

Sylwia Konarska-Zimnicka

(Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8337-1637>







E-mail: sylwia.konarska-zimnicka@ujk.edu.pl

Late Medieval Krakow Astrological Prognostics Concerning Health, Disease and Treatment Methods

Późnośredniowieczne krakowskie prognostyki astrologiczne o zdrowiu, chorobach i sposobach leczenia

ABSTRACT

Late medieval astrological predictive texts (iudicia, calendars, almanacs etc.) are an interesting source of knowledge about the past. The practice of publishing such texts was a result of the development of the so-called Krakow school of astronomy and astrology. The Krakow masters, who held the position of professors at the chair of astronomy and astrology, were obliged to prepare the said predictive texts annually. The publications included astrological predictions based on forthcoming positions of heavenly bodies and concerned almost every sphere of life of the contemporary society. They referred to trade and agriculture, including prognoses of abundant or failed harvests. They covered political issues, but also problems pertaining to marriage, as well as to children and their upbringing. Vast passages were devoted to weather forecasting, that is, astrometeorology. However, special emphasis was put on the medical topics, as health and disease were an

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THE AUTHOR'S ADDRESS: Sylwia Konarska-Zimnicka, the Institute of History of the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, 17 Uniwersytecka Street, Kielce 25-406, Poland			
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issue of key importance for the representatives of all social strata. Astrological predictive texts, indicating the best (from the viewpoint of astrology) time for attempts to maintain or regain health, were meant to interpret theoretical knowledge with recommendations concerning the practice, which was difficult to verify with regard to sources.

Key words: astrology in the Middle Ages, prognostics, calendars, almanacs, the University of Krakow

Astrological predictions are a 'treasure trove of knowledge' about different subjects related to the so-called everyday life of people in the late 15th and early 16th century. That period of their increased 'discovery' was owed to the invention of printing (even though handwritten works, also in scope of the title predictions, were still being produced). It was not only the result of the enormous interest and demand for that type of creation, both on the part of the society eager for astrological knowledge and the printers counting on considerable profits¹, but also of the belief in the great power of influence of the lunar world on the sublunar one, of which man was a component. Astrology was triumphant at that time, the prognosticators' output being the best testimony to that fact².

The practice of publishing astrological predictions is connected to the foundation of the chair of astrology at the University of Krakow, i.e. in the mid-15th century. Although there are preserved examples of

¹ A. Kawecka-Gryczowa, *Rola drukarstwa polskiego w dobie Odrodzenia*, Warszawa 1954, pp. 68–69, wrote that while the average edition of most titles was approx. 300 copies, their amount reached 10,000 in the case of calendars, and, importantly, the circulation spread very quickly both within the country and abroad, reaching 'apud exteras remotissimasque nationes'. See: *Codex diplomaticus Universitatis Studii Generalis Cracoviensis continet privilegia et documenta quae res gestas academiae eiusque beneficia illustrant*, Pars quarta, *Ab Anno 1507 ad Annum 1548*, Kraków 1884, no. 350, p. 92; cf. E. Potkowski, *Książka i pismo w średniowieczu. Studia z dziejów kultury piśmiennej i komunikacji społecznej*, Pułtusk 2000, pp. 199–207. L. Birkenmajer, *Zapiski historyczne wśród starych almanachów Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej*, 'Kwartalnik Historyczny' 1902, 16, pp. 445–457; 1903, 17, pp. 405–421, presented notes testifying to their popularity among readers.

² Due to the subject matter, strictly defined in the title, the article does not draw out the extremely complex considerations on the approval and criticism of astrology. That topic has been extensively treated in: S. Konarska-Zimnicka, *'Wenus panią roku, Mars towarzyszem...'* *Astrologia w Krakowie XV i początku XVI wieku*, Kielce 2018, where broad chapters are titled precisely *Krytyka astrologii* and *Aprobata astrologii*. See also: eadem, *Why Was Astrology Criticised in the Middle Ages? Contribution to Further Research (on the Basis of Selected Treaties of Professors of the University of Krakow in the 15th Century)*, 'Saeculum Christianum. Pismo Historyczno-Społeczne' 2017, 24, pp. 91–99; eadem, *Astrologia Licita? Astrologia Illicita? The Perception of Astrology at Kraków University in the Fifteenth Century*, 'Culture and Cosmos. A Journal of the History of Astrology and Cultural Astronomy' 2011, 15, 2, pp. 65–90.

that type of creations from the beginning of the century, which can be associated with the establishment of the cathedral of astronomy in the first decade of the 15th century³, the forecasts from the first half of the 15th century are more astronomical than astrological, in contrast to the later ones (second half of the 15th, early 16th century). The custom of writing regular astrological predictions for the new year to come was initiated by Marcin Król of Żurawica (approx. 1422–1453)⁴, the founder of the chair of astrology⁵, who himself was the author of the forecast for 1451⁶. Every professor of the chair of astrology and, according to the statutes of 1476, also of the chair of astronomy, was obliged to prepare an annual forecast in three versions: a comprehensive, professional one, with references to the authorities of the contemporary world of science, probably addressed to adepts of the science of celestial bodies, i.e. astronomers and astrologers

