenna is found in the *Manṭiq* of Ibn al-Muqaffa',[85] where the root is used twice in relation to pairs of opposites, but in the second form (*yu'ayyin*) and not in the fifth. Furthermore, it was not used systematically, unlike its specific and continuous use in Avicenna's commentary, and was referred in both cases to the role played by the simultaneity of time in determining a contradiction.[86]

As we have seen, Avicenna partially deviates from this fairly homogeneous exegetical tradition, which runs from Alexander to Fārābī *via* Isḥāq b. Hunayn. As far as we know, Avicenna was the first author to systematically introduce the use of two different terms to distinguish between the logical (*'-y-n*, "mutual determination" of truth values within pairs of contradictory propositions) and ontological (*ḥ-ṣ-l*, "realization") level of determination.

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[84] Al-Fārābī, *Sharḥ al-'Ibāra* [*Commentary on De Interpretatione*], tr. Zimmermann, in Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī's Commentary*, 91.

[85] *Al-Manṭiq (Logic) by Ibn al-Muqaffa'. Ḥudūd al-Manṭiq (Definitions of Logic) by Ibn Bihrīz*, ed. M. T. Dāneshpazhūh, Tehran 1978, 37.

[86] Affirmation and negation would not be mutually contradictory "if it had not been specified [*yu'ayyin*] one [and the same] time for both of them": *Al-Manṭiq*, 1978, 37.

Avicenna's discussion of the status of statements with future tense verbs in *'Ibāra* 10

This section contains extensive translations from *'Ibāra* 10, where Avicenna provides commentary on *Int*. 9. The aim of the selected passages is twofold: firstly, to emphasize the significance of his discussion of the status of statements with future tense verbs, and secondly, to illustrate Avicenna's deliberate exclusion of theological considerations from this section of his work. In fact, he only mentions the Aristotelian deterministic arguments formulated at 18a34-b9, 18b9-16, excluding the later-added arguments for determinism (such as the argument from Divine Knowledge).[87]

Between tradition and innovation. Avicenna aims to adhere to Aristotle's text while demonstrating his familiarity with earlier commentators. This is evident in at least three ways: (1) Avicenna often criticises the commentators; (2) he uses the term *al-mašhūr* ("what is commonly accepted") to summarise the arguments of his predecessors; (3) his dependance on these commentators is evident from his reception of (3a) technical terms such as *mādda* (tropos), *jiha* (hūlē), the root: *ḥ-ṣ-l* (aphōrismenōs), etc.; (3b) examples such as "Men are just";[88] (3c) as well as doctrines: deliberate choice (*iḫtiyār*); matters of the propositions.[89] Although the author is familiar with the commentators and reworks some of their doctrines, he refrains from extending the argumentative core of *De Interpretatione* in the traditional way and instead develops his own critical view of this Aristotelian text.

In *'Ibāra* 10 (whose heading is: "On the Verification of the State of Contradiction and the Degrees of its Types in the Sections of True and False"), Avicenna's intention is not to positively affirm the indefiniteness of the distribution of truth values, but rather to explain why "it is not necessary" that the truth and falsity of a pair of future singular contradictions be determined;[90] and he does so by resorting to a

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[87] See Ammonius, *On Interpretation 9*, tr. by Blank, with Boethius, *On Interpretation 9*, tr. by Kretzmann, 3-15.

[88] See Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, II.2, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 88.10.

[89] See also Alexander, *In APr*, ed. Wallies, 27.27-28.2, Ammonius, *In De Int*., ed. Busse, 129.5, Stephanus, *In De Int*., ed. Hayduck, 25.20-25.

[90] Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 70.14-15.

metaphysical explanation. In propositions of this kind, determination occurs either due to the necessity of the thing itself or the existence of a certain cause.[91] This is followed by a hypothetical period of unreality. If every affirmation and negation has a determinate (*per se*) truth value, it follows that of every contradictory pair about future things either the affirmation or the negation is true. If it is necessary for every affirmation or negation to be true *per se* or false *per se*, then it follows that "in no thing is being and non-being permissible through conformity [*ittifāq*] [to the existent], rather, all things [become] necessary"[92] – which means that "what is truly predicted cannot but occur".[93] This absurd consequence follows from the assumption that, in each statement, truth values are determined prior to the occurrence of the events described. The strength of this argument hinges on the assumption that a man *might have* truthfully predicted the occurrence of a specific event.[94]

> Certainly, the thing does not become existent because it has already been held true; rather, the statement is true only because the thing itself is such.[95] Therefore, this necessity is in the things themselves,[96] even if nothing is said. Hence it has become clear that when either truth or falsehood are determined, what we shall indicate as absurd occurs.[97]

When, in turn, truth values are not determined, contradictory propositions can be: (1) both true, (2) both false, (3) the third configuration is that neither contradictory proposition is now necessary to be true or false, rather, whichever of the two truth values is *possible* in each of the disjuncts.[98] The first two configurations are "absurd", while the third is the correct one. At this point, Avicenna argues for the existence of contingency and our capacity to deliberate.

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[91] Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 70.16-18.

[92] Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 71.16-72.1.

[93] Aristotle, *Categories*, tr. Ackrill, 137. See Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 71.1-72.1; Aristoteles, *De interpretatione*, 9, 18a34-b9.

[94] Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 72.1-6. See Aristoteles, *De interpretatione*, 9, 18b9-16.

[95] Avicenna states in the following paragraph: "Truth is that which corresponds to existence": Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 72.15-16.

[96] This statement refers to actuality and does not imply any form of determinism, either logical or metaphysical.

[97] Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 72.6-10.

[98] Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 72.10-14.

> We know that there are things that happen by chance, and things whose being and non-being happen in equal measure. If it were not so, we would have no need to deliberate, reflect or prepare for action, believing that when we do what is necessary, something will happen that would not happen if we refrained [from doing it]. If what we deliberate about and prepare for were among what is by necessity, or were [among what] is not by necessity, so that someone could say something about it and it would be true or false, and the judgement about it had been determined by his statement, our preparation and deliberation[99] would not be of any use. However, our intellects testify to the usefulness of preparation, and we do not doubt it; therefore, that which removes and invalidates it is absurd.[100]

Contingency should be defended not only "in things that happen because of choice [*iḫtiyār*]", but also in "things that are in nature", such as wood, which can both rot and be burnt ("and neither of the two things is necessary for it, *qua* wood").[101] In the following passage, Avicenna argues for the exclusion of metaphysical arguments from logic. He suggests that the examination of the nature of the necessary and the possible, as well as the establishment of the existence of contingency, should be the domain of metaphysics.

> In this way it is necessary to understand what is said in the First Teaching, and not to pay attention to the sophistries of some commentators so as to think that by this discourse made in the First Teaching is meant only the ascertainment of necessity and the negation of possibility, [and that] from here [Aristotle] goes back to the ascertainment of possibility and the negation of necessity through deception [*murāwaḍa*[102]]. In fact, if we consider the order of our exposition and that of the First Teaching, it is known that this is the one that is more worthy, since something artificial as well as absurd was said in their commentaries. For in fact, the consideration of the nature of the necessary and the possible, and the ascertainment of possibility is not what is appropriate for the logician as such, but rather this pertains to another discipline.[103]

The aim of the logician is (1) to know the truth value of a proposi-

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[99] *Rawiyya* and *isti'dād*: Avicenna utilizes the same terms as Fārābī in his commentary.

[100] Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 73.5-11.

[101] Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 73.11-16.

[102] This term seems to suggest a rather sophistic and deceptive way of charming someone. I am grateful to Silvia Di Vincenzo for this valuable suggestion.

[103] Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 73.16-74.5.

tion, (2) together with the way in which it is determined, in a twofold sense: (2a) firstly, by comprehending its composition or form, (2b) and secondly, by ascertaining its truth value, specifically whether it is true or false in a necessary or possible way. The logician must also know that contingent entities and contingent propositions[104] are conditionally necessary.

> It is clear that among the things there is what is necessary in existence and in non-existence, for in fact it is evident and commonly accepted that many of the things do not have a necessary existence. I do not mean as long as [a thing] exists and on the condition that it exists. Insofar as [it fulfills] this condition and the other similar conditions which you will learn elsewhere among the conditions of the possible [so that its state changes to necessity], then the thing is necessary by virtue of them. Rather, its existence alone is not necessary if you consider its quiddity *without* adding any condition.[105]

Avicenna clarifies that what is necessary *per aliud* is necessary as long as it exists. In summarizing the contents of this chapter, he reminds us that in such propositions, truth is not determined by virtue of necessity, but rather by virtue of possibility. This view is contrary to the one held by both Aristotle and Fārābī.

> [Your understanding] brings together all that has been said, [(1)] that in these propositions truth is not determined by virtue of necessity, but rather by virtue of possibility;[106] [(2)] that, in some of them, one of the two extremes is more worthy for the purposes of truth; [(3)] as well as [the fact] that some things are not necessary in their being and in their non-being.[107]

Conclusions

In this comparative analysis, it has been observed that Fārābī and Avicenna engage with Aristotle's text and its exegetical tradition in distinct ways. It has been shown that there is a strong exegetical continuity between Fārābī and his late antique predecessors, particularly in the

[104] See Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 74.11-75.8.

[105] Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 74.7-11.

[106] On the relationship between possibility and future, see Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, II.4, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 117; Id., *Remarks and admonitions: part one: logic*, tr. by S. C. Inati, Wetteren 1984, 97; Ahmed, *Avicenna's Deliverance*, 20.

[107] Ibn-Sīnā, *'Ibāra*, I.10, ed. Al-Ḫuḍayrī, Madkūr, 75.10-12.

way he extends Aristotelian deterministic arguments and addresses the theological issues of the nature of divine knowledge and theodicy. In contrast, Avicenna displays a notable independence of thought. While acknowledging the importance of the tradition, the author takes a reformative approach towards it, seeking to provide commentary based both on Aristotle's words and on his own reflections. In *'Ibāra* 10, Avicenna excludes the later-added theological and moral arguments and instead emphasizes the logical aspects of the Aristotelian text. Although much remains to be done, this study, along with the examination of Avicenna's introduction of a significant linguistic innovation, aimed to identify some of the most distinctive features that define the Avicennian approach to future contingents: (1) its logical nature; (2) the significance of the form of propositions and the implicit modal relation that links their atomic constituents (S-P); (3) the emphasis on the multifaceted concept of possibility (in conjunction with its relation to necessity).

IMT – Scuola Alti Studi Lucca

Connaître le futur. Le cas des futurs contingents *ut in pluribus* chez Albert le Grand

Martha Beullens

De prime abord, la connaissance des événements futurs semble problématique : en effet, à moins de poser un univers déterministe, comment pourrait-on connaître ce qui n'est pas encore advenu ? Ou, en prenant le problème dans l'autre sens : si l'on peut connaître le futur, quelle place reste-t-il à la contingence ? En effet, c'est bien à propos des futurs *contingents* que la question se pose – la connaissance des futurs nécessaires est, quant à elle, prise en charge par la science, car le nécessaire est l'objet de la science.[1] Cependant, tous les futurs contingents ne sont pas à considérer également. Il s'agit en effet de distinguer entre les contingents *ut in paucioribus*, les contingents *ut in pluribus* et les contingents *ad utrumlibet*.[2]

> Le contingent a égard à [*respicit*] la cause qui n'est pas cause par soi ; et pour cette raison, il est distingué selon la distinction de la cause. Et si la cause n'est pas par soi disposée et inclinée vers l'être, le contingent est dit par nature [*natum*], c'est-à-dire *ut in pluribus*. Mais si la cause n'est pas disposée et inclinée vers une chose plutôt qu'une autre, le contingent est dit *ad utrumlibet*.[3]

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[1] Albertus Magnus, *Topica*, II, tr. 1, c. 6, ed. A. Borgnet (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia 2), Paris 1890, 307a : « Scientia autem est eorum quae necessaria sunt, et semper praesentia sunt, vel in seipsis, vel in necessitate ordinis suae essentiae, ut eclipsis solis : scimus enim hoc modo et praesentia et futura, ut quando est eclipsis solis defectus sive eclipsis : quia defectus Latine, ekleipsis est Graece » (« La science est des [choses] qui sont *nécessaires*, et toujours présentes, ou bien en elles-mêmes ou bien dans la nécessité de l'ordre de leur essence, comme l'éclipse du soleil : en effet, nous savons de cette façon les [choses] présentes et les [choses] futures, comme quand il y a une éclipse de soleil, *defectus* ou *eclipsis* : parce que *defectus* en latin est *ekleipsis* en grec »).

[2] Cette distinction avait déjà été établie par Aristote : Aristoteles, *Metaphysica,* VI, 2, 1026b24-27.

[3] Albertus Magnus, *Peri hermeneias*, II, tr. 2, c. 6, ed. A. Borgnet (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia 1), Paris 1890, 452b : « Contingens autem respicit causam quae non est per se causa : et ideo distinguitur secundum causae distinctionem. Si autem est causa

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> […] il faut dire que le contingent *ut in paucioribus* est celui dans lequel il y a le *casus*[4] et la chance, comme il sera évident plus bas dans les exemples. Et je dis qu'il est selon l'intention de la cause efficiente, comme on l'a montré plus haut dans l'exemple de la pluie en été. En effet, le contingent, ou bien a une cause ordonnée mais empêchable par l'effet, ou bien n'a pas de cause ordonnée à l'effet par soi mais par accident. Et certes, s'il a une cause [ordonnée mais empêchable], il est *in pluribus* ; en effet, ce qui a une cause non-empêchable, ce n'est pas contingent mais nécessaire. Or, le contingent qui n'a pas de cause par soi mais par accident, qui est efficient, celui-là est *in paucioribus*.[5]

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non per se ad esse disposita et inclinata, dicitur contingens natum sive ut in pluribus. Si autem causa est indisposita et non inclinata ad unum plus quam ad aliud, dicitur contingens ad utrumlibet ». Roger Bacon propose une classification semblable. En particulier, il pose lui aussi l'identité entre le *contingens ut in pluribus* et le *contingens natum*, contrairement, par exemple, à Robert Kilwardby (voy. J. Mendelsohn, « "Men go grey" : Robert Kilwardby and the logic of natural contingency », in *Historia Logicae and its Modern Interpretation*, ed. J. Lemanski, I. Max, London 2023, 13).

[4] C'est délibérément que nous nous nous sommes abstenue de traduire *casus*. La question de la traduction de ce terme ne se laisse, en effet, pas résoudre facilement. En première intention, nous pourrions traduire *casus* par « accident » : c'est une traduction courante, qui fait sens dans ce contexte. Cependant, le *casus* étant un accident d'une espèce particulière, traduire ainsi ce terme nous exposerait au risque de le confondre avec le genre auquel il appartient. En relisant attentivement la définition du *casus* proposée par Albert, nous pouvons nous apercevoir qu'elle décrit en fait une coïncidence, comprise dans son sens étymologique de *co*-incidence. Cependant, nous refusons aussi cette traduction, pour deux raisons : (1) nous nous méfions de l'impression de familiarité induite par le terme « coïncidence », dont le sens obvie ne correspond pas exactement au sens technique ici visé, (2) la coïncidence ne correspond pas au seul *casus* puisqu'elle subsume également la chance. En dernière intention, nous pourrions traduire *casus* par « hasard ». Cependant, le hasard est souvent compris comme « absence totale de causes ». Or, dans un univers administré par la Providence divine, rien n'arrive totalement sans cause. Pour éviter toute confusion, nous décidons donc de conserver le latin.

[5] Albertus Magnus, *Physica*, II, tr. 2, c. 14, ed. P. Hossfeld (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia. Editio Coloniensis 4.1), Münster 1987, 119.35-55 : « […] dicendum est, quod contingens ut in paucioribus est id in quo est casus et fortuna, sicut infra patebit in exemplis. Et dico, quod ipsum est secundum intentionem causae efficientis, sicut supra ostensum est in exemplo de pluvia in aestate. Contingens enim aut habet ordinatam causam, sed impedibilem ab effectu, aut non habet causam ordinatam ad effectum per se, sed per accidens. Et siquidem habet causam, est in pluribus; quodenim habet causam non-impedibilem, hoc non est contingens, sed necessarium. Contingens autem, quod non habet causam per se, sed per accidens, quod est efficiens, illud est in paucioribus ». Que la cause soit empêchable *par l'effet* est assez étrange, puisque, si la cause est empêchée, il n'y a précisément pas d'effet. À notre sens, Olivier Boulnois a raison de proposer de comprendre que la cause est empêchable par un effet appartenant à une

À la lumière des extraits cités, nous comprenons que la contingence dans les choses non volontaires peut avoir deux origines. Soit la cause n'est pas ordonnée par soi à l'effet mais *par accident* – ce qui signifie qu'il est *accidentel* que telle cause produise tel effet, c'est-à-dire encore qu'elle ne le produit ni nécessairement ni même la plupart du temps – et le contingent est dit *ut in paucioribus*.[6] Soit la cause est ordonnée

autre chaîne causale: O. Boulnois, « Religions et philosophies dans le christianisme au Moyen Âge » [En ligne], in *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études (EPHE)*, 118 (2011), 239-249 : 246. Toute autre lecture nous ferait sortir du cadre spécifique de la causalité *efficiente* qu'Albert établit ici.

[6] Dans la *Physica*, Albert le Grand considère comme non naturels les futurs qui se produisent *in paucioribus*. Il définit ainsi comme naturel ce qui a une fin déterminée par la nature – la nature correspondant dès lors, de manière restrictive, à son *cours habituel* : Albertus Magnus, *Physica*, II, tr. 3, c. 2, ed. Hossfeld, 134.11-36 : « […] *omnia enim naturalia* sicut et ea quae induximus et de pluvia et *membris* animalium, *aut semper fiunt aut frequenter. Sed ea quae sunt* de numero eorum quae fiunt *a casu* et *fortuna,* nullum fit *semper vel frequenter,* sicut constat ex *superius* habitis ; ergo ea quae fiunt a natura, non fiunt a casu et fortuna […]. *Si igitur omnia* naturalia aut *a casu videntur* fieri *aut* a natura *propter* aliquid operante et *finem* intendente et *impossibile* est ea fieri *a casu* et *fortuna,* necessario fiunt a natura determinatum finem in unoquoque eorum intendente ; *huiusmodi* enim *omnia* quae *semper vel frequenter* salvata sunt, *a natura sunt, quemadmodum* etiam antiqui *affirmabant,* qui casum et fortunam causas rerum esse *dicebant* ; ergo omnia *naturalia sunt propter aliquid* et habent *finem* determinatum […] » (« […] en effet, toutes les [choses] naturelles comme celles dont nous avons parlé et [celles] au sujet de la pluie et des membres des animaux, arrivent ou bien toujours ou bien fréquemment. Mais [parmi] celles qui sont au nombre de celles qui arrivent par *casus* et par chance, aucune n'arrive toujours ou fréquemment, comme il est évident à partir des [propos] tenus plus haut ; donc ce qui arrive par nature n'arrive pas par *casus* et par chance […]. Si donc toutes les [choses] naturelles semblent arriver ou bien par *casus* ou bien par la nature opérant à cause de quelque [chose] et tendant vers une fin, et s'il est impossible qu'elles arrivent par *casus* et par chance, elles arrivent nécessairement par la nature tendant vers une fin déterminée dans chacune d'elles ; en effet toutes les [choses] de ce genre qui ont été maintenues toujours ou fréquemment sont par la nature, comme les Anciens l'affirmaient aussi […] ; donc toutes les [choses] naturelles sont à cause de quelque [chose] et ont une fin déterminée […] »). Il est vrai que le *casus* et la chance ne sont pas causés naturellement mais ordonnés par la Providence divine: Albertus Magnus, *Summa theologiae*, pars I, tr. 17, q. 67, m. 3, ad 1, ed. A. Borgnet (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia 31), Paris 1894-1895, 684a. Pour une discussion de ce problème chez Aristote, voy. notamment S. Delcomminette, « Nécessité et contingence dans le devenir », in Id., *Aristote et la nécessité* (Tradition de la pensée classique), Paris 2020, §201-207, 288-294 et R. Sorabji, « Chapter One. Do Coincidences have Causes ? (*Metaph.* VI 3) », in Id., *Necessity, Cause, and Blame. Perspectives on Aristotle's Theory*, London 1980, 3-25.

par soi à l'effet mais est *empêchable* – « normalement », « la plupart du temps », « en règle générale », telle cause devrait produire tel effet à moins qu'une cause plus forte ne l'en empêche – et le contingent est dit *ut in pluribus*. Autrement dit, si le contingent *ut in pluribus* n'est pas incliné par soi *vers l'être* (contrairement aux futurs nécessaires, sa cause est empêchable), il est incliné par soi *vers une chose plutôt que vers une autre* (la plupart du temps, telle cause produit tel effet).

Dans le *De prophetia*, Albert le Grand propose une autre classification des événements futurs, qui repose sur le critère de la déterminabilité de leur cause :

> […] les [choses] contingentes au sujet du futur ne sont pas d'une seule raison. En effet, les causes de certaines [choses] n'ont pas été déterminées, cependant elles sont déterminables par la nature et il arrive de les connaître d'avance aussi de façon naturelle. Or, il y en a certaines dont les causes n'ont pas été déterminées ni ne sont par la nature déterminables ; ce sont celles qui sont par le libre arbitre ; et il n'arrive pas de les connaître d'avance, ni en partie ni en tout, par la nature.[7]

Nous pouvons établir une correspondance entre (1) les futurs contingents *ut in pluribus* et les événements futurs dont les causes sont indéterminées mais déterminables par la nature et (2) les futurs contingents *ut in paucioribus* et les événements futurs dont les causes sont à la fois indéterminées et indéterminables par la nature. Notons que cette dernière catégorie comprend également les futurs contingents *ad utrumlibet*, qui se produisent par le libre arbitre. (3) Les futurs nécessaires sont, quant à eux, des événements futurs dont les causes sont déterminées par la nature.

Cet article portera spécifiquement sur la connaissance des futurs contingents *ut in pluribus* (ou futurs dont les causes sont indéterminées mais déterminables par la nature), à la connaissance desquels seuls il est possible de parvenir *naturellement*. Leur statut est particulièrement

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[7] ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De prophetia*, II, 2, resp., ed. J.-P. TORRELL, in J.-P. TORRELL, « La Question disputée *De prophetia* de saint Albert le Grand. Édition critique et commentaire », in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 65 (1981), 5-53 et 197-232: 32.21-26 : « Ad primum ergo dicendum quod contingentia de futuro non sunt unius rationis. Quorundam enim cause non sunt determinate, determinabiles tamen a natura, et illa contingit precognoscere etiam naturaliter. Quedam autem sunt quorum cause non determinate sunt nec a natura determinabiles ; sunt ea que sunt a libero arbitrio ; et illa non contingit precognoscere nec in parte nec in toto per naturam ».

intéressant, compte-tenu de l'approche résolument naturaliste d'Albert le Grand.

Comprendre plus avant les futurs contingents *ut in pluribus* ainsi que la connaissance dont ils peuvent faire l'objet demande de commencer par présenter, rapidement, la façon dont est structuré et administré l'univers albertinien. Nous aborderons donc dans un premier temps la façon dont la Providence divine et le destin s'articulent dans le cadre de la doctrine albertinienne de l'univocité d'analogie, avant de nous intéresser au type d'événements visés par l'expression « futurs contingents *ut in pluribus* » et au type de savoir dont ils peuvent faire l'objet. Nous montrerons ensuite que l'utilité est l'une des caractéristiques de ce savoir conjectural : il porte sur des questions présentant un intérêt pour l'homme et vise à orienter l'action humaine, de sorte à faciliter l'œuvre de la nature. Pour finir, nous verrons comment comprendre que toutes les sciences divinatoires s'appuient ultimement sur les astres.

La Providence divine et le destin

Pour Albert le Grand, la Providence est « la cause première de tout ce qui arrive toujours et de ce qui arrive fréquemment et de ce qui arrive rarement ».[8] Remarquons que cette énumération reprend l'ensemble des modalités possibles des événements non volontaires que nous venons de citer – respectivement, les événements nécessaires, les événements contingents *ut in pluribus* et les événements contingents *ut in paucioribus*. Bien qu'elle existe de toute éternité en tant que dessein divin, la Providence ne s'exprime que temporellement, car Dieu ne gou-

[8] Albertus Magnus, *Summa theologiae*, pars I, tr. 17, q. 67, m. 2, a. 1, ed. Borgnet, 686b : « […] secundum Boetium providentia sit indissolubilis nexus et inevitabilis et simplex ratio forma gerendorum, ipsa est causa primaria omnium eorum quae fiunt semper, et eorum quae fiunt frequenter, et eorum quae fiunt raro. Causa autem primaria maxime influens causa est. Et cum sit forma et ratio gerendorum, formalis causa est, quae inter alias causas maxime influens est ad esse » (« […] pour Boèce, la Providence est le nœud indissoluble et la raison inévitable et simple et la forme de tout ce qui doit être accompli, elle-même est la cause première de tout ce qui arrive toujours, et de ce qui arrive fréquemment, et de ce qui arrive rarement. Or, la cause première est précisément la cause influant. Donc, la Providence est précisément cause. Et tandis qu'elle est la forme et la raison de ce qui doit être accompli, elle est cause formelle qui, parmi les causes, est celle qui influe surtout vers l'être »).

verne que les « existants créés issus du temps »[9] et les non-existants en tant qu'ils sont déjà pris dans le processus du devenir. La Providence, considérée telle qu'elle est de toute éternité dans l'esprit divin, est simple (à l'image de Dieu lui-même) mais lorsqu'elle se déploie (c'est-à-dire lorsqu'elle cause dans le temps), elle devient multiple. En effet, en se déployant, c'est-à-dire en s'éloignant de l'absolue simplicité de la source dont il provient, l'être devient multiple et non nécessaire. C'est précisément cette double perspective, cette dialectique entre simplicité et multiplicité,[10] qui permettra de fonder le mode de connaissance des futurs contingents *ut in pluribus*.

Si la Providence cause et gouverne toutes les choses, seules quelques-unes sont causées par elle de façon *immédiate* (il s'agit, de façon exhaustive, de l'Ange, du ciel et de la terre, et de l'âme).[11] La plupart des choses sont, au contraire, causées et gouvernées par l'intermédiaire de causes secondes, qui permettent en quelque sorte de déployer ce qui était précontenu de façon immobile dans la cause première – Albert suit ici l'autorité du *Liber de causis*, qu'il considère encore comme une œuvre aristotélicienne.[12] Or, si une chose tient effectivement son être

[9] Albertus Magnus, *Summa theologiae*, pars I, tr. 17, q. 67, m. 2, ad q. 1, ed. Borgnet, 681a.

[10] Sébastien Milazzo a raison de voir dans la question du rapport entre l'un et le multiple l'une des questions centrales de la pensée d'Albert le Grand : Albert le Grand, *Le Traité du flux. Tractatus de fluxu causatorum a causa prima et causarum ordine* (Sagesses médiévales), intro., trad. fr. et notes de S. Milazzo, Paris 2013, 65-265 : 67. Mais peut-être ce projet d'articulation entre l'un et le multiple est-il, plus largement, le défi que doit relever toute métaphysique: O. Boulnois, *Métaphysiques rebelles. Genèse et structure d'une science au Moyen Âge* (Épiméthée : Essais philosophiques), Paris 2013, 134.

[11] Albertus Magnus, *Summa theologiae*, pars I, tr. 17, q. 68, m. 3, sol., ed. Borgnet, 703b.

[12] Albert le Grand semble conscient qu'Aristote n'a pas écrit le *Liber de causis* ; dans certaines de ses œuvres de maturité, il en accorde la paternité à Ibn Daoud, qui l'aurait composée d'après la « lettre d'Aristote » *De principio universi esse* : voy. D. B. Twetten, « Albert the Great on Metaphysics : 10. Albert's Arguments for the Existence of God and the Primary Causes », in *A companion to Albert the Great. Theology, philosophy and sciences*, ed. I. M. Resnick (Brill's Companion to the Christian Tradition 38), Leiden-Boston 2013, 658-687 : 675-676. Cependant, Albert le Grand continue d'attribuer sporadiquement la paternité du *Liber de causis* à Aristote, y compris dans la deuxième partie de la *Summa theologiae* (voy. par exemple Albertus Magnus, *Summa theologiae*, pars II, tr. I, q. 4, m. 2, a. 1, ed. A. Borgnet [Alberti Magni Opera Omnia 33],

de la cause première nécessaire, elle tient en revanche ses déterminations de la cause prochaine, qui est contingente, ne pouvant « atteindre la pureté, la noblesse et la certitude » de la cause première.[13] Donc, ce dont la cause est contingente est lui aussi contingent.

Plus précisément, c'est par l'intermédiaire du *destin* que la Providence gouverne les choses qu'elle ne cause pas de façon immédiate. Si la Providence et le destin peuvent sembler se superposer l'un à l'autre, il s'agit cependant de bien les distinguer : le destin diffère en effet de la Providence en ce qu'il en est le déploiement dans et à travers l'ordre des causes. Albert décrit le rapport entre Providence et destin comme un rapport d'analogie : « La Providence et le destin diffèrent comme le modèle [*exemplar*] et la copie [*exemplatum*] et comme la cause influant et la forme influée ».[14] C'est que la cosmologie albertinienne ne

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Paris 1894-1895, 82b), pourtant réputée être l'une des dernières œuvres du Dominicain (voy. H. Anzulewicz et al., « Zeittafel [Chronologie nach derzeitigem Forschungsstand] », in *Albertus Magnus und sein System der Wissenschaften*, hrsg. v. H. Möhle et al., Münster 2011, 28-31), si l'on admet qu'elle a été écrite par Albert le Grand ou sous sa direction. Pour les références à Ibn Daoud, voy. notamment Albertus Magnus, *De causis et processu universitatis a prima causa*, II, tr. 1, c. 1, ed. W. Fauser (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia. Editio Coloniensis 17.2), Münster 1993, 59.9-15, 61.65-68. Albert continue-t-il d'attribuer quelquefois à Aristote la paternité du *Liber de causis* parce qu'il a conscience que « David le Juif » n'est que le compilateur d'un texte qu'il considère majoritairement aristotélicien, comme le suggère Sébastien Milazzo (S. Milazzo, « Introduction générale », in Albert le Grand, *Le traité du flux*, XXXVIII) ? Pour un aperçu du problème, voy. A. de Libera, *Métaphysique et noétique. Albert le Grand* (Problèmes & Controverses), Paris 2005, 74-87. Il faudra attendre que Thomas compare de façon systématique le *Liber de causis* avec l'*Elementatio Theologica* de Proclus (dans la traduction latine de Guillaume de Moerbeke) pour que le Moyen Âge latin admette la tonalité néoplatonicienne de l'œuvre. À propos de la réception et de la lecture, très différentes, du *Liber de causis* par Albert le Grand et Thomas d'Aquin, voy. A. de Libera, « Albert le Grand et Thomas d'Aquin interprètes du *Liber de causis* », in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 74 (1990), 347-378.

[13] Albertus Magnus, *Summa theologiae*, pars I, tr. 17, q. 68, m. 4, a. 2, ad 2, ed. Borgnet, 689a : « […] causatum illius causae puritatem et nobilitatem et certitudinem assequi non potest […] ».

[14] Albertus Magnus, *Summa theologiae*, pars I, tr. 17, q. 68, m. 1, sol., ed. Borgnet, 695a-b : « Unde providentia et fatum differunt ut exemplar et exemplatum, et sicut causa influens, et forma influxa ». Alessandro Palazzo remarque avec justesse que, dans cet extrait, Albert conceptualise le rapport entre Providence et destin à la fois en des termes platoniciens (« differunt ut exemplar et exemplatum ») et en des termes néoplatoniciens (« sicut causa influens et forma influxa ») : A. Palazzo, « *Dupliciter autem ponitur fatum*. La questione sul fato nella tarda *Summa theologiae* di Alberto

peut s'envisager indépendamment de la métaphysique du flux et de la doctrine de l'univocité d'analogie qu'elle consacre.[15]

Selon cette doctrine, émane du Premier Principe une forme, toujours simple et toujours la même à toutes les étapes du flux. Cependant, elle se distingue essentiellement du Premier Principe car, fluant à partir de lui, elle ne peut être, comme lui, jaillissement spontané.[16] Le

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Magno », in *Divus Thomas*, 122 (2019), 219-261 : 234. Albert le Grand traite du destin principalement dans deux textes, le *De fato* (1256) et la *Summa theologiae* (après 1268). Si dans la *Summa theologiae*, Albert définit le destin dans son rapport à la Providence, ce n'est pas le cas dans le *De fato*, où, dans une perspective philosophique et naturaliste, il ne remonte que jusqu'à la première cause *in genere*, c'est-à-dire le cercle céleste, comme nous le verrons *infra*.

[15] Sur la métaphysique albertinienne du flux, voy. notamment A. de Libera, « Chapitre IV. La métaphysique du flux », in Id., *Métaphysique et noétique*, 143-209 ; S. Milazzo, « Introduction générale », en part. XLV-LXXIV. Sur la notion d'analogie, voy. P. Aubenque, « Néoplatonisme et analogie de l'être », in *Cahiers de Fontenay*, 19-22 (1981), 63-76 ; O. Boulnois, « De l'analogie à l'univocité de l'Être », in Id., Être et représentation (Épiméthée : Essais philosophiques), Paris 1999, 223-291 ; J. F. Courtine, « Aux origines néoplatoniciennes de la doctrine de l'analogie de l'être », in Id., *Les catégories de l'être* (Épiméthée : Essais philosophiques), Paris 2003, 167-189 ; A. de Libera, « Les sources gréco-arabes de la théorie médiévale de l'analogie de l'être », in *Les Études philosophiques*, 3-4 (1989), 319-345 ; Id., « Chapitre III. Dieu et l'être », in Id., *Métaphysique et noétique*, 95-142 ; J. Lonfat, « Archéologie de la notion d'analogie d'Aristote à saint Thomas d'Aquin », in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 71 (2004), 35-107 ; V. Lossky, « La notion des "analogies" chez Denys le pseudo-Aréopagite », in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 5 (1930), 279-309.

[16] Nous proposons cette expression qui nous semble prendre en charge à la fois l'autodiffusion nécessaire de soi et l'aséité (c'est-à-dire l'absence de cause) du Premier Principe : Albertus Magnus, *Peri hermeneias*, II, tr. 2, c. 6, ed. Borgnet, 451a : « […] attende, quod sicut dicit Avicenna, ens possibile dividit ens cum eo quod est ens necesse. Et cum ens necesse sit quod nullo modo est in potentia, erit ens necesse quod nullam habet causam : quia ens quod habet causam quocumque modo, est in potentia comparatum ad causam illam secundum id quod est in ea. Et per oppositum ens possibile est, quod habet causam, et possibile est secundum quod comparatur ad causam illam, et secundum quod per esse dependet ab illa : et sic omnia causata possibilia sunt […]. » (« […] remarque que, comme dit Avicenne, l'étant possible divise l'étant avec ce qui est l'étant nécessaire. Et puisque l'étant nécessaire est ce qui n'est en puissance d'aucune manière, *l'étant nécessaire sera ce qui n'a aucune cause*, parce que l'étant qui a une cause d'une quelconque manière est en puissance comparé à cette cause, selon ce qui est en elle. Et à l'opposé, l'étant possible est ce qui a une cause, et il est possible selon qu'il est rapporté à cette cause, et selon qu'il dépend d'elle par l'être ; et ainsi toutes [les choses] causées sont possibles […] »). Voy. aussi Albertus Magnus, *De causis et processu universi-*

recours à des images empruntant notamment aux registres de l'écoulement ou de l'illumination permet de saisir en quoi ce qui flue est à la fois semblable et différent de ce dont il flue.[17] Essentiellement différente et pourtant semblable à ce qui flue, la source du flux est caractérisée par Albert le Grand comme un modèle (*exemplar*) de ce qui flue. L'analogie est donc caractérisée par une ressemblance (univocité) doublée d'une différence (équivocité) : tout est à l'image du Premier Principe (ressemblance) selon sa capacité de réception propre (différence). Cette univocité *d'analogie* implique une hiérarchie, établie en fonction de la ressemblance au Premier Principe. En effet, ce qui flue s'exprime de façon de moins en moins pure et limpide au fur et à mesure qu'il s'éloigne de sa source – l'obombration étant liée à la capacité d'analogie de chaque étant.

Cela étant clarifié, continuons à caractériser le destin. Dans sa *Summa theologiae* (*pars* I), Albert le définit comme « la forme et la raison de toutes les [choses] qui se produisent par la nature, par la volonté ou par le dessein, commençant à partir du principe des causes qui est la Providence et procédant à partir d'elle ».[18] Il est aussi défini

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tatis a prima causa, I, tr. 4, c. 1, ed. Fauser, 43.26-30 : « Si autem quaeritur, quid facit primum fontem emittere hunc fluxum, cum possit nihil agere in primum, dicendum, quod ipsa communicabilitas primi, cum semper sit in actu et ex copia bonitatis semper exuberet, hanc facit emanationem ». (« Si l'on se demande ce qui fait que la première source émet ce flux, alors que rien ne peut agir dans le premier, il faut dire que c'est la communicabilité du premier elle-même qui fait cette émanation, puisqu'elle est toujours en acte et déborde toujours de l'abondance de bonté »).

[17] Dans sa *Physica*, Albert recourt ainsi à l'image d'une ligne tracée par une plume : Albertus Magnus, *Physica*, III, tr. 1, c. 3, ed. Hossfeld, 152.85-153.4 : « Adhuc autem, si nos imaginemur puncti fluxum facere lineam et terminari fluxum puncti in aliquo puncto, ubi terminatur fluxus eius, constat, quod terminus lineae, in quo stat fluxus puncti, intrinsecus est et essentialis lineae; et non possemus dicere, quod punctus terminans fluxum esset alterius essentiae quam punctus fluens, sed esse est aliud fluentis et stantis per modum termini » (« En outre, si nous nous figurons que le flux d'un point fait une ligne et qu'il se termine en un point où se termine son flux, il est évident que la fin [*terminus*] de la ligne, dans laquelle s'arrête [*stat*] le flux du point, est intrinsèque et essentielle à la ligne ; et nous ne pourrions dire que le point terminant le flux est d'une autre essence que le point fluant mais l'être du [point] fluant et du [point] à l'arrêt est autre par le mode de la fin [*termini*] »).

[18] Albertus Magnus, *Summa theologiae*, pars I, tr. 17, q. 68, m. 1, sol., ed. Borgnet, 695a : « […] est forma et ratio omnium per naturam, vel voluntatem, vel propositum fientium, inchoans a principe causarum quae est providentia, et ab ipsa procedens in secunda, tertia, et quarta, secundum ordinem causarum […] ».

comme « tout cet ordre de causes commençant à partir de la Providence, qui contient tout exemplairement et causalement ».[19] Comme la Providence, le destin est donc défini comme *une forme et une raison*. Mais contrairement à elle, cette forme et cette raison ne sont pas situées de toute éternité dans la simplicité de l'esprit divin ; au contraire, elles s'expriment temporellement dans la procession et l'influence des causes issues de la Providence et ordonnées par elle.

Tout ce qui précède nous permet d'identifier la Providence et le destin à la forme qui flue du Premier Principe :[20] la Providence et le destin sont en effet *la même forme* considérée à deux moments (logiques) du « fluer ». Mentionnons déjà ici que le destin peut aussi, en un autre sens, être considéré comme « la disposition inhérente aux causes et causés mobiles, par laquelle, *comme un instrument*, la Providence noue [*nectit*] chaque chose à ses ordres ».[21] C'est d'ailleurs en ce

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[19] Albertus Magnus, *Summa theologiae*, pars I, tr. 17, q. 68, m. 1, sol., ed. Borgnet, 695a-b : « […] totus ille ordo causarum ex providentia inchoans, quae exemplariter omnia continet et causaliter, Graece vocatur εἱμαρμένη ». Pour une lecture approfondie du traité 17 de la *Summa theologiae* (*pars* I), voy. Palazzo, « *Dupliciter autem ponitur fatum* », 219-261.

[20] Alessandro Palazzo a raison de souligner le rôle central que joue destin dans le système albertinien. Il considère en effet le destin comme « the real pivot around which the other doctrines rotate »: A. Palazzo, « The scientific significance of fate and celestial influences in some mature works by Albert the Great. *De fato, De somno et vigilia, De intellectu et intelligibili, Mineralia* », in *Per perscrutationem philosophicam : neue Perspektiven der mittelalterlichen Forschung : Loris Sturlese zum 60. Geburtstag gewidmet*, hrsg. v. A. Beccarisi, R. Imbach, P. Porro, Hamburg 2008, 55-78: 56. Voy. aussi Id., « Albert the Great's doctrine of fate », in *Mantik, Schicksal und Freiheit im Mittelalter*, hrsg. v. L. Sturlese (Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 70), Köln-Weimar-Wien 2011, 65-95.

[21] Albertus Magnus, *Summa theologiae*, pars I, tr. 17, q. 68, m. 2, sol., ed. Borgnet, 700a. Cette définition associe la conception boécienne du destin comme nœud (*nexus*) mobile (Boèce, *De consolatione Philosophiae*, IV, 6 §9, ed. C. Moreschini, München-Leipzig 2000, 122.32-33) dépendant de la Providence (Id., *De consolatione Philosophiae*, IV, 6 §13, ed. C. Moreschini, 123.47-56) et la conception hermétique du destin comme concaténation de causes (Hermès Trismégiste, *Asclepius*, c. 39-40, ed. C. Moreschini, Stuttgart-Leipzig 1991, 83.15-85.3). Comme l'écrit Alessandro Palazzo : « Il ricorso ad Ermete e a Nemesio consente ad Alberto una sottile ma significativa variazione della prima e principale definizione boeziana: il fato è detto infatti una disposizione per mezzo della quale la provvidenza collega le varie cose nel loro ordine, ma è una disposizione che inerisce alle cause e ai causati mobili, e non semplicemente alle cose mobili, come recita invece il testo boeziano. La precisazione

dernier sens, selon Albert, qu'il est considéré proprement et selon tout son être. Le destin *renvoie* donc à la Providence et à la volonté divine comme la *cause* qui l'influe et qu'il suppose et « contient » mais il *signifie* la disposition influée par la Providence dans les causes secondes et suivantes, c'est-à-dire l'effet de la volonté divine.

Le « point de basculement » entre la Providence et le destin est à situer au niveau des astres. La définition complète du destin que propose Albert dans son *De fato* est, en effet, la suivante : « […] le destin est dit la forme de l'ordre de l'être et de la vie des inférieurs causée en eux à partir de la période du cercle céleste qui entoure leurs naissances de ses rayonnements […] ».[22] Bien qu'il ne s'enracine pas ultimement en eux, comme le veut une certaine conception à laquelle s'oppose fermement Albert,[23] le destin entretient donc une relation étroite avec les astres.

Jusqu'à présent, nous avons pu mettre en évidence que la Providence divine gouverne les étants sublunaires par l'intermédiaire des astres. Cela implique que l'être et la vie des inférieurs – c'est-à-dire leur constitution et leur maintien dans l'être, c'est-à-dire encore leur existence effective, y compris la durée de leur vie et leur développement jusqu'à l'éventuelle actualisation totale de leur essence – sont à comprendre relativement à la configuration céleste qui leur correspond.[24] L'influence des astres sur le monde sublunaire est donc importante. Pour autant, ils n'imposent pas de nécessité aux choses et, ce, pour deux raisons : premièrement, la force des étoiles parvient aux inférieurs *per aliud* et non *per se* et, deuxièmement, elle leur parvient

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è frutto della reinterpretazione del fato boeziano in termini ermetici come catena di cause »: Palazzo, « *Dupliciter autem ponitur fatum* », 231.

[22] Albertus Magnus, *De fato*, a. 2, resp. 21, ed. P. Simon (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia. Editio Coloniensis 17.1), Münster 1975, 68.31-33 : « Tertio modo dicitur fatum forma ordinis esse et vitae inferiorum, causata in ipsis ex periodo caelestis circuli, qui suis radiationibus ambit nativitates eorum […] ». Dans le *De fato*, la démarche d'Albert est naturaliste ; il n'est donc pas question d'y étudier le destin dans son rapport à la Providence.

[23] Albertus Magnus, *Summa theologiae*, pars I, tr. 17, q. 68, m. 1, sol., ed. Borgnet, 695a-b.

[24] Sur cette question et la façon dont Albert adapte la philosophie aristotélicienne de la nature en y intégrant les connaissances astrologiques gréco-arabes, voy. H. D. Rutkin, « Astrology and magic », in *A companion to Albert the Great*, ed. Resnick, 451-505 (en particulier « 1. Astrology and Natural Philosophy in Albert's Authentic Works », 458-483).

per accidens.[25] C'est-à-dire qu'elle leur arrive de façon non nécessaire, par le biais d'un *intermédiaire* qui l'a lui-même reçu selon son pouvoir propre et qui la transmet donc altérée. En effet, « tout ce qui est reçu […] est dans ce dans quoi il est reçu selon la puissance du recevant et non selon la puissance de la cause par laquelle il est ».[26] La

[25] Albertus Magnus, *Summa theologiae*, pars I, tr. 17, q. 68, m. 2, a. 2, ad obj. 6, ed. Borgnet, 701b.

[26] Albertus Magnus, *De fato*, a. 2, resp. 21, ed. Simon, 68.60-69.3 : « […] omne enim quod recipitur, ut dicunt Boethius et Aristoteles in VI Ethicorum, est in eo in quo recipitur, secundum potestatem recipientis et non secundum potestatem causae, a qua est ». Selon la définition qu'en donne Alain de Libera, « l'analogie, "capacité réceptive finie" est la mesure précise de ce qu'un étant créé peut recevoir de son créateur, étant donné la place qu'il occupe dans l'univers hiérarchique »: A. de Libera, *Albert le Grand et la philosophie (À la recherche de la vérité)*, Paris 1990, 100. Pour l'expression « capacité réceptive finie », Alain de Libera renvoie au *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*. Si l'idée y est en effet évoquée, l'expression ne s'y trouve pas telle quelle : Albertus Magnus, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, c. 4, ed. P. Simon (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia. Editio Coloniensis 37.1), Münster 1972, 119.18-31 : « *Noster sol,* idest qui ad sensum nobis videtur, *per ipsum esse,* quod est lucidum, *illuminat* quasi communicando suam intentionem, quae est lux, *secundum* propriam *rationem,* idest secundum analogiam uniuscuiusque recipientium ; *ita quidem et bonum immittit etc., archetypum,* idest principale exemplum, *segregate,* idest excellenter, *super solem* sensibilem *sicut super imaginem obscuram,* idest imperfecte repraesentantem, quia non est simplex et sua essentia non est lux, qua agit, nec etiam est simpliciter perfectus, ut agat per ordinem sapientiae et libertatem voluntatis, *proportionaliter,* <idest> accepta proportione ex parte effectuum, non ex parte causae, quae similiter se habet ad omnia, *radios,* idest processiones, suae *bonitatis* » (« Notre soleil, c'est-à-dire celui qui est vu par nous selon le sens, par [son] être même, qui est resplendissant [*lucidum*], illumine pour ainsi dire [*quasi*] en communiquant son intensité [*intentionem*], qui est la lumière, *selon la raison propre, c'est-à-dire selon l'analogie de chacun de ceux qui la reçoivent* ; […] de sorte qu'il fait, par l'ordre de [sa] sagesse et par la liberté de [sa] volonté, les rayons, c'est-à-dire les processions, de sa bonté, *proportionnellement*, <c'est-à-dire> selon la proportion reçue de la part des effets, non de la part de la cause, qui se tient semblablement relativement à toutes les [choses] (trad. A. de Libera) ». Voy. aussi la définition de l'analogie que donne Vladimir Lossky : « […] l'analogie chez le Pseudo-Denys signifie la capacité proportionnelle des créatures à participer aux vertus créatrices de Dieu, qui leur confèrent leur être et toutes leurs perfections. »: V. Lossky, « La notion des "analogies"», 292. Il faut également pointer l'héritage du *Liber de causis* sur cette question, dont les propositions 177 à 180 traitent de la capacité de réception des choses. Ainsi, par exemple, la proposition 180 soutient ceci : « C'est donc selon le degré de proximité de la cause première et selon l'aptitude de la chose à l'accueillir que celle-ci peut, en proportion, recevoir d'elle et par elle se délecter. La raison en est que la chose ne reçoit de la cause première et ne se délecte en elle que selon la mesure de son être propre […] »: *La Demeure de l'être. Autour d'un anonyme.*

forme qui flue peut donc être affaiblie, voire empêchée, par tous les intermédiaires la séparant de son acte ultime, c'est-à-dire par toutes les causes intermédiaires que comprend la chaîne de causalité, si on les considère précisément non pas en tant que causes mais en tant que réceptacles d'une causalité dont ils sont le relais.

Nous le voyons, l'univers albertinien est un univers ordonné, hiérarchisé, dans lequel les êtres entretiennent entre eux des rapports d'analogie. C'est précisément sur ce rapport d'analogie que se fonde la connaissance par conjecture, propre aux contingents *ut in pluribus*. Dans un tel univers de correspondances et vu l'importance du rôle joué par les étoiles dans le gouvernement des êtres sublunaires, il n'est pas surprenant qu'un événement, par exemple céleste (une conjonction, une éclipse, voire simplement la position précise de telle ou telle planète ou constellation dans la cartographie du ciel) puisse être le signe d'un événement sublunaire. Il semble même que l'événement céleste *cause* l'événement sublunaire. Les étoiles étant causes premières *in genere* de tout ce qui se produit *naturellement* dans le monde sublunaire, il semble logique de poser que leur position et leur mouvement causent, au sens fort, les événements qu'on constate leur correspondre – pour autant du moins que l'on reste dans la sphère des événements naturels. Nous verrons d'ailleurs que tous les modes de prédiction des événements contingents *ut in pluribus* s'appuient ultimement sur les astres, que le sage y lise directement ou qu'il en interprète les signes au sein du monde sublunaire.

Des futurs dont les causes sont indéterminées mais déterminables par la nature

Albert ne mentionne que peu d'exemples de futurs contingents dont les causes sont indéterminées mais déterminables par la nature, tout comme il ne mentionne que peu d'exemples de futurs contingents *ut in pluribus*. Le monde sublunaire étant le lieu de la contingence, nous pourrions comprendre, en première intention, qu'il s'agit de l'ensemble des événements sublunaires naturels.[27] Ne serait-ce pas donner

Étude et traduction du Liber de causis (Philologie et Mercure), intro. P. MAGNARD, trad. fr. O. BOULNOIS, B. PINCHARD, P. MAGNARD, J.-L. SOLÈRE, Paris 1990, 75.

[27] En parlant d'Aristote, Sylvain Delcomminette indique que « c'est précisément la possibilité de l'émergence imprévisible de tels accidents et de leurs causes qui fait

à ce concept une extension trop large ? Pour pouvoir être objets de science, les événements sublunaires naturels doivent en effet pouvoir être considérés comme *nécessaires* – fût-ce selon une « nécessité atténuée ».[28] Deux considérations s'imposent : (1) ce n'est qu'au niveau de l'espèce que le « en règle générale », en mettant en évidence une régularité, s'apparente à une forme de nécessité – la façon dont la règle générale va s'exprimer au niveau d'un individu particulier reste incertaine ; (2) cependant, on ne cherche à connaître par avance que des événements qui présentent pour nous un certain intérêt, et sur lesquels nous pouvons, par notre action, intervenir – cette connaissance s'inscrit d'emblée dans le registre de l'utile. Dans l'extrait suivant, le critère de l'intérêt ou de l'utilité que présentent pour nous ces événements que l'on cherche à connaître est pris en charge par le terme « *sperabilia* ».

> […] les [choses] futures sont plutôt objets d'opinion ou d'espoir : objets d'opinion celles qui sont simplement attendues comme vraies, comme l'éclipse du soleil ou le tremblement de terre ou autre [chose] de ce genre, objets d'espoir celles qui sont attendues comme profitant à la vie, comme la fertilité de l'année ou la victoire de la guerre ou quelque chose de ce genre. Sous la [catégorie] "objets d'espoir" sont

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que les chaînes causales sont au mieux, au sein du monde sublunaire, de l'ordre du "en règle générale" plutôt que de la nécessité stricte : des exceptions à la règle sont toujours possibles, ne fût-ce que par la rencontre non programmée entre plusieurs chaînes causales indépendantes »: DELCOMMINETTE, « Nécessité et contingence dans le devenir », in *Aristote et la nécessité*, §202, 289.

[28] Pour l'utilisation, dans ce contexte, de l'expression « nécessité atténuée », voy. DELCOMMINETTE, *Aristote et la nécessité*, §194, 280. Dominique Demange parle, quant à lui, d'un « élément de nécessité »: D. DEMANGE, « Chapitre III. Connaissance et expérience », in *Jean Duns Scot. La théorie du savoir* (Sic et non), Paris 2007, 119. Selon Aristote, il ne peut en effet y avoir de science que de ce qui arrive toujours *ou le plus souvent*. Nous pouvons lire dans l'Aristote latin : ARISTOTELES*, Metaphysica, Lib. I-XIV, Recensio et Translatio Guillelmi de Moerbeka*, VI, 2, ed. G. VUILLEMIN-DIEM (Aristoteles Latinus 25/3.1), 129.129 (ed. BEKKER : 1027a) : « QUOD AUTEM scientia non est accidentis, palam ; scientia namque omnis aut est eius quod est semper aut EIUS QUOD secundum magis […] » (« Mais qu'il n'y a pas de science de l'accident, manifestement ; de fait, toute science est ou bien de ce qui est toujours ou bien de ce qui est suivant le plus […] »). Il est intéressant de souligner que l'exemple donné immédiatement ensuite par Aristote pour illustrer « le plus fréquemment » relève de la médecine : ARISTOTELES*, Metaphysica, Rec. et Transl. Guillelmi*, VI, 2, ed. VUILLEMIN-DIEM, 129.132 : « Oportet enim diffiniri aut per semper aut per magis, ut quia utile mellicratum febricitanti ut secundum magis » (« En effet il faut définir ou bien par le toujours ou bien par le plus, comme l'hydromel [est] utile au fiévreux selon le plus »).

> aussi contenues ces [choses] qu'il faut craindre, qui sont attendues comme maux futurs.[29]

Parmi les futurs contingents dont les causes sont indéterminées mais déterminables par la nature que l'on cherchera à connaître, il faut donc compter les phénomènes météorologiques et leurs conséquences particulières (par exemple, sur telle récolte, avec le risque éventuel de famine que cela implique, *etc.*), mais aussi ce qui concerne les corps (au premier chef, la santé). Par parenthèses, précisons également que si, par principe, le libre arbitre de l'homme, dont l'âme et la volonté ont été « constituées à l'image de Dieu dans la liberté de soi et qui sont maîtresses de leurs actes et de leurs choix »,[30] ne peut jamais être directement influencé par les étoiles, il peut cependant être *incliné* par l'intermédiaire du corps et des puissances végétative et sensible de l'âme. Et comme Albert nous dit que, la plupart du temps, les hommes suivent

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[29] Albertus Magnus, *De memoria et reminiscentia*, tr. 1, c. 2, ed. S. Donati (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia. Editio Coloniensis 7.2A), Münster 2017, 116.8-15 : « […] futura potius sunt opinabilia vel sperabilia. Opinabilia quidem quae simpliciter exspectantur ut vera, sicut solis eclipsis, vel terrae motus, vel aliquid hujusmodi. Sperabilia autem quae exspectantur ut proficientia ad vitam, sicut fertilitas anni, vel victoria belli, vel aliud hujusmodi. Sub sperabilibus autem etiam timenda continentur, quae exspectantur ut mala futura ».

[30] Albertus Magnus, *Summa theologiae*, pars I, tr. 17, q. 68, m. 1, sol., ed. Borgnet, 696a : « Talis enim stellarum qualitas trahere potest corpora, et mutare animas etiam plantarum et brutorum, sed animam et voluntatem hominis quae ad imaginem Dei in libertate sui constitua est, et domina est suorum actuum et suarum electionum, nec mutare nec trahere potest coactiva coactione […] ». Par sa volonté, l'homme imite un trait essentiel de la divinité : la liberté au sens de *causa sui*. Bien entendu, il ne s'agit pas de comprendre l'expression *causa sui* au sens de fort de « cause de soi » : la volonté comme faculté ne se cause pas elle-même dans l'être. D'ailleurs, selon Albert, aucun être ne se cause lui-même, pas même l'être nécessaire, défini bien plutôt par *l'absence de cause* (cf. *supra*, n. 16). *A fortiori*, la volonté ne peut pas non plus être cause d'elle-même dans l'être. Si elle est *causa sui*, c'est donc en tant qu'elle est à elle-même son propre moteur : elle se donne à elle-même la fin qui la met en mouvement, qu'elle peut en toute indépendance, du moins en droit, choisir de poursuivre ou non. Sur le sens à donner à la maxime « *liber est causa sui* », voy. J. A. Spiering, « *Liber est causa sui* : Thomas Aquinas and the maxim "the free is the cause of itself" », in *The Review of Metaphysics*, 65 (2011), 351-376. Sur la volonté comme *causa sui*, voy. D. B. Twetten, « Chapter 13. The Emanation Scheme of Albert the Great and the Questions of Divine Free Will and Mediated Creation », in *Albert the Great and his Arabic Sources*, ed. K. Krause, R. C. Taylor (Philosophy in the Abrahamic Traditions of the Middle Ages 5), Turnhout 2024, 371-442: 378-389.

leurs passions plus que leur raison,[31] les événements contingents qui dépendent du libre arbitre entrent de fait dans la catégorie des événements contingents dont les causes sont indéterminées mais déterminables par la nature, c'est-à-dire dans la catégorie des futurs contingents *ut in pluribus*. Par exemple, la volonté peut être inclinée par les passions de crainte ou de concupiscence par lesquelles nous voulons quelque chose que nous ne voudrions pas si nous étions libérés de telles passions.[32]

Si les causes de ces événements futurs sont *déterminables* par la nature, c'est bien parce qu'elles appartiennent à l'ordre des causes naturelles (nous avons vu que la cause et l'effet sont ordonnés par soi l'une à l'autre). Si elles sont *indéterminées* par la nature, c'est parce qu'elles sont empêchables : elles n'imposent aucune nécessité aux corps sublunaires. C'est pourquoi il arrive au devin de prédire quelque chose de vrai qui, cependant, n'arrivera pas. Si un tel événement ne se produit pas, c'est que l'information de la matière a été empêchée par un corps intermédiaire ou une cause plus forte. Albert le Grand écrit ainsi, à propos de la prophétie *naturelle* : « […] toutes les fois que sera survenu, dans les intermédiaires ou l'un des intermédiaires, un mouvement plus fort que celui par lequel fut saisi le signe d'un événement futur, ce qui a été prophétisé ne se produit pas […] ».[33] Il

[31] Albertus Magnus, *De somno et vigilia*, III, tr. 1, c. 8, ed. A. Borgnet (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia 9), Paris 1890, 189a : « […] omnes enim fere sequuntur passiones magis quam rationem ».

[32] Albertus Magnus, *De somno et vigilia*, III, tr. 1, c. 8, ed. Borgnet., 189a : « Dicamus igitur, quod licet propositum et voluntas sint causae per se operum nostrorum quibus non sit necessitas ad aliter movendum quam volunt, tamen haec secundum inclinationes, subduntur causis universalibus superioribus et naturae : et ideo inclinantur ab his ad aliquid volendum, sicut inclinat alicui injacens passio timoris vel concupiscentiae voluntatem, quod aliquid vult, quod liberatus ab hujusmodi passione nequaquam vellet, et est adeo violentum, quod licet non imponat necessitatem […] ».

[33] Albertus Magnus, *De somno et vigilia*, III, tr. 2, c. 5, ed. Borgnet, 202b : « Quotiescumque ergo fortior motus supervenerit in mediis vel mediorum aliquo, quam ille est a quo sumptum fuit signum futuri eventus, non evenit quod vaticinatum est ». Sur la prophétie naturelle chez Albert et les sources arabes et hébraïques auxquelles il puise, voy. A. Palazzo, « *Philosophi aliter loquuntur de prophetia quam sancti.* Alberto il Grande e la profezia naturale », in *Immaginario e immaginazione nel Medioevo*, a cura di M. Bettetini, F. Paparella (Textes et études du Moyen Âge 51), Turnhout 2009, 179-201. Sur la prophétie surnaturelle au XIIIe siècle, on consultera utilement, notamment, les références suivantes : A. Rodolfi, « Prophesying and Being a Prophet. The Case of Caiaphas as an Evil Prophet, from Hugh of Saint-Cher to Thomas Aquinas », in

n'en reste cependant pas moins que les causes ou les dispositions éloignées et très communes des causes furent les premiers principes de l'ébauche de ces événements qui ne se sont pas produits, ainsi que de vrais signes. En outre, ces signes ont été correctement interprétés – c'est-à-dire que le devin a perçu les signes en tant que signes et qu'il a correctement interprété ce dont ils étaient les signes –, ce qui fait dire à Albert que « dans les premiers mouvants, elle [la forme] a signifié de façon très vraie quelque chose de futur qui serait arrivé sans doute […] mais dans ces choses il y eut un empêchement ».[34] Ou encore : « […] l'astronome dit vrai et cependant ce qu'il dit n'arrive pas, parce que ce qu'il a dit était très vrai relativement à la disposition des cieux, mais cette disposition a été exclue par la mutabilité des inférieurs ».[35] C'est pour cette raison que les futurs contingents *ut in pluribus* ne peuvent jamais qu'être *conjecturés*.

Un savoir seulement conjectural

L'hypothèse selon laquelle il est possible de prédire quelque chose de vrai qui cependant n'arrivera pas est forte, parce qu'elle oblige en quelque sorte à envisager une troisième voie aux côtés de l'opposition logique classique vrai-faux : vrai dans la forme mais faux dans la matière. Ce constat pousse Albert à considérer que la conjecture produit un *habitus* de moindre certitude que la science – ce qui se comprend aisément dans la mesure où la science mène à une connaissance universelle et certaine, tandis que la conjecture ne peut mener qu'à un savoir

Prophecy and Prophets in the Middle Ages, ed. A. Palazzo, A. Rodolfi (Micrologus' Library 103), Firenze 2020, 165-187 ; J.-P. Torrell, *Recherches sur la théorie de la prophétie au Moyen Age : XIIe-XIVe siècles : études et textes*, Fribourg 1992.

[34] Albertus Magnus, *De somno et vigilia*, III, tr. 1, c. 11, ed. Borgnet, 194a : « […] cum tamen in primis moventibus verissime significavit aliquid futurum, quod absque dubio evenisset, si concreata cum ipso ad concurrendum concurrissent : sed in his fuit impedimentum […] ».

[35] Albertus Magnus, *De fato*, a. 4, sol., ed. Simon, 73.52-56 : « Et ideo saepe astronomus dicit verum et tamen non evenit, quod dicit, quia dictum suum fuit quoad dispositionem caelestium verissimum, sed haec dispositio a mutabilitate inferiorum exclusa est ».

incertain[36] – mais également de moindre certitude que l'opinion[37] – ce qui est plus étonnant car, contrairement à l'opinion, le savoir conjectural repose sur la connaissance des causes. Cette moindre certitude s'explique cependant si l'on compare les objets sur lesquels portent respectivement la conjecture et l'opinion. En effet, en relisant l'extrait du *De memoria et reminiscentia*, on remarque que l'opinion porte sur des événements que « l'on attend simplement comme vrais », sans portée axiologique, tandis que la conjecture porte sur des événements que l'on espère ou que l'on craint. Autrement dit, l'opinion semble devoir ici se comprendre comme portant sur des objets nécessaires (l'éclipse solaire, qui est mentionnée, est d'ailleurs l'exemple paradigmatique de l'événement nécessaire) qui ne sont alors pas connus *en tant qu'objets de science* avec l'*habitus* que cela impliquerait.

Albert précise que le devin dans les astres (mais ceci est transposable aux autres pratiques prédictives naturelles) « ne peut tirer des astres qu'une *forme commune non appropriée* ; or l'appropriation est [à partir] du mélange de la matière et des vertus agentes et patientes qui sont dans la matière ; et ces choses ne sont pas connues par les astres mais à partir des raisons physiques ; à cause de quoi il [Ptolémée] enseigne aussi que le juge des astres avisé n'est pas ignorant dans les [choses] physiques ».[38] Autrement dit, ce n'est pas en tant que

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[36] Ce ne sera cependant pas la voie empruntée par tous les auteurs. Pour Pietro d'Abano, par exemple, le problème sera justement de « démontrer que l'astrologie est une science théorique certaine, visant une multitude de choses contingentes et individuelles, en contradiction avec l'interprétation courante de la science »: G. Federici Vescovini, « L'astrologie comme science théorique, rationnelle et autorisée dans le *Lucidator* de Pietro d'Abano », in *Médecine, astrologie et magie entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance : autour de Pietro d'Abano*, éd. J.P. Boudet, F. Collard, N. Weill-Parot (Micrologus Library 50), Firenze 2013, 3-20 : 4.

[37] Albertus Magnus, *De fato*, a. 4, sol., ed. Simon, 73.45-47.

[38] Albertus Magnus, *De somno et vigilia*, III, tr. 1, c. 11, ed. Borgnet, 194a : « […] divinans in astris non faciat nisi judicium commune : quia non nisi formam communem non appropriatam elicere potest ex astris : appropriatio autem est commixtionis et materiae et virtutum agentium et patientium quae sunt in materia : et ista per astra non sciuntur, sed ex physicis rationibus. Propter quod ipse etiam praecipit, quod doctus judex astrorum non sit imperitus in physicis ». Cette idée provient en fait du *Centiloquium* du Pseudo-Ptolémée, dont le *verbum* I stipule : « […] Astrologus autem non debet dicere rem specialiter sed universaliter, ut qui eminus videt aliquam rem. Sic enim facit qui considerat rem secundum materiam suam et non venit ad ejus certam cognitionem. Per materiam habemus de re cognitionem dubiam, per formam vero cer-

devin que quelqu'un peut déterminer comment le destin informera la matière, mais ce n'est qu'à condition d'être également « physicien » qu'il pourra faire la part des choses entre ce qui relève du mouvement céleste et ce qui relève des vertus de la matière – et bien plus, de *cette matière-ci en particulier* – et donc de prévoir comment le destin s'exprimera effectivement dans la matière. C'est ce qui fait dire à Albert que l'astrologue se trompera s'il n'a pas de connaissances en philosophie naturelle. Cette méconnaissance présupposée, par l'astrologue en tant qu'astrologue, des effets concrets et particuliers que peut avoir *dans la matière* l'influence céleste est également l'une des raisons pour lesquelles Galien refusait aux astrologues la possibilité de prédire le cours d'une maladie.[39]

La médecine, qui est un art recelant une part de prédictibilité (le pronostic) et qui, en tant que tel, porte également sur des futurs contingents *ut in pluribus*, peut nous servir de modèle pour comprendre le mode de

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tam. Et hec judicia que trado tibi sunt media inter necessarium et possibile. Quod dixi "hec judicia esse inter necessarium et possibile", hoc est apud eum qui rerum naturas et stellarum opus considerat. Sed illi qui ex meliori parte anime cognitionem habent futurorum propinquiores sunt veritati propter anime vim in eis dominantem, licet non multa habeant hujus artis scientiam »: *Liber centum verborum Ptholomei cum commento Haly*, ed. Venetiis 1493, f. 107ra, cité par J.-P. Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance. Astrologie, divination et magie dans l'Occident médiéval (XIIe-XVe siècle)*, Paris 2006, 221, n. 60 (nous traduisons :« […] L'astrologue ne doit pas dire la chose spécialement mais universellement, comme celui qui voit quelque chose de loin. En effet, ainsi fait celui qui considère la chose selon sa matière et qui n'arrive pas à sa connaissance certaine. Par la matière, nous avons, au sujet de la chose, une connaissance incertaine [*dubiam*] mais, par la forme, [une connaissance] certaine. Et ces jugements que je te transmets sont intermédiaires entre le nécessaire et le possible. Ce que j'ai dit, que "ces jugements sont entre le nécessaire et le possible", c'est chez celui qui considère les natures des choses et l'œuvre des étoiles. Mais ceux qui ont la connaissance des [choses] futures à partir d'une meilleure partie de l'âme sont plus proches de la vérité à cause de la force de l'âme qui domine en eux, bien qu'ils n'aient pas beaucoup la science de cet art ». Richard Lemay attribue la rédaction du *Centiloquium* et de son commentaire dit « de Hali » à l'astrologue égyptien Ahmad ibn Yûsuf (Xe siècle): voy. R. Lemay, « Origin and Success of the *Kitâb Thamara* of Abû Ja'far Ahmad ibn Yûsuf ibn Ibrâhîm from the Tenth to the Seventeenth Century in the World of Islam and Latin West », in *Proceedings of the first International Symposium for the History of Arabic Science*, ed. A. Y. Al-Hassan, G. Karmi, N. Namnum, vol. 2, Alep 1978, 91-107.

[39] V. Nutton, « Greek medical astrology and the boundaries of medicine », in *Astro-medicine. Astrology and Medicine, East and West*, ed. A. Akasoy, C. Burnett, R. Yoeli-Tlalim (Micrologus Library 25), Firenze 2008, 17-31 : 23.

connaissance conjectural – Albert le Grand établit d'ailleurs lui-même explicitement cette comparaison dans son *De prophetia* : « De là, de même que le médecin pronostique par l'intermédiaire d'un signe très proche, l'astrologue (*astronomus*[40]) [pronostique] par l'intermédiaire d'un signe lointain […] ».[41] En effet, en visant une clinique *efficace* qui permette de couvrir *le plus grand nombre de cas*,[42] la médecine exprime la tension qui existe entre la forme *commune* (le plus grand nombre de cas) et la forme commune *appropriée* (l'efficace) : le médecin ne prend pas en charge l'universel, mais doit prendre en compte la singularité

[40] Au XIIIe siècle, en effet, bien que l'astronomie et l'astrologie soient clairement distinguées l'une de l'autre dans leurs dimensions conceptuelle et pratique (et ce, depuis le *Quadripartitum* de Ptolémée), la terminologie n'est pas encore bien fixée, et les termes « astrologie » et « astronomie » peuvent en principe tous deux être utilisés de façon interchangeable: H. D. Rutkin, *Sapientia Astrologica : Astrology, Magic and Natural Knowledge, ca. 1250-1280* (Archimedes 55), 2 vols., vol. 1 (*Medieval Structures (1250-1800) : Conceptual, Institutional, Socio-Political, Theologico-Religious and Cultural*), Cham 2019, XXIX-XXX. Certains auteurs, parmi lesquels Dominicus Gundissalinus, leur attribuent cependant déjà une signification fixe mais les intervertissent, en faisant de l'astronomie ce que nous entendrons par « astrologie » et inversement: voy. M. Lejbowicz, « Le choc des traductions arabo-latines du XIIe siècle et ses conséquences dans la spécialisation sémantique d'*astrologia* et d'*astronomia* : Dominicus Gundissalinus et la *sciencia iudicandi* », in *Transfert de vocabulaire dans les sciences*, éd. P. Louis, J. Roger, Paris 1988, 213-276. B. B. Price, « Interpreting Albert the Great on astronomy », in *A companion to Albert the Great. Theology, philosophy, and the sciences*, ed. Resnick, 397-436 : 412-413, soutient que c'est également le cas d'Albert le Grand, mais, après examen des textes qu'elle produit en soutien de cette thèse, il nous semble que rien ne permet de l'affirmer. En effet, aucun texte ne mentionne à la fois l'*astronomia* et l'*astrologia*, ce qui témoigne plutôt en faveur de la thèse de l'interchangeabilité des termes. Au vu du contexte, il ne fait guère de doute qu'il faille ici comprendre *astronomus* au sens d'« astrologue ». Nous utiliserons pour notre part les termes dans leur acception actuelle.

[41] Albertus Magnus, *De prophetia*, II, 2, ad 8, ed. Torrell, 34.28-29 : « Unde, sicut medicus pronosticat per proximum signum, ita astronomus per signum remotum […] ».

[42] J. Giovacchini, « L'expérience par les sens : question de philosophe ou question de médecin ? », in Expertus sum. *L'expérience par les sens dans la philosophie naturelle médiévale*, éd. T. Bénatouïl, I. Draelants (Micrologus Library 40), Firenze 2011, 325-336 : 332. Sur la médecine comme art conjectural, voy. aussi V. Boudon, « Art, science et conjecture chez Galien », in *Galien et la philosophie*, éd. J. Barnes, J. Jouanna, Genève 2003, 269-305 ; Rutkin, *Sapientia Astrologica : Astrology, Magic and Natural Knowledge*, vol. 1, XLV, souligne la similitude des structures ou des *motifs* (au sens de *patterns*) de pensée entre l'astrologie et la médecine, telles qu'elles s'expriment notamment respectivement chez Ptolémée et Galien.

du corps qu'il soigne. Comme l'écrivait déjà Aristote, quelqu'un qui, en médecine, possèderait la définition sans l'expérience et acquerrait la connaissance de l'universel en ignorant le singulier contenu dans l'universel se tromperait souvent de traitement.[43] En médecine, comme dans les autres arts prédictifs d'ailleurs, la fin ne peut être atteinte qu'accidentellement par la seule connaissance de l'universel. Cependant, l'expérience seule ne suffit pas davantage. Il s'agit donc de trouver la règle universelle qui permette à la fois d'unifier (par soi et non par accident) ce qui est expérimenté de manière parfois éparse et confuse et d'orienter l'action.[44] Autrement dit, il s'agit de nouveau de comprendre la façon dont la forme informe de manière concrète la matière.

Le point commun de ces arts prédictifs est d'être *faillibles* :[45] leur fin est en effet *empêchable*. Autrement dit, ils manquent parfois leur but. L'empêchabilité de la cause, dont nous avons vu qu'elle permet de distinguer entre les événements contingents *ut in pluribus* et les événements nécessaires, intervient donc à la fois dans le cadre de la causalité efficiente et dans le cadre de la causalité finale.[46] Cependant, le défaut

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[43] Aristoteles, *Metaphysica*, I, 1, 981a18-25, trad. fr. M. P. Duminil, A. Jaulin, in *Aristote. Œuvres complètes*, éd. P. Pellegrin, Paris 2014, 1738.

[44] Albertus Magnus, *Metaphysica*, I, tr. 1, c. 8, ed. B. Geyer (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia. Editio Coloniensis 16.1), Münster 1960, 11.25-44 : « *Experientia quidem enim artem fecit, sicut ait Polus philosophus recte dicens, sed inexperientia fecit casum.* Quemadmodum enim in physicis casus est causa per accidens in his quae propter aliquid fiunt, ita in actibus eorum quae fiunt per nos, quae omnia propter aliquid fiunt, experimenti potentia fecit causam per se eorum quae a nobis propter aliquid fiunt. Et haec est ars in finem regulans et dirigens opus. Inexperientia autem, si pertingat ad finem, sine regulante finem contingit ; et hoc fit casu, sicut non-expertus aliquando sanat, sanare non intendens, sed casu dans medicinam sanitatis perfectivam. *Ars autem fit* et generatur et perficitur in nobis, *cum ex multis* non confusis quidem iam *experimento* per depurationem universalis *intellectis* per rationem veram et certam *una* ex omnibus abstracta fit *de similibus* essentialiter *acceptio universalis*, in qua instantia non esse probatur. Et tunc experimenti potentia perducta est ad actum completum, et depuratum est et simplex, quod prius in confusione multorum erat acceptum ».

[45] Voy. notamment V. Boudon, « Art, science et conjecture chez Galien », 303.

[46] Cela se comprend si l'on a en tête le fait que « la fin est cause que l'efficient soit cause »: Albertus Magnus, *Quaestiones super De animalibus*, XI, q. 6, ed. E. Filthaut (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia. Editio Coloniensis 12), Münster 1955, 220.14-18 : « Quantum ad completionem prior est finis et secundo efficiens et tertio forma et ultimo materia, quia efficiens non dicitur causa, nisi quia movet ; sed non movet, nisi quia prius movetur a fine. Unde finis est causa, quod efficiens sit causa. Praeterea generans generat sibi simile ».

de prévision est toujours à imputer à la contingence de l'objet de ces disciplines. En aucun cas, le défaut de prévision de l'art médical, par exemple, n'est dû à la faillibilité de la règle, puisqu'il s'agit de la raison vraie et certaine[47] et que l'art médical est la cause par soi de la guérison du malade. C'est ce qui explique que la prévision ne peut être, dans ce contexte, que *conjecture* et c'est ce qui explique aussi cette valeur de vérité, de prime abord étrange, de « vrai qui cependant ne se produit pas ». En revanche, le défaut de prévision de celui qui possède seulement l'expérience est à imputer à la faillibilité de la règle tirée de l'expérience, qui ne parvient pas à se hisser au niveau de l'universel. Ici, la prévision est simplement fausse, quand bien même d'ailleurs ce qui est attendu se produirait accidentellement.[48] À l'inverse, conjecturer correctement un événement qui, en définitive, ne se produit pas, ne constitue pas une véritable erreur, puisqu'il est de l'essence du contingent de pouvoir ou non se produire. Le danger consisterait plutôt à considérer que le contingent est nécessaire, c'est-à-dire à prédire quelque chose sans signaler qu'un empêchement est possible. Autrement dit, l'erreur serait de vouloir former, à partir de signes, un jugement particulier définitif, alors qu'il ne faut, au contraire, « juger que *de façon générale et avec une déclaration prudente* ».[49]

La conjecture est cependant loin d'être un pari aveugle ; elle se fonde en effet sur des savoirs certains et s'opère dans les limites imposées par l'art en question, définies par sa fin (dans le cas de la médecine, recouvrer la santé). C'est ici qu'intervient le critère de l'utilité, qui oriente la connaissance conjecturale vers une pratique qui la cadre

[47] Albertus Magnus, *Metaphysica*, I, tr. 1, c. 8, ed. Geyer, 11.11-18 : « Propter quod etiam frequenter fallit ex defectu regulantis et non tantum ex defectu rei, circa quam est opus. Ars autem numquam fallit ex defectu regulantis, quia haec est ratio vera et certa; sed fallit quandoque per accidens ex defectu eorum in quibus factio consistit ».

[48] Comme l'expose clairement, *mutatis mutandis*, Sylvain Delcomminette en commentant les *Seconds Analytiques* I, 33, 89b3-6, « toute opinion portant sur un objet qui peut être également objet de science est fausse : en effet, dans le meilleur des cas, elle prend comme étant contingent quelque chose dont la science peut montrer qu'il est nécessaire »: S. Delcomminette, « La nécessité dans la théorie de la science », in Id., *Aristote et la nécessité*, 163.

[49] Albertus Magnus, *De somno et vigilia*, III, tr. 2, c. 5, ed. Borgnet, 202b, nous soulignons : « […] propter quod Ptolemaeus sapiens dicit nihil esse judicandum nisi valde generaliter et cum protestatione cauta, quod stellae ea quae faciunt, faciunt per aliud et per accidens, ex quibus multa in significatis suis occurrunt impedimenta […] ».

et la justifie. C'est parce qu'un certain événement (par exemple, la guérison de telle maladie) se produit la plupart du temps dans tel contexte que le contexte peut être travaillé pour que l'événement visé se produise. Évidemment, il s'agit que l'événement et le contexte soient *finalement* rapportés l'un à l'autre, sinon la contingence ne serait pas *in pluribus* mais *in paucioribus*, c'est-à-dire que la cause de l'événement lui serait ordonnée non pas par soi mais par accident. Le rôle du médecin sera, dans cette perspective, d'identifier le « contexte » propice à la guérison, y compris le climat, le repos, les remèdes, *etc.* qui y aideront. Une simple connaissance théorique ne suffit pas à cela ; il faut en outre que le médecin possède cette connaissance qui se base sur l'expérience et la conjecture. Alors seulement pourra être écarté l'empêchement que constitue la maladie pour que soit atteinte la fin (c'est-à-dire le corps sain).

La description du médecin qui vient d'être faite rappelle le rôle du sage pseudo-ptoléméen, qu'Albert le Grand mentionne notamment dans le *De somno et vigilia* :

> C'est pourquoi Ptolémée dit que l'effet céleste est aidé par ceux qui disposent de telle manière ce qui lui est soumis, comme la semence est aidée par le labour et la fumure de la terre, et très souvent l'un est mû par de telles formes et pas l'autre, à cause de la différence de leurs corps et d'une disposition semblable ou contraire de leurs âmes.[50]

Il faut préciser que l'aide que le sage est en mesure d'apporter à l'effet céleste ne peut s'entendre que vis-à-vis des événements relevant à la fois de la nature et de l'art, et non pas vis-à-vis des événements relevant de l'art seul ni même des événements relevant de la nature seule, selon une classification établie dans la *Metaphysica* :

> […] comme la santé et l'agriculture et de nombreuses [choses] dont l'astronome veille à ce qu'elles se produisent par l'effet céleste ; au sujet de quoi Ptolémée dit que le sage aide l'effet céleste, comme la terre est aidée par le labour et l'ensemencement. Mais certaines [choses] ne se produisent que par l'art, comme la maison ; en effet on a déjà traité de ce qui arrive seulement par la nature. Mais la cause de ce que certaines [choses] se produisent par la nature et par l'art, et

[50] Albertus Magnus, *De somno et vigilia*, III, tr. 1, c. 11, ed. Borgnet, 193b : « Propter quod dicit Ptolemaeus, quod coelestis effectus juvatur a taliter disponentibus subjectum ejus, sicut juvatur semen terrae aratione et fimatione, et omnino frequenter unus movetur talibus formis, et non alius, propter differentem suorum corporum et animarum dispositionem similem vel contrariam ».

> certaines par l'art seulement, est que la matière de certaines [choses], ayant en soi un principe agissant et formateur, est telle qu'elle suffit pour commencer à agir et à ce que se produise quelque [chose] de ce qui se produit par l'art, dans lequel se manifeste [*exsistit*] quelque partie de la chose naturelle, qui commence à agir par nature, comme nous l'avons dit dans ce qui précède ; et dans de telles [choses] l'art aide en facilitant l'acte et en écartant les empêchements, mais c'est la nature qui opère. Pour cette raison, certes, une telle matière peut être mue par l'art, mais une autre, dont aucune partie du mouvement n'est touchée par l'art, ne peut être ni mue ni aidée par l'art, et il y en a peu qui excèdent les forces de ceux qui pratiquent un art, comme la génération des montagnes, des tremblements de terre, du tonnerre et des [choses] de ce genre.[51]

Tandis que les événements qui relèvent de l'art seul ne sont pas concernés par l'effet céleste, les événements qui relèvent de la nature seule semblent ne pas souffrir d'empêchements et donc n'avoir pas besoin d'aide pour se produire. Dans les cas où le sage peut aider l'effet céleste, son art se limite cependant à disposer au mieux la chose afin qu'elle puisse le recevoir, et à écarter tout empêchement. C'est bien la nature qui opère. Pour reprendre la métaphore pseudo-ptoléméenne, l'ensemencement ne *nécessite* pas le labour et la fumure mais il en est largement facilité. De la même façon, la forme qui émane des cieux peut être « renforcée ou diminuée à partir d'eux, de sorte qu'elle meuve plus ou moins les corps qu'elle affecte et semblablement les âmes ».[52] Autrement dit, le sage est celui qui aide les effets du cercle céleste *pour*

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[51] Albertus Magnus, *Metaphysica*, VII, tr. 2, c. 10, ed. B. Geyer (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia. Editio Coloniensis 16.2), Münster 1964, 352.12-31 : « […] *sicut sanitas* et agricultura et multa quae fieri per caelestem effectum procurat astronomus ; de quo dicit Ptolemaeus, quod sapiens iuvat caelestem effectum, sicut iuvatur terra aratione et seminatione. Quaedam autem *non* fiunt nisi ab arte *sicut domus ;* de his enim quae tantum fiunt a natura, iam habitum est. *Causa vero* eius quod quaedam fiunt a natura et arte, quaedam autem ab arte solum, *est, quia* quorundam *materia,* in se habens agens et formans principium, talis *est,* quod *quidem* sufficit *incipere in facere et fieri aliquid ipsorum* quae fiunt *ab arte, in qua* arte *existit aliqua pars rei* naturalis, quae facere incipit natura, sicut in ante praelibatis diximus, et in talibus ars ministrat expediens ad actum et removens impedimenta, natura autem est, quae operatur. Ideo *haec quidem talis* materia *potens est moveri ab* arte, alia autem cuius motus nulla pars contingitur ab arte, *illa non* potest ab arte moveri neque iuvari, et haec sunt pauca vires artificum excedentia, sicut est generatio montium et terraemotus et tonitrui et huiusmodi ».

[52] Albertus Magnus, *De somno et vigilia*, III, tr. 1, c. 11, ed. A. Borgnet, 193b : « […] et ex illis potest confortari vel debilitari, ut plus vel minus moveat corpora quae afficit, similiter et animas ».

que la finalité puisse être atteinte, quelle qu'elle soit, à commencer par la finalité de constitution et de maintien dans l'être des étants animés.

La façon dont est caractérisée la conjecture, portant sur des événements qui se produisent *la plupart du temps*, renvoie à la définition du destin en tant que « forme moyenne entre le nécessaire et le possible ».[53] C'est que, comme nous l'avons vu, le destin est cette forme, empêchable, qui flue des étoiles en vue d'ordonner et de nombrer les inférieurs. S'il peut être considéré en tant que forme fluante, le destin peut cependant aussi être considéré en tant que disposition inhérente à l'être dans lequel flue la forme. En tant que tel, le destin d'un être correspond à sa perfection, c'est-à-dire à son être en acte, c'est-à-dire encore sa forme spécifique, qui est à la fois sa fin et la place qu'il est voué à occuper dans la hiérarchie des êtres.[54] Il correspond aussi à son « lieu naturel ». Pour connaître le destin d'une chose et aider à ce qu'il

[53] Albertus Magnus, *De fato*, a. 2, resp. 21, ed. Simon, 68.50-56 : « Haec autem talis forma media est inter necessarium et possible ; necessarium enim est, quidquid est in motu caelestis circuli, possibile autem et mutabile, quidquid est in materia generabilium et corruptibilium. Forma autem ista causata ex caelesti circulo et inhaerens generabilibus et corruptibilibus, media est inter utrumque ».

[54] Cette double signification du mot « destin » fait écho à la double signification que revêt la notion d'analogie chez le Pseudo-Denys : « Étant donné que l'analogie est la capacité qu'a chaque être de participer au premier, la proportion ainsi établie entre chaque être met en place un ordre dans l'univers sous forme sérielle, du plus parfait au moins parfait. Pour terminer, nous ne faisons que signaler qu'il existe encore chez le Pseudo-Denys un autre sens important du terme analogie : l'analogie signifie aussi la fin de chaque créature, c'est-à-dire son union avec Dieu, qui est différente pour chacune d'elles »: J. Lonfat, « Archéologie de la notion d'analogie», 63. L'équivalence entre ces différentes expressions mériterait un article à part entière mais voici, en guise de matériau de réflexion, les extraits à partir desquels nous l'établissons – outre la définition, déjà mentionnée, du destin comme « forme de l'ordre de l'être et de la vie des inférieurs » : Albertus Magnus, *De caelo et mundo*, I, tr. 2, c. 7, ed. P. Hossfeld (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia. Editio Coloniensis 5.1), Münster 1971, 53.29-31 : « […] et corpora, quae moventur naturaliter, *terminata et* finita *sunt in locis suis* naturalibus, eo quod quantitas eorum finitur ad locum » (« […] les corps qui sont mus naturellement sont terminés et finis dans leurs lieux naturels, pour cette raison que leur quantité est finie en vue du lieu»); Id., *Physica*, II, tr. 2, c. 22, ed. Hossfeld, 131.54-59 : « Generantis enim finis est per generationem venire in perfectionem suam ultimam, quae est, quando potest facere tale alterum, quale ipsum est. Sed finis generati est venire in perfectionem suam primam, quae est esse actu secundum formam naturalem » (« En effet, la fin du générant est de venir à sa perfection ultime par la génération, quand il peut faire un autre tel qu'il est lui-même. Mais la fin du généré est de venir à sa première perfection, qui est l'être en acte selon la forme naturelle »).

se matérialise, le sage doit donc, dans un premier temps, remonter aux étoiles, qui sont la cause première *in genere* de ce qui se produit dans le monde sublunaire. La caractéristique des astres à se mouvoir de façon sempiternelle et régulière fait, en effet, d'eux de précieux supports d'observation sur lesquels baser des prédictions. En effet, non seulement, la récurrence des configurations célestes permet d'établir plus facilement des correspondances avec les événements sublunaires, mais la régularité du mouvement du ciel permet de calculer avec précision la position absolue et relative des astres à n'importe quel moment (et, partant, de prédire les événements sublunaires correspondants). Il existe d'autres pratiques prédictives, telles que la prophétie naturelle, la divination par les songes, l'art des augures et la géomancie, dans le cadre desquelles le devin ne lit pas directement dans les étoiles mais cherche des signes visibles de la forme qui émane d'elles pour espérer atteindre, par traitement analogique, l'invisible qu'il tente de découvrir. C'est pourquoi Albert écrit que « les sciences divinatoires s'appuient toutes sur les mouvements des astres ».[55]

Les sciences divinatoires s′appuient toutes sur les mouvements des astres

Dans le cas de la prophétie naturelle, qui est définie par Albert le Grand comme « le *quasi habitus* ou l'aptitude de la nature connaissant à l'avance les choses futures à partir de l'illumination de l'intellect »,[56] l'intellect du prophète est informé par une forme qui, caractérisée comme « forme de l'ordre » et « forme du déploiement », s'avère être le destin : ce qu'il est donné au prophète de connaître est donc ce qui est informé par le destin, et l'oracle ou la vision est le signe de ce qui se produit par le destin en un autre lieu ou de ce qui se produira en un autre temps. L'âme ne peut cependant jamais se représenter l'influence céleste que « relativement au mode de sa possibilité et de sa quantité

[55] Albertus Magnus, *De somno et vigilia*, III, tr. 1, c. 8, ed. Borgnet, 188a : « Adhuc autem nos invenimus alias scientias divinantes, quae omnes innituntur motibus astrorum, et invenimus quoniam frequentius, ut dicunt, adveniunt ».

[56] Albertus Magnus, *De somno et vigilia*, III, tr. 1, c. 3, ed. Borgnet, 181a : « […] prophetia enim est quasi habitus vel naturae habilitas ex illuminatione intellectus futura praecognoscens […] ».

et [relativement] à une figure déterminée et signifiée »,[57] c'est-à-dire relativement à sa capacité propre de réception, conformément à ce que soutient la doctrine de l'univocité d'analogie. Lorsque donc la forme parvient à l'âme imaginative, elle la reçoit selon les formes de l'imagination. C'est pourquoi Albert écrit que dans l'âme du prophète sont imprimées « de façon claire ou métaphorique les *formes* des effets futurs, sous lesquelles les [choses] futures sont prévues et prédites ».[58] Nous le voyons, c'est bien aux formes qu'a accès le prophète. Pour connaître la façon dont les effets futurs se produiront effectivement, il doit lui aussi avoir des connaissances en philosophie naturelle, comme nous l'avons déjà montré.

Ces connaissances servent aussi, dans le cas de la divination par les songes, à écarter les *phantasmata* dont l'origine est le dormeur (en termes de temps, de lieu, de complexion ou d'habitudes) afin de pouvoir se concentrer sur ceux dont l'origine est extérieure à lui – c'est-à-dire qui proviennent de l'effet céleste. Autrement dit, il s'agit de supprimer le « bruit » pour isoler les signes de l'influence céleste et espérer pouvoir les interpréter. Albert compare les *phantasmata* qui parviennent dans les songes aux reflets des choses dans l'eau : si aucun mouvement ne se produit, l'image apparaît semblable à la chose dont elle est le reflet, mais lorsque l'eau est en mouvement, l'image devient confuse et difforme.[59] Il revient donc au devin d'assembler rapidement

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[57] Voici la citation complète : Albertus Magnus, *De somno et vigilia*, III, tr. 1, c. 8, ed. Borgnet, 187a : « […] quoniam quidem has recipit aliquando intellectus universales et simplices : minus tamen quam fuerunt in intelligentia, et easdem effingit imaginata ad modum suae possibilitatis et quantitatis et figuram determinatam et significatam » (« […] puisque parfois l'intellect reçoit [les formes] universelles et simples ; cependant moins qu'elles ne le furent dans l'intelligence, et [l'âme] imaginant les représente relativement au mode de sa possibilité et de sa quantité et [relativement] à une figure déterminée et signifiée »).

[58] Albertus Magnus, *De somno et vigilia*, III, tr. 1, c. 6, ed. Borgnet, 185b : « Ferunt autem per hunc modum, quod lumen intelligentiarum et splendor illustrat eas, et agit in eis formas futurorum effectuum aperte vel metaphorice, sub quibus futura praevidentur et praedicuntur ».

[59] Albertus Magnus, *De somno et vigilia*, III, tr. 2, c. 9, ed. Borgnet, 206b-207b : « Phantasmata enim somniantum similia accidunt in somno idolis illis quae sunt in aqua apparentia, sicut et prius diximus : in aqua enim si nullus motus fiat, similis rei fit apparitio, sed post idola tunc in aqua apparentia non sunt similia formis veris, sed partes illius formae confusas et inordinatas et distortas : et promptus erit judex in talibus, qui cito committit et componit diversa et distorta idolorum, sic ex motu confu-

les diverses images pour reconstituer le « modèle » de l'image brouillée – c'est-à-dire la forme qui a été exprimée de manière multiple et particulière par les *phantasmata* – afin d'y donner du sens. Autrement dit, l'interprétation des songes se produit en deux temps : premièrement, il s'agit de reconnaître la cause de chaque *phantasma* (ce qui nécessite d'abord d'observer les mouvements propres à celui qui rêve pour parvenir à déterminer ce qui, dans ses songes, relève des mouvements ayant leur cause en lui, afin de pouvoir ensuite attribuer, en creux, le reste à l'influence céleste, pour peu qu'il ne s'agisse pas d'un songe accidentel) et deuxièmement de composer les images afin de les ramener à la forme qu'elles expriment.[60]

D'autres types de divination, qu'Albert décrit moins longuement, certainement à cause de la méfiance dont elles font l'objet dans le monde ecclésiastique, sont moins sujets à ces problèmes de « bruit » que nous venons de mentionner. Les événements sur lesquels s'appuient ces formes de divination prenant place dans la sphère de la matière et du devenir, ils donnent déjà en quelque sorte des indications sur la façon dont la forme peut se matérialiser dans le monde sublunaire. C'est le cas, par exemple, des points tracés par la main du géomancien, ou du vol des oiseaux, dans lesquels l'influence céleste s'imprime et s'exprime tellement fortement que les augures peuvent lire en eux comme s'ils lisaient directement dans les étoiles. La malléabilité dont font preuve les animaux « non soucieux de leurs propres actes »[61] –

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sorum dicens, quoniam hoc est hominis, et hoc est equi, et sic de quibuslibet aliis. Ille enim simili facultate quam habet in aquis motis judicandi idola, potest etiam judicare somnium hoc vel illud : et cum habet simulacra, non est ei opus nisi quod transferat ad significata secundum motum quem diximus : et tunc conjecturatum est somnium : idola autem diligenter perspiciat quaecumque sunt secundum causam apparentia, etsi diversa videantur, quia motus subjecti frequenter impedit rectum somnium : et cum scitur causa motus, et idolum ad formam redigitur, tunc potest conjici somnium, dummodo attendantur praecipue loca et tempora et complexiones et mores somniantium, ut superius diximus. Hoc autem docere magicae scientiae pertinet et non physicae ».

[60] Sur le *De somno et vigilia* d'Albert le Grand, voy. C. Grellard, « La réception médiévale du *De somno et vigilia*. Approche anthropologique et épistémologique du rêve, d'Albert le Grand à Jean Buridan », in *Les* Parva naturalia *d'Aristote : fortune antique et médiévale*, éd. C. Grellard, P.M. Morel (Philosophie 28), Paris 2010, 221-237.

[61] Albertus Magnus, *Physica*, II, tr. 2, c. 21, ed. Hossfeld, 129.60-71 : « Cum autem influit haec fatalis dispositio animalibus non sollicitis circa proprios actus, tunc magis sequuntur eam animalia, et ideo in talibus fatales dispositiones magis mani-

c'est-à-dire n'ayant la possibilité ni de les décider ni d'opérer un retour réflexif sur les motivations de ceux-ci – les rend en effet quasi-transparents, donnant à voir l'influence céleste qui s'imprime en eux et en vertu de laquelle ils agissent. D'après Albert, la connaissance acquise par leur intermédiaire est même plus certaine que la connaissance qui repose directement sur l'observation des étoiles. Si, à première vue, cette position peut sembler étrange, elle se comprend si l'on garde à l'esprit, comme l'écrit Albert dans l'extrait suivant, que le pronostic qui repose sur des qualités inhérentes aux choses est plus probable. Entre la prévision qui repose sur les étoiles et celle qui repose sur les étoiles secondes se joue l'écart, que nous avons déjà eu l'occasion de mentionner, qui réside entre forme commune et forme commune *appropriée*.

> À l'autre, il faut dire que les divinations ne sont pas des [choses] fatales, ni les augures ; mais certaines pronostications ont été saisies [comme] des [choses] fatales à partir de signes probables non nécessaires, comme Hippocrate l'enseigne dans le livre *De Prognosticis*. En effet l'ordre dans les étoiles est ainsi au premier rang, et la disposition ou la qualité adhérant aux générés est la qualité influée des étoiles et est au deuxième rang. Et pour cette raison de telles dispositions sont appelées [*vocatur*[62]] par Ptolémée dans le *Centiloquium* "étoiles secondes". En effet, il dit ainsi : "Celui qui pronostique, s'il pronostique à partir des étoiles secondes, dit des [choses] plus vraies, pour cette raison qu'il pronostique par des qualités qui sont inhérentes aux choses ; et pour cette raison elles sont plus efficaces pour faire bouger les choses que la position des astres qui ne touche pas la chose par soi, mais par autre [chose] et par accident". [63]

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festantur, et ideo augures in illis tamquam in secundis stellis, ut dicit Ptolemaeus, ponunt considerationes ».

[62] Grammaticalement, un singulier ne se justifie pas. Nous lisons donc le verbe au pluriel : « vocantur ».

[63] Albertus Magnus, *Summa theologiae*, pars I, tr. 17, q. 68, m. 1, ed. Borgnet, 697a : « Ad aliud dicendum, quod fatalia divinationes non sunt, nec auguria : sed fatalia quaedam prognosticationes sumptae sunt a signis probabilibus non necessariis : sicut Hippocrates docet in libro de Prognosticis. Sic enim ordo in stellis est in gradu primo, et dispositio sive qualitas adhaerens generatis, est qualitas influxa a stellis, et est in gradu secundo. Et ideo a Ptolemaeo in Centilogio tales dispositiones vocatur* stellae secundae. Dicit enim sic : "Prognosticator qui prognosticatur a stellis secundis, veriora dicit : eo quod ille prognosticatur a qualitatibus quae rebus inhaerent : et ideo efficaciores sunt ad res transmutandum, quam positio siderum quae per se rem non tangit, sed per aliud et per accidens". » Il faut comprendre l'affirmation selon laquelle « les divinations ne sont pas des [choses] fatales, ni les augures » dans le contexte théologique, à la fois de la *Summa theologiae* elle-même et de l'argument précis développé

Ce qui rend potentiellement dangereuses les pratiques telles que la géomancie ou la science des augures, c'est la particularité de leur objet qui excite la curiosité des non-initiés et les incite à expérimenter eux-mêmes ce qu'elles enseignent. Le risque est grand, en effet, qu'un *quidam*, séduit par l'aspect magique de ces disciplines et la possibilité qu'elles offrent de prédire le futur s'y essaie sans en maîtriser l'art,[64] ce qui donnerait lieu à de fausses prédictions ou à des prédictions indûment assertives. Or, comme nous avons eu l'occasion de le souligner à maintes reprises, les futurs contingents *ut in pluribus* ne peuvent être connus que par conjecture. En outre, leur connaissance, qui n'a pas vocation à être gratuite, s'oriente vers une pratique visant à écarter ce qui ferait obstacle à l'influence céleste afin que le monde puisse être gouverné de façon ordonnée et harmonieuse.

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ici, qui consistait à nier l'existence du destin au motif que *Nb*. 23,23 refuse à la fois la divination et l'art des augures. Il faut aussi noter que l'expression « stellae secundae » semble ici signifier le destin en tant qu'il est considéré comme disposition adhérant à un individu.

[64] Albertus Magnus, *De bono*, tr. 4, q. 1, a. 2, ad 9, ed. H. Kühle, C. Feckes, B. Geyer, W. Kübel (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia. Editio Coloniensis 28), Münster 1951, 225.64-75 : « (9) Ad aliud dicendum, quod Philosophus dicit hoc propter pronitatem ad malum adiunctam scibili alicui, et non propter ipsam scientiam, sed propter curiositatem experiendi in opere id quod docet scientia. Bonum enim est scire et omnino bonum, quod est pars beatitudinis et viae et patriae, sed non expedit aliquid scire propterea, quod exerceri sine peccato [non] potest, et tamen ad peccatum inclinat. Sicut enim dicit Tullius, prudentis est, quod "omnis actio eius vacare debet temeritate et negligentia nec vero agere aliquid cuius non possit causam probabilem reddere" ». L'argument mentionne explicitement la nigromantie et la science des augures : *Ibidem*, 9, 222.54-60 : « (9) Item, in XI Primae philosophiae dicit Aristoteles, quod quaedam mala melius est nescire. Ergo videtur, quod prudentia non sit scientia omnis mali. Item, quaedam scientiae prohibentur, ut nigromantia et augurativa et huiusmodi. Ergo videtur, quod non omnis mali scientia pertineat ad prudentiam ».

Rodolfo Brito sui futuri contingenti

Riccardo Fedriga - Costantino Marmo

Introduzione

Due parole innanzitutto sui testi che verranno presi in esame in questo contributo. Intendiamo concentrare la nostra attenzione soprattutto sulla *quaestio* 16 del commento di Radulphus Brito al *De interpretatione* («utrum omnia eveniant de necessitate»), tenendo conto, tuttavia, che allo stesso problema è dedicata anche la q. 13 del suo commento al secondo libro della *Physica*. Il primo testo ha una storia abbastanza complessa. Ci arriva in due versioni (come già avevano scoperto Heinrich Roos e Jan Pinborg negli anni '70),[1] una versione *A* e una *B*; la prima (all'epoca) testimoniata dal solo ms Nürnberg, Stadtbibliothek, Cent. V.21 (=N, d'ora in avanti), la seconda testimoniata da una dozzina di manoscritti.[2] Dallo studio delle questioni su Porfirio, tuttavia, è emerso che l'ordine cronologico interno tra le due versioni va invertito, così che la versione *B* precede la *A* (non abbiamo cambiato le abbreviazioni date da Roos e Pinborg per non aggiungere ulteriore confusione).[3] La ragione per cui Roos e Pinborg (e con loro Sten Ebbe-

[1] H. Roos, "Die Kontroverse zwischen Bartholomaeus von Brügge und Radulphus Brito über die Frage: *Utrum genus possit salvari in unica specie*. Mit einer Textausgabe: Radulphus Brito, *Quaestiones super Isagogen Porphyrii*, qu. 13", in *Sapientiae procerum amore.* Mélanges médiévistes offerts à Dom Jean-Pierre Müller O.S.B. à l'occasion de son 70eme (24 février 1974), éd. T.W. Köhler (Studia Anselmiana 63), Roma 1974, 323-342: 329-330; J. Pinborg, "Radulphus Brito on Universals", in *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen Âge Grec et Latin*, 35 (1980), 56-142: 56-58.

[2] In ciò che segue ci serviremo dei seguenti mss. (che in larga parte testimoniano della versione *A*): Bruxelles, Bibliothèque Royale "Albert Ier" 2910 (3540-47) (= Br); Padova, Biblioteca Antoniana, XX.457 (= Pd); Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 697 (= P_1); Salamanca, Biblioteca Universitaria, 2350 (= S); Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Vat. Lat. 3044 (V_4).

[3] Su questo si veda S. Ebbesen, C. Marmo, "Introduction to the edition of Radulphus Brito, *Quaestiones supra librum Divisionum Boethii*", in Radulphus Brito, *Quaestiones supra librum Divisionum Boethii*, ed. S. Ebbesen, C. Marmo (Studia

Turnhout, 2025 (Rencontres de Philosophie Médiévale 31) *pp. 161-180*
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sen)[4] erano inclini a pensare che fosse vero il contrario stava soprattutto nel fatto che la versione *B* nel ms N presenta una versione più lunga (sul *De interpretatione* per esempio, anziché 25 questioni, ne presenta ben 54), contaminata però dagli interventi di un altro misterioso autore, un tal Hytpibbius, di cui si conosce molto poco, se non che contribuisce a completare le serie di questioni di Brito sull'*Ars vetus* (inclusi i *Sex principia*), andando così a coprire tutta la materia trattata da *Isagoge*, *Categorie*, *De interpretatione* e *Liber sex principiorum*.[5] Alcune questioni autenticamente britoniane, inoltre, che non compaiono nella versione *A* sono testimoniate solo da N: dal punto di vista di Roos e Pinborg, quindi, l'ipotesi di una priorità della versione *A* sulla *B* era assolutamente ragionevole. La versione *B*, avevano osservato, riaffiora anche in alcuni manoscritti della versione *A* – in particolare per il *De int*. dai mss. Br e S[6] – il che andava a complicare ulteriormente le cose. Roos e Pinborg, tuttavia, pensavano che la contaminazione riguardasse solo le prime questioni:[7] in realtà anche per la q. 16 sul *De int*., Br e S presentano in diversi passaggi la versione *B*, come si vedrà. Ad aiutare a sbrogliare la matassa, oltre ad alcuni riferimenti interni nelle questioni su Porfirio,[8] ha contribuito la scoperta di un ulteriore testimone, il ms Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, 1427 (= Le) che presenta una versione *B* priva di contaminazioni e, soprattutto, di contributi estranei come quelli di Hytpibbius. Con questa versione spesso concordano i testi delle questioni dei mss. contaminati (Br e S, in particolare, ma non solo) che recano di solito la versione *A*. L'ipotesi che è stata avanzata[9] è che si debbano distinguere due redazioni della versione *B* (*B'* e *B"*) che

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Artistarum 50), Turnhout 2024, 29-46; C. Marmo, "The Two Versions of Radulphus Brito's *Questions on Porphyry*", in *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen Âge Grec et Latin*, 94 (2025), 1-44.

[4] S. Ebbesen e J. Pinborg, "Gennadios and Western Scholasticism. Radulphus Brito's *Ars Vetus* in Greek Translation", in *Classica et Mediaevalia*, 33 (1981-1982), 263-319.

[5] Sul commento all'*Isagoge* di Porfirio si veda C. Marmo, "Hytpibbius: Radulphus Brito's Emulator on the *Ars Vetus* I. The *Questions on Porphyry*", in *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen Âge Grec et Latin*, 87 (2018), 180-266.

[6] Si veda sopra la nota 2 per le sigle di questi mss. di cui ci serviremo.

[7] I loro sondaggi erano stati compiuti solo sulle prime questioni sull'*Isagoge* di Porfirio e sul *De int*.

[8] Su cui si veda Ebbesen, Marmo, "Introduction".

[9] Su cui si veda, ancora, Ebbesen, Marmo, "Introduction".

precedono entrambe la versione *A*. Le questioni supplementari autenticamente attribuibili a Rodolfo che compaiono in N, a questo punto, vanno intese come questioni aggiunte alla redazione *B'* per costituire la redazione *B*'' (base per le manipolazioni di Hytpibbius) e quindi eliminate dalla successiva versione *A*, perché discusse in altre opere: una per esempio, su Porfirio, si trova sia nelle questioni sulla *Physica*, sia nelle questioni sui *Topica* di Aristotele; un'altra questione sul *De int*. si trova nelle questioni sugli *Analytica Posteriora*.[10]

Per questo contributo, Costantino Marmo ha preparato quindi un'edizione di lavoro della q. 16 sul *De int*. che tenga conto di queste due o tre versioni che si citeranno in nota (senza apparato delle varianti, tuttavia). Al fine di contestualizzare il contributo di Brito, il medesimo ha anche ripescato due questioni dalla tradizione dei commenti al *De int*. che risalgono probabilmente agli anni '70: una dal commento di Pietro di Alvernia[11] e quella di un Anonimo Fiorentino.[12]

La lunga carriera di Rodolfo Brito come maestro delle Arti, durata attorno ai vent'anni, ha ovviamente comportato la possibilità di rivedere spesso le proprie opere, di prepararne versioni ufficiali da far circolare, che si trovano a convivere naturalmente con altre versioni, magari non altrettanto autorizzate: ciò ha prodotto la situazione de-

[10] Cfr. C. Marmo, "Se il genere possa essere conservato da una sola specie. Un dibattito parigino nei commenti a Porfirio di fine XIII secolo", in *Studi sull'aristotelismo medievale*, 2/2 (2022), 47-78 e Idem, "La semantica anti-referenzialista di Rodolfo il Bretone in una *quaestio* sugli *Analytica Posteriora* (e sul *De interpretatione*)", in *Edizioni, traduzioni e tradizioni filosofiche (secoli XII-XVI). Studi per Pietro B. Rossi*, a cura di L. Bianchi, O. Grassi, C. Panti (Flumen Sapientiae 7), Roma 2018, I, 173-186.

[11] Il commento è conservato in diversi mss.; qui ci siamo serviti di Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 16170 (= P_2) e Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, 1565 (= M). Su questo commento si veda S. Ebbesen, "Questions and Sophismata. Tracking Peter of Auvergne", in *Aristotle's Peri Hermeneias in the Latin Middle Ages*, ed. H.A.G. Braakhuis, C.H. Kneepkens (Artistarium Supplementa 10), Groningen-Haren 2003, 31-49; la lista delle questioni si può leggere alle pagine 45-48.

[12] Il commento è contenuto nel ms Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 12 sin. 3 (= F_1) che testimonia di opere attribuite a Pietro di Alvernia, a Boezio di Dacia e ad altri anonimi probabilmente coevi. Recentemente S. Ebbesen e I. Rosier-Catach hanno pubblicato anche i *Sophismata* di Pietro, di Boezio e di altri: cf. Boethii Daci Aliorumque *Sophismata*, ed. S. Ebbesen, I. Rosier-Catach (Corpus Philosophorum Danicorum Medii Aevi 9), Hauniae 2021. La lista delle questioni sul *De int*. si può leggere in Ebbesen, "Questions and Sophismata", 48-49.

scritta finora per l'*Ars vetus*. Cose analoghe avvengono anche per altre opere, come le questioni sull'*Ethica* (delle cui diverse versioni si è occupato Iacopo Costa),[13] o sul *De anima*,[14] e anche sulla *Physica*. Queste ultime in particolare sono conservate in due mss. molto importanti per le opere di Brito: Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Conv. Soppr. 1.E.252 (F_2) e Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Vat. Lat. 3061 (V). Entrambi i codici contengono numerose opere attribuite esplicitamente a Brito o a lui attribuibili. Le questioni sugli otto libri della *Physica* si trovano in entrambi i codici, ma presentano due versioni piuttosto diverse: quella vaticana presenta non solo un testo diverso, ma anche numerose questioni in più rispetto alla versione fiorentina (e perciò dovrebbe trattarsi di una versione più recente). Di qui la necessità di trascriverle e confrontarle, a vicenda e con le differenti versioni della q. 16 sul *De int*. Ma di questo appunto si occuperà la seconda parte di questo contributo.

A queste si aggiungono alcune questioni sulle *Sentenze* (dalla 65 alla 68) sul primo libro che si occupano di problemi molto vicini. Due di esse sono state pubblicate in appendice a un articolo di M. Rossini e C. Schabel[15] e a quest'edizione faremo riferimento, in attesa che anche le altre trovino un editore.

La *quaestio* 16 sul *De interpretatione*

Il testo della questione sul *De interpretatione* si apre con la domanda se tutti gli eventi futuri accadano necessariamente. Vengono avanzate affermazioni che riguardano le posizioni a favore cui seguiranno quelle contro l'idea che tutto accada per necessità e ci si interrogherà sulla possibilità che il futuro sia determinato in modo necessario o contin-

[13] I. Costa, *Le* questiones *di Radulfo Brito sull'«Etica Nicomachea»* (Studia Artistarum 17), Turnhout 2008; Radulphus Brito, *Questiones super librum Ethicorum Aristotelis*, ed. I. Costa (CCCM 294), Turnhout 2022.

[14] Si veda l'edizione delle questioni sul terzo libro in W. Fauser, *Der Kommentar des Radulphus Brito zu Buch III* De anima*. Radulphi Britonis Quaestiones in Aristotelis librum tertium De anima. Kritische Edition und philosophische Einleitung* (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters 12), Münster 1974.

[15] C. D. Schabel, M. Rossini, "Time and Eternity among the Early Scotists: Texts on Future Contingents by Alexander of Alexandria, Radulphus Brito, and Hugh of Novocastro", in *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale*, 16 (2005), 237-338.

gente. L'argomento si presenta nella forma di un determinismo teologico di natura causale.[16] Infatti, se il futuro non avvenisse necessariamente, l'infallibilità divina sarebbe messa in questione e, con essa, anche la *scientia Dei* che risulterebbe falsa, cosa che non è accettabile. L'attributo che, per primo, viene predicato della conoscenza divina quindi non è, come di consueto, quello della prescienza ma quello della infallibilità: l'estensione della *scientia Dei* è legata alla capacità di non sbagliare, prima ancora che a quella di non sapere.[17]

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[16] Radulphus Brito, *Questiones super librum De interpretatione*, q. 16, Br 123rb; Le 13ra; N 107ra-b; P_1 27vb; Pd 55va; S 42vb-43ra; V_4 96v: «Item, omne quod est provisum a providentia infallibili /S 43ra/ necessarium est evenire; sed omnia futura sunt provisa a providentia infallibili, sive cadunt sub providentia infallibili; ergo omnia futura de necessitate evenient. Maior patet sicut prius: si enim quod est provisum a providentia infallibili non eveniret de necessitate, tunc illa providentia fallibilis erit, quod est inconveniens. Minor etiam patet, quia omnia futura sunt provisa a providentia divina que est infallibilis. Item, omne illud quod habet causam determinatam et provisam sive necessariam, de necessitate eveniet; sed omne contingens futurum et etiam omne contingens quod factum est habet causam necessariam et determinatam sui esse; ergo omne contingens quod fiet et etiam quod factum est de necessitate eveniet. Maior patet, quia ex hoc quod habet causam necessariam et determinatam ad esse /N 107rb/, necessarium est ipsum evenire et non a casu et a fortuna. Probatio maioris dupliciter». Testo comune alle due versioni *A* e *B*.

[17] Radulphus Brito, *Quest. sup. De int.*, q. 16, Br 123rb-123va; Le 13ra; N 107rb; P_1 27vb; Pd 55vb-56ra; S 43ra; V_4 96v-97r: «Primo, quia causa indeterminata ut indeterminata est non habet producere aliquem effectum, quia postquam indeterminata est ad quemlibet, tunc qua ratione produceret unum eadem ratione produceret alterum; et ideo omne ens quod habet esse quantumcumque sit contingens et casuale, habet /Br 123va/ esse a causa determinata. Verbi gratia, quia accipiamus aliquem effectum contingentem, ut hominem esse album, tunc quero utrum causa istius effectus sit determinata vel non; si sic, habeo propositum; si non sit determinata, sed indeterminata, tunc arguo: quia ab indeterminato secundum quod indeterminatum est nichil procedit; ergo si causa fuit indeterminata, non potuit producere istum effectum. /V_4 97r/ Et si dicas quod causa istius effectus sit determinata ab alio, contra: quia tunc queram de illo per quod determinatur illa causa, utrum sit determinatum respectu istius effectus vel non; si sic, tunc iste effectus habuit causam necessariam et determinatam sui esse, et ideo eveniet de necessitate. Et sic eodem modo standum fuit in primo. Si non oportet quod ab alio determinetur ad hoc quod causa primi effectus determinet, quia ex indeterminato ut sic nichil procedit, tunc queram de illo alio sicut prius, et sic erit processus in infinitum in causis; ergo etc. Et sicut arguo /Pd 56ra/ de isto effectu, sic intelligendum est de aliis effectibus contingentibus, etc.; et sic cum omnes isti effectus contingentes habeant causam determinatam sui esse, omnes de necessitate evenient». Testo comune alle due versioni.

L'analisi dei futuri contingenti, e degli enunciati che vertono su di essi, saranno dunque un valido test per valutare la coerenza delle tesi deterministe e di quelle a esse opposte, dato che questi futuri ancora non sono determinati nel tempo. Per contrastare la posizione del determinista bisogna svincolare la necessità dal determinismo. Metafisico-causale, teologico o semantico che sia, esso infatti toglierebbe all'uomo il libero arbitrio e la liberà capacità di deliberare socialmente, cioè di intervenire nel corso degli eventi attraverso la sua libera scelta.[18] Per chiarezza espositiva, procederemo con l'analisi del piano semantico-linguistico, per poi passare a quello epistemico-teologico e chiudere, infine, con quello metafisico-causale.

Semantica non direttamente referenziale

Si consideri l'enunciato "ogni evento futuro è futuro per necessità" («omne futurum de necessitate est futurum»). Contro il determinista, esso infatti si può leggere come necessario oppure come determinato (in senso puramente logico o in senso temporale causale, *per accidens*). Se lo si intende nel secondo modo, l'enunciato diventa: ogni evento futuro è un evento futuro per il suo modo di essere futuro (*futuritio*), cioè la necessità cade sull'evento, vincolando al modo della necessità futura ogni cosa, e in questo senso è falso. *De virtute sermonis*, l'enuncia-

[18] Radulphus Brito, *Quest. sup. De int.*, q. 16B, Br 125ra-b; Le 13va-b; N 107va-b; S 43va-b: «Item, hoc ostenditur rationibus ducentibus ad impossibile. Sicut arguebatur prius, si omnia evenirent de necessitate, tunc non oporteret nos consiliari in agibilibus neque negotiari, quia si istud faceremus, fieret istud sive non, semper illud accideret; hoc autem est absurdum dicere; ideo etc./N 107vb/ Item, si omnia evenirent de necessitate /Br 125rb/ omnes scientie morales et legales perirent, quia secundum scientias morales et legales benefacientes semper secundum mores bonos sunt premiandi et remunerandi, malefacientes et bonos mores spernentes sunt puniendi. Item, si omnia de necessitate evenirent non deberent boni nec mali nec premiari nec puniri, quia in eo quod aliquis facit de necessitate et non ex proprio motu voluntatis, sed male velle suo oporteret illum facere, illud in hoc non deberet aliquis premiari vel puniri; et ideo si aliquis malefacit, quod de necessitate oportuit ipsum malefacere, non debuit puniri. Et si aliquis benefecit, si oportuit ipsum benefacere, non debet premiari nec laudari. Et sic perirent leges /Le 13vb/ et mores que iubent unumquemque /S 43vb/ premiari et laudari, puniri et vituperari secundum quantitatem et qualitatem boni vel delicti reddendo singula singulis; sed quod leges et mores destruantur et pereant et quod aliquis non debeat premiari vel puniri de benefactis vel de malefactis est absurdum et irrationale et iniustum». Cfr. anche Radulphus Brito, *Questiones super libros Physicorum,* II, q. 13, F_2 21rb-va; V 88vb-89ra.

to non porta a una conseguenza logica tra necessità e determinazione. Quello che emerge da questa analisi e viene confermato dalla forma logica dell'argomento (*forma rationis*) è la variazione dell'ambito di azione dell'operatore modale "è necessario che". A seconda di dove cade in relazione al futuro si determina o meno una fallacia di composizione e divisione, cioè una lettura complementare dell'enunciato, e la relativa lettura in senso composto oppure diviso: in quest'ultimo caso, l'enunciato è falso.[19] Quindi non si può universalmente concludere a un parallelismo necessità-determinazione e si ritorna al caso della disgiunzione tra le due letture che chiude la strada al determinismo.[20]

[19] Cfr. *infra* nota 24.

[20] Radulphus Brito, *Quest. sup. De int.*, q. 16, Br 125rb-va; Le 13vb; N 107vb; P_1 28rb; Pd 57ra; S 43vb; V_4 98r-v: «Tunc ad rationes. Ad primam. Cum dicitur 'omne futurum de necessitate est futurum', aliqui dicunt quod est falsa, quia sensus est quod 'omne futurum de necessitate est futurum', id est omne futurum de necessitate eveniet et ista falsa est; et ideo ista 'omne /V_4 98v/ futurum de necessitate est futurum'. Aliter tamen potest dici distinguendo maiorem, cum dicitur 'omne futurum de necessitate est futurum', ista est duplex ex eo quod li 'de necessitate' potest /Br 125va/ determinare inherentiam sive compositionem predicati ad subiectum ita quod sit sensus: 'omne futurum de necessitate est futurum', id est inherentia sive compositio futuri ad futurum est necessaria, et sic est vera; vel potest determinare extremum compositionis, scilicet predicatum quod est 'esse futurum', et tunc erit sensus 'omne futurum de necessitate est futurum', id est omne futurum de necessitate eveniet, et sic est falsa et est ibi fallacia compositionis». (Testo comune alle due versioni). Cfr. Radulphus Brito, *Quest. sup. Phys.*, II, q. 13, F_2 21vb-22ra: «Ad aliam rationem, que est ratio Alberti, quando dicitur 'omne futurum de necessitate est futurum etc.', intelligendum quod dicendo 'omne futurum de necessitate est futurum', li 'de necessitate' potest determinare hoc quod est futurum, id est rem que futura est, quantum ad sui futuritionem, vel quantum ad inherentiam predicati ad subiectum; modo omne futurum de necessitate est /F_2 22ra/ futurum quantum ad inherentiam predicati cum subiecto, quia ibi predicatur idem de se; sed si accipitur ratione futuritionis sue, omne futurum de necessitate est futurum, id est omne futurum de necessitate eveniet, sic falsa est; et cum dicitur 'quod de necessitate est futurum de necessitate eveniet', dicendum quod hic sumitur in illo sensu in quo maior erat falsa, scilicet pro fore in futuro; et ideo non sequitur conclusio». Cfr. anche Petrus de Alvernia, *Questiones super Perihermenias*, q. 36 (*Utrum omnia eveniant de necessitate et nichil a casu et fortuna, nec ad utrumlibet*), M 9ra-b, P_2 108rb: «Quando dicitur quod omne futurum de necessitate eveniet etc., dicendum quod maior sine modo necessitatis est vera, tamen non est vera cum modo necessitatis, quoniam ad veritatem illius propositionis in qua ponitur modus non solum exigitur predicatum inesse subiecto, immo /M 9rb/ oportet quod nec circa subiectum, nec circa predicatum implicetur aliquod subiectum contingens; <nunc autem hic circa subiectum implicatur aliquod contingens sicut contingit circa futurum; ideo maior propositio falsa est> nec forte Aristoteles concederet istam pro vera 'futurum esse futurum' sine modo neces-

Credenza e piano epistemico

Se passiamo al piano epistemico-teologico della *scientia Dei*, viene anche a questo livello ribadita la distinzione tra modi del conoscere, come quella disgiuntiva tra necessario e contingente. Dio è infallibile proprio perché conosce anche ciò che accadrà "in modo contingente". Come in (i) "come Dio sa che accadrà così ciò avverrà": questa proposizione è vera e necessaria e corrisponde all'essere delle cose, non determinato (se no sarebbe falsa) delle cose: l'enunciato (i) è "contingente e indeterminatamente vero, non necessario". Se all'enunciato "tutto ciò che è necessario è determinatamente vero" si può concedere il proprio assenso, è invece una fallacia sostenere che ogni cosa futura è necessaria "*perché* essa sarà o non sarà". Non è infatti così, e non lo è sulla base del fatto che non è *perché* (argomento causale) sarà ma *come* sarà che accadrà (argomento modale): come attesta anche Tommaso, l'argomento non è causale ma modale perché il modo di conoscere precede il perché, cioè la ricerca delle cause anche nella conoscenza divina, che è *in primis* modale e solo secondariamente causale. Per cui corretto, se applicato a Dio, causa prima, non è dire "Poiché Dio sa, quindi accadrà necessariamente" ma "Come Dio sa così accade". Quindi ciò che succede, accade in modo contingente, perché Dio sa, cioè conosce, in modo aperto – e comunque infallibile. Ed è sempre per questo motivo che non ci si appella in prima battuta all'attributo dell'onniscienza, che avrebbe mostrato il fianco alla priorità ontologica della causalità rispetto alla modalità: il *come* precede il *perché*.[21]

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sitatis, quoniam idem est iudicium de ista 'futurum est futurum', et de ista <'a erit'>; nunc autem non concederet istam 'a erit', quare nec istam 'futurum est futurum', sed bene concederet istam 'a erit vel non erit', quare similiter bene concederet 'futurum est futurum vel non est futurum'». Per quanto concerne le analisi semantiche in questo contesto, si veda A. M. Mora-Márquez, *The Thirteenth Century Notion of Signification: The Discussions and Their Origin and Development* (Investigating Medieval Philosophy 10), Leiden 2015; per la nozione di semantica non direttamente referenziale, si veda Marmo, "La semantica anti-referenzialista".

