BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Per cognitionem visualem.
The Visualization of Cognitive and Natural Processes in the Middle Ages.

14th - 15th & 21st - 22nd June 2021
Instituto de Filosofia - Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto

Organizers: Instituto de Filosofia da Universidade do Porto; From Data to Wisdom: Philosophizing Data Visualizations in the Middle Ages and Early Modernity (POCI-01-0145-FEDER-029717)
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From Data to Wisdom. Philosophizing Data Visualizations in the Middle Ages and Early Modernity (POCI-01-0145-FEDER-029717)
XXV ANNUAL COLLOQUIUM OF THE SIEPM

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Organization:
Convenors: José Higuera - José Meirinhos
Secretary: Lídia Queiroz (FDTW Project) - Isabel Marques (IFLUP)
Design: Celeste Pedro (FDTW Project)

Abstract

The purpose of this colloquium is to deepen understanding of the Medieval visual tools that represented and demonstrated philosophical and scientific knowledge and, to an extent, the accumulation of empirical data with a focus on medieval Latin, Greek, Arabic and Jewish traditions. While some sought to outline physical phenomena, others depicted cognitive processes such as deduction or inference, for instance, arbor porphyriana, astronomical diagrams, or geometrical illustrations of physical motion. In addition to this, various kinds of graphics, charts, and diagrams supported the dissemination of legal knowledge, prognostic methods, genealogical records, moral schemes, division of sciences, and medical practices.

Visual tools, which appear frequently in Medieval manuscripts, have often been considered as «illustrative material» intended to facilitate the comprehension and interpretation of texts. This material has been widely described as the iconographic representation of Christian theology, and of the Medieval Arts and Disciplines. However, these «visual aids» offer something more than a straightforward correspondence between a conceptual interpretation and its figurative depiction. They are in fact key to understanding methods of acquiring and shaping knowledge through visual frameworks with didactical, disputational or heuristic purposes. Transforming knowledge through visual or data cumulative devices emerged as an additional way to the understanding of natural phenomena and the different sorts of relations lurking between its elements.

Following Hugh of Saint Victor’s work, Patrice Sicard described the study of these kinds of images as «visual exegesis», a method of visual training derived from the Augustinian tradition (Trin. XI, 2,2), and Augustine’s explanation of how the soul develops understanding through the corporal and rational observation of natural signs. Thomas Aquinas, centuries later, concerning the difference between singular objects, general concepts, and their specular representations, introduced distinctions between three kinds of visual media that are closely aligned with intellectual vision (De ver. q. 18., a. 1, ad 1um). The first of these is the light that allows the physical vision (visio corporalis); the second is the concept generated in the mind (species rei visae); and the third is a medium permitting access to the object’s knowledge, such as an image that is seen «in a mirror» (sic in speculum).

Visual representations were thus deeply involved in Medieval traditions concerning the dissemination and teaching of philosophy and science. Consequently, they were not only examples of theological or philosophical interpretation, but rather brought together manifold intellectual activities, illuminating various perceptual, cognitive, and spiritual concerns.

The colloquium will address the following issues:

- Visual tools and the representation of philosophical or scientific knowledge;
- «Visual exegesis» applied to the different modalities of the representations of knowledge;
- The relations expressed through schemes and visual classifications;
- The connection between visual perception and knowledge generated through the representation of objects;
- The gathering of perceptual data in diagrams, graphs, schemes, tables and all sorts of graphical representations;
- The visual representation of the elements and natural processes;
- The different uses of diagrams and other visual representations (teaching, mnemonic, demonstration, invention, prognosis, etc.);
- The relationship between corporal and spiritual realms expressed by visual tools;
- Reflections on reflection: mirrors and knowledge.

Sessions Time Remark: All sessions are scheduled in Portugal local time (GMT +01:00). Please, check your time zone.
XXV ANNUAL COLLOQUIUM OF THE SIEPM
Per cognitionem visualem. The Visualization of Cognitive and Natural Processes in the Middle Ages.

