

ECHOES OF *NIRANJ* MAGIC IN THE WORK OF ALBERT THE GREAT*

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Abstract

Niranj magic is a genre of magic which is closely connected with a cluster of texts known as *Pseudo-Aristotelian Hermetica*. As Charles Burnett's groundbreaking study has shown, a part of these texts has been translated in Latin, albeit not without problems. In fact, the term *niranj* as such was never translated in Latin and thus tracing the 'luck' of this genre of magic in the texts of the Middle Ages is a difficult and arduous task. Despite the aforementioned challenges, this paper aims to show that echoes of *niranj* magic can be tracked in the work of Albert the Great. In this regard, my study can be deemed as a natural sequel of Burnett's initial study.

Key Words

Niranj; Albert the Great; Medieval magic; *Picatrix*; Pseudo Aristotelian *Hermetica*



I. *Introduction*

The subject of *niranj* magic seems to pose great challenges in terms of its historiographical study and interpretation. A characteristic example of such a 'challenge' is the following case: the term *niranj* is found in Avicenna's *Divisions of Intellectual Sciences* where *niranj* is mentioned as one of the special sciences subordinated to natural philosophy. The modern scholarly translations of the Avicennan *Divisions* – as well as of the other Arabic books which contain it: Al Ghazali's *The aim of the philosophers* and *The incoherence of the philosophers*, and Averroes' *The incoherence of the incoherence* – all give a different translation when it comes to *niranj* magic. Therefore, the confusion that arises does not really

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contribute to the understanding of both the actual meaning of the term and its actual place in the historiography of magic. That said, Anawati translates *niranj* magic as « theurgy » and also the same translation is given by Mimoune.¹ On the contrary, Michot translates the same term as « science of the amulets ».² Similarly, Marmura in the translation of the *Incoherence of the Philosophers* translates *niranj* as « science of magic », while Van den Bergh in his translation of the *Incoherence of the Incoherence* translates *niranj* as « art of incantations ».³ From the translations above, it is more than evident that modern scholars exhibit some confusion with respect to the meaning of *niranj*, while they also try through personal assumptions and criteria to subscribe *niranj* magic to a certain trend of magic.

Congruently, a similar attitude is attested in the first Latin translation of Avicenna's *Divisions* which was made by Andrea Alpago in the sixteenth century. The excerpt which contains the term runs as follows:

Et ex illa scientia alnirangiat, id est scientia artis magice, et intentio in ea est permiscere virtutes que sunt in substantia mundi terreni, ut adveniat in eo virtus a qua proveniat actio extranea vel mirabilis.⁴

As we see, in Alpago's Latin translation the writer has attempted to phonetically preserve the Arabic-Persian word of *niranj* by giving it in its plural version alongside with its definitive article at the beginning, that is, *al niranjat*. Following this train of thought one can understand now what *alnirangiat* stands for, since it is the Latin transliteration of the word *al niranjat* which was mentioned before. What is interesting here is that this kind of transliteration shows that Alpago was unfamiliar with this kind of magic too and thus he explains its meaning by just saying that it is the « science of magic art ».

Given all the above, one gets the impression that *niranj* magic was a conundrum for all the scholars who dealt with it, and when it came to the translation of the term they usually depended on and adopted explanatory tools which were the product of their personal interpretation. Our knowledge on *niranj* magic though has significantly changed with the groundbreaking study by Charles Burnett, who

¹ GEORGE ANAWATI, « Les Divisions Des Sciences Intellectuelles d'Avicenne », *Mélanges de l'Institut d'Études Orientales*, 13 (1977), p. 329; RABIA MIMOUNE, « Épître Sur Les Parties Des Sciences Intellectuelles d'Abu 'Ali al-Husayn Ibn Sinâ », in *Études Sur Avicenne*, ed. JEAN JOLIVET, ROSHDI RASHED, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1984, p. 146.

² JEAN MICHOT, « Les sciences physiques et métaphysiques selon la Risālah fī Aqsām al-'Ulūm d'Avicenne. Essai de traduction critique », *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale*, 22 (1980), p. 67.

³ AL-GHAZĀLĪ, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, ed. and transl. MICHAEL E. MARMURA, Brigham Young University press, Provo 1997, p. 162; AVERROES, *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*, ed. and trans. SIMON VAN DEN BERGH, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1954, p. 311.

⁴ AVICENNA, *Compendium de anima ...*, ed. ANDREAS BELLUNENSIS, Gregg International Publishers, Farnborough 1969, p. 142.

meticulously showed on the one hand that *niranj* magic was both performed and flourishing in the Arabic world, while it was literally ‘lost in translation’ in the Latin medieval world since no Latin equivalent term is attested for the analogous term of *niranj*.⁵ In this regard, trying to trace even echoes of *niranj* in the thought of medieval Latin scholars seems an arduous endeavor with little chance of a fruitful outcome.

This paper follows through on some of the issues in Burnett’s article and therefore it aims to show that echoes of *niranj* magic are to be found in the work of Albert the Great (1200–1280) who was active during the thirteenth century. In what follows, I will first provide a short introduction to *niranj* magic and its ‘fate’ in the Latin medieval world and then I will proceed with adducing ‘echoes of *niranj*’ in the work of the Dominican master.

II. Niranj magic and its Latin medieval fate

The word *niranj* or *niranjat* in its plural comes from the Pahlavi (middle Persian) word *nerang* which was mostly used for incantations related to binding spirits or invoking stars.⁶ In his *Divisions* Avicenna describes *niranj* magic as the science which aims at mixing the powers which are found in the substances of the terrestrial bodies to bring about a power from which wonderful things spring forth. With respect to the mixing of the powers of the terrestrial bodies, Avicenna provides us with more information in his *On actions and passions*, where he divides all actions into four categories: soul to soul, soul to body, body to soul, and body to body. It is the last category that is of interest to our discussion, since Avicenna reports that the action of a body to a body is like that of an element turning to another one or like the action of drugs and poisons to the human body. It is also at the end of this account that Avicenna presents *niranjat*, talismans, and alchemy as examples of a body-to-body action.⁷ Yet, Avicenna’s account is not complete and the studies of Manfred Ullmann and Charles Burnett allow us to visit the notion of *niranj* in a wider spectrum. In particular, Ullmann presents it as a kind of magic that uses a great variety of ingredients in its recipes and which applies to numerous cases like protection against weapons, love-magic, tongue binding, creation of illusions, etc.⁸ Congruently, Burnett presents *niranj* as « a magical

⁵ CHARLES BURNETT, « Niranj: A Category of Magic (Almost) Forgotten in the Latin West », in CLAUDIO LEONARDI, FRANCESCO SANTI (eds.), *Natura, scienze e società medievali. Studi in onore di Agostino Paravicini Bagliani*, SISMEL–Edizioni del Galluzzo, Florence 2008, p. 37–66.

