

Charles Burnett, The Doctrine on Kings and Empires in Abu Ma'shar's *Book on Religions and Dynasties* and its Application in the Medieval West

Abstract: The history of dynasties and the reigns of kings can be shown to conform to certain recurring astrological configurations or periods of years in the past and can be extrapolated into the future. The various recurring periods are provided, as they are described by Abu Ma'shar in his *Book on Religions and Dynasties (On the Great Conjunctions)*, and then the application of these doctrines to Bohemian history is illustrated.

Carmela Baffioni, L'astrologia politica islamica: il caso degli Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'

Abstract: The article describes the fourteen passages of the encyclopaedia containing the word *dawla*. The Ikhwān introduce a cyclical conception of the alternation of ruling dynasties. After the dynasty of the evil reached its apex, the dynasty of the good begins when learned agree "on a unique school and a sole religion".

The Ikhwān introduce this as a wondrous event, close to become reality. This conception is linked to their vision in expectance of the legitimate rulers after the debasement of the Family of the Prophet following Muḥammad's death. The connection of these passages with the rituals described in Ep. 50 *On the Various Kinds of Management* (where political vision, astrology and magic are combined) might confirm the Ikhwān's Ismā'īlī commitment.

Shlomo Sela, World Astrology in Abraham Ibn Ezra's Work

Abstract: Abraham Ibn Ezra's (ca. 1089-ca. 1161) astrological corpus includes the two versions of *Sefer ha-'Olam* (Book of the World), which represent the first Hebrew theoretical work, unique in medieval Jewish science, to discuss the theories and techniques of historical and meteorological astrology that had accumulated from Antiquity to Ibn Ezra's time. This article surveys the content of the two versions of *Sefer ha-'Olam* and their most important doctrines as he conceived of them. The relevant material is presented chronologically: (a) the ancient period; (b) the Hellenistic period; (c) Indian and Persian contributions; (d) contributions by astrologers working in the Muslim world; and (e) connections with twelfth-century Latin work on world astrology. In addition, this paper examines the contents of three additional texts by Ibn Ezra, directly concerned with world astrology: (a) the tenth chapter of *Reshit Hokhmah* (Beginning of Wisdom), where Ibn Ezra presents a series of cycles related to world astrology; (b) the astrological section of the exegetical excursus in the long commentary on Exodus 33:21, where Ibn Ezra inserts material on world astrology into his biblical commentary; (c) the introduction to *Sefer ha-Moladot* (Book of Nativities), where Ibn Ezra juxtaposes world astrology and the doctrine of nativities and presents a series of original ideas about world astrology.

Marienza Benedetto, *An Ideology for Dependence?* The Public Dimension of Astrology in the Jewish Middle Ages

Abstract: The identification of astrology with an *ideology for dependence*, proposed by Adorno in a 1975 essay, which was apparently eccentric compared to the rest of his production, offers an opportunity to discuss the (far from unequivocal) approach to political astrology in the philosophical-scientific literature of the Jewish Middle Ages. Reviewing some of the main positions in this respect, it will turn out that, beyond Adorno's reductive interpretation, the public dimension of astrology instead testifies to the independence of the Land of Israel from all that is not God or – in a diametrically opposite perspective, which links the Jewish people to the most general and powerful astral determinations – their absolute independence from the accidental processes of time.

Pasquale Arfé, Attorno all'edizione dell'*Ars geomantiae*: le fonti esplicite e implicite

Abstract: Researching for the sources of the *Ars geomantiae* – the oldest divinatory handbook of Western geomancy, translated from Arabic into Latin by Hugo of Santalla in 12th-century northern Spain – led to a double outcome: on the one hand, it showed the nature of Hugo's cultural competence, imbued with the texts and scientific knowledge of his time; on the other hand, it revealed a series of historico-philosophical and philological data relating to the appearance of his version. In particular, the analysis of the three explicit sources of the *Sayings* attributed to Socrates, of the *Centiloquium* of pseudo-Ptolemy and of the *Isagoge ad Technē Galieni* of Iohannitius has allowed not only to give a direct insight into the fundamental contribution of Arabic culture in the 12th-century *translatio* of scientific studies, but also to carry out a more certain clarification on the dating of the *Ars geomantiae* and its placement within the translating activity of the master of Santalla. Finally, the question of the hermeticity of the text, raised by the reference to Enoch, one of the three Hermes of Abū Ma'shar's legend, has specified to what extent the *Ars geomantiae* belongs to the Hermetic tradition.

