



Three Astrological Predictions

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NOTES

THREE ASTROLOGICAL PREDICTIONS

This paper will illustrate the astronomical and further information offered by annual and other astrological predictions from three examples of A.D. 1377, 1430-31, and 1474. All were composed in Italy, in two cases at least by Germanic authors, and thus supplement in a way my previous articles in this journal,¹ although one of the three is preserved in a manuscript at the British Museum.

I

A prediction for the year 1377 by Konrad Stoll² or Conradus Stollo³ or Scollo⁴ is preserved in a manuscript at Munich.⁵ Conrad, who speaks of himself as from Alamania (Germany, Switzerland or Swabia), completed it at Rome on 31 January 1377. He had also spent the past year, 1376, in Italy, but before that had lived and written predictions for years past in the regions of Avignon and Orange of the sixth clime, whereas Rome is of the fifth clime.⁶

Conrad begins the coming year concerning which he predicts on 12 March at 9.36 p.m. or two and a half hours before midnight. In the fifth clime the ascendent will be 12° Scorpio. He has considered first, however, the significations of the solar eclipse which preceded the revolution of the astronomical year, occurring on the tenth of January, a little before noon. About half of the sun was

¹ 'Notes on some Astronomical, Astrological and Mathematical Manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris', this *Journal*, XX, 1957, pp. 112-72. 'Notes on some Less Familiar British Astronomical and Astrological Manuscripts', *ibid.*, XXII, 1959, pp. 157-171.

² So Zinner, *Verzeichnis d. astron. HSS des deutschen Kulturgebietes*, 1925, no. 10668, listing our MS.

³ Clm. 7762, fol. 216r: '... ego Conradus Stollo Alamannus magister in artibus gloriose astrologie filius ...'

⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 220v: 'Datus scriptus et completus in Roma per magistrum Conradum Scollo de Alamania anno domini 1377 die ultima mensis Ianuarii. deo gratias.'

⁵ Clm. 7662, fols. 216r-220v. Zinner dates it as fourteenth century; I would say fifteenth century. It opens: 'Novis supervenientibus vetera ricietis ...'

⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 216r: 'Scripti autem pluribus annis preteritis super sextum clima vz. super Avinion(?) et Auriaceñ. provincias qua pro tunc moram traxi ibidem. Duobus (216v) autem annis quibus fui in Italia vz. M. CCC. lxxvi preterito et M. CCC. lxxvii presenti scripsi super quinto climate quod Dyaromes vel Romanum vocatur, hoc est Romam et Italiam.'

eclipsed in 30° Capricorn, which, according to Hermes, is the same thing as the beginning of the sign Aquarius. The descendent of the eclipse is in 26° Taurus. The revolution of the past year falls in the fifth house and the eclipse lasts an hour and a half. But astronomers reckon its significance from the time when the eclipse was precisely half-way. It signifies evil for kings, lords, magnates and princes; and that many will fall from power, because the eclipse is in mid-sky and the tenth house, which is royal, and in the house of Saturn.

Mars is the lord of the present year. Successive paragraphs consider the state of kings, princes and rulers, the state of peoples and communities, the weather, whether the year will be fertile or marked by failure of crops, and wars. Many novelties are predicted.

There will be a conjunction of Saturn and Mars on 10 April in 20° Pisces and the fifth house. Then Conrad discusses the diseases and pestilences of the coming year, and the strength and weakness of each planet in the revolution of the year.

A lunar eclipse will occur on 15 December, shortly after sunset in 4° Cancer, and the ascendent of the eclipse in 10° Cancer. The eclipse will be total and last three and a half hours.

II

An annual prediction for the year 1430-31 by one Vernadigius (Bernadigius? see Tiraboschi, vi, 1, p. 392) of Milan is preserved in MS. Harley 3731 at the British Museum, a paper manuscript of the fifteenth century. In the printed Catalogue of 1808 of the Harleian collection (iii, 56) the contents were briefly listed as follows:

1. Hermetis Trismegistae Astrologia.
2. Messeallae sive Messeallach, Epistola, de rebus & eclipsibus Lunae, & conjunctionibus planetarum, cum aliis eiusdem scriptis.
3. Almanzoris Sermones Astrologici.
4. Hermetis, de accidentibus Sermones.
5. Tractatus de Eclipsibus, scriptus 1431.

