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Apologia for the opuscule on *De siderali fato vitando*

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Editor's Note. Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) composed the *Apologeticus* to defend himself against charges of heresy following the publication of his *De siderali fato*, the seventh book of his *Astrologici*, in 1629. Germana Ernst's introduction to Campanella's work precedes this translation.

1. The opuscule on *De siderali fato vitando*, the seventh of the *Astrologici* books,¹ shows that God has not allowed any harm to befall humankind without there being a remedy for it: for this reason it suggests the remedy against the effects of the eclipse, as opposed to those people whose ascendant or *afeta* or the place of the direction are given a bad aspect by the eclipse itself and by the dominant harmful stars. It is suggested in the opuscule that before the onset of the event - as well as over its duration, and for a few hours after its close - the subject who is menaced by such passions should lock himself up in a room and pray to God, creator of the stars, to neutralize the impending evil. He must then decorate the house and the walls with plain, white cloths, against the darkness of the eclipse; he must scatter perfumes and the smell of rose vinegar and of distilled water to cancel out the noxious air, and light fires with the wood of terebinth, laurel and myrtle. One then has to light five torches and two bigger lamps made out of wax and fragrant preparations, to represent the two lamps and the five planets, in a philosophical, not superstitious ceremony, as it is specified in the text.²

2. Some people condemn this practice on the grounds that it is contrary to Catholic doctrine: there are those who sense in it something opposed to faith, and others who brand it as superstitious.

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3. Those who say it is opposed to faith clearly are mistaken. All theologians agree that faith, in fact, concerns either the dogmas or the holy vows. However, insofar as this remedy is not against the dogmas, nor against the vows, it is not against faith - is neither heresy nor error - whether directly or indirectly, as one can infer from St. Thomas, II IIae, q. 1, art. 6.³

4. Quite the contrary: we proclaim that this remedy is advantageous to faith. In fact, by asserting that astral fate cannot be avoided, one subjects free will to the stars; in this way one does away with reward and punishment, and therefore with God's judgement and providence. By doing so, one also eliminates the immortality of the soul, God's justice and God himself: this is what Cicero argues in *De natura deorum* and *De divinatione*; so does Chrysostom in his book *De providentia*, as well as Augustine in the fifth book of *De civitate Dei*,⁴ and Thomas in the opuscle *De fato*, in the *Contra Gentiles* III, ch. 103 and II IIae, q. 105.⁵ My book argues, however, that it is possible to avoid it [the fate], therefore it is in favour of faith in general.

5. One can then show that the elaboration of this remedy is in accordance with faith in a specific way, in that it appeals principally to orations to God and to the natural things created by God, as will become clearer later on.

6. It is clear that this is not superstition, insofar as all superstition relies on a tacit or explicit deal with the devil, as Thomas writes, in II IIae, qq. 105 and 92, art. 2, and in the q. 122, art. 2. However, here there is no question of any explicit or tacit pact: therefore it is not superstition.

7. That there is no explicit pact is obvious, for the explicit pact is dealing here with a remedy of occult philosophy that involves an invocation to God - a philosophy that the Persians call magic. This magic is twofold, according to Philo in his book *De specialibus legibus*,⁶ Jerome in his comment on the second chapter of Daniel, and Justin in the questions 24 and 26 of this treatise *Ad Gentiles*.⁷ One is true; it is used by philosophers, kings and princes, who apply active to passive and the celestial to the earthly; while the other is false; it invokes demons, in an explicit or tacit pact. But in this case there is no pact of any kind at all.

8. One can see that there is no tacit pact insofar as whatever is used in this remedy acts as a natural cause against the effect of the eclipse. Therefore one does not expect the effect of a demon, who interferes if one foolishly resorts to a non-cause as if it were a cause of that effect, as Thomas tells us, II IIae, q. 96.

9. Now we shall prove the minor. That clean, white garments stand in contrast to dark eclipses is obvious. And all doctors have shown that vinegar, scented distilled water, aromatic perfumes and flowers purify noxious air and dissolve or keep away the seeds of pestilence and bad influences - especially Marsilio Ficino, Florentine canon, great theologian and philosopher, in his short book *De peste*, where he lists all the physicians who agree on these points.⁸ Even the sacred exorcists dissolve with fire the handiwork of demons who resort to natural things to cast their spells - so it is said by Paolo Grillando, Bartolomeo Spina, Ambrogio Vignate and the *Malleus maleficarum*.⁹