Stefano Rapisarda, A Contribution to a Corpus of Anglo-Norman Chiromancies

Abstract: In the middle of the 12th century the traditional core of divination techniques receives some innovation. New techniques appear, one of them particularly successful: chiromancy. It emerges almost simultaneously in Spain and in Plantagenet England, in association with the less fortunate spatulomancy. All six of the vernacular chiromantal texts prior to the 15th century so far recorded are in the langue d'oïl and five of the six come specifically from the Anglo-Norman domain. This confirms the Anglo-Norman area as one of the main crossroads of medieval divination, which nevertheless is still awaiting for an overall scholarly treatment, probably due to its linguistic complexity, due to the trilingual dynamics Latin/Anglo-Norman/Anglo-Saxon.

Nicolas Weill-Parot, Pouvoir de la magie astrale et ordre politique chez Guillaume d'Auvergne

Abstract: After giving some examples of the links between astral magic and the political sphere or model (political goals of certain talismans, therapeutic astral magic at the service of powerful people, use of hierarchies of demonic powers), the article focuses on William

of Auvergne's analysis of the stakes of power in the magic art. The Bishop of Paris underlines the logical impasse to which the political power attributed to a magician would lead, and he shows the insuitability of the comparison between the astrological talisman and the royal seal that supporters of this practice could put forward.

Alessandro Palazzo, Astrology and Politics: the Theory of Great Conjunctions in Albert the Great

Abstract: The doctrine of great conjunctions, first theorized by the Arab astrologer Albumasar in the *De magnis coniunctionibus* (*Book of Religions and Dynasties*), is a form of general astrology characterized by the attempt to explain events affecting the Earth as a whole or in part (e.g. cataclysms – floods of water and fire, plagues, famine, etc. – the succession of civilizations, new empires, religions and prophets) as a consequence of the mean conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter.

The paper deals with Albert the Great's remarkable contribution to the medieval debate on great conjunctions by focusing on a few passages from his *De causis proprietatum elementorum* and his *Politica* commentary (II 6 and V 9). The potential and risks posed by this all-embracing explanation of natural phenomena and the human domain did not escape Albert the Great. He grasped the subversive character of the universal determinism underlying the great conjunctions, as well as their scientific value.

The first selection of his texts, mainly taken from the *De causis proprietatum elementorum*, establishes the scientific nature of conjunctionist theory. They elucidate its complex and sophisticated notions, describe the effects of planetary conjunctions on the sublunary world, and oppose this theory to pseudoscientific explanations of natural processes. Albert also discusses the epistemological status of conjunctionist theory, clarifying its relationship to other branches of astrology.

By contrast, the texts from the *Politica* commentary relate the great conjunctions to human history and political processes, exploring the conflict between astral determinism and human responsibility.

Alessandra Beccarisi, The Geomantic Technique and its Applications

Abstract: Based on unpublished texts of *Estimaverunt Indi*, *Geomantia* attributed to Willelm of Moerbeke and *Breviloquium artis geomantie* by Bartolomew of Parma, my contribution aims at presenting a general overview of the geomantic technique and its political applications. In order to achieve this aim, I will first offer a few preliminary considerations on the concept of natural divination.

Carlos Steel, Henry Bate's Translation of Ibn Ezra's treatise *The Book of the World*. A Critical Edition

Abstract: Critical Edition of Henricus Bate's translation of Ibn Ezra's *Book of the World* (*Sefer ha-'Olam*), which deals with the astrological prediction and interpretation of political events and with weather forecasting. Bate's preface to his translation in which he defends Albumasar against Ibn Ezra's criticism and advocates an approximating method of calculation of astronomical data is a remarkable document in the medieval history of science. The introduction gives a survey of the manuscript tradition of this translation which was quite successful.

