

**Astrology in the Service of the Crown: Bartomeu de Tresbens,  
Physician and Astrologer to King Pere the Ceremonious of Aragon**

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### **Summary**

Bartomeu de Tresbens (fl. 1359-1375) was a physician and astrologer in the service of King Pere the Ceremonious of Aragon and his son Joan, both of them strongly interested in providing patronage for astronomy-astrology. Tresbens dedicated a set of astrological treatises in Catalan to Pere. He therefore appears to be the author of the most outstanding body of astrological work written in the vernacular in Latin medieval Europe. However, it has been scarcely studied up to now: only his longest treatise has been edited though insufficiently analysed, whereas his other works remain unstudied. This paper aims to outline Tresbens's biography and his relationship with the monarchy, both from the extant documentation and from his writings, as well as presenting an overview of his works. Upon examination Tresbens is revealed to be a notorious and well attested example that can help to understand the role of astrologers in medieval European courts.

**Key words:** medieval astrology, vernacularization, Catalan, Bartomeu de Tresbens, Pere the Ceremonious.

### **1. The King's Astrologers**

While the presence of the science of the stars, including both theoretical astronomy and its practical application, astrology, and its practitioners were common in Islamic courts, they slowly penetrated the courts of Latin Europe from the thirteenth century, beginning in those areas most directly exposed to the diffusion of Greek-Arabic knowledge –the Iberian and Italic Peninsulas as well as Sicily–, and reached their peak between 1450 and 1600. Indeed, in the thirteenth century Alfonso X of Castile translated and compiled treatises on the science of the stars directly from Arabic into Castilian (and occasionally into Latin), certain astrologers associated with the courts such as Michael Scot and Guido Bonatti wrote treatises in Latin, and some rulers, like Ezzelino da Romano, lord of the March of Treviso, or the Emperor Frederick II, consulted astrologers. In the fourteenth century, a higher number of astrologers are found to have been linked to some monarchs, for example Abraham ibn Zarzal (to Pedro I of Castile), Arnoul de Quincampoix (to Philippe IV of France), Tommaso da Pizzano (to Charles V of France) and Hermann (to Emperor Ludwig the Bavarian). Certainly, the resort of some rulers –usually kings or nobles, but sometimes even citizen republics such as Florence– to the science of the stars was becoming more common but was still uneven and discontinuous, depending on each one's individual inclination. However, it is difficult to

ascertain a decisive influence of astrologers on important political decisions, whereas it is sometimes easier to demonstrate a propagandistic use made of their predictions<sup>1</sup>.

From Alfonso X the interest of certain rulers in astrology-astronomy led them to patronize the translation of treaties in this field in the vernacular, in the framework of the vernacularization of learned knowledge that began in the thirteenth century<sup>2</sup>. More rarely, they supported the writing of original works. The use of the vernacular meant breaking the monopoly of learning so far held by clerical sectors, from monasteries or universities, and the emergence of a new knowledge centre –the court– with a new and powerful audience –the

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the presence of astrology in medieval courts see: Hilary Mary Carey, *Courting Disaster: Astrology at the English Court and University in the Later Middle Ages* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992); Jean-Patrice Boudet, 'Les astrologes européens et la genèse de l'Etat moderne (XIIe-XVIIe siècle): une première approche', in *L'État Moderne et les élites, XIIIe-XVIII siècles: apports et limites de la méthode prosopographique. Actes du colloque international CNRS-Paris I, 16-19 octobre 1991*, ed. Jean-Philippe Genet and Günther Lottes (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1996), 421-33; Jean-Patrice Boudet, 'Les astrologues et le pouvoir sous le règne de Louis XI', in *Observer, lire, écrire le ciel au Moyen Âge: actes du colloque d'Orléans (22-23 avril 1989)*, ed. Bernard Ribémont (Paris: Klincksieck, 1991), 7-61; Jean-Patrice Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance: astrologie, divination et magie dans l'Occident médiéval (XIIe-XVe siècle)* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2006), 295-325; Jean-Patrice Boudet 'Les horoscopes princiers dans l'Occident médiéval (XIIe-XVe siècle)', *Micrologus*, 16 (2008), 303-33; Julien Véronèse, 'Contre la divination et la magie à la cour: trois traités adressés à des grands aux XIVe et XVe siècles', *ibid.*, 405-31; Joan Cadden, 'Charles V, Nicole Oresme, and Christine de Pizan: Unities and Uses of Knowledge in Fourteenth-Century France', in *Texts and Contexts in Ancient and Medieval Science: Studies on the Occasion of John E. Murdoch's Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Edith D. Sylla and Michael McVaugh (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 208-44; Michael H. Shank, 'Academic Consulting in Fifteenth-Century Vienna: The Case of Astrology', *ibidem*, 245-70; John D. North, 'Scholars and Power: Astrologers at the Courts of Medieval Europe', in *Actes de la VI Trobada d'Història de la Ciència i de la Tècnica (Vic, 27, 28 i 29 d'octubre de 2000)*, ed. Josep Batlló, Pasqual Bernat and Roser Puig (Barcelona: Societat Catalana d'Història de la Ciència i de la Tècnica, 2002), 13-28; Jan R. Veenstra, *Magic and Divination at the Courts of Burgundy and France: Text and Context of Laurens Pignon's Contre les devineurs (1411)* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1998); Monica Azzolini, *The Duke and the Stars: Astrology and Politics in Renaissance Milan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013). A number of papers on astrology in courts will be published in *Astrologie, divination et magie dans les cours*, ed. Jean-Patrice Boudet, Martine Ostorero and Agostino Paravicini Bagliani (Florence: SISMEL, forthcoming). On astrology in Andalus society and politics see: Julio Samsó, *Las ciencias de los antiguos en al-Andalus* (Almería: Fundación Ibn Tufayl de Estudios Árabes, 2011), 75-80, and Joan Vernet, 'Astrología y política en la Córdoba del siglo X', *Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos* 15 (1970), 91-100.

<sup>2</sup> On vernacularization see Serge Lusignan, *Parler vulgairement: les intellectuels et la langue française aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles* (Paris – Montréal: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin - Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1986); Claude Thomasset, 'Les traités scientifiques', in *Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters*, ed. Hans Robert Jauss et al. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1988), 8.1, 306-9; Thérèse Charmasson 'L'astronomie, la cosmologie, l'astrologie et les sciences divinatoires', *ibidem*, 321-35; Joëlle Ducos, 'Traduire la science en langue vernaculaire: du texte au mot', in *Science Translated: Latin and Vernacular Translations of Scientific Treatises in Medieval Europe*, ed. Michèle Goyens et al. (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2008), 181-196; William C. Crossgrove, 'The Vernacularization of Science, Medicine, and Technology in Late Medieval Europe: Broadening Our Perspectives', *Early Science and Medicine*, 5 (2000): 47-63; Clara Floz, *El Traductor, la Iglesia y el rey: la traducción en España en los siglos XII y XIII* (Barcelona: Gedisa, 2000); Lluís Cifuentes, *La ciència en català a l'Edat Mitjana i el Renaixement* (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona; Palma: Universitat de les Illes Balears, 2006); Lluís Cifuentes, 'La traducció i la redacció d'obres científiques i tècniques', in *Història de la literatura catalana*, dir. Àlex Broch, (Barcelona: Enciclopèdia Catalana, 2014), 2, 118-31.

nobility. While other branches of technical literature in the vernacular reached a broader readership, sophisticated judicial astrology was mainly addressed at those in power, and only some products such as almanacs and prognostications later became popular, especially in the late fifteenth century thanks to the printing press. Occasionally, the presence of judicial astrology and divinatory arts in court caused a reaction among some polemicists who also questioned these practices in vernacular texts, both from faith or reason, like Nicole Oresme at the court of Charles V of France or Laurent Pignon at the court of Duke Jean the Fearless of Burgundy. Certainly, such controversies were stimulated by the competition between astrologers and other advisers to influence those in power.

In the fourteenth century, the ruler who most decidedly boosted the vernacularization of learning, with a specific interest in the science of the stars, was Charles V, known as the Wise, regent (1356-1360) and king of France (1364-1380). In order to facilitate access by him and his entourage to learned knowledge, this monarch undertook an intensive programme to translate works in different disciplines, including a large number on astronomy and astrology. From 1359, when he still was Dauphin, he ordered the translation of some basic books in this field and in 1361 Pèlerin de Prusse, a master of arts of German origin, addressed at him an original treatise on astrology, the *Livre des eleccions universelles des douze mansions*.

Less known by current scholarship is another king who also resolutely promoted the science of the stars and its vernacular diffusion: Pere the Ceremonious of Aragon. His long reign (1336-1387) coincided with a deep demographic, economic, political and social crisis in the Crown of Aragon. In this unfavourable context Pere sought to increase monarchy's prestige, the only institutional link between his kingdoms, not only by means of military campaigns and territorial expansion but also by supporting art, literature and the sciences, as the early modern Aragonese chronicler Jerónimo Zurita recorded<sup>3</sup>. This active policy of patronage mirrors those of other kings of his time and especially that of the earlier Alfonso X of Castile, whose legal code *Siete Partidas* he ordered to be translated. As with Alfonso, one of the disciplines that enjoyed a major boost under Pere the Ceremonious was astronomy-astrology, achieving its high point in the Crown of Aragon during his reign. Pere, who confessed his personal interest in this field<sup>4</sup>, supported the translation and the writing of original works in different languages. Such an interest is demonstrated from the early 1350s: he gave his patronage to the translation on this subject into the vernacular from at least 1351 onwards, when master Alfonso was commissioned by him to render a 'book of figures and astronomy' probably into Aragonese<sup>5</sup>; he received the astronomer Jacob ben David Bonjorn at

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<sup>3</sup> 'Fue muy dado a todo género de letras, especialmente a astrología y grandemente aficionado a la alquimia', Jerónimo Zurita, *Anales de la Corona de Aragón*, X, 39, ed. Ángel Canellas (Saragossa: CSIC, 1967-1985), vol. 4, 713.

<sup>4</sup> 'Sentints nos ésser inclinats a natura en amar, sercar e investigar sciències e en special de les Steles, e per actes e affers consagüents nostre regne personalment no ayam pogut entendre en provar los moviments dels corsos celestials per socor en la major part de nostre temps ayam agut entendre en fets cavallarívols e militars per deffensar e mantenir nostres Regnes', Josep M. Millàs Vallicrosa, *Las Tablas astronómicas del Rey Don Pedro el Ceremonioso* (Madrid: CSIC; Barcelona: Asociación para la Historia de la Ciencia Española, 1962), 123-4 (also in the Latin version, *ibid.*, 142).

<sup>5</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1065, fol. 3v and 112r, in Antoni Rubió, *Documents per l'història de la cultura catalana mig-aval* (Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 1908), vol. 1 (nos. 153 and 154). Although it is not specified, this version must be in Aragonese, attending to the language employed by the king to communicate with the translator. Indeed, after becoming king, he usually wrote his letters in Latin and Catalan, but he used to employ Aragonese when communicating with Aragonese people, such as the translator Juan Fernández de Heredia: Fernando González Ollé, 'Opciones y preferencias lingüísticas del rey Pedro IV de Aragón', *Revista de Filología Española* 87/2 (2007): 293-322. See a hypothesis and literature on this translation in Cifuentes, *La ciència en català*, 437-9.

his court, in Perpinyà, in 1356<sup>6</sup>, and he ordered astronomical instruments from Jews of the same city (in 1352 and 1356)<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, if we trace events back to the beginning of his reign, the *Corónica de Aragón* (1499) states that his coronation took place in 1336 under a very favourable sign, according to the astrologers sent by King Robert of Naples<sup>8</sup>.

However, in my opinion, a turning point in the patronage of the science of the stars can be observed in 1359, when he commissioned Pere Gilbert and his disciple Dalmau Sesplanes to write a book on the ‘art of astrology’<sup>9</sup>. Of course, the terms ‘astronomy’ and ‘astrology’ are exchangeable in the Middle Ages and by themselves they are not indicative of which branch of the science it was. Everything indicates that this work is the *Tables of Barcelona*, as named by Lynn Thorndike, composed in Latin between 1360 and 1366, and completed by Sesplanes after Gilbert’s death. Only its preface and part of its canons are preserved. Other astronomical works promoted by the king are also preserved nowadays: the *Tables of Perpinyà*, designed to calculate solar and lunar eclipses and compiled by Jacob ben David Bonjorn, in Hebrew, Latin and Catalan, were possibly begun in 1361; and the *Tables of King Pere*, compiled by Jacob Corsuno with the collaboration of Sesplanes and completed in 1381, include the canons also in Hebrew, Latin and Catalan. The use of Hebrew can be explained by the fact that the authors of these two works were Jewish, while the Latin version corresponds to the purpose, declared by the king himself, of providing materials for international use<sup>10</sup>, and the Catalan version can be attributed to Pere’s personal interest. This set of texts, basic in nature and having a practical orientation, are grounded in previous works and new observations with the aim of updating earlier astronomical tables, such as Alfonso’s *Tables*, and to facilitate their local use<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> ACA, RP, reg. 828, fol. 78r.

<sup>7</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1140, fol. 53v, edited in Francesc de Bofarull, ‘Antigua marina catalana’, *Memorias de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 7 (1901): 1-123, no. 15; ACA, C, reg. 899, fol. 75v, edited in Antoni Rubió, *Documents per l’historia de la cultura catalana mig-eval*, vol. 2 (Barcelona: Institut d’Estudis Catalans, 1921), no. 143.

