THE CHILDREN OF THE PLANETS: FREEDOM, NECESSITY, AND THE IMPACT OF THE STARS – THE ICONOGRAPHIC DIMENSIONS OF A PAN-EUROPEAN EARLY MODERN DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

The "Children of the Planets" is an astrological visual motif that depicts the seven planets as personified deities along side their 'planet children' who are generally seen as smaller persons below the planet representing the influences and activities associated with each planet. The iconography of the planets themselves can be traced to the 12th century, but we do not see the additional characters, the children, that define this motif, until the 14th century in fresco imagery and not until the beginning of the 15th century in manuscript illumination. This interesting development in depictions of the planets, from the 12th to the 15th century, highlights a shift in the perception and understanding of astrology that culminated in the early modern period. The many Renaissance prints that display this motif are witnesses to the popularity of a new perception of astrology. The purpose of this thesis is not only to retrace the history and development of this motif – to answer some questions about the provenance and meaning of the motif that have never fully been answered – but also to show how as a concept the 'children of the planets' represents a development in the philosophy of the early modern period. The Children of the Planets depict a new model in astrological thinking, a development brought on by a synthesis of ideas occurring in the transmission stories of different texts and images.

The Children of the Planets fit into a broader conceptual framework where we can look at some of the intellectual trends in the fifteenth century. The humanists of this time period, like Marsilio Ficino, give us insight into some of the reasons we find these interactions, of religious, astrological, medicinal, and everyday life, in early prints. In the discussion in our first chapter, we find in Ficino's writings the first use of the term *prisca theologia*. The idea of a 'natural religion,' the idea that the divine is common to all, can be seen in many literatures during this time. This is the way of thinking that was informing the genres of early printing that the Children of the Planets find a venue in. As Ficino himself tried to harmonize Christian theology with Platonic philosophy and Ptolemaic astrology, so

does our motif. The *De vita libri tres* can be seen as a complex example in the genre we will define throughout this essay, of works dedicated to the 'good' way of living through practical approaches toward the acquiring knowledge of the world through right action in everyday life. The manuscripts and prints containing the Children of the Planets are another example. These works provide guidelines for how to approach subjects in philosophy, theology, and health, those topics that readers would find useful and beneficial in their daily lives.

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INTRODUCTION

The "Children of the Planets" is an astrological visual motif that depicts the seven planets as personified deities along side their 'planet children' who are generally seen as smaller persons below the planet representing the influences and activities associated with each planet. The iconography of the planets themselves can be traced to the 12th century,[1] but we do not see the additional characters, the children, that define this motif, until the 14th century[2] in fresco imagery and not until the beginning of the 15th century in manuscript illumination. This interesting development in depictions of the planets, from the 12th to the 15th century, highlights a shift in the perception and understanding of astrology that culminated in the early modern period. The many Renaissance prints that display this motif are witnesses to the popularity of a new perception of astrology. The purpose of this thesis is not only to retrace the history and development of this motif – to answer some questions about the provenance and meaning of the motif that have never fully been answered – but also to show how as a concept the 'children of the planets' represents a development in the philosophy of the early modern period. The Children of the Planets depict a new model in astrological thinking, a development brought on by a synthesis of ideas occurring in the transmission stories of different texts and images.

Something that has often led to some confusion that should be clarified is that when speaking about the iconography of the stars we are speaking of several distinct transmission stories. The story of the *constellations* is different from that of the *planets* and even still the iconography of the *Children of the Planets* is different from both of these. The transmission

[1] Dieter Blume, "Michael Scot, Giotto and the Construction of New Images of the Planets," in vol. 14, *Images of the Pagan Gods: Papers given at a conference in memory of Jean Seznec* (London: Warburg Institute Colloquia, 2009), 129, 132. The *Aratos* by Germanicus (composed in 11th c.) is the 12th century illuminated manuscript which Michael Scot, most likely, drew from (Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid MS 19 [16]), is the earliest series of the personified seven planets.

[2] That is, in the frescos originally designed by Pietro d'Abano and painted by Giotto in the Salone of the Palazzo della Ragione, Padua. Unfortunately this cycle of the planet children was destroyed in a fire in the 15th century, and retouched then. They were restored again in the 18th century after weather damage. There are 14th century copies though, that give us some idea about what features were original. See Blume, "Michael Scot, Giotto, and the Construction of New Images of the Planets," 137, fn. 17.

of the constellations has come to us from Greek sources, through the *Aratea*,[3] and is still recognizable from antique models today. "Images of the constellations constitute, in fact, the only uninterrupted iconographical tradition leading from Antiquity through the Middle Ages into the Renaissance."[4] But the iconography of the planets originated only later, in the 12th century, when we first begin to see individual personifications of the moon, for example, or series of the seven 'movers' (αστέρες πλανήτες [asteres planetes] meaning 'wandering stars'), the five planets and the two luminaries (sun and moon).[5] But these bore little to no resemblance to the antique gods. In the 13th century we see creations of planet figures by individual artists, those in Georgius Fendulus' or Michael Scot's works. Dieter Blume writes that the "bridge leading back to the gods of Antiquity was thus definitely burned. Even educated readers would not have made the connection anymore. So in the field of planetary astrology, there was in fact no survival of the pagan gods."[6] Even though we have depictions of the gods that they are associated with in antiquity, these gods were not combined with personifications of the celestial objects until much later in the 16th century. As for their 'children,' we will see just how these developed through the course of this thesis.

This also brings us to another point of clarification. The texts that commonly appear along side the Children of the Planets motif are not understood to be necessarily directly related to the motif. Rather it is thought that this motif did not originate as an illustration of a text, but instead is an independent visual series that appears along side different texts. There develops different traditions that place the motif next to excerpts from the *Introductorium maius* and *Kitāb al-Mawālīd* by Abû Ma'shar al-Balkhī (Jaʿfar ibn

[3] That is the corpus of the Greek poet Aratos, third century BC.
[4] Rembrandt Duits, "Reading the Stars of the Renaissance: Fritz Saxl and Astrology," *Journal of Art Historiography* 5 (2011): 10. Also, Ernst Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1970), 26–27.
[5] As in a bronze mirror from 1153 AD, Iran. Stefano Carboni, *Following the Stars: Images of the Zodiac in Islamic Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 6.
[6] Blume, "Michael Scot, Giotto, and the Construction of New Images of the Planets," 136. On Warburg's 'survivals' see Georges Didi-Huberman, "The Surviving Image: Aby Warburg and Tylorian Anthropology," *Oxford Art Journal* 25, no. 1 (2002): 59–70.

Muḥammad al-Balkhī, 787–886 AD), in both Arabic and Latin versions, but the illustrations of the Children of the Planets do not specifically mimic the description in the corresponding passage. It seems that they come from an already established tradition of planetary depictions of the professions, at least in Islamic art, but we do not have any examples of this tradition in manuscripts before those in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* (1399). The 9th century corpus of Abû Ma'shar, works like the *Kitāb al-Mawālīd*, are only illustrated later, in the 14th century. Still, I find what is interesting is that when his works are illustrated, that is exactly when the Children of the Planets first appear (in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*). "When it was decided to depict these astrological powers, the appropriate images first had to be invented. And it was not Ovid, but Abû Ma'shar who was consulted."[7] The importance of following the motif as both an independent work of art and as a motif that accompanies specific texts is therefore necessary if we really want to understand how the motif first came about.

One of the greatest difficulties I have found with my study of the Children of the Planets is tracing the iconography of the motif as an independent artistic series, that seems to be independent of any text, and at the same time researching the contexts in which it appears along side certain texts. I have found that it is necessary to follow the texts in which the motif appears in order to put together a full picture of their history. The difficulty of tracing the motif alone, as a visual work without a text, is that there are huge gaps in the imagery examples, and, up until the late 15th century, very few. We can only guess at the connection between the few examples in Islamic manuscripts and those of the Western models. The examples we have in fresco imagery are far removed from both.[8]

In the introduction to the most comprehensive work on the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*, Stefano Carboni's *Il Kitāb al-Bulhān di Oxford*, Ernst Grube wrote about his research that "the

[7] Blume, "Michael Scot, Giotto, and the Construction of New Images of the Planets," 130.
[8] For example, the frescoes of the Salone in the Palazzo della Ragione, Padua, 14th century, and the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara, c. 1470.

recognition of the absolute necessity of an integral study of both text and accompanying images" is an important new dimension that should not be ignored.[9] Eva Baer was interested as well in the relationship between a possible textual precedent for the Children of the Planets in the Arabic *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* (Goal of the Sage),[10] otherwise known as the *Picatrix* (in Latin translation),[11] with the images in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*.[12] More recently Rembrandt Duits emphasized the puzzling impetus in Fritz Saxl's research on the Children of the Planets to think "in terms of a direct intercultural transmission of images rather than of an intercultural transmission of texts with separate illustration traditions in each culture."[13]

Dieter Blume points to the need for analysis of both text and image, especially in light of the early examples of the planets in Fendulus's *Liber astrologiae* (ca. 1230s) (extracts from Abû Ma'shar's *Introductorium maius*, 9th century), or those created by Michael Scot (ca. 1220s) where he formed his illustrations based on his own imagination combined with textual details from Abû Ma'shar. In this way the text becomes very important, even when it does not correspond to the imagery that accompanies it exactly. The context that it gives to the motif informs us about the immediate surroundings which are important evidences of how the motif came to be.

Chapter 1 of this thesis will open a discussion on the implications of the philosophical relevance of the motif in astrology of the early modern period. Chapter 2 will follow the intercultural transmission of texts and images of the Children of the Planets and will look at examples of the motif in order to reveal points of development within the representations. Chapter 3 will focus on the Children of the Planets in early print and how these were incorporated into everyday life. The introduction to this thesis will continue here

[9] Stefano Carboni, *Il Kitāb al-Bulhān di Oxford* (Torino: Editrice Tirrenia Stampatori, 1988), 111.
[10] Hellmut Ritter and Martin Plessner, trans., *"Picatrix" Das Ziel des Weisen von Pseudo-Magriti* (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1962).
[11] The Arabic *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* was identified by Wilhelm Printz in 1920 as the original of the Latin *Picatrix*.
[12] Eva Baer, "Representations of 'Planet-Children' in Turkish Manuscripts," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 31, no. 3 (1968): 526–533.
[13] Duits, "Reading the Stars of the Renaissance: Fritz Saxl and Astrology," 6.

with a discussion of the use of the motif, will list some of the examples we have, and will look at the theoretical framework for the Children of the Planets in a broader astrological context.

i. The Motif as a Tool

The early modern individual would have been acutely aware of the planet that governed the moment of their nativity. The use of prescriptions, prayers, and formulae to induce that planet to do well by someone accompanied what might seem a determinist discourse. But fate and free will walked hand and hand in the most popular of the literatures of this time. The idea of the intermediary deities of the Zodiac and planets were key to this thinking. The Children of the Planets were often found along side popular Christian motifs. The Children of the Planets were associated with the days of the week and served, along with the depictions of the Zodiac and Labors of the Month, as an instructive calendar. One of the reasons this motif was so popular, almost as widely printed as biblical motifs, was because of its usefulness in everyday life. It functioned as a horoscope in which the planets could be seen performing human actions, participating in human affairs. The artists of these works were reconstructing an astrological recipe at first, and gradually incorporated scenes of everyday life intermixed with the planet figures. The Children of the Planets gives us an insight into a pivotal development in the frame of mind of the early modern individual because it shows how an understanding of cosmology could be delivered to a wide audience through images, and how this could correspond to religious practice and could be incorporated into daily life. This phenomenon in the early modern period opens a discourse about the intersection of astrology and theology that is informed by the histories of science, medicine, astronomy, and religion.

My argument for the significance of the Children of the Planets, as a tool that illustrated a new form of astrological thinking, fits into a broader thesis according to which

the humanists saw the need for practical ways to access the divine. When ideas of individuality and free will could potentially conflict with belief in divine will and providence the understanding of the stars offered a way of harmony. The way of solving this conflict, contacting a remote God, was through the use of intermediary divinities (Liberal Arts, Fates, Fortune, Planets, angels) combined with scientific practice. This idea stemmed from a transformation that occurred in Arabic transmutations of Greek cosmogonies and culminated in their Latin and vernacular translations of the 12th–15th centuries.

ii. Examples

I will list here some of the examples we have of the Children of the Planets in manuscripts and print. I will limit this list to those that will be addressed in this thesis. The earliest examples of the Children of the Planets, wherein we see in a series of seven separate folios depicting the planets, accompanied by multiple personifications of their correspondences, their children, appear just before the turn of the 15th century. Genreally they are thought to depict the correspondences, activities, and professions associated with each planet, e.g., Saturn, black, diggers, farmers, toil, old age, death, an old man on a crutch, a reaper, a hang-man, a begger; Jupiter, white, nobility, a lord, archers, riders, scholars; Mars, red, wrath, war, fire, killing, fighting; Sun, gold, prayer, kings, fencing, wrestling, ruling; Venus, bathers, lovers, musicians, dancers; Mercury, green, craftsmen, doctors, scribes, illuminators; Luna, silver, magicians, water, fishermen, fools. The earliest example in the West is the 1407, *Épître d'Othéa*, by Christine de Pisan (BNF MS fr.606), with other early examples being the 1445 Kassel manuscript (Passauer Calendar, 2 Ms. astron. 1), the 1460 *De Sphaera* (Cristoforo de Perdis, Lat. 202, Estense, Modena), the 1475 Joseph of Ulm MS (originally dated to 1404, Tübingen Library, UB M. d. 2.), the 1491 *Heidelberger Schicksalsbuch*, (Cod. Pal. Germ. 832), the 15th century Rawl. D 1220, in English, the 1480

Housebook (Waldburg-Wolfegg),[14] and 16th century examples in the *Splendor Solis* (Berlin Kupferstichkabinett, Cod. 78 D 3, ca. 1531, Harl. MS 3469, d. 1582). The earliest printed example, coming even before movable type is a woodcut Block-Book print, the *Planetenbuch* (Heidelberg, Universitatsbibliothek, Cod. Pal. Germ. 438, 149r–150v), probably dating from about 1455, but possibly earlier.[15] Other early prints are found in the 1460 Baccio Baldini engravings, the 1460 London Block-Book in the British Library (I A 27), the 1460 Basel Block-Book, Öffentliche Bibliothek (A N V 37a), 1470 *Wirkungen der Planeten* Block-Book (Granger Collection), the 1470 Berlin Block-Book, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen, the Copenhagen Block-Book, Statens Museum for Kunst (Det kongelige Bibliotek); the Vienna Block-Book (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ink.2.d.4); the 1510 prints of Jörg Breu the Elder (Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, Staatliche Museen), and the 15th c. *Schwabach* Block-Book (Kirchen-Kapetelsbibliotek). The Augsburg prints of Erhard Ratdolt are a source of comparison for planet figures, as those seen in the 1488 *Flores astrologiae* of Abû Ma'shar, *Astrolabium planum* of Johannes Angelus, and the 1489 *Magnis coniunctionibus*.

The Arabic *Kitāb al-Bulhān* (Baghdad 1399, Bodl. MS Or 133) and the lesser known Ottoman *Kitāb al-maṭāli' al-sa'āda wa-yanābī' al-Sayyāda* (Book of ascensions of bliss and the fountains of Lordship, 1582, BNF Suppl. Turc. 242, PM M. 788), are rare examples of the motif in Islamic iconography, each show 56 panels, 7 planets, and 7 x 7 children, elaborately illustrated. How these are related to the *Kitāb akham al-Mawālīd*

[14] See, Zdravko Blazekovic, "Variations on the Theme of the Planet's Children, or Medieval Musical Life According to the *Housebook*'s Astrological Imagery," in *Art and Music in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Katherine A. McIver (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003), 242–244. The *Housebook* in a way bridges the gap between manuscript and print, because it illustrator is famous for his early dry-point prints.

[15] Blazekovic, "Variations on the Theme of the Planet's Children," 244, fn. 3. See, Adam von Bartsch, *Illustrated Bartsch: German Single Leaf Woodcuts before 1500*, no.161, ed. Richard S. Field (New York: Abaris Books, 1987).

(Book of nativities), a source to both the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*[16] and the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* will be seen.

The Kraków *Picatrix* (BJ 793, discovered in 1915, which dates to ca. 1458), the only illustrated Latin manuscript of this infamous 11th century handbook of talismanic magic, depicts four 'children' of each planet. It is an important text for its variations from other manuscripts and its East-Central European origin. There is also a Spanish manuscript composed under Alfonso X (Reg. lat. 1283a, folios 1–36[17]), that contains fragments of the *Picatrix*,[18] which Aby Warburg identified in 1911 (sometime in the vicinity of discovering the Latin version) containing many brilliant illustrations of the planetary figures, some of which bear interesting similarities to the Kraków manuscript.

iii. Fritz Saxl and the Surrounding Scholarship

Though the Children of the Planets motif has been discussed by well-known authors, most importantly Fritz Saxl, the art historian and director of the Warburg Institute and Library, and colleague of Aby Warburg,[19] there are still questions that remain about its provenance. Without Saxl's research on the Children of the Planets, begun in 1912, there would be no comprehensive comparison of examples or catalogue of manuscripts surrounding the motif. Saxl developed, with Hans Meier, a system of understanding the different types of planet iconographies based on their different source texts. Many of the questions that are still unanswered about the Children of the Planets motif may have been answered if not for the

[16] The first treatise in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* is Abû Ma'shar's 'Book of Nativities,' this is why we often see the manuscript as a whole is often attributed to Abû Ma'shar. See, Stefano Carboni, "The Wise Abû Ma'shar al-Balkhi from the kitāb al-bulhān," in *Venice in the Islamic World, 828–1797*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

[17] For a published edition of Vaticanus Reginensis 1283 see Alfonso d'Agostino, *Astromagia (MS Reg. Lat. 1283 a) de Alfonso X el Sabio* (Naples: Liguori Editore, 1992). Margharita Fiorello has worked on an English translation of the text based on this text. See "Hermes Zodiologion," accessed on 04.01.2012, http://heavenastrolabe.net/hermes-on-moon-mansions.

[18] David Pingree, "Between the Ghaya and the Picatrix: The Spanish Version," *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 44 (1981): 27–56.

[19] See, Fritz Saxl, *A Heritage of Images: A Selection of Lectures by Fritz Saxl*, ed. Hugh Honour and John Fleming, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970). Also, Fritz Saxl and Erwin Panofsky, "Classical Mythology in Mediaeval Art," *Metropolitan Museum Studies* 4, no. 2 (1933): 228–280.

untimely deaths of these two early scholars. Some of Saxl's conclusions have been questioned and recently reexamined (even he had hesitations about his own transmission theory that traced the motif from Hellenistic through Oriental to Babylonian sources)[20] by Dieter Blume, Stefano Carboni, and Ewa Śnieżyńska-Stolot. Scholarship generally agrees that the motif depicts the seven planets with people performing the human professions, but there is more to the story than this. I will look at how, in the Eastern examples, the multiple anthropomorphic figures in the motif represented forms of the planet itself, multiple 'planetoids,' and not simply humans born under each planet's influence. We can see in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* (Book of Wonderment), *Kitāb al-Isṭamāṭīs* (Book of Istamatis), and the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* (Goal of the Sage) examples of this.

Erwin Panofsky, Raymond Klibansky, and Fritz Saxl in their work *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art*[21] traced the origins of melancholia back to Pythagorean philosophy through 'humoralism,' the belief in the doctrine of the four humors corresponding to the four elements and divisions of time. Melancholia was the nature associated with the planet Saturn and black bile. Thus the melancholic person was the person born under the influence of the planet Saturn, the Saturnine nature synonymous with the melancholic. This work examined many examples of the Children of the Planets motif in the case of Saturn, including Dürer's *Melancholia I*. Earlier Aby Warburg encountered the motif in his studies of the Palazzo Schifanoia frescos in Ferrara.[22] During that time Warburg made possibly his most important iconographic discovery, that the images in the central row of the Schifanoia frescos (ca. 1470) were derived from descriptions in Abû Ma'shar's *Introductorium maius*. Warburg also identified the Children of the Planets in the frescos, specifically, the children of Venus (see Image 30). Many of the questions about the origin and provenance of the planetary iconography that

[20] Duits, "Reading the Stars of the Renaissance: Fritz Saxl and Astrology," 3.
[21] Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1964).
[22] Aby Warburg, "Italian Art and International Astrology in the Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara" in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity* (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 1999), 563–591.

were left pending after Warburg's research were handed over to Saxl who would also study the iconography of the constellations, coming up with an explanation of their transmission that is still today the model for other scholars. The transmission of images of the planets became Saxl's area of expertise for the remainder of his career. Saxl found relationships between planetary motifs in the Children of the Planets, Labors of the Months, and Decans.[23] In the 1950s and 1960s D.S. Rice and Eva Baer additionally established a manuscript relation between Arabic and Ottoman examples of the motif, in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* and the *Kitāb al-maṭāli'*.[24] More recently David Pingree (1933–2005) and Charles Burnett also did extensive research on the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*.[25] In his 2011 article, "Reading the Stars of the Renaissance: Fritz Saxl and Astrology," Rembrandt Duits points to the need for revisiting some of Saxl's valuable research, while reexamining scholarship on the theory of the transmission and the origins of planet imagery. These have remained uncontested only until recently when Dieter Blume pointed out some of the gaps in Saxl's transmission theory.[26] Lastly, D.S. Rice's conclusions about the possible northern Italian predecessor of the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* have never been reconciled with Saxl's transmission theories, and this conflict is something I will return to.

We know that one text often appended to the Children of the Planet images was derived in part from Abû Ma'shar's *Introductorium maius*.[27] The writings of Abû Ma'shar were very influential in the Renaissance, and reoccur in the works of many important figures. Marsilio Ficino's work dedicated to Matthias Corvinus, *De vita coelitus compranda*, shows some of this influence, as well as the *Picatrix*.[28] The *Picatrix* was also an influence on this book of Ficino's, and he gives many descriptions of anthropomorphic

[23] Panofsky and Saxl, "Classical Mythology in Mediaeval Art."
[24] Baer, "Representations of 'Planet-Children' in Turkish Manuscripts," 526–533; D. S. Rice, "The Seasons and the Labors of the Months in Islamic Art," *Ars Orientalis* 1 (1954): 1–39.
[25] Pingree, "Between the Ghaya and the Picatrix."
[26] Dieter Blume, *Regenten des Himmels: Astrologische Bilder in Mittelalter und Renaissance* (Berlin: Akademie, 2000).
[27] Carboni, *Following the Stars: Images of the Zodiac in Islamic Art*, 5.
[28] Ficino also gives a Decan description which he takes from Abû Ma'shar, for example. See, Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 70.

planetary figures that mirror those in the *Picatrix*. Ficino approached the understanding of mankind as 'children of the planets' with tools to harness the benevolent qualities of a given planet through science and medicine, even if we are born under a "bad sign" (he being a child of Saturn himself).[29] Ficino introduced a new quality to the children of Saturn, where a melancholic nature could be used toward devout scholarship.[30] This character of Ficino's marks the very particular approach to science and theology that was emerging at that time, where the individual lived under the influences of the divine spheres, yet was capable through practical means of magic to manipulate the confines of destiny. This was an attempt by an exemplary Renaissance individual that reflects the idea of man's desire to use his own hands to capture the divine, and to put it into use in everyday life.

