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*Rino Avesani, Edoardo Fumagalli, Giovanna M. Gianola,
Carla Maria Monti, Manlio Pastore Stocchi, Marco Petoletti,
Nigel G. Wilson, Stefano Zamponi*

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MARCO BAGLIO, IRENE CECCHERINI, ANGELO PIACENTINI

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BIANCA FACCHINI

A PHILOSOPHICAL QUARREL AMONG
AUCTORITATES: MUSSATO'S *DE LITE INTER
NATURAM ET FORTUNAM* AND ITS CLASSICAL
AND MEDIEVAL SOURCES*

The *De Lite inter Naturam et Fortunam* was composed by the Paduan writer and statesman Albertino Mussato (1261-1329) in the years after 1325, coinciding with the last phase of his life and activity, which he spent in exile.¹ This text has been handed down to us in two manuscripts: Sevilla, Bibl. Capitular y Colombina, 5-1-5, XIV c. (C), ff. 1, 58, and Padua, Bibl. Civica, B.P. 2531, XV c., ff. 60 (P), the latter of which is likely to descend from the former.² Reading Mussato's

* I want to thank Prof. Giovanna Maria Gianola, Prof. Luigi Salvioni, and Prof. Frank Bezner for their useful suggestions.

1. A comprehensive bibliographical survey on Albertino Mussato is offered by L. LANZA, *Albertinus Mussatus*, in *C.A.L.M.A., Compendium Auctorum Latinorum Medii Aevi (500-1500)*, Firenze, SISMEL-Edizioni del Galluzzo, vol. 1/2 2000, pp. 108-10; see also M. ZABBIA, *Mussato, Albertino*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Roma, Ist. della Enciclopedia Italiana, vol. LXXVII 2012, pp. 520-24. On Mussato's exile and his last writings: M. MINOIA, *Della vita e delle opere di Albertino Mussato*, Roma, Forzani, 1884, pp. 158-67; B.G. KOHL, *Padua under the Carrara, 1318-1405*, Baltimore-London, The Hopkins Univ. Press, 1998, pp. 49-59; G. GIANOLA, *Albertino Mussato 'personaggio' e la Traditio civitatis Paduae: primi appunti*, in *Miscellanea di studi in onore di Giovanni da Pozzo*, a cura di D. RASI, Roma-Padova, Editrice Antenore, 2004, pp. 3-28, at pp. 3-6. Alongside the *De Lite*, in his last years Mussato also wrote the similarly unpublished *Contra casus fortuitos*; the diachronical relation between the composition of the two dialogues is illustrated by a passage from the *De Lite* itself, where Nature makes reference to Mussato in her address to Fortune: « In te et de te perstat immobilis, quoque magis circumfertur mediis in vexationibus, ridet. In casus tuos fortuitos non tamen tibi set eterne posteritati victoriam parat: clipeis virtutum propulsandos eos nudiustertius stilo mediocri conscripsit » (C, f. 33v; P, f. 27r); cf. A. MOSCHETTI, *Il 'De lite inter Naturam et Fortunam' e il 'Contra casus fortuitos' di Albertino Mussato*, in *Miscellanea di Studi critici e ricerche erudite in onore di Vincenzo Crescini*, Cividale del Friuli, Tip. Frat. Stagni, 1927, pp. 567-99, at p. 584.

2. On the *De Lite* and its manuscript tradition, see MOSCHETTI, *Il 'De lite'* (pp. 563-90 on C and P); G. BILLANOVICH-G. TRAVAGLIA, *Per l'edizione del 'De Lite inter Naturam et Fortunam' e del 'Contra casus fortuitos' di Albertino Mussato*, in « Bollettino del Museo Civico di Padova », voll. XXXI-XLIII 1942-1954, pp. 279-96 (pp. 284-92 on the genetic

work in its totality based on its main, if long neglected, manuscript (C), instead of relying solely on the partial transcription published in 1927 by Andrea Moschetti, can throw new light on the overall contents of this late medieval work, its sources, its topics and themes.³ The *De Lite* is structured as a philosophical dialogue between personifications of Nature and Fortune, who discuss their respective fields of competence and debate who has more power in influencing individual existence, human history, and the course of events in the universe.⁴ Introduced as a dream experienced by the

relation between the two manuscripts). Cf. also F. LO MONACO, *Un nuovo testimone (frammentario) del 'De contra casus fortuitos' di Albertino Mussato*, in « Italia medioevale e umanistica », vol. XXVIII 1985, pp. 107-36, at pp. 109-12. For a full and up-to-date description of C, see the online *Catalogue of the Colombina Library*; for P, see the online catalogue of the *Nuova Biblioteca Manoscritta*; cf. L. GRANATA et al., *I manoscritti medievali di Padova e provincia*, Firenze, SISMEL, 2002, p. 35 n. 52. The text of the *De Lite* as reported in this article is quoted based on C, with the following orthographic choices: insertion of punctuation marks and capitalization, distinction between *u* and *v*, change of *j* into *i*. In spelling out the abbreviations, I chose *m-* instead of *-n-* before labial consonant, *-ci-* instead of *-ti-* before vowel, *-ph-* instead of *-f-* in *philosophus* and derivatives if not otherwise specified. In the article I will not discuss the possible textual problems arising from some passages as given by C.

3. MOSCHETTI, *Il 'De lite'*, pp. 591-99. Moschetti's transcription was based on P (at p. 570 n. 1, of the same article, Moschetti explains that, when he asked to consult C, he received no answer from the Colombina Library). The themes of the *De Lite* have been discussed by N. RUBINSTEIN, *Some Ideas on Municipal Progress and Decline in the Italy of Communes*, in Fritz Saxl, *1890-1948. A Volume of Memorial Essays from his Friends in England*, ed. by D.J. GORDON, London, T. Nelson, 1957, pp. 169-83; R.G. WITT, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2000, pp. 117-73, in part. pp. 146-50. See also M. DAZZI, *Intorno alla nascita di Albertino Mussato*, in « Archivio Muratoriano », vol. II 1915, fasc. XVI pp. 261-72; ID., *Il Mussato storico*, I e II, in « Archivio Veneto », s. V, vol. VI 1929, pp. 357-471, at pp. 414-25; ID., *Intorno alla nascita di Albertino Mussato*, III. *La famiglia Mussato. Note genealogiche e cronologiche per servire alla questione dell'origine di Albertino Mussato*, in « Miscellanea di Storia Veneta edita a cura della R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Venezie », s. IV, vol. IV 1930, pp. 1-105, at pp. 50-51; ID., *Il Mussato preumanista (1261-1329): l'ambiente e l'opera*, Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 1964, pp. 64-65 and 83; C. CARDELLE DE HARTMANN, *Lateinische Dialoge 1200-1400. Literaturhistorische Studie und Repertorium*, Leiden, Brill, 2007, pp. 222-29 and 521-23.

4. Some observations on the structure and contents of the dialogue can be found in MOSCHETTI, *Il 'De lite'*, pp. 567-88. Jeannine Quillet has devoted some pages of her article on the *De Lite*, stating that in the dialogue Mussato's use of allegory is traditionally medieval (J. QUILLET, *Remarques sur l'usage de l'allégorie dans l'œuvre de A. Mussato*, in « Medioevo », vol. XI 1985, pp. 163-74, at p. 170 n. 26).

author during his exile in Chioggia,⁵ the quarrel is finally resolved by the providential appearance of Christ, who issues two decisive pronouncements, the first on the relation between Nature and Fortune and the second on the existence of Fate. The dialogue touches on many topics of moral philosophy – such as the relation between virtue and fortune and the essence of nobility and friendship –⁶ and employs the abstract and theoretical register of the scholarly treatise while making with frequent allusions to Padua's history in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and to Mussato's personal vicissitudes. Moreover, in line with Mussato's proto-humanist interest in

5. The narrative motif of the dream also characterizes another work by Mussato, the *Somnium in aegritudine apud Florentiam* (M. PASTORE STOCCHI, *Il 'Somnium' di Albertino Mussato*, in *Studi in onore di Vittorio Zaccaria in occasione del settantesimo compleanno*, a cura di M. PECORARO, Padova, Unicopli, 1987, pp. 55-63; ALBERTINO MUSSATO, *Écérinide, Épitres métriques sur la poésie, Songe*, éd. critique, traduction et présentation par J.-F. CHEVALIER, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2000, pp. 49-61). Just based on its narrative pattern and content, this text (the account of a vision of Hell) has often been associated with Dante's *Commedia*, even if some scholars reject this connection (A. ZARDO, *Albertino Mussato. Studio storico e letterario*, Padova, Draghi, 1884, pp. 286-90; MINOIA, *Della vita*, pp. 187-89; A. BELLONI, *Dante e Albertino Mussato*, in « *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana* », vol. LXVII 1916, pp. 209-64, at pp. 257-59; ID., *Una visione dell'oltretomba contemporanea alla dantesca*, in « *Rassegna Nazionale* », s. II, vol. XXXVI 1921, pp. 20-31; MOSCHETTI, *Il 'De lite'*, p. 575; PASTORE STOCCHI, *Il 'Somnium'*, pp. 42-43). On the debated and yet unresolved question of whether Mussato and Dante might have known each other: G. MARTELOTTI, *Mussato, Albertino*, in *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, Roma, Ist. della Enciclopedia Italiana, vol. III 1971, pp. 1066-68, with bibliography; M. FEO, *The 'pagan beyond' of Albertino Mussato*, in *Latin Poetry and the Classical Tradition: Essays in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. by P. GODMAN and O. MURRAY, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990, pp. 115-47, at p. 136.

6. Dealing with issues of moral philosophy in a dialogue form was a wide-spread literary practice in Mussato's time, also and especially within the Paduan proto-humanistic circle. In his article on the *Quaestio disputata inter Lovatum et Musatum*, Bolisani writes: « Io penso quindi che essa per l'argomento si debba accostare ai temi di carattere morale o storico proposti da Seneca il Vecchio nelle sue *Suasorie* e che dovevano essere di moda nei cenacoli preumanistici, se di tal genere ce ne sono pervenuti due dello stesso Mussato in forma dialogica e naturalmente in prosa (*De lite inter Naturam et Fortunam; Contra casus fortuitos*) » (E. BOLISANI, *Un importante saggio padovano di poesia preumanistica latina*, in « *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia Patavina di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* », vol. LXVI 1953-1954, pp. 61-77, at p. 64). Cf. CARDELLE DE HARTMANN, *Lateinische Dialoge*, pp. 222-29. Kristeller writes that Mussato's *De Lite* and *Contra casus* present him « non solo come poeta, storico e grammatico, ma anche come filosofo morale » (P.O. KRISTELLER, *Umanesimo e Scolastica a Padova fino al Petrarca*, in « *Medioevo* », vol. XI 1985, pp. 1-18, at p. 10).

classical literature and philosophy,⁷ the *De Lite* abounds with references to ancient texts. Among the quoted and re-used authors are not only Latin poets and “moralists” such as Virgil, Seneca, Cicero and Sallust, but also, and to a considerable extent, Aristotle.⁸

Scholars have long argued that Mussato was likely to have been intimately familiar with the medieval Latin translations of Aristotle. In fact, by the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries, the Paduan intellectual *milieu* was deeply imbued with Aristotelianism, as evidenced by the works of Peter of Abano and Marsilius of Padua. In this regard, scholars such as Dazzi, Rubinstein, and Witt have claimed that Peter’s philosophical naturalism and Marsilius’s political rationalism, as well as the overall interest in Aristotle that characterized the so-called “School of Padua”, must have exercised a strong influence on Mussato.⁹ Indeed, in his epistles in defense of poetry Mussato cites Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*,

7. On Mussato’s and the Paduan proto-humanists’ role in the discovery and study of ancient Latin texts, see for example MINOIA, *Della vita*, pp. 262, 30-43; R. SABBADINI, *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci ne’ secoli XIV e XV*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1914, pp. 106-14; DAZZI, *Il Mussato preumanista*, pp. 42-63; G. BILLANOVICH, *Veterum vestigia vatam’ nei carmi dei preumanisti padovani*. Lovato Lovati, Zambono di Andrea, Albertino Mussato e Lucrezio, Catullo, Orazio (*Carmina*), Tibullo, Propertio, Ovidio (*Ibis*), Marziale, Stazio (*Silvae*), in « Italia medioevale e umanistica », vol. I 1958, pp. 155-243; ID., *Il preumanesimo padovano*, in *Storia della cultura veneta*, II. *Il Trecento*, Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 1976, pp. 19-110 (in part. pp. 56-66 and 85-106); G. BILLANOVICH, *I primi umanisti e l’antichità classica*, in *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 500-1500. Proceedings of an International Conference held at King’s College, Cambridge, April 1969*, ed. by R.R. BOLGAR, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1971, pp. 57-74; R. WEISS, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1969, pp. 16-29; WITT, *In the Footsteps*, pp. 81-124.