<sup>8</sup> Gauberto Fabricio de Vagad, *Crónica de Aragón (Zaragoza, 1499)* (Saragossa: Cortes de Aragón, 1996), fol. 136r.

<sup>9</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1071, fol. 177r, in Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 1, no. 192.

<sup>10</sup> Millàs Vallicrosa, *Tablas astronómicas*, 124 and 143.

<sup>11</sup> The extant text of the *Tables of Barcelona* (also called *Taules i almanac*) was edited in Lynn Thorndike, ‘Introduction and Canon by Dalmatius to *Tables of Barcelona* for the Years 1361-1433’, *Isis* 26/2 (1936): 310-320, and in Millàs Vallicrosa, *Tablas astronómicas*, 85-93. In the same volume of Millàs (93-238) the three versions of the *Tables of King Pere* (also called *Tables of Barcelona*) are also edited. The Catalan and Latin versions of the *Tables of Perpinyà* or *Astronomia* were studied and edited in Josep Chabàs, *L’Astronomia de Jacob ben David Bonjorn* (Barcelona: Institut d’Estudis Catalans, 1992), 39-251. Both studies by Millàs (54-84) and Chabàs (15-37) are indispensable overall views for approaching the astronomical-astrological activity in the time of Pere the Ceremonious and Joan the Hunter. See also Josep M. Roca, *Johan I d’Aragó* (Barcelona: Institució Patxot, 1929), 363-415; Josep Chabàs, ‘The Astronomical Tables of Jacob ben David Bonjorn’, *Archives of History of Exact Sciences* 42 (1991): 279-314; Josep Chabàs, ‘L’activitat astronòmica a l’època del rei Pere (segle XIV)’, in *La ciència en la història dels Països Catalans*, vol. 1, *Dels àrabs al Renaixement*, ed. Joan Vernet and Ramon Parés (Valencia: Institut d’Estudis Catalans; Universitat de València, 2004), 483-514, Cifuentes, *Ciència en català*, 189-220; Michael A. Ryan, *A Kingdom of Stargazers: Astrology and Authority in the Late Medieval Crown of Aragon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), 105-53, and Cristóbal Macías, ‘Algunas consideraciones sobre la astrología en el Reino de Aragón’, *eHumanista* 10 (2016), 456-92. Jewish contribution is summarized in Esperança Valls, *Cap estrella per a Israel* (Girona: Universitat de Girona, 2008). Regarding Pere and his time: Institució Milà i Fontanals (CSIC), *Pere el Cerimoniós i la seva època* (Barcelona: CSIC, 1989); J. N. Hillgarth, ‘La personalitat política i cultural de Pere III a través de la seva crònica’, *Llengua & Literatura* 5

In addition, the king took care to furnish his astronomers-astrologers with the resources required for their activity. Among other astronomical instruments, he commissioned the building of a great armillary sphere in 1362<sup>12</sup>. A list of 90 stars dated in 1362 and preserved in a manuscript in Paris was due to Gilbert and Sesplanes's observations<sup>13</sup>. Moreover, from 1359 onwards Pere and his son Joan frequently ordered astrolabes, clocks and sundials from Jewish craftsmen in Majorca, who excelled in the manufacture of astronomical and nautical instruments, as well as the making of maps and navigational charts<sup>14</sup>. Such instruments and maps were sometimes offered to people of high rank or, as a diplomatic gift, to foreign rulers, like the famous *Catalan Atlas* attributed to Abraham Cresques, likely to have been given by Duke Joan to the King of France and which included contents on medical astrology. Some of them, such as Isaac Nafucí (1376) or Vidal Efraïm Girondí (c. 1381), also wrote works on astronomy-astrology commissioned by the Ceremonious but now lost<sup>15</sup>. Lastly, the royal library contained many titles relating to astronomy and astrology, which the king himself often took care to acquire and that remained at the disposal of his astronomers-astrologers in order to compose their works<sup>16</sup>. In addition, among the properties inventoried at King Martí's death, some instruments were listed, probably acquired by his predecessors, Pere and Joan<sup>17</sup>.

Pere's son and successor, Joan, was also very interested in astrology: numerous questions posed by him to many astrologers, including Sesplanes, are recorded, both before and after he became king. It has been said that King Joan the Hunter (1387-1396) left the astronomical work of his predecessor to focus instead on astrology<sup>18</sup>. In fact, we have no certain proof of any astronomical or astrological work promoted by him, even though his efforts to obtain books on these subjects, even in Catalan translation, are recorded<sup>19</sup>.

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(1992 - 1993): 7-102; Ernest Belenguer, *Vida i regnat de Pere el Cerimoniós (1319-1387)* (Lleida: Pagès editors, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1079, fol. 106v, in Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 1, nos. 201 and 202; ACA, RP, reg. 871, fol. 186v, and reg. 943, fol. 247r, in Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 2, nos. 141 and 119.

<sup>13</sup> Jean-Patrice Boudet, *Lire dans le ciel: la bibliothèque de Simon de Phares, astrologue du XVe siècle* (Brussels: Centre d'Étude des Manuscrits, 1994), 65.

<sup>14</sup> Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 2, no. 129; ACA, C, reg. 1746, fol. 109r, in Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 1, no. 312.

<sup>15</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1664, fol. 37r, in Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 1, no. 319; ACA, C, reg. 1095, fol. 25r-v, cited in Josep Trenchs, *Documents de Cancellaria i de Mestre Racional sobre la cultura catalana medieval*, ed. M. Teresa Ferrer et alii (Barcelona: Institut d'Estudis Catalans), 2011, no. 1711.

<sup>16</sup> 'En Pere etc. al feel nostre en P. dez Palau, tinent les claus del nostre arxiu de les armes del palau nostre de Barcelona, salut et gràcia, fem-vos assaber que nos havem manat al feel de casa nostra, en Dalmau çes Planes, que ab los libres nostres d'art d'estrologia qui són en lo dit archiu, nos faça alcuna obra de la dita art, segons que d'açò l'avem informat, perquè volem e us dehim e us manam que, exceptats dos libres qui son appellats Ali-Aben-Ragel, los quals per la dita rahó no cal que-l li liurets, tots los altres libres de la dita art d'astrologia, los quals lo dit en Dalmau vos demanarà un après altre successivament, ço és, ell retén a vós lo que primerament li haurets liurat e vós liuran a ell un après altre, liurets a ell per la dita rahó, recobran en cascun liurament dels dits libres albarà', ACA, C, reg. 1071, fol. 176v, in Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 1, no. 191.

<sup>17</sup> 'un strelau de lautó' (no. 1006), in addition to compasses (nos. 1014 and 1025), is recorded in the inventory preserved in ACA, C, reg. 2326 (1410) and transcribed in Jaume Massó, 'Inventari dels béns mobles del rey Martí d'Aragó', *Revue Hispanique* 12/42 (1905): 413-590. It also includes an important part of the royal library.

<sup>18</sup> Chabàs, *Astronomia de Jacob ben David Bonjorn*, 23-28; Chabàs, 'Activitat astronòmica', 503-6.

<sup>19</sup> In 1379 Dalmau Sesplanes sent Joan a book on the eclipse of the Sun and the Moon: 'libret... de l'eclipsi del sol e de la luna e del girament e del ple de la luna' (ACA, reg. 1658, fol. 11v, in Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 1, no. 304). However, this reference does not demonstrate that it was translated into

Therefore, in my opinion it would be more accurate to say that Joan did not continue Pere's programme of preparing a corpus of basic texts that embraced both astronomy and astrology, certainly an ambitious project of high intellectual prestige. What is true is that, whereas the extant documentation does not show Pere regularly consulting his astrologers, it does reveal that his son consulted astrologers very often, albeit usually with an unspecified purpose. Joan also seems to have been more personally involved in the science of the stars than Pere: indeed, whereas in the *Tables of King Pere* the father expresses regret that he could not devote his attention to it because he was absorbed by government and war duties, the son states that he was familiar with the use of an astrolabe and discusses technical issues with Sesplanes<sup>20</sup>. In any case, although I have thus far focused on astronomical works, it should be remembered that Pere was also concerned with promoting a set of basic treatises that were unequivocally astrological. This is not surprising if we consider that in the *Tables of King Pere* the Ceremonious confesses that, as a ruler, his interest in the 'science of the stars' lies in its practical application, i. e. judicial astrology<sup>21</sup>.

Naturally the backing given by Pere and Joan to the science of the stars does not mean that they indiscriminately accepted all the occult arts: both supported learned knowledge based on occult natural forces while repressing practices based on the invocation of spirits. Indeed, although they did protect some alchemists, they persecuted necromancy and sorcery as shown in several proceedings that they opened or in which they showed interest. Nevertheless, and significantly, both father and son held divergent views on the case of midwife Bonanada, accused by Joan of having caused the death of his fiancée Jeanne de Valois in Beziers, whereas Pere wondered how his son could believe that someone might be harmed from a distance. Perhaps the credit given by Joan to the effectiveness of necromancy and sorcery explains his efforts to obtain magical objects and books from the defendants and other suspicious people, both caused by his fear of being their target and his will to learn more about the occult arts. Therefore, we can assume that father and son showed varying degrees of credulity regarding the action of curses, but both used the charge of causing death or illness by means of black magic in the proceedings initiated against two different women, who were their respective political enemies: Pere against Violant de Vilaregut, Jaume of Majorca's widow, and Joan against Sibil·la de Fortià, the last wife and widow of the Ceremonious himself<sup>22</sup>.

Bartomeu de Tresbens (*fl.* 1359-1475) was commissioned to write the astrological work under the patronage of Pere. He is certainly a very remarkable author of medieval technical literature in the vernacular and author of the most outstanding astrological work of the Crown of Aragon. However, in my opinion, he has not received the attention that he deserves, especially in comparison with the astronomical activity undertaken at the same court of Pere, probably because his work belongs to a domain that is not currently prestigious. Until now he has been known for his most extensive and ambitious work, the *Llibre de les nativitats*<sup>23</sup>, and a few documents, especially from the Archive of the Crown of Aragon

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Catalan or that it was dedicated to him or that it was a work by Sesplanes. On different hypotheses regarding this book, see Chabàs, *Astronomia de Jacob ben David Bonjorn*, 24, and Cifuentes, *Ciència en català*, 198-9. In 1386 Joan also tried to obtain the Catalan version of a book of Abenragel, but we do not know if it was carried out (ACA, C, reg. 1674, fol. 47v, in Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 1, no. 385).

<sup>20</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1658, fol. 11v; ACA, C, reg. 1659 fol. 132r; ACA, C, reg. 1746, fol. 130r (in Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 1, 304, and 2, nos 236 and 239).

<sup>21</sup> '...la part judiciària della sciència delles stelles supposa los vers moviments dels corsos celestials...', Vallicrosa, *Tablas astronómicas*, 124. See also the beginning of the preface (in note 79 below).

<sup>22</sup> See the cited examples and the corresponding documents in Roca, *Johan I d'Aragó*, 363-415.

<sup>23</sup> Bartomeu de Tresbens, *Tractat d'astrologia*, ed. Joan Vernet and David Romano (Barcelona:

(ACA), which provided some data on his career in Pere's service. It is now possible to expand our knowledge about Tresbens considerably, thanks to the study of other shorter astrological writings, mostly identified by Lluís Cifuentes, and the discovery of new documentation, due mainly to Carmel Ferragud<sup>24</sup>. This paper aims to review his work and his career as an astrologer in the service of the monarchy in the light of materials that have been discovered to date, largely unknown or insufficiently studied before.

## 2. Biographical Outline of Tresbens

At present Tresbens's origins are completely unknown: it is not known when or where he was born, nor is anything known about his early life. The surviving documentation invariably describes him as having a university degree in medicine, which he may have obtained at Montpellier, as we shall see, but he defines himself not only as the king's physician, but also as an astrologer and philosopher<sup>25</sup>. The earliest extant document referring to him, belonging to the Historical Archive of Barcelona, dates back to 1359, when he participated in a tribunal as a medical examiner in Barcelona<sup>26</sup>. But the bulk of the surviving documentation on Tresbens is housed at the ACA and shows his connection with the royal family between 1360 and 1375. Indeed, the documents show his official position to be a 'physician of the king's house' as well as his activity as an astrologer in the service of the crown. We see him playing this double role not only for Pere but also for his son and heir, Duke Joan, and often travelling through the states of the Crown of Aragon under the requirements of their itinerant monarchy. Unfortunately, most of the documents are too concise and insufficiently explicit to provide a clear idea of the events that they refer to, perhaps because of their confidential nature.

If Tresbens entered the service of the monarchy around 1360, as suggested by the chronology of the known documentation, his recruitment would coincide with the moment at which Pere's interest in astrology became deeper. Moreover, the oldest document linking him with the Crown seems to be related to the science of the stars. Based on this evidence, it seems likely that Tresbens was already acting as an astrologer before becoming royal physician, and this expertise might have helped him in his professional promotion. As it was not unusual, Tresbens's offices were apparently independent of each other, since his

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Biblioteca Catalana d'Obres Antigues, 1957-1958). The introduction to this edition (vol. 1, 9-36) has so far been the main work of reference on Tresbens. There are some further brief notes in Josep M. Calbet and Jacint Corbella, *Diccionari biogràfic de metges catalans* (Barcelona: Fundació Salvador Vives Casajuana; Universitat de Barcelona, 1981-3), s.v. 'Bartomeu de Tresbens', vol. 1, 68; Luis García-Ballester, *La medicina a la València medieval: medicina i societat en un país medieval mediterrani* (Valencia: Edicions Alfons el Magnànim), 1988, 94-5; Chabàs, 'Activitat astronòmica', 501-2; Ryan, *Kingdom of Stargazers*, 111-2.