Attention was called to the two Hermetic texts, at fols. 11r-50r and 170v-172v, in *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, ii, pp. 221-22, and the former was printed by Wilhelm Gundel, *Neue astrologische Texte des Hermes Trismegistus*, in *Abhandlungen Bayer. Akad. d. Wiss., Phil.-Hist. Abteilung, N.F.*,

Heft 12, 1936. What the Catalogue erroneously calls a treatise on eclipses written in 1431 is the aforesaid annual prediction, which was presumably composed early in 1430. It is written in a different hand from the preceding contents of the manuscript.⁷

The prediction opens by lamenting the lack of students of astronomy. Presently 'our illustrious prince and duke of Milan' is mentioned (Filippo Maria Visconti). In making this prediction from the course of the stars, Vernadigius recognizes that God created them, and that they do not influence human free will necessarily. He has taken into account the influences from previous years that are still pending and operative, before turning to the next revolution of the year on 11 March, the vernal equinox. He has also considered whether between that time and the next revolution of the year in March 1431, any eclipses will occur, and has found that a partial solar eclipse will begin on 12 February 1431, at 2.19 p.m., 'diebus equatis', and will last about two hours, 'with 2° Cancer ascending on our horizon'. Its effects, however, will not be felt during the coming year; indeed, they will not appear until eight years have passed, because the sun at the time of the eclipse will be eight unequal hours distant from the eastern horizon. Therefore Vernadigius will treat of it separately at another time.

Of more immediate interest is an opposition of sun and moon just before the sun's entry into Aries at the vernal equinox. This opposition will take place on 9 March at 20.24 p.m. (i.e. 10 March at 8.24 a.m.). The position of the planets and *partes*⁸ at that moment is given thus:

⁷ It occupies fols. 194ra-205vb, where it and the manuscript end. It opens: 'Numquam laude vel premio dignos putavi . . .' The following is a partial indication of various miscellaneous bits preceding it which are not covered in the above contents from the printed catalogue.

172v. 'Quando per questionem iam factam . . .' (i.e. astrological interrogation).

175v. Tables.

176r. Rubric. 'Revelata est mihi hec veritas quod additio 5 minutorum in omni anno in motu 8^e spere est vera et naturalis, et iudicandum est per 9^m celum et non per 8^m, cum spere sint 9^m et non 8^m ut quidam voluerunt.

Oriffiel Sachariel Samael Michael Annael Raphael Gabriel. Isti sunt septem angeli secundum septem planetas quorum quilibet ducit mundum 354 annis et 4 mensibus in numero dierum lune . . .'

181v. 'Cum igitur volueris significatorem aliquem dirigere . . .'

'In the ascendent will be *pars tritici* 5° 10' Gemini, *pars nucum* in 21° 8' Gemini; in the fourth house ascending will be *pars fabarum*, *pars milii* in 27° 2' 10" Leo. In the fourth house from the ascendent will be *Canta* (?) in 17° 22' Virgo, the moon in 28° 2' 37" Virgo. In the sixth house will be *pars patris* in 19° 2' Scorpio. In the seventh house will be *pars ordei* in 13° 6' Sagittarius, *pars olivarum* in 8° 58' Sagittarius. *Pars mellis*, *pars fortunae*, *pars evasionum* in 19° 0' Scorpio. In the ninth house will be Saturn in 12° 35' Capricorn direct and northerly. In the tenth house will be *pars guerre* in 15° 0' Aquarius, *pars lentis* in 0° 5' Pisces. In the eleventh house will be Jupiter in 12° 5' Aries direct and southerly, the sun in 28° 35' Pisces, Mercury in 18° 37' Pisces, the head (of the dragon) in 15° 22' Pisces. In the twelfth (11a in MS.) house will be Venus in 11° 46' Taurus and direct.'

The entry of the sun into the first minute of Aries will be on 11 March at 7.10 p.m., *diebus equatis* with 13° Libra the ascendent 'above our horizon in the hour of the moon', and at that moment planets and parts will be thus disposed:

'In the ascendent will be the moon in 16° 49' Libra, *pars frumenti* in 24° 5' Libra, *pars nucum* in 3° 17' Scorpio. In the fourth (?) house from the ascendent will be Saturn in 12° 4' Capricorn, direct and northerly. In the third house will be *pars fabarum*, *pars milii* in 12° 10' Capricorn. In the fifth house *pars uvarum* 13° 43' Aquarius, *pars pacis* 17° 44' Aquarius. In the sixth house will be the sun in 0° 0' Aries, *pars mellis* 26° 11' Pisces, Mercury 21° 33' Pisces and direct, the head in 15° 18' Pisces. In the seventh house will be *pars olivarum* in 8° 49' Aries, Jupiter in 13° 13' Aries, direct and southerly, *pars evasionis* in 13° 0' Aries, *pars ordei* in 9° 23' Aries, Mars in 11° 5' Aries, direct and southerly. In the eighth house will be *medium* in 13° 5' Taurus, direct. In the ninth house will be *pars laudis* in 13° 5' Cancer. In the tenth house will be *pars guerre* in 17° 9' Cancer. In the eleventh house will be the Tail (of the dragon) in 17° 18' Virgo. *Pars intersectionis* in 2° 59' Libra.'