8. For an overview of the history and the various editions of the medieval Latin translation of Aristotle, see L. MINIO-PALUELLO, *L’Aristoteles Latinus*, in *Opuscula. The Latin Aristotle*, Amsterdam, Adolf M. Hakkert, 1972, pp. 459-82.

9. DAZZI, *Il Mussato preumanista*, pp. 25-34; RUBINSTEIN, *Some Ideas*, pp. 178-82; WITT, *In the Footsteps*, pp. 149, 154-55; cf. KRISTELLER, *Umanesimo e Scolastica*, pp. 13-16. The *De Lite* is often mentioned also in P. MARANGON, *Ad cognitionem scientiae festinare. Gli studi nell’Università e nei conventi di Padova nei secoli XIII e XIV*, Trieste, Edizioni Lint, 1997, pp. 380-410 (on the relation between Marsilius, Peter of Abano, and Mussato) and pp. 149-77 (on the study of Aristotle in the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Paduan « Convento del Santo »). More in general, on Peter of Abano: B. NARDI, *Saggi sull’aristotelismo padovano dal secolo XIV al XVI*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1958, pp. 1-74 (against Peter of Abano’s definition as “Averroist”); J.H. RANDALL, *The School of Padua and the Emergence of Modern Sciences*, Padova, Editrice Antenore, 1961, pp. 28-35; E. PASCHETTO, *Pietro d’Abano, medico e filosofo*, Firenze, Vallecchi, 1984; L. TURETTA, *Biblio-*

while in his *Vita Seneca* he quotes from the last chapter of Aristotle's *Poetics*. Gustavo Vinay and Henry A. Kelly observe that he was probably among the very few men of letters of the Middle Ages to have had access to this latter text in Latin translation.¹⁰ Nevertheless, until now the evidence for Mussato's first-hand knowledge of the Latin Aristotle has been scant. However, the *De Lite* quotes at length from Aristotle's *Physics*, *Magna Moralia*, *Rhetoric*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Politics* and *De Anima*.¹¹ It therefore constitutes an important

grafia delle opere a stampa di e su Pietro d'Abano, in *Convegno Internazionale per il 750° anniversario della nascita di Pietro d'Abano*, Roma, Dipartimento di Medicina Sperimentale, 2008, pp. 659-734; H. LAGERLUND, *Peter of Abano*, in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy. Philosophy between 500 and 1600*, ed. by H.L., Dordrecht-Heidelberg-London-New York, Springer, vol. II 2011, pp. 952-53. On Marsilius: F. BATTAGLIA, *Marsilio da Padova e la filosofia politica del Medio Evo*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1928; the various articles contained in *Marsilio da Padova*. Atti del Convegno internazionale di Padova, 18-20 settembre 1980, a cura di E. OPOCHER, in «Medioevo», voll. V-VI 1979-1980; G. PIAIA, *Marsilio e dintorni. Contributi alla storia delle idee*, Padova, Editrice Antenore, 1999; M. MERLO, *Marsilio da Padova. Il pensiero della politica come grammatica del mutamento*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2003; V. SYROS, *Marsilius of Padua*, in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, vol. II pp. 717-209.

10. In these letters (E. CECCHINI, *Le epistole metriche del Mussato sulla poesia*, in *Tradizione classica e letteratura umanistica. Per Alessandro Perosa*, a cura di R. CARDINI, E. GARIN, L. CESARINI MARTINELLI, G. PASCUCI, Roma, Bulzoni, 1985, pp. 95-119; MUSSATO, *Écérinide, Épitres métriques sur la poésie, Sonje*, pp. 29-48), Mussato appropriates the concept of ARIST., *Metaph.*, I 3 938b 28-30 (WITT, *In the Footsteps*, pp. 157-58; cf. P. MARANGON, *Alle origini dell'aristotelismo padovano*, Padova, Editrice Antenore, 1977, at pp. 168-69; G. FRASSO, *Appunti sulla "difesa della poesia" e sul rapporto "teologia-poesia" da Dante a Boccaccio*, in «Verbum», vol. III 2001, 1 pp. 1-17, at pp. 4-10). ALBERTINI MUXATI *Lucii Annei Seneca Cordubensis vita et mores*, in A.CH. MEGAS, Ὁ προουμανιστικός κύκλος τῆς Πάδουας (*Lovato Lovati-Albertino Mussato*) καὶ οἱ τραγωδίες τοῦ L.A. Seneca, Θεσσαλονίκη 1967, pp. 154-61, at pp. 158-59, quotes ARIST., *Po.*, xxvi 62a 5-11. Cf. G. VINAY, *Mussato e l'estetica medievale*, in «Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana», vol. CXXVI 1949, pp. 113-59, at pp. 136-57; H.A. KELLY, *Aristotle-Averroes-Alemannus on tragedy: The Influence of the Poetics on the Latin Middle Ages*, in «Viator», vol. X 1979, pp. 161-209, at p. 188; ID., *Ideas and forms of tragedy from Aristotle to the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993, p. 139.

11. In this regard, scholars have only pointed out that in some passages of the *De Lite* Mussato uses, rather freely, terms and concepts drawn from Aristotle's *Politics*: see RUBINSTEIN, *Some Ideas*, p. 173; WITT, *In the Footsteps*, p. 150; V. SYROS, *Die Rezeption der aristotelischen politischen Philosophie bei Marsilius von Padua*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2007, at pp. 94-99, with bibl. (on Mussato's familiarity with Aristotle's *Politics* cf. also P. MARANGON, *Ad cognitionem scientiae festinare*, pp. 385, 402, 412). In my article I will not specifically consider this aspect, which has already received some critical attention. Man-

indicator for assessing the extent of Aristotle's reception by Mussato and, more generally, in late medieval Padua.¹²

On the one hand, Aristotle is regarded in the *De Lite* as a stable and everlasting source of authority; usually quoted as *phylosophus* – the philosopher *par excellence* – or *princeps phylosophorum*, he is often invoked by both Nature and Fortune as the guarantor of their statements' truth and as the most reliable arbiter on controversial questions. Accordingly, in claiming their rights and prerogatives, the two opponents describe themselves in rigorously Aristotelian terms: their self-definitions are literally drawn from the second book of Aristotle's *Physics*, which Mussato presumably read in the Latin translation by James of Venice (ca. 1140) and later revised by William of Moerbeke.¹³ Nature's self-description as "the principle of movement and rest of the being in which she is" (« principium [...]

lio Dazzi has also listed some graecisms and references to Aristotle in the *De Lite*, observing that there are no studies on the topic (DAZZI, *Il Mussato preumanista*, 65-66).

12. The extent and character of Mussato's quotations of Aristotle's works, in particular those from the *Physics*, *Magna Moralia*, and *Rhetoric*, would appear to exclude the possibility that he was relying exclusively on a compendium, such as the *Auctoritates Aristotelis* or Geremia da Montagnone's *Compendium moralium notabilium* (*Les Auctoritates Aristotelis: un florilège médiéval. Étude historique et édition critique*, ed. by J. HAMESSE, Louvain-Paris, Publications universitaires-Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, 1974; GEREMIA DA MONTAGNONE, *Epytoma sapientie*, Venetiis, P. Liechtensteyn, 1505). However, at the present stage of research, the hypothesis that Mussato used one of more intermediate sources cannot be completely excluded either (cf. n. 29 and 46 below).

13. ARISTOTELIS *Physica. Translatio Vetus*, ed. by F. BOSSIER and J. BRAMS, in *Aristoteles Latinus*, vol. VII-1/2, Leiden-New York, Brill, 1990² (the following quotations of Aristotle's *Physics* will be based on this edition). The *Translatio Vaticana* includes only books I-II 2 of Aristotle's *Physics*, and thus it is not likely it was Mussato's source. On the various medieval Latin translations of the *Physics*, see BOSSIER-BRAMS, *Préface. La Translatio Vetus de la Physique*, in *Aristoteles Latinus*, vol. VII-1/1 pp. XI-CIX, at pp. XII-XXVII; cf. *Aristoteles Latinus. Codices*, ed. by G. LACOMBE, Roma, Libreria dello Stato, 1939, vol. I p. 52; J. BRAMS, *La riscoperta di Aristotele in Occidente*, Milano, Jaca Book, 2003, pp. 47-49; E. BERTI, *Fisica*, in *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, Roma, Ist. della Enciclopedia Italiana, vol. II 1970, p. 933. Identifying the version utilized by Mussato is particularly difficult since there is currently no edition of William of Moerbeke's revision of the *vetus* (on which, see J. BRAMS-G. VUILLEMIN-DIEM BRAMS, *Physica nova und Recensio matritensis - Wilhelm von Moerbekes doppelte Revision der Physica Vetus*, in *Aristotelisches Erbe im arabisch-lateinischen Mittelalter*, Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1986, pp. 215-88; BRAMS, *La riscoperta*, pp. 110, 116: William's translation probably consisted of different redactions). Mussato might have also relied on a version contaminating *vetus* and *nova*, as that we find in two manuscripts *patavini* of the *Physics* dating to the thirteenth and fourteenth

motus ac status sive quietis [sive] eius in quo sum») recalls Aristotle's definition of nature in *Physics* II.¹⁴ Fortune in turn refers to "Aristotle's sayings in *Physics* II and *Magna Moralia* II" and then, closely following these texts, describes herself as a divine and irrational force acting beyond intellectual understanding:

Dico ergo esse tam grande, tam latum nostre iurisdictionis officium cum, ut Aristoteles adtestatur in *Physicis*, quid divinum sim, ut nequeam cuiusvis regule cuiuspianve diffinitionis vel verborum vel differentiarum connexione describi. [...] Nitar tutari mea iura fallatis huiuscemodi verbis Aristotilis in *Physicorum* II et *Magorum Moraliu* scilicet in II [...]. Non enim ut tu, Natura, semper cuius causa ut semper aut frequenter factiva es, agis, set ut contigit, ut michi libet, inordinate procedo et in animo eius in quo fuerit plurimus intellectus et ratio minima mea operatione demoror vel conversor, set e contra in eo plus demoror in quo reperio minimum intellectum (C, ff. 7v-8r).¹⁵

She subsequently illustrates the ancient theories on fortune (τύχη) as developed by the first Greek philosophers in a rather extended passage which, once again, quotes the second book of the *Physics*.¹⁶ The same source is at the basis of the distinctions made in the dia-

centuries (BOSSIER-BRAMS, *Préface*, pp. xxxiii-xiv). A manuscript containing « aliqui libri textus Physice » in James of Venice's translation is present in the 1396-97 Catalogue of the Paduan « Convento del Santo » (cf. MARANGON, *Ad cognitionem scientiae festinare*, pp. 156, 161).

14. C, f. 4r; a similar formulation is present also at f. 5r. Cf. ARIST., *Ph.*, II 1 192b 21-22: « quod est natura principium alicuius et causa movendi et quiescendi in quo est [...] ».