<sup>24</sup> I thank Carmel Ferragud for bringing the many documents of the ACA regarding Tresbens to my attention and providing me with their transcription. Some of them had been quoted in Carmel Ferragud, *Medicina i promoció social a la baixa Edat Mitjana (Corona d'Aragó, 1350-1410)* (Madrid: CSIC, 2005), 91, 202, 268 and 446. At present, both of us are preparing a diplomatarium in order to gather all the extant documents on this astrologer. Regarding Tresbens's works see Cifuentes, *Ciència en català*, 209.

<sup>25</sup> 'Barthomeu de Tresvents, metge seu en la part de física e en aquesta matexa e expert de filosofia', *Llibre de les nativitats (=Tractat d'astrologia)*, vol. 1, 40; 'pobre letrat e humil sercador e servidor de veritat dels térmens de philosophia, de medecina e de astrologia', MS Ripoll, Biblioteca Lambert Matas 21, fol. 66r.

<sup>26</sup> AHCB, Estudi, xviii, 9, no. 1, in Antonio de la Torre and Jordi Rubió, *Documentos para la historia de la Universidad de Barcelona* (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 1971), vol. 1, [38-42], doc. 22.

astrological works had no medical orientation but were rather biased towards the needs of power. In any case, according to Jean-Patrice Boudet, the double profile of physician and astrologer in the service of a prince was the most common among the astrologers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, although professionals specialized only in astrology became more frequent from the fifteenth century<sup>27</sup>. However, except for Tresbens, Pere's astronomers-astrologers were not physicians: Pere Gilbert was a master of arts ('magistrum in artibus et in astrorum scientia peritissimum'), Dalmau Sesplanes seems to have had no university degree, because he was simply labelled Gilbert's disciple and an expert in the science of the stars ('discipulus ipsius et in ipsa scientia expertus'), and Jacob Corsuno was called a 'Jewish astrologer and interpreter' ('Juheu estròlench e torcimany')<sup>28</sup>.

If the extant documents housed at the ACA regarding Tresbens are examined, the earliest proving his relationship with the Crown is a request from the king, dated 1360 in Alagón, near Saragossa, to the official of Justice of the Kingdom of Aragon, Johan López Sessé, calling on the latter to oblige all the blacksmiths in Saragossa to be totally available for whatever Tresbens needed for his work, in the hours and days decided by him<sup>29</sup>. We cannot be sure what kind of work it was, but it is very tempting to suspect that it was a great astronomical instrument. In the following years (1361-1363) other documents place him in several towns in Aragon, such as Almunia, Saragossa and Monzón. These stages have a clear connection with the king's movements in his war against Castile, as described in his *Crònica*, and demonstrate that he was part of the royal retinue<sup>30</sup>. As for what his function might have been during the war, we should note that it was, of course, common for the royal physician to accompany the king when he was on a military campaign<sup>31</sup>, but there is no evidence that an astrologer was also required for war expeditions.

Beyond the royal archives, the *Llibre de consells* of Cervera, a middle-sized town in inner Catalonia, provides new biographical data on Tresbens. Indeed, it records the negotiations held from 30 July to 22 October 22 1372 between the Council of Cervera and

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<sup>27</sup> Boudet, *Entre science et nigromance*, 295-325.

<sup>28</sup> Vallicrosa, *Tablas astronómicas*, 90; ACA, RP, reg. 372, fol. 190v (in Amada López de Meneses, 'Documentos culturales de Pedro el Ceremonioso', *Estudios de Edad Media de la Corona de Aragón* 5 (1952), 669-771, no 74).

<sup>29</sup> 'Al amado consellero nostro Johan López de Sessé, cavallero justicia de Aragón o a su lugarteniente, salut e dilección. Mandamos vos que a requisición de maestre Bertolomeu de Tresbienes, maestre en artes e en medicina, físico nostro, forcedes e costregades de part nostra aquell o aquellos ferreros de Çaragoça que él vos dirá a fer aquella obra que él querrá e en aquellos días, horas e tiempos que ell demandará', ACA, C, reg. 1171, fol. 14 (in Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 2, no. 131).

<sup>30</sup> Tresbens's location according to the documents from ACA and Pere's according to his *Crònica*, edited in *Les quatre grans Cròniques, IV: Crònica de Pere III el Cerimoniós*, ed. Ferran Soldevila, Jordi Bruguera and M. Teresa Ferrer (Barcelona, Institut d'Estudis Catalans, 2014): ACA, C, reg. 1171, fol. 14 (Alagón, 15 May 1360) / *Crònica*, VI, 29 (358): in Saragossa, May 1360; ACA, RP, Treasury, 342, fol. 150 (Saragossa, April 1361) / *Crònica*, VI, 29 (359) in Saragossa late March – mid-April 1361; ACA, RP, Treasury, vol. 342, fol. 170 (Almunia, April 1361) / campaign in Calatayud, *Crònica*, VI, 29 (359); ACA, C (*Sigilli Secreti*), reg. 1191, fol. 531v-532r (Barbastro, 1 October 1363) / *Crònica*, VI, 33 (364): in Saragossa until mid-September 1363, subsequently Monzón and Barbastro towards Perpinyà; ACA, RP, Treasury, vol. 346, fol. 111v (Monzón, Abril 1363) / Courts in Monzón from mid-Novembre to mid-April 1363, *Crònica*, VI, 33, 364.

<sup>31</sup> On the presence of medical practitioners in the campaigns of Catalan kings see Lluís Cifuentes, *Medicina i guerra a l'Europa baix-medieval: la sanitat i la participació dels seus professionals en les expedicions militars de la Corona d'Aragó (1309-1355)* (Bellaterra: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 1993 vol. 1, 219-60, vol. 2, 340-361, 465-8 and 596-601; Lluís Cifuentes and Michael McVaugh, 'Estudi introductor', in *Arnaldi de Villanova Opera Medica Omnia, X.2: Regimen Almarie* (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona), 1998, 20-7.

Tresbens, who was then in Barcelona, in an attempt to convince him to base himself there as the town's official physician, a professional activity not necessarily incompatible with service to the royal family<sup>32</sup>. The Council minutes show how the high prestige he had acquired, not only as a physician but also as an astrologer, gave him great power of negotiation: they reveal the great interest of the town in hiring him because of his reputation as a 'good physician and great astrologer'<sup>33</sup>. This reputation meant that he could demand a higher salary and many more tax exemptions than other physicians. However, the harsh conditions demanded by Tresbens finally discouraged the Council from hiring him.

In 1373, Duke Joan wrote several letters from Valencia asking Tresbens to visit him urgently from Barcelona<sup>34</sup>. In one of these Tresbens is ordered to bring with him all his books on astrology and medicine, as he would need these to meet the duke's requirements<sup>35</sup>. It can therefore be deduced that the reasons for this request are both due to his role as a physician and astrologer, and that Joan considered them to be of great importance, although the exact motive is not specified. An alternative interpretation might be that the use of astrology was required for some medical purpose. In any case, a later document confirms that Tresbens went from Barcelona to Valencia<sup>36</sup>. A year later Tresbens is again in the Kingdom of Valencia near to Joan, as indicated by two letters from the duke. In one of these, dated 31 October 1374, Joan entreats his father to receive Tresbens and listen to what were probably some astrological predictions about the king, the heir and the kingdoms of the Crown of Aragon<sup>37</sup>. There may possibly be a relationship between this request and another made by the king himself: in a letter dated 2 December 1374, Pere commands Tresbens to come to him because of some affairs concerning him that the physician has to carry out in collaboration with

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<sup>32</sup> *Llibre de consells* (Cervera, 1372), Arxiu Comarcal de la Segarra, 220-30-T1-8, fols. 34r, 36r-v, 37r-v, 38v, 39r. See also Carmel Ferragud, 'Bartomeu de Tresbén, metge i astròleg de Pere el Cerimoniós i l'infant Joan: entre el servei a la Corona i el municipi', *Asclepio* (forthcoming). Josep M. Llobet, 'Els metges a Cervera durant els segles XIV i XV', *Gimbernat* 13 (1990): 115-40; Agustí Duran and Frederic Gómez, 'Las Escuelas de Gramática en Cervera', *Boletín de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* 17 (1944): 5-77. On the conditions of the physicians to Catalan kings in the late fourteenth century see Ferragud, *Medicina i promoció social*, 196-220, 284-97.

<sup>33</sup> 'E fo proposat en Conseyll per los dits pahers que ells han recebut una letra dels prohòmens que són a Barchinona continent en acabament que havien tractat ab maestre Barthomeu de Tresbens que sen vingués estar azí en la vila a practicar sa art de medecina [...]. Sobre lo fey de maestre Barthomeu de Tresbens fo acordat que, com aquesta sie una de les notables viles de Catalunya e estige fort mal se'n un sollemniall metge e segons fama lo dit maestre Berthomeu sie bon mege e gran astròlech...', *Llibre de consells*, fol. 36r-v.

<sup>34</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1739, fols 42v and 43r.

<sup>35</sup> 'Com ja per altra letra nostra vos hajam escrit que per necessitat de nostra persona vos hajam mester e us pregàssem e manàssem que, tots afers a parts posats, vinguéssets a nós segons que en la dita letra que dada fo en València, primer dia del mes e any devall escrits, pus largament és contengut, on com nós de certa sciència vullam que per la dita nostra necessitat vingats a nós, per ço volem e us mana, que vinent de continent a nós, aportets ab vós tots los libres vostres e a vós necessaris així en astrologia com en física, e que per res no triguets si'ns desijats servir ne complaure', ACA, C, reg. 1739, fol. 44r (in Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 1, no. 264).

<sup>36</sup> ACA, Reial Patrimoni, Mestre Racional, vol. 587, fol. 52v. He was in Barcelona in January 1373 according to ACA, RP, MR 364, fol. 109v.

<sup>37</sup> 'Sàpia la vostra magnificència que lo feel físich vostre e meu, maestre Bartholomeu de Tresbens, m'a dites algunes paraules tocants vós e mi e tots los regnes vostres, de les quals ell havia parlat ab vós en Barcelona e aquelles trobà per sciència d'estrologia. Et com jo no me entena segons que vós senyor sabets en aquelles e vós les sabets, per ço tramet-vos lo dit físich, lo qual vos plàcia oyr e haver acort en ço que us plaurà e tremetrem en resposta per ell matex ço que determenarets', ACA, C, reg. 1742, fol. 7v (in Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 2, no. 187).

Dalmau Sesplanes, another astronomer-astrologer in the royal service, as we know<sup>38</sup>. It therefore seems evident that these mysterious affairs are astrological in nature.

Although Tresbens's official position was that of royal physician, surprisingly almost no extant document explicitly shows him providing medical assistance to the king or his family, probably because he was normally alongside Pere, as seen above during the Aragon campaign, and, therefore, he did not need to be called upon for health care. The only recorded request for Tresbens's medical advice comes from Joan's wife, Mata of Armanhac: in a letter dated 10 December 1374 in Lleida, she asks the king to send her the physician to cure her from a cold and mild fever.<sup>39</sup>

Further documents show the advantage that Tresbens occasionally gained from his proximity to the monarchy for certain commercial operations, such as the permission given by Joan for him to export a large load of figs from the Kingdom of Valencia to the other Crown territories and the safe conduct granted by the king to Tresbens's partner, a merchant from the County of Foix, his son and his agents, to trade and stay wherever they liked in his kingdoms<sup>40</sup>. Moreover, the astrologer influenced on medical regulations when he inspired Joan to decree that all medicine or surgery practitioners not provided with a university license would have to pass a rigorous exam<sup>41</sup>. The last known documents related to Tresbens are dated April 1375<sup>42</sup>. After that his trail runs cold, and therefore he probably died or ended his relationship with the royal family.

### 3. Transmission, Authorship and Dating of Tresbens's Works

Four astrological treatises in Catalan by Tresbens are preserved: *Llibre de les nativitats* ('Book of nativities'), *Tractat de les interrogacions* ('Treatise on interrogations'), *Tractat de les eleccions* ('Treatise on elections') and *Libel d'investigació de tresors* ('Booklet of research for treasures'). However, the only well-known work by Tresbens is his main

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<sup>38</sup> 'Nós manam venir aquí per alguns afers nostres lo feel de casa nostra maestre Bartomeu de Tresbens, los quals han afer <aquí> ell e Dalmau Ses Planes, de casa nostra. Perquè us deïm e manam que a açò que·ls dits maestre Barthomeu e Dalmau Planes vos diran e sobre·ls dits afers de nostra part creegats, axí com si <nós> vos ho deyem, e·ls endrecets sobre aquells, e d'açò·ns farets plaer e servey', ACA, C, reg. 1357, fol. 2. Confirmed by ACA, C, reg. 1357, fol. 10v.

<sup>39</sup> 'Molt alt e molt excellent príncep e senyor pare e senyor meu molt car, sàpie la vostra molt gran altea que jo he haüt cadarn ab un poch d'escalfament, perquè plàcia a vós, molt alt senyor, de licenciar e manar a maestre Barthomeu de Tresbens que, vista la present, vingue a mi', ACA, C, reg. 1811 f. 59v i 60r.