14th June 2021
Digital Room / Session 1
9.30 Opening session

10.00 Chair: Alessandro Palazzo

Ayelet Even-Ezra (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Trees between cultures: simple tree diagrams in Latin, Syriac, Greek and Hebrew

Pippa Salonius (Monash University, New Zealand), Ordo and Nature in the Trees of Sculpted Narrative at Orvieto Cathedral

Digital Room / Session 2
16.00 Chair: Valeria Buffon

Lídia Queiroz (IF-FLUP), Visualizing wisdom in diagrams and charts of medieval and early modern Medicine

María Cecilia Rusconi (Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, Argentina), A new version of the sigillum aeternitatis. The Opus circa speculare aenigma uniuersi by Heymericus de Campo (1395-1460)

15th June 2021
Digital Room / Session 1
10.30 Chair: Alessandra Beccarisi

Yael Barash (Tel Aviv University), The illustrations of Hildegard of Bingen’s Visions in Lucca Codex: Between Visions and Nature

Martín González Fernández (Universidad de Santiago de Compostela), El estómago y los pies. (Bernardo de Claraval contra Arnaldo de Brescia)

Evelina Miteva (Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca), What Melancholy Looks Like? Visualisations and Interpretations of Melancholy in the Middle Ages

Digital Room / Session 2
16.00 Chair: Maarten Hoenen

Francesca Galli (Università della Svizzera italiana), Attraverso lo specchio: le proprietà (meta-)fisiche delle superfici riflettenti nel pensiero teologico ducentesco

Tamar Tsopurashvili (Ilia State University, Georgia), Metaphor as a source of visualization of cognitive process in Meister Eckhart’s Metaphysics

Luciano Micali (Charles University of Prague), Visual Perception and Knowledge of God in Jean Gerson’s Tractatus deculo

21st June 2021
Digital Room / Session 1
10.30 Chair: Alexander Fidora

Anna Rustioni (Facoltà di Teologia di Lugano), Ubi amor, ibi oculos. Il nesso tra visione e amore in Riccardo di San Vittore

Paula Oliveira e Silva & João Rebalde (IF-FLUP), O debate sobre a produção do conceito universal a partir da representação fantástica, no Comentário ao De anima de Marcos Jorge, S.I.


Digital Room / Session 2
16.00 Chair: Katja Krause

Nicolas Vaughan (Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá), Adam of Wodeham’s Theory of Perception: A Disjunctivist Approach

Peter John Hartman (Loyola University Chicago), The Reflex Theory of the Beatific Vision: Durand of St.-Pourçain’s Theory of Reflex Acts

22nd June 2021
Digital Room / Session 1
10.30 Chair: Mikhail Khorkov

Arianna Dalla Costa (The Warburg Institute, London), Lunar Mansions as Celestial Images in the Thirteenth-Century De Signis Astronomics*

Maria Manuela Brito Martins (Universidade Católica Portuguesa), Représentations et schémas graphiques de la species visibilis dans le De homine d’Albert le Grand

José Higuera (IF-FLUP), The Visualization of Motion: Averroes and Albertus Magnus

Digital Room / Session 2
16.00 Chair: Roberto Hofmeister Pich

Alessandro Palazzo (Università di Trento), Et ego quidem nunc fabricabo circulum. Images and visual representations in the geomantic treatise Estimaverunt Indi

Aníbal Szapiro (Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina), Visual Representations of Light in Oresme’s De visione stellarum

David Rollo (University of Southern California), Vision, Knowledge and Nature in Alain de Lille’s De planctu Naturae

17.30 Conclusions: José Meirinhos

To get the zoom links for the colloquium, e-mail: siepmporto2020@gmail.com / SIEPM@kuleuven.be
Ayelet Even-Ezra
Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Trees between cultures: simple tree diagrams in Latin, Syriac, Greek and Hebrew

The reading habits of high-medieval and early modern scholars included heavily glossing and marking the texts they have read. One of the most peculiar and eye-catching forms of these annotations is the phenomenon of converting bits and pieces of texts in various disciplines into simple tree diagrams or adding new information by way of such diagrams. In the talk I will present a small part of my research on tree diagramming in the Latin west, using its quantitative and qualitative findings as a starting point for an intercultural history of diagramming. Taking commentaries to the Organon as an axis for inter-cultural comparison, I will discuss the Latin tradition in light of the Syriac, Arabic, Byzantine, and Hebrew manuscript traditions, and raise several questions regarding the interpretation of similarities and non-similarities. Specifically, I will argue that the Greek-Latin interface most intriguing point is the points of non-influence, while the Latin-Hebrew interface presents other challenges of graphic rezeptionsgeschichte.
Pippa Salonius
Monash University, New Zealand