⁶ BURNETT, « Niranj: A Category of Magic », p. 37.

⁷ CHARLES BURNETT, « The Three Divisions of Arabic Magic », in LIANA SAIF et al. (eds.), *Islamicate Occult Sciences in Theory and Practice*, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2021, p. 44–45.

⁸ MANFRED ULLMANN, *Die Natur- und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam*, Brill, Leiden 1972, p. 362–363.

practice which includes the mixing and processing of ingredients, the recitation of magical words, the burning of incense and the making of figurines in order to manipulate spiritual forces ».⁹ Recently, Burnett extended further the applicability of *niranjat* by associating it with emotional control, psychological situations and the performance of illusions, which in turn entail that the imaginative powers of the weaker souls would be affected by the powers of a stronger human soul.¹⁰

The first attestations of *niranj/niranjat* are found in a cluster of Arabic texts which are known as Pseudo-Aristotelian *Hermetica* and were supposed to be written by Aristotle for his pupil, Alexander the Great. The date of these texts is uncertain and they have served as a source of other famous magical texts like the *De secretis naturae* of Pseudo Apollonius and the *Picatrix*.¹¹ Some of these Pseudo-Aristotelian *Hermetica* were translated into Latin. In particular, the part of the *Kitab al makhzun*, which deals with lunar mansions, was translated as *Liber lune secundum Aristotelem*, while the part of the same book which is concerned with the capturing of animals was translated as *Liber secundum Hermetem de quatuor confectionibus ad omnia genera animalium capienda*.¹² Additionally, a part of the *Kitab al Istamatis* and its commentary *Kitab al maditis*, which were probably known by Hermann of Carinthia, as well as a part of the *Kitab al istamakhis* were translated as *Liber antimaquis*.¹³ The important thing for our study is that in all these translations of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Hermetica* there is not any Latin word to be found which could be regarded as equivalent to *niranj/niranjat*. The lack of a Latin translation but also the weakness of Latin scholars to coin a Latin term for *niranj* is also attested and confirmed by the ensuing cases. For instance, in Hermann of Carinthia's *De essentiis* we find the term *neiringet*, in William of Auvergne's *De universo* we find the term *niiriangi* and in the *Liber de quatuor confectionibus* the term *anatigit*.¹⁴ All these different variants show nothing more than the effort of the Latin translators to come up with a Latin transliteration which would give just the phonetical aspect of *niranjat* rather than its actual meaning. The kind of difficulty which is connected to the meaning of *niranjat* is also mirrored through the *Liber lune* and the *Liber antimaquis*. In the first one, the Latin translator preferred not to translate *niranj* and therefore we have a *lacuna*,¹⁵ while in the second book the

⁹ BURNETT, « Niranj: A Category of Magic », p. 42.

¹⁰ BURNETT, « The Three Divisions of Arabic Magic », p. 52.

¹¹ BURNETT, « Niranj: A Category of Magic », p. 38–41.

¹² BURNETT, « Niranj: A Category of Magic », p. 44.

¹³ CHARLES BURNETT, « Hermann of Carinthia and the *Kitāb Al-Istamāṭīs*: Further Evidence for the Transmission of Hermetic Magic », *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 44 (1981), p. 167–169; for an edition of the *Liber antimaquis*, see CHARLES BURNETT, « Aristoteles/Hermes: Liber Antimaquis », in GERRIT BOS, CHARLES BURNETT, PAOLO LUCCENTINI (eds.), *Hermetis Trismegisti Astrologica et Divinatoria*, Turnhout, Brepols 2001, p. 177–221.

¹⁴ BURNETT, « Niranj: A Category of Magic », p. 46–47.

¹⁵ I deal with *Liber lunae* later in my paper.

Arabic word is translated as « mirabilia ».¹⁶ Likewise, in the Latin translation of *Ghayat al hakim* which is known as *Picatrix*, the word *niranjat* is either translated as « lapides » or « ymagines » and thus it has become equivalent to talismans or as « opus » or « mirabilia » when the word is interpreted as signifying a procedure or a wonderful outcome. However, all these Latin words that were adopted do not really convey the actual meaning of *niranj/niranjat*, as Burnett notes.¹⁷

In any case, it should be noted that any Latin attempt to translate *niranj* led either to confusion or distortion. To put it clearly, on the one hand, the Latin translations that aimed to phonetically imitate the word of *niranj/niranjat* resulted in creating Latin words that were meaningless and bearers of confusion, while on the other the Latin words that were chosen to translate the Arabic term only managed to distort the initial meaning of *niranj*.

III. Albert the Great and Niranj magic

According to what was presented before, it becomes obvious that the Latin Middle Ages did not coin a term that would be able to deliver the actual meaning of *niranj/niranjat* and thus this kind of magic was eventually consigned to oblivion. That said, searching for the presence of *niranj* magic per se in Albert the Great's work seems to be an unfruitful task, provided that we do not have an actual Latin term that we can rely on and search for. Yet, in what is left of this sub-chapter, I would like to draw attention to some facts and passages which are reminiscent of *niranj* magic. Firstly, I show how the general meaning of *niranj* magic is encountered in the work of Albert and then I proceed with more particular cases like those of *Liber lunae* and *Picatrix*.

Before delving into Albert the Great and *niranj* magic it should be stated that Albert has a positive attitude towards magic.¹⁸ This positive attitude has been well articulated by Collins who recently stated that Albert exhibits « a willingness to evaluate claims of magical power sympathetically before isolating what in them deserved condemnation ».¹⁹ Albert, in his *De mineralibus*, was particularly favorable

¹⁶ CHARLES BURNETT, « Aristoteles/Hermes: Liber Antimaquis », p. 211: « Isti sunt familiares spiritus Saturni 72 per quos faciebant multa mirabilia »; cf. p. 183.

¹⁷ BURNETT, « Niranj: A Category of Magic », p. 48.