⁸ *Pars fortunae* etc. corresponds to the Greek κληρος, which Bouché-Leclercq, *L'astrologie grecque*, p. 642, defines as 'en astrologie, point du cercle obtenu par un calcul spécial à chaque cas'.

As was common with annual astrological predictions, ours is divided into four parts for the four seasons of the year. As spring was begun from the vernal equinox, so summer came in with the sun's entry into the first minute of Cancer. The opposition immediately preceding this will be on 6 June at approximately 5.09 p.m. with 23° Scorpio ascending 'above our horizon'. The position of the planets at that time will be:

In the 2nd house, Moon 23° 46' Sagittarius.
Saturn 11° 24' Capricorn, retrograde and northerly.
In the 4th house, Caput draconis 10° 42' Pisces.
In the 6th house, Jupiter 2° 58' Taurus, direct.
In the 7th house, Mars 13° 51' Gemini, direct. Mercury 0° 59' Gemini, direct.
In the 8th house, Sun 23° 46' Gemini.
Venus 12° 49' Cancer, retrograde.
In the 10th house, Cauda draconis 10° 42' Virgo.

The sun will enter Cancer on 12 June at 7.05 p.m. with 5° Leo ascending 'above our horizon'. The planetary positions given are:

Cauda draconis, 2nd house, 10° 21' Virgo.
Saturn, 6th house, 10° 55' Capricorn, retrograde.
Caput draconis, 8th house, 10° 21' Pisces.
Moon, 9th house, 0° 10' Aries.
Jupiter, 10th house, 4° 37' Gemini.
Sun, 12th house, 0° 0' Cancer.
Venus, 9° 57' Cancer, retrograde.

In the following prediction it is said that the most serene emperor will not be fortunate in this quarter.

The opposition immediately preceding the autumnal equinox will occur on 2 September at 3.25 p.m. with 14° Capricorn in the ascendent and these planetary positions:

Moon, 2nd house, 18° 4' Pisces.
Caput draconis, 2nd house, 6° 3' Pisces.
Jupiter, 4th house, 11° 7' Taurus, retrograde.
Venus, 7th house, 2° 20' (29'?) Leo, direct.
Mars, 7th house, 10° 55' Leo, direct.
Sun, 8th house, 10° 4' Virgo.
Cauda draconis, 8th house, 6° 3' Virgo.
Mercury, 9th house, 0° 18' Libra, retrograde.
Saturn, 12th house, 6° 32' Capricorn, direct.

The autumnal equinox will be on 14 September at 7.52 p.m. with 2° Taurus ascending and these planetary positions:

Moon, 4th house, 16° 38' Leo.
Mars, 4th house, 18° 23' Leo, direct.
Venus, 4th house, 14° 58' Leo, direct.
Cauda draconis, 5th house, 5° 24' Virgo.
Mercury, 5th house, 23° 2' Virgo.
Sun, 5th house, 0° 0' Libra.
Saturn, 9th house, 6° 43' Capricorn, direct.
Caput draconis, 11th house, 5° 24' Pisces.

On 29 November at approximately 4.02 p.m. (i.e. 30 November, 4.02 a.m.) with 11° Scorpio in the ascendent, would occur the last opposition before the winter solstice, with the planets located as follows:

Sun, 1st house, 16° 54' Sagittarius.
Mercury, 1st house, 3° 51' Capricorn, direct.
Saturn, 3rd(?) house, 10° 20' Capricorn, direct.
Caput draconis, 4th house, 1° 21' Pisces.
Jupiter, 7th house, 1° 58' Taurus, retrograde.
Moon, 8th house, 16° 54' Gemini.
Cauda draconis, 10th house, 1° 21' Virgo.
Mars, 11th house, 2° 51' Libra, direct.

The winter solstice would be on 12 December at 10.54 p.m. with 18° Virgo in the ascendent and the planets placed thus:

Mars, in ascendent, 8° 37' Libra, direct.
Moon, 3rd house, 25° 23' Scorpio.
Venus, 3rd house, 0° 29' Sagittarius.
Sun, 4th house, 0° 0' Capricorn.
Saturn, 5th house, 13° 54' Capricorn, direct.
Mercury, 5th house, 18° 42' Capricorn, direct.
Caput draconis, 6th house, 0° 4' Pisces.
Jupiter, 8th house, 7° 32' Taurus, retrograde.
Cauda draconis, 12th house, 0° 40' Virgo.