³ The Chair of Astronomy and Mathematics was founded in the early 15th century thanks to the foundation of a Mr Stobner, hence it was often called the Stobnerian Chair. K. Morawski, *Historia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, vol. 1, Kraków 1900, p. 103; cf. A. Birkenmajer, *Uniwersytet Krakowski jako międzynarodowy ośrodek studiów astronomicznych na przełomie XV i XVI stulecia*, in: *Odrodzenie w Polsce. Materiały sesji naukowej PAN 25–30 października 1953 roku*, vol. 2: *Historia nauki*, part 2, ed. B. Suchodolski, Warszawa 1956, p. 364; Z. Kozłowska-Budkowa, *Odnowienie jagiellońskie Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego (1390–1414)*, in: *Dzieje Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w latach 1364–1764*, vol. 1, ed. J. Zathej, Kraków 1964, p. 52; H. Barycz, *Nowa synteza dziejów Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, 'Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy' 1966, 3, p. 310; M. Markowski, *Kształtowanie się krakowskiej szkoły astronomicznej*, in: J. Dobrzycki, M. Markowski, T. Przyppkowski, *Historia astronomii w Polsce*, ed. E. Rybka, vol. 1, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1975, p. 72; idem, *Methodologische Grundlagen der offiziellen Universitätsbeschlüsse und Erklärungen der Professoren an der Krakauer Universität im XV. Jahrhundert*, 'Studia Mediewistyczne' 1977, 17, p. 25; J. Sondel, *Przywileje fundacyjne Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego oraz przywileje nadania szlachectwa jego profesorom (z historyczno-prawnym komentarzem)*, Kraków 2015, p. 198.

⁴ M. Zwiercan, *Marcin z Żurawicy zwany Król (z Przemyśla, de Polonia)*, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* [hereinafter: PSB], vol. 19, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1974, pp. 580–581; *Bibliografia Literatury Polskiej. Nowy Korbut*, vol. 3, Piśmiennictwo staropolskie, ed. R. Pollak, Warszawa 1965, pp. 461–462 [hereinafter: *Nowy Korbut*]; J. Sondel, *Słownik historii i tradycji Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, Kraków 2012, pp. 813–814; K. Ożóg, *Uczeni w monarchii Jadwigi Andegaweńskiej i Władysława Jagiełły (1384–1434)*, Kraków 2004, p. 49; L. Wachholz, *Wydział Lekarski Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego i jego grono nauczycielskie od r. 1364–1918*, Kraków 1935, p. 33; M. Markowski, *Nauki ścisłe na Uniwersytecie Krakowskim w XV wieku*, in: *Filozofia polska XV wieku*, ed. R. Palacz, Warszawa 1972, p. 219.

⁵ M. Markowski, *Die Astrologie an der Krakauer Universität im XV Jahrhundert*, in: *The Universities in the Late Middle Ages*, eds. J. Ijsewicz, J. Paquet, Leuven 1978, pp. 256–275; idem, *Burydanizm w Polsce w okresie przedkopernikańskim*, Wrocław 1971, p. 231; idem, *Powstanie pełnej szkoły astronomicznej w Krakowie*, in: J. Dobrzycki, M. Markowski, T. Przyppkowski, *Historia astronomii*, p. 90; cf. S. Konarska-Zimmnicka, *Wenus*, pp. 19–80.

⁶ Marcin Król z Żurawicy, *Iudicium anni 1451*, Biblioteka Jagiellońska [hereinafter: BJ], manuscript 764, pp. 3–12, 17–26; idem, *Iudicium anni Domini 1451 [...] promulgatum*, BJ, manuscript 1918, sheets 185r–200v.

alike; another one for representatives of academic circles gathered in the Collegium Maius⁷, version suggested also to be sent to Krakow councilors; finally, the third one, limited to strictly astrological information but devoid of any scientific commentary, for the general public which treated these ephemeral publications (their topicality was limited in time) as the 'communication media' of the time⁸.

Those prints would come out under many names and in various forms. We learn from the preserved sources that they were prognostics, almanacs, iudicia, minutiae; they were called practica, tacuinum, ephemerides, or calendars⁹. They were diverse in visual and editorial terms, primarily in size and graphic layout but, more importantly, also in content: while the ephemerides contained the largest amount of astronomical and computistic data, the prognostics and almanacs limited such data to a minimum, focusing on the descriptive form of presenting astrological issues. Similarly, iudicia emphasized the description of astrological forecasts. The aforementioned prints were also relatively extensive in terms of volume: from several to around a dozen r-v. sheets; in the vast majority of cases, the 4° size was used in prognostics and almanacs, although the tiny, pocket-sized ones were most often printed as 16°, and sometimes even 24° and 32°¹⁰. Large-sized wall calendars (2°), which could be hung

⁷ *Codex diplomaticus*, Pars quarta, no. 348, pp. 87–88; see: *Założenie i urządzenie Collegii Minoris*, ed. J. Szujski, 'Archiwum do Dziejów Literatury Oświaty w Polsce' 1878, 1, pp. 97–98.

⁸ E. Potkowski, *Piśmiennictwo masowe w początkach epoki nowożytnej. 'Iudicia astrologica' z Krakowa*, 'Z badań nad Polskimi Księgozbiórami Historycznymi. Studia i Materiały' 2002, 20, p. 18. P. Tańkowski, *Spoleczna funkcja kalendarzy astrologicznych w Polsce XVIII wieku*, 'Biuletyn Biblioteki Jagiellońskiej' 2002, 52, 1–2, p. 137, writes, referring to the beginnings of printed calendars: 'Drukem kalendarzowym wypadnie przyznać tytuł pierwszej popularnej książki dla masowego odbiorcy' ['Calendar prints should be given the title of the first popular book for mass audience']; A. Strzebońska, *Szesnastowieczne kalendarze krakowskie*, in: *Bibliologia, literatura, kultura. Księga pamiątkowa ofiarowana Profesorowi Wacławowi Szelińskiej*, eds. M. Konopka, M. Zięba, Kraków 1999, p. 178.

⁹ J. Zathy, *Z historii środowiska magiczno-astrologicznego w Krakowie w XV wieku*, 'Krzysztofory' 1981, 8, p. 17; M. Janik, *Kalendarigrafia polska od XVI–XVIII wieku. Próba typologii*, in: *Kalendarze staropolskie*, eds. I. Dacka-Górzyńska, J. Partyka, Warszawa 2013, pp. 9–52; K. Kossakowska-Jarosz, *Kalendarz. Spory terminologiczne*, 'Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej im. Powstańców Śląskich w Opolu. Filologia Polska' 1993, 33, pp. 129–135; M. Janik, *Polskie kalendarze astrologiczne epoki saskiej*, Warszawa 2003, p. 5; S. Konarska-Zimnicka, *Wenus*, pp. 89–93.