<sup>40</sup> 'Com nós, a supplicació del fel físich del senyor rey e nostre maestre Bartholomeu de Tresbens, humilment a nós facta, hajam atorgat e donada licència al dit maestre Bartholomeu que franchament e sens pena alcuna puixe traure o fer traure del dit regne e portar e fer portar a les parts que volrà dins la terra del senyor rey e nostra CL quintars de figues', ACA, C, reg. 1651, fols 88v-89r (Valencia, 23 October 1374); 'Nos Petrus etc. ut vos, Bartholomeus de Tribusbonis físicus domus nostre et Guillelmus Durandi ac Iohannes Durandi filius vestry, dicti Guillelmi mercatoris civitatis Apamiarum Regni Ffrancie et Comitatus Fuxi, cum vestris factoribus, negociatoribus, procuratoribus et famulis per nostre protectionis presidium ab omni iactura valeatis salubrius preservari [...] tenore presentis carte nostre recipimus atque ponimus vos predictos Bartholomeum, Guillelmum et Iohannem ac factores, negociatores, procuratores et famulos vestros sub nostra proteccione, custodia et comandamento, ita quod in terra nostra ubilibet possitis negociari et marcari (=mercari) atque morari cum rebus seu mercibus vestris salve', ACA, C, reg. 922, fol. 75r-v (Saragossa, 16 April 1372). On the frequent commercial activity carried out by physicians beyond their profession, see Ferragud, *Medicina i promoció social*, 435-68.

<sup>41</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1682, fols 91v-92v (11 April 1375), and reg. 1625, fol. 189r-v (28 April 1375).

<sup>42</sup> The second mentioned in note 41 and ACA, C, reg. 1625, 192r.

work, the first of them, edited under the inaccurate title *Tractat d'astrologia*, whereas the others have not yet been studied. These four astrological works are only reproduced in two fifteen-century manuscripts<sup>43</sup>.

- The MS Paris, BNF, Manuscrits occ.: Espagnol 411, paper, 86 fols. 297x220 mm., dated to the last quarter of the fifteenth century, only includes the *Llibre de les nativitats* (fols 1bisr-85r).
- The MS Ripoll, Biblioteca Lambert Matas 21 (*R* onwards), dated to the third quarter of the fifteenth century. Paper. 173 fols. 291 x 215 mm. Blank folios 21v, 23-28, 98v-111 and 121-122, 148v, 149v, 164v-165. Leaves 1 and 29-30 are mutilated, as well as some blank others (23-28) and the back of 173, which was cut and preserves remains of writing, namely marginal notes apparently belonging to the *Libel d'investigació de tresors*. Written in two hands: the first copied most of the manuscript, apart from fol. 123-149, copied by the second. Four of the texts are by Tresbens: *Llibre de les nativitats* (fols 1r-85v), *Tractat de les interrogacions* (fols 86r-98r), *Tractat de les eleccions* (fols 150r-162v), *Libel d'investigació de tresors* (fols 166r-73v). Thus, the codex is mostly taken up by Tresbens's treatises, except for the *Tables of King Pere* (fols 112r-120v and 123r-149v), whose canons are copied twice, and two consecutive formulas for finding the ascendant at the hour of birth, the first in Latin, the second in Catalan:
  - *De animodar rubrica* (fol. 163ra-163va): *inc. Si volueris scire verum ascendens in hora nativitatis alicujus...; expl.: dicit se pluries expertus fuisse.*
  - *Aliter de eodem secundum Avenatzer* (fols 163va-164r). *Inc.: 'Abans que comense los judicis vos vull mostrar com trobareu lo grau de l'ascendent...'*. *expl.: 'axí u he yo provat d'aquest animodar. Explicit feliciter'*.

Only two of these four treaties are clearly attributed to Tresbens: the *Llibre de les nativitats*, in both manuscripts, and the *Libel d'investigació de tresors*, the first and last of the series in *R*. Whereas these two works were already assigned to Tresbens by Vernet and Romano, his authorship of the two other works was recognized later by Lluís Cifuentes<sup>44</sup>, from a cross-reference in the *Tractat de les eleccions*:

You know that in previous treaties I have shown you many questions of astrology regarding nativities and interrogations<sup>45</sup>.

This reference shows that the author of the *Tractat de les eleccions* and the *Tractat de les interrogacions* is the same as that of the *Llibre de les nativitats*, i.e. Tresbens. In addition, my review has found other references, especially a clearer one in the *Tractat de les interrogacions*, which refers to the third and fourth chapters of the *Llibre de les nativitats*:

You must work through the hyleg and the alcohoden in the adjustments and decreases of times and years, as I have already shown in the science of the years of life of the native in the *Treatise of*

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<sup>43</sup> Manuscripts described by Vernet and Romano in the introduction to *Tractat d'astrologia*, 25-34, and in Vicenç Beltran *et alii* (dir.), *BITECA. Bibliografia de textos catalans antics*, 1989-2015, [http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/philobiblon/biteca\\_ca.html](http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/philobiblon/biteca_ca.html), manid 2114 [accessed 5 November 2015]. *R* was used for the edition of the Catalan text of the *Tables of King Pere*: Millàs Vallicrosa, *Tablas astronómicas*, 121-238. I have consulted the manuscript directly and via a digital copy.

<sup>44</sup> Cifuentes, *Ciència en català*, 209.

<sup>45</sup> 'E ja sabets que en los tractats precedents d'aquest vos he mostrat molt dels affers de astrologia en las nativitats e en las interrogacions' (fol. 150r). Cf. *Llibre de les nativitats*, vol. 1, 52-63.

nativities<sup>46</sup>.

Other allusions in the *Tractat de les interrogacions* to the same treatise do not specify its authorship but demonstrate the author's intention of offering an inclusive work<sup>47</sup>. In addition, at the end of the *Tractat de les eleccions* there is a reference to the *Libel d'investigació de tresors*, copied shortly afterwards<sup>48</sup>.

The Ripoll manuscript is therefore a very consistent collection containing almost exclusively astronomical-astrological writings related to Pere the Ceremonious, the four by Tresbens and the *Tables of King Pere*. Other evidence strengthens the authenticity of Tresbens's authorship: the dedication to the king in all of them (though without Pere's name in the *Tractat de les interrogacions*), as well as the coherency of doctrine, style, language and sources. Other common features are the way of using his sources – sometimes critical or nuanced – and the inclusion of a few cases of his own experience as an astrologer. Tresbens's four works form a set well defined by cross-references and by the desire to provide an overview of astrology. Indeed, by means of his longer writings Tresbens offers the fundamentals of astrological doctrine in Catalan in three key areas: nativities, interrogations and elections. Nevertheless, his contribution focuses on those aspects that may interest his audience, kings and nobles, especially in the last two treatises. However, he does not limit himself to the basics of astrology, but also discusses some more specialized areas in the *Libel d'investigació de tresors* and other writings mentioned as past or future projects.

The manuscripts transmitting Tresbens's works are very few in number and this may indicate that they were barely circulated out of the court, especially if we note that one of them contains writings almost exclusively linked to King Pere. But such a conclusion would be hasty considering that many medieval technical texts in Catalan have been lost or have only been preserved in a single manuscript, although their diffusion can often be well attested documentarily. Moreover, in general, treatises on judicial astrology in the vernacular were scarce, as were their extant witnesses, in comparison with Latin ones. Finally, in the Iberian Peninsula they suffered a certain extent of persecution by the early modern Inquisition<sup>49</sup>.

Unfortunately, for now, there is no sufficient evidence to establish the exact dating of Tresbens's works. The dedication to Pere points to the period in which his connection with the monarchy is documented, between 1360 and 1375. Cross-references suggest that the four works were written in the same order in which they are arranged in the manuscript: *Llibre de les nativitats*, *Tractat de les interrogacions*, *Tractat de les eleccions* and *Libel d'investigació de tresors*. Vernet and Romano dated the *Llibre de les nativitats* to 1373, but they did not give any reason to support their estimate<sup>50</sup>. The aforementioned letter sent in 1373 by Joan asking Tresbens to bring his books to Valencia is not a strong argument for this dating, because it does not necessarily imply that these books were authored by him, but may rather be simply

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<sup>46</sup> 'Devets hobrar per yleg e per alcocoden en los ajustaments e en los aminvaments dels temps e dels anys axí com ja he mostrat en la sciència dels anys de la vida dels nats en lo *Tractat de les nativitats*' (fol. 93v). Hyleg is the dominant planet at the moment of birth, used to calculate the length of life, and Alchocoden is the planet that rules over the degree of the hyleg, employed to find out the years of life. See *Llibre de les nativitats*, vol. 1, 52-63, and Jim Tester, *A History of Western Astrology* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1987), 169-70.

<sup>47</sup> 'Aprés deu traure la part de fortuna axí com en lo *Libre de les nativitats* ensenya e el *Introductori de l'art*' (fol. 86r); 'jutjaràs en la vida e si l'ésser de son cors e de sa substància e de sos accidents tot per la guisa que has vist en la doctrina de las nativitats en general' (fol. 87r).

<sup>48</sup> 'En cercar tresors e traure lo tractat se saguex', fol. 162v.

<sup>49</sup> Sebastià Giralt, 'Magic in Romance Languages', in *The Routledge History of Medieval Magic, Magic*, ed. Sophie Page and Catherine Rider (forthcoming).

<sup>50</sup> Vernet and Romano, 'Introducció', 12.

owned by him. Actually, it is only possible to affirm that the *Llibre de les nativitats* was composed when Tresbens was more than 47 years old, as he himself states in chapter 18. Nevertheless, since the year of his birth is unknown, his age does not help us to date this book. Hypothetically, however, two references to contemporary events may suggest that Tresbens's works were written in the 1360s, even though they are too vague to provide a certain date. The first is a possible allusion contained in the *Tractat de les interrogacions* to the intervention of England in the Castilian Civil War between Pedro the Cruel and Enrique de Trastámara (1366-1367), when discussing an interrogation on whether the King of England would obtain the Kingdom of Castile<sup>51</sup>. Secondly, the *Tractat de les eleccions* recalls a council held in the past by the king with the barons in Catalonia, which he rightly predicted to be profitless<sup>52</sup>. This might correspond to a meeting that Pere had with the barons and churchmen of Catalonia on July 10<sup>th</sup> 1362<sup>53</sup>. Finally, two documents from the royal chancery and treasury might refer to one or two of Tresbens's works: the *Libel d'investigació de tresors* seems to be the object of the king's letter from Valencia to Pere Ramon in Barcelona, where he is vehemently commanded to send a copy of the 'book on hidden treasures' that he was ordered to make for the Ceremonious (13 September 1369)<sup>54</sup>. Approximately two months before a payment had been made to cover the expenses for a 'book on astrology' for the king, which hypothetically might have been to pay for this copy or have been related to another work by Tresbens<sup>55</sup>. If this book on treasures really was Tresbens' last treatise, it would probably have been finished in 1369 and his other known works would have been written earlier.

#### 4. Other Works by Tresbens?

Tresbens appears to intend to discuss certain specific arguments in future works on the science of the stars, although it is not known whether he finally wrote these. In the *Tractat de les interrogacions* he states that he is willing to compose a general book, probably on the principles of astrology, but it would be different from the *Introductorio de l'art* ('Introduction to the Art') cited as an already written work, maybe by Tresbens himself<sup>56</sup>. In the *Tractat de*

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<sup>51</sup> fol. 89v. Cf. *Crònica*, chapters VI, 59-61, 393-5.

<sup>52</sup> 'E remembre mi que lo Rey féu un consell ab tots los barons en Catalunya e yo viu que termeneren lo consell e yo diguí a l'archabisbe de Saragossa que notàs bé aquella cosa que yo li diria: que ja res no se'n seguiria d'aquella determinació per ço car la luna era adonchs en la 6 casa e axí fo, perquè guardats tots temps que la luna non sia cazent', fol. 158r.

<sup>53</sup> 'Y el rey a 10 de junio mandó convocar todos los perlados y barones de Cataluña para que se juntasen en Barcelona a 10 de julio siguiente', Zurita, *Anales*, IX, 40 (vol. 1V, 436).

<sup>54</sup> 'Lo Rey. Manam vos sots pena de la ira e indignació nostra que per lo feel nostre Bernat Grimau, mercader de Mallorca, portador de la present, nos trametats trellat bo e feelment fet e comprovat del *Libre dels tresors amagats*, lo qual vos fou liurat per manament nostre, havent-vos en açò leyalment segons que de vós confiam', ACA, C, reg. 1225, fol. 44r (in Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 2, 139, corrected reference).

<sup>55</sup> 'Ítem, done al senyor rey, los quals lo dit senyor, ab albaranet segellat ab lo segell del seu anellet, scrit en València, a XXI dia de juliol de l'any MCCCLXIX, atorgà de mi haver haüts e reebuts per messions que's són fetes en un llibre d'estrologie del dit senyor, segons que en lo dit albarà se conté que cobre: XXII florins d'or d'Aragó', ACA, MR, 358, fol. 66v, edited in Trenchs, *Documents*, no. 1423. Although the chronological proximity with the previous letter is significant, this document might also be related to a payment to Dalmau Sesplanes, as in ACA, C, 1344, fol. 22v-23r (6 January 1367), edited in Trenchs, *Documents*, no. 1354.