[21] Radulphus Brito, *Quest. sup. De int.*, q. 16, Br 125vb-126ra; Le 13vb; N 107vb; P_1 28rb; Pd 57ra; S 43vb-44ra; V_4 98v-99r: «Ad aliam. Cum dicitur 'illud quod /V_4 99r/ est provisum a providentia infallibili de necessitate eveniet', dico sicut dicit frater Thomas quod scientia divina non imponit necessitatem ipsis rebus, /Br 126ra/ ideo quasdam res previdet necessario esse, et quasdam contingenter; et cum dicis 'ergo ipsa providentia decipietur', dico quod non oportet, quia sicut quedam sunt provisa a deo contingenter fore et quedam non contingenter sed necessario, ita quedam eveniunt

Non è dunque necessariamente vero che, dato che X è preconosciuto da una conoscenza infallibile, è necessario che X accada. L'infallibilità viene, cioè, disgiunta dal determinarsi degli eventi. La conoscenza di una mente infallibile, infatti, non dipende dagli eventi, ma è piuttosto vero il contrario. Essa dipende dal modo della conoscenza: se so fare uno scrigno, che lo scrigno esista o meno, so come farlo. Parimenti, la *ratio considerandi* di questa intelligenza non dipende da un intermediario, come avviene per l'intelletto speculativo umano con il *phantasma*, ma è diretta e non può essere tratta in inganno.

Sempre mantenendosi all'interno dell'analisi della forma logica di «omne quod est prescitum a scientia infallibili est necessarium evenire», se si svincola la conoscenza dal riferimento diretto alla *res*, tale enunciato può essere letto in relazione ai *modi* della conoscenza stessa. Il che non comporta affatto che la conoscenza divina sia limitata dagli eventi contingenti e possa sbagliarsi, al variare di questi.[22] "Tutto ciò che è e

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contingenter et a casu, et quedam de necessitate et determinate; et tamen propter hoc providentia dei non decipitur, quia non dependet ab istis inferioribus, sed magis omnia dependent a deo sive a prima causa. Et cum dicitur in minori 'omnia futura sunt provisa a providentia divina que est infallibilis', concedatur; quedam tamen sunt provisa a deo contingenter et quedam de necessitate; et ideo quedam eveniunt contingenter /S 44ra/ et a casu et quedam de necessitate. Sed ista solutio non sufficit, quia si aliquid est previsum fore, aut illud eveniet ut est previsum fore aut non; si sic, et non potest aliter evenire, tunc de necessitate eveniet. Si autem dicas quod deus previdet aliquid fore ita quod potest contingere fore vel non fore, si sic dicas, contra: quia postquam previsum est a deo fore, tunc est previsum sic fore ita quod non potest non fore, quia des quod possibile est ipsum fore; ergo est, tunc ponatur in esse; est igitur illud possibile fore; ponatur ergo quod non erit, tunc, licet sequatur falsum, tamen non impossibile erit ipsum non fore; et cum scientia divina previdet ipsum fore, iam scientia dei falleretur, quod falsum est et impossibile». Testo comune alle due versioni.

[22] Radulphus Brito, *Quest. sup. De int.*, q. 16, Br 125va-b; Le 13vb; N 107vb; P_1 28rb; Pd 57ra; S 43vb; V_4 98v: «Cum dicitur 'illud quod est scitum a scientia infallibili est necessarium evenire sive de necessitate eveniet', frater Thomas solvit dicens quod non oportet; et cum dicitur in probatione maioris quod tunc illa scientia falleretur, ipse dicit quod non, quia scientia dei non dependet ex rebus, sed magis econverso, ut si ego sciam facere archam, sive archa sit sive non, ego habeo scientiam faciendi archam. Similiter ratio considerandi non dependet ex fantasmate, et ideo, sive fantasia sit sive non sit, adhuc est ratio considerandi; et ita scientia divina non falletur in aliquo, sive res sit sive non, cum non dependeat ex rebus, sed magis econverso. Vel aliter potest dici ad maiorem: cum dicitur 'illud quod est scitum a scientia infallibili de necessitate eveniet', non oportet; unde sic esset vera maior 'illud quod est scitum a scientia infallibili eveniet sicut scitur'; et ad minorem, cum dicitur 'omne futurum est scitum a

sarà, Dio lo conosce in base alle sue cause e ai suoi principi": quindi egli conoscerà in modo indeterminato eventi indeterminati. Ed è necessario che li conosca in quel modo, ma non è (ancora) determinato: la scienza divina non viene influenzata dagli eventi inferiori, ma tutto dipende da Dio come causa prima ed essenzialmente libera e non impedita.

Il rapporto che intercorre tra il modo di essere delle cose e il modo di conoscerle da parte dell'uomo è infatti duplice. Un modo concerne l'intelletto pratico, da cui dipendono la *ratio deliberandi*, le decisioni, le assemblee e gli affari umani compreso quindi il libero arbitrio, i giudizi, le punizioni e le pene; un altro modo riguarda l'intelletto speculativo. L'intelletto pratico non procede per intermediari né, come abbiamo visto, dipende dagli oggetti per agire: piuttosto, si può dire che li produca. Ed è la volontà che si rivolge agli opposti: il nostro modo di deliberare è una capacità presente in noi per natura, ed è in sé neutro e non determinato. Al contrario, l'intelletto speculativo dipende dalle *res* e dalla catena causale che le lega alla *mens* per il tramite di intermediari, cioè i *phantasmata*. La scienza divina funziona come il nostro intelletto pratico. Lo spiegano bene gli esempi della carpenteria, dell'architettura e degli artefatti materiali. La modalità della conoscenza divina, allora, al pari degli enunciati modali, non è legata all'evento ma, anzi, ne determina la modalità di esistenza in relazione al modo divino di conoscerlo: contingente oppure necessario. Si tratta di una soluzione, apparentemente considerata valida da Brito, che vale la pena mettere in rilievo, poiché giunge a negare che Dio conosca i dettagli contingenti del nostro mondo, mentre, al contempo, difende il fatto che la *scientia divina* non sia comunque svalutata.[23]

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scientia infallibili puta a deo', verum est, et ideo eveniet sicut deus scit ipsum evenire; modo deus scit quedam evenire contingenter, et talia /Br 125vb/ contingenter evenient. Quedam autem alia scit evenire necessario et talia de necessitate evenient. Verbi gratia ut si ego sim in campis et videam solem oriri et Sortem currere, video unum evenire de necessitate, scilicet solem oriri, et aliud contingenter, scilicet Sortem currere». Testo comune a entrambe le versioni. Si veda anche il passo citato in nota precedente.

[23] Radulphus Brito, *Quest. sup. De int.*, q. 16, Br 126ra-b; Le 13vb; N 107vb; P_1 28rb-va; Pd 57ra-b; S 44ra; V_4 99r: «Propter quod est notandum quod cum dicitur 'deus /P_1 28va/ previdet omnia futura', dico quod verum est – previdet quidem quedam tamen /Br 126rb/ necessario et quedam contingenter; et quando dicis 'ergo tunc scientia divina falleretur', dico quod non oportet, quia providentia divina non dependet a rebus sicut nostra providentia; et ideo mutatione facta in re non oportet quod providentia divina fallatur et decipiatur. Secus autem est de scientia nostra, quia si ita non esset in

Abbiamo visto come a) il piano linguistico del riferimento modale si saldi con quello b) della conoscenza divina e umana. L'argomento generale, è opportuno ricordarlo, mira a disgiungere necessità da determinazione; e ciò avviene a livello semantico grazie a quella che, con una espressione non bella ma efficace, potremmo definire "complementarità disgiuntiva". L'enunciato "ogni evento futuro è futuro per necessità" ha una possibile e complementare lettura modale: *de dicto* o *de re* oppure per composizione o divisione, cioè a seconda che l'operatore modale (e.g., necessità o contingenza) in un enunciato dichiarativo del tipo X è p (che Socrate corra) riguardi l'intera proposizione (*dictum*), come in («Sortem currere est necessarium») o solo il predicato e allora il modo si interpone al *dictum* («Sortem est necessarium currere»).[24] L'enunciato è, cioè, letto sotto una duplice prospettiva, esterna o interna, per così dire, all'operatore modale. Prendiamo il classico caso di *De Interpretatione* 9, quello relativo all'esempio della battaglia navale. Per Brito, esiste una sistematica ambiguità di riferimento, evidenziata dalla disgiunzione in resoconti di enunciati temporali-modali. Non c'è, e non può esserci, una sola risposta univoca alla domanda se, per esempio, domani, ci sarà la battaglia navale. Il che svincola la necessità dalla determinazione. A livello teologico, questa complementarità nell'articolare piani di discorso trova riscontro (e quindi giustificazione) in un riferimento a oggetti secondo una prospettiva plurima – per esempio, conoscere in modo necessario oppure in modo contingente. Si parlerà allora di una modalità neutra di conoscere gli oggetti che stabilisce, ma non determina, il modo del riferimento linguistico. Questa pluralità modale è, per così dire, ineliminabile perché "presupposta" nella mente

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re sicut providemus, tunc scientia nostra esset erronea, et loquor nunc de providentia sive scientia nostra speculativa que dependet a rebus et nullo modo est causa rerum. Et ponatur exemplum de hoc, scilicet, quod propter aliquam mutationem factam in re non oportet scientiam divinam falli, sicut ars edificativa remanet eadem in anima, sive domus sit sive non sit, quia ars edificativa /Pd 57rb/ non dependet ex domo extra, sed econverso, scilicet domus extra dependet ex arte edificativa. Unde intellectus noster practicus ut sic non dependet ex agibilibus quamvis econverso sit de intellectu nostro speculativo. Modo intellectus divinus respectu istorum inferiorum est sicut intellectus noster practicus; ideo non oportet quod mutetur eius scientia sive providentia dato quod res non sit; ideo etc.». Testo comune alle due versioni.

[24] Massimo Mugnai, *Possibile/Necessario* (Lessico della filosofia), Bologna 2013, 72-73.

divina:[25] vi è infatti una antecedenza ontologica e metafisica dei modi di conoscere divini, liberi e non impediti.

Ontologia e metafisica: la causalità

Un terzo livello di indagine, che potremmo definire fondazionale, riguarda il piano metafisico-causale. Bisogna dimostrare che l'articolazione dei modi di conoscere divini è libera in se stessa, per quanto possa essere necessaria o contingente, quanto agli oggetti esterni. Il che si traduce nell'affermare che la conoscenza divina non è affetta da cause intermedie: essa, cioè, non è impedibile. Dalla lettura sinottica di tutte le questioni parallele, e in particolare dalla *quaestio* 16 sul *De interpretatione*, emerge come Rodolfo si inserisca perfettamente nel solco della discussione che, sul finire del XIII secolo, attraversa il problema della ridefinizione della contingenza, basata sulla causalità e sulla impedibilità o meno delle cause. Il perché è chiaro: sarà la relazione tra la causa

[25] Radulphus Brito, *Quest. sup. De int.*, q. 16, Br 127va-vb; Le 14ra-b; N 108ra; P_1 28vb; Pd 57vb-58ra; S 44va: «Et est intelligendum per modum notabilis quod enunciationes de futuro contingenti non sunt vere determinate nec false determinate, sed una est vera sub disiunctione ad alteram. Et ratio huius est, quod enunciationes sunt vere quemadmodum et res de quibus sunt; sed res de futuro contingenti non habent esse determinate nec non esse determinate, sed esse sub disiunctione ad non esse; ergo enunciationes de contingenti futuro non sunt vere determinate, nec false determinate; sed vere sub disiunctione ad falsitatem. Maior patet ex primo huius. Minor satis patet ex precedenti questione, immo Philosophus ponit ibi totam istam rationem ubi solvit unam dubitationem. Ex hoc ad unam rationem /Br 127vb/ que solet fieri in oppositum / Pd 58ra/ quam facit Philosophus contra se ipsum, cum dicit: si 'Sortes est modo albus' verum fuit prius dicere quoniam Sortes erit albus; et si verum fuit dicere quoniam erit albus, non potuit non fieri albus; et si non potuit non fieri albus, necessarium fuit ipsum fieri album, et sic de necessitate factus est albus; et sic intellige de aliis futuris. /Le 14rb/ Ad hoc dicendum est quod ratio Philosophi procedit ex suppositione, supposito scilicet quod eodem modo sit veritas in enunciationibus de futuro contingenti sicut in illis de inesse. Unde cum dicitur 'si Sortes est modo albus, verum fuit prius dicere quoniam erit albus', dicendum quod non est verum determinate, nisi facta illa hypothesi, sed fuit verum dicere 'quoniam Sortes erit albus vel non erit albus' sub disiunctione; ideo etc.». Testo comune alle due versioni. Cfr. Petrus de Alvernia, *Quest. sup. Periherm.*, q. 37 (*u. propositiones de futuro contingenti possint esse vere*), P_2 108vb; M 9va: «Ad aliud. Concedatur maior, sed ad minorem, quando dicitur quod futura contingentia ita se habent ad esse quod potest esse et non esse, dicendum quod futurum contingens habet aliquid esse in natura, quoniam id habet quod recipit a sua causa; nunc autem a sua causa recipit esse indeterminatum, ideo ipsum futurum contingens habet esse indeterminatum; et hoc modo etiam habet veritatem».

prima, le cause intermedie e gli effetti a evidenziare o meno il legame tra contingenza, necessità e determinazione. La *quaestio* 16 mostra un bilanciamento tra i percorsi delle tradizioni causali ontologiche, derivati principalmente dalle riflessioni su *Metaphysica* VII-IX, e quelli di tipo semantico, con particolare riferimento al determinismo e al fatalismo teologico, sollevati da *De Int*. 9. Rodolfo, sulla scorta di quello che pare essere un approfondimento della q. 36 di Pietro d'Alvernia sul *De interpretatione*, mostra di dominare molto bene il problema, mantenendosi in perfetto equilibrio tra i due diversi ordini di problemi. La considerazione degli argomenti finalistico provvidenziali assieme a quelli metafisico-causali inserisce Brito nelle discussioni sulla contingenza e nelle ridefinizioni del suo status – a partire quanto meno dal *De necessitate et contingentia causarum* di Sigieri, da Tommaso, e proseguite poi con Pietro d'Alvernia a dimostrazione di una viva comunità conversazionale su questi temi tra gli anni Settanta e la fine del secolo XIII.[26]

Unita alla considerazione della volontà ancora subordinata alla naturalità dell'intelletto deliberativo, la concezione non assoluta della contingenza negli argomenti causali della *quaestio* 16 fa propendere per una certa distanza sia dal volontarismo più marcato quale quello di Enrico di Gand, sia dal contingentismo naturalista di Sigieri sia, infine, da quello che Pasquale Porro ha definito «il determinismo provvidenziale» di Tommaso.[27] Tutti i termini del dibattito sono ben contestualiz-

[26] Cfr. D. Calma, *Études sur le premier siècle de l'Averroïsme latin, Approches et textes inédits* (Studia Artistarum 31), Turnhout 2011. Sul *De Necessitate* di Sigieri, cfr. Sigierus de Brabantia, *De Necessitate et Contingentia Rerum*, in J. J. Duin, *La doctrine de la Providénce dans les écrits de Siger de Brabant* (Philosophes médiévaux 3), Louvain 1954; cfr. anche A. Maier, "Notwendigkeit, Kontingenz und Zufall", in Ead., *Die Vorläufer Galileis im 14. Jahrhundert. Studien zur Naturphilosophie der Spätscholastik*, Roma 1949, 235 sgg. Meno evidente, ma pure presente, per esempio nell'affermazione per cui, la necessità dell'evento si ha nel momento in cui esso accade, *in hora in qua accidit*, per quanto sia una comune riproposizione della necessità 'statistica' aristotelica, è il debito con l'Anonymus Florentinus, sia nel linguaggio, sia nell'argomentazione sia, infine, in una minore indipendenza di Brito rispetto alla lettera aristotelica. Cfr. Petrus de Alvernia, *Quest. sup. Periherm*., q. 36, P2 107vb-108va; M 8vb-9rb. Cfr. anche Anonymus Florentinus, *Questiones super librum Perihermenias*, F1 8va-11rb.

[27] P. Porro, "Contingenza e impedibilità delle cause. Presupposti e implicazioni di un dibattito scolastico, in *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia*, 1 (2013), 113-147: 121; cfr. anche M. Posti, *Medieval Theories of Divine Providence 1250-1350* (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 128), Leiden-Boston 2020, 103-110.

zati: dalla distinzione tra cause lecite e non; determinate e indeterminate; l'impedibilità delle cause per resistenza (*indispositio*) della materia o per debolezza del legame – per esempio nel caso del concorso di cause e/o in relazione a ordini di perfezione sempre crescenti, come nell'esempio delle costellazioni; oppure decrescenti, e vieppiù impedibili per vari motivi, sino all'azione umana.[28] Nel riferimento ad Al-Kindi (e seguaci) come modello dei deterministi, Rodolfo mostra di conoscere la discussione generata dalla riflessione sul contingente in Avicenna come ciò che non ha la propria causa in sé; così come conosce il problema della relazione tra cause intrinseche e cause estrinseche, che viene concretamente delineato nella difficoltà di stabilire un confine netto tra le due; e trattato nella declinazione degli ordini celesti e nella discussione sulle nuove rivoluzioni dei pianeti (*renovationes* che al determinista appaiono non impedibili per se – in modo intrinseco – ma *per aliud*, grazie all'intervento dei modi estrinseci su quelli intrinseci); così come ha perfetta padronanza dell'argomento della *indispositio* della materia, che al non determinista potrebbe sembrare impedibile, mentre non è così se si risale al concorso delle cause.[29]

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[28] Radulphus Brito, *Quest. sup. De int.*, q. 16, Br 124va; Le 13rb; N 107va; P_1 28ra; Pd 56ra; S 43rb: «Opinio astrologorum quorundam, sicut Alkindi et suorum sequentium, fuit quod omnia de necessitate evenirent propter rationem ultimo tactam in oppositum, quia illud quod fit a causa non inpedibili etc.; et isti astrologi sic ponentes dixerunt de aliquo philosopho quod necessarium fuit ipsum esse philosophum; et sicut hoc fuit necessarium in materia ad talem finem ordinata esse in tali homine fuit necessarium; sed ista opinio non valet, ut apparebit in dissolvendo rationes illorum». Cfr. Radulphus Brito, *Quest. sup. Phys*., II, q. 13, F_2 21va: «Alkindi (Alchuinti, F_2) qui propter rationes tactas posuit omnia de necessitate evenire diceret ad hoc quod si ego consulerem de aliquo [[me]] necessarium fuit me consulere de illo; et de libero arbitrio diceret quod nichil esset, immo necessarium est aliquem se (sic, F_2) consulere ad unam partem et necessarium est tamen ipsum alteram partem deliberare. Et si diceretur sibi 'nonne possum surgere et non surgere quandocumque (quod-, F_2) voluero?', diceret quod si surgas, necessarium fuit te surgere et si aliquis puniretur et premiaretur hoc est necessario, quia necessarium fuit ipsum malefacere vel benefacere». Cfr. V 89ra (che presenta un testo alquanto diverso, benché concordante nel contenuto).

[29] Radulphus Brito, *Quest. sup. De int.*, q. 16, Br 127ra-rb; Le 14ra; N 108rb-va; P_1 28va-b; Pd 57va-b; S 44rb-va; V_4 100r: «Ad aliam. Cum dicitur 'illud quod fit a causa non impedibili est necessarium evenire', verum est, si sit a causa non impedibili immediate; sed si sit a causa <non> impedibili mediate non est verum; et cum dicitur 'omnia quecumque facta sunt et quecumque habent fieri fiunt et habent fieri a causa non impedibili, scilicet a prima causa', verum est mediate, sed immediate non est verum; et cum dicis quod immo, quia prima causa est causa omnium, verum est; sed non est causa

Se nelle *Questiones super Physicam*, tutti questi temi sono correttamente orientati alla riflessione sulla giustificazione dei principi fondanti della filosofia della natura, forti dell'assunto aristotelico per cui noi non conosciamo nessuna cosa prima di aver scoperto il perché di ogni cosa, nella *quaestio* 16 sul *De int*. Rodolfo è ben conscio del fatto che il problema è "anche" un altro. Non solo *cognoscere res per causas*, ma anche "come" avviene questa conoscenza e, quindi, sulla base di quali fondamenti extra empirici. In un universo di discorso aristotelico, ciò avviene attraverso termini e concetti quali astrazione, materia, forma, ma anche necessità e contingenza – favorendo così lo spostamento verso un ambito di ricerca metafisico e logico-semantico,

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omnium istorum inferiorum immediate, sed solum mediate, quia non est causa istorum inferiorum nisi mediantibus multis aliis causis particularibus, que possunt impediri, ut dictum est in positione. […]. Ad aliam. Cum dicitur 'omne novum hic inferius reducitur ad aliquod novum vel ad aliquam novam dispositionem in celo', /P_1 28vb/ tunc arguitur: si omne novum hic inferius reducatur ad aliquam novam dispositionem in celo, tunc ergo omne quod est hic inferius habet causam determinatam et necessariam, quia omnis revolutio celi est necessaria; sed quod habet causam determinatam et necessariam, necessario inerit. Et credo quod verum est, si illud quod habet causam determinatam et necessariam, habeat illam immediate. Et tu dicis 'omne novum hic inferius' etc., dico quod ista inferiora non reducuntur ad ali/Br 127rb/quam revolutionem celi immediate, immo mediate, quia mediantibus particularibus transmutationibus in materia, sicut mediante generatione et corruptione; et ideo dicit Aristoteles, secundo De generatione, quod homo generat hominem mediante sole; et etiam ista inferiora reducuntur ad aliquam revolutionem celi mediantibus dispositionibus materie, ideo ratione indispositionis materie vel ratione concursus particularium agentium iste effectus futurus potest impediri ne talis effectus futurus ex tali constellatione producatur /Pd 57vb/ in materia, quamvis natus sit produci ex tali constellatione in materia tali. Et ideo talis effectus potest aliter evenire quam ista constellatio exigat. Et ideo dicit Ptolomeus, in primo Almagesti, quod vir sapiens dominabitur astris, unde quia vir sapiens videns quod aliquis homo natus sub tali vel tali constellatione debet submergi vel suspendi, potest disponere materiam aliter quam sit nata recipere talem constellationem vel talem formam sub tali constellatione, /S 44va/ ut si aliquis sub tali constellatione natus debeat fieri latro vel demens, et sic de aliis, potest subtrahere talem dispositionem et inducere aliam; ideo etc. […] Et tu dices contra hoc: quia omne impedimentum materie est contrarium agentis hic inferius, et reducitur ad aliquam causam determinatam et necessariam, puta ad aliquam revolutionem in celo que est necessaria, propter quod fuit necessarium istam materiam fieri indispositam <et impediri; dico quod hoc non est verum, scilicet quod sit necessarium istam materiam fieri indispositam> ad /N 108va/ receptionem talis effectus, immo potuit necessarie evenire: accidit enim ut accidit et evenit ut evenit.» Cfr. R. Fedriga, *La sesta prosa. Discussioni medievali su prescienza, libertà e contingenza* (Filosofie), Milano 2015, 59-67. Cfr. anche Porro, "Contingenza e impedibilità della cause", 123.

cui il filosofo naturale è estraneo.[30] La *quaestio* 16 mostra, pertanto, la piena consapevolezza del fatto che la discussione sulla necessità e la contingenza sia tutt'altro che una sottigliezza tecnica ma che investa, piuttosto, la profonda ridefinizione in atto dei fondamenti e dello *status* stesso delle cose. Consapevolezza che si evince anche dal riferimento agli altri protagonisti della *altercatio*, quei *moderni* cui Brito fa riferimento nella stessa *quaestio*, in entrambe le versioni *B* e *A*, oltre che nella *quaestio* II.13 sulla *Physica*.[31] Essi sono identificabili con coloro

[30] Cfr. R. Martorelli Vico, *Medicina e filosofia. Per una storia dell'embriologia medievale nei secoli XIII-XIV*, Milano 2002, 55.

[31] Radulphus Brito, *Quest. sup. De int.*, q. 16, Br 127rb-va; Le 14ra; N 108ra; P_1 28vb; Pd 57vb; S 44va; V_4 100r: «Et si dicas: nonne iste effectus est quid novum, ergo reducitur ad aliquod novum in celo? Dico quod est quid novum, et ideo bene volo quod reducatur ad aliquid /Br 127va/ novum in celo, puta ad talem vel talem constellationem; sed hoc non est immediate, sed mediantibus multis agentibus particularibus, que possunt impediri; ideo etc. Verum tamen est quod aliqui dixerunt quod omnis effectus quantumcumque contingens sit est necessarius respectu prime cause et celi; tamen quantum est ex natura sua et respectu agentium que possunt impediri, talis effectus est impedibilis et contingens. Et hec est intentio Boetii, in quinto *De consolatione*. Istud tamen non videtur esse verum, quia si isti effectus inferiores contingentes essent necessarii respectu motus celi et respectu prime cause, tunc simpliciter essent necessarii respectu cuiuscumque alterius cause particularis, quia aliter non possent produci nisi secundum quod exigeret prima causa que est non impedibilis. Sed dicere quod omnes effectus sunt simpliciter necessarii est inconveniens; ideo etc. Melius est ergo dicere primo modo; quare etc.». Testo comune alle due versioni. Cfr. Radulphus Brito, *Quest. sup. Phys*., II, q. 13, F_2 21va-vb: «Alia est opinio modernorum: dicunt enim quod aliquid esse contingens hoc potest esse dupliciter: vel respectu causarum particularium vel respectu prime cause; modo respectu causarum particularum, multa sunt contingentia; sed respectu prime cause omnia sunt [[d]] necessaria. Et hoc declarant sic: quia iste cause agentes particulares a casu possunt impediri ne consequa<n>tur suos effectus, prima[m] causa[m] concurrente[m], vel per indispositionem materie, et ideo possunt esse multi effectus casuales respectu istarum causarum particularium. Sed respectu prime cause dicunt quod nichil est a casu et ratio principalis ipsorum est ista: quia nichil est contingens respectu sue cause essentialis; modo prima causa est causa essentialis cuiuslibet effectus existentis hic inferius; quare etc.». Cfr. V 89ra. Cfr. anche Petrus de Alvernia, *Quest. sup. Periherm*., q. 36, P_2 108va; M 9rb: «Propter quod dicendum est aliter, quod de futuro possit loqui dupliciter: aut enim accipitur per comparationem ad primam causam, et sic omne futurum est necessarium vel de necessitate eveniet; aut accipitur futurum per comparationem ad omnes causas propinquas et immediatas, et sic omne futurum non evenit de necessitate, quare nec esse futurum hoc modo habet causam necessariam, immo quedam sic et quedam non; unde id quod habet causam necessariam propinquam et immediatam de necessitate eveniet; id autem quod non habet causam immediatam propinquam et necessariam non eveniet de necessitate, ad minus per comparationem ad illam causam. Et sic solvitur ad illud».

che ritengono che ogni effetto, benché sia necessario rispetto alla prima causa e al cielo, tuttavia, in relazione alla sua natura e agli agenti che possono essere impediti, è impedibile e contingente. I contingenti, per loro, possono essere assoluti, cioè *simpliciter*, in relazione alle cause contingenti, e *secundum quid*, in relazione alla causa prima. I *moderni* sembrano avere una posizione vicina a quella dei *Parisienses doctores* citati nel *De necessitate et contingentia causarum* di Sigieri, così come a quella dei *Peripatetici* e degli *alii* nelle *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*, identificati da Armand Maurer con Tommaso e Alberto e considerati con maggiore cautela, invece, da Dragos Calma e Pasquale Porro.[32]

Ricordiamo brevemente che, per Sigieri, non è corretto affermare che, in base alla onnicomprensione e all'universalità dell'ordine provvidenziale stabilito dalla Prima Causa, ogni effetto sia necessario *simpliciter*. Sarebbe vero se, all'interno dei cinque ordini di cause, non ci fossero effetti accidentali, e non solo in relazione alla causa prima ma anche a quelle inferiori. Ma questi ci sono, altrimenti non ci sarebbero le cause *ad utrumlibet*, l'indisposizione della materia superflua, la preterintenzionalità, le deliberazioni e le libere scelte ecc. Per il Brabantino, il fatto che nessun effetto si verifichi accidentalmente rispetto alla causa prima, non implica che ogni effetto si verifichi necessariamente, cosa che evita il rischio paventato dalle tesi necessitariste. Ma, dato che ci sono effetti accidentali tra cause intermedie e inferiori, allora possono esserci effetti accidentali tanto estrinseci, quanto intrinseci: se l'estrinseco non si realizza come deve, cioè nel tempo e in *necessitas per accidens*, gli intrinseci restano tali in potenza. Il che non inficia la necessità non impediente della Prima Causa verso il primo effetto prossimo – secondo il principio per cui *ab uno simplici non procedit nisi unum immediate* –, né il fatto che gli effetti inferiori dell'ordine siano *secundum quid*, cioè relativi, rispetto alla Prima. Per Sigieri, le cause sono ordinate essenzialmente, cioè le proprietà essenziali delle cause determinano solo e soltanto quelle degli effetti. La Prima Causa

[32] Nella *quaestio* 16 di Rodolfo, Tommaso è citato nella replica al secondo e al terzo argomento in favore della tesi determinista (cfr. testi citati sopra, nn. 21-22). Per Thomas de Aquino, si veda *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 22, art. 4, ed. Leonina (Opera Omnia 4), Romae 1888. Per i riferimenti al contesto filosofico-teologico e agli argomenti di Sigieri, si veda F. Binotto, "Siger of Brabant on Determinism: a Reassessment of the Necessitate et Contingentia Causarum", in *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale*, 66 (2024), 31-54; D. Calma, *Études sur le premier siècle de l'averroïsme latin*; P. Porro, "Contingenza e impedibilità delle cause", 142.

non può quindi contribuire a determinare lo stato modale, contingente o necessario, degli stati sublunari, i quali sono comunque contingenti per prossimità immediata e unica. Le cause contingenti e secondarie sono condizione sufficiente, per quanto non necessaria, a garantire la contingenza negli effetti, indipendentemente dal fatto che questi vadano a buon fine o vengano deviati. Come anche per Tommaso, nessun effetto è accidentale rispetto alla Causa Prima; diversamente dall'Aquinate e dai *Parisienses doctores* citati nel *De necessitate*, come anche dai *moderni* di Rodolfo, per lo stesso Sigieri non si ha un duplice stato modale (contingente o necessario, *per aliud/per se*) che segue da una scelta volontaria della Causa prima. Sigieri vuole evitare il rischio di un determinismo provvidenziale per cui la contingenza *per aliud* è sempre, in qualche modo, subordinata alla necessità prima e non riesce "essenzialmente" ad arginare il determinismo, se non come espediente *ad hoc*. E il prezzo che paga è alto: sia a livello semantico, per cui abbiamo una semantica direttamente referenziale per i futuri contingenti; sia a livello metafisico-causale, per cui la Causa Prima è naturale e si apre al rischio di non garantire una giustificazione del suo legame essenziale con gli effetti mediati.[33]

Anche per Rodolfo, come per Pietro d'Alvernia, il rapporto tra la Prima Causa e le Intelligenze è immediato, non impedibile e necessario, e il piano delle *res* non influisce sulla Prima Causa. Il problema, nel comune tentativo di evitare l'identificazione tra modalità e determinismo, è quello di giustificare la relazione tra non impedibilità della Prima Causa e cause sublunari o a vario titolo impedibili. La sua soluzione è quella di aggiungere tra la causa e le *res* un livello ulteriore, che fa slittare la discussione dal non determinismo all'indeterminismo, nel senso di non ancora determinato. Le cause sono ontologicamente orientate a seconda di "come" Dio le pensa. Dio può farlo in modo disgiuntivo: contingente "o" necessario. In questo modo, a seconda della lettura, il resoconto linguistico sul riferimento modale sarà vero o falso quando, in *necessitas per accidens*, esso si determina. Ma prima di essere tale, esso non deve essere né vero né falso, e non, come pare in Pietro d'Alvernia (i) vero in senso contingente e (ii) vero in senso necessario. Questo piano, da un punto di vista causale, è non impedibile, ed è immediatamente collegato alla Prima Causa: non l'affetta in alcun modo, garantisce del legame con

[33] Cfr. A. LaZella, "Siger of Brabant on Divine Providence and the Indeterminacy of Chance", in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 51 (2011), 483-500.

gli effetti sublunari. Il che avviene quando una delle due contraddittorie disgiuntive si riferisca a una *res* attuale e realizza lo sviluppo naturale del passaggio da metafisico a temporale.

Sarà proprio il suo essere inserito nel tempo degli accadimenti fattuali a rilevare la presenza della impedibilità: *ut frequenter*, *ad utrumlibet* e volontaria. Come Tolomeo, il saggio orienta gli astri, cioè modifica gli impedimenti con la sua libera azione. Ma lo fa solo perché, come l'architetto, sa come fare uno scrigno – indipendentemente dal fatto che esso esista o meno. Poi, come dice Aristotele, *accidit ut accidit*.[34] La volontà è certamente guidata, cioè indirizzata dall'intelletto a scegliere una o l'altra opzione, ma rimane libera nella scelta di fare diversamente rispetto ad atti, consigli e oggetti diversi. Quindi, la soluzione alla questione del futuro contingente diventa chiara nella sua portata genuinamente filosofica. Gli enunciati riguardanti il futuro contingente non sono né veri né falsi in modo determinato. La verità o falsità di tali enunciati si basa sulla realizzazione effettiva degli eventi nel futuro. Fino a quando l'evento non si verifica, l'enunciato è aperto e ambiguo – attitudine che è presente anche in Pietro d'Alvernia, nella q. 37 sul *De int.*[35] – Rodolfo respinge l'idea che gli enunciati riguardanti il futuro contingente siano necessari e determinati. Essi sono aperti a più possibilità fino a quando l'evento effettivamente si verifica, e la loro verità o falsità si basa sulla realtà concreta del futuro. Questa prospettiva sfida la concezione di un futuro completamente predeterminato e necessario, aprendo spazio all'indeterminatezza, alla contingenza e alla libertà.

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[34] Cfr. quanto dice Rodolfo nel testo citato sopra, alla nota 27.

[35] Petrus de Alvernia, *Quest. sup. Periherm.*, q. 37, P_2 108va; M 9vb: «Ad videndum autem entitatem futuri contingentis intelligendum est quod entitas unius effectus iudicanda est secundum entitatem sue cause et ideo que sunt cause futuri contingentis notandum et dicendum quod omnes cause futuri contingentis sunt tales quod possunt effectum producere vel non producere indifferenter; nec erit alia causa <ad> ipsum determinate producere, nec alia <ad> ipsum (ipsam P_2) producere indeterminate, nec potens futurum; ergo contingens est illud quod potest fore et non fore, nec verum est id determinate dicere fore, quoniam potest non fore; nec determinate non fore, quoniam potest fore. Si orationes sunt vere quemadmodum et res, oratio dicens ipsum futurum contingens fore non erit vera determinate, quoniam ipsum potest non fore; nec oratio dicens futurum contingens non fore non erit vera determinate, quoniam ipsum poterit fore. Sed ipsum contingens futurum erit tale quod ipsum poterat fore vel non fore; ideo oratio dicens ipsum fore non est vera determinate, et oratio dicens ipsum non fore non erit vera determinate; sed una sub disiunctione ad aliam ita quod oratio vera est qui dicit futurum contingens esse vel non esse, ut ista 'navale bellum erit vel non erit'».

Rimane un problema. Il tipo di necessità immediata tra la causa prima e le intelligenze non è *per accidens* e non resta che pensare a una necessità non temporale, come quella sincronica, propria degli istanti logici. Da un punto di vista ontologico, allora, si presenta il medesimo problema di Duns Scoto: il rapporto tra gli artefatti mentali e la mente divina di che tipo è? Le preesistono? Sono coeterni? Sappiamo come lo risolverà Duns Scoto, ed è il problema su cui si accanirà la prima generazione post-scotista: senza postulare la modalità sincronica degli istanti logici, che in Rodolfo non sono presenti, salta la catena tra *scientia Dei*, causa prima e sua causa prossima.[36] L'immediatezza, sufficiente a livello metafisico, non è giustificata a livello teologico a meno di non prendere il modello della contingenza di Sigieri e spostarlo nell'universo del volontarismo. Ma per farlo bisogna separare teologia da metafisica, e fare della prima una *scientia practica*.

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[36] Cfr. il commento e le note al testo a John Duns Scotus, *Contingency and Freedom. Lectura I 39: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, ed. A. Vos Jaczn *et al*., Den Haag 1994. Cfr. C. Schabel, "Early Franciscan Attacks on John Duns Scotus Doctrine of Foreknowledge", in *What is 'Theology' in the Middle Ages? Religious Cultures of Europe (11th-15th Centuries) as Reflected in their Self-understanding*, ed. M. Olzewski (Archa Verbi. Subsidia 1), Münster 2007, 301-328.

Alcune polemiche di Ugolino di Orvieto sulla preconoscenza divina dei futuri contingenti

Amos Corbini

1.

L'agostiniano Ugolino di Orvieto, che lesse le *Sentenze* a Parigi nell'anno accademico 1348-'49, è stato sicuramente una figura speculativa di rilievo sia all'interno del suo ordine religioso, sia nelle diverse università dove operò e insegnò, e le sue dottrine ebbero un ampio influsso nei decenni successivi alla sua morte.[1]

1.1

Nella sua trattazione delle questioni relative alla prescienza divina dei futuri contingenti, Ugolino si colloca certamente all'interno di una lunga tradizione "parigina" che, affondando le sue radici nelle celebri pagine della *Consolatio* boeziana, aveva trovato momenti centrali e fondamentali almeno nelle riflessioni di Tommaso d'Aquino e di Giovanni Duns Scoto, come anche nella polemica contro Pietro Aureoli. Certamente, però, è l'esposizione di Gregorio di Rimini a costituire per lui l'antecedente più prossimo e immediato, attraverso cui gli pervennero anche influenze di aspetti del pensiero anglosassone, prima tra tutti la

[1] Su questi aspetti, per un primo orientamento si possono vedere i contributi di A. Zumkeller, "Leben und Werke des Hugolin von Orvieto", in *Schwerpunkte und Wirkungen des Sentenzenkommentars Hugolins von Orvieto O.E.S.A.*, hrsg. v. W. Eckermann, Würzburg 1990, 3-42; e di V. Marcolino, "Die Wirkung der Theologie Hugolins von Orvieto im Spätmittelalter", in *Analecta Augustiniana*, 56 (1993), 5-124; oltre per esempio al più recente M. Brînzei, C. D. Schabel, "Les cisterciens et l'université. Le cas du Commentaire des *Sentences* de Conrad d'Ebrach (+1399)", in *Les Cisterciens et la transmission des textes (XIIe-XVIIIe siècles)*, éd. T. Falmagne, D. Stutzmann, A. M. Turcan-Verkerk (Bibliothèque d'histoire culturelle du Moyen Âge 18), Turnhout 2018, 453-486: 462-464.

Turnhout, 2025 (Rencontres de Philosophie Médiévale 31) *pp. 181-211*
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communis opinio che si era costituita a partire e sulla base degli scritti di Ockham.[2] In effetti, molti dei temi principali toccati da Ugolino lo sono sulla scorta di Gregorio di cui spesso riprende le dottrine fondamentali, spesso peraltro in una esposizione più ampia. Vediamo quali sono questi punti qualificanti.

Innanzitutto, Ugolino afferma che Dio è una natura intellettiva[3] e in particolare è una conoscenza intellettiva: Dio, essendo un atto puro di conoscenza che in quanto puro è anche perfettamente semplice, è Egli stesso intelligenza.[4] Dunque, Dio è anche la sua stessa prescienza, ovvero una conoscenza evidente rispetto a ciò che è futuro:[5] proprio poiché Dio è una sostanza intellettuale semplice, è anche una sostanza infinita poiché indivisibile rispetto a qualsiasi vero essa conosca.[6]

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[2] Su questi aspetti la bibliografia è enorme: per un primo valido orientamento, si possono vedere almeno M. J. F. M. Hoenen, *Marsilius of Inghen. Divine Knowledge in Late Medieval Thought* (Studies in the History of Christian Traditions 50), Leiden-New York 1993, 157-193; C. D. Schabel, *Theology at Paris, 1316-1345. Peter Auriol and the Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents* (Ashgate Studies in Medieval Philosophy), New York 2000, 17-63 (con citazione degli studi precedenti dello stesso autore); J. Marenbon, *Le temps, l'éternité et la prescience de Boèce à Thomas d'Aquin* (Conférences Pierre Abélard), Paris 2005.

[3] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius in quattuor libros Sententiarum*, I, d. 35, a. 1, ed. W. Eckermann (Cassiciacum Supplementband 9), Würzburg 1984, II, 296.45-51.

[4] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 35, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 296.52-297.81.

[5] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 2, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 326.69-71; cfr. Gregorius Ariminensis, *Lectura super primum et secundum Sententiarum*, d. 38, q. 2, a. 3, ed. A. D. Trapp, (Spätmittelalter und Reformation. Texte und Untersuchungen 8), Berlin-New York 1984, III, 293.10-11.

[6] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 2, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 327.90-328.125. Gregorio a questo riguardo aveva spiegato che Dio è un giudizio intuitivo ed immenso rispetto a tutti i contingenti, tanto futuri quanto presenti e passati (Gregorius Ariminensis, *Lectura*, d. 38, q. 2, a. 2, ed. Trapp, III, 283.12-16; e a. 3, 305.8-10), e Ugolino chiosa spiegando che, nella sua supereminente nobiltà di natura, Dio ha conoscenza di tutte le nature ovvero di tutte le perfezioni (Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 35, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 298.109-117), conoscenza che contiene in una visione massimamente semplice ed infinita l'ampiezza di tutte le possibili visioni (Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 35, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 300.161-164).

Venendo al piano della creazione, anche sulla scorta di Gregorio[7] Ugolino riprende la distinzione tra enti futuri *incomplexa* e enunciati *complexa* riguardanti il futuro: infatti il termine *futurum* si usa indistintamente sia per le *res* future, come una determinata anima che non è ancora ma potrà essere; sia per le *res complexae* delle quali, in quanto sono significabili, noi diciamo che possono o potranno essere, come avviene con l'enunciato *animam esse.*[8]

Su questa base si innesta la basilare adozione dell'antica prospettiva boeziana e poi tommasiana dell'eterna e atemporale presenza innanzi a Dio di tutte le cose,[9] dottrina su cui peraltro Ugolino varia e fiorisce con abbondanza di sottolineature e di inflessioni[10] e che riassume sinteticamente in queste righe:

> Deus intuetur omnem entitatem possibilem et futuram, praesentem et praeteritam in suo praesentario statu vel instanti praesenti aeternitatis et tamquam praesentem sibi, et est evidentissimum iudicium vel as-

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[7] Gregorius Ariminensis, *Lectura*, d. 38, q. 2, a. 1, ed. Trapp, III, 274.16-28; e anche q. 2, a. 3, 285.10-15. Una recente e interessante rilettura dell'interpretazione data da Ugolino riguardo alla distinzione tra *vera incomplexa e significabilia complexe* come rivelatrice di un aspetto fondamentale del suo pensiero si può leggere in D. Riserbato, "Esistenza e verità in Ugolino di Orvieto O.E.S.A. (+1373). *Verum incomplexum* e *significabile complexe* tra semantica e ontologia", in *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 29 (2018), 457-478.

[8] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 2, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 325.29-38.

[9] Cfr. ad esempio Gregorius Ariminensis, *Lectura*, d. 38, q. 2, a. 2, ed. Trapp, III, 283.29-30.

[10] Per esempio, egli esplicita che alla visione sommamente infinita che è Dio ogni visibile è evidentemente noto e ugualmente a Lui presente (Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 320.109-111), poiché tutte le cose future, in quanto sono future, sono eternamente presenti a Dio nel loro essere costituite nel Verbo (Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 2, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 327.79-81): infatti, ripugna all'infinità attualissima dell'essere infinito di Dio la possibilità di divenire passato o futuro, mentre Dio è sempre necessariamente in una simultanea presenzialità (Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius in quattuor libros Sententiarum*, principium secundum, q. unica, a. 2, ed. W. Eckermann [Cassiciacum Supplementband 10], Würzburg 1986, III, 13.232-234). A Dio dunque tutti i futuri contingenti sono presenti (Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 319.72-73), per cui Dio conosce eternamente anche qualsiasi *complexe significabile* che per noi prima o poi sarà futuro, ma come presente (Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 323.213-216).

> sensum de omni aliqualiter esse, fuisse, vel fore, ut in re est vel erit vel esse potest non distanter, sed praesentialiter.[11]

È proprio nella *probatio* in cui Ugolino argomenta questa dottrina che egli si mostra memore del lessico dell'*indistantia* tipico di Pietro Aureoli, che pure, com'è noto, era stato criticato severamente da Gregorio di Rimini, con una scelta lessicale non casuale che è già stata notata da Schabel:[12]

> Omne futurum esse futurum evidenter Deus praescit et ab aeterno praescivit. Probatur ex dictis […] Secundo: Quodlibet futurum est Deo *per indistantiam durationis* aeternaliter aeque praesens. Igitur immediate intuetur quodcumque futurum et distinctissime et evidenter.[13]

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Gregorio di Rimini, com'è noto, era stato molto attento e deciso nell'affermare che l'eterna presenza dei futuri e la loro immediata evidenza rispetto alla conoscenza divina non dovessero essere intesi come implicanti una necessità dei futuri stessi: il futuro è contingente, su questo Gregorio non ammette dubbi, e Dio lo conosce esattamente come esso è, ovvero come contingente; e l'assoluta certezza della conoscenza divina dei futuri contingenti non implica in alcun modo la loro necessità.[14]

Anche la lettura di Ugolino, come premettevo all'inizio, non si segnala in generale per l'originalità teorica delle sue idee fondamentali, e si colloca piuttosto nell'ambito di riflessioni che già si erano venute elaborando tra i teologi agostiniani precedenti anche a Gregorio di Rimini;[15] si nota però che il tema della contingenza dei futuri preco-

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[11] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 2, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 328.120-125.

[12] Schabel, *Theology at Paris, 1316-1345*, 287.

[13] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 322.164-170. Corsivi miei.

[14] Cfr. ad esempio Gregorius Ariminensis, *Lectura*, d. 38, q. 2, a. 2, ed. Trapp, III, 282.27-32 e 283.33-284.2; q. 2, a. 3, ed. Trapp, III, 289.17-19. Su questo punto, si possono vedere per esempio le trattazioni riservate a Gregorio nei volumi di Hoenen e Schabel citati alla nota 2, oltre a D. Ciammetti, *Necessità e contingenza in Gregorio di Rimini* (Philosophica 87), Pisa 2011.

[15] Cfr. Schabel, *Theology at Paris*, 183-188 (su Dionigi di Borgo san Sepolcro e

nosciuti da Dio è certamente un aspetto della lettura gregoriana che Ugolino enfatizza molto nel suo commento: ad esempio, alla fine del primo articolo della trentacinquesima distinzione, il *doctor acutissimus* afferma in termini limpidi e paradigmatici che la visione di Dio eterna e massimamente semplice concerne una infinita varietà di passati e di futuri: siccome essa concerne infiniti enti possibili, essa è conoscenza necessaria dei veri necessari, contingente dei veri contingenti.[16] Detto altrimenti, Dio non preconosce il fatto che nessuna cosa futura lo sia in modo necessario, poiché la cosa futura è e rimane contingente; in caso contrario, infatti, la prescienza divina potrebbe errare, prevendendo come necessario un evento che poi, nella sua contingenza, potrebbe sempre non verificarsi; ma questo è impossibile e assurdo.[17] La contingenza dei futuri è strettamente legata da una parte a quella dell'agire divino, che rimane sempre e sommamente libero, essendo ciò da cui tutta la realtà dipende come dal proprio agente primo, che nulla può influenzare;[18] proprio la somma e illimitata libertà dell'agire divino fa sì che sia impossibile per Dio conoscere che qualcosa sarà futuro in

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Gerardo da Siena) e 214-220 (su Michele di Massa). Inoltre, non troviamo nella sua esposizione riferimenti e discussioni circostanziate rispetto alle dottrine di Pietro Aureoli e Giovanni Duns Scoto, che rappresentavano all'epoca alcune delle alternative teoriche fondamentali sulle quali era tipico che gli autori si soffermassero nelle loro trattazioni; su questo punto, tra i numerosi studi di Schabel, si possono vedere ad esempio: "Landulph Caracciolo and Gerard Odonis on Predestination: Opposite Attitudes toward Scotus and Auriol", in *Wissenschaft und Weisheit*, 65 (2002), 62-81; "Early Carmelites between Giants: Questions on Future Contingents by Gerard of Bologna and Guy Terrena", in *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales*, 70 (2003), 139-205. Ma anche il *background* rappresentato dalle idee di Boezio e di Tommaso non trova in Ugolino lo spazio per messe a punto su aspetti specifici, a differenza di quanto avviene per altri autori: cfr. ad esempio C. D. Schabel, "Parisian Secular Masters on Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents in the Early Fourteenth Century, Part II: Thomas Wilton's *Quaestio ordinaria* «Utrum praedestinatus possit damnari», in *Recherches de Théologie et de Philosophie Médiévales*, 78 (2011), 417-479; "Dominican Anti-Thomism: James of Metz's Question on Divine Foreknowledge, with a Rebuttal from the *Correctorium Iacobi Metensis*", in *Przegląd Tomistyczny*, 20 (2014), 35-72.

[16] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 35, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 300.161.167.

[17] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 2, a. 2, ed. Eckermann, II, 330.13-21.

[18] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius in quattuor libros Sententiarum*, principium primum, a. 4, ed. W. Eckermann (Cassiciacum Supplementband 7), Würzburg 1980, I, 38.192-193.

modo necessario, perché se così fosse la stessa libertà di Dio si volgerebbe in necessità:[19] ma, ancora una volta, se tutto è creato liberamente da Dio esso non può che essere creato contingentemente e, nella perfetta semplicità dell'essenza divina, ciò che è creato contingentemente non può se non essere conosciuto a sua volta in modo contingente.[20] E ancora: Dio vede nel suo eterno presente che Giuda avrebbe tradito il Cristo, tuttavia è rimasto del tutto possibile che Giuda non compisse il proprio tradimento poiché Dio vede anche, nel suo eterno presente, che Giuda nel momento del tradimento avrebbe potuto venir meno dal proprio proposito di tradire e, inoltre, Dio vede anche che Egli stesso fin dall'eternità avrebbe potuto non vedere che Giuda avrebbe tradito Cristo. Dunque, il tradimento di Giuda è e rimane contingente, sia di per sé, sia nella visione di Dio, che vede sia il possibile darsi nel futuro del contrario dell'evento previsto, sia il fatto che Egli avrebbe potuto fin dall'eternità non prevedere quel futuro contingente.[21]

Ma Ugolino dettaglia ulteriormente questa prospettiva: sono compossibili il fatto che Dio preconosca che ogni futuro sarà futuro e quello che ogni futuro sia futuro in modo contingente.[22] Infatti, come si è detto, Dio preconosce i futuri precisamente nello stesso modo in cui essi sono nella realtà: ora, qualsiasi futuro è futuro in modo contingente, e così ciò che sarà futuro si può esprimere in un vero conosciuto da Dio nello stesso modo. Ad esempio, se assumiamo la proposizione "B che è Pietro pecca in A" –intendendo con A un momento futuro nel tempo, ad esempio il mezzogiorno di domani–, da una parte B sarà in A e, dall'altra, è anche possibile che B non sia mai, poiché si tratta di

[19] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 321.151-322.159.

[20] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 319.84-92.

[21] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 2, a. 2, ed. Eckermann, II, 331.55-67. Anche l'intransigente difesa della contingenza era sicuramente un aspetto tipico già di autori agostiniani precedenti a Ugolino e a Gregorio di Rimini, al punto che riguardo a Michele di Massa Schabel ha potuto scrivere: "Of course it had already become a commonplace at Paris by the 1320 to include a section refuting fatalism, but at the same time showing that the existence of contingency was a *per se notum*, that is, not something provable but rather plainly obvious" (Schabel, *Theology at Paris*, 217).

[22] Schabel osserva che questa soluzione adottata da Ugolino e, come vedremo, da Alfonso Vargas, è in realtà già quella dell'agostiniano Tommaso di Strasburgo (Schabel, *Theology at Paris*, 259-260 e 277).

una creatura contingente. Pertanto da una parte Dio preconosce che B sarà in A, ma dall'altra B sarà in A in modo contingente poiché, in altre parole, Dio preconosce che B sarà in A, ma questo non elimina in alcun modo la possibilità che B nella sua contingenza non sia mai. Insomma, il fatto che Dio preconosca che Pietro peccherà in A significa in realtà sia che Pietro peccherà in A, sia che è possibile che egli non peccherà mai in A, le quali due assunzioni insieme formano appunto un futuro contingente.[23]

Conseguenza diretta di tutte queste assunzioni è che la prescienza divina non è di per sé causa dell'essere futuro di alcun futuro;[24] non solo, ma anche l'inverso è vero, ovvero le cose future non esercitano alcuna causalità sulla conoscenza divina, data la loro dipendenza da Dio e la loro radicale inferiorità ontologica, per cui non è pensabile che entità contingenti possano esercitare un'azione causale su un essere necessario e incausabile.[25] Anche questa è senz'altro una dottrina assunta da Ugolino in consonanza col suo predecessore Gregorio,[26] ma trova in lui anche una specificazione: i futuri, pur non esercitando causalità su Dio, sono però da considerare come concause della sua prescienza almeno per noi; infatti è il loro essere futuri che fa sì che la conoscenza divina sia per noi una prescienza, ovvero, siccome essi sono nell'infinita visione e intellezione che Dio è, si può dire che uno stato di cose futuro, che lo è per noi secondo una durata determinata di tempo, ci permette di sapere che l'infinita conoscenza che Dio ne ha è una *pre*conoscenza, che però non causa il futuro stesso.[27]

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[23] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 2, a. 2, ed. Eckermann, II, 332.75-93.

[24] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 2, ed. Eckermann, II, 339.33-34.

[25] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 2, ed. Eckermann, II, 339.16-18.

[26] Gregorius Ariminensis, *Lectura*, d. 38, q. 2, ed. Trapp, III, 273.33.35; e q. 2, a. 3, ed. Trapp, III, 307.13-26.

[27] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 2, ed. Eckermann, II, 339.18-27. Nella sua difesa intransigente della contingenza del creato e della volontà divina, Ugolino sicuramente si colloca ancora una volta su un versante tradizionale e maggioritario nel suo secolo, certamente al di fuori di tendenze deterministiche presenti nella sua epoca che pure hanno cominciato ad essere sottolineate: cfr. C. D. Schabel, *Pierre Ceffons et le déterminisme radical au temps de la peste noire*, Paris 2019, in particolare 7-10; ma anche, in precedenza, "Il determinismo di Francesco di

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Se indubbiamente il dettato di Gregorio di Rimini rappresenta per lui un riferimento fondamentale, questo non significa che Ugolino non manifesti anche una certa *verve* polemica contro il suo predecessore agostiniano, in un primo caso appunto riguardo all'ultimo tema che abbiamo toccato, ovvero ad una recisa negazione anche della più remota possibilità che i futuri contingenti possano esercitare su Dio una qualche causalità.

Ugolino verso la fine della sua discussione relativa alla quarantesima distinzione del primo libro porta come terza *conclusio* l'affermazione secondo la quale da una parte nessuna potenza può fare sì che la prescienza divina non sia prescienza, anche prima che la cosa preconosciuta sia posta in essere, poiché come abbiamo visto la prescienza è Dio stesso nella sua visione massimamente semplice e infinita; d'altra parte però, parlando *absolute*, Ugolino dice che *possibile est prescientiam non esse prescientiam*. Questo va inteso nel senso che nel momento attuale, posto nello scorrere del tempo proprio del mondo creato, è possibile che non vi sia mai stata prescienza di un qualche singolo futuro contingente, come ad esempio la venuta dell'anticristo. Infatti, qualsiasi futuro contingente ovviamente può essere oppure non essere, proprio in quanto è contingente; dunque, è possibile per noi che di quello che, sempre per noi, è un futuro contingente Dio non abbia avuto prescienza, poiché il futuro contingente può non essere e quindi, se fosse necessario che Dio avesse preconoscenza del futuro contingente A, la sua prescienza potrebbe essere falsa, il che è per Ugolino naturalmente del tutto impossibile.[28] Ugolino immagina però un ipotetico avversario che sostenga la necessità degli eventi futuri, e quindi della loro prescienza da parte di Dio, con alcune argomentazioni; tra queste la terza si basa sul principio in base al quale colui nella cui potenza non c'è la possibilità di impedire o eliminare l'antecedente, non ha nella sua potenza nemmeno la possibilità di eliminare il con-

Marchia (parte I)", in *Picenum seraphicum,* 18 (1999), 57-95; "Il determinismo di Francesco di Marchia (parte II)", in *Picenum seraphicum*, 19 (2000), 15-67. Si veda anche, nell'ultima parte di questo articolo, la discussione contro Pietro di Ceffons condotta da Ugolino.

[28] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 3, ed. Eckermann, II, 343.61-70.

seguente. Ora, il fatto che Dio preconosca eternamente il fatto che tu peccherai nel momento A è antecedente al fatto che tu pecchi in A; ma, ovviamente, quando verrà l'istante A nessuno ha il potere di impedire o eliminare l'antecedente costituito dalla prescienza divina, dunque nemmeno quello di eliminare il conseguente, ovvero l'evento del peccato che sarà, a quel punto, necessariamente compiuto nel momento A.[29] Ma, ribatte Ugolino, il principio posto in questa argomentazione è falso: infatti, certamente nessuna creatura è in grado di impedire nulla che riguardi Dio, e tuttavia Dio vuole (almeno) che la creatura possa usare il suo libero arbitrio; dunque, Egli vuole anche ciò che è condizione necessaria affinché possa avvenire l'esercizio del libero arbitrio, tra cui la contingenza e quindi la non necessità della propria prescienza. Ecco dunque che, anche se nessuna creatura può esercitare un'azione causale su Dio, comunque l'antecedente, ovvero la prescienza divina del futuro contingente, potrebbe non esserci stata.[30]

Tutta questa argomentazione è in sé chiara e coerente con quanto Ugolino ha fin qui affermato: ci potrebbe dunque sorprendere a questo punto il suo reciso *et in hoc non teneo Gregorium*, visto che anche Gregorio è un fautore, come abbiamo visto, della contingenza del futuro che è presente nella prescienza divina. In realtà, la questione è più sottile: Gregorio infatti, nel punto del testo a cui allude Ugolino, si riferisce al fatto che il principio enunciato da Ugolino («in cuius potestate non est impedire vel tollere antecedens, in eius potestate non est tollere consequens») era in effetti stato fatto valere come molto importante proprio da quel Pietro Aureoli contro il quale, notoriamente, Gregorio prende recisamente posizione; e contro di lui Gregorio ragiona in questo modo: Pietro in realtà ha la possibilità di impedire l'antecedente, ovvero il fatto che Dio preconosca che in futuro egli peccherà, proprio perché nel suo libero arbitrio c'è effettivamente il potere di non peccare nel momento A. Dunque, se Pietro sceglierà di non peccare nel momento A, a questa scelta seguirà "necessariamente" il fatto che Dio non abbia mai preconosciuto che Pietro avrebbe peccato in A.[31]

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[29] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 3, ed. Eckermann, II, 344.77 e 87-94.

[30] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 3, ed. Eckermann, II, 345.124-130.

[31] Gregorius Ariminensis, *Lectura*, d. 38, q. 2, a. 3, ed. Trapp, III, 303.6-12.

È lecito domandarsi in che cosa esattamente consista ciò che Ugolino afferma di non condividere dell'asserzione di Gregorio, che ha palesemente lo stesso scopo e lo stesso obiettivo polemico di quanto dice Ugolino: e la risposta, mi sembra, sta nell'avverbio "necessariamente", che agli occhi di Ugolino non si può intendere se non come legato ad una possibile azione della creatura su Dio che non può essere in alcun modo ammessa. Per Ugolino, in altre parole, il modo giusto di esprimere l'invalidità del principio aureoliano in questo caso è dire che, se Pietro nel momento futuro A sceglierà di non peccare, "noi a quel punto potremo pensare" che Dio dall'eternità non abbia preconosciuto il peccato di Pietro nel momento A, dato che esso non si è verificato; invece, Gregorio sembrerebbe (almeno agli occhi di Ugolino) in questo passaggio ammettere che "Pietro abbia la potenza di far sì" che Dio non abbia avuto preconoscenza del suo peccato nel momento A, scegliendo di non compierlo. Insomma, Ugolino è davvero molto attento a sgombrare il campo anche dalla minima sfumatura di possibilità di azione causale della creatura sul creatore (la quale porterebbe con sé almeno una certa dose di determinismo), quale quella che qui gli sembra un po' essere, per così dire, sfuggita a Gregorio, anche a costo di criticare il suo peraltro fondamentale e venerato predecessore.

Nell'altro caso in cui Ugolino prende le distanze da Gregorio, per la verità egli sembra, più che neutralizzare un possibile equivoco a cui secondo lui questi avrebbe potuto dare luogo, piuttosto francamente fraintendere la sua dottrina. Il punto che Ugolino in questo caso afferma di non condividere è la quarta conclusione che Gregorio porta contro la dottrina aureoliana dell'indeterminatezza del valore di verità delle proposizioni contraddittorie riguardanti i futuri contingenti:[32] Gregorio afferma innanzitutto che nessuna proposizione affermativa particolare o universale che enuncia l'esistenza di un'entità contingente futura è necessariamente vera. Infatti, dice Gregorio, è possibile che sia vera la proposizione "nessuna entità contingente futura sarà", perciò in nessuna proposizione riguardante il futuro c'è necessità.[33] Da questa conclusione Gregorio inferisce la falsità della dottrina di chi sostiene la necessità di proposizioni come "ogni futuro sarà contingente", "qualche futuro sarà contingente", qualora esse si riferiscano ad una qualche

[32] Hoenen, *Marsilius of Inghen*, 198-208; Ciammetti, *Necessità e contingenza in Gregorio di Rimini*, 19-63; Schabel, *Theology at Paris*, 266-269.

[33] Gregorius Ariminensis, *Lectura*, d. 38, q. 1, a. 2, ed. Trapp, III, 253.17-25.

entità contingente futura, proprio perché è possibile che nessuna entità contingente futura sia.[34] Tuttavia, e questo è il punto contestato da Ugolino, le stesse proposizioni sono invece necessarie se i loro soggetti stanno a significare non entità future contingenti, ma enunciabili complessi riguardanti il futuro, sia affermativi che negativi poiché, come egli ha stabilito in precedenza, è impossibile che tra due *enuntiabilia* contraddittori rispetto al futuro uno dei due non sia determinatamente vero e uno falso,[35] e, dopo aver portato a sostegno della propria tesi due *auctoritates* tratte da Agostino e dal libro di Osea, Gregorio si premura però di ribadire che questo non implica la conseguenza che una qualche proposizione singolare relativamente al futuro sia necessaria, poiché nessun futuro è necessariamente futuro e ogni proposizione singolare rispetto al futuro è contingente.[36]

Se andiamo ora ad esaminare il testo in cui Ugolino afferma il proprio dissenso da Gregorio, non possiamo non osservare che in realtà egli sembra proporre esattamente la stessa dottrina di quest'ultimo: Ugolino enuncia infatti il fatto che nessun *complexum futurum* è necessario, per la ragione che non è necessario che nessun futuro sia futuro, dato che è possibile che non vi sia assolutamente nulla oltre a Dio.[37] Dopo una spiegazione di questa sua tesi, peraltro del tutto coerente con quanto Ugolino ha già a più riprese sostenuto, ecco il riferimento alla trattazione di Gregorio, che come ricorda Ugolino ha sostenuto che: «Duorum contradictoriorum complexorum contingentium de futuro alterum est verum, alterum non est verum».[38]

Ora, secondo Ugolino, dal principio di Gregorio bisogna trarre la conseguenza che qualche futuro contingente necessariamente sia, "almeno nella forma di un complesso", ovvero di quelli che chiamiamo comunemente *complexe significabilia*: ad esempio, è "necessario" che sia vero che l'anticristo sarà oppure non sarà. Ora, è chiaro che, come abbiamo visto, Gregorio distingue la necessità che uno dei due enun-

[34] Gregorius Ariminensis, *Lectura*, d. 38, q. 1, a. 2, ed. Trapp, III, 253. 26-30.

[35] Gregorius Ariminensis, *Lectura*, d. 38, q. 1, a. 2, ed. Trapp, III, 253.30-254.7.

[36] Gregorius Ariminensis, *Lectura*, d. 38, q. 1, a. 2, ed. Trapp, III, 254.19-26.

[37] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 337.71-76.

[38] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 337.86-87.

ciabili complessi contraddittori rispetto al futuro abbia un valore di verità determinato, dal fatto ben diverso che ogni singolo enunciabile complesso rispetto al futuro sia vero oppure falso; quindi accusarlo di una qualche forma di determinismo pare piuttosto difficile, a meno di confondere la necessità del principio logico di bivalenza con una qualche forma di necessità reale riguardante la prescienza divina. In effetti, nella sua confutazione Ugolino non mi sembra del tutto chiaro e coerente: infatti, innanzitutto egli ribadisce che nessun futuro è necessario; poi afferma che è futuro ad esempio il *complexum* "l'anticristo non deve essere creato"; ora, se assumiamo che sia A il momento futuro in cui questo *complexum* sarà vero, e che A giunga 'necessariamente', allora si darebbe il caso di un futuro (il *complexum*, dobbiamo intendere), che non sia futuro, ma in questo modo ovviamente Ugolino assume e dà per indiscutibile che nessun futuro possa essere necessario, il che semmai sarebbe ciò che qui andrebbe dimostrato.[39] Ma, al di là dell'aspetto che mi sembra poco perspicuo e quindi persuasivo di questo argomento, sembra chiaro che la strategia di Ugolino qui è da una parte riconoscere che Gregorio ha sostenuto che ogni futuro è futuro in modo contingente, poi però rimproverargli di avere sostenuto, in modo contraddittorio con quanto riferito in precedenza, esattamente l'opposto di quanto Gregorio esplicitamente afferma, ovvero che dalla dottrina del valore di verità determinato di due enunciabili opposti e contraddittori rispetto al futuro seguirebbe per lui la necessità di un futuro determinato.[40] Insomma, in un'esposizione che non mi pare segnalarsi per particolare perspicuità, tra un passaggio argomentativo e l'altro Ugolino sembra finire per rimproverare a Gregorio quanto egli purtroppo ha esplicitamente negato.

3.

Un'altra polemica che Ugolino intavola sempre sul tema della contingenza del futuro ci presenta nuovamente la fisionomia di un pensatore attento forse più a ribadire le proprie tesi che a analizzare in modo del tutto critico e soprattutto completo quanto affermato dal proprio

[39] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 337.84-98.

[40] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 337.98-102.

avversario, e si tratta stavolta della polemica contro Alfonso Vargas di Toledo.[41] Le idee di quest'ultimo sulla prescienza divina dei futuri contingenti sono già state presentate anni or sono da Schabel,[42] e tuttavia non sarà inutile ripresentare i loro tratti fondamentali qui per poter capire meglio il trattamento che ad esse riserva Ugolino.

In primo luogo, intraprendendo la discussione della distinzione 39 del primo libro, Alfonso nel primo articolo pone quattro *suppositiones*, che afferma esplicitamente essere state poste anche da Anselmo nel *De Concordia*. Esse sono nell'ordine le seguenti:

> [S1] Necesse est quicquid Deus prescit futurum esse sicut prescitur a Deo […]
>
> [S2] Deus prescit aliquid esse futurum sine omni necessitate […]
>
> [S3] Necesse est aliquid esse futurum sine omni necessitate […]
>
> [S4] Prescientia Dei quam sequitur necessitas et contingentia rerum a qua removetur necessitas non repugnat.[43]

Si tratta, come si vede, di quattro affermazioni che pongono fin dall'inizio il piano del discorso su quello, comune a Gregorio e poi ad Ugolino, della salvaguardia della contingenza della creazione.[44]

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[41] Dopo il pioneristico volume di J. Kürzinger, *Alphonsus Vargas Toletanus und seine theologische Einleitungslehre* (Beitrag zur Geschichte der Scholastik 14), Münster i. W. 1930, e oltre a quanto citato alla nota seguente e alla nota 57, ben pochi sono stati i contributi dedicati a questo autore: possiamo ricordare E. L. Saak, "The Reception of Augustine in the Later Middle Ages", in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West. From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. A. Bevan, I. Backus, Leiden-New York-Köln 1997, I, 367-404; P. J. J. M. Bakker-J. H. L. van den Bercken, "The Commentary on Aristotle's *De anima* by Alphonsus Vargas Toletanus, OESA" in *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale*, 52 (2010), 201-34; A. Corbini, "«Notitia intuitiva» and «complexe significabile» at Paris in the 1340s: From Alphonsus Vargas Toletanus to Peter Ceffons" in *Philosophical Psychology in Late-Medieval Commentaries on Peter Lombard's «Sentences»*. Acts of the XIVth Annual Colloquium of the Société Internationale pour l'Etude de la Philosophie Médiévale. Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, 28-30 October 2009, ed. C. D. Schabel-M. Brînzei, Turnhout 2020, 3-38.

[42] Schabel, *Theology at Paris*, 274-280.

[43] Alfonsus Vargas Toletanus, *In primum Sententiarum*, ed. Venetiis 1490; di questa edizione esiste una trascrizione redatta da Luciana Cioca che si può trovare a questo indirizzo internet: https://thesis-project.ro/alphonsusvargas/texts.html (ringrazio un anonimo referee per avermelo segnalato). Da essa sono tratte tutte le citazioni di Alfonso che seguono (con alcune correzioni): in questo caso, si tratta dei f. 152va-b.

[44] La stessa [S1], che potrebbe anche essere letta in chiave deterministica, in realtà

Subito di seguito, il secondo articolo presenta quattro *conclusiones*, argomentate più diffusamente. Esse sono nell'ordine:

> [C1] Deus est prescius omnium futurorum […]
>
> [C2] Tanta necessitate futurum est futurum quod necesse est omne futurum esse futurum […]
>
> [C3] Omnis propositio de futuro a Deo prescita hoc supposito habet necessariam et infallibilem veritatem sicut est prescita […]
>
> [C4] Non obstante huiusmodi necessaria et infallibili veritate Deus potest facere de potentia sui absoluta oppositum presciti et revelati, utpote antechristum non fore.[45]

Quest'ultima conclusione allarga il campo del discorso ad un'ampia disputa contro Francesco di Treviso,[46] che avrebbe negato proprio quanto in essa asserito, in nome dell'infallibilità della prescienza divina. Ma Alfonso per confutare la posizione di Francesco ribadisce innanzitutto che

> [C4bis] Simul stant quod Deus presciat antechristum et possit facere ipsum non fore.[47]

Questa posizione, che in realtà ripete sostanzialmente [C4], è provata con cinque argomentazioni volte a ribadire il possibile non verificarsi di quanto preconosciuto da Dio, cui segue un *correlarium* che combina [S1] con la tesi principale contro Francesco [C4bis]:

> Iste due propositiones non repugnant necesse est antechristum fore sicut prescitum est a Deo ipsum fore et Deus potest facere antechristum non fore.[48]

A questo punto la trattazione di Alfonso prosegue negli articoli 3 e 4, dedicati, come succede costantemente nel suo commento, alla discussione di temi controversi con autori prevalentemente contemporanei

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va intesa nel modo in cui, nei testi sopra citati nella sezione 1.2 di questo contributo, abbiamo visto asserire sia Gregorio sia Ugolino che Dio preconosce i futuri *nel modo in cui essi sono futuri*, quindi come contingenti, come il seguito della trattazione di Alfonso chiarisce, ad esempio nella successiva [C3].

[45] Alfonsus Vargas Toletanus, *In primum Sententiarum*, ed. L. Cioca, f. 152vb-153rb.

[46] Su questo autore non abbiamo altre notizie, se non che lesse le *Sentenze* l'anno prima di Alfonso, quindi nel 1343-44 insieme a Gregorio di Rimini (Schabel, *Theology at Paris*, 274, n. 58).

[47] Alfonsus Vargas Toletanus, *In primum Sententiarum*, ed. Cioca, f. 153rb.

[48] Alfonsus Vargas Toletanus, *In primum Sententiarum*, ed. Cioca, f. 153va.

(che rappresentano anche, come è stato notato, la parte storicamente e teoricamente più interessante dell'opera): ad una prima confutazione di Aureolo, breve e probabilmente non derivante da letture circostanziate e di prima mano riguardo a questo autore, quanto piuttosto da quella che era diventata sostanzialmente una consuetudine,[49] segue dapprima una assai lunga discussione con John Rathe Scotus, che occupa una metà dell'intera trattazione e sulla quale torneremo tra poco, e poi ritorna a discutere con Francesco di Treviso nella parte finale. In questa sezione, appellandosi alla tradizionale distinzione tra necessità antecedente e necessità conseguente, Alfonso ribadisce quanto nella sostanza ha già affermato nel secondo articolo, ovvero che ciò che è preconosciuto come futuro da Dio lo è in modo libero, contingente e privo di necessità.[50]

Assai più articolata e per certi versi innovativa è invece la discussione con John Rathe Scotus, che commentò le *Sentenze* per quarto dopo Alfonso stesso[51] e che si schierò contro [C2], riguardo al problema della relazione tra necessità del passato e necessità del futuro. Fondamentalmente, John interpreta per Alfonso in modo del tutto errato una *auctoritas* agostiniana, tratta dal *Contra Faustum*, come se essa significasse che tra il passato e il futuro la differenza stesse nel fatto che il passato è necessario, il futuro contingente; ma Alfonso ripete a più riprese che questa interpretazione del passo di Agostino è in realtà insostenibile. Quindi il futuro è, per Alfonso, in realtà necessario tanto quanto il passato: ma, come ha notato già Schabel, dobbiamo precisare con attenzione il senso in cui questa assunzione di Alfonso possa essere correttamente intesa. Infatti, per confutare gli argomenti di John Rathe Scotus, Alfonso premette due *propositiones*:

> [P1] Non est idem rem esse futuram et rem futuram esse, sicut non est idem rem esse presentem et rem presentem esse […]
>
> [P2] Licet res aliqua, utputa quedam actio, non necessitate futura sit, quia priusquam sit fieri potest ut non sit futura, rem tamen futuram necesse est esse futuram.[52]

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[49] Schabel, *Theology at Paris*, 275.

[50] Alfonsus Vargas Toletanus, *In primum Sententiarum*, ed. Cioca, f. 155rb-156ra.

[51] Schabel, *Theology at Paris*, 274 n. 58; cfr. Alfonsus Vargas Toletanus, *In primum Sententiarum*, ed. L. Cioca, f. 153va.

[52] Alfonsus Vargas Toletanus, *In primum Sententiarum*, ed. Cioca, f. 154va.

È appunto alla luce di queste due asserzioni che diventa chiaro in che modo Alfonso possa conciliare la più volte asserita contingenza dei futuri preconosciuti da Dio con la loro necessità, ovvero riducendo quest'ultima in sostanza ad una tautologia: per i futuri, assunti in quanto futuri, è necessario essere futuri, esattamente come per i passati è necessario essere passati. Infatti

> Licet non sit necesse aliquem actum meritorium vel demeritorium esse futurum, necesse tamen est omnem actum meritorum vel demeritorium futurum esse futurum.[53]

In questo senso, come ha osservato Schabel, da una parte Alfonso sembra eliminare la distinzione tra il futuro e il passato, dall'altra però afferma nella parte seguente del suo commento che solo il passato è necessario in modo assoluto e, in ogni caso, non tutte le sue affermazioni sono univoche né in un senso né nell'altro.[54] In realtà, non è sorprendente che l'esatta posizione di Alfonso sia risultata piuttosto difficile da comprendere agli autori contro i quali egli polemizza.

Tuttavia, possiamo aggiungere tornando a noi, tra coloro a cui riuscì difficile misurarsi con la sua esposizione ci fu anche Ugolino. Egli intraprende direttamente la confutazione delle idee di Alfonso nel primo articolo della terza questione della sua discussione sulla distinzione quarantesima del primo libro, che si domanda *utrum sit possibile alicui facere de quolibet futuro ipsum non fore*.[55]

L'approccio di Ugolino è fin dal principio decisamente polemico:

> Prima est opinio, quae *inter caetera* ponit distinctione 38 sex propositiones, in quibus discordat a veritate et contradicere voluit Gregorio et Joanni Scoto sequenti dicta Gregorii.[56]

Quindi, secondo Ugolino, in qualche modo Alfonso ha un intento direttamente polemico proprio nei confronti di Gregorio, cosa che, possiamo subito osservare, per la verità non sembra particolarmente trapelare dalla pur ampia trattazione di Alfonso, che peraltro come si è già ricordato costella costantemente il suo commento di polemiche esplicite

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[53] Alfonsus Vargas Toletanus, *In primum Sententiarum*, ed. Cioca, f. 154va.

[54] Schabel, *Theology at Paris*, 278-279.

[55] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 334.2-3.

[56] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 335.25-27. Corsivi miei.

con autori contemporanei o precedenti; dunque, in realtà, se Gregorio o Scoto fossero stati i suoi interlocutori reali o ideali in questa discussione, assai probabilmente Alfonso lo avrebbe esplicitato, come fa in diversi altri casi.[57] Ugolino dunque sembra fin dall'inizio interpretare in un modo ben preciso il dettato di Alfonso, intendendo le sue polemiche come rivolte non ai suoi reali interlocutori (come abbiamo più volte ricordato, Francesco di Treviso e Giovanni Rathe Scotus), ma a autori più noti ad Ugolino stesso.

Inoltre, Ugolino afferma subito anche che, tra le dottrine sostenute da Alfonso, egli sta compiendo una scelta *inter caetera*, ed è proprio guardando al modo in cui Ugolino fa questa scelta e a che cosa vi include che possiamo ricavare indicazioni interessanti sul suo modo di procedere e sulle sue idee.

La prima *propositio* che Ugolino riferisce è effettivamente la nostra [S1], però con un'aggiunta di Ugolino che, pur nella sua brevità, tende a deformarne in realtà il senso:

> Prima: Necessarie est quidquid Deus praescit futurum esse, sicut praescitur a Deo", vel necesse est omne futurum esse futurum, sicut praescitur a Deo.[58]

Leggiamo subito infatti che cosa aveva aggiunto Alfonso immediatamente dopo la sua [S1]:

> Et, licet ista suppositio bene intellecta satis sit evidens, quia Dei prescientia sicut et eius scientia est omnino infallibilis, sicut patet per beatum Augustinum V De civitate Dei, capitulo 9, et sic expresse de mente Anselmi, sicut statim apparebit, declarabitur tamen infra conclusione, scilicet tertii articuli sequentis.[59]

Quindi, due cose risultano chiare rispetto a [S1]: la prima è che il *focus* di Alfonso quando pone la sua asserzione iniziale non è affermare la contingenza piuttosto che la necessità del futuro, bensì stabilire l'infallibilità della prescienza divina rispetto ai futuri stessi (punto sul quale,

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[57] Ad esempio, ho esaminato l'attitudine polemica di Alfonso nei confronti di Egidio Romano nel mio "*Sicut ait magister noster*. Egidio Romano visto da tre maestri all'inizio della 'seconda scuola agostiniana'", in *Studia graeco-arabica*, 14 (2024), 997-1024.

[58] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 335.27-29. Le virgolette della citazione sono nell'edizione critica.

[59] Alfonsus Vargas Toletanus, *In primum Sententiarum*, ed. Cioca, f. 152vb.

come abbiamo visto, Ugolino non avrebbe potuto che essere d'accordo). La seconda è che Alfonso dice subito che [S1] deve essere *bene intellecta*, rimandando su questo punto alla fine del suo terzo articolo, ovvero all'ultima occasione nella quale torna sugli argomenti necessitaristici, loro sì, di Francesco di Treviso, semmai però per confutarli ancora una volta:

> Deus prescit et revelavit antechristum libere contingenter, sed non sine omni necessitate fore et, quia quicquid Deus prescit necesse est esse futurum sicut prescitur ab eo, ut patet ex prima suppositione primi articuli, sequitur quod necesse sit antechristum libere et contingenter et sine omni necessitate fore.[60]

Quindi, in realtà, ed esattamente come sostiene lo stesso Ugolino sulla scorta anche di Gregorio, quello che Alfonso intende dire è che Dio preconosce necessariamente ciò che è futuro nel modo in cui esso è futuro, dunque preconosce necessariamente il futuro, nel suo essere contingente. Ma Ugolino qui, nella sua chiosa alla citazione di Alfonso, dà invece una sfumatura deterministica alla proposizione che estrapola da Alfonso (aggiungendo «vel necesse est omne futurum esse futurum»), trascurando così anche la distinzione che Alfonso pone, come abbiamo visto, con le sue [P1] e [P2], tra il fatto necessario poiché tautologico che ogni futuro sia futuro (proprio perché è futuro), e il fatto contingente che ogni futuro sia.

Veniamo ora alla seconda *propositio* che Ugolino sceglie *inter caetera* nell'esposizione di Alfonso: «"Secunda: Deus praescit esse aliquod futurum sine omni necessitate"».[61]

Questa è effettivamente la [S2] di Alfonso, ma Ugolino accosta questa asserzione, effettivamente scritta da Alfonso, ad un suo personale *collage* che peraltro presenta come la *tertia propositio* di Alfonso stesso: «Tertia: "Tanta necessitate futurum est futurum", quanta necessitate "praeteritum est praeteritum"».[62]

La strategia di Ugolino è chiara: dopo aver riportato come seconda affermazione di Alfonso la sua effettiva riaffermazione della contin-

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[60] Alfonsus Vargas Toletanus, *In primum Sententiarum*, ed. Cioca, f. 155va.

[61] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 335.29-30.

[62] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 335.30-31. Le virgolette sono nell'edizione critica.

genza del futuro, egli vuole trasmettere al suo lettore (o ascoltatore) l'impressione di essere di fronte ad un interlocutore che si contraddice, in quanto affermerebbe poi subito dopo nella proposizione successiva qualche cosa che sembra in evidente contrasto con la precedente. Ugolino però in questa terza proposizione isola e accosta la prima parte di [C2] con un'asserzione che Alfonso fa in effetti poco dopo; però, se guardiamo nel loro contesto originario quanto scritto da Alfonso, vediamo che il suo reale discorso ha un senso ben differente.

> Secunda conclusio est quod tanta necessitate futurum est futurum *quod necesse est omne futurum esse futurum.* Istam conclusionem deduco. Primo sic: non minori necessitate futurum est futurum quam preteritum sit preteritum.[63]

Che cosa sta quindi realmente dicendo Alfonso? Una cosa, semmai, non particolarmente rilevante dal punto di vista teoretico, ovvero sta introducendo la propria idea tautologica che il futuro, proprio perché è futuro, non può non essere futuro (idea che come abbiamo visto diventa importante nella sua discussione successiva con John Rathe Scotus); in questo senso, e solo in questo senso, il futuro è per lui assimilabile al passato, il quale proprio perché è passato non può non essere passato, ovvero perché per entrambe queste dimensioni del tempo è tautologicamente vero che esse non possono non essere ciò che sono. Nessun particolare determinismo deriva da questo assunto per Alfonso, come abbiamo visto; ma il fatto che Ugolino elimini la clausola riportata sopra in corsivo rende non solo possibile, ma praticamente inevitabile il fraintendimento. Fraintendimento che continua, a questo punto coerentemente, almeno da parte di Ugolino, anche nella quarta e seguente *propositio*: «Quarta: "impossibile est aliquod futurum non esse futurum"».[64]

Certo, questa volta la citazione è corretta,[65] tratta com'è dalla seconda argomentazione che Alfonso porta per sostenere la propria [C2], ma noi ora capiamo meglio che cosa essa significhi: Alfonso non intende che è necessario che ogni futuro sia così come esso è preconosciuto da Dio, cosa che nega a più riprese, ma che è necessario che

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[63] Alfonsus Vargas Toletanus, *In primum Sententiarum*, ed. Cioca, f. 153ra. Corsivi miei.

[64] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 335.32. Le virgolette sono nell'edizione critica.

[65] Alfonsus Vargas Toletanus, *In primum Sententiarum*, ed. Cioca, f. 153ra.

ogni futuro, proprio in quanto è futuro, sia futuro. Invece, nel contesto rappresentato dalla contraddizione che Ugolino intende mostrare tra la seconda e la terza asserzione di Alfonso, e dalla sua cucitura di testi che costituisce la terza asserzione stessa, la quarta non può che essere intesa (e viene intesa da Ugolino) come se essa intendesse quanto Alfonso in realtà non sostiene, ovvero che il futuro è necessariamente così come è preconosciuto da Dio.

A questo punto, Ugolino completa il quadro con le ultime due *propositiones*. Vediamo la quinta:

> Quinta: "non obstante necessaria et infallibili veritate" futuri contingentis "Deus potest facere de potentia absoluta oppositum praesciti et revelati".[66]

Di nuovo, la presentazione di Ugolino induce il suo lettore in errore: la verità necessaria e infallibile di cui nella [C4] Alfonso sta parlando va certamente collegata con la precedente [C3]: si tratta della verità infallibile di un futuro conosciuto da Dio 'in quanto contingente', mentre è chiaro che Ugolino qui intende come se Alfonso volesse asserire che la verità del futuro contingente preconosciuto da Dio è in realtà quella propria di un vero necessario, del quale però Alfonso affermerebbe, a questo punto con poco rigore, anche la possibilità che Dio possa fare l'opposto; per cui Ugolino completa la sua presentazione di nuovo con una citazione letteralmente corretta, ma che intesa in modo tendenzioso porta certamente fuori strada il suo lettore:

> Sexta: "Simul stant", quod necessarie sit antichristum fore et quod Deus potest facere antichristum numquam fore.[67]

Di qui la conclusione definitiva che, ancora una volta, cita parole di Alfonso mutandone sottilmente il senso: «Item addit: "Omne, quod aliquando fuit futurum, necessarie fuit esse futurum"».[68]

In questo caso l'operazione di decontestualizzazione e quindi anche di fraintendimento che Ugolino porta avanti si rivela anche da un

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[66] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 335.32-34. Le virgolette sono nell'edizione critica.

[67] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 335.34-36. Le virgolette sono nell'edizione critica.

[68] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 335.36-7. Le virgolette sono nell'edizione critica.

dato esteriore: se le sei *propositiones* si trovavano nella stessa zona iniziale della discussione di Alfonso, ovvero nei primi due articoli dove egli pone le basi del suo ampio discorso successivo, in questa aggiunta alla sesta *propositio* Ugolino va a prendere in tutta un'altra zona del commento del suo avversario una delle numerose ragioni portate nell'articolo 4 contro John Rathe Scotus, non citando peraltro il proseguimento della frase che chiarisce in che senso vada correttamente intesa questa proposizione:

> Omne quod aliquando fuit futurum necesse fuit esse futurum, quia, *ut patet per Anselmum pluries allegatum*, rem futuram necesse est esse [esse est *ed.*] futuram.[69]

Il rimando al *De concordia* anselmiano già *pluries allegatum* ci permette, ancora una volta, di capire quale sia il vero intento di Alfonso, ovvero ribadire la più volte ricordata dottrina che nulla ha a che vedere con il necessitarismo che Ugolino gli attribuisce.

A questo punto la confutazione di Ugolino procede su vie facilmente intuibili, che rappresentano il prevedibile proseguimento della strategia che gli abbiamo visto mettere in campo nella presentazione delle tesi di Alfonso: innanzitutto, questi si contraddice;[70] in secondo luogo, rispetto ai *futura incomplexa* la sua dottrina va in contrasto con la radicale contingenza di ogni essenza creata da Dio, che contingente rimane anche qualora essa sia futura;[71] di conseguenza, è illegittimo e ancora una volta contraddittorio porre una equivalenza tra la effettiva necessità del passato e quella, in realtà inesistente, del futuro.[72] E per quanto riguarda i *futura complexa*, più che l'argomento in sé, fondato su quanto asserito in precedenza, va notato che è proprio questa parte della confutazione di Ugolino che lo porta a schierarsi – nel secondo caso che abbiamo esaminato - anche contro Gregorio di Rimini,[73] reo

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[69] Alfonsus Vargas Toletanus, *In primum Sententiarum*, ed. Cioca, f. 154vb; corsivi miei.

[70] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 335.37-336.42.

[71] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 336.43-59.

[72] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 336.60-70.

[73] Si vedano i testi citati nelle note 33-40.

evidentemente, come si è visto, di avere quantomeno prestato il fianco secondo lui al medesimo errore.[74]

4.

Possiamo poi vedere all'opera la difesa della contingenza del futuro da parte di Ugolino anche nelle sue ripetute e ampie confutazioni della posizione del cistercense Pietro di Ceffons, anche se nel caso di questo autore la questione è decisamente più complessa[75] non solo per la situazione in cui versa il testo nell'unico manoscritto superstite dell'opera,[76] ma anche perché le idee di Pietro sul tema della necessità presente nella creazione presentano due facce alquanto differenti nel suo assai vasto commento: nei quattro *principia*, infatti, Pietro afferma di parlare *in persona philosophi*, procedendo quindi nei panni di un filosofo che, in modo puramente razionale e lasciando da parte qualsiasi fede religiosa, argomenta a favore del determinismo come unica posizione sostenibile; la prescienza divina, in questo modo, implicherebbe l'annullamento di qualsiasi contingenza del futuro, e la causalità naturale sarebbe del tutto necessaria eliminando anche la possibilità della libertà di arbitrio.[77] D'altra parte, nel corpo del suo commento alle *Sentenze*, ove Pietro non può parlare allo stesso modo dato il carattere eminentemente e ovviamente teologico dello scritto, la situazione diventa più ondeggiante e difficile da afferrare, al punto che il modo di procedere di Pietro ha potuto essere descritto come un "valzer con il determinismo".[78] Peraltro, il testo di Pietro relativamente alle distinzioni 38-40 si presenta in una situazione di notevole disordine[79] che si aggiunge alle altre problematiche specifiche del manoscritto in cui esso ci è testimoniato, per cui la determinazione delle esatte tesi presentate e discusse da Pietro anche relativamente alla sua polemica con Ugolino richiede al momento di attendere la pubblicazione dell'edizione annunciata da

[74] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, I, d. 40, q. 3, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, II, 337.71-338.106.

[75] Su questo punto, lo studio di riferimento è ora quello di Schabel citato alla nota 27.

[76] Schabel, *Pierre Ceffons et le déterminisme radical*, 23-35 in particolare.

[77] Schabel, *Pierre Ceffons et le déterminisme radical*, 118-123.

[78] Schabel, *Pierre Ceffons et le déterminisme radical*, 125 e 128.

[79] Schabel, *Pierre Ceffons et le déterminisme radical*, 132-134.

Schabel.[80] Tuttavia, data anche l'estensione e il dettaglio della confutazione che Ugolino presenta, ci è comunque possibile esaminare il suo versante della discussione, per considerare quali siano i temi e le strategie che Ugolino mette in atto a difesa della contingenza del futuro preconosciuto da Dio, anche in questo caso contro colui che egli considera, certamente con qualche ragione in più rispetto al caso di Alfonso Vargas, come un sostenitore del determinismo.

La discussione tra i due fu in effetti serrata –lo stesso Ugolino in diversi passaggi discute dettagliatamente singole porzioni di proposizioni e precise affermazioni di Pietro distinguendo accuratamente quali tra di loro lo trovano d'accordo e su quali specifici punti egli dissente[81]–, e si snoda attraverso i *principia* al primo, secondo e quarto libro di Ugolino in un gioco insistito di botta e risposta con Pietro.[82]

Dobbiamo notare innanzitutto che in questo caso Ugolino è perfettamente consapevole del doppio livello su cui si snoda la trattazione di Pietro, perché proprio la prima volta in cui polemizza con lui egli sa che Pietro afferma la necessità del futuro *in persona cuiusdam philosophi*, e si propone di rispondergli a tono, *in persona alterius philosophi*;[83] corrispondentemente, egli segnala puntualmente quando il discorso ad un certo punto si sposta invece su un piano specificamente teologico.[84]

Nel suo *principium* del secondo libro, per parte sua, Pietro afferma che la confutazione filosofica presentata da Ugolino nel suo primo *principium* gli sembra infondata, basata come essa è sull'analisi di *complexe significabilia* e sul presupposto di nessi causali che andrebbero posti tra le essenze reali e i *complexe significabilia* preconosciuti da Dio,[85] analisi che porterebbe il suo avversario a mancare il bersaglio. In effetti, se andiamo a leggere con attenzione ciò che Ugolino scrive

[80] Schabel, *Pierre Ceffons et le déterminisme radical*, 206.

[81] Si può vedere ad esempio Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium secundum, q. unica, a. 2, ed. Eckermann, III, 14.281-15.295.

[82] Schabel, *Pierre Ceffons et le déterminisme radical*, 116-118.

[83] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium primum, quaestio, a. 4, ed. Eckermann, I, 40.261-270.

[84] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius in quattuor libros Sententiarum*, Principium quartum, quaestio, a. 1, ed. W. Eckermann (Cassiciacum 11), Würzburg 1988, IV, 141.67-69.

[85] Schabel, *Pierre Ceffons et le déterminisme radical*, 125 e 156.

nell'ampia confutazione presente nel suo primo *principium*, dobbiamo constatare come in realtà per il nostro autore il discorso che egli fa sui *complexe significabilia* riguardanti il futuro vada poi riportato sempre agli *incomplexa* che in essi sono appunto significati, per restituire al discorso che si sta svolgendo il suo reale e pieno valore.[86] Ecco allora che, già in questo primo testo, Ugolino da una parte fa ragionamenti su *complexe significabilia* che abbiano in sé riferimento ad eventi futuri, dall'altra porta il discorso anche sugli *incomplexa* significati da questi *complexa*, che rappresentano, e lo dice esplicitamente, il fondamento di tutta la questione. In effetti è proprio la riflessione sulle essenze di ciò che sarà futuro a mostrare fin dall'inizio per Ugolino l'insostenibilità della posizione di Pietro: come abbiamo visto, anche la scienza divina è un'essenza in se stessa ed è prescienza rispetto a ciò che per noi è futuro; ma dall'eternità è vero che vi saranno infinite essenze future, e in questo modo seguendo Pietro, secondo Ugolino, si dovrebbero porre in realtà, alla base degli infiniti *complexe significabilia* sul futuro, essenze future non solo infinite ma anche eterne e necessarie, il che è assurdo perché potrebbe persino portare a postulare l'esistenza di infiniti dèi.[87]

Data l'importanza polemica della questione, non è casuale che subito dopo queste affermazioni (in realtà rivolgendosi contro il secolare Giovanni Maheu de Signéville) Ugolino cerchi di dimostrare quanto solitamente appare essere per lui un presupposto incontrovertibile e non bisognoso di ulteriori argomentazioni, ovvero la contingenza di qualsiasi essenza creata: infatti, la necessità di un'essenza implicherebbe che quella avesse non solo una perfezione, ma una perfezione in senso assoluto (*simpliciter*); ora, un'essenza contingente dista ontologicamente da una che sia necessaria tanto quanto dista da una che sia caratterizzata da perfezione assoluta; ma una creatura, proprio in quanto tale, non può mai avere nemmeno per un istante una perfezione assoluta, altrimenti sarebbe Dio stesso; quindi, una creatura non può mai avere, nemmeno per un istante, un'essenza necessaria.[88] Dunque,

[86] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium primum, quaestio, a. 4, ed. Eckermann, I, 41.289-295.

[87] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium primum, quaestio, a. 4, ed. Eckermann, I, 42.319-334.

[88] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium primum, quaestio, a. 4, ed. Eckermann, I, 44.400-407. Sulla polemica di Ugolino contro Giovanni Maheu di Signéville mi permetto di rimandare al mio "Preconoscenza dei futuri contingenti e

per Ugolino la contingenza del futuro è un dato di partenza indiscutibile perché essa è caratteristica ineliminabile e fondante di tutta la creazione proprio in quanto essa è distinta da Dio, unico ente necessario: ecco perché, in fondo, tante volte sia in questo testo[89] sia in numerosi passaggi del suo commento le argomentazioni di Ugolino sembrano contestare il determinismo a partire dall'assunzione, non discussa e non dimostrata ma data per assodata, della contingenza di tutto ciò che esiste nella creazione e quindi anche del futuro; ed ecco quindi anche una ragione per cui certamente esse hanno potuto sembrare anche a Pietro come argomentazioni in qualche modo difettose. Ma la contingenza, per Ugolino, non è davvero materia di discussione possibile, a meno di rendere le creature uguali ontologicamente a Dio.

Nel *principium* del secondo libro Ugolino riprende la discussione con Pietro in un contesto però più specifico, che è quello della discussione sull'azione di Dio rispetto al passato e rispetto al futuro (legata, com'è chiaro, alla *vexata quaestio* che abbiamo già più volte incontrata sulla relazione tra la contingenza oppure la necessità del futuro e la necessità del passato);[90] questa discussione è suscitata anche dalla tematica della volontà divina, della sua relazione con la volontà e la libertà degli angeli e quella degli uomini che è centrale nel secondo libro del Lombardo.

Nel riflettere *de Dei efficientia respectu praeteriti et respectu futuri*, Ugolino pone all'inizio tre proposizioni: la prima stabilisce che

> Deus non facit praeteritum fuisse, quia omne facere Dei ad extra est liberum et contingens, sed respectu praeteriti nulla potest esse factio libera et contingens; igitur.[91]

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conoscenza divina delle creature: ancora su alcune polemiche di Ugolino di Orvieto", in corso di stampa negli atti del convegno "Prescienza, profezia, determinismo e futuri contingenti tra antichità e Medioevo" tenuto a Firenze nell'ottobre 2024, nella collana "Studi e ricerche del Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia" dell'Università di Firenze.

[89] Per esempio anche subito prima del passo appena citato, cfr. HUGOLINUS DE URBE VETERI, *Commentarius*, Principium primum, quaestio, a. 4, ed. ECKERMANN, I, 44.381-393.

[90] Per alcuni aspetti di questa discussione in Ugolino e la sua relazione con le dottrine di Gregorio di Rimini, cfr. R. GASKIN, "Peter of Ailly and other Fourteenth-Century Thinkers on Divine Power and the Necessity of the Past", in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 79 (1997), 273-291: 281-284.

[91] HUGOLINUS DE URBE VETERI, *Commentarius*, Principium secundum, q. unica, a. 2, ed. ECKERMANN, III, 12.219-221.

Ancora una volta, quindi, la contingenza dell'agire divino *ad extra* viene messa al centro della scena per escludere un'azione diretta di Dio nel fatto che il passato sia trascorso; quindi, *a fortiori*, nella seconda proposizione si afferma esplicitamente anche che Dio non fa sì che il futuro sia futuro.[92] Ma più significativa per gli sviluppi di cui qui ci occupiamo è la terza proposizione:

> In praesenti aeternitatis nulla data vel imaginabilis morosa duratio trahit secum necessitatem nisi relate ad res praeteritioni subiectas.[93]

In Dio, come Ugolino poi spiega ampiamente basandosi naturalmente sul quinto libro del *De consolatione* boeziano, non esiste nessuna durata temporale e quindi nessun reale trascorrere di tempo, tale da portare con sé alcuna necessità, necessità che si dà invece in ciò che è sottoposto al tempo e che, proprio per questo, è rigorosamente limitato all'ambito di ciò che è *citra Deum.*[94] Di qui il successivo corollario, secondo il quale l'essere reale di ciò che è nel mondo è invece divisibile e soggetto al diventare passato, per cui nel mondo il passato è connotato dalla necessità, a differenza del futuro che è contingente;[95] e ancora la seguente *regula* che ribadisce che è al di fuori di Dio tutto ciò che può diventare passato e in questo modo acquisisce il carattere della necessità.[96] Questo serve ad Ugolino per confutare la posizione di Pietro, il quale avrebbe asserito che l'assenso dato da Dio al fatto che sia un determinato futuro, ed esprimibile in una proposizione, può diventare passato e quindi necessario; di conseguenza, sempre per Pietro, tale diventa anche il futuro a cui Dio ha assentito, perché *a propositione vera ad significatum sit bona illatio.*[97]

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[92] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium secundum, q. unica, a. 2, ed. Eckermann, III, 13.224-226.

[93] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium secundum, q. unica, a. 2, ed. Eckermann, III, 13.227-228.

[94] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium secundum, q. unica, a. 2, ed. Eckermann, III, 13.230.

[95] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium secundum, q. unica, a. 2, ed. Eckermann, III, 13.253-255.

[96] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium secundum, q. unica, a. 2, ed. Eckermann, III, 14. 256-257.

[97] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium secundum, q. unica, a. 2, ed. Eckermann, III, 14.281-15.295; 16.325-333.

Qui due aspetti vanno notati: il primo è che, con il procedere della discussione tra i due autori di *principium* in *principium*, Ugolino sembra essere diventato anche consapevole del fatto che quello che, come abbiamo visto, è stato chiamato un "valzer" con il determinismo potrebbe anche essere considerato, più prosaicamente, come un atteggiamento contraddittorio e mutevole secondo i casi, poiché Pietro, dice Ugolino, in alcuni luoghi invece *tenet futura contingenter fore*,[98] dato che egli ammetterebbe che almeno il peccato sia commesso in modo libero e contingente; dunque, conclude forse con una punta di trionfalismo Ugolino, anche basandosi su ciò che Pietro altrove ammette, Dio non può che preconoscere il peccato futuro nel modo in cui esso sarà futuro, ovvero ancora una volta in modo libero e contingente.[99]

Il secondo punto si può notare nell'ultima argomentazione che Ugolino porta in questo articolo: essa ripete ancora una volta che, come in fondo ha già detto tante volte, Dio preconosce tutti i futuri in modo evidente, ma Egli è una conoscenza infinita, quindi onnipotente; se però è onnipotente non può soggiacere al tempo e diventare passato, come è impossibile che egli non sia libero di agire nei confronti degli enti contingenti creati, per cui non c'è alternativa: dal fatto che Dio preconosca il futuro non si può se non trarre la conseguenza che esso è contingente. Ma Ugolino stavolta afferma che in questo ragionamento egli si rifà ad un dato della fede cristiana («alia ratio est, in qua dico aequaliter fidem»), cominciando così a spostare esplicitamente il piano del discorso dalla filosofia alla teologia.

In questo modo, Ugolino prepara anche il terreno alla sua ultima confutazione, che troviamo nel *principium* del quarto libro, dove l'attacco a Pietro si svolge in un contesto ancor più specificamente determinato dalla natura teologica della trattazione, legata qui al problema dell'efficacia dei sacramenti;[100] e proprio su questo terreno ora Ugolino sembra muovere la sua ulteriore sfida a Pietro, affermando che anche quando egli parla come teologo non ha capito quanto Ugolino ha af-

[98] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium secundum, q. unica, a. 2, ed. Eckermann, III, 16.336.

[99] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium secundum, q. unica, a. 2, ed. Eckermann, III, 16.334-340.

[100] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium quartum, ed. Eckermann, IV, 139.2-7.

fermato.[101] Ugolino trova che Pietro di *principium* in *principium* non abbia mutato sostanzialmente il proprio errore: egli ha immaginato che l'eterno presente divino sia reso necessario dal trascorrere del tempo che lo renderebbe passato,[102] e su questa base ha pensato di confutare una dottrina che sicuramente Ugolino ha presentato come sua, ma che in realtà è, Ugolino lo ribadisce a chiare lettere screditando così anche il suo avversario, nientemeno che di Agostino e di Boezio.[103]

Che cosa ha affermato di preciso Pietro? Secondo Ugolino, egli ha immaginato che il presente dell'eternità divina vada pensato come un istante, concepibile come un punto presente su una linea infinita che sia l'eternità. Ora, supponiamo che Dio in un qualsiasi punto di questa immaginaria linea temporale abbia voluto un evento futuro (nell'esempio classico fatto da Pietro, che l'anticristo sia). Ora, se Dio è immutabile, come potrebbe far sì che in un punto successivo di questa linea si annulli quanto egli ha voluto in un punto (ovvero un momento) precedente? In questo, varrebbe ancora una volta un parallelismo con il passato: Dio non può far sì che il passato non sia più, e analogamente non potrebbe far sì che il futuro non sia più, una volta che egli lo ha stabilito.[104]

Ugolino riconosce a più riprese al suo avversario l'onore delle armi[105] ma continua imperterrito a ribadire la propria linea di pensiero: l'*imaginatio* di Pietro è sbagliata alla radice, perché essa assume che il presente dell'eternità di Dio sia raffigurabile come un punto indivi-

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[101] «Ex hoc patet, quod bachalarius Bernardi, cum gratiose sumpsit impugnare propositionem meam ex intentione tamquam theologus, non in persona philosophi, non accipit intentionem propositionis» (Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium quartum, quaestio, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, IV, 141.66-68).

[102] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium quartum, quaestio a. 1, ed. Eckermann, IV, 141.68-70.

[103] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium quartum, quaestio a. 1, ed. Eckermann, IV, 141.94-142.97.

[104] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium quartum, quaestio a. 1, ed. Eckermann, IV, 143.131-136; le argomentazioni di Pietro sono poco dopo ampiamente riferite da Ugolino, cfr. 143.149-144.173.

[105] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium quartum, quaestio, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, IV, 144.174-175: «Haec sunt pulchra e subtiliter dicta, sed ad veritatem sustineri non possunt»; Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium quartum, quaestio, a. 3, ed. Eckermann, IV, 155.538-539: «Addo hic tria corollaria, in quibus subtiliter impugnavit dicta mea bachalarius de sancto Bernardo».

sibile, che rappresenterebbe un istante indivisibile, ma qualsiasi punto immaginario o reale non potrebbe così distare da un qualsiasi altro punto sulla stessa retta dell'eternità divina se non di una quantità di tempo finita, reale o possibile; quindi la linea immaginata da Pietro non è realmente la linea dell'infinita eternità divina, semmai piuttosto una linea che porterebbe a pensare, nella sua finitezza immaginaria o reale, come impossibile il presente dell'eternità di Dio; ma questo Pietro non lo vuole ammettere finendo così ancora una volta ed inesorabilmente per contraddirsi.[106] In fondo, ciò che Pietro fa secondo Ugolino è fraintendere l'idea stessa dell'eterno presente divino asserita da Boezio, poiché egli immagina che il presente dell'eternità divina sia distante da qualsiasi punto della linea immaginata di una distanza in realtà finita; in questo modo, egli immagina in verità una linea che, in base a quanto sopra detto da Ugolino, o risulta finita (il che porterebbe a negare l'eternità di Dio), oppure infinita ma paradossalmente limitata in entrambe le direzioni.[107] In buona sostanza, la linea immaginaria rimane sul piano delle realtà create e quindi divisibili e molteplici, dunque è del tutto inadeguata a rappresentare la realtà di Dio;[108] Pietro in fondo si contraddice perché con questa sua immaginazione pone come divisibile in punti e quindi in parti l'atto purissimo e semplicissimo che Dio è,[109] e se così fosse Dio non sarebbe Dio, ma una creatura.[110] Invece, la verità che Pietro finisce per dimenticare è che Dio nel suo presente eterno e immenso è temporalmente indistante da qualsiasi evento passato e futuro, poiché ogni evento passato e futuro è presente davanti a lui.[111]

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[106] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium quartum, quaestio, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, IV, 144.174-184.

[107] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium quartum, quaestio, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, IV, 145.195-198.

[108] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium quartum, quaestio, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, IV, 146.237-241.

[109] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium quartum, quaestio, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, IV, 145.208-212.

[110] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium quartum, quaestio, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, IV, 146.247-250.

[111] Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium quartum, quaestio, a. 1, ed. Eckermann, IV, 145.201-204.

Nella sua conclusione del discorso,[112] Ugolino inserisce una considerazione che mi sembra a questo punto paradigmatica del suo punto di vista: Pietro, anche se da filosofo ha argomentato a favore della necessità del futuro e di tutto il reale, ha comunque ammesso come fedele cristiano che il creato sia contingente, quindi pone egli stesso che Dio sia all'origine della contingenza. In qualche modo, quindi, ammettere la necessità sembra essere agli occhi di Ugolino un problema del tutto teorico e astratto che si può porre soltanto in un'ottica filosofica, legato ad un uso per giunta che si rivela del tutto sbagliato degli stessi strumenti della filosofia.

Le considerazioni con le quali Ugolino esprime la propria netta disapprovazione verso una filosofia che pretenda di esaurire l'orizzonte di ciò che l'uomo può e deve ricercare sono sicuramente tra le più indagate del commento sentenziario del nostro autore,[113] ed è sicuramente possibile che esse abbiano contribuito ad orientare anche il giudizio di Ugolino nei riguardi delle considerazioni fatte da Pietro di Ceffons *in persona philosophi*; rimane il fatto, tuttavia, che la confutazione che Ugolino porta avanti con costanza è dettagliata e ampiamente argomentata, per cui sarà certamente interessante poterla confrontare effettivamente con il testo del commento sentenziario e dei quattro *principia* di Ceffons quando essi saranno editi, anche allo scopo, per la verità, di comprendere se davvero le argomentazioni di Ugolino siano così inefficaci come Pietro sostiene.

Tuttavia, alla luce delle polemiche di cui si è qui parlato,[114] possia-

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[112] In realtà, la confutazione nei confronti di Pietro continua anche nell'articolo 3 della questione del medesimo *principium* (Hugolinus de Urbe Veteri, *Commentarius*, Principium quartum, quaestio a. 1, ed. Eckermann, IV, 155.538-160.684), dove però il tema che viene toccato riguarda la dimensione del libero arbitrio umano, che porterebbe ad ampliare eccessivamente il nostro discorso.

[113] Cfr. A. Zumkeller, *Hugolin von Orvieto und seine theologische Erkenntnislehre* (Cassiciacum 9), Würzburg 1941, 220-255; F. Corvino, "La polemica antiaristotelica di Ugolino da Orvieto nella cultura filosofica del secolo XIV", in *Filosofia e cultura in Umbria. Atti del IV Congresso di Studi Umbri*, Gubbio 1967, 407-458; S. Magnavacca, "Notas sobre el rechazo de la filosofía en Hugolino de Orvieto", in *Rivista di storia della filosofia*, 61 (2006), 181-192.

[114] Va anche tenuto conto che il quadro qui delineato è parziale: esso ha bisogno ancora di essere completato, sia rispetto alla relazione tra le posizioni di Ugolino e quelle di Giovanni di Mirecourt, altro autore assai importante di quegli anni, sia rispetto a quelle espresse nel *De causa Dei* di Thomas Bradwardine, che Ugolino conosce bene.

mo dire che certamente la salvaguardia netta e decisa della contingenza dei futuri preconosciuti da Dio è un tema che Ugolino difende con una *verve* polemica acuta e a tratti intransigente, segno sicuro dell'importanza che questo tema assume nell'economia della sua speculazione. Se nel caso di Alfonso la lettura che Ugolino dà dei testi del suo avversario sembra essere stata parziale e non esente da fraintendimenti, che in misura minore non mancano nemmeno rispetto a testi di Gregorio di Rimini, la sua conoscenza del commento alle *Sentenze* di Pietro di Ceffons è sicuramente di prima mano e dettagliata. Altre ricerche saranno però necessarie per completare le nostre conoscenze e portare ulteriore luce su questo aspetto del commento di Ugolino, che sembra per la sua importanza capace di rivelare aspetti significativi della sua personalità filosofica.

Università di Torino

The Presence of the Past: Durand of St.-Pourçain and Peter of Palude on Intuitive Cognition of the Past

Peter Hartman

Remember me is all I ask,
and if remembrance be a task,
forget me.
(Anonymous)

Durand of St.-Pourçain holds that the presence of a thing in itself to a mind is sufficient to think about that thing, and that a mind does not need representations or *species* in order for things outside it to be present to it. Quite the contrary, a mind can be present to (and so think about) a thing provided there are no impediments between it and that thing, and whatever else might be required in order to remove such impediments, a mind does not need to acquire a representation or *species* of that thing.[1] What goes for us, goes for angels too, but whereas there are impediments that stand between embodied minds and things outside them, there are no such impediments for angelic minds, and so angelic minds can think about every singular natural thing that presently exists without *species* or representations owing to the presence of those things in themselves to angelic minds.

[1] See P. Hartman, "Durand of St.-Pourçain and Thomas Aquinas on Mental Representation", in *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 30/1 (2013), 19-34; J.L. Solère, "Durand of Saint-Pourçain's Cognition Theory: Its Fundamental Principles", in *Medieval Perspectives on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. R. Friedman, J.M. Counet, Louvain-la-Neuve 2013, 185-248; and P. Hartman, "Durand of St.-Pourçain and John Buridan on *Species*: Direct Realism with and Without Representation", in *Questions on the Soul by John Buridan and Others*, ed. G. Klima (Historical-Analytical Studies on Nature, Mind and Action 3), Cham 2017, 107-129 and the texts cited therein.

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However, Durand's anti-representationalism has its limits. One problem it would seem to face is what I will call the problem of the past. How does a mind think about something that is not present to it, including, of course, past things? How does the mind remember? Durand's solution for embodied minds appeals to the body: sensible things leave behind *species* or "impressions" in the body, and sometimes these impressions are themselves present to the mind. In such a case, we either (rightly) use them as representations, and so it is that we remember the past or imagine what is absent; or (wrongly) treat them as present things, and so it is that hallucinations can happen.[2] But here's the problem: If an angel has no representations in its mind, and no body, and so no impressions left behind in a body, then how can an angel remember what has happened? It would seem that an angel would forget the past.

This is precisely the problem that Peter of Palude raises against Durand's view of angelic thought,[3] and it is precisely the problem that I

[2] I will reference Durandus de Sancto Porciano, *Scriptum Super IV Libros Sententiarum* (hence, *In Sent.*) using the standard Book, Distinction, Question device, followed by the paragraph number in the relevant edition (either the ongoing critical edition from the Thomas Institute at the University of Cologne, published by Peeters, Leuven in their Bibliotheca series by the editorial board of *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales*, or the Lyon 1563 edition). I also indicate which redaction a text comes from with A, B, or C. Hence, *In Sent.* A 2.3.7, n. 18 = Redaction A of Book 2, Distinction 3, Question 7, paragraph number 18. Durand's various versions of his Commentary are traditionally grouped into three redactions: (1) an initial working version associated with his lectures in Paris during the academic year 1308/9 (Redaction A); (2) a revised version culminating in his promotion to master at Paris in early 1312 (Redaction B); (3) and a final official version produced after 1317 (Redaction C). For the most recent discussion of these redactions and the dates, see T. Jeschke, *Die Lehre von den Seelenpotenzen bei Durandus von Saint-Pourçain: eine philosophische Psychologie im Übergang vom Hoch- zum Spätmittelalter*, Leiden 2022, 46-71. Durandus, *In Sent.* C 2.3.6, n. 14, 119ra: "Est tamen advertendum quod licet in nulla potentia sensitiva vel intellectiva sit species ad repraesentandum ei suum obiectum, tamen in spiritibus corporeis non sentientibus remanent quandoque species (seu impressiones) abeuntibus sensibilibus, quae dum nobis dormientibus (vel vigilantibus) obiiciuntur organis interiorum sensuum [et] apprehenduntur, et si in eis sistat cognitio, decipimur aestimantes rerum imagines esse veras res exteriores; si vero cognitio non sistat in eis, sed apprehendantur ut imagines aliarum rerum, non decipimur, sed sunt nobis principium memorandi". See also Durandus, *In Sent.* C 2.7.3, n. 5, 124va-b.

[3] The objection can be found in Palude's Commentary on the *Sentences* [*In Sent.*] 2.3.4.8 (= Book 2, Distinction 3, Question 4, Subquestion 8). I quote it below on page 225. For Petrus de Palude text I use Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,

want to address in this paper. As we'll see, Durand's answer is surprising: there is a sense in which past things *are* really present to angelic minds. The text I use to defend my reading occurs only in one version of Durand's discussion of angelic knowledge of future contingents (*In Sent.* A 2.3.7, n. 18).[4] Hence, I will first go over Durand's theory about angelic knowledge of future things.[5] I will then present Palude's objection from the past, and what I take Durand's answer to it to be. Durand's solution is surprising: he argues that angels have a kind of intuitive cognition of past things, just as they do of present things. I will close with a few words about whether past things are also somehow really present to human minds as well.

The presence-theory

Durand defends what I call the presence-theory of angelic singular knowledge, according to which the presence of a singular thing either "in itself" or "in its natural causes" to an angel is *sufficient* for an angel to "infallibly think about" (i.e., *know*) that thing – both "what it is" (*quid sit*), e.g., what Socrates is, and "whether it is" (*an sit*), that is, its existential status, so to speak, e.g., that Socrates exists now, or will exist in the future, or has existed in the past.[6] Durand sometimes uses

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Cod. Vat. Lat. 1073 [*V*], ff. 26va-28va, (silently) corrected against Basel, Universitätsbibliothek B II 22, ff. 35rb-38vb and Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, Cod. 899, ff. 41rb-44ra.

[4] In the case of Book 2, Distinction 3, Question 7 – the focus of this study – there are only two versions: A and C. Durand had decided to play things safe, it would seem, and simply omitted his entire discussion of angelic thought in B (Book 2, Distinction 3, Questions 5-8). However, he offers a quick summary of his own view on angelic foreknowledge in Durandus, *In Sent.* B 2.7.3, n. 4, quoted below in footnote 11, which suggests that his view was basically the same.

[5] Durand's theory of divine knowledge of future contingents is discussed in detail in C. Schabel, R. Friedman, I. Balcoyiannopoulou, "Peter of Palude and the Parisian Reaction to Durand of St Pourçain on Future Contingents", in *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 71 (2001), 183-300; see the references therein as well as the more recent C. Schabel, "Early Carmelites Between Giants: Questions on Future Contingents by Gerard of Bologna and Guy Terrena", in *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévale*, 70/1 (2003), 139-205.

[6] Durandus, *In Sent.* C 2.3.7, n. 16, 119vb-120ra: "Singularia autem quae dependent solum ex causis naturalibus, si sint praesentia cognoscuntur infallibiliter ab angelo. Nec est alia causa quaerenda nisi quia sunt ei praesentia, sicut non est quaerenda causa quare visus percipit colorem sibi praesentem et auditus sonum. Si vero sint prae-

the language of "experiential" (or "intuitive") to describe an angel's knowledge of a thing present in itself and "simple" to characterizes its knowledge of a thing present in its natural causes, and I will use these terms in what follows.[7] I will also sometimes characterize a thing's presence in itself as its real presence and its presence in its natural causes as its virtual presence.

In virtue of what is a singular really present to a mind, and so experientially (or intuitively) known by a mind? In the case of an embodied mind, the fact that it exists is not enough; other facts having to do with the body and its physical location come into play. But for an angelic mind the fact that a thing exists is sufficient for its real presence to an angelic mind, with the exception of supernatural things (such as the supernatural relation between Christ's human nature and the divine; see, e.g., *In Sent.* C 2.3.7, n. 19; *In Sent.* A 2.3.7, n. 18) and (perhaps) mental acts in other minds (*In Sent.* 2.8.5).[8] As Durand explains in detail in his discussion of angelic location, this is owing to a kind of basic law: God made the universe and angels in it such that an angel is really present to every natural singular thing that now exists thanks to its order ("secundum ordinem") as opposed to place ("secundum locum").[9]

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terita vel futura, contingentia vel necessaria, adhuc cognoscuntur infallibiliter ab angelo per hoc quod talia sunt praesentia cognitioni angelicae, non quidem in se sed in suis causis naturalibus […] [Angelus] cognoscit omnes effectus pure naturales, necessarios et contingentes, quid sint et an sint, sive sint praeteriti sive praesentes sive futuri". See also Durandus, *In Sent.* A 2.3.7, n. 13, 181,103-182,121.

[7] Durandus, *In Sent.* A 2.3.7, n. 18, 185,208-186,219: "Non enim solum cognoscit de rebus praesentibus an sint vel non *simplici cognitione* correspondente [nostrae] intellectivae cognitioni, sed *experimentali* correspondente nostrae sensitivae, ita quod sicut astrologus cognoscit eclipsim futuram vel praesentem per intellectum ex cognitione causarum eclipsis et nihilominus de praesente eclipsi habet per visum *cognitionem experimentalem* quasi probantem et confirmantem priorem cognitionem, sic angelus de effectibus futuris vel praesentibus quae dependent solum ex causis naturalibus habet *cognitionem simplicem* ex cognitione causarum talium effectuum et *quasi experimentalem* ex actuali praesentia earum quae est quasi probans et confirmans priorem cognitionem". (emphasis mine); see Durandus, *In Sent.* C 2.3.6, n. 21, 119rb, where he describes experiential cognitions as intuitive cognitions. For Durand's views about intuitive cognition, see Durandus, *In Sent.* C 4.49.2, 412va-415ra and Id., *In Sent.* C 1.P.3 (i.e., Prologue to Book 1, Question 3), 14va-15ra.

[8] In Redactions A and B he denies that angels can read our thoughts, but in Redaction C he leaves it open.

[9] Durandus, *In Sent.* C 1.37.2.1 (i.e., Question 1 of Part 2 of Distinction 37), 101ra-

The upshot is that Durand holds that an angel is really present to every natural singular thing that exists now, and so an angel has experiential knowledge of every natural singular thing that exists now, as well as every natural relationship that obtains among those things: it knows not just what such things are and that they actually exist, but also where they exist (among other relational facts about them). Hence, Durand rejects the common view that angelic singular knowledge of the present is a function of infused representational *species* on the grounds that such *species* are unnecessary.[10]

While what an angel experientially (or intuitively) knows is *prima facie* straightforward, what an angel simply knows – that is, what is virtually present to it or present to it in its natural causes – is not at all straightforward. Is any singular so present to an angel? Is every singular present to it in this way? Or are only some singulars?

Let's start with a quote from Durand:

[T1]

> An effect follows without fail from a necessary cause, and in it [i.e., the cause] one knows of the effect both what it is and whether it is. So too an effect follows without fail from a contingent and impedible cause if it is not impeded, and in it [i.e., the cause] one knows of the effect both what it is and whether it is. Since, then, an angel completely knows all natural causes, both necessary ones and contingent i.e., impedible ones, and also every relationship among them, and through this it knows which cause is impeding or not impeding another cause, it is obvious that an angel through this knows of all purely natural effects, both necessary ones and contingent ones, both what they are and whether they are – be they past, present, or future.[11]

102vb and Id., *In Sent.* B 1.37.2, 44,3-65,471. See also Id., *In Sent.* C 2.3.7, n. 17, 120ra; Id., *In Sent.* A 2.3.7, nn. 17-18, 184,173-187,257; Id., *In Sent.* A 2.3.5, n. 41, 169,637-170,652; Id., *In Sent.* C 2.3.6, n. 21, 119rb; Id., *In Sent.* A 2.11.1, n. 4, 96,29-32.