¹⁰ Incunabula and old prints are marked with the so-called bibliographic format which does not depend on the dimensions of the book, but on the number of times a sheet of paper has been folded. See: H. Szwejkowska, *Książka drukowana XV–XVIII wieku. Zarys historyczny*, Wrocław–Warszawa 1987, pp. 64–65; cf. M. Janik, *Kalendarigrafia*, p. 25, annotation 59; idem, *Polskie*, pp. 82–83.

on the wall¹¹, next to key computistic data (a list of twelve months divided into consecutive days and holidays falling on them), presented extremely limited content, pared down to the essential information shown in graphic form (with graphic markings explained in the legend, placed most often in the upper part of the calendar); that gave them the most accessible form, understandable also for an uneducated society¹².

Their content was extremely rich, as the astrological forecasts were aimed to encompass all the aspects of human life. Matters of health and disease were among the most important topics in the prognostics. All the knowledge presented in them was based on a strong belief in the unity of the macro- and microcosm¹³, according to astrological rules, drawn from the works of ancient and medieval scientists from the circles¹⁴ of both the Islamic and Christian culture¹⁵, with humoralism as the core of medical knowledge¹⁶. In

¹¹ A. Strzebońska, *op. cit.*, p. 179, states that 'kalendarz ścienny miał format stojącego prostokąta' ['a wall calendar had the format of a standing rectangle'].

¹² M. Janik, *Polskie*, p. 155, writes about 'dwóch podstawowych jednostkach treści: kalendarium i prognostyku' ['two basic units of content: the calendar and the prognostic'].

¹³ B. Płonka-Syroka, *Różne koncepcje podmiotowości człowieka w teoriach i doktrynach medycznych*, 'Medycyna Nowożytna. Studia nad Kulturą Medyczną' 2001, 8, 1, p. 25 wrote about 'paralelizmie makrokosmosu (wszechświata) i mikrokosmosu (człowieka)' ['the parallelism of the macrocosm (universe) and microcosm (human being)']; Z. Kalembe, *Wpływ koncepcji makro- i mikrokosmosu na pojmowanie choroby i człowieka chorego*, 'Medycyna Nowożytna. Studia nad Historią Medycyny' 1998, 5, 1, pp. 29–38; cf. M. Kurdziałek, *Koncepcje człowieka jako mikrokosmosu*, in: *O Bogu i o człowieku*, ed. B. Bejze, vol. 2: *Problemy filozoficzne i teologiczne*, Warszawa 1969, pp. 109–125; idem, *Średniowieczne doktryny o człowieku jako mikrokosmosie*, in: idem, *Średniowiecze w poszukiwaniu równowagi*, pp. 271–310. More broadly in: G. P. Conger, *Theories of Macrocosms and Microcosms in the History of Philosophy*, New York 1922, *passim*; Z. Libera, *Mikrokosmos, makrokosmos i antropologia ciała*, Tarnów 1997, *passim*.

¹⁴ H. Schipperges, *Die Assimilation der arabischen Medizin durch das lateinische Mittelalter*, Wiesbaden 1964; idem, *Arabische Medizin im lateinischen Mittelalter*, Berlin–Heidelberg–New York 1976; J. Burchardt, *Elementy wkładu Arabów do farmakognozji średniowiecza łacińskiego*, 'Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki' 2001, 46, 2, pp. 7–34; P. Pioreschi, *A History of Medicine*, vol. 4: *Byzantine and Islamic Medicine*, Omaha 2001, *passim*; see also: L. Saif, *The Arabic Theory of Astral Influences in Early Modern Medicine*, 'Renaissance Studies' 2015, 25, 5, pp. 609–626.

¹⁵ Z. Gajda, *Do historii medycyny wprowadzenie*, Kraków 2011, *passim*; Ch. Burnett, *Astrology and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, 'Society for the Social History of Medicine Bulletin' 1985, 37, pp. 16–18; broadly in: *Astro-Medicine, Astrology and Medicine, East and West*, eds. A. Akasoy, Ch. Burnett, R. Yoeli-Tlalim, Firenze 2008, *passim*; P. Kibre, *Studies in Medieval Science: Alchemy, Astrology, Mathematics and Medicine*, London 1984, *passim*; S. Konarska-Zimnicka, *Wenus*, pp. 137–207; eadem, *Jatromatematyka w optyce twórczości krakowskich uczonych późnego średniowiecza. Przyczynek do badań*, in: *Medicina antiqua, mediaevalis et moderna. Historia-filozofia-religia*, eds. S. Konarska-Zimnicka, L. Kostuch, B. Wojciechowska, Kielce 2019, pp. 165–181.

¹⁶ T. Brzeziński, *Rozwój poglądów na istotę choroby*, in: *Historia medycyny*, ed. idem, Warszawa 1988, pp. 137–143; N. G. Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*.

