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Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale
— Rencontres de Philosophie Médiévale, 31 —
General Editor: Alessandra Beccarisi (Università degli Studi di Foggia)

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

BREPOLS
2025

All of the essays published in this volume have been reviewed by members of the Bureau of the SIEPM. This publication is funded by the European Union - Next Generation EU, Mission 4 Component 2 Investment 1.1 - CUP E53D23018670001, under the PRIN 2022 PNRR call, project “Social, Political, and Religious Prognostication and its Roots: Philosophical Strategies for Coping with Uncertainties and Planning the Future” (P2022BMJ5A).

The research leading to these results has received funding from the Department of Humanities of the University of Trento.

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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D/2025/0095/267

ISBN 978-2-503-61981-1

DOI 10.1484/M.RPM-EB.5.150732

ISSN 2294-8384

E-ISSN 2294-8392

Printed in the EU on acid-free paper

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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.

More generally, the scholarship on medieval discourses on foreknowledge has substantially expanded over the last decade or so, thanks to the publication of numerous 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. OSHEMA, 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 Ma‘šār’s *Great Introduc-*

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

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-semantic, 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

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 Contingents”, 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 Ishāq 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 Contingents 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 pre-conoscenza 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 Contingents 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 Maʿṣar 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 *Compilerium* 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 Physiognomical 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-Mağūsī’s *Kitāb al-Malakī*”) analyzes the evolution of prognostic knowledge in early Arabic medicine, focusing on ‘Alī 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 Hunayn b. Ishāq and late antique models, noting how later physicians, such as al-Rāzī and al-Mağūsī, 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.

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