<sup>56</sup> 'Alcuns savis són segons que diu Aly Abenrachel que dien que deu reguardar al senyor del yleg axí com fem en les nativitats, e si serà en bon loch significa los seus anys. E si serà en loch mal significa

*les eleccions* he promises a treatise on astronomical instruments, specifically on the sphere and the equatorium. It is probable that these books were never written. Notwithstanding, if the commentator of the *Libel d'investigació de tresors* is Tresbens himself – as I will defend below – he authored a treatise focused on the monarch, entitled *Libre del Rey e de lurs accidents* ('The book of the king and his accidents'), that he finished but has since been lost, according to one of the glosses that accompany the text<sup>57</sup>.

Lastly, although Tresbens's preserved works are concerned with astrology, he may also have written about medicine. We can suspect this from a single recipe preserved under Tresbens's name in a manuscript from El Escorial<sup>58</sup>. It is included in a medical compilation entitled *Summa medicine* falsely attributed to Arnau de Vilanova but perhaps actually written by Hugh of Montpellier. This may indicate the existence of a collection of recipes or *experimenta* by Tresbens, in Latin, and it also suggests that he studied at the Medical Faculty of Montpellier, bearing in mind that the materials in the *Summa* are predominantly from Montpellier. Could he have also learned astrology at Montpellier? There are witnesses of the use of medical astrology by physicians trained or living in this city around 1300, but maybe not in a strictly academic milieu. This tradition may have continued to Tresbens' times, but there is no clear evidence<sup>59</sup>.

## 5. Contents of Tresbens's Treatises

### 5.1. Llibre de les nativitats

This is his most extensive and most ambitious work, and the one with a more general aim. Its preface recognizes Pere III as the promoter of the treatise and justifies the text based on the need of the monarchs and nobles to know the future<sup>60</sup>. Tresbens states that the purpose of the work is to help the reader understand the fundamentals expounded by the authors of the 'science of astrology', which he says he extracted from the most reliable books and from his

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lo nombre d'aquells anys meses, e guarda adonchs als temps mals, car per aquesta manera se talen e se contan e tolen les dignitats. E yo dich que aquesta es oppinió vera, e per so la he yo pauzada en lo comensament d'aquestes interrogacions e he intenció, si Déus ma dóna vida, de retra la causa i la rahó més largament en un libre, que entendí compondre general', fol. 93r. He cites the third book of Abenragel's *Liber completus*, 143 of its edited Castilian version: Aly Abenragel, *El Libro conplido de los iudizios de las estrellas: traducción hecha en la corte de Alfonso el Sabio*, ed. Gerold Hilty (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1954). Its Latin version, used by Tresbens, was published in 1485 as *Liber completus in iudiciis stellarum* (Venice: 1485). Regarding the *Introduitori de l'art* see note 47 above.

<sup>57</sup> '...axí com he ensenyat en lo *Libre del Rey e de lurs accidents*', fol. 167r).

<sup>58</sup> See Cristina de la Rosa, *Summa medicinae (Mad. Esc. M. II. 17): estudio y edición crítica* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 2000), 592 (=fol. 118r) and Cristina de la Rosa, 'Un ejemplo de enciclopedia médica medieval de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial (ms. M II.17)', in *Estudios de Latín Medieval Hispánico: Actas del V Congreso Hispánico de Latín Medieval, Barcelona, 7-10 de septiembre de 2009*, ed. José Martínez Gázquez, Óscar de la Cruz and Cándida Ferrero (Florence: SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2011), 509-20. A brief reference was included in Guy Beaujouan, 'Manuscrits médicaux du Moyen Âge conservés en Espagne', *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 8 (1972), 161-221.

<sup>59</sup> Sebastià Giralt, "Medicina i astrologia en el corpus arnaldia", *Dynamis*, 26 (2006), 15-38.

<sup>60</sup> '...senyor en Pera, per la gràcia de Déu rey de Aragó terç', 39. A more detailed resume is included in Vernet and Romano's introduction. The numeration of chapters, missing in the manuscripts, is due to the editors. Joan Vernet, 'Lexicologia de Bartomeu de Tresbens', *Estudis Romànics* 13 (1963-1968): 275-6, provides some corrections to the edited text.

own experience, with a special interest in discovering a person's lifespan<sup>61</sup>. Certainly, the early chapters deal with the research on how long the person for whom the consultation is made will live (Chapters 1-13). He then goes on to discuss how to know when natives will suffer accidents (14-15). He then continues by examining various other points to know the fortune of a person or his/her parents (16-18). From Chapter 19 until the end of the work he reviews judicial astrology systematically, house by house. To the first house, which is the most complex and ambiguous, he devotes eleven chapters (20-30), firstly enumerating the physical features given by every planet, and later, more extensively, the psychological ones. A number of general rules are applied to the most frequent cases (31). This is followed by a description of an alternative system based on the houses of the Sun and the Moon (32-33). He then provides instruction on how to calculate some parts (34), and examines certain aspects of the first house: the fortune and the misfortune that may occur as a result of accidents (35-36) and of the ages of the individual (37). The rest of the book (38-48) reviews the other houses: the second, on material goods; the third, on brothers; the fourth, on the father and inheritance; the fifth, on children; the sixth, on diseases and servants; the seventh, on unions such as marriage; the eighth, on death and inheritance; the ninth, on the Church and religion; the tenth, on the mother and social fortune; the eleventh, on friends, and the twelfth, on enemies. The work concludes with an anti-determinist justification of judicial astrology, pointing out that the influence of the stars is not inexorable but can be corrected or damaged by the will, by beliefs and by the environment.

## 5.2. Tractat de les interrogacions

As in the rest of the codex, the chapters of the *Tractat de les interrogacions* (R, fols 86ra-98rb) are not numbered, although their divisions are apparently preserved. In the first chapter the author begins by indicating the interest of the king (unnamed) in knowing the influence of the stars on people's actions and will. He goes on to explain the basic concepts behind such an influence. In the second chapter he points out that whoever wishes to interrogate should firstly reflect deeply and at length on the question and consult an expert astrologer. Subsequently, he goes into the general technical guidelines to be followed by the astrologer. The third chapter focuses on the consultations about whether future life will be good or not. The fourth describes how to calculate how much life has gone and how much remains. The fifth part explains how to know which part of life will be better. The sixth deals with the interrogation of the four parts of the world, of the day, of the town or of the place (the four cardinal directions). The seventh discusses how to answer a question from a king, a prince or a nobleman about the duration of his power. From here on (fol. 91r - 98r) he provides a series of 'general rules' which in fact become the core of the treatise, all of them regarding interrogations about kings and lords. These rules concern the duration of their wealth, their power and their life, the loyalty of their subjects, when and how they may lose their authority, the prosperity, goodness, justice and fame of their kingdoms, the dissensions and rebellions to be faced by them, their promotion to a higher dignity, etc. At the end of fol. 98r the treatise is abruptly interrupted and a marginal note in Latin indicates that the original copied by the scribe was already incomplete. There is no indication of the possible total extension of the original work or the proportions of the part that has been lost.

## 5.3. Tractat de les eleccions

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<sup>61</sup> 'E per amor de so he collides les regles del temps per tots los més autèntichs llibres que he poguts trobar e per experiència he jo vist', *Llibre de les nativitats*, vol. 1, 40.

In his dedication to Pere of Aragon the author of the *Tractat de les eleccions* (*R*, fols 150r-62v) points out that elections are used by the king to a greater extent than nativities and interrogations, aspects to which he has dedicated the previous treatises, with the reason being clear: a ruler needs to decide<sup>62</sup>. He announces that he is only going to discuss those aspects relevant to the needs of the monarch, in order to offer a work that is useful both to Pere the Ceremonious and to his successors. Actually, – he says – the different branches of astrology are reserved for the minority of kings and the mighty, and therefore elections should be made solely to nobles, or at least those who are accustomed to using astrology. Consequently, the treatise focuses on the interests of nobles and kings. It is also essential to bear in mind that elections are individual, although the election of a son can be based on his father's nativity.

After establishing that an election should be grounded in a nativity or a previous interrogation, the author provides some general rules (fol. 151v). A 'general chapter' follows, in which guidelines for any projected action are furnished (151v-152r). Directions for specific requirements are then provided. They begin with the issues most related to royalty and nobility, such as asking the king for grace and honour, crowning the king or ennobling someone, bestowing or taking away a lordship. This is followed by questions relating specifically to war: conquering lands or besieging towns, challenging and defeating the enemy, launching a war – including a table showing good and bad times to go to war (fol. 156r) –, destroying towns and castles, sending knights to war. The author then discusses political relationships: sending an ambassador to negotiate a peace or to arrange a marriage, starting a journey by land or sea, appointing new knights, holding general council and courts. Here he recalls the king's council in Catalonia with the barons, mentioned above. He continues with other aspects of government: asking the people for help or a tribute, appointing officers and other charges for justice, administration, treasury and the army, and even writing letters. Immediately afterwards he reviews the preparation for war: buying horses and other beasts, wining tournaments, learning to fight, purchasing or making weapons, military engines and warships. Lastly, he deals with actions related to public works: building towns and castles, populating desert places, buying lands and towns, digging wells, making rivers, springs and canals flow. The latter two items include the making and burying of two astrological images to populate or depopulate places and to make water come.

#### 5.4. Libel d'investigació de tresors

Its complete title, as shown in the preface, is *Libel d'investigació de tresors o algunes coses amagades en cercar* 'Booklet of research for treasures and some hidden things when to be sought' (*R*, fols 166r-73v). It begins abruptly, but apparently very early after beginning the dedication to King Pere, who is said to have entrusted the author with his commitment to astrology. Tresbens, after consulting many books on judicial astrology, has produced a booklet to search for treasures or other hidden things. He gives it to the king and begs him to keep it secret from those who know nothing about this area of philosophy and from any king or lord except for his sons. The process of research must begin with the king choosing a loyal searcher able to find hidden things without harming the rights of others or dishonouring the monarch. He announces that he will reveal his sources when necessary, and he will confirm or contradict other authors with reason and authorities. Even when he disagrees with them, he will reveal the opinions of others if he understands them<sup>63</sup>.

He then presents the eight parts or chapters of the treatise, outlining the order that the interrogation should take in order to reveal: 1) whether the substance is hidden in the place it

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<sup>62</sup> See appendix A below.

<sup>63</sup> See appendix B below. I am preparing an edition of this book.

is meant to be; 2) whether it is valuable or not; 3) the amount and magnitude of what is hidden; 4) whether it is old or not; 5) if it is possible to find it; 6) whether it is located on or under the ground; 7) how deep or high it is; 8) the place and situation it is in.

This initial scheme is modified in the text: although the chapters are not numbered, the changes are detectable from the contents. Thus, the third and fourth chapters are exchanged in order and the fifth is followed by the eighth of the table of contents. The text is abruptly interrupted in the eighth chapter, whereas the sixth and the seventh have disappeared. However, in terms of their contents, it is not illogical for the sixth and seventh to follow the eighth of the table of contents, since they deal with a more specific location in relation to the more general specification of the eighth. Thus, only two chapters and a small part of another one are missing from the total of eight. Therefore, the great majority of the treatise is preserved. The text is accompanied by a long and erudite commentary aimed at clarifying its meaning and expanding its contents, including references to the authorities. At first glance it is not obvious who is the author of this commentary, but everything points to it being Tresbens himself, since it is coherent with the text and the sources cited in it are also consistent with those quoted in the text. The aforementioned reference to *Libre del Rey e lurs accidents*, in a passage concerning the king of Aragon, points to an astrologer linked to the Catalan court. In addition, in two passages of the commentary, references to the text are made in the first person<sup>64</sup>.

The first chapter explains that first of all it is necessary to make sure, using astrological means, that something is hidden where the interested person remembers it. If it is not there, it should be searched for among the houses of those people closest to him. There are also directions on how to locate it when the person who has hidden it is a relative, a friend or an enemy, and when the place where it is located is suspected or heard of. In the second, astrological guidelines are provided on how to know the value of something that is hidden, especially in relation to the material from which it is made. It includes an account of a personal experience in which he guessed the buried material: he found large copper pipes in the inn of Gaston de Lévis, lord of Leran<sup>65</sup>. The third chapter (fourth in the initial schema) sets out the steps to follow to find out whether the thing that is hidden was buried long ago or recently. The fourth (third in the table of contents) explains how to determine the quantity or the magnitude of the buried thing. In the fifth Tresbens says that, after all the previous steps have been carried out, it is necessary to ascertain whether the hidden object can be obtained, and he also gives guidelines for this purpose. After that, it is possible to find out its location in a space divided into the four cardinal points. This is attempted in the last, incompletely extant part. Here the author includes examples from his own experience: once, in the aforementioned

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<sup>64</sup> ‘E quan dic qu-el missatge no haja cura de altra cosa entench a dir que pròpiament durant la intenció del que tramet faça son poder lo missatge que entena a l’artista, ço és a saber al mestre del judici...’, as a reference to the beginning of the text in fol. 167r: ‘La magnificiència del Rey sàpia qu’ell demanant deu espressament, mogut per sa volentat desirable, e dir e interrogar l’artista per sa pròpia bocha o per letra o cert missatge que d’altre cosa no haja cura tro que la interrogació haja feyta’. Also in fol. 172v: ‘Si volem saber, etc. - La intenció que yo y pos en aquesta letra és que entench que la longuesa de la casa és en lo temps de la interrogació trobada per la latitud del significador’.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Mas en cant que poria estar en significació de altra planeta perquè dic absolutament precedent la letra de Aomar que sia falsa. E yo en semblant cas viu en una qüestió interrogatòria que trobe Mars que era significador e Saturnus [...]. E Saturnus en Capricorn e dis que havia aquí coure e molt matall mesclat de substància del matall que és lom [...]. E pronostique per açò que era aram ros e que hi havia consolidació de substància de Saturn mesclada. Mas tota l’altra substància era de coure e aram vermell. E lo senyor de la era, mossèn Gastó de Lenis, per provar la sciència no crehent que pogués ésser veritat féu cavar. E trobaren molts canons de coure vermell consolidat com plom mesclat per los quals canons se podia fer venir aygua’, 171r-v.