Alexander Fidora, Ramon Llull's Critique of Political Astrology

Abstract: This paper explores Ramon Llull's critique of political astrology regarding both its literary expression and its epistemological foundations. It opens with a discussion of Llull's reception of the *topos* of the treacherous astrologer, which shows how the Catalan philosopher and theologian used this traditional motif in order to rebut the very influential notion of political astrology from pseudo-Aristotle's *Secretum secretorum*. Regarding the epistemological foundations of Llull's critique of astrology, the paper draws attention to his reflections on the changing epistemological conditions of human experience, which he sees as the main reason for the precarious status of astrology. Consequently, Llull pleads for replacing an experience-based astrology by a principle-oriented science of the stars.

Paolo Ponzio, Tra rivelazioni e stratagemmi: politica e teologia profetica in Tommaso Campanella

Abstract: In this essay we will specify two issues particularly significant not only with regard to the personal life of Tommaso Campanella, but also with respect to his thought: 1) the revolutionary prophecy of the Calabrian conspiracy of 1599 and 2) the affair of the relationship between freedom and fate in the *De fato siderali vitando*, written on the commission of the Pope Urban VIII.

Virginia M. Giouli, Relativity of Freedom in Plato's *Republic*

Abstract: Plato's ideal *Republic* is closed to error, fallibility, evil and, thus, to change; in order for it to come into existence, however – even hopelessly –, it needs the transcendence of the particularities which characterize unique individuals. Hence, to avoid relativism in the *Republic* regarding the nature, judgement, limitations and exercise of freedom, Plato erroneously includes an élite: the Councils of State. However, the right or best solution as to how to implement freedom cannot be found. Nevertheless, Plato's unavoidably relativistic idea of ideals of freedom in the *Republic* is annulled by his use of a choice beyond reason that serves freedom; not personal dreams, nor utopias. Indeed, the sacred nature of the Supreme Good in the *Republic* is a value *too far apart* from the power of rulers and those ruled; since whatever has been 'religiously' put forward by Socrates about the élite and its education – therefore relativism in freedom and the ideal *Republic* – serves only the sacrifice of such childish dreams.

Maria Evelina Malgieri, L'essere e la volontà creatrice. La quarta proposizione del *De causis* nel commento dello Pseudo-Adamo di Bocfeld

Abstract: The *Scriptum in Librum de causis* traditionally attributed to Pseudo-Adam of Bocfeld occupies an important place in the history of the Latin reception of the *Liber de causis*. Previous studies have helped to better define our knowledge of the text which, however, still remains largely unpublished. This article (i) adds a new element for the study of the authorship of the text; (ii) discusses the

interpretation offered by the *Scriptum* of one of the most famous propositions of the *Liber de causis*, the fourth proposition (“Prima rerum creaturarum est esse, et non est ante ipsum creatum aliud – The first of created things is being, and there is nothing else created before it”).

Giuliano Mori, Contingency, Possibility, and Verisimilitude in Lorenzo Valla: Dialectics and Philology

Abstract: This article analyses Lorenzo Valla’s dialectics in order to uncover an epistemological theory of truth undergirding Valla’s production. Based on the analysis of Valla’s *Retractatio totius dialecticae*, I argue that Valla rejects the notion of one-sided possibility, and considers both possibility and contingency as incompatible with necessity and absolute truth. This assumption inevitably hinders inquiries in fields of knowledge that deal with inherently possible or particular data. Analysing Valla’s philological works, this article shows that, in specific cases, Valla tries to overcome this obstacle thanks to the notion of intellectual *acumen*, a faculty that transcends the rules of logical inference and puts the inquirer in contact with truth.