[10] Durandus, *In Sent.* A 2.3.5, 146,4-170,676; Id., *In Sent.* C 2.3.6, 139ra-140ra For discussion of Aquinas's account of angelic singular thought via *species*, see D. Perler, "Disembodied Cognition and Assimilation: Thirteenth-Century Debates on an Epistemological Puzzle", in *Vivarium*, 57/3-4 (2019), 317-340; M. Lenz, "Why Can't Angels Think Properly? Ockham Against Chatton and Aquinas", in *Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry*, ed. I. Iribarren, M. Lenz, Aldershot 2008, 155-167; and T. Suarez-Nani, *Connaissance et langage des anges selon Thomas d'Aquin et Gilles de Rome*, Paris 2002, 52-54.

[11] Durandus, *In Sent.* A 2.3.7, n. 13, 181,103-182,121; Id., *In Sent.* C 2.3.7, n. 16, 120ra: "[…] sicut a causa necessaria infallibiliter sequitur effectus, et in ea cognoscitur

This is a surprisingly strong claim: every "purely natural" effect – past, present, or future – is virtually present (i.e., present in its natural causes) to an angel, and so an angel simply knows of every such effect both what it is and also that it exists, has existed, or will exist.

A deterministic world

One way to think about what Durand is saying here is to bracket free choices from the universe (including God's). In such a "deterministic" universe, where we only have purely natural causes and effects, Durand would maintain that we can still draw a meaningful distinction between "contingent" causes and necessary ones. A cause is contingent if it sometimes does not bring about its effect whereas a cause is necessary if it always brings about its effect. However, there are two kinds of contingent causes, and only one of them is present in such a world. On the one hand, there are causes that are contingent because they might not bring about their effects since something else might block or impede them from doing so; on the other hand, there are causes that are contingent because they might not bring about their effects even though nothing is in fact blocking or impeding them from doing so.[12] I will call the former "natural" contingent causes and the latter "free" contingent causes. (In T1 Durand is talking about natural contingent causes). From a certain perspective natural contingent causes are

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quid sit et an sit, sic a causa contingente et impedibili, si non sit impedita, infallibiliter sequitur effectus, et in ea cognoscitur quid sit et an sit. Cum igitur angelus cognoscat perfecte omnes causas naturales, necessarias et contingentes seu impedibiles, et omnem causarum habitudinem (ac per hoc sciat quae causa aliam impediet vel non impediet) manifestum est quod per hoc cognoscit omnes effectus pure naturales, necessarios et contingentes, quid sint et an sint, sive sint praeteriti sive praesentes sive futuri". All translations are mine. See also the unique addition in Id., *In Sent.* B 2.7.3, n. 5, 35,36-43: "[…] sicut a causa necessaria infallibiliter evenit effectus, ita a causa impedibili, si non sit impedita, infallibiliter evenit effectus, nisi quod primus evenit ex necessitate simpliciter, secundus autem ex necessitate suppositionis. Sicut ergo cognita causa necessaria infallibiliter cognoscitur eius effectus, ita cognita causa impedibili et cognito quod non impedietur cognoscitur infallibiliter quis effectus eveniet. Angelus autem cum cognoscat perfecte omnes causas naturales et ordinem earum et concursum possibilem cognoscit de qualibet causa impedibili si impedietur per concursum contrariae causae vel non. Et ideo cognoscit per certitudinem quid eveniet vel non eveniet". See also Id., *In Sent.* B 1.38.3, n. 9, 83,105-84,129 and Id., *In Sent.* C 1.38.3, n. 9, 89va.

[12] Durandus, *In Sent.* B 1.38.3, n. 6, 80,47-82,80; Id., *In Sent.* C 1.38.3, n. 6, 89rb.

necessary causes too: it is necessary that if unimpeded a natural contingent cause bring about its effect. Hence, Durand characterizes them as necessary *ex suppositione.*[13] It is necessary that my campfire produce heat unless impeded, for instance, that is, under the assumption that it is not impeded.

So imagine a world without free contingent causes, that is, a world where every cause is either a necessary cause or a natural contingent cause. What does an angel *simply* know in this world, that is, what is virtually present to it? Durand's answer would seem to be this: everything that is, was, or will be.

One assumption Durand seems to make here is that an angel in virtue of knowing *what* a thing is, knows what sort of effect that thing would produce, that is, it knows the thing's causal powers.[14] So, for instance, if Michael knows what my campfire is, Michael knows, among other things, that my campfire is capable of producing heat, that is, that my campfire, if unimpeded, will produce heat. Call this the *causal knowledge thesis*.

While the causal knowledge thesis is sufficient to warrant the claim that an angel thus has simple knowledge about what the effect is (*quid sit*) thanks to its knowledge of what the cause of that effect is (it knows what heat is because it knows what fire is), it is not enough to warrant the claim that an angel thus has simple knowledge about whether the effect is (*an sit*). Michael might, for instance, (experientially) know that my campfire actually exists and what it is, and thus simply know what heat (its effect) is (thanks to the causal knowledge thesis); but Michael would not *simply* know, from this alone, that *this* heat that the fire in fact is now producing exists. In order to know this further fact Michael would need to know that my campfire is not impeded right now. But in order to know this, Michael needs to know something else, something that lies *outside* my campfire (the cause), namely, (a) the things that can impede my campfire and (b) that no such thing is actu-

[13] Durandus, *In Sent.* B 2.7.3, n. 4, 43,15-44,27; Id., *In Sent.* B 1.38.3, n. 9, 83,105-84,129; Id., *In Sent.* C 1.38.3, n. 9, 89va.

[14] Durand makes this explicit in *In Sent.* A 2.8.5, n. 3 and *In Sent.* B 2.8.5, n. 3, 64,13-26: "[Q]ui plenius et perfectius novit naturas rerum quid sint, plenius et perfectius novit actiones earum quid sint". See also Petrus de Palude, *In Sent.* 2.3.4.8, *V*, f. 27rb: "Et sicut cognoscendo speciem hominis cognoscit eius accidentia propria, sic cognoscendo hunc Solem cognoscit eius virtutem et actionem".

ally related to my campfire so as to impede it. Call this the *background knowledge thesis*.[15]

Of course, we do not have such background knowledge. But angels do. As Durand tells us in T1, an angel (experientially) knows of everything that now exists not just that it exists and what it is, but also where it is. Hence, since an angel also knows what everything that actually exists can do (thanks to the causal knowledge), it knows whether or not any given natural contingent cause is actually impeded. Thus, in a deterministic world an angel simply knows that my campfire is producing heat now, that is, that it is not impeded now, and so it simply knows that this heat (its effect) exists now. Moreover, it also simply knows that my campfire will be producing heat next, that is, when time is iterated one step into the future, for the same reason. So an angel simply knows purely natural effects that exist now at time *t* and those that will exist next at time *t*+1. But if an angel simply knows what will exist *next* (since what will exist next is virtually present to an angel), then it seems that we can also iterate forward one more step into the future, and so what will happen at time *t*+2 will also be virtually present to (and so simply known by) an angel, and so on.

What about the past? At the end of T1, Durand says that an angel also *simply* knows every *past* thing, that is, that past "purely natural" effects are somehow present to an angel in their "purely natural" causes just like present and future "purely natural" effects. *Prima facie* this is an odd claim. How can a past *effect* be present in a present *cause*? One way to get an account of angelic hindsight, so to speak, off the ground would be to endorse the principle of proportionate causality (past *causes* are contained in present *effects*)[16] and expand the notion of virtual presence: a thing can be present *either* in its natural *causes* (as in the

[15] This is more or less the thrust of Durand's criticism of Aquinas's claim that knowledge *via causalitatis* is merely conjectural: Aquinas focused too narrowly on knowledge of the proximate cause and whatever is intrinsic to it, and failed to take into account the entire network of causes (Durandus, *In Sent.* B 1.38.3, n. 8, 82,87-83,104). For discussion of Aquinas's account of divine foreknowledge *via causalitatis* and this sort of criticism, see M. Hoenen, *Marsilius of Inghen: Divine Knowledge in Late Medieval Thought* (Studies in the History of Christian Traditions 50), Leiden 1993, 27-29, 63-65, 166-167.

[16] See, e.g., E. Feser, *Aristotle's Revenge: The Metaphysical Foundations of Physical and Biological Science*, Neunkirchen-Seelscheid 2019, 293.

case of present and future *effects*) *or* in its natural *effects* (as in the case of present and past *causes*). While it is somewhat surprising Durand does not ever talk this way in *In Sent.* 2.3.7 (or, for that matter, *In Sent.* 1.38.3 on God's foreknowledge), he does talk this way elsewhere (e.g., *In Sent.* 4.47.2, n. 8; *In Sent.* 4.11.1, n. 11), and so it is plausible that this was Durand's view on the matter.

Whatever the case may be, let us grant Durand his claim: in a deterministic world, an angel can iterate forward in time from what now exists to what will exist and backwards in time from what now exists to what has existed too, and so all present, past, and future things are virtually present to (and so simply known by) an angel.

When worlds collide

So much for our toy deterministic world. What happens when we introduce free choice back into the picture? As Durand readily admits, free effects are not virtually present in free causes to an angel.[17] So, to go back to our campfire example, while we might suppose that an angel can know what effect my campfire would cause if unimpeded, and it can also know that it is not actually impeded, if the campfire is a free cause an angel cannot know whether that effect exists, since it does not know whether my campfire also freely *wants* to produce it.

One might object that an angel can experientially know the free choice that now exists in the campfire, and thus it knows that the campfire wants to produce heat, and since it knows that the campfire is not impeded, it thus knows that this heat exists now. As mentioned, Durand is somewhat hesitant to allow that an angel can experientially know of our occurrent free choices that they exist;[18] but even so, an angel still cannot know (simply or otherwise) a future free choice, and so all bets are off about iterating any further into the future.[19]

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[17] Durandus, *In Sent.* C 2.3.7, n. 17, 120ra: "Quae autem dependent ex libero arbitrio alterius angeli vel nostro non potest angelus per certitudinem cognoscere – nec in se, cum nondum sint, nec in causis suis (hoc est: in affectione alterius angeli vel nostra) antequam istae affectiones sint in angelo vel in nobis per eamdem rationem". See also Id., *In Sent.* A 2.3.7, n. 16, 183,148-184,172; Id., *In Sent.* B 1.38.3, n. 8-9, 82,87-84,129; Id., *In Sent.* C 1.38.3, n. 8-9, 89rb-89va.

[18] See footnote 8 above.

[19] God, on the other hand, knows just a bit more than what angels know: he not only

So what happens in a world where we have a mix, as it were, of free causes and "purely natural" causes (i.e., free contingent causes, natural contingent causes, and necessary causes)? Since in T1 Durand seems to be saying that in our current world an angel *does* know future effects that come about from purely natural causes, it would seem reasonable to read him as holding the following view, attributed to him by Peter of Palude (among others):

> If the impedible causes [i.e., natural contingent causes like my campfire] are known [*cognoscuntur*], and with this everything that can impede them is also known [*cognoscuntur*], and with this the fact that none of these will impede them is also determinately known [*cognoscitur*], then what effect will happen is determinately known [*determinate scitur*]. Hence, angels know [*praecognoscunt*] not just future eclipses, but also future floods, droughts, cold snaps, and heat waves, whereas [human] astronomers do not, since astronomers do not know [*sciunt*] every impediment. However, angels do not know for certain [*pro certo ... praesciunt*] future famines and wars, since these depend upon human free choice.[20]

On this reading, Durand is committed to the *plausible* claim that an angel does not simply know of future free effects that they will exist, such as famines and wars, and the *implausible* claim that an angel nevertheless does simply know of purely natural effects (i.e., necessary effects and natural contingent effects) that they will exist, such as floods, droughts, cold snaps, heat waves, and eclipses. The latter claim is implausible, since it is clearly false: once we admit human, angelic, and divine free choices into the world, an angel cannot know of any given future effect that it will exist, since there is always the possibility that a future free choice might impede the effect's cause, or, at any rate, that God might simply destroy its cause at some point in the future.[21]

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knows what will impede or not impede a natural contingent cause but also (supposedly) what will determine or not determine an indifferent (i.e., free) cause like my will. See Durandus, *In Sent.* B 1.38.3, nn. 9, 12, 16, 83,105-84,129; 90,244-252; 92,298-93,329; Id., *In Sent.* C 1.38.3, nn. 9, 18, 22, 89va; 89vb; 90ra; Id., *In Sent.* C 2.8.5, n. 3, 126va; Id., *In Sent.* A 2.8.5, n. 3, 64,13-26.

[20] Petrus de Palude, *In Sent.* 1.38.3, n. 2.5.1b, 269. For Palude's *In Sent.* 1.38.3, I cite the page and paragraph numbers from the edition in Schabel, Friedman, Balcoyiannopoulou, "Peter of Palude".

[21] A point Palude repeatedly makes, e.g., Petrus de Palude, *In Sent.* 1.38.3, n. 2.4.5, ed. Schabel, Friedman, Balcoyiannopoulou, 269: "Ex hoc apparet quod omnis cognitio creaturae de re quantumcumque videtur necessaria futura tamen falli potest quia

What should we do? The principle of charity demands that we find some sort of solution for Durand here. The solution that Palude and others pursue is this. Durand's implausible claim should be qualified. An angel really does *infallibly* know some purely natural future contingent events, but not *infallibly without qualification* but *infallibly ex suppositione*, just as the events themselves do not invariably follow from their causes without qualification but only *ex suppositione*.[22] This applies to necessary causes too: under the assumption that God does not freely impede the motion of the Sun (or destroy the Sun), an eclipse will happen.[23] One way to think about this is that an angel does not know the actual future world, but a possible (and privileged) future world, that is to say, an angel does not know that X will actually exist but that X would exist were the world deterministic here on forward (which, of course, implies that God does not freely decide to destroy the world). What an angel simply knows, that is, what it knows from the virtual presence of things, is not the future state of the *actual* world, but the future state of a very special *possible* world.[24] So too with the

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Deus potest impedire quod nulla creatura potest impedire. Nescit autem creatura quod Deus non impediet nisi sibi hoc Deus revelaverit. Propter quod omnis naturalis [sc. simplex] cognitio creata mendax est et fallax secundum potentiam Dei". Id., *In Sent.* 1.38.3, n. 2.1, 264: "[…] per comparationem ad Deum nulla causa est necessaria, nec in esse nec in agere, nec est effectus necessarius, cum ipse possit omnia annihilare et futura impedire de potentia absoluta".

[22] Plausibly, this is what Durand is saying in *In Sent.* B 2.7.3, n. 4 quoted in footnote 11 above. See, e.g., Petrus de Palude, *In Sent.* 1.38.3, n. 2.6.1a, ed. Schabel, Friedman, Balcoyiannopoulou, 270: "[…] aliud est de cognitione creata, cuius infallibilitatem sufficit esse ex suppositione (unde ad hoc quod videam vel sciam Sortem currere, sufficit quod ipse currat, licet contingenter, quia ex quo currit necesse est eum currere), aliud de cognitione increata, quam oportet esse necessariam simpliciter et absolute, et non solum ex suppositione. Non enim scientia Dei potest falli, nec simpliciter, nec ex suppositione, cum sit necessaria simpliciter et absolute".

[23] See, e.g., Petrus de Palude, *In Sent.* 2.3.4.8, *V*, f. 27rb: "Similiter quia nescit finem mundi, per consequens nescit utrum eclipsis sit futura in anno millesimo, quia nescit si tunc erit finis mundi. Sed supposito cursu mundi qui est, si vult speculari, sciet quid futurum erit in effectibus pure naturalibus usque ad mille milia annorum magis quam astrologus per algorismum suum".

[24] See, e.g., Petrus de Palude, *In Sent.* 1.38.3, n. 2.3.5, ed. Schabel, Friedman, Balcoyiannopoulou, 266: "Omnia enim quae sunt futura relucent ab aeterno in Dei essentia – non solum secundum quod sunt in suis causis (quod tamen sufficeret ad eorum cognitionem, cum hoc sufficiat ad cognitionem possibilium quae non erunt; unde non possunt repraesentari quantum ad esse quod habebunt, sed quantum ad esse quod

past: an angel *simply* knows of a past thing, not that it actually existed, but that it would have existed *provided the world has been deterministic from here on backwards*.

The problem with the past

So much for the general view: an angel experientially (or intuitively) knows of every natural thing that actually exists (i) what it is, (ii) that it actually exists, and (iii) where it actually exists (among other relations that actually obtain); and it simply knows from their virtual presence in the things that actually exist a possible future, past, and present world, that is, it simply knows the things that would exist in the future, past, or present granted how the world actually is. I now want to look at an angel's knowledge of the past in a little more detail, focusing on two key objections: one which Durand puts to his view; the other from Palude.

The mystery objection

In *In Sent.* A 2.3.7, n. 18 – in a large stretch of text omitted in *In Sent.* C 2.3.7 – Durand sums up his view so far on the issue of angelic knowledge of future free contingents, and then raises an objection.

> Past [free] singulars do not have a determination, neither in themselves nor in their causes, and so an angel will have no thought about them. After all, something is not present to angelic thought unless it has some determinate being [*esse*], either in itself or in its cause.[25]

haberent si essent – sed de hoc postea videbitur), sed etiam quantum ad esse quod in seipsis actualiter habebunt".

[25] Durandus, *In Sent.* A 2.3.7, n. 18, 186,255-238: "Effectus autem dependentes ex libero arbitrio non sunt eis praesentes secundum praeexistentiam quam habent in causis suis, quia in eis nullam habent determinationem nisi forte coniecturalem, sed solum secundum esse suae actualis existentiae […]. Sed videtur quod incidamus in idem inconveniens in quo et primi: quia *singularia praeterita nec in se nec in causis suis habent aliquam determinationem; ergo de eis angelus nullam habebit cognitionem. Non enim est aliquid praesens angelicae cognitioni nisi quod habet aliquod determinatum esse vel in se vel in causa sua*". Translated text in italics. The "primi" here refers to the *species*-theory of angelic singular knowledge of the past (see footnote 10 above). Durand's objection to that view was, roughly, that if an angel can know the past via *species* then it should also be able to know the future via *species*, and so we should hold that an angel cannot know the past or future via *species* (nn. 6-7, 179,45-180,61).

While Durand's point concerns past *free* contingents (i.e., past events that depend upon free choices) we can extend it into a broader worry. A past natural cause might be virtually present to an angel in its natural effects in the way sketched above, and so an angel can simply know that it would have existed. However, an angel does not know whether it actually existed, just as an angel does not know which possible future events are the actual future events that will take place (if any). All an angel would seem to know is that such events would occur in the future or would have occurred in the past granted the present state of the world under the assumption that the world is deterministic here on forward or here on backwards. Hence, while an angel might be able to *think* about what possibly was, it cannot know for certain what *actually* was. But surely Michael knows what actually happened – at least Michael knows those events that he experienced. Otherwise, we would have to admit that angels are worse off than goldfish: they would forget everything that actually happened the second those events pass into the past.

Call this *the mystery objection*: an angel's knowledge of the *actual* past is a mystery on the presence-theory of angelic singular knowledge.

The annihilation objection

In commenting on Durand's text here, Palude puts forward a further, related, objection, which I will call *the annihilation objection*.

> If God were to annihilate everything that now exists except for one angel, then that angel would lose every natural thought that it had about things other than itself, since those things would no longer exist – neither in their own presence nor in the presence of their naturally known causes.[26]

[26] Petrus de Palude, *In Sent.* 2.3.4.8, *V*, f. 27vb: "[…] secundum eos ratio cognoscendi angelo alia a se est illorum praesentia in se vel in causis suis […]. Sic si angelus cognoscit res alias per praesentiam earum in se vel in causa sua, quando res desinit esse in se, desinet eius cognitio experimentalis (sic enim eam vocant), quando autem desinet esse in sua causa, tunc desinet omnino cognosci. Ita quod *si Deus annihilaret omnia quae sunt praeter unum angelum, ille perderet omnem cognitionem naturalem quam habuit aliorum a se, quia alia a se non manent in sua praesentia nec in praesentia suae causae naturaliter cognitae* […] Ea vero praeterita quae a libero arbitrio dependent omnino oblitus esset, quia illorum non habet nisi notitiam quae est ex eorum praesentia". Translated text in italics. See also Id, *In Sent.* 2.3.4.5, *V*, f. 23rb.

This objection is somewhat stronger in a way. Not only would an angel thus not *know* (infallibly think about) actual past events in such a scenario, but an angel would not be able to *think about* actual past events at all, since, according to Durand, a thing must be present to an angel, either really or virtually, in order for an angel to at least think about it, much less infallibly think about (know) it. But in this scenario, nothing at all is present to an angel, and so an angel cannot even think about a possible past event, much less an actual past one.

Both objections come to much the same point. It seems incredibly strange to hold that the *only* access an angel has to the past is through the presently existing world outside the angel (i.e., via virtual presence of things in present things). Surely, an angel remembers the past even if nothing now exists outside an angel. For Palude, this goes to show that we should embrace the *species*-theory of angelic singular knowledge: an angel infallibly remembers or knows past things thanks to the (infused) *species* of things it has in its mind. (And, *pace* Durand's objection, a *species* can furnish an angel with *infallible* access to past and present contingents without furnishing it with equal access to future contingents).[27]

So here's where we are. It would seem that an angel cannot be really present to a past thing for the very simple reason that a past thing does not actually exist. Nor can we lean into a solution that appeals to a past thing's virtual presence, for at least two reasons. First, it would seem to furnish an angel only with knowledge about a possible past world and not the actual past world leaving it a mystery as to how an angel knows actual past things. Second, it makes an angel's access to the past entirely dependent upon what exists (outside the angel) right now, which is a strange view of remembering: Michael should be able to remember something even if God annihilates everything outside him.

[27] See especially Petrus de Palude, *In Sent.* 2.3.4.8, *V*, f. 28ra: "Dicendum quod, quia futurum nec est nec umquam fuit determinatum in se nec in sua causa creata, propter hoc non potest determinate repraesentari per aliquam speciem creatam, alias plus se haberet ad veritatem quam ad entitatem. Sed praeteritum, ex quo fuit praesens, determinatum fuit in se et in omnibus causis suis, et in necessitatem transivit ut non possit non fuisse. Unde et per speciem sui et per speciem suae causae perpetuo potest repraesentari".

Durand's solution to the problem of the past

Durand insists that an angel does have certain knowledge about actual past events, including those that depend upon our free choices. For instance, in *In Sent.* C 2.7.3, n. 8, he writes:

> [P]ast things are known by an angel with certainty [*nota per certitudinem*] […]. Those things that are past were at one point present and so they were known [*cognita*] by an angel, and they still are unless we maintain that angels forget.[28]

But this answer seems to paper over the problem. If an angel can think about only those things that are present to it (either really or virtually), then how can an angel *continue* to think about a thing once it is no longer present to it?

Durand provides a fuller answer in *In Sent.* A 2.3.7, n. 18. Immediately after he raises the mystery objection against his account, he writes:

> We should answer that past things have determination not in being [*in esse*] because an angel does not know this about a past thing [i.e., that it presently exists], for an angel would be mistaken, but in having been [*in fuisse*] (not so with the future in being about to be [*in fore*]), because after a thing has had being [*esse*], it is infallibly true to say that it was, because it cannot not have been; but before it has being [*esse*], it is not infallibly true to say that it will be, because it might not be. Therefore, angels can infallibly know such past things, but not future ones.[29]

This is a compact passage and there are several ways of interpreting it. One reading would be to take Durand to be saying that a thing can have a "determination" that is sufficient for its real (as opposed to virtual) presence to an angel, and so sufficient for an "experiential" (or intuitive) knowledge of it, if it actually exists (*est*) or if it *actually existed* (*fuit*).[30]

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[28] Durandus, *In Sent.* C 2.7.3, n. 8, 124vb.

[29] Durandus, *In Sent.* A 2.3.7, n. 18, 186,238-245: "Et dicendum quod praeterita habent determinationem non in esse quia nec hoc cognoscit angelus de praeteritis, quia falleretur, sed in fuisse (non sic autem futura in fore), quia postquam res esse habuit, verum est infallibiliter dicere quod fuit, quia non potest non fuisse; sed antequam esse habeat non est verum infallibiliter dicere [quod erit], quia potest non fore. Propter quod angeli possunt talia praeterita infallibiliter cognoscere, non autem futura".

[30] This is how Palude interprets Durand here in Petrus de Palude, *In Sent.* 2.3.4, subq. 9, f. 29ra: "[…] dicunt quod angelus de naturalibus duplicem habet cognitionem,

We might think here of two kinds of real presence or presence in itself: the sort that actual present things have (a determination *in esse*) and the sort that actual past things have (a determination *in fuisse*). So too there are two kinds of experiential or intuitive knowledge: those about things that actually exist and those about things that actually existed. By contrast, actual future things are not present in themselves (they do not have a determination *in fore*), and so there is no such thing as an experiential or intuitive knowledge about things that will actually exist.

This implies, of course, that an angel is present in itself not just to every singular thing that actually exists (thanks to its rank or order as discussed above) but also present in itself to every singular thing that has already actually existed (or at least a set of those, namely, the ones that an angel has actually experienced). And since the first is thanks to a brute law – God just made the universe and angels in it such that every singular that exists is really present to an angel – so too we might hold that the latter is thanks to a brute law too: God just made the universe and angels in it such that every singular that has actually existed (or at least a subset of them) is really present to an angel.

On this reading, the past is real (it has actual past existence) just as the present is real (it has actual present existence) but the future is not (it does not have actual future existence); thus, Durand is what we would nowadays call a "no futurist" (in contrast with a "presentist" or an "eternalist"): the past and present are real, but the future is not.[31]

If this is the right reading, then we can make good sense of Durand's statement in *In Sent.* C 2.7.3 about angelic forgetfulness above: an angel simply continues to think about (and, indeed, intuitively know) actual past things (and so does not forget them) thanks to the fact that such things continue to be really present in themselves to an angel. An angel does not need to have a representation of an actually past thing any more than it needs a representation of an actually present thing: both are really present to it. Hence, we can reject *species* or *habi-*

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scilicet simplicem et experimentalem. Ergo semper est in actu secundo simplici respectu naturalium, sed non semper est in actu secundo experimentali *nisi quando actu sunt vel postquam semel actu fuerunt*".

[31] For the contemporary debate, see N. Emery, M. Markosian, M. Sullivan, "Time", in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2024 Edition), ed. E. N. Zalta (URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2024/entries/time/>, last consulted 4.5.2025).

tus as necessary for angelic remembering too.[32] And if God destroys everything *that actually exists* outside an angel, it still seems true to say that an angel remains really present to everything that *had* actually existed, and so Michael will continue to experientially or intuitively know everything that actually was even though in such a case Michael would no longer experientially know anything that actually is (since nothing actually is).

However, this reading fits uneasily with other claims Durand makes, most notably his arguments against Aquinas's "real presence" theory of God's knowledge of future contingents.[33] Durand rejects this view in all three versions of *In Sent.* 1.38.3.[34] (In *In Sent.* B 1.38.3, n. 11, he also insists that it is not even Aquinas's view.) He does so on the grounds (among others) that future things are not real and so cannot be really present to God.[35] On Durand's interpretation Aquinas means to say that future things are *as if* really present to God, or present to God "in his knowledge", but not *really* present.

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[32] Which Durand does in, e.g., Durandus de Sancto Porciano, *Tractatus de habitibus*, q. 4, a. 7, ed. J. Koch (Opuscula et textus. Series scholastica 8), Münster 1930 (for *habitus*) and Id., *In Sent.* C 2.3.6, 139ra-140ra and Id., *In Sent.* A 2.3.5, 146,4-170,676 (for *species*). On Durand's views about *habitus*, see P. Hartman, "Are Cognitive Habits in the Intellect? Durand of St.-Pourçain and Prosper de Reggio Emilia on Cognitive Habits", in *The Ontology, Psychology and Axiology of Habits (Habitus) in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. M. Roques, N. Faucher (Historical-Analytical Studies on Nature, Mind and Action 7), Cham 2018, 229-244 and Id., "Durand of St.-Pourçain and Cognitive Habits (*Sent. III, D. 23, QQ. 1–2*)", in *The Language of Thought in Late Medieval Philosophy*, ed. M. Roques, J. Pelletier (Historical-Analytical Studies on Nature, Mind and Action 5), Cham 2017, 331-368.

[33] The literature on Aquinas's "real presence" theory is too vast to cite here. The locus classicus is J. Groblici, *De scientia Dei futurorum contingentium secundum S. Thomam eiusque primos sequaces*, Krakow 1938. For the current philosophical debate about the viability of Aquinas's theory, see W. L. Craig, "Was Aquinas a B-Theorist of Time?", in *The New Scholasticism*, 59 (1985), 475-483 and the literature cited in M. Acton, "Reflective Imagination: Time Perception in Thomas Aquinas I", in *Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica*, 4 (2023), 859-872: 865, note 5. On Durand's criticism, see Schabel, Friedman, Balcoyiannopoulou, "Peter of Palude", 218-237 and Hoenen, *Marsilius*, 169-172.

[34] Durandus, *In Sent.* C 1.38.3, nn. 11-17, 89va-b; Id., *In Sent.* B 1.38.3, nn. 10-11, 84,130-89,243. *In Sent.* A 1.38.3 is the text we find in Petrus de Palude, *In Sent.* 1.38.3, and it is mostly the same as the text we find in Durandus, *In Sent.* C 1.38.3.

[35] Durandus, *In Sent.* B 1.38.3, n. 11, 85,150-89,243; *In Sent.* C 1.38.3, n. 13, 89va-b.

But does this mean that actual past things are also not real at least in some sense, and that actual past things cannot be really present to God? Durand is, in fact, very careful not to go this far in his criticism. And there's a good reason for this. Consider the alternative: that a past-tensed proposition is true even though there is no *ontological ground* that makes it true. This seems to go against a deeply felt belief among scholastic authors that truth depends on being.[36] For Durand, an actual past thing has some determination – not in being (*in esse*) but in having been (*in fuisse*). Such determination *in fuisse* is sufficient not just for the truth of past-tensed propositions, I submit, but also for angelic experiential or intuitive knowledge of actual past things, both what they are and that they actually were.

Conclusion

To wrap up, then, an angel can simply know possible past things thanks to their virtual presence to an angel, although it cannot know what actually was in this way. However, an angel is really present to a set of actual present and actual past things, namely, every natural thing that actually exists and every past thing that the angel has actually experienced, and so an angel experientially or intuitively knows actual present and past things.

Could we say the same thing about human intellects? Could a human intellect also experientially know an actual past thing? I don't see why not. While Durand does countenance a form of remembering that depends upon the body (see footnote 2 above), this account has a notorious problem: How can we remember our own past intellectual acts? Such acts are not "sensible", and so leave no "impression" behind in the body. Yet, Durand insists that we do know our past intellectual acts, although, obviously, we do not remember *all* our past intellectual acts (unlike angels we can forget); there must be some sort of condition under which a past intellectual act is really present to us. In his brief remarks on remembering our past intellectual acts, Durand claims that I

[36] See, e.g., Palude's text above in footnote 25, and Durand's discussion of truth in Durandus, *In Sent.* B 1.19.3, 16,3-25,196 and Id., *In Sent.* C 1.19.5-6, 65vb-66vb. For discussion of this principle, see G. Frost, "Thomas Aquinas on the Perpetual Truth of Essential Propositions", in *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 27/3 (2010), 197-213, who argues that Aquinas abandons it in the case of past-tensed contingent propositions.

can remember the past intellectual act I elicited yesterday about a rose (for instance), and all that seems to be required is that the rose or an impression of the rose be really present to my intellect.[37] It isn't exactly clear what Durand has in mind here. Does the rose or its impression somehow represent the past intellectual act? If so, how? I would submit, in light of our discussion above, that what he might have in mind is that the rose (or its impression) is simply a condition under which my past intellectual acts about the rose are really present to my intellect. The absence of the rose or its impression functions as a kind of impediment that blocks the intellect from being really present to past intellectual acts about it, just as the absence of light functions as a kind of impediment that blocks sight from being really present to the color of the wall; but once we remove such an impediment – turn the lights on, bring to mind the impression – then we can say that the object is really present to the mind, and so intuitively known. And just as light (or even the *species* produced by the color in the air and in the organ as a consequence of light) is not a representation of the distal color to our faculty for sight, so too the impression is not a representation of a past act to our intellects.[38]

So perhaps Durand would allow that we can experientially know or intuitively cognize at least this narrow section of the past just as we can intuitively cognize the present; and, more or less, just as the angels do.

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[37] Durandus de Sancto Porciano, *Quaestiones de libero arbitrio*, q. 3, ed. P.T. Stella, in P.T. Stella, "L*e Quaestiones de libero arbitrio* di Durando da S. Porciano", in *Salesianum*, 24 (1962), 450-523: 496-497: "[…] quando aliquis intelligit se intellexisse rosam […] ille actus est sola recordatio actus praeteriti, qui prius fuit et modo non est, alioquin non esset praeteritum, nec eius esset recordatio […]. [E]x praesentia rosae mihi qualitercumque repraesentatae consurgo non solum in cognitionem eius sed etiam in cognitionem cognitionis prius de ea habitae, et sic unum est ratio cognoscendi alterum […]. [R]ecordatio non potest esse nisi alicuius praecogniti; sed de omni actu quo aliquid cognoscimus saltem perfecte etiamsi pro tunc non discernamus nos cognoscere potest esse recordatio; ergo omnis talis actus fuit non solum cognitio sed etiam cognitus". For discussion, see P. Hartman, "Durand of St.-Pourçain on Reflex Acts and State Consciousness", in *Vivarium*, 59/ 3 (2021), 215-240.

[38] On Durand's views about visible *species*, see footnote 1 above.

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Future Contingents in Arguments of Political Censorship: Modal Propositions in Contrast. Solorzano Pereira Stands up to the Censors of *De Indiarum Iure* (1638)

Gonzalo Tinajeros Arce

I. Introduction

Juan de Solorzano Pereira (1575–1655) was an original thinker of the Ibero-American Baroque period who lived for two decades in the Spanish West Indies (Peru and Bolivia). He had to do a real juggling between the Spanish economic interests and the Indigenous cultural values in a scenario of deep conflicting relations. It occurred precisely amidst the emergence of a political proposal to establish a mix republic for Spaniards and Indigenous people into a new world.

Solorzano's intellectual position was very strong and difficult: on the one hand he represented the crown interests in the West Indies territories and acted as a good and remarkable royal officer (conciliator of Charcas and counsellor of the Indies) with strong attitudes of discipline, moral duties, and efficient activities. On the other hand, he manifested his political and philosophical perception that consisted in the fact that the Spanish government should abolish the extreme abuses against lives and minds of the native indigenous people. Various kinds of forced labor should be prohibited in the Indian Law, because it had been enslaving the indigenous people's lives. Nevertheless, Solorzano wrote sometimes about the necessity to keep the public utility labors in favor to the Spanish empire, but only if a just price was to be guaranteed to the indigenous workers. Solorzano's tried to find a midpoint in relation to Spanish and indigenous interests according to the use of subtle probabilistic reasonings.

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The political censorship of the second volume of *De Indiarum Iure* lamentably reveals structural problems facing the freedom speech in the public health (*salutis publicae*) of the Spanish colonial empire. The eighteenth and nineteen centuries will be revolutionary times, especially to the freedom demands on behalf of the indigenous people. They did not want to stay indefinitely neither as temporary servants nor as second-class vassals in the West Indies.

II. First intellectual effort to reduce the slavery temporality towards freedom[1] through the probabilism of contrary opinion

Juan de Solorzano Pereira presented himself as an innovative writer, critical towards the traditional and conservative visions about slavery during his ages, which, supported by the *Ius Gentium*, took as a universal principle the necessity of unconditional slavery of war prisoners. Analyzing through his experiences in the West Indies, Solorzano observed as highly rigid the perpetual enslavement of the indigenous people, once this could only lead to extreme poverty, suffering, political intrigues, unmeasurable violence, and eternal heartbreak to the Christian consciences. He thinks that Christian humanism shall be the safe pathway to the gradual freedom of the indigenous people, and that it can be easily taught to those human beings with docility, tranquility, patience and good mood with the indigenous people – so that they may voluntarily convert to Christianism in order to civilize themselves in a state of peace and delimit them a short temporality in the undesired state of slavery, so that they enter the soonest the paths of freedom as equal and free vassals in a new mixed republic in the West Indies.

The imprisonment of the natives and the violent imposition of slavery, grounded on the customs of *Ius Gentium*, were outcomes of these armed conflicts. The decision to keep the indigenous people as captives was taken during the colonial period and subjected to a scale of

[1] For detailed information about the modalities of serfdom and modalities of freedom in the Solorzano's thought, see the article G. Tinajeros, "Indian Law: Modalities of Freedom and Modalities of Serfdom to the Indigenous People in Charcas-Bolivia. Inquire into Juan de Solorzano Pereira's Philosophical and Political arguments", in *Slavery, Freedom, and Beyond: Interdisciplinary Debates on Brazilian and African Societies in Historical and Contemporary perspective,* ed. R. H. Pich, S. Conermann (Dependency and Slavery Studies), Berlin-New York forthcoming.

temporality or transience in future contingencies for the sanction and especially the releasing of natives due to the jurisdictional influence of the conciliator from Charcas:

> Pero en ese caso no son esclavos con esclavitud perpetua, sino con servidumbre temporal que ha de durar tanto cuanto, en compensación del precio recibido, les parezca suficiente a los jueces que conocen estos casos.[2]

Solorzano Pereira centers his main juridical-philosophical argument on the temporal condition of slavery via probabilism. He believed in a mere probable opinion, yet solid, which departs from his innovative notion of contrary opinion. After rigorous hearings and analyses of other contemporary opinions about the nature of slavery, Solorzano decided to assume a risky standpoint in *De Indiarum Iure*. Whereas most opinions of doctors from his time were based on the value of the positive law and the most probable opinion, Solorzano based his on the natural law. Solorzano chose one of the less probable opinions ever; in this matter, the positive law related closely to the usual principles of *Ius Gentium*. Solorzano Pereira claimed that an open and acute evaluation of the condition of slavery was necessary to reach a *secura conscientia* status based on a solid decision about such an important and controversial topic. For this reason, he contrasted the relevance of expressing a contrary opinion[3] against the opinion considered the most probable one. The contrary opinion should be carefully elaborated and closer to the profound truth for its basis on the imprescriptible principles of the natural freedom of indigenous people, regarded as men or human beings. According to these principles, after a just war, indigenous people would be allowed to gradually return to a fairer state of freedom and peace in scenarios of future contingencies, necessarily following the natural law for that. It would be up to indigenous people to decide about purely voluntary conversion to Christianity, the accomplishment of agreement and peace activities, the civilization of uncivil enslaved people, and becoming vassals in some future contingency of a mixed republic led by the Spanish Crown.

Natives were publicly and privately forced into compulsory labor in the 17th century. This situation shows how indigenous vassals' autonomy was very restricted as they had to obey the orders from Spanish

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[2] J. Solórzano, *De Indiarum Iure* (Colección Corpus Hispanorum de Pace), Madrid 1994, III, 463.

[3] Solórzano, *De Indiarum Iure*, III, 412-463.

workers and, not so often, from the only free natives, *Caciques* and *Curacas* that worked as inspectors (*Corregidores)* in some provinces of the West Indies.

Local governors defended public utility, arguing that it met the royal orders and enormously benefited the public treasury of the monarchy. Furthermore, they claimed that indigenous people had voluntarily traded the workforce for money to survive. Apart from forced labor, Spaniards and criollos forced indigenous people to take private jobs called *Yanaconazgo* in Spaniards' houses and farms. This fact withdrew indigenous people's moral dignity and health since these occupations turned them into servants of abusive householders.

Solorzano wrote a direct reflection against kinds of labor *Yanaconazgo and Mita,* showing the abuses the Spaniards and American criollos practiced against indigenous people. That is why the chancellors of the Spanish Crown Jose de Napoles and Francisco de Alarcon censored[4] in 1638 a part of his book. He was compelled to prohibit the most controversial pieces of the text in which he wrote about public and private forced labor in colonial territories, especially in Charcas, Potosí, and Lima.

The second volume of *De Indiarum Iure* was censored and first appeared in the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. In 1638, the Crown's counsellors and regents Jose de Napoles and Francisco de Alarcon issued two opinions arguing for the book's condemnation, unless Solorzano removed some parts and changed others. These parts contained opinions accusing Spanish residents in the West Indies of ill-treatment of the indigenous people in the new world and holding them as miserable servants.

In a Royal command dated from September 28th, 1637, Philip IV, king of Spain, ordered the secretary of the West Indies Council, Royal advisers Fernando Ruiz de Contreras and Francisco Contreras to ban the publishing of all the pages of Juan de Solorzano Pereira's *Indiarum Iure*. Warning that the work could become future ammunition in the hands of the enemies of the Spanish Crown in the conquest of America, the king also ordered its immediate revision by two censors. Curiously

[4] See Luciano's Pereña study preliminary to the Spanish edition of *De Indiarum Iure*, especially *Solórzano, Defensor oficial de la Corona,* in Solórzano, *De Indiarum Iure,* III, 19-61.

enough, on July 16th, 1636, the publication of the very same manuscript had been authorized by the Real Council of the West Indies after Lorenzo Ramirez de Prado's favourable review. Prado was a specialist in the West Indies.

According to a royal order dated from November 2nd, 1637, the king of Spain signed a mandate to Lic. Jose de Napoles asking for an analysis of the 17th chapter of Solorzano's manuscript. The king determined that Napoles should inform the author of any critical part that was not in accordance with the censor guidelines and ruled that the critical free speech regarding the actions of Spaniards against the native indigenous people in the new world had to be restricted. After Napoles censoring of the manuscript, the Majesty Philip IV asked the royal adviser Francisco de Alarcon, on March 12th, 1638, to elaborate an ultimate review censoring political and juridical contents of the second volume of *De Indiarum Iure*. The royal command and censors claimed urgent remedies, moderation, and soft language, omitting any kind of abuses, violence, or crimes, suffered by indigenous people in labor activities in the mines, farmers, and works of public utilities.

Both reviews were sent to the State Council on June 29th, 1638, and after a long deliberation, the assembly resolved that Solorzano's manuscript should not be printed and, let alone, published because the inconvenient effects of the critical book were very possible in undetermined future contingencies. Count Castrillo commanded on June 2nd, 1638, that only the pages with specific corrections by the censors should be sent to Solorzano for rewriting the final version of the second volume before its publishing.

One encounters three types of future in all these documents dating from the 17th century.

1. Immediate future in royal imperative to a concise analysis of the manuscript.

Modal Propositions in the first type of future:

a) King Philip IV of Spain decides on September 28th, 1637, that the unrestricted circulation of the yet to be published book by Juan Solorzano, which had been authorized by the counselor of the Indies Lorenzo Ramirez, must be revisited as soon as possible, but that the manuscript in the immediate future could certainly become ideological ammunition for the political enemies of the Spanish nation.

(b) On November 2nd, 1637, King Philip IV orders his advisor, Jose de Napoles, that he will have to analyze very carefully the 17 chapters of Solorzano's manuscript and he should inform the author of any critical part that was not in accordance with the censor guidelines so that the critical parts against the Spanish would be removed or eliminated as soon as possible with the respective corrections to the book that is yet to be published.

(c) Francisco de Alarcon should elaborate a detailed opinion on any excesses in the critical tone of Juan de Solorzano's manuscript and then would have to send it for final review to King Philip IV in accordance with the royal command of March 12th, 1638.

2. Open future for outlining possible critical parts that could imply in a contingent future low moral dignity to the Spanish crown. It was used when Solorzano would denounce extreme abuses, slavery, and deaths of indigenous people with the intent to alter those abusive situations in another contingent future.

Modal Propositions in contrast in the second type of open future:

(a) Solorzano expresses in the censored manuscript that the private works (i.e. Yanaconazgo, Obrajes) in the houses of the Spaniards and Creoles, carried out by the indigenous people, neither gave dignity nor helped with the necessary economic subsistence for the indigenous people. On the contrary, those works and in those hard conditions should be finished and in an open, contingent and probable future, those extreme abuses should be suspended and could no longer obliterate the life of the indigenous people.

(b) The *contrary opinion or negative opinion*, says Solorzano, should be carefully elaborated, well founded by reason and justice, even if it must oppose the customs and the enforced law in each epoch. The natives discovered in the new world are by nature human beings, and they will be able to recover their freedom, once the just war imposed by the Spaniards is over. The indigenous natives should through natural law be able to generate with their conduct gradual, legitimate and legal scenarios of peace in future contingencies in which they could become vassals on behalf of a mixed republic of Spanish and indigenous people led by the Spanish Crown.

(c) The Spanish government should abolish the extreme abuses against lives and minds of the native indigenous people. Nevertheless,

Solorzano wrote sometimes about the necessity to keep the public utility labors, but only in the case a just price was to be guaranteed to the indigenous workers.

(d) Solorzano believes that Christian humanism shall epitomize the safe pathway to the gradual freedom of the indigenous people, and that it can be easily taught to those human beings with docility, tranquility, patience and good mood – so that they might voluntarily convert to Christianism.

3. Open contingent future from the perspective of the censors in relation to problems and inconveniences caused by the publication of manuscripts with critical content that would end up producing adverse effects in possible but not yet confirmed worlds.[5]

Modal Propositions in contrast in the third type of open future:

(a) The reviews disclosed by both censors are based on hypothetical situations of possible worlds in uncertain but quite realizable futures. The publication would cause intellectual enemies of the Kingdom of Spain to use the harsh arguments of Charcas and Lima conciliator to undermine the legitimacy of the Right of Retention of the West Indies, and for this reason the manuscript should be censored until it could be corrected and softened.

(b) In 1638, the Crown's counsellors and regents Jose de Napoles and Francisco de Alarcon shared two severe opinions arguing for the book's condemnation, unless Solorzano removed some parts and changed necessarily others. These parts contained opinions accusing the Spanish residents in the West Indies of ill-treatment of the indigenous people in the new world and keeping them as miserable servants.

III. Review of Jose de Napoles

On March 12th, 1638, Jose de Napoles, regent and counsellor of the Crown, wrote a review objecting the publication of Solorzano's manu-

[5] Regarding the logical possibilities of determining possible individuals in possible worlds, see, D. K. Lewis, *Sobre la pluralidad de mundos*, Mexico 2015, 103-244. Also see the external logical analysis of possible worlds, A. Barceló, *Sobre el análisis,* Mexico 2019, 127-213.

script. Napoles argued for the necessity of censoring some chapters, especially those that included insinuations of brutal repression, unjustified violence against Natives working in mines, coca plantations, houses and public utility services. Napoles based his objections on possible future contingencies that could affect the honor of the Spanish nation. Such hypotheses pointing to a probable negative future operated as a strategy to derail the possibility that Solorzano's experiences could reinforce any critical narrative about the Indies. Napoles would not support any work that contradicted the mainstream discourse and the principles of the raison d'état. Censors accused Solorzano of being imprudent. Thus, it was imperative to censor his work in order to remedy the situation, erasing parts of the manuscript that could harm the dignity of Spain.

In this probable world, Napoles disagreed with Solorzano's rational argument that criticism of abuses by the Spanish could produce some consciousness about the situation and, thus in the future, improve the treatment of indigenous vassals. For Napoles, the unrestricted publication of the complete manuscript could boost uprisings against the province's governments, downgrade Spaniards' human values and work as ammunition for the enemies of the Empire.

Finally, Napoles emphasized that those who occupied inferior positions in the political administrative structure had no right to question royal orders or put them in doubt, let alone accusations of irrational injustice in the positive laws and costumes. Napoles' strong argument was centered on legality, for everybody had to respect the positive law of the state and could not contradict its mandates. The obligation to obey royal laws and to execute magistrate dispositions should prevail.

Censors' recommendations to Solorzano: the writer should soften his words, especially when giving his opinions. He should be careful with expressions chosen to write about brutal labor abuses against Natives. The author should omit dubious sentences in relation to facts and withdraw all quotes from enemies of the Spanish Empire. Napoles clearly expressed that Solorzano's contrary opinions to the Spanish Crown, specifically those related to the brutal governmental treatment of Indigenous people, should be left out. The same should be done with Solorzano's opinions on Yanaconazgo: the regulation of indigenous services held in private/domestic spaces. Solorzano argued that these services were a heavy mode of serfdom that condemned indigenous

people to work to death. His opinions on different kinds of forced labor in plantations, cities, and silver mines should also be censored.

Parts that should be left out from the text: (cap 2., n.17, p. 10.); (cap.3, n. 40, p.16); (cap.13, n.14, p102); (cap. 16, n. 81, p.140); (cap 17, n.17, p.150).[6]

Alarcon, the second censor, is less severe with Solorzano's manuscript. He demands a few corrections and some omissions. More importantly, he asks for remediation and softening of expressions that point to abuses by the Spaniards against Indigenous people working in mines.

The author should suppress the toughness of his words when mentioning *servitii immanitate*. In chapter 15, Solorzano chooses negative or contrary opinion, which condemns the costumes of Laboral services in the colonies, defining them as unjust.

IV. Solorzano's position and strategy to limit the censures: A few philosophical reflections about the political censorship in the document 17 (Archive general of Simancas, E. 2660, March 12 of 1638)

Indigenous people performed modalities of voluntary and involuntary serfdom intrinsic to different kinds of forced labor in plantations, fields, cities, and silver mines. The workforce was usually traded for small amounts of money and food, never enough to live with dignity. For Solorzano, these illustrate the material, moral, and socially miserable conditions to which indigenous people were subjected. Yet, paradoxically, there were laws[7] and even money bills[8] of Carlos V, Felipe II,

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[6] See Luciano's Pereña boards of censure in the study preliminary to the Spanish edition of *De Indiarum Iure*, especially *Solórzano, Defensor oficial de la Corona*. In: Solórzano, *De Indiarum Iure,* III, 41-44.

[7] New laws from 1542 explicitly prohibited enslavement. See the Indies' compiled laws of the Spanish Crown, vol. 2, 1681. Available at http://www.memoriachilena.gob.cl/archivos2/pdfs/MC0018802.pdf

[8] In *De Indiarum Iure*, Solorzano Pereira highlights the royal bills from May 27th, 1582, December 5th, 1608, and December 31st, 1608, in which Spaniards reprimand the vice-king Marques de Montesclaros and the Lima's Archbishop for the ill-treatment and carelessness of indigenous people. Solorzano argued that the new vassals of the Crown should be treated with moderation and subtlety to be guided to Christianity through praying and Catholic instruction, Solórzano, *De Indiarum Iure,* III, 386-389.

Felipe III, and Felipe IV, in which indigenous people were defined as free men, vassals of the Spanish Kingdom who should be taken care of and treated with subtlety to lead them to Christianity smartly:

> Y porque habiéndose tan cumplidamente lo que ha parecido convenir al bien espiritual y temporal y conversión de los dichos indios, teniendo tanto cuidado de procurar que fuesen doctrinados e instruidos en las cosas de nuestra santa fe católica mantenidos en justicia y amparados en su libertad como súbditos y vasallos nuestros, entendíamos que nuestros ministros cumplían lo que les habíamos ordenado. Y de no haberlo hecho ni cumplido y llegando a estado de tanta miseria y trabajos, nos ha dolido, como es razón. Y fuera justo que vos y vuestros antecesores, como buenos y cuidadosos pastores, hubiérades mirado por vuestras ovejas, solicitando el cumplimiento de lo que en su favor está proveído o dándonos aviso de los excesos que hubiese, para que mandásemos a remediar, y se cumpliese nuestra voluntad, que es de que estos pobres gocen de descanso y quietud y conozcan a nuestro Señor, para que mediante su divina gracia y la predicación del santo evangelio puedan salvarse, etc.[9]

Solorzano used religious metalanguage to express his saddest and desolate feelings and thoughts about the abuses he observed *in loco*. He witnessed the pain of working indigenous people in the colonial cities of Potosí, Charcas, Lima, and Cuzco. Solorzano used his metaphysical sagacity[10] to stop the second volume of *Indiarum Iure* from being censored, using Jewish representations and symbols. First, he portrayed the sufferings of Jewish enslaved people in Ancient Egypt. Then he compared the Semite misery to the painful abuses daily inflicted on indigenous people in their lands in America (*Abya Ayala*). Through this strategy, Solorzano found it possible to denounce the strong asymmetries in domination and serfdom in the social relations of the mixed republic of Spanish masters and indigenous servants. Thus, through the Jewish religious modality, divine and metaphysical words comfort the souls in colonial America and allow them to recognize the asymmetries of their own lives. There were two republican entities in the

[9] King Felipe's bill, given in Lisbon on May 27th, 1582, sent to the of Lima for publishing. Solórzano, *De Indiarum Iure,* III, 386-387. Italics from the original.

[10] In relation of the metaphysical sagacity and creativity in the speculative thinking of Solorzano, see the article: G. Tinajeros "Opiniones probables sobre el origen de los indios occidentales. Un estudio sobre la inteligencia imaginativa en el *De Indiarum Iure,* de J. Solórzano Pereira", in *Revista Classica Boliviana*, 12 (2023), 341-362. Available at https://ojs.umsa.bo/ojs/index.php/classica/article/view/161/545

Indies divided by privileges and the kind of domination. Yet, they were constituted as one mixed society (the mixed republic) that, in some contingent future, would adapt to the natural law and have to merge to produce uniform vassals with equal rights in the same empire:

> 11-14. Hoy en día se encuentran los indios en condiciones más duras y peor tratados por gente injusta y cruel que en otro tiempo los judíos, cuando estuvieron cautivos en Egipto […] 15-16. Pero los indios casi en el mismo plazo de tiempo han sido arrasados y exterminados en su mayor parte, de suerte que pueden decir a Dios lo que se lee en el libro de Daniel (3[37]) refiriéndose a los judíos: *Señor hemos disminuido más que todas las naciones, hoy estamos humillados en toda la tierra* […] 41. Dios aparte de nosotros esta desgracia y, compadecido de la causa y de la suerte tanto de españoles como de indios, ayude y dé unidad a ambas repúblicas y las conserve en su santa fé y religión, libres de pecados, injusticias y escándalos […].[11]

As one can see, the living conditions of the indigenous people were tough. They were subjected to different modalities of serfdom, including mistreatment, injustice, and cruelties. These painful conditions allow the comparison with Jewish people, especially regarding forced labor in quarries and silver and mercury mines in Potosí (Bolivia) and Huancavelica (Peru). Furthermore, other labors were also considered compulsory, and public utility and indigenous people should perform them in houses, farms, churches, markets, roads, and the construction of public and private buildings.

A principal modality of serfdom in the colonial Potosí was in the silver mines. There, mines were extracted from the mountain *Cerro rico*, a mythical place, *Achachila*, for indigenous people where minerals are attached to stones, where the mine's interior is difficult to access. In the depths of *Cerro Rico*, scarce light gives a simple outline of the bodies that circulate inside. The infra world of the mountain is dark and cold, with a shortage of air, and filled with clouds and demons taking care of the *Supay,* the god of minerals according to miners from different periods. Working conditions in mines were asphyxiating for indigenous servants, who died soon in a few years from tuberculosis.

Solorzano Pereira often visited the mines in Huancavelica and Potosí while working as a visiting judge from 1616 to 1619.[12] Like other

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[11] Solórzano, *De Indiarum Iure*, III, 475-485.

[12] A. Muñoz, *Introducción, textos y traducción del Thesaurus Indicus (1668) de*

intellectuals of his time, he used strong words to refer to the modality of indigenous mining serfdom, categorized in shifts: the daily and warmer *Punchaorunas*, and the nocturne and cold *Tutarunas*. These shifts were taken from Tuesday to Sunday[13] in colonial mining centers. Besides Solorzano Pereira, Diego de Avendaño, Jose da Acosta, and Juan de Matienzo also reported horrifying situations and the misery experienced by indigenous workmen, condemned by Spaniards' greed for silver. This condition led to a modality of extreme serfdom of the body. Here are two moving accounts of this world:

> […] clima y sitio desabrido y estéril, con olores y exhalaciones intolerables, aire pestilente y escaso, a la sola luz de velas cuyos humos ocasionaban grandes trabajos; viendo hasta fantasmas de los mismos demonios subterráneos; teniendo que trepar por escalas dificultosas y mal seguras, peligrosas aun sin carga, con una muerte segura si se llegara a caer de ellas; y como el polvo ocasionaba la enfermedad que llamaban "el mal de la mina", a consecuencia del cual pocos sobrevivían más de cuatro años.[14]

and:

> Trabajan allá dentro, donde es perpetua oscuridad, sin saber poco ni mucho cuando es día. Ni cuando es noche. Y como son lugares que nunca los visita el sol, no sólo hay perpetuas tinieblas, mas también mucho frio, y un aire muy grueso y ajeno a la naturaleza humana; y así sucede marearse los que allá entran de nuevo, como a mí me acaeció, vascas y congoja de estómago.[15]

Erudite metaphors and detailed descriptions of the infra world of the mines show souls haunting the veins of extraction to trade minerals for money, leaves of coca, and food to support miners and their families. Indigenous people had been working in mines since the Incans and the Tiwanakotas. However, during Spanish domination, the mode of production *mitayo* was based on compulsory serfdom, including physical and moral sacrifices. On the other hand, Spaniards claimed that it was voluntary and paid labor despite being forced. It is well known that indigenous people never earned enough to live with dignity.

Diego de Avendaño (Colección del Pensamiento Medieval y Renacentista 16), Pamplona 2001, 130.

[13] Muñoz, *Introducción, textos y traducción*, 131.

[14] J. Solórzano, *Política Indiana - Libro II,* 21, quoted by Muñoz, *Introducción, textos y traducción*, 130.

[15] J. Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las indias*, Madrid 1979, 99.

One of the most remarkable working modalities during the colonial period in Potosí was the labor in the silver mines. Solorzano was deeply moved as revealed in his stories in *Política Indiana* and in *De Indiarum Iure* about the suffocating scenarios in the underground metal galleries. Places that not only make one lose the senses of day and night, but also the body figures and shadows of workers – many of them indistinguishable and lost amongst the demons and entities of Pluto that very likely inhabit the underworld of the earth.

Solorzano's creative capacity and his sensitivity to write and describe the details of life in the West Indies led him to outline in his second volume's manuscript distinguishable over-human or subhuman situations that the indigenous vassals were suffering in Potosí, Charcas, Cusco and Lima. The Charcas conciliator considered as unacceptable the maintenance of the terrible condition of non-voluntary serfdom in which the indigenous people were dragged, as well as the lack of effective response from the institutions in America to curb the abuses in spite of the existence of royal decrees that promoted the freedom of native Americans.

Solorzano made use of his sharp and heavy pen, as he was recognized as a notable conciliator and advisor to the West Indies. He believed that with his argumentative reasoning he could make some changes happen in a contingent and unpredictable future, and maybe establish the dream of a mixed republic of Europeans and indigenous people in the new world. The audacity of his reasoning cost him dearly, since both he and his son[16] had to join forces to defend the ideas of *De Indiarum Iure* of temporary prohibitions and censorship, portrayed in a legal process against the conciliator of Charcas in Madrid.

Finally, Solorzano, in the last chapter of the last book printed *De Indiarum Iure*, opens the possibility that labor modalities of *Mita* and *Yanaconazgos* should be, in certain moments, considered a public utility, depending on the situational economic contingencies of the empire. These two modalities would limit physical and moral abuses against

[16] For biographical information about Solórzano, see C. Sánchez, *El pensamiento jurídico político de Juan de Solórzano Pereira,* Navarra 2010, 53-70. Furthermore, A. Orías, "Presencia de la escolástica en la historia de las ideas políticas hispanoamericanas. Charcas como centro de reflexión moral sobre el Estado (siglos XVI y XVII)", in *Revista Classica Boliviana*, 12 (2023), 273. Available at https://ojs.umsa.bo/ojs/index.php/classica/article/view/258/542

indigenous people, and they would enhance the necessity of just payment to the indigenous workers facing precarious conditions similar to enslaving.

V. Conclusion

The present research intended to show a new approach to understanding contingent futures by addressing the freedom of thought and publication of probable opinions of a neo-scholastic philosopher, who lived and wrote for two decades in Hispanic America. In the text, arguments in favor and against the censorship of the second volume of the *De Indiarum Iure* were placed in dispute, presented and contradicted by the advisors and censors of the Spanish crown and by our author, the prominent conciliator of Charcas. The latter, being in the place, saw, experienced and decided to write about the continuous abuses and excesses to which the indigenous people were subject to in different working activities on daily basis. Vassals of various kinds, those involuntary servants who exchanged their labor power for wages of poverty and whose conditions were denounced by Solorzano Pereira, Acosta, Avendaño, Friar Domingo of Saint Tomas (Bishop of Charcas), among many others. Furthermore, Solorzano's reflections opened up the possibility for us to think about possible worlds in times where censorship seeks to disguise its power, demanding to soften, moderate, withdraw and extinguish supposed excesses of freedom of thought in favor of the wisdom of the reason of state. Nevertheless, free thinking can frequently be outlined through metaphors, philosophical and literary allegories in contingent futures and can open new possible worlds of broad, critical and free reflection – which are the necessary condiments to investigate science itself with study of different states of affairs.

Universidade de Brasília

Prophecy: A Debate across Cultures:
Jewish, Islamic, and Latin

Déchiffrer l'Invisible : interprétation (*ta'bīr*) et exégèse (*ta'wīl*) dans la philosophie islamique

Meryem Sebti

En terre d'islam, les philosophes considèrent que dans sa nature, le phénomène de l'inspiration prophétique est comparable à celui qu'expérimente le rêveur qui fait un songe prémonitoire. La connaissance d'événements à venir acquise pendant le sommeil est le fruit d'une inspiration divine tout comme l'est l'inspiration prophétique. Cependant, les prophètes se distinguent du reste des hommes en ce qu'ils peuvent aussi recevoir cette inspiration à l'état de veille. La révélation est donc une forme d'inspiration divine qui advient à un être humain singulier à l'état de veille et parfois à l'état de sommeil. Le premier des philosophes à rendre raison de cette forme d'inspiration spécifique est al-Kindī (801-873). Avicenne (980-1037) donnera cependant à cette doctrine une forme plus élaborée notamment grâce à sa doctrine complexe des sens internes et par le fait d'inscrire sa prophétologie dans une métaphysique et une cosmologie.

La tradition islamique établit un lien direct entre la révélation et le rêve. Un hadith énonce en effet que le rêve constitue la quarante-sixième part de la prophétie.[1] Un autre hadith fait dire au prophète Muḥammad que : La révélation divine vient aux prophètes soit durant l'état de veille soit pendant l'état de sommeil.[2] D'un autre côté, la version arabe du *De Somno* – laquelle trahit considérablement la pensée d'Aristote en admettant la possibilité de rêves véridiques permettant de connaître l'avenir alors que le Stagirite les refuse catégoriquement – fournit aux philosophes une explication rationnelle du phénomène des

[1] Voir Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-Ta'bīr*, ḥadīṯ, 2, 3 et 9, Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, trad. angl. M. Khan, Chicago 1979, 91-142.

[2] Ḥadith consulté en ligne : https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3 le 11 mai 2025. T. Fahd, « Nubuwwa », in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2e éd., éd. P. Bearman et al., Leiden, 1960–2005.

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visions véridiques. L'explication de ce type de rêves dépend d'un cadre métaphysique qui permet d'associer une hiérarchie de formes à sa hiérarchie cosmique.[3] Le rêve est une représentation, sous une forme différente, de ce qui est dans le monde intelligible et qui se produit ensuite dans le monde sensible. Et si l'intellect séparé transmet quelque chose à l'âme humaine, cela est reçu sous une forme spirituelle. Le texte arabe du *De somno* s'efforce d'expliquer pourquoi, même dans le cas d'un rêve véridique, les choses peuvent ne pas sembler exactement comme elles le sont lorsque l'événement prophétisé se produit dans le monde physique : le rêve et l'événement sont deux représentations différentes de la même chose, à savoir de la forme intellectuelle sous-jacente.

Le fait de considérer que les rêves et le phénomène de l'inspiration divine – même dans sa forme la plus élevée qu'est la révélation – suivent le même processus a conduit Avicenne à élaborer une herméneutique originale qui connaîtra une postérité importante. Le présent article, qui pose les bases d'une étude plus exhaustive, explore les modalités propres de cette herméneutique et de sa réception.

Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Isḥāq al-Kindī, dans son ouvrage, *Sur la quiddité du sommeil et des rêves*[4] admet que l'imagination reste active durant le sommeil et il accepte l'existence de rêves prémonitoires ou inspirés, contrairement à l'Aristote historique selon lequel les rêves sont des résidus sensoriels ou des réactions à des stimuli externes. Al-Kindī avance l'idée que durant le sommeil l'âme humaine s'émancipe des sens pour accéder à des connaissances cachées, voire prophétiques. Il considère aussi que les âmes pures et réceptives sont plus susceptibles de recevoir de tels rêves véridiques.

Dans un autre traité, *Sur la quantité des livres d'Aristote*,[5] al-Kindī distingue la manière dont les prophètes, à travers la révélation divine, et les philosophes, par l'étude et l'effort, accèdent à la connaissance, tout en affirmant que la nature de cette connaissance est identique pour

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[3] Voir l'explication de R. Hansberger, « *Kitāb Al-Ḥiss wa-l-maḥsūs*. Aristotle's *Parva naturalia* in Arabic Guise », in *Les Parva Naturalia d'Aristote*, éd. P. M. Morel, C. Grellard, Paris 2010, 143-162.

[4] al-Kindī, *Risāla fī māhiyyat al-nawm wa-l-ruʾyā*, dans *Rasāʾil al-Kindī al-falsafiyya*, éd. M. ʿA. Abū Rīda, Cairo 1950, I, 283-311.

[5] al-Kindī, *Risāla fī kamiyya kutub Arisṭū*, dans *Rasāʾil al-Kindī al-falsafiyya*, éd. Abū Rīda, I, 362-374.

tous. Il valorise l'intellect comme la plus noble des facultés humaines, renforçant l'idée que le prophète, en tant que détenteur de l'intellect le plus parfait, occupe une position unique. Ces enseignements, qui reflètent une influence néoplatonicienne marquée, ont eu un impact significatif sur les théories de la connaissance dans la philosophie islamique, notamment sur celle d'Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (870-950) et celle d'Avicenne après lui.

Al-Fārābī va insister sur la fonction de l'imagination dans le processus qui permet les rêves prémonitoires et l'inspiration prophétique. Dans son traité *Des idées des habitants de la cité vertueuse*,[6] il attribue à l'imagination trois fonctions : la conservation des impressions sensibles, leur composition et leur imitation : activités pouvant opérer indépendamment des sens et de la mémoire.

L'imagination tient une place essentielle dans la révélation prophétique, en ce qu'elle peut reproduire et traduire sous forme d'images des concepts métaphysiques abstraits. Cette capacité permet aux prophètes, pourvus d'une imagination remarquable et d'un intellect exceptionnel, de transformer ces vérités universelles en symboles porteurs de sens pour une communauté particulière, enracinés dans sa propre culture. Al-Fārābī[7] distingue les types de prophètes en fonction de la manière dont ils reçoivent et interprètent ces images, qu'il s'agisse de visions survenant pendant l'éveil ou le sommeil, ou de l'emploi de métaphores et d'énigmes.

Son approche rationnelle de la prophétie repose sur une réinterprétation des écrits d'Aristote et exerce une influence profonde sur Avi-

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[6] Al- Fārābī, *Kitāb ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila,* éd. A.N. Nader, Beirut 1991 (6ème édition), 108. Marwan Rashed a montré que le passage d'al-Fārābī sur la prophétie constitue en réalité un commentaire du *De insomniis* arabe. Al-Fārābī commente lui-même un commentaire de ce texte par al-Kindī : M. Rashed « Un « nouveau » fragment arabe de la version kindienne du *De insomniis* d'Aristote et sa réception dans une recension des *Principes des opinions des habitants de la cité vertueuse* d'al-Fārābī », in *Bulletin d'études orientales* [En ligne], 68 (2023) (consulté le 04 mai 2025. URL : http://journals.openedition.org/beo/9259), p. 329-357.

[7] Sur la doctrine des rêves d'al- Fārābī, voir M. Rashed, « Abū al-Faraǧ Ibn al-Ṭayyib, *Traité des rêves et de la distinction entre rêve valide et rêve invalide selon la doctrine des philosophes* », in *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 34 (2023), 115-155, notamment 129 et ss. Je remercie le relecteur anonyme qui m'a signalé cette référence.

cenne. Ce dernier, bien qu'inspiré par Al-Fārābī, établit une distinction plus marquée entre imagination et intellect. Il assigne à l'une et à l'autre une fonction spécifique dans la cognition prophétique. Avicenne va jusqu'à qualifier l'intellect du prophète de « saint », signifiant par là qu'il atteint le sommet de la connaissance humaine.

La cosmologie avicennienne permet de conférer à l'imagination humaine une fonction distincte de celle qu'elle avait chez al-Fārābī. En effet pour celui-ci l'imagination reconfigure des formes intelligibles qui émane sur elle de l'intellect. Pour Avicenne, les âmes humaines, par le biais de leur imagination, sont en relation avec les âmes des sphères célestes, qui elles aussi sont dotées d'une faculté imaginative. Par cette interaction, l'imagination humaine capte des images directement issues du monde céleste et les reconfigure. L'imagination des êtres humains procède par imitation (*muḥāka*) : elle imite ce qu'elle a vu du monde sensible lors du songe et à son réveil le rêveur doit effectuer un travail d'interprétation pour retrouver la vision originelle à partir de laquelle l'imagination a procédé à son imitation.

Avicenne élabore sur la base de cette doctrine une herméneutique originale. Les songes tout comme les données de la révélation doivent être soumis à une interprétation parce que les uns comme les autres sont le résultat d'un travail de reconfiguration mimétique de l'imagination humaine :

> Puisqu'il advient accidentellement à l'état de veille que l'âme appréhende quelque chose, ou qu'elle atteigne pendant le sommeil le monde angélique [*al-malakūt*] – d'une manière que nous décrirons plus tard – alors si cette puissance [i.e. l'imagination], par son repos ou par sa soumission, permet à l'âme de bien fixer (une forme), et si elle ne la domine pas en abrégeant pour elle le temps de fixation – alors la forme [qui apparaît] peut être parfaitement remémorée telle quelle [a été vue]. Par conséquent, il ne sera pas requis de souvenir [*tadhakkur*] si c'est l'état de veille, ni d'interprétation [*ta'bīr*] si c'est durant le sommeil, ni encore d'exégèse [*ta'wīl*] s'il s'agit d'une inspiration divine [*waḥī*]. L'interprétation et l'exégèse remplissent ici la même fonction que le souvenir.[8]

L'interprétation du songe (*ta'bīr*) tout comme l'exégèse (*ta'wīl*) des données de la révélation repose sur un procédé que l'on pourrait appeler – en utilisant un terme emprunté à la psychologie moderne – d'am-

[8] Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā', al-Nafs*, IV, 2, ed. Ğ. Š . Anawati, S. Zayed, Cairo 1975, 156.

plification.[9] Le rêveur va éclairer un symbole par un autre jusqu'à parvenir à l'image qui est à l'origine de son songe :

> L'interprétation [du rêve] est la suivante. Vous allez dire : « qu'ai-je vu du monde invisible pour que, de ce que j'ai vu, l'imagination soit passée à autre chose ? Par exemple : qu'est-ce que j'ai vu pour que l'imagination en ait fait un arbre ? » Par conséquent, l'interprétation [*ta'bīr*] est le plus souvent faite par conjecture et est établie par expérience. Pour chaque nature, une autre habitude ; selon les saisons et les conditions, l'imagination fournit une imitation [*muḥākaṭ*].[10]

Chaque rêveur devra interpréter le songe en fonction de son expérience propre, de sa culture… Dans un autre de ces ouvrages, le *Kitāb al-Mabda' wa-l-Ma'ād* Avicenne explicite ce processus :

> Néanmoins, quand elle en trouve l'occasion, l'âme voit les divers états de ce monde-ci qui se trouvent dans ce monde-là. L'imagination les appréhende parfois tels qu'ils sont et sans transfert [*wa lam yantaqilu 'anhā*]. Cependant, dans la plupart des cas, elle les appréhende et imite tout ce qu'elle en perçoit par des choses qui lui sont semblables et dissemblables. Parfois donc, l'âme n'est pas distraite par cette puissance, mais elle retient tel quel ce qu'elle a vu, parfois elle est distraite par elle et retient ce qu'elle a imaginé, non point ce qu'elle a vu. *L'interprète du songe estime et conjecture ensuite de quelle chose cette image peut être une imitation*. C'est que l'homme pense parfois à quelque chose, que l'imagination l'en distrait et qu'il passe alors à quelque chose d'autre ; il continue ainsi à passer d'une chose à une autre, jusqu'à oublier sa pensée première. Quand il veut s'en souvenir, il se met à refaire le chemin inverse. Il se demande à partir de quelle chose lui est apparu ce qu'il imagine à ce moment. Il ne cesse de revenir en arrière, jusqu'à atteindre le point de départ.[11]

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[9] Pour Jung, l'amplification est une technique utilisée pour approfondir la signification des symboles et des images apparaissant dans les rêves, les visions ou les œuvres d'art. Ce processus consiste à élargir le contexte d'un symbole en y intégrant des informations culturelles, historiques ou mythologiques, permettant ainsi à l'individu de mieux comprendre sa portée profonde et de se rapprocher de son origine psychique ou de son noyau significatif. Cette méthode commence par l'exploration d'un symbole particulier, en recherchant des associations supplémentaires et des significations plus vastes, souvent en le comparant à d'autres symboles issus de diverses cultures ou époques, afin d'enrichir la compréhension de son importance tant personnelle qu'universelle.

[10] Ibn Sīnā, *Ṭabīʿīyāt. Dānesh-nāma-ye ʿalāʾī*, ed. M. Meshkāt, Téhéran 1353/1974, 134.

[11] Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Mabda' wa-l-Ma'ād,* ed. 'A.A. Nūrānī, Teheran 1984, 118-119, trad. Y. Michot, non publiée, disponible en ligne : http://muslimphilosophy.com/sina/works/AN195.pdf (consultée le 11 mai 2025), 78. On trouve déjà chez al-Kindī la doctrine selon laquelle, la vision onirique est médiatisée par un symbole, ainsi, rêver

L'interprétation du rêve consiste à retrouver, à travers un processus d'association symbolique, la vision originelle à l'origine du rêve. C'est précisément ce qu'explique Avicenne dans son *Épître sur la division des sciences rationnelles* où il définit la science de l'interprétation (*'ilm al-ta'bīr*) de la manière suivante :

> Parmi ces sciences se trouve la science de l'interprétation [*'ilm al-ta'bīr*]. Son but est d'inférer à travers les représentations oniriques [*al-ḥulmiyya*] ce que l'âme a contemplé du monde invisible [*'ālam al-ġayb*] et que l'imagination a représenté au moyen d'un symbole qui diffère de [la vision originale].[12]

L'interprétation, le *ta'bīr* conduit le rêveur à retrouver l'image qui est à la source de la vision ; ce qu'il a vu du monde céleste. Cependant, tous les rêves ne méritent pas d'être soumis à ce processus interprétatif singulier. Il faut distinguer d'abord le rêve confus – celui qui est dû aux préoccupations diurnes ou encore à l'état physiologique du dormeur – du rêve véridique (*al-ru'ya al-ṣādiqa*), qui a lieu lorsque l'âme du rêveur a eu une vision du monde céleste. Cette vision a ensuite été reconfigurée par son imagination :

> *Ce qui a besoin d'être interprété* [*yu'abbar*] *et d'être l'objet d'une exégèse* [*yata'awwal*] n'appartient à aucune de ces catégories [que nous venons de mentionner]. Il doit être connu comme quelque chose provenant de l'extérieur et ayant une certaine signification. Pour cette raison, le rêve du poète dans la plupart des cas n'est pas valable, ni celui du menteur ou du vilain ou encore de l'ivrogne, du malade, de l'affligé et de celui sur lequel une mauvaise mixtion ou pensée a pris le dessus.[13]

On notera dans ce passage l'équivalence posée par Avicenne entre interprétation (*ta'bīr*) et exégèse (*ta'wīl*) et sur laquelle je reviendrai. Seuls méritent d'être soumis au « *ta'bīr » les rêves qui permettent au dormeur d'accéder au monde céleste.*

> Le parallèle entre le *ta'bīr* et le *ta'wīl* repose sur l'idée que le processus qui explique l'apparition de l'inspiration divine [*wahī*] chez le prophète est similaire à celui qui justifie l'origine du rêve véridique. Grâce à son imagination, le prophète peut obtenir la connaissance des événements particuliers passés et celle des événements particuliers à

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que l'on vole peut symboliser un voyage, AL-KINDĪ, *Fī māhiyyat al-nawm wa-l-ru'yā, dans Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyya*, éd. ABŪ RĪDA, I, 304.

[12] AL-KINDĪ, *Risāla fī aqsām al-'ulūm al-'aqliyya*, éd. ABŪ RĪDA, I, 103-118; 110.16-17.

[13] IBN SĪNĀ, *Al- Shifā', al-Nafs*, IV, 2, ed. ANAWATI, ZAYED, 160.1-4.

venir en ayant accès au monde de l'invisible,[14] appelé dans le Coran ʿālam *al-ghayb* et qui est identifié par de nombreux auteurs comme étant le *malakūt*.[15] Par ce savoir, le prophète peut être le guide de ses

[14] Fait remarquable, dans la version arabe du *De Somno*, nous trouvons une doctrine similaire. Tout d'abord, l'idée que la vision dans le rêve de l'homme a une réalité sous-jacente au-dessus de lui et qu'elle n'est jamais complètement identique à cette réalité. Voici ce que note Rotraud Hansberger dans son analyse de *Fī bāb al-nawm* : « The *maʿnā* here presents the dreamer's objective, true significance and meaning which sometimes the dreamer himself is not even able to obtain and which dream interpreters may know without having access to the corresponding spiritual (and corporeal) forms. The objectivity is guaranteed by the metaphysical framework within which this theory of veridical dreams is set », R. Hansberger, *The Transmission of Aristotle's Parva Naturalia in Arabic*. Unpublished DPhil diss., University of Oxford, 2007, 87-88. Et aussi la doctrine d'une hiérarchie céleste, intellectuelle, psychique et corporelle qui rend raison de la possibilité de certains rêves comme les visions véridiques: « with regard to the theory of veridical dreams, it is a critical aspect of the metaphysical framework that it allows a hierarchy of forms to be associated with its cosmic hierarchy, a hierarchy of forms that can then be linked to the psychological component of the theory: the three-faculty theory. The hierarchy consists of corporeal, spiritual and intellectual forms: everything that exists in corporeal forms in the world exists in intellectual form in the (universal) intellect. And if the intellect conveys something to the human soul, it will be received as a spiritual form. This is made explicit in the following passage, where the text endeavors to explain why even in a veridical dream things may not look exactly as they do when the prophesied event takes place in the physical world: dream and event are two different representations of the one and the same thing, the underlying intellectual form » : R. Hansberger, *The Transmission of Aristotle's* Parva Naturalia *in Arabic*, Unpublished DPhil diss., University of Oxford 2007, p. 147. S'agissant de l'auteur de cette adaptation arabe, Hansberger émet l'hypothèse qu'il y aurait eu plusieurs étapes d'adaptation du texte grec, la première ayant eu lieu au sein du cercle d'al-Kindī (*Ibid.,* p. 212). M. Rashed, « Un « nouveau » fragment arabe », 354, pour sa part, juge cette hypothèse fragile et souligne qu'il n'existe aucune preuve permettant d'exclure que cette adaptation ait été entièrement réalisée par al-Kindī lui-même et son cercle : « il s'agirait d'un projet collaboratif associant al-Kindī, pour ce qui était de l'orientation doctrinale, et au moins un helléniste, pour ce qui était de la traduction ». Il parvient à cette conclusion grâce à l'examen d'un manuscrit jusque-là inconnu, un fragment des *Parva Naturalia* conservé dans un manuscrit de Téhéran (Majlis Shūrā, Ms 10055).

[15] Sur le terme de *malakūt* et son usage dans la philosophie, voir M. Sebti, « Le *malakūt* : esquisse de l'histoire d'un complexe doctrinal », in *De la lettre à l'esprit / From the Letter to the Spirit. Travaux en hommage à Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi / Studies in Honour of Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi*, éd. O. Mir-Kasimov, M. Terrier (Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Sciences Religieuses 209), Turnhout 2025, 1079-1103.

> congénères et leur transmettre la connaissance des réalités célestes, étendant ainsi les effets de la providence divine jusqu'aux confins du monde sensible, au cœur même de la cité des hommes.[16]

Examinons à présent la modalité de réception de l'inspiration divine par l'imagination du prophète telle que la conçoit Avicenne dans le *Traité de l'âme* du *Shifā'*.

> Parfois, ils [les prophètes] voient *la chose telle qu'elle est* [*bi-ḥālihi*], et d'autres fois, ils se représentent *une image* [*miṯālahu*] *de la chose* pour la même cause que celle pour laquelle le dormeur se représente l'image de ce qu'il voit, comme nous l'expliquerons par la suite. Quelquefois, ils se représentent une apparition [*shabaḥ*] ; ils se représentent que ce qu'ils perçoivent est la transcription en paroles de cette apparition, par le biais de paroles entendues qui sont apprises, puis récitées. Il s'agit là de la prophétie propre à l'imagination.[17]

Les songes et l'inspiration prophétique ne diffèrent pas quant à leur nature ; c'est le degré de fidélité à la vision originelle, d'origine céleste, qui détermine leur différence. Les inspirations des prophètes sont plus souvent fidèles à la vision qui en est l'origine que ne le sont les rêves, fussent-ils véridiques.

Avicenne confère à la doctrine islamique (et grecque) du lien entre le rêve et l'inspiration divine un cadre métaphysique et cosmologique qui permet d'en rendre raison. La conception avicennienne de l'herméneutique des rêves véridiques et de l'inspiration prophétique diffère considérablement de la conception de l'interprétation des rêves véridiques qui est exposé dans la version arabe des *Parva Narturalia.*[18] Ro-

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[16] Sur cette question, M. Sebti, *Avicenne. Prophétie et gouvernement du monde*, Paris 2021.

[17] Ibn Sīnā, *Al- Shifā', al-Nafs*, IV, 2, ed. Anawati, Zayed, 154.11-20. Pour Avicenne la source de la révélation est double. Le prophète reçoit la révélation par son imagination – comme l'explique ce texte – mais aussi par son intellect. Sur ce point, Sebti, *Avicenne*, 125-136.

[18] Ainsi que l'explique Rotraud Hansberger, la structure générale du *Kitāb al- wa-l-maḥsūs* diffère considérablement de celle des *Parva Naturalia* grecs en ce sens qu'il ne représente que six de ses traités, divisés en trois *maqālat*. De plus, les trois traités qui traitent des rêves *De somno et vigilia* (*Sur le sommeil et l'éveil*), *De insomniis* (*Sur les rêves*), et *De divinatione per somnum* (*Sur la divination à travers le sommeil*) sont condensés dans la version arabe en un seul chapitre qui fait partie de la deuxième *maqāla* ; le *Bāb al-nawm wal-yaqaẓa*. Alors que la majeure partie de cette *maqāla* (folios 21r-40r) correspond à *De somno et vigilia*, les pages restantes (40r-47v) sont consacrées au sujet des rêves, particulièrement des rêves véridiques, sans qu'il y ait une sé-

traud Hansberger explique que, contrairement au texte grec d'Aristote qui rejette la possibilité des rêves véridiques, dans le *De divinatione* arabe, l'apparition des rêves véridiques est expliquée dans un cadre métaphysique qui combine les idées de plusieurs écoles philosophiques grecques, ainsi que des concepts associés à la religion scripturaire monothéiste. Dieu, en tant que cause suprême et créateur, se trouve au sommet de la hiérarchie métaphysique, suivi par l'Intellect (universel), qui sert de médiateur entre Dieu et les âmes des êtres vivants. Tout ce qui existe est créé par Dieu, d'abord dans l'Intellect, puis sous sa forme corporelle dans le monde. Ainsi, l'Intellect contient déjà tout ce qui existe ou existera dans le monde physique. Dans un rêve véridique, l'Intellect dévoile une partie de ce qui a été créé en lui aux âmes des hommes disposés à recevoir une telle vision.[19]

Rotraud Hansberger explique clairement le processus qui justifie le rêve véridique. Lorsqu'une personne fait un tel rêve, elle perçoit une forme spirituelle qui, bien que proche de la forme corporelle, n'est pas identique à celle-ci. Cela permet également de comprendre comment les intelligibles purs provenant de l'Intellect, habituellement inaccessibles à l'être humain, peuvent devenir perceptible : l'Intellect exprime la forme intellectuelle (qui n'est pas perceptible) en «mots spirituels » (*kalimāt ruḥāniyya*). Ces derniers sont d'une manière ou d'une autre transmis au sens commun du rêveur. Le sens commun les transmet ensuite à la faculté formative, qui représente ces « mots spirituels » sous forme de « formes spirituelles » ; ces dernières sont ce que le rêveur « voit » dans son rêve. Les autres sens internes, que le texte qualifie de « facultés spirituelles », ont aussi une fonction dans ce processus :

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paration nette entre une partie sur les rêves et une partie sur la divination dans les rêves. Rotraud Hansberger explique que ces pages sont une réécriture à la fois *De insomniis* et *De divinatione per somnum*. Elle note aussi que de grandes parties du *Kitāb al-Ḥiss wa'l-maḥsūs* ne constitue pas des traductions des *Parva Naturalia* grecs. Ainsi, elle note que « Plus de la moitié du texte est constituée de passages plus ou moins longs qui n'ont pas d'équivalent dans le texte grec ». Le *Bāb al-nawm wal-yaqaẓa* ne contient que quelques traces des originaux grecs *De insomniis et De divinatione per somnum*, dans R. Hansberger, « How Aristotle Came to Believe in God-given Dreams: The Arabic Version of *De divinatione per somnum* », in *Dreaming across boundaries : the interpretation of dreams in Islamic lands*, ed. L. Marlow, Washington 2008, 50-77.

[19] Pour la difficulté d'expliquer comment l'intellect universel peut transmettre des images qui concernent des événements particuliers, voir Hansberger, « How Aristotle Came to Believe in God-given Dreams », 55-58.

la mémoire stocke ces formes ; et lorsque le rêveur se réveille, il peut peut-être découvrir la signification (*ma'nā*) du songe grâce à sa faculté de pensée. S'il ne parvient pas à découvrir cette signification par lui-même, il doit se tourner vers un interprète pour obtenir de l'aide. L'interprète est soumis au même acte de « révélation » que le rêveur, bien qu'il n'ait pas eu le rêve lui-même. L'Intellect transmet les mêmes mots spirituels à l'interprète qu'au rêveur ; cependant, dans le cas de l'interprète, ces mots ne sont pas convertis en « formes spirituelles », c'est-à-dire en visions oniriques. L'interprète est capable de saisir directement leur signification. Cette aptitude à recevoir ce type d' « inspiration » de l'Intellect découle soit de son haut degré spirituel, soit de sa capacité à déchiffrer les « signes manifestés dans le monde ». Sa mission consiste à traduire ces mots spirituels en « mots corporels », en un langage compréhensible pour le rêveur. Pour être réceptif à de telles révélations, l'interprète doit être pur de corps et d'âme. Ainsi, l'interprétation correspondra au rêve du rêveur, car l'interprète et le rêveur ont reçu leur inspiration de la même source et reflètent tous deux la même « forme intellectuelle ». Néanmoins le texte n'explique pas vraiment pourquoi l'interprète est capable d'exercer cette fonction interprétative, alors que le rêveur ne l'est pas, même si tous deux ont vraisemblablement, reçu les mêmes « mots spirituels ».[20] Le texte explique seulement que l'interprète est un homme « spirituel », probablement davantage que le rêveur lui-même, ce qui justifie sa capacité à comprendre directement la signification des messages reçus de l'Intellect.

On peut relever deux différences importantes entre la doctrine avicennienne du rêve inspiré et celle des *Parva Naturalia*. Tout d'abord, la fonction des âmes célestes, dont l'existence n'est pas attestée dans la version arabe des *Parva Naturalia* mais qui est présente chez Avicenne. Ensuite, le travail de décryptage symbolique que le rêveur doit entreprendre pour retrouver la vision à l'origine de son rêve. Selon Avicenne, ce processus d'amplification, permettant de remonter de symbole en symbole, doit être accompli par le rêveur lui-même. Ce dernier est le seul à connaître la trame symbolique sous-jacente à l'imitation effectuée par son imagination des visions du monde invisible. Dans les *Parva Naturalia*, en revanche, c'est un interprète, doté d'un haut niveau spirituel, qui est chargé de l'interprétation du rêve. Bien qu'il soit clair dans l'adaptation du texte grec que l'interprétation du rêve

[20] Cela est noté par Rotraud Hansberger dans son commentaire du texte.

ne relève pas de la responsabilité du rêveur lui-même, la question de l'autorité exégétique devient plus complexe dans le cas de l'inspiration prophétique.[21] Le prophète est-il le seul à pouvoir effectuer cette exégèse, ou d'autres peuvent-ils également s'y atteler ? Si tel est le cas, quelles qualités ces interprètes doivent-ils posséder ?

Si l'on examine les penseurs, philosophes et théologiens qui se penchent sur la question des rêves véridiques et de l'inspiration divine après Avicenne, il apparaît que sa doctrine exerce une influence notable sur de nombreux auteurs importants, tels qu'al-Ghazālī (1058-1111), Suhrawardī (m. 1191), ou encore Shahrazūrī (m. après 1288). Avant d'exposer leur conception, il convient préalablement de s'intéresser à l'histoire des deux termes techniques, de *ta'wīl* et de *ta'bīr*.

Le terme « *taʾwīl* » est dérivé de la racine « *ā-l* » qui signifie en arabe « le retour à l'origine ». Ce terme et ses variantes apparaissent quatre cent vingt fois dans le Coran. Toutefois, le mot « *taʾwīl* » lui-même apparaît dix-sept fois, et ce dans sept sourates différentes. Dans le Texte révélé, le terme ne désigne pas seulement l'interprétation du Coran, mais également celle des rêves et de certains événements.[22] L'un des premiers exégètes à utiliser le terme de *ta'wīl* pour qualifier l'exégèse du Coran est al-Māturīdī (853-954) dans son *Ta'wīlāt al-Qur'ān*. Avant lui, *ta'wīl* et *tafsīr* étaient utilisés de manière interchangeable.[23] Peu à peu, une distinction a été introduite entre les deux termes, et le terme *tafsīr* en est venu à être principalement utilisé pour l'exposition des thèmes majeurs du Coran. Pour al-Māturīdī, le terme *tafsīr* signifie attribuer un sens précis à un verset, et seules les personnes qualifiées pour cette tâche sont les compagnons du Prophète. En tant que contemporains du Prophète, ils ont été témoins des événements et des circonstances dans lesquels le Coran a été révélé, ce qui leur confère une autorité unique pour interpréter son message. Ils avaient également

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[21] Pour la question de l'autorité exégétique dans la pensée d'Avicenne, voir Sebti, *Avicenne*, 149-156.

[22] Au sens de l'interprétation du discours, « *taʾwīl* » est mentionné 5 fois dans le Coran : III,7 ; VII, 52-53 et X, 38- 39. Au sens de l'interprétation d'un événement, il y est évoqué 4 fois : IV, 59 ; XVII, 35 et XVIII, 78 et 82. Quant au sens de l'interprétation des rêves, le mot « *taʾwīl* » se trouve à huit reprises dans le Coran : XII, 21, 36, 37, 44-45 et 100-101.

[23] A. M. A. Galli, « Some Aspect of al-Māturīdī's Commentary of the Qur'ān », in *Islamic Studies*, 21/1 (1982), 3-21. Voir aussi EI 2 pour *taʾwīl* et *ta'bīr*.

connaissance des commentaires et explications du Prophète sur les versets et étaient bien informés des circonstances de la révélation (*asbāb an-nuzūl*). Cependant, ces compagnons ne se sont pas permis de donner leurs propres avis sur les versets du Coran, car faire un *tafsīr* n'autorise pas à donner des opinions diverses. Leur rôle était de transmettre fidèlement ce qu'ils avaient vu et reçu directement du Prophète. À la lumière de cette conception du *tafsīr*, al-Māturīdī a dit que le dicton du Prophète, « Celui qui interprète le Coran selon son opinion personnelle prendra sa place dans le feu », devient clair.

En revanche, le *ta'wīl* consiste à dégager toutes les significations possibles sous-entendues dans un verset, allant au-delà de l'interprétation littérale pour explorer ses dimensions cachées et symboliques. Par conséquent, son application n'est pas restreinte aux compagnons du Prophète, comme c'est le cas pour le *tafsīr*. Elle est accessible à tous les érudits qualifiés, qui sont capables d'explorer et de révéler les significations plus profondes et implicites des versets. Il n'y a pas de restrictions concernant le *ta'wīl*, car, contrairement au *tafsīr*, le *ta'wīl* n'affirme pas que Dieu a voulu une signification précise pour un verset donné. Il s'agit plutôt d'explorer les multiples interprétations possibles, sans prétendre à une seule vérité définitive. Il s'agit d'une tentative de révéler ou de découvrir les significations potentielles qui pourraient être sous-entendues dans un verset. Le plus grand mérite de celui qui pratique le *ta'wīl* réside dans sa capacité à souligner que la signification d'un verset peut être multiple, ouvrant ainsi la voie à différentes interprétations possibles sans imposer une lecture unique.

Pour illustrer son point de vue sur ce sujet, al-Māturīdī note à propos du verset « Louange à Dieu » (*al-ḥamdu lil-lāhi*) que certains ont interprété ce verset comme signifiant que Dieu s'est loué lui-même, tandis que d'autres ont compris qu'il s'agit d'un ordre divin nous enjoignant de le louer. Par conséquent, la différence entre le *tafsīr* et le *ta'wīl* est la suivante : alors que le premier consiste à adopter une signification fondée sur l'autorité, le second introduit plusieurs interprétations possibles du verset, ouvrant ainsi la voie à une exploration plus large de ses significations. Cependant, al-Māturīdī a également précisé que, dans la mesure du possible, le Coran doit être interprété par le Coran lui-même, en utilisant ses propres versets pour éclairer et clarifier les passages ambigus. Pour lui, le Coran ne se contredit pas, et pour parvenir à une compréhension correcte de sa signification, il est essentiel de

prendre en compte l'ensemble des versets relatifs à un point de discussion. Tous les passages concernés doivent être étudiés de manière cohérente afin d'éviter toute interprétation isolée ou erronée. Ainsi, dans de nombreux cas, on peut observer qu'un sujet est mentionné de manière succincte dans un verset et est ensuite éclairci ou détaillé dans d'autres versets, permettant une compréhension plus complète du thème abordé. Ce n'est qu'en consultant l'ensemble des versets liés à un sujet donné que l'on peut parvenir à saisir la signification exacte d'un verset, en intégrant toutes les nuances et éclaircissements apportés par le Texte révélé dans son ensemble. Al-Māturīdī définit donc le *ta'wīl* comme la possibilité d'une interprétation ouverte et non exclusive du Coran, reflétant l'idée sous-jacente que sa signification ne peut jamais être pleinement épuisée. Cela laisse place à une multiplicité d'interprétations qui enrichissent la compréhension du message divin.

La doctrine selon laquelle le *ta'wīl* du Texte révélé et l'interprétation des rêves, le *ta'bīr*, suivent un processus similaire, dans la mesure où ces deux démarches herméneutiques cherchent à dévoiler, derrière des symboles, une réalité appartenant à un ordre supérieur de l'être, a été théorisée et fixée par Avicenne. Il utilise, comme on a pu le voir, les deux termes techniques comme étant synonymes. L'idée d'une signification ouverte, telle qu'elle est associée au terme *ta'wīl*, est précisément celle qu'Avicenne attribue au terme *ta'bīr*, puisque l'interprétation vise à découvrir ce que l'imagination de chaque individu a façonné à partir d'une vision unique.

Cette thèse aura une postérité importante. On la retrouve chez le théologien ash'arite al-Ghazālī, qui établit également un lien entre l'interprétation des rêves (*ta'bīr*) et l'exégèse du Coran (*ta'wīl*). Dans les *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*, il affirme :

> Sache, que tout ce que tu es susceptible de comprendre t'est présenté par le Coran de telle manière que si, dans ton sommeil, tu étudies la Tablette préservée avec ton âme, elle te serait racontée à travers un symbole approprié nécessitant une interprétation. Sache que l'interprétation du Coran [*ta'wīl*] occupe la place de l'interprétation des rêves [*ta'bīr*]. C'est pourquoi nous avons dit qu'un exégète du Coran [*al-mufassir*] se préoccupe de son écorce.[24]

[24] AL-GHAZĀLĪ, *Jawāhir al-Qur'ān*, ed. MUḤYĪ AL-DĪN ṢABRĪ AL-KURDĪ, (Maṭba'at Kurdistān al-'Ilmiyya), le Caire 1329 [1911], 38, trad. angl. M.A. QUASEM, *The Jewels of the Qur'an: al-Ghazālī's Theory*, Selangor 1977, 52. Ici le *tafsīr* est considéré

Ce parallèle est clairement exposé par al-Ghazālī dans *Al-Ḥikma fī makhlūqāt Allah ʻazza wa jalla*, où, en interprétant le Verset de la Lumière (24:35), il explique que les prophètes, grâce à leur imagination, possèdent la capacité de décrypter les visions du monde invisible.

> Quant à la niche [*mishkāt*], elle est comparable à l'âme. Le verre est comme la faculté de l'imagination ; le cristal est comme l'intellect. Quant à l'arbre il est comme l'Intellect agent. Étant donné que le cristal, qui est la lumière, pour révéler ses fruits et sa sagesse aux corps, nécessite un instrument corporel qui ressemble aux corps comme la lumière, cette lumière a besoin d'une huile qui convienne au feu par sa chaleur à la mèche par son humidité. Nous avons souvent avancé l'idée que l'intellect ne peut agir directement, et son intermédiaire est l'âme, qui est donc la niche. Puis, pour que l'âme puisse connaître les sensations, comme nous l'avons établi, la sagesse divine lui a donné des facultés. L'une de ces facultés est la faculté imaginative dans laquelle est imprimés ce qui provient des sens. Elle est comme le verre. Le verre a été spécifiquement choisi parce qu'il reflète les images visibles comme un miroir lisse dans lequel on peut voir, et parce que le verre est le plus pur des joyaux en ce qu'il permet de voir à travers. Les prophètes, paix sur eux, connaissent l'invisible grâce à cette faculté. Ils interprètent l'image et la comprennent. [Cette faculté] possède une science particulière, qui est la science de l'interprétation des visions.[25]

Dans ce texte, al-Ghazālī considère que l'imagination remplit une double fonction : elle est à la fois la faculté psychique par laquelle les visions se manifestent et celle qui permet d'interpréter ces mêmes visions. Il soutient aussi que ce sont les prophètes eux-mêmes qui interprètent les visions qu'ils reçoivent du monde invisible. La question de l'autorité exégétique dans la pensée d'al-Ghazālī est importante et mériterait une étude approfondie à part entière.

Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī,[26] maître de l'*ishrāq*, conçoit lui aussi l'imagination comme la faculté ouvrant l'accès au monde du *malakūt*. Il décrit le processus mimétique à l'œuvre dans le fonctionnement de

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comme une explication qui s'arrête au sens littéral du Texte révélé, de son « écorce ». Ce terme appartient au vocabulaire soufi, l'écorce s'oppose au « noyau », qui elle englobe, la *ḥaqīqa* qui est « la réalité » de la chose considérée, cf. É. Geoffroy, *Le soufisme : Histoire, fondements et pratiques de l'islam spirituel*, Paris 2019, 115.

[25] al-Ghazālī, *Al-Ḥikma fī makhlūqāt Allah ʻazza wa jalla*, in *Majmūʻ Rasāʼil al-Imām al-Ghazālī*, ed. I.A. Mohammad, Le Caire, s.d., 77.

[26] al-Suhrawardī, *Al-Alwāḥ al-ʻimādiyya*, in *Majmūʻāt Muṣanifāt Shaykh al-Ishrāq*, ed. H. Corbin, Téhéran 1996, IV, 87.

l'imagination, tant lors de l'apparition des songes que dans les cas d'inspirations divines avérées, de la manière suivante :

> Lorsque son autorité s'affaiblit, l'âme est marquée par quelque chose de l'invisible et de là provient le rêve véridique ; cependant, l'imagination continue de passer d'une image à une autre qui lui correspond, lui ressemble ou lui est opposée. Si l'âme voit un ennemi, l'imagination le représente par un serpent ou un loup ; si elle voit un roi, elle le représente par une mer ou une montagne. Lorsque l'âme oublie ce qu'elle a vu et que ne reste dans la mémoire que ce vers quoi incline l'imagination, il est alors nécessaire d'effectuer une interprétation [*ta'bīr*] [du rêve]. L'interprète est alors doté d'une intuition [*yuḥdas al-mu'abbir ḥadsan*] qui lui indique ce qu'imitent ces imitations. Quant aux prophètes [*al-anbiyā'*] et aux sages [*al-fuḍalā'*] divins [*al-muta'ālihūn*], il leur est aisé de contempler les étants invisibles [*al-mutaġayyibāt*] parce que leurs âmes sont puissantes, soit selon leur nature originelle [*qawiyya fī-l-fiṭra*] soit en raison de leur mode de vie et de leurs connaissances. Alors ils reçoivent les impressions [*yantaqishūn*] des étants invisibles parce que leurs âmes sont comme des miroirs polis dans lesquelles se manifestent [*tatajallī*] des impressions [*nuqūsh*] du *malakūt*. Quelque chose comme une apparition [*shabaḥ*] [de cette impression] se dirige vers le sens commun qui la traite de la meilleure manière possible alors qu'il est selon la forme la plus noble. Parfois [ces hommes] voient l'invisible grâce au sens commun, comme si c'était une vision directe [*mushāhada*], et parfois ils entendent un son dont l'origine est indéterminée [*sawṭ hātif*] ou encore lisent ce qui est écrit. Tout cela ce sont des impressions [*nuqūsh*] qui s'impriment dans l'imagination et de là dans le sens commun. Parce que la plupart du temps, le sens commun ne reçoit pas l'impression de l'imagination étant occupé par les sens externes et que l'imagination est occupée par l'intellect et, lorsque la pression se relâche, – comme durant le sommeil ou autre – l'imagination prend le dessus sur le sens commun et se manifeste [*lawwaḥa*] alors en lui : sous forme d'images imprécises [*ṣūran jazāfiyya*] comme c'est le cas dans les rêves confus [*aḍġāth al-aḥlām*] ;[27] ou d'images qui sont des imitations [*muḥākat*] de réalités saintes [*umūr qudsiyya*] ; il s'agit alors de rêves véridiques ou d'inspiration avérée.[28]

La doctrine avicennienne constitue la base des développements de Suhrawardī sur les rêves véridiques et l'inspiration prophétique. Il est cependant intéressant de noter qu'en ce qui concerne l'interprétation, Suhrawardī introduit l'idée d'une « inspiration » permettant d'inter-

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[27] C'est une expression coranique (12 : 44).

[28] AL-SUHRAWARDĪ, *Al-Alwāḥ al-'imādiyya,* in *Majmū'āt Muṣanifāt Shaykh al-Ishrāq*, IV, 87.

préter les rêves – une doctrine absente chez Avicenne – qui rappelle la thèse exposée dans la version arabe des *Parva Naturalia*. Cette question mériterait aussi d'être examinée plus longuement. Pour le maître de l'*ishrāq* comme pour Avicenne, le travail d'interprétation des rêves véridiques consiste à remonter de symbole en symbole par association jusqu'à la vision qui est à l'origine de la vision onirique. Dans l'exemple donné dans ce texte, l'image du loup apparue en rêve représente le danger et le rêveur va remonter d'image en image jusqu'à celle de l'ennemi qui lui a été donnée à voir dans le monde invisible.

Le commentateur de Suhrawardī, Shams al-Dīn Shahrazurī, reprend dans son commentaire de *Ḥikmat al-Ishrāq* la doctrine selon laquelle certains rêves méritent d'être interprétés alors que d'autres non. Bien que l'influence d'Avicenne soit patente, Shahrazurī se distingue de son illustre prédécesseur sur de nombreux points :

> Lorsque la lumière gouvernante [*al-nūr al-mudabbar*] se connecte avec les lumières gouvernantes célestes quand l'imagination est en action, alors se grave en elle les motifs [*yantaqishu bi-naqshi*] de l'invisible adapté à son état, à celui de ses proches et de ses connaissances de la même manière que se grave dans le miroir une forme à partir d'une autre forme qui lui fait face lorsqu'il n'y a pas de voile entre elles. Lorsque l'impression [de cette forme] est complète, elle peut disparaître rapidement ou demeurer pendant longtemps. Elle est alors imitée par la lumière gouvernante par des formes partielles que *l'imagination manifeste,* puis cette forme se manifeste dans le sens commun et est alors perçue. Si ce qui est perçu correspond étroitement à la notion universelle (qui a été vue dans le *ghayb*), la seule différence résidant dans le fait d'être universelle ou singulière, alors l'interprétation du rêve est superflue. Mais si cette correspondance est faible, il est alors possible de s'y arrêter en ce que l'imagination peut se représenter la notion universelle puis l'imiter au moyen d'une forme similaire, opposée ou semblable. *Alors, une interprétation est nécessitée,* qui consiste en une analyse inverse de sorte qu'elle retourne des formes imaginées partielles aux notions universelles psychiques. S'il n'y a pas de correspondance entre les formes universelles et les formes imaginées que l'imagination a représentée, alors le rêve fait partie des rêves confus [*adhghat al-aḥlam*] sans signification ou interprétation, résultant de la frivolité de l'imagination. Si les images gravées dans la lumière gouvernante sont partielles, alors elles sont conservées dans leur état sans être imitée par l'imagination, mais elles sont conservées dans la mémoire telles qu'elles ont été clairement contemplées dans les tablettes du monde [*al-alwāḥ al-'alāmiyya*]. *Il s'agit là de « rêves véridiques » qui ne nécessitent ni interprétation [ta'bīr] ni explication. S'il s'agit d'une inspiration*

> *divine [waḥī] alors elle ne nécessite pas d'exégèse [ta'wīl]*. Si en revanche l'imagination est puissante et manipule ces formes et les imites à l'aide de formes qui lui correspondent et lui ressemblent ou au contraire sont opposées à elle *alors l'interprétation [ta'bīr] et l'explication [tafsīr] sont nécessaires.* Cela parce que l'imagination, quel que soit son point de départ, imite la forme par un symbole [*mithāl*] et par un autre symbole et ce, jusqu'au réveil. S'il est possible de revenir au point de départ par analyse [*taḥlīl*] alors il s'agit d'un rêve véridique qui nécessite d'être interprété sinon, il s'agit d'un rêve confus. Si la notion perçue est faible alors elle est imaginée ainsi que nous l'avons mentionné ; et si la forme perçue n'est pas stable, alors elle n'a pas de signification. Les personnes qui ont les rêves les plus véridiques [*'aṣṣaḥ*] sont celles dont l'humeur est la plus équilibrée. Une humeur sèche mémorise bien mais n'est pas très réceptive. Une humeur humide est le contraire. Une humeur chaude a des mouvements désordonnés. Une humeur froide est apathique. Et les plus fiables sont les hommes véridiques [*al-ṣudūq*].[29]

L'explication de Shahrazurī est plus détaillée que celle d'Avicenne. Le processus à l'œuvre est mieux explicité. L'imagination est conçue dans ce passage comme une puissance psychique qui procède par mimesis. Elle imite ce qui est donné à l'âme de voir du monde invisible. L'imitation, la mimésis, est un processus heuristique : l'imitation ne ressemblant jamais vraiment à son modèle. C'est dans cet interstice entre la réalité – métaphysique ici – et sa copie que s'ouvre la possibilité d'une herméneutique. Si la copie est trop éloignée du modèle, on ne peut revenir au modèle et le processus de travail sur les symboles est inutile ; si la copie colle parfaitement au modèle, l'herméneutique n'est pas nécessaire. Elle n'a sa place que lorsque la copie permet, par un processus d'analyse, de remonter au modèle et de le dévoiler. Shahrazurī explique que l'inspiration divine (*al-waḥī*), lorsqu'elle est attestée, ne nécessite pas d'exégèse, de *ta'wīl*. De même le rêve véridique peut parfois se passer d'interprétation, de *ta'bīr*. Pour le commentateur, l'interprétation et l'exégèse ne sont nécessaires que lorsque les données du monde invisible ont été voilées, mais pas complètement, par les imitations de l'imagination.

Quant à Mollā Ṣadrā (m. 1640/1) il établit aussi, dans ses *Mafātiḥ al-ghayb*, un parallèle entre l'interprétation des rêves et l'exégèse des éléments révélés par une inspiration divine :

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[29] Shams al-Dīn Shahrazurī, *Sharḥ Ḥikmāt al-Ishrāq*, éd. H. Ziai Torbati, in *Mu'asasāt muṭāli'āt wa tahqiqāt farhanguī*, Téhéran 1372/1994, 565. 20-566, 1-21.

> Disons tout ce que votre compréhension ne peut saisir, car le Coran vous le présente de telle manière que, si vous étiez endormi, cela apparaîtrait à votre âme comme reflétant la Tablette préservée. Représenter cela avec un exemple approprié nécessite une interprétation. Ainsi, il a été dit que toute exégèse suit le cours de l'interprétation.[30]

Dans ce court passage, il apparaît que, pour Mollā Ṣadrā comme pour ses prédécesseurs, l'acte herméneutique est indissociable d'une métaphysique qui rend raison de la capacité des êtres humains à entrer en contact, par la médiation de leur imagination, avec des entités célestes et à recevoir des révélations sous forme d'images particulières de ces entités. C'est dans le cadre de cette métaphysique que les termes « *ta'wīl* » et de « *ta'bīr* » ont pris dans la tradition philosophique islamique le sens particulier que l'on a vu. Selon ces philosophes, l'inspiration divine et le rêve véridique ont la même origine et se forgent selon un processus similaire, qui repose sur la fonction mimétique de l'imagination. Interpréter un rêve ou faire l'exégèse d'une donnée révélée par inspiration divine, c'est remonter d'image en image jusqu'à retrouver la source de l'image forgée par l'imagination. Cette source ultime provient du monde invisible. Il est intéressant de noter que dans la traduction qu'il a faite du livre des songes d'Artémidore d'Ephèse, Ḥunayn Ibn Isḥāq écrit : « Il est des rêves manifestes [*ẓahira*] et d'autres sujets à interprétation [*ta'wīl*]. Les premiers sont semblables à la réalité qu'ils signalent ».[31] Cette distinction introduit déjà l'idée selon laquelle les rêves nécessitant une interprétation sont ceux qui diffèrent de la réalité qui en est à l'origine.

C'est cependant Avicenne qui, en développant une doctrine novatrice de l'imagination, a explicité le processus par lequel le rêve et l'inspiration divine se révèlent semblables. Ainsi, le *ta'wīl* – généralement réservé à l'exégèse des Textes révélés – et le *ta'bīr*, relatif à l'interprétation des rêves, en viennent à signifier la même chose : un travail patient d'amplification symbolique permettant de retrouver la signification d'un rêve ou d'une inspiration divine dont la source se trouve dans le monde des réalités célestes, habituellement invisibles et cachées aux êtres humains mais auxquels les rêves et les inspirations ouvrent l'accès.

CNRS, Paris

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[30] Mullā Ṣadrā, *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, Sitad-i Inqilab-i Farhanguī, Markaz-i Nashr-i Dānešgāh-e, Téhéran, 1983, 96.

[31] A. Miquel, « Réflexions sur le « Livre des Songes » d'Artémidore d'Éphese-Ḥunayn B. Isḥāq », in *Studia Islamica*, 52 (1980), 89-103.

The Epistemology of Astrology and Prophethood from Abū Maʿšar to Avicenna's *Metaphysics*

Germano Gorga

The theoretical and practical questions related to the possibility of acquiring foreknowledge of future events is a central topic in medieval thought, which was also deeply investigated by philosophers and intellectuals in Islamicate contexts, producing various kinds of texts devoted to different methods of predicting the future. The aim of this paper is to present the epistemological, physical, and metaphysical connections between two of the most debated methods of prediction, namely the scientific discipline of astrology and prophecy in the thought of Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037), known by his Latin name Avicenna. While a comprehensive analysis of Avicenna's thought on prophecy and astrology is beyond the scope of this work, it is possible to draw some parallels between the prophets and the astrologers in Avicenna's thought, in order to theoretically explain the causes and the reasoning behind his famous rejection of astrology in the *Metaphysics* (*Ilāhiyyāt*) of his *Book of The Healing* (*Kitāb al-Šifāʾ*)[1] and in the *Book of Deliverance* (*Kitāb al-Naǧāt*).[2] In order to come to a full understanding of Avicenna's text, it will be necessary in the following pages to explore the similarities between the astrologer and the prophet in classical Arab thought, referring both to other works by Avicenna and to one of the most famous Arab astrologers, namely Abū Maʿšar. Next, attention will be paid to the epistemology of astrology, with reference to both the Greek and Arabic astrological traditions, as well as the philosophical refutations of this discipline closest to Avicenna, namely those of Al-Fārābī.

[1] The work has been edited in two volumes: Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Šifāʾ, Al-Ilāhiyyāt* (1), ed. Ǧ. Š. Qanawatī, S. Zāyid, Cairo 1960; Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Šifāʾ, Al-Ilāhiyyāt* (2), ed. M. Y. Mūsā, S. Dunyā, S. Zāyid Cairo 1960.

[2] The edition used for this work is the following: Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Naǧāt min al-ġaraq fī baḥr al-ḍalālāt*, ed. M. T. Dānišpažūh, Tehran 1985.

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The connection between prophecy and astrology in medieval Islamic authors has already been established by R. G. Morrison,[3] who has studied the consideration of astrology in the early commentators of the Qur'ān. This controversial discipline was widespread in the Arab world but condemned by theologians, who compared the intellectual and supernatural abilities of the prophets with the ways of the astrologers.

Nevertheless, the constraints of the religious faith conflicted with the philosophical interest represented by the construction of a mathematical science[4] similar to astronomy, but with the fundamental advantage of providing knowledge of the future. Moreover, astrologers were also part of Islamicate societies, since historical, literary, and figurative sources reveal a pervasive presence of astrologers and magicians in Islamic cities.[5]

Avicenna himself explicitly opposes astrologers and prophets in his *Indication to the Refutation of Astrology* (*Al-Išāra ilā fasād 'ilm aḥkām al-nuǧūm*).[6] After discussing people's innate love of comfort (*ḥubb al-rāḥa*) and the origins of alchemy, Avicenna talks about the tendency to believe even incredible and impossible things, such as the story of the existence of the *'Anqā' Muġrib*, creature usually identified with the

[3] R. G. Morrison, "Discussions on Astrology in Early Tafsīr", in *Journal of Qur'anic Studies*, 11(2009), 49-71: 60-61.

[4] The philosophical character of astrology, closely connected to Aristotelian physics, is underlined in the famous monograph by R. Lemay, *Abu Ma'shar and Latin Aristotelianism in the Twelfth Century: The Recovery of Aristotle's Natural Philosophy through Arabic Astrology*, Beirut 1962. For a general overview of the scientific inheritance of astrology and its Greek sources, see R. Lemay, "Acquis de la tradition scientifique grecque confrontés aux réalités des civilisations médiévales. Cas particulier de l'astrologie", in *Perspectives arabes et médiévales sur la tradition scientifique et philosophique grecque*, ed. A. Hasnawi, A. Elamrani-Jamal, M. Aouad, Paris 1997, 137-171.

[5] Many testimonies of this presence are presented in G. Saliba, "The Role of The Astrologer In Medieval Islamic Society", in *Bulletin d'études orientales*, 44 (1992), 45-67.

[6] The work was edited and translated in Y. Michot, *Avicenne, Réfutation de l'astrologie. Édition et traduction du texte arabe, introduction, notes et lexique par Yahya Michot*, Beirut 2006. The text had previously been examined in M. A. F. Meheren, "Vue d'Avicenne sur l'astrologie et sur le rapport de la responsabilité humaine avec le destin", in *Museon*, 3 (1884), 382-403.

"phoenix",[7] and the promises of astrologers, although it is well known that no one can have knowledge of the future unless it is granted by God. The passage runs as follows:

> And from this [derives] the love of the people for the knowledge of what will be in the future and what will happen in it, even though they know that no one has this knowledge except a prophet, someone sent [by God] who receives a revelation from God, so that he grasps and knows it, or one of the friends of God, an honest man who has seen a true vision in his sleep, both in the case where [this vision] needs no interpretation and in the case where it does, so that he perceives through [this vision] the knowledge of what will be in the future.[8]

The general attitude of seeking easy pleasures causes people's love (*ḥubb*) for the knowledge of the future, which leads them to rely on untrustworthy sources of knowledge – in this case, astrologers. In this passage, knowledge of the future is the prerogative of the prophet or of an "honest man" who receives a vision directly from God that may or may not require interpretation (*ta'bīr*). As is to be expected in a polemical work, Avicenna signals from the beginning the object of his attack; but his very formulation – the contrast between an incorrect way of knowing the future and the right ways of doing so – allows us to recognize the philosophical intention to distinguish between two different yet comparable figures, the prophets and the astrologers.

The link between prophecy and astrology is also reflected in the arrangement of the contents of both the tenth book of the *Metaphysics* section of the *Book of The Healing* and the metaphysical part of the *Book of Deliverance*:[9] the proof against astrology is to be found at the end of the first chapter of the tenth *Metaphysics* treatise, in which

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[7] On the myth of the *'Anqā' Muġrib*, see G. Ron-Gilboa, "*ʿAnqāʾ Mughrib*: The Poetics of a Mythical Creature", in *Journal of Abbasid Studies*, 8 (2021), 75-103. On Avicenna's use of impossible things as examples, see T.A. Druart, *Avicennan Troubles: The Mysteries of the Heptagonal House and of the Phoenix*, in *Tópicos*, 42 (2012), 51-73.

[8] Ibn Sīnā, *Réfutation de l'astrologie*, ed. Michot, 6,12-7,4.

[9] The *Book of Deliverance* (*Kitāb al-Naǧāt*) was written by Avicenna as a summary of the much larger *Kitāb al-Šifā'*: see D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, Leiden-Boston 2014, 115. In the respective sections devoted to the refutation of astrology, the differences between the text of the *Kitāb al-Šifā'* and that of the *Kitāb al-Naǧāt* are minimal and probably depend on the state of textual transmission.

Avicenna first recapitulates the emanation from the First and the exceptional qualities of the prophets and then reveals the way in which the celestial souls know the terrestrial realm, arriving at the influence of the celestial powers on the human will. Only at this point do we find Avicenna's proof against astrology, which we will be the final object of the present analysis. In the following lines, namely in the second section of the treatise, Avicenna is concerned with the importance of the community for the survival of the human species, the necessity of a legislator, and the metaphysical proof of prophecy, which establishes that such a prophet-legislator must exist and must rule over all others.[10] Thus, prophecy and astrology are presented as thematically and textually linked. It is worth asking why Avicenna felt the need to refute the science of astrology in his *Metaphysics*, after his cosmological description of the world and the chain of causes from the higher beings to the terrestrial ones, and just before addressing the political role of the prophet.[11]

Avicenna's rejection of astrology cannot be based on a refutation of its mainly philosophical tenets, since both in the *Metaphysics* section of the *Healing*,[12] and in the section devoted to natural philosophy, precisely in the fifteenth chapter of Avicenna's reworking of the Aristotelian *De Generatione et Corruptione* (*al-Kawn wa-l-fasād*), Avicenna admits the influence of the various celestial bodies not only on the material receptacles that make our existence possible, but also on the will (*irāda*) itself:

> Some existing things need only a part of a revolution, and sometimes the duration of their generation ends in the same revolution in which it comes to be, as with the species of flies and the plants covered in hair, which are generated and dissolved in one day. Some existing

[10] The compositional, doctrinal, and systematic aspect of the proof of prophecy found in the *Metaphysics* has been studied in A. Bertolacci, "The Metaphysical Proof of Prophecy in Avicenna", in *Prophecy and Prophets in the Middle Ages*, ed. A. Palazzo, A. Rodolfi, Firenze 2020, 39-75.

[11] On the political role of the prophet in Avicenna, see: M. Sebti, *Avicenne. Prophétie et gouvernement du monde*, Paris 2021, 167-213; J.W. Morris, "The Philosopher-Prophet in Avicenna's Political Philosophy", in *The Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. C. Butterworth, Cambridge 1992, 142-188, and M. Galston, "Realism and Idealism in Avicenna's Political Philosophy", in *The Review of Politics*, 41 (1979), 561-577.

[12] Ibn Sīnā, *Ilāhiyyāt* X.1, ed. Mūsā, Dunyā, Zāyid, 437, 2-6. 437, 2-6).

> things need [multiple] revolutions of the sphere for their generation, while others need multiple revolutions, so that their generation is complete and every existing thing is, as it seems, perishable.[13]

The influence of the revolution of the celestial bodies – and especially that of the Sun – on generation is a common argument used in the astrological tradition to confirm the epistemological and empirical soundness of astrology: both Ptolemy[14] and Abū Maʿšar[15] give the example of the Sun's role in the generation of animals and the existence of seasons, following the famous Chapter II, 10 of Aristotle's *De Generatione et Corruptione*.[16] Avicenna extends this reasoning by affirming that all the changes of the elements and the things that happen in the sublunary world are subject to the celestial spheres, including human choices:[17]

> All earthly states depend on the celestial motions, including our choices and wills, for without any doubt they are things that come to be after not being. And everything that comes to be after not being has a reason and a cause that happens; this [process] can be traced back to the motion; from [the other] motions to the circular motion. The illustration of this has already been completed. In the same way, our choices follow the celestial motions.[18]

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[13] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Kawn wa-l-fasād,* ed. M. Qasim*,* Cairo 1969*,* 195, 4-9.

[14] Ptolemaeus, *Le Previsioni Astrologiche*, ed. Feraboli, 10-11.

[15] Abū Maʿšar, *The Great Introduction to Astrology by Abū Maʿšar,* ed. K. Yamamoto, C. Burnett (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Textes and Studies 106), Leiden-Boston 2018, I, 57.

[16] This is not the only place in the *corpus aristotelicum* in which the role of the Sun and Moon is deemed important for generation, another equally famous example is *De Generatione animalium* IV, 10.

[17] This passage reaches the same conclusion as *Ilāhiyyāt* X,1. The rigid mechanics of the influence of the heavenly bodies which ultimately derives from the First Being itself, is the reason why Avicenna is often considered a strict determinist. On this see: C. Belo, *Chance and Determinism in Avicenna and Averroes*, Leiden 2007, esp. 119-120. On the complexity of this issue and its relation to the Avicennian *Glosses*, see M. Rashed, "Theodicy and Approximation: Avicenna", in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 10 (2000), 223-257. On the problem of human responsibility and action in Avicenna's metaphysical framework, see A. Ruffus, J. McGinnis, "Willful Understanding: Avicenna's Philosophy of Action and Theory of the Will", in *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 97 (2015), 160-195.

[18] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Kawn wa-l-fasād,* ed. Qasim*,* 196, 5-8. This passage has been translated into French in Rashed, *Theodicy and Approximation*, 227.