¹⁸ HENRYK ANZULEWICZ, « Magie im Verständnis Alberts des Grossen », in IÑIGO ATUCHA et al. (eds.), *Mots Médiévaux offerts à Ruedi Imbach*, FIDEM, Porto 2011, p. 419–431 and ATHANASIOS RINOTAS, « Compatibility between Philosophy and Magic in the Work of Albertus Magnus », *Revista Española de Filosofía Medieval*, 22 (2015), p. 171–180.

¹⁹ DAVID J. COLLINS, « Scholasticism and High Medieval Opposition to Magic », in SOPHIE PAGE, CATHERINE RIDER (eds.), *The Routledge History of Medieval Magic*, Routledge, London – New York 2019, p. 466.

towards talismans whose power was due to their specific form, a doctrine which Albert took from Avicenna.²⁰ Likewise, Albert shows a positive attitude towards astrology and the influence of the superlunar world on the sublunar one.²¹ Considering the above, Albert's name is well related to magic, something which is further attested by testimonies of other medieval scholars of the fourteenth century.²²

Turning back to Albert and *niranj* magic, as we have already seen, the *Divisions* report that the mixing of the powers of the earthly things bring about something that is wonderful. Likewise, in the translations of the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Hermetica*, the *niranjat* were translated as *mirabilia* and it is worth searching whether there is a meaning of *mirabilia* in Albert's work that comes close to that of the *Divisions*. In this way, a first general connection or – maybe better – a strong compatibility between Albert and *niranj* magic will be accomplished which will serve as a springboard to proceed further with our study. There are many passages, especially in his commentary on Lombard's *Sententiae* and in the *Summa theologiae*, which discuss the subject of « *mirabilia* », albeit within a theological context. Specifically, the discussion revolves around such questions as « what the difference between *miracula* and *mirabilia* is » and « if demons can perform either of them ». So, according to Albert, *miraculum* is the product of divine will and it appears when creation 'obeys' Christ's will, whereas *mirabilia* is the product of a sudden and very fast action that does not go beyond nature and is imperceptible in terms of time.²³ Yet, there is a text in Albert's commentary on the *De anima*,

²⁰ NICOLAS WEILL-PAROT, *Les images astrologiques au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance: Spéculations intellectuelles et pratiques magiques (XIIe-XVe siècle)*, Champion, Paris 2002, p. 260–280.

²¹ DARREL RUTKIN, « Astrology and Magic », in IRVEN RESNICK (ed.), *A Companion to Albert the Great*, Brill, Leiden 2013, p. 451–505, and ID., *Sapientia astrologica: Astrology, Magic and Natural Knowledge, ca 1250–1800*, vol. I: *Medieval Structures (1250–1500): Conceptual, Institutional, Socio-Political, Theologico-Religious and Cultural*, Springer International Publishing, Dordrecht 2019, p. 275–293.

²² DAVID J. COLLINS, « Albertus, Magnus or Magus? Magic, Natural Philosophy, and Religious Reform in the Late Middle Ages », *Renaissance Quarterly*, 63/1 (2010), p. 1–44; AGOSTINO PARAVICINI BAGLIANI, « La légende médiévale d'Albert le Grand (1270–1435). Premières recherches », *Micrologus: Natura, Scienze e Società Medievali*, 21 (2013), p. 295–368.

²³ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Summa Theologiae*, pars 2, tract. 8, q. 30, m. 1, art. 1, ed. AUGUSTE BORGNET, Vives, Paris 1894–1895, p. 322b: « Ad id quod contra objicitur, dicendum quod vinum secundum naturam fit ex aqua digesta per vitis virtutem, impuro putrefacto ejecto per depurationem quae fit in vite: sicut dicit Aristoteles in IV Meteororum, quod omnis digestio, et maxime ea quae praepausis dicitur, quae est in fructiferis lignorum et herbarum, est completio a naturali et proprio calore ex contrajacentibus passionibus perfecta. Sed hoc modo Christus non fecit vinum ex aqua, sed solo imperio suae voluntatis, cui omnis creatura obedit. Unde illa objectio supponit falsum, quae dicit, quod solum sit miraculum propter hoc quod factum sit subito: sed miraculum est, quia super ordinem naturae fuit elevatum, et secundum solam obedientiam creaturae ad voluntatem Dei perfectam. Nec opera magorum vel daemonum facta sunt subito, hoc est, in nunc: sed facta sunt velocius quam natura ex talibus seminibus possit ea producere. Et ideo dicunt

which resembles the content of the description of *niranj* magic in the *Divisions*. In this passage, Albert speaks about the generation of things according to the model of Alexander of Aphrodisias:

In the composite things, however, the elemental forms endure in some way and on top of that the forms of composite things are added to them; and therefore when elements recede through the blending of the things which rise above, then wonderful things are performed in nature.²⁴

With respect to this passage, two things need to be stressed: firstly, the compatibility of this Albertian text with that of the *Divisions* is better clarified if one takes into account the other Avicennan text we saw before, that is, *On the actions and passions*. According to the latter, the blending of the earthly powers was explained by means of elemental mixtures and thus the *mirabilia* which are produced in the *niranj* magic of the *Divisions* are the result of elemental processes. Following this train of thinking, Albert's text bears a marked compatibility with the account of the two previous Avicennan texts, since the *mirabilia* which are produced in nature are also the result of elemental procedures. Secondly, by adducing this text of Albert, it should be noted that we cannot draw any direct connection or influence between Albert and Avicenna's *Divisions*. However, on the other hand, one cannot deny that some content of *niranj* magic which exists within the *Divisions* is present in Albert's work in a purely philosophical context.

III.1. The case of *Liber lunae*

Yet, the real question is whether Albert came across any text which was associated with *niranj* magic. If he did, the question that emerges in turn is how any ideas connected to *niranj* were communicated to him given that there was no standard Latin translation of the term. To begin with, Sannino has already indicated that the *Liber de quattuor confectionibus* is mentioned and listed in the *Speculum astronomiae* as a text which is not associated with illicit necromancy but with the licit or natural part of it.²⁵ Even though this book has been attributed to Albert the

quidam, quod facta sunt repente, hoc est, in non perceptibili tempore: propter quod mirabilia, et non miracula sunt ».

²⁴ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De anima* III, tr. 2, c. 4, ed. CLEMENS STROICK, in *Opera omnia*, vol. VII/1, Aschendorff, Münster 1968, p. 182: « In compositis autem remanent secundum aliquem modum formae elementales, et insuper adiciuntur eis formae compositorum; et ideo, quando elementa per mixturam ab excellentiis recedunt, tunc in natura mirabilia operantur ».