III

The astrological prediction of the coming of antichrist which was composed by John of Lübeck at Padua in 1474, was printed in that city by Bartholomaeus de Val de Zoccho in the same year. Inasmuch as there is but one copy of the printed edition in America (at the Huntington Library),⁹ I may perhaps be per-

⁹ IAL, J337. The British Museum also has a copy.

mitted to give some account of it as found in a manuscript copy made by Hartmann Schedel (1440–1514) which is now preserved at Munich.¹⁰

Arguing that the time of the coming of antichrist can be foreseen from the stars, John cites the pseudo *Ovidius de vetula* that religious change and the advent of prophets may be predicted from conjunctions of the superior planets and the influence of the superior bodies. 'For Jupiter essentially signifies sects, cults and prophets.' Judaism followed the first major conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter. Then came Chaldeanism, Egyptian religion, sun worship (*et gens Tartarica hodie*), and Mohammedanism.

Ovidius de vetula further tells that in his time from 'a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the house of Jupiter, with the sign Virgo rising and Mercury dominant there, a beautiful virgin ascended in the first *facies* of that sign' according to the constellations, as the authority of the Indians has it. He saw and recognized that the pure and immaculate Virgin without male intercourse would conceive a great prophet and give birth to the son of the highest God, to whom on his death-bed he commended himself with utmost humility.¹¹

The Cimmerian sibyl testified to the same effect, saying in her prophecy:

'In prima facie Virginis ascendit quedam puella facie pulchra proluxa capillis sedens super sedem sceatam (?) nutrit puerum dans ei ad comendum lac proprium.'¹²

And at that time the eighth sphere and the

IA 29826; and the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Rés. D. 8608.

¹⁰ Clm. 841, folio, fifteenth century, 48 fols. Scripsit H. Schedel. At fols. 39–48 (original numbering 139r–148r), 'Pronosticum Ioannis de Lubec Almanii super antecristi adventu Iudeorumque messiae'; Incipit, 'Interrogatus ne fore possibile per astrorum calculum ad temporis notitiam adventus antecristi (*sic*) posse pervenire . . .'

¹¹ Clm. 841, fol. 139v: 'Ovidius de vetula suo tempore ex Saturni et Iovis coniunctione in Iovis domicilio signo Virginis oriente ibidem Mercurio dominante in cuius prima facie secundum celorum imagines, ut vult Indorum autoritas, pulchra ascendit virgo. Vidit et cognovit virginem puram et immaculatam absque maris cohitu magnum prophetam concepturam filiumque Dei altissimi parituram cui in suo extremo se sibi humilime recommendavit.'

¹² This passage more closely resembles the translation of Albumasar, *Introductorium maius*, tract. vi, Diff. 1, cap., 'De ascensionibus imaginum', in John of Seville's translation (quoted in *Speculum astronomiae*, cap. 12; *Opera B. Alberti Magni*, ed. A. Borgnet, x, 644), than in the translation of Hermann of Carinthia.

ninth sphere coincided. And the Tiburtine sibyl at Rome showed the emperor Octavian in the solar ray a virgin holding a boy in her arms, and said: 'Worship him as greater than thou, since the sun in mid-sky in a royal house marks this child as king of kings and lord of lords.'

John of Lübeck hastens to add that the advent of our lord Jesus Christ was reserved to the Supreme Power, and that one should not believe that He was subject to the celestial bodies as other prophets and sects, past or future, were and will be. He quotes Albertus Magnus *In suis mineralibus* that man is ruled by two principles, nature and will. Nature is subject to the stars, but the will is free. He then qualifies this in turn by a remark attributed to Boethius, that the well born should not rejoice in their parentage but in the strength of the stars, and a passage from the letter on government of a family attributed to St. Bernard, that the state of all worldly affairs and outcome of business transactions is subject to fortune.

Antonius de Monte Ulmi¹³ said that this Christian faith would last until in another conjunction Jupiter was joined with the moon, 'whence will result a faith and prophet removing every cult and sect and corrupting the Christian faith by suspension. Ovid knew that this prophet would come, on whose advent from the influence of the stars I shall base my prognostication.' The vernal equinox or revolution of the year and a mean conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter will occur on 10 March 1504, at 6.04 p.m. and 57 seconds. The true conjunction will be on 9 June, at 11.58 p.m. John holds that this conjunction announces the coming of the Jewish Messiah and advent of a lunar prophet. He cites Albumasar, Antonius de Monte Ulmi, Ptolemy, Messahala and Alcabitius, and meets the objection that there will be no change of the planets from one triplicity to another in 1504, by saying that there was none in the case of the conjunction of 6 B.C. which preceded the birth of Christ. The mother will be a deaf Jewish virgin impregnated by a demon. The moment of birth will be 10.07 p.m. on 13 September, 1506, in southern parts.¹⁴

Their offspring will work many natural wonders, which seem supernatural to the common crowd, and many supernatural

¹³ On him see *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, iii, pp. 602–10.