calendars, where, as mentioned, the border signs were the predominant form of message, medical advice was limited to a few key issues: bloodletting, cupping, or taking medications. Astrological predictions covered also the use of baths and haircutting. Appropriate symbols were used to indicate the days when a given treatment should be performed, and, in the case of medications, additionally, in what form they were to be taken in order to ensure recovery or an effective cure. Special markings indicated: *minutio optima*, *minutio mediocris*, *balneum bonum cum ventosis*, *balneum sine ventosis*, *laxatio per electuarium*, *laxatio per haustum*, *purgatio per pillulas*. Importantly, the multiple use of a given symbol indicated the level of effectiveness of the treatment. For example: Mikołaj Prokopiades z Szadka (1489–1564)¹⁷ advised readers of the 1525 calendar to undergo phlebotomy in May on the days 1, 2, 8, 9, 13 and 17, and even ‘more excellently’, on the days 12, 15, 18, 25 and 26 of that same month. He found it advisable to perform cupping on the 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18 and 25 of May. Interestingly, the astrologer did not indicate good days for using a bath without cupping for that month. He did note, however, the days when he found the configuration of the celestial bodies favorable to haircutting. May 1, 2, 10, 11, 25 and 29 were the most favorable time for it. When it comes to taking medications, it was not advisable to take those in the form of confection, i.e. thick syrup, in May. The author of the calendar, however, found it appropriate to be treated with medications in the form of, as he recorded, ‘potations’, i.e. diverse tinctures, thin liquids, and that should be done in May on St. Sophia’s day (15 May)¹⁸. In turn, the ephemeride compiled by Michał of Wiślica (ca. 1499–1575)¹⁹ for 1532, the forecasts for May informed that on the 2nd, 9th, 17th and 24th day of that month, phlebotomy would be highly recommended, while on the 25th, 29th and 30th its effectiveness may be barely average. Bathing with cupping was recommended on the 2, 19 and 25 May, without cupping on the

An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice, London–Chicago 1990, passim; B. Wojciechowska, *Flebotomia i purgowanie, czyli o leczeniu w wiekach średnich*, Kielce 2019, passim.

¹⁷ H. Barycz, *Mikołaj z Szadka*, in: PSB, vol. 21, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1976, pp. 138–140; J. Sondel, *Słownik*, pp. 854–855; T. Marszał, *Mikołaj Prokopowicz z Szadka astrolog, astronom, historyk nauki, miłośnik i znawca książki (1489–1564)*, ‘Biuletyn Szadkowski’ 2009, 9, pp. 5–36.

¹⁸ Mikołaj Prokopiades z Szadka, *Naznamionowanie dzienne miesięcy nowych pełnych [...] lata [...] 1525 [Kraków, Hieronim Wietor, 1524/1525] pl*⁹, ed. W. Wydra, Poznań 2010, calendar sheet.

¹⁹ L. Hajdukiewicz, *Michał z Wiślicy*, in: PSB, vol. 20, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1975, pp. 628–629; J. Sondel, *Słownik*, pp. 541–542; S. Kazusek, *Michał z Wiślicy*, in: *Świętokrzyski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 1, ed. J. Wijaczka, Kielce 2002, p. 102; S. Konarska-Zimnicka, *Astrologica Michała z Wiślicy. Przegląd twórczości, ‘Z Dziejów Regionu i Miasta. Rocznik Oddziału Polskiego Towarzystwa Historycznego w Skarżysku-Kamiennej’* 2012, 3, pp. 79–92.

7th and 10th; on the other days, bathing was considered inadvisable, so was cupping. On 9 May, in turn, purification was recommended through 'laxatio per electuarium'; 'laxatio per haustum' was advised on the 16th and 17th day of that month. Interestingly, 'purgatio per pillulas' was not recommended in May at all. Conversely, in October for instance, that method of purification was recommended to be practiced on days 9, 10 and 11²⁰.

In some cases, those ephemerides, as they were often colloquially called, did not have a daily breakdown of each month and were limited to medical advice within full months, with suggestions of what intervention – and when – should be best performed according to the liturgical calendar. In the first astrological-medical calendar for 1474 printed in Poland, the advice was presented in the following manner: 'May. Tuesday's day of the Holy Cross is good for manhood and old age, for phlegmatics, except for the loins. The following day, similarly for them. Monday after St. Stanislaus, good for old age, for choleric, except for the ankles, especially in the morning. The following day, likewise, good day for them. Thursday after St. Stanislaus, good for old age for phlegmatics, except for the vena cava. The following day, likewise, good day for them, especially in the morning. Friday after St. Sophia, average for adolescence, for choleric, except for the pulmonary vein. Thursday after St. Urban average for adolescence and manhood, for melancholics, except for the buttocks'²¹. That formula was adopted by the creators of later calendars and the pattern recurs in many preserved incunabula and old prints from the late 15th and early 16th century. The anonymous *Ephemeris ad annum 1511* focuses on the following issues: 'Quando conveniat venam incidere. Balneum ingredi. Et corori medicaminibus consulere'²², i.e. on the most important and commonly available health-saving methods. The publication informed that, in May for instance, 'in die Philippi

²⁰ Michał z Wiślicy, *Ephemeris cum electionibus pro anno Domini 1532: qui est bissextilis et embelismatis*, Florian Ungler, Kraków 1531, BJ, st. dr. cim. vol. 16, calendar sheet.

²¹ 'Maj. Wtorek dzień św Krzyża dobry dla wieku męskiego i starczego, dla flegmatyków, oprócz lędźwi. Nazajutrz podobnie dla tychże. Poniedziałek po św. Stanisławie, dobry dla wieku starczego, dla choleryków, oprócz kostek, zwłaszcza rano. Nazajutrz podobnie dzień dobry dla tychże. Czwartek po św. Stanisławie dobry dla wieku starczego dla flegmatyków, oprócz żyły głównej. Nazajutrz podobnie dzień dobry dla tychże, zwłaszcza rano. Piątek po św. Zofii średni dla wieku młodzieńczego, dla choleryków, oprócz żyły płucnej. Czwartek po św. Urbanie średni dla wieku młodzieńczego i męskiego, dla melancholików, oprócz pośladków'. Anonymous author, *Almanach Cracoviense ad annum 1474*, Kasper Straube, Kraków 1473/1474, BJ, inc. vol. 1998, calendar sheet.