Moreover, Avicenna's medical writings stress the role of the Sun and the Moon in producing diseases and cures, adding complexity to the still understudied relationship between medicine and astrology in his thought.[19] Indeed, Avicenna cannot disprove the fundamental premise of astrology – namely the influence of the celestial realm on the terrestrial world[20] – and admits as much in his *Indication to the Refutation of Astrology*:

> So, it has already become clear that every star and every sphere has its own influence on this world, that is, its own soul, and it is impossible for a human being to realize or perceive the effect of every [celestial soul].[21]

Given also the "astrologized" cosmos theorized in Islamic philosophy,[22] Avicenna's rejection of astrology might seem dissonant with his entire philosophical system and the general determinism ascribed to his philosophy. However, it is possible to understand his metaphysical refutation of astrology for two main reasons: (i) the first one is an epistemological reason, while (ii) the second one is "metaphysico-political". Regarding the first (i), it can be said that for Avicenna astrology is not a valid science and cannot be considered as such, since it does not use demonstration and does not take into account the terrestrial causes in its predictions. With regard to the second point (ii), it is possible to

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[19] Astrology and medicine were often compared in Avicenna's time, as is shown by his *Indication to the Refutation of Astrology* (*Réfutation de l'astrologie*, ed. Michot, 122-131). On the conflict and common practices between doctors and astrologers, see C. Burnett, "Doctors versus Astrologers: Medical and Astrological Prognosis Compared", in *Die mantischen Künste und die Epistemologie prognosticher Wissenschaften im Mittelalter*, ed. A. Fidora, Köln 2013, 101-112. On Avicenna's use of astronomical data in medicine, see Ibn Sīnā, *Poème de la médecine*, ed. H. Jahier, A. Noureddine, Paris 1956, 20-22.

[20] A general overview of this concept can be found in J. North, "Celestial Influence – The Major Premise of Astrology", in Astrologi hallucinati. *Stars and the End of the World in Luther's Time*, ed. P. Zambelli, Berlin-New York 1986, 45-100.

[21] Ibn Sīnā, *Réfutation de l'astrologie*, ed. Michot, 37,11-14.

[22] The reference is to G. Freudenthal, "The Astrologization of the Aristotelian Cosmos: Celestial Influences on the Sublunary World in Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, and Averroes", in *A Companion to Aristotle's Cosmology: Collected Papers on* De Caelo, ed. A.C. Bowen, C. Wildberg, Leiden 2009, 239-281. The most famous example of a philosophical defense of astrology in Islamic philosophy is that of Al-Kindī: see P. Adamson, "Abū Maʿšar, Al-Kindī and The Philosophical Defense of Astrology", in *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales*, 69 (2002), 245-270.

suppose that astrologers could interfere with the political system developed in the last treatise of the *Metaphysics*, since they would seem to be competitors of the prophets, because they claim to share with them the knowledge of the hidden (*ġayb*) without possessing any peculiar characteristic in their souls.

This second political reason can be fully explained by the similarities between astrology and prophecy in Avicenna's production, which are culturally accepted in Islam, and by Avicenna's remarks on the rarity of prophets[23] and the necessity of obeying their words.[24] In fact, there are three main points of intersection between the practices of astrologers and the abilities of the prophets, as will be explained in the following pages using both Avicenna's statements and the most philosophical book on astrology in the Islamic tradition, namely Abū Maʿšar's *Great Introduction to Astrology*:[25] (a) both the prophet and the astrologer claim to have knowledge of future events, and thus both have a connection with the "hidden"; (b) they have the ability to influence people; and, finally, (c) they use a language different from that of philosophers – namely, the language of scientific demonstration (*burhān*), which is used to construct and derive certain knowledge – and is aimed at convincing hearers.

Foreknowledge

Regarding the first macro-similarity (a), in Avicenna's writing a clear statement on the prophet's foreknowledge can be found in the metaphysical section of *Book of Provenance and Destination* (*Kitāb al-Mabda' wa al-Maʿād*):[26] after discussing the order of the celestial spheres and presenting the first property of the prophet,[27] Avicenna de-

[23] Ibn Sīnā, *Ilāhiyyāt* X,3, ed. Mūsā, Dunyā, Zāyid, 443, 16..

[24] Ibn Sīnā, *Ilāhiyyāt* X,4, ed. Mūsā, Dunyā, Zāyid, 447, 4-12 and *Ilāhiyyāt* I,4, ed. Qanawatī, Zāyid, 28, 3-5.

[25] The *Great Introduction to Astrology*, in addition to being a comprehensive handbook on the discipline of astrology, contains considerable theoretical information regarding the study of the stars and disquisitions in the field of philosophy that make this work unique and an important source for the present analysis.

[26] This book is considered to be an early work by Avicenna, see D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 101.

[27] The various properties of prophethood have been studied extensively. On this

scribes the second property, stating:

> As regards the second property of the prophet, it depends on the imagination of the man of perfect complexion. The act of this property is the prediction of things that will be and the indication of hidden things; this could happen to the majority of people in the state of sleep thanks to dreams. But to the prophet alone it happens both when he is asleep and when he is awake.[28]

According to this description of the property, only the prophet, who is described as a "man of perfect complexion", can obtain from celestial souls the knowledge of the specific events that will take place through the cosmological chain linking the souls of the celestial bodies to the particular soul of the prophet:[29] while ordinary people can gain knowledge of "hidden things" (in Arabic *muġayyabāt*)[30] during their sleep through truthful dreams sent by God, the prophet, by virtue of his exceptional nature, can know what is hidden both in his sleep and in his waking state.

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topic, see D.N. Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima in the Latin West* (Warburg Institute Studies and Texts 1), London 2000, 154-165, who distinguishes three kinds of prophecy in Avicenna. For another opinion see M.A. Al-Akiti, "The Three Properties of Prophethood in Certain Works of Avicenna and Al-Gazālī", in *Interpreting Avicenna: Science and Philosophy in Medieval Islam* (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies 56), ed. J. McGinnis, Leiden 2004, 189-212. Other texts on this subject are J. Michot, "Prophétie et divination selon Avicenne: Présentation, essai de traduction critique et index de l'«Épître de l'âme de la sphère»", in *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, 83 (1985), 507-535 and O.L. Lizzini, "Representation and Reality: On the Definition of Imaginative Prophecy in Avicenna", in *The Parva naturalia in Greek, Arabic and Latin Aristotelianism. Supplementing the Science of the Soul* (Studies in the History of Philosophy of Mind 17), ed. B. Bydén, F. Radovic, Amsterdam 2018, 133-154.

[28] Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Mabda' wa al-Maʿād (The Beginning and The End)*, ed. ʿA.A. Nūrānī, Tehran 1984, 116, 10-13.

[29] This prophetic ability is linked to the practical intellect supported by the imagination, as explained by D. Gutas, "Imagination and Transcendental Knowledge in Avicenna", in *Arabic Theology, Arabic Philosophy: From the Many to the One: Essays in Celebration of Richard M. Frank*, ed. J.E. Montgomery (Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations 19.2), Leuven-Paris-Dudley 2006, 337-354: 343-344.

[30] The term *muġayyabāt* indicates the particular events of the future, as shown by Gutas, "Imagination and Transcendental knowledge in Avicenna", 338; the "hidden" nature of this knowledge is clearly stated in Ibn Sīnā, *Risāla fī l-fiʿl wa l-infiʿāl,* ed. Z. ʿĀ. Al-Mūsāwī, Ḥaydarābād 1934, 5: "The occult sciences depend on the knowledge of the two kinds of hidden, namely the past things and the future ones".

The astrologer, on the other hand, tries to formulate a science from the celestial causes, disregarding any peculiar characteristic, as the *Great Introduction to Astrology* by Abū Maʿšar shows.[31] In the second chapter of the first book of his treatise, the author highlights how the astrologers understand the reality of the influence of the powers of the stars and can predict future events:

> Astrologers, however, know the powers of the stars from their obvious effect on this world (*bi-mā yaẓharu min fiʿli-hā fī haḏā al-ʿālam*), and they say that the Sun is hot because of what they observe of its heating <effect> and the Moon is moist because of what they observe of the power of its effect on the water of the sea and other waters.[32]

Influence on Others

Another area of intersection between the prophet and the astrologer (b) is their power to influence people, to guide them in their decisions, both in particular life situations and in general political choices.

In fact, the characterization of the Avicennian prophet includes the recognition of his special abilities, which make him apt to give laws and spread the fundamental knowledge about the necessary being.[33] In the *Metaphysics of The Healing*, the prophet is proven to be necessary for the construction and development of human society, which reaches the ultimate potential of the soul, as it is made clear in the so-called "metaphysical proof of prophecy":[34]

> And how can it not exist, when that which depends on its existence, (and is) built on its existence, exists? A prophet, therefore, must exist, and he must be a human. He must also possess a special characteristic not present in other people, so that people would recognize in him something that they do not have, whereby he is differentiated from them.[35]

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[31] Abū Maʿšar, *The Great Introduction,* ed. Yamamoto, Burnett, I, 69, 2.24c-2.24d.

[32] Tr. in Abū Maʿšar, *The Great Introduction*, ed. Yamamoto, Burnett, I, 69.2.24c.

[33] Ibn Sīnā, *Ilāhiyyāt* X, 2, ed. Mūsā, Dunyā, Zāyid, 442, 8-20..

[34] For a rigorous explanation of the proof see Bertolacci, "The Metaphysical Proof of Prophecy", 61-68.

[35] Ibn Sīnā, *Ilāhiyyāt* X,2, ed. Mūsā, Dunyā, Zāyid, 442, 5-8. Tr. M. E. Marmura, in Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of The Healing. A Parallel English-Arabic Text Trans-*

The proof explains the necessity of the prophet by means of a teleological argument: the prophet must exist because society, which needs a prophet as a lawgiver in order to flourish, exists. This statement reveals the importance that Avicenna attributes to the prophet in accordance with the Islamic religion[36] and the *falsafa*,[37] underlining the power of this figure in the political construction of society. While prophets give society its fundamental laws and practices, astrologers can actively influence the actions of the people who consult them. The power of the astrologers is discussed in the part of the section of Abū Maʿšar's *Great Introduction to the Art of Astrology* in which the author reaffirms the validity and usefulness of astrology against the possible attacks. He writes:

> And just as the stars indicate the distressful things we have mentioned, so they indicate protection and benefit because of it too and the astrologer, by his foreknowledge and his advice to a person concerning the occurrence of a discomfort to him, is therefore the cause of his protection against it.[38]

In providing a defense against the most common attacks on the discipline, such as its alleged uselessness, Abū Maʿšar grants an active role to astrological prediction in people's lives, following and strengthening the Ptolemaic tradition.[39]

Language

The last similarity is that both the prophet and the astrologer use language differently from a scientist or a philosopher. The prophet, in

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lated, Introduced, and Annotated by M. E. Marmura, Provo 2005, 365.

[36] On prophecy in Islam, see F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam* (Middle Eastern Studies), Chicago-London 2011

[37] The prophet plays an important role in Al-Fārābī' philosophy. On this issue, see R. Walzer, "Al-Fārābī's Theory of Prophecy and Divination", in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 77 (1957), 142-148 and H. Daiber, "Prophetie und Ethik bei Fārābī (gest. 339/950)", in *L'homme et son univers au Moyen Age. Actes du Septième Congrès International de Philosophie Médiévale (30 Août – 4 Septembre 1982)*, ed. C. Wenin (Philosophe Médiévaux 16/17), Louvain-la-Neuve 1986, 729-753.

[38] Tr. in Abū Maʿšar, *The Great Introduction*, I, 165, 6.13 b.

[39] The problem of the usefulness of astrological science and the originality of Abū Maʿšar in this respect has been studied by C. Steel, "What is the Advantage of Knowing the Future? Some Comments on Ptolemy's Tetrabiblos, I, 3", in *Medioevo*, 42 (2017), 31-55.

Avicenna's view, does not speak through philosophical demonstration (*burhān*) to convince people of the right opinions about God and the laws. Instead, he communicates his insights through images, metaphors, and symbolic signs:

> Rather, he should let them know of God's majesty and greatness through symbols and similitudes derived from things that, for them, are majestic and great […]. He must tell them about [eternal] bliss and misery in parables derived from what they can comprehend and conceive.[40]

The peculiarities of the language adopted by the prophet are also referenced to in the first treatise of the *Metaphysics*,[41] following the teachings of Al-Fārābī in this regard.[42]

Astrologers take advantage of human beings' innate desire to know the future, even though they understand that this is only possible for a prophet, but they have certain techniques to prove convincing.[43]

Given these three areas of intersection, it is clear that astrologers could represent a political threat to the social order: for the political plan outlined by Avicenna admits only a prophet as a legislator, since he can receive through revelation the ethical norms that are to form the basis of individuals' social life.[44] The possibility of implementing these norms lies largely in the very authority of the prophet-legislator who must establish himself as a recognizable leader. This political action, however, cannot take place without the rest of the community acknowledging the prophet's exceptional gifts, including his ability to perform wonders (*karamāt*) and his connection with the occult. The presence of

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[40] Ibn Sīnā, *Ilāhiyyāt* X, 2, ed. Mūsā, Dunyā, Zāyid, 443, 3-7. Tr. Marmura, 363-364 (slightly modified).

[41] Ibn Sīnā, *Ilāhiyyāt* I,8, ed. Qanawatī, Zāyid, 51, 8-11.

[42] On the social and political role of rhetorical and not demonstrative modes of expression in Al-Fārābī, see Al-Fārābī, *Book of Letters* (*Kitāb Al-Ḥurūf*): english translation with introduction, interpretive essay and annotations, plus Muhsin Mahdi's revised edition of the Arabic text, ed. C. Butterworth, Berkeley 2024, 236-239; J. Lameer, *Al-Fārābī & Aristotelian Syllogistics. Greek Theory & Islamic Practice* (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies 20), Leiden-New York-Köln 1994, 259-289.

[43] Ibn Sīnā, *Réfutation de l'astrologie*, ed. Michot, 120-121.

[44] The explanation of this aspect is in M. Sebti, "Le mal moral chez Avicenne: perspectives éthiques et politiques", in *Oriens*, 49 (2021), 216-243: 237-240.

the astrologer could actually undermine the uniqueness of the prophet by encouraging actions that are not in line with the desirable conduct for the survival and flourishing of human society.

Yet, Avicenna's rejection of astrology is reinforced by a more traditional reason: the weaker epistemological status of astrology compared to astronomy and the mathematical sciences in general.

The Epistemology of Astrology

The problematic epistemological status of astrology is already explicit in the Greek works of Ptolemy, in which the science of astrology has its own epistemology, both related to and distinct from that of astronomy: in Ptolemy's formulation, the two sciences have two different degrees of certainty. In the introduction to the *Almagest*, which in itself is an important key to access to Ptolemy's epistemology, the author describes astronomy as the most noble and reliable science, after having discarded physics and the Aristotelian formulation of metaphysics.

> […] and that only mathematics can provide sure and unshakable knowledge to its devotees, provided one approaches it rigorously. For its kind of proof proceeds by indisputable methods, namely arithmetic and geometry.[45]

As explained in the passage above, the mathematical mode of inquiry (τὸ μαθηματικόν) is considered the only viable method to obtain "sure and unshakable knowledge" (βεβαίαν καὶ ἀμετάπιστον τὴν εἴδησιν): in particular, astronomy adopts two indisputable ways (ἀναμφισβητήτων ὁδῶν) of establishing its truths, namely arithmetic and geometry, and it is the highest science, thus replacing Aristotelian metaphysics, which is considered obscure because of its interest in an invisible God.[46]

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[45] Ptolemaeus, *Syntaxis Mathematica*, ed. J. L. Heiberg, Leipzig 1898, I, 6.17-21; Tr. G. J. Toomer, *Ptolemy's Almagest*, Princeton 1998, 36.

[46] Ptolemaeus, *Syntaxis Mathematica*, ed. Heiberg, I, 5.15; 6.14. The complex epistemology of *Almagest*'s *proemium* and the role of the science of astronomy in Ptolemy's thought have been studied in J. Feke, *Ptolemy's Philosophy: Mathematics as a Way of Life*, Princeton 2018. On Ptolemy's rhetorical strategies and interest in constructing a different theoretical philosophy, see: J. Feke, "Meta-mathematical Rhetoric: Hero and Ptolemy against the Philosophers", in *Historia Mathematica*, 41 (2014), 261-276 and J. Feke, "Ptolemy's Defense of Theoretical Philosophy", in *Apeiron: A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science*, 45 (2012), 61-90.

Astrology, on the other hand, is certainly much more problematic, since, although it is related to astronomy, it has its own features and objectives, which are different from those of the other science: for astrology also deals with objects that belong to the material and corruptible world, and therefore raises the same kind of problems as Aristotelean physics.[47] In the introduction to the *Tetrabiblos*, Ptolemy writes:

> Now we will discuss the second [kind of knowledge] in a way suitable to philosophy, even though it is not self-sufficient (αὐτοτέλους); […] since anything difficult can easily be attacked by the masses, as regards the two kinds of knowledge mentioned above, the accusations concerning the first would certainly be made by people who are incapable of seeing, while the [attacks] on the second [discipline] have more plausible grounds (either because the [aspect] difficult to grasp regarding certain things gives the impression of complete incomprehensibility, or because the inevitability of the things known renders their aim useless).[48]

Paraphrasing, we can say that while it is impossible to object to the results and the methods of astronomy (since it would be an action performed by "blind" people διαβολαὶ τυφλῶν ἂν εἶεν παντελῶς), astrology can be deemed obscure because of the intrinsic difficulty of the subject and its doubtful utility. It is quite possible to make mistakes in astrology, but, according to Ptolemy, this does not invalidate the whole discipline.[49] The many attacks on this discipline attested by Ptolemy do not take into account that the science of astrology derives its principles both from astronomy – that is, from a certain mathematical discipline – and from the patent influence of the celestial bodies on the Earth – that is, from visible physical evidence. The occurrence of errors in the practice of astrologers – true astrologers, not charlatans – is due to two reasons that complicate astrological predictions: (i) the first is that, although events in the sublunary region are influenced by the movements of the celestial bodies, it is necessary to take into account the fact that many events are subject to other causes, especially with regard to ge-

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[47] Ptolemaeus, *Syntaxis Mathematica*, ed. Heiberg, I, 6.15.

[48] Ptolemaeus, *Le Previsioni Astrologiche (Tetrabiblos)*, ed. S. Feraboli, Torino 2010, 8.10-27.

[49] Ptolemaeus, *Le Previsioni Astrologiche,* ed. Feraboli, 21. On the defense of astrology in the *Tetrabiblos*, see S. Fazzo, "Un'arte inconfutabile: La difesa dell'astrologia nella 'Tetrabiblos' di Tolomeo", in *Rivista di Storia della filosofia*, 46 (1991), 213-244.

nethliac astrology,[50] which deals with the individual destinies of people and thus requires more caution, because of the multiple variables present; (ii) the second reason has to do with the prediction of atmospheric events, and it is the lack of experimental data: since the life of a single human is not enough to observe all the possible configurations of the stars, some events will not be easy to explain.[51] The impossibility of witnessing the same configurations twice (so as to study their effects on the sublunar region) and the necessity of experiencing them adds a degree of uncertainty to astrological predictions, revealing the distinctly "experimental" aspect of this kind of knowledge – a popular topic of discussion in the medieval Islamicate regions.

The doubts and difficulties raised by Ptolemy in his *Tetrabiblos* remained in the Arabic reception of this discipline:[52] the most important and most famous astrologer of the 9th century, Abū Maʿšar, felt the need to theoretically justify and prove the validity and the soundness of astrology.

Like his Greek predecessor, Abū Maʿšar derives the certainty of astrology from those sciences in which there is "no disagreement" and possibility of doubt: arithmetic, geometry, and land surveying, essential components of the astronomical science.[53] Moreover, the theoretical chapters of *The Great Introduction to Astrology* illustrate the epistemological basis for astrology and attempt to establish its validity by saying that what is not immediately clear in astrology, namely the parts derived from the harder mathematical sciences, is actually derived from "clear analogies" coming from the domain of physics.

> Most of the science of astrology is obvious, clear, and in front of our eyes. The part of it that is not obvious is inferred by means of clear analogies (rational arguments) (*qiyāsāt*) from the science of the na-

[50] "Genethliac astrology" is that part of the science devoted to predicting the future of individuals. On the difficulties it presents, see Ptolemaeus, *Le Previsioni Astrologiche*, ed. Feraboli, 178-187.

[51] Ptolemaeus, *Le Previsioni Astrologiche*, ed. Feraboli, 16-19.

[52] On the Arabic *Tetrabiblos*, see: M. Ullmann, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam* (Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1 The Near and Middle East 9/6/2), Leiden 1972, 282-283; F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums, VII: Astrologie – Meteorologie und Verwandtes* (Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums 7), Leiden 1979, 43-44.

[53] Abū Maʿšar, *The Great Introduction,* ed. Yamamoto, Burnett, I, 54, 2.3.

> tures of things (physics) and from what is obvious from the powers of the movements of the planets over this world.[54]

Abū Maʿšar builds the logic of astrological reasoning on the importance of firsthand experience of the planets' effects on the world, noting that what is not obvious about this science is derived from *qiyāsāt*, a term that in this tradition must be translated as "analogies".[55] The observational and the experimental aspect of astrology, so important in Ptolemy and Abū Maʿšar, is reflected, in a more concise way, in the introductory section of the *Introduction to Astrology* written by Kūšyār ibn Labbān between the late 10th and early 11th centuries:

> The second [science] is the science of effects coming from the stars, their powers, and their influence on whatever is below the sphere of the Moon. This is the science which is grasped by experience (*tağriba*) and analogy (*qiyās*) and it is confused with the first science.[56]

Ibn Labbān recalls the already Ptolemaic division between astronomy and astrology and confirms all the epistemological doubts about this science. Astrology does not use geometrical demonstration, but it is understood thanks to experience (*tağriba*) and analogy (*qiyās*). It is clear from the two sources analyzed that astrology was considered by Arabic authors to be epistemologically dependent on astronomy and highly experimental.

Those philosophers who sought to disprove the validity of astrological predictions could resort to various argumentative strategies, such as – among the others – addressing the problem of free will[57] like the Christians, or correcting the classification of sciences, or denying the metaphysical and cosmological premises of astrology. In order to understand Avicenna's refutation of astrology and its relationship to his description of prophecy, it is useful to delve into the argumentative strategy of the so-called Second Teacher, Al-Fārābī (d. 950).

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[54] Tr. in Abū Maʿšar, *The Great Introduction,* ed. Yamamoto, Burnett, 55, 2.5.

[55] C. Burnett, "The Certitude of Astrology: The Scientific Methodology of Al-Qabīsī and Abū Maʿshar", in *Early Science and Medicine*, 7 (2002), 198-213.

[56] Tr. in Kūšyār ibn Labbān, *Introduction to Astrology*, ed. M. Yano, Tokyo 1997, 7.

[57] An example of this kind of refutation can be found in S. Khalil, "La Réfutation de l'astrologie par Elie de Nisibe", in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 2 (1977), 408-441.

Al-Fārābī and Astrology

Al-Fārābī's doubts about astrology can already be observed in his classification of sciences in the *Division of the Sciences* (*Iḥṣāʾ al-ʿulūm*),

where he lumps astrology and astronomy together under the standard definition of "science of the stars" (*ʿilm al-nuǧūm*).[58]

Al-Fārābī's approach to astrology, already in his classification, shows a kind of "skepticism" about its degree of certainty, since astrology is not defined as "mathematical" like astronomy: in Al-Fārābī's description, this science is concerned with the *dalālāt* (indications) of the stars and aims at predicting the future, just like the interpretation of dreams and divination.[59] But Al-Fārābī's real thoughts on astrology emerge from two specific texts, namely the *Treatise on the Truth of Astrology* (*Maqāla fī l-jiha allatī yaṣiḥḥu ʿalayhā al-qawl fī aḥkām al-nuǧūm*)[60] and the *Notes on What is True and What is not True of Astrology* (*Nukat fī mā yaṣiḥḥu wa-mā lā yaṣiḥḥu min aḥkām al-nuǧūm*),[61] which represent two different ways of analyzing astrologers' claims. In the first treatise, Al-Fārābī emphasizes that the science of astrology is based on truly valid premises: the influence of the celestial bodies depends on the degree of heat that each of them produces.

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[58] On this definition and the interplays between astronomy and astrology, see A. Sayili, *The Observatory in Islam*, Ankara 1960, 8-49 and G. Saliba, "Astronomy and Astrology in Medieval Arabic Thought", in *Les doctrines de la science de l'antiquité à l'âge Classique*, ed. R. Rashed, J. Biard, Louvain 1999, 131-164. Another author who uses this definition is Al-Khwārizmī, *Kitāb Liber Mafātīḥ al-ʿulūm*, ed. G. Van Volten, Leipzig 1895, 209-210.

[59] Al-Fārābī, *Iḥṣāʾ al-ʿulūm*, ed. ʿU. Amīn, Cairo 1949, 84, 2-7. The text has been translated in Saliba, "Astronomy and Astrology", 138-139. For the other predictive sciences listed by Al-Fārābī in this context and the connection between divination and prophecy, see T. Fahd, *La Divination Arabe*, Leiden 1966, 39-90.

[60] This text has been edited in M. Mahdi, "Maqāla li-abī Naṣr al-Fārābī fī l-jiha allatī yaṣiḥḥu ʿalayhā al-qawl fī aḥkām al-nuǧūm", in *Nuṣūṣ falsafiyyat*, ed. ʿU. Amīn, Cairo 1976, 53-47. A French translation of this treatise can be found in T.A. Druart, "Le second traité de Farabi sur la validité des affirmations basées sur la position des étoiles", in *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale*, 21 (1979), 47-51.

[61] A new edition with an Italian translation of this text can be found in S. Abram, "Note di Abū Nasr al-Fārābi sulla verità e falsità dell'astrologia", in *Medioevo*, 45 (2020), 237-277.

> So the states of the celestial bodies at a certain moment require a certain amount of heat, and their positions in the places where they are and their reciprocal positions, which are known thanks to the astronomical observation, and their positions with respect to the Earth and the other bodies require that a certain body receive a certain amount of heat. This amount of heat is followed by signs and forms.[62]

Moreover, it is also possible to see in Al-Fārābī's text how astrology was conceived as a kind of knowledge constructed on the basis of the experience (*taǧriba*) of all the effects derived from the measure of the heat produced by the celestial bodies,[63] but this physical and cosmological premise does not justify the astrologers in making predictions in matters that concern the use of the human deliberation and thinking.[64]

The *Nukat*, on the other hand, is written in the form of a *reportatio* in which a student asks Al-Fārābī to explain the reasons why astrologers are not to be trusted and their science is not sound.

This kind of refutation focuses more on the actual astrological theories than on the philosophical premises for the practice: Al-Fārābī shows his knowledge of the subject by refuting specific statements in the books used by astrologers. For example, one of the arguments highlights the contradictory reasoning of the astrologers, who assume different effects of the planets and yet recognize that they are all made of the same substance, different from the sublunary elements,[65] while other arguments discuss the arbitrariness of the attributes of the planets as established by the astrologers and other specific beliefs.

Al-Fārābī bases his refutation on the inconsistency of the astrological doctrine per se, underlining the contradictions of the premises (such as the incorruptible nature of the celestial bodies and the different qualities attributed to them).

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[62] Al-Fārābī, *Maqāla*, ed. Mahdi, 69.10-70.4.

[63] The *Nukat* also emphasizes the value of experience, see Abram, "Note di Abū Nasr al-Fārābi, 268-272.

[64] Al-Fārābī, *Maqāla*, ed. Mahdi, 74.2-3.

[65] Al-Fārābī, *Nukat*, ed. Abram, 246, 17-21.

Avicenna's Metaphysical Rejection of Astrology

Avicenna's conception of astrology inherits the discussions about the utility of this discipline and its epistemological and metaphysical basis, but it is more original compared to the Second Teacher's view, since Avicenna changes the very classification of sciences. In his *Epistle on the Classification of the Intellectual sciences*,[66] the chief mathematical sciences are only arithmetic, geometry, the science of configuration (i.e. astronomy), and music, while astrology, like medicine, is considered a derived physical science. This change in the classification of the sciences is a consequence of the inferior degree of certainty ascribed to astrology by Avicenna, as is made explicit in the *Indication to the Refutation of Astrology*:

> The second kind of science, the refutation of which the wise man does not concern himself with, and the destruction of which he does not seek, [is such that] it is [composed] of vileness and the destruction of order, as is undoubtedly the case according to those who know the sciences and have some common sense with the science of amulets and the science of scapulimancy and other similar ones. Well, the wise do not make them partakers of rank and status so that they may destroy or refute them. And of this second kind [is] astrology, inasmuch as the wise avoid its destruction and refutation, since they know the evidence of the groundlessness of its principles and ramifications.[67]

After talking about the first kind of sciences that are not refuted by the wise men – philosophers – namely those that cannot be disproved because of the evident soundness of their procedures and proofs, Avicenna talks about the sciences that do not deserve a refutation because of the clear absence of truth in them, such as astrology, the science of amulets, and the science of scapulimancy. Nevertheless, astrology is somewhat different, because its philosophical premise, namely the influence of the celestial bodies on the Earth, is a well-known part of Avicenna's own philosophical system, and it is also what allows the kind of prophecy related to the imagination of the celestial bodies. In fact, in the body of the text Avicenna does not discuss the premise (*muqaddima*) of astrology, only its principles (*uṣūl*) and ramifications

[66] Ibn Sīnā, *Tis' Rasā'il fī-ḥikma wa-l-ṭabī'iyyāt*, ed. Ḥ. ʿĀṣī, Cairo 1908, 104-118, see in particular 110.10-14.

[67] Ibn Sīnā, *Réfutation de l'astrologie*, ed. Michot, 3, 8-13.

(*furūʿ*) with arguments already present in the philosophical tradition, such as the attribution of different sensible qualities to the celestial bodies when they are not made of the same four elements as terrestrial things. All these epistemological considerations on the status of astrology are presupposed in Avicenna's refutation of astrology in the *Metaphysics of The Healing*, which is connected to the whole cosmological and political plan of the work. To better analyze this text, it is possible to divide it into three sections: (i) the description of astrology and the astrologer, (ii) the refutation proper, and (iii) the conclusion.

Before beginning his refutation, Avicenna sums up the consequences of his previous statements regarding the chain of causes that connects the terrestrial realm to the celestial bodies and ultimately to God's will:

> If it were possible for some human to know all the events on Earth and in the sky together and their natures, he would comprehend the manner of all that will occur in the future.[68]

This strong hypothetical clause concludes the argument about the influence of the upper world on earthly events. The statement could indeed justify the practice of the astrologers, who would become at least as important in the treatise as the prophet, whose cosmological role is strongly emphasized. To avoid this possibility, Avicenna begins his actual refutation with a tendentious description of astrologers (i):

> [But] this astrologer who professes astral [predictions] – in addition [to the fact that] his first positings and premises are not based on demonstration (although he may claim for them experience [*tağriba*] or inspiration [*waḥy*] and may attempt poetic and rhetorical syllogism [*qiyāsāt šiʿriyya aw ḫiṭābiyya*] to establish them) – depends on [only] one genus of evidential indicators of the causes of generated things: namely, those that are in heaven. But he cannot guarantee for himself knowledge of all the states that are in heaven.[69]

As we can see, Avicenna is referring here to an unspecified astrologer (*haḍā al-munağğim* in the Arabic text), whose science is not based on the method of scientific demonstration. This astrologer admits the possibility of having acquired this knowledge, or at least its premises, thanks to *waḥy* or *tağriba*, namely "experience" or "divine inspiration": this statement is understandable only on the basis of the astro-

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[68] Ibn Sīnā *Ilāhiyyāt* X,1, ed. Mūsā, Dunyā, Zāyid, 440, 2-4. Tr. Marmura, 363.

[69] Ibn Sīnā, *Ilāhiyyāt* X,1, ed. Mūsā, Dunyā, Zāyid, 440, 4-8. Tr. Marmura, 363.

logical literature read by Avicenna and by his own connection between the prophet and the astrologer. The occurrence of the term *tağriba* is extremely interesting, since the experimental aspect of astrology is a fundamental feature of this discipline already in Arabic astrological texts and Al-Fārābī.[70]

Moreover, Avicenna almost mocks the astrologers by affirming that they can pretend to have a divine inspiration, *waḥy*, which is a prerogative of the prophet. The inglorious parallel between astrologer and prophet continues in the text, as Avicenna refers to the fact that astrologers try to use – the choice of the verb *ḥāwala*, literally "to try", "to attempt", is particularly intriguing here – poetic or rhetorical syllogisms (*qiyāsāt šiʿriyya aw ḫiṭābiyya*) to prove their science, probably reinterpreting the meaning of *qiyās* found in the astrological tradition.

According to Avicenna, astrologers rely on syllogisms that do not aim at scientific accuracy but at persuasion (*iqnāʿ*) and the creation of images.[71] This seemingly innocent statement by Avicenna is in fact a harsh condemnation of astrological practice, since the astrologer does not have the same possibility of acquiring knowledge of future events as the prophet, nor the sound demonstrative method of the philosopher. The use of rhetorical and poetic syllogisms is related to the political teleology of the existence of prophets, who, as we have seen, can use a language very different from that of demonstration, but which loses all its social, political, and epistemological value when used by the astrologer.

Astrology is then (ii) deemed inconsistent because it contradicts the previous Avicennian statement about the possibility of acquiring knowledge of the future: the astrologers base their predictions only on the celestial bodies, neglecting the equally important terrestrial causes[72] – in contrast also to Ptolemy's own prescriptions in the *Tetrabiblos*.

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[70] On the philosophical meaning of *tağriba* in Avicenna, see J. L. Janssens, "'Experience' (*tajriba*) in Classical Arabic Philosophy (al-Farabi-Avicenna)", in *Quaestio*, 4 (2004), 45-62 and D. Gutas, "The Empiricism of Avicenna", in *Oriens*, 40 (2012), 391-436.

[71] On rhetorical and poetical syllogisms, their use, and their epistemological status in Arabic philosophy, see D. Black, *Logic and Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics in Medieval Arabic Philosophy* (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Textes and Studies 7), Leiden 1990, 103-137.

[72] On the importance of matter and the theoretical issues related to Avicenna's con-

In the next part of the text, Avicenna shows two degrees of skepticism about astrological skill: first, the Persian philosopher denies the possibility of having knowledge of all the states of the heavens (and in fact astrological predictions are based on a few celestial bodies rather than the existing multitude), summarizing in a very concise way the thesis set forth in the *Indication*. The second degree of skepticism then comes into play after the author has conceded the possibility that the astrologer actually knows all the states of the heavens, as well as the action and nature of the celestial bodies: such knowledge cannot be maintained at all times, since there is no method of calculation – and therefore mathematics (*ṭarīq min al-ḥisāb*) – that can provide accurate knowledge of the totality of the states of the heavens. The Avicennian refutation is thus a direct consequence both of his own classification of the sciences and of the doubts of the astrologers themselves. The next part elaborates on the previously stated nodes of the discussion:

> [But, even] if he were able to make us and himself such as to know all of this, it would not suffice to make us move thanks to it towards the hidden things. For things that are absent [but] on the way of coming to be are completed only through mixtures between celestial matters (which, out of tolerance, [we will grant] that we have achieved knowledge of all their numbers); and terrestrial matters, anterior and posterior; that which enacts them; and that which receives their actions – those that are natural and those that are voluntary. [These] do not become complete through celestial [matters] alone. Thus, the one who does not have knowledge of all that is present of the two states of affairs and [knowledge of] that which necessitates each of the two – particularly that which is connected with the hidden – will be unable to make the transition [in the knowledge] to the hidden.[73]

Avicenna begins his discourse again with a new hypothetical clause: while he admits, just for the sake of argument, that astrologers can know all the celestial states, this kind of knowledge would not be sufficient to predict the future – which here falls under the concept of the occult (*ġayb*) – since astrologers do not take into account the rest of the causes involved in the occurrence of a given event, namely all the earthly states, in their active and passive, natural, and voluntary princi-

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ception of providence, see O. L. Lizzini, "Matter and Nature: On the Foundations of Avicenna's Theory of Providence: An Overview", in *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World*, 7 (2019), 7-34.

[73] Ibn Sīnā, *Ilāhiyyāt* X,1, ed. Mūsā, Dunyā, Zāyid, 440, 12-17. Tr. Marmura, 363-364.

ples. The occult, here a prerogative of the prophets and friends of God, cannot be reached through astrological wisdom, because it inherently lacks the complementary knowledge of the earthly states.

Finally (iii), Avicenna again affirms that he does not trust the discourses of the astrologers, but, in accordance with the doctrinal content of his *Metaphysics*, he must admit that the premises – denoted by the logical term *muqaddimāt* – of their doctrine are true:

> We thus have no reliance on their statements, even if we admit as a concession that all that they give us of their philosophical premises are true.[74]

Conclusion

To conclude, it can be said that the metaphysical refutation of astrology is an integral part of Avicenna's philosophical system, because it allows him to admit the influence of celestial bodies, but without legitimizing figures such as astrologers, who could claim knowledge of the occult without being chosen by God or taking into account all the factors that determine human and natural events. Avicenna's refutation of astrology is informed by both properly philosophical positions and unspecified astrological sources. Moreover, the refutation contains important clues as to the value of Avicenna's classification of the sciences, allowing us to observe how more properly logical and epistemological aspects enter into his metaphysical evaluations.

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[74] Ibn Sīnā, *Ilāhiyyāt* X,1, ed. Mūsā, Dunyā, Zāyid, 440, 17-19. Tr. Marmura, 364.

The Most Perfect Prophet for Maimonides: Moses and Abraham in *The Guide of the Perplexed*

Ying Zhang

Introduction

Maimonides' view on prophecy in general and the Mosaic prophecy in particular is a theme that has been much discussed in the scholarly world. One question, however, has almost not been asked: is Moses the most perfect prophet for Maimonides?

To answer this question, we need to know what the criteria for perfection are in Maimonides' view. In the final chapter of the *Guide*, Maimonides explains the equivocal Hebrew term *ḥokhmah* (wisdom) and proposes four meanings for it. Accordingly, he presents four kinds or species of human perfections based on the view of the philosophers: the perfection of possessions, the perfection of the bodily constitution and shape, the perfection of the moral virtues, and the perfection of the rational virtues. Agreeing with the philosophers, Maimonides describes the perfection of the rational virtues as "the individual true perfection of the individual", and "the ultimate end" of human beings.[1]

According to Maimonides' own criterion for the ultimate perfection, the answer to our question would seem to be as clear as day: of course, Moses IS the most perfect prophet for Maimonides. In almost all his major writings, Maimonides emphasizes the superiority and uniqueness of Moses and his prophecy. In the *Guide of the Perplexed*, Maimonides refers to God's words in *Exodus*, "and I appeared unto

[1] Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, III 54, tr. S. Pines, Chicago-London 1963, 632-635. Hereafter references to *The Guide of the Perplexed* will be given in the text according to its Part, chapter, and page number in this edition. Please note that the italics in the citation of the *Guide* refer to words, phrases and sentences that are originally in Hebrew. Quotation marks for the biblical passages have been added. See further A. Altmann, "Maimonides' 'four perfections'", in *Israel Oriental Studies*, 2 (1972), 15-24.

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Abraham, and so on, but by My name, the Lord, I made Me not known to them [6,3]", and explains that "it informs us that his [i.e. Moses'] apprehension was not like that of the *Patriarchs*, but greater – nor, all the more, like that of others who came before".[2] Maimonides makes clear that the superiority of Moses lies in his greater "apprehension". In other words, "apprehension", or more precisely, "intellectual apprehension", is the criterion for the rank of the prophets and their prophecy. This is perfectly in agreement with Maimonides' view that the ultimate perfection for human beings is the perfection of rational virtues.

However, if we examine the theme "who is the most perfect prophet for Maimonides?" more closely in the light of Maimonides' esoteric-exoteric art of writing,[3] the answer that encourages Moses' supremacy would no longer be so obvious. By examining the view of the supremacy of Moses and its counterarguments and the distinctive character of Abraham, more specifically, by comparing Maimonides' presentation of the two great prophets in the *Guide*, this article argues that in the *Guide of the Perplexed*, Abraham rather than Moses is the most perfect prophet according to the hierarchy of knowledge that Maimonides establishes in his Treatise.

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[2] MAIMONIDES, *The Guide*, II 35, tr. PINES, 367.

[3] Leo Strauss is the first modern scholar who reminds us about Maimonides' exoteric-esoteric art of writing in the *Guide of the Perplexed*. It is worth noting that although as early as in the early 1930s, Strauss had talked about the distinction between the esoteric and the exoteric writings, his understanding of the two concepts later changes. In the third chapter of *Philosophie und Gesetz*, written in 1931, he takes 'exoteric' as the publicization of the philosophical teaching by the modern Enlightenment, and he uses the term in a rather derogatory sense. On the other hand, Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* was seen by him as an esoteric work. However, in the essay he wrote in 1938, "The Literary Character of *The Guide for the Perplexed*", Strauss suggested that the *Guide* be read as 'an exoteric work'. In other words, 'exoteric' is no longer negative in his view; rather, 'the exoteric' refers now to the explicit expression of the traditional teaching. In the new perspective, 'the esoteric' signifies the conveying of non-Jewish, philosophic teaching in an implicit way. In this way, the esoteric and the exoteric together constitute the philosophic art of writing. See L. STRAUSS, *Philosophie und Gesetz: Beiträge zum Verständnis Maimunis und Seiner Vorläufer*, Berlin 1935, 87-122; ID., *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, Glencoe 1953, 7-94; Y. ZHANG, "The Guide to *The Guide*: Some Observations on 'How To Begin To Study *The Guide of the Perplexed*'", in *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy*, 46/3 (Summer 2020), 539-540.

The Supremacy of Moses and His Prophecy

In the First book of *Mishneh Torah*, The Book of the Knowledge *(Sefer Ha-madda ʿ)*, Maimonides points out that Moses' prophecy is distinguished from the prophecy of all others in the following respects:

> All the prophets received their inspired messages in a dream or in a vision; Moses while *awake and standing*. […] all the prophets received their messages through the medium of an angel, […] Moses received his message *not through an angel*; it was no allegory that was revealed to Moses but he realized the prophetic message clearly, *without riddle and without parable*; all the prophets [when receiving their messages] were *filled with fear and consternation* and became physically weak. Not so, our teacher *Moses*. […] *He prophesied at all times*.[4]

These exceptional features of Moses' prophecy are also shown in "The Thirteen Roots or Principles" of the Torah that Maimonides proposes in his *Commentary on Mishnah*. Among these fundamental principles, the central one, i.e., the seventh, is "the prophecy of Moses, our Teacher: We are to believe that he was the chief of all other prophets before and after him, all of whom were his inferiors".[5]

However, the supremacy of Moses and his prophecy is not a matter of fact in the Jewish tradition before Maimonides. As Leo Strauss points out, the superiority of the prophecy of Moses is "not the repetition of something commonplace". Agreeing with Michael Guttmann's view that *Mishnat R. Eliezer* is a source of Maimonides' view on the difference between the prophecy of Moses and that of other prophets,[6] Strauss recognizes that "it is affirmed in an immediately preceding passage [of *Mishnat R. Eliezer*] that the prophecy of the patriarchs is superior to that of Moses and the other prophets. And from this passage Maimonides has borrowed nothing".[7]

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[4] Maimonides, "Yesodei ha-Torah" VII 6, in *Mishneh Torah, The Book of Knowledge*, notes and tr. M. Hyamson, new corrected edition, Jerusalem-New York 1981, 43a. Italics added.

[5] Maimonides, *Commentary on Mishnah*, *Helek: Sanhedrin*, Chapter X, tr. A. J. Wolf, in *A Maimonides Reader*, ed. I. Twersky, Springfield, NJ 1972, 417-423: 419.

[6] M. Guttmann, "Zur Quellenkritik des Mischneh Thora", in *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums*, 79 (N. F. 43), H. 2 (1935), 148-159: 150-152.

[7] L. Strauss, "Quelques remarques sur la science politique de Maïmonide et de Fârâbî", in Id., *Gesammelte Schriften. Band 2: Philosophie und Gesetz – Frühe Schriften*, Zweite Auflage, hrsg. v. H. Meier, Heidelberg 2013, 144. The English trans-

In the passage Strauss refers to, the Midrashic sage Rabbi Eliezer ben Jose states:

> The patriarchs, did not need the special name be explained to them, yet the other prophets, the special name was explained for them […] Evidence [of this] is to the words of Moses our Master, "and God said to Moses, 'I will be what I will be' [*Exod*. 3.14]", although the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, "I appeared to Abraham [etc.], yet my name, the Lord, did I not make known to them [*Exod*. 6,3]", like you.[8]

It is clear that for Rabbi Eliezer, the Patriarchs not only knew the holy Name of God, but also knew it well enough so that they did not need an explanation of the Name. Likewise, the great medieval Jewish thinker before Maimonides, Judah Halevi, expresses the similar view in the *Kuzari*. He argues that the Patriarchs are superior to all other prophets, because they know the most holy Tetragrammaton directly, without asking for the meaning of *the* Name, and that the Patriarchs, due to their "utmost faith and purity of heart", do not need the display of any wonders to them.[9]

Other examples also show that the supremacy of Moses and his prophecy is by no means a common sense among the rabbinic Sages.[10] The authors of the Midrash point out that the Patriarchs "did not criticise My ways", as none of them "murmur at My ways", nor did they complain to God or ask God's name as Moses did.[11]

The question, then, arises: Why does Maimonides propose and emphasize the exceptional supremacy of Moses? Again, Strauss supplies for us a convincing answer in his studies of Maimonides in the 1930s. He points out that Maimonides advocates the supremacy of Moses out

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lation is taken from: L. Strauss, "Some Remarks on the Political Science of Maimonides and Farabi", tr. R. Bartlett, *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy*, 18/1 (1990), 15.

[8] *The Mishnah of Rabbi Eliezer, or The Midrash of Thirty-Two Hermeneutic Rules*, ed. H. G. Enelow, New York 1933, 112.

[9] J. Halevi, *Kitab Al Khazari*, tr. H. Hirschfeld, London-New York 1905, 86. See L. Strauss, "Marginalien im Handexemplar von Leo Strauss", in Id., *Gesammelte Schriften. Band 2*, 162.

[10] See N. N. Glatzer, "A Study of the Talmudic-Midrashic Interpretation of Prophecy", in Id., *Essays in Jewish Thought*, Tuscaloosa 2009/1978, 16-35: 23-24.

[11] *Midrash Rabbah* Vol. III: *Exodus*, tr. Rabbi Dr. S. M. Lehrman, London-New York 1983, 107-108.

of political considerations, i.e., in order to identify Moses as the prophet of the divine law. According to Strauss, the reason for Maimonides highlighting the superiority of the Mosaic prophecy is that "only the prophecy of Moses is *legislative*", and that "only Moses is the *philosopher-legislator in Plato's sense* or the 'first Chief' in Farabi's sense", even though "Maimonides does not say it explicitly".[12]

However, this view, that "Moses is the philosopher-legislator in Plato's sense", turns out *not* to be conclusive for Strauss. In his 1960 essay "How To Begin To Study *The Guide of the Perplexed*",[13] Strauss quite surprisingly suggests that by placing the two biblical passages, *Exodus* 33,20-23 and *Isaiah* 6, in one subsection (i.e., *Guide* I 8-28), Maimonides induces us to think that "Isaiah reached a higher stage in the knowledge of God than Moses or that Isaiah's vision marks *a progress beyond Moses*'".[14] In this context, Strauss reminds us that his earlier observation, that "the supremacy of Moses' prophecy is connected with its being *the only legislative prophecy* (I 63, II 13, 39)", is still valid. "But", Strauss goes one significant step further and states,

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[12] Strauss, "Quelques remarques", 144, and Id., "Some Remarks on the Political Science", 15. Italics are added.

[13] In the manuscript of "How To Begin To Study *The Guide of the Perplexed*", Strauss wrote that the essay was written between May 19 and August 13, 1960. See H. Meier, "How Strauss Became Strauss", tr. M. Brainard, in *Reorientation: Leo Strauss in the 1930s*, ed. M. D. Yaffe, R. S. Ruderman, New York 2014, 28, note 26.

[14] L. Strauss, "How To Begin To Study *The Guide of the Perplexed*", in Id., *Liberalism Ancient and Modern,* New York-London 1968, 140-184: 161. Italics are added. This essay was first published as one of the introductions to Shlomo Pines' English translation of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*, xi-lvi. Strauss published the first seventeen paragraphs of the essay in L. Strauss, "On the Plan of *The Guide of the Perplexed*", in *Harry Austryn Wolfson Jubilee Volume*, ed. S. Lieberman, S. Spiegel et al., Jerusalem 1965, 775-791. Among the studies on this significant essay are: S. Lenzner, "Leo Strauss and the Problem of Freedom of Thought", Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University 2002; M. J. Sharpe, "'In the Court of a Great King': Some remarks on Leo Strauss' Introduction to the *Guide for the Perplexed*, Part 1", in *Sophia*, 50 (2011), 141-58; Id., "'In the Court of a Great King': Some remarks on Leo Strauss' Introduction to the *Guide of the Perplexed*, Part 2", in *Sophia*, 50 (2011), 413-427; A. Tepper, *Progressive Mind, Conservative Politics: Leo Strauss's Later Writings on Maimonides*, Albany 2013; W. Z. Harvey, "How to Begin to Study Strauss's 'How to Begin to Study the *Guide of the Perplexed*", in *Interpreting Maimonides: Critical Essays*, ed. C. H. Manekin, D. Davies, Cambridge 2018, 228-246; Zhang, "The Guide to *The Guide*", 533-563.

> precisely because his prophecy culminates in the Law, it reflects the limitations of law. *Law is more concerned with actions than with thoughts* (III 27-28; I Introduction).[15]

The insight in this statement provides us the starting point for our question: despite the supremacy of Moses and his prophecy, is Moses genuinely the most perfect prophet in Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*? In order to answer this question, we must confront the following question first.

How "Exceptional" Is Moses and His Prophecy?

In the *Guide of the Perplexed*, although Maimonides claims that he would not repeat the differences between the prophecy of Moses and that of all other prophets that he had presented in the *Mishneh Torah*, he cannot help highlighting the supremacy of Moses and his prophecy by citing such biblical passages as *Exodus* 6,3 and *Deuteronomy* 34,10.[16]

The exceptional status of Moses is also shown in Maimonides' enumeration of the degrees of prophecy: he expressly excludes Moses from the highest, i.e., eleventh, degree of prophecy, which according to him "consists in the prophet's seeing an *angel* who addresses him *in a vision*, as *Abraham at the time of the binding* [of Isaac]".[17] However, as Strauss points out, "Maimonides deliberately contradicts himself",[18] which Maimonides openly admits at the beginning of his Treatise.[19] This holds for his statements regarding the supremacy and uniqueness of Moses. For instance, in the chapter that discusses the reason for the law concerning

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[15] Strauss, "How To Begin To Study *The Guide of the Perplexed*", 162. Italics are added.

[16] *Deuteronomy* 34,10 reads: "And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face". See Maimonides, *The Guide*, II 35, tr. Pines, 367-368.

[17] Maimonides, *The Guide*, II 45, tr. Pines, 402. It is interesting to note that Maimonides mentions Moses when he talks about the first degree of prophecy, which pointing to "an individual receives a divine help". Moses is said not to be abandoned by the divine force "from the moment he reached a man's estate. It was because of this that he was moved to slay the Egyptian and to reprove the one who was in the wrong among the two men that struggled [*Exodus* 2,11-13]". See Maimonides, *The Guide*, II 45, tr. Pines, 397.

[18] Strauss, "How To Begin To Study *The Guide of the Perplexed*", 143.

[19] Maimonides, *The Guide*, Introduction, tr. Pines, 17-20: 20.

the chosen temple, Maimonides inserts a passage on "the fundamental principle of belief in prophecy precedes the belief in the Law". He repeats there the view that "the prophet receives prophecy only through the intermediary of the *angel*". Suddenly he points out that,

> Even in the case of *Moses our Master*, his prophetic mission is inaugurated *through an angel*: "And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord in the heart of fire" [*Exod*. 3,2].[20]

Clearly this is against his statement that Moses' prophecy is "not through an angel". In a similar way, Maimonides' claim that Moses' prophecy is "without riddles and without parables"[21] is *tacitly* denied by himself. In the discussion of the abundant use of parables and figurative speeches in prophecies, Maimonides makes it clear at the very beginning of the chapter that the use of parables is the work of the imagination.[22] Yet, the illustrations Maimonides chooses for showing the use of parables and figurative terms in prophecy are actually all taken from Moses' speeches:

> Thus he [i.e., Moses] set the passage down as a parable, like the passage: "Curd of kine and milk of sheep, and so on [*Deut*. 32,14]". This figurative use of language is exceedingly frequent in the books of prophecy. […] For no one doubts with respect to its dictum, "The Lord shall open unto thee His [good] treasure, and so on [*Deut*. 28,12]", that this is figurative and that God has no *treasure* in which there is *rain*.[23]

Given the fact that there are plenty of parables and figurative speeches in the prophetic books, and that Maimonides insists that the Mosaic prophecy is free from imagination, the above illustrations in the Torah are not necessary. Are these illustrations then Maimonides' indications that his statements concerning the non-figurative character of the Mosaic prophecy are questionable?

Moreover, Maimonides' assertion that Moses alone was free from "fear and consternation" when he was receiving the messages from God is also doubtful. Not only is the biblical text not in harmony with this claim, as is shown in Moses' first meeting with God in *Exodus* 3,11-

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[20] MAIMONIDES, *The Guide*, III 45, tr. PINES, 576.

[21] MAIMONIDES, "Yesodei ha-Torah" VII 6, in *Mishneh Torah, The Book of Knowledge*, ed. HYAMSON, 43a.

[22] See MAIMONIDES, *The Guide*, II 47, tr. PINES, 407.

[23] MAIMONIDES, *The Guide*, II 47, tr. PINES, 408.

4,17, but Maimonides himself also alludes to the same state between Moses and other prophets in his explanation of the cease of prophecy due to the weakness of body and negative moods. As he points out,

> […] and that prophetic revelation did not come to *Moses*, peace be on him, after the disastrous incident of the *spies* and until the whole *generation of the desert* perished, … because – seeing the enormity of their crime – he suffered greatly because of this matter.[24]

This illustration not only shows that Moses is not immune to negative mood such as "fear and consternation", but the fact that Moses' prophecy ceases after the spy episode also manifestly goes against what Maimonides claims in the *Mishneh Torah*, that Moses "prophesied at all times".[25]

In short, although Maimonides repeatedly emphasizes the "extraordinary character" of Moses' "apprehension" and his "actions",[26] by making contradictory statements, he hints at the limitation of the prophecy of Moses and his knowledge of God.

What is Distinctive in Abraham?

In Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*, Abraham stands out as the only alternative to Moses for being a perfect prophet. He appears, in an implicit way, before all the biblical figures in Maimonides' Treatise: the epigraph that proceeds the three parts of the *Guide* is a biblical verse connected with Abraham – "In the name of the Lord, God of the World (*ʾel ʿolam*)" (*Gen*. 21,33).[27] This verse is so vital to Maimonides,

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[24] Maimonides, *The Guide*, II 36, tr. Pines, 372-373.

[25] Maimonides, "Yesodei ha-Torah" VII 6, in *Mishneh Torah, The Book of Knowledge*, ed. Hyamson, 43a.

[26] Maimonides, *The Guide*, II 35, tr. Pines, 369.

[27] Some might be surprised by this rendering of *ʾel ʿolam*, which is given by the English translator of the *Guide*, Shlomo Pines. Indeed, most of the English translations of the Hebrew Bible have it as "the everlasting God". The word *ʿolam* came to denote the meaning of "world" in rabbinic Hebrew and thereafter. As the translator's note indicates, "The correct sense of this Hebrew invocation is 'God of Eternity'. However, in current Hebrew the words mean 'God of the World'; this seems to have been the meaning that Maimonides had in mind": see Maimonides, *The Guide*, III, tr. Pines, 3. Pines explains his considerations on the rendering in a letter to Leo Strauss (on 10 September, 1956): "My translation of *ʾel ʿolam* adopted after some hesitation, was due to a wish to keep constantly to the method adumbrated. For while it is evident, that

that he begins all his major works, *Commentary on Mishnah*, *Mishneh Torah*, and *The Guide of the Perplexed*, with it. One may say that Abraham is the first one whom we encounter in the *Guide*.

More importantly, this verse suggests that the Tetragrammaton, which according to Maimonides is "indicative of the essence of" God,[28] is known to Abraham. It is true that one may read Maimonides' epigraph "In the name of the Lord, God of the World" as a eulogy to God and separate it from its context, that is, without connecting it to Abraham. Still, the question of whether Abraham knew the Tetragrammaton can be discerned in Maimonides' discussion of the biblical verse in his text.

When presenting one of the three opinions on the causality of the world, that "the world as a whole […] was brought into existence by God after having been purely and absolutely nonexistent", Maimonides points out that

> This is one of the opinions [i.e., about the coming into being of the world]. And it is undoubtedly a basis of the Law of *Moses our Master*, peace be on him. And it is second to the basis that is the belief in the unity [of God]. Nothing other than this should come to your mind. It was *Abraham our Father, peace be on him*, who began to proclaim in public this opinion to which speculation had led him. For this reason, he made his proclamation "in the Name of the Lord, God of the world" [*Gen.* 21,33]; he had also explicitly stated this opinion in saying: "Maker of heaven and earth".[29]

This passage is crucial for understanding Maimonides' view on Moses and Abraham. In the first place, Maimonides makes it clear that Abraham does know the holy name of God, which can be shown in his proclamation "in the Name of the Lord, etc.". Moreover, he points out that Abraham was *led by speculation* "to proclaim in public this opinion". Yet there the question arises: what exactly was "this opinion"

Maimonides wanted *in petto* to say 'God of the World', it is more than likely that he was aware that the uninitiated reader, having some knowledge of Hebrew and of the Bible would understand the words to mean: God of Eternity": see J. L. KRAEMER, J. STERN, "Shlomo Pines on the Translation of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*", in *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, 8 (1998), 13-24: 22.

[28] MAIMONIDES, *The Guide*, I 61, tr. PINES, 147-149: 148. As Maimonides explains, "this great name, […] is indicative of a notion with reference to which there is no association between God, may He be exalted, and what is other than He": see MAIMONIDES, *The Guide*, I 61, tr. PINES, 148.

[29] MAIMONIDES, *The Guide*, II 13, tr. PINES, 282.

that Abraham proclaimed? Was it *creatio ex nihilo*? Or, was it rather the unity of God? Maimonides makes it unclear, perhaps deliberately, as he later connects "this opinion" also to Abraham's acclaim of "Maker of heaven and earth". To answer this question, it should first be noted that in our passage, Maimonides states that *creatio ex nihilo* is not the first of the foundation of the Law; instead, the unity of God is. Why is that so? Because, according to Maimonides, *creatio ex nihilo*, like the eternity of the world, cannot be demonstrated, whereas the unity of God is demonstrable.[30] It is true that the context of this passage is "the coming into being of the world", which renders a stronger possibility for *creatio ex nihilo*; still, it would seem unnecessary for Maimonides to insert "the unity of God" as the prioritized foundation of the Law. Therefore, it is more likely that Maimonides refers "this opinion" to "the unity of God". In other words, he intends to draw our attention to Abraham's capacity of understanding the unity of God, which is a demonstrable truth in his view, by his own speculation.

Indeed, Maimonides repeatedly associates Abraham with the speculative knowledge of the unity of God. As he states in one of the passages that parallels Moses and Abraham:

> He who received a great overflow, as for instance *Abraham*, assembled the people and called them by the way of teaching and instruction to adhere to the truth that he had grasped. Thus *Abraham* taught the people and explained to them by means of speculative proofs that the world has but one deity, that He has created all the things that are other than Himself, and that none of the forms and no created thing in general ought to be worshipped. […] But he never said: God has sent me to you and has given me commandments and prohibitions.[31]

Surely, the prophet that God has sent and given commandments and prohibitions was Moses, though his name does not appear in the passage. The comparison between the prophecy of Moses and that of the Patriarchs has already been made in *Guide* I 63, where Maimonides asserts that "the Patriarchs were addressed in regard to their private affairs only".[32]

In the cited passage, Maimonides singles out Abraham and stresses again that he was the one who received "a great overflow" and that he

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[30] Maimonides, *The Guide*, II 1-2, tr. Pines, 245-252.

[31] Maimonides, *The Guide*, II 39, tr. Pines, 379.

[32] Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 63, tr. Pines, 154.

taught the people "by means of speculative proofs". The term "overflow" or *fayḍ* is used by Maimonides for describing how the separate intellects work on the heavenly spheres and on the lower world.[33] For him, "overflow" also plays a central role in prophecy: "the truth and quiddity of prophecy consists in its being an overflow overflowing from God, […] through the intermediation of the Active Intellect", which is the last among the separate intellects, "toward the rational faculty in the first place and thereafter toward the imaginative faculty".[34] According to Maimonides, Abraham's teaching of the unity of God and His creation does not involve imagination at all; rather, it was "by means of speculative proofs". In this way, "a great overflow" that Abraham received points to his great intellectual apprehension and thus to his great human perfection.

The truth that Abraham grasped, the existence of God and His unity, is no other than the first two Commandments of the Decalogue that Moses received from God later. In his discussion of the "Gathering at Mount Sinai", the revelation par excellence, Maimonides makes it clear that "these two principles, I mean the existence of the deity and His being one, are knowledge by human speculation alone". He further explains that "with regard to everything that can be known by demonstration, the status of the prophet and that of everyone else who knows it are equal. […] Thus, these two principles are not known through prophecy alone".[35] This conclusion is a clue pointing to how Abraham obtained his knowledge of God, of the first two commandments.[36] Mai-

[33] See especially MAIMONIDES, *The Guide*, II 12, tr. PINES, 279, where Maimonides claims that "He caused His knowledge to overflow to the prophets". But he also makes clear that the degree of the prophecy that the prophets received is in accordance with their natural disposition, that is, with the degree of their intellectual apprehension. See MAIMONIDES, *The Guide*, II 32, tr. PINES, 362-363.

[34] MAIMONIDES, *The Guide*, II 36, tr. PINES, 369.

[35] MAIMONIDES, *The Guide*, II 33, tr. PINES, 364. It is worth noting that in this context, Maimonides states further that "As for the other commandments, they belong to the class of generally accepted opinions and those adopted in virtue of tradition, not to the class of the intellecta": see *Ibidem*. According to Maimonides, "generally accepted opinions" belong to knowledge of good and evil, i.e., what Adam obtained after eating the forbidden fruit, which is inferior to knowledge of truth and falsehood, i.e., what Adam was endowed at his creation. See MAIMONIDES, *The Guide*, I 1-2, tr. PINES, 21-26.

[36] In commenting Maimonides' discussion of the "Gathering at Mount Sinai" in *Guide* II 33, Howard Kreisel noticed that "Maimonides insists that the 'voice' [of God]

monides implies that Abraham knew by his own understanding or apprehension the central principles of the Mosaic Law.[37]

In a passage in the first book of *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides explicitly points out that Abraham, "the Pillar of the world", was the first that "attained the way of truth". He makes clear that Abraham did not have any teacher, either divine or human. Although Abraham had the innate curiosity and the capacity of reflection, at first, he worshipped stars and images just as his father and mother and his fellow people did. Only when he was forty, when he became intellectually mature enough, did he "recognize his Creator", that is, did he attain the knowledge of God's creation and unity. In this context, Maimonides states that, after arriving at Canaan, Abraham "proclaimed his message, as it is said, 'And he called there in the name of the Lord, God of the Universe [*Gen*. 21,33]".[38] As we have seen, in all the passages that mention Abraham's knowledge of God, Maimonides associates it with his proclamation, "in the name of the Lord", therewith confirming Abraham's specific knowledge of the Tetragrammaton. However, in Moses' case, it was God who "appointed Moses to be our teacher and the teacher of

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heard by the people, whether as an articulate one or inarticulate, conveyed only the first two commandments"; and he sharply points out that "It is certainly strange to imply that all members of the nation attained demonstrative proof of the existence and unity of God. This, however, is not Maimonides' position". Yet Kreisel does not associate this text with Maimonides' depiction of Abraham' speculative knowledge of the existence and unity of God: see H. Kreisel, *Prophecy: The History of an Idea in Medieval Jewish Thought* (Amsterdam Studies in Jewish Thought 8), Dordrecht 2001, 231-232.

[37] Some may question whether, according to Maimonides' conception of overflow and prophecy, Abraham received his knowledge from the overflow of the separate intellect, which in turn came from the overflow of God. Therefore, some may suggest, Abraham cannot independently obtain knowledge of God by his own speculation. However, in Maimonides' view, intellectual apprehension is a general human capacity given by God; in this way, the intellectual apprehension of every individual can be seen as an inborn or natural capacity. On the contrary, the capacity of prophecy is a particular capacity, which is given by God to a small group of people. In Abraham's case, he understands independently by his own intellectual apprehension that God is one, that He exists and created the world; whereas as a prophet, he receives prophecy such as "the binding of Isaac" from a particular prophetic revelation.

[38] Maimonides, "Laws concerning Idolatry and the Ordinances of the Heathens", in *Mishneh Torah, The Book of Knowledge*, ed. Hyamson, 66b-67a. Like Shlomo Pines, Hyamson also renders *ʿolam* as "universe" (synonymous with "world") rather than "eternity". See above, footnote 27.

all the prophets", and it was God who charged Moses "with his mission", as well as showing Moses and the Israelites "the way to worship Him and how to deal with idolatry" and so on.[39] In short, according to Maimonides, Moses realized the error of star worship and other foreign worship through divine revelation, which means, he did not understand the problem of idolatry by his own speculation.

Abraham and Moses in the *Guide*

As we have seen hitherto, no matter how implicitly, Moses' exceptional superiority is questionable in the *Guide*. At the same time, Abraham is tacitly depicted to be of high speculative knowledge. Since, for Maimonides, the criterion for human perfection is "acquisition of the rational virtue", which consists in grasping the "true opinions concerning the divine things",[40] if Abraham is indeed superior in perfection to Moses, in which way does his knowledge of divine things or of God surpass that of Moses? We examine this question from three aspects.

In the first place, let us see the appellation that Maimonides provides for Abraham and Moses. In most cases, Maimonides addresses the two prophets in the traditional Jewish way, that is, "Abraham our Father" (ʾAvraham ʾavinu)[41] and "Moses our Master" (Mosheh rabbenu).[42] In one case, as the author of the Torah, Moses is called "the Master of those who know".[43]

Among the appellations of Abraham, perhaps the most interesting one is "the pillar of the world".[44] This honorific points to the fact that Abraham is not merely the Father of our Israelites, but in a broader sense, also the Father of all the nations, or simply, the Father of human beings. Indeed, the name of *Abraham* designates "father of many [nations]", as is shown in *Genesis* 17,5. In the same chapter that Abraham

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[39] Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, The Book of Knowledge*, ed. Hyamson, 67a.

[40] Maimonides, *The Guide*, III 54, tr. Pines, 635.

[41] See Maimonides, *The Guide*, II 13; 17; 22; 30; 39; 41, III 24; 29; 45; 49.

[42] See Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 21; 37; 54; 59; 63; II 13; 17; 26; 28; 32; 33; 34; 35; 39; 45; III 17; 25; 26; 27; 31; 32; 45; 46; 47; 50; 51; 54. It is worth noting that in some of the chapters, Maimonides uses the expression "the Law of Moses our Master". See further Maimonides, *The Guide*, II 13; 28; III 17; 25; 27.

[43] Maimonides, *The Guide*, III 12, tr. Pines, 448.

[44] Maimonides, *The Guide*, III 29, tr. Pines, 515.

is addressed as "the pillar of the world", Moses is called by Maimonides as "the Master of the prophets".[45] Does the difference in the two designations imply that Moses and his Law are characteristically Israelite, whereas Abraham is beyond the boundary of the nation?

Except for their different epithets, Abraham and Moses are entitled together as "the pillars of the well-being of human species".[46] The phrase "the well-being of human species" seems ambiguous: does the well-being lead to the perfection of the human individual, and therewith to the rational virtue, or does it rather lead to the perfection of the human community, and therewith to moral virtues? The broad context in which this title appears is, again, Maimonides' discussion of the issue of "the coming into being of the world", that is, the question of "creation or eternity?" The two prophets come to sight as the authorities of the opinion of the Law that the world was created out of nothing, as Maimonides claims in the previous chapter: "the world's being produced in time is the opinion of *Abraham our Father* and our prophet *Moses*, may peace be on both of them".[47] The immediate context of the title, the adverbial modifier "with regard to its beliefs and its associations", expressly limits the title "the pillar of the well-being of the human species" within the religious and political realm. In other words, "the well-being" refers indeed to the well-being of the community of the believers. In Maimonides' view, while believing in the corporeality of God does not undermine the foundation of the Law, "the belief in eternity the way Aristotle sees it – that is, the belief according to which the world exists in virtue of necessity, that no nature changes at all, and that the customary course of events cannot be modified with regard to anything – destroys the Law in its principle".[48] In this sense, when Maimonides calls Abraham and Moses in this context "the pillars of the well-being of human species", the commonality of the two prophets is their status as the predecessor and founder of the Law.

The second aspect of our examination is Maimonides' exact view on Moses' knowledge of God. Is it true that, in Maimonides' view, Moses was "the greatest philosopher-scientist of all time", and the

[45] Maimonides, *The Guide*, III 29, tr. Pines, 517.

[46] Maimonides, *The Guide*, II 23, tr. Pines, 321.

[47] Maimonides, *The Guide*, II 22, tr. Pines, 320.

[48] Maimonides, *The Guide*, II 25, tr. Pines, 328.

uniqueness of his prophecy "consisted in the absolute supremacy of its metaphysical and scientific truth"?[49] Even though there are plenty of instances that would seem to support this view, Maimonides' contradictory presentations of the Mosaic prophecy encourage us to give a second thought on the question.

The key chapter that suggests the limitation of Moses' knowledge of God is *Guide* I 54. In the chapter Maimonides interprets in detail a biblical passage in *Exodus*:

> Therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, shew me now Thy ways, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight. (*Exod*. 33,13)
>
> Show me, I pray Thee, Thy glory. (*Exod*. 33,18)
>
> And He said, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy". And He said, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live". (*Exod*. 33,19-20)[50]

In the passage, Moses makes two requests from God: to know His ways and His glory. Maimonides begins his interpretation with a general remark on the passage in question. He states that Moses received one answer to both his requests, and that while he asked for the knowledge of God's attributes in the first request and of "His essence and true reality" in the second request, God granted to let him know only His attributes, that is, His "ways". As Maimonides says: Moses was taught by God that "His essence cannot be grasped as it really is".[51] In Maimonides' presentation, the "ways" (*derākhim*) of God are His attributes of action, "merciful and gracious, long-suffering [*Exod*. 34,6-7]" and so on, which were called by the Sages as *middōt* (characteristics, or attributes).[52] And he clarifies further that the term *middōt* is "applied

[49] A. J. Reines, "Maimonides' Concept of Mosaic Prophecy", in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 40/41 (1969-1970), 344.

[50] The translation of these biblical verses follows Pines' translation in the *Guide*, which is based on the King James Version (KJV).

[51] Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 54, tr. Pines, 123.

[52] Maimonides makes it clear that "God's ways" are the "Thirteen Characteristics" (or Thirteen Attributes) that the Talmudic Sages talked about: see Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 54, tr. Pines, 124.

to moral qualities".[53] In other words, Moses was promised only the knowledge of God's attributes of action, which are models for human moral virtues. This knowledge is clearly not as high as the speculative knowledge of God's unity that Abraham had grasped.

However, this much is not enough to establish the limitation of Moses' knowledge of God, for, after the general remark at the beginning of *Guide* I 54, Maimonides makes a turn and speaks about "a subject of speculation", and stresses again the unique and exceptional status of Moses' apprehension. As he points out, "when he [i.e., Moses] would know the *ways*, he would know Him". Yet he immediately explains that "he who knows God *finds grace in His sight* and not he who merely fasts and prays, but everyone who has knowledge of Him".[54] This explanation implies that knowledge of God's "ways" or attributes is not only accessible to Moses, but available for everyone. However this may be, the following passage seems to challenge our view that Moses' knowledge was limited within the practical realm.

> When he [Moses] asked for knowledge of the attributes and asked for forgiveness for the nation, he was given a [favorable] answer with regard to their being forgiven. Then he asked for the apprehension of His essence, may He be exalted. This is what he means when he says, "Show me, I pray Thee, Thy glory" [*Exod*. 33,18]; whereupon he received a [favorable] answer with regard to what he had asked for at first – namely, "Show me Thy ways" [*Exod*. 33,13]. For he was told: "I will make all My goodness pass before thee" [*Exod*. 33,19]. In answer to his second demand, he was told: "Thou canst not see My face, and so on" [*Exod*. 33,20]. This dictum – *All my goodness* – alludes to the display to him of all existing things of which it is said: "And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" [*Gen*. 1,31].[55]

According to Maimonides, "all My goodness" refers to the whole created world to which it is said, "And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good [*Gen*. 1,31]". In the same vein, "pass before thee" means that Moses will apprehend the nature of every thing and "the way they are mutually connected so that he will know how He governs them in general and in detail".[56] Since in Maimonides' view, the knowledge of the essence of God is indicated in the knowl-

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[53] Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 54, tr. Pines, 124.

[54] Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 54, tr. Pines, 123.

[55] Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 54, tr. Pines, 124.

[56] Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 54, tr. Pines, 124.

edge of the created things,[57] if Moses indeed apprehended the nature of every thing and "the ways they are mutually connected", he would be truly ranked as the most perfect prophet. However, on closer inspection, this is not the case, especially when we read this passage in the light of Maimonides' own "scattered" insinuations or "chapter headings".

When Maimonides interprets God's *glory* as the essence of God, he refers to God's reply to Moses, that "thou canst not see My face [*Exod*. 33,20a]".[58] He left behind the second half of the verse, "for there shall no man see me, and live [*Exod*. 33,20b]". In this context, Maimonides also does not mention a significant part of the next sentence, in which God told Moses, "and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen [*Exod*. 33,23]". In an earlier chapter, Maimonides has explained this biblical verse:

> "but My face shall not be seen" [*Exod*. 33,23] means that "Moses demanded a certain apprehension […] and was promised an apprehension inferior to that which he had demanded. It is this latter apprehension that is named *the seeing of the back* in its dictum: 'And thou shalt see My back'".[59]

This passage is a hint foreshadowing his interpretation of Moses' requests in *Guide* I 54. Maimonides makes it clear that the knowledge that God granted to Moses was an inferior one. The essence of God is surely superior to the attributes of God. Moreover, only in this passage does Maimonides explicitly connect God's "face" and His "back", in a metaphorical way, to God's essence and attributes, respectively.

The Hebrew words for "face", *panim*, and for "back", *ʾaḥor*, have been explained earlier in the lexicographic chapters. Due to his strong rejection of divine corporeality, Maimonides states that when applied to God, the equivocal term *panim* [face] signifies figuratively "the anger and wrath of God". He explains that the biblical verse that "the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face" [*Deut*. 5,4] means "as a presence to another presence without an intermediary". It is in that context, Maimonides makes it clear, that the verse "But My face shall not be seen" indicates that "the true reality of My [i.e., God's] existence as it veritably is cannot

[57] See Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 46, tr. Pines, 103.

[58] Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 54, tr. Pines, 123.

[59] Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 21, tr. Pines, 48.

be grasped".[60] This remark is in accord with Maimonides' explanation of the two requests of Moses in *Exodus* 33, that while Moses asked for knowing both God's attributes and His essence, God promised to him only His attributes of action. Maimonides also points out that Onqelos the Aramaic translator of the Bible renders "My face" as "those in front of Me", which according to him indicates that "there are likewise great created beings whom man cannot apprehend as they really are. These are the separate intellects".[61] Close to the end of the chapter on *panim* [face], Maimonides claims that "further on you shall hear my interpretation of that which was demanded by *Moses our Master,* peace be on him".[62] This statement hints at the connection between *Guide* I 37 and I 54.

If the "face" of God stands for higher beings that are free from matter, such as separate intellects or God, what then does "God's back" refer to? The Hebrew term for "back" – *ʾaḥor*, is explained by Maimonides in the chapter right after that on *panim*. According to Maimonides, *ʾaḥor* has the meaning of "following and imitating the conduct of some individual with respect to the conduct of life" in this sense: when applied to God, it means "following in obedience to" God and "imitating His acts".[63] Exactly in this context, Maimonides interprets the verse "And thou shalt see My back [*Exod*. 33,23b]" as meaning "thou shalt apprehend what follows Me, has come to be like Me […] as I shall explain in a chapter of this Treatise".[64] Again, he hints at his discussion of Moses' requests from God in I 54. Maimonides' explication that seeing "God's back" is following and imitating God's actions excellently echoes his connecting God's ways to His attributes and therewith to His actions, which are the prototype for moral virtues.

As we have shown, to achieve an adequate understanding of Maimonides' thought on the issue of Moses' knowledge of God, the passages in I 21 have to be read in the light of I 54, and vice versa. The same holds for I 37 and I 38.

Now let us return to the passage in I 54, where Maimonides cites the biblical phrase "all My goodness", and seems to suggest that Moses

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[60] Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 37, tr. Pines, 86.

[61] Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 37, tr. Pines, 86.

[62] Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 37, tr. Pines, 86.

[63] Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 38, tr. Pines, 87.

[64] Maimonides, *The Guide*, I 38, tr. Pines, 87.

would obtain theoretical knowledge of the nature of all beings. However, he indicates in the following passage that

> Scripture has restricted itself to mentioning only those *thirteen characteristics*, although [Moses] apprehended *all His goodness* – I mean to say all His actions – because these are the actions proceeding from Him, may He be exalted, in respect of giving existence to the Adamites and governing them. This was [Moses'] ultimate object in his demand, the conclusion of what he says being: "That I may know Thee, to the end that I may find grace in Thy sight and consider that this nation is Thy people" [*Exod*. 33,13] – that is, a people for the government of which I need to perform actions that I must seek to make similar to Thy actions in governing them.[65]

Now we see what Maimonides means by "all My goodness": it again refers to "all the actions of God". The knowledge that God promised for Moses is again the knowledge of God's attributes, or so to speak, of moral virtues rather than of rational virtues. According to Maimonides, the reason for Moses to request knowledge of God was that being a religious and political ruler, he needs to know how to reward and punish, and how to instruct in governing his people. For that, he needs to imitate God's actions. These actions are expressed in rabbinic notion of "the thirteen characteristics" of God in *Exodus* 34,6-7.[66]

In addition to the above two aspects, Maimonides' subtle presentation of Abraham deserves our special attention. Abraham is placed by Maimonides on the eleventh degree, that is, the highest degree of prophets. In that context, Maimonides claims that

> The eleventh degree consists in the prophet's seeing an *angel* who addresses him *in a vision*, as *Abraham at the time of the binding* [*of Isaac*] [*Gen*. 22]. In my opinion this is the highest of the degrees of the prophets whose states are attested by the prophetic books, after the perfection of the rational faculties of the individual, considered as necessary by speculation has been established, and provided one exempts *Moses our Master*.[67]

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[65] MAIMONIDES, *The Guide*, I 54, tr. PINES, 124-125.

[66] It should be noted that there is no indisputable view on what exactly are the thirteen characteristics of God. See *Babylonian Talmud*, Rosh Hashanah 17b, in *The Babylonian Talmud, Seder Moʿed in Four Volumes*, Volume IV, tr. with Notes, Glossary and Indices under the editorship of Rabbi Dr. I. EPSTEIN, London 1938, 68.

[67] MAIMONIDES, *The Guide*, II 45, tr. PINES, 402.

Regardless of the fact that Maimonides excludes Moses from the ranking of prophecy, he compares him with Abraham at the highest degree, as if Moses were not simply beyond that degree. Indeed, in his description, Abraham, "at the time of binding", had achieved "the perfection of the rational faculties". What else can be higher than that state? This is clear evidence that Abraham did obtain the ultimate perfection in Maimonides' view.

Concluding Remarks

Despite Maimonides' efforts to maintain the exceptionally highest status of Moses and his prophecies, his interpretations of Moses' two requests and God's response to him in *Exodus*, which are scattered in different chapters of the First Part of the *Guide*, led us to the understanding that "what has been apprehended by" Moses is limited to God's actions, or so to speak, to moral virtues that are linked to these actions. It is because Moses was *the* political leader of a chosen community that is united by the divine law that Maimonides depicts him as a prophet who needs more urgent practical knowledge of governing a people rather than speculative knowledge about God's essence. In this sense, his apprehension is indeed exceptional, though not necessarily the most superior.

Now we may say, in the *Guide of the Perplexed*, Abraham and Moses stand for two different types of human perfection: Moses is the legislative prophet who receives from God the Law and proclaims it to the people; he is the greatest political man in governing the people by imitating God's actions.

Given the ultimate importance of the Law to the Jewish people, Moses should be seen as the most important prophet. On the other hand, although Abraham is in a lower rank than Moses in receiving specific prophecy,[68] as an individual prophet, he attains the speculative truth such as God's existence and His unity by his own speculation; he knows the most holy name of God and teaches people to believe in One God and disputes against the practice of worshipping the stars and images, much earlier than the promulgation of the Law.[69] Abraham is

[68] Maimonides, *The Guide*, II 45, tr. Pines, 402-403.

[69] Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, The Book of Knowledge*, ed. Hyamson, 66b-67a;

thus closer to the highest human perfection in Maimonides' view, the perfection of rational virtues.

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The Guide, III 29, tr. Pines, 517.

Angels and Prophets in Thirteenth-Century Latin Prophetology

Anna Rodolfi

The relationship between the angel and the prophet is a central and characteristic topic in Islamic prophetology, starting with Avicenna.[1] In thirteenth-century Latin prophetology, this subject is discussed in a more limited and circumscribed way,[2] but not without interest for at least two reasons. First of all, this discussion represents a crucial touchstone for the study of the relationship between Arab and Latin prophetology, their similarities and differences.

[1] This research is part of the research project PRIN PNRR 2022: *Social, Political, and Religious Prognostication and its Roots: Philosophical Strategies for Coping with Uncertainties and Planning the Future* (PI Alessandro Palazzo). I wish to thank Amos Bertolacci for his careful reading of the oral version of this research and for his observations. I wish to thank Matteo Stettler for the linguistic revision of the English version of this article. For a specific treatment of Avicenna's doctrine of prophecy and its relevance in the metaphysical and anthropological spheres, see A. Bertolacci, "The Metaphysical Proof of Prophecy in Avicenna", in *Prophets and Prophecy in the Middle Ages,* ed. A. Palazzo, A. Rodolfi (Micrologus Library 103), Firenze 2020, 39-75. On angels and prophets in Avicenna's thought, see M. Sebti, *Avicenne. Prophetie et gouvernement du monde*, Paris 2021,19-26. For further insights on the conception of prophecy in the Arabic world, with specific reference to al-Ġazālī and the doctrine of the creative imagination of the prophet in Alfarabi, see M. Signori, "Prophecy and the Authority of the Prophet in al-Ġazālī's *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*", in *Prophets and Prophecy*, ed. Palazzo, Rodolfi, 76-99; C. Martini Bonadeo, "La rivelazione, la profezia, il profeta e la sua facoltà immaginativa nelle opere di Abu Nasr Al-Farabi", in *Prophets and Prophecy*, ed. Palazzo, Rodolfi, 5-38. On the relationship between the prophet and the astrologer, refer to Germano Gorga's essay in this same volume ("The Epistemology of Astrology and Prophethood from Abū Maʿšar to Avicenna's *Metaphysics*").

[2] The relationship between the angel and prophecy is also a limited but recurring theme in treatises of Latin prophetology too. For a specific examination of this aspect in Thomas Aquinas' theological thought, see. S. T. Bonino, "L'ange et le prophète: la médiation angélique dans la révélation prophétique selon saint Thomas", in *Revue Thomiste*, 104 (2008), 141-166.

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Secondly, it offers a privileged viewpoint from which to consider thirteenth-century Latin prophetology with its specific issues, internal tensions, and historical development.[3]

In this paper, we will begin by considering some of the more general elements of thirteenth-century Latin prophetology. On this basis, we will proceed to recall the more significant moments in the discussion on the relationship between angels and prophets in the works of thirteenth-century authors, from William of Auxerre to Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great. To conclude, we will propose some final remarks to summarize the main points that emerged from the analysis.

1. The Vocabulary of Prophecy in Scholastic Thought

By thirteenth-century prophetology, we mean a rather compact and coherent set of texts and questions *de prophetia*, which extends from the 1220s to the end of the century and the first decades of the next: from the first interventions of William of Auxerre, Hugh of St. Cher, Philip the Chancellor, and Alexander of Hales, through Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas in the mid-century, to Vitale du Four, Nicholas of Lyra, or John Baconthorpe.

These authors consider prophecy autonomously, that is, independently from the commentaries on the prophetic books of the Bible typical of the early medieval period, and do so in treatises that take the form of the *quaestio*. Central to these is the theme of prophetic knowledge, partly due to the influence of Aristotelian psychology.[4] As

[3] On the conceptualization of the idea of prophecy in thirteenth-century philosophical and theological debates, see B. Decker, *Die Entwicklung der Lehre von der prophetischen Offenbarung von Wilhelm von Auxerre bis zu Thomas von Aquin*, Breslau 1940; J.-P. Torrell, *Théorie de la prophétie et philosophie de la connaissance aux environs de 1230. La contribution d'Hugues de Saint-Cher*, Leuven 1977, and his collection of essays *Recherches sur la théorie de la prophétie au moyen âge, XII-XIV siècles: études et textes,* Fribourg 1992; M. Schlosser, *«Lucerna in caliginoso loco». Aspekte des Prophetie-Begriffes in der scholastischen Theologie*, Paderborn 2000. For further specific considerations about prophetic knowledge, see also, A. Rodolfi, «*Cognitio obumbrata*». Lo *statuto epistemologico della profezia nel secolo XIII* (Micrologus Library 74), Firenze 2016.

[4] For the influence of Aristotelian gnoseology on the doctrine of prophetic knowledge elaborated by the theologians of the thirteenth century, see Torrell, *Théorie de la prophétie*, 210-242; S.T. Bonino, "Le rôle de l'image dans la connaissance prophétique d'après saint Thomas d'Aquin", in *Revue thomiste*, 89 (1989), 533-568.

a form of divine revelation, prophecy conveys knowledge that goes beyond the ordinary. In order to comprehend its status, one must therefore examine: a) its internal articulation; b) the status of the prophet as a knowing subject; and c) the means through which prophecy is realized.

a) During the thirteenth century, the structure of the prophetic process was canonized around three phases: the reception of images, the interpretation of their meanings, and the proclamation of the revealed truth.[5] The reception of images already confers prophetic knowledge, but not always is the receiver also able to comprehend them. Therefore, another step is needed, that of interpretation. The exemplary case is the Pharaoh's dream and its interpretation by Joseph. Overall, the essential moment in thirteenth-century Latin prophetology is that of interpretation, which is what allows the acquisition of actual prophetic knowledge. It is even more important than the proclamation phase, that is, the political role of the prophet, which is instead central on the other hand in Arabic prophetology.[6]

b) As for the subject, he may become a prophet either occasionally, which is to say punctually (*actus*), or by virtue of a permanent faculty (*habitus*).

Contrary to the Arabs, most Latin authors in the thirteenth-century debate opt for the former (*actus*, not *habitus*):[7] the prophet is therefore conceived as a predominantly passive instrument, which also accounts for those biblical cases of unaware prophets (for example, Balaam's ass),[8] or even evil ones (the paradigmatic case of Caiaphas).[9]

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[5] See Hugo de sancto Caro, *Quaestio de prophetia*, in Torrell, *Théorie de la prophétie*, 10-11.

[6] For the political role attributed to the prophet by Arabic philosophers, see Sebti, *Avicenne*, 163-237.

[7] See Torrell, *Théorie de la prophétie*, 151-169; Schlosser, *«Lucerna in caliginoso loco»*,188-193; A. Rodolfi, "«Habitus» o «actus»? La definizione della conoscenza profetica nel XIII secolo", in *Concezione e valore della profezia fra riflessione antropologica e funzione politica (XII-XV secolo)*, ed. M. V. Ingegno (Percorsi di esegesi antica e medievale 2), Canterano (RM), 49-75.

[8] *Num*. 22, 22-35.

[9] On the discussion of this specific case of the prophet, I take the liberty of referring to a work of mine: A. Rodolfi, "Prophesying and being a prophet. The case of Caiaphas as an evil prophet, from Hugh of Saint-Cher to Thomas Aquinas", in *Prophets and Prophecy in the Middle Ages,* ed. Palazzo, Rodolfi, 165-187.

c) And finally, the means. Prophetic knowledge, as *visio* Dei, can only be indirect or mediated. As to what its means are, we can distinguish two main phases in the thirteenth-century debate. For a first generation of authors, including Philip the Chancellor and Hugh of St. Cher, the means of prophetic knowledge is the *speculum aeternitatis*.[10] The prophet sees the future in this medium, rather than directly in God. For a second generation, that of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, the means are instead the images present in the prophet's mind, according to the terms of the Aristotelian theory of knowledge. In an author like Albert, prophetic knowledge is said to properly arise from the abstracting action that the divine light exerts on the images already present in the prophet's mind – images that are not created but given a new configuration, bringing a new meaning, just as in an anagram by changing the order of the letters one obtains a new word.

2. The Relationship Between Angels and Prophets in Thirteenth-Century Latin Thought

Latin authors discuss the relationship between prophecy and angels within this theoretical framework. Besides the means of knowledge, that is, the media, there are also mediators. The first link between angels and prophets emerges precisely at this point. Prophecy is the mediation between God and man through another man, the prophet, who acts as a mediator along the stairway of the *reditus* that will one day bring man back to God. But alongside the prophet, or rather, above him, there is another important step on the stairway ascending to God, namely the angel. In any case, the association of angels and prophets is inevitable for two separate reasons. First, the role of angelic mediation is attested by the Bible, where angels sometimes act as the authors or bearers of tidings related to the future, such as the Annunciation to Mary, the message of Christ's birth to the shepherds, and the promise of

[10] The notion of *speculum aeternitatis*, linked to Paul's expression "videre in speculo" (I *Cor*. 13, 12 and II *Cor*. 3, 18), is traced back to Godfrey of Poitiers (around 1215) and represents one of the major conceptual developments in the theory of prophecy of the early thirteenth century, see Decker, *Die Entwicklung der Lehre*, 51, note 9; Torrell, *Théorie de la prophétie*, 188, note 1; Schlosser, *«Lucerna in caliginoso loco»*, 104-112.

a son to Abraham.[11] Second, the principle established by Dionysius the Areopagite in the fourth chapter of *De caelesti hierarchia*, according to which the visions of the Fathers always occur through the mediation of heavenly powers: "Divinas visiones gloriosi fratres nostri adepti sunt per medias caelestes virtutes".[12]

The association of angels and prophets had already been exhaustively theorized by the Arabs. For an author like Avicenna, there is a functional similarity between the angel and the prophet (both function as mediators) because their essences or natures converge on the axis of continuity between the human soul and celestial minds. In Avicenna's prophetology, man becomes a prophet thanks to the mediation of angels, without which providential order could not reach him and the sublunary world. Having attained intellectual perfection, he himself becomes an angel, that is, a perfect mind that, while remaining human, no longer requires contact with the lower sphere of the senses in order to know.[13]

For Latin authors, too, the created universe was a highly hierarchical whole, yet not a fixed but a dynamic one, with that meaning that the order of the world allows beings endowed with intellect and will the possibility of an ascent: which is to say, the possibility, at least under certain exceptional conditions, to go beyond themselves, to ascend through the levels of being, and to draw closer to God, waiting to then achieve, through divine will and grace, their ultimate end, namely, the union with Him, the return home (*reditus*).

How to conceive the relationship between angels and prophets within this conceptual framework? Given that the two are tied by an essential relationship of mediation – "Propheta est medium inter angelos et populum", as Thomas Aquinas states in the *Quaestio XII de*

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[11] *Matth.* 1, 26-28; *Lc.* 2, 8-15; *Gen.* 11, 26 (other events of angelic apparition in *Ez*. 40, 3; *Dn*. 8, 16; *Zach*. 1, 8; *Ap*.12, 7).

[12] See Ps-Dionysius Areopagita, *De coelesti hierarchia*, c. 4. 2-3, in *Corpus Dionysianum* II, ed. G. Heil, A. M. Ritter, Berlin 2012, 22-23.

[13] See M. Sebti, "L'angélologie comme fondement de l'éxperience prophétique chez Avicenne", in *Anges et démons dans les traditions théologiques et métaphysiques*, éd. S. Margel, J. P. Schneider (Cahiers de la Revue théologie 24), Géneve 2021, 105-123: 106-111. For a presentation of angelology in Islamic philosophy, see O. L. Lizzini, "L'angelologia islamica: il Corano e la tradizione", in *Angeli*, ed. G. Agamben, E. Coccia, Vicenza 2009, 1455-1500.

veritate[14] – where does the angel's role as a mediator enter the chain of prophetic knowledge? The solution to these problems can be given by answering the following questions: a) the question of whether angels are or can themselves be prophets; b) the question of whether and how they intervene in the process by which prophets acquire their knowledge. Now, we will examine the discussion of these two themes in the texts of the Latin prophetologists of the thirteenth century, leaving momentarily aside Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, due to the complexity of their positions.

a) Whether angels can be prophets

William of Auxerre was the first among the Latin prophetologists of the thirteenth century to establish a continuity between angels and prophets. He does so explicitly in the seventh treatise of his *Summa aurea* by identifying a common denominator between the two on a gnoseological, rather than ontological level, on the basis of the concept of speculum aeternitatis: "Quoniam propheate ea quae vident, vident in speculo aeternitatis sicut angeli, post angelorum cognitionem agendum est de prophetia". Although both angels and prophets use the mirror as a mode of knowledge, they do not know the future in exactly the same way. In fact, William develops the concept of the mirror by distinguishing different aspects of it. If, as some affirm, the speculum were identical to the divine essence through whose illumination each mind knows, there would be fundamentally no difference between angels and prophets. The medium is thus the same. However, in the case of the angel, who is already blessed by contemplating God, the mirror coincides with a direct vision of the divine essence. Not so for the prophet, who is still a *viator*: in his case, the mirror consists of a cognitive medium that allows a type of knowledge that is doubly deficient compared to that of the angel – that is, knowledge that is only reflected and that concerns only the contents (not the essence) that God means to show:

> Si autem aliquid praeter divinam essentiam connotatur in creatura aut aliquis effectus, non videtur ille effectus esse nisi illuminatio qua illuminatur angelus, mediante qua illuminatione resultat, videt quae resultant in speculo. Sed cum omnes videntes aut cognoscentes ha-

[14] Thomas de Aquino, *Super Evangelium S. Ioanni lectura*, c. 20, lect. III, ed. R. Cai, Roma 1952, 466.

> beant huiusmodi illuminationem, videtur quod de quolibet homine etiam viatore posset dici sicut de angelo quod ipse videt in speculo. Quod falsum est.[15]

The gap between angel and prophet underlined by William while elaborating the concept of *speculum* takes on more consistency in the anonymous *Summa Duacensis*, whose author highlights the hierarchical organization of the various moments of prophecy. Such hierarchy comes to be reflected in the prophets themselves, who are regarded as more or less perfect depending on the moments of the process they have experienced. Drawing inspiration from the Augustinian theory of the three visions, the author of the *Summa* distinguishes three degrees of actualization in the prophetic process based on the psychic powers involved: actualization is material at the level of the images, habitual at the level of the intellect, and actual at the level of interpretation (*materialiter*, *habilitualiter*, *actualiter*). The prophet, in the full or complete sense, is the one who utilizes all three types of powers. He receives the images *materialiter*, grasps them with the intellect *habitualiter*, and finally interprets them *actualiter*: "Dicimus ergo quod prophetia etsi sit in vi triplici, in ymaginativa materialiter, in intellectiva est habitualiter, in interpretativa actualiter".[16] Moreover: "Dicitur etiam stricte propheta ille qui per ymagines cognitas habet cognitionem significati, ut fuit Ysaias qui legens et agnoscens quoniam ecce virgo concipiet, intellexit quod legebat".[17]

Of the three moments, the central one is interpretation (*virtus interpretativa*), in which the author of the *Summa duacensis* finds the prophecy *in actu*, that is the complete prophecy:

> tertio autem modo et verius et strictius dicitur interpretativa vis anime comprehendens imaginativam et intellectivam, quae scilicet attingit rerum figuras non ibi stando, sed ulterius rerum veritatem sub illis figuris attingendo.[18]

The angel, however, being immaterial, lacks this proper form of prophecy because he is bereft of the organs upon which the imagination de-

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[15] Gullillemus Autissiodorensis, *Summa Aurea*, tr. VI, ed. D. Ribaillier, Grottaferrata 1982, 140.

[16] See *La "Summa Duacensis"* (ms. Douai 434). *Texte critique avec introduction*, ed. P. Glorieux, Paris 1955, 135.

[17] *La "Summa Duacensis"* (ms. Douai 434), 135.

[18] *La "Summa Duacensis"* (ms. Douai 434), 135.

pends: therefore, the angel cannot be considered a prophet. The *vis* or *virtus interpretativa*, as noted in the *Summa duacensis*, is in fact indispensable to the success of the prophecy, which consists in bringing about repentance in the hope of future salvation:

> Cum enim propheta omnis sive sit ad consolationem sive ad terrorem exigat vim interpretativam de necessitate que cum instrumento fieri habet, et angelus careat illa vi, impossibile est quod angelus finem consequeretur prophetie […]. Cum ergo omnis propheta sit interpres.[19]

In other words, the *vis intepretativa* facilitates the transition from the private moments of the prophecy, i.e., the reception and interpretation of the message, to the public moment of the communication *ad extra* of its meaning through the proclamation, with all the fear that this should induce and the repentance that should follow in the community. This idea was taken up and developed by Hugh from St. Cher. Hugh observes that the phase of the proclamation constitutes another obstacle to the prophetic nature of the angel, as the angel lacks not only the images on which prophetic knowledge is based but also the "utterance" (*profari*), that is, that ability to communicate it, which is the whole point of prophecy:

> Angelus autem purus spiritus est et ideo non habet vim interpretativam ad denunciandum extra, et ideo non est propheta proprie. Fari enim proprie non convenit angelo quod est ratione prophetiae. Secundum nominis rationem prophetari enim dicitur quasi procul fari et propheta procul fans.[20]

Lacking the ability both to interpret the meaning of the images and to communicate it, the angel is thus doubly deficient as a prophet. Hugh's position exemplifies an approach whereby the question of the relationship between angel and prophecy is addressed from a philosophical perspective, that is, at least in part, independently of the scriptural facts, where, as already mentioned, angels do communicate and foretell.

The theme of *vis interpretativa* as the discriminating element between angels and prophets then circulates in thirteenth-century prophetology. Alexander of Hales, Philip the Chancellor, and the anonymous author from Assisi, whom Jean-Pierre Torrell studied, all adopted it. It is still present later in the century in Nicholas of Pressoir, a Pari-

[19] *La "Summa Duacensis"* (ms. Douai 434), 135.

[20] Hugo de sancto Caro, *Quaestio de prophetia*, in Torrell, *Théorie de la prophétie*, 3-58: 17.

sian reader of Albert the Great's *De prophetia* and himself an author of prophetological questions (1274). Nicholas discusses the hypothetical case, suggested by Philip the Chancellor in his *Summa de bono*, of an angel who has taken on a body and now has a voice ("sumendo corpus et in illo formando sonos et verba").[21] Not even in this case, states Nicholas, could he be considered a prophet, as the voice alone is not enough to constitute that more complex function of the *vis denunciativa*, the ability to proclaim, which is the combined effect of the organs of speech and the ability to interpret, without which the proclamation itself has no object. To this, Nicholas adds that the vision of the prophet, as a *viator*, is always of an indirect and enigmatic nature ("in speculo et in enigmate", according to St. Paul), whereas the angel, as a *beatus*, enjoys a *visio aperta* in a statutory way; when the future is revealed to him, he sees it revealed directly in the Word:

> Alia ratio est quia quando aliquid futurum ei revelatur, videt visione aperta videndo in speculo, scilicet visione comprehensoris, propheta videt non illa visione aperta que est comprehensoris, sed viatoris, et in tali visione sunt enigmata ut dicit quedam Glossa. Propter hoc angelus non dicitur propheta.[22]

Thus, the form that vision takes also distinguishes the prophet from the angel. This point had already been emphasized earlier by Alexander of Hales, who insisted that the prophet's vision of the future always takes place through the veil of the body (*velamen corpulentiae*), whereas the angel learns it through a vision *facie ad faciem*.[23] For the same reason, the angel can appear to man, but cannot inspire him, if by *spiritus* we mean, with Augustine and the Gloss, that inferior part of the soul where images are imprinted, that is, the imagination.[24] It is true that the angel's exclusion from the prophetic dimension depends on their

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[21] Philippi Cancellarii *Summa de bono, pars posterior*, III, I, q. 2, ed. N. Wicki, Berne 1985, 506.

[22] Nicolaus de Pressorio, *Quaestiones de prophetia*, q. 8, in A. Rodolfi, "Le *Quaestiones de prophetia* attribuite a Nicola di Pressoir (ms. Madrid 4008, ff. 52ra-82vb)", in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et litteraire du moyen âge*, 82 (2015), 227-259: 303.

[23] Alexander de Hales, *Quaestiones disputatae antequam esset frater*, q. 18, *De prophetia*, ed. V. Doucet (Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi vol. XX), Firenze 1960, 294.

[24] On the meaning of the term *spiritus*, see Torrell, *Théorie de la prophétie*, 170-187.

incorporeal nature. However, from this perspective, angels are characterized by a deficiency, which thus makes them unable to be prophets. On the other hand, being linked to the human condition through the body (because it is destined to it), prophecy appears in Latin prophetology as a distinctly human phenomenon: "[prophetia] non convenit nisi hominibus",[25] as Philip the Chancellor states. And it specifically regards men, with all their imperfections and limitations: here we are far from Avicenna's conception of the prophet as a man endowed with a perfect mind that, despite his body, allows him to somehow elevate his condition, bringing it closer to that of the angelic minds – so close to even confuse it with it.

b) The Role of the Angel in Divine Prophecy

Given that the angel is not, nor can be, a prophet, the authors of the thirteenth century ask whether the angel can at least contribute to prophetic phenomena and, if so, how. In the thirteenth-century debate, two alternative possibilities on this point emerge, depending on whether the angel's intervention occurs 1) at a material level, that is, it has something to do with the actual contents of prophetic knowledge (what the prophet knows), or 2) at a formal level, that is, it pertains to the modes of such knowledge (how the prophet knows and by what means).

1) Regarding the first possibility, whether angels can be the source of the contents of prophetic knowledge, the prevailing response in the debate is negative, with at least one partial exception, that of Thomas. Prophetology in the thirteenth century progressively identified the proper object of prophecy in future contingents dependent on free will, alongside the *occulta Dei*. Generally, theories of angelic knowledge from the thirteenth-century theories hold that angels know through the *species* infused by God at the moment of creation. Despite their immaterial nature, angels are enabled by these species to know particular things in the world, although only virtually. However, these species do not allow angels to know future contingents, which by definition are not contained in those species, as they always pertain actually existing objects. Ultimately, even for angels, future contingents can be known solely through divine revelation. Angels can indeed inspire human be-

[25] Philippi Cancellarii *Summa de bono*, III, I q. 2, ed. Wicki, 506.

ings with regards to the knowledge of those natural contents that they themselves, by their own nature, know through the innate species that are created by God (even though, in this specific instance, the angel's intervention is not necessary, as human beings are also able to acquire such knowledge). Alternatively, angels can reveal the future, but only whenever they are expressly sent by God (*missus ad nos*) for that purpose. In any case, this revelation does not, strictly speaking, amount to prophetic inspiration. Nicholas of Pressoir, who elaborates specifically upon this theme, emphasizes that the angel's revelation cannot be called *prophetia* in the traditional sense, but rather an *angelica inspiratio*, since it ultimately derives its cause from God (*a Deo*) without mediation. Therefore, no angelic illumination exists regarding the contents of the future object of prophecy. Shedding light on the objects of prophetic knowledge is an exclusively divine faculty, as only God is the source of the truth of future contingents and their being:

> Ad aliud quod queritur utrum sit inspiratio angelica, dicendum quod si dicitur inspiratio prout est in prophetia, sic est revelatio de hiis que lumine divino illustrantur et hec inspiratio est futurorum contingentium, revelatio que etiam aliquo modo dependent a libero arbitrio nostro; et sic numquam est inspiratio angelica nisi dicatur angelica quia potest fieri a Deo per ministerium angelorum. Aliter potest dici quod cum angelica inspiratio sumitur revelatio. Angeli enim per species sibi concreatas cognoscunt res naturales lumine intellectus angeli, et de talibus potest fieri revelatio ab angelo ipsis hominibus et sic potest dici angelica inspiratio; sed de talibus non est inspiratio prophetica, sed futurorum contingentium dependentium a libero arbitrio.[26]

The angelic intellect, although ontologically positioned halfway between the human and the divine intellects, appears similarly limited in its capacity to fully grasp the flow of illumination that comes from God. It is for this very reason that God bypasses intermediaries and directly infuses in the prophet the gift of *lumen propheticum* whenever future contingents are concerned. From this point of view, the angel is merely an auxiliary or concomitant instrument of prophecy for the prophet:

> Ad aliud dicendum quod licet angelicus intellectus quantum ad cognitionem rerum naturalium possit mentem illuminare et quoad hoc sit angelus superior, tamen quoad illuminationem illam que est ad cognoscendum futura contingentia que non veritatem nec causam ha-

[26] Nicolaus de Pressorio, *Quaestiones de prophetia*, q. 8, ed. Rodolfi, 266.

> bent nisi in Deo, non est angelus superior immo equalis, et propter hoc respectu talium est illuminatio divina, nec ad hoc est illuminatio angelica.[27]

A further proof of the limitation in angels' abilities to directly convey contents of knowledge to the prophets is that, even when appearing to man, angels are not able to reveal knowledge about the meaning of their own apparition:

> Similiter dicunt de bonis angelis quia, sicut mali possunt apparitionem facere in vi inferiori, non tamen possunt dare cognitionem eius quod figuratur per illam apparitionem, similiter potest bonus angelus; et sic sumitur inspiratio et sic potest dici angelica. Sed ut dicitur inspiratio quoad cognitionem eius quod designatur per apparitionem non potest esse nisi divina.[28]

2) If angels cannot intervene on the contents of prophetic knowledge, the only remaining possibility is that they partake in the prophecy at a formal level, that is, in the modes and conditions of possibility of prophetic knowledge. For the most part, Latin prophetologists tend to focus their attention on this issue. Angels are known to have the ability to predispose and prepare the prophet at the natural level (a preparation that is superfluous for the prophet as the Arabs conceived him, that is, as someone already extraordinarily gifted with imagination and a naturally perfect intellection). They purify the prophet's mind to ensure maximum receptivity to divine truth, free from distractions. The action of angels thus perfects and improves the prophet's receptive capacity by subtraction, not by addition or development. Only God, Nicholas of Pressoir again affirms, is the source of angelic apparitions, as well as of the knowledge of the meaning of images (the *vis interpretativa*) in the prophet's mind; nonetheless, good angels can "preparare intellectum prophetae removendo impendimenta":

> Possunt etiam angeli boni preparare intellectum prophete removendo impedimenta, tamen dare lumen vel illuminationem facere qua intellectus prophete cognoscat quid significatur per illas apparitiones non potest aliquis nisi solus Deus. Tamen sine preiudicio puto quod in prophetia in qua est apparitio similitudinum et cognitio eorum que sunt sub illis apparitionibus, cum unum sit ordinatum ad alterum, sicut solus Deus illuminat mentem prophete ad cognoscendum quid figuratur per illas, ita ipse Deus imprimit et informat illas similitudi-

[27] Nicolaus de Pressorio, *Quaestiones de prophetia*, q. 8, ed. Rodolfi, 266.

[28] Nicolaus de Pressorio, *Quaestiones de prophetia*, q. 9, ed. Rodolfi, 268.

> nes sive facit illas apparitiones, nec dicitur propheta propter aliquas apparitiones si fiant per angelum.[29]

The anonymous author from Assisi also openly states that the angel cannot create any cognitive content in the prophet, thus excluding the possibility that the angel might be the direct source of the objects of prophetic knowledge: "prophetia est habitus infusus in creatura solo a Deo; angelus autem non habet potestatem creandi in nobis cognitionem".[30]

On the other hand, the author then concedes the possibility of angelic involvement in the cognitive dynamics of the prophet, a sort of preparatory and "pedagogical" involvement (*per modum docentis*):

> Dicitur tamen habere posse imprimendi similitudines in ymaginativam nostram, et si dicatur illuminare est solum per modum docentis, id est removentis impedimenta et preparantis intellectum ad recipiendum divine lucis infusionem.[31]

The comparison, derived from Augustine, between the action of the angel and that of the schoolmaster was first introduced by Hugh of St. Cher and then taken up by Philip the Chancellor. Also for Philip, who excludes the possibility of angelic intervention with respect to contents ("inspiratio angelica prophetia non est"),[32] the angel's illumination operates "per modum docentis", that is, it resembles the action of a schoolmaster who seeks to improve the receptive abilities of the student. The latter will receive contents elaborated by others, on behalf of whom the schoolmaster acts, very much like someone who, to use Philip's image, illuminates a house by opening the window through which light enters: "Ita dicitur angelus intellectum dare homini, ut quis dare lumen domui cui fenestram facit, cum eam non sua luce penetret vel illustret".[33]

The scope of action granted to the angel in most of the *de prophetia* treatises of the thirteenth century is thus limited to the preparation

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[29] Nicolaus de Pressorio, *Quaestiones de prophetia*, q. 9, ed. Rodolfi, 268.

[30] See. J.-P. Torrell, "Un «De prophetia» de saint Bonaventure? (Assisi, Bibl. Com. 186). Edition critique, avec introduction et notes", in Id., *Recherches sur la théorie de la prophetie au moyen âge*, 251-317: 287.

[31] Torrell, "Un «De prophetia» de saint Bonaventure? (Assisi, Bibl. Com. 186), 287.

[32] Hugo de Sancto Caro, *De prophetia*, ed. Torrell, 16-17, 157-158, 160.

[33] Philippi Cancellarii *Summa de bono*, q. 1, ed. Wicki, 493.

of something that already exists, excluding the creation of something new. This type of intervention is compared to the process of reorganizing images already present in the prophet's mind, which constitutes the specific nucleus of prophetic knowledge, as identified in the commentaries of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas.

The discussion on this point is ideally opened by the *Summa Halensis*, which is contemporaneous with Albert's first commentary on the subject. The author of the *Summa*, in fact, asserts that the angel, rather than evoking new images in the prophet's mind, can bring about a different ordering of the images already present in his imagination. However, the *Summa* remains vague and cautious about how this might occur, echoing Augustine's words about the extreme difficulty of knowing this process:

> Numquid potest angelus speciem unire sive similitudinem cum virtute imaginativa, quae prius numquam fuit in illa? Unitio illa est quantum ad effectum, non quantum ad essentiam: effectus autem in hoc attenditur quoad coniunctionem similitudinum quae sunt in imaginativa, ad quam coniunctionem excitat spiritus angelicus. Quo autem modo fit, sicut dicit Augustinus Super Genesim "scire difficillimum est et explicare operosissimum".[34]

The author who goes the furthest in this direction is Thomas, who illustrates a variety of ways in which the angel can intervene on the prophet's imagination and does not even exclude the formation of images in the prophet's mind, which is denied by most other authors:

> […] in revelatione prophetica duo concurrunt, scilicet mentis illustratio et formatio specierum in imaginativa virtute […] Sed ipsa formatio specierum in imaginativa virtute proprie angeli est attribuenda eo quod tota corporalis creatura administratur per creaturam spiritualem, ut Augustinus probat in tertium De Trinitate: vis autem imaginaria utitur organo corporali, unde specierum formatio in ipsa ad ministerium proprie pertinet angelorum.[35]

Aquinas' statements represented a new thesis in the thirteenth-century debate, and we cannot rule out that some clarifications on this point by later authors, such as Nicholas of Pressoir and Richard of Media-

[34] *Summa Halensis*, Ia-IIae, tr. 3, q. 3, m. 2, c. 3, ed. PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Firenze 1948, 257.

[35] Thomas de Aquino, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, q. XII, a. 8, sol., studio et cura Fratrum Praedicatorum (Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia 22/2-1), Romae 1970, 393.57-64.

villa, are entirely or at least partially critical reactions against Thomas' position. As we have seen, Nicholas of Pressoir advances the most restrictive thesis concerning the role of the angel, who assists rather than creates, defending his position against those who extend it to the impression of images in the prophet's imagination:

> Tamen aliqui dicunt quod non est inconveniens ponere quod aliquando fiat impressio imaginum per angelum in vi imaginaria prophete et per divinam illustrationem cognoscit quid per illas imagines vel apparitiones significatur. Alii dicunt quod utrumque, ut dictum est, fit a Deo in propheta.[36]

Richard of Mediavilla, on his part, concedes the possibility of an active role of the angel (*effective*), but limits it to the lowest level of vision, that of the body: at the moment of their apparition, angels can in some way produce words or facts to facilitate the emergence of a truth that would otherwise remain inaccessible to men. At the higher levels of vision, the angel's support is instead only preparatory or auxiliary (*dispositive*). Richard especially rules out the possibility that angels can impress new images in the prophet's imagination. According to Richard, that would be like showing colors to a person blind from birth or performing a miracle that only God can do:

> Sed primus gradus prophetiae potest esse ab angelo effective. Potest enim formare mediante aliquo corpore, aliqua verba sensibilia, vel facere facta, vel excitare hominem ad talia faciendum, vel dicendum, quae sunt repraesentativa alicuius veritatis, cuius cognitio transcendit naturalem hominis facultatem […] Non credo tamen, quod possit in imaginatione novas species imaginabiles imprimere per quas cogitativa sensibilis moveretur, quia tunc posset facere, quod caecus natus imaginaretur colorem.[37]

This controversial openness on the issue of the formation of images by angels is part of a wider theoretical framework in Thomas, which is characterized by the recognition of the active role of the angel in the prophetic experience. It is an approach that, all in all, seems closer to the Arab model, to which Thomas appears more receptive than other authors. For Thomas, as for the Arabs, angelic mediation in prophecy is, in fact, something statutory and not merely occasional or auxiliary. When faced with the apparently exceptional cases of prophets directly

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[36] Nicolaus de Pressorio, *Quaestiones de prophetia*, q. 8, ed. Rodolfi, 269.

[37] Richardus de Mediavilla, *Super Quatuor Libros Sententiarum*, III, d. 23, a. 8, q. 2, t. 3, Brixiae 1591 (rist. Frankfurt am Main 1963), 259.

touched by God (Moses or David, for example), Thomas makes a point of clarifying that angelic mediation is actually always present. According to Thomas, the angel intervenes in the prophecy primarily by strengthening the human intellect, "angelico lumine confortatur".[38] The prophetic light comes directly from God, Thomas explains, but it must adapt to the condition of the human mind *in via*, and this adaptation occurs thanks to the conjunction with the angelic light, which by its nature is more contracted and proportional to the human mind ("magis contractum et humanae menti magis proportionatum"). This active and essential role in prophetic mediation that Thomas Aquinas attributes to the angel aligns well with another important aspect of his angelology, namely the theory of the identity between angels and separate intelligences, which Thomas supports, once again echoing the positions of the Arabic authors.[39] In light of this, we can understand the angelic influence on the prophet's mind as a specific instance of a broader theory about the angelic ministry in the sublunary world, which is based on the general cosmological function performed by angels.

According to Thomas, the mediation of the angelic light is also in this case what endows human intelligence with a greater capacity of perception in judgment:

> Angelum neque creat species in mente nostra, neque immediate phantasmata illuminat; sed cum per continuitatem luminis eius cum lumine intellectus nostri noster intellectus potest efficacius phantasmata illustrare.[40]

Despite not being the author of this perception himself, the angel thus intervenes specifically in that *vis interpretativa*, which, as we have seen, constitutes the crucial moment of prophetic knowledge according to Latin prophetology. Because of the angelic light, the agent intellect of the prophet is enabled to judge better, that is, to correctly interpret the images and learn their meaning. The angel, says Thomas, can make

[38] Thomas de Aquino, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, q. XI, a. 3, 359.

[39] See Thomas de Aquino, *Responsio ad magistrum Ioannem de Vercellis de 43 articulis*, prol., in *Opuscula theologica*, I, ed. R.A. Verardo, Roma-Torino 1954, 211: "[…] caelestia corpora a spirituali creatura moveri, a nemini Sanctorum vel philosophorum negatum legisse me memini. Hoc igitur supposito quod Angeli moveant caelestia corpora, hoc in dubium nulli sapienti vertitur quin omnes motus naturales inferiorum corporum ex motu caelestis corporis causentur".

[40] Thomas de Aquino, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, q. XI, a. 3, ad 12, 360.

the species shine, either by stimulating the imagination or by supporting the intellect: "facit rerum similitudines in mente resultare vel movendo imaginationem vel lumen intellectus confortando".[41]

We thus return to the question of the contents of prophetic revelation and the formation of the species. At the level of *species intelligibiles*, as Thomas states in his *Quaestio XII de veritate*, the action of the angel does not consist in the creation of cognitive contents. This is because, from a metaphysical point of view, the angel cannot directly create anything, let alone intelligible forms or new concepts. At the level of the imagination, however, the issue is more complex.

In fact, the angel can make physical causes converge and arrange corporal reality in a way that leads the prophet to think about the actual significance of what he sees. Perhaps this is how we should understand the formation of images in prophecy, which Thomas attributes to the angel in his own right: "ipsa formatio specierum in imaginativa virtute proprie angelis est attribuenda".

To clarify the question, we can refer to what Thomas says in his *Quaestiones de malo* regarding the action of angels on the human intellect:

> Ex parte autem specierum angelus bonus vel malus potest immutare hominis intellectum ad aliud intelligendum non quidem influendo species in ipsum intellectum, set quaedam signa exterius adhibendo quibus intellectus excitatur ad aliquid apprehendendum, quod etiam homines facere possunt. Set etiam ulterius angeli boni vel mali possunt interius quodammodo disponere et ordinare species ymaginarias secundum quod competit ad aliquid intellegibile apprehendendum.[42]

Therefore, according to Thomas, angels act on the human intellect not by creating species *ex nihilo* within the intellect itself, but by working through the imagination in two ways: from outside the mind, that is, by predisposing external signs ("signa exterius adhibendo") that evoke new images in the mind, thus leading the intellect to apprehend something; or from within the mind itself, although in this case the angel does not actually create new images but rearranges and reorders the

[41] Thomas de Aquino, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, q. XI, a. 3, ad 15, 361.

[42] Thomas de Aquino, *Quaestiones disputatae de malo*, q. 16, a. 12, resp., studio et cura Fratrum Praedicatorum (Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia 23), Romae 1982, 333.

already existing ones ("disponere et ordinare species ymaginarias"), so as to stimulate intellection. The latter is the theme of the new order, or the anagram. Applying this theory to the case of prophecy, a detailed account of *formatio specierum* by the angel emerges: while the direct formation of intelligible species remains excluded, new images can be formed from outside through signs or the existing images in the mind can be rearranged in a new way. Along with the question of a new order, Thomas thus seems to allow the angel some possibility of evoking new images, albeit indirectly.

Albert the Great, too, moves in the same direction when it comes to the noetic support that angels provide for prophetic knowledge. Some elements of Albert's position correspond to those present in Thomas, although the consequences Albert draws from them are not the same. In his early work *De coaequaevis*, when discussing angelic illumination ("per quem modum angeli faciunt in nobis intellectum divinum"), he seems to suggest a very original thesis, which aligns him with the Arabs, especially Avicenna, namely, that the intellect of the angel unites with the agent intellect, almost taking its place. Thus, the angel acts as the agent intellect, which actualizes the prophet's potential intellect. The passage is not easy to interpret, but Albert, while explaining the mechanism of Augustine's three visions, seems to establish a continuity between the prophet's intellect and that of the angel, or even to consider the agent intellect itself an angel, on the basis of a principle of continuity between the prophet and superior intelligences that closely resembles the theses defended by Avicenna:

> Dicimus, quod triplex est modus, quibus Angeli illuminant animas, scilicet ad sensum, et ad imaginationem, et intellectum, secundum triplex genus visionis distinctum ab Augustino in libro XII super Genesim ad litteram: illuminatio tamen perfecta non fit nisi secundum intellectum. Unde concedimus, quod Angeli in intellectum possunt imprimere lumen sub quo fit cognitio, et ipsa cognoscibilia secundum species suas. Dicimus enim, quod sicut obedit eis materia ad assumptionem corporum, sic obedit eis et ad abstractionem specierum. Unde sicut intellectus agens species abstrahit a phantasmatibus et unit eas intellectui possibili secundum ordinem ad scientiam et opus, sic intelligentia angelica lumine suo abstrahit species a phantasmatibus, et componit cum intellectu animae secundum ordinem ad revelationem occultorum. Si autem quaeratur, Ubi sint phantasmata a quibus abstrahit? Dico, quod sunt in anima, et possunt fieri in anima utroque duorum modorum: potest enim Angelus facere in ea de novo per visionem sensibilem vel imaginativam. Potest etiam in ea facta

> naturaliter ordinare et componere et dividere secundum exigentiam revelationis secundum quam intendit illuminare. Et hos modos dicit Augustinus miros modos, quibus Angeli visa sua imprimunt in animas. Qualiter autem hi modi conveniant visioni propheticae et visioni superiorum et aliis modis revelationis, alibi dicetur.[43]

Once again, in interpreting this passage, as already occurred when commenting on Thomas, we can note that in the *De coaequaevis* the association between angel and prophet is intertwined with the question of the identity between angels and celestial intelligences. On this theme, Albert's position is not unambiguous.[44] In his commentary on the second book of the *Sentences* (1246), Albert appears skeptical about the identification between angels and intelligences, which some "stubbornly defend" ("utrum nos vocemus angelos substantias illas separatas quas philosophi intelligentias vocant, ut quidam contentiose defendere praesumunt"),[45] and at the same time downplays the effect of the conjunction between the human mind and the angelic intellect. In particular, Albert denies the efficacy of a conjunction with the angelic light or the agent intellect, and points out (opposing in anti-Averroist fashion the unity of the intellect) that knowledge is possible only if the intellect is immanent in the individual:

> Dicendum ad primum cum communi opinione, quod solus Deus immediate operatur super voluntatem: Angelus autem bonus ex ordine gratiae non naturae operatur super intellectum illustrando ipsum: et daemon quia cecidit a gratia, in intellectum nostrum operari non potest nisi per consequens: quia scilicet ordinat phantasmata aliter et aliter, ut ex eis hoc vel illud in intellectu resultet. Tamen bene concedo quod ex lumine naturali aliquid possit influere super phantasmata,

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[43] Albertus Magnus, *De coaequaevis*, tr. IV, ed. A. Borgnet (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia 34), Paris 1895, 524-525.

[44] On this topic, see L. Sturlese, "Il razionalismo di Alberto Magno", in *Storia della filosofia tedesca nel Medioevo*, Firenze 1996, 90-96; D. B. Twetten, "Albert the Great's Early Conflations of Philosophy and Theology on the Issue of Universal Causality", in *Thomistic Papers VII. Medieval Masters: Essays in Memory of Msgr. E. A. Syan*, ed. R. E. Houser, Houston 1999, 25-62; Id., "Albert the Great, Double Truth, and Celestial Causality", in *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 12 (2001), 275-358; P. Porro, "Intelligenze oziose e angeli attivi. Note in margine a un capitolo del 'Convivio' dantesco (II, IV)", in *«Ad ingenii acuitionem». Studies in honour of Alfonso Maierù*, ed. S. Caroti, R. Imbach, Z. Kaluza, G. Stabile, L. Sturlese (Textes et Etudes du Moyen Âge 38), Turnhout 2006, 303-351: 326-335.

[45] Albertus Magnus, *Commentarius in II Sententiarum*, d. 3, a. 3, ed. A. Borgnet (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia 27), Paris 1894, 64-66.

