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Reading William of Auvergne



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ISSN: 2465-3276

ISBN: 978-88-9290-166-7

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Volume pubblicato con un contributo del
Dipartimento di Scienze Umane e Sociali (DISUS)
dell'Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale"

Layout: Giorgio Grillo

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	<i>Preface</i>
7	<i>Introduction</i>
31	I. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD AND FREE WILL
31	God as Creating Cause
33	Foreknowledge and Providence
41	The Destiny of Man
47	Fate as Necessity
55	Countering Astral Causality
58	Human Will
61	II. NATURAL CAUSALITY AND IMAGE MAGIC
61	Divine Causality and Natural Causality
73	Miracles and Marvels
76	Natural Magic: Science or Art?
82	Sources: Experimental Books, Books of Secrets, <i>The Nabataean Agriculture</i>
100	Idolatry and Hermetic Image Magic
107	III. THE SOUL ON THE BOUNDARY OF TWO WORLDS
107	What is the Nature of the Soul?
116	Soul and Body
119	Man
121	Soul and Music

TABLE OF CONTENTS

126	Cosmology and William's Music Theory
129	Music and Medicine
132	Goodness and Beauty
143	<i>Conclusion</i>
151	<i>Illustrations</i>
157	<i>Appendix</i>
163	<i>Bibliography</i>
185	<i>Index of Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance Authors and Places</i>
189	<i>Index of Modern Authors</i>
193	<i>Index of Manuscripts</i>

READING WILLIAM OF AUVERGNE

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PREFACE

I developed an interest in William of Auvergne's philosophy and theology through my studies on the reception of medieval Hermeticism. As I investigated William's confutation of Hermetic sources, I became persuaded that a systematic and chronological study of his most voluminous work, *The Teaching on God in the Mode of Wisdom* (*Magisterium divinale et sapientale*) could reveal additional insufficiently researched aspects of this work.

The profile of William that historiography has established, and from where I make my first moves in this study, is that of a theologian, bishop, philosopher and mathematician.

Auvergne is more or less uncategorizable by today's standards. His first editor, Johannes Dominicus Trajanus, considered him to be a very learned philosopher and theologian, but above all a mathematician.

He was first of all a learned man, and, as is granted to very few, possessed of the keenest intellect, and the ablest judgment; most versed in mathematics, a most capable investigator of the mysteries of nature, one who handles difficult passages and neglects no part of the philosophy of Plato, Aristotle or other philosophers, in which, according to him, they think well. If he approves less of our authors, he refutes them gracefully and spares the naming of their names. He vigorously assaults the heretics of ancient times¹.

1. Johannis Dominici Trajani in Editionem Venetam anni M.D.XCIX *Praefatio* in Guillelmus Alvernus, *Opera Omnia*, I-II, ed. F. Hotot, apud Andream Palard, Orléans, Parisiis 1674 (repr. Frankfurt am Main 1963), I: "*Fuit is cum primis doctus vir, ac, quod paucissimis est concessum, acutissimo ingenio, iudicio vero peracri, in Mathematicis versatissimus, arcanorum naturae solertissimus indagator, difficiles locos non perfunctorie tractat, sed resecat ad vivum, nullam Philosophiae partem indiscussam reliquit, Platonis, Aristotelis, aliorumque Philosophorum, in quibus bene sentiunt, nullus sequacior; in quibus male, nemo vehementior insectator. Si qua nostratium authorum minus probat, refellit quidem, sed modeste, parcit*

Capable investigator of the mysteries of nature, as will be seen in the first chapter, William interprets nature as the effect of God who, while being the first cause of the theological realm, operates in the physical sphere through secondary causes (*causae secundae*). William, in the light of his double doctrine of causality, intervenes critically on issues relating to the relationship between providence and fate (understood as both necessity and astral causality) and between destiny and the free will of man.

As far as the heretics of ancient times are concerned, in the second chapter, the focus will turn to William's arguments against Hermeticism, in order to focus on natural magic and image magic. In particular, I will dwell on the notion of "property", namely, the virtue or power of entities (man, plants, animals, and stones). I will show that William, in his writings of the 1220s and in the first part of *On the Universe*, describes these natural properties without resorting to the notion of hidden forces or occult powers, or to books of experiments and secrets.

To illustrate how Williams handles difficult doctrines of ancient philosophers, in the third chapter I will examine what William contends regarding the soul of human beings and the concept of the human being as a spiritual entity. This concept was probably arrived at through the application of a hylomorphic doctrine derived from Avicenna. The soul of the human being stands on the boundary of two worlds, with God above and the sensible world below. In *On the Universe*, in a chapter devoted to music, William shows how the soul plays a connective role in the order of the world as a reminder of Harmony, i.e., as mathematical knowledge that allows us to "measure" the intelli-

tamen nomini. Fortiter oppugnat haereticos, antiquiores, inquam, nam de monstrosis, quae postea pullularunt, haeresibus, et irreligionibus, ne per somnium quidem suspicari potuit Guilielmus. Illud in eo singulare, quod frequenter quidem rationibus necessariis, saepius autem novo docendi genere, similitudinibus scilicet, et exemplis popularibus plane, quod vult, aptissime conficit. Iam vero cum caeteros longo vincat intervallo, in tribus tamen seipsum etiam vincit. Quod genus liber, qui de Rethorica divina, et qui de Causis, Cur deus homo; itemque qui de Universo scribitur. Quae cum ita sint, mirum pariter, et indignum, mihi visum est, iacere in tenebris obsitum squalore preclarum Doctoris egregii thesaurum, nec quemquam repertum vel in Gallia vel parente, vel altrice Theologiae, ac scientiarum, vel alibi, qui Parisiensem Antistitem, Gallorum decus, et ornamentum, perditum recrearet".

gible order in the physical realm. This mathematical knowledge is useful for the study of theology; both as a medical therapy for the balancing of temperaments; and as an appropriate introduction to William's musical aesthetic, which is closely connected to inner morality. Just as aesthetics aims to recognize external beauty (*pulchrum visu*), so does ethics aim to recognize inner beauty (*pulchrum interius*), e.g., goodness (*bonum*).

Williams lessons on the fascination of hidden knowledge in nature and the exploration of natural phenomena, in particular the relationship between mathematics and the occult has never failed to provoke debate. This is illustrated in the listing manuscripts of William's works, as well as amid the enthusiasm, reticence and criticism to be found in documents from his readers be they Medieval, Renaissance or Modern.

I have many people to thank.

I am grateful for support and intellectual friendship to my colleagues specializing in medieval and early modern history of philosophy, Lorenzo Bianchi, Nadia Bray and Loris Sturlese, for their stimulating comments.

I thank Agostino Paravicini Bagliani for his efficient support during the production of the book.

I am grateful to Antonio Piccolo for his advice.

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Aoife Beville, Nicole Goulnois, and Federico Poole, who revised the English text with expertise and learning.

I thank my students, Anna Pagano, Marco Sbreglia and Pina Tramparulo.

Since I started planning this book, I discussed some subjects of it with a special colleague of mine, Valeria Sorge. As she died prematurely in May 2021, I dedicate this book to her in gratitude.

Finally, and most heartfelt, my thanks go to my dear husband, Giacomo, who sadly passed away before his time in September 2021. I also dedicate this book to him and our son Luigi, with love and gratitude.

Last but not least, I owe special thanks to my department (Dipartimento di Scienze Umane e Sociali dell'Università di Napoli "L'Orientale") for funding this work.

Citations from the writings of William of Auvergne in this book are from the Orléans edition of 1674: Gulielmi Alverni *Opera omnia*. This edition is in two folio volumes: Vol. I is paged 1-1074; Vol. II is in two parts; the second part, called Supplement to Vol. II, is paged 1-248. All references to vol. II are to the Supplement, or second part of the volume. References to the *De anima* (*Opera omnia* II, *Suppl.*) and to the *De fide et legibus*, *De universo creaturarum* or *De universo spiritualium* (*Opera omnia* I), will be abbreviated *De anima*, *De legibus*, *De universo creaturarum* and *De universo spiritualium*, respectively. References to other treatises by William of Auvergne will be given with the full title of the treatise, and the volume in which it appears in the Orléans edition or in modern edition. In quotations, the orthography and punctuation have been lightly standardized and, in cases of obvious error, corrected. All italics are mine. The passages of William of Auvergne translated into English are quoted by R. Teske; when the translation is mine it is indicated.

For works by classical authors and St. Thomas, I cite their modern critical editions only in the bibliography. In footnotes, I give only their full titles and the chapters or books they are divided in.

INTRODUCTION

An Historiographical Perspective

William of Auvergne, or Guilielmus Parisiensis according to the *Chartularium* of the University of Paris¹, was born in Aurillac ca.1180/1190. He died in Paris in 1249, where he served as bishop from 1228 to 1249.

He was an intellectual with a multifaceted personality: bishop, preacher, theologian, philosopher, and mathematician in the sense of “*arcanorum naturae solertissimus indagator*”². He was aware of the debates of his time, careful in the exchange with the author of *Summa Halensis*, Roland of Cremona, and Albert the Great. As his first biographer, Noel Valois, remarked, he had an independent and curious spirit. He drew on a variety of sources from various philosophical traditions, which historians have partly investigated.

Possiamo convenire che dall'inizio alla fine della sua carriera di studioso Guglielmo D'Auvergne lottò con animo spregiudicato, se pure con qualche eccesso pratico e speculativo, contro ogni forma di asservimento del pensiero nel nome di qualsivoglia autorità umana: fosse quella di Aristotele o di Platone o di Pitagora o dei 'seguaci loro' [...] Abelardo peripatetico e gli 'italici' platonizzanti di Chartres, insieme con i fautori di Avicenna e Scotto Eriugena, cederanno il passo, senza dubbio, per opera principalmente del vescovo di Parigi, ad uomini che sapranno guardare ad Aristotele e a Platone con rispetto ma senza soggezione da schiavi. La saggia indipendenza di pensiero verso Aristotele, che S. Alberto Magno e S. Tommaso d'Aquino protestano insieme con

1. H. Denifle, E. Chatelain (eds.), *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis sub auspiciis consilii generalis facultatum Parisiensium*, I, Parisiis 1889: doc. n. 60, 116-17; n. 63, 118-19; n. 65, 119-20; n. 68, 123-25; n. 76, 134-35; n. 88, 144; n. 101, 152.

2. See above Preface note 1.

la propria riverenza in passi comunemente noti, non designa quindi un fatto di carattere esclusivamente personale, ma rappresenta lo spirito del tempo: spirito venutosi foggiano per la buona battaglia condotta da Guglielmo d'Auvergne³.

With these remarks, in 1955 Amato Masnovo closed the third of three volumes dedicated to William of Auvergne's speculation. His reconstruction, in line with the point of view of neo-scholasticism, constantly compared the Parisian's thought with that of Thomas Aquinas. However, it is not possible to ignore Masnovo's contribution, as he regards William's doctrine as a doctrine that, although being in the process of formation, is one that exerts a great influence on the scholastic philosophy of its time.

Recent studies devoted to William of Auvergne are attentive to the influence exercised by the Parisian bishop not only on Thomas Aquinas, but especially upon other thinkers of the thirteenth-century.

In his *Scholarly Community at the Early University of Paris*, Spencer E. Young focuses on the influence of William of Auvergne as a distinguished intellectual of the so-called "parens scientiarum" generation⁴; In his book, Ian Wei illustrates how the importance of understanding the similarities and differences between animals and humans is stressed not only by William of Auvergne, but also in the *Summa Halensis* and by Bonaventure, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas⁵. Animals are a fundamental resource for knowing God and His creation. Particularly in *On Laws*, Williams attempts to explain the old Testament precepts stating that animals were created for use by humans and as tools employed by God to shape human behavior.

Corey Barnes examines the relationship between providence and free will, discussing William's influence "on theological reflections in the 1230s and 1240s"⁶.

3. See A. Masnovo, *Da Guglielmo d'Auvergne a san Tommaso d'Aquino*, I-III, Milano 1930-1945²; III, *L'uomo*, Milano 1945, 211.

4. S. E. Young, *Scholarly Community at the Early University of Paris. Theologians, Education and Society, 1215-1248*, Cambridge 2014.

5. I. P. Wei, *Thinking about Animals in Thirteenth-Century. Paris Theologians on the Boundary Between Humans and Animals*, Cambridge 2020.

6. C. L. Barnes, "Providence and Causality in the *Summa Halensis*", in L. Schumacher (ed.), *The Summa Halensis: Doctrines and Debates*, Mouton 2020,

In addition, the issues of causality and beauty are discussed with references to Thomas of York⁷ and Bonaventure⁸.

The current state of this question, however, seems to me to validate the importance and even the necessity of this book, which seeks to evaluate William's philosophy in its historical context, between authority and innovation.

Noël Valois's standard biography dates back to 1880 and provides valuable information on his education and studies, as well as his ecclesiastical activities⁹. It states that William played an important role in the history of the church, as well as in philosophical and literary history. Valois' portrait weaves together William's moral qualities with biographical and professional information. Valois' description highlights the different facets of William's personality. William was a thirteenth-century thinker capable of fulfilling not only the roles of philosopher and theologian, but also those of preacher and, in his function as bishop, court adviser. In this way, he shows how William's work was organized around a spirit of caution and great wisdom, which was also the spirit of his life¹⁰.

89–105, 90: “Though criticized by the papacy for his handling of university related matters (or crises), William exercised a clear influence on theological reflections in the 1230s and 1240s.”; see chapter 1, note 11.

7. P. Reilly, “Thomas of York on the Efficacy of Secondary Causes”, *Mediaeval Studies* 15 (1953), 225–33. For a further discussion see chapter 1.

8. T. McKenna, *Bonaventure's Aesthetics: The Delight of the Soul in Its Ascent into God*, Lanham 2020.

9. N. Valois, *Guillaume d'Auvergne évêque de Paris (1228–1249): sa vie et ses ouvrages*, Paris 1880, 3–19; E. de Bourbon, *Anecdotes historiques, légendes et apocryphes tirés d'Étienne de Bourbon*, Paris 1877: doc. n. 444, 383; n. 450; 388–89.

10. Valois, *Guillaume d'Auvergne évêque de Paris*, 320–32: “Homme d'étude et d'action, Guillaume se montre sous le double rôle du docteur et de l'évêque. On ne traite point d'affaire religieuse, civile et politique, à laquelle il ne puisse mettre la main; il n'est point dans le monde scientifique ou littéraire de terrain, sur lequel son vigoureux esprit ne brûle de mesurer ses forces. Administration de la justice, gouvernement du diocèse, missions diplomatiques, ces tâches si diverses lui semblent compatibles; théologie, rhétorique, philosophie, droit canon, morale, aucune de ces connaissances ne lui fait défaut. A cette variété de goûts, à cette souplesse de génie se joignent une soif de science qui peut à peine être assouvie au prix de recherches incessantes, et ne le cède qu'au désir de partager avec d'autres le fruit de ses laborieuses découvertes; une éloquence qui touche et convertit, si elle ne désarme point tous les critiques; un esprit vif et redoutable; un

Other surveys of William's life, and specialized readers devoted to William's thought, comprise an extensive bibliography. Ernst Moody has reconstructed William's episcopal career – which lasted twenty years – as part of a study where he attributes a *De anima* treatise to William¹¹. Valois, furthermore, introduced a critical focus on William's source materials, namely the astrological elements and popular beliefs present in William's system of thought. These themes were then developed by Lynn Thorndike¹² and other scholars, despite their not having always understood his complexity.

Joseph Kramp has shown that seven of William's works (*De trinitate seu De primo principio*, *De universo creaturarum*, *Cur Deus homo*, *De fide et legibus*, *De sacramentis*, *De virtutibus et moribus*) were conceived as one vast work, known as the *Magisterium divinale et sapientiale* (*The Teaching on God in the Mode of Wisdom*)¹³. Since then, many passages of these works have been translated, but there is still an acute lack of critical editions.

coeur aimant qui, sachant compatir aux faiblesses du corps et aux misères morales, libre de toute attache mondaine, rigide, intraitable en matière de foi, ne désire rien tant que le salut des âmes; un dévouement sage et désintéressé. Sage, ce mot servira, mieux que tout autre, à peindre un homme qui n'a point laissé dans l'histoire de trace aussi brillante que plusieurs de ses contemporains, mais dont la prudence, apparaît à toutes les pages de sa vie. Evêque, il joint l'indulgence à la fermeté; directeur des consciences, il préfère un don charitable à l'accomplissement d'un pèlerinage et met un acte de bonne administration au-dessus d'un exploit belliqueux. La secrète préférence que lui inspire la politique royale, l'inquiétude que lui cause le zèle emporté de certains prélats, ne diminuent en rien le dévouement avec lequel il sert le Saint-Siège. En philosophie, dans ses ouvrages ascétiques et dans ses traités de morale, il sait associer à une érudition remarquable pour son siècle une louable indépendance. Souriant des superstitions du vulgaire, prenant en pitié les préjugés de certains savants, il apporte dans le choix de sa doctrine le même esprit de prudence éclairée, de modération et de sagesse qui fut la règle de sa vie”.

11. E. A. Moody, “William of Auvergne and his treatise *De anima*”, in Moody E. A. (ed.), *Studies in Medieval Philosophy, Science, and Logic: Collected Papers 1933-1969*, Berkeley 1975, 1-109.

12. L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, II, *The First Thirteen Centuries of Our Era*, New York-London 1923, 338-70 (for a further discussion, see chapter 2, *passim*).

13. J. Kramp, “Des Wilhelm von Auvergne ‘*Magisterium divinale*’”, *Gregorianum* 1 (1920), 538-613 and *Gregorianum* 2 (1921), 42-103; 174-95.

The ensuing historiography has concentrated on two themes: firstly, the relationship between *divinale* and *sapientiale* in the *Magisterium*, and, secondly, the role of Aristotelian thought in William's work. Concerning the first area, Kramp and Guglielmo Corti have analyzed why William titled his work *Magisterium divinale et sapientiale*. Both preferred the simpler title of *Magisterium divinale*¹⁴. By now, it is generally acknowledged that the individual parts – *On the Trinity or On the First Principle*, *On the Universe*, *On the Soul*, *Why God Became Man*, *On Faith and Laws*, *On the Sacraments*, *On Virtues and Morals* – form a single work, to which William assigned the title *Magisterium divinale et sapientiale*. According to Corti, the aims and means of this “divine and wise teaching” are different from those of natural philosophy. The aim is knowledge of the Creator, and the means is the philosophical method. As Corti writes:

Il *magisterium divinale*, dunque, ci fa acquistare la *cognitio Creatoris*, ma per *philosophiae vias*, proprio per questo è *sapientiale*: si dà in esso una dimostrazione razionale, filosofica, si procede, cioè, per *modum sapientialem et per viam probationum*. Non si esclude, tuttavia, da questa dimostrazione la Sapienza, che è *sapida et saporosa scientia divinae suavitatis*¹⁵.

There is a distinction between the *divine Teaching*, which is purely philosophical and proceeds by rational proof, and the whole *Teaching*, which is theological and proceeds from faith.

More recently, Roland Teske has clarified that the term “divine” is used not only to refer to theological content, but also to celebrate the glory of the Creator God: “wisdom” is meant in the sense that the scope of the teaching is to stimulate love for the Creator¹⁶.

14. G. Corti, “Le sette parti del *Magisterium diuinale ac sapientiale* di Guglielmo di Auvergne”, in G. Corti, *Studi e ricerche di Scienze religiose in onore dei Santi Apostoli Pietro e Paulo nel XIX centenario del loro martirio*, Roma 1968 (Lateranum Nova series, 34), 289–307.

15. Corti, “Le sette parti del *Magisterium divinale ac sapientiale* di Guglielmo di Auvergne”, 294.

16. R. J. Teske, “William of Auvergne on Philosophy as *divinalis* and *sapientialis*”, in J. A. Aertsen, A. Speer (eds.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter? Qu'est-ce la philosophie au Moyen Âge? What is Philosophy in the Middle Ages?* (Akten des X. Internationalen Kongresses für mittelalterliche Philosophie der

Regarding William's philosophical sources, his direct knowledge of Aristotle was quite limited. Since the 1950s, scholars have limited explorations of Aristotelian influence to the question of moral philosophy¹⁷. Teske's studies constitute a defining landmark in William's interpretation. He has shed light on theoretical complexities in the *Teaching* through his essays and selected critical translations of it. *The Teaching*, in its extraordinary dimensions, uses the structure of the *summae* and concerns the following subjects: God as Trinity and Creator, angelic realities and human beings, sin, the return of man to God through the redemption of Christ, grace, faith, the sacraments, and virtue. William approaches these topics from a broad philosophical-theological stance, closely examining the Augustinian tradition and comparing it multiple times with Aristotelianism, which he knew through the mediating work of Avicenna¹⁸. Teske has tackled the historiographical question of the prevailing Aristotelian or Avicennian influences in William's work. In his view, the meta-

Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale, 25. bis 30. August 1997 in Erfurt), Berlin-New York 1998, 475-81, 481: "Though parts of the whole *Magisterium* are *divinales* in the sense that they are about God, the whole *Magisterium* is *divinale* in the sense that it is directed to the glory and worship of the creator. Parts of William's *Magisterium* are *sapientiale* in the sense that they deal with God and spiritual creatures or in the sense that their teaching is profound, but the whole of his *Magisterium* is *sapientiale* in the sense that it aims non merely at knowledge of the creator and his works, but in the sense that it aims to move the will to a love and worship of the creator which is also the perfection and beatitude of our souls." Cf. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 1 1, *Opera Omnia* I, apud Andream Palard, Parisiis 1674 (ripr. Frankfurt am Main, 1963), 593bB-94aE.

17. G. Jüssen, "Wilhelm von Auvergne und die Transformation der scholastischen Philosophie im 13. Jahrhundert", in J. P. Beckmann (hrg.), *Philosophie im Mittelalter. Entwicklungslinien und Paradigmen*, Hamburg 1987, 141-64; G. Jüssen, "Wilhelm von Auvergne und die Entwicklung der Philosophie im Übergang zur Hochscholastik", in W. Kluxen (hrg.), *Thomas von Aquin im philosophischen Gespräch*, Freiburg-München 1975, 185-203; H. Borok, *Der Tugendbegriff des Wilhelm von Auvergne: (1180-1249): eine moralhistorische Untersuchung zur Ideengeschichtlichen Rezeption der aristotelischen Ethik*, Düsseldorf 1979.

18. R. J. Teske, "William of Auvergne's Debt to Avicenna", in J. L. Janssens, D. De Smet (eds.), *Avicenna and His Heritage* (Acts of the International Colloquium, Leuven-Louvain-la-Neuve, 8-11 September 1999), Leuven 2002, 153-70.

physics of the *De Trinitate* is a perfect blend of Boethian and Avicennian teachings. Notwithstanding the explicit references to Aristotle and the absence of direct references to Avicenna, the Persian philosopher's influence is predominant, from both a stylistic and doctrinal point of view¹⁹. Teske's study of metaphysics in William's work locates, in the context of an Avicennian influence in the *De anima* of 1240, a spiritualistic concept of the human being. This will be further discussed in the third chapter²⁰.

Since Teske's research, curiosity about William has grown among German and American medievalists. Subsequently, Italian and French academics have contributed to the re-evaluation of specific themes in William's philosophical system.

It will be useful to document how certain aspects of William's thought have been investigated, while others – of no less importance – have been entirely ignored, superficially dismissed, or approached from perspectives which have not always been fully convincing. It is reasonable to think that William attempted to reconcile the new perspectives of Greek, Arabic, Islamic, and

19. William of Auvergne, *The Trinity, or the First Principle*, transl. by R. J. Teske and F. C. Wade; Introduction and Notes by R. J. Teske, Milwaukee (WI) 1989 (Medieval Philosophical Texts in Translation, 28), 53: "When Avicenna is opposed to the truth of the faith, William certainly rejects the Avicennian position, but William's whole metaphysics is a blend of Avicenna and Boethius, with the great Arab philosopher as the dominant influence. William explicitly mentions Aristotle and does not mention Avicenna in *De Trinitate*; yet it would seem that he means Avicenna rather than Aristotle or any of the other Aristotelians when he speaks of Aristotle and his followers. It is Avicenna, above all others, who has formed his philosophical thought, and it is the style of Avicenna in Latin translation that has most influenced Williams's writings"; R. J. Teske, "William of Auvergne's Use of the Avicennian Principle: "Ex uno, In Quantum Unum, Non Nisi Unum"", *Modern Schoolman* 71 (1993) 1-15; R. J. Teske, "William of Auvergne on the Eternity of the World", *Modern Schoolman* 67 (1990), 187-205; R. J. Teske, "William of Auvergne and the Manichees", *Traditio* 48 (1993), 63-75; R. J. Teske, "William of Auvergne and the Individuation of the Human Souls", *Traditio* 49 (1994), 77-93; R. J. Teske, "William of Auvergne on the 'Newness of the World'", *Medievalia: Textos e Estudios* 7-8 (1995) 287-302. These essays have been reprinted in R. J. Teske, *Studies in the Philosophy of William of Auvergne*, Milwaukee (WI) 2006.

20. R. J. Teske, "William of Auvergne's Spiritualist Concept of the Human Being", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne († 1249)*, Turnhout 2005 (Proceedings of the International Conference held in Geneva in May 2001), 36-53.

Jewish²¹ philosophical texts with the Platonic-Augustinian tradition. In this perspective, William would appear to be the defender of an intermediate position, of a compromise between refusal and acceptance: open to new cultural currents and yet independent.

Natural Philosopher, Mathematician or Necromancer?

The following brief account of the pre-eminent scholarly opinion on William's natural philosophy²² illustrates just how radically divergent such opinion is.

John Weser has investigated William's concepts of matter, form, nature, causality, movement, place, and time, by highlighting their Platonic and Aristotelian heritage²³. Barbara Faes de Mottoni has argued that William equated Plato's *anima mundi* with the heavenly soul of the Arab tradition. This soul inhabits the highest heavenly realms and extends its influence from one heaven to the other, by virtue of contiguity. In this way, it assumes the animating function of the nine celestial spheres without intervening in the human world. This perspective safeguards the freedom of the act of creation, and takes a position within the anti-astrological debate. William, adhering to the Peripatetic distinction between the lunar and the sublunar realms, ascribes a strictly "astronomical" function to the *anima mundi*. It animates the heavens but does not give life to earthly forms (plants, animals, and mankind), as in the naturalistic cosmology of the twelfth century²⁴.

21. L. Smith, "William of Auvergne and the Law of the Jews and the Muslims", in T. J. Heffernan, Th. E. Burman (eds.), *Scripture and Pluralism: Reading the Bible in the Religiously Plural Worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Leiden-Boston 2005, 123-42.

22. K. Werner, "Wilhelms von Auvergne Verhältniss zu den Platonikern des zwölften Jahrhunderts", *Sitzungsberichte der Akademie Wien Philosophisch-Historische Klasse* 74 (1873), 119-72.

23. J. Weser, "Die naturphilosophischen Begriffe Wilhelms von Auvergne", *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 32 (1919), 29-47.

24. B. Faes De Mottoni, "La dottrina dell' 'anima mundi' nella prima metà del secolo XIII: Guglielmo d'Alvernia, 'Summa Halensis', Alberto Magno", *Studi medievali* 21/1 (1981), 283-97, 87-89.

Albrecht Quentin's reconstruction of William's thought proposes a comprehensive reading of William's natural philosophy²⁵. According to Quentin, William argues that the universe is produced by the efficient causal power of God, but, through their natural processes, bodies, spiritual substances, plants, animals, and minerals all retain their own causative agency. However, there is an element in Quentin's interpretation, which suggests further study: the ambiguous use of the expression *okkulte Form/okkulte Kräfte* to indicate natural causality, without, however, defining this term²⁶. More convincing, and with greater support from the text, is Quentin's examination of the theological presuppositions of causality: God as *fons vitae* and *fons luminum*, and His direct or indirect action in the process of creation. In Quentin's view, William's aim was essentially to determine the correct relationship between God and nature, following the tradition of Islamic philosophy with Neoplatonic roots, combined with Avicenna's necessitarianism²⁷. This interpretation is commendable in that it provides a framework for William's naturalistic speculation. However, it fails to analyze the following areas in depth: the doctrine of secondary causality and the notion of virtue. Nor does Quentin reconstruct William's library. All of these are fundamental aspects for an understanding, both historical and theoretical, of William's thought. In this regard, Moody has noted that some difficulties in the interpretation of William's philosophy can only be overcome "through comparative textual study of William's writings and those of his predecessors and contemporaries"²⁸. This paves the way for a deeper investigation which, beginning with the problems partially noted by Quentin in identifying the source material, might start to untangle the knots in William's philosophy.

25. A. Quentin, *Naturkenntnisse und Naturanschauungen bei Wilhelm von Auvergne*, Hildesheim 1976 (Arbor Scientiarum, 5); see also M. Miller, "William of Auvergne on Primary and Secondary Causality", *The Modern Schoolman* 75 (1998), 265-77; M. Miller, "William of Auvergne and the Avicenna's Principle 'Natures operates in the Manner of a Servant'", in J. Inglis (ed.), *Medieval philosophy and the Classical Tradition*, London-New York 2002, 263-76 (for a further discussion, see Chapter 3, 107-41).

26. Quentin, *Naturkenntnisse und Naturanschauungen*, 19-21.

27. Quentin, *Naturkenntnisse und Naturanschauungen*, XIII.

28. Moody, "William of Auvergne", 14.

Numerous studies have been undertaken on the soul and its passions in William's work. Some of the most interesting of which are collected in the miscellaneous volume *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, which highlights the profound unity to be found in the spiritual and moral personality of the bishop of Paris²⁹. As a psychological concept inspired by the Augustinian-Platonic tradition, Barbara Faes de Mottoni presents the *raptus animae* as an argument for the immortality of the soul³⁰. Silvana Vecchio reconstructs a classification of the thirty *virtutes affectivae* of the Augustinian passions through a detailed analysis of the *De virtutibus*. She recognizes an affective element and the role of will in the cardinal virtues, which is inspired by Avicenna but strongly divergent from the Aristotelian position³¹. Carla Casagrande distinguishes in the *De Sacramento poenitentiae* (c. 1228) a pedagogy of the affections in penance, based on Augustinian sources³².

Brenno Boccadoro highlights the dual nature of music: there is both what William defines, along with Plato, as *bene morata*, and *inhonestissima, turpissima et ridiculosa jocolatio*. Music accompanies the forces of evil in the case of demons or jesters. Interestingly, on this subject Boccadoro cites a passage from the *De Universo* in which William addresses a magical-theoretical practice described in the *Asclepius* where demons present in statues delight in the sound of song³³. In presenting the dual influence

29. F. Morenzoni, J.-Y. Tilliette, *Avant - Propos*, in F. Morenzoni, J.-Y. Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 7: "Les signataires de cet avant-propos se plaisent toutefois à imaginer que leurs discussions n'ont point été vaines et que, loin de se limiter à un simple 'état de la question', elles tendent à faire ressortir l'unité profonde de la personnalité spirituelle et morale de l'évêque de Paris, que traduisent à la fois sa réflexion théologique et mystique la plus abstraite et les aspects les plus pragmatiques de son action pastorale".

30. B. Faes de Mottoni, "Guglielmo d'Alvernia e l'anima rapita", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 45-74.

31. S. Vecchio, "*Passio, affectus, virtus*: il sistema delle passioni nei trattati morali di Guglielmo d'Alvernia", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 174-87.

32. C. Casagrande, "Guglielmo d'Alvernia e il buon uso delle Passioni nella Penitenza", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 189-201.

33. B. Boccadoro, "La musique, les passions, l'âme et le corps", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 75-92 (for a further discussion, see chapter 3, 107-41).

exercised on the human soul by the harmony of songs and sounds, or, in other words, the Pythagorean-Augustinian ethics of music, William arrives at the question of divination. Deification, demonology, the supernatural, natural magic, and necromancy are themes that play a central role in William's theological and philosophical speculation. Because of their breadth, they are key terms of comparison, even in William's analysis of other matters. Such is the case with music, which Boccadoro considers extensively, as well as the case of the consecration of churches, as addressed by Franco Morenzoni. Another example is that of the power of the word, as analyzed by Irène Rosier-Catach, in addition to the work of Pierre Boglioni on saints and miracles.

Since the work of Steven Marrone in 1995, William's youthful interest in magic has been accepted as an established fact³⁴. Marrone studied the relationship between natural magic, necromancy, and natural philosophy, and many scholars have continued to explore this theme, focusing on the Hermetic sources³⁵.

A single exception to this trend is the work of Francesco Santi, which concentrates on the relationship between Aristotelian tradition and magic in William's work. I will outline an initial survey of the existing scholarship on these topics, starting with Santi's novel perspective³⁶.

Lo sappiamo: Guglielmo d'Auvergne colpisce noi altri suoi lettori per la dismisura delle sue conoscenze di scritti ermetici e magici, che lo rivelano assiduo lettore, come pochi altri nel suo tempo, di una letteratura estrema e ambigua [...]. Di recente si è però anche potuto guardare a tutto ciò con minor turbamento, sostenendo che letture del genere furono in realtà suscitate da una prevalente intenzione disciplinare, dalla dovuta preoccupazione pastorale del vescovo [...] È possibile che si colga nel segno riconoscendo la preoccupazione pastorale di Guglielmo nella dettagliata contestazione agli scritti magici. Eppure restiamo perplessi³⁷.

34. S. P. Marrone, "William of Auvergne on magic in natural philosophy and theology", in Aertsen, Speer (eds.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?*, 741-48.

35. For a further discussion, see chapter 3.

36. F. Santi, "Guglielmo d'Auvergne e l'ordine dei Domenicani tra filosofia naturale e tradizione magica", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 136-53, 136.

37. Santi, "Guglielmo d'Auvergne e l'ordine dei Domenicani tra filosofia

Santi's misgivings are supported by the thirteenth-century doctrinal conflict regarding Aristotelian naturalism. Along these lines, Santi shows how William's rejection of Hermetic black magic corresponds to a project for the modernization of theology. This modernization implies an appreciation of Aristotelian natural philosophy, privileging its mechanistic aspects. To do so, William, along with Dominican theologians and preachers, from Roland of Cremona to Thomas of Cantimpré, looks for an alternative to the natural philosophy of Chartres. Santi rightly highlights, in William's writing, the constructive philosophical goal of wedding naturalist Aristotelianism to his own theology. Santi does well to recall the authentic meaning of papal concerns at the time:

Il problema posto dal papa non è tanto quello della tradizione ermetico magica quanto quello dell'uso della antropologia e della cosmologia aristotelica nella teologia (problema che i papi continueranno a porre per tutto il secolo) per quanto esse comportano a proposito della nozione metafisica di soggetto (l'unità sostanziale di materia e forma, in netta antitesi con la tradizione cosmologica e antropologica occidentale)³⁸.

Rosier-Catach, from a perspective that tends to emphasize the value of logic and language, has examined the liturgy of the sacraments (*sacramentum id efficit quod figurat*). He proposed a relationship between sacramental and magical signs, using as theoretical justification the legal concept of causality through pact. The origin of this concept can be traced back to Augustine in the *De Trinitate*, regarding the theory of relation (e. g., currency symbols), and to the *De doctrina christiana*, regarding the conventionalist concept of signs. Physical causality plays a central role in William's embodied universe. Rosier-Catach argues that causality through a pact implies that no created virtue or power is given to the sacrament at the time it is performed, since it would then subsist as a substantial form. The performance of the sacrament is seen as a pact between God and man, or as a contract according

naturale e tradizione magica", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 137.

38. Santi, "Guglielmo d'Auvergne e l'ordine dei Domenicani tra filosofia naturale e tradizione magica", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 145.

to which God undertakes to give His assistance, in order for the sacrament, if validly conferred, to produce the desired effect. Therefore, the performance of the sacrament puts it in relation with grace. Otherwise, physical causality would be denied because under no circumstance can a *virtus divina* enter a body, since this would imply the attribution of divine character to a corruptible or divisible substance. According to Rosier-Catach, these arguments clearly deny the attribution of a *virtus divina* to bodies, as well as denying the existence of a *naturalis virtus*. From the *De Sacramento Eucharistiae* to the *De Legibus*, William develops a theory that denies the presence of divine and natural forces in symbols. Rosier-Catach argues that the efficacy of magical and sacramental symbols does not depend upon natural properties, but, rather, on a pact with demons in the case of the former, and a pact with God in the case of the latter. In emphasizing the centrality of words and names, which have no strength or power in themselves, but act only draw their power from those to whom they are addressed, Catach draws on William's anti-magic criticism, which introduces the twenty-seventh chapter of the *De Legibus*. This chapter concerns *idolatria verborum*, which is condemned on two accounts: firstly, for attributing prodigious power to words, secondly, for transferring the rightful worship of God to other beings³⁹.

The work of Pierre Boggioni on this subject is particularly interesting. He aims to demonstrate William's close relationship to the official and popular veneration of the saints, as well as the relation between hagiography and miracles (e.g. the ecstatic experience of the *raputs mentis*). He also investigates the relationship between hagiography and theology. In this context, once again, the discussion of supernatural phenomena intertwines with magic and the occult sciences⁴⁰. Isabel Draelants has pointed out William's familiarity with the *De virtutibus herbarum*,

39. I. Rosier Catach, "Signes sacramentales et signes magiques: Guillaume d'Auvergne et la théorie du pacte", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 93-116; A. Boureau, *Satan hérétique. Naissance de la démonologie dans l'occident médiéval (1280-1330)*, Paris 2004.

40. For a further discussion, see Chapter 2.

lapidum et animalium, citing some experiments known to him⁴¹; and I have already suggested further study of the sources common to William and to the author of *De mirabilis mundi*⁴². The existence of these sources is clear and I will be discussing it later on, in the second chapter. Graziella Federici Vescovini has investigated what William meant by the expression *vires occultae*, and to what extent these “occult” forces should be regarded as natural magic. William speaks of a natural magic which comes from the occult forces of nature and from a diabolical, false, and illusionary magic, which occurs through the intervention of demons. He develops a theory of natural magic, constructed around the vague concept of the occult, which is destined to be transformed by “natural” philosophers, doctors, and Aristotelian astronomers into a rational doctrine of the “specific form”, such as that of Peter of Abano. Vescovini’s discussion is central in identifying two main problems: the differences between natural magic and diabolical magic⁴³, and the relationship between natural magic and natural philosophy. This relationship implies a distinction between the known object and the method of knowing: the object of magic is a phenomenon which is occult/unknown/inexplicable by rational means, and can only be known through experience. It is this subject which we will explore in the second chapter.

Preacher and Bishop

In *Autour de Guillaume d’Auvergne*, church historians as well as historians of literature present an updated portrait of William as preacher and bishop.

Jacques Verger, for example, has discussed William’s ‘scholastic’ and pastoral activity, which are impossible to separate. Verger has

41. I. Draelants, *Le Liber de virtutibus herbarum, lapidum et animalium (Liber aggregationis). Un texte à succès attribué à Albert Le Grand*, Firenze 2007 (Micrologus Library, 22), 123–25.

42. A. Sannino, *Il De mirabilibus mundi tra tradizione magica e filosofia naturale*, Firenze 2011 (Micrologus Library, 41), 64–67.

43. G. Federici Vescovini, *Medioevo Magico, La magia tra religione e scienza nei secoli XIII e XIV*, Torino 2008, 37–40.

also examined the relationship between William and the Dominicans, the legacy of the *Aetas Boethiana*, William's knowledge of classical rhetoric, and his fortune in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The reason for William's shift in perspective can be traced to an internal factor, namely his development of a new epistemology seeking to replace Aristotelian-Avicennian heritage with a Grossatestian-Baconian influence⁴⁴. Jacques Berlioz has analyzed the literary *exempla* of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and published a transcription of the *Compilatio singularis exemplorum*. In this work, he describes William as an ally of the new preaching orders and as a skilled orator capable even of eliciting laughter. Berlioz accurately outlines the boundaries between myth and reality, documents the fame William enjoyed among his contemporaries, and reveals the esteem and affection Louis IX and Blanche of Castile had for him.

Berlioz's observations find an echo in those of Yves Chrste. Chrste studied the decorations of the stained-glass windows of the Saint-Chappelle in Paris and the iconography of the 'Bibles moralisées', in Latin and in the vernacular. The decorations were made in Paris between 1220 and 1235, and the Chapel was consecrated by the king in 1248, under William's episcopate. This fact could explain William's possible patronage there. According to Chrste, the search for the marvelous and bizarre, at the expense of biblical truth, did not concern the clerics, but rather the court environment, which was composed of lay people very close to the entourage of the queen mother, Blanche of Castile⁴⁵.

Jean-Yves Tilliette, Pascal Collomb, and Franco Morenzoni have presented William as an orator and preacher. Tilliette demonstrates that, although raised on classical readings, William

44. S. Marrone, *William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste: New Ideas of Truth in the Early Thirteenth Century*, Princeton, 1983.

45. J. Berlioz, "La voix de l'évêque. Guillaume d'Auvergne dans les exempla (XIII^e-XIV^e)", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 9-31. In the field of logic, Laurent Cesalli proposes a linguistic analysis of the *enunciabile*, which addresses the question of divine immutability and the relationship between God and the world, see L. Cesalli, "Guillaume d'Auvergne et l'enunciabile: la solution profane d'un problème théologique", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 117-36.

developed a concept of oratory different from that of the Ciceronian tradition. By divine rhetoric, he means “rethoric of God”⁴⁶, thereby showing that the words of human prayer are replaced by the divine word itself, in the form of biblical quotations.

Furthermore, Collomb edited a short pamphlet on the sacrament of the Eucharist, contained in the Latin manuscript 10625 of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, with the title *Cum quibus meditationibus audiendum ac celebrandum est divinum officium missae, Wilhelmus Parisiensis*. The name *De missa* refers to Léopold Delisle who, in 1836, included the manuscript in his *Inventaire des manuscrits conservés à la Bibliothèque Impériale*. This text, however, has never been studied in-depth, except by N. Valois, who, though briefly, underlined the thematic analogies between the *De missa* and the *De sacramento eucarestiae*. Collomb deals with the study of style and sources, especially the attribution of texts to William.

Finally, Gilbert Dahan proposes an alternative reading to Étienne Gilson and Beryl Smalley’s of William’s commentary on *Ecclesiastes*, *Song of Songs*, and *Proverbs*. His examination of this commentary’s structure, sources, and exegetical technique is valuable, and the critical text of the Prologue to *Ecclesiastes*, in the appendix, contributes even more incisively to the overall portrait of William⁴⁷. William’s spiritual exegetical technique revolves around the similarities or metaphors of the book as the world and the world as a book, which shows a preference for the Aristotelian *libri naturales*. This theme is also found in *De faciebus* (1230) and in *De legibus* XVI, chap. 45–46, where the use of *similarity/metaphor* is notable. We understand this pair as what allows for the establishment of relationships between two different realities⁴⁸.

46. J. Y. Tilliette, “Oraison et art oratoire: les sources et le propos de la *Rethorica divina*”, in Morenzeni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d’Auvergne*, 203–15.

47. G. Dahan, “L’exégèse de la Bible chez Guillaume d’Auvergne”, in Morenzeni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d’Auvergne*, 237–63.

48. Dahan, “L’exégèse de la Bible chez Guillaume d’Auvergne”, in Morenzeni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d’Auvergne*, 262: “À partir d’un passage de Jérémie (Ier. 8, 13), Guillaume constate que le mode d’exposition prôné dans les livres prophétiques est celui de la similitude, *similitudo* (on peut traduire ce terme par ‘métaphore’). La similitude pose des

Morenzoni presents four sermons, contained in the Latin manuscript held at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (no 15954). He begins by examining two treatises, the *Ars Praedicandi* and the *De Faciebus Mundi*, on the theme of the consecration of churches, in order to show similarities and differences with the sermons. The *De faciebus mundi* is articulated in *regulae* that allow for the introduction of Greek *similitudines*, which expose *spiritualia* based on *visibilia*, and vice versa. This text deals with a central theme in William's thought, as Gilbert Dahan has demonstrated: that of the *livre-monde* and the *monde-livre*. The intimate relationship between theological-philosophical production and preaching becomes evident around this thematic nucleus. Among the many sermons attributed to William – which number 579 – according to J. B. Schneyer, there are eight dedicated to the consecration of the church. While there is no unanimity in establishing their dates with certainty, there is evidence that indicates that most of William's sermons date back to the years when he was bishop⁴⁹. Morenzoni examines additional sermons concerning baptism, and three groups of sermons that deal with the problem of the *sacra exteriora* and the true meaning of religious ceremonies. His analysis of true worship, *latria*, in contrast to false worship, *idolatria*, is particularly interesting. Regarding these themes, the continuity between the homilies and the *De Legibus* (1230) has been confirmed by documentary evidence. As is known, this continuity is particularly evident in the twenty-seventh chapter of the *De Legibus*, within a broader discussion of Judaism⁵⁰. William aims to highlight the pedagogical efficacy of

rapports entre deux réalités différentes et invite le lecteur ou l'auditeur à réfléchir sur ces rapports”.