²⁵ ANTONELLA SANNINO, « Ermete mago e alchimista nelle biblioteche di Guglielmo d'Alvernia e Ruggero Bacone », *Studi Medievali*, 41 (2000), p. 182–183; PAOLA ZAMBELLI, *The Speculum Astronomiae and Its Enigma: Astrology, Theology and Science in Albertus Magnus and His Contemporaries*, Kluwer, Dordrecht 1992, p. 247–248.

Great there are many contrary scholarly voices which have not argued in favor of this possibility and therefore one may disregard this reference on the grounds that it belongs to the dubious works of Albert.²⁶ Looking into the genuine works of Albert one may come across sources which show that Albert was familiar with books which preserve ideas related to *niranj* magic. The first one is found in Albert's commentary of the second book of Lombard's *Sententiae* and it shows a direct knowledge of the *Liber lune secundum Aristotelem*. Albert clearly attributes it to Aristotle and he refers to it by the name *Liber de mansionibus lunae*.

With respect to this text, Albert attempts to answer the question of whether demons are helped in their operations by the constellations of stars (*Utrum daemones in suis operibus iuventur constellationibus*).

In his answer Albert reports that in the talismanic books it is recited that demons are easier invoked when the moon is in one sign than another and he continues by saying that this invocation cannot be possible except because the demons know that at a certain point of time they are helped by signs and the aspects of the planets which in turn facilitate the effect that is pursued by the necromancer.²⁷ In support of his statement, that is, that demons are indeed helped by star constellations, Albert cites a part of the *Liber lune* almost verbatim. In order to show the close connection between the texts I will present them together. Therefore, Albert's words run as follows:

Quod autem hoc verum sit, dicit Aristoteles in libro de Mansionibus lunae sic: **Quando descendit selin albethaim, fac ad amorem dominatorum terrae, idola conflagra, Angelos ad te clama:** et constat, quod non intelligitur de bonis Angelis: ergo mali facilius tunc veniunt quam alio tempore. Selin idem est quod luna. Albethaim est quaedam constellatio quae est in secunda mansione Arietis, ita quod primae mansioni dentur tredecim gradus et minuta septem de Arietis imagine: ergo videtur, quod superiora iuvant daemones ad talia opera consequenda.²⁸

²⁶ For a recent account on the authorship of the *Speculum astronomiae*, see JEREMIAH HACKETT, « Albert the Great and the *Speculum Astronomiae*. The State of the Research at the Beginning of the 21st Century », in RESNICK (ed.), *A Companion to Albert the Great*, p. 437–449.

²⁷ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Super IV Libros Sententiarum*, II, dist. 7, art. 9, p. 157a–b: « Videtur autem, quod sicut legitur in libris Imaginum, daemones luna existente in uno signo, facilius vocantur quam ipsa existente in alio: hoc autem non potest esse, nisi quia sciunt tunc se iuvari a signis et ad aspectibus planetarum ad faciliorem effectum ejus quod intendit necromanticus, ut videtur ».

²⁸ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Super IV Libros Sententiarum*, II, dist. 7, art. 9, p. 157b. I have highlighted with bold letters the part of Albertus' text which relates to the *Liber lune*.

Congruently, the analogous text of the *Liber lune* states the following:

Quando descendit Albotaim, fac ad dominatores terre, idola confla, Angelos ad te clama,
coram dominis terre intra, uxorem non accipias, non compares, non novum
vestimentum induas. Si aliquis natus fuerit, erit bonus, sapiens; femina meretrix.²⁹

Before we proceed with analyzing the two sources, it should be stressed that Albert adduces the part from the *Liber lune* almost verbatim, something which is indicated by the words in bold letters and therefore it becomes quite evident that Albert indeed had knowledge of the *Liber lune*. Yet, we will begin with the analysis of the latter so as to better understand the reception of it by Albert the Great. As Charles Burnett informs us, the *Liber lune* is a translation of a part of the *Kitab al makhzun*. It discusses the place of the moon in each of the twenty-eight constellations and it gives guidance and advice for making *niranj*, talismans and poisons and for involving oneself in important life activities like getting married, travelling, buying or selling things etc. However, Burnett has also clearly shown that in the *Liber lune* the word *niranj* was never translated in Latin and therefore there is a *lacuna* as far as it concerns the object of the verb *fac*.³⁰ As a matter of fact, the Arabic text of the *Liber lune* impels the reader to make a *niranj* for the love of the rulers of earth when the Moon descends to Albutaim, while the absence of an equivalent Latin term for *niranj* and the complete omission of the latter leaves much space for the Latin readers to plausibly apply a different reading.

The last remark might give us a lead in interpreting Albert's approach towards the text of the *Liber lune* that he cites. It is well to remember that Albert wants to prove that demonic operations are indeed helped by star constellations. Thus, the Dominican master follows the ensuing steps: he first evokes Aristotle's authority in order to justify the truth of his previous words, then he adduces the excerpt from the *Liber lune* which supports Aristotle's position, he comes up with the suggestion that the excerpt speaks about bad angels and lastly he explicates the terms of *Selin* (moon) and *albethaim* (constellation) which all together will allow him to deduce his initial claim, which holds that demons are aided by constellations. Even though the original text of the *Liber lune* is not associated with demons, it is worth tracking how Albert might have come up with such a negative attitude towards the text. The first expression to be interpreted is the one of *confla idola*. In the translation of *Liber lune* Burnett translates the aforementioned

²⁹ BURNETT, « Niranj: A Category of Magic », p. 57. The edition of the *Liber lune* is found at p. 50–66 of the aforementioned article. Translation by Charles Burnett at p. 62: « When she descends to Albutaim, make (a *niranj*) for (the love of) rulers of the earth, compose talismans, call angels to you, enter before the rulers of the earth, do not marry, do not buy, do not put on new clothing. If anyone is born, he will be good, wise; a female a whore ».

³⁰ BURNETT, « Niranj: A Category of Magic », p. 49.

expression as « compose talismans ». Appropriate as this translation might be for the *Liber lune*, I deem that this might not be the case when it comes to Albert's interpretation. To begin with, the standard Latin word Albert uses for talismans is *imagines*, something which also becomes apparent at the beginning of our source where he speaks about *libri imaginum* and therefore it might be more than probable that the Dominican master conceives of *idola* in a different manner. A thorough research in Albert's *corpus* reveals that he usually uses the expression *conflare idola* and its variants in his theological works, while it is usually employed in order to denote the metallic fabrication of idols which may lead in turn to the worship of false gods.³¹ That said, Albert could have understood the expression *confla idola* merely as « create metallic idols ».