Ordo and Nature in the Trees of Sculpted Narrative at Orvieto Cathedral

In Aristotelian philosophy, the term ‘nature’ designated an ‘order’ in that it strived for perfection (ordo ad finem), in its determined forms and its laws. This paper explores the medieval understanding of nature and natures in the four trees framing biblical episodes on the Orvieto cathedral façade. The salvation cycle, already visible in a thirteenth-century plan, presents its audience with an account of human progress that is unique to the history of art. Its message reads in multiple directions: allegorically, anagogically and tropologically. Like a book, proceeding across columns, formal similarities prompt comparison and suggest typological relationships between episodes. Carved into the face of the church, they are part of a body of discourse. I am interested in how these images were read by their stratified and varied audience. What additional information did the layers of narrative, typological structures and the use of mirroring lend its discourse? Images are a universal language, but symbols were also central to the medieval communication system. What did it mean for medieval men and women to look eastwards to read their history in a framework of trees before entering God’s house? In its use of branching imagery and repetitive medallions did they recognize a reference to the mysterious power of nature as a “spirit moving outward upon all things and returning upon itself in circles”?

Lidia Queiroz
IF-FLUP

Visualizing wisdom in diagrams and charts of medieval and early modern Medicine

Starting from the ongoing project “From Data to Wisdom. Philosophizing Data Visualizations in the Middle Ages and Early Modernity”, we propose to analyze the wisdom condensed in medieval diagrams and charts within medieval and early modern medical manuscripts. For this purpose, we’ll take in consideration the “Zodiac man”, the “Phlebotomy Man” and urine flasks diagrams as well as vovelles, moon charts, etc., highlighting how much they are fundamental for medical practices, enabling physicians to make more promising diagnoses and treatments, knowing where and when to act in their patients’ bodies, as when it is necessary – for instance – when pondering the practice of bloodletting or surgery, and precautions to follow.
Maria Cecilia Rusconi
Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET)

A new version of the *sigillum aeternitatis*.

The *Opus circa speculare enigma universi* by Heymericus de Campo (1395-1460)

The *Opus circa speculare enigma universi, sigillum aeternitatis authentice appellatum* by Heymericus de Campo (1395-1460) is only preserved in codex 11 571-75 (2177) of the Royal Library in Brussels. I am currently preparing its critical edition.

In this work Heymericus presents a diagram – the *sigillum* – which represents the principles of universal knowledge.

We find the description of this diagram in two of Heymericus's previous works, which are preserved in codex 106 of the Nicholas Cusanus' Library at St. Nicholas-Hospital in Bernkastel-Kues: *De sigillo aeternitatis* (f. 77r-85r) and *Disputatio de potestate ecclesiastica* (f. 89r-188v). Between folios 186v and 188r there are four graphic representations of the described diagram. We also have another representation in the first folio of codex 264 from the abbey of Tongerlo in a parcial copy of the *Liber Floridus* by Lambert of Saint-Omer.

These different versions of the *sigillum* can be classified according to two historical periods; the first one corresponds to Heymericus's stay at the council of Basel, when he composes the works of codex Cus.106; the second one corresponds to his teaching activity at the University of Louvain, which is the probable place of origin of codices 264 of Tongerlo and 11571-75 of Brussels.

In this paper I will present first the versions of the *sigillum* from the Basel period and, secondly, those of the Louvain period. The chronological presentation of those versions is meant to constitute a framework for studying the evolution of the aforementioned symbol.
The illustrations of Hildegard of Bingen's Visions in Lucca Codex: Between Visions and Nature