49. F. Morenzoni, “*Predicatio est rei predicate humanis mentibus presentatio*: les sermons pour la Dédicace de l'église de Guillaume d'Auvergne”, in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 293–322; see J. B. Schneyer, *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1150–1350*, 11, Münster 1969–1990 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters. Texte und Untersuchungen, 43), 2, 373–415; M.-M. Davy, *Les sermons universitaires parisiens de 1230–1231: Contribution à l'histoire de la predication médiévale*, Paris 1931, 149–153.

50. Morenzoni, “*Predicatio est rei predicate humanis mentibus presentatio*: les sermons pour la Dédicace de l'église de Guillaume d'Auvergne”, in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 310: “Le *De legibus*, tout comme quelques autres traités, permet également de constater l'importance

ceremony. In the *De Legibus*, he specifies that the *sacra exteriora* (the procession, priests' ornaments, and all the various ceremonial elements), despite having no intrinsic virtue and no power of sacralization or sanctification, nevertheless have a fivefold utility. This utility comprises the following elements: *eruditio ad sacra spiritualia, rememoratio, invitatio, impetratio aeternorum sacrorum, rememoratio beneficiorum Dei aut aliorum mirabilium*. This validity is, however, a prerogative of Christian rites, which thus confirms religion's superiority over Judaism. This fascinating interpretation by Morenzoni is an example of William of Auvergne's coherence and originality. In his doctrinal, liturgical, and homiletic works, William insists, almost obsessively, on the centrality of adhering to the Christian message. In this light, his vocabulary, rich with expressions and images that condemn blasphemous behaviour, is justified.

Bref, l'usage intensif de comparaisons de cette nature, car il faut insister sur le fait qu'il s'agit de similitudes même si le *sicut* a le plus souvent disparu dans le texte tel qu'il nous est parvenu, a pour conséquence de présenter une vision de la société humaine assez inquiétante, où la présence et l'action des forces démoniaques paraissent incessantes et multiformes⁵¹.

Morenzoni addresses the nature of preaching and pastoral education in the thirteenth century, and has so far published four volumes of *Sermons*. These sermons total well over 300, and were preached on Sundays and major feast days; they treated notable themes. These moralising sermons, crafted and delivered by an authoritative preacher to diverse audiences, are significant for the indubitable educational influence they had on their audience⁵².

que la fête de la Dédicace a eu dans la réflexion que Guillaume d'Auvergne a menée au sujet du culte chrétien et de la différence qui existe entre ce dernier et celui des juifs. C'est également grâce à l'analyse de la cérémonie de la Dédicace que l'évêque de Paris a estimé pouvoir trouver les arguments qui lui permettaient de répondre de manière satisfaisante aux éventuelles accusations d'idolâtrie qui étaient adressés aux chrétiens par le milieu juif⁵³.

51. Morenzoni, "*Predicatio est rei predicate humanis mentibus presentatio*: les sermons pour la Dédicace de l'église de Guillaume d'Auvergne", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 314.

52. F. Morenzoni, "Doctrinal Reflection and Preaching in the Work of William of Auvergne", *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 97/2 (2013), 345-66.

Luca Bianchi and Alain E. Bernstein contribute further to the portrait of William by reconstructing the origins and successes of two of his battles against heretics. Bianchi documents how ten theological articles, censored by William in 1241/1244, exercised an extraordinary influence, from Bonaventure to Gerson⁵³. Bernstein offers a singular account of William's invective against the heresy of the Cathars, judging William's invective as the result of this precise "sociological" aspect in that period⁵⁴. Later, Bernstein in another essay, proposes a comparative analysis of three works: a sermon written for the second Sunday after Pentecost (*Homo quidam fecit cenam magnam*), of which he also provides a transcription; a university sermon for the Eve of All Saints; and the theological-philosophical work the *De Universo*. He opposes "the Cathar notion that a good God created a good world and an evil principle created an evil world", which challenges the Christian thesis of creation by one God. However, he shares with his opponents the thesis that in the present life good and bad 'intermingle'⁵⁵.

Research Aims

In addressing the question of natural philosophy in William of Auvergne, we must first consider mathematics and marvels, both of which play a fundamental role not only in William's naturalistic reflections but also in his cosmological ones⁵⁶. These reflec-

53. L. Bianchi, "Gli articoli censurati nel 1241/1244 e la loro influenza da Bonaventura a Gerson", in Morenzoni, Tilliet (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 155-71.

54. A. E. Bernstein, "William of Auvergne and Cathars", in Morenzoni, Tilliet (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 271-92; A. E. Bernstein, "Theology between Heresy and Folklore: William of Auvergne on punishment after death", *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 5 (1982), 5-44. On the problem of the materiality of purgatory and the relationship between esoteric knowledge and exoteric faith, see A. E. Bernstein, "Esoteric Theology: William of Auvergne on the Fires of Hell and Purgatory", *Speculum* 57/3 (1982), 509-31; D. W. Pasulka, *Heaven Can Wait: Purgatory in Catholic Devotional and Popular Culture*, Oxford 2014, 33-35.

55. Bernstein, "William of Auvergne and Cathars", in Morenzoni, Tilliet (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 288, 89.

56. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* II 1 42, in Id., *Opera Omnia*, I-II, ed. F. Hotot, apud Andrean Palard, Orléans, Parisiis 1674 (repr.

tions are found his theological production, from the *De Legibus* to the *De Sacramento Eucarestiae*, as well as his sermons.

Williams states that mathematics is necessary to natural philosophy because earthly things are made and regulated by number, weight, measure, harmony, movement and light. Thus, they are rooted in, and foundation on, the mathematical sciences. Astronomy cannot be learned without geometry and arithmetic. It is a Ptolemaic science that is distinct from idolatry of the stars⁵⁷.

The rejection of every kind of idolatry appears once again in William's adherence to Aristotelian naturalism; in other words, it is evident both in his theological and philosophical discourse. Yet, this anti-magic critique has a precise goal: to include so-called "natural magic" within the field of natural science; in fact, on this matter there is a broad and substantial consensus, due to the doctrine of physical or secondary causality (the *virtutes* of bodies) and to the book-world / world-book relationship: or, rather, attention to the *sacra exteriora*, which have their theoretical justification in the doctrine of the *imaginatio* and in the strength of the word, as inherited from Al-Kindi. It is sufficient to call attention to *De Universo* I, 1, 46 *Contra illos, qui dicunt planetas esse malos*, in which William underlines the celestial presence of various virtues in the fixed stars. These virtues have been created by God for His approval: "sic fabricator omnium Deus stellas multiplicium virtutum variarumque pulchritudinum in coelis ordinavit pro beneplacito sua decentio mirabilis, ac decore"⁵⁸. They are created in the presence of the creation of other virtues: "herbarum, medicinarum, lapidum, et istae virtutes sunt sicut aspectus, et habitudines ipsarum ad alias res"⁵⁹. At this point, before proceeding to negate astral-magical science (image magic), William proposes a detailed description of the properties

Frankfurt am Main 1963), I, 841aC: "Quis enim dubitat animas, apud quas sunt scientia arithmeticae, et scientia musicae, atque scientia geometriae, capaciores esse scientiae astronomiae, quam si illae apud eas non essent, quin potius manifestum est alias animas scientiam astronomiae capere non posse, nisi quae istas in se ipsis habuerint, et tanto magis illam eas capere posse, quanto his tribus fuerint pleniores".

57. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De legibus* 25, *Opera Omnia* I, 77aC-91bA.

58. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 1 46, 657aC.

59. *De universo creaturarum* I 1 46, 657bD.

of minerals (iron, magnet, sapphire, diamond, jasper), thus reminding the reader that “huiusmodi operationes, aspectus, et habitudines est invenire multas alias, quae possunt adiuvare aestimationem tuam ad opinandum de sentiis dictorum astro-nomicorum”⁶⁰. The objective is therefore clear: to defend natural properties, described in detail in the second chapter, (universal sympathy and antipathy, *aspectus amoris et timoris* in humans, the power of the soul in plants, *sensus naturae* in animals, and magnetism in stones), which William ascribes to the realm of natural magic, without the risk of offense or injury to the Creator.

This legitimization of natural magic is interrupted by the continuation of critical arguments against astral hermetic magic, based in astrolatry, as demonstrated “in alio tractatu” (*De Legibus*) because “prima fuit haec, scilicet, quod nulla virtus dat maius, aut nobilius se”⁶¹. In this context, however, William questions the difference between natural magic and necromancy, on the basis of the dissimilarity between the images and the ligatures that “sensu naturae apprehenduntur”⁶² and which are constructed by tormented men “multis modis a daemonibus”⁶³. This questioning of himself regards the natural and necromantic aspects of *ligationes*, *specula*, and *operationes corporales per contactum*, as he lists in detail the practices of both types, ascertaining sometimes *mirabilis autem, et prorsus intolerabilis error est*⁶⁴. William repeats, almost obsessively: “cum igne et gladio, omnique genus bellandi circa illos pugnasse certissimum sit”⁶⁵.

Through unsystematic arguments, as extensively analysed by modern scholarship, notably by Thomas De Mayo and Robert Goulding⁶⁶, William

60. *De universo creaturarum* I 1 46, 657bD.

61. *De universo creaturarum* I 1 46, 658bF-G; *De legibus* 27, 88bH.

62. *De universo creaturarum* I 1 46, 660bF.

63. *De universo creaturarum* I 1 46, 665bD.

64. *De universo creaturarum* I 1 46, 659bC.

65. I will limit myself to a single example: *De universo* I 1 46, 661bB-C.

66. Th. De Mayo, *The Demonology of William of Auvergne: by Fire and Sword*, Lewiston (NY) 2007 (for a further discussion, see Chapter 2, 61-105). R. Goulding, “Illusion”, in S. Page, C. Rider (eds), *The Routledge History of Medieval Magic*, London and New York 2019, 312-30, 314: “As a recent study [i.e. De Mayo] of his work has argued, William’s work represents an early

certainly abhorred genuine demonic magic, which he insisted should be eradicated (to use one of his favourite phrases) “by fire and sword”. However, such truly diabolical magic formed a rather small part of those actions that were popularly believed to be magical. In other words, under the guise of attacking magic, William set out a robust defence of natural magic, saving many marvellous and (to that point) inexplicable actions from the suspicion of demonic collusion. His work is of relevance to us here because (as one might expect from this Augustinian thinker) illusion plays a very central role in his explanation of magical effects. And the importance of his work cannot be overstated: the categories he sets out will be invoked both by inquisitors and witch-hunters, and by pious natural magicians well into the seventeenth century⁶⁷.

Taken together, all these elements of William’s attitude call for further investigation, which must, however, begin from careful reconsideration of his texts⁶⁸, – an endeavour I will indeed undertake in the second chapter.

The fact that William of Auvergne’s contribution is distinguished by a non-traditional interest in Aristotelian naturalism and the magical arts – an interest that went hand in hand with his traditional Augustinian background – is, I think, something that historiography has firmly established, although possible relations with Dominicans (Francesco Santi has shown those with Roland of Cremona)⁶⁹ and authors belonging to the English

attempt to engage with the newly available Aristotelian texts [...] in order to sustain a fundamentally Augustinian theology, picking up bits and pieces from Aristotle, the commentary tradition, as well as scientific and magical texts”.

67. Goulding, “Illusion”, in S. Page, C. Rider (eds.), *The Routledge History of Medieval Magic*, 314–15.

68. I. Draelants, “The Notion of Properties. Tensions between *Scientia* and *Ars* in medieval natural philosophy and magic”, in Page, Rider (eds.), *The Routledge History of Medieval Magic*, 169–86, 178: “It therefore seems that William of Auvergne did not always draw a clear distinction between the marvellous effects of natural substances that have natural and knowable causes, and the wonders that result from vivification caused in nature by the action of a demon. He keeps the former within natural science and condemns the latter but he seems to consider that the term *nigromantia* applies to both practices”.

69. Santi, “Guglielmo d’Auvergne e l’ordine dei Domenicani tra filosofia naturale e tradizione magica”, in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d’Auvergne*, 138–40.

environment remain to be investigated⁷⁰. In order to proceed on this path, in consideration of William's spirit of independence, I intend to investigate the relationship between Stoicism (a doctrine known to William through authors he calls Italic or Latin) and Hermeticism in William's *On The Teaching*. This investigation may reveal some dissymmetries or puzzling questions, and contradict some widespread opinions. This is indeed the aim of my book: to provide a critical review of materials. It is worth pointing out that I assembled these materials in the course of a long-lasting research on William, which I started with a study of his rejection of Hermetic literature. I will offer only a few examples, limited to discussions of issues (i.e. providence, fate, natural causality, magic and so on) that have played an important role in Auvergne's thought. Traces of this role can be found in the critical literature, but it deserves further investigation. Due to its themes – the unknowability of the First Principle, the emanative flux, formal causality, the presence of God in the human soul, the immortality of the soul, etc. – and its emphasis on *raptus* as a means for the soul to elevate itself – William of Auvergne's thought has been qualified now as Platonic, but with Avicennizing leanings – as was E. Gilson's famous opinion⁷¹ – now as Platonic-Aristotelian – an Aristotelian elaboration on Platonism “inspired by a spirit of independence”, according to Masnovo –, now as confused and contradictory. Indeed, William's thought turns out to be a sort of synthesis between different traditions, of which he himself underlines the problems, overcoming them and modifying them in part or radically, depending on the topics. A careful investigation to reconstruct Auvergne's appropriation of, and elaboration on, the Stoic and Hermetic tradition with regard

70. A fundamental source is Marrone S. P., *William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste: New Ideas of Truth in the Early Thirteenth Century*, Princeton 1983. It would be interesting to explore the legacy of the *De legibus* and *De universo* in Thomas of York. For example, the cause-effect relationship, and specifically the higher nobility of the former compared to the latter, see for example, Thomae Eboracensis *Sapientiale* III 8, ed. by A. Punzi, 95 l. 63-64, Firenze 2020 (Corpus Philosophurum Medii Aevi, XXV), on demons and the relationship between fate and providence.

71. É. Gilson, “La notion d'existence chez Guillaume d'Auvergne”, *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 21 (1946), 55-91.

to some aspects, exploring the doctrinal content of *loci* where William explicitly mentions the *Philosophi italici*, and Hermes, Mercury and the various nouns and doctrines associated with them (avoiding a top-down approach, i.e., avoiding starting from conceptions generically assumed to be Stoic and Hermetic, then ascertaining which of them characterize the Alvernian's thought). In this way it will be possible to determine which concepts William considers peculiar to the Italic or Latin tradition, what attitude he takes towards them, and for what purposes he makes use of them. In short, from this investigation it should be clear whether or not a coherent image of the philosophy of these systems emerges from William's citation of works attributed to Hermes or authors bearing a variant of this name, as well as those of the philosophers he calls Italics, and how he incorporates or rejects the doctrinal elements of these traditions.

The upcoming chapters, therefore, examine the dialectic between divine causality and astrological causality, fate and providence, miracles and *mirabilia*, the conception of man as a *nexus* and divine image, the role of the individual soul, the doctrine of beauty and music. They contribute to present a medieval author who is central to the critical tradition of Aristotelianism up to the dawn of modernity.

CHAPTRE I

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD AND FREE WILL

God as Creating Cause

The doctrine of causality is based on two principal kinds of causes: God as the first cause, followed by the secondary causes (*causae secundae* or *media naturae*). The first kind deals with the theological realm, while the second belongs to the physical realm¹.

The theological presuppositions of causality are amply treated by William of Auvergne in the first section of *The Teaching on God in the Mode of Wisdom* (*Magisterium divine et sapientiale*): *On the Universe of Creatures* (*De universo creaturarum* 1236–1240), where he deals with the unity of the First Principle and, from this, deduces the unity of the universe². Every whole is one because a whole is made of parts; a whole is but a union of parts³. *Universitas* is simply the entire multitude of beings, united in the First Principle. The First Principle is variously defined by

1. I elaborate on themes I discussed in three previous essays: A. Sannino, “La dottrina della causalità nell’universo di Guglielmo d’Alvernia”, *Studi filosofici* 27 (2004), 31–68; “Fato e causalità astrale in Guglielmo d’Alvernia”, *Studi filosofici* 39 (2016), 31–47; “*Omnia de necessitate eveniunt*. Il destino dell’uomo: modelli di necessità e libero arbitrio in Guglielmo d’Alvernia”, in L. Bianchi, A. Sannino (eds.), *Destino e Libero arbitrio*, Napoli 2018, 15–29.

2. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 1 11, in Id., *Opera Omnia*, I–II, ed. F. Hotot, apud Andream Palard, Orléans, Parisiis 1674 (repr. Frankfurt am Main 1963), I, 604bH: “Dico ergo, quia omne totum unum est, et hoc apparet ex nominatione, et intentione ipsius; totum enim, et pars relative ad invicem dicuntur, et totum est verissima diffinitione, seu explicatione, adunatum, seu aggregatum ex partibus. Aggregatio autem, et adunatio, non est nisi unio, et coniunctio partis, et partis, sive partium ad invicem, quae iterum unio seu coniunctio, non est nisi unitas totius”.

3. *De universo creaturarum* I 1 11, 604bH: “Unde et totum dicitur esse continuum, et mundus etiam dicitur totus”.

William as: the universal fountain (*fons universalis*), the maker (*artifex*), the blessed and sublime creator (*creator benedictus et sublimis*), and the first cause (*causa prima*). The Christian thesis of the efficient causality of God, who freely creates from nothing using His Word, is then introduced using negative theology (*viam remotionis*). William, in treating the topic of “how the universe proceeded from the first” (*qualiter universum exivit a primo*), highlights the fallacy of various philosophical points of view, including those held by the schools of Greek and Arabic Neoplatonism and Christian Platonism. He primarily criticizes the classical emanationist view, which does not posit any alterity between the Creator and His creatures. William then polemicizes against six well-known images of the Creator proposed by Plotinus, Al-Kindi and Plato who describe the First Cause

in the manner of emanation from a fountain [...], as the form of a viewer in the mirror [...], in the manner of a shadow from a body [...], in the manner of a footprint from one who impresses it or from a walker [...], in the manner of an odor from a perfume [...], as an artifact proceeds from a worker [craftsman] or as any product from its maker⁴.

Against these doctrines, since it has been shown that the creator is without parts in the ultimate degree of partlessness, William proposes the theory of creation through the Word, the Son of God. He leans towards a synthesis of the opinions of Avicenna and those of Avicbron, leaving aside, in this part of *The Teaching*, the trinitarian implications⁵.

4. I use Roland Teske's translation, see William of Auvergne, *The Universe of Creatures*, selections transl. with an Introduction and Notes by R. J. Teske, (Medieval Philosophical Texts in Translation, 37), Milwaukee (WI) 1998, 64-66. See notes 25-26: Teske suggests some of William's sources, particularly: Al-Kindi's *De aspectibus* and Augustine, *De civitate Dei* X 21; *De universo creaturarum* I 1 17, 611bE-12bG: “per modum emanationis ex fonte [...] quemadmodum forma inspectoris in speculo [...] ad modum umbrae ex corpore [...] per modum vestigii ab impressore, seu gradiente [...] per modum odoris ex odoramento [...] sicut exit artificium ab artifice, et fabrica quaecunque a fabricatore”.

5. *De universo creaturarum* I 1 18-25, 612bE-19bA; I 1 20, 613bD: “quia verbum, quod hic intendo, scilicet spirituale, vel intellectuale, non est nisi ars ipsa in effectu, hoc est in actu cogitandi, quare ars per quam creator omnium artifex, prima creata operatus est, non est nisi verbum eius intellectuale, hoc autem est apud Deum”.

Foreknowledge and Providence

William of Auvergne assigns a universal significance to the theme of divine providence and its relationship to free will because, in his system of thought, divine providence belongs both to the physical world and man (*de scientia naturali*), and to incorporeal and spiritual realities (*de scientia Dei*). This chapter will investigate the first connection, that between divine providence and physical world, concentrating on the third part of *On the Universe*. In the Preface, William announces that he will write about the governance of the bodily universe because of a “dangerous error regarding human beings and human affairs”⁶, which has been made for various reasons. The first reason he gives for this error is the relationship between knowledge, or divine foreknowledge, and the free will of human creatures. The second reason requires addressing the question of a specific type of necessity in which all creatures are involved, namely that of astrological determinism, which further entails an unbreakable causal link between all things (*eimarmene*). To explore his reasoning further, the second part of this chapter will be devoted to the substantial and functional equivalence between fate, *eimarmene*, and astral causality.

In thirteenth-century Paris, William intends to deal with the

ancient question that has troubled many from antiquity and still entangles [engrosses] many even in my time, that is, whether the providence and care of the creator imposes necessity upon things and events, and there is almost the same question about his knowledge and foreknowledge⁷.

6. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 1, 754aH: “Post haec autem aggrediar loqui de gubernatione universi corporei et maxime quantum ad res humanas et ipsos homines. Et hoc est quoniam circa homines ipsos et res humanas *magis est erratum et periculosius, et erratur adhuc a multis*”. I use Roland Teske’s English translation: William of Auvergne, *The Providence of God Regarding the Universe*, selections transl. with an Introduction and Notes by R. J. Teske, (Medieval Philosophical Texts in Translation, 43), Milwaukee (WI) 2007, 29.

7. English transl. by Teske, *The Providence of God*, 99; The passage above, along with the following passages, have been compared with the manuscript held by the Vatican Apostolic Library: Ross. Lat. 1053. The significant varia-

Firstly, granted divine providence, there should be no place for free will since whatever happens occurs inexorably. This hypothesis runs the risk of developing into the absurdity of making God subject to fallibility and error. In the second place, it is considered impossible that what is known in advance by divine providence will not take place: “whatever the creator has foreseen is, therefore, necessary”⁸. Instead of focusing on these two arguments, it is preferable to examine the crux of the problem: to what degree and in what ways, in William’s *Universe of Creatures*, foreknowledge and divine providence do not place necessities on contingent things, and thus do not hinder, impede, pre-

tions have been indicated parenthetically, while the orthography and punctuation have been lightly standardized and, in the case of obvious error, corrected. The divisions present in the Hotot edition are recorded in the vast manuscript tradition of *On the Universe*, although not until after the 14th century. For the reader’s convenience, I have retained the editorial divisions. Henceforth, I will cite *De universo creaturarum* by specifying the book, volume, chapter, and columns. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 3 15, 778aG (ms. f. 94ra): “Post haec autem proseguar antiquam illam quaestionem, quae multos antiquos exagitavit, et multos etiam tempore meo involvit, videlicet utrum providentia et (sine ms.) cura Creatoris rebus, et eventibus necessitatem inferat. Et fere eadem quaestio est de scientia et praescientia ipsius”.

8. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 15, 778aG-bE (ms. f. 94ra-rb): “Ponam igitur in primis ea, quae in errorem istum multos induxerunt. Horum autem primum est: quoniam, inquit, impossibile est divinam providentiam falli, necesse est evenire quicquid providit. Quicquid autem necesse est evenire, necessarium est. Quicquid igitur providit creator, necessarium est. Providit autem omne, quod futurum est, seu eventurum. Omne igitur futurum, seu eventurum, necessarium est. Omne igitur futurorum est immutabile, et inaversibile. Amplius. Inquit, aut possibile est non evenire aliquid eorum, quae providit Deus, aut non. Si est possibile, eo igitur posito non accidet impossibile. Ponatur igitur. Erit ergo verum, quod aliquid eorum, quae providit Deus eventura, non eveniet. Erravit igitur providendo, et verum est providentiam eius falli. Hoc autem certum est omnibus esse impossibile, videlicet Deum errare, vel providentiam eius falli in aliquo, id igitur ex quo accidit, est impossibile. Impossibile igitur est aliquid eorum, quae providit Deus eventura, non evenire. Nihil autem est futurum, quod non providerit. Nihil igitur est futurum quod non sit necesse evenire. Quia igitur omne, quod est eventurum, providit Deus eventurum, omne quod est eventurum necesse est evenire. Quare omnia de necessitate eveniunt. His igitur, et huiusmodi (quae sophistica tendicula, et intelligentibus, exercitatisque in rebus huiusmodi ridendae ac pueriles argutiae sunt), nolo te detinere diutius”.

vent, limit or restrict free will, in terms of willing and not willing, doing and not doing?⁹

William's outline, which belongs to the generation of *parentes scientiarum*¹⁰, is remarkable both for its ability to portray the various components¹¹ involved and because it presents the arguments that were later perfected by Thomas Aquinas¹². William,

9. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 1, 754bE (ms. f. 94rb): "Et faciam te scire de praescientia, et providentia creatoris, qualiter ex eis non sit rebus contingentibus necessitas, nec per eas ullo modorum impeditur, vel prohibetur nostra libera voluntas, neque arctatur, vel costringitur nostra libertas, quantum ad velle, et non velle, facere, et non facere; nisi quatenus, et quibus modis, ostendam tibi". English transl. by Teske, *The Providence of God*, 30.

10. Young, *Scholarly Community at the Early University of Paris*, 64–101.

11. See for example, William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea* I 10, ed. by J. Ribaillier, I, 198–201, Paris–Grottaferrata 1980 (*Spicilegium Bonaventurianum*, 16); Alexander of Hales, *Doctoris irrefragabilis Alexandri de Hales Ordinis minorum Summa theologica*, IV, Quaracchi 1948, I, P1, In1, Tr5, S2, Q1–4 (nn. 181–265), 266–359; Barnes, "Providence and Causality in the Summa Halensis", in L. Schumacher (ed.), *The Summa Halensis: Doctrines and Debates*, 89–105; M. Posti, *Medieval Theories of Divine Providence 1250–1350*, Leiden 2020; S. M. Kopf, "Providence in the Summa Halensis: Between Authority and Innovation", in L. Schumacher (ed.), *The Legacy of Early Franciscan Thought*, Berlin–Boston 2021, 89–110, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110684827-009>; S. M. Kopf, I. Silva, (eds.) *Divine and Human Providence – Philosophical, Psychological and Theological Approaches*, London 2020.

12. Masnovo, *L'uomo*, 187: "Questi brevi cenni a San Tommaso non saranno un fuor di luogo, se avviveranno nello spirito del lettore la coscienza che pur davanti alle pagine di Guglielmo d'Auvergne bisogna aspettarsi di assistere, a proposito di prescienza divina, ad una dottrina in formazione: quindi, come succede in siffatte contingenze, di trovarsi dinanzi a contrasti reali e non semplicemente cattedratici, alla vita vissuta e non alla vita semplicemente raccontata". I already spoke about William's God's voluntaristic divine creation and secondary causality, in my essay "La dottrina della causalità nell'universo di Guglielmo d'Alvernia", 43–46; see also Barnes, "Providence and Causality in the Summa Halensis", 104–5: "Reading the Summa Halensis' treatment of providence as a response to William of Auvergne's treatment in his *De universo* sheds light on what themes the Summists sought to highlight and why. William labored to combat dualism and Avicenna's scheme of necessary emanation. In combatting a scheme of necessary emanation, William stressed creation as a voluntary divine act. In combatting dualism, William stressed Avicenna's emphasis on the efficient causation of all reality from one first principle. Even if this particular combination partitioned the divine creative act from any necessity, it seemingly reduced everything thereafter to necessity. The Summists sought an alternative to the forceful impositions or compulsions of efficiency and found one in formal causality. Moreover, the Summists' category

with his refined, repetitive and sometimes recondite eloquence, examines the distinction between *de re* and *de dicto* interpretations as modal statements in two different situations: the first relating to divine providence in its connection to bodily reality, the second with regard to free will in relation to the first cause (God), as well as to the superlunar (stars) and sublunar (*fate*) secondary causes¹³. In the first situation, he refutes the purported distinction between *de re* necessity and *de dicto* necessity, a distinction which he attributes specifically to the “Italian” philosophers¹⁴. He proposes

of formal causality owes as much to later Neoplatonic interpretations as it does to Aristotle. The Summists’ point of departure develops a clever parallel of Aristotelian causal categories and trinitarian appropriations. Efficient, formal, and final causality map onto power, wisdom, and will. Just as importantly, Aristotle’s emphasis on the coincidence of causes reinforces trinitarian circumincession (or perichoresis), while principles of trinitarian appropriations justify specification of one cause or attribute without excluding the others. The Summists’ strategy from the beginning undercuts William of Auvergne’s singular focus on efficient causality by insisting on causal coincidence and trinitarian circumincession and then shifts the focus to formal causality and wisdom. This shift frames the Summists’ approach to explaining unlimited divine power educed in limited acts within a definite order and to defining providence as the ‘plan of the exemplar considered in the divine art (*exemplaris ratio consideratur in arte divina*)’. Specifying formal exemplarity weaves in elements related to final causality without thereby equating providence itself with the *summum bonum* to which all things are ordered. Providence itself is not the end of the ordering but rather the plan of the ordering precisely as enacted. The enactment of this order situates human free choice within an order of necessity to something (*ad hoc*) rather than from something (*ab hoc*) and, through this specification, alleviates the tensions of William’s emphasis on efficiency”.

13. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 3 19, 785aB-aC (*ms.* 96vb): “*Primum fuit providentia divina per concomitantiam (ed. comitantiam), quam audivisti sive concomitantiam (ed. comitantiam) mutuam inter ipsam (ed. ipsas), et res futuras, vel non futuras [...]. Secundum fuit motus coelorum atquefigurationes, caeteraque dispositiones stellarum, et luminum, de quibus consueverunt astronomi (add. qui ms.) omnes eventus omnesque actiones et passiones quae fiunt, considerare in mundo inferiori, et maxime in hominibus, et rebus humanis. Tertium fuit inarmene, quam vocaverunt aliqui ex philosophis implexam seriem causarum et indeficienter currentem, dependentiamque necessariam unius ex alia. Quartum fuit fatum sive fatatio. De tribus igitur his tentabo satisfacere tibi per viam quam consuevi probationum, et satisfaciam, si Deus voluerit*”.

14. R. J. Teske, “The Identity of Italici in William of Auvergne’s Discussion of the Eternity of the World”, in Teske, *Studies in the Philosophy of William of Auvergne*, Milwaukee (WI) 2006, 53–64; See Masnovi, *L’uomo*, 206:

a new solution in terms of universality, or singularity, and notes that the same concept is expressed by the terms “compositely” (*composite*) and “separately” (*divise*). He favors a distinction between *divided sense* and *compound sense*, and thereby establishes a specular relationship between the logical plane and the ontological plane, contributing to the long tradition of modal logic.

In the Middle Ages, this issue was originally addressed by Boethius, who, commenting on the ninth chapter of Aristotle’s *De interpretatione*¹⁵, discussed the question of determinism and future contingents. In the twelfth century, Peter Abelard dealt with the distinction between the *de rebus* and *de sensu* interpretation of modal sentences, which he also called the distinction between the divided (*per divisionem*) and compound (*per compositionem*) sense (“*expositio per compositionem et expositio per divisionem*”)¹⁶. Roughly one hundred years later, William brings the terms of the debate sharply into focus. Divine providence (*actio divina ad extra*) is at stake, along with its effects on man and his freedom; to wit, the *concrete action of free will*. William’s argument addresses two interconnected actions, one divine and the other human, which taken together invite a discussion of the compatibility or non-compatibility of the contingency of future events, with God’s foreknowledge. Examination of the original texts will confirm that William of Auvergne’s views mark, on the one hand, a slight deviation from the Boethian distinction between conditional necessity and absolute necessity. This distinction, on the other hand, is accepted, shared, and integrated by Thomas Aquinas, whose lucid analysis is much more familiar

“L’attaccamento all’italico Pitagora, chiamato maestro di Platone e addirittura il filosofo per antonomasia, doveva portare a chiamare italici i filosofi – o un gruppo di filosofi – di Chartres e quanti come loro platonizzavano o pitagorizzavano fino alla condanna del 1241; sia pure che il nome corresse anche per gli italici antichi, e individualmente per qualche personaggio italiano come Boezio, caro agli amici di Chartres”. Even Augustine mentions Pythagoras as the Italic philosopher, not to mention Protagoras and the Platonists, in general (see *De civitate Dei* VIII 2 and 9).

15. Aristotle, *De interpretatione* IX, 18a27–b25.

16. W. Kneale, “Modality *De Dicto* and *De Re*”, in E. Nagel, P. Suppes, A. Tarski (eds.), *Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science: Proceedings of the 1960 International Congress*, Stanford 1962, 622–33.

than William's to contemporary logicians and their interpreters. William deserves credit for his ability to discern and point out the difficulties caused by failure to understand – or a partial understanding of – the difference between statements that describe a logical-transcendental necessity (*de dicto*) and an ontological-categorical necessity (*de re*)¹⁷. The theme of providence and its relationship to creatures is structured around four thematic nuclei and is explored in chapters 15–25 of the third section of the first main part of *On the Universe of Creatures*. The point of the discourse is no longer presented from within the framework of the *scientia Dei* – according to the vision provided by Peter Lombard – but from within that of the will, thus sharing the Boethian approach, which considers the issue of the compatibility of divine prescience with both future contingents and free will. William's arguments attribute two specific acts to God: *providere*, understood in the sense of looking from above man and the world; and *praevidere*, which, in the wake of Boethius, is conceived of not as prediction, foreknowledge of events projected into the future, but as knowledge of a present that never ceases to be present. That which for man is a future event is always present for God, so the events that depend on free will are present to God in their contingencies. Yet William displays a certain dissatisfaction with this traditional solution. For this reason, he undertakes a systematic refutation of the errors committed by those who support the deterministic thesis that “everything happens out of necessity and nothing happens freely.”

But because it seemed to some misguided people that, by other ways than by the providence of the creator, all things are also produced or come about in this world of necessity and that nothing at all is freely in our power, but that we are rather impelled by necessity to do all the things we do and that it is impossible that we are prevented from doing all the things we do, I think that it is most suitable that we deal for a

17. Amato Masnovo and Roland Teske have been the first scholars to describe the architecture of William's philosophical discourse with respect to the *quaestio* of anticipated knowledge of future contingents and free will. See Masnovo, *L'uomo*, 165–205; R. J. Teske, “William of Auvergne on *De re* and *De dicto* Necessity”, in Teske, *Studies in the Philosophy of William of Auvergne*, 65–79.

little while with these things and attend to the destruction of these errors that you see are most pernicious¹⁸.

Of the four errors William addresses, however, only the first concerns us here, namely, that of the concomitance (*concomitantia*) – that is, universal and intellectual coincidence, correspondence, or concordance – of divine knowledge and future contingents, or even of divine providence and future things. This blunder is seen in arguments based on a misunderstanding of the relationships between divine providence and divine knowledge, on the one hand, and human action, on the other. It is therefore necessary to distinguish the intention¹⁹ of divine foreknowledge from the intention of divine providence. The first is broader and extends over future goods and evils; the second is more restricted and tends only to future good. For we commonly say that only good things are provided for²⁰; the former, and not the second, is God's will, as the locutions "intentio ut", "procurare ut", "consulte procurata" imply. Who would want to attribute to God the intention or will to do evil? William repeatedly remarks "mala dico culpabilia"²¹.

18. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 3 19, 785aB (*ms.* 96vb): "Quia vero et (etiam *ms.*) per alias vias, quam per Creatoris providentiam visum est nonnullis erroneis, omnia ex necessitate vel fieri, vel evenire in mundo isto, et nihil (*add.* non *ms.*) esse omnino in potestate nostra libere, sed potius impelli nos necessitate ad omnia, quae facimus, et prohiberi impossibile esse ab omnibus, quae facimus. Convenientissimum arbitror negociari aliquantulum circa haec, et intendere ad destructionem errorum istorum, quos tu vides tam perniciosos. Scito igitur, quia *quattuor* sunt, quae induxerunt eos in errorem huiusmodi". The passage has also been commented on by Masnovo, *L'uomo*, 166–67. English transl. by Teske, *The Providence of God*, 119.

19. English transl. by Teske, *The Providence of God*, 30 note 5: "Following Avicenna [...] William uses intention as a synonym for conceptual content or meaning as well in the sense of purpose and goal".

20. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 1 754bF: "Scito in primis, quod differt intentio praescientiae ab intentione providentiae: quoniam intentio praescientiae amplior est, et extensa tam super bona, quam super mala futura; aequae enim praescit Creator benedictus mala, et bona et e converso. Intentio vero providentiae restrictior est, et non cadit nisi super bona futura, communiter enim sola bona provideri dicuntur". Masnovo, *L'uomo*, 168.

21. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 1, 754bG: "Non autem est bonitatis divinae intentio, ut mala eveniant vel fiant, *male dico culpabilia*. Sed neque eiusdem bonitatis est procurare, ut mala huiusmodi fiant, vel eveniant. Quare manifes-

Providence is manifested through God's efficient causality, whose relationship with worldly reality forces William of Auvergne to employ dubitative expressions (*videtur, forsitan*)²². These expressions introduce the finalism that is immanent in things and orient the investigation in the *De universo creaturarum* towards naturalism²³. This is a very different approach than we find in the *De Trinitate*.

tum est mala non esse provisa a creatore, sicut neque *consulta procurata*: quamquam dubitare non debeas omnia, et bona, et mala praescita esse ab eodem, et praecognita, ac praevisa: et est intentio mea hic de malis culpabilibus”.

22. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 3, 759bB: “Reminiscere etiam, quia nomen, et intentionem causae efficientis videntur merito philosophi extendisse ad exactam, ac depuratam eiusdem rationem; forsitan enim sic non congruit nisi primae causae efficienti quae est Creator benedictus”. See Sannino, “La dottrina della causalità nell’universo di Guglielmo d’Alvernia”, 43-47. My hypothesis is slightly different with respect to that of Masnovo and classical historiography: occasionalism is absent in William of Auvergne, and the system of secondary causes is well-articulated. It is suprising that Masnovo, even though he begins with an attentive analysis of biology and zoology as they are present in William’s universe, does not grasp their meaning; see Masnovo, *L’uomo*, 169-82.

23. *De universo creaturarum* I 33, 757bD-62bE, 758aG-bF: “Postmodum autem quaero ab eis, utrum natura haec liber sit, an magister, et iterum cuiusmodi liber, cuiusmodi literis scriptus, et quae quantitas, et cuius voluminis, et de scriptore interrogo eos, et nesciunt mihi respondere. Quod si dixerint mihi, quia magister est: quaero iterum, ubi magister ille tot, et tanta artificia didicerit, si didicit, quoniam si non didicit, hoc est, si scientiam huiusmodi ab alio non habet, necesse habent confiteri, quia magister iste creator est, cum solus creator scientiam ab alio non habeat, et quicunque habent, ab eo habeant. Mirabile autem valde est, quod similis artifex, et magister, aut similis liber apud nos nondum inventus est. Quod si creator ipse est, qui docet huiusmodi artifices, quibus nulla est artificiorum necessitas propria comparatione indigentiarum, et necessitatum nostrarum; quanto magis in nos deberet esse tantae divinae bonitas largitas, ut in hominibus essent istae artes naturaliter, vel saltem artes necessariae, ut non cogerentur homines tantis vigiliis, et laboribus, artificia sibi necessaria discere et acquirere? Mirabile autem est, si sit liber, in quo legunt isti artifices artificiorum suorum scientiam, qualiter ibi legere possunt, et videretur quod literae illae non sint naturales, si literae ubi sunt, quoniam nullae literae naturaliter leguntur ab hominibus, et literae non possunt esse naturales aliud, quam naturalia signa: sed et haec signa, ubi impressa sunt, et de quibus impressit? Amplius. Natura, quae ita docet huiusmodi artifices, si non est subiectum, sed in subiecto, quemadmodum docet Aristoteles qualiter docet, cum ipsa nihil scire posse videatur? [...] Dicendum igitur videntur, ut quemadmodum fluit esse a fonte primo, et universali essendi; et pro beneplacito ipsius,

The Destiny of Man

In Chapter 15, as I said above, William begins a reflection on the ancient issue “whether the Providence or Foreknowledge of the Creator imposes necessity on things and events”²⁴, on which, as is known, even Thomas expresses a theoretically problematic position²⁵. Three other lengthy sections (XVI–XVIII) are dedicated to the links between *actio divina ad extra* and *actio humana singularis*. God’s intervention has inevitable effects on the activity of free will. The question hinges on voluntarism (the voluntary acts of a free individual), even before Thomas. William, albeit without attempting to comment Aristotle’s *De interpretatione* IX 18a27–b2516, distinguishes between individual statements about future events and universal statements about future events. As regards the former, he calls attention to the predicate and avoids deterministic conclusions, because the principle of bivalence – according to which a statement always has a single truth value, that is, it is either true or false – is not applicable to them. For the latter, instead, this principle is essential. In other terms – drawing on the later explanation by Thomas Aquinas, who expresses himself more clearly than William – we can say that individual statements about the future are somewhat different than statements about the past and the present. In the case of the latter two, if a statement is true in a determinate way then its opposite must necessarily be false, for any matter. In individual statements about the future, instead, it is not necessary that when a statement is true in a determinate way its opposite is false for

super esse causarum ab ipso; et quemadmodum bonitas, et pulchritudo et alia quae vocantur bona, sunt bonitate sua super omnia creata, et generata: sic a lumine sapientiae creatoris descendunt, sive fluunt pro beneplacito ipsius naturaliter lumina praedictarum cognitionum, prout requirit necessitas, et utilitas eorum; quemadmodum super formicam lumen quoddam providentiae, quia hoc requirit necessitas vitae ipsius [...]”.

24. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 15, 778aG: “Utrum providentia, seu praescientia Creatoris, rebus et eventibus necessitatem imponat”. English transl. by Teske, *The Providence of God*, 99.

25. Aquinas points at once toward both the presentness of all things to an eternal God, as well as to the complete and omniscient nature of divine causality.

contingent matter; for necessary matter, the same holds true as for individual statements about the future, present, and past²⁶.

Moreover, consider the predicate, and you will see that it is nothing other than the necessity of coming about. But this can in no way truly be said about a proposition, because a proposition does not come about and will not come about. *It is not about the future because it is true and necessary from the beginning of the ages and now as well.* Because, therefore, this predicate is said only about things and natures, that locution can only be understood about things. *The truth and the true distinction, therefore, is that this necessity can be predicated of things or attributed to things, either in the universal or universally – and it is in accord with the truth when ‘about the proposition’ is understood according to them – or it can be understood in the singular and separately, and they [sc. Italian or Latin sophists] call this interpretation ‘about the thing’.* This then is what produces the duplicity in the thing, namely, universality and singularity. For ‘it is necessary that whatever God has foreseen will come about will come about’ is in no way true of individuals singularly and separately. It is, nonetheless, true in the universal and compositely. Even if each future event were contingent and were possible not to come about, this would still be true and necessary, and the reason is that it is universality to which necessity belongs, but not to singularity, just as when you say of two contradictory contingent propositions it is necessary that one of these two be true. For in both of them there is contingency and in neither necessity, and just as if you say, ‘One of them will always be true’, the everlastingness of the truth is not attributed separately or singly to one, but in common or in the universal²⁷.

26. Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio libri Peryermeneias* I, 1, lect. 13, n. 6: “Sed in singularibus et futuris est quaedam dissimilitudo. Nam in praeteris et praesentibus necesse est quod altera oppositarum determinate sit vera et altera falsa in quacumque materia; sed in singularibus quae sunt de future hoc non est necesse, quod una determinate sit vera et altera falsa. Et hoc quidem dicitur quantum ad materiam contingentem: nam quantum ad materiam necessariam et impossibilem similis ratio est in futuris singularibus, sicut in praesentibus et praeteris. Nec tamen Aristoteles mentionem fecit de materia contingenti, quia illa proprie ad singularia pertinent quae contingenter eveniunt, quae autem per se insunt vel repugnant, attribuuntur singularibus secundum universalium rationes. Circa hoc igitur versatur tota praesens intentio: utrum in enunciationibus singularibus de futuro in materia contingenti necesse sit quod determinate una oppositarum sit vera et altera falsa”.

27. English transl. by Teske, *The Providence of God*, 100–1. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 3 15, 778bF–H: “Amplius. Considera ipsum praedicatum et videbis, quod aliud non est, nisi necessitas eveniendi.

William points out that the statement “necesse est evenire quidquid providit Deus eventurum, evenire necesse est” (It is necessary that whatever God has foreseen will come about will come about), have two different meanings, because the necessity can refer to individual events or to the whole; in the first case the necessity is understood ‘compositely’ and in the second case ‘separately’. Thus, in William’s view divine foreknowledge in no way offends free will, because in the second meaning the *necesse est* does not refer to individual events²⁸.

And the Italian or Latin sophists say that this is a duplicity of locution, because it can be understood, as they say, about a thing (*de re*) or

Hoc autem de ipso dicto nullo modo vere dicitur, quoniam dictum nec evenit, nec eveniet. *Non enim est de futuris, cum ab initio saeculorum, et modo etiam verum sit, et necessarium.* Quia, igitur, praedicatum istud non dicitur, nisi de rebus, et naturis, non potest intelligi illa locutio nisi de rebus. *Est ergo veritas, et vera distinctio, quia ista necessitas potest de rebus praedicari, vel rebus attribui in universali sive universaliter, et hoc sit secundum veritatem, quando intelligitur de dicto secundum eos, vel potest intelligi in singulari, seu divisim, et hunc intellectum vocanti ipsi de re.* Hoc igitur est, quod facit duplicitatem in re, videlicet universalitatis, et singularitatis. Nullo modo enim verum est de singulis singulariter, et divisim ‘quidquid providit Deus eventurum, evenire necesse est’. *Est tamen verum in universali, et coniunctim.* Etiam si unumquodque futurum esset contingens, et possibile non evenire, tamen verum esset hoc, et necessarium, et hoc est, quoniam universalitas est, cui competit necessitas, singularitati vero non, quemadmodum cum dixeris de duobus oppositis contingentibus, alterum istorum duorum esse verum necesse est. In utroque enim contingentia est, et in neutro necessitas, et quemadmodum si dicas, semper erit verum alterum, sempiternitas veritatis non divisim, aut singulatum attribuitur alteri, sed in communi, sive in universali”.