²² Anonymous author, *Almanach anni 1511 super meridianum Cracoviensem*, Jan Haller, Kraków 1510, BJ, st. dr. cim. vol. 3, calendar sheet.

et Jacobi mediocris iuuenibus, colericis preter pulmaticam. In crastino melior pro eisdem et in balneo et ventosis preter pectus. Optima etiam in electuariis. Cancer. Sabbato ante Zophie balneum mediocre post meridiem, pro colericis. Feria quarta in pro festo Zophie optimapro virili flegmaticis. Similiter in balneo et – ventosis preter coxas quae sunt supra genna. Dominica post Zophie electa pro virili et senili et maxime melancolicis preter tibias. Aquarius. In crastino etiam in omnibus bona pro eisdem. Feria quarta ante Vrbani optima pro virili et senili, colericis, preter zaphenam. Bona in pillulis, balneo et ventosis. Pisces. Feria sexta ante Vrbanis laudabilis pro flegmaticis, senibus, preter cephalicam. Arries. In vigilia ascensionis Domini mediocris in balneando colericis. Sabbato post ascensionis Domini optimum balneum flegmaticis ad desiccandum humiditates²³. The emphasis was therefore put on the methods of preventing various ailments not listed here specifically and on the search of the optimal time for the performance of therapeutic procedures practiced at that time. At the same time, it was considered important to observe the principles of humoral medicine and iatromathematics, one of the key rules of which was melotesis – the belief that the signs of the Zodiac rule the human body – and the attribution of planetary powers to specific members and organs²⁴. It is precisely the adherence to those rules that explains the prohibitions appearing in those ‘ephemeral prints’ and concerning the incision of specific places or veins within their area; that was vital from the point of view of one of the most popular procedures at that time: phlebotomy²⁵.

A slightly different form of medical advice can be found in prognostics and iudicia which are much richer in terms of content. Those issues were there devoted to separate, adequately titled paragraphs, e.g. *De salute et*

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ M.J. Geller, *Melothesia in Babylonia. Medicine, Magic and Astrology in the Ancient Near East*, Berlin 2014, passim; Ch. A. Mercier, *Astrology in Medicine*, London 1914, passim; K. Sudhoff, *Iatromathematiker vornehmlich in 15 und 16 Jahrhundert. Eine Studie*, Breslau 1902, passim; S. Konarska-Zimnicka, *Wenus*, pp. 137–207; eadem, *Jatromatematyka*, pp. 165–181.

²⁵ It was based on Pseudo-Ptolemy’s famous aphorism – taken from *Centiloquium* and attributed to Claudius Ptolemy himself – which read: ‘Nie przebijaj żelazem tej części ciała, która pozostaje pod władzą znaku, zajmowanego w danej chwili przez Księżyc’ [‘Pierce not with iron that part of the body which may be governed by the sign actually occupied by the Moon’]. Z. Stepnicki, *Centiloquium Klaudiusza Ptolemeusza*, ‘Polski Kalendarz Astrologiczny’, Bydgoszcz 1937, p. 68. About phlebotomy in the middle ages, broadly in: B. Wojciechowska, *op. cit.*, passim.

*infirmitate*²⁶, *De salute et mortalitate*²⁷, *De infirmitatibus*²⁸, *De egritudinibus*²⁹, and sometimes *De egritudinibus et mortalitatibus hominum*³⁰, *De salute et egritudine*³¹, *De salute et infirmitate animantium*³². Interestingly, in the prediction for 1526 compiled by Mikołaj Prokopiades z Szadka, the chapter devoted to the forecasts of our interest was entitled *De salubritate, aeris et epidimia*³³. The same author linked the information about changes in the weather with medicine-related matters in the forecast for 1532, in which he included a paragraph entitled *De salubritate vel nocibilitate aeris*³⁴.

In each of the paragraphs bearing one of the aforementioned titles, the author of the prognostic associated configurations of celestial bodies with diseases and ailments that were to plague people in the year in question. Their specification, along with the determination of the scale of their impact and indication of the groups most vulnerable to them constitute the core of the discussed paragraphs. Michał Falkener z Wrocławia (ca.

²⁶ Mikołaj z Toliszkowa, *Iudicium celebratissime Vniuersitatis Cracouiensis [...] in annum Domini M.D.XIII editum*, Jan Haller, Kraków 1513, Biblioteka Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej [hereinafter: Biblioteka UMCS], st. dr. 229, sheets 6r–6v; idem, *Iudicium celebratissime Vniuersitatis Cracouiensis [...] in annum Domini millesimum quingentesimum sedecimum editum*, Jan Haller, Florian Ungler, Kraków 1516 (?), Biblioteka Kórnicka PAN [hereinafter: BN PAN], st. dr. cim. Qu. 2112, sheets 5v–6r.

²⁷ Mikołaj z Toliszkowa, *Judicium celebratissime Vniuersitatis Cracouiensis [...] ad annum Domini 1518 recollectum*, Jan Haller, Kraków 1518, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka we Wrocławiu [hereinafter: BUWr.], st. dr. 400623, sheet 5v; idem, *Judicium celebratissime Universitatis Cracouiensis [...] ad annum Domini M.D.XXIII. collectum*, Hieronim Wietor, Kraków 1522, BN PAN, st. dr. cim. Qu. 2147, sheet 6r.

²⁸ Mikołaj Prokopiades z Szadka, *Pronosticon accidentium ex syderali dispositione anni Domini 1520 [...] in Studio Cracouiensi editum*, Hieronim Wietor, Kraków 1519, Biblioteka Narodowa w Warszawie, XVI. Qu. 6068, sheets 2v–3r; idem, *Juditium astronomicum [...] pro anno Christi MDXXI, fideliter calculatum*, Hieronim Wietor, Krakow 1521, BUWr., st. dr. 400626, sheet 6v.

²⁹ Michał Falkener z Wrocławia, *Iudicium Cracouiense [...] ad annum millesimum quadringentesimum nonagesimum quintum*, Arnold z Kolonii, Lipsk 1494–1495, Biblioteka Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich we Wrocławiu, XV–213, sheets 5r–5v.