Consequently, our focus is laid on the expression *fac ad amorem dominatorum terrae*. As has already been mentioned the word *niranj* is not translated in the *Liber lune* and therefore it is worth examining how this sentence could be conceived by Albert. Nicolas Weill-Parot, in his profound study on astrological images interprets the source which is under scrutiny as « make idola in order to acquire the love of the lords of the earth ».³² In all probability, Weill-Parot either regards the word *idola* as being the object of *fac* or he disregards the presence of *fac* completely and he unites the adverbial expression of *ad amorem dominatorum terrae* with the one of *confla idola*. In any case, Weill-Parot does not seem to be aware of how the word *niranj* had affected the Latin translation of the *Liber lune* and thus he does not examine whether the expression *fac ad amorem dominatorum terrae* may render another meaning and therefore another interpretation on the source. In fact, the aforementioned expression may stand as it is and confer another meaning upon the source. The expression *facio ad aliquid/aliqui* may also be translated as « to be good or of use for anything; to be useful, of service », as well as « to suit or fit ». Consequently, the expression *dominatores terrae* could possibly refer to planets but

³¹ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Postilla super Isaiam, Postillae super Ieremiam et Postillae super Ezechielem*, c. 2, ed. FERDINAND SIEPMANN, HEINRICH OSTLENDER, in *Opera omnia*, vol. XIX, Aschendorff, Münster 1952, p. 45: « Et idola penitus conterentur. Chaldaei enim venientes et templa et idola, quae posuerant Iudaei, subvertebant; et tunc apparuit inutilitas idolorum. Exod. xxxii (20): "Arripiens Moyses vitulum conflatilem, quem fecerant filii Israel, combussit et contrivit in pulverem". Idola etiam conteruntur, quando simulacra, quae quilibet sibi facit per avaritiam, mundi vanitatem vel delicias, per compunctionem auferuntur »; Ibid., c. 42, p. 429: « "Confusus est omnis artifex in sculptili, quoniam falsum est, quod conflatit, et non est spiritus in eis." Omnia quae de idolis dicta sunt, de malis praelatis dici possunt moraliter et de his qui constituerunt eos »; Ibid., c. 42, p. 481: « quod idolum dicitur numinis opinati praesentis figura, sculptile ab arte, conflatile a materia, quia frequenter de metallis fiebant idola »; ID., *Super Baruch*, c. 1, ed. AUGUSTE BORNET, Vives, Paris 1893, versus 19, p. 369a: « Tunc enim ante montem Sina vitulum fecerunt conflatilem: illicita concupierunt: idolo Beelphegor initiati sunt, et idolothyta comederunt, et idola adoraverunt ».

³² WEILL-PAROT, *Les images astrologiques*, p. 261.

also to demons since Albert in his *Super Isaiam* refers to demons as *principes terrae*.³³ That said, the Latin text that Albert quotes may be interpreted as follows: « When Selin (Moon) descends to Albethaim, make yourself of service/ become useful to the love of the lords of the earth, make/cast metallic idols and call angels to you ».

In that way, the quoted text becomes a 'guide-like' text for invoking bad angels according to which if one wants to gain the favor of the angels then he should first make himself favorable towards them (or the planets), then create metallic idols and finally invoke them. Following this train of thinking, one may now understand Albert's ensuing remark according to which the angels should be understood as bad angels and it is probably due to the signification of *idola* and *dominatores terrae* that the Dominican master deems that angels should be conceived of as being bad.

III.2 The case of *Picatrix*

As has become clear, Albert the Great had come into contact with at least one book which was associated with subjects of *niranj* magic, albeit that it was absent as a word. In addition, the Dominican master most likely connected the content of it with necromantic practices which in turn were associated with demonic invocations and thus an illicit and unchristian mark was bestowed upon it. This is also confirmed by another source of Albert's which speaks about Toz Graecus, that is, Hermes Trismegistus and the invocation of planets in terms of necromancy.³⁴ As a result, the subject of *niranj* which pertains to the manipulation of spiritual forces falls under the umbrella of necromancy in Albert's thought. The two references which were presented belong to the early works of Albert and evidently they portray his negative attitude towards necromancy. However, one may notice a shift in Albert's conception of necromancy especially in his 'third period' which is connected with the commentary of the Aristotelian corpus.³⁵ In Albert's references of this period to necromancy, one may detect a more favorable attitude towards the *science of necromancy* and one may wonder what were Albert's readings which made him adopt such a different attitude towards necromancy. Towards this answer, one might get some useful insight and knowledge by comparing Albert's thought on necromancy with that from the famous book *Picatrix*. Such a comparison, as we will see, provides some significant compatibilities between

³³ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Postilla super Isaiam, Postillae super Ieremiam et Postillae super Ezechielem*, c. 14, ed. SIEPMANN, OSTLENDER, p. 205.

³⁴ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Super Dionysium de divinis nominibus*, c. 4, ed. PAULUS SIMON, p. 168: « Secundum antiquitatis rationem, idest secundum opinionem gentilium, qui templum et aram soli consecrabant sicut deo, et sicut etiam Toz in libro quodam quem de nigromantia scripsit, docuit invocationes ad singulos planetas, attribuens unicuique proprium numen ».

³⁵ FERNAND VAN STEENBERGHEN, *La philosophie au XIIIe siècle*, Publications universitaires de Louvain, Louvain 1966, p. 246.

Albert and the *Picatrix* with respect to necromancy, despite the fact that it is very difficult to prove that *Picatrix* might have been read indeed by Albert and thus molded his thought on necromancy. In addition, the *Picatrix* was a bearer of *niranj* magic too and therefore further encounters with this kind of magic may have been communicated to Albert via the *Picatrix*.