Lucca contains 10 illustrations of the 10 visions of Hildegard of Bingen's last book, Liber divinorum operum (LDO). The codex was created in the first half of the 13th century, about 50 years after Hildegard's death. We do not know who the painter is, nor if Hildegard herself had a hand in it. However, they are certainly a visual early reception of LDO; a visual exegesis. I suggest that the illustrations reflect a duality: On the one hand, the illustrations describe visionary experiences by depicting Hildegard on the bottom viewing the visions, and by choosing divine gold for background; on the other hand, some of the illustrations are maps of the cosmos, and include layers, winds, even the four seasons. This duality reflects the text of LDO, a documentation of divine visions that broadly discusses natural elements. Thus, LDO is a visionary book that includes descriptions of themes that may be perceived by everybody. Based on reconstructing the text, I suggest that LDO’s goal is to show the readers how they can know God through His interaction in the world. Hence, Hildegard's visions legitimate studying nature and God's interactions in it. I believe that the illustrations in the Lucca codex unfold this goal. By depicting Hildegard viewing the cosmos, the illustrations present Hildegard as the source of cosmological knowledge. This way the illustrations express how the corporal and spiritual realms interact, as well as visions and empirical knowledge.
What Melancholy Looks Like? Visualisations and Interpretations of Melancholy in the Middle Ages

Depictions of Melancholy in the Renaissance are a part of the common imagery – and even if one cannot recall immediately one, they would still recognize Dürer's Melencolia, a heavy seat-ed figure holding her head in her hand, staring in the void. And, dating to the same period, we can all picture Shakespeare's melancholic prince Hamlet, or his sad beloved Ophelia who takes her life. As one goes later in the history of art, images of melancholy become more, and more famously known.

But how was "melancholy" presented in the Middle Ages? The topic had a prominent place in the theory of the four humors; in religious context, sadness was a sickness of the soul, which could transition into a sickness of the body – and excessive sadness and idleness (acedia) was regarded as a sin. Along with other allegories and concepts, the melancholic affliction was also personified, "Queen Acedia" and, later, "Dame Melancholy" have their memorable visualizations.

With the help of several examples, visualising melancholy in different ways (graphic circles, representing humoral theory; personification of melancholy as a sin; various melancholic figures e.g. animals or knights) I will try to sketch the different aspects of melancholy in the High Middle Ages. The methodological question I would like to address is going to be: Are these visualisations, and, accordingly, interpretations, describing a single phenomenon, or was melancholy rather a "container term" encompassing divergent concepts? The corresponding philosophical aspects of the term are going to be seen in pertinent texts, focusing on Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas.
Metaphor as a source of visualization of cognitive process in Meister Eckhart’s Metaphysics

In his German sermons Meister Eckhart uses metaphorical language to express his speculative ideas demonstrated in the theory of intellect and theory of predication expressed in his Latin works, especially in *Questio Parisienses* I and In Exodus commentary. In *Prologus in Opus propositionum* Meister Eckhart makes inquiry into a propositional context of the sentences by the differentiation of two structures of predication. For this aim he follows prevalent language theories of the Middle Ages by making a distinction between inherence and identity, and outlines the connotative aspect of the termini used in the sentences claiming that the language we use regarding the termini generales differs from the language of everyday use: “Aliter sentiendum est de ente et aliter de ente hoc et hoc.” (Prol. op. prop. n. 3).

This statement is relevant to the idea expressed in Exodus Commentary that claims: “Igitur omnia praedicamenta accidentalia in deo transeunt in substantiam secundum genus suum et modum praedicandi, quem sortis a subiecto et ex habitudine ad subiectum” (In Exod. n. 65).

In my paper I will argue that based on his German Sermons 9 and 21 Meister Eckhart "translates" through his theory of predication the essence of his theory of intellect into visual images of metaphorical language. But although this difference in expressions between the Latin and German language there is to find the homogenous metaphysical schema in his thoughts.
Anna Rustioni  
Facoltà di Teologia di Lugano

«Ubi amor, ibi oculos». Il nesso tra visione e amore in Riccardo di San Vittore

Paula Oliveira e Silva & João Rebalde
IF-FLUP

O debate sobre a produção do conceito universal a partir da representação fantástica, no Comentário ao *De anima* de Marcos Jorge, S.I.