> unde liquidius resultet in speciebus id quod intendit: sed non puto, quod hoc lumen super possibilem intellectum influere possit: sed ad hoc exigitur lumen agentis, quod agens est substantiale, quia agens seipso agit, sicut lux seipsa lucet: et intelligere ejus est similiter ipsius opus, et non alicujus praeter ipsum.[46]

Setting this limit to the power of angelic illumination, Albert describes the relationship between the angel and the prophet using the argument of the new order of images, which Albert formulates once again in his commentary on Book II of the *Sentences* and which is later taken up also by Thomas Aquinas. The angel does not infuse new images into the prophet, but rearranges the existing ones to make the future intelligible, as in an anagram:

> Daemon non inficit in animam sui prophetae species, sed potius de existentibus ibi elicit intellectum novum futurorum. Est enim de speciebus et litteris aliquo modo simile; quia sicut eaedem litterae diversi mode combinatae et ordinatae faciunt comoedias et tragoedias, ita etiam eadem species diversi mode ordinatae exprimunt diversa presentia, praeterita et futura.[47]

Therefore, we find in Albert two seemingly different tendencies when it comes to describing the role that angels play in prophetic knowledge, one founded on the conjunction of the intellects and the other more in line with Latin prophetology (namely, the argument of the anagram). In a nearly contemporary work like the *Super Dionysium De caelesti hierarchia* (post-1250), the two approaches seem to undergo a synthesis, as Albert speaks again of an action that the angelic light exerts on the prophet *in vece*, that is, in place of the agent intellect. However, he describes this action not as a creation but rather a composition (that is, a rearrangement) of images:

> […] sed ad formandas compositiones et condivisiones ad quas non est proportionatum lumen intellectus agentis, exigitur superius lumen ut angelicum, et sic lumen eius se habet in ratione agentis universaliter. Si autem non essent formae in phantasmatibus, oporteret eas creari a Deo.[48]

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[46] Albertus Magnus, *Commentarius in II Sententiarum*, d. 8, a. 10, ed. Borgnet, 185.

[47] Albertus Magnus, *Commentarius in II Sententiarum*, d. 7, a. 5, q. 2, ed. Borgnet, 149.

[48] Albertus Magnus, *Super Dionysium De caelesti Hierarchia*, c. 4, ed. P. Simon, W. Kübel (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia. Editio Coloniensis 36.1), Münster 1999, 68.31-36.

Moreover, in directly tackling the subject of angelic illumination, perhaps aware of its complexity, Albert carefully distinguishes between a philosophical approach and a theological one in discussing this topic. The role assigned to the angel at the noetic level evidently depends on how one understands his ontological status. For philosophers, what counts is the identity between angels and celestial intelligences, as well as a principle of continuity between them and human souls. For theologians and Albert himself, angels are not linked to the movement of the orbs and do not illuminate human souls unless specifically sent for that purpose:

> Dicimus quod secundum opinionem philosophorum facile esset respondere huic quaestioni. Ipsi enim ponunt intelligentias motores orbium […] unde habent ad animas nostras duplicem continuitatem, scilicet universalis virtutis moventis continuitatem motus […] Est etiam alia continuitas per medium: motus enim coeli compositus est ex virtute spirituali, quae est dirigens ad finem […] Et huiusmodi dicunt esse influentiam intellegibilem in animas nostras. Tali autem continuitate non possumus nos sic dicere, eo quod non ponimus angelos coniunctos motui, nec omnes movere orbes. Et ideo oportet aliter dicere, scilicet quod Angeli non illuminant animas nostras nisi missi ad nos.[49]

The latter case also applies to prophetic knowledge: angels mediate it only insofar as they are sent by God Himself, the source of all intellectual light, for that specific purpose:

> Angeli vero illuminant virtute divini luminis quod a Deo participant […] Similiter dicimus quod Deus est fons totius intellectualis luminis: unde si homines qui sunt ultimi in hoc genere, debent illuminari, hoc erit agentibus Angelis […] Et propter hoc etiam omnes prophetae alii dicunt Deum dicere quae per Angelos eis revelantur.[50]

In his slightly earlier *Quaestio de prophetia* (1245-1247), Albert finally draws conclusions from these premises, reiterating that the angel creates neither intelligible nor imaginary species in the prophet's mind and making a clear distinction between angelic and divine inspiration. In fact, the light of the angelic intellect has as its object natural things (*naturalia*), about which no prophecy is made ("de quibus non est pro-

[49] Albertus Magnus, *Super Dionysium De caelesti Hierarchia*, c. 4, ed. Simon, Kübel, 67.49-54, 67.68-70, 67.77-84.

[50] Albertus Magnus, *Super Dionysium De caelesti Hierarchia*, c. 4, ed. Simon, Kübel, 69.67-68, 69.79-82, 69.87-89.

phetia"). Prophecy regards future contingents, and, whenever it comes to them, angels do not have cognitive privileges over humans ("respectu cognitionis futurorum dependentium a libero arbitrio non sunt angeli superiora luminaria in comparatione ad homines"). Therefore, the only inspiration that can trigger prophetic knowledge is divine inspiration ("unde prophetia semper est inspiratio divina, per quemcumque ministretur"). Angels can contribute to prophetic knowledge only by reordering images already present in the prophet's mind. Albert's idea is that in prophetic vision, rather than the infusion of new images, a new order is simply given to pre-existing ones:

> […] probabilius est, quod species in imaginatione ordinentur et componantur, quam novae imprimantur. Unde omnes species imaginabiles a sensu receptae sunt, sicut vult Augustinus; et Philosophus dicit in III De anima, quod 'phantasia est motus a sensu secundum actum factus'.[51]

Conclusion

In the context of a very hierarchical structure of reality, elements of dynamism and mediation play a decisive role in the return home (*reditus*) of the human soul, along with divine grace (and, of course, the mediating figure of Christ for Christian authors). These elements are agents, such as angels and prophets, who, by nature or by grace, are capable of serving as intermediaries in the communication between God and man. Functioning as "devices of adaptation" for the purpose of the human *reditus*, angels and prophets contribute to establishing a proportion between the divine light and the human mind called upon to receive its message.

However, each one of these carries out this function independently: in thirteenth-century Latin prophetology, the principle of ontological continuity between intelligences and souls that prevails in the Arab world gives way to the idea of a direct relationship in space and time between God and the soul of the man-prophet. Latin philosophers and theologians in the thirteenth century maintained a clear distinction between the spheres of angelology and prophecy: the prophet is not an

[51] Albertus Magnus, *Quaestio de prophetia*, in Albertus Magnus, *Quaestiones*, ed. A. Fries (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia. Editio Coloniensis 25.2), Münster 1985, 67.52-57.

angel, nor is the angel a prophet. At the same time, both the prophet and the angel exhibit characteristics that point to the same general conception of their role as mediators between God and man. Neither angels nor prophets appear to be capable of intercepting the intelligible flow of divine light about the future, except in a partial and transitory way. Latin prophetologists consider angels and prophets as special links in a chain – precise junctions where single interventions of divine light take place – rather than fixed channels of a flow coming from the prime source that stand in a relationship of continuity with each other. Angels and prophets thus appear as instruments, singled out from time to time and independently from one another, at the service of a particular and contingent providence aimed at a specific recipient. For thirteenth-century Latin authors, both angels and prophets consequently play a more passive role. This is consistent, on the one hand, with the conception of prophecy as an *actus* (not a *habitus*, that is, a permanent quality), and, on the other, with the series of limitations that Latin authors set to the possibility of a direct and positive or creative intervention of angels in prophetic knowledge (e.g., the argument based on the re-ordering of images). What they lose in activity and lucidity of vision, however, angels and prophets gain in concreteness: that is, in the efficacy of a ministerial action that does not require an immediate or complete knowledge of the truth – of *consilium Dei* – to cooperate in the salvation of individual souls but is exercised through individual signs and announcements, apparitions, and events, which each individual is called to understand, accept, and follow.

Università di Firenze

The Church at the End of Times. Prophecy and Eschatology in Albert the Great's Sermons and Biblical Commentaries

Andrea Colli

Introduction

Eschatology plays a significant role in the work of the 13th-century theologians for at least two reasons: the philosophical debates on the nature of the soul also concern the problem of individual redemption or damnation; the conflict between secular clergy and mendicant orders, on the other hand, is fuelled by the belief of many Dominican and Franciscan friars to be prophets of the last stage of Church history. After all, the dialectical tension between individual and collective endings has characterised Christian eschatology from its origins.[1]

The present study seeks to shed light on only the second way of considering eschatology, focusing on some of Albert the Great's prophecies about the future of the Church. Given the breadth of the topic, we will focus on a limited number of texts: first, we will examine how Albert interprets certain eschatological discourses in the New Testament; second, we will check whether the suggestions offered by the exegetical analysis are reflected in his homilies.

[1] The theological topic is very broad and complex. For some general coordinates, see P. Althaus, *Die letzten Dinge. Lehrbuch der Eschatologie*, Gütersloh 1956; J. Ratzinger, *Eschatologie. Tod und ewiges Leben* (Kleine katholische Dogmatik 9), Regensburg 1977; J. Moltmann, *Theologie der Hoffnung. Untersuchungen zur Begründung und zu Konsequenzen einer christlichen Eschatologie*, München 1985.

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1. The destruction of Jerusalem as eschatological prophecy about the Church

The word "eschatology" is by default associated with the fascinating *Book of Apocalypse*: the second coming of Christ and the end of time do not seem to be so accurately described in any other biblical book. In a way, even in the case of Albert the Great, this text can be the starting point for investigating his eschatology: the printed edition of *Alberti Magni Opera omnia* includes also a *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (*Vidit Iacob*).[2] Although Jacques-Marie Vosté demonstrated the inauthenticity of this commentary,[3] Alain Boureau has recently reopened the question in a well-structured article with the provocative title *Albert le Grand, commentateur de l'Apocalypse*.[4] As the debate over the authenticity of the work is still open,[5] it is more prudent to focus our analysis on other Albert's commentaries on the New Testament.

2.1. A small community devoted to the contemplation

The first commentary of Albert the Great on the Holy Scripture is on the *Gospel of Matthew* (1257-1260).[6] Like the other synoptic Gospels, the text is a constellation of exhortations and parables intended to prepare the disciples for the coming of the end of times.[7] Jesus' warnings

[2] Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in Apocalypsim S. Joannis*, ed. A. Borgnet, É. Borgnet (Opera omnia 38), Paris 1899, 465-826.

[3] J.-M. Vosté, "S. Albertus in Apocalypsim", in *Angelicum*, 9 (1976), 328-335.

[4] A. Boureau, "Albert le Grand, commentateur de l'Apocalypse", in *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 61 (2014), 43-58.

[5] For a wide-ranging overview on this debate, see also D. Burr, "Mendicant Readings of the Apocalypse", in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, ed. R. K. Emmerson, Ithaca 1992, 89-102; C.A. Scine, *Early Dominicans on the Apocalypse: A reading of the 1260s Apocalypse commentary of Peter of Tarentaise*, Dissertation presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Saint Louis University 2010; M. Rainini, "Die sieben Posaunen. Predigt und Apokalypse am Anfang des Predigerordens", in *Bibelstudium und Predigt im Dominikanerorden. Geschichte, Ideal, Praxis*, hrsg. v. V. Š. Dóci, T. Prügl (Dissertationes Historicae 36), Roma 2019, 57-78.

[6] Cf. B. Schmidt, *Prolegomena*, in Albertus Magnus, *Super Matthaeum*, ed. B. Schmidt (Opera omni 21.2), Münster i.W. 1987, XIII-XVI; "Zeittafel", in *Albertus Magnus und sein System der Wissenschaften. Schlüsseltexte in Übersetzung Lateinisch-Deutsch*, hrsg. v. Albertus Magnus-Institut, Münster i.W. 2011, 28-31.

[7] This is due to the eschatological nature of the Gospel's message. Cf. E. Gräßer,

become particularly insistent in chapter 24: announcing the imminent destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus prophesies about the end of this world.[8] Albert the Great comments as follows:

> Hic incipit tangere signa consummationis saeculi in signis consummationis Iudaeae, quia eadem particulariter praesignabant destructionem Iudaeae, relata ad Titum et Aelium Hadrianum, quae universaliter accepta, relata ad Antichristum, finem mundi significant.[9]

According to a widely accepted exegetical model,[10] the persecution of the Jews under Titus (*consummatio Iudaeae*) does not completely realise Jesus's prophecy, but prefigures the condition of the Church at the end of times (*consummatio saeculi*):

> Tempore autem Antichristi, cum confirmabitur potestas eius, tunc maxime regnabit in Iudaea persequens ecclesiam fidelium, et tunc oportet ad litteram fugere ad montium speluncas et deserta.[11]

This is a recurring image in the eschatology of Albert the Great: the Church (*ecclesia fidelium*) will be forced to retreat to deserted and hidden places above the mountains ("ad montium speluncas et deserta"). This means that the Church of the future will not be a well-structured institution with properties and secular power, but rather a small and hidden community of believers.

These conclusions reflect the contrast between two different ecclesiologies: the mendicant orders, which attributed to themselves a prophetic role in salvation history, promoted a model of *communitas fidelium* different from that of the institutional Church.[12]

Das Problem der Parusieverzögerung in den synoptischen Evangelien und in der Apostelgeschichte, Berlin 1957.

[8] *Matth.* 24, 24.

[9] Albertus Magnus, *Super Matthaeum*, c. 24, ed. Schmidt, 566.15-20.

[10] Cf. Hugo de Sancto Caro, *In Postillam super Matthaeum*, 24, ed. N. Pezzana, Venezia 1703, 5ra-vb.

[11] Albertus Magnus, *Super Matthaeum*, c. 24, ed. Schmidt, 567.47-50.

[12] Cf. R.E. Lerner, "Poverty, Preaching and Eschatology in the Revelation Commentaries of Hugh of St. Cher", in *The Bible in the medieval world. Essays in memory of Beryl Smalley*, ed. K. Walsh, D. Wood, Oxford 1985, 157-189; Id., "The Vocation of the Friars Preacher: Hugh of St. Cher between Peter the Chanter and Albert the Great", in *Hugues de Saint-Cher († 1263)*, ed. L.J. Bataillon, G. Dahan , P.M. Gy (Bibliothèque d'histoire culturelle du Moyen Âge 1), Turnhout 2004, 215-231; M. Rainini, "I predicatori dei tempi ultimi. La rielaborazione di un tema escatologico

The physical action "fugere ad montes", however, can also be interpreted in mystical terms (*mystice*) as an ascetic movement to elevate oneself to the highest virtues:

> Mystice autem in Iudaea sunt, quae 'confessio' interpretatur, illi qui confessioni laudis sunt dediti, sicut clerici et religiosi, quibus tempore persecutionis fugiendum ad culmina virtutum, quia virtutum perfectione tunc indigent, 'ut possint resistere in die malo et in omnibus perfecti stare […] Qui autem sunt *in tecto*, sunt in arce contemplationis, quibus praecipitur, ne descendant in domum carnis, sed alta contemplatione veritatis postponant omnia commoda carnis pro Christo fortiter morientes.[13]

While the interpretation *ad litteram* refers to the condition of the entire *ecclesia fidelium*, the "mystical reading" concerns, above all, the future of consecrated persons ("clerici et religiosi"). Eschatology and ecclesiology merge once again: at the end of times, priests and religious should lead an essentially contemplative life within a small and hidden community of believers.

The vast apocalyptic-themed literature circulating in the 13th century[14] evidently plays a significant role in this interpretation of Jesus' prophetic teachings. However, the exhortation to lead a virtuous life could also be linked to Albert's fascination with the contemplative philosophical life. Suffice it to mention the questions devoted to the problem of *felicitas contemplationis* in the first commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* or the reflections on the beatitude of the separated soul in the second treatise of *De natura et origine animae*.[15]

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nel costituirsi dell'identità profetica dell'Ordine domenicano", in *Cristianesimo nella storia*, 23 (2002), 307-343.

[13] Albertus Magnus, *Super Matthaeum*, c. 24, ed. Schmidt, 567.58-63, 66-70.

[14] Cf. M. Reeves, *The influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages. A Study in Joachimism*, New York 1969, in particular 133-292; M. Rainini, "I predicatori dei tempi ultimi".

[15] Cf. Albertus Magnus, *Super Ethica*, X, l. 10, ed. W. Kübel (Opera omnia 14.2), Münster i.W. 1987, 743-759; Id. *De natura et origine animae*, II, c. 13, 14, 17, ed. B. Geyer (Opera omnia 12), Münster i.W. 1955, 37-41, 43-44. On the influence of Pagan vision of *contemplatio* in Albert's thought see, among the others: L. Sturlese, *Vernunft und Gluck. Die Lehre vom "intellectus adeptus" und die mentale Glückseligkeit bei Albert dem Großen* (Lectio Albertina 7), Münster i.W. 2005; H. Anzulewicz, "Albertus Magnus über die *felicitas contemplativa* als die Erfüllung eines natürlichen Strebens nach Wissen", in *Quaestio. Journal of the History of Metaphysics*, 15 (2015), 457-466.

2.2. The moral decline of the Church

The prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem is also found in the *Gospels of Mark* and *Luke*. However, while in the *Enarrationes in Marci Evangelium* Albert the Great offers no significant eschatological considerations, the exegesis of *Luke*'s chapter 21 is a constellation of very gloomy prophecies. They concern two particular events evoked in Jesus' prophetic discourse: the destruction of the temple and the heavenly signs announcing both the fall of Jerusalem under Titus and the end of times.

In the first case, echoing a widespread interpretation, Albert compares the stones of the temple with the community of believers composed of "living stones".[16] The material destruction of the temple ("non relinquetur lapis super lapidem")[17] is therefore a prophecy of the future diaspora of the faithful and, consequently, of the spiritual crisis of the Church:

> Hoc spiritualiter magis impletum est in Ecclesiis, in quibus lapidibus vivis nihil remansit nisi ignis infernalis, exustio in carnis concupiscentia.[18]

This tragic situation results from the moral collapse of priests, cardinals, and bishops increasingly devoted to *concupiscentia carnis, concupiscentia oculorum* and *superbia vitae*:

> Deuter. XXXII, 22: *Ignis succensus est in furore meo, et ardebit usque ad inferni novissima: devorabitque terram*, hoc est, terrenum habentes affectum, *cum germine suo*, hoc est, cum nepotibus quos in Ecclesias introducunt: *et montium*, hoc est, Praelatorum, Cardi-

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[16] Albert the Great focuses on this metaphor in the *Sermones de sancto Augustino*. Cf. J. B. Schneyer, "Alberts des Großen Augsburger Predigtzyklus über den hl. Augustinus", in *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 36 (1969), 100-147. In this regard see A. Colli, "Albert the Great on Aristotelian Political Vocabulary. Three Examples from the *Commentarium in octo libros Politicorum Aristotelis*", in *Brückenbauer und Wegbereiter: Die Dominikaner an den Grenzen der katholischen Christenheit*, hrsg. v. V. Š. Dóci, T. Prügl (Dissertationes Historicae 40), Roma 2022, 21-37: 31-35; Id., "Immagini della Chiesa nell'esegesi biblica di Alberto Magno (ca. 1193-1280)", in *La Bibbia per la riforma della Chiesa*, ed. M. Settembrini (Studi biblici), Torino 2025, 141-154.

[17] *Luc.*, 21, 6.

[18] Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in secundam partem Evangelii Lucae (X-XXIV)*, 21, 6, ed. A. Borgnet (Opera Omnia 23), Paris 1895, 631A.

> nalium, et Episcoporum, fundamenta comburet: quia fundamentum eorum materia ignis, scilicet, concupiscentia carnis, et concupiscentia oculorum, et superbia vitae. Hoc enim fundamentum, pice tenacis concupiscentiae, et sulphuris foetentis per immundum libidinis confectum, coram igne inferni stare non poterit.[19]

The same scenario is prefigured by the heavenly signs during the destruction of Jerusalem: "Et erunt signa in sole, et luna, et stellis".[20] As in the previous cases, these are timeless signs: they do not reflect a single event that has already ended, i.e., the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple, but predict the future of the Church. In particular, they foreshadow what will happen to the ecclesiastical hierarchies (sun), the laity (moon), and the religious orders (stars).

When Jesus announces the *signa in sole*, he is probably referring to solar eclipses.[21] Such astronomical events prefigure the moral decline of papal and episcopal authority:

> Sol enim obscuratur, quando illi qui illuminatores orbis terrae deberent esse, obscurantur: sicut Papa, Cardinales, Archiepiscopi, et Episcopi. Sapient. XVII, 19 et 20: *Omnis orbis terrarum limpido illuminabitur lumine, et non impeditis operibus continebatur. Solis autem illis superposita erat gravis nox, imago tenebrarum quae superventura illis erat*. Haec enim luminaria tenebrosiora iam sunt quam alia tenebrosa, tum per ignorantiam, tum etiam per nigram vitam. Hi etiam sunt qui stant, non circumeunt: quia de cura subditorum nihil considerant, sed in altitudine suae ambitionis stant erecti et otiosi. Josue, X, 13: *Stetit sol in medio coeli, et non festinavit occumbere spatio unius diei*: quia non est respectus morti eorum, sed in altitudine diei stant, in superbia ambitionis suae: de qua altitudine dicit Psalmus LV, 4: *Ab altitudine diei timebo*. Hi pro tertia parte percussi sunt: quia lumen dignitatis retinentes et quaestum, tota utilitas spiritualium percussa est. Haec enim tria sunt, dignitas, et temporalium dispensatio, et utilitas spiritualium quam debebant rependere, quae tota percussa est. Ezechiel. XXXIV, 3: *Gregem meum non pascebatis*. Isa. I, 5: *Super quo per-*

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[19] Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in secundam partem Evangelii Lucae*, 21, 6, ed. Borgnet, 631A.

[20] *Luc.*, 21, 25. Indeed, this is a clear reference to *Is.*, 60, 18-20.

[21] This reference to particular astronomical events that may indicate the transition from one era to another may be related to the issue of the Great Year (*Annus Magnus*), to which Albert the Great devotes some reflections in other writings. In this regard, see A. Palazzo, "The *Annus magnus* in Albert the Great's Parisian Theological Works. *De IV coaequaevis* and *Commentarii in libros Sententiarum*", in *Vivarium*, 61 (2023), 26-58.

> *cutiam vos ultra, addentes praevaricationem*? Retrocessio autem est, quia reversi sunt ad vomitum, et ad vitam laicalem. II Machab. IV, 14 et 15: *Sacerdotes festinabant participes fieri palaestrae, … et praebitionis ejus iniustae: … et patrios quidem honores nihil arbitrantes, graecas glorias optimas arbitrabantur.* Hoc modo totus retrocessit clerus, qui sol mundi fuit.[22]

Both the combination of quotations from various books of the Old Testament and the use of past or present tenses confirm the previous considerations about the timelessness of Jesus' prophecies: Albert predicts the future of the Church, but his criticism is without temporal boundaries. After all, problems related to the moral corruption of the ecclesiastical hierarchies have always accompanied the history of the Church. In any case, the Dominican theologian paints a dramatic picture of the future ruling class of the Church: "clerici erecti et otiosi in altitudine ambitionis" and "in superbia ambitionis, reversi ad vomitum".

The moon (*luna*) – symbolizing the lay people – is clearly affected by these solar eclipses. According to Albert's spiritual reading, this means that lay congregations will be completely devoted to earthly pleasures, following the bad example of priests and bishops:

> Et ideo luna, hoc est laicorum congregatio, eclipsim patitur sui luminis, et conversa est in sanguinem, hoc est, ad carnalitatis amorem. Osee, IV, 2: *Sanguis sanguinem tetigit.* Unde exclamat David, Psal. L, 16: *Libera me de sanguinibus, Deus, Deus salutis meae*. Haec etiam stat torpens in otio turpi concupiscentiae, dicente Domino, Matth. XX, 6: *Quid hic statis tota die otiosi?* Et est etiam ipsa luna percussa in tertia parte. Una enim pars laici populi est dispensatio rei familiaris in domo: secunda, congruentia civitatis in civilitate: et tertia est exercitium sacramentorum, quae pars manifeste percussa est, quia de sacramentis nihil curant. Job, XXI, 14: *Dixerunt Deo: Recede a nobis, et scientiam viarum tuarum nolumus.*[23]

Concupiscence, as disordered desire, undermines three aspects of the life of the laity: family relations (*in domo*), civil relations (*in civilitate*), and participation in the sacraments (*exercitium sacramentorum*).

This moral decadence also involves the religious orders, which are here symbolised by the stars. By breaking the vow of poverty (*abre-*

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[22] Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in secundam partem Evangelii Lucae*, 21, 27, ed. Borgnet, 644B-645A.

[23] Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in secundam partem Evangelii Lucae*, 21, 27, ed. Borgnet, 645A.

nuntiatio paupertatis), they are no longer a source of light, but become shooting-stars:

> Stellae autem sunt Religiosi, qui sicut stellae in coelo micantes, ita deberent stare in coelesti conversatione. Ad Philip. III, 20: *Nostra conversatio in coelis est.* Judicum, V, 20: *Stellae manentes in ordine et cursu suo, adversus Sisaram pugnaverunt*. Habent autem tres partes, scilicet, votum obedientiae, votum castitatis, et votum paupertatis. Et votum quidem obedientiae aliqualiter tenent, et similiter votum castitatis. Sed abrenuntiatio paupertatis manifeste percussa est: quia fere omnes ad terrenorum amorem etiam plusquam saeculares sunt inclinati. Et ideo signanter dicitur, Matth. XXIV, 19, quod deciderunt in terram.[24]

As in the commentary on the *Gospel of Matthew*, this dramatic situation triggers the search for a new model of Church. The future Church must be conceived as a small and hidden community of believers:

> Sapientia enim in verbis, et patientia in verberibus omnia vincunt. Quae duae alae datae sunt mulieri quae Ecclesiam significat, quibus volat in desertum ut defendatur a dracone diabolo, qui eam persequitur.[25]

The Church will be a small community exiled to the desert, intensely persecuted by the Antichrist (*draco diabolus*). The few remaining faithful seek the wisdom ("sapientia in verbis") and endure the martyrdom ("patientia in verberibus").

There is little evidence to date the *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*; however, Albert certainly wrote it after his election as bishop of Regensburg. His eschatological discourse therefore takes into account the situation of the Church of his time. After all, the combination of criticism for present time and predictions for the future is a typical feature of biblical prophecies: Jesus' predictions on the imminent fall of Jerusalem start from a severe condemnation of the men of his time. In other words, meditating on the *Gospel of Luke* and interpreting the events of his times, Albert the Great condemns the corruption of his contemporary Church and, at the same time, prefigures its future.

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[24] Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in secundam partem Evangelii Lucae*, 21, 27, ed. Borgnet, 645A.

[25] Albertus Magnus, *Enarrationes in secundam partem Evangelii Lucae*, 21, 19, ed. Borgnet, 639B.

Eschatological teaching to renew the Church

The juxtaposition of eschatological and ecclesiological themes is one of the leitmotifs of Albert's preaching activity: exhortations and warnings addressed to the Church of his time reflect his idea of the future *ecclesia fidelium*.

A limited number of studies have examined Albert's homiletic writings for at least three reasons: these are mostly unpublished texts, in many cases their authenticity is doubtful, most of them were originally written in medieval German, but handed down through Latin *reportationes*.[26] The following remarks are clearly not intended to bring a solution to these difficult questions. The purpose is just to mention a few examples related to our case study.

The immorality of the clergy, as a sign of the end of times, is the core of the sermon *Ego sic curro*, held in Paris on January 27, 1247.[27] Thus, twenty years before writing his *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, Albert the Great had identified the corruption of the ecclesiastical hierarchies as the main cause of the future destruction and renewal of the Church:

> Isti sunt clerici, qui non excolunt agros, non plantant vineas. Timendum est, quod istis dulciores sunt glarei Cocyti, quia si quando aliquid cum labore acquiritur et cum delectatione possidetur, hominem post se trahit, multo magis illos trahit qui sine labore acquirunt, cum delectatione participant et cum honore possident. Ideo de eis dicit Ezechiel (22,27), et loquitur ad litteram de Ierusalem et de principibus eius: 'Principes, inquit, tui sicut lupi rapientes praedam ad effundendum sanguinem et ad perdendum animas et avari ad sectanda lucra'. Principes Ierusalem clerici sunt, quia et in principatum omnes

[26] Cf. J. B. Schneyer, "Predigten Alberts des Großen in der Handschrift Leipzig Univ. 683", in *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 34 (1964), 45-106; B. Geyer, *Die Universitätspredigten des Albertus Magnus*, München 1966; J. B. Schneyer, "Albert des Großen Augsburger Predigtzyklus über den hl. Augustinus", in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 39 (1969), 100-147; P. Hossfeld, E. Nellessen, *Die Predigt des Hl. Albertus Magnus zu Honnef*, Bad Honnef 1980; E. Schinagl, *Naturkunde-Exempla in lateinischen Predigtsammlungen des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts* (Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters 32), Bern 2001; Id., "Naturwissen in den Predigten der Handschrift Leipzig Univ. 683", in *Albertus Magnus. Zum Gedenken nach 800 Jahren: Neue Zugänge, Aspekte und Perspektiven*, hrsg. v. W. Senner (Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Dominikanerordens – Neue Folge 10), Berlin 2001, 633-644.

[27] Geyer, *Die Universitätspredigten des Albertus Magnus*, 7.

> electi sunt et in sorte electionis dei est clericus, sicut tota tribus Levi in sortem domini electa erat. Isti sicut lupi rapiunt praedam. Praeda lupi est in ovibus et super oves, et oves dominus appellat populum fidelem; 'ad effundendum sanguinem', idest ad effuse expendendum sanguinem, idest ad prodigaliter expendendum. Unde Ieremias: 'sanguis pauperum' spargitur in plateis. Loquitur de rebus ecclesiae datis ad sustentationem pauperum. Similiter sanguis martyrum, idest res acquisitae sanguine martyrum, in plateis superiacet, quia prodige expenduntur res ecclesiasticae.[28]

The decline of the Church is also the subject of the sermon *Domine, descende, priusquam moriatur filius meus*, held in Paris on October, 6, 1247. Cardinals and bishops are compared to mediocre sovereigns (*reguli*), only interested in temporal goods:

> Item regulus dicitur, qui etsi magna habet regere, in parvis tamen occupatur in regendo. Temporalia parva sunt, spiritualia magna sunt. Magna cura est hodie in regendo temporalia, parva vero circa spiritualia. Reguli sunt omnes isti. Per vicarium regunt spiritualia, et per se ipsos temporalia. […] Et omnes isti 'separati sunt in diem malum', quasi ut incipiat in eis dies malus.[29]

Albert's prophecy, however, is not entirely negative: the institutional crisis, which seems to mark the advent of evil into the world ("quasi ut incipiat in eis dies malus"), does not entail a general collapse of the Church, but an opportunity for its renewal. As in the case of the *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, some sermons, presumably delivered in Cologne and handed down through a Latin *reportatio* in the manuscript Lepzig Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 683, explicitly dwell on the idea of the future Church as a small community dedicated to the contemplative life.

The fourteenth sermon, for example, addresses Jesus' exhortation to vigilance: "vigilate, quia nescitis, qua hora dominus vester venturus sit".[30] Whether Jesus refers to individual death (*mors*) or doomsday (*iudicium*), the central idea is still "staying awake" (*vigilate*). What this concretely means is clarified through an accurate description of vigilance as process of liberation from all earthly pleasures, ending in contemplation: "videre veras et pulchras formas vigilancium est".[31]

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[28] Geyer, *Die Universitätspredigten des Albertus Magnus*, 15.6-25.

[29] Geyer, *Die Universitätspredigten des Albertus Magnus*, 50.10-15.

[30] Schinagl, *Naturkunde-Exempla*, 252-260.

[31] Schinagl, *Naturkunde-Exempla*, 258.

Similar considerations apply to the sermon 132, which focuses on another Jesus' prophetic teaching: "Beatus ille servus quem cum venerit dominus invenerit sic facientem, scilicet vigilantem".[32] In this long homily, still unpublished, Albert points to the figure of Gregory the Great as an example to follow:

> Credo quod multi nostri sciunt quod Gregorius "vigil" vel "vigilans" interpretatur et propter hoc verba ista convenienter de eo exponuntur. Ipse siquidem in opere et effectu operis vigilavit, erat enim unus de pastoribus qui observabant vigilia noctis super gregem suum. […] Unde vigilia hominis idem est quod vigilia virtutis quae tabefacit carnes resolventes et sapientes nos. Et hoc est prima beatitudo quae facit nos idoneos ad ulteriorem beatitudinem. Et certe numquam dominus secundum istum ad vigilandum super gregem suum constituisset, si non prius praedicto modo super se vigilasset.[33]

Jesus' eschatological discourse once again serves to outline the future of the Church. While popes, cardinals, and bishops mentioned above are responsible for the imminent destruction of the Church because of their concupiscence and avarice, Gregory the Great embodies a model of "vigilance" for his virtuous life devoid of all earthly desires and passions. He prefigures the faithful of that small and hidden community who will flee to the mountains at the end of times.

Conclusions

Albert the Great interprets the weaknesses of the 13th-century Church in the light of the Gospel prophecies. The result is a revolutionary vision of what will happen at the end of time: a small community of the faithful, leading a virtuous life dedicated essentially to contemplation, replaces a hierarchical model of the Church, corrupted by the moral decadence of popes, cardinals, and priests.

There are of course some questions that still need to be answered to precisely define this eschatological vision and its ecclesiological implications. For example, it remains to be seen whether Albert is proposing a reform of the Church or simply describing a future scenario; whether these considerations on the end of time also influence his reflection on the condition of the separated soul after death. Moreover, following the

[32] Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 683, ff. 300ra-303vb.

[33] Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, ms. 683, ff. 300ra, 302ra-b.

suggestions of Boureau, an in-depth analysis of the *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, included in the Paris printed edition, is necessary to verify its authorship. Similarly, a complete catalog of the topics covered by Albert in his sermons should be prepared, also completing the edition of the homilies preserved in the Leipzig manuscript and recognizing their authorship.

The "mosaic" is still missing many essential pieces; however, the findings of this study already unveil a new image of Albert the Great. According to a view shared by some, prophesying does not mean knowing future events in advance, but discovering their possible causes in the present.[34] The Dominican master, commonly appreciated for his use of philosophical sources and his reflections on physics and metaphysics, reveals himself not just as a theologian or exegete, but as a reformer, if not a "visionary prophet".

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[34] Cassiodorus, *Expositio psalmorum*, ed. M. Adriaen (CCSL 97), Turnhout 1958, praef., c. 1, p. 7. In this regard see, among the others, M. Schlosser, Lucerna in caliginoso loco. *Aspekte des Prophetie-Begriffes in der scholastischen Theologie* (Münchener Universitäts-Schriften, Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät. Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes zur Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Theologie und Philosophie 43), Paderborn 2000, 161-172; B. Faes de Mottoni, "Ispirazione, visione, rivelazione. Note per un lessico della profezia nelle teologie della prima metà del secolo XIII", in *I Castelli di Yale*, 8 (2006), 11-19; A. Rodolfi, "Sogno e profezia in Alberto Magno", in *Scientia, Fides, Theologia. Studi di filosofia medievale in onore di Gianfranco Fioravanti*, ed. S. Perfetti, Pisa 2011, 193-216: 199-209.

Prophecy's Future and Prophecies Past: Thomas Aquinas, Peter of John Olivi, and the Prophetic Economy

Paul Clarke, O.P.

Jean-Pierre Torrell once observed that among medieval scholastic thinkers, Thomas Aquinas was "the first to go beyond the too narrow problem of specifying prophecy through knowledge of contingent futures".[1] Whether Torrell's reading of Thomas's predecessors is accurate or not, it is certain that in such a *dépassement*, the Dominican master would have been joined by one of his most critical and perceptive readers, the Languedoc Franciscan, Peter of John Olivi. Both take the view that prediction of the future can be but one dimension of prophetic revelation, whose principal object, as Thomas puts it, is "all the realities that the divine light communicated makes it possible to know, whether they be divine or human, spiritual or corporeal".[2] Prophecy primarily and formally concerns that which is distant or hidden and exceeds human cognition.[3]

In theorizing prophecy, Thomas and Olivi both perform a *relecture* of the prophetic *ordo temporis* and the figurative structure of promise and fulfillment. Their discussions critically engage the traditional construction of the problem of the future of prophecy, in the double sense of the future as (1) the privileged object of prophecy, and (2) prophecy's continuation in post-Incarnational history. To grasp the sense and scope

[1] J.-P. Torrell, *Recherches sur la théorie de la prophétie au Moyen âge, XIIe-XIVe siècles études et textes*, Fribourg 1992, 208.

[2] Thomas de Aquino, *Summa theologiae* (henceforth *ST*), II-II, q. 171, a. 3, *c*, ed. Leonina (Opera Omnia 10), Romae 1899, 371: "Cognitio autem prophetica est per lumen divinum, quo possunt omnia cognosci, tam divina quam humana, tam spiritualia quam corporalia. Et ideo revelatio prophetica ad omnia huiusmodi se extendit".

[3] Thomas de Aquino, *ST,* II-II, q. 171, a. 3, *c*, ed. Leonina, 371: "[…] prophetia est de his quae procul a nostra cognitione sunt, tanto aliqua magis proprie ad prophetiam pertinent, quanto longius a cognitione humana existent".

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of their accounts, it is necessary to escape the strictures of standard approaches, which consider medieval prophecy either in terms of cultural or political imaginaries, or more abstractly in terms of its epistemology or psychology. Lost from view is the way that prophecy serves as a cornerstone of what we might term the medieval architecture of agency. For a *societas christiana*, the deepest ordering structures are those pertaining to the end of salvation. This order depends upon revelation, not simply the 'Book' of Scripture, but the historical dispensation of revealed truth that enlightens the mind and directs action. In an attempt to stay close to a common medieval assumption about history as providential, and to avoid presuming from the outset that scholastic thinking *about* prophecy had no place within or bearing on the social *conversatio* within which the thinkers were embedded, the present paper approaches prophecy in terms of the 'economy' (*οἰκονομία*, *dispensatio*), the practical scheme for ordering human life in common, over time, toward a goal. The sense of prophecy and the prophetic is thus viewed in light of the providence by which God oversees and directs the historical affairs of the 'household' of his creation.[4]

The aim in this paper is to provide a sketch of how Thomas and Olivi conceive of the economy of prophecy, which may help to recontextualize their theoretical contributions to the study of prophecy. I will consider three *loci* wherein this economic metastructure is crucial: periodization, the continuation of prophecy, and the question of prophecy's stability as a *habitus*.

Periodization, or the *ratio ordinis temporum*

The first *locus* to be considered is how Thomas and Olivi articulate the periodization of history and, within this frame, their interpretations of progress and decline. The difference between these periodizations is rooted in a divergence in how each understands the nature and scope of prophecy as a constructive principle of the *cursus temporum*.

[4] In speaking of the 'economy of prophecy', or the 'prophetic economy of time', I am drawing on the notion of *le régime d'historicité* developed by F. Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time* (European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism), New York 2015; *Chronos: l'Occident aux prises avec le temps* (Bibliotheque Des Histoire), Paris 2020.

It should first be noted that there is no single medieval approach to the periodization of history; there is instead a wide variety of periodizations and a certain suppleness in their use.[5] There are *sex aetates* of history, marked by a major intervention of God and corresponding to the *sex dies et opera* of creation. One could also treat the *aetates mundi* as mirroring the *aetates hominis*, growing in perfection before declining. There are the *tria tempora* of the laws of nature, Scripture, and grace; the model of the succession of kingdoms (the *translatio imperii*), a historico-political framework based on the prophecies of Daniel; there is Joachim of Fiore's famous double-seven periodization, and his Trinitarian division of history into the *status* of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And more. These periodizations are not only Scriptural in provenance; their form is prophetic in the broad but important sense that they follow a figure-fulfillment structure, describing the relation of succession between earlier and later in terms of past promise and later fulfillment, between which one must account for moments of continuity, discontinuity, and transcendence. These periodizations are the realization of what Auerbach called the "figural-prophetic interpretation of history", of which the typological reading of Scripture is an integral part.[6]

While occasionally using or including other periodizations such as the seven days or the *aetates hominis*, Thomas's favored periodization is a traditional one, drawn from Paul and transmitted by the fathers, which carves up the *cursus temporum* into three *status: ante legem, sub lege, sub gratia*.[7] The lack of a more elaborate periodization has proved disappointing to many commentators, further evidence of what Gilson

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[5] For a sampling of the literature, see: R. Schmidt, "*Aetates mundi*: die Weltalter als Gliederungsprinzip der Geschichte", in *Zeitschrift Für Kirchengeschichte*, 67/ 3 (1955), 288-317; A. Funkenstein, "Periodization and Self-Understanding in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times", in *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 5/1 (1974), 3-23; M. Rainini, "L'histoire et sa fin. Intelligence de l'histoire et apocalyptique au XIIe siècle" trans. V. Ceccarelli, *Communio*, 260/ 6 (2018), 43-53. M.-D. Chenu, "Conscience de l'histoire et théologie", in *La Théologie au douzième siècle* (Études de philosophie médiévale), 3e éd., Paris 1976, 62-89.

[6] E. Auerbach, "Figura", in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*, trans. R. Manheim, Manchester 1984, 11-76: 53-58.

[7] Other tripartite divisions found throughout Thomas's corpus include: *lex naturae, Moysi, Evangelii; status naturae, gratiae, gloriae; status veteris legis, novae legis, patriae*.

referred to as Thomas's *indifférence prodigieuse* toward history.[8] What is significant here, however, is not the degree of complexity or elaboration (as if one ought simply to prefer Baroque to Romanesque), but the purpose the periodization serves and the notions of prefiguration and fulfillment that it presupposes and promotes. That the theory underlying his periodization is far from banal, consider his account of progress and decline within his discussion of prophecy in the *Summa theologiae* II-II, qq. 171-178. In article 6 (q. 174) Thomas asks *utrum gradus prophetiae varientur secundum temporis processum*. There seem to be two meta-historical dynamics at play, responsible for periodic ascents and (from the other angle) a sort of consistent descent. He begins by underlining the teleology of prophecy: it is directed to the knowledge of divine truth, by the contemplation of which we are (1) instructed in faith (either concerning the Godhead, or Christ's Incarnation); and (2) guided in our actions.[9] His first point is to underline the presence of a kind of periodic ascent in the economy: "If we are speaking of prophecy as it is ordered toward faith in the Godhead, it progressed according to three divisions of time, namely before the law, under the law, and under grace".[10] I call this periodic rather than simply progressive, because of his subsequent remark: "In each *status* taken singly, however, the most excellent revelation was that which was given first".[11] He seems to

[8] É. Gilson, "Cajetan et l'humanisme théologique", in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, 22 (1955), 113-136: 113.

[9] Thomas de Aquino, *ST,* II-II, q. 174, a. 6, *c*, ed. Leonina, 399: "Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut dictum est, prophetia ordinatur ad cognitionem divinae veritatis, per cuius contemplationem non solum in fide instruimur, sed etiam in nostris operibus gubernamur, secundum illud Psalmi, *emitte lucem tuam et veritatem tuam: ipsa me deduxerunt*".

[10] Thomas de Aquino, *ST*, II-II, q. 174, a. 6, *c*, ed. Leonina, 399: "Si ergo de prophetia loquamur inquantum ordinatur ad fidem deitatis, sic quidem crevit secundum tres temporum distinctiones, scilicet ante legem, sub lege, et sub gratia".

[11] Thomas de Aquino, *ST*, II-II, q. 174, a. 6, *c*, ed. Leonina, 399-400: "In singulis tamen statibus prima revelatio excellentior fuit. Prima autem revelatio ante legem facta est Abrahae, cuius tempore coeperunt homines a fide unius Dei deviare, ad idololatriam declinando, ante autem non erat necessaria talis revelatio, omnibus in cultu unius Dei persistentibus. Isaac vero facta est inferior revelatio, quasi fundata super revelatione facta Abrahae, unde dictum est ei, *Gen*. xxvi: *Ego sum Deus patris tui Abraham*. Et similiter ad Iacob dictum, *Gen*. xxviii: *Ego sum Deus Abraham, patris tui, et Deus Isaac*. Similiter etiam in statu legis, prima revelatio facta Moysi fuit excellentior: supra quam fundatur omnis alia prophetarum revelatio. Ita etiam in tempore gratiae, super

envision a kind of plateau, or even decline, after the "spike" in prophetic revelation. In a less objective sense, he is perhaps also thinking of times when, after a revelation, the people lapse into ignorance or error.

In reviewing the prophetic revelations made within each of his three *status*, Thomas's interest is to underscore the way that later prophecy is – both historically and, one might also say, structurally – founded upon (*fundatur*) earlier revelations (Abraham, Moses, the apostles). Excellence in prophecy is thought architecturally – that is, it is conceived in terms of the weight a given prophecy bears for the structure of the economy taken as a whole. Thomas continues: "Second, as to the faith in Christ's Incarnation, it is evident that the nearer men were to Christ, whether before or after Him, the more fully, for the most part, were they instructed on this point, and after Him more fully than before".[12] Here we have Thomas's view of the definitive peak within the prophetic economy of time, which in itself is simply an affirmation of Hebrews 1. More striking is his insistence that historical nearness to Christ provides the criterion for the fullness of prophetic reception.[13] On Thomas's reading, a close inspection of the evidence of Old Testament revelation within the larger economy of prophecy reveals a pattern or rhythm that is far from being a simple ascending line that reaches an abrupt halt with the Incarnation. According to the periodization that he discerns, framed in terms of prophecy's teleology, we are led to see that for Thomas, it is the logic of prophetic revelation that gives structure to history, rather than the converse.

This last claim receives confirmation by one further point. Prophecy, for Thomas, has as its goal both the formation of belief (either toward the *deitas* or the Incarnation of the Son) and the direction of

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revelatione facta apostolis de fide unitatis et Trinitatis fundatur tota fides Ecclesiae: secundum illud Matth. XVI: *Super hanc petram*, scilicet confessionis tuae, *aedificabo Ecclesiam meam*".

[12] THOMAS DE AQUINO, *ST,* II-II, q. 174, a. 6, *c*, ed. Leonina, 400: "Quantum vero ad fidem incarnationis Christi, manifestum est quod quanto fuerunt Christo propinquiores, sive ante sive post, ut plurimum, plenius de hoc instructi fuerunt. Post tamen plenius quam ante: ut apostolus dicit, *ad Ephes*. III".

[13] See also the discussion *utrum articuli fidei creverint secundum temporum successionem* in THOMAS DE AQUINO, *ST,* II-II, q. 1, a. 7, ed. Leonina (Opera Omnia 8), Romae 1895, 19: "Sed contra est quod Gregorius dicit, quod secundum incrementa temporum crevit scientia sanctorum patrum, et quanto viciniores adventui salvatoris fuerunt, tanto sacramenta salutis plenius perceperunt".

human actions. On the latter aspect, Thomas argues that "the prophetic revelation varied not according to the course of time, but according as circumstances required – *secundum conditionem negotiorum* –, because as it is written (Prov 29:18), 'When prophecy shall fail, the people shall be scattered abroad'".[14] This is quite subtle. Prophecy's variation throughout history is not determined by a reified, immanent historical schema, but follows the divine accommodation to the human condition in its changing practical circumstances. Thomas's apparently minimalist periodization not only sets in relief the openness of human history to divine revelation, but also provides a principle (at once theological and anthropological) for thinking through the future of prophecy, in the double sense noted above.

Unlike Thomas, Olivi is quite devoted to periodizing, showing a degree of sophistication and panache that reflects his conviction that to interpret Scripture's obscure meanings rightly, one must pay close attention to the details and shades of difference setting apart one *status* from another. On this score, one's historical position is of major importance: the later one is, the better one can (in theory) discern the *distinctiones ordinis temporum*, and grasp the key to the door of Scripture, within which the meaning of history is hidden.[15] From Joachim, Olivi derives his ordering principle for the prophetic economy: the *concordantia* of old and new testaments, and the *historia ecclesiae* as typologically prefigured in the writings of both testaments.[16] On the basis of a careful use of the hermeneutics of concordance, the *vir illuminatus* not only gains insight into the meaning of Scripture, or the past history of

[14] Thomas de Aquino, *ST*, II-II, q. 174, a. 6, *c*, ed. Leonina, 400: "Quantum vero ad directionem humanorum actuum, prophetica revelatio diversificata est, non secundum temporis processum, sed secundum conditionem negotiorum: quia, ut dicitur *Prov*. xxix, *cum defecerit prophetia, dissipabitur populus*. Et ideo quolibet tempore instructi sunt homines divinitus de agendis, secundum quod erat expediens ad salutem electorum".

[15] Petrus Ioannis Olivi, *De doctrina,* 74 in *Peter of John Olivi on the Bible:* Principia Quinque in Sacram Scripturam, ed. D. Flood and G. Gàl, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 1997, 108.

[16] Unlike his mendicant contemporaries, Olivi understood the gospels as "prophetic and apocalyptic books", and furthermore "it was in the conviction […] that the gospels could and should be interpreted typologically, that Joachim most profoundly influenced Olivi's gospel commentaries". K. Madigan, *Olivi and the Interpretation of Matthew in the High Middle Ages*, Notre Dame 2003, 9.

the Church; he also is graced with what Amos Funkenstein described as a "method of prediction without divination" developed by 12th century figures such as Rupert of Deutz and especially Joachim of Fiore.[17] Olivi's ardent commitment to interpreting the prophetic or mystical sense of Scripture coheres tightly with his view that it is prophecy that "secretly weaves together the historical course of the whole Church".[18]

The originality of Olivi's view on the prophetic economy lies not in his use of a sevenfold division, but in his sophisticated integrations of the seven periods of ecclesial history within Joachim's Trinitarian schema, and most especially his view of the sixth age as the great hinge upon which all history turns. This sixth period is also the beginning of the transition between the age of the Son and the age of the Spirit, or as he sometimes puts it, between Christ's advent in the flesh and his advent in the spirit.[19] This pivotal age is the *status contemplativus*, marked by an overflowing of the Spirit's gift of *intellectus spiritualis* and a return to the full purity and perfection of apostolic life, particularly in evangelical poverty. Olivi thinks that Joachim prophetically foreknew this age, and that Francis is its John the Baptist – or even the *adventus Christi in spiritu*.

Olivi's keen sense of the inner relation between prophecy and the periods of the historical economy emerges powerfully from an image he offers in the prologue of his *Lectura super Apocalypsim*. Framing the historical progress within the church's history in terms of the *tres fines seu Christi adventus*, he writes:

> Three mountains separated by two valleys will strike a man who sees them from a great distance as a single mountain. […] Then, when he stands on the first mountain, he will see the first valley and two mountains, and when he stands on the second mountain he will see

[17] For this phrase, see A. Funkenstein on 12th century exegesis in *Theology and the Scientific Imagination: From the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century*, 2nd ed., Princeton 2018, 263. See also D. Burr, *Olivi's Peaceable Kingdom: A Reading of the Apocalypse Commentary* (The Middle Ages Series), Philadelphia 1993, 110-113.

[18] Petrus Ioannis Olivi, *De Christo*, 27 in *Peter of John Olivi on the Bible*, ed. D. Flood and G. Gàl, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 1997, 135.

[19] Petrus Ioannis Olivi, *Postilla in Isaiam*, in *Peter of John Olivi on the Bible*, ed. D. Flood and G. Gàl, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 1997, 166-169: "Et secundum hoc sunt tres Christi adventus sollemnes: primus in carnem, secundus in spiritum, tertius ad iudicium". See discussion in D. Burr, "Olivi, Christ's Three Advents, and the Double Antichrist", in *Franciscan Studies*, 74 (2016), 15-40.

> two valleys and three mountains. Just so, the Jews before Christ's first advent, like one standing before the first mountain, did not distinguish the first from the later ones, but took the whole for a single [advent]. Christians before the sixth period of the church distinguished between the first and the others because they stood on the first and saw an intervening space […] between the first and final advents, but did not commonly distinguish between the advent in the sixth period and the one at final judgment. […] Those, however, who shall be placed in the sixth period or who see it in the spirit distinguish it from the first and last. Then they see this distinction in the prophetic books, and also in those things said by Christ and the apostles about Christ's final advent and the final age of the world. Then they also see the concordance of various events in the first five ages of the world with those in the first five periods of the church, as well as the concordance of the seven periods under the law with the seven periods of church history.[20]

To stand in the sixth age is tantamount to seeing the shape and goal of history *in spiritu*. Yet Olivi does not think merely that chronological posteriority entails epistemological superiority. There is a qualitative shift in this sixth age of renewal, towards which the previous five ages have been progressing, though often more through twists and turns than a direct ascent. This age of the Spirit involves an outpouring of insight into the *concordantiae* of history precisely in order to strengthen the faithful remnant amidst the tribulations and temptations that are to come. Reading Scripture (and history) *prophetice seu mystice* is thus

[20] Petrus Ioannis Olivi, *Lectura super Apocalypsim*, ed. W. Lewis, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 2015, 73-74: "Secundo elucidat ipsam distigendo tres fines seu tres Christi adventus in Prophetis indistincte involutos. Sicud enim viro distanti a monte magno, duas magnas valles seu planities intra se continente ac per consequens et trino, videtur mons ille non ut trinus set tantum ut unus mons, nullis vallibus distinctus. Ex quo vero vir ille stat super primum montem videt primam vallem et duos montes illam vallem concludentes; ex quo vero stat in monte secundo seu medio videt duas valles cum montium ipsas concludentium trinitate. Sic Iudei qui fierunt ante primum Christi adventum quasi ante primum montem non distinxerunt inter primum et postremos, set sumpserunt totum pro uno. Christiani vero sextum statum ecclesiae preeuntes distingunt quidem inter primum et ultimum, tanquam iam positi super primum et tanquam videntes medium spacium conversionis gentium quod est et fuit inter primum adventum et ultimum. Communiter tamen non distingunt inter illum qui erit in extremo iudicio et inter illum qui erit in statu sexto, quando, secundum Apostolum, Christus illustratione sui adventus interficiet antichristum. Qui autem statuentur in sexto vel in spiritu vident ipsum, distingunt ipsum a primo et postremo. Videntque tunc hanc distinctionem in libris propheticis, et etiam in hiis quae a Christo et apostolis dicta sunt de finali Christi adventu et de finali statu mundi". Translation taken from Burr, *Olivi's Peaceable Kingdom*, 103.

a timely spiritual gift that opens a path precisely into the meaning of prophecies past. And as the *viri spirituales* must remind their contemporaries in the sixth age, those prophecies – be they from the prophets, Christ, or the apostles – have not yet been exhaustively fulfilled.

The Contemporary Continuation of Prophecy

A second helpful index for grasping Thomas and Olivi's views of the economy of prophecy is their shared view that prophecy remains indispensable even after the coming of Christ. For Thomas, prophecy is perennially necessary for quite practical reasons: *ad directionem humanorum actuum; ad populi gubernationem; ad cultum divinum*.[21] This need is not met by nature; it is supplied supernaturally. Thomas holds that prophecy continues after Christ, but with an important shift. In his *lectura* on the *Letter to the Ephesians*, he distinguishes between (1) the prophets who were heralds of the Incarnation; (2) the apostles, who prophesied after Christ of the joys of the life to come.[22] In his *Commentary on the Romans*, reiterating that prophecy is a certain *revelatio occultorum*, he affirms that "the gift of prophecy was not only in the Old Testament, but in the New as well".[23] Prophets in the New Testament are those who explain the prophetic *dicta*, since "Scripture is interpreted in the same spirit in which it was composed". Commenting on *1 Corinthians*, he notes that those who chant (presumably Scripture) in church with *intelligentia* perform a prophetic act.[24]

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[21] Thomas de Aquino, *ST,* II-II, q. 172, a. 1, ad 4, ed. Leonina, 378: "Ad quartum dicendum quod lumen propheticum se extendit etiam ad directions humanorum actuum. Et secundum hoc, prophetia necessario est ad populi gubernationem. Et praecipua in ordine ad cultum divinum, ad quem natura non sufficit, sed requiritur gratia".

[22] Thomas de Aquino, *Super Epistolam ad Ephesios lectura,* c. 4, lect. 4, in *Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura*, ed. R. Cai, Turin-Rome 1953, II, 52: "Nam quantum ad revelationem divinorum mysteriorum, subdit quosdam autem prophetas, qui praenuntiatores fuerunt Incarnationis Christi, de quibus dicitur I Petr. i, 10: *Prophetae qui de futura in vobis gloria prophetaverunt*. […] Sed Apostoli prophetantes fuerunt post adventum Christi gaudia vitae futurae. Apoc. i, 3: *Beatus qui legit et qui audit verba prophetiae huius,* et cetera". See also *In ad Ephesios,* c. 3 lect. 1, ed. Cai, 36-37.

[23] Thomas de Aquino, *Super Epistolam ad Romanos lectura*, in *Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura,* c. 12, lect. 2, ed. R. Cai, Turin-Rome 1953, II, 182: "Hoc autem donum prophetiae, non solum fuit in veteri testamento, sed etiam in novo – Ioël ii, 28: '*Effundam de spiritu meo super omnem carnem, et prophetabunt filii vestri*'".

[24] Thomas de Aquino, *Super Primam Epistolam ad Corinthios lectura*, c. 14, lect. 1,

One important distinction he makes in the same commentary concerns on whose behalf one speaks: "the one who preaches or teaches in the schools (*in scholis*) speaks on his own behalf, while the one who reads Scripture aloud in church – be it *lectio*, *epistola*, or *Evangelium*, speaks on behalf of the whole Church".[25] While Thomas maintains a certain reserve in speaking of contemporary prophecy, it is clear that his sense of the indispensability of prophetic activity is not limited only to the early Church. Rather, he seems to think that the meaning, measure, and profile of prophecy is most clearly visible in the New Testament fulfillment of Old Testament propheticism. This provides the fundamental model for all life in the third *status*, human history *sub gratia*.

Olivi's propheticism, like that of Thomas, is largely textual, interpretive, and ethical (in the sense that it directs action), but each of these qualities receives a Joachimite amplification and reorientation. Olivi believes that the economy is far more dramatic, especially in this sixth/third age, which, as noted, he is convinced is to be an age of enlightenment, religious perfection, and spiritual joy. Prophecy is not only essential for the direction of human agency; its very exercise is necessary to bring about a new age of expanded and perfected agency – a love of God that exceeds knowing.[26]

Olivi extends Thomas's own extension of prophetic illumination (prophets to apostles) into the age of the *vita apostolica* in a way that seems to exceed a mere correspondence of the Old and New Testament.[27] Based on his *concordantiae*, Olivi views the prophets, on the

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in *Super Epistolas S. Pauli Lectura*, ed. R. Cai, Turin-Rome 1953, II, 390.

[25] Thomas de Aquino, *In ad I Corinthianos,* c. 11, lect. 2, 346: "Sed dicendum est, quod ille qui praedicat vel docet in scholis, ex propria persona loquitur. Unde et Apostolus, Rom. II, 16, nominat evangelium suum, scilicet propter industriam qua utebatur in praedicatione evangelii; sed ille, qui Sacram Scripturam in ecclesia recitat, puta legendo lectionem, vel epistolam, vel Evangelium, ex persona totius Ecclesiae loquitur. Et de tali prophetante intelligitur, quod hic Apostolus dicit".

[26] Olivi's voluntarism bears a markedly Dionysian inflection, with a suprarational *iubilus caritatis* serving as a kind of historical principle for interpreting the prophetic economy of time. For the *iubilus caritatis* as *clavis Scripturarum*, see Petrus Ioannis Olivi, *De doctrina*, 75, 107-108.

[27] Olivi recognizes the problem of defending the perfection of Christ and the apostles as superior to that of later ages. For his discussion, see Petrus Ioannis Olivi, *Quaestiones de perfectione evangelica*, q. VIII, published as *Das Heil der Armen und das Verderben der Reichen*, ed. J. Schlageter (Franziskanische Forschungen 34), Werl 1989.

one hand, and Christ and the apostles on the other, as providing a prefigurative profile of the *spirituales* of the *tertius status*:

> For the prophets themselves sent at that time for the correction of the perverse, idolatrous people and for the reform of divine worship were an express figure of Christ and of the apostles who would be sent out at the beginning of the first hierarchy of Christ. And both, namely the former and the latter, were an express model (*expressum exemplar*) of the evangelical men who for [engagement in] all the contests of the Antichrist, and for the introduction of the second hierarchy of Christ, are to come at that time.[28]

In thinking about the continuation of prophetic activity in the ongoing history of the Church, Olivi does not begin with an idealized or timeless notion of prophecy based on its form in the Old Testament. Rather, he discerns an analogical continuity, a history of patterned escalations. This history does not leave Christ behind, but neither is it completely accurate to refer to this vision of history as "Christocentric", if by that we understand the *chronological* centrality, or decisive importance, of Christ and of the Incarnation. Olivi's notion of *Christus ut medium* is richer and more precise. Within Olivi's prophetic interpretation of history, when he insists that *Christus stat in medio* of all events and of all ages, it is to indicate how Christ is the *form* of history, how he *mediates the sense of history*.[29] It is the interpreter's task to seek out this Christic form through the Scriptures, this form that is always present, sometimes visible and sometimes hidden in different ways at different times.[30]

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[28] Petrus Ioannis Olivi, *Postilla in Isaiam*, 169: "Tunc enim prophetae ipsi ad populi perversi et idolatrae correctionem et ad divini cultus in eis reformationem missi erant, expressa figura Christi et apostolorum mittendorum in initio primae Christi hierarchiae. Et utrique, scilicet hi et illi, erant expressum exemplar evangelicorum virorum qui omnia certamina Antichristi et pro introductione secundae Christi hierarchiae sunt tunc temporis venturi". To render the translation somewhat clearer, I have supplied the words in brackets. I am grateful to my confrère Timothy Bellamah for his helpful conversation concerning this passage.

[29] For discussion of Olivi's understanding Christ as *medium*, see S. Piron, "Le métier de théologien selon Olivi. Philosophie, théologie, exégèse et pauvreté", in *Pierre de Jean Olivi. Philosophe et théologien*, éd. C. König-Pralong, O. Ribordy, T. Suarez-Nani, Berlin 2010, 17-85: 64-70.

[30] S. Piron, "Le métier de théologien selon Olivi", 63-64: "Le rôle de l'interprète s'y trouve extraordinairement valorisé. La position qu'il occupe est, pourrait-on dire, celle d'un révélateur de la révélation qui cherche à rendre lisible un texte voile. […] La meilleure façon de désigner la dimension inspirée de la lecture qu'il propose serait de le présenter comme un 'prophète textuel', dont toute l'inspiration provient du texte et y

Hence the fundamental import of Olivi's hermeneutical principle that he sums up as follows: "In short, always – for the most part – the more spiritual will be beneath the more sensible, the contemplative beneath the active, and always the more hidden under the more manifest".[31]

He is less inclined to coordinate particular ecclesial or doctrinal offices with prophetic activity, preferring instead to hint suggestively toward an outpouring of prophetic illumination in the sixth age, wherein contemplation, the *intelligentia spiritualis* of Scripture, and a supra-intellectual *gustus* of the hidden mysteries of God reorder the form of Christian life as a whole.[32] The *vir illuminatus* of which Olivi speaks to his students in one of his *principia* need not be a cleric or a *magister*.[33] He will, however, be poor and contemplative – a prophetic agent of the *ecclesia renovata et contemplativa*. Indeed, for all his idealization of the *ecclesia primitiva* (what has been called a "Franciscan historicism"),[34] the perfection that Olivi sees is not a restoration of a bygone order; the "temporal pole of reference" that orients his thought lies in the future, albeit a future already inaugurated and proleptically lived by Francis:[35]

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retourne pour lui donner une nouvelle intelligence. S'il est illuminé, c'est uniquement par la lumière qu'il parvient à faire surgir du texte".

[31] Petrus Ioannis Olivi, *De doctrina*, 74, 107: "Et breviter semper, ut plurimum, spiritualior erit sub sensibiliori, ut contemplative sub active et semper occultior sub manifestiori". For discussion, see S. Piron, "*Litteralior*. L'englobement du spirituel dans le littéral selon Pierre de Jean Olivi", in *Annali di Scienze Religiose*, 7 (2014), 179-95.

[32] See Petrus Ioannis Olivi, *Super Lucam*, c. I, 188, where the contemplation of the *tertius status* is described as "super rationem, per gustus scilicet extaticos et per supermundanos influxus".

[33] Petrus Ioannis Olivi, *De doctrina*, 74-75, 106-108.

[34] See G. Leff, "The Apostolic Ideal in Later Medieval Ecclesiology", in *The Journal of Theological Studies* , 18/1 (1967), 58-82.

[35] See S. Piron, "La critique de l'église chez les spirituels languedociens", in *Cahiers de Fanjeaux*, 38/1 (2003), 77-109: 78: "A la différence des appels classiques à la *reformatio*, dénonçant une décadence jugée à l'aune d'une pureté originaire, la critique de l'Église est ici menée au nom de sa perfection future, en vue de l'accomplissement des promesses évangéliques dans un avenir espéré proche. Ce basculement du pôle temporel de référence constitue l'originalité majeure de la visée ecclésiologique de ce joachimisme franciscain".

> Just as in the sixth age, carnal Judaism and the senility of the prior time having been rejected, the new man Christ came with a new law, life and cross, so in the sixth period, the carnal church and the senility of the prior time having been rejected, the law, life and cross of Christ will be renewed, and for this reason at its beginning there appeared Francis, marked with Christ's wounds and totally crucified with as well as configured to Christ.[36]

Habitus, or the Stability of Prophecy

When it comes to the question of whether prophecy has the status of *habitus*, here Thomas takes the side of instability, while Olivi defends, in striking fashion, the stability of prophecy. According to the Aristotelian division, which provided the framework for scholastic reflection on this question, there are three options for how prophecy might be in the soul: by way of *actus*, *passio*, or *habitus*. Earlier theorists, such as William of Auvergne and Philip the Chancellor, held it to a *habitus*. Hugh of St. Cher disagreed. Albert speaks of a "quasi habitus".[37] If prophecy is a *habitus*, then it is a stable, abiding form that remains in the soul, such that the prophet can make use of it as he wants, when he wants. After some hesitation in his earlier discussions, in the *Summa theologiae* Thomas departs from the mainstream position that prophecy is a *habitus*. In q. 171, a. 2 of the *secunda secundae*, he observes that prophetic illumination cannot be fit neatly into Aristotle's threefold division: "illa divisio philosophi non comprehendit absolute omnia quae sunt in anima". Thomas's reflection on Scriptural descriptions of prophecy (e.g., Elisha) leads him to the settled view that prophecy is not an abiding form in the prophet's soul: it is unstable. This gives it a certain resemblance to *passio*, since "in cognitione prophetica intellectus humanus patitur ex illustratione divini luminis". Thus, he concludes that the "lumen propheticum insit animae prophetae per modum cuiusdam passionis vel impressionis transeuntis". The similarity that

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[36] Petrus Ioannis Olivi, *Lectura super Apocalypsim,* n. 250 (70): "Sicud etiam in sexta aetate, reiecto carnali Iudaysmo et vetustate prioris seculi, venit novus homo Christus cum nova lege et vita et cruce, sic in sexto statu, reiecta carnali ecclesia et vetustate prioris seculi, renovabitur Christi lex et vita et crux, propter quod in eius primo inicio Franciscus aparit, Christi plagis caracterizatus et Christo totus concrucifixus et configuratus". Translation taken from Burr, *Olivi's Peaceable Kingdom*, 116.

[37] For discussion of these views, see Torrell, *Recherches sur la théorie de la prophétie*.

Thomas remarks leads him to speak of a *quaedam habilitas* that the soul of the prophet gains by virtue of having "suffered" the divine light, a kind of familiarity with divine revelation, disposing him to be more easily illuminated. How can someone be *called* a prophet, then? Thomas thinks that this could refer to the residual *habilitas* of the recipient of prophecy, but then goes further, citing *Jeremiah* 1,5: even when someone is not currently receiving revelation, he can be called a prophet by virtue of his office *ex deputatione divina*. By denying that prophecy is a *habitus*, Thomas also sets limits on the scope of revealed knowledge that would be attributed to a prophet.[38]

Olivi's view can be found in his commentary on Isaiah, composed around 1279-1280 in Montpellier where he was serving as *lector bibliae*. In dealing with the question of a prophet's certainty regarding future contingents, he identifies three ways by which prophetic understanding (*intelligentia*) is given, which may come as a package deal (*ex trium concursu*) or separately (*ex altero illorum trium*). The first of these is the *donatio alicuius dispositionis habitualis.* This *habitus* in turn may take three possible forms: first, a sharpening and clarifying of the intellect; second, as a certain habitual knowledge (*scientia*), similar to a man's habitual understanding of a given truth; third, habitual adherence, as in the mode of faith.[39] Of particular interest here is that he attributes the first kind to the prophet Daniel, noting that God gave him "an understanding of dreams and visions", which Olivi unpacks as "a sharp intellectual clarity and a certain affective liveliness for examining easily and profoundly whether the dreams were from a good spirit or not, and what they might signify".[40] Translating this

[38] See Thomas de Aquino, *ST,* II-II, q. 171, a. 2, ad 2, and a. 4, ad 3, ed. Leonina, 372.

[39] Petrus Ioannis Olivi, *Postilla in Isaiam*, 197: "Habitus vero qui ad hoc valet, triplicis generis esse potest. Aut enim dicit solam exacuitionem et clarificationem aciei ipsius intellectus. Aut dicit aliquam scientiam habitualem, ita quod datur homini habitualis intelligentia alicuius veritatis. Aut dicit adhaesionem habitualem per modum fidei adhaerentem, utpote quod homo habet firmissimam aestimationem et credulitatem quod ita sit aut erit".

[40] Petrus Ioannis Olivi, *Postilla in Isaiam*, 197: "Primum habitus credo quod habebat Daniel (1, 18), quando dicitur quod dederat ei Deus *intelligentiam somniorum et visionum*. Erat enim sibi datum quoddam clarum acumen in intellectu et quaedam vivacitas in affectu ad faciliter et profunde examinanda somnia an essent a bono spiritu vel non et an hoc vel illud significarent".

into the scholastic register, Olivi then explains that in his estimation, Daniel was "given a certain habitual knowledge (*habitualis scientia*) or wisdom concerning the general laws or rules of divine providence, by which it rules all things but especially human affairs, and by which Daniel formed judgments of those dreams, similar to how we form judgments about particular conclusions from universal principles. And in this way Joachim in *Libro de concordia* et in *Expositione Apocalypsis* says that he swiftly (*subito*) grasped the whole concord of the old and new testaments according to certain general rules, from which he later deduced certain other things, as if through argument".[41] Prophecy can thus be like drawing conclusions about particulars based on universal principles. With the *habitus* of prophecy, then, one gains the stable disposition and predictive capacity to perform the "applied science" of prophetic interpretation. We should not miss the larger point that in his pairing of Daniel and Joachim, Olivi effectively relativizes biblical prophecy. As David Burr puts it, "it would seem that the Joachite tail has succeeded in wagging the biblical dog. Joachim's gift has become a model for explaining Daniel's".[42] Through this reversal, Olivi cracks the door open for the prophetic *habitus* to be both spiritually intensive and historically extensive.

The picture that emerges from these considerations shows Thomas more comfortable speaking of the "prophetic" rather than "prophets", while Olivi moves smoothly from the presence of the "prophetic" to the attribution of "prophet". The rapprochement – or not – of prophecy and *habitus* is the conceptual translation of a background conviction about prophecy's economic structure and its relation to human agency. While the prophetologies of Thomas and Olivi should not be read as

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[41] Petrus Ioannis Olivi, *Postilla in Isaiam,* 197-198: "Aestimo etiam quod data erat ei aliqua habitualis scientia seu sapientia generalium legum seu regularum divinae providentiae, secundum quas regit omnia, et specialiter humana, secundum quas iudicabat de somniis illis, sicut suo modo per principia universalia iudicamus de particularibus conclusionibus. Et hoc modo Ioachim in *Libro de concordia* et in *Expositione Apocalypsis*, dicit se subito accepisse totam concordiam Veteris et Novi Testamenti quantum ad quasdam generales regulas, ex quibus ipse postmodum aliqua quasi argumentando deducit, et ut sibi videtur, aliquando sic quod ex hoc aestimat se habere certam intelligentiam conclusionis sic deductae, aliquando vero non nisi probabilem coniecturam in qua plerumque potuit falli".

[42] D. Burr, "Olivi on Prophecy", in *Cristianesimo nella Storia*, 17/ 2 (1996), 369-91: 90.

a simple reflection of their membership in the Dominicans or Franciscans, respectively, a grasp of the orientation and content of their conceptual decisions is closely related to how we understand the formation of an intellectual *habitus* that arises from the dynamic, mutual inflection of two "identities": *mendicant* and *scholastic*. Theirs is a scientific approach to prophecy, articulated by religious men living a particular kind of prophetic life recognized officially by the Church, elaborated by means of the intellectual forms of scholastic practice, at a particular historical conjuncture of an ongoing *renovatio in novissima hora*. So, taking a cue from an observation by John Van Engen, one way to think about this is that Thomas espouses what one might call a "guild" propheticism.[43] Prophecy is not the personal, habitual, property of any one individual, but it can be understood in terms of *deputatio*, a commission that crystallizes in an ecclesially-recognized collective *officium*. Prophecy in this sense is open to being the task or *métier* undertaken corporately in the service of the Church. While Thomas is notoriously reticent about his own Order, or its founder, Dominic, it nonetheless seems safe to note, at minimum, a striking convergence between Thomas's conceptualization and the form or ideal of the Order of Preachers.

In Olivi, by contrast, we find a "personalist" propheticism, in which the individuality of Francis serves as a pattern for how – according to Olivi – we are to interpret not only the *vita apostolica*, but what will emerge in this new *status* as the *vita christiana* itself. The primacy of the personal, of the individual, resounds powerfully in Olivi's views of the Franciscan *forma vitae*, in his metaphysics of *liberum arbitrium*,

[43] J. Van Engen, "Dominic and the Brothers: *Vitae* as Life-forming *exempla* in the Order of Preachers", in *Christ Among the Medieval Dominicans: Representations of Christ in the Texts and Images of the Order of Preachers*, eds. K. Emery and J.P. Wawrykow, Notre Dame 1998, 7-25: 9-10: "Early Dominicans acted in much the same spirit that drove townsmen to form guilds at the same time and in the same urban spaces. […] Guilds were organized to protect and facilitate the pursuit of particular ends, such as baking or banking or teaching. Dominic organized his band of clerics for preaching. This was to be their craft (the medieval Latin word '*ars*')". He goes on to note that "If Dominic and his followers organized a guild of Preachers, Francis and his followers initially gathered a band of lay penitents. While a corps of clerics found it comparatively easy to take on the forms of an order, a band of lay penitents found it famously difficult, and looked steadily to their singular exemplar for the paradigm of a Christ-like penitential life. Hence the built-in structural importance of Francis's life".

in his understanding of the prophetic economy as it unfolds through different *status*, and in his hermeneutics premised on the essentially infinite fecundity of the Scriptural *littera*, which needs not a spiritual *glossa* to fix its meaning, but a more profound – and prophetic – attention to its radically individual literality in order to unveil what is *spiritualior*.[44]

Conclusion

From these three lines of inquiry, and by way of conclusion, I would like to draw out two implications that fall broadly under the rubric of the politics of time. The first relates to the fundamental importance in the thirteenth century of the theme of *reformatio* or *renovatio temporis* – within which the mendicant orders are meant to play a leading role – and, further, the nature of the *novum* in question. As is well known, throughout the early decades of the *fratres minores* and *fratres praedicatores*, their ecclesiastical novelty in conjunction with their claim to recover the original form of evangelical life caused no little consternation in certain quarters. In other words, it would have been difficult to be a mendicant friar in the thirteenth century without some sense of the peculiar temporality implied by his *religio,* at once new and old, original and eschatological, arriving late on the scene as the laborers of the *undecima hora*.[45] As for the attitudes of our two friars, both take a view of the qualified novelty of this *renovatio*. Olivi understands the mendicant embrace of evangelical living as an 'apocalyptic recovery', while Thomas views it as a 'traditional novelty'. Thomas's early and consistent refusal of Joachimite ideas was hardly the dry fruit of a theological conservatism; rather, he opposes Joachimism and its Franciscan avatars on the grounds that they misunderstand the radicality of the evangelical *novum* – and its historical durability as such. Olivi stresses the epochal nature of the recovery of evangelical perfection be-

[44] See S. Piron, "An Institution Made of Individuals: Peter John Olivi and Angelo Clareno on the Franciscan Experience", in *Individuals and Institutions in Medieval Scholasticism*, ed. A. Fitzpatrick and J. Sabapathy (New Historical Perspectives), London 2020, 157-176. For illuminating discussion of *l'exégèse olivienne*, see again Piron, "*Litteralior*".

[45] See M. Rainini, "I Predicatori dei tempi ultimi. La rielaborazione di un tema escatologico nel costituirsi dell'identità profetica dell'Ordine domenicano", in *Cristianesimo nella Storia*, 23/2 (2002), 307-343.

cause a prophetic economy based on Joachim's *concordantia* requires a kind of escalating repetition of what has come before. Reading the *lex nova* typologically, as a figure of the future, means that the renewal of *vita apostolica* can only be a *lex supernova*.

The second point is a question we might pose to Thomas and Olivi bearing on what could be called their "ethics of fulfillment": How is this *renovatio* to be accomplished, how is one to fulfill the demanding promise of *perfectio evangelica*? In his study of Olivi's commentary on the *Gospel of Matthew*, Kevin Madigan rightly connects Olivi's disagreement with Thomas on evangelical poverty to their divergent interpretations of the content of the new law, arguing that Olivi defends a "morality of imitation", while Thomas promotes an "ethics of deliberation".[46] To extend this idea, we might say that for Olivi, the renewal of radical Gospel living is accomplished through imitation of a *figura*, and one that is precisely prophetic: *pater noster Franciscus*. In fulfilling the promises of Christ, Francis himself is the *alter Christus*, and becomes for his followers a promise, a figure, a seal to be opened through prophetic exegesis and imitation.[47] For his part, Thomas certainly views mendicants' reclamation of evangelical living as an *imitatio Christi et apostolorum*, yet this mimetic character is qualified by Thomas's view of the central role played by human deliberation and prudential reasoning, precisely within the logic of the *imitatio*. This emphasis on deliberation should not be mistaken as an assertion of rationality over against charisma – that is, as yet another instance of the Weberian dialectic – but rather as the consequence of a particular understanding of the historical prophetic economy and the modes of participation available *in hoc tempore*. Thomas does not so much mute the prophetic in the ordinary run of things as emphasize how, as a result of the *novum* of Christ, it has become extraordinarily ordinary. For that reason, and in keeping with Thomas's famous dictum about nature and grace, prophecy does not and should not compete with the natural capacities and

[46] K. Madigan, "Aquinas and Olivi on Evangelical Poverty: A Medieval Debate and Its Modern Significance", in *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*, 61/4 (1997), 567-586.

[47] See Petrus Ioannis Olivi, *Quaest. de perf. ev.,* q.VIII, 148: "Nihil enim in Christo aut circa Christum factum reperies quod fere in isto expressum non fuerit. Unde videtur ubique se habere ad Christum sicut cerae figura et impressio ad exemplare sigillum".

virtues at man's disposal – especially *prudentia*, man's participation in divine *providentia*. It is here that we can locate the deep incompatibility between Olivi's Franciscan literalism – with its emphasis on the Christological exemplarity of Francis, and the Poverello's own ideal of living the Gospel *sine glossa* – and Thomas's views of the continued divine *accommodatio* to the human condition, and the instrumentality of poverty to the ends of perfection.

I have argued that it is within a specifically economic framework that we ought to situate the speculative and practical contributions of Thomas and Olivi to the revisioning of prophetic vision. Both turn to the economy within which prophetic figures and fulfillments find their meaning, reading backwards from fulfillment to *figura*, and then applying this economic perspective within their conceptual decisions about prophecy's meaning, its causes, its social function, and so on. For both Thomas and Olivi, it is the fulfillment of prophecies past that discloses the meaning of prophecy's future.

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Prognostic Sciences and Divination

Scientia stellarum ex te et illis est: The Two Sources of Knowledge for Predicting the Future, in Pseudo-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium* and Michael Scot's *Liber introductorius*

Charles Burnett

The most familiar division of the knowledge of the stars is into astronomy and astrology, which, put simply, concern the movements of the stars (a mathematical science), and their effects (a physical science), respectively.

Ptolemy, in the second century AD, established the scientific nature of both divisions in his *Tetrabiblos*, and distinguished them by their epistemology: both are predictive sciences, but in astronomy the prediction (that of the movements of the Sun, Moon, and the stars or planets, relative to each other and to the earth), proceeds by way of demonstration (ἀποδεικτικῶς); whereas for the prediction of the effects a less accurate method is used, which is conjectural (εἰκαστικός), and relies both on natural science (φυσικῶς) and hitting the target (εὐστόχως).[1]

We find, however, a completely different division of the epistemology of the science of the stars in the *Centiloquium*, a set of aphorisms also attributed to Ptolemy, but probably composed in Arabic before the early tenth century.[2] The first aphorism is:

[1] For a detailed discussion of Ptolemy's distinction, based on the Greek original and several Arabic and Latin translations, see C. Burnett, "Ptolemy's Differentiation between Astronomy and Astrology in the Greek-Arabic-Latin Tradition", in *Cahiers de Recherches Humanistes et Médiévales*, 47 (2024), 373-403.

[2] J.-P. Boudet, "Astrology between Rational Science and Divine Inspiration: the Pseudo-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium*", in *Dialogues among Books in Medieval Western Magic and Divination*, ed. S. Rapisarda, E. Niblaeus (Micrologus Library 65), Firenze 2014, 49-75 and E. Rovati, "Transcription of Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf ibn al-Dāya, *Tafsīr Kitāb al-Thamara*" (update 25.05.2021), *Ptolemaeus Arabus et Latinus. Texts*, URL = https://ptolemaeus.badw.de/text/M1135.

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ʿilm al-nujūm minka wa-minhā
The knowledge of the stars is from you and from those
(in Latin: Adelard: *Doctrina stellarum ex te et illis*
Plato of Tivoli: *Scientia stellarum ex te et illis est*
Hugo Sanctelliensis: *Astrorum scientia de te et de illis*).[3]

The Arabic commentary which accompanies the text makes it immediately clear that two ways (*ṭarīq*, *via*) are involved: "from you" and "from those", and that the first could be called "divine inspiration", the second "learning". It is worth exploring this enigmatic phrase and its interpretation in more detail because it is relevant to the question of whether the practitioner is inspired or simply carrying out a task that he has learnt (the contrast of "natura" with "doctrina"), and this question applies equally to the magician. The arguments also, I would submit, are interesting in themselves, but are so elliptical that they need explanation.

But first a few words about the *Centiloquium* itself.[4]

The earliest form in which we know this text is in Arabic, accompanied by a commentary by Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf, written soon after 912-13 A.D. in Cairo. Thereafter it was the subject of further commentaries in Arabic, and was translated into Persian once, twice into Hebrew, perhaps once into Greek, and at least five times into Latin during the twelfth century, and subsequently transmitted in many manuscripts and early printings. The Latin translations that I shall be referring to are those of Adelard of Bath (d. circa 1152), Plato of Tivoli (fl. 1136 and 1138), and Hugo Sanctelliensis (fl. 1145-47). It purports to be the book that Ptolemy wrote as the fruit of the contents of all his other books on the science of the stars.[5] It consists of 100 aphorisms (102 in most of the Arabic manuscripts, and in Hugo Sanctelliensis'

[3] Unless otherwise stated, the Latin quotations come from Plato of Tivoli's version, which was the most popular. I quote from Emanuele Rovati's forthcoming edition with his permission.

[4] For another Arabic edition and its commentary, an Italian translation and an edition of the Greek see Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf ibn al-Dāya, *Commento al Centiloquio Tolemaico*, ed. F. Martorello, G. Bezza, Milan 2013, and for the Latin translations see J.-P. Boudet, "The Medieval Latin Versions of Pseudo-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium*: A Survey", in *Ptolemy's Science of the Stars in the Middle Ages*, ed. D. Juste, B. van Dalen, D. N. Hasse, C. Burnett, Turnhout 2020, 283-304.

[5] The only book of Ptolemy that could realistically be said to precede the *Centiloquium* is the *Tetrabiblos*.

translation). It is not meant to provide a structured account of astrology, but rather gives pithy statements (usually only one sentence long) which are meant to be easily memorised.

The first of these is that "the knowledge of the stars is from you and from those". A short explanation is already contained within this aphorism (unlike the other aphorisms in the book which have no such explanations), but both the aphorism and the explanation are accompanied by a substantial commentary from Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf. This commentary begins by stating that "the wise man (Ptolemy) means by 'from you and from those' that there are two ways of predicting (*li-taqdimat al-maʿrifa ṭarīqayn*, *qui res futuras prenoscere desiderat duabus viis oportet incedere*)". Reversing the order, Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf explains that the first – "from those" – means "from the stars", and this way involves observation of external reality: the visible stars and their palpable effects, which have been experienced by the Ancients and can be proved by the present-day astrologer (note the emphasis on the use of the senses which convey the external information into the soul). The second – "from you" – on the other hand, refers to what is already within the being of astrologers, referred to in the Arabic as the reflective power (*al-quwwat al-fikrīya*), which flows from their heart (*rūʿihim*, *illorum corda*) and, if this is pure and undisturbed, it is what the philosophers call "the divine part" (*al-juz' al-ilāhī*, *via divina*). Plato of Tivoli places "the divine" right at the beginning of the description of the second way: "The second way is when anyone considers through divine inspiration this science (astrology)" (*Alia via est quando aliquis per divinam inspirationem consideraverit istam scientiam*), while Hugo Sanctelliensis places emphasis on the "divine part" by adding *vel potius quasi deicam* ("or rather almost Godly").

The way "from you" is exercised through the superior part of the soul, which is rational, and has the ability to predict accurately. Such predictions can be made also by those who have no knowledge of the movements of the stars or the results of these movements. For we see that hermits and epileptics, who are divorced from external reality, and are not using their bodily senses, but only the force of the soul, are able to predict the future. The implication, also, is that external objects (be they stars or earthly phenomena) are only instantiations of the forms of things ("particulars"), whereas things within the rational soul are the forms ("universals") themselves. The way "from those" comes about

through the study (*yaʿlimūna*, *doctrina*) of the heavenly bodies and their movements; the way "from you" through an internal perception (*bi-ḥissi yajdūnahu fī anfusihim*), which Plato of Tivoli interprets as "divine inspiration" (*inspiratio divina*).

Ideally, both ways should be followed, because the one complements the other. Thus, the person in which they are brought together will excel in the art of prediction, and in anticipating events. Negative emotions, like anger and desire, will hinder the divine or reasoning part. Hence only the wise man, who can free himself from bodily activities, can predict the future in a healthy way. Thus, the man in which these two ways are combined becomes the sage (*mubarriz, inter sapientes reputabitur*).

This combination is, then, encapsulated in the phrase "The knowledge of the stars is from you and from those". "You" is the astrologer, the higher, rational, part of whose soul can be described as divine or divinely inspired, but whose reasoning is conjectural. "Those" are the heavenly bodies, which possess an external reality that can be demonstrated.

Similar statements concerning the soul and the part of the human being which comes into being through nature rather than through teaching, occur in the immediately following aphorisms. The second aphorism claims there is no difference (or separation) between the one who seeks the best thing and the "natured" (*al-maṭbūʿ*, *eum qui habet hoc ex natura* Plato, *naturalis* Hugo); the best astrologer is the one whose internal disposition is fully deployed. The third aphorism states that the one who is naturally inclined to a thing (*al-maṭbūʿ fī-l-shayʾ*, *ille qui facit aliquod opus ex natura*) finds that thing already powerfully indicated in his horoscope. The fourth aphorism seems to suggest that the "natured" soul (*al-nafs al-maṭbūʿ*, *anima connaturalis* Adelard, *anima quae ex natura dat iudicia* Plato, *anima naturalis* Hugo), subject to the phenomena within the air round about him,[6] is better at making predictions than the astrologer who relies on his learning about the distant stars.

In *Aphorism* 8 the "judging soul" (*al-nafs al-ḥakīma*, *anima sapiens*) once again is the subject, and is portrayed as "helping" (*tuʿīnu*,

[6] This is Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf's explanation of the "seconds of the stars" (*thawānī al-nujūm*, *secundae stellarum*) in the aphorism.

adiuvabit) the action of the stars, just as the agriculturist helps the powers of nature by ploughing and pruning.

These aphorisms demonstrate the practical application of the idea that the internal (and superior) power of the soul, which is divinely inspired, and is the most "natural" part of the human being, has influence over external reality. This could be summarised in the aphorism that *Sapiens dominabitur astra* ("the wise one will dominate the stars"), which we find frequently quoted in the name of Ptolemy (see below), but does not occur in this form in the *Centiloquium*.

The end of the exposition of *Aphorism 7* gives a kind of concluding statement concerning how the astrologer must know the three virtues of the soul, and how all the human virtues (and vices) derive from the soul, but are in turn indicated in the stars and planets (i.e., once again, the relation between the internal and the external). Plato of Tivoli and Hugo Sanctelliensis add that "the astrologer who knows this well, deserves to be called 'a philosopher'" (*qui bene scit astrologus, philosophus meretur dici* Plato and Hugo).

Hints of the same understanding of the epistemology of astrology appear in the Arabic-Latin tradition outside the *Centiloquium*. For example, in a book probably originally written by Māshāʾallāh and translated by Hugo Sanctelliensis under the title of *Liber Aristotilis*, we read of "the law of the stars divinely planted in skilled souls" (*astrorum legem divinitus insitam animis peritis*; no equivalent in the Arabic).[7] The same Latin author, expanding on a statement in praise of astrology in Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*, chapter 1, refers to the practice of astrology as seeming to happen "by some divineness" (*quadam divinitate videtur contingere vel accidere*).[8]

To Māshāʾallāh is attributed, in Michael Scot's *Liber Introductorius*, the phrase: "The soul, when divinely illuminated, will often foresee the promises of the stars and it will have the power to take precautions lest it fall victim to plague, if it wishes" (*Anima divinitus illustrata*

[7] *The* Liber Aristotilis *of Hugo of Santalla*, ed. D. Pingree, C. Burnett, London 1997, IV.9.3, 107. This part of the *Liber Aristotilis* comes from C. Burnett, A. al-Hamdi, "Zādānfarrūkh al-Andarzaghar on Anniversary Horoscopes. Edition and Translation", in *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften*, 7 (1991-1992), 294-398, but this phrase seems to have been added by Hugo Sanctelliensis.

[8] Burnett, "Ptolemy's Differentiation", 396.

previdebit sepe promissa stellarum et virtuosa erit precavere sibi ne decidat in pestem, si voluerit).[9]

Michael Scot, the early thirteenth-century philosopher of Frederick II Hohenstaufen, wrote the fullest original introduction to astrology of the time, which he called the *Liber introductorius.* He uses several of the first twelve aphorisms of the *Centiloquium*, in sequence (but giving a number only to the first aphorism),[10] to establish the regimen of the astrologer (*Liber Introductorius*, MS Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm, 10268, ff. 120ra-120vb).[11] He follows the translation of Plato of Tivoli, but makes no distinction between the text and the commentary, both of which he attributes to Ptolemy. He adds his own substantial commentary or extrapolation to Plato's text. In so doing, he sometimes elucidates or expands on the implications of the text. Among his original interpretations are the following:

Michael adds to the list of those "who give true judgements for which they have neither indications nor reasons", "[…] good old men, well-disposed commoners and the voice of the people of the region, to whom many things are revealed in the spirit or in visions, and others who speak from their soul,[12] spontaneously, from what arises in their heart, such as fools, children, melancholics and the sick <6>". This is interpreted as having knowledge through "divine inspiration (*divina inspiratio*), as once did prophets and apostles <7>",[13] in distinction to those having knowledge through technical training (*per artem*), such as philosophers. Thus for prophets and apostles, their knowledge is regarded as "natural"; for philosophers, their knowledge is "artificial" (i.e. as a result of their training in the art; this substitutes for the *Centiloquium*'s *per doctrinam*) <9>.[14] A person with these two knowledges,

[9] MS Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm, 10268, f. 120rb.

[10] The number is omitted in MS Edinburgh, University Library, MS 132 (=*L*).

[11] See Appendix below, where the text is divided into short sections by numbers in angle brackets.

[12] Michael seems to use the adverb *animose* as a direct reference to the soul ("soully"), rather than in its usual sense of 'courageously'.

[13] He is probably thinking of the *Sortes Apostolorum*, in which each of the twelve apostles is presented as giving prophecies. This work is referred to elsewhere in the *Liber introductorius* (I owe this reference to Eleonora Andriani).

[14] Michael Scot would have found the terminology "natural" and "artificial" in al-Fārābī's *On the Enumeration of the Sciences*, in the translation of Gerard of Cre-

i.e. the "natural" and the "artificial", is perfect, and must be regarded as belonging to the number of philosophers <9>. "Artificial" knowledge requires "natural" knowledge. The "natural" knowledge is that of the soul, which is divided into the thinking of reason and sensation, which are related to the two parts of philosophy: knowledge and the operation of knowledge. Knowledge is in the "thought of the heart", and operation resides in "sensation" (*sensualitas*) which proceeds from thought <11>.[15]

In aphorism 4 Michael Scot avoids the difficulty of the interpretation of "the seconds of the stars" (*secundae stellarum*), by which the soul makes judgements, by saying "according to nature", and he repeats that "nature" refers to something that "is superior to the planets and the stars that are above them in the firmament, and his judgements will be better than those of the one who will judge according to the interpretation of the higher bodies, what has been provided for the regulation of temporal or corporeal nature" <16>. This is immediately followed by another quotation of Ptolemy (*Item dixit Ptholomeus*): "The wise soul will dominate the stars" (*anima sapiens dominabitur astris*) <17>. This may be the earliest formulation of the phrase (usually without "anima") that became so popular later on,[16] especially in consideration that it fits the context of the *Liber introductorius* so well.

It may be asked whether this apparent investment of more worth in the internal power to predict is, in fact, a defense of astrology. For,

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mona: *Über die Wissenschaften – De scientiis: Nach der lateinischen Übersetzung Gerhards von Cremona*, ed. F. Schupp, Hamburg 2005, chapter four, *On Natural and Divine Science*, and in Dominicus Gundissalinus's *De divisione philosophiae/über die Einteilung der Philosophie*, ed. A. Fidora, D. Werner, Freiburg 2007, 62, but applies it to man's thought, in an epistemological sense, rather than to bodies in the external world (naturally created rather than made by man).

[15] Michael Scot owes the two-part division of the soul and the corresponding two parts of philosophy to Al-Kindī, *De quinque essentiis*, ed. A. Nagy (*Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters* II.5), Münster 1897, 28.

[16] J. Niermeier-Dohoney, "*Sapiens Dominabitur Astris:* A Diachronic Survey of a Ubiquitous Astrological Phrase", in *Humanities*, 10.4 (2021), https://doi.org/10.3390/h10040117, considers that a quotation of this aphorism by Albertus Magnus in his *De fato* (1265) is the earliest. Michael may be quoting an earlier source, as is his wont. Thomas Aquinas quotes this phrase in his *Summa theologiae*, Ia, q. 115, a. 4, ad 3 (written before 1269) (http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/sth1103.html#33271): 'Unde et ipsi astrologi dicunt quod sapiens homo dominatur astris, inquantum scilicet dominatur suis passionibus'.

Thomas Aquinas wrote that "if someone presumes to foreknow or foretell future things of this sort in any manner whatsoever, except with God's revelation (*nisi Deo revelante*), he manifestly usurps to himself what is God's. And from this, some are called diviners (*divini*). Whence Isidore says in the *Etymologies*: 'Men are called diviners as though they are full of God; they pretend to be charged with divinity (*divinitate plenos*) and they forecast the future for men by shrewd fraud.'"[17] If astrologers owe their success to true divine inspiration or revelation, does this exonerate them from being pure practitioners? There is no question here of astrologers invoking demons to ensure their success (a standard criticism we find in Augustine and Isidore and their successors). The 'divination' described here (dominating the stars by divine means) is very different from the 'divination' which involves divine or spiritual entities which are other than God.[18]

But if one goes too far in the direction of elevating the predictions of one's own soul (one may say 'intuition') over those derived from the (passive) observation of the stars, one runs the risk of becoming a magician:[19] one can not only predict, but also change events. If "the wise soul will dominate the stars", then it can use the stars to effect its will. The words of the *Centiloquium* in this case are more cautious: "the wise soul can help the stars" (*Centiloquium* 8). Cooperation is the ideal: on the one hand we have the wise soul, the internal capacity, on the other hand we have the stars. Both are creations of God, and they are equally necessary for gaining knowledge of God's providence for his creatures.

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Acknowledgments: I am grateful to Eleonora Andriani for alerting me to the text of Michael Scot's *Liber introductorius*, for allowing me to see the draft of her edition of

[17] This passage is quoted and translated in N. D. Rutkin, "Is Astrology a Form of Divination? Thomas Aquinas, the Index of Prohibited Books, and the Construction of a Legitimate Astrology in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance", in *International Journal of Divination and Prognostication*, 1 (2019), 36-74: 44.

[18] Jean-Patrice Boudet argues that the *Centiloquium*'s establishment of astrology "as a synthesis of rational science and divine inspiration served to construct the Church's doctrinal norm concerning astrology" (Boudet, "Astrology between Rational Science and Divine Inspiration", 75).

[19] For Michael Scot's ambivalent attitude towards magic see E. Andriani, "Foreseeing the Future in Unexpected Events: The Case of the *Liber introductorius* of Michael Scot", in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, 89 (2022), 7-33.

the *Prohemium* to the *Liber introductorius*, and for corrections and additions; and to Emanuele Rovati, for further necessary and abundant corrections and comments, and for access to his editions of the Arabic text and Plato of Tivoli's Latin translation of the *Centiloquium*. This article complements that of J.-P. Boudet, "Astrology between Rational Science and Divine Inspiration: the Pseudo-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium*", in *Dialogues among Books in Medieval Western Magic and Divination*, ed. S. Rapisarda and E. Niblaeus (Micrologus Library 65), Firenze 2014, 49-75, where most of the texts from the *Centiloquium* discussed here can be found. For editions of the whole of the *Centiloquium* and its commentary in Arabic, Italian translation and Greek see Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf al-Dāya, *Commento al Centiloquio Tolemaico*, ed. G. Martorello, G. Bezza, Milano 2013.

Appendix

The *Centiloquium* in Michael Scot's Chapter on the Regimen of the Astrologer

Michael Scot, *Liber introductorius*, Quatuor distinctiones, distinctio 3, edited from Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 10268 (= *M*), f. 120ra, with occasional corrections and variants from Edinburgh, University Library, MS 132 (= *L*), f. 2vb.[20] Words and phrases taken from Plato of Tivoli's version of the *Centiloquium* are italicized; words and phrases taken from al-Kindī's *De quinque essentiis* are underlined.

M f. 118rb

<1> (*rubric*) Explicit secunda distinctio primi libri. Nunc incipit tertia, in qua continentur multa capitula de iudiciis multarum rerum, secundum quod diversi auctores huius artis sentiunt (statuunt *L*). Et de notitia artium arismetice, geometrie, cyromantie, geomantie et prophetie. Prohemium tertie distinctionis primi libri.

…

M f. 118va

<2> (*rubric*) De notitia regiminis astrologi tam in habitando domum et vivendo quam in audiendo questiones petentium ex industria huius artis et satisfaciendo sibi.

….

M f. 120ra.

<3> Dicit enim scilicet primo verbo Ptholomeus in Centiloquio, *astrologus* numquam *debet rem dicere* alteri *specialiter* velut est affirmando sic et sic erit omnino tali die et tali hora, nisi sit res magne certitudinis ut punctum (puncti *LM*) renovationis lune et solis mutationis de signo in signum etc., set debet dicere sua verba equivoce quando questio est magni periculi, ut semper eadem verba maneant cum dubietate intellectus scilicet inter esse et non esse. <4> Causa est ne

[20] For further information on these two manuscripts and the relation between them, see E. Andriani, "A Neglected Witness to the 'Liber introductorius' of Michael Scot", in *Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana*, 98 (2019), 623-638.

astrologus valeat vice aliqua reprehendi ab auditore, vel quod homo non intromittat facere rem magni mali, quo ipse perdat suum bonum nomen vel avere possessum etc. cum quandoque homo non bene omnia notet sicut deceret vel deceri[21] debet, et Deus omnipotens mutet res per causam principalem quam vivens homo ignorat frequenter. <5> Unde Psalmista dixit: "Iudicia Dei abyssus multa". Paulus vero dicit: "O altitudo divitiarum" etc., quasi dicat "O profunditas". <6> Item dicit Ptolemeus: "*Sunt enim multi qui*[22] *dant vera iudicia* fortunate (fortune *L*), *quorum nec significationes nec rationes* habent", velut sunt amici dei, sicut *heremite* sancti, boni senes, vilici bene dispositi et vox populi regionis quibus multa in spiritu vel visionibus revelantur quandoque sunt, et alii qui loquuntur animose, sicut visum est sibi, *ex* e*manat*ione *cordi*s ut sunt stulti, pueri, melancolici et infirmi. <7> Quare dicitur quod hominum quidam habent scientiam *per divinam inspirationem* ut quondam prophete et apostoli, et quidam per artem, ut phylosophi quondam, et qui hodie sunt in mundo. Et tamen totum est istud ex parte infundentis dona gratiarum et virtutum. <8> Unde dictum est: "Dominus mortificat (*M* f. 120rb) et vivificat, deducit ad inferos et reducit dominus, pauperem facit et ditat, humiliat et sublimat (sublevat *L* and *Vulg.*), suscitans de pulvere egenum ut sedeat cum principibus et solium glorie teneat". <9> Igitur prophetarum et apostolorum dicitur scientia naturalis, philosophorum vero artificialis. *Cum* vero *aliquis hom*inum *has duas habuerit*, videlicet naturalem et artificialem, ipse perfectus est et in philosophorum (+ et prophetarum *L*) compoto reputandus, ut Job, Salomon, Aristotiles, Plato etc. Unde talis persona *in* doctrina et *iudiciis* questionum *veridicus invenitur*. <10> Et est sciendo quod scientia naturalis non indiget probatione artificialis, set artificialis scientia requirit omnino probationem alterius, videlicet naturalis. Causa est quia scientia artificialis non est scientia nisi secundum probationem alicuius que (qua *M*) fit opinione vel argumento invente rei seu iam note aliquo intellectu. <11> Dicit enim Aristotiles quod philosophia non est nisi ordo rationalis anime quo ipsa exagitatur multimode. Sicut enim anima dividitur in cogitationem rationis[23] et sensum, sic dividitur

[21] deceret vel deceri *L*; *M* is unclear.

[22] *M in margin*: qui sunt di<i>udicantes (?) vera iudicia.

[23] Al-Kindī, *De quinque essentiis*, 28, gives *cogitatio vel ratio et sensum*. Dominicus Gundissalinus, also drawing on al-Kindī in his *De divisione philosophiae*, 64, gives *sensum et rationem*.

in duas partes ipsa philosophia, videlicet in scientiam et in operationem scientie. Accipitur ergo pars scientie in ipsa cogitatione, pars igitur scientie est ipsa cordis cogitatio, et pars operationis accipitur in sensualitate[24] que procedit a cogitatu, quem facit anima rationalis tantum et non brutorum, scilicet in corde, cuius extensio dividitur in res divinas et humanas, naturales et accidentales sive artificiales,[25] que aut sunt salubres aut dampnabiles. <12> Quod totum Deus ante creationem mundi prescivit et ordinavit sic esse. Nobis ergo necessarium est ut illas partes in quas philosophia dividitur, contemplemur et dicamus quod earum alie sunt in omnibus substantiis et alie non. Et iste que non sunt in omnibus substantiis sunt corpora celestia, qualia sunt stelle et planete. Et eorum que sunt in omnibus substantiis orbis terre, sunt[26] in generatione et corruptione, ut .4. elementa principalia et eorum filii, videlicet .4. humores qui ex elementis procedunt. <13> Res autem que sunt in omnibus substantiis eorum que sunt tam supra quam infra, noscuntur esse .5. tantum, scilicet yle, forma, locus, motus et tempus occultum vel manifestum. <14> In omni quidem re in qua est substantia, est yle ex qua ipsa res est omnino, et forma que[27] videtur et qua distinguitur a ceteris[28] rebus visione, et locus in quo ipsa existit in omni termino sui, vel potentia motus, existentia[29] cuius est in tempore cum (omni *L*) tempore. <15> Et quia sepe occurrunt accidentia cursui nature, quibus homo naturalis impeditur, ut est ira, indignatio et similia, quibus ab intellectu tardamur, gaudium quo vagamur, coytus quo debilitamur, labor quo agravamur, etc. ideo quemlibet astrologum oportet multum esse solicitum circa studium librorum, principaliter sue artis. Et si solicitus in hiis bene non fuerit, sine multorum errore futura non previdebit, ergo non bene iudicabit questiones intromissas alicui petitorum.

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[24] Al-Kindī, *De quinque essentiis*, 28: *Operatio est pars sensibilis.*

[25] Al-Kindī, *De quinque essentiis*, 29, divides the *pars animae cogitativa* into *cogitatio divinorum* and *cogitatio artificialium*.

[26] Al-Kindī, *De quinque essentiis*, 30, adds *quae sunt*, which makes better sense grammatically.

[27] Al-Kindī, *De quinque essentiis*, 30, gives *qua*, which may be a preferable reading.

[28] Al-Kindī, *De quinque essentiis*, 30: *ab aliis.*

[29] This is the word abbreviated in *L*; *M* is unclear. However, *L* has the habit of writing 'x' for 's' (e.g. *Paradixi* below), and it is possible that the original reading was 'essentia', which corresponds to Al-Kindī, 31: *motus quo ipsius constitutio existit et hoc est ei essentia in loco et tempore* ("motion, by which the constitution of it [the body] exists, and this is its essence in place and time").

<16> Item dixit Ptholomeus: *anima que ex natura dat iudicia iudicabit* secundum naturam que superat planetas et stellas altiores eis in firmamento, et iudicia ipsius erunt *meli*ora *quam illi*(*us*) *qui iudicabit* secundum interpretationem corporum superiorum que data sunt ad regimen nature temporalis seu corporalis.

<17> Item P(tholomeus) dixit: "Anima sapiens dominabitur astris".

<18> Item dixit Pth(olomeus): *Non poterit* homo *dare iudicia secundum stellarum complexionem vel commixtionem nisi* ille *qui vim anime et complexionem naturalem* corporum superiorum *bene cognoverit in vi*m *anime et in operibus que in hoc seculo* per*a*guntur.

<19> Messehalla vero dixit: "Anima divinitus illustrata previdebit sepe promissa stellarum et virtuosa erit precavere sibi ne decidat in pestem, si voluerit".

<20> Druvius (Druus *M*, Drivius *L*) dixit: "Corpus anime sapientis evadit quandoque per illam et diutius perseverat in orbe sicut insipientis deficit et ipsa cum eo[30] in eternam dampnationem". <21> *Opus* enim *est* omni *astrologo ut multum sit audax in scientia anime* que extenditur *in eius tribus viribus*, videlicet ymaginatione, ratione et memoria, *et in* hiis que *manan*t *ab* eis, videlicet in *bono malo, iustitia iniustitia, largitate avaritia, mendacio veritate, fidelitate proditione, humilitate superbia* etc., plus utens divinis quam humanis. <22> *Cum vero* (*M* f. 120va) *hoc totum ex anima ipsius cognoverit*, planetas, firmamentum et stellas celi tute poterit *aspicere* superius et *videre* qualiter omnia sint condita et disposita ad instructionem sue *anim*e, quam deberet omnis homo multum habere in cura, vitando vitia et virtutibus adherendo, ex quibus post separationem utriusque coniuncti que fiet, Deo vocante, possit audire vocem illius alacriter et merito gratie valeat ascendere super altitudinem firmamenti et recipi altius eo cum electis in gloria Paradisi (Paradixi *L*) ab angelis, et ibi esse perpetuo ante Deum gaudens feliciter bonis eternis que Deus tribuit cuilibet accedenti. <23> Et *hec pars scientie* mundanorum *est melior cunctis partibus que in hac scientia continentur*. Videmus quidem quod *amor et odium* penitus *movent hominem a rectitudine* sui iuris, nisi medium teneat largo modo, cum *magnanimus parvipend*a*t magna* et *pusillanimus magnific*e*t parva* frequenter. <24> Amare Deum paucorum est et observare precepta eius.

[30] A verb of motion is required: *it*?

Beatus homo igitur qui in hoc mundo fuerit bonus peregrinus, cum quisque sit advena et fugitivus ut patet per illos qui cotidie moriuntur.

Translation

<1> Here ends the second distinction of the first book.[31] Now begins the third, in which many chapters are included about judgements of many things according to the opinions of different authorities in this art. Also, on the information about the arts of arithmetic, geometry, chyromancy, geomancy and prophecy. The proemium to the third distinction of the first book.

<2> Information about the regimen of the astrologer both in his living conditions and lifestyle and in answering the questions of those asking, by performing this art, and fulfilling himself.[32]

<3> Ptolemy says in the *Centiloquium*, namely in the first aphorism: "The astrologer should never say anything to anyone specifically" (*Centiloquium* 1), such as by affirming that such and such will happen definitely on such a day and at such an hour, unless the matter is of great certainty, like the moment of the renewal of the Moon and of the passage of the Sun from one sign to another etc., but he ought to pronounce his words in an equivocal way when the question involves a great danger, so that those words may always remain in a state of doubt concerning their meaning, namely between it happening and it not happening. <4> The reason for this is that the astrologer should not at any time be criticised by the person listening to him, or that a man should not get involved in doing a great harm by which he would lose his good name or the goods that he possesses, since sometimes man does not take note of all things well, just as is fitting or should be fitting, and the almighty God changes things through an overriding cause which man, in his lifetime, is frequently not aware of. <5> Hence the

[31] Michael Scot's 'first book' is the *Liber quatuor distinctionum*, after which come the *Liber particularis* (the second book) and the *Liber physiognomie* (the third book) which, together, make up the *Liber introductorius.*

[32] For an edition of the beginning of this chapter (MS *M*, ff. 118va-119ra) see P. Morpurgo, "Note in margine a un poemetto astrologico presente nei codici del *Liber particularis* di Michele Scoto", in *Pluteus*, 2 (1984), 5-14: 9-12, for which there is an Italian translation in F. Porsia, *Antiche Scienze del Corpo e dell'Anima. Il* Liber Phisionomiae *di Michele Scoto*, Taranto 2009, 277-280.

Psalmist says: "The judgements of God are a great abyss" (*Ps.*, 35, 7). But Paul says: "O height of wealth…" as if to say "O depth" (*Rom.*, 11, 33).[33] <6> Likewise, Ptolemy says: "For there are many who give true judgements by chance,[34] for which they have neither indications nor reasons" (*Centiloquium* 1*, expositio*), as if they are friends of God, as is sometimes the case with holy hermits, good old men, well-disposed commoners and the voice of the people of the region, to whom many things are revealed in the spirit or in visions, and others who speak from their soul,[35] spontaneously, from what arises in their heart, such as fools, children, melancholics and the sick . <7> Therefore, it is said that certain men have knowledge through divine inspiration, as once did the prophets and apostles, and certain through art, such as philosophers – those in the past and those who are today in the world. Nevertheless, all of this is due to the part of the one who pours out the gifts of graces and virtues. <8> Hence it is said: "God brings death and life; he sends some down to the lower world and brings them back, he makes poor and he enriches, he brings down and raises up, arousing the poor man from the dust so that he sits with the princes of the world and occupies a throne of glory" (1 *Sam.*, 2, 6-8). <9> Therefore, "natural knowledge" is that of the prophets and apostles, while "artificial"[36] knowledge is that of the philosophers. But when a man has them both – namely, the natural and the artificial – he is perfect and should be considered among the philosophers, like Job, Solomon, Aristotle, Plato etc. Hence, such a person in the teaching and judging of questions is found to be speaking the truth. <10> And one should know that natural knowledge does not need the proof of artificial knowledge, but artificial knowledge requires completely the proof of the other, namely natural knowledge. The reason for this is that artifical knowledge is only knowledge according to the proof of something which is discovered by opinion or argument or

[33] Readers would know that the full verse reads: "O height of wealth, wisdom and knowledge in God". The Greek gives *báthos* which means both 'depth' and 'height' and the phrase is translated in the *New English Bible* (Oxford, 1970) as "O depth of wealth".

[34] Here, *fortunate* is taken to be an adverb used by Michael Scot as a derivative from *fortuna* in the sense of 'chance', but the word could also keep its usually meaning of 'with good fortune/outcome'.

[35] Taking *animose* as an adverb built on the meaning of *anima*.

[36] Michael Scot uses *artificialis* as the adjective from *ars* in the sense of a technique that is learnt.

which is already known by some understanding. <11> For Aristotle says that philosophy is nothing but the ordering of the rational soul, by which it is roused in many ways. For just as the soul is divided into the thinking of reason and sensation, so philosophy is divided into two parts, namely into knowledge and the operation of knowledge. Therefore, the part on knowledge is received in thinking itself – so the part of knowledge is the very thinking of the heart; and the part of operation is received in the sensuality which proceeds from thought, which only the rational soul does, and not the soul of brute animals – namely in the heart, whose extension is divided into divine and human things, and natural and accidental or artificial, which are either health bringing or damnable. <12> God knew all this before the creation of the world and ordered it to be like this. Therefore, it is necessary for us to contemplate those parts into which philosophy is divided, and to say that some of them are in all substances, others not. And those that are not in all substances are the celestial bodies, such as the stars and planets. And of those which are in all substances of the orb of the earth, are those involved in generation and corruption, such as the four principle elements and their offspring, namely the four humours which proceed from the elements. <13> But the things which are in all substances of those things which are both above and below, are known to be five only, namely matter, form, place, movement and time, hidden and manifest. <14> In every thing in which there is substance, there is matter from which the thing completely exists; form which is seen[37] and by which it is distinguished from other things by sight; place in which it exists within all its boundaries; or the potential of movement, whose essence is in time and with time. <15> And because accidents often occur to the course of nature, by which the "natural" man is hindered, such as anger, indignation, etc., by which we are delayed by the intellect, joy by which we lose our stability, sexual intercourse by which we are weakened, labour by which we are weighed down etc., for this reason each astrologer ought to be very careful in studying books, especially those of his art. And if he is not careful in doing this, he will not predict the future without making mistakes in many things; so he will not give good judgements to the questions posed for anything that is asked.

<16> Likewise, Ptolemy said: "The soul which gives judgements from its nature, will judge according to a nature which is superior to the

[37] Or "by which (*qua*) it is seen".

planets and the stars that are above them in the firmament" (*Centiloquium* 4), and his judgements will be better than those of the one who will judge according to the interpretation of the higher bodies what has been provided for the regulation of temporal or corporeal nature.

<17> Likewise, Ptolemy said: "The wise soul will dominate the stars".

<18> Likewise, Ptolemy said: "A man cannot give judgements according to the complexion or mixture of the stars unless he is one who knows well the force of the soul and the natural complexion of the superior bodies […][38] on the force of the soul, and on the activities which are enacted in this world" (*Centiloquium* 7 and *expositio*).

<19> But Māshā'allāh said: "The soul, when divinely illuminated, will often foresee the promises of the stars and it will have the power to take precautions lest it fall victim to plague, if it wishes".

<20> Dorotheus[39] said: "The body of the soul of a wise man sometimes escapes through it (the soul), and lasts longer in the world, just as (the body of) the fool fails and it (the soul) <goes> with it into eternal dampnation". <21> For every astrologer needs to be very daring in knowing about the soul, which is extended in its three forces, namely, imagination, reason and memory, and in these things which flow from them, namely in good and bad, justice and injustice, generosity and greed, lies and truth, faithfulness and betrayal, humility and pride etc., using what is divine rather than what is human (*Centiloquium* 7, *expositio*). <22> But, when he knows all this from his soul, he can safely look upwards at the planets, the firmament and the stars of the sky and see how all are founded and arranged to instruct his own soul, which every man should look after very carefully, by avoiding vices and adhering to virtues, from which, after the separation of each of the joined, which will happen when God calls <the soul>; it can hear his voice gladly and, as a result of grace, can ascend above the height

[38] Michael Scot appears to misunderstand the *Centiloquium* here. He has wrongly added "superior bodies", when it is the man's own complexion that is at stake, and he has omitted the beginning of the next sentence, which returns to the description of the heavenly bodies (*coniunctio enim et aspectus earum operantur* [...], "for their conjunction and aspects operate […]").

[39] "Druvius" or "Durius" is the common Latin transliteration from Arabic of the name "Dorotheus".

of the firmament and be received by the angels with the elect beyond that (the firmament) into the glory of Paradise,[40] and be there perpetually before God, rejoicing happily with the eternal goods that God has given to every one who arrives. <23> And this part of the knowledge of mundane things is better than all the parts that are contained in this knowledge (*Centiloquium* 7, *expositio*). For we see that love and hatred completely remove man from the straight path of his own right, unless he holds to the mean with a wide measure, since a great-hearted man often undervalues great things and a weak-minded man often overvalues small things (*Centiloquium* 12). <24> To love God and observe his commands is characteristic of few people. Blessed is the man, therefore, who is a good pilgrim in this world, since everyone is a stranger and a fugitive, as is clear through those who die every day.

[40] Michael Scot already states that a knowledge of books and putting their doctrine into practice provides an entrance into Paradise (*quasi habere iam principium paradisi*) in the *Prohemium* to the *Liber introductorius* in MS *M*, f. 1vb (I owe this reference to Eleonora Andriani).

Celestial Influence and Astral Magic. Between the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* and the 'Kindī-circle Alexander'

Giulio Navarra

1. Introduction

As is well known the ʿAbbāsid age in the Islamic world carried on the Graeco-Syriac-Arabic translation movement which allowed Hellenic philosophy and sciences to be preserved and introduced in the Muslim context between the 2nd/8th and 4th/10th centuries. The centre of this movement was Baghdad and one of the great protagonists was the philosopher and polymath Yaʿqūb ibn Isḥāq al-Kindī (2nd century AH/870 AD *ca*.). He was the founder and head of a circle composed by Muslims, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and even polytheists, where many philosophical writings were translated from Greek into Arabic with the support of the caliphal court. The aim of the Kindī-circle's translations was to readapt the texts of Hellenic philosophy into works suitable for the new Muslim context. This series of translations and adaptations gave rise to a new metaphysics known as "al-Kindī's metaphysics file" which develops crucial Neoplatonic assumptions in Islamic terms.[1] Some *Enneads* by Plotinus, the *Elements of Theolo-*

[1] G. Endress, "Die wissenschaftliche Literatur", in *Grundriß der arabischen Philologie. Bd. II: Literaturwissenschaft*, ed. H. Gätje, Wiesbaden 1987, 400-506; G. Endress, "The Cycle of Knowledge: Intellectual Traditions and Encyclopædias of the Rational Sciences in Arabic Islamic Hellenism", in *Organizing Knowledge: Encyclopaedic Activities in the Pre-Eighteenth Century Islamic World*, ed. G. Endress, Leiden-Boston 2006, 103-133; Id., *Proclus Arabus. Zwanzig Abschnitte aus der Institutio Theologica in arabischer Übersetzung*, Wiesbaden-Beirut 1973; Id., "The Circle of al-Kindī: Early Arabic Translations from the Greek and the Rise of Islamic Philosophy", in *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism. Studies on the Transmission of Greek Philosophy and Sciences dedicated to H.J. Drossaart Lulofs on his Ninetieth Birthday*, ed. G. Endress, R. Kruk, Leiden 1997, 43-76; F. W. Zimmermann, "The Origins of the

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gy by Proclus, excerpts from the works of the Christian Neoplatonist John Philoponus,[2] and other Neoplatonic writings have been translated, sometimes abridged, and adapted in accordance with the creationism and monotheism of the Abrahamic religions and have been attributed to Aristotle or his "disciple" Alexander of Aphrodisias in such a way as to present scattered but interrelated writings.

However, among the Kindī-circle's translations are relevant pseudepigrapha: the *Kalām fī maḥḍ al-ḫayr* (known in the Latin West as *Liber de causis*), the *Ūthūlūjiā Arisṭūṭālīs* (the *Theology of Aristotle*) and other works belonging to the so-called groups of *Plotiniana* and *Procliana Arabica*.[3]

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so-called Theology of Aristotle", in *Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: the Theology and Other Texts*, ed. C. B. Schmitt, W. F. Ryan, J. Kraye, London 1986, 110-240; Id., "Proclus Arabus Rides Again", in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 4 (1994), 9-51; C. D'Ancona, "Pseudo-Theology of Aristotle, Chapter 1: Structure and Composition", in *Oriens*, 36 (2001), 78-112; Ead., "Tradizione greca e versione araba delle Enneadi: l'indipendenza reciproca e il caso del trattato Sull'immortalità dell' anima (IV 7[2])", in *Del tradurre. Da Occidente verso Oriente come incontro di lingue e culture. Atti della giornata di studio su "Traduzioni orientali e testi classici: lo stato della ricerca". Brescia, 8 ottobre 2004*, a cura di R. B. Finazzi, Milano 2005, 39-66; Ead., "Aux origines du dator formarum. Plotin, l'Épître sur la science divine et al-Fārābī", in *De l'Antiquité tardive au Moyen Âge. Études de logique aristotélicienne et de philosophie grecque, syriaque, arabe et latine offertes à Henri Hugonnard-Roche*, éd. E. Coda, C. Martini Bonadeo, Paris 2014, 381-414; Ead., "The Textual Tradition of the Arabic Plotinus. The Theology of Aristotle, its *ru'ūs al-masā'il*, and the Greek Model of the Arabic Version", in *The Letter before the Spirit: The Importance of Text Editions for the Study of the Reception of Aristotle*, ed. A. M. I. van Oppenraay, R. Fontaine, Leiden-Boston 2012, 37-71; P. Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus: A Philosophical Study of the 'Theology of Aristotle'*, London 2002 (repr. Piscataway, N. J. 2017).

[2] A. Hasnawi, "Alexandre d'Aphrodise vs. Jean Philopon: notes sur quelques traités d'Alexandre «perdus» en grec, conservés en arabe", in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 4 (1994), 53-109.

[3] On the *Theology of Aristotle or Discourse on Divine Sovereignty* (*al-Qawl fī-l-rubūbiyyah*), see *Die sogenannte Theologie des Aristoteles aus arabischen Handschriften zum ersten Mal herausgegeben*, ed. F. Dieterici, Leipzig 1882. Partial edition and Italian translation in: Plotino, *La discesa dell'anima nei corpi (Enn. IV 8 [6]). Plotiniana arabica (pseudo-Teologia di Aristotele, capitoli 1 e 7; "Detti del sapiente greco")*, ed. C. D'Ancona, Padova 2003; Plotino, *L'immortalità dell'anima IV 7 [2]. Plotiniana Arabica (pseudo-Teologia di Aristotele, capitoli I, III, IX)*, ed. C. D'Ancona, Pisa 2017. On the *Book of Aristotle's explanation of the Pure Good* (*Kitāb al-Īḍāḥ li-Arisṭūṭālis fī l-ḫayr al-maḥḍ*), better known in the Latin world as *Liber de causis*, see *Die pseudo-aristotelische Schrift über das reine Gute bekannt unter*

Thus, ancient philosophy, as developed according to the "Alexandrian curriculum", was re-elaborated in accordance with the Islamic dogmas, that is, creationism and *tawḥīd* (the Oneness and Unity of God).[4] The sage's curriculum of studies started with logic and through the investigation of natural philosophy culminated in grasping the First Principle, its nature and creation. The culmination of this path was therefore Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Lambda. In fact, Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias played a crucial role at this stage of formation of *falsafah* (the Hellenic philosophy in the Islamic context), especially Alexander if we consider the topics of astrology and cosmology. These are the topics I will focus on.