Gaston de Lévis's inn, his expertise was tested again when his wife hid his books and he was able to discover them<sup>66</sup>.

## 6. Tresbens's Sources

In two of his prefaces Tresbens declares that he composed his works after consulting a great many reliable books on astrology<sup>67</sup>. He certainly cites many of the most prestigious Arabic and Greek astrologers, but it is doubtful whether all of them are his true sources, since he may be quoting them via other authors or from certain widely-disseminated anthologies. In fact, Tresbens's sources had not been studied in depth until now, not even in his main work, the *Llibre de les nativitats*, which has already been edited. Gerold Hilty and Joan Vernet have suggested that its main source was Abenragel's *Liber completus in iudiciis stellarum* (*The Complete Book on the Judgment of the Stars*), although they did not carry out a systematic analysis throughout the whole work to prove this<sup>68</sup>. Here I present only the main conclusions of my previous study on Tesbéns's sources<sup>69</sup>.

The Latin translation of Abenragel's *Liber completus* by Egidio de' Tebaldi and Pedro del Real is certainly the origin of most of the contents of Tresbens's *Llibre de les nativitats*, yet it is far from being its only source, as suggested. Another author extensively used is Omar Tiberiades (*De nativitatibus*), whereas Albumasar (*Liber introductorii maioris ad scientiam iudiciorum astrorum*) and Alcabitius (*Introductorius ad iudicia astrorum*) are occasionally employed in the same book. The other treatises by Tresbens give a similar picture: Abenragel's *Liber completus* is also the main source for all of them, although other works are directly cited in one or more of them: Omar Tiberiades (*De interrogationibus*), Pseudo-Ptolemy's *Centiloquium*, *Liber novem iudicum*, and probably Ptolemy's *Quadripartitum*, pseudo-Ptolemaic *Liber proiectionis radorum stellarum* and Masha'allah's *De occultis*.

Albeit through Latin translation, Tresbens' sources are originally Arabic, except for Ptolemy and maybe Pseudo-Ptolemy, which is unsurprising in a field like astrology that was so dominated by Arabic authors. The authors and works employed by Tresbens are mainly some of the most popular according to David Juste's catalogue of the extant Latin astrological manuscripts copied before 1500<sup>70</sup>: Alcabitius, *Centiloquium*, Abenragel, Ptolemy, Albumasar,

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<sup>66</sup> 'E aquesta obra fiu yo en l'ostal del senyor de la era, ço es de mossèn Gaston de Lenis e trobe la vera devant ell mateix e devant tota sa companya. E una altra vegada en la qual per provar amagaren un de un e trobem lo que havien mes en una fanga per tal que mi fessen més musar. E altra vegada ne trobe mos llibres que ma muller havia amagats per dubte de mos enemichs e no me los volia ensenyar e yo am semblant quèstió trobe-los en l'ostal en la bastidida de Bosenhat prop del foch, enmig de l'hostal amagats enfre ploma. Perquè aquesta sciència he tostemps retenguda per vera car procehís ab intenció complida', fol. 173v.

<sup>67</sup> '...e fet comprendre e elegir de la madul·la dels actors de veritat de aquella sciència', *Llibre de les nativitats*, vol. 1, 40; *Libel d'investigacions de tresors*, fol. 66r (see appendix B below).

<sup>68</sup> Gerold Hilty, review to *Tractat d'astrologia*, in *Vox Romanica* 19 (1961): 390-398; Joan Vernet, 'Tradición e innovación en la ciencia medieval', in *Oriente e Occidente nel Medioevo: filosofia e scienze. Convegno internazionale ([Roma], 9-15 aprile 1969)* (Rome: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1971), 741-57. Now see Gerold Hilty, 'El *Libro conplido* en Catalunya', *Estudis Romànics* 38 (2016), 347-55, where new reasons are given to support the Latin rather than Castilian version as Tresbens' source.

<sup>69</sup> 'Drawing from the marrow of the authors of astrology: The sources of Bartomeu de Tresbens, Astrologer to King Pere the Ceremonious of Aragon', in *Astrologie, divination et magie dans les cours* (Florence: SISMEL, forthcoming).

<sup>70</sup> David Juste, 'The impact of Arabic sources on European astrology: some facts and numbers', *Micrologus* 24 (2016), 173-194.

*Liber novem iudicum* and Omar (in order of popularity). All these are more or less general introductions to astrology, but he apparently also uses a few less widely known and more specialized treatises, *De occultis* and *Liber projectionis radiorum stellarum*. Therefore, Tresbens' knowledge of astrological literature seems to have been considerably broad.

Although his works are based on this literature, Tresbens sometimes provides his own views or materials: he makes a critical use of his sources, by contradicting, correcting or completing them, whether with the support of other authorities or not. He occasionally adapts the contents to the person the work is addressed to, namely the king, and he adds some tables and also develops some explanations of his own. Moreover, he introduces specific examples to reinforce his own discourse or the position of authorities, or even to contradict them: he uses some personal experiences and other people's cases that he knows or has heard about, and he applies the technique discussed to specific samples, including himself. He is therefore somehow right when he claims a threefold ground for his works: textual authorities, reason and experience. He claims to expound what he has confirmed by experience or has seen, and if not, he verifies it by applying reason and consulting authorities. Nevertheless, we should not believe that each of these foundations is equally important to the whole, given that, as was common in medieval intellectual works, the authorities were far and away his prime source of knowledge. In any case, his occasionally critical approach to these should be appreciated in such a conservative domain as astrology was<sup>71</sup>.

## 7. Astrology in the Service of Power

Tresbens's four treatises are addressed to the king in their prefaces, and in these he also agrees to emphasize the special value of astrology for power. The preface of the *Llibre de les nativitats* states that the knowledge of nativities is useful for anyone, but that it is essential for kings and nobles because God has entrusted them to govern other people. Therefore, they have a great need to know what is going to happen in the future, which actions should be undertaken and which passions and events must be avoided. And if someone's nativity cannot be revealed, then interrogations regarding his own future or his subjects' future –since inferior nature depends on the superior– should be based on the time of his coronation, if he is a king, or on the time when he was given his lordship, if he is a nobleman<sup>72</sup>. The beginning of the *Tractat de les interrogacions* stresses the king's interest in the influence of the heavens on people's government and their wills<sup>73</sup>. In the *Tractat de les eleccions* he states that, according to all the authors, elections must only be made on nativities or interrogations and on royal

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<sup>71</sup> The conservative nature of astrology is pointed out by Hilary M. Carey 'Judicial astrology in theory and practice in later medieval Europe', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 41/2 (2010), 90-98.

<sup>72</sup> '...a totes les gents qui viuen segons raó e lley sia bo de saber les nativitats, més als reys e grans senyors e nobles, los quals Déu ha ordenats per regiment d'altres, e és de necessitat ordenar-hi e bé estant, per so car per ells són diverses consideracions en los accidents del món per saber, e en alegir a ells temporals accions e per devedar passions e accidents són fortment necessàries. E qui aquelles no pot haver és necessitat fer interrogacions per ell, e per prendra raelis o principis en lo temps del coronament als reys, o del temps en lo qual és dada senyoria o poder o homenatge de aquell qui no és rey, mas és comte o duch o baró o noble en senyoria, car ab aquelles raelis o principis o ab la una d'elles hauràs tostemps endressar la sciència dels accidents aveniradors o les aleccions per fer-lo endressar o ell o son poble en los éssers, segons que possible és en natura jusana per la subirana', *Llibre de les nativitats*, vol. 1, 39.

<sup>73</sup> 'Car a la Reyat Magestat ha plagut haver conexensa en los fets celestials e los encercaments de les obres dels signes e planetas e esteles fixas en so que fan los nats. E plàcia-us veure en los fets que fay lo moviment del cel en lo regiment de les gents, en lurs coratges e voluntats', fol. 86r.

affairs. That is why they should be reserved for noblemen, or at least for those who have been used to employing astrology for a long time<sup>74</sup>. In the *Libel d'investigació de tresors* he restricts the knowledge related to the search for treasures or other hidden things to the king and his successors, and suggests that the monarch should choose someone loyal to him as a 'secret searcher' in charge of looking for occult things in his kingdoms<sup>75</sup>. We may suspect that Tresbens is claiming such a mission for himself before Pere the Ceremonious, who always needed money for his great enterprises, such as his campaigns in Sardinia and his intervention in the Castilian Civil War. Actually, there is strong evidence of the interest of Catalan kings in treasure hunting during the fourteenth century and the early fifteenth century: a number of documents produced by Pere and his sons Joan and Martí, giving a licence to some individuals to search for precious metals and other treasures in their kingdoms, are preserved at the ACA. In exchange for the licence, the Crown receives a substantial part of the finds by appropriating the right of possession of the found objects to the detriment of the landowners. Even though these documents do not specify the means used to hunt for treasures, whether astrological or otherwise, they do demonstrate the existence of this economic activity and specialists in this field, as well as the involvement of the monarchy. However, in one case we know of a Moorish expert on astrology (and medicine), which is a hint that the science of the stars was considered an efficient means to find treasures<sup>76</sup>. Indeed, many such licenses were given to Muslim and Jewish searchers, but sometimes licences were granted to people linked to the Crown, including royal physicians<sup>77</sup>. The latter might have the role of intermediaries, whereas the former probably carried out the search on the spot. This activity promoted by the Ceremonious also may be the origin of the *Book of King Pere of Aragon*, cited as a source in an anonymous Occitan writing focused on finding treasures enchanted by Muslims and Gentiles in the Iberian Peninsula, although it is rather oriented towards necromancy<sup>78</sup>. The real activity of treasure hunting and the contents of both this writing and Tresbens's book recall the legendary fame of the treasures hidden by Muslims with spells which Francesc Eiximenis includes among the beauties of the Kingdom of

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<sup>74</sup> See appendix A below.

<sup>75</sup> See appendix B below.

<sup>76</sup> 'Nós infant en Johan, considerants que tot tresor encantat o amagat de reetemps a ençà lo qual se trob en la terra e senyoria del dit senyor rey pare meu s'esguarda es pertany al dit senyor o de nós, considerants encara que vosaltres, Abdal·là Almonestet e Abdulsiç Almonestet, moros vehins del loch de Matet de la Vall d'Almonezir, qui sots en moltes coses esperts, en especial tu, dit Abdal·là, qui és astrolegia e metge, vos entremetriets volenters d'aytal tresor a cercar e a trobar a messions vostres si nos vos acullfem en covinent part de aquell, considerants noresmenys digna cosa ésser e rahonable que si en res nos aprofitam per vostra indústria d'aquest fet que vosaltres ne deiats profit reportar, per tenor d'aquesta letra donam e atorgam a vosaltres, dessusdits Abadal·là e Abdulsiç, la terça par entegrament de tot tresor encantat o antigament amagat que vosaltres o qualsevol de vós trobets o per instrucció vostra se trob dins la dita terra e senyoria...', ACA, C, reg. 1740, fol. 52r (Valencia, 6 February 1374).

<sup>77</sup> Regarding both physicians: ACA, C, reg. 924, fols 116v-117r (5 June 1373); ACA, C, reg. 1231, fols 144v-145r (7 October 1376); see Ferragud, *Medicina i promoció social*, 449. On the other cases: ACA, C, reg. 1085, fols 131v-132r (27 September de 1371); ACA, C, reg. 1107, fol. 61v (2 March 1385); ACA, C, reg. 1955, fol. 86v (12 October 1388); ACA, C, reg. 1979, fol. 194 (15 July 1392); ACA, C, reg. 1981, fols 141v-143v (15 January 1393); ACA, C, reg. 2259, fol. 25r (30 June 1406). These are edited in Antoni-Maria Aragó, 'Licencias para buscar tesoros en la Corona de Aragón', in *Martínez Ferrando, archivero: miscelánea de estudios dedicados a su memoria* (Barcelona: Asociación Nacional de Archiveros, Bibliotecarios y Arqueólogos, 1968), 7-21.

<sup>78</sup> Sebastià Giralt, 'The manuscript of a medieval necromancer: Magic in Occitan and Latin in ms. Vaticano, BAV, Barb. lat. 3589', *Revue d'histoire des textes*, n. s. 9 (2014): 221-72.

Valencia (c. 1383)<sup>79</sup>.