Neste paper analisamos a teoria da produção do conceito universal a partir da representação dos objetos materiais, com base no comentário ao *De anima* de Aristóteles, escrito por Marcos Jorge, um jesuíta português que ensinou filosofia em Coimbra no séc. XVI. O autor discute o problema a partir da teoria das espécies de Tomás de Aquino, interpretada por Javei e Caetano. Estes dois dominicanos são críticos quanto às teorias alternativas à de Aquino e em particular quanto à de Escoto. Enquanto jesuíta, Marcos Jorge deveria seguir Tomás, mas ele prefere definitivamente a explicação de Escoto. O objetivo principal deste paper é mostrar alguns aspectos da receção do debate medieval sobre teorias da representação imaginária e da mediação dos fantasmas na produção do conhecimento intelectual, em autores do século XV e na primeira geração da escola jesuíta, em Portugal. Para tal propom-nos: i) mostrar a posição dos autores supramencionados acerca da função da imaginação na produção do fantasma e a sua relação com o mecanismo sensorial, interno e externo; ii) analisar os seus argumentos acerca do mecanismo causal de produção do conceito universal pelo intelecto, a partir da representação fantástica; iii) mostrar as razões pelas quais Marcos Jorge opta pela posição de Escoto, nesta questão, bem como a conceção que este jesuíta tem acerca do mecanismo humano de percepção de objetos no mundo material, e da função da imaginação e do intelecto neste processo; iv) dar a conhecer este autor, a sua teoria sobre este assunto e a sua relação com o Curso filosófico Conimbricense.

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Roberto Hofmeister Pich
PUCRS, Porto Alegre

Dialectics, Visual Tools and the Methods of Learning: Exploring ‘Visual Cognition’ in Manuscripts on Logic by Jesuits Masters from Ecuador (17th-18th Centuries)

Presupposing that dialectics was generally viewed by early-modern scholastic thinkers as a discipline that should provide understanding of acts or activities of the intellect – such as the operations of apprehension, judgement, and inferential reasoning –, the habiliy of skillful and right use of mental operations (particularly inferential reasoning), as well as the knowledge of “beings” whose ontological status depends (at least partially) on those operations themselves, it is sensible to affirm that visualization schemes for language and thought categories and the use of various kinds of graphics and diagrams might be understood as a way of knowing about mind and about logical objects. Of course, they were also, and very specially, tools for learning or acquiring habits of logical reasoning, thus tools conceived as an important part of teaching and learning methods. The purpose of my paper is to characterize the use of visual tools for understanding mind and logical objects, as well as for conceiving methods of teaching and learning logic; to be found in courses on dialectics and commentaries on Aristotle’s logical works by Jesuits masters who were active in Universities and Colleges in Quito / Ecuador, during the so-called colonial period (16th-19th centuries). The sources of my research are the manuscripts by 17th and early-18th century authors such as Luis de Andrade S.J., Ignacio Gil Castelvi S.J, Nicolás B. Cisneros S.J., Jacinto Basilio Morán de Buitrón S.J, José Morell S.J, and Andrés Cobos S.J.
Nicolas Vaughan
Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá

Adam of Wodeham’s Theory of Perception: A Disjunctivist Approach

In this presentation, I analyse Adam of Wodeham’s theory of perception, against the background of John Duns Scotus’ and William of Ockham’s theories of intuitive cognition. I argue that Ockham’s so-called “theory of intuitive cognition of nonexistent objects”, together with its theological implications and presuppositions, necessitates, in the first place, a rejection of Scotus’ object-dependent account of the intuitive–abstractive distinction, as Ockham rightly noticed when he proposed that it be replaced by a power-dependent account; and secondly, a fallibilist understanding of both supernaturally and naturally produced intuitive cognitions. I show how Wodeham’s novel theory of perception incorporates these two insights. The argument, in brief, is the following. If, as Wodeham contents, one and the same mental act of noncomplex apprehension—one and the same intuitive cognition—is naturally capable of producing both true, evident perceptual judgements of existence, and false, but also evident, judgements of existence, then the class or species of intuitive cognitions is essentially disjunctive, and not homogeneous, as Ockham had assumed. I conclude by showing that my analysis is in principle neutral with respect to the current debate between an internalist and an externalist interpretation of Ockham’s and Wodeham’s theories of mental content.