2. Alexander's cosmology: the 'astrologization of the Aristotelian cosmos'

Alexander of Aphrodisias, as 'Exegete' of Aristotle and successor of the Peripatetic school in Athens, was confronted with a world in which astrology and astral worship have become culturally accepted and widely disseminated.[5] His *Περὶ προνοίας* (i.e., *De providentia*) was

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dem Namen Liber de causis, ed. O. Bardenhewer, Freiburg im Bresgau 1882 (repr. in Frankfurt a.M. 1961); R. Taylor (ed.), *The Liber De Causis* (*Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khair*). *A Study of Medieval Neoplatonism*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto 1981 (Unpublished dissertation, courtesy of the Author whom I thank). Latin text: "Liber de causis", ed. A. Pattin, in *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*, 28 (1966), 90-203. See Thomas de Aquino, *Super Librum de causis expositio*, ed. H. D. Saffrey, Paris 2002. Italian translation: Tommaso d'Aquino, *Commento al Libro delle cause*, ed. C. D'Ancona, Milano 1986. See C. D'Ancona, R. C. Taylor, "Liber de causis", in *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques, Supplément*, éd. R. Goulet, Paris 2003, 599-647. On the *Epistle on the Divine Science*, initially attributed to al-Fārābī, and the *Sayings of the Greek Sage* ([*al-Qawl*] *al-Šayḥ al-Yūnānī*): ʿA. A. R. Badawī (ed.), *Aflūṭīn ʿinda al-ʿarab. Plotinus apud Arabes. Theologia Aristotelis et fragmenta quae supersunt*, Cairo 1955[1], 1966[2] (repr. Kuwait 1977). New edition: C. D'Ancona (ed.), "The Neoplatonic *Epistle on the Divine Science*. The Text, Three Translations, and an Index", in *Studia Graeco-Arabica*, 10 (2020), 111-196. See P. Kraus, "Plotin chez les Arabes. Remarques sur un nouveau fragment de la paraphrase arabe des Ennéades", in *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte*, 23 (1940-1941), 263-295.

[4] Endress, "The Cycle of Knowledge", 103-133.

[5] R. W. Sharples, "Alexander of Aphrodisias: Scholasticism and Innovation", in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Romischen Welt, Teil II: Principat, Band II, 36.2*, ed. W. Haase, Berlin-New York 1987, 1176-1243 (revised in *Aristotle Re-Interpreted New Findings on Seven Hundred Years of the Ancient Commentators*, ed. R. Sorabji, Lon-

contemporaneous of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* (2nd-3rd centuries CE).[6] In general, the stars were believed to influence and govern the earthly world through their power. Already in the Peripatetic *De mundo*, attributed to Aristotle, is the notion of "divine power (θεῖα δύναμις)", which is emanated by the First Mover to the next movers so as to permeate the whole cosmos[7] as "a single power pervading all things (μία [ἡ] διὰ πάντων διήκουσα δύναμις)".[8] This leads to consider the theme of providence, that is, the way the First Principle (the divine world) governs the sublunar one. However, according to the Peripatetic tradition, if the First Cause exerts its providence in a primary way over the celestial bodies, the sublunar bodies are only accidentally (κατὰ συμβεβηκός) affected by the divine providence. This raises significant difficulties for Peripatetic cosmology. Alexander's personal treatise *De providentia* aims to solve these issues.

In a relevant contribution entitled *The Medieval Astrologization of the Aristotelian Cosmos*, Gad Freudenthal shows the key elements of Peripatetic cosmology as conceived by Alexander in his philosophical

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don-New York 2016); S. Toulouse, "Les chaires impériales à Athènes aux IIe et IIIe siècles", in *L'enseignement supérieur dans les mondes antiques et médiévaux*, éd. H. Hugonnard-Roche (Textes et Traditions 16), Paris 2008, 27-174.

[6] S. Fazzo, "Alessandro d'Afrodisia e Tolomeo: Aristotelismo e Astrologia tra fra il II e il III secolo d.C.", in *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia*, 4/43 (1988), 627-649.

[7] [Aristoteles], *De Mundo*, in *Opera*, ex recensione I. Bekker, ed. Academia Regia Borussica, vol. III, Berlin 1836, 398b19-27: "Οὕτως οὖν καὶ ἡ θεία φύσις ἀπό τινος ἁπλῆς κινήσεως τοῦ πρώτου τὴν δύναμιν [20] εἰς τὰ συνεχῆ δίδωσι καὶ ἀπ' ἐκείνων πάλιν εἰς τὰ πορρωτέρω, μέχρις ἂν διὰ τοῦ παντὸς διεξέλθῃ· κινηθὲν γὰρ ἕτερον ὑφ' ἑτέρου καὶ αὐτὸ πάλιν ἐκίνησεν ἄλλο σὺν κόσμῳ, δρώντων μὲν πάντων οἰκείως ταῖς σφετέραις κατασκευαῖς, οὐ τῆς αὐτῆς δὲ ὁδοῦ πᾶσιν οὔσης, ἀλλὰ διαφόρου καὶ ἑτεροίας [25], ἔστι δὲ οἷς καὶ ἐναντίας, καίτοι τῆς πρώτης οἷον ἐνδόσεως εἰς κίνησιν μιᾶς γενομένης·". See J.C. Thom (ed.), *Cosmic Order and Divine Power. Pseudo-Aristotle, On the Cosmos*, Tübingen 2014, 45-47 (slightly modified): "So also, the divine being, by a simple movement of the first region, gives its power to the next things and from these again to those further away, until it permeates the whole. For one thing, being moved by another, itself again also moves something else in regular order, while all things act in a way appropriate to their own constitutions; but there is not the same way for all, but a different and diverse one, in some cases even the opposite, although there is just one initial striking of the keynote, as it were, that leads to movement".

[8] [Arist.], *De Mundo*, ed. Bekker, 396b28-29.

reflection and systematization of Aristotle's works.[9] These elements are: (i.) the Sun and the Moon with their positions and motions contribute to generation, becoming and dissolution in the sublunar world;[10] (ii.) the Sun and the Moon act for the preservation (σωτηρία) of species (not individuals) in the earthly world;[11] (iii.) the sublunar substances, insofar as composed of contrary qualities (the four elements) cannot afford to be eternal;[12] (iv.) the First Unmoved Mover of *Metaphysics Lambda* 6-7 is identified by Alexander with the Active Intellect of Aristotle's *De anima* 3.5,[13] that is, as a Pure Form, necessary and simple substance, desirable and intelligible (ὀρεκτόν καὶ νοητόν), and the cause informing material bodies (i.e., the *Dator formarum*), as Alexander states in his *De anima* and *Quaestio* I.1;[14] (v.) the Peripatetic *De mundo* provides the doctrine of 'divine power' emanating from the First Mover all over the cosmos so as to regulate the overall order;[15] (vi.) the celestial bodies are ensouled (ἔμψυχον), moved by desire or impulse (καθ'ὁρμὴν, *ishtiqāq*) towards the First Cause. This desire is

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[9] G. Freudenthal, "The Medieval Astrologization of the Aristotelian Cosmos: From Alexander of Aphrodisias to Averroes", in *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, 59 (2006), 29-68.

[10] Arist., *De generatione et corruptione* II.10-11, 336a28-338b19; *De caelo* II.3, 286b51-59; *Meteorologica* I.2-4, 339a12-342a2.

[11] Cf. M. Rashed, "La Préservation (σωτηρία) Objet des *Parva Naturalia* et Ruse de la Nature", in *Revue de Philosophie Ancienne*, 1/20 (2002), 35-60.

[12] Arist., *Parva Naturalia, De longitudine et brevitate vitae* 3, 465b29-466a10.

[13] Arist., *De Anima* 3.5, 430a10-15.

[14] Fazzo, "L'exégèse de *Métaphysique Lambda* dans le *De principiis* et dans la *Quaestio* I.1 d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise", in *Laval Théologique et Philosophique*, 3/64 (2008), 607-626.

[15] [Arist.], *De Mundo*, ed. Bekker, 397b32-398a6. See Alexander Aphrodisiensis, *De providentia* (*Fī l-ʿināyah*: Abū Bishr's translation), in H.-J. Ruland, *Die arabischen Fassungen von zwei Schriften des Alexander von Aphrodisias: Über die Vorsehung und Über das liberum arbitrium*, Saarbrücken 1976, 77.10-79.5; (ed. S. Fazzo, M. Zonta, *La Provvidenza. Questioni sulla Provvidenza*, Milano 1998, 151): "Indeed, divine power, that we also call 'nature', makes the things in which it is found exist and gives them a form according to a certain orderly connection, without acting according to a deliberation (*al-rawiyyah*). Nature acts neither according to deliberation nor according to reasoning (*bi-l-fikr*) in regard to each of the things it does since nature is an irrational power. Rather, nature foreruns the existence of a being: thus, this being comes to be because of the animal (as being the physical begetter) and the heavenly body as being the begetter of its principle".

the cause of the daily circular motion of the fixed stars (the first moved mover) which in turn, imparts the diurnal westward motion to each planet as opposed to the eastward motion belonging by essence (*fī dhāti-hi*) to each planet.[16]

These insights are drawn both from the Greek Alexander's works and from their Arabic rendering, so that, according to the Arabic Alexander, in general, the positions, relations and movements of the Sun, the Moon and the other celestial bodies contribute to becoming and events that happen in the earthly world, so that what happens down here aims at the preservation of species and not individuals. This is precisely "providence" according to the Arabic Alexander.

Alexander's *De providentia* is lost in Greek and has been handed down to us in two different versions: the most ancient is the *Fī l-tadbīrāti al-falakiyyah* (also known as D15), which comes from al-Kindī's circle (9th/3rd cent.); the second one is entitled *Fī l-ʿināyah* (D18), which rather comes from the Aristotelian School of Baghdad and is attributed to the Nestorian Christian Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus al-Qunnāʿī (d. 328 AH/940 AD).[17] Scholars consider the latter more faithful to the lost Greek text for two reasons: (i.) the aim of the Aristotelian school to recover a pure Peripateticism and renovate the studies concerning Aristotle in the 10th century;[18] (ii.) authenticity and literalism of Abū Bishr's translation proven by some fragments of the original

[16] Alex. Aphrod., *Quaestio* I.1, ed. I. Bruns, 4.3-4, *Supplementum Aristotelicum*, II.2, Berlin 1892; [Alex. Aphrod.], *De principiis* (*Fī mabādīʾ al-kull*), in C. Genequand, *Alexander of Aphrodisias on the Cosmos*, Leiden-Boston-Köln 2001, §§ 7-8, 47-48; Alex. Aphr. apud Simpl., *In De caelo*, 2.1-9, ed. J.L. Heiberg (*Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* VII), Berlin 1894, 380.13-15.

[17] A. Dietrich, "Die arabische Version einer unbekannten Schrift des Alexander von Aphrodisias über die Differentia specifica", in *Nachrichten von Alexander der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse* (1964), 85-148. The designations D15 and D18 refer to their positions (15 and 18 respectively) in the list compiled by Dietrich. Supplement to Dietrich's list: J. van Ess, "Über einige neue Fragmente des Alexander von Aphrodisias und des Proklos in arabischer Übersetzung", in *Der Islam*, 42 (1966), 148-168. See H.J. Ruland (ed.), *Die Arabischen Fassungen von zwei Schriften des Alexander von Aphrodisias Über die Vorsehung und Über das liberum arbitrium*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Saarland, 1976.

[18] Endress, "Die wissenschaftliche Literatur", 400-506: 430; R. Walzer, "New Light on the Arabic Translations of Aristotle", in *Oriens*, 6 (1953), 91-142 (repr. in: Id., *Greek into Arabic. Essays on Islamic Philosophy*, Oxford 1963, 60-113: 65-66).

Περὶ προνοίας found in the *Contra Iulianum* by Cyril of Alexandria (1st half of the 5th century CE).[19]

Leaving aside Abū Bishr's translation that retains the features of Alexander's thought identified above by Freudenthal, I will focus here on the Kindī-circle's version, since it is an adaptation in Islamic terms of the original thought of Alexander. The first part of this adaptation is a shortened and revised version of Alexander's *De providentia*, while the second part is entirely new compared to the *Fī l-ʿināyah*. Indeed, this rendering is only partially reconcilable with the Greek Alexander's thought, but perfectly fits into the magical-divinatory and astrological traditions, as we shall see. Indeed, the main premise of these practises is the influence of the heavenly virtues or powers on human and earthly events. This allows the astrologer to predict favourable or adverse outcomes by observing the sky, or the magician to invoke celestial or demonic forces to realise his will.

Thus, in adapting the text to creationism and monotheism in line with the programme of the Kindī-circle, the adaptor needs to emphasise the role of divine power in the cosmos, the Neoplatonic emanation of this power all over the cosmos until the sublunar region, and the role and status of the celestial bodies. This emanation is what allows to preserve the perpetuation of the cosmos and species in the earthly world, so that it coincides with providence or "divine government" (*tadbīr*). The previously mentioned points are all confirmed. The adaptor indeed writes:

> Thus, the noble celestial bodies pour forth their power upon the changing bodies subject to generation and dissolution, which are below the Moon's sphere in this way, and pouring forth their power upon them [*fayḍ quwwat-hā ʿalay-hā*] is what government over them [*tadbīr-hā*] consists of.[20]

Differently from other works belonging to the *Plotiniana* and *Proclia-na Arabica*, the so-called "Kindī-circle's Alexander" does not integrate the *Nous* and the Universal Soul as intermediaries of the emanation

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[19] S. Fazzo, "La versione araba del *Περὶ προνοίας* di Alessandro di Afrodisia e i frammenti greci nel trattato *Contra Iulianum* di Cirillo Alessandrino", in *Aevum*, 74 (2000), 399-419.

[20] [Alexander], *Fī l-tadbīrāti al-falakiyyah*, ms. El Escorial Árabe 798 (= E), f. 80v2-4:

وإنّما تفيض الأجرام السماويّة الشريفة قوّتها على الأجرام المستحيلة الواقعة تحت الكون والفساد التي تحت فلك القمر هكذا، وفيض قوّتها عليها هي تدبيرها لها.

of the First Principle, rather considers the celestial bodies as the true agents of creation and providence (government). The focus on the celestial bodies is the peculiar feature of the Kindī-circle's Alexander[21] and this can be considered as the climax of the so-called Alexander's "astrologization of the Aristotelian cosmos". The agency of the celestial bodies is depicted as follows:

> And it does not suit the changing and passive bodies that they act upon the bodies closest to them and that they pour forth their power upon them, while the noble celestial bodies would not act upon the bodies closest to them and would not pour forth their power upon them, but rather it is more worthy of them that they should pour forth their good upon the changing things that are close to them because of their nobility and munificence, even though the changing bodies act upon the bodies close to them so as to affect them, they are also affected by them, and their potency does not remain in them in a state of purity.[22]

In the *Fī l-ʿināyah* this passage is absent, since divine power comes from the "θεῖα σῶματα" (i.e., the "divine bodies") and permeates every sublunar body in relation to proximity (γειτνίασις) to them. The stars were associated with the Hellenistic gods at Alexander's time, but this approach cannot be maintained in the Islamic context, so that the Kindī-circle's adaptor does not only adopt a different terminology, but he also defines the status pertaining to the stars in the overall arrangement of the cosmos:

> Concerning the various species of bodies whose existence is subject to generation and dissolution, amongst them there are those that receive only the vegetative soul and cannot be animals, i.e., plants; those that can receive the vegetative soul and the sensible one [i.e., the animals]; and those things that can receive the vegetative, the sensible and the rational soul, *like the complete and perfect bodies, that are the pure, bright, and harmonious bodies and for this reason they happen to possess the rational soul*. Therefore, if it is so, we <can> say that Nature, which is the celestial power, governs the things subject to generation and dissolution until Nature reaches their comple-

[21] Plotino, *L'immortalità dell'anima IV 7 [2]*, ed. D'Ancona, 345-350.

[22] [Alex.], *Fī l-tadbīrāti al-falakiyyah*, E f. 80r21-26:

وليس من الواجب أن تكون الأجرام المستحيلة المنفعلة تفعل في الأجرام القريبة منها وتفيض عليها من قوّتها وأن تكون الأجرام السماويّة الكريمة لا تفعل في الأجرام القريبة منها ولا تفيض عليها من قوّتها، بل هي أحرى بالإفاضة على ما قرب منها من الأشياء المستحيلة لشرفها وكرمها. غير أنّه وإن كانت الأجرام المستحيلة تفعل في الأجرام القريبة منها وتؤثّر فيها، فإنها تنفعل منها أيضاً، فلا تبقى قوّتها فيها محضة.

> tions and goals, distinguishes between things, separates them from one another, and preserves their forms also through reproduction and generation of one from another.[23]

From this passage, it emerges that the celestial bodies (*al-ajsāmu al-samawīyyatu*) are rational, complete, and perfect bodies as well as the human bodies in the order of beings, and that Nature, here identified with the divine power, is what governs, informs, and preserves the substances in the sublunar world. This order of beings and souls is basically that we find in Aristotle's *De anima*,[24] nevertheless the celestial bodies are not only agents of ordering and informing sublunar substances, but they are also cause of being. The author writes:

> And we come back to where we were and say that the celestial bodies do not only govern [*laysat tudabbiru…faqaṭ*] these changing bodies, but they are also the cause of their being and subsistence [*ʿillā kawnihā wa-thabāti-hā*], as we have said many times.[25]

The celestial bodies are agents of creation and preservation of the cosmos. As such, what follows them, the sublunar world, is caused and depends on them for its being and order:

> This is because the things that know their substances and natures by themselves in an essential way they have knowledge of the things of which they are the cause, and nothing they know is contrary to their will. And it is now clear that the activity of the first and noble bodies is not for the sake of the subsistence of the earthly world, nor for the sake of its perpetuation; and nothing of what happens in the earthly world escapes them, and there is nothing that does not happen according to their will, since they [the celestial bodies] are the cause of the substances of the earthly world and their becoming.[26]

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[23] [Alex.], *Fī l-tadbīrāti al-falakiyyah*, E f. 81v6-12:

وأمّا سائر الأجسام الكائنة تحت الكون والفساد، فمنها ما يقبل النفس النامية فقط ولا يقوى على أن يكون حيواناً، شبه النبات؛ ومنها ما يقوى على قبول النفس النامية والحيوانيّة؛ ومنها ما يقبل النفس النامية والحيوانيّة والناطقة، شبه الأجرام التامّة الكاملة، وهي الأجرام النقيّة الصافية المعتدلة، فلذلك صارت فيها النفس الناطقة. فإن كان هذا هكذا، قلنا إنّ الطبيعة، وهي القوّة السماويّة، إنّما تدبّر الأشياء الواقعة تحت الكون والفساد الى أن تبلغ تمامها وغايتها وتفصّل فيما بين الأشياء وتميّز بعضها من بعض وتحفظ صورها أيضاً بالنسل والتكوين بعضها من بعض.

[24] R. Arnzen, *Aristoteles' De anima: eine verlorene spätantike Paraphrase in arabischer und persischer Überlieferung* (Aristoteles Semitico-Latinus 9), Leiden 1998.

[25] [Alex.], *Fī l-tadbīrāti al-falakiyyah*, E f. 82r13-15:

ونرجع الى ما كنّا فيه فنقول إنّ الأجرام السماويّة ليست تدبّر هذه الأجرام المستحيلة فقط، لكنّها هي علّة كونها وثباتها أيضاً كما قلنا مراراً.

[26] [Alex.], *Fī l-tadbīrāti al-falakiyyah*, E f. 80r3-9:

وذلك أنّ الأشياء التي تعرف جواهرها وطبائعها معرفة ذاتيّةً هي معرفة الأشياء التي هي علّة كونها ولا يعرف

Therefore, this passage clearly shows what we call "astral determinism" in the Kindī-circle Alexander's *Fī l-tadbīrāti al-falakiyyah*. However, this doctrine of causality explains that everything occurring in the sublunar world happens in accordance with the will of the celestial bodies, thus happening in accordance with God's will. The will (*al-irādah*) of the celestial bodies, insofar as their power (the divine power) coincides with nature, is the will of God, it does not diverge from the regular ordering of creation. Indeed, this "causal determinism" does not negate the agency and power of the First Cause, but it only reinforces the idea that nothing can be associated with God, and the celestial bodies are intermediary causes of the outflow of the divine power down to the sublunar region. Therefore, the activity of the celestial bodies, that is, their positions, their mutual distances, and motions, defines the order of the cosmos, the order of creation, so that providence coincides with both the government of the First Cause exerted over the celestial bodies and the government of these bodies over the sublunar region:

> And we say that government [*tadbīr*, i.e., "providence"] is of two degrees: [i.] the first of these two is the government of the celestial bodies from the outermost sphere up to the Moon's sphere; [ii.] the second one is the government of the world which is under the Moon's sphere. As for the government of the first bodies, it comes from the First Agent [*al-fāʿil al-awwal*]; whereas as for the government of the earthly world, it comes from the first bodies, because of what they receive from the First Power.[27]

The Kindī-circle's Alexander cosmology presents a structure where the celestial bodies play the crucial intermediary role between the First Cause (God) and the earthly bodies. Unfortunately, the work does not give any further insight into the nature of events occurring in the earthly world, but it can be deduced from the passages quoted and elsewhere that, for the adaptor, the ordering of the cosmos itself coincides with divine providence without the intervention of reasoning or choice. There is a decisive passage in this regard:

فيها شيء من الأشياء من غير إرادتها. فقد بان إذن أنّه ليس فعل الأجرام الأول الشريفة من أجل ثبات العالم الأرضيّ ودوامه وأنّه لا يفوتها شيء من الأشياء ممّا يحدث فيه ولا يكون دون إرادتها، وأنّها علّة جواهر العالم الأرضيّ وكونها.

[27] [Alex.], *Fī l-tadbīrāti al-falakiyyah*, E f. 79v8-11:

ونقول إنّ التدبير ضربان:[١] أحدهما تدبير الأجرام السماويّة من فلك الأقصى الى فلك القمر؛ [٢] والآخر تدبير العالم الذي تحت فلك القمر. فأمّا تدبير الأجرام الأول فيكون من قبل الفاعل الأوّل، وأمّا تدبير العالم الأرضيّ فيكون من قبل الأجرام الأوّل لما صار فيها من القوّة الأولى.

> As the Maker [*al-ṣāniʿ*, i.e., "Craftsman", "Demiurge"], master of prodigious techniques, realizes a marionette [idol] or something else, as if it possessed motion, e.g., walking or jumping, although it has not a soul, and motion did not come to it by itself but by the wisdom of the maker and his ingenuity, likewise Nature must act, since it is a work realized by a virtuous maker, that is, the celestial body, and the power it possesses is very great. This is the reason why it [Nature] performs a lot of wonderful works, so that it does not cease to realize one thing from another until it reaches the end of the <received> power. This is because every corporeal power has a purpose, so that when that power realizes it, then also the being of the bodies ceases to be.[28]

This passage opens up a number of remarks. Through this analogy between the Demiurge and Nature, the adaptor clarifies that the order and perfection of creation does not derive from the celestial bodies in themselves but from the wisdom of the Maker, the divine power, that is, the order of creation derives from the First Cause. Indeed, Nature acts as a "rational potency" whose agency is explained by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*,[29] so that the general arrangement is the result of divine power flowing from the First Cause all over the cosmos through the mediation of the celestial bodies. Out of the analogy, the maker calls to mind the magician or illusionist who builds idols and puppets, or mechanical automatons endowed with such abilities that they appear to be living.[30] We have to consider that the 3rd/8th-4th/9th-century Baghdad was the context of a great diffusion of theatres, mechanical arts, and the construction of automatons, and this could have influenced both the Kindī-circle's version and Abū Bishr's translation.[31]

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[28] [Alex.], *Fī l-tadbīrāti al-falakiyyah*, E f. 81r5-13:

وكما أن الصانع صاحب الحيل العجيبة يعمل صنما أو غيره فيصير في ذلك الصنم حركة كأنه يمشي أو يقفز وهو غير ذي نفس، وإنما صارت له حركة لا من أجله لاكن من أجل حكمة الصانع وحيلته. كذلك ينبغي أن تفعل الطبيعة، فإنها صنعة صانع فاضل أعني من الجرم السماوي والقوة فيها كثيرة جدا؛ فلذلك تفعل أفاعيل عجيبة كثيرة. فلا تزال الطبيعة تفعل بعض الأشياء إلى أن تنتهي إلى غاية القوة، فإن لكل قوة جرمية غاية. فإذا انتهت تلك القوة وقف كون الأجرام أيضا.

[29] Arist., *Metaph*. 9 (Θ), in *Opera*, ex recensione I. Bekker, ed. Academia Regia Borussica, vol. II, Berlin 1831, 1046b1-20.

[30] Cf. [Arist.], *De mundo*, ed. Bekker, 398b10-20 (οἱ νευροσπάσται, i.e., "the men who run puppet-shows").

[31] M.G. Losano, *Automi d'Oriente. Ingegnosi meccanismi arabi del XIII secolo*, Napoli 2003.

3. The *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* and its underlying cosmology

The influence of the *Fī l-tadbīrāti al-falakiyyah* on later metaphysics remains to be conclusively proven. However, the greatest compendium on magic and astrology of the time, the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* (*The Aim of the Wise*), known in the Latin West as *Picatrix*, provides substantial insight into the integration of these philosophical and cosmological ideas into practical and esoteric sciences.[32] This encyclopaedic work shares significant cosmological connections with the Kindī-circle's adaptation of Alexander's thought. The *Ghāyat* emphasizes the influence of celestial bodies on the sublunar world, aligning with the Arabic Aristotelian tradition. It discusses how celestial power, originating from the First Cause, is mediated by the stars and planets, affecting everything from natural events to human dispositions and actions.

The authorship of this fundamental text remains still debated among scholars today, although it is traditionally attributed to the Arab Andalusian Muslim astronomer and mathematician Maslama al-Majrīṭī (d. 395 AH /1004 AD or shortly thereafter).[33] Maslama al-Majrīṭī was a prominent figure in the scientific and philosophical circles of al-Andalus. He was known for his contributions to mathematics, astronomy, and alchemy, and his works had a significant influence on both Islamic and European science. His reputed authorship of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* places the text within a well-respected scientific tradition. The first known attribution of the *Picatrix* to Maslama al-Majrīṭī appears to have been made by the Arab historian Ibn Khaldun in his seminal work, the *Muqaddimah*. Ibn Khaldūn referred to the as *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* and ascribed its authorship to the astronomer and mathematician Maslama al-Majrīṭī, However, this attribution is considered problematic for several reasons, including chronological inconsistencies regarding the dates of the work's completion and al-Majrīṭī's life.[34]

This traditional attribution has been challenged by some scholars. Maribel Fierro has argued that the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* should be attribut-

[32] V. Perrone Compagni, "*Picatrix latinus*. Concezioni filosofico-religiose e prassi magica", in *Medioevo. Rivista di storia della filosofia*, 1 (1975), 239-337.

[33] Cf. Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, ed. F. Rosenthal, Princeton 2005, 6.18, 374.

[34] E. J. Holmyard, "Maslama al-Majriti and the Rutbatu'l-Hakim", in *Isis*, 6/3 (1924), 293-305.

ed to Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī (d. 353 AH/964 AD), "a traditionist with bāṭinī aspirations".[35] Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam, emphasizes the inner, spiritual journey and the direct experience of the divine. Bāṭinīsm, associated with various esoteric Islamic sects, focuses on hidden, inner meanings of religious texts and doctrines. These influences are evident in the text's emphasis on the spiritual and mystical dimensions of astrology and magic. Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī was known for his interest in esoteric sciences and mystical traditions, and his involvement in the intellectual life of Córdoba, one of the leading cultural centres of the Islamic world at the time. His alleged authorship suggests a different intellectual lineage and emphasizes the text's connections to esoteric and mystical traditions.

Additionally, the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* reflects the intellectual heritage of the *Epistles of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ* (the *Brethern of Purity*),[36] a secretive philosophical and scientific brotherhood that flourished in Baṣra during the 10th century. The *Epistles of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*, a major work attributed to this group, encompass a wide range of topics, including philosophy, science, and mysticism. The *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*'s integration of various philosophical and cosmological ideas into practical and esoteric sciences mirrors the syncretic approach of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ.

The Latin translation of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, commissioned by King Alphonso X el Sabio of Castille between 1256 and 1258, played a crucial role in the text's dissemination in the Western world.[37] King Alphonso X was a key figure in the cultural and intellectual history of medieval Spain. His court in Toledo became a major centre for transla-

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[35] M. Fierro, "Bāṭinism in Al-Andalus. Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī (d. 353/964), author of the *Rutbat al-Ḥakīm and the Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* (*Picatrix*)", in *Studia Islamica*, 84/2 (1996), 87-112; G. De Callataÿ, S. Moureau, "Again on Maslama Ibn Qāsim al-Qurṭubī, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'and Ibn Khaldūn: New Evidence from Two Manuscripts of the *Rutbat al-ḥakīm*", in *Al-Qantara: Revista de Estudios Arabes*, 2/37 (2016), 339-372. See G. De Callataÿ, "Magic in al-Andalus: *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa', Rutbat al-hakim and Ghayat al-hakim* (*Picatrix*)", in *Al-Qantara: Revista de Estudios Arabes*, 2/34 (2013), 297-344.

[36] See D. Pingree, "Between the Ghāya and Picatrix. I: The Spanish Version", in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 44 (1981), 27-56.

[37] See C. Burnett, "Magic in the Court of Alfonso *el Sabio*: the Latin Translation of the *Ghayat al-Hakim*", in *De Frédéric II à Rodolphe II: astrologie, divination et magie dans les cours (XIIIe-XVIIe siècle)*, éd. J.-P. Boudet, M. Ostorero (Micrologus Library 85), Firenze 2017, 37-52.

tion and scholarship, where many important Arabic texts were translated into Latin and Castilian. The translation of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* into Latin significantly impacted European scholarship and magic, shaping the development of Western esoteric traditions. The *Picatrix* became foundational for medieval and Renaissance European occultists, alchemists, and astrologers. Its detailed descriptions of magical practices, talismans, and the influence of celestial bodies provided a rich source of knowledge for those engaged in the esoteric sciences. The availability of such comprehensive material facilitated the integration of these practices into the broader framework of Western occult traditions.

With particular reference to the underlying cosmology and the influence of the celestial bodies on earthly events, I will focus my attention on the *Ghāyat* which presents some interesting doctrinal connections with the Kindī-circle Alexander's *Fī l-tadbīrāti al-falakiyyah*.

The text elaborates on the construction and consecration of talismans, providing specific instructions for aligning their creation with the astrological conditions that maximize their effectiveness. For instance, the proper time to create a talisman for protection would be when the Moon is in a particular phase and sign, ensuring that its celestial influence is at its peak.[38] A relevant point is at the beginning of Book 3. After having discussed in Book 2 the "art of images and talismans" (the Hermetic *scientia imaginum*) and powers related to the planets and the signs of the Zodiac, in Book 3 the author treats the qualities of each single planet and sign.

Thus, at the beginning of chapter 1, he writes:

> After having spoken in the preceding book on the images and figures of the heavens and the other matters therein, […] [k]now that according to the fact that the Sun crosses from place to place in the circle of signs [i.e., the Zodiac], its effects are diversified. They are also diversified on account of the variety of planets and fixed stars. […] Here I shall tell in fuller detail the effects and powers that each of the planets has individually within itself and about the effects and properties of *nigromantia*. […] The celestial power is poured into the terrestrial, and in it the spiritual motion and alteration is greatest according to what is desired. Thus, the works of images are of two

[38] See Pseudo-Maǧrīṭī [al-Qurṭubī], *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm. Picatrix: Das Ziel des Weisen*, ed. H. Ritter, Leipzig 1933, 169-170; *Picatrix Latinus*, II.10, ed. D. Pingree, London 1986, 119-120.

> kinds, namely, by the power of the heavens and by the natural power of the Earth.[39]

The Neoplatonic background of these assertions is evident: the celestial bodies pour forth their power into the sublunary ones, whose motions and alterations come to be "according to what is desired". The explanation is in line with the magical-divinatory tradition: the action of images and talismans by the divinator/magician is made possible by the spread of divine power over the entire cosmos, from the First Cause down to the lower substances, through the medium of the celestial bodies. The passage is in fact a rendering of a Neoplatonic principle common to 'Arabic Aristotelianism' from *Neoplatonica Arabica* to the Arabic Alexander and beyond. Based on this, the author of the *Ghāyat* discusses "magical images" (that is, enchantments deriving from the use of certain images or geometrical forms), whereby the paradigm be-

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[39] Pseudo-Maǧrīṭī [al-Qurṭubī], *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, ed. Ritter, 148.8-149.5:

قد ذكرنا لك ايها الناظر في المقالة التي تقدمت من افعال الطلاسم والصور وتأثيراتها والنسب وقرائنها ما قدرنا عليه وحبوناك به وان كل شيء متكون في بطن الارض وعلى وجهها وفى ما فوقها من الهواء واعلى فان له في الفلك صورة تشبه صورته وشكل يشاكله ونظير هو مثله فان الشمس كلما بلغت الى موضع من الفلك بمسيرها الدائم فعلت فعلاً غير المتقدم فأفعالها متفننة دائمة وذلك لتغير الكواكب المتحيرة والثابتة مأواها فمتى احتيج إلى تحريك شيء رصد له وقته فاذا جرى شكله من الفلك وسامت المكان الذي يراد به ايقاع الفعل المراد حركنا طبع ذلك بمشاركة شيء ارضى او هوائي يشاكل الطبعين ة فيكون عن ذلك في الشيء الأرضي حركة عظيمة روحانية بحسب الامر المراد فالطلسمات انما تفعل بجهتين احداهما سماوية والأخرى ارضية وهذا الذى أودعه هذه المقالة من ضروب السحر الى علم الطلسمات في الرفعة والشرف. ان للكواكب فيما يحاول من الاعمال السحرية أموراً تختص بها وتنفرد دون غيرها.

Picatrix Latinus, III.1, ed. Pingree, 91.9-12:

"Postquam in precedenti libro sumus locuti de ymaginibus et figuris celi et ceteris ibidem existentibus. nunc dicamus quod figure sive vultus huius seculi celestibus figuris eisdem similibus assimilantur. Et scias quod secundum quod Sol transit de loco ad locum in circulo signorum eius diversificantur effectus. qui eciam diversificantur propter diversitatem planetarum et stellarum fixarum. Et ideo quando aliqua disponere voluerimus, inspicere debemus tempus congruum ad ea in celestibus figuris operibus faciendis animadvertendo, et tunc cum effectu opera fient que facere intendimus natura et similitudine rerum terrestrium ad celestia et conveniencia duarum naturarum ad invicem. scilicet celestis et terrene. In qua quidem terrena celestis virtus infunditur. et in ea motus et alteracio spiritualis maxima secundum petita. Quapropter opera ymaginum sunt duarum manerierum, videlicet virtute celi et terre naturali virtute. Et quantum in hoc tercio libro erimus locuti in ymaginibus nigromancie totum sequitur scienciam ymaginum et earum altitudines excelsas. Et in hoc loco effectus et potencias quas quilibet planetarum habet in se divisim circa effectus et proprietates nigromancie seriosius narrabo". English translation: D. Attrell, D. Porreca, *Picatrix. A Medieval Treatise on Astral Magic*, University Park (PA) 2019, 131-132 (slightly modified).

hind these assertions is the origin of both natural and heavenly virtues from God. Thus, the author writes:

> Know that if the Moon or Venus were the lord of anyone's nativity, such a person would be a lover of women and of a jolly disposition. If the Sun or Mars were lord of the nativity, such a person would be a lover of victory and conquest. If it were Jupiter or Mercury, that person would be a lover of knowledge, learning, understanding values, goodness, and justice.[40]

Each planet has its own influence on a peculiar aspect of nature and actions of human being, it is related to a specific part of the individual body or to a specific attitude or feeling,[41] nonetheless this agency is carried out because of divine power. This is the core of the genethliac astrology, where everyone is born with a certain humoral disposition, the determination of which is due to nature that, in turn, is the ordering defined by the stars. Individual temperaments are not only derived from but also influenced and developed over time by the celestial bodies.[42]

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[40] Pseudo-Maǧrīṭī [al-Qurṭubī], *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, ed. Ritter, 336.15-19:

عليه القمر والزهرة وزحل فان الغالب على طبعه القوة الشهوانية نحو المأكولات والمشروبات والمناكح وان كان المريخ والشمس والزهرة فان الغالب عليه الجماع والمناكح وان كان المستولى عليه الشمس والمريخ فان ٨١ الغالب على طبعه شهوة الغضب والانتقام وحب الرئاسة وان كان المستولى عليه الشمس وعطارد كان عشقه للمعارف واكتساب الفضائل والعدل.

Picatrix Latinus, IV.5, ed. Pingree, 199.35-37:

"Et ideo scias quod si Luna aut Venus fuerit dominus alicuius nativitatis, talis mulierum et ioculacionum erit amator; si autem Sol aut Mars nativitatis dominus fuerit, superandi et vincendi erit amator; si vero fuerit Iupiter aut Mercurius, talis sciendi et addiscendi atque bonitates intelligendi et bonitatum et iusticie erit amator". Eng. trans. Attrell, Porreca, 244 (slightly modified).

[41] Pseudo-Maǧrīṭī [al-Qurṭubī], *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, ed. Ritter, 198.1-3:

وها انا مبين لك طبائعها وخاصة دلالتها على الاشياء الموجودة، فأولها واعلاها مكانا واقربها من فلك البروج زحل وقوته البرد واليبس وجوهره نحس مفسد وهو منان الريح خبيث غدار مخوف.

Picatrix Latinus, III.7, ed. Pingree, 114.1-5: "Subsequenter scribere decrevi uniuscuiusque planetarum naturas et res cuilibet eorum appropriatas, et quid unusquisque significat eorum. Et hoc a Saturno tamquam a priori incipiendum est. Saturnus est frigidus et siccus, et est infortuna, damnans, auctor mali odoris et fetidi, superbus, proditor quia, quando aliquid promittit, prodicionem agit". Eng. trans. Attrell, Porreca, 155 (slightly modified): "Next, I decided to write down the natures of each and every one of the planets, the things appropriate to each of them, and what each of them signifies. This begins with Saturn, as before. Saturn is cold and dry, an unfortunate planet, damaging, author of bad and foul odors, proud and treacherous".

[42] Pseudo-Maǧrīṭī [al-Qurṭubī], *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, ed. Ritter 195.14-18:

ان كنت حزينا او كان بك مرض من مرة سوداء وكل امر يكون من طبعه فاطلبه على ما ارسمه لك واستعن

In Book 4, the *Ghāyat* delves into the use of herbs and stones, detailing how these materials are imbued with celestial powers. The text outlines the planetary correspondences for various natural substances, explaining how to harness their inherent properties for magical practices.[43]

Consequently, celestial power allows the cosmos to be interconnected, presenting a diversity of entities, properties, and powers. These fundamental assumptions enable the divinator/magician to read the future and evoke celestial virtues or occult natural forces of images and talismans for good or evil deeds. It is clear that the arts of magic, divination, and astrology are essentially conjoined sciences and practices. The notion of 'divine power' is the legacy bequeathed by the Stoic school (the divine *Logos*) to the Peripatetics, and the Greek Alexander, who reworks it based on the *De mundo*.[44] This tradition is later reinterpreted by his Abrahamic readers in the Kindī-circle in more generally Neoplatonic terms.

عليه بالمشترى فانه المصلح لما يفسده وربما طلب بزعمه الانسان امرًا إلى كوكب فيسأل ذلك الكوكب كوكبا آخر فينقضي ذلك الامر فلا تسأل امرًا الا لكوكب يصلح له.

Picatrix Latinus, III.7, ed. Pingree, 112.31-34: "Et si in cogitacionibus et doloribus fueris positus aut melancolia vel infirmitate gravatus, in supradictis omnibus vel in quolibet predictorum peticiones petiturus fueris a Saturno et queras ea que sue nature deputantur, et ea ab eo petas ut in posterum dicemus, et te in sui peticione cum love iuvabis. Et radix omnium istarum peticionum est ut non petas alicui planete aliquam peticionem nisi ea que sue dominacioni sunt attributa". Eng. trans. Attrell, Porreca, 154 (slightly modified): "If you were caught up in deep thought and grief, in melancholy or grievous illness, in all these things or affairs, seek petitions from Saturn, and request things assigned to his nature. Seek those things from him as we say below, and aid yourself with Jupiter in your request, Fundamental to all these requests is that you never seek anything from a planet unless it is attributed to its dominion".

[43] Pseudo-Maǧrīṭī [al-Qurṭubī], *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, IV, ed. Ritter, 279-285; *Picatrix Latinus*, IV, ed. Pingree, 209-214. In Book 4, for instance, details are provided on the proper harvesting of the herb yarrow under the influence of Venus to enhance its efficacy in love spells (ed. Ritter, 221). Additionally, specific instructions dictate the engraving of stones, such as emeralds, with particular symbols during designated planetary hours to augment their protective qualities (ed. Pingree, 392.10-15).

[44] On the notion of divine power, still fundamental: P. Donini, "*Θεία δύναμις* in Alessandro di Afrodisia", in *Commentary and Tradition. Aristotelianism, Platonism, and Post-Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. M. Bonazzi (Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca et Byzantina 4), Berlin-New York 2011, 125-138; S. Fazzo, *Aporia e sistema. La materia la forma il divino nelle* Quaestiones *di Alessandro di Afrodisia*, Pisa 2002, in part. 155, 160-167, 175-210. I am currently working on a contribution titled "Divine Power as the Cornerstone of Kindī-Circle Alexander's Cosmology", which is forthcoming.

4. Conclusions

To sum up and conclude, the ʿAbbāsid translation movement, centered in Baghdad from the 2nd/8th to 4th/10th centuries, played a pivotal role in introducing Greek philosophy and science into the Islamic world.

Key figures like al-Kindī led diverse groups in translating and adapting these works to fit Islamic principles. This effort resulted in the creation of the so-called "al-Kindī's metaphysics file", which integrated Neoplatonic ideas with Islamic dogmas. Alexander of Aphrodisias' cosmology, particularly his treatise *De providentia*, greatly influenced Islamic metaphysical thought by emphasizing the role of celestial bodies and divine power. This cosmology was further adapted by al-Kindī's circle and later translators, emphasizing the direct influence of celestial bodies on creation and providence, the conception of divine power, the intermediatory role played by the celestial bodies, the regular order of the cosmos as seen in the *Fī l-tadbīrāti al-falakiyyah*.

The *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* (*Picatrix*), attributed to al-Qurṭubī, combined various influences to elaborate on celestial powers and their terrestrial effects, reflecting Neoplatonic principles. Tracing the philological path of these concepts is difficult, yet one can identify in the Kindī-circle a fundamental place not only for the translation of philosophy into Arabic, but also for the emergence of a magical-divinatory tradition that would later be inherited by Latin thought with the Toledan translations of the 12th and 13th centuries.

University of Foggia

Non-astrological Methods of Weather Forecasting in Medieval Latin Astrological Works: A Contradiction?

Barbora Kocánová

Several different ways of predicting the weather are known from the Middle Ages, of which the astrological method was the one most recognised by scholars. It is the subject of a large number of texts, among which a small group is particularly noteworthy. Their authors, on the one hand, present detailed instructions and rules for astrological prediction, but on the other hand, also include rules unrelated to astrology. Their model was the 2nd-century Greek astronomer, astrologer, mathematician and geographer Ptolemy, who in the second book of his *Tetrabiblos* provides hints for astrological weather forecasting,[1] yet at the end also offers a list of rules for short-term forecasting from atmospheric phenomena.[2] Some authors of the Latin Middle Ages not only

[1] For example, when forecasting the weather for the specific seasons of the year, Ptolemy recommends making horoscopes for the new and full moon, which are closest to the equinox and solstice. This is achieved through an analysis of the Sun and Moon, namely their position in the zodiac, their position in relation to the horizon (whether they are in the ascendant, etc.), and their aspects to the other planets. Following the data obtained, the character of the weather for the next three months can be determined: see Claudius Ptolemaeus, *Tetrabiblos*, II, 11-13, ed. W. Hübner (Claudii Ptolemaei opera quae exstant omnia 3.1: Ἀποτελεσματικά), Leipzig 1998. One-time general events such as wars, droughts, weather variability, abundance of grain, etc., could also be predicted, e.g. from the conjunction of the Sun and Moon when it causes an eclipse, and from the movement of the planets at that time (II, 5-10). See also C. Hall, "Horoscopes of the Moon: Weather Prediction as Astrology in Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*", in *Early Science and Medicine*, 26 (2021), 231-253.

[2] These rules are based on observing the brightness and colour of the Sun and Moon, halo phenomena and the corona, and the appearance of some fixed stars, comets, meteors, clouds and rainbows: see Claudius Ptolemaeus, *Tetrabiblos*, II, 14, ed. Hübner, 158-164. Ptolemy's instructions are discussed in more detail by A. Lawrence-Mathers, *Medieval Meteorology. Forecasting the Weather from Aristotle to the Almanac*, Cambridge 2020, 77-79.

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built on Ptolemy but also enriched their astrological works with other forecasting methods; thus, in addition to astrological instructions, we find rules for forecasting from the month in which it thunders, from the day of the week on which the January calends falls, and others.

Such a model is applied by two 13th-century authors (Leopold of Austria in *Compilatio de astrorum scientia*, and Guido Bonatti in *Liber introductorius ad iudicia stellarum*) and two from the following century (Firmin de Beauval in *Opusculum repertorii pronosticon in mutationes aeris tam via astrologica quam metheorologica* and John Ashenden in his *Summa iudicialis de accidentibus mundi*). In general, these works by these four authors were conceived as handbooks containing collections of rules. As for the astrological rules that prevail over non-astrological approaches, these are often very detailed rules based on the positions of the planets, especially the Moon and Sun, their aspects, and their movements at specific moments (e.g. eclipses, the beginning of the year). Why exactly did the authors in question incorporate other methods of prognostication (sometimes even with meteorological explanations) into their predominantly astrological treatises? Were they aware of the limited reliability of the various methods and intended to compile a set of all the different rules in order to give as reliable a forecast as possible? And did they try to link all the methods, or validate them in this way?

Although the astrological method was the predominant approach to weather prediction and was exempt from the criticism of astrology as such, it had its detractors.[3] Its critique is found in medieval sources of various genres, including narrative texts. For example, the Czech chronicler Petrus Zittaviensis (Petr Žitavský, d. 1339) reports on a particular unsuccessful astrological prediction: although according to the Toledo letter of 1322 there was to be, among other things, a windstorm in September 1329, during which all the winds were to blow and the

[3] Already in antiquity we encounter criticism of astrologers, from which those who predicted the weather from the stars were excluded because their predictions were deemed based not only on the assumption of stellar causality but also on observation: see L. Taub, *Ancient Meteorology* (Science of Antiquity), London-New York 2003, 39-40. An overview of other ways of predicting the weather in the Middle Ages, including such methods as foretelling from sheep shoulder blades or divination from bowls of salt, is given by B. Kocánová, "Weather Forecasting: Traditions and Practices in the Medieval Western Christian World", in *Prognostication in the Medieval World. A Handbook,* 2 vols., ed. M. Heiduk, K. Herbers, H.-C. Lehner, Berlin 2021, vol. I, 651-664.

sky was to turn black, the year in question was calm, and the prediction was therefore almost entirely false.[4] Following their own experience, some university scholars also rejected astrological weather predictions. For instance, the *quodlibetarius* John Arsen of Langenfeld, in his preparations to determine "Whether an experienced astrologer can reliably predict future events", mentions that predictions of rain, wind and other phenomena that were derived from the horoscope for the beginning of the astrological year were often not confirmed, even though such predictions had been written by knowledgeable astrologers.[5]

Specific objections to astrological prediction concerned the excessive distance of the celestial bodies from the sublunar region where the weather was supposed to happen and our limited knowledge of their movements, the individual characteristics of which could not be clearly assigned to specific meteorological phenomena.[6] Such limits

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[4] Petri abbatis Zittaviensis *Cronica Aulae Regiae*, II, 22, ed. A. Pumprová, L. Jan et al. (Monumenta Germaniae historica: Scriptores XL), Wiesbaden 2022, 466-467: "Quedam epistola de astronomica sciencia conscripta plura mirabilia hoc anno ventura dudum ante annos aliquod predixerat […]. Noveritis, quod anno Domini M^{o}C^{o}C^{o}C^{o}XXIX° mense Septembri sole existente in libra convenient omnes planete insimul et sol erit in cauda draconis, et […] fiet dyluvium ventorum per Saturnum et Martem et crescet mare ultra solitum et erit ventorum tanta conflicio, quod flabunt omnes venti et obscurabunt et denigrescent totum aerem et dabunt sonos horribiles et corpora hominum dissipabunt subvertentes edificia et arbores et plures valles adequabunt montibus […]. Docuit me ipsa rerum et eventuum experiencia, quia fere omnia, que eadem epistola spiritu pseudigrafo predixerat, sunt mentita. Ymmo iste annus quietus fuit et temperatus et in blado plurimum fructuosus". See also G. Mentgen, *Astrologie und Öffentlichkeit im Mittelalter* (Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters), Stuttgart 2005, 168-170; on the further impact of the Toledo letters see R. Simek, "Der Untergang der Welt im Jahre 1432 und ihre Errettung durch Johannes von Gmunden", in *Johannes von Gmunden – zwischen Astronomie und Astrologie*, hrsg v. R. Simek, M. Klein (Studia Medievalia et Septentrionalia 22), Wien 2012, 193-213, and C. Rohr, *Extreme Naturereignisse im Ostalpenraum. Naturerfahrung im Spätmittelalter und am Beginn der Neuzeit* (Umwelthistorische Forschungen 4), Köln-Weimar-Wien 2007, 538-539.

[5] See the handbook of the *quodlibetarius* John Arsen of Langenfeld, dating perhaps from 1400, preserved in Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, MS. 1435, ff. 257v-258v: "Utrum peritus astrologus de futuris contingentibus certitudinaliter pronosticare possit"; f. 258r: "Prima pars astrologie, que est de revolucionibus, non certificat quoad iudicium, […] per illam iudicatur de gwerris, tranquillitatibus, ventis, pluviis et sic de consimilibus, de quibus sepe experimur non evenire, quod pronosticatum est, eciam a peritis".

[6] For more details see J. M. Mandosio, "Meteorology and Weather Forecasting in

are pointed out by Nicole Oresme in his commentary on *Meteorology*. Interestingly, as Aurora Panzica shows, in the first version of his commentary he believes that by observing the stars it is possible to arrive at a weather forecast but in the revised version he moderates his opinion by saying that our knowledge of celestial bodies and their effects is, considering their distance, too general to allow for a reliable prediction. Nevertheless, he assumes that if we were better informed, astrological predictions would be more accurate than those from sublunar phenomena because, according to him, the stars not only foretell weather changes but also cause them.[7]

Despite the fact that the predictions of astrologers did not always succeed, in general, it can be said that astrologers enjoyed quite a lot of trust. Klaus Oschema points out the reasons for this and mentions, among other things, the excuses astrologers used to defend themselves in the event of failure, such as the lack of data provided; he also emphasises the psychological aspect, namely that people generally do not tend to check predictions retrospectively.[8]

Leopold of Austria, the author of the manual *Compilatio de astrorum scientia* from around 1271, apparently also had confidence in

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the Middle Ages", in *Die mantischen Künste und die Epistemologie prognostischer Wissenschaften im Mittelalter*, hrsg. v. A. Fidora (Archiv für Kulturgeschichte. Beiheft 74), Köln-Weimar-Wien 2013, 172.

[7] A. Panzica, "Introduction", in Nicole Oresme, *Questiones in Meteorologica de ultima lectura, recensio parisiensis. Study of the Manuscript Tradition and Critical Edition of Books I-II.10*, ed. A. Panzica (Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy and Science 32), Leiden-Boston 2021, 1-9: 2. See Nicole Oresme, *Quaestiones in Meteorologica*, II,5 (*Utrum rubedo matutina sit signum pluvie*), II,6 (*Utrum caligo sit signum pluvie future*), ed. Panzica, 242-248.

[8] K. Oschema, "Heaven Can Tell… Late Medieval Astrologers as Experts – and What They can Teach us about Contemporary Financial Expertise", in *Making the Medieval Relevant*, *How Medieval Studies Contribute to Improving our Understanding of the Present*, ed. C. Jones, C. Kostick, K. Oschema, Berlin-Boston 2020, 191-210: 201-206, and Id., "Irren ohne zu scheitern. Warum (spät-)mittelalterliche Astrologen nicht immer Recht haben mussten", in *Praktiken und Räume des Wissens. Expertenkulturen in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, hrsg. v. M. Füssel, F. Rexroth, I. Schürmann, Göttingen 2019, 145-171. The author also lists the extant literature on the topic regarding its relationship to astrology in the Middle Ages. As the main supporting argument of astrology served the apparent connection between the Sun and the seasons, between the Moon and the tides, and between the risings of the stars and certain natural phenomena. The possible effect of these bodies on us and on earthly events was therefore assumed.

astrology.[9] His manual is divided into ten parts, devoted to several branches of astrology, including nativities, finding answers to certain questions, and determining the appropriate time for specific activities. It is difficult to say how trustworthy his rules were to his contemporary readers; in any case, his text was well known in the Middle Ages, thirty copies surviving in Germany alone.[10] Leopold deals with weather forecasting in the sixth section, in the introduction to which he writes that all changes in the weather come from the signs of the zodiac and stars or planets and their aspects;[11] that is why he collected facts about the nature of the signs of the zodiac and the stars in them, about the nature of the planets, and collected also – as he says – the rules of philosophers. He begins the section with an explanation of the nature of the signs based on Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*, then includes a passage on the lunar mansions, and on the planets, which he discusses in connec-

[9] Leopold is not a well-known author, but we do know that he worked as an astronomer and astrologer in the second half of the 13th century and died sometime around the turn of the 13th century. He probably studied in Paris, and may have belonged to the circle around the encyclopaedists Vincent of Beauvais and Brunetto Latini: see F. J. Carmody (ed.), *Leopold of Austria, Li compilacions de la science des estoilles, Books I-III, edited from MS French 613 of the Bibliothèque nationale with notes and glossary* (University of California publications in modern Philology 33.2), Berkeley-Los Angeles 1947, 39. J. H. Holden, *History of Horoscopic Astrology. From the Babylonian Period to the Modern Age*, 2nd ed., Tempe 2006, 143, states that Leopold completed the work sometime around 1278, as he included a horoscope in the eighth section for 17 December 1278, which according to Holden indicates the approximate date of composition of the work. J. Ducos, "Astrométéorologie et vulgarisation, le livre VI de Li compilacion de le science des estoilles de Léopold d'Autriche", in *Par les mots et par les textes, mélanges en l'honneur de C. Thomasset*, éd. D. James-Raoul, O. Soutet, Paris 2005, 239-256, suggests that he wrote the manual around 1270.

[10] See Carmody (ed.), *Leopold of Austria*, *Li compilacions de la science*, 44. On the manuscripts, see S. Jenks, "Astrometeorology in the Middle Ages", in *Isis*, 74.2 (1983), 185-210: 205-207, nos. 57 and 84. The text of the handbook was printed by Erhard Ratdolt in Augsburg in 1489.

[11] Leopoldus de Austria, *Compilatio de astrorum scientia*, Tract. VI, Augsburg 1489, 44b: "Omnis mutatio aeris fit aut ex natura signorum aut stellarum, que in eis sunt, aut ex natura planetarum in se et in signis et eorum coniunctionibus et applicationibus". The sixth section on weather forecasting, *De mutatione aeris*, also occurs separately in manuscripts, namely in codices preserved at Oxford, Erfurt, Wolfenbüttel and Cracow: see Jenks, "Astrometeorology", 205, no. 38; G. Rosińska, *Scientific Writings and Astronomical Tables in Cracow: a Census of Manuscript Sources (XIVth–XVIth centuries)*, Wrocław 1984, 115, no. 532.

tion with the determination of the ruler of the year.[12] In predicting the weather for the seasons, he mentions, again on the basis of Ptolemy, the need to observe the equinox or solstice preceding the conjunction and opposition of the Sun and Moon; of significance, he says, is the situation three days before or after the conjunction of these two heavenly bodies which, when in angular houses, change the weather.[13]

It will not surprise anyone that the famous Italian astrologer Guido Bonatti (c. 1210-1297) also had no doubt about the validity of astrology in weather forecasting. His book, written not long after Leopold, sometime after 1282, has survived under many titles: *Liber introductorius ad iudicia stellarum*, *De astronomia tractatus*, *Liber astronomicus*, and others.[14] All these titles indicate that it is a work of astrology and the text indeed is mostly astrological. In his compilation, Guido Bonatti defends the usefulness of astrology, introduces the signs, astrological houses and planets, their influence on earthly events and their mutual effects, discusses conjunctions and some astrological techniques (mentioning, for example, *interrogationes*, i.e. the search for answers to questions such as whether to go to a banquet, whether it will be held and what kind of food will be there, or how many kinds of food);[15] and in the tenth treatise, *De imbribus et de aeris mutationibus*, he writes about weather forecasting.[16] That its author believed the rules he gives is evident, for example,[17] from the statement that if there is a conjunction of the Sun and the Moon, and Jupiter is "joined corporally to them,

[12] Leopoldus de austria, *Compilatio*, Tract. VI, 44b-45b.

[13] Leopoldus de austria, *Compilatio*, Tract. VI, 46a.

[14] In the first printed edition by Erhard Ratdolt, the work is entitled *Decem continens tractatus astronomiae* (Augsburg 1491); it was later published in Venice (1506) and Basel (1550). The following quotations are from the Augsburg edition, the text of which I consulted with a sample of manuscript copies.

[15] See Holden, *History of Horoscopic Astrology*, 139.

[16] See Guido Bonatus, *Liber introductorius ad iudicia stellarum*, Tract. X, Augsburg 1491, 398a-406b. On the content of this part, see Lawrence-Mathers, *Medieval Meteorology*, 149. Bonatti's compilation is generally divided into ten treatises, but these are sometimes further subdivided into two or more sections, and the order of the treatises varies in the copies. See also L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, New York 1923, vol. II, 826, note 3.

[17] Guido Bonatus, *Liber introductorius*, Tract. X, 398b (tr. by B.N. Dykes, *Bonatti on Mundane Astrology. Treatises 4,8.1, and 10 of Guido Bonatti's Book of Astronomy, from the 1491 and 1550 Latin Editions*, Minneapolis 2010, 227-228).

or […] aspects them from trine or sextile aspect, nor did one of the malefics (*aliqua ex infortunis*) appear with them […], it will indubitably (*indubitanter*) deny future rains".

No doubts are likewise to be expected in the case of the Oxford author belonging to the Merton group, John Ashenden, who might have been prompted to write his great work *Summa iudicialis de accidentibus mundi* (1346-1348) by the success of his prediction concerning the effects of the lunar eclipse and the three conjunctions of Mars, Jupiter and Saturn that were to occur in March 1345, from which he foretold cold and extremely wet weather and associated unrest, war and mortality for the next few years.[18] *Summa iudicialis* is a huge sum of astrological knowledge concerning large-scale events and weather, divided into two parts – two treatises – one on general principles and predictions arising from the position of the heavenly bodies, the other on more detailed weather and related predictions (e.g. hunger and mortality). The work is very extensive, yet it did not suffer the usual fate of lengthy treatises, which tended not to be popular among scribes. On the contrary, it is preserved in more than thirty manuscripts which, besides England, are to be found, for example, in Paris, Milan, Naples, Vienna, Cracow, Erfurt, Munich, Leipzig, Nuremberg, and Wroclaw.[19]

If the aforementioned authors seem to be clearly in no doubt about the validity of astrology, the situation is more interesting in the case

[18] On John Ashenden, see especially K. V. Snedegar, *John Ashenden and the Scientia astrorum mertonensis. With an Edition of Ashenden's Pronosticationes*, Oxford 1988 (diss.), esp. vol. I, 1-21 and 64-175; on his predictions see 185-206 (an edition of Ashenden's predictions being in the vol. II, 291-441). See also Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. III, 326-328. Ashenden belonged to a learned society based at Merton College, Oxford, concentrating on astronomical and astrological studies. Product of these studies is the Bodleian manuscript Digby 176, compiled in the mid-14th century by William Reed, to which most recently see J.-P. Boudet, L. Miolo, "Alfonsine Astronomy and Astrology in Fourteenth-Century Oxford: The Case of MS Bodleian Library Digby 176", in *Alfonsine Astronomy: The Written Record*, ed. R. L. Kremer, M. Husson, J. Chabás, Turnhout 2022, 57-105.

[19] Abridged versions are also included. An overview of the manuscripts is given by H. M. Carey, *Courting Disaster. Astrology at the English Court and University in the Later Middle Ages*, New York 1992, 189-190, and Snedegar, *John Ashenden*, vol. II, 280-283. The updated list will be one of the results of Francesca Bonini's research on John Ashenden, which is being conducted as part of a project led by Alessandro Palazzo at the University of Trento. For the prolific reception of this work among medieval and later authors, see Carey, *Courting Disaster*, 74-75.

of William Merle, who was active shortly before Ashenden and from whom Ashenden seems to have drawn.[20] Merle, working in England, repeatedly was active in Oxford, producing (a) *Regule ad futuram aeris temperiem pronosticandam*, on astrological weather forecasting; (b) *De pronosticatione aeris*, on forecasting from what we would call "empirical" or inferior or terrestrial or common weather signs, such as loudly croaking frogs, the changing appearance of sky, or a rule according to which a shower or thunderstorm arriving on a Saturday never, or only rarely, lasts beyond Monday;[21] or that of all the days of the week, the weather changes most frequently on Fridays;[22] and (c) records of weather observations.[23]

His texts caught the attention of Keith Snedegar, who wrote an article on the subject, stating that Merle seems to have departed from the astrological method during his observations and wrote texts with non-astrological rules, thus also departing from the then-current trends in Oxford.[24] A similar point is made by Anne Lawrence-Mathers in her book on medieval weather forecasting.[25] The truth is, however, that there are several question marks over the chronology of Merle's writings, so it could have been the other way around, or it could also have

[20] SNEDEGAR, *John Ashenden*, vol. I, 143, and K. V. SNEDEGAR, "Between Scholasticism and Folk Wisdom: The Weather Lore of William Merle", in *Southern African Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 5 (1997), 29-36: 30 and 32. A very useful analysis of Merle's work is also given by THORNDIKE, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. III, 141-145.

[21] See Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Digby 147, f. 135r; see also JOHANNES ESCHUID, *Summa iudicialis*, Venetiis 1489, II, 3, 5, f. n8va.

[22] See Oxford, BL, MS. Digby 147, f. 135r. A critical edition of both Merle's weather forecasting texts is envisaged by Maximilian Schuh and Barbora Kocánová.

[23] William Merle recorded the weather for seven years; a facsimile of the records was published with the translation by G. J. SYMONS, *Merle's Ms. Considerationes temperiei pro 7 annis per Magistrum Willelmum Merle, socium domus de Merton. The earliest Known Journal of the Weather, kept by the Rev. William Merle, Rector of Driby, Lincolnshire, 1337-1344*, London 1891. For more detail on the journals and Merle's texts with rules for weather forecasting, see especially SNEDEGAR, "Between Scholasticism", 29-36.

[24] SNEDEGAR, "Between Scholasticism", 30.

[25] LAWRENCE-MATHERS, *Medieval Meteorology*, 165. As Maximilian Schuh rightly points out in M. SCHUH, "Medieval Meteorology: Forecasting the Weather from Aristotle to the Almanac, by Anne Lawrence-Mathers", in *The English Historical Review*, 138/590-591 (2023), 308-310, the author omits the fact that one of Merle's texts on forecasting concerns astrology and is not just another version of the same rules.

been that he did not depart from any method, but merely made lists of rules that came into consideration when making predictions.[26]

In any case, Merle deals with only one method within each text, which is an entirely different approach from the authors upon whom this study focuses. The most diverse set of rules for weather forecasting is given by Leopold of Austria in his *Compilatio de astrorum scientia*. In the section *De mutatione aeris* (*On the Changes of the Weather*) he includes, alongside instructions for astrological forecasting, predictions derived from comets and meteorological phenomena such as rainbows. Unlike Ptolemy and Al-Kindī, from whom he drew, Leopold does not first give astrological rules and then weather signs from atmospheric phenomena, but gives them alternately almost without system. After the astrological introduction, for example, he mentions a rule about the rainbow taken from Ptolemy ("Rainbow in clear weather means cold, in rainy weather means clear sky"), with some added information (such as on the etymology of the word *yris* and on the meteorological theory of wind).[27] Then he turns again to astrology, including the rules for predicting the weather at the time of the "revolution of the year" (*revolutio anni*, i.e. the start of the astrological year marked by the Sun's entry into Aries), thence to the so-called

[26] In his weather records, Merle, unfortunately, does not make any correlations between the weather that occurred and the predicted weather. He just lists which days were foggy, when it rained, etc., with the only exception being the report of a "dragon" that was briefly seen and after which a drought was expected; see Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Digby 176, f. 8r (facs. printed in Symons, *Merle's Ms.*): "September [1343] […] In secunda septimana videbatur in Lyndesay ardens draco circa solis occasum vel ante, qui futuram tunc siccitatem significavit". It is not certain exactly what the phenomenon was supposed to be, as the designation *draco ardens* could have been used for a meteor, a comet, or an aurora borealis: see. U. Dall'Olmo, "Latin Terminology Relating to Aurorae, Comets, Meteors and Novae", in *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, 11 (1980), 10-23: 13, 22-23. Symons translates it as a *comet*, but given the short duration of the phenomenon, a more appropriate interpretation seems to be a meteor or aurora. As for the expected drought, in weather forecasting texts meteors and comets were associated with it, so probably Merle was referring to meteor.

[27] Leopoldus de austria, *Compilatio*, Tract. VI, 46a: "yris tempore sereno aerem significat hyemalem, et pluvioso serenitatem. […] Et dicitur yris ab aere". See Claudius Ptolemaeus, *Tetrabiblos*, II, 14, 11, and Isidorus Hispalensis, *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, XIII, 10, 1, ed. W.M. Lindsay, Oxford 1911. Indicators of changes in climate include a darkened or greenish Moon, comets, meteors (*assub*) and clouds.

opening of the doors and others, followed by rules based upon various traditions. First comes a passage on forecasting from thunder, for example, "If thunders are heard in January, it portends strong winds and abundance of fruits".[28] He includes the rules for forecasting from the beginning of the year: "If the calends of January occurs on the Sunday, it will make a warm, but windy winter, wet spring".[29] And at the end come atmospheric signs again, rainbows and halos, but this time drawn from Seneca's *Natural Questions*.[30] Leopold skips from astrological forecasting to atmospheric weather signs, and back again to astrology drawn from Arabic texts and their Latin translations, to thunder and other rules, returning to atmospheric weather signs again. He just lists, drawing together rules from different sources, without any links or comments.

In contrast, Guido Bonatti clearly worked with fewer traditions in the section on weather forecasting. He draws heavily on a translation of an Arabic astrological text, *Jafar Indus*,[31] and on Ptolemy's *Tetra-*

[28] Leopoldus de austria, *Compilatio*, Tract. VI, 47b: "Ianuarii tonitrua ventos validos et abundantiam frugum significant". For texts with rules for predicting from thunder, known as brontologies, see especially R. M. Liuzza, "What the Thunder Said: Anglo-Saxon Brontologies and the Problem of Sources", in *The Review of English Studies*, 55 (2004), 1-23; D. Juste, H. Chiu, "The *De tonitruis* Attributed to Bede: An Early Medieval Treatise on Divination by Thunder Translated from Irish", in *Traditio*, 68 (2013), 97-124; and W. Sayers, "Irish Affinities of *De tonitruis*, A Treatise on Prognostication by Thunder", in *Eolas: The Journal of the American Society of Irish Medieval Studies*, 10 (2017), 2-15.

[29] Leopoldus de austria, *Compilatio*, Tract. VI, 47b: "Kalende Ianuarii si fuerint in die dominico, hyems erit bona sed ventosa, ver humidum, estas et autumnus ventosi et annona satis et pecora et mel […], discordia inter reges, latrocinia multa". On rules of this kind, see in particular E. A. Matter, "The *Revelatio Esdrae* in Latin and English Traditions", in *Revue Bénédictine*, 92 (1982), 376-392, and L. DiTommaso, "Pseudepigrapha Notes III: 4. Old Testament Pseudepigrapha in the Yale University Manuscript Collection", in *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*, 20 (2010), 3-80.

[30] Leopoldus de austria, *Compilatio*, Tract. VI, 48a: "Arcus yridis in diversis locis diversa significat […] Si circa occasum refulserit, tonabit et leviter pluet, si ab ortu surrexerit, serena promittit. Circulus circa lunam, qui halo dicitur, si delapsus fuerit equaliter et semetipsum evanuerit, significat aeris tranquillitatem, cum in una parte ruptus fuerit, illinc ventus unde scinditur, si in pluribus locis ruptus fuerit, tempestatem in mari naute expectant". See Seneca, *Naturales quaestiones*, ed. H. M. Hine, Stuttgart-Leipzig 1996, I, 6, 1 (rainbow), 29; I, 2, 8 (halo), 14-15.

[31] On this text see C. Burnett, "Lunar Astrology. The Varieties of Texts Using Lunar Mansions, with Emphasis on *Jafar Indus*", in *Micrologus*, 12 (2004), 43-133.

biblos, from which he takes predictions from halo phenomena, comets, meteors, and the colour of the Sun at sunset.[32] For example, he repeats Ptolemy's rule about rainbows that "a rainbow in clear weather signifies coming storms, and after bad cold weather it signifies clear weather", which Bonatti mentions together with a commentary.[33]

The chapter on "Certain extraordinary things" is noteworthy, Bonatti saying he does not remember finding these rules elsewhere, but that he has seen them to be often and again true.[34] Among other things, again we have the rainbow: if it shows up in the morning, it means rain, unless the great dryness of the air has had the opposite effect, and vice versa.[35] At the end of the chapter Bonatti remarks once more that though these coincidences are often true, yet they are not necessary.[36] In general, he seems to have more confidence in astrology, as we have seen in the example of an astrological rule whose result can be expected *indubitanter.*[37]

To sum up, even Bonatti, the most celebrated astrologer of the 13th century, gives both astrological and non-astrological rules without caring that some have mutually exclusive approaches, so for him they are certainly not contradictory. He clearly prefers the astrological ones, but

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[32] Guido Bonatus, *Liber introductorius*, Tract. X, 403b-404b.

[33] Guido Bonatus, *Liber introductorius*, Tract. X, 404a-b: "Aspicias etiam yridem et in quibus temporibus apparuerit et in quibus temporibus erit eius apparitio. Nam si apparuerit in serenis temporibus nec illud serenum fuerit longi temporis atque magni siccitatis; quoniam tunc non erit significatum illius ita necessarium, tamen vix aut nunquam fallitur, quia yemalem aerem aut pluvias significabit. Et hoc accidet ex eo, quod vapores, qui rari fuerant, incipiunt ingrossari, quoniam ut plurimum immo quasi semper yris non apparet, nisi cum vapores rarificantur vel inspissantur. Si autem yemale tempus fuerit serenum, serenum tempus demonstrabit futurum, quoniam vapores tunc incipiunt rarificari et desiccari atque anullari, ut dixit Ptholomeus".

[34] Guido Bonatus, *Liber introductorius*, Tract. X, 405a: "De quibusdam partibus extraordinariis […], que non memini me invenisse in dictis alicuius philosophorum, sed vidi ea multociens, et ut plurimum veridica et maxime habent locum hic in sexto climate toto et in latere quinti et in meridie septimi".

[35] Guido Bonatus, *Liber introductorius*, Tract. X, 405a: "[…] si de mane applicuerit *(apparuerit, mss.)* yris, tunc pluviam indicabit, nisi magna siccitas aeris contrarium operetur".

[36] Guido Bonatus, *Liber introductorius*, Tract. X, 405a: "Hec accidencia licet ut plurimum sint vera, non tamen necessaria sunt".

[37] See note 17.

he does not seem to have any reason not to mention the meteorological rules, which – according to him – mostly work as well.

The work by Firmin de Beauval has seven main parts, six of them astrological. Astrology greatly constitutes the majority but still the section with non-astrological rules is quite extensive. It is included at the end of the work as a seventh section, headed, "The seventh part on the changes of the weather, which is based on the higher signs known through the science of meteorology, and on some widely, commonly (*vulgariter*) recognised signs".[38] There are several sections in this part, e.g. on the colouring of the Sun and Moon during eclipses, on comets, on halo phenomena, and on the appearance of the Sun at sunrise and sunset. There are rules for predicting winds from thunderstorms, different cloud forms, etc. Firmin draws heavily on Ptolemy and his commentary, but also on the extract from Pliny known as *De praesagiis tempestatum*.[39]

Some rules should stem from forecasting by the common people, i.e., countrymen (*praenosticatio rusticorum*),[40] although actually the rules that follow are by Albertus – not Albert the Great, but Albertus de Orlamunde, as we find these rules in (probably) his *Summa naturalium*.[41] The same applies to *prenosticatio ventorum per diversa signalia*

[38] Firminus de Bellavalle, *Opusculum repertorii pronosticon in mutationes aeris tam via astrologica quam metheorologica*, VII, Venetiis 1485, 42a-45b, title: "De mutatione aeris per signalia superiora, que per methaurorum scientiam habent cognosci, et quedam alia signalia vulgariter approbata".

[39] The text *De praesagiis tempestatum* corresponds to Plinius Maior, *Naturalis historia*, XVIII, 342-365, ed. L. Ian, C. Mayhoff, Stuttgart 1967, vol. III, 238-245. For Firmin's other sources see Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. III, 273.

[40] Firminus de Bellavalle, *Opusculum*, VII, 12, 44b.

[41] See Albertus de Orlamunde, *Summa naturalium*, IV, 8, ed. A. Borgnet, Paris 1890 (Opera Omnia 5), 484b. Albert the Great was thought to be the author of the compendium *Summa naturalium* but it is most likely the Dominican Albert of Orlamünde, who was active in the second half of the 13th century. The text was published by August Borgnet in the collected works of Albert the Great (Opera Omnia 5, Paris 1890, 445-536), as *Philosophia pauperum*. Particular attention has been paid to it by Martin Grabmann, who, on the basis of information from commentaries, has identified Albert of Orlamünde as the author: see M. Grabmann, "Die *Philosophia pauperum* und ihr Verfasser Albert von Orlamünde. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des philosophischen Unterrichtes an den deutschen Stadtschulen des ausgehenden Mittelalters", in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, 20.2 (1918), 1-29. This view

vulgi ("wind prediction from the signs known by common people")[42] and to the following chapters regarding forecasting from the colours of the clouds, from fire, from the sea, and also from the behaviour of animals (such as frogs growing louder than usual presaging a storm).[43] But again, Firminus is just listing the rules in a certain order, without commenting.[44]

We find even more meteorology in Ashenden's *Summa iudicialis de accidentibus mundi*. Ashenden placed a section on weather forecasting as early as the first of two parts which, as already mentioned, is devoted to the general principles of mundane (i.e. not natal horoscopic) astrology.[45] In this section, Ashenden proceeds from the astrological elements from which predictions are made (e.g. the nature of the planets, aspects, important moments) and from the procedures described by his predecessors (e.g. the chapter on "How to Predict the Weather According to Lincolniensis")[46] whereas in the second part he is already focusing on the "particulars" of weather prediction (and related matters), dividing this part into twelve sections (*distinctiones*) according to the phenomena predicted. First, phenomena in the air are examined, i.e. rain, snow, clear skies, etc.; then phenomena on the ground (e.g. earthquakes, floods, pestilence and famine, and wars).[47] Sometimes there is also an explanation or description of the phenomena and the

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was subsequently criticised, but in the 1930s Bernhard Geyer sided with Grabmann's conjecture, in B. Geyer, *Die Albert dem Grossen zugeschriebene* Summa naturalium *(*Philosophia pauperum*). Texte und Untersuchungen*, Münster i.W. 1938, 1-3, 42-47.

[42] Firminus de Bellavalle, *Opusculum*, VII, 13, 44b; see Albertus de Orlamunde, *Summa naturalium*, IV, 13-17, ed. Borgnet, 487b-491b.

[43] Firminus de Bellavalle, *Opusculum*, VII, 14-20, 44b-45b.

[44] However, his consistent referencing of the sources of the quotations is of value.

[45] Johannes Eschuid, *Summa iudicialis*, I, 9, 4; I, 10, 12, Venetiis 1489, ff. g1v-h7r.

[46] Johannes Eschuid, *Summa iudicialis*, I, 10, 10, ff. h4v-h5v. *Lincolniensis* is thought to be the theologian and Chancellor of Oxford University Robert Grosseteste (before 1170-1253), the presumed author of *De impressionibus aeris seu de prognosticatione*. His authorship is disputed: see C. Panti, *Moti, virtù e motori celesti nella cosmologia di Roberto Grossatesta. Studi ed edizione dei trattati* De sphera*,* De cometis*,* De motu supercelestium (Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi. Testi e Studi 16), Firenze 2001, 45-46, and Lawrence-Mathers, *Medieval Meteorology*, 136-140. Text edited in L. Baur, *Die philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste, Bischofs von Lincoln*, Münster i.W. 1912, 41-51; for a more detailed discussion of this text, see Jenks, "Astrometeorology", 190-191.

[47] See Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. IV, 329-334.

"immediate causes" of their generation are given. A large part is taken up with predictions based on astrological principles, e.g. the Moon in an astrologically strong position during eclipses or at the beginning of different cycles (e.g. year, quarter, etc.) indicates significant rainfall;[48] other significators are also present: cloud forms, animal behaviour, etc. Ashenden also dedicates a passage to rules for predicting from thunder, which we have already encountered in the work of Leopold of Austria.[49]

Of crucial importance is the last section of this part, in which Ashenden specifically explains how to proceed in making a prediction based on the given rules (both the general ones from the first part and the particular ones from the second part), and indicates which of these rules, in his judgment, he considers reasonable and acceptable; the last chapter is then devoted to a defence of astrology.[50]

He recommends proceeding from the general to the particular (as already recommended by Ptolemy and his commentator Haly Abenrudian), i.e., to take into account a planet, its position in the zodiac, the relationship to other planets and constellations, the lunar mansions, plus the time of year, the area, what phenomenon preceded it, and whether or not something specific can follow it; and only when more than one sign coincides at the same time is the prediction reliable. Surprisingly, he is critical of the rules given by Perscrutator, i.e., Robert of York, which are mostly astrological in nature.[51] On the contrary, he acknowledges the usefulness of the rules brought by Ptolemy and Arab authors such as Jafar Indus and Al-Kindī,[52] other than their rules for the prediction of daily rains, with which he does not have good experience.[53] For a short-term forecast of rains, in his opinion, it is better to forecast

[48] If the Moon is the only celestial body in an astrologically strong position, great floods and a substantial rise in sea level can be expected. See Johannes Eschuid, *Summa iudicialis*, II, 8, 3, f. u7v.

[49] Johannes Eschuid, *Summa iudicialis*, II, 7, 2, ff. t5v-6r.

[50] Johannes Eschuid, *Summa iudicialis*, II, 12, 1-3, ff. C8v-D7v.

[51] The Oxford Dominican Robert of York, called "Perscrutator", is the author of the text *De impressionibus aeris sive de mirabilibus elementorum* (*On the phenomena of the air or the wonders of the elements*), to which see Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. III, 104-118.

[52] See in more detail Snedegar, *John Ashenden*, vol. I, 136-137, 143.

[53] Johannes Eschuid, *Summa iudicialis*, II, 12, 2, f. D2r.

from non-astrological signs.[54] And finally, by including non-astrological methods and some explanations, perhaps Ashenden wanted to meet the requirement that the forecaster should know not only astrology but also natural philosophy, specifically meteorology.[55] He himself points out that he listed astrological rules and common weather signs and wrote about the generation and causes of accidents according to both astrologers and philosophers.

Based upon this short glance through a few texts, I believe that the authors of astrological works simply sought to make as accurate predictions as possible, and relied wholly on astrological predictions for general trends, recognizing with Ptolemy the need to take into account also the more down-to-earth signs for short-term forecasts. Interestingly, it was only John Ashenden who was more specific in considering under what conditions which sign was most reliable. In general, they tried to collect as many signs as possible in their works, these to complement and support each other, without addressing the fact that the methods were not related to astrology. At the same time, by providing occasional additional information about the nature and immediate causes of given phenomena, they were able to give the impression that they were not only concerned with astrology, but could also apply philosophy.

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[54] Johannes Eschuid, *Summa iudicialis*, II, 12, 2, f. D2r. He refers here to Ptolemy (*Tetrabiblos*, II, 13): see Snedegar, *John Ashenden*, vol. I, 135, note 33.

[55] See Al-Kindī's introduction to his letters on predominantly astrological weather forecasting where he says that he wants to write a text on meteorological phenomena and the causes of moisture and drought based on the theories of philosophers, as the astrologers rely too much on tradition and are inconsistent; see the commentary on the letters by G. Bos, C. Burnett, *Scientific Weather Forecasting in the Middle Ages. The Writings of Al-Kindī. Studies, Editions, and Translations of the Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Texts*, London-New York 2000, 326.

The Reworking of the Earliest Latin Texts on Geomancy (*Ars geomantiae*, *Estimaverunt Indi*, *Si quis per artem geomanticam*, *Desiderantibus*) in the Context of Geomantic Collections and Compilations

Alessandro Palazzo

1. Introduction

The first Latin texts on geomancy that appeared in the Middle Ages are believed to be translations from Arabic originals. The *Ars geomantiae*, usually regarded in modern scholarship as the first geomancy to circulate,[1] was translated into Latin by Hugo of Santalla around the mid-twelfth century.[2] The work known as *Estimaverunt Indi*, so named from its incipit, is a translation of an anonymous Arabic text; even though we do not have certain information about when exactly the text was translated nor about the name of the translator, it is nevertheless likely that the translation took place sometime in the twelfth century. Another early geomantic text, known as *Si quis per artem geomanticam*

[1] P. Tannery, "Le Rabolion" II. "L'introduction de la géomancie en Occident et le traducteur Hugo Sancelliensis", in *Mémoires Scientifiques*, publiés par J. L. Heiberg, vol. IV, Toulouse-Paris 1920, 318-353: 328, 343 Only after completing the present paper did I have the opportunity to read a study by Charles Burnett ("Gerard of Cremona's Involvement in Alchemy, Divination and the Occult: A Study with Sample Texts") arguing that the *Estimaverunt Indi* should be attributed to Gerard of Cremona. Moreover, I also learned that David Juste, in another study, argues that the *Si quis per artem geomanticam*, usually attributed to Gerard of Cremona, was actually a *reportatio* composed by his listeners.

[2] P. Arfé, "Attorno all'edizione dell'*Ars geomantiae*: le fonti esplicite e implicite", in *Quaestio*, 19 (2019), 101-128: 113, 122, based on a number of elements (a quotation from Plato of Tivoli's translation of the *Centiloquium*, the dedication to the bishop Michael of Tarazona, and two documents connecting Hugo with Tarazona), hypothesizes the time frame between 1145 and 1151 or, more likely, towards 1147.

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from its incipit, was ascribed to Gerard of Cremona and achieved wide currency, being preserved in a large number of manuscripts.[3] Finally, another important geomantic treatise that appeared rather early was the *Desiderantibus verum et certum judicium dare*, whose composition is believed to date from the first half of the thirteenth century. The text circulated initially in anonymous form and was then attributed to Peter of Abano, but it is unclear whether it was written originally in Latin or translated from an Arabic source.[4]

These first geomantic texts are technical treatises illustrating the steps of the geomantic technique. As is well known, this divinatory method consists of two main stages. In the first operative phase four figures (*matres*) are obtained from sixteen rows of dots traced on sand or similar material, without counting them, moving from right to left ("casting of the dots"), and from these first four images are then derived, according to a numerical automatism, the images occupying the other compartments (*domus*) of a chart divided into fifteen slots. The second stage is the interpretation of the geomantic tableau according to specific rules and complex methods. This part of the procedure also involves a psychological analysis of the mind of the consultant by the geomancer.

A comparison of the above texts in terms of their contents and structure shows that while all deal with the geomantic method and its technicalities, they are generally not exhaustive, since they do not cover all the elements and parts of geomancy, but, depending on their primary intention, tend to focus on some of its aspects at the expense of others. This selective approach is a consequence of the fact that all these texts have a modular structure. In other words, they are comprised of independent textual units examining different steps of the geomantic technique.[5]

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[3] The list of Gerard's translations drawn up by his disciples includes an entry on geomancy: see *Commemoratio librorum*, in C. Burnett, "The Coherence of the Arabic-Latin Translation Program in Toledo in the Twelfth Century", in *Science in Context*, 14 (2011), 249-288: 280: "De geomantia <68> Liber geomantie de artibus divinatoriis". Only the manuscript Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, 4° 1148, ff. 223v-234v adds "qui incipit: estimaverunt Indi" after those words.

[4] T. Charmasson, *Recherches sur une technique divinatoire: la géomancie dans l'Occident médiéval*, Genève-Paris 1980, 121-122. Other geomantic treatises, which are believed to have been composed rather early – e.g. Plato of Tivoli's translation – are not taken into consideration here as, unlike the above mentioned texts, they seem to have been less influential for subsequent geomantic literature.

[5] The same happens with other types of technical literature on divination and astrol-

In what follows, I intend first to set forth the results of a comparative analysis of these texts from which their individual and common characteristics in terms of content and structure will emerge. I will claim that the internal structure of these writings has an impact on their manuscript transmission. As a consequence, I will also briefly take into account some features of their manuscript tradition. Then, I will focus on the reception of these texts in larger geomantic collections such as the one preserved in London, British Library, Harley MS 4166. I will conclude with some remarks on the process of "re-organization" that the textual material of these earliest geomantic writings underwent in subsequent Latin geomantic compilations such as in the *Geomantia* ascribed to William of Moerbeke and in the *Compilatorium sive aggregatorium totius artis geomantiae* by Rolandus Scriptoris.

2. *Ars geomantiae* (inc. *Rerum opifex Deus*)

In nine of its witnesses, the *Ars geomantiae* is preceded by a prologue in which geomancy is placed within a metaphysical framework.[6] God, the creator of all things, pre-established, before their coming into existence, their future state in His mind and distributed to each, at His will, what he deemed appropriate to attribute to rational creatures. Having in His thought ("imaginarie") all creatures, before they are made, God placed a superior intellectual cognition of the creatures in the recess of the hearts ("archano cordium").[7] Then, the prologue sets out the histori-

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ogy: e.g., D. Juste, "Reading Birth Horoscopes in the Middle Ages: Latin Judgements on Nativities 1100-1450", in *Les Moyen Âge et les sciences*, éd. D. Jacquart, A. Paravicini Bagliani, Firenze 2021, 549-593, describes the standard structure of the *iudicia* on *nativitates*.

[6] P. Arfé, "Le dimore delle stelle nel *Prologus super Artem geomantiae* di Ugo di Santalla", in *Studi Maġrebini*, Nuova serie, 12-13 (2014-2015), Labor limae. *Atti in onore di Carmela Baffioni*, a cura di A. Straface, C. De Angelo, A. Manzo, Tomo 1, 41-71: 42, n. 4-5. According to Arfé, the *Prologus* unfolds according to the patterns of creationism: 49.

[7] Arfé, "Le dimore delle stelle", 65,3-10: "Rerum opifex deus, qui sine exemplo noua condidit uniuersa, ante ipsam generationem de illorum futuro statu mente diiudicans, haec quidem etiam, que de sue uniuersitatis thesauro rationali creature largiri dignatur, singulis prout ipse uult distribuit. [...] Imaginarie, priusquam fierent, cuncta habens, eorundem noticiam archano cordium quasi suspectam et intellectualem infudit [...]". The prologue had already been published by Tannery, "Le Rabolion" II. "L'introduction de la géomancie en Occident et le traducteur Hugo Sancelliensis", 324-326.

cal reasons for the emergence of geomancy (namely the need to correct the defects of astrology) and addresses the conceptual background of this divinatory art (namely the correspondence between the configurations of the superior world and the sublunary realm), emphasizing the link between geomantic figures and lunar mansions.[8] Towards the end the prologue contains a dedication to the Bishop of Tarazona,[9] suggesting that the prologue is something more than a mere translation and includes Hugo's own material. According to Charles Burnett, "the preface is likely to be a mixture of prefatorial material in the Arabic original and Hugo's own input".[10]

After the prologue the text itself begins, whose structure I will present according to the reconstructions of Thérèse Charmasson and Pasquale Arfé, both of whom base their analyses on the oldest witness, Paris, BnF, lat. 7354.[11] It must be kept in mind, however, that due to

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Both Tannery and Arfé base their editions solely on Paris, BnF, lat. 7354, which is believed to be the oldest witness of the *Ars geomantiae*.

[8] Arfé, "Le dimore delle stelle", 65,15-66,50.

[9] Arfé, "Le dimore delle stelle", 66,53-58: "Quia huiusmodi artificium antiquissimum fore et aput sapientum quamplurimos dignos et indignos in usu fuisse philosophorum antiquitas refert, ego Sanccelliensis geomantie inscriptionem aggredior et tibi mi domine Tirasonensis antistes, ex priscorum opulentia huiusmodi munusculum adporto, aeremantia et piromantia, quas audiui, sed minime contigit reperiri, postpositis, deinceps idromantiam tractaturus".

[10] C. Burnett, "Hermetic Geomancy, «Ratione certis experimentis usitata»", in *Geomancy and Other Forms of Divination*, ed. A. Palazzo, I. Zavattero (Micrologus Library 87), Firenze 2017, 135-141: 136, n. 6, which also provides a thorough analysis of the prologue. On this text, see also C. Burnett, "The Translating Activity in Medieval Spain", in Id, *Magic and Divination. Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds*, Aldershot 1984, IV, 1036-1058: 1042-1043. For an analysis of Hugo's translations, notably of their prologues, see, in addition to Paul Tannery's essay (above, n. 1), C. H. Haskins, *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Science*, Cambridge 1924, 67-81; G. Braga, "Le prefazioni alle traduzioni dall'arabo nella Spagna del XII secolo: la valle dell'Ebro", in *La diffusione delle scienze islamiche nel medio evo europeo* (Roma, 2-4 ottobre 1984), Roma 1987, 322-354: 337-354; C. Burnett, "A Hermetic Programme of Astrology and Divination in mid-Twelfth-Century Aragon: The Hidden Preface in The *Liber novem iudicum*", in *Magic and the classical tradition*, ed. by C. Burnett, W. F. Ryan, London-Torino 2006, 99-118; J. M. Gázquez, *The Attitude of the Medieval Latin Translators Towards the Arabic Science* (Micrologus' Library 75), Firenze 2016, 51-61.

[11] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 99-106; P. Arfé, "L'*Ars geomantiae* di Ugo di Santalla. Il testo e la sua tradizione", in *Geomancy and Other Forms of Divination*, 65-91:

textual differences among the manuscript witnesses it is hard to establish what was the original form of this treatise.[12] In particular, Arfé has ascertained that the manuscript tradition is subdivided into three different branches and that there are substantial discrepancies between the witnesses of the same family tradition: for instance, the text preserved in the manuscript from Paris diverges considerably, from a certain point on, from that of Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 5508, which is another important witness of the same family.[13]

1. f. 1r-v: *Incipit prologus super artem geomantie secundum magistrum Ugonem Sanctelliensem interpretem qui eam de arabico in latinum transtulit. Rerum opifex deus, qui sine exemplo noua condidit uniuersa …*

Prologue.

2. ff. 2r-3r: *Modus operandi in geomantia*.

This section describes the casting of the points, the production of the figures, and the placing of them within the chart. Moreover, the text at this point makes remarks on the preconditions of the geomantic procedure (i.e., weather conditions, the ritual preparation, the state of mind of the geomancer and the consultant).

3. ff. 3r-17r: *Comprehensum intus omnium figurarum primum que conponitur ex stellis Arietis …*

Analysis of the meanings of the 16 figures.

4. ff. 17v-37r: *Significatio figurarum parium et imparium quae ab inuicem procedunt*.

This section provides an analysis of the triplets, i.e., the *procreatio* of each figure from two progenitors and the specific meanings each figure acquires depending on the different pairs of parents. The end of the section is indicated by an explicit: *Explicit generatio figurarum parium et imparium*.

77-79. Tannery ("Le Rabolion" IV. "La géomancie chez les Latins", 373-412: 373-402) had already offered the first partial transcription of the *Ars geomantiae* from the Parisian manuscript in his study of medieval geomancy.

[12] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 108: "Il est donc difficile, dans un tel cas, de déterminer quelle a pu être la forme primitive du traité de Hugues de Santalla".

[13] Arfé, "L'*Ars geomantiae* di Ugo di Santalla", 80-86.

5. f. 37r-v: *De masculinis atque* feminis *(*sic*) que etiam fortunata que infortunata figurarum signa*.

Short section on gender and value (fortunate or unfortunate) of the figures.

6. ff. 37v-41v: *De adquirenda pecunia*.

Examples of geomantic questions (that is, the meanings that a figure takes on under certain conditions, namely combined with other figures appearing in the chart, with regard to a specific issue).

7. ff. 41r-42r: *Item aliud capitulum de cogitatione agnoscenda*.

This section deals with the identification of the *intentio* of the consultant, or, in other words, with the identification of the house that reveals what is in the mind of the consultant.

8. ff. 42r-49v: *Iterum de significatione figurarum* [f. 45r: *De bonitate et malicia figurarum* / f. 47r: *De situ domorum*].

This section deals with the meanings of the figures, the meanings of the houses, and the value of the figures depending on their progenitors.

9. ff. 49v-55v: *De itinere determinato*.

Examples of geomantic questions. The judgments are based on the figure related to the subject of the question and on the Judge, which is the figure of the fifteenth house.

After the words "Liber geomantiae explicit", there is an epilogue which is a short text in the Gothic writing used in the rest of the Parisian manuscript (ff. 55v-56v).[14] The fact that the epilogue is preserved by only one – albeit the oldest – of the manuscripts led Paul Tannery to regard it as a later addition by another author.[15] On the contrary, Pasquale Arfé believes that the text is part of the *Ars geomantiae*. The intention of the epilogue is to correct the defects of astrology (its obscurity and verbosity) by condensing its many obscure statements into a collection of few useful sentences, thereby making those statements more evident.

> *Intentio* autem huius auctoris est obscuras et multiplices sententias astronomie utilibus et paucis sermonibus in unum colligere et eorum

[14] Arfé, "L'*Ars geomantiae* di Ugo di Santalla", 69.

[15] Tannery, "Le Rabolion" II. "L'introduction de la géomancie en Occident et le traducteur Hugo Sancelliensis", 326, n. 4.

> obscuritatem et tenebrositatem certis limitibus ueritatis aperire et ad lucem id est ad maiorem euidentiam reuocare. […] *Causa intentionis* est difficultas astronomie et eius librorum multiplicitas. Multi enim conati sunt iudicia astrorum et significationes tam in bono quam in malo certis rationibus et probabilibus argumentis aperire quod in paucis uoluminibus facere non potuerunt. Iterumque iste ad hoc nititur ut stellarum significationes in rebus mundanis breuiter et utiliter nobis aperiat et omnem scrupulum dubitationis in his a nobis longe repellat.[16]

The epilogue ends with a remark clarifying the titulus of the text: *Ars geomantie*. "Geomantia" is said to derive from "ge", earth, and "mantia", divination, meaning divination in or above the earth. This name is preferred to "ars punctatoria", the art of making dots.[17] We find an analogous etymology of "geomantia" in other Latin sources.[18] In general, it should be noted that the concern with finding the exact denomination of this newly imported divinatory technique was shared by almost all chief medieval texts on geomancy. The term "geomantia", which had already been in use to refer to one of the forms of divination related to the four elements, as witnessed by Isidor's *Etymologiae*, soon became the favorite option, even though alternative proposals were also advanced.[19] In light of all of this, the concluding remark on the name of the technique seems to suggest that the epilogue is a Latin addition aimed at accommodating the *Ars geomantiae*, a translation of an Arabic original, within a Latin context.

As is clear from this outline, the *Ars geomantiae* focuses on the analysis of the figures, their procreation, the houses and the relationships between figures and houses. In other words, it is a geomancy mainly based on figures and houses and their interactions. It also offers a number of examples of solutions to geomantic questions based on the interpretation of the combinations of different figures and their appearance in the different houses. Even though some sections seem to repeat

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[16] Arfé, "L'*Ars geomantiae* di Ugo di Santalla", 89,4-14.

[17] Arfé, "L'*Ars geomantiae* di Ugo di Santalla", 90,49-53: "*Titulus* incipit: Ars geomantie. 'Ge' namque grece, terra latine <dicitur>, 'mantia', diuinatio: inde geomantia, id est diuinatio in terra uel super terram; et a quibusdam male intelligentibus punctatoria ars nuncupatur, quia per punctos eius effectus conprobatur".

[18] See, e.g., Guillelmi de Morbeca *Geomantia I-IV,4*, ed. E. Rubino (Corpus philosophorum medii aevi. Testi e studi 26), Firenze 2021, 9,35-36.

[19] On the name of the technique, see Charmasson, *Recherches*, 9-14.

what has already been discussed in previous parts of the work, the text develops in a linear fashion: the analysis of the meanings of the figures is carried out in section 3 (each figure is considered separately) and 8 (the figures are examined in relation with each other); the examples of geomantic questions gathered in section 6 are based on the combinations of figures, while those collected in section 9 revolve around the interaction between the figure which refers to the issue of the question and the Judge.

As we have already said, the textual tradition of the *Ars geomantiae* is extremely intricate, with its manuscripts witnessing different versions of the text and showing contaminations with other geomantic texts (e.g., the *Si quis per artem geomanticam* ascribed to Gerard of Cremona).[20] Moreover, some parts of the text seem to have enjoyed independent circulation. For example, as noticed by Charmasson, section 3 is preserved in later geomantic collections and in the work by Rolandus Scriptoris.[21]

3. *Estimaverunt Indi*

In the Late Middle Ages, the *Estimaverunt Indi* was regarded as one of the most – if not the most – authoritative treatises on geomancy. It is well known that in his *Breviloquium* Bartholomew of Parma maintains that the geomantic art had originated with the *Estimaverunt Indi*, which was considered to be an all-embracing work containing the *Estimaverunt Indi* itself, the *Ars geomantiae* and the *Si de statu corporis*, which was the second part of the text ascribed to Gerard of Cremona.[22] Paradoxically, the importance of the *Estimaverunt Indi* is confirmed by the fact that, along with Andreas Capellanus' *De amore*, it was the only

[20] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 107-108.

[21] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 98, n. 5. Other parts of the *Ars geomantiae* seem to have been incorporated into other geomantic works, among which there are the treatise attributed to Plato of Tivoli and, again, Rolandus Scriptoris' *Compilatorium sive Aggregatorium*: see Charmasson, *Recherches*, 99, n. 2.

[22] On the perception of the *Estimaverunt Indi* as the seminal text of the geomantic art, see A. Palazzo, "Origin, Development, and Decline of the Western Geomantic Tradition", in *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 31 (2020), 417-441: 430-432.

work explicitly targeted by Étienne Tempier in the 1277 condemnation.[23] The text has a complex, multilayered structure, as outlined next.[24]

1. f. 1ra: *Estimaverunt Indi, quod quando lineantur linee absque numero et prohiciuntur pares et eriguntur*.

Prologue: Construction of the Mothers; Intention and psychological dimension of geomancy; ritual elements.

2. ff. 1rb-2vb: *Et scias, quod ex figuris quedam sunt, que sunt fortunate … Completus est sermo super 12 domos*.

Analysis of the values – fortunate or unfortunate – of the figures, the factors influencing their values, the meanings of the houses.

3. ff. 2vb-3ra: *Figura prima est figura singularis in sorte … et est ultimus finis earum et eorum status*.

This section deals with sophisticated notions such as the intention of the inquirer, the *aspectus* of the houses, the meanings of the twelve houses; the prophetic origin of the science of the line, namely geomancy.[25]

4. ff. 3ra-4rb: *Procreatio.*

Illustration of the process of generation of the figures.

5. ff. 4rb-5vb: Abusaid Tripolitanus.

At the outset of this textual segment, the *Estimaverunt Indi* declares that the real intention of this part is to integrate Abusaid's exposition of the operation of the line with all other aspects related to the production of the figures, the properties of the figures and the houses, and their relationship. This textual segment also includes the analysis of the as-

[23] On the relationship between *Estimaverunt Indi* and Tempier's condemnation, see: A. Palazzo, "L'*Estimaverunt Indi* e la condanna del 1277", in *Geomancy and Other Forms of Divination*, ed. by Palazzo, Zavattero, 167-221.

[24] I am summarizing here the results of the analysis of Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 30.29, ff. 1r-24r carried out in A. Palazzo, "*Et ego quidem nunc fabricabo circulum*. Images and Diagrams in the Geomantic Treatises *Estimaverunt Indi*", in Per cognitionem visualem. *The Visualization of Cognitive and Natural Processes in the Middle Ages. Acts of the XXV Annual Colloquium of the SIEPM Porto 14-15 and 21-22 June 2021*, ed. J. Higuera Rubio, Turnhout 2023, 133-172: 146-167.

[25] On the religious (notably Islamic) roots of the *Estimaverunt Indi*: see Palazzo, "Origin, Development, and Decline", 426-429.

cendant, namely the figure formed in the first house, as well as further details on *communicatio*, *commixtio*, and *procreatio*.

6. ff. 5vb-10va: Questions related to specific areas of life and solutions based on the different meanings which the figures acquire when they occur in the houses.

Towards the beginning of this section, we find the explicit of the text that was transcribed by Bishop Tempier in his *Syllabus* ("Ratiocinare ergo super eum, et inuenies, etc."), which probably means that he had access to a shorter version of the text.

7. ff. 10va-15va: *Capitulum in proprietate operationum figurarum 16 in 15 cum significatione earum singularium cum domorum proprietatibus*.

Analysis of the sixteen figures when positioned in the fifteenth house as well as their meanings in relation to each house.

8. ff. 15va-16ra: *Procreatio* of *Populus*, which is the only figure composed of 8 dots.

9. ff. 16rb-17rb: Position *in ascendente* or *in occasu* of the figures.

This section highlights the connection between geomantic figures and the stars by providing a visualization of the position of figures with respect to the celestial sphere and the earth. Then the values of fortunate/unfortunate figures are examined in connection with the fortunate/unfortunate houses, and an allusion is made to the prologue. The very last sentence suggests that the treatise ends here, as it states that every issue regarding geomancy has been shown, explained, abbreviated, and expounded in this work.

10. f. 17rb: Short chapter associating the organs of the human body with the twelfth houses.

11. ff. 17rb-18ra: *Intentio*.

Examples of the meaning (*intentio*) which certain figures acquire when they appear repeatedly in several houses.

12. ff. 18rb-19ra: *Pars fortunae*.

13. ff. 19ra-21vb: *Paternitas*.

Procreation of the Judge: since the Judge must be a figure with an even number of dots, only the triplets comprising of even-numbered

figures are considered. This segment is introduced by the title "In hoc libro deerant ista que secuntur capitula".

14. ff. 21vb-22ra: Geomantic figures are linked to planets and specific human physiognomies.

This section ends with a reference to Johannes Albusaiz, which is probably another form of the name Abusaid.

15. ff. 22rb-24ra: Addition, Diminution, *scientia puncti* and *proiectio*.

It is hard to say where exactly to locate the explicit of the *Estimaverunt Indi* because the text seems to be transmitted in various manuscripts with a different explicit and some manuscripts add other texts or fragments which seem to be somehow related to the *Estimaverunt Indi.* However, it is highly likely that the explicit coincides with the end of chapter 88 (*Considera ergo illud et iudica illud quod significat figura*),[26] namely with the end of the section 15.

As is clear from this outline, what at first may look like an unsystematic arrangement full of repetitions, upon careful examination turns out to be a spiral structure with levels of increasing sophistication. For instance, the procreation of the figures from pairs of progenitors is discussed first in section 8 and then in 13. The figures are discussed first in section 2 and then, more extensively, in section 7 (in relation to the houses) and in section 9 in connection with the position in *ascendente* or *occasu* and with astrological factors.

Despite this structure, the text gives an accurate account of the geomantic art, from the casting of the points to the most sophisticated methods of interpretation (*pars fortunae* and *via puncti*) of the chart. The text seems to be a compilation or an abridgment of different sources and heterogenous material. Some parts are ascribed to Albusaid Tripolitanus, who is mentioned several times throughout the *Estimaverunt Indi* under different forms. The name Alatrabulucus also occurs in the

[26] The division into chapters is based on the table of chapters found in one of the witnesses of the *Estimaverunt Indi*: London, British Library, Harley MS 4166, f. 12v. On the problem of the explicit, see I. Zavattero, "*Estimaverunt Indi*: la tradizione testuale di un anonimo trattato di geomanzia", in *Geomancy and Other Forms of Divination*, 31-63: 51-54; Palazzo, "*Et ego quidem nunc fabricabo circulum*", 166-167.

incipit of Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 30.29.[27] I am inclined to think that Abu Saʿid al-Tarabulusi – this is the Arabic form of this name – is not the author of the *Estimaverunt Indi* but either an important source or an illustrious name in the Islamic geomantic tradition evoked to lend more authority to the text.

The *Estimaverunt Indi* is preserved in full by only four manuscripts,[28] whereas another four contain parts of the text.[29] Moreover, there is a large number of fragments or excerpts contained in several manuscripts. The prominence of the *Estimaverunt Indi* within the geomantic tradition is also confirmed by the quantity of explicit and implicit quotations in other geomantic works: the text is heavily quoted in the *Geomantia* ascribed to Moerbeke, in the treatises by Bartholomew of Parma, and in the *Compilatorium* by Rolandus Scriptoris. As has been said above, the *Estimaverunt Indi* was praised by Bartholomew of Parma as the seminal source on geomancy.

The manuscript tradition of the *Estimaverunt Indi* is characterized by a high rate of fluidity.

A. We find the text combined somehow with other geomantic writings within larger geomantic collections. This is the case with München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 547, which is a late geomantic collection (sixteenth century) that also includes an incomplete version of the *Estimaverunt Indi*.[30] In particular, the manuscript has two parts with different numerations of the folia. The former contains (1) Bartholomew of Parma's *Verba collecta de libro geomancie* (ff. 1-85v); (2) the *Estimvaverunt Indi* (ff. 86r-159r); and (3) some geomantic notes

[27] *Estimaverunt Indi*, Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 30.29, f. 1r, "Incipit liber geomantie nove Magistri Ugonis Satiliensis editus ab Alatrabuluci translatione". The attribution to Hugo of Santalla is today dismissed as untenable.

[28] Aix-en-Provence, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 1298, ff. 1-96v (= A); Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 30.29, ff. 1ra-24ra (= Fl); Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magliabechiano XX,9, ff. 1ra-19va (= Fm); Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana, cod. 829, ff. 43ra-76vb (Fr).

[29] Erfurt, Universitätsbibliothek, Dep. Erfurt, CA 4° 365, ff. 53-82 (= E); Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Palat. 945, ff. 239ra-252vb (= Fp); London, British Library, Harley MS 4166, ff. 1-12 (= L); München, Bayerische Staatsabibliothek, Clm 547, ff. 86r-159r (M).

[30] D. Juste, *Les manuscrits astrologiques latins conservés à la Bayerische Staatsbibliothek de Munich*, Paris 2011, 74.

(ff. 159v-162r). Interestingly, the *Verba collecta* and the *Estimaverunt Indi* are regarded as one single treatise in 288 chapters, as is clear from the *tabula* of their contents (ff. 163r-172r). The conflation of the two texts in the *tabula* could be a consequence of the fact that Bartholomew draws heavily on the *Estimaverunt Indi*.

The latter part of the manuscript contains (4) another geomantic treatise (*Geomancia dicitur a geos grece quod latine interpretatur terra ...*) (ff. 1r-69r)[31] which is followed by (5) further geomantic notes (ff. 72r-83v).

Moreover, large sections of the *Estimaverunt Indi* were incorporated within geomantic collections. As we will see when analyzing one of these cases, these collections were conceived of as structured complexes of textual units, and therefore the sections of *Estimaverunt Indi* must be considered as constituent parts of a whole.

B. London, British Library, Harley MS 4166, ff. 1-12 (see below).

C. Firenze, Biblioteca nazionale, Palat. 945 is a heterogeneous miscellany of alchemical and magical writings, geomantic texts – among which an incomplete version of the *Estimaverunt Indi* –, and medical and veterinary recipes. The *Estimaverunt Indi* (f. 239ra-252vb), recorded as "Frammento acefalo di un'Operetta di Geomanzia in latino" in the nineteenth-century catalogue of the *Codici Palatini* of the *Biblioteca nazionale di Firenze*, is the second in a list of four geomantic texts, the last of which is Gerard of Cremona's *Si de statu corporis*.[32]

Fragments of the *Estimaverunt Indi* also circulate as independent textual units within collections or merged into other texts.

D. Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. ch. f. 212, ff. 166-214v contains a number of extracts from the *particulae* 4-6 of the *Geomantia* ascribed to Moerbeke. Mixed in with these extracts are some texts from other unknown sources. At least one of these passages is a quotation from section 9 of the *Estimaverunt Indi* dealing with the position of the figures in the celestial circle (*in ascendente* or *in occasu*).

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[31] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 294.

[32] *Indici e cataloghi. IV. I Codici Palatini della r. Biblioteca nazionale di Firenze*, II, fasc. 6, Roma 1899, 436-437.

Estimaverunt Indi, Biblioteca Medicea Laur., Plut. 30.29, f. 16rb	Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. ch. f. 212, f. 167r
Et ego quidem nunc fabricabo circulum, in quo significantur secundum modos earum et formam ascensionis earum et *ipsarum* (*om*. Fl) occasus, ut videantur visione oculi et discernantur earum ascensiones ab ipsarum occasibus et earum forme.	Nunc fabricamus circulum, in quo manifestabitur forma eorum, situs et ortus et occasus, natura et qualitas secundum modum earum et complexionem, <ut> visuali discretione et oculo videantur earum forme.
Iste autem figure secundum hanc formam in ascensione et descensione in circulo ad occasum, que sunt a cardine terre ad medium celi, sunt ascendentes. Et que ex eis sunt ex medio celi ad occasum, sunt descendentes converse.	Et sciendum, quod ex eis sunt a cardine terre, id est a medio inferius usque ad medium celi superius, sunt erecte et ascendentes, et que a medio celi ad occasum, sunt descendentes et converse. Tibi patet in hoc circulo visuali.

The short passage quoted by the Würzburg manuscript belongs to a textual segment of the *Estimaverunt Indi* aimed at clarifying the meaning of a complex circular diagram that located the geomantic figures with respect to the celestial circle and attributed them their names and qualities. Since the diagram was not copied in the Würzburg manuscript, the textual passage taken from the *Estimaverunt Indi* turns out to be incomprehensible.[33]

E. Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, cod. 839, ff. 23r-36r, contains a composite geomantic treatise which starts with an incomplete and poor version of the proem of the *Estimaverunt Indi*. Apparently, only the *incipit* and section 15 dealing with the *scientia puncti* have been copied from the *Estimaverunt Indi*.[34]

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[33] For a description of the diagram, see PALAZZO, "*Et ego quidem nunc fabricabo circulum*", 159-160; Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana, cod. 829, f. 52ra, shows the same circle, but uses a different nomenclature for the geomantic figures inside it: see A. PALAZZO, "La geomanzia medievale latina: sapere operativo per immagini", in *Per una filologia integrata dei testi e delle immagini. Prospettive genealogiche ed ermeneutiche*, a cura di C. BOLOGNA, A. FORTE, Roma, 2024, 247-267: 259.

[34] ZAVATTERO ("*Estimaverunt Indi*: la tradizione testuale di un anonimo trattato di geomanzia", 36-37, n. 28) has drawn attention to the fragment preserved in Firenze, Biblioteca Riccardiana, cod. 905, ff. 40r-46r, which covers the section of the *Estimaverunt Indi* pertaining to the *via puncti*. Moreover, ZAVATTERO ("*Estimaverunt Indi*: la diffusion d'un texte geomantique condamné", in *Medioevo. Rivista di filosofia medievale*, 42 [2017], 57-80: 69-75) has documented some geomantic collections containing a text dealing with the *via puncti* which is generally ascribed to a certain Zacharias Albasarith and is said to have been translated from Hebrew, or Arabic, into Latin by

F. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 24940, is a rich geomantic collection dating from the end of the fifteenth century.[35] The collection includes early chief Latin sources and anonymous treatises on geomancy, such as (1) the *Geomancia nova* (Inc.: *Secundum precepta priorum inventorum et usu Sarracenorum*) (ff. 1r-25v);[36] (2) the *Desiderantibus verum ac certum iudicium dare* (ff. 98r-105r); (3) the second and first parts of the *Si quis per artem geomanticam* by Gerard of Cremona (ff. 110r-154v and 168r-189v); and (4) the *Quicumque vult habere artem de geomancia* (ff. 155r-161r). In addition to these texts and (5) a number of geomantic notes, the manuscript also contains (6) excerpts from the *Estimaverunt Indi* (ff. 25v-30r): "Dicitur in libro quod Estimaverunt Indi, quod quando figura multiplicetur...".

G. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 625, is structured in several parts containing astrological, astronomical, and geomantic material.[37] The first part contains a collection of geomantic works, including (1) the anonymous *Acquisicio in Ariete continetur*;[38] (2) the second part of Gerard of Cremona's text, known as *Si de statu corporis questio proponatur*; and (3) Hugo of Santalla's *Ars geomantiae*. In addition, there are also (4) extracts from the *Estimaverunt Indi*, which are apparently contrasted with Hugo of Santalla's translation (ff. 10v-11v).[39]

Salio of Padua. Even though Zacharias' text is clearly a geomantic translation different from the *Estimaverunt Indi*, it coincides, in terms of content, with the section relating to the *via puncti* of the *Estimaverunt Indi*. On Salio's translation, see Charmasson, *Recherches sur une technique divinatoire*, 198-199.

[35] Juste, *Les manuscrits astrologiques latins conservés à la Bayerische Staatsbibliothek de Munich*, 162-163.

[36] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 297. The table of content at ff. 91r-97r registers other anonymous texts preserved in the manuscript as parts of the *Geomancia nova*, namely the *Si de statu corporis alicuius componatur utrum debet meliorari an non* (ff. 31r-90r), the *Quidam quesivit de… (?) utrum possit et debeat vincere in causa vel non* (ff. 190v-197v), and the *Desiderantibus verum ac certum iudicium dare* (ff. 98r-105r).

[37] For the description of the content of the manuscript, see https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript 1631

[38] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 293.

[39] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 98-99.

4. *Si quis per artem geomanticam*

The *Si quis per artem geomanticam*, believed to be a translation by Gerard of Cremona, is subdivided into two parts: part one illustrates the geomantic method, while part two offers a collection of geomantic questions which, depending on their subjects, are grouped according to the houses. The treatise is preserved in a large number of manuscripts, most of which transmit it in full, while others only part two,[40] which is introduced by the *incipit* "Si de statu corporis…".

Based on London, British Library, Sloane MS 310,[41] we can outline the structure of the text as follows:

Part One:

1. f. 1r: Incipit: *In nomine illius qui maior est. Incipit liber Geomancie magistri Girardi Crimonensis ab auditoribus via astronomica composita*.

The prologue (ff. 1r-2r) addresses preliminary issues, such as the reasons for the emergence of geomancy, the invocation of God (termed "inspector" of the future), and the state of mind of the geomancer (*simpliciter et intente questionem proponat et omnino caveat ne nimis prompto anima cuiquam respondeat neque iuxta libitum vel oppinionem iudicare presumat*). Moreover, the science transmitted by God is at the origin of the human science of stars. Geomancers (*magistri*) must be cautious.

2.ff. 2r-5v: *De numero signorum ad hanc scientiam pertinentium. Ad cuius igitur artis scientiam 16 figurarum* significantium *(*recte *signis utimur), que per 12 domorum mansiones secundum astronomicam doctrinam locamus*.

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[40] On the manuscript tradition of this text, see L. Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science During the First Thirteen Centuries of our Era*, New York 1923, vol. 2, 119, n. 6; and Charmasson, *Recherches*, 130, n. 4, 131, n. 1.

[41] The manuscript belonged to Thomas Allen (1540-1632), a book collector who was associated with important figures (mathematicians such as Thomas Harriott, Robert Recorde, John Dee) and was himself a mathematician: see A. G. Watson, "Thomas Allen of Oxford and his manuscripts", in *Medieval scribes, manuscripts & libraries. Essays presented to N.R. Ker*, ed. by M. B. Parkes, A. G. Watson, London 1978, 279-313: 310.

This section sheds light on the astrological background of geomancy by focusing on astrological technicalities, the zodiac signs (starting with Aries) and the planets. The section ends with a visual representation of the twelve signs in a circle (f. 5v).

3. ff. 5v-7r: *Capitulum quomodo 16 signa geomancie conficiuntur et formantur ex motu firmamenti et cursu et coniunctione planetarum cum stellis aliis* (f. 5v); *De significatione signorum geomancie, et primo de Constricto et postea de aliis per ordinem* (f. 6v).

This section deals with the figures by analyzing their connections with the planets and the zodiac signs; the qualities of the figures (*stabiles*, *mobiles*, *mediocres*); and their meanings.

4. ff. 7r-12r: *De domibus et earum significationibus, et primo de questionibus ad primam pertinentibus* (f. 7r).

This section describes the houses and their meanings. It also analyzes other technical concepts (angles, triplicities, aspects, *translatio*, *locatio*, *receptio*, *conspiratio*, *prohibitio*) and the Judge.

5. ff. 12r-13r: Figures-signs and their elemental qualities.

6. f. 13v: *Capitulum qualiter questio debet proponi et qualiter iudicium et questio formatur*.

Formation of the geomantic tableau starting from the casting of the dots.

7. ff. 14r-17v: Description of the sixteen figures.

8. ff. 18r-20r: Specific meanings of the figures in relation to various questions.

Part Two

9. ff. 20r-65r: *Incipit 2 pars huius voluminis, que est de iudiciis or-d^{iis} super 12 domos astronomie, et primo de questionibus prime domus vel de inquisit', que continet [1]2 capitula, et est primum de statu, vel qualitate vel de statu hominis futuro prospero vel adverso*.

As has been said above, the latter part of the text consists of a collection of questions dealing with topics related to the domains of the houses.

As is clear from this description, the *Si quis per artem geomanticam*

does not address the issue of the procreation of the figures (triplets).[42] It does explore the astrological background of the geomancy in much greater depth than Hugo of Santalla's *Ars geomantiae* and the *Estimaverunt Indi*, but, on the other hand, it gives few details on the interpretation of the chart.[43]

Thérèse Charmasson has noticed that almost all its manuscript witnesses have additions to the text after the explicit.[44] This is also the case with Sloane MS 310 which we used for our reconstruction of the content of the treatise: at f. 66r, after "Sufficit ad presens. Explicit" we find a chapter about the meanings of the houses that occupies almost the entire page:

> De intentione et racione domorum quantum ex maiorum dictis nostri ingenii capacitas potuit retinere, pauca et utilia breviter perstringimus. Sciendum igitur quod 12 sunt in hac scientia mansiones, quarum 1 dicitur esse vite et est 1 cardo et est ascendens; 2 acquisitionis et est succedens; 3 fratrum et propinquorum et est cadens; 4 est et cardo et est angulus terre et est patrum et hereditatum, et est sic de aliis 12 domibus. Sunt igitur 12 domus in geomantia ad similitudinem 12 signorum celestis spere, que a philosophis colora rationibus ymagines dicuntur, ut Aries Taurus Gemini Cancer etc. Et est sciendum, quod signa ista nichil sunt aliud quam celi certa spacia ex stellarum positione et ordine calculatorum sagacitate quasi quibusdam limitibus perclarata vel determinata, per que Sol et Luna et ceteri planete faciunt suum cursum. Sunt namque planete 7. Supremus Saturnus, sub ipso Iupiter, deinde Mars, deinde Sol, qui positus in medio firmamenti est, unde quidam philosophus sic ait sic nomen domini, qui posuit Solem in medio firmamenti et 3 stellas sursum et tres deorsum sub Sole, Venus, deinde Mercurius, deinde Luna, que aliis planetis est velocior. Et sic est finis huius operis.

Contaminated versions of Gerard's text with other works have come down to us.[45] Its most salient characteristic, however, is its bipartition. This structural articulation had also an impact on the manuscript transmission. Since it is anonymous in most manuscripts, the *Si de statu corporis*, the second part, was regarded as a complete work in itself and had an independent circulation. Moreover, Thérèse Charmasson has pointed out that the collection of questions forming the second

[42] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 133.

[43] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 139.

[44] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 137.

[45] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 137.

part is the most quoted section of Gerard's text, with some or all of its questions copied at the end of or within other treatises in several manuscripts.[46] Significantly, as mentioned above, Bartholomew of Parma quotes the *Si de statu corporis* as one of the three seminal texts of geomancy beside the *Estimaverunt Indi* and Hugo's *Ars geomantiae*.[47] It must also be noted that Gerard's text achieved currency in the vernacular thanks to a translation into Italian preserved in at least two manuscripts.[48]

5. *Desiderantibus verum et certum judicium dare*

In an appendix to her book, Thérèse Charmasson offers a transcription of the *Desiderantibus verum et certum judicium dare* on the basis of München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 489, ff. 222-230. In the version witnessed by this manuscript, the text has the following structure:

1. f. 222:

Prologue, which contains both an invocation to God to disclose the meaning of the figures and reveal the occult property of the houses, and a list of the nine points to be addressed in the text.

2. ff. 222v-223v: *De bonitate et malitia figurarum*.

Analysis of the quality (favourable or unfavourable) of the figures and their changing value depending on their positions and their mutual relationships.

3. ff. 224-227: *De cognitione inventionis significatorum*.

Analysis of the meanings of the houses, namely the fields covered by each of the twelve geomantic houses.

4. ff. 227v-228v: Interaction between the *significatores* and its im-

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[46] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 136-137.

[47] See above, n. 22.

[48] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 138-139. One of the two manuscripts (Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale II. I. 372 [former Magliab. XX-13]) is an Italian geomantic collection containing, among others, the vernacular versions of the *Geomantia* of Bartholomew of Parma, Gerard of Cremona's geomancy (ff. 61r-97v), William of Moerbeke's *Geomantia*, and Abdallah's *Geomantia*: on this manuscript and its content, see E. Rubino, "An Italian Translation of William of Moerbeke's *Geomancy*", in *Medioevo. Rivista di storia della filosofia medievale*, 42 (2017), 81-98.

pact on the interpretation of the geomantic chart. (f. 227v *De occupatione figurae*; ff. 227v-228r: *De coniunctione figurarum*; ff. 228r-228v: *De mutatione significatorum*; f. 228v: *De translatione figurarum*).

5. f. 229r-v: *De bonitate vel malitia judicis et testium*.

Witnesses and Judge.

6. f. 229v: *De sextadecima figura*.

The section deals with the sixteenth figure, the so-called Super-Judge, which is sometimes necessary, in addition to the figures occupying the first fifteen houses, to clarify the meaning of the geomantic chart.

7. ff. 229v-230r: *De cito et tardo fine questionis*.

Time required for the geomantic prognostication to take place.

The text completely omits what are standard sections of other geomantic treatises: for instance, it does not contain any section explicitly dedicated to the description of the figures, it says nothing about the operations leading to the formation of the tableau, it does not mention the procreation of a figure from two progenitors (triplets).[49] Most of the notions discussed (the changing values of the figures depending on their reciprocal position in the tableau; the houses; the *significatores* and their interactions; the value of the Judge and the Witnesses, the function of the Super-Judge) suggest that the text was rather meant to provide someone who was familiar with geomancy with the essential instructions for interpreting an already formed geomantic tableau. In this respect, it is significant that the above notions are made clear through concrete examples of geomantic questions.

Eight witnesses are known to preserve the text.[50] As in the case of the other geomantic texts that have already been analyzed, this treatise too has a complex and fluid tradition characterized by contamination with other works. For instance, after the *Desiderantibus*, München, Staatsbibliothek Clm 24940, which we have already mentioned with regard to the *Estimaverunt Indi*, copies a few chapters on technicalities (*prohibitio*, *via puncti*, *projectio*, *continuatio*, etc.) which are also preserved in other geomantic works. Charmasson offers a tentative ex-

[49] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 123.