15. Cf. ARIST., *Ph.*, II 4 196b 5-7: « Sunt autem quidam quibus videtur esse quidem causa fortuna, inmanifesta autem humano intellectui, sicut cum divinum quoddam sit et felicius »; ARIST., *MM*, II 8 1206b 39 - 1207a 5: « Ut est natura semper cuius est causa, huius ut frequenter aut ut ipsi factiva est, fortuna autem numquam, sed inordinate, et ut contigit [...]. Neque autem oportet intellectum quondam aut rationem rectam: et enim hic non minus est ordinatum et semper eidem fortuna autem non. Propter quod et ubi plurimus intellectus et ratio, hic autem minima fortuna, ubi autem plurima fortuna, hic autem minimus intellectus » (for the edition of the *Magna Moralia*, see n. 21 below). Fortune's speech at C, ff. 7v-8r overall corresponds to ARIST., *Ph.*, II 4 196b 5-7 and 197a 18-20; *MM*, II 8 1206b 36 - 1207a 7, 36-38.

16. The mentioned passage appears at C, ff. 8v-9r, and quotes ARIST., *Ph.*, II 4 195b 35 - 196a 11, 19-35. See for example f. 8v, where Fortune states: « Primo non absque determinata causa posse quidquam evenire censebant [...]. Secundo altera ratione dicebant, ut tu Natura, antiquos primevos me habuisse pro nichilo; nam cum causas de generatione et corruptione tractassent, de me determinare curassent, siquidem

logue between *Fortuna* and *Casus*, the latter of which is an extension of the former,¹⁷ and between Nature and Fortune, respectively defined as the first efficient cause of the events occurring always or often (Nature), and as the remote, accidental cause of the events occurring in view of a well-defined purpose (Fortune).¹⁸ Various other examples and direct mentions of this text demonstrate that Mussato was intimately familiar with Aristotle's *Physics*,¹⁹ which in fact constituted the most influential text for Western natural philos-

me putassent alicuius existentie [...]». Cf. ARIST., *Ph.*, II 4 195b 36 - 196a 11: « Quidam enim et si sit aut non, dubitant; nichil enim fieri a fortuna dicunt, sed omnium esse aliquam causam determinatam quecumque dicimus a casu fieri aut a fortuna [...]. Similiter autem est et in aliis que a fortuna dicuntur, semper aliquam esse accipere causam, sed non fortunam, quoniam si aliquid erat fortuna, inconveniens utique videbitur sicut vere est, et dubitabit utique aliquis propter quid nullus antiquorum sapientum causas de generatione et corruptione dicens de fortuna nichil determinavit, sed, sicut visum est, nichil opinabantur neque illi esse a fortuna ».

17. The distinction between *Fortuna* and *Casus* can be found at C, ff. 9v-10v, and is based on ARIST., *Ph.*, II 5 196b 10-13, 17-19, 23-29, 33-36, 197a 5-8, 15-18. See for example ff. 9v-10r, where Fortune affirms: « Videmus aliquid quidem similiter semper fieri [...]. Videmusque et alia frequenter fieri [...]. Neutrius horum me esse Fortuna confiteor [...]. Eorum que propter finem deliberatum eveniunt [...] sum tamen causa longinqua per accidens [...] ». The source underlying this passage is ARIST., *Ph.*, II 5 196b 10-12, 17-24: « Primum quidem igitur, quoniam videmus alia quidem semper similiter fieri, alia autem sicut frequenter, manifestum est quod neutri horum causa fortuna dicitur [...]. Eorum autem que fiunt alia quidem propter hoc fiunt [...] huiusmodi igitur cum secundum accidens fiant, a fortuna dicimus esse ».

18. The distinction between Nature and Fortune present at C, ff. 12v-13v quotes ARIST., *Ph.*, II 6 (in part. 197a 36 - 197b 11, 15-18, 22-25, 30-32). See for example ff. 12v-13r, where Fortune states: « [...] alias de hoc meo Casu a multis super mearum rerum disquisitione quesita sum, quamquam hoc ab Aristotile nostro in tuis *Physicis* perquam vera et utili determinatione discussa sit [...]. In pluribus quam ego se applicat ille comertis [...]. In hiis quidem que inanimatis et infantibus aut belluis indiscreta ratione contingunt, in quibus omnino nullum est quod proficiscatur ab intellectu vel ratione propositum, Casu, non me Fortuna, rite quis dixerit evenire [...] ». Cf. ARIST., *Ph.*, II 6 197a 36, 197b 7-10: « Differt autem quoniam casus in plus est [...]. Et propter hoc neque inanimatum nichil neque infans neque bestia nichil facit a fortuna, quoniam non habent propositum; neque eufortunium neque infortunium inest his, nisi secundum similitudinem [...] ».

19. See for example C, f. 15r: « Quid Aristotiles noster, quem tibi testem in tuis semper actibus adhibes, aut aliud docent luculenta volumina *Physicorum*, quam me *Naturam* semper esse et fuisse? ». Cf. ARIST., *Ph.*, II 1 193a 3-28: « Quod quidem igitur natura sit, dictum est, et quid natura et secundum naturam; sicut autem est natura temptare demonstrare ridiculum est [...] ».

ophy until the publication of Newton's *Principia mathematica philosophiae naturalis* in 1689.²⁰

In the *De Lite*, quotations from Aristotle's *Physics* II intermingle with references to chapter II 8 of the above-mentioned *Magna Moralia* which deals with the topic of « good fortune ». Mussato is likely to have read this Aristotelian work in the Latin translation by Bartholomew of Messina rather than in the *Liber de bona fortuna*, a widespread Latin version, the latter of which was a Latin version of both *Magna Moralia*, II 8 (1206b 30 - 1207b 19) and *Eudemian Ethics*, VII 14 (1246b 37 - 1248b 11).²¹ The quotation of the *Magna Moralia* in the following passage of the *De Lite* provides a sample of the textual variants aligning Mussato's text with Bartholomew's translation and differentiating it from the *Liber* (the variants of the *Liber* are given in italic):

Bene fortunatus inquit [i.e. Aristotle] est absque [*sine*] ratione habens mo-

20. J.M. THIJSSSEN, *Natural Philosophy*, in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, vol. II pp. 839-49, at p. 839.

21. Bartholomew's version can be found in ARISTOTELIS *Magna Moralia*, ed. by C. PANNIER, in *Aristoteles Latinus*, vol. XXVII (forthcoming: electronic version available in the AL online database); see also the synoptic table provided by V. CORDONIER-C. STEEL, *Guillaume de Moerbeke traducteur du 'Liber de bona fortuna' et de l'Éthique à Eudème'*, in *The Letter before the Spirit. The Importance of Text Editions for the Study of the Reception of Aristotle*, ed. by A.M. VAN OPPENRAAY and R. FONTAINE, Leiden, Brill, 2012, pp. 401-46, at pp. 439-41, comparing the translation of *MM*, II 8, by Bartholomew of Messina with that present in the *Liber*. Valérie Cordonier has identified the Greek model used by Bartholomew in his translation of the *Magna Moralia* (CORDONIER, *La version latine des 'Magna Moralia' par Barthélemy de Messine et son modèle grec: le Ms. Wien, ÖNB, Phil. Gr. 315 (V)*, in *Translating at the Court. Bartholomew of Messina and the Cultural Life at the Court of Manfred, King of Sicily*, ed. by P. DE LEEMANS, Leuven, Leuven Univ. Press, 2014, at pp. 337-82). On Bartholomew of Messina, cf. BRAMS, *La riscoperta*, pp. 89-96. On the *Liber* and its late-medieval fortune, see E. FRANCESCHINI, *Aristotele nel Medioevo latino*, Padova, Tipografia del Seminario, 1935, pp. 13-14; D.A. LINES, *Aristotle's Ethics in the Italian Renaissance (ca. 1300-1650). The Universities and the Problem of Moral Education*, Leiden-Boston-Köln, Brill, 2002, p. 46, and especially: CORDONIER-STEEL, *Guillaume de Moerbeke* (attributing the translation of the *Liber* to William of Moerbeke and clarifying the relation between the *Liber* and Bartholomew's translation of *MM*, II 8); V. CORDONIER, *Sauver le Dieu du philosophe: Albert le Grand, Thomas d'Aquin, Guillaume de Moerbeke et l'invention du 'Liber de bona fortuna' comme alternative autorisée à l'interprétation averroïste de la théorie aristotélicienne de la Providence Divine*, in *Christian Readings of Aristotle from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed. by L. BIANCHI, Turnhout, Brepols, 2011, pp. 65-110 (on the genesis of the *Liber* and the particular role that Thomas Aquinas played in this respect).

tum [*impetum*] ad bona et hec acquirens [...]. Non enim ut tu, Natura, semper, cuius causa ut semper aut frequenter [*in pluribus*] factiva es, agis, set ut contingit [*accidit*], ut michi libet, inordinate procedo (C, ff. 8r-v).²²

Magna Moralia, II 8, is the textual source that underlies Nature's allusion to the irrational character of Fortune, whose followers act as possessed,²³ and also that substantiates her definition of *fortunati* as individuals owning some goods which do not derive from, or depend on, their actions:

Ex dogmate Magnorum Moraliū hanc sarcinulam decerpisti [...] cum ibidem asseruit tibi Fortune non nisi in non existentibus in hominibus locum esse et quorum ipsi domini non sunt; subsequenter ibi [...] subiunxit nobilem bene fortunatum dici et omnino cui talia bonorum insunt quorum non ipse dominus est, set tu (C, f. 22r).²⁴

As these quotations show, in the dialogue Aristotle is referred to as the main *auctoritas* not only in natural but also in moral philosophy.²⁵

22. ARIST., *MM*, II 8 1207a 36-37; 1206b 38-1207a 1; cf. CORDONIER-STEEL, *Guillaume de Moerbeke*, pp. 439-42. See also C, f. 11r: « Aristotiles noster in Moraliū Magnis propie ad demoniorum simile te coniectans ait et enim demoniaci absque [*a Deo vecti absque*] ratione motum [*impetum*] habent ad aliquid operandum » (ARIST., *MM*, II 8 1207b 3-5; cf. CORDONIER-STEEL, *Guillaume de Moerbeke*, p. 442); C, f. 22r: « cum ibidem asseruerit tibi Fortune non nisi in non existentibus [*in hiis que non in nobis existunt*] in hominibus locum esse et quorum ipsi domini non sunt » (ARIST., *MM*, II 8 1207a 15-20; cf. CORDONIER-STEEL, *Guillaume de Moerbeke*, p. 440).

23. « Non immemoriter Aristotiles noster in Moraliū Magnis propie ad demoniorum simile te coniectans ait et enim demoniaci absque ratione motum habent ad aliquid operandum [...] » (C, f. 11r). Cf. ARIST., *MM*, II 8 1207a 35 - 1207b 5: « Est igitur bona fortuna irrationalis natura [...] Et enim demoniaci absque ratione motum habent ad operandum quid ». See also n. 15 and 22 above.

24. Cf. ARIST., *MM*, II 8 1207a 19-26: « Bona fortuna et fortuna in non in nobis existentibus neque quorum ipsi domini simus et potentes operari [...] nobilem enim bene fortunatum dicimus, et omnino cui talia bonorum insunt, quorum non ipse dominus est ». The concept is recalled also at f. 36v of the *De Lite*, where Nature tells Fortune: « Ad me redit, ut alias in hac lite hodierna die diligenti ratione tetigimus, ubi voluisti obtinuisse, si recolis, auctoritate in Magnis Moraliū Magnis usa phylosophi. Bene dici nobilem fortunatum, cum sit nobilitas de bonis non existentibus in hominibus et quorum non ipsi sunt domini et potentes aliquid operari ».