10. If, moreover, this were superstition, it would have to belong to one of the categories of superstition. Indeed, it would have to be idolatry, or witch divination, or vain observance. But it is not idolatry, since here one is honouring nothing but God, with sermons, and with the remedy made of the natural things God created for that purpose. Nor is it witch divination, since we do not claim that it allows us to know the future, or occult things. And nor is it vain observance, since one practices vain observance when one expects things to have an effect that are neither causes of that effect nor a sign of God, of the church of God or of nature. It is for this reason that Thomas, in II IIae, q. 96, says that tacit pacts are superstitious only when one affixes to the things used for the remedy characters or letters - signs, not active things. Cajetan says the same thing in his *Comment*,¹⁰ as does the third book of *Contra Gentiles*, ch. 105. In fact the letters and characters one chooses to affix are references to intelligent causes, not to celestial bodies, not to terrestrial bodies and nor to artificial bodies, which cannot understand the meaning of the sign. Therefore, to expect them to have an effect is to expect the intelligences to have an effect, at least in an interpretive fashion, and it is in this case that the demon responds and gets involved - he is worthy of such silliness, and this is the structure of the tacit pact, according to Thomas and Augustine. But in the process explained here there are no characters, nor letters, and thus there is no superstition.

11. But the opponent could say:¹¹ even though there are no characters or letters, and liquids and fires are used in a medicinal way, in order to clean the air and dissolve the seeds of pestilence (indeed, bodies have a corporeal, not a spiritual impact), still the following remain: 1. ceremonies; 2. torches, specifically seven in number; 3. a symbolic comet. All things which act as notional symbols, rather than having any physical action. A single big fire and one or two torches can, in fact, produce the desired effect. If you want seven of them, you are ascribing to the septenary an active function that it doesn't have, and this is foolishness on your part; here we have a case of vain, superstitious observance, and the demon can get involved.

12. I respond to the first objection by stating that there is no ceremony here. Ceremonies, in fact, are expressions of faith, and they regard the cult of God. When they are performed in a frivolous way rather than within the institution of God and the Church, they are instances of a tacit pact with the devil, as confirms Thomas, I IIae, q. 99 and q. 103, and, as he tells us at q. 101, one can divide them into sacrifices, sacraments and observances according to the divine or ecclesiastic institution.¹² But only physical actions are involved in this practice, which to have a physical effect use physical bodies, such as fires, torches, perfumes, medicinal liquids: in this sense there is no ceremony. Otherwise, even when the doctors light a fire against the plague, using clean cloths, vinegar and other things, as well the *teriaca*, they are performing ceremonies. Thus, all human activities, in all crafts, have a ceremonial character when active things are applied to passive things.

13. To the second accusation, I answer by saying that the septenary is not present in this practice as a superstition, neither in meaning nor in causal power. It is so in the first place because one might deny that the number does not cause or participate in causing some effect, insofar as the Pythagorean doctrine, according to which specific virtues inhere in numbers, has never been condemned by any pontifical or council act. Indeed, just as a doctor who foolishly uses agaric to cure black bile (agaric cannot work since what is natural to it is merely to purge the pituitary) would not deserve to be accused of superstition, so those who hold, along with the Pythagoreans, that numbers harbour a virtue that in fact does not exist are not for that matter superstitious so much as deceived and ignorant. One can say the same for those who attribute a causal power to the septenary, as Thomas writes at II IIae, q. 96, art. 2 *al*

primo: indeed he says that this is not a case of superstition, whether one only believes that they possess a natural virtue or whether they actually do.

14. And although the sacred canons, cause 2. 2, q. 1,¹³ condemn those who place their hopes with regard to the desired effects in a particular number of candles or orations, this is the case only when one attributes an effect to these numbers, an effect that can only come from God. This is why, if someone were to say that mass is only valid if four or five candles have been lit, this person would be superstitious. The mass has an effect because of God, not because of that number that causes or contributes to cause the effect; and when a certain number is determined by the church, such as that of the seven canonical hours, the mass's three orations and the two candles, it is not superstition but the representation of something divine and secret - or it is the taking into account of the comfort and situation of the person at prayer, of the place and time, and the church was given by God the authority to makes decisions regarding rites etc.

When one uses a particular number for the sake of the effect, and for its capacity, if not to cause, at least to contribute to causing, this is not vain observance: the same applies to figures. There is nothing superstitious about building a house with four angles, about organizing an army with a higher, rather than lower number of soldiers, or with square or triangular lance formations, because that number and that figure are useful for that effect. Hence, the doctor will give the patient seven, rather than four pills; indeed it is normal to use an odd number without any superstition, especially when one is imitating nature. Therefore the fact of using seven torches - for the sake of higher effectiveness during the eclipse - is not superstition: it is physical, medical observation.