³⁰ Jakub z Hży, *Judiciale pronosticon pro Christi anno 1517 [...] calculatum*, Jan Haller, Kraków 1517 (?), BUWr., st. dr. 400622, sheet 4r.

³¹ Mikołaj Prokopiades z Szadka, *Judicium astrologicum anni M.D.XXV [...] elaboratum*, Hieronim Wietor, Kraków 1524, BN PAN, st. dr. cim. Qu. 2152, sheets 6ra–b.

³² Mikołaj Prokopiades z Szadka, *Pronosticon judiciale [...] futurorum eventuum anno Domini 1519*, Jan Haller, Hieronim Wietor, Kraków 1518–1519, BN PAN, st. dr. cim. Qu. 2135, sheets 7r–v.

³³ Mikołaj Prokopiades z Szadka, *Iudicium Cracouiense astronomicum [...] super annum Domini 1526*, Hieronim Wietor, Jan Sandecki, Kraków 1525 (1526?), BJ, st. dr. cim. vol. 96, sheet 12v.

³⁴ Mikołaj Prokopiades z Szadka, *Judicium astrologicum in celebri Studio Cracouiensi [...] ad annum Domini 1532*, Maciej Szarfenberg, Kraków 1532, BN PAN, st. dr. cim. Qu. 2371, sheets 3ra–b.

1460–1534)³⁵ presaged ‘infirmities et egritudines graves’ for the year 1495, its reason being that ‘vtrisque enim Solis deliquio Saturni ac Martis sydera humane vite inunicissima presunt atque dominantur’³⁶.

The configuration of celestial bodies for 1514, according to the establishments made by Mikołaj z Toliszkowa (*aka* Tuliszkowa; d. ca. 1534)³⁷, spleen troubles, catarrh, lower abdominal ulcers, fever, gout, ascites and many other ailments resulting from the overcooling of the head, as well as ailments of the feet and shins, their ulceration and soreness. These ailments were to affect people depending on the sovereignty of a sign of the Zodiac over the area they inhabited. The least affected areas were supposed to be those under the rule of Aries, Taurus, Cancer, Libra and Scorpio, as well as those assigned, by the astrological tradition, to Capricorn³⁸. The same astrologer referred, for the year 1517, to the arrangement of celestial bodies in the previous years (1515 and 1516). According to him, the effects of those arrangements were either visible in the form of diverse health conditions or they would continue to manifest themselves, all the more so that an unexpected eclipse (i.e. one that people had failed to predict) could thwart, in February, even the most favorable predictions. The scholar concluded that there was a realistic risk of a plague, mainly in regions where the eclipse would be visible³⁹. Interestingly, Jakub z Iłży starszy (1470–1526) predicted for that same year 1517⁴⁰ that, due to the location of the ruler of the year, Mars, and his companion Jupiter, but also due to the particular situation of the Moon and Saturn, all chronic ailments would

³⁵ H. Barycz, *Falkener Michał*, in: PSB, vol. 6, Kraków 1948, pp. 357–358; J. Sondel, *Słownik*, p. 384; R. Palacz, *Michał Falkener z Wrocławia. Stan badań*, ‘Materiały i Studia Zakładu Historii Filozofii Starożytnej i Średniowiecznej’ 1966, 6, 4, pp. 35–91; K. Bochenek, *Michał Falkener z Wrocławia – osoba i dzieło*, ‘Sofia. Pismo Filozofów Krajów Słowiańskich’ 2005, 5, pp. 373–383; S. Konarska-Zimnicka, *Michał Falkener z Wrocławia – życie i twórczość*, in: *Michał Falkener z Wrocławia, Introductorium astronomie Cracoviense elucidans almanach, czyli kompendium wiedzy astrologicznej*, transl. and compil. S. Konarska-Zimnicka, ed. and compil. P. Piotrowski, Warszawa 2014, pp. 7–30.

³⁶ Michał Falkener z Wrocławia, *Iudicium Cracoviense [...] ad annum millesimum quadringentesimum nonagesimum quintum*, sheet 5r. See: J. Norri, *Dictionary of Medical Vocabulary in English, 1375–1550. Body Parts, Sickneses, Instruments, and Medical Preparations, vol. 1–2*, London–New York 2016, listing names of diseases and ailments appearing in historical sources.

³⁷ L. Hajdukiewicz, *Mikołaj z Tuliszkowa*, in: PSB, vol. 21, Kraków 1976, pp. 144–145; J. Sondel, *Słownik*, p. 855.

³⁸ Mikołaj z Toliszkowa, *Iudicium celebratissime Vniuersitatis Cracouiensis [...] in annum Domini M.D.XIII editum*, sheets 6v–7r.

³⁹ Mikołaj z Toliszkowa, *Iudicium celebratissime Vniuersitatis Cracouiensis [...] in annum Domini millesimum quingentesimum sedecimum editum*, sheets 5v–6r.

⁴⁰ H. Barycz, *Jakub z Iłży starszy*, in: PSB, vol. 10, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1962–1964, pp. 352–353; J. Sondel, *Słownik*, pp. 542–543; S. Konarska, *Jakub z Iłży starszy*, in: *Świętokrzyski słownik biograficzny*, vol. 1, ed. J. Wijaczka, Kielce 2002, pp. 62–63.

then intensify. People were also to suffer from quartan fever, contagious illnesses, paralysis, gout, visceral conditions, spleen pain and other chronic diseases. All of them were to result from excess heat ensuing from the activity of Mars which, as Mikołaj z Toliszkowa argued, would be harmful mainly to choleric. Skin ailments, defined by the figurative name of the so-called snakeskin, were also predicted to become a nuisance⁴¹. In some places, an outbreak of a pest was also expected. In general, the astrologer described the people's health situation in that year as difficult (as he added, the same applied to war)⁴².