25. On Aristotle's fundamental role in medieval ethics: B. KENT, *Ethics*, in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, vol. 1 pp. 310-17. As has been mentioned above, a central topic in the *De Lite* is the relation between virtue, fortune and happiness (see in part. C, ff. 17v-22v), which is dealt by referring to authors such as Seneca (*tragicus*), Boethi-

In this regard, the discussion on nobility, involving the distinction between « natural » and « moral » nobility, and that between « nobilitas in genere » and « nobilitas in specie », is closely patterned after Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.²⁶ Mussato seemingly read this work in the *translatio nova*, authored by William of Moerbeke, as the following quotation reveals (the variants differentiating the *translatio vetus* of the *Rhetoric* as to Mussato's text and to the *translatio nova* are given in italic):

Nobilitas quidem est genti et civitati sui iuris antiquos esse et presides primos insignes et multos insignes prodiisse ex ipsis in hiis que celantur [*genti et civitati ibidem esse genitos aut antiquos esse et prepositos primos apparentes, et multos apparentes fieri ex ipsis in invidis*] [...] Singularis autem nobilitas que a viris aut mulieribus et legitimis ab ambobus [*propria autem nobilitas aut maribus aut a mulieribus, et consanguinitas ab utriusque*] (C, f. 34r).²⁷

Again, the dialogue's treatment of friendship, analyzed in its three components of « good, useful and pleasant », paraphrases the relevant passage of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*,²⁸ which is another

us, Cicero and, among the others, Aristotle. At C, f. 21v, for instance, Fortune says: « Exteriora quidem bona de essentia beatitudinis negat esse philosophus, verum beatitudinis ornamenta condecorant » (cf. ARIST., *EN*, I 9 1099b 9 - 1100a 9; *MM*, II 8, 1207b 17-19). This subject was in fact hotly debated in classical antiquity (M.C. NUSSBAUM, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986) and still represented a problem in Aquinas's ethics (J. BOWLIN, *Contingency and Fortune in Aquinas's Ethics*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999, pp. 138-212). In this article I will not specifically delve into the analysis of this aspect, since I am especially focusing on the two issues that are most thoroughly examined in the dialogue and finally addressed in the closing *sententiae*: the relation between nature and fortune and the existence of fate.

26. This section (C, ff. 33v-37r) quotes and discusses ARIST., *Rh.*, II 15 1390b 21-27 and I 5 1360b 31-38. Introducing the topic of nobility, Fortune remarks: « Semper ab Aristotile meo, cuius imitatio hodie ceteris iure preest, de re unaquaque discernenda seu naturali seu morali libenter incipio [...] ».

27. ARIST., *Rh.*, I 5 1360b 32-35 (ARISTOTELIS *Rhetorica*, ed. by B. SCHNEIDER, in *Aristoteles Latinus*, vol. XXXI 1-2, Leiden, Brill, 1978, pp. 21, 175); See also C, f. 11v: « Unus autem, ait, assequitur optimus mos bone fortune, quia amatores Dei [*quoniam philotei (amici deorum glossae)*] sunt et habent se ad divinum credentes propter facta bona a fortuna [*et habent penes divinum qualiter, credentes propter facta a fortuna*] » (ARIST., *Rh.*, II 17 1391b 2-5; cf. ed. SCHNEIDER, pp. 95, 252). On the various medieval Latin translations of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* see E. BERTI, *Retorica*, in *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, Roma, Ist. della Enciclopedia Italiana, vol. IV 1973, pp. 892-93; BRAMS, *La riscoperta*, pp. 111, 115, 117.

28. C, ff. 22v-24r, corresponding to ARIST., *EN*, VIII 2-3. See for example C, f. 22v,

work repeatedly cited in the *De Lite*.²⁹ These and the other Aristotelian references in the dialogue point to the fundamental role attributed to « the philosopher » as a permanent and revered authority.³⁰ Along these lines, at the beginning of the above-mentioned passage on nobility Fortune explicitly states that she will follow Aristotle, « cuius imitatio hodie ceteris iure preest ».³¹

where Nature says: « Est honestum, utile et delectabile super quo triplici amabili triplex fundatur amicitia ». Cf. ARIST., *EN*, VIII 2 1155 b 18-19: « Videtur enim non omne amari, set amabile; hoc autem esse bonum vel delectabile vel utile » (ARISTOTELIS *Ethica Nicomachea. Translatio Roberti Grosseteste Lincolnensis sive Liber ethicorum*. B. *Recensio recognita*, ed. by R.-A. GAUTHIER, in *Aristoteles Latinus*, vol. XXVI 1-3/4, Leiden-Brussels, Brill, 1973); MARANGON, *Alle origini*, pp. 165-66. The three kinds of friendship are distinguished also in the *Eudemian Ethics* (chap. VII 2), which, however, in the Middle Ages was not considered an Aristotelian work, apart from the chapter VII 14, included in the *Liber de bona fortuna* and circulating autonomously.

29. See for example C, f. 16v, where Fortuna states: « Tu quidem et Ars estis aliquid circa idem, quia circa contingens aliter se habere, sicut et meus inquit Agatho, ars dilexit naturam et e contrario ». Cf. ARIST., *EN*, VI 4 1140a 19 (fr. 6 Nauck), where, however, the stated affinity is between art and fortune, not art and nature (in Mussato's text, the imprecision is probably due to a quotation from memory). Again about friendship, see C, f. 22v: « Hoc seu divinum seu humanum munus, quod amicitia dicitur, quo sine, ut philosophus inquit, nullus elligit vivere etiam habens reliqua bona » (cf. ARIST., *EN*, VIII 1 1155a 1-9 and IX 9, 1169b 17-18); C, f. 23r: « Una anima sunt, inquit Aristoteles, quibus omnia comunia, omnia equalia, ut genu tibi coniunctum » (cf. ARIST., *EN*, VIII 9 1159b 31-32; IX 8 1168b 6-8); C, f. 35v: « Quod enim comuniter dicitur impossibile est totaliter esse falsum, ut videtur velle philosophus in septimo Ethicorum » (*EN*, VII 1 1145b 2-7). The cursory and non-literal nature of Mussato's references to the *Nicomachean Ethics* makes it extremely difficult to individuate the Latin translation he was following (on the various Latin versions of the *Nicomachean Ethics* circulating in the Middle Ages cf. E. BERTI, *Etica*, in *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, Roma, Ist. della Enciclopedia Italiana, vol. II 1970, pp. 756-58; LINES, *Aristotle's ethics*, pp. 45-49). Moreover, at C, ff. 22v-23r, Mussato conflates distinct passages of the Aristotelian treatise and combines them with Cicero's *Laelius*; perhaps, his knowledge of the *Nicomachean Ethics* was not first-hand. The same inference could be made about his knowledge of the *Politics* (on which see n. 11 above and 30 below).

30. For other examples of Aristotelian references, see C, f. 37r: « nec mirum cum dicat Aristoteles quod intellectus corrumpitur quodam interius corrupto scilicet organo fantasie » (ARIST., *de An.*, I 4 408b 24-25; Cf. THOM. AQ., *Summa c. Gent.*, II 80 6); C, f. 24r: « Sic est, Fortuna; tu praticalis es et rebus deputata polliticis domina enim es, ut in Polliticis Aristoteles ait » (the passage referred to might be ARIST., *Pol.*, IV 2 1295b 6-9 and VII 13, 1332a 30-32, where is stated that a moderate amount of fortune's goods is beneficial for the city; the definition of fortune as presiding over practical activities can be found in ARIST., *Ph.*, II 6 197b 1-6), etc.

31. See n. 26 above.

However, the narrative strategy of the dialogue aims at gradually re-adjusting and rectifying the Aristotelian philosophical postulates by framing them within a new, Christian perspective. For instance, the personifications of Nature and Fortune in the text embody not only Aristotelian but also Christian concepts. If on the one hand Nature defines herself according to the Greek concept of *physis* and as the principle of motion and rest, on the other hand she states that she is God's helper and collaborator:

[...] illius disponente auctoreque Deo affui Natura ipsa compagini [...]. Alia eminens causa, quam ne prorsus negem, primus scilicet motor et artifex Deus, animas infundit, me astante, me presente atque confovente multiplices [...] (C, ff. 4r-v).³²

Likewise, while she is described in Aristotelian terms as « causa per accidens » (accidental cause), Fortune repeatedly acknowledges that she owes her powers to God, whom she describes by expressions such as « Ille qui nostrum utramque humani generis exercitiis superesse disposuit » (C, f. 24v).

Moreover, in the course of the debate, Aristotle does not appear as a univocally-interpretable authority; on the contrary, his statements are corrected and instrumentally re-adapted by either one or the other disputant in order to prove or disprove their respective

32. While the definition of God as « motor et artifex » in Mussato's text is perhaps explainable in light of Aquinas's particular reading of Aristotle's metaphysics (see pp. 89-90 below), more in general it represents a case of the synthesis between Platonism and Aristotelianism which typically characterizes the medieval reception of Aristotle and was promoted by different factors, such as Boethius's philosophical project, the diffusion of the *Liber de causis*, the mediation of Arabic philosophy, the works by Albert the Great and the late-medieval interpreters of Aristotle (see for example M. ZAMBON, *Aristotelis Platonisque sententias in unam revocare concordiam*. *Il progetto filosofico boeziano e le sue fonti*, in « Medioevo », vol. XXVIII 2003, pp. 17-49; È. GILSON, *La filosofia nel Medioevo. Dalle origini patristiche alla fine del XIV secolo*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, 1973 [Italian transl.; original edition: Paris 1922], pp. 415-17, 604-58; C. D'ANCONA COSTA, *Recherches sur le 'Liber de causis'*, Paris, J. Vrin, 1995; EAD., *La Casa della Sapienza. La trasmissione della metafisica greca e la formazione della filosofia araba*, Milano, Guerini, 1996, pp. 46-65, 103-12; S. GERSH, *Platonism*, in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, vol. II pp. 1016-22; A. GODDU, *Causality*, in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, vol. I pp. 201-6; J. BRUMBERG-CHAUMONT, *Albert the Great*, in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, vol. I pp. 41-44, at p. 43).

arguments. For instance, when Nature offensively calls her *demoniac* by referring to Aristotle, Fortune exclaims:

[...] ille me, quam demoniacam vocas, in Physicis ipsis tuis quoddam quid inquit esse divinum, quo spiritu plenus in Rhetoricis sancta reiteratione rememorat [...]. Bene fortunatos inquit amatores Dei esse, si bene memin-erim per verba (C, f. 11v).³³

Far from unambiguously revealing a unique and undoubtable *Veritas*, the theses of the ancient philosophers, including Aristotle himself, are liable to opposite interpretations, as Nature notices in the following address to Fortune:

Summa tua semper temeritas, o Fortuna, tu phylosophos, tu theologos, tu omnium scientiarum auctores, in quibus tuum Aristotilem, Democritum, Empodoclem, Eraclitem, nunc pro te ad argumenta tue elationis adducis, nunc ad oppositum trahis [...] (C, f. 44v).

Although Aristotle is the most illustrious philosopher, in the *De Lite* he is only one among the various cited pagan thinkers, whose voices appear often mutually discordant and – lacking a superior discernment – state equally plausible, but also equally doubtful, truths. The dialogue shows that the wisdom of the ancient philosophers, and, more generally, of all human authorities, is only partial and relative; their words have no resolving power. It will ultimately be another kind of Word, the divine *Verbum* of God, that dispells any doubts and ends all disagreement. Indeed, at the end of the dialogue, Christ explains to Nature and Fortune that issuing a decisive judgment on their essence and prerogatives is necessary precisely because of the confusion reigning among the various earthly *auctoritates*:

33. Cf. ARIST., *Ph.*, II 4 196b 5-7 (see n. 15 above) and *Rh.*, II 17 1391b 1-5: « Elatiores quidem igitur et magis impremeditati propter bonam fortunam sunt, unus autem assequitur optimus mos bone fortune, quia amatores dei sunt et habent se ad divinum aequaliter credentes propter facta bona a fortuna ». Here the “Christianization” of Aristotle occurs already in the Latin translation by William of Moerbeke, since the Greek original has: ὑπερηφανώτεροι μὲν οὖν καὶ ἀλογιστότεροι διὰ τὴν εὐτυχίαν εἰσίν, ἐν δὲ ἀκολουθεῖ βέλτιστον ἦθος τῇ εὐτυχίᾳ, ὅτι φιλόθεοί εἰσι καὶ ἔχουσιν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον πῶς, πιστεύοντες διὰ τὰ γινόμενα ἀγαθὰ ἀπὸ τῆς τύχης (the text is quoted following: *Aristotle. Ars Rhetorica*, ed. W.D. Ross, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1959).