¹⁴ Clm. 841, fol. 144r, 'et credo quod erit in provincia Erzcidie in qua est tercius Babilonie.'

which have no reality, such as apparent resurrection of the dead, as Cecco d'Ascoli did with a dead Florentine woman whom by aid of the devil he kept for some time apparently alive, eating, drinking, sleeping, and so forth. This antichrist will be at the height of his power and glory in 1530. This story about Cecco is new to me. The rest of John's treatise is a defence of astrology against hypocrites and the ignorant, which terminates with a quotation from *Picatrix*,¹⁵ that there is nothing worse in men than wishing to

give a sophisticated appearance of knowledge which one does not possess. John hopes to calculate the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn for the deluge of fire. The work then ends:

'Padue calculatum per me Ioannem de Lubec anno gratie millesimo quadringentesimo septuagesimo quarto currente de mense Aprilis.

Bartolomaeus de Val de Zoccho. F.F.'

Since this last is the printer's name, it would seem that Hartmann Schedel made his written copy from the printed edition.

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¹⁵ 'Picatrix'. *Das Ziel des Weisen von Pseudo-Mağrūtī*. Translated into German from the Arabic by H. Ritter and M. Plessner, *Studies of the Warburg Institute* 27, 1962, 435 pp.

REYNARD THE FOX AND THE SMITHFIELD DECRETALS

The Smithfield Decretals (British Museum, Royal MS. 10 E. iv) is a large volume of the glossed decretals of Gregory IX, written in Italy but illuminated in England in the first half of the fourteenth century, probably near the middle.

The subject-matter of the illustrations is very varied and includes Bible history, saints' lives, romances, fables, allegories and scenes of everyday life, but one is struck by the frequent appearances of the fox whom one suspects on numerous occasions to be no other than Reynard of the *Roman de Renart*.¹ The object of this essay is to describe, identify, group and comment on these fox illustrations in the Smithfield Decretals.

They occur in the following order:

1. Fol. 48r. In the lower margin, right, a fox runs off with a rabbit held between his jaws and flung over his back. To the left, observing this scene, is a richly robed person blowing a hunting horn. (Pl. 37a)

2. Fol. 48v. In the lower margin, a fox is hanged from a tree by poultry. Geese pull on the rope, a cock and hen (?) pull at the fox's

hind legs. A goose to the right holds a bow and arrow, and one to the left holds an aspergillum. The goose which pulls the rope from ground level is armed with sword and buckler. Two ducks look on. (Pl. 37b)

3. Fol. 49r. In the lower margin, the fox is carried in funeral procession. Two weeping human beings (nuns?) support the outstretched fox whose posture is hardly that of a dead animal. Six geese, in pairs, harnessed by a rope which is attached to the fox's hind legs, pull him to his grave. A cock leads the procession and carries a mace. A rabbit brings up the rear and carries an aspergillum. (Plate 37c)

4. Fol. 49v. In the lower margin, left, a mitred fox, holding a crozier, preaches to a group of nine birds, including a cock, a goose, goslings, hens and a stork. (Pl. 37d)

5. Fol. 49v. In the lower margin, right, a fox runs off to his hole with a goose (its neck held between his jaws) flung over his back. The fox's hole is shown and one can just make out two foxes' heads peeping out of it. A woman pursues the fox and aims a blow at his rump with her distaff. (Pl. 37d)

6. Fol. 53r. In the lower margin, a fox has gone to ground with a man or a woman hot on his tail. Another person kneels before the hole's exit and holds a net over it.

7. Fol. 53v. In the lower margin, a fox, carrying a stave and wearing a belt round his middle from which hang three pouches, is approached by a messenger rabbit carrying a sealed letter and a spear. (Pl. 37e)

8. Fol. 54r. In the lower margin, a fox,

The author wishes to acknowledge the help and advice of Professor L. C. Sykes, Head of the French Department, University of Leicester.

¹ As edited by M. D. M. Méon, 4 vols., Paris, 1826; or by E. Martin, 3 vols., Strasbourg, 1882-87. For other examples of the use of the *Roman de Renart* in marginal illustration, see L. M. C. Randall, 'Exempla as a source of Gothic marginal illumination', *Art Bulletin*, xxxix, 1957, p. 105.