The year to follow, 1518, also heralded different perturbations, according to astrological forecasts concerning health. Although Mikołaj z Toliszkowa stated that he 'did not read' threats of plague in the stars, he did emphasize that he was generally anticipating acute ailments to affect many people in various parts of the world, all of that due to Mars's great power that year. The author of the prognosis did not fail to list the diseases which were to plague people: fever, hot ulcers bringing poignant, acute pain, heart and bowel ailments, head and shoulder diseases, but also female conditions; as he emphasizes, all of them could be expected mainly by residents of areas under the rule of Leo, Taurus and Scorpio⁴³.

Mikołaj Prokopiades z Szadka produced astrological predictions for the year 1519. As early as in the first sentence of an interesting paragraph, he stated 'non video periculum generale universo orbi imminere', which was probably a comforting message which brought some hope. However, he quickly added that people could expect diseases associated with Saturn and Mars, recognized as rulers of that year. But here too, he left a loophole, recognizing that benefic planets, friendly to people, could neutralize the harmful effects of the malefic ones. He stated, however, that sanguinics were to be particularly affected by chronic diseases that year; especially rheumatism, runny nose, different catarrhs, emaciation due to illness, intestinal ailments, quartan and tertian fever, spleen diseases, hydrops, ailments defined as 'carnium corosio, ventris solutio'; moreover, morbid blebs, dental ailments, but also mental diseases (oddities, madness), cough and stomach problems. Head and foot diseases were to intensify additionally⁴⁴. The same scholar deplored the situation of Mars and the

⁴¹ The ailment in question was, most probably, eczema.

⁴² Jakub z Hły, *Judiciale pronosticon pro Christi anno 1517 [...] calculatum*, sheet 3v.

⁴³ Mikołaj z Toliszkowa, *Judicium celebratissime Vniuersitatis Cracouiensis [...] ad annum Domini 1518 recollectum*, sheet 5v.

⁴⁴ Mikołaj Prokopiades z Szadka, *Pronosticon judiciale [...] futurorum eventuum anno Domini 1519*, sheets 7r-v.

Moon in square⁴⁵ in the sixth house⁴⁶, adding that the unfavorable aspect was aggravated by Scorpio in the ascendant of the year, i.e. in the first house of the annual horoscope. Such an arrangement of celestial bodies reportedly heralded troubles for choleric who were threatened mainly by quartan and tertian fever, inflammation of various parts of the body, all sorts of ailments resulting from excessive heat, with particular emphasis on the abdomen and loins. Fortunately, the author did not detect a plague, although he did make a reservation that it might 'explode as a result of an unexpected eclipse'⁴⁷.

As it can be easily noticed, people were particularly afraid of any form of the so-called 'plague', sought in the configuration of celestial bodies. Mikołaj z Toliszkowa stated for the year 1523 that its rulers – planets Saturn and Jupiter – would not have any special influence on people's health, nor even on the breakout of a plague. However, he did mention the possibility of unexpected plagues due to the opposition that was to happen between Mars and Saturn in a human sign that year. Luckily, as the astrologer pointed out, those would not last long. He also noted that the Sun would cause various ailments to boys, clergy, and talented craftsmen – artists that year. Vomiting, ailments of the mind ('turbationes cerebri'), drooling, severe dizziness and melancholy were to be particularly expected that year⁴⁸.

The fear of a plague outbreak can also be noticed in the prognostics by the aforementioned Mikołaj Prokopiades z Szadka who informed that no sign of a universal plague could be read in the annual chart for the year 1525. However, he decided that 'venomous ailments' called plagues

⁴⁵ In antiquity and the middle ages, five basic aspects were known: conjunction (0-degree angular distance of planets), sextile (60 degrees), quadrature (90 degrees), trine (120 degrees), opposition (180 degrees). J. Włodarczyk, *Astrologia. Historia. Mity. Tajemnice*, Warszawa 2008, p. 22.

⁴⁶ The astrological tradition distinguished twelve horoscopic houses; that resulted from the division of the heavenly sphere into unequal yet symmetrical parts and was due to the daily movement of the Earth around its axis. In astrological symbolism, houses represented different spheres of life. See: S. Konarska-Zimnicka, *Dom rodzinny a domy horoskopowe w średniowiecznej tradycji astrologicznej*, in: *Dom, codzienność i święto. Przestrzeń domowa – ludzie i rzeczy*, eds. B. Popiołek, A. Chłosta-Sikorska, M. Gadocha, Kraków 2018, pp. 11–20. Broadly in: RW Holden, *The Elements of House Division*, Southampton 1977, *passim*.

⁴⁷ 'ekspłodować na skutek niespodziewanego zaćmienia'. Mikołaj Prokopades z Szadka, *Juditium astronomicum [...] pro anno Christi MDXXI, fideliter calculatum*, sheet 6vb. 'de peste vero non est significatio annua nisi eclipsis effectus, que multas his anni molestabat vrbes non dum explosa foret'.

⁴⁸ Mikołaj z Toliszkowa, *Judicium celebratissime Universitatis Cracoviensis [...] ad annum Domini M.D.XXIII. collectum*, sheet 6r. Melancholy was closely related to the influence of Saturn. Broadly in: R. Klibansky, E. Panofsky, F. Saxl, *Saturn i melancholia. Studia z historii filozofii przyrody, medycyny, religii oraz sztuki*, transl. A. Kryczyńska, Kraków 2009, *passim*.