Set quoniam per externa mundi secula ante descensum nostrum in terras et tradite salutis gratiam a magnis hesitatum fuerat de iurisdictionum vestrarum discretionem phylosophis super quibus et hodie plerumque theologi nostri certant, ne ulterius aures nostras offendat hec vel similis umquam suscitata certatio! (C, f. 52v).³⁴

Christ's words underline that, notwithstanding the substantial difference between pagan and Christian thinkers (based on their ignorance of, or faith in, the Incarnation), human intellect is intrinsically prone to err and wander far from the Truth.

In resolving the controversy, Christ definitively brings Nature's and Fortune's actions back under the divine aegis. The heavenly Arbiter of the quarrel first of all restates how the existence of all beings must only and exclusively be attributed to God's Creation, to which Nature is subordinated:

Et ad te nostros affatus [...] dirigimus, o Natura. Cum tibi gignendi, producendi, alendi et corrupendi in toto orbe cuncta subiecimus, tantum commisimus ut pene in omnibus que facimus te mediante et coherente face-re dicti simus ut Deus et Natura, ac si sinonina [sic] essent et idem significarent, multi utrolibet vocabulo coutuntur. Immo tantum tibi in aula nostra mundiali locum quadam largitate concessimus ut creare dicaris, sicut Censorinus ille noster Cato in libro de moribus 'Infantem nudum cum te natura creavit' licentiose dixit et placuit, set tamen hoc nulla arrogancia nullaque elatione suscipias. Et tamen nostri solius esse, creare bene ille noverat Censorinus; tulimus, nec illum dedecuit pro tui magnificentia, de tui denominatione transuptio (C, f. 52r-v).

34. On the adjective *externus*, used by Mussato with the meaning of *hesternus*: ALBERTINI MUXATI *De obsidione domini Canis Grandis de Verona ante civitatem Paduanam*, ed. G.M. GIANOLA, Padova, Editrice Antenore, 1999, pp. 108-9 n. 128. Thirteenth- and fourteenth-century commentators of the *Liber de bona fortuna* highly debated on the possible coincidence between the two concepts of "good fortune" and "nature" (cf. V. CORDONIER, *Réussir sans raison(s). Autour du texte et des gloses du 'Liber de bona fortuna' Aristotilis dans le manuscrit de Melk 796 (1308)*, in 1308, *Eine Topographie historischer Gleichzeitigkeit*, hrsg. von A. SPEER und D. WIRMER Berlin-New-York, Walter de Gruyter, 2010 [« Miscellanea Mediaevalia », 35], pp. 704-70, at pp. 732-58). Such philosophical debates might have found an echo in this passage of the *De Lite*, and perhaps even contributed to inspiring the composition of Mussato's dialogue. On the related conceptions of *fortuna* and *natura* in the High Middle Ages, see also T. LEHTONEN, *Fortuna, Money, and the Sublunar World*, Helsinki, Finnish Historical Society, 1995, at pp. 86-93.

In this passage, the explicit polemical target is the pagan *Cato Censorinus*.³⁵ However, Christ's resolving sentence, placed towards the end of the debate on Nature's and Fortune's prerogatives, acquires a more general value, which goes beyond the criticism of the *auctoritas* quoted contextually. The reference to God's exclusive rights on creation closely recalls Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, II 21 (aimed at demonstrating that « creatio est propria Dei actio, et quod eius solius est creare »); as I will demonstrate this work by Aquinas is massively quoted in the *De Lite* and represents another source that previously has not been pointed out by scholars of Mussato.

After addressing Nature, Christ turns to Fortune, reminding her of how incredible powers she was conferred by God:

Tu Fortuna, cui [...] toti mundo miranda atque stupenda commisimus [...], putasne parum tibi, si ex arcanis nostris circa humanos actus secreta commisimus que nulli scire fas fuerit, nisi cum evenerint ipsa que fecimus? (C, f. 52v).

Christ then issues his definitive pronouncement on Nature and Fortune, explaining that human beings are subjected to the influence of the stars with respect to the body, to that of the angels with respect to the intellect, and to that of God with respect to will. Celestial bodies operate by producing an imprint on the human body (which acts as a natural cause), Angelic Intelligences operate through persuasion, and God operates directly:

Genus humanum secundum corpus ordinatum esse sub nostris corporibus celestibus voluimus, secundum intellectum vero sub angelis, id est sub nostris substantiis separatis. Secundum vero voluntatem placuit retinuisse sub nobis, quam ob rem possunt aliqua homini non admissa immo potius exclusa sua intentione contingere; non tamen ea preter ordinem celestium

35. PS. CAT., *dist.*, I 21: « Infantem nudum cum te natura creavit / paupertatis onus patienter ferre memento » (M. BOAS, *Disticha Catonis*, Amsterdam, North-Holland Publishing Company, 1952, pp. 57-58). The appellation *Censorinus*, referring to Marcus Porcius Cato, can be found also elsewhere, e.g. in John of Salisbury (« Quam si quis ediscere voluerit, adeat Catonem Censorinum », JOH. SARISB., *poliar.*, VI 19). As the *Prologus* of the *De obsidione* reveals, some readers in Mussato's times attributed the *Disticha Catonis* to Lucius Annaeus Seneca (see ALBERTINI MUXATI *De obsidione, Prol.*, 5, at p. 5, and pp. LIII-LVI with further observations and bibliography on this complex matter).

corporum vel nostrorum angelorum dispositionem, vel nostram, ulla ratione contingere. Quamvis enim nos [i.e. Christ] soli directe ad intentionem hominis operemur, tamen actio angeli ad electionem hominis per modum suasionis aliquid operatur, actio vero celestis corporis per modum disponendi, in quantum corporales celestium corporum impressiones actionum aliquas electiones in corpora ipsa humana disponunt [...] (C, f. 53r).

Whenever angels lead humans towards a positive goal without instructing them on why it is good, the individuals they persuade can be called *fortunati*. However, all casual events lose their fortuitous character when they are traced back to God's will.³⁶

Commenting on the threefold system of causes illustrated at the beginning of this passage, Ronald Witt states that the conclusion of Mussato's *De Lite* contains « a complete exposition of his theory of universal causation ».³⁷ Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting that this doctrine, as well as all the examples contained in Christ's « sententia diffinitiva », faithfully follow Aquinas's *Summa contra Gentiles*, III 92, which states:

Cum igitur homo sit ordinatus secundum corpus sub corporibus caelestibus; secundum intellectum vero sub Angelis; secundum voluntatem autem sub Deo: potest contingere aliquid praeter intentionem hominis quod tamen est secundum ordinem caelestium corporum, vel dispositionem Angelorum, vel etiam Dei. Quamvis autem Deus solus directe ad electionem hominis operetur, tamen actio Angeli operatur aliquid ad electionem hominis per modum persuasionis: actio vero corporis caelestis per modum disponentis, in quantum corporales impressiones caelestium corporum in corpora nostra disponunt ad aliquas electiones.³⁸

In the conclusion of the dialogue, therefore, the Aristotelian con-

36. The *Sententia Yesu Christi inter Naturam et Fortunam diffinitiva* corresponds to C, ff. 53r-55v.

37. WITT, *In the Footsteps*, p. 149; cf. DAZZI, *Il Mussato storico*, pp. 363-64.

38. THOM. AQ., *Summa c. Gent.*, III 92 2 (the text is quoted following: S. THOMAE AQUINATIS *Liber de veritate Catholicae fidei contra errores infidelium seu summa contra Gentiles*, a cura di P. MARC, C. PERA, P. CARAMELLO, Torino, Marietti, 1961); cf. THOM. AQ., *Summa theol.*, I 116. Overall, Christ's definitive pronouncement on Nature and Fortune follows THOM. AQ., *Summa c. Gent.*, III 92 1-6, 11-13. Aquinas's theory represents an attempt at conciliating the "theological" and the "naturalistic" readings of the Aristotelian concept of « bona fortuna »: CORDONIER, *Réussir sans raison(s)*, pp. 745-47.

cepts of Nature and Fortune are re-read in light of a Thomistic interpretative framework according to which the universe is governed by a series of superior, interconnected causes that are ultimately presided over by God. Christ's final sentence, emanating from a different and superior position, definitively subsumes and rectifies the theses of the two rivals whose language was mainly Aristotelian. Mussato's *De Lite* thus represents a sample of the « multiplicity of strategies adopted throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance to harmonize Peripatetic philosophy with Christian religion, or at least to avoid their clash » which historiography has always considered one of the main characteristics of Latin Aristotelianism.³⁹ While the tendency to compare seemingly divergent *auctoritates* was generally typical of the Scholastic tradition of dialectical reasoning,⁴⁰ Mussato's dialogue is deeply influenced by Aquinas's particular thought and his characteristic approach to Aristotle. In this regard, there is no scholarly consensus on the nature of Aquinas's Aristotelian commentaries. According to some critics, Aquinas's *commentaria* are strictly exegetical writings aimed at providing, as much as possible, an accurate reading of Aristotle; others, instead, posit that in these works Aquinas expresses his own philosophy, frequently betraying his Christian theological concerns.⁴¹ Scholars such as Jenkins who wish to overcome the clear-cut opposition between the « appropriationist » and the « historicist » readings of the relevant commentaries notice that Aquinas usually offers a faithful and learned exegesis of the Stagirite's texts, avoiding any comments on the truth of his claims, and yet makes minor corrections when the philosopher's statements are in open conflict with Christian orthodoxy.⁴²

39. L. BIANCHI, *Introduction*, in *Christian Readings of Aristotle*, pp. 9-23, at pp. 11-12.

40. J. JENKINS, *Expositions of the Text: Aquinas's Aristotelian Commentaries*, in « Medieval Philosophy and Theology », vol. v 1996, pp. 39-62, at pp. 48-53.

41. Bibliographical indications in JENKINS, *Expositions of the Text*, pp. 39-40; cf. BIANCHI, *Introduction*, pp. 12-13 n. 9; L. ELDERS, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin et Aristotle*, in « Revue Thomiste », vol. LXXXVIII 1988, pp. 357-76, at pp. 357-58.

42. ELDERS, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, pp. 374-76; JENKINS, *Expositions of the Text*, pp. 41-42. In fact, the genuinely exegetical purpose is surely not alien to Aquinas's commentaries; indeed, his tenet on the necessary concordance between faith and reason

Aquinas's commentary on *Physics* II contains some examples of these adjustments of Aristotle, with which the Christianizing strategy of the *De Lite* is perfectly in line. Commenting on Aristotle's definition of fortuitous and « by chance » beings, for example, Aquinas objects:

Hoc autem videtur inconveniens, quod [...] casus sit causa caeli. Considerandum est autem quod si ea quae fortuito vel casualiter accident, idest praeter intentionem causarum inferiorum, reducuntur in aliquam causam superiorem ordinantem ipsa; in comparatione ad illam causam non possunt dici fortuita vel casualia: unde illa causa superior non dici potest esse fortuna.⁴³

Similarly, in his final remark on Aristotle's definition of fortune, Aquinas concludes:

Unde patet quod natura nihil est aliud quam ratio cuiusdam artis, scilicet divinae, indita rebus, qua ipsae res moventur ad finem determinatum.⁴⁴

More generally, scholars have underlined that a main alteration introduced in Aristotle's thought by Aquinas's own interpretation is the tenet of the creation « ex nichilo » (according to which the first Mover is the cause not only of the motion, but also of the being, of all other things). In his commentaries, Aquinas forcedly states this

leads the « doctor angelicus » to believe that the apparent conflict between « philosophical principles of reason » and « supernatural principles of revelation » was only due to the often-occurring misinterpretation of the philosophers' ideas (G. KLIMA, *Anclilla Theologiae vs. Domina Philosophurum*, in *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter? Qu'est-ce que la philosophie au moyen âge? What is Philosophy in the Middle Ages?*. Akten des x. Internationalen Kongresses für mittelalterliche Philosophie der Société Internationale pour l'Etude de la Philosophie Médiévale, 25. bis 30. August 1997 in Erfurt, hrsg. von J.A. AERSTEN und A. SPEER, Berlin-New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1998, pp. 383-402, at pp. 396-398). Nevertheless, it is undeniable that, either attributing erroneous beliefs to the *philosophus* himself or wishing to prevent possible misinterpretations of his words, in many passages Aquinas corrects and integrates Aristotle's texts, often utilizing introductory forms such as « sciendum est autem », « advertendum est autem », « considerandum est autem » (see ELDERS, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, pp. 365-66).