That number has a causal effect of this sort should emerge clearly out of what has been said, and out of the fact that God made each thing 'according to number, weight and measure':¹⁴ man always has five fingers per hand, and to have fewer or more fingers would be a monstrosity and an error of the first principles. At the same time, the planets are seven in number, not three, and the sun is one, not two. Therefore number has value. Indeed, if one were to remove number from things, one would lose the distinction between individuals and species, and all things would become formless chaos,¹⁵ and neither I nor you would be here. And things that do not consist of a particular number are against art and against nature; this is why art uses numbers in artificial products, imitating the author of nature, and there can be neither music

nor verse without number. Fools should explain to me why the voice's third, fifth and eighth numbers are consonant, while the second, fourth and seventh are dissonant? Thus there is virtue in number - not that of warming up, which is what heat does; nor to humidify, which was what humour does; nor of other qualities and bodies. Therefore it has its own, specific virtue, which does not only consist in distinguishing things but also in providing specific uses, of which more shall be said elsewhere.

15. Theologians often teach, too, that virtues and mysteries inhere in numbers; Origen, for instance, focused on the usefulness and mystery of numbers throughout his work and in particular in the homily 2 on Genesis, in the homily 16 on Leviticus, as well as in the first and subsequent homilies on Numbers.¹⁶ Richard of St Victor, on p. 1, Bk. 2 except for ch. 5, reveals the nine meanings of numbers and many others in the allegory of the pact of the tabernacle, and in the first part of Bk. 2 of *De eruditione interioris hominis*, ch. 29, says many things about the septenary.¹⁷ Gregory the Great, in his commentary on Ezechiel in the whole of the second book, where he writes about the construction of the temple, says marvellous things, from homilies 13 to 22. But he states that the septenary forms all things in homily 33, on the Gospels, and in 34 he adds many other philosophical reflections.¹⁸ Augustine focuses everywhere on the mysteries and virtues of numbers, and he praises Pythagoras for his philosophy of numbers in the tenth book of *De civitate Dei*, and in the eleventh book, ch. 30 and 31, he discusses with erudition the senary and septenary according to the holy Scripture, stating that one should not despise the nature of numbers since, he says, God has created all things 'according to number, weight and measure'.¹⁹ Jerome, in his commentaries on Isaiah and on Ezechiel (*Supra Isaiam* and *Supra Ezechielem*), attributes to numbers possibly greater virtues still than do the Pythagoreans,²⁰ who, according to Calcidius and Ficino, used to reveal the mysteries of number only to the most religious. Ambrose, in his commentary on Luke (*Supra Lucam*) and in his book *De Noe et arca*, reveals many mysteries and uses of numbers.²¹

16. That it is not superstitious to light the seven torches in order to clear out the noxious air is also due to the fact that this number corresponds to the seven planets which, as the mathematicians and physicists teach us, and as Thomas confirms in *Contra Gentiles* III as well as in the commentary on the *De generatione et corruptione* II and in the book *De fato*, preside over the lower things in the slanted circle and send us the

gathered virtues of the fixed stars:²² all forms, whether substantial or accidental, and all movements come from the heavens, and all real actions emerge out of a real action of the heavens: that is, all intentional actions are driven by celestial intentional actions, as he says in *De potentia*, q. 5, art. 8.²³ This is why the fabrication of seven torches is a physical imitation of the heavens: but one seizes more of the celestial influence when one is imitating the heavens than when one is not, as it is attested by Ficino in *De vita coelitus comparanda*, by Sinesius and by the whole of nature.²⁴ Therefore this number is useful. Therefore it is neither meaningless nor superstitious: if one has to light fires, then it is best to represent the number of celestial fires than to do so randomly or as one wishes, or *a capriccio* [as one fancies], to use popular parlance. God indeed made each thing according to 'number and weight and measure'. This is why, by imitating nature, we are imitating God.