might occur and affect primarily Germany, Spain, and Lesser Poland. At the same time, he gave some hope that the forecast might not be fulfilled, because, as he wrote, it might be fortunately reversed by the interaction of two benefic planets: Jupiter and Venus. However, he did warn that the approaching eclipse of Mars in Capricorn would cause people to be beset by contagious diseases in late summer and throughout autumn. Most of the ailments of that year were supposed to come from an excess of melancholy. The readers were supposed to expect quartan fever, cholera, contagious melancholy, lethargy (drowsiness), dizziness, catarrhs, loss of consciousness, paralysis, morbid tiredness with life ('cedium') and many other ailments of 'Saturnine et Martialis nature'. Moreover, people inhabiting the areas under the control of these two malefic planets were to be affected by the abovementioned diseases with particular intensity and frequency⁴⁹. For the year 1526, the same scholar had no good news for boys and old men. He predicted that Mercury would be responsible for the deaths of many young boys from an infection which was to aggravate especially in spring. The same planet was also supposed to influence epidemics, generate head, stomach, loin and knee diseases, causing also various catarrhs, asthma, sensory disturbances and headache. For old men, the strong Saturn was to be a herald of death⁵⁰. Conversely, the year 1532, according to the findings of Mikołaj Prokopiades z Szadka, was to be propitious. The scholar wrote that planets and signs favored human safety and health. However, quite cautiously, the Krakow master stated that, due to Saturn's stay in Cancer – a cardinal sign – infections and even death might occur in summer and at the end of winter that year. As for specific diseases, he suggested expecting ailments that would involve the stomach, spleen, and lungs, in addition to all sorts of weaknesses and conditions originating in melancholy⁵¹.

Similarly, the questions of health, diseases, and ways of combating them constituted an important element of the creation in the universally understood field of prognostics in the late Middle Ages. Prints of that type, as Józef Seruga underlined, played a much more important role than they do today⁵². Not only did they provide information of a strictly calendar nature, but also gave extremely important medical, hygienic

⁴⁹ Mikołaj Prokopiades z Szadka, *Judicium astrologicum anni M.D.XXXV [...] elaboratum*, sheets 6ra–b.

⁵⁰ Mikołaj Prokopiades z Szadka, *Judicium Cracoviense astronomicum [...] super annum Domini 1526*, sheet 12v.

⁵¹ Mikołaj Prokopiades z Szadka, *Judicium astrologicum in celebri Studio Cracoviensi [...] ad annum Domini 1532*, sheets 3ra–b.

⁵² J. Seruga, *Krakowskie kalendarze XVI wieku*, Kraków 1913, p. 3.

and dietary guidelines (as well as many other kinds)⁵³ The scale of that type of output testifies not only to the great demand for these ‘ephemeral prints’, but can also to give an insight into their social reception. It cannot be excluded that the ‘astral’ terms indicated by learned astrologers as optimal for bloodletting, cupping, and taking appropriate medications were scrupulously followed. They may have even been yielding the results expected (unfortunately, the sources do not contain any information on the practical use of astrological advice contained in forecasts and calendars, in spite of the popularity and the very form of the calendars – a graphic presentation of the type and degree of optimization of the procedures applied – lead us to suppose that the use of clear symbols made it easier to understand, and therefore also to apply them)! After all, the heavenly bodies’ influencing power was believed to be enormous. And there is nothing on earth that would happen without having been previously written in the stars...

(translated by LINGUA LAB)

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⁵³ K. Śreniowska, *Pojęcie czasu a tzw. myślenie historyczne*, ‘Historyka’ 1975, 5, pp. 109–112. See also: S. Konarska-Zimnicka, *Ekonomia a gwiazdy podług wybranych almanachów krakowskich doby przedkopernikańskiej*, in: *O przeszłości. Czasy. Miejsca. Ludzie*, ed. W. Kowalski, Kielce 2016, pp. 229–239; eadem, *Aksjologia czasu w kontekście średniowiecznej i wczesnonowożytnej astrologii elekcyjnej (na przykładzie wybranych prognostyków astrologicznych przełomu XV i XVI stulecia)*, in: *Kategorie kultury. Czas*, eds. M. Bator, M. Krzysztofik, Z. Trzaskowski, Kielce 2015, pp. 227–241.

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STRESZCZENIE

Późnośredniowieczne prognozy astrologiczne (iudicia, kalendarze, almanachy, etc.) to ciekawe źródło do poznania przeszłości. Zwyczaj ich publikowania związany był z rozwojem tzw. krakowskiej szkoły astronomiczno-astrologicznej. Mistrzowie krakowscy piastujący funkcję profesorów katedry astronomii i astrologii zobligowani byli do układania rokrocznie prognozy, w których zamieszczali bazujące na mającym nastąpić układzie ciał niebieskich prognozy astrologiczne dotyczące niemalże każdej płaszczyzny życia ówczesnego społeczeństwa – prognozy odnoszono do handlu, gospodarki rolnej, urodzaju lub nieurodzaju; obejmowano nimi zagadnienia natury politycznej, ale też kwestie małżeństwa, posiadanego potomstwa i jego wychowania; obszerne ustępy poświęcano prognozowaniu pogody, a więc astrometeorologii. Jednakże szczególny nacisk kładziono na zagadnienia medyczne, albowiem kwestia zdrowia i choroby stanowiła kluczowe za-

gadnienie, które było istotne dla przedstawicieli wszystkich, bez wyjątku, stanów społecznych. Prognozyki astrologiczne natomiast, wskazując odpowiednią, z punktu widzenia astrologii, porę na podejmowanie starań o utrzymanie dobrej kondycji lub powrót do zdrowia, miały stanowić wykładnię wiedzy teoretycznej z zaleceniami dotyczącymi trudnej do zweryfikowania źródłowo praktyki.

Słowa kluczowe: astrologia w średniowieczu, prognozyki, kalendarze, almanachy, Uniwersytet Krakowski

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sylwia Konarska-Zimnicka – researcher and lecturer at the Institute of History of the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Department of Research on Cultural Change and Science. Her research interests include history of late medieval and early modern culture, history of the Church, everyday life, dance, music and other forms of entertainment in the Middle Ages, development of medieval and early modern science, with particular emphasis on medicine, astronomy, astrology; medieval literature, auxiliary sciences of history, primarily medieval palaeography.