43. THOM. AQ., *In Ph.*, II l. 10, 237-38 (S. TOMMASO D'AQUINO, *Commento alla Fisica di Aristotele*. I. *Libri 1-3*, a cura di B. MONDIN, Bologna, Edizioni dello Studio Domenicano, 2004, p. 376).

44. THOM. AQ., *In Ph.*, II l. 14, 286 (ed. MONDIN, p. 422); cf. ELDERS, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, p. 268.

principle despite and against the texts of the Stagirite, which do not contain anything similar.⁴⁵

All this suggests that if Mussato's *De Lite* is directly inspired by Aquinas's theological writings, the dialogue's method of absorbing Aristotle's natural philosophy within an overall Christian discourse is also in keeping with the latter's work as an Aristotelian exegete.⁴⁶ In the *De Lite*, Aristotle's *auctoritas* in natural philosophy is not undermined, and yet the text adopts two strategies to correct and neutralize his potentially unorthodox claims. First, as has been shown above, in the course of the debate, Nature's and Fortune's self-definitions present seemingly imperceptible transpositions of the Aristotelian postulates into a Christian key, in line with the exegetical commentary tradition headed by Aquinas.⁴⁷ Second, at the end of the dialogue, Aristotelian natural philosophy is definitely amended by, and assimilated within, the theological system of superior causes illustrated in Christ's resolving discourse, which follows Aquinas's *Summa contra Gentiles* II (« the metaphysics of creation ») and III (dealing with « God as the ultimate goal of all created existence, and

45. JENKINS, *Expositions of the Text*, pp. 46-48, 60; cf. ELDERS, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, p. 360; J. OWENS, *Aquinas as Aristotelian Commentator*, in *St. Thomas Aquinas 1274-1974. Commemorative Studies*, Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1974, vol. I pp. 213-38, at p. 238.

46. Given Mussato's "philological" interest in classical texts and the overall extent of his Aristotelian quotations from works (such as the *Magna Moralia*) that were not commented on by Aquinas, as well as from works for which the relevant Latin translations can be identified (see pp. 76-81 above), it seems not entirely plausible that he read the *Physics* directly in the commentary by Aquinas. The problem is, nevertheless, insoluble, since « when the first Renaissance printers published Aquinas' commentaries on Aristotle, they found that the medieval manuscripts lacked a Latin text of Aristotle [...]. As a consequence, these printers obtained a Latin version of Aristotle, made by a humanist scholar, and printed it with the commentary by Aquinas [...]. This means that our Latin texts of Aristotle, as now printed with the commentaries by St. Thomas, are neither the version of William of Moerbeke nor are they the precise medieval translations read by Aquinas » (V.J. BOURKE, *Introduction*, in *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, pp. xvii-xxxii, at p. xviii).

47. On the different reception of Aristotle by different medieval commentators, with special reference to the *Physics*, see the bibliographical indications contained in BIANCHI, *Introduction*, p. 11 n. 7. For other examples of how the Aristotelian assumptions could be readapted and assimilated by in the thirteenth century Christian discourse on creation: A. GHISALBERTI, *Gli inizi dell'Aristotelismo Latino*, in *Was ist Philosophie in Mittelalter?*, p. 281-97, at pp. 286-92.

God's variously directing all things toward the goal that is [...] himself»).⁴⁸ In Mussato's view, Aristotle's philosophical principles are still valid but must be correctly read in light of the Christian Revelation.

The subsumption of classical philosophy under a new, Christian theological framework by which it is definitively superseded is particularly evident in the second half of Mussato's *De Lite* (ff. 44v-51r), in which Nature and Fortune deal with the controversial issue of the existence and power of fate and its possible coincidence with the influence of the stars. In this section of the text, Mussato combines his long-standing interest in astrology and destiny – probably spurred by Peter of Abano's studies and further encouraged by the bitter reflections of his exile –⁴⁹ with his wide readings of classical literature. At f. 44v Nature observes that many ancient philosophers believed all events to be predestined by the superior force of *fatum*, endowed with the power of necessity. Fortune thus engages in an articulate exposition of the ancients' theories which begins with a collage of quotations from Cicero's *De Fato*.⁵⁰ Fortune first men-

48. N. KRETZMANN, *The Metaphysics of Creation. Aquinas's Natural Theology in 'Summa contra Gentiles' II*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1999 (in part. 99-100 on SCG, II 21); ID., *From creation to Providence*, in « Medieval Philosophy and Theology », a. IX 2000, fasc. II pp. 91-104, at p. 104 (chapters 64-110 of SCG, III illustrate God's « universal governance, in so far as he governs every created thing »).

49. On Mussato's interest in astrology as witnessed by his other works: MINOIA, *Della vita*, p. 257; MOSCHETTI, *Il 'De lite'*, pp. 586-88; G. ARNALDI-L. CAPO, *I cronisti di Venezia e della Marca Trevigiana*, in *Storia della cultura veneta*, pp. 272-337, at p. 280-81. On Peter of Abano's studies in astrology, see for example PASCHETTO, *Pietro d'Abano*, pp. 249-83. In dedicating his *De Lite* to Pagano della Torre, Patriarch of Aquileia, Mussato explains that the dialogue originated « from his need to understand his own successes and failures » (C, f. 2v; cf. WITT, *In the Footsteps*, p. 147).

50. At C, f. 49r, the *De Fato* is explicitly mentioned as the source for Fortune's account of ancient Greek philosophy (see p. 93 below). The topic of the influence of the stars, treated with examples drawn from Cicero's *De Fato*, appears already at C, f. 37v. Here, Nature attempts to prove that celestial bodies are not the necessary cause of human acts of will and choice. At f. 38r she claims: « Oppirus qui se naturam uniuscuiusque ex aspectu stellarum nosce profitebatur derisus est a ceteris qui illa in Socrate vitia non agnosceret; ab ipso autem Socrate sublevatus, cum illa sibi vitia ratione a se deiecta diceret ». The reference is to CIC., *fat.*, 10-11: « Socraten nonne legimus quem ad modum notarit Zopyrus physiognomon, qui se profitebatur hominum mores naturasque ex corpore, oculis, vultu, fronte pernoscere? Stupidum esse Socraten

tions the dispute between Diodorus and Chrysippus, as reported in *De Fato*, 13; according to the latter, the involuntary motions of the soul are independent from the conditioning of fate, and therefore there is no necessity involved in future events, while the former argues that in the future only the events which necessarily have to happen will effectively occur.⁵¹

Nature and Fortune start evaluating the antecedent causes possibly inducing human beings to act or desire as they do, engaging in a disquisition which follows *De Fato*, 7-11.⁵² Then, in line with *De Fato*, 39, Nature notices that the ancient philosophers' opinions are seemingly bipartite as to the difficult question of fate's essence and pow-

dixit et bardum, quod iugula concava non haberet, obstructas eas partes et obturatas esse dicebat; addidit etiam mulierosum; in quo Alcibiades cachinnum dicitur sustulisse ». Zopyrus, a Greek slave who became Alcibiades' pedagogue, was considered the founder of the science of physiognomy (on his interpretation of Socrates' physiognomy, cf. also *Tusc.*, iv 80). Here Mussato replaces physiognomy with astrology. Likewise, at C, f. 42r, Nature adds: « Et ego audiui Sulphonem Megaricum philosophum, acutum hominem et probatum, familiares suos scripsisse ebriosum et mulie[b]r[e]osum fuisse, non tamen ad eius vituperium, set ad laudem. Vitiosam enim naturam sic exemtam et compressam doctrinam habuit, ut nemo in eo potuerit vitii vestigium deprendisse ». Cf. *Cic., fat.*, 10: « Stilponem, Megaricum philosophum, acutum sane hominem et probatum temporibus illis accepimus. Hunc scribunt ipsius familiares et ebriosum et mulierosum fuisse, neque haec scribunt vituperantes, sed potius ad laudem; vitiosam enim naturam ab eo sic edomitam et compressam esse doctrina, ut nemo umquam vinulentum illum, nemo in eo libidinis vestigium viderit ». The study of physiognomy, meant as the relation between one's physical traits and the nature of his or her soul, in connection with the influence of the stars, was particularly popular in late-thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century Padua, thanks to Peter of Abano's researches (see PASCETTO, *Pietro d'Abano*, 134-49; EAD., *La fisiognomica di Pietro d'Abano*, in « Medioevo », vol. xi 1985, pp. 97-112).

51. Fortune explains: « [Crisippus] quod non sit futurum posse fieri asserit, ut frangi hanc gemmam etiam si illud numquam futurum extiterit; neque necesse fuisse Cypsellum regnare Corinthi, licet millesimo ante anno id predixisset Apollo [...], [Diodorus] id solum fieri posse iudicat quod aut sit verum aut verum futurum sit, et quicquid futurum sit, id dicit esse necesse, et quicquid non sit futurum, id fieri posse minime confitetur » (C, f. 45r); cf. *Cic., fat.*, 13: « At hoc, Chrysippe, minime vis, maximeque tibi de hoc ipso cum Diodoro certamen est. Ille enim id solum fieri posse dicit, quod aut sit verum aut futurum sit verum, et, quicquid futurum sit, id dicit fieri necesse esse et, quicquid non sit futurum, id negat fieri posse. Tu, et quae non sint futura, posse fieri dicis, ut frangi hanc gemmam, etiamsi id numquam futurum sit, neque necesse fuisse Cypselum regnare Corinthi, quamquam id millensimo ante anno Apollinis oraculo editum esset ».

52. C, f. 45r-v.

er. Indeed, there are two schools of thought; the first one, to which Aristotle himself belongs, asserts the necessary power of fate, while the second, which includes Chrysippus, denies its existence:

Set dic, age, cum in hac de fati natura et vi questione difficili phylosophorum oppiniones bipartita secueris, ut illi scilicet in quibus pene divinus Aristotiles a fato necessitatem adiecerint, alii in quibus Crisippus ille tuus rei-eccerint et abesse voluerint, quibus utuntur utrique examini-bus rationum? (C, f. 45v)⁵³

The discussion delves deeply into an evaluation of these two opposing theses⁵⁴ and subsequently focuses on the relation between fate and the influence of the stars;⁵⁵ however, based on the contrasting arguments of the ancient philosophers, Nature and Fortune are ultimately unable to find a convincing answer to the problem of fate.

At this point in the debate, Nature remarks that, having examined the opinions of the ancients as reported by Cicero, it will be useful to consider those of the moderns:

Antiquorum optiones argumentaque que circa fatum ab illis decerpere potuisti, quorum tibi a magno Cicerone cum de hoc fato distribuit pars multa reserata se optulit, nonnulla a te ipsa subiunxisti, nec ego que verisimilia vel vera putavi subsilui. Set quid moderni auctores et maxime sacrosante doctores ecclesie, theologi, phylosophi santique, Agustinus scilicet eorum princeps, Gregorius suarumque paginarum expositores, Egidius Romanus, Thomas ille, quem in catalogo sanctorum apostolica locavit auctoritas, sensere, si forsan diseruere et in lucem edidere Christicolis? (C, f. 49r)⁵⁶

53. Cf. Cic., *fat.*, 39: « Ac mihi quidem videtur, cum duae sententiae fuissent veterum philosophorum, una eorum, qui censerent omnia ita fato fieri, ut id fatum vim necessitatis adferret, in qua sententia Democritus, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Aristoteles fuit, altera eorum, quibus viderentur sine ullo fato esse animorum motus voluntarii, Chrysippus tamquam arbiter honorarius medium ferere voluisse, sed adplicat se ad eos potius, qui necessitate motus animorum liberatos volunt [...] ».

