

# MAGIC AND DIVINATION AT THE COURTS OF BURGUNDY AND FRANCE

*Text and Context of Laurens Pignon's*  
Contre les devineurs  
(1411)

BY

JAN R. VEENSTRA



BRILL  
LEIDEN · NEW YORK · KÖLN  
1998

## CONTENTS

|                                                                                              |      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Acknowledgements                                                                             | xi   |
| Abbreviations                                                                                | xiii |
| Introduction                                                                                 | 1    |
| <br>Chapter 1: THE TREATISE AND ITS AUTHOR                                                   |      |
| 1.1 The Prologues of <i>Contre les devineurs</i>                                             | 7    |
| 1.2 Divination and Magic: The Themes of <i>Contre les devineurs</i>                          | 10   |
| 1.3 The Rise of Magic and Astrology: The Contexts of <i>Contre les devineurs</i>             | 21   |
| 1.4 Life and Works of Laurens Pignon, OP.                                                    | 28   |
| 1.5 The <i>Chronica compendiosa</i> and the War of 1411                                      | 34   |
| 1.6 The King and the Evil Spirit                                                             | 41   |
| <br>Chapter 2: THE PACT WITH THE ENEMY                                                       |      |
| 2.1 Motives for Murder                                                                       | 43   |
| 2.2 The Devil's Advocate                                                                     | 48   |
| 2.3 <i>Epistola ex tenebris infernalibus</i>                                                 | 50   |
| 2.4 The Magic Court                                                                          | 59   |
| 2.4.1 The Case of the Apostate Monk and the Tower of Montjay                                 | 59   |
| 2.4.2 The Case of Two Augustinian Monks                                                      | 64   |
| 2.4.3 Doctor and Sorcerer: The Cases of Jehan de Bar and Arnaud Guillaume                    | 67   |
| 2.4.4 July 1403: The Case of Poinson and Briquet                                             | 72   |
| 2.4.5 Two Secular Trials: The Cases of Margot de La Barre (1390) and Jeanne de Brigue (1391) | 77   |
| 2.4.6 Magic and Calumny: The Case of Valentina Visconti                                      | 81   |
| 2.4.7 The Case of the Shroud of Christ                                                       | 85   |
| 2.5 The 'Bal des Ardents' and the Dangers of Pagan Ritual                                    | 89   |
| 2.6 Conclusion                                                                               | 95   |
| <br>Chapter 3: HISTORY AND DIVINATION                                                        | 97   |
| 3.1 Simon de Phares: The First Historian of Astrology                                        | 98   |
| 3.2 History between Sacred and Secular                                                       | 102  |
| 3.2.1 Re-reading the Signs                                                                   | 104  |
| 3.2.2 The Eschaton                                                                           | 107  |
| 3.3 Signs from Heaven                                                                        | 112  |

|                                                                                                                  |            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 3.4 Astrology, Burgundy, and History                                                                             | 119        |
| 3.5 Astrology and the Court of Burgundy                                                                          | 127        |
| 3.6 Conclusion                                                                                                   | 134        |
| <b>Chapter 4: A CRITIQUE OF SUPERSTITION</b>                                                                     | <b>137</b> |
| 4.1 Censure of Superstition                                                                                      | 138        |
| 4.1.1 Censure and Lay Instruction in France around 1400                                                          | 138        |
| 4.1.2 The Limits of Lawfulness and Possibility                                                                   | 143        |
| 4.1.3 From Pastoral to Inquisitorial Censure                                                                     | 148        |
| 4.2 Classifying Superstition: Magic or Astrology                                                                 | 153        |
| 4.3 Demons                                                                                                       | 163        |
| 4.3.1 Dualism                                                                                                    | 163        |
| 4.3.2 Naturalisation of the Demonic                                                                              | 166        |
| 4.3.3 Demonic Illumination                                                                                       | 173        |
| 4.4 Dreams                                                                                                       | 176        |
| 4.5 Stars, Causes and Free Will                                                                                  | 184        |
| 4.5.1 Stellar and Divine Determinism: Augustine, Boethius,<br>and Aquinas                                        | 184        |
| 4.5.2 Pignon on Causality in CLD                                                                                 | 189        |
| 4.5.3 Pignon on Causality in CDE                                                                                 | 193        |
| 4.6 Conclusion                                                                                                   | 199        |
| <b>RECAPITULATION</b>                                                                                            | <b>201</b> |
| <b>INTRODUCTION TO THE MANUSCRIPT</b>                                                                            |            |
| 1. Codicological Observations                                                                                    | 207        |
| 2. The Edition                                                                                                   |            |
| 2.1 Treatment of the Text                                                                                        | 208        |
| 2.2 Structure                                                                                                    | 210        |
| 3. History of the Manuscript                                                                                     | 211        |
| 4. Pignon as Translator                                                                                          | 213        |
| <b><i>CONTRE LES DEVINEURS</i></b>                                                                               | <b>223</b> |
| <b>Appendix I: THE CONFESSION OF MASTER JEHAN DE BAR</b>                                                         |            |
| 1. Introduction                                                                                                  | 343        |
| 2. Text                                                                                                          | 351        |
| <b>Appendix II: PROGNOSTICATION ON THE LIFE OF JOHN, DUKE OF<br/>BURGUNDY, AND HIS HEIRS BY MASTER ALOFRESIN</b> |            |
| 1. Introduction                                                                                                  | 357        |
| 2. Text                                                                                                          | 366        |

Appendix III: THE TWELVE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC AND A GAME OF  
NUMEROLOGICAL DIVINATION

|                                                   |     |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Introduction                                   | 373 |
| 2. 'Les 12 Signes dou firmament'                  | 375 |
| 3. The Text of <i>Les 12 Signes dou firmament</i> | 381 |
| 4. A Numerological Game                           | 393 |

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Glossary                     | 403 |
| Bibliography                 | 409 |
| Index of Names in CLD        | 419 |
| Index of Names               | 421 |
| Index of Subjects and Titles | 429 |