The Children of the Planets motif was a scientific, a religious, and a practical tool. In a 2010 conference paper, "Astrology as Sociology: Depictions of the 'Children of the Planets' 1400–1600," Geoffrey Shamos discussed how this motif helped people in the early modern period to understand the science of the cosmos, and was even a social tool for "categorizing corporate identity,"[31] meaning that people could use the motif to identify where to place themselves among a group of individuals that all shared the same character, birth sign, or vocation. Therefore the Children of the Planets had an important sociological function as well. Each planet, among its other correspondences, sympathized with different activities and professions. In some of the more elaborate examples we can see popular trades of the 15th century, a manuscript copier, an icon illuminator, a musician playing a hurdy-gurdy, even a street magician demonstrating the 'cups and balls' routine (see Image 1).

[29] Carol Kaske and John Clark, "Introduction," in *Three Books on Life*, Marsilio Ficino (New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1998).
[30] See, Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*.
[31] Geoffrey Shamos, "Astrology as Sociology: Depictions of the Children of the Planets 1400–1600," (lecture at conference "Imagining Astrology: Painted Schemes and Threads of the Soul," University of Bristol Institute for Research in the Humanities and Arts and the Centre for Medieval Studies, July 10, 11, 2010); his dissertation by a similar title: "Depictions of the 'Children of the Planets' in European Art, 1400–1600," (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, n.d.); also, "Lords of Lords: Courtly Depictions of the 'Children of the Planets,'" (seminar, "Origins," Eighth Annual Graduate Humanities Forum Conference, University of Pennsylvania, Feb., 28, 2008).

By learning the principles of astrology and the artifacts of a given planet, the knowing scholar would be able to operate upon, or in accordance with, the forces of Fortune, thus triumphing over her, and practicing the will of God. For example, the Children of the Planets falls under the heading of 'catarchic astrology' which "denying the determinism of ordinary astrology, attempts to provide rules for choosing the moments most auspicious for commencing activities in this world,"[32] much like the sympathetic magic of the *Picatrix* which attempts to provide the same tools. In the *Picatrix* the significance of depicting the planets in multiple forms was in order to draw down from them their power (or influence of the god) in the form of a spell in order to perform a task.[33]

To understand the significance of this motif, we must first look at the time period that popularized it. "This was a time when intellectual forms dominated and filled life; a time when even festival pageants were influenced by the basic thoughts concerning freedom, destiny, and the relationship of man to the world. In such a time, thought does not remain enclosed within itself but rather strives for visible symbols."[34] The Children of the Planets is an example of this striving to put the intellectual into the visual in early modern thought. It was used to express religious ideas particularly about the correspondences between heavenly objects and their mundane counterparts. It revitalized the power of images in the religious thought of the time. Thus the motif related a philosophy through its depictions. A 'child of the planet' was the image of the god of the planet with the artifacts, colors, symbols, expressing the ideas corresponding to each, thereby imparting knowledge of all these things when looking upon it.

iv. Treatise on the Seven Planets: The Children of the Planets in the

[32] David Pingree, "Some of the Sources of the Ghāyat al-hakīm," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 43 (1980): 7.
[33] Eugenio Garin, *Astrology in the Renaissance: The Zodiac of Life* (London: Routledge/ Kegan Paul Ltd., 1984).
[34] Ernst Cassirer, "Freedom and Necessity in the Philosophy of the Renaissance," in *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (New York: Harper/Row, 1963).

Framework of Ptolemaic Astrology

The first appearances of the Children of the Planets come to us at the beginning of the 15th century, the earliest examples being those anomalous images in the 1399 *Kitāb al-Bulhān* (Book of Wonderment, Bodl. Or. 133)[35] and the illuminations in Christine de Pisan's 1407 *Épître d'Othéa*. But we can discuss the contexts in which these images were formed by looking at the traditions of astrological texts that have informed the motif. Ewa Śnieżyńska-Stolot explains that the system informing the astrological attributions associated with the planets follows Teucer of Babylon (1st century AD), his sequence beginning with Mars (Abû Ma'shar and the *Picatrix*, for example, follow Teucer's system).[36] It is from Teucer that we have descriptions of the Decans, Terms, and Climes, which we will discuss in this thesis.[37] Raymond Llull (ca. 1232–1315) adds modifications to the Decan lore of this system, where he includes the daily solar motion – ascendant, stationary, and descendant – and positions of the planets.[38] The broader heritage of works describing the planets and their earthly correspondences came from many sources drawing on Teucer, such as Manlius (c. 14 AD) and Rhetorius the Egyptian (7th c. AD). Tuecer's explanation of certain astrological aspects differed in some points from Ptolemy. Ptolemy provided the broader astronomical model that would dominate the Middle Ages. Ptolemy collected and adapted earlier astronomical literatures and provided geometrical models, in an effort provide an improved understanding of the universe. Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblios* and *Almagest* were widely known and reproduced, having been translated and commented on by Arabic sources, for

[35] We will speak in Chapter II about the two other Ottoman examples, which are derived from the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*.
[36] She compares this to a second but similar distinct system, the Indian system of Varahamihira (532 AD). Ewa Śnieżyńska-Stolot, *Astrological Iconography in the Middle Ages: The Decanal Planets* (Cracow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2003), 10.
[37] Stephan Heilen, "Ptolemy's Doctrine of the Terms and Its Reception," in *Ptolemy in Perspective: Use and Criticism of his Work from Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Alexander Jones (New York: Springer, 2010), 57.
[38] Ewa Śnieżyńska-Stolot, *Astrological Iconography in the Middle Ages: The Decanal Planets* (Cracow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2003), 10.

example, by Abû Ma'shar (787–886) in his *De magnus conjunctionibus*.[39] Abû Ma'shar's *Introductorium maius* is another crucial source of astrological ideas in the medieval and early modern eras, and it is from this work that the text that commonly accompanies the Children of the Planets motif is derived.[40] Along with the *Centiloquium* ascribed to Ptolemy, these astrological works describe the influences of the planets on the sublunar world. They follow a heliocentric model of the universe that can be compared with the Aristotelian model made up of 55 concentric circles, where the Ptolemaic system would have a simplified 10 spheres and additional refinements concerning uniform circular motion modified by epicycles. This system was familiar throughout the antique world. "Islamic astrologers conceived of the universe as a series of concentric circles with the earth at the center. Charts found in medieval manuscripts, such as in early copies of al-Qazwini's cosmological work entitled *'Aja' ib al-makhluqat wa ghara' ib al-mawjudat* (The wonders of Creation and the Oddities of existing Things), written in the second half of the 13th century, elucidate this theory."[41] A most influential Greek text on astronomy translated into Arabic was Ptolemy's *Almagest*. "The most important, original contribution of Islamic scientists to astronomy is the study of the rotation of the moon…The system of the Lunar Mansions (manazil al-qamar)…corresponds to the moon's twenty-eight 'stops' – that is, to the number of phases from new moon to new moon within the Zodiac."[42]

These traditions of astrology were incorporated into many different confessions throughout late antiquity. The terms 'astrology' and 'astronomy' we can point out were used interchangeably probably until the 14th century, when we begin to see some examples of the terms being used differently. We see Pietro d'Abano (1257–1316) struggling to distinguish the two terms between their derivation from similar Greek terms *logos* and

[39] Keiji Yamamoto and Charles Burnett, trans., eds., *Abû Ma'sar on Historical Astrology. The Book of Religions and Dynasties (On the Great Conjunctions)*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2000).
[40] Blazekovic, "Variations on the Theme of the Planet's Children," 244, fn. 6. See also, Panofsky and Saxl, "Classical Mythology in Mediaeval Art"; and Warburg, "Italian Art and International Astrology in the Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara," 567.
[41] Carboni, *Following the Stars*, 3.
[42] Carboni, *Following the Stars*, 4.

nomos, one being a descriptive science on the motion of the stars while the other being the juridical, describing their effects.[43] Pietro d'Abano, whose work probably inspired the Children of the Planets frescos in the Palazzo della Ragione in Padua, references the *Speculum astronomiae* of Albertus Magnus (1193–1280) in his discussions promoting astrology. More specifically Albertus Magnus defended astrology as a Christian form of knowledge[44] in the *Speculum astronomiae* (written after 1260), and responded to a Paris debate culminating at the time, in 1277, with the 219 propositions of Bishop Tempier that forbade certain astrological works, such as Al-Kindi's (802–873) *De radiis stellarum*.[45] Albertus Magnus used both Ptolemy's and Abû Ma'shar's works to structure and defend his system of astrology.[46] Astronomy/Astrology was included among the seven Liberal Arts, generally listed as Grammar, Rhetoric, Dialectic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy. Charles Burnett points to an interesting variation of the Liberal Arts in the *Disciplina clericalis* of Petrus Alfonsi,[47] the 11th/12th century polemicist, translator from Arabic, and Jewish convert to Christianity, who was physician at the court of Alfonso VI of León and Castile. Here, instead, we have Dialectic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Medicine, Music, Astronomy, and the undetermined seventh being either Necromancy, Philosophy, or Grammar. In the *Picatrix* the first chapter of the third book is dedicated to explaining which planets govern which arts. The list of the sciences associated with Mercury, are, for example, "dialectic, grammar, philosophy, geometry, astronomy/astrology, geomancy, the

[43] Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, V (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953).
[44] Scott Hendrix, *How Albert the Great's Speculum astronomiae was Interpreted and Used by Four Centuries of Readers: A Study in Late Medieval Medicine, Astronomy and Astrology* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010).
[45] Benedek Láng, *Unlocked Books: Manuscripts of Learned Magic in the Medieval Libraries of Central Europe* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2008), 23, fn. 27.
[46] Richard Lemay, "The Paris Prohibitions of 1210/15, the formulas of absolution by Gregory IX (1231), and the Incipit of Albertus Magnus' *Speculum Astronomiae*. Origin and canonical character of the *Speculum Astronomiae*," Unpublished paper, n.d.; Richard Lemay, *Abû Ma'shar and Latin Aristotelianism* (Beirut: The Catholic Press, 1962).
[47] Charles Burnett, "Talismans: Magic as Science? Necromancy among the Seven Liberal Arts," in *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages: Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds* (Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1996).

notary art, augury" and the interpretation of language.[48] These kinds of variations show us not only that astrology was a subject seen as central to the discovery of knowledge, but that other subjects which we might assume conflicted with the status quo in fact played a larger role in medieval Europe. We see that astrology was well incorporated into Christian, Jewish, and Islamic exegeses. This is apparent in the treatise on the seven planets that we will examine in the following chapters, which are not only attributed to many different authors, but also incidentally found in all different confessions.

There are treatises of the properties of the seven planets and nativities attributed to Islamic authors, like Jābir ibn Hayyān (as in Christine de Pisan's work, *Épître d'Othéa*) and Abû Ma'shar, but also to Jewish sources, like Ibn Ezra. This last attribution we find in William Lilly's 1655 introduction to the English translation of Johannes Angelus's *Astrolabium planum* (published in 1488 by Erhard Ratdolt, a work whose primary source we can trace through Pietro d'Abano back to Abû Ma'shar). He writes that the work "had its Original from the Aegyptians, and was first made known to us in Europe by the learned Jew Even Ezra," that is, Abraham Ben Meir Ibn Ezra (1089–1164), the well-known Toledan philosopher, astronomer, and writer. Christian sources also commonly included works about the seven planets, for example the *Book of the Seven Planets* by Ramon Llull (1232–1315), the Christian philosopher and translator. In it he examines certain traditions and attributes ascribed to each planet in a critical account. Even though it is difficult to track down Llull's sources, because of his style of writing which does not cite any, the description of the planets' features are familiar to us from other authors, similar to those in the *Centiloquium*, or in later author's like Johannes Angelus and Christine de Pisan. Saturn is described as "of the complexion of earth…it is masculine, diurnal, bad, and rules lead and Saturdays. It rules Capricorn and Aquarius and completes its cycle in thirty years."[49] Llull says melancholy,

[48] Greer and Warnock, *Picatrix*, 3.1:135.

[49] Ramon Llull, "The Seven Planets: Saturn," 1.1 in *Book of the Seven Planets*, http://lullianarts.net/planets/planet.html. This is the only edition provided by the Ramon Llull Database, Centre

good memory, and all the above properties belong to people "influenced" by Saturn, and that each planet is a lord of the things below which are "the imprints of operations above [the planets] imprinting their likenesses on natural operations with their natural properties and virtues, like a foot leaves its print in sand."[50] This seems to reflect very much the Ptolemaic understanding, maybe even particularly through the intricacies discussed in the *Speculum astronomiae.*

The presence of astrology along side religious discourse can be explained by a way of thinking about religion as a universal tendency, something we might call "natural religion," that is, the idea that the belief in the divine is common to all.[51] In the 12th century we can speak of a certain "discovery of nature" that preceded movements in natural philosophy.[52] This trend went hand and hand with Greek and Arabic translation movements. Its counterpart in the 15th century is seen in such works as *De pace fide* of Nicholas Cusanus (1401–1464) in his expression "*una religio in varietate rituum*" (one religion in many rituals). We find the idea of a "universal language" of religion in the 13th century *Book of the Gentile and the Three Wise Men* of Ramon Llull, where we have a discourse between four individuals from different religions, again looking for the "true" religion. The work is a dialogue set in an ideal forest where three "wise men" comes across a grove of five trees. They begin a discussion in which they are aided by a lady who appears on a white horse, Intellegentia, who instructs them to learn the secret language of nature, which is inscribed in the trees that surround them. They are joined by a pagan man who, before he realizes that the three men are of different faiths, Jewish, Islamic, and Christian, requests to convert to the religion that they are discussing. The men offer him a compromise where they will all

de Documentacio Ramon Llull (http://centrellull.ub.edu/), University of Barcelona, http://orbita.bib.ub.edu/ramon/bo.asp, all accessed on April 17, 2012. For a Spanish edition see, Ramon Llull, "Tratado de astrología," ed. Joan-Manuel Ballesta, *Revista Astrológica Mercurio-3*, no. 34 (Barcelona, 1991), 177.

[50] Ramon Llull, "Questions," 2.2 in *Book of the Seven Planets*, accessed on April 17, 2012, http://lullianarts.net/planets/planet.html.

[51] Stanley Tambiah, "Magic, Science, and religion in Western Thought: Anthropology's Intellectual Legacy," in *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 5.

[52] Yossef Zvi Schwartz, "Religious Conversion and Migration of Knowledge" (course lecture, Central European University, Budapest, Feb. 27, 2012).

participate in a discussion in order to find the best faith. This dialogue gives us a sense of the way of thinking that would have placed astrological ideas inside a philosophical discussion taking place between different confessions.

We will see in the following chapters how the Children of the Planets are couched in these ideas, and that the texts that we find them among reflect an inclusive type of theology in the early modern period. In all the contexts that we find the motif we can observe a sense of eclecticism. The *Épître d'Othéa* serves as a comprehensive guide to the noble way of life informed by the knowledge of the ancients, while the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* is a collection of astrological treatises and different "wonders" of creation, whose purpose may also have been to serve as a compendium of ancient knowledge. The treatises of the *Housebook* (1480 Waldburg-Wolfegg), the work which provides us with perhaps the most well-known examples of the Children of the Planet's motif, is a collection of a variety of diverse topics, from medicine, to astrology, to the art of memory, which was probably designed as a learning tool for its owner. In the *Picatrix* manuscript Canon. Misc. 500 we find this most famous treatise on magic next to an illustrated herbal and a *Clavis* of Trithemius. The Block-Books, like the *Heidelberger bilderkatechismus planetenbuch* (Cod. Pal. germ. 438), are also found in compilations of various works of astrology combined with Christian theological themes. In every example we see the motif participating in a dialogue with the texts that surround it, a dialogue between the collected knowledges of many cultures that inform and respond to each other.

Chapter 1

"Being a Planet's Child by Choice"

The aim of this first chapter is to explore the idea that originally inspired this thesis, that is, the Children of the Planets as a concept, and to show how it embodies an attitude toward theology that was a signature of Renaissance individualism.

I first came across the Children of the Planets through a perhaps unexpected route. While researching a Hermetic treatise called the *Asclepius* (ca. 300),[53] which deals with cosmology, human nature, and certain theurgic religious practices, I found my way to Marsilio Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda*, which is in part a commentary on this work. Here the idea that 'we are all children of the planets' first occurred to me as an analogy for the revival of astrology in the 15th century, ushering in the rather modern concept that the individual, through his own actions, is capable of interacting with the divine on a daily level – and, specifically, that he has a choice in the matter of his own destiny. This led me ultimately to Ernst Cassirer's treatment of Ficino's contribution to the philosophical discourse on freedom and necessity. No recent scholarship has continued the conversation started by Cassirer about the Children of the Planets as a way of thinking, a fact that is not surprising based on the very small number of scholars who have written in detail about the Children of the Planets motif in general. One of the few people who has recently commented on the Children of the Planets, Rembrandt Duits, remarked on this fact when I

[53] For discussions on this work see: Pasquale Arfé, "The Annotations of Nicolaus Cusanus and Giovanni Andrea Bussi on the Asclepius." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 62 (1999): 29–59. Clement Salaman, *The Asclepius: the Perfect Discourse of Hermes Trismegistus* (London: Duckworth Publishing, 2007). Brian P. Copenhaver, ed. *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius in a New English Translation, with Notes and Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Antoine Faivre, *The Eternal Hermes: From Greek God to Alchemical Magus*, trans. Joscelyn Godwin (Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes Press, 1995). A. J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismegiste I: L'astrologie et les sciences occultes*, vol. 1, reprint (Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1989 [1944]). Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Sympathy or the Devil: Renaissance Magic and the Ambivalence of Idols," *Esoterica* 2 (2000): 1–44. Vincent Hunink, "Apuleius and the 'Asclepius.'" *Vigiliae Christianae* 50, no. 3 (1996): 288–308. Jean-Pierre Mahé, *Hermès en Haute-Égypte*, 2 vols. (Quebec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1978–82), 2:45–272, 1:16–20.
Marvin Meyer, *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition*. Excerpt from the *Perfect Discourse* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2007).

spoke with him in April 2012. Duits has also pointed out in his recent article (2011), "Reading the Stars of the Renaissance: Fritz Saxl and Astrology," that until Dieter Blume,[54] no one had questioned Saxl's account of the origin of the planet iconography, nor has anyone else done significant follow up on his comprehensive studies of the Children of the Planets. That being said, this chapter will approach the conceptual basis for the Children of the Planets through the available sources, while charting new territory where the argument demands. For the moment then we will briefly step away from the strict sense of the Children of the Planets, solely as a visual motif, and consider its more philosophical implications.

I. Cassirer and his treatment of Ficino's Astrological Solution: Finding Free Will in Divine Will

The conceptual basis for the Children of the Planets theme comes from a philosophical perspective peculiar to the Renaissance, as elaborated by Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945) in his work *The Individual and the Cosmos*.[55] Cassirer used the term 'children of the planets' in his chapter "Freedom and Necessity in the Philosophy of the Renaissance" to describe the close proximity felt by many of the humanists, like Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), to the stars. The discussion of fate and free will, amongst the oldest of philosophical debates, was enlivened by humanistic ideologies on the borderlands of modernity, where new scientific approaches, based on Ptolemaic astronomical models, had to find their place in a religious discourse.

As an astrological idea, the Children of the Planets is a descendant of the same Ptolemaic system of astrology that Ficino was using and that was the standard throughout the Middle Ages. Ptolemaic astrology (Ptolemy, 90–168), a popular refinement of Aristotelian cosmology, was based on a geocentric model of the universe that consisted of

[54] Dieter Blume, *Regenten des Himmels: Astrologische Bilder in Mittelalter und Renaissance* (Berlin: Akademie, 2000), 201–204.
[55] Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (New York: Harper/Row, 1963).

ten concentric spheres, earth being the first followed by the seven planets, moving in epicycles within their own orbits, surrounded by the sphere of the fixed stars, and lastly the sphere of the prime mover. This astronomical system was elaborated in the *Almagest* (the title derived from the Arabic translation of the Greek '*Mathēmatikē Syntaxis*'), which had been translated from Arabic into Latin around 1230. The *Tetrabiblios* provided the more theoretical astrological concepts of the Ptolemaic understanding, along with the Pseudo-Ptolemaic *Centiloquium* (appearing in the early 10th century).

Cassirer pointed to Ficino's unique treatment of astrological topics, not only in his ways of attempting to harmonize them with Christianity, but also in his attempts to modify (and manipulate) concepts of fate and divine will with astrological recipes.

> The *same* planet can become the friend or foe of a man; it can unfold those powers that bring bliss or those that bring evil, according to the inner attitude that man assumes towards the planet…Ficino retains the idea of 'being children of the planets'; but in addition to this natural descendance from the planet he also recognizes an intellectual descendance – he recognizes the possibility, as has been said, of being a 'planet's child by choice.'[56]

For Ficino there are ways of interacting with the planets that can enhance their beneficial influences. Through religious practice then, that is aligned with both God and the stars, Ficino proposes a course toward a healthy way of living, and one where individual actions have a role to play. Whether a divine will dictates the outcomes of events or Fortune uses the stars to do so, the course of the future is determined in both theological and astrological dogmas. This is part of the reason that these two can sometimes be married, as in Ficino's Christianity. For Ficino, there are some ways of softening determinism through right living. What part the individual has to play and whether he has any control of his own choices, is a question that has always bothered the philosophy of religion. To keep things simple, we can look at one source of Ficino's understanding, from an almost unending list of sources where freedom and necessity have been discussed, in order to understand how our theme, the Children of the Planets, communicates a unique solution to this problem.

[56] Cassirer, "Freedom and Necessity in the Philosophy of the Renaissance," 113.

II. Augustine on Fortuna and Felicitas

St. Augustine (354–430), in book five of *De civitate dei*, examined closely discourses on happiness and fate.[57] Augustine distinguished two realms (as in the central theme of this work, the earthly city versus the 'city of God') in his discussion of fate; the earthly sphere and the sphere of salvation. First he 'redefines' fate, distinguishing it from the common definition, as that which is dictated by the stars, comparing this to the Stoic definition, as an 'order of causes' which was begun by the First Cause (or God).[58] Augustine instead defines fate as providence in the earthly realm, and defends the individual will, even if it is something that God always foresees. The hidden causal order of events is God's will. At the same time he dealt with the topic of the determinism of astrology and undermined it, for example, with the analogy of twins,[59] where he used two people being born at the same time, yet being ultimately very different, as proof that astrology does not dictate character unquestionably. He examined the counter argument to this criticism of astrology as well, in the story of the 'Potter's Wheel' of Figulus (Nigidius), who spun the wheel and marked it twice, at the same moment, revealing when the wheel was stopped that the marks were far apart, in order to demonstrate that the velocity and expanse of the heavens are so great in comparison to the moments each twin is born, that each actually has their own distinct mark on the heavens and distinct horoscope. In the sphere of salvation, Augustine defines fate as divine grace through another analogy of twins, Jacob and Esau (V, 4). Here the difference in their two characters is a result of a choice that God made, and not dictated by the moment of their birth, where Jacob was literally grasping the heal of his brother, and therefore was born in the same moment, but was different in every possible way from Esau (Gen. 25:26).