17. One can show the same things in the holy Scriptures. God ordered Moses to make all things according to what had been shown to him on the mount, at Exodus 25.²⁵ On that occasion, as Justin Martyr tells us in *In Triphonem*, he was shown all the celestial objects, supralunary and sublunary,²⁶ on whose model he built the tabernacle and vestments, as we learn from Philo, Joseph, Clement of Alexandria, Jerome and Sisto da Siena in the third book;²⁷ and the Wisdom of Solomon itself, at ch. 18, tells us that 'the whole world was represented in the vestment of Aaron the priest'.²⁸ The four colours of the vestments signified the first four bodies of the world called elements, as Sisto da Siena writes in Bk. 2, at the entry 'Pontificalis', along with Thomas, at I Iiae q. 102, art. 5 to 9. The femorals signify the earth, the coat stands for the sidereal sky, the two onyx stones stand for the two hemispheres and the twelve gems in the pectoral, for the twelve zodiacal signs; for in all of these are contained all earthly matters, as it is said at Job 38: 'knowst thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou establish its dominion in the earth?'²⁹ Therefore not only is it not forbidden to represent celestial objects physically, but it is encouraged, according to Job, Thomas and, following the fathers, Richard, Cassiodorus, Bede, Philo, Josephus, Clement of Alexandria and Jerome, according to Sisto da Siena, when he writes about *De sciographica expositione* in Bk. III.³⁰

Moreover, when the latter talks about *De physica expositione*,³¹ following the same doctors, he asserts: In the tabernacle there was the atrium, the sacred room and the *Sancta sanctorum* [Holy of Holies]. The atrium was a representation of the sublunary world: for this reason it was

not covered by the roof, nor by any hangings, and instead was open to the rain, winds, hot and cold. There, sacred and profane, pure and impure men mingled, along with animals about to be sacrificed, and there was a constant stream of life and the vicissitudes of death, just as in the sublunary world. The room called sacred, glowing with the splendour of gold, represented the celestial world, which is half-way between the sublunary and the intellectual worlds: for this reason, in its southern part there were seven lamps, of which the central one, which was also the tallest, represented the sun; the other six were the six planets, set in the meridian zone, because it is from there that one sees best the course of the planets, as Thomas says, along with the Fathers. Therefore it is allowed to represent the seven planets in their number and position, as Moses had done, because it is a way of showing and praising God's work. The inner room, or *Sancta Sanctorum*, represented the angelic or intellectual world, of which Plato speaks in the *Timaeus* and Basil in the *Hexameron*, along with other learned fathers: no one entered the *Sancta Sanctorum* apart from the high priest, once a year, with the name of God Jehovah on his forehead, because here only God, with the holy men and the angels, lives in the intellectual and supralunary world, and here there is Aaron's rod, which signifies God's power, from which all powers derive, and the tables of the Law, and the manna, which signifies the goodness and benevolence of God towards all creatures, as Thomas teaches at I IIae, q. 102, art. 4 to 6. For this reason there were also the Cherubs, who translate the intellectual world; whence the apostle, at Heb. 8 and 9,³² taught that all those things were the shadows of celestial things. Thus it is astonishing that one should condemn the imitation of God, which can do no harm and on the contrary, can only be beneficial.

18. Moreover, in the holy Scripture the septenary is highly praised, to such an extent that God made the corporeal creatures in seven days; all peoples dedicate these seven days to the planets and the church does not dissent: in fact it names without any superstition the day of the sun and of the moon, of Mars and Mercury, of Jupiter, Venus and Saturn. Seven are the spirits that assist God, there are seven lights in the Temple, seven eyes in the stone in Zacharia,³³ seven candelabra of the Apocalypse, seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets of the angels, seven rumbles of thunder, seven ampullae poured by the seven angels. And there are seven ages of the world, seven sensorial apertures in the human face, which is the image of God and a little world: thus Gregory, Augustine, Ambrose and the other fathers praise the septenary highly. Not to mention the

Platonist and the Pythagorean philosophers on this matter. Therefore it is truly astonishing that this sacred number is rejected as superstitious by the same people who promote it in the seven sacraments and in the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, without the presence in it of strange words or characters, which only Thomas and Cajetan associate with superstition.