Marilena Panarelli, Plants Changing Species. The Latin Debate on the *transmutatio plantarum*

Abstract: The change of plant species, that is the *transmutatio plantarum*, is a crucial topic, which raises significant philosophical problems. Here, almost unnoticed, hides a significant moment of the process of reception of Aristotelian philosophy. The question is addressed in the first book of the pseudo-Aristotelian *De plantis*, where some examples of plants are reported that change their own species. The Latin commentators of the *De plantis* who dealt with this issue showed a certain interpretative vivacity. Adam of Buckenfield states that plants can change their own species because their shape when compared to that of animals is closer to matter and therefore less perfect. Meanwhile, their matter is less determined than that of minerals. Among all commentators, Albert the Great and Roger Bacon show best the complexity of the question at hand, disclosing two opposite philosophical positions. In spite of Bacon, who admits just a mutation of accidents and denies the possibility that *labor* could change the form of a plant, Albert assigns to *ars* the possibility to change the form of plants.

Tommaso Sgarro, La religione della mente in Tommaso Campanella

Abstract: Tommaso Campanella’s *dignitas hominis* acquires its own autonomous and innovative historiographical value in recognizing the connection between *mens* and religion as a distinctive element of human beings. The *Mens* is infused in men directly by God and the discovery of the *religion of mind* has revealed the rationality of Christianity. Only through Christianity the “Primalitary” structure of being is fully expressed and, at the same time, human freedom reaches its fulfillment.

Eugenio Mazarella, Colpa e tempo. Una glossa heideggeriana

Abstract: The experience of guilt is the experience in which human existence, the way of being of man as a conscience, is founded and held in the foundation of its own: the relation of conscience to itself in the relationship that it has with its Sacred, the mystery of fascination and terror of the *Numinous*, of a *totally Other*, whose integrity the consciousness, the human being must tear, *to ex-sist, to be himself*, to be placed in *his being*. In a *eccentricity* to nature which is its “nature”, the place it holds in the world. Eccentricity that is his debt and his connection with that Center that goes through him and from which he is out, “thrown into the world”, says Heidegger, and condemned to be so – this debt and this guilt – if he wants *to be*. *The Guilt is the Time*, the experience of the time. *Being in the time* brings with it the guilt, the *being-guilty* of those who are, of those discover it, the man.

Carmine Di Martino, Heidegger e la concezione destinale della tecnica

Abstract: Heidegger understands technology as a mode of revealing, i.e., a way of discovering and comprehending reality, which is not merely the result of human invention and operation, but rather a destiny which surpasses and addresses the human being, insofar as its root lay deep in the very advent of philosophy, of the West and its position toward being as a whole. How can we still have interest in such ontological conception of technology as a destiny? What is its topical relevance for the present? What is its contribution to think the transformative action of technology, i.e., the opportunity and threat it brings with it?

Giambattista Formica, On the Procedural Character of Hilbert’s Axiomatic Method

Abstract: Hilbert’s methodological reflection has certainly shaped a new image of the axiomatic method. However, the discussion on the procedural character of the method is still open, with commentators subscribing to three differing points of view: (1) some have seen it as a synthetic method, i.e. a method to derive theorems from axioms already and arbitrarily established; (2) others have counter-argued in favour of its analytic nature, i.e. given a particular scientific field, the method is useful to reach the conditions (axioms) for the known results of the field (theorems) and to rightly place both in a well-structured theory; (3) still others have underlined the meta-theoretical character of the axiomatic reflection, i.e. the axiomatic method is the method to verify whether axioms already identified satisfy properties such as completeness, independence and consistency. Each of these views has highlighted aspects of the way Hilbert conceived and practiced the axiomatic method and, therefore, they can be harmonized into an image better suited to the function the method was called to fulfil: deepening the foundations of given scientific fields, to recall one of Hilbert’s well-known expressions. Here, I argue that the axiomatic method is, in Hilbert’s hands, a very flexible tool of inquiry, and that for the method to lead analytically to an axiomatic well-structured and reasonably grounded theory it needs to include both synthetic procedures and meta-theoretical reflections in a dynamic interplay. Therefore, in Hilbert’s thought, the expression “deepening the foundations” denotes the whole set of considerations, permitted by the axiomatic method, that allow the theoretician first to identify and then to present systems of axioms for given scientific fields.