[57] Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, Books IV–VII, no. 412, vol. 2, trans. William Green (Cambridge: Harvard University Press – Loeb Classical Library, 1963).
[58] Augustine, *City of God*, 179, 5.8.
[59] Augustine, *City of God*, 139–159, 5.2–5.6.

Augustine also looks at Cicero's critique of the Stoic definition of fate, as a "chain of causes" ascribed to "the will and power of the supreme God."[60] Cicero denies that there can be any foreknowledge of the future, by God or man, thereby denying astrological divination and prophecy.[61] Augustine says he prefers to deal with refuting the astrologers, who at least believe in destiny, than to deal with Cicero on this point. But he accepts the replacement of the determinism in the fate of astrology with a fate that was predestined by divine will. Augustine recognized, of course, the problem of free will (*liberum arbitrium*), that if all is decided beforehand by God, then there would be little point to life in general.[62] "But if there is a determined order of causes by which everything that happens happens, then all things that happen happen by fate. If this is the case, there is nothing really in our power, and the will really has no free choice. And if we grant this, says Cicero, the whole basis of human life is overthrown."[63] And if human laws do not actually have any consequence, then there is no real justice in the world, says Cicero.[64] Cicero "chose free will" over foreknowledge of the future, therefore rejecting astrological divination and an all-knowing God. This is why Augustine tried to define fate in such a specific way, or even to replace the term altogether, with the will of God, or as an order in which necessity operates, where things happen for a reason. This does not exclude free will for Augustine. For him we still have a choice, even if it is one that God foresaw us making. "Nor do we fear that our acts of free will (*voluntate facimus*) will not be acts of free will if it is granted that he whose foreknowledge cannot be mistaken foreknows that we will so act. Cicero had this fear and so rejected foreknowledge. The Stoics had it, and so they said that not everything happens by necessity, although they maintained that everything is brought about by fate."[65] Augustine wrote a dialogue dealing

[60] Augustine, *City of God*, 165, 5.8.
[61] See, Cicero, *On Divination*, trans. W. Falconer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press – Loeb Classical Library, 1923); Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press – Loeb Classical Library, 1933), 3.95.
[62] Augustine, *City of God*, 171, 5.9.
[63] Augustine, *City of God*, 171, 5.8.
[64] Cicero, *De fato*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press – Loeb Classical Library, 1948), 40.
[65] Augustine, *City of God*, 171, 5.9.

with additional problems about free will in his work *De libero arbitrio* (On free will). Simon Harrison's book about this work examines a difficulty that arises when scholars try to explain Augustine's understanding of free will objectively, in a "single, monolithic 'theory of will.'"[66] He proposes that Augustine approaches the problem of free will subjectively, as a problem of knowledge, where Augustine might ask, "how do I know I am free?" Harrison calls this appraoch "Augustine's way into the will."[67] He suggests that what seems to be a conflict to some scholars might actually be the result of a complex understanding of free will for Augustine.[68] Augustine often points out that anyone only wills what is good, and that it is only an unwitting consequence that sin occurs through free will.[69] John Rist commented on this understanding of Augustine's, writing "free will is a good, and that it is better that God created men subject to the possibility of the abuse of free will than that he did not create them."[70] This aspect expressed for Rist Augustine's mature view of free will (as seen in *De civitate dei*), where man has chosen the lesser of two virtues in the cases that he sins, but borders on a "philosophical chimera" that places man between good and evil.[71] Free will for Augustine is something that effects daily life, something that could add to the virtue of one's character, but it is not something that will ultimately interfere with the destiny that has been set for each person, by God, in the realm of salvation.

Necessity is redefined too, not simply as those things outside of our power to control, such as death, but rather as the need for things to happen for a reason.[72] Choice is essential

[66] Simon Harrison, *Augustine's Way into the Will: The Theological and Philosophical Significance of De libero arbitrio* (Oxford: Oxford University Press – Oxford Early Christian Studies, 2006), vii.
[67] Harrison, *Augustine's Way into the Will*, vii.
[68] Gerald Bonner's made a comparison of the different positions that Augustine could take on the matter of free will, where he saw both "the earlier teacher, who proclaimed the freedom of the will; and the later Doctor of Grace and defender of Predestination." See, Gerald Bonner, *God's Decree and Man's Destiny* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987), xii.
[69] Augustine, *De libero arbitrio*, trans. (Westminster: Newman Press, 1955), 2.1.3.
[70] John Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 108.
[71] Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*, 131.
[72] Augustine, *City of God*, 183, 5.10.

for the correct belief in God. "There is no right living if there is no correct belief in God"[73] and this can only result from a conscious effort to follow Him. The will still exists, even if God foresees it. This seemingly paradoxical argument is perhaps one of the few places that we see Ficino deviate from Augustine, who he looks to in general for religious authority. Augustine was aware that a comprise between fate and divine will could be had, saying "some make this (astrological fate) independent of the will of God, while others maintain that it depends upon his will"[74] but ultimately decided not to mend the two. For him it is within God's will to choose to make anyone happy. Thus Augustine would choose, if he had to, Felicitas over Fortuna, for if "happiness were a goddess, it would be affirmed that she alone might properly be worshiped."[75]

So Ficino's distinct move was in the opposite direction of Cicero on the subject of free will. All three thinkers, Cicero, Augustine, and Ficino, refuse to part with free will. But each represent a different philosophical way of dealing with it in relation to the divine. Cicero in refusing to part with free will, chooses the simplest answer; he does away with divination and the foreknowledge of God. Augustine wants both free will and divine will, so parts with divination/astrology, and distances divine will from the negative meanings of 'fate.' Ficino refuses to part with astrology, divine foreknowledge, or free will, and he uses astrology as a tool for the individual will to tap into divine foreknowledge. This is Ficino's astrological solution to the problem of fate and free will. Augustine and Cicero both renounced astrology because of a determinism they felt there, but Ficino saw it as a tool to harness one's own fate and put individual free will in alignment with the divine will. Ficino sees himself as a child of a planet (Saturn), in order to establish his kinship to the heavenly realm. In that sense, as a descendant of the stars, he participates in his own destiny, the making of his own fortune; becoming the planet that dictates the outcome of his own fortune. Becoming like a planet, the very planet that governs one's nativity, will eventually

[73] Augustine, *City of God*, 187, 5.10.
[74] Augustine, *City of God*, 135, 5.1.
[75] Augustine, *City of God*, 133, 5. Preface.

lead, through formulas and practice, to becoming the planet itself, at which point the individual governs his/her own fate. We will look at how the planets can act as intermediaries through their mundane correspondences, or how this was understood as possible in the following section.

III. Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda* and the *Picatrix*

Ficino's cosmography was based on a Ptolemaic universe, and was one that understood the whole world as a living creature. He relied heavily on an understanding of the universe that related each person's destiny to the arrangement of the planets at their birth. But he made sure to add that one can choose what qualities of each planet we are to be influenced by. Ficino himself was a "child of Saturn,"[76] doubly so, as Aquarius (governed by Saturn) was on the horizon, with Saturn rising, at the moment of his birth. Saturn was generally believed to be 'a bad star,' associated in depictions of the Children of the Planets, for example, with pain, death, poverty, old age, and solitude. But Ficino found other meanings associated with the planet, like wisdom, scholarship, and a devotional life, showing how all great philosophers were born under Saturn, and emphasized these qualities in his first work *De vita libri tres* (Three Books on Life). In their work, *Saturn and Melancholy*,[77] Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl traced the path of 'melancholia,' i.e., the Saturnine nature, through Renaissance art and literature. They attributed to Ficino the reinvigorating of the melancholic nature with positive qualities, thus creating a new way of being a child of Saturn. "He it was who really gave shape to the idea of the melancholy man of genius and revealed it to the rest of Europe."[78] A child of Saturn in the Ficinian model was a scholar, an astrologer, a philosopher, as student of ancient wisdom – what we might

[76] Even though Scorpio, ruled by Mars, was his Sun sign, he was both bothered by and felt akin to Saturn, which is indicated in many of his letters. Marsilio Ficino, *Opera omnia*, 2 vols. (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmo, 1959–1962), 732.
[77] Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1964).
[78] Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, 255.

identify as the description of a humanist. So, in this sense 'melancholia' was the complex disposition that defined a way of life. "Thus, out of the intellectual situation of humanism – that is to say out of the awareness of freedom experienced with a sense of tragedy – there arose the notion of a genius which ever more urgently claimed to be emancipated in life and works from the standards of 'normal' morality and the common rules of art. This notion arose in close combination with the notion of a melancholy."[79]

Carol Kaske and John Clark remark on Cassirer's treatment of Ficino and the idea of becoming 'a planet's child by choice' in their introduction to Ficino's work. They describe how Ficino used the stars through sympathetic magic in order to "enhance free will rather than discovering its impotence."[80] The idea that we are each descendants of the stars which are in the sky at the moment of our birth is informed by a doctrine of correspondences, which saw the microcosm as analogous to the macrocosm. In a hierarchy of genuses, elements in each were related by similarity to each other, in astral, animal, mineral, and vegetable life, e.g., Sun-King-Lion-Gold-Sunflower. This 'Great Chain of Being' was a concept thought to be derived from the writings of Plato and Aristotle and popularized through Neoplatonism in the Middle Ages. The idea of correspondences between heavenly and mundane objects can be seen in many different works, extending from the 'golden chain' in Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* (Dream of Scipio) to the stellar rays of Al-Kindi's *De radiis*. This way of thinking was common to the early modern thinker. As we mentioned earlier, Ficino saw the cosmos as an animal: "Most important, the cosmos is itself an animal more unified than any other animal, the most perfect animal."[81] This analogy was his way of understanding the doctrine of correspondences. Each part of the world was related to every other part, because they participated in a whole, the body of the cosmos. For the Renaissance individual like Ficino, Cassirer wrote, there was a new way of relating this doctrine of correspondence, through a 'new astrological vision' of the world. Through his

[79] Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, 254.
[80] Kaske and Clark, "Introduction," *Three Books on Life*, 38.
[81] Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, 251.

own modifications made on the doctrine of stellar rays, Ficino was able to involve the individual "consciousness" in the deterministic discourse, in order to bring the microcosm closer to the macrocosm. In Ficino's *De vita libri tres* the system of astrology "begins with the thought that inasmuch as the world is not an aggregate of dead elements but rather an animate being, there can be in it no mere 'parts' that possess an independent existence next to and outside the whole. What appears externally to be a part of the universe is, when more deeply grasped, to be understood as an *organ* possessing its definite place and its necessary function in the whole complex of life of the cosmos."[82] Each part of the microcosm is an expression of the whole, governed by a hierarchal order to the cosmos. This "*emanatistic* sort of physics" Cassirer sees as evident in the *Picatrix*, one of Ficino's sources for his third book on life, *De vita coelitus comparanda*.[83]

Eva Baer, in her article "Representations of 'Planet-Children' in Turkish Manuscripts," pointed out the similarity to the descriptions of the planets and professions in the *Picatrix* with the depictions of the Children of the Planets in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* (Book of Wonderment), which we will discuss in detail in chapter 2.[84] Baer saw an obvious lineage between the Children of the Planet depictions and the concept of correspondences between planets and individual characteristics described in the *Picatrix*. The *Picatrix* had long been a suspect of influence on Ficino's work, since Aby Warburg, Fritz Saxl, and Hellmut Ritter pointed this out in 1922, but this was not confirmed for many decades.[85] This work was well known among 15th century authors and continued to gain repute throughout the Renaissance, even though it was never published. It is an amalgam of supposedly over 200 different sources, according to its own introduction, collecting the knowledge of the ancient

[82] Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos*, 113.
[83] Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos*, 110.
[84] Eva Baer, "Representations of 'Planet-Children' in Turkish Manuscripts," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 31, no. 3 (1968): 526–533.
[85] Kaske and Clark, "Introduction," *Three Books on Life*, 45. See Hellmut Ritter, "Picatrix, ein arabisches Handbuch hellenistischer Magie," *Vortrage der Bibliothek Warburg* 1 (1921/1922): 94–124.

sages, from "Chaldeans, Nabateans, Egyptians, Greeks, Turks, and Hindus."[86] It was attributed to Maslama al-Majriti (d. 1007)[87] by Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406), but it is now known to date to a few decades after his death.[88] It was translated from Arabic first into Spanish, at the court of Alfonso X, in 1256, and later into Hebrew and Latin.[89] Its mysterious title in Latin, *Picatrix*,[90] was also thought to be the name of its author (as we will see Ficino believed), who is still unknown. It includes primarily Hermetic and Neoplatonic philosophies and draws largely on the epistles of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā (Brethren of Purity), *De imaginibus* by Thābit ibn Qurra al-Ḥarrānī (826–901), Jābir ibn Hayyān (721–815), Abû Ma'shar (787–886), the Pseudo-Ptolemaic *Centiloquium,* and the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Kitāb al-Isṭamāṭīs* amongst others.[91] The discovery of a letter in which Ficino explained that he had incorporated all of the useful parts of the *Picatrix* into his third book finally confirmed the assumption that much of his *De vita coelitus comparanda* had been drawn from the *Picatrix*.[92] Ficino dictated (to Michele Acciari) in this letter to Filippo Valori, who was hoping to borrow a copy of the *Picatrix*, saying that he had already returned the book to 'Georgio,'[93] but that there was no need to read it as he had "transferred it to those books he himself composed…whatever is in any way useful or important in that work, may be read point for point perhaps better and certainly more fully and clearly in his own book *De vita*.

[86] John Michael Greer and Christopher Warnock, *Picatrix: Liber Atratus Edition* (n.p.: Adocentyn Press, 2010/11), 3.5.
[87] Raquel M. Diez discusses the possibility of Qadi Sa'id al-Andalusi (1029–1070) as the author. Raquel M. Diez, "Alfonso X el sabio: Picatrix (Ms. Vaticano Reginensus Latinus 1283a)," (PhD diss., New York Univ., 1995), 12 [Warburg FBH 295.D32].
[88] Specifically 1047–1051 AD. Garin, *Astrology and the Renaissance*, 46.
[89] Recently Charles Burnett informed me that a Hebrew manuscript of the *Picatrix* has been discovered to predate the Latin by Reimund Leicht. His publication on the matter is forthcoming. See also, Reimund Leicht, *Astrologumena Judaica*: *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der astrologischen Literatur der Juden* (Tuebingen: Mohr Siebeck GmbH & Co. K, 2007).
[90] Henry Kahane, Renée Kahane, and Angelina Pietrangeli, "*Picatrix* and the Talismans," *Romance Philology* 19, no. 4 (1966): 574–593.
[91] Pingree, "Some of the Sources of the Ghāyat al-hakīm," 7.
[92] Daniela Delcorno Branca, "Un discepolo de Poliziano Michele Acciari," *Lettere italiane* 28 (1976): 468–481. For the letter see, MS Florence, Nazionale, Filza Rinuccini 17, Insert 6, fols. 8v–9v, Letter II.
[93] As to the identity of 'Georgio,' Paola Zambelli has offered Giorgio Anselmi da Parma the elder, rather than the alternative guess of Delcorno Branca, Giorgio Cipro. Zambelli points to the fact that Anselmi da Parma and his son authored and tried, unsuccessfully, to publish a work based on the *Picatrix*. See, Paola Zambelli, *White Magic, Black Magic in the European Renaissance: From Ficino, Pico, Della Porta to Trithemius, Agrippa, Bruno* (Boston: Brill, 2007). Also, Branca, "Un discepolo de Poliziano Michele Acciari."

If you reflectively and carefully read the latter, you won't miss a thing from…the famous *Picatrix*."[94] The favorite subject of the *Picatrix* is planet correspondences, including which professions they are each associated with, the proper prayers to the planets, and lists of how they should be depicted in images. In this way it is very much a predecessor to the Children of the Planets concept, where practically every correspondence that is portrayed in Children of the Planets illustrations is mentioned explicitly or suggested in the *Picatrix*.[95] Ficino uses the passages about the images proper to each planet in his third book, detailing passages of the *Picatrix* in 3.18, for example, to acquire a long life one would make an image of Saturn on sapphire with Saturn rising: "The form was this: an old man sitting on a rather high throne or on a dragon, his head covered with a dark linen cloth, raising his hands above his head, holding in his hand a sickle or a some fish, and clothed in a dusky robe."[96] We will recognize this description in the image we have of the illustrated *Picatrix* (see Images 12–18). Here he shows some hesitation about their usage, but defends them even pointing to the *Speculum* for support. He claims they are effective regardless and points to a story that Iamblichus gave of a certain Olympius, a magician who wanted to "planet-strike" (*siderare*)[97] Plotinus through the use of similar images. Ficino says the attempt backfired, and Olympius "planet-struck" himself instead, because Plotinus was somehow protected from the dangerous influence of the planet, by his own genuine nature.[98]

De vita coelitus comparanda claims to be a commentary on Plotinus (205–270), probably *Ennead* 4.3.11, "On the difficulties about the Soul."[99] In actuality it is as much a commentary on Plotinus as it is of two other works, one being the *Picatrix* and the other

[94] Kaske and Clark, "Introduction," *Three Books on Life*, 85, fn. 2. Original: "ea in libros quos ipse de vita composuit transtulisse…quum praesertim quae in eo ipso opere lucidiusque, legantur in illo ipso libro quem De vita inscripsit quem quidem si diligentissime volveris, nihil…a Picatrice illo…desiderabis." (MS Florence, Nazionale, Filza Rinuccini 17, Insert 6, fols. 8v–10v, Letter II).
[95] For explicit examples, see Baer, "Representations of 'Planet-Children' in Turkish Manuscripts," 526–533.
[96] Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, 3.18:335–337.
[97] 340, line 125.
[98] Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, 3.18:341.
[99] It could also be a commentary on 3.4.5, "On our allotted guardian Spirit," as well, being as this is also the subject of 3.22 of *De vita coelitus comparanda*. Plotinus, *Enneads*, trans. A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge: Harvard University Press – Loeb Classical Library, 1967), 153–155.

being the *Asclepius*.[100] 4.3.11 is the only place that Plotinus discussed calling gods into statues, what Ficino saw as an allusion to the "god-making" passages of the *Asclepius*,[101] a Greek Hermetic text that was known throughout the Middle Ages, unlike the bulk of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, in its Latin translation. The *Asclepius* discussed, in a dialogue between Hermes Trismegistus and his adepts, a means toward achieving true knowledge of the divine. The most important and most secret way to contact the divine nature was through the practice of animating statues and drawing down the spirits of celestial beings (daemones) into them, described in passages 24 and 37. Many authors who valued the Hermetic writings, wanting perhaps to incorporate them into a broad canon of 'ancient wisdom,' like Augustine or Lactantius (240–320), wrote about the *Asclepius*, struggling with the meaning of these passages. Ficino, valuing the Hermetic writings as ancient wisdom, tried to harmonize these difficult passages with his specific Christian philosophy. His translations of the *Corpus Hermeticum* reintroduced the Hermetic writings and ushered in what some scholars saw as a 'Neo-Hermetic' movement.[102] One of the few other places that we find the kind of practice described in the *Asclepius*, drawing down celestial spirits into statues (aside from commentaries on the *Asclepius*), is in the *Picatrix*, and this is probably why Ficino combined his knowledge of the *Picatrix* with his commentary on Plotinus's discussion of this subject in his third book.

IV. The Perfection of the Self and 'Perfect Nature'

An additional subject that both of these works share, the *Picatrix* and *Asclepius*, with Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda* is the pursuit of the perfection of the self. This topic, which has come to define Renaissance humanism, was of primary importance to Ficino's *De vita libri tres*. Here he proposed a healthy 'way of life' could be achieved by aligning

[100] Kaske and Clarke, "Introduction," *Three Books on Life*, 29, 47.
[101] Whether Plotinus is actually referencing the *Asclepius* would be interesting as the text itself is dated to sometime before 300 AD, which could make it contemporary with Plotinus's own writings.
[102] Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

the individual with the planet that governs them, and through something like one's 'daemon,' in the Socratic sense of the word.

> Whoever therefore wants to have the heavens propitious, let him undertake above all this work, this way of life;…the activity which from tender years you do, speak, play-act, choose, dream, imitate; that activity which you try more frequently, which you perform more easily, in which you make the most progress, which you enjoy above all else, which you leave off unwillingly. That assuredly is the thing for which the heavens and the lord of your horoscope gave birth to you. Therefore they will promote your undertakings and will favor your life to the extent that you follow the auspices of the lord of your geniture, especially if that Platonic doctrine is true (with which all antiquity agrees) that every person has at birth one certain daemon, the guardian of his life, assigned to his own personal star, which helps him to that very task to which the celestials summoned him when he was born.[103]

The path toward the perfection of the self is found in Ficino's work through a harmony achieved with the world around us and governed by the stars that we are each born under. This is probably where Cassirer saw the innate bond between man and planet in Ficino's work: "To be sure, there is a bond, says Ficino, that joins every man to 'his' planet from the moment of his birth; and that bond is indestructible."[104]

The perfection of the self is achieved in *Picatrix* by contacting one's own 'perfect nature,' through one's pneuma or, again, one's 'daemon,' with the help of an incantation.[105] Four pneumata are named for the 'perfect nature,' much like the planetary pneumata that are said to govern one of each of the seven planets and the seven regions of the world, the Climes. In the *Picatrix* Hermes (Trismegistus) describes the way in which he found his perfect nature:

> When I wished to understand and draw forth the secrets of the world and of its qualities, I put myself above a certain pit that was very deep and dark, from which a certain impetuous wind blew…Then there appeared to me in a dream a beautiful man of imperial authority…I asked him who he was, and he replied: 'I am Perfect Nature.'[106]

After Ficino discusses finding one's own star or personal daemon in 3.23, he also states that one must also know "exactly what region your star and your daemon initially designated you to dwell in and cultivate, because there they will favor you more. Assuredly, it is that region in which, as soon as you reach it, your spirit is somehow refreshed through and

[103] Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, 3.23:371.
[104] Cassirer, *Individual and the Cosmos*, 113.
[105] Greer and Warnock, *Picatrix*, 3.2:136–138.
[106] Greer and Warnock, *Picatrix*, 3.6:150.

through."[107] The professions and finding the daemon of one's destined profession are described here. These are related to a specific place that each person is allotted to. One must be in the right place, in the right profession, to be able to find their genius, the progenitor of their life, their daemon. This is interesting to us, of course, because of the association of the Children of the Planets with the human professions, which they are generally seen to depict. "As far as pertains to dwelling and profession, that saying of the Oriental astrologers is by no means to be scorned, namely, that by change of name, profession, habits, manner of living, and place, the celestial influence can be changed…The astrologers agree with the Platonists that the guardian daemons of every individual whatsoever can be two, the one proper to his nativity, the other to his profession."[108] This section harks back strongly to 3.7 and 3.9 of the *Picatrix*. Here the Climes (geographical locations) are related to the professions associated with each planet, as well as the Term (divisions of sky into 60 areas). Ficino mentions the Terms explicitly in his description of how to find one's daemon through their horoscope, by locating its Term from the Ascendant, "to whatever star that term belongs, they think your daemon belongs to it too."[109] The pneumata of the planets are described as each having governance over one of the six directions of each planet, with an additional seventh spirit which governs them all (3.9). This comes just after the discussion on how to find one's perfect nature (3.6). It seems a very reasonable proposition that this is another place that we can point to a borrowing from the *Picatrix*, or direct commentary, where chapter 3.23 of *De vita* corresponds closely to chapter 3.9 of the *Picatrix*. It is in this and the surrounding chapters that the *Picatrix* describes how to contact each planet, depending on one's purposes, through the use of different spells involving correspondences, and most interestingly, by dressing like the planet itself. In the case of Saturn, "when you want to speak to Saturn…dress in black…also wear a black cap of the sort that doctors wear, and you should wear black shoes…have an iron ring in your hand, and carry an iron

[107] Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, 3.22:373.
[108] Ficino, *Three Books on Life* 3.23:373.
[109] Ficino, *Three Books on Life* 3.23:373.

thurible [incense burner] with you."[110] The emulation of the planet in all of his/her characteristics is the most important aspect of the prayers described in this book.