28. Boethius, *Consolatio Philosophiae* V 6, 26–32, ed. by L. Bieler, Turnhout 1984, 103, 88–104, 109: “Respondebo namque idem futurum cum ad diuinam notionem refertur necessarium, cum uero in sua natura perpenditur liberum prorsus atque absolutum uideri. Duae sunt etenim necessitates, *simplex una*, ueluti quod ‘necesse est omnes homines esse mortales’, *altera condicionalis*, ut ‘si aliquem ambulare scias, eum ambulare necesse est’. Quod enim quisque nouit, id esse aliter ac notum est nequit, sed haec condicio minime secum illam simplicem trahit”; Boethius *Commentarii in librum Aristotelis Peri Hermeneias pars posterior*, III 9, ed. by C. Meiser, Leipzig 1880, 241, 1–9: “Duplex modum necessitas ostenditur: *unus* qui cum aliquis accidentis necessitate proponitur, alter qui simplice praedicatione profertur, et simplici quidem praedicatione profertur, cum dicimus ‘solem moveri necesse est’. Non enim solum quia nunc movetur, sed quia numquam non movebitur, idcirco in solis motu necessitas venit, *altera vero, quae cum condicione dicitur* talis est: ut cum dicimus ‘Socratem sedere necesse est, cum sedet’ [...]”.

about a proposition (*de dicto*), and their intention is that the proposition that is expressed by that locution: "Whatever God has foreseen will come about" is necessary or something necessary just as this locution is also necessary and its contradictory clearly impossible. But they call the interpretation "about a thing" what I called that about individuals, and they do so *with a childish and vague intention*. For in the explanation of such duplicity they lacked and still lack not only words, but also a clear and pure understanding²⁹.

As is known, Boethius distinguishes between simple necessity and conditional necessity: the first is necessity as such insofar as it is itself necessary ('it is necessary that all men are mortal'), while the second is that related to foreknowledge ('I know that Socrates is walking, therefore it is necessary that Socrates is walking'). William rejects the distinction between *de re* necessity and *de dicto* necessity, which he attributes to the *sophistae italici vel latini*³⁰, first and foremost because the distinction they make between the necessity of a thing (*de re*) and necessity of a proposition (*de dicto*) is unclear.

To overcome this difficulty, he specifies:

But you will see this clearly through what I will say, first because a thing is expressed by every locution. But this is because every locution says what it signifies. But that which every locution signifies is its thing; even if it is words or any other sign, it will be said to be a thing in relation to the words or locution signifying it. *Something expressed by a locution, therefore, is a thing. Hence, an interpretation 'about a proposition' is necessarily an interpretation 'about a thing'*³¹.

29. English transl. by Teske, *The Providence of God*, 100. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 3 15, 778bF: "Et hoc *sophistae Italici vel Latini* dicunt esse duplicitatem locutionis, quia potest intelligi, ut dicunt, *de re vel de dicto*. Et intentio eorum est, quod dictum, quod per illam locutionem dicitur 'quidquid providit Deus eveniet' necesse est sive necessarium, sicut et ipsa locutio necessaria et eius contradictoria manifeste impossibilis. Intellectum vere de re vocant id quod ego dixi 'de singulis'. Et hoc *puerili et vaga intentione*". See Teske, "William of Auvergne on *De re* and *De dicto* Necessity", in Teske, *Studies in the Philosophy of William of Auvergne*, 69-71.

30. Teske, "The Identity of Italici in William of Auvergne's Discussion of the Eternity of the World", in Teske, *Studies in the Philosophy of William of Auvergne*, 53-64; Masnovo, *L'uomo*, 206; see above note 14.

31. English transl. by Teske, *The Providence of God*, 100. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 3 15, 778bF: "Primum, quia locutione omni

William, in conclusion, stresses that *Italian and Latin sophists* have shown that *omne dictum / omnis locutio* is also a *res*³². Thomas Aquinas resolves the issue by arguing, with recourse to Chapter 4th of Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations*, that in the case of *de re* the necessary modality has a narrow scope of application, only including the subject of the proposition ('everything known by God must be'), whereas in the case of *de dicto* it has a broadly applicable scope extending to the whole statement 'everything known by God is necessary'³³.

dicitur res, hoc autem est quoniam omni locutione dicitur id, quod ipsa significat. Id vero, quod unaquaeque locutio significat, res eius est, etiamsi sermo sit, vel signum aliud quodcunque, res dicetur ad sermonem, seu locutionem significantem illum. Dictum igitur per locutionem res est. Quare intellectus de dicto est intellectus de re".

32. With regard to the similarities of Thomas' position to William's, see Masnovo, *L'uomo*, 185–87. In Thomas Aquinas, as is known, the problem of the compatibility of foreknowledge ex parte Dei with the contingencies of the world finds an efficient solution in the development of the nature of divine knowledge, which is not situated – like human knowledge – in the temporal realm, but rather outside of temporality, as from a peak from which it is possible to oversee the movement of events that happen in the temporal sphere, knowing them infallibly in a determined way, and without, therefore, interfering with their ontological status – contingent or necessary as it may be. This occurs in the same way that we know in a determined way that something exists in a particular way, but this does not imply anything about the modal status of the object known. A complete and thorough examination of this problem can be found in W. L. Craig, *The Problem of Future Contingents and Divine Foreknowledge from Aristotle to Suarez*, Leiden–New York 1988; Ch. Hughes, "Aquinas on God's Knowledge of Future Contingents", in J. Haldane (ed.), *Mind, Metaphysics and Value in the Thomistic and Analytical Traditions*, Notre Dame (IN) 2002.

33. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I, q. 14, 13, ad 3; Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio libri Peryermeneias* 1 14, n. 20: "Sed Deus est omnino extra ordinem temporis, quasi in arce aeternitatis constitutus, quae est tota simul, cui subiaceat totus temporis decursus secundum unum et simplicem eius intuitum; et ideo uno intuitu videt omnia quae aguntur secundum temporis decursum, et unumquodque secundum quod est in seipso existens, non quasi sibi futurum quantum ad eius intuitum prout est in solo ordine suarum causarum (quamvis et ipsum ordinem causarum videat), sed omnino aeternaliter sic videt unumquodque eorum quae sunt in quocumque tempore, sicut oculus humanus videt Socratem sedere in seipso, non in causa sua". Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio libri Peryermeneias* 1 14, n. 21: "Ex hoc autem quod homo videt Socratem sedere, non tollitur eius contingentia quae respicit ordinem causae ad effectum; tamen certissime et infallibiliter videt oculus hominis Socratem

William's hermeneutic retains some ambiguous theoretical traits. While his position does not seem to be completely different from that of the Italian (*Itali*) philosophers, he nonetheless reveals their dialectical limits and finds a way to bypass this separation by transitioning from the logical-semantic plane (*dictum*, *signum*) to the ontological plane (*res*). The thesis whereby William is able to extend Providence to the last detail of all things, but only to God, and not to us, remains problematic. Presentness comes from the particularity of divine knowledge, which extends to every object: so that every object is present to God, as to itself. Divine immutability is evidently a prerequisite for presentness, which, however, William fails to clarify³⁴, although he is able to correct the first mistake, which I already mentioned above. This mistake concerns *concomitantia*, the universal and intellectual coincidence, correspondence, or concordance of divine knowledge of (future and free) events. William insists on the argument – already used by Boethius – that there is a radical difference between divine knowledge of the future and human knowledge: this argument achieves what results it does achieve only by virtue of a causal connection. William of Auvergne, in an attempt to construe knowledge *ex parte Dei* as being immune from becoming reality, runs the risk of introducing necessity within God's providential plan: almost as if God were in the grip of a single plan and therefore constrained to implement

sedere dum sedet, quia unumquodque prout est in seipso iam determinatum est. Sic igitur relinquitur, quod Deus certissime et infallibiliter cognoscat omnia quae fiunt in tempore; et tamen ea quae in tempore eveniunt non sunt vel fiunt ex necessitate, sed contingenter". See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* I 67 for the overlap in Thomas concerning the *de re*, *de dicto*, *sensu composito*, *sensu diviso* distinctions.

34. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 3 18, 784bG-H: "Neque igitur scientia divina, per modum, quo est scientia, dat necessitatem scitis, sicut neque visio tua, qua vides solem in coelo, dat necessitatem soli essendi in coelo. Neque tamquam causa dat providentia creatoris necessitatem rebus, neque per modum, quo est scientia, vel visio sicut neque visio tua; neque necessaria concomitantia est inter illam, et res, per hoc quod ipsa sit causa earum, cum innumerabilia sint, quorum ipsa non est causa, videlicet omnia mala culpabilia, omnia vitia et peccata; neque per hoc, quod communem habeat causam cum rebus, cum ipsa causam non habeat ullo modorum". See Teske, "William of Auvergne on *De re* and *De dicto* Necessity", in Teske, *Studies in the Philosophy of William of Auvergne*, 71.

that plan alone³⁵. The language used fits fully into the logic of theoretical procedure, so much so as to dilute the strict dualism maintained between the *ordo idearum* and *ordo rerum ex parte scientiae naturalis*, the Creator, or “gubernator mundi”, initiates processes and *providentially* leaves to the will of individuals the choice of their own life plan.

Fate as Necessity

The polemical treatise on fate found in William of Auvergne’s *On the Universe* presents two major issues: on the one hand, the complex relationship between providence and divine foresight, on the other, the relationship between astrological determinism and the unbreakable causal connection between all things, that is, necessity (*eimarmene*)³⁶. Both of these issues have important implications for the role of individual will.

The following pages will investigate the idea of fate, seen both as necessity and as astral causality. It is a complicated theme,

35. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 16, 780aG: “Qualiter autem, et qua de causa verum sit, ut Deus providerit, vel sciverit aliquid, quod tamen possibile est ipsum nec scivisse nec providisse: ‘dico’ quia hoc est per perfectionem, et luminositatem ipsius Creatoris, cui a parte rerum nihil accidit, vel advenit, per quod sciat [...]”; I 3 16, 780aH: “Longe autem aliter se habet apud nos. Omnis enim scientia nostra, omnis etiam cogitatio nostra aliquid est novum, et adventitium, et superadditum super essentias animarum nostrarum, et propter hoc non absque mutatione earum efficimur scientes eorum, quae prius non sciebamus aut non scientes eorum, quae prius sciebamus”. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 17, 781bD: “Cum immutabilior, inquit, et fixior sit incomparabiliter Creatoris scientia, vel providentia, necessarium autem est, ut si aliquis ex hominibus vel scit, vel scivit aliquid, ipsum scivisse illud semper post hoc sit necessarium, nec ullo modorum possit non scivisse illud; qualiter igitur possibile est de aliquo, quod Creator scit nunc, vel scivit ipsum, non scivisse illud, et qualiter potest de coeterno non scivisse illud? Intende in his, quae dixi [...]”; I 3 16, 782aG: “Cave autem, ut sane intelligas hoc, quia revera creator non potest non habere *scientiam* aliquam, quam vel habeat, vel habuerit umquam. Sed comparisonem ipsius scientiae qua dicitur sciens aliquid, et quae quoquo modo potest nominari casus scientiae ipsius super illud, vel respectus aliquis scientiae ipsius ad aliud; et tam casus huiusmodi, quam respectus iste, licet eos habeat creator, potest tamen eos non habere absque amissione alicuius, quod sit apud ipsum [...]”.

36. Masново, *L'uomo*, 165–205.

because – as Stephen Gersh has shown – the obscurity of the definition of fate by several authors of late antiquity – some of whom, notably Plotinus and Asclepius, were among William's sources – is partly due to their use of two explicative categories. They define fate both in substantial and in functional terms, that is, in terms of what it is (its substance) and of how it works (its function)³⁷.

The aim is to show that William was fully aware of the difficulty of conceiving of a human free will given man's essential relationship to the actions of the first cause (God) and to the activity of the superlunar (stars) and sublunar (*eimarmene*) secondary causes. William prefers to observe perceivable phenomena, recognizing the immanent determinism of the universe and thus embarking on a path which takes into consideration not only the relationship between the provident God and *res humanas*, but also sublunar (*eimarmene*) and superlunary (stars) causes. This choice allows William to reconsider the topic and arrive at slightly different results than the Stoic-Neoplatonic and Augustinian-Boethian tradition that precedes him.

In his discussion of the statement which proposes that all things come about by necessity and nothing comes about freely (*omnia ex necessitate fieri, et nihil libere*), William refutes the mistakes made by most, as I have shown above³⁸.

The errors, or targets for his polemic, are the following: the universal concordance between divine knowledge and real future events; the view of astrologers who wished to gather all the events, actions, and passions of the terrestrial realm under the influence of the motion of the heavens and the constellations; *eimarmene*, which some philosophers intended as the intricate chain of causality; and fate, or *fatatio*.

The first of these errors is tackled by William in the *pars costruens* of his reasoning, in which he proposes a theological (*de scientia Dei*) approach to the matter, as I observed above. The last three thematic nuclei are objects of the *pars destruens*, which is of particular interest here. I think it is worthwhile to follow

37. S. Gersh, *Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism. The Latin Tradition*, Notre Dame (IN) 1986, 282-83; 366-67.

38. See above note 18.

William's exposition in a different order than its own, by beginning with a further distinction, introduced further in the text, regarding the term *fatum*. This term, we are warned, has been conceived of in different ways, and it is possible to distinguish four meanings (*intentiones*), of which the first and the third are connected to astrological determinism and necessity (*eimarmene*). The first *intentio* is that of preordination, or predestination, to fortune or misfortune at the moment of birth (or conception) in relation to the constellations³⁹. In this sense, as William observes, the term refers to astrological influence and it would therefore be inappropriate to call it *fate*. Another meaning (*intentio*) of the term 'fate' is prophecy or prediction (*for* or *faris*) by the gods regarding important events; since this view is grounded in polytheism, it can be quickly dismissed, as, for William, this fact lends it no more substance than polytheism itself⁴⁰. This theory seems to have its origin in old wives' tales, about old wives themselves hearing gods' conversations about unborn babies⁴¹. As to the

39. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 3 24, 791aB-aC (ms. 1011a): "Post haec *transibo ad investigationem fati, et fatationis*, et earum personarum, quae vulgo dicuntur fatatae, et fatandi potestatem habere, utrum sint, vel non sint, et quid sit ipsa fatatio secundum intentionem eorum, qui eam posuerunt. *Scito igitur quia fatum secundum intentionem unam, est fortuna, vel infortunium, adversitas, vel prosperitas, exaltatio, vel depressio praedeterminata, seu praedestinata, aut praeparata alicui in ipsa nativitate sua vel ante. Et haec est intentio* (secundum om. ms.) *quam astronomi scientias iudiciorum suorum fatidicas nominant; et dicitur fatum abusive a for, faris, tamquam constellatio nativitatis, vel conceptionis, vel etiam alterius horae praecedentis, et* (add. ms.) *conceptionem, et nativitatem, haec fata, sive locuta fuerit praesignando, sive praesignificando* [textum add. ms.]. *Alio modo, et alia intentione fatum intellexerunt cultores multitudinis deorum, praedeterminatum et praedictum ab ipsis diis, quos colebant, praedictum inquam denunciative*".

40. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 24, 791aC-aD (ms. 1011b): "*Fatum igitur secundum intentionem istam est sententia, et assertio deorum ipsorum, dicendo vel fando, expressa, et denunciata mortalibus de magnis eventibus alicuius: non enim dicitur fatum de quotidianis, et* (aut ms.) *modicis eventibus*".

41. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 24, 791aC-aD (ms. 1011b): "*Dedit autem causam huic opinioni multiplex narratio, et assertio hominum, et maxime mulierum dicentium, se audivisse Deos loquentes in nativitatibus hominum, et mulierum eventus istos. Sed et usque hodie apud multas nationes est huiusmodi opinio, et forsitan apud omnes, et multos ex egregiis militibus, <quos fatatos sic dicunt, id est>* (om. ms.) *magnos eventus eorum a diis, vel a* (add. a ms.) *deabus antequam evenirent, praefatos sive* (et ms.) *praedictos*".

tertia intentio, it gave rise to a two-sided debate, in an impartial tone (without bias or approval), within the philosophical tradition of those who William calls “philosophi italicī”⁴² and William takes a strongly polemical tone when it comes to the Hermetic *Asclepius*. According to an “Italic” philosopher, well versed in eloquence – the allusion is to Cicero – one meaning of fate is *eimarmene*, or the tightly-knit chain of causes. William dedicates an entire chapter (*ad destructionem eimarmenes*) to the rebuttal of this interpretation, where he identifies *Asclepius* as responsible for this flawed thesis. The first passage appears, at first glance, to evoke the tone and rhetoric of *De civitate dei*, fifth book, chaps. These renowned pages provide a reflection upon fate inspired by a topical matter – the fall of the Roman Empire. Augustine too, in a less systematic fashion than William, identifies different meanings for the term ‘fate’: astral influence which is determined at the moment of conception or birth, the word of God, and necessity, or *eimarmene*. He rejects the theory of astral determinism attributed to Posidonius’ stoicism because of its failure to take into account Hippocratic medical theories. Nadia Bray recently examined Augustine’s reflection on the stoic theory of *eimarmene*, highlighting his sources and specifying that, in his mind, only the language of the doctrine needed to be changed because it thematically expressed the Christian thesis of divine providence⁴³:

There are those who with the name of *fate* do not mean the position of the stars at the moment in which someone is conceived, or born, or begins to live, but rather mean *the order and the connection of all the causes according to which all things occur*. With these we must not get embroiled in a long debate, inasmuch as to attribute this order and this chain to the power and will of God [...] ⁴⁴.

The Augustinian reconstruction begins with the objections against stoicism raised by Cicero in the *De divinatione*. While acknowledging a certain value in these arguments, Augustine

42. See above note 30.

43. N. Bray, *La tradizione stoica nel Medioevo. Un approccio dossografico*, Roma 2018, 17–22.

44. Augustine, *De Civitate dei* V 8 [English transl. mine].

condemns them, because to outright deny both human and divine divination would mean denying divine providence⁴⁵. William does not pick up on Augustine's polemic against Cicero; rather, he borrows his own definition of fate from the Greeks, meaning by it what they called *eimarmene* – the order and sequence of causes. A synoptic comparison of the texts in the footnotes confirms unequivocally that the orator is Cicero, as the editor, Pralard, had already noted⁴⁶.

William warns that both in the *De natura deorum*⁴⁷ and in the *De divinatione* Cicero claims that fate is a perpetual truth, which having its source in all *eternity*: nothing has happened that should not have happened and, likewise, nothing will happen, the cause of which, intended to produce a specific effect, is not already present in nature. Reading the passage from Cicero in its entirety, we are warned that this vision of fate can be supported scientifically, not superstitiously, “like the eternal cause, in virtue of which past events occurred, present events are occurring, and future events will occur”⁴⁸. For this reason, on the one hand, in

45. Augustine, *De Civitate dei* V 9 2.

46. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 3 24, 791bA (ms. 101rb): “Sciendum autem est tibi, quia fuit ex Italicis philosophis, cuius eloquentiam usque hodie tota latinitas non immerito admiratur, et inter Italicos sapientiam eius reputo, et arbitror admirandam, qui dixit fatum, et imarmenem idem esse, nec distinxit inter ea, nisi nominibus tantum, dicens fatum esse causas colligatas, per quas res rebus connexae serie oriuntur, vel fiunt. Et iterum alio sermone dixit, quia fatum est ex omni aeternitate fluens veritas sempiterna”. The editor wrote in the margin of page: “Ciceronem intellige”. Cf. Cicero, *De divinatione* 1 55; 125–26: “Fieri igitur omnia fato ratio cogit fateri. Fatum autem id appello quod Graeci εἰμαρμένη id est ordinem seriemque causarum cum causae causa nexa rem ex se gignat. Ea est ex omni aeternitate fluens veritas sempiterna. Quod cum ita sit nihil est factum quod non futurum fuerit eodemque modo nihil est futurum cuius non causas id ipsum efficientes natura contineat. Ex quo intelligitur ut fatum sit non id quod superstitiose, sed id quod physice dicitur causa aeterna rerum, cur et ea quae praeterierunt facta sint et quae instant fiant et quae sequuntur futura sint. Ita fit ut et observatione notari possit quae res quamque causam plerumque consequatur etiamsi non semper (nam id quidem adfirmare difficile est) easdemque causas veri simile est rerum futurarum cerni ab iis qui aut per furorem eas aut in quiete videant”. See Teske, in William of Auvergne, *The Providence of God*, 138–39. An example in *De universo* I 1 17–22, 611bD–17bB.

47. Cicero, *De natura deorum* I 55 11.

48. Cicero, *De natura deorum* I 55 11.

most cases the effect that will result from a given cause can be indicated (not in all cases, because such a peremptory statement would be hazardous); on the other, it is likely that the same causes of future events are glimpsed by those who have had a vision or dream⁴⁹.

However, William's restoration of this meaning of *fatum* (*ex omni aeternitate fluens veritas sempiterna*) takes a different course than that of the Roman orator. While Cicero used these arguments to rebut Stoic fatalism, William instead incorporates them into the *pars construens* of his extensive analysis. He introduces a further meaning of *fatum*, constructing an etymology from the verb *fari* (to speak) and linking it to the word of God⁵⁰. Among the supporters of the *eimarmene*, the causal nexus which allows reality to be interpreted as a series of interconnected or mutually implicated causes, a place of honor in the confutation is reserved for the complex doctrine of the Hermetic *Asclepius*, particularly in chapters 39th–41th⁵¹. The Hermetic definition of fate as “the necessity of all things that happen, bound together as the links of a chain”⁵² is broken down into various alternatives in the dia-

49. Cicero, *De divinatione* 125–26, above note 46.

50. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 3 24, 791bC (ms. 101rb): “Non solum res dicitur, sed ipsa fatio, sive dictio ipsa [...]. Haec igitur ratio videtur esse nominis, seu nominationis fati, et congruere soli verbo Creatoris, in quo, et per quod constituit, et ordinavit apud semetipsum ante saecula totam seriem saeculorum, atque causarum, omnesque eventus hominum, qui dicuntur fortunae, vel infortunia”. Augustine, *De civitate dei* V 9 3 [English transl. mine]: “We do not deny, however, an order of causes in which the will of God has the maximum power, nor do we name this using the term ‘fato’, as long as it is not posited in relation with the verb ‘fari’, which means to speak. [...] If in front of God there exists a determined order of all causes, this does not necessarily entail the loss of free will. Rather, it is our own will inserted into the chain of causes, which is determined in front of God and contained within his foreknowledge, since the will of men is the cause of human works. Therefor whoever knows the cause of all things can surely ignore, among those other causes, our will, which He knows as the cause of our actions”.

51. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 21, 787aC–D (ms. 98rb): “Quoniam autem alibi circa hoc multa tibi et dicta, et scripta sunt per me procedam ad destructionem imarmenes, prout eam isti erronei posuerunt. Hanc igitur dixerunt esse implexam seriem causarum, iuxta quod intellexit Mercurius, et expressit in libro suo *de Deo deorum*”.

52. Ps. Apuleii *Asclepius* 39, ed. M. Stefani, Turnhout 2019 (Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio mediaevalis, 143. *Hermes Latinus*, III.2), 216, 928–32:

logue. Nonetheless, the organic nature of the Hermetic position lies precisely in the definition of fate as deeply linked with necessity (*eimarmene et necessitas ambae sibi invicem individuo connexae sunt glutino*) and with order, according to the interpretation of Albertus Magnus in the *Summae theologiae*⁵³. Necessity and order therefore characterize *fatum*, *cum nihil aliud sit, nisi dispositio ordinis causarum, rebus mobilis impressa*. William finds this doctrine to be curious and contrasting with his own, as it does not take into account that God as the First Cause is entirely free and transcendent; one cannot attribute the Creator a mode of necessary operation that belongs instead to nature, which acts in the manner of a servant (*modum servientis*)⁵⁴. The First Cause proceeds *per modum voluntatis*, not *per modum naturae*⁵⁵; but it is not only the First Cause that resists the yoke of *eimarmene*, but also all separate intelligent substances and humans, who cannot be bound by necessity because otherwise it would not be possible to speak of their merit or demerit⁵⁶. Constraint is exerted only on the limbs of the body and not on the will; the latter, even

“Quam εἰσαπαμένη nuncupamus, o Asclepi, ea est necessitas omnium quae geruntur, semper sibi catenatis nexibus uincta; haec itaque est aut effectrix rerum aut deus summus aut ab ipso deo qui secundus effectus est deus aut omnium caelestium terrenarumque rerum firmata diuinis legibus disciplina [...]”. I. Parri, *La via filosofica di Ermete. Studio sull'Asclepius*, Firenze 2005 (Hermetica Mediaevalia, 2), 182.

53. Albertus Magnus, *Summa theologiae* I 17 68, ed. A. Borgnet, Paris 1895 (*Opera omnia*, 31), 704.

54. Miller, “William of Auvergne and the Avicenna’s Principle ‘Natures operates in the Manner of a Servant’”, 263–76.

55. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 3 21, 787aD (ms. 98rb): “Et de modo naturae iam scis, quam longe sit a nobilitate et gloria creatoris, quoniam, sicut didicisti apud Aristotelem, natura operatur per modum servientis, ed ideo serviliter”.

56. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 21, 788aG–H (ms. 98va): “In toto igitur ordine illo non erit propter praedictam convenientiam implexio causarum necessaria, et inevitabilis, atque immutabilis, hoc est, nec in toto ordine intelligentiarum, quas posuit Aristoteles, et sequaces eius nec in omnibus novem ordinibus angelorum sanctorum, quos ponit doctrina Christianorum”. *De universo creaturarum* I, 3, 21, 789aB (ms. 98vb): “Iam etiam patefactum est tibi in praecedentibus, quod in rebus voluntariis, quae apud homines sunt, similiter locum non habet necessitas, aut implexio, cum tanta sit libertas voluntatis humanae, ut neque cogi possit ad suam primam, ac propriam operationem, quae est velle, vel prohiberi ab illa invita”. See Masnovo, *L'uomo*, 197–99.

under coercion, remains free. An emblematic example is given. Think of a man, into whose hands a thurible has been placed, with violence, in order to offer incense to an idol. If his arm is also shaken with violence, he cannot be considered guilty of having burned incense for the idol. His motion not being dictated by his will, the act of incensing the idol is not his own, but should be imputed instead to whoever agitated his arm, if that person's intention was to offer incense. These reflections allow us to go beyond *eimarmene*, conserving free will, even where its coincidence with necessity in God and the saints seems compromised⁵⁷.

57. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 21, 788bH (*ms.* 98vb): "Iam igitur manifestum est tibi per hoc, quoniam implexio causarum non currit cursu causalitatis naturalis, atque necessitatis huiusmodi in substantiis intelligentibus abstractis, neque in aliquibus aliis substantiis quantum ad actiones voluntarias, et quia necessitas obedientiae voluntariae non contradicit libertati, nec laedit eam ullo modorum, quin potius perficit eandem, et quod non possunt non obedire iussis creatoris praenominatae substantiae nobiles, non est ex debilitate vel impotentia vel defectu virtutis, quin potius ex fortitudine, abundantiaque, et perfectione ipsius". *De universo creaturarum* I 3 22, 789aC-bA (*ms.* 99ra): "Forsitan autem dicat aliquis, quia ista implexio est iuxta sermonem, quem dixit *quidam ex Italicis philosophis*, occupationes inquires, 'serimus' [Teske refers to Seneca, *Moral Letters* 8.72.1, see English transl. by Teske, *The Providence of God*, 132]. Huiusmodi autem exemplum est, quia cum in aliquo concurrerint scribendi voluntas, et opportunitas, caeteraque omnia, quae requiruntur ad hoc, ut potentia scribendi exeat in actum, exhibit necessario in actum; et eodem modo se habet de his, quorum causa est actus scribendi cum aliis, quoniam sequuntur ex actu scribendi cum aliis, et hoc necessitate simili, qua actus scribendi est secutus ex causa sua, et aliis adiutoriis, et ita in infinitum, vel usque ad novissimum causatum. Qua de causa cuiuscumque singularis vel existentia, vel eventus erint necessarius; et haec ratio induxit aliquando me in adolescentia mea, ut mihi videretur nullum ex singularibus contingentibus habere causam huiusmodi, vel unam, vel plures simul aggregatas, causam inquam, coniunctam scilicet, qua posita, de necessitate ponatur: audies et alia a me in hoc praesenti capitulo. Scito igitur hic, quoniam fortassis verum est, quod posita huiusmodi aggregatione causae scilicet efficientis (*ms.* 99rb), et eam ad hoc quod operetur, adiuvantium, necesse est operationis initium esse, vel operis, non autem opus ipsum, vel eius perfectionem. Et hoc dico in his, quae generantur, vel per successionem temporis fiunt. Et hoc est, quoniam aut consummationem, vel perfectionem operis huiusmodi possibile est, vel ipsam causam efficientem omnino non esse, vel aliquid de aggregatione illam adiuvantium. Sicut vides in aedificatione domus, cuius causa efficiens est voluntas aedificantis, vel aedificari facientis: quam voluntatem possibile est mutari in contrariam voluntatem, antequam perficiatur domus haec".

*Countering Astral Causality*⁵⁸

William's approach to astrology conforms with orthodoxy. He believes that celestial virtues act on the sublunary realm to the extent that they are rooted in nature – elements, humors, and the bodies that are composed thereof: i.e. animals. Men in their animality are subject to the influence of the heavens, but free will allows them to liberate themselves from the law of necessity. But, stresses William, because most men make little use of their intellect and live almost like animals, sometimes they are induced to mistakenly believe in necessity imposed by the stars and superstitiously believe in the power of images:

[They have believed that] to the men born under these same constellations, when they were auspicious or propitious, some great advantages were bestowed – such as being kings, princes, prophets, or wiser than other men – so they believed that from these images came the power, not to receive such blessings, but to rise to prominence. And this is explicitly stated in the books that have been written about talismans and images and other maleficent spells⁵⁹.

William reserves strongly controversial tones (*cum gladio et igne*) for those who argue for the influence of stars and talismans on human actions. In this regard, it is worth recalling the argument in the *De Legibus*, where such opinions are attributed to a form of nefarious idolatry, namely that of talismanic magic. This form of magic uses planetary forces attracted to the material specific figures (talismans) are made of, according to the principle of

58. *De universo creaturarum* I 1 46, 654bF: “Contra illos qui dicunt planetos esse malos”.

59. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De legibus* 23, 66bH-67aA: “in quem errorem inducti videntur alii ex opinione stellarum, luminarium, et coelorum: quemadmodum enim ab ipsis constellationibus nascentibus sub ipsis hominibus credebant provenire, cum faustae, vel fortunatae essent, supereminencias quasdam hominibus, videlicet, ut reges, aut principes, aut prophetae, aut sapientes essent ante alios; sic virtutes non quidem ista obtinendi, sed magis praestandi provenire credebant imaginibus, et hoc expresse legitur in libris eorum quos de praestigiis, et imaginibus aliisque sacrilegis maleficiis scriperunt”. [*English transl. mine*].

universal sympathy. Talismans therefore act as a connection between heavenly virtues and earthly virtues. Those who want to learn how to make them must thoroughly know the science of interpenetration between the planets and the other constellations, as well as the motions of the sky and the times when the moon is favorable. To best increase the power of talismans, the maker will use a material suitable for receiving the strength of heavenly bodies and will choose the right place and wait for the appropriate time. Nevertheless, for the magical operation to work, the maker's will is paramount, as is his trust in the action itself, to which words and prayers can be added. These concepts, used for the achievement of various goals (spells, preparing poisons or medicines, falling in love, or taking revenge on an enemy), are found in the texts of Hermetic magic, a form of learned Magic that has its theoretical foundation in astrology. In William, these talismans are rightly considered a kind of artificial production of life – the art of animating statues, namely theurgy, as it is described in *Asclepius* chapters 23, 24, 37, 38⁶⁰. William has extensive knowledge of these matters, as has been shown⁶¹. In *On the Universe*, with a more philosophical orientation, he reiterates his opinion on the basis of the principle of metaphysics that “one cannot give anything nobler or greater than himself.” The will of the Creator (the greatest of all) cannot be subject to astral influences caught in the talisman:

Another mistake of greater folly is incurred in, namely, that the same will of the Creator appears to be subordinate to the images, to the point that it either cannot or does not want to do otherwise than what the images require according to the intentions of men who have fallen

60. Ps. Apuleii *Asclepius*, 23–24, 37–38, ed. Stefani 197, 513–200, 570; 214, 880–216, 924.

61. Marrone, “William of Auvergne on Magic in Natural Philosophy and Theology”, in Aertsens, Speer (eds.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?*, 741–48; A. Sannino, “Ermete mago e alchimista nelle biblioteche di Guglielmo d'Alvernia e Ruggero Bacone”, *Studi medievali* 41 (2000), 151–89, 55–66; V. Perrone Compagni, “I testi magici di Ermete”, in P. Lucentini, I. Parri, V. Perrone Compagni (eds.), *Hermetism from Late Antiquity to Humanism. La tradizione ermetica dal mondo tardo-antico all'Umanesimo* (Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Napoli, 20–24 novembre 2001), Turnhout 2003 (Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia, 40), 505–33, 509–10.

in error; nor can the good will of the creator allow all the iniquities and injuries that must be caused and are caused by such images⁶².

Additionally, stars and talismans cannot produce spiritual change or alter dispositions within human souls⁶³, nor can they act on the human will. The intrinsic relationship between astrological (*iudicialis*) and talismanic magic is thoroughly dealt with in the glosses to the Vatican City Manuscript, Ross. Lat. 1053, particularly as regards comments on portions of text that in the print edition are presented as a single chapter, the 46th⁶⁴.

It is in this theoretical framework that William demonstrates how celestial causality would risk determining worldly events, suppressing freedom and all individual responsibility, as well as every argument for right or wrong, for reward or punishment. It would even eliminate the possibility of avoiding even the smallest accident⁶⁵. Such a cosmos regulated by deterministic laws would

62. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 1 46, 660aH: "Accidit et alius error maioris insaniae, ut etiam ipsa creatoris voluntas eousque videatur eis subdita, ut aliud vel non possit, vel non velit facere, quam quod requirunt imagines huiusmodi secundum intentionem huiusmodi erroneorum, et quod etiam consentiat optima creatoris voluntas omnibus iniquitatibus, et iniuriis quas per imagines huiusmodi faciendas esse, et fieri docuerunt". [English transl. mine]. See N. Weill-Parot, *Les 'images astrologiques' au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance. Spéculations intellectuelles et pratiques magiques, XII^e-XV^e siècle*, Paris 2002, 175-213, 175-87.

63. *De universo creaturarum* I 1 46, 660aH-bE: "Cum imagines huiusmodi corpora tantum sint, qualiter motus spirituales, aut alias dispositiones operantur in animabus humanis, maxime cum absconditae fuerint, ac sepultae, et omni modo ignoratae, et inapprehensae? [...] sic imagines huiusmodi, quia imagines sunt imaginum coelestium, quae utique vivae sunt, ut ipsi ponunt, virtute illarum, scilicet coelestium, faciunt omnia haec, et hoc est, quod dicit Ptolemaeus in libro centum verborum, quem vocat centilogium, quia imagines terrestres subitae sunt coelestibus virtutibus, et eis obediunt. In hoc facillimum est respondere quoniam imagines regaliū sigillorum, nisi apprehensae sint, neminem movent, nisi motu apprehensionis, neque ad voluntatem regiam faciendam, nisi ipsa voluntas regia, vel scriptura, cui appensa sit imago regia, vel aliquo modo innotescat".

64. With respect to this topic, see the ff. 29ra-36ra: "De motibus planetarum quales sunt et de erroribus [...]; reprobatio erroris et virtutes stellarum et luminarum et aliarum rerum [...]; determinatio virtutum quales habeant corpora coelestia super ista inferiora".

65. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 20, 785bB-C (ms. 97ra): "Contra errorem igitur istum non est tam ratione disceptandum, quam igne, et gladio

not leave space for the possibility of changing the course of even the smallest occurrence, and human industry would be neutralized by any imminent evil or desired good. Another opinion taken from Cicero's *De fato* allows William to explicitly refute the argument that – although it is fixed in the stars of heaven that one must heal from his illness or succumb to it – it does not follow that he should neglect his medicines, even if it is written in heaven that he must heal. Why? According to William, the “Italian” philosopher does not realize that the event takes place within the general hypothesis of necessity, so that nothing really depends on us, but on everything that resides outside of us (*extra nos*); for this reason, Cicero remains trapped in determinism.

Human Will

In chapter 46th of *On the Universe*, William of Auvergne demonstrates that both with the above mentioned reprised arguments, and with a sort of *reductio ad absurdum*, the influence of celestial bodies on sensory bodies is very limited, and totally ineffectual on the will (*voluntas*). He goes back to this topic further on (in the context of fate) to clarify that it acts only on *apprehensio*, so that it is not required to desire, nor held back by desire⁶⁶. As to the explicit question if celestial motion can pro-

pugnandum. Cum omnia vitia et peccata inde descendere asserant, omniaque esse inculpabilia, et nullatenus habentibus ea, vel facientibus, imputanda, et propter hoc nec illos, nec illa ulla poena, vel punitione esse digna. Nutricem vero vitiorum et omnium peccatorum, videlicet impunitatem, adeo defendat, et nutriat, ut poenas omnes exterminet, nec aliquam infligi, nec istigendam esse (ms. 97rb) patiat. Ubi non ut dubitandum ullo modorum, quin poenis maxime indigeant, et illis solis edoceri possint. Si enim undique flagellentur, contumeliis afficiantur, rebusque suis spoliuntur, mirum est, si tanta, tamque erronea sint pertinacia, ut de nullo ista eis irrogantium conquerantur, si neminem sibi iniuriari dicant, vel etiam posse iniuriari. Hoc enim necesse habent confiteri, vel resipiscere ab isto errore”.

66. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 20, 786bF-G (ms. 97va): “Tam igitur declaratum est tibi per hoc, quod voluntas nostra secundum intentionem quam dixi non subest necessitati motus coelestis, nec cuiquam alii necessitati: qua propter neque ea, quae subsunt voluntati, aut quae ab ea, sive per eam. Si enim libera est voluntas per semetipsam, necesse est libera esse, quae subsunt eius imperio, et ab illo, et per illud, quamdiu subsunt eius imperio”. *De uni-*

duce any misgivings in the will, even if only as efficient cause, William answers negatively, for two reasons. The first is that, if the stars and their dispositions were conscious and voluntary, they would be responsible for all human faults; or, rather, worse than responsible, the actual cause of evil. The second is that, if it were unconscious and involuntary, all that is influenced by celestial bodies would happen at random⁶⁷. In this theoretical framework, astrologists' wisdom is stripped of every credit and leads to the conclusion that *motus coelestes non sunt causae ullo modorum necessitatis apud res humanas* because, as William states regarding the error of talismanic magic:

All these things will become more certain and clear to you [sc., to the reader] through those which will appear to you about the care and the rule of the universe by the Highest One. When in fact you know how much care is in the wisdom and in the goodness of the Creator towards everything and human things, it will appear evident to you that He does not leave the rule of all this either to images, or to stars, or to luminaries, or to the skies [...], He keeps and protects all out of the immensity of his mercy⁶⁸.

verso creaturarum I 3 20, 786aG (ms. 97ra): "Motus vero coelestis secundum positionem erroneorum istorum extra non est, et in eum per se nihil possumus, neque quantum ad esse ipsius, neque quantum ad aliter se habere eiusdem: manifesta igitur est tibi dissimilitudo causarum praenominatarum in causalitatibus suis. Faciam autem scire quoniam in rebus voluntariis, hoc est, in rebus quae per voluntatem nostram vel fiunt, vel acquiruntur, nihil potest naturaliter, et per se motus coelestis".

67. *De universo creaturarum* I 3 20 787bB: "Sequitur ex hoc malitiam stellarum luminaribus, et coelis innatam esse, et eos esse naturaliter malos, et ad mala hominis incendere; quare non solum malos esse, sed et deteriores hominibus, quibus sunt malitiarum omnium voluntarii actores. Iam autem destruxi tibi hoc in alio capitulo de hac eadem materia, iudiciorum scilicet astronomiae. Si vero praeter intentionem, et voluntatem eorum sunt voluntaria nostra, sunt igitur a casu, sive causaliter quantum ad ipsos. Casualium autem nec ordo est, nec certitudo, nec perennitas, nec etiam frequentia, quare nec scientia. Ergo, nec ipsi astronomiae super huiusmodi credendum est, neque eius professores super talibus consulendi. Et hoc est quod, intende-bam, videlicet declarare quod motus coelestes non sunt causae ullo modorum necessitatis apud res humanas". Masново, *L'uomo*, 196.

68. *De universo creaturarum* I 1 46, 666aH: "Fient autem omnia haec tibi certiora, et clariora, per ea, quae patefient tibi de cura, et gubernatione Dei altissimi circa universum. Cum enim innotuerit tibi, quanta cura sit sapientiae,

William of Auvergne's hermeneutic operation establishes substantial and functional equivalence between fate, *eimarmene*, and astral causality. This operation is not a simple exertion of semantic-dialectical erudition, but rather on a philosophical plane, and not just the theological one, as Teske has indicated⁶⁹. William rules out any form of determinism of the mobility of natural phenomena. William tackles the question of determinism in theology (*de scientia dei*) along the lines of medieval Platonism, while he handles his natural philosophy (*de scientia naturali*) in a more original fashion. Particularly with regard to Augustine, he grounds the rebuttal of astrological determinism on that of talismanic magical practices, taking advantage of his vast knowledge of texts from Arabic Hermeticism. From Cicero he borrows the definition of *fatum* in order to employ it in a different context. William, a keen orator, preserves the roles of both providence and free will, while neutralizing the power of the heavenly motions.

et bonitati Creatoris de omnibus, et rebus humanis, elucescet tibi evidenter, quia nec imaginibus, nec stellis, nec luminaribus [...] commitit gubernationem eorum [...] de immensitate pietatis suae eadem tuetur, atque defendit". [English transl. mine].

69. Teske, in William of Auvergne, *The Providence of God*, 21.

CHAPTRE II

NATURAL CAUSALITY AND IMAGE MAGIC

Divine Causality and Natural Causality

In his book on knowledge and nature in William of Auvergne's thought¹, Albert Quentin observes that, for William, the cosmos is regulated by a double process of causality. This process comprises one system that flows from above to below (God-nature) and another that flows from below to above (nature-God). God, as the fount of life, creates beings and endows them with a *forma substantialis*. God also emits *lumina*, that endow creatures with a secondary causality, which induces them to preserve themselves individually and their species. As the creating and efficient cause, God imbues the souls of plants, animals, and humans with vital powers, to varying degrees. These powers allow them to send signals (*vita, motus, sensus*) in the form of rays, from within to without, or from the soul to the body. Nature, therefore, is composed of dynamic states (*media, causae secundae*) which receive their causative power from God, and

1. Quentin, *Naturkenntnisse und Naturanschauungen bei Wilhelm von Auvergne*, 167. See above Preface, 3-5.

This Chapter is a newly updated rewriting of some portions of the following essays: "Guillaume d'Auvergne e i libri experimentorum", in I. Draelants, Th. Benatouil (eds.), *Expertus sum. L'expérience par les sens en philosophie naturelle médiévale, XII^e-XIV^e siècles*, (Colloque international Nancy, 5-7 février 2009), Firenze 2011 (Micrologus Library, 40), 67-88; "*Nigromantia secundum physicam, nigromantia imaginum: arte e immagine*", in L. Bianchi, A. Sannino (eds.), *La magia naturale tra Medioevo e prima età moderna*, Firenze 2018 (Micrologus Library, 89), 81-130; "Ammirare, conoscere ed imitare? Il miracolo, il mirabile e il mirifico in Guglielmo D'Alvernia", in L. Andreani, A. Paravicini Bagliani (eds.), *Miracolo! Emozione, spettacolo e potere nella storia dei secoli XIII-XVII*, ed. by, Firenze 2019, 57-74.

then transmit the said power to lower beings. Consequently, God is also the end-point of movement for every being aspiring to pass from a state of imperfection (*malum, potentialis, carentia*) to one of perfection (*bonum, actus, perfectio*). Quentin's synthesis therefore places William's philosophy of nature between the tradition of the School of Chartres in the twelfth century (specifically as regards William's theories of *media* and of *virtutes naturales* as specific properties intrinsic to the mineral, animal and vegetal kingdoms), and the scholasticism of Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas. Quentin also recognises the influences of Avicenna² and Solomon Ibn Gabirol³ on William, but does not take

2. Along the lines of the hypothesis suggested by Masnovo (according to which William of Auvergne, like Maimonides, takes the idea of divine necessity from Avicenna), it would be useful here to examine the *Metaphysica* or *Liber de prima philosophia* (*Kitāb al-Sifa*) by the Islamic philosopher in order to explain the identification between essence and existence in God, as well as other theological issues. It is likely that William knew the text in its Latin translation by Gerard of Cremona (1114-1187) or in that by Domenicus Gundissalinus (1115-1190). From Avicenna's text, William also borrows the real (not abstract) distinction between essence (*quidditas*, pure substance) and existence (the fact of being) in creatures. For William, this dissimilarity is annulled in God, since "he is what he is", according to the famous definition given in *Exodus* 3:13-14. In this way, the absolute simplicity and necessity of God's being is affirmed.