The emphasis given by Tresbens to the benefits that astrology brings to the ruler can also be found in the preface of the *Tables of King Pere*. There the king declares himself to be interested in the science of the stars, and specifically in judicial astrology, because it is the noblest and most useful of natural sciences, beloved and researched by kings, nobles and philosophers, since the influence of the stars rules empires, kingdoms, war, loyalties, justice, epidemics, natural disasters and so on. In addition, he praises each branch of judicial astrology individually: nativities reveal all the particular accidents (of physical origin) of a whole life, interrogations reveal someone's temporal events and elections show how fortune can be achieved and misfortune avoided.<sup>80</sup> Despite this eulogy of the utility of astrology in all of its branches, Tresbens comments that Pere rarely asked him about elections<sup>81</sup>, even though it is actually the kind of consultation most requested by the king. Such an observation fits the scarce evidence of astrological queries in the documentation related to the Ceremonious, in contrast to that of his son Joan.

Expanding our focus beyond Tresbens' writings, we may wonder what real influence astrologers had on government decisions by rulers who cultivated the science of the stars like Pere and Joan. Unfortunately, in their case we have few clearly documented examples. In a letter dated 15 October 1359 King Pere told the foreman Guillem Carbonell what days and times were most convenient to lay the first stone of the work that was about to start on the Palau Reial Major in Barcelona, according to the calculations of Pere Gibert and Dalmau Sesplanes<sup>82</sup>. In 1379, Duke Joan commanded Sesplanes to be asked what date would be best for Yolande de Bar's arrival in Catalonia and for the celebration of their wedding<sup>83</sup>. Also, in

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<sup>79</sup> 'Ultra açò, senyors meus, sapiats que havets hic, en diverses parts del regne, de grans e de notables amagatalls que hic són despuis que los moros ne foren gitats en ça, en los quals ha coses fort precioses amagades, jatsia que ab maleficis dels dits moros les dites coses hagen perdudes les llurs pròpies colors; de les quals coses ab vostra bona indústria poriets venir en coneixença lleugerament. De aquests amagatalls he entès que n'ha u fort notable après la Font de Benifalló, e altre fort assenyalat en lo terme de Manises; e dins la ciutat mateixa n'hi ha molts dels dits amagatalls, segons que poriets saber ab los moros mateixs antics de ací de la terra, si els estrenyets de noves o per altra forma de turment a dir veritat, e que els dits moros antics revelassen llurs registres secrets', Francesc Eiximenis, *Regiment de la cosa pública*, ed. Daniel de Molins (Barcelona: Barcino, 1927), 27. I thank Carmel Ferragud for indicating me this passage.

<sup>80</sup> 'E en les sciències purament naturals aquella que és de major noblea e de major excel·lència és la sciència de las stelas. Car per aquesta migença la influència de la primera causa se fan los condiments e los fundaments dels regiments imperials e reals, e las duracions, transmutations de sectes, regnes e senyories temporals, les abundàncies, caresties, guerres, paus, leyaltats, prodicions, justícies e injustícies, sequedats, epidèmies, mortalitats, terratrèmols e pestilències terrenals segons que clarament apar en la part judiciària de revolucions dels anys mundanals. Axí mateix, per la dita sciència segons la part de les nativitats e de las revolucions d'aquelles, se seguexen als hòmens tots los accidents particulars del dia de lur nativitat fins a la mort consegüents los actes corporals. E per aquesta sciència segons la part de qüestions pot saber l'om los seus esdeveniments temporals e ab la part de les elections pot aconseguir fortunes e fugir a infortunas celestials, per les quals cosas entre les sciències naturals aquesta és a l'hom de major utilitat. Car lo seu enginy ne pren molt gran acuhiment e l'enteniment marvellós clarificament e lo seyn acabat reposament. E per ço per reys, philòsofs e grans senyors és amada, cercada e investigada antigament car les influències celestials en tal saber han enclinats aquells naturalment', *R*, fol. 112r (also in Vallicrosa, *Tablas astronómicas*, 123).

<sup>81</sup> See appendix B below.

<sup>82</sup> Josep M. Madurell, 'El Palau Reial Major de Barcelona: recull de notes històriques', *Estudis Universitaris Catalans* 22 (1936), 491-518.

<sup>83</sup> 'Volem que vós parleu amb en Dalmau Planes stalabre quals dies e quant dels meses de ffabrer, març e abril serien bons a entrar la Duquessa en lo Principat de Cathalunya e axí matex a fer bodes' (9

September 1393 he consulted three astrologers, ‘mossèn Gastó’, a ‘black monk’ from Avignon and the German Ramar (or Raimar Hony) to assess their predictions for the military expedition against the Sardinian revolt, which he was delaying owing to financial difficulties and finally gave up<sup>84</sup>. In 1381 Joan ordered Francesc Eiximeis and Sesplanes to be asked separately about their interpretation of the coming of a comet<sup>85</sup>. Thus, consultation of two or more astrologers or other experts was common.

The documentation is not very clear in other cases, although it often shows Joan consulting astrologers, and we have seen that Joan once asked his father to heed Tresbens’ predictions, although there is no record of what they were or whether they caused any consequence. In contrast, another king that was very close to Pere, his vassal and brother-in-law Jaume III of Majorca, appears in Oresme and Philippe de Mézières’s works that criticised astrology as an example of a ruler marching towards his own destruction after using an election to set the most astrologically favourable moment for an enterprise. The historical fact is that Jaume, after losing the kingdom of Majorca and the counties of Roussillon and Cerdanya in the Ceremonious’ war against him, sold Montpellier to the king of France in order to obtain the resources necessary to try to recover his former territories. From Avignon, he organized an army that disembarked in the Bay of Alcúdia and was finally defeated at the Battle of Lluçmajor, where Jaume was killed and beheaded (1349). Oresme and Mézières are the only authors who attributed the choice of this time for the expedition to an astrological consultation. However, this point is not transmitted in the medieval chronicles on Jaume’s defeat, and neither do the extant documentary sources, which give a very clear view of the financial and military vicissitudes of Jaume’s expedition, show whether the decision on the starting time was really taken from astrological considerations<sup>86</sup>. However, it is very possible that Jaume cultivated astrology, considering not only the rivalry that he always maintained with the Ceremonious in all areas but also his involvement in the occult arts. Indeed, in Perpinyà the king of Majorca had an alchemist and necromancer named Stephanus Pipinus in his service and perhaps also his master, Berenguer Ganell, author of *Summa sacre magice*, if we believe the evidence given by Pipinus himself in the trial whereby he was condemned in 1347 for cursing the bishop of Mende<sup>87</sup>. He also stated that he had received two books from Jaume and Ganell to communicate with spirits: a certain *De naturalibus* and the *Liber iuratus*. Indeed, it is well known that the king of Majorca gathered an extensive library, which ended dispersed and partly in Pere’s hands, but regarding its occultist contents only a copy of the

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December 1379), ACA, C, reg. 1746, fol. 50r (cited in Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 1, 281).

<sup>84</sup> ‘Mossèn Gastó és vengut e adés afrontar-lo em ab lo monge negre, aquell gran estròlech d’Avinyó, e ab mestre Raymar, e serà bé meravella que lurs qüestions se conclouen ans del passatge de Cerdanya’, ACA, C, reg. 1965, fol. 162r, cited in Rubió, *Documents*, vol. 2, 333.

<sup>85</sup> ACA, C, reg. 1665, fol. 38v (edited in Trenchs, *Documents*, no. 1970).

<sup>86</sup> This historical episode is analysed in Gabriel Ensenyat, *La reintegració de la corona de Mallorca a la corona d’Aragó: 1343-1349* (Palma: Moll, 1997), 262-80. Regarding its transmission in medieval historiography and literature see Gabriel Ensenyat, "Referències cronístiques i literàries medievals sobre la reincorporació de la Corona de Mallorca a la Corona catalonaragonesa", Rafael Narbona (ed.), *XVIII Congrés Internacional d’Història de la Corona d’Aragó: la Mediterrània de la Corona d’Aragó (segles XIII-XVI) i VII centenari de la sentència arbitral de Torrellas, 1304-2004* (València: Universitat de València, 2005), 2, 1867-1880. See also Zurita, *Anales*, VIII, 34 (vol. 4, 174-5).

<sup>87</sup> See the edition of the process and its French translation in Edmond Falgairolle, *Un envoûtement en Gévaudan en l’année 1347* (Nîmes: Catélan, 1892), 35-117. See also Solène Baron, ‘Un procès de magie en Gévaudan et ses enjeux politiques (1347)’, *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 33 (2017), 385-417. Concerning Jaume III’s intellectual entourage: Gabriel Ensenyat, "La antigua Corona de Mallorca a mitad del siglo XIV: la crisis general y política y sus repercusiones culturales", *Edad Media: revista de historia*, 8 (2007), 59-77.

*Secretum secretorum* can be traced<sup>88</sup>. Nevertheless, Mézières narrates the episode as if he had witnessed it in person when he was in Avignon, where he sought the Pope's support for his planned crusade to the Holy Land, and he even says that he was tempted to participate in the expedition. However, if the wording is analysed –especially the expression ‘lost his head and the kingdom’, of course referring to Jaume— it is clear that his account, written in 1389, derives from Oresme's, in particular from *Contra astronomos iudiciarios*, dating back four decades earlier and contemporary with Jaume's death. Such a dependence, which is evident in many of Mézières' passages that question astrology and specifically in the examples of rulers who lost their kingdoms because they believed in it, make its value very doubtful as a direct witness of the fact<sup>89</sup>. If Mézières is discarded, how far can one single witness from a controversial work against judicial astrology be relied on? And even though the astrological consultation by the dethroned king is credited, how can we be sure of the extent to which this had been decisive on setting his fleet's departure time to Majorca? Interestingly, the other major enemy of the Ceremonious, Pedro I of Castile, is also portrayed by Mézières as a king who never went to war without first consulting astrologers until he realized their deceit<sup>90</sup>. In this case, at least one historiographical source agrees: the *Sumario del Dispensero* presents the Castilian monarch, shortly before the fatal defeat he was going to suffer in Montiel (1369), lamenting to Abraham ibn Zarzal about the fact that such favourable predictions made by him and other astrologers of his kingdom were not achieved at all. On the contrary, he was driven to disaster<sup>91</sup>.

In short, we see that kings who consulted astrologers, like Pere and Joan, took their advice into account in decisions such as the choice of the day to start a building or to celebrate a wedding, but it becomes very difficult to assess the real weight of their influence on more complex political matters, for instance the time or the opportunity to undertake a military expedition<sup>92</sup>. Even when concerning other rulers, some sources support such an influence, but

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<sup>88</sup> Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, *Readers and Books in Majorca (1229-1550)* (Paris: CNRS, 1991), vol. 2, 399-404, 433.

<sup>89</sup> ‘Recitons ce qui advint ou temps du Viel Pelerin lui estant a Avignon. Jacques le roy de Maiorgue, qui fort se delitoit en ceste hauste folie, a grant conseil et longue determinacion des astrologiens en Avignon, print son election pour aler recouvrer son royaume que le roy Pierre d'Arragon tenoit. Il se parti d'Avignon a toute s'election et paou failli que le Viel Pelerin n'ala avec lui. Ledit roy de Maiorgue par son election se tenoit a seur de recouvrer son royaume. Il y entra et assés tost après par le roy Pierre d'Arragon il perdi et la teste et son royaume’, Mézières, *Songe*, vol. 1, 754; ‘Istis denique temporibus rex Majoricarum Jacobus multum erat astrologie inclinatus qui cum semel horam recedendi de Avinione per hanc scienciam elegisset inde profectus nunquam reversurus satis cito post per Petrum regem Arragonum perdidit caput simul et regimen’, Coopland, *Nicole Oresme and the Astrologers*, 127. The corresponding passage in the *Livre de Divinacions* (Oresme, *Contro la divinazione*, 112), French version written by Oresme himself a few years later, does not include Pere's reference and, therefore, is not the source of Mézières's account. Regarding the differences between both versions see Stefano Rapisarda, ‘From the *Tractatus contra astronomos iudiciarios* (1349) to the *Livre de divinacions* (1356): Nicole Oresme lost in translation’, in *El saber i les llengües vernacles a l'època de Llull i Eiximenis: estudis ICREA sobre vernacularització = Knowledge and Vernacular Languages in the Age of Lull and Eiximenis: ICREA Studies on Vernacularization*, ed. Anna Alberni, Lola Badia, Lluís Cifuentes and Alexander Fidora (Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2012), 231-55.

<sup>90</sup> Mézières, *Songe*, 1, 750.

<sup>91</sup> *Sumario de los reyes de España por el dispensero mayor de la reyna doña Leonor*, ed. Eugenio de Llaguno (Madrid: Antonio de Sancha, 1781), 60-75.

<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, a few (disastrous) decisions based on astrological predictions are recorded: the foundation of the city of Vittoria by Emperor Frederick II (1274), occupied shortly after by his enemies and the attack on Orzinuoevi by Ezzelino da Romano that led to his defeat and death (1259).

it is not usually possible to verify them. Regardless of whether a ruler was more or less gullible concerning the science of the stars, it must be borne in mind that an astrologer was just one of the many advisers to whom he listened: in addition to other astrologers who did not necessarily agree, he listened to political, military and religious consultants and other experts before making a decision<sup>93</sup>. Although astrological advice could sometimes serve as psychological support for his decisions, it was often viewed more as an element of ostentation and a sign of the intellectual refinement of a sovereign who aspired to be seen as wise.