First of all, it should be stated that necromancy since the twelfth century has gradually started gaining a more favorable status, something which is confirmed by the work of Petrus Alfonsi who recognizes necromancy as one of the liberal arts, by the work of Gundissalinus who posits necromancy as a part of physics and by the fact that Constantinus Africanus was educated in necromancy.³⁶ Eventually, the term *nigromantia* is used as the Latin equivalent of the Arabic word for magic (*sihr*) and in the first half of the thirteenth century the word *nigromantia* is used to denote the ‘science of properties’, while it is also connected to the magical-astrological powers of talismans.³⁷ Turning to *Picatrix*, its Arabic original was the *Ghayat al hakim* (The goal of the sage) and it was probably written between 954–959 by al-Qurtubi.³⁸ The text was first translated in Castilian and then into Latin after 1256.³⁹ In the Arabic version of *Picatrix*, magic is a science (*sihr*) and it is divided into three branches according to the kind of influence or action. When it is a soul to soul action, this falls under the category of *niranj* magic, while when it is a soul to body action then it falls under the category of talismanic magic and lastly when it is a body to body action then it falls under the category of alchemy.⁴⁰ Charles Burnett has already noted the connection between the Avicennian *Divisions* and the Arabic version of *Picatrix* since the three last sciences which are mentioned by Avicenna (science of *niranj*, talismans and alchemy) are also presented in the

³⁶ CHARLES BURNETT, *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages: Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds*, Variorum, Aldershot 1996, p. 1–3.

³⁷ ISABELLE DRAELANTS, « *Magica Vero Sub Philosophia Non Continetur*: Statut des arts magiques et divinatoires dans les encyclopédies et leurs *auctoritates* (1225–1260) », in ALESSANDRO PALAZZO, IRENE ZAVATTERO (eds.), *Geomancy and Other Forms of Divination*, Sismel–Edizioni del Galluzzo, Florence 2017, p. 464 and 508. For the term *nigromantia*, see JEAN-PATRICE BOUDET, « *Nigromantia*: brève histoire d’un mot », in PALAZZO, ZAVATTERO (eds.), *Geomancy and Other Forms of Divination*, SISMEL–Edizioni del Galluzzo, Florence 2017, p. 445–462.

³⁸ GODEFROID DE CALLATAÏ, SÉBASTIEN MOUREAU, « Again on Maslama Ibn Qāsim Al-Qurṭubī, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ and Ibn Khaldūn: New Evidence from Two Manuscripts of *Rutbat al-Ḥakīm* », *Al-Qantara* 37/2 (2017), p. 329–372. About the *Picatrix*, its history and fortune in the Western world, see JEAN-PATRICE BOUDET, ANNA CAIOZZO, NICOLAS WEILL-PAROT (eds.), *Images et magie. Picatrix entre Orient et Occident*, Honoré Champion, Paris 2011.

³⁹ *Picatrix: A Medieval Treatise on Astral Magic*, trans. DAN ATTRELL, DAVID PORRECA, Penn State University Press, University Park, PA 2021, p. 1–4.

⁴⁰ MASLAMAH IBN AḤMAD MAJRĪTĪ, « *Picatrix* »: *das Ziel des Weisen von Pseudo-Magrītī*, germ. trans. HELLMUT RITTER, MARTIN PLESSNER, Kraus Reprint, Nendeln 1978, p. 7. It should be noted that the authors give the term « nirendsch » as a translation for the Arabic *niranjat*.

Ghayat al hakim as divisions of magic. The important thing here is that the Arabic text associates the influence of a soul to a soul with *niranj* magic and it is interesting enough to see first how the Latin text of the *Picatrix* refers to the matter.⁴¹ In the second chapter of the first book, the author of *Picatrix* deals with the *scientia nigromantiae* and the text runs as follows:

Scias quod ista scientia nominatur nigromancia. Nigromanciam appellamus omnia que homo operatur et ex quibus sensus et spiritus sequuntur illo opere per omnes partes et pro rebus mirabilibus quibus operantur quod sensus sequatur ea admeditando vel admirando [...] Et pars istius sciencie est in practica propter quod sua opera sunt de spiritu in spiritum, et hoc est in faciendo res similes que non sunt essencia. Et ymaginum compositio est spiritus in corpore, et compositio alchimie est corpus in corpore. Et generaliter nigromanciam dicimus pro omnibus rebus absconditis a sensu et quas maior pars hominum non apprehendit quomodo fiant nec quibus de causis veniant.⁴²

In the Latin text of *Picatrix*, the Arabic word for magic (*sihr*) is translated as *nigromancia* and it is recognized as a science. After a short definition of the term, the practical aspect of *nigromancia* is divided into three parts, the first of which included the word *niranjat* and it was therefore associated with *niranj* magic. Yet, as Burnett has already pointed out the Arabic word *niranjat* was completely lost in the translation and thus necromancy was presented as the science which had as parts soul-to-soul actions, talismans (soul to body) and alchemy (body to body).⁴³ Despite the fact that once again the Arabic term of *niranj/niranjat* was not translated in Latin, one should note the subject of *niranj* magic which was related to the soul-to-soul actions and influences was incorporated into necromancy and thus it provides us with a path through which one can trace its remnants. Following the path suggested, one may notice a similar pattern in some works of

⁴¹ On the relationship between the *Ghayat al-Hakim* and the *Picatrix*, see JEAN-PATRICE BOUDET, JEAN-CHARLES COULON, «La version arabe (*Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*) et la version latine du *Picatrix*: Points communs et divergences », *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes*, 33 (2017), p. 67–101.

⁴² *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the « Ghāyat Al-Ḥakīm »*, ed. DAVID PINGREE, The Warburg Institute, London 1986, p. 5; trans. ATTRELL, PORRECA, *Picatrix*, p. 41: « Know that this science is called ‘magic’. We call ‘magic’ any act someone performs in which the spirit and all the senses are engaged throughout the whole process and through which miracles are produced to the extent that the senses are driven to their contemplation and wonder [...] One part of this magical science is practical, on account of how it works by operating from spirit into spirit, making those things similar that are not so by their essence. Working with images, however, involves spirit in matter, and alchemical work involves matter in matter. Generally, we use the term ‘magic’ for everything hidden from the senses whose causes most of humanity cannot perceive ». The translators have chosen the word ‘magic’ as a translation of *nigromantia*. For the justification of their choice see p. 10–12.

⁴³ BURNETT, « Niranj: A Category of Magic », p. 48–49.

Albert the Great where necromancy is also called a science and it seems to follow the general division which was previously described in the *Picatrix*.