3. The idea of God as the one and only cause of matter and form, which acts freely, is a doctrine set out in the *Fons vitae*, a Latin translation by Domenicus Gundissalinus of the *Séfer Meqor Hayyim* by Ibn Gabirol (Malaga 1021 - Valencia 1054, also known as Avicebron). William considers Ibn Gabirol to be *omnium philosophantium nobilissimus* and draws other topics of Neoplatonic inspiration from him, including *contemplatio Dei* and apophatism. William finds the *Fons vitae* preferable to the *Liber de philosophia prima* for correcting Avicennian ontological theses at odds with Christian dogma. Nonetheless, he rejects the Gabirolian doctrine of universal hylo-morphism, that is, the possibility that all realities are composed of matter and form, inasmuch as, according to William, some beings, for example angelic beings, do not have a material form. Furthermore, an important role in William's understanding of Neoplatonism was played by the *Liber de Causis*, a treatise written in Arabic by an author who probably lived in the ninth century, and which was falsely attributed to Aristotle. Thanks to Gerard of Cremona's translation in the twelfth century, it became known in Latin. The *Liber de causis* is, in reality, a collection of thirty-one propositions (thirty-two in the Latin version, due to a doubling of the fourth), taken from Proclus' *Elementatio theologica*. William criticizes the Neoplatonic emanationist view and proposes "correcting" the language of *De causis* to portray God as a cre-

full account of William's "naturalistic" sources from the Greco-Arab world, which influenced Latin culture in the twelfth century. Only by examining these sources (as I will do in the third section of this chapter) can we achieve a better understanding of William's notion of nature. In his view, nature is passive inasmuch as it is created by the causative action of God. Conversely, it is active insofar as the Creator endows every being with marvelous occult powers, which unfold through secondary causality, whether by similarity or by difference, as I shall explain later in more detail. William places marvels (*mirabilia*) in the realm of spiritual activity that functions by its own power (*virtus/spiritus*). At this point, it is interesting to note the image of the awe-inspiring and the marvelous, rather than the miraculous, that William proposes in *The Teaching* and in the recently published sermons of the *Corpus Christianorum*⁴. Research until now has followed the traditional method, a bottom-up lexicographical approach that highlights the occurrences of terms such as "miracle" (*miraculum*), "marvelous" (*mirabile*), *mirificum*, and their derivatives. Stephen Gersh, Martin Hoenen, Loris Sturlese, and, most recently, Nadia Bray⁵ have used this method to analyze William's use of terms in reference to Platonism, from the sources of Meister Eckhart to the stoic tradition of the Middle Ages. This method has permitted a reconstruction of the theme of the marvelous in William's works. Quantitatively, *The Teaching*

active and efficient cause that operates in natural processes through secondary causes (*media* or *causae secundae*), which give being and life to men, plants, and animals through powers (*virtutes*) of varying degrees. William reclaims the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, placing his thinking in the wake of the Gabriolian and Augustinian tradition and with continual reference to the original Dionysian metaphor of *lux* and *lumen*. Therefore, according to William, God is the *lumen scientiae*, which gives existence and intelligence to creatures' being, which is able to ascend towards the Creator through an *itinerarium mentis* that ends with a beatific vision in the future life.

4. Guillelmus Alvernus, *Opera homiletica*, 4, ed. by F. Morenzoni, Turnhout 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 (*Corpus Christianorum*, Continuatio mediaevalis 230, 230a, 230b, 230c). To investigate these sources, I used the database *Library of Latin Texts*.

5. Bray, *La tradizione filosofica stoica nel Medioevo*; S. Gersh, M. J. F. M. Hoenen, *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages: a Doxographic Approach*, Berlin 2002; L. Sturlese (ed.), *Studi sulle fonti di Meister Eckhart*, II, Fribourg 2008 and 2012 (Dokimion 34 and 37).

contains 140 occurrences of the term “miracle”; 327 occurrences of “marvelous”/“marvels”; and 88 of *mirificum* and its derivatives. In the *Sermones*, we count 71 instances of “miracle”, 147 of “marvels”, and 22 of *mirificum*. These statistics bear witness to the importance William assigns to marvelous phenomena, which he admires and would like to emulate.

In the theological sections of his work dedicated to the *Teaching of God*, William provides an ontological definition of miracles, in line with Augustine, from within the context of an historical description of laws and hagiography (*vita sanctorum*). He does not neglect to examine the sacraments, in particular the Eucharist. However, in the naturalistic sections devoted to the *Teaching of Wisdom*, “miracles” and “marvels” are sometimes used unclearly, and almost as synonyms, the term *mirificum* being used indistinctly for both. My aim here is to reconstruct how William treats these issues in *On Laws* and *On the Universe*. In these texts, the use of the supernatural (“marvels”, “wonder”, “miracle”)⁶ underscores both its lexico-epistemological significance and William’s relationship with tradition. His reflections on the marvelous, or on that which provokes marvel and astonishment within the Christian religion, encourage William to distinguish

6. J. Le Goff, *Le merveilleux dans l'Occident medieval*, in M. Arkoun, J. Le Goff, T. Fahd, M. Rodinson (eds.), *L'Étrange et le Merveilleux dans l'Islam médiéval* (Colloque organisé par l'Association pour l'avancement des études islamiques en mars 1974 à Paris), Paris 1978, 61-79 (now in Le Goff, *L'imaginaire médiéval*, 151-87) [*Il meraviglioso e il quotidiano nell'Occidente medievale*, trans. by F. Maiello, Roma-Bari 1983, 3-83]; M. Karnes, “Marvels in the Medieval Imagination”, *Speculum* 90/2 (2015), 327-65; A. Boureau, “Miracle, volonté et imagination: La mutation scolastique (1270-1320)”, in *Miracles, prodiges et merveilles au Moyen Âge*. Actes des congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public, 25^e congrès, Orléans Juin 1994, 159-72; doi: <https://doi.org/10.3406/shmes.1994.1656>; https://www.persee.fr/doc/shmes_1261-9078_1995_act_25_1_1656 (last consultation 3 Sept. 2021); C. Walker Bynum, “Miracles and Marvels: The Limits of Alterity”, in K. Elm, F. J. Felten, N. Jaspert, S. Haarländer (eds.), *Vita religiosa im Mittelalter: Festschrift für Kaspar Elm zum 70. Geburtstag*, Berlin 1999, 799-817; R. Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge 2008, 1-33; S. Marrone, “Magic and the Physical World in Thirteenth-Century Scholasticism”, *Early Science and Medicine* 14,1/3 (2009), (Evidence and Interpretation: Studies on Early Science and Medicine in Honor of John E. Murdoch), 158-85.

between the *mirabilia* of the natural realm and those of the divine. *Miracles* and *marvels* both foster admiration, inasmuch as they reveal rare or unprecedented things. While *miracles* are entirely “unknowable”, *marvels* are “comprehensible”, although their comprehension differs from that of common natural occurrences. Both terms, “miracles” and “marvels” derive from the Latin verb *mirari*, meaning “to look in wonder”. In both theology and natural science, these terms have a relationship with the *mirificus*. This term combines the roots of *miror* (look), again, and of *facere* (make). *Mirificus*, therefore, does not refer only to the act of looking in wonder, but also to the action which causes astonishment. A *mirificum* phenomenon constitutes a break from the usual order of nature. This phenomenon, while it may provoke terror, is wished for and is recognizable as a manifestation of the “wonderful virtues” (*virtutes mirificae*) of natural beings. These virtues are the secret properties (powers, forces) of the elements, through which God manifests his presence. These powers lie on the boundary between the visible and the invisible, and the knowable and the unknowable. At this crossroads, the philosopher, physician, astrologist, and alchemist come to know natural causes through experience (*cognoscere causas per experientiam*). Phenomena *mirifica* thereby become marvels of sorts, in which the causative principle of *virtutes* is still God, but in which nature autonomously completes processes of transformation. For example, the fish known as the stingray, which numbs whoever touches it, becomes “the basilisk, which, it is said, can kill a man with its gaze”, etc.⁷.

7. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* II 1 32, 833bC–34aE: “Conveniens autem est, ut in hoc capitulo reminiscaris virtutum, atque substantiarum intelligentium, vel etiam sentientium, quae extra se ipsas et corpora, quibus coniunctae, vel colligatae sunt, operantur impressiones mirabiles. Verum tamen nullam invenies, quae substantiam sibi similem vel in se, vel extra se generet, aut creet. Et ex isto genere (sicut alibi dixi tibi) est piscis, qui vocatur torpedo, qui tangentis manum solo attractu sui adeo torpidam efficit, ut nihil illa hora omnino operari possit. Et quod est mirabilius, si lancea quantaecunque longitudinis tangatur, eundem torporem in manu tangentis, non dico in lancea, operatur. Ex his est piscis, qui echeneis nominatur, qui adherens exterius fundo navis, quantumcunque maximae, et quantumcunque flatu, vel impulsu ventorum agitatae, eam stare cogit immobilem. Ex his est et basiliscus solo visu hominem (ut dicitur) interficiens. Ex

However, miracles are admirable because they are caused *ex mirifica virtute creatoris*. They do not obey the laws of nature (being *supra naturam*), nor do they occur in opposition to the ordinary course of nature (*contra naturam*): the Virgin who bears a child, Lazarus raised from the dead, the miraculous healing of a limb, the bush that burns but is not consumed⁸, etc. At this

his est vir, vel mulier, quicumque oculos habens fascinantes, si creditur sermonibus vulgaribus, et maxime mulierum vetularum. Ex his est lupus, si creditur verbis hominum dicentium, quod si prius viderit hominem, quam videatur ab ipso, ipsum naturaliter raucum facit, praevisus autem ab homine hoc in eum minime operatur. Sunt et alia innumera huiusmodi, quae libri de secretis, et mirabilibus animalium virtutibus continent. Horum igitur tibi rememorationem feci, ne forte ipsorum exemplo in opinionem creationis, aut generationis, quas imponunt intelligentiis, iudicaris. Quod est dicere, ne propter hoc, quod intelligentias ponunt incomparabiliter nobiliorum, ac maiorum virtutum, quam sint animae animalium praenominatorum, cogi te credas ad opinandum, vel concedendum, quod huiusmodi creationes, quas eis imponunt, posse debeant intelligentiae, cum audiuveris iam saepius animas canum, et araneorum, multa posse, quae non possunt animae nostrae, licet nobilitate, atque perfectione sint eis naturaliter incomparabiles. Vulgare autem exemplum est in ferro, et auro; ferrum manifestum est multa posse, quae non potest aurum. Sic et auris potest, quod non potest oculus; cum sit oculus aure multo nobilior. Et de his suppetit tibi exemplorum innumerabilis multitudo". Here is the English translation (from "Ex his est piscis" to "minime operatur"): "Of this kind, as I have said elsewhere, is the fish known as the stingray, which numbs the hand of those that touch it, so that the hand is unable to be employed. And what is even more surprising is that even if it is touched with a lance of any length, it still instils the same numbness, in the hand of the one who touches it, and not even on the blade. Of this kind is the fish known as remora (*echeneis*), which, adhering to the hull of the ship, no matter how big the ship or how strong the winds that blow against it, forces it to remain immobile. Of this kind, too, is the basilisk, which, it is said, can kill a man with its gaze. Of this kind, too, is the man or woman with captivating eyes, if we are to believe folktales favoured by old wives. Of this kind is the wolf, if we believe the tales of men who say that if the wolf sees a man before he is seen, he makes the man hoarse; but if seen before he has no effect".

8. *Exodus* 3 (King James Version) [1] Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. [2] And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. [3] And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. [4] And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of

point, William's own path reaches a crossroads: from one perspective, mirific phenomena, as marvels, are objects of study for natural science (*ex scientia naturae*); from another, they are, as miracles, objects of study for theology (*ex scientia Dei*).

But let us proceed in order. First, I will retrace the historiographical debate, starting with the work of Caroline Walker Bynum, and then I will move on to an examination of texts concerning marvels and miracles.

In the Early Middle Ages, the marvelous, as Walker Bynum writes, was seen a response to new and bizarre occurrences that seem to exceed explanation. These occurrences also seem to point to some kind of *signifying reason*, although not necessarily to any specific cause.

Along these lines, from the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries several philosophers elaborated upon the *incipit* of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, which associates awe with ignorance and doubt⁹. These philosophers argued that if this astonishment comes from a wish to identify causes that are not understood, then it must be replaced by scientific or philosophical knowledge. This conception of astonishment led to an ontological distinction between *miracles* and *marvels*, that is, between "unusual and difficult" occurrences (*insolitum et arduum*) produced by God¹⁰ through natural effects which we are unable to understand solely in terms of the laws of nature, and faced with which we run the risk of giving in to astonishment. There are two distinct reasons for this risk. First the number of phenomena considered to be objectively wonder-inducing, and therefore objectively beyond explanation, must be therefore reduced, while all other events that do not obey the laws of nature, are wonderful only to the ignorant. Second, "such theorizing suggests that most events have natural causes. If philosophers are diligent enough, wonders

the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. [5] And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. [6] Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

9. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A 2, 982 b-83a.

10. Walker Bynum, *Miracles and Marvels*, 808-10.

will cease”¹¹. These facts are thus incorporated into a web of reasoning that leaves little room for surprise or joy, insofar as it shows that most phenomena have natural causes, for which the wise set off in search¹². William explicitly observes how easily phenomena are attributed to the power of God and considered to be miracles, and how one thus omits to investigate their respective causes¹³. The author of *The Marvels of the World* identified the primary aim of the philosopher and the natural scientist as that of knowing the causes of marvels (*facere cessare mirabilia rerum*), once he has established the dominant role of man within the universe of wonders.

Can these points of view really weaken the sense of astonishment and work contrary to wonder, as Walker Bynum suggests? She may be correct, and yet a perplexity remains. If we assume the premise of an ontological, rather than psychological, difference between miracles and wonders in theology and natural philosophy, the eclipse of wonder on a heuristic level (let alone on an emotional one), does not follow. It is precisely this admiration that provokes the mind into understanding sufficient causes through experience. Moreover, Walker Bynum also admits that Nicole Oresme claimed to be fascinated and enchanted by the “wonderful properties” of animals and the *diversitas* of human experience¹⁴. Roger Bacon attempted to provide naturalistic

11. Walker Bynum, *Miracles and Marvels*, 811.

12. I have already highlighted this rationalizing attitude in relation to the *opera magicorum*. The *mirabilia rerum* are now the defining factor (*cognoscere causas et rationes*) of a group of thinkers, from William to the author of *De mirabilibus*, and from Albertus Magnus to Roger Bacon and, in the following century, Nicole Oresme. See for example: Sannino, *Il De mirabilibus mundi*, 12–14 and *passim*; 85: “Postquam scivimus quod opus sapientis est facere cessare mirabilia rerum, quae apparent in conspectu hominum, quamvis varia, quamvis diversa et plurimum admiranda, non cessavimus inquirere scripta auctorum, donec sufficienter appareret magna pars operum mirabilium”; 96: “Non potest aliquis dicere, quod omnis res non sit plena mirabilitate”.

13. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo spiritualium* II 2 20, 1055bB: “In his igitur, et huiusmodi, oportet te diligenter intendere, et non sequi consuetudinem imperitorum quorundam, qui etiam in omnibus rebus administrandis, quarum causas ignorant, et investigare prorsus nesciunt, ad omnipotentissimam virtutem creatoris recurrunt, dicentes miracula esse omnia huiusmodi”.

14. Walker Bynum, *Miracles and Marvels*, 810–12.

explanations of saints who lived without eating, of the resurrection of the body, and of amulets. He expressed himself in language marked by the terror and sweet wonder of the Eucharist, and defined the magnet as one of the “miracles of nature” (*miracula naturae*). Albertus Magnus, in his turn, described the physiological manifestations of admiration as “a compulsion and a suspension of the heart” in the presence of something “great and unusual”¹⁵. Thomas Aquinas cited Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* to connect wonder with pleasure, and drew on the *Metaphysics* to associate it with a desire that culminates not only in knowledge but in the encounter with Divine Majesty. He claimed that the angel of the Annunciation shocked the Virgin because “wonder is the best way to attract the attention of the soul”¹⁶.

I would add that wonder is not devalued or rejected by the philosophical and theological tradition of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Rather, in adopting the attitude that K. Park defines as “not-astonished”¹⁷, William of Auvergne, Albertus Magnus, and Roger Bacon questioned the thesis that there is a divide between astonishment and imitation. Wonder stimulated their research. They preferred to contrast it, instead, with what is knowable, in order to encourage imitation. The phrase *non imitandum sed admirandum* – as is well known – had been used since the era of the early church to express the distance between heroes and martyrs, on the one hand, and the common believer, on the other. This thesis lost its effectiveness for the natural

15. Walker Bynum, *Miracles and Marvels*, 805; Nicole Oresme, *De causis* 1, in *Nicole Oresme and the Marvels of Nature: A Study of His De causis mirabilium*, ed. by B. Hansen, Toronto 1985, 160–63; Albertus Magnus, *Metaphysica libri quinque priores* I t. 2, c. 6, ed. by B. Geyer, Münster 1951, 23 (*Opera omnia*, 16/1 ed. Institutum Alberti Magni Coloniense). At this point, the scholar reminds us that in the modern era the treatment of miracles originates with Descartes’ famous definition of 1649: “wonder is a sudden surprise of the soul which makes it tend to consider attentively those objects which seem rare and extraordinary”. René Descartes, *Les Passions de l’âme* II 53 and 70, Paris 1988. For translation see René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul* II 53 and 70, trans. by S. Voss, Indianapolis 1989, 56–57, 52. References are to Part (Roman) and Article (Arabic) numbers.

16. Walker Bynum, *Miracles and Marvels*, 809.

17. K. Park, L. Daston, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150–1750*, New York 1998, 21–133.

philosopher, who, through his empirical knowledge of the natural properties of entities, could use his *ars* (τέχνη) to imitate the activity of the Creator, and thereby produce marvels.

The hagiographic tradition is quite different, since in it miracles, although “wonderful”, are rarely presented in order to astonish. Instead, they are listed in collections, or boring enumerations of events presented in order to educate and instruct. For this reason, portents and oddities are used – less often than one might suppose – as incitements to admiration. We therefore need to bear in mind that the “rationalizing” arguments of William of Auvergne, the author of *The Marvels of the World*, Bacon, Albert, and Oresme coexist with such hagiographic chronicles. They also coexist with important and unusual natural events such as eclipses, earthquakes, and famines. Although these stories about such events arouse terror and fear, the *narratio mirabilium* serves as a safeguard for wonder. In a cultural context in which lay and ecclesiastical rulers competed against one another via manifestations of power, splendor, and spectacle, in an attempt to make various things “mirific”, the wonder of the wise man was a yearning for understanding, to grasp a meaning lying beyond common theories and fears. It is precisely in this atmosphere that William of Auvergne exercised his episcopal office in Paris and worked as a chaplain at the court of King Louis IX the Saint. In line with the Ciceronian and Augustinian tradition, by *monstrum* William means what is against nature; by *portentum*, what will manifest itself in the near future; by *prodigium*, an often obscure omen of future misfortune; and by *ostentum*, the unusual and the uncommon. This classification of the admirable refers to the complex realm of the supernatural¹⁸, or the *hyperreal*, according to Pierre Boglioni’s definition. As he writes there is a “structural parallelism” between William’s interest in the Christian marvelous and his interest in magic, which both

18. Already in the classical era, in the *De Divinatione*, Cicero remarks that “monstra, ostenta, portenta, prodigia appellantur quoniam monstrant, ostendunt, portentunt et praedicunt”. Isidore of Seville, in his *Etymologiae*, after an introduction dealing with the theory of *portenta*, *ostenta*, *prodigia*, *monstra* and *portentuosa*, is the first in the Late Middle Ages to propose a true classification of the monstrous, in which man is the major point of reference for the various typologies of monsters.

belong to the world of the “hyperreal”. This parallelism is clear in the case of the invisibility and manifestation of “separated souls”, which can be caused both by miracles and by magic¹⁹.

Boglioni perceives, therefore, the possibility of a parallelism that is not only structural, but which concerns the world of the *hyperreal*, between the *libri miracolorum christianorum* and the *libri magorum, tam naturalium quam maleficorum*. He also underlines how, in William’s thought, a global acceptance of the marvelous predominates, whereby hagiographic wonders, folkloristic beliefs, and the effects of magic are certainly judged differently, but nevertheless appeal to the same taste for the marvelous²⁰.

That William had such a predilection has already been noted by his first and, currently, only biographer – Noel Valois²¹. It was later reaffirmed by Lynn Thorndike²². An essay by Michael Miller²³ instead tackle the question of miracles from the perspective of sufficient causality. Faced with the biblical example of

19. P. Boglioni, “Saints, miracles et hagiographie chez Guillaume d’Auvergne”, in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d’Auvergne*, 323–39, 34: “Ce penchant évident pour le surnaturel et le merveilleux n’est pas sans rappeler l’intérêt privilégié de Guillaume pour la magie et les sciences occultes. Même d’un point de vue rédactionnel, la formule *in libris miracolorum christianorum* rappelle la forme analogue *in libris maleficorum* [...] Il me semble qu’on peut établir un parallélisme structurel entre son penchant pour la magie et son penchant pour le merveilleux chrétien. Les deux registres d’expérience appartiennent à un même monde qu’on pourrait appeler de l’hyper-réel. Il est évident alors qu’il peut avoir interférence et contamination réciproques entre ces deux mondes. Tel est le cas, tout à fait significatif, des âmes séparées, qui ont la propriété de demeurer invisibles ou de se manifester à nos yeux, à leur gré, comme on peut le documenter aussi bien par les récits des miracles chrétiens que dans les oeuvres des magiciens, aussi bien naturelles que maléfiques”; Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo* II 2 31, 736bF: “Hoc enim quibusdam Dei electis atque dilectis etiam in ista miseria divino munere concessum est, videlicet, ut nec viderentur, nec sentirentur, nisi cum vellent: sicut legitur in narrationibus gentis christianorum, et in operibus magorum tam naturalium quam maleficorum, de rebus huiusmodi multa inveniuntur”.

20. Boglioni, “Saints, miracles et hagiographie chez Guillaume d’Auvergne”, 335, notes 54–55.

21. Valois, *Guillaume d’Auvergne évêque de Paris (1228–1249)*, 311–24.

22. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, II, 341, 347, 355, 358, 364.

23. Miller, “William of Auvergne and the Avicenna’s Principle ‘Natures operates in the Manner of a Servant’”, 263–76.

the bush that burned but was not consumed, Thomas de Mayo has noted that it can be conceived as “the intrusion of divine power into the set course of nature: henceforth, miracles were supernatural exceptions to the mechanistic, Aristotelian order of the universe. As a result, the difference between the miraculous and the ordinary was more a matter of theological perspective than an objective difference between the phenomena so labeled”²⁴.

Miller has honed in on the heart of the question: is there really a clear line of demarcation in William’s texts between miracles and marvels?

De Mayo, in his study on demonology, reiterates that William, like the scholastic thinkers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, proposed a classification of the natural and the demonic after enumerating the great variety of phenomena and powers present in nature²⁵. In this way, William reified the forces of evil

24. Th. De Mayo, *The Demonology of William of Auvergne by Fire and Sword*, Lewiston (NY) 2007, 84.

25. De Mayo, *The Demonology of William of Auvergne by Fire and Sword*, 124: “The scholastic thinkers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries simplified this great variety of beings and powers by dichotomizing and classifying them as either natural or demonic. In so doing, they reified the evil forces and created different problems from the ones they had intended to resolve. William embraced a mechanistic and Aristotelian conception of a cosmos guided by the regular motion of the stars and their influence on the sublunary world. Although divine miracles formed the only true exception to this order, for only God could suspend the regular laws of the universe he had created, demons in practice formed a second exception, one of illusion which was part of the natural order but seemed otherwise. To fit the new theory of the schools, the learned elite, including William, used demonic magic to shoehorn existing beliefs into the framework of Aristotelian science. Occult virtues formed one avenue of explanation – what had been thought expressions of supernatural and immanent power, theologians now conceived as exotic but natural phenomena. Demons constituted another. William and his contemporaries were to construct a vision of demons as wicked spirits who used their natural powers of illusion to delude, confound and damn humanity, thus explaining the most intractable or impossible-seeming of popular beliefs. In effect, these writers, who were also Church officials, ascribed unusual events to either good or evil causes, performing a scientific variation of *discretio spirituum* (discernment of spirits), searching for the divine presence in nature and guarding against a demonic one”.

and created problems different from those he intended to solve. Despite having, in his opinion, embraced the Aristotelian concept of the cosmos, he foresaw two exceptions within it. The first was divine miracles, which are the only true exception to this order, since only God can suspend the regular laws of the universe He created. The second were demons, who instead “trick” or “deceive” man, making him believe what is not true. Demons do not, however, have the strength to actually interrupt the course of nature. Furthermore, for William, “occult virtues formed one avenue of explanation – what had been thought expressions of supernatural and immanent power, theologians now conceived as exotic but natural phenomena”²⁶. I suggest that, in William’s universe, the last exceptions to the order of nature are *marvels as the field of occult natural virtues*. To illustrate this, I will examine a selection of citations from William’s works in order to a) assess miracles and marvels; b) investigate the source texts that I have been defined above as “naturalistic”; and c) explore the concept of demonic magic.

Miracles and Marvels

In *On Faith and Laws*, William of Auvergne presents the miracle as the foundation of Christian faith, as it reveals that nothing is impossible for God. William affirms the truthfulness and unique character of Christian monotheism in a narrative and non-argumentative framework, in which the main miracles of the Old and New Testaments²⁷ represent the Creator’s intervention (*ex virtute Dei*) in the course of nature through *mirificae operae*.

We call miracles the wonderful and unusual activities of God’s power that are contrary to the course of nature, such as resurrecting the dead,

26. De Mayo, *The Demonology of William of Auvergne by Fire and Sword*, 124.

27. I quote here only two important places in the text that demonstrate the equivocal nature of the term *miraculum*: Guillelmus Alvernus, *De legibus* 11, 43aB: “Scito autem, quod notum erat miraculum et famosum, curatio leprosororum apud Hebraeos”; *De legibus* 27, 91aD: “In multis autem animalibus sit ligatio, et congregatio, vel divina virtute, et miraculose, ut diximus, vel sensu naturae, quae est una de radicibus magiae naturalis”.

restoring sight to the blind, cleansing lepers, curing the possessed, ousting and binding demons, and other such things²⁸.

Such operations are called “unusual”, not because they do not occur frequently, but because they are outside the usual order of nature. They are deemed contrary to the forces of nature, not only due to the specific circumstances of their occurrence, but also due to the manner and order they are carried out in. The above passage is somewhat ambiguous and its exegesis hence complex, because in it the term “contrary” is used indifferently for *supra* and *contra naturam*. Occasionally William seems to suggest an idea which, although not expressed with Thomas Aquinas’ clarity and rigor, seems to lead in the same direction as the *Summa Theologiae*: I q. 105, a. 7 and *De potentia* q. 6, a. 2, ad 3²⁹.

28. *De legibus* 3, 18G: “Miracula autem appellamus virtutis Dei admirandas operationes insolitas, cursuique naturae contrarias, quales sunt suscitatione mortuorum, illuminationes coecorum, mundationes leprosororum, curationes daemonicorum, effugationes, et religationes daemonum et similia”; Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* II 1 37, 742aF: “Mirabilia enim creatoris, quae miracula nominantur, tenendum est eos aut ignorasse, aut omnino non credidisse, et haec est causa, propter quam erraverunt in naturis, et earum virtutibus, errorem quem dixi tibi. Ex quo etiam in alios errores plurimos incidunt”.

29. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 105, a. 7, arg. 2: “Praeterea, miraculum dicitur aliquid arduum et insolitum supra facultatem naturae et spem admirantis proveniens. Sed quaedam fiunt praeter naturae ordinem, quae tamen non sunt ardua, sunt enim in minimis rebus, sicut in restauratione gemmarum, vel sanatione aegrorum”; *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 105, a. 7 co.: “Unde aliquid est mirum uni, quod non est mirum aliis; sicut eclipsim solis miratur rusticus, non autem astrologus. Miraculum autem dicitur quasi admiratione plenum, quod scilicet habet causam simpliciter et omnibus occultam. Haec autem est Deus”; *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 105, a. 7 ad 2: “Ad secundum dicendum quod arduum dicitur miraculum, non propter dignitatem rei in qua fit; sed quia excedit facultatem naturae. Similiter etiam insolitum dicitur, non quia frequenter non eveniat sed quia est praeter naturalem consuetudinem [...]. Supra facultatem autem naturae dicitur aliquid, non solum propter substantiam facti sed etiam propter modum et ordinem faciendi. Supra spem etiam naturae miraculum esse dicitur; non supra spem gratiae, quae est ex fide, per quam credimus resurrectionem futuram”; *De potentia*, q. 6, a. 2, ad 3: “Ad tertium dicendum, quod circa ea quae Deus miraculose facit, talis solet adhiberi distinctio, quod quaedam dicantur fieri supra naturam, quaedam contra naturam, quaedam praeter naturam. Supra naturam quidem, in quantum in illum effectum quem Deus facit, natura

In some cases he uses “contrary” in a naturalistic sense, almost implying an interchangeability between *miracles* and *marvels*. For William, the reliability of the evidence for miracles seems to rest not on the fact that the Apostles’ knowledge is self-evident, but rather on the fact that such evidence is found in the effects of the miracle, which arouse wonder. This is because, as we have read in the text of the *Summa Theologiae* I, q. a. 7 co.: “Now a miracle is so called as being full of wonder; as having a cause absolutely hidden from all: and this cause is God. Wherefore those things which God does outside those causes which we know, are called miracles”³⁰.

William of Auvergne thus posits the unintelligibility of miraculous occurrences. These find no epistemic space in a nature regulated by actions, which are defined as habits, which are defined as “habits”. The word used is *habitus*, which means a condition or a state; William also speaks of “inclinations” (*inclinaciones*) and intentions (*intentiones*).

Events that occur in opposition to the ordinary course of nature are called *contra* or *supra naturam*. A separate status is given

nullo modo potest; quod quidem contingit dupliciter: vel quia ipsa forma inducta a Deo, omnino a natura induci non potest, sicut forma gloriae, quam inducet Deus corporibus electorum, et sicut etiam incarnatio verbi; vel quia etsi talem formam possit in aliquam materiam inducere, non tamen in istam: sicut ad causandum vitam natura potens est; sed quod in hoc mortuo natura vitam causet, hoc facere non potest. Contra naturam esse dicitur, quando in natura remanet contraria dispositio ad effectum quem Deus facit, sicut quando conservavit pueros illaesos in camino, remanente virtute comburendi in igne, et quando aqua Iordanis stetit, remanente gravitate in ea, et simile est quod virgo peperit. Praeter naturam autem dicitur Deus facere, quando producit effectum quem natura producere potest, illo tamen modo quo natura producere non potest, vel quia deficiunt instrumenta quibus natura operatur (sicut cum Christus convertit aquam in vinum, Ioan. II, 3–11, quod tamen natura aliquo modo facere potest, dum aqua in nutrimentum vitis assumpta, suo tempore in succum uvae per digestionem producitur), vel quia est in divino opere maior multitudo quam natura facere consuevit, sicut patet de ranis quae sunt productae in Aegypto; vel quantum ad tempus, sicut cum statim ad invocationem alicuius sancti aliquis curatur, quem natura non statim, sed successive, et alio tempore, non in isto curare posset: et sic accidit in miraculo inducto de socru Petri. Unde patet quod omnia huiusmodi, si accipiatur et modus et factum, facultatem naturae excedunt”.

30. For the English translations, see <https://www.newadvent.org/summa/1105.htm> (last consultation 2 May 2020).

to marvels, which are, instead, outside of the ordinary course of nature (*praeter naturae ordinem*). These unusual phenomena, which depend on secondary causes, do not require the suspension of normal divine providence. They are knowable *a posteriori* and are, in certain respects, imitable. Nonetheless, many marvels are the subject of *ars magica naturalis*, which is an area of natural philosophy. Consequently, the sufficient causes for various transformations approach a horizon of “knowability”, due to their effects, which, in turn, legitimize the imitative technique of the philosopher.

This subject is complex because it poses the following problems: 1) the epistemological definition of natural magic, as an art and as a science; and 2) the distinction between natural magic and talismanic or image magic, which makes use of idolatrous forms.

Natural Magic: Science or Art?

Marvels, or wonders, for William, fall under the scope of natural magic. But what does he mean by this expression? In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the classifications of the arts and scholarly disciplines were revised due to the influence of Aristotelian sources, enriching, or outright modifying, the classical idea of the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*. Consequently, a new kind of discipline appeared on the boundaries of natural science and art: natural magic. It was defined as a practical activity (*ars magica naturalis*) which could transform the knowledge of natural philosophy into action. It combined active principles present in nature – i.e., virtues not only manifest but also hidden, particularly in the specific forms of sublunary bodies – with passive matter. With this new discipline, philosophers and theologians, by paying attention to astrological constellations (*dies critici* and *horae convenientes*), created a knowledge that could lead to the mastery of science, political and social roles, or personal and economic success. Natural magic is defined differently by scholastic thinkers attempting, at times, to provide a naturalistic interpretation of practices called *nigromanticae*. Recent historians, particularly Jean Patrice Boudet, have explored the semantic and theoretical value of the term *nigromantia*, differentiating it from *necromantia* and

showing how these terms are often confused in medieval texts³¹. The question is presented differently from author to author, with lexical and speculative ambiguities. This aspect of William's philosophy remains unclear, despite having been highlighted in studies for many years³². I suggest that a diachronic analysis of *The Teaching on God in the Mode of Wisdom*, of *On the Virtues and Vices* (*De virtutibus et vitiis*), *On the Eucharist* (*De sacramento eucharistiae* 1223), *On Faith and Laws* (*De fide et legibus* 1228-1230), and the first part of *On the Universe* (1231) will be useful³³. The case of the relationship between the second and third sections of *The Teaching* and *On Laws* is one of the most interesting examples. Although there is a strong link between these sections, it is evident that the theoretical frameworks of the two works – written more than a decade apart – are radically different. William of

31. J.-P. Boudet, "Nigromantia: Brève histoire d'un mot", in A. Palazzo, I. Zavattero (eds.), *Geomancy and Other Forms of Divination*, Firenze 2017, 445-62 (Micrologus Library, 87); J.-P. Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance. Astrologie, divination et magie dans l'Occident médiéval (XII^e-XV^e siècle)*, Paris 2006, 125-37.

32. Marrone, "William of Auvergne on Magic in Natural Philosophy and Theology", in *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?*, 745-46: "Linking all these branches together was the fact that each concerned nature's hidden powers and forces (*vires et potentiae occultae*), the reason of course for the unexpected and wondrous quality of the operations they allowed. While even philosophers, if ignorant of magic themselves, called these sciences and arts 'necromancy' (*necromantia*) and Christian teachers, doubtless with the best of motives, labeled those who knew and practiced them sorcerers (*malefici*), in fact both the knowledge and practice were in themselves perfectly acceptable to God, like all natural things the fruit of his creative beneficence. William preferred to call its practitioners 'magi', which he derived etymologically from 'magna agentes', not 'mala agentes' as was sometimes erroneously maintained"; Sannino, "Ermete mago e alchimista nelle biblioteche di Guglielmo d'Alvernia e Ruggero Bacone", 151-209; D. Porreca, "Hermes Trismegistus: William of Auvergne's Mythical Authority", *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 67 (2000), 143-58; P. Lucentini, "L'ermetismo magico nel secolo XIII", in Lucentini, *Platonismo, ermetismo, eresia, nel Medioevo*, Louvain-La-Neuve 2007 (Textes et études du Moyen Âge, 41), 264-310; Weill-Parot, *Les "images astrologiques" au Moyen Âge*, 175-87; Draeulants, "The Notion of Properties Tensions between *Scientia* and *Ars* in Medieval Natural Philosophy and Magic", 178.

33. On the dating of William's writings, see Corti, "Le sette parti del Magisterium divinale ac sapientiale di Guglielmo di Auvergne", in Introduction note 14 and 15.

Auvergne recognizes the existence of a number of phenomena defined as magical works, not miracles, and he attempts to find a way to make them intelligible, “to learn the causes and reasons of certain magic works, especially those which are by the art of natural magic (cognoscere causas et rationes quorundam operum magicorum, maxime quae sunt ex arte magica naturali)”³⁴. These works are marvelous and secret because they lie beyond our comprehension (*nostrae cognitioni non subiacent, etiam cum sint naturalia*)³⁵, although they are natural. They fall under the category of *scientia magica naturalis*, which would, later in his work, be renamed “magic natural art” (*ars magica naturalis*). These phenomena are contrary to the expected course of nature, but are legitimate; on the contrary, those belonging to so-called “image science” (*scientia imaginum*) are not. In order to reach a theoretical and practical definition of magic, William dually designates magic as “science” and “art”, and uses these names with an ambivalence that is clarified only at the end of *On the Universe*. He reserves the locution *scientia magica* for *idolatria imaginum*, which implies the invocation of demons. In his work, *ars magica naturalis* refers to human operations: a *techne*, or a practice, capable of artificially reproducing events whose occult causes are beyond our human knowledge. Notably, William of Auvergne discusses the possibility of artificially producing life, in conformity with nature, thereby removing this argument from the domain of the necromantic arts. In short, William introduces a distinction between the ‘marvelous’ character of a) some natural processes (hidden virtues of herbs, gems and animals; attributing the power of a soul to the basilisk); b) the astonishing appearance of events as a result of illusion; and c) the theme of the artificial generation of life, as distinct from the animation of statues and objects using the aid of demons. He sets forth this classification

34. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo spiritualium* II 2 22, 1060bF: “Ex his igitur, et similibus, in libris experimentorum, et in libris naturalium narrationum plurima leguntur; utcumque cognoscere poteris causas, et rationes quorundam operum magicorum, maxime quae sunt ex arte magica naturali”. The translation is from Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 347.

35. Gervasius Tiberiensis, *Otia imperialia: Recreation for an Emperor*, III Preface, ed. by E. Banks, J. W. Binns, Oxford 2002, 558.

for the first time in the twenty-fourth chapter of *On Laws*, in the context of a discourse on idolatry of demons (which we will discuss in the final section of this chapter).

Regarding the first type of marvel, he affirms that it arises from a specific form of ignorance: a marvel having natural causes is confused with the product of idolatrous actions, which are sometimes combined with the manipulation of nature. According to William, what philosophers often call *nigromantia*, or *ars*, is actually *natural magic*, i.e., nature's power to work wonders thanks to virtues bestowed by the Creator. It is, therefore, the eleventh part of natural science. William notes that it is "that part of natural science which is called natural magic"; "philosophers call it necromancy or *philosophica*, perhaps quite improperly, and it is the eleventh part of all natural science"³⁶. Concerning the nature's power to work (*marvels*), the following passages present a list of such phenomena:

And there are countless other things of this kind, which are contained in books of secrets and books on the marvelous virtues of animals [...]. Regarding the stone called heliotrope, if what *experimenters* have written about it is true, it must have such power over colors as to impede their effect, so that whoever wears it cannot be seen. [...] A similar power is attributed to the skin or nerve found in the spine of a snake; they say that if a string for a vielle or a cithara is made with this ligament, wherever that string has been played no strings of other instruments can be played. Therefore, such a string has the power to impede the sounds of other strings and to stop other such instruments. And you have already heard that there are many other impediments brought about by powers of animals, and about the remora which holds ships still against the force of the winds; or the green buttercup which

36. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo* I I 43, 648aF-G: "Et quod tibi de ista limitatione seu diffinitione, intellige in pluribus, et non universaliter, quia forsitan anima basilici et animae quorundam aliorum animalium, et quaedam animae humanae multa operantur, et mira valde extra corpora sua, et illa nominanda sunt, et numeranda in ea parte naturalis scientiae, quae vocatur *magica naturalis*"; *De legibus* 24, 69bCd (ms. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 15755, f. 71vb, first quoted by J.-P. Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, 128): "Et de operibus huiusmodi est *magia naturalis*, quam *necromantiam*, seu *philosophicam* philosophi vocant, licet multum improprie, et est totius scientiae naturalis pars undecima".

grows on small trees and, placed in a dog's mouth, renders it mute, so that it cannot bark. But the wolf that sees a man before it is seen also binds his voice³⁷.

In many chapters of *The Teaching*, William discusses marvels by building on the Avicennian thesis that every agent emits a spirit, or medium (*spiritus*), through the force of will or imagination, from itself to the outside world³⁸. In particular, some bonds cre-

37. *De universo spiritualium* II 3 22, 1059bC-60aF-H: "Non est autem prohibitum naturali impossibilitate, quin res aliquae contra aliquas virtutes, et super illas habeant, quemadmodum lapis adamas super lapidem magnetem, propter quod et in praesentia adamantis ferrum ad se trahere non potest, licet non improbabiliter opinari quis posset non ex virtute dominationis hoc esse quae sit adamanti supra magnetem, sed potius ex dispositione magnetis, quae praeligit adamantem, et praefert magneti, eo dimisso currens ad illum. De lapide autem, qui vocatur heliotropia, si vera sunt, quae de isto scripserunt experimentatores: necesse est ipsum posse contra colorem, cuius operationes ita impedit, ut gestantem illum videri non sinat [...]. Similem vero virtutem attribuerunt pelliculae, vel nervo, qui est in spina serpentis, dicentes, quia si ex eo fiat corda in viella, vel chitara, ubicunque nervus ille sonuerit, impossibile est nervos aliorum instrumentorum sonare: est igitur huiusmodi nervo virtus prohibendi sonum ab aliis nervis, et suspendi alia huiusmodi instrumenta. Et tu iam audivisti multas alias ligationes esse ex virtutibus animalium, sicut de torpedine, cuius supra feci mentionem, quae tactu suo ligat membra tangentium ipsam; et de remora, qui ligat naves contra impetum ventorum, et de ranuculo viridi, qui ascendit super arbores parvas, et positus in ore canis ligat vocem ipsius, ut latrare non possit. Sed et lupus praevidens hominem ligat vocem ipsius. Mirabilis autem est id, quod experimentatores posuerunt in libris suis: videlicet de serpente quod ligat maleficos, et magicos, ut in praesentia ipsius cessent omnia praestigia eorum, et incantationes dimittant. Et idem dixerunt de argento vivo, si inclusum fuerit inter duos nodos cannae"; 1060aE-H: "Hic igitur advertendum est tibi, quia virtutes occultae multae, et mirabiles fiunt in rebus quas attingere non possumus, qualis est virtus cancrorum fluvialium, per quam fugant talpas ab hortis [...] sicut dicunt experimentatores [...]. Dico igitur, quia si creditur experimentationibus, herba quae vocatur paeonia magnam potestatem habet in malignos spiritum [...]. Manifestum est etiam et lapidem iaspidem fugare serpentes, propter quod et aquilae ponunt illum in nidis suis". Latin references are to longer passages.

38. *De universo spiritualium* II 3 23, 1063bA. Bacon provides a clearer naturalistic explanation of the phenomena in question by substituting the *vehiculum* with the species, similarly moved by the agency of will: R. Bacon, *Epistula de secretis artis et naturae operibus artis et naturae, et de nullitate magiae*, c. 3, in *Opera quaedam hactenus inedita* (Appendix), ed. by J. S. Brewer, London 1859, 530-31 (Rerum Britannicarum medii aevi Scriptores): "Unde quando

ated by animals (the remora, the basilisk, the wolf)³⁹ occur through a *vehiculum*, or a medium between two realities, the corporeal and the spiritual, which would otherwise not come into contact⁴⁰. In the third chapter, I will discuss whether William adheres to the tradition of “pneumatic” magic, which would go on to have great success among Renaissance authors. These authors would later count William among the philosophers to whom their doctrine owed its origin⁴¹. As we will see in the following section, over time William made use of various sources in different sections of *The Teaching*.

in homine invenitur haec, scilicet bona complexio, et sanitas corporis, et iuventus, et pulchritudo, et elegantia membrorum, et anima munda a peccatis, et cogitatio fortis, et desiderium vehemens ad aliquid opus magnum; tum quicquid fieri potest per virtutem et speciem hominis, et spiritus, et calorem naturalem, necesse est quod fortius est vehementius fiat per huiusmodi species, et spiritus, et vapores, et influentias quam si aliquod istorum deficiat; et praecipue si desiderium forte et intentio valida non desit”. See R. Bacon, *De multiplicatione specierum and De speculis comburentibus* 1, I, ed. by D. C. Lindberg, Oxford 1983, 2, 19-6, 98.

39. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo spiritualium* II 3 23, 1063bD-64aE: “Cui enim videatur echeneis piscis posse ligare navem magnam contra omnem impetum ventorum, et prohibere eam a motu, et substantiam abstractam nobilem non posse movere eandem incomparabiliter nobiliori, ac sublimiori imperio, cum anima ipsius echeneidis prohibitionem istam, et ligationem non alia virtute efficiat, quam imperio, vel alia huiusmodi passionem? Fortassis enim ita est passio illa, sicut dixi tibi de virtute, qua basiliscus per visum interficit hominem, et de virtute qua lupo ligat vocem homines, quem ante videat, quam videatur ab illo”.

40. *De universo spiritualium* II 3 23, 1063bA: “Et hoc vehiculum vocaverunt Philosophi spiritum, et diversificaverunt huiusmodi vehicula pro diversitate operationum animae ipsius, verbi gratia spiritum vitalem, quo vita vehitur ab ipsa anima, quae fons vitae est, per singula in corpore viventia; similiter spiritum sensibilem, quo sensus per singulas partes corporis, quae sentiunt, vehitur: eodem modo et spiritum naturalem, quo quasdam virtutes ipsius animae per corpus vehi notaverunt”.

41. Johannes Picus, *Conclusiones sive Theses DCCCC Romae anno 1486 publice disputandae, sed non admissae* II, 45, ed. by B. Kieszkowski, Genève 1973, 71: “Sensus nature, quam ponunt Alchindus, Bacon, Guillelmus Parisiensis, et quidem alii, maxime autem omnes Magi, nichil est aliud quam sensus vehiculi”; A. Godet, *Nun was ist die Imagination anders als ein Sonn im Menschen. Studien zu einem Zentralbegriff des magischen Denkens*, Dissertation, Basel-Zürich 1982, 137. See Al-Kindi, “De radiis”, ed. by M.-T. D’Alverny, F. Hudry, *Archives d’histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 41 (1974), 139-260, 243-44; Avicenna, *Liber de anima seu Sextus de Naturalibus* IV 4, ed. by S. Van Riet, II, Leiden 1968, 65-66 (*Avicenna Latinus*, IV).

Sources: Experimental Books, Books of Secrets, The Nabataean Agriculture

“It is indeed surprising the number of times he alludes to ‘experimenters’ and to ‘books of experimenters’”⁴², Lynn Thorndike writes in his monumental work *History of Magic and Experimental Science*, describing William of Auvergne’s interest in natural philosophy and the scientific investigation of the sublunar realm. This perspective, according to Thorndike, partly draws on the work of William of Conches. In my opinion, it is important to highlight the aspects of William’s thought that are absent in later authors such as Roger Bacon, Albertus Magnus, and the anonymous author of *On the marvels of the world (De mirabilibus mundi)*, who each displayed the same curiosity about the causal mechanisms of the created world. These mechanisms are the cause of, or the sufficient reason behind, phenomena which appear to be mysterious and wondrous (*mirabilia*), and which are also considered to be magic. The scholastics of the thirteenth century attempted to explain these phenomena, first with a “physical reasoning” inspired by Aristotelian naturalism, and later with a doctrine of the supernatural – that is, of the underlying cause of phenomena. We find mention of this doctrine in experimental books or books of secrets (*libri experimentorum, libris de secretis et mirabilibus animalium virtutibus*). These books record the effects that can be ascertained, even while their cause remains a mystery. In particular, William compares Aristotle’s “natural books” (*libri naturales*) – specifically the Greek philosopher’s reflections on change and movement, which are the theoretical origin of action through mediated or immediate contact (*contactum immediatum aut mediatum*)⁴³ – to Avicenna’s *Metaphysics*, which contains a theory that imagination (*imaginatio animi*) generates actions from a distance⁴⁴. In this theoretical framework,

42. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 338–70, 41.

43. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 1 46, 663aA: “Operationes enim corporales per modum naturae per contactum sunt aut mediatum, aut immediatum, quod est dicere, quia corpus virtute sua corporali non agit, nisi vel in corpus, quod contingit, vel in aliud contingens illud”.

44. B. Delaurenti, *Virtus verborum. La puissance des mots. Débats doctrinaux sur le pouvoir des incantations au Moyen Âge*, Paris 2007, 107.

which establishes a continuous relationship between the knowable and the unknowable, medical experimental books (*empirica medicorum*), alchemical art and their practitioners (*experimentatores*) play a central role. They become workers (*effectores*) of natural magic. William observes that

the materials possessed of the marvellous virtues essential for this art are very rare in Europe, but in India and lands near it they abound, and hence natural magic flourished and [still] flourishes vigorously there, and therefore are many experimenters there who always work marvels by their skill⁴⁵.

The need to pass on the tradition of natural histories in a critical fashion, or at least in a non-fideist way, begins to emerge (*aggregata igitur ratiocinatione*)⁴⁶. Subsequently, William's desire to preserve the ancient tradition goes hand in hand with an intriguing openness towards the books of experiments. William, in his writings of the 1220s and in the first part of *On the Universe*, describes the natural dispositions of entities in terms of *aspectus amoris* and *timoris*, in man; *semina*, in plants; *sensus naturae*, in animals; and magnetism and other virtues, in stones. In these cases, he does so without introducing the notion of hidden forces or occult powers, and without referring to the books of experiments and secrets. This approach can be seen in the following emblematic passage:

[...] dicam brevi sermone, quia quod maxime probabile videtur de virtutibus, et effectibus stellarum, et luminarium, habetur ex operationibus virtutum rerum aliarum, tam animalium, quam partium ipsorum amplius herbarum, medicinarum, lapidum, et istae virtutes sunt sicut aspectus, et habitudines ipsarum ad alias res⁴⁷.

45. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo spiritualium* II 3 23, 1064bH-65aA: "[...] quia etiam copia rerum huiusmodi apud nos minime invenitur, rarissime sunt [...] In partibus autem Indiae, et caeteris illis adiacentibus, copia rerum huiusmodi magna est, et propter hoc magica naturalis potissimum ibi viguit, et viget, qua de causa sunt ibi semper (ed. *super*) experimentatores multi, et rerum mirabilium per huiusmodi peritiam effectores". I use Thorndike's translation, see *History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 347, adding "always" on the basis of the manuscripts consulted.

46. *De universo spiritualium* II 3 25, 1072aF.

47. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 1 46, 657aD-58aH.

William's epistemological itinerary proceeds along two paths: first, there is that of the *auctoritas* of the ancient naturalists (Pliny, Isidore, Alain) and, second, that of the *experimentatores*. Drawing on the writings of a group of these, made up of doctors and alchemists⁴⁸, he forms a knowledge that is born of experience and which, in a later moment, he transforms into *techne* or art. Such a conception is Aristotelian. Art is *a creative disposition accompanied by true reason regarding those things which may be different from what they are*⁴⁹. This disposition permits the production of some objects, the scope of which is always beyond the object itself. Thanks to *experience*, this disposition also allows for events that do not obey the laws of nature, but do not need to occur in opposition to the ordinary course of nature in order to come about. William is one of the first authors of the thirteenth century to sketch a new epistemology attempting to integrate classical heritage with Aristotelian-Avicennian influence. Natural philosophy is understood as a space for researching the causes of corporeal change, a change that takes place through regular processes. "Natural" indicates, precisely, a knowledge of causes that begins by looking at their effects: "Naturale namque est unicuique effectui causam suam indicare, et ad ipsam deducere rationabiliter cogitantem"⁵⁰. William describes this issue, in the way noted above, exclusively in the second and third parts of *On the Universe*. In the other sections of *The Teaching* (*On Virtues, On Faith and Laws, On Eucharist, On the Universe I*), instead, he attributes analogous examples to different authorities – *libri naturales, quidam libelli de naturis animalium*, and *Plinius*. He remembers collecting natural books (*libri de naturis*) from the regions in which they were prevalent: France, Germany and England. In his own words,

Congregavi ergo, nec mihi suffecit Gallia atque Germania, que tamen in libris copiores sunt regionibus universis, immo in partibus transmarinis et in Anglia libros de naturis editos aggregavi et ex omnibus meliora et commodia decerpsi⁵¹.

48. *De universo spiritualium* III 2 22, 1060bF.

49. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VI, 4 1140a.

50. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* II 2 32, 875aC.

51. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De virtutibus et vitiis* 11, 148bF.

In *De virtutibus*, in a discussion on morality, William defines science in the following way: "And we say that science is a virtue, and that this kind of science is generated by repeated knowledge (*frequenter scire*) and is also known by the name 'expertise' (*peritia*)"⁵². Therefore, knowledge – science – produces *expertise*, which comes about as an intellectual virtue (*virtus intellectiva*) in the learned man"⁵³. In the twentieth chapter of *De legibus*, William makes a clear distinction between "voluntary operations" and the operations of the sun and the moon in the world beneath. He criticizes authors who attribute the former to the stars, while he considers the latter natural. William shares with the classical tradition a notion of natural causality based on similarity, according to which natural processes occur through similarity (*sunt per similitudinem*) and the agent gives naturally that which it possesses in order to make the receiving being similar to itself (*intendit dare naturaliter quod habet et assimilare sibi recipiens*). The causal agent is nobler than that which is caused. In this context, William distinguishes between natural actions produced by bodies (*corporales*), actions produced by souls (*spirituales*), and actions produced by the body and soul jointly (*opera artificiorum*). The first are capable of intervening on bodies exclusively through contact between active cause and passive effect, or through a medium via similarity or contrariety (*ad modum imperantis per contactum agentis et patientis aut medii*). The second are caused by the virtues of intellect, imagination, will, and desire. The third, also called "operations of spiritual substances" (*operationes spiritualium substantiarum*), have the ability to direct movements through the intervention of a medium, the *spiritus*⁵⁴.

52. *De virtutibus et vitiis* 8, 116bF-G: "et dicamus, quia scientia quaedam est virtus, et quia huiusmodi scientia generatur ex frequenter scire, et vocatur alio nomine peritia".

53. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De legibus* 24, 70aE-F: "Qui autem in his docti sunt, talia non mirantur, sed solum creatorem in eis glorificant scientes, quod sola omnipotentissima voluntate ipsius natura operatur".

54. The following passages have been collated with manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 15755. For the reader's convenience, I have kept the editorial divisions and, from now on, will cite *De legibus* by specifying the chapter and columns, with the pages of the *ms.* in brackets. *De legibus* 20, 55aD (f. 56vb): "Probationes autem evidentes quibus error iste destruitur, hae sunt, quia coeli et stellae, atque haec luminaria, videlicet Sol,

Through this classification, William illustrates the secondary causality of phenomena, which occurs “according to [its] whole nature (*secundum totam naturam*)”. This expression explains his appreciation for the Galenic idea of medicinal effect, which does not depend on the elemental properties of the curative agent, but rather on the “property of the whole substance”. Operations like this might work even at a distance, and so William calls them “magical”⁵⁵.

Steven Marrone has clearly explained the issue:

et Luna, aut scienter, et voluntarie ista operantur, quae eis imponunt, aut naturaliter, quemadmodum ignis calefacit, et lux illuminat”; 55bB-D (f. 57ra): “Quod si dixerit quis, quia naturaliter ista operantur absque scientia et voluntate, quemadmodum lapis adamas attrahit ferrum, aut ignis calefacit potentia, scilicet quae necessitate operatur non libertate, cui non est liberum operari, vel non operari [...]. Vilius autem impossibile est causam esse nobilioris; quare virtutes coelorum, stellarum et luminarium impossibile est causare in nobis sapientiam, vel virtutes, vel bonos mores, vel etiam quasque artes, vel voluntates, cum omnia haec nobiliora sunt omnibus huiusmodi virtutibus, quas ipsi ponunt in coelis. Amplius, virtutes ex quibus sunt huiusmodi operationes, aut sunt corporales, aut sunt spirituales; si corporales non possunt igitur naturaliter imprimere dispositiones spirituales. Naturales enim operationes sunt per similitudines, agens enim naturaliter intendit dare quod habet, et assimilare sibi recipiens”; 56aE (57va): “Quod si dixerit quis eas esse spirituales, iam nosti, quia virtutes huiusmodi non operantur, nisi intelligendo, imaginando et desiderando”; 56aH-bA (f. 57va) “ex quo apparet, quod opera artificiorum non sunt mere ex spiritualibus operationibus animarum nostrarum; immo adiuvantur a corporalibus operationibus, videlicet motibus membrorum et instrumentorum ut diximus. Et iterum operationes, quae sunt ab animabus in corpora sibi coniuncta non sunt ex solis spiritualibus, quae in anima sunt; immo cooperantur operationes spirituum, quos multi medios, et summa, et operatione opinantur esse inter animas, et corpora eorum, et cooperationibus eorum, et mediationibus indigent animae, ut operentur in corporibus suis, sive motum, sive aliam operationem; similiter et ad hoc, ut operentur per ipsa corpora in aliis materiis”; *De legibus* 21, 56aGH (f. 57vb): “Quod si quis dixerit, quia eius virtutes sunt similes virtutibus, quae attribuuntur lapidibus pretiosis, qualis virtus attribuitur puro smaragdo, videlicet attrahendi divitias domino suo, et diamanti, quod efficit gratiosum; nec in hoc effugiant inconveniens, quia secundum hoc, nec situs, nec locus aliquid addit, vel minuit virtutibus istis”.

55. See Marrone, “Magic and the Physical World in Thirteenth-Century Scholasticism”, 172; 173: “Indeed, in all instances of this sort what was at work, said William, was a ‘natural magic’, resident right there in nature to be made use of in a ‘natural art of magic’”.

In such cases the action was frequently due to a hidden force or power (*vis*, *virtus*, *potentia occulta*), still natural but usually unexpected, difficult to describe⁵⁶.

Books of experiments” and “natural histories”, William says, were full of descriptions of these occult yet natural powers, and a lot of medicine depended upon them. The effects of an occult power could not be related to its cause based on formal resemblance or a formal opposition. An example would be that of a hot body inducing whiteness instead of heat in another body. Another, William affirms, was the power of a sapphire to cure infirmity, restrain passion and calm fear. In the twenty-fourth chapter of *On Laws*, William asserts: “certain marvels are natural operations and knowledge of them is one of the eleventh parts of natural science”⁵⁷. Regarding William’s sources, beginning with the studies of David Pingree regarding the circulation of Arabic Hermetic texts in the Latin Middle Ages, scholars have shown that William knew many works. Some of these are now partly available in a critical edition and *On Laws* and *On the Universe* can hence be compared with them⁵⁸. According to Pinella Travaglia, in William’s passages on magic there are no literal quotations from the *Nabataean Agriculture*. However, there are several examples concerning the artificial generation of life that seem to refer to it⁵⁹. In the twelfth chapter of *On Laws*, William

56. Marrone, “Magic and the Physical World in Thirteenth-Century Scholasticism”, 174: “Not only, William explained, were the ‘books of experiments’ and ‘natural histories’ loaded with descriptions of these occult yet natural powers, but also much of the art of medicine depended upon them. In instances where an occult power was at work, results were produced that could not be related back to the cause itself according to a formal resemblance or a formal opposition or contrariety, nor understood in any such terms. It was as if a hot body should automatically induce not heat but rather whiteness in another, or something falling on a surface at rest should continue to move, and even faster. An example of such an operation, so William said, was the power of a sapphire to cure infirmity, restrain ardent passion and calm fears”.

57. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De legibus* 24, 70aE-F.

58. Pingree, “The diffusion of Arabic Magical Texts in Western Europe”, 57–102.

59. I thank Pinella Travaglia for giving me access to the unpublished results of her research, including the Italian translation of the Arabic text,

cites the *Liber Neumich*, i.e., the *Kitāb al-Nawāmīs*, known in the Latin world as *Liber vaccae* (*The Book of the Cow*). This is where the example of the artificial generation of a cow is related⁶⁰. However, this feat alone, to which William devotes only a few lines, does not seem to justify his position on the subject. Firstly, because the *Liber Neumich* is not mentioned in that context. Maaïke Van der Lugt has already pointed out that the *Liber vaccae* is first cited in the Old Testament, “in relation to the prohibition against the crossbreeding of cattle (Lev. 19:19)” and cites William’s argument that “one of the reasons for the prohibition against crossbreeding was to repress the nefarious actions and magical evils which are procured with the offspring generated by such mixtures. These actions”, adds William “are described in the book that is called *Neumich* or *Neumuch* and that is called the *Laws of Plato* by another name”⁶¹. And so, William references the book in regard to the operations that fall in the category of what scholastics called preternatural (*praeter naturam*), as distinct from true, supernatural miracles. Therefore, Newman’s views on William’s negative opinion of the *Kitāb al-Nawāmīs* only seem to apply to this book and not to the subject of the artificial gener-

based on the edition edited by Fahd; see *L'Agriculture nabatéenne*, (trad. en arabe attribuée à Abu Bakr Ahmad b. ‘Āli al-Kasdānī), ed. by T. Fahd, I-II, Damas 1993 and 1995. Concerning the *Book of the Nabataean Agriculture* (*Kitāb Falāḥat al-nabaṭiyya*), cf. P. Travaglia, “Asclepio e la creazione artificiale della vita nella Agricoltura Nabatea”, in Lucentini, Parri, Perrone Compagni (eds.), *La tradizione ermetica dal mondo tardo-antico all’Umanesimo*, 315–38; P. Travaglia, “Il Libro della Agricoltura nabatea nella tradizione agromonica andalusa”, *Al-Qanṭara* 30/2 (2009), 535–55.

60. Sannino, *Il De mirabilibus mundi*, 67; M. Van der Lugt, “‘Abominable mixtures’: The *Liber vaccae* in the Medieval West, or the Dangers and Attractions of Natural Magic”, *Traditio* 64 (2009), 229–78.

61. Van der Lugt, “‘Abominable mixtures’”, 256: “the *Liber vaccae* made its first appearance in a theological debate about the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament. It is cited in relation to the prohibition against the crossbreeding of cattle (Lev. 19:19). According to William of Auvergne, one of the reasons for the prohibition against crossbreeding was to ‘repress the nefarious actions and magical evils which are procured with the offspring generated by such mixtures. These actions are described in the book that is called *Neumich* or *Neumuch* and that is called the *Laws of Plato* by another name. This book is all about such mixtures and it is called the *Laws of Plato* because it is contrary to the laws of nature”.

ation of life⁶². William is sceptical of the “magical” way in which these subjects are treated in the *Kitāb al-Nawāmīs*, as we will see. In contrast, his scepticism is not directed against wonders and their going against the common course of nature. If the *Kitāb al-Nawāmīs* does not illustrate William’s opinion on artificial generation, then, perhaps, the *Nabataean Agriculture* can be considered one of the sources on this topic. In *On the Universe* and *On Laws* there are many references to the Chaldeans (the Babylonians), to idolatry and Chaldean necromancy, and to heretic pagan idolaters⁶³. Although these references may have biblical origins, one in particular, due to its idolatrous content, suggests which kind of sources William may have had in mind⁶⁴. What he mentions is significant: books of bewitchment (*maleficia*), in which trees are used in idol worship⁶⁵. As we have already said above, William cites many books: spellbooks, used with the aid of demons;

62. W. R. Newman, *Promethean Ambitions: Alchemy and the Quest to Perfect Nature*, Chicago 2005, 190: “William is extremely unfavorable toward *The Book of the Cow*, a work that he knows well. He condemns its practice of generating unnatural animals only to kill them at an appointed time for magical purposes. Probably inspired by Saint Augustine and other scriptural writers who argued that demons and angels could cohabit with humans, William equates pseudo-Plato’s recipes with the attempts by demonic incubi and succubi to collect nocturnal emissions and produce monsters, such as giants, from them. All of these unnatural generations are damnable practices and can perhaps lead to the production of hideous monsters, although William remains somewhat skeptical”.

63. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De legibus* 1, 2, 22, 26 and 27. I refer to the documentation cited in my “*Nigromantia secundum physicam, nigromantia imaginum: arte e imagine*”, 115–29; see also S. Page, “Uplifting Souls: The Liber de essential spirituum”, in C. Fanger (ed.), *Invoking Angels Theurgic Ideas and Practices, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries*, University Park (PA) 2012, 79–112, 91; A. Sannino, “From Hermetic Magic to the Magic of Marvels”, in Page, Rider (eds.), *The Routledge History Handbook of Medieval Magic*, 153–68; as well as P. Lucentini, V. Perrone Compagni, s.v. “Hermetic Literature II. Latin Middle Ages”, in W. J. Hanegraaff, A. Faivre, R. Van den Broek, J.-P. Brach (eds.), *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, Leiden-Boston 2005, 499b–529a, 522.

64. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De legibus* 10, 41bD.

65. *De legibus* 26, 31aC: “sicut nos ipsi legimus in libris maleficiorum”; F. Collard, “*Veneficiis vel maleficiis: Réflexion sur les relations entre le crime de poison et la sorcellerie dans l’Occident medieval*”, *Le Moyen Âge* 109 (2003), 9–57; see also F. Collard, *Le crime de poison au Moyen Âge*, Paris 2003.

“books of magic”, mainly about Hermetic magic⁶⁶; *libri de secretis et mirabilibus animalium virtutibus*⁶⁷; and *libri experimentorum*⁶⁸.

These cited sources must be distinguished from one another; they do not simply refer to a body of literature with similar traits, often generically understood as magic. Presumably by the expression “books of the experimenters” William means a group of texts, among which the most evident source is the *Experimentator*, a collection of sources which includes the third book of *De natura rerum* by Thomas of Cantimpré⁶⁹. But these and other encyclopaedic texts cannot explain the subsequent reference to the artificial generation of life, as present in the books of experiments. The following passage is an example:

Nec mirum, cum iam attentatum sit ab hominibus, et creditum ab eis homines *per aliam viam efficere quam per viam consuetae generationis*: sicut in libris experimentorum poteris invenire⁷⁰.

This quotation from an unspecified “book of experiments” most likely reflects William’s knowledge of the *Nabataean Agriculture*. According to William, the common people’s habit of attributing great power and magnificence, and even omnipotence, to nature – as in the case of artificial generation – constitutes a twofold blasphemy against the Creator. This because it attributes a great and laudable power to demons, while omnipotence belongs to God alone, and because it detracts from God. Furthermore, it would deny the power of nature itself. In fact, the virtue that makes the artificial generation of life possible is the work of the

66. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De legibus* 8, 38aFG; 17, 49bB-C; 23, 67aA-C; 24, 76aE-H; 27, 88aE-91bD.

67. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* II 1 32, 833bC-34aE. See above note 7.

68. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo spiritualium* II 3 22, 1059aA-60bF. See above note 37.

69. J. Deus, *Der Experimentator: eine anonyme lateinische Naturenzyklopädie des frühen 13. Jahrhunderts* (Dissertation zur Erlangung der Würde des Doktors der Philosophie des Fachbereichs Geschichtswissenschaft der Universität Hamburg), Hamburg 1998.

70. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo* II 3 25, 1072aG. *Generation outside the normal process*, which William speaks of here, regards the processes undergone in the uterus.

Creator, while the virtue of nature is a *subiectus*. As such, the virtue of nature seems to be the agent of this work, as distinct from the Creator, but it operates with the agreement of the Creator, without any hint of rebellion. William portrays it as a servant:

Primum quia virtutem, quae talia operabatur, ab ipso creatore removebant, et etiam ab ipsa natura; cum et ipsius creatoris esset, et auctoris dominantis, et ipsius naturae, ut proprii subiecti, et beneplacito creatoris absque ulla rebellione, ac contradictione servientis⁷¹.

Therefore, William's interest in the artificial generation of life seems to be a part of his broader investigation of the marvelous and secret aspects of nature, in which many aspects of what was commonly called *nigromantia secundum physicam* (in the literature with which William was familiar) are defined⁷². At first, he treats the possibility of artificially producing the most elementary forms of animal life, presumably those without a soul but still created by God, as a mere acceleration of natural processes:

The sudden and unexpected production of frogs, lice, worms, and some animals belong to those works in which only nature is operative, but with the help of seeds that nature itself confers, the work of generation is accelerated, so that it appears to those who ignore its process not as the work of nature, which ordinarily accomplishes such things much more slowly, but rather seems to be the force of one who commands nature⁷³.

Yet immediately after this, with a seemingly contorted argument, he asserts:

For this reason, in order for the Christian religion to be fully affirmed and fully valid, it has been determined that if someone were to do such things in such a manner he should be considered wicked and

71. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De legibus* 24, 70aE, see above note 53.

72. I offer here an interpretation different from Marrone's; see above note 56.

73. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De legibus* 24, 69bD-70aE: "Qua de causa ut etiam maxime vigeret, et praestaret Christiana religio, inductum est, ut si quis talia, et taliter operaretur, malus, et maleficus haberetur, et non virtute naturae alicuius, sed magis adiutorio, et potentia daemonum huiusmodi facere putaretur".

evil, and that he accomplished these things not by means of the virtues of nature but with the aid of demonic power. But specialists in such matters are not surprised at these feats but rather glorify the Creator alone in them, knowing that nature alone in accordance with His omnipotent will operates both in the customary manner known to men and contrary to custom not only in new ways but producing new things. Therefore, we must not doubt the feminine element⁷⁴ in the new mixtures⁷⁵.

The action of specialists seems to be limited to accelerating what nature usually accomplishes, only more slowly, and yet now the possibility that “nature [...] may even create new things” is introduced. This possibility, considered completely normal, recalls the concept of *invention* by which man, in the *Book of Nabataean Agriculture*, contributes to producing new things in nature. Therefore, as he contemplates the issue of the artificial generation of life, William seems to align himself once more with the *Book of Nabataean Agriculture*, to the extent that he recognises man’s potential. However, in his interpretation of this possibility, William displays something that may distance him substantially from his Arab counterpart. For both, the artificial production of animals cannot bypass the laws of nature, but for William this means that it cannot disregard the dynamics involved in the mating of two sexed creatures⁷⁶. William also speaks of the sudden generation of frogs and worms in the *Law*, considering it possible. A bit further on we will examine in detail the relevant place in the text. For now, I will only point out that this looks like a justification of *Exodus* 7:7, where, in response to the plague of frogs, which God sent against Pharaoh and the Egyptians, Egyptian magicians also produced frogs with their artifices. William offers a philosophical interpretation of the possibility of this type of generation, one that is very close to the *Nabataean*

74. I read *femineum*, rather than *feminum*, as above.

75. *De legibus* 24, 69bD. I use Thorndike’s translation (from “But specialist” to “new things”), see Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 348.

76. *De universo spiritualium* II 3 22, 1061aC: “naturae autem in seminibus, et per semina non fuit difficile operari iuxta consuetudinem suam: divina vero virtus, sicut utique patentissimum est, promptissima est adiuvare semina, et infundere eis animas”.

Agriculture. This type of generation is one that, even though it does not follow the normal course of nature, still lies inside nature's realm. Certainly, it cannot be held to be against what God has predestined because, in that case, it would be a mere trick, destined to reveal only its own false nature. Therefore, in *On the Universe*, William continues to make these necessary distinctions. In the twenty-third chapter of *On Laws*, he takes up again the theme of the artificial generation of animals. While it is considered possible for the frog, it has not been accomplished for other animals because even when they have been formed, they quickly vanish. This kind of operation, therefore, is viewed as demonic, insofar as it makes an evanescent, false life appear real.

Impossibile enim est veras columbas, aut veros lepores, aut alia cuiuscunque generis vera animalia fieri etiam sic, idest tam subito, id est ministerio daemonum. Tu autem nosti, quia generatio huiusmodi animalium multi temporis est, et multiplicis praeparationis. Praeterea animalia, quae sic apparent, ita ut subito apparent, sic subito evanescent nullum prioris existentiae vestigium relinquentia: verorum autem animalium non est possibile, ut subita sit destructio, vel potius consumptio, ita ut nulla vestigia ipsorum remaneant⁷⁷.

The arguments supporting the impossibility of the artificial generation of life in more complex animals recall those used in the *Book of Nabataean Agriculture*: an artificially-generated man would remain alive only for a year and then would be destined to disappear. The artificial generation of animals is more complex, as it requires a greater number of operations than those required for the production of plants, and therefore it is practically impossible. Regarding, instead, the artificial generation of horses, in *On the Universe* the possibility of producing a horse from an object made of reeds is refuted as deceptive. This is a matter which William distinguishes from artificial generation; rather, it concerns the animation of a manmade object. He leaves open a margin of possibility for the artificial production of life: the man who creates can alter the usual course of nature. His activities are part of the deepest secret of nature, where life orig-

77. *De universo spiritualium* II 3 23, 1064bGH.

inates: namely, the realm of sexual union. But this is a different matter. Building an inanimate body and subsequently imbuing it with life is impossible. William also deals with this issue in the *De legibus*, in the context of his critique of forms of idolatry. He acknowledges that sometimes idolatry is only ignorance of the true causes of natural phenomena, which are attributed to occult forces, different from the forces from which they actually originate. But this is not so for the animation of statues or vases (*statuae non aliud quam vasa sunt*)⁷⁸, or whatever other object man can produce: *in no way, by no means, can these be made alive*. Here he makes explicit reference to Hermetic magic, in particular to the *Asclepius*⁷⁹. William draws a clear distinction between generation and fabrication: statues do not have a parent but a maker, in contrast to animals, which have fathers and mothers.

In fact, no one says that statues are generated, nor do they say so of vases, which are formed or shaped in a certain way; and, generally, where there is a craftsman or a maker, there is no need for father, mother or generation⁸⁰.

The generation of animals, instead, always occurs through the agency of God. As for living bodies that are *per definitionem* ensouled bodies, God not only creates their souls, but also joins the soul – in the sense of strength or power – to an adequate body⁸¹. The wise man, on the other hand, as an *experimentator*, has a scientific knowledge of the properties of bodies, which he can

78. *De legibus* 26, 86bGH.

79. *De legibus* 25, 85aH–86bH.

80. *De legibus* 25, 80aGH: “Nemo enim dicit statuas generari, neque vasa, quae formantur; vel figurantur quolibet modo, et generaliter ubi faber, sive fabricator est, nec pater nec mater necessario est, nec generatio. Statuae namque ut diximus contentae sunt fabris suis et fabricatione, nec genitorem requirunt, aut generationem; quare nec patres, nec matres essent, ut in animalibus, nec generatio. Manifestum autem est deos huiusmodi, nec fabricatores esse, aut formatores corporum animalium”.

81. *De legibus* 26, 85bC: “impossibilis est coniunctio aliquarum animarum, et statuarum, sive imaginum, quoniam coniunctio animae ad corpus non est nisi sicut virtutis ad organum suum, et sicut materiae ad formam, et sicut perfectionis ad potentiale receptibile ipsius: sensu vero manifestum est, nec statuas, nec partes earum, organa esse aliquarum operationum animalium, unde nec agunt, nec patiuntur in datione responsorum”.

use, with artifice and technique, sometimes producing marvelous effects which cause common people to wonder at and admire him, as they are ignorant of their true causes. William emphasizes this in order to create a distinction between legitimate, even if difficult to understand, natural operations, and diabolical ones. It is only in the last pages of *The Teaching*, bearing witness to the arduous course of his research, that William is able to articulate a different classification of works of magic (*magica operum*). It is no wonder, then, that the circulation of texts from the Hermetic Arabic tradition – for example, the *Book of Nabataean Agriculture*, which presents a link between agriculture, alchemy, and magic – allows for a discussion of the question of man's agency in nature. This discussion addresses several facets of the issue, and notably its philosophical, political, and ethical implications. This perspective distinguishes the new literature from the Aristotelian tradition which, at least in part, oriented the medieval classification of the sciences by separating the mechanical arts from the practical sciences, and by acknowledging the involvement of man's superior faculties only in the latter⁸².

For William of Auvergne, works of magic can be distinguished as follows:

1) Magic illusions, i.e., “mockeries of men or of demons”. These illusions are produced by skill and dexterity, by ventriloquists, jugglers, and fortune tellers. They arouse great wonder until men learn how they are done⁸³.

82. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* E 11025b25. On the role of the mechanical arts with regard to the classification of the sciences in the Latin Middle Ages, see: F. Alessio, “La filosofia e le ‘artes mechanicae’ nel secolo XII”, *Studi medievali* III/6 (1965), 110–29. On the scientific value of the mechanical arts according to Ugo of S. Victor, cf. *Didascalicon*, in *Patrologia latina* 176, ed. by J. Migne, Paris 1844–1855, 770C–812B; G. Dahan, “Les classifications du savoir aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles”, *L'enseignement philosophique* 40 (1990), 5–27; A. Maierù, “La struttura del sapere”, in S. Petruccioli (ed.), *Storia della Scienza*, IV (*Medioevo, Rinascimento*), Roma 2001, 103–44, 11–13. On the development of these themes in the Late Middle Ages, see G. Federici Vescovini, ‘*Arti*’ e filosofia nel secolo XIV: studi sulla tradizione aristotelica e i ‘moderni’’, Firenze 1983.

83. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo spiritualium* II 3 22, 1059aA. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 345.

2) Magic candles⁸⁴, which are mere apparitions and have no reality, for example the magic circle experimenters.

3) Natural magic, which involves physical, alchemical, or medical experiences. Like those in the *libris experimentatorum*, these experiences are based on the occult properties of certain elements, used singly or mixed together; for example, the therapeutic properties of stones and animals⁸⁵; and the artificial generation of life.

The first two works of magic have no claim to the alleged attribution of truth. Tricks are considered diabolical not because they involve the help of demons but because the operations themselves are deceitful: *they are claimed to be real, but they are the fruit of the imagination, and fraud is diabolical*⁸⁶. A vision of snakes, produced through a specific use of candles, is another example, which appears in the *Book of Nabataean Agriculture*⁸⁷, and in both the *Liber aneguemis* and the *The Marvels of the World*⁸⁸. William interprets the possibility of bestowing life without sexual union and without God conferring a soul along the same lines:

De praestigiis autem, hoc est, de operibus ludificatoriis, quibus videntur facere mira quaedam, quae non videntur eis esse possibilia, non immerito quaestionem habet, utrum fiant, et qualiter: et de generationibus quorundam animalium non est dubium, quin ea faciant, vel saltem procurent. Et legislator Hebraeorum in secundo libro legis illius expresse testatur, quia ranas fecerunt magi ebullire similiter per incantationes, et quaedam arcana. Verum quoniam animas huiusmodi animalium nec creare eis unquam possibile fuit, nec corpora formare, manifestum est eos, vel semina huiusmodi animalium, vel materias, ex quibus facillime generantur, magis Aegyptiis aliquo modo ministrasse: naturae autem in seminibus, et per semina non fuit difficile operari iuxta consuetudinem suam: divina vero virtus, sicut utique patentissimum est, promptissima est adiuvere semina, et infundere eis animas, quam cito fuerit opportunum et quas et quales decuerit. Licet igitur magi illi male operarentur⁸⁹.

84. *De universo spiritualium* II 3 22, 1059aB-C.

85. *De universo spiritualium* II 3 22, 1059bC-D; *De universo spiritualium* II 23-26, 1061aD-1074bH.

86. *De universo spiritualium* II 3 22, 1059aA.

87. *Agriculture nabatéenne*, ed. by Fahd, I, 450.

88. Sannino, *Il De mirabilibus mundi*, 135-41.

89. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo spiritualium* II 3 22, 1061aB-C.

The method indicated by William ascribes to reason assisted by experience the ability to identify the causes of phenomena. Therefore he can conclude, regarding “the things which we have read in the books of experimenters and in the books of natural narrations”, that “we can learn the causes and reasons of certain magic works, especially those which are by the art of natural magic”⁹⁰. The discovery of this new source, the *Book of Nabataean Agriculture*, allows us to support a hypothesis regarding the milieu in which *The marvels of the world* was conceived. The concept of experiment unites *The marvels of the world*, William of Auvergne, and the Hermetic text. The texts in question present an order of reality which cannot be rationally explained, or otherwise verified, but can only be experienced. According to the opinion expressed in *The marvels of the world*⁹¹, the *mirabilia* of nature – which, as in William of Auvergne, cannot be explained by natural causes or by the four elements – belong in this category⁹². *Mirabilia*, in *The marvels of the world*, are the deepest secrets of nature, which reveal themselves to the experimenter only through experimentation, and otherwise remain incomprehensible⁹³. In this way, the anonymous author proposes an interesting

90. *De universo spiritualium* II 3 22, 1060bG.

91. Sannino, *Il De mirabilibus mundi*, 98-99: “Credidit magna pars philosophorum et medicorum quod tota mirabilitas experimentorum et mirabilium exiret a rebus naturalibus, quando in lucem conferuntur per calidum et frigidum, siccum et humidum, et significaverunt has quatuor qualitates, et posuerunt ipsas radices omnium mirabilium, et eorum mixtio exigit ad omne mirabile, et verificaverunt illud in suis operibus, et iusserunt sua experimenta incedere et componi per istam, et tenere per has res et verificari. Et cum invenerunt multa experimenta philosophorum, non potuerunt ea verificare per calidum et frigidum, imo magis ex hoc erat contrarium, accidit eis, mirari incessanter et tristari, et negant plerumque illud, et si videant id”.

92. A different opinion is expressed by Albertus in the *De vegetabilibus et plantis*, where, in the paragraph *De mirabilitate commixtionis elementorum*, all the strange effects of plants, and their properties, are caused by the elements. The variance can be explained by the hypothesis of dependence on different sources.

93. Sannino, *Il De mirabilibus mundi*, 99: “Plato, Aristoteles, et legitimi et omnes qui intenderunt super ultimum philosophiae, eam certificaverunt quod mirabilitas exiit a rebus secundum modos valde diversos. Plerumque per virtutes coelestes impressas, plerumque per caliditatem et frigiditatem et plerumque per virtutes daemonum, et nigromanticorum, plerumque per

relationship of reciprocity and osmosis between the practice of transformation and knowledge of the secrets of nature, giving a new meaning to alchemical operations. *The knowledge of nature* is not a prerequisite for success of an experiment, as is commonly understood in the alchemical tradition; rather, this success is a *gift of nature which occurs in the moment of the experiment*. In this manner, the *experiment* becomes central: through it, knowledge is produced, which is already present secretly in nature and emerges and manifests itself. The unintelligibility of phenomena, the impossibility of understanding them from a rational point of view, and their invisible nature are not a sufficient reason for denying them. This point of view is very similar to that expressed in the *Book of Nabataean Agriculture*, and can be attributed explicitly, as we have already shown, to the Latin version of *The Book of the Cow*, or the *Liber Anequemis maior*.

The author of *The Marvels of the World* refers to *Liber Anequemis maior* (that he calls *Liber Regimenti*) that

there be certain things manifest to the senses in which we know no reason. And certain be manifest by reason, in which we perceive no sensation. As in the first kind of things, we must not believe in human opinions, but in experience; and reasons are to be proved by experience not to be denied. As in the second kind of things, feeling is not be looked for, because it may not be felt. Therefore, certain things must be believed only by experience, without reason, because reason is hidden from the eyes of man. Certain other things, however, are to be believed by reason only, because they cannot be sensed. Although we (do not) know any manifest reason wherefore the loadstone should attract iron, experience, nonetheless, manifests that it does so. This being a marvellous effect, which only experience certifies, a man should suppose other things. And he should deny any marvellous thing although he had no reason, but he ought to prove (the causes of the marvellous things) by experience; for the cause of marvellous things are hidden, and the previous causes so diverse, that man's understanding, after Plato, may not apprehend them. Therefore, the loadstone attracts iron, wheat attracts straw, and a certain other stone attracts glass. So marvellous things are

virtutes alias innatas rebus cum suis formis substantialibus, plerumque per relationem, quae fiunt rerum ad invicem. Unde redduntur incomprehensibilia rerum mirabilia, sicut dicit auctor".

declared by Philosophers to be in things by experience; which no man ought to deny, until they are tested by experience, after the fashion of Philosophers. Indeed, Philosophers say that the palm is a tree and it has two sexes, male and female; therefore, when the female plant is near to the male, thou seest that the female bows down to the male, and the leaf and branches of it are made soft, and bow down to the male. Therefore I will now leave some things to your judgement, and you must know them to be true, even if reason cannot explain them. For only by experience can they be explained⁹⁴.

And, in the *Nabataean Agriculture*, we read:

But not all that cannot be seen and has not been proven must be rejected and disavowed. Proof of the fact that a thing is not does not consist in having never seen a similar phenomenon. This is mistaken! Indeed, when the intelligent man hears the description of something he has never seen or known, and the truth about which remains in suspension for him, he does not reject it or push it away, but instead allows for it and treats it as possible until it has been investigated, or until evidence has been found that proves or negates it. If he experiences it, this will persuade him of its reality; if it is negated, he will be persuaded of its falsity. We have already grasped that we must reject whoever denies that the creation of man can occur in another mode, besides that of reproduction between a male and a female, merely because it has never been seen by any man⁹⁵.

The affirmation of the necessity of accepting as natural possibilities even those phenomena which cannot be rationally explained appears on the same page on which William writes about the date palm, in terms similar to those used in the *Nabataean Agriculture*. One can, therefore, reasonably hypothesize a relationship between the two texts, the *Nabataean Agriculture* being much earlier than the *Aneguemis maior*.

94. Sannino, *Il De mirabilibus mundi*, 105-6. For the English translation, except for divergences from the Latin text, I used the following edition: *The Book of the Secrets of Albertus Magnus of the Virtues of Herbs, Stones and Certain Beats also A Book of the Marvels of The World*, ed. by M. R. Best and F. H. Brightman, Oxford 1973, 82, l. 19-83, l. 26.

95. This English translation was made on the basis of Pinella Travaglia's Italian translation of the Arabic text edited by Fahrd.

Idolatry and Hermetic Image Magic

Since Thorndike, recent studies have argued that, in order to adapt to Aristotelianism⁹⁶, William condemns demonic magic. In *On Laws*, in a broadly theological framework, William refutes the idolatry of images in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. He begins with a classification of statues as images of saints, statues as dwellings of demons, and statues as talismans of human craftsmanship⁹⁷. He establishes that veneration, founded on faith, is due only to God; it allows man to fortify his intellect against superstition. Idolatry, instead, is the transferring of worship, which should regard only God, to other forces. From this standpoint, William then develops a classification of the various forms of idolatry⁹⁸. All consist of falsely attributing to other forces things that are God-given and which, wrongly, become themselves objects of worship and veneration, instead of God. Idolatry is, then, an *insanissima superstitio* which has ancient roots in ancient Egypt and Babylon.

William attacks the idolatry of images. He traces the origin of idolatrous cults of statues back to the impious theurgy described in the *Asclepius*⁹⁹.

This text celebrates the human activity of creating gods (*efficere deos*) in order to attract divine force to statues. But William attacks Hermes as the first inspiration of pagan idolatry. He

96. Santi, "Guglielmo d'Auvergne e l'ordine dei domenicani tra filosofia naturale e tradizione magica", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 137-53.

97. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De legibus* 23, 65bB-67aC.

98. *De legibus* 24-27, 67aA-93bC. The first form of idolatry is the worship of demons, and it is upheld by a false belief in demons' power over mankind and nature. The second is the idolatrous worship of the stars and planets, and the third the idolatrous adoration of the elements, which is attributed to the Babylonians. The fourth is the worship of idols, i.e., statues, and the fifth the worship of images. The sixth is the adoration of figures, the seventh the worship of words and names, and the eighth the worship of times and seasons. The ninth is the idolatry of the beginnings of actions, and the tenth the worship of found objects.

99. Ps. Apuleii *Asclepius* 23, 24, 37, 38, ed. by Stefani, 197, l. 513-200, l. 570; 214, l. 880-216, l. 924.

derives his criticism from Augustin's *De civitate Dei*. He recognizes three kinds of images, or idols: the first are portraits of historical personages, that is, images in memory. The second consists of religious simulacra in which demons dwell (*habitalia deorum hoc est daemoniorum*). The third consists of *dei factitii*, which are made by man and into which "the splendour of deity and virtue of divinity" is poured, or instilled, by the heavenly spirits or by the heavens and stars, and which are worshiped by idolaters who use fumigations, invocations, and chants "ac si veri Dii essent"¹⁰⁰.

William does not believe that minds and souls can be transferred to statues, and thus concludes that Hermes is a demoniac prophet. Egypt, *templum mundi*, thereby becomes the land of idolatry. Hermes "erred shamefully" and was marvelously deceived by evil spirits¹⁰¹. He is guilty of offering sorcerers and astrologers the beliefs and techniques necessary to transfer the stars' power to talismans. William attacks the *Asclepius's* theurgy and explains how it is a sort of image magic (*scientia imaginum*). This magic uses planetary forces, channelled through amulets and talismans, according to the principles of the universe. The purpose is to cast spells and prepare poisons or medicines, with the aim of helping someone gain the affections of their beloved or take revenge on their enemy. The talisman acts as a connection between heavenly virtue and earthly virtue, so to learn the "way of making talismans" we must read, for example, *Picatrix*. One who wants to learn the system of making talismans has to have deep knowledge of the science of the correspondences between the planets, and the constellations and conjunctions relating to

100. Lucentini, Perrone Compagni, *s.v.* "Hermetic Literature II. Latin Middle Ages", 505b; *De legibus* 26, 83bB-83bC [*Contra idolatriam imaginum*]. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 350.

101. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 351 also on characters and figures. Concerning Solomonian Magic, see J. Véronèse, *Solomonian Magic*, in Page, Rider (eds.), *The Routledge History Handbook of Medieval Magic*, 187-211. William of Auvergne mentions Solomonian treatises, *Idea* or *Entocta* (i. e. *Liber quattuor annulorum Salomonis*) and *Liber sacratum* (*Liber Hermetis de rebus occultis*), see Guillelmus Alvernus, *De legibus* 27, 89bD: "De nefanda autem imagine, quae *idea Salomonis*, et *entocta* dicitur, nulla sit mentio apud Christianos; similiter nec de libro quem *sacratum* vocant, nec de operibus eiusdem. Eodem modo neque de figura, quae *Mandal*, sive *Amandel* dicitur, aut operibus eius".

the movements of the heavens. He must make sure that the Moon is in a favorable position¹⁰².

These ideas appear, with some differences, in the Hermetic texts. For William, they are also found in magic and sorcery books (*ex libris magicis atque maleficis*), some of which are attributed to Hermes, Thoth Graecus, and Belenus.

William mentions the *Liber septem planetarum*, a collection of seven books attributed to Hermes but based on the wisdom of Abel (*Libri septem planetarum ex scientia Abel*)¹⁰³. Specifically, he refers to the following books: the *Antimaquis*, a manual of magic translated from Arabic, which describes the spirits which govern each planet¹⁰⁴; and the *Liber de stationibus ad cultum Veneris*¹⁰⁵.

102. Sannino, "From Hermetic Magic to the Magic of Marvels", 154-55; Picatrix: *the Latin Version of the Ghāyat al-ḥakīm* III 10, ed. by D. Pingree, London 1986, 146; Picatrix I 6, 51-57: "De virtutibus ymaginum, et cuius maneriei possunt haberi, et quomodo ymagine possunt recipere vim planetarum, et quomodo opera fiunt per ymagine; et hec est radix scienciarum nigromantie et ymaginum. Et scias quod istud quod dicitur virtus est id quod natura et experimento comprobatur. Si illud agens quod in ipsa virtute agit habuerit naturam in illo opere manifestam. Et maxime ut talis operatio sit virtutem habens in ipsis rebus. Non natura manifesta quam habeat in eis, tunc opus illud erit forcius et magis apparens. Et quod ex eo effectualiter apparebit veracius et magis cognitum". Picatrix I 7-8, 112-66.

103. Thabit ibn Qurra "On Talismans". Ps.-Ptolemy "On Images 1-9". "Liber prestigiorum Thebidis" of Adelard of Bath, in G. Bohak, Ch. Burnett, Firenze 2021 (Micrologus Library, 106), 93 note 175, 203-43; P. Lucentini, V. Perrone Compagni, *I testi e i codici di Ermete nel Medioevo*, Firenze 2001 (*Hermetica Mediaevalia*, 2), 66-68; S. Giralte Sebastia, "The Liber Lune and the Liber Solis attributed to Hermes in the MS Vatican, B.A.V., Barb. lat. 3589", *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes / Journal of Medieval and Humanistic Studies* 33 (2017/1), 103-26; V. Perrone Compagni, "Studiosus incantationibus. Adelardo di Bath, Ermete e Thabit", *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana*, 80/81 (2001), 36-61.

104. *Liber Antimaquis*, ed. by Ch. Burnett, in *Astrologica et divinatoria*, Turnhout 2001 (Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio mediaevalis, 114C. *Hermes Latinus*, IV.4), 195-221.

105. Belenus, *De viginti quattuor horis*, ed. Lucentini (ms. München, Clm 10268) in "L'ermetismo magico nel secolo XIII"; see Lucentini, Perrone Compagni, *I testi e i codici di Ermete nel Medioevo*, 73-76; Toz Graecus, *De quattuor speculis* and *Hermes, Liber lunae*, see F. J. Carmody, *Arabic Astronomical and Astrological Sciences in Latin translation. A critical bibliography*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1956, 62; L. Thorndike, "Traditional Medieval Tracts Concerning Engraved Astrological Images", in *Mélanges Auguste Pelzer. Études d'histoire littéraire et doctrinale de la scolastique médiévale offertes à Mgr Auguste*

William judges these books harshly and insists that they must be destroyed by fire and sword (*cum igne et gladio*). Particularly, in *On Laus*, he recalls the Hermetic texts as juvenile readings, the memory of which still arouses intense reactions of disdain in him. He associates *idolatria characterum et figurarum* with Hermetic and Solomonic magic, which he seems to refer to via the *De imaginibus et horis*, the *De XXIV horis*, attributed to Belenus, and the *De IV speculis*, credited to Toz Graecus¹⁰⁶. *Idolatria nominum et verborum* describes the sacrilegious power that is derived from the names of angels and spirits that serve the moon, as the *Liber nefarius lunae* attests. Signs themselves do not have marvelous powers because the virtues attributed to figures cannot be derived from matter itself, since it is impossible to attribute divine power to a corruptible substance. Nevertheless, power can come from the figure and from geometric form, but only from their functions as signs. William harshly refutes the various forms of idolatry that constitute nigromantic magic, based on the help of demons and on the use of images, figures, and “characters” intended to animate talismans¹⁰⁷. William’s analysis tends to deprive the idol or image of any causal function in the operations that are attributed to it. He thus denies the status of the idol, and therefore of the image. Weill-Parot has demonstrated how William refutes the arguments of those who assert the ontological reality of idols and images – particularly of those who adopt the Asclepian idea of a “manufactured god” – by showing the impossibility of conceiving the union of idols with a *spiritus* (demon). This is impossible, whether the idol is considered to be the home of the *spiritus*, or whether it is considered to be endowed with divine virtue through consecration. Images are therefore superfluous with respect to the operations that are attributed to them. They perform certain operations (answering, talking, etc.) only because they are objects of honor and venera-

Pelzer, Louvain 1947, 217-73; Pingree, “The Diffusion of Arabic Magical Texts”, 82-83; Toz Graecus, *De stationibus ad cultum Veneris*, see Lucen-
tini, Perrone Compagni, *I testi e i codici di Ermete nel Medioevo*, 83-84.

106. Toz Graecus – Germa Babiloniensis, *De quattuor speculis*, see Lucen-
tini, Perrone Compagni, *I testi e i codici di Ermete nel Medioevo*, 89-90.

107. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De legibus* 27, 86bH-92aG.

tion shown to the *spiritus*, and are therefore necessary for worship. In short, William includes all image magic in the category of idolatrous practices. And this is true both for images merely made under certain constellations and for prayers, writings, and sacrifices. He does not distinguish between the two categories, and categorically rejects the idea of predestination determined by astrological placements at the time of birth, used to choose kings, princes, prophets, and scholars. Idolaters, however, supported the idea that heavenly virtues could be conferred upon images. Moreover, in William's opinion, although magic is deprived of every possibility of ontological reality, it nevertheless remains true that the operations attributed to it can be carried out. These effects can be explained by the presence of demons, who, by virtue of the worship bestowed upon them through images or idols, fulfil the magician's desire in order to lure his soul further into perdition. William defends the idea that it is only with God's authorization that demons can tempt man by offering certain suggestions, without having the power of forcing man to comply with them (due to free will). William distinguishes between objects blessed by the Church and the idolatry of images. Idolatry, understood as the worship of an idol, differs greatly from the use of images in Christian religion, wherein through a consecrated object one always turns to God Almighty. The chain consisting of God – consecrated object – beneficial effect corresponds to the chain king – royal seal – protection. This chain works by virtue of semiology: the image of the king protects because it is a symbol of his royal power, just as the consecrated artefact protects the faithful because it is a symbol of a divine destiny. This comparison does not hold when it comes to "images of celestial images", i.e., astrological talismans. The demonic semiological pact is therefore symmetrical to the divine semiological pact. Further on, William elaborates upon the issue when he deals with the wounds and stigmata that idolaters inflicted on their own bodies. We may understand this fully by looking at the example of the covenant between God and the people of Abraham. In conclusion, images can work, for good or for ill, only if God permits it. The linkage (*ligatio*) is understood as a suspension of the ordinary course of things, both that of

nature (a fire that is bounded will not burn) and that of man (bound thieves, merchants, or ships). To attribute an exclusively divine power to an image would be an offense to divine glory, and talismans with their wondrous powers would constitute a challenge to human justice and morality, since they would make it possible to rob others of the dignity, honor, and inheritance that belong to them. For this to be the case it would be necessary for God to permit it, and if he did it would mean that he is angry with humanity. But to imagine that such images could suddenly provoke God's wrath is absurd. William's interpretation posits an intrinsic connection between a mystic-religious quality and the magic-talismanic practice; this connection justifies his condemnation of the *scientia imaginum*. And yet, as is well known, he directs vehement criticism, in even harsher tones, towards Hermetic texts in the eleventh chapter of *Speculum astronomiae*¹⁰⁸. William's ability to discern between the two facets of magic is crucial. If talismanic or image magic is not legitimate, then natural magic points toward a form of natural science, and one that was destined to have great impact¹⁰⁹. This approach was to come to the fore during the Renaissance.

108. *Speculum astronomiae* 11, ed. by S. Caroti, M. Pereira, S. Zamponi, P. Zambelli, in P. Zambelli, *The Speculum astronomiae and its Enigma. Theology and Science in Albertus Magnus and his Contemporaries*, Dordrecht-Boston-London 1992 (Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science, 135), 240-50.

109. A. Sannino, "Oro te, o spiritus qui lates in illo corpore: Guglielmo d'Alvernia e il *Liber de quattuor confectionibus*", *Studi Magrebini* 12 (2014 but printed in 2017), 475-91.

CHAPTRE III

THE SOUL ON THE BOUNDARY OF TWO WORLDS¹

What is the Nature of the Soul?

Ernest Moody offers an important commentary *On the Soul* (*De anima*), another section of *The Teaching on God in the Mode of Wisdom* by William of Auvergne. Moody advances the hypothesis that, in Platonic psychology, traces of the mind-body problem remain, i.e., an attempt to explain the interaction between ontologically heterogeneous realities: the soul and the body. Furthermore, the theory of the relationship between the soul and the body in William's thought has been influenced by Augustinian and Aristotelian theories².

1. This chapter presents, in the first three paragraphs, a version already published as "*Quod anima sit in horizonte duorum mundorum. Psicologia ed antropologia in Guglielmo d'Alvernia*", in A. Beccarisi, A. Palazzo (eds.), *Per studium et doctrinam. Fonti e testi di filosofia medievale dal XII al XIV secolo*, Canterano (RM) 2018 (Flumen sapientiae, 6), 41-55. The paragraphs 4-7 present new, unpublished research.

2. Moody, "William of Auvergne and His Treatise *De anima*", 19: "At the time William of Auvergne wrote his treatise on the soul, the mind body problem was of particular importance, due to the ingress of the Aristotelian view of the soul as the substantial form of the body. Some of the Greek and Arab interpretations of the Aristotelian position, made available to the schoolmen through the new Latin translations, impressed the Bishop of Paris as dangerous doctrines, to be combatted in the interests of Christian truth with the universal weapon of reason. The sensitive points at which the danger became most evident were in questions connected with the freedom of creation and efficacy of divine providence, and with the spirituality, immortality, and moral responsibility of the soul. Hence, while in questions of physics and astronomy it seemed possible to accept the new Peripatetic theories without threatening the essentials of the Augustinian point of view, in psychology and in natural theology vital issues were at stake, so that it was here that the cleavage between the Augustinian and Aristotelian posi-

Recent research has revealed new sources that William took account of. This doxographical approach confirms “strong signs of an openness towards new philosophical texts [...] in the Parisian bishop’s *Magisterium divinale*”³. William’s interest in these new texts manifests a certain tension with Aristotelianism and is marked by a complex interaction with Avicennism, Christianity, and Hermeticism. This interest has also been influenced by the Stoic tradition (by Cicero and Seneca, in particular), as well as the Neoplatonism of the *Liber de causis* and the *Fons vitae*, in Dominic Gundissalvi’s Latin translation of Avicbron’s (Solomon ibn Gabirol’s) *Séfer Meqor Hayyim*.

The first part of this chapter focuses on a particular set of anthropological ideas in circulation in Paris during the first half of thirteenth century, followed by a diachronic analysis which takes into account the *Teaching* as a whole. The two main questions to be explored are: a) what is the soul? b) what is the relationship between the soul and the body? We will see how William of Auvergne not only developed a negative concept of the body, in a Platonic mold (i.e., as the prison of the soul)⁴, but, further, that his speculation points toward a parallelism between the inner and external worlds. He sets forth an anthropology based upon a psychology of the divine image as imprinted on the soul. This psychology states that man’s being is an image in the likeness of God (*homo divinae similitudinis formae*).

Scholars agree that Paris was the cultural center to which students from all regions flocked in William’s time, a place where the Platonic-Augustinian, Aristotelian, Hermetic, Arabic, and

tions became definite and decisive. This is clearly the case with William of Auvergne, who, despite his respect for Aristotle and his extensive use of Aristotelian ideas adopts at the outset of his discussion, in his manner of defining the soul, a thoroughly Augustinian position”. For other points of view, see P. King, “Why Isn’t the Mind-Body Problem Medieval?”, in H. Lagerlund (ed.), *Forming the Mind. Essays on the Internal Senses and the Mind/Body Problem from Avicenna to the Medical Enlightenment*, Berlin 2007, 187–205; F. Amerini, “Tommaso d’Aquino e il Mind-Body Problem”, in C. Martello, A. Vella (eds.), *Anima e corpo nella filosofia medievale*, Atti del Convegno di Studio (Catania 19 ottobre 2015), Catania 2017, 65–95.

3. L. Sturlese, *Filosofia nel Medioevo*, Roma 2014, 65.

4. Faes De Mottoni, “Guglielmo d’Alvernia e l’anima rapita”, in Moren-zoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d’Auvergne*, 70–71.

Hebrew philosophical traditions enjoyed some reprieve from censure and prohibition⁵. Paris was indeed a cultural capital, just like other important centers such as Cologne, with Albert the Great⁶, or Oxford, with Robert Grosseteste and Thomas of York⁷. In 2005, Francesco Santi stressed William of Auvergne's relationship with "Dominican successors of Roland of Cremona" such as Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, and further specified that "the conflict between William of Auvergne and Pope Gregory IX and William of Auxerre" had significant "naturalistic and theological consequences"⁸. It is therefore necessary, when considering the Parisian context, to also look at this new textually-based criticism, which acted as a counterbalance to long-standing historiographical convictions.

5. Bianchi, "Gli articoli censurati nel 1241/1244 e la loro influenza da Bonaventura a Gerson", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 155–71. See Sannino, "Ermete mago e alchimista nelle biblioteche di Guglielmo d'Alvernia e Ruggero Bacone", 152–54.

6. L. Sturlese, *Storia della filosofia tedesca nel Medioevo. Il secolo XIII*, Firenze 1996, 69–125; L. Sturlese, *Homo divinus. Philosophische Projekte in Deutschland zwischen Meister Eckhart und Heinrich Seuse*, Stuttgart 2007; A. Palazzo, "Le fonti ermetiche nel *De summo bono* di Ulrico di Strasburgo", in Lucentini, Perrone Compagni, Parri (eds.), *Hermetism from Late Antiquity to Humanism*, 189–202; A. Palazzo, "La sapientia nel *De summo bono* di Ulrico di Strasburgo", *Quaestio* 5 (2005), 495–512; A. Palazzo, "Albert the Great's Doctrine of Fascination in the Context of his Philosophical System", in L. Honnefelder, H. Möhle, S. Bullido Del Barrio (eds.), *Via Alberti: Texte – Quellen – Interpretationen*, Münster 2009 (Subsidia Albertina, 2), 135–215; A. Beccarisi, "La 'scientia divina' dei filosofi nel *De summo bono* di Ulrico di Strasburgo", *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 61 (2006), 137–63; S. Cianciosio, "Dall'uomo naturale all'uomo divino. Uno studio sull'antropologia eckhartiana", in Beccarisi, Palazzo (eds.), *Per studium et doctrinam*, 197–220; A. Beccarisi, "La teoria dell'intelletto come fondamento di una comunità universale in Meister Eckhart e Dante Alighieri", in Beccarisi, Palazzo (eds.), *Per studium et doctrinam*, 221–44.

7. A. Sannino, "La tradizione ermetica a Oxford nei secoli XIII e XIV: Ruggero Bacone e Tommaso Bradwardine", *Studi filosofici* 18 (1995), 25–47; Porreca, "Hermes Trismegistus in Thomas of York: A 13th Century Witness to the Prominence of an Ancient Sage", 147–275; F. Retucci, "Nuovi percorsi del platonismo medievale: i commentari bizantini all'*Etica Nicomachea* nel *Sapientiale* di Tommaso di York", *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 25 (2013), 85–120; F. Retucci, "La dignità dell'uomo nell'Inghilterra medievale", in Beccarisi, Palazzo (eds.), *Per studium et doctrinam*, 57–77.

8. Santi, "Guglielmo d'Auvergne e l'ordine dei Domenicani tra filosofia naturale e tradizione magica", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 137–53, 145.

The aim of this chapter is to illustrate that in William's philosophical framework the soul-body relationship intersects the main themes of his philosophical research: metaphysics, psychology, anthropology, and music theory.

As we read in *On the Universe*, the human soul exists naturally on the border between two worlds: the intellectual world and the physical one⁹. There are two directions in which the soul can travel – upward and downward – and, if it has never sinned, it will be able to freely join one realm or the other. The soul is united with the physical world through the body, and with the intellectual world through its own intellectual function¹⁰. These distinctions return in another chapter of William's work – which, in the printed tradition, bears the title *On the virtue of music* (*De virtute musicae*), in a context in which music is seen as a discipline useful for attaining psychosomatic harmony¹¹ – and then once again in a section of the *De anima*¹². The passages in question are well known to those interpreters who have focused on the Augustinian theme of the soul as a mirror of the Creator. Only in the natural state of innocence is the soul characterized by a sort of pure intellectuality. In that state, everything comes from within and is prompted by divine light.

9. As explicitly stated by Plotinus, *The Enneads* 4.7.

10. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo spiritualium* II 3 20, 1056aH: "Oporteret autem te iugiter reminisci de anima humana, quod ipsa est in horizonte duorum mundorum, et in confinio duarum regionum, et etiam ei naturaliter liberum inclinare se in inferiorem, atque erigere se, sive elevare ad superiorem, nisi corruptio, quae est a parte corporis, impediret. Nunc autem non est ei liberum elevare se ad mundum superiorem, sive regionem illam, in statu miseriae et corruptionis istius. Est enim mirabiliter depressa et incurvata per corpus, de quo dixit sapiens".

11. *De universo spiritualium* II 3 21 [ed. 20], 1056bF-G: "*De virtute musicae*, et quod anima sita sit in horizonte duorum mundorum, et de revelationibus per diversa media. Quaestionem autem habet, an harmoniis, id est concentibus musicorum instrumentorum, possit obtineri, vel acquiriri quolibet modo splendor iste".

12. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De anima* 6 33, 211b: "Ponendum est animam humanam velut in horizonte duorum mundorum naturaliter esse constitutam et ordinatam. *Et alter mundorum est ei mundus sensibilibium cui coniunctissima est per corpus*; alter vero creator ipse est in sempiterno ut exemplar".

As Moody has pointed out, William's problem is

*how an incorporeal and indivisible substance, able to exist independently and to carry on its essential spiritual operations, happens to animate a body, and to indulge in operations that require the mediation of the body for their achievement. It will not adopt the extreme Platonist view of the union of soul and body as unnatural, or as due to a primeval 'fall' of a pre-existent soul. Though William does use the Christian doctrine of original sin to explain many of the apparent deficiencies of the soul in its spiritual operations of knowing and willing, he is unable to use it in explanation of the union of soul and body in man. To explain this union, he has to find some natural reason, in the nature of the soul itself, for its animation of the body. Such an explanation is to be discovered only by viewing the role of the human souls in the order and purpose of the creation*¹³.

We can gain a clearer understanding of Moody's above considerations if we further examine the sources of William's picture of the universe: the *Liber de Causis* and Avicenna's *Fons Vitae*. In these sources, the universe is characterized by the goodness of God, which flows down as from a fountain of life through the world of spiritual beings, corporeal beings, and created things. In this picture, the human soul, as a spiritual being, is what connects these last two worlds¹⁴.

The source of William's concept is, in both cases, the second proposition of the *Liber de causis*: "The being which is below eternity and above time is the soul"¹⁵.

Two of William's above-quoted three passages describe at length the soul's double bond, which ties it both to time and to

13. Moody, "William of Auvergne and His Treatise *De anima*", 34 [italics mine].

14. *De anima* 5 11, 127b-28a: "Amplius manifestum est naturam humanam primo lumini naturali ordinatione longe viciniorem esse omni anima brutali sive irrationali. Qua propter si lumina naturalium cognitionum naturaliter, et ordine naturae descendunt a primo lumine, necesse est ut priora et maiora lumina cognitionum huiusmodi descendant prius super eam quam super aliquam aliarum [...]. Amplius in operationibus naturae non est saltus, nec interruptio".

15. "Le *Liber de causis*. Édition établie à l'aide de 90 manuscrits avec introduction et notes", ed. by A. Pattin, *Tijdschrift voor Philosophie* 28 (1966), 90-203, 138, l. 80-82: "Esse vero quod est post aeternitatem et supra tempus est anima, quoniam est in horizonte aeternitatis inferius et supra tempus".

eternity. The soul, while “above”, has time as its cause, and yet is “below eternity”, because it is subject to modification. The soul is more changeable than the intellect, which is coextensive with eternity because it is invariable. Following Alain de Lille¹⁶, William adapts the *Liber’s* axiom “anima est in horizonte aeternitatis et ante tempus nomine aeternitatis” to the human soul. He does so by means of an exegesis that partially corresponds to the argument later put forward by Thomas Aquinas¹⁷ – who refers to the soul as the *horizon aeternitatis* because it participates both in eternity and in time¹⁸ – and Dante¹⁹. From the *Liber*:

as the hierarchy of prime causes declines towards Nature, Soul comes between Intelligence and Nature. Soul is on the horizon of being, because it is attached to eternity from below and yet is above time. Soul is the bridge between time and eternity, between Intelligence and Nature. The First Cause posited Soul as the stratum on which Intelligence performs its activity. Once again, Souls are subdivided and hierarchically ordered, with the lead position being occupied by the First Intellectual Soul and the lowest position by mere Souls. Below Soul is Nature, the sensible universe²⁰.

In this proposition, according to William, there are elements in common with the Platonic and peripatetic doctrines. The soul is conceived as the being that is with eternity, i.e., that is completely characterized by the impossibility of coming to an end

16. It was Alain who first cited the work, under the title of *Aphorismata de essentia summae bonitatis*, translated from the Arabic into Latin in Toledo by Gerard of Cremona.

17. Thomas Aquinas, *Super Librum de Causis expositio lectio II*: “Loquitur enim hic de anima quam attribuunt philosophi corpori caelesti, et propter hoc dicit quod est in horizonte aeternitatis inferius et supra tempus. Horizon enim est circulus terminans visum, et est infimus terminus superioris hemisphaerii, principium autem inferioris; et similiter anima est ultimus terminus aeternitatis et principium temporis” [*italics mine*].

18. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia* q. 3, a. 9: “anima rationalis constituta est inter deum et res corporales media; unde in libro de causis dicitur, quod est creata in horizonte aeternitatis et temporis”. [*italics mine*]

19. Dante Alighieri, *Monarchia* III 15, ed. by P. Chiesa and A. Tabarroni, Roma 2013, 228: “homo [...] recte a philosophis assimilatur orizonti, qui est medium duorum emisphaeriorum” [*italics mine*].

20. *The Book of Causes* [*Liber de Causis*]. Translated from the Latin with an Introduction by D. J. Brand, Milwaukee (WI) 1984, 18.

(so eternity in its Boethian acceptance), but knows according to time. It lies on the line of the horizon, on the circle that marks the limit of vision and constitutes the lower limit of the upper hemisphere as well the upper limit of the sensible hemisphere.

The soul-intellect of the human being stands on the boundary of two worlds, with God above and the sensible world below. The soul-intellect lies in the middle (*in loco medietatis*), for its substance goes beyond time and movement to draw from eternity, while its activity requires contact with the body (*coniunctissima est per corpus*)²¹. So the human soul is considered intellect due to its substantial bond with the body.

At this point, I will not deal with the aspects of this concept that can be traced back to Avicennism or Averroism²². Instead, I will focus on the reasoning that led William to ask himself: "Is psychology a part of natural philosophy?". In his prologue to *The Soul*, his puzzlement is evident. Aristotelian philosophers (to whom he refers implicitly using the term 'anyone') categorize the study of the human soul as part of the natural sciences. If it were not, it would have to fall within the divine and wise sciences, and the soul would be investigated along with God himself, of whom the soul is the image. William, then, introduces another definition of the soul in order to integrate the *propositio secunda* of the *De causis*: the "image in the likeness of God" (*forma divinae similitudinis*)²³. The statement is taken from the

21. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De anima* 5 8, 143ab; see the English translation *William of Auvergne: The Soul*. Translated from the Latin with an Introduction and Notes by R. J. Teske, Milwaukee (WI) 2000 (Medieval Philosophical Texts in Translation, 37), 255-57.

22. R. De Vaux, *Notes et textes sur l'Avicennisme latin aux confins des XII^e-XIII^e siècles*, Paris 1934 (Bibliothèque thomiste, 20); Thomas Aquinas, *Trattato sull'unità dell'intelletto contro gli averroisti*, ed. by B. Nardi, Firenze 1947, reprint ed. by P. Mazzantini, Spoleto 1998 (Quaderni di cultura mediolatina, 8).

23. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De anima*, Prologus, 65a: "Quod enim causata vel facta sit ad imaginem Dei, sicut in lege legitur Hebraeorum, quod et divinae similitudinis forma, sicut ait Mercurius Aegyptius in libro *de Deo deorum*, naturalis Philosophus non attingit: omnis enim eius intentio in rebus naturalibus versatur totaliter, et ad creatoris supereminetissimam altitudinem non attingit. Qua propter imago et similitudo creatoris, divinaeque similitudinis forma, ut est dico imago et similitudo illius, et divinae similitudinis forma tam longe est ab intentione naturalis artificis, quam longe ipse creator et eius divinitas a rebus ipsis naturalibus, inquantum sunt res natu-

Hermetic *Asclepius*, a text he shows deep familiarity with, but which he refutes "by fire and sword" (*cum igne et gladio*). He does so – in *On Laws* and in *On the Universe*, both written before *The Soul*²⁴ – by deploying the complex concepts of idolatry and talismanic magic²⁵. Three times in his entire indictment of Hermeticism, William appeals to the authority of Mercury to endorse philosophical positions. Two of these appeals are inspired by *Asclepius* 7²⁶.

In the prologue, William appeals to Hermetic discourse in order to uncouple psychology from natural science, which is equivalent to distancing himself from the Aristotelian position. He prefers, however, to assign the investigation of the soul to the realm of theology, or divine philosophy. The human soul, which is an image of God, is perfectly united with Him (*coniunctissima Deo*), and for this reason it is man's knowledge of his own soul that leads to his knowledge of the Creator. William intends to advance this knowledge of God (*cognitio Creatoris*) through irrefutable proofs (*probationes irrefragabiles*) of His existence²⁷.

How can William's change in perspective here be explained in relation to the other two references to the *Asclepius*, in which he

rales, et scientiis naturalibus subiectae". See Ps. Apuleii *Asclepius* 7, ed. by Stefani, 181, l. 134-37: "quicumque etenim hominum tantum felicitatis adepti sunt, ut illum intellegentiae diuinum perciperent sensum, qui sensus est diuinior in solo deo et humana intellegentia".

24. See above chapitre 2, 61-105.

25. Sannino, "Ermete mago e alchimista", 159-65; Lucentini, "L'ermetismo magico nel secolo XIII", 274-81.

26. Porreca, "Hermes Trismegistus: William of Auvergne's Mythical Authority", 57: "Although his philosophical system was not based on the writings of Mercurius, the latter did serve to aid William's expression of his doctrine of causality and divine will, as well as his view of the nature of the human soul. It appears to be there is assonance of certain expressions used in the *Asclepius*, such as the idea of the body weighing the soul down like a noose around its neck, and the soul as a form of a divine likeness, which struck William the most. Mercurius thus played a significant, but limited, role in William's thought".

27. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo spiritualium* II 3 7, 1028aE-F: "Tu autem intellige, quia in omnibus tractatibus istis specialibus non utor testimonio legis alicuius, nec intentionis meae est veritatem communem, et communiter sciendam vel credendam ab hominibus astruere per testimonia sed per probationes irrefragabiles".

defends a dualistic, negative concept of corporeality²⁸? William rightly recognizes, in the Hermetic text, the outline of a psychology that goes beyond a dualistic anthropological approach. In particular, his use of Mercury allows him to find in the soul, or, rather, in its intellectual properties, the union of human and divine natures. This notion is paralleled in *Genesis* 1:26 ["Let us make man in our image, in our likeness" ("faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostrum")]. Together with the *De causis*, it creates a new definition of the "human soul", as an incorporeal substance. This new proposal in the realm of theology allows us to much better understand the soul-body relationship, as well as the conception of the human being as spiritual. This conception was most likely influenced by a hylomorphist doctrine derived from Avicbron²⁹.

28. The expression "obtorto collo" directly referred to Hermes is found in *De vitiis et peccatis* 5, 268aE: "Quemadmodum dicit Mercurius in libro *de Deo Deorum*, loquens de corpore humano: 'Animam – inquit – ut aiunt obtorto detinet collo'" (Ps. Apuleii *Asclepius* 12, ed. by Stefani, 187, 278-79); *De anima* 5 13, 132b: "Et hoc videtur insinuasse Mercurius Philosophus Aegyptius hoc sermone, animam, inquit, detinet *obtorto collo*, intelligens hoc de corpore a quo depressionem et corruptionem patitur quae non permittit se erigere ad sublimia et nobilia bona: similiter eam non permittit dirigere se a tortitudine et perversitate vitiorum"; P. Lucentini, "Il corpo e l'anima nella tradizione ermetica medievale", in Lucentini, *Platonismo, ermetismo, eresia nel Medioevo*, 223-34, 224-25: "nel celebre dialogo ermetico la concezione dell'uomo presenta dottrine comuni alla tradizione platonica e alle correnti religiose della tarda antichità: l'immortalità dell'anima e la mortalità del corpo; la duplicità dell'umana natura, divisa tra l'uomo 'essenziale' (ὁσιώδης), costituito a immagine di Dio, e l'uomo 'materiale' (ὕλικος), formato dai quattro elementi. Ma l'origine celeste dell'anima e il destino immortale non producono un pensiero dualistico, e trovano un originale equilibrio con la santa e 'divina' funzione del corpo [...]". This conception acquires a new meaning, because it fits into a theology of the image: the world is the first image of God, and man is the second.

29. Avicbron, *Fons vitae ex Arabico in Latinum translatus ab Iohanne Hispano et Dominico Gundissalino* V 17, ed. by C. Baeumker, Münster 1895 (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, 1. 2-4), 288, l. 22-89, l. 2: "Materia propria formae intelligentiae, id est extremitas sublimior materiae universalis, recipit formam intelligentiam, quae sustinet omnes formas, a voluntate, in qua est omnis forma plene et perfecte, et quae est totum et totum in ipsa".

Soul and Body

According to the Christian doctrine of creation, man is formed by the union of two natures, viz., soul and body. Through his reading of the *De causis*, the *Asclepius* and (perhaps) the *Fons Vitae*, William seeks to mend the tensions of dualism with singular stitches resulting in a stunning patchwork. Let us reconstruct his argumentation. William starts with the Aristotelian definition of the soul as the perfection of a physical, organic body with the potential for life³⁰. Without commenting on the use of the term “perfection”, William makes clear instead that the physical, organic body, the organism (in contrast to Aristotle’s phrase “all instruments”), has a function and is made to fulfil certain operations (which, for Aristotle, were living and thinking). As is known – William writes – Aristotle considered the body to be matter (*corpus quidem materia est*) and the soul to be form (*anima vero forma*). As form, the soul is substance, and one of three kinds: matter, form, or a composite of form and matter. Matter is potentiality, form is actuality, and every human being is a combination of the two. The soul is not an independently existing substance, “an incorporeal, living substance, since it is clearly impossible that a non-living substance understand or know”³¹. William adds a strategic clarification to this second kind of substance: “sicut forma quae iam erat aliquid esse” or substance in the sense of form³². This substance is already a determinate thing (*res determinata*) or a certain being (*esse*). René Antoine Gauthier has pointed out William’s ability in combining two parts of the older version of Aristotle’s *De anima*³³ and thus changing Aristotle’s doctrine:

30. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De anima* 1 1, 65b: “Anima igitur est prout definit Aristoteles ‘perfectio corporis physici organici potentia vitam habentis’”.

31. English transl. by Teske, *The Soul*, 47.

32. *De anima* 1 2, 66b: “tripliciter dicatur substantia, et hoc quidem sicut materia, id vero sicut forma quae iam erat aliquid esse, tertium vero sicut compositum iam ex eis, anima quidem non materia est neque compositum, sed forma”.

33. Aristotle, *De anima* 414a14-17 and 412a6-10.

Au lieu de dire avec Aristote que la forme est ce en vertu de quoi le sujet est dit être telle chose déterminée, il assure que c'est la forme elle-même qui est une chose déterminée³⁴.

William comes to this conception by drawing on three different textual traditions: the Neoplatonism of the *Liber de causis*, philosophical Hermeticism, and Hebrew Neoplatonism. His position can be summarized by merging these divergent textual traditions in the following formulation: the human soul is a form that resembles God, and it is an intelligence full of intellectual forms³⁵.

William goes on to refute the thesis that "human beings are not human souls". He does so under an Avicennian influence based on the following implications: a) souls know and understand, otherwise they would not exist; and b) in man, there is an incorporeal substance which rules the body, a living substance: the soul. If this substance were not living, it would be impossible for it to know or understand. In this way, by

those two first principles of philosophy, namely, that the same thing cannot be affirmed and denied and that the same thing is either affirmed or denied³⁶,

William shows through the principle of noncontradiction and the principle of the excluded third that the soul is a living and incorporeal substance, which knows and understands *by means of this definition and description (per hanc rationem et descriptionem)*.

But no one has spoken of the human soul who does not understand it through this definition or description and who does not call it a living, incorporeal substance that understands and knows essentially and properly and that rules the whole human being, that is, everything interior and exterior to the human being³⁷.

34. Gauthier, "Notes sur les débuts", 357; Teske, "William of Auvergne's Spiritualist Concept of Human Being", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 38.

35. "Anima humana, divinae similitudinis forma, est intelligentia plena formae intellegibilis".

36. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De anima* 1 3, 67a; English transl. by Teske, *The Soul*, 46.

37. *De anima* 1 3, 67a: "Nemo autem locutus est de anima humana qui illam non intelligat per hanc rationem seu descriptionem, et qui eam non

Through his own eloquence and the use of a series of metaphors, William refutes the error made by a hypothetical misguided and feeble-minded person who would deny that the brute soul is a substance³⁸ and therefore claims that it is impossible for man to ignore the existence of his own soul³⁹. How can one incur in such an error? Let us read part thirteen of chapter three of the *De anima*:

The reason for this, however, is that our souls are either naturally inclined or have become accustomed to follow the signs or marks that are in them. I mean: to follow the signs insofar as they are signs and to wander off through what they signify so that it is most difficult for them to return to themselves and to be called back from such things⁴⁰.

By attributing to the soul all the faculties, or powers, of the composite human – growth, nutrition, locomotion, perception, and intellect – William solves the puzzle of what belongs to the body and what belongs to the soul, and how these two distinct realities interact with one another. It is not the body that perceives, but, rather, through the body that the soul perceives and activates sensation: it is the soul (*qua operator*) that acts upon itself (*qua intelligentia*). In conclusion, the immaterial soul is united with, but not affected by, the physical body. New research has shown that William's approach is very probably also based on other sources: for example, on Nemesis of Emesa's treatise *De natura hominis*⁴¹.

nominat substantiam viventem incorpoream intelligentem et scientem per se proprie, totum hominem, hoc est, *omnia interiora hominis et exteriora regentem*"; English transl. by Teske, *The Soul*, 47.

38. *De anima* 1 5, 69a-71a; English transl. by Teske, *The Soul*, 51-58.

39. *De anima* 3 13, 103b: "ignorantia animarum suarum, sicut revera praedixi, impossibilis est hominibus"; English transl. by Teske, *The Soul*, 148: "I state, therefore, that ignorance of their souls, as I have already in fact said, is impossible for human beings".

40. *De anima* 3 13, 103b-04a: "Animae nostrae adeo vel natae sunt vel assuetae sequi signa seu notas quae in eis sunt; sequi, inquam, signa ut signa sunt, et abire per ea quae significant, ut difficillimum sit eis ad se ipsas converti, et a rebus huiusmodi avocari". See *Liber De causis* 2.

41. M. Kurdziałek, H. McDonald, "Mediaeval Doctrines on Man as Image of the World.", *Roczniki Filozoficzne / Annales De Philosophie / Annals of Philosophy* 62/4 (2014), 205-46.

Man

What are the arguments William invokes to stress the spiritual nature of the psyche? Actually, in speaking of its existence, William has already stated that it is neither the body, nor a part of the body. In *On the Universe*, in the context of refuting Cathar dualism, he distinguishes between “vulgar” arguments (those based on common sense, also found in the *De anima*)⁴² and metaphysical arguments. The “vulgar” arguments are based on the *Leitmotiv* of William’s metaphysics: “no body receives within itself another body, but everybody that is wholly alive wholly receives into itself life and soul, since it is wholly ensouled and living in every part of itself”⁴³. Thus, William denies the corporeality of the soul (“declaratum est tibi quod animam non esse corpus”), since, if it were a body, that would mean that two bodies would be overlapping in the same place⁴⁴. In William’s philosophical reasoning, Avicenna’s famous “flying man” argument plays a central role. William, like Avicenna, argues for the spirituality of the human soul. It is a spiritual substance, free of any specific composition, which means that it is whole and undivided. Therefore, thought does not have anything to do with the body. Once again, to introduce an innovative doctrine in the cultural context of the first half of the thirteenth century, William prefers to use the *Asclepius* to consign vice and evil to corporeality⁴⁵. Through a passage – faith-

42. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 1 1, 594aF-G.

43. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De anima* 2 6, 77b: “omne autem corpus quod vivit totaliter, recipit in se vitam et animam totaliter, cum sit animatum totaliter et vivens secundum omnem sui partem”. English transl. by Teske, 76-77.

44. *De anima* 2 6, 77b: “Declaratum igitur est tibi per hoc animam non esse corpus; alioquin duo corpora essent in eodem loco totaliter”.

45. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo spiritualium* II 3 20, 1056bE: “Videbatur itaque mihi, quia facilis erat purgatio animarum nostrarum a sordibus vitiorum, facilisque diruptio laqueorum, seu vincolorum, quibus animae nostrae tenebantur incurvatae et quasi in obtorto collo, sicut dixit Mercurius in libro suo *de Deo deorum*”; Ps-Apuleii *Asclepius* 12, ed. by Stefani, 187, 277-81: “res enim dulcis est in hac corporali uita, qui capitur de possessionibus fructus. Quare animam obtorto, ut aiunt, detinet collo, ut in parte sui, qua mortalis est, inhaereat, nec sinit partem diuinitatis agnoscere inuidens immortalitati malignitas”. See Parri, *La via filosofica di Ermete. Studio sull’Asclepius*, 67.

fully patterned after his Hermetic source⁴⁶ – he moves from the anthropogonic to the moral plane, arguing that passions born from matter are overcome through the primacy of the soul.

William, unlike Avicenna, intends to suppress intermediaries between God and the human soul. The spiritual substance of the soul is recognized as unique to man (given its indivisibility). This shift occurs in a context in which some theologians – such as, perhaps, Gilbert of Poitiers – clarified that prayers are made to the saints, not to the souls of the saints. Using his typical language, perhaps to avoid admitting explicitly that the definition of man depends upon his being composed of form and body, William uses a number of images (workshop and tool, house and inhabitant, horse and rider), to emphasize the relationship between body and soul⁴⁷.

These metaphors suggest that the essential substance of the human soul is the immediate cause of its cognitive and voluntary operations, without the need for a certain faculty that intervenes between the soul and the operations it accomplishes. Since the soul is indivisible, two separate intellects (potential and active) cannot be attributed to it without creating a paradox. The intellect is the very substances of the soul itself (*esse intelligentia* in the *De causis*, *forma plena intellegibilis* in Avicenna). Thus, William of Auvergne arrives at a metaphysics of the intellect with inevitable anthropological implications. On the other hand, however, he sets forth an anthropology of man as an image in the likeness of God.

Current historiography has recommended investigating the relationship between William's philosophy and the Dominican school of thought⁴⁸, emphasizing that the key to William's thought system is his adherence to Aristotelianism, through a universal rejection of Hermeticism. Some insist on the strong

46. Parri, *La via filosofica di Ermete. Studio sull'Asclepius*, 54-65.

47. For an analysis of these texts, see Teske, "William of Auvergne's Spiritualist Concept of Human Being", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 48-49.

48. Following the direction indicated by Santi, "Guglielmo d'Auvergne e l'ordine dei Domenicani tra filosofia naturale e tradizione magica", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 137-53, and not in the Neothomistic perspective proposed by Masnovo, *Da Guglielmo d'Auvergne a San Tommaso d'Aquino*, *passim*.

influence of Avicenna⁴⁹ while others speak of a return to Augustinianism⁵⁰. However, only a diachronic and comparative reading of William's theological and philosophical project, supported by a systematic analysis of his *other authorities* (*aliae auctoritates*), has led me to propose the hypothesis set forth in the present work. In the first half of the thirteenth century, Paris – where Albertus Magnus studied before going to Cologne – was a philosophically rich environment, to which we can trace the roots of a new anthropology of human dignity (*homo divinus*), based on a metaphysics of the intellect that was to develop in interesting ways⁵¹.

Soul and Music

In *The Soul*, the soul of the human being stands on the boundary between two worlds, with God above and the sensible world below, as I have argued above. In *On the Universe*, in a chapter devoted to music, William shows how the soul plays a connective role in the order of the world in the following ways: as a reminder of Harmony, i.e., mathematical knowledge, which

49. Teske, "William of Auvergne's Spiritualist Concept of Human Being", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 35–53.

50. Faes De Mottoni, "Guglielmo d'Alvernia e l'anima rapita", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 45–74; For other themes, see also Vecchio, "Passio, affectus, virtus: il sistema delle passioni nei trattati di morale di Guglielmo d'Alvernia", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 174–87.

51. An example in Albertus Magnus, *Metaphysica* I 1 1, ed. B. Geyer, Münster i. W. 1960, (*Opera Omnia, editio Coloniensis*, 16, 1), 2, 4–15: "Sicut subtiliter enim dicit Hermes Trismegistus in libro, quem de deo deorum ad Esclepium collegam composuit, homo nexus est dei et mundi, super mundum per duplicem indagationem existens, physicam videlicet et doctrinalem, quarum utraque virtute rationis humane perficitur, et hoc modo mundi gubernator congrue vocatur. Subnexus autem est deo, pulchritudines eius non inmersas mundo, hoc est continuo et tempori, accipiens per similitudinem divinam, quae in eo est per lumen simplicis intellectus, quod a deo deorum participat"; *Ethica* X 2 3, ed. A. Borgnet, Paris 1899, (*Opera omnia*, 24), 627b: "Homo enim duo homines est: secundum intellectum scilicet, secundum quem Deo connexus est, ut dicit Hermes Trismegistus, nihil brutale habens in se ipso; et secundum rationem inquisitam, secundum quam tempori et continuo coniunctus est, secundum quam quidem etiam homo est excellens bestias".

allows us to measure the intellectual order of the physical realm. This knowledge is useful for the study of theology. As a medical therapy for the balancing of temperaments (i.e., moods). As an appropriate introduction for William's music theory, which is closely connected to inner morality. While aesthetics aims to recognize external beauty (*pulchrum visu*), ethics focuses on inner beauty (*pulchrum interius*), i.e., goodness (*bonum*). In this context, music serves as a metaphor relating to the establishment of well-being and good behavior. William's music theory is thoroughly informed by philosophical texts that consider the role of music in society, including Plato's *Timaeus*, Aristotle's *Politics*, and Boethius's *De institutione musica*. The most striking aspect of William's discussion of music is how he uses music to display philosophical values, more specifically, ethical balance and social moderation.