19. But one might object: if they are here to signify the celestial lights, what sort of virtue can one derive from this meaning? I reply: 1, that the imitation of divine and sacred lights is sufficient; that one does this, 2, in order to draw the virtues from the seven planets and from the seven motive angels, from which derive all the lower world's real and intentional actions, according to Thomas; 3, so that God should further encourage the imitation of his works; and, 4, in order to keep away the malevolent angel that directs against us the influence of the eclipse. All evils are sent to us through the agency of the malevolent angels, and all good through that of the good angels, as Cyril, Chrysostome, Augustine say about the "evils sent by the Egyptians through the agency of the malevolent angels", which are described in Ps. 77.³⁴ The same thing is told of Job, of Saul and of the woman who suffered from a blood flow for eighteen years, as Christ says in Matthew,³⁵ and therefore in *Sap.* 18, after "the whole world was inscribed within the robes of Aaron, and the deeds of the great were inscribed in the four orders of stone, and the magnificence of God was inscribed in the diadem", it is added: "the slayer yielded to these things, and he feared them".³⁶ As it is said in Num. 16,³⁷ there was an angel that slew the Israelites because of their murmurings [against Moses and Aaron - at Num. 17], turning against them the fire from the altar (just as the other angel, in Exodus 12, slew the first-born sons of the Egyptians). Aaron, dressed in the priestly vestments, stood amongst the living and the dead, praying with the thurible, and he stopped the fire from spreading, since whoever spread it was one who "feared those things" (in the plural), that is, the name of God, the representation of the world, which is God's sacred work, and the deeds of kinfolk (just as the other slayer feared the lamb's blood, symbol of Christ's blood, as Chrysostom says), and for this reason he says: "Yield to these things", that is, fear these three things, and not only "this", that is, not only God's name. It is thus not far from the truth to suppose that, for devils, this number of celestial and ecclesiastical lamps is actually loathsome and awful, and it is like a sign because it represents God, who arranges each thing according to the sacred septenary. It is all the more so for the fact that Philo, in the first book of *De opificio*

mundi,³⁸ Gemma Frisius in the first book of *De arte cyclognomica*,³⁹ and Paolini in the seven books of the *Hebdomades*,⁴⁰ all affirm that God himself is represented in the septenary: therefore this number is a sign not addressed to demons, but against demons, as long as there is no superstition about characters, letters and pact.

20. Moreover, some people, including Albertus Magnus, state that a physical virtue also springs out of the seven planets that exert an influence on the seven candles - the counted, not abstract number of bodies controlled by the heavens. Thomas agrees with this in the third book of *Contra Gentiles*, ch. 105: when one skilfully builds some object under a specific constellation, the objects draw a specific virtue from the stars; and although in II IIae, q. 96, art. 2, Thomas says that the objects, when they are being built, do not receive virtues from the sky other than those conferred on them by their natural matter and form, he does not contradict himself, nor does he withdraw what he had affirmed in the third book of *Contra Gentiles*, as Cajetan rightly observes in his commentary.⁴¹ Thomas affirms that the objects, as such, do not take their form from the heavens, as do natural things, but from the mind of the maker: but in saying this he does not go against the notion that, if they are made under a particular celestial configuration, they draw virtues from it, and they are superstitious only when signs, characters and letters are added, not when they are physically subjected to these influences. Not even Augustine could deny the efficacy of 'certain sidereal influences',⁴² which, as Thomas teaches us, play a role in the human realm as well as in bodies that are more subjected to the heavens. This doctrine of Cajetan's is proven by Albertus Magnus in the *Speculum*,⁴³ by Ficino in the *Epistolae*⁴⁴ and by Thomas in the opuscule *De fato*, at the end of ch. 4, where he teaches that even in new clothes, formed under a particular constitution of the sky, there is a stellar imprint about order and duration, as well as in astronomical figures made under a specific stellar aspect; he writes: "Just as the disposition of stars at a particular time imprints within natural things the disposition of the order of being and duration, so it also imprints this disposition within artificial things, and this is why the figures of magic images are imprinted according to the aspect of the stars and are called to function in that way".⁴⁵ Thomas speaks of physical magic, as does Pliny; and we have shown that this is true in nature and in art. Indeed, in nature, in that stone of which Pliny speaks in Bk. 28, one can see the natural imprint of the seven Pleiades, in the exact position, order and number in which they shine in the sky; and in the astroit stone

one can see many stars, just as one can see the moon in the sandaster,⁴⁶ etc. Albertus reports many other experiments, as does Bede in vol. 1.⁴⁷ But, with regard to artificial things, it has been shown (by Giambattista della Porta in Bk. 7 of *Magia naturalis*⁴⁸ and by Gilbert in *Philosophia magnetica*⁴⁹) that if small sticks of iron are made on an anvil set in an east-west direction, and is then placed on a cork floating on water, they will turn towards the place in which they were made; and if you have made a number of small sticks in that way, they will all float parallel to each other, while if you throw in small sticks made on an anvil set in a north-south direction, they will float at a perpendicular to the other ones. This was written by the author of that astrological book, in the preamble, where he showed that the stars act according to their aspect as well as according to movement, light and influences.⁵⁰ Therefore it is not right that Cajetan should be censured by Martin Delrio, who notices a contradiction in Thomas:⁵¹ it is a contradiction that Cajetan, in fact, eliminates in the most learned way; and this explanation chimes with the practical experience mentioned above and with Thomas in the book *De fato*.