Peter John Hartman
Loyola University Chicago

The Reflex Theory of the Beatific Vision: Durand of St.-Pourçain’s Theory of Reflex Acts

Some of my mental states (or acts) are conscious and some of them are not. Sometimes I am so focused on the wine in front of me that I am unaware that I am thinking about it; but sometimes, of course, I take a reflexive step back and become aware of my thinking about the wine in front of me. What marks the difference between a conscious mental act and an unconscious one? According to some medieval philosophers, a lower-order (or direct) mental act is conscious if there is another, higher-order (or reflex) mental act present at the same time. In the first half of this talk, I will focus on Durand of St.-Pourçain’s rejection of such a higher-order theory of state consciousness. According to Durand, two mental acts cannot coexist in the same mental power at the same time, and so such higher-order theories cannot work. Rather, state consciousness is a function of the content of a mental act: a mental act about, say, a rose is conscious when the content of that act also includes a relation to that mental act. In the second half of the talk, I look at Durand’s application of this theory to the case of the beatific vision. Notoriously, Durand maintains that the beatific vision consists in a reflex and not a direct act about the divine. According to his opponents, such as Peter of Palude and John Pouilly, such a view is dangerous for it seems to claim that our highest happiness consists in an act about something created not divine (a mental act). As I argue, Durand’s theory of reflex acts solves this objection: the beatific vision has as its content both the divine (its principal object) together with a relation to itself.
Arianna Dalla Costa
The Warburg Institute, London

Lunar Mansions as Celestial Images in the Thirteenth-Century De Signis Astronomicis

Lunar asterisms are small star-clusters used among pre-Islamic Bedouins for the creation of the mansions of the moon - a lunar zodiac. The lunar mansions entered Latin Europe in the tenth-century through the translation from Arabic of the astrological corpus known as Alchandreana (Juste, 2014). Scholarly literature has paid scarce attention to the Latin tradition on lunar mansions that developed from this translation, arguing that Latin astrologers adopted this system without making any substantial change to it.

In my paper, I show that the Latins did re-elaborate this notion, incorporating it into their astronomical and astrological system. Therefore, I argue it is possible to speak of a Latinisation of lunar mansions. My main case study is the De Signis Astronomicis, a thirteenth-century text based on the Alchandreana, preserved in the codex Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS. Plut.30.39 ff. 26ra-32ra. My study focuses on the graphical aspect of lunar mansions, i.e. the images used to depict lunar asterisms, considering them as a key feature of this system. My analysis results in three claims. First, the patterns of dots that follow the description of the asterisms are not random designs but represent actual asterisms, and I propose a new methodology to identify them. Secondly, the circular diagrams containing lunar asterisms can be interpreted as cosmological images. Finally, this manuscript strengthens claims of a correspondence between lunar asterisms and geomantic figures, divinatory images traced in sand (Savage-Smith, 1980; Burnett, 2017), showing how images can create links between different texts and forms of thought.
Maria Manuela Brito Martins
Universidade Católica Portuguesa

« Représentations et schémas graphiques de la species visibilis dans le De homine d’Albert le Grand »

Dans le De homine dans la partie concernant l’« anima sensibili », Albert le Grand se livre à une enquête sur la connaissance à partir du sens de la vision. Le Doctor universalis évalue de manière approfondie le sens de la vision au moyen des éléments qui constituent l’objet de la connaissance en tant que species visibilis, reproduite dans le sujet qui connaîtra. Pour cela, il y a la concurrence de l’organe de la vision avec l’objet perçu. Mais bien au-delà de l’enquête sur la vision à partir de l’organe sensible, Albert examine le ‘milieu’ qui permet cette ‘vision’, qui est la lumière. En fait, c’est la conjonction de ces deux éléments qui font que l’œil est figuratum corpus. Le but de notre communication sera, donc, de montrer dans la partie concernant l’« objectum visus » la manière comment les rayons de lumière constituent un moyen important pour la constitution de la vision sensible dans le sujet et pour le sujet. Pour montrer cela, nous présenterons dans notre exposé les schémas et les représentations graphiques qu’Albert le Grand reproduit dans cette section de son traité, à propos de la réception de la lumière et les différentes formes de « reflexio luminis » dans l’appréhension sensible et physique du sujet.