The Neoplatonic tradition, following Plato's primacy of ideas, held that God is the origin of all, and that God's intellect emanated through successive spheres, forming them and ending up with a world of generation and decay, which is the furthest from eternal truth. William's relationship to Neoplatonism starts with the numerology of Pythagoras, Plato's *Timaeus*, the number symbolism of Boethius (whose debts to Platonic thought were many), and the work of the Neo-Pythagorean Nicomachus of Gerasa. Physical-cosmological space is founded by an intellectual order, which is also reflected in the sensible realm by laws, in order to present a deontological theory of morality. Thus, perfection and order proceed from an intelligible cause, while imperfection and disorder come from the material substrate underlying bodies. Man, naturally good before the Fall, was upright and well-tempered in his affections, and his will and intelligence worked together in perfect harmony, and all the natural virtues (*virtutes naturales*) gravitated unanimously towards good. With the arrival of sin, the psycho-anthropological balance was shattered and man began to conform to the self-subsisting order of the cosmos, choosing good or evil according to his own natural inclinations.

If we attribute the principal role in this dynamic of the affections to the human will, the fundamental choice between good

and evil will lead us back to the inner realm of the soul. This would mean reducing the role of Aristotle's *habitus*: "Whatever Aristotle thinks", William specifies, "we do evil because we are wicked; we are not nor do we become wicked because of doing evil"⁵².

Man, when offered rewards, can manage his passions in a balanced way – *vires motivae* or *virtutes affectivae* – but he is also susceptible to punishment due to the uncontrolled motions of the soul, which are true operations of free will. How does human harmony fit into this framework? According to the etymology of the Greek *harmozo* or *hamotto*, (whence *harmonia*), harmony expresses an orderly connection in the fields of hearing and sight, and therefore of temporality and spatiality. The harmony of geometry and perspective has a spatial and visual value, while the harmony of music does not occur in the simultaneity of space, but in the progression of time⁵³. William describes music using the technical expression "virtue of harmonies" (*virtus harmoniarum*). Music stands, like the soul, on the boundary – the liminal space – between two worlds: that of heavenly music and that of human music. The latter kind is further divided into well-mannered music, as performed by human beings, and music performed by "wicked and scandalous" beings. For William, there is a place for *human* music, played or sung according to a proper method (*modus rectus*): through it, man rises to knowledge of the rational order of creation and the image of divine beauty (*pulchritudo divina*). Only dance is expressly condemned; celestial music competes with the soul *in alio statu*, the bliss of Paradise. Heavenly music is accompanied by images of eternal and infinite light; nevertheless, human music can be split into a dichotomy between well-mannered music and obstreperous music. This dichotomy corresponds to the Soul-Body tension. The soul tends

52. Vecchio, "*Passio, affectus, virtus*: il sistema delle passioni nei trattati di morale di Guglielmo d'Alvernia", in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 179.

53. G. Stabile, "Musica e cosmologia: l'armonia delle sfere", in G. Stabile, *Dante e la filosofia della natura. Percezioni, linguaggi, cosmologie*, Firenze 2007 (Micrologus Library, 20), 180–81. Kildwardby's definition of harmony is also noteworthy: "Harmonia autem nihil aliud est quam rerum diversarum concors ad invicem coaptatio sive modificatio".

towards *Pulchritudo*, towards the beauty of the Creator, through the introspective Pythagorean-Platonic method of that which is “read within” (*intus legit*).

William’s bipartite division of music rejects Boethius’ three musical divisions – *musica mundana*, i.e., the music of the spheres; *musica humana*; and *musica instrumentalis*, which is made by certain instruments, such as the kithara or the aulos, among others – in favor of divisions that describe music as it is performed by human beings.

This departure from Boethius is the result of a synthesis of the Aristotelian tradition and the lingering influence of Platonism. William’s statements about music’s role in improving society go back to Plato’s *Republic*. He mentions that music, when properly used, can improve the behavior of human beings. This notion, in William’s philosophy, echoes Augustine’s fear of music’s power, as expressed in the *Confessions* (Book 10, Chapter 33). In this doctrinal and scientific context, as Brenno Boccadoro⁵⁴ has suggested, William’s musical skill becomes important: music is the “virtue of harmonies” (*virtus harmoniarum*). For William, the discovery of *euphonia* for William, partly inspired by the Pythagorean-Platonic-Boethian tradition, is based both on the correct ratio of numbers and on the influence of musical rhythm on the human soul.

William attributes the expression *bene morata* to Plato, while in fact it can be traced to Boethius, who, in the *De Institutione musica* I.1, writes: “Unde Plato etiam maxime cavendum existimat, ne de bene morata musica aliquid permetur”⁵⁵. Through multiple examples, William shows that what he calls well-mannered music is mostly aimed at improving the mores of persons, whereas heavenly music is directed towards the praise of the Creator, as its final cause or purpose.

William tackles the question of the freedom of the listener with respect to the power of musical harmonies. His reflections on music, while not up to the standards of later music theorists due to the lack of musical scores, underline the contingency of

54. Boccadoro, “La musique, les passions, l’âme et le corps”, in Moren-zoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d’Auvergne*, 75–92, 79.

55. Boethius, *De Institutione musica* I 1.

the perceived form (sound) with respect to the intelligible meaning of the work. This meaning demonstrates a kind of mental arithmetic (i.e., an intelligible order) which is concerned not with musical execution but, instead, with a reading of the cosmic order, the celestial vault populated by choirs of cherubs. Moreover, William asserts his music theory within the context of physical causality. Music, as I have reiterated, is “the virtue of harmony” and the term “virtus” plays a central role in William’s philosophical system, as we have seen in the second chapter⁵⁶. Unlike his sources, in *The Universe* William distinguishes between music perceived by the ears and the harmonic ratios construed by the mind. Notes do not produce pleasure, but numbers and musical ratios, which can be contemplated only inwardly. Indeed, even those who listen to a song that is out of tune nevertheless feel an extreme pleasure. The harmony inherent in the song is superior to its execution. The harmony becomes greater the more harshly and tediously it resonates with the outside; since it occasions musical delight within the soul, it does not seem necessary to conclude that the notes that resonate externally are in compliance with those that are internal⁵⁷. William goes back to an Augustinian theme, that of the difference between music as perceived by the ears and its numerical (i.e., intelligible) models, in order to make explicit that audible music is not at all a faithful translation of harmony.

56. See above 61–105.

57. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 2 44, 746bF–G: “Qualis harmonia delectabit animas nostras in alio statu. Non immerito vero perscrutandum est, quid fit, quod delectet animas nostras in vocibus musicatis, seu melodiis, et forsitan videatur alicui non irrationabiliter, quod non voces ipsae delectent, eas *sed magis numeri, et proportionibus musicae, qui nullatenus audiuntur, sed interius solummodo cogitantur*. [...] Nec tibi dubitandum, quin omnis pulchritudo, omnis apta coniunctio, omnis conveniens applicatio tunc futura, resonet in eo statu spiritualiter pulchritudinem, bonitatem, et sapientiam creatoris, et ipsum universum universaliter, hoc est, in omnis partibus suis spiritualibus, et corporalibus, erit quaedam resonantia creatoris, et velut carmen pulcherrimum arte creatoris, et sapientia, ineffabili artificio modulatum spiritualiter, ut ipsis glorificatis hominibus auditu iocundissimum non forinsecus strepitu ullo modorum fit tumultuosum”.

Cosmology and William's Music Theory

The heavenly space and the musical space, as Giorgio Stabile writes, have been in an interesting relationship with the theme of the harmony of the spheres since the Platonic *Timaeus*. Indeed, as Stabile writes, in Plato heavenly and musical spaces are connected “with the theme of the cosmos as a whole, as a relationship between concordant and discordant numbers, consonance and dissonance”⁵⁸. This comparison was further developed in the introduction to Aristotle's *Physics*, and goes as far as Copernicus and Kepler. For these later thinkers, the problem of the harmony of the spheres lies in the proportional connections between the breadth of each orbit and its duration, and the distance of each planet from the sun. In particular, in the *Harmonices mundi* Kepler sets forth his famous theory of the planetary system as a musical score. William, on the other hand, seems to reject the Platonic interpretation of the harmonic generation of the *anima mundi*. In particular, he remarks that Saturn's revolutions – which according to Plato take 30 years – form a dissonant numerical relationship to those of Jupiter, which last 12 years. He then attributes this relationship to the empyrean sky.

Medieval cosmologies build on the Platonic concept of the multiplicity of empirical phenomena as copies of intellectual forms. This concept is easier to grasp if we read the *Book of Wisdom*, in particular 11:20: “You have disposed all things by measure, number and weight” (“Omnia in mensura et numero et pondere disposuisti”). William proposes a Christian interpretation of the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmological model: a universe of spheres, formed in the celestial hemisphere by ten skies, of which the empyrean one – the ‘*aplanon*’ – while itself motionless, is the motor of the heavens. In the *De anima*, he celebrates the greatness of the composer of the universe in the following passage:

[...] when you look at the beauty and magnificence of the universe in all its parts, namely, its spiritual and bodily parts, you will undoubtedly find that [...] the universe itself is like a most beautiful canticle,

58. Stabile, “Musica e cosmologia: l'armonia delle sfere”, 190.

because he himself plays the harmonies on his lyre, which is the only-begotten Son of God, and on this account you will clearly see that the individual ages or individual generations are individual odes or melodies of this canticle, and that the individual creatures are like individual words or individual syllables in these songs. You will also see the most profound marvels that he himself has done, that is to say, that the most lofty and most noble creatures sing like the highest and clear voices, but the sensible and inanimate creatures sing lower like heaviest and lowest voices, while the rest of creatures, sounding forth in accord with their variety, some lower, others higher and sharper, bringing together the extremes in a marvelous harmony, produce a melody of wondrous delight, a melody not audible by bodily ears, but delightful for spiritual ears with its ineffable sweetness⁵⁹.

This passage is related to others that refer to the *Book of Wisdom*: God has arranged all things according to weight, number, and measure (*Book of Wisdom* 11:20) and can be summarized with the expression of William of Auxerre: “Penes haec tria (species, numerus, ordo) est rei pulchritudo”⁶⁰. The use of these terms (canticle, harmony, concert) can be traced, on the one hand, to the Christian tradition (specifically to number and measure in the *Book of Wisdom*), on the other, to the Neoplatonic tradition. According to Augustine, music is “scientia bene modulandi”, or a structured science that follows the rules of numbers as regards tempo and intervals. This notion goes back to the

59. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De anima* V 18, 143a: “Cum enim inspexeris decorem et magnificentiam universi in omnibus scilicet partibus suis spiritualibus et corporalibus, inuenies indubitanter omnia et singula clamare [...] ipsumque universum esse velut *canticum pulcherrimum*, quod ipse in cythara sua, quae est unigenitus Dei filius ineffabilis suauitatis concentus modulatur; et propter hoc videbis evidenter singula saecula, sive singulas generationes, singulas odas, sive melodias carminis istius, singulas creaturas, velut singulas voces, sive singulas syllabas in cantationibus istis. Apparebit etiam tibi altissima qua ipso fecit magnalia, quod est dicere sublimissimas ac nobilissimas creaturas praecinere tanquam voces excelsissimas et acutissimas, sensibiles vero et inanimatos succinere tanquam gravissimasque voces: caeteras vero creaturas pro varietate alias quidem gravius, alias excelsius quidem et acutius resonantes, et extremis *mira concordia consonantes concentum* mirae iucunditatis efficere”; English Transl. by Teske, *The Soul*, 256; U. Eco, *Arte e Bellezza nell'estetica medievale*, Milano 1987, 27.

60. William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea* II 11 1 1, ed. by Ribaillier, II, 312, 73-77.

Pythagorean tradition, which established the arithmetic foundations of music. William sets it forth as a paradigm for the recognition of the order of the cosmos, which he determines to be providential order. Like Augustine, he is silent on the concept of the music of the spheres, focusing instead on harmony and proportional virtues (which substitute for the numbers that Augustine spoke of) as vectors leading towards divine truth. In summary, as concerns mathematical speculation, William draws on the Pythagorean-Platonic and Neo-Pythagorean traditions, specifically those of Nicomachus of Gerasa and Boethius. The former illustrates the relationship between the movement of the spheres and the production of sound in the *Enchiridion armonices*. The latter, in the *De institutione musica*, expands the relationship between body and movement to include “earthly music”. Through numbers, which are the ordering principle of the cosmos, the universe becomes “an ordered universe” in the same way as a musical symphony takes shape, in which song, sound, chords, and harmonies celebrate the majesty of the Creator. The created universe as described by William – similar to Augustine’s description – unfurls in a temporal dimension and reflects the harmony of the human soul. Only the soul – or, rather, its faculties (senses, imagination, reason, intellect) – can grasp the harmony of God. Numerical relationships orient the human intellect, making it aware of the manifestation of the divine.

The notion of the ordered universe goes back, again, to William’s revival of the Platonic tradition based on the *Timaeus* and of the *De architectura* by Vitruvius (first century BC). The ordered universe is a mirror (*speculum*) of the virtues imbued, in an orderly fashion, by the Creator. A symbolic-theological dimension appears. On the one hand, order is a form imprinted by the Creator upon the universe, on the other, it is the direction that the *homo viator* must follow, viz., from earth to heaven. Man, endowed with free will, chooses between earthly nature and heavenly spirituality. God is the harmonizer and tuner of the universe, according to the previously cited verse from the *Book of Wisdom*. Music is tasked with celebrating the Creator. According to Leo Spitzer,

It is the immortal merit of St. Ambrose to have assigned to Christian music the task of embodying the Greek Word Harmony: music's assignment henceforth is to perform what is in its very nature to express: the praise of the Creator of musical World Harmony⁶¹.

Music and Medicine

Pythagorean and Platonic writers on music have acknowledged its effect on the emotions, including Boethius, who drew on Plato. William synthesizes the category of harmony and the theory of the constitution of humors. A long tradition – going back to the Pre-Socratics – has addressed this issue, producing perspectives relative to the soul-body relationship. Of course, in William's thought, the soul has cognitive powers it derives from its freedom and its being able to choose between well-mannered music and wicked music. What, then, should be meant by the first kind of music, which positively influences the character of its listener? There is some information in another context, namely, *De Universo* I 2 44⁶², which has its theoretical starting point in *On Laws*, where William clarifies that a sound's natural properties, such as a high pitch or extreme intensity, may be dangerous or even lethal⁶³. In contrast, in *On the Universe* William describes the first kind of music, the beautiful one, as involving soul and body, and thus both the higher powers and the lower faculties. In turn, this allows the *virtus intellectiva* (which, for William, consists of the imagination and memory) of our soul to recognize agreement and to grasp the ordered design underlying the providential order.

The exercise of composing (*inveniendi cantus*) and harmonies corroborate the intellectual virtue and offer the best conditions for the study of theology (*studia divinalium scientiarum*) and the contemplation of divine realities⁶⁴.

61. L. Spitzer, "Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony: Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word 'Stimmung': Part I", *Traditio* 2 (1944), 409–64, 427.

62. See above note 58.

63. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De legibus* 23, 66bG.

64. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo spiritualium* II 3 21 [ed. 20], 1057aA-B: "Ex quibus manifestum tibi esse debet, quoniam harmoniae gratiam

The second kind of music, produced by the spell (*iaculatio*) of demons, acts on the body, enslaving it. The *lugubrus cantus* of the Hermetic *Asclepius* and the four kingdom of demons in the four regions of the world in the *Liber necromanticus*⁶⁵ are the worst examples of such music.

Additionally, William affirms that numerous spiritual maladies can be cured with music. He thus revives the theory of motions:

It is well known that many spiritual maladies, such as fury, melancholy, and other mental alienations, were sometimes cured with musical concerts. The cause lies in in the admirable suaveness of certain concerts. Suaveness delights human souls, captivates them, and frees them from passions⁶⁶.

Music acts on the soul and the body more than medicine does, because it is a mathematical discipline, founded on a force (*vis*), namely, on the virtue of musical proportions (*virtus musicalium proportionum*) intrinsic to the elements of musical grammar. William does not depart from Thomas Aquinas in reiterating the

contemplationis, et divinalium scientiarum studia, non mediocriter adiuvant. Verum peritia musicalis, et ars inveniendi componendique cantus, maxime harmonicos, qui omnium sunt suavissimi, necessaria est in his. Forte igitur, et fortuito curati sunt multi morbi spirituales per harmonias a nescientibus medicis, quae, vel quales harmoniae virtutem istam habent. Verum si praeinominata peritia praediti essent, vix eos effugeret aliquis morbus spiritualis. [...] Vides igitur quantus defectus est in medicis, tempore isto potissimum, quantum ad morbos spirituales. Revertar autem ad illud, in quo eram, et dicam, quia iam claruit tibi per ea, quae praecesserunt, status naturalis animae, quo posita est ipsa nobilitate suae creationis in horizonte duorum mundorum, et in confinitate duarum regionum”.

65. *De universo spiritualium* II 3 20, 1030bE: “In opere illo necromantico, quod dicitur maior circulus, dixerunt, doctores huiusmodi operum, convenire quatuor Reges daemonum a quatuor partibus mundi, et coram unoquoque multitudinem virorum ioculatorum, et citharedorum, quae multido nonnisi daemonum esse potest”. See Boccadoro, “La musique, les passions, l’âme et le corps”, in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d’Auvergne*, 87.

66. *De universo spiritualium* II 3 21 [ed. 20], 1056bG: “Manifestum est etiam multos morbos spirituales interdu fuisse curatos concentibus, sicut insaniam et melancholiam, et alias quasdam alienationes. Causa autem in hoc est, quoniam concentuum quorundam suavitas mirabiliter est demulcens animas humanas, et rapiens eas, et propter hoc eripiens eas ab aliis passionibus”.

Boethian thesis: “Musica considerat sonos, non in quantum sunt soni, sed in quantum sunt secundum numeros proportionales”⁶⁷.

In William, as in Boethius, music is founded upon mathematical rules, which can be isolated in their rhythms and modes because music is endowed with virtue (*virtus*) and proportion (*proportio*). William’s assessment of the value of music in achieving true wisdom is clearly borrowed from Plato:

Induxit [sc. Plato] etiam cum vis, virtusque musicalium proportionum, quae adeo ut ipsemet dixit, potentes sunt in animas nostras, ut totae animae nostrae in potestate earum positae videantur. Immutant quippe eas mira facilitate secundum dispositiones illas, quae sunt secundum virtutem concupiscibilem et irascibilem: et hoc pro voto, seu libito musicantis, si in arte musica exercitatus fuerit et evidenter peritus⁶⁸.

The elements of musical grammar become tools for defining musical genres and modes. William knows the formal causes of auditory effects and tries to isolate them into harmonic structures, following the Platonic and Boethian tradition. So for him and his sources:

It is easy to understand that harmonies help to stimulate intellectual virtue and the noblest emotive motions, while the chromatic category, due to its weak form, loosens the inhibitions of the soul, stimulating the motions of Venus’ virtue. In the same way, the diatonic category excites fierceness and warlike courage, so on the advice of musicians it is used on the battlefield, where even horses are incited to fight⁶⁹.

67. Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boethium De Trinitate* III 5.3 ad 6; Boethius, *De Institutione musica* I 7.

68. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 3 30, 803aC; *Timaean a Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus* 50, ed. J. H. Waszink, P. J. Jensen, The Warburg Institute, London–Leiden 1975² (Plato Latinus, 4) 99, l. 122–100, l. 1; l. 100, l. 23–101, l. 1.

69. Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo spiritualium* II 3 21[ed. 20], 1057aB: “Ex his etiam facile est tibi scire, quod non mediocriter confortant, et adiuvant virtutem intellectivam, atque motivas nobiles, quemadmodum cantiones, quae sunt de chromatico genere molli, lasciviam, et motus venereos vehementer incitant, et acuiunt; sicut et illae, quae sunt de tertio genere, hoc est, de diatonico, incitant animas humanas in rigorem, et ferocitatem exasperant, et erigunt, propter hoc consilio musicorum in praeliis adhiberi solent, ubi et illud mirabile accidit, qui etiam equos in praelium excitant, et exacuiunt soni diatonico genere musicati”.

In conclusion, as we have seen previously, William's characterization is twofold. On the one hand, it concerns the painful story of the human soul, on the other, it provides an account of music theory. The first issue must be interpreted both ontologically and deontologically insofar as William underlines the tension between perceivable realities and the Creator, who makes reality intelligible. The second passage distinguishes between well-mannered music and wicked music with an abominable rhythm. Music of strong moral inspiration – the kind that leads the human intellect towards intellectual realities, towards the plane of Divine Beauty (*Pulchritudo*) – is glorified with a dedication in which the aesthetic values of polyphony are explicitly mentioned: beauty, convenient union, goodness, and charm (*Pulchritudo, apta coniunctio, cincinnitas, bonitas, suavitas*). Lugubrious music is, instead, explicitly condemned because it enslaves the lower faculties of the soul and drives man to sin.

Beauty and Goodness

In 1946, Edgar De Bruyne and Henri Pouillon called attention to William of Auvergne's doctrine of beauty⁷⁰. Many years later, Umberto Eco revisited De Bruyne's opinion in a more systematic fashion⁷¹.

De Bruyne recognized four medieval aesthetic concepts in William's work: an aesthetic optimism that celebrates the beauty of creation as founded upon *Wisdom* 11:20; a doctrine of colors; the theme of beauty (*pulchrum*) in relation to that of goodness (*bonum/honestum*), borrowed from Cicero; and, finally, a particularly interesting psychological emotionality⁷². To these aesthetic

70. E. De Bruyne, *Études d'esthétique médiévale* (I. De Boèce à Jean Scot Erigène. II L'époque romane. III. Le XIII^e siècle), Louvain 1946; H. Pouillon, "La Beauté, propriété transcendante chez les Scolastiques", *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge* 15 (1946), 263–329.

71. Eco, *Arte e Bellezza nell'estetica medievale*, 32.

72. E. De Bruyne, *L'esthétique du Moyen Âge*, Louvain 1947, 61: "Guillaume d'Auvergne résume avant 1230 le problème qui se pose à propos des deux dernières propriétés du beau: 'la beauté visible, dit-il, se définit ou bien par la figure et la position des parties à l'intérieur d'un tout,

theories, a fifth one should be added: that of music theory, as I have shown in the preceding pages.

William does not define Beauty by perceivable notions of harmony, size, and color. His notion of beauty is a more moral one, based on nature. According to this notion, all objects of virtue share a formal similarity, and that is why beauty procures delight, as specified in the following passage:

Just we call beautiful for the eyes that which is able to please in and of itself and delights the beholder [...]. If we want to know visible beauty then let us rely on the external sense of sight [...]. The beauty of elegance that our sight or our inner gaze approves and by which it is pleased⁷³.

This notion of goodness is defined in comparison to external and visible beauty (*pulchritudinem seu decorem ex comparatione exteriorioris et visibilis pulchritudinis*). While sensible beauty pleases those who see it, inner beauty gives pleasure to the soul of those who perceive it and, further, induces them to love it. In this way William, as Umberto Eco remarks, establishes an equivalence between moral beauty and goodness. He clearly draws this equivalence probably from the Aristotelian Rhetoric⁷⁴, from the

ou bien par la couleur, ou bien par ces deux caractères réunis, soit qu'on les juxtapose, sans plus, soit que l'on considère le rapport d'harmonie qui les réfère l'un à l'autre"; 109: "Guillaume fait appel à l'introspection [...]. Comme Cicéron dans le *De officiis*, Guillaume dans le *De bono et malo* fonde toute son esthétique sur le parallélisme de la beauté morale, qui est le Bien, et de beau sensible".

73. Guillelmus Alvernus, *Tractatus De bono et malo* I, 206 (ms. Balliol, Pouillon, 315-16): "Quemadmodum enim *pulchrum visu* dicimus quod *natum est per se ipsum placere* spectantibus, et *delectare* secundum visum, sic et *pulchrum interius*, quod intuentium animos delectat et amorem sui allicit [...]. Laudabile et bonum per se vocatum est et laudabiles facit ipsos habentes [...]. *Ista autem omnia ipso experimento sensus nota fiunt [...]. In huius explanatione non immorabimur quoniam ipse interior visus testis est nobis interiorioris et intelligibilis pulchritudinis, sicut exterior visus est exterioris*". Quoted by C. Barrett (ed.), "The Aesthetics of the High Middle Ages", in *History of Aesthetics*, II: *Medieval Aesthetics*, Berlin Boston 2015, 110-304, 221 (<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110808223-004> last consultation 3 September 2021).

74. Eco, *Arte e Bellezza nell'estetica medievale*, 32; Aristotle, *Rethorica* I 9, 1366a33.

Stoic tradition, from Cicero and Augustine. To understand this definition, we need to examine William's sources.

In his *De officiis*, Cicero states:

And it is no mean manifestation of Nature and Reason that man is the only animal that has a *feeling for order, for propriety, for moderation in word and deed*. And so no other animal has a *sense of beauty, loveliness, harmony in the visible world*; and Nature and Reason, extending the analogy of this from the world of sense to the world of spirit, find that beauty, consistency, order are far more to be maintained in thought and deed, and the same Nature and Reason are careful to do nothing in an improper or unmanly fashion, and in every thought and deed to do or think nothing capriciously.

It is from these elements that is forged and fashioned that moral goodness which is the subject of this inquiry – something that, even though it be not generally ennobled, is still worthy of all honour; and by its own nature, we correctly maintain, it merits praise, even though it be praised by none⁷⁵.

The elements to which Cicero refers constitute what Stoics, namely Panaetius⁷⁶, would have called *decorum*⁷⁷, which involves

75. Cicero, *De Officiis* I 14 with an English Translation, ed. by W. Miller, Cambridge 1913, 16-17: "Nec vero illa parva vis naturae est rationisque, quod unum hoc animal sentit, quid sit ordo, quid sit quod deceat, in factis dictisque qui modus. Itaque eorum ipsorum, quae aspectu sentiuntur, nullum aliud animal pulchritudinem, venustatem, convenientiam partium sentit; quam similitudinem natura ratioque ab oculis ad animum transferens multo etiam magis pulchritudinem, constantiam, ordinem in consiliis factisque conservandam putat cavetque ne quid indecore effeminateve faciat, tum in omnibus et opinionibus et factis ne quid libidinose aut faciat aut cogitet. Quibus ex rebus conflatur et efficitur id, quod quaerimus, honestum, quod etiamsi nobilitatum non sit, tamen honestum sit, quodque vere dicimus, etiamsi a nullo laudetur, natura esse laudabile".

76. See J. A. McMahon, "Beauty as Harmony of the Soul: The Aesthetic of the Stoics", in M. Rossetto, M. Tsianikas, G. Couvalis, M. Palaksoglou (eds.), *Greek Research in Australia: Proceedings of the Eighth Biennial International Conference of Greek Studies*, Adelaide 2009, 54-63, 58-59.

77. Cicero, *De Officiis* I 93-94: "Sequitur, ut de una reliqua parte honestatis dicendum sit, in qua verecundia et quasi quidam ornatus vitae, temperantia et modestia omnisque sedatio perturbationum animi et rerum modus cernitur. Hoc loco continetur id, quod dici Latine *decorum* potest; Graece enim *πρέπον* dicitur. Huius vis ea est, ut ab honesto non queat separari; nam et, quod decet, honestum est et, quod honestum est, decet; qualis autem differentia sit honesti et decori, facilius intellegi quam explanari potest. Quic-

a notion of moral beauty, according to which all objects of virtue have a formal similarity because they are expressions of rationality. They exhibit proportion and harmony, properties which Thomas Aquinas would have called “radiance” or “clarity”. According to Panaetius, these characteristics are found in nature. Man’s ability to recognize them by perception makes it possible to include *decorum* in the notion of aesthetics, which presents itself precisely as an expression of *decorum*. It is in this sense that *decorum*, intended as a feeling for harmony, proportion and order, is a fundamental part of aesthetic ethics. William concurs with this point of view and his aesthetic ethics is compatible with an essentially rational soul.

Beauty manifests itself when the soul of the subject recognizes that which naturally pleases and delights, that which tends towards the rational virtue: *Est enim delectatio coniunctio convenien-*

quid est enim, quod deceat, id tum apparet, cum antegressa est honestas. Itaque non solum in hac parte honestatis, de qua hoc loco disserendum est, sed etiam in tribus superioribus quid deceat apparet. Nam et ratione uti atque oratione prudenter et agere, quod agas, considerate omnique in re quid sit veri videre et tueri decet, contraque falli, errare, labi, decipi tam dedecet quam delirare et mente esse captum; et iusta omnia decora sunt, iniusta contra, ut turpia, sic indecora. Similis est ratio fortitudinis. Quod enim viriliter animoque magno fit, id dignum viro et decorum videtur, quod contra, id ut turpe, sic indecorum”; *De officiis* I 98: “Quocirca poëtae in magna varietate personarum, etiam vitiosis quid conveniat et quid deceat, videbunt, nobis autem cum a natura constantiae, moderationis, temperantiae, verecundiae partes datae sint, cumque eadem natura doceat non negligere, quemadmodum nos adversus homines geramus, efficitur, ut et illud, quod ad omnem honestatem pertinet, decorum quam late fusum sit, appareat et hoc, quod spectatur in uno quoque genere virtutis. Ut enim pulchritudo corporis apta compositione membrorum movet oculos et delectat hoc ipso, quod inter se omnes partes cum quodam lepore consentiunt, sic hoc decorum, quod elucet in vita, movet approbationem eorum, quibuscum vivitur, ordine et constantia et moderatione dictorum omnium atque factorum”; see M. B. Ingham, “The Light of Pure Character. Honestum, Decorum and the Stoic Sage”, in A. M. Ramos (ed.), *Beauty and Good: Recovering the Classical Tradition from Plato to Duns Scotus*, Washington 2020, 136–59: https://books.google.it/books?id=a5EHEAAQBAJ&pg=PA139&lpg=PA139&dq=And+so+no+other+animal+has+a+sense+of+beauty,+loveliness&source=bl&ots=J6TFcbdVwr&sig=ACfU3U14oYlZ14Wj_ySX7gZMwJK5NwaQEA&hl=it&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj_vpuh6PjvAhWDKewKHRJBCjsQ6AEwA3oECAEQAw#v=onepage&q=beauty%20cicero&f=false (last consultation 7 March 2021).

tis cum conveniente. The moral beauty of an act, such as honoring one's parents, is of such a nature as to immediately procure pleasure – due to its “coniunctio conveniens” – to our intimate conscience, which spontaneously tends to beauty. Likewise, to recognize the physical beauty of a color, we cannot fail to note its inseparability from our perception: “Ab ipso colore non est separabile actu vel ratione hoc ipsum quod est visibile et hoc est quoniam visibilitas essentia eius est”⁷⁸. The essence of color is identified with perception, but perception itself is no distinguished by aesthetic pleasure: “Nec est aliud delectatio subjecto et essentia quam visio ipsa [...] necessario (enim apprehensio) delectabilis”⁷⁹. To De Bruyne's and Eco's observations, I would add that in his color examples William uses not only the Plotinian thesis – according to which color is in itself a beautiful form – but also Witelo's notion that the beauty of a composite is founded on the relationship between the whole and its parts⁸⁰. Moreover, William had already shown before 1230 that he fully understood the essential relationship between proportion and colors: “Visibilis pulchritudo dicitur [...] in se aut figura et positio aut color aut ambo illorum aut alterum in comparatione ad alterum”⁸¹.

William believes in the principle that “nothing that is not beautiful can please God”. Consequently, when man's soul spontaneously delights in beauty which fits his soul, man sees in himself a reflection of God, the absolute ideal. In *The Trinity* (1223),

78. Guillelmus Alvernus, *Tractatus de bono et malo* I, ed. by O'Donnell, quoted by De Bruyne, *L'esthétique du Moyen Âge*.

79. *Tractatus de bono et malo*, quoted in Barrett (ed.), “The Aesthetics of the High Middle Ages”, 112. De Bruyne and Eco point out that William's definitions contain terms referring to the cognitive act (*spectare, intueri, aspicere*) and to affective operations (*placere, delectare*), see De Bruyne, *L'esthétique du Moyen Âge*, 109–13.

80. Witelo, *Optica IV*, 148 (Alhazen II, 59), quoted by Barrett (ed.), “The Aesthetics of the High Middle Ages”, 268: “Pulchritudo comprehenditur a visu ex comprehensione simpliciter formarum visibilium placentium animae, vel coniunctione plurium visibilium intentionum habentium ad invicem proportionem debitam formae visae”.

81. Guillelmus Alvernus, *Tractatus de bono et malo* I, ed. by O'Donnell, 207 (Pouillon, 317), quoted by Barrett (ed.), “The Aesthetics of the High Middle Ages”, 222.

William goes even further, stating that the actions of creatures are nothing more than partial expressions of the divine presence within them. The desire for beauty, the joy of beholding, the wish for *pulchrum*, is an energy even before it manifests itself⁸². Following Thomas Gallus, William believes that love is a form of knowledge. The feeling of beauty is a loving emotion and leads to knowledge: *non alio modo quam amore ipso*. There is thus a natural tendency towards eternity achieved by the light of knowledge and through love: “ex uno habitu et lumen cognitionis et sapor affectionis”. In other words, William interprets the affective relationship between subject and object as a corollary of the gnoseology of the mystical vision. For this reason, De Bruyne spoke of William’s aesthetic emotionalism as distinct from Thomas Aquinas’ intellectualism⁸³. Beauty is therefore the goal of a universal human attitude where knowledge is both aspiration and satisfaction, or delight.

In order to distinguish the plane of sensible beauty from that of intellectual beauty and, furthermore, to act according to goodness, one must recognize the spiritual meaning of God’s beautiful images as displayed in the ‘book of nature’. Therefore, William specifies that “signis autem utendum significatione, non materialiter”. He regards beauty and goodness as identical in reality but different in their relation to man’s spiritual capacities. He describes beauty as the object of a sensible aesthetic appetite and goodness as the object of the intellectual appetite. In this regard, the tenth chapter of Book III of the *Ethica Nicomachea* plays an important role. Here Aristotle established that, similarly to the pleasures of the soul (like that of knowledge to those who love knowledge), the pleasures of sight and the pleasures of hearing are indeed corporeal, but involve neither temperance nor intemperance because they can be enjoyed as they should, neither in excess nor too scarcely.

Now we have said that Temperance is the observance of the mean in relation to pleasures (for it is concerned) only in a lesser degree and in a different way with pains; and Profligacy also is displayed in the same

82. *De Trinitate* XI, 15b-16a: “Hoc cogit vehementia et velut torrens primi fluxus”.

83. De Bruyne, *L'esthétique du Moyen Âge*, 150-53.

matters. Let us then now define the sort of pleasures to which these qualities are related.

Now we must make a distinction between pleasures of the body and pleasures of the soul: *Take for instance ambition, or love of learning: the lover of honor or of learning takes pleasure in the thing he loves without his body being affected at all*; the experience is purely mental. But we do not speak of men as either temperate or profligate in relation to the pleasures of ambition and of learning. Nor similarly can these terms be applied to the enjoyment of any of the other pleasures that are not bodily pleasures: those who love hearing marvellous tales and telling anecdotes, and who spend their days in trivial gossip, we call idle chatters, but not profligates nor do we call men profligate who feel excessive pain for the loss of fortune or friends.

Temperance therefore has to do with the pleasures of the body. But not with all even of these; for men who delight in the pleasures of the eye, in colors, forms and paintings, are not termed either temperate or profligate, although it would be held that these things also can be enjoyed in the right manner, or too much, or too little⁸⁴.

The enjoyment brought about by the contemplation of figurative works of art is therefore corporeal, because it is caused by the sense of sight. Unlike purely physical pleasures, such as those conveyed by touch and taste, which Aristotle calls servile and bestial, it is a free pleasure. It is not subject to physiological needs, such as appetite or carnal desire, and it is unique to man as such, not being an aspect shared with animals⁸⁵.

The definition of beauty proposed by William clearly references the Aristotelian idea that the pleasure of sight is, in those who contemplate paintings, an unconditioned physical enjoyment. One could even say it is biological and self-fulfilling, like the pleasure of the soul, as is the pleasure of learning as an end in itself for those who love knowledge. This definition can be compared with the following passage in the *Summa Theologica* of Aquinas:

84. Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* III 10, 1117b3, transl. by H. Rackham, Cambridge (MA) 1926.

85. Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea* III, 1118a7. According to De Bruyne, Auvergne's definition of beauty is based on the anonymous translation of books II and III of the *Ethica Nicomachea* (known as *Ethica vetus*).

bonum proprie respicit *appetitum*: est enim bonum quod omnia appetunt. Et ideo habet rationem finis: nam appetitus est quasi quidam motus ad rem. Pulchrum autem respicit vim cognoscitivam: pulchra enim dicuntur quae visa placent⁸⁶.

The latter means 'things that give pleasure when they are seen are called beautiful'.

Thomas' definition of beauty as the deriving of pleasure from vision introduces the problem of a subjective understanding of beauty. The ambiguity comes from the word *visa*, which in Latin has a different meaning than in English. The notion of *videri* is closely associated with the activity of contemplation. Knowing beauty is an activity of the mind, not the result of a discursive process. Knowledge, for Thomas, occurs when the form of an object, without its matter, exists in the mind of the individual who knows the said object⁸⁷. It is especially important to see that the form of the object begins to exist in the mind of the knower. Since beauty, for Thomas, is caused by the form of the object, this explains how the apprehension of beauty is the result of knowledge.

More specifically, the senses of sight and hearing are those through which the beholder receives the form of the object. For Thomas, these senses are the most important in the perception of beauty.

Thomas argues for the objectivity of beauty in the sense that beauty resides in the object itself. In other words, beauty is not a concept in the mind of the beholder imposed on a given object. If beauty is objective, then there must be some criteria by which we discover whether something is indeed beautiful. The

86. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I 5 4.

87. Thomas Aquinas, *De Trinitate* 5 2. The details of this process are not relevant here. For example, someone is looking at a flower. Its immaterial form is received by the senses and begins to exist in the mind of the knower. The knower can thus contemplate the form of the flower and discover its beauty. The knower receives data from the sensory world through the senses, but it is not the senses that recognize something as beautiful. It is the mind that recognizes the beauty of a given object. Consequently, knowledge has two components, a passive one and an active one. The passive component receives data from extramental reality. The active component gives abstract forms new existence in the mind of the knower.

criteria of beauty are not detailed formulas but landmarks to help finite minds appreciate beauty. Not all of these criteria need to be applicable for an object to be regarded as beautiful, and the applicability of one of these criteria does not guarantee that an object is beautiful. For Thomas, beauty has four primary standards: actuality, proportion, radiance, and integrity⁸⁸. The original context of this list is the relationship with the Son. This Christological context – in which the definition of the second person of the Trinity appears as the absolute exemplar of *pulchritudo* such as man/human being is able to define it on the basis of the creaturely experience of reason – finds confirmation in Aquinas' commentary on the *De divinis nominibus* by the Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. In the *Summa theologiae*, the most relevant passages about the definition of *pulchrum* and *pulchritudo* constantly refer to *De divinis nominibus*. Thomas writes:

Postquam Dionysius tractavit de lumine, nunc agit de pulchro, ad cuius intellectum praeexigitur lumen; et circa hoc, duo facit; primo: praemittit quod pulchrum attribuitur Deo; secundo, ostendit modum quo ei attribuitur. [...] et circa hoc, tria facit: primo, praemittit quod differenter attribuitur Deo et creaturis pulchrum et pulchritudo [...] ⁸⁹.

And while in God there is total identity between the beautiful and beauty due to the absolute simplicity of divine essence, in creatures, instead, the beautiful and beauty are distinguished according to the participation of each individual beautiful entity in beauty itself, which is God's, since "*pulchritudo enim creaturae nihil est aliud quam similitudo divinae pulchritudinis in rebus participata*". God, *supersubstantiale pulchrum*, grants beauty to things, which then become singularly beautiful, according to their specificity, so that the beauty of the spirit is different from that of the body, and the beauty of one body is different from that of another body. Dionysius explains what the "ratio pulchri-

88. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I 39 8: "Ad pulchritudinem tria requiruntur: primo quidem integritas, sive perfectio, quae enim diminuta sunt, hoc ipso turpia sunt. Et debita proportio, sive consonantia. Et iterum claritas, unde quae habent colorem nitidum, pulchra esse dicuntur".

89. Thomas Aquinas, *In Librum De Divinis Nominibus* V 4.

tudinis” consists of by saying that God grants beauty because he is the cause “consonantiae et claritatis in omnibus”.

In summary, the *De bono* (which is dated to 1228, not 1210) and the *De Trinitate*, which dates back to 1223, constitute a first stage in William’s philosophy, which he was later to further develop in his *De anima* (1240). In this last work William is already on his way towards a theory of music, which he begins to outline in the *De universo creaturarum* through his use of terms such as ‘song’, ‘concert’, and ‘harmony’. My diachronic evaluation of William’s works has revealed its singularity with respect to the theme of *pulchritudo*. In the second part of this chapter, I have tried to show how the dividing line between celestial music and earthly music was in a specular relationship to the dialectical relationship between soul and body and that between what is beautiful to behold (*pulchrum visu*) and inner beauty (*pulchrum interius*).

Through the concepts of *pulchrum* and *coniunctio*, for William, such as Boethius, Cassiodorus and Isidore of Seville science ‘music’ provided a description of truths of nature. Particularly, Isidore wrote: without music no discipline can be perfect, for there is nothing without it (“Itaque sine musica nulla disciplina potest esse perfecta, nihil enim sine illa”)⁹⁰. Therefor for William, music is the key to the proportions of the whole, its dimensions, and the balance of its parts. It is a mathematical science, which links the rational order to the perceivable order. It is endowed with its own medicinal power, as ancient scholars had already pointed out⁹¹. Music, made of consonance and dissonance – which, together, create harmony – is the emblem of the unity of opposites. Moreover, God, being eternal by nature, grants eternity to man through the latter’s participation in divine nature, thereby creating man’s soul *ad imaginem* of the musical number that constitutes the universe. Man, when he recognizes the beauty of the image of the divine present in his own person, delights in it and lives honestly.

90. Isidore of Seville, *Ethimologie* III 17 1.

91. Augustine, *Confessiones* X 33,49–50.

CONCLUSION

The popularity of William of Auvergne's *On Laws* and *On the Universe* in the fourteenth and fifteenth century is demonstrated by the surviving manuscripts and first old printed editions. My research was based both on the main catalogues and on direct inspection of manuscripts. It slightly adds to the number of manuscripts listed by Jennifer Ottmann in 2005, by Riccardo Saccenti in 2020, and by the Digital Archives for Medieval Cultures (<http://www.mirabileweb.it>), as the tables in this volume show¹.

It would be interesting to study these manuscripts and their provenances to investigate the influence of the *De legibus* and *De universo* in the later Middle Ages and early modern times. An example of how fruitful such an approach could be is provided by the *compendia* to several sections of William's *Magisterium divinale et sapientiale* preserved in Melk, Benediktinerstift, Codex Mellicensis 1767 (426, H. 45). The manuscript dates to 1459 and the copyist is Johann Schlitpacher, known as John of Weilheim². He was a Benedictine humanist and reformer, a *magister artium* at Vienna and Melk – where he introduced Italian monastic humanism – and a prior in Austrian and Bavarian monasteries (1468–72)³.

Another interesting witness is held in the University of Rochester, Department of Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservation, illuminated manuscript, uncatalogued⁴. On the ini-

1. See Appendix, 157–62.

2. <https://manuscripta.at/diglit/AT6000-1767/0005> (Last consultation 11th March 2022).

3. He wrote *Gemma Bibliae seu memoriale minus Bibliae* (1447) and treatises and works about the monastic Reformation.

4. www.textmanuscripts.com (Last consultation 11th March 2022): “The miniature of the spheres of the universe on f.1r is an extraordinary image that shows the spheres as a series of overlapping discs that tumble down the page from a golden arch at the top, to the circles of the earth at the very bottom (as a previous description aptly phrased it, ‘cascading and overlap

tial page of the *De universo* there is a representation of the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic cosmos. It is a significant clue to the popularity of William's attempt to found a rationalist and scientific vision of nature.

As regards the provenance of the image, as Anna Siebach-Larsen has observed⁵, although it displays stylistic similarities with images in northeastern Italy, it was very probably made in Rome. The provenance of the manuscript also appears to be Italian (Ferrara or Venezia). Among its owners was Philippus Barbarycus of Venice, a papal protonotary (a very important office in the Papal Curia). Philippus gave the manuscript to the Franciscan Convent in Trastevere in Rome ("Transtyberim in urbe"), under the condition that it would not be sold and would be reserved for his own use during his lifetime. At f. 251 we read the following inscription added at the end of the text:

Dominus Philippus Barbarycus nobilis Venetus protonotarius numerarius largitus est hunc librum de universo corporali et spiritali Gulielmi episcopi parisiensis conuentui sancti francisci Transtyberim de urbe. Non vendatur nec alienetur, usum tamen huius in vita sua sibi reseruauit⁶.

This information, while worthy of further research and verification, is a significant testimony to the popularity of William's *De universo* in Italy as well as elsewhere.

In his *Apologie pour tous les grands personnages qui ont esté fausement soupçonnez de magie*, Gabriel Naudé includes William of Auvergne among those who were accused of magic for having had an interest in that part of natural philosophy that avails itself

down the page, like a stack of coins which have tumbled over'). The heavens are depicted in brightly burnished gold, followed by the expanses of the universe, with glittering liquid-gold rays flecked onto a yellow ground, to the stars, the planets, the sun and the moon, and the earthly elements of fire (here as flames), air (with two tiny flying insects), water (with two fish) and finally the earth (with dark and brooding primeval forests) at the foot of the page. It would be of interest to know whether any of the other copies of this text are illuminated".