Charles Burnett describes a logic similar to that in Ficino's *De vita coelitus comparanda* found in the theology of the *Picatrix*[111]: "They believed that God as prime cause was so far removed above humankind that man could only reach him through intermediaries, which were, for them, the planets."[112] We can argue that this same need for intermediaries is also a result of a Ptolemaic cosmology, where the *primum mobile* is farthest from the earth.

Ficino explicitly connected this farthest sphere to the individual soul, writing that the *primum mobile* was the soul, "Soul is led most easily of all, since she is the Primum Mobile and movable of herself, of her own accord."[113] This is how he solved the problem in another way of the distance between free will and divine will. It is the soul that unites body and intellect through a contagious attraction.[114] "Finally let no one believe that absolutely all gifts are drawn from the Soul…But if he employs things which pertain to this star and daemon,…And he undergoes this influence not only through the rays of the star and the daemon themselves, but also through the very Soul of the World everywhere present…the World-soul constructed in the heavens besides the stars, figures…and she impressed properties on all of these."[115]

[110] Greer and Warnock, *Picatrix,* 3.7:159.
[111] Burnett ascribes this way of thinking specifically to the Sabaeans of Harran, a Syriac-speaking religious community, combining Neoplatonic, Hermetic, and talismanic religious practices, a branch of which were established in Baghdad following the teachings of Thabit ibn Qurra. Burnett sees this as a likely candidate for an environment in which the *Picatrix* could have originated. Charles Burnett, "Arabic, Greek, and Latin Works on Astrological Magic Attributed to Aristotle," in *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages: Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds* (Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1996), 87.
[112] Burnett, "Arabic, Greek, and Latin Works on Astrological Magic Attributed to Aristotle," 87.
[113] Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, 3.1:243.
[114] Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, 243–244.
[115] Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, 245.

V. *Prisca Theologia* and *Philosophia Perennis*

Ficino often felt he had to justify his use of astrology, even with an "Apology" following book three of *De vita*, where he writes: "Someone will therefore say: Marsilio is a priest? Isn't he? Indeed he is. What business then do priests have with medicine or, again, with astrology? Another will say: What does a Christian have to do with magic or images? And someone else, unworthy of life, will begrudge life to the heavens."[116] He defends his cause in three counts, first, by saying that the "ancient priests of long ago were doctors as well as astronomers,"[117] and that his purpose is clearly medicinal; second, he reminds the reader that he is merely summarizing previous writers, such as Plotinus; and last, he points out that there are two kinds of magic, that which makes use of daemons, which he calls "inquisitive" magic, and that which makes use of natural material and natural causes, being "necessary" magic.[118] He claims to be practicing only the second of these, where magic is only used for achieving good health, which is a necessity. Of course, Ficino does contradict himself here, for, as we have discussed, he describes in detail in *De vita* how to make use of daemons toward the benefit of the good life as well.

The first defense is connected to another concept, *prisca theologia*, which, it turns out, is a phrase first used by Ficino. I suggest that it is this *prisca theologia* that provides Ficino the forum for his astrological solution to the problem of free will. He is able to condone astrological practices that allow for greater free will, and incorporate these ideas into his own Christianity as a result of his pursuit of the *prisca theologia*. Thus we can say that Ficino's *prisca theologia* is what allows him to understand his relationship to the heavens as a child of the planets. The concept of *prisca theologia* (ancient theology) expresses the belief in the idea that a sacred knowledge has been handed down through the ages, and can be retrieved from certain writings in antiquity, and defined by the 'sages' of these texts.

[116] Ficino, "An Apology Dealing with Medicine, Astrology, the Life of the World, and the Magi Who Greeted the Christ Child at His Birth," in *Three Books on Life*, 395–401, 395.
[117] Ficino, "Apology," in *Three Books on Life*, 397.
[118] Ficino, "Apology," in *Three Books on Life*, 399.

Having come across the term repeatedly in my research, I felt I had to find its provenance in scholarship. How was it related to the term *philosophia perennis*, or *prisca sapientia*? I was confident that the idea and variations of the term were in use in Renaissance sources, but was unsure of the term's use prior to this, and in addition I thought there might be a possibility that its wider dispersion may have taken place at a much later date.

It turns out both of these assumptions are the case. In the recently published work by Wouter Hanegraaf, *Esotericism and the Academy*, we find an examination of the difference between and origin of the use of the terms *prisca theologia* and *philosophia perennis*, which he describes as types of 'grand narratives' that eventually fell out of popularity by the beginning of the 18th century.[119] We find the first use of the term *prisca theologia* and the popularization of the idea in Ficino, though its wider use in scholarship is attributed to D. P. Walker in the 20th century.[120] The term *philosophia perennis*, which was first introduced by Agostino Steuco in 1540, again was put into scholarly use later, in 1966 by Charles Schmitt. The terms are often synonymous, but if we follow Hanegraaf's logic we can see the difference, where *prisca theologia* is defined by Charles Schmitt, as "true knowledge" handed down from the *prisci* (ancient sages) to Christianity, i.e., "from Orpheus to Aglaophemus to Pythagoras and, finally, to Plato,"[121] and implicating periods where knowledge has been lost, while *philosophia perennis* says the same knowledge can be found in every period.

The difference is slight and I am not sure that Hanegraaf's definitions cannot be easily inverted between terms. For example, Schmitt writes of the terms *prisca sapientia*

[119] Wouter Hanegraaf, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 6. See also chapter 1, fn. 7: "D. P. Walker claimed to have 'launched' the term in 1954 (*Ancient Theology*, 1, n. 1, referring to his groundbreaking 'Prisca Theologia in France'), but it appears literally in Marsilio Ficino's writings, for example 'De laudibus philosophiae' (Opera, 768: 'Prisca vera Aegyptiorum et Arabum theologia'); *Argumentum to the Pimander*; or *De Christiana religione* 22 (Opera, 25: 'Prisca Gentilium Theologia')."

[120] Though Walker used this term to mean something a bit different. See Hanegraaf, *Esotericism and the Academy,* chapter 1, p. 6, fn. 5: "As emphasized by Walker in the opening sentence of his classic study on the *prisca theologia* tradition: 'By the term "Ancient Theology" I mean a certain tradition of Christian apologetic literature which rests on misdated texts' (Walker, *Ancient Theology*, 1)."

[121] Hanegraaf, *Esotericism and the Academy,* 8.

and *prisca theologia*, saying that the first is "a very high level of wisdom" while the latter he says is basically the same as Steuco's *philosophia perennis*; "It turns out to be little more than *prisca theologia* in slightly novel dress…the word '*priscus*,' probably best translated as 'venerable,' is one which reoccurs often in Steuco."[122] Hanegraaf applies this discussion on *prisca theologia* to the idea that the ancients were somehow closer to interacting directly with the divine, and the popular tendency to attribute this "direct mystical access to the divine"[123] to oriental sources. This way of thinking, he points out, is where 'Platonic Orientalism,' a term coined recently by John Waldbridge in 2001, stems from. Hanegraaf examines this "Platonism understood as ancient 'divine wisdom derived from the Orient'" throughout *Esotericism and the Academy*, paralleling it to understandings of *prisca theologia*, where "all the important Greek philosophers up to and including Plato had received their philosophy from these sources…countless testimonies confirmed that Plato himself and all his notable predecessors had personally traveled to Egypt, Babylon, Persia, and India, where they had studied with priests and sages."[124] We can see tendencies of this perceived lineage, Walbridge explains, by the late Hellenistic period, when it would have been basically commonplace to believe that the Magi that attended Christ at his birth were the descendants of ancient Persian philosophers, such as Zoroaster. Ficino paralleled the translation of texts into Latin to this genealogy of knowledges in one of his letters to Cosimo de' Medici, saying "Plato's spirit, living in his writings, had left Byzantium to fly like a bird to Cosimo in Florence."[125] Certainly the *Picatrix* could be headed under the category of Platonic Orientalism. Charles Burnett discusses both the real and the fictitious attributions of some of the sources of the *Picatrix*, to Indian and Persian antecedents, but also how many texts, that were originally composed in Arabic, like the *Kitāb al-Isṭamāṭīs* (a source of the *Picatrix* which we will discuss in chapter II), were attributed to Aristotle.

[122] William W. Quinn, *The Only Tradition* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 78.
[123] Hanegraaf, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 14.
[124] Hanegraaf, *Esotericism and the Academy*, 14, fn. 29.
[125] Ficino, 'Proemium,' in vol. 2 of *Supplement Ficinianum*, ed. Paul Kristeller (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1937), 104–105.

In the work of the Arabic translator, Hermann of Carinthia (1100–1160), we see Hermes and Asclepius described as pupils of the "Indian King Agathodaimon."[126] This shows how Greek works acquired an 'oriental lineage,' and Arabic texts attributed to Aristotle acquired a Greek one. One of the things that results from all this is an affinity for the use of intermediary gods in cosmological writings, which was incidentally ushered in through the interaction and transmission of these texts. Yossef Schwartz summarized this point in a recent CEU lecture:

> The cosmological framework developed by Arab (Moslem as well as Jewish) philosophers, formed a complex causal and spatial system, in which the anthropological model of body – soul – intellect became a general metaphysical principle integrated into a unified universal order. The mythical figure of the (Koranic or Biblical) angel was an integral part of this cosmic natural order. Intelligences or separate substances were conceived as parts of the mechanism of divine creation and providence.[127]

This plays into our earlier discussion in which the Children of the Planets acted as intermediaries of the divine will. Ficino practiced, if only in his writings, the belief that through the aid of the planets, we may be able to operate on our own futures through right living. That is, if we act out our parts as the offspring of the planet that governed our nativity, we will imitate the cause that was laid out for us by God, through the heavens.

VI. Pico della Mirandola's *De homnis dignitate*

We cannot finish this chapter without the mention of one of Ficino's comtemporaries, Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), the infamous humanist philosopher that defended natural philosophy, religion, and magic with his 900 theses and whose *De homnis dignitate* (Oration on the Dignity of Man) addresses exactly our subject here. Frances Yates said about this work that it echoed the "great character of Renaissance magic, of the new type of magic introduced by Ficino and completed by Pico."[128] There he treats the topics of free

[126] Burnett, "Arabic, Greek, and Latin Works on Astrological Magic Attributed to Aristotle," 87.
[127] Yossef Zvi Schwartz, "Migration of Knowledge and the Limits of Appropriation: On the Latin Rejection of Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic Cosmology" (lecture at Medieval Studies Department, Central European University, Budapest, Sept. 29, 2010).
[128] Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, 86.

will, man as intermediary, and the astral orders, beginning with the creation of man. Pico opens his opus with the *Asclepius* and a touch of Platonic Orientalism,

> Most esteemed Fathers, I have read in the ancient writings of the Arabians that Abdala the Saracen on being asked what, on this stage, so to say, of the world, seemed to him most evocative of wonder, replied that there was nothing to be seen more marvelous than man. And that celebrated exclamation of Hermes Trismegistus, "What a great miracle is man, Asclepius" confirms this opinion.[129]

After a moment of hesitation Pico reveals that the reason man is so worthy is because of his free will. Pico writes that God had run out of room, had no where to put man, so he put him in the middle of everything, and had him share accordingly in everything that God had created. He was thus in this way also an intermediary.

> that man is the intermediary between creatures, that he is the familiar of the gods above him as he is the lord of the beings beneath him; that, by the acuteness of his senses, the inquiry of his reason and the light of his intelligence, he is the interpreter of nature, set midway between the timeless unchanging and the flux of time; the living union (as the Persians say), the very marriage hymn of the world, and, by David's testimony but little lower than the angels.[130]

Pico explains that in man's creation that God had run out of archetypes when he decided to create this last special creature to look on the rest of creation. In his own colorful language, "He had already adorned the supercelestial region with Intelligences, infused the heavenly globes with the life of immortal souls and set the fermenting dung-heap of the inferior world teeming with every form of animal life."[131] Man was at first formless, without imprint like the other creatures, and therefore completely in control of his own free will. He was able to choose what things to be influenced by. In contrast to the planets, man was not susceptible to fate alone: "The highest spiritual beings were, from the very moment of creation, or soon thereafter, fixed in the mode of being which would be theirs through measureless eternities. But upon man, at the moment of his creation, God bestowed seeds pregnant with all possibilities, the germs of every form of life."[132] Pico's philosophy has a striking difference from Ficino's, because for Pico, even the planets bow to man. The celestial gods are only a

[129] Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *On the Dignity of Man*, trans. A. Robert Caponigri (Washington DC: Regnery Gateway, 1956), 3.
[130] Pico, *On the Dignity of Man*, 3.
[131] Pico, *On the Dignity of Man*, 5.
[132] Pico, *On the Dignity of Man*, 8.

steppingstone on the way to the union with God. We can imitate them though, if we want to get closer to the divine faster: "[U]nable to yield to them, and impatient of any second place, let us emulate their dignity and glory. And, if we will it, we shall be inferior to them in nothing."[133] Like Augustine, Pico was willing to undermine the determination of the stars in order to get to what he saw as the ultimate goal, the immediate presence of God. As bold as this seems there is also an extreme piety throughout this work of Pico's, where theology is praised at times above natural philosophy, and where man can take the place of a planet to find his way, through natural philosophy to theology: "Summoned in such consoling tones and invited with such kindness, like earthly Mercuries, we shall fly on winged feet to embrace that most blessed mother."[134] In fact, he makes natural philosophy inseparable from theology. Pico makes the path toward 'true knowledge' tripartite, saying that the three aphorisms written above the entrance to the ancient temple of Delphi represent three types of philosophy: μηδέν άγαν (*meden agan*, nothing in excess), being moral philosophy, γνῶθι σεαυτόν (*gnosi sauton*, know thyself), referring to the present philosophy of man's dignity, and εἶ (*ei*, thou art), representing natural philosophy combined with theology. Yates discussed Pico's *magia naturalis* as a concept close to what we have mentioned earlier, a natural form of religion, combined with ritual practices.[135] Yates thought that Pico would have sought practical means of "establishing 'links' between earth and heaven" through magical praxis, even using talismans and star images, just as she thought Ficino might have done: "Pico's natural magic is therefore, it would seem, probably the same as Ficino's magic, using natural sympathies but also magical images and signs."[136] Whether these two individuals were 'practicing magic' or medicine is debatable.[137] Pico's own rejection of astrology in his *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem* (Disputations against divinatory astrology) would seem to contradict the astrological elements that Yates

[133] Pico, *On the Dignity of Man*, 13.
[134] Pico, *On the Dignity of Man*, 21
[135] Zambelli, *White Magic, Black Magic*, 2–5.
[136] Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, 89.
[137] Kaske and Clark, "Introduction," *Three Books on Life*, 54.

emphasized in Pico's work, where she pointed to Lynn Thorndike (who with Yates would emphasize how science is tied to magic, from its naissance) to support her claim, saying, "these thesis showed that Pico's thinking 'was largely coloured by astrology.'"[138] Pico's problem with astrology was the same as Augustine's in part, where he would choose the grace of God over the fate of the stars, but more so he could not tolerate the lack of free will that was a result from determinism of astrology. Pico discussed the archaic names of the seven planets and the 'lots' of the planets in his *Disputationes*, and dismissed them as "tales told by Albumasar."[139] His interest was in a 'higher' form of practice. There are many comparisons we can make between Pico and Ficino, as Paola Zambelli has done in her work, *White Magic, Black Magic in the European Renaissance*, where she writes about them that the "Neoplatonic and Hermetic theories of the two Florentines on the cosmos, the 'spirit,' and the forces of nature had given rise to a new idea of magic."[140] Zambelli understands the two to make the same distinctions about what parts of magic are permissible: "In order to differ from the popular methods of sorcerers, in 1486, Ficino and Pico, had claimed the possibility of a purely natural magic, with no invocation of demons."[141] But ultimately, I think, we must also distinguish some important differences between the two. Both Pico and Ficino sought to define magic in a particular way, distinguish what could be acceptable, and they sought to allow for the synthesis of various religious beliefs. In their explanations of the types of magic that each advocated, their views on the surface, did not seem so far apart. But looking closely we see that Ficino's magic was not Pico's. Ficino, even though he claims to distinguish daemonic magic from natural magic, in *De vita coelitus comparanda*, gives very specific details about how to use one's own daemon and the planets to aid in the search for the perfect self. Strangely, the

[138] Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, 86. Lynn Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, IV (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953 [1923]), 494.
[139] Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Disputationes Adversus Astologiam Divinatricem*, ed. Eurgenio Garin (Florence: Vallecchi, 1946).
[140] Paola Zambelli, White Magic, Black Magic in the European Renaissance: From Ficino, Pico, Della Porta to Trithemius, Agrippa, Bruno (Boston: Brill, 2007), 2.
[141] Zambelli, White Magic, Black Magic, 3.

difference between Ficino's and Pico's solution to the problem of free will was in the daemonic and astrological element. Zambelli contrasts Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516) (who will come up later in this thesis) with Pico and Ficino, saying a few years after (in 1499) they made their distinctions about the use of daemons in natural magic "Trithemius crossed swords with them over this very question."[142] But in reality Ficino and Trithemius were not so opposed. For Ficino the use of talismans, daemons, and planets were tied together in the path toward an individual's growth. Even though for Pico the triumph of the individual was so important, he separated these things from it. Pico made man the intermediary, taking out the need for the intermediary planets. In this way he put the individual man in the place of the planets, giving man a function and position in a hierarchical order on par with the celestials.

We will see how this network of stars, gods, and human actions was depicted in the various examples we have of the Children of the Planets motif here, in the following chapter.

[142] Zambelli, *White Magic, Black Magic*, 3.

Chapter 2

The Children of the Planets in Manuscripts

The study of the iconography of the planets began with Fritz Saxl's research on the subject, as we mentioned in our introduction. Rembrandt Duits points out that Saxl's transmission theory for the iconography of the planets changed over time, beginning with an uninterrupted lineage back to ancient Babylon. Even though he first concluded, "that the late medieval images of the planets are iconographically far removed from the classical gods who lent the planets their names"[143] he looked for a lineage, as he would later find with the constellation iconography, that would link them to ancient sources. "He boldly argued that these iconographical types could be traced back straight to the planet deities of ancient Babylon, where the planet Mercury bore the name Naboo, the god of writing. The intermediary step, he thought, could be found in the unique pagan cult of the city of Harran…where elements of Babylonian astrology reportedly survived until well into the days of Islam; aspects of this cult were transmitted via the 11th century Arabic book on magic, the *Ghaya*."[144] Saxl retracted this view in his 1915 catalogue of astrological manuscripts,[145] partly because of the Kraków *Picatrix*. Warburg had recently discovered the connection between the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* and the Latin *Picatrix*, and in 1912 an illustrated copy of the *Picatrix* was discovered in Cracow (BJ 793). The illustrations however did not attest to any marked influence from any Arabic sources, but looked rather to be the inventions of an individual scribe (see Images 12–18). This resulted in Saxl's revised theory for the transmission of the Children of the Planets, which was more specific than his theory of the planets, where he believed the Children of the Planets images to be "a conflation of two traditions: the Arabic astrological tradition of assigning specific human activities to the

[143] Duits, "Reading the Stars of the Renaissance: Fritz Saxl and Astrology," *Journal of Art Historiography* 5 (2011): 3.
[144] Duits, "Reading the Stars of the Renaissance: Fritz Saxl and Astrology," 3.
[145] Fritz Saxl, *Verzeichnis astrologischer und mythologischer Handschriften des lateinischen Mittelalters in römischen Bibliotheken* (Heidelberg: Carl Winters, 1915), xiii–xiv.

domains of the planets, and the Western pictorial tradition of the labours of the months."[146] Duits points out that even though Saxl ultimately failed to explain the iconography of the planets through an uninterrupted transmission theory, he still attempted the same approach with the Children of the Planets. "In spite of his own earlier failure with the iconography of the planets themselves, he also declared once again that we should be thinking in terms of a direct intercultural transmission of images rather than of an intercultural transmission of texts with separate illustration traditions in each culture."[147]

Finally, Saxl theorized a parallel transmission of the Children of the Planets images from Oriental tomb reliefs to Hellenistic depictions,[148] then through Arabic texts via Spain to the West, and lastly into a synthesis of East and West in Italian fresco imagery. We could compare this theory to something like the "exchange of glances" (*Blickwechsel*) that Hans Belting mentions in his recent work *Florence and Baghdad*.[149] Instead of influence and difference we have an exchange of ideas between cultures that produces new forms of knowledge and new iconographies. Even if Saxl was still interested in influence, he attempted here to say that there were parallel influences and therefore a shared lineage of more than one culture in the planetary iconographies. Later Saxl added to this theory some details about the tabular form seen in some examples of the motif, as in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* (see Image 25) and the frescos of the Paduan Salone (see Image 31), saying that this graph formation in the Children of the Planets motif was an Arabic invention, which the Salone adapted and combined to create the Italian imagery.[150] Saxl had a good reason for his suspicions that the Children of the Planets came in part from Islamic models. He saw a tradition of writings that described the professions along side the Climes, those different regions of the world governed by each of the seven planets. Saxl pointed to other depictions

[146] Duits, "Reading the Stars of the Renaissance: Fritz Saxl and Astrology," 5.
[147] Duits, "Reading the Stars of the Renaissance: Fritz Saxl and Astrology," 6.
[148] Panofsky and Saxl, "Classical Mythology in Mediaeval Art," 242, 244.
[149] Hans Belting, *Florence and Baghdad: Renaissance Art and Arab Science* (Cambridge: Belknap of Harvard University Press, 2011), 3.
[150] Duits, "Reading the Stars of the Renaissance: Fritz Saxl and Astrology," 7.

of the Children of the Planets in Islamic manuscripts, those in the Paris manuscript, *Kitāb al-maṭāli' al-sa'āda wa-yanābī' al-Sayyāda* ('Book of ascensions of bliss and the fountains of Lordship,' or 'Book of Felicity,' BNF Suppl. Turc. 242) (see Image 29).[151] He did not know at the time that, along with another example in New York (PM M. 788), these were Ottoman Turkish translations derived from the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*. But just because the examples are rare does not mean Saxl's assumptions were wrong. We can point to earlier descriptions of the Climes related to the professions in the *Kitāb Gharā'ib al-funūn wa-mulaḥ al-'uyūn* (Book of Curiosities, 12th/13th c. MS, composed before 1050 AD, Bodleian MS Arab. C. 90).[152] This is a richly illustrated text, sharing some motifs with that of the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*, as in the figure of the 'Waq Waq Tree.'[153] Unfortunately the Climes and planets are not illustrated in the *Kitāb Gharā'ib al-funūn*, though they would have been at one time, as the text indicates missing illustrations.[154] The *Kitāb al-Bulhān* illustrations also lack enough accompanying text to be able to compare, only having the brief title, "A discourse on the Professions," along with the names of the planets, and "A discourse of the Climes." Unlike his constellation theory, where he succeeded comprehensively and with great amounts of evidence in mapping the development of the iconography of the star groups from the Renaissance through the middle ages and back to antiquity, Saxl was never able to fully explain the Children of the Planets. This was due to a number of reasons, one being his early death at age 58, as well as his continual dedication to maintaining the Warburg Institute and Library, managing its relocation from Hamburg to London, and taking over its direction during Warburg's mental illness and confinement. Saxl and Hans

[151] There is a facsimile edition of this manuscript. *The Book of Felicity: Matali' al-saadet*, Barcelona: Moliero, 2012 (ISBN: 978-84-96400-36-8).