21. We have thus showed in the most satisfying way that the septenary derives its value not only from mystery, through the imitation of Moses and of nature, but also from the correspondence with the seven planets, from which one expects a physical good; and even if that is not the case, still there is nothing superstitious about it. Where there is only representation, without any impious invocation, without any characters or letters, the process is neither favourable nor detrimental to faith, as Thomas and Cajetan tell us in the passages cited above, and as Thomas says in the *Opusculo* 15, art. 39, where he states: 'It is erroneous to relate the sphere of influence of Mars and the Moon with free will. If, however, one associates it with natural and corporeal things, there follows no absurd consequence with regard to the doctrine of faith'. Augustine, in fact, writes in *De civitate Dei* that 'it is not always entirely absurd to assert that certain celestial influences have an effect on the very diversity of bodies'. This is even true for the succession of days: in fact, since astrologers associate seven hours with each of the seven planets, and since there are twenty-four hours in a natural day, it follows that at the beginning of the twenty-second hour of the day the moon governs, just as in the first hour. Therefore, if one starts with Saturn, one will attribute the twenty-third hour to it, and the twenty-fourth to Jupiter, and the first hour of the following day to Mars: but to affirm or to deny this is not relevant

to the doctrine of faith. This is how, for the blessed doctor, there is nothing superstitious in the names of the seven days dedicated to the planets, nor in the ruling hours, nor in the septenary, since physical imitation eliminates superstition: it is all the more the case for those bodies over which the stars have the most power.

22. Moreover, this representation is almost univocal, and thus physical and effective: in fact, the stars, according to Ambrose, *Hex.*, 4, are fiery⁵³ (this is why the church chants, following him: 'The fiery sun recedes') and he considers those who deny this to be heretics. Justin the philosopher, Bede, Augustine, Basil, Chrysostom and all the fathers teach the same thing; thus one speaks of the 'limpid flames of the stars' in *Sap.* 18,⁵⁴ and in *Eccl.* 42, the sun is described as 'burning like a furnace'. Therefore candles that are lit up bear reference to the stars, and they can draw a benefit from them, or, in their place, bring benefit to us. In fact, when the sun - lamp of the earth, as Plato says⁵⁶ - sets, we turn on a lamp, which replaces it during the night, thanks to that same fire which we receive from the sun, held within mirrors or stones or within the woods that come from the sun, through the rubbing and beating that increases and releases latent heat; and in the same way, when the lights and the angular planets suffer in the eclipse, we can always represent the stars and comets, so that, however negative is the external air, it may become positive within the room, thanks to the objects used to represent them, and this is what magicians and sages did in antiquity. Thus, as Ficino states in the book *De peste*, they used to sculpt the Scorpion or the Serpent into the bezoar stone, into the rings and the astronomical figures capable of keeping the plague at bay.⁵⁷ Thomas, in *Contra Gentiles* III and in *De fato*, does not condemn them and indeed he approves of them, while Cajetan, in the comment to II IIae, q. 96, takes their defence. However, the author of the astrological book writes that he did not have the courage to approve of them.⁵⁸ He does, however, approve of this representation of the planet, which is advocated by the Scripture, nature and art, as has been amply shown in this discourse against those who do not know high theology, nor philosophy of nature, nor medicine. The mere observation of certain critical days during fevers, in relation to the course of the moon and of the planets, would have been able to teach them that the stars have power over corporeal things, that there is nothing superstitious in observing their numbers, and that whoever thinks differently condemns the holy Scripture, Moses and the physical sciences, medicine, and the arts, given to us by God for our salvation. They should be accusing God, who made

seven planets - not us humans, who represent the seven planets and try to attract their virtues: especially since the author declares in the second book that he locates the virtues in numbered things, not in numbers themselves, as does Pythagoras. Although this is not entirely condemned either, unless it is applied in a thoughtless manner and with regard to things over which the virtues have no power, as it was said above. It is evident, then, that no superstition or infidelity arises out of the lighting of seven lamps - if it is used, as was stated in the text, to offset the effect of eclipses and comets - neither on the basis of the numbering number nor on that of numbered things. This goes for the imitation and interpretation of divine and human things as well as for the physical and medicinal causal role and efficacy of this numbered number; on the contrary, this practice involves fidelity, physical efficacy and, at the same time, piety.

