

*The Crown and the Cosmos: Astrology and the Politics of Maximilian I.*  
Darin Hayton.

Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015. xiii + 312 pp. \$45.

*Astrologers and Their Clients in Medieval and Early Modern Europe.*  
Wiebke Deimann and David Juste, eds.

Beihefte zum Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 73. Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2015. 230 pp. €40.

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The two volumes under consideration continue the recent trend to focus on the practice of astrology in the early modern period, not just to consider its theory. Hayton's work, which began as his dissertation, looks primarily at astrologers in the court of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I. Deimann and Juste give us a compilation of nine papers from a 2011 conference in Erlangen on the title subject plus an introduction by the editors; aside from a German preface, which is translated into English, all the articles in this volume are in English.

According to Hayton, Maximilian is an early example of a ruler who consistently used astrology and astrologers to promote his political agenda. The most interesting way, as Hayton describes it, was in shaping his image. Maximilian was only the second Habsburg emperor and was never crowned by the pope; Hayton presents him as a ruler who was

“obsessed with reinforcing his own claims to the imperial title as well as the authority of the House of Habsburg in the face of sustained opposition from the German princes and electors in addition to foreign kingdoms” (18) and who saw astrology as a vital tool for reinforcing his legitimacy and the right of the Habsburg dynasty to the imperial title. The most famous astrologer of his day, Regiomontanus, was called on by Maximilian’s parents to draw up the son’s horoscope, and the astrologer confirmed that he would be a great leader. Maximilian wrote autobiographical works in which he depicted himself as astrologically destined to rule. An emperor writing such works? Hayton points out that Maximilian understood the importance of print and used it to influence public opinion. Hayton details how astrologers aided the emperor in various facets of his political agenda. The humanist Joseph Grünpeck suggested that portents showed that rebellious princes and cities were disrupting the natural order. Sebastian Brant produced broadsheets supporting Maximilian’s wars against the French.

Maximilian’s position was enhanced by his reputation as a patron of learning, and he worked to reestablish the University of Vienna as a major academic institution. The eminent humanist Conrad Celtis moved to the University of Vienna in 1495, just two years after Maximilian assumed the imperial title, and he established the *Collegium poetarum et mathematicorum*, making the university a center for the study of astrology. Maximilian appointed the eminent Georg Tannstetter to one of four chairs he established at the university. Tannstetter’s wall calendars and annual *practica* were so popular that they were satirized and pirated; most importantly, they were read by various classes of people so that when his recommendations favored the emperor, they had widespread influence, though Hayton reports as “wishful thinking” Tannstetter’s prediction for 1505 that “university masters would be honored by kings and princes” (135). Tannstetter’s student Andreas Perlach continued his program, supporting Archduke Ferdinand with pamphlets that supported his election as king of the Romans. Andreas Stiborius enhanced the emperor’s image with his lectures, and his instruments for producing astrological charts for Vienna were used by Maximilian and his advisors to guide his decisions. More valuable were those produced by Johannes Stabius, which could be applied to any city the emperor wished to control. They could also be personalized as gifts to the emperor’s supporters. After Maximilian crowned Stabius poet laureate, Stabius expressed his gratitude by producing a prognostication for 1503–04 that the celestial configurations would produce unrest and conflict unless the princes supported the emperor’s military and political objectives.

Johannes Lichtenberger gets scant mention in Hayton’s volume, though the astrologer claimed to be connected with the Habsburg court under Frederick III, Maximilian’s father. Wiebke Deimann in “Astrology in an Age of Transition: Johannes Lichtenberger and His Clients,” from the second volume under consideration, maintains that though Lichtenberger was never connected with the imperial court, he did compose charts for other German princely houses. This was despite the fact that he was a mediocre astrologer. Deimann points out that Lichtenberger also understood the power of print and used it to build up his stature as a practitioner. A practitioner who is generally

thought superior and was critical of Lichtenberger's sloppiness but did not recognize the advantages of print to the same degree was Paul of Middelburg, whom Stephan Heilen discusses in his article "Paul of Middelburg's Use of the *Mathesis* of Firmicus Maternus." This article concentrates on Paul's *Prognosticum* for the years 1484–1504. It was dedicated to Maximilian but did not land the author a court position. Heilen shows passages that it closely followed the wording of the *Mathesis*, but suggests that the purpose was to impress his imperial dedicatee; a later work by Paul did not use the *Mathesis*. Heilen also identifies the Firmicus manuscript used by Paul as the copy in the Urbino library.

In the seventeenth century Johannes Kepler became an astrological advisor to a much later generation of Habsburg emperors, Rudolph II and his brother Matthias. Katrin Bauer in "Johannes Kepler between two Emperors" analyzes four letters by Kepler that relate to the fractious relationship between the brothers. Bauer concludes that Kepler failed in two goals—to reconcile the brothers and to gain a position on the emperor's privy council. Nevertheless, by being available to both brothers Kepler was not only an advisor to Rudolph but continued as imperial mathematician under Matthias. Another article about the relationship between astrology and power is H. Darrel Rutkin's "Astrology, Politics and Power in 16th-Century Florence: Giuliano Ristori's Extensive Judgment on Cosimo I's Nativity (1537)." As noted regarding Maximilian, Cosimo's birth chart was used to project that he was fitted for power, but in this case Rutkin notes that Ristori included talismanic magic and suggests that his political outlook stood between the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secret of Secrets*, with its emphasis on astrology and magic, and the political theory expounded by Machiavelli and Guicciardini. Another article looks at what was probably a middle-class client. David Juste in "A Sixteenth-Century Astrological Consultation" writes about a judgment by the astrologer Wilhelmus Mysocacus of Brussels for one Joannes Sillyers of Mechelen, who may have been an advisor to the king and others. Juste analyzes the document and sees it as a valuable example of a professional astrologer's work at that time and appends an annotated edition.

Other articles handle medieval instances. Two deal with two well-known thirteenth-century astrologers: Charles Burnett discusses Michael Scot and Benjamin Dykes discusses Guido Bonatti. Moving into the early fourteenth century, Jean-Patrice Boudet looks at a newly discovered response to astrological interrogation by the archbishop of Aix-en-Provence and appends an annotated edition; Robert Hand discusses Giovanni Villani's comments in his famous chronicle about the great conjunction of 1345.

While a monograph by its very nature has more to offer than a book of articles, and Hayton's look at astrology in the court of Maximilian I is a valuable addition to the literature on the practice of astrology in the early modern period, the articles in the volume edited by Deimann and Juste provide useful insights for readers.

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