[152] Emilie Savage-Smith and Yossef Rapoport, eds., *The Book of Curiosities: A critical edition* (March 2007), accessed on May 29, 2012, http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/bookofcuriosities. Also, Rapoport and Savage-Smith that is to be published by Brill Press (Leiden) in their series *Studies on Islamic Manuscripts*.

[153] A mythical tree that bears fruit that looks like human beings. Greer and Warnock, *Picatrix*, 4.7, 274: "In the same place [India] is said to be another tree from which, in the spring and fall, voices similar to human voices are heard to issue, and the roots of that tree are shaped like human beings. For an interesting discussion see Evelyn Edison and Emilie Savage-Smith, *Medieval Views of the Cosmos* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2004), 66. Also, Laura Collins, "Tale of the Waq Waq Tree" (9/1/08), accessed May 27, 2012, http://surlalunefairytales.yuku.com/topic/750 - .T8KnD66C_3A.

[154] See English commentary in Savage-Smith and Rapoport, *The Book of Curiosities*, fol. 16a, fn. 3.

Meier publication of the third catalogue of astrological images (1953), where they categorized the planet iconography into three models, was published only posthumously of both authors, Meier having an untimely death as well in 1941 during a bombing raid of London.

Meier and Saxl's contribution to the studies of the iconography of the planets is still invaluable and the three categories in which we can place examples of planet illustrations are extremely helpful when comparing various examples. They described three types of astrological manuscripts that contained imagery of the planets: 1) those derived from the *Aratea*, 2) images derived from Michael Scotus's works, 3) those from Oriental works. Ewa Śnieżyńska-Stolot gives us a clear description of these categories in her work *Decanal Planets*,[155] to which she adds two more categories: 4) the images in an Abû Ma'shar manuscript (Fendulus, Sloane 3983, f. 32r-49v), and 5) those images of the Kraków *Picatrix*. Śnieżyńska-Stolot points to a difference that emerges between the medieval and the modern images of the planets. The *Aratea* type imitate ancient models of the corresponding Greek deities, and are typically shown riding in chariots drawn by horses (or other creatures occasionally) (see Image 47). These images correspond to the popular writings of Ovid. Michael Scotus' writings contain illustrations that imitate medieval styles and vocations – king, bishop, knight, scholar, etc. (see Image 51) (Warszawa akc. 9802. Baw. 46, f.22v-23v; Vienna 2352, f. 27r-31v; Kraków 573, f. 215r; Zurich c 54, f. 24v-30v). The Scotus type were originally thought by Saxl to be based on Oriental models,[156] but more recently Blume has argued that they are more likely spontaneous creations based on Scotus' lively imagination. Their descriptions do however draw a few details from Abû Ma'shar astrological almanacs.[157] Oriental models are seen either in graph form or in

[155] Ewa Śnieżyńska-Stolot, *Astrological Iconography in the Middle Ages: The Decanal Planets* (Cracow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2003).
[156] T. S. R. Boase, "Review of *Catalogue of Astrological and Mythological Illuminated Manuscripts of the Latin Middle Ages, Manuscripts in English Libraries,* vol. iii, by Fritz Saxl, Hans Meier, and Harry Bober," *The English Historical Review* 70, no. 274 (Jan. 1955): 99.
[157] Blume, "Michael Scot, Giotto, and the Construction of New Images of the Planets," 135.

circular reliefs (see Image 25, 34). These figures exhibit their own features for each planet, as we mentioned earlier (Saturn as an Indian man; Jupiter, a seated dignitary; Mars, a warrior with a severed human head; Venus, an *ud* player; Mercury, a scribe; and Sun and Moon as a round face) (see Image 25). Fendulus's *Liber astrologiae* (Sloane 3983, illustrated abbreviations of Abû Ma'shar's *Introductorium maius*) shows a similar tendency to the Scotus type, where they also show a relationship to the Zodiac. Śnieżyńska-Stolot separates these from the Michael Scotus type. Saxl and Meier speculated that Scotus' illustrations may have been the source of some of the Abû Ma'shar imagery later, as seen in the Paduan frescos (see Image 31), which is a consensus agreed upon today as seen in Dieter Blume.[158] The *Picatrix* gives four images of each planet (see Image 12), as mentioned earlier, each based on a different source, according to the author. These are similar to some Persian miniatures from 15th and 16th century manuscripts, in that the humanoid figures are sitting on animals (dogs, birds, lions, dragons), according to Anna Caiozzo (see Image 33).[159] In the 15th century, says Śnieżyńska-Stolot, the imagery changes and we see, for example in the *Housebook,* figures on horseback in the sky, holding flags that have animal correspondences on them as emblems of each planet (see Image 1, 2, 4). Johannes Sacrobosco's commentary on Michael Scotus (created in Leipzig in 1483) shows both constellations and the sign that corresponds to each planet as well (Morgan 384, f. 28v-32r). A special example are the images that accompany the text of the *Astrolabium planum* of Peitro d'Abano, specifically Johannes Angelus' edition, where the images combine *Aratea* and possibly even Harranian[160] models of deities (Budapest, Germ. 2, f. 20v; C, f. 101v). We will look at this text shortly.

[158] Blume, "Michael Scot, Giotto, and the Construction of New Images of the Planets," 138.
[159] Anna Caiozzo, "Rituels théophaniques imagés et pratiques magiques: les anges planétaires dans le manuscrit persan 174 de Paris." *Studia Iranica* 29 (2000): 230, pl. 40 [Warburg FBC 15]. Also, Anna Caiozzo, *Images du ciel d'orient au Moyen Âge: une histoire du zodiaque et de ses représentations dans les manuscrits du Proche-Orient musulman* (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2003) [Warburg FAF 700].
[160] Śnieżyńska-Stolot, *Astrological Iconography in the Middle Ages*, 34.

Stefano Carboni writes that interestingly the planets themselves were not personified in art until the 12th century, the earliest example being an inscribed bronze mirror from 1153, probably Iran. Even though the gods that they are associated with in classical times were, of course, often depicted, it was not until much later that they were associated with the celestial objects, the planets themselves.

> It was only later on, closer to the Islamic era, that in representations of the planets themselves they were given a human appearance. In Islamic astrology the role of the planets was fundamental, and therefore a system of personifications was as necessary, if not more so, as those of the signs of the Zodiac. Based, once again, on Greek sources, each planet also was soon associated with a particular color, day of the week, and geographical area, as well as with one or more occupations, and its personality evolved from these various characteristics.[161]

The Children of the Planets however do not appear, as we have said, until the 1399 illustrations in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* (see Image 25). We can see a potential predecessor to the Children of the Planets form in the illustrations of the *Kitāb al-Mawālīd* (see Image 36, 38). In those of the Keir Collection (Image 36) we see for example in a depiction of "the discourse on him who is born under the sign of Pisces and Jupiter, in the second Decan under the influence of Jupiter" three versions of the planet Jupiter accompanying each other. Jupiter is seen as a fisherman, trying to catch the 'Big Fish' (which is what Pisces is called in Arabic, 'al-hut'), who is conversing with a figure above him, also Jupiter. These two figures are haloed, the one above looks down at the other. Beneath them is another Jupiter. This minor Jupiter sits with the five Planetary Terms (ḥadūd) in a row beneath the central illustration (see Image 36). The illustration found in the same treatise of the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* is similar, where Jupiter sits in a nimbus with a singular fish (see Image 37). In another manuscript of the *Kitâb al-Mawalid* (BNF arabe 2583 Abû Ma'shar)[162] of the second Decan of Pisces shows two Jupiter figures, though here he holds two fish, as is the more common depiction derived from the *constellation* (rather than the *sign*, in the earlier illustrations)

[161] Carboni, *Following the Stars*, 6.
[162] Carboni, *Following the Stars*, 5. This manuscript, produced in Cairo around 1300 AD, was illustrated later, probably in the 17th century.

iconography of Pisces ('al-samakatan,' meaning 'two fish') (see Image 38).[163] The tabular format in all of these is similar to that which we see in the Children of the Planet illustrations, and we see the familiar features of the planet deities shared between all of these examples.

I. The Heritage of Manuscripts and the Contexts of the Images

The Children of the Planets emerge as a popular motif at a very specific time. We do not find any examples of this motif in manuscripts before the turn of the 15th century. The motif becomes very popular in manuscript illuminations, and is even one of the first things to be printed. The planet figures are depicted performing the human professions, and exhibit the qualities associated with each planet. They generally illustrate a doctrine of correspondences, showing the features of each planet, the colors, artifacts, character, and attributes associated with each.

The importance of the motif, as we have discussed in the previous chapter, is in that it portrays the idea that the individual has a choice in the making of his own destiny. This is because each planet child represents a different aspect of the planet, that is, different possibilities or ways that a planet can have influence over persons born under them. The purpose of the motif was therefore to provide different ways of life for people to choose from and to follow. In this way the Children of the Planets served as a device for promoting a philosophy that allowed a greater amount of freewill in the understanding of astrology. My belief is that the popularity of the motif stems from a trend in the thought of the time toward harmonizing individualism with concepts of the divine. Beneficial characteristics could be harnessed and more negative aspects could be overpowered if a person became aware of the different features of the planets that governed their nativity.

[163] Carboni, *Following the Stars*, 47.

The Children of the Planets motif gracefully sums up the astrological knowledge of the Renaissance period and attests to the renewal of the faith in the stars. Interestingly, we see the motif in many different contexts, accompanying works on astrology, health, and religion, and in works that are ascribed to different confessions, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim. We find the motif next to many different texts, and part of what this chapter will do is to track down exactly what texts it accompanies. We must note that the motif functions independently of the texts that it accompanies, usually corresponding to the text only indirectly. In this way it is in many cases a motif that is independent of any text. One of those places where it is an independent illustration from the text, and is also our earliest example, is in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* (Book of Well-Being), which is an Arabic manuscript that is a collection including various astrological, folkloric, and religious treatises. In oriental manuscripts the motif is very rare, and when we examine closely the three examples we have, one Arabic and two Ottoman texts, we will come to see that we are really only speaking of one work in three versions, the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*. The illustrations in the Kraków *Picatrix* (Latin translation of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*) are something I would like to look at in relation to the Children of the Planets motif. The relationship between the *Picatrix* and the Children of the Planets is something that I will try to explain further in the following chapter. I think that this is an important connection because one of the central ideas of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* is the perfection of the self, which can be accomplished only by harnessing the power of the individual spirits of the planets and finding ways to bring their divine influence into daily affairs.

The assumption that the visual motif somehow entered into Western examples through a work like the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* must be examined closely. Fritz Saxl and Erwin Panofsky thought that a text similar to the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*, perhaps its predecessor, would have informed the Children of the Planets series found in the frescoes of the Palazzo della Ragione in Padua, attributed to Giotto (but having been repainted after damage in the 18th

century).[164] This interesting suggestion would be difficult to mend with the research done by D.S. Rice on the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*, because at least some of the depictions in it he believed were inspired by Italian works. Comparing Stefano Carboni's recent (1988) research on the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*[165] to these earlier studies helps us to see in one place a comprehensive assessment of their discoveries. Carboni's research answers, I think, questions asked by both scholars. This earliest example, the 1399 *Kitāb al-Bulhān*, is a special case of the Children of the Planets motif. It is, along with the two Ottoman Turkish translations of this work, unique in Islamic manuscripts. I will start here with a closer look at this text before I go into detail about the Children of the Planets motif in its wider dispersion throughout Europe. This will tell us firstly what potentially different themes fall under the heading "Children of the Planets" and will help us define the shared or dissimilar aspects of the motif in different examples.

First, we should consider how to define the Children of the Planets motif. In the strict sense, we do not see the motif before the turn of the 15th century, and then only in manuscripts. It is then that we start seeing a self-contained illustration in various manuscript traditions of the seven planets as personified deities accompanied by a series of smaller planetary figures – their children. This usually includes a specific page layout, where the planet figure is highlighted at the top of the picture, usually in a circle or haloed somehow, and is larger than the 'planet children' beneath. The prototype for this layout is considered to be Christine de Pisan's 1406 *Épître d'Othéa* (see Image 42). Of course there are many variations to this basic pattern, sometimes the planet is seen on the facing page from his/her children, as in the Biblioteca Estense manuscript entitled *De Sphaera* (see Image 6–11) (MS Lat. 209). But, as we will see in this chapter, there is a broader definition for the Children of the Planets that includes any images that depict the correspondences of planets as personified figures. This comes with usage of the term 'planet children' to describe figures

[164] Panofsky and Saxl, "Classical Mythology in Mediaeval Art," 245.
[165] Carboni, *Il Kitāb al-Bulhān di Oxford*.

in other works of art that resemble individual personifications included in the Children of the Planets motif. This term 'planet children' we see, for example, applied to the images in Abû Ma'shar's *Flores Astrologiae* (see Image 48) (*Heidelberger Schicksalsbuch*, Cod. Pal. Germ. 832) and we could add some of the planet figure illustrations from the *Picatrix* (Kraków MS BJ 793) to this category.[166]

In the strict sense then we can ask, "Why does imagery of the Children of the Planets spontaneously occur only at the turn of the 15th century?" One suggestion, given by D.S. Rice in 1954, was that the imagery in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* was influenced by imagery in a northern Italian work, a Latin translation of an Arabic medical treatise. I will give one possible alternative explanation of why images of the Children of the Planets appeared at this time, due to cultural developments in the iconography of the Islamic manuscript tradition, giving examples of other Islamic iconographic themes that only began to be depicted in the 15th century.

Additionally, we should first look at the contexts in which they appear. This following section will be oriented then toward the purpose of elucidating the provenance of the Children of the Planets motif. I would like to find out whether the motif in European examples is accompanied by the same texts and ideas that it is in the Arabic and Ottoman examples and to define the concepts involved therein. Only after accomplishing this can we then examine the possibility of the Children of the Planets also functioning as visual motif independent of any text.

II. *Kitāb al-Bulhān*

The *Kitāb al-Bulhān* (MS Bodl. Or. 133), which can be translated as 'Book of Wonderment' or 'Book of Well-Being,'[167] is a compilation of several different texts, the first of which is labeled "*Kitāb al-Bulhān* by Abû Ma'shar" on a folio preceding the body of the work, made

[166] Śnieżyńska-Stolot, *Astrological Iconography in the Middle Ages*, 33.
[167] Rice, "The Seasons and the Labors of the Months in Islamic Art," 3.

by a later (17th century) scribe, and which the rest of the codex has come to be headed under. I was able to examine this manuscript thoroughly at the Bodleian Library, and found some important details I will discuss here.

The manuscript was produced in Baghdad sometime between 1382–1410 in the style of the Jelairid school.[168] The introduction of the work tells us that it was composed and illustrated by ʻAlī ibn al-Hasan, and given to his friend, Diya Husain al-Irbili, who is the scribe and copier of this particular manuscript. The first portion of the manuscript includes the "Book of Nativities" (*Kitāb al-Mawālīd*)[169] by Abû Maʻshar (787–886 AD), and we see a portrait of Abû Maʻshar in a later illumination in the work. There are few surviving illustrated manuscripts of this work by Abû Maʻshar, this one showing 12 full-page miniatures (see Image 37).[170] This is where we find the multiple images of the planets that we mentioned earlier, here and in other manuscripts, like the images of Jupiter in the fragment of the Keir Collection.[171] The text that accompanies this image is as follows:

> Said the wise [Abû Maʻshar]: 'Those born under this decade have a bright complexion and a tendency to become tanned. Their body is cold and moist, as they belong to a watery and nocturnal sign in the Zodiac. Their physique is well proportioned, but they tend to gain weight easily. They change moods often. They tend to work little, since they do not like to exert effort. They get annoyed easily. When they become attached to a place they like, they do not want to leave it. They love women. They have great strength and are cunning. Allah knows more.'[172]

Two other descriptions, one according to Ptolemy and another to Dorotheus, are also given.

In the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* the Children of the Planets are depicted in two folios following the *Kitāb al-Mawālīd*, in the form of a 7 x 8 column graph. The planets are in a vertical column on the right of the first folio, starting with Saturn, the most distant planet

[168] Rice, "The Seasons and the Labors of the Months in Islamic Art," 3.
[169] Carboni, *Il Kitāb al-Bulhān di Oxford*.
[170] Carboni, *Following the Stars*, 5. Those illustrations in the manuscript of the Keir Collection (MS Keir Collection, late 14th c., Baghdad) show 36. These two examples are the earliest illustrations of this work in manuscripts, to the best of my knowledge.
[171] The Keir fragment is part of a dispersed manuscript. This portion was found by the owner of the Keir Collection, Edmund de Unger (died last year), in a Paris used bookstore. The other half of the dispersed manuscript belonged to the Oriental Institute of Sarajevo, until it was destroyed by the bombing of the Institute during the siege of Sarajevo. See Carboni, *Following the Stars*, 46.
[172] Carboni, *Following the Stars*, 47: "Pisces – First decade (from *The Book of Nativities* by Abû Maʻshar)." This translation is Carboni's taken from the BNF manuscript Arab 2583.

from Earth, and ending with the Moon, closest to Earth. The horizontal columns extending from each of the planets show seven figures (7 figures x 7 planets), contained in his/her own box, which are our Children of the Planets (see Image 25). These are usually described as portraying the human professions, but sometimes as the seven qualities of man, each according to his/her respective planet. They show, for example, Saturn, associated with the color black and trades that are laborious, such as a blacksmith or stone-mason; Jupiter, with the color white, associated with religion and good judgment, represented by a judge or hermit; Mars, associated with red and war, as an executioner; the Sun, associated with gold and nobility, shows a king; Venus, associated with art and music, is represented as different musicians and dancers; Mercury, associated with scribes and craftsmen, is a manuscript illuminator; the Moon, associated with water, is depicted by fishermen.

Eva Baer in her 1968 article, "Representations of the 'Planet Children' in Turkish Manuscripts,"[173] pointed to two other manuscripts (with the help of D.S. Rice, who we will return to shortly), which are Ottoman Turkish translations of the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* commissioned by Murad III for his daughters, Fatima and Ayse, entitled the *Kitāb al-maṭāli' al-sa'āda wa-yanābī' al-Sayyāda* (Book of ascensions of bliss and the fountains of Lordship, 1582, BNF Suppl. Turc. 242, PM M. 788). This realization, that we are really only speaking of one work in three versions, the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* translated into two Ottoman Turkish versions, is something that for some reason has only gradually come to be understood about these three manuscripts. Aside from Stefano Carboni's comprehensive work on the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* published in 1988 there are no other in-depth discussions on the Children of the Planets in this work.[174] To my knowledge the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* is the earliest (and the only, aside from these two translations) example of the Children of the Planets in Islamic iconography. To be clear, there are, of course, other examples of planet

[173] Eva Baer, "Representations of 'Planet-Children' in Turkish Manuscripts," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 31, no. 3 (1968): 526–533.
[174] Stefano Carboni, *Il Kitāb al-Bulhān di Oxford*.

figures elsewhere (lacking their 'children') in many Arabic, Persian, and Turkish manuscripts, for example in Qazwini's *Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt wa gharā'ib al-mawjūdāt* (known as the 'Wonders of Creation').[175] There was an established tradition of depicting the planets with certain features that we see repeated in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān:* Saturn as an Indian man with a pickaxe, Mars as a warrior with a human head in his right hand, Jupiter as a seated king, Venus as an *ud* player, Mercury as a scribe. But these examples do not show the seven additional planet figures alongside the planets themselves, which defines our motif. Interestingly, even depictions of the planets only began to appear in the 12th century, with the bulk of examples from the 13th/14th century, in Islamic iconography.[176]

One of the most interesting observations made by Baer in her article was that the text which describes the planets in the same fashion as they are depicted in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* is the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*.[177] She notes that there "are seven categories of professions or trades within the domination of the seven planets. Based on late Hellenistic tradition preserved, for instance, in the famous treatises on alchemy and magic, the so-called '*Picatrix*,' these professions are determined by the qualities attributed to their respective planetary lord."[178] Baer did not go into detail in justifying the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* as the source for the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* images, but we can agree with the implicit similarity if we look at certain passages which mention some of these professions specifically.[179] The planets are often described in the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* with instructions on how to make images of them. Saturn for example "is used to ask for needs that you desire from chieftains, nobles, presidents, kings, old people and dead people,…peasants, builders, slaves,

[175] Or, more precisely, "Marvels of Creatures and Strange things Existing," cod. Monacensis 464, date: 1280. See, Fritz Saxl, "Beitrage zu einer Geschichte der Planetendarstellungen im Orient und im Okzident," *Der Islam* 3 (1912), 151–177.
[176] Panofsky and Saxl, "Classical Mythology in Mediaeval Art," 245.
[177] As we have mentioned in the previous chapter, this is the Arabic original of the Latin *Picatrix*, and was probably written in the 11th century. David Pingree, "Some of the Sources of the Ghāyat al-hakīm," 2; Willy Hartner, "Notes On Picatrix," *Isis* 56, no. 4 (Winter, 1965): 438.
[178] Baer, "Representations of 'Planet-Children' in Turkish Manuscripts," 529.
[179] For example with Saturn we see tanning, farming, mining, and architecture. See Hellmut Ritter, ed., *Pseudo-Magriti: Das Ziel des Weisen, I, Arabischer Text* (Leipzig and Berlin: B.G. Teubner, 1933), 150 – 152, 196, 200.

thieves,…and every other similar request of the same nature ask for it from Saturn with the help of a drawing that I make for you."[180]

Two works that describe the seven by seven arrangement of the planets, that is, where each planet has seven planetary "spirits" (perhaps gods or angels) are *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* and the *Kitāb al-Isṭamāṭīs*.[181] The *Kitāb al-Isṭamāṭīs*, a Pseudo-Aristotelian work, purported to have been translated in Baghdad by Ḥunayn ibn 'Isḥāq (809–873 AD),[182] is the source for some of the planetary descriptions that Eva Baer pointed to in the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm.* Charles Burnett shows how a portion of the *Kitāb al-Isṭamāṭīs* is excerpted and depicted in one of the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* illustrations, the folio depicting the 28 Mansions of the Moon (the monthly transit of the moon through subdivisions of the Zodiac).[183] The *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* shares the same names for the moon mansions in a similar treatise on the moon which follows the Children of the Planets folios. This might show some support to Eva Baer's attribution of the similarities between text and image in the Children of the Planets and *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm.* The folio with the Moon Mansions comes just two folios after the Children of the Planets folios, included in a small group of unidentified folios that follow the *Kitāb al-Mawālīd*. The Children of the Planets and the Moon Mansion folios appear to be by the same scribe, but whether they would have originally been from the same work we will have to decide. If this is a correct assumption, then it could mean that the Children of the Planets imagery in this Eastern example accompanies an additional text, that is, the *Kitāb al-Isṭamāṭīs*. It is interesting that we find the Children of the Planets in such close proximity here to a work by Abû Ma'shar because we know that a text based on the *Introductorium maius* by Abû Ma'shar is commonly appended to Western examples, and

[180] Hashem Atallah and William Kiesel, trans., *Picatrix Ghayat Al-Hakim*, vol. 2 (Seattle: Ouroboros Press, 2008), 63.
[181] Pingree, "Some of the Sources of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*," 1–15.
[182] Burnett, "Arabic, Greek, and Latin Works on Astrological Magic Attributed to Aristotle," 85.
[183] Charles Burnett, "The *Kitāb al-Isṭamāṭīs* and a Manuscript of Astrological and Astronomical Works of Barcelona," and "Herman of Carinthia and the *Kitāb al-Isṭamāṭīs*: Further Evidence for the Transmission of Hermetic Magic," in *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages: Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds* (Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1996).