[50] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 121.

planation of this situation claiming that these chapters were part of an original long version of the *Desiderantibus*. However, she does not rule out the hypothesis that these chapters derive from a common source and that only the München manuscript – among the witnesses of the *Desiderantibus* – was contaminated by it.[51]

Moreover, it should be noted that the *Desiderantibus* had a relevant influence on later geomantic literature, as it was incorporated into the works of Bartholomew of Parma, William of Moerbeke, Jean des Murs, and Rolandus Scriptoris, and was largely quoted by anonymous Latin and vernacular geomancies.[52]

6. Geomantic Collections

What can we make out of the analysis of the text structure and the manuscript transmission of these early geomantic writings? They share a few common characteristics. Generally, they are not endowed with a systematic and orderly structure similar to that of later works and compilations, such as the *Geomantia* ascribed to Moerbeke or, in the second half of the fifteenth century, the *Compilatorium sive aggregatorium totius artis geomantiae* by Rolandus Scriptoris. By contrast, the writings which we have just examined are less concerned with a well-ordered and all-encompassing presentation of geomancy and more focused on some aspects of the technique, which are investigated far more in depth than others.

Moreover, these early geomantic texts have an extremely complex manuscript tradition: their manuscripts witness various textual versions, arrange the matter in a different order (e.g., *Ars geomantiae* and *Estimaverunt Indi*), and have different explicits. In the course of the manuscript transmission, these texts lose their clearly defined identity and become fluid: they circulate in parts, are supplemented by additions, get contaminated by each other, are merged and incorporated into other treatises and compilations. There can be many reasons for this process of explosion of the manuscript tradition, but I am persuaded that the main reason lies in the very nature of these texts, which are characterized by both a selective approach to geomantic matter and a modular structure.

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[51] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 122, 126-127.

[52] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 122.

Evidence of this is offered by many medieval and early-modern geomantic collections, which are compiled from fragments or sections of geomantic writings, entire treatises, geomantic notes, visual devices. The earliest geomantic writings we have just examined are among the most common texts found in collections of this type, where they are incorporated in whole, in part, or in fragments, and recombined with other texts to provide a comprehensive treatment of the art of geomancy.

A collection of this kind is found in London, British Library, Harley MS 4166, dating to the fourteenth-fifteenth century. It is a miscellaneous manuscript collecting several texts of divination. Among other items, it also contains a *Sphere of Life and Death*,[53] a fragment of William of Aragon's treatise on oneiromancy (*De prognosticatione sompniorum libellus*),[54] and fragments from a treatise of fortune-telling.

The first part of the manuscript (ff. 1-70v) is a geomantic collection that according to Charmasson[55] is subdivided into three sections, containing respectively a partial version of the *Estimaverunt Indi* (ff. 1-12v), six different anonymous geomantic texts copied by the same hand (ff. 13-51v), and another anonymous geomantic writing (*Comprehensum intus omnium figurarum prima*, ff. 52r-70v). The ancient catalogue of the Harleian manuscripts only makes a general mention of five treatises of geomancy and astrology.[56] These discrepancies alone demonstrate how hard it is to establish where one work ends and the next begins within a geomantic collection.[57] To adequately describe the

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[53] It is an onomantic device: on this type of texts, see D. Juste, "A medieval treatise of onomancy: The *Spera sancti Donati*", in *Geomancy and Other Forms of Divination*, ed. by Palazzo, Zavattero, 291-329; idem, Les Alchandreana *primitifs. Étude sur les plus anciens traités astrologiques latins d'origine arabe (Xe siècle)*, Leiden-Boston 2007, 206-217.

[54] See R.A. Pack, "De pronosticatione sompniorum libellus Guillelmo de Aragonia adscriptus", in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 33 (1966), 237-293. Pack, however, does not mention the fragment in the Harleian manuscript among the witnesses of this treatise of oneiromancy.

[55] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 309.

[56] *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 4 vols., London, 1808-1812, vol. III (1808), 121: "1. *Artis geomanticae et astrologicae tractatus quinque*; 2. *Ars memoriae*; and 3. *De insomniorum interpretatione*".

[57] On the difficulty of distinguishing textual units within geomantic anthologies or manuscripts, see M. Heiles, *Das Losbuch. Manuskriptologie einer Textsorte des*

content of geomantic manuscripts and collections we must abandon the traditional concept of a geomantic treatise as a self-subsistent and autonomous work and adopt the more flexible notion of textual segment or unit, which may consist of either an entire geomantic writing, or one or more modules (parts) of the same writing, or fragments or geomantic notes. The following is the exact content of the geomantic collection in Harley MS 4166.

A. ff.1-12v: *Estimaverunt Indi*

This section of the manuscript contains the final part of the *Estimaverunt Indi* and adds the *tabula* listing the chapters of the work (12v).[58] In particular, the fragment covers the sections 11 to 15, namely, the most technical ones, dealing respectively with the *intentio* (11: f. 1r-v); the *pars fortunae* (12: ff. 1v-2r); the *paternitas* of the Judge (13: ff. 2r-7r); the *modus* of the figures, i.e., their connection with planets and human physiognomy (14: ff. 7r-8r); and addition, diminution, *scientia puncti*, and *proiectio* (15: ff. 8r-11v). However, since the *tabula* lists all the chapters, it is likely that originally the manuscript preserved a complete version of the *Estimaverunt Indi*.[59]

We have already referred to the fact that the sections pertaining to the *pars fortunae* and *scientia puncti* were among the most cited parts of the *Estimaverunt Indi* and also had an independent circulation. This is not surprising since only the *Estimaverunt Indi*, among the early geomantic writings mentioned above, covers these complex and important aspects of the geomantic procedure, through which it is possible to identify the fortunate house (*pars fortunae*) and detect the true intention of the consultant (*scientia puncti*).

After what seems to be the explicit of the *Estimaverunt Indi* (f. 11v: *Considera ergo illud et iudica per illud quod significat figura*), the Harleian manuscript provides, without interruption, a text dealing with geomantic technicalities, namely the method for discovering a name, the method for finding out the *intentio* of the consultant, the *proiectiones*, and the nature of the figures (ff. 11v-12r: [*§Nota autem ad*

14. bis 16. Jahrhunderts, Wien-Köln-Weimar 2018 (Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 83), 127-134.

[58] See Zavattero, "*Estimaverunt Indi*: la tradizione testuale di un anonimo trattato di geomanzia", 37-40.

[59] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 114.

sciendum certissime nomen, debemus primo facere 4 lineas et de illis facere figuram et litere illius erunt principium nominis; deinde facere aliam figuram de aliis 4 lineis et litere illius erunt alie litere sequentes nominis habendi […] *§Et totum istud apparet obscure in isto tractatu. §Nota, quod ad sciendum intentionem querentis sufficit via puncti, prout scis, vel prima proieccio et sunt novem proiecciones* […] *Figure mediocres neque bone neque male sunt iste: Via, Populus, Candidus, Coniunctio. Nota, quod Rubeus in itineribus et visitationibus et proposito et expeditione impedimentum et prohibitionem negocii significat, et maxime in prima et secunda domo, si ibi inveniatur*]).

B. ff. 13-17v?: *De nomine inveniendo*[60]

1. f. 13r: The geomantic figures are linked with numbers and letters.

De nomine inveniendo primo Adquisitio habet de literis, scilicet s. et v. et de numero 31. Unde, si questio numero fiat, quod prima domus offert nobis, prima namque domus representat cogitationes secretas ….

2. ff. 13v-14v: Names and meanings of the figures (Of each figure are reported several different names).

f. 13v: *Ista sunt nomina figurarum. Fortuna maior, Omen maius, Tutela intrans, Auxilium intus idem sunt …. Hic incipiunt significationes de cogitationibus interrogantium secundum proprietatem figurarum et primo de adquisitione …*

3. ff. 14v-16r: The sixteenth figure (the so-called Super-judge).

f. 14v: *Nota quod hoc capitulum est de 16 figura, quae formatur ex prima et 15ª figura …*

ff. 14v-16r: *Alia 16 capitula …*: the meanings of the figures when they are Super-judge.

At f. 16r there is a reworking of a passage from the *Estimaverunt Indi*:

[60] This anonymous geomantic text does not seem to coincide with the chapter transmitted after the explicit of the *Estimaverunt Indi* in some of its manuscripts: see Palazzo, "*Et ego quidem nunc fabricabo circulum*", 167.

Estimaverunt Indi, Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 30.29, f 2rb	London, British Library, Harley MS 4166, f. 16r
Cum ergo percutis lineas, pone 7, que sunt super dexteram tuam querenti, et 7, que sunt super sinistram tuam ei, de quo queritur, et que remanet in manu est iudex linearum et ad illud convertitur iudicium figurarum, quod est minimum vel quod est magnum earum.	Nota ex libro, qui dicitur Estimaverunt Indi etc., quod prime 7 figure sunt, scilicet ex parte querentis, significantes bonum vel malum ex parte sua et secundum eorum significationes accidentales; et 7 figure sequentes ex sinistra parte semper sunt ex parte rei quesite vel ex parte adversarii querentis, et iudex est medians inter illas, et secundum quod iudex magis convenit cum primis 7 vel discordat et convenit cum aliis 7, est iudicium bonum vel malum de querente et re quesita.

4. ff. 16v-17v: Illustration of the meanings and values of the figures and instructions on how to interpret the chart.

f. 16v: *De modis autem iudicandi sciendum quod 9 debent considerari principaliter*.

f. 17v: *Cauda vero commixtum saturninum et mercurialem colorem etc. Explicit etc.*

C. Anonymous text

f. 18r: *Hec ars autem geomancia proprie nuncupatur, et alio modo filia astronomie, tertio modo vocatur scientie arene secundum quod tibi dicam, propter quod magistri experti, qui hanc artem invenerunt, de astronomia eam* ast (*?*) *tractaverunt, quando voluerunt certificari de alia re dubia, protraxerunt questiones suas in munda arena, secundum quod dicam tibi postea. Modo ostendam tibi breviter, quomodo tu debes petere et quomodo tu debes operari, quando et quid debes petere*.

1. ff. 18r-19v: *In principio debes deum rogare omnipotentem, quod ipse certificet de illo, quod tu velles scire*.

Construction of a geomantic tableau starting from the casting of the points; meanings of the houses; and instructions on how to interpret the chart.

2. ff. 19v-25v: Geomantic questions.

f. 19v: *Si vis scire cogitationem hominis, respice 13^{am} figuram …*

Si vis scire si homo vivet diu vel non, respice primam figuram. Si illa significat bona, vivet bene; si vero mala, male …

3. ff. 26r-27r: Tables grouping the figures according to their characteristics (connections with zodiac signs and the elements).

4. ff. 27v-34v: Meanings and qualities of the figures and analysis of the figures related to the houses.

5. ff. 34v-36v: Further information on the meanings of the houses, the characteristics of the figures, and the values of the figures in relation to the houses.

At the bottom of f. 34v, a passage from another anonymous geomancy is quoted (*Nota hic ex alia geomancia quod prima domus figurarum est domus vite …*).

6. ff. 36v-37r: Geomantic questions.

f. 36v: *Quando lineas in itinere in mari aut in loco fluminum magnorum, in quibus currunt naves, et exit Diminutus aut Rubeus in prima …*

7. ff. 37r-38r: Geomantic tables and wheel.

At the bottom of f. 37r there is a table with the 16 figures, their letters and numerical values, while ff. 37v-38r are occupied by a circle which is subdivided into 16 slices, each for any of the geomantic figures. The circle, or wheel, contains a series of concentric circles that cross the slices, so that each figure is associated with several other factors (gender, value, planet, zodiac sign, cardinal direction, elemental quality, number, letter/letters, colour, flavour, and two names).

8. ff. 38v-39r: Meanings of the houses.

f. 38v in marg. sup.: *De proprietatibus domorum.*

f. 38v: *Prima domus significat vitam et nuntium operis et cogitationem …*

9. ff. 39r-43r: Geomantic questions.

f. 39: *Si vis scire cogitationem hominis, respice primam domum et figuram eius …*

10. ff. 43r-46v: Meanings of the some figures related to the houses.

f. 43r: *Hic incipiunt naturales proprietates figurarum et primo de Via*.

11. ff. 47r-50r: How to know the *intentio* of the consultant.

f. 47r*: Questio quomodo homo debet cognoscere cognitionem petentis per* 18am *(?) figuram. Si vis scire questionem interrogantis vel interogationem petentis secundum rationem predictorum, accipe primam figuram, que est domus vite et cogitationis, et 15am figuram, que vocatur iudex, et fac de illis duobus unam figuram* …

D. ff. 48v-50v: *De inveniendo intentionem petentis secundum Spatam* (f. 48v)

1. f. 48v: *Iste sunt regule, quibus Spatam peritus astrologus operatus est in vita sua. Post eum* Usion *(?) Arabicus et Egiptii et alii sapientes. Iste sunt 4 regule, que nos docent, quid homines volunt vel quid cogitant*.

2. ff. 49r-50v: Geomantic questions.

3. ff. 50v-51v: Procreation of the Witnesses and the Judge (the analysis of the triplets and their meanings is limited to the figures *Populus* and *Via*).

f. 50v: *Consequenter dicendum est de testibus et iudice collectionis et de* que existunt (?) *ex duabus collectionibus. Sunt hee.*

E. ff. 52r-70: This unit is copied by a single hand, which is very different from that or those to which we owe the previous parts of the manuscript. According to Charmasson, the whole unit transmits an anonymous geomancy.[61] As a matter of fact, the first part (ff. 52r-63r) is a partial witness, hitherto neglected, of the *Ars geomantiae* and covers only section 3 devoted to the analysis of the figures.

1. ff. 52r-63r: Analysis of each figure (*Comprehensum intus*, *Comprehensum foris*, *Auxilium intus*, *Auxilium foris*, *Barbatus*, *Transversus*, *Imberbis*, *Mundus facie*, *Candidus*, *Rubeus*, *Limes interius*, *Limes exterius*, *Coniunctio*, *Constri<c>tus*, *Congregatio*, *Via*).[62]

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[61] Charmasson, *Recherches*, 293.

[62] *Imberbis* (=*Puer*) and *Mundus facie* (=*Puella*) occupy seventh and eighth place respectively in the sequence of the sixteen figures examined. Arfé, "L'*Ars geomantiae* di Ugo di Santalla", 84-85, has identified this as a common mistake of the manuscripts depending on the antigraphs α and β. Therefore, the position of these two figures within the text seems to provide us with a clue as to the relationship of ms. Harley 4166 with rest of the witnesses of the *Ars geomantiae*.

f. 52r: *Comphensum intus omnium figurarum prima, que componitur ex stellis Arietis et eadem est facies Solis et domus vite, omnium figurarum indicatur potissima ….*

2. f. 63r-v: Analysis of the meanings of the houses (14 houses mentioned).

This part is similar, but not identical, with section 8 of the *Ars geomantiae*, which is dedicated to the description of the houses.

3. ff. 64r-65v: Geomantic questions.

f. 64r: *Si vis scire quod domino seu populo accidit, si aliqua civitas vel aliquod castrum …*

4. f. 66r-v: Tables grouping the figures according to their qualities (*stabiles*, *mobiles*, *mediocres*; *masculine*, *feminine*; *optime*, *pessime*, *permixte*, *declinantes ad bonum*, *declinantes ad malum*; etc.).

5. ff. 67r-70v: Procreation of the figures from pairs of progenitors starting from *Via* (Triplets).

From my analysis it emerges that the geomantic collection preserved on the ff. 1r-70v of London, British Library, Harley MS 4166 consists of at least five macro-units, which are in turn subdivided into several sections. The collection incorporates at least two of the major geomantic writings examined above, namely the *Estimaverunt Indi* (A) and *Ars geomantiae* (E.1). Inspite of some repetitions and its disorder, the collection offers, by combining all its texts and fragments, a comprehensive analysis of all the aspects and steps of the geomantic method.

7. Organized Compilations: the *Geomantia* attributed to Moerbeke and the *Compilatorium* by Rolandus Scriptoris

In addition to being incorporated into larger geomantic collections, the earliest Latin texts on geomancy (the *Ars geomantiae*, the *Estimaverunt Indi*, the *Se quis per artem geomanticam*, and the *Desideranti-bus*) were also largely quoted by subsequent geomantic works, such as the treatises by Bartholomew of Parma, the *Geomantia* ascribed to Moerbeke, and the *Compilatorium* by Rolandus Scriptoris. In all these cases, we are dealing with works conceived as elaborate compilations which re-arrange previous sources in an orderly way, combining and intertwining them variously.

Turning to the *Geomantia*, recently published by Elisa Rubino,[63] the debate on its authenticity has unfortunately overshadowed other important characteristics of the text that have become clear thanks to the edition.[64] The *Geomantia* has been convincingly described by Alessandra Beccarisi as a compilation of the earliest Latin geomantic texts, which, as already mentioned, were the seminal sources of the Latin geomantic literature: the *Ars geomantiae*, the *Estimaverunt Indi*, the *Si quis per artem geomanticam*, and the *Desiderantibus verum et certum judicium dare*. Many quotations can now be identified on the basis of the critically reconstructed text.[65]

The *Geomantia* offers a comprehensive, systematic and orderly treatment of the geomantic art.[66] The author arranged the material within a solid and coherent architecture: the text has two prologues, is structured into eight *particulae*, which are in turn subdivided into *distinctiones* and chapters. A general index of the headings (*tituli*) of the *particulae* follows the *prologus maior*, the second one; in addition, each *particula* is preceded by a table listing the headings of its *distinctiones* and chapters.

Each *particula* is dedicated to a specific aspect of geomancy: the first deals with preliminary issues, the casting of the points, and the sixteen geomantic figures, their meanings, qualities, and connections

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[63] Guillelmi de Morbeca *Geomantia I-IV,4*, ed. Rubino; *Geomantia IV,5-VIII*, ed. E. Rubino (Corpus philosophorum medii aevi. Testi e studi 28), Firenze 2023.

[64] Doubts about the authenticity of this work have been raised by P. Beullens, "Why William of Moerbeke is not the Author of 'His' *Geomantia* (and Why that does not Make the Text Less Interesting)", in *Mediterranea. International Journal for the Transfer of Knowledge*, 4 (2019), 239-244. On the authorship of the text, see also A. Beccarisi, "Guglielmo di Moerbeke e la geomanzia", in Guillelmi de Morbeca *Geomantia I-IV,4*, ed. Rubino, XXIX-XXXVI. On Moerbeke, see the recent monograph by Pieter Beulles, *The friar and the philosopher: William of Moerbeke and the rise of Aristotle's science in Medieval Europe*, London-New York 2023.

[65] Beccarisi, "Guglielmo di Moerbeke e la geomanzia", XXXVI-LVI. See also Ead., "Qualche considerazione sulla *Geomantia* attribuita a Guglielmo di Moerbeke", in *Quaderni di Noctua. La tradizione filosofica dall'antico al moderno*, vol. 5 (2019): *Tra antichità e modernità. Studi di storia della filosofia medievale e rinascimentale - Studi e testi*, a cura di F. Amerini, S. Fellina, A. Strazzoni, 554-603, available at URL=http://www.didaschein.net/ojs/index.php/QuadernidiNoctua.

[66] Guillelmi de Morbeca *Geomantia I-IV,4*, ed. Rubino, prol., 6,73-75: "Hiis prenotatis videamus huius codicis ordinationem, quem propter sententiarum varietatem atque scientie profunditatem in octo divisimus particulas [...]".

(with elements, sexes, parts of the day, seasons, planets, human physiognomy, etc.); the second deals with the figures from a genetic point of view by analyzing their formation from the lines (*De figurarum formatione*), the qualities of each figure generated from pairs of progenitors (*De generatione figurarum*), and the motions of the figures (*De motibus figurarum*), i.e., their reiteration in other positions of the chart; the third concerns the astrological background of geomancy (zodiac signs and planets and their characters), the filling of the houses in the geomantic chart (*De creatione figurarum*), the geomantic houses, their meanings and qualities; the fourth is a list of geomantic questions and solutions which are collected in groups related to the twelve geomantic houses (each house covers an area of reality and related aspects); the fifth *particula* examines some technicalities used in interpreting the chart (*proiectio*, *cardo*, the *termini* of the question, *communicatio*, etc.); the sixth focuses on understanding the *intentio quaestionis* and reading the consultant's mind through the technical procedure of the *via puncti*; the seventh deals with the meanings of the figures in relation to each house; the eighth deals with the judgment based on only the figure appearing in the first house, which is the strongest in geomancy. Indeed, by producing the heads of the four Daughters, the first Mother initiates the process that leads to the creation of any other figure in the chart, which is thus related to (*annexa*) and partly caused by Her (*ab ea partim erigitur*).[67] The two prologues, the general table of content, and internal cross-references are also meant to emphasize the unity and cohesion of the *Geomantia*. The effort of systematization and "rational organization" of the content of the earliest geomantic sources made by the *Geomantia* is evident.

Another example of a compilation that reworks and reorganizes earlier material is the *Compilatorium* by Rolandus Scriptoris.[68] Rolandus is a fifteenth-century physician who participated in a controversy with Laurent Musteon concerning the choice of the days appropriate

[67] Guillelmi de Morbeca *Geomantia IV,5-VIII*, ed. Rubino, 8, 161,15-22.

[68] On Rolandus' biography and scholarship, see, at least, the fundamental thesis by Thérèse Charmasson: *Sciences et techniques divinatoires au XVe siècle: Roland l'Ecrivain, médecin, astrologue et géomancien*, 2 vols, Positions des Thèses, École Nationale des Chartes, Paris 1973, and lately M. Farelo, "Roland Scriptoris ou de Lisbonne: un médecin, un professeur et un clerc portugais au XVe siècle", in *Medievalista Online*, 25 (2019), 1-23 available at http://journals.openedition.org/medievalista/1750

for bloodletting and laxatives[69] and authored compendia on arithmetic (*Aggregatorium sive compendium artis arismetrice*)[70] and physiognomy (*Reductorium Phisionomie*),[71] and, probably, astrological dossiers.[72] He also composed a compendium of geomancy that, as he himself states at the outset of his work, aimed at embracing the concise rules and the secret thoughts that had been veiled ("sub nube") by some on account of the great depth of this art. Rolandus acknowledges his heavy reliance on the major sources of the geomantic tradition, namely on the ancient Arabs – by which the *Ars geomantiae* by Hugo of Santalla and the *Estimaverunt Indi* are meant – and on the modern experts, i.e., William of Moerbeke, Bartholomew of Parma, and Gerard of Cremona.

> Incipit Compilatorium sive Aggregatorium totius artis *geomantiae* (*add*. ad astronomiam redactae R), cuius *compilatorii* (*om*. R) *sunt duae partes* (: partes sunt duae S), scilicet prooemialis et *exsecutiva* (*add*. secundum M. Ro. B. R)
>
> Artem geomantiae sub brevibus et claris verbis compilare intendo, ut de ea senserunt Arabes antiquissimi et sapientes moderni Guillelmus de Morbeca, Bartholomaeus de Parma, Gerardus Cremonensis et alii plures, ipsam artem reducendo ad canones et regulas astrologiae, ex qua ipsa orta est et cuius ipsa filia nuncupatur, allegando dicta astro-

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[69] T. Charmasson, "L'établissement d'un almanach médical pour l'année 1437", in *Comptes-Rendus du 99e Congrès National des Sociétés Savants (Besançon 1974)*, section des sciences, fasc. V, Paris 1976, 217-234.

[70] T. Charmasson, "L'Arithmétique de Roland l'Ecrivain et le Quadripartitum numerorum de Jean de Murs", in *Revue d'histoire des sciences*, 31,2 (1978), 173-176.

[71] D. Jacquart, *La médecine médiévale dans le cadre parisien XIVe-XVe siècle*, Paris 1998, 444-447; J. Ziegler, "Médecine et physiognomonie du XIVe au début du XVIe siècle", in *Médiévales*, 46 Printemps (2004), *Éthique et pratiques médicales*, available at https://doi.org/10.4000/medievales.805 (last access: 18.12.25); Id., "Measuring the Human Body in Medieval and Early Renaissance Physiognomy", in *Micrologus. Nature, Sciences and Medieval Societies*, 19 (2011), 349-368; H. Avelar, L.C. Ribeiro, "Fisionomia e astrologia: o manuscrito de Rolando de Lisboa", in *Luz, cor e ouro. Estudos sobre manuscritos iluminados*, ed. C.F. Barreira, Lisboa 2016, 235-248; J. Ziegler, L.C. Ribeiro, "Astral Physiognomy in the Fifteenth Century: The Case of the Illuminated Opening Folio of Rolandus Scriptoris's *Reductorium phisonomie*", in *The Body as a Mirror of the Soul. Physiognomy from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. L. Devriese, Leuven 2021, 183-206.

[72] J.-P. Boudet, T. Charmasson, "Une consultation astrologique princière en 1427", in J.-P. Boudet, *Astrologie et politique entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance* (Micrologus Library 102), Firenze 2020, 247-271.

> logorum, ut Ptolemaei, Haly, Albumasaris et aliorum, conformia secundum mei parvi ingenii capacitatem. Et ideo ista summa Aggregatorium seu Compilatorium totius artis geomantiae nuncupari potest, quia breves regulas et considerationes secretissimas complectitur, quae sub nube ab aliquibus sunt scriptae propter artis ingentem profunditatem.[73]

As is clear from these words, Rolandus emphasizes the derivation of geomancy from astrology, on whose canons and rules it is based.

Like the *Geomantia*, the *Compilatorium* has a solid and sophisticated architecture. It is divided into two parts, the first of which is a preface in two chapters in which the author explores the philosophical background of divination and provides a theoretical justification for the geomantic technique. The second practical part ("exsecutiva"), divided into 6 *summae*, which are in turn subdivided into parts and chapters, provides a comprehensive and organized account of all the notions and aspects of the geomantic procedure: 1. astrological connections of the figures and meanings of the twelve houses; 2. formation and interpretation of the tableau; 3. nature and meanings of each figure considered separately in itself; 4. meanings of the figures in relation to the houses; 5. Witnesses and Judge; and 6. geomantic questions.[74]

Rubino's investigation also gives us a clearer picture of the state of the manuscript tradition of the *Geomantia*. It is preserved in full in four manuscripts, while eleven witnesses are known to contain it in incomplete form, and three of them are described as reworkings.[75] As Rubino remarks in her introduction, the fact that in most of these manuscripts

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[73] The text above is based on the collation of two out of the three manuscripts which are known to transmit the work: London, British Library, Royal 12-C-XVI, ff. 3r-6r (= R) and London, British Library, Sloane MS 3487, ff. 1r-4v (= S). The *Compilatorium* contains numerous references to Moerbeke as the author of the *Geomantia*, thereby providing reliable, albeit late, evidence of the attribution of the *Geomantia* to Moerbeke. Moreover, the inclusion of Gerard of Cremona among the "modern" experts is also noteworthy, which seems to imply that Rolandus does not regard the *Si quis per artem geomanticam* as a translation, but as an original work of Gerard. This point, however, needs further investigation.

[74] On the characteristics and the content of the *Compilatorium*, see Charmasson: *Sciences et techniques divinatoires au XVe siècle*, vol. 1, 103-156, vol. 2, 32-60; eadem, *Recherches*, 178-193.

[75] E. Rubino, "Introduzione al testo critico", in Guillelmi de Morbeca *Geomantia I-IV,4*, ed. Rubino, LIX-LXVII.

the scribes do not copy the text in full is something that usually does not happen with the transmission in the medieval manuscripts of authors of philosophy, theology, law, or medicine. The *Geomantia* seems to lie somewhere between the official academic literature, usually copied faithfully, and the "Wissensliteratur" (encyclopedias, magical-alchemical writings, collections of medical recipes, texts of spirituality, sermons, lives of saints, etc.) that is pragmatic and has a fluid, and often anonymous, transmission.[76]

If we take a step forward and examine the "Mitüberlieferung" of the *Geomantia*, we notice a situation similar to those of the earliest geomantic writings. Of the fifteen witnesses of the *Geomantia*, three preserve it as the only text in whole (Erfurt, Universitätsbibliothek, Dep. Erfurt CA 4° 384 [= E3][77] and Erlangen, Universitätsbibliothek, 666 [= E][78]) or in part (Kassel, Universitätsbibliothek, Landesbibliothek und Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel, 2° Ms. Astron. 3 [= K1][79]); two manuscripts preserve it in full (Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, 76.1 Aug. 2° [= G][80]) or partially (München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 905 [= M2][81]) in connection with astrological and astronomical texts. The rest of the manuscripts include sections of the *Geomantia* in larger geomantic collections or transmit the text in connection with other geomantic texts (Erfurt, Universitätsbibliothek, Dep. Erfurt CA 4° 373 [= E1] and 377 [= E2];[82] Firenze, Biblioteca

[76] Rubino, "Introduzione", LXVII-LXIX.

[77] See W. Schum, *Beschreibendes Verzeichniss der Amplonianischen Handschriften-Sammlung zu Erfurt*, Berlin 1887, 641.

[78] Description from H. Fischer, *Katalog der Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen. 2. Band: Die Lateinischen Papierhandschriften*, Erlangen 1936, 410-411.

[79] Digitisation and description of the content of the manuscript at https://orka.bibliothek.uni-kassel.de/viewer/image/1395315098279/1/ (last access: 15.12.25).

[80] See O. von Heinemann, *Die Handschriften der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel, Zweite Abtheilung: Die Augusteischen Handschriften III*, Wolfenbüttel 1898, 391 (Nachdruck unter dem Titel: *Die Augusteischen Handschriften*, Bd. 3: *Codex Guelferbytanus 32.7 Augusteus 2° bis 77.3 Augusteus 2°* [Kataloge der Herzog-August-Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel 6], Frankfurt a.M. 1966).

[81] See Juste, *Les manuscrits astrologiques latins conservés à la Bayerische Staatsbibliothek de Munich*, 88.

[82] Schum, *Beschreibendes Verzeichniss*, 624-625, 631-633.

Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 89 sup. 34 [= F];[83] Kassel, Universitätsbibliothek, Landesbibliothek und Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel, 4° Ms. Astron. 16 [= K];[84] München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 242 [= M1];[85] München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 588 [= M];[86] Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 3059, ff. 93r-105r [= W1] and ff. 136r-172v [= W2];[87] Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 5508 [= W3];[88] Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. ch. f. 212 [= W][89]).

In other words, the *Geomantia*, which was meant to be a comprehensive and well-ordered treatment of geomancy, ended up sharing the same type of manuscript transmission as the earliest geomantic writings, which, as said, were often transmitted in parts that had an independent circulation and were incorporated into larger geomantic collections or associated with other geomantic texts.

The collections which include parts of the *Geomantia* contain a large variety of geomantic writings and fragments. The most present is Hugo of Santalla's *Ars geomantiae*, which is transmitted, in full, in parts or fragments by five witnesses of the *Geomantia* (E3, F, K, M, and W3); Gerard of Cremona's text appears four times in manuscripts

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[83] D. Juste, "MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 89 sup. 34", in *Ptolemaeus Arabus et Latinus. Manuscripts*, URL = http://ptolemaeus.badw.de/ms/419.

[84] Digitisation and description of the content of the manuscript at https://orka.bibliothek.uni-kassel.de/viewer/image/1357121750174/.

[85] Juste, *Les manuscrits astrologiques latins conservés à la Bayerische Staatsbibliothek de Munich*, 61. The *liber geomanticus* contained in this manuscript, however, is a treatise compiled on the basis of William's *Geomantia* rather than an actual witness of the *Geomantia*.

[86] Juste, *Les manuscrits astrologiques latins conservés à la Bayerische Staatsbibliothek de Munich*, 75-77.

[87] *Tabulae codicum manu scriptorum praeter graecos et orientales in Bibliotheca Palatina Vindobonensi asservatorum*, ed. Academia Caesarea Vindobonensis, Vol. II: *Cod. 2001-3500*, Wien 1868, 187-188.

[88] *Tabulae codicum manu scriptorum praeter graecos et orientales in Bibliotheca Palatina Vindobonensi asservatorum*, ed. Academia Caesarea Vindobonensis, Vol. IV: Cod. 5001-6500, Wien 1870, 140.

[89] H. Thurn, *Die Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Würzburg. Zweiter Band, zweite Hälfte. Handschriften aus benediktinischen Provenienzen; II Die Handschriften aus St.Stephan zu Würzburg*, Wiesbaden 1986, 67-68.

of the *Geomantia* in both its complete text, the *Si quis per artem geomanticam* (E1), and its second part, the *Si de statu corporis* (F and W1-2). The presence of the *Estimaverunt Indi* in the Mitüberlieferung of the *Geomantia* is limited to both the fragment in W, to which we have referred above (see section 3), and to the chapter *De via puncti ex libro Yndorum* in M, which has a relationship with the section *de via puncti* of the *Estimaverunt Indi* (see above, n. 34). The fact that the *Estimaverunt Indi* is widely quoted in the *Geomantia* itself may be the reason why no need was felt to add sections or parts of the *Estimaverunt Indi* in addition to the *Geomantia* in the geomantic collections that include the latter text. The *Desiderantibus*, on the other hand, is contained in two manuscripts of the *Geomantia* (F and W3), even though it was also extensively quoted in this work.

8. Conclusion

Medieval Latin treatises of geomancy are fluid texts with particularly intricate manuscript transmissions. This is especially true of the earliest texts, which were translations from Arabic originals (the *Ars geomantiae* translated by Hugo of Santalla, the *Estimaverunt Indi*, the *Si quis per artem geomanticam* and probably the *Desiderantibus verum et certum judicium dare*). The manuscripts of these writings witness various textual versions, have different explicits, and show contaminations between them and also with other geomantic texts. Moreover, parts or fragments of these seminal texts on geomancy had an independent circulation. While there can be many reasons which explain the complexity of each single text and the specific characteristics of its manuscript tradition, I think that the nature and structure of these texts played a major role in determining what I have defined as the explosion of their manuscript tradition: these earliest documents of the dissemination of geomancy in the West have a selective approach to the geomantic method as they cover only some aspects or some more thoroughly than others; moreover, they generally provide an unsystematic treatment of geomancy, sometimes addressing the same topics more than once; furthermore, they are made up of independent textual units.

In light of all of this, it is not surprising that the earliest Latin texts on geomancy were so often incorporated in full or in part into later larger geomantic collections and assembled with other geomantic texts and

fragments. Upon careful examination, most of these collections reveal a well-thought-out architecture. As the manuscript Harley 4166 shows, they do not pile up geomantic material mechanically, but bring texts, chapters, notes, and fragments together according to a precise plan: all the elements gathered are carefully selected so that they complement each other and cover the different aspects and phases of the geomantic technique. In other words, a text or a fragment included in a collection should not be considered in its individual self-contained identity, but as an item in the broader context of a set of texts, as a textual unit in a larger whole. In terms of content, it should be emphasized that almost all geomantic collections contain at least one or more of those earliest Latin texts on geomancy, which, being translations from Arabic into Latin, were held as authoritative sources that conveyed the wisdom of this art in its most authentic form.

The relevance of these earliest texts on geomancy is confirmed by the prominence they achieve within later elaborate compilations such as the *Geomantia* ascribed to Moerbeke and the *Compilatorium* by Rolandus Scriptoris. Both these works are comprehensive attempts to provide a systematic and well-ordered analysis of the geomantic art, its technicalities, its conceptual implications, and its structural links with astrology. To this purpose, they appropriate large passages and entire sections from those texts and re-arrange them within an elaborate architecture. As time went by, the *Geomantia* ascribed to Moerbeke and the works by Bartholomew of Parma, namely Latin compilations based on the earliest Arabic-Latin translations, also became authoritative. Therefore, Rolandus' *Compilatorium*, since it relies on the entire corpus of authoritative sources, both on Arabic and Latin, should be considered the latest and most complete product of the medieval Latin geomantic tradition.

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Malae divinationes: Demons' Foreknowledge and Semiotics of Lying in Augustine's *De divinatione daemonum*

Roberto Limonta

Composed between AD 406 and AD 410,[1] *De divinatione daemonum* is a polemic pamphlet,[2] a *libellum*[3] in which Augustine treats in a more systematic order a number of issues he had dealt with in a haphazard manner within other texts.[4] Augustine himself states that he started to work on the text following an occasional discussion, which he later decided to rearrange and integrate.[5] As announced by the title, the pamphlet's topic is a dispute against the divinations attributed to divine or semi-divine creatures in the pagan world, called *daemones*. In Augustinian later writings and in the medieval theological tradition the term will subsequently come to indicate Satan's demonic creatures, to

[1] On the issue of dating, historians agree on AD 406 as *terminus post quem*; the *terminus ad quem* ranges between 410 and 411: see. J. Den Boeft, "Divinatione daemonum (De-)", in *Augustinus-Lexicon*, hrsg. v. C. Mayer, Basel 1996-2002, vol. II, coll. 519-520; L. J. Van der Lof, "Les interlocuteurs d'Augustin dans le *De divinatione daemonum*", in *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes*, 13 (1967), 27-28.

[2] Augustinus, *De divinatione daemonum,* ed. J. Zycha (CSEL 41), Wien 1900, 597-618.

[3] Augustinus, *Retract.*, II, c. 30, ed. A. Mutzenbecher (CCSL 7), Turnhout 1989, 114. The Augustinian works will be quoted according to the abbreviations of *Augustinus-Lexikon*.

[4] In *Gn. litt.*, XI-XII, before the drafting of *Divin. daem.*, and then in *Civ.*, VIII, c. 15 and IX, c. 20-22. See K. Schlapbach, "De divinatione daemonum", in *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine*, ed. K. Pollmann, W. Otten, Oxford 2013, coll. 132-134; J. Den Boeft, "Daemon(es)", in *Augustinus-Lexicon*, hrsg. v. Mayer, vol. II, coll. 213-222; Id., "Divinatione daemonum (De-)", coll. 519-524.

[5] For what concerns the interlocutors of Augustine, Laurens Van der Lof argues that they were recently converted members of the Christian community of Hippo, still connected with their pagan cultural roots (Van der Lof, "Les interlocuteurs d'Augustin", 25-30).

Turnhout, 2025 (Rencontres de Philosophie Médiévale 31) *pp. 457-478*
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which the capacities of demonic precognition the text outlines will be ascribed.[6] Thus, in the Middle Ages and beyond, Augustine's analysis will be understood and discussed through the lens of such an interpretation of the word *daemones*. At the beginning of the fifth century, these kind of divinatory practices were still widespread in the Roman Empire and in Proconsular Africa, where they concerned the Christian community of Hippo.[7] Beyond these historical circumstances, the philosophical core of the matter is treated in the middle section of the text,[8] where controversies and contingent problems leave room to the fundamental issue: what is the nature of demons, and what has it got to do with their cognitive capacities, particularly with divination?[9]

The issue will have great philosophical fortune during the Middle Ages, and the theological tradition will reformulate it through a network of concepts that are rich in theoretical implications: are demonic creatures able to foreknow future contingents, and how? What is the structure of their cognitive faculties, and to what extent its analysis could shed light on human cognitive processes? What about the relations between this divinatory capacity and that of prophets, angels, and,

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[6] Den Boeft, "Daemon(es)", coll. 213-222: 214.

[7] See P. Brown, "Sorcery, Demons and the Rise of Christianity: From Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages", in *Religion and Society in the Age of Augustine*, ed. P. Brown, London 1972, 119-146.

[8] Augustinus, *Divin. daem*., c. 3, n. 7-c. 6, n. 10, ed. Zycha, 603-608.

[9] In Late Antiquity, Middle and Neo-Platonic demonology provides the framework within which issues concerning the nature and divinatory powers of demonic creatures are discussed. Augustine draws on them in an eclectic way: suffice it to say that in Platonic traditions, unlike in *De divinatione daemonum*, demons are seen as positive natural powers. See. A. Timotin, *Trois théories antiques de la divination: Plutarque, Jamblique, Augustin* (Ancient Philosophy and Religion 6), Leiden-Boston 2022; Id., *La démonologie platonicienne: histoire de la notion de daimon de Platon aux derniers néoplatoniciennes*, Leiden 2012; S. Pricoco (ed.), *Il Demonio e i suoi complici. Dottrine e credenze demonologiche nella Tarda Antichità*, Soveria Mannelli 1995; P. Siniscalco, "Dai mediatori al mediatore. La demonologia di Apuleio e la critica di Agostino", in *L'autunno del diavolo*, a cura di E. Corsini, E. Costa, Milano 1990, I, 279-294; C. Moreschini, "La polemica di Agostino contro la demonologia di Apuleio", in *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di Lettere e Filosofia*, 2/2 (1972), 583-596; J. Pepin, "Influences païennes sur l'angélologie et la démonologie de saint Augustin", in *Entretiens sur l'homme e le diable*, éd. M. Milner, Paris 1965, 51-59; H. J. Geerlings, *Die antieke daemonologie en Augustinus' geschrift de divinatione daemonum*, Amsterdam 1953.

ultimately, of God? Is the potential determinism of demonic divination compatible with human free will?[10]

In answering the questions raised by his community, Augustine shifts the discussion from the context of a contingent controversy to the theological dilemma that is deeply rooted in it, defining a demonological paradigm that will shape the medieval theological debates on the topic – whether as a textual source, a conceptual model, a critical reference point, or merely as a general backdrop.[11] The focal point of this paradigm is, as we shall see, the analysis of the demons' divinatory acts as manipulations of *signa naturalia* and, therefore, as significant examples of what, borrowing from Umberto Eco, we might call "the semiotics of lying". In *A Theory of Semiotics*, Eco defined semiotics with a formula that became a classic: "the discipline studying everything which can be used in order to lie",[12] thus underlining the close relationship between the field of signification and the epistemology of lying – a relation that is today generally acknowledged in semiotic studies.[13] On the other hand, Marcia Colish and Irene Rosier-Catach, among others, have stressed the historical and philosophical significance of Augustinian insights into lying,[14] substantially developed in

[10] See K. Flasch, *Le Diable dans la pensée européenne*, Paris 2019, 131-137, 173-182; T. Gregory, "Dio ingannatore e genio maligno. Note in margine alle 'Meditationes' di Descartes", in *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, 53 (1974), 477-516.

[11] See R. Limonta, "Una più del diavolo. Divinazione, prescienza e futuri contingenti nel *De divinatione daemonum* di Agostino d'Ippona", in *Dianoia*, 24 (2017), 3-14. See also Schlapbach, "De divinatione daemonum".

[12] U. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, Bloomington-London 1976, 7. Eco rephrased his definition in U. Eco, "Dire il contrario", in *Menzogna e simulazione*, a cura di M. Bonfantini, C. Castelfranchi, A. Martone, I. Poggi, J. Vincent, Napoli 1997, 33-43, where the term "semiotics" means the theory about how it is possible to say what is not the case.

[13] See R. Gramigna, *Augustine's Theory of Signs, Signification, and Lying*, Berlin-Boston 2020, 147.

[14] I. Rosier-Catach, *La Parole efficace. Signe, rituel, sacré*, Paris 2004, 298-299; M. L. Colish, "St. Augustine's rhetoric of silence revisited", in *Augustinian Studies*, 9 (1978), 5-24: 16. On medieval conception of lying and Augustine's legacy, see also D. Denery, *The Devil Wins. A History of Lying from the Garden of Eden to the Enlightenment*, Princeton-Oxford 2015; C. Marmo, "La définition du mensonge au Moyen Âge et dans le débat contemporain", in *La vérité. Vérité et crédibilité: construire la vérité dans le système de communication de l'Occident (XIIIe-XVIIe siècle)*, éd. J.-P. Genet, Roma-Paris 2015, 81-94; P. J. Griffiths, *Lying: An Augustinian Theology of Duplicity*,

two *opuscula* – *De mendacio* (AD 395) and *Contra mendacium* (AD 420-21 ca.) – which were composed just respectively before and after *De divinatione daemonum*. Although Augustine never explicitly puts together these two topics, it is not hard to recognize the features of demonic divination in the eight cases of lying treated in *De mendacio.* Such an interpretive hypothesis seems justified not only by the chronological proximity of the three works, but also by the tradition of Christian theology, which provides the framework for Augustine's thought. The Scriptures emphasize the value of simplicity and directness of speech on several occasions.[15] On the contrary, lying is traditionally ascribed to demonic creatures: in the Gospel of John, Satan is defined as the "father of lying".[16]

The divination of demons, therefore, constitutes a highly relevant case study, as it connects the epistemological and moral approach of *De mendacio* and *Contra mendacium* with the theological perspective of *De divinatione daemonum*, thus underscoring once more the underlying unity of Augustine's philosophy and its fundamental idea of an analogical order in the created world. In turn, this reading may contribute to explain Augustine's outright condemnation of lying, which, under this interpretation, is not only a violation of the social pact but, more importantly, a violation of the very nature of language and therefore of the metaphysical order of divine creation. Furthermore, this theory of lying provides a framework for defining the nature of demonic divination in the light of the cognitive functioning of rational beings: a shift in focus from apologetics to epistemology that allows him to develop significant considerations in the fields of semiotics, philosophy of language, communication theory, psychology.[17]

Grand Rapids 2004; C. Casagrande, S. Vecchio, *I peccati della lingua. Disciplina ed etica della parola nella cultura medievale*, Roma 1978.

[15] *Isa.*, 10, 23; *Matt.*, 5, 34-37. See G.R. Evans, *Getting it Wrong. The Medieval Epistemology of Error* (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 63), Leiden 1998, 181.

[16] *John*, 8, 44. On lying, understood as the essential nature of demonic creatures, see particularly Denery, *The Devil Wins*.

[17] About the historical interconnections between signs and divination in Late Antiquity, see L. Repici, *Predire il futuro. I filosofi antichi e la divinazione*, Pisa 2022, and particularly G. Manetti, *Theories of the Sign in Classical Antiquity*, Bloomington-Indianapolis 1993.

This tight connection between sign, lying, and demonic divination lies at the core of my analysis. In what follows, I will first offer a textual survey of *De divinatione daemonum*, focusing on the main lines of Augustine's argument on the cognitive nature of demons and their divinatory practices. Secondly, I will interpret such a theory within the framework of the definitions of lying outlined in *De mendacio* and *Contra mendacium*, while using the doctrine of sign developed in *De Doctrina Christiana*, *De Magistro* and *De Trinitate* as a theoretical backdrop.[18] I thus aim to demonstrate the historiographical coherence and value of this interpretation: reading *De Divinatione Daemonum* through the lens of the semiotics of lying appears to effectively resolve the crucial paradox of a demonic divination that tells the truth while lying, a prominent feature of the text. Finally, in the last paragraph, I will offer concluding remarks, focusing on the theoretical issues that have been identified through the cross-reading and interpretation of the sources.

Nature and Boundaries of Demonic Foreknowledge

De divinatione daemonum stems from the discussions concerning the destruction of the temple of Serapis in Alexandria, an event that took place in 391 following the edicts that banned pagan cults in the Roman Empire. As a pagan oracle had seemingly predicted it,[19] the case raised the question about the demons' capacities to divine the future, i.e. to predict future contingents and thus have some kind of foreknowledge.[20] In the text, Augustine raises two different issues: the capacity of demons to divine, which he unhesitatingly concedes ("non esse mirandum si istam

[18] See. C. Kirwan, "Augustine's Philosophy of Language", in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, ed. N. Kretzmann, E. Stump, Cambridge 2001, 186-204; M. Bettetini, "Agostino d'Ippona: i segni, il linguaggio", in *Knowledge through Signs. Ancient Semiotic Theories and Practices*, ed. G. Manetti (Semiotic and Cognitive Studies 2), Turnhout 1996, 207-272; Manetti, *Theories of the Sign*, 157-168; R. Simone, "Semiologia agostiniana", in *La cultura*, 7 (1969), 88-117.

[19] "Affirmaretur praedixisse nescio quem eversionem templi Serapis, quae in Alexandria facta est": Augustinus, *Divin. daem*., c. 1, n. 1, ed. Zycha, 599. According to Eunapius, *Lives of Philosophers and Sophists*, 6 (473b 116), tr. by W.C. Wright (Loeb Classical Library 134), Cambridge 1921, 473, the prediction was the work of a Neoplatonic mystic, named Antoninus.

[20] K. Kühn, "Augustinus Schrift 'De Divinatione Daemonum'", in *Augustiana*, 47 (1997), 291-337.

eversionem templi et simulacri sui imminere daemones, et scire et praedicere potuerunt");[21] and the truth of such divinatory statements. While these two elements are necessarily intertwined in divine prophecy, in the first step of his argument Augustin establishes that they are to be kept separate in the case of demonic divinations. Therefore, the point here is not so much about the contingent truth of these acts of foreknowledge, nor about the capacity of demons to make predictions, but rather about their epistemological status and, more generally, about the nature and role of demonic acts in the context of divine order, which should not allow for them.

To clarify this point, the pamphlet preliminarily defines the nature of *daemones*: "Daemonum eam esse naturam, ut aerii corporis sensu terrenorum corporum sensum facile praecedant".[22] The basic assumption here is the airy nature of demonic bodies, a concept drawn from the Middle Platonic demonology.[23] Demons have an extraordinary capacity to act in the sensible world and, thanks to the power and subtlety of their airy bodies, they are by far superior to human creatures, which are instead limited by their material bodies.

From the characteristics of demonic bodies Augustine derives a set of abilities that appear so much more powerful than those of humans that they seem divine. In turn, this provides an epistemological ground to demonic divinations from the perspective of human beings:

> Quibus duabus rebus quantum ad aerium corpus attinet, praediti, hoc est acrimonia sensus et celeritate motus, multa ante cognita praenuntiant vel nuntiant, quae homines pro sensus terreni tarditate mirentur. Accessit etiam daemonibus per tam longum tempus quo eorum vita

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[21] Augustinus, *Divin. daem*., c. 1, n. 1, ed. Zycha, 599.

[22] Augustinus, *Divin. daem*., c. 3, n. 7, ed. Zycha, 603. On the airy bodies of demons, see also *Civ.*, VIII, c. 14-15 and VIII, c. 22; *Gn. litt.*, 3, c. 10, n. 14-15. In the Platonic tradition (Plutarch, Apuleius, Nemesius, to quote the most important authors), which produced a sort of *koiné* on the topic, the airy place indicates demons as mediators between heaven and earth, which also accounts for their semi-divine nature. Augustine takes a radically difference stance on this: the *locus naturalis* of the demons becomes a prison that shows their limitations.

[23] See Timotin, *Trois théories antiques de la divination*; Id., *La démonologie platonicienne*; N. Fick, "St. Augustin pourfendeur des demons païens, ou la critique de la démonologie d'Apulée, *De Civit. Dei*, VIII", in *Discours religieux dans l'Antiquité: Actes du colloque Bésancon, 27-28 janvier, Université de Franche-Comté*, éd. M. Mactoux, E. Geny, Besançon 1995, 189-206.

> protenditur, rerum longe maior experientia, quam potest hominibus propter brevitatem vitae provenire.[24]

Acute sensitivity (*acrimonia sensus*), rapidity of movements (*celeritate motus*) and, particularly, long experience ("rerum longe maior experientia") are the features of the demonic cognitive powers. This is why human beings believe that demons' acts are divine and supernatural. While acknowledging that the cognitive powers of demons are real, this account clearly defines the boundaries within which they can operate, and in doing so, it limits – second step of Augustine's argument – the value of those divinatory practices.

The demons' acts are not able to access the level of "maioribus et occultioribus causis",[25] from which the causal chain, which determines events and is only accessible to God and the prophets, starts. Rather, the demons' cognitive apparatus enables them to formulate predictive statements, through which they "praenoscant atque praenuntient multa".[26] The lexical choice here is meaningful: according to Augustine, *praenoscere* and *praenuntiare* cannot be defined as acts of divination, even from just a linguistic point of view. The prefix *prae* is the only difference between these demonic acts and the common human acts of *noscere* e *nuntiare*; the demons are simply capable of doing it in advance.[27] In this way, Augustine qualifies the superiority of the demons' cognition as merely quantitative, so as to draft a hierarchy of creatures based on the efficacy of their perceptive apparatuses, where he places, at different levels, dogs, vultures, eagles, human beings and demons. Therefore, demonic acts are downplayed and framed within the scope of natural laws ("minoribus et usitatioribus causis futura praevidentur"):[28] demons do not know future contingents according to the ultimate principles governing them, but merely anticipate the steps in the causal chain through probabilistic inferences. They do not really

[24] Augustinus, *Divin. daem.*, c. 3, n. 7, ed. Zycha, 603-604.

[25] Augustinus, *Divin. daem.*, c. 6, n. 10, ed. Zycha, 610.

[26] Augustinus, *Divin. daem.*, c. 4, n. 7, ed. Zycha, 605. Augustine mainly uses the verbs *praenuntiare*, *praenoscere* and *praedicere*. The term *praescientia*, which implies an ontological commitment, occurs only once within the text.

[27] See. G. Catapano, "'Cose' e 'segni' secondo Agostino", in *Quaestio*, 18 (2018), 69-83: 70-71.

[28] Augustinus, *Divin. daem.*, c. 6, n. 10, ed. Zycha, 610.

possess a true science of future events: although their precognitions occasionally prove accurate,[29] they rely on a very fragile epistemological foundation, namely the inductive process based on the belief in the repetitiveness of natural phenomena.

By limiting both the power and the nature of demonic divination, Augustine restricts its range of action. In most cases – he stresses – demons simply predict what they are themselves about to do.[30] For instance, exploiting the thinness of their own airy bodies, they creep into human bodies and produce distorted visions that, mingling with thoughts, influence human choices. They are also capable of knowing human thoughts, not only those expressed verbally but also the innermost ones, when they get to be manifested through physiognomic features. However, demons cannot create real objects or mental images. Their deceptions operate before cognitive processes happen: altering the sensitive data impressed in the human mind, they hinder the intellect's ability to produce correct judgment, thereby leading humans to sin.[31]

"Aliquando autem non quae ipsi faciunt" Augustine states "sed quae naturalibus signis futura praenoscunt, quae signa in hominum sensus venire non possunt, ante praedicunt".[32] If the divination of demons is a kind of semiotic inference that anticipates ongoing processes, it is not very different from what a physician does when he foresees the patient's state of health through signs such as temperature variations.[33] From this point of view, demonic precognition is essentially different from divine prophecy: first, it fails when a higher will, such as God's, overturns the rules of natural processes; secondly, demons deceive

[29] On demonic capacity to predict something true, even if for deceptive purposes, see also AUGUSTINUS, *Gn. litt.*, XII, c. 13, n. 28, ed. J. ZYCHA (CSEL 28/1), Wien-Prag 1894, 398, and particularly *Gn. litt.*, XII, c. 17, n. 34, ed. ZYCHA, 403, where the ability to read human thoughts is credited, as in *De divinatione daemonum*, to "acrimonia cernendi etiam corporalia incomparabiliter praestantiore quam nostra est, sed etiam corporum ipsorum, longe utique subtiliorum, mira velocitate".

[30] AUGUSTINUS, *Divin. daem.*, c. 5, n. 9, ed. ZYCHA, 607.

[31] See also AUGUSTINUS, *Civ.*, VIII, c. 14; *Doctr. Chr.*, II, c. 23, n. 35; *Gn. litt.*, XI, c. 20; *En. Ps.*, 94.6; *Ench.*, 9.

[32] AUGUSTINUS, *Divin. daem.*, c. 5, n. 9, ed. ZYCHA, 607.

[33] The example of a physician is a *topos* in the literature about divination. See Cicero's *De divinatione,* I, c. 7, 13, ed. W. AX, Stuttgart 1965, 6_b.

purely for the sake of deception, driven by an envious will: "Fallunt autem etiam studio fallendi et invida voluntate".[34]

This statement, which concludes the central section of the text, focuses on a key issue in the discussion. According to Augustine, a cognitive act should not be understood as neutral or autonomous, something whose outcome can be morally oriented towards good or evil at a later stage. To grasp things correctly, cognitive acts have to be founded on *caritas*; without it, their intentionality misses its target, producing falsehoods and deceptions.[35] The moral aspect of divinatory acts also limits their cognitive effectiveness. So demonic divinations are both immoral and false: immoral because false, but also false because immoral, since the will to lie and deceive moves them away from truth. In short, a cognitive act can be correct but, due to its deviant intentionality, not true – an interpretation that rests on Augustine's view that a statement is correct when the relationship between *res* and *signa* in the speaker's mind is reproduced in the listener's mind. By granting will a crucial role as the truth-maker of cognitive acts, Augustine is leading us to re-read the theory of demonic divination through the lens of a different distinction: no longer that between true and false, but that between truth and lie.

From *De mendacio* to *Contra mendacium*: a Semiotics of Lying

In his recent monograph on the theological history of lying, Dallas Denery identifies lying as the specific characteristic of demons, emphasizing how this fundamental trait defines their role and significance within the Christian narrative of Salvation:

> The Devil invented the lie, and it is an invention that defines and mars his very essence and existence. Moreover, it is an invention whose effects seem to define and mar Creation itself, […] that God transformed because the Devil's lie had proven so successful.[36]

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[34] Augustinus, *Divin. daem.*, c. 6, n. 10, ed. Zycha, 610.

[35] See Augustinus, *Doctr. Chr.*, II, c. 41, n. 62; III, c. 15, n. 23, ed. J. Martin (CCSL 32), Turnhout 1962 , 75-76, 91. The pivotal role of intentionality as a norm of ethical acts in Augustine's work is a Stoic legacy: see M. L. Colish, "The Stoic Theory of Verbal Signification and the Problem of Lies and False Statements from Antiquity to St. Anselm", in *Archéologie du signe*, éd. L. Brind'Amour, E. Vance (Papers in Medieval Studies 3), Turnhout 1983, 17-43: 34.

[36] Denery, *The Devil Wins*, 34. See also Casagrande, Vecchio, *I peccati della lingua*, 255-256.

Taking the cue from this interpretation, in what follows I shall analyse the case of demonic divinations within the framework of the theory of lying discussed in *De mendacio* and *Contra mendacium*,[37] while consistently engaging with the theory of signs outlined in *De Magistro* and primarily in *De Doctrina Christiana.*

As is well known, Augustine's definition of sign opens the second book of *De Doctrina Christiana*:

> Signum est enim res, praeter speciem quam ingerit sensibus, aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem venire; sicut vestigio viso, transisse animal cuius vestigium est, cogitamus; et fumo viso, ignem subesse cognoscimus; et voce animantis audita, affectionem animi eius advertimus, et tuba sonante milites vel progredi se vel regredi, et si quid aliud pugna postulat, oportere noverunt.[38]

According to Augustinian semiotics, the sign does not produce knowledge – at least, not directly; rather, its goal is to communicate.[39] Sig-

[37] Augustinus, *De mendacio*, ed. J. Zycha (CSEL 41), Wien 1900, 411-466; Id., *Ad Consentium contra mendacium*, ed. J. Zycha (CSEL 41), Wien 1900, 467-528. See also, on the topic of lying in Augustine's writings, Augustinus, *Doctr. Chr.*, I, c. 36-40; *Conf.*, V, c. 35,10-41.66-10.42.67; *Trin*., XV, c. 11, n. 20. For an overview of the bibliography about Augustine's conception of lying, especially in *De mendacio* and *Contra mendacium*, see Gramigna, *Augustine's Theory of Signs*, 143-179; C. Marmo, "La définition du mensonge au Moyen Âge et dans le débat contemporain", in *La vérité. Vérité et crédibilité: construire la vérité dans le système de communication de l'Occident (XIIIe-XVIIe siècle)*, ed. J.-P. Genet, Roma-Paris 2015, 81-94; M. Bettetini, "*De mendacio*" and "*Contra mendacium*", in *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine*, ed. Pollmann, Otten, coll. 335-338; A. Fürst, "Mendacio (De-)" and "Mendacium", in *Augustinus-Lexikon*, hrsg. v. Mayer, vol. III, coll. 1257-1266; Evans, *Getting it Wrong*, 181-202; T. Feehan, "Augustine on Lying and Deception", in *Augustinian Studies*, 19 (1998), 131-39; Id., "The Morality of Lying in St. Augustine", in *Augustinian Studies*, 21 (1990), 67-81; G. R. Evans, *Augustine and Evil*, Cambridge 1990, 193-202; Colish, "The Stoic Theory of Verbal Signification". Augustine speaks of lying also in other texts, like *Soliloquia* and *In epistulam Iohannis ad Parthos*: see E. T. Hermanowicz, "Augustine on Lying", in *Speculum*, 93/3 (2018), 699-727; on *De Trinitate*'s considerations about *mendacium*, see Colish, "The Stoic Theory of Verbal Signification", 36-38.

[38] Augustinus, *Doctr. Chr.*, II, c. 1, n. 1, ed. J. Martin (CCSL 32), Turnhout 1962, 32.

[39] See Gramigna, *Augustine's Theory of Signs*, 40-97; Kirwan, "Augustine's Philosophy of Language", 190-195; Manetti, *Theories of the Sign*, 161-162; Simone, "Semiologia agostiniana", 98-100. For Augustine's influence on medieval theories of signification, see I. Rosier-Catach, "Signification et efficacité: sur les prolongements

nification is the activity taking place in the speaker that translates an inner content into an external sign, which in turn has the function of activating an analogous inner content in the listener:[40] "ulla causa est nobis significandi, id est signi dandi, nisi ad depromendum et traiciendum in alterius animum id quod animo gerit is qui signum dat".[41] The text does not focus on the correspondence between *res* and *signa*, i.e. the fundamental assumption of linguistic communication, but emphasizes another issue: the relationship between interiority (in this case, the *verbum*, the word of truth placed by God in human beings' soul) and externality (the semiotic codes of communication).

In semiotic acts, *signa* are distinguished from the *res* they signify. Of course, even a *signum* is a *res*; otherwise, it would be nothing, and consequently it could not signify. But insofar as it is a sign, it is a wholly intentional act that leads the mind to the things to be learned.[42] As Augustine argues in *Contra Academicos*, if the thing signified by a word were always evident in a linguistic act, then any discussion about words would be unnecessary.[43] Any semiotic code is grounded on an ontological level, as stressed by *De magistro*: "per ea signa quae verba appellantur nos nihil discere, potius enim, ut dixi, vim verbi […] re ipsa quae significatur cognita discimus quam illam tali significatione percipimus".[44] The Hipponate was certainly worried about the implications of a nominalistic conception of language. Although the truth must

médiévaux de la théorie augustinienne du signe", in *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques*, 91 (2007), 51-74.

[40] Augustinian semiotics construes verbal language within the framework of sign, while also recognizing it as the most universal kind of signification due to its metalinguistic capacity to be used to signify anything, other languages included. See Augustinus, *Doctr. Chr.*, II, c. 3, n. 4, ed. Martin, 33-34; see Gramigna, *Augustine's Theory of Signs*, 206; Catapano, "'Cose' e 'segni'", 72-73; V. Giraud, *Augustin, les signes et la manifestation*, Paris 2013, 283; Manetti, *Theories of the Sign*, 226-227, 234; Simone, "Semiologia agostiniana", 97.

[41] Augustinus, *Doctr. Chr.*, II, c. 2, n. 3, ed. Martin, 33.

[42] M. D. Jordan, "Words and Word: Incarnation and signification in Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*", in *Augustinian Studies*, 11 (1980), 177-96: 186: "[…] an intentional sign is the kind of thing which starts a motion towards what it signifies and, mediately, towards whomever employs it as a sign".

[43] Augustinus, *Acad.*, III, c. 13, n. 29, ed. W. M. Green (CCSL 29), Turnhout 1970, 51-52.

[44] Augustinus, *Mag.*, c. 10, n. 34, ed. W. M. Green (CCSL 29), Turnhout 1970, 193.

be verbally expressed, it is not a purely linguistic object and cannot be reduced to logical or syntactic processes. To prevent such nominalistic drift, Augustine had to point out the risks of self-referential signification. This is the purpose of his theory of lying, which takes shape between *De mendacio* and *Contra mendacium*.

Augustine proceeds through progressive dichotomies: initially, he establishes a distinction between a natural and positive use of the language, on the one hand, and a negative and artificial one, on the other. He then carves out the field of lying within the negative pole of the distinction, contrasting it with falsehood and error. The definition of lying in *De mendacio* sounds as follows: "enunciationem falsam cum voluntate ad fallendum prolata manifestum est esse mendacium".[45] Written with the aim of clarifying some aspects addressed in the previous treatise as well as polemically challenging Priscillianist heretics, *Contra mendacium* rethinks some of the conclusions reached in *De mendacio.* More specifically, it shifts the focus on linguistic *consuetudo* and takes into account the ethical and social implications of deceptive language use. Its definition of lying is very similar to that of *De mendacio*, but *Contra mendacium*'s formula features a crucial difference: "Mendacium est quippe falsa significatio cum voluntate fallendi".[46] The shift from *enunciatio* to *significatio* is not just terminological, but semantic. It broadens the conceptual range of lying from the verbal level of enunciation to signification *tout court*, in accordance with the conception of word developed in *De Doctrina Christiana.* This means that lying is not just a technical issue within language structures, but also a matter of metaphysical and ethical principles, intertwined with the fundamental relation between signs, things and state of affairs. Augustine thus suggests that the right perspective to understand lying is what we call semiotics, rather than any form of psychological or rhetorical reductionism.

The ethical framework of the discussion is, in both cases, the absolute condemnation of lying: "nihil aliud illa testimonia Scripturarum monere nisi nunquam esse omnino mentiendum".[47] Since lie is the opposite of truth, if truth is good, lie can only be evil.[48] In the Mid-

[45] Augustinus, *Mend.*, c. 4, n. 5, ed. Zycha, 419.

[46] Augustinus, *C. mend.*, c. 12, n. 26, ed. Zycha, 507.

[47] Augustinus, *Mend.*, c. 21, n. 42, ed. Zycha, 463.

[48] Augustinus, *C. mend.*, c. 3, n. 4, ed. Zycha, 474-476.

dle Ages, the theological tradition identified Augustine's theory with this prohibition against lying. Nonetheless, *De mendacio* distinguishes eight categories of lies, from the most serious to the least severe, and this implies a more nuanced judgment about some types of *mendacium*; for example, the lies that do not harm anybody.[49]

Beyond these strictly ethical considerations, let us focus on the semiotic and linguistic aspects. In both his writings on lying and on signs, Augustine grounds his theory on a conception of the word as an inherently ambiguous object. *De mendacio* speaks of a "double-heart" (*cor duplex*) and a "double-thought" (*duplex cogitatio*),[50] contrasting the "mouth that kills the soul" ("os autem quod mentitur, occidit animam") with the "mouth of the heart" (*os cordis*) which preserves *verbum cordis*, i.e. the word of truth.[51] This is the constitutive paradox of Augustinian semiotics: the claim that signs are necessary as natural means of communication is inseparable from the awareness of their limitations and ambiguities,[52] a problematic balance that appears in both texts on lying. Augustine thus puts aside the conceptual distinction between true and false and the relationship between *res* and *signa*, like he also does in *De divinatione daemonum*, as we have seen. The focus shifts to the gap between the *verbum cordis* and the *voces* of sociolinguistic practices: it is this gap, which right signification tries to bridge, that provides the space for the liar's *voluntas fallendi* to operate.[53] The soul's intention is crucial ("ex animi sui sententia judicandi sunt"),[54] as long as it is not understood just as a parameter of moral judgment, but also as a truth-maker that establishes the semantic intentionality of the relation between *signum* and *res*. This is the case, for example, of the metaphorical use of language in biblical exegesis, an issue extensively discussed in the fourth book of *De Doctrina Christiana*, but appearing also in *De mendacio* and *Contra mendacium*:[55] although symbols and

[49] Augustinus, *Mend.*, c. 14, n. 25, ed. Zycha, 445.

[50] Augustinus, *Mend.*, c. 3, n. 3, ed. Zycha, 415.

[51] Augustinus, *Mend.*, c. 16, n. 31, ed. Zycha, 450.

[52] R. Gramigna, *Augustine's Theory of Signs*, 143; C. Ando, "Augustine on Language", in *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, 40 (1994), 45-78: 47-51.

[53] See also Augustinus, *Doctr. Chr.*, I, c. 36, n. 40, ed. Martin, 29.

[54] Augustinus, *Mend.*, c. 4, n. 4, ed. Zycha, 417.

[55] Augustinus, *Mend.*, c. 5, n. 7-9, 421-425; c. 15, n. 26, ed. Zycha, 446-447; *C. Mend.*, c. 9, n. 20, c. 13, n. 28, c. 17, n. 34, ed. Zycha, 492-494, 508-510, 516-518.

allegories in the Scriptures must not be interpreted accordingly to their literal meaning, they cannot be classified as lies.

Augustine is trying to maneuver between two different threats here. On the one hand, he wants to avoid a purely sociological and utilitarian approach to lying, because this could open the way to contextual considerations that could undermine the absolute nature of its prohibition. On the other hand, reducing the issue to the dynamics of semiotic codes could downplay the role of will, affecting the moral and cognitive intentionality of the act of lying. In both cases, the nature of *mendacium* would be misunderstood. The *De mendacio* and *Contra mendacium*'s formulas aim at holding together two different aspects: the semiotic (*falsa enunciatio* or *significatio*) and the ethical (*voluntas fallendi*). Therefore, the intention of deceiving is not an external reality with respect to the mendacious act, but rather a driving force internal into it, the crucial agent responsible for the moral and social consequences and, simultaneously, for the truth or falsehood of semiotic processes.

Lying and Deceiving: the Case of Demonic Divinations

To my knowledge, Augustine's work does not explicitly address the relationship between the theory of mendacious sign and the case of demonic divination, even though the Bishop of Hippo might have discerned connections between mendacious signs, deceptions and demonic acting in St. Paul's *Epistles*, with which he was very familiar.[56] The only partial exception is the second book *de signis* (composed in 396) of *De Doctrina Christiana*, which briefly reflects on it. Chapters twenty-three and twenty-four address the deceptions perpetrated by those whom Augustine refers to as *praevaricatoribus angelis* (i.e. demons, using the term here in its common theological sense).

They belong to a *daemonum societas*, and their deceptions are related to "superstitiosis et perniciosis divinationum".[57] Demons, deceptions, lies and divination are collected here under the label "artes […] vel nugatoriae vel noxiae superstitionis".[58] The Scriptures warn against these so-called prophecies, and Augustine emphasizes such warning

[56] *2 Thess.*, 2, 9-10; *1 Tim.*, 4, 1-2; *1 Joh.*, 2, 21-27.

[57] Augustinus, *Doctr. Chr.*, II, c. 23, n. 35, ed. Martin, 58.

[58] Augustinus, *Doctr. Chr.*, II, c. 23, n. 36, ed. Martin, 58.

by quoting the words of *Deuteronomy*: "Si dixerint vobis, inquit, et ita evenerit, ne credatis eis".[59] This scenario crucially aligns with the demonic divinations concerning the temple of Serapis: the precognition of future contingents is not a sufficient guarantee for the truth of those divinatory statements. Augustine highlights this point both in *De divinatione daemonum,* where he admits the existence of demonic divinations, and in his *opuscula* on lying, centered on the role of a non-linguistic factor such as the *voluntas fallendi*.

For these reasons, humans must beware of the "imaginariis signis" created by a "pestifera societate hominum et daemonum".[60] Demons' divinations are just semiotic inferences, grounded on "multi multa humanis suspicionibus quasi regulariter coniectata".[61] The rule governing them is not the relation with the signified *res*, but the relationship with the irrational context of assumptions, bias and beliefs: "Illi enim spiritus qui decipere volunt talia procurant cuique, qualibus eum irretitum per suspiciones et consensiones eius vident".[62] In addition to this, signs are always related to epistemic attitudes, that is, they are related to the interpreter; in fact, "nulla ista signa sunt, nisi consensus observantis accedat".[63]

What we are offered here is clearly collection of suggestions and brief remarks rather than a comprehensive theory. Yet, *De Doctrina Christiana* gathers, integrates, and connects some crucial elements scattered across the other texts under considerations, thereby contributing to a new interpretation of *De divinatione daemonum* in light of Augustine's theory of lying.

Demonic precognitions operate according to *voluntas fallendi*, a trait deeply embedded in the nature of demons. Its primary tool is the manipulation of signs, leading to a *falsa significatio* that hinges on the correspondence between divinations and states of affairs, even if the truth-maker, in Augustine's theory, is the correspondence between *verbum* and *voces*, i.e., interior and exterior word. The intention of deceiving appears as a primary hermeneutical principle. The key aspect

[59] *Dt.*, 13, 1-3.

[60] Augustinus, *Doctr. Chr.*, II, c. 23, n. 36, ed. Martin, 58.

[61] Augustinus, *Doctr. Chr.*, II, c. 24, n. 36, ed. Martin, 59.

[62] Augustinus, *Doctr. Chr.*, II, c. 24, n. 37, ed. Martin, 59.

[63] Augustinus, *Doctr. Chr.*, II, c. 24, n. 37, ed. Martin, 60.

of this precognition is thus the capacity to exploit a semiotic code that is capable of correctly signifying future contingents, i.e. producing a linguistic description that corresponds to the future state of affairs. However, this predictive capacity is fragile in two key respects, which in turn illuminate some important aspects of Augustine's theory of demonic nature.

The first is described in *De mendacio*. In giving a definition of lying, Augustine insists on inner intention (*sententia animi*) as the primary criterion for determining whether a person is lying or not: "ille mentitur qui aliud habet in animo et aliud verbis vel quibuslibet significationibus enuntiat".[64] This is clearly the case of demons: the point here is the correspondence between *verbum cordis* and *os cordis*, and not that between *res* and *signa* or between divinatory statement and future state of affairs, which seems to be satisfied. Demonic divination could be defined as the capacity to produce a dissociated form of truth, where the logical-linguistic level is disconnected from the ethical and metaphysical level that should ground and legitimate it.[65] Such disconnection is produced by the will, which determines the nature of each cognitive act by directing it towards its natural purpose, i.e. communication, or towards falsehood and deception. The key to *falsa significatio* in *De mendacio* lies precisely in the soul's intention, namely the *voluntas fallendi*. In *De divinatione daemonum* we encounter a similar definition, expressed through an hendiadys: demonic deceptions are caused "studio fallendi et invida voluntate";[66] additionally, the *De mendacio*'s casuistry includes scenarios in which a person tells the truth with the intent to deceive.[67] As Marcia Colish pointed out: "the liar's intention [in Augustinian theory] is so central that a speaker's wish to deceive makes his statement a lie even when it is objectively true";[68] and that

[64] Augustinus, *Mend.*, c. 3, n. 3, ed. Zycha, 415.

[65] See Feehan, "Augustine on Lying", 133-134.

[66] Augustinus, *Divin. daem.*, c. 6, n. 10, ed. Zycha, 610.

[67] Augustinus, *Mend.*, c. 4, n. 4, ed. Zycha, 416: "Qui enim verum ideo loquitur quia sentit sibi non credi, ideo utique verum dicit ut fallat, scit enim vel existimat propterea falsum putari posse quod dicitur quoniam ab ipso dicitur. […] ideo verum dicit ut fallat".

[68] M. L. Colish, "Rethinking Lying in the Twelfth Century", in *Virtue and Ethics in the Twelfth Century*, ed. I. P. Bejczy, R. G. Newhauser (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 130), Leiden 2005, 155-173: 156.

is exactly the case of demonic divination. In the treatises on lying, the corrupted intentionality of *voluntas fallendi* is the criterion used to evaluate mendacious acts and classify them in ethical categories. In *De divinatione daemonum,* on the other hand, the basic assumption of the whole reasoning is the moral condemnation of demons, so the liar's *voluntas fallendi* is used as a robust argument in an epistemological context.

The second aspect concerns the sign relationship established by demonic divination. As we saw, the latter is founded on an inferential reading of *signa naturalia*: due to this capacity, demons are able to make predictions and produce lies that fall within the scope of *De mendacio*'s categorization. More specifically, they count as lies that damage someone and benefit another, or as lies said solely for the sake of lying.[69] But these predictive *suppositiones* – to borrow *De Doctrina Christiana*'s terms – are based on two malicious misunderstandings.

The first concerns the nature of the *signum* itself. As we have seen, Augustine views the sign as a purely functional object used to grasp the things it signifies; it must thus be understood as a conventional tool, whose meaning varies depending on the context. On the contrary, demons perceive and use signs as objects with natural properties that they can understand and convey to humans, who are in turn deceived by these self-styled divinations.[70]

The second misunderstanding consists in an unnatural reversal of the relationship between *res* and *signa*: instead of explaining signs with things, as Augustine's philosophy of language postulates, demons reduce things to signs, insofar as the meaning and value of signs is completely self-directed, and signs replace things in the eyes of deceived humans. Consequently, the human intellect is forced to move in a purely linguistic context. Moreover, such manipulation of language undermines the relationship between signs and reality, which is crucial for the salvation of the Christian believer.[71]

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[69] Augustinus, *Mend*., c. 14, n. 25; c. 21, n. 42, ed. Zycha, 444, 463-465.

[70] Rosier-Catach, *La Parole efficace*, 114: "Augustin cherche à montrer le caractère vain et illégitime de pratiques d'interprétation de signes qui prétendent reposer sur des propriétés naturelles qu'ils posséderaient, ou d'attribution à certains signes, pour les mêmes raisons, de vertus particulières".

[71] When unrelated to *res*, language becomes *vaniloquium*: see Augustinus, *Mag.*,

The central issue here is whether lying can be good and truth can be evil: *De mendacio* firmly denies that lying can be good, while *De divinatione daemonum* implicitly admits that telling the truth can lead to evil. This means that Augustine is re-thinking the criterion to evaluate linguistic signs, reframing metaphysical and moral terms. *De mendacio* identifies this criterion with the acts of those who were judged righteous and never lied because they were moved by good intentions. It thus outlines a sort of performative conception of truth: "Elucet […] nihil aliud illa testimonia Scripturarum monere nisi nunquam esse omnino mentiendum; quandoquidem nec ulla exempla mendaciorum imitatione digna in moribus factisque sanctorum inveniantur".[72] This is a positive model that will have great fortune in medieval monastic literature, where it is reflected in formulas like "doctrina et vitae exemplo", "exemplis et scriptis", "modo per praecepta, modo per exempla", and so on.[73] Its negative counterpart is found in the actions of demons, which are portrayed as examples of mendacious beings' activities: in Augustine's writings, the adjectives most commonly attributed to demons are *fallax*,[74] *deceptor*,[75] and especially *mendaciloquus*.[76]

Demons' divinations are the result of a radical manipulation of the sign nature. They turn *signa naturalia* – which are effects of natural processes – into *signa data*, i.e. kind of objects that are functional to the deception of humans.[77] As it is clear from the abovementioned passag-

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c. 2, n. 3, ed. Green, 160: "quando non habemus quid significemus, omnino stulte verbum aliquid promimus".

[72] Augustinus, *Mend.*, c. 21, n. 42, ed. Zycha, 463; see also *Mend.*, c. 15, n. 26, ed. Zycha, 446. This is the meaning of Augustinian *facere veritatem* (*Conf.*, X, 1): for a recent interpretation of it in the light of the performative theory of speech acts, see M. Ferraris, *Fare la verità*, Bologna 2022, esp. 9-22.

[73] See M. Long, "High Medieval Monasteries as Communities of Practice: Approaching Monastic Learning Through Letters", in *Journal of Religious History*, 41/1 (2017), 42-59: 56.

[74] Augustinus, *Civ.*, X, c. 42, n. 67, ed. B. Dombart, A. Kalb (CCSL 47-48), Turnhout 1955, 192.

[75] Augustinus, *Trin.*, IV, c. 13, n. 17, ed. W.J. Mountain, F. Glorie (CCSL 50-50A), Turnhout 1968, 182.

[76] Augustinus, *C. Faust.*, XX, c. 19, ed. J. Zycha (CSEL 25/1), Prag-Wien-Leipzig 1891, 560.

[77] On differences between *signa naturalia* and *signa data*, see Augustinus, *Doctr. Chr.*, II, c.1, n.2; c. 2, n. 3, ed. Martin, 32-33.

es in *De Doctrina Christiana* and *De Magistro*, signs do not teach but communicate. The *signum* is what declares an absence: it is a conceptual object with indexical value, whose sole function is to point the interpreting subject towards the relationship the sign has with the *res*. On the other hand, the *signa data* manipulated by demons teach (something false) but do not communicate.[78] Their aim is to shift the intentionality of human cognitive acts from the level of things, which they cannot produce or modify, to the level of signs, which they are able to manipulate. Demonic divination is limited to a denotative use of signs and does not involve the connotative level: it implies a theory of reference aimed at deception, but not a semantics. Remaining at the level of a theory of reference is therefore a form of lying, since it amounts to fragmenting the sign relationship and obscuring the semantic content of signification.[79]

This analysis might be seen as the outcome of a biased semiotic reading, which begs the question by interpreting historical sources to fit preconceived notions. Nevertheless, the same conclusion emerges when the issue is translated into logical-linguistic terms. The semantic value of a statement is determined by categorematic terms and their connection to extra-mental objects, but also by syncategorematic elements such as *si*, *tunc*, *sic*.[80] It is the entire linguistic *complexum* that must be assessed as being true or false. Disconnected from this overall framework, signs lose their meaning: "verba enim sunt ut his utamur; utimur autem his ad docendum".[81] Demonic divination operates at this level, manipulating linguistic connections: it formulates statements that, while made up of truthful *signa naturalia*, are overall radically different from the sum of their components. This is a kind of precognition, denotatively correct yet connotatively mendacious.

In addition to the technical aspects of communication and to the functioning of the *voluntas fallendi,* for lying to work there must be both a liar/deceiver and a deceived person. The focus is thus on the relationship between the complex *res/signa* and the third part of the

[78] Augustine places very different kinds of phenomena in the category of *signa data.* He includes phenomena that range from the Scripture to doves' sound, but always in the spirit of remarking the limitations of the creatures' languages.

[79] See Catapano "'Cose' e 'segni'", 75-76; Simone, "Semiologia agostiniana", 110.

[80] Simone, "Semiologia agostiniana", 108-109.

[81] Augustinus, *Mag.*, c. 9, n. 26, ed. Green, 186.

semiotic triangle, the interpreting subject. *De Doctrina Christiana* had argued that the objects of demonic deception are the *suppositiones,* namely the beliefs and biases of the deceived person.[82] In *De mendacio*, Augustine states that it is possible to state something false without lying ("falsum possit dicere non mentiens"), if one genuinely believes the state of affairs to be as described, even if it is not true. Conversely, one can lie about something that is true, if one believes it to be false and asserts it as such, in spite of its actual truth.[83] The scenario described here is the same as that of *De divinatione daemonum*: demonic divination skillfully moves within the semiotic triangle, and exploits the gap between the signs and the interpreting subject so as to mix up different levels and overshadow the difference between true and false. The object of these precognitions is thus not an actual state of affairs, present or future, but a subject to manipulate, as stated in *De Doctrina Christiana*: "illa signa, quibus perniciosa daemonum societas comparatur, pro cuiusque observationibus valent".[84] Similarly, *De mendacio* defines lying as a *falsa significatio* caused by the *voluntas fallendi*, shifting the focus on the interpreter of the signs. The ambiguity determined by the interplay between truth, belief, falsehood and lying delineates the realm within which demonic deceptive acts take place.

Concluding Remarks

We are now in the position to summarize the findings about *De divinatione daemonum* that emerged from the comparative analysis of Augustine's texts:

1. The refutation of demonic divinatory capacities relies on a semantic shift from falsehood to lying. According to Augustine, the conceptual pair true/false, based on a conception of truth as correspondence between words and the state of affairs,[85] is inadequate to define the truth-value of that particular kind of divination that is typical of demons. If demons are able to pre-cognize future contingents, a semantic reformulation of the concept of truth is necessary. In this sense,

[82] See Colish, "The stoic theory of verbal signification", 32-33.

[83] Augustinus, *Mend.*, c, 3, n. 3, ed. Zycha, 415.

[84] Augustinus, *Doctr. Chr.*, II, c. 24, n. 37, ed. Martin, 60.

[85] Gramigna, *Augustine's Theory of Signs*, 159.

the element of intentionality, which *De mendacio* identified with the *voluntas fallendi*, acquires a pivotal role; moreover, intentionality also explains how something like demonic divination, despite the apparent linguistic and semantic contradiction, can exist. The opposite of this concept of truth cannot be falsehood, which belongs to the logical or epistemological field, but lying, i.e. an illocutionary act in which linguistic, logical, ethical, metaphysical and theological aspects converge, in accordance with Augustine's overall philosophical views and with the "major causes" mentioned in *De divinatione daemonum*.

2. Demonic semiotics has an epistemic, not epistemological, foundation. This is the crucial aspect of Augustine's argument. And this applies both to demons – whose chains of signs in divinations are formed inductively on the basis of beliefs and hypotheses – and even more to the deceived human. In fact, demonic divination exploits the deceived's opinions and beliefs, or more precisely, what the demons perceive the human to believe. However, this highly epistemic approach, being related to contingent and unstable factors, is also the main reason for its epistemological weakness.

3. This epistemic foundation is related to another aspect highlighted by the semiotic reading of Augustinian texts: the primary relationship with the interpreter. That means that the limitations of signs – particularly in demonic semiotics – are more closely related to social language practices than to its formal features. Augustine's semiotics relies on a conception of language as *consuetudo loquendi*;[86] thus, evil does not lie in language as such but in its practices and usages. In this sense, an inferential and epistemic semiotics like that of demons serves as a warning against the dangers of language, once the word is disconnected from the *verbum cordis* and solely connected to the external *voces* of social communication. As a consequence, the pivotal role of social linguistic practices in Augustine's theory of sign may lead to a historiographical reevaluation of *De divinatione daemonum*, a text that has often been overlooked due to its contextual framework, closely related to the religious practices and controversies of Late Antiquity.

4. The demons' manipulation results from their interference with the natural relationship between signs and things, in turn due to their

[86] This notion of *consuetudo loquendi* has to be broadly understood, ranging from exegetical reading of the Scriptures to most common linguistic practices.

voluntas fallendi. In the definition of lying outlined in *Contra mendacium*, the perverted will has the primary role of causing a *falsa significatio*, which is the visible effect of that malevolent intent. Similarly, *De Doctrina Christiana* argued that understanding the nature of signs cannot be separated from *caritas*, an ethical concept that is more closely related to the psychological dimension of will and its acts than to the mechanisms of signification. Following Paul of Tarsus' model, Augustine considers any knowledge deprived of charity to be void.[87] For example, Scriptural exegesis is valid only if it fosters *caritas*, i.e. the love of God and of our neighbor. Without it, any cognitive act is incomplete and tainted by lying. This account is crucial to explain what appeared as a paradox, namely the capacity of demons to lie while predicting something true. It also illustrates how the topic of *De divinatione daemonum* is deeply rooted in the Augustinian doctrine, extending far beyond the contingent question of the oracle's prediction about the temple of Serapis. Demonic divination is contaminated by this very void, a feature that accounts for the distinction, in Augustine as in later theological traditions,[88] between the knowledge of angels and that of demons, the fallen angels.

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[87] Augustinus, *Civ.*, IX, c. 20-23; *Doctr. Chr.*, I, c. 36, n. 40-41; II, c. 41, n. 62; III, c. 15-23.

[88] G. D. Wiebe, *Fallen Angels in the Theology of St Augustine* (Oxford Early Christian Studies), Oxford 2021.

Barhebraeus on Physiognomical Prognosis

Jens Ole Schmitt

Physiognomical Discussions in Barhebraeus's Works

Physiognomical topics are dealt with in several of Barhebraeus's works at varying length. Given the vast output of this Syrian Orthodox, that is, miaphysite Christian, theologian and polymath (d. 1286 CE), this inclusion does not come unexpectedly in general, as the topic is also occurring in Arabic works that were his sources or similar works.[1] Most of these occurrences in Barhebraeus's works have received attention so far, especially with regard to their sources, among which are primarily Polemon and ps.-Aristotle (though, in contrast to many other works by Barhebraeus, not necessarily, or at least to a lesser extent, later or contemporary Arabic texts, such as by Avicenna or Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī).[2] The focus here shall be only on future prognosis by physiognomical inferences in general at these places in Barhebraeus. Even though the number of these predictions is very small in Barhe-

[1] For his life and works, see H. Takahashi, *Barhebraeus. A Bio-Bibliography* (Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies), Piscataway, NJ 2005.

[2] G. Furlani, "Die Physiognomik des Barhebräus in syrischer Sprache", in *Zeitschrift für Semitistik und verwandte Gebiete*, 7 (1929), 1-16; U. Marzolph, "Die Quellen der Ergötzlichen Erzählungen des Bar Hebräus", in *Oriens Christianus*, 69 (1985), 81-125: 98-99; M. Zonta, *Fonti greche e orientali dell'Economia di Bar-Hebraeus nell'opera* La Crema della scienza (Supplemento agli Annali 70), Napoli 1992, 25-48; N. P. Joosse, *A Syriac Encyclopaedia of Aristotelian Philosophy. Barhebraeus (13th. C.), Butyrum sapientiae*, Books of Ethics, Economy and Politics (Aristoteles Semiticus-Latinus 16), Leiden 2004, 8-9; L. Weitz, "Al-Ghazālī, Bar Hebraeus, and the 'Good Wife'", in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 134 (2014), 203-223. Many of his philosophical and even Christian theological works are based upon Arabic sources. For a discussion of reasons for the non-usage of the brief Arabic physiognomical treatise by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, who otherwise is a key source, see J. O. Schmitt, "Sleepy Animals. Barhebraeus (1226-1286 CE) on Sleeping and Dreaming among Animals", in *Medieval Worlds*, 18 (2023), 137-158: 151.

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braeus, this topic is nonetheless of interest, as it can point to both the historical consideration of the possibilities of physiognomics as well as allow for assuming a wider range of sources the author had used. For in most of these detailed connections between a (bodily) peculiarity and an inference, the detected presence of a certain bodily feature allows for the inference of the simultaneous presence of a certain character trait only. Such, for example, is happening in the famous Aristotelian case of having large forearms and being courageous as found in his *Prior Analytics*.[3] In a few cases, however, the inference relates (more or less clearly) to the future by means of a present disposition (such as, for example, having large forearms now will simultaneously point to becoming courageous or acting courageously in the future due to presence of the trait). Historically, the usability of physiognomics for prognosis was also not always accepted, but is found with some authors or in some contexts only.[4] Questions of interest in this respect regarding Barhe-

[3] Aristoteles, *Analytica Priora*, II 27, 70b14-17, in W. D. Ross (ed.), *Aristotle's* Prior *and* Posterior Analytics*. A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*, Oxford 1949 (reprint 2001); Aristotle, *Categories, On Interpretation, Prior Analytics,* ed. and trans. by H. P. Cooke, H. Tredennick, Cambridge, MA 1938 (reprint), 528-529.

[4] In an ancient context, already Polemon introduced this topic by way of inserted narrations, see chapters 68-70 of the Arabic version in the Leiden recension: R. Hoyland, "A New Edition and Translation of the Leiden Polemon", in *Seeing the Face, Seeing the Soul. Polemon's Physiognomy from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Latin*, ed. S. Swain, Oxford 2007, 329-463: 456-463, on which see S. Swain, "Introduction" to *Seeing the Face,* ed. Swain, 11-12. In a medieval context, E. Savage-Smith, *Magic and Divination in Early Islam* (The Formation of the Classical Islamic World), Aldershot 2004, xli, notes that physiognomy is not concerned with predicting the future, but, rather, the detection of inner values (but a slightly wider approach is maintained by R. Hoyland, "The Islamic Background to Polemon's Treatise", in *Seeing the Face,* ed. Swain, 227-280: 261). J. Ziegler, "On the Various Faces of Hebrew Physiognomy as a Prognostic Art in the Middle Ages", in *Unveiling the Hidden–Anticipating the Future. Divinatory Practices among Jews between Qumran and the Modern Period*, ed. J. Rodriguez-Arribas, D. Gieseler Greenbaum (Prognostication in History 5), Leiden 2021, 286-310, though primarily focusing on Jewish texts, sees a medical influence in physiognomical prediction, which was not given in the classical period, but arose later, which he also finds by investigating into attested lexicographical meaning (287-290), which is also detailed for the European context by T. Barton, *Power and Knowledge. Astrology, Physiognomics, and Medicine under the Roman Empire*, Ann Arbor, MI 1994 (reissue 2002), 140-143; 151, and I. Maclean, *Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance. The Case of Learned Medicine* (Ideas in context 62), Cambridge 2002 (reprint 2007), 301-303. See also the overview by P. Schmidl, "Medieval Traditions of Prognostication in the Islamic World", in *Prognostication in the Medieval World.*

braeus are especially the kinds of future inferences that are introduced, the ratio of these prognostical cases to the overall number of inferences, whether there is a relation to his physiognomical sources or these prognostical cases are his own introduction, whether there is a noteworthy distribution of prognostical inferences among (regular) presential or simultaneous inferences, whether these are clustered in certain works or evolve around certain topics, and the reliability of these inferences.

Among Barhebraeus's different works, physiognomy occurs in the unpublished *Prior Analytics* of the Syriac *summa Cream of Wisdom*, which is his most extensive philosophical work, roughly resembling Avicenna's Arabic *Healing* (*al-Shifāʾ*) by way of a treatment of the physiognomical syllogism.[5] Following Avicenna, who relied on Aristo-

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A Handbook, 2 vols., ed. M. Heiduk, K. Herbers, H.-C. Lehner, Berlin 2021, vol. I, 189-242. While the Karaites rejected prognostication in general, according to D. J. Lasker, "Karaite Objections to Prognostication", in *Prognostication in the Medieval World*, vol. II, 828-830: 829, physiognomy has, to the contrary, also been employed for determining exact dates in other cultures, such as noted for China by X. Wang, *Physiognomy in Ming China. Fortune and the Body* (Sinica Leidensia 149), Leiden 2020, 97. In the context of the European Enlightenment, non-prognostication of physiognomy, connected with its status as a science, is also stressed by Nicolai in opposition to Lavater, see S. Habersaat, *Verteidigung der Aufklärung. Friedrich Nicolai in religiösen und politischen Debatten* (Epistemata Literaturwissenschaft 316), 2 vols., Würzburg 2001, vol. II, 84-85. In a more recent context, this topic occurs also briefly in Walter Benjamin's fragmentary note "Zum Problem der Physiognomik und Vorhersagung", in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 6.91, ed. R. Tiedemann, H. Schweppenhäuser, Frankfurt am Main 1985; the different levels of temporality are discussed in an analysis by A. Noor, "Walter Benjamin. Time and Justice", in *Naharaim*, 1 (2007), 38-74.

[5] Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. Or. 37, ff. 178v-179v. A first edition with English translation of the *Prior Analytics* and commentary is currently in preparation. The respective part reads in a draft translation as follows:

On the physiognomical [syllogism]. Five theories.

First: The physiognomical [syllogism] is a syllogism that is related to example and sign. It arises when someone acknowledges and has been showed by a demonstration that, as the bodily forms follow the bodily (ܓܒܝܠܬܢܝܐ) mixtures, likewise also natural affections of the soul follow [them]. We call natural affections, for example, anger, desires, and others. For accidental affections, such as learning of musicality, change the soul besides the body. Thus, when someone knows that these affections of the soul will follow this form of the body, he will make the forms to a sign for the affections. When he sees in some particular animal some particular affection, such as courage in a lion, he will posit its bodily form, such as largeness of the upper extremities, as a sign for courage. And when he sees a man with large upper extremities, he will conclude that he is courageous.

tle (and ps.-Aristotle[6]), Barhebraeus also repeats Aristotle's cautioning conditionals in this respect on finding the matching sign.[7] Examples are large upper extremities for having courage, such as found with the lion, or determining the corresponding sign for magnanimity, which is, if a different one is found with two species, such as additionally with the panther, distinguished from that found with the panther, who might not share in magnanimity. Even though courage can be seen as a general disposition that affects future behavior of its bearer, there is, as in Aristotle, no explicit connection with prognostication given here.

A very short general reference to physiognomy (that is, the body as a revealer of things hidden in the soul) is also found in his monastical work *Ethicon*, which does not include prognosis.[8] Its exact origin is currently unclear.[9]

Second: When the bodily form resembles shared things in an affection [that is, things shared by an affection], a sign is derived, such as the largeness of the upper extremities of the lion will then be a sign of courage, yet in relation to courageous animals, not to weak ones.

Third: When the sign exists in the whole species, such as the largeness of the upper extremities in all lions, but only one of two affections, such as courage without killing of all the cattle, for the devouring of one sheep is found with all lions, this sign of this general affection alone will be the sign.

Fourth: When one sign is found in two species, such as largeness of the upper extremities in lion and panther, and one of the two affections is found in both species, such as courage in lion and panther, but high-mindedness in the lion only, one must take the largeness of the upper extremities as a sign of courage, but not of high-mindedness.

Fifth: In the physiognomical [syllogism] as well as in an example, there are four terms. The major [term] is, for example, man. The middle [term] is, for example, largeness of the upper extremities. The minor [term] is, for example, Samson. The similar [term, that is, the term used for comparison in this paradigmatic inference] is, for example, lion. When we say, as the upper extremities are large as those of a lion, it will be obvious that the middle [term] is thus more general than the minor [term] and equal with the major [term].

[6] Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifāʾ. Al-Qiyās*, ed. S. Zāyid, Cairo 1964, 579; *Il* Kitāb Arisṭaṭālīs al-faylasūf fī l-firāsa *nella traduzione di Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq*, ed. and tr. by A. Ghersetti (*Quaderni di Studi Arabi*. Studi e Testi 4), Venezia 1999, 3.

[7] That is, if body and soul go together in this respect, physiognomy will be possible: see Aristoteles, *Analytica Priora*, II 27, 70b7-14, ed. and trans. Cooke, Tredennick, 526-527.

[8] Barhebraeus, *Ethicon*, ed. Y. Çiçek, Glane 1985, 78; see Weitz, "Al-Ghazālī, Bar Hebraeus", 213, for a translation and detailed discussion.

[9] Weitz, "Al-Ghazālī, Bar Hebraeus", 213-214, note 43, assumes a borrowing from

In the *Animals* of the abovementioned *Cream of Wisdom*, physiognomical topics are found in an inserted so-called *theory* (that is, smallest division of the text) in the context of a discussion of (also human) outer organs, while the other parts of this section are chiefly taken from the Arabic version of the *Animals* by Ibn Sīnā. One might wonder whether this addition of physiognomics was also made because of animal character traits that are dealt with in Aristotle's *Historia Animalium*[10] or also frequently occur in physiognomics, though this occurrence comes with less details in Ibn Sīnā's *Animals*.[11] The literal connection, though, is by a treatment of these outer organs, whose particularities function as physiognomical signs (that is, for example, characteristics of forehead, eyes, and ears). Also here, the inferences that are gained from physiognomy are simultaneous, except that dispositions at present might also point to expected future outcomes.[12]

Ephrem due to the meter. Even though a short remark on physiognomy is also found in Ibn Sīnā, *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, ed. S. Dunyā, 4 vols., Cairo 1968-1971, IV, 163, on which see J. Thomann, "Avicenna über die physiognomische Methode", in *Geschichten der Physiognomik. Text, Bild, Wissen*, hrsg. v. R. Campe, M. Schneider, Freiburg im Breisgau 1996, 47-63: 62, an influence by it on Barhebraeus here as well does not seem likely due to deviation.

[10] For example, evil-intended fox and timid hare at Aristoteles, *Historia animalium*, I 2, 488b, 12-28, ed. D.M. Balme (Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries), Cambridge 2002 (reprint 2011), also in A.L. Peck (ed. and trans.), *Aristotle. History of Animals. Books 1-3*, Cambridge, MA 1965 (reprint), 16-19.

[11] Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifāʾ. Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, ed. ʿA. Muntaṣar, S. Zāyid, I. ʿAbd Allāh, Cairo 1970, 6-7.

[12] A first edition of the Syriac text with an English translation and commentary listing parallels with possible sources is currently in preparation by Martina Galatello. Meanwhile, only the respective part shall be focused on here. In a preliminary draft translation, it reads (based on Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. Or. 83, f. 82r):

Second section: On significations and composition of outer organs

Our master attested that physiognomers take correct significations from outer organs. He said that a large forehead (ܩܪܚܬܐ [rendering this Syriac word as "forehead" instead of the usual connotation "baldness" seems to be suggested by the context of organs, even though Barhebraeus uses ܩܘܕܡܐ ܕܪܫܐ in his *Book of Economics* 3.2..2, tr. Joosse 125; see also R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 2 vols., Oxford 1879-1901, reprint Hildesheim 2006, ii, col. 3739, s.v. ܩܘܪܚܬܐ, for an attestation of the meaning "forehead"]) signifies slowness in motion, but a small one (signifies) easiness of motion, a broken one (signifies) stupidity, a protuberant one irascibility, and a straight one (signifies) effeminacy. Having a crooked nose (signifies) subtle understanding, having temples scornfulness and pride. Small angles of the eye (signify) evil character traits.

A clear source could not be found so far.[13]

One major occurrence of physiognomical inferences in Barhebraeus's writings is found in the *Book on Economy*, which is also a part of the *summa Cream of Wisdom*. Physiognomics receives some space here in form of a complete and more or less independent chapter, which is an insertion compared to his main source.[14] The immediate context of this insertion is choosing slaves and one's wife. As with other occurrences, some inferences are ambiguous, as they can primarily be understood to denote a characteristic disposition that is already present,[15] while only few are related to the future.[16]

An elevated eyebrow (signifies) envy, eyes of a medium size (signify) discrimination and good character traits. Protuberance of the eye (signifies) disturbance of the mind, (its) depth acuteness and craftiness. Continuous twinkling (points) to instability, one (eye) that is always open and not relaxed to mental confusion. What is relaxed in an intermediate way is better. Large ears signify garrulousness and much babbling, a medium size (signifies) understanding.

The text then continues with a description of the eye and its nerves, which is, again, taken from Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, ed. Muntaṣar, Zāyid, ʿAbd Allāh, 255.

[13] There are some partial similarities, such as with ps.-Aristotle (large forehead for laziness, small one for lack of education, ignorance for protuberance of the eyes: see *Il* Kitāb Arisṭaṭālīs al-faylasūf fī l-firāsa *nella traduzione di Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq*, ed. Ghersetti, 41-43); Polemon (circling eyes for having committed a foul act, curved nose for much thinking, large ears for an indifferent mind: see Polemon [Leiden version], ed. Hoyland, in R. Hoyland, "A New Edition and Translation of the Leiden Polemon", 343-417), and al-Dimashqī's Arabic translation of Archelaos (wide eyebrow for bad intention: see J. Thomann, "A Lost Greek Text on Physiognomy by Archelaos of Alexandria in Arabic Translation Transmitted by Ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Dimashqī", in *Visualizing the Invisible with the Human Body. Physiognomy and Ekphrasis in the Ancient World,* ed. J. C. Johnson, A. Stavru [Science, Technology, and Medicine in Ancient Cultures 10], Berlin 2019, 443-484; nos. 39; 82).

[14] See Joosse's commentary, in Joosse, *A Syriac Encyclopaedia of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 243. The main source in this case is the *Nasirean Ethics* by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, as also showed by Joosse.

[15] Such as having "good dispositions": see Barhebraeus, *Book of Economy*, 3.1.2, tr. Joosse, 119 (ܙܘܥܐ ܛܒܐ). Likewise, the rendition by Joosse as "will perform wicked actions" (see Barhebraeus, *Book of Economy*, 3.1.2, tr. Joosse, 119 [ܣܥܝܪܝܢ ܠܗ]) , literally, "are being done by him" could also be rendered as presential.

[16] At Barhebraeus, *Book of Economy*, 3.3.2, tr. Joosse, 129, a eunuch is said to be "disobedient", having "a propensity (ܝܨܪܐ) toward evil", and "to become angry" when regarded improper. This, however, can also be understood as referring to habituality and be rendered presentially. A connection between the brave in a battle and fighting in silence (Barhebraeus, *Book of Economy*, 3.3.4, tr. Joosse, 130-131) can be

Physiognomical topics likewise occur as a lengthy insertion in the *Amusing Stories* that is dealt with in an independent chapter, which is also in this case not found in the Arabic main source.[17] Also here, one finds a few cases of examples of future prognosis (such as inferring from bodily characteristics to having female children), which are more obviously future-related than those in the *Economy*, among them one case that is not based on bodily characteristics, but circumstances (the temporal onset of a person coming to power predicting the duration of the person's rulership itself).[18] Among the different, though altogether few treatments of physiognomy by Barhebraeus, this text is distinguished by these clear cases of prognosis. Another distinction consists in referring also to the past for presential causal explanations (by inferring someone being the offspring of fornication due to bodily characteristics).[19]

Relative Frequency of Future Inferences and Relation to Sources

The ratio of inferences with future predictions to the total number of all inferences for each individual work is found to be for the *Animals* 0 of 16, for the *Amusing Stories* 4 of 63, and for the different parts in the *Economy* 1 of 31, 0 of 69, and 2 of 61. Noteworthy is the small percentage among the correspondences between signs and traits or events that this future prognosis makes up at all. Additionally, in some cases, the classification as future-related may still be debatable, as these cas-

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understood as pointing to the future, but also characterize persons, or be just a causal insertion to explain previous inferences regarding the voice.

[17] Namely, the Arabic anthology *Nathr al-durr* by al-Ābī, as suggested by Marzolph, "Die Quelle der Ergötzlichen Erzählungen", 82.

[18] Such as someone being characterized as never going to harm anyone and "usually" having daughters (ܠܐ ܡܫܟܚ ܠܐ ܡܬܩܛܠ ܘܒܢܝ ܢܣܝܢ) in the case of inferring from bodily characteristics, E. W. Budge (ed. and tr.), *The Laughable Stories. Collected by Mār Gregory John Bar-Hebraeus*, London 1897 (reprint Piscataway, NJ 2003), 178, no. dclxxxvii; 151. Another prognostical inference, which does not rely on bodily signs, points to the short duration of a rulership when the sovereign already rules in his prime (*The Laughable Stories*, tr. Budge, 180-181, no. dccxi), while those inferring a person's being short-lived (ibid.) or having longevity do so (*The Laughable Stories*, tr. Budge, 181, no. dccxiv). All three latter cases employ the same verb ܒܥܐ, though positive or negated.

[19] Namely, being the offspring of adultery (*The Laughable Stories*, tr. Budge, 182, nos. dccxxiii-iv).

es can also be understood as being reducible to a present disposition. This also applies to the classical case of being courageous due to large extremities, for this can also be understood as having a general future disposition that is present now simultaneously with the bodily characteristic, though not yet being manifest, or having indeed manifested in past situations, thus, being likely to be repeated for future events. In at least one instance in the *Economy*, this is explicitly mentioned. These cases have not been included in the above ratios. However, future inferences are found only in the *Amusing Stories* and the *Economy*. This might also be due to the lengths of the treatment, with a lengthier selection of inferences making it perhaps more likely to encounter cases of future prognosis, unless this could be explained to occur due to the different sources only.

Most cases of Barhebraeus's predictions can already be found in earlier texts, yet in a scattered manner, as none of these texts seems to be a clearly identifiable singular source for Barhebraeus so far. This holds for inclinations or dispositions in general,[20] for having female offspring,[21] longevity,[22] being short-lived,[23] and having one's origin in fornication.[24] The length of a person's political ruling is at least reminiscent of astrological works, such as by Abū Maʿshar's *Great Conjunctions*.[25]

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[20] Polemon [Leiden version], ed. and tr. HOYLAND, 410-411 (*mayl*); this term is also found in Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's *al-Manṣūri*: see the list in R. FORSTER, "Physiognomy as a Secret for the King. The Chapter on Physiognomy in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secret of Secrets*", in *Visualizing the Invisible*, 321-345: 332.

[21] (PS.-)ARISTOTELES, *Physiognomica*, 808a34-37; M. F. FERRINI (ed. and tr.), *Aristotele, Fisiognomica*, Milano 2007, 176-177; W. S. HETT (ed. and tr.), *Aristotle. Minor Works*, Cambridge, MA 1955 (reprint), 104-105.

[22] For example, in both Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, for whom see FORSTER, "Physiognomy as a Secret", 330, 336, as well as in al-Jawzī's *Akhbār*, for whom see HOYLAND, "Islamic Background", 246, or FAKHR AL-DĪN AL-RĀẒĪ's *Physiognomics* [*Kitāb al-Firāsa*], ed. ʿA. ḤAMDĀN, Cairo 2002, 60. In all cases, however, longevity is directly connected with the ears.

[23] Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, see FORSTER, "Physiognomy as a Secret", 336.

[24] Polemon [Leiden version], ed. and tr. HOYLAND, 346-347.

[25] K. YAMAMOTO, C. BURNETT, *On Historical Astrology. The Book of Religions and Dynasties (On the Great Conjunctions)*, 2 vols. (Islamic Philosophy, Theology, and Science. Textes and Studies 33), Leiden 2000. A clear source passage for Barhebraeus could not be located so far in this or similar works, though.

However, also these Arabic potential (indirect) sources themselves do not come with a significantly higher ratio of future predictions to general inferences in physiognomy than those found in Barhebraeus.[26] This suggests that Barhebraeus did not intentionally add or suppress future predictions, but, rather, that these had already in his sources or similar Arabic texts received only a limited attention.

Besides, there is no religious Christian stance against prognosis by physiognomy at these occurrences discussed or implied.[27]

"Confidence Level"

For the case of fathering female offspring when certain conditions of skin color, eyes, and nose are met, Barhebraeus considers this as happening "for the most part",[28] a term that is also employed by him for

[26] For example, the Leiden version of the Arabic Polemon has none among the first 115 predictions, while in Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's *al-Manṣūri*, one encounters four predictions out of 125, half of which concern longevity, the other two the opposite, being short-lived. Three of these four predictions are based on the ears (tr. FORSTER, 336), one on the eye (tr. FORSTER, 330). These predictions are not found in a similar version as in the *Secret of Secrets*. However, while also Barhebraeus connects one instance of a prediction of longevity with the eyes (*The Laughable Stories*, tr. BUDGE, 181, no. dccxiv), deep-set eyes are only one of several conditions, while the *Manṣūrī* takes gazing into account. A similar connection with longevity is also found in FAKHR AL-DĪN AL-RĀZĪ's *Physiognomics*, ed. ḤAMDĀN, 54, which suggests a possible influence of the *Manṣūrī* on Fakhr al-Dīn. Another connection in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzi is between the ears and longevity (ed. ḤAMDĀN, 60). Some other inferences in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī are less clearly related to the future, as they are based on currently present dispositions, such as fast or slow growth based on the respective psychological faculty under certain temperament of the body (ed. ḤAMDĀN, 24-25), seeing colors while dreaming as explicable by the current temperament (ed. ḤAMDĀN, 28), or having a fondness for women (ed. ḤAMDĀN, 55). In addition, the prediction of huge detriment is encountered: see Y. MOURAD, *La physiognomonie arabe et le* Kitāb al-firāsa *de* Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzi, Paris 1939, 41, 103. But also in Fakhr al-Dīn, the relative frequency of prognostical inferences is likewise quite low.

[27] Medieval penal considerations of prognosis, though not including physiognomy, by church law have been addressed in K. HERBERS, H.-C. LEHNER, *Mittelalterliche Rechtstexte und mantische Praktiken* (Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 94), Köln 2021.

[28] Compared with ps.-Aristotle, his above-mentioned ultimate source, this seems to be an addition affecting modality. For the adjective θηλυγόνος does not necessarily imply a more frequent occurrence of female as compared to male offspring only (see

the natural realm in contrast to the heavenly one, due to the possible interference by hindering causes that prohibit the secured occurrence of an event under the same initial conditions, such as fire going up. This could also be understood as not allowing for a full determinism, unless also all hindering causes were given. One might also argue that, according to the methodological discussion in *Analytica Priora*, one might then have to adjust the corresponding sign by finding a different one if predictions prove to be wrong repeatedly. Longevity, though, is expressed by a categorical statement without any further modal cautioning. In ps.-Aristotle, however, an outcome is even said to arise necessarily in the context of introducing another, more philosophical approach to physiognomics without full consent.[29]

Also the other, non-prognostical inferences in Barhebraeus, that is, the majority of cases, usually do not come with further modal implications. Rather, they are formulated as declarative statements, by which they might point to regularity and being considered predictable. In Polemon and some Arabic texts, however, modalities of frequency rarely occur.[30] Therefore, it is not necessarily by Barhebraeus's intention that these modifiers are omitted.

Conclusion

To sum up, only the two most detailed treatments of physiognomy by Barhebraeus include prognosis, and cases that are clearly not reducible to habits are only encountered in the *Amusing Stories*. Predictions concern chiefly longevity or its absence and can be understood as a categorical statement. It seems likely that these predictions are explicable by a matching source, which might be a different recension of a transla-

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also H. G. LIDDELL, R. SCOTT, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford 1996, s.v., for places in Aristotle's Historia Animalium). However, HETT 105 renders it as "inclined to have female children". Apart from this, a temporal frequency occurs, for example, in ps.-Aristotle regarding always watery eyes, ed. GHERSETTI, 28, tr. 63.

[29] (PS.-)ARISTOTELES, *Physiognomica*, 807a9-10, ed. and tr. FERRINI, 170-171 (see also 228, nt. 6); ed. and tr. HETT, 96; Arabic translation, ed. and tr. GHERSETTI, 8, 53 (though differently rendered).

[30] Polemon [Leiden version] specifies "doing frequently" (*kathura*) (ed. and tr. HOYLAND, 455), while Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī distinguishes between applicability in most cases (ed. ḤAMDĀN, 40) and in all (ed. ḤAMDĀN, 32), and, at another place, adds a modal *yaḥtamilu an*, "it might be that" (ed. ḤAMDĀN, 49).

tion of an ancient text than the extant ones. This had, in general, already been suggested by Furlani and later by Zonta and Joosse, especially for the *Economics*, based on given deviations from extant versions as well as frequent recourse to ancient authorities. Surprisingly, some prognostic parts in particular might indeed additionally do have an origin in more contemporary Arabic texts that have to be determined. One might think, for example, based on the inclusion of longevity and its occurrence in Fakhr al-Dīn's *Physiognomics* or Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's *al-Manṣūrī*, of some similar work. In general, due to the scarcity of occurrences, Barhebraeus does, at a first look, not seem to personally adhere significantly to such a kind of prediction, though he seemingly does to physiognomics in general. For he dwells upon this topic extensively in the *Economics* and adds it to both the *Amusing Stories* as well as the *Animals* on his own account when compared with the respective main source text. But it should also be noted that, despite the small number of future predictions to be found in earlier Arabic authors, he nearly incorporates all of them, suggesting indeed an endorsement, at least in passing.

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Between Tradition and Medical Practice. Prognosis in al-Maǧūsī's *Kitāb al-Malakī*

Anna Gili

Introduction: Prognosis in Early Arabic Medicine

In his medical treatise *Firdaws al-ḥikma* (*The Paradise of Knowledge*), completed by the year 850, the Arabic physician ʿAlī b. Sahl Rabbān al-Ṭabarī (d. after 864) extensively quotes chapters of Hippocrates' *Prognostic* concerning prognosis and critical days.[1] In the opening of *bāb* (paragraph) 26 of the tenth *maqāla* (chapter) in *nawʿ* (book) IV, entitled "On death signs and the signs intermediate between good and evil" (*fī ʿalāmāt al-mawt wa-l-ʿalāmāt al-mutawassiṭa li-l-ḫayr wa-l-šarr*), he states that:

> And that [Hippocrates' doctrine] is not valid in all statuses of many diseases: as rain does not occur until after clouds appear, but sometimes there are clouds and there is no rain, in the same way recovery and death do not come about until after either good or bad signs appear, but not all signs speak the truth and not all physicians discern them and know their subtleties.[2]

The passage shows that Arabic physicians soon took up and critically evaluated the extensive knowledge on prognosis transmitted by Greek works translated into Arabic, and primarily by Hippocrates' *Prognos-*

[1] About this author, see D. Thomas, "Al-Ṭabarī", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online* (2012), (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1133>, last consulted on 27/02/2024); E. Wakelnig, "Al-Ṭabarī and al-Ṭabarī. Compendia between Medicine and Philosophy", in *Philosophy and Medicine in the Formative Period of Islam*, ed. P. Adamson, P.E. Pormann (Warburg Institute Colloquia 31), London 2017, 218-54.

[2] ʿAlī ibn Sahl Rabbān al-Ṭabarī, *Firdaws al-ḥikmat fī al-Ṭibb*, ed. M.Z. al-Ṣiddīqī (Islamic Medicine 29), Frankfurt am Main 1996, 316. All translations are mine, if not otherwise indicated.

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tic.[3] Klamroth's studies have shown that this text was translated into Arabic twice: the first translation is extant only in excerpts, while the second, authored by Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq (d. 873), is completely preserved and it is also the most widely consulted.[4] As Overwien maintains, it is probable that this second version was made from the lemmas of Galen's commentary on the *Prognostic*, a work which was itself translated into Arabic by Ḥunayn.[5] Moreover, the *Prognostic* was also one of the four Hippocratic works that were studied and commented upon in the Alexandrian late antique medical school, as witnessed by Stephen of Alexandria's commentary and the traces of Alexandrian teaching in the first Arabic translation of the *Prognostic*.[6] Other Greek works, es-

[3] On the translations of medical works into Arabic, their context and early reception see U. Vagelpohl, "The user-friendly Galen: Hunayn Ibn Ishaq and the adaptation of Greek medicine for a new audience", in *Greek medical literature and its readers. From Hippocrates to Islam and Byzantium*, ed. P. Bouras-Vallianatos, S. Xenophontos, (Publications of the Centre for Hellenic Studies, King's College London), New York 2018, 113-130.

[4] See G. Bos, "A recovered Fragment on the Signs of Death from Abu Yusuf al-Kindi's Medical Summaries", in *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften*, 6 (1990), 189-94; O. Overwien, "Einige Beobachtungen zur Überlieferung der Hippokratesschriften in der arabischen und griechischen Tradition", in *Sudhoffs Archiv*, 89.2 (2005), 196-210: 205-208; Id., "Eine anonyme Vorlesung über das Prognostikon aus dem Spätantiken Alexandria", in *Galenos*, 5 (2011), 91-102; N. P. Joosse, P. E. Pormann "Abd Al-Latif al-Baghdadi's *Commentary on Hippocrates' Prognostic*: A Preliminary Exploration", in *Epidemics in Context: Greek Commentaries on Hippocrates in the Arabic Tradition*, ed. P. E. Pormann (Scientia Graeco-Arabica 8), Berlin-Boston 2012, 251-83; N. P. Joosse, "A Newly-Discovered Commentary on the Hippocratic Prognostic by Barhebraeus: Its Contents and Its Place within the Arabic Taqdimat al-Maʿrifa Tradition", in *Oriens*, 41.3/4 (2013), 499-523. Klamroth's edition, dated 1886 (M. Klamroth, "Ueber die Auszüge aus griechischen Schriftstellern bei al -Jaʿqûbî", in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 40.2 [1886], 189-233), would need to be updated, since various new manuscripts have been discovered. A German translation of Klamroth's edition by O. Overwien and U. Vagelpohl is provided in Hippocrates, *Pronostic*, ed. J. Jouanna, Paris, 273-298.

[5] Overwien, "Eine anonyme Vorlesung", 92. No edition of the Arabic version of this commentary has so far been published.

[6] On the Alexandrian curriculum, see O. Overwien, "Der medizinische Unterricht der Iatrosophisten in der 'Schule von Alexandria' (5.-7. Jh. n. Chr.): Überlegungen zu seiner Organisation, seinen Inhalten und seinen Ursprüngen (erster Teil)", in *Philologus*, 162.1 (2018), 2-14; Id., "Der medizinische Unterricht der Iatrosophisten in der 'Schule von Alexandria' (5.-7. Jh. n. Chr.): Überlegungen zu seiner Organisation,

pecially Galen's *De crisibus* and *De diebus decretoriis*, together with their Alexandrian reception, contributed additional doctrines about the different stages of the disease course and the possibility of predicting its outcome according to recurring patterns of critical days.[7]

Al-Ṭabarī's words testify to the rapid reception of these texts. Right from the start, the knowledge conveyed by the Greek monographic treatises mentioned above was included in encyclopedias such as the *Firdaws*, and it is worth questioning what position prognosis held within such all-embracing expositions of medical knowledge. Usually, prognosis is dealt with in sections concerning fevers and their crises and is closely related to semiology, i.e. sphygmology and uroscopy. For instance, al-Ṭabarī concludes the tenth *maqāla* (chapter) of *nawʿ* (book) IV, which discusses various kinds of fevers, with a paragraph (n. 23) on critical days and with some other paragraphs (n. 24-26) based on Hippocrates' *Prognostic*.[8] Some decades later, the philosopher and physician Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Zakariyyāʾ al-Rāzī (865-925) similarly dealt with prognostication in book X of his *Kitāb al-Manṣūrī*,

seinen Inhalten und seinen Ursprüngen (zweiter Teil)", in *Philologus*, 162.2 (2018), 265-290; Id., "Medizinische *Prolegomena* aus dem spätantiken Alexandria im Kodex Aya Sofya 3588", in *Studia graeco-arabica*, 10 (2020), 21-35 and the bibliography mentioned there. On the Alexandrian tradition of the *Prognostic*, Stephanus Philosophus, *A commentary on the prognosticon of Hippocrates*, ed. J. M. Duffy (Corpus medicorum Graecorum 11.1.2), Berlin 1983; W. Wolska-Conus, "Les commentaires de Stephanos d'Athènes au *Prognostikon* et aux *Aphorismes* d'Hippocrate: de Galien à la pratique scolaire alexandrine", in *Revue des études byzantines*, 50.1 (1992), 5-86; O. Overwien, *Einige Beobachtungen*, 206-208; Id., *Eine anonyme Vorlesung*, 92-102.

[7] On the Arabic translations of these works and their reception, see Galenus, De diebus decretoriis*, from Greek into Arabic. A Critical Edition, with Translation and Commentary, of Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq,* Kitāb ayyām al-buḥrān, ed. G. M. Cooper (Medicine in the Medieval Mediterranean), New York 2011; G. M. Cooper, "Medical Crises and Critical Days in Avicenna and After: Insights from the Commentary Tradition", in *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World*, 6.1-2 (2018), 27-54; Id., "The Reception of an Empirical Medical Theory: Galen's Crisis Theory in the Arabic Commentaries on the Hippocratic Aphorisms", in *The 1st International Prof. Dr. Fuat Sezgin Symposium on History of Science in Islam Proceedings Book*, ed. F. Basar et al., Istanbul 2020; Galenus, *The Alexandrian summaries of Galen's "On critical days": editions and translations of the two versions of the "Jawāmiʿ", with an introduction and notes*, ed. G. Bos, Y. T. Langermann (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies 92), Leiden 2015.

[8] Al-Ṭabarī, *Firdaws al-ḥikmat*, 310-317.

whose chapters 1 to 18 concern fevers.[9] Thereafter, chapters 19 and 20 encompass "bad" and "good" signs, chapters 21-28 are dedicated to critical days and the temporal development of fevers, and semiology is the topic of the conclusive chapters 29-35.[10] The same content organization is also found in the *Kitāb al-Ḥāwī*, a work that originated from a collection of al-Rāzī's notes but was never published in a final form by the author.[11] Another early 10th-century medical encyclopedia, the *Kitāb al-ḏaḫīra* (*Book of treasures*), presents a short chapter "on crisis" (*fī-l-buḥrān*) after an extensive description of all fevers and before focusing on sphygmology and uroscopy.[12]

The inclusion of prognosis in the sections on fevers or semiology resumes the tradition of Late Antique medical encyclopedias such as Oribasius' *Synopsis ad Eustathium* and Paul of Aegina's *Pragmateia*. In the *Synopsis*, book VI opens with short chapters on critical days and semiology, which precede the main section discussing fevers and acute diseases.[13] In the *Pragmateia*, book II deals initially with good and bad signs, the distinction between chronic and acute diseases, critical

[9] On the medical production of al-Rāzī, see F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums. Band III: Medizin, Pharmazie, Zoologie, Tierheilkunde* (Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums 3), Leiden-Köln 1970, 274-294; M. Ullman, *Die Medizin im Islam* (Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 1 The Near and Middle East, Ergänzungsband 9/6/1), Leiden-Köln 1970, 128-135; Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakarīyā al-Rāzī, *Doutes sur Galien: introduction, édition et traduction*, ed. P. Koetschet (Scientia Graeco-Arabica 25), Berlin-Boston 2019.