Albert the Great does not treat the subject of necromancy systematically and thus one should gather again his scattered references in order to construct and interpret his thought on the matter. When it comes to the science of necromancy and its parts, Albert distinguishes between – at least – two parts of necromancy. In particular, the Dominican master seems to follow the categorization of the *Picatrix*, since he speaks about a part of necromancy which is related to a soul-to-soul action and influence, and it involves the *scientia fascinativa et scientia incantativa*. Likewise, he accepts another part of necromancy which is associated with talismanic magic. With respect to the soul-to-soul action as a part of necromancy in Albert's work, the most characteristic excerpt is found in his *De causis et processu universitatis a prima causa* where he states the following:

To this, however, they were adding that in the science which is called science of fascination (evil eye) and which is part of necromancy, the soul of one person after having marched out by means of its sense power, it (the soul) hinders the operations of other humans and even of natural things, in the like manner that the vision of one frequently hinders the operations of another and the sense of hearing of one binds another so as not to operate, just like it is clear in that part of necromancy which is called science of incantation. An example of which is the incantation of serpents and of other things.⁴⁴

With respect to this source, it should be stressed that the work which contains it was written between 1264–1267 and therefore one should not exclude the possibility that the Dominican master might have become through indirect avenues aware of the content of *Picatrix* which was translated in turn in 1256.⁴⁵ This excerpt comes from a chapter in which Albertus examines the error of Heraclitus, according to which the truth of reality is the result of our sense perception and our mental representations of it and thus humans become the measure of all things. Albertus rejects this and states that reality is prior to sense perception and mental representation and therefore it is the former that creates the latter. In this regard, fascination and incantation are given as examples of

⁴⁴ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De causis et processu universitatis a prima causa*, II, tr. 2, c. 26, ed. WINFRIDUS FAUSER, in *Opera omnia*, vol. XVII/2, Aschendorff, Münster 1993, p. 120: « Huic etiam addebant, quod in scientia, quae fascinativa dicitur, quae pars necromantiae est, quod anima unius per virtutem sensus egressa aliorum hominum et etiam naturalium rerum impedit operationes, ut visus unius frequenter impedit operationes alterius et auditus unius alium ligat, ne operetur, sicut patet in illa parte necromantiae, quae incantativa vocatur. Cuius exemplum est incantatio serpentium et aliorum ».

⁴⁵ *Albertus Magnus und sein System der Wissenschaften: Schlüsseltexte in Übersetzung Lateinisch-Deutsch*, Aschendorff, Münster 2011, p. 30.

mind's activity towards external reality.⁴⁶ With respect to fascination, Kovach has related fascination to the problem of 'action at a distance' in the work of Albert and specifically to the 'anti-contiguistic' kind of action.⁴⁷ Consequently, Palazzo has mitigated the 'anti-contiguistic' claims about fascination by showing that fascination's efficacy was performed by means of a 'bodily vector', the *spiritus*.⁴⁸ That said, the important thing that one should keep in mind is not only that Albert refers to a part of necromancy that pertains to a soul-to-soul action but also that this kind of action is discussed within a philosophical context. This becomes evident also in Albert's *De sensu et sensato* where he scrutinizes Avicenna's opinion that not all actions require contact. In fact, in the cases of God, intelligence and soul, which are all spiritual agents, contact is not required for their action and this is especially true for the « philosophy of necromancy and incantations in which often (action) affects that which it does not touch, like the soul of one person affects by means of fascination that which it does not touch ». ⁴⁹ In this text, even though Albert does not speak of necromancy as fascination and incantations being its parts, one may understand on the one hand that these two have a close relation to necromancy and, on the other, that necromancy seems to have gained some points in Albert the Great's mind and he refers to it as 'philosophy'.

Turning to the other part of necromancy, Albert refers to talismans as part of necromancy in both his *De mineralibus* and *Summa theologiae*. With respect to the *De mineralibus*, one finds Albert's systematic treatment of the topic according to which talismans are regarded as *scientia*. It is also in the very same source that

⁴⁶ For a general account on Albert's attitude towards fascination and incantations, see BÉATRICE DELAURENTI, *La puissance des mots, « virtus verborum »: Débats doctrinaux sur le pouvoir des incantations au Moyen âge*, Cerf, Paris 2007, p. 230–232; EAD., *Fascination. Une histoire intellectuelle du mauvais oeil (1140–1440)*, Cerf, Paris 2023, p. 282–285.

⁴⁷ FRANCIS J. KOVACH, « The Enduring Question of Action at a Distance in Saint Albert the Great », *The Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, 10/3 (1979), p. 204–213.

⁴⁸ ALESSANDRO PALAZZO, « Albert the Great's Doctrine of Fascination », in SUSANA BULLIDO DEL BARRIO, LUDGER HONNEFELDER, HANNES MÖHLE (eds.), *Via Alberti: Texte, Quellen, Interpretationen*, Aschendorff, Münster 2009, p. 198.

⁴⁹ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De Sensu et Sensato*, tract. 1, c. 10, ed. AUGUSTE BORGNET, Vives, Paris 1890, p. 27a: « Sunt autem quidam quibus ista non placent, sicut Avicennae, dicentes non esse probatum a Peripateticis quod omnis actio sit per contactum, sed tantum esse dictum probabiliter, eo quod in pluribus agentibus physice non habeat instantiam. In his autem quae non agunt physice, sicut Deus, et intelligentia, et anima, omnino est falsum: et dicunt non posse inveniri rationem hoc probantem, quod omnis actio sit per contactum agentis ad patiens, nec acceptam esse hanc propositionem quasi ab auctoritate Antiquorum. Et confortavit ipsam admiratio: quia eo quod in multis agentibus physice videmus quod agunt per contactum, trahimur in admirationem si aliquid sit quod non tangit quando agit: et si haberemus inductionem de opposito, scilicet quod agentia non tangerent, tunc haberemus admirationem de hoc, utrum aliquid tangeret quando agit: et haec dictio praecipue est in necromantiae philosophia et incantationis, in quibus frequenter agit id quod non tangit: sicut anima unius fascinando agit in eum quem non tangit ».

Albert presents the ‘science of talismans’ as part of necromancy which in turn is a part of the second part of astronomy, that is, astrology.⁵⁰ Two things should be mentioned here: firstly, the Dominican master continues to preserve a positive attitude towards necromancy and he now asserts that it is due to the « goodness of the doctrine » (*propter bonitatem doctrinae*) that he decided to speak about this topic. Secondly, Albert further classifies necromancy under astrology probably in order to imply its conjectural character, and thus he echoes back to his *Super Porphyrium de V universalibus* where he subsumed both necromancy and astrology under the category of *scientia conjecturalis*.⁵¹ Turning to the *Summa theologiae*, the intellectual milieu of the book changes and it becomes theological and thus Albert adopts a more conservative approach towards necromancy since he approaches it from its theological side. Albert poses the question of « whether demons can create illusions » and in his solution he responds positively and he says that this is taught in necromancy and its part which deals with talismans.⁵² Despite the fact that this text does not present a favorable account of Albert for necromancy, it should be noted that once again the Dominican master acknowledges talismans as a part of it, albeit connected to demons rather than philosophy.