Abû Ma'shar is also one of the sources for the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*. The first treatise of the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* is the *Kitāb al-Mawālīd*, as noted above, but the folios containing the Children of the Planets are technically not part of this work. Because the Children of the Planets imagery shows individuals acting out different activities associated with different nativities, it makes sense that it has been placed next to Abû Ma'shar's work on nativities, but it seems clear it is an illustration from a separate work.

From my experience with the Children of the Planets topic, the valuable and detailed research of D.S. Rice on the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* seems to be rather neglected, scarcely mentioned by the few other scholars who write on this subject. Rice pointed to the sudden appearance of motifs, similar to the Children of the Planets, in 14th century Islamic art, like the Labors of the Months and the Four Seasons (see Image 26).[184] He thought the reason that we do not see the Labors and the Seasons motifs earlier in other Islamic iconography was because they came from the intersection with Western models. The *Kitāb al-Bulhān* is the first, and only, place the Seasons and another motif, the Climes (division of earth into seven regions), appear in Islamic manuscripts (see Image 27). They do not appear in the two Ottoman Turkish translations of this work. The Seasons, Rice believed, somehow found its way into this Arabic work through a northern Italian intermediary. Rice proposed that the *Tacuinum Sanitatis* (BNF Nouv. Acq. Lat. 1673, dates: 1380–1390), an illustrated Latin translation of the Arabic *Taqwin al-sihhah* by Ibn Butlan (d. 1066) (a work that was never illustrated in Islamic manuscripts), was the most likely candidate for a source of the Seasons images in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*. In other words, an illustration, that arose in the Latin translation of an Arabic work, returned to another Arabic work featuring the same theme. Rice pointed to certain features in the costume of figures in the Climes motif that are specifically "European" as well; one is a rather Italian looking fellow in the third Clime. The iconography in the Clime folios of the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*, as well as depicting the

[184] Rice, "The Seasons and the Labors of the Months in Islamic Art."

traditional planet figures known to earlier Islamic art, depict the dress and character of individuals from foreign lands, to acquaint the reader with human geography. Therefore it is not surprising to find European figures there. The question is whether they borrow the style from European iconographic models. Though he did not do so explicitly, it seems that Rice might apply the same argument about the origin of the Seasons to the Children of the Planet figures in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*, especially since they are more or less anomalies in Islamic manuscripts, much like the two other anomalies to Islamic iconography, the images of the Climes and the Four Seasons. Part of the reason Rice did not include a detailed account of the possible Western predecessor for the Children of the Planets, of course, is because there is none, but maybe he also suspected that they might have a different lineage. Though it is tempting to follow his argument – that these motifs do not exist elsewhere or before in Islamic art and must therefore be a product of the intersection with the West – I believe, in the case of the Children of the Planets, there is possibly another explanation.

We also see in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* the first example in manuscripts of a *Falnama-I Jafar*. Here we have a specifically Islamic theme represented for the first time in imagery. In this case, even though we have not seen depictions of this work before, we know it is not coming from a Western model. The reason it is depicted at just this time I would say is because of the birth of a new genre in Islamic manuscripts. The '*Falnama*' were manuscripts used and designed for the purpose of prognostication. They were exceptional in the relation they gave between text and image. In the *Falnama* the images were primary to the text, the opposite of most illuminated Islamic manuscripts. This was because the images were meant to be used in divination and as memory devices, i.e., suggestions to implicate a known story. In the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* many of the treatises are dedicated to divination, including the folios of the Children of the Planets, which were used for the most basic form of divination – discovering one's governing planet and the related possible future vocations. The *Falnama* were used in a form of bibliomancy where an inquirer would ask a question

and then turn to a random page of the book to find his fortune. More specifically, '*Falnama*' referred to the tables found at the end of a book (often the Koran) that were used to calculate what page to turn to in order to find the prognostication. They were in the form of a table or graph, like the one where we see the Children of the Planets in a 7 X 8 format (see Image 25). The 7 X 8 (7 X 7 + 7) arrangement of the planet figures is described in a section of the *Ghāyat*, one that is shared with the *Kitāb al-Isṭamāṭīs*.

Chapter four of book three of the *Ghāyat* tells us how the verses of the Koran can be divided according to the seven planets, in order to be used for divination.[185] In chapter nine we have a description of the seven spirits that belong to each of the seven planets. These are in turn related to the Climes.[186] This description gives support to the argument that the *Ghāyat* could be a text informing the Children of the Planets motif in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*, where we see each of the seven planets attended by seven other planet figures. There are interesting similarities in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* and the curious *Kitāb al-Isṭamāṭīs*, a large portion of which is shared with the *Ghāyat* and is the source of the seven by seven arrangement, where "each planet has seven spirits: one on each of its six sides, and one which unites them all"[187] which attend to mankind in daily affairs. Men imparted with one of these plural entities (e.g., Saturn is accompanied by 72 other Saturns) could "summon up his spirit in visible form, and that spirit would do his bidding."[188] *Kitāb al-Bulhān*, as we have pointed out, is also the only example in any manuscript that contains illustrations of the planetary 'climes,' the geographic areas governed by each planet (described in the *Kitāb al-Isṭamāṭīs*).[189]

It has been suggested by Massumeh Farhad in her *Falnama: Book of Omens* that the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* was something of a prototype of the *Falnama*, and could even have been

[185] Atallah and Kiesel, *Picatrix Ghayat Al-Hakim*, 2:27.
[186] Atallah and Kiesel, *Picatrix Ghayat Al-Hakim*, 2:105–113.
[187] Pingree, "Some of the Sources of the Ghāyat al-hakīm," 7.
[188] Burnett, "The *Kitāb al-Isṭamāṭīs* and a Manuscript of Astrological and Astronomical Works of Barcelona," 11. See also, "Herman of Carinthia and the *Kitāb al-Isṭamāṭīs*: Further Evidence for the Transmission of Hermetic Magic."
[189] Rice, "The Seasons and the Labors," 39.

used for the same purpose.[190] The *Kitāb al-Bulhān* has the same image to text ratio as the *Falnama*, where many of the illustrations are self-contained, having little to no text attached to them. The Children of the Planets folios are examples of these independent images in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān.* Thus we can speculate that the Children of the Planets only appear around the beginning of the 15th century because the Arabic texts that they illustrate (whether Abû Ma'shar or the *Kitāb al-Isṭamāṭīs*) were not traditionally illustrated. Only in this period, starting with a few examples as early as the 13th century, and blossoming in the 15th, do we see an illustration tradition begin in Islamic manuscripts.

III. The Children of the Planets: Survey of European Manuscripts

The Children of the Planets show up in a variety of venues in Western manuscripts. They appear in 1) calendar cycles, often attached to Christian works, 2) everyday life manuals, 3) astrological works, and 4) literary works. We find them in the 1491 *Heidelberger Schicksalsbuch*, in the 1480 *Housebook* of the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, in the Modena manuscript, *De Sphaera*, in Christine de Pisan's *Épître d'Othéa*, and even in Abû Ma'shar's *Flores*. Each of these deserves more detail, starting with this last example.

A brief note on Fritz Saxl's transmission theories surrounding the motif in Europe should be made before going into detail about the manuscripts. It is necessary to weigh the current thesis to some extent on Saxl's research because he was the first to comprehensively study the Children of the Planets motif, and his work on this subject is still the backbone for any current scholarship involving this motif. Fritz Saxl theorized two transmission points for the images of the Children of the Planets in the West. In the first category he put the Paduan frescos in the Palazzo della Ragione (see Image 31) (originally by Giotto), classifying these as bearing Eastern features. In the second category he put Christine de

[190] Massumeh Farhad and Serpil Bagci, *Falnama: The Book of Omens* (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 2009).

Pisan illustrations (see Image 42) as the prototypes for the majority of the Children of the Planet imagery in Western manuscripts.

We have the figures of the Children of the Planets in the *Heidelberger Schicksalsbuch* (see Image 48) (Cod. Pal. Germ. 832) identified as such in the University of Heidelberg Library description of contents, which is actually an excerpt of Abû Ma'shar's *Flores*. This work was printed in Augsburg in 1488 as the *Flores Astrologiae*, an extract of the *Introductorium maius*, by Erhard Ratdolt and in Venice by Johannes Baptista Sessa, in the same year (see Image 49). The *Introductorium maius* (also referred to as *Introductorium in Astronomiam*), a treatise on astrology, is the Latin translation of the Arabic *Kitab al-mudkhal al-kabir ila 'ilm ahkam an-nujjum*. In the Venetian example we can clearly see a similarity to the Heidelberg manuscript, where planet figures can be seen in the same order (see Image 48–49). The *Heidelberger Schicksalsbuch* also contains the *Astrolabium planum* of Pietro d'Abano (ed. Johannes Angelus) and a work on the 36 constellations of the mathematician and Arabic translator Michael Scotus (1175–1232). It is interesting to find all of these works next to each other in one codex, as each have been venues for the iconography of the Children of the Planets separately. Fritz Saxl pointed to the Michael Scotus illustrations in another manuscript to show an example of a transmission point of Eastern influences on European texts. Saxl claimed that the images in an early 13th century Scotus' work, *Liber Introductorius* (also MS Bodl. 266, 15th c.), bore features of Arabic iconography of the planet figures. More recently Dieter Blume has called this into question, saying that the Scotus illustrations are more likely inventions of a creative mind.[191] If that is the case though, we see the connection to the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* becoming more and more distant. What examples of the Children of the Planets, if any, ever borrowed from the imagery of the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*? If the Scotus illustrations were not the point of contact between Eastern and Western examples of planet figures, then we are left with no solid

[191] Blume, "Michael Scot, Giotto and the Construction of New Images of the Planets."

examples of direct transmissions. This makes the Children of the Planets in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* even more of an anomaly, but maybe it also gives us better reasons to question its provenance and meaning.

Another work, that is also an extract of the *Introductorium maius* of Abû Ma'shar, is the *Liber astrologiae* (BNF lat. 7344) attributed to Georgius Zothorus Zaparus Fendulus which also includes 'planet children.' It depicts many unique planetary figures (see Image 50). Śnieżyńska-Stolot describes these figures as "Decanal Planets" in her book *Astrological Iconography in the Middle Ages: The Decanal Planets*. She explains that the iconography of the Decans and the planets are very much related. The 36 Decans, which originally corresponded to the 36 stars and constellations, each govern 10 degrees of the 360-degree sphere. Each Zodiac sign governs one of 12 places in the celestial sphere. Each of these are divided into three Decans. One of the seven planets governs each Zodiac (each planet governs two signs, and the sun and moon govern one sign each) and also each Decan. Therefore the personifications in depictions of the Decans are the planets, often called the Faces, just as those depicted in the Children of the Planets motif. The term 'Face' refers to the planet lord of the Decan, that is, the Decan has the face of the planet that governs it. Each ten-day period is governed by a different planet. Each sign has one planet lord, three Decans (governed by three planets), and five "Terms" which are five planets. Therefore, a Decan depiction would often contain three images of the same planet, for example, Jupiter could be the planet lord of Pisces, the Decan lord of the second Decan, and one of the five Terms. This is why we can say that the figures in the *Liber astrologiae* can be considered prototypical planet children, especially since they accompany the same text commonly found with the Children of the Planet imagery, Abû Ma'shar's *Introductorium maius*. This is why Abû Ma'shar's *Introductorium maius*, or a work derived from it, is the likely candidate for the source of transmission into these early Western examples. Here we are following in the footsteps of Aby Warburg and Fritz Saxl who traced much of the planetary

imagery through Abû Ma'shar texts. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, the *Magnis coniunctionibus* (*Kitāb al-qirānāt*) and the *Kitāb al-Mawālīd* are other points of transmission. The *Introductorium maius* is one of the most important texts involved in the transmission of knowledge into Europe starting in the mid-12th century, as it was one of the sources of Aristotelianism, and especially introduced Aristotelian thought in the context of natural philosophy. [192]

Perhaps the most well-known example of the Children of the Planets motif is found in the *Housebook* of the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet (or Master of the Housebook), folios 10b–7a. The *Housebook* (~1480) shows the motif alongside a work on the art of memory, household recipes, health remedies, mining, minting, metallurgy, pyrotechnics, and defense of a fortress. The context of the motif here is 'secular,' the *Housebook* as a whole being a manual for practical everyday knowledge. The Children of the Planets intended use here seems to be to serve as a reference tool for the qualities related to each planet, to categorize or predict the behavior of those individuals associated with each planet, because of their profession or birth. The figures of the planet children in the *Housebook* interact with the scenery in a way distinct from other examples of the motif (see Image 1–5). They are perhaps the most elegant in the form where we see the planet figure as a rider bearing a flag above the scene. These illustrations are said to have influenced Dürer's works. We see a lively interaction in the *Housebook* illustrations of the figures blending with the scenery, almost as if a conscious effort was being made to mix the divinities more fully with human forms and human characteristics. In the Children of Jupiter we can distinctly see the same figure of Jupiter at the top of the picture is also the king in the throne at the bottom right corner of the illustration (see Image 2).

[192] Richard Lemay, "Abû Ma'shar and Latin Aristotelianism in the Twelfth Century" in *The Recovery of Aristotle's Natural Philosophy through Arabic Astrology*, vol. 38 (Beirut: American University of Beirut Oriental Series, 1962). Also, Richard Lemay, *Abû Ma'shar Al-Balhi, Kitab al-Madkhal al-kabir ila 'ilm ahkam al-nudjum. Liber introductorii maioris ad scientiam judicorum astrorum* (Naples: Institutio Universitario Orientale, 1995–1996), 23 ff.

There is an additional sequence of planet children in the *Housebook*, which follow the more famous examples directly, from folios 18b–25a, that have been strangely neglected. This series also shows seven illustrations including planetary figures, resembling the children in the first part. I would also call this series a Children of the Planets series, much like the accompanying series we see in the Modena manuscript (see Image 6–11). For some reason I have not seen any commentaries on this second series, but only discovered it when I looked at the facsimile. This series shows an even more elaborate story of the Children of the Planets (see Image 5). We recognize some of the same figures from the previous seven illustrations. These illustrations seem to go into additional details associated with each planet, and could perhaps even be a sequence depicting the Climes, but this would have to be supported with more research.

The *Housebook* is accompanied by German poems, which remind us of the similar texts that accompany the Children of the Planets, but these are more perhaps more playful:

> The Children of Saturn
>
> My children are vicious, dry, and old,
> Envious, weary, wretched, cold.
> Deep eyes, hard skin, their beards are small,
> They're lame, misshapen, depraved
> withal. Traitorous, brooding, greedy, pale,
> they often find themselves in jail.
> They grub the dirt, dig graves, plow land,
> in foul and stinking clothes they stand.
> Condemned to die or live in sorrow,
> sweet and strain, or trouble borrow.
> Always needy, never free,
> It's Saturn's children there you see.[193] (see Image 3)

There are notable similarities in many of the depictions in the *Housebook* to those in the *Liber astrologiae* (see Image 1, 50). We can note this particularly in the figure of Luna, who in both works sits on a harnessed horse (white), both figures facing left, one leg visible,

[193] "Mein kint sein sich pleich, durr*r* vnd kalt / Grew, treg, poß, neydig, trawrich vnd alt, / Dip, geitig, gefangen, lame vnd ungestalt, / Tiff augen, ir hawtt ist hartt vnd wenig part / Grasse lebtz, ungeschaffen gemantt / Wuste thyr sint in wol bekannt. / Das erttrich sie durchgraben gern, / Velt pawens sie auch nicht empern. / Vnd wie man in noyt vnd arbeit sol leben, / Das ist Satrnus kint gegeben*n* / Die annders ir natur han, / Allein von Saturno sol man das verstan." For transcription of German text see, Johannes Graf von Waldburg-Wolfegg, *Das Mittelalterliche Hausbuch: Betrachtungen vor einer Bilderhandschrift* (Munich: Prestel, 1957). The translation here is by Marianne Hansen, from Timothy B. Husband, *The Medieval Housebook and the Art of Illustration* (New York: Frick, 1999). See, Blazekovic, "Variations on the Theme of the Planet's Children."

with long hair, bare foreheads, and round faces. The image of the lobster is above the shoulder (See image 1, 50). These kinds of similarities point to the common origin shared by many of the Children of the Planets series.

The earliest example of the Children of the Planets in Western manuscripts are those found in Christine de Pisan's 1406 *Épître d'Othéa* (BNF, MS. Fr. 606) (see Image 42). Here the motif is distinctly related to the theme in the work, of the struggle to master one's own fortune, where it is introduced as essential knowledge for a questing knight. The text that introduces the Children of the Planet imagery cites 'Geber' (Jābir ibn Hayyān) as a source. It describes the "conditions" and qualities of the planets that men and women should or should not strive to emulate.[194] A knight should be like Jupiter (Christlike), noble and humane, but a lady should avoid being like Venus, amorous and idle. The days of the week are also associated with each, "Saturday is named after Saturn, and the metal lead is given thereto, and it is a planet of slow condition, heavy and wise."[195] The layout of the motif in Pisan's work are the key feature that has been highlighted by scholars, like Saxl, where we see the central planet deity at the top of each illustration in a nimbus, with the smaller children beneath, in a row. The combination of this layout with the planet children forms was seen as an innovation of Christine de Pisan, who was said to have overseen the original production of the illuminations of her works.[196] The layout itself comes from the iconography of the Last Judgement and Descent of the Holy Ghost (Cod. Bamberg, MS. Lat. 5) prototypes, as explained by Saxl and Panofsky.[197] The same layout was also adapted for depictions of the Liberal Arts, where Minerva is seen above the seven arts, as in a manuscript of Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus* (On Famous Women) (BNF, ca.1400). This

[194] Christine de Pisan, *The epistle of Othea to Hector or, The boke of knyghthode* (London: J.B. Nichols & Sons, 1904), 17–24. A modern English edition: Jane Chance, *Christine De Pizan's Letter of Othea to Hector: Translated With Introduction, Notes, and Interpretative Essay* (Albany: The Focus Library of Medieval Women, SUNY Press, 1989).
[195] Pisan, *Othea*, 19.
[196] Anne-Marie Barbier, "Le cycle iconographique perdu de l'*Epistre Othea* de Christine de Pizan," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales* 16 (2008): 279–299.
[197] See, Panofsky and Saxl, "Classical Mythology in Mediaeval Art," 246; Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, 206.

is interesting because we know Pisan's other work, *Livre de la Cite des dames* (The Book of the City of Ladies), was seen as a reaction to this work by Boccaccio. The format is found as well, for example in the German *Losbuch* (Vienna, ser. nov. 2652, 14th c.), which shows pagan philosophers related to the seven planets: "In this [work] is the notion that a man has a ruling planet, and that if he is true to it, he will live out a singular fortune. Individual fate is only for those who live according to their true nature."[198] The *Losbuch* (Lot Book) is one example from the genre of "oracle books" that we see many examples of in the 15th century, which were used for divinatory purposes. I would speculate that we even perhaps have the same or a very similar layout in the Keir Collection illumination of Abu Mashar's *Kitāb al-Mawālīd*, or even in the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* illustrations of that work (see Images 36-42). Why this shared layout it present between these geographically distant examples is unclear.

Though not in a manuscript, we should mention here the Children of the Planet imagery in the frescos in the Palazzo della Ragione, Padua, attributed to Giotto (1266–1337), and those in the Schifanoia frescos (ca. 1470). These are said to derive, through the *Astrolabium planum* of Pietro d'Abano (1257–1316), from Abû Ma'shar's descriptions of the planets, in the text mentioned earlier that is commonly found along side the Children of the Planets in Western examples, the *Liber Astrologiae*.[199] Saxl pointed to the arrangement of these Children of the Planet figures in a graph layout, which we know is a feature shared by the Arabic and Ottoman examples that we have (see Image 25, 31).[200] Otherwise the details of the planet children in the frescos do not exhibit the traditional features found in Islamic art. There is evidence that these depictions could be related to the *paranatellonta* (the personifications of the star groups and planets that rise together with the Sun or angles in a horoscope), where some of the images are similar to the images in the Vaticanus

[198] Warren Kenton, *Astrology: The Celestial Mirror* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 108.
[199] See, Panofsky and Saxl, "Classical Mythology in Mediaeval Art," 245.
[200] Fritz Saxl, *La Fede Negli Astri: dall' antichita al Rinascimento* (Torino: Boringhieri, 1985).

Reginensis 1283, the 'Spanish *Picatrix*.'[201] If this is the case it does beg the question of whether other Children of the Planets imagery also exhibits shared aspects with *paranatellonta* imagery. We also see the Children of the Planets in the Schifanoia frescos, for example, in the Triumph of Venus, that are comparable to the images of Venus in the Krakow *Picatrix* (see Image 15, 30).