54. C, f. 46r-v (the analysis of the relation between *appetitus* and *adsensio* follows Cic., *fat.*, 40-43).

55. C, ff. 47r-49r. Mingling quotations from Cic., *fat.*, 12-13, 19 with examples drawn from recent and contemporary history, Nature and Fortune highlight the fallible and misleading nature of the prophecies of the astrologers and conclude that it is not plausible that stars exercise an irresistible force on earthly events.

56. This passage is recalled by Paolo Marangon, who in his study points out that in late-thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Padua Aquinas's works were well-known not only in the "Aristotelian" environment of the University, but also in the Francis-

In a passage patterned after Aquinas's *Summa contra Gentiles* III 93 6, Fortune recalls how Gregory the Great, Augustine, and Aquinas himself condemned the very name of *fatum*:

Gregorium accipe in omeliis fati mendatia detestantem: 'Absit' inquit 'a fidelium cordibus qui fatum aliquid esse dicunt!' Agustinus autem ille legis divine preceptor eximius: 'Si quisquam' inquit 'res humanas fato tribuit, voluntatem vel potestatem divinam fati nomine appellans, sententiam teneat et linguam corrigat.' Sic et ille divinus expositor Thomas fati nomen tamquam perierum divine providentie prophanavit [...] (C, ff. 49r-v).⁵⁷

However, as Nature observes, Augustine seems to have rejected the identification between fate – meant as the influence of the stars – and divine providence, rather than the idea of fate itself. Nevertheless, when conceiving of *fatum* differently, that is, as a sequence of interrelated events governed by divine providence, one runs the risk of joining the fallacious opinion of those like Boethius who tried to save the very dubious concept of fate.⁵⁸

can « Convento del Santo » (MARANGON, *Ad cognitionem scientiae festinare*, pp. 134, 182, 186).

57. Cf. THOM. AQ., *Summa c. Gent.*, III 93 6: « Unde Augustinus dicit, in v de civitate Dei: "si quis voluntatem vel potestatem Dei fati nomine appellat, sententiam teneat, linguam corrigat". Et Gregorius, secundum eundem intellectum, dicit: "absit a fidelium mentibus ut fatum aliquid esse dicant" [...] ». Cf. also AEG. ROM., *Rep.*, I q. 8 (dist. 39), ll. 25-29: « Tamen, ut dicit Augustinus, quod cum providentiam Dei dicimus fatum, a nomine recedimus. Unde 5 De civitate, II capitulo: "non est dubium, regna humana divina providentia subduntur; qui hoc fatum dicit, sententiam teneat, linguam corrigat" » (AEGIDIUM ROMANI *Reportatio Lecturae super Libros I-IV sententiarum: Reportatio Monacensis; Excerpta Godefridi de Fontibus*, a cura di C. LUNA, Firenze, Olschki, 2003 [« Opera omnia », III/2], p. 188). The same passage by Augustine is quoted also in AEGIDIUM ROMANI *De praedestinatione, praescientia, Paradiso et Inferno*, in AEGIDIUM COLUMNII ROMANI *Tractatus contra exemptos, antistitibus et religiosis omnibus maxime necessarius* [...], Romae, Bladus, 1555, ff. 34v-45r; at chap. 2, f. 35v.

58. In replying to Nature, Fortune explains: « [...] nonnulli fato subiectum vel vim quampiam vel officium invenire conati divine providentie inheserunt [...]. Contra quos ille Christiane professionis defensor Agustinus invexit [...]. Ego cum Augustino vim siderum abnego et detestor, etiam si, ut predixi, ad divinam referant voluntatem. Nonne, si sic fateamur ut adserunt, cassa fore[n]t humani libertas arbitrii? [...] Si cuiusquam fatum esse aliquid adserentis optioni adduceret me voluntas, [...] illorum existimationi deferrem qui fatum indeclinabilem causarum ordinem divine aplicitum voluntati quo effectus quadam necessitate proveniunt apellarunt; hii saltem fato nomen veritati quasi consimile congruentius invenerunt. [...] Inveni aliqua verisimilitudine quamquam usquequaque suffragante veritate permota non adeo tamen

In Mussato's *De Lite*, the discourse of the Christian theologians and Doctors of the Church is defined as "modern" and regarded as profoundly different from the ancient pagan thought, for *auctores* such as Augustine or Gregory the Great, who lived in a later time than Aristotle or Chrysippus, were enlightened by Faith and the Christian Revelation.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, as Nature and Fortune realize with disappointment, even "modern" Christian theologians are at odds with each other and have no univocal and unambiguous answers to central questions such as the existence of fate. This intellec-

illum indeclinabilem causarum ordinem fatum appellare vel esse digner; aut velim ut illi totam enim eam vim seu necessitatem seu indeclinabilitatem, quam, si verum dicerent, dicunt inferri connexione seu relatione ordinis causarum ad ipsam Dei providentiam, dico ab ipsa sola Dei providentia et non a causarum ordine proficisci [...]. Et forsitan qui fatum divinam ipsam providentiam protulere per hanc rationem verius seu verisimilius viderentur esse locuti. Deffero tamen licentiosius auctoritati eorum qui fatum indeclinabilem causarum ordinem ad divinam voluntatem relatum contestati sunt. Quos in aliis benedictis invenio meliores, in quorum turba Boetium illum Severinum invenio, qui multa verborum circumitione perambulans oppitulationi fati propensior institit ut ei locum in diversoriis inveniret» (C, ff. 49v-51r). While recalling the terms and concepts of Aquinas's *Summa contra Gentiles* III 93 (see p. 97 below), this passage seems to be also reminiscent of the distinction between different interpretations of the term "fate" made by Giles in *Rep.*, I q. 8: «Nunc quaeritur de fato quid sit. Ad hoc dicendum quod tripliciter dicitur: uno modo vis siderum, ut dicit Augustinus [...]. Secundo, dicit ordo causarum, ut dicit Augustinus [...]. Tertio, dicitur divina providentia [...]. Sumendo primo modo fatum, subditur: uno modo dicitur vis syderum in divinam providentiam reducta, alio modo non reducta, sicut ordo causarum dicitur dupliciter: vel non reductus in divinam providentiam [...]; alio modo dicitur fatum ordo causarum reductus in divinam providentiam [...]. Et sic, secundum Boetium, fatum est indeclinabilis ordo causarum reductus in divinam providentiam» (ed. LUNA, pp. 187-89; a summary of this question can be found also in AEG. ROM., *Praed.*, chap. 2, f. 35r). On this philosophical problem, see also LEHTONEN, *Fortuna*, pp. 77-85.

59. This distinction between "ancients" and "moderns" is rather common in the High Middle Ages: «Especially from the twelfth century onward, writers of Latin took pains to differentiate between ancients and a new category that they made their own, moderns» (J. ZIOLKOWSKI, *Cultures of authority in the Long Twelfth Century*, in «Journal of English and Germanic Philology», vol. CVIII 2009, pp. 421-48, at p. 435, with bibliography). On the other hand, in Mussato's *De Lite* the opposition between "ancients" and "moderns" has a different connotation than in the works by the contemporary Marsilius of Padua (ca. 1275-ca. 1342), where *antiquus* denotes various past ages, and *modernus* refers to Marsilius's own times, often in a polemical mode (PIAIA, *Marsilio e dintorni*, pp. 65-74).

60. C, ff. 55r-57r.

tual impasse is once again overcome by means of Christ's final explanation (*Adiectio Yhesu Christi et de fato sententia*).⁶⁰ In his definitive pronouncement on fate, Christ first recapitulates the diverse stances existing among both the ancients and the moderns:

Addicimus ergo sic quod, cum multi hominum multa in mundo evenire viderint per accidens si ad particulares causas respectus habeatur, nonnulli eorum tales eventus dixere in nullis causis superioribus ordinari, quo concesso et fatum nichil esse necesse est. Quidam vero quasi omnia que a Casu contingere videntur, seu a te, Fortuna, ad sidera reducere nixi sunt, veluti ab eis ordinata essent et sub quadam efficatia stabilita, reducentes ea, sicut in causam, in celestia corpora et etiam electiones humanas, fatum vim positionis siderum appellantes, ac si cum necessitate quadam illis omnia subderentur [...]. Amplius quidam omnia hec tua, que a te Fortuna procedunt [...] omnia agi Fato dixerunt, ad dispositionem nostre providentie reducentes [...]. Ex quibus unus ex nostris, licet non infidelis, Boetius dixit fatum esse [...] in nostre providentie complexione conclusum [...]. Qui modus cum in ipsa intelligentie nostre simplicitate conspicitur, nostra providentia ab hominibus nominatur; cum vero ad ea que movet et disponit refertur, fatum est a veteribus appellatum [...]. Fatum verum inherens rebus mobilibus esse dispositionem per quam ipsam nostra providentia suis queque necit ordinibus [...]. In eo vero quod dixit mobilibus innotescere voluit ordinem nostre providentie rebus mobilitatem et contingentiam non auferre, secundum quod quidam alii posuerunt (C, ff. 55r-56r).

He then explains how those refuting the existence of superior causes implicitly, and correctly, denied the existence of such an absurd concept as *fatum*; those identifying fate and astral influence were instead evidently wrong for they did not take into account the power of free will. As to Boethius and those trying to save the idea of fate by partially identifying it with divine providence, their subtle verbal distinctions look equally unfounded:

Primo qui cum multos effectus casualiter seu fortuito evenire viderent secundum considerationem primarum causarum dixerunt ea nullis causis superioribus ordinari. Set illo concesso quod asserunt, nonne et fatum negare nichil esse necesse est? Profecto nichil fatum esse ipsa sua confessione constiterit. Hii vero qui ea que a te Fortuna contingebant astris adtribuere seu eorum potentiis nisi sunt, nonne sub vi positionis siderum electiones humanas subdendo, ut eis ex necessitate subiaceant, in suo ore

61. THOM. AQ., *Summa c. Gent.*, III 93 2, 4-6 (the end of *Summa c. Gent.*, III 93 6, refer-

mentiti sunt, libertate liberii arbitrii derogantes? Tu vero Boeti, quem ecce nunc videmus inter has beatas animas [...], quid te tot et tantis circa fati explicationem, ut et tu fatum quidquam esse volueris, distinctionibus fatigasti, cum demum nichil aliud terminaveris, nisi quod vocabulis quibusdam non autem rebus fatum a providentia nostra secreveris, sive enim illud fatum in nostra mente constiterit, sive rebus nostris mundanis adhererit? Nonne totum sub potestate nostre providentiae, ut mente nostra nec egrediatur nec rebus inhereat, nisi nobis volentibus aut nolentibus in rei veritate concluditur? Nec tu fatum aliquid esse dixisse potueras, nisi nostram providentiam negaturus, quam si constare et immobilem confitebare sicut est, fatum omnino nichil esse potuisti et debuisti absque tuorum implicatione verborum inconvincibili ratione concludere (C, ff. 56v-57r).

Again, Christ's *De fato sententia*, with its appraisal of the various existing opinions on the existence and power of *fatum*, is a faithful re-writing of Aquinas's *Summa contra Gentiles*, III 93, stating:

Videntes enim homines multa in hoc mundo per accidens contingere, si causae particulares considerentur, posuerunt quidam quod nec etiam ab aliquibus superioribus causis ordinentur. Et his videbatur fatum nihil esse omnino [...]. Horum ergo quidam omnia quae hic accidunt a casu contingencia, reducere sunt conati sicut in causas in caelestia corpora, etiam electiones humanas, vim dispositionis siderum, cui omnia cum quadam necessitate subdi ponebant, fatum appellantes. Quae quidem positio impossibilis est, et a fide aliena, ut ex superioribus patet. Quidam vero in dispositionem divinae providentiae omnia reducere voluerunt, quaecumque in his inferioribus a casu contingere videntur. Unde omnia fato agi dixerunt, ordinationem quae est in rebus ex divina providentia fatum nominantes. Unde Boetius dicit quod *fatum est inhaerens rebus mobilibus dispositio, per quam providentia suis quaeque nectit ordinibus*. In qua fati descriptione, dispositio pro ordinatione ponitur. In rebus autem inhaerens ponitur ut distinguatur fatum a providentia: nam ipsa ordinatione secundum quod in mente divina est, nondum rebus impressa, providentia est; secundum vero quod iam est explicata in rebus, fatum nominatur. Mobilibus autem dicit ut ostendat quod ordo providentiae rebus contingentiam et mobilitatem non aufert, ut quidam posuerunt. Secundum hanc ergo acceptionem, negare fatum est providentiam divinam negare. Sed quia cum infidelibus nec nomina debemus habere communia, ne ex consortio nominum possit sumi erroris occasio; nomine fati non est a fidelibus utendum, ne videamur illis assentire qui male de fato senserunt, omnia necessitati siderum subiicientes.⁶¹

ring to the sayings regarding fate by Augustine and Gregory the Great, has already

In keeping with Aquinas's account, Mussato's *De Lite* ends with Christ's definitive dismissal of the notion of fate:

Ex quibus verba et oppiniones omnium dicentium aliquid fatum esse vel fuisse cassamus, irritamus et prophana enuntiantes evacuamus omnimoda veritate. Volumusque et iubemus ne nostri cultus fideles se in aliqua eius ratiocinatione vel mentione coinquent fatum esse aliquid iudicantes (C, f. 57r).