Another essential aspect regarding astrology at court is the use of the vernacular. The orientation of Tresbens' works towards the monarchy doubtless explains his choice of language, since Catalan was the king's language, rather than Latin, the dominant language in medieval sciences. In addition to the trilingual astronomical tables that were also promoted by Pere and the books in Catalan collected in the royal library – 16 of 56 astronomical-astrological books –, they demonstrate, specifically in the Catalan court, a significant presence of the vernacular in the field of the science of the stars, although not to the extent of threatening the overall pre-eminence of Latin<sup>94</sup>.

In the Latin Europe of the fourteenth century, treatises on astrology that had originally been written in the vernacular were very scarce, although a few examples have survived from the thirteenth century<sup>95</sup>. Actually, the only contemporary parallel is Pèlerin de Prusse's *Livre des eleccions universelles des douze mansions* (1361), dedicated to Charles V of France. In this unfinished work he summarizes and purges Abenragel and Bonatti in order to adapt their doctrine to the needs of the monarch: he eliminates aspects that may be inconvenient, such as those related to the Church, while he expands on others that might interest the king, like procreation, war, coronation and the calling of assemblies<sup>96</sup>. Pèlerin agrees with Tresbens in

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On the other hand, Lynn Thorndike, 'The Horoscope of Barbarossa's First-Born', *The American Historical Review* 64/2 (1959), 319-22, wonders whether the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I might have preferred his second son to his first as his successor after seeing their horoscopes. Vernet 'Astrología y política' hypothetically proposes that the Andalusí strongman Almanzor (c. 938-1002) used to start his successful military campaigns in astrologically propitious times.

<sup>93</sup> Maxime Préaud, *Les astrologues à la fin du Moyen Âge* (Paris: J. C. Lattes, 1984), 227-31.

<sup>94</sup> An overall view of this process of vernacularization see Cifuentes, *Ciència en català*, 189-219.

<sup>95</sup> The *Introductoire d'astronomie* is an astronomical-astrological treatise in French addressed to Baudouin de Courtenay, Latin emperor of Constantinople who died in 1273: its first part was edited by Stephen Dörr, *Der älteste Astronomietraktat in französischer Sprache: L'Introductoire d'astronomie. Edition und lexikalische Analyse* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1998). A *Tractato del corso della Luna* preserved in a codex of 1463 was dated by its editor to the second half of the thirteenth century: Pezzella, Salvatore, *Astronomia ed astrologia nel Medioevo, da un manoscritto inedito (sec. XIII) della città di Firenze* (Florence: La Giuntina, 1982). Some astrological calendars and prognostications in Occitan have been transmitted in the MS Paris, BnF, fr. 1745, fol. 147v-153r (late thirteenth or early fourteenth century) and BnF, lat. 7420A, fol. 113r-v, s. XIV (1332-1333), edited and studied by Katy Bernard, *Compter, dire et figurer: édition et commentaire de textes divinatoires et magiques en occitan médiéval* (Bordeaux: Université Michel de Montaigne Bordeaux 3, 2007). Ramon Llull's *Tractat d'astronomia* (1297), with a simplified doctrine of astrology adapted to his *Ars*, was originally written in Latin: see *Començaments de medicina. Tractat d'astronomia*, ed. Lola Badia (Palma: Patronat Ramon Llull, 2002), 125-53.

<sup>96</sup> '...je escriray soubz correction un petit livret a mon pover de la partie des elections, uquel je assembleray les plus communes et plus necessaires choses de ladite partie, et especialement matieres touchans la santé du corps et fait humain generalment, et causes royaulx et de princes, pour garder naturellement leur commencement en quelconques matiere. Car la salvacion de prince est conservacion de pays et de pueple...', Floriane Aline Gagnard, *Le dauphin et l'astrologue: le Livret des elections universelles des 12 maisons de Pèlerin de Prusse* (Montréal: Université de Montréal, 2014), 52. See also Jean-Patrice Boudet, 'Astrologie et politique dans la crise du milieu du XIVe siècle': le *Livre des*

emphasising the interest of astrology –and specifically the branch of elections– to kings or lords and, consequently, making their writings suitable to the needs of the monarchy. Such a tendency also is acknowledged by the opponents of judicial astrology, like Nicole Oresme and Philippe de Mézières, who consequently focus their criticism on the attraction exerted by it on rulers, which is considered especially dangerous. This is why Oresme translated his *Contra astronomos* from Latin into French while adapting and simplifying the original contents: his immediate intention was probably to turn the dauphin and the court away from astrology and divination<sup>97</sup>.

Interestingly, similarities between the programmes of Charles the Wise and Pere the Ceremonious are also significant: their chronological coincidence –the one beginning and the other becoming systematic in 1359-1360–, their support for the vernacularization of astronomical and astrological works and their effort to gather a great library including a large collection of books on the science of the stars. However, there are also important differences: a preference of the former for translations and of the latter for original works or their different attitudes to university: Charles V founded two fellowships in 1377 at the college of Master Chrétien Gervais aimed at providing access to astronomy-astrology at the University of Paris<sup>98</sup>, whereas Pere made no known effort to introduce the science of the stars to university. As no direct relationship between the projects of both kings has been ascertained to date, might one have influenced the other? Might Pèlerin’s treatise have been known to Tresbens and inspired him to write astrological works that were also addressed to the king? In any case, Tresbens, whose purpose was to offer the foundations of the various branches of astrology in Catalan, showed greater ambition than Pèlerin and any other previous or contemporary astrological author in the vernacular, which was preferentially used in short and specific writings such as aide-mémoire, horoscopes and prognostications. In the case of Tresbens we

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*élections universelles des douze maisons de Pèlerin de Prusse*, in Danielle Jacquart, Danièle James-Raoul and Olivier Soutet (eds.), *Par les mots et les textes. Mélanges de littérature et d’histoire des sciences médiévales offerts à Claude Thomasset* (Paris: Presses de l’Université Paris Sorbonne, 2005), 83-104.

<sup>97</sup> ‘Multi principes et magnates, noxia curiositate solliciti, vanis nituntur artibus occulta perquirere et investigare futura. Ad cuius erroris impugnationem ordinavi tractatum qui sequitur...’ Oresme, *Contra astronomos iudiciarios*, G. W. Coopland, *Nicole Oresme and the Astrologers: A Study of His Livre de Divinacions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), 123; ‘Mon entencion a l’aide de Dieu est monstrier en ce livret, par experience, par auctorités et par raison humaine que folle chose, malvaise, et perilleuse temporelment, est mectre son entente a vouloir savoir ou deviner les aventures et les fortunes a venir ou les choses occultes par astrologie, par geomancie, par nigromancie ou par quelconques telx ars, se l’en les doit appeller ars. Maisment tel chose est plus perilleuse a personnes d’estat come sont princes et seigneurs auxquels appartient le gouvernement publique. Et pour ce ay je composé ce livret en françois afin que gens lays le puissent entendre, des quiex, si comme j’ay entendu, plusieurs sont trop enclins a telles fatuités; et autre foys ay je escript en latin de ceste matiere’, Nicole Oresme, *Contro la divinazione*, trad. Stefano Rapisarda (ed. Sylvie Lefèvre) (Rome: Carocci, 2009), 80. Also in Mézières: ‘le chevetaine doye souverainement garder son host de toute sorcerie, des signes, invocations, des sciencies deffendues, et de tous jugemens d’astrologie encontre franc arbitre; desquelx jugemens pluseurs grans seigneurs et autres s’en sont trouvez deceus’, Philippe de Mézières, *Le Songe du viel pelerin*, ed. Joël Blanchard with Antoine Calvet and Didier Kahn (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2015), 1, 598. ‘Et les seigneurs de bonne foy et simples qui ne se congnoissent en la science et ne demandent pas le conseil de ma maistresse l’Université donnent foy au boudeur subtil et cabuseur astrologien. Et toutefois de X conclusions afirmatives il ne s’en trouvera pas l’une qui en verité pure aviengne entierement. Et ainsi sont les seigneurs deceus...’, *ibidem*, 741.

<sup>98</sup> Jean-Patrice Boudet, ‘A ‘college of astrology and medicine’? Charles V, Gervais Chrétien, and the scientific manuscripts of Maître Gervais’s College’, *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 41/2 (2010), 99-108.

have a real astrologer who, according to some documents and some references found in his work, answered consultations inside and outside of court like those by Duke Joan, the archbishop of Saragossa and Gastó de Lenis. His works reveal good knowledge of astrological sources, which he sometimes compares and contrasts, and he critically analyses from reason and experience, as well as complementing his theoretical discussion by applying the technique to individual cases on his own. Taken as a whole, Tresbens' oeuvre was not only the most outstanding effort to disseminate astrology in the Crown of Aragon or in Catalan, but was probably the most complete contribution to judicial astrology written directly in the vernacular in medieval Latin Europe.

#### **Appendix A: Preface of the *Tractat de les eleccions* (fol. 150r-v)**

Don Pedro senyor Rey d'Aragó, príncep humil més que nengun anyell, molt havets vists e hauzit de mos dits, aprenets los que més vos plauen pendre. Però bé·m plau que, si algun vol reprendre razón, sol la·m faça entendre bé *en* repenre en so que·m volrà dir e clarament demostrar ab albir e, si mi porà vendre, per més rahó seré vencut e tornaré aprendre. E ja sabets que en los tractats precedents d'aquest vos he mostrat molt dels affers de astrologia en las nativitats e en las interrogacions. E perquè més sovén usats en elections, jatsia que tart ne demanets ni·n fassats, vull vos far compliment en ellas en aquellas cosas tan solament que és mester o necessitat a vós com a Rey e a vostros successors. E non entén a parlar en aquestes elections si no·ntén solament en las cosas reials que pertanyen a la casa e progènia reyal en sos afers necessaris. Per ço car dien tots los actors que electió no·s deu fer sinó sobre nativitats o sobre interrogacions e sobre fets reials. E per ço, car les nativitats al jorn de *vuy* no se·n salven ni s'entenen sinó per Reys e per hòmens de gran caler e d'aquells són poch perquè la sciència és departida en lo món, se confon. E per amor d'açò non deuen ésser fetas elections sinó en aquells qui han gran e natural senyoria, sens nativitats, ni a altres sinó que seran tals que contínuament vullan usar per astrologia e en aquella se nodriran o en aquells qui han feta enterrogació equivalent a la nativitat, la qual se féu per hom que lonch temps ha considerat en voler saber son ésser de sa fortuna e vida e accidents ab intenció cordial. Car aquell mou e ha mogut lo firmament en aquella voluntat qu·el tenia amagada entro aquell die e hora e minut entro al punt que·s mou e va fer son viatge al mestre de l'art o li tramet letres per cert misatge, lo qual li especifica la qüestió en tal forma: 'Maestre, prech vos que·m prengats l'ascendent per veure e saber la figura del cel e la disposició per la ordinació de l'ésser de ma vida en los accidents a mi pertanyents segons natura. E açò fet sia obrat al judici e de qui avant pot fer elections equivalents a la electió que se faria per la nativitat si la havia'. E vertederament les elections non són bones ni profiten sinó a cas e a fortuna a les altres gents. És ver que en alguns hòmens dels quals la nativitat d'algun primogènit seu al qual serà jutjada nutrició perfecta se poden pendre accidents pertinents al pare e puy fer electió al pare e al fill per aquella. E és quaix equipollent o equal a la figura de la nativitat del pare pròpia.

#### **Appendix B: Preface of the *Libel d'investigació de tresors* (fol. 166r-v)**

...mi una petita part del seu saber, car és escrit que aquella cosa que havem per grat rebuda per grat la devem dar. E per amor d'açò yo, Barthomeu de Tresbens, pobre letrat e humil cercador e servidor de veritat dels tèrmen de philosophia, de medecina e de astrologia, mandat per la magnífica real Magestat de mon senyor don Pedro, per la gràcia de Déu Rey d'Aragó terç, e cercats e girats molts e diverses volums de llibres de la facultat de astrologia en judicis, e en aquest petit volum he ordinat un libell, ço és a saber, de investigació de tresors o

alcunes coses amaguades en cercar, perquè a aquells qui ab lur plaer o volran la publicaré o comunicaré o l'apestaré, suplicant emperò a la prudència de la sua celcitut que a negun ydiota ne ignorant los térmens d'esta part de filosofia transladar no laxe ni faça ne a negun altre Rey ne gran senyor si propi fil seu non era, perquè scrit és que a negun no donaràs la honor tua. E si la honor a alta sua no deu donar ja menys lo poder. Lo procés donques tal sia que lo Rey elegest ha un fahel a ell, lo qual sia encercador secret qui, sens injúria fer a les gents, ço és a saber de qui visserien les viles o lochs o possecions o hostals, car de les altres gents no deu haver cura per fer saber sos affers a las gents, sàpie pendre maneres e cautelas de encercar per sos regnes e terras, emperò sens infàmia o diffamació del Rey o de si mateix, les coses amagades antigues o novelles.

A la Reyal Magestat donques o a qualsevulla los tresors amaguats perduts encercar donaré doctrina vera e segura si a Déu plau, e si alleguar los doctors la sentència e la letra declararé, sembla a mi pus honest que si a mi mateix tan solempne offici e tractat usurpant aspirava. Emperò bé direm ço que n-e provat e que de feyt n-e vist, e ço que non he provat, si ver me sembla, ab rahons e auctoritats textuais comprovaré. E si per ventura algunes coses diré contra alguns amichs serà per ço car he trobat lo contrari per rahó o per ço car esperimentant non he axí trobat de fet com ells ho deyhen. Mas per ço no estaré que no digua las lurs opinions si bé les entençh.