The illustrations by Cristoforo de Perdis of the 15th century (1450–1470) Modena manuscript, *De Sphaera* (Biblioteca Estense, MS Lat. 209), accompany a text by Francesco Filelfo (1398–1481), the Italian Renaissance humanist. This work is an untitled manuscript that 20th century scholars appended the name 'De Sphaera' to. The elegant and complex illustrations of the Modena manuscript feature the Children of the Planets both beneath the central figure of each planet, as well as on a facing page, even in a graph form for the children of Mercury (see Image 11). This can be compared to the accompanying second series of planet figures in the *Housebook* (see Image 5). These depictions thus combine both the formatting of the Pisan images, and the tabular arrangement seen in the Palazzo della Ragione Children of the Planets.[202]

Another example that has another series of seven images accompanying a second Children of the Planets theme is the *Splenor Solis* (Harley MS. 3469, 16th c., and Berlin Kupferstichkabinett Cod. 78 D 3, d. 1531). In the *Splenor Solis*, a German alchemical manuscript attributed to the legendary Salomon Trismosin (perhaps mentor of Paracelsus) which is based largely on the alchemical manuscript *Aurora Consurgens* (d. 1410), through a German translation dating to the 1520s (Cod. germ. qu. 848), we see an interesting combination of variations of the motif. The manuscripts of the *Splendor Solis* contain 22 illustrated folios. The seven Children of the Planet images each follow the same layout: the central figure in each is an alchemical elixir, which contains personifications of the elixir in

[201] On the paranatellonta see, Marco Bertozzi, *La tirrania degli astri: gli affreschi astrologici di Palazzo Schifanoia* (Livorno: Sillabe, 1999), 42–44. For the Spanish manuscript see, Alfonso d'Agostino, *Astromagia (MS Reg. Lat. 1283 a) de Alfonso X el Sabio* (Naples: Liguori Editore, 1992).
[202] Daniele Bini, *Astrologia: arte e cultura in età rinascimentale* (Modena: Biblioteca Estense, 1997).

a flask, the planet is shown at the top in a chariot, and the children are featured beneath and beside the flask. Another related seven folios show some familiar planetary figures, for example we can see Mars beheading a king in the sixth illumination (see Image 32). These details in the second series of illustrations that commonly accompany the Children of the Planets motif, and the additional planet children figures in them is something that needs further investigation. Jörg Völlinagel[203] recently pointed to the relationship between many of the images in the *Splendor Solis* and those Children of the Planet images by Jörg Breu the Elder (1510 Series) (see Image 46), even speculating that Jörg Breu the Elder could be the illuminator of the *Splendor Solis* planet children.

We can look at the second part of the *Astrolabium planum* edited by Johannes Angelus (John Engles), Pietro d'Abano's work (based on Abû Ma'shar's *Introductorium maius*) for an example of the way a text that described the planet children would understand its own sources. In an introduction by William Lilly in the English edition (1655), Lilly gives the genealogy of sources to be the Egyptians, Ibn Ezra, and the 'Doctrine of the Spheres.' Lilly's introduction tells us that the work is specifically useful for people who want to predict the character of their children through understanding the Nativity, i.e., the degree of the Ascendant in relation to the Decan or Face of the sign. The key is to place the child in accord with "his proper Genius" (Intro. *Astrolabium planum*, Lilly). He admits that there are manifold other uses, but does not have time to go into them.

There is an interesting development in a Central European example of a planet series. In one manuscript of Konrad Kyeser's *Bellifortis* (early 15th century, MTAK Cod. Lat. K 465) we find the blending of the planet figures with contemporary personalities. The illustrations show the planets as human figures on horseback with flags (much like the *Housebook* figures), and in the case of the Sun we find a portrait of King Sigismund of

[203] Jörg Völlnagel, "Harley MS. 3469: Splendor Solis or Splendor of the Sun – A German Alchemical Manuscript," Electronic British Library Journal (2011): 7. Accessed on June 2, 2012, htt://www.bl.uk/eblj/2011articles/pdf/ebljarticle82011.pdf.

Hungary, and Holy Roman Emperor. This was due to an innovation by the artist, and not to the author of the manuscript, as Benedek Láng points out, "Fortunately, Kyeser had died before he could have faced the trauma that the illuminator of this fragment depicted his greatest enemy, the emperor Sigismund."[204] This is the only version of the *Bellifortis* that depicts Sigismund, who had deposed his brother Wenceslas IV, whose court Kyeser belonged to. This manuscript was probably produced for Sigismund, and eventually belonged to the Corvinus Library. This would indicate a point at which the motif combines the astrological formula, and depiction of the planet deity, with an image of an actual king, in an attempt to create a contemporary appeal to its viewer and to place the astrological mechanism into a modern sphere.

IV. Kraków *Picatrix*

Ewa Śnieżyńska-Stolot in her book *Picatrix Latinus*,[205] discusses the only illustrated Latin version of the *Picatrix*, the Kraków *Picatrix* (ca. 1458, 1459) (BJ 793). This work was discussed as well by Benedek Láng in 2008 in his work, *Unlocked Books*.[206] Láng pointed to the East-Central European origin of the manuscript in the context of the idea of there being a 'magic school' in Cracow, and to see how the environment that produced this text dealt with astrology as a field of study. Láng made the interesting suggestion that perhaps only the first two books were illustrated because of the type of magic being described there, as opposed to the 'darker' magic of the latter two books. The division between types of magic, talismanic, demonic, in the Speculum would support this possibility. But it does not seem that this was the case, but rather the death of the scribe Piotr Gaszowiec (d. 1474), also

[204] Benedek Láng, *Unlocked Books: Manuscripts of Learned Magic in the Medieval Libraries of Central Europe* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2008), 77, fn. 84.
[205] Ewa Śnieżyńska-Stolot, "Summary," in *Picatrix Latinus: Ikonografia planet i planet dekanicznych w rękopisie Krakowskim* [The iconography of the planets and the decanal planets in the Kraków manuscript], 89–107 (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellonskiego, 2009).
[206] Benedek Láng, *Unlocked Books*, 103.

the author of one of the accompanying texts in the codex.[207] The illustrations begin in full color but trail off to outlines. The text stops, while the images go on to depict the rest of the Decans. Śnieżyńska-Stolot writes that the illuminator was tracing other images. The text that the Kraków *Picatrix* was tracing from would be a non-extant *Picatrix Latinus*. This 'ghost text' would have been originally copied and illustrated sometime in the late 14th or early 15th century in the court of Prague, and was probably in turn derived from an Alfonsine manuscript.[208] The images of the planets in the *Picatrix* show the planets sitting atop different animals. Similar imagery is seen in a few Arabic manuscripts (BNF MS arabe 2775 and MS Biblioteca Escorial, 14th c. 'Al-Magrithi Kitab Thakhirat al-Iskandar' [Treasure of Alexander][209]) (see Image 24), for example, in an undated Cairo manuscript of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* (see Image 23).[210] The Kraków *Picatrix*, only just discovered in Saxl's time, put a damper on some of Saxl's theories on the transmission of the planetary iconography, because he believed the illustrations to be spontaneous creations of an individual illuminator and not related in any way to Oriental models, as he had hoped. Recent research on the manuscript, by Benedek Láng and Ewa Śnieżyńska-Stolot, can now tell us a little more about its images.[211]

The Vaticanus Reginensis 1283,[212] a 13th century fragment of the Spanish version of the *Picatrix*, composed in the court of Alfonso X, interestingly accompanies text by Abû Ma'shar's *Introductorium maius* describing the *paranatellonta*.[213] This illuminated manuscript was discovered by Aby Warburg in 1911 in the Vatican Library. We know from the original preface to the *Picatrix* that the work was translated into Spanish first, and then Latin, the Latin coming from the Spanish translation and not the Arabic, as noted by David

[207] Śnieżyńska-Stolot, "Summary," in *Picatrix Latinus*, 90.
[208] Śnieżyńska-Stolot, "Summary," in *Picatrix Latinus*, 89.
[209] Anna Maria Alfonso-Goldfarb, Livro do Tesouro De Alexandre: Um estudo de hermetica arabe na ofincina da historia da ciencia (Petropolis: Editora Vozes) 1999.
[210] *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, ed. M. Nasar, Cairo [n.d.], 60. See, David Pingree, "Indian Planetary Images and the Tradition of Astral Magic," *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 52 (1989): 8, fn. 40.
[211] Láng, *Unlocked Books*, see 79–80, 98.
[212] See the related text, the Alfonsine *Lapidarium* II (Escorial h. I. 15), Śnieżyńska-Stolot, *Astrological Iconography in the Middle Ages*, 13.
[213] See, Bertozzi, *La tirrania degli astri*, 42–44; Pingree, "Between the Ghaya and the Picatrix," 27–57.

Pingree.[214] It was written originally in Spain, possibly by an anonymous Sabian author from Harran.[215] Yehuda ben Moshe is thought to have translated the Arabic text into the vernacular around 1243–1250.[216] It was then translated into Latin in 1256. The dissertation by Raquel Diez[217] notes that this work is not a direct translation of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, but an expanded work that elaborates on the passages of the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* that it quotes. The name 'Picatriz' is given in this manuscript, which shows that this name has come from the Spanish translation. More recent speculation on the name 'Picatrix' might point to its origin in the Spanish noun *picador*.[218] Its rather refined style of illuminations, showing, for example, Luna riding on a rabbit (a customary depiction in Indian art) encased in a circle or sphere (see Image 20). After a treatise on the Mansions of the Moon and the Zodiacal signs there are ten folios describing the planets, though only descriptions of Mars, Venus, and Mercury are included in the fragment. These illuminations of Mars illustrate passages 2.10 and 3.7 of the *Picatrix*. We see the seventh spirit of Mars depicted as an angel in the central circle of a circular diagram, surrounded by six other figures (see Image 19). The corresponding passage is 3.7, where (as in 3.9 where each planet is described as having six spirits and an additional seventh that governs them) seven names of the spirits of Mars are given. There are images of Mercury, but the text is missing for them (fols. 31r-36v). Interestingly, the illustration seems to draw equally on the passage from 2.10, where four forms of Mars are described according to different authorities (Beylus, Hermes, Picatriz, and 'other sages'), using the details of the features for the figures in the illustration:

> [A nude man standing with a] virgin mistress, & this is the figure (statue?) of Venus, and is lifted up, & her hair fastened back; & Mars his right hand placed on the neck of Venus & the left hand on the breasts; Gazing & looking at her face. So says this wise one [Hermes] in his book about this and in this way many great works are accounted. We speak about this in

[214] Pingree, "Between the Ghaya and the Picatrix," 27.
[215] Śnieżyńska-Stolot, *Picatrix Latinus*, 89.
[216] d'Agostino, *Astromagia*, 21–22, 26, 3, fn. 56.
[217] Diez, "Alfonso X el sabio: Picatrix," 47.
[218] J. Thomann proposes this in a footnote, but actually emphasizes a different theory involving a translation of the name 'Maslama' in his article, but I prefer the 'picador' theory. J. Thomann, "The Name Picatrix: Transcription or Translation?" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 53 (1990): 289–296, 296, fn. 81. Also, Śnieżyńska-Stolot, *Astrological Iconography in the Middle Ages*, 13.

> our own 'el libro de las ymagenes.'[219] The shape of Mars in other books is the figure of a knight on a lion, & has in his right hand a sword & in the left a man's head, taking it by the hair, and his garments are new. The figure of Mars's in the second saying of Picatriz is a figure of a knight on lion, and in his hand a long lance. The second figure of Mars of the wise Picatriz is this: [symbol of Mars]" (fol. 27r).[220]

This description could correspond to the first image of Mars, if for some reason the illustrator interpreted 'figura' to mean statue (it can have this meaning), for here we see Mars holding a small statue of a woman, looking into its face. The following figure corresponds as well. The images are, counterclockwise: a naked man holding a statue (of Venus?) in his right hand, the left across her chest, a man on a lion holding a sword in his right hand, a warrior on a lion with a lance, a warrior holding a head and sword, a man-half-dog holding a sword and human head, a crowned man standing holding a sword, and in the middle an angelic figure with wings (fol. 27). Venus is also described here in the description of Mars, where Mars holds her by the neck and looks at her. This is the passage that is illustrated in the Kraków *Picatrix*. Three of the Mars figures are strikingly similar to those in the wheel of Mars illustration of the Vaticanus Reginensis manuscript. We can see many similar features to those illustrations of the planets in the Kraków *Picatrix* (see Images 12–18). Of course, the Kraków *Picatrix* dates to nearly two centuries later, so in this case we have an immense chronological gap, not to mention language difference, between the two manuscripts. Whether we can place these images in the same category of classification of planet iconography as those of the Kraków *Picatrix*, as laid out and appended to by

[219] This reference, which is not in the Latin probably refers back to the beginning of 2.10, where there the figures of the planets are attributed to the "Libro spirituum et ymaginum quem transtulit sapiens Picatrix" (line 10). This could also be a reference to *De imaginibus* by Thābit ibn Qurra (al-Ḥarrānī, 826–901), which is a primary source for the *Picatrix*.

[220] My translation from Pingree's transcript, the ellipses are reconstructed from the Latin. Pingree, "Between the Ghaya and the Picatrix": "…manceba virgen, & es esta la figura de Venus; et esta levantada en pie, & sus cabellos fechos crinechados atras; & Mars ponendo su mano diestra en su pescuego de Venus & la mano siniestra en lo[s] pechos della; & el catando & mirando en su cara. & dize esto sabio que esta y. desta manera a grandes fechos et muchos segunt el conto en su libro. & nos [&] te fablamos desta y. en el nuestro libro de las ymagenes. La forma de Mars en otros libros es figura de omne cauallero sobre un leon, & tiene en su mano diestra una espada & en la siniestra cabepa de omne, teniendo la por los cabellos; et sus uestidos nueuos. La forma de Mars segund el dicho de Picatriz es figura de omne cavallero sobre un leon, et en su mano azcona luenga.... La figura de Mars segund el sabio Picatriz es esta:…" See, Greer and Warnock, *Picatrix*, 2.10, 103. The English from the Latin: "The image of Mars according to the opinion of Hermes is the form of a nude man standing erect on his feet and before him on the right is a beautiful maiden standing on her feet, which is the form of Venus; and her hair is fastened in the back; and Mars is placing his right hand on her neck and his left hand is stretched out above her breast, and he is facing her and gazing upon her."

Śnieżyńska-Stolot, or whether they should be in their own category is hard to say, but it is tempting because of their similarity to group them together.

The comparison of manuscripts of the Children of the Planets can tell us a great deal about their development. The contexts in which they are found, as we can see evidenced here in this chapter, are important to us because they provide us with the texts that used the motif and show us how image and text might have been understood by their audience. As we can see by the number of examples, the Children of the Planets were an extremely popular theme in 15th century manuscripts, showing their relevance to the early modern individual. From Padua, to Baghdad, to Modena, to Cracow they communicated a distinct astrological idea through a new motif. The relevance of the Children of the Planets is tied to discussions in scientific, religious, and magical categories. How this idea was to be put into print, thus finding its even wider distribution, we will see in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

'Housebooks' in the Transition from Manuscript to Print in 15th Century Europe

To place our discussion in a broader conceptual framework we can look at some of the intellectual trends in the 15th century. Turning again to one of the humanists of this time period, Marsilio Ficino, might give us insight into some of the reasons we find these interactions of religious, astrological, medicinal, and everyday life, and whose translations were widely printed. As we have discussed in our first chapter, we find in his writings the first use of the term *prisca theologia*. The idea of a 'natural religion,' the idea that the divine is common to all, can be seen in many literatures during this time.[221] This is the way of thinking that was informing the genres of early printing that we are discussing here. There were eight printed editions of Ficino's translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* before 1500. These along with Ficino's translations of Plato's works, printed first in 1484, contributed to the revival of the ancient philosophies and religion that were so popular in the Renaissance. Ficino himself tried to harmonize Christian theology with Platonic philosophy and Ptolemaic astrology. His *De vita libri tres* (Three Books on Life), first printed in 1489, can be seen as a complex example in the genre of 'housebooks' that we will try to define in this chapter, i.e., works dedicated to the 'good' way of living, offering practical approaches toward acquiring knowledge of the world through right action in everyday life. Ficino's work provides guidelines for how to approach subjects in philosophy, theology, and health, those topics that his readers would find useful and beneficial in their daily lives. *De vita* then is a complex and philosophical work for a sophisticated intellectual audience, which we should consider for certain parallels in the typical block-book and early print, and which have common features for a wider readership. Reverse order or delete

In order to better understand the transition from manuscript to print, let us look closely for a moment at one specific manuscript of the *Picatrix*, which I think is the ideal

[221] Tambiah, *Magic, Science, and Religion*, 5.

example of what I mean by 'housebook.' The Canonicianus Latinus 500, in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, is what I would call an authentic spell book. The manuscript was copied in Italy in 1580 (bound before 1710), and is a miscellany including an illustrated herbal, a treatise on medicines, another on common diseases, a printed work by Trithemius entitled 'Generalis Clavis Secretorum,' and books 3 and 4 of the *Picatrix*. This vellum covered book, with hand-stamped floral patterns on the inside cover, once belonged to (according the first folio) the polymath Guiseppe Columbani (1676–1736), and also the Jesuit Matteo Luigi Canonici (1727–1805). The Canonicianus Latinus 500 is a great example of how manuscript and print were blended together to create a book that could be used on a daily basis. Bound directly in the middle of the *Picatrix* folios (see Image 52), we find a work by Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516), the German Abbott and contemporary of Agrippa and Paracelsus. It is an astrological work, and describes the characteristic of the seven planets, which is probably why it was bound next the *Picatrix*. It appears to be a 'key' to the third book of *Steganographia*, so may be apparently some sort of a cipher for underlying content,[222] but it is an unknown one, not mentioned among his genuine or spurious works.[223] Trithemius is said to have noted that the cryptographic part of his works are a "secular consequent of the ability of a soul specially empowered by God to reach, by magical means, from earth to Heaven."[224] The first treatise in the work shows lively illustrations of different herbs, some of them with human faces (see Image 53). What occurred to me when examining this manuscript is that the context that we find different works in is in fact important. Here we can see how this book as a whole was used for practical purposes, the herbal to make medicines and the *Picatrix* to cast spells, with the help of the planets. This

[222] Thomas Ernst, "Schwarzweisse Magie: Der Schlussel zum dritten Buch der *Steganographia* des Trithemius," *Daphnis*: *Zeitschrift für Mittlere Deutsche Literatur* 25 (1996): 1–205. Noel L. Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology: A Chapter in the controversy over the occult studies in Early Modern Europe* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).
[223] Pingree, *Picatrix: The Latin Version*, xxii-xxiii.
[224] Noel L. Brann, "Trithemius, Johannes," in *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism*, ed. Wouter J. Hanegraff (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 1135–1139.

shows us how an early modern reader of the *Picatrix* would have viewed the work, as a practical tool.

I. Context of Block-Books and Woodblock Prints

Prior to movable type there was an earlier form of print in Europe, the block-book, seen as early as 1420, where prints were made from a carved wood block, imprinting full sheets of paper with an image in ink. One of the reasons the block-book printing technique came into use was because of the greater availability of paper. By 1450 more advanced techniques superseded these methods, where a large number of books could be produced easily with the printing press. The manuscript was not immediately replaced by the invention of print, but instead this was a gradual change, where manuscripts and early prints were often found side by side in the same library, printed pages bound next to handwritten ones. Most interesting about this process are the subjects that were represented by early printed works and how they compare to those of the manuscripts in this transitional period. Among the most popular subjects of early printed works were Biblical meditations (e.g. *Canticum canticorum*, *Biblia pauperum*, Book of Hours, etc.), but second to these were practical subjects like calendar cycles, recipes, health remedies, techniques for metalworking, medicinal works, arts of memory, and *Ars moriendi*. Both of these two categories were found in "housebooks" of the time, i.e., books that were used as reference tools in early modern households, sometimes designed specifically for everyday use.[225] Housebooks were first seen as manuscripts, and were individual to the household that owned them, but interestingly it is the very subjects of housebooks that we find in many early prints that were adapted for use by a wider audience. The 'religious' and the 'secular' topics in these books

[225] William Pidduck, "Publisher's Note" in *Medieval and Early Modern Women Part 2: Household books, Correspondence, and Manuscripts Owned by Women, from the British Library, London – A listing and guide to the microfilm collection*, Southampton: Ashford Press, 2004.

were found stitched together in one work.[226] In this chapter I will look at a more subtle difference in content between the biblical and astrological elements found in many early prints to examine how they were perceived by their readers. The Children of the Planets were in this context a calendar cycle for the days of the week but also a useful tool to understand one's horoscope. They fit into a broad picture of the universe, the understanding of the cosmos, and of God's creations of the celestial spheres.

Print brought many literatures into the private realm, and therefore it is one of the main factors in making the privatization of religion possible. An examination of early printed literatures that lie on the border between the secular and religious spheres will tell us how these elements were understood by the individual of the early modern period. We can focus on block-books and woodcut prints to begin with and then look at close relationships between the images in manuscripts and prints of the same work, for example in the case of the *Heidelberger bilderkatechismus* (Cod. Pal. germ. 438) and the prints of Erhard Ratdolt, the Augsburg printer. Our examples of the Children of the Planets motif move from manuscript to print quickly. The *Housebook* manuscript is also an interesting case, bridging the gap between manuscript and print, as there was probably a printed version made of it that has not survived.[227] It contains only practical and astrological subjects. We see in many block-book subjects addressing astrology, health, and prayer, which will open this chapter as well to a discussion on magic, religion, and science. We see these three categories blend effortlessly in many examples of block-books.[228]

[226] For a comparison of different uses of the term, see Jose Casanova, "Secularization, Enlightenment, and Modern Religion," in *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1994), 13. These definitions of secularization have been discussed: 1) in a differentiation between two spheres, religious and secular, and 2) in a movement toward the private sphere, and 3) in a decline of religion. Casanova writes, that "these historically sedimented semantic moments of the term 'secularization' only make sense if we accept the fact that, 'once upon a time,' much of reality in medieval Europe was actually structured through a system of classification which divided 'this world' into two heterogeneous realms of spheres, 'the religious' and the 'secular.'"

[227] Blazekovic, "Variations on the Theme of the Planet's Children," 244.

[228] For a discussion of these terms see Stanley Tambiah, "Magic, Science, and religion in Western Thought: Anthropology's Intellectual Legacy" in *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1–31.

Printing made religious subjects (through texts) more available to a larger audience, and eventually it also made it more private. For these reasons we can say that print had an early part to play as a secularizing factor, that is, if we define the term 'secular' versus 'ecclesiastic,' then we can understand its usage in terms of the 15th century. In this sense we can speak of the secular as part of the 'profane' realm. I suggest that the term secular is attached to 'everyday life' and I will use it in this chapter as analogous to the realm of everyday life. Charles Taylor writes about the "enchanted world" (in terms of Weberian 'disenchantment') of the *ancien régime* model, where state and church are interwoven. He says

> In an enchanted world there is a strong contrast between the sacred and the profane. By the sacred, I mean certain places (such as churches), certain agents (such as priests), certain times (such as high feasts), and certain actions (such as saying the Mass) in which the divine or the holy is present. In comparison to these, other places, people, times, and actions may count as profane.[229]

This is recognizable even in Augustinian theology, where the earthly city continually reflects upon another city, a city of god. In these terms we can very easily use the term 'secular' for we are talking about a society in the 15th century that functions not only in "higher time" but in "secular time" as well. This harkens back to the etymology of the term 'secular' from Latin *saeculum*, that is, secular defined as "age, century, or world."[230] Even though Jose Casanova would say that the "differentiation of time and space into two different realities, a sacred and a profane one, became truly meaningless long ago,"[231] for the time period we are discussing the distinguishing of two realms described by Taylor here is necessary and indicative.