5. I thank Dr Anna Siebach-Larsen for sending me her unpublished work and Lisa Wright and Clara Auclair for making the pictures published here.

6. www.textmanuscripts.com (Last consultation 11th March 2022).

of mathematics⁷. In this book, I started from the judgment of Trajanus, William's first publisher, who describes him as a "very learned philosopher and theologian most versed in mathematics and capable investigator of the mysteries of nature"⁸. The French libertine's rationalism thus stands in ideal continuity with a historiographic tradition striving to restore William's place in the scholastic debate on natural magic, as distinguished from any form of idolatry. It should not be forgotten, however, that William strongly feels the presence of the devil, who not only torments the damned in the afterlife, but also tempts the living and causes various kinds of harm, from natural calamities to epilepsy. The fact that quite a few manuscripts exist of the *De universo spirituali*⁹ show that this work had an autonomous circulation, i.e., that William's demonology drew interest¹⁰.

However, the bishop of Paris regarded as licit natural divination, that is, the foretelling of future events by observing natural signs. For example, he acknowledges that the behavior of birds, which are particularly sensitive to air conditions, can be used to forecast storms or other meteorological events. An example of the popularity of William's doctrines regarding superstition and natural divination can be found in the *Tractatus de superstitionibus (superstitiosis) quibusdam casibus* (1425) by Heinrich of Gokum. Heinrich intends to refute "cases of superstition". In the wake of medieval tradition – from Augustine of Hippo to Thomas Aquinas, down to William of Auvergne himself – he regards it as a terrible sin to seek the help or advice of demons; natural divination, instead, he regards as possible and admissible.

7. G. Naudé, *Apologie pour tous les grandes personnages qui ont esté fausement soupçonnez de magie*, Paris 1655, 55–56.

8. See Preface note 1.

9. See Appendix 157–62.

10. M. D. Bayley, "A Late-Medieval Crisis of Superstition", *Speculum* 84/3 (2009), 633–61, 40: "So strong was William's influence, in fact, that when Denis the Carthusian cited in his *Contra vitia superstitionum* 'a certain master in his tract *De superstitionibus*, which for the most part he drew from Lord William of Paris's book *De fide et legibus*' he might have been referring to one of two different works by that title produced in the early fifteenth century, one by the Leipzig professor Johannes of Wünschelburg, the other an anonymous treatise *De superstitionibus* that exists in at least four copies in the Bavarian State Library in Munich, both of which are patterned heavily on William's work".

Gokum's reflections on the value of the ritual sign show echoes of William's teachings. According to Gokum, recourse to prayers, blessings, or invocations of saints by the faithful is fully licit, as long as – as proved by the rite performed for Saint Agatha to obtain protection from fire – people understand that it is divine power, and not a virtue intrinsic to the rite itself, that will grant the hoped-for protection. Nevertheless, the Dominican denies the “diabolical-magical” power of words, with particular reference to the apotropaic practice of writing down the names of the Wise Kings and carry the writings on one's person to ward off epilepsy attacks or other troubles. He specifies that this practice may be adopted under condition that we turn to God in obsequy and veneration: words in themselves have no power. The use of crosses to ward away storms from fields threatens to become a false superstition if people believe that the cross itself possesses an intrinsic power. Heinrich argues for the legitimacy of the use of consecrated or blessed objects for non-religious purposes, as long as they regarded as a *sign* and not an *instrument* of divine power¹¹.

Gokum's treatise is revelatory of an attitude that was still common in the first half of the fifteenth century, when quite a few authors expressed concern regarding certain “ritual” practices which, if left uncontrolled, threatened the validity of religious belief.

Finally, William deserves credit for his intuition of the notion of *sensus naturae*, also called *spiritus* or *virtus occulta*. This notion was echoed in the following centuries, with particular regard to the theme of *divinatio*.

Divination is presented in the *De legibus* and the *De universo* as a near-imitation of divine activity (*quasi divinitatis imitatio*). William preliminarily distinguishes the natural sphere of prophecy and divination – analogous to that of natural magic – from the demoniac sphere, which is analogous to that of talismanic magic. In this context, the notion of *sensus naturae* is central. Cornelius

11. Heinrich of Gokum, *Tractatus de superstitionibus (superstitiosis) quibusdam casibus*, Blaubeuren, ca. 1477; Bayley, “A Late-Medieval Crisis of Superstition”, *Speculum* 84/3 (2009), 635.

Agrippa did not hesitate to revive it in the first book of his *De occulta philosophia*, citing several examples from William's *De universo*.

Let us read some passages:

So this sense of nature, as William the Parisian says, is more sublime than any *humana apprehensione* and very close to prophecy, and very (*vehementer*) similar to it. From this *sensus* a certain *mirabilis* splendor of *divinitio* is bestowed on some animals, as is manifest in dogs, who are capable, *through this sense*, to detect thieves and those who hide, and thus seek them out and hunt them up [...]. *Through this same sense*, vultures predict slaughters and battles, and gather in places where such events will occur to feed on the corpses. *Through this same sense*, the baby grouse recognizes its mother which it had never seen, and shuns the grouse that stole the eggs from its real mother and brooded them as its own. *And through this same sense*, the human soul, *omnino ignorante*, *perceives certain remarkable things* and is filled with terror or instinctive horror.

William of Paris tells of a woman in love who could feel the approaching of her lover, when he went to visit her, from up to two leagues' distance. He also tells of a male stork which, through its sense of smell, found out the adultery of his mate, reported it to the gathered members of his flock, and obtained her condemnation [...]. And he also tells of a horse that had unwittingly mounted his mother and, later finding this out, ripped off his genitals with his teeth to punish himself for the incest. Similar stories about a horse are also found in Aristotle, Varro, and Pliny¹².

It is worth remembering that, as early as 1992, Vittoria Perrone Compagni pointed out that Agrippa drew on William of Auvergne¹³, although so far no studies have been devoted to this subject.

12. Cornelius Agrippa de Nettesheim, *De Occulta Philosophia libri tres* I, IV, ed. by V. Perrone Compagni, Leiden-New York-K 1992, 197, l. 1-21; 197, l. 24-198, l. 4, see Guillelmus Alvernus, *De universo creaturarum* I 1, 46, 660F-G; I 3 8, 771A; II 2 69, 922H.

13. V. Perrone Compagni, "Introduction", in Agrippa de Nettesheim, *De Occulta Philosophia libri tres*, 21, n. 46: "The presence of Albertus, and indeed that of William of Auvergne, certainly cannot be reduced to points of detail; on the contrary, it is fundamental to our understanding of the structure of Book 1 of the manuscript version".

A further research path to be pursued, retracing the popularity of the Italian manuscripts of the *De universo*, could be a quest for the sources of Tommaso Campanella's *Del senso delle cose* and *Metaphysica*¹⁴, as a supplement to Germana Ernst, Lorenzo Bianchi, and Guido Giglioni's studies on the relationship between sense and prophecy¹⁵.

According to Giglioni, Tommaso Campanella's sense "in quanto costitutivamente metaforico è anche costitutivamente divinatorio",

in perceiving the rest of the world *as* itself, the spirit projects and anticipates, touches – and is touched in its turn by – what is not immediately present [...]. The spirit of some individuals is so subtle that they "presentiscono le passioni dell'aria dove si fanno le cose, e le predicono"¹⁶.

In the *Metaphysica*, Campanella also writes:

Even before someone speaks, from the mere motion of the imagining soul, the spirit of the listener can understand the meaning of what that person will say in the air susceptible to the word, just like the vision of thunderbolts precedes the noise of thunder¹⁷.

As Giglioni observed, divinatory intuition differs in no way from sensation, but is sharper and more accurate, because the mental image (*motus animae imaginantis*), the intention of the spirit (*significatio spiritus*), the sound waves moving the air, and finally the spoken word (*aër susceptivus verbi*) form a psycho-physiological *continuum* that is at once corporeal and representational. The relationship is as natural as that between the thunder-

14. Tommaso Campanella, *Del senso delle cose e della magia*, ed. by G. Ernst, Roma-Bari 2007, 68: "Un cavallo, scrive Aristotile, che portava rivenza alla madre, ne mai la volse fottere, ma dall'armentario sendo ingannato che con panno coverse la madre, uso il coito e poi, scoperto il tratto, uccise per rabbia l'armentario, e altri se stesso".

15. Tommaso Campanella, *Del senso delle cose*, 69.

16. G. Giglioni, "Senso, linguaggio e divinazione nella filosofia di Tommaso Campanella", *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia* 64/2 (2009), 309-20: 318; Tommaso Campanella, *Del senso delle cose e della magia*, 78.

17. Tommaso Campanella, *Metafisica*, ed. by G. Di Napoli, I-III, Bologna 1967, 53.

bolt and the clap of thunder¹⁸. I will not dwell here on the important role of sensism and divination in Campanella's system, as this has already been done elsewhere. It is just worth stressing that for William, as for Thomas, every entity is endowed with sense, and thus reacts to the slightest stimulation, perceiving it from a distance, both spatial and chronological. However, there are also some differences between the two authors. For Campanella, the power of divination is immanent to nature and discriminates between the true and the fallacious sense of things. For William, instead, God is transcendent. The theory of prophecy is fundamental to understand Campanella's notion of Being, whereas in William the theory of prophecy is an integral part of his theory of *nature*.

If we search in William's texts for a relationship between sense and spirit, between occult virtue and divination, we will see that, like Campanella, William believes them to be connected.

This question is a still unexplored path. Why? William displays a preference for the doctrine of *spiritus* found in the pseudo-Hermetic *Liber de quattuor confectionibus*, where the capture of wolves, lions, birds and reptiles is achieved through *attractio spirituum*. This short text features a scene where Aristoa (an Arabic corruption of Aristotle), thanks to his *spiritum universalem* and the subtlety of his mind, manages to penetrate the *secreta scientiarum occultarum*. For this reason, Hermes declares his willingness to also reveal to him the *secreta* of Aroth-Ismenus, and urges him to take heed, because in his hands *sunt claves futurorum et absconditorum*¹⁹. The illustrated practice is not an exercise in *venatio*, but in knowledge and dominion. Man has the capability to penetrate

18. Giglioni, "Senso, linguaggio e divinazione nella filosofia di Tommaso Campanella", 318.

19. *Liber de quattuor confectionibus*, ed. A. Sannino in "Ermete mago e alchimista nelle biblioteche di Guglielmo d'Alvernia e Ruggero Bacone", 185: "Dixit Hermes: - O Arista, inveni in libro thexauricato ex secretis scientiarum occultarum, que Arod, id est Gabriel, dum doceret Ismenum ea, id est Adam, scientiam naturarum animalium [...]; Et tu, Aristoa, attrahis per spiritum tuum universalem superiorem et universa secreta scientiarum occultarum ac naturalium per subtilitatem tuam, quemadmodum radii solis lumen mundi, et eius fortitudines non tradis oblivioni, nec negligis aliquid ex secretis oculis et subtilibus numque dimittis ingenium neque subtilitatem quam non attrahas per spiritum tuum".

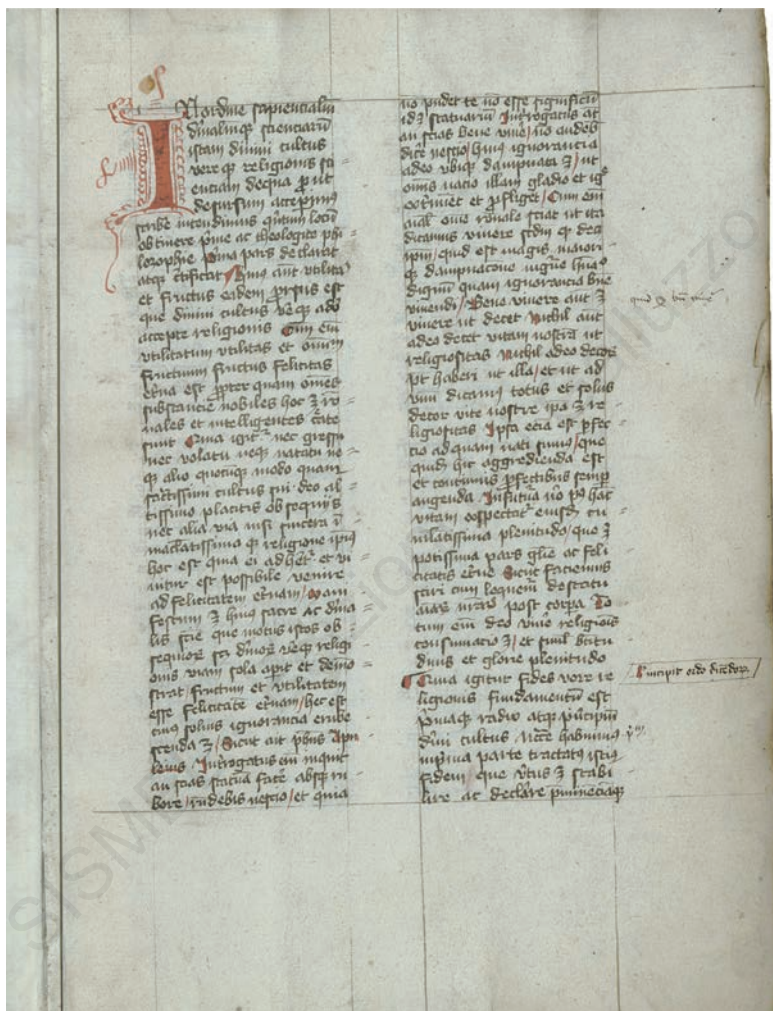
the secrets of nature, whose forces he can regulate and orient by virtue of his imagination (*virtus/spiritus imaginarius*). This doctrine appears to be emblematic for the scholastic thinker. Through it, he strives to distinguish the positive aspects in the science of secrets, this science being a form of *divinatio* – that is, *prophecy* – in which *spiritus* hold a place of honor. *Spiritus* are intrinsic to the nature of every living creature. They are not manifest in themselves, but can be perceived through an effort of human *ingenium*. In the Latin version of the Arabic source, to dominate animals man appeals to their intrinsic properties by praying God to act on the *virtutes* that operate *per virtutem spirituum concordantium*. Thus, the three inferior realms (animal, vegetable and mineral) intersect with the upper realms (God, intelligences, man) through the latter three's ability to set in motion the *vehicula* – *sensus/spiritus/virtus* – between worlds that are no longer divided. Man understands the *secreta naturae*, and can thus help nature to reveal itself. He does not work miracles but, by having recourse to *divinatio quasi divinis imatio*, he can connect the latent forces of creation, becoming a mediator between above and below.

In conclusion, William is on the same path on which Marsilio Ficino, Cornelio Agrippa, Bernardino Telesio and Tommaso Campanella later trod further by having recourse to the *spiritus* of animals. *Spiritus* are equal to *sensus naturae* and *virtus naturalis occulta*: they are present in every body (*spiritus qui latet in illo et in illo corpore*) and can be read/understood by man's *imaginatio*.

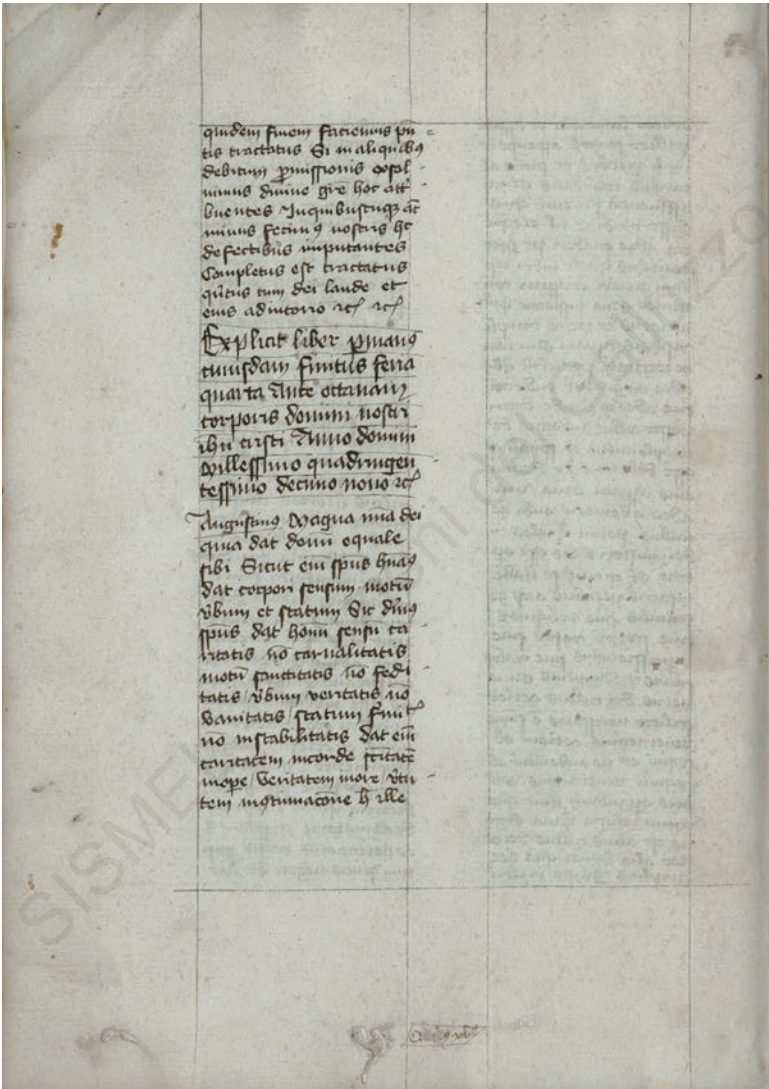
In this long diachronic evolution, from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, *spiritus* or *sensus naturae* or *vis physica*, regarded as the "definitively unknown", eventually became a positive entity in scholastic philosophy. Having been rationalized as "occult properties" thanks to Avicenna's *Canon*, they kept fascinating scholars until early modernity, nourishing new variants of the doctrine of divination.

ILLUSTRATIONS

SISMEL - Edizioni del Galluzzo



1. Incipit De fide et legibus, Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, BJ Rkp. 410 III, f. 1r.



2. Explicit *De fide et legibus*, Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, BJ Rkp. 410 III, f. 149v.

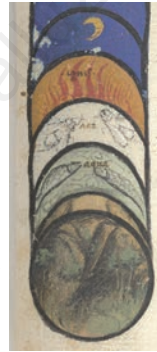


4.

4. *Illuminated spheres*, Rochester (University of), Department of Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservation, MS non catalogued, f. 1r.



5.



6.

5-6. *Details of the spheres*, Rochester (University of), Department of Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservation, MS non catalogued, f. 1r.

APPENDIX

The manuscript tradition of On Laws and On the Universe

This appendix includes *De fide*'s and *De universo*'s manuscripts that are of immediate relevance to understanding William's legacy from the Middle Ages to the early modern period.

The manuscripts are listed in alphabetical order, on three columns: 1. Identification data: city, library, shelf-mark; 2. References to J. R. Ottmann's "List of manuscripts and editions" in Morenzoni, Tilliette (eds.), *Autour de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, 381-82; 387-88; 3. References to R. Saccenti's Appendix, *Early-Scholastic Sources (1160-1248)*, in Saccenti, "Deepening the Senses of the Word: A Survey of Parisian Theological Sources (1160-1250)", *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale* 59 (2017), 59; 62-63; 4. References to the Digital Archives for Medieval Culture (<http://www.mirabileweb.it>).

I highlighted in bold manuscripts absent in the two above-cited lists and in the mirabile.

Table 1 - The manuscripts of *De fide et legibus*

Shelf Mark	J. Ottmann's List (2005)	R. Saccenti's List (2020)	Mirabile (last consultation 18.02.2022)
1. Bernkastel-Kues, Bibliothek des St. Nikolaus-Hospitals, 94, f. 11r-72			
2. Brugge, Hoofdbibliotheek Biekerf (Stadsbibliotheek), 219, f. 262	x	x	x
3. Braunschweig, Stadtbibliothek, LVII, f. 90r-189v	x		
4. Bruxelles, Bibliothèque royale, 1672, f. 11r-111r	x		
5. Bruxelles, Bibliothèque royale, 2183, f. 159r-66r	x		
6. Cambridge, Jesus College, 59, f. 10r-134r	x		

Shelf Mark	J. Ottmann's List (2005)	R. Saccenti's List (2020)	Mirabile (last consultation 18.02.2022)
7. Cambridge, University Library, Kk.4.19, f. 11r-58v	x		
8. Chartres, Médiathèque "L'Apostrophe", 510 (+), f. 11r-66r	x	x	x
9. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi A-IV-106, f. 31r-140v	x		
10. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Lat. 339, f. 21r-146r; 154v	x		
11. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 851, f. 11r-109v	x		
12. Erfurt, Universitätsbibliothek, Dep. Erf., Ca 2° 48, f. 49r-98v	x	x	x
13. Klosterneuburg, Stiftsbibliothek, 349, f. 152v-53v (<i>exceptum</i>)	x		
14. Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, BJ Rkp. 410 III, f. 11r-149v			
15. Lambach, Stiftsbibliothek, 106, f. 11r-105r			
16. Lyon, Bibliothèque municipale, 1511, f. 1-89	x		
17. Mantova, Biblioteca Teresiana (Biblioteca Comunale), 432 (D. III. 6), f. 11r-164v	x		x
18. Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, 954, f. 1-277	x		
19. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 449, f. 11r-148v	x	x	x
20. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 13445, f. 63r-64v, 65v-171r	x		
21. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14317, f. 59r-158v		x	x
22. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 18516, f. 11r-101r, 212r-16v	x		
23. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 26825, f. 277r-96r	x		
24. Nürnberg, Stadtbibliothek, Cent. III 65, f. 21r-56v	x		
25. Oxford, Balliol College, 174, f. 21r-67r	x	x	x
26. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C. 398, f. 121-37v	x	x	x
27. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lincoln College, Lat. 170, f. 1-138, f. 139-181	x	x	x

APPENDIX

Shelf Mark	J. Ottmann's List (2005)	R. Saccenti's List (2020)	Mirabile (last consultation 18.02.2022)
28. Oxford, Magdalen College Library, 109, f. 118r-192r		x	x
29. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 510, f. 1r-86v	x		
30. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 516, f. 24r			
31. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 14311, f. 1-94	x	x	x
32. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 14534, f. 1r-82v	x		
33. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 15755, f. 1r-105r	x		x
34. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Nouv. Acq. Lat. 433, f. 56r-115r	x		
35. Paris, Bibliothèque interuniversitaire de la Sorbonne, 218, f. 1-87			
36. Reims, Bibliothèque municipale, 474, f. 1-94	x		
37. Roma, Archivio Generale dei Padri Carmelitani (Institutum Carmelitanum), III Varia 1, f. 188r-265v	x	x	x
38. Roma, Biblioteca Angelica, 548, f. 1r-105v			
39. Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque de l'Agglomération du Pays de Saint-Omer, 132	x		
40. Salzburg, Stiftsbibliothek Sankt Peter, a.XI.12, f. 40b-177b			
41. Sankt Polten, Diözesanbibliothek, 23, f. 103r-241r		x	x
42. Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 1572, f. 134	x		
43. Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 1715, f. 155	x		x
44. Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 3939, f. 4r-139r	x		
45. Worchester, Cathedral and Chapter Library, F. 32, f. 122v-80v	x	x	x

Table 2 - The manuscripts of *De universo*

Shelf Mark	J. Ottmann's List (2005)	R. Saccenti's List (2020)	Mirabile (last consultation 18.02.2022)
1. Amsterdam, Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica (Mr. J.R. Ritman), 166		x	x
2. Augsburg, Staats-und Stadtbibliothek, 2 ^o Cod. 67, f. 86r-210r	x		
3. Augsburg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. II. 1. 2 ^o 155, f. 200r-34r	x		
4. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Fol. 692, f. 1-213v			
5. Bruxelles, Bibliothèque royale, 1673, f. 9-275	x		
6. Cambrai, Médiathèque Municipale, 167, f.1-323	x	x	x
7. Cambridge, University Library, Add. 6171, f. 2r-229v	x	x	x
8. Chartres, Médiathèque "L'Apostrophe" 512 (†), f. 33-289v	x	x	x
9. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Borgh. 330, f. 1r-48r (pars I); f. 48v-225r (pars II)	x		
10. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Lat. 1054, f. 1r-317r	x		
11. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ross. Lat. 1053, f. 1r-267v	x		x
12. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 848, f. 52r-355r	x	x	x
13. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 850, f. 1r-229r; 322r-69r	x	x	x
14. Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, Hs 272, f. 59r-100v (pars II, 3)			
15. Douai, Bibliothèque Marcelline Desbordes-Valmore, 454		x	x
16. Erfurt, Universitätsbibliothek, Dep. Erf. CA. 2 ^o 182, f. 1r-111v	x	x	x
17. Klosterneuburg, Augustiner-Chorherrenstift, 34, f. 1r-394r	x		
18. Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, BJ Rkp. 500 III, f. (pars II, 2-3 cum indice rerum ordine alphabeti digesto)			

APPENDIX

Shelf Mark	J. Ottmann's List (2005)	R. Saccenti's List (2020)	Mirabile (last consultation 18.02.2022)
19. Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, BJ Rkp. 694 III, f. 264 (pars I, 1-2 cum indice rerum ordine alphabeti digesto)			
20. Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, 1409, f. 1r-252v (pars I, 1-2)			
21. Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, 1410, f. 1-232			
22. Mantova, Biblioteca Comunale Teresiana, A. III 30, f. 1r-268, 272-355v	x		
23. Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, 695, f. 1r-182v (pars I)	x		
24. Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, 697, f. 1r-220v (pars II)	x		
25. Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, 744, f. 60r-66r	x		
26. Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, 1746 (1804, 1682, H 87), f. 53rv (exc.)			
27. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 3798, f. 1r-73v (pars II, 3 <i>De malignis spiritibus</i>)	x	x	x
28. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 3821, f. 172r-221v (pars II, 3 <i>De malignis spiritibus</i>)	x	x	x
29. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14215, f. 1r-218r	x	x	x
30. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14317 (pars III, 2), f. IIIr-57v		x	x
31. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 18519a, f. 266	x		
32. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 18520, f. 241	x		
33. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 21256, f. 188	x		
34. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 21257, f. 177	x		
35. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 21258, f. 55	x		
36. Nürnberg, Stadtbibliothek, Cent. II 10, f. 204r-40r	x		
37. Nürnberg, Stadtbibliothek, Cent. IV 70, f. 1r-321v	x		
38. Oxford, Balliol College Library, 207, f. 2r-199v	x	x	x
39. Oxford, Bodleian Library, lat. th. c. 17, f. 1r (<i>De universo spirituali</i> pars II, 1-3); f. 116v (<i>De universo corporali</i> pars I)	x		
40. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud. Misc. 146, f. 25r-64v (<i>De universo</i> pars II, 3)	x		

Shelf Mark	J. Ottmann's List (2005)	R. Saccetti's List (2020)	Mirabile (last consultation 18.02.2022)
41. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson D. 1451, f. 79v-166r	x		
42. Oxford, Corpus Christi College Library, 130, f. 1r-66v	x	x	x
43. Padova, Biblioteca Capitolare della Curia Vescovile, B. 19, f. 1r-199v		x	x
44. Paderbon, Erzbischöfliche Akademische Bibliothek, Theodoriana Ba 6, f. 213	x		
45. Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, 3476, f. 244	x		
46. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 14310, f. 370	x		
47. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 15756, f. 239	x	x	x
48. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 17473, f. 155	x		
49. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 433, f. 1r-55v			
50. Rochester (University of), Department of Rare Books, Special Collections and Preservation, (illuminated <i>ms.</i> non catalogued: www.textmanuscripts.com), f. 1r-251r			
51. Roma, Biblioteca Angelica 546, f. 1r-230v (pars I, 1)			
52. Roma, Biblioteca Angelica 547, f. 1r-190v (pars II, 1)			
53. Salzburg, Studienbibliothek, V. 4. H 165, f. 342-74	x		
54. Tübingen, Universitätsbibliothek, Mc 31, f. 160v, 182v	x		
55. Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Lat. Z. 305, f. 215 (<i>pars I</i>)	x		
56. Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Lat. Z. 306, f. 235 (<i>pars II</i>) (cl. X, cod. 182, 183)	x		
57. Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 2308, f. 166	x		
58. Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 5389, f. 292	x		
59. Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 5390, f. 310	x		
60. Wien, Schottenstift (Benediktiner), Bibliothek, Cod. 357, f. 1r-259v (pars II)			

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INDEXES

SISMEL - Edizioni del Galluzzo

Index of Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance Authors and Places¹

- Abel *see* Hermes
 Abraham, 67n, 104
 Agrippa, Heinrich Cornelius, 147, 147n, 150
 –, *De occulta philosophia*, 147n
 Abu Bakr Ahmad b. ‘Āli al-Kasdānī, 88n
 –, *Kitāb Falaḥat al-nabaṭiyya/Book of the Nabataean Agriculture*, 88n, 92–93, 95–96, 96n, 97–99
 Adelardus Bathoniensis, 102n
 al-Kindi, 26, 32, 81n
 –, *De aspectibus*, 32n
 –, *De radiis*, 81n
 Alanus ab Insulis, 84, 112, 112n
 Albertus Magnus, 62, 69, 82, 97n
 –, *Summa theologiae*, 53n
 –, *Metaphysica*, 69n., 121n
 Albertus Magnus (Ps.), 68, 70, 82, 96–98
 –, *De mirabilibus mundi*, 68n, 88n, 96n, 97n, 98n, 99n
 Alexander Halensis
 –, *Summa theologica*, 35n
 Ambrosius, 129
 Aristoteles, 3, 12–13, 13n, 28n, 36n, 40n, 42, 54n, 97n, 116n, 62n, 108n, 116, 123, 137–38, 149, 149n
 –, *De anima*, 116n
 –, *De interpretatione*, 37n
 –, *Ethica Nichomachea*, 84n, 138n, 147, 149
 –, *Metaphysica*, 67n, 82n
 –, *Physica*, 126
 –, *Politica*, 122
 –, *Rethorica*, 139n
 Apostles, 75
 Arod (Gabriel), 149n
 Aroth (Ismenus), 149n
 Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis, 18, 37, 50–51, 60, 64, 89n, 127–28, 134, 145
 –, *Confessiones*, 141n
 –, *De civitate Dei*, 32n, 37n, 50n, 51n, 52n
 Avicenna (Ibn-Sina), 7, 12–13, 13n, 15–16, 32, 35n, 39n, 62, 82, 119–21, 150
 –, *Kitāb al-Sifa/Liber de prima philosophia*, 62n
 Avicbron (Solomon Ibn Gabirol), 4, 32, 120
 –, *Sefer Meqor Hayyim/Fons vitae*, 62n
 Bernardino Telesio, 150
 Blanche of Castile queen, 21
 Boethius, Anicius Manlius Severinus, 13n, 37–38, 44, 46, 122, 124, 128–29, 131, 141
 –, *Commentarii in librum Aristotelis Peri Hermeneias pars posterior*, 43n
 –, *Consolatio Philosophiae*, 43n
 –, *De Institutione musica*, 124n, 131n
 Bonaventura de Balneoregio, 8–9, 25

¹ Because of their ubiquity, the entries William of Auvergne, *On Laws*, *On the Universe*, *On the Soul*, etc. are not included in this index.

- Calcidius
 –, *Commentarius in Timaeum*, 131n
 Cassiodorus, 141
 Christus, 75n
 Cicero, 50–52, 58, 60, 70n, 108, 132, 134
 –, *De divinatione*, 51n, 52n
 –, *De natura deorum*, 51n, 52n
 –, *De officiis*, 134n
 Copernicus Nicholaus, 126
- Dante Alighieri, 112
 –, *Monarchia*, 112n
 Descartes René
 –, *Les Passions de l'âme*, 69n
 Dionysius (Ps.), 140
 Domenicus Gundissalinus, 62n, 108
- Eckhart Meister, 63
Esclapius see Asclepius
Exodus, 62n, 66n, 92
- Gabriel Naudé, 144
 –, *Apologie pour tous les grandes person-
 nages, qui ont esté fausement soup-
 çonnez de magie*, 145n
 Gerardus Cremonensis, 62n
 –, *Aphorismata de essentia summae bo-
 nitatis*, 112n
 Gervasius Tiberiensis, 78n
 Gilbertus Porretanus, 120
 Gregorius IX pope, 109
 Guillelmus Autisiodorensis, 109, 127
 –, *Summa aurea*, 35n, 127n
 Guillelmus de Conches, 82
- Heinrichus de Gochum, 145
 –, *Tractatus de superstitionibus*, 146n
 Hermes (Abel)
 –, *Liber de stationibus ad cultum Vene-
 ris*, 102
 –, *Liber lunae*, 102
 –, *Libri septem planetarum ex scientia
 Abel* 102, 102n
 Hermes (Belenus), 103
 –, *De viginti quattuor horis*, 102n
- Hermes Trismegistus (Mercurius,
 Mercurius Aegyptius)
 –, *Asclepius*, 16, 48, 50, 52, 53n, 56,
 56n, 94, 100, 100n, 101–2, 114, 114n,
 115n, 116, 119n, 130, 121n, 149,
 149n
 Hermes (Toz Graecus/Germa Ba-
 bilonensis), 103
 –, *De quattor speculis*, 103n
 Hugo de Sancto Victore, 95n
- Ieremia, 22n
 Iohannes Scotus Eriugena, 7
 Isaac, 67n
 Isidorus Hispalensis, 84, 141
 –, *Etymologiorum Libri*, 70n, 141n
- Jacob, 67n
 Johannes Dominicus Trajanus, 3, 145
 Johannes Picus de Mirandula
 –, *Conclusiones sive Theses*, 81n
 Johannes Schlitpacher (Weilheim),
 143
 Johannes of Wünschelburg, 145n
 Johannes Kepler, 126
- Liber de causis*, 62n, 108, 111, 112n,
 117, 118n?
Liber necromanticus, 130
 Louis IX king, 21, 70
- Mandal (Amandel), 101n
 Marsilius Ficinus, 150
 Mercurius *see* Hermes Trismegistus
 Mercurius Aegyptius *see* Hermes
 Trismegistus
 Moses, 66n, 67n
- Nemesius Emesenus, 118
 Nicolaus Oresme, 68, 68n, 70
 –, *De causis mirabilium*, 69n
 Nichomachus Gerasenus, 122, 128
- Panaetius, 133–34
 Petrus de Abano, 20
 Petrus Lombardus, 98

- Petrus Abelard, 7, 37
 Phylippus Barbarycus, 144
Picatrix, 101, 102n
 Pythagora, 37n, 122
 Plato, 3, 16, 32, 88, 97–98, 124, 126, 129, 131
 Plato (Ps.), 88
 –, *Liber neumich (Liber vaccae, Book of Laws)*, 88, 88n, 89n, 98?
 Plinius, 84, 147
 Plotinus, 32, 48
 –, *Enneads*, 110n
 Posidonius of Rhodes, 50
 Proclus
 –, *Elementatio theologica*, 62n
 Protagoras, 37n
 Ptolomaeus (Ps.)
 –, *Centiloquium*, 57n
 –, *De imaginibus*, 102n
 Robertus Grosseteste, 109
 Robertus Kildwardby, 123n
 Rogerius Bacon, 68, 68n, 69–70, 82
 –, *De multiplicatione specierum*, 81n
 –, *Epistula de secretis artis*, 80n
 Rolandus Cremonensis, 7, 18, 28, 109
 Seneca, 108
 –, *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*, 54n
 Socrates, 43n, 44, 46n
 Thabit ibn Qurra
 –, *De imaginibus*, 102
The Marvels of the World see Albertus Magnus (Ps.)
 Thomas Aquinas, 6, 8, 37, 41, 41n, 45, 62, 69, 74, 109, 112, 130, 135, 137, 139, 140, 145
 –, *Expositio libri Peryermeneias*, 42n, 46n
 –, *In Librum De divinis nominibus*, 140n
 –, *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia*, 74n, 112n
 –, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 46n
 –, *Summa Theologiae*, 74n, 138–39, 139n, 140n
 –, *Super Boethium de Trinitate*, 139n
 –, *Super Librum de Causis expositio*, 112n
 Thomas Campanella, 148, 149
 –, *Metaphysica*, 148n
 –, *Del senso delle cose e della magia*, 148n
 Thomas Cantimpratensis, 18, 90
 Thomas Eboracensis, 9
 –, *Sapientiale*, 29n
 Thomas Gallus, 137
 Varro, 147
 Vitruvius, 128
 –, *De architectura*, 128
 Witelo, 136
 –, *Optica*, 136n

Index of Modern Authors

- Aertsen J. A., 11n, 17n, 56n
 Alessio F., 95n
 Amerini F., 108n
 Andreani L., 61n
 Arkoun M., 64n

 Baumker C., 115n
 Barnes C. L., 8, 8n, 35n
 Barrett C., 133n, 136n
 Bartlett R., 64n
 Beccarisi A., 107n
 Beckmann J. P., 12n
 Bénatouil T., 61n
 Berlioz J., 21, 21n
 Bernstein A. E., 25, 25n
 Bianchi L., 5, 31n, 61n, 148
 Bianchi Luca, 25, 25n, 109n
 Bieler L., 43n
 Binns J. W., 78n
 Boccadoro B., 16, 16n, 17, 124, 124n, 130n
 Boglioni P., 17, 19, 70, 71n
 Bohak G., 102n
 Borgnet A., 121n
 Borok H., 12n
 Boudet J.-P., 76, 77n, 79n
 Bourbon E. de, 9n
 Boureau A., 19n, 64n
 Brach J.-P., 89n
 Brand D. J., 112n
 Bray N., 5, 50, 50n, 63n
 Brewer J. S., 80n
 Best M. R., 99n
 Brightman F. H., 99n
 Broek R. van den, 89n
 Bruyne E. De, 132, 132n, 136, 136n, 137, 137n, 138n

 Bullido Del Barrio S., 109n
 Burman Th. E., 14n
 Burnett Ch., 102n

 Carmody F. J., 102n
 Caroti S., 105n
 Casagrande C., 16, 16n
 Cesalli L., 21n
 Chatelain E., 7n
 Chiesa P., 112n
 Christe Y., 21
 Ciancioso S., 109n
 Collard F., 89n
 Collomb P., 21, 22
 Corti G., 11, 11n, 77n
 Couvalis G., 134n
 Craig W. L., 45n

 D'Alverny M.-T., 81n
 Dahan G., 22, 22n, 23, 95
 Daston L., 69n
 Davy M.-M., 23n
 Delaurenti B., 82n
 Delisle L., 22
 Denifle H., 7n
 Deus J., 90n
 Draelants I., 19, 20n, 28n, 61n

 Eco U., 127n, 132n, 133, 133n, 136n
 Elm K., 64n
 Ernst G., 148, 148n

 Faes De Mottoni B., 14, 14n, 16, 16n, 108n, 121n
 Fahd T., 64n, 88n, 96n
 Faivre A., 89n
 Fanger C., 89n

- Federici Vescovini G., 95n, 20
 Felten, F.J., 64n
- Gauthier R. A., 116, 117n
 Gersh S., 48, 48n, 63, 63n
 Geyer B., 69n
 Giglioni G., 148, 148n, 149n
 Gilson É., 22, 29, 29n
 Giralt Sebastià S., 102n
 Godet A., 81n
 Goulding R., 27, 27n, 28n
- Haarländer S., 64n
 Haldane J., 45n
 Hanegraaff W.J., 89n
 Hansen B., 69n
 Heffernan T. J., 14n
 Hoenen M. J. F. M., 63, 63n
 Honnefelder L., 109n
 Hudry F., 81n
 Hughes Ch., 45n
- Ingham M. B., 135n
 Inglis J., 15n
- Janssens J. L., 12n
 Jaspert N., 64n
 Jensen P. J., 131n
 Jüssen G., 12n
- Karnes M., 64n
 Kieszkowski B., 81n
 King P., 108n
 Kluxen W., 12n
 Kopf S. M., 35n
 Kramp J., 10, 10n, 11
 Kurdzialek M., 118n
- Lagerlund H., 108n
 Le Goff J., 64n
 Lindberg D. C., 81n
 Lucentini P., 56n, 77n, 88n, 89n, 101n, 102n, 103n, 109n, 114n, 115n
 Lugt M. van der, 88n
- Maiello F., 64n
 Maierù A., 95n
- Marrone S. P., 17, 17n, 21n, 29n, 56n, 64n, 77n, 86, 86n, 87n, 91n
 Martello C., 108n
 Masnovio A., 8, 8n, 29, 35n, 36n, 38n, 39n, 40n, 44n, 45n, 48n, 59n, 62n, 120n
 Mayo T. B. de, 27, 27n, 72, 72n, 73n
 Mazzantini P., 113n
 Mcdonald H., 118n
 McKenna T., 9n
 McMahon J. A., 134n
 Meiser C., 43n
 Miller M., 15n, 53n, 71, 71n
 Miller W., 134n
 Möhle H., 109n
 Moody E. A., 10, 10n, 15, 15n, 107, 107n, 111, 111n
 Morenzoni F., 13n, 16n, 17, 17n, 18n, 19n, 21, 21n, 22n, 23, 23n, 24, 24n, 25n, 28n, 63n, 71n, 100n, 108n, 109n, 117n, 120n, 121n, 123n, 124n, 130n, 157
- Nardi B., 113n
 Negel E., 37n
 Newman W. R., 89n
- O'Donnell J. R., 136n
 Ottman J. R., 143, 157-62
- Page S., 27n, 28n, 89n, 101n
 Palaktsoglou M., 134n
 Palazzo A., 77n, 107n, 109n
 Paravicini Bagliani A., 5, 61n
 Park K., 69, 69n
 Parri I., 53n, 56n, 88n, 109n, 119n, 120n
 Pattin A., 111n
 Pasulka D. W., 25n
 Pereira M., 105n
 Perrone Compagni V., 56n, 88n, 89n, 101n, 102n, 103n, 109n, 147, 147n
 Petruccioli S., 95n
 Pingree D., 87, 87n, 102n, 103n
 Porreca D., 77n, 109n, 114n
 Posti M., 35n
 Pouillon H., 132, 132n, 133n, 136n

- Quentin A., 15, 15n, 61-62
 Rackham H., 138n
 Ramos A. M., 135n
 Reilly J. P., 9n
 Retucci F., 109n
 Riballier J., 35n, 127n
 Rider C., 27n, 28n, 89n, 101n
 Riet S. van, 81n
 Rodinson M., 64n
 Rosier Catach I., 17-19, 19n
 Rossetto M., 134n, 157-62
 Saccenti R., 143
 Sannino A., 20n, 31n, 40n, 56n, 61n, 68n, 77n, 88n, 89n, 96n, 97n, 99n, 102n, 105, 109, 114n, 149n
 Santi F., 17, 17n, 18, 18n, 28, 28n, 100n, 109, 109n, 120n
 Schneyer J. B., 23, 23n
 Schumacher L., 8n, 35n
 Silva I., 35n
 Smalley B., 22
 Smet D. de, 12n
 Smith L., 14n
 Sorge V., 5
 Speer A., 11n, 17n, 56n
 Spitzer L., 128, 129n
 Stabile G., 123n, 126, 126n
 Stefani M., 53n, 56n, 100n, 114n, 115n, 119n
 Sturlese L., 5, 63, 63n, 108n, 109n
 Suppes P., 37n
 Tabarroni A., 112n
 Tarski A., 37n
 Teske R., 6, 11, 11n, 12, 12n, 13, 13n, 32n, 33n, 35n, 36n, 38n, 39n, 41n, 42n, 44n, 45n, 46n, 51n, 54n, 60n, 113n, 116n, 117n, 118n, 119n, 120n, 121n, 127n
 Thorndike L., 10n, 71, 71n, 78n, 82, 82n, 83n, 92n, 95n, 100, 101n, 102n
 Tilliette J.-Y., 13n, 16n, 17n, 18n, 19n, 21, 21n, 22n, 23n, 24n, 25n, 28n, 71n, 100n, 108n, 109n, 117n, 120n, 121n, 123n, 124n, 130n, 157
 Travaglia P., 87, 87n, 88n, 99n
 Tsianikas M., 134n
 Valois N., 7, 9, 9n, 10, 22, 71, 71n
 Vaux R. de, 113n
 Vecchio S., 16, 16n, 121n, 123
 Vella A., 108n
 Verger J., 20
 Véronèse J., 101n
 Wade F. C., 13n
 Walker Bynum C., 64n, 67, 67n, 68, 68n, 69n
 Waszink J. H., 131n
 Wei I. P., 8, 8n
 Weill-Parot N., 57n, 77n, 103
 Werner K., 14n
 Weser J., 14, 14n
 Young S. E., 8, 8n, 35n
 Zambelli P., 105n
 Zamponi S., 105n
 Zavattero I., 77n

*Index of Manuscripts*¹

Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 10625: 22	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ross. Lat. 1053: 33n, 34n, 57
—, —, 15954: 23	
—, —, 15755: 79n, 85n	

¹ Manuscripts listed in the appendix are not included in this index.

Finito di stampare nel mese di giugno 2022
dalla S.T.I. (Stampa Tipolitografica Italiana)
Viale Charles Lenormant 112/114 – 00119 Roma