References

1. See n. 2 and 5 of the introduction. The *afeta* is that planet or place which, within a nativity and according to particular calculations and rules, plays an important role in delimiting the lifespan of the subject.
2. *De siderali fato*, in *Opera latina*, pp. 1327 ss.
3. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa th.*, II IIae, q. 10, “De infidelitate”, and q. 11, “De haeresi”.
4. For the Ciceronian polemic against Stoicist, fatalistic views, see Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, V, 8-9 in PL 41, 148 ss.; John Chrysostom, *De fato et providentia* (doubtful work), in PG 50, 755-759.
5. The opusculum *De fato* is not by Aquinas but by Albertus Magnus; one can read it in S. Thomae Aquinatis *Opera Omnia*, ed. R. Busa (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1980), vol. VII, pp 47-50; *Contra Gentiles*, III, 105; *Summa th.*, II IIae, q. 95, ‘De superstitione divinatoria’.
6. Philo of Alexandria, *De specialibus legibus*, III in *Œuvres*, vol. III, ed. A. Moses (Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1970), pp. 122-125.
7. Jerome, *In Dan.*, in PL 25, 498; ps.-Justin Martyr, *Quaestiones et responsiones ad Orthodoxos*, qq. 24 and 26, in PG 6, 1270 s., 1274.
8. The *Consilio contro la pestilenza*, edited in Florence in 1481, and reprinted a number of times during the following century, was bound into the first volume of the *Opera* in a Latin translation by Gerolamo Ricci, entitled *Epidemiarum*

antidotus; for the passages cited here, see ch. VIII of the Italian text, 'Del cibare e del governo dell'infermo' (Florence, 1576), pp. 42 ff and ch X of the Latin text, in M. Ficini *Opera omnia* (Basel, 1576; facsimile reprint ed. P. O. Kristeller and M. Sancipriano, Turin, 1959), pp. 592-95.

9. Numerous editions of the most famous demonological manual, the *Malleus maleficarum*, edited by the German Dominicans J. Sprenger and J. Institoris, followed one another from 1487 on, progressively augmented by other treatises on related arguments by theologians and jurists, such as the *De sortilegiis eorumque poenis* by the Florentine Paolo Grillando, the *Quaestio de strigibus* by the Dominican Bartolomeo Spina, the *Quaestio de lamiis seu strigibus et earum delictis* by the Lombard Ambrogio Vignate.

10. For Cajetan's commentary to q. 96, see the edition cited in n. 12 of the introduction.

11. 'Triplex obiectio', *in marg.*

12. Thomas, *Summa th.*, I IIae, q. 99, art. 3; q. 103, art. 4; q. 101, art. 4.

13. The reference to the *Corpus iuris canonici* does not seem correct.

14. Sap. 11, 21.

15. Cf. T. Campanella, *Le poesie*, ed. F. Giancotti, Turin, Einaudi, 1998, p. 313: '...e 'l caos immenso/la bella distinzione assorbirebbe'.

16. Origen, *In Genesim*, hom. 2 ("De fabrica arcae et eorum quae in ea sunt", in PG 12, 161 ff.; *In Leviticum*, hom. 13 ("De diebus festis, et lucerna, et candelabro et oleo ad lumen etc."), *ibid.*, 544 ff.; *In Num.*, hom. 1 and ff., *ibid.*, 585 ff.

17. Richard of St Victor, *Nonnullae allegoriae tabernaculi foederis*, in PL 196, 191-202 and the *Expositio difficultatum suborientium in expositione tabernaculi foederis*, *ibid.*, 211 ff.; *De eruditione hominis interioris*, I, 29, *ibid.*, 1327-1328.

18. Gregory the Great, *Super Ezech.*, II, hom. 3 ff. in PL 76, 958 ff.; *In Evang.*, hom. 24, *ibid.*, 1186; hom. 33, *ibid.*, 1239.

19. Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, XI, 30-31 in PL 41, 343-45.

20. Jerome, *Commentaria in Isaiam*, in PL 24, 280 (see also *In Amos*, in PL 25, 1037; *In Aggeum*, *ibid.*, 1400-01); *Comm. in Ezechielem*, in PL 25, 394-95.