The block-book was usually highly illustrated, imitating illuminated manuscripts. Their images were combined with text that was either handwritten or also printed with the same method. Books made with this early printing technique were slightly more accessible to a wider audience and more affordable, say, than those commissioned manuscripts that

[229] Charles Taylor, "Religious Mobilizations," *Public Culture* 18, no. 2 (2006): 283.
[230] Casanova, *Public Religions*, 12.
[231] Casanova, *Public Religions*, 13.

were done completely by hand. Still, generally we are looking at an aristocratic or wealthy urban class consumer for these types of works, those few who were literate, and not the common man, and this is so even of the early movable type works. Nonetheless, these kinds of printing methods began to make texts more available to a wider readership, and some block-books, like the *Biblia pauperum* (Pauper's Bible) or the *Planetenbuch* (Planet Book), would have been used as teaching tools, their large illustrated narratives being accessible even to those non-readers through a copy owned by a parish church. *Biblia pauperum* were vernacular collections of illustrated biblical commentaries, the central text comparing the correspondences between the Old and New testaments. The illustrations in these works dominated the page, with minimal text accompanying large images, which distinguished them from most manuscripts and perhaps made them popular as printed works. The first movable type *Biblia pauperum* is the 1462 print done by Albrecht Pfister in Bamberg in German. The earliest *Planetenbuch* comes even before this, ca. 1455 (Heidelberg, Universitatsbibliothek, Cod. Pal. Germ. 438). Here, even a member of the lower classes could afford to collect single folios that were produced from woodblock impressions, one-page versions of similar texts:

> In addition to book illustration, woodcuts were also produced in the 15th century as single-leaf devotional prints. Such prints were collected by laypeople as mementos of pilgrimage and used in private prayer; they functioned to sustain an encounter between the worshipper and the figure depicted. Like book illustration, which structured the text for the reader, the visual form of the devotional print was related to its practical function for the worshipper.[232]

These single leaf illustrated prints were popular in private homes and were even used as a sort of talisman to protect the home, for example "St. Christopher bearing the Infant Jesus, who would, for a day protect from death anyone who caught his gaze."[233]

Block-books, much like illuminated manuscripts, were somewhat of a commodity for their owners. Owning a block-book would be seen as a status symbol in the same way that the aristocracy would see owning a manuscript. In her article, "Profane Illuminations,

[232] Cynthia A. Hall, "Before the Apocalypse: German Prints and Illustrated Books, 1450–1500," *Harvard University Art Museums Bulletin*, 4, no. 2 (1996), 8–29.
[233] Blazekovic, "Variations on the Theme of the Planet's Children," 243.

Secular Illusions: Manuscripts in Late Medieval Courtly Society," Brigitte Buettner describes this use of manuscripts as status symbols by the aristocratic readership that had them commissioned.[234] She discusses how illuminated manuscripts on profane subjects "contributed to the development of a secular typology that familiarized the aristocracy with its putative past, a secular opposed to a biblical ancestry."[235] The aristocratic libraries of the 13th through 15th centuries reflect interest in more 'historical' subjects, as well as 'literary,' including vernacular prose and poetry, in comparison to the clerical libraries of the same time. The aristocratic interest in secular subjects was oriented toward a taste for the past; history, science, and literature were pursued with a greater interest in the libraries of the aristocracy. Buettner suggests that the secular images of the illuminated manuscripts commissioned by aristocracy "helped to create what would become, during the Renaissance, a "'cult of the past,' that is, a cult of the pagan past."[236] In other words, a notable difference between the libraries of the aristocracy and those of the church would be in the amount of secular or profane subjects they owned. The aristocratic libraries reflected interest in texts that included narratives, fables, and heroic tales, and preferred texts (had a larger number in comparison to the clerical libraries) that fell outside of the solely theological topics. This tendency created in the production of illuminated manuscripts was handed down to the block-book printing tradition. This could explain the sometimes purely non-ecclesiastic content of some block-books and manuscripts from this time period.

A common form of block-book was the *Planetenbuch*, where we find our images of the Children of the Planets in many examples, as mentioned in the introduction, which we will list again here: ca. 1455 *Planetenbuch* (Heidelberg, Universitatsbibliothek, Cod. Pal. Germ. 438, 149r–150v); 1460 Baccio Baldini (1436–1487) engravings; 1460 London Block-Book in the British Library (I A 27); 1460 Basel Block-Book, Öffentliche Bibliothek

[234] Brigitte Buettner, "Profane Illuminations, Secular Illusions: Manuscripts in Late Medieval Courtly Society," *The Art Bulletin*, 74, no. 1 (1992): 75–90.
[235] Buettner, "Profane Illuminations," 82.
[236] Buettner, "Profane Illuminations," 82.

(A N V 37a); 1470 *Wirkungen der Planeten* Block-Book (Granger Collection); 1470 Berlin Block-Book, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen; Copenhagen Block-Book, Statens Museum for Kunst (Det kongelige Bibliotek); Vienna Block-Book (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ink.2.d.4); 1510 Jörg Breu the Elder (Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, Staatliche Museen); 15th c. *Schwabach* Block-Book (Kirchen-Kapetelsbibliotek).[237]

II. The Calendar in Prints

The calendar, the days of the week, the labors of the months, and the zodiac were other secular themes in block-book prints. The popularity of these subjects was due to their usefulness on a daily level, where a book containing these motifs could be used as a reference guide from day to day, as meditations or teaching tools, where days of the week were associated and depicted with corresponding planets and qualities associated with them. The Labors of the Months commonly accompanies the Children of the Planets, portraying those activities that were performed during different times of the year, wheat harvest, grape harvest, planting, etc., related to each month. The nativities of individuals could be understood in relation to the zodiac and planets they were governed by, which would help predict future character development and ways of life.

Agnes Dukkon discusses the role in cultural history of Hungarian calendars in early prints in her work *Régi Magyarországi Kalendáriumok Európai Háttérben* (Old Hungarian calendars in a European background). She looks at the "domestic appearance and blossoming of the genre of calendars"[238] in the broad history of science, literature, art, and folklore, beginning with the late 16th century and ending with examples from the mid 18th century. Using mainly the series of bibliographies *Régi Magyarországi Nyomtatványok* (RMNy, 'Early Hungarian Prints') and *Régi Magyar Könyvtár* (RMK, 'Old Hungarian

[237] For a list of the Children of the Planets in Block-Books, see: Sabine Mertens, Elke Purpus, and Cornelia Schneider, *Blockbücher des Mittelalters: Bilderfolgen als Lektüre* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1991), 410.
[238] Agnes Dukkon, *Régi Magyarországi Kalendáriumok Európai Háttérben* [Old Hungarian calendars in a European background] (Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2003), 213.

Library'), Dukkon shows how astrological subjects were highlighted and handled in popular prints:

> The Scientific attitude of Humanism, the increased value of the role and the destiny of man, results in the characteristic blurred contours and intermingling of the ancient pagan culture and Christian world view in the early modern age calendars. Even the spirit of the Reformation is felt: in many 16th century calendars one observes a sense of uncertainty, hidden remorse, a compulsion to offer excuses concerning astrology. This explains the fact that calendar makers or publishers often add short prayers or references to the Divine Providence to the text of prognostica. The choice, or the question of 'either-or' seems particularly obvious for Martin Luther and Calvin who refuse to interrogate the stars when it comes to human destiny.[239]

Dukkon points to the need for further studies "through complimentary comparitive investigation of the European background, and Polish, German, English, and French calendars"[240] and on the genre of Central European (Hungarian) printing to compare to those publications focusing on printing in other centers of Europe. She also looks closely at the contexts of early Hungarian prints, and at their "assessment of the content, and traditional components – symbols, astronomy, elements of everyday life, e.g., healing economic advice, superstitions, beliefs, and means of entertainment, teaching, chronicles, anecdotes, and rhymes" where "Calendars – especially in Central Europe – functioned much as newspapers for a long period."[241] The calendar, and the motifs that would have accompanied it, functioned as a way of receiving daily information, like a newspaper updating readers on current affairs, much like today where horoscopes are still found in daily and weekly papers. The calendrical motifs made knowledge available in an appealing and accessible format, and offered a novel way of looking at astrology and the passing year.

[239] Agnes Dukkon, *Régi Magyarországi Kalendáriumok*, 216.
[240] Agnes Dukkon, *Régi Magyarországi Kalendáriumok*, 215.
[241] Agnes Dukkon, *Régi Magyarországi Kalendáriumok*, 216.

III. The Children of the Planets – Scientific, Religious, and Magical

In part due to the translation projects that had begun during the previous two centuries in Spain, where many astrological works were translated from the Arabic into Latin and then to other European vernaculars,[242] the subjects in many early prints were those same subjects that had been popular in manuscripts. The fascination with topics in astrology, first in the Alfonsine courts and then throughout Europe, was joined by the wider public interest when these same texts were made available in print.

In Augsburg, Erhard Ratdolt for example printed many works by Abû Ma'shar al-Balkhi, including the 1488 *Flores astrologiae* (an abridged *Introductorium maius*), the *Astrolabium planum* of Johannes Angelus, and the 1489 *Magnis coniunctionibus* (a translation by Johannes Hispalensis of the *Kitāb al-Mawālīd* and other writings by Abû Ma'shar). The text that was often seen next to calendar cycles of the days of the week and Children of the Planets in block-books was often an adaptation from Abû Ma'shar's *Introductorium maius*.

We might ask here how the subjects of early print were understood by their audience: were they magical, scientific, or religious? If we take into account in this discussion a broad understanding of religion, we can use this approach as a working definition for religion. Stanley Tambiah argues that "from a general anthropological standpoint the distinctive feature of religion as a generic concept lies not in the domain of belief and its 'rational accounting' of the workings of the universe, but in a special awareness of the transcendent, and acts of symbolic communication that attempt to realize that awareness and live by its promptings."[243] In this way we can understand why the use of astrological subjects in block-books and print were combined with 'religious' works in the same volume, because they helped in a practical way to promote the 'awareness of the transcendent' and gave instructions on how to 'live by its promptings.' These astrological

[242] Panofsky and Saxl, "Classical Mythology in Mediaeval Art."
[243] Tambiah, *Magic, Science, and Religion*, 6.

subjects were therefore topics of religion as much as biblical meditations. This does not contradict our description of these subjects as 'secular' since we are not putting the 'religious' as opposite to secular, but rather distinguishing secular from 'ecclesiastic.' Therefore the secular or profane realm can be inhabited by religion, and topics in astrology can even be found under that heading as well. Tambiah reexamines the terms magic, religion, and science saying "It is my submission that this emphasis on religion as a system of beliefs, and the distinction between prayer and spell, the former being associated with 'religious' behavior and the latter with 'magical' acts, was a Protestant legacy which was automatically taken over by later Victorian theorists like Tylor and Frazer."[244] If this is the case then we can say that the readership of the early prints would not have distinguished what we might now call the 'magical' treatise, on astrology from those medical tracts that made use of spells, or the religious works. This would again explain their presence side by side in block-books, prints, and manuscripts of the 15th century. It is a necessary question then to ask,

> If the distinctions between religion and sacramental magic, between prayer and spell, between sovereign deity and manipulable divine being, were the product of a specific historical epoch in European history and its particular preoccupations stemming from Judeo-Christian concepts and concerns, can these same categories (embedded in and stemming from and historical context) fruitfully serve as universal, analytical categories and illuminate the texture of other cultures and societies?[245]

For Tambiah the answer is that we must be continually aware of this historical distinction because, for the larger populace prior to the Reformation, these categories were very mixed and would not have been perceived as important in comparison to everyday life rituals and "practical living."[246] My answer is made clear by the evidence we find in the literature of the period we are discussing, which reveals that all three of these categories were participating with each other under one heading of 'practical knowledge for everyday life.'

[244] Tambiah, *Magic, Science, and Religion*, 19.
[245] Tambiah, *Magic, Science, and Religion*, 20–21.
[246] Tambiah, *Magic, Science, and Religion*, 31.

If we can theorize as well that the 15th century individual did not distinguish such 'secular' topics from 'religious' topics then we can see how the religious and secular elements were so easily melded together. The 1455 *Heidelberger bilderkatechismus* (Cod. Pal. Germ. 438) is one example where astrological texts and fables have been bound together with *Biblia pauperum*, *Ars moriendi/Totentanz* (dance of death). The *Biblia pauperum*, as mentioned earlier, gave examples of how certain Old Testament stories should be read as prophesying occurrences in the New Testament. *Ars moriendi* were a collection of six treatises on the subject of how to 'die well,' containing for example illustrations of the five temptations along side prayers and consolations for the dying man. We find along side these in the *Heidelberger bilderkatechismus* the *Planetenbuch* followed by the Aesop's fable, "The Sick Lion." It is when we find on occasion texts that are missing one or the other, religious or secular, that we first can talk about a real difference perceived. In the 1480 *Housebook* for example, we do not find any biblical texts along side the astrological and practical treatise. In the *Housebook* a treatise on the *Ars memoriam* is followed by a series of the planets and their children. These sophisticated illustrations by the unknown "Master of the Housebook" (probably in actuality three skilled illustrators) are those well-known examples that have made this motif familiar to our modern audience. This housebook (hence the title given to the manuscript) must have been designed for someone who had diverse interest reflected, in addition to these treatises on memory and astrology, by tracts on metallurgy, castle defense design, and medicine. Also in the 1568 *Ständebuch* (Book of Trades) or the 1459 *Fechtbuch* (Fight-book) we see texts dedicated solely to professions or warfare, lacking ecclesiastical contents. This transition might indicate if not a preference for some readers in 'everyday life' topics over a more overtly religious topic, at least a trend toward separating or expanding what topics were appropriate for publication and readership. By allowing 'everyday life' into the libraries and early printing workshops,

an unintentional peeling apart of the religious and secular realms was taking place in the 15th century.

The transition in the 15th century from manuscript to print was tied to developments in subject matter that reflects the mentality of an expanding audience. Print made texts that were once available only to the clerical and aristocratic realms available to a wider audience. This gave a wider range of individuals the ability to interpret original texts for themselves. Because printing made use of vernaculars, it put the text itself into the hands of the individual, allowing them to make up their own mind on how it should be interpreted. Early print was largely about interpretation. As was stated earlier in this chapter, the most popular early prints were "commentaries" on the Bible. Commentaries, summaries, and abridgements on other topics as well, such as astrology and medicine, were also common. Print was one of the most important factors in making possible new forms of interpretation. In this way, coming before the reform movements of the 16th century, though unaware, it was one of the early factors of secularization. Moreover, many block-books combined astrological knowledge with religious and practical literatures and reflected the interest and inclusive approach toward their diverse subjects that their readers maintained. The topics found together in block-books and printed works before 1500, that would later become separated and classified as secular, religious, or scientific, were seen as congruent in their milieu. The housebooks of the 15th century are definitive in their contents of what their owners found to be useful knowledge, thus showing the beginnings of a genre in the earliest printed works that was oriented toward everyday life.

Conclusion

"The Problem of the Planet Children"

My express goal in this thesis was to show that the Children of the Planets motif puts into iconography a new form of astrological thinking that emerged at the beginning of the 15th century. Where we can only trace the motif as far back as its earliest examples, we must then ask the question "What is the philosophical stance that Children of the Planets tries to portray?" I would say that it portrays the idea that the individual is interconnected with a cosmos, is part of it in the same way that the planets are, and in that way can become an active principle in determining the course of his/her own life. This way of thinking offers a solution to the determinism of astrology and places free will in accordance with providence by allowing the individual to choose from a number a beneficial paths toward right living. This new philosophical stance was a result of a synthesis of ideas and elements that were acquired during the development of planet iconography in the Middle Ages, culminating in the 15th century. It was only in the 15th century that: 1) the Children of the Planets appeared for the first time in manuscripts, alongside text, 2) that manuscript illumination reached a peak in development, 3) which was simultaneous to the onset of print, 4) where we saw a revival of astrology, and 5) *prisca theologia* gain popularity.

All this was accompanied by a focus on everyday life, health, medicine, and the beginnings of an inadvertent movement into the private sphere. The inklings of this movement provided the palette for the Children of the Planets which is a meeting of everyday life and an astrological formula. The Children of the Planets was a reference tool, a calendar used to understand basic concepts about astrology, one's sign, one's ruling planet. It was also a way to catalogue an individual amongst the group, where each person could find his place of belonging in the society, through his placement in a guild or profession or character based on the illustration. By being able to identify with a social group, the motif functioned as a social tool as well. It was, of course, a divinatory tool as

well, where basic characteristics of one's future could be observed depending on the date of birth.

Most importantly the Children of the Planets provided a choice. It offered options for its viewer, i.e., which of various possibilities to emulate and ascribe to. Philosophically it offered a way for free will to operate among providence and astrological determinism. Each person in this way was bound to a planet by birth, and by communing with the celestials, through daily interaction, one could match the influence of the stars over his own destiny.

In his first publication on the Children of the Planets motif, Fritz Saxl originally asked four questions in his article "Probleme Der Planetenkinderbilder" (Problems of the Planet Children Images):

1. Where is the home of planet children representations?
2. Their relation to the Orient.
3. On which texts are they based?
4. Filiation of the representations.[247]

He answered at least the last of these. His catalogues of astrological motifs and the categorization described there are still used today. As far as what texts they were based on, he could not point to any one single specific work which the images illustrated exactly, but instead entertained their genealogy as an independent visual motif. He could say that the text that *accompanied* the Children of the Planets was often derived from Abû Ma'shar's *Introductorium maius*. How they were related to Oriental manuscripts he never fully was able to explain. His guess was that the frescos in the Palazzo della Ragione had somehow informed the motif in Italy, and that these images had come to us through an earlier manuscript that would have been the predecessor to the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*, or images in an

[247] Fritz Saxl, "Probleme der Planetenkindebilder," *Kunstchronik und Kunstmarkt* 48 (1919): 1013–1021. This is a review of Anton Hauber, *Planetenkinderbilder und zur Geschichte des menschlichen Glaubens und Irrens* (Strasbourg: Heitz, 1916). English translation here by Thomas Szerecz.

illustrated version of the *Picatrix*, which had been derived from the Sabbians of Harran. But the Kraków *Picatrix* did not bear the evidence of having spent any time in the East, and there were large distances between the examples in this theory. The question of their origins he traced to their earliest examples in Western manuscripts, in Christine d'Pisan's *Épître d'Othéa* (1407), and to the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* (1399), produced in Baghdad, but he never found any earlier examples in manuscripts so the details of their transmission were left a mystery.

My question throughout this work has been not just about where they came from, but also why did they only appear and become so popular only at this time? I think a philosophical change in the understanding of astrology was occurring, and that is what caused the motif to occur simultaneously in distant places, leading to a blossoming in the early modern period. Where we run out of examples, the logical step to take is to turn to the philosophical dimensions. From this perspective we broaden the scope, and can look at the unanswered questions about the details of the motif.

The philosophical dimension of the Children of the Planets is expressed in Marsilio Ficino's *De vita coelitis comparanda*. There we see how Ficino marries a particular understanding of astrology to Christianity, and proposes its use in everyday life. Its practice can lead the individual ultimately to achieving a self-perfection, a goal that we see reflected in the *Picatrix*. In the *Picatrix* as well as in Ficino the ability to contact perfect nature is aided by intermediary beings, the planets and individual daemons. In the student of Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, we do not find this same need, because there man himself becomes the intermediary.

The astronomical context from which the Children of the Planets are born is Ptolemaic, and its astrological counterpart is in large part found in the writings of Abû Ma'shar. In the early examples we have of the motif we can observe at least two different formats. In the *Kitāb al-Bulhān*, the planets and children are seen in a graph form, 7 X 8

squares containing the planets and the planet children, from right to left. In the Christine de Pisan examples the planet figure is seen above in a nimbus while the children are below, in a line. But those images that are most likely to come to mind when we think of the Children of the Planets are not strictly in either of these formats, but show instead a blending of figures and the interaction of planets and children, as in the Housebook. In the early woodcuts and blockbooks we can even see some of this communication between the central celestial figures of the planet and the Zodiacs with the rest of the figures. The ratios are closer between planet and children, much like in the *Liber astrologiae* images.

When we are looking for individual 'planet children' we see resemblances to the figures in the Kraków *Picatrix* and the Spanish *Picatrix* (Vaticanus Reginensis 1283). Details about how the artists of the manuscripts chose to portray this text can still be discovered, as we have seen in the case of the figure of Mars, which had its own variation in the image based on a different interpretation of the text. In the transition from print to manuscript we see individual figures transferred from manuscript to print which we can compare, and which retain the same form in many different places. We find the planets riding on the backs of different animals in these examples of the *Picatrix* which resemble those models in later imagery of the Children of the Planets, as in the central planet figures in the *Housebook*. Finally, the Children of the Planets are among the first images to be printed. Print eventually puts the Children of the Planets into the private sphere. There it becomes a household item, and functions alongside other useful literatures as a daily reference tool.

There is an intriguing connection, hinted at by the similarity to images in the *Losbuch* and German Children of the Planets manuscripts, or between the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* and the images of the *Falnama*, in that we know the Children of the Planets could be used as a divinatory tool. We can argue that these types of books should be classified under one genre. These types of books, 'oracle books,' and the manuscripts that the Children of the

Planets are found in were specifically using images imbedded in the text as independent artifacts of divination. The book as a whole was a magical artifact, and the images in particular imparted the divination.

The importance of reevaluating and expanding the approach to the methodology surrounding the research on the Children of the Planets is evidenced by the many questions that remain. We can still investigate further comparisions between the examples of the motif that we have, especially in some less studied examples, as in the additional planet children series found in the Modena, *Housebook,* and *Splendor Solis* manuscripts. But more importantly we must entertain further philosophical approaches to the images. This is in part an extension of the suggestion made at one time by Aby Warburg that anthropological methodologies should be added to art historical methods of investigating iconography. Giorgio Agamben writes that for Warburg "iconography was never an end in itself…Warburg's use of iconography always transcends the mere identification of a subject and its sources."[248] It was Warburg who first called attention to the need for a "methodological amplification of the thematic and geographical borders" of art history, pointing to the new approach he had taken in the analysis of the Schifanoia frescos, that recognized "that antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the modern age are in fact one interrelated epoch."[249]

Questions to address with further opportunity and time would naturally gravitate towards in-depth analysis and comparison of the printed examples of the Children of the Planets, specifically in the different printing centers throughout Europe, from Italian and German, to Hungarian, Polish, and Bohemian examples. It remains a task for future studies on this topic. One of the more difficult tasks that must be addressed in the studies of the Children of the Planets is the uncovering of further examples in Oriental manuscripts. The

[248] Giorgio Agamben, "Warburg and the Nameless Science" in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, ed. Daniel Heller-Roazen, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999/2000), 92.
[249] Agamben is quoting Warburg here (see Aby Warburg, "Italian Art and International Astrology in the Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara"). Giorgio Agamben, "Warburg and the Nameless Science," 92.

need for this was pointed to not only by Saxl and Rice early on, but more recently by Baer and Carboni as well. That we still have only three examples in Islamic manuscripts is not due to their lack of existence, but simply that there are not enough scholars researching this field. At this point, though, a similarity in the page layouts between the early examples of the Children of the Planets and other astrological motifs in manuscripts, prior to the 1407 *Épître d'Othéa* and the 1399 *Kitāb al-Bulhān*, is a promising lead.

The Children of the Planets as a motif and as a philosophical approach embody and understanding of astrology that attempts to bring the human and divine atmospheres closer together. The 'children' are witnesses to the time period that they were created in, but their relevance to the early modern era is superlative. They offer a new way of handling texts and images, which puts the readers and viewers in a closer relationship to the book itself. A synthesis of ideas and a meeting of cultures in their formations has created their distinct form, and their ability to act as interpreters between everyday life and the divine sphere is what makes them an art form and an artifact of religious and scientific histories.

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