By means of this conclusive statement, Mussato's Christ resolutely repudiates the thought of those believing « fatum esse aliquid », among whom is not only the openly blamed Boethius but, as it is worth pointing out, also Aristotle himself, based on the previous quotation of Cicero's *De Fato*.

Overall, the dialogue's argument concerning the essence of fate results in an examination of classical philosophy and an assessment of its validity in light of Christian theological orthodoxy. In the course of their dispute, the two apponents examine in detail the mutually contradictory accounts provided by the ancient philosophers alongside the theses claimed by Augustine, Boethius, and late medieval Christian intellectuals. Nature and Fortune's overtly high esteem for the classical *auctores* shows that the ancient philosophers' inquisitive attitude should be regarded as intrinsically praiseworthy. However, the philosophers' statements cannot be taken literally or uncritically, but instead must be submitted to rational judgement and be compared and corrected according to the precepts of contemporary Christian theology. Indeed, in the tumult of discordant voices characterizing the dialogue, the only individual empowered to make definitive clarity is Christ, who speaks from a more authoritative position than the two disputants and ultimately appears as the effective spokesperson of late-thirteenth century Scholasticism. Therefore, if during the altercation between Nature and Fortune Thomas Aquinas is quoted only as one among the many conflicting

been quoted by Mussato: see p. 94 above). The different possible meanings of "fate", as well as Boethius's distinction between *fatum* and *providentia* are analyzed also in AEG. ROM., *Rep.*, 1 qq. 8-9 (dist. 39), a text which Mussato might have had in mind (ed. LUNA, pp. 187-90, see n. 57 above).

auctoritates, the narrative logic of the text endows his words with a resolving power and a superior degree of authority.

In fact, the issues of fate's existence and the stars' possible influence on human actions and choices repeatedly appear in Aquinas's own philosophical and theological reflections.⁶² In particular, *Summa Theologica*, I 116, specifically deals with the problem of fate; here, quoting the sentences by Boethius, Augustine, and Gregory the Great which are also recalled in *Summa contra Gentiles*, III 93 6, Aquinas states that « quod ea quae hic per accidens aguntur, sive in rebus naturalibus sive humanis, reducuntur in aliquam causam praeordinantem, quae est providentia divina ». The system of superior causes explained in the central chapters of the *Summa contra Gentiles* is also elucidated in *Summa Theologica*, I 2ae 9 5-6, which discusses whether will is moved by celestial bodies or by God, to conclude that while human passions can be influenced by the stars, « intellectus hominis movetur ab Angelo », and « Deus movet voluntatem hominis, sicut universalis motor, ad universale obiectum voluntatis, quod est bonum ».⁶³ In *Quaestio disputata de malo*, 6, regarding human choice, Aquinas specifies that « voluntas aliquid confert cum a Deo movetur, ipsa enim est quae operatur, sed mota a Deo; et ideo motus eius quamvis sit ab extrinseco sicut a primo principio, non tamen est violentus ».⁶⁴

The purpose of Aquinas's writings on this subject is that of conciliating the idea of creaturely contingency and freedom with faith

62. The difference between "fate" and "divine providence" is examined in many works and passages by Aquinas, among which is the commentary on Petrus Lombardus's *Sententiae*, book I, dist. 39, q. 2, art. 1 (S. TOMMASO D'AQUINO, *Commento alle sentenze di Pietro Lombardo*, 2. *Libro primo, distinzioni 22-48. La Trinità delle Persone - 2a parte, Gli attributi divini*, tradotto da R. COGGI, Bologna, Edizioni Studio Domenicano, 2000, pp. 726-31); as mentioned, Giles on Rome's (later) commentary on the same *distinctio* is explicitly quoted by Mussato in the *De Lite* (see nn. 57, 58, and 61 above).

63. The text is quoted following: SANCTI THOMAE AQUINATIS *Opera omnia iussu impensaue Leonis XIII P.M. edita, vols. 4-7: Pars prima Summae theologiae; Prima secundae Summae theologiae*, Romae, Ex Typographia Polyglotta S.C. de Propaganda Fide, 1888-1892.

64. *Quaestiones disputatae de malo*, q. 6, a. 1; the text is quoted following: S. THOMAE AQUINATIS *Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P.M. edita. xxiii. Quaestiones disputatae de malo*, Roma-Paris, Commissio Leonina-J. Vrin, 1982.

in divine foreknowledge, providence, and the universal ruling of God.⁶⁵ While, following Aristotle, Aquinas distinguishes between necessity and contingency, he nevertheless « believes in a world governed to the ground by Providence ».⁶⁶ Therefore, as a commentator, Aquinas corrects Aristotle's assertions on the necessary influence on the stars and restates the power of « divina providentia »;⁶⁷ what is more, in his own theological writings he appropriates Aristotle's claims to support this Christian dogma.⁶⁸ Once again, however, Aquinas's readjustment of Aristotle's thought into a Christian perspective is accomplished through minor interventions and seemingly neutral appropriations of his words, rather than by means of open, polemical opposition to the pagan philosopher. According to Valérie Cordonier, in Aquinas's view Aristotle must have even had a theory of providence compatible with that prescribed by the Christian creed.⁶⁹

In contrast Mussato, who follows Cicero's *De Fato* as the source of Aristotle's thought on this particular matter, mentions the Stagirite as one among various, discordant pagan authorities debating the problem of *fatum*, and attributes to him the belief in a fate endowed with necessity. The concluding « Sententia de fato » reveals how

65. G. VERBEKE, *Fatalism and Freedom according to Nemesius and Thomas Aquinas*, in *St. Thomas Aquinas 1274-1974*, pp. 283-313, at p. 294; H. GORIS, *Divine Foreknowledge, Providence, Predestination, and Human Freedom*, in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. by R. VAN NIEUWENHOVE and J. WAWRYOW, Notre Dame, Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2005, pp. 99-122, at p. 99.

66. BOWLIN, *Contingency and fortune*, pp. 7-11.

67. ELDERS, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, p. 369; cf. OWENS, *Aquinas*, p. 238; V.J. BOURKE, *Nicomachean Ethics and Thomas Aquinas*, in *St. Thomas Aquinas 1274-1974*, pp. 239-60, at pp. 257-58 (more in general, on the profound influence on Aquinas's commentary on the thirteenth-century reception of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*: R.-A. GAUTHIER, *Le cours sur l'Ethica nova d'un maître ès arts de Paris (1235-1240)*, in « Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age », vol. XLII 1975, pp. 71-142; I. COSTA, *Autour de deux commentaires inédits sur l'Éthique à Nicomaque: Gilles d'Orléans et l'Anonyme d'Erfurt*, in *Christian Readings of Aristotle*, pp. 211-72, at p. 211). See also above, pp. 81-82.

68. See for example the answer to *Quaestiones disputatae de malo*, 6: « Relinquitur ergo, sicut concludit Aristoteles in cap. de bona fortuna, quod id quod primo movet voluntatem et intellectum, sit aliquid supra voluntatem et intellectum, scilicet Deus ».

69. CORDONIER, *Sauver le Dieu*, p. 67. On this controversial issue, see for example BOURKE, *Nicomachean Ethics*, pp. 257-58.

such a view is radically alien from, and deeply incompatible with, the Christian beliefs in free will and in an ordered universe governed by divine providence, which Mussato's Christ describes in strictly Thomistic terms. Thus, in the *De Lite*, Aristotle's natural philosophy, if Christianized, is overall assimilated and accepted; however, for what concerns the problem of fate, Aristotle's (supposed) opinion is finally rejected in favour of Aquinas's explanation. On the "ethical" problem of human actions and choices,⁷⁰ Mussato thus introduces a fracture between Aristotelianism and Thomism which is perhaps much more pronounced than in the view of Aquinas himself.

To conclude, Ronald Witt has noticed how Mussato's works are characterized by a syncretic combination of, on the one hand, proto-humanist passion for classical literature and, on the other, Christian religious inspiration which intensified later in Mussato's life, specifically during the 1320s, as his *De Lite* helps to reveal.⁷¹ Compared to the existing studies on the topic, an integral reading of the dialogue is beneficial to better understand the ancient and medieval sources underpinning Mussato's philosophical thought in his final years. Most notable among these, as we have seen, are Aristotle's writings on natural and moral philosophy, Cicero's *De Fato*, and Aquinas's *Summa contra Gentiles*. As scholars have not adequately highlighted thus far, this last text must have been a crucial reading for Mussato towards the end of his life.⁷² Ultimately, the pervasive references to classical philosophy in the *De Lite* revitalize what seems at first a perennial patrimony of knowledge; however, the dialogue shows how pagan wisdom is fallible and susceptible to correction in light of a perspective which is not only generically Chris-

70. With "ethics", I refer to that particular branch of philosophical and theological speculation which is centered on the analysis of human actions as ordered to an end and proceeding from intellect and will (see R. McIRNEY, *Ethics*, in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. by N. KRETZMANN and E. STUMP, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993, pp. 196-216, at pp. 196-98).

71. WITT, *In the Footsteps*, pp. 156, 159.

72. Aquinas was pronounced a saint in 1323, few years before the composition of the *De Lite*; this event is referred to in the dialogue (cf. p. 93 above) and may have sharpened Mussato's interest in Aquinas's thought.

tian, but specifically informed by late medieval Scholasticism and by Thomism in particular.

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L'articolo si concentra sul *De Lite inter Naturam et Fortunam* di Albertino Mussato, con particolare riguardo al riutilizzo del pensiero filosofico classico entro la prospettiva cristiana e dichiaratamente "moderna" del dialogo. L'opera è l'unica testimonianza significativa della familiarità di Mussato con le traduzioni latine delle opere di Aristotele e pertanto rappresenta un importante punto di riferimento per lo studio della tradizione aristotelica nel tardo Medioevo. Altra fonte ampiamente utilizzata è il ciceroniano *De Fato*. Nel dialogo le abbondanti citazioni classiche sono sottoposte a revisione alla luce della fede cristiana e della riflessione teologica di Tommaso d'Aquino (*Summa contra gentiles*). Questa doppia strategia, di richiamo e al contempo correzione delle autorità antiche, è resa particolarmente evidente dall'organizzazione narrativa e retorica del testo.

This article focuses on Mussato's 'De Lite inter Naturam et Fortunam', with particular regard to the reuse of ancient classical philosophy within the Christian and consciously "modern" perspective of the dialogue. The 'De Lite' is the only textual witness explicitly and extensively attesting to Mussato's familiarity with Aristotle in Latin translation, and it therefore represents an important point of reference in the study of the Aristotelian tradition during the late Middle Ages. Another source significantly utilized by Mussato is Cicero's 'De Fato'. The frequent classical quotations in the dialogue are reassessed in light of Christian faith and re-read from an interpretative standpoint primarily influenced by Thomas Aquinas's theological reflection ('Summa contra gentiles'). This twofold strategy of citation and correction of the classical "auctoritates" is particularly emphasized by the narrative and rhetorical structure of the text.