21. Ambrose, *Expositio Evang. secundum Lucam*, in PL 15, 1575, 1595, 1617, 1723-24; *De Noe et arca*, in PL 14, 383 ff; 415.
22. See above, n. 5. See In II *De gen. et corr.*, ch. X, lectio X, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. VII, pp. 613 (although from lectio XVIII in the first book the commentary is not by Aquinas, but by an unknown author from the school of Albertus Magnus).
23. *Quaestio disputata de potentia*, q. 5, art. 8 (in *Opera omnia*, vol. III, p. 228).
24. The *De vita coelitus comparanda* in *Opera I*, pp. 529-572 (see the Italian translation cit n. 11 of the Introduction, in particular p. 303. Synesius, see *De insomniis*, in PL 66, 1285.
25. Ex. 25, 9 ss.
26. Justin Martyr, *Dialogi cum Triphone Iudaeo*, in PG 6, 566.
27. For the specific references to the *Bibliotheca sancta* of Sisto da Siena, see below, n. 29-31.
28. Sap. 18, 24.
29. Sisto da Siena, *Bibliotheca sancta*, II (Lugduni, 1575), p. 116 ff. See Thomas, *Summa th.*, I IIae, q. 102, art. 5, to 9. Iob 38, 33.
30. Sisto da Siena, *Bibliotheca sancta*, III, 'De sciographica expositione', p. 184 f.
31. Ibid., 'De physica expositione', III, pp. 163-64. See Thomas, *Summa th.*, I, IIae, q. 102, art. 5, to 6.
32. Heb. 8, 5; 9, 23; 10, 1.
33. Zach. 3, 9.
34. Ps. 77, 49.
35. See Mt. 15, 22 ff and Lc. 13, 11 f., 16.
36. Sap. 18, 24-25.
37. Num. 16, 47-48.

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38. Philo, *De opificio mundi*, in *Oeuvres*, vol. I, ed. R. Arnaldez (Paris, 1961), p. 200 ff.

39. The reference is not to the Flemish mathematician and astronomer Gemma Phrysius, but to the son, the doctor Cornelius Gemma (1535-1579), author of the *De arte cyclognomica* mentioned here (Antwerp, 1569) and of a *De naturae divinis characterismis* (Antwerp, 1575).

40. Fabio Paolini, *Hebdomades, sive septem de septenario libri* (Venice, 1581), VII, ch. III, p. 374 ff. See above, Introduction, n. 9.

41. See above, n. 5 and 10.

42. Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, V, 6 in PL 41, 146.

43. Albertus Magnus, *Speculum astronomiae*, ed. S. Caroti, M. Pereira, S. Zamponi, overseen by P. Zambelli (Pisa, 1977); now included, with English facing text, in the study by P. Zambelli, *The "Speculum astronomiae" and its Enigma* (Kluwer, Dordrecht-Boston-London, 1991), ch. XI and XVI.

44. Astral and astrological references are quite frequent in Ficino's 'Letter'. On images, see in particular the passage in the letter dated 20 August 1494 to Angelo Poliziano (*Epistolae*, l. XII in *Opera*, vol. I, p. 958), where Ficino writes, with reference to Book III of his own *De vita*: "Neque despicio prorsus imagines illas, neque omnes respuo regulas, et si enim arbitror certam iis rationem nullam inesse, tamen ut studiosissimus humanae medicinae curator remedia non solum sapientibus certa, sed etiam multis probabilia sector...".

45. Ps. Thomas, *De fato*, art. 4 in *Opera omnia*, vol. VII, p. 49.

46. In the *Historia naturalis*, l. XXVIII, ch. 28, Pliny describes the sandaster, a stone found in India and in southern Arabia, which has a fire inside it, surrounded by drops of gold positioned like the Pleiades and the Iads and therefore used by the Chaldeans in magical ceremonies; in the ch. 48, he writes of the astrion, a stone that is similar to crystal, in the centre of which a star shines like a full moon; in the following chapter, he mentions the astrioten stone, used in the magical arts.

47. See the spurious opuscles attributed to Bede, such as the *De planetarum et signorum ratione*, the *De signis coeli*, the *Pronostica temporum* in PL 90, 941, 945, 953.

48. G. B. Della Porta, *Magia naturalis*, VII (Naples, 1589), p. 127 f.

49. G. Gilbert, *De magnete magneticisque corporibus et de magno magnete tellure Physiologia nova*, 1. III, ch. 12 (London, 1600), pp. 139 ff.
50. See the 'Praefatio' to the *Astrologicorum libri*, in *Opera latina.*, II, p. 1097.
51. M. Delrio, *Disquisitiones magicae* 1. I, c. IV, q. 1 (Venice, 1606), p. 32.
52. Thomas, *Opusc. 15 (Responsio ad lectorem Vercellensem de art. 42)*, art. 39 (in *Opera omnia*, vol. III, p. 642).
53. Ambrose, *Hexaameron*, IV, 3 in PL 14, 192.
54. Sap. 17, 5.
55. Eccli. 43, 3.
56. Plato, *Timaeus*, 39b.
57. Ficino, *Consilio contro la pestilenza*, ch. XXII, p. 72; *Epidemiarum Antidotus*, ch. XXIII, in *Opera*, I, pp. 634-35.
58. See *De siderali fato*, in *Opera. latina.*, p. 1337.