Thus far, we have seen that Albert seems to follow the general scheme of the first two parts of necromancy as they are witnessed in the *Picatrix*, but still it remains to be examined whether Albert accepts alchemy as a part of necromancy, just like the author of the *Picatrix* does. In principle, there is no reference in Albert’s text which would allow us a direct or even indirect relation of necromancy to alchemy. It is true that Albert does not connect alchemy to any magical practice

⁵⁰ Cf. ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De Mineralibus* II, tract. 3, c. 1, ed. AUGUSTE BORGNET, Vives, Paris 1890, p. 48a: « De imaginibus autem lapidum et sigillis post haec dicendum est: licet enim pars ista sit pars necromantiae secundum illam speciem necromantiae quae astronomiae subalternatur, et quae de imaginibus et sigillis vocatur: tamen propter bonitatem doctrinae, et quia illud cupiunt a nobis scire nostri socii, aliquid de hoc hic dicemus ».

⁵¹ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Super Porphyrium de V universalibus*, tr. 1, c. 7, ed. MANUEL SANTOS NOYA, in *Opera omnia* vol. I/1a, Aschendorff, Münster 2004, p. 15: « Et in realibus scientiis aliter est in probabilibus, et aliter in necessariis et stantibus, et aliter est in coniecturalibus, quae sunt scientiae divinationum, sicut in physiognomia et secunda parte astronomiae et in geomantia, nigromantia et aliis huiusmodi scientiis ». In the *Picatrix* astrology is connected with the ‘theoretical’ part of necromancy. Cf. *Picatrix*, ed. PINGREE, p. 6: « Et dico quod nigromancia dividitur in duas partes, scilicet in theoreticam et practicam. Theorica est scientia locorum stellarum fixarum, quia ex eis componuntur celestes figure et forme celi, et quomodo radios suos proiciunt in planetas se moventes, et ad sciendum figuras celi quando intendunt illud facere quod querunt ».

⁵² ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Summa Theologiae*, pars II, tract. 8, q. 30, m. 2, p. 327b: « Solutio. Dicendum, quod revera huiusmodi illusiones fiunt a daemonibus, et a maleficis arte daemonum: hoc enim expresse dicunt Sancti: et communis est omnium opinio, et docetur in necromantia in parte illa quae dicitur de imaginibus et annulis et speculis Veneris et sigillis daemonum Achot Graeco, et Grema Babylonico, et Hermete Egyptio ».

but this does not mean that a body-to-body action is completely absent in Albert's magic. Actually, Albert seems to accept that one of the fields of operation of magic is the transmutation of bodies and its veracity, albeit he does not make any connection or allusion to alchemy proper.⁵³ Similarly, in the *Summa theologiae*, the Dominican master refers once more to the matter of transmutation and its veracity, only that in this case he condemns the magical transmutations as « phantastical and deceptive ».⁵⁴ Given the evidence above, one can only infer on the one hand that the notion of a body-to-body action in terms of transmutation was not an alien subject to Albert's magic, but on the other there is no textual evidence that would allow us to extend our claims either to necromancy or to alchemy and therefore claim that alchemy is part of necromancy. However, one should keep in mind that there are many instances in Albert's work where he refers to magic as *scientia* too, while there are also excerpts where Albert discusses both magic and necromancy as being the same. In this regard, connecting the sources about magic and transmutation with necromancy would not be that far-fetched provided that Albert does not draw a sharp distinction between *scientia magica* and *necromantia*.

IV. Conclusion

Niranj magic seems to have a short life in the history of ideas. The main reason for this, as has already been explained, is that the original Arabic term was either literally 'lost in translation' or was translated with Latin words which overly distorted the meaning of the initial term. This creates undoubtedly an inherent problem in the study of *niranj* magic in the Latin medieval world because researchers do not actually have a 'word-compass' which will allow in turn ways of tracing and thus studying this kind of genre of magic. Despite these difficulties, this paper purports to have found 'echoes' of *niranj* magic in the work of Albert the Great. I am talking about echoes because Albert's contact with any content pertaining to *niranj* magic was both indirect and unconscious. My claim that echoes of *niranj* magic are to be found in the work of Albert is indicated and congruently justified by the following arguments: firstly, as I have shown, the Avicennan description of *niranj* as a mixing of bodies which brings about *mirabilia* is something that one meets in Albert's work too. Additionally, and maybe most

⁵³ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Super IV Libros Sententiarum*, II, dist. 7, art. 6, p. 151b: « quia duplex fit operatio artis magicae: una in praestigiis eorum quae apparent et non sunt, alia in transmutatione rerum quarundam secundum veritatem ».

⁵⁴ ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Summa Theologiae*, pars II, tract. 8, q. 30, m. 1, art. 1, p. 321a: « Ergo transmutationes virgarum per magos factae, non fuerunt verae, sed phantasticae et deceptoriae ».

importantly, Albert was in contact with texts which carry ideas of *niranj*, like the *Liber lune*. The latter was employed by Albert to argue that stellar constellations may be of help to demons and thus the original practice of *niranj* magic was interpreted and understood within a demonic context by Albert. Another Latin book that was associated with *niranj* magic is the *liber de quatuor confectionibus* which is mentioned in the *Speculum astronomiae* and therefore is related to Albert's name. Yet, the attribution of this text to Albert is considered to be dubious and no valid connection can be made with him. Finally, the fact that Albert recognizes necromancy as a science that has -at least- two parts which in turn refer to a soul-to-soul action (fascination and incantations) and to a soul-to-body action (talismans) may suggest that Albert might have had some knowledge of the *Picatrix*. If this is true then Albert had one more source which contained ideas related to *niranj* magic.

As a final note, I would like to stress and maybe highlight the dynamic character of *niranj* magic. It is true that the Latin texts which were mentioned in this study did not bear any Latin name for *niranj/niranjat* and thus the ideas which were connected to this genre of magic could be regarded as 'orphans' in terms of context. Yet, this 'orphan-status' serves as a unique opportunity to see and study how ideas adapt in new cultural environments and how they progress. In this regard, *niranj* ideas – unconsciously and unknowingly – were associated with demonic magic, necromancy and soul-to-soul action in Albert's work. Such a realization is of great use since it provides new ways of approaching and studying the remains of *niranj* magic in the Latin medieval world.

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