José Higuera
IF-FLUP

The Visualization of Motion: Averroes and Albertus Magnus

The sixth book of Aristotle’s Physica introduces a way to grasp the indivisible parts of change/motion regarding the boundaries and the intermediate points where physical phenomena occur. The definition of extreme points of change/motion and its conjectural middle parts points out the commensurability between time lapses of physical changes and its whole magnitude, e.g., in spatial dislocations, qualitative alterations, or quantitative variations. The Venetian edition (1562) of Averroes’ (Ibn Rushd) Great Commentary on Physica shows a set of diagrams representing the different relations between time-lapses and physical phenomena, specially under the supposition of the infinity magnitudes of time, that implies an unlimited composition of change/motion. This paper intends to focus on the visual function of those diagrams and addresses the hypothesis that Albertus Magnus’ Commentary on Physics could be the graphical source for this type of physical visualisations.
Alessandro Palazzo
Università di Trento

"Et ego quidem nunc fabricabo circulum".
Images and visual representations in the geomantic treatise Estimaverunt Indi

Geomancy was one of the most renowned medieval predictive arts. In this method the geomancer traces 16 rows of dots on the sand or paper, without counting the points, moving from right to left. Once all the lines have been produced and divided into groups of four, he marks off the points by two until one or two remain in each line. The remaining patterns constitute the first four images (mothers) from which all other figures in the chart are derived (daughters, nieces, witnesses, the judge and, if necessary, the arbitrator). Each of the sixteen possible configurations is good or bad, is male or female, and has astrological connotations. The 15 positions in the chart – houses – are related too to specific sets of meanings. Algebraic principles underly the whole process. By reading the images located in the houses, the geomancer is able to foresee the Future and reveal the Unknown on behalf of clients seeking answers to pressing questions. Therefore, geomancy was an operative technique that constructed itself the images it interpreted.

By focusing on the Estimaverunt Indi, the geomantic treatise condemned by Tempier in 1277, I intend to highlight the peculiar role played by the geomantic images and their philosophical relevance. The following issues will be addressed:
1. What is the effective role of the geomancer in the image construction? Is he a free agent or an instrument of celestial causality?
2. How concretely does the geomancer read the chart? What is meant by geomantic intention? How does God contribute to the geomantic process?
3. What is the purpose of images, charts, diagrams outlined on the manuscripts of the Estimaverunt? Do they have a decorative function? Are they visual tools illustrating the text? Do they belong to the instructions related to the image construction or interpretation?

Aníbal Szapiro
Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina

Visual Representations of Light in Oresme’s De visione stellarum

In De visione stellarum, a treatise that remained anonymous until the 1960s, Nicole Oresme analyzes whether the stars are seen where they are. To answer this, he considers astronomic and optic issues, with special attention to atmospheric refraction. In doing this, he deals with the problem of ignoring if there is a surface separating air and ether or if, instead, there is change without discontinuity. To face the problem, he speculates about the relation between a uniformly difform density and a surface separating two media with given densities and claims that if the variation of the atmosphere’s density were uniformly difform given an infinite number of surfaces separating media, this would produce the same effect than the variation between two media separated by one surface.

In this work, I analyze the diagrams accompanying this speculation in the extant manuscripts and I offer an interpretation of their features considering whether it could be related, and how, to the geometrical representations that Oresme developed in his De Configurationibus qualitatum et motuum.
Vision, Knowledge and Nature in Alain de Lille’s

*De planctu Naturae*

Early in the *De planctu Naturae*, Nature, allegorized as a young woman of surpassing beauty, declares to the first-person narrator/protagonist, Alanus: “To most, I have decreed that my face in all its power should be covered by figures, thereby protecting my secret from being vilified” (“Sed tamen plerisque mee potestatis faciem palliare decreui figuris, defendens a uilitate secretum”). Nature makes these comments because she is about to make her interlocutor an exception to this near-general rule: unlike others, Alanus will indeed learn Nature’s secrets and will do so in visual terms. To understand the mysteries of the Divine Nous (what Nature elsewhere calls the “interna penetralia celestis archani” that she protects) is to examine the physical body of Nature herself, visually to see the truth of her naked loveliness divested of the protective figures under which she habitually hides. I shall argue that this eroticized means of visual understanding is ultimately Augustinian in origin, derived most clearly from the prologue to the *De doctrina Christiana*, but also influenced by the *De Trinitate*. Nature’s reference to “figurae” (here, figurative language in its widest sense) points toward Alain’s own use and defense of the trope as a means of exegetical understanding. To see through the veils of writing is, as Augustine argues in the *De doctrina*, ultimately to gain an intimation of the mysteries of the Divine.