[10] I have consulted the *Kitāb al-Manṣūrī* in MS Istanbul, Feyzullah Efendi, 1327, ff. 148r-184r (digitized on the online portal of the Süleymaniye library, last consulted on 24/08/2024); the manuscript is dated 13 Ramaḍān 624 H., that is 27 August 1227.

[11] Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakarīyā al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Ḥāwī fī al-ṭibb: Ṣuḥḥiḥa ʿan nusaḫ qadīma maḥfūza fi ʾl-makātib šahīra aḥadhā fī maktabat Iskūryāl raqm 813 Madrid*, Ḥaydarābād, 1955-1963; Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakarīyā al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Ḥāwī fī al-ṭibb*, ed. Mohammed Ismail Mohammed, Beirut 2021.

[12] M. Meyerhof, "The 'Book of Treasure', an Early Arabic Treatise on Medicine", in *Isis*, 14/1 (1930), 55-76; Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, 260-262; M. Ullman, *Die Medizin im Islam*, 136-137. The paternity of this work is discussed, but since it is quoted by al-Rāzī, it is certainly earlier. I have consulted it in manuscript Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Şehid Ali Paşa, 2028 (dated to the 14th or 15th century; digitized on the online portal of the Süleymaniye library, last consulted on 24/08/2024). The relevant chapter is on ff. 82r-82v.

[13] Oribasius, *Synopsis ad Eustathium, Libri ad Eunapium*, ed. J. Raeder (Corpus Medicorum Graecorum 6.3), Leipzig 1926, 183-184.

days, and semeiology, and then continues with fevers.[14] Both works were translated into Arabic and certainly enjoyed significant circulation among Arabic physicians, although the loss of these translations makes more precise evaluations difficult.[15] Nevertheless, the case of prognosis shows that they exerted a clear influence on the structuration of encyclopedias, for which the monographic works by Hippocrates and Galen did not provide a suitable model.

Resuming the structural paradigm provided by Oribasius and Paul of Aegina, early Arabic physicians do acknowledge the role played by prognostication in their training and praxis, but this topic is not discussed independently from fevers or semeiology. However, in the second half of the 10th century, a new awareness of the importance of the prognostic science emerges in the *Kitāb al-Malakī*, a sizable encyclopedia composed by the Zoroastrian physician ʿAlī b. al-ʿAbbās al-Maǧūsī.[16] Patronized by the Buyid ruler ʿAḍud al-Dawla, al-Maǧūsī was active as a physician in hospitals of the Fārs province and in Baghdad. His *Kitāb al-Malakī* was completed by 977/978. The work is divided into two sections, i.e. theory and practice, both composed of ten books. Its author claims to have written, for the first time, a comprehensive and unitarian discussion of the medical science. In this carefully constructed whole, prognosis constitutes the topic of the last book of the first section (I.10) and is therefore presented as the crowning achievement of an apprenticeship in theoretical medicine.

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[14] Paulus Aegineta, *Epitomae medicae libri septem*, ed. J.L. Heiberg (Corpus Medicorum Graecorum 9.1), Leipzig 1921, 73-74.

[15] Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, 152-154, 168-170; Ullman, *Die Medizin im Islam*, 84-87; P.E. Pormann, "The *Parisinus Graecus* 2293 as a Document of Scientific Activity in Swabian Siciliy", in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 13 (2003), 137-161; Id., *The Oriental Tradition of Paul of Aegina's* Pragmateia (Studies in Ancient Medicine 29), Leiden 2004.

[16] On this author, see F. Micheau, "ʿAlī Ibn al-ʿAbbas al-Maǧūsī et son Milieu", in *Constantine the African and ʿAlī ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Maǧūsī. The* Pantegni *and Related texts*, ed. C. Burnett, D. Jacquart (Studies in Ancient Medicine 10), Leiden-New York-Köln 1994, 1-15; new evidence on his biography will be presented in my PhD Thesis.

Prognosis in *al-Kitāb al-Malakī*: the importance of reading books and visiting patients.

Al-Mağūsī entitles the first chapter of book I.10 "on the signs warning of what will come into being". The verb "to warn" corresponds to the Arabic *anḏara* (*bi*), which is the verb used by Ḥunayn in his translation of Hippocrates *Prognostic* to refer to the physician's activity of "warning" his patient of the predictable course of the diseases.[17] In the *Kitāb al-Malakī*, it is the signs that directly announce a future condition. In this short first chapter, al-Mağūsī explains the importance of prognosis:

> والطبيب إذا تقدّم فعلم ما يحدث في الأبدان من الأمراض والعلل استعمل التدبير والعلاج، الذي يحسم أسباب تلك الأمراض والعلل ويمنعها من الحدوث، فيحفظ بذلك صحّة الأبدان على حالها: فإذا تقدّم فعلم أنّ المريض يسلم من مرضه ويتخلص كان علاجه له على ثقة ويقين منه ببرئه ونجاح علاجه إيّاه وإنجابه فيه فإذا علم أنّ المريض يهلك لم يتلبس بشيء من علاجه، ولم يتعب نفسه.[18]
>
> If the physician prognosticates the diseases and affections that will occur, then he applies the regimen and the treatment capable to cut the causes of these diseases and affections and which prevents them from occurring, thus preserving the health of the bodies as it is. If he prognosticates that the sick is getting healthier and recovering from his disease, his treatment for him will be based on confidence, on the

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[17] See Klamroth, "Ueber die Auszüge", 1, r. 1, 204. I have also consulted MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ar. 2835 (digitized at https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc30751x, last consulted on 06/02/2024; the manuscript is datable to the 13th century and has Syriac origin), f. 29v-48v (the verb occurs at the beginning, on f. 29v). See also Klamroth, "Ueber die Auszüge", 205, 1, r. 7.

[18] There is no critical edition of the *Kitāb al-Malakī*. The volumes recently printed in Alexandria (ʿAlī ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Maǧūsī, *Kāmil al-ṣināʿa al-ṭibbyyia*, ed. Ḫ.A. Ḥarbī, Alessandria 2018; book I.10 is in the third volume) present numerous mistakes. All texts quoted here are based on the collation of the following manuscripts: Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 94b (f. 222r); Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 450a (f. 201r); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ar. 2874 (f. 155r). As my PhD Thesis will show, these manuscripts preserve the most correct readings for the section of the *Kitāb al-Malakī* comprising books VI to X of the theoretical section. As for the two most ancient copies of this textual portion, London, British Library, Or. 6591, ff. 104r-114v, dated 1152-1153 (https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100023025434.0x000001, last consulted 24/08/2024), belongs to a Western branch of the tradition whose readings are usually worse than those of the more widespread Eastern branch; Princeton, University Library, Garrett no. 1s, ff. 135r-149r, dated 1190 (https://dpul.princeton.edu/islamicmss/catalog/1v53jx03x, last consulted 24/08/2024) presents a number of peculiar erroneous readings. A thorough catalographic description of all these manuscripts will be provided in my PhD Thesis.

> patient's certainty that the physician will cure him, and on the good progress and success of his treatment. If he knows that the sick is dying, the physician will not be equivocal at all in his treatment and will not tire himself out.

These words explain why the interpretation of signs indicating what will be is of greater stance than the interpretation of those referring to a present condition, and therefore deserves to be placed at the end of the study path in theoretical medicine. On one side, explaining to the patient what will become of him is the most important part of the curative process, as it enables the physician to gain his trust and to propose the right treatment also as a preventive measure. On the other hand, as al-Mağūsī stresses in the final chapter of book X, formulating a correct prognosis is particularly difficult, since the risk of error is always menacing the physician's analysis.

> ولذلك قال ابقراط إنّ الحكم والقضية في الأمراض الحادّة بالموت والحياة ليس على غاية الثقة لا على الموت ولا على الصحّة ولذلك للطافة مادّتها وسرعة حركتها وتنقّلها من حال إلى حال. إلّا أنّه إذا كان الطبيب ماهرًا قد أطال النظر في الكتب وارتاض بمزاولة المرضى مدّةً من الزمان طويلةً ونظر نظرًا شافيًا لم يكد يخطئ فيما يحكم به إلّا اليسير. ولذلك قد يجب على الطبيب أن يكثر مزاولة المرضى ويتحفظ بما يعاينه ويجيد التمييز ويحسن القياس ويكثر تدبير ما ذكرناه في كتابنا هذا.[19]

> Therefore, Hippocrates said that the judgment and the prognosticatory statement concerning death and life in acute diseases is not totally reliable, neither in death nor in health, due to the shortness of their duration and the swiftness of their movement and change from one state to another. However, if the physician is skilled and has already spent a lot of time studying books and practiced by striving to cure patients for a long period and examined them carefully, he can hardly make a mistake in what he judges if not rarely. Therefore, the physician may have to strive to cure patients more frequently, be careful with what he examines with his own eyes, be good at distinguishing, improve reasoning, and engage repeatedly in understanding what we mentioned in this book of ours.

The opening reference to difficulties in judging acute diseases is based on *Aphorisms*, book II.19.[20] However, al-Mağūsī does not simply repeat

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[19] Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 94b, f. 288v-289r; Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 450a, f. 237r; Paris, BnF, Ar. 2874, f. 186r.

[20] On the Arabic version of the *Aphorisms* and its later tradition, see P. E. Pormann, K. I. Karimullah, "The Arabic Commentaries on the Hippocratic Aphorisms: Introduction", in *Oriens*, 45.1-2 (2017) 1-52, which resumes the results of Pormann's project dedicated to this topic. The Arabic text is edited by P. E. Pormann, K. I. Karimullah,

traditional ideas on the utility, difficulty, and riskiness of prognosis. In the first passage quoted above, the distinction between two lines of conduct, one to be applied in case the patient is likely to recover, one in case death is apparent, is nowhere to be found in the *Prognostic* or its commentaries by Galen and Stephen. The recommendation to the physician of not pursuing the care of a desperate case is either introduced by al-Mağūsī as part of his reading of the *Prognostic*'s first chapter, or it is based on a (possibly Alexandrian) tradition which is otherwise lost.[21] Moreover, the repeated reminders of the importance of practice, even at the expense of theory, goes sometimes beyond the advice given by the *auctoritates*, like at the end of chapter 6 of this same book I.10, devoted to critical days.

> ولذلك ينبغي أن يعني بمعرفة قوّة المريض، فإنّ في ذلك منفعة عظيمة في تقدمة المعرفة بما يأول إليه حال المريض. وليس يمكن تعرّف ذلك بالقياس لكنّ بالدربة وكثرة مزاولة المرضى زمانًا طويلًا.[22]
>
> Therefore, the physician should take care of knowing the strength of the patient, because in that there is a great benefit in formulating a prognosis about what the condition of the sick will become, and this cannot be known through reasoning, but through habitual practice and the frequent strive to cure patients for a long time.

The meaningfulness of such denial of the role played by *qiyās* (reasoning) in formulating a prognosis, specifically when it requires an assessment of the patient's strength, can be better appreciated if this passage is compared with al-Mağūsī's source on critical days, namely Galen's *De diebus decretoriis* in Ḥunayn's Arabic version.

N. Carpentieri, et al., المقالة الثانية من شرح جالينوس لفصول أبقراط بترجمة حنين بن إسحاق (*Galen's Commentary on the Hippocratic Aphorisms, Book 2*) Manchester 2017 (available online at < https://doi.org/10.3927/51689327>, last consulted on 28/02/2024). *Aphorisms* II.19 (41-43) reads:

قال أبقراط إنّ التقدّم بالقضية في الأمراض الحادّة بالموت كانت أو بالبرء فليست تكون على غاية الثقة

(Hippocrates said: the prognosticatory statement in acute diseases, be it on death or recovery, is not totally reliable). The Galenic commentary on this passage acknowledges the possibility of errors in prognosis of acute diseases but does not explain, as al-Mağūsī does, what the physician should do to prevent it.

[21] A similar statement is present in Joosse, "Abd Al-Latif al-Baghdadi's", 282, in a passage of al-Baġdādī's commentary on the second lemma of the *Prognostic*. Two are the possible interpretations: either al-Mağūsī and, later, al-Baġdādī refer to an otherwise unknow commentary tradition on this lemma, or this is part of an Arabic development in reading the *Prognostic*.

[22] Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 94b, f. 236r; Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 450a, f. 213v; Paris, BnF, Ar. 2874, f. 164v.

> Now I must take up the issue of the particular critical days about which the physicians disagree, and I must discriminate between the one who speaks truthfully, and the one who is false, using experience and reason. For we have explained in other places that all of what is sought and researched in medicine is tested and examined using these two perspectives.[23]

The relevance of practice does not simply involve the observation of disease development throughout the patterns of critical days. In chapter 10, al-Mağūsī openly recalls Hippocrates' *Prognostic* and *Aphorisms* as basis of his doctrine on signs forecasting death and recovery in every disease, and he alludes to the importance of his personal experience as well.

> فنحن نأخذ في ذكر الدلائل الجزئية المنذرة بالسلامة والهلاك في كلّ واحد من الأمراض على ما ذكره ابقراط في كتاب تقدمة المعرفة وفي كتاب الفصول وغيره من الكتب، وما ظهر لنا نحن بكثرة مزاولتنا للمرضى ومعاناتنا إياهم من هذه العلامات فيهم.[24]
>
> We will mention now the specific signs warning of recovery and death in every disease according to what Hippocrates said in the *Prognostic*, in the *Aphorisms*, and in other books, and to what became visible to us among these signs thanks to our frequent strive to cure sick people and our efforts to cure them.

According to previous research by Pormann and Joosse, the *Prognostic* did not enjoy a great favor among Arabic physicians before the "classical age", since no commentary on it was composed before the 12th century. Conversely, not only the passage from the *Firdaws* quoted at the beginning, but also this section of al-Mağūsī's encyclopedia witnesses an early interest in the interpretation of this work, whose content is systematized and extended throughout these chapters.

The example of the *facies hippocratica*

The first paragraphs of chapter 10 of book I.10 propose a fourfold classification of the domains to which the signs allowing for a prognosis in every disease can be traced. They can be: 1) taken from accidents affecting conditions of the body and its touch; 2) taken from accidents affecting actions of the body; 3) taken from evacuations of the body; 4) taken from the statuses of diseases and illnesses. Such classification

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[23] Galenus, De diebus decretoriis*, from Greek into Arabic*, 225-226.

[24] Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 94b, f. 236r; Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 450a, f. 213v; Paris, BnF, Ar. 2874, f. 164v.

has no parallels neither in the commentary tradition of the *Prognostic* nor in earlier medical treatises. Al-Mağūsī's uses it in chapters 10 and 11 of book I.10 as a structural grid. We can indeed imagine that al-Mağūsī had eight "boxes" in front of him, each one referring to one of these categories, applied both to bad and good signs (*e.g.* 1a. signs taken from accidents affecting conditions of the body forecasting recovery; 1b. signs taken from accidents affecting conditions of the body forecasting death, and so on), and he extracted passages from his sources to insert them in the right box, so as to group them thematically. This way, when compiling the *Kitāb al-Malakī*, he had at his disposal homogeneous blocks of texts that could be reunited into a coherent presentation, to which additional information taken from his personal experience could be added.

A telling example is al-Mağūsī's description of the so-called *facies hippocratica*, that is the description of how the face of the sick person may presage death, based on chapters 2 and 3 of the *Prognostic*. The relevant information collected by al-Mağūsī results in two paragraphs, a longer and more detailed one in chapter 10, concerning signs warning of death, and a much shorter one in chapter 11, concerning signs announcing recovery, built essentially by contrast to the former. In the description of the deadly *facies*, most accidents that appear on the patient's face are considered as to pertain to "accidents affecting statuses of the body and its touch". Al-Mağūsī begins by mentioning the most general features of such an appearance.

أمّا الوجه الذي **لا يشبه وجوه الأصحاء**، فهو دليل رديء، وقوّته وضعفه في الدلالة في الرداءة تكون بحسب بعده عن الوجه الصحيح وقربه منه، والوجه الذي يكون قحِلًا منحشفًا على المثال الذي قد ذكره أبقراط وهو أنّ **يكون الأنف حادًا والعينان غائرتين والصدغان لاطئتين والأذنان باردتين منقبضتين وشحماتهما مقلبتين وجلدة الوجه ممتدّة ولونه كمدًا أو أخضر** أو يعلوه غبرة فإنّه يدلّ على الهلاك[25]

As for the face that does not resemble the faces of healthy people, it is a bad sign, and its strength and weakness in the indication of badness depend on its distance from and closeness to the healthy face, and the face that is dry and emaciated, similar to description already made by Hippocrates, which is: the nose is sharp, the eyes are sunken, the temples collapsed, the ears cold[26] and contracted, and their lobes

[25] Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 94b, f. 245v-246v; Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 450a, f. 221v-222v; Paris, BnF, Ar. 2874, f. 170v-171v. All subsequent passages concerning the *facies hippocratica* occur in these folia.

[26] Among the collated *Kitāb al-Malakī* manuscripts, Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuni-

turned-back, the skin of the face is stretched, and its color is dull or green, or befallen by a dusty color – this face points to destruction.

Resemblances can be noted with respect to both Hippocrates' *Prognostic* (in bold) and Galen's commentary (underlined). A wavy underline in al-Mağūsī's text indicates the parts for which no correspondence can be found.

Hippocrates, *Prognostic*

انظر أوّلًا إلى وجه المريض هل شبيه وجوه الأصحاء وخاصّةً هل يشبه ما كان عليه. فإنّه إذا كان كذلك فهو على أفضل حالاته. **فأمّا الوجه الذي هو من المضادّة لذلك الوجه الشبيه في الغاية بما كان عليه، فهو أردئ الوجوه. وصفّته أن يكون الأنف منه حادًّا والعينان غائرتين والصدغان لاطئين والأذنان باردتين منقبضتين وشحماتهما منقلبتين والجلدة التي على الجهة** صلبة **متمددة جاسئة ولون الوجه كلّه أخضر أو كمدًا أو أسود** أو رصاصيًا.[27]

Look first at the sick person's face, whether it is similar to the faces of healthy people, and especially whether it is similar to what it was like. If it is like that, then it is at its best. As for the face that is the opposite of that face which is completely similar to what it was, it is the worst of faces. Its characteristic is that the nose is sharp, the eyes are sunken, the temples collapsed, the ears cold and contracted, their lobes turned-back,[28] the skin which is on this area is hard, stretched, and rough, and the color of the entire face is either green, or dark, or dull, or lead-like.

Galen, commentary on the *Prognostic*

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versiteit, Or. 94b, f. 245v and London, British Library, Or. 6591, f. 109r have the reading *bāziratayni*, the dual feminine form of the participle *bāzir*, "protruding", while Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 450a, f. 221v and Paris, BnF, Ar. 2874, f.170v have *bāridatayni*, "cold". The Arabic translation of the *Prognostic* as extant in Klamroth's edition and in MS Paris, BnF, Ar. 2835, f. 30r also has the adjective *bāridatayni*, "cold", corresponding to the Greek ψυχρός, "cold". The writing of the two words in Arabic script, however, is very similar, and it is possible that some manuscripts of the *Prognostic* have the form *bāziratayni*. Therefore, even though *bāridatayni*, "cold", seems the preferable reading of the *Kitāb al-Malakī*, it cannot be excluded that al-Mağūsī read *bāziratayni* in some manuscript and accordingly quoted Hippocrates' text. Describing the ears as "protruding" would have also been acceptable in this context.

[27] The text is based on Klamroth, "Ueber die Auszüge", par. 2, 205-206, and MS Paris, BnF, Ar. 2835, ff. 30r-31v. These are the sources of all passages from the *Prognostic* that follow.

[28] MS Paris, BnF, Ar. 2835, f. 30r has the reading متقلصتين (*mutaqallişatayni*), "contracted", in the main text, which is corrected into *munqalibatayni*, "turned-back", by the scribe himself in the margin. Since this is the reading shared by al-Mağūsī, it has been chosen in the text printed here, without implying that this was the translation used by Ḥunayn.

وأمّا حالاته المتوسّطة بين الحال التي هي أفضل والحال التي هي أردئ، فالبحث عنها يجب عليك إذا كانت الأطراف قد حُددت. ولكنّ أقربها من الوجه الذي حاله أفضل الحلات أفضلها وأقربها من الوجه الذي حاله أردئ الحالات أردأها، والذي بعده من كلّ واحد من الطرفين متساوي حاله فتوسّط بينهما.[29]

As for its [of the face] intermediate states between the better and the worse state, you must investigate them, since the extremes have already been defined. Of course, that closest to the face whose condition is the best is better and that closest to the face whose condition is worst is worse, and that which is equally distant from each of the two extremes is intermediate between them.

Most of the elements which feature in this description are taken from the *Prognostic*. However, the idea of the existence of a "scale" of badness (or goodness) emerges only in Galen's commentary, and it is even more systematically addressed in Stephen's commentary on the *Prognostic*.[30] The qualification of the face as "dry and emaciated" is a peculiarity of the *Kitāb al-Malakī*, as well as the designation of its color not as black or lead-like, but dusty. On the whole, this first passage underscores dryness as a distinctive element of the *facies*.

Al-Mağūsī moves on to explain how these symptoms might be interpreted differently according to the typology of disease they accompany.

فإنّه يدلّ على الهلاك إلّا أن تكون هذه الأعراض قد حدثت **بسبب إسهال** أو تعب **أو سهر** أو وجع شديد، **فإنّه يكون أقلّ رداءةً**. وذلك أنّ الوجه يكون بهذه الصفة في الأمراض المتطاولة وعند التعب الشديد والاستفراغ الكثير.

It [the *facies*] indicates death, unless these symptoms occur due to diarrhea, fatigue, sleeplessness, or severe pain, in which case it is less bad, because the face has these characteristics in chronic diseases, extreme fatigue, and frequent evacuation.

Hippocrates, *Prognostic*

وإذا كان الوجه في أولّ المرض بهذه الحال وليس يمكنك أن يستدلّ مع ذلك بسائر الدلائل، فقد ينبغي لك أن تسأل هل **سهر** ذلك الإنسان **أو لأنّ بطنه ليناً شديدًا** أو ناله شيء من الجوع. فإن أدلى بشيء من ذلك فينبغي أن تظنّ به **أنّه أقلّ رداءةً**.

If the face is in this condition at the beginning of the disease and

[29] The text is based on MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud. Or. 139, f. 18v (E. Savage-Smith, *A new Catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. Volume I: Medicine*, Oxford 2011, 25-27).

[30] Stephanus Philosophus, *A commentary*, I.20, ed. Duffy, 66-67. For the Galenic passage, see Galenus, *In Hippocratis Prognosticum commentaria*, III, ed. J. Heeg (Corpus Medicorum Graecorum 5.9.2), Leipzig-Berlin 1915, 210, rr. 16-25.

you cannot be guided by other additional signs, then you should ask whether that person suffered from sleeplessness, or (whether it is so) because his stomach suffered strongly from diarrhea, or he was afflicted with some hunger. If he notifies something of that, then you should think that his condition is less bad.

Galen, commentary on the *Prognostic*

قال جالينوس: كلّ هذه الدلائل تظهر في الوجه في الأمراض المزمنة وعند التعب والغشي وخاصّة في وقت الموت.[31]

Galen said that all these signs appear in the face in chronic diseases, fatigue, fainting, and especially at the time of death.

If the physician discovers that such a condition is caused by dysentery, insomnia, tiredness, or severe pain, it means that it is less bad: a similar idea is already expressed by Hippocrates, but without any mention of chronicity. It is Galen who underlines that, in chronic diseases and deadly conditions, such changes appear in the patient's face.

A further comparison can be made between the etiology of the *facies* proposed by al-Maǧūsī and Galen.

أما الأمراض المتطاولة، فلطول إنهاك المرض للبدن وذوبان الرطوبات من الأعضاء اللحمية والأصلية وتجفيفها له ونقصان الروح والدم في البدن. فأمّا التعب والسهر والنفث والوجع فلكثرة ما يتحلّل من البدن من الروح والرطوبة واكتسابه اليبس، فتضعف لذلك الحرارة الغريزية والروح فلا يقويان على أن يبلغا إلى هذه المواضع، أعني أطراف البدن، فيهزل لذلك أطراف البدن ولا سيما الوجه، فيظهر فيه هذه الأعراض لأنّ الوجه قليل الدم لبعده من الكبد والقلب اللذين هما معدنا الروح والدم ولأنّ العظام أيضا في الوجه كثيرة، فإذا ذاب اللحم والرطوبات تبيّنت العظام والجلد.

As for chronic diseases, this [the appearance of the *facies*] is due to the prolonged exhaustion of the body caused by the disease, the consumption of humidities from the fleshy and principal body parts, and the desiccation of these parts in the body, and the decrease of spirit and blood in the body. As for fatigue, sleeplessness, expectoration, and pain, [the appearance of the *facies*] is due to the large amount of spirit and humidity being dissolved from the body and it becoming dry. Therefore, the vital heat and the spirit weaken, so they are not able to reach these places, I mean the extremities of the body, so the extremities of the body, especially the face, become emaciated. These symptoms appear in it first because the face has little blood due to its distance from the liver and the heart, which are the source of spirit and blood, and second, also because the bones in the face are many, so if the flesh and the humidities exhale, the bones and the skin come into sight.

[31] Oxford, BL, Laud. Or. 139, f. 19r.

Galen, commentary on the *Prognostic*

> فأقول إنّ حدوث هذه الأعراض يكون إمّا عن سبب يذوب الأعضاء الخفية من البدن ويفسدها، وإمّا عن ضعف من الحرارة الطبيعية يبلغ من أمره ألّا يمكنها الانبساط والوصول إلى أطراف البدن لكنّها تكون في الأحشاء فقط يسيرةً ويتبع ذلك أن لا يجري الدم والروح إلى أطراف البدن كما كانّا يجريان فيما قبل.[32]

> I say that the occurrence of these symptoms is either due to a cause that consumes the hidden[33] parts of the body and corrupts them, or due to a weakness from the natural heat, a weakness such that it prevents the heat from expanding and reaching the extremities of the body, rather the heat stays only in the interior and is of a small amount, and it follows that the blood and spirit do not flow to the extremities of the body as they used to before.

Galen mentions two mechanisms leading to the appearance of the *facies*: either some liquefying cause destroys the fleshy parts of the body, or a weak internal heat fails to reach the extremities of the body. Al-Mağūsī has certainly excerpted these passages, but also arranged them into a more organic picture. First, he creates the twofold etiological scheme which distinguishes chronic diseases and tiredness: indeed, the explanatory passage is clearly divided into two sections, both introduced by *fa-ammā… fa* ("As for…"). Al-Mağūsī also adds another explanation of the reason why the face is the first part of the body where deadly symptoms appear: it is the remotest from liver and heart. In his commentary, Stephen argues that the face can instruct the observer about the condition of brain, heart, and liver, and a similar tradition might have suggested to al-Mağūsī to clarify the link between the face and the last two body parts.[34] Moreover, in a general attempt to present the reader with a concise overview of the phenomenon, al-Mağūsī does without linking each component of the *facies* (sharp nose, sunken eyes…) with this etiological explanation, as Galen does in his commentary.[35]

Al-Mağūsī dedicates the ending of this reasoning to how to draw conclusions on the outcome of diseases from these signals. If they

[32] Oxford, BL, Laud. Or. 139, f. 19v.

[33] The Greek text has the word σαρκώδης, "fleshy", and it is possible that the text of the Oxford manuscript is corrupted.

[34] Stephanus Philosophus, *A commentary*, I.20, ed. Duffy, 66-69.

[35] Galenus, *In Hippocratis Prognosticum commentaria*, I.7, ed. Heeg, 211-214.

come with chronic diseases, they warn of a long duration, while if they accompany acute ones, they warn of the disease overcoming the bodily strength.[36] In the case of chronic diseases, therefore, this is not a matter of course, but an important observation in deciding how to deal with its future development.[37] The allusion to chronicity, which Galen added to the Hippocratic text, is not shortened, but expanded by al-Maǧūsī: this is consistent with his general tendency to devote more space to chronic diseases than earlier sources, as Joel Chandelier has pointed out.[38]

Along the lines of the *Prognostic*, al-Maǧūsī goes on with the description of the signs provided by the eyes.

فإذا كان بياض العين أحمر وعروقها كمدةً أو سود، دلّ ذلك على الهلاك لا محالةً، وذلك أنّ احمرار العينين إذا لم يكن عن رمد فإنّه يدلّ على امتلاء الدماغ وأغشيته بموادّ دموية؛ وكمودة عروق العين وسوادها يدلّ على برودة العين وهذا دليل خاصّ على الهلاك؛ ونتوء العين في الأمراض الحادّة رديء إذا لم يكن عن رمد أو عن قيء وذلك أنّه إذا لم يكن عن هذه الأسباب دلّ على مادّة كثيرة انصبّت إلى العين. **وإذا كانت العينان شاخصتين جامدتين لا تتحرّكان فإنّ ذلك دليلًا رديئًا جدًا** وذلك ممّا يدلّ على جمودة العينين وموتهما. **وإذا كان بياض العين في وقت النوم ظاهرًا والجفنان مطبّقين ولم يكن ذلك عن بعض الاستفراغات ولا كانت تلك عادة المريض في صحّته، فإنّ ذلك دليل رديء قتّال** إذ كان ذلك ممّا يدلّ على ضعف الدماغ. **وإذا كان الجفن والشفة والأنف ملتويةً كمدةً فالموت قريب، وذلك أنّ هذه الأعراض تكون عن تشنّج الدماغ والكمودة تكون عن البرد والموت** يرد الأطراف في الحمّيات المحرقة رديء، وذلك أنّه يدلّ إمّا على ورم عظيم في الأحشاء وإمّا على أخلاط لزجة باردة كثيرة في الأطراف.

If the whites of the eyes are red and their veins are dark or dull, this inevitably indicates death. This is so because if the redness of the eyes is not caused by ophthalmia, then it indicates that the brain and its membranes are filled with bloody substances. The dullness and blackening of the eye veins indicate the coldness of the eye, and this is specific evidence of death. Protrusion of the eye in acute diseases is bad if it is not due to ophthalmia or vomiting since, if it is not due to these reasons, it indicates that a lot of matter has flown into the eye. If the eyes are staring and fixed and do not move, then this is very bad sign, which is among what indicates that the eyes are frozen and dead.

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[36] فإذا كانت هذه الأعراض تحدث في الأمراض المتطاولة دلّت على طول المدّة. فإنّها إذا عرضت في الأمراض الحادّة وزمانها يسير، دلّ ذلك على قوّة المرض وعظمه ولذلك صارت تدلّ على الخطر والهلاك. فمتى كانت هذه الأعراض بسبب تعب أو إسهال أو سهر أو وجع كانت أقلّ رداءةً.

[37] GALENUS, *In Hippocratis Prognosticum commentaria*, I.7, ed. HEEG, 214. In these passages, Galen simply underlines that the appearance of the *facies* in chronic disease is not surprising at all and does not dwell on what it might suggest about the future development of the pathological condition.

[38] J. CHANDELIER, "Le concept de maladie chronique, des grecs aux arabes et des arabes aux latins", in *Micrologus*, 24 (2016), 25-42.

And if the whites of the eyes at the time of sleep are apparent and the eyelids are closed, and this is not due to some evacuation, nor was this the patient's habit in his health, then this is a bad and deadly sign since this is an indication of a weak brain. And if the eyelid, lip, and nose are twisted and dull, then death is near, because these symptoms are due to a convulsion of the brain, and dullness is due to coldness and death. Cold of the extremities in burning fevers is bad, because it indicates either a large tumor in the interior or an abundance of sticky, cold humors in the extremities.

Hippocrates, *Prognostic*

فإنّ العينين إن كانتا تحيدان عن الضوء أو كانتا تدمعان عن غير إرادة أو كانتا مزورّتين أو كانتا أحدهما أصغر من الأخرى **أو احمرّ بياضها أو كانت فيهما عروق كمودة أو سود** أو كان فيهما رمص أو كانتا مضطربتين **أو ناتئتين أو غائرتين جدًّا** وكان لون الوجه كلّه متغيرًا، فينبغي أن تظنّ بهذه الدلائل كلّها أنّها دلائل رديئة قتّالة. **وقد ينبغي أن تتفقّد ما يظهر من باطن العينين في وقت النوم**: **فإنّه إذا ظهر شيء من بياضها والجفنان منطبقين** ثمّ لم يكن ذلك عن ذرب أو شرب دواء مسهّل **ولم يكون أيضا فيمن عادته أن ينام وعيناه بتلك الحال، فإنّ ذلك دليل رديء قتّال جدًّا. فإن كان الجفن ملتويًا أو كان كمدًا أو كان الشفة والعين والأنف بتلك الحال مع بعض تلك العلامات الباقية، فينبغي أن تعلم أنّ المريض قريب من الموت**.

If the eyes deviate from the light, or they shed tears involuntarily, or they are squint, or one of them is smaller than the other, or the whites are red, or they have dull or black veins in them, or there is white secretion in them, or they are in continuous commotion, or protruding, or very sunken, and the color of the entire face changes, you should think that all signs are bad and fatal. You should check what appears from the inside of the eyes at the time of sleep, because if some of the whiteness of the eyes appears and the eyelids are closed, and this is not due to diarrhea or drinking a purgative medicine, and it is not affecting someone who is accustomed to sleeping with his eyes in this state, then this is a very bad and fatal sign. If the eyelid is crooked, or livid, or the lip, eye, and nose are in that condition [lividness] with some of these other signs, then you should know that the patient is close to death.

Galen, Commentary on the *Prognostic*

وأمّا احمرار بياضها كالذي يعرض في الرمد وفي السكارى فيدلّ على امتلاء الدماغ وآمته ، وكثير ما يدلّ على ورم حارّ عارض في هذه الأعضاء، وذلك أنّ انصباب الدم في العروق التي في العينين الذي بسببه يُرَى بياضهما أحمر وهو الغشاء المحيط بالجزء من العينين المسمّى الإكليلي إنّما يكون عن هذين السببين، وقد بيّنت في كتابي في التشنّج أنّ هذا الغشي يربط جميع الأغشية التي في العين وبيّنت أيضا أنّ طرف السفاق يأتي هذا الموضع من العين مع ما فيه من العروق. وقد بيّن ابقراط بيانًا واضعًا أنّه يعني بقوله : أو احمرّ بيضهما هذه العروق فيما كتبه بعد ذلك، فإنّه قال إذا كانت فيهما عروق كامدة أو سود وهذا العارض لا محالةً قتّال، وذلك أنّ العروق التي في العينين [لا] تظاهر حمرًا إمّا بسبب امتلاء كما قلت، وإمّا بسبب ورم حارّ في الدماغ والكمودة والسواد يعرضان في العينين إذا بردتا وإنّما يبردان إذا عرض لهما الموت، ولذلك صارت هذه الألوان دائمًا تدلّ على الهلاك [...] وقد

هجا أيضا العينين الناتئتين والغائرتين جدًّا إلّا أنّ نتوء العينين قد يكون في ابتداء المرض وخصّةً في من تقيّئ بسبب طعام كثير تناوله وشراب كثير شربه.[39]

As for the redness of their whites, as seen in ophthalmia and drunkenness, it indicates that the brain is full and affected by meningitis, and it often indicates a hot tumor in these body parts. That is to say, the flowing of blood towards the veins in the eyes is the cause for the whites of the eyes being seen red, and the white of the eyes corresponds to the membrane surrounding the part of the eyes called "crown". And this [the flowing of the blood] is originated by these two causes. I have shown in my book *On Spasm* that this membrane connects all the veins in the eye, and I have also shown that the extremity of the pericranium comes to this place of the eye with its veins. And Hippocrates has clearly explained that by "or their white becomes red" he meant these veins in what he wrote afterwards, for he said "if there are dull or black veins in them, this symptom must be fatal", because the veins in the eyes appear[40] red either because of fullness, as I said, or because of a hot tumor in the brain, and dullness and blackness appear in the eyes when they are cold. But they become cold if they are exposed to death, which is why these colors always indicate death. As for secretions, as you have learnt, they are caused by a disease occurring in the eye parts, as in the case of ophthalmia and other eye diseases, and it does not indicate a danger. […] He also attacked the protruding and very sunken eyes, but the protrusion of the eyes may be at the beginning of the disease, especially in those who have vomited because of exaggerate intake of food and drink.

Al-Maǧūsī opens this passage with literal quotations of *Prognostic* 3, but explanations taken from Galen's commentary are systematically embedded in the text and, when necessary, simplified. Al-Maǧūsī epitomizes the passage about the flowing of blood towards the veins of the eye membrane as "the brain and its membranes are filled with bloody substances". He also leaves out the "restless" eyes and focuses on their protruding appearance. Thereafter, al-Maǧūsī does not mention their being "sunken", and this is probably not by chance. Indeed, after describing protruding eyes, Galen tries to explain how "protruding and sunken eyes" can be reconciled but the discussion does not reach an

[39] Oxford, BL, Laud. Or. 139, ff. 31v-32r.

[40] This Galenic passage is very complex, and it is not possible to dwell on it at length in this essay. However, the comparison with the Greek original (Galenus, *In Hippocratis Prognosticum commentaria*, I.10, rr. 21-25, ed. Heeg, 222) indicates that this sentence should have a positive meaning. I have therefore chosen to expunge the negation from the text. A future edition of the Galenic commentary might help assessing the correct reading.

unambiguous result. Evidently, al-Mağūsī leaves out this uncoherent element.[41] The only part of this text which has no parallels in the sources is al-Mağūsī's reference to burning fevers. The remark seems foreign to the rest of the discussion, but it provides an example of how such bad signs can be interpreted in the case of acute diseases, of which burning fevers are an example. Moreover, in Stephens' commentary "burning fevers" are mentioned as an essential factor for the development of a deadly diseases, since they contribute to dissipation.[42] Al-Mağūsī's repeated references (see below) to burning fevers might derive from his acquaintance with a similar Alexandrian tradition.

After these passages, al-Mağūsī dwells on the tongue and the condition of the body extremities, which is the topic of paragraph 9 of the *Prognostic*. He thus skips the paragraphs between *Prognostic* 3 and 9 and concludes the section concerning "accidents affecting statuses of the body and its touch" by focusing on cutaneous lesions and the temperature of the body surface. However, when starting the description of "accidents affecting actions of the body", al-Mağūsī goes back to the eyes, that is *Prognostic* 3, by focusing on their actions.

فأما الدلائل المأخوذة من الأفعال، فهي ما أصف. **إذا كانت العينان تحيدان عن الضوء فتدمعان من غير إرادة فذلك دليل ردئ**، وإن كان مع ذلك حركتها كثيرةً **وهما مزورّتان وأحداهما أصغر من الأخرى فإنّها علامات مهلكة**، وذلك لأنّ إجادة العين عن الضوء يدلّ على ضعف القوّة الباصرة الحادثة عن ضعف الدماغ لا عن غيره من أعضاء العين، وسيلان الدموع يدلّ على ضعف القوّة الماسكة التي في الدماغ. فإن كان ذلك مع حمّى محرقة وعلامات رديئة دلّ ذلك على الهلاك، وإن كانت الحمّى سليمةً دلّت على رعاف سيحدث. فأمّا ازورار العين فيدلّ على تشنّج الدماغ لا تشنّج العضل كما يعرض في الحول وصغر أحدي العينين وكثرة حركتها يكون من رعشة عرضت للعضل والجفون وهذان العرضان دالّان على الهلاك.[43]

The signs taken from the actions are what I am about to describe. If the eyes turn away from the light and tear involuntarily, it is a bad sign, and if they move a lot and are squinted, and one of them is smaller than the other, these are fatal signs, because the turning away of the eye from the light indicates the weakness of the visual power caused by the weakness of the brain and not by other parts of the eye, and the flow of tears indicates the weakness of the retentive faculty of the brain. If this is with a burning fever and bad signs, it indicates

[41] Galenus, *In Hippocratis Prognosticum commentaria*, I.10, ed. Heeg, 224-225. The text is faithfully translated into Arabic.

[42] Stephanus Philosophus, *A commentary*, I.23, rr.10-14, ed. Duffy, 74-75.

[43] Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 94b, f. 247v; Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Or. 450a, f. 223r and Paris, BnF, Ar. 2874, f.172v.

death, and if the fever is healthy, it indicates that a nosebleed will occur. As for the squinted eye, it indicates brain spasm, not muscle spasm, as seen in strabismus. And the smallness of one eye and its frequent movement is from a tremor of the muscles and eyelids, and these two symptoms are signs of death.

Galen's commentary on *Prognostic*

يقول إنّ العينين تحيدان عن الضوء بسبب ضعف القوّة الباصرة، وضعف هذه القوّة تكون في بعض الأقاويل بسبب ضعف آلاتها كالذي يعرض في الرمد وربّما ضعفت من غير أن تكون الآلات نالها مكروه؛ وإذا كان ضعفها بهذا السبب كان ذلك دليل قتّال وكذلك أيضا إذا دمعتا، فإنّه إن كانت تلك الدموع بسبب رمد عرض فيها أو مادّة انحدرت إليهما من الرأس فإنّ ذلك يكون على خلاف المجري الطبيعي وليس يدلّ على الموت لا محالةً. [في ذكر الازورار] وإن كان بسبب ضعف القوّة دلّ على الهلاك والموت. وأمّا ازورار فيعرض فيهما عند تشنّج العضل المتحرّك لهما ومتى كانت هذه العلّة في العضل المتحرّك للعينين فقط فليس يدلّ ذلك على أمر رديء [فقط]، ومن كان بسبب علّة مبدئ العصب الذي يأتي العينين وهو الدماغ فذلك دليل على الهلاك في الغايّة، وذلك أنّ العضل القريب من الدماغ أشدّ إحساسًا بالعلّة العارضة فيه وقبل جميع العضل، فربّما عرضت هذه العلّة في عضل العينين الذي ذكره ابقراط في كتاب المفاصل ونقصان أحدي العينين أيضا عن الأخرى بخلاف المجري الطبيعي عرض قتّال وذلك أنّه يدلّ على موت القوّة المدبّرة للعينين.[44]

He says that the eyes turn away from the light because of the weakness of the visual faculty, and the weakness of this faculty is, in some accounts,[45] due to the weakness of its body parts, such as that which occurs in ophthalmia, but it may be weakened without the parts being harmed, and if it is weakened for this reason, it is a sign of death. Similarly, if they tear; if these tears are due to ophthalmia or a substance that has flown to them from the head, this is contrary to the natural course but does not inevitably indicate death, and if it is due to weakness of the faculty, it indicates destruction and death. As for squinted eyes, they appear in sick people when the muscle moving them is affected by spasms, and when this disease affects only the muscle that moves the eyes, it does not indicate a bad thing, and if it is due to the disease affecting the beginning of the nerve that is opposed to the eyes, which is the brain,[46] it is a most certain sign of death, because the muscle near the brain is more sensitive to the disease affecting it and feels it before all other; this disease might affect [also] the muscle of the eyes, which Hippocrates mentioned in his *Book on Joints*. And when an eye is smaller than the other, in a way contrary to the normal course, it is a fatal symptom, as it indicates the death of the faculty regulating the eyes.

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[44] Oxford, BL, Laud. Or. 139, ff. 30r-31v.

[45] This is the reading of MS Oxford, BL, Laud. Or. 139, but it is not clear to which "reports" Galen might refer. The Greek text has ἐνίοτε, "sometimes".

[46] The Greek text refers here to "the beginning of the nerves, which is the brain". It is not clear why in the Arabic translation, as it is preserved in MS Oxford, BL, Laud. Or. 139, the specification "which is opposed to the eyes" was added.

These qualities of the eye presented in this text are taken from the same *Prognostic* passage quoted above (p. 506), and specifically from its beginning: al-Mağūsī decided to postpone this part and insert it in the second category of "signs taken from actions". He also refers here to "rapid movements" of the eyes, a topic omitted in the previous section on accidents that affect their conditions. Also in this case, explanations taken from Galen's commentary are interposed in between the Hippocratic quotations. Al-Mağūsī's intervention is clear in the etiology of "avoiding the light": Galen's more general statements are clarified as meaning that only the brain, and no other body part surrounding the eyes, is harmed. The same is true for the description of squinted eyes: al-Mağūsī directly states that this is caused by brain spasm, and not muscle spasm, thus epitomising of Galen's text. Finally, al-Mağūsī seems to contribute his own explanation of why the eyes tear, why one is smaller than the other and why they move quickly, reiterating his peculiar reference to burning fevers.

Conclusion: prognosis between tradition and patients' observation

The example of the *facies hippocratica* shows that al-Mağūsī's assertions regarding the importance of prognosis in medical practice are not mere rhetoric, given the effort he has devoted to both interpreting and explaining Hippocrates and Galen's doctrines. Moreover, it is probably no coincidence that his classificatory and structuring working method is so evident in this book concerning prognosis: if anticipating the course of diseases is so risky, creating a strict classification of bad and good signs provides an effective armor against the danger of error.

Thanks to al-Mağūsī's work, foreknowledge appears possible when it lays its foundations in the comparison between the observable reality of the patient's body and an interpretative grid offered by past physicians' experience. The elaboration of a well-structured grid allows for such interweaving of traditional, inherited knowledge and new observations, where the latter can be embedded into the former to create a coherent whole. This method is a perfect concretization of the theoretical premises expressed by al-Mağūsī in the introduction to his encyclopedia: ancient and modern physicians, Greeks and Arabs are essentially in agreement with each other, although there might be dif-

ferences in accidental aspects, and the structuration of sparsely transmitted ancient knowledge might call for improvement.[47] In the case of the *facies*, the picture defined by the *Prognostic* and its commentaries is both newly organized and extended by adding further exemplifications or emphasizing certain aspects.

Overall, al-Maǧūsī respects his own theoretical premises and methodologies when he assumes the pose of an interpreter of Hippocrates. Therefore, the section about prognosis in the *Kitāb al-Malakī* can be considered an example of an early, yet mature interest in commenting on the *Prognostic*. Already in the second half of the 10th century, this work had much to say to a practicing physician, and a close analysis of the *Kitāb al-Malakī* makes it possible to observe, in a concrete way, how this reading, understanding and updating activity took place.

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[47] On this topic, see A. Gili, "The Concept of Consensus in Theoretical Reflections about Medicine: The Prefaces of the 'Kitāb al-Malakī' and the 'Muʿālağāt al-buqrāṭīya'" in *Consensus*, hrsg. v. A. Speer, T. Jeschke (Miscellanea Mediaevalia 43), Berlin-Boston 2024, 431-454.

Somnium coadiuvat ad curationem. The Curative Power of Dreams in Pietro d'Abano's *Conciliator*

Mario Loconsole

"Non ho mai dubitato della validità dei segni, Adso,
sono la sola cosa di cui l'uomo dispone per orientarsi nel mondo".
Umberto Eco, *Il nome della rosa*

1. Introduction

The philosophical tradition – from Aristotle (in particular in *De insomniis* and *De divinatione per somnum*) to his Arabic interpreters and to the Latin reception – has been fascinated by the divinatory power of dreams, and it has attempted to frame the phenomenon within physical and natural principles.[1] Also, there was the medical literature, which did not deviate from the intent to "naturalise" dreamlike experience, favouring more practical and physiological aspects. One of the most intriguing tendencies in this respect – which has its roots in Hippocratic and Galenic texts – is undoubtedly that of the use of dreams as a diagnostic and curative tool, because they were believed to represent the body's humoral imbalance through oneiric images, and because

[1] See e.g., G. Fioravanti, "La 'scientia somnialis' di Boezio di Dacia", in *Atti dell'Accademia delle Scienze di Torino: II. Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, 101 (1966-1967), 329-369; T. Gregory, "I sogni e gli astri", in *I sogni nel Medioevo, Seminario Internazionale (Roma, 2-4 ottobre 1983)*, a cura di T. Gregory, Roma 1985, 111-148; L. Repici, "Introduzione", in Aristoteles, *Il sonno e i sogni. Il sonno e la veglia, I sogni, La divinazione durante il sonno*, a cura di L. Repici, Venezia 2003, 9-80; P. van der Eijk, "Aristotle on Cognition in Sleep", in *Sleep*, ed. T. Wiedemann, K. Dowden, Bari 2003, 25-41; S. Donati, "Dreams and Divinatory Dreams in Albert the Great's *Liber de somno et vigilia*", in *Contemplation and Philosophy: Scholastic and Mystical Modes of Medieval Philosophical Thought*, ed. A. Speer, R. Hofmeister Pich (Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 125), Leiden 2018, 178-215.

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they were considered possible mediators for curative indications from superior entities.[2]

Aristotle acknowledged the possibility of premonitory and non-accidental dreams in *De divinatione per somnum*, considering them to be due to perceivable movements from distant objects and places that reached the dreamer's soul.[3] At the same time, he also recognised that a certain kind of dreams could be used to predict incipient afflictions of the sleeper (1, 463a4-21) and even that dreams may be causes or signs of actions that the dreamer would perform while awake (1, 463a21-31). Nonetheless, the Stagirite was somewhat hesitant about the prognostic value of dreams.[4] It was the Arabic tradition[5] – as well as the Latin tradition, as far back as Albert the Great[6] – that gave a decisive twist to the Aristotelian scepticism about the use of dreams as a means of determining or predicting future events. In this context, the idea of an astrologisation of nature[7] – which considered sublunar events to be es-

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[2] Cf. S. M. Oberhelman, "The Interpretation of Prescriptive Dreams in Ancient Greek Medicine", in *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 36/4 (1981), 416-424; S. M. Oberhelman, "Galen, On Diagnosis from Dreams", in *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 38/1 (1983), 36-47.

[3] Aristoteles, *De divinatione per somnum,* 2, 463b31-464a19, ed. H. J. Drossaart Lulofs, Leiden 1947, 42.1-21.

[4] On Aristotle's scepticism about the predictive power of dreams, see Repici, "Introduzione", 40-53 and 66-74; Donati, "Dreams and Divinatory Dreams", 184; A. Palazzo, "*Philosophi aliter loquuntur de prophetia quam sancti*: Alberto il Grande e la profezia naturale", in *Immaginario e immaginazione nel medioevo* (Textes et Études du Moyen Âge 51), a cura di M. Bettetini, F. Paparella, Louvain-la-Neuve 2009, 181; A. Rodolfi, "Sogno e profezia in Alberto Magno", in Scientia, fides, theologia. *Studi di filosofia medievale in onore di Gianfranco Fioravanti*, a cura di S. Perfetti, Pisa 2011, 201.

[5] See Gregory, "I sogni e gli astri", 119; S. F. Kruger, *Il sogno nel Medioevo*, Milano 1996, 145-204; V. Perrone Compagni, "'Evidentissimi avvertimenti dei numi', Sogni, vaticini, profezie in Pomponazzi", in *Annali del Dipartimento di Filosofia (Nuova Serie)*, 27 (2011), 25-32.

[6] See A. Beccarisi, "Natural Philosophy and Theology. Sleep, Dreams and Divination in Albert the Great's *Super Matthaeum*", in *Quaestio*, 23 (2023), 15-34; A. Bereschi and V. Ile, "Albert the Great on the Materiality of Dreams in *De homine*", in *Quaestio*, 23 (2023), 137-162; Donati, "Dreams and Divinatory Dreams", 178-215; Palazzo, "*Philosophi aliter loquuntur*", 179-201; Rodolfi, "Sogno e profezia", 193-215.

[7] G. Freudenthal, "The Medieval Astrologization of Aristotle's Biology: Averroes on the Role of the Celestial Bodies, in the Generation of Animate Beings", in *Arabic*

sentially directed by astral motions and influences – became also the interpretative pattern that situated divination through dreams within the naturalistic and rational framework. Thus, the capacity to foresee future events became the tangible evidence for the existence of a causal chain originating from higher entities and regulating the course of sublunar events.[8] At least a part of the experienced dreams – that is, those that were not considered to be directly dependent on physiological and psychological states of the dreamer – could thus be put in a common context with other phenomena that were thought to predict future events, such as visions and natural prophecies.[9]

The subject of this study is the *differentia* 157 of Pietro d'Abano's[10] *Conciliator*, in which the author discusses whether dreams are helpful in the treatment of human diseases ("Utrum somnium conferat in cura, necne").[11] From the very first lines, it is clear that the physician from

Sciences and Philosophy, 12/1 (2002), 111-137.

[8] Perrone Compagni, "*Evidentissimi avvertimenti dei numi*", 32.

[9] Perrone Compagni, "*Evidentissimi avvertimenti dei numi*", 21-59; Palazzo, "*Philosophi aliter loquuntur*", 179-201; A. Rodolfi, *'Cognitio obumbrata'. Lo statuto epistemologico della profezia nel secolo XIII* (Micrologus Library 74), Firenze 2016; Ead., "*Locus autem Prophetarum Spiritus sanctus est*. Il profeta e la profezia nei commenti biblici di Alberto Magno", in *Divus Thomas*, 122 (2019), 185-218.

[10] On the figure and thought of Pietro d'Abano I only mention here two classic but essential studies: B. Nardi, "Intorno alle dottrine filosofiche di Pietro d'Abano", in B. Nardi, *Saggi sull'aristotelismo padovano dal secolo XIV al XVI*, Firenze 1958, 19-70; N. G. Siraisi, "Two Models of Medical Culture, Pietro d'Abano and Taddeo Alderotti", in *Medicine and the Italian Universities, 1250-1600* (Education and Society in the Middle Ages and Renaissance 12), Leiden-Boston-Köln 2001, 79-99. Among the most recent volumes dedicated to the Paduan author, cf. J.-P. Boudet, F. Collard, N. Weill-Parot (éd.), *Médecine, astrologie et magie au Moyen Âge: autour de Pietro d'Abano* (Micrologus Library 50), Firenze 2013; P. De Leemans, M. J. F. M. Hoenen (ed.), *Between Text and Tradition: Pietro d'Abano and the Reception of Pseudo-Aristotle's* Problemata Physica *in the Middle Ages*, Leuven 2016; G. Piaia, *Pietro d'Abano. Filosofo, medico e astrologo europeo*, Milano 2020; M. Klemm, *Medical Anthropology in the Late Middle Ages: Body, Soul, and the Virtues according to Peter of Abano*, Berlin 2024.

[11] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator controversiarum quae inter philosophos et medicos versantur*, apud Iuntas, Venetiis 1565 (ripr. anast. Padova 1985), 157, ff. 213va-214va. Very little has been researched on the subject in the work of Pietro d'Abano: see, e.g., W. C. Curry, *Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences*, New York 1960, 207-209; a topic close to the one addressed in this article – namely, on the position to assume during sleep as covered in Pietro d'Abano's works – has been dealt with recently and

Padua follows the trend of the Arabic-Latin tradition, both in his naturalistic understanding of dreamlike experiences and in his endorsement of the prognostic value of dreams. Quoting verbatim an Averroes' excerpt from the *Compendium* on Aristotle's works on sleep,[12] Pietro emphasises how the predictive function of dreams – and the same can be said of visions or prophecies – cannot merely be a random occurrence. It is rather subject to essential natural dynamics, which should thus be investigated from the perspective of physical science and medicine.[13] And it is precisely for this reason that it is right to scrutinise the principles of such phenomena: since there are causal and consequential relationships between predictive dreams and future events related to them, it is valid not only to provide insight into the natural principles of dreams, but also to rely on the prognostic value of them for the sake of a profitable – in this case medical – purpose.

The following parts of the article illustrates and comments on the salient issues of the *differentia* 157: firstly, a threefold division of dreams as presented by Pietro will be analysed; then, it will be clarified how according to the author dreams can be useful in curing illnesses; thirdly, the conditions for the occurrence of predictive dreams will be investigated, determining whether a dream is to be considered true or false; finally, some concluding remarks will be drawn.

2. How many types of dreams?

Pietro divides dreams into three distinct classes: the natural dream (*somnium naturale*), the animal dream (*somnium animale*), and the

very lively by G. Zuccolin, "Su quale fianco è meglio dormire? Le soluzioni a un'antica questione, dai *Problemata* pseudo-aristotelici a Pietro d'Abano", in *Le Sommeil. Théories, représentations et pratiques. (Moyen Age et époque moderne)*, éd. B. Andenmatten, K. Crousaz, A. Paravicini Bagliani (Micrologus Library 125), Firenze 2024, 283-316.

[12] Averroes, *Compendium libri Aristotelis De sompno et vigilia*, ed. A.L. Shields, H. Blumberg, Cambridge (Massachusetts) 1949, *Versio Vulgata*, 94.25-95.34.

[13] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 213vbH: "Nullus hominum est qui non habeat portionem in somniis et in apprehensionibus, que fiunt in vigilantibus, quod apparet quia cum homo experimentaverit multotiens videbit quod hoc non accidit casu, sed essentia. Et alie comprehensiones, puta visiones et prophetie, licet non sint vise, sunt tamen valde famose, que autem huiusmodi apud omnes aut sunt necessaria secundum totum aut secundum partem: impossibile enim ut famosum sit falsum secundum totum".

celestial or divine dream (*somnium celeste seu divinum*).[14] Natural dreams originate in the domain of bodily complexions and therefore derive from the balance of the humours ("que veniunt ex temperantia virtutum humorum"). This is an organic type of dream, namely whose causes are to be found in the domain of physiological factors within the body of the dreamer. While sleeping,[15] the impressions of the humoral balance are delivered through the spirit[16] to the imaginative faculty, which initiates the oneiric representation. Therefore, if someone has a sanguine complexion – writes Pietro –, it often happens that they dream about red or pleasant things, such as swimming in blood, banquets, and the like; the choleric often sees yellowish things or violent situations, such as running fast, fighting, intense passions, and the like; and the same holds true for phlegmatic and melancholic natures, who have their specific and recurring types of dreams.[17]

The animal dream originates from great anxiety and disturbance of the waking mind ("causatur ex multa sollicitudine anime circa quoddam in vigilia"), being that kind of dream that is caused by a great ap-

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[14] A brief summary of Pietro's threefold description of dreams can be found in: Curry, *Chaucer and the Medieval Sciences*, 207-209.

[15] For an overview on the philosophical and medical aspects of the phenomenon of sleep, see V. Leroux, N. Palmieri, C. Pigné (éd.), *Le sommeil. Approches philosophiques et médicales de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*, Paris 2015.

[16] On the role of the *spiritus* in physiological functions of living beings, see, e.g., J. J. Bono, "Medical Spirits and the Medieval Language of Life", in *Traditio*, 40 (1984), 91-130; M. Panarelli, "Bodily Prerequisites of the Mind: The Spirit as the Highest Product of Digestion", in *The Embodied Soul. Aristotelian Psychology and Physiology in Medieval Europe between 1200 and 1420*, ed. M. Gensler, M. Mansfeld, M. Michałowska, G. Klima (Historical-Analytical Studies on Nature, Mind and Action 11), Cham 2022, 115-132.

[17] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 213vbF: "Naturalia somnia sunt que veniunt ex temperantia virtutum humorum cum spiritu gerente virtutem formalem ad imaginativam. Quando enim in aliquo natura sanguinis dominatur, ut ad multum videbit in somnio res rubeas delectabiles, seque in sanguine natare, convivia et similia; quando vero cholere, res igneas citrinas, volatus, rixas, furores et que huiusmodi; si autem phlegmatis natura, somniabit aquas, nives, frigora, stupores et que talium; quod si melancholie, res nigras perterrentes, ploratus, casus, loca mortuorum et que talium, que siquidem permanent diutius aut labuntur secundum quod corporis natura participat siccitate aut humiditate". See Averroes, *Compendium libri Aristotelis De sompno et vigilia*, ed. Shields, Blumberg, *Versio Parisina*, 124.59-125.61: "[…] colericus sompniat videre ignes et sanguineus res rubeas et fleumaticus natare in aquis et melancolicus videre res nigras et homines mortuos".

prehension of the soul for moods or circumstances experienced in the waking state. At this point, Pietro – by relying on an autobiographical episode – tells the reader how he himself was tormented by a recurring dream for more than two years, which was caused by the impression that a trip to the Parisian *studium* had made on him.[18]

The celestial (or divine) dream is brought about by the impressions of the souls that direct the heavenly bodies in their orbits ("a divinis sive celorum causatur animabus que motores dicuntur orbium"), since they are able to leave an imprint on the imagination in accordance with their natures and in proportion to the aptitude of the minds that receive them.[19] Here, Pietro follows what we already called the tendency of astrologising dream experiences: the possibility to predict future events lies in the dependence of the sublunar world on a natural chain of causes initiated by the motion of the stars. According to an assumption already hinted at by Aristotle, and which gradually became widely accepted, the dream and the future event must share a common cause:[20] in Pietro's case – as for the Latin philosophical tradition since Albert the Great's[21] and Boetius of Dacia's[22] commentaries – this common cause is to be found in the influence of the stars on the sublunar world, which regulates and determines every natural process. Simply put, the dream

[18] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 213vbF: "Somnium vero animale dico quod causatur ex multa sollicitudine anime circa quoddam in vigilia, cum enim somno maior motus, ut qui exterior, quietetur propter spirituum contractionem, percipitur minor qui interior. Maior enim motus minorem secundum Aristotelem perturbat et depellit, et huiusmodi quidem somnium me ultra duos annos quam multipliciter fatigavit ex impressione causatum vehemente itineris ad studium Parisiense".

[19] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 213vbG: "Divinum vero somnium seu celeste audio illud quod a divinis sive celorum causatur animabus, que motores etiam dicuntur orbium, qui […] aliquando operantur formam in imagi<na>tione secundum comparationem eorum et comparationem animarum ipsorum secundum aptitudinem, quoniam anime nostre habent maiorem comparationem cum substantiis separatis quam cum corporibus sensibilibus".

[20] See P. J. van der Eijk, *Medicine and Philosophy in Classical Antiquity: Doctors and Philosophers on Nature, Soul, Health and Disease*, Cambridge 2005, 201-202; Donati, "Dreams and Divinatory Dreams", 182 and 187-189; Palazzo, "*Philosophi aliter loquuntur*", 195.

[21] On dreams in Albert the Great, see above footnote 6.

[22] On dreams in Boethius of Dacia, see Fioravanti, "La 'scientia somnialis'", 329-369; V. Feti, "La Scienza dei Sogni nel Medioevo: il *De Somniis* di Boezio Dacia", in *Medicina nei secoli*, 27 (2015), 149-198.

experience and the future event predicted by it have the same cause in that they are produced or regulated by the disposition of the stars. Unlike Albert's interpretation, however, Pietro chooses not to complicate the physical dynamics of this influence: Albert had in fact articulated a complex and refined theory, according to which celestial influences are the cause of dreams, indicating the light irradiated by celestial bodies as a vehicle, which was initially responsible for a physical alteration in the sleeper's body and which in turn provoked that dreamlike imaginative process. This scheme, which – as Tullio Gregory[23] has suggested – is probably borrowed from al-Kindi's *De radiis*, did not make its way to Pietro, who instead seemed to embrace the idea of a direct action of the celestial souls on the dreamer's soul, without the need for further bodily means.[24] In Pietro, a prerequisite for such direct action is the fact that the human soul is far more akin to separate substances than to bodily sensations ("anime nostre habent maiorem comparationem cum substantiis separatis quam cum corporibus sensibilibus").

A further point of interest concerns the bodily process underlying the dreamlike experience and the function of the imaginative faculty. The dream is seen as a representation provided by the imaginative faculty – as considered in Avicenna's account of the internal senses –, capable not only of registering and storing corporeal stimuli, but also of actively and creatively combining them into images, even when the perceived objects are absent.[25] The stimuli received during sleep, however, do not derive from external objects, since the activity of the external senses is muted while one is asleep: with the loss of the sensible perception of external things, imagination becomes much more receptive to all the very subtle impulses that generally go unnoticed while awake. This quieting of the sensitive impulses thus allows more subtle internal stimuli to prevail, such as the humoral balances (as in the natural dream) or "latent thoughts" (such as the daytime worries in the animal dream) or astral impressions (as in the celestial or divine

[23] Gregory, "I sogni e gli astri", 119.

[24] This understanding of the direct relation between celestial souls or intelligences and human soul was by no means new to the Latins. This is, for example, the theoretical choice that both Avicenna and Maimonides had given for a naturalistic explanation of the phenomenon of prophecy: see Palazzo, "*Philosophi aliter loquuntur*", 179-201.

[25] Palazzo, "*Philosophi aliter loquuntur*", 187-195.

dream).[26] Thus, this imaginative faculty is even active in the absence of perceived objects and – using stimuli different from those usually caused by the sensible perceptions of external objects – able to represent images and to produce the dream in the mind of the sleeper. During sleep, the imaginative faculty acts as a device that reacts even to subtler stimulations by providing appropriate representations.[27]

Here, then, follows a brief overview of the three types of dreams and their causes as outlined in Pietro's *differentia*:

Somnium naturale –> caused by the complexion and the balance of the humours

Somnium animale –> caused by great anxieties and disturbances of the waking mind

Somnium celeste –> caused by the impressions made by celestial souls

3. Can dreams be useful in curing diseases?

Having established this tripartition, Pietro gives an insight into the way in which dreams can be helpful in the treatment of illnesses. This can in fact occur in two ways: dreams can act (a) as quite direct causes of healing ("per viam cause quasi immediate") and (b) as signs ("per modum signi").

In the *De divinatione per somnum*,[28] Aristotle had indeed distinguished three possible ways to unfold the relation between dream and future event: as its cause – as fatigue is the cause of a fever; as its sign – as the roughness on the tongue is a sign of someone having a fever; or as a mere coincidence – for example, going for a walk during a solar eclipse is neither a cause nor a sign of the eclipse, rather, the timing of the two events is merely coincidental. Representative examples of

[26] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 214raC: "In somno motus est non raro licet enim virtutes sensitive et motive quiescant extrinsecus, interius tamen motus depellebatur maiori extrinseco". On the topic, see also Donati, "Dreams and Divinatory Dreams", 198-201; Feti, "La Scienza dei Sogni", 154.

[27] Donati, "Dreams and Divinatory Dreams", 201. See also Rodolfi, "Sogno e profezia in Alberto Magno", 213.

[28] Aristoteles, *De divinatione per somnum,* 1, 462b26-463b11.33-39. For an analysis of this Aristotelian passage, see also Donati, "Dreams and Divinatory Dreams", 180-181; Rodolfi, "Sogno e profezia in Alberto Magno", 202-203.

first case are dreams that advise the dreaming person to take a specific course of action in the future. Regarding the logical framework of the second case, it seems as if Aristotle thought of the medical practice of assigning a prognostic value to dreams in the diagnosis of future illnesses.[29] In the third case, there seems to be no causal relationship connecting the dream to the anticipated event; hence, the dream cannot be considered to have any predictive significance.[30]

At least two things are noteworthy: firstly, the idea of the medical significance of dreams was also suggested in Aristotle's text; secondly, Pietro chooses to present the Aristotelian scheme and terminology here, but in fact scales it down to the third case. The reason for this choice is obvious: it would not make any sense to consider accidental coincidences between dreams and future events in the *differentia*; since no relationship occurs in this case – if not merely accidental –, there is no basis for connecting the dream to the future event. On the contrary, the consideration of those cases in which the dream and the future event are linked by a causal connection or by means of signs (as in the first and in the second case), and in which thus inquiring into this non-accidental link can in some way benefit the sick person, is surely of greater significance in this medical analysis.

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[29] VAN DER EIJK, *Medicine and Philosophy*, 192-201.

[30] On this passage, see also Albert the Great's commentary: ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De somno et vigilia*, III, 2, 1, ed. A. BORGNET (Opera Omnia 9), Paris 1890, 197b-198a: "Somnia igitur sunt in uno istorum trium ratione, aut forte in ratione duorum: tertium enim cum his non coincidit quia quod per accidens est, raro est, et neque signum, neque causa. Dico autem causam, sicut dicimus eclipsis lunae esse causam terrae interpositionem, et eclipsis solaris causam esse positionem lunae inter visum nostrum et solem, et sicut putrefactio vel labor putrefaciens humorem est causa febris. Sic etiam sunt quaedam somnia quae causas habent imagines ignis. Signum autem vocatur quod designat aliquid, licet non sit causa ipsius sicut accensio directa lunae ad modum capitis vel caudae draconis, et directa subtractio, signum futurae eclipsis: asperitas autem linguae signum est febriendi, et somnium de gustu fellis signum est febris instantis. Signum autem, ut dicit Galenus, est respectu futuri, et respectu praesentis, et praeteriti: et hoc praecipue in somnis fit, in quantum divinando cognoscuntur occulta cujuslibet differentiae temporis. Accidentia vero sunt quae a casu et fortuna sic eveniunt, sicut aliquo ambulante convenit casu deficere vel eclipsari solem: ambulatio enim illius neque signum, neque causa defectus solis est: nec e converso defectus solis est causa vel signum ambulandi: et ideo nihil talium casualium et non per se accidentium nullum fit semper vel frequenter, sed raro valde et incerte, ut diximus in secundo de physico auditu".

Going back to the *differentia*, it has been said that the thesis defended by the physician from Padua is that dreams can be useful as (a) direct causes of healing and (b) as signs.

(a) In order to understand how dreams can act as a direct cause of healing, one should consider a hypothetical situation, in which an action performed in a dream – and leading to beneficial results in that dream – can be performed likewise in the waking state, whenever the same situation occurs in real life. It may indeed happen that a certain way of acting is suggested during sleep. Upon waking, the dreamer, treasuring the subject of the dream, acts as the dream has suggested to them: such a dream causes future events, as the precise action that was suggested during sleep would not have been taken into consideration without experiencing that specific dream.[31] To provide an example, Pietro recounts[32] what happened to an acquaintance of his (*quidam sociorum*), who, fearing greatly that he might fall ill with phthisis, dreamt that he was prescribed to drink milk. Since milk consumption was, at the time, highly recommended for people suffering from phthisis,[33] Pietro deduced that, in this case, it was the dream itself that directly provided a curative suggestion. Of the same type are also the examples that the physician from Padua mentions a little earlier, presenting the case of a spleen patient who was prescribed during a dream to drink his own urine every day three times a day; or that of others who, obeying a dream they had, were cured of leprosy.[34]

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[31] See Feti, "La Scienza dei Sogni", 167. Another example of this kind is presented by Albert the Great: see Albertus Magnus, *De somno et vigilia*, III, 2, 2, ed. Borgnet, 199a-b: "Et tale fuit somnium, de quo dicit Galenus, quod quidam dolens splenem saepe contulit et ordinavit quod faceret, unde sibi contrarium splenis medicaretur, et somniavit quod mingeret super manum inter duos digitos auricularem et annularem: et cum evigilaret sic fecit, et convaluit: et sic somnium fuit sibi principium operationis diurnae quam fecit in vigilia sequenti. Saepe autem fiunt hujusmodi somnia: hoc ergo modo contingunt quaedam somniorum, quorum principia sunt in nobis et causae".

[32] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 214raA: "Tale vero est somnium, ut pretactum ex argutis, unde quidam sociorum verens phthisim incurrere vidit in somnio quod precipiebatur sibi horride assumere quod grece lac importat et salvaretur a phthisi. Quantum autem in ea conferat, differentia ostendetur 194. […] Confert igitur ratione cause".

[33] See, e.g., Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 194, ff. 248raA: "Lac convenit phthisicis […] universaliter lac bonum esse dico indigentibus bono et facili nutrimento, sed phthisicus hoc indiget, cum sit consumptus et difficile nutritus".

[34] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 213vaH: "Quidam spleneticus somniavit

(b) A dream can, on the other hand, act as a sign to benefit the cure of a disease, precisely because such a sign may lead to knowledge of what caused the disease, thus providing useful information regarding a remedy.[35] Unlike in other cases, Pietro does not provide examples of dreams that may function as signs in the prediction of a disease or its possible cure. Given, however, the link with the astrological lexicon – and the setting of the predictive oneiric experience in relation to celestial influences –, it could well be assumed that these may be like those dreams that are able to predict future events, but concerning the dreamer's health. Thus, just as, the prediction of any unfortunate event might make the dreamer implement a series of precautionary and preventive measures against it, so the prediction of a certain illness might trigger that person to take preventive measures as well, such as following a certain diet or pharmacological precepts. To use an example from the *Speculum astronomiae* that might be helpful to better understand the kind of dream prediction considered here: if a man knew in advance, from the teaching of the stars, that he would experience extreme heat and dryness in a future summer due the influence of the heavens, he could change his temperament in advance, for instance, by changing his diet, until it is rather cold and wet; in this way, the influence of the heavens, which would have made him ill due to the excess of heat and dryness if he had a moderate temperament, now, since it finds him in the opposite state, brings him back to a moderate temperament instead.[36]

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quod ei precipiebatur in somnio, ut urinam suam biberet omni die ter et sanaretur […]. Aliqui obediendo somnio vel visioni curati sunt a lepra".

[35] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 214raA: "Adhuc ex parte quidem signi, quia illud quod significat ducit in causam morbi, atque in ipsum confert – tale vero est somnium, ut tetigit propositorum primum – itaque somnium iuvamentum ut signum prestat cure".

[36] *Speculum Astronomiae*, 13, ed. P. Zambelli, in Ead., *The Speculum Astronomiae and Its Enigma: Astrology, Theology and Science in Albertus Magnus and his Contemporaries* (Boston Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science 135), Dordrecht-Boston-London 1992, 258.29-36: "Unde si homo ex astrorum magisterio praescierit quod in aestate futura ex operatione caeli passurus sit ex superfluitate caloris et siccitatis, in multo tempore ante per exhibitionem diaetae potest mutare complexionem suam, donec declinet ad latus frigiditatis et humiditatis, ut operatio caeli adveniens, quae si ipsum in media consistentia invenisset, ad latus aegritudinis ex calore superfluo et siccitate traxisset, dum ipsum in opposito latere invenit, potius reducit ad medium sanitatis".

4. Truth and falsehood in predictive dreams: a handbook for the dreamer

The case of the causation or prediction of future events, however, remains a very uncertain field of investigation, and not only because it is at the mercy of the contingency of mundane circumstances. In fact, from this point of view, not all dreams can have the same relevance as causes or signs of future events. Thus, Pietro emphasises that there may be some dreams that are true, while others are to be considered completely false ("Dividitur autem multipliciter somnium, quoniam aliud est verum, aliud falsum").[37] There is thus a "gradation of truth" in dreams: only certain dream experiences have a meaning and are thus relatable to future events. First of all, then, the type of dream that the physician from Padua defines as more true (*verius*) is undoubtedly the celestial one: according to a scheme of rationalisation and naturalisation of the predictive nature of dreams, Pietro assigns a higher degree of truthfulness to those dreams that depend on natural causes that not only determine dream representations, but also regulate the life and course of the sublunar world. On the other hand, animal dreams seem to have less value in predictive terms: in fact, they seem to have very little significance or none at all, they are – for the most part – an illusion concerning those things that afflict or occupy the soul while awake, so that, for example, someone who is suffering from hunger imagines that they are eating. The natural dream, although it is the type of dream that occurs most frequently, is not of great significance, as if the dream related to the humoral balance or complexion of the sleeper does not tell us more than what is already present in his body ("immediatam habet significationem"), thus having no great application in the field that investigates the possibility of dreams to predict future events.[38]

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[37] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 213vbE. See Averroes, *Compendium libri Aristotelis De sompno et vigilia*, ed. Shields, Blumberg, *Versio Parisina*, 94.21: "[…] ipsorum enim quedam [sompnia] sunt vera et quedam sunt falsa".

[38] See Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 214raAB: "[…] somnium verius est celeste seu divinum et maxime quando anima fuerit libera, superioribus substantiis applicata, eorum representationes suscipiens. Animale vero nullius aut quam pauce veritatis existit. Est enim magis illusio eorum quedam, circa que anima fuit sollicita et occupata in vigilia, seu famescenti representantur cibi […]. Somnium vero naturale, etsi verificetur ad multum, nullam tamen grandem hoc est immediatam habet significationem, cum ex parte possit etiam rerum non naturalium permutari".

Actually, the use of dreams as a diagnostic means – precisely because they are able to provide a picture of the physiological state of the patient – is often found in medical literature and the roots of this use can already be traced back to Hippocratic medicine.[39]

The rationale behind this idea lies in the fact that during sleep, namely when the senses that receive external stimuli are closed off, dreams can give voice to all those dispositions or principles within the organism – such as those that cause illness – that would not be perceptible during waking time as they are overwhelmed by sensory perceptions.[40] Pietro probably does not mention this here specifically because he chooses to focus almost exclusively on the predictive function of dreams in preference to the diagnostic one. While diagnostic dreams are warnings that reflect principles or impressions present within us[41] – which basically depend on our own organism –, dreams with predictive value are caused by external principles,[42] namely the celestial impres-

[39] See Repici, "Introduzione", 49-50; G. Guidorizzi, "Sogno, diagnosi, guarigione: da Asclepio a Ippocrate", in *Il sogno in Grecia*, a cura di G. Guidorizzi, Roma-Bari 1988, 87-102.

[40] I quote here an explanatory passage on this subject: Albertus Magnus, *De somno et vigilia*, III, 2, 1, ed. Borgnet, 198a-b: "quaedam somniorum […] sunt causae et signa passionum et operationum quae circa corpus accidunt: et haec sunt somnia quorum principia sunt in nobis. Propter quod etiam qui doctiores inter medicos sunt, dicunt quod oportet valde intendere somniis: quoniam etiam complexio et passio et accidens animae et corporis bonum et malum frequentissime demonstratur in somnio. […] Causa autem somniorum potest esse et in corpore et in anima: et somnium illius erit demonstrativum ut signum: hoc enim in somno magis manifestatur quam in vigilia: cujus causa est, quia motus qui sunt talium humorum vel affectionum in die moventes corpus vel animam, nisi sint valde magni, forte latent, eo quod non sentiuntur propter majores motus corporis et animae qui fiunt a sensibilibus in sensus agentibus in vigilando, etiam in die. In dormiendo autem fit contrarium: motus enim parvi moventes corpus vel animam, magni videntur esse. […] Manifestum est enim, quod omnia principia sunt parva quantitate, licet magna sint potestate, nisi resistatur eis: sicut enim principia aegritudinum et aliarum passionum parva sunt: et ideo in vigilia ab eo qui circa alia occupatus est, animo nequaquam percipiuntur. Manifestum igitur, quod haec principia debilis sunt motus primitus habentia et magis in somno quam in vigilia percipiuntur. Sic igitur quaedam somnia ab his quae in corpore sunt passionibus et dispositionibus causantur, et ipsa nihil aliud quam talia in corpore existentia significant". See. also Feti, "La Scienza dei Sogni", 163.

[41] Borrowing the lexicon of Albert's passage quoted in the previous footnote ("haec sunt somnia quorum principia sunt in nobis").

[42] The distinction between dreams caused by internal or external principles was, however, already traceable in Aristotle's argumentation: see Repici, "Introduzione", 66.

sions in the case of Pietro's interpretation. Hence, the physician from Padua undertakes a peculiar attempt: he uses the description of predictive dreams as transmitted by Arabic and Latin philosophy and applies it to the medical field, a field in which the diagnostic dream – that is, the dream that indicates the patient's present physiological state – had a significant degree of primacy.

Moreover, and besides this "gradation of truth" among dreams, Pietro also outlines a series of conditions that help the dreamer to better receive predictive dreams, providing advice on how to best dispose of their mind and body; conversely, these conditions may also serve as a discriminating factor in judging whether the dream experienced is to be considered true, according to the circumstances in which it occurred. As a matter of fact, the final part of the *differentia* is occupied with the idea that dream representations can be contaminated by certain adverse conditions. Here, it is not only stated – as mentioned earlier – that dreams can be divided into true and false, but – much more pessimistically – that most of them are to be considered entirely false ("plerunque non sunt vera somnia").[43]

If, in fact, dreams that are more truthful – bearing information useful for interpreting or predicting future events – are to be found among celestial dreams, it is also advisable for the soul of the dreamer to be free, united with the superior substances and receptive to the representations of these ("quando anima fuit libera, superioribus substantis applicata, eorum representationes suscipiens").[44] Furthermore, it is rare for dreams to occur if one falls asleep immediately after eating because of the many internal movements caused by digestion ("in his que sunt post preemissionem ciborum minime fit somnia videre, tunc enim maxime accidit moveri propter introductum cibum"); and the same is true if one has worked hard, as this leads to a dissolution of the spirit and a disturbance of the soul, preventing heavenly impressions from being received ("minoratur etiam somnium post vehementem laborem et spiritum dissolutionem. Anima enim tunc recondita quiescit totaliter […], cum anima turbata nequeat que celestium impressiones animarum

[43] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 214raC.

[44] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 214raA: "Somnium verius est celeste seu divinum et maxime quando anima fuit libera, superioribus substantis applicata, eorum representationes suscipiens".

suscipere"). Moreover, morning is the best time of the day to have good dreams, precisely because it is the time when all thoughts quiet down and the motions of the humours are mild ("omnes enim cogitationes hac hora quiescunt et motus humorum sunt finiti").[45] Therefore, the best condition for predictive dreams is the absence of disturbances, when bodily functions are reduced to a minimum and the mind is calm and free from passions: the desired state is that of maximum receptivity with the lowest possible physical and psychological interference, as if in sleep – once external sensory perceptions have been deactivated – a further effort should be made to quiet the internal organism, preparing it to receive celestial impressions.

Moreover, dreams are generally better if they take place in times, regions and living conditions that possess hot and dry qualities. Pietro himself reports here how he was deprived of the capability of dreaming in England and Scotland, precisely because he often dined on wet food and beer![46] In spite of this, the melancholic complexion remains the best for experiencing predictive dreams precisely because of the qualities of the cold and dry black bile;[47] and this is so according to a *topos* already traceable in Aristotle's *Problemata*,[48] but which Pietro seems to derive directly from Averroes' commentary.[49] Yet, it is the quietness

[45] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 214raBC.

[46] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 214raD: "Somnium etiam accidit amplius cum apprehensionibus et regione, hora et universaliter vita temperatis ad caliditatem et siccitatem quam in oppositis, et ideo viri reperiuntur illic et tunc prophetici […], quare in Anglia et Scotia repletus humidis et cervisia fere per annum secedens vacavi a somnio".

[47] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 214rbAC: "Humor melancholicus convenit somnio et actioni istius virtutis, quia enim iste humor est multi vaporis ascendit ad caput et facit somnium. Et ideo convenit somnio huicque virtuti et actioni complexio frigida et sicca. Frigiditas enim facit tarditatem motus et siccitas confirmationem forme. […] Homines enim scilicet melancholicos phantasmata movent maxime de memoria et reminiscentia".

[48] Aristoteles, *Problemata*, XXX,1, 953a10-995a40. See also Aristoteles, *De divinatione per somnum*, 2, 464a32-b5.44-45. On the topic of dreams in melancholic temperaments, see R. Klibansky, E. Panofsky, F. Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy. Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art*, Nendeln-Liechtenstein 1979, 35-44; Gregory, "I sogni e gli astri", 127; P. van der Eijk, "Aristotelian Elements in Cicero's *De divinatione*", in *Philologus*, 137 (1993), 223-231.

[49] Averroes, *Compendium libri Aristotelis De sompno et vigilia*, ed. Shields, Blumberg, *Versio Parisina*, 117.48-119.68; *Versio vulgata*, 118.48-120.64.

of the body and the minimisation of internal motions – guaranteed by the complexional cold – combined with the ability to preserve and retain forms – an ability provided by the dry quality of the melancholic temperament – that guarantees a more favourable bodily condition for the dream experience. Added to this, the vaporous tendency of the melancholic humour – by producing many vapours ascending to the upper regions of the body and the head – provides the ideal conditions for the dreamer. Slowness of internal motions, the ability to retain forms and images, and a vaporous substratum make melancholics excellent dreamers.[50]

5. Conclusion

Pietro draws on a long-standing theory that has its philosophical roots in Aristotle's understanding of the nature of dreams and its medical background in the Hippocratic and Galenic schools. In line with the Arabic re-elaboration and the Latin reception of the topic, he endeavours to naturalise dreaming activity: even in the case of the most extraordinary aspects – such as the prediction or causation of future events –, the Paduan physician leaves no room for divine or demonic intervention, seeking to elaborate an explanation that is entirely in compliance with natural principles.

Coherently with the late medieval reading of predictive dreams in relating them to phenomena like visions or prophecies, Pietro often relies on Averroes' *Compendium* – as shown multiple times throughout the present contribution – and dispels the critical scepticism that had characterised Aristotle's view. The celestial souls – rulers of the sublunar world – can also determine some of our dream experiences, to the extent that signs or causes of future events can be derived from them. Therefore, under certain circumstances and due to certain natural and physiological conditions, dreams may assist us in seeing or interpreting what is about to happen, show us the path to follow regarding certain choices we will face and warn us of potential dangers.

[50] On the physiological relationship between melancholy, its vaporous nature, and form retention, see e.g., M. Loconsole, "Why Philosophers Father Foolish Children. Peter of Spain, Albert the Great and James of Viterbo on the Transmission of Intellectual Qualities", in *The Embodied Soul*, ed. Gensler, Mansfeld, Michałowska, Klima, 91-113.

Nevertheless, in the *differentia*, an aura of pessimism remains that goes beyond the concreteness of this phenomenon, which, from a naturalistic and medical point of view, is unconditionally accepted and endorsed by the Paduan physician. Dreams sometimes lead us to foreknowledge of the future, and their dynamics are not the result of chance, but subject to their own essential logic as natural phenomena whose principles can be rationally investigated. Still, Pietro has to admit to himself that most dreams – albeit being an important means of curing maladies at times – are often false, because most of the times they are the result of humoral causes, of daytime worries that reach us even during sleep, or occur when the soul is troubled and cannot be receptive to heavenly impressions. Furthermore, dreams are often unclear or difficult to interpret and change in meaning depending on the dreaming subject: if certain dreams are for some an indication of favourable situations, for others they may predict adversity. It is impossible to have universal knowledge of them, precisely because their causes are mainly indeterminate.[51]

Vittoria Perrone Compagni[52] – in a contribution on the description of dream experiences in Pietro Pomponazzi – emphasises the idea that predictive dreams ought to be regarded as oriented towards the benefit of mankind, thus placing them in a teleological dimension. Although this reading is only possible between the lines in Pietro's text, it is not entirely out of place in this specific case. After all, the purpose of dream predictions – and the correct interpretation of them – is, in the medical field, no more than one possible tool to bring about the quickest recovery of the patient who suffers (or will suffer) from an illness, one way among so many others in the medical art of working together with nature towards the healing of the body.

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[51] Petrus de Abano, *Conciliator*, 157, f. 214rbC: "Sunt etiam quedam somnia laudabilia in quibusdam et prospera in aliis vero vituperanda et aversa, et ideo impossibile aut difficile fit natura, quam cognitionem de somniis suscipere universalem propter eorum causas fere indeterminatas".

[52] Perrone Compagni, "*Evidentissimi avvertimenti dei numi*".

Madmen's Special Capacities in Nicole Oresme

Vesa Hirvonen

Nicole Oresme (c. 1323–1382) was a late medieval Parisian philosopher and theologian, natural scientist, counsellor of the French King, and finally the Bishop of Lisieux.[1] He was a writer on a wide range of subjects, who was interested in mental disorders and madmen among other things, writing quite a lot about them. My purpose in this article is to analyse Oresme's considerations of madmen by asking what he thinks about the special cognitive capacities often linked with them, that is, madmen's clairvoyance and their foretelling of the future.

First, I will say something about madness in late medieval philosophy and theology. I will then discuss what Oresme thinks about madness. Finally, I will investigate what kinds of special capacities madmen can have according to Oresme, and how such things are caused.

A large variety of terms referred to mental disorders in late medieval theological and philosophical texts. The most common terms were 'amentia' (*amentia*), 'dementia' (*dementia*), 'epilepsy' (*epilepsia*), 'foolishness' (*fatuitas*), 'frenzy' (*phrenesis*), 'fury' (*furia*, *furor*), 'insanity' (*insania*), 'lovesickness' (*amor hereos*), 'lunacy' (*lunatia*), 'mania' (*mania*), 'melancholy' (*melancholia*), and 'stupidity' (*stultitia*). According to Jean-Marie Fritz mental disorders, based on an antique tradition, were divided into two types in the Middle Ages. The first

[1] E. Grant, "80 Nicole Oresme", in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. J. J. E. Gracia, T. B. Noone (Blackwell Companions to Philosophy 24), Malden-Oxford-Victoria 2003, 475-480: 475; M. Lejbowic, "Nicole Oresme, spectateur engagé", in *Nicole Oresme philosophe. Philosophie de la nature et philosophie de la connaissance à Paris au XIVe siècle*, éd. J. Celeyrette, C. Grellard (Studia Artistarum 39), Turnhout 2014, 21-61; D. Deliscia, A. Panzica, "The Writings of Nicole Oresme: A Systematic Inventory", in *Traditio*, 77 (2023), 235-375. Earlier versions of some parts of this article were published in V. Hirvonen, "Late Medieval Philosophical and Theological Discussions of Mental Disorders: Witelo, Oresme, Gerson", in *History of Psychiatry*, 29 (2018), 165-186.

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contained such states as amentia, dementia, insanity, foolishness, and stupidity, which often, but not always, referred to negative passive madness, when there was an absence of reason. The second contained such states as frenzy, fury, lethargy, mania, and melancholy, which referred to positive active madness that caused something harmful.[2] Following Greek and Arabic medicine, medieval physicians often considered a humoral imbalance as the cause of a mental disorder.[3] Melancholy was usually associated with an imbalance or excess of black bile when there was no fever. Constantine the African considered melancholy to be either a belief in some imaginary evil or a suspicion that caused fear and sorrow. The distinction between mania and melancholy was unclear. According to Fritz mania was thought to include excitation, while melancholics felt low. Many medieval writers discussed these states together. Bartholomaeus Anglicus (thirteenth century), for example, made no distinction between them in recommending remedies. Frenzy was believed to result from the action of yellow bile on the brain, and it was thought to be accompanied by fever and erratic behaviour such as weeping, raging, and laughing.[4] Fury was often used by lawyers in referring to those evincing active, raging madness.[5] Epilepsy was held to arise from the movement of phlegm or black bile or blood to the brain. The changes in humours in epileptics were associated with the phases of the moon.[6] Late medieval theologians and philosophers, among them Nicole Oresme, developed their views of mental disorders based on these premises.

Nicole Oresme was more interested in mental disorders than many other philosophers and theologians in his time. Oresme dealt with them in several books and contexts. One of the most important sources for

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[2] J.-M. Fritz, *Le discours du fou au Moyen Age XIIe-XIIIe siècles: Étude comparée des discours littéraire, médical, juridique et théologique de la folie*, Paris 1992, 6-7.

[3] For a brief discussion of Constantine the African's (c. 1020–1087) medical translations from Arabic to Latin, see V. Hirvonen, "Medieval Theories" in *Sourcebook for the History of the Philosophy of Mind*, ed. S. Knuuttila, J. Sihvola (Studies in the History of Philosophy of Mind 12), Dordrecht 2014, 605-613: 605.

[4] S. Kemp, *Medieval Psychology* (Contributions in Psychology 14), New York-Westport-London 1990, 116-121; M. Laharie, *La folie au Moyen Age XIe-XIIIe siècles*, Paris 1991, 127-138; Fritz, *Le discours*, 133-138.

[5] Fritz, *Le discours*, 7, 157-159; J. S. Neaman, *Suggestion of the Devil: The Origins of Madness*, Garden City, New York 1975, 74, 89-90.

[6] Lunacy was sometimes identified with epilepsy. Kemp, *Medieval Psychology*, 120; Fritz, *Le discours*, 209-213.

Oresme's considerations of madness is his *De causis mirabilium*, in which he deals with marvels involving various sensations and the activity of the soul and the body. Another key source for Oresme's thoughts on mental disorders is his *Tractatus de configurationibus qualitatum et motuum*, in which, in considering mental disorders, Oresme attempts to show that various marvellous phenomena can have natural explanations. Let us now examine some mental disorders that particularly interested Oresme: mania; melancholy; lunacy; epilepsy; and lovesickness.

Mania

Mania and melancholy are the mental disorders with which Oresme mostly deals. Sometimes he combines them; sometimes he discusses them separately. In *De causis mirabilium* Oresme writes that maniacs (and melancholics) have fumes which ascend especially around the brain and the instruments of the soul. These fumes have an effect on the fantasies of the people concerned, their behaviour directly following what occurs in their fantasies: they cannot control themselves, be quiet, and calm down.[7] Maniacs are, according to Oresme, constantly in motion, both in relation to their limbs and their thoughts.[8] They do not stay settled with one objective but continually and rapidly change from one to another.[9] They do not speak in perfect long sentences but in truncated ones, and they are unable to repeat what they have said.[10] Being a maniac does not mean being happy all the time – quite the contrary. Oresme remarks that according to Galen the emotions of maniacs vary in extremes: sometimes laughing or crying, being brave or timid, believing the sky is falling down and raising their arms to stop it doing so, and so on.[11] Because of black melancholic fumes, in most cases maniacs think bad things, Oresme says.[12] In this connection he also

[7] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mirabilium*, 3, in B. Hansen, *Nicole Oresme and the Marvels of Nature. A Study of his* De causis mirabilium *with Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary* (Studies and Texts 68), Toronto 1985, 252.791-796.

[8] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 3, ed. Hansen, 256.841-843.

[9] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 3, ed. Hansen, 258.862-863.

[10] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 3, ed. Hansen, 258.866-868.

[11] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 3, ed. Hansen, 260.872-875. For Galen see Hansen, *Nicole Oresme*, 260, footnote 116).

[12] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 3, ed. Hansen, 256.848-849.

appeals to traditional physicians who say that those infected by bad, melancholic, and burnt humours think bad and ugly things, especially when bad fumes ascend to their cognitive faculties.[13] The fear that follows causes thoughts about the devil, sins, torments, and so on in maniacs' minds.[14] When they speak, they typically speak about bad things.[15] Does this not sound like melancholy? Oresme's expressions may lead one to suppose that he is speaking about melancholy. The explanation seems to be that he does not make a sharp distinction between maniacs and melancholics. Is he perhaps anticipating the later diagnosis of manic depressive or bipolar mental illness?

In referring to mania in *De causis mirabilium*, Oresme scarcely mentions the visions of demons, but in *Tractatus de configurationibus qualitatum et motuum* he does. It appears that like other mentally disturbed people, those with mania may see and hear demons and other things which are not real, that is, which have no exterior counterpart. In dealing with these phenomena, Oresme develops the aetiology of maniacs' problems. According to Oresme the visions and hearings concerned arise as follows: people's imaginative or estimative capacity is corrupted because there is something wrong with the organs of their interior senses. This defect is in turn due to an abscess on the brain or another cause, often originating in the heart.[16] It is notable that Oresme says that some defects in the brain or elsewhere affect the interior senses (imaginative and estimative capacities) through the organs of those senses. The chain of causation is thus very organic and physical. Oresme does not mention the humours or fumes at all here; he may take for granted that humours and fumes are imbalanced in the organic defects concerned.

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[13] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 3, ed. Hansen, 258.869-260.871. According to Bert Hansen Oresme refers to Avicenna and Constantine the African: Hansen, *Nicole Oresme*, 258-259, footnote 114.

[14] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 3, ed. Hansen, 256.849-850.

[15] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 3, ed. Hansen, 258.868-869.

[16] Nicole Oresme, *Tractatus de configurationibus qualitatum et motuum*, II, 29, in M. Clagett, *Nicole Oresme and the Medieval Geometry of Qualities and Motions: A Treatise on the Uniformity and Difformity of Intensities Known as* Tractatus de configurationibus qualitatum et motuum (Publications in Medieval Science 12), Madison-Milwaukee-London 1968, 344.3-346.11.

Melancholy

According to Oresme fear is a typical feature of melancholy. Oresme remarks that Avicenna and Galen do not think it surprising that melancholics are afraid, as they have the cause of fear in them, that is, the black melancholic humour.[17] How does it make people afraid? As seen with mania, Oresme thinks black melancholic fumes make people think bad things. Because of the fear that follows, thoughts of the devil, sins, torments, and so on come to their minds.[18] This seems to suggest that first there is fear, and then the person links it with bad things, even with something that does not necessarily exist in reality. Oresme also holds to the traditional view that because a melancholic person's spirit is thick and cold, the person is like a fool and is not bright.[19] Similarly to what he has said about mania, Oresme adds that melancholics (and women) belong to a group who act immediately, without deliberation, when something comes to mind, or when something occurs to them.[20]

In the traditional medical interpretation of melancholics as fools and unintelligent, Oresme recognizes a possible contradiction with what Aristotle said about them: in *Problems* (Pseudo-)Aristotle remarked that all men who were wise and able like Socrates were also melancholic. Oresme does not attempt to deny that the wise men to whom Aristotle referred were melancholics. He specifies that the troubles in their exterior parts had made them cold and dry and therefore melancholic. However, wisdom was able to survive in these men.

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[17] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, Appendix A, Tabula problematum, ed. Hansen, 389.799-801. In *Quaestiones de sensu* attributed to Oresme and Albert of Saxony, it is presented the traditional view that coldness in dry matter generates blackness, and therefore melancholics, who are cold and dry, are more black than other people. Nicole Oresme, *Quaestiones de sensu*, q. 10, ed. J. Agrimi, "Quaestiones de sensu" *attribuite a Oresme e Alberto di Sassonia* (Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di lettere e filosofia dell'Università di Pavia 29), Firenze 1983, 151.

[18] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 3, ed. Hansen, 256.848-850.

[19] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 4, ed. Hansen, 334.793-794, 796-797; 336.803-806.

[20] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, Appendix A, Tabula problematum, ed. Hansen 382.561-562, 564-565. For this part of Oresme's work see L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, Volumes III and IV: Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries (History of Science Society Publications. New Series 4), vol. 3, New York 1934, 462-466.

Oresme explains this as follows: because of their repeatedly good (interior) acts, such men have good inclinations in some of their (interior) organs and potencies, and they think about good deeds. Oresme also adds that as melancholics are cold and thick, some good dispositions imprinted in them also remain.[21] Elsewhere, Oresme admits that there are melancholics who have the use of reason. He even talks about prudent or wise melancholics. According to Oresme the tragedy of some melancholics is that they well understand that there is no reason to be afraid, but they are still just as afraid as some maniacs.[22] In their case too, in some acts the person is melancholic, while in others they are healthy. It becomes clear that, according to Oresme, melancholy does not always envelop the whole personality. Perhaps some new light is shed on the connection between mania and melancholy: in maniacs the problems of melancholics may become very strong, so they may be even more feared than those who are only melancholic.

Lunacy, epilepsy, and lovesickness

According to Oresme, there is also a natural causation in what happens to lunatics, epileptics, and those suffering from lovesickness. As far as lunatics are concerned, Oresme states that it is already clear from the term that their humours have been shifted naturally, that is, by the moon, not by a demon.[23] Oresme deals with lunacy and epilepsy separately, but he probably accepts the traditional view that the moon can affect epileptics by affecting their humours. Alongside epileptics, he

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[21] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 4, ed. Hansen, 336.801-806; 338.838-853. Bert Hansen refers to Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, who think that during the fourth century B.C. the notion of melancholy shifted in a more positive direction. See Hansen, *Nicole Oresme*, 337, footnote 113; R. Klibansky, E. Panofsky, F. Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art*, New York-London 1964, 15-17.

[22] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, Appendix A, Tabula problematum, ed. Hansen, 384.624-626; Id., *Questiones super quatuor libros Meteororum*, 3.19, in S. C. McCluskey, *Nicole Oresme on Light, Color, and the Rainbow: An Edition and Translation, with Introduction and Critical Notes, of Part of Book III of his* Questiones super quatuor libros Meteororum, Diss., University of Wisconsin 1974, 248.251-252.

[23] Among those whose disorder is naturally caused, Oresme also mentions frenetics, who comprised a notable group of madmen in the medieval theories, but they do not really interest Oresme. Nicole Oresme, *Tractatus de configurationibus*, II.29, ed. Clagett, 346.11-14.

discusses the possessed (*arrepticius*). It remains unclear whether he really means demoniacs here. In any case he says that in the possessed and epileptics there is a revoking or reclusion of the soul to the inside, and a retraction of the sensitive spirits into the interior capacities. In epileptics this happens during a seizure.[24] Oresme seems to mean that in the case of those who are possessed, as well as of epileptics, the soul is not in touch with the outside world and is unable to receive information from it through the spirits which normally move around the body. In epileptics the reason for this is probably the moon shifting the humours. As we shall see later, such an inwards turn may have interesting consequences for the capacities of the person.

Oresme thinks that people suffering from lovesickness (*amor ereus*) strongly imagine their beloved, believing that they see them when they actually do not. According to Oresme similar things happen to many other melancholics – even those who have the use of reason. This is because of the melancholic humours ascending to their brains.[25] Oresme thus combines even lovesickness with melancholy. Oresme knows several cures for this disease. Referring to Witelo (1237–78/later), he states that the best cure for such melancholy is to be joyful and consoled in a remote place, and not to think of bad things.[26] Elsewhere, Oresme suggests music as a cure.[27]

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[24] Nicole Oresme, *Tractatus de configurationibus*, II.29, ed. Clagett, 346.19-28. See also cont., Id., *Tractatus de configurationibus*, II.29, ed. Clagett, 346.28-348.46; Nicole Oresme, *Livre de divinacions*, XII, in G. W. Coopland, *Nicole Oresme and the Astrologers: A Study of his* Livre de divinacions, Cambridge 1952, 100; Id., *Livre de divinacions*, XII, ed. S. Rapisarda, *Contro la divinatione. Consigli antiastrologici al re di Francia (1356)* (Biblioteca medievale 122), Roma 2009, 152.

[25] Nicole Oresme, *Questiones Met.*, 3.19, ed. Mccluskey, 248.246-253. Here Oresme uses the form *amor ereus* instead of the form *amor hereos*. According to the editor question 19 is derived from the work of Themon Judei: see Mccluskey, *Nicole Oresme on Light*, 71. For *amor hereos* in Oresme see also Nicole Oresme, *Tractatus de configurationibus*, II. 23, ed. Clagett, 478-479.

[26] Nicole Oresme, *Questiones Met.*, 3.19, ed. McCluskey, 248.260-250.263. Witelo was a Polish (Silesian) natural philosopher and theologian, who also lived for some time in Italy. For his approach to madness see Hirvonen, "Late medieval", 167-169.

[27] Nicole Oresme, *Tractatus de configurationibus*, II.22, ed. Clagett, 330.35-39. Here Oresme refers to Ibn Butlan and Boethius. On their texts see Clagett, *Nicole Oresme and the Medieval Geometry*, 331, footnotes 13 and 15, and 478. See also B. Delaurenti, "Contre la magie démoniaque et les incantations: Les questions 43 et 44 des *Quodlibeta*", in *Nicole Oresme philosophe*, éd. Celeyrette, Grellard, 251-297: 268.

Can demons cause mental disorders?

As seen above, Oresme ascribes natural causes to mental disorders. Oresme was of course well aware that his contemporaries did not always share his view but thought that mental disorders came from demons or from heaven. It is ignorance of natural causes which makes people think in this way, Oresme writes: those who are not physicians easily attribute such diseases as strokes, epilepsy, and mania either to God or to demons, as such states may occur suddenly and even in healthy people, and the people in question are ignorant of their causes.[28] With the aid of medicine, Oresme continues, we know, for example, that melancholy causes various changes in the human being; those who look most wise suddenly look most stupid, and the heads or necks of those who look healthy are suddenly twisted back. Certain humours may run to the tongue, the brain, the stomach, the arm, or to other places, and following this there can be astonishing changes in the melancholic person. All this, however, can be explained by natural causes.[29] In holding this opinion, Oresme must face the objection that many traditional authorities such as Avicenna and even Christ considered madmen (maniacs) to be demoniacs.[30] In response Oresme says, as above, that those who do not know immediate and natural causes of a madman's experiences refer to demons, heaven, or God as a cause. They are wrong.[31]

Yet can mental disorders always be sufficiently explained by bodily causes? This is not self-evident to Oresme. There are, he suggests, degrees of madness in people: some are always completely mad, some temporarily, some in respect to some things but not others.[32] He admits that bodily complexions do not always suffice to explain this vari-

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[28] Nicole Oresme, *Quaestio contra divinatores horoscopios*, ed. S. Caroti, in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen age* 43, 201-310: 293.

[29] Nicole Oresme, *Quaestio contra divinatores*, ed. Caroti, 293-294.

[30] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 3, ed. Hansen, 260.883-885.

[31] Avicenna does not, Oresme attempts to prove, posit a demon in this connection, or he would not offer a treatment like a regimen for the people concerned. The reference to Christ is unfortunately ignored by Oresme. Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 3, ed. Hansen, 262.898-903.

[32] In this connection Oresme uses the term "fool", but by it he seems to refer to all the mentally disordered in general. Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, Appendix A, Tabula problematum, ed. Hansen, 389.786-792.

ation. Some people are mad, although they seem to be healthy and to have an optimal complexion of natural capacities and senses: they see, hear, and can speak well, they are strong, eat, act, sleep well, and so on. Why is this?[33] At least in *Tabula* in *De causis mirabilium* this question remains unanswered, as does the question of why animals such as horses and cows, unlike human beings, do not become mad.[34] There should be nothing in principle to stop this happening, as Oresme certainly thinks they possess both the body and the interior senses that might be disturbed.

Oresme does not, however, entirely rule out the possibility that even demons or witches may play a role when mental disorders appear. Oresme does not wish to maintain that all the world's strange phenomena have natural explanations, but he suggests many of them do, including those that happen to madmen.[35] Where melancholy is concerned, Oresme refers to Avicenna, who thinks that even if melancholy results from a demon, it is sufficient for us to understand that in it the bodily complexion is dominated by black bile. The proximate cause of melancholy is therefore black bile, whether the cause of that black bile is a demon or not.[36]

According to Oresme, in addition to demons, magicians or necromancers may indirectly be able to cause mental disorders. Oresme admits that magical art can cause human beings to be shaken into such a state of terror and imagination that they lose their senses and become like (*velut*) demented beings or maniacs. These people then believe that they see or hear things that they do not.[37] Oresme does not appear to say that in this case the person is really in a state of dementia or mania, but rather in a state which is reminiscent of them. However, is real madness possible in such a case? Does Oresme think that a great fright may cast

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[33] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, Appendix A, Tabula problematum, ed. Hansen, 390.815-819.

[34] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, Appendix A, Tabula problematum, ed. Hansen, 382.558-560.

[35] Nicole Oresme, *Tractatus de configurationibus*, II.35, ed. Clagett, 372.10-14.

[36] Nicole Oresme, *Tractatus de configurationibus*, II.35, ed. Clagett, 372.16-21. For Avicenna see Clagett, *Nicole Oresme and the Medieval Geometry*, 487.

[37] Nicole Oresme, *Tractatus de configurationibus*, II.26, ed. Clagett, 338.26-30. See also the text immediately above: Clagett, *Nicole Oresme and the Medieval Geometry*, 14-25.

a person into a real mental disorder? Oresme refers to Hippocrates, who thinks that long-lasting fear (*timor*) and timidity (*pusillanimitas*) produce a melancholic person. If people are afraid and sad for a long time, a habit is generated in their soul so that they become maniacal or completely melancholic.[38] Oresme therefore seems to agree that prolonged fear at least – probably also caused by a magician – may lead to a kind of mental disorder.

In writing about necromancers, Oresme admits that such magicians may be able to produce fumes from certain materials which can make human beings so demented that terrible or fantastic things appear to them. Such artificial fumes are called suffumigations (*suffumigatio*).[39] Such activities, Oresme remarks, must be very dangerous to the necromancers themselves. In making their invocations, they may not only be changed in body but also become completely mentally disturbed. They look like idiots (*ydeot*) or persons in a fury (*furiosus*) and become totally alien not only to other people but somehow even to themselves. Moreover, it is possible that they may not return soon, if ever, to their original state.[40]

Madmen's special or supernatural capacities

Although Oresme thinks that the causes of mental disorders are at least mostly natural, he considers that some mentally disordered people can have extraordinary capacities such as revealing hidden things or foretelling the future. Can those capacities be naturally explained, or can they even be supernatural? In Oresme's texts this question especially concerns maniacs, perhaps because they were usually thought to be the active kind of madman. In madmen's special capacities it is not always a question of foretelling the future but simply seeing some things more clearly than others. Oresme finds it conceivable that for a certain time some maniacs see some things more clearly than healthy people. He does not seem completely sure why this is so. He thinks it may be because the spirits in maniacs' bodies run quickly and become subtler

[38] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 4, ed. Hansen, 318.574-578.

[39] Nicole Oresme, *Tractatus de configurationibus*, II.32, ed. Clagett, 364.63-67.

[40] Nicole Oresme, *Tractatus de configurationibus*, II.30, ed. Clagett, 350.26-29.

due to the bodies' sudden changes (*antiperistasis*).[41] The phenomenon of clairvoyance would thus have a natural explanation.

The state in which maniacs have subtle spirits and humours does not, however, last long, as thick spirits and humours come and darken them.[42] In saying this, Oresme again seems to combine melancholic humours with mania. As far as the very subtle spirits and humours are concerned, Oresme thinks that even healthy people may have them, but in their cases this may also be temporary: they lose their thoughts, get a headache, and sometimes even become fools.[43] Oresme continues that one can sometimes be bright and at other times a total fool. Indeed, many of the brightest people become dull, and this may be because the brighter the spirits, the more darkened or corrupt they may become.[44] Oresme may mean that a talented person has the capacity to do good and bad things.

In addition to seeing clearly, maniacs were sometimes thought to reveal hidden things and to foretell the future. Oresme ponders possible explanations for such very special phenomena. One of them is the Platonic idea that in the human memory all the species of knowable things that would be known if not hindered are present from the beginning. Oresme admits that this theory might explain phenomena like maniacs' ability to foretell (*predicere*), but he clearly rejects this.[45]

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[41] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 4, ed. Hansen, 286.160-163: "Et ita est ymaginabile quod aliqui maniaci pro aliqua hora clarius vident quia forte spiritus per antiperistasim fugiunt et subtiliantur vel quia circa alia non impediuntur et ideo anima tunc est potentior, unde unum contrarium quandoque fortificat aliud". In explaining *antiperistasis*, Bert Hansen refers to Marshall Clagett's book on Giovanni Marliani, who defines it as "the supposed sudden increase of the intensity of a quality as a result of being surrounded by its contrary quality, for instance, the sudden heating of a warm body when surrounded by cold": see Hansen, *Nicole Oresme*, 286, footnote 28. M. Clagett, *Giovanni Marliani and late medieval physics* (Studies in history, economics, and public law 483), New York 1941, 79. For a more extensive analysis of the medieval interpretation of the Aristotelian-origin *antiperistasis*, see A. Panzica, "An (apparent) exception in the Aristotelian natural philosophy: Antiperistasis as action on contrary qualities and its interpretation in the medieval philosophical and medical commentary tradition", in *Revista Española de Filosofía Medieval*, 29 (2022), 33-76.

[42] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 4, ed. Hansen, 286.165-167.

[43] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 4, ed. Hansen, 286.167-169.

[44] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 4, ed. Hansen, 288.198-201.

[45] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 4, ed. Hansen, 276.43-51: "2º nota quod, secun-

Another possible explanation is to some extent trivial: it is possible, Oresme remarks, that a maniac who talks all the time may sometimes say something true about the future, just as it could happen that Socrates, wandering around the streets of Paris like a fool, could chance upon his friend's house.[46] Oresme considers that maniacs speaking the truth by chance at one moment may be connected with their previous thinking of the same thing. What kind of thinking is possible for them? Oresme's answer is vague (*in confuso*), rather than distinct, thinking, as in most cases maniacs' thoughts are disturbed because of the black melancholic fumes within them.[47] Here again mania is combined with melancholic fumes.

As a possible natural explanation of maniacs' disputed capacities to reveal hidden things or foretell the future, Oresme ponders the influence of the audience in situations where maniacs' capacities are said to be active. For example, Oresme thinks that listeners' fear or murmuring may alter the medium, the air, and this in turn may alter the organs of maniacs, which may then alter their cognitive capacities.[48] Oresme

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dum Platonem in fedrone [*!*] et ipsum sequentes ponentem memoriam esse in intellectu et in ipsa ab initio sue creationis esse omnes species rerum cognoscibilium, ita quod addiscere numerum non est nisi rememorari et obstaculum corporeum quadammodo rememoveri vel coaptari ut anima videat et cognoscat – tunc facile dicetur de quibusdam prophetis et de aliis qui futura videntur predigere ut maniaci et cetera. Quia tamen ista opinio est falsa nec tenetur communiter, ideo aliter dicemus quia non valet motivum eorum. Unde de Pictagora qui recolebat se alias fuisse est frivolum, et ita dicerem de multis que narrantur". Oresme also rejects this explanation in the case of the boy who – according to the traditional story – understood geometry by himself. Oresme thought that the boy's understanding of geometry was possible because of the subtlety of his intelligence: Id, *De causis mir.*, 4, ed. Hansen, 276.51-53.

[46] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 3, ed. Hansen, 252.800-803: "Potest igitur contingere a casu quod talis maniacus qui nunquam quasi tacet dicet aliquod verum futurum sicut potest contingere quod Sor fatuus discurrens per vicos Parisius intrabit domum amici sui et si precogitasset vel voluisset et cetera forte non ivisset et cetera".

[47] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 3, ed. Hansen, 256.846-850: "Dico 2° quod si quandoque verum dicant hoc est a casu. Dico 3° quod hoc potest esse quia de hoc precogitaverant et hoc vel in confuso vel in speciali; in confuso quia ut in pluribus tales mala cogitant propter fumos melancolicos nigros et forte propter timorem occurrunt cogitationes de dyabolo, de peccatis et tormentis et cetera". For Oresme on distinct vs confused cognizing, see e.g. Id., *De causis mir.*, 2, ed. Hansen, 170.45-49.

[48] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 3, ed. Hansen, 258.851-852, 855-861: "Dico 4° quod forte assistens, cui reserant occulta vel predicunt futura, ad hoc potest eos movere […] In multis quandoque valde modica causa et quasi inestimabilis sufficit movere

really seems to mean here that through the air and organs maniacs can somehow read other people's thoughts. Although he seems to accept that something like this is possible, Oresme criticizes people's credulity: he remarks that people take maniacs' stories too seriously, and too easily think that maniacs are speaking only about them.[49]

It is notable and perhaps a little surprising that in the case of epileptics Oresme readily accepts their foretelling of the future. As already mentioned, Oresme thinks that among epileptics and the possessed there can be a revoking or reclusion of the soul to the inside and a retraction of the sensitive spirits into the interior capacities. The exterior senses of these people are then deadened so that they neither see nor hear, but their interior capacity acts. Oresme considers that in this condition such people have a marvellous power. Some, in their ecstasy, have marvellous visions. Later (epileptics after their seizure) they say that they have seen much; sometimes, according to Oresme, they foretell the future and reveal hidden things. This is said to have happened to Muhammad, among others. Oresme finds it possible that the people concerned may also have revelations from a demon or even from the Holy Spirit, but it is sufficient for him that they can have visions that are naturally caused.[50]

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et precipue in virtutibus cognoscitivis. Assistens autem ante eos quandoque timet et fremit timens ne sibi dicant et cetera et sic immutat medium, et medium organum, et organum virtutem et cetera. Unde sicut color parietis vel astrorum immutat medium et cetera, ita ymaginabile est quod ille assistens aliqualiter et cetera". Later Oresme says that, according to Avicenna, the imagining faculty can move an exterior object, but that he himself does not entirely concede this: see Id., *De causis mir.*, 4, ed. Hansen, 306.443-308.451.

[49] Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.,* 3, ed. Hansen, 258.864-866. Oresme complains that people more eagerly believe in a foolish woman foretelling their future than a physician. Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, Appendix A, Tabula problematum, ed. Hansen, 380.491-495.

[50] Nicole Oresme, *Tractatus de configurationibus*, II.29, ed. Clagett, 346-348.19-46: "Nunc autem ostendendum est quod quedam istorum principaliter fiunt propter revocationem seu reclusionem anime ad intra et retractionem spirituum animalium sensitivorum ad virtutes interiores, quoniam anima sic retracta seu recollecta non in se sed in spiritibus suis mirabilem habet potentiam, cuius signum est quod in arrepticiis et epilepticis ratione egritudinis spiritus retrahuntur et recluduntur ad intra sicut in epilepticis tempore quo cadunt et tunc sensus exteriores sopiuntur ita ut non videant neque audiant et laborat virtus interior. Quidam autem illorum in illa extasi mirabiles habent visiones; unde postea narrant se vidisse multa et quandoque predicunt futura et revelant occulta"

It appears that Oresme believes that mentally disordered people may be able to reveal hidden things and even foretell the future. Oresme presents this opinion in his *Tractatus de configurationibus qualitatum et motuum* in particular. In his *Livre de divinacions*, however, Oresme maintains that those who can prophesy lead sober and peaceful lives, have mirror-clear souls, and are clean of worldly thoughts. In saying this, Oresme appeals to Moses Maimonides, who maintains that concupiscence and sadness hinder prophesying.[51] Should we think, like Lynn Thorndike, that Oresme is not entirely consistent in his interpretations?[52] Not necessarily. First, Oresme may think that real prophesying is a divine effect that requires a positive state of mind, while a natural ability to reveal hidden things does not. Even if he thought that prophesying could be compared with the natural revealing of hidden things, Oresme might think that a person, in very different states of mind, could receive knowledge of hidden things.[53]

(on Muhammad's case see CLAGETT, *Nicole Oresme and the Medieval Geometry*, 481-482). NICOLE ORESME, *Livre de divinacions*, XII, ed. COOPLAND, 100. NICOLE ORESME, *Livre de divinacions*, XII, ed. RAPISARDA, 152 (on Muhammad see RAPISARDA, *Contro la divinatione. Consigli antiastrologici*, 272). Ulrich Taschow finds Oresme interesting for the history of unconsciousness. U. TASCHOW, *Nicole Oresme und der Frühling der Moderne. Die Ursprünge unserer modernen quantitativ-metrischen Weltaneignungsstrategien und neuzeitlichen Bewusstseins- und Wissenschaftskultur* 1-2, Halle 2003, 320. Compare the modern theories of primitive consciousness, that is, internal brain activity when consciousness has vanished. See J. W. LÅNGSJÖ, M. T. ALKIRE, K. KASKINORO *et al.,* "Returning from Oblivion: Imaging the Neural Core of Consciousness", in *Journal of Neuroscience*, 32 (2012), 4935-4943. Witelo also thinks epileptics may see the future, but that such knowledge comes from outside. Witelo's idea is that because the movements of the spirits are quietened in epilepsy, and the rational soul does not reach the exterior sensible objects, it can transcend its essence and join substances which are separate from matter and thus see the future and prophesy. See WITELO, *De causa primaria paenitentiae in hominibus et de natura daemonum*, ed. J. BURCHARDT, *List Witelona do Ludwika we Lwówku Slaskim. Problematyka teoriopoznawcza, kosmologiczna i medycza* (Studia Copernicana 9), Wroclaw-Warszawa-Krakow-Gdansk 1979, 170(10), 394-399. Elsewhere Witelo says that epileptics and melancholics (and sleeping persons) may see future things – because of the effect of separate intelligences (angels) – when there is no impeding imagination: ID., *De causa primaria paenitentiae*, ed. BURCHARDT, 164(4).146-158.

[51] NICOLE ORESME, *Livre de divinacions*, XI, ed. COOPLAND, 92; NICOLE ORESME, *Livre de divinacions* XI, ed. RAPISARDA, 138, 140.

[52] THORNDIKE, *A History of Magic*, vol. 3, 420.

[53] Even in *Livre de divinacions*, Oresme says that among those who practise divina-

As is now clear, according to Oresme foretelling seems possible for some human beings whose minds do not act normally and ideally. Indeed, a kind of foretelling, according to Oresme, is possible even for brute animals that have no reason at all, or at least some of them. In *Tractatus de configurationibus qualitatum et motuum*, Oresme discusses animals' foretelling, linking it with animals' instincts (*instinctus*). He says that some animals may, as if by a certain instinct of nature, be able to foretell (*presentire*, *prenuntiare*) future and hidden things, though in a confused – inexact and indistinct – way. Oresme refers here to some classical examples from natural history, such as the eagle owl foretelling (*presentire*) death, the dolphin (*prenuntiare*) a storm, and the kingfisher a calm.[54] Concerning animals' foretelling, however, Oresme uses such terms as *presentire* and *prenuntiare*, not *predicere*, as in the case of human beings. Animals' foretelling is something like the expression of instinctual feelings about some things.

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tion are melancholics. Nicole Oresme, *Livre de divinacions*, X, ed. Coopland, 80; Nicole Oresme, *Livre de divinacions*, X, ed. Rapisarda, 124. Besides special capacities of the mind, some mentally disturbed people were traditionally thought to have some special bodily strengths. Oresme accepts the traditional view that some frenetics may become extraordinarily strong and quick, much stronger and quicker than they were before their frenzy. He does not try to give reasons for this. Nicole Oresme, *De causis mir.*, 4, ed. Hansen, 284.148-151. Sylvia Huot notes that this view is already taken for granted in the *Prose Salernitan Questions* c. 1200: S. Huot, *Madness in Medieval French Literature: Identities Found and Lost*, Oxford 2003, 75-76. *The Prose Salernitan Questions*, ed. B. Lawn (Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi 5), London 1979, 197. As Bert Hansen remarks, the unusual power of frenetics is briefly dealt with by Albert the Great (Albertus Magnus, *Quaestiones super De animalibus*, IV, q. annexa 11, ed. E. Filthaut [Opera Omnia 12], Münster i.W. 1955, 150.71-151.2): Hansen, *Nicole Oresme*, 285, footnote 27.

[54] Nicole Oresme, *Tractatus de configurationibus*, I.36, ed. Clagett, 258.22-260.29: "Et quamvis alii modi visionum supra positi non contingunt in animabus brutorum eo quod non sunt apte ut sint talia specula, forsan tamen possunt esse specula isto ultimo modo ut quasi quodam instinctu nature presentiant futura vel occulta et hoc confuse sicut aves quedam ut bubo quam dicunt funus auspicari. Unde Statius 'feralia bubo dampna canens' et cetera, et de equo in libro Iob dicitur quod ipse 'procul odoratur bellum.' Similiter delphini maris prenuntiant tempestatem et avis alcione tranquillitatem, et multa exempla de istis reperiuntur in historia naturali". For animals foretelling the weather see also Nicole Oresme, *Questiones in Meteorologica de ultima lectura, recensio parisiensis. Study of the Manuscript Tradition and Critical Edition of Books I-II.10*, II.5, ed. A. Panzica (Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy and Science 32), Leiden-Boston 2021, 242.4-7; Id., *Questiones in Meteorologica de ultima lectura*, II.6, ed. Panzica, 248.5-11.

Conclusion

Even if Nicole Oresme thinks that the causes of mental disorders are at least mostly natural, he considers that mentally disordered people can have extraordinary cognitive capacities. In Oresme's texts this question especially concerns maniacs, perhaps because they are usually thought to be the active kind of madmen, but also epileptics.

In madmen's special capacities it is not always a question of such a miraculous capacity as foretelling the future but simply seeing some things more clearly than others. Oresme finds it conceivable that for a certain time some maniacs see some things more clearly than healthy people. He does not seem completely sure why this is so. He thinks it may be because the spirits in maniacs' bodies run quickly and become subtler due to the sudden changes (*antiperistasis*) in them.

In addition to seeing clearly, maniacs in the Middle Ages were indeed thought to reveal hidden things and even foretell the future. Oresme ponders various possible natural explanations for such phenomena. In the case of epileptics Oresme quite easily accepts their foretelling of the future. The exterior senses of epileptics can be deadened so that they neither see nor hear, but their interior capacity acts. Some epileptics, in their ecstasy, have marvellous visions and they foretell the future and reveal hidden things.

So some human beings whose minds do not act perfectly, according to Oresme, can have extraordinary but naturally explained capacities such as foretelling the future. Interestingly, he writes that there are even some creatures, whose minds are in the first place less perfect than normal human beings' minds, that can have these capacities, namely some animals. Oresme also attempts to give a natural explanation for their kind of foretelling